

*Glorify God in all we do,
Grow with Him daily &
Go with Him to share His love.*

CHRISTMAS PARADE



January at a Glance

- 1: Happy New Year! No Sunday School
- 4: No Wednesday Night Activities
- 8: 9:00 am Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons
 - 10:10 am Sunday School begins
- 9: 6:00pm Elder & Deacon Meetings
7:00pm Full Consistory will meet
- 11: 6:30 Bible Class Begins again
 - 6:30 & 7:30 Youth Groups begin
- 13, 20, 27: 2:00pm FRC is in charge of BINGO at Sibley Specialty Care
- 16: 9:30 am Faith Bible Study
 - 3:00 pm Patience Bible Study
- 25: 2:00pm FRC is in charge of Nursing Home Services
- 29: Communion Sunday

*Sundays:

- 9:00 am Praise and Worship Service
- 10:10 am Sunday School 4yrs - Adult
Coffee Fellowship Time

*Tuesdays:

- 8:30 am Quilting Chicks will meet

*Wednesday Evening Bible Classes and Youth Groups:

- 6:30 pm Bible Classes 1st-5th grades
- 6:30 pm MS Remnant Youth Group
- 7:30 pm HS Remnant Youth Group
- 7:30 pm Joyful Voices Choir

CONTACT INFORMATION:
712-754-2783

sibleyfrcoffice@gmail.com



View our Website at: sibleyfrc.org



Stewardship & Giving

Offering Summary through December 26:

- **General Fund: \$323,022.85**
Budget: \$315,827.88; 100.02% of budget
- **Benevolent Fund: \$49,307.37**
Budget: \$70,626.12; 69% of budget
- **Building Fund offerings to date: \$3875**

Faith In Action for January:

Layettes for the Center of Hope

This month we are collecting items that a new Baby or New Mom might be in need of.

We only ask that all donated items must be NEW.



Special Offering for January

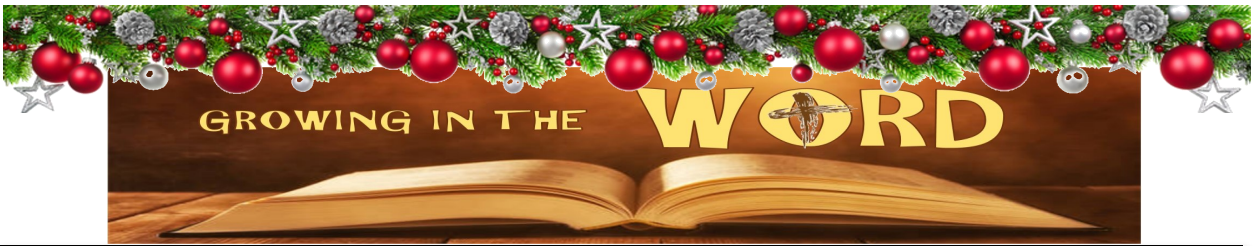


Meeting Minutes

Consistory Meeting Highlights

December 21, 2022

- **MMSA** recommendation to purchase new digital soundboard and condenser mics to be paid for by an anonymous donor.
- **MMSA** to approve baptism request by Collin and Lexi Van Diepen for their son, Theodore John Van Diepen on January 8th,
- **MMSA** to approve MS Remnant request for church use for Lock in on December 27 & 28.
- **MMSA** to approve recommendation for Communion Dates for 2023
- New appointments are as follows:
VP: Ken Loerts; Clerk: Jerrad Brouwer; Assistant Clerk: Dennis Jurgens; GF Treasurer: Mark Hulstein; Asst GF Treasurer: Roger Verdoorn; Chairman of the Deacons: Jon Elser; Clerk of Deacons: Cole; Property Chair: Levi Christensen



Faith Bible Study, will meet on **Monday, January 16 at 9:30 am**. We will be studying “Abigail” in our book *Women of the Old Testament*. Scripture will be 1 Samuel 25:2-44. Alfreda Verdoorn will be leader and Rhonda Riebeling will serve as hostess. All are invited! Hope to see you there!

Patience Bible Study, will meet on **Monday, January 16 at 3:00 pm** We will be studying lesson #3 “The Attractiveness of Suffering,” in our book *Seven Letters to Seven Churches*. Scripture for the lesson is Revelation 2:8-11. Barb will lead and serve as hostess. Come for a time of fellowship and learning. Hope to see you there!

Fellowship Bible Study Opportunities on Sundays at 6:30pm:

1. **Message Discussion and Application** *Clayton and Jodi Wagenaar’s home & *FRC Fellowship Hall

2. **Digging into God’s Word: Ecclesiastes** *Kevin and Laurel Klaassen’s home All ages, singles and couples are invited to attend.

Childcare can be arranged. Come, join a group and let’s grow together!

Trivia Time!!

1. What Bible personality was called a half-baked pancake?
2. What was the name of the king who put Jeremiah into a dungeon in which he sank in the mire?
3. Absalom caught his hair in what kind of a tree?
4. Four rivers flowed out of the Garden of Eden. What are the names of these four rivers?
5. Eldad and Medad are famous because of what?
6. Muppim, Huppim and Ard were who?
7. What was the name of the man who had his head cut off and thrown over a wall to Joab?
8. What tribe had 700 left-handed men who could sling stones at a hair breadth and not miss?
9. What was the name of the secretary of Paul the apostle who wrote the book of Romans for Paul?
10. At Belshazzar’s feast a hand wrote on the wall, “Mene, Mene, Tekel, U-pharsin.” What was the interpretation of the words?
11. What were the weather forecasts Jesus told the Pharisees and Sadducees?



A Letter from Pastor Colas

The Lagossette Church of Christ greets you in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

I would like to take this moment to thank you for your ministry support. It has been about 5 years since I started receiving financial assistance from you guys. Thank you so much, I greatly appreciate it. During this holiday season, I have a few things I would like to share with you all regarding my church.

There are two big projects we are wanting to work on next year. Church repairs and continued work for our elderly population. There are times when I wonder how we will get some of these things done, as life in ministry in Haiti can be tough, but our God is bigger and powerful. We've seen His miracles every day in our lives.

We hope to continue to have a program for the elderly in our church to have a meal every Saturday. The other big project is the church repairs-mostly our roof. I know Papito has shared a vision for many years to bring a team down to help with this project but COVID and most recently the situation in Haiti has made this idea hard to have happen at this time. I don't share these things because I am asking for money, but mostly to give an update and ask for prayers. Ways your church can pray for my church in Haiti. I would also love to know what ways we can pray for your church. We have been praying for a pastor and it sounds like you have someone right now. We will continue to pray for that.

~~Mesi anpil!
Pastor Colas



January Celebrations

~~Birthday's~~

1 Jan Harskamp Brenda Wassman	14 Mim Ernst	30 Karen Honken
5 Phyllis Vander Linden Sandy De Vries	17 Brayden Bruxvoort	31 Jurnea Bos
6 Damian Van Der Sloot	18 Janice Groen Matthew Runia	
7 Tracee Brouwer Ashley Heronimus Alan Julius	Tanya Dykstra Tanner Dykstra	
8 Angie Buysman Robert Groen	20 Kathy Runia	
9 Marcia Oldenkamp	24 Jayden De Boer	
12 Lynn Schram Alexis Hulstein	25 Kalie De Boer	
	26 Rhonda Riebeling Dr. Brian Saylor	
	27 Brady Block Donna Smidt	
	28 Jon Elser	
	29 Ken Tjaden	

I have found
THE ONE
Whom my soul Loves
SONG OF SOLOMON 3:4

~~Anniversaries~~

19 Joel & Kathy Verdoorn	57 years
20 Jim & Jena Ver Steeg	11 years
26 Cole & Kayla Hoekstra	15 years
26 Bubba & Sharalyn Tjaden	38 years



If you would like to be included in our Birthday and Anniversary Calendar and do not see your name, please contact the office (sibleyfrcoffice@gmail.com or 754-2783) and let us know your dates! We would love to recognize YOU on your special day! Thanks

Praise and Worship Greeters

- 1: E: Derek and Megan Ackerman/family
C: Brian and Chelsey Alexander/family
W: Kimberly Alsip/family
- 8: E: Bobby and Dee Baker
C: John and Sharon Bartels
W: Gretchen Bartelson
- 15: E: Tony and Jamiey Bevers/family
C: Mike and Andrea Block/family
W: Troy and Meggan Block/family
- 22: E: Travis and Jill Boeke/family
C: Jerrad and Tracee Brouwer/family
W: Jamie and Jennifer Bruxvoort/family
- 29: E: Nate and Angie Buysman
C: JoAnn Calsbeek
W: Levi and Kira Christensen/family



9:00am Worship Nursery

- 1: Nursery Not Staffed
8: Ruth Ann Wiersma & Alexis Hulstein
15: Peg Van Kley & Sandy Heronimus
22: Leona Meendering & Kathy Verdoorn
29: Sandy Lamfers & Rachel Wills



Fellowship Coffee Servers

- 1: Leona Meendering & Joanne Klaassen
8: Larry and Rhonda Riebeling
15: Ted and Eileen Schutte
22: Dave and Lesa Stofferan
29: Ger and Barb Van Diepen

Children & Worship during the service



- 1: Leader: Deb Kosters
Helper:
- 8: Leader: Deb Kosters
Helper:
- 15: Leader: Deb Kosters
Helper:
- 22: Leader: Deb Kosters
Helper:
- 29: Leader: Deb Kosters
Helper:

Willing Hands Group

Willing Hands Group #6

will be responsible for services during the month.

Co-chairpersons are:

- Peg/Curt Van Kley
- Rhonda/Larry Riebeling

Library Volunteers



- 1: Alfreda Verdoorn
8: Ruth Ann Wiersma
15: Kathy/Joel Verdoorn
22: Marilyn De Boer
29: Gert Gaalswyk

Sportsmen's Devotional



Bible Study Verse

II Timothy 3:16-17

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (NKJV)

Thoughts

Outdoorsmen know the importance of a properly equipped camp. If we have good equipment and the right equipment, we will have a great experience. But if we have bad equipment or the wrong equipment, we can be miserable and frustrated the entire time.

- Camp with confidence with your equipment by: Testing before you use it. Correcting that which is faulty. Practicing good camp safety and hygiene.

Action Point

- Our Christian walk also needs to be well equipped by: Spending time in God's Word. Knowing that it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Believing that it is perfect, holy, and true.
- With it, we can: Establish truth. Correct those who depart from the faith. Instruct each other in righteous and holy ways.

This is how we are completely prepared for the good work we must accomplish for the kingdom.

Sportsmen's Tip of the Day

Carry extra batteries for your camera, flashlight, or other electronic devices, but don't carry the batteries loose. You can make small, neat carriers out of duct tape, perfectly sized to the number and style of extra batteries that you need. The one I made holds three AAA batteries with a flap that folds over and tucks in like an envelope. I got this idea from watching boys make duct tape wallets at a boy's camp. Some of the boys I know still carry their wallets, even a couple of years later!

Trivia Time Answers!!!

1. Ephraim ("Ephraim is a cake not turned")--Hosea 7:8" **2.** Zedekiah--Jeremiah 38:5,6 **3.** Oak--2 Samuel 18:9 **4.** Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates -- Genesis 2:10-14 **5.** Their Prophecy -- Numbers 11:26-29 **6.** The Sons of Benjamin -- Genesis 46:21 **7.** Sheba -- 2 Samuel 20:14-22 **8.** The Benjamites -- Judges 20:15,16 **9.** Tertius -- Romans 16:22 **10.** Mene - God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it; Teke- Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting; U-pharsin-Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians -- Faniel 5:25-28 **11.** Evening sky red- fair weather; morning sky red - stormy weather -- Matthew 16:1-3.

NEW YEAR'S TO-DO LISTS



I refuse to start my year with any resolutions because there isn't any way I can get taller or younger! So, I am putting aside the temptation to make frivolous resolutions; instead, I am making a to-do list of things that must be done. I have a personal list that isn't important to you, but there is another to-do list of important things for us to consider as a congregation.

In our discernment meetings, we have started to look at the challenges we face as a denomination and a congregation. It has been an exciting journey, but one we have just begun. As Robert Frost once said, we have *miles to go before we sleep*. Here are some things I think we can't ignore in 2023. You may disagree with my list—and I'd love to hear your thoughts—but we would all agree that we have work to do. Here is my short but the tasks will take time, prayer, and commitment.

#1—Make our Denominational Decision

We have a few decisions to make. The first decision is whether we stay with the RCA or leave. If we decide to stay, we will need to think about what staying means and our obligation to the denomination. If we decide to leave, we need to decide where to go. *Both decisions depend on our theology—what we believe and why we believe it.* We must be able to articulate our theological beliefs clearly so that we can make sound decisions. Can you answer this last question? Does scripture inform your theology, or popular culture?

#2—Find our new pastor, and develop strong leadership

We need to work together as we search for pastoral leadership. This is a complex process and a real challenge. Please pray for the Consistory, and Search Team, and give your time if requested. We have to find a good pastor with good theology!

#3—Put God first and serve Him as we ought at Sibley FRC.

As we search for our next pastor and make our denominational decisions, some things are becoming better understood about who we are. Like so many congregations, we realize that we have changed. Some things are good, including the fact that our giving is strong. However, we have problems too. Our attendance in worship is down, we are not able to find teachers, we struggle to get people to serve on Consistory, we aren't happy with all the aspects of our worship services, we are aging, and we need people to serve on committees. The list could go on. This is theology in practice.

What concerns me is that when we discuss these issues, it is always something that *someone else* needs to fix. How can this be? All members of Sibley FRC, no matter age, education, talent, or status, are each responsible to God for our ministry. It is always a question of theology.

THEOLOGY 101 FOR SIBLEY FRC

CREEDS & CONFESSIONS

If you attended the most recent discernment meetings, you would have heard Pastor Troy talk to us about the importance of knowing what we believe—our theology. **Theology** is the *study of God*, and **doctrines** are *teachings or particular beliefs*. Doctrines express our theology.

Troy asked us to identify the RCA denominational standards. That is where I decided to start this newsletter series on Theology. The RCA has adopted three creeds and four confessions, and they are a summary of our beliefs. You can read more on the RCA website. *Let me know if you need a copy of any of them.*

Creeds are broad statements of faith that encompass beliefs held by Christians of all church denominations. They are generally shorter, and we often recite them in worship.

- **Apostles' Creed**—written about 300 years after the birth of Christ and summarizes foundational beliefs. *This creed is the one we most often recite in our morning worship.*
- **Nicene Creed**—written in 325 AD after the Council of Nicaea, which formalized the doctrine of the Trinity as opposed to the Arian heresy. It is the only document after the Bible that the entire church has officially approved.
- **Athanasian Creed**—Written in the fourth century and named after Bishop Athanasius, a prominent defender of the Trinity. It further clarified the doctrine of the Trinity.

Confessions are more in-depth expositions of Christian theology. All denominations or congregations do not hold them. Our confessions are in the family known as *reformed* and link back to the ministry and teaching of John Calvin. Calvin influenced generations of believers in many countries. Presbyterians, Huguenots, and Puritans are all connected by common theological principles.

- **The Belgic Confession**—written in 1561, it is the oldest and most comprehensive of the RCA's Standards of Unity; the Belgic Confession outlines the central beliefs of the Christian faith with a Reformed accent. Guido de Bres', a preacher of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, wrote the Belgic Confession.
- **The Canons of Dort**—Written as a response to Arminianism, the Canons of Dort clarify the Reformed teaching of salvation and God's grace. The Canons were written between 1618 and 19 and formulated the *Five Points of Calvinism*.
- **The Belhar Confession**—The most recent of the RCA's Standards of Unity, the Belhar Confession makes a case for unity, reconciliation, and justice. It was adopted in 1986.
- **The Heidelberg Catechism**—With the warm tone of a gentle teacher, the Heidelberg Catechism unpacks the gospel, the sacraments, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. It was written in 1563 to teach doctrines through questions and answers.

PRAYER LIST

BE A
Prayer
WARRIOR
Luke 21:36

PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

1. Pray for our Church
2. Brian and Chelsey Alexander
Kimberlie, Riley, Brysen
3. Kim Alsip; Zoey
4. Brian and Elia Althoff; Will, Gracia
5. Bobby and Dee Baker
6. John and Sharon Bartels
7. Pray for our College Students
8. Pray for our Church
9. Drew and Keshia Bean; Rylee, Everly
10. Kaitlyn Bechler
11. Carl Berkenpas
12. Davis and Kristen Beyer; MacKenzie, Aidan
Dawson, Easton, Kavan, Tayah
13. Mike and Andrea Block; Michael Jr
14. Pray for our College Students
15. Pray for our Church
16. Troy and Meggan Block; Halle, Brady, Kolby
17. Travis and Jill Boeke; Emma
18. Kody and Jurnea Bos
19. Jerry and Sylvia Bosma
20. Tammy Breitweiser; Andrea
21. Pray for our College Students
22. Pray for our Church
23. Daphne Bremer; Dalten, Tayler
24. Randy Bremer
25. Marlys Brink
26. Jerrad and Tracee Brouwer;
Grant, Carter, Madison
27. Brayden Bruxvoort
28. Pray for our College Students
29. Pray for our Church
30. Jamie and Jennifer Bruxvoort; Logan, Ella
31. Kailey Bruxvoort

College Students:

Mackenzie Beyer
Logan Bruxvoort
Kaden Maxwell
Teddy Van Gelder

Carter Brouwer
Andrea Leusink
Austin Wassman
Tyler Feldkamp

Dalten Bremer
Ashilyn Hulstein
Natalie Klaassen

Leah Ackerman
Grant Brouwer
Tanner Dykstra
Jaeger Johnson
Alex Mc Dougall

Ryan Van Marel



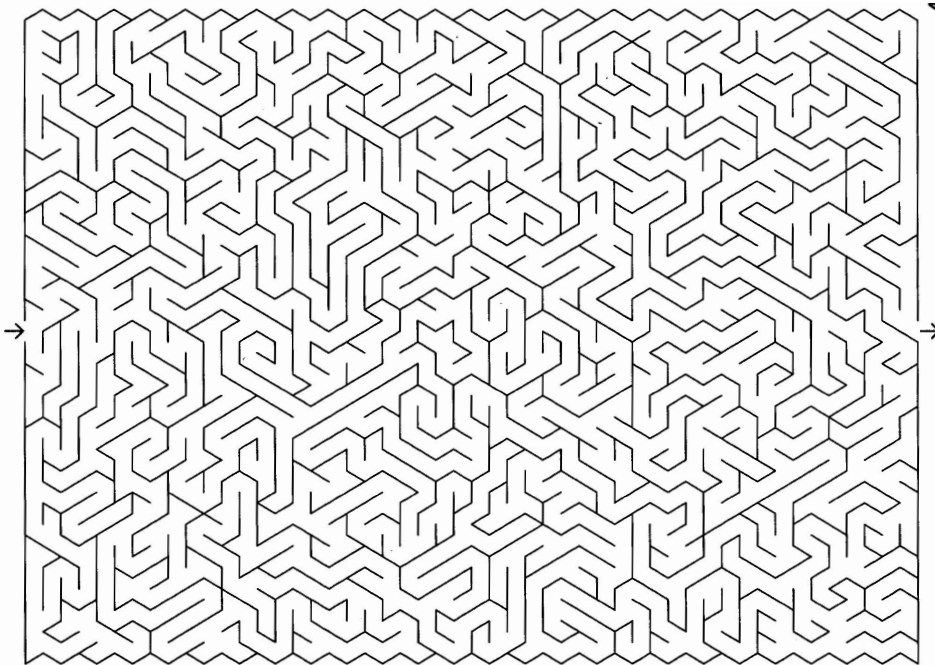
19

MISSING VOWELS

Instructions for solving Missing Vowels are given on page 18. Solution on page 147

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AWARE | <input type="checkbox"/> INBOARD | <input type="checkbox"/> QUAIL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CATERER | <input type="checkbox"/> LAKE | <input type="checkbox"/> ROOST |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CHALET | <input type="checkbox"/> LOOKING | <input type="checkbox"/> SAINT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> COBWEB | <input type="checkbox"/> MOTOR | <input type="checkbox"/> SAPLING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DIVER | <input type="checkbox"/> NUTMEG | <input type="checkbox"/> SENORA |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ENACT | <input type="checkbox"/> OUTLAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SEVEN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FONDUE | <input type="checkbox"/> OVEN | <input type="checkbox"/> SIDECAR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FRIEND | <input type="checkbox"/> PANEL | <input type="checkbox"/> SOON |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GALORE | <input type="checkbox"/> PECULIAR | <input type="checkbox"/> TASTE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HAVE | <input type="checkbox"/> PHASE | <input type="checkbox"/> TEAR |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HEIGHT | <input type="checkbox"/> PICKAX | <input type="checkbox"/> THREE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HINDER | <input type="checkbox"/> POSTMEN | <input type="checkbox"/> TOGA |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> PRICE | <input type="checkbox"/> VEIL |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> PULPIT | <input type="checkbox"/> VENDOR |

L T H R O O W C C G K X S R
 T O P L O P O G O A S L O T
 Q K O D O T L M N R W T O C
 N O N V O P T R P O O A N O
 T O O R R O O L O M L L R N
 F H O O N B O O R D D P O E
 S R C D L O S O T H N K O G
 O O X O K C O P C N O O F S
 V X N O R L D C H O O G H T
 O O N O O S O O O M R O O O
 N G N C R R C B L T F G S S
 O D O D X O O W O S O H P T
 V P T S O O R O T O L O K O
 O D O V O R T B T P O N O L



WINTER



3 letters

hat
ice

4 letters

coal
cold
melt
snow

5 letters

boots
nippy
scarf
sleet
slush
snowy

6 letters

chilly
frigid
gloves
heater
jacket
shiver

7 letters

flannel
mittens
sweater
wintery

8 letters

blizzard
flurries
hot cocoa
slippery
snowsuit
solstice

9 letters

fireplace
Jack Frost
longjohns
snowstorm

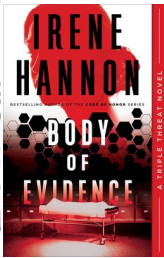
12 letters

freezing rain

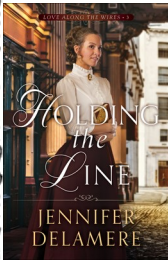


From the library--

Now that the busyness of the holidays is over why not take time to visit the church library and check out a book or two to read on the long winter evenings. Here are previews from three new books in the library.



BODY OF EVIDENCE by Irene Hannon and the third book in the 'A Triple Threat' series. "Forensic pathologist Grace Reilly has seen her share of unusual deaths in rural Missouri. But when she begins to notice a curious pattern in autopsies of older residents whose demises appear to be natural, she takes her concerns to Sheriff Nate Cox. Nate is skeptical about the link Grace is seeing between the deaths, as well as her suspicions of foul play. But her persistence is compelling. And once they join forces to investigate, danger follows, because exposing the truth could destroy several lives—including Grace's."



Book number 3 in 'Love Along the Wires' series HOLDING THE LINE by Jennifer Delamere is another new book. "A widow at just thirty years of age, Rose Finlay is determined to put all ideas of marriage and family behind her and pursue an independent life. But when she notices a young woman about to be led astray by a roguish aristocrat, bitter memories from her past arise, and she feels compelled to intervene. The unintended consequences of her efforts will ultimately force Rose to reexamine her life in a new light. As the guardian of his two widowed sisters' financial and domestic affairs, John Milburn carries heavy responsibilities for a single man.

But he's faced with his biggest challenge when his headstrong niece falls prey to the attentions of a powerful man who could ruin both her and her family. When Rose and John join forces to protect his niece, they put everything they hold dear—including their growing attraction—in jeopardy."



THE CHOICES SHE MADE by Felicia Ferguson is a story of modern day happenings. "In 1997, seventeen year-old Madeline Williams is torn between continuing her family ranching legacy and accepting her Army-bound boyfriend's marriage proposal. But when an assault by John David Billings, the son of a wealthy rancher leaves her pregnant, Madeline sacrifices both options, choosing to leave town and raise the child alone. It's been several years, and when she returns to her hometown to meet with her father rumors circulate about John David's trial—for assaulting other women. Madeline struggles with the secret she's kept from her daughter--and everyone but her father—all of these years. If she testifies, John David could be put away for good. It doesn't help that he's hired a killer lawyer, and it would take a testimony like hers to put him behind bars. But if she unveils her past, that could have some dangerous repercussions for her daughter. She has trusted God throughout her entire life but can she trust him to carry her through this trial?"

This is just sampling of the books available. There is a wide variety so visit the library soon.

Jeannette Juffer

Our Outreach Team has purchased some Community Express Bus passes to be given to church family/individuals in need. If you would like a round-trip ticket or know of someone who could use one, please stop at the office.

Community Express
Voucher for Transportation
Provided to you by your local church
Thank you for riding!

Date _____
Signature _____



FRC is responsible for BINGO at Sibley Specialty Care for the last three Fridays for the month of January. Please see the Information Center to get signed up to help out.



JANUARY 15, 2023
FOLLOWING
SUNDAY SCHOOL

Chili, cinnamon rolls and hot dogs for the children will be provided. Volunteers are needed to help serve and clean-up. Hope to see you there!!

*******New 2023 Calling Districts *******

District 1: Randy Van De Berg /Jon Elser:
Charles Ackerman-Kailey Bruxvoort

District 2: John Juffer/Mark Hulstein:
Jane Buysman-Mark Dykstra

District 3: Kevin Klaassen/Derek Heronimus:
Ron Dykstra-Cole Hoekstra

District 4: Ron Dykstra/Cole Hoekstra:
Dale Honken – Clint Klaassen

District 5: Lyle Peelen/Brian Saylor:
Ellie Klaassen – Cory Maxwell

District 6: Dennis Jurgens/Roger Verdoorn:
John McDougall-Jennie Schram

District 7: Jerrad Brouwer/AJ Weg: Kley:
Ted Schutte Curt Van

District 8: Ken Loerts/Levi Christensen:
Steve Van Kley – Elizabeth Wynia



Education Schedule:

Please remember the following Weather Cancellations Procedure: If there is NO school, or school is released early due to inclement weather, there will be NO WEDNESDAY Night activities.

Sunday School 3 yr - Adult:

- Jan 1: No Class due to Christmas Break

Wednesday Bible Classes (1st-5th grades):

- Jan 4: No Class due to Christmas Break

MS and HS Remnant Youth Group:

- Jan 4: No Youth Group due to Christmas Break

College Addresses

Hudson Feldkamp

825 Legacy Lane
Unit 61
Brookings, SD 57006

Ryan Van Marel

804 Medary Ave. South
Brookings, SD 57006

Alex Mc Dougall

2040 Hawthorn Ct. Drive
#7122
Ames, IA 50010-9169

Jagger Johnson

4709 Steinbeck Street
Apt 11
Ames, IA 50014

Tanner Dykstra

3029 N. 47th Street
Lincoln, NE 68504

Grant Brouwer

DU 2335
700 7th Street NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250

Leah Ackerman

5008 W. Equestrian Pl.
Apt 217
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

Ashilyn Hulstein

718 9th Ave
Brookings, SD 56007

Dalton Bremer

Rm# 612 A-2
1110 North Dubuque St.
Iowa City, IA 52245

Tyler Feldkamp

318 Campanile Ave
Spencer Rm227
Brookings, SD 57007

Austin Wassman

1434 Tyler Ave
Ocheyedan, IA 51354

Andrea Leusink

BVU Box 2461
610 W. Fourth Street
Storm Lake, IA 50588

Carter Brouwer

SDSU
Room 421
Binnewies Hall
Box 2805
Brookings, SD 57007

Ted Van Gelder

SDSU
Room #324-A1
Young Hall
Box 2807
Brookings, SD 57007

Kaden Maxwell

104 S. Harmon Drive
Mitchell, SD 57301

Logan Bruxvoort

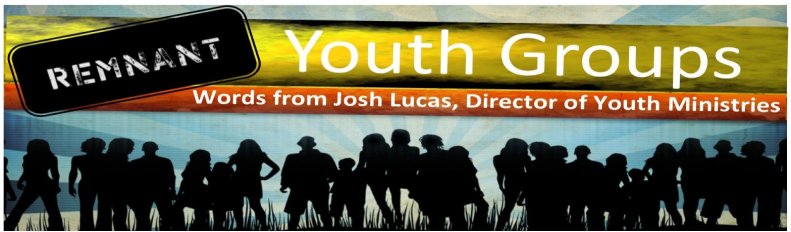
230 10th Ave.
Worthington, MN 56187

MacKenzie Beyer

610 W. 4th Street
Storm Lake, IA 50588

If your student will have a different address for the 2022-2023 school year please let the office know.

Hello First Reformed Church,
Have you ever been in a debate with another Christian over Christmas? I think personally that it is a little bit sad that we as Christians have to fight over something as beautiful as the celebration of the birth of our Lord



and Savior Jesus Christ. The argument is that Christians should not participate in Christmas at all. I think this is crazy to me to even suggest something like that, especially since true history reveals that Christians came up with the celebration of Christmas first. Have you ever taken the time to do the research on the true reasons for the things of the holidays? I am talking about things like lights, tree, decorations, and even Santa. Yes, you heard me right, did you know that Santa has Christian roots? It may not be the reason you are thinking but hear me out on this. Let's take a stroll down history lane.

When was Christmas first introduced? Christmas was first introduced as a Christian holiday in AD 379 in Constantinople. The term "Christmas" meant "Christ's Mass" which related to the celebration of the Eucharist of the Christ. Most people would agree that there are two essential words in "Christmas," "Christ" and "Mas." Which when you break down those two words mean, more Christ. This is not the true reason for the holiday, but it also does not change anything, at least in my mind. Second, the date of December 25th as the day Christians have chosen to celebrate Christmas. Why December 25th? Honestly no one really has an answer for that question. There are a few theories, but those theories really do not have much supporting evidence. Over the centuries, tradition has influenced the date so now December 25th has become the official day and most everyone in the world celebrates it. Third, some people use Jeremiah 10 to explain that God forbids the use of evergreen trees, which are the trees that are used for Christmas trees. However, this is an issue of context. God was forbidding the WORSHIP of these trees, people during this day were worshipping trees, animals, etc. God does not want us to worship anything other than Him. Don't worship the tree. Fourth, the issue of Santa and the elves. Did you know that the original concept of Santa derived from a real-life person? The man's name was St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, dating all the way back to the fourth century. Nicholas inherited a large amount of money and used much of his fortune to help the poor. Nicholas gave gifts to the poor in the name of Christ. After his death, the Church recognized him as a saint, hence why he got the name St. Nick. The red clothing likely mimics the red robes worn by bishops. The other concepts, adopted from cultural influences, mingled together over the years gave us what we know as Christmas Traditions today.

Do we understand the true meaning behind Christmas? Why did Jesus have to come? What did Jesus being born accomplish? All of these questions need to be answered and celebrated during the holiday season. Don't run away from this holiday, embrace it, celebrate it, but with everything else use caution in it. Hannah and I recently did a podcast episode on this issue. We encourage you to go and listen to it if you'd like. It is called, "The Gospel Truth" you can find it anywhere you can listen to podcasts. Thank you all so much for reading my newsletter article and I hope that you were blessed by it. If you ever need a hug this big ole teddy bear has one for you!

Blessings,
Josh Lucas

Dad Jokes With Josh:

What's the problem with eating a clock?
It's very time consuming!



Update from Rowland and Jane Van Es December 2022

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Colossians 2:6-7 says, “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.” Some of you may be wondering, what keeps missionaries “rooted in Christ” as they live and work cross-culturally—especially as the holiday season comes around.

We have found that much of our “rootedness” comes through fellowship with Christians from a wide variety of backgrounds. This seems to be our most meaningful way to be “built up in him (Christ) and established in the faith.” We attend two different Sunday fellowships. Each has its strengths and weaknesses but both keep us connected to Christ and the other members. They keep us in the faith, in fellowship, in the Word, in prayer, and in gratitude for all our spiritual connections.

Jane fellowships weekly with a women’s spiritual formation group. For the last several months they have been exploring how the arts can bring them closer to God. They enjoy learning from each other, encouraging one another in their spiritual journey, and lifting it all in prayer.



For Rowland and the students in the School of Theology, what keeps them rooted in Christ is their Monday Fellowship hour. This semester each month had a theme around which there was a Bible reflection, a time of prayer, and a time of celebration.

In September, the theme was the university’s chosen verse for the new academic year, Ps 46:1, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” In October the theme was the Reformation, celebrating the use of local languages in worship, for scripture, and in prayers from the heart. They also celebrated great church women of the past and present.



In November, the theme was ending sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). They looked at the story in II Sam 13 of the rape of Tamar, launched the Thursdays in Black campaign for the entire university, and through music and drama, dared to imagine a world without rape and violence, celebrating what could still be true. See the news story [here](#) and another story about it [here](#).

For both of us and our colleagues here at St Paul’s University, what keeps us all “rooted in Christ” is the African philosophy of “I am because you are.” Several students and staff lost family members this semester and we gathered with them for prayer to support them in their time of loss. We also had several end-of-semester picnics with our students. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we mourn together just as we rejoice together.

Being rooted in Christ also helps us to live a life “abounding in thanksgiving.” As a couple, this means we try to be more thankful for both the big and small things. We are thankful that our two daughters are coming back to their Kenyan “home” for Christmas again this year. The last time we celebrated here as a family was in 2019. It will be good to be all together in Kenya for the holiday season.

Today it is raining, and we are thankful for the blessing of rain and wish it for everyone in Kenya and the East African Region, and elsewhere who are suffering from drought. We are thankful for RCA Global Mission and other groups who work hard to bring food, water, and other necessities of life to those who need it, especially those suffering from natural disasters.

Finally, we are thankful to you, our friends and supporters, who have allowed us to live and work here with a chance to teach so many students, giving them a quality Christian higher education. St. Paul’s just celebrated more than 1,500 students who graduated with diplomas and degrees in various fields.



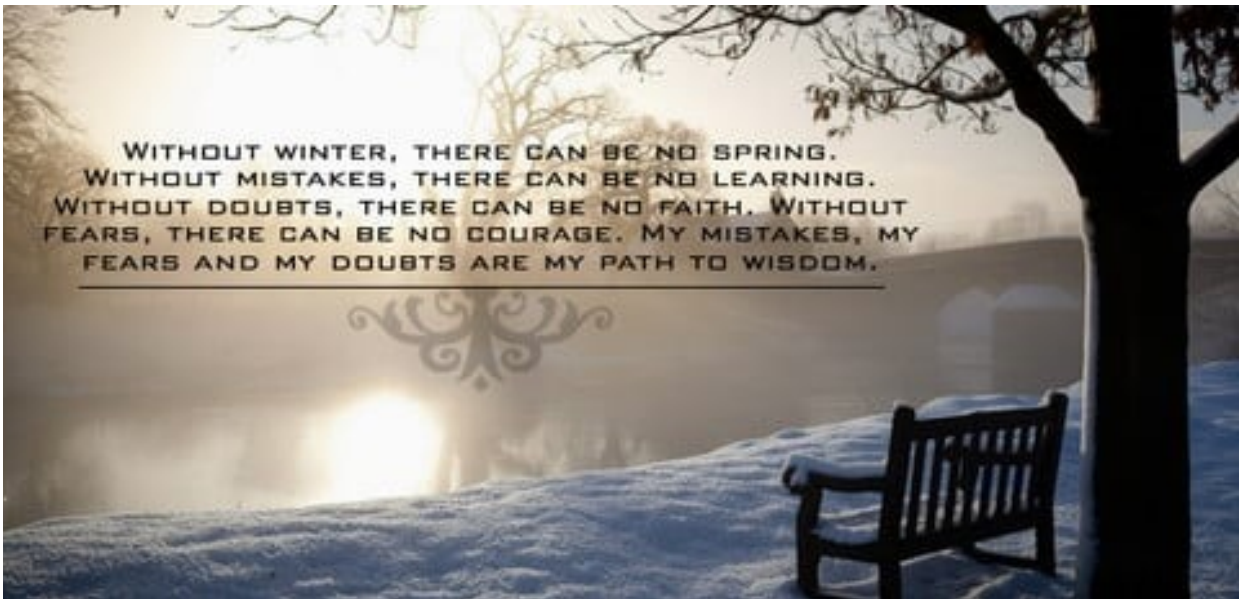
We pray that each graduate will go out and change their corner of the world for the better, by helping others. Just like the five students who won the prestigious Hult prize for producing sanitary pads made from banana fibers (read more), so we hope all our students will make a difference as they carry the light of Christ in their service to God and humanity.



May the light and love of Christmas be yours in abundance this year and keep you rooted in Christ, too.

Grace and Peace,

Jane and Rowland Van Es



FORGET THE former THINGS
do not dwell in the past
See I AM doing a NEW thing
I AM MAKING A WAY
in the wilderness
and streams in the
wasteland.

ISAIAH 43:18-19

DaySpring