



The Newsletter

February 2026

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



Camp Registration opens February 2nd! Reminder: FRC will pay for half of the camp registration fee per student. If you invite a friend who doesn't attend FRC, we will pay for half of their camp fee too!

INSPIRATION HILLS Summer Camp 2026

NOT OF THIS WORLD
JOHN 17:16

REGISTER YOUR CAMPER ONLINE AT inspirationhills.org

1242 280th St, Inwood, IA
ihills@inspirationhills.org
inspirationhills.org
712-986-5193

February at a Glance

- 7: 5-7:30 Agape Supper & BINGO
- 9: Crazy Love Bar Handout
- 6:00 pm Elder & Deacon Meetings
- 7:00 pm Full Consistory will meet
- 9-24: Secretary's office will be closed
- 16: 9:30am: Faith Bible Study
- 3:00pm: Patience Bible Study
- 5-7:30 MS Tip Night @ Pizza Ranch
- 18: 6:30am Men's Lenten Breakfast at First Presbyterian Church
- 20: March Newsletter Deadline
- 25: Noon-1pm 6-in-26 Book Club

*Sundays:

- 9:00 am Praise & Worship Service
- 10:10 am Sunday School for 3yrs-Adult
- 10:10 am Coffee Fellowship Time
- 6:30 pm Fellowship Bible Studies

*Tuesdays:

- 8:30 am Quilting Chicks will meet

*Wednesday Evening:

- 6:00 pm Family Night Supper
- 6:30 pm Pioneer Clubs for 1st-5th grades
- 6:30 pm Various Adult Bible Classes
- 6:30 pm Middle School Remnant
- 7:30 pm High School Remnant

CONTACT INFORMATION: 712-754-2783
office.admin@sibleyfrc.org
www.sibleyfrc.org

- www.facebook.com/firstreformedsibley
- <https://www.sermonaudio.com/solo/sibleyfrc/>
- @sibleyfirstreformedchurch566



The Bleak Midwinter

*"In the bleak midwinter frosty wind made moan.
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone."*

Though that is a Christmas carol, and it's out-of-season since we are 2/3 of the way through January, it seems appropriate today. As I write the wind is howling and snow is blowing sideways. The temps are set to plunge tomorrow morning, and by Friday the high is supposed to be -9.

While I am truly grateful for my cozy and tidy parsonage, I remember places where winters were not so severe as what we have here. They chilled you a little bit for a couple of months, with their 35 or 40 degree average high temperatures. Maybe you got one or two small snows that amounted to an inch or three each, but they always melted quickly. Then about the beginning of March you could smell the moist, loamy hints of spring in the wet leaves when you stepped out of your front door early in the morning. That smell always seemed homey to me. It reminded me of growing things, and my great grandmother's chicken and dumplings, and Easter Sundays in the 1970's when the men wore white shoes with matching white belts and garish double-knit plaid trousers. A baby blue or pale pink Izod shirt usually completed the ensemble.

Home has been on my mind a lot lately. When I was a boy I spent a lot of time with my grandfather, who lived in a small town in the Missouri Bootheel. He just took me with him to do whatever it was that he needed to do. He always kept a PO box, and so I frequently joined him in his daily walk to the Post Office. Often I would ride my bike up to the grain elevator he owned just to visit him and drink an RC Cola from the pop machine in the scale room. Granddad lived a good and simple life. He drank his coffee each morning with a spoonful of Cremora from the same blue Frankoma mug that holds pens on my desk today. He shipped his brokered grain on the Frisco railroad. He attended the Hayti United Methodist Church with my grandmother each Sunday. He cut his grass, and looked after his own mother, who lived in the next town over. He fished the Mississippi River in his marigold colored boat, the Ednita. We ate pecans off the tree in his backyard. As soon as my hands were big enough he taught me how to crack two of them in the palm of my hand, one nut against another. Everybody knew and liked him, and because I was semi-permanently attached to his side, I got the benefit of their friendly affections too. He simply belonged to that little town in Southeast Missouri where he lived. I always admired his small and quiet life. I always wanted to belong somewhere like he belonged to his place, but I never have. That unfulfilled longing has always ached in my soul just a little bit.

However, I am comforted by the fact that I do have a home. It's not any terrestrial patch of ground. It is eternal. There's no winter there. No scorching summers either. (I think the climate of heaven and the climate of San Diego maybe have something in common!) It was specially constructed for me by the One who knows the secret signature of my soul. Because I

led my grandfather to Christ in his final days, before the cancer took him, he is there waiting for me. I'm content to abide here now, but I keenly look forward to our reunion. I want to encourage you to think often about heaven, even if you feel strongly attached to a certain earthly place. This is the realm of change, of decay, of impermanence. Put all your eggs in an earthly basket and eventually they will break, and your heart along with them. As Robert Frost said, "nothing gold can stay." But in heaven all of our deepest longings will be fulfilled. We'll never be lonely again, or in pain, or have any sicknesses or sorrows. My hope for you is that you will come to long for heaven, and long to see Jesus, more than you desire anything else.

Consistory Meeting Highlights January 12, 2026

- MMSA Lawncare contract for church lawn, with BF&S
- Natalie Klaassen and Laura Carpenter requested membership with FRC. Both were recognized at the January 18th Service.
- MMSA Church use requests by Deb Kosters (kitchen), Meggan Block (Boys Basketball Team Meal) & 6-in-26 Book Club Dates
- Community VBS plans are progressing
- Chili Cinnamon Roll Feed served approx. 100 people
- Church office will be closed February 9-24th.



All men are invited to the OCMA's Men's Lenten Breakfast at 6:30am

Schedule:

- Feb 18 @ First Presbyterian**
- March 4 @ First Reformed**
- March 18 @ First Baptist**
- April 1 @ Trinity Lutheran**

February Family Supper Menu:

- Feb 4:** Pulled Pork & Baked Beans
- Feb 11:** Pizza Hot Dish
- Feb 18:** Scalloped Potatoes and Ham
- Feb 25:** Tacos and Spanish Rice

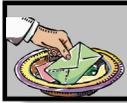
All meals include fruit & fresh vegi option, cookies/bars, and milk, water or juice to drink. Ham sandwiches are available in place of the main entree.



February Offering:

Boxes of
Breakfast Cereals

6:00 Family Night Supper
6:30-7:30pm 1st-5th Grade
Pioneer Clubs Activities



Stewardship & Giving

Offering Summary through January 31:

- **General Fund: \$32,167**
 - Budget: \$382,111.50; 8% of budget
 - **Benevolent Fund: \$620**
 - Budget: \$59,500; 1% of budget
 - **Building Fund offerings to date: \$60**
- *****

Average Monthly Offering Needed:
\$36,801

Total Ben./Gen. Offerings through January 31
\$32,787

*Total Ben/Gen offering does not include
 "Special Monthly Offering" donations as they
 are technically not part of the estimated budget.*

Special Offering for February



Faith In Action for February:

Random Acts of Kindness

Cheer up a friend Thank a Teacher Lend a hand
 Read to a young child Do a kind act daily
 Leave a thank you note Offer your seat
 Cycle courteously BE TOLERANT Let another go first
 Bake cookies for firefighters Give a compliment
 Help a student make friends Assist an adult
 Give a balloon away Lend a classmate a pencil
 Celebrate something every day Encourage a friend
 Respect others Walk a dog Do a favor
 Forgive mistakes Smile at someone new

1 Chronicles Trivia Time

1. When I died, my enemies took my head and armor and hung them in the temples of their gods. Who am I?
2. Who is the father of Zimran, Jokshan, Ishbak and Shuah?
3. What valiant warrior took only a club to battle a seven-and-a-half-foot Egyptian and then killed him with his own spear? A. David, B. Solomon, C. Joab or D. Benaiah
4. You are the commander of David's royal army. Who are you?
5. "May the Lord multiply his troops a hundred times over." A. Joab, B. Nathan, C. David, or D. Gad
6. How many musicians did David have?
7. David gave me his plans for the temple. Who am I?
8. Who struck down 300 men with a spear in one encounter and was made chief of the officers?
9. When David was instructed by God to build an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, how much gold did it take to purchase the field? A. 15 lbs., B. 60 lbs., C. 300 lbs., or D. 700 lbs.?

Praise and Worship Greeters

- 1: E: Joel and Kathy Verdoorn
C: Larry and Alfreda Verdoorn
W: Roger Verdoorn
- 8: E: Clayton and Jodi Wagenaar
C: Brent and Brenda Waassman
W: AJ and Jenny Weg/family
- 15: E: Lawrence and Ruth Ann Wiersma
C: Ryan Wiersma
W: Derek and Megan Ackerman/family
- 22: E: Brian and Chelsey Alexander/family
C: Kim Alsip/family
W: Bobby and Dee Baker



AGAPE SUPPER & BINGO



February 7, 2026
from 5pm-7:30pm

Please RSVP to Josh Lucas
by February 2nd.



Library Volunteers



- 1: Jan Henrichs
8: Jamie Hulstein
15: Jan Juffer
22: Jeannette Juffer

Pastoral Visitation Link

To allow easy Pastoral Visit Scheduling
a new link has been created.

Please visit the following link:

<https://calendly.com/frcpastorbrian>

Or scan the QR Code. Please contact
the office if you have questions or
would like to personally
schedule a visit.



Children & Worship during the service



	Leader	Helper
1:	Deb Kusters	Donna Smidt
8:	Deb Kusters	Olivia Daiker/Grace Hoekstra
15:	Deb Kusters	Donna Smidt
22:	Deb Kusters	Nash/Cash/Loryl/Addison

Worship Service Nursery

- 1: Anne Maxwell & Ruth Ann Wiersma
8: Pam Vande Hoef & Jenny Weg
15: Abby & Joselyn DeZeeuw
22: Teresa Hurlburt & Maria Mans

Fellowship Coffee Servers

- 1: Ken and Wilma Loerts
8: Larry and Rhonda Riebeling
15: Dave and Les Stofferan
22: Ger and Barb Van Diepen

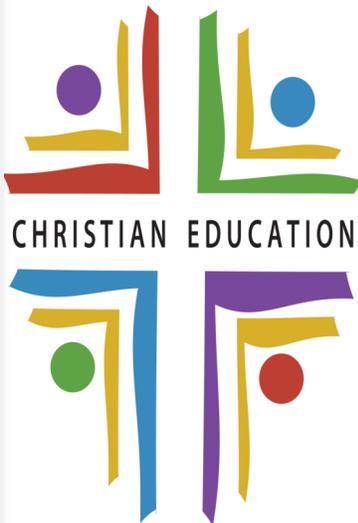
Willing Hands Group

Willing Hands Group #2

will be responsible for
services during the month.

Co-chairpersons are:

- Julie/Merlyn Janssen
- Jan/Ed Harskamp
- Luella Eggink



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:

All classes as scheduled

Wednesday Pioneer Clubs (1st-5th grades):

All classes as scheduled

MS and HS Remnant Youth Group:

As scheduled

College Addresses

Carter Brouwer
2013 Fox Run Trail
Brookings, SD 57006

Ted Van Gelder
815 3rd Ave.
Brookings, SD 57007

Grant Brouwer
2295 SE Glacier Trail
#115
Waukee, IA 50263

Halle Block
4710 Mortensen Road
Unit 201
Ames, IA 50014

Madison Brouwer
20 Alumni Street
Apt. 206
Vermillion, SD 57069

Keegan De Zeeuw
812 University Street
Box #173
Pella, IA 50219

Maverick Elser
802 6ht Street
Apt. 206
Ames, IA 50010

Emma Langstraat
502 12th Ave
Brookings, SD 57006

Michael Block Jr.
208 8th Street SW Unit
PO Box 103
Orange City, IA 51041

Grace Bevers
808 N. University Street
McFadden 304
Vermillion, SD 57069

Ella Bruxvoort
409 12th Ave NE
Sibley, IA 51249

Aiden DeZeeuw
204 Beach Road
Room 532
Ames, IA 50013-0025

Karissa Hulstein
One Triton Circle
#812
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

Alex Bosma
100 Currier Hall
N220
Iowa City, IA 52242

Elliot Daiker
Welch Hall, Ayres
255 Richardson Ct,
#1262
Ames, IA 50013-0023

Cole Dykstra
2801 Ohio St.
RID-136
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

Sofia Hisek
610 West 4th Street
Storm Lake, IA 50588

Alexis Hulstein
5929 230th Street
Melvin, IA 51350

Alyssa Jacobsma
1101 W 22nd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Addysen Langstraat
861 Jackrabbit Ave.
Binnewies Hall
303 A1
Brookings, SD 57006

Andrea Leusink
104 East 7th Street
#165B
Coralville, IA 52241

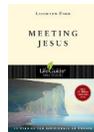
Kaylee Maxwell
4644 200th Street
George, IA 51237

If your student will have a different address for the 2025-2026 school year please let the office know.





Faith Bible Study, will meet on **Monday, February 16 at 9:30 am**. We will be studying lesson #1, "Blessed in Christ" in our new study book *Ephesians: God's Big Plan for Christ's New People*, Scripture will be Ephesians 1:1-14. Paul shows us a radically different view of church in his letter to the Ephesians. The church is God's handiwork made up of people from every kind of background, living under the gracious rule of Christ HIMSELF. If you would like to join, contact the office to get a book. Luella will lead and Jeannette will serve as hostess.



Patience Bible Study, will meet on **Monday, February 16 at 3:00 pm**. We will be studying lesson #9 "Jesus the Puzzling King," in our book *Meeting Jesus*. Scripture for the lesson is Mark 11. Barb will lead and Dorothy will serve as hostess. Come for a time of fellowship and learn-



Fellowship Bible Study Opportunities!

****Sermon Discussion Group****

Library Sunday Evenings at 6:30 pm

****Digging into God's Word****

Fireside Room Sunday Nights at 6:30 pm

****TableTalk****

Fellowship Hall Sunday Nights at 6:30 pm

****From Dust to Glory****

Couldn't make it to Sunday School on Sunday morning? Join us for a repeat of the class at 6:30 pm in the Fireside Room on Wednesday Evenings



**TableTalk
Discussion Group
Sunday Nights
at 6:30pm
In the Fellowship Hall**

February 1

"Learning to Lament" and "We Grieve with Hope"
found on pages 7 and 15 of the February TableTalk Magazine

February 8

"Comfort in the Church" and
"Sin, Sorrow and Joy in the Life of a Christian"
found on pages 19 and 22 of the February TableTalk Magazine

February 15

"Truth in the Information Age"
found on page 68 of the February TableTalk Magazine

February 22

"The Word of God and Worship"
found on page 72 of the February TableTalk Magazine



PRAYER LIST



PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

1. Pray for our Church
2. Loren and Deb Hulstein
3. Mark and Rosie Hulstein
4. Michael and Chelsea Hulstein;
Addison, Aubrey, Bennett
5. Rod Hulstein
6. Scott and Jamie Hulstein;
Karissa, Alexis
7. Pray for our College Students
8. Pray for our Church
9. Chris and Teresa Hurlburt
10. Cody and Kristen Hurlburt;
Braelyn, Adelyn, Caelyn
11. Mike and Mary Hustoft
12. Roger and Carol Iedema
13. Merlyn and Julie Janssen
14. Pray for our College Students
15. Pray for our Church
16. Jeannette Juffer
17. John and Jan Juffer
18. Dennis and Dar Jurgens
19. Ethel Jurgens
20. Karen Jurgens
21. Pray for our College Students
22. Pray for our Church
23. Karen Keiper
24. Brady and Ashilyn Klaassen
25. Clint Klaassen; Haley, Colt, Katie
26. Jamie Klaassen; Haley, Colt, Katie
27. Joanne Klaassen
28. Pray for our College Students

College Students:

Alex Bosma
Elliot Daiker
Cole Dykstra
Sofia Hisek
Alexis Hulstein
Alyssa Jacobsma
Addysen Langstraat
Kaylee Maxwell

Grace Bevers
Michael Block Jr.
Ella Bruxvoort
Aiden De Zeeuw
Karissa Hulstein

Halle Block
Madison Brouwer
Keegan De Zeeuw
Maverick Elser
Emma Langstraat

Ted Van Gelder
Carter Brouwer
Andrea Leusink
Grant Brouwer



Farmer Girl Reflections

There is a reason the story of Moses and Pharaoh still makes us uncomfortable.

Because God did not hint. He did not gently suggest. He did not wait for Pharaoh to come around on his own. God sent Moses to Pharaoh with a clear message in the book of Book of Exodus.

Let My people go.

Pharaoh said no.

So God responded. Not all at once. Not without warning. But deliberately. Step by step. Each plague was not random chaos. Each one was aimed directly at what Egypt trusted, relied on, or worshiped. God was dismantling their confidence piece by piece.

First, the Nile turned to blood. The Nile was Egypt's lifeline. It was worshiped as divine. It brought water, food, fertility, and wealth. God turned the source of life into something unusable. A reminder that what sustains us is not a god. When the thing you depend on most fails, everything else feels unstable.

Then came frogs. Frogs symbolized fertility and blessing. Egypt even had gods associated with them. God multiplied them until they were everywhere. In beds. In kitchens. In places they never belonged. What was once seen as good became overwhelming.

Next came gnats, followed by swarms of flies. Egyptian priests were obsessed with cleanliness and ritual purity. These tiny, relentless pests made worship impossible. Control slipped away in irritating, constant ways.

Then God struck the livestock. Wealth, labor, food, and status were wiped out. Some animals were sacred. Others were economic pillars. Either way, security disappeared quickly.

After that came boils. Painful sores that showed up on bodies and animals alike. Egyptian priests prized physical perfection. Suddenly suffering was personal, visible, and unavoidable.

Then came hail. A single storm destroyed crops and land. Years of work undone in a moment. The gods thought to protect the land proved powerless.

After the hail came locusts. Whatever was left was eaten. No backup plan remained. No safety net.

Then darkness fell. Thick darkness that lasted days. Egypt worshiped the sun as supreme. God shut it off completely.

And finally came the death of the firstborn. Pharaoh himself was seen as divine. His lineage was supposed to be untouchable. God showed that no human power stands above Him.

After nearly every plague, Pharaoh said the same thing.

Okay. I get it. I will let them go.

And then, as soon as relief came, he changed his mind.

Which is where this story stops feeling ancient.

Because we may not experience rivers turning to blood, but we experience the modern equivalents every day.

Our "Nile" looks like systems we trust for stability. Healthcare. Technology. Institutions. When they fail or disappoint, anxiety rises quickly.

Our frogs look like overstimulation. Constant noise. Notifications. Schedules so full there is no rest. Too much of everything until even good things feel suffocating.

Our gnats and flies are the low-grade stresses we live with nonstop. Emails. Bills. Conflict. Pressure that never quite lets up but slowly wears us down.

Continued ----->

Our livestock loss looks like financial instability. Job insecurity. Markets shifting. Realizing money was never meant to carry the weight of our peace.

Our boils show up as burnout, chronic illness, anxiety, depression, and pain we can no longer hide or power through.

Our hailstorms are the sudden moments that change everything. Accidents. Diagnoses. Natural disasters. Loss that arrives without warning.

Our locusts are the seasons where one thing after another is stripped away. When every backup plan disappears and we are left with nothing but God.

Our darkness looks like grief, confusion, and seasons where God feels quiet and the future unclear. The kind of darkness that presses in and forces us to stop pretending we are fine.

And our final plague moments are the ones that finally break our illusion of control. The realization that pride does not protect us. That refusing to let go often delays freedom.

The plagues were never about destruction for its own sake. They were about exposure. God revealed what Egypt trusted more than Him and showed, one by one, that none of it could save them.

And God still works that way.

Not because He enjoys shaking things. But because freedom matters more than false security. Because He hears the cries of those who are trapped. Because He is patient, even when we keep hardening our hearts.

God does not compete for control. He reveals it.

The question was never whether God was powerful enough.

Then or now.

The question has always been whether we trust Him enough to loosen our grip and follow when He says it is time to move.

And history suggests that when He moves, it is always toward freedom.



W	A	N	S	C	A	H	S	H	A	V
I	G	R	O	U	N	D	H	O	G	A
N	S	F	E	B	R	U	A	R	Y	L
T	H	E	O	H	O	Z	D	W	X	C
E	I	B	T	O	N	L	O	V	E	O
R	N	R	G	O	L	Y	W	X	A	L
P	R	E	S	I	D	E	N	T	S	D
L	I	N	C	O	L	N	G	R	O	U
D	V	A	L	E	N	T	I	N	E	S



February Word Search

February

Winter

Cold

Groundhog (Day)

Shadow

Presidents' (Day)

Valentine's (Day)

Love

Trivia Time Answers:

1. Saul (10:8-10)
2. Abraham (1:32)
3. D. Benaiah (11:22-24)
4. Joab (11:16; 27:34)
5. A. Joab (21:3)
6. 288 (25:7)
7. Solomon (28:11)
8. Jashobeam (11:11)
9. A. 15 lbs. (21:25)



Partners in **MISSION**

Jeff and Chelsea
Lampen

If you looked at Chelsea's typical Monday this past year in the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), you can see the ways in which your generosity has blessed God's people both here in Hannover and throughout the world. I (Chelsea) would begin my week with a time of worship with the WCRC staff (this small staff of twelve comes from ten different countries, some of which are actually in

active armed combat against one another). It was always good to gather together at the beginning of each work week and re-member ourselves; putting ourselves back together in worship. Afterwards, we dove into tasks, meetings, and workshops that need to be put together for the General Council that happened in Chiang Mai this past October. Even during those meetings, members from RELISH would message asking for prayer for a tough situation at school, a doctor's appointment, or to set up a time to discuss difficulties at home. With my notebook full of lists in hand, I would head back to my office.

Once there, I would take some time to call or write to RELISH members, meeting them in their joy or disappointment. Then, I would reach out to the Canada and North American Area Council (CANAAC) delegates for the General Council. We had four zoom gatherings throughout the year so they would feel well prepared for the Council. Lunch with other WCRC staff members followed, all of whom felt overwhelmed not only by the preparation for the General Council, but also by events that were happening in their home countries and lives. The afternoons were filled with praying, listening, pastoral care, sermon preparation, writing, creating, and messaging, and then ended with a German lesson with my tutor who has become a friend.

Coming home after a day filled with being present to our beloved home was a gift. I would make banana muffins or hummus for lunches for the kids for the next day (and a little container to bring in for the staff for the morning) and fall asleep hard knowing I was exactly where God needed me.

And you can see how the support of your gifts and prayers also impacted Jeff's work, too! God is drawing Christians together here in Hannover despite differences in language and culture. A beautiful example of the deepening relationships between the international RELISH worship service and our hosting German congregation was the *Adventssingen* event held a week before Christmas.

Just as the sun was beginning to set, many of us gathered in the church courtyard on benches around a campfire, coming together around Advent music, food, and friendship. We sang Christmas carols in English and German, told stories and shared holiday poems that we treasured while growing up, and enjoyed German bratwurst and mulled wine together with good old fashioned American s'mores (considered tasty but "too sweet" by many of our good German friends who had them for the first time!). Of course, there were a few little hiccups (as there always are when people from different cultures come together): Germans tend to be very punctual arriving at least five minutes before the event begins, while the international folks tend to trickle in over the course of the event's first half hour. But the event went over even better than we had hoped: about twice as many people showed up as we had expected! We prayed together, laughed together, and drew closer together as the international body of Christ.

Through any work, you come across challenges. Upon reflection, ours fall into two categories: learning the German system of things and building relationships.

This year, we got our two-year German work visas, the kids established in the German school system (which involved visiting multiple "Gymnasiums" or middle/high schools for Lorelei in the spring), figured out German taxes, and began receiving "Kindergeld", a form of child support from the German government. So. Much. Paperwork. We are beyond grateful for all of our friends who walked beside us in these processes, and for St. Ursula's, the Gymnasium Lorelei prayerfully chose and was accepted into this past fall. But beyond our family challenges of learning these systems, we have needed to ask questions alongside our RELISH members, too. What are the hotlines for domestic violence; how do you get a good therapist; what is the legal process for caring for your mental health; which plumber do you call when your sink floods over; who do you call for emergency physical care. These are only a small handful of the challenges we walked beside our congregation members over the past year.

A second challenge was learning to walk alongside a multi-cultural community. It takes patience, commitment to relationships, and growing thicker skin. We have both been raised to be Midwest-American-nice, and GUESS WHAT? Not everyone was raised in Iowa or Michigan—haha! Whether it was figuring out how to show up well to the consistory meetings that are held in German or walking beside the WCRC staff as the new General Secretary was elected; at every turn, we have been met with the process of discerning how best to show up in our international relationships. When you are often meeting with people who speak English as a third or fourth language, it is important to really be intentional in how you communicate. This applies to our various cultural traditions, too: songs we thought were “typical” Advent songs are only known to a handful of people in the congregation, and songs they hold near and dear are ones we have never heard before. It’s a joyful, weighty journey of walking in intentional relationships through large and small conversations.

Thank you for continuing to hold our family and ministry in prayer! Here are a few ways you can continue to pray for us as we enter into 2026:

- We are prayerfully discussing with the German congregation about having a joint service together on the first Saturday evening of the month, either as a bilingual service or one using simple German. We are excited and curious about this, and would love for you to pray that we can all communicate well and that the Holy Spirit does something amazing with this idea!
- At the WCRC, Rev. Philip Peacock will be installed as the General Secretary after the retirement of the Interim General Secretary Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi. There are also quite a few staff changes that will take place over the next year, and we would love your prayers for these transitions. Please pray that we can be peace-filled, loving colleagues while also providing them with stable pastoral care.
- Thank you for holding our kids in your prayers, too! Lorelei is doing well at St. Ursula’s, in the German confirmation class at church, and also started playing the French Horn this past year. Please pray that she would develop a healthy group of friends. Caspian is rocking learning German at Grundschule Mengendamm, and we would love prayers that he continues to learn and grow well. Lord willing, Evander will begin Kindergarten this fall, and we would love prayers that he would have some good friends there, that the German language would continue to go well for him, and for Jeff and Chelsea as we tearfully bring him to school.



Above top to bottom: The Adventssingen Jeff referenced in our letter; We started having "Soul Suppers" in our home, a potluck with our RELISH congregation once or twice a month for a time not only of food and fellowship, but also a small devotion and time to pray together



February Celebrations

~~Birthday's~~

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1 Dale Honken
Aiden De Zeeuw | 13 Michael Hulstein
Nancy Soat
Emma Boeke | 22 Karen Keiper |
| 2 Jim Ver Steeg | 14 Evelyn Carpenter | 24 Ron Dykstra |
| 3 Jenny Weg | 16 Harold Van Der Sloot
Jan Henrichs | 27 Dave McDyer
Zoey Alsip |
| 4 Dick Oldenkamp
Jordan Carpenter | 17 Kendra De Boer | 28 LaVonne Prins |
| 5 Karen Jurgens | 19 Nick Mans | 29 Connor Christensen |
| 6 Sydney Ackerman | 20 Eric Schiphoff
Joanna Lucas | |
| 7 Ashilyn Klaassen | 21 Amy Van Marel
Jeannette Juffer
Riley Alexander | |
| 12 Loren Hulstein | | |



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

~~Anniversaries~~

- | | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 14 | Burt and Jan Henrichs - 51 years |
| 15 | Gary and Jessa Wolter - 63 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

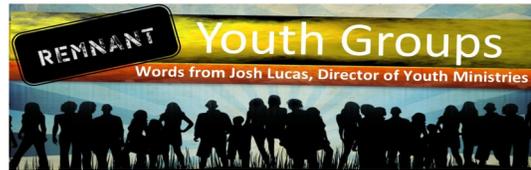
Hello First Reformed Church,

I remember one of the worst times of my life happened just two years ago when I lost both of my grandparents within one week of each other. These deaths came as a shock to the family and me because, at least in a worldly sense, these deaths were preventable. My grandpa had diabetes and needed a specific medication, but the nurse who cared for him gave him the wrong medication and it caused him to have a fatal heart attack. However, before his death, my grandma, while visiting my grandpa in the hospital, went to the hospital cafeteria to get lunch. She accidentally tripped over an unattended hospital cart and ended up having a brain bleed which caused her to pass away a few days later. It was a big shock to my whole family and I when were told my grandpa passed away. Then when I got the call about my grandma passing, I just lost it. I was angry with God, distraught and in tears. I remember I left my office for the day because this was just too much for me to handle all at once. I was still livid when I got into my car to go home and break the news to Hannah; and then it finally hit me like a ton of bricks. A few months prior I prayed for my grandpa to be healed, and it worked for a short time, but he ended up getting sick again and needed to return to the hospital. I started yelling again, "Why God?! Why did you answer part of my prayer but not the rest of it?! Where are you in all of this?! I cannot feel you and it seems as though you have abandoned my family and me?! Where are you, God?!"

After yelling I turned on the car, and my favorite station, Life 96.5, came on and that is when I heard it. "Where is God in the heartache? Where is God in the fear? Where is God when it hurts so bad that you can't hold back the tears? Where is God in the sickness that the prayers didn't fix? When it doesn't make sense where is God in all of this?" I responded with, "Yeah, exactly! That is what I am thinking right now!" The song continued that made me stop the car and park it, "He is right here where He's always been, He never left and He never will. Where is God? God is with us." I broke down crying even more, but my tears were not out of anger and sadness over my grandparents, it was out of guilt and repentance of what I just said to God. I was so angry with God that I questioned Him. I questioned His presence within me and I missed the mark. God is in control and God has them both now. My grandpa never has to go through any pain ever again; my grandma's Parkinson's was cured. My sorrow turned to joy in that moment.

I was still sad and honestly, I still get sad sometimes because I will always miss my grandparents, but I realize where they are and that I will see them again. If you are in that same boat right now, where you are angry with God over a loss of some kind, I can sympathize. I know the pain of losing something or someone unexpectedly and the feelings of anger, confusion, sorrowful, etc. that follow that loss. However, I do know this as well, God takes these situations and He will use them for good. He promises that our sorrows will turn into joy. Do not give up on God because He is not giving up on you. He is always there for you. He has never left and never will. God is right there with you until the very end, believe in that and trust in Him.

Blessings,
Josh



Dad jokes with Josh:

I have this amazing crop joke, but I must warn you it is a little corny!

From the library--

What a change a month can make! As I am writing this, the sun is shining in an almost cloudless blue sky and for once the wind isn't blowing! Iowa's winters are constantly changing. This month I am going to introduce you to 3 can't-put-down series by authors I can't get enough of.



The first book is ***Candle in the Darkness***, book 1 in the Refiner's Fire series by Lynn Austin. Set during the Civil War, Caroline Fletcher is caught in a nation split apart and torn between the ones she loves and a truth she can't deny

The daughter of a wealthy slave-holding family from Richmond, Virginia, Caroline Fletcher is raised to believe slavery is God-ordained and acceptable. But on awakening to its cruelty and injustice, her eyes are opened to the men and women who have cared tirelessly for her. At the same time, her father and her fiancé, Charles St. John, are fighting for the Confederacy and their beloved way of life and traditions.

Where does Caroline's loyalty lie? Emboldened by her passion to make a difference and her growing faith, will she risk everything she holds dear?



The second book is ***Tending Roses***, book 1 in the Tending Roses series, by Lisa Wingate. When Kate Bowman temporarily moves to her grandmother's Missouri farm with her husband and baby son, she learns that the lessons that most enrich our lives often come unexpectedly. The family has given Kate the job of convincing Grandma Rose, who's become increasingly stubborn and forgetful, to move off her beloved land and into a nursing home. But Kate knows such a change would break her grandmother's heart.

Just when Kate despairs of finding answers, she discovers her grandma's journal. A beautiful handmade notebook, it is full of stories that celebrate the importance of family, friendship, and faith. Stories that make Kate see her life—and her grandmother—in a completely new way....



The last book this month is ***Shattered Sanctuary***, book 1 in the Erin Delaney Mysteries by Nancy Mehl. Grappling with the aftermath of a tragic incident that altered her life, ex-police officer and bestselling mystery author Erin Delaney finds solace in the tranquility of a cabin nestled deep in the Smoky Mountains. But her restful stay is shattered when cries pierce the night, hinting at a lurking presence haunting the woods. When local police chief Adrian Nightengale seeks her help with a carefully arranged murder scene, she is thrust back into the world of crime solving. As they delve into the investigation, Erin's intuition reveals chilling truths about the killer's motives and strategically perfected methods.

Joined by the enigmatic Kaely Quinn-Hunter, a former FBI behavioral analyst, Erin not only embarks on a quest to stop the merciless serial killer, but also confronts the revived ghosts of her past. In a race against time, Erin must defeat her own demons while outmaneuvering a cunning killer or risk becoming the next victim in this deadly game of cat and mouse.

~~Jamie