

The Newsletter

March 2024

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

It is not a matter of
luck or coincidence
but rather see
everything as a
God-incidence.

“For with God, nothing shall be
impossible!”

~Luke 1:37



HappyHealthyandProsperous.com

March at a Glance

- 6: 6:30 am Men's Lenten Breakfast
here at First Reformed Church
- 11: 6:00pm Elder & Deacon Meetings
7:00pm Full Consistory will meet
- 15-16: HS Remnant Weekend Retreat at
Inspiration Hills
- 18: 9:30am Faith Bible Study
3:00pm Patience Bible Study
- 20: 6:30am Men's Lenten Breakfast at
Trinity Lutheran Church
- 24: 9:00 am Palm Sunday
Joyful Voices Choir will sing
- 25-29: FRC is in charge of Meals on
Wheels
- 28: 6:30pm Maundy Thursday Service
- 31: 7:00 am Sunrise Service
8:00 am Easter Brunch
9:00 am Easter Celebration Service

*Sundays:

- 9:00 am Praise and Worship Service
- 10:10 am Sunday School 4yrs - Adult
Coffee Fellowship Time
- 6:30 pm Fellowship Bible Studies

*Tuesdays:

- 8:30 am Quilting Chicks will meet

*Wednesday Evenings:

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

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@sibleyfirstreformedchurch566



Stewardship & Giving

Offering Summary through February 23:

- **General Fund: \$45,183.75**
Budget: 443,532.29; 10% of budget
- **Benevolent Fund: \$4932.52**
Budget: \$68,275.23; 7% of budget
- **Building Fund offerings to date: \$435**

Special Offering for March



Faith In Action for March

Nursing Home Items

This month, we are encouraging everyone - children through 90 year olds - to bring at least one item for the residents of our two local nursing homes. Sibley Rehab needs items for bingo prizes: Little Debbie or other individually wrapped snacks and candy bars. Country View needs items for their general store: jewelry, small knick-knacks, shaving cream, shampoo, lotion, toothpaste & brushes, hard candies, etc.



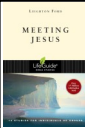
Holy Week Happenings

*March 28:
7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service*

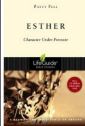
*March 31:
7:00 am Sunrise Service
8:00 am Easter Brunch
9:00 am Easter Celebration Service*

All Are Welcome!

GROWING IN THE WORD



Faith Bible Study will meet on **Monday, March 18 at 9:30 am**. We will be studying lesson #9 "Jesus the Puzzling King" in our book *Meeting Jesus*. Scripture will be Mark 11. Anita will be leader and Jan Harskamp will serve as hostess. All are invited! Hope to see you there!



Patience Bible Study will meet on **Monday, March 18 at 3:00 pm**. We will be studying lesson #7 "Character No Matter What," in our book *Esther*. Scripture for the lesson is Esther 7. Barb will lead and serve as hostess. Come for a time of fellowship and learning.



6:30pm Sunday Evening Fellowship Bible Study Opportunities!

****Message Discussion and Application Bible Study****

*Clayton and Jodi Wagenaar's home, *FRC Fellowship Hall

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

*Fireside Room

All ages, singles and couples are invited to attend.

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

It's in the Good Book

Test your Bible knowledge!! Are these sayings found in the Bible?

1. God helps those who help themselves.
2. A drop in the bucket.
3. Silence is golden.
4. Pride goes before the fall.
5. Tell the truth and shame the devil.
6. Fools jump in where angels fear to tread.
7. A penny saved is a penny earned.
8. By the skin of your teeth.
9. Honesty is the best policy.
10. Where there's smoke, there's fire.
11. Neither a borrower nor a lender be.
12. A little bird told me.



Celebrations

~~Birthday's~~

- 1 Arnie Langstraat
Heidi Sayler
- 4 Luella Eggink
- 5 Clint Klaassen
- 6 Blake Loerts
- 7 Sandy Heronimus
Darcy Martinez
- 8 Dee Baker
- 10 Sofia Hisek
Mark Van Der Sloot
Bryan Verdoorn
Margarett Travaille
- 11 John Mc Dougall
- 12 Tim Kruger
John Van Diepen, SR.
- 13 Greg Tracy
- 14 Kevin Klaassen
- 15 Brianna Jacobsma
- 17 Abby Kreykes
- 18 Addison Hulstein
Darlene Jurgens

19 Cory Maxwell

22 MacKenzie Beyer

23 Chelsey Alexander
Cole Hoekstra

24 Glenda De Boer
Brian Loerts

25 Nick Buysman
Mitch Kreykes

28 David Calsbeek

29 Nash Loerts
Kim McDougall

30 Logan Bruxvoort

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

~~Anniversaries~~

- 8 Bobby and Dee Baker 49 years
8 Joel and Angie Van Gelder 6 years
11 Brayden and Alyssa Bruxvoort 1 year
16 Mark and Rosie Hulstein 5 years
18 Ken and Sandy Heronimus 41 years
19 Ted and Eileen Schutte 11 years
20 Jason and Gina Jacobsma 20 years
30 Bob and Gladys Tiedeman 53 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

- 3: E: Chad and Megan Travaille/family
C: Randy Van De Berg
W: Duane and Pam Vande Hoef
- 10: E: Paul Vander Linden
C: Collin and Lexi Van Diepen/family
W: Ger and Barb Van Diepen
- 17: E: Jim and Pauline Van Engen
C: Curt and Peg Van Kley
W: Dean and Amy Van Marel
- 24: E: Harvey and Marcia Van Ruler
C: Jim and Jena Ver Steeg/family
W: Bryan Verdoorn
- 28: **Maundy Thursday**
E: Joel and Kathy Verdoorn
C: Roger Verdoorn
W: Clayton and Jodi Wagenaar
- 31: E: AJ and Jenny Weg/family
C: Lawrence and Ruth Wiersma
W: Ryan Wiersma



Sunday School Nursery

- 3: Peg Van Kley & Alexis Van Diepen
10: Anne Maxwell & Ruth Ann Wiersma
17: Kira Christensen & Kathy Verdoorn
24: Teresa Hurlburt & Peg Van Kley
31: No Sunday School

Fellowship Coffee Servers



- 3: Burt and Jan Harskamp
10: Ken and Wilma Loerts
17: Leona Meendering & Joanne Klaassen
24: Larry and Rhonda Riebeling
31: Ted and Eileen Schutte

Children & Worship during the service



- 4: Leader: Deb Kusters
Helper:
- 11: Leader: Deb Kusters
Helper:
- 18: Leader: Deb Kusters
Helper:
- 25: Leader: Deb Kusters
Helper:

Willing Hands Group

Willing Hands Group #3

will be responsible for services during the month.

Co-chairpersons are:

- Jamie/Scott Hulstein
- Sandy/Dave Lamfers

Library Volunteers



- 3: Jan Henrichs
10: Jamie Hulstein
17: Jan Juffer
24: Jeannette Juffer
31: Leona Meendering

Sportsmen's Devotional

Today's Photograph

Palm Canyon, Kofa National Wildlife Refuge, AZ (MQ)



Bible Study Verse

Matthew 21:4-6

All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "Tell the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey,

a colt, the foal of a donkey.' " So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' "Hosanna in the highest!"

Thoughts

A friend and I hiked up the remote Palm Canyon in the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge to photograph the California fan palms tucked away within this narrow deep canyon.

While hiking the palms drew my memories to past Palm Sundays

Action Point

Palm Sunday is the day we remember Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem just one week before His resurrection that the prophet Zechariah depicted. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey," Zachariah 9:9 (NKJV).

Note, He rode in on the unbroken donkey colt that was as gentle and reverent as a lamb. People were everywhere and the donkey was obedient. That in itself was a miracle! He is the Master of all!!!

Today we celebrate this predicted fulfilled event and refer to it as Palm Sunday because of the Palm branches that were laid on the road by the worshiping crowd as Jesus rode the unbroken donkey into Jerusalem. But, the same crowds that were shouting Hosanna just 5 days later would shout, "Crucify Him!"

Do each of us honestly reflect back on these events? Do we take a week out of the year to think about it? I encourage you this year to remember what was given freely at such a great price to you and to all mankind this coming week. Whether it's taking a special hike into Palm Canyon or just going to spend time in the outdoors to be still and to reflect on this upcoming week's celebrations.

Sportsmen's Tip of the Day

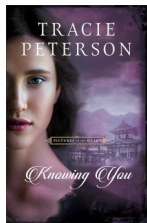
In a pinch water through condensation can be collected from a palm frond hanging on a palm tree. Tie a plastic bag around the frond completely encasing the leaf. As the water collects, empty the bag into a water container and retie to the frond to collect more.

Its In the Bible Answers!!

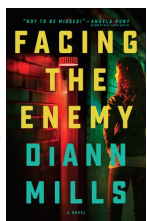
1. False 2. True (Isaiah 41:15 3. False 4. True (Proverbs 16:18) 5. False 6.False 7. False 8. True (Job 19:20) 9. False 10. False 11. False 12. True (Ecclesiastes 10:20)

From the library--

We are continually adding to the library inventory-----



THE first new book is in LARGE PRINT, written by Tracie Peterson and the third book of "Pictures of the Heart" series, *KNOWING YOU*. "Budding artist May Parker is captivated by the Japanese exhibits at the Alaska Yukon-Pacific Exposition and longs to know more about her mother's heritage—which her mother refuses to speak of because of the heartbreak she left behind in Japan. Wanting to experience more of the exhibits, May works as a Camera Girl—but her curiosity leads her into danger when a suit of samurai armor becomes the target of an elusive art forger. After ten years apart, May is reunited with her childhood friend Lee Munro, a police detective assigned to keep a watchful eye on the exposition. Their friendship immediately begins to blossom with hints of something more, but when they become entangled in a dangerous heist involving the samurai armor and their love is threatened, can they overcome the odds against them?"



FACING THE ENEMY by DiAnn Mills is next. "For the past five years, FBI Special Agent Risa Jacobs has worked in the violent crimes against children division of the Houston FBI. When the long-awaited reunion between Risa and her brother, Trenton, ends in tragedy, Risa is riddled with guilt, unable to cope with the responsibility she feels over his death. On leave from the FBI Risa returns to her former career as an English teacher at a local college, only to see her past and present collide when one of her students, Carson Mercury, turns in an assignment that reads like an eyewitness account of her brother's murder, with details never revealed publicly. Alarmed by Carson's inside knowledge of Trenton's death, Risa reaches out to her former partner at the FBI. Special Agent Gage Patterson has been working a string of baby kidnappings but he agrees to help her look into Carson's background. Risa and Gage soon discover their cases might be connected as a series of high-value thefts have occurred at properties where security systems were installed by Carson's stepfather and children have gone missing. There's sinister plot at play."



Our last book is *FAIREST OF HEART* by Karen Witmeyer, the first book in "Texas Everafter" series. "Beauty has been nothing but a curse to Penelope Snow. When she becomes a personal maid for a famous actress whose troupe is leaving Chicago to tour the West, she hides her figure beneath shapeless dresses and keeps her head down. But she still manages to attract the wrong attention, leaving her prospects in tatters—and her jealous mistress plotting her demise. After his brother lost his life over a woman, Texas Ranger Titus Kingsley has learned to expect the worse from women and is rarely disappointed. So when a young lady found in suspicious circumstances takes up residence with the seven old drovers living at his grandfather's ranch, Titus is determined to keep a close eye on her. With a promotion hanging in balance, Titus is assigned to investigate a robbery tied to Penelope's acting troupe, and all evidence points to Penelope. But Titus might just be convinced that Penelope has a heart as pure as her last name...can he prove it?"

Visit the library soon.

Jeannette Juffer



PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Tim and Jodie Kruger; Jared, Katie | 16. Pray for our College Students |
| 2. Pray for our College Students | 17. Pray for our Church |
| 3. Pray for our Church | 18. Josh and Hannah Lucas; Joanna, Allegra |
| 4. Jodene Kruse | 19. Nick and Maria Mans; Loryl, Nolan |
| 5. Charlie and Brenda Kuhl | 20. Frank Martinez |
| 6. David and Sandy Lamfers | 21. Darcy Martinez |
| 7. Arnie and Diane Langstraat | 22. Cory and Anne Maxwell;
Kaden, Kaylee, Kyler |
| 8. Mark and Melissa Langstraat;
Emma, Addysen, Taylor | 23. Pray for our College Students |
| 9. Pray for our College Students | 24. Pray for our Church |
| 10. Pray for our Church | 25. Jon and Kim McDougall; Alex, Matthew |
| 11. Cindy Larson | 26. Dave and Jessica McDyer;
Lincoln, Addison |
| 12. Wilma Leusink | 27. Leona Meendering |
| 13. Brad and Sarah Loerts;
Parker, Blake, Brynna | 28. Cliff and Linda Mehls |
| 14. Brian and Megan Loerts;
Brysen, Jaxton, Nash, Ellie | 29. Steve and Lynn Mulder |
| 15. Ken and Wilma Loerts | 30. Pray for our College Students |
| | 31. Pray for our Church |

College Students:

Marissa Ackerman
Halle Block
Tayler Bremer
Madison Brouwer
Regan Crichton
Keegan De Zeeuw
Makya Dykstra
Maverick Elser
Jared Kruger
Emma Langstraat
Matthew McDougal
Gannon Rockman

MacKenzie Beyer
Kaden Maxwell
Teddy Van Gelder

Carter Brouwer
Andrea Leusink

Dalten Bremer
Ashilyn Hulstein
Natalie Klaassen

Grant Brouwer
Ryan Van Marel

BE A
Prayer
WARRIOR
Luke 21:36

Grace Covenant Ministries

PRAYER JOURNAL



THE 38TH ANNUAL OCMA PASSION PLAY

In 1985, the first Osceola County Ministerial Association Good Friday Passion Play was introduced to the community. That was 40 years ago! Where has time gone? Many who worked on that production are still involved, working to ensure that those who enjoy the opportunity to attend will still have the quality experience they have come to expect.

Sibley FRC has always been an integral part of the production. It is hard to list people who have been involved because there are so many of you. I can't remember, let alone list everyone. We are all over the place during the production, and it is a blessing to spend time with everyone during that crazy busy week!

Here are a few people who have been around for a very long time. In case you had forgotten, the flats (or backgrounds) were painted by Faye Vos. Ed and Leona Meendering ran the stage crew for decades and helped to streamline the processes so that we didn't have to spend six weeks on the production. Curt and Peg Van Kley took over this essential task. Many of you work on those crews, hauling our sets and equipment from the CRC, setting up, taking down, and running the fog machine.



Once again there will be doughnuts and coffee!

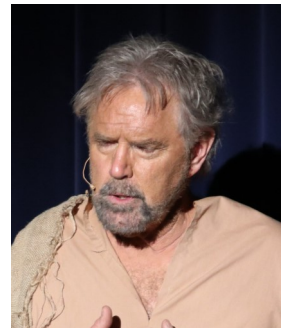
Sibley FRC has contributed many musicians and performers. Peg Van Kley says there is new music to sing this year, Greg Kusters is growing his beard again, and we need every one of you to join the crowd. Do you remember that Randy Vande Berg was once an apostle, but he created so much disturbance backstage he was switched to the role of a Pharisee. He's a great pharisee! Duane Vande Hoef has agreed to do Barabbas one more time, but he needs a new costume because the old one fell apart last year. I'm glad he hasn't fallen apart like the old robe!

Our pastors have always had a role in the productions. Gary Van Heukelom was Peter every year he was our pastor, and now Josh is stepping out as Pilate.

We may have gotten rid of the sheep and the donkey, but we really love having the children. Please consider having your little ones join this year. We need a crowd in the first scene, and we have supervised activities planned for them while they wait for the next production. One of the great pleasures is to see families join year after year, and to watch little children grow into adult participants.

Many of you have worked on lights, sound, curtains, prompting, singing, and feeding the cast and crew. Those of you who have never helped may not know that we are well-fed by a talented group of people. As you all know, I work for the tuna sandwiches!

This year will be the 38th annual production, not the 40th because we had to take two years off due to the pandemic. Many things changed during that time, including our attitudes toward setting aside time to serve others.





PASSION PLAY CONTINUED...

Please consider joining us this year. Remember, it is just ONE week of your time. We start on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, setting up the sets. We practice Sunday afternoon, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday evenings, present the production on Friday and clean up on Saturday. It is fun—and it is a blessing to join the team.

Also, I am forced to face the fact of the passage of time. I am older, and many of us who have been at this since 1985 may need to move into another role. We aren't burned out—we are just older!

Personally, my knees aren't as good as they used to be. We need new people, with new ideas and new energy to help keep the production fresh, and going forward.

So, make the decision to participate in, or attend the "38th Annual OCMA Good Friday Passion Play. Put the date on your calendars, call for tickets, invite a friend or neighbor to join you. Will we see YOU this year? I hope so!

~~Thanks to Deb Kusters for these pictures!

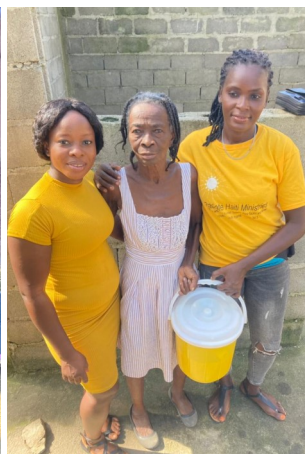


RADIATE HAITI MINISTRIES

Holiday Meal Kits Update

**We were able to send a total of
120 meal kits this year!!**

The meal kits included the following:
Rice, Black beans, Spaghetti, Sardines, Oil,
Grocery bags, and a Bucket



Mèsi Anpil!
Thank you so much!

Easter Word Search

ROMANS
RISEN
SACRIFICE
THREE DAYS
ANGELS
SAVIOR

GOLGOTHA
BLOOD
SIMON OF CYRENE
JESUS
ROBE
LAMB

SON OF GOD
TOMB
APOSTLES
CALVARY
CROSS
NAILS

MARY
CRUCIFIXION
PILATE
HIGH PRIEST
PASSOVER
SUNDAY

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

Consistory Meeting Highlights February 12, 2024

- MMSA for Kayla Hoekstra to use the Fireside Room on January 6, 2025 for a meeting.
- MMSA for Jodi Wagenaar to use the Fellowship Hall and Kitchen on Saturday, June 1 for a bridal shower.
- March 22 and 23 will be the East and West Sioux Classis Retreat at Trinity in Orange City.
- MMSA to do various parsonage repairs
- A New Members class was discussed with plans to be made available at a later date



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:

- Classes as scheduled March 3, 10, 17, 24
No Class on March 31st due to Easter

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

- Classes as Scheduled March 6, 13, 20, 27
- ### MS and HS Remnant Youth Group:
- Groups as scheduled: March 6, 13, 20, 27

College Addresses

Ryan Van Marel

804 Medary Ave. South
Brookings, SD 57006

Ashilyn Hulstein

718 9th Ave
Brookings, SD 56007

Dalton Bremer

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

Andrea Leusink

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

Carter Brouwer

707 11th Street
Apt. #313
Brookings, SD 57007

MacKenzie Beyer

610 W. 4th Street
Storm Lake, IA 50588

Ted Van Gelder

SDSU
Young Hall 324-A1
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Brookings, SD 57007

Kaden Maxwell

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Mitchell, SD 57301

Grant Brouwer

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Waukee, IA 50263

Marissa Ackerman

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SDSU
Brookings, SD 57007

Halle Block

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Tayler Bremer

SDSU
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Brookings, SD 57007

Madison Brouwer

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Vermillion, SD 57069

Regan Crichton

Iowa Lakes CC
Estherville, IA

Keegan De Zeeuw

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Box #173
Pella, IA 50219

Makya Dykstra

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Mitchell, SD 57301

Maverick Elser

3455 Holdrege Street
Lincoln, NE 68503

Jared Kruger

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Appt. 4
Calmar, IA 52132

Emma Langstraat

Young Hall 273
SDSU
Box 2807
Brookings, SD 57007

Matthew McDougall

Room #206
IA Lakes Comm. College
3200 College Drive
Emmetsburg, IA 50536

Gannon Rockman

3099c Nest Ave.
Sheldon, IA 51201

If your student will have a different address for the 2023-2024 school year please let the office know.

Hello First Reformed Church,

Michael Jordan once said, "If you do the work, you get rewarded. There are no shortcuts in life." This man knew what hard work was all about. Jordan worked hard, practiced and went on to become, one of the, possibly, greatest basketball players of all time.

Have you ever discussed the concept of actions equaling rewards with your children? I think it is important that we teach our children the concept of hard work. We want them to work hard and to achieve great things. However, do we feel this way about our children's faith? Do we put in as much time and effort into their faith as we do their athletics or activities? I ask this because of the following question, **"What is the more important?"** Do we care more that our kids win state, get tons of scholarships, be the best player, or that they get into heaven? Which may lead you to ask, **"Why not both?"** This is a fair question, I do think we can have a strong faith and still be talented and successful in something, however this brings up another question, **"Who are we serving?"** If you are confused, I encourage you to go and read Matthew 6:24-26. Some argue that Jesus is only strictly talking about money, which in this context yes, He is, however in the grand scheme of things we can replace the money with anything in our lives. We cannot serve two masters, we have to choose one or the other, and I am here to encourage you to serve God every time. Eventually one of the masters is going to want all of the effort and all of the attention. There will come a time where we will not be able to have both, at least at the high-end level we would like it to be.

Think about this concept for just a moment. If we were to put in all of the effort, time, commitment, money, etc. into our children's faith the way we do for sports or activities, how strong do you think your child's faith will be? It is time that we bring our kids back into the faith. This is not to say that the kids are not saved, but to **make faith a priority again**. When there is a game on during youth group or worship, where should we go? If there is a tournament during a special church event, where should we go? If our children are suffering emotionally, spiritually, and physically where should we go? The choice is yours. Parents, please do not think that you are a bad parent for making your kids come to youth group or worship over a school/extra-curricular event. They are not adults, therefore they are not at a point where they know what is best for themselves. God made you the parent to help your children navigate this world. Think about these things and pray about them. I am always here if you ever have any questions or would like to know more about anything I talked about here. Thank you so much for reading my article. If you ever need a hug, this big ole teddy bear has one for you!

Blessings,
Josh



Dad Jokes with Josh:

To the guy who invented zero..... Thanks for nothing!



A glimpse at what your support made possible

In the summer of 2022, we were visiting our supporting congregations in America on our home assignment and it was somewhat shocking for us to be living in a world where the pandemic was being spoken about in the past tense. In Japan, the COVID restrictions were still in effect and would remain so until mid-May of 2023 when the government finally ended those restrictions.

In March while I (Abraham) was giving my final English class for the semester at the Soen Preschool, I was teaching the children how to sing the song, "When you're happy and you know it clap your hands." I decided it was time for me to bend the rules a little bit and show the six-year-olds what a happy face is supposed to look like. So, I unmasked for a brief moment to display my happy smile. Immediately, some of the children started pointing at my face and shouted out in Japanese, "You have a mustache!" These children, who have known me for almost half of their lives and had been with me so many hours, were seeing my face for the very first time. Their reaction helped me realize that the end of the restrictions didn't mean that we could simply take off our masks and return to things as they were before the pandemic. After nearly three and a half years, much had changed.

Ten years ago, in response to the dwindling number of youth in the congregations throughout Tokyo, we began a districtwide annual youth event to foster cooperation between congregations so evangelism could be reinvigorated. It was exciting to see that event continue to grow and blossom over the subsequent years. Unfortunately, COVID put an end to large in-person gatherings, and we found it rather difficult to find ways to create that event in an online format during the pandemic. This was very disheartening because we were afraid it might not come back. This fall when we rebooted the event after a three-year hiatus, although the number of youth who attended was down somewhat from previous years, the number of participating congregations was the highest ever. For us, this was a sign of hope that the event could grow into something greater in the future than it had been in the past.

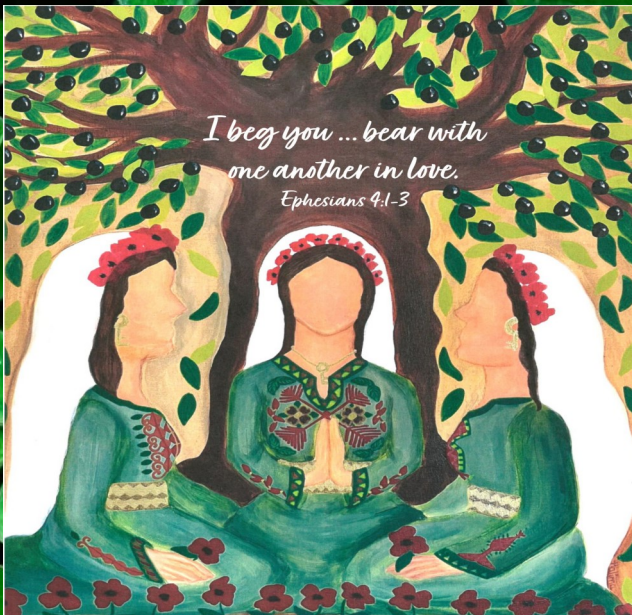
Before COVID, Sayuri had been traveling to several locations each month to give lectures on Christian principles of homemaking to gatherings of housewives. In 2020, the pandemic forced them to move to Zoom. Now, even with all the COVID restrictions having ended, these lectures continue to be held over Zoom because being online opened up the lectures to reach beyond the metropolitan Tokyo region. There are women from all over Japan who now participate regularly. What is exciting is that the number who attend has more than doubled and, more overwhelmingly, the majority of them are seekers.

Sayuri has been very active throughout the years with The National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies (an organization akin to what the RCWM used to be in the RCA) and was elected to a two-year term as the chairwoman of its central committee. We ask for your prayers for wisdom and guidance as she takes on this new role of responsibility. We also ask prayers that our work at Kugahara Church might continue to bear fruit. One of the highlights of 2023 was that the guitarist in our Evening Worship Band was baptized on Easter, making him the second member of our band to do so. Please pray that our congregation can continue to proclaim the message to its neighbors.

Finally, we ask that God will continue to open doors for us throughout Japan. During the pandemic, our work has been mostly with our congregations in Tokyo. 2023 allowed us to also be utilized in other parts of Japan. We were able to do ministry in congregations in Tokushima, Oita, Fukushima, Chiba, and Saitama. We hope that this can expand even further in 2024.

We are so grateful for your continued support throughout the years as we endeavor to proclaim the gospel to the people of Japan. Our prayers are with all of you and your ministries as well.

Abraham and Sayuri Kist-Okazaki



World Day of Prayer

**March 1 @ 2:00pm at
Sibley First Presbyterian Church**



**All men are invited to the
OCMA's Men's Lenten
Breakfasts**

Schedule:

**March 6 @ 6:30am
Sibley First Reformed Church**

**March 20 @ 6:30am
Trinity Lutheran Church**

The Osceola County Ministerial Association Good Friday Passion Play March 29th 38th Season!

There will be three
performances
5:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m. &
9:00 p.m.
at the Sibley-
Ocheyedan High School
Auditorium, Sibley, IA

FREE TICKETS

are available and may be
reserved by calling
(712)754-2945
or by emailing
ocmapassionplay@gmail.com

Church groups and
organizations may request
enough tickets for their entire
group. Please do not reserve
more than you need.



Passion Play 2024 Schedule:

- **Saturday, March 23 @ 1:00 PM**
Setup at S-O School (Meet at the Sibley CRC to load sets)
- **Sun, March 24 from 1:00-3:30 PM**
Rehearsal (including children)
- **Mon, March 25 from 7:00-9:00 PM** Rehearsal (no children)
- **Tues, March 26 from 7:00-9:00 PM** Rehearsal (no children)
- **Wed, March 27 from 7:00-10:00 PM** Full dress rehearsal with children; Children will be dismissed at 8pm
- **Fri, March 29 from 3:00 PM**
Make-up for the entire cast
- **Sat, March 30 @ 8:00 AM**
Take down the sets

If you would like to participate, please call Peg or Curt Van Kley @ 754-2945, Keith Zylstra @ 712-261-2378 or Becky Krogman @ 754-2967 so that your name can be included in the program. We must know if you will be able to take part in or help with the passion play.