



# The Newsletter

April 2026

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

He is Risen

## April at a Glance

- 1: 6:30 am Men's Lenten Breakfast at Trinity Lutheran Church
- 2: 6:30 pm Seder Feast in Fellowship Hall
  - 2pm BINGO at Sibley Specialty Care
  - 5, 7 & 9pm Passion Play at S-O High School
- 5: 8:00 am Celebration Brunch  
9:00 am Easter Service (no Sunday School)
- 10: 2pm BINGO at Sibley Specialty Care
- 12: Noon: Josh Lucas's Ordination
- 13: 6:00 pm Elder & Deacon Meetings  
7:00 pm Full Consistory will meet
- 17: 2pm BINGO at Sibley Specialty Care
  - May Newsletter Deadline
- 20: 9:30am: Faith Bible Study
  - 3:00pm: Patience Bible Study
- 20-23: FRC in charge of Meals on Wheels
- 24: 2pm BINGO at Sibley Specialty Care
- 26: Freedom's Gate Meal
  - Last Sunday School for 25-26 year
- 27-30: FRC in charge of Meals on Wheels
- 29: Noon 6 in 26 Book Club
  - Last Wednesday Night Pioneer Club
  - Last Middle School Remnant

### \*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 Bbile Classes
- 6:30 pm Middle School Remnant
- 7:30 pm High School Remnant

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 [www.facebook.com/firstreformedsibley](https://www.facebook.com/firstreformedsibley)  
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 [@sibleyfirstreformedchurch566](https://www.youtube.com/@sibleyfirstreformedchurch566)



John Calvin, quoting a 3<sup>rd</sup> century early church father named St Cyprian, famously said, "You cannot have God as your father unless you have the church as your mother." What he meant by that is that the church is God's appointed ordinary means to birth, nourish, and raise Christians up to maturity. Lively Christians need the regular preaching of the Word of God and the spiritual nourishment given by the sacraments, as well as the fellowship of the saints. Neither the New Testament nor 2,000 years of church history favor the idea of "solo Christianity," that is, a purely individual relationship with God apart from participation in the Visible Church. The idea that you can is a very recent thing, unique to North America, brought on by the corrosive cultural forces of American Individualism and bad habits acquired during COVID. Nobody else believed that in the past, nor do they believe it now. We're the odd man out in American evangelical religion. Think back to your own childhood and see if I'm right.

That's why, when you join the church, your membership is initiated by an exchange of vows. You vow to the Lord and the church that you voluntarily want to join yourselves to this particular body of the True Visible Church. You take vows that say, basically, "I want to be here. I want to learn and grow here. I want to participate in the life of this particular body and serve the Lord here. Therefore, I will support this church with my prayers, my presence, my gifts, and my service." The congregation, in turn, promises to support you however they reasonably can in keeping your promises and growing in the Lord. The congregation also uses this opportunity to reflect on their own membership vows and to renew them. These vows are also repeated and strengthened at baptisms. A significant part of the communion service is also renewing and strengthening our vows to the Lord and to each other as well. These promises are intertwined with almost every aspect of congregational life. You simply cannot have a functioning church where people refuse to do the things they promised to do

Oddly enough, in this region, there is a high level of a sense of entitlement to church membership by individuals who simply refuse to keep those vows at even a minimal level. They make solemn promises to the Lord and to the congregation that they will do certain things, and then they simply refuse to do what they have promised. There are all kinds of excuses, but they are just that: excuses. They do not fool anyone. If someone can go to the grocery store, their doctor's appointment, or bingo, they can go to church. If someone can spend Sunday morning at the lake or playing golf, they can keep their promises and attend church. The fact of the matter is that they simply don't want to. Other things are more important to them.

It baffles me that some people can make a promise to God and to the congregation and have no intention of really keeping that vow. But when I or another elder calls them on it, they get mad at us, as though somehow, we, not they, are in the wrong. Even worse are those who never darken the door at a Sunday morning service, but who show up to vote at congregational meetings. This is destructive to the fabric of congregational life. I must also add that part of the reason this is so important is that a person who can make a vow to Almighty God with no intention of keeping it is in a very spiritually hazardous place. If this is you, please, look to your own soul's health and wellbeing. There is a very good chance you are not actually a Christian and thus are not on the road to heaven. I care about your soul and do not want that for you.

Let me be clear. Anyone is welcome to come and peacefully participate in the life of First Reformed Church. We don't bar non-members from worship services, Sunday School, the Lord's Supper,

or anything else besides ordained office and perhaps certain teaching duties. You don't have to become a member. But if you do, both God and your elders expect you to do what you've promised you will do. After all, you expect people to keep their promises to you, don't you? And you probably get upset when they don't keep their promises, don't you? Then the scriptural principle at stake is that you should do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

As your pastor I wanted to use this opportunity to inform you of some changes in the bylaws regarding membership at First Reformed. At the last consistory meeting we instituted some changes in policy that we think are important and will clarify certain issues. The new bylaw states that, starting immediately, anyone who does not attend public worship for a period of six months without informing the elders as to the reasons for their absence is considered to have reneged on their membership vows and will be automatically removed from the membership rolls of First Reformed Church.

Please note: This will not occur until there has been at least one attempt by either myself or an elder to make contact with you and try to understand the reasons for your absence. Certainly, there are valid reasons to be absent for an extended period, and we understand that. If you are, for instance:

- On military deployment
- Have left town to attend college
- Are undergoing cancer treatments
- Spend the winter in warmer climes
- Are legitimately shut in or nursing home bound
- A full-time caretaker for a homebound relative

then just tell me or an elder what's going on and we will let things go on as usual. If you are absent without some underlying providential hindrance, your elder will encourage you to renew your obedience. If you don't want to, that's fine. Really, it's fine. We will simply remove you from the membership rolls. If at any time in the future you change your mind and want to come back, you can re-apply to the consistory for membership.

There is no meanness intended here, only honesty and clarity. Our hope is that this policy will tend to the health and wellbeing of the congregation and all the individuals that comprise the congregation by inviting you to grapple with one of Jesus' favorite questions to those he ministered to: "What do you want?" What do you really, actually want in the depths of your being? If the answer is, "I want Jesus," then we are here to help you come to know him in this community in which he dwells.

### **Consistory Meeting Highlights March 9, 2026**

- Church Carpets are set to be cleaned this summer
- A kitchen update meeting will be held on March 15 (moved to the 22nd) to discuss option
- MMSA to allow the Carpenter family the use of the Fellowship Hall and Kitchen for graduations on May 15 and 16
- MMSA the request by Pastor Brian to be gone on May 24<sup>th</sup>, August 23<sup>rd</sup>, and September 27<sup>th</sup>. Pulpit Supply will be sought out for these dates.
- MMSA to approve various changes to the By-Laws as recommended and discussed.
- Nominating Team is being moving forward and members will be asked to serve on team
- Suggestions were offered to assist the Admin Team in finding a replacement for Josh Lucas
- MMSA to look into what it will take to livestream the Dust to Glory Adult Sunday School Class.



## Stewardship & Giving

### Offering Summary through March 28:

- **General Fund: \$87,167.20**  
Budget: \$382,111.50; 23% of budget
- **Benevolent Fund: \$4647.04**  
Budget: \$59,500; 8% of budget
- **Building Fund offerings to date: \$210**  
**designated kitchen funds:**

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**Average Monthly Offering Needed:**  
**\$36,800.96**

**Total Ben./Gen. Offerings through March 28**  
**\$23,309**

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

## Special Offering for April



**Vacation Bible  
School Expenses**



**OCMA's Men's Lenten  
Breakfast at 6:30am  
April 1 @ Trinity Lutheran**

## Faith In Action for April:

### Church Kitchen Items



We will be collecting items that will be put to use in our church kitchen.



Some items needed are: Coffee Creamer Cups, Clorox Wipes, Paper Towels. We **do not need**, Dish Soap or Napkins. Maybe you have worked in the kitchen and know of something that would be

useful that you would like to donate.

All items are appreciated!



**FRC is in charge of  
Meals on Wheels  
April 20-23 & 27-30**


**Sign-up to Volunteer at the  
Information Center.**

## 2 Chronicles Trivia Time

1. Who carried 5,400 silver and gold artifacts back to Jerusalem from Babylon?
2. As King Cyrus's treasurer, I counted out all the gold and silver articles taken from Jerusalem. What is my name?
3. Approximately how many men and women, including slaves, returned from Babylon?  
3,000 70,000 5,000 50,000
4. You are the only priest named who rebuilt the alter of the God of Israel. Who are you?
5. Which of the following kings of Persia was against the rebuilding of Jerusalem?  
Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, Xerxes
6. Who was king of Persia when the rebuilding of the temple was completed?
7. I am the father of Ezra, descended from Eleazar son of Aaron. What is my name?
8. After Ezra returned to Jerusalem, the returned exiles made several burnt offerings to God. How many animals in all were sacrificed?
9. Who said, "Our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens"?
10. What are Shekariah, Shelomith, Bigvai, and Hakkatan?  
Native bond servants to King Artaxerxes; Names of some of the people who returned with Ezra to Jerusalem; Specially designated areas with in Jerusalem for returning Exiles; Four rivers located primarily in Persia and Babyon

## Praise and Worship Greeters

- 2: Maundy Thursday - No Greeters Needed
- 5: E: Luella Eggink  
C: Jon and Amy Elser  
W: Anita Ernst
- 12: E: Paul and Sharee Feldkamp  
C: Eugene and Renae Groen  
W: Robert and Janice Groen
- 19: E: Mim Ernst  
C: Ed and Jan Harskamp  
W: Bill and LaDonn Hartzell
- 26: E: Dwayne and Janice Heikes  
C: Dan and Maureen Heilman  
W: Burt and Jan Henrichs



**FRC is in charge of BINGO**  
for the month of April!  
See the Information  
Center to sign-up to help!

## Library Volunteers



- 5: Kathy/Joel Verdoorn  
12: Ruth Ann Wiersma  
19: Gert Gaalswyk  
26: Jan Henrichs

## 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



	<b>Leader</b>	<b>Helper</b>
5:	Deb Kusters	Donna Smidt
12:	Deb Kusters	Olivia Daiker/Grace Hoekstra
19:	Deb Kusters	Donna Smidt
26:	Deb Kusters	Nash/Cash/Loryl/Addison

## Worship Service Nursery

- 5: Peg and Curt Van Kley  
12: Heidi and Grace Saylor  
19: Laurel and Natalie Klaassen  
26: Anne Maxwell & Ruth Ann Wiersma

## Fellowship Coffee Servers

- 5: Burt and Jan Henrichs  
12: Luella Eggink & Lynn Schram  
19: Ed and Jan Harskamp  
26: Bill and LaDonn Hartzell

## Willing Hands Group

### Willing Hands Group #4

will be responsible for services during the month.

#### Co-chairpersons are:

- Karen/Dale Honken
- Marica/Dick Oldenkamp
- Pam /Duane Vande Hoef



## **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:**

- April 5 - No Sunday School due to Easter
- April 26 - Last Sunday School for '25-'26 year

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

- April 29 - Last Pioneer Club for '25-'26 year

### **MS and HS Remnant Youth Group:**

- April 29 - Last Middle School Remnant for '25-'26 year
- April 29 - Last High School Remnant for '25-'26 year

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## **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 6th 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

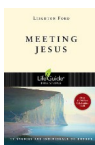
**Andrea Leusink**  
104 East 7th Street  
#165B  
Coralville, IA 52241

**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, April 20 at 9:30 am**. We will be studying lesson #3, "Eyes Opened by the Spirit" in our study book *Ephesians: God's Big Plan for Christ's New People*, Scripture will be Ephesians 1:15-23. Rhonda Riebeling will lead and Imogene Rasmussen will serve as hostess.



**Patience Bible Study**, will meet on **Monday, April 20 at 3:00 pm**. We will be studying lesson #10 "Jesus the Prophet," in our book *Meeting Jesus*. Scripture for the lesson is Matthew 24:1-31. Barb will lead and Kathy will serve as hostess. Come for a time of fellowship and learning.



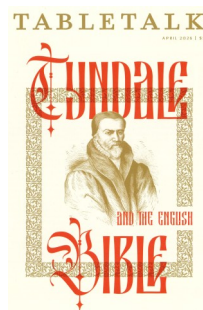
### **Fellowship Bible Study Opportunities!**

**\*\*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**

### **TableTalk discussion group schedule and topics**

**April 5**  
**Will Not Meet due to Easter**  
**April 12**  
The English Bible Before Tyndale (pg. 4)  
Tyndale's Vision, Work and Courage (pg 10)  
**April 19**  
The Legacy of Tyndale's Bible (pg. 18)  
**April 26**  
Taking God's Word to the Nations (pg. 24)



# PRAYER LIST

BE A  
*Prayer*  
WARRIOR  
— Luke 21:36

## PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

1. John and Kim McDougall
2. Matthew McDougall
3. Dave and Jessica McDyer; Lincoln, Addison
4. Pray for our College Students
5. Pray for our Church
6. Leona Meendering
7. Steve and Lynn Mulder
8. Vanessa Odens; Gracie, Landon
9. Dick and Marcia Oldenkamp
10. Lyle Peelen
11. Pray for our College Students
12. Pray for our Church
13. Reka Post
14. LaVonne Prins
15. Junior and Imogene Rasmussen
16. Larry and Rhonda Riebeling
17. Daren Rockman
18. Pray for our College Students
19. Pray for our Church
20. Marlin Roelfs
21. Janice Runia
22. Marlin and Kathy Runia
23. Brian and Heidi Sayler;  
Grace, Levi, Elijah
24. Eric Schiphoff
25. Pray for our College Students
26. Pray for our Church
27. Hugh Schiphoff
28. Ellen Schram
29. Jennie Schram
30. Lynn Schram

### **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 something about Barabbas that just refuses to stay in the “nice, tidy Bible story” category, and honestly I think it is because his story hits a little too close to home if you actually let yourself sit in it longer than a Sunday school recap. We like to treat him like the obvious background villain, the rough-looking guy you can safely judge from a distance, the one you mentally label as the wrong choice so you can feel a little better about yourself. He is convenient like that. He makes the crowd look foolish and makes us feel like we would have handled it better, like we would have stepped in and been the one reasonable person saying hey maybe do not release the criminal and execute the innocent man, just a thought.

But then you start looking at his name, and suddenly it gets a whole lot less comfortable. Barabbas literally means son of the father, which is almost offensively on the nose when you realize who he is standing next to. On one side you have Jesus, the Son of the Father, the one who actually belongs in that title in every possible sense. On the other side you have Barabbas, son of the father, the guilty version, the broken version, the one who actually earned the sentence that is about to be carried out. And the crowd, in all their wisdom and emotional stability, looks at both options and goes yeah we will take the guilty one, go ahead and let him walk. You almost want to step into the scene like you are watching someone about to back a trailer into a ditch and say stop, stop, stop, you are about to make a very obvious mistake here.

But nobody stops it, and Barabbas walks out of there still breathing, which means somewhere in the middle of all that chaos you have a man who woke up that morning fully aware that his day was going to end on a cross. He knew how Rome handled people like him. There was no optimism, no backup plan, no last minute legal loophole where he was going to represent himself and win. His story was over, and he knew it. And then suddenly it was not. Suddenly he is being pushed out into the daylight instead of marched up a hill, and I do not care how tough or hardened you are, that is going to mess with your head a little bit. You do not just casually dust yourself off and go grab lunch like wow that was wild, anyway what is for dinner.

Because the problem is not just that he lived. The problem is that he knows why he lived. He watched it happen. He watched the crowd choose him, and he watched Jesus not stop it. That is the part that should bother us more than it does. Jesus could have spoken up. He could have defended Himself. He could have pointed out the obvious flaw in the crowd’s decision making process, which frankly was not their strongest moment. Instead He stands there calm and steady like this is not surprising to Him at all, like He knows exactly how this is going to go and is choosing to let it play out anyway. And now Barabbas is stuck walking around with that in the back of his mind, which is not exactly something you just ignore and move on from like it was a mildly awkward social interaction.

And this is where it stops being a story we can comfortably observe and starts being one that kind of corners us in a way we would rather avoid. Because we like to believe we are not Barabbas. We like categories, and we put him in the “obviously guilty” category while we place ourselves somewhere in the “generally decent human who tries pretty hard” category. We compare ourselves to people who are worse and feel pretty okay about the results, like if life were graded on a curve we are at least passing, maybe even above average on a good day. Meanwhile this story

comes along and completely ignores our grading system and replaces it with something a lot less flattering.

Because Barabbas does not earn anything in this moment. He does not improve himself. He does not get a second chance because he showed potential or wrote a really convincing apology letter. He is just guilty, completely and inconveniently guilty, and still he is the one who walks free while the innocent man takes his place. Which means the entire story hinges not on what Barabbas did, but on what Jesus chose to do. And if we are honest, that is the part that makes us squirm a little, because it removes our ability to feel like we contributed something meaningful to our own rescue.

And yet that is exactly where the story lands whether we like it or not. Barabbas is not there so we can feel superior to him. He is there so we can recognize ourselves in him, which is a lot less fun but a lot more honest. We are the ones who had a sentence we could not outrun or fix or explain away with better wording. We are the ones who would have been standing there knowing full well we did not deserve to walk out of that situation. And instead, somehow, we are the ones blinking in the sunlight trying to figure out why we are still here while Jesus was led away in our place.

So yes, we can sit there and say we would have chosen Jesus that day, and maybe we like to believe that about ourselves because it sounds better and feels more heroic. But the reality this story keeps pressing on us is not about what we would have chosen, it is about what He chose. And what He chose was to take the place of the guilty so the guilty could walk free. Which means whether we like it or not, we are not the ones standing in the crowd making the right call.

We are Barabbas.

And we are the ones who walked away.

### **April Family Supper Menu:**

- April 1:** Sub Sandwich and Macaroni Salad
- April 8:** Penne Pasta Bake and dinner roll
- April 15:** Scalloped Potatoes and Ham
- April 22:** Tacos/Taco bowls and Rice
- April 29:** Cooks Choice

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.



### **April Offering:**

Child's Choice

**6:00 Family Night Supper**

**6:30-7:30pm 1st-5th Grade  
Pioneer Clubs Activities**

### **Trivia Time Answers:**

1. Sheshbazzar (1:11)
2. Mithredath (1:7-8)
3. 50,000 (2:64-65)
4. Joshua (3:2)
5. Artaxerxes (4:8-24)
6. Darius (6:13-15)
7. Seraiah (7:1-5)
8. 197 animals (8:35)
9. Ezra (9:5-6)
10. Names of some of the people who returned with Ezra to Jerusalem (8:1-14)



## Partners in MISSION

Rowland and Jane Van Es

Because of your support of us and our ministry, we were able to continue working and teaching another year here at St Paul's University in Kenya (our home for the last 20+ years). Rowland once again taught preaching, pastoral care, and Christian ethics to Diploma in Theology and Bachelor of Divinity Students. He

was also busy leading the weekly fellowship in the School of Theology, leading a Wednesday chapel each semester for the whole University, and mentoring many students.

Jane continues to teach in the School of Social Sciences, usually Introduction to Psychology, Social Psychology, and Developmental Psychology. She mentors counseling and social work students and serves as the program leader for counselling psychology. She also serves as a leader of a weekly Women's Spiritual Formation group.

Because of your support of the [RCA-SPU student scholarship fund](#), two RCEA pastors and one RCEA student were able to continue their studies in the School of Theology. Moses and Daniel both serve Reformed Church in East Africa (RCEA) congregations in Nairobi, residing in needy communities. Dorcas is a promising student and is currently doing her practicum or internship in Eldoret, Kenya.

The first challenge was renewing our work permit with the government. We had been classified as missionary workers for 20 years and given inexpensive three-year permits but the new government made some new categories and re-classified us as religious and/or charitable workers. We now have to pay more for just a two-year work permit. This process took six months but now we are legal again. All this uncertainty created some stress and forced our partner St Paul's to rise to the occasion, which they did, and showed us they still valued the partnership between the RCA and St Paul's University.



The second challenge was a planned family reunion in July that turned into a funeral for Rowland's father. On the day we were to meet in Colorado, he suffered a major heart attack and died in his sister's home after the EMTs tried in vain to restart his heart. Needless to say, this came as a shock to all of us and forced us to change our vacation plans. In the end, we still had a very meaningful time together with the remaining family for a week in Kansas and then another week in Arizona for the memorial service. Some of what we teach in class here became very personal and practical this year.

Pray for us as we take on leadership roles here at St Paul's University. Rowland was recently appointed as head of department for practical theology with a lot of additional work. Jane also has stepped in as acting head of department whenever her head goes on leave. Pray that local staff will be recruited and trained to take on these responsibilities.

Pray for our students as they study and struggle to find financial support for their tuition. The government has reduced scholarships for students in private universities and this has reduced student numbers and the universities revenue, straining the overall budget.

Pray for peace and security in Kenya, East Africa, and Africa as a whole. There will be elections here in 2027 and the campaigning has already started in 2026. The economy has challenges, the climate is changing, and many families are struggling to pay for food, education, and health care. Pray for pastors serving in rural & urban congregations full of needy but still very active members.



# Sportsmen's Devotional

Today's Photograph . . . . It Is Up To Us To Plant The Seed and Then Watch How God Will Grow It



## Bible Study Verse

Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (NIV)

## Thoughts

Imagine the trauma, stress and uncertainty that all the disciples felt when Jesus was crucified. Then three days afterward hearing He had risen and been seen! It must have been like being on a roller coaster that hadn't been invented yet..

Then they meet Him on the mountain where He told them to go and then He commissioned them in the above mentioned scripture. It was now up to them. Now it is up to each of us to pass on what we believe to be true:

- Believing in our hearts that He was the Son of the one true God.
- Believing He, Christ, died for each of us.
- Ask Him to forgive us and wash our sins with His precious blood and accept Him as our Lord and Savior.
- Believe we will live with Him in eternity away from all this stress, grief, death and corruption.

Do our best to become like Him through daily studying and applying His Word, the Bible. It will truly be Heaven!

## Action Point

We do not need to convince people that our God is real. We need to show them why we believe in the Lord by how we act, who we are and by our deeds.

God will move their heart. It is up to us to plant the seed and then watch how God will grow it.

## Sportsmen's Tip of the Day

Canadian fishing trips have always been some of my best adventures. Plan early for them by attending sport shows in the winter months and doing internet research. But I promise you, if you are even thinking about a trip to Canada, I have been going for over 35 years and every trip has been a different adventure. You want to see God paint the sky, watch a Canadian sunset.



# LIGONIER CONNECT



## **MORE RESOURCES TO GROW IN YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST**

Sibley FRC has partnered with Ligonier Ministries to better equip us for ministry and discipleship. This partnership includes full access to **Ligonier Connect** – the entire collection of Ligonier’s teaching series. Ligonier Connect is a wonderful way to learn and grow individually or with others.

This resource is available to you as a member of the church. As such, ***you should not subscribe or pay individually***; the church’s community subscription is paid for as part of our partnership with Ligonier.

**To use Connect, you must first be invited by the account owner**, which is Gretchen Bartelson. Just ask — in person, by phone, by email, or text. Once you receive the email invitation you will receive the information you need to set up your account. (Gretchen Bartelson, [gbartelson@outlook.com](mailto:gbartelson@outlook.com), 712.301.3748)

**<https://connect.ligonier.org/p/ligonier-connect/>**

Ligonier Connect is more than a library of interactive video courses. It's a learning environment with features carefully designed to help you access and apply what you're studying.

Google Ligonier Connect, go to [www.ligonier.org](http://www.ligonier.org), or to the link above to see the list of courses available. These courses are based on books by many of the Ligonier teachers and authors.

### **Widely flexible to suit your study habits**

- Ligonier Connect is accessible in any internet browser and optimized for mobile and desktop screen sizes. As a subscriber, you can take as many courses as you want, when and where you want, and at the pace that suits you best.

### **Visible Progress at Every Step**

- Each course begins with a clear roadmap that shows every lesson and step you will encounter. This learning "path" is visible at any point in the course, so you're always aware of where you're at, what you've accomplished, and what lies ahead.

### **Lessons that reinforce learning**

- Every video lesson is accompanied by an optional quiz that enables you to immediately assess your recollection and comprehension of the major points. Thoughtful discussion questions also challenge you to consider and apply what you've learned.

**Sibley Community VBS**  
 Host Church: Sibley First Presbyterian Church  
**May 31-June 4 | 5:30pm-8:30pm**

To register your student(s) or to volunteer to help, please use this link or scan the QR code:

[https://vbspro.events/p\\_early/sibleyiowa2026](https://vbspro.events/p_early/sibleyiowa2026)

**Passion Play 2026 Schedule:**

- **Saturday, March 28 @ 8:00 AM**  
Setup at S-O High School We need STRONG backs!! (Meet at the Sibley CRC to load sets)
- **Sunday, March 29: 1:30-2:30 PM**  
Music Rehearsal for crowds & soloists  
**2:30 pm** Costumes may be picked up  
**2:30-4:00 pm** Full Rehearsal (including children)
- **Monday, March 30 from 7:00-9:00 PM**  
Rehearsal (no children)
- **Tues, March 31 from 7:00-9:00 PM**  
Rehearsal (no children)
- **Wed, April 1 from 7:00-10:00 PM**  
Full dress rehearsal with children;  
*Children will be dismissed at 8:00 pm*
- **Fri, April 3: 3:00 PM**  
Make-up for the entire cast
- **Sat, April 8 @ 8:00 AM**  
Take down the sets

If you would like to participate, please call Peg or Curt Van Kley @ 754-2945, Josh Lucas @ 461-1520 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.

FRC will be providing the meal for the Freedom's Gate Congregation on April 26.

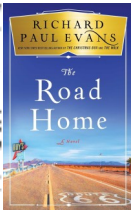
If you are interested in helping with this Outreach Opportunity, please sign up at the Information Center.

**He is Risen**

DEATH COULD NOT HOLD HIM.  
 Rejoice in the resurrection of  
*Jesus Christ.*

## From the library--

The weather has been consistently teasing us with warmth yet reminding us that the cold is not that far away. As we begin to enjoy warmer days and end our winter hibernation, here are a few quick reads for you to enjoy this April.



Our first addition is the third and final book in the Broken Road series by Richard Paul Evans, **"The Road Home"**. If you have had a chance to enjoy the first two, this one is no less entertaining! *"In the exciting and provocative series that began with The Broken Road and The Forgotten Road, Charles is still on his pilgrimage across the iconic Route 66 in The Road Home. He intends to finish his trek from Amarillo to Santa Monica, despite learning that his ex-wife is now planning to marry another man. With the initial reason for his trip in jeopardy, he still has lessons to learn along the way before he discovers—and arrives at—his true destination."*



Our second book, **"Fire by Night"**, is the second book in the Lynn Austin Refiner's Fire series. *"The drama of the Civil War unfolds through the eyes of two very different Northern girls. Lovely Julia Hoffman has always enjoyed the carefree life of her well-to-do family, but when she fails to attract the attention of Rev. Nathaniel Greene, a fierce abolitionist, she determines to bring meaning to her empty and shallow existence. When she becomes a Union nurse, her eyes are opened to the realities of war and suffering. She also meets Phoebe, who has entered the army under false pretenses--and whose journey to understanding herself, as well as the tumultuous world about her, is revealed with sensitivity and drama."*



Our third addition is book two in the Tending Roses Series by Lisa Wingate, **"Good Hope Road"**. *"Twenty-year-old Jenilee Lane, whose dreams are as narrow as the sky is wide, doesn't imagine any good could come out of the tornado that has ripped across the Missouri farmland where she makes her home. But some inner spark compels her to take action. To rescue her elderly neighbor Eudora Gibson from the cellar in which she's been trapped. To make her way to the nearby town of Poetry, where the townspeople have begun to gather in the only building left standing. To collect from the devastated landscape fragments of life that lie strewn about in the tornado's wake: letters, photographs, and mementos that might mean something to people who have lost everything. Eudora Gibson didn't think Jenilee had it in her. But the girl she's hardly noticed for years is now surprising her—stepping forward with a bravery that inspires Eudora to face her own bitter past. Brought close by tragedy, the two will learn lessons about the resilience of the human spirit and the ties that make a community strong. And together, they will travel to a place that once lay beyond their dreams."*



Finally, our fourth addition is by a new author, Charles Martin. **"The Water Keeper,"** is book one in Martin's Murphy Shepherd Series. *"Murphy Shepherd is a man with many secrets. He lives alone on an island, tending the grounds of a church with no parishioners, and he's dedicated his life to rescuing those in peril. But as he mourns the loss of his mentor and friend, Murph himself may be more lost than he realizes. When he pulls a beautiful woman named Summer out of Florida's Intracoastal Waterway, Murph's mission to lay his mentor to rest at the end of the world takes a dangerous turn. Drawn to Summer, and desperate to find her missing daughter, Murph is pulled deeper and deeper into the dark and dangerous world of modern-day slavery. With help from some unexpected new friends, including a faithful Labrador he plucks from the ocean and an ex-convict named Clay, Murph must race against the clock to locate the girl before he is consumed by the secrets of his past--and the ghosts who tried to bury them."*

~Jamie



# APRIL

## WORD SCRAMBLE

Inscramble the following list of shuffled words to meaningful words!

- PSIGNR
- MSOSBSL
- NEYREEGR
- OLRFSEW
- SBNNEUI
- ARMHTW
- IANR
- AEDGRN
- MLRULAEB
- GGES
- RETAH AYD
- EHSSWOR
- NHSSIUEN
- EERATS
- PSRTINGOU



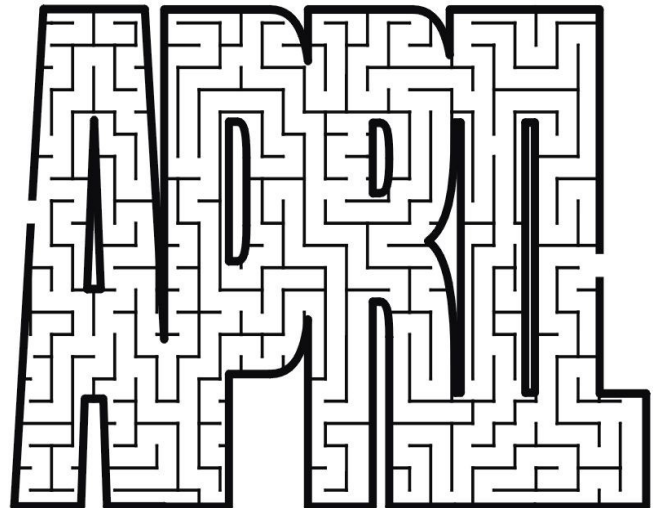
## April Showers

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

- |                  |                |            |           |
|------------------|----------------|------------|-----------|
| April Fool's Day | Warmer Weather | Jellybeans | Beginning |
| Chocolate        | Earth Day      | Baseball   | Planting  |
| Flowers          | Puddles        | Showers    | Basket    |
| Chicks           | Easter         | Spring     | Taurus    |
| Aries            | Bloom          | Bunny      | Green     |
| Jokes            | Grow           | Plow       | Sun       |

## SUDOKU

1		7			6	4	5	
	2	5	3	4				8
	6				1		7	
	5	3					2	9
6	1				9	8		
			6		2			7
		1		9	3	2		
		8						
	4			7	8	5	9	1





# Celebrations

## ~~*Birthdays*~~

- 2 Kailey Bruxvoort
- 3 Angela De Boer  
Gary De Vries
- 4 Kyler Maxwell  
Ger Van Diepen
- 5 Wilma Leusink  
Brixton Hodapp
- 8 Pam Vande Hoef  
Mary Hustoft  
Chelsea Hodapp
- 9 Lyle Peelen  
Burt Henrichs
- 10 Marilyn De Boer  
John Juffer
- 12 Ellen Schram
- 13 Steve Mulder
- 14 Dave Lamfers  
Bill Hartzell
- 16 Martha Krikke  
Troy Block

- 17 Margaret Calsbeek  
LaDonn Hartzell
- 18 Sharalyn Tjaden
- 19 Grace Hoekstra
- 21 Pastor Brian
- 22 Twila Heemstra
- 23 LeRoy De Boer

- 24 Randy Vande Berg
- 26 Melissa Langstraat  
Grant Brouwer
- 27 Dennis Jurgens  
Michael Hodapp
- 28 Janice Heikes
- 30 Loryl Mans

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

## ~~*Anniversaries*~~

- |                           |          |
|---------------------------|----------|
| 6 Chris & Teresa Hurlburt | 30 years |
| 7 Dave & Lesa Stofferan   | 48 years |
| 19 John & Jan Juffer      | 58 years |
| 22 Josh & Hannah Lucas    | 9 years  |
| 27 Roger & Carol Iedema   | 53 years |
| 28 Dean & Amy Van Marel   | 36 years |



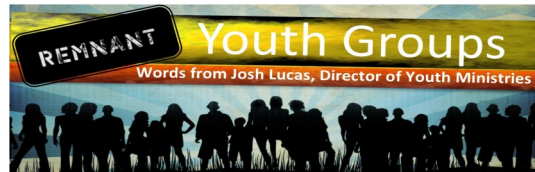
If you would like to be included in our Birthday and Anniversary Calendar and do not see your name, please contact the office (sibleyfrcoffice@gmail.com or 754-2783) and let us know your dates!  
We would love to recognize YOU on your special day! Thanks

Hello First, Reformed Church,

This past weekend, March 20-22, 2026, ten students were able to join us as we hosted our annual High School retreat at the Inspiration Hills Eagle Crest Lodge. What an amazing weekend!! Our theme for this year's retreat was, "Do not conform to the world," based on Romans 12:1-2. We were able to enjoy four chapel sessions that helped us to unpack these two verses and come to a better understanding of what it means to not conform to the world. Something that was shared during one of those chapel sessions was from verse 2, "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind." There is so much that is found in this one simple sentence. The biggest takeaway that I presented to the students was, "Where do you see a need for transformation?" Ultimately, we need to transform our whole lives, and we need to give up sin, but we wanted them to think of areas of growth specifically in their lives. One of our chaplone leaders, that went on the trip, posed a challenge, "Write down one sin that you need to give up. One thing that you need to start doing." The students were then encouraged to share what they wrote to their small group, and then the leaders shared as well. This was one of my personal favorite highlights from the weekend. It was so great for students to see each other as brothers and sisters in Christ who need help in certain areas, but also to see their leaders also struggle with things as well.

I think this is a vital thing for us to consider as adults as well. It is a command of God and honestly a true revealing of our faith in Christ to be transformed. The truth here is we are not to live in the same way that we lived before. We are to be a new creation. Where do you see transformation in your life? What sin in your life do you need to give up? What is one thing that you need to start doing? These seem like simple kid stuff questions, but when we think about it, Jesus calls us to have childlike faith. We are called, "Children of light" (Ephesians 5). Sometimes we need to ask ourselves the simple questions that we ask our children, not because we are at the same intellectual level, but we tend to overcomplicate our faith, and we miss what is important. What is important, is that we are changed into the image of Christ and you cannot be in the image of Christ if you are living in sin, meaning you are unrepentant. Again, what is one sin that you need to give up? What is one thing that you need to start doing today? This was given as a challenge so that the students can come up with a plan. A plan of how to actively live for Jesus and to realize that God is not magically going to transform us into the image of Christ without us doing anything. I didn't get a chance to share this with them, but one point I was going to make was this, actor Chris Pratt when he received an award a few years ago said something vitally important for our students and even ourselves to hear, "You are not perfect just the way you are. You are imperfect." Which is a Biblical truth that we need to realize and allow that to challenge us to make changes in our lives and make us want to grow in Jesus. In short beloved ones, be transformed in Jesus.

Blessings,  
Josh



### Dad Jokes with Josh:

Q: Why did the worker get fired from the calendar factory?  
A: Because he took a day off.

# Easter Garden

Easter is always a celebration, and we invite you to share in the joy by bringing lilies to help decorate the sanctuary.

Lilies may be brought to the church Fellowship Hall on  
Friday, April 3 (7am-4pm) or  
Saturday, April 4 (7am-12pm)

Please include a card with your name on it.  
Flowers can then be picked back up following the 9:00  
a.m. service on Easter morning, April 5.



## Holy Week Happenings

April 2 @ 6:30 pm  
*Passover Seder Supper*

April 5  
8:00 am  
*Celebration Brunch*  
9:00 am  
*Celebration Praise  
and Worship Service*



## PASSION PLAY

# Friday, April 3

*40<sup>th</sup> Season!*

### FREE TICKETS

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

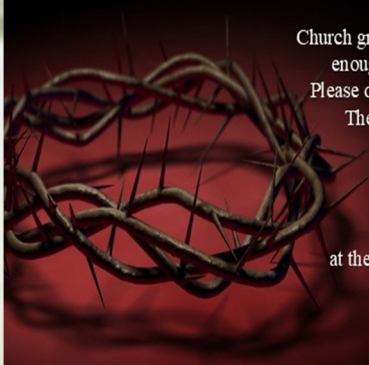
Church groups and organizations may request  
enough tickets for their entire group.  
Please do not reserve more than you need.  
There will be three performances

**5:00 p.m.**

**7:00 p.m.**

**9:00 p.m.**

at the Sibley-Ocheyedan High School  
Auditorium, Sibley, IA



## Railroad Spike Crosses Available Easter Morning!



Check out the table by the  
sanctuary and take home one  
of these unique treasures!!