THE NEWSLETTER

Sibley First Reformed Church — News You Need to Know

June 2026

Glorify *God in all we do* | Grow *with Him daily* | Go *share His love*

June at a Glance

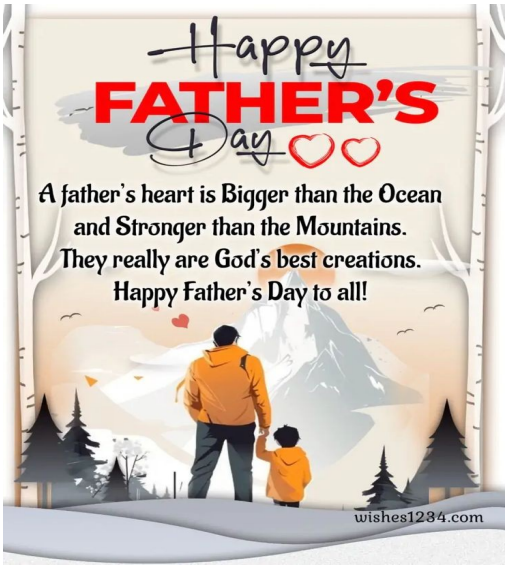
May 31-June 4: 5:30-8:30pm Community VBS at First Presbyterian
5: 2:15pm BINGO at Osceola Sr. Living
8: 6:00 pm Elder & Deacon Meetings
7:00 pm Full Consistory will meet
15: 9:30am: Faith Bible Study
- **3:00pm: Patience Bible Study**

19: June Newsletter Deadline
24: Noon: 6 in 26 Book Club
28: Communion Prep Sunday

***Sundays:**
- **9:00 am Praise & Worship Service**
- **10:10 am Coffee Fellowship Time**
- **Sunday School is on break until Fall**
- **6:30pm Fellowship Bible Studies**

***Tuesdays:**
- **8:30 am Quilting Chicks will meet**

***Wednesday Evening:**
- **Pioneer Club, Bible Studies and Remnant Youth Groups are on break until Fall**



CONTACT INFORMATION: 712-754-2783
office.admin@sibleyfrc.org
www.sibleyfrc.org
www.facebook.com/firstreformedsibley
https://www.sermonaudio.com/solo/sibleyfrc/
YouTube @sibleyfirstreformedchurch566

The Bountiful Blessings Table Is Back!

This is a great opportunity to share your abundance of garden produce, flowers, baked goods, home canned items...
(all items are appreciated)

All items donated to the table are available to take home for a free-will monetary donation.

All money collected by the end of the season will once again be donated to a local food pantry.

Faith In Action for June:

Shut-ins/Nursing Home Residents

Make it a point to send a card, visit or make them feel special in some way.

Mark Your Calendars!
June 14
(Following the Worship Service)
A Ligonier Connect Demonstration will be held in the Church Library

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.

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

Ligonier Connect

Celebrations

~~Birthday's~~

1 Jessica McDyer
Kimberlie Alexander
Travis Boeke

2 Kalen Heronimus

3 Alexis Van Diepen

7 Sandy Lamfers

8 Abby De Zeeuw
Jena Ver Steeg

9 Lawrence Wiersma
Kelsey Doorenbos

10 Addison De Zeeuw

11 Dale De Boer
Nancy Dykstra

12 Georgia Hisek

14 Kimberly Alsip
Grace Bevers
Sharee Feldkamp

16 Chris Hurlburt

18 Janelle Van Drunen
Mark Langstraat
Joselyn De Zeeuw

19 Gabe Bevers

20 Lois Van Diepen

22 Charles Kruger
Chelsea Hulstein

23 Joel Van Gelder
Mike Block Sr.

24 Stan De Zeeuw
Colt Klaassen

26 Karissa Hulstein
Merlyn Janssen

28 Jarred Brouwer
Jaxton Loerts

~~Anniversaries~~

4	Marlin & Kathy Runia -	38 years
9	Jarred and Tracee Brouwer -	26 years
10	Ed and Jan Harskamp -	62 years
11	John & Sharon Bartels -	60 years
11	Dr. Brian and Heidi Sayler -	32 years
12	Loren and Deb Hulstein -	41 years
15	Collin & Alexis Van Diepen -	7 years
20	AJ and Jenny Weg -	11 years
22	Cody and Kristen Hurlburt -	8 years
23	Charles and Katha Kruger -	42 years
25	Brad and Sarah Loerts -	21 years
26	Junior and Imogene Rasmussen -	62 years
27	Ron and Nancy Dykstra -	51 years
27	Curt and Peg Van Kley -	34 years
28	Mark and Tanya Dykstra -	29 years

Children and Worship

Children and Worship is on Summer Break.

See you next fall!!

Praise and Worship Greeters

7: E: Karen Keiper
C: Brady and Ashilyn Klaassen
W: Clint Klaassen/family

14: E: Jamie Klaassen/family
C: Joanne Klaassen
W: Kevin and Laurel Klaassen

21: E: Natalie Klaassen
C: Dave Kleinwolterink
W: Greg and Deb Kosters

28: E: Mitch and Abby Kreykes/family
C: Chuck and Katha Kruger
W: Pam Kruger

Library Volunteers

7: Pauline Van Engen
14: Marcia Van Ruler
21: Alfreda Verdoorn
28: Kathy/Joel Verdoorn

Worship Service Nursery

Nursery is open, but unstaffed during the summer months.

Fellowship Coffee Servers

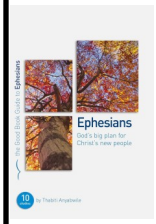
7: Larry and Rhonda Riebeling
14: Verlyn and Donna Smidt
21: Dave and Lesa Stofferan
28: Ger and Barb Van Diepen

Willing Hands Group

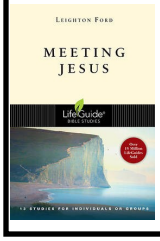
Group #6
will be responsible for services during the month.

Co-chairpersons are:

- Peg/Curt Van Kley
- Rhonda/Larry Riebeling



Faith Bible Study, will meet on **Monday, June 15 at 9:30 am.** We will be studying lesson #5, "United in Christ" in our study book *Ephesians: God's Big Plan for Christ's New People*, Scripture will be Ephesians 2:11-22. Luella Eggink will lead and Jan Harskamp will serve as hostess.



Patience Bible Study, will meet on **Monday, June 15 at 3:00 pm.** We will be studying lesson #12 "Jesus the Dying King," in our book *Meeting Jesus.* Scripture for the lesson is John 19:16-42. Barb will lead and Leona will serve as hostess. Come for a time of fellowship and learning.

Consistory Meeting Highlights
May 11, 2026

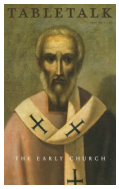
- Pioneer Club served 74 meals/night avg at $2.20/person average. Thank you for the donations of hamburger without it the cost would have been much higher.
- Carpet cleaning will happen week of July 27th
- MMSA to limit to 50% of 1 church camp per student per year
- MMSA to accept the membership transfer for Marcia Massa from Sibley CRC to FRC.
- Pulpit supply secured for May 31st in light of Pastor Brian's surgery.
- MMSA the use of the Fireside Room for a Bridal Shower for Hannah Jacobsma
- GOS parade float will be constructed on June 5th
- Freedom's Gate meal served 98 members
- Remnant Leaders for 26-27 year: HS-Natalie Klaassen and Larry DeBoer; MS- Derek Heronimus
- Pioneer Club will use the Backpack program to promote activities to non-English speaking parents.
- Officer Nominating Committee gave an update.
- Options for Josh's replacement were discussed.

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.

****Sermon Discussion Group****
TBD keep watching the bulletin for updates

****Digging into God's Word****
Fireside Room Sunday Nights at 6:30 pm



*****TableTalk*****
Fellowship Hall
Sunday Nights at 6:30 pm

June 7
What is the Early Church?
June 14
The Apostles and the Apostolic Church
June 21
The Ministry of the Earliest Fathers
June 28
Contending for the Faith
The Blood of the Martyrs

*****From Dust to Glory*****
Wednesday Night Class is on Summer Break.
Classes will resume in the Fall
with the start of the Education Year.

Stewardship & Giving

Offering Summary through May 30:
- **General Fund: $157,380.75**
- Budget: $382,111.50; 41% of budget
- **Benevolent Fund: $8,993.93**
Budget: $59,500; 16% of budget
- **Building Fund offerings to date: $305**
designated kitchen funds: $5,800

****

Average Monthly Offering Needed:
$36,800.96
Total Ben./Gen. Offerings through May 30
$39,426.05

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

Special Offering for June:
Freedom's Gate!!

Pray for God's People

BE A Prayer WARRIOR

Luke 21:36

Assisted Living
Trudy Dykstra
Larry & Alfreda Verdoorn
Margaret Calsbeek
Anita Ernst
Ellen Schram
Jane Buysman
Wilma Hatting

The Nursing Homes
Martha Krikke
Jo Hielkema
Ethel Jurgens

Christian Retirement Home
Helen Vander Veen

Our Missionaries
Dr. Bernadeth Kelly &
Adrian Bobb
Sayuri Kist—Okazaki
Brian & Donna Renes
J.J. & Tim TenClay
Rowland & Jan Van Es
Grace Covenant Ministries
Jeff and Chelsea Lampen

College Students:
Aidan Beyer
Dawson Beyer
Jordan Carpenter
Hadley Crichton
Dawson Kreykes
Grace Sayler
Tristen Vos
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
Andrea Leusink
Grant Brouwer

1. Bryan Verdoorn
2. Joel and Kathy Verdoorn
3. Larry and Alfreda Verdoorn
4. Roger Verdoorn
5. Faye Vos
6. Pray for our College Students
7. Pray for our Church
8. Clayton and Jodi Wagenaar
9. Brent and Brenda Wassman
10. Alyssa Wassman
11. AJ and Jenny Weg;
    Addison, Alivia, Austyn
12. Lawrence and RuthAnn Wiersma
13. Pray for our College Students
14. Pray for our Church
15. Ryan Wiersma
16. Gary and Jessa Wolter
17. Renae Wolter
18. Derek and Megan Ackerman;
    Quinnley, Sydney
19. Mitch and Angie Ackerman
20. Pray for our College Students
21. Pray for our Church
22. Brian and Chelsey Alexander;
    Kimberlie, Riley, Brysen
23. Kim Alsip; Zoey
24. Bobby and Dee Baker
25. John and Sharon Bartels
26. Gretchen Bartelson
27. Pray for our College Students
28. Pray for our Church
29. Carl Berkenpas
30. Tony and Jamiey Bevers
    Elliot, Grace, Gabe, Olivia

Prayer Journal

Partners in MISSION

The Lampens

Dear Friends,

Having recently walked—like the rest of you—through the darkness and pain of Holy Week and into the brightness and dawn of Easter Sunday, the words of Jesus as he gathered with his disciples are still echoing through my (Jeff) mind. In John's gospel, John invites his readers into the disciples' last conversation with Jesus before his arrest and crucifixion and spends a surprisingly long five chapters (out of 21 total!) on Jesus' final warnings, encouragements, and prayers for his closest followers. Surrounded by his disciples, Jesus says, **"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing, but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father"** (John 15:12-15). In his last hours with his disciples, for the first time in John's gospel, Jesus Christ finally called his disciples "my friends." For Jesus, friendship did not mean fearful, blind obedience, but rather an obedience based on their love for him and his openness with them.

Here in Hannover, we are discovering the joys of friendship as Jesus described it, based on honesty, affection, and respect. It has been so encouraging to see relationships continuing to develop between our kids and their friends at school. We see and hear stories of them just being themselves, embracing the goofiness and silliness and passion that God has given them, and watching their friends respond in the same way! With a language barrier, it's not always so easy to be yourself, but watching Lorelei and Caspian embrace friendships and attend birthday parties and invite kids over is inspiring to me on a deep level. Just as Jesus' followers weren't perfect (Peter would go on to deny Jesus just hours after being called his friend), our friendships don't have to be perfect, either. But what is important is making the effort.

Friendship hasn't always come easy for me, as a generally introverted man. I, like many other men, find myself much more likely to spend my time on work, family, and hobbies than picking up the phone and reaching out to a friend. There seem to be more pressing things in life, things that need more immediate attention, and things that don't require as much from me relationally as friends. But I've begun to wonder whether there is an opportunity here to build up and be built up by other Christians in a way that I haven't fully taken advantage of before.

One of our clearest local partners here in Germany is the Evangelisch-reformierte Kirchengemeinde Hannover (the Reformed Church of Hannover). They were the church who, over 10 years ago, welcomed the idea of opening their doors to an English-speaking worship service, at first monthly, then twice a month. We have begun asking ourselves, "What would it look like to develop a closer friendship between our worshiping bodies? How could we build each other up?" In doing so, we've begun meeting each other with honesty, affection, and respect. This has been producing real fruit! We just celebrated our third bilingual worship service. We're collaborating on a joint, Friday evening, German/English, pasta supper worship service beginning in June. I'll be helping lead a German confirmation class trip in May. Some Relish regulars, who had no official church home yet, officially joined the Reformed Church of Hannover. We're walking with our fellow pastors through some great joys and terrible sorrows. And we're trying to imagine what closer cooperation could look like in the future.

As we've known all along, friendship is not easy. Misunderstandings due to language or culture arise. Assumptions are made, and mistakes happen. But we have to trust that, in the end, the friendships that we build with one another are worth it. We can do more together than we can alone; life is more worth living when we're able to stand side-by-side with honesty, affection, and respect. We're more than just colleagues and we're certainly not competitors, we're brothers and sisters in Christ who are called to love one another as Christ Jesus loved us.

In Christ,
Jeff and Chelsea Lampen, Lorelei (12), Caspian (8), and Evander (4)

Inspiration Hills Camp and Retreat Center

Kids away at camp this month

June 15-19

Olivia Daiker, Wilderness Camp
Chloe Sheffield, Wilderness Camp
Joanna Lucas, Day Camp Explorers

June 22-26

Brynna Loerts, Girls Only Camp

June 29-July 1

Pauline Van Engen, Grand Camp
Palmer Hartzell, Grand Camp
Jhase Hesse, Grand Camp
Kellan Hesse, Grand Camp

Students always love receiving mail from home. If you would like to write to students who are attending camp please send letters to: Inspiration Hills Camp, % (Student Name/Camp attending), 1242 280th Street, Inwood, IA 51240.

MONTH OF JUNE

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

Summer Solstice	Celebrations	Strawberries	Father's Day
Butterflies	Graduation	Gardening	Lawnmower
Celebrate	Fireflies	Balloons	Sunshine
Mosquito	Baseball	Weddings	Vacation
Lemonade	Ladybug	Fishing	Picnics
Flowers	Family	Hiking	Beach

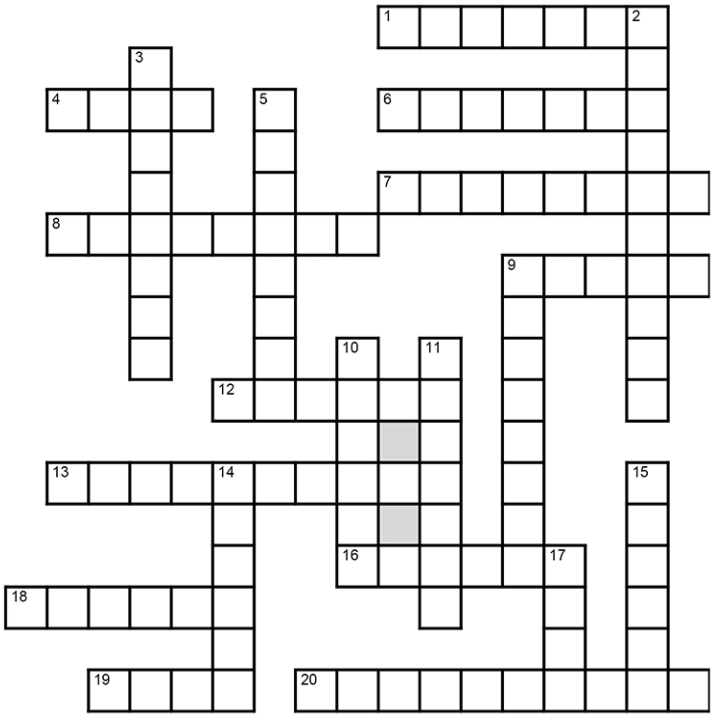
ACROSS

1. Marriage ceremony.
4. Celebrated on June 14th in the US: ___ Day.
6. Certificate presented at a graduation ceremony.
7. Cook outdoors on a grill.
8. Opposite of indoors.
9. June is the ___ month of the year.
12. Astrological sign for the start of June (twins).
13. Celebrated on June 19th to commemorate the ending of slavery.
16. Astrological sign for the end of June (crab).
18. He is celebrated on the third Sunday in June.
19. June 6th, 1944.
20. Red berry that is in season in June.

DOWN

2. Ceremony marking the end of the school year.
3. Time off from school.
5. Drink made from a yellow citrus fruit and sugar.
9. Longest day of the year: Summer ___.
10. Meal eaten outdoors.
11. Sport using a rod and a reel.
14. Number of days in June.
15. Season that begins in June in the Northern Hemishere.
17. Birth month flower for June.

Barbecue, Cancer, D-Day, Diploma, Father, Fishing, Flag, Gemini, Graduation, Juneteenth, Lemonade, Outdoors, Picnic, Rose, Sixth, Solstice, Strawberry, Summer, Thirty, Vacation, Wedding



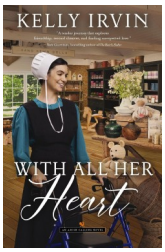
Esther Trivia Time

1. Who are Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Karkas?
2. Of the men Xeres consulted when Vashti wouldn't come, which one spoke to the king? *Memukan, Admatha, Karshena, Marsena*
3. Who was the father of Haman?
4. Oops! Your husband, Haman, is second in rank to the king. You and some of his friends suggested he set up the tall pole where he eventually died. What is your name?
5. How many years passed between the time when Esther was made queen and when Haman decided to kill the Jews?
6. Who led the king's horse carrying Mordecai, dressed in royal robes, through the city while saying, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!"?
7. King Xerxes ruled over how many provinces from India to Cush?
8. What did it mean to "cast a pur"?

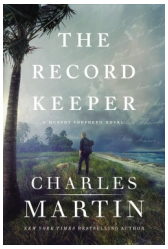
1. Servants of King Xerxes (1:10) 2. Memukan (1:16) 3. Hammedatha (3:1) 4. Zeresh (5:14; 7:10) 5. Eight Years (1:3) 6. Haman (6:11) 7. 127 Provinces (1:1) 8. A selection system similar to dice (9:24)

From the library--

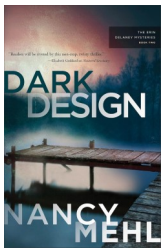
Summer has finally arrived! If your summer plans include free time while at the pool, ballfield, or road trip, the library has great books to help fill that down time. Stop by to find the following new additions.



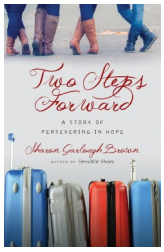
Book one is the third book ***"With All Her Heart"*** in the Amish Calling series by Kelly Irvin. *Elijah Miller is a quiet and painfully shy man with a talent for carving the handmade toys and furniture that tourists in the Amish shops love. The large, boisterous Miller family is anything but shy. With a thriving auction business, they want him to do what he hates most: taking the stage and calling the auctions. He loves his family and wants to support them, but will they allow room for Elijah to follow his own dream? Bonnie Yoder began the Homespun Handicrafts with her friends, Sophia and Carol. Each has a physical disability to overcome but together they prove that wheelchairs and rollators will not stop them from building a business and a craft community. Bonnie, with her chestnut curls and pretty face, yearns for a husband and family of her own but fears her spinal condition will keep any Amish man from choosing a life with her. Can a man like Elijah see past her walker to the woman behind it? Can Elijah and Bonnie help each other find the lives they want and the love they desire?*



Our second addition is the third book in the Murphy Shepherd Series, ***"The Record Keeper."*** *Murphy Shepherd's last rescue mission very nearly cost him his life. He'd like nothing more than to stay close to his wife and daughters for a while. But Bones's nemesis must be stopped, and there are so many who still need to know they are worth rescuing. As the cat-and-mouse game moves into the open, Murphy is tested at every turn--both physically and mentally. Then the unthinkable happens: his beloved mentor and friend is taken. Gone without a trace. Murphy lives by the mantra that love always shows up. But how can he rescue Bones when he has no leads? The Record Keeper explores the true cost of leaving the ninety-nine to find the one.*



The third book to join the library is book two in the Delaney Mystery series, ***"Dark Design"*** by Nancy Mehl. When Erin *Delaney learns that a serial killer has mimicked the murder portrayed in her bestselling novel, she joins her friend Kaely Quinn-Hunter, a former FBI profiler, in Virginia. Their reunion, only a few months after fending off an eerie killer in the woods of Tennessee, is bittersweet, as Kaely has been tasked by the FBI to recruit Erin's help to identify a suspect. The FBI's team is stumped by the murderer who re-creates killings from the books of multiple authors, with only ominous notes left behind. As Erin is drawn further into the web of fear and chaos, Kaely begins to fear for Erin's safety. On top of tracking down a murderer, Erin must shoulder the weight of a haunted past and claims that she stole the plot of her novel from one of her sources. As she struggles on multiple fronts, the enemy looms closer than ever--and Erin's life hangs in the balance.*



With our last addition, we continue the Sensible Shoes series by Sharon Garlough Brown with the addition of book 2, "***Two Steps Forward"***. *The women from Sensible Shoes are taking their next steps in the spiritual formation journey. But each of them is finding roadblocks along the way. Meg, a widow and recent empty-nester, is off to see her daughter in London. But what does hope look like when nothing goes as planned? Charissa, a conscientious graduate student, is battling to let go of control and embrace her unexpected pregnancy. But what doeshope look like when transformation is slow? Hannah, a pastor on sabbatical, is trying to find her equilibrium with rest and a new relationship. But what does hope look like when old grief keeps resurfacing? Mara, a wife and mother, longsfor her difficult family life to improve. But what does hope look like when tension escalates and circumstances only get worse? Sometimes life feels like two steps forward and one step back. Find your own spiritual journey reflected in the lives of these women and discover the way forward.*

This month we also add the next 6 books in the With Jesus children's series. This month's titles are *"With Jesus...I am Thankful, I Share, I Give, I am Brave, I am Talented, and I Love".*

Whatever your summer plans are, remember to just be in the moment. Time moves to fast to be distracted by things that don't matter.

~~Jamie

Updates are coming to FRC!

This summer we will be updating our church kitchen including new flooring, appliances and more! We will also be undergoing a website makeover. Please be patient with the changes as they are implemented.

More details to come in the next weeks/months.

MCCALLUM MUSEUM SUMMER SUNDAY SERIES

June 28 - 2:00pm-3:00pm

Mennonite Settlement in Osceola County

From their distinctive buildings, farming practices and social/church affairs, the Mennonites who settled in Osceola County left a fascinating history. Staff will delve into the events connected to the small settlement of Mennonites who lived around May City.

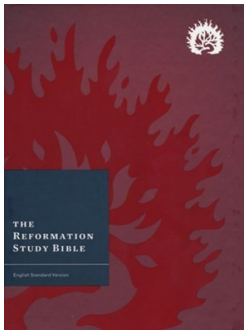
Called to Serve

FRC has created a Officer Nominating Team to aid in the nomination of Elders and Deacons to serve on Consistory. Those on the team are: Ron Dykstra, John Van Diepen, Heidi Saylor, Jan Henrichs, Rhonda Riebeling, Arnie Langstraat, and Clayton Wagenaar. If you have ever had the desire to serve as an Elder or Deacon, please feel free to contact one of the team members for more details.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Summer Education Schedule:

Sunday School,
Wednesday Night
Pioneer Club,
High School and
Middle School
Remnant Youth Groups
are on break until fall.
See you in September!



Wish you had ordered your own copy of the Reformation Study Bible??

It's not to late!!

Reformation Study Bibles are still available to order by filling out the Order Form found on the Book Table.

June 21-First Day of Summer!!

Farmer Girl Reflections

The second half of Acts chapter 1 is easy to overlook, but it shows something important about the early church. After Jesus ascends into heaven, the disciples do not scatter or panic. They return to Jerusalem just like He told them, gather together, and devote themselves to prayer. About 120 believers are there, waiting for the promise of the Holy Spirit. They are not performing miracles yet.

They are not preaching to crowds. They are simply being faithful in the waiting. Then Peter stands up and addresses the group. He brings up something painful and uncomfortable, the betrayal and death of Judas. No one tries to pretend it did not happen. No one glosses over it. Peter points back to Scripture and explains that even this terrible event was not outside of God's knowledge. What Judas did was real, and it was evil, but it did not catch God by surprise. Even in betrayal and loss, God's plan was still moving forward.

So the disciples decide to choose a replacement, someone to take Judas's place among the twelve. But they do not just pick a random person or vote based on personality. They set clear qualifications. The new apostle must have been with them the entire time, from Jesus' baptism to His ascension. He must be a witness to the resurrection. This was not about popularity or charisma. It was about faithfulness and firsthand testimony.

Two men fit the criteria: Joseph called Barsabbas, also known as Justus, and Matthias. Both had been there. Both had walked the same dusty roads, listened to the same teachings and seen the risen Christ. Either one would have been qualified. So what do the disciples do next? They pray.

They say, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen" (Acts 1:24, ESV). They recognize something simple but profound. They can see actions. They can see qualifications. But only God sees the heart. So they place the decision in His hands. They cast lots, a common and accepted method at the time for seeking God's will, and the lot falls to Matthias. And just like that, he is counted among the eleven apostles.

It is not a dramatic scene. There is no thunder, no angel, no visible sign. Just a group of ordinary believers, praying, trusting God, and taking the next step in obedience. But it matters, because it shows that the early church did not run on impulse or personality. It ran on prayer, Scripture, and trust in God's guidance.

Sometimes life feels like that moment in Acts 1. Something has been lost. Something important is missing. There is a gap where something used to be. And we are left standing there, not sure what comes next. The disciples had lost Judas, and even more recently, they had watched Jesus ascend into heaven. There was a lot of uncertainty in that room.