

The Newsletter August 2021

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

CREATION MUSEUM

&

ARK ENCOUNTER

MS Remnant Retreat



August at a Glance

- 2: 1:00pm Backpack Packing Party
- 3: 10am-7pm OCMA Backpack distribution in Fireside Room
- 10: No Consistory This Month
- 15: Communion Preparatory
- 22: Communion Sunday
- 23: 9:30 am Faith Bible Study
3:00 pm Patience Bible Study

*Sundays:

9:15 am Coffee Fellowship Time
10:00 am Combined Summer Service
Sunday School is on break for Summer

*Tuesdays:

8:30 am Quilting Chicks will meet

*Wednesday Evening Bible Classes and Youth Groups:

Are on Break until Fall

CONTACT INFORMATION:
712-754-2783
sibleyfrcoffice@gmail.com



View our Website at: sibleyfrc.org



Stewardship & Giving

Offering Summary through July 26:

- **General Fund:** \$201533.83
Budget: \$299,173.35; 67% of budget
- **Benevolent Fund:** \$25259.20
Budget: \$71,025.61; 35% of budget
- **Building Fund offerings to date:** \$1355.70

Special offering for August:



Faith In Action for August: Upper Des Moines Food Pantry

Let's help fill up the pantry! Any non-perishable food is welcome. Thank you for sharing!



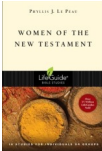
Bible Trivia

1. Because of Achan's sin he was stoned in which valley?
2. What was the name of the sorcerer who was struck blind by Paul the apostle?
3. After Paul's shipwreck, what island did he swim to?
4. What was the name of the wife of both Nabal and King David?
5. Which of Joseph's brothers was left behind as a hostage when the other nine returned to bring Benjamin to Egypt?
6. In order to win the battle with Amalek, Aaron and Hur helped Moses by doing this.
7. Zipporah had a very famous husband. What was his name?
8. What was the name of the wife of Lapidoth and what is she famous for?
9. When David scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let spittle fall down on his beard, and pretended to be crazy, he was doing so because he was afraid of which king?
10. In what book of the Bible do you find the following words:
"As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout..."?
11. What was Nebuchadnezzar's other name?

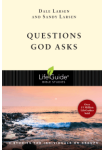
Bible Study Opportunities

Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us.
And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait
patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.

Romans 15:4



Faith Bible Study, who meets the third Monday of most months, will meet on **Monday, August 16 at 9:30 am** in the Fireside Room. We will study chapter 3 “Herodias” in the book Women of the New Testament. Scripture for the morning will be Mark 6:14-29. Lynn Schram will lead the lesson and Jan Henrichs will serve as hostess.



Patience Bible Study, who meets the third Monday of most months, will meet on **Monday, August 16 at 3:00 pm** in the Fireside Room. We will continue our book, Questions God Asks, by David and Sandy Larsen. Barb will lead lesson #8, “Is It Right For You to be Angry?” Jan Juffer will serve as hostess. Come and join us!



The Congregational Care Team is in the early planning stages to create a new pictorial directory for our church. We are not planning to use a professional photographer this year. We are asking each family to submit a good photo of your family. If you do not have a good photo or do not have the ability to get a photo taken, please contact LaDonn Hartzell and she will find a time that works for your family and take one for

you. Photos will be submitted via email to LaDonn: lhartz124@gmail.com. If you do not have access to email, please drop off your photo at the church office and we can scan it in for you. Along with your photo, please include all family names, phone numbers and address that you would like published in the directory. **DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PHOTOS IS OCTOBER 15, 2021.** The church office will be printing the directory and hopes to have them ready for distribution by January 2022.



FRC PARTNERS!! The Congregational Care Team is inviting congregation members to join us in a “Partnering Program” to encourage our college students. Plan to send cards, letters, care packages, emails, text messages of encouragement during crucial times of the school year or just any day to perk them up & encourage them!! Any congregation members interested in a “partnership” with a college student once the next school year begins—please contact Lois Van Diepen.



Cornerstone Service Greeters

- 1: E: Scott and Jamie Hulstein
C: Joel and Kathy Verdoorn
W: Dick and Marcia Oldenkamp
- 8: E: LaVon Dykstra
C: Duane and Pam Vande Hoef
W: Ron and Nancy Dykstra
- 15: E: Dave and Sandy Lamfers
C: John and Lois Van Diepen
W: Bill and LaDonn Hartzell
- 22: E: Clint and Jamie Klaassen
C: Dr. Greg and Deb Kusters
W: Marlin Roelfs
- 29: E: Bob and Janice Groen
C: Lawrence and Ruth Ann Wiersma
W: Dave and Lesa Stofferan

Nursery

The Nursery will be open for use,
but unstaffed.

Children & Worship Schedule



**Children and Worship is on break for the
Summer! See you all this Fall!!**

Willing Hands Group



Willing Hands Group #2

will be responsible for
services during the month.

Co-chairpersons are:

- Luella/Harold Eggink
- Darcy/Frank Martinez

Fellowship Coffee Servers



- 1: Duane and Pam Vande Hoef
8: Clayton and Jodi Wagenaar
15: Lawrence and Ruth Wiersma
22: Andrea and Michael (Jr) Block
23: Nate and Angela Buysman

Library Volunteers



- 1: Leona Meendering
8: Janice Runia
15: Jen Schram
22: Pauline Van Engen
29: Leanne Van Kley



Compassion Sunday Global Impact Report: This year 5,710 children were sponsored through 1,747 churches who participated in Compassion Sunday. Thank you, First Reformed Church, for answering Compassion International's Call to Hope! Through your generosity, at least 5 new children living in poverty received sponsors.

God is Good, around the world!



Consistory Meeting Highlights

- **MMSA church use for Jamie and Jennifer Bruxvoort to use the fellowship hall and kitchen for Logan's Graduation May 13, 2022.**
- **MMSA Kayla Hoekstra for a meeting in the Fellowship Hall Aug 2nd at 7 pm.**
- **MMSA to go ahead with Soup and Pie supper for Missions, September 22, 2021**
- **The Sacrament of Holy Communion will be celebrated on July 25 and August 22**
- **MMSA to continue with one service at 10:00 AM Sundays, with fellowship time and Sunday School beginning at 9:00 AM, until discussed at November Congregational Meeting**
- **Bibles will be presented to First Graders and Ninth Graders on September 12th**
- **The Pastoral Search team reported that the Profile and position are posted. Responses are beginning to come in.**
- **Consistory will not meet in August. Next scheduled meeting will be on September 14.**



June 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.

- **All Youth Education classes and Youth Groups are on Summer Break**

College Addresses

Garrett Sayler

208 8th Street SW
Unit 846
Orange City, IA 51041

Jena Van Marel

IMT at the Medical Center
8181 Fannin Street
Apt. 2531
Houston, TX 77054

Hunter DeJong

109 Wilder Place
Ames, IA 50014

Peyton Crichton

2820 S. Duluth Ave
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Kalie DeBoer

815 8th Street
Sibley, IA 51249

Nick and Sara Buysman

4101 Lovell Rd.
Apt. 1-319
Circle Pines, MN 55014

Jaden Abels

University of Sioux Falls
1101 W 22nd Street
Box 452
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Troy Soat

1101 W. 22nd Street
USF Box 451
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Tanner Dykstra

Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln
1055 N 16th Street
S519
Lincoln, NE 68508

Alyssa Wassman

Foundation Residence
Apartments 103
1410 Birch Street
Marshall, MN 56258

Alex Mc Dougall

106 Barton Anders
285 Richardson Ct Rm 106
Ames, IA 50013-0023

Grant Brouwer

DU 2335
651 6th St. NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250

Leah Ackerman

503 10th Ave.
Sibley, IA 51249

Cody Dykstra

1359 SW Prairie Trail Pkwy
Apt. #307
Ankeny, IA 50023

Carson Van Westen

204 Beach Road Room 321
Maple Friant
Ames, IA 50013-0039

Ryan Van Marel

SDSU Box 2807
Room #0416 Young Hall
Brookings, SD 57007

Ashilyn Hulstein

Hyde-139B-A1
1451 8th Street
Brookings, SD 57007

Hudson Feldkamp

230 Dakota Trail
Brookings, SD 57007

Dalton Bremer

100 Daum Hall
Room #5407
Iowa City, IA 52242

Mariah Elser

University Suites - 128A
1780 R Street
Lincoln, NE 68508

Austin Wassman

1434 Tyler Ave
Ocheyedan, IA 51354

If your student will have a different address for the 2021-2022 school year please let the office know.

Sportsmen's Devotional



Bible Study Verse

Mark 1:17

And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." (ESV)

Thoughts

Cliff and I were privileged to travel to Wyoming to spend some time with two more members of the Sportsmen's Devotional Team in the high mountain areas of the Tetons. They were gracious and patient hosts. They wanted to share with us a wonderful new pastime they both enjoyed, namely fly fishing. I had attempted it a few times without much success.

Our teachers gave us some great instruction and help. They patiently taught us the knots, procedures of casting, which flies to use, and many other skills.

We enjoyed some great success because they patiently taught us these new skills.

Action Point

As the Lord went about the process of selecting His disciples, he used their profession as an example of what he wanted them to learn. They were fishermen. He would teach them to fish for men. This word picture must have been attractive and powerful to them.

By word and example Jesus did so.

These disciples would become great students of Christ and also of the Word of God which they learned to understand and obey. They indeed became fishers of men.

My point is that we must LEARN to share our faith and how to be saved with others. There are many different approaches to do so. But make it a point to learn some method to share your faith and the means of eternal life with others.

Jesus made each of us to be a witness for Him.

Sportsmen's Tip of the Day

Learn the skills required to become successful in your favorite outdoor pursuits. Time invested in learning greatly enhances the success to be enjoyed. Also make up your mind to share by teaching your skills to others especially young people. There is great personal satisfaction in doing so. And you will gain some new hunting buddies!

Trivia Time Answers!!!

1. Anchor (Joshua 7:240-26) **2.** Elymas (Acts 13:6-12) **3.** Melita (Acts 27:41-44)
5. Abigail (1 Sam. 25:3,42) **6.** Simeon (Gen. 42:18-20,24) **7.** Holding up his hands (Exodus 17:11-13) **8.** Moses (Exodus 2:21) **9.** Deborah, the first woman judge of Israel (Judges 4:4,5) **10.** Achish, king of Gath (1 Sam. 21:12-15) **11.** Proverbs (Prov. 11:22) **12.** Belshazzar (Daniel 5:2)

BE A
Prayer
WARRIOR

PRAYER JOURNAL

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PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Pray for our Church | 17. Burt and Jan Henrichs |
| 2. Russ Gaalswyk | 18. Clint Henrichs |
| 3. Gene and Renae Groen | 19. Derek and Ashley Heronimus;
Kalen, Brooks |
| 4. Bob and Janice Groen | 20. Ken and Sandy Heronimus |
| 5. Clark Haken | 21. Pray for our College Students |
| 6. Lennis and Marvella Harberts;
Uchan, Apiyo, Ahbea, Aysha | 22. Pray for our Church |
| 7. Pray for our College Students | 23. Dale and Josie Herrboldt |
| 8. Pray for our Church | 24. Johanna Hielkema |
| 9. Ed and Jan Harskamp | 25. Melissa Hisek;
Sofia, Georgia |
| 10. Bill and LaDonn Hartzell | 26. Cole and Kayla Hoekstra;
Amelia, Grace |
| 11. Wilma Hatting | 27. Dale and Karen Honken |
| 12. Kevin and Twila Heemstra | 28. Pray for our College Students |
| 13. Dwayne and Janice Heikes | 29. Pray for our Church |
| 14. Pray for our College Students | 30. Alec and Sarah Hoppe |
| 15. Pray for our Church | 31. Anita Hoting |
| 16. Dan and Maureen Heilman;
Luke, Amelia | |

College Students:

Carter Brouwer
Jayden De Boer
Dahson De Jong
Wyatt Dykstra
Andrea Leusink
Austin Wassman

Dalten Bremer
Faye Carda
Jennifer Cuadros
Clint Henrichs
Ashilyn Hulstein
Natalie Klaassen

Leah Ackerman
Grant Brouwer
Cody Dykstra
Tanner Dykstra
Jagger Johnson

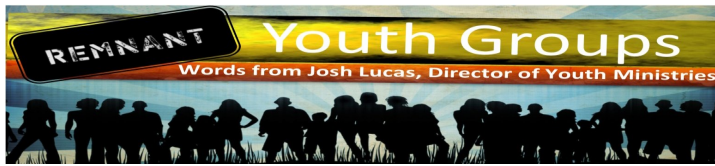
Alex Mc Dougall
Lane Tangeman
Carson Van Westen
Alyssa Wassman

Kaitlyn Bechler
Kalie De Boer
Jaden Abels
Nick Buysman
Hunter DeJong
Hunter Rockman
Ryan Van Marel
Mariah Elser

Peyton Crichton
Garrett Sayler
Makayla Tangeman

Jena Van Marel
Troy Soat

Hannah Lucas



Hello First Reformed Church,

Your Devil Crushing Ninja Trainer (Youth Director for short) here to give you an update on what is happening and hopefully to encourage you! We had a very successful summer to say the least! We took our high school group to Lake Charles, LA for a mission trip, and then we took our middle schoolers on a trip to the Ark Encounter and Creation Museum. These trips were successful to our standards of what makes a trip good. We first measure what the majority of students got out of the trip. Was it a positive experience? Did they learn something new that will be beneficial to them later in life? Did they grow in their spiritual life? Second, we look at Bible study time. Did our students spend time in the word, not just a short devotional. Was there teaching involved? Did they dig deeper into the Word? Finally, how were they challenged? These three aspects are what make a good youth trip and/or mission trip. I have to say all three of these aspects were accomplished and then some. We obviously have it down as a majority, because there are times when we have students that do not get anything out of a trip or at least not as much as someone else did, so we want to score it based on majority and not just the whole group.

The mission trip was successful because one, it got our students out of the Midwest and to see a whole different culture. That in itself is a very positive thing. Next, our students were able to see what it is like for people who have lost everything materialistic in their lives. There were some homeowners that had lived in their homes for decades and raised their kids in that same home only to see it destroyed. It was good for them to see how invaluable our homes need to be. Also, they were able to work in extremely hot working conditions that they were not used to. It showed them the importance of hard work and what it means to rely on God for strength. Fourth, we spent a ½ hour to 1 hour every day and night, except for one night, in God's word doing devotions and expanding our knowledge of his truth. Finally, our students left the trip growing in their faith. I am sure you have heard the testimonies from the students of how God really worked in their lives.

The Ark Encounter and Creation Museum trip was very successful as well. It was a trip that really opened all of our eyes to the beauty and complexity of God's creation. A lot of questions were asked and answered on this trip and students left the trip with the mindset, "This is not just a story in the Bible, this actually happened and there is evidence for it." One of the biggest ways that we saw God moving was in the realm of science. Science tries to say that it created itself and that it governs itself and that we are all cosmic accidents, but that is not the case. Students left knowing that God is real, and he created everything and set things in motion for the world to sustain itself, and God is still in control of it. We did devotions everyday, two-three times per day to get their minds thinking about what they were going to learn about that day. Finally, we saw God moving to the point of students being excited and wanting to have conversations with their friends about science, Noah's Ark, and creation itself. You will hear from them soon! I hope that you have been blessed by my newsletter, and if you ever need a hug this big ole teddy bear has got one for you!

Blessings,
Josh Lucas

Dad Jokes with Josh:

Q: Why do some couples go to the gym?

A: Because they want their relationship to workout.



Celebrations

~~Birthday's~~

1 Ellie Loerts	19 Alexis Gaalswyk Maureen Heilman
3 Vanessa Odens	
4 Garrett Sayler	20 Charlie Kuhl
5 Barbara Van Hattem	21 Jessa Wolter
6 Dale Herrboldt	22 Paul Feldkamp Jena Van Marel Lindy Tracy
7 Cory Dykstra Kade Julius Dawson Beyer Aidan Beyer	23 Kyle Soat
8 Chris Wynia Landon Odens	24 Sharon Bartels Amy Elser
9 Natalie Klaassen	25 Wilma Hatting Dan Janssen Lars Ackerman
10 Barb Van Diepen Regan Crichton Anita Ernst Rachel Waits	26 John Bartels Brenda Kuhl Brad Loerts
11 Leanne Van Kley	27 Madison Brouwer
13 Tayler Bremer	28 Larry Riebeling
15 Megan Loerts	29 David Van Ruler Parker Dagel
16 Deb Kusters Dawson Kreykes	30 Renae Groen Lisa Nissen Linda Mehls
17 Alyssa Wassman Cody Dykstra Andrea Block	31 Tessa Feldkamp Grace Sayler Jackson Van Der Sloot
18 Peyton Crichton	

~~Anniversaries~~

2 Jim & Pauline Van Engen	47 years
4 Merlin & Karen Doorenbos Chad & Megan Travaille	31 years 3 years
6 Ger and Barb Van Diepen Ken and Wilma Loerts	55 years 45 years
7 Charlie and Brenda Kuhl John and Kim Mc Dougall	40 years 22 years
10 Henry and Barb Fisher	48 years
11 Eugene and Renae Groen	49 years
13 Steve and Lynn Mulder Clayton and Jodi Wagenaar Michael and Chelsea Hulstein	33 years 33 years 10 years
15 Mike and Mary Hustoft	58 years
18 Dave & Donna Kleinwolterink	45 years
22 Arnie & Diane Langstraat	52 years
23 Scott and Jamie Hulstein Brent and Brenda Wassman	24 years 24 years
24 John and Lois Van Diepen Randy and Kelli Vande Berg	59 years 31 years
28 Leroy & Glenda De Boer	40 years
30 Steve & Leanne Van Kley Brian and Megan Loerts	47 years 13 years

Being the

Update from Brian Renes



Why does it take 15 years to translate a Bible? No surprise, it is a big book with tons of complexities.

For over 30 years I have been encountering the wonder, the richness, and the ever-deep complexity of the Bible, and specifically the unique challenge of translating God's Word into other languages. There are over 30,000 verses in the Bible. An experienced translator can maybe draft 20 to 30 verses in a day, depending on whether it is a story, poetry, or proph-

esy, the

latter being much harder. The first draft itself takes years.

Once the draft is complete, it gets reviewed by the other translators. So again, 30,000 verses are gone over one verse at a time to improve the wording and ensure a solid understanding of the passage.

Eventually, after several revisions and much discussion, the team feels like the text is ready. But before any book can be published, it needs to be others who are not on the translation team. That is called a "community check." The translation team has done the best they can do, but they need to ensure it is understood by as many people as possible. So they read it or share it with people from various churches (as shown in the pictures).

Over the past months, the Tojolabal translators have shifted to that focus and are visiting churches far and wide in the region. This experience has been great because they can share the Word of God, reading it with people who have not yet heard these texts. Many were excited to hear Psalms for the first time. But in addition to that sharing, they also discover some words that are not understood in certain communities. After each of these reading sessions, the team comes back to discuss and further improve the translation. One beautiful step closer to the first full Bible in Tojolabal.

Please pray for the Tojolabal translation team that they can have the strength to finish and the wisdom to do their work well.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership in Bible translation,

Brian and Donna Renes



**note on 15 years:* The amount of time it takes to translate a Bible has many implications. The number of translators and their ability is foremost in terms of planning the time it will take to finish. In the case of the Tojolabal translation project, they started with two translators working full time. It was obvious that it would take far longer than 15 years to complete the Bible with just the two, so another pastor was added to work with them. As the years passed, one of the original translators went blind due to complications from diabetes (he was under 50). To make up for his loss, another translator, who was a young pastor, was added. Regrettably, another got sick, so a young lady was added. Each translation project is unique, but the Tojolabal story reflects what typically happens. People get trained to do the work but, with such a long-term project, there are due to be setbacks. Thankfully, the Lord provides. His Word will go out to all—sooner or later.



Back to School

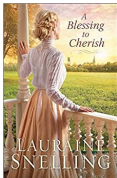


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| alphabet | learn |
| Art | library |
| backpack | Math |
| books | Music |
| classroom | numbers |
| crayons | pencil |
| desk | Physical Education |
| Drama | reading |
| elementary | recess |
| English | school |
| friends | scissors |
| Geography | Science |
| grades | Social Studies |
| Health | Spelling |
| History | students |
| homework | subjects |
| Language Arts | teacher |
| learn | writing |

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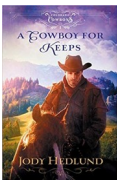
From the library--

There are four new books to write about this month:

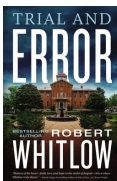


The first is in LARGE print and is *A BLESSING TO CHERISH* written by Lauraine Snelling.

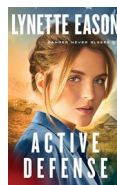
"After several years of widowhood and hard work, Ingeborg Bjorklund has reached a place of contentment with her life. She enjoys watching Blessing, North Dakota thrive and grow, filled not only with her extended family, but also newcomers like David Gould. Though a high-society businessman from New York, City, David has become a dear friend. But how should she handle the ways their relationship seems to be changing?"



Book #1 of a new series, "Colorado Cowboys" is *A COWBOY FOR KEEPS* by Judy Hedlund is our second new book. "Greta Nilsson's trip west to save her ailing little sister, Astrid, could not have gone more wrong. First, bandits hold up her stagecoach, stealing all her money. Then, upon arriving in Fairplay, Colorado, she learns the man she was betrothed to as a mail-order bride has died. Homeless, penniless, and jobless, Greta and her sister are worst off than when they started. Wyatt McQuaid is struggling to get his new ranch up and running and is in town to purchase cattle when the mayor proposes the most unlikely of bargains. He'll invest in a herd of cattle for Wyatt's ranch if Wyatt agrees to help the town become more respectable by marrying and starting a family with Greta. But when old insecurities and surprising revelations arise, can a union born out of desperation survive?"



Robert Whitlow is the author of *TRIAL AND ERROR*. It is a book that is quite true to life for this era. "Buddy Smith built his law practice around tracking down missing children. After all, he knows the agony of being separated from a child. Not long after his daughter's birth, her mother ran away and Buddy never saw either one again. Gracie Blaylock has known Buddy her entire life, and now that she is clerk of court for the county, their paths cross frequently. When Gracie hears that a teenager in town has gone missing, she knows Buddy is the one for the case. Together with Gracie and Mayleah—the new detective in town—Buddy chases all leads, hoping to reach the missing teen before it's too late. And as he pursues one girl, he uncovers clues that could bring him closer to the girl he thought he'd lost forever: his own daughter".



The last book is *ACTIVE DEFENSE* by Lynette Eason, the third book in "Danger Never Sleeps" series. "When former field surgeon Heather Fontaine returns from a party to find that someone has broken into her house—and threatened her friends—she assumes it is the stalker who has been creeping her out. She hopes to find safety and peace of mind by leaving the city and hiding out in a small town. But trouble follows her even there. Luckily, a stalker isn't the only one observing Heather. Travis Walker has been secretly watching out for her for weeks. As owner of his own security agency, it's what he does. Together, Travis and Heather must figure out who wants her dead—and why—before it is too late."

There are a lot of good books in the library, find one that meets your needs and check it out!!

~~Jeannette Juffer

1st Day of School When your Baby is a Kindergartner

She started school this morning,
And she seemed so very small.
As I walked there beside her
In the kindergarten hall.

And as she took her place beside
the others in the class,
I realized how all too soon
Those first few years can pass.

Remembering, I saw her as
She first learned how to walk.
The words that we alone made out
When she began to talk.

This little girl so much absorbed
In learning how to write.
It seems as though she must have grown
To girlhood overnight.

My eyes were blurred, but hastily
I brushed the tears away
Lest by some word or sign of mine
I mar her first big day.

Oh how I longed to stay with her
And keep her by the hand
To lead her through the places
That she couldn't understand.

And something closely kin to fear
Was mingled with my pride.
I knew she would no longer be
A baby by my side.

But she must have her chance to live,
To work her problems out,
The privilege to grow and learn
What life is all about.

And I must share my little girl
With friends and work and play;
She's not a baby anymore—
She's in kindergarten today.

The Last "1st Day of School": When your Baby is a High School Senior

What?! How did this happen? Wasn't I just in high school a few years ago? (Um, make that a few decades ago!) Obviously, this milestone didn't just sneak up on me. I knew it was coming but now that it's here, I'm going to admit that I'm not ready! He's ready, which is the important part. But having to circle the "12" on the enrollment form just doesn't seem right. Writing the word "senior" next to your baby's name isn't something you can prepare for. Knowing that this school year is going to be filled with "last times" ties my stomach in knots.

I remember the first time I held him, and his first day of pre-school. In fact, I remember almost ALL of his firsts. Now, his first day of his last school year is quickly approaching. His next "first day of school" will be without me at whatever college he chooses to go to.

I know I'm not the ONLY mom who's ever graduated her oldest child from high school. I mean, this milestone happens every year! But, it feels completely foreign and a bit like an "out of body" experience. So here is what I've decided to do to get me through this.

Enjoy every minute.

I'm going to try to find the joy in circling the "12", writing the "senior", and helping him with college applications. I'm going to be "in the moment" as much as I can. There will be times when I don't want to even think about his Senior year, but I'm going to encourage myself to enjoy it to the fullest. I'm going to find the joy in the fact that I've raised a kind, smart, funny, caring, talented human being. I'm going to allow myself the sadness, tears and lumps in my throat that will come at various times throughout this year.

And I'm going to hug him – more than he wants me to! Basically, I'm going to do what I've done with him these past 17 years – what moms do everyday....ENJOY EVERY MINUTE I HAVE WITH HIM!

By: Cyndra Whiddon

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