

FAITH & LIFE

April 2024



GROW DEEP LIVE TALL

Jeremiah 17:7-8



First Christian Reformed Church
1401 16th St
Rock Valley, IA 51247
Rev. Matthew Haan
www.firstercrv.com
712-476-5902

“I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES”



Today we shout the announcement that no other religion in the world can claim. We celebrate the fact that Easter announces that Jesus who died has now risen victorious over the grave! He Lives! Jesus Lives today!

No other religion in the world even dares to make that claim. Because in all the other religions of the world their leaders die. They die and they disappear or change into something else. And all that remains are stone statues, traditions, and ceremonies.

But in Christianity the truth that we are proclaiming is that Christ not only rose and conquered the one thing that we can't conquer with all our technology, but Jesus conquered death. Which is why we sing with boldness and joy the hymn, "Up from the Grave He Arose".

The Resurrection of our Lord is our eternal hope. So that whenever we stand next to stones of granite west of Doon or south of Rock Valley, we know that our tears are not only caught by the soil, but held by Jesus our Savior who has promised to never leave his sons and daughters in the earth. But to raise them to glory to be with him eternally.

That will be a glorious day when every grave is opened again and the physical body of those who died so long ago will stand and see their family and the glorious light of heaven present around all.

Aren't you longing for that Day! When our living redeemer will be seen in all His brilliance and glory, to be seen face to face!

Christianity is the cure that our world needs to hear. The hope of the Resurrection is what our faith is built upon as sinners who have been redeemed!

Proclaim this truth. Our Redeemer Lives!!

Blessings,

Pastor Matt



BIRTHDAYS (80+)

April 2 – Don Postma will be 90.

April 11 – Clarence Klarenbeek will be 82.

April 16 – Jane Koedam will be 85.

ANNIVERSARIES

April 4 – Clarence & Mary Ann Klarenbeek will be married 65 years.

April 17 – John & Carol De Roon will be married 56 years.

April 24 – Harold & June Driesen will be married 65 years.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to **Marva Haak and Violet Haak** on the birth of a grand/great-grandson, Bennett Duane Coulander. Bennett was born to proud parents, Steve and Megan Coulander on Jan. 28, 2024. He weighed in at 6lbs. 9oz. His excited siblings are Lane, Saydie, Willa and Livvy.

Other proud Grandparents are Hank & Sherry Coulander.

SPECIAL CONCERNS

Continue to pray for all who are anticipating or recovering from surgeries, those dealing with sickness & injuries, and those continuing their battles with cancer.

Please uphold all of our students who are completing this academic school year and preparing for life changes in their education and future endeavors.

SYMPATHIES

We express our Christian sympathy to **Albert & Harriett Van Zanten and family** and **Dick & Albertha Morlag** in the passing of their sister-in-law, Wilma Van Zanten on Feb.26.

We express our Christian sympathy to **Arnie Kempema** in the passing of his sister, Glenda Vollink on Feb.29.

*May the Lord wrap his loving arms around you
and comfort you as only He can do.*

Welcome Jaden Den Boer & Katlien Van Der Weide

I, Jaden, grew up on a farm west of Rock Valley. My parents are Nolan and Gina Den Boer. I am an electrician for American Electric in Harrisburg.

I, Katlien, also grew up on a farm west of Rock Valley. We actually grew up just a few intersections down the road from each other. My parents are Jon and Karena Van Der Weide. I am a dental assistant at the Children's Dental Centre in Sioux Center.

We both grew up with large families, which we love spending time with. We met through mutual friends in high school. We love doing anything outdoors such as boating, kayaking, hunting, golfing, etc. We are excited to get married in October and to see what other plans God has for us!

We are also excited to continue to meet more people and continue to grow our faith!



*The Blessing of a Friend
The Lord brought us together,
there's a bond that we now share.
It's a blessing we call friendship,
and it means we truly care.
You've been there during times of need,
you've shared my dreams and plans.
It's nice to know that you are there,
if I ever need a hand.
I always enjoy the time we spend,
whenever we're together,
but more than that you are my friend
and in my heart forever.
Author Unknown*



“Leap with the Lord”

When we look back on 2024, it may be special for many different people for many different reasons. Perhaps some will change careers to a job that they loved and have always wanted. Perhaps your relationship status changes from single to married or even perhaps married to widow or widower. It is safe to say that even if those categories don't fit any of the events of your life you should be able to look back on 2024 and see change.

One of the unique things about 2024 is that it is a leap year. What is a leap year? Glad you asked, because I didn't exactly know either. By definition, a leap year happens every four years when an extra day is added to the calendar. For some of us, we would welcome the next day. Others dread the extra day and want to turn the calendar to March. Whatever the case, it is a day that God has given us to use for his glory. What a unique opportunity we have!

The common thought and belief as we walk in this world is that every day should be used for God's glory regardless of any quirks of the calendar. I believe this to be true and I will admit that I don't often do my best with this opportunity. With this extra day added in the month of February, what a great reminder that we have been given to make every day count, even those that only appear on the calendar every four years!

As I think about this occurrence in the calendar, it causes me to wonder: would I do anything different with the “extra day”? Would I be more conscious of the opportunities that are available before me or what I treat it like just another day? What would you do? What could God have in store for me and you, on this day and even on an extra day during a leap year?

The interesting part is that we do not know what God has in store. We can have 10 straight days where we feel like we are living a “normal life” and then we can have one moment on the 11th day where things changed for better or for worse., So no matter if it is a leap year or regular year, God is still in control. He controls each day, the actions and inactions by people including us.

Whatever the calendar says whether there is a leap year involved or not, we can take every day and “leap with the Lord.” We can leap in his strength and power because without that we would be nowhere. We can leap in the Holy Spirit trusting him to lead and guide us. We can leap and remain on the promises of God given to us through his son and his word. No matter what the calendar says we can leap forward in Christ and hold on to his strength no matter what may come our way. What a great reminder and hope we have!



CEC TACO SUPPER!

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 2024

5:30PM - 7:00PM

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A TACO NIGHT!

***Delicious Softshell Tacos**

Toppings Include:

**Lettuce, Cheese, Onions,
Tomatoes, Taco Sauce, Salsa**

***Supreme Nachos**

***Nachos and Cheese**

***Hot Dogs and Coney Dogs**

***Root Beer Floats**

**Highlights of the March 5, 2024, meeting of Classis Iakota
Held at the Trinity CRC in Rock Valley**

- Much time in the morning was spent deliberating over several proposed overtures to synod. Four overtures were finally adopted.
 - An overture which asks synod to declare that Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 108 and sexual ethics (along with all unrepentant sin) are salvation issues based on Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 87
 - An overture which asks synod to amend Church Order, Supplement, Article 5-B which has to do with regulations concerning the procedure to be followed in the submission of a confessional-difficulty gravamen (an official grievance/concern about some aspect of our creeds and confessions)
 - An overture which asks synod to re-examine ecumenical relations with the Reformed Church in America in light of recent developments within that denomination
 - An overture which asks synod to call on all CRC churches who have publicly stated that they are no longer willing to call practicing same-sex relationships a sin to either repent of their decision or disaffiliate from the CRCNA.
- Classis granted the requests of Barry Miedema, Trevor Mouw, Nathan Nieuwendorp, and Thomas Soodsma to have their respective licenses to exhort be renewed for another two years.
- Having received word from Bridge of Hope Ministries that the job descriptions for Sam & Gail Ashmore were clarified, the Classical Interim Committee shared that Sam & Gail may now be ordained as Commissioned Pastors in the CRCNA.
- Elections which took place throughout the day led to the following results:
 - Bob Drenten to serve on the CRCNA Council of Delegates
 - Kurt Monroe, pastor for First CRC in Sioux Center, to be the Minister delegate to synod
 - Stan Wynia, from Bethel CRC in Sioux Center, to be the Elder delegate to synod
 - Jevon Groenewold, from First CRC in Sioux Center, to be the Deacon delegate to synod
 - Drew Hoekema, pastor for Platte CRC, to be the fourth officebearer delegate to synod
- Reports were given from:
 - Lee & Doug De Groot on behalf of Minn-I-Kota Youth Network
 - Tara Boer on behalf of the Classical Safe Church Team
 - Kathleen Ridder on behalf of Calvin University
 - Bob Drenten on behalf of Calvin Theological Seminary
 - John Lee on behalf of the CRC Council of Delegates
 - Brad Meinders on behalf of Resonate Global Mission
 - Ron Vos on behalf of World Renew
- After lunch the delegates gathered in smaller groups (two groups of ministers, two groups of elders, and two groups of deacons) to reflect on a set of questions (provided by the Classical Interim Committee) relating to their service as officebearers.

Rev. Bernie Haan
Stated Clerk of Classis

(For more information: www.classisiakota.org)

MORE THAN MUSIC

JUNE 7-8, 2024 | SHELDON, IA

RISEFEST 24

LEGACY PARTNER
ROSENBOOM
Custom Crafted Cylinders



IT'S MORE THAN MUSIC IT'S A MISSION

Building experiences with, through, and for the local church. We are on a mission together.

Together we want to engage people with the power of HOPE through Jesus!

We want to share what we have with you and honor your work, coming together around more than music, around a mission!

WE ARE ON A MISSION TOGETHER!

WAYS YOU CAN SHARE ABOUT RISEFEST

Contact us!

Darrel Statema
Church Engagement
(605) 838-6296
darrel@riseministries.com

WWW.RISEMINISTRIES.COM

**PARTNER
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PROMOTE
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DOWNLOAD ASSETS

“The Joy of Jesus”

The joy that Jesus offers his disciples is his own joy, which flows from his intimate communion with the One who sent him. It is a joy that does not separate happy days from sad days, successful moments from moments of failure, experiences of honor from experiences of dishonor, passion from resurrection.

This joy is a divine gift that does not leave us during times of illness, poverty, oppression or persecution. It is present even when the world laughs or tortures, robs or maims, fights or kills. It is truly ecstatic, always moving us away from the house of fear into the house of love, and always proclaiming that death no longer has the final say, though its noise remains loud and its devastation visible. The joy of Jesus lifts up life to be celebrated. ~Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Lifesigns*

“Following the ‘Perfect Fool’”

Theologian Frederick Buechner, who died at age 96 in 2022, explored how the “foolishness of God” (see 1 Corinthians 1:25) compares to human wisdom. He pondered the safety stickers that warn, “The life you save may be your own.”

“That is the wisdom of [humans] in a nutshell,” wrote Buechner. “What God says, on the other hand, is ‘The life you save is the life you lose.’ In other words, the life you clutch, hoard, guard and play safe with is in the end a life worth little to anybody, including yourself, and only a life given away for love’s sake is a life worth living.”

Buechner continued, “To bring his point home, God shows us a man who gave his life away to the extent of dying a national disgrace without a penny in the bank or a friend to his name. In terms of [human] wisdom, he was a Perfect Fool, and anybody who thinks [they] can follow him without [being] something like the same kind of a fool ... is laboring under not a cross but a delusion.”

“When it Rains”

The skeleton flower, a perennial native to Japan, has delicate petals that change from opaque white to almost transparent when wet. After it rains, only the flower’s intricate, skeleton-like veins are visible.

When the rains come (and they will!) in our lives, the same can be said. Amid difficulty and struggle, our true selves often become more transparent. During a parenting challenge, criticism might emerge. Or while we tackle a tough work project, impatience might rear its ugly head.

Hosea 6:3 (NLT) proclaims: “Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring.” The rains will come. Whether you’re experiencing light rain or a downpour, ponder what the water reveals. Then ask God how you can be more open to his work in that area. ~Janna Firestone

Bible Trivia

What does the newly risen Jesus tell his disciples — twice — when he appears in the locked room where they are hiding?

- A. “Love one another as I have loved you.”
- B. “Peace be with you.”
- C. “The last shall be first and the first shall be last.”
- D. “I am risen!”

See Next page for Answer



“Trustworthy Stewards”

After making people in his own image, God entrusted them with the rest of his creation. He wants us to manage well our bodies, our minds and our earthly home. Consider these stewardship quotes from Christian thinkers:

“We ourselves are not masters of our own ability and knowledge. They, like our talents and health, are a loan presented for our use. We must live as people who know that such temporary possessions are not true belongings and that we must give account for our management of them.”
~Albert Schweitzer

“Our God is not a God who discards what he has made, who is defeated by sin and evil. Our God is a redeeming God, a God who is determined to reclaim his fallen world, setting it free from its enslavement to corruption and bringing it to a final state of glory.” ~Douglas J. Moo, Creation Care

“Keep on Shining”

Charles W. Naylor (1874-1950) was a traveling evangelist until misfortune struck. First a tentpole fell on him as he prepared for a meeting. A year later, a bus accident left him partially paralyzed.

Despite experiencing chronic pain, Naylor became a prolific author and hymnist, dictating almost 150 songs. He often wrote about God’s loving care amid adversity. One of his hymns begins:

*When the winds of persecution blow,
When the streams of hatred toward you flow,
When your foes in number seem to grow,
Just keep on shining.*

“God’s comfort in our times of sorrow is not an imaginary thing,” Naylor wrote. “It can be so real that it is a balm for our wounded spirits. Having passed through the experience more than once, [I know] how real and vital and sustaining the comfort of God can be.”

“A Wake-up Call”

God — let me be aware.
Let me not stumble blindly down the ways,
Just getting somehow safely through the days,
Not even groping for another hand,
Not even wondering why it all was planned,
Eyes to the ground unseeking for the light,
Soul never aching for a wild-winged flight,
Please, keep me eager just to do my share.
God — let me be aware.
God — let me be aware.
Stab my soul fiercely with others’ pain,
Let me walk seeing horror and stain.
Let my hands, groping, find other hands.
Give me the heart that divines, understands.
Give me the courage, wounded, to fight.
Flood me with knowledge, drench me in light.
Please — keep me eager just to do my share.
God — let me be aware.
~Miriam Teicher



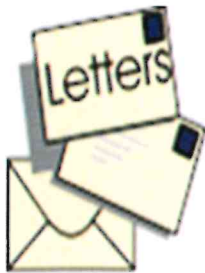
Letter Writing to our MISSIONARIES



	RIBBENS	MALETOUNGOU	KLOMPIEN
April 7	Steve H	Betty H	Darwin H
April 14	Kyle H	Rob J	Travis J
April 21	Dick J	Kevin J	Sara J
April 28	Galen K	Gerrit K	Jonathon K

Resonate Global Mission

Attn: Rev. Michael & Megan Ribbens
 1700 28th St SE
 Grand Rapids, MI 49508
 EMAIL: mrribbens@crcna.org – Mike
mrribbens@gmail.com – Megan



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Resonate Global Mission

Attn: Mark & JinHee Klompfen
 1700 28th St SE
 Grand Rapids, MI 49508
 EMAIL: mklompfen@crcna.org



GREETERS



April 7	Mike & Tammy B Myron & Amy B Austin & Allison B	Dan & Shannon B Elmer & Lori B Karl & Alyssa B	Rog & Hilaine
April 14	Eric & Tracy B Josh & Katie B Mitchell & Kelsi B	Cody & Emileann D Rick & Bonnie D Kevin & Diana DG	Larry & Yvonne
April 21	Zach & Jamie DJ Steve & April DK Tyler & Alli DB	Justin & Lisa DW Carl & Melissa E Jeff & Stephanie E	Vern & Ellen
April 28	Brian & Renae F Justin & Josie F Marv & Dee F	Bob G & Arnold K Brad & Nanci G Galen & Elsie G	Harlan & Priscilla

USHERS



April 7	East: Cody D, Mike B West: Cole VDB, Colton VO	AM PM	Jackie R, Ellen VB, Rashana M, Jaelyn K Laurie VK, Harper VB
April 14	East: Josh B, Mike VZ West: Dan B, Darin P	AM PM	Sharla VR, Taryn VH, Kayla VE, Tad M Kelsey VB, Brennan VK
April 21	East: Joël B, Matt VE West: Jace M, Alvin L	AM PM	Leah W, Jamie Z, Brea VK, Ava VO Tammy B, Jenessa VR
April 28	East: Arnold K, Bob G West: Benjamin H, Keith L	AM PM	Amy B, Allison B, Addison VH, Erica VR Shannon B, Kennedy VH

Hello

2024

April

2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 Donald Postma (90)	3 Carol De Roon Stephanie Elgersma	4 Emeri Bliet <i>the Clarence Klarenbeek's (65)</i>	5	6 Kyle Hoogendoorn Kim Van Tilburg <i>the Dick Jansma's</i>
7	8 Jessica Kats Lexi Rust Karla Van Kley	9	10 Andy Van Roekel Macay Van't Hul	11 Mike Haverhals Clarence Klarenbeek (82)	12	13
14 <i>the Eric Van Surksum's</i>	15 Darwin Hoogendoorn <i>the Joe Miller's</i>	16 Jane Koedam (85) Samantha Van Otterloo	17 Wyatt Zomer <i>the John De Roon's (56)</i>	18 Kylie Davelaar	19	20 Mike Kooistra Jonah Van Surksum <i>the Nate Van Kley's</i>
21 Zach De Jager	22 Stephanie Koedam <i>the Mike Van Otterloo's</i>	23 Marv Faber Carson Grevengoed	24 Larae Van Der Bink <i>the Harold Driessen's (65)</i> <i>the Colton Van Surksum's</i>	25 Allison Bliet Jaydn LeLoux Parker Rus <i>the Dan Eibemendaal's</i>	26 Alyssa Bos Rich Rozeboom	27 Josh Byl Bob Groeneweg Jodi Van Beek Sandy Van Bemmel Mike Van Otterloo <i>the Brad Postma's</i>
28 Gene LeLoux <i>the Blake Zomer's</i>	29 Harper Van Bemmel Leah Walls	30 Jenessa Van Roekel Wanda Vanden Bosch				