

FAITH & LIFE

February 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

“Job Speaks The Truth Of Our Redeemer Alive In Lent”



For our Lenten series this year we are turning to the comforting, challenging, and Christ-centered book of Job.

If this Old Testament book is familiar to you, I would encourage you to re-read the chapters listed below to remember the considerable blessings that Job enjoyed in the first chapter that were suddenly cut off from him by the permission of the Lord. Yet Job still brought the Lord praise and blessing in worship.

Read the words slowly and see Job's response to the pain, the sorrow, and the death of not one, but all his children. Hear this man of faith ask questions about his life and life in its fullness.

See him wrestle with his friends who are trying to help, but end up hurting him with their poverty of words and their presence that doesn't end.

Listen to the faith that remains steadfast when everyone is asking him to turn away. Even his own wife says curse God and die.

Ask yourself how you would hold up under such intense pressure? How would you hold up under such intense persecution? Pain and anguish? Most would give up. But Job does not. Job knows that his redeemer lives and in that truth his heart remains steadfast and true. Job knows that his Redeemer is the Lord. What about you?

As we come into this Lenten season so quickly after advent and Christmas, our minds and lives may seem like they are swirling like recent snow in the wind. Perhaps there is great pain or lingering doubts that need to be quelled. Take the minutes and the moments in this season to read and reflect on this book.

Here are the chapters we will be studying together:

Feb. 18, we will begin this series with both sacraments of communion and baptism, reading Job 1, as we think about Blessing the name of the Lord.

Feb 25, we will read Job 2 and wonder how God considers humanity.

Mar 3, we will continue in chapter 2 and walk with our weeping.

Mar. 10, we move to Job 3 to hear Job's questions that frequent our own lips and minds.

Mar. 17, we will ask who can be kept from speaking.

On Palm Sunday, Mar 24 we will hear the appeal and correction of the Lord.

Maundy Thursday we will hear the anguish of the soul from Job 6 and of Jesus in John 17 as he prays for us.

Good Friday brings us to Job 7 and John 19 as we hear the prophecy and see the fulfillment of Jesus dying for our pardon eternally.

Finally, on Easter morning we will celebrate that our Redeemer lives!

Blessings this Lenten Season,

Pastor Matt



BIRTHDAYS (80+)

Feb. 16 – Janice Attema will be 82.

ANNIVERSARIES (50+)

Feb. 12 – Gerrit & Esther Kats will be married 64 years.

SPECIAL CONCERNS

Gerrit Kats continues to gain strength with his health.

Krista Van Engen underwent a hysterectomy on January 4.

Alvin LeLoux will have heart ablation surgery on January 30
due to his atrial fibrillation.

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

SYMPATHY

We express our Christian sympathy **Kevin & Kristin Jansma and family** as they mourn the passing of their father & grandfather, William (Bill) Jansma who passed away on Jan. 6, 2024.

We express our Christian sympathy to **Jennie Maassen, Larry & Pam Maassen & family, Brent & Carisa Maassen & family** in the passing their son/brother on Jan. 20, 2024.

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

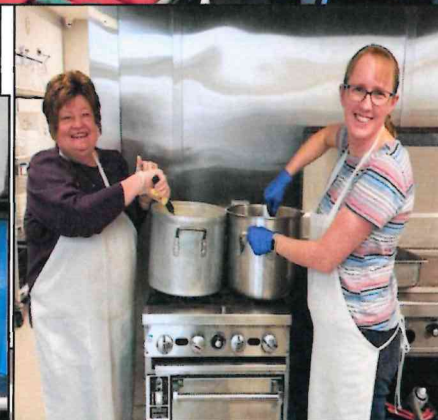
“Open invitation”

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast,
Let every soul be Jesus' guest;
Ye need not be one left behind,
For God hath bidden all humankind.

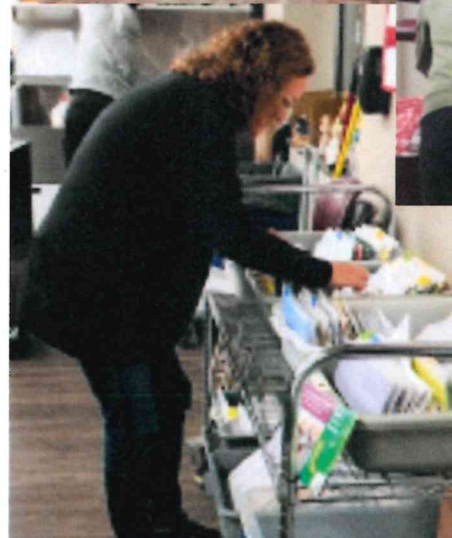
Sent by my Lord, on you I call;
The invitation is to all:
Come, all the world; come, sinner, thou!
All things in Christ are ready now.

Come, all ye souls by sin oppressed,
Ye restless wanderers after rest,
Ye poor, and maimed, and halt, and blind,
In Christ a hearty welcome find.

Serving at the
Banquet West Side
Jan. 3, 2024



Youth Group serving
Banquet Down-town.
A total of 370 meals were
served that night.



712-560-6973

Seller's Name

Name of Organization First CRC Christian Education Chapter

First CRC CEC



Name Phone		Address		Snack Bag (\$8)		Family Bag (\$20)		Total # of Items		Total \$ Balance Due		Pd	
				Cheddar Cheese									
				White Cheddar									
				Cheddar Jalapeño									
				50-50: Caramel, White Cheddar									
				Caramel									
				Chocolate Drizzled Caramel									
				Cinnamon Roll									
				Birthday Cake (contains wheat)									
				Sea Salt Caramel									
				Snack Bag (\$8)									
				Family Bag (\$20)									
				Total # of Items									
				Total \$ Balance Due									
				Pd									
				TOTALS:									

Orders and Money Due By: **February 4, 2024**

Youth Group
**FAMILY
FEUD**

Game Night!

Catered Meal Provided

*Menu: Prime Pork Loin, Garlic Mashed Potatoes,
Green Bean Casserole, Garden Salad, Rolls, and Dessert*

FEBRUARY 21, 2024

6:30PM – FELLOWSHIP HALL

Adult Night Out

Freewill Offering
(\$20 suggested per plate)

RSVP (BY FEBRUARY 11, 2024)

ADULTS ATTENDING: _____

PHONE #: _____



“The Beautiful Tree”

Most of us would agree when picking out a Christmas tree (or several if you are someone that has multiple trees) that we want to pick the best. We want to pick the one that has the most growth, not a sparse tree with few branches. We want to pick ones with sturdy trunks that can stand firmly no matter where they are placed either inside or outside. We want a tree that promotes health that will last all December and perhaps into January as we celebrate the season. All in all, we want healthy trees to use in our celebration of Christmas and even more so in our decorations for the holidays.

As we move forward into the year of our Lord 2024 and past the celebrations of Christmas and the new year there is another tree that comes into mind. This tree may not be beautiful to the naked eye, in fact it may be destined for the scrapheap in many minds. Its rough exterior may cause us to cringe, even more so when we realize that someone had to be put on that tree. The splinters that are near where the hands and the feet would go scares away from even considering this tree. Yet there was one person who gladly took on everything this tree had to offer including the sins of mankind.

This beautiful tree was found on the hill of Calvary. This beautiful tree is special not because of what it looks like but because of who it held. No expensive ornament or heirloom angel set up on the tree. Instead, the son of God, fully human and yet fully divine, was placed upon that tree. He wasn't put there to serve as a decoration instead he was put there to serve as a declaration of God's saving work and sin and Satan's total defeat. He was not placed there as a memory of Christmases gone by, instead he is the eternal sacrifice that stands as a stark reminder of the price that was paid.

While this time of year we often focus on the beautiful Christmas tree with good reason there is another tree that we can look for to focus on as well. This beautiful tree bought us the only present truly worth having, salvation found in Jesus Christ. This beautiful tree stood out not because of its beauty within the tree itself but because of the beautiful Savior that was placed upon it. This tree did not have strips of garland or other decorations to cover it, yet it was covered with the blood of the Savior meant for each of us.

While totally different in nature and in purpose these trees are connected. One is a heralding promise of the everlasting of Jesus coming as a baby, the other serves as a reminder of the penalty he paid. One serves as a continuous reminder of the gift of Jesus Christ and his life, while the other serves as a reminder of Jesus's death. Each tree stands as visual reminders of what Christ has done for us. Each tree carries a private yet beautiful dignity, welcoming of the Savior to earth and a beautiful and poignant reminder of the sacrifice of that same Savior. What beautiful trees! What wonderful reminders! What pieces of reflection are ours as we leave behind Christmas 2023 and look onto the year of our Lord 2024.

The Wheeled Worshiper

"Spring training for Christians"

The word Lent comes from Middle English and German words for springtime. In light of the start of baseball season, some people call the pre-Easter season "spring training for Christians." This fresh perspective moves away from the flawed understanding that Lent must be somber, or that giving something up for Lent is punishment for sin or a way to earn God's favor.

As people of faith, we should never take a season off. But every so often — at least once a year! — we do well to examine where we need to get back in shape spiritually. Perhaps we will indeed opt to give something up: that swearing habit, sleeping in on Sundays, or the cost of a weekly treat so we can donate the money instead. Or maybe we'll take on something new for Lent: a Bible study, prayer routine or service project.

Hebrews describes spiritual discipline as challenging in the moment but yielding righteousness later. The writer urges us, "Lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees ... so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed" (12:11-13, ESV). May the spring training of Lent strengthen and heal us all.

"GOD-SHAPED HOLE"



HAVE YOU EVER NEARED THE COMPLETION OF A JIGSAW PUZZLE, ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT A PIECE OR TWO IS MISSING? THAT'S AN APT VISUAL FOR WHAT IT'S LIKE TO LIVE WITHOUT GOD. BLAISE PASCAL, A 17TH-CENTURY PHILOSOPHER, OBSERVED: "THERE IS A GOD-SHAPED VACUUM IN THE HEART OF EACH MAN WHICH CANNOT BE SATISFIED BY ANY CREATED THING BUT ONLY BY GOD THE CREATOR, MADE KNOWN THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."

CENTURIES EARLIER, ST. AUGUSTINE PROCLAIMED "THOU HAST MADE US FOR THYSELF, O LORD, AND OUR HEARTS ARE RESTLESS UNTIL THEY FIND THEIR REST IN THEE." AND IN THE OLD TESTAMENT, THE WRITER OF ECCLESIASTES EXPOUNDED ON THE MEANINGLESSNESS OF EARTHLY STRIVING AND MATERIAL PURSUITS. ONLY GOD'S SPIRIT CAN FILL OUR EMPTINESS AND SATISFY OUR ETERNAL LONGINGS.

"I HAVE COME THAT THEY MAY HAVE LIFE, AND HAVE IT TO THE FULL," SAYS JESUS IN JOHN 10:10 (NIV). HE ALONE PROVIDES THE SOLUTION FOR EMPTINESS. WHAT COMFORT TO BE FILLED WITH — AND TO FIND OUR FULFILLMENT IN — OUR SAVIOR!

"The Realm of the Impossible"

The wonderful thing about praying is that you leave a world of not being able to do something and enter God's realm, where everything is possible. He specializes in the impossible. Nothing is too great for his almighty power. Nothing is too small for his love. ~Corrie ten Boom

Bible Trivia

Use one word (perhaps in different forms) for all the blanks to complete this Scripture passage: "Dear friends, let us ____ one another, for ____ comes from God. Everyone who ____ has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not ____ does not know God, because God is ____."

- A. believe
- B. help
- C. love
- D. forgive

See next page for Answer



“Invaluable!”

“The kingdom of heaven,” said Jesus, “is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it” (Matthew 13:45-46, NRSV).

In 2021, the Good News Network reported that a crab fisherman in Thailand stumbled upon a valuable Melo pearl while cutting up a snail for lunch. In wonder, he brought it to his brother to verify the discovery. “My family had been fishing for generations,” said Prasarnphon Phunwan, “but I believe our fate is about to change because of my lunch.” Several months prior, another fisherman had been offered \$351,000 for a similar pearl.

Likewise, God’s priceless love immeasurably alters our eternal fate. If we fully comprehended the value of that love, we’d give up everything to obtain it. But the greater wonder is that we don’t have to buy it. God gives it to us as a gift! Whether we seemed to encounter Jesus by chance or someone joyfully shared the Gospel with us, our Savior is the merchant who “sold all that he had” — even his life. So priceless is salvation! So valuable are we! ~Heidi Hyland Mann

“Learning To Forgive”

Forgiveness is great in theory, and it’s a wonderful blessing to receive. But granting forgiveness can be another story. As C.S. Lewis said, “Everybody says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive.” Likewise, forgiveness doesn’t simply happen over time, as forgetting often does. Instead, it’s “an act of volition,” said Simon Wiesenthal, “and only the sufferer is qualified to make the decision.”

Because forgiveness has many spiritual, emotional and even physical benefits, the secular world is taking notice. Colleges now offer classes about forgiveness skills and strategies. “You practically never hear sermons on forgiveness that are practical and give clear instructions on how to approach it,” Professor Robert Enright tells the Washington Post.

Graduate student Shyanne Sporrer says a forgiveness class helped her realize the danger of holding grudges. “Forgiving does not mean you are giving up power,” she says. “On the contrary, when you forgive, you are the person who is in control. By forgiving, you can empower yourself to move forward from the anger and resentment to be a better version of yourself.”

“Ground Rules for Love”

In *Let Me Be a Woman*, missionary Elisabeth Elliot writes about the “ground rules” for “how this thing called love really works — in a marriage, in the world.” Her list reflects many of the principles found in 1 Corinthians 13, the Bible’s love chapter.

- This love of which I speak is slow to lose patience. It looks for a way of being constructive.
- Love is not possessive.
- Love is not anxious to impress, nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own ideas.
- Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage.
- Love is not touchy.
- Love does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it is glad ... when truth prevails.
- Love knows no limits to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope; it can outlast anything. It is, in fact, the one thing that stands when all else has fallen.



Cornerstone Prison Church Newsletter

As you come to him, the living Stone - rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him - you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious **cornerstone**,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame."

1 Peter 2:4-6

January 2024

EXPANDING THE KINGDOM FROM THE INSIDE-OUT

GLIMPSES OF GOODNESS

The opening verses of Luke 2 provide the setting and situation for the birth of Christ. Many of us put up manger scenes and reflect on the reality that the King of Kings was born in a dingy place. We are reminded at verse seven that Mary and Joseph weren't granted better accommodations because there was no place for them in the inn.

I try to imagine the transition it must have been for Jesus. Having eternally existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and taking a first breath in a cattle stall. The glaring contrast between rolling out the red carpet for people of great importance and the messy arrival of the Messiah should shock us. As we begin a new year it should serve as a reminder that from the very beginning Jesus brought great hope and joy in unlikely places. Remembering what was less than desirable as Jesus arrived should help us remember how he continues to bring hope and joy in less than desirable times and places.

The last quarter of 2023 was filled with further changes and challenges for Cornerstone Prison Church. Chapel programs have continued to be impacted by policy changes and staffing shortages. Outside of the chapel, the lives of the men have also seen changes and challenges. There are less jobs, less hours to go to rec, less single occupancy cells, and at times less time out of the cells for everyone.

One of our annual programs was directly impacted by this reality. Every year we partner with the other chaplains in the South Dakota DOC Chaplains Advisory Committee to provide a sack of Christmas goodies to all the inmates. The last few years we have had a team of guys help us pack the roughly 800 sacks for the Hill and have distributed them at the rotunda as the men head back from their evening meal. This year, an unexpected lockdown of the facilities meant there was no help from the guys in the packaging process and no opportunity for them to come to us to receive their gifts. Instead, while the whole prison was on lockdown a few of us brought the Christmas sacks to every cell in the prison.

(Continued on back)

This was a lot of work, and a sharp contrast to what was expected. But it was also a unique gift. That in the middle of undesirable times a reminder of hope and joy showed up in unexpected places. Many expressed the relief of a moment to feel like being home with family, enjoying a special treat, and the sense of joy of simply receiving a gift and knowing the care that it represented.

This last year there have been many frustrations, but there have also been many glimpses of goodness right through them. Maintaining our ministry hasn't been easy, but the Lord has been faithful to show up bringing joy when the situation has people feeling down and to share hope with the hurting. Whether you have put away your Christmas decorations or will do so soon, I encourage you to take an extra moment imagining the light of the world showing up in a dingy cattle stall and then say a prayer for the hurting, the addicted, the incarcerated, and the families they have been kept separate from, inviting God to continue to show up as the Messiah that enters our messes showing us the love of our faithful Heavenly Father.

*New Year's Peace,
- Pastor Scott*



Cornerstone Prison Church

www.cornerstonepcsd.org

- Scott Van Voorst, Pastor
scott@cornerstonepcsd.org

Outside Office:

PO Box 88708
Sioux Falls, SD 57109
Ph 605.496.8152

office@cornerstonepcsd.org

Inside:

1600 North Drive
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
Ph 605.367.5749

Cornerstone Annual Benefit Banquet

Save the date!

When: Monday, April 1, 2024 - 6:30pm.

Doors open at 6:00pm.

Where: Trinity CRC - Rock Valley, IA

Cedar Rock Café out of Rock Valley, IA will be providing the food.

Please join us for an evening of celebrating how the hope of Jesus Christ is working in hearts and lives of inmates in the SDSP!

A freewill offering will be taken to help with Cornerstone financial needs.

RSVP to Kim at 712.476.5292 or at www.cornerstonepcsd.org

Give your gifts to Cornerstone Prison Church

Enclosed is a \$ _____ gift for Cornerstone Prison church

Please use for () General Fund () Bibles & Materials () Cornerstone Barnabus Foundation

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Please make checks payable to *Cornerstone Prison Church*.

Donations are tax deductible.

Donations can be sent to:

Cornerstone Prison Church, c/o David Vande Kamp, Treasurer,
801 S. Gordon Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 57110.



Letter Writing to our MISSIONARIES



	RIBBENS	MALETOUNGOU	KLOMPIEN
February 4	Steve DK	Clarence DR	Doug DR
February 11	John DR	Justin DW	Tyler DB
February 18	Harlan D	Harold D	Jim D
February 25	Carl E	Jeff E	Brian F

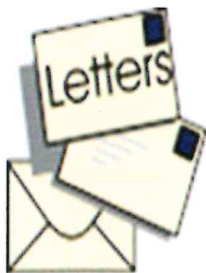
Resonate Global Mission

Attn: Rev. Michael & Megan Ribbens

1700 28th St SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49508

EMAIL: mrribbens@crcna.org – Mike
mrribbens@gmail.com – Megan



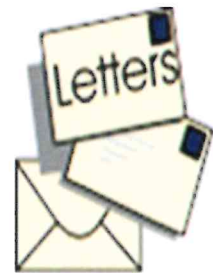
Resonate Global Mission

Attn: Rev. Sosthene & Kara Maletoungou

1700 28th St SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49508

EMAIL: smaletoungou@crcna.org



Resonate Global Mission

Attn: Mark & JinHee Klompier

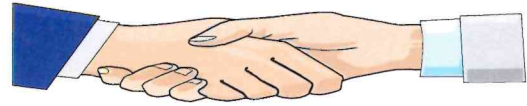
1700 28th St SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49508

EMAIL: mklompier@crcna.org



GREETERS



February 4	Jonathon & Tamae Kats Taylor & Jessica Kats Brett & Malorie Kirkley	Ruth Koedam Alex & Michelle Kooima Darin & Megan Kooima	Harlan & Priscilla
February 11	Mike & Ranae Kooistra Matthew & Autumn Laman Alvin & Sue LeLoux	Evan & Rhonda LeLoux Gene & Carla LeLoux Keith & Jacque LeLoux	Ron & Darletta
February 18	Shanna LeLoux Jacob & Amanda Maassen Larry & Pam Maassen	Joe & Jill Miller Brian & Tricia Mulder Darin & Lisa Pollema	John & Carol
February 25	Mike & Niki Pollema Brad & Brenda Postma Rich & Lynnette Rozeboom	Damon & Jackie Rus Alex & Alexis Rust Dustin & Jodi Van Beek	Rog & Hilaine

USHERS



February 4	East: Arnold K, Bob G West: Benjamin H, Keith L	AM PM	Laurie VK, Sharla VR, Alison L, Noah DK Taryn VH, Mason J
February 11	East: Jeff E, Rick D West: Ron L, Gene L	AM PM	Kelsey VB, Jamie Z, Jaydn L, Jaelyn K Tammy B, Rashana M
February 18	East: Cody D, Mike B West: Cole VDB, Colton VO	AM PM	Kayla B, Aftyn B, Kayla VE, Teeghan B, Erica VR Jill M, Benjamin H
February 25	East: Josh B, Mike VZ West: Dan B, Darin P	AM PM	Leah W, Allison B, Kaysha A, Tad M Shannon B, Brennan VK

2024

February

2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2 <i>the Larry Maassen's</i>	3
4 Owen Laman Laura Van Kalsbeek	5	6 Ashley Van Otterloo Starla Van Otterloo	7 Mitchell Byl Kevin Jansma Colton Van Surksum Blake Zomer	8 Kendra Jansen Deacon Pollema Mark Van't Hul	9 Bristyl Bleyenbergh	10 Jeff Kats Aysha Pollema
11 Evan Altena Jackie Rus	12 Steve Hoekstra <i>the Gerrit Kats' (64)</i>	13 Madison Olivera <i>the Rick Davelaar's</i>	14	15 Easton Kooima	16 Janice A'tema (82)	17 Tessa Breuer
18	19	20 Brielle Jansma	21 Rod Banda	22 Ryan Olivera <i>the Tim Van Tilburg's</i>	23	24
25 Jay Ver Burg	26 Jace Mulder	27 Jeff Elgersma Deanna Faber Kendra Van Tilburg	28 Noah De Kam	29		