

# FAITH & LIFE

February 2025



*GROW DEEP LIVE TALL*

*Jeremiah 17:7-8*

First Christian Reformed Church

1401 16<sup>th</sup> St

Rock Valley, IA 51247

Rev. Matthew Haan

[www.firstcrcrv.org](http://www.firstcrcrv.org)

712-476-5902



## “FINDING ENRICHMENT”

One of the blessings of life, is being able to find enrichment. Whether that enrichment comes from reading your favorite author or sitting by your neighbor at a youth or high school sporting event, doing a craft or mission project with someone you know or you just met, playing an instrument or participating in a hobby. Finding enriching activities and experiences is life giving.

It is my prayer that throughout your life you have had countless enrichment opportunities through the experiences listed above or countless others in business, education, or in supplication before the Lord in prayer to be enriched in blessed ways.

This is because God designed our beings to be enriched by Himself and by one another. God enriches people in many ways, including enriching minds with eternal perspective and enriching our tongues with eternal vocabulary. He enriches our heart and soul with His eternal gift of faith so that we would be carried in this life and the life to come by the Holy Spirit. That we would cling to Christ Jesus as Savior and Lord.

This is what the Lord says to us through the apostle Paul, “I always thank God for you because of His grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in Him you have been enriched in every way—in all your speaking and in all your knowledge—because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you.” (1 Cor. 1:5-6).

How do you enjoy living through these verses? Lord-willing your stories abound! But if they don’t in the current moment, let’s turn that page this month. As there are scores of opportunities to mentor one another in prayer and fellowship. There are opportunities to visit fellow members in care centers and assisted living. There are opportunities to aid our Gems and Cadet programs and nearly countless opportunities to help our schools, and other parachurch organizations. All of which are very enriching experiences. What will yours be in the month of February?

Perhaps this month is the opportunity to start loving enrichment anew, or to have your heart rekindled for enrichment again in any avenue the Lord is leading you to.

Blessings on your month and journey of lasting engagement and enrichment in the body of Christ Jesus.

Blessings,

Pastor Matt





## BIRTHDAYS

February 16 – Janice Attema will be 83.

## ANNIVERSARIES

February 12 – Gerrit & Esther Kats will be married 65 years.

## BABY BLESSINGS

-- Tim & Kendra Van Tilburg were blessed with the birth of a healthy baby girl, Faith Briella on January 10. Welcoming her home is her big sister Brooke.

## REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH/WELCOME

Abbie Eppinga Reaffirmed her Faith on Sunday, January 12

Jeremy Kooiker Professed his Faith on Sunday, January 12

## SYMPATHY

-- We express our Christian sympathies to **Austin & Allison Blik & family and Jim Driesen**, as their grandfather and brother-in-law, Herb Blik, passed away on December 23 at the age of 89.

-- We express our Christian sympathies to **Carl & Melissa, Zach & Lucy, & Carson Elbers**, as their father and grandfather, Courtney Elbers, passed away on December 29 at the age of 87.

-- We express our Christian sympathies to **Bob Kooima** as his brother-in-law, Henry Ter Wee of Larchwood, passed away on January 4 at the age of 83.

-- We express our Christian sympathies to **Gerrit & Kay Vis and Jeff & Kacie Van Bommel family – Delanie, Davis & Aubrie, Hadlie, Ryder, & Harper**, as their mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Gert Vis passed away on January 13 at the age of 101.

***We pray that our Heavenly Father will wrap the family in His arms of comfort and surround them with His peace.***

## SPECIAL CONCERNS

-- **Ruth Koedam** was diagnosed with spinal cancer. Please pray for comfort and strength for her as she continues with treatments.

-- **Don Postma** has spent some time in the Sheldon Hospital with health struggles. Pray for strength and healing for Don and for Lois as she supports him.

-- **Addison Van't Hul**, daughter of Loy & Taryn, continues to struggle with hearing loss. Continue praying for restored hearing for Addison.

-- **Marv Faber** continues chemotherapy treatments. Pray for strength, comfort, and healing through each treatment.

-- **John De Roan** – continue to pray for John as he struggles with pulmonary fibrosis, as well as a progression of his Parkinson's Disease, and for Carol as she walks alongside him.

-- **Tate Van Essen**, son of Chris & Whitney Van Essen, and grandson of Rick & Bonnie Davelaar, continues to heal from the burns he received on his legs and feet. Pray for him and his family during the lengthy healing process.

-- ***Continue to pray for all those affected by the flood and the daily changes they face in the process of recovery, relocating, and rebuilding.***

## MISSIONS

-- The following people will be traveling to Guatemala the week of February 2-8: **Lori Boon, Mike Haverhals, Tammy Haverhals, Leonard Hoekstra, Deb Hoekstra, Jill Miller, Tad Miller, Deb Van't Hul, Mark Van't Hul, Ava Van Otterloo, and Judy Van Otterloo**. Those not from our church that are also going: **James De Jong, Tyler Van't Hul**. Please pray for traveling mercies, guidance, protection, and for them to be blessed as they are a blessing to those they serve. The theme verse for the trip is *Ephesians 3:20-21* - "Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."



## *Congratulations Jaden Den Boer & Katlien Vander Weide*

Jaden and I were married on Oct. 4, 2024.

We met in high school through mutual friends and remained friends for a few years. Our day was Harrisburg and we wouldn't have changed a single thing. We loved having all of our family and friends there to celebrate. I had my 3 sisters, 2 friends, and Jaden's 2 sisters as bridesmaids and his 2 younger sisters as personal assistants. Jaden had his brother, my 2 brothers, and 4 friends as groomsmen and 2 friends as ushers. My little sister and his nephew were our flower girl and ring bear. We went to Cancun, Mexico for our honeymoon, which was also amazing, despite the small little hurricane passing through. Jaden is an Electrician for American Electric out of Harrisburg, and I am a Dental Assistant at the Children's Dental Centre in Sioux Center along with a barista at Rooted and an instructor at Pulse in my free time. We bought a house together in June on the Northeast side of Rock Valley and are loving it!





## Families in Guatemala



## February 2-8, 2025 Team

The following people from First CRC serving in Guatemala this week:

- ❖ Lori Boon
- ❖ Mike & Tammy Haverhals
- ❖ Leonard & Deb Hoekstra
- ❖ Jill & Tad Miller
- ❖ Mark & Deb Van't Hul
- ❖ Judy & Ava Van Otterloo
- ❖ James De Jong
- ❖ Tyler Van't Hul

Please be in prayer for safe travels and God's glory to be evident through their presence among the people!





# First CRC 12th Annual Ice Fishing Tournament at Lake Pahoja

Saturday, February 8, 2025

★PRIZES AWARDED★

★BRING YOUR OWN GEAR★

7:30AM – Check-in/Set-up

8:00AM – Start

10:00AM – Fish Weigh-ins/Awards

The Fellowship Committee will be providing  
Hot Chocolate, Coffee, & Donuts

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**List Name(s) of Each Participant:**

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**Phone # -** \_\_\_\_\_

\*You are responsible for your own safety and those participating with you during this entire outing!\*



IGNITE YOUTH GROUP

# Valentine's Day Party

Feb 19, 2025

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR

FOOD . GAMES. FELLOWSHIP.

6:30 PM AT FIRST CRC ROCK VALLEY

Join us a catered meal and a fun game of Family Feud!  
Please RSVP to 712.578.8742 or email [youth@firstcrcrv.org](mailto:youth@firstcrcrv.org) by

Tuesday, February 11

Suggested donation of \$20

## **“God’s Nature in Human Form”**



Why shepherds? Many of us have read the Christmas story hundreds if not thousands of times over our lifetimes and I would dare to guess that we have asked that very question. Why were shepherds the first recipients of the message of the Savior? Why not King Herod, the Pharisees, or another government official? Why not share the message with someone like Simeon or Anna from the temple who had been waiting lifetimes, their own included, to see the fulfillment of the prophecy? There may not be a clear definitive answer to why God chose shepherds on the hillside, but I think we can begin to understand how God ultimately wanted to be portrayed and why this created such confusion for the rest of the world.

We often call God “our shepherd” or the “Good Shepherd”. Psalm 23 offers great insight into what Jesus does for us as the shepherd. It causes me to believe that it was no coincidence that the shepherds were the first recipients of the gift of the Ultimate Shepherd. While they may not have known what was truly happening, God knew the message he wanted to send and the people he wanted to send it with. He knew that the royal Son of God would ultimately forego that royalty here on earth and instead take the role of a servant and shepherd.

It falls to us then as we read the Christmas story once again to take a moment and look at the shepherds. We are not given much for detail such as names, specific places, or back stories of any of the shepherds. Yet we can surmise from other passages of Scripture that shepherds were not often seen as high on society’s ladder. Yet, they had an important job and were central to the upkeep of a family business if one was in farming. Any livestock including sheep were valuable not only as a means for buying and selling but also as a means for sacrifice for a family or even a community. This causes me to believe even more fully that Christ knew what he was doing when he allowed himself to be compared to not only a shepherd but also a sheep, a sacrifice for all. Only God could take one of the lowliest occupations with one of the lowliest animals and turn it into a heavenly calling. Only Jesus could become a shepherd yet still be considered the King of kings and Lord of lords.

When Jesus became a shepherd, he became God’s nature in human form. God’s nature of care and concern for his creation is embodied in the care and concern that a shepherd shows to his sheep from the first to the 99th. There can be many other descriptions given for our father God and for the Savior of the universe, but none seem to be more powerful, at least to me then the role of shepherd. As we reflect on the Christmas story, this year, may we take a moment to focus on the shepherds, the role that they played before the message was given to them and the role that they played after. We should also take time to consider the role that Jesus Christ plays as our Ultimate Shepherd, from the Christmas story, to the cross, to the grave and even now. In doing so, we begin to get a glimpse of the nature of the Almighty Father in human form and we can begin to understand more richly and deeply his care and concern for us, his sheep.





### **“A Prayer for President’s Day”**

Lord of heaven and earth, we offer you our deepest gratitude for this country and the freedom to worship you. Stir up a sense of stewardship so we all may care for our nation and each inhabitant of it.

We pray especially for our leaders, that you will bless them with wisdom and humility. Prompt everyone in positions of authority to pursue righteousness, justice and the welfare of all. Remind us of the psalmist’s teaching: “Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12, NRSV). May that promise be fulfilled “from sea to shining sea.” Amen.

### **“True Love”**

Many of us celebrate Valentine’s Day in both fun and serious ways. Children exchange treats and humorous cards with classmates and friends; some bring home handmade cards for the adults in their lives. Romantic partners may go out to eat and present each other flowers, chocolate, a fancy card — maybe even an engagement ring!

As playful as Valentine’s Day can be, it’s also a great time to remember the serious side of love, as indicated by these quotes:

“When you love someone, you love the whole person as he or she is, and not as you would like them to be.” —Leo Tolstoy

“You don’t love someone because they’re perfect; you love them in spite of the fact that they’re not.” —Jodi Picoult

“Love ... is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. ... It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weaknesses.” —Ann Landers

We can do the difficult work of true love — actions, not just feelings — only because God loved us first. He did (and does) so despite our imperfection, and in Jesus, God shows us how to share true love with others. This Valentine’s Day, if you don’t remember any other profound quotes, hold this one in your heart:

“We love because God first loved us.” —1 John 4:19 (NCV)

### **“Love Makes us Worthy”**

Unlike God, who loves unconditionally, humans often make choices and set limits when doling out affection. But Thomas Merton reminds us, “Our job is to love others without stopping to inquire whether or not they are worthy. That is not our business and, in fact, it is nobody’s business. What we are asked to do is to love, and this love itself will render both ourselves and our neighbors worthy.” As for how to develop and maintain that type of love? Merton shares, “It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my [neighbors].”

### **Bible Trivia**

The short Old Testament book of Lamentations is a set of communal laments (sorrowful songs) about the destruction in 587 B.C. of which city, by which people?

- A. Babylon; the Assyrians
- B. Jerusalem; the Babylonians
- C. Rome; the Greeks
- D. Caesarea Philippi; the Romans

See next page for answer





### **“Time”**

Time is  
too slow for those who wait,  
too swift for those who fear,  
too long for those who grieve,  
too short for those who rejoice.  
But for those who love,  
time is eternity.  
~Henry Van Dyke

### **“All the Ways God Helps Us”**

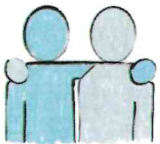
When young adults land in difficult situations and desperately call home, parents respond in various ways. They might remind their son or daughter of guidelines learned years back — behavior and problem-solving skills to get back on track. Or maybe parents direct their kids to a mentor, expert or resource for assistance. But if the crisis is severe, no doubt these loving parents hop in the car, or even on a plane, and go to their child. They embrace and support them, perhaps even taking initial steps to bring them through the chaos to a new beginning.

When the people of Israel were in the wilderness, exile and countless difficulties in between, God lovingly used each of these strategies. God reminded Israel of the Ten Commandments and other laws he gave to guide their life together. Sometimes he sent prophets and other leaders to direct the people into better ways and times. God does the same today, reminding us of Scripture's guidance and sending us prophetic voices and wise leaders.

Above all, when nothing less would save people, ancient and modern, from the dangers of sin and death, God came to us as Jesus. God's only Son walked with us, lived through our troubles alongside us, taught us new ways directly and brought us out of the problematic place where we were trapped and into a new beginning. ~Heidi Hyland Mann

### **“I Am Here”**

In *Bread for the Journey*, theologian Henri J.M. Nouwen calls consolation — from “to be with” (con-) “the lonely one” (solus) — “one of the most important ways to care.” He writes, “Life is so full of pain, sadness and loneliness that we often wonder what we can do to alleviate the immense suffering we see.”



Although consoling doesn't necessarily remove someone's pain, Nouwen notes that it serves a deeper purpose: To console means “to be there and say, ‘You are not alone, I am with you. Together we can carry the burden. Don't be afraid. I am here.’ That is consolation. We all need to give it as well as to receive it.”

### **“Valentines for Kids”**

Valentine's Day isn't just for schoolchildren and sweethearts. Loving parents should strive to give their children these life-changing gifts during February and beyond.

- Acceptance:** Say and show that you love children for who they are. Give this gift with a kiss.
- Self-confidence:** Help boost kids' trust in themselves. Give this gift with a hug.
- Peace:** Model how to give your worries to God. Offer this present with laughter.
- Gratitude:** Help children be genuinely thankful for each new day and for all of life. Give this gift as they go out the door.
- Faith:** Introduce children to Jesus, the best friend they'll ever have. Do this by taking them to church and Sunday school regularly.





## Letter writing to our Missionaries

### RIBBENS

### MALETOUNGOU

### KLOMPIEN

February 2	Darwin H	Kyle H	Rob J
February 9	Travis J	Dick J	Kevin J
February 16	Sara J	Galen K	Gerrit K
February 23	Jonathon K	Pat K	Brett K

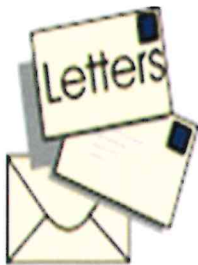
### Resonate Global Mission

Attn: Rev. Michael & Megan Ribbens

1700 28<sup>th</sup> St SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49508

EMAIL: [mribbens@crcna.org](mailto:mribbens@crcna.org) – Mike  
[mribbens@gmail.com](mailto:mribbens@gmail.com) – Megan



### Resonate Global Mission

Attn: Rev. Sosthene & Kara Maletoungou

1700 28<sup>th</sup> St SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49508

EMAIL: [smaletoungou@crcna.org](mailto:smaletoungou@crcna.org)



### Resonate Global Mission

Attn: Mark K family

1700 28<sup>th</sup> St SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49508

\*Please mail to Mark



# February

## GREETERS



February 2	Mike & Niki Pollema Brad & Brenda Postma Rich & Lynnette Rozeboom	Damon & Jackie Rus Alex & Alexis Rust Jeff & Kacie Van Bemmell	Larry & Yvonne
February 9	Lindsey Van Bemmell Verlyn & Sandy Van Bemmell Dereck & LaRae Van Der Brink	Lyle & Joyce Van Engen Matt & Krista Van Engen Albert & Grace Van Grootheest	Vern & Ellen
February 16	Fred & Karla Van Kley Nate & Laurie Van Kley Colton & Ashley Van Otterloo	Merlin & Cindy Van Otterloo Michael & Judy Van Otterloo Nolan & Julie Van Otterloo	Harlan & Priscilla
February 23	Warren Van Otterloo Colton & Leah Van Surksum Mike & Gert Van Regenmorter	Andy & Sharla Van Roekel Eric & Erica Van Surksum Alyssa Van't Hul	Ron & Darletta

## USHERS



February 2	East: Josh B, Mike VZ West: Dan B, Darin P	AM PM	Jamie DJ, April DK, Aftyn B, Jaelyn K Alli DB, Teeghan B
February 9	East: Joel B, Matt VE West: Tyler DB, Alvin L	AM PM	Priscilla D, Steph E, Kayla B, Ada K Deb H, Noah DK
February 16	East: Arnold K, Bob G West: Benjamin H, Keith L	AM PM	Cherie G, Kendra J, Amera F, Kate L Jessica K, Titus H
February 23	East: Taylor K, Rick D West: Joe M, Gene L	AM PM	TaMae K, Malorie K, Brielle J, Faith K Michelle K, Alison L



# February 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 <i>the Larry Maassen's</i>	3	4 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 Bristy   Bleyenber	10 Jeff Kats Aysha Pollema	11 Evan Altena Jackie Rus	12 Steve Hoekstra <i>the Gerrit Kats' (85)</i>	13 <i>the Rick Davelaar's</i>	14 Owen Laman	15 Easton Kooima
16 Janice Altena (83)	17 Tessa Breuer	18	19	20 Brielle Jansma	21 Rod Banda	22 <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	