

FAITH & LIFE

March 2024



GROW DEEP LIVE TALL

Jeremiah 17:7-8



First Christian Reformed Church

1401 16th St

Rock Valley, IA 51247

Rev. Matthew Haan

www.firstcrcrv.com

712-476-5902

“THANKING GOD FOR FAITHFULNESS”



Whenever faithful workers in the harvest field of the church retire, we the church need to reflect and rejoice at the gifts of fruitfulness and faithfulness that we have experienced richly. These thoughts of truth and grace are certainly true of Dee Faber.

Dee started playing regularly for our church 55 years ago. She was already an accomplished organist having begun 8 years prior, and she has only improved through the years.

Each of our accompanists are extremely important to me as a pastor because that person is my co-worker when it comes to leading worship. We are leading worship together. As a congregation, we should never take for granted the person who does this work, especially in this day and age when accompanists, particularly organists, are becoming more scarce.

One of the directives of Reformed Worship is that when an instrument is played by itself, such as in a prelude, offertory, or postlude the person listening should be able to sing the words in their mind in a devoted way to the Lord, so that each note would plow the heart for the Word of God so that it may be deeply planted.

Thank you, Dee for doing this labor faithfully in worship and all the hours of practice prior, to aid all of the congregation in their worship to God with heart, mind, and soul.

Everyone needs to realize that Dee doesn't just sit down and play for us on Sunday. She participates in the Worship committee to select the hymns, then sits down to practice the music ahead of time, which requires time away from home. Praying that each note that is played and sung in worship, would be woven into the season, sermon, and activity of a particular service.

Thank you, Dee, for all of your faithfulness through the years spanning more than 60 years in total of leading God's people to sing His praises in worship, and your countless years aiding our children to sing their praises. Your skills have brought fuller joy to moments of rejoicing at weddings, baptisms, Communions, and Professions of Faith, and great comfort in times of tears at funerals.

In this dedication, Dee has offered us some moving preludes of great depth and length and superb hymn playing. Thank you, Dee, for all those hours of practice and preparation at home and here at church. Thank you to Marv and the fullness of the Faber family, to the church of Jesus Christ gathered here. Your family's faith shines through each generation.

Thank you, Dee, for your faithful service to the Lord Triune and your sharing of musical gifts and talents with us at First Church as a lasting blessing.

Thank you Dee!

Blessings,

Pastor Matt

BIRTHDAYS (80+)

March 5– Lois Postma will be 84.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Mike & Gert Van Regenmorter as they rejoice in the birth of their 15th grandchild, Aiden Lee! Aiden was born on January 22, to Andrew & Amy Den Hartog. He was welcomed home by sister, Alyssa - 5 and brother, Austin – 3. Other grandparents include Rod & Lisa Den Hartog from Sanborn.

SPECIAL CONCERNS

Betty Hoogendoorn – continues to gain strength recovering from Covid & respiratory illness.
Kyle Hoogendoorn – continues to gain strength recovering from pneumonia.
Gerrit Kats – continues to receive treatment for cancer.
Paula Kats – has begun at-home kidney dialysis.

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.

SYMPATHIES

We express our Christian sympathies to **Harm & Bonnie Wiersma, Verlyn & Sandy Van Bommel, and Jeff & Stephanie Elgersma & family** as they mourn the loss of their beloved mother & grandmother, Mary Ann Van Bommel, who passed away on January 30, 2024.

We express our Christian sympathies to **Clarence & Esther De Roan** as they mourn the loss of their sister-in-law, Jean De Jong, who passed away on February 6, 2024.

We express our Christian sympathies to **Jack & Kelsey, Ben, Jay, & Penny Ver Burg** as they mourn the loss of their beloved father and grandfather, Marv Van Den Top, who passed away on February 18, 2024.

We express our Christian sympathies to Carl & Melissa, Zach, & Carson Elbers as they mourn the loss of their beloved mother & grandmother, Myrna Elbers, who passed away on February 19, 2024.

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

Upcoming Events:

March 3 - Coffee/Cake Fellowship for Deanna Faber

March 6 - YG Praise & Worship Night @ Trinity CRC

March 10 - Profession of Faith Sunday/Daylight Savings

March 13 - Prayer Day Service

March 24 - Palm Sunday

March 25 - Book Club Discussion Night

March 27 - Cadet-O-Rama

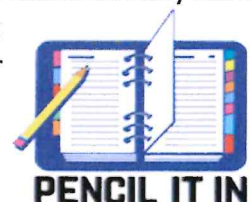
March 28 - Maundy Thursday Service/Communion

March 29 - Good Friday Service

March 31 - Easter Sunrise & Easter Sunday Services

April 1 - Council Meeting

April 3 - CEC Taco Supper



Meet Sawyer James Van Otterloo

On December 7, 2023, Colton & Ashley Van Otterloo were blessed to welcome into their lives their baby boy, Sawyer James Van Otterloo.

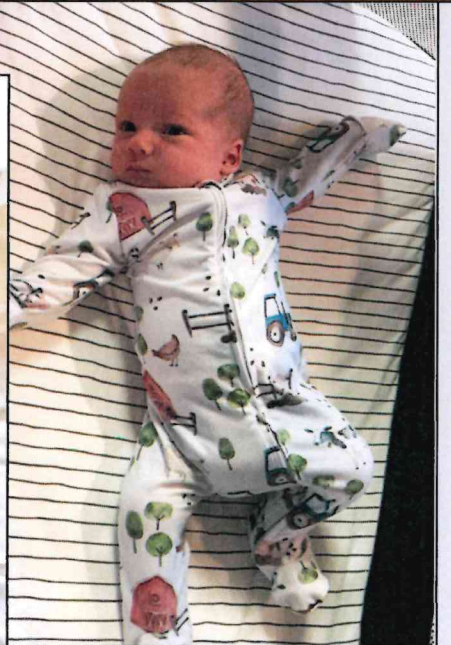
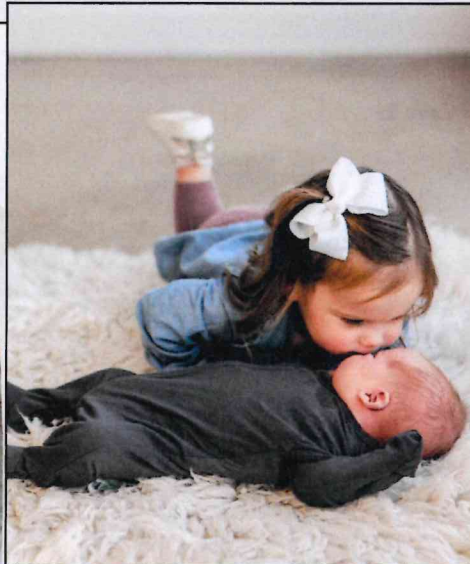
Sawyer tipped the scales at 7lbs, 10oz.
and he was 20 3/4 inches long.

Big sister, Hayden, who just turned 2 in January, welcomed him home with open arms.

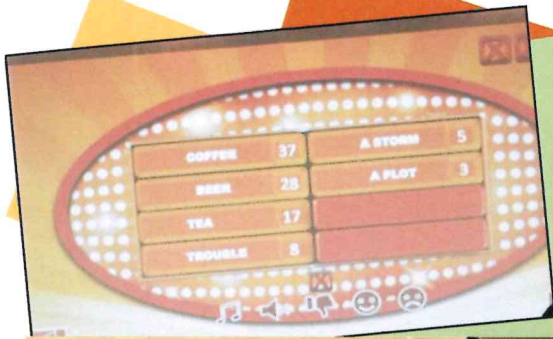
Proud Grandparents include:

James & Rachelle Vanden Bos
and Craig & Sue Van Otterloo from Rock Rapids.

Sawyer's dad, Colton, farms with East Valley,
and his mom, Ashley, is a registered nurse at
Hegg Hospital, and they live in Rock Valley.



Youth Group "Family Feud" Supper





“God’s Plan”

Every so often you may read the headline that a scientist or group of scientists “accidentally” discovered something while doing something else. Their whole plan and purpose for the scientific research and experiments may be put on hold as they travel down this new path of discovery. It is an exciting time for scientists, the general public, and perhaps the world at large when these events happen. It provides hope for the future and research, perhaps in medicine and perhaps in the quality of life as we know it.

But what if these moments were not truly “accidents”? What if these moments were part of God’s given plan, allowing us to discover something small in the midst of a bigger project? After all, God created this world and everything in it. He knows it completely, and He recognizes what we have yet to discover. Perhaps it is part of His plan.

This should change our approach to research and science. Instead of being disappointed when findings and research don’t go the way that we intended them to go, instead maybe it can be another avenue worth exploring. A treatment may not cure cancer, but it may help somewhere else and someone else. The opposite can be true as well, a medicine may not help cure its intended disease, but it may help in cancer battles or other illnesses. We can’t put limits on the power of God, and we can’t put a limit on what He will allow us to do in the use of His world.

Instead of automatically labeling an undesired result in scientific research and experimenting an accident, I think it should be labeled an opportunity. It should be an opportunity to see what God has in store, to see where He is leading us, to see what blessing He has in store with the use of what He has created. It should be an opportunity to explore His world even further than we already have, and use it to the best of our ability and knowledge for His glory and for the betterment of others.

I look forward to the opportunities, discoveries, and new research that will come in the year 2024 and beyond. I pray that God will continue to show us what He has for us in His creation and also through the minds and skills of scientists, doctors, nurses, and even perhaps the non-scientific people. I trust that God can use whomever to show His creativity and to be a blessing to whatever community He chooses. In the end, God is in control, and we are stewards of the gifts that He has given us. Here’s to the exploration of more of those gifts and the opportunity to share them and use them for His honor and glory in this world.

The Wheeled Worshiper

“Pressed”

Gethsemane, the name of the place where Jesus prayed before his betrayal, is an Aramaic word for “olive press.” During Bible times, olives were pressed three times to remove all the valuable oil. Before being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus felt the full pressing weight of our sins on his shoulders. Surrounded by olive trees, praying fervently while sweating drops of blood, the perfect Son of God asked his Heavenly Father three times to remove the cup of suffering.

Instead of removing that trial, God used it to redeem and save humankind. Likewise, God uses our hardships to refine and strengthen our faith.

In *The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi*, TV host Kathie Lee Gifford and Messianic Rabbi Jason Sobel speculate that if Peter, along with James and John, hadn’t fallen asleep in Gethsemane, he may have had the strength to not deny Jesus later that night.

“All of us must be vigilant to watch and pray so that we don’t succumb to the temptation to deny the Lord when we go through the olive presses of life and feel like we are being crushed by our situation and circumstances,” the authors write. “We must remember that it is the crushing that brings out the true inner value and worth of the olive.”

“God’s Provision While We Wait”

A November 2023 landslide trapped 41 construction workers in a tunnel they’d been excavating for a Himalayan highway project. For 17 days, they were stranded nearly 3 miles from freedom. When rescuers’ drilling equipment broke, miners drilled through the last 2 meters of rock and gravel by hand. Finally, all the workers were pulled to safety through a 3-foot-wide steel pipe. Because they had received food, water, medicines, oxygen and even light through a narrow pipe while underground, all were in good health.

We are trapped in sin and brokenness: our sin and that of others, fragmented relationships and systems, nearby and across the globe. Christianity teaches that God’s way of goodness will win in the end. But before full rescue comes, what keeps us alive and hopeful — even healthy?

As water was faithfully provided to the laborers through that narrow pipe, God quenches our thirst through baptism. Scripture and the sacrament of communion are the food and medicine that nourish and strengthen us. Prayer — our own and others’ prayers for us — along with the Holy Spirit’s gifts such as comfort and joy flow into our lives like the light of hope and the oxygen of life. Though complete rescue seems slow to come, God provides for us while we wait. ~Heidi Hyland Mann

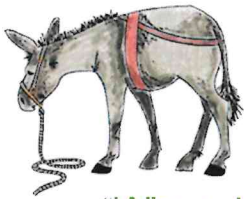
Bible Trivia

The “Christ hymn” in Philippians 2 proclaims that after Jesus humbled himself even to the point of death, God exalted him, and that eventually all will worship him. What two body parts are named as part of that worship?

- A. knee; tongue
- B. hands; feet
- C. arms; lips
- D. heart; mouth

See next page for answer.





“Be The Donkey”

Corrie ten Boom, a devout Christian who helped shelter hundreds of Jewish people from Nazis during World War II, was asked how she stayed humble despite her fame.

“When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on the back of a donkey, and everyone was waving palm branches and throwing garments onto the road and singing praises, do you think that for one moment it ever entered the head of that donkey that any of that was for him?” she replied. “If I can be the donkey on which Jesus Christ rides in his glory, I give him all the praise and all the honor.”

Jesus told his followers they’d need to carry (or “take up”) their cross. But how well do you carry your Savior? How do you bring him into a world that desperately needs the good news of the gospel?

“Resurrection Rumbblings”

In *Easter Earthquake*, James A. Harnish explores the “earthshaking promise” of Jesus’ resurrection. Easter Sunday “shatters the power of fear,” he writes. “Because Christ is risen, we no longer allow fear to dominate, control or manipulate us. We don’t remain imprisoned in the tombs of our past failures or buried under the weight of present anxiety. In the risen Christ, old things pass away and everything becomes new.”

Easter, Harnish adds, is proof that God hasn’t forsaken us and is present among us. “The Resurrection contradicts the assumption that Christ resides on an ethereal cloud in a distant heaven. Rather, we find him on the dusty road that leads to the real stuff of our ordinary world.”

Jesus’ followers can find him everywhere, Harnish concludes. “The risen Christ will meet us along the confused, chaotic, fearful paths of our lives and speak the same words the women hear at the tomb, ‘Do not be afraid.’”

“Our Feeble Prayers, Our Father’s Response”

In *He Still Moves Stones*, Max Lucado recalls the story of Derek Redmond, a 1992 Olympic competitor in the 400-meter race. Halfway through Redmond’s semifinal run, a torn hamstring sent him tumbling to the ground. His dad, Jim, immediately ran onto the track. He met up with Derek, who, though crying, had managed to stand and was hopping forward.

“You don’t have to do this,” Jim said. But Derek insisted. “Well, then, we’re going to finish this together,” said Jim, who supported his son as he hobbled to the finish line. The crowd cheered and wept as Derek, with Dad’s assistance, finished the race.

Lucado writes: “What made the father do it?... Was it the strength of his child? No, it was the pain of his child... God does the same. Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the One who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference.”



Letter Writing to our MISSIONARIES



	RIBBENS	MALETOUNGOU	KLOMPIEN
March 3	Justin F	Marv F	Bob G
March 10	Galen G	Irene G	Brad G
March 17	Bob G	Marva H	Austin H
March 24	Kelly H	Larry H	Rev Matt H
March 31	Mike H	Eddie H	Leonard H

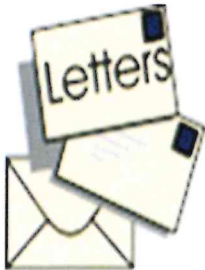
Resonate Global Mission

Attn: Rev. Michael & Megan Ribbens

1700 28th St SE

Grand Rapids, MI 49508

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



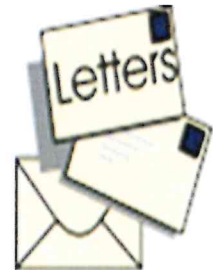
Resonate Global Mission

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



March 3	Jeff & Kacie VB Verlyn & Sandy VB Dereck & LaRae VDB	Lyle & Joyce VE Matt & Krista VE Albert & Grace VG	Larry & Yvonne
March 10	Fred & Karla VK Nate & Laurie VK Colton & Ashley VO	Mer & Cindy VO Mike & Judy VO Nolan & Julie VO	Vern & Ellen
March 13 Prayer Day Service		Warren VO Colton & Leah VS Mike & Gert VR	
March 17	Andy & Sharla VR Eric & Erica VS Alyssa VH	Chad & Sandra VH Carol VH, Mary VH Loy & Janice VH	Harlan & Priscilla
March 24 Palm Sunday	Loy & Taryn VH Mark & Deb VH Mike & Christal VH	Michel & Shelby VH Tim & Kendra VT Tim & Kim VT	Ron & Darletta
March 28 Maundy Thursday/Communion		Ron & Darletta L Randy & Pat B Vern & Carol DB	
March 29 Good Friday		Mike VZ Jack & Kelsey VB Gerrit & Kay V	
March 31 Easter	Harm & Bonnie W Glenn & Leah W Blake & Genae Z	Ryan & Jamie Z Evan & Kim A Howie & Lynette A	John & Carol

USHERS



March 3	East: Joel B, Matt VE West: Jace M, Alvin L	AM PM	Em D, Jamie DJ, Brea VK, Ava VO April DK, Jenessa VR
March 10	East: Arnold K, Bob G West: Benjamin H, Keith L	AM PM	Alli DB, Steph E, Sam VO, Erica VR Cherie G, Kennedy VH
March 13 Prayer Day Service	East: Jeff E, Rick D West: Joe M, Gene L	PM	Priscilla D, Addison VH
March 17	East: Cody D, Mike B West: Cole VDB, Colton VO	AM PM	Deb H, Kristin J, Brielle J, Taryn B Jessica K, Aftyn B
March 24 Palm Sunday	East: Josh B, Mike VZ West: Dan B, Darin P	AM PM	Tamae K, Malorie K, Kayla B, Abby A Michelle K, Benjamin H
March 28 Maundy Thursday/Communion	East: Joel B, Matt VE West: Jace M, Alvin L	PM	Amera F, Alison L, Jaydn L, Abby A, Teeghan B
March 29 Good Friday	East: Arnold K, Bob G West: Benjamin H, Keith L	PM	Rhonda L, Titus H
March 31 Easter	East: Jeff E, Rick D West: Joe M, Gene L	AM PM	Jill M, Jackie R, Kaysha A, Noah DK Lisa P, Mason J

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 Jonathon Kats	5 Tracy Hoogendoorn Lois Postma (84)	6 Gracie Bloemendaal Damon Rus Penny Jo Ver Burg	7 Brad Postma	8 Megan Kooima	9
10 Sydney Elgersma Addison Van't Hul	11	12 Brylie Johnson	13 Kolt Bleyenbergh	14	15 Diana De Groot Carl Elbers Taylor Kats	16
17 April De Kam Niki Pollema	18 Ethan Van't Hul	19	20 Remi Elgersma Carol Van't Hul	21 Karen Jansen Mitchel Van't Hul	22 Kyler Pollema	23 Faith Kirkley
24	25	26 John De Roon	27 Taylor Altena	28 Judy Van Otterloo <i>the Evan Altena's</i>	29 Jadyn Faber Tad Miller Rachelle Vanden Bos	30
31 Abby Altena						