

# FAITH & LIFE

May 2024



*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.firstercrv.com](http://www.firstercrv.com)

712-476-5902

## “PRAYERS IN MAY”



May has always been a month of tremendous activity.

- ❖ Farmers are sowing the fields.
- ❖ Students and teachers are reaching the goal line of graduation.
- ❖ Mothers are longing to be remembered.
- ❖ In the church we celebrate the ascension and the blessing of Pentecost.
- ❖ On the last Monday of May we read and remember the names of soldiers who defended our nation with the ultimate sacrifice of their lives for ours.

May is a month of momentous moments that mark one of the busiest months of the year.

Within all the busyness and joy which can be easy to rush through, we get to Memorial Day Weekend, and finally are able to say in prayer, “Thank you Lord for it all.”

But instead of waiting until that final break and the unofficial kick-off of Summer, it is better for our hearts to remain steadfast in focus, in effort, and in prayer.

To this end, on the backside of this page there is a prayer calendar of encouragement and challenge that we would love every age to include in their prayers in the month of May. Pray for all the events going on and pray for the prayer point of the day.

Allow this simple challenge to grow your family’s prayer life this month. Take the time to pray, because prayer is the most important activity to do in a Christian’s life. Prayer is your gift given by the Lord Triune.

Jesus himself promised in John 14 that we would not be left as orphans, but would be blessed with the Eternal counselor, the Spirit of truth, which we remember and rejoice in on Pentecost Sunday.

This truth and fact we read in Acts 2 where the Holy Spirit descended with power to dwell with all of God’s people to grow and sustain, to guide and lead, and to drive us to our knees in prayer. Prayer lifted in the blood of Jesus. Prayer given to the Father as a fragrant offering. A sacrifice of blessing that replenishes our souls, fills our hearts, and opens our mouth to speak of the Lord’s power over sin and death which grows us in truth and grace.

During the planting, celebrating, and rejoicing over all the other events in May don’t forget to stop and give praise to God for fulfilling his promises; by sending his Son Jesus, to save, and his Holy Spirit to guide. Give thanks for what God has done and will continue to do in you as you grow in your faith and pray richly in the month of May

Blessings,

Pastor Matt



# Let Us Pray!

## CHALLENGE

19

Today, find a way to pray without using any words.

ROMANS 8:26-27

18

Pray over your dreams & desires, releasing them into God's hands.

EPH. 3:20-21

17

Ask God to make you an answer to someone's prayer.

1 JOHN 3:17-18

Pray with your eyes on God, not on the difficulties.

JESUS PRAYING IN THE GARDEN



20

Give over your broken heart & deep sadness to God & invite Him to turn them into joy.

1 SAM. 1:10

Prayer is the place where burdens change shoulders.

HANNAH PRAYING FOR A BABY



16

Say "Yes" to God's plan for your life.

MATT. 26:39

21

Thank God for His great love for you.

1 JOHN 3:1

15

Look outside your window and talk to God about what you see.

DANIEL 6:10

14

Talk to God about your worries and needs.

PHIL. 4:6-7

13

Pray for people affected by natural disasters, wars, or tragedy.

NEH. 1:3-4

12

Pray for God to increase your faith.

MARK 9:24 & LUKE 17:5

Listening is the beginning of prayer.

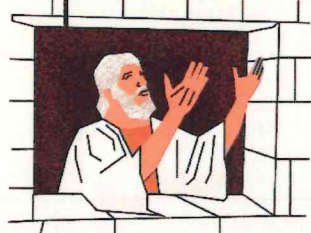
Keep on praying and never give up. LUKE 18:1

22

Try praying while kneeling down.

ACTS 9:40

Prayer invites God into the situation.



DANIEL PRAYING BY HIS WINDOW

10

Pray for strength and courage to say "yes" to where God calls you.

PSALM 25:4-5

11

Pray for God to fill you with His knowledge and wisdom.

JAMES 1:5



TAX COLLECTOR AND PHARISEE PRAYING IN THE TEMPLE

23

Pray for God to fill you with peace.

ROMANS 15:13

9

Bring a need to God and pray for His provision in your life.

1 PETER 5:7

24

Tell someone about your need/struggle and ask them to pray for you.

ESTHER 4:15-16

25

Pray for ministry leaders and volunteers in your church.

1 THESS. 5:12-13

26

Pray for someone who doesn't know Christ.

ROMANS 10:1

Rich is the person who has a praying friend.

8

Be quiet before God so that you can hear the voice of His Spirit.

PSALM 85:8

7

Confess your sin and embrace God's grace and mercy.

LUKE 18:9-14

6

Pray for someone who was mean to you and ask God to do them good.

LUKE 6:28

Worry never changes things. Prayer does.

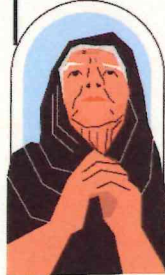


ESTHER PRAYING IN HER PALACE

27

Pray for a God-sized miracle.

EPH. 3:20-21



ANNA THE PROPHETESS PRAYING IN THE TEMPLE

5

Before you go to sleep at night, offer a song of praise as a prayer to God.

PSALM 42:8

3

Pray for someone who needs healing.

JAMES 5:13-16

He who kneels before God can stand before anyone.

PAUL PRAYING FOR THE THORN IN HIS FLESH TO BE REMOVED

29

Be still before God and simply enjoy His company.

DEUT. 4:7

28

Pray for the leaders of your country to fear God and do what's right.

1 TIM. 2:1-4

4

Pray for someone who is on the mission field.

EPH. 6:19-20



31

Try praying with your hands raised up.

PSALM 141:2

30

Today, ask someone how you can pray for them. Then do it.

1 THESS. 5:25

FOR KIDS &

GROWN-UPS

TOO!

Repeat Challenge Monthly!

Start here!

Mark your progress each day with a check mark.

To get more creative, faith-nurturing resources visit: [WhatsForDinnerMag.com](http://WhatsForDinnerMag.com)



## BIRTHDAYS (80+)

- May 3 – Donna Bakker** will be 84.  
**May 7 – MaryAnn Klarenbeek** will be 82.  
**May 17 – Jennie Maassen** will be 93.  
**May 24 – Bob Kooima** will be 87.

## ANNIVERSARIES

- May 31 – Roger & Hilaine Kempema** will be married 56 years.

## SPECIAL CONCERNS

- Continue to pray for Bob Kooima as he had a stent put in to repair a heart blockage earlier in April.
- Continue to uplift Carol De Boer as she anticipates hip surgery.
- Encourage and pray for Don Postma as he has been struggling with excess fluid and blood pressure issues, and continues to be monitored.
- Pray for Tammy Baartman as she recovers from her recent thyroid surgery.
- Be in prayer for Brindy Vander Ziel as she recovers from open heart surgery.
- Continue to encourage and pray for Bill Laman, Matt Laman's father, as he continues therapy recovering from a stroke.
- Uplift in prayer, Bertha Van Den Top, LaRae Van Der Brink's mother, as she has experienced a rapid decline in her health and testing continues to find the cause and the next steps in helping her regain strength and health.
- Pray for Bastiaan Van Ginkel, newborn grandson of Mike & Judy Van Otterloo, that he may continue growing and gaining strength.
- Continue to uplift the family of Collin Kats, nephew of Jonathon & Tamae Kats, after his ATV accident.

**Continue to pray fervently 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.

--Continue to pray for Israel and the turmoil and unrest experienced worldwide.

--Pray for all those impacted by the string of tornadoes that ripped through Nebraska and Iowa this week.

## SYMPATHIES

We express our Christian sympathies to **Clarence & Esther De Roon** in the passing of Esther's brother, Manuel De Jong on April 9.

We express our Christian sympathies to **Dick Morlag** - friend of our congregation, and to members **Al & Harriet Van Zanten, Mike Van Zanten, and Verlyn & Sandy Van Bommel** in the passing of Albertha Morlag on April 24.

We express our Christian sympathies to the congregation of Grace Community Church and the family of Rev. Joe Terrell as he died on April 20.

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





## CONGRATULATIONS

A special Valentine gift arrived this year for John & Carol De Roon.  
Their 20<sup>th</sup> great-grandchild was born.

Walker Thomas Bierne, was born to Justin & Rachel Bierne.  
Grandparents are Pat & Carla Bierne. Walker joins his family in Aberdeen, SD.  
In the past 18 months, John & Carol have been blessed with eight great-grandchildren,  
seven boys and one girl.

Colt Matthew Jansen, son of Cory & Mariah Jansen from Sheldon.

Kamden Jay Jansen, son of Travis & Kendra Jansen from Doon.

Jettson Michael Covey, son of Brady & Allison Covey of Hull.

Grandparents to these three include Rob & Karen Jansen.

Kashton Levi & Weston Alan De Wit, twins of Shane & Katie De Wit from Rock Valley.

Grandparents include Justin & Lisa De Wit.

Henry Carl Maassen, son of Byron & Shayna Maassen of Rock Rapids.

Norah Lynn Kooiker, daughter of Brady & Dayna Kooiker of Sheldon.

Grandparents of these two include Raul & Cheryl De Roon.

These eight join seven other girls and five boys.

**To God be the Glory! We get to love on them all!**

### *Requesting prayers of thanks and gratitude!*

A chapter closed....Lord willing! Marcus had his final scans this past February. He has "graduated" to a yearly checkup and bloodwork! Feeling so very hopeful that his cancer will be "in the past". We will be forever grateful for all the care, love and prayer support we received from our 1st CRC church family and for God's plan on how his treatment would go...and that we get to continue to have him in our lives! When we were first informed about his treatment plan we were told to expect to be admitted between treatments for fevers, upset stomach, mouth sores, blood transfusions and dialysis, but through his journey he was only admitted once between treatment and had 1 small transfusion. He spent 40-45 days in a hospital bed from October 12-January 3 and not once did he complain...love that kid! Every time the word cancer hits my ears this mama's heart goes through so many emotions...praying for all those who are in their battle and for the families who had to say goodbye to a loved one.

--Brent, Carisa, Marcus & Kaden Maassen, Harm & Bonnie Wiersma

#### **"Counting My Blessings"**

It's like it was yesterday  
I was praying for a miracle  
Scared to have a little hope  
And now looking back today  
Seeing all the things You've done  
I can't even add them up  
God I'm still counting my blessings  
All that You've done in my life  
The more that I look in the details  
The more of Your goodness I find  
Father on this side of Heaven  
I know that I'll run out of time  
But I will keep counting my blessings  
Knowing I can't count that high.



## Remembering MaryAnn Van Bommel

Mary Ann Van Bommel, 88, of Rock Valley, Iowa, died Tuesday, January 30, 2024, at Whispering Heights in Rock Valley. A funeral service was held Saturday, February 3, at 11:00 AM at the First Christian Reformed Church of Rock Valley with Rev. Matthew Haan officiating.

Mary Ann Van Bommel, daughter of Peter and Lydia (Vanden Bosch) Wielenga, was born November 18, 1935, at Lebanon, Iowa. In 1952, Mary Ann was united in marriage with Henry Paul Van Bommel. They spent time living in Iowa, Minnesota, and California until settling on an acreage 1 mile west of Doon, Iowa in 1966. Here they would raise their 4 children until moving to Rock Valley, Iowa in 1993. Henry Paul passed away on August 14, 2007, after a 2 ½ year battle with cancer in which Mary Ann tenderly and lovingly cared for him in their home. Mary Ann moved to Four Seasons in Rock Valley in 2012 and in 2018 she moved to Whispering Heights in Rock Valley.



Left to cherish her memory are: Gene (Daris) Van Bommel of Randolph, Wisconsin and their children: Kristi (Rodney) Wierenga, Jill (Ross) Van Baren, Rachel (Nathan) Nikkel, Jessica (Ed) Van Dyke and Marisa (Austin) Herrema; Bonnie (Harm) Wiersma of Rock Valley and their children: Carisa (Brent) Maassen, Ryan (Kyla) Wiersma, Nolan (Katie) Wiersma, Evan (Sarah) Wiersma and Stephanie (Jeff) Elgersma; Verlyn (Sandy) Van Bommel of Rock Valley and their children: Alyssa (Greg) Anderson, Katie (Bryan) Burgers, and Austin (Hannah) Van Bommel; and Susan (Jeff) Hoekstra of Sioux Center and their children: Caleb (Whitney) Hoekstra, Dylan (Lacey) Hoekstra, Seth Hoekstra and Ethan (Summer) Hoekstra; 39 great-grandchildren; 1 great-great-grandchild; sisters-in-law, Gert Van Den Top of Hull and Wilma Van Bommel of Doon; brothers-in-law, Marion (Carol) Van Bommel of Luverne, Minnesota and Jack Van Dam of Edgerton, Minnesota.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Peter and Lydia Wielenga; husband, Henry Paul Van Bommel; parents-in-law, Albert and Gertie Van Bommel; siblings, Jake (Kathryn) Wielenga, Tillie (John) Van Voorst, Henrietta (Gene) Hansen, and Lyda (Jim) Tamminga; sister-in-law, Marie Van Dam; and brothers-in-law, John Van Den Top, Leonard (Ruth) Van Bommel, and Alvin Van Bommel.

### ***Special thanks to several family members for sharing their memories.***

Growing up, our lives revolved around the family farm, church and school activities. We all spent many hours doing the daily chores, walking the bean fields, snapping green beans on the front porch, husking sweet corn and canning various fruits and vegetables. We always ate our meals together at the kitchen table, with devotions and prayer. I also recall going through the Heidleberg catechism as part of our devotion time. Both Mom and Dad made sure we had a firm foundation. Mom and I spent many hours doing dishes - she would wash and I would dry. It was here that catechism lessons were reviewed, spelling words and memory verses were practiced, as well as a lot of discussions, conversations and advice given...and I learned to work "efficiently"! Mom taught me how to bake and cook at an early age so when my sister was born shortly before my 11th birthday, I was able to make the meals for our family in her absence. Our home was often filled with music. Mom would play the piano and we would all sing when my grandparents and/or mom's siblings and families visited. I can still hear my grandpa sing "Rock of Ages". Mom also accompanied Verlyn and I as we played guitar and sang at many Sunday night "request programs". (Mom even sewed us matching shirts!)



Mom also played the organ at Doon CRC for 34 years. I remember spending a lot of Saturday afternoons in church with her while she practiced for the upcoming services. I don't recall ever missing a church service except for illness...and we had to be pretty sick! If we had church, regardless of the day or time, we were there. Visiting ministers often had dinner with us (which was always pea soup so it could be made on Saturday) and would stay with us until the 2 pm service. Our teachers were always invited over for coffee somewhere around the beginning of each school year. We were taught to respect our teachers and Mom and Dad both supported them and the school with their time, prayers and dedication to our Christian education. Again, if there was a school event, we were there.

After I married and had children, mom made sure she spoiled my kids as best she could and helped me learn and manage this new phase of life. She rocked and sang to the kids as infants, invited them for sleepovers when they were older and made sure she knew and welcomed their friends as they grew. She enjoyed watching as many of their activities as possible, especially church and school music programs. She also prayed for them and encouraged them to "walk in the ways of the Lord". I think every birthday card they received encouraged them on their faith walk. She loved on them in the best possible way.

When I think back on all the memories of Mom the thing I remember (and now miss) the most is her consistent prayers and love for her family. In the last years, she often questioned the purpose of her life and I would remind her how much I needed and coveted her prayers. She was my prayer warrior and will be forever loved. ~Bonnie

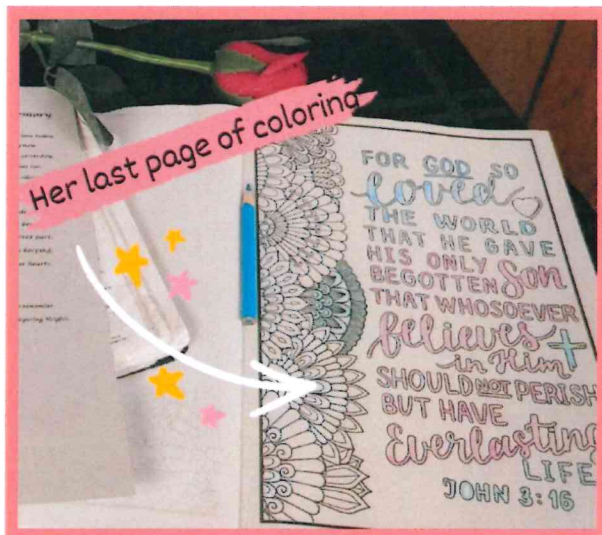
Many of my favorite memories of my grandma come from sleepovers at her house. The nights would typically end with her reading me Three Billy Goats Gruff as many times as requested. The morning would start with her letting me use as much sugar on my Wheaties as I liked. Then Grandpa would read devotions from a Bible used so frequently that his thumb had made an impression on the back cover. My grandparents provided me with such a consistent example of love and faithfulness that I could never be too thankful for. ~Evan Wiersma

I'll forever remember staying overnight at grandma and grandpa's house when I was young. My brother and I loved it so much and would often pack our bags and wait at the end of our driveway to be picked up. Grandma's house was always a special place where we knew we were welcome. ~Nolan Wiersma

A little over a week ago, Grandma Van Bommel reached for her coloring book and began carefully coloring her last picture - a picture that she would never finish but instead get to experience the truth and the gift of this promise of God's love fulfilled - the gift of Everlasting Life.

Grandma LOVED Jesus and her family dearly. Her daily prayer was for all to know and love Jesus and it will forever be her legacy and gift to us. Her heart was crafted for kindness and she will be missed. But we are all better for knowing her.

♥ ~Katie Wiersma





My grandma had a gift for taking small moments and turning them into special memories. I have so many good memories with my grandparents, but here are a few of my favorites.

Whenever we were in her car together she would always sing to me. Once we neared her house the song would always transition to "To Grandma's House We Go," a song I know my mom now sings to my girls.

I was thrilled when my grandparents sold their farmhouse in Doon and moved to town because it meant I could spend even more time with them. My parents would let me sit next to grandma at every night church service. She would pack me extra wethers, which soon became my favorite candy. I later learned this transition from the farm in Doon to town in Rock Valley was very hard on my grandma, so I'm glad I got to be by her side.

Whenever I got the chance I would stay overnight at my grandparent's house. A night with grandpa and grandma meant games galore, grandma playing the piano, countless books, and an ice cream sundae in a fancy cup. I didn't have my ears pierced, so Grandma always let me play with her jewelry box, which was my favorite thing of hers because it was filled with clip-on earrings. Grandma would always pray with me before tucking me into bed, but I'll never forget seeing her kneel by her bed to pray before she crawled into bed. It's one of my most cherished memories of her. She was a prayer warrior for me and so many others. I often thought that's why God kept her on this earth for all those years she longed for heaven.

Grandma's house was the hot spot during summer days at the pool. My cousins and I, along with ten or so of our friends would run to her house at the 3:00 rest break. She would have her famous popsicles (special recipe), chocolate chip cookies and kool-aid for a snack. If she wasn't home she'd leave the back door open along with a note. I often wonder how many popsicles she went through each summer.

My grandma was very good at writing cards and words of encouragement to me and others. I don't think I ever visited my grandma when there wasn't a stack of cards ready to be sent out or put in church mailboxes. I struggled with homesickness when I was younger, so my grandma would always write me notes for each day that I would be gone from home. She also always reminded me that no matter where I was, we would always be looking at the same moon. Throughout her time in the nursing home she spent many hours coloring bookmarks and cards for church members and my family.

My grandparents always showed up for me at school and sporting events. When my grandpa got sick, my grandma became his primary caregiver but they still came to what they could. This has always meant a lot to me. Grandma even came to watch me teach at Rock Valley Christian's open house during my first year. This still puts a smile on my face each year at open house because I can picture her sitting in the corner. She was always my biggest encourager. She would come to my classroom after school hours and help me organize or cut. In later years my mom or I would have to bring it to her, but she loved to sit and cut my school material out. She actually still cut out the name tags for the students I'm teaching this school year.

I'm so thankful I was blessed with a wonderful grandma who got to meet all my girls and share countless memories with us. She loved Quincy, Remi and Sydnee and was always eager to hear their stories or read to them when we all visited. My grandma taught me to love the Lord, but she also showed me how to serve others. When I think about all my memories of grandma, I see how much love and effort she put into her relationship with people. She took time for the people around her, and she loved them well. We love and miss her, but are so thankful she is with Jesus - right where she longed to be. ~Stephanie Wiersma



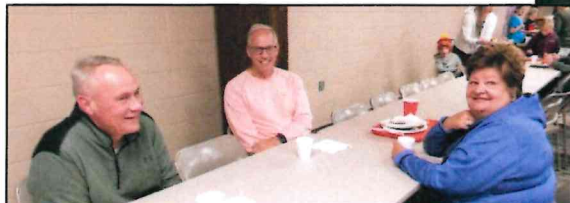
## “Grandma’s House”

Your farm house feels like a dream I've only seen in pictures  
black and white, with a barn, the haymow & tire swing fixture.  
The memories of you here are hazy, but the ones I do recall  
were filled with wagon rides across the road and corn crib time with dolls.  
It's where you became a mom of 4, two boys two girls who'd you cherish and adore.  
Now that town home of yours I came to know quite well, even those secret places.  
Your cookies, popsicles, & tootsie rolls lit up our smiling faces!  
The sleepovers, the mending, the old bridesmaid dresses,  
the racetracks, the sundaes, the cleaning of messes.  
Rest breaks from the pool must have been the highlight of your summer  
because all our friends knew your treats/house was “funner” 😊  
You and grandpa washing dishes, playing crazy eights,  
these memories keep coming -the others can relate.  
Hearing Alan Jackson on the old stereo while watching you  
write numbers talking on the telephone.  
The candlelight Christmas dinners: a sight to behold,  
full of laughter, swapping stories, where Luke 2 was retold.  
It's here you held each other when news of sickness came,  
you cared for him until at last, Jesus called his name.  
This space became more lonely. It was here you had him last.  
It was hard to go, unbearable, to leave it in the past.  
Four seasons became home for the next couple years.  
We'd hear all kinds of stories about your elderly peers!!!  
They may have lost their marbles to this you did attest.  
But not you -no -nope- you were smarter than the rest!  
Coffee time each Sunday we'd catch up on the gossip,  
some stories hard to believe- it was kind of a toss up! 😊  
You spent a lot of time here: coloring detailed pictures.  
That granddaughter kept you busy with classroom activity mixtures.  
Tootsie became the name you'd use when you couldn't recall  
whose name was whose because you couldn't remember it all 😊  
You longed for this last home, that one of great glory.  
It was hard to be patient- to wait for God's story.  
We can only imagine what your eyes must have seen  
the minute you saw Him, the Lord our Great King!  
Singing with Jesus, seeing Grandpa again, my oh my what a new life to begin!  
Now wrapped in his arms, seated above  
We miss you dear Grandma -know you are loved ❤️ ❤️  
We shall see you soon, Lord willing, as they say  
and visit this home where you're at one day.  
But for now I'll just picture you staying up late,  
praising His holy name & waiting at the gate. ~Rachel Nikkel





# Christian Education Taco Supper - April 3, 2024







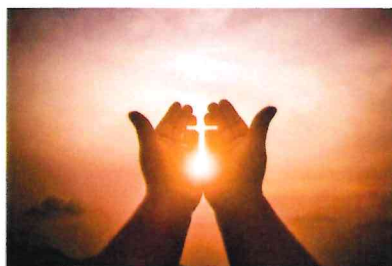
### **Sioux City Gospel Mission - April 22, 2024** **Care Groups #3 and #5**

On Monday, April 22nd, approximately 20 members of Rock Valley First CRC attended the Sioux City Gospel Mission. Carl Elbers opened up with an introduction and a word of prayer. Jack Ver Burg led the song service. We sang "What A Friend We Have in Jesus" and "The Old Rugged Cross". Following the song service, Jack Ver Burg, along with his kids, Kate LeLoux, and Joe and Jill Miller's kids sang Jesus Loves Me; which was greatly appreciated by all in attendance. Pastor Haan gave the message on 1st Peter Chapter 4 verses 1-11. The message was that even though we live in a broken world, we can let Christ's love shine through to others by the way we live and treat one another. Pastor Matt closed with prayer. Offering was taken while we sang Amazing Grace. Jill Miller ended the service with a word of prayer.

It was a positive experience meeting with the attendees and hearing their story about how God was working in their lives and how the mission has been a benefit to them.

### **Sioux Falls Gospel Mission - April 23, 2024** **Care Groups #1 and #8**

On Tuesday, April 23, twenty people from Groups 1 and 8 went to the Union Gospel Mission in Sioux Falls. Jeff Van Bommel opened with prayer. Elmer Boon captivated the audience with the message that we are all looking for something, money doesn't make you happy, we are to carry each other's burdens. The Gospel is the Good News, an invitation we are called to accept, believe in your heart, confess with your mouth, and be forgiven. Brian Faber lead song service and we were accompanied by Laurie Van Kley. During offering, Laurie and Trevin Van Kley favored us with a piano duet, "Jesus, Name Above All Names". Kyle Hoogendoorn closed with prayer.



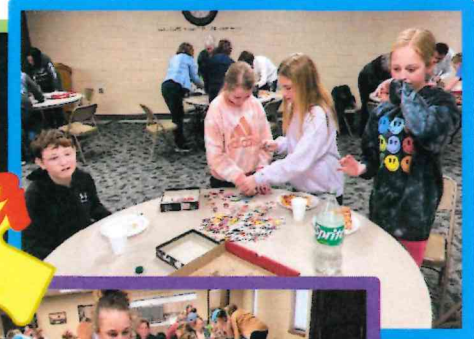


# Youth Group Senior Farewell at Great Shots!





# Puzzles, Pop & Pizza







## “God’s Family”

“You will notice we say ‘brother and sister’ ‘round here- It’s because we’re a family and the folks are so dear.” This is the first verse of a popular hymn written by Bill and Gloria Gaither titled “The Family of God.” Though written in 1970, this song has become a favorite of many and I know it may be a favorite of many readers of this piece. Just this first verse details the communal aspect that we all hope and aspire to hold as members of the family of God.

This song also causes me a bit of reflection. We see ourselves as the family of God within our church communities and the greater church both state and worldwide. But do we live up to this status, to this relationship we have given ourselves and taken on? This isn’t meant to be a status check in the eyes of God. Our salvation does not depend on us doing this. However, it does give us the opportunity to reflect on our relationship to the greater family of God and how we can get even better at the task of loving our neighbor and being a part of God’s family.

You could flip through the religious channels on television and come across what is called a mega church. This church can tend to have way more members than your local congregation, at least according to church records. You often wonder how everyone finds guidance at a church like this and you can understand why some churches have multiple pastors that seek to help the congregations in various roles. This doesn’t put a limit on what God does in any situation, but I’m thankful to be part of my local congregation with a dedicated pastor, elders, deacons and others who care in their own ways. Furthermore, I’m thankful to be a part of a greater church community that comes together in small ways to be a blessing to one another, whether that be combined services and events, the sharing of pastors for pulpit filling or any other of the many perhaps behind the scenes ways that churches come together.

I believe it’s easier in our congregations/families to reach out and show genuine care and love to one another. But the other question that arises is: how often do we do this? How often do we as “regular” church members actually reach out in care and consideration to others? Or do we leave those tasks to the pastors, elders, and deacons of the church? I would say that I have found myself opting for the second solution. It is a goal, that we all can get better at regardless of status in the church, the goal of becoming even more united as the family of God. How do we do that? A simple way to start is to take a look at last week’s bulletin or announcement sheet. Pray for the people, families, situations and causes that are mentioned on the sheet. Next week, when the bulletin arrives in your inbox or in your hand, do the same thing. You may be praying for the same people every week or you may be praying for new opportunities and situations. Perhaps God will even lay it on your heart to take it a step further than prayer. Lord willing, it will allow us to put memories and moments behind the words when we sing “The Family of God” the next time. Lord willing, and with the help of the Triune God, we can take on the opportunity to become even more united, even more bonded in love and service as the family of God.



## “God Remembers”

It is not difficult for me to remember that the little ones need breakfast in the morning, dinner at midday, and something before they go to bed at night. Indeed I could not forget it. And I find it impossible to suppose that our heavenly Father is less tender or mindful than I.



I do not believe that our heavenly Father will ever forget his children.

I am a very poor father, but it is not my habit to forget my children.

God is a very, very good Father. It is not his habit to forget his children.

## “Come Glorify God Together”

Don't use summer as an excuse to skip church! By gathering in corporate worship, we obey God's command, become equipped for Christian living, and minister to our fellow pilgrims. Consider these tips for engaging in corporate worship.

**\*First, show up — in person if you can. Examine your heart and your motivation for attending church. \*Lift up your eyes from earthly matters to focus on God.**

**\*Come prepared. Do you need to confess anything or remove any hindrance?**

**\*As you worship, consider how each part of the service displays the gospel: greeting, singing, confessing, reading Scripture, hearing Bible-based teaching, praying, giving and communing.**

**\*Be careful not to compartmentalize corporate worship as separate from the rest of life. Instead, consider how you'll carry the experience into the coming week.**

**\*Come ready to receive; then let that overflow fuel you for the days ahead.**

**\*Come prepared to participate, knowing that worshiping together is a rehearsal for heaven.**

**\*But most importantly! Just come.**

**~Monica L. Wilkinson**

## “Summer Solace”

The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quite alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be and that God wishes to see people happy, amidst the simple beauty of nature. As long as this exists, and it certainly always will, I know that then there will always be comfort for every sorrow, whatever the circumstances may be. And I firmly believe that nature brings solace in all troubles.

## “The Engine of Marriage”

*Being in love is a good thing, but it is not the best thing. Love is a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by the grace which both partners ask and receive from God. On this love the engine of marriage is run; being in love was the explosion that started it.*

*~ C.S. Lewis*

**Christ our captain has not promised us a smooth voyage across the sea of life, but He has promised us a safe anchorage in the eternal Haven of Rest.**

## Bible Trivia

What does God compare to rain “watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater”?

- A. The justice of the nations
- B. The work of God's people
- C. The message of Isaiah the prophet
- D. God's word



See next page for answer



### “My Poverty, God’s Riches”

When Jesus says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3), I’ve tended to think in terms of emotions: “Blessed are the sad, depressed, discouraged, regretful, lonely ...” I picture human experiences that God will fix when the kingdom of heaven is made full, as in Revelation: “Mourning and crying and pain will be no more” (21:4).

Surely that’s one faithful understanding,  
but a poem by Pastor Steve Garnaas-Holmes gives a different slant:

Eternal God,  
I humbly confess my riches,  
... all to which I cling.  
I repent of the wealth  
of what I think and what I fear  
and what I want.  
O I am truly poor; I have nothing  
but ... my openness to you.  
... sustain my blessed poverty,  
an open hand,  
reaching out in this present moment,  
to your open hand.

~“Poor in Spirit,” Jan. 25, 2023, at <https://unfoldinglight.net>

### “All God’s Children”

On the basis of the eternal will of God, we have to think of *every human being*, even the oddest, most villainous or miserable, as one to whom Jesus Christ is Brother and God is Father; and we have to deal with him on this assumption. If the other person knows that already, then we have to strengthen him in the knowledge. If he does not know it yet or no longer knows it, our business is to transmit this knowledge to him.

On the basis of the knowledge of the humanity of God, no other attitude to any kind of fellow man is possible. It is identical with the practical acknowledgment of his human rights and his human dignity. To deny it to him would be for us to renounce having Jesus Christ as Brother and God as Father. ~Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God*

### “Lonely?”

Loneliness is a universal problem. Ironically, the bigger our world population grows, the bigger the problem of loneliness becomes. More people isn’t the answer. But one person is! And that One Person who can be with you, anytime, anyplace, anywhere is the Lord Jesus Christ, the One who promises, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”



### “Christian Symbol”

**EYE OF GOD** — This symbol represents our “all-seeing” God, who is present everywhere and is always watching over us. (“The eyes of the Lord are in every place,” Proverbs 15:3, NRSV.) The eye is inside an equilateral triangle, which is associated with the Holy Trinity.

(See Isaiah 55:10-11, NIV.)  
Bible Trivia Answer: D



# Memorial Day

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

## Pancake Breakfast

7:00 - 10:30am



Location: *First Christian Reformed Church  
Fellowship Hall*

Hosted by: *Christian Education Chapter  
of First CRC*

*We hope to see you there!*





FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

**Pastor Matt Haan**

**712-451-8253**



**pastor@firstcrrv.org**

# 11 DAY TOUR OF ISRAEL

*Traveling*  
**JANUARY**  
**13 - 23, 2025**

# Experience the **HOLY LAND**

*Hosted by*  
**PASTOR MATT HAAN**

*Departures*  
**\$5,097 FROM SIOUX FALLS, SD**

*Price includes:*  
\$595 US & Intl. departure taxes/fuel & \$175 gratuities  
*Additional departure cities available upon request*

Register Online: **RegisterNow.ittworld.com**  
Tour Code: **Haan25**



**Early bird savings with your initial deposit of \$500.00!**

**\$150**

*If payment received by*  
**10/13/23**

**\$100**

*If payment received by*  
**01/13/24**

**\$75**

*If payment received by*  
**03/13/24**

**\$50**

*If payment received by*  
**05/13/24**





# Cornerstone Prison Church

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

**April 2024**

EXPANDING THE KINGDOM FROM THE INSIDE-OUT

## Locked Down, but Lifted Up

The passage tied to our church name and featured in the top right corner of every newsletter comes from 1 Peter 2. Later in that same chapter you can also read: 19 For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. 20 But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. 21 To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

While these verses were applied to how believers can be a royal priesthood in this life while they were slaves in an ancient civil system, it has direct application to the lives of the men who make up Cornerstone Prison Church. Peter's concern was that Christians face suffering well, recognizing a connection to Christ's suffering for our sake and that how we suffer can point the world to Christ. While none of us want to suffer, we do experience suffering in this time. Recently there was a disturbance at the prison. Tensions had run high, after many beneficial opportunities had been reduced over months. Then there was an additional change that radically reduced communication between the men and their families. In the wake of the disturbance all the men in the prison were locked down. It has become fairly common that when a few men act up they all get locked down. This means chapel services end up being cancelled. It was a stark contrast this year, having the joy of Easter and a great evening at our annual banquet while the men of Cornerstone were locked down and the chapel was closed without knowing when services would resume. For a couple of weeks, the men were locked down, but that wasn't the whole story because many followers of Christ were lifting them up in prayer.

As we continue to navigate difficult times, we greatly appreciate the prayers and support of the broader church. I especially encourage you to continue to lift up the men at the times they suffer for the negative actions of others around them. Pray that the way they navigate these difficult times would bring glory to God and give others glimpse of the freedom available in Jesus Christ. Pray that by the work of the Holy Spirit they would feel that even when locked down they are in fact being lifted up.

*Pastor Scott*



**Cornerstone Prison Church Benefit Banquet** was held on Monday, April 1 and was a wonderful evening. Harmony of Hope performed a short concert. Trinity CRC in Rock Valley was bursting with praises to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We heard from two former inmates and Pastor Scott shared about the activities going on at Cornerstone and this year will be a year of "New Creation" based on the scripture from 2 Corinthians 5:17-21. Of course, the food was delicious and catered by Red Rock Café from Rock Valley. A special thanks to all who attended the annual banquet and for the continued financial support that was raised. Thanks be to God!!  
If you couldn't make it this year, make a point to join us next year!



Didn't get to the Banquet?  
**Want to donate?**  
Use the form below or **DONATE ONLINE** on our website. Click Support, Financial Support, Give Online.

# Cornerstone Prison Church

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

Scott Van Voorst, Pastor  
[scott@cornerstonepcsd.org](mailto:scott@cornerstonepcsd.org)

Website:

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

Outside:

PO Box 88708

Sioux Falls, SD 57109

Ph 605.496.8152

[office@cornerstonepcsd.org](mailto:office@cornerstonepcsd.org)

Inside:

1600 North Drive

Sioux Falls, SD 57104

Ph 605.367.5749

Join us for a Friday afternoon worship service at Cornerstone. We have spots open for you to visit starting in July. Contact Jean to schedule a date that works for you. We need to have at least 3 weeks notice to get the paperwork completed; then come and be blessed. Our email address: [office@cornerstonepcsd.org](mailto:office@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

	RIBBENS	MALETOUNGOU	KLOMPIEN
May 5	Pat K	Brett K	Arnold K
May 12	Roger K	Clarence K	LeRoy K
May 19	Taylor K	Ruth K	Scott K
May 26	Alex K	Darin K	Bob K

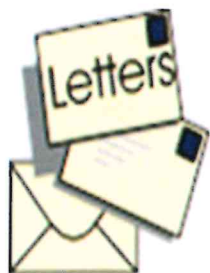
### Resonate Global Mission

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 & JinHee Klompfen

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

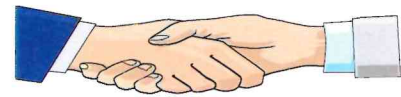
Grand Rapids, MI 49508

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





# GREETERS



May 5 – Ascension Observed GEMS Sunday	Bob & Cherie G Marva H Austin & Rachel H	Kelly & Patty H Mike & Tammy H Eddie & Lanae H	Ron & Darletta
May 12 – Mother's Day	Leonard & Sue H Steve & Sue H Kyle H, Jarod L	Rob & Karen J Travis & Kendra J Dick & Carla J	John & Carol
May 19 – Pentecost Sunday Graduate Sunday	Kevin & Kristin J Sara J Galen & Paula K	Jonathon & Tamae K Taylor & Jessica K Brett & Malorie K	Rog & Hilaine
May 26	Ruth K Alex & Michelle K Darin & Megan K	Mike & Ranae K Matthew & Autumn L Alvin & Sue L	Larry & Yvonne

# USHERS



May 5 – Ascension Observed GEMS Sunday	East: Jeff E, Rick D West: Joe M, Gene L	AM PM	Em D, April DK, Addison VH, Kaysha A Alli DB, Aftyn B
May 12 – Mother's Day	East: Cody D, Mike B West: Cole VDB, Colton VO	AM PM	Jamie DJ, Steph E, Benjamin H, Taryn B Cherie G, Amera F
May 19 – Pentecost Sunday Graduate Sunday	East: Josh B, Mike VZ West: Dan B, Darin P	AM PM	Deb H, Jessica K, Brielle J, Teeghan B Kristin J, Titus H
May 26	East: Joel B, Matt VE West: Jace M, Alvin L	AM PM	Tamae K, Michelle K, Mason J, Noah DK Rhonda L, Alison L



# May 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 <i>the Scott Koedam's</i>	2 <i>the Mitchel Van't Hul's</i>	3 Donna Bakker (84) Kim Van Otterloo Jack Ver Burg	4 <i>the Brett Kirkley's</i>
5 Rob Jansen Caleb Johnson	6 Tristan Mulder	7 Mary Ann Klarenbeek (82)	8 Peyton Rus	9 Hannah Van Tilburg	10 Jake DeWit Sara Johnson Verlynn Van Bommel	11
12 Breya Van Kley <i>the Zach De Jager's</i> <i>the Colton Van Otterloo's</i>	13	14 Jacob Leloux	15 Emerson Byl Sharla Van Roekel	16 Scott Koedam Alex Kooima	17 Alyson Banda Jennie Maassen (93) <i>the Mike Haverhals'</i>	18 Isaac Postma Julie Van Otterloo <i>the Myron Bleyenberg's</i>
19 Darin Kooima Mary Vande Kamp Erica Van Surksum	20 Joe Miller <i>the Darin Pottema's</i>	21 Melissa Elbers Gerrit Vis	22	23	24 Cody Davelaar Bob Kooima (87)	25 Gensen Zomer
26 Carter Vanden Bos	27	28	29 Darletta Leloux	30 Arnold Kempema Levi Vanden Bos	31 <i>the Travis Jansen's</i> <i>the Roger Kempema's (56)</i>	