

**Building God's
kingdom one life at a
time.**



First Reformed Church

**March
2026**

**COMMUNION TO SHUT-INS
MARCH 3**

Pastor Paul and several elders provide communion to members in care facilities and their homes throughout the morning and afternoon. If you would like to be added to the list please call the church office at 712.324.2130.



Time to
Spring Ahead

**Sunday,
March 8**

Don't forget
to set your
clocks ahead
one hour.

Family Night Meal - 5:00-6:15 PM

- Mar 4** Pulled Pork/Bun, Chips, Cole Slaw, Baked Beans, **Cookies**
[7 people bring 2 dozen cookies]
- Mar 11** Soup (Chicken & Wild Rice, Chili & Potato), **Bars**
[10 people bring 9x13 pan of bars]
- Mar 18** **NO FAMILY NIGHT MEAL**
5-7 PM - Alpha Teens/Middle School Pasta Supper
- Mar 25** Scalloped Potatoes & Ham, Veggie, **Cake**
[10 people bring a 9x13 cake]



Items that are to be brought in by work group members will follow the meal for that night (**in bold lettering**). *If you can't get items to the church by 10 AM Wednesday, call the church office & make arrangements with Wendy. If you can't deliver items when the church is open, use the code provided by your work group leader.*

SPRING CREATIVE MOVEMENT SCHEDULE

PRACTICE SCHEDULE

- March 4 - 5 PM in sanctuary
- March 8 - 5 PM in sanctuary
- March 15 - 5 PM in sanctuary

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

- March 22 - 9:30 service

On the performance date be here at 8:45 AM. Wear black leggings and a white t-shirt or tank top.



DATE: Thursday, March 12
TIME: 4:30-6:00 PM
LOCATION: Living Water Church
Bring a box with you to pick up your groceries.



Honor the memory of a loved one this year by purchasing an Easter lily to be displayed in our sanctuary on Easter Sunday. **Each lily is \$23** and payment is due at the time you place your order. **Orders need to be turned into the church office and are due March 15.** Following the Easter service, you are welcome to take your lily home.



WHEN: Monday, March 16

TIME: 5:30-6:30 PM

WHERE: Living Water Community Church

A come and go buffet will be served. A bag of groceries is available to take home with you after you have had your meal. Come join us for some food & fellowship.

Alpha Teen's Pasta Supper

When: Wednesday, March 18

Time: 5:00 - 7:00 PM

Where: FRC Fellowship Hall

Cost: Free will donation

This is one of the primary ways the Alpha Teens fund their activities - Power Connection, Middle School Retreat & other events. Your attendance & contributions will be most appreciated.
God bless you - The Alpha Teens

Hands of Hope Committee will be collecting groceries and cleaning supplies for NCC's Thunder Cupboard that assists students. Please put your items in the tubs in the Fellowship Hall. **We will collect through March 8.**

Below is a list of suggested items to donate.

ITEM

- Sugar
- Pasta
- Brown Rice
- Jelly
- Kidney Beans
- Pancake Mix
- Potatoes
- Ramen Noodles
- Tea
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Tomato Sauce
- Salt & Pepper
- Spaghetti & Other Noodles
- Tortillas
- Canned Chicken
- Wheat Flour
- White Rice
- Cooking Oil

- Cereal
- Juice
- Peanut Butter
- Pinto Beans
- Syrup
- Coffee
- Spices
- Tomato Paste
- Onions
- Milk
- Bread
- Bananas
- Eggs
- Oranges
- Apples
- Butter
- Tomatoes
- Feminine Products
- Paper Towels
- Deodorant

- Toilet Paper
- Kleenex
- Laundry Soap
- Shampoo
- Dish Soap
- Trash bags - kitchen

Cleaning items:

- Window cleaner
- Floor cleaner
- Household deodorizer
- Tub & sink cleaner
- Chlorox
- Disinfecting wipes
- Toilet bowl cleaner

Please put items in red on the kitchen counter or in the refrigerator where appropriate.

YOUTH SUNDAY - PALM SUNDAY - March 29

This year the RCYF youth will be joined by our children 3 year olds through kindergarten during this special service.

The children, 3-yr - K, will meet downstairs in room #12 (children's singing room) at 9 AM. They will sing at the beginning of the service and will then be released to sit with their parents.





Registration for summer camp at Inspiration Hills opened on February 2. Grab a brochure in the Fellowship

Hall or visit inspirationhills.org to review the camp offerings and register. **FRC will cover half the cost of camp for your child and one of his or her friends.** Register early because camps fill up quickly! Save money by registering before April 15.

PARENTS OF SENIORS

We are in need of pictures, both baby and senior picture, of your upcoming graduate. In addition we would like a short blurb about their future plans. Please submit these things to either Caitie or Wendy.

Their emails are:

caitie@sheldonfirstreformed.com
wendy@sheldonfirstreformed.com

PARENTS OF GRADUATES FROM COLLEGES and OTHER POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS

Please send Wendy a picture of your graduate and a couple sentences about their future plans so they can be included in the May Encore.

SUMMER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY



HAPPY
Anniversary

- Mar 6 Mark & Katie Vander Naald - 22
- Mar 8 Ben & Callie Hoelker - 1
- Mar 10 Ron & Jan Koerselman - 54
- Mar 11 Adam & Savannah Sauer - 20
- Mar 12 John & Carolyn Meyer - 61
- Wayne & Deb Den Hartog - 44
- Mar 16 Bryan & Brenda Godbersen - 47
- Kirk & Tina Dekker - 24
- Mar 18 Brad & Janice Vander Pol - 20
- Mar 25 Larry & Laura Oldenkamp - 49
- Mar 28 Brian & Char Woelber - 46
- Myron & Vicki Holtrop - 26
- Beth & James Borgens - 5
- Mar 29 Dave & Denise Wolthuizen - 51
- Mar 30 Jordan & Ashtyn Hoekstra - 13

GIVING STATEMENTS

Check your church mailboxes for your 2025 giving statements. If they are inaccurate please contact the church office or Brady Peters at brdyptrs@gmail.com.



MARCH MEETING DATES

4TH Regular meeting

11TH Theme night: Wild Wednesday- Dress like a wild animal or the wild west

18TH Regular meeting

25TH Regular meeting

Family night meal: 5:15-6:30
 Awana meeting time: 6:00-7:30

Contact Sami Fox for more info or to register



Mar 2 Barry Whitsell
Melinda Van Beek
Brayden Meyer
Aaliyah Wassenaar
Abigail Wassenaar
Maren Jensen

Mar 3 Carma Nordahl
Sharla Roozeboom

Mar 4 Phyllis De Vries - 92
Brandon Kats
Asher Peters

Mar 5 Bev Heemstra - 92

Mar 6 Dixie De Jong
Dennis Popkes

Mar 8 Caitie Fagen
Bennett Cooper

Mar 9 Emma Van Meeteren

Mar 10 Denise Portz

Mar 14 Ed Verburg
Ivan Korver

Mar 15 Kemmy Claude

Mar 16 Karen De Boom
Natalie Jorgensen

Mar 17 Chase De Groot
Shae Slykhuis

Mar 18 Edgar De Vries - 93
Carol Pomerence
Brad Zeutenhorst
Nichole Freeman

Mar 19 Mike Oldenkamp

Mar 20 John Oostra
Brielle Mouw

Mar 22 Darrell De Groot
Beckett Sawyer

Mar 24 Chad Beukelman
Matthew Meyer

Mar 25 Mike Kleinwolterink
Laura De Hoogh
Mikayla Meyer

Mar 26 Denise Wolthuizen

Mar 27 Blaine De Groot

Mar 28 Kayley Kreykes

Mar 29 Sarah Van Meeteren
Kaden Kamstra
Norah Fox

Mar 30 Janet Koerselman
Brian Stofferan
Olivia Van Maaren

Mar 31 Eileen Martens
Jasmine Holtrop
Joshua Nieuwendorp
Adaline Crooks



Thanks to all who served the Unity Meal on Feb 16. We served a total of 130 people. Special thank you to the Sawyers for the buffalo burger that we used for

the meal. We touched many people and they enjoyed the food.

~ Dianne Wolthuizen

We want to thank everyone again for all your thoughts and prayers for Ryer and our family while he was away. Also, thank you for the care packages and cards he received as well. Continue to pray for peace in a place of such unrest.

~ The Dackens

Your thoughtfulness and support gives us courage to face tomorrow. Thank you.

~ The Family of Andrew Kanengieter

Thanks to all of the people who helped serve the meal to the NCC soccer team and its coaches.

~ The Hands of Hope Team



HIDDEN
ACRES
EST 1979

MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT

When: April 11-13

Where: Hidden Acres Christian Center, Dayton, Iowa



Rocky Mountain High

High school students, it is not too late to sign up for Rocky. Spots are still available. If you need help with the registration process, contact

Caitie by phone at 712.324.2130 or by email at caitie@sheldonfirstreformed.com.

If you are interested in having a large print bulletin for your use on Sundays, please contact Wendy at 324-2130 or wendy@sheldonfirstreformed.com and she will print one out for you. The bulletin will be placed on the small shelf to the left of the entry at the back of the sanctuary and on the table in the overflow area. Right now there will be one copy located at each location.



ADULTS - VBS NEEDS YOU TOO!
 See the Welcome Table to sign up to help with VBS



**February 1
 Baptism of
 Ryker Dean Jager**



Ryker is the son of Josh & Haley Jager. He is the grandson of Shane & Christie Jager and the great-grandson of Bob & Cheryl Van Meeteren and Edgar & Shirley Jager.

PROFESSIONS OF FAITH

On February 22, five people made their professions - Kari Rozeboom, Kailey Mainolfi, Ayla Sauer, Cael Story and Harper Van Meeteren.



First Reformed is so pleased to welcome all of them into our church family, and are looking forward to eleven more professions being made in the next several months!

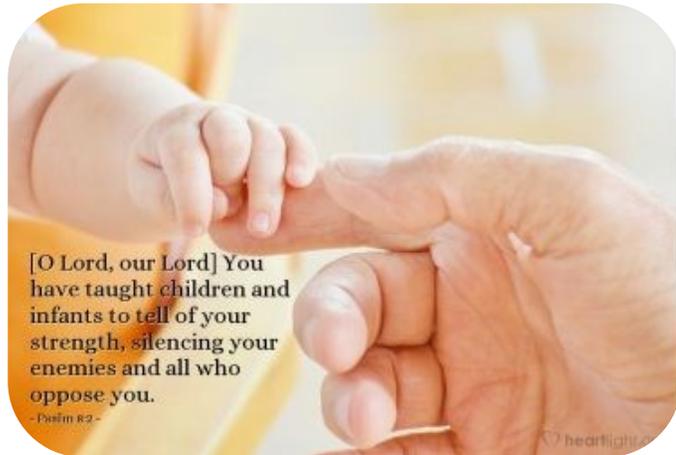
If you too are interested in joining our family of believers here at FRC please contact Pastor Paul.

GENERAL FUND - February 2026

	Jan 26	YTD Budget	Annual Budget
Beginning Cash Balance	\$ 57,449.25		
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
General Fund	63,931.30	51,888.47	622,661.61
Interest Income	36.81		
Transfer In	0.00	7,500.00	90,000.00
Total Income	63,968.11	59,388.47	712,661.61
Gross Profit	63,968.11	59,388.47	712,661.61
Expense			
Alliance Dues	0.00	0.00	21,000.00
Congregational Care	728.53	1,416.68	17,000.00
Education	233.67	2,058.33	24,700.00
Facilities & Grounds	4,144.94	27,795.83	272,850.00
General and Consistory	3,275.85	1,508.33	18,100.00
Hands of Hope Outreach	4,319.11	1,566.67	18,800.00
Office	502.23	2,174.99	26,100.00
Payroll Expenses	28,104.14	28,663.47	300,211.61
Transfer Out	25,000.00		
Worship	20.81	758.33	9,100.00
Youth Groups	3,212.85	400.00	4,800.00
Total Expense	69,542.13	66,342.63	712,661.61
Net Ordinary Income	-5,574.02	-6,954.16	0.00
Net Cash Flow	-5,574.02	-6,954.16	0.00
Ending Cash Balance	\$ 51,875.23		

CHANGES TO THE CHURCH DIRECTORY SINCE THE BEGINNING OF 2026

- Darlene Verrips
2501 E. 6th Street Room 100
Sheldon, IA 51201
- Jager Roozeboom
1160 11th St.
Sheldon, IA 51201
- Ken & Paula Van Aalsburg
701 26th Ave.
Sheldon, IA 51201



Lower-Level Renovation February 2026

Jan 31, 26

Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
General Fund	
Lower Level Renovation	245,672.99
Total General Fund	245,672.99
Transfer In	
Endowment Interest	7,575.00
Total Transfer In	7,575.00
Total Income	253,247.99
Gross Profit	253,247.99
Expense	
Facilities & Grounds	
Building Improvements	
Lower Level Renovations	248,991.99
Total Building Improvements	248,991.99
Total Facilities & Grounds	248,991.99
Total Expense	248,991.99
Net Ordinary Income	4,256.00
Net Cash Flow	4,256.00

BENEVOLENT FUND - February 2026

The Heartbeat
from christianforumsite.com

	Jan 26	Budget
Beginning Balance as of January 1, 2026	\$ 75,930.13	
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Benevolent Fund	11,650.00	189,500.00
Missions	700.00	
Sunday School	75.00	
Total Income	<u>12,425.00</u>	<u>189,500.00</u>
Gross Profit	12,425.00	189,500.00
Expense		
Commitments		
Beth (Blankers) Borgens/CRU	0.00	7,000.00
Bethesda Christian Counseling	0.00	5,000.00
GraceCovenantMinistry-Annville	0.00	7,000.00
Grooters, Jay & Amy-Costa Rica	0.00	7,000.00
Harlan Moss-SD Prison Ministry	0.00	7,000.00
Inspiration Hills	0.00	7,000.00
Jake & Brittany Korver	0.00	7,000.00
JoJo Bong-Asian Youth	0.00	3,500.00
Lay Mission Fund	0.00	10,000.00
Love Inc	583.33	7,000.00
Mission & Service Projects	0.00	5,000.00
Mission to India-ChurchPlanters	0.00	7,500.00
Mission to India-Literacy Prog	0.00	2,500.00
Multiplication Network	0.00	3,500.00
Pascal,Sasha&Sara-Moldova	0.00	3,000.00
Reformed Church in America		
Brownell-Japan	0.00	7,000.00
Nicole Opgenorth-Nicaragua	0.00	7,000.00
Total Reformed Church in America	0.00	14,000.00
Reformed Mission Services	0.00	5,000.00
Rise Fest	0.00	5,000.00
Rise Ministries	0.00	7,000.00
SandalsOnSand Min (B Godbersen)	0.00	2,500.00
Sheldon Christian School	0.00	7,000.00
Talking Bibles	0.00	7,000.00
Touch of Hope Bibles	0.00	4,000.00
Touch of Hope Haiti	0.00	7,000.00
Vasileiadis,PavlosMeggan-Greece	0.00	7,000.00
Village Northwest Unlimited	0.00	7,000.00
Words of Hope	0.00	28,000.00
Total Commitments	583.33	189,500.00
YTD Offerings Paid Out	<u>10,050.00</u>	
Total Expense	<u>10,633.33</u>	<u>189,500.00</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>1,791.67</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Net Cash Flow	<u>1,791.67</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Ending Cash Balance	\$ 77,721.80	

A nurse on the pediatric ward, before listening to the little ones' chests would plug the stethoscope into their ears and let them listen to their own hearts. Their eyes would always light up with awe. But she never got a response to equal four-year-old David's. Gently she tucked the stethoscope in his ears and placed the disk over his heart.

"Listen," she said, "What do you suppose that is?" He drew his eyebrows together in a puzzled line and looked up as if lost in the mystery of the strange tap-tap-tapping deep in his chest. Then his face broke out in a wondrous grin. "Is that Jesus knocking?" he asked!

THEOLOGY AS EXPLAINED BY CHILDREN

from southcountychurches.com

- Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.
- Unleavened bread is bread made without ingredients.
- Moses went to the top of Mt. Cyanide to get the 10 commandments.
- Solomon has 300 wives and 700 porcupines.
- David fought the Finkelsteins, a race of people who lived in Biblical times.
- The people who followed Jesus were called the 12 decibels.
- One of the opossums was St. Matthew.
- A Godly person should have only one wife. This is called monotony.
- The Epistles were the wives of the Apostles.
- Joshua led the Hebrew in the battle of Geritol.
- Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day and a ball of fire by night.
- The first book of the Bible is Guinness, in which Adam & Eve were created from an apple tree.

2026 SHEPHERDING TEAMS

First Reformed Church, Sheldon

The congregation is divided into nine groups - one for each Elder/Deacon pair. Your Consistory shepherding team is responsible for keeping in regular contact with the families listed under their names. If you are experiencing some significant trial or illness or are involved in a crisis situation such as a job loss, major life change, or family death feel free to contact your Care Elder or Deacon. If your family has experienced a joyful occasion like the birth of a baby, the marriage of a son or daughter, a wedding anniversary, a promotion at work, or retirement, etc., please let your shepherding team know of the special occasion. In all these situations, an appropriate prayer to the Lord will be offered.

Your Shepherding Team is directly above the list of families to whom they are assigned:

Team 1: Bob Stellinga & Tyler Drenkow

Ed Alons – Kendall De Groot

Team 2: Brad Bosma & Dan Bracy

Evan De Hoogh – Betty Gonnerman

Team 3: Steve Van Beek & Marty Van Peurseem

Johnny Granstra – Shane Jager

Team 4: Dennis Ten Clay & Jared Schaeffer

Luke Jenness – Toby Maggert

Team 5: Larry Vander Plaats & Rodney Kruse

Eileen Martens – Carol Pomerence

Team 6: Randy Fonkert & Cleiton Zanela

Caleb Popkes – Noah Sterk

Team 7: Galen Blankers & Brady Peters

Brian Stofferan – Norma Van Gorp

Team 8: Mike Kleinwolterink & Andy Cooper

Lyle Van Heuvelen – Darlene Verrips

Team 9: Greg Sawyer & Brent Hofmeyer

Marwin Vogel – Brad Zuetenhorst

*“Building God’s
Kingdom one life
at a time.”*

1 Peter 2:4-5



Church Contact Information

Church phone number: 712.324.2130

Email: wendy@sheldonfirstreformed.com

2026 Ministry Teams Contact People

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Pastor Paul - President
Dennis Ten Clay - Vice President
Mike Kleinwolterink - Clerk
Brady Peters - Chairman of Deacons
Tyler Drenkow - Secretary of Deacons

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Dennis Ten Clay - 712.348.3160
dennistenclay@gmail.com

BUILDING & GROUNDS

Cleiton Zanela - 712.230.1501
zanelavineyards@hotmail.com

CALLING ELDER

Gary De Hoogh - 712.348.2647
gndehoogh@msn.com

CHURCH PRIVILEGE

Larry Vander Plaats - 712.348.4626
plaats58@yahoo.com

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Bob Stellinga - 712.348.3330
stell@nethtc.net

We Care -

Nancy Martens - 712.348.0590
nkmartens@hotmail.com

ENDOWMENT FUND

Brady Peters - 712.541.7640
brdyptrs@gmail.com

HANDS OF HOPE OUTREACH

Dianne Wolthuizen - 712.348.4679
waldian12@gmail.com
Janna Kats - 712.441.7122
jannableyenberg@gmail.com

MEMORIAL FUND

Brady Peters - 712.541.7640
brdyptrs@gmail.com

MISSION COMMITTEE

Rodney Kruse - 712.348.4232
rodneykruse@hotmail.com

NURSERY

Kelsey Cooper - 712.348.2636
kelseydh34@gmail.com

PRAYER CHAIN COORDINATOR

Brenda Godbersen - 712.348.0392
brendagodbersen@gmail.com

PULPIT SUPPLY

Dennis Ten Clay - 712.348.3160
dennistenclay@gmail.com

SACRAMENTS

Larry Vander Plaats - 712.348.4626
plaats58@yahoo.com

SAFETY & SECURITY

Greg Sawyer - 712.348.1021
sawyerconstuctioninc@gmail.com

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Andy Cooper - 712.348.6718
andycooper343460@gmail.com

WOMEN TO WOMEN

Brenna Haack - 712.441.0050
brennahaack@gmail.com

WORK GROUPS

Bev Brouwer - 712.348.4083
brouwerb@premieronline.net



Important Church Information

- ◆ **WEBSITE:** www.sheldonfirstreformed.com
- ◆ **WORSHIP VIDEO:** www.sheldonfirstreformed.com/media/worshipservices.cfm
- ◆ **BULLETIN:** www.sheldonfirstreformed.com/media/weeklybulletin.cfm **OR** paper copies are available in the bulletin box outside the north kitchen door along with the most recent Encore and devotional
- ◆ **RADIO BROADCAST:** Sundays at 10 AM on FM 100.7
- ◆ **TV BROADCAST:** Tuesdays at 4 PM on local cable channel 12
- ◆ **FACEBOOK:** www.facebook.com/sheldonfirstreformed
- ◆ **E-GIVING LINK:** Text the word "SFRC" to the number [833.484.7253](tel:833.484.7253) or give online at www.sheldonfirstreformed.com/give
- ◆ **TRADITIONAL GIVING:** Mail to Sheldon First Reformed Church, 1101 7th Street, Sheldon, IA 51201 **OR** drop your offering in the slot on the church office door during the week
- ◆ **MY CHURCH APP:** Download on Google Play or the App Store **OR** text the words "SFRC APP" to the number [833.484.7253](tel:833.484.7253).
- ◆ **PRAYER REQUESTS/PRAISES:** Call the church office at 712.324.2130 or email Pastor Paul at paul@sheldonfirstreformed.com
- ◆ **NEXT STEPS CODE:** The QR code is on the bulletin cover. Using your smartphone device scan the code & it will bring you to a page that will take you to our Connection Card, Prayer Requests, or Giving.
- ◆ **PARENTS:** Children's bulletins are available at www.sheldonfirstreformed.com/media/children-s-bulletin.cfm.
- ◆ **SUNDAY SCHOOL GUIDES:** Pick up in the youth house.
- ◆ **MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL:** Follow us on Instagram & Facebook @ Frcsheldonstudent ministries for upcoming activities & any updates. To be added to the email list please email Caitie at caitie@sheldonfirstreformed.com.
- ◆ **DURING THE WEEK:** The church is open from **7AM-4 PM Monday - Thursday, and from 7 AM-12 PM on 2nd & 4th Fridays**. During the week you may use the north & south doors to get your mail or drop off offerings etc. in the office. You will need to ring the door bell (silver button) to the right of these doors to enter the church. Wendy will buzz you in from the office.
- ◆ **SUNDAY MORNINGS:** The church doors will lock at 9:30 AM. If you find the doors locked upon your arrival, go to the front/east door and a team member will welcome you into the church
- ◆ If you would like to receive church emails & don't currently receive them, please call the church at 712.324.2130 & provide Wendy with your email address. You may also fill out the connection card with this info & place it in the basket as you leave the sanctuary.
- ◆ If you have moved, made changes to your emails or phone numbers, please contact the church office with the updated information by calling 712.324.2130 or emailing wendy@sheldonfirstreformed.com.
- ◆ **BULLETIN & NEWSLETTER ITEMS:** If you would like items included in either, please get the items to the office by 10 AM on Thursday morning for the bulletin & the Thursday of the last full week of the month for inclusion in the upcoming newsletter. **The deadline to submit items for the April Encore is noon on Thursday, March 26. It will be printed on March 27.**

NOTE: To access videos & bulletins, note the above information in [purple](#). If you cannot find bulletins, look under the media tab. Then scroll down to the date of the bulletin you are looking for and click on it.

Missionary Updates

Grooters serving throughout Latin America

We are back in Costa Rica for a quick 3 months this year. It always feels good when we see the coast, we know we are close to home. It's different this year to be pulled in different directions of where "home" is. We definitely miss our Colorado home and all the good friendships we have developed over the past year. But... it feels great to see friends and our favorites here in Uvita/Ojochal too.



Quick update: Last week we enjoyed time together at our annual IBAC staff meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica. Time was spent developing our core values, reviewing procedures and encouraging each other. God sure has put together a great team. We are blessed to be part of His work



Front row - Esteban Amaya (Mexico, Bolivia, Argentina coordinator), Jay (Executive Director), Josue Brenes (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Peru coordinator) Kevin Rivera (Translator/Teacher)

Prayer Requests

- Pray for safety as we travel this weekend to 2 IBAC institutes in Costa Rica.
- Pray for safety as we travel back to Colorado the end of March.
- Pray for financial partners to help us Mobilize our Latino Teachers.
- Pray for new church or individual partners for Institutes ready to be started.

Praises

- Blessed time together as a IBAC staff, early February.
- God provided a small group bible study we could be part of while in country.

Our mailing address is:
Jay and Amy Grooters
97 Kiowa Creek Trail
Florissant, CO 80816



Nathan and Nozomi Brownell

A glimpse at what your support made possible

Nathan Brownell:

Because of your generosity, the hope of the gospel continues to reach those attending the outreach programs held at the Green House youth center here in Yokohama Japan. One of the highlights of this past year is the Sunday Afternoon Fellowship gathering (SAF). SAF is a gathering of students, young adults and teachers. We send out invites with a different theme each month. When we gather, we sing, have a round of casual self-introductions, listen to a Christian message, and share a meal together. Attendees bring their family members or friends and many stay late into the evening even after the program has finished as if they do not want the evening to end. It is a beautiful thing. We feel your prayers. Each month the Lord brings together our volunteer team and the Holy Spirit draws those who should come. Each month approximately 30 join SAF.

This monthly outreach is in addition to our weekly after-school programs. Over the course of one year the after-school program attracts at least 480 students visits from three area junior and senior high schools. If each of the three area schools has approximately 1,200 students and faculty, our potential reach is approximately 3,600 precious students and future leaders. The SAF program broadens the reach beyond the immediate area schools. So, we need to be careful not to spread ourselves too thin. However, the Lord continues to bless us with several core volunteers who help in many ways. We say heartfelt thanks to Mr. Odani, Mrs. Kumura, Mr. & Mrs. Sagara, Mr. & Mrs. Tabe, and Ms. Hannah Lee.

Nozomi Brownell:

With your generous and faithful support and prayer:

- 1) I was able to continue training the Children and Worship (C&W) leaders throughout the year. Over last 13 years, we have certified 21 worship leaders and, in the year 2025, we added three more. They are practicing the program across Japan in various settings including preschools, Sunday schools, after-school programs, and even for adult Bible study groups. The program has been used by the Lord to reach out not only to the children and students but also many non-Christian parents and the school staffs. Most Japanese have very little knowledge of the Bible, but when children are exposed to C&W, children get so interested that the parents and the staff become curious enough to request to be included. The adults feel safe to be in the C&W environment and they are often moved deeply when they learn that they too can relate to God through quietness and prayer.
- 2) The C&W worship leaders could start their various ministries due to the generous gifts of wooden figures from churches in the U.S. The used materials which we have received over the years are available to be lent the leaders when needed. And your support has made possible the model worship center at the Green House here in Yokohama, Japan.
- 3) I was given opportunities to speak at one of the local mission elementary schools for their Mission Day and at YMCA for the kids Christmas service. Proclaiming the good news to the young children is a great joy!

Our challenges in 2025

Nathan Brownell:

One of our mission partner organizations is going through a downsizing and restructuring process. This process is presenting many challenges. One challenge was the need for a new part-time staff person at that office. Over the years we have been blessed by the faithful service of Mrs. Lee and her service continues. However, our part-time assistant retired. Those who have experience in seeking good help know how challenging the search process can be. Our search took more than one year.

Fortunately, through the kind introduction of a contact at International Christian University we were able to hire Mr. Tada. We were seeking someone with experience in finance, legal compliance, and with a good understanding of Christianity to help support the office work. Fortunately, although Mr. Tada was newly retired, he had a sense of call that the Lord was not done with him yet and that he should “strengthen the arms of the missionaries.” Mrs. Lee and Mr. Tada have been a great help this past year as we have been dealing with various legal matters in support of the mission work.

Nozomi Brownell:

The challenge of C&W continues to be the provision of the materials. We hold the workshops often to make the props and materials for parables together. However, making the wooden figures by ourselves is still a challenge. There was a kind, retired gentleman who used to make some of the wooden figures for us here, but now he is over 80 and retiring from such volunteer work. We have been trying to set up the woodshop where we can make our own figures, but it is still a work in process. We need a better workspace, better woodworking equipment or machinery, and of course, the techniques. I am praying that the Lord will grant us the “know how” for making the wooden figures and props, or that he would send those who have the skills to help. And of course, we would be glad to receive any used figures from churches in the U.S.

Please pray

Nathan Brownell:

1. Please pray for Haruka, a graduate of a local mission school who has been very active at the Green House; during her senior year, she helped form a band that held a well-attended praise concert at GH, where she also shared a powerful testimony, and she is now a college student who still attends SAF and will soon go on exchange study to Indonesia. Please pray that God will guide and protect her during this time, and that the Lord will bless her and make her a blessing to others while she is there.



2. Pray for discernment in the coming year as we must decide whether to renovate or rebuild the Green House youth center. Either path presents new challenges.
3. Our second son Raymond graduated from Tokyo Christian University and the graduate school. He is in training to become a pastor. We praise the Lord that his application to be licensed to preach has been approved. We thank God that he is under the mentorship of a good pastor as he works toward ordination. Please pray for him and his ministry.
4. Nozomi's mother has been in an advanced care facility for several months. They are tentatively preparing for her release to return to the senior center. Please pray for her health.

Nozomi Brownell:

- 1) For the worship leaders to continue growing spiritually and that they would have more opportunities to lead the C&W program.
- 2) For new worship leader candidates to be added to the program. We need more leaders for raising Christ-centered children.
- 3) For the C&W material center to be established such that we would be able to consistently supply the materials needed.



Reformed Mission Services has a team leaving this week for Costa Rica, where RMS has been actively serving for many years. On this trip, we will partner with a local congregation in the Los Cuadros area to help prepare their newly acquired property for a future church building. The members of this congregation have close ties with Bill Green and his ministry through CLIR. Please pray for safe travel, strength for the team, and lasting fruit from this partnership.

Reformed Mission Services is raising funds to build a ministry and training center in Las Majadas, El Salvador. This center will equip local pastors with Reformed theology through short-term courses taught by visiting professors, and it will offer English classes to residents of surrounding towns, helping them gain skills for jobs and daily life. Your support will help provide fencing, dormitory foundations, and essential preparations so this center can train leaders, strengthen churches, and bless the community. To learn more or give, visit rms.org/projects.



**PASCALS in MOLDOVA
February 2026**

Clear the Snow



The past six weeks have been snowy, icy and just all around miserable here in Chisinau, Moldova. We have spent a good amount of time clearing the snow from our stadium. If we don't clear the snow, we don't get to practice. Also, the snow begins to pack down, turn to ice and then we don't get to practice for weeks on end while it slowly melts. Lately, it feels like every time we turn around, we are clearing snow.

This somewhat feels like our life in ministry as missionaries and disciple makers. We make headway, are excited about growth in some of our disciples and wake up the next day to 'snow.' We may lose one or two team members from a soccer team and have to start recruiting again, which means also creating a new team dynamic. We may be super excited about one of the youth asking questions about Jesus and

seeming interested, only to have this person suddenly stop coming around. We may make plans for an event just to get sick, etc. There are lots of things that can feel like a dump of snow on our gorgeous green field and we have to pull out the shovels and plow on.

This isn't a new sentiment in ministry, three steps forward, one big avalanche. Just read Paul's letters to the Corinthians. We plow on through prayer-yours and ours. We plow on through our presence, the day in and day out of being here in the every day lives of these youth and our neighbors. We plow on through hope, knowing the Christ is doing a work in people.

March Schedule

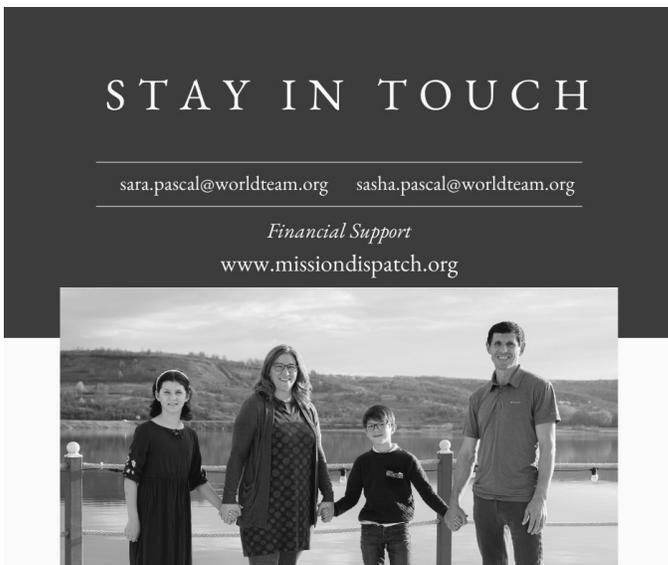
March will be a busy month, with a soccer tournament every weekend with different age groups. We also have the World Team Europe leaders coming to Moldova for a visit and a check-in. I, Sara, have module three of my UEFA C Coaches license.

PLEASE PRAY

1. That our time with the kids and their families at soccer would bring spiritual conversations and opportunities to speak life.
2. For our visit with the World Team Europe Area leaders to be fruitful and encouraging.
3. For health, so we can do all of these things.
4. For us to find one or two new players for our U13 team.

Thank you for your on-going support and prayers.

Sasha, Sara, Adela & Miroslav



THOUGHTS AS EASTER APPROACHES

from learnbibleddaily.com

As we journey through the seasons of Lent and Easter, it's a beautiful time to reflect on our faith and the transformative power of God's love. These seasons invite us to not only remember the sacrifice of Jesus but also to embrace the hope and renewal that comes with His resurrection. Let's dive into these scriptures and see how they can enrich our understanding of this sacred time.

Luke 9:23

“Then he said to them all: ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.’”

Following Jesus requires sacrifice and commitment. This verse serves as a reminder that Lent is a time to evaluate our priorities and make choices that reflect our faith. Daily, we are called to take up our cross, embracing the challenges that come with discipleship.

1 Peter 2:24

“He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”

As we reflect on Jesus' suffering, we are reminded of the healing He brings. This verse encourages us to let go of our burdens and embrace the righteousness that comes from faith. During Lent, consider what sins you need to lay down and how you can live more fully in Christ.



The Midwest Network Newsletter

A Word from the President

CODY MORET

Greetings! As we observed Ash Wednesday and enter the season of Lent, I encourage you to take time to reflect on how God is working in your life and ministry. Perhaps there is something He is inviting you to release or to embrace as you seek renewed closeness with Him. My prayer is that this season creates space for stillness, renewal, and deeper dependence on the Holy Spirit.

As shared at our fall gathering, we continue to review our bylaws and move toward Policy Governance. A subcommittee has recommended a few minor updates, which we plan to communicate this summer in preparation for action at our next fall gathering. Because of the size and geography of our Network, we want to approach this process thoughtfully and create clear opportunities for communication and feedback.

At our January meeting, the board approved Seth Sundstrom's summer sabbatical. We are working on a plan to cover responsibilities during his absence and appreciate your patience and support.

I also encourage you to attend this year's Pastor's Retreat, April 13–15 at Inspiration Hills. It will be a meaningful time of rest and renewal. Thank you for your faithful service, and may this season of Lent bring fresh encouragement to you and the ministries you lead.



Prayer Team Update

FRED WILGENBURG

The current Prayer Guide can be found at the link below!

For any prayer requests feel free to email us at

midwestnetprayer@gmail.com

[HTTPS://DRIVE.GOOGLE.COM/FILE/D/17LNMFHUJ0FOQKL8N2UROBCOFOK7AZBOW/VIEW?USP=SHARING](https://drive.google.com/file/d/17LNMFHUJ0FOQKL8N2UROBCOFOK7AZBOW/view?usp=sharing)

JUST AROUND THE CORNER: PASTOR'S RETREAT

MONDAY APRIL 13 - WEDNESDAY APRIL 15

INSPIRATION HILLS - INWOOD, IA

TOPIC: Disordered Desires

Seeking transformation through grace

During this retreat, we will consider how our desires become disordered—pulling us away from God, from others, and even from our own true selves—and how the Holy Spirit awakens in us a deeper longing for transformation that draws us toward God and his kingdom. Our everyday desires are ultimately meant to be satisfied by the infinite love of God, who meets us with grace rather than striving. Come away for awhile. . . for a time of worship, rest, and community as we make space for God to do what only God can do.

REGISTER HERE: [HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/E78VZSIAHZUOCWSV5](https://forms.gle/E78VZSIAHZUOCWSV5)

Find helpful guidance on the following topics on our Resources Page below!

- COMPENSATION & BENEFITS
- MINISTRY PARTNER VIDEOS
- DIRECTORIES & FORMS
- ORDINATION INFORMATION
- COVENANT KEEPERS
- PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS

[HTTPS://MIDWESTNETWORK.ORG/RESOURCES](https://midwestnetwork.org/resources)

Financial Update

BRENDA VAN BEEK

Now that we've wrapped up another year in ministry together, please review the enclosed 2025 financial report. Looking ahead to 2026, all of the Network's church support activities will continue, and we'll also take on two new activities: put our practices into written policy in the move toward Policy Governance, and prepare our churches for the first round of 5-year renewals with the Alliance. Personally, I'm also looking forward to working with our churches more closely this summer as we discuss the governance updates and as I fill in during Seth's sabbatical.

And then a life update...I would appreciate your prayers as I walk thru a breast cancer diagnosis. I will have surgery in the next few weeks, then radiation, but hopefully no chemo is needed. The full course of treatment will be clearer in a week or so, but I'm told it will likely be finished before my son graduates from high school in May. God's surpassing peace has been with me, and I'm told it's very treatable with a high likelihood of cure. Thank you!

**Q: WHAT TIME OF DAY DID GOD
CREATE ADAM?**

A: JUST BEFORE EVE

**Q: WHERE WAS SOLOMON'S
TEMPLE LOCATED?**

A: ON THE SIDE OF HIS HEAD

From the Network Pastor

SETH SUNDSTROM

I've had a lot of people ask me how I'm doing, since my Parkinson's diagnosis this past summer. I'm grateful for the love and concern. The good news is, my meds are working and, while I'm changed by this disease, I'm not defeated. I'm actually doing quite well physically and have deep peace spiritually and emotionally.

In other news, many of you probably got an email from me last week about my upcoming Sabbatical May 26 thru Aug. 14. (not related to the above). It's been 15 years since my last one, so I'm looking forward to an extended rest for my soul and mind. My main focus will be fishing - like all disciples should.

In preparation, I'm working with our Board and Staff to make sure everything is covered in my absence. If you need anything from me, please reach out soon. As always, don't hesitate to call - 605.351.4373

Transitions/Updates

SETH SUNDSTROM

Accepted Calls

Josh Lucas - First Reformed of Baldwin WI

Transitions

Riverview Reformed of Yankton, SD
Willmar First Reformed of Willmar, MN

Seeking Pastor

Bethel Reformed of Brandon WI *
Chandler Reformed of Chandler MN
Delaware Reformed of Lennox SD
Faith Reformed of Wisconsin Rapids WI *
First Reformed of Meservey IA
Free Grace Reformed of Middleburg IA *
Immanuel Reformed of Belmond IA



March 2026

Dear First Reformed Church,

Tataya is a Maasai evangelist in Tanzania. Like many Maasai men, he never learned to read because he grew up herding livestock and attended school only occasionally.

This creates a heartbreaking barrier. Even when printed Bibles are available, **many Maasai cannot read God's Word—it remains out of reach.**

As Tataya explains, *"In this world, it's better if we have both a printed Bible and a Talking Bible. But where I live, many people cannot read. **The Talking Bible helps them understand.**"*

Six months ago, Tataya received a Talking Bible. For the first time, Scripture could be heard clearly in the local language—first at Friday and Sunday gatherings.



But the listening didn't stop there. People hungered for more. Tataya began sending the Talking Bible home with different believers each week so families could listen longer—even while tending their livestock or working in the fields.

God's Word was no longer distant or locked away. It could be heard—personal, alive—and people were eager to listen.

Because of the Talking Bible, God's Word now reaches people in Tataya's community who cannot read. Families gather at home, neighbors stop to listen, and even elders—who often resist printed Bibles—hear Scripture aloud. One small device is shared again and again, boldly spreading God's Word throughout the community.

"When Scripture is spoken aloud," Tataya explains, *"people can meditate on God's Word day and night—just as Joshua 1:8 describes."*

"I love seeing my people's faces light up when they hear God's Word," he adds. *"It reminds me why I keep sharing."*

One Talking Bible now reaches entire families—and sparks conversations throughout the community.

The Talking Bible Tataya uses today is part of a **legacy that began over 40 years ago**. In 1983, I recorded the Maasai New Testament in a small mud hut on the Serengeti—a project that took three months! Today, updated recordings continue to bring God's Word to thousands who cannot read.

Tataya's story is just one of many. Across Tanzania and beyond, millions of people cannot read—and right now, they are waiting to hear God's Word. For them, the Talking Bible is not a replacement. It is a lifeline.

Because of your faithful support, **God's Word continues to reach communities like Tataya's every day**. Families gather at home, neighbors stop to listen, and even elders are hearing Scripture aloud. One small device is shared again and again, boldly spreading God's Word throughout the community.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul D. Hoekstra". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul D. Hoekstra

President, Talking Bibles International

P.S. Thank you for your ongoing partnership in this ministry. Your gifts are keeping God's Word moving to those who need it most.

Beth Borgens

February 2026

The Snowball Effect

As finals approached, staff member Josh was tempted to coast, believing 'it's finals week; nobody will want to talk with us.' But the dedication of his students challenged him. The excitement started with Quaid, a junior, who took Oliver and Nolan out to share their faith for the first time in December.

Now their group chat began filling with encouraging updates:

- **Dec. 4, 2:23 p.m. Quaid (student leader):** Nolan and I talked with Sam, a freshman open to checking out Cru. Then, Oliver and Adam went sharing, and a guy named Nate prayed to receive Jesus!
- **Dec. 4, 3:39 p.m. Jonah (intern):** Logan and I just had a two-hour conversation with Nikolai, who became increasingly open to the gospel. We're meeting again soon.
- **Dec. 7, 9:42 p.m. Ryan (student leader):** I just got a text from Gus, who had stopped responding, saying he wants to start coming to Cru more next semester.
- **Dec. 9, 4:09 p.m. Josh (staff):** Jonah and I had two guys pray to receive Christ with us today!



This "snowball effect"—faith prompting faith—compelled their steps. During finals week, these leaders celebrated three new brothers in Christ!

Shared by: Greater Twin Ports Cru team - Josh and Kendra Graham

Prayers & Praises



Thank you all for your prayers as I traveled to NAME (religiously secure area of the world) this month. I was part of meetings joined by leaders from 21 other countries from around the world. Praise God for translation technology! These meetings officially kicked off my year of Global Operations Leadership Development. It was a joy meeting fellow staff from around the world and getting to hear from Cru's global leadership. I have a lot of work ahead of me! I am also thankful that I stayed mostly healthy on this trip so thank you for your prayers. Since I can not share a group photo for the safety of my coworkers, here is a picture of my coaching group for the year.

Andrea from Costa Rica, Liz from Mexico, and me.

*Please pray for Violet, she has been sick on and off for the past 2 months and she is feeling miserable.

PRISON LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRY NEWSLETTER February 2026



***“Now to Him Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us, to Him be the glory.”
Ephesians 3:20***

God is awesome in all His ways! When a person remains steadfast in their decision to follow Jesus, others will see it. When others see it they will want that same peace and joy a follower of Christ has in them.

One of the men in the Bible study had some good questions. I asked Henry if he knew the Lord and he told me, “I do not, but I would like to know Him.” He did not have any Bible knowledge. He went on to tell me, “When I was using drugs, I saw some pictures where I saw a dark shadow over me, like a spirit. That scared me, so I quit using drugs. I am a believer that there is a spirit world.” He was very open to hearing the good news of the gospel and trusted Christ as his Savior!

I have visited Peter a few times. He lives on D-floor where the men have been on tight supervision for the last year. When he was brought to my office, he had to be handcuffed. I knew something was different about Peter this time. He was more positive and smiling. As we visited, he told me, “A few weeks ago I got down on my knees and told the Lord, ‘You can have all of me. I am done with the gang life, and I want to follow You Lord Jesus with all my heart.’ My life has changed and I have peace in my heart and soul! I told the others that I quit the gang life. They tell me I will get beat up for leaving it. I don’t care what they think or do to me, I am done with that life. I

would rather get beat up for doing right than for doing wrong, which I did most of my life. If I am going to suffer it might as well be for Jesus! The other day one of the gang members walked past my door and spit on me. I remembered that they spit on Jesus as well, I let it go. I am sharing my devotions with my roommate, and he is getting interested in knowing Jesus and His Word.” I visited with Peter 10 days later and he told me. “My cellie is not a Christian but he is very interested in learning more about Jesus. I would like you to visit with him and explain the gospel to him more clearly.” I told him I would be glad to visit with him. A few days later I received a request from Peter to talk with me as soon as possible. It was about his cellie who wanted to visit with me. We went over the good news of Jesus Christ and the cost of following Jesus. He was very serious about changing his life of sin by inviting Jesus to be his Lord and Savior! After we prayed, he told me it was like a burden lifted. Peter has truly been a light and a witness to his cellie. Peter informed me, “I have been praying with some of the inmates when we are out of our cells for rec. One of the men asked if me, ‘If before we lock up can we get in a circle and you would pray for us!’ That is what has been happening for the last few days. Another thing God is doing is that the man who spit on me, now wants me to pray for him!” Praise God for His work in their lives! I am thankful to God that I can be part of what He is doing!

Thank you for your prayers, God is truly at work in the prison! Thank you for your financial support as well! Have a great February!

In Christ, *Harlan*

Please designate my name in the memo section of your check. Send them to: Prison Lighthouse Fellowship (PLF) or South Dakota Prison Chaplain’s Association (SDPCA), 601 W 57th Street Sioux Falls, SD 57108. Your gifts are appreciated and tax deductible. My phone: 605-940-4220, Email: harlan@convergeheartland.org



March 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8am Praise Team Practice 5-5:30pm - Creative Movement Practice	2	3 7am Men's Bible Study 6pm Hands of Hope Mtg	4 5-6:15pm Meal 6-7:30pm Awana 6:15-7:30pm MS 6:30-7:30 Adult Bible Study 7:45-9pm HS	5 7am Executive Team Mtg	6	7
8 Daylight Savings Time Begins - set clocks ahead 1 hour 8am Praise Team Practice 5-5:30pm - Creative Movement Practice	9 6pm Congregational Care Mtg	10 7am Men's Bible Study	11 5-6:15pm Meal 6-7:30pm Awana 6:30-7:30 Adult Bible Study 7:45-9pm HS	12 4:30-6pm Sheldon Food Truck @ Living Water	13	14
15 8am Praise Team Practice 5-5:30pm - Creative Movement Practice	16 5:30-6:30pm Sheldon Unity Meal @ Living Water	17 St. Patrick's Day 7am Men's Bible Study 6:30pm Elders/Deacons Mtgs 7:30pm Consistory Mtg	18 1:30pm Afternoon Circle 5-7pm MS Pasta Meal 6-7:30pm Awana 6:30-7:30 Adult Bible Study 7:45-9pm HS	19 7pm Evening Circle	20 	21
22 8am Praise Team Practice Professions of Faith Creative Movement Performance	23	24 7am Men's Bible Study	25 5-6:15pm Meal 6-7:30pm Awana 6:15-7:30pm MS 6:30-7:30 Adult Bible Study 7:45-9pm HS	26	27	28
29 Palm Sunday Youth Sunday 3 yr-K sing 8am Praise Team Practice	30	31 7am Men's Bible Study				

