

OCTOBER 2026 ENCORE

Building God's kingdom one life at a time . — 1 Peter 2:4-5

1101 7th Street, Sheldon, IA 51201

712.324.2130

website: www.sheldonfirstreformed.com

WEDNESDAY NIGHT FAMILY MEAL - 5:00-6:15 PM

- October 7 Goulash, Veggie, Bread, **Bars**
[12 people bring 9x13 pan of bars]
- October 14 Creamed Chicken/Bun, Chips , Oreo Fluff,
Cake
[12 people bring a 9x13 cake]
- October 21 Hot Beef, Corn, **Brownies**
[12 people bring a 9x13 pan of brownies]
- October 28 Pulled Pork/Bun, Baked Beans, Cheesy
Potatoes, **Bars**
[12 people bring 9x13 pan of bars]

Items that are to be brought in by work group members follow the meal in **BOLD WHITE**. Please be sure to bring a 9x13 sized pan of bars/brownies/ cake as indicated. The number of people who attend meals is growing, so we need to make sure we have enough dessert for everyone. If possible have your items here by 4:00 PM on Tuesday.

To drop off items in the kitchen when the church isn't open, use the code provided by your work group leader. Be sure to sign the notebook on the counter with your name so we know who brought items.

Your Help is Needed at our Family Night Meals

Adults who are NOT parents of kids attending Awana, or who are taking part in children or youth activities, **PLEASE DON'T GET IN LINE TO EAT UNTIL AFTER 5:37 PM**. This will allow the kids to eat first so the various Wednesday night programs may start on time.



WHEN: October 4
TIME: Morning Service

If you are unable to attend you are invited to partake of the sacraments at the CRH at 6:00 PM.

CREATIVE MOVEMENT PRACTICES

Practices will be at 4:30 PM on Sunday afternoons in the sanctuary. They will last about 30 minutes. Kids need to enter the church through the north door.

FIRST PRACTICE: OCTOBER 4

Practices will be on October 11, 18, 25 and November 1.

FIRST PERFORMANCE: NOVEMBER 8

IMPORTANT DATES IN OCTOBER FOR YOUTH

- ♦ **Sunday, October 4**
MS frozen food samples & sales after service
- ♦ **Wednesday, October 7**
MS to corn maze: 5:45-8:15 PM
HS to corn maze: 6:45-9:15 PM
- ♦ **Friday & Saturday, October 9 & 10**
MS Lock-in: 9 PM-7:30 AM on the 10th
- ♦ **Sunday, October 11**
MS frozen food sales after service
- ♦ **Sunday, October 18**
MS frozen food sales after service
- ♦ **Wednesday, October 21**
MS frozen food order forms due



MOBILE FOOD TRUCK

DATE: Thursday, October 8

TIME: 4:30-6:00 PM

LOCATION: Living Water Church

Bring a box for your groceries.

DATE: Monday, October 19

TIME: 5:30-6:30 PM

LOCATION: Living Water Church

Bring your friends and enjoy the meal and fellowship. The meal is a come and go buffet style meal. A bag of groceries is available to take home with you after you have had your meal.



If you order items from the Middle School Frozen Food Sale, the delivery date for your food is Saturday, November 14.

Time: 4:30-6:30 PM

Location: North parking lot

Come and enjoy fellowship, food and treats.

If you would like to decorate your car, trunk, or trailer, there will be a sign up sheet at the Welcome Table. We will also need people to serve hotdogs that evening.



Oct 5 Brian & Stacie Stofferan - 13
Oct 6 Lee & Darla Reuvers - 19
Oct 7 Darren & Amanda De Groot - 20
Oct 14 Lyle & Melissa Laubach - 38
Oct 17 Larry & Eileen Fedders - 56
Oct 20 Arnie & Glenda Hoogers - 59
Matt & Dawn Meyer - 25
Jared & Callie Holtrop - 8
Oct 21 Todd & Sheila Van Beek - 31
Oct 23 Mike & Kristin Oldenkamp - 27
Oct 25 Bob & Peggy Jager - 52
Oct 30 Marv & Luann Donkersloot - 67



Oct 1	Cleiton Zanela	Oct 15	Emily Popkes
Oct 2	Jen Sawyer	Oct 16	Tracy Claude
	Amanda Christians		Ethan deBoer
	Brittany Holtrop	Oct 18	Millie Vos - 92
Oct 3	Mason Sauer		Dee Van Beek
Oct 4	Marsha Sterk		Marv Nieuwendorp
	Lyle Van Heuvelen		Larry Vander Plaats
Oct 5	Dennis Van Meeteren		Chelsey Wolthuizen
	Roger Helgersen	Oct 19	Katie Vander Naald
	Joe Wildeman		Kylie Schnoor
	Melissa Mouw	Oct 20	Keaton Mouw
Oct 6	Brandon Krukow	Oct 21	Marv De Bruin
Oct 7	Makena Oostra		Rachel Iedema
	Clay Kruse	Oct 22	Laura Kruse
Oct 8	Dee Helgersen		Cael Christians
	Mark Ten Kley	Oct 24	Marlene Lawson
Oct 9	Deanna Van Riesen		Renee Bork
	Jack Jager		Dayten Van Beek
Oct 10	Janice Vander Pol		Quinn Walker
Oct 11	Arlan Van Wyk	Oct 25	Craig Van Meeteren
	Logan Van Meeteren		Maison Oostra
Oct 12	Gretchen Bosma		Piper Drenkow
Oct 13	Jared Schaeffer	Oct 26	Marv Donkersloot
Oct 14	Marlene Heerde	Oct 27	Donna Schaeffer
	Peggy Jager		Dulcie Mouw
	Kristi Punt		Camden Hofmeyer
	Kathi Stellinga	Oct 28	Jerry Wolthuizen
	Aniston De Groot		Hadley Van Peurse
	Preston Wolthuizen	Oct 29	Ava Rozeboom
		Oct 30	Ellen Van Maaren
		Oct 31	Mary Swoyer

Benevolent Fund - September 2026

	Jan - Aug 26	Budget
Beginning Balance as of January 1, 2026	\$ 75,930.13	
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Benevolent Fund	60,397.80	189,500.00
Missions	2,223.00	
Sunday School	541.00	
Total Income	63,161.80	189,500.00
Gross Profit	63,161.80	189,500.00
Expense		
Commitments		
Beth (Blankers) Borgens/CRU	3,500.00	7,000.00
Bethesda Christian Counseling	0.00	5,000.00
GraceCovenantMinistry-Annville	3,500.00	7,000.00
Grooters, Jay & Amy-Costa Rica	3,500.00	7,000.00
Harlan Moss-SD Prison Ministry	3,500.00	7,000.00
Inspiration Hills	0.00	7,000.00
Jake & Brittany Korver	3,500.00	7,000.00
JoJo Bong-Asian Youth	0.00	3,500.00
Lay Mission Fund	0.00	10,000.00
Love Inc	4,666.62	7,000.00
Mission & Service Projects	0.00	5,000.00
Mission to India-ChurchPlanters	3,750.00	7,500.00
Mission to India-Literacy Prog	1,250.00	2,500.00
Multiplication Network	0.00	3,500.00
Pascal,Sasha&Sara-Moldova	1,500.00	3,000.00
Reformed Church in America		
Brownell-Japan	3,500.00	7,000.00
Nicole Opgenorth-Nicaragua	3,500.00	7,000.00
Total Reformed Church in America	7,000.00	14,000.00
Reformed Mission Services	0.00	5,000.00
Rise Fest	5,000.00	5,000.00
Rise Ministries	3,500.00	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	1,156.68	4,000.00
Touch of Hope Haiti	0.00	7,000.00
Vasileiadis,PavlosMeggan-Greece	3,500.00	7,000.00
Village Northwest Unlimited	0.00	7,000.00
Words of Hope	0.00	28,000.00
Total Commitments	48,823.30	189,500.00
YTD Offerings Paid Out	46,163.05	
Total Expense	94,986.35	189,500.00
Net Ordinary Income	-31,824.55	0.00
Net Cash Flow	-31,824.55	0.00
Ending Cash Balance	\$ 44,105.58	

thank
you!

Thank you for all the ways you have encouraged us after Marwin's stroke - visits, cards, helping us beautify our yard and your prayers. Every way is so appreciated as we continue the healing journey.

~ Marwin & Twyla Vogel



**Reformed
Mission
Services is
looking for**

volunteers for several upcoming Ministry Development Trips: Japan, November 12–24, 2026; Peru, November 27–December 5, 2026; and the Dominican Republic, January 4–11, 2027. There are opportunities for people with a variety of skills and abilities to serve, and we would love to have you consider joining a team. Visit rms.org/trips for more information and to learn how you can be part of an upcoming trip.

DO YOU HAVE ANY EGG CARTONS LYING AROUND?

The food bank is in need of egg cartons. Several people are donating eggs for distribution, but cartons are needed. Please drop egg cartons off in the church office. Your help will be appreciated.

FUNNY THINGS KIDS HAVE SAID ABOUT THE BIBLE

from lynndove.com/2014/06/06/friday-funnies-kids-say-funny-things-in-church/

- ◆ **Adam & Eve:** "Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree."
- ◆ **Noah's Wife:** "Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark."
- ◆ **Lot's Wife:** "Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night."
- ◆ **The Red Sea:** "Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread without any ingredients."

General Fund - September 2026

	Aug 26	Jan - Aug 26	Annual Budget
Beginning Cash Balance	\$ 24,412.21		
Ordinary Income/Expense			
Income			
General Fund	23,082.00	404,993.83	622,661.61
Interest Income	0.00	218.94	
Transfer In	50,000.00	50,000.00	90,000.00
Total Income	73,082.00	455,212.77	712,661.61
Gross Profit	73,082.00	455,212.77	712,661.61
Expense			
Alliance Dues	0.00	9,284.27	21,000.00
Congregational Care	5,320.03	11,585.09	17,000.00
Education	1,475.85	22,393.80	24,700.00
Facilities & Grounds	18,122.03	141,086.54	272,850.00
General and Consistory	979.31	10,749.47	18,100.00
Hands of Hope Outreach	2,714.02	15,809.26	18,800.00
Office	693.33	15,409.33	26,100.00
Payroll Expenses	24,599.33	197,600.19	300,211.61
Transfer Out	0.00	40,000.00	
Worship	671.69	2,290.82	9,100.00
Youth Groups	717.11	4,251.74	4,800.00
Total Expense	55,292.70	470,460.51	712,661.61
Net Ordinary Income	17,789.30	-15,247.74	0.00
Net Cash Flow	17,789.30	-15,247.74	0.00
Ending Cash Balance	\$ 42,201.51		

- ♦ **The Commandments:** "The seventh commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery."
- ♦ **The Lord's Prayer:** One child recited the end of the prayer as: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us some E-mail. Amen."
- ♦ Casey asked her Sunday School teacher a question: "If people of Israel are Israelites, and the people of Canaan are Canaanites, are the people of Paris called Parasites?"
- ♦ A little girl became restless as the preacher's sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"
- ♦ A Sunday School teacher asked her preschool class as they were on their way to the church service, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?"
One bright little girl replied, "Because people are sleeping."

Minutes of the Consistory Meeting – First Reformed Church, Sheldon, IA Tuesday, September 15, 2026

Those present:

Elders: Dennis Ten Clay, Randy Fonkert, Greg Sawyer, Kendall De Groot, Larry Vander Plaats, Steve Van Beek, Brad Bosma, Mike Kleinwolterink

Deacons: Cleiton Zanela, Jared Schaeffer, Brady Peters, Dan Bracy, Marty Van Peursem, Rod Kruse, Brent Hofmeyer, Andy Cooper, Tyler Drenkow

Absent:

Elders: Galen Blankers

Deacons: None

- A. Pastor Paul called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM.
- B. Pastor Paul offered opening prayer and devotions from Colossians 3:12-17.
 1. Paul encouraged us that whatever we do in word or deed do it in the name of Jesus.
 2. Bear with one another and forgive any grievances.
- C. Roll Call & Approval of minutes from August 18, 2026.
 1. **Motion Made Supported & Carried (MMSC)** to approve.
- D. Celebrations and Thanksgivings were discussed.
 1. Clean up crew for Marwin Vogel.

2. Brady Peters' trailer and volunteers to move chairs for unity service.
- E. Report from Deacons meeting - reported by Tyler Drenkow.
- F. Report from Elders meeting - reported by Mike Kleinwolterink.
- G. Pastor's Report
 1. Discussion of building expansion.
 2. Each consistory member spoke to concerns and reasons to promote expansion of ministry area.
 3. Actions Taken
 - a. Executive team will form a committee and give instructions to begin process for consistory approval. **MMSC** to approve.
 - b. Statement to be made Sunday, September 20, regarding postponement of the 3 town hall meetings for the congregation, formation of committee and steps we are taking to move the process forward. **MMSC** to approve.
- H. Committee Reports were discussed.
 1. **MMSC** to approve.
- I. Financial reports - Brady Peters
 1. **MMSC** to approve.
- J. Next Meeting: October 20, 2026 Prayer – Galen Blankers
- K. Adjourn: **MMSC** to adjourn at 9:25 PM.
- L. Andy Cooper closed in prayer.



2026 Fall Youth Retreats

This year's theme is **Salt & Light**, based on Matthew 5:13–16. Throughout both retreats, students will explore what it means to live as salt and light in their schools, churches, communities, and everyday lives.

CAMP CONNECTION | HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT

October 30–November 1

Grades 9–12

Bring your **whole youth group** for a weekend away together, or students are welcome to **register and attend individually!** The weekend will include worship, chapel, activities, games, fellowship, and plenty of time to enjoy camp.

EARLY BIRD: Save \$30 when you register by October 9!

[Learn More + View Pricing & Registration](#)

MIDDLE SCHOOL FALL RETREAT

November 6–8

Grades 6–8

A fun, faith-filled weekend designed specifically for middle school students! Students will experience worship, chapel, activities, games, time with friends, and a weekend away at camp.

EARLY BIRD: Save \$30 when you register by October 16!

[Learn More + View Pricing & Registration](#)

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: Kendall De Groot & Tyler Drenkow

Ed Alons – Darren De Groot

Team 2: Brad Bosma & Dan Bracy

Kendall De Groot – Betty Gonnerman

Team 3: Steve Van Beek & Marty Van Peursem

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 – Dean Zoet

*"Building God's
Kingdom one life
at a time."
1 Peter 2:4-5*



Church Contact Information

Church phone number: 712.324.2130

Email: frcsecretary@outlook.com

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

Kendall De Groot - 712.324.1410
kdegroot@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

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

Elise Drenkow - 712.324.1182
emdrenkow@hotmail.com

WORK GROUPS

Bev Brouwer - 712.348.4083
brouwerb@premieronline.net



IMPORTANT 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** 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**.
- ◆ **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 **7 AM-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 November Encore is noon on Thursday, October 28. It will be printed at 10 AM on Friday morning.**

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.



The Midwest Network Newsletter

A Word from the President

CODY MORET

Our denominational Gathering was held August 19–21 in Holland, Michigan. For those of you who were not able to attend, it was a successful and very uplifting time together. The theme was discipleship. What better time of year to talk about discipleship than the fall and harvest season? Jesus talked about the harvest being ready and abundant—all that was needed were workers. I believe we sometimes view disciple-making as overwhelming. In reality, it does not have to be that hard. The important thing is to take the first step, no matter how big or small that step may be. Here is an illustration I thought about while gathering bales in the hay field. First, someone planted the grass seed some time ago. That person may not even be around anymore to see the harvest or the fruits of their labor. Second, someone needed to cut the grass so it could be made into bales. Next, someone—maybe the same person, maybe not—raked the hay into windrows for baling. Then came the baler to make the bales, followed by someone hauling them off to a stack so they could be used at some point. A similar process will be used to harvest many crops this fall.

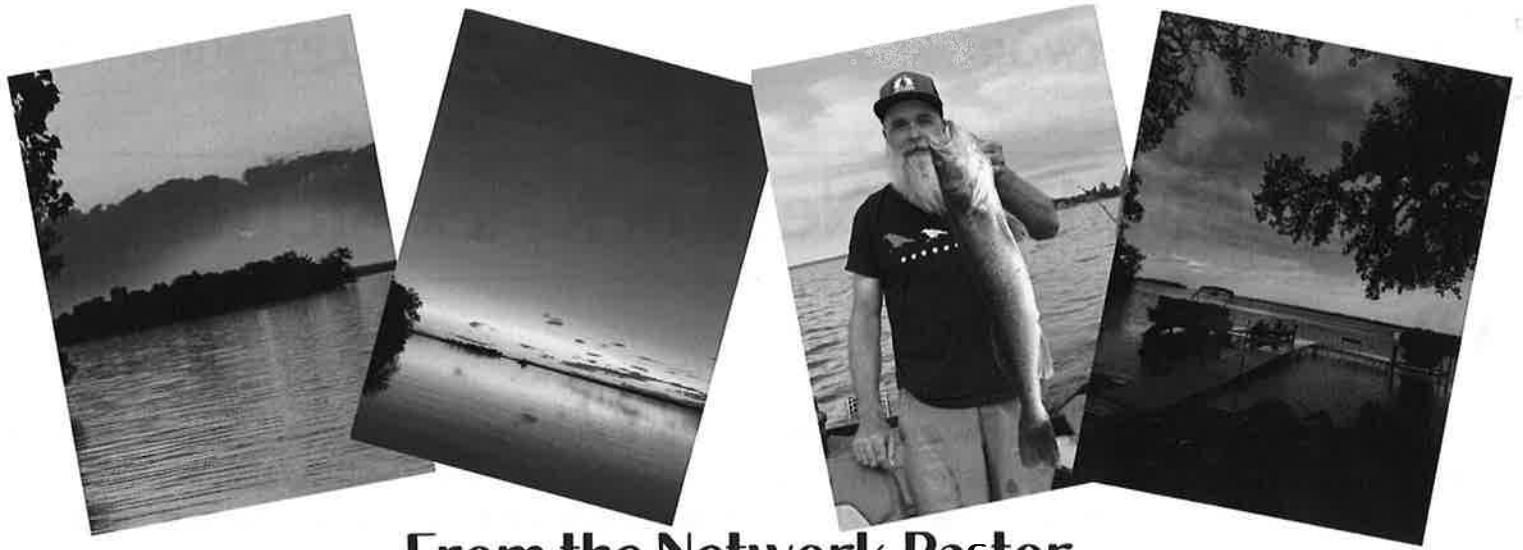
Why do I share this? Because it takes time and effort from more than one person to make disciples. Just as we are dependent on God to bring life-giving rain for the crops, we are dependent on the Holy Spirit to work in people's hearts and lives and bring them to Jesus.

Just like the person in my illustration who took the first step and planted the grass seed in faith that it would grow and eventually be harvested, we must faithfully take the first step in the disciple-making process. The person who planted the grass also did not do every part of the process. Many people were involved in turning that grass into bales of hay. In the same way, many people are needed to make disciples, as we all have different spiritual gifts to bring to the process.

Please consider: What could your first step be in making disciples for the Kingdom of God?

I pray for a safe harvest for our farmers and a blessed and happy school year for all those returning to school.

May God richly bless you and your family.



From the Network Pastor SETH SUNDSTROM

Dear Midwest Network,

After eleven weeks away, I have returned from sabbatical and resumed my responsibilities as Network Leader. I am grateful to be back, grateful for the opportunity I was given to step away, and especially grateful for the many people who faithfully cared for our churches and network during my absence.

When I began the sabbatical, my hope was not to accomplish something but to stop accomplishing for a while. After ten years of continuous network leadership—and all that those years have held—I needed genuine rest and renewal.

One of the greatest gifts of the sabbatical was the freedom to live at a more natural and unhurried pace. I could sleep when I was tired, wake when I was rested, eat when I was hungry, and give my full attention to the people and moments in front of me. Those may sound like small things, but they reminded me how easily the demands of ministry can disconnect us from the ordinary rhythms through which God cares for us.

I have been asked whether I experienced any great spiritual “aha” moments during the sabbatical. I’m not sure that I did—at least not in the dramatic sense. The closest thing came through the time I spent listening to the Bible on audio. I wasn’t studying it, preparing to teach it, or searching for something useful to say. I was simply listening and digesting it. Receiving Scripture without needing to turn it into a sermon, lesson, or leadership insight allowed me to experience it in a quietly renewing way.

It was also refreshing to step out of the constant reactive mode that comes with email, texts, meetings, and the steady stream of needs that accompany network leadership. The quiet helped me recognize just how much urgency I had been carrying. Over time, I began to feel calmer, more present, and less internally hurried.

I return with renewed gratitude for my calling and for the people I am privileged to serve. I also return with a clearer awareness that a healthy pace cannot be limited to an eleven-week sabbatical. I am still considering what that will mean in practice, but I want to carry some of that greater calm, attentiveness, and trust into this next season of ministry.

Thank you for honoring the boundaries of my sabbatical. Thank you for praying for me and my family. And thank you to Brenda Van Beek, Rick Van Ravenswaay, Cody Moret, the Midwest Network Board, and all those who carried additional responsibilities while I was away. Your faithful leadership allowed me to step back with confidence.

Most of all, I was reminded that the Midwest Network belongs to Jesus—not to me. The churches continued to worship, pastors continued to preach and care for their people, and the work of the kingdom continued quite well without my constant attention. Humbling, perhaps—but also wonderfully freeing.

I am glad to be back among you. I look forward to reconnecting, hearing what the Lord has been doing, and continuing our shared work with renewed energy, deeper joy, and, I hope, a healthier pace.

Peace to you.

Network Happenings

BRENDA VAN BEEK

It's been a busy summer! We've held three webinars on our proposed Bylaw changes and two Revitalization team discussions, found new pastors for several vacant churches, and completed the first of our 5-year Church Covenant Renewals, all while our fearless leader, Seth, was able to take a well-deserved sabbatical. A huge thanks goes to our admin team and officers for stepping up in a variety of ways this summer, GO TEAM!

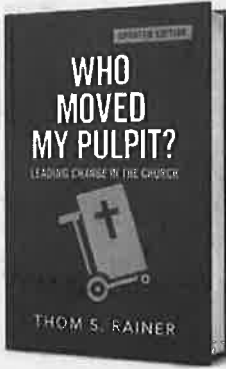
The Alliance has also been busy. At the Gathering earlier this month, a new tool for discipleship was rolled out, participants were able to meet many partners in ministry, and pastors could ask questions about the transition to a new retirement plan administrator. In addition, the application for IRS 501(c)(3) group exemption is in the works. It's an exciting time! We're so grateful for all of our church partners - none of this happens without your support.

On a more personal note, an update on my breast cancer journey: I completed my radiation treatments in early June, and I'm feeling fully recovered after my second surgery on June 23. God's surpassing peace remains present, and I've been humbled to meet so many who have been praying for me. Thank you so much, prayer really is a powerful tool. I'll have one final procedure late this year as part of the reconstruction process, and then, by God's grace, this journey will be in the rear-view mirror.

Next up, our annual meeting in November - I look forward to seeing many of you there!



**BUY
THE BOOK
HERE**



REVITALIZATION TEAM

BOOK CLUB IS BACK!

Join others from our Network as we read and discuss
Who Moved My Pulpit?: Leading Change in the Church
by Thom Rainer

 WHEN: 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM Begins Tuesday, Sept. 15	 WHERE: Zoom	 WHO: People who love Jesus and the Church	 WHAT: Book discussion	 WHY: Understanding how to deal with change within the church
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LEARN. GROW. LEAD.
Together, we'll navigate change with greater kingdom purpose.

**REGISTER
HERE**



Prayer Team Update

FRED WILGENBURG

For any prayer requests feel free to email us at midwestnetprayer@gmail.com

August prayer concerns

- *Pray for the Alliance leaders to have wisdom, clarity, vision, and fulfillment in their work.*
- *Pray for those facing cancer, aging-related concerns, joint replacements, eye issues, and other health challenges.*
- *Praise God for Freedom's Gate Church and its ministry to more than 100 former offenders and others. Pray for continued growth and the development of leaders from within.*
- *Pray for communities and agricultural areas affected by severe storms and drought across the Midwest Network.*
- *Pray for protection, perseverance, and strength amid ongoing spiritual warfare.*



Transitions/Updates

SETH SUNDSTROM

Installed

Riaan van Staden - Immanuel Reformed of Belmond IA 6/28/26

Accepted Calls

Doug Shotsky - Bethel Reformed of Brandon, WI
Robert Biber - Chandler Reformed of Chandler, MN
Cody Raak - Free Grace Reformed of Middleburg, IA
Brad McDonald - Rvierview Reformed of Yankton, SD

Seeking Pastor

Delaware Reformed of Lennox SD
Emmanuel Reformed of Springfield, SD
Faith Reformed of Wisconsin Rapids WI *
First Reformed of Meservey IA
Willmar First Reformed of Willmar, MN

Transitions

Riverview Reformed of Yankton, SD
Emmanuel Reformed of Springfield, SD

*CURRENTLY WORKING WITH [HTTPS://WWW.CHEMISTRYSTAFFING.COM](https://www.chemistrystaffing.com)

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Q: WHO WAS THE FASTEST
RUNNER IN THE BIBLE

A: ADAM. HE WAS THE FIRST
IN THE HUMAN RACE

Q: WHAT CAR IS IN THE
BIBLE?

A: HONDA: THE APOSTELS
WERE IN ONE ACCORD

Find helpful guidance on the following topics on our Resources Page

- COMPENSATION & BENEFITS
- ORDINATION INFORMATION
- MINISTRY PARTNER VIDEOS



- DIRECTORIES & FORMS
- PREVIOUS NEWSLETTERS
- COVENANT KEEPERS

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



"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgements and His ways past finding out."
Romans 11:33

God is God and He always does what is right. We don't have to understand His ways. We live by faith and not by sight. Some of the men I visit with realize that God allowed them to go back to prison so that they would have time to get to know the Lord in a deeper way. They are too busy on the outside trying to make a living and pay their bills. When they fall into their old addiction because of stress, they understand that their priorities were wrong.

One of the men who I have been meeting with for over a year in Jameson Annex, (where I am most of the time) was transferred to the Hill. He has only two months until release. I go to the Hill on Friday morning to visit with men one-on-one. I had the opportunity to meet with him at that time. When he was paged to come to the Chapel his cellie came instead of him. This cellie told me he was very interested in knowing more about Jesus and the Bible. We talked for a short time and then he went back to get the man who was paged. The man from Jameson Annex told me he was disappointed and didn't like it on the Hill. He went on to say, "I know the Lord is allowing this test to strengthen my faith before I am released in a few months. My cellie is very interested in learning more about the Bible and that is strengthening my faith, because that makes me search my beliefs. My patience is being tested, and it is helping me grow in the Lord." God always knows what is best for us.

An inmate who I had been meeting weekly on the Hill was transferred to Jameson Annex. So now I have more opportunity to visit with him. He told me, "I am so glad to be in Jameson, because I was surrounded by young men who were going down a bad road. I felt like I was going further away from God every day. Now I have a good Christian cellie who wants to read the Bible. On the Hill I didn't want to read the Bible because I was not living right. Now I feel like I have a new opportunity to get right with the Lord and stay on the right path!" Praise God!

Last week we had the opportunity to baptize six men at the church service. One of the men had been out of prison for about a year. We had talked about getting right with the Lord at that time, but he was not ready to give up his sinful lifestyle. A year later back in prison, he wanted to follow Jesus. God had changed his heart. He wanted to be baptized and show that he was ready to follow Christ! One of the men baptized had been in a fight a year earlier at the beginning of a church service. He said he was committed to following the Lord. The Lord is at work, changing men's hearts!

Will you please pray that I proclaim the gospel clearly & for open hearts for those who attend the weekly church services and Bible studies. The number of men attending has risen dramatically. The laws have become stricter for those on parole, so there are a high number of men returning to prison on violations. Some of the men attending are not Bible literate and others have never heard the gospel explained. There is a growing interest! Some attend to get out of their cells, but they hear the gospel.

Thank you for your prayers, they are vital and for your financial support!

In Christ, *Harlan*

Please designate my name in the memo section of your check. Make the checks out to: Converge Heartland, or PLF, the address is: 601 W 57th Street Sioux Falls, SD 57108. Your gifts are appreciated and tax deductible. My phone: 605-940-4220, Email: harlan@convergeheartland.org

October 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
MS = Middle School *MS frozen food sales is after worship service FNM = Family Night Meal HS = High School				1 7am Executive Team Mtg	2	3
4 8am Praise Team Practice World Communion Sunday *MS frozen food sales & samples 4:30pm Creative Movement Practice 6pm Communion @ CRH	5 6:30pm Hands of Hope Mtg	6	7 5-6:15pm FNM 6-7:30pm Awana 5:45-8:15pm MS to corn maze 6:30-7:30pm Adult Bible Study 7:30-8:10pm Choir Practice 6:45-9:15pm HS to corn maze	8 4:30-6pm Sheldon Food Truck @ Living Water	9	10
11 8am Praise Team Practice *MS frozen food sales 4:30pm Creative Movement Practice	12 6pm Congregational Care Mtg	13	14 5-6:15pm FNM 6-7:30pm Awana 6:15-7:30pm MS 6:30-7:30pm Adult Bible Study 7:30-8:10pm Choir Practice 7:45-9pm HS	15 7pm Evening Circle	16	17
18 8am Praise Team Practice *MS frozen food sales 4:30pm Creative Movement Practice	19 5:30-6:30pm Sheldon Unity Meal @ Living Water church	20 6:30pm Elders/Deacons Mtgs 7:30pm Consistory Mtg	21 1:30pm Afternoon Circle 5-6:15pm FNM 6-7:30pm Awana 6:15-7:30pm MS sales sheets due 6:30-7:30pm Adult Bible Study 7:30-8:10pm Choir Practice 7:45-9pm HS to corn maze	22	23	24
25 8am Praise Team Prac 4:30pm Creative Movement Practice	26	27	28 5-6:15pm FNM 6-7:30pm Awana 6:15-7:30pm MS 6:30-7:30pm Adult Bible Study 7:30-8:10pm Choir Practice 7:45-9pm HS	29	30	31 4:30-6:30pm Trunk or Treat