

Teach Us to Pray

We have nine Bible storybooks in our house, **one for every year we've been parents.**

We received one Bible storybook from our church in Washington D.C. when Corrie was baptized, another from Covenant when Nico was baptized, and snagged a tattered Anne de Vries book at the Covenant Swapmeet a few years back. On top of that, Corrie now has **three children's Bibles of her own, Nico received a storybook from his preschool teachers this year, and Louisa got *The Jesus Storybook Bible* for Christmas.** Sometimes our kids fight about which Bible to read out of after supper. This is a good problem to have, right?

Well, now we have added something new to the mix, a book the size of a Chicago phone book called *Teach us to Pray: Scripture-Centered Family Worship through the Year*. **Whoa. "Family worship?" you may ask. "That's not just your average, ordinary, after supper family Bible reading." Correct. This is more than a storybook. It's worship. And we at the DeVries house are pretty excited about it.**

The writers of the book, Lora A. Copley and Elizabeth Vander Haagen, brought to the table their formative experiences of contemplative prayer, *Lectio Divina*, and family worship

time and created a prayer book they hope can help families encounter grace together. They wanted to keep it simple, dialogic, multisensory and repetitious. The teachers among us would likely agree that those are good goals to have when working with children.

Let me give the concept some flesh.

We began using the book during the season of Epiphany. Each night, one of our kids would take a turn lighting a candle and leading us around the room. The litany prompted the leader to say **"We light a candle to remind us of Jesus' words: 'I am the light of the world.'" The rest of us would continue, saying: "Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but have the light of life."** (Side note: when our kids started fighting about whose turn it was to lead the processional, we knew we were on to something with this book. When they started dipping their fingers in the wax, well, we remembered that they are kids.) Back in our seats, we would sing a short song, the same song throughout the season. Before we read the Bible passage, we would quietly (except for Louisa) ask the Holy Spirit to help us pay attention to God. Then we would read the passage (from a child-friendly translation).

And then, just as our children do during their time in Children in Worship, we would simply
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Notes from the Pastor



Understanding Current Christian Reformed Culture

When I was in seminary, our courses on Christian Reformed history helped me to see the identity of the CRC through the lens of waves of Dutch immigration, an analysis put forth particularly by Robert Swierenga. The first wave of Dutch immigration was largely as a result of the *Afscheiding*, the breakaway from **the national church in the early 1800's**. This first wave of immigrants split from the RCA in 1857. This wave of immigration valued theological purity. The second wave of Dutch immigrants came in the late 1800's and was heavily Pietistic. They were concerned with **the individual's relationship with God and how we could improve our individual walk with God**. The third wave came after WWII (and more prominently to Canada) and was heavily influenced by Kuyperian thought, emphasizing **Christ's redemption in all aspects of life**. While the CRC was united by shared ethnic heritage, these differences could be maintained while still holding us together as a body. As the ethnic diversity within the CRC began to increase, these differences became more pronounced—and were further exacerbated by broader shifts in the world around us.

I was recently watching Rev. Paul Vander Klay's (Paul is the pastor of Living Stones CRC in Sacramento, CA) video recap of this year's Synod (yes, I watch commentary videos about Synod... It's available at <https://>

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ul1Z8NTMCE8). He offered a new breakdown of the current culture of the Christian Reformed Church. He suggested that the CRC can be broken down into the Confessionalists, Evangelicals, Progressivists, and Sacramentalists. The Confessionalists are those who prize doctrinal purity and largely position themselves on the theologically conservative wing of the denomination. The Evangelicals are those who are most interested in the growth of the church and **were largely a response to the “seeker movement” in broader evangelicalism**. The Progressivists are especially concerned with social justice. The Sacramentalists are rediscovering **the role of “high church” elements such as weekly communion and the use of the Revised Common Lectionary**.

Paul's analysis was a new one to me, but one that I found helpful. In particular, he also used it to explain some other recent phenomena in the CRC: for a long time, the Evangelical voices in the CRC tended to align more with the Progressivists. The Confessionalists were a vocal minority (largely centered in our own classis, Classis Iakota, as well as Classis Minnkota, immediately to our north). The Evangelicals, though, have begun to largely break with the Progressivists in recent years and align more with the Confessionalists, **resulting in the surprising moment of this year's Synod**, when concern over an article on the blog run by the Office of Social Justice (the **“Do Justice” blog**) resulted in the creation of a new advisory board for future publications.

The Sacramentalists, though, are a relatively new voice in the CRC. They are growing—especially on the east and west coast. Many coastal church plants, especially, are drawing

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Grandma Alert! Grandpa Alert!

Chris and Rin Goedhart give thanks for a new granddaughter, born May 27, to their daughter and son-in-law, Lisa and Morgan Halpert. Anneke Rin weighed 6 lbs, 6 oz, and all are doing well.

Howie and Vicki Hall have been blessed with their first great granddaughter, Finley Jo, who was born on June 16. Parents are Josh and Jamie Abercrombie and grandparents are

Steve and Joni Hall who live in Minnetonka, Minnesota.

Congratulations to Marv Wielard on the addition of two new grandsons! On April 21, premature twin boys were born in Dallas, Texas. One weighed almost five pounds, the other almost two pounds. Paul and Valerie Wielard agreed to adopt the twin boys. They named the boys John Calvin and Luke Emrys. John has been home with them for a few weeks, but Luke is still in the hospital. Both boys are progressing well—even dad and mom and 2-year-old James are surviving!

Notes from the Pastor

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young people by pursuing not the seeker-driven models of 1980's and 1990's evangelicalism, but by offering rich liturgies and weekly communion. Their influence is growing in the denomination. Paul suggests that the Sacramentalists will likely bring further disruption to the "old alliances." Like the progressivists, many are deeply concerned about social justice. But they can also be surprisingly rigid on doctrinal points associated with their sacramental views. The end result, for church nerds like myself who watch and pay attention to trends in the CRC, is that the culture of the Christian Reformed Church is changing rapidly—perhaps, thanks to technology, social media, and the rapidly shifting culture around us, faster than it ever has in our 150+ year history.

The truth, of course, is that we don't fall so neatly into distinct camps. I recognize within myself a passion for each of these areas, albeit at different levels and manifesting in

various ways. If each of these represented an impulse (toward doctrine, toward evangelism, toward justice, and toward ritual) and we were to map out the ways that each of those impulses was present in each of our lives, I suspect that the results of our congregation would represent a broad diversity of emphases. This is a good and beautiful thing—we need each other and our differing emphases.

I find Paul's analysis helpful because it gives me a lens through which to understand the current reality of the CRC, to get a sense for where it is heading, and to better understand our own congregation and the varying interests and impulses within. For myself, such an understanding helps lay the foundation for a stronger relationship and respect for our various approaches to the Christian life. I am grateful to God for the diversity of experiences within our congregation and within our denomination, and I look forward to seeing where God will lead us next.

-Pastor Kory

July Birthdays & Anniversaries

1	Barb H Margaret VK Linda V	9	Tom C Amalia F-K Chris & Rin G	24	Josiah F Mark & Merrill MC
2	Stuart B Annemieke L Stan VB Luke & Sarah H Kory & Lauren P	10	Tiffany P	25	Dane & Rachel H
3	Fednel T	12	Jill F Dane H	26	Pastor Gianni G
4	Merrill MC	14	Barb S	28	Jacob VP Eldon W
5	Mary D	15	Phil M	29	Dennis & Pam DJ Cal & Sally J
6	Gidge M	16	Jason & Dani W	31	Isaac H
8	Isabel C Priscila C-F Luke H Sharon V	17	Ashlyn P Dwight VT Kris VP		
		19	Pete & Betty VP		
		21	Scott & Margaret VK		



Offering Schedule

July 2

AM General/Building Fund,
Compassion Fund

PM Rehoboth Christian School
(at First CRC)

July 9

AM Christian Education Fund
PM The Banquet (at First CRC)

July 16

AM Missions Fund
PM World Renew: Free a Family

July 23

AM Tuition Assistance Fund
PM New Life Treatment Center

July 30

AM Christian Education Fund

Evening Worship Schedule

July 2 Worship at First CRC

July 9 Worship at First CRC

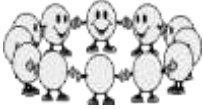
July 16 Teaching Service (with First CRC)

July 23 Teaching Service (with First CRC)

July 30 Rest (no evening service)

July Assignments

Here are the assignments for members to “practice hospitality” this month...
Remember to wear your name badges!



Nursery

Parents of the month: Lee & Jenni M

July 2

AM INF Dennis & Pam DJ, Jan B
TODDLER Doug & Marge DB, Duane B
PM (at First CRC)

July 9

AM INF Ron & Carol O, Luanne G
TODDLER Rob & Megan H, Dave G
PM (at First CRC)

July 16

AM INF Don & Sherri TN, Andy L
TODDLER Joe & Erin E, Rachel L
PM John & Linda V, Nick & Jenni B

July 23

AM INF Luke & Sarah H, Kris VP
TODDLER Mark & Lisa C, Marty VP
PM Tom & Ruth C, Lee & Jenni M

July 30

AM INF Ethan & Donna B, Dave V
TODDLER Dave & Emily K, Jan V

August 6

AM INF Laura L, Sharon V
TODDLER Mark & Sara H, Kurt V
PM Chris & Rin G, Daryl & Deb H



Coffee Servers

Isabel C, Paul C, Ana F,
Lydia M, Linda VH, Dennis VP



Greeters

AM Natalie B, Bob DS, Linda V
PM Wil A, Mary D, Jo F



Ushers

AM Dave G, Tim K, Kurt V
PM Duane B, Daryl H

Substitutes

If you are unable to serve on your assigned date for coffee, usher, or greeter, contact

Sally J, Rachel L, Fednel T,
Marty VP, Lois VZ, Jan V

Thanks for serving!

Courier Copy—It's up to you!

The *Courier* is issued monthly at Covenant church. If you have copy that you wish to be included, send it to the church office. Each issue is distributed on the last Sunday of the month. Copy deadline is Monday, July 24 for the August issue.

What Are Elderberries Good For?

Ah, summer. Time for candy parades and fishing, for chasing kids at the pool and t-ball. It's also time to wrap up our commitment to our Christian Education Fund.

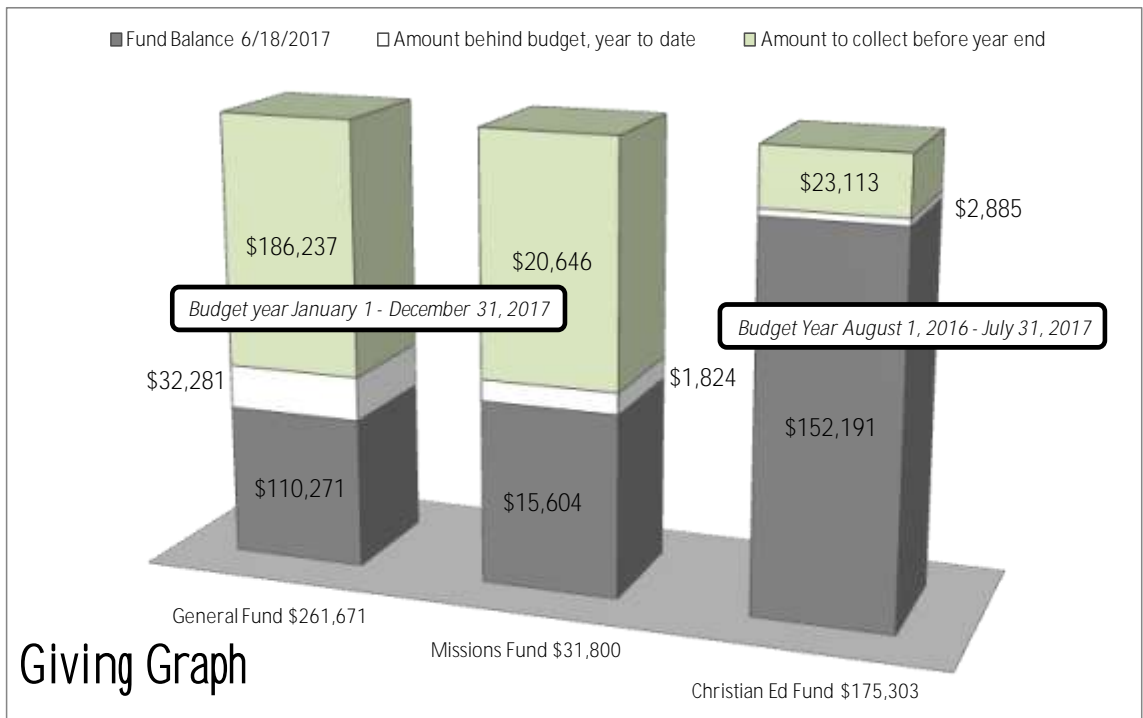
Currently we still owe \$27,725. With only two more months to go, it is the humble elderberry to the rescue. The elderberry is said to have anti-inflammatory, antiviral, and anti-cancer properties. It can treat wounds and is believed to soften and restore skin. And this July, the elderberry can be used to help pay for a child's tuition. Who said money doesn't grow on trees?

So it is our hope that in a few weeks' time, the elderberry nursery north of Sioux Center

will be teeming with CovenAnts. The schedule will be more flexible than the aronia berry picking, and children as young as 10 are welcome to help. (And I thought child labor was only encouraged in the Goslinga household! Who knew?!) They will pay each person \$8.00/hour and we are told the work is not difficult.

More details will be forthcoming, however, the nursery folks would like an idea of how many workers we plan to provide, and the sooner the better. There was a link to sign up for this opportunity in the emails we sent out previously. So far only 7 families have responded. Please prayerfully consider being part of this effort.

-Luanne Goslinga



Outdoor Worship and Church Campout

It's been our recent tradition to have an outdoor worship service once a summer. This year we plan to worship outdoors at Sandy Hollow on July 30 at 10:00 AM. We'll set up our sanctuary near the NW Shelter and campground. We hope you'll plan to stay after the service for a bring-your-own-picnic lunch and time of fun and fellowship as well! The Sioux County Conservation Board has waved the vehicle day pass fee for individual vehicles coming for the morning service and lunch.

Along with the outdoor service this year, you are invited to join us for a night of camping on Saturday, July 29. Most of the camp sites are available first come, first serve, but the

Sioux County Conservation Board will allow us to reserve up to 10 sites in advance for \$48 a site. (This fee actually reserves your spot for 3 nights.) If you are interested in reserving one of these 10 sites ahead of time, please contact Nick Breems (nick.breems@dordt.edu) as soon as possible. Others are welcome to grab a site on Friday or Saturday morning, but the park can fill up on the weekends.

Everyone is invited to come out on Saturday night for a bonfire and sing-along. And then join us again on Sunday morning for worship! We hope you will consider this great opportunity for fellowship! More details to come.



Here are some ways to pray for our missionaries, Kelly and April Crull, as they serve in northern Spain:



Church in Madrid through a season of transition. Pray that He continues to bring growth to this congregation.

- For the last few years April has been working with a team on a book about our approach to church-planting. Filled with lots of practical exercises, *Dynamic Adventure* aims to accompany new church planters and also established churches as they impact their neighbors. You can preview it on Amazon. Pray for the translations as they are completed by the end of the year.
- Praise God with us for the faithfulness we have seen as He has led Mountainview

- Pray for our many missionaries in Spain as they transition to summer ministry. As people are on a more relaxed schedule there are many opportunities for relational ministry.
- Pray for discernment for the people in our small group as we meet for the summer.
- Praise God for sustaining and supporting our kids during the school year. We have received glowing reports from all of their teachers.

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spend time “wondering” together about the passage. The writers include a couple of simple **“I wonder” prompts which draw each child** (and adult) into the story no matter the fact that they are at different stages of faith development. We would close by praying for specific groups of people and then say another verse together.

Each element is short and flows easily to the **next. Each day’s prayer connects to the passage,** each passage to the church season.

For the record and before you get this idyllic little picture of our family in your head:

- We are lucky if we get through this without telling at least one child to sit down, come out from under the table, or stop singing for just a moment, please.
- We love *The Jesus Storybook Bible* and find value in just reading the Bible.
- We are lucky if we have three nights a week where we are at home for supper **and don’t have to run somewhere afterwards.** Now that church softball has started, we are lucky for two (Go Covenant!).

But what makes us excited about this concept of family worship is that it provides something for every member of the family—old or young (or younger), calm or antsy, auditory or tactile learners. Corrie said she likes the time of wondering and the rhythm and repetition from day to day—**knowing what’s next, like the prayer of illumination.** Nico likes the opening **hands-on activity and, “Well, mostly everything” he said.** And Louisa likes the songs and the stories—**though she’s the one**

we often have to call out from under the table. Laremy likes being bid to pray for specific groups of people. And as parents, we both **appreciate being pushed by the “I wonders”** to share with our children concisely and from our hearts—filled with assurances and questions alike—what we understand about God and His good Word.

Recently, I’ve been amazed by the opportunities for faith formation available to my children. Sunday worship, Children in Worship, Sunday School, our Christian schools and preschools, GEMS, Cadets, Youth Group, Small Groups, Vacation Bible School. Our kids are **being taught the stories and truths of God’s Word** in so many places and are being nurtured in their faith by so many Godly people. **And aren’t we thankful for that!**

It might be easy to let that formation happen **only in those places and not in the home.** I’ll admit, Laremy and I too often leave it to the others. But we have been convinced, by our experience of family worship around the table, that the Holy Spirit is using this time to grow each member of our family and our family as a unit. And it has made us appreciate more the nurturing going on elsewhere.

I’m not sure where the tradition of family Bible reading or devotions after the evening meal started (The Passover?), but I think many **would agree that it’s a good one.** If you would like to try something new, we have recently purchased a box of 10 copies of *Teach Us To Pray*. They are available to you for \$12. Just talk to Sara in the office.

-Rebecca DeVries