March - April 2017

In Touch WITH COMMUNITY

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS:

THE REST OF THE STORY. . .

Submitted by Mary Seaman

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come." Joyful music, excitement and a spirit of good will permeate our world and we quicken our steps in anticipation of this momentous day—the birth of Jesus. Then… it's over. We feel depleted. We carefully wrap the ornaments and Nativity characters, remove the tinsel and garlands, stowing away all the reminders of Christmas for another year. Sadly, for many people, the reason for Christmas—Jesus—also is put "in storage," forgotten for another year. Perhaps the problem is: we've forgotten the "rest of the story."

Hymn writer Isaac Watts (1719) didn't pen the words "the Lord is come" with a careless use of grammar. The use of historical present means a truth has been stated, as in science one says, the earth is round. Jesus' coming is an ongoing event that happens 365 days of the year! Furthermore, we often omit the third verse of Watts's hymn: "No more let sins and sorrows grow…", which introduces the rest of the story. The reason for Christ's coming is the gift of salvation. Some would say that sharing the good news is all about love—"You just have to let people know that you love and care about them." But how does one define Christian love? God's love for us is the highest form of love imaginable—agape—unconditional, sacrificial love. "Not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10). It's so much easier to tell others

(Continued on page 8)

Church Family NEWS AND UPDATES

Submitted by Mary Seaman

CONGRATULATIONS AND BLESSINGS TO:

- Gay Pung on the birth of a great-grandson, Brogan Robert Crum.
- John and Dianne Coolman on their son's (Russell John Coolman) promotion from Commander to Captain in the US Navy.
- Paul and Kaeli Stolt on the birth of Kinley Anne, born February 23rd. Proud grandparents are Glen and Lynda Stolt and Great-grandparents Mike and Sally Bales.
- Chris and Danya Drost on the birth of grandchild #9. Lillian "Lilly" Hunter Partridge, was born February 24th. She joins her twin siblings Jack and Sofie and her parents Dr. Timothy and Shayna (Drost) Partridge of Waterbury Vermont .

SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS TO:

- Chris Leese and family at the passing of Chris' father.
- Chip Sauer and family at the passing of Chip's Aunt.
- Sandy Malewitz and family at the passing of Sandy's father.

Please pray and send words of encouragement to our Military Men and Women.

- David R. Merrill/AIC (US Air Force)- PSC 41 Box 4577, APO AE 09464 Lackenheath, England (9/13)
- Danielle Merrill/AIC (US Air Force)- PSC 41 Box 4577, APO AE 09464 Lackenheath, England (10/20)
- Captain Kyle Leese (Army National Guard) - 752 Lake Drive, Kalkaska, MI 49646 (10/3)
- BMCM (SW/CM) Garrett Miller (US Navy) - USS IWO JIMA LHD7, Deck Dept., FPO AA 34094-1664
- FC Nuttall, Logan D (U. S. Navy) - UFS Monterey CG61, Unit 100265, FPO AE 09578 (deployed in the Gulf of Aden) (4/22)
- Captain Russell John Coolman (US Navy) - 7079 Pecan Chase, Frisco, TX 75034 (03/04)
- Cameron G. Canupp (US Air Force) - 551 Sturmthal St, Edwards, CA 93523 (6/21)
- L.Cpl. Keie, Christopher D. (US Marines) MACS TAOC Radar Unit 37215, FPO AP 96372-7215. (stationed in Okinawa, Japan) (1/10)
- LCpl Bottomley, Johno J (US Marines) 2nd BN 4th MAR, 1st MARDIV 555493, Camp Pendleton, CA, 92055 (12/13)
- SN Potter, Andrew (U.S. Navy) 440 Roberts Ave, PMB #1912, Pensacola, FL 32511-5151 (8/3)
- PFC Rachael (Nuttall) Davis (US Army), 139 Man O War Dr., Oak Grove, KY 42262
- Sgt. Myles Kerr (US Marines) 26882 Calle Real, Capo Beach, CA 92624

Please call the church office with contact information for your loved one serving in the military. Numbers in parentheses indicate their birthdate. Please consider sending birthday cards (white envelopes, nothing on outside except addresses).

Good News

By Pastor Theda Williams

"I have good news and bad news; what would you like to hear first?" Have you ever been asked that question? What did you pick? I have often opted to hear the bad news first because I've wanted to save the best for last. I believed that whatever the bad news was, the good news would somehow be better and I would either end up emotionally where I began, or even a little bit ahead. It doesn't always work this way, does it? Sometimes the bad news is so devastating that we don't even hear the good that follows it.



The world is full of good news and bad news. What kind of news have you been hearing lately? I don't know about you, but there are days when I don't want to watch the news on television because it feels like nothing good is happening. And then there's social media: The cute puppy pictures or the videos of baby giraffes being born that appear on Facebook do little to dissuade me from discouragement. So where is the good news?

Several years ago, when our country was going through a major recession, I heard this important message to the church: Followers of Jesus should look at a world full of bad news through the lens of gratitude for the opportunity to share the amazing news that we know to be true: The news that Jesus came to redeem all that is lost. Rather than wallowing in the "ain't it awfuls?" of life, we know that God is our constant and we are secure in Him (Psalm 16:8-10). In times of discouragement and fear, there's a hunger for good news—and we have it!

The Christmas season always starts with good news doesn't it? "Behold I bring you good news of great joy!" That's what the angels said and we celebrate that every year. And then . . . sometime in the middle of January . . . we forget and we find ourselves slowly trudging through our daily rituals and somewhere, we don't know where, we've lost our joy. We've focused on all that is wrong in our lives and in the world.

When I was attending classes to become a commissioned pastor, there was one young man in my group who always left me puzzled.

(Continued on page 12)

Sharing the Good News

by Kris Way

The Good News is that when we trust God's grace to save us through the work of Jesus, our sins are forgiven, we get a purpose for living, and we're promised a future home in Heaven. The Gospel is the good news that God is restoring our broken lives through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

It is my privilege serving as Elder at CRC and would like to share the good news of the recent Consistory Retreat held the weekend of February 10th. The Good News of the body of Christ is here at CRC. The retreat was a time focused on prayer and coming together in unity. We believe there is power in prayer, and praying with purpose. The Bible mentions prayer a lot, but prayer is much more than simply repeating words or wishful thinking. Prayer is talking and listening to God. Prayer, like a conversation, can be done at any time, anywhere – because God is always with us and is always listening.



Praying with purpose is simply praying for God to fulfill what He has already begun. Since God's work is always a story, our best praying will be part of an ongoing story.

Prayer isn't just for the eloquent or super-spiritual. Connecting with God in prayer is a privilege that each of us should be enjoying. But sometimes it takes a little guidance to get going. I would like to share with you the many different opportunities for prayer at CRC. Mornings at the church you can join others who faithfully gather to pray for people:

- weekdays 6:15 am.
- Sundays 7:45 am.
- Following each morning service there will be people available to pray with you at the alter.
- There is a prayer box available
    - prayer chain is available by email.

All these times are listed on the Church website.

There will also be a 30 day Lenten prayer initiative where you can bring your prayers to the cross. More information on this will be available as it approaches. Will you join and take 30 days to commit to praying? God loves you and created you to know him personally. Have you talked with him lately? Begin today! We would love to have you join us!!

"The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers."
1 Peter 3:12

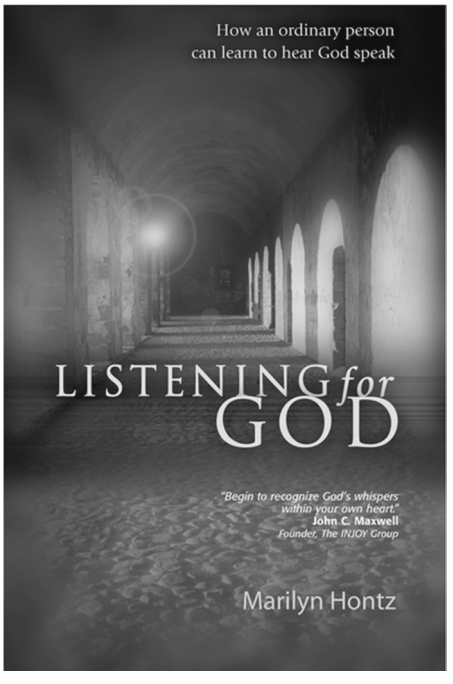
"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."
Phil 4:6-7

John Wesley once wrote, "God does nothing but by prayer, and everything with it."

The Reader's Perspective

Listening for God by Marilyn Hontz!
by Nancy VanRoekel! !

Sharing the Good News: The Holy Bible has been called the "Good News." That has me reflecting on what is in scripture. That is indeed "good news" to share with others.



What always comes to mind first when hearing this phrase, "good news," is witnessing to others about Christ. Of course, there is no better news than to discover that your sinful existence and the punishment it deserves has been dealt with. Salvation comes from one who was perfect and didn't deserve to die on that cross. Sharing that story with someone who hasn't yet acknowledged their own sinfulness or need for salvation can be very moving.

That is indeed the critical message to share, but there is much more good news flowing from the pages of scripture. The Word is filled with mighty promises offering comfort, stability, forgiveness, wisdom and strength. It also offers insights into the attributes of the Lord of the Universe and the way He has called us to live. But how much time do most of us really spend reading, reflecting and meditating on those words of wisdom? How shall we then take them to heart?

In Listening for God, Marilyn Hontz shares a time of crisis when she was 14 and her mother had cancer.

(Continued on page 7)

CONSISTORY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

CONSISTORY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS JANUARY 2017

Consistory participated in a conference call with David Celeskey, a pastor seeking ordination in the RCA. David is looking for a recommendation from CRC for him to be taken under the care of classis. Consistory approved Chip's writing a recommendation on his behalf; following their approval, it will be sent to classis.

Pastor Chip led Consistory through the 2017 Consistory Handbook with a special emphasis on "A few keys to serving on Consistory."

Consistory approved Jeremy DeYoung to continue in his role as deacon chair. Due to absences, they decided that the other officers would be determined at the February Retreat.

Consistory reviewed the approved goals for 2017 to update and invite input from the new consistory members. The goals received affirmation. Teams were developed around the following three goals:

1) Leadership: Gary Strange, Terry Smith, Mark Cosens, Joel VanRoekel
2) Communications: Erica Boss, Josh Dhaseleer, Gary DeYoung, Aaron Wiers
3) Prayer: Roger Rozema, Jeremy DeYoung, Nate Klooster (absent: Kris Way, Bruce Deckinga, Al Gooch)

Consistory reviewed their role as liaisons to ministry teams; assignments were also reviewed.

Consistory reviewed the recent Congregational Meeting. There was support for the January timeframe and for scheduling the meeting between services with recognition that this time would not work if more "challenging" decisions needed to be made. There was also discussion about how to increase attendance at this meeting, encouraging both members and non-members to attend, The new Communications Team will address this concern as part of their role in encouraging communication between the leadership and congregation.

Pastor Chip informed Consistory that Judy Boss has said "yes" to serving as the at-large member of the Executive Team for 2017-2019.

(Information from Consistory minutes provided by Pastor Chip)

(Continued from page 5)

Marilyn prayed fervently to God to provide a cure but God's answer was for something different. Marilyn at first felt bereft. In time she came to recognize God's promises in scripture and let them strengthen and heal her.

By observing her mother's life, Marilyn realized that prayers have no boundaries. They can extend over the entire world or on for generations. Her mother talked everything over with God and then made sure (to do what I have found to be a very critical piece of the puzzle), to listen as God's spirit touched her heart. I like to write down the thoughts that come to me when I pray. Then I think about how to apply what I am reading in Scripture to the way I am living my life. Marilyn states, "God is always listening to you. He invites you to listen to Him as well." Take the time to "be still before the Lord" and listen as He speaks into your heart.

Many people who attend church feel guilty if they do not read their Bible regularly. But they are missing out if they focus only on reading one or two chapters so they can check that off their "to-do" list. God wants to speak to us through His Word and Marilyn suggests that we "read until He shows you an insight, promise, correction or encouragement." She says, "Simply read the Word until God speaks to you. You may read only one paragraph but if you sense your Heavenly Father stopping you, then pause and see what God wants to do with that passage in your life for that day." As God helps us uncover the truths He's given us, we grow in our relationship with Him. We then start to desire more time in the Word and in His presence.

Marilyn shares examples of times she's focused on a particular verse in the morning and, before the day is over, has come in contact with someone who found strength and peace as she shared that verse with them as well. She says, "Yet the Bible tells us that we can have confidence that the Lord will help and equip us as we allow God's Word to get into us. We then become an extension of Jesus Christ, the Living Word." We live in a busy, noisy society in which it is difficult to hear God's still, small voice. Consider picking up Marilyn's book and looking for ways you can grow and be led by our Lord's mighty Word!



(Continued from page 1)

about the love of Jesus than to talk about death on the cross and, more difficult yet, death for our sins. If we truly believe John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life," and if we truly love our neighbors, then we will be compelled to share the good news of salvation. It's the perfect gift, the one without ribbons and bows, the gift that cost Him everything, yet costs us nothing. Shouldn't everyone we know be told this story?!!

As a first step, I think we all need to revisit the story of our personal salvation. We need to rekindle our fire. We need some passion for what we believe if we are going to light a spark in someone else! How can we pass the message on when our flame has been snuffed out by the winds of the world? We have the responsibility of sharing the good news with others, just as a mom, dad, grandparent, teacher, co-worker or neighbor loved us enough to share their personal testimony of salvation with us, inviting us to also receive the "gift." We have to be intentional both in remembering and in sharing. Relying on chance leads to indifference and apathy. Scripture challenges us to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

Recognizing and confessing our sins is an essential part of our faith journey and plays a significant role in giving our personal testimony. Pointing out the sins of others and donning a self-righteous attitude never leads anyone to Jesus. I can still vividly remember the first time I became aware of my own sinful nature. I was sixteen when I made an appointment to see my pastor because I needed to confess a sin that weighed heavily on my heart. I had told my stepdad he had no right to tell me what to do shouting, "You're not my dad"! (Actually, he was the only dad I ever knew). He left the house, not speaking a word, with tears in his eyes. I apologized, but struggled with resentment and anger: I was a senior and felt I should be able to drive to a school event at night alone. Dad, of course, didn't want his little girl to be driving six miles each way on a country road at night. Days after the conflict, I still couldn't forgive myself. Hence, I kept that appointment with my pastor. He provided a safe place for me to stumble my way through confession and offered me words of kindness and the assurance that I was forgiven. He helped me understand how

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

important it is to humbly acknowledge wrongdoing—to repent and then change my behavior. My dad was a stern man, a strict disciplinarian, who never offered soft words of love. But I always knew that he really cared about me. When he died thirteen years later, I was the one holding his hand…he had asked for me.



With confession comes forgiveness, the opportunity to experience agape love. God's love and the supporting love of others are always needed. But just loving someone is not the end of the story. I will always remember the impact a Lay Witness Mission had on my life, when in 1977, my husband responded to an altar call and received Jesus as his Savior. I joined him, making a recommitment of my faith. We were just two years past the two-months premature birth of our daughter and the diagnosis of our son's early infantile autism. We were both struggling and, in God's perfect timing, a fellow congregant, who had frequently helped with our children during the preceding two years, invited us to attend. They offered not only loving help in concrete ways but also the opportunity for a spiritual awakening. Life did not get miraculously easier, but keeping God at the center of all of our decisions kept us grounded, even when we stumbled. I frequently prayed the anonymous prayer: "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things that I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

Looking back over the years of my story intertwining with the stories of others, I see a clear pattern for sharing the good news: we show love in very tangible ways, we share our personal testimony, we provide opportunities for others to become involved in our church family, and we pray for those people, trusting that the Holy Spirit will capture the hearts of those who seek Him. We need to stay connected to the source of our Life—Jesus—remembering, repenting, reviving, then reaching out to those who are inside and outside of our circle.

During the season of Advent, we pondered the Christ child in a lowly manger. Now, let us lift our eyes to the Cross and absorb the enormity of our Savior's sacrifice as we move into the season of Lent. Let us experience anew the joy that Jesus **is** come and, with caring hearts, share the **rest of the story.**

ENRICHING YOUR MARRIAGE

Submitted by the Marriage Enrichment Team

Since God designed marriage, He must be at the center. *As Psalm 127:1 tells us, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it."*

Here are five essentials for making your marriage thrive:

Be thankful for your spouse. Your spouse is a gift from God. Thanking God often for your spouse is a practical way to focus on what is good and admirable about him or her. Reflect on the early days and recall what attracted you, on what made you pledge your life and love to each other, and be thankful.

Practice communicating from the heart. It is vital to communicate authentically in both the good and the difficult times of marriage.

Risk revealing your deepest thoughts, ideas, fears, hopes, and dreams to each other to create the strong foundation of a lasting marriage. The Scriptures emphasize being open and vulnerable in communication. Paul modeled transparency when he wrote to the Corinthians, many of whom were not exactly his admirers: "*For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote you with many tears; not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you" (2 Corinthians 2:4)*. Paul was not afraid to weep or say, "I love you."

Be intimate. From relational intimacy springs sexual intimacy. The safety of being known and still being accepted—in spite of our flaws—finds its expression in marriage through sex. It is a gift to married couples from God.

Relational and sexual intimacy keeps a marriage from deteriorating into little more than a legally arranged partnership.

Practice the power of forgiveness. Because we are imperfect human beings, we will fail our spouse repeatedly. We will focus on flaws, cease to communicate,

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10)

and offend each other without trying. All of this demands a steady supply of forgiveness.

The Bible tells us to "*be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).* There is great power in forgiveness—it says, "The fight is over and I will not try to punish you."

Be teachable. Marriages are always a work in progress. Each spouse is changing and developing, which means there are new things to learn at every age. Sometimes marriages run into problems that need the help of a third party.

If this happens in your marriage, find someone who will work in support of your marriage, not just agree with your grievances. Make sure this person is committed to both Christ and the two of you.

As you break from the noise of your day to reflect on the ways God is blessing you through the life of your spouse, we pray that your heart will be filled with gratitude for this gift—someone for you to love and someone to love you—fashioned by the Creator especially for you.

VISIT the Marriage Team's shelf on the kiosk at CRC for additional resources to help make your marriage the best that it can be.

*Taken from **5 Essentials for a Thriving Marriage,***
by Dennis and Barbara Rainey

(Continued from page 3)

He had a huge heart for people who were lost, but his approach to sharing good news with them was always about making sure they knew the bad news first. As I listened to him speak, it seemed that he was so focused on bad news, that I'm not sure that he ever got excited about the good news. In my mind, I began to see two camps emerging--the good news camp and the bad news camp. Of course this is over-simplification, but I knew that I wanted to be in the good news camp.

Don't get me wrong, the Bible clearly teaches us that all of us need rescuing, and that we cannot do it by ourselves. Most of the people I've met know this to be true. The people in my life who need Jesus have already tried their own rescue--they know the bad news. They are desperately searching and longing to hear some bit of good news. And that's where the gospel comes in.

Guess what the word "gospel" means? It means "good news." The story of Jesus is great news, especially when the bad news wants to overwhelm and discourage us. It's great news when we've tried to just be better people and fail miserably. It's great news when it looks like evil has the upper hand.

As we walk through this season of Lent, we need to go down that road with Jesus--the road of rejection, pain and disgrace. There was a period of time when it appeared that the good news of His birth was being swallowed up by the bad news of His humiliating death. But . . . we know the end of the story and it's all good news!

So what news do you want to hear first? What news do you want to tell people first? I'm choosing the good news of the gospel. There's a reason the Bible refers to the stories about Jesus as "The Gospel according to Matthew," etc. When we fully hear and understand what this good news really is, the bad news that has been following us around will become far less significant. That's the news I want to live into and talk about.

Ministry Updates

Safe Haven Updates

We have been blessed! In 2016 we served 10,071 meals! Our first day of the Breakfast 6 years ago we had zero people… look how God has blessed! After doing some figuring it would cost us around $1.30 per meal if we had to buy everything for the breakfast. Again we are blessed with a group of people supplying our sausage, blueberries, O.J, and some eggs which brings our cost per meal to $.87. We are Blessed.

We are always open to financial donations as even though this is inexpensive we serve an average of 180 people per week, which means the cost of the week is $156.60 and a month is around $630 a month. Our current funds will last us 3 months.

At our volunteer appreciation breakfast on January 14, with volunteers from the Free Breakfast Club, Men's Night Light shelter, and Games and Grub the question was asked: "How has working in your ministry impacted your life?" Here are some of the answers:

- Made new connections – "God connections"
- I now see people differently – not as judgmental
- Has given me purpose in life
- Fun with Games & Grub
- Have met 100 more people and I feel appreciated
- Touched me that we are reaching people in our community
- Relationships are built – I get more out of it than what I put in to it
- I feel welcomed and loved
- It's a blessing

RELATIONSHIPS is what it is all about. We can always use more volunteers at any of the 3 ministries. Especially the men's shelter as we have been open every night with 2 -5 men. See Kim Bakker, Gary DeYoung, or Drew Oliver.

We are doing Game's and Grub the 3rd Saturday of the month and you can meet us at Pine Cove apartments at 11:20. This summer we will be back to weekly Wednesdays.

Breakfast Club can always use more help, see Jan or Linda Boss.

(Continued on page 14)

Ministry Updates, *continued*

A letter from a Guest

Dear Breakfast Crew,

I just wanted you all to know how much the breakfast has helped me! When I come I al always encouraged! You all are VERY sweet every time I come! I don't make a lot of money so I pretty much miss breakfast most of the time but when I come I realize that I am not the only one that doesn't have really any money, but you all keep me smiling when am there and when I Leave !! J I hope you enjoy these cookies I made you all! This is from me for saying thank-you! You all are Amazing! Love you all,

Volunteer(s) needed: Safe Haven is looking for someone or a group of someones to sort and organize the donations for our Free "yard sale". Items will be coming in during the Month of April to the Garage Next Door and needs to be ready for "Sale" by May 9th. If you are interested in helping out please see Jan Boss.

Games & Grub

Games & Grub is thinking of expanding to two locations this summer. Children at the Charlevoix Estates have asked that we include them. We are in the thinking and planning stages at this point. What it would mean is that we would begin at 11:00 a.m. (instead of 11:30) at Pine Cove and then pack up and leave at noon and head to Charlevoix Estates from 12:15 – 1:15 p.m.. This means our volunteers would have to add an extra hour to their time and we would be adding about 20 bags of food to be handed out. We welcome any input from everyone, especially those who volunteered last year. Decision will be Made in April. Please talk to anyone from Safe Haven and Community Outreach.

Spring Break

We will be helping Sarah Muladore (5th grade teacher in Charlevoix) pack bags for the children who are on free or reduced lunch, who won't be getting food over spring break. At Christmas time we packed 90 bags so I am assuming that we will be doing similar for Spring Break. We will be accepting donations of food and money. More details to come as the date approaches. I am also assuming we will be packing these bags on Tuesday, March 21 at 3:30 p.m.. See Jan Boss if you are interested in helping in any way.

(Continued on page 15)

Ministry Updates, *continued*

(Continued from page 14)

KARI'S CLOSET UPDATE:

Kari's Closet provides clothing, shoes, toys, books, furniture, etc for children ages 0-18 to families in need (or if you work in the area and know of specific needs of families you are welcome to stop in and shop around).

Current Hours: Tuesday and Thursdays from 4:30 -6pm

It works best if donations are dropped off during the above operating hours. However, if this does not work, donations can be left at the church office during church office hours (please label with "Kari's Closet"). Our needs vary so we currently accept all donations that can benefit children.

We are always looking for volunteers to help take Tuesday and/or Thursday shifts when the closet is open. If you have questions, please contact Sue at 675-5829.



Season of Lent 2017

Join us for our Sunday Lenten Services, each Sunday at 8:30 and 10:15 a.m.:

The Crux of the Matter

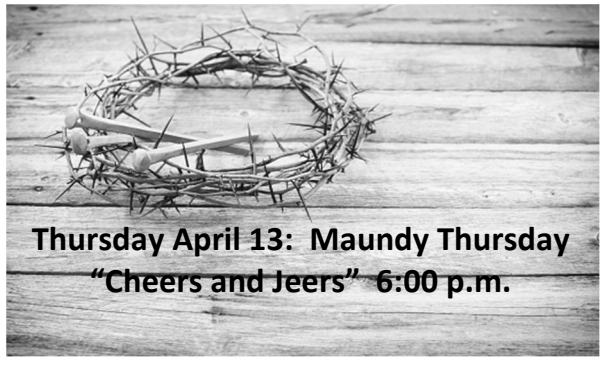
March 12: Wading In

March 19: Tall Tales

March 26: I Gotta Be Me

April 2: Keep Your Eyes on the Prize

April 9: Growing Up



April 16: Easter Sunday, 9:00 a.m. at the Charlevoix Middle/High School Auditorium

Safe Families for Children:
Update from Candice Wiers

Safe Families for Children (SFFC) is an innovative approach to provide homes for children whose parents need a temporary family to place their children with, due to unmanageable or critical circumstances.

In late January 2017, our CRC SFFC team processed an intake for a hosting of a 5 year old and 9 month old. In the city of Charlevoix, we currently have 2 host families, 2 family coaches, and 0 family friends (please read below for more detailed definitions of these different volunteer roles). For this specific hosting, the host family was able to host the children for 2 weeks. Fortunately, the hosting only lasted 2 weeks because if the hosting would have taken longer than 2 weeks, the children would have had to be transferred to a family in Petoskey (which has 5 host families, 3 family coaches, and 12 family friends). The 5 year old attends school in Charlevoix so it is imperative that we have more volunteers in Charlevoix so that in this specific case we would be able to provide continuity for him by keeping him in his school, rather than having to move him to a home in Petoskey. And we only anticipate this kind of situation and demand increasing as word spreads in our community about the services we are able to provide.

So, if you are still interested in becoming a volunteer please let me know as soon as possible, and I can get you headed in the right direction with paperwork. Realistically, it would be great to have 5 more host families, 10 family friends, and 1 more family coach, so that we can be prepared to meet the needs of Charlevoix community members in crisis right here in Charlevoix.

A recap of Safe Family definitions (I know it can be really confusing!):
Host family: takes children into the home temporarily;
Respite host family: takes children into the home for 24-48 hours;
Family friend: may provide transportation, make a meal for the host family, serve as a resource for the family in crisis, watch children for a short period during the day (no overnight stay);
Family coach: meets with families experiencing crisis, calls volunteers/hosts/family friends/assists managing the database, has access to training and conferences, may volunteer time in the office with the paid staff, process intakes and referrals, understands the community and resources available; and
Resource friend: helps financially.

Our community needs us. Thank you so much for your considering this opportunity to be of help to others in our area.

P.S. If you are already an approved volunteer, can I ask you to share this with a friend or family member who also lives in our Charlevoix Community?

Ministry Updates *continued*

COMMUNITY REFORMED CHURCH

GLOBAL OUTREACH MINISTRY

Attention to all whose heart has been desiring to work for God. He has made a call to us desiring to knit together a group to serve Him in a most beautiful place. Copper Island, British Columbia, Canada. The ministry there is called Adventure Learning Center, and it is the place our own Aaron Otis serves along with Ray Badgero and others. It is a wondrously beautiful island, where a Christian Summer Camp is help each summer. The young people of the surrounding area, which are the native 1st Nations families, come here each summer to learn of God's love. The camp would be unable to run, except for volunteers, as I hope a group of us could be! God may have been tugging at your heart for a work such as this unique and special place. Your willingness to serve in this way, can make all the difference to many if these youth!

The week of July 15-22, 2017 is the week our help is needed. It will be working while the high school youth will be there.

There will be a sign up meeting on March 12th between services in the conference room with all the details and questions answered. Or you may call my number which is 231-838-2751 for anything you may want to know.

Pleases open your hearts to actually GO - and be the hands and feet of Jesus. You will come back from this adventure so blessed! You always feel like you take home so much more than what you are able to give! God bless your hearts as you contemplate this privilege to serve our God!

Sincerely, Nancy Whitley Balchik

(on behalf of the Adventure Learning Center, Copper Island, British Columbia, Canada)

Ministry Updates *continued*

Guatemala / Haiti Short Term Mission Experience

By Al Gooch

I wish you could have been there**…….. In Guatemala or Haiti.** We just returned on the 20th of February from an 11 day mission trip to Haiti. In January, we sent a team for 11 days to Guatemala. Words can't describe the satisfaction and peace of mind you receive when going on a short term mission trip. Every time I return from a short term mission trip, I think of "**It's better to give than receive**", this is so true. My mom, my grandmother, different pastors, have all said this during my lifetime. My friends all praise me for going on mission trips, but the truth is, these trips are very rewarding to me. I get much more than I give…. Acts 20:35 tells us, "I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak". And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he said, "It is more blessed to give than receive". My daughter Kristen wrote a story for the newsletter a couple of years ago and it was titled "Guatemala Changed my Life". Kristen will be making her 7th trip to Guatemala from March 11th to the 18th. Three of those trips were for about 90 days and she said this, "I have learned so much by spending time in Guatemala, but the most valuable thing is that I have grown closer to God. I trust him more and more each day. I am certain that He has called me to do His work in Guatemala, and even though I have had some tough times, as we all do, I have been blessed and continue to be blessed".

In January, Pastor Duane Strickler of Falling Waters West Virginia with his 16 year old grandson, Noah, joined Bruce Deckinga, Rebecca Berg and myself and traveled to Pi De La Cuesta to help Robert Jackson. We have sent teams for at least a dozen years to help Robert, whom we support. We worked on a number of projects this year. We applied four coats of stucco to the outside of the shower/restroom building (first flush toilets, showers, septic tank in the village) that we had worked on the last couple of years. We sanded and refinished all the church pews and repaired some wood shutters/doors. We

(Continued on page 19)

built a stone wall to keep the heavy rains from flooding the bathrooms with mud. We also did some smaller projects. We started each day with singing and devotion…. **God is good!!**

Our February trip team to Grassier Haiti included Scott Norris, Dekota Boulton, Kristen Boulton, Alan Spinniken from Church Of The Living God in Traverse City , Robert Jackson from Guatemala, and our team from CRC of Richard May, Jim Malewitz and myself. We were there to help our pastor friend Jean Heder Petit-Frere. Jim and I were there for the 3rd time, and Richard won't say how many trips to Haiti he has made, but it's a lot….. We divided into three teams. Jim and I were the survey team that staked out three new roads to get to the church. Pastor Jean rented a bulldozer and driver for six days to build the roads. Dakota, an electrician, and his wife Kristen did a lot of wiring and box replacement. The other team worked on building the new church Pastor Jean's campus. This was his original church in Carfour that was destroyed in the earthquake of 2010. A lot of the steel work was saved and used in building the new church. When we left, the foundation, walls post, trusses and 75% of the roof was complete. Pastor Jean hopes to have the first church service in the new church on Easter. While we were there, a group came from the Carfour church, to bless, pray and sing in the new church.

I got the bug!!!!!!! Before my first mission trip, I would read the church bulletin each week before our service and a plug for a short term mission trip to Guatemala caught my eye. Each week this tugged at me a little more. This became so strong after several weeks that I signed up to go without really asking Liz if she was alright with it. A team from Fernandina Beach Florida (Amelia Island) followed us to Pi De La Cuesta a couple of weeks later. They put together a 6 minute video that is very powerful and motivating. They have a Facebook page, Christwalk Church, you can find the video there. My favorite bible verse is John 15:5, **"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit: for without me, you can do nothing**". I just turned 64 while I was in Guatemala, and it's been only the last nine or ten years that I finally figured it out. It becomes clearer every day that what I have and have done, all comes from God and going on these trips is not just rewarding, it's priceless**…… I hope that you get the bug!!!!!**

Good News: You are as precious as an iPhone!

By Sue Bouwense

Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. John 14:19

Doug and I were blessed to get connected with the Young Life organization back in 2014, when we started planning for the possibility of an overseas mission experience. Since then we have come to learn how Young Life seeks to carry on Christ's work of redemption among kids all over the world. This is an organization that starts with this premise from John 14—"a loveless world is a sightless world." Unless kids can see God's love shining through us, they won't hear our message about who Christ is and what he did (the gospel).



In January we were privileged to join other adults from Young Life of Little Traverse Bay at a WYLDlife weekend at Timberwolf Lake. WYLDlife is the middle school version of Young Life. As adult guests for the weekend, Doug and I were reminded how much sheer energy middle school kids have, and the Young Life staff met them right there, with LOTS of energy and craziness and loud music. But over the course of 40 hours, these 500 kids were shown the love of God by camp staff and their leaders, and the story of Christ's love and sacrifice was unpeeled for them during their club times and in their cabin talks. In an atmosphere of love and acceptance, they were exposed to the gospel in a compelling way that they could relate to.

One of the speaker's visual aids really made an impression on me. Cesar pointed to a boom box, and explained that in "the old days," that was his music delivery system. He picked it up and promptly dropped it, and it shattered into chunks on the floor. He kind of shrugged that off, and then said that today we have a new form of music delivery. He grabbed his cell phone from his pocket and lifted his arm as if to throw that to the floor as well. Oh, the gasps that arose from that audience! His point? If you value something enough, you will protect it and treasure it. God's love comes from the source of TREASURE—God treasures us so much that he gave up his son to offer up his life for us. Now it's our turn to treasure God enough to use our lives as an expression of that gospel of love and forgiveness and grace.

Please consider the power of Young Life to reach kids! Young Life staff members and volunteers meet kids where they are and begin the work of building real relationships that will allow them the right to share the good news of the gospel. Without love, acceptance and forgiveness, the good news will not be heard. Until kids can see how much they are treasured and loved by Christ's representatives, they are not going to hear the message of love and grace that Christ left.

Community Reformed Church is blessed to support the work of Ted Polleys, who was a driving force behind launching Young Life Charlevoix this past fall. Please pray for Ted and his team of young adult leaders as they do the hard work of reaching out to kids and loving them enough to open their eyes (and hearts) to the good news of Christ.

MEET OUR 2017 ELDERS AND DEACONS

Submitted by Mary Seaman

ELDER BRUCE DECKINGA and his wife of fifty years, Joanne, reside in Petoskey where they have raised their children—Jeff, Amy, Andrea and Jodi. With his daughters now married, Bruce has the joy of seven grandchildren. He enjoys being a grandpa, saying that caring for Kaycee has become a favorite pastime. Bruce worked as a general surgeon in Petoskey for most of his thirty-plus years in the medical practice, retiring twelve years ago. Retirement has afforded him the opportunity to serve on mission trips, the majority of which have been medical. While going on mission trips about three times a year consumes most of Bruce's "leisure" time, he also enjoys flying, a hobby he has pursued since 1971 when he secured his commercial pilot's license. On an especially relaxing day, one might find him fishing.

Personally, Bruce finds that "sharing the good news of Jesus" works best through interpersonal relationships, getting to know people one-on-one. He says that opportunities to share occur more often on mission trips because he "can pray with his patients."

ELDER NATE KLOOSTER and his wife, Joy, have two grown children—Megan and Isaac. Megan, who works at New Leaf Design in Traverse City, will be getting married in June. Isaac lives in Charlevoix and works at RB Lyons. Nate has been employed at St Mary's Cement for thirty-seven years, working as an equipment operator. During his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing and attending high school basketball games.

Nate is excited about having been on the start-up committee for the Safe Haven Breakfast Club. Beyond providing food, this ministry opens the door to "helping people find Jesus." Nate says that serving at the Night Light Men's Shelter is another avenue for sharing, as the opportunities arise. At Nate's work place, the local union has purchased Bibles, which Nate distributes to anyone who has lost a loved one. Involvement in these ministries provides opportunities for making connections that can lead to "sharing the good news of Jesus."

DEACON ERICA BOSS and her husband, Dr. Craig, are parents to Rachel, John, Caroline and Benjamin—all of whom live in Grand Rapids. Caroline and Ben are students at Calvin while Rachel and John are employed in GR. Erica was a stay-at-home mom for a number of years when her children were young and has worked at the Charlevoix Area Hospital for the past seven years. Erica and Craig enjoy playing tennis during their leisure time. Also, they have started a lavender farm located on the old Boss farm where Nathan Boss grew up. They are toying with the idea of adding a honeybee colony to complement the lavender endeavor.

Within the church, Erica teaches Sunday school and helps with the Safe Haven Breakfast Club.

Her volunteer work in both cases involves forming relationships and showing both children and adults the love of Jesus. These ministries are "intentional ways to invite new people into the church where they can feel welcome in a hospitable atmosphere, sharing food and conversation." Relationships formed in these settings can provide opportunities for "helping others find and follow Jesus."

DEACON JOEL VANROEKEL and his wife, Nancy, have two married sons—Chris and Justin—and three grandchildren. He is retired from a teaching career of thirty-nine years, which includes working as a literacy specialist and adjunct professor. Joel enjoys "all thing northern Michigan." His outdoor activities range from exploring the lakes in his own rowing shell, kayaking, bicycling, photography, and falling trees that he cuts up for wood. He serves on the board of the Lake Charlevoix Association and writes articles for the Association's bi-annual newsletter as well as the Courier.

Joel says that "sharing the good news of Jesus depends on one's talents and gifts." Personally, he shares and prays with those he can reach, "connect with." Serving as deacon, Joel sees his role as "giving both input and appropriate reactions to proposals, plans, and actions that will impact the congregation and larger community." He also states that "supporting the church staff in their duties and using thoughtfulness about benevolence decisions further the opportunities to help others find Jesus."

DEACON AARON WIERS and his wife, Candice, are parents of three beautiful daughters—Adelaide (7), MiMi (6), and Ainsley (4). The older two are students at Charlevoix Elementary School while Ainsley attends the pre-school program. Aaaron works from home as an analyst for US Bank. This mode of employment enables him to be more involved with childcare and his girls' activities. Aaron enjoys spending time outdoors with his family—going to the beach, hiking, and skiing. Individually, he is an avid biker, clocking one hundred-plus miles a week when weather permits.

Aaron finds volunteering his time at the Night Light Men's Shelter gives him "opportunities to connect with individuals he would not ordinarily meet and the possibility of sharing the good news of Jesus." Serving as deacon, he can meet people, one-on-one, and show love and support. "The caring, help, and follow-up with the recipients goes beyond the giving of money; this is another way to share the love of Jesus."

Contacts at CRC:

Chip Sauer, Pastor

Jan Boss, Director of Spiritual Formation

Ted Polleys, Associate Pastor

Lynda Stolt, Office Administrator

Michael Brown, Maintenance Engineer

Theda Williams, Pastor of Worship, Creative Arts and Leadership

Tammy Oliver, Director of Children's Ministries

Sarah Polleys, Office Assistant

Dianne Coolman, Kitchen Manager

Cindy Mansen, Choir Director





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Monday - Friday, 6:15 a.m.

Wednesday (2nd floor City Hall), 12 p.m.

Wednesday, 5:00 pm

Saturday, 7:15 a.m.

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