

REFLECTIONS

COMMUNITY

Reformed Church



enCOURAGEment

A couple of quotes that come to mind as I think about CRC and what lies ahead in 2024:

"Most of us have advanced in our spiritual maturity only as far as our courage has taken us."

"What is often standing in the way of our growth is not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of courage."

(TLP Part One, Session on courage)

You partner this with all the places in Scripture where God says "do not be afraid" and it seems there is a pretty strong theme in Scripture about the importance of cour-

age. "Be strong and courageous" Moses says to Joshua as he is about to lead the people of Israel across the Jordan River into the promised land.

Two of the greatest impediments to faithfulness in relationship to God are fear and comfort. They are constantly used (inner voice and outside voices) to manipulate us to buy certain things, vote certain ways, and even avoid certain people. They are used because they are effective. But ultimately they lead us away from trusting in God and instead encourage us to trust in ourselves or the wisdom of the world (which the Bible says is actually foolishness).

"What is often standing in the way of our growth is not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of courage."

Last year the theme in my reflection was encouragement – celebrating how God was continuing to help us as a church grow, both literally in regards to people coming back to church, but also in terms of our growing commitment to seek His voice personally and corporately. The root of encouragement is courage. In fact, encouragement actually means to spur

on courage. I am so thankful for the unique opportunities I have in my role to see many CRC people acting courageously both in their pursuit of God and in the tangible ways they are seeking to love others. This even includes the courage some are exhibiting in embracing God's forgiveness and love for themselves and courageously confronting the voices that speak falsehoods and shame.

I was going to start this article with READY – SET – GROW as a theme for 2024, but I'm more convinced that our willingness to lean more deeply into God is critical to pursuing the courageous life that He calls us to. To grow requires courage. To love requires courage. To step across that line of comfort that often stops us requires courage. To put others before ourselves requires courage. To reach out to our neighbor or care for someone in need requires courage. To take responsibility for our sin and apologize requires courage. To truly trust God with all of our lives requires courage.

I hope you are as encouraged as I am with what God is up to at CRC, but may we keep asking God to grow us in courage as we seek to help all people find and follow Jesus, because living into God's mission for CRC requires courage.

- Pastor Chip

Values and Goals

Helping all people find and follow Jesus.

Here at CRC we have five core values: Holistic Care, Relational Discipleship, Leadership Development, Growing Connections, and Younger Generations. Each of these values has a team made up of staff, elders, and deacons to ensure that we are living into that value and that we are accomplishing the goals set out for the church by consistory.



Leadership Development



Growing Connections



Relational Discipleship



Holistic Care



Younger Generations

2024 CRC Goals with Values Team Assignments

1. Partner with families within CRC who have children (birth to high school seniors) to provide opportunities, trainings, and experiences that foster spiritual growth and Biblical literacy for their children. (Younger Generations, Relational Discipleship)
2. Provide multiple experiences for children in the community to experience love and learn about Jesus. (Younger Generations, Growing Connections)
3. Increase the church's investment of budgeted funds and volunteer/staff time to engaging and providing opportunities for post high school - 30 years old's to connect with each other and Christ. (Younger Generations, Growing Connections)
4. Develop new and current leaders at CRC who are growing more Christ-dependent, emotionally mature, and missionally-focused. (Leadership Development, Relational Discipleship)
5. Take intentional steps to develop a culture of service at CRC where a growing number of regular attenders and active members are committed to serving Christ, each other, and our community. (Holistic Care, Leadership Development, Relational Discipleship)
6. Provide opportunities for people at Community Reformed Church to connect with each other for growth, fellowship, fun, and encouragement. (Growing Connections, Younger Generations)
7. Deepen our commitment to discipleship by creating and implementing practices that foster evangelism and missional living. (Relational Discipleship, Holistic Care)
8. Intentionally provide and foster opportunities for people (outside or new) to connect to the life of the church. (Growing Connections, Relational Discipleship)

Seasons of Change - We Have Some New Faces Around Here

Welcome Enos!

Enos Bacon became a familiar face over the summer while he was leading worship during our search to fill our Worship Leader position. After much prayer and consideration, Enos has accepted the worship leader position and will officially be part of the CRC team beginning January 1st. He is a full time Middle School Principal for Mancelona Public Schools and has served as an educator for 24 years. He has a wife of 24 years, Charnell, and three adult children. He is a talented musician that enjoys shooting sports in his free time. He has dedicated his life to serving others, and he is excited to lead others to Christ through music and fellowship. He has served in worship bands at several churches over the last 14 years including Calvary Baptist, Genesis, Ironton Congregational Church and now here at Community Reformed Church. He says "despite my sins and shortcomings, I am an avid follower of Christ and am grateful for my salvation through him."



Welcome Mark!

We are thrilled that Mark Cosens has recently accepted a new part-time position as Technical Director. In this role, Mark will oversee and coordinate all aspects of the Technical Ministry in regards to audio, lighting, and video. Mark is married to Kari and has two daughters, Kayla and Anna. Mark is originally from Fremont, Michigan, where he and his wife were high school sweethearts. They moved to Charlevoix in 2007 and began attending CRC shortly after. Mark is a Senior Systems Analyst at Munson Healthcare Charlevoix hospital. When not working, Mark likes to spend time with his family, taking the family's two yellow labs to the woods or dog park, volunteering with Young Life and youth group.



Welcome Heather!

Heather's Seaman's cheerful face is not new around CRC, but her roll is! This past fall Heather jumped back into serving God's people delicious food as our Director of Kitchen Ministries. Heather is married to Matt and is mom to Samantha. She also works at Boss Landscaping.

Thank You Dan and Peggi!

Dan Adams, Minister to Youth/Young Life Church Partner stepped back from his position this Fall. He and his wife Kaitlyn still volunteer with youth group. We wish them the best in their next chapter.

Peggi Penfold, served at the Director of Kitchen Ministries last fall and winter. She is now spending more time with her darling grandchildren. We are so thankful for the wonderful meals she provided!





Leadership Development

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” - James 4:10



Leadership Retreat

This fall the consistory and staff attended a two day workshop held at the church to focus on connecting with Christ and each other. The staff lead consistory through several spiritual practices including both Lectio Divina and Visio Divina using artwork that represented the story of Jesus

healing the paralytic (Mark 2:2-11). They also attended to business items and affirmed the 2024 goals for the church.

TLP (Transformational Leadership Pathways)

Discipleship in the life of a church is often something talked about but rarely implemented. TLP is changing that at CRC. Over the last five years, TLP has become a process that includes 5 different ten week classes. During those ten weeks, participants are encouraged to have a daily connection with Christ, experience Christian community weekly in their small group, and receive a trained coach to help them one on one to process what God is doing in their life. It has been so encouraging.

Over 50 people have been a part of the TLP process. We are offering TLP 4 – Missional Living for the first time this January and already have 10 people signed up.

TLP Offerings in 2024

January - March

TLP 4 – Missional Living

Jan. 11th – Mar. 14th

Thursdays from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

(requires you have completed TLP 1 & 2)

April - June

TLP 1 – The Values of Jesus

April 4th - June 6th

Thursdays from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

TLP 3 – Becoming Your True Self

April 3rd – June 5th meeting

Wednesdays from 6:00-7:30pm

(requires you have completed TLP 1 & 2)

Summer 2024

TLP 2 – Practicing Discipleship

June 20th – August 22nd

Thursdays from 9:00-10:30am

Fall 2024

TLP – Coaching Class

Sept. 11th- Nov. 13th

Wednesdays from 6:00-7:30pm

(requires you have completed TLP 1, 2, & 3)

TLP 1 – The Values of Jesus

Sept. 12th – Nov. 14th

Thursdays from 9:00-10:30am

TLP 4 (time/day TBD)

Discerning God's Will TOGETHER

There is a difference between the discernment that we use to make daily decisions and a corporate discernment process that is taken on by teams or committees within the church.

'Corporate Discernment' takes place when a whole group (like consistory) is trying to discern together, following a decision-making process guided by Christian principles. These types of situations may only arise a few times a year but, when they do, it is important to walk through a process so we can move forward with unity and peace.

As the result of the work in corporate discernment, we have developed a discernment team to help groups walk through this process. The team's focus is on educating and facilitating groups as they walk through the discernment process. The team consists of Chip Sauer, Chris Maki, Theda Williams, and Erin Nickel. The team studied Ruth Haley Barton's book "Pursuing God's Will Together" and became convicted as a team that putting "Christ First" is the first step in the discernment process. The team oversees the work of the values teams and provides accountability and support in the pursuit of the goals of the church.

"There are many qualities that contribute to good leadership, but it is our commitment to discerning and doing the will of God through the help of the Holy Spirit that distinguishes spiritual leadership from other kinds of leadership." - Ruth Haley Barton

Christ First



Everyone can be more intentional in recognizing Christ while doing ministry on behalf of the church. When we gather together it is important to recognize our meetings as an opportunity to worship and that God is present with us instead of "getting through an agenda." It seems like a simple task, but often times we get caught up in the to-dos of our meetings, classes, and other gatherings. It's important to remember what God told us **"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."** - Matthew 18:20.

God is always present and this year we made a commitment to taking an active step in both acknowledging and celebrating God's presence when we gather. Now, when two or more people gather on behalf of ministry work for the church we make sure to first focus our attention upon Christ each and every time,

- We believe a person's capacity to lead effectively is directly related to their emotional and spiritual maturity.
- We believe lifelong learning, giving and receiving feedback, and encouragement are key elements in leadership.
- We believe as leaders develop so does their Kingdom impact.



Growing Connections

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin."
- 1 John 1:7

Do Something For Someone Success!

"Do Something For Someone" is an easy way that our congregation can help others every few months. This year we collected almost \$800 in change for prizes for the church carnival, filled 500 eggs with candy for the Charlevoix Estates Easter Egg Hunt, collected tons of candy for our annual trunk or treat, hosted a drive for diapers, baby bottles of change and care baskets for mom's to support both Mom's and Tots and the Pregnancy Care Center. We also handed out greeting cards and addressed envelopes so people could send cards to some of our church family to brighten their day.



Welcoming Is What We Do!

One of our 2023 goals was to "develop and implement a process of welcoming and engaging guests from the parking lot to the sanctuary." As a result of that work we have created a team to focus on new visitors to CRC. The Welcoming Team seeks out new people on Sunday mornings to welcome them into our church. We want everyone who visits to feel like they belong. You will likely see them wearing their welcome shirts and a smile on Sunday mornings.

The Welcoming Team also hosted a luncheon for some people who were new to CRC. Several people gathered after a Sunday service for a fun fiesta themed



- We believe being welcoming is a tangible expression of love which encourages belonging within the family of God.
- We want no one to ever stand alone in our community or church.
- We want to remove any barriers which keep people away from engaging with Christ and one another.

Be Our Guest!

One of the best ways we can steward our building is hosting our friends and neighbors from the community. We have been blessed with space to share and we are excited about the opportunities we had to open our doors to a variety of groups throughout the year,

Some groups and events hosted this year at CRC:

- Weekly Ping Pong
- Ladies Line Dancing
- Charlevoix J.V. Volleyball Sleepover
- District 5 Garden Club Fall Meeting
- Card Making Classes
- Beyond Basics Literacy Training
- Pine Lake Winds Christmas Concert
- Bergmann Center Christmas Party
- Community Thanksgiving



Pine Lake Winds Christmas Concert



Charlevoix J.V. Volleyball Team Sleepover



District 5 Garden Club Fall Meeting



Ladies Line Dancing



Community Thanksgiving



Weekly Ping Pong



Younger Generations

"Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture, will praise you forever; from generation to generation we will proclaim your praise."

-Psalm 79:13

Young Adults

This crew knows how to have fun! Our 18-30 year olds gathered several times throughout the year for different activities. They did a beach bash, went ax throwing, ate dinner together at BWW's and most recently conquered the escape room in Petoskey.



- We believe younger generations are not just the future of the church, but are an important part of the church today and their gifts, insights, and leadership are needed.
- We are inclusive in all areas of ministry to younger generations.
- We believe that when we prioritize younger generations that everyone benefits.



Trunk - Or - Treat

We had a record number (20) of "trunk" entries and a TON of trunk-or-treaters this year! We also added a donut and hot cider station which was a big hit. Thank you to everyone who helped make it a special night for kiddos in our community!



Youth Group Fun!

Our youth groups are divided by grade. The Jr. High Youth Group (6th - 8th grade) meets on Wednesday nights and the High School group (9th–12th grade) meets on Sunday nights. Both groups had a full year of fun and adventures including a back to school bash with extreme slip-n-slide kickball! The groups spent time learning about Jesus, having a blast with games, and doing fun activities. The youth group took a trip to Cedar Point this past summer and our Jr. High Youth Group wrapped up their year with a Christmas sleepover in the Youth Room!



CRC Kids

Children's Ministry had a busy and fun year. Along with our weekly Sunday school and Wednesday night activities we hosted a handful of special events like Parents Night Out with a Gingerbread Bash theme. We also hosted Vacation Bible School in August that had a fantastic turn out, and held our biggest and best Trunk-or-Treat yet this fall. CRC Kids ended the year with an amazing Christmas Program.



Crazy Hair Night - Wednesday CRC Kids



Vacation Bible School



Parents' Night Out - Gingerbread Bash



Parents' Night Out - Gingerbread Bash



Christmas Program



Church Picnic - Carnival Style!

Our congregation dove in and hosted a fun, family friendly picnic for our church family and neighbors. Although the rain dampened the ground, it did not dampen our spirits! We had old school carnival games, prizes, hot dogs, root beer floats, inflatables, a cake walk and the biggest saw dust dig the kids had ever seen. It was a wonderful afternoon with great food and fellowship!





Relational Discipleship

"You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful people, who will be able to teach others also." - 2 Timothy 2:1-2

Profession of Faith Class

Pastor Chip and Pastor Chris held a Profession of Faith Class for 5th - 12th grade students this past fall. The class helped prepare students for questions like "What does it mean when we say we believe in God?" They covered all sorts of topics like who Jesus is, what is the Church, sin, and the gift of salvation by grace through faith. They also discussed what it means to profess your faith and to live faithfully as a follower of Jesus. There were 10 students and one adult student who took the class.



Graduation Sunday

This summer we recognized the class of 2023. Congratulations Westley Purdy, Mason Cunningham, Ellen Dhaseleer, Merrett Carson, and Jack Jarema.



- We are committed to growing by inviting Jesus to transform our lives as we actively follow Him.
- We encourage and challenge every person in teaching and modeling discipleship.
- It is our role as a church to offer intentional opportunities for non-believers to find and follow Jesus.



40 Days of Lent

This spring we offered a 40 Days of Lent Challenge. During this time of preparation participants had the opportunity to go deeper in relationship with God. We had over 65 participants who received daily emails or texts with brief daily activities/opportunities along with scripture suggestions to help enrich their experience.

New Members

This year we welcomed Marshall and Callie Bakker, Kayla Cosens , and Timothy, Patrick, and Matthew McClure as new members.



Baptism

Thomas Boss, son of Rob and Zabrina Boss was baptized by his uncle, Pastor Chris Maki on July 16th.



Remembering Our Loved Ones

We recognize the losses our CRC family has had over this past year. We celebrate their lives and legacy of faith that has encouraged and touched our lives. We also grieve as we experience the loss, not being able to see

their faces, hear their laughter or feel their touch. We know their lives are part of a legacy of faithful believers who have encouraged and challenged us to grow in faith in Jesus. This grief lives alongside a living hope of where they are today, alongside of Jesus, knowing that one day we will see them again.

Nathan Boss

Joyce Boss

Paul Jolliffe

Jonathan Merrill

Nancy Bambach

Marsha Jones

We also recognize that many of you have lost dear loved ones this past year. We mourn with you and we trust that God has provided you strength, comfort, and His presence, and continues to do so.



Holistic Care

"Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others." - Philippians 2:4

Volunteer Fair

We firmly believe that volunteerism is such an important part of serving in our community. We also are acutely aware that volunteerism seems to be on the decline. Our Local Outreach team hosted the second annual Volunteer Fair to help be the catalyst needed to encourage people in the community to take the next step in volunteering and supporting local non-profit and ministry organizations. There were great door prizes, giveaways, and a food truck on site. It was a great way to help promote the important ways that these groups are serving our community.



- We actively look for ways to serve those inside and outside the church emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically.
- We offer opportunities for people to grow wherever we are at in their spiritual journey, recognizing that spiritual growth can begin with the meeting of physical needs.
- We are committed to collaborating with local and global organizations to meet needs and address areas of brokenness that hinder people from experiencing the Kingdom of God.

Creating A Culture of Serving

This fall, Kate Chanda stepped in to help address the need for connecting our congregation with ways to serve both in the church and community. She developed a Volunteer Center with the help of her husband Scott. The center has lots of information on how people can serve in both long term and short term ways.

Helping All People Find and Follow Jesus...One Act of Service at A Time.



Local and Global Outreach Ministries

Part of our commitment to Holistic Care is having teams that focus on outreach both in our community and throughout the world. These teams, Local and Global Outreach, function as liaisons between our congregation and mission and service organizations. This includes financial support decisions, educating the congregation, encouraging involvement and committing to pray for these organizations and the people they serve. Holistic Care makes up 17% of the operating budget and helps support the following organizations:

Global Outreach

- Heart for Africa
- Food for the Hungry
- World Vision
- Audio Scripture Ministries
- Bible League
- Wycliff
- SIM (Service in Missions)
- Word of God for Asia
- Words of Hope-Middle East Project
- Words of Hope
- Adventure Learning Ministries
- Arbin and Bimala Pokharel
- Every Child Ministries
- Fruit of the Vine Ministries
- Streams in the Desert
- Shabach Ministry
- Margret Weir
- Military Ministries
- Master Missions
- Youth With a Mission
- Voice of the Martyrs
- World Outreach Ministry
- Mission Partners India
- YL Moldova
- YL Former Soviet Union

Local Outreach

- Charlevoix Ministerial Association
- Christmas Project
- Community Food Pantry
- Ebenezer School
- Good Samaritan
- GVSU Campus Ministry
- Joppa House
- Keryx Prison Ministry
- Kiersten's Ride
- LTB Young Life
- Manna Food Project
- Mom & Tot's Center
- Nehemiah Project
- Northern Chaplain Services
- Pregnancy Care Center
- Safe Families
- Safe Haven Ministries
- Spring Hill Day Camp
- Western Seminary
- Diana Wood - Intervarsity
- Stretcher Bearers
- Arianna Hassenzahl - Camp Barakel
- Gas Cards/Grocery



Young Life Moldova



Bible League International



Manna Food Project



Kiersten's Ride

Men's Saturday Bible Study



There has been exciting things happening in Men's Ministry this year. A bible study has kicked off and the group is off to a great start! Bring your Bible and morning coffee and join them every other Saturday in the CRC conference room from 8-9am. All ages and levels of Bible knowledge are welcome. They currently have 10-14 guys who spend time in the New Testament studying encounters people in the Gospels had with Jesus. They put themselves in the story of WHY they met Jesus and WHAT HAPPENED to them as a result of that encounter.

They focus on having friendly and interactional discussions that have practical applications to their lives.

Reminder texts are sent out 7-10 days and 3 days before each meeting. Text or call Jerry VanKuiken at 616-402-1886 to sign-up.

Guys Night - Fourth Thursday

No agenda, just a casual gathering. The group meets at 7 p.m. at The Back Lot in Charlevoix. Contact Chip for more information @ 231-330-5331. Location may change depending on season. Next gathering is January 25th at The Back Lot in Charlevoix.

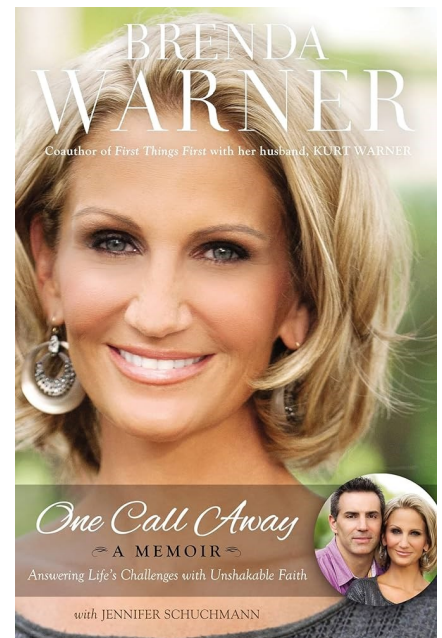
Women's Book Studies

Women's Ministry had several book studies this past year, The first one was in February held at the library, one in the summer at Charlevoix Township Park, and one this past fall here at CRC. In the summer we had a choice between "The Anatomy of the Soul" by Curt Thompson and "Hannah Coulter" by Wendell Berry. In September we discussed "All My Knotted Up Life" by Beth Moore. We had about a dozen women and the discussions were amazing!

The next study will be January 22, 2024 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. here at CRC. There will be light sandwiches and snacks followed by a time of discussion on Brenda Warner's book, "One Call Away."

You may order the book on your own or contact: twilliams@communityreformed.net

Please join us for an evening of connection and discussion. Please sign up by using the email address above.



Ladies Weekly Bible Study

Ladies Bible Study will start again on Tuesday, January 9th at 10 a.m. in the Community Room, The group is reading DISCERNING THE VOICE OF GOD: How to Recognize When God Is Speaking by Priscilla Shirer.

The study is open to all ladies in the congregation and community. If interested or for more information please contact Kathy Martinchek at kmmagnolia@gmail.com or message her at 231 675-4037.