



First Reformed Church **News & Views**



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Just because the sun is shining doesn't mean the same thing for everyone. Today as I type this, the sun is shining on much of my family and friends but in Willmar the temp at 2:50 pm is 17 degrees. By my sister in Phoenix, AZ it's 59, my aunt in Torrance, CA it's 67 and where we are going in the southern tip of Texas soon for the mission trip it's 70 today. Distance from the source of light and heat makes a difference.

Living most of my life in the Midwest there are countless days I would have loved to bask in the rays out west to avoid snow and windchill. So far, that is not where God has put us after we finished 3 years of seminary life in California.

Here's the reality though. Did you know your body chemistry changes and adapts to where you live? The first year in California I was walking around in jeans and a short-sleeve shirt when it was 50 degrees while most of the population had their winter coats, hats and mittens on. Over the next months my body knew I was going to stay in that climate for a while. The second winter, 50 degrees no longer felt comfortable unless I put on the winter coat and hat.

Translate this into the spiritual. The closer our relationship with Jesus, the Son of Man, the Son of God is, the better life will flow. As we hang around people who need more of Jesus light, God's Spirit will bring about changes in them if we are intentional about being Christ-like around them. The change timeline isn't the same for everyone though. Neither can we expect the ones who need more Son in their life just to show up on Sunday morning for a church service.

One of the strongest community connections we currently have is the jr high & high school youth group. Many of the kids don't have a storyline of growing up in the church. They don't know what the Bible says about God or about them. They don't know what they don't know. They don't know Jesus loves them and has a plan for their lives. Some may come to youth group just to escape the chaos happening in their homes. Some just want to be with their friends. Some show up willingly. Others have no choice since their parents tell them they will attend.

Will you pray regularly for our youth? Pray for the volunteer leaders as they share the truth of the Bible and seek to help the kids put it in the context of their lives. Pray for wisdom, endurance, patience and expectation for the kids and leaders. Each one is at a different place in the lives and spiritual journeys. The common need for all is: basking in the Son, no matter if live is going well, or if they're on the struggle bus. Pastor Rob

FEBRUARY



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

- 4 Benjamin Damhof
- 6 Ken Bestge
- 10 Harold Korthuis
- 17 Carolyn Dierenfeld

February

- 10 Jeni & Hiko Ritz
- 18 Gary & Vonna Faber



Mary Circle:
No February meeting

Deborah Circle:
No February meeting

Rebekah Circle:
Tuesday, Feb 14 @ 2:00 pm

Naomi Circle:
Thursday, Feb 9 @ 6:30 pm



For Karen & Matt Dahle & their new son Charlie. Join us for treats Sunday February 5 after worship, meet Charlie and celebrate this beautiful addition to our family. Hosted by the Petersen family



BABY GIRL SWANSON IS ON THE WAY!

Join us for a
Baby Shower
honoring
Nou & Josiah

Date: Saturday, February 18th

Time: 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Place: First Reformed Church

Couple is registered at Target & Amazon
Lunch will be served.

RSVP: Kathy 320-444-2579

Wednesday Feb 15 * Come celebrate our youth!

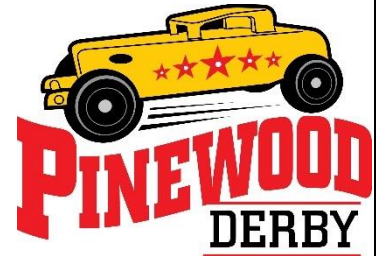
TEENS FOR CHRIST



Taco in a bag fundraiser
6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
FREEWILL DONATION
Bingo (with prizes) after
supper and the derby.

Cadets

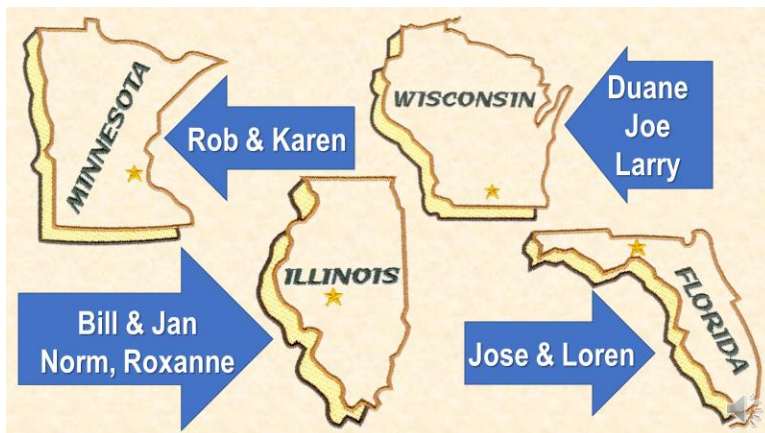
Weigh-In
5:45-6:00 pm
Race 6:15 pm



Texas Mission Trip February 2023

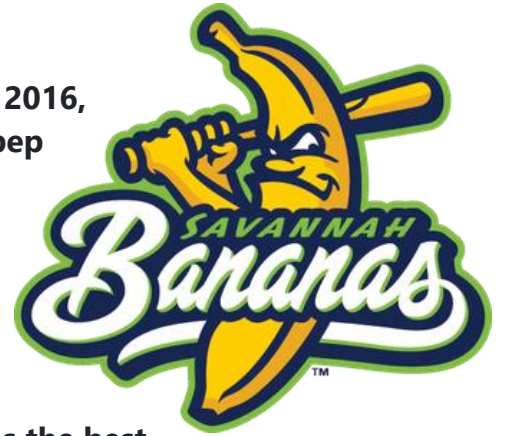


Thank you for your generous contributions toward the building material for the trip. Please be praying for safety as we travel and work in Texas. Most of the group will be driving down, three will be flying. Pastor Rob & Karen will be gone Feb 8-19. Pray for Luis & Sandy, the family we are building the house for.



Let's go bananas!

When the baseball team in Savannah, Georgia, got new owners in 2016, it also received a new name and identity — the Bananas! Adding pep to what often seemed a long, boring game, Jesse and Emily Cole offered a creative new experience, full of entertainment and spectacle. Players wear all-yellow uniforms (sometimes kilts), and the mascot is a banana named Split. Cheering on the team are the Banana Nanas senior-citizen dancers and the Man-Nanas Dad Bod Cheering Squad. The entire organization sets out to bring hospitality and joy, sending people home thinking, “This was the best experience of my life!”



What if Christians, individually and as a community, fully embraced *our* new name and identity, sharing radical hospitality and profound joy with everyone? Jesus has bought us from our former owner, sin, and given us a new name: Beloved of God. This identity may seem silly to some, just as the Savannah Bananas raised eyebrows initially. But before long, the delighted fans were *going bananas* for them!

With the same wild abandon and big-hearted outreach, the church — with its much-greater message — can spread love and goodwill, and have fun doing it!

Love aces the test

Author Adele Calhoun describes life as “our ‘open-book’ test on love.” How can we ace it? In *Invitations From God*, she points out that daily decisions are the make-or-break factors: “Day in and day out as we plan, work, produce, commute and relate, we make life-altering choices to either love or neglect others.”

For another study guide, reflect on St. Augustine’s timeless words: “What does love look like? It has the hands to help others. It has the feet to hasten to the poor and needy. It has eyes to see misery and want. It has the ears to hear the sighs and sorrows of [people]. That is what love looks like.”

A Prayer to Combat the Winter Blues

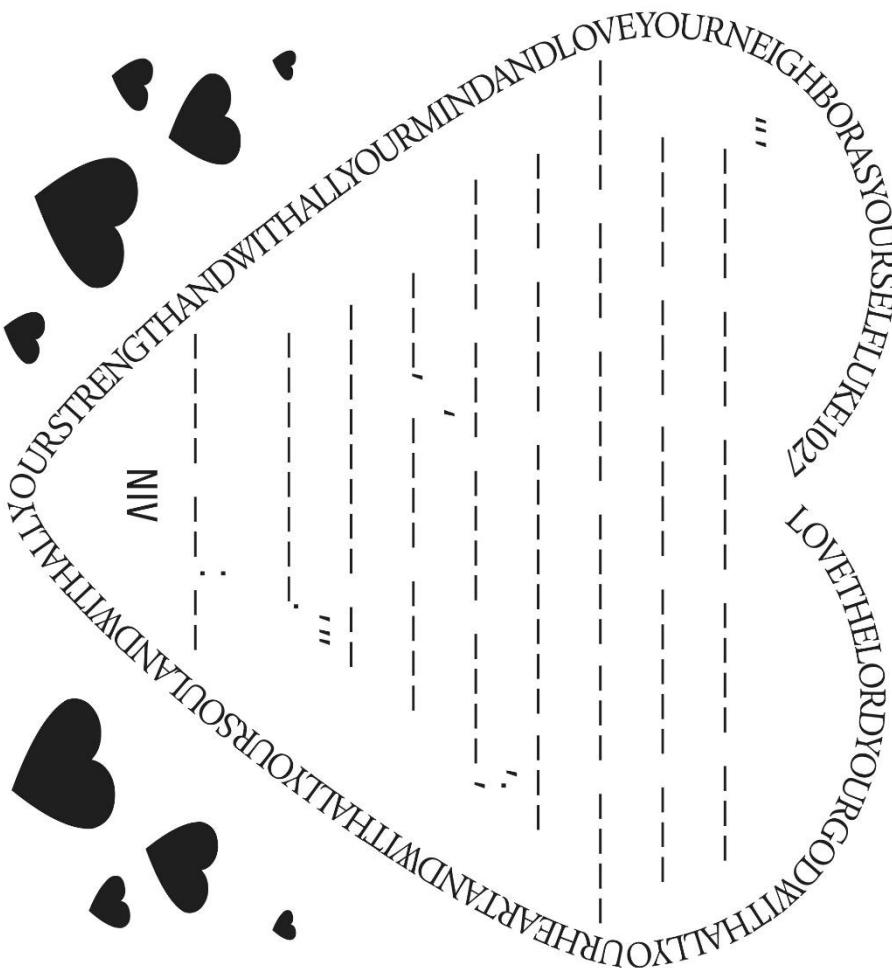
By Kelly O’Dell Stanley

Dear Lord, I need Your help. There are bigger and more critical needs out there, but in order for me to play the role you’ve given me, I need to be emotionally healthy. Thank You for the people who love me, who make me feel better just by being with me. Help me find time to be with those who make my soul sing, and thank you for the healing and enjoyment that brings. Give me wisdom about what I consume mentally and emotionally, and help me make wise choices for my health. Help me let go of the physical and mental clutter that drags me down, and help me to delight in the little things and find joy in the things that I do. But don’t stop there. Show me where else I can help bring joy—point me towards people whose lives I can improve in any small way. Use me, Lord, because that’s often where I find fulfillment, when I’m living out Your purposes. And through it all, help me to see You, to turn to You, to lean on You, and to give thanks to You. Because You are the giver of life, the hope of eternity, and the author of joy. Amen.

The river of life

Puzzle!

Draw lines to separate the words in the heart outline. Then, starting with "Love," write the words in order inside the heart to complete the two greatest commandments.



The Red River of the North, in the north-central U.S. and central Canada, takes countless twists and turns. A close-up aerial photo or map shows its frequent sideswipes and U-turns. One could cross the river several times without changing direction while hiking or biking along the border between Minnesota and North Dakota. You might wonder at points if it has completely turned back south — which raises another point: While most rivers flow south, the Red River flows north.

Sometimes life meanders, but that doesn't mean we're off course. Sometimes we seem to be going in the opposite direction of most people, but that doesn't mean we're not headed the right way. Sometimes it feels like it takes us a long time to make progress, but that doesn't mean we're not moving. We might just be taking in more of life's scenery! Follow your own unique trajectory, letting God, the creator of all rivers and all life, serve as the current that moves you ever onward.

FAITH &

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Five Biblical Principles Of Money Management

1. SPEND LESS THAN YOU EARN.

Sounds easy, but hard to do. We live in a culture of constant advertising bombardment, and our culture sows discontentment. We're taught that we can and should buy what we want, when we want, regardless of consequences. Proverbs 13:11 states, *"Wealth quickly gotten dwindles away, but amassed little by little, it grows."*

2. BE WISE WITH DEBT.

Debt always mortgages the future. It will always come calling, and it can lower our standard of living in the future. We must make sure that we don't presume upon the future and that we understand the true cost. Proverbs 22:7 tells us, *"The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender."*

3. PLAN FOR FINANCIAL MARGIN, BECAUSE THE UNEXPECTED WILL OCCUR.

Who's had to make an unexpected car or home repair? What about an unexpected medical bill for a broken bone? When we fail to build liquidity for short-term emergencies, we are creating a crack in our financial foundation. This principle applies to having a solid emergency fund and being properly insured with health, life, and disability insurance. Proverbs 6:6-8 states, *"Go to the ant, you sluggard! Observe its ways and become wise. Without leader, administrator, or ruler, it prepares its provisions in summer; it gathers its food during harvest."*

4. SET LONG-TERM GOALS, BECAUSE THERE'S ALWAYS A TRADE-OFF BETWEEN THE SHORT-TERM AND THE LONG-TERM.

If we all operated off of long-term goals, how would that change our short-term perspective on how we use money? Focusing on goals that are important to us can also help us to establish a clear direction on God's calling for our lives. Philippians 3:14 says, *"I continue my pursuit toward the goal, the prize of God's upward calling, in Christ Jesus."*

5. GIVE GENEROUSLY, BECAUSE GIVING BREAKS THE POWER OF MONEY.

Yes, giving our resources to others in need is a nice thing to do. However, this principle goes so much deeper than that. Giving breaks the power that money has over us. God calls us to trust him, and giving generously forces us to do just that. Christ is the ultimate sacrificial giver, and we are called to live our lives in the same manner. II Corinthians 9:6-9 states, *"Consider this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant to you, so that in all things, always having all you need, you may have an abundance for every good work. As it is written: 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.'*

A ROMANS 5 APPROACH TO PARENTING by Scott Turansky

Sometimes parents are afraid to be firm with their children for fear that their kids won't like them or that they'll add too much pressure that their kids can't handle. Unfortunately, many children take advantage of their parents' graciousness and don't reciprocate in a positive way.

IT'S TRAINING TIME - The reality is that many children need a boot camp experience in following instructions, working on attitude, or getting control of their anger. Firmness is an important parenting strategy. Firmness makes a child's present pattern of response uncomfortable. It's amazing how comfortable some children are with resistance, whining, meanness, or a bad attitude. Firmness makes it clear that we aren't going to continue to live this way.

FIRMNESS ISN'T JUST MORE CONSEQUENCES - Some parents immediately think of consequences when they think of firmness, but consequences are only a piece of the strategy. One of the things that makes firmness work is clarifying expectations. When you write it down, post it on the wall, or simply ask your child to repeat what you expect to happen, you are increasing your firm approach. Another aspect of firmness is constructive confrontation, that uses the power of words without anger to give further clarity to the situation. Getting close to a child and saying, "Kailey, it looks like you're not obeying me. I told you to stop watching the video and come and help me in the kitchen. You need to turn it off now." Anger at kids isn't necessary, but your close proximity increases the child's discomfort. When a child doesn't respond to your relational approach, firmness communicates that change isn't optional.

"I'M WAITING" INCREASES ACCOUNTABILITY - Firmness might also come in the form of waiting expectantly. When you give a child an assignment, don't just walk away and assume it'll get done. Your child may need for you to stand there for a few moments to make sure he's moving in the right direction. Your firm presence at that moment increases the discomfort and moves children forward. Sometimes parents move too quickly to correction strategies and overuse their toolbox of consequences. The reality is that all consequences weaken their usefulness over time so when possible, it's best to rely on other change tools such as firmness. Constructive confrontation, waiting expectantly, and clarifying expectations are all-important for establishing a firm parenting approach and often work before consequences become necessary.

FOCUS ON WHAT TO DO, NOT JUST WHAT NOT TO DO - Be careful, though, that you don't just focus on what you want your child not to do. That's correction. Children also need training to do the right thing. Focus on what the child needs to do instead. In fact, it's best to focus on a heart-quality or character issue. "Trevor, we're working on kindness and what you just did to your brother missed the mark. So, I'd like you to try that again. Show me some kindness." Character is often learned under pressure. It's true that life imposes its own pressure on our lives but sometimes kids can't feel it. That's when parents must help them feel the pressure a little more. We aren't suggesting that parents be mean to their kids, but it's often helpful to make a specific effort in certain areas for kids so that they can strengthen areas of weakness. The home is a place for children to learn and grow. If kids don't develop self-control, cooperation, honor, and integrity at home, they'll have a much more difficult time out in the world. In fact, your controlled firmness at home can teach children lessons more easily than the harshness of life that will come later.

A LESSON FROM ROMANS 5 - Romans 5:3-4 reads, "We know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." The important principle in this passage is one that applies to all people, even children. Growth often takes place under pressure. Notice that there are four words in that verse. Suffering, perseverance, character, and hope. When parents increase the pressure (suffering) and give kids a plan (perseverance) then growth (character) is the byproduct and a positive view of the future (hope) is the result. Your parenting strategy needs to have a focus on character and a willingness to add some suffering, in the form of firmness, into your child's life. Essentially you're going to communicate the message that we aren't going to live this way any more. The message is "This isn't good for you now or for your future and it's not good for our family." Your strategy is to help your child feel uncomfortable with the present operating plan. Things have to change. Firmness starts moving kids in a positive direction.

IT'S ABOUT THE HEART NOT JUST BEHAVIOR - But don't just start being firm without giving your kids a plan of what you want them to do. Focus on the character quality you're trying to develop. If your daughter resists instruction you're going to work on cooperation. If your son is mean to his brother then he needs to learn kindness. If you have a child who lies, then integrity is the goal. If you keep your eyes on the positive character needed to move forward then you'll be able to maintain a positive approach even in the midst of the pressure you're creating. Your child needs to develop perseverance, but few children understand what it is. Kids tend to live for the present and often want things immediately. Adults know that many good things take time and hard work, and children will need to develop perseverance in their lives in order to be successful. If you're developing a plan for meanness then help your child know how to persevere. After all, when his little brother is annoying, how should your son respond without meanness? When your daughter wants to finish her video instead of helping you in the kitchen, how should she think differently about the situation? Answers to those kinds of questions help children know what perseverance looks like in very practical terms.

KIDS START TO CHANGE, AND CHANGE BRINGS HOPE - Once you have clarified the goal (character) and you've given your child a plan (perseverance) then you add the firmness (suffering) and good things start to happen. The beauty of this approach is that kids not only start to change but they experience the hope promised in the verse. They begin to believe that it is possible to get a good grade when they work hard, or handle their emotions when they develop self-control. Using the Romans 5 model for helping children change patterns of negative behavior gives both parents and children a roadmap for addressing difficult parenting challenges.

Not only do the children experience more hope but parents do as well. Firmness is an important component of a good parenting plan when it fits into the positive, forward looking approach of focusing on the goal of character development.

Instead of just telling kids what you want them to stop doing, you'll be challenging them to work toward a goal and move forward toward maturity.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:13-20

*Images are deceiving. Salt and sugar look exactly the same
but taste very different. —Suzy Kassem*

In the first verse of today's Bible reading, Jesus says, "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under foot."

These are tough words, but to understand them, we need to remember that salt has long been a blessing to us humans. It's valuable because of its many uses. In history, salt has been used as currency and fought for in wars. Salt is used to cure and store meats, disinfect wounds, make food, pottery and more. Salt, in general, was loved not for just *one* of its uses but because it had *so many* uses. It was an unexpected blessing in a thousand ways.

Jesus' point is that those who belong to him, who live under his reign and rule in this world, are just like salt. It's incredibly useful and surprisingly valuable — not because we can enhance a great rib eye steak, but also because we can make the kingdom of God known in the world.

We can tell people about God's world through the way we admit our faults, the way we cling to Christ, love our enemies, feed the needy, strive to keep our promises and so much more — which Jesus goes on to outline later in his "Sermon on the Mount."

Members of God's world have a surprising usefulness in this hurting world when we respond to that grace by walking in love.

We are God's "salty" people. When followers of Jesus lose their saltiness, the world misses out on experiencing the kingdom, and we lose out on the joys of being a blessing.

—Matthew Popovits with Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Sometimes, O God, I must be the salt of the earth. But other times, I need also to be sugar. Help me to be wise and provide what is needed, when it is needed. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Exodus 1-4

Monday: Exodus 5-7

Tuesday: Exodus 8-10

Wednesday: Exodus 11-13

Thursday: Exodus 14-17

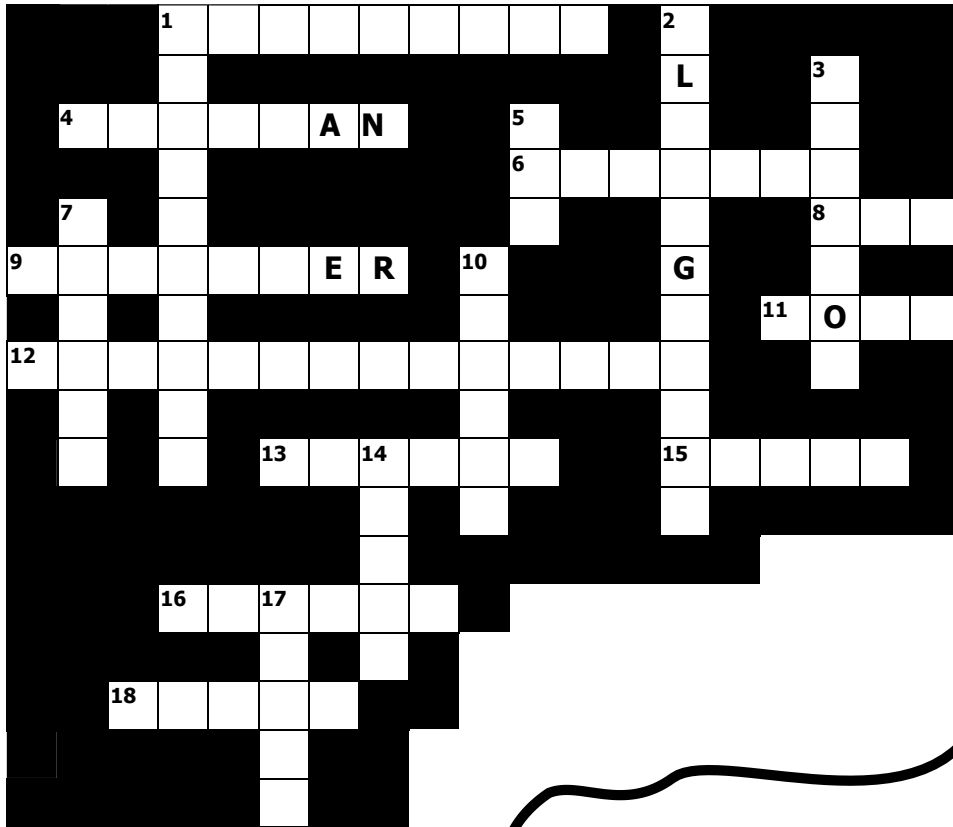
Friday: Exodus 18-20

Saturday: Psalms 13-15

Verse to Remember
You shall have no other gods before me.
 —Exodus 20:3

CROSSWORD CLEANING!

The theme of this puzzle is cleaning items.



CLUES

- 1 Across: Type of soap
- 1 Down: Apparatus to clean dishes
- 2. Vigorous physical effort
- 3. Used when washing hair
- 4. Used to hold debris
- 5. An old or torn cloth
- 6. Added to water to form cleaning solution
- 7. To whiten
- 8. Can be wet or dry
- 9. A cleaning powder
- 10. Pail
- 11. A water tube
- 12. Used to clean clothes
- 13. Used to remove dirt on knick-knacks
- 14. To vigorously rub
- 15. To brush away
- 16. Used to clean carpets
- 17. Fabric
- 18. Used to sweep

- ANSWERS:**
- 1. Across — detergent;
 - 1. Down — dishwasher;
 - 2. elbow grease;
 - 3. shampoo;
 - 4. dustpan;
 - 5. rag;
 - 6. ammonia;
 - 7. bleach;
 - 8. mop;
 - 9. cleanser;
 - 10. bucket;
 - 11. hose;
 - 12. washing machine;
 - 13. duster;
 - 14. scrub;
 - 15. sweep;
 - 16. vacuum;
 - 17. cloth;
 - 18. broom.



February 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:21-37

Relax, Recharge and Reflect. Sometimes it's OK to do nothing.

—Izey Victoria Odiase

A little more than five years ago, my wife and I were in Scotland to celebrate a wedding anniversary.

One day, we rummaged around in a backpack and retrieved a map to get the lay of the land. We noticed a spot over by Loch Lomond where there was a notation: “Rest and Be Thankful.”

This was not a helpful instruction or command from the mapmaker. It's actually the name of a mountain pass, noted for its breathtaking view. On some paper or digital maps, it is simply called “The Rest.” It is the highest point on the A83 and is 803 feet above sea level, dividing Glen Kinglas from Glen Croe.

The place got its name because, in the days before motorcars, you had to slog through a long, uphill climb to get there. Once you topped the crest of the hill, you found yourself in a broad, level place, with a spectacular vista: a sight made all the sweeter by the knowledge that the road was all downhill from there. From the viewpoint of this famous beauty spot you can see the old valley road, engineered by General Wade during the subjection of Scotland following the Jacobite rebellion.

“Rest and be thankful” — it's pretty good advice to remember at the end of every day, as well as on Sundays, a day of rest and gratitude.

Jesus himself invited us to come alongside of him and rest ... and perhaps be thankful as well. He said, “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29).

Saint Augustine, the fourth-century theologian and author of the *Confessions*, once sought wealth, status and glory, thinking that these things would bring contentment and happiness. But he was wrong.

He turned his heart to God, and discovered, as he was later to write, “Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee.”

So, tonight, pause for a moment to “rest and be thankful.”

—Timothy Merrill, with help of various internet sources

Prayer: O Lord, I cannot rest unless I have been active and doing something. Give me the strength to walk up the mountains, into the valleys and along the streams, until at the end of the day, I reach home and can rest from my labors, and be thankful. In your name. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Exodus 21-24
- Monday:** Exodus 25-27
- Tuesday:** Exodus 28-31
- Wednesday:** Exodus 32-
- Thursday:** Exodus 35-37
- Friday:** Exodus 38-40
- Saturday:** Psalms 16-18



WORD BOX

The answer for each numbered clue will be the same down and across.

1	2	3	4	5
2				
3				
4				
5				

CLUES FOR WORD BOX

1. One who keeps money
2. On top of
3. Casts a ballot
4. A happening
5. Takes it easy



VALENTINE'S DAY

Millions of Valentine's Day cards are being exchanged right now as we approach Valentine's Day on Friday. How many words of **three letters or more** can you find in the word "valentine"? Give it a try, and as you work on this, remember the people in your life for whom you have a special affection and love.

VALENTINE

Write your words in the empty space below.

Answers to Word Box: 1. saver, 2. above, 3. votes, 4. event, 5. rests.
Valentine's Day: vale, veil, tin, time, nine, lent, ale, tale, event, even, vent, lean, veal, teen, eat, teal, vain, neat, lien, vein, ate, nave, tea, eave, eaten, nail, ail, Lenten, tan, tail ... and more.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 17:1-9

Listen to Jesus and follow him. That's the message of the Transfiguration.

—Pope Francis

An online user poll ranked adult responses to the same “What-do-you-want-to-be” question asked of the kids. The top five responses? Get rich, be a singer, be a superhero, be a movie star and be a cowboy.

We learn at an early age that there are people in our world who are more admirable than others, based on our sense of their power, prestige and potential for greatness.

We bring this up because when Peter sees Jesus — *his* Jesus, the rabbi he’s chosen to follow — chatting with the two — THE TWO — heroes of his own faith, Moses and Elijah, he’s more excited than a groupie in a mosh pit.

Suddenly, everything falls into place for him: Jesus as Hero. Jesus as Messiah. Jesus as the One. Jesus the Anointed.

Peter is ready to proclaim Jesus as Hero of the Year and send him to Hawaii right now.

Of course, Peter doesn’t know what he’s talking about. This is what the Bible says: “Peter said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah’—*not knowing what he said*” (Luke 9:33 — emphasis added).

In his book, *Let Story Guide You*, author and speaker Donald Miller points out that in a great story, the strength and greatness of the protagonist are measured by *what dreams would potentially die if the hero does not succeed in the task*.

In other words, the greatest stories have great heroes with great tasks at hand. Have a heroic task, and a person to take it on, and you’ve got a fabulous story. Perhaps, this is what foreshadowed in this Transfiguration account. Now we know that Jesus understands his mission. A great task lies before him. Perhaps, Moses and Elijah remind Jesus that he is the Person for the task. The salvation of the world is at stake.

Peter knew he was staring at a Hero.

This story reminds us that by any definition of the word “hero,” Jesus is it.

And for that we are forever grateful and in his debt.

—Timothy Merrill

*Prayer: Lord Jesus, thank you for taking on the great task of the redemption of the world.
Amen.*

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday: Romans 1-4

Monday: Romans 5-8

Tuesday: Romans 9-11

Wednesday: Romans 12-16

Thursday: Proverbs 1-3

Friday: Proverbs 4-7

Saturday: Psalms 19-21

Verse to Remember

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS!

The answers to the following clues have one meaning when capitalized and a different meaning when not capitalized. Find the answers and write them in the spaces provided. Then unscramble the circled letters to reveal a very old person from the Old Testament.

Capitalized

1. A large country in Asia
2. Denver football player
3. Slavic language
4. A planet
5. City in Iowa
6. Expensive car
7. Citizen of country near Pakistan
8. Soft drink
9. Month
10. Epic poet
11. Greek god of shepherds
12. Credit card

Non-capitalized

1. porcelain tableware
2. untamed horse
3. to shine something
4. a silvery element
5. a couch
6. buns
7. woolen blanket/shawl
8. slang for illegal drug
9. rhythmic movement
10. baseball's biggest hit
11. utensil
12. passport stamp

SECRET PERSON

Answers: 1. china, 2. bronco, 3. polish, 4. mercury, 5. davenport, 6. rolls, 7. afghan, 8. coke, 9. march, 10. homer, 11. pan, 12. visa. Secret Person: Methuseleh.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

Better to shun the bait, than to struggle in the snare. —John Dryden

According to online sources, there once was an overweight businessman who decided it was time to shed some excess pounds. He took his new diet seriously, even changing his driving route to avoid his favorite bakery.

One morning, however, he showed up at work with a gigantic coffee cake. Everyone in the office scolded him, but he simply smiled and explained: “This is a special coffee cake,” he said. “I accidentally drove by the bakery this morning, and there in the window was a host of goodies. I felt it was no accident, so I prayed, ‘Lord, if you want me to have one of those delicious coffee cakes, let there be a parking spot open right out in front.’ And sure enough, the eighth time I drove around the block, there it was — just waiting for me!”

Someone said that although opportunity knocks only once, temptation beats the door down every day. That may be true, but this businessman was aiding and abetting in his own temptation, wasn’t he?

When we think of temptation, we usually think of those moments when we’re enticed to do something bad, unkind or even evil. But the Bible defines temptation as a “testing” or a trial of our faith rather than a moral seduction.

Take Jesus for example. When he was tempted to turn the stones at his feet into bread, who could blame him? *He had not eaten solid food for 40 days!* Eating bread after not eating for 40 days is not a bad thing — it is a *necessary* thing. The catch here is that the devil was up to tomfoolery. Although eating bread was not, in itself, something wrong, Jesus could not do it at the behest of the devil. Not doing something good, something no reasonable person could blame him for doing, was, in this case, a test of his faith. He would not do it.

Our faith gets tested, too. We also go through trials and testing, like the ancient patriarch Job, for example. All of the biblical heroes of the faith experienced testing and adversity. Yet they resisted the temptation to avoid it or run away from it.

Jesus didn’t run. He embraced the test and resisted the devil. And you know what happened, don’t you? The devil ran, just as the Bible predicts he will do every time: “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

—Timothy Merrill

Prayer: Lord, be with me in my hour of trial. Amen.

Daily Bible Readings

- Sunday:** Leviticus 1-4
Monday: Leviticus 5-7
Tuesday: Leviticus 8-10
Wednesday: Leviticus 11-13
Thursday: Leviticus 14-16
Friday: Leviticus 17-19
Saturday: Psalms 22-24

Verse to Remember

*“The LORD is my shepherd;
I shall not want.”*

—Psalm 23:1

—Psalm 23:1 (KJV)

Think Spring!

S	R	E	T	A	W	L	A	R	E	N	I	M	Y	H
V	N	N	D	U	O	L	C	Y	E	O	J	T	E	C
R	G	O	F	T	E	E	L	S	P	I	U	U	G	W
H	E	Q	W	L	M	W	E	A	H	T	C	N	M	X
Y	T	G	G	E	J	N	Z	U	F	A	I	A	T	I
L	R	I	V	E	R	A	M	R	O	R	T	C	L	F
N	P	J	K	Q	Y	I	O	T	P	I	E	S	E	G
T	L	M	N	D	D	S	O	S	Y	P	N	T	R	I
M	Z	O	M	I	T	E	E	V	E	S	A	E	A	Q
D	K	S	T	L	A	T	R	R	R	R	B	A	A	W
W	R	Y	I	O	I	R	K	O	D	E	W	M	D	K
H	F	S	Z	C	L	A	P	Y	C	P	S	I	C	C
F	L	S	O	W	X	A	H	I	L	E	Q	E	B	N
B	U	Z	V	V	V	G	K	D	C	P	A	Z	R	W
T	L	Z	E	Y	J	I	D	E	G	R	Q	N	R	E

Soon, the winter snow will begin to melt if it hasn't already. Rain will fall and mud season will be in full swing! Find the following forms of water in the word search puzzle to the left:

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|-----------|
| cloud | reservoir | dew |
| river | fog | sleet |
| frost | snow | |
| geyser | spring | glacier |
| steam | hail | vapor |
| humidity | ice | |
| hydrate | iceberg | lake |
| ocean | perspiration | |
| rain | artesian well | |
| mineral waters | | waterfall |

Brain Stumpers:

1. What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries?
2. What can you catch but not throw?
3. What's black and white and red all over?

Brain
Stumpers:

1. A towel
2. A cold
3. A newspaper

⌘⌘⌘⌘⌘ Please be Praying for... ⌘⌘⌘⌘⌘⌘⌘⌘⌘⌘⌘⌘⌘

Our Missionaries

Jeremy & Susan Beebout ~ Niger
Rawee & Nui Bunupuradah ~ Thailand
John & Lynne Hubers ~ Ethiopia

Deacons

Steve Underland '23
Gene Van Den Einde '23, Deacon Chair
Michelle Bonnema '24
Paul Damhof '24, Treasurer
David Bobzien '25
Vicki Zimmer '25

Elders

Jan Damhof '23, Secretary
Randy Dannen '23
Doris Bents '24
Junell Peterson '24, Head Elder
Dick Lessman '25
Marlys Walter '25

Pastor: Rob Ford pr4willmar@gmail.com **Music Director:** Becky Lippert
Secretary: Becca Hayunga **Bookkeeper:** Shelly Krossman **Janitor:** Randy Hayunga

*We are a church, empowered by the Spirit of God, united by grace,
engaging in the Kingdom work for the glory of God.*

United by Grace ❖ Branching Out ❖ Planting Seeds ❖ Growing Together

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