



first reformed church
ORANGE CITY, IA

themilestone

FALL 2022

THE LEADING EDGE

PASTOR TIM BREEN



When I was growing up, I loved watching a cartoon show called *The Jetsons*. If you're old enough to remember the program—episodes were produced in the 1960's and the 1980's— you'll recall that the Jetsons' story was set in the far distant future. George, Jane, Judy, Elroy, and their dog Astro lived high-tech lives in the gleaming new community of Orbit City. They traveled to work in flying cars, communicated through holograms, and kicked back while a friendly female robot named Rosie did all the housework.

The Jetsons, it turns out, envisioned the future with mixed accuracy. While certain elements of the story actually underestimated the power of 21st Century technology, more of the advances the show imagined have yet to develop. (It remains noteworthy that on the housework, they got it exactly right: I enjoy watching my robot vacuum clean my floors almost every day!)

For the most part, I love new technology. But even I have limits.

Ready for a rant? I really, really dislike having to use the self-checkout lanes at the grocery store. I mean, it's okay if you have one or two items and you're in a hurry, but there are some merchants these days (*I'm looking at you, Sioux Center Walmart*) where scanning and packing your own stuff is the only way you can do it.

Now, I don't absolutely require human contact when I'm checking out with my motor oil or Chips Ahoy—more about that in a moment—my problem is just that the checkout process is pretty much a guaranteed adventure in humiliation.

The experience begins by revealing a live picture of you on camera. This is your friendly reminder that, while you have every intention of paying in full for your enchiladas and Gatorade, the grocery store overlords can't be sure you won't choose instead to foray into criminal activity. Because Hy-Vee, as we all know, is a den of temptation.

After that, the real fun starts: The laser scanner won't work. The price rings up wrong. The scale measures weird. The red light above your head flashes repeatedly because you want to buy cooking wine.

And then there's my favorite mistake: "There is an unexpected item in the bagging area." Yes, I know. *I* am that unexpected item in the bagging area.

The result is that you always end up needing the help of the Self Checkout Human Error Monitor Enforcer. You know the SCHEMER, right? This is the high school student who trudges over, looks disdainfully at your decision to use plastic instead of paper, then enters their Top Secret Security Code (most of the time it's 0000, I think?). This act of magnanimity allows you the privilege of completing your purchase. *But before you do, are you willing to round up your purchase to support spotted beluga rescue efforts?* No, okay. (Just be aware that the chip reader doesn't work.)

Life in the grocery store shouldn't be that automated. We shouldn't have to form-fit into what the machines want for us. We should have the opportunity, at least, to chat about the weather and to ensure that your eggs are packed above the honeydew.

It's the same thing in church, gang. These days, congregations are using more and more digital tools. We have sound boards, check-in scanners, and iOS apps. These are important ministry assets in 2022.

But there is no replacement for human connection at church. An automated experience of the Body of Christ is no experience of Christ at all. We are called to have incarnated community together. Church is about shaking hands, talking over coffee, praying together, and bearing each other's burdens.

We are also called to look out for people who seem disoriented among us. They may be visitors or guests. They may be in grief over a loss. They may have come to church because they haven't been able to find hope anywhere else.

Romans 14:19 says "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification." This means doing whatever it takes to help one another find shalom and quiet and rest. And it means building others up in Christ.

That won't happen when we assume church runs on autopilot like George Jetson's car. It takes compassion, courage, and a spirit of welcome. By doing this, we will stand apart from the world's scanners and see people like Jesus did.

WELCOME *New Faces*



JD, Nicole & Hayden Plum



Matt, Alisa, Kamryn & Khloe Weg



Kyle, Kelly & Bennett Boersma



Aaron & Bev Heronemus



Kris, Ann, Christian,
Elizabeth & Luke Korver



Mike Jacobsma



Pat, Dana, Maci & Cody Brenneman



Jeff & Meg Otto



Staff Retreat

Pictured from left to right:

Barry Brandt (Executive Director), Mark Haverdink (Pastor of Congregational Life), Ross Enger (Director of Youth Ministries), Corky Koerselman (VP of Consistory), Merilee Pennings (Bookkeeper), Amanda Haverdink (Worship Coordinator), April Beaver (Director of Digital Ministries), Sarah Kuiper (Director of Children's Ministries), Ken Oldenkamp (Volunteer Staff), and Tom Hydeen (Ministry Assistant)

Our staff spent the day at Inspiration Hills on July 6. We spent time vision-casting, planning fall programming, and playing a brutal game of frisbee golf.

From the desk of Amanda Haverdink

Have you ever been to a game of your favorite sports team and cheered so loudly that you couldn't speak the next day? Have you ever been swept up by the amazing scene on a Broadway show (or Tulip Festival Night Show)? Have you ever gotten choked up when the Pride of the Dutchman Marching Band plays *Championship* as they march by?

I have.

Why is that? Why do we buy the t-shirts, cheer on the TV, spend money on expensive tickets, and cry a little when the band marches by? I submit to you this idea-- we are created for more. We are created to deep down yearn to be a part of something bigger than ourselves-- to be a part of something bigger than the sum of its parts. We are created for worship. In the depths of who we are, we are looking for and anticipating the passage in Revelation 7 which paints a picture of the multitude too great to count declaring "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne!"

The amazing thing is that we catch a glimpse of that in those arenas I mentioned above, but we have the privilege of experiencing that "together-ness," the "with-ness," and the belonging that comes with being a part of something bigger than ourselves every Sunday morning. We get to come together with people who will be there with us someday around the throne. We get to sing together the same salvation story of Jesus, and the majesty and might of God our Father. We get to feel the Holy Spirit soften and quicken our hearts as the truth of the Gospel of God sinks into our hearts, refreshing and rejuvenating. There is something powerful, holy, and mysterious that happens when God's saints worship Him together corporately.

I don't know about you, but I love Sunday mornings for that reason. God is on the move, and we get to be a part of that "foretaste of glory Divine."

See you Sunday :)



From the desk of Sarah Kuiper

It started 20+ years ago as a babysitting job. Dave and I were newly engaged and looking for a way to make some extra pocket money. A family from our church in Illinois approached us and asked if we would be willing to "hang out" with their daughter on Friday nights while they attended the local high school football games . . . but there was a catch. Their daughter had significant needs, and we would be responsible for a lot more than you would be with an average 8-year-old. We would be responsible for feeding her orally and with her feeding tube, changing her, and lifting her out of her chair to put her in bed. She wasn't able to communicate verbally, so we would have to learn (quickly) how to use her speaking device so we could communicate with her. We offered to do it for one week as a trial.



That "one-week trial" turned into a regular weekly "hang out", which turned into a teaching position for me at their daughter's school, which turned into a leadership position for me at Hope Haven when Dave and I moved back to Iowa, which turned into a passion. I love working with children that have physical and learning differences. I love watching them light up when they understand that God made them, God loves them, and Jesus wants to be their forever friend . . . just the way they are.



As a church, we have an amazing opportunity and responsibility. We get to be a light and a safe place for kids to go that have physical and learning differences. We get to teach all kids, regardless of ability, about Jesus in a way that they can understand. Right before VBS this past summer, we opened up a sensory room for kids who may need it. It was one of our most used rooms during VBS. Starting this fall, we implemented classroom and one on one aides from Northwestern and from our congregation that help our students during our ministry time. We have God-sized plans for this ministry . . . and I can't wait to see what happens next.

Watch more of Sarah's story at frcoc.org/stories.



From the desk of Pastor Mark Haverdink

Some things that I have been passionate about this Fall have been the multiple ways the men of FRC are able to grow spiritually. The first Thursday of the month is our regular Men's Breakfast and short Bible lesson on one of the disciples. The breakfast starts early morning so we can all be off to work before 8 am. We also offer weekly men's Bible studies on Tuesday mornings at 6:30 am and Wednesday nights at 6:30 pm. These events and groups are open to all men from our congregation.

Another event I'm excited about is the "It Starts with You" men's gathering on November 3 at the Triple Box at 7 pm. We've partnered with 5 other area churches in this specific outreach designed to encourage men to take a spiritual step into a deeper relationship with Jesus. It's our hope as a planning team to see many men come out for this event and be encouraged to lead their families into a closer relationship with Jesus.

Why is men's ministry so important? Through the years, it has been noted that less and less men are making a relationship with God a priority. Often women are the highest population at church events and in attendance. The Bible is very clear about the role men are to play in being the spiritual leaders of our families while also being active in ministry in the church and the world. It's my prayer that men will continue to answer the call to lead well in their circles of influence and always point others to Jesus.





Children & Youth

In our Children and Youth ministries, we have tons of fun learning about Jesus. Pictured on these pages are VBS, the Welcome Back Picnic, Youth Popup Night, the Harvest Party, Sunday School, and Wednesday Night activities.



Welcome LITTLE ONES



Hayden Pluim

Born: June 9, 2022

Parents: JD and Nicole Pluim

Alivia Vermeer

Born: August 17, 2022

Parents: Chase and Amber Vermeer



KINGDOM PARTNERSHIP

Because of the nature of the work of our partners in India, we will not be using names and specific locations for the protection of those we partner with.

This past summer our partners in India were able to come to an evening worship service and share the work they are doing in both India and Madagascar.

As a medical Dr, Joe* has been able to share the gospel with those that come into his practice by using his medical knowledge combined with his understanding of culture, language, and local community. Jenny* his wife has also had a chance to build an independent fair trade company and work to grow a community of vulnerable women into creating products for sustainable income.

This fall the couple will spend time in Madagascar and partner with a health organization there to bring education and resources to under-resourced communities. In Joe's time visiting First Reformed, he shared the goal of sourcing 22 ultrasound handheld scanners to be used in 22 hospitals across Madagascar. They were able to secure 18 devices so far!! The impact of the technology will be a welcomed source of diagnostics in hospitals.



If you would like to be part of funding the last 4 ultrasound units please contact Merilee in the church office. the cost of one unit is \$3000.

**Names have been changed for safety.*



INSTALLATION OF
ELDERS & DECONS



EMILY RITZ PROFESSION OF FAITH



INSTALLATION OF
SARA VAN ZEE

Praying Together



KIDS PRAYING FOR TOM HYDEEN



CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER



AJ BOMGAARS PROFESSION OF FAITH



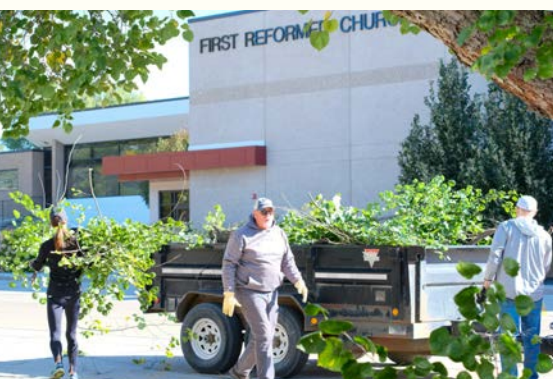
WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEALS



AISLE BLESSINGS

Serving Together

Our mission is to glorify God, know Christ, and make him known. Serving is one of the ways that we carry out that mission. Here are pictures from Wood Splitting for Corn Creek, Tapestries of Life, and the 100 Homes project.





women's
ministry (left)
senior
adults (right)



meals
potluck & NWC
athletic feed



adult
sunday
school



Experiencing Life Together

UPCOMING *events*

- **November 9** - Chili Cook Off
- **November 23** - Thanksgiving Eve Service
- **December 5** - Kids' Christmas Program
- **December 18** - Blue Christmas
- **December 24** - 4 pm, 6 pm, & 11 pm Christmas Eve Services
- **December 25** - 8:30 am & 10:30 am Christmas Services

