



first reformed church
ORANGE CITY, IA



themilestone

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THE LEADING EDGE

PASTOR TIM BREEN



What does God ask of members of a local church? For the whole answer to that question, you'd need to spend quite a bit of time reading through the New Testament. My shorthand answer—one that I believe to be faithful to scripture and a lot easier to remember—is to talk about the *four T's*.

The four T's are shared at each one of our quarterly First Steps membership exploration lunches. They stand for **Time** (I like to challenge people to dedicate, on average, ten hours per month to serving FRCOC), **Talent** (using the unique spiritual gifts God has built into members to strengthen and sustain the body), **Tithe** (returning 10% of your income back to Kingdom purposes) and **Testimony**.

In many cases, the thought of sharing their testimony mortifies folks. They either imagine standing at a podium with hundreds of people staring back at them or lying backwards on a therapist's couch retelling the horrors of their middle school lives.

In reality, presenting your testimony can be much shorter and much simpler than that. It's basically about telling others how you have seen God at work in your life. It needs to be neither sophisticated nor structured.

At our recent end-of-year church potluck, I passed out small note cards entitled "My Tiny Testimony" and offered five blank lines for people to share their answer to this question: *In the past year, I've experienced the joy of life and ministry as part of the FRCOC family in this way...*

The dozens of cards we received in response warmed my heart with joy. Here is a small sampling of the Tiny Testimonies handwritten in response to that prompt:

- "I have been so blessed to worship this year, and a bonus is my family has come to join us at FRC! So much love and joy here!"
- "As a new widow I have appreciated the friendship and acceptance of this church... *"The joy of the Lord is my strength!"* There is wonderful joy here!
- "Spending one-on-one time in prayer with sisters in Christ."
- "Recently, when I was struggling facing a medical procedure, two angels stopped by my house around 10:30 at night to pray for me. The angels were Jack Huang and AJ Bomgaars. I was extremely blessed!"
- "I've enjoyed meeting and talking with the many new people who are worshiping with us and becoming part of our church family."
- "It's awesome ministry in every way—singing, sermons, fellowship, and much more!!"
- "Being able to again be with the church family in worship. Being blessed with a circle of sisters in Christ who pray for me and study with me and uphold me!!"
- "Being able to connect with people outside of NWC as a new graduate living and working in the area."
- "The church has blessed me in many ways. One is whenever I start to stray from God, the church always seems to bring me back and boost my faith, when I feel like God is not near or that I'm a bad person."
- "Legos in the Loft."

I love those! Pure and sweet. Psalm 105:1 invites us to: "Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done." Testimony isn't about spilling your guts or wowing an audience. It's about turning the spotlight back on God. As your Lead Pastor, I am so grateful for how God has led us through the past year and can't wait to see what he has in store next for FRCOC!

WELCOME *New Faces*



Becca Bindert



Jeff & Lori Hartman



Deb Wolthuizen



Darbi Gustafson



Brian & Sara Crane & Isaiah



WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON...

AMANDA HAVERDINK, WORSHIP COORDINATOR

Last year we updated our broadcast plan to give us more control and better sound quality. Overall we have been incredibly excited by this update! This summer I am looking to continue to improve the good things we have going-- we are now going to be mixing sound from the new studio, leaving the Chapel to be it's own entity. This will allow us to dial in even more, and continue learning how to get the best possible sound to those who are unable to be present in church. To God be the glory, great things He has done (and continues to do!).



MARK HAVERDINK, PASTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Summer provides a wonderful time to enjoy Sabbath rest. With milder temperatures and perhaps a bit of a relaxed schedule, be mindful to intentionally schedule... nothing. As midwesterners we are go-getters and work hard, but part of God's design is to rest, not just an hour or so, but a significant amount of time breathing in nature, observing God's beauty and perhaps investing in a relationship with a close friend. If you need some help making some intentional time, feel free to give the office a call and ask for me and I can help you with developing Sabbath rest.

SARAH KUIPER, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

WOW, What a year! We learned a lot, and had a lot of fun doing it. Some of our highlights from the year were the implementation of 4 family events during the year, the start of AWANA on Wednesdays for our 2nd-5th graders, and giving out 40 Bibles this year to our 1st-3rd graders. We are looking forward to VBS this summer, where we will learn that what we do can change the world around us.



APRIL BEAVER, WOMEN'S MINISTRIES & SOCIAL MEDIA

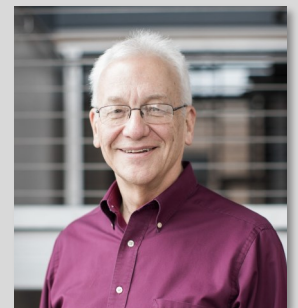
Our new recording studio enabled us to start producing Tell Me More, a midweek Q&A about Sunday's message. Other recording ideas in the works include a women's podcast. Make sure to subscribe to our social media platforms, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter, for up-to-date information on these new recordings, sermon quotes, scripture, and celebrations. We endeavor to make our social media platforms a positive environment that you want to share with your friends.

This summer in Women's Ministry, we are connecting outside with our Tuesday morning playdates at Windmill Park and hiking adventures at parks around Orange City. We will also have some opportunities for crafting and fellowshiping together later in the summer. Check out the Women's Ministry page on our website for details about these events and to sign up for our monthly newsletters.

TOM HYDEEN, MINISTRY ASSISTANT

Sanctuary Choir – How good it was to prepare and present Sunday anthems several times during this year. I am grateful to the faithful members of the choir who willingly give of their time and energy. I am also thankful for the staff and congregation friends who value the participation of the choir in the life and ministry of FRC. I already have in mind the theme for the ending concert in April 2023. The choir will be working on those concert anthems beginning in September. If you have questions or interest in being a part of the choir, please contact me or any other choir member.

Senior Adults (65+) – Senior Adults is going strong. I appreciate the several friends and members of FRC who attend the gatherings and give their encouragement. We are better together! One of my 2023 Senior Adult goals is to afford opportunities to support the goals of RISE25. If you have questions about Senior Adults or have an idea about some topic or speaker you would like to hear, please contact me.





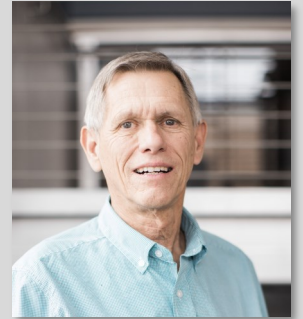
LYLE LUNDGREN, CONNECTIONS COORDINATOR

In my position with connections, we look at "connecting" people. I truly believe the Holy Spirit calls each of us to "get out of our comfort zone" in our faith journey. This may be as simple as being a greeter, serving coffee or splitting firewood for Corn Creek, to stepping into a leadership roll with a small group or some type of outreach or mission opportunity.

In the months ahead, I look forward to "re-thinking" what small groups should look like at FRC. I plan on visiting other churches and developing a team of leaders to assist with creating a "formula" that is a great fit for the family at 1st Church.

KEN OLDENKAMP, CONNECTIONS TEAM LEADER

As we look around our community we see new construction and growth. Many new people are moving into our area bringing us new neighbors, new co-workers, and relationships. We would like to encourage you meet and invite these new acquaintances to worship with us at FRC. Introduce yourself to those you do not know and make everyone feel welcome at FRC. God can use you to make a difference in someone's life.



ROSS ENGER, DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

Spring has sprung in our Youth Ministries! From an impactful Middle School Retreat that saw students commit their life to Christ for the first time, to our graduate recognition on Youth Sunday, Jesus is being made famous in the hearts & testimonies of our kids. I'm currently working on organizing our high school mission trip. Because of ever-changing entry requirements in Puerto Rico, it has been changed to a cross-cultural experience through the Youthworks mission site in Birmingham, Alabama. In July, our middle school ministry is sending a group to the Power Connection youth conference at Bethel University. In the meantime, this summer, my wife and I will be meeting with kids for various events and work projects to form and strengthen relationships and lines of communication with our students, volunteers, and parents.

Volunteer Focus

BLOCKS & KNOTS

The Blocks and Knots ladies use their time and talents to make many warm quilts for those who are less fortunate in our area. The ladies come weekly to cut squares, lay them out in patterns, sew them together, find backs and batting, knot the quilts, and bind them. They have created almost 2,000 quilts since they began meeting together in 1996.

Many people are given hope and warmth by this ministry. Blocks and Knots give their quilts to several ministries in our area including Atlas, Center of Hope, Genesis House, Gospel Mission, American Legion, Family Crisis Center, and Tapestry of Life.

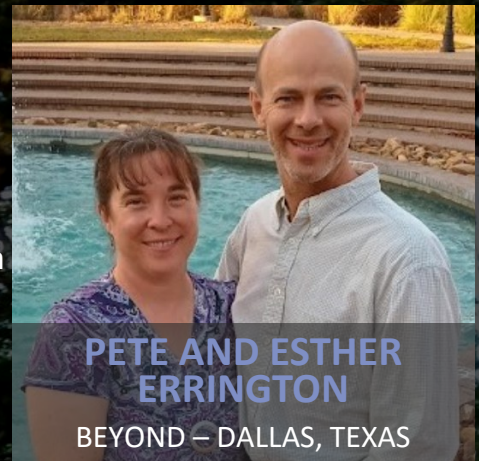
Blocks and Knots meet weekly on Wednesday at 1 pm in the basement at church. If you are handy with a needle or would like to learn, they can always use more volunteers. It is so much fun to see the quilts come together!



KINGDOM PARTNERSHIP

Pastor Tim: Pete, can you explain how your partnership with First Reformed Church began? Did you have a connection with some of our members?

Pete Errington: Yes, a number of friends are part of First Reformed Church! The thing that really spearheaded this connection was Don and Michelle Vaas. Esther and Michelle were classmates in the same Social Work major at Northwestern and we've often stayed at their home when we've visited Northwest Iowa... Also, while we were both students at Northwestern, we learned that there was another couple named Pete and Esther—the Bos family. I introduced myself to them and we became friends over hot chocolate that day!



**PETE AND ESTHER
ERRINGTON**

BEYOND – DALLAS, TEXAS

How did you and Esther sense a call to ministry?



We actually both grew up in missionary families. Esther's parents worked with the Cheyenne people of Wyoming and my parents served in the Philippines. But it was through an Urbana conference when we were in college that we felt God calling us to serve him as well. One of the options was to be "senders". After getting married we served with Jackson County ministries and then landed at Beyond in Seattle. Currently we serve here in the US as "pre-field" coordinators preparing mission personnel get ready to serve in the field.

What makes the ministry of Beyond distinct?

There are lots of great mission and ministry groups out there; Beyond is somewhat distinct in that we are laser-focused on making disciples that reproduce disciples themselves. Every meeting, every conference, we're constantly equipping and retooling to help our folks live out the Revelation 7:9 promise.

What has been the clearest moment of God at work in your ministry over the last year?

There have been so many... One I'll mention is that we are working with an organization in a Muslim-majority country where an Islamic "commander" helped to get some groups started reading the New Testament. His group meets in a mosque! It was his report that they loved reading about Jesus because they could understand it and it changed their lives when they obeyed. In another situation we saw 43 people baptized together in a lake.



What is your God-sized vision for the coming years?

We are part of a group called the 24:14 Network, and together we are trying to put a team on the ground in every people-group in the world by the end of 2025. We're only 2 and a half years away. That would be the biggest goal.

What are your prayer requests at this time?

We have family and parenting issues like so many others (we have seven kids), but professionally we are praying for wisdom and stamina about scheduling and taking some trips in the coming months. Some are international... and one might be to Orange City!

YOUTH *Happenings*



HAPPENINGS AT FRC



Maundy Thursday—Pursuing Jesus, A Traveling Tenebrae Experience



Maundy Thursday



Senior Adults