

A group of five young women are sitting on a light-colored sofa in a modern library or study area. They are all focused on reading or writing in books and papers. The room has large windows in the background, letting in natural light. The women are dressed in casual winter clothing. The overall atmosphere is quiet and studious.

# themilestone WINTER 2023



# THE LEADING EDGE

PASTOR TIM BREEN



I love traveling internationally. The dramatic sights, the cultural immersion, the delicious food and compelling stories – it all fascinates me.

There is one aspect of traveling outside of the country that complicates things, though. In many cases, crossing borders means entering spaces where other languages are the predominant tongues. And when that happens, English-speaking folks like me need *translators*.

I relied on two forms of translation during my recent trip to Brazil. In the one hand – literally! – I had my iPhone outfitted with the Google Translate app. This little program works wonders: upon typing in the foreign text or taking a picture of a sign or menu, the app instantly renders the words into English.

Far more helpful to me, however, was the assistance of human translators. In the course of my journey, I shared experiences with a dozen or so bi-lingual helpers. These interpreters served as communication intermediaries between Portuguese speakers and our English-only group.

In realtime, these friends explained the happenings in worship, assisted us in airport issues, drew us into conversations with Brazilian tribes, and revealed the ironies of Portuguese wordplay. When you are translating word for word, every meeting takes twice as long, but the efforts of the men and women who thoughtfully convey one language into another make for meaningful moments.

Two translation-situations proved especially memorable to me. In the first, pictured here, we observed a training event for deaf Christian missionaries. It was a perplexing and powerful experience to see words signed, translated, and then re-presented in *three* different ways!

In the other moment, we worked with a woman who patiently translated the speeches of four or five other persons to English to our group. In each of these conversations, she listened politely, reasoned carefully about the best English phrasing, and then communicated the meaning to our team of Americans. But her practice changed when the final Brazilian presenter took the podium. I noticed immediately that our translator did not wait for this speaker to finish his sentences before translating. Each time, she quickly and decisively translated over the top of his talk. I learned later that this speaker was her husband.



The Bible offers a number of fascinating stories about language and translation. Genesis 11 reports the story of the Tower of Babel, in which arrogance and pride led to the abandonment of a grand construction project. God used lingual confusion to teach the builders there about pride. The Pentecost event recorded in Acts details an inversion of the story. When the Holy Spirit was poured out on that day, language barriers were overcome so that the gospel could spread throughout the region. And Revelation 7 describes a miraculous heavenly worship service – one with some powerful Palm Sunday imagery – in which people of every language hail the Lamb who was slain.

Ultimately, the greatest Translator of all was Jesus. In his life, death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus came and communicated grace, forgiveness, reconciliation, and hope to the world. These terms are like a foreign language compared to the common speech and practice of a sad and hurting world. In some sense, Jesus came and spoke “Heavenish” in the tongue of Earth.

It is our privilege as followers of Jesus to share the same vision with the world now. The values and ministry we declare will undoubtedly seem peculiar in a secular and self-centered age. But our work as translators (the Bible calls us “ambassadors”) is precisely the message our society needs right now.



# Christmas at FRC

Our Christmas season includes incredible volunteers, beautiful decorations, lights, music, and overwhelming joy. This year Christmas day was on a Sunday, so we enjoyed back-to-back Christmas Eve and Christmas Morning services.





# WELCOME *New Faces*



Brent & Cheryl Bouma



Randy Cleveringa



Iva Fylstra



Harlan & Kim Bousema



Blake, Stacie, Kari, Silas, Luci, Jett & Oaklee Snieder



Henry Van Aartsen



Dean & Patty Koele



Les & Cindy Cleveringa



Dave & Sandy Harmelink



Dave & Bonnie Poppen



Jeff & Renee Guthmiller



Jon, Katie, Luke, & Ady Jeltema



Jack & Julia Vander Stelt





Logan, Cassandra,  
Jackson, & Dane Mars



Pete & Rachael De Beer



Leon & Rachel Hubers



Tyler, Autumn, &  
Callum Faber



Vova & Julia Popova



Jerry & Chris Dykstra



Brian & Shonna Hector



Ruby Rockman



Mark, Jodi, Makayla, & Brenden Vander Zwaag



Rodney Vanden Hull



Scott Cabney



Jeris & Marie Vermeer



Anberlyn Howe



Jenya, Alina, Mark, &  
Lion Vlasenko



# Welcome LITTLE ONES



## Calvin Howerzyl

Born: October 25, 2022  
Parents: Adam and Kate  
Howerzyl



## Lydia Rau

Born: November 15, 2022  
Parents: Reed and Andrea  
Rau



## Kaatje Bloemendaal

Born: January 4, 2023  
Parents: Andrew and Juliana  
Bloemendaal



## Graham Dorhout

Born: January 7, 2023  
Parents: Mitch and Kelsey  
Dorhout



## Callum Faber

Born: January 13, 2023  
Parents: Tyler and Autumn  
Faber



## Hudson Heemstra

Born: January 18, 2023  
Parents: Kyle and Katelyn  
Heemstra



## Lauren Hegstad

Born: February 22, 2023  
Parents: Grant and Jen  
Hegstad



# Connecting with Lyle Lundgren

"CONNECTIONS" What does this mean, and what does this look like within the body of Christ at FRC? Believe me, I ask myself that question often. Each day I receive multiple emails with ideas and suggestions on how believers should be connected with other Christians and within the Body of Christ.

One area that I have been looking at is how we can inform and engage church members. We already have a First Steps gathering geared toward our visitors and new members to help them get acquainted with the Staff, ministries, and facilities at First Church.

What I have been working on for the past 4-5 months is a series of three classes for all FRC church members called NEXT STEPS. Here is a snapshot of what those classes will be about.

## **Session One: OUR IDENTITY**

- The history of FRC: Where we have been and come from.
- The future of FRC: Where we are going; Our involvement in The Kingdom Network.
- What we believe: Our main theological points.
- Homework: Spiritual Gifts Assessment; Sharing our "faith story."

## **Session Two: OUR PURPOSE**

- Sharing our Stories: Faith Journey and Spiritual Gifts.
- Our Vision at FRC: Living out our mission statement.
- Our Involvement at FRC: Serving and Mission Opportunities.

## **Session Three: AWESOME MEMBERSHIP**

- History and benefits of church membership.
- Why You Matter: Using your unique gifts and experiences to attend to the needs of the Church, Community, and World
- Membership Deployment: GO!!



I pray that each of you will consider being a part of these Connections Classes. The plan is to offer them 3-4 times a year. The first set of classes will be offered on Wednesday evenings, March 15, 22, and 29, from 6:30-7:45 pm.

# Notes from the frontiers of youth ministry by Ross Enger



A wise man once said that, "Winning is better than not winning." I believe that to be true. I believe it, in fact, because I've learned it from my many experiences of not winning. I always seem to find myself squared off against an opponent with a higher rank in Rocket League (on PlayStation), a higher x-count (in archery league), or more defined abs (on Instagram). In the deadly duels of our daily comparison games I come up short more often than not. Like Buster Scruggs' melancholy in the cowboy ballad, "There's a faster gun/coming over yonder/when tomorrow comes," not winning is not fun. Nonetheless, on those special days, when the eight planets and all their moons align, when a tally goes in the "W" column, *you feel it in your fibers.*

So, you might ask, what does it look like on those golden days when we carve a win for our youth ministry? Or, just as importantly, what does it look like to take a loss? It can feel like a loss when a teenager's moral failure gets hung out in public like grandma's laundry, or when the point of a good Bible lesson fades in the half-focused doldrums of a Sunday afternoon, but my feelings may be shortsighted in light of a long testimony in the making.

Defining what really moves the chains in ministry involves chalking out the boundaries and setting the game clock. Ignoring the exceptions, my gridiron of youth ministry faith-growth takes place roughly between Labor Day of a student's sixth grade year to the final plate of nachos at their senior graduation party at the end of May. A person's head can get tossed around a few times on that 84-month long roller coaster.

Nevertheless, in those ups and downs of physical, social, and emotional growth - I see real kingdom victories breaking through. I see wins when cliques of young girls hug it out, cry, and apologize to each other before praying for the Holy Spirit at chapel on a youth group trip, and when the stronger and historically unstable high school guy uncharacteristically takes it easy on a younger camper so they can feel what acceptance is just weeks before professing faith in Jesus, and when a frustrated adult volunteer receives wisdom words and genuine prayer days before they would've cracked under the weight of a suffocating career.



These wins pour out weekly from the wild and daring chalice of youth ministry, I wish you could see it, overflowing from the abundance of the eternal well that echoes Jesus' words, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."



# KINGDOM PARTNERSHIP

As I reflect on the past 6 months at FRC in the position of Director of Missions, a couple of things have stuck out. One, is our long history in the church of partnering outside of our walls. You have partnered well, worked well, stewarded well and it is such a blessing!

I am excited to watch some of our partnerships gain traction because of the relationships being built. One thing I am keenly aware of is that you will never be able to "outsource" mission.

Mission and ministry happen one interaction at a time. It is each person who has given their dollar, lingered in the two-hour conversation of God at work, hit one nail at a time into a roof, spent their morning cutting out wheelchair parts.

This is where my heart beats faster watching how each area of gifts come together in Kingdom building and I can't wait to see what the years to come to hold with each of us doing what we were created to do!



**UPCOMING  
OPPORTUNITIES**  
[frcoc.org/missions](https://frcoc.org/missions)

## **2023**

March 5 - 5:30pm - Compton recap  
March 26 - April 2 - WinterPark mission  
April 23 - 29 - Mission Emphasis week  
April 23 - Community clean up and care  
September 15 - 17 - Engage Global training  
October - Trip to Compton

## **2024**

January - Compton  
February/March - Haiti  
August - Family Mission

*\*This is not an exhaustive list and subject to change, but will give you an idea of how to plan your calendars in advance.*

Sara VanZee  
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COMPTON

# Missions

Here are some of the ways our church family has worked side by side in the winter months. Serving alongside one another in Compton, Urbana, Haiti, and in our own backyard! Thank you for how you continue to use your gifts!



SOLAR PANELS IN HAITI



COMPTON



COMPTON



UPBANA CONFERENCE



WELCOMING OUR UKRAINIAN FAMILIES



BOUNTIFUL TABLE



# Children & Youth

We have so much fun with the kids in our church. Pictured here are normal weekly happenings, The Story kids Christmas Program, Game Night, Youth Christmas Party, and Winter Rush Middle School Retreat.









# EASTER *Services*

**April 2** - Palm Sunday  
8:30 & 10:30 AM

**April 6** - Maundy Thursday  
6:30 PM

**April 9** - Easter  
7 AM Sunrise Service  
10 AM Easter Service

