First Reformed Church
September 13, 2026

NURSING HOME/ASSISTED LIVING RESIDENTS:
Whispering Heights: *Marilyn Van Holland, Clara Bannick, Joyce Van Berkum, Viola Van Driel, Wilma Humme, Lucy Ymker.* Pleasant Acres, Hull: *Milt Swier*. Riverview Ridge: *Judi Dorhout, Ella Hoogendoorn, Wayne & Judi Groeneweg, Wilma Schneider, Sandy Ver Steeg.*

CHURCH SUPPORTED MISSIONARIES:
Brian & Elizabeth Bruxvoort in AK; *Amy and Seung Kim* in Bangladesh; *Brian and Donna Renes*, in Sioux Center; *Dr. Yohannes Bekele* in Ethiopia, *Josh & Alison Perkins* in United Arab Emirates.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Habitat for Humanity Homeownership Opportunity! Are you or someone you know in need of a safe, affordable place to live? Siouxland Habitat for Humanity is accepting partner family applications for a 2027 home build in Boyden. Application forms are available at our Sioux City office at 1150 Tri View Ave. or via email families@siouxlandhabitat.org. Contact Sandra with questions: 712-224-5117. Applications are accepted until September 30.

Love INC Sioux County is seeking a part-time ***Church & Community Relations Coordinator***. (20 hours/no Fridays). Qualifications:

- **A personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a heart for Christian service**
- **Strong interpersonal, communication and computer skills**
- **A motivated, self-starter that works independently and collaboratively w/in a team setting**
- **Comfortable giving presentations and praying in groups**
- **Willingness to work with a variety of Christian church denominations**

Please send resume to: Love INC Sioux County, PO Box 53, Rock Valley, IA 51247. For more information, please contact Debbie at (712)476-5990.

Love INC Sioux County has a volunteer Prayer Team that meets the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month from 9 – 10 a.m. at the office in Rock Valley. We would like to invite anyone who is passionate about prayer to join our team! We pray specifically for the churches throughout Sioux County and for the Love INC movement locally and nationwide. Call 476-5990 if interested.

Love INC. Adopt-a- Room Challenge
Kitchen Care: dish soap, disinfecting wipes, multipurpose cleaner, hand soap, napkins, paper towels
Bathroom Care: sanitary pads, shampoo, conditioner, bodywash, deodorant, toilet paper, tissues
Laundry Room Care: laundry detergent, bleach
Nursery: Baby items- size 3-7 diapers, wipes

A new Bible study opportunity for MOMS is launching this fall! This study will take place at Trinity CRC on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month in classroom #23, beginning at 7:00PM. Our first study will be September 23. Please contact Cindy Kamstra (605-413-6182) or Darcy Van Holland (712-470-6077) for more information.

ELDERS:
Berwyn Van Kekerix ’26
Dave Bliek ’26
Rod Netten ’27
Daryl Scholten ’27
Micah Vis ’28
Dave Van Holland ’28

DEACONS:
Weston De Jager ‘26
Ross Van Kekerix ‘26
D. J. Van’t Hul ‘27
Brandon Van Middendorp ‘27
Dustin Van Beek ‘28
Brian Van’t Hul ‘28

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Daryl Scholten & D. J. Van’t Hul
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Micah Vis & Dustin Van Beek
Dave Van Holland & Brian Van’t Hul

Baatz – Claussen
De Jager - Koedam
Koldenhoven - Oostra
Post – Van Egdom
Van Ginkel - Vande Vegte
Vander Heul - Zeutenhorst

CONSISTORY OFFICERS & COMMITTEES FOR 2026:
Vice-President: Dave Bliek
Asst. Vice President: Micah Vis
Audio: Kevin Bouwman
Chairman of Deacons: Weston De Jager
Clerk: Daryl Scholten
Deacon Clerk: Brian Van’t Hul
Treasurer for Church Ministry Fund: Brandon Van Middendorp, Dustin Van Beek (assistant)
Sacraments: Rod Netten, Berwyn Van Kekerix
Benevolent: Ross Van Kekerix, Jesse Van Egdom
Executive Committee: Dave Bliek, Daryl Scholten, Micah Vis, Weston De Jager
Kids Block Reps: Dave Bliek, Gary Miller
Property: Ralph Bousema, Kevin Bouwman, Ross Van Kekerix
Church Use: Sheri Bousema, Daryl Scholten
Personnel Committee: Weston De Jager, Daryl Scholten, Tim Landegent
Women’s Ministries Service Reps: Ashley Vis, Jodi Van Beek
Education: Julie Vande Kamp, Micah Vis, Ross Van Kekerix, Steve Van Den Top
Youth: Julie Vande Kamp
VBS: Ashley Vis, Julie Landegent
Missions: Dan & Jen Taylor, Wilbur & Madelyn Vander Heul, Ryan Blankespoor, Dave Van Holland, D.J. Van’t Hul, Dustin Van Beek
Music & Worship: Brittany Wiebe, Dave Bliek, Weston De Jager, Pastor Cliff
Nursery: Kayla Van’t Hul, Julie Landegent
Decorating: Deb Kempema, Sandi Scholten, Sheri Bousema

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Kelderman - Miller
Netten – Van Berkum
Van Den Top - Vande Vegte
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The sweet taste of Grace

We are in the season of Fall or some of you may call it autumn. What are some fun things that happen during fall? Leaves change colors, leaves start to fall from the trees, the weather gets a bit colder, we may see decorations of pumpkins and maybe some apples or we see Carmel apples for sale in the store.

Well do you know what I see alot of during this season is CANDY. It's all over the stores and perhaps you may get a chance to get some of that candy.

Maybe you will go to a fall festival or a trunk or treat at a local church or maybe go door-to-door trick or treating. Either way you stand a good chance of getting lots of free candy. That's a pretty sweet deal. What is your favorite candy?

You really don't have to do much to get that free candy. Dress up, knock on a door and very politely say trick or treat. Pretty easy way to get free candy. But, is that candy really free? My thought is that somewhere along the line someone had to pay for that candy. Maybe not you, but your neighbor, your church, or whomever you are receiving the candy from had to pay for it. It's only free to you.

This reminds me a little of God's Grace, Eternal life and salvation from sin are ours, absolutely free to us. We don't and we can't do anything to earn Gods love and grace, all we have to do is believe and receive. We ask for forgiveness and it's ours, no strings attached!

However, someone had to pay the cost. Someone redeemed us and purchased us, covering our sin and taking our punishment. Who was that? Jesus of course! Jesus came to live and die in our place. He was willing to suffer punishment instead of us. The Bible tells us our sins deserve death, but death is not what we get. Jesus died instead so we could have life. Through him we all have a chance to be saved and live in heaven. We don't have to do anything special, not even knock on doors. All who believe in him will have eternal life.

We know that we all mess up, even as Christians we make mistakes and sin, but God is always willing to forgive us and cover us with his love. The work Christ did on the cross

was once and for all. He loves us and makes us new. That’s a treat that is better than any kind of candy. As an extra bonus it doesn’t cause cavities.

Shall we pray

Dear God,
Thank you for giving us grace. We get undeserved eternal life in heaven. Please help us put our hope and trust in you. Thank you for your love. We love you God.
In Jesus name, Amen.

Not Everything Happens for a Reason

Have you ever found yourself, in the midst of unimaginable grief, pain, heartache, or despair, wondering how you are going to make it through another day? Wondering where your next breath is going to come from? Your world has crumbled beneath you and has left you feeling shattered, empty, and hopeless.

And then a well-meaning friend or family member comes along and drops the infamous "*Everything happens for a reason*" bomb. You smile kindly and nod. That's all you can do to keep yourself from punching them in the face.

You can't possibly imagine a reason for what just happened.

The more you stew about a probable reason for your pain, the angrier you become. You try desperately to make sense of a situation that won't ever make sense. You reach for answers, but none come.

I spent years searching for answers, trying to find reasons that would bring an end to my pain. I thought that if I could find the cause, I could treat the condition. But what I found through years of searching, experiencing, and living is that often there is no reason for why tragedy has occurred.

Sometimes bad things happen for no reason other than we are human beings having a human experience. Pain, heartache, grief, loss, disease, and death are inevitable parts of the human experience.

We hear people say "Life dealt me a crappy hand" as if pain and hardships are not the norm. We assume that life is supposed to be easy and when things don't go our way, we feel like we have been wronged. Human beings seem to have an innate sense of entitlement. We think that we are owed a pain free existence. But the truth is that *human beings are not exempt from the human experience. And struggle is an innate part of the human experience.* None of us are exceptions to this rule. **We all struggle. We all suffer. We all experience**

pain, heartache, and loss. And sometimes, there's just no reason other than we are human and pain is a part of the process.

I recently had a conversation with a friend who was struggling to find peace with "God's plan" for her life including the recent death of a loved one. "How could this possibly be God's will?" she asked. Here's the thing about God's will. Are you ready for this? Listen closely:

God's will is not the path we walk, but rather how we walk the path. God's plan is never for someone to have cancer. God's will is not for an innocent child to be abused or murdered. God's will is not for mass shootings. God's will is not chronic pain, illness, disability, or death. *God's will is not an event that happens to us, it's how we respond to what happens.*

God's will for us is to walk with Him through the cancer. Through the abuse. Through the death. Through the illness. God's will is for us to draw close to him in the midst of pain. *God's will is for us to use our painful life events to carry his message of hope, grace, forgiveness, and mercy.*

God's plan was never for pain to be part of the human experience. His plan was for us to live in peace and harmony with Him. The human experience became painful when sin entered the world. Our own free will weaved threads of tragedy, loss, heartache, and pain into the human experience

God is not responsible for our pain. We are not responsible for our pain. What happened in the Garden of Eden is responsible for the human condition. And the human condition is hard wired for pain and suffering. God is not causing us to hurt. He is hurting with us. What we do with our hurt is what matters. How we handle tragedy is what brings purpose into our pain.

There's hardly ever a justifiable reason for the bad things that happen in life. Tragic loss is not laced with inherent specs of good. I used to get so mad when people would say, "you can find good in every situation." That's just not true. There is no good in murder or abuse. *We have to create the good. We have to choose to respond in a way that brings good into an impossible situation. We have to choose to give purpose and meaning to our suffering.*

Not everything happens for a reason. But in everything that happens, there can be a reason to bring hope and healing to others. God can use our pain for a greater good if we choose to let him in.

Proverbs 14:29, Proverbs 15:1, Ecclesiastes 7:9, Ephesians 4:26-27, Colossians 3:8

Materials Needed
Can of soda

Object Lesson
Good Morning boys and girls,

Well, you have been back in school for a few weeks…….is everyone loving school? And, today Sunday School starts! Fall sports have started, maybe some of you have piano lessons, basketball, volleyball, or dance and gymnastics….it is just a busy time all at once.

Sometimes in all the busyness we get tired which makes us upset or angry.

It's times like this we need to be extra careful about sinning. Sinning is when we do something that goes against God's commandments for our life, like fighting, and saying unkind things. Do you ever have days where you are really frustrated?

(Take out can of soda.)

Let's pretend we are a can of soda. You wake up early in the morning, you're still tired and not ready to wake up: Shake, Shake.
The tag on your shirt is itchy and the seams on his socks are not JUST RIGHT: Shake, shake!
You get on the bus and it's noisy: Shake, Shake.
At lunch, no one sits with you and they served something you don't like: Shake, Shake.
At recess, they didn't play what you wanted to play: Shake, Shake.
Now your back on the bus, where the big kids are yelling and it smells funny and it's hot and kids are too close and the seat is uncomfortable and you're hungry. Shake, Shake.
You finally walk in the front door, and mom or dad says, "How was your day?"

Guess what? You just opened that can.

What would happen if I opened this can? It would explode everywhere!

(Set the can down and make sure you give it at least a minute or two before picking it up again. It would be best if you test this before presenting it.)

So if you were are all angry like this can and you sin by getting in a fight or calling someone bad names it would be like opening this can and it spraying everywhere!

Sometimes what we need to do it walk away and pray and ask God to help us to calm down and not respond in sin.

(Take the can and open it. It should open normally now. Make this dramatic so the kids think it will spray everywhere.)

See all this can needed was a few moments of quiet and it calmed down and it could be opened without exploding. When we are angry or upset we too need a few moment so that we can react without sinning.