

**First Reformed Church
November 1, 2020**

Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes are available in the fellowship hall. Please remember to label your box for a BOY or GIRL and their age. Also include your \$9 donation for shipping. Please return boxes to Jen's office by Sunday, November 15! Thanks, and have a fun time filling your box!

As we approach the holiday season, we'd like to remind you to use Smile.Amazon.com when ordering from Amazon. Choose First Reformed Church of Rock Valley Iowa and you're all set. Our youth group receives a percentage back on your purchases. Thanks!

The deacons would like to thank you for your giving this year. Even with all the missed on-site worship services and many members affected in one way or another by the pandemic, the Church Ministry Fund balance is good. That said, we would like to ask you to prayerfully consider the special offerings as that giving has been below normal. If there are any of our special offerings you had planned to support but just didn't remember at the time you can put your gift in an envelope with the name of the special offering on it, and we will make sure it gets where it needs to go. You can place any offering in any of the three offering boxes before or after worship on Sunday, you can drop off an offering in the offering box in the East entrance during normal office hours, or you can give electronically anytime via www.rvfr.org/give.

Past special offerings: *Autumn's Place, Building Fund, Love INC, Justice for All, Hope Haven, Alpha Center, Prison Ministries, Northwestern College, Sioux City Gospel Mission, Family Crisis Center, Inspiration Hills.*

Upcoming special offerings: *Center of Hope, Thanksgiving, RV Christian School, Christmas.*

Budget Report:	2020 Budget	\$319,893.00
	Monthly Budget	26,657.75
	Oct. Offering	25,575.88
	Year to Date	218,846.68
	YTD Standing	(47,730.82)

Resident B'day: Adriana Dykstra 11/17/34

NURSING HOME & ASSISTED LIVING RESIDENTS:

Whispering Heights: **Verna Boer, Adriana Dykstra, Faye Gort, Marilyn Van Holland.** The Legacy Living, Gillette, WY: **Mary Boer;** Pleasant Acres, Hull: **Cornie & Ann Jansen;** Bethany Home, Brandon, SD: **Bill & Alma Landegent;** Faith Lutheran Home, Osage, IA: **Henry Feekes.**

CHURCH SUPPORTED MISSIONARIES:

Brian and Elizabeth Bruxvoort in AK; **Amy and Seung Kim** in Bangladesh; **Tom and Aichatou Johnson** in Pella, IA; **Brian and Donna Renes** in Sioux Center; **John & Lynn Hubers** in Ethiopia.

If you or a family member have a prayer concern and would like to have either the elders or the whole church to pray with you or for you, please contact your calling elder or a member of the consistory.

Announcements

Center of Hope invites you to join us online for our Fall Benefit, Saturday, November 14 at 7:00 PM. We will be highlighting the ways God has been at work this year, as well as celebrating our 20 years of ministry. To join us that night, please visit our website at www.centerofhopesf.org and click Fall Benefit Registration and follow the instructions.

Reflections for November 1, 2020

One of the spiritual growth opportunities that I and others are and have participated in is FaithWalking. In FW time is spent looking into your past and how you responded or reacted to experiences. My shame, not thinking I was enough, always led me to work hard and be busy so people would think I am wonderful and like me. There was one point in ministry where it had been nearly three months since I had taken a day off and was applauded by leadership for working hard. I truly thought if I worked hard everyone would think I was wonderful. One day someone complained to the leadership of the church I was serving that he did not believe I was working hard enough. At that point I was easily putting in 60-70 hours a week. It sent me into a tailspin because this was the first time someone did not like my work because I was not working hard enough. That vow did not work any longer.

What I needed to do was write a positive vow to replace an old vow that was outdated and quite frankly not that healthy. Through prayer, discernment, and solitude the new vow that really does direct my life now is this: I will rest in Jesus, trusting who he says I am, while working wholeheartedly for him. The motto for me is "don't work harder, rest deeper." Outwardly at times there might not seem to be much of a change, but inwardly it is all different. Living for an audience of one and resting in him is so different than living for the applause of hundreds of people I might not even like. The words of Jesus took on such a powerful impact in this time, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) This is not necessarily the absence of activity; it is more about an inward peace of knowing that I am enough as I am. I am loved by Jesus...I am a follower of Jesus...I belong to Jesus...I am resting in Jesus.

Jesus spoke these words amid a religious system that taught you had to follow a myriad (countless or extremely great number) of rules to maybe be accepted by God. It would lead people to be crazy tired trying to follow all the minute rules. Then maybe God would love and accept you. Maybe. Jesus came not only to fight against this system; he destroyed it on the cross. It is finished. Nothing you can do to add to it. People were tired trying to follow all the burdens of following minute rules. Jesus said if you are tired of this come to me. I loved you first, you do not have to earn it. I will give you rest from all this frantic running around trying to look good and earn my love. Get rid of religion. I offer you a relationship of grace, mercy, love. You cannot earn it. It is gift. That message of Good News was like a refreshing drink in the desert of self-righteousness. We are going to think about this on Sunday. Some passages to sink into: [Matthew 11:25-30](#); [Ephesians 2:1-10](#); [John 14:25-27](#).

Grace upon Grace,
Pastor Verlyn