



Make the Connection

Bethel Reformed Church Weekly Newsletter

Values

January 29, 2012

Volume 5—Issue 5

The RCA will be holding an event called “Conversations” in Orlando, Florida, February 10-12. RCA participants from across the United States will listen for God's call on the denomination as a whole; Pam and I plan to attend. The event will be a significant step in the ongoing denominational discernment process. As the RCA's 10-year goal, *Our Call*, draws to an end in 2013, church leaders seek to discern where God is calling the RCA to focus next.

In preparation for the “Conversations” event, I have been using an RCA devotional called “Drawing Near”. The scripture for Wednesday, January 25, was Acts 10-11:18. It is the story of Peter praying on the roof. While in prayer, he sees a sheet being lowered, filled with unclean animals. Peter hears a voice telling him to kill and eat. Peter says, “*No, I won't because I have never eaten anything unclean.*” The voice tells Peter, “*What God has made clean, you must not call profane.*”

The story shows the beginning of the expansion of the Reign of God. Gentiles also will be welcomed into the Reign, through Christ. Peter had to rethink his values in order to value what God valued. Values are our inner convictions which are shaped through our life experiences. These values help to dictate the decisions we make and the actions we take.

Here is the *Drawing Near* devotional from the 25th. May it challenge you as it did me. Read Acts 10:1-11:18.

Sometimes we hold strong beliefs and values that have been core in our “tribe” for many years. Often, these values come in conflict with what God seems to be doing in and among us, and they can be a hindrance to kingdom expansion. We begin to wonder whether these are core beliefs and values at all. In your context, what values are treated as core values that may not be, and may be getting in the way of following Jesus' call?

WITNESS FROM THE STANDARDS: Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 84

Q84. How does preaching the holy gospel open and close the kingdom of heaven?

A. *According to the command of Christ: The kingdom of heaven is opened by proclaiming and publicly declaring to all believers, each and every one, that, as often as they accept the gospel promise in true faith, God, because of Christ's merit, truly forgives all their sins. The kingdom of heaven is closed, however, by proclaiming and publicly declaring to unbelievers and hypocrites that, as long as they do not repent, the wrath of God and eternal condemnation rest on them.*

God's judgment, both in this life and in the life to come, is based on this gospel testimony.

Discernment question: *What is God saying in this passage to you and to the church?*

Prayer: *Be patient with us, Dream-Giver, as it takes a while for us to recognize your voice—to change an old rule, to try something new, to step out in faith. Keep speaking, showing, inviting, and crafting divine “coincidences” so we can follow your trail. Amen.*

Carry On,
Pastor Troy

This Week at Bethel Church

Monday, January 30

7:00 p.m.—NA Meeting, Fireside Room

Tuesday, January 31

10:30 a.m.—Bethel Staff Meeting

Wednesday, February 1

8:00 a.m.—Men's Prayer Group

5:30 p.m.—Wednesday Family Ministries

6:30 p.m.—Lifetree Café

7:45 p.m.—Sr. High Youth Group

Thursday, February 2 (No activities)

Friday, February 3

6:30 p.m.—Comunidad Cristiana Bible Study/Prayer Meeting, Fellowship Hall

RED CROSS Blood Drive The Sheldon Area RED CROSS Blood Drive will be held Friday, February 10, at the First Reformed Church. Appointments may be scheduled from 1:30-6:30 p.m. Everyone, beginning at age 16, is encouraged to help save a life! For more information or to schedule your appointment, call Bob Schat at 324-4443, or visit www.redcrossblood.org Thank You.

Scan this QR code with your QR code reader app to access Pastor Troy's sermon notes on your Smart phone.



Community Garden Update!



An informational meeting about the community garden will be held on Sunday, January 29, 2:00 p.m., at the Youth House. You will have an opportunity to sign up for a garden plot at the meeting. There 33 potential plots located near the water tower. We encourage both the experienced, as well as the novice gardener to participate. We are excited about the exchange of ideas, as participants share their gardening tips about planting, production, harvesting, and their favorite recipes. Our goal is not only to promote healthier lifestyles, but to create a sense of community among the gardeners. The community garden provides a great opportunity to participate in a "front porch" environment that will foster new relationships and opportunities for outreach.

We continue to look for individuals, businesses and/or organizations willing to partner with us to provide support in the way of materials, expertise and labor. We are also looking for individuals willing to mentor those new to gardening. Some of our future needs would be a community garden shed, tools, seed, and signage. If you are willing to donate your help or are interested in a garden spot, please contact Larry or Connie Van Meeteren (324-4088), Brad Tebben (712-930-5473), or Sharron Roos (324-3277) or email sheldongarden@gmail.com.

Thank You

from the Bruns

Thank You, Bethel family, for all the prayers, cards, phone calls, and meals that we have received.

Please continue to pray that the medication will do what is needed; pray the doctors will find the right course of treatment.

Randy, Liz and Family

Caring Bridge Website for Deric Bootsma

A CaringBridge website has been set up for Deric Bootsma:

www.caringbridge.org/visit/dericbootsma

Communicating via Caring Bridge is a great way to be an encouragement to Deric and his family.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

February 1

Art Alons
Eloise Den Hartog
Evelyn Koele
Courtney Van Beek
Karla Ven Huizen

February 2

Darlene Ellerbroek
Aletha Mouw

February 4

Amanda Nordgaard

February 5

Darcy Espey
Pat Verrips

Offering Record

January 22

Offering	\$3,846
Weekly Offering Needed	\$8,601
Offering Received YTD	\$21,274
Budgeted YTD	\$34,404
Percent Received YTD	62%



Discipleship for Adults

Sermon Seconds on Sundays

is a discussion of the Bible text(s) and main points Pastor Troy used in his sermon.

Men's Accountability Group

meets on Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m. Please contact Bill Langfitt at 324-4663 if you are interested.

Circle of Friends Bible Study

Meets the second Tuesday of each month. Currently studying "Live Deeply". Please contact Rose De Vos at 324-4213 to join them.



Simplify Your Life

Hollywood director Tom Shadyac, best known for *Ace Ventura*, *The Nutty Professor*, *Patch Adams*, *Bruce Almighty*, and *I Am*, will discuss how he simplified his life in an exclusive filmed interview at Lifetree Café on Wednesday, February 1, held in the Bethel Beanery

"Shadyac sold his Hollywood mansion and moved into a trailer park," says Lifetree representative Craig Cable. "He'll share his journey and offer practical help in taking the next step toward living a saner, happier, less cluttered life."

The Lifetree event, titled "Simplify Your Life," offers participants practical help to reduce clutter, complication, and chaos in everyday life, according to Cable.

Lifetree Café is a place where people gather for conversations about life and faith in a casual coffeehouse-type setting. It features real stories of real people, biblical insights, time to build relationships with old and new friends, laughter, and opportunities to serve.



Bethel's RCA Missionaries Share Prayer Needs

Bruxvoort Family Soldotna, Alaska



As a pilot, mechanic, and flight scheduler for the Mission Aviation Repair Center (MARC), Brian Bruxvoort helps make evangelization and church ministry possible in Alaska's remote villages. He transports pastors to and from their congregations; brings missionaries, students receiving mission training, and work teams to their mission sites; flies children to Bible camps; and helps maintain MARC's airplanes. He also connects people with the goods or services they need and helps Alaskan Christians feel connected to the rest of the body of Christ. His wife, Beth, participates in a women's Bible study and an after-school club called Child Evangelism Fellowship, volunteers in her children's classrooms, and reaches out to women around her who need a friend. The Bruxvoorts have four children: Brianna, Michael, Lucas, & Jonathan.

Prayer Requests:

- For those who are adjusting to losing mates
- For our boys to finish this school year well
- For continued safety in flight and maintenance
- For the kids who went to camp to grow in Christ
- For a marriage and family life that will draw others to Jesus Christ
- That we be good stewards of the gifts God gives us

**Articles continued on
back page>**

Swart Family Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



The Daasanach people, who live along the Omo River in southern Ethiopia, depended on the flooding of the river to provide food for their families until windmills were introduced to irrigate gardens along the river. Caleb and Joanna Swart are continuing and expanding the RCA mission work of the Windmill Project. Caleb has plans to build an additional fifty windmills, which will be owned and maintained by the Daasanach people. Joanna, a nurse, will work in prenatal and immunization clinics. Caleb and Joanna have three children, Elsa, Ezra, and Daisy and they join Caleb's parents, Dick and Donna Swart, in this work.

RCA Global Mission staff asked Swarts to answer this question:

Please tell us about ongoing as well as special prayer needs you may have at this time.

- Pray for the church in our village. It is easy for our evangelists, Berhanu and Hanna, to become discouraged by the slow response of the people living most closely with us. Pray for their encouragement, their bold witness, and our support of them and their efforts. Pray for the local church leaders, Nanuk and Semola, for their love and understanding of the Gospel to grow and grow.
- Pray for the windmill owners. Pray for their physical needs to be met by their gardens, and pray for them to become

Van Es Family Limuru, Kenya



St. Paul's University in Limuru, Kenya, is an international and ecumenical institution that prepares men and women for ministry in the Christian church and in society. Founded in 1903 as a divinity school, St. Paul's recently expanded to become a Christian university. In addition to doing theological studies, students can now earn a bachelor's degree in business administration. Rowland Van Es Jr., who has training in economics and theology, teaches in both departments. Jane Van Es teaches sociology and psychology at the bachelor's level and assists with the master's-level program in pastoral care and HIV/AIDS. Rowland and Jane have two daughters, Jenna and Michelle.

RCA Global Mission staff asked Van Eses to answer this question:

Please tell us about ongoing as well as special prayer needs you may have at this time.

- Pray for insecurity in Kenya and Somalia. Kenyan troops are fighting in Somalia in an effort to curb piracy and instability in Northern Kenya. Somali terrorist groups have threatened reprisal in Kenya. There are hundreds of thousands of refugees in Kenya who have fled the fighting and famine in Somalia who also need our prayers.
- For Kenya, 2011 was a year of high inflation. While the price of basic goods increased, incomes did not, so pray for the poor who can no longer afford to buy sufficient food for their families.



Bruxvoort, continued

Praises:

- A safe trip with many joyful reunions
- Readjustment of Lucas and Jonathan to school
- A safe summer of flying for MARC
- For many kids who went to Bible camp
- For 28 years of marriage
- For God's provisions in our lives

Swart, continued

- examples and leaders within their communities. Pray for hearts that want to know God and the life only He can give.
- Pray for Caleb as he continues to work on the Windmill Project. Pray for his relationships with the windmill owners and also our windmill workers.
 - Pray for Joanna as she home schools Elsa and Ezra and primarily takes care of things in our home. Pray for opportunities for her to be involved in the community, as well as for the interactions between Elsa, Ezra, and Daisy and local kids.
 - Pray for safety from illness and injury.
 - Pray for the renewal of our work permit and continued government permission to stay and work in Ethiopia.
 - Pray for our family, that first and foremost, we would be an example of Christ's love in how we treat each other and the people we encounter everyday. Pray for faith, for grace, and for compassion as we raise our family in this unique environment.

Van Es, continued

- Pray for members of St Paul's Divinity faculty who are grieving. One of our colleagues died from cancer leaving a widow and several young children, our Dean lost a 20 year old daughter and another colleague lost a 16 year old daughter.
- Our car was hit while Jane was driving the carpool of kids to school in October. While there was extensive damage to our car, we are thankful no one was injured. We covet your prayers for safety as we travel on these roads every day.
- In 2012, Kenya is supposed to hold elections. We don't know the date yet (August or December) but during the last election (2007) there was tension before and violence afterwards. Pray for peace and security and for free and fair elections that all will accept as legitimate.