

THE MILESTONE • SPRING 2021 • FIRST REFORMED CHURCH

CELEBRATING

150 YEARS

OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

THE LEADING EDGE

PASTOR TIM BREEN

Happy Birthday, First Reformed Church! This spring, we have the privilege of celebrating 150 years of God's faithfulness to our congregation. That number is incredibly significant; statistics suggest that the average lifespan of a church is around 70 years and that around 5000 churches in the US close every year. FRCOC's legacy is God's doing, and we praise him for sustaining us through a century and a half!

This winter, when I spent a couple of weeks reading and researching about how our church can grow and thrive in the coming decade, I took some time to ponder our past. Who is FRCOC, and how has God built us for the long game of ministry? I really wondered: *What is our church's DNA?*

Deoxyribonucleic acid, the famous double-helixed molecule that maps out the genetic characteristics of biological life, has been frequently allegorized to detail the core values of *social* organizations. A group's "DNA" describes its long-lasting/generational values; such marks survive leadership transitions, social changes, and organizational crises.

Biological DNA is built from four chemical bases - cytosine, guanine, adenine, and thymine. How these four ingredients are arranged along the strand of DNA dictates how the organism will develop and behave. A certain strand of DNA will create zebra stripes; a different sequence produces eagle feathers. No matter where, no matter when, that DNA can be trusted to produce the same outcome.

When pressed to think about FRCOC's spiritual DNA, I likewise settled on four congregational values. How these four aspects and aims interact shapes the life of our church; they mix and match in vibrant ways, and when they are esteemed and resourced, the church flourishes.

The four base identifiers at FRCOC are:

Love. Members of FRCOC deeply love the church as an organization and its people. They are loyal and caring for those who have claimed membership in the church. Congregants are grateful for the work done by the church in the past, are committed to each other in the present, and anticipate that their congregation will continue its work past their own lifetimes.

God's Word. FRCOC as an entity is shaped by the Bible. Members love detailed and thoughtful messages, are eager students of the Bible, and stand for a worldview that derives from Scriptural values.

Connectedness. Large-group gatherings are richly valued at FRCOC. Members come out for auctions, soup suppers, fund-raisers, and other high-attendance events. The centerpiece is the Sunday morning worship experience.

Grit. FRCOC was launched on a desolate windswept prairie in 1871. It survived locust plagues, wildfires, drought, and two world wars. Members unselfishly planted seven churches within the congregation's first fifty years. This attitude persists in the church. FRCOC's people give generously to ministry and support other brave missional enterprises. They value the pioneering spirit and are unwilling to be boxed in by political movements.

These four genetic markers can be seen everywhere if one wishes to look. They were true 100 years ago, are operational now, and - in all likelihood - will identify our church long into the future!

WHAT WE'RE WORKING ON...

AMANDA HAVERDINK, WORSHIP COORDINATOR

We are in a great season at FRC in the Worship Ministry arena! God is faithfully growing us in prayer, worship, and new methods of doing things. I am excited to see what the next few months hold!



MARK HAVERDINK, PASTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Spring is here and that means some exciting times for FRC! 150 years ago early settlers to the Orange City area gathered for worship and the makings of First Reformed Church was underway. The week of May 2-9 will provide you with multiple opportunities to remember the 150 years of God's goodness to FRC. We will enjoy a few joint gatherings with 1st Christian Reformed Church, as they are celebrating their 150th anniversary later this summer. Be sure to note the schedule of events on the back cover page and join us for the festivities!

KEN OLDENKAMP, CONNECTIONS TEAM LEADER

The Connections Team has met many new people worshiping with us over the past few months. Our community has grown and changed in many ways. Many of these new people do not have a church home or attend church. We encourage you to pick up a free gift box at the Welcome Center to give to new neighbors and co-workers and invite them to church. The box contains info about FRC along with some small gifts. Continue to invite and make everyone feel welcome at FRC.



ROSS ENGER, DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES

Our youth ministry mission at FRC is springing forward with worship events, games, teaching series, and Bible studies as we build toward spring and summer youth trips. Youth ministry grad Parker Wierda led a special Pizza, Prayer, and Praise event in the Loft to close out our fall semester and Tim Czirr and Kelsay Parrott, our college interns, are leading some of our Sunday Bible studies, as we've shifted our focus to the book of Romans this semester. Middle school kids get a crack at their yearly retreat the beginning of April at Hidden Acres, and our "Change Drive" fundraiser for our summer middle school trip is scheduled for the end of April. Look for announcements and meetings for our high school summer trip to Rocky Mountain High beginning in May.

SARAH KUIPER, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

As I look back on this past year, I am reminded of God's faithfulness. We've been blessed to meet in person this year, sharing the love of God with our kids, even if it looked different than in the past. In talking to others around the country who are still shut down and finding it hard to connect, this blessing was not lost on me. We are starting to wrap up our ministry year and are looking forward to our Pinewood Derby Wed., April 28th. We are also excited to host a Vacation Bible School here at church July 12-14, with a pool party on July 15. More information coming soon.



APRIL BEAVER, WOMEN'S MINISTRIES & SOCIAL MEDIA

Women's ministry has a fun event planned for April 17 – flower arranging. Arrange a bouquet for yourself and one to share. We also have a few of our regular Women's Bible studies starting back up in April. Check out our Women's Ministry page at frcoc.org for all the details and to sign up for our Women's Ministry email newsletters. Our social media platforms continue to grow in reach. We currently have over 140 people viewing our services online live each Sunday. You can help our reach continue to grow by liking and sharing our posts.

KINGDOM PARTNERSHIP

Sunday, April 11, is **World Vision Chosen Day** at First Reformed Church. This special morning will be a time of learning about ministry on the continent of Africa and will conclude with an opportunity for you to be selected as a sponsoring family by a young person in Malawi. Sponsorship of a child is \$39/month.



World Vision's website offers an important update on the needs in this land: *The drought spreading through much of Africa has caused severe food shortages in Malawi since 2016. Destructive forestry practices are also worsening the drought conditions—as the soil absorbs water less effectively, farming becomes more difficult. Because Malawi uses hydro-powered electricity, the drought also caused blackouts and power shortages. With no power, small-scale businesses often had to shut down, and dairy farmers in particular were affected, since they couldn't refrigerate their products. These factors didn't help the chronic malnourishment and lack of food that stunt a third of Malawian children's growth. Your support is helping us provide short- and long-term emergency assistance to the families hit hardest by the drought's effects. Working with partnerships, we brought emergency resources of food and water to those most in need, so families and communities can get back on the path to flourishing. Your support also means our work is transforming education and health for children in vulnerable communities. As we're improving water and education together, kids are given tools to fulfill their God-given potential.*

So how can you and your family be chosen? Here's how it works:

April 11: Text **Reformed** to 56170 sign up. Then go to the Fellowship Hall after worship to have your picture taken.

April 12 - 17: Pictures are sent to two communities in Kapeni, Malawi where you will be chosen by your sponsored child.

April 18: Find your name in the Fellowship Hall with information on the child who chose you.



At any point in the process, you can join our Facebook group **First Reformed Church Chosen** to share, engage and talk about your Chosen experience. This is a great place to share your child's letters to you and see letters from other children in the communities we are sponsoring.

Our church has beautiful partnerships in places like Haiti, New Mexico, and Japan already. We are eager to further expand our participation in God's work through this incredible personal connection opportunity in Malawi. We pray that you will choose to be chosen!

New Faces

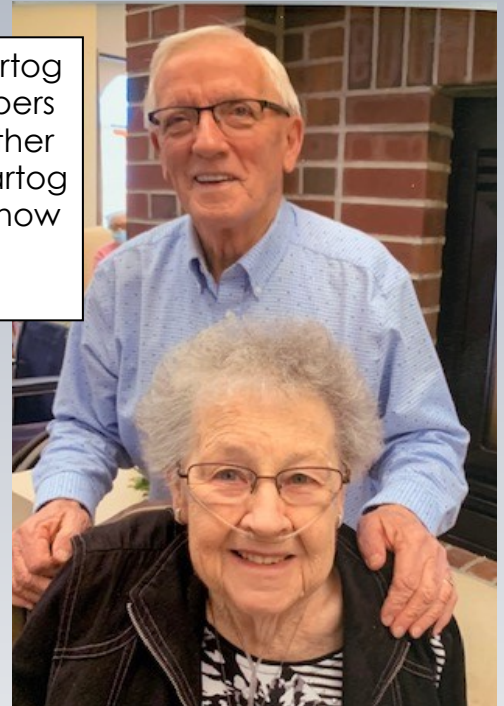


Mike & Laura Vander Stelt and their children Henry, Cordelia and Moraine live in Maurice. Mike is a service tech at Premier Communications and Laura is a veterinarian.



Verlyn & Melinda Fedders are longtime Orange City residents that are now retired and enjoying life! They are excited to be a part of FRC. Melinda has joined the choir and they look forward to being a part other FRC ministries.

John & Ann Den Hartog were long time Hospers residents, and together they started Den Hartog Industries. They are now retired and living at Landsmeer.



Rick & Lori Scholtens along with their four active boys, Trevor, Garrett, Karsten and Gabe live in Orange City. Rick is an engineer and project manager and Lori is a teacher at MOC-FV.



Joan Van't Hof has lived in Orange City since 1980. She really enjoys listening to music and especially has enjoyed the wonderful music FRC has during it's services.

LITTLE ONES *welcome*



Eloise Lemke

Born: November 26, 2020
Parents: Drew & Amanda
Lemke



Osa Ochsner

Born: December 10, 2020
Parents: Kyle & Jenn
Ochsner

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

From the Christmas program in December to the Gems & Cadets this past semester, our preschool through 5th graders have had lots of fun learning more about Jesus' love for them.



College Students

SPRING SERVICE PROJECTS



Opelousas, LA

FRC supported several college students this year for Spring Service Projects. We were honored to help support the following students:

Jordan Blok, Elizabeth Parks, Allie Haverdink, Sierra Stamer, Colin Kaemingk - Opelousas, LA

Misael Bruzzzone and Hannah Van Meeteren -Orange County, Texas

Paige Ginger and BreElle Van Zee - New Orleans

Hailey Louw and Kelsey Parrott - Kansas City, KS

Cameron Esch - Jackson County, KY



Jackson County, KY



Kansas City, KS



Orange County, TX



Kansas City, KS



Opelousas, LA



Opelousas, LA

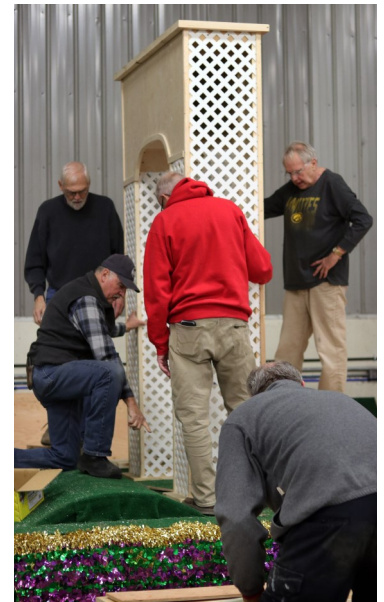


New Orleans

UPCOMING *events*

First Reformed Church 150th Celebration Float Construction

- **April 11**- World Vision Chosen picture taking day
- **April 18** - Chosen Sunday
- **April 28**, 6 PM - Fellowship Meal followed by Pinewood Derby
- **May 2**, Youth Sunday
9:40 AM - Historical Presentation by Doug Anderson
5:30 PM - A Venture in Faith Readers Theatre, fellowship after
- **May 6**, 6:30 PM - 150th Anniversary Open House, Cake & Ice Cream, Museum Open in Chapel
- **May 8**, Softball game vs. 1st CRC, Fireworks @ 9 PM
- **May 9**, 10 AM - 150th Worship Celebration, 11:30 AM - All Church Photo, front lawn, Noon - All Church Meal
- **July 12 - 14**, Vacation Bible School



CHRISTMAS AT FRC



first reformed church
orange city, ia