



# The 4th Focus

## “A Way of Life”

Last Tuesday, as I met with our elders and consistory for our monthly meeting, it was again a delight—in part, because we took time to discuss how our church family can be more effective and faithful to the vision that God gives us to be a redeeming presence in our community. How can we increasingly love people into the kingdom? It’s a delight because I believe this is what God would have us focus on as a leadership.

In recent years, so that we can all be on the same page with regard to how we do this, we have tried to keep it simple and say that every member should focus on actively loving God through worship, loving one another through small groups (community) and loving our neighbors through ministry or service. Every member should strive to actively love God, one another and those still outside of the kingdom.

Here’s what often happens both in our discussion and in life: We tend to think of worship, community and service to others in terms of events. Worship is the event of Sunday morning. Community is the small groups meetings. And service might be understood as Kids Hope mentoring or an EMS meal or some service project.

We are called to get on board with God’s redeeming work in our community and drawing people into a relationship with Jesus. **The key to our effectiveness and faithfulness in loving people into the kingdom will involve making our love for God, one another and the stranger a way of life rather than an event or activity that we can check off our list for the week.** We tend to think that once we have done our “church thing,” we can go on to focus on our own little world again.

In this season of Lent, this should be one focus for the repentance that we considered a couple of weeks ago in a sermon. We are encouraged to make a turn from making our expression of love to God, one another and strangers a small part of our life to making it our defining characteristic for all of life—every day. Just before his suffering and death, Jesus washed his disciples’ feet and taught them to humbly serve others just as he had demonstrated to them. And then he taught that their love for one another would be the defining characteristic of his disciples (John 13).

I can think of several examples in our church family where this humble service and love is a defining characteristic for life. We have one family that repeatedly welcomes and “adopts” boys who are struggling through life and need a warm, loving home. A woman invests deeply into the heart and life of a man in the community who struggles with addiction. Some of us struggle to engage with coworkers by serving them and inviting them into our lives. I know that there are women and men who are defined by actively nurturing and caring for friends throughout the week. I am often encouraged by the apparent evidences of love and service in our church family and I know that there is much that we often don’t see.

Again, however, we are challenged to make our love for Jesus and others the defining characteristic of our hearts and lives. As we miserably fail, we can be encouraged with the way Jesus restored the miserably failing Peter. Jesus repeatedly asked Peter, Do you love me? And then Jesus instructed Peter to feed or love and care for his sheep.

This season of Lent, leading up to Easter, is an opportunity to be refreshed in the wonder of a patient, self-sacrificing Savior who keeps restoring and coming alongside us through his Spirit. What do you need to give up so that you can embrace a life of actively loving God and others? Let us use this Lenten period for “broken-hearted returning” and commit to a way of life that puts Jesus’ love on display to a lost and broken world.

- Pastor Tim



Our Easter Celebration with our Kids Hope students and their families will be held on March 31 from 6 – 8 PM. We will begin our night with an Easter egg hunt, followed by dinner and the telling of the Easter story through a play. Kids Hope volunteers, please plan to join us for this great relationship building night!

Mentors – Spring Break will run April 2 – 11. We will resume our regular mentoring schedule on April 12. Believe it or not, at the time of this writing, we have only 11 weeks of mentoring left for this school year. Thank you mentors and prayer partners for your faithfulness and let's finish our year strong!

More mentors are always needed. We are currently at an all-time low of nine mentors. If you have an hour a week during the school year to help a struggling child, please talk to me about how you might become a part of the Kids Hope team for the 2010-11 school year!

- Mary Kay Townley, Director

## Understanding Jesus

In every great story you have characters and a plot. While a good plot will move the story along and keep you interested in the story, you will not truly become engaged with it unless you truly care about the characters. The more you know about a character's life, the more you care about what happens to the person.

A few months ago, as I was leading the High School ministry of **New City Neighbors**, it occurred to me that many of the students I work with know the plot of the gospels, but don't know the characters very well. They all knew the basics of the story, and had heard the part about Jesus' death many times, but there was a sense that it didn't matter to them, because they didn't really know Jesus.

Since that time we have been doing an in-depth study of Jesus. Each week we focus on a different part of his character in an effort to see who he was, what he was passionate about, and why he cared. There have been more than a few lessons that have blown me away as these students ask deep questions and wrestle with Jesus. Jesus is slowly becoming more real and personal as he is understood in new and fresh ways.

Please pray for these students over the next two months as we wrap up this topic. Pray that the Holy Spirit would work in their hearts to help them grow not only in their understanding of Jesus, but in their love for him as well. Pray that they would give their lives over to him and that they would desire to follow him all the days of their lives.

- Eric Schalk



## MARCH

- 1 - Scott Schalk
- 2 - Noreen Reitsma
- 7 - Marlys Burggraaf
- 7 - Breanna Tubergen
- 7 - Matt Simone
- 11 - Skip Hawkins
- 13 - Brian Townley
- 13 - Koa Rossiter
- 13 - Kivi Rossiter
- 15 - Will Ring
- 19 - Erin Meendering
- 20 - Tim Dorn
- 22 - Vera Baar
- 23 - Sarah Parler
- 25 - Tiffany Gonzales
- 25 - Bruce Coeling
- 27 - Daniel Berthiaume
- 28 - Percy Woods
- 29 - Barb Blystone
- 30 - Sue Berrios
- 31 - James Brinks

## APRIL

- 1 - John Damon
- 3 - Sandy Moll
- 5 - Matt Scherpenisse
- 7 - Erin Berrevoets
- 9 - Mike Brinks
- 11 - Judy Schalk
- 11 - Alex Smith
- 12 - Michael Gleason
- 13 - Judy Springfield
- 13 - Jo Ann Parks
- 14 - Beau McDowell
- 15 - Jim Blanksma
- 15 - Ardreen Adair
- 15 - Chad Kooyer
- 16 - Becky Gebhart
- 16 - Paul Baragar
- 17 - Nathan Meendering
- 18 - Emily O'Brock
- 18 - Justin DeBoer
- 20 - Amy Alkema
- 20 - Andy Alkema
- 21 - Zachary Coeling
- 25 - Lisa Boehm
- 28 - Mike Bolt
- 31 - Gretta Kriekard

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## Junior High Youth



We kicked off the new Junior High Youth Group with a pizza luncheon, games and some videos on February 7. Our theme for the year is “Connect, Grow, Serve” which involves connecting and growing in our relationship to

Christ and in turn using that relationship to go out and serve others.

On February 27 we enjoyed a time of tubing at Pando, even though the snow conditions made tubing a bit slow – a good time was had by all (watch the bulletin board for some pictures). On Saturday, March 27 we will be attending and cheering on our Grand Rapids Griffins!

Upcoming meeting dates: March 21 where our topic will be Growing with Christ and discussing a name for our group (also for those who were at the February 21 meeting – don’t forget to bring your coins). We will not have a meeting on April 4 due to Spring Break. We will meet again on April 18 where we will discuss Growing with Community. Meetings are held at 4<sup>th</sup> Church from 6 – 7:30 PM and supper is provided.

If you are in 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade we would love to have you join us – friends are always welcome too!

Thank you to our sponsors Justin & Kari Bierens, Julie Gleason, Brian Tubergen and Mary Kay Townley for their time and commitment to our youth, and to Duane Smith, from Eaglecrest Ministries and former 4<sup>th</sup> Youth Director, for his direction and leadership.

**CRESTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOL:** All alumni, parents, grandparents, staff and friends of Creston Christian School are cordially invited to join the Creston Christian family in a reunion “Celebrating God’s Faithfulness” over the last 120 years. On Friday, May 14, there will be an informal celebration with an old fashioned Hamburg Fry and an open house highlighting the history and wonderful memories of the school. On Sunday, May 16, at 5:30 PM, a service of praise and thanksgiving will be held at Sunshine Church in celebration of God’s faithfulness over so many years. Additional information may be found on their website at [www.grcs.org](http://www.grcs.org).

## Women’s Ministry



We look forward to the **Tea & Tables** evening on March 23. It’s fun to hear women chatting about ideas on how they are going to decorate their table. It’s also a treat to see the variety of scrumptious desserts that are brought for our enjoyment!!

Cindy Bultema, Leslie Hawkins’ neighbor, will be our speaker. She loves the Lord and her sparkling personality will draw you close and hold you while she teaches and inspires you to live and walk in the super-abundance God has for you. You will love her compassionate heart as she testifies to Christ’s unconditional love and faithfulness that redeems our lives for his glory, regardless of who we are or what we’ve done.

She has been featured in *Believe* magazine and is a sought after speaker for MOPS, churches and schools. Although her number one ministry is that of wife and mom! We look forward to her sharing how God has and is working in her life and the challenge she has for us.

This is a great evening to invite a friend who doesn’t know the Lord or who doesn’t have a church family!!

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Many of you know Alyssa and Bjorn from seeing them on Sunday mornings or perhaps you are a part of their small group. If not introduce yourself! Alyssa is Nancy Springfield’s granddaughter and will be getting married at 4<sup>th</sup> in May. We look forward to a **Bridal Shower** for Alyssa on April 21!

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How have you done encouraging your **Heart 2 Heart** partner this week?? Beka is looking for one more person who felt the Lord leading them to join earlier, but didn’t. Here is your opportunity. Talk to her about it today!



**A PUBLICATION OF  
FOURTH  
REFORMED CHURCH**



1226 Union Ave. N.E.  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Pastor Tim Meendering  
Phone: 454-1561  
www.fourthchurch.com

**Sunday Service**  
9:30 AM

**Family Fellowship  
Lifeline Groups**  
5:00 PM

**Christian Education**  
11:15 AM

**Our Vision**

Seeking to be a joyful,  
welcoming  
community that is  
transformed by the gospel  
and nurtured in God's  
Word, and led by His  
Spirit - to redeem the  
city and beyond."

**A COMMUNITY REDEEMED TO  
REDEEM OUR COMMUNITY**

## *GEMS Update*

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An early spring March night was perfect for a special cleaning project planned by the GEMS and their special friends. For the month of February the girls had been diligently saving pop cans with the goal of raising some funds to buy new toys for the nursery. When Julie Gleason announced that they had raised \$50 – that's 500 cans - everyone was quite pleased.

The evening began with a closest guess and won this each girl and special friend on their shirt. Then we sang A favorite was a new song girl at a time opened a gift of a money. Excitement grew as across the stage.



guessing game. A huge plastic baby cheese puffs. Jennifer Parks had the tasty snack. Along with the theme received a tiny white diaper to pin some songs with our special friends. "You Are My Friend". Next, one new toy purchased with the can the pile of colorful new toys spread

After job assignments were made, we all marched off to clean, sanitize, wipe down, sort and purge broken or unsafe items. Those with the strongest arms and longest legs carried loads back and forth from the kitchen. Before long everything sparkled and the new toys were placed on clean shelves.

With great satisfaction, we enjoyed punch, cake and ice cream. Even the napkins carried out the baby shower theme. For a final laugh, the person with a dirty diaper pinned to her won the prize of a big blue stuffed snake. Before our closing song, everyone received a tiny basket filled with mints!

## *Children's Worship*

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Where are all those kids going after the offering prayer? Here's your answer: they are all heading to Children's Worship! We have two different classes for Children's Worship. The younger class is for ages 2 ½ to 4 yr. olds and the other class is for ages 5 to 7 yrs.

While you enjoy the message from Tim, Children's Worship is a time for your children to spend learning a bible story and doing a fun craft. We have numerous volunteers from the congregation who commit to teaching or helping in the classes every week. It is a blessing to spend time with all the little ones that come and new children are always welcome.

- Amy Coeling

**Celebrate the Miracle Of Easter**

*Renew Your Faith this Holiday Season*