

“Glimpses of God”



FOURTH REFORMED CHURCH

The 4th Focus

As your pastor, you know that in various ways especially through preaching that I push toward change, growth, mission, and engagement with others and our community. You also know that I am passionate about the means, motivation, and empowerment that move us along toward becoming like Jesus. Bear with me here for another perspective on how we make progress in faith and faithfulness.

We are created and re-created, through the gospel, to put the image and glory of God on display to a lost and broken world and thus serve as ambassadors who irresistibly draw people into God's kingdom of love and grace. Jesus is the ultimate expression of the image and glory of God and so we might also think in terms of being the presence of Christ for this lost world so loved by God. Many of us wouldn't say it this way but most of us are well aware and struggle under the command to make disciples.

The struggle and breakdown in our faithfulness to this mission is most often with the motivation, empowerment or boldness that leads us toward action and engagement. Through my years and especially through the last few weeks of John Damon's life, there were multiple evidences of numerous people whom he had boldly led into a relationship with Christ. You could chalk that up to his being abandoned by his father, or being a Citadel graduate, a brash Navy man, a seasoned attorney, his beautiful, loving wife, or his inability/struggle to hear the responses of others. I suggest, based on my conversations with John, that we could chalk it up to John's Spirit-driven ability to interpret/see the glory of the gospel of God's grace through all of these circumstances. John looked back on his life the good, the bad and the ugly and was overwhelmed with God's unrelenting grace.

The inhibitions, self-concern and fears that work effectively to make us wallflowers in the presence of opportunities to engage and share Christ will dissolve away with an over-powering experience of the grace and glory of the gospel. And so faith and eyes to see the glimpses of God and the gospel is vital for faithfulness.

How do we pursue and capture these glimpses of God and the gospel? The opportunities are endless but again, John Damon, who impacted so many of us into his 90s, reminds me of the treasure to be discovered in our elderly brothers and sisters. I think about Connie Larson, Charlton Meyer, the Vander Velde's and others who, in the face of suffering and adversity, hold up the sustaining grace, love and joy of Jesus for all to see. Glimpses of God are available to those who seek out the presence of our seasoned saints.

God and his glory are revealed in creation, your walk on the beach at sunset, or the fresh morning snow, as "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows his handiwork." Glimpses of God's grace and glory are revealed in people around us every day. My wife is a glimpse of God's love and faithfulness for me everyday. And at the same time, the daily experiences with my deeply suffering alcoholic friend, John, scream with God's persevering grace for the sinner and the undeserved intervention and love lavished on me who is one of the worst of sinners. Just as Paul wrote in Philippians 1, I am thankful for you all, as I catch daily glimpses of the fruit and evidences of God's Spirit and grace at work.

God and his glory are particularly held up for us in his Word. Here we see the gospel and Jesus revealed with stunning beauty. And here we learn how to rest and thus be bold in our righteous standing with God, accomplished by Christ on the cross. There is nothing I can do either miserable failure or notable accomplishments that will make him love me more or love me less. The gospel, relentlessly rehearsed and soaked deep into my mind, yields fruit in my life.

Let us look for the glimpses of God and the gospel every day and pursue those who are yet blind to such transforming glory every day. - Pastor Tim

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...er really would ask that you join us for a time of prayer on April 1 at 11:15 AM in Room #1. We will pray not only for our Kids Hope students, but for all the staff and students at Kent Hills School. If you spend anytime at all at the school, you know that there are many hurting children who are acting out in anger, disrespect, bullying other children and various other ways ó all in an effort to somehow mask their own pain. The staff needs our prayers as well as it takes a tremendous amount of wisdom and patience to handle all the issues that come their way.

I will share at this meeting how I have seen prayers answered for my own mentoring relationship. Prayer has and will make a difference! Thank you to our faithful Kids Hope USA prayer partners/warriors: Tom Boehm, Dee & Caryl Christians, Sue Hawkins, Connie Larson, Mary Mackie, Ruth Meendering, Sandy Moll, Mary Proos, Julie Schalk, Ed & Sharon VanTimmeren and Dianne Waterloo. You are all amazing and the definite power behind the success of Kids Hope USA!

Upcoming Events:

March 28 – Easter Celebration with our Kids Hope USA students and their families will be held from 6 ó 8 PM at the church. Marvin the Magician will share the Easter message through gospel magic. Kids Hope volunteers be sure to make your reservation by March 25.

April 1 – Prayer Gathering in Room #1 at 11:15 AM. All are welcome to join us!

- Mary Kay Townley

Birthdays



March

- 2 - Noreen Reitsma
- 7 - Breanna Tubergen
- 7 - Matt Simone
- 11 - Skip Hawkins
- 13 - Brian Townley
- 13 - Koa Rossiter
- 13 - Kivi Rossiter
- 16 - Kevin 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

- 3 - Sandy Moll
- 5 - Matt Scherpenisse
- 7 ó Erin Berrevoets
- 9 - Mike Brinks
- 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 OðBrock
- 18 - Justin DeBoer
- 20 ó Amy Alkema
- 20 ó Andy Alkema
- 21 ó Zachary Coeling
- 25 - Lisa Boehm
- 26 - Molly Bierens
- 28 - Mike Bolt

Happy Birthday!





Please help the GEMS replenish their store before April 16:

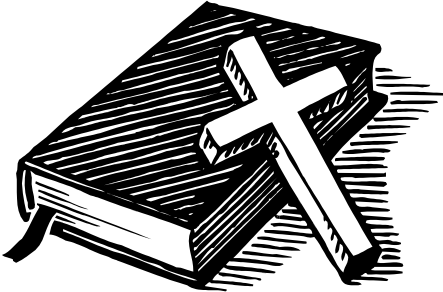
Large stuffed animals, nail polish, stickers, markers, jewelry, cute socks, craft kits, journals, art supplies.

NCN Needs New TRIP Participants!



Can you help by using gift cards to buy your groceries and/or gas?

Jonas Michaelius, the first ordained minister in the Reformed Church in America, was born in 1584, the same year as the death of William of Orange, who led the Dutch to independence over the Spanish. His father, also a minister, served as a chaplain for a group of Dutch òSea Beggarsö who preyed upon Spanish shipping. It was long believed that Rev. Everardus Bogardus was the first RCA minister, but a letter Michaelius wrote to Rev. Adrian Smoutius, dated August 11, 1628 described his ministry in America. This letter was discovered in the Dutch city of The Hague in 1828 and proved that Michaelius was the first.



At age 14, Michaelius began studies at the University of Leyden remaining for six years. The first 20 years of his ministry was spent in Holland. In March 1625, he was sent to Brazil, which the Dutch had recently seized from the Portuguese. While in route, after it was learned that Brazil had been retaken, he was diverted to

Guinea on the west coast of Africa, where he served until late 1627.

On January 24, 1628, Michaelius set sail with his wife and two children to America. After a stormy voyage, he arrived on April 7. Three days later a church was organized, the birth date of the Reformed Church. In the letter mentioned above, Michaelius described the first worship service.

At the first administration of the Lord's Supper which was observed not without great joy and comfort to many, we had fully fifty communicants, Walloons and Dutch, a number of whom made their first confession of faith to us...Those (of the Walloons) who understood no Dutch are very few...Nevertheless, the Lord's Supper is administered to them in the French language...with a sermon preceding, which I have before me in writing as I cannot trust myself extemporaneously.

Although he desired to reach the native population with the gospel, Michaelius saw little hope in reaching at least the adults. He wrote: *As to the natives of this country, I find them entirely savage and wild, strangers to all decency, yea, uncivil and stupid as garden poles, proficient in all wickedness and godlessness: devilish men who serve nobody but the devil.* Rather than witness directly to the adults, he proposed that children be removed from their families and raised as Christians. Later, they might return and work among their own people. This plan was never adopted because the local adults obviously were unwilling to give up their children and it was also felt that this could jeopardize the profitable fur trade.

Michaelius' stay in America was short, sad and stormy. His wife died seven weeks after his arrival, leaving him to care for two young daughters. His grief was great, but his faith remained steadfast, as he wrote in a letter: *Now what shall I say. The Lord has done it. I must bear it. And what reasons have I to object? For all things work together for good to them that love Him.* He also leveled intense criticism toward the local authorities, which would be continued by the ministers who followed him. This conflict will be covered in the next article. Together, these circumstances lead him to return to Holland late in 1631 or early in 1632.

On March 4, 1632, Michaelius appeared before the consistory of Amsterdam to give an account of his stay in America. Although he was warmly received by the Dutch church authorities who heartily recommended three times in 1637-38 that he return to New Netherland, the directors of the West India Company whom he had criticized gave him a cool reception and blocked all plans for him to return.

- Eric O. Brock

Next - Church vs. State

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,
nurtured in God's
Word, and led by His
Spirit - to redeem the
city and beyond."

A COMMUNITY REDEEMED TO
REDEEM OUR COMMUNITY

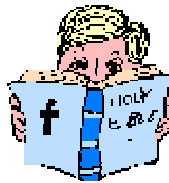


The children at Fourth Reformed Church are growing in leaps and bounds in their worship as they learn to respond to The Living God and His glorious grace. What a wonderful sight to see the children as they make their way to the Praise Room following their dismissal from the öbig churchö! They are little teachers as they demonstrate what it means to öEnter into His Gates with Thanksgiving and into His Courts with Praiseö (Ps.100:4). The children are eager to lift up their voices and their hands to worship our Holy God.

After their time of Praise and Worship through music, they continue their worship at their own level by meeting in smaller groups around God's Word. The children are able to hear, see, and do something to respond to God's Word. Every week, I am beautifully reminded that our Lord teaches us to become like little children (Matt.18:3). The children at 4th rejoice in the Lord without reservation; if you ask them, öWhat's today?ö They will tell you: öThis is the day that the Lord has made, we will be glad and rejoice in itö (Ps.118:24)!

- Regina Riley

Meet Erica



Hi!

My name is Erica Stone and I have been a proud member of Fourth Church for less than a year now. I am a believer and one of your fellow sisters in Christ.

I am fifteen years old and I go to Creston High School. I have a non-believing family which includes two little annoying brothers. I went to a Christian elementary school which was probably the place that was the starting point for my relationship with the Lord. With my parents being unbelievers, I actually go to this church by way of the Studebaker family and also by occasionally walking.

Since I am just fifteen and the Bible says, "Do not let others look down on you because you are young," I strive to continue to grow in my relationship with the One who gave His life for me. I have read the entire Bible multiple times and I would like to share some wisdom that I have learned by doing so. You do not have to be a Bible scholar to learn His Word. God is not the Author of confusion and I think that He wants His children to get into His Word. God wants us to spend time with Him, not for us to be religious (we are broken sinners) but for us to have a relationship with Him. Our righteousness is like dust; it amounts to nothing; that's why we need a relationship with Him. We need to spend some of our free time just worshiping Him, talking (praying) to God and reading His Word. Spending time with God is one of the greatest things that any believer can do!

(We appreciate Erica's ministry as she helps with GEMS and is a part of a small group.)