



The 4th Focus

“Encouragement and Challenge”

If you have been a part of our church family for even a short time, you have likely observed that I will often communicate both the indicative and the imperative. OK, so maybe you haven't noticed that and so let me explain...

The indicative mood is a statement of fact about something and the imperative mood is the expression of a command or order. And so for example, my last Focus article ended with this statement: *Jesus submitted himself to be bound and killed at the hands of blind and cowardly hypocrites so that we could be set free for a life of genuine and reckless love.* The indicative or the observation about our status or position or reality was that Jesus acted with sacrifice and love so that we are set free from sin and hypocrisy. The imperative is that we are therefore called to act with reckless love for others.

Our mission statement is another example: A community redeemed (indicative) to redeem our community (imperative). The Apostle Paul consistently wrote about the indicative and the imperative. One example is Romans 12:1: *Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy (the indicative of our status and position through Christ's righteousness explained in the first eleven chapters), to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God...* (the imperative which is then explained in greater detail). The Heidelberg Catechism's indicative is *"I...belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins...has set me free from the tyranny of the devil..."* (Q/A 1) and *"In Christ I am righteous before God and heir to life everlasting"* (Q/A 59), etc. And the imperative of the Catechism involves an urging toward good works, obedience, fruits, etc.

Paul summarized this indicative-imperative order of things in this way: *"The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love."* A Christ-honoring life must begin with the gospel believed (indicative) and be expressed with genuine love for God and others (imperative).

Thanks for your patience so far and here's my point: Many of us can see how God has worked and is working in us and through us—particularly through Fourth and New City Neighbors—corporately. There is ministry to be celebrated. God has poured out his blessing on our efforts and we are increasingly making a difference in our community AND providing a vision for others to take a role in redeeming their community. The indicative is that we are employed in the high calling as kingdom servants and missionaries and we are launched.

BUT, there is so much more imperative for us to respond to in our individual roles as kingdom servants throughout the week. I think especially of the imperative to "Practice hospitality" (Romans 12:13). *"Seeking to be a welcoming community"* is at the heart of our vision statement because it is one of our greatest challenges. It's just not enough to smile and "be friendly" when a guest shows up for worship. It's comfortable to hang out with the same family and friends but it's not your central calling. Making disciples, being salt and light, welcoming and eating with strangers IS your central calling. Every one of us must take the initiative to push out and introduce our self and invite people into our community.

Invite them over for dinner or dessert. Go out for coffee or take them out to lunch. Or think about it this way: What if you were to "tithe" some time—perhaps one outing or lunch per week—to engage a guest or someone new and encourage them toward Jesus and your church family? Even if we would all begin with a goal of doing this once/month, the change and results would be dramatic. And our guests and friends on the edges would be drawn into the fellowship and friendships that they are searching for.

Jesus was rejected by friends and even his Father so that we, who deserve to be rejected could be welcomed as a friend and son/daughter of God (indicative) AND so that we could welcome others into this same joy that we know (imperative). - PT

Progressive Dinner

Pretty much across the board, women love to go out and enjoy delicious food prepared by someone else. Add to that the fun of time spent with friends of all ages in not one but four different homes, and you have an evening out that is hard to beat.

Fourth can certainly say it has more stellar cooks than usual for a church group, but Erin B., Kari, Gina, and Leah soared to the top as hostesses for the Women's Progressive Dinner event last month.

Using the first of the garden's earthly delights, along with other assorted yummy ingredients, Erin prepared a spread of appetizers and a setting that, had we time to linger, would have more than made the evening complete. But on to Kari's house and a gorgeous salad buffet that would have easily made the cut for the cover of a Martha Stewart magazine. Again, we happily settled in but were gently whisked back into the parked cars that would take us to the main dish stop at Gina's house, where we were treated to a steaming meat and potatoes sit-down dinner that was delightful in every way. We gathered in the living room after dinner for a time of devotions taken from Jesus Calling, given by Marcia. Then on to Leah's house and a glorious assortment of desserts, which was the perfect end to a wonderful evening.

Many thanks to Ruth and Erin B. for organizing this fun time of fellowship and fat grams!

- Dawn Faasse

I love Breaktime because..

of the awesome experiments.

I get to have fun!

I just love everything about Breaktime!

we get to do science.

we get to go on fieldtrips.

we get to make snacks.

science is fun and I like it so, so, so, much. I love Breaktime so, so, so, much!

of all the healthy food!

we do cool art!

we get to sing!

I like the teachers and the healthy snacks!

you get to play games and it is so fun.

because it is fun!



July

- 1 - Kari Bierens
- 2 - Jerry Wierenga
- 8 - Connie Larson
- 8 - Jeff Broene
- 13 - Teresa DeBoer
- 14 - Ed Reitsma
- 17 - Jessica Ortiz
- 22 - Jonathan Brinks
- 23 - Avery Gleason
- 23 - Kate Schalk
- 24 - Wendy Wetzel
- 26 - Erica Fles
- 28 - Branson Parler
- 29 - Erica Stone



Happy Birthday

August

- 2 - Tom Adams
- 3 - Charlton Meyer
- 3 - Tim Meendering
- 5 - Connie Scherpenisse
- 8 - Joyce Van Neuren
- 9 - Evie Walton
- 12 - Rick Berthiaume
- 12 - Alexis Springfield
- 14 - Steve Springfield
- 14 - Jake Kooyer
- 15 - Betty Webster
- 17 - Darold Parks
- 20 - Ke Rossiter
- 20 - Jose Ortiz
- 21 - Amy Adams
- 22 - Ken Walton
- 22 - Jacob Tubergen
- 23 - Bertha VanderVelde
- 24 - Lynn Simone
- 25 - Amber Studebaker
- 26 - Joel Adams
- 31 - Jeff Springfield

GEMS

Needed: Special Friends!

In all of our lives we remember a woman who meant a lot to us. When I was 5 my sister's friend, Leta, gave me a birthday card. Leta's card was special and when she came over she was always interested in me. In the family line up I was stuck between 3 older sisters and a new baby brother. She was my "special friend" and though it didn't last forever it was truly a gift that I have never forgotten.

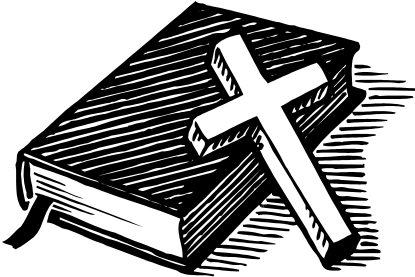
Who was it in your life? Would you like to be that for one of our GEMS? Those of us who continue to invest ourselves in GEMS truly believe that girls need good role models and feel called to mentor them as Christian women.

Being a special friend requires your prayers and love, sending a card at special times and being at some of our meetings and events. Give it some thought! There will be an informational and sign up table on September 9.

- Nancy Aukeman

Reformed Church Heritage - Church Expansion

The Reformed Church expanded beyond New Amsterdam. By 1664, six pastors served 13 churches in areas as far distant as New Jersey and Delaware. Because of the inevitable intertwining of ministry and church growth, both will be covered in this article.



The second major center of colonial activity was around Fort Orange (Albany, New York), 140 miles north of New Amsterdam. Local settlement grew through the patroon system. A patroon was an entrepreneur who received land in exchange for sponsoring new settlers in the colony. Kiliaen Van Rensselaer was a diamond merchant who owned extensive real estate in the Netherlands. Although he never set foot in America himself, his land holdings around the settlement of Rensselaerswyck eventually reached about 1,000 square miles.

Although patroons exercised certain rights and privileges over their subjects, they were obligated to provide religious instruction. Van Rensselaer was a godly man who wrote to the chief councilman in July 1632 *On all occasions when a council meeting is held, they shall not neglect to invoke the name of the Lord and every Sunday and on the usual holidays they shall come together to read aloud some chapters from the Holy Scriptures.* The layman Brant Peelen was appointed to lead worship services.

Rev. Johannes Megapolensis arrived at Rensselaerswyck in 1642. A former Roman Catholic, he befriended the Jesuit missionary Isaac Jogues and carried out missionary work among the Indians. Once his six year term ended, he resolutely made plans to return to the Netherlands. Stopping in New Amsterdam, he was persuaded to remain until his death in 1670. His youngest son Samuel who attended Harvard was the first Reformed minister educated on American soil. Back in Rensselaerswyck, Rev. Gideon Schaats served from 1652-94, the longest pastorate in the history of the denomination.

By 1660, Dutch settlements were established on Long Island at New Amersfoort, (Flatlands), Breukelen (Brooklyn), Midwout, (Flatbush), New Utrecht and Boswyck (Bushwick). For years, spiritual nurture was provided by lay leaders or occasional pastoral visits from New Amsterdam. In 1652, Megapolensis was joined by a second pastor, Samuel Drisius. In addition to Dutch, Drisius could preach in English and French, reaching English colonists on Long Island and Huguenots on Staten Island. People occasionally braved a ferry crossing over to Manhattan, but this often involved a long walk to the boat or an unsafe crossing in bad weather.

Eventually Rev. Johannes Polhemus was called in 1654 to minister to the congregations at Midwout, New Amersfoort and Breukelen. A church building was built at centrally-located New Amersfoort. Polhemus at first preached only there, but by 1656 was ordered to preach alternate afternoons at Midwout and Breukelen. The latter was more remotely located, and Polhemus was often accused of offering little more than a prayer on his fortnightly visit there. Over a century before the Reformed Church became independent from the Dutch Church, Polhemus proposed the idea of a separate American Classis.

Breukelen received its own pastor when Henricus Selyns arrived in September 1660. He was blessed with a godly heritage, having ancestors on both sides who had served as officers in the Reformed Church in Holland for a century. During his four year stay, church membership quadrupled. Even so, the congregation was either unable or reluctant to pay his salary. After considering leaving over this matter, Governor Stuyvesant agreed to pay a large portion of his pay in exchange for him making regular visits in good weather to the governor's farm or *bouwerie*. Among his listeners were about 40 slaves.

Selyns sailed back to the Netherlands, but later returned, serving from 1682 until his death in 1701. He was a prolific poet, composing verse to commemorate weddings and other occasions. In 1697, he wrote a lengthy work honoring Puritan leader Cotton Mather's writing *Magnalia Christi Americana* (*"The Mighty Works of Jesus Christ in America"*).

By Eric O'Brock
Next - Worship

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

**A COMMUNITY REDEEMED TO
REDEEM OUR COMMUNITY**

New Member



Many of us enjoyed the February Sunday when **Jeremiah Parks** stood in front of church and professed his faith and love for Christ. As Jeremiah shared a bit of what led him to this moment, we were encouraged by the clear evidence of the Holy Spirit at work among us. Jeremiah and his family were neighbors of Fourth during his early years and were introduced to us by walking across the field and joining us for worship. He began his education in the Christian schools in pre-school through 8th grade and then the switch to Northview High School proved to be a big change for him. Jeremiah's favorite and best teacher was our own Mrs. Boehm while he was in the 5th and 6th grade!

In high school, he enjoyed wood classes and going to Kent Career Technical Center (KCTC). KCTC is a trade school where he focused on heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC).

Jeremiah considers himself to be an outdoorsman and enjoys spending as much time in the woods as he can—especially the family property that they enjoy near Grant. He loves to fish and hunt and he is thrilled to report that he recently purchased a new bow for the upcoming fall hunting season. If he has spare time, his favorite activity is riding dirt bikes—something that he has enjoyed since the age of 5.

Jeremiah is currently busy holding down two jobs. About a month ago, he started at industrial E.M.S. (electrical, mechanical service) where his father works and he does whatever they want or need him to do. He enjoys this job! He also works at K&M Dodge where he is an oil change tech and does other miscellaneous jobs.

At the time of this publication, Jeremiah is on a much-anticipated dream trip to Colorado with his Dad and best friend! The two-week trip schedule will include dirt biking in the mountains, white water rafting, fishing and camping. I'm sure he will have some stories to share when he returns.

Gary Proos played a major role in his life over this past year. Last summer, they started to meet and study the Bible together. Gary helped him to understand God's love for him and taught him that we will always be sinners no matter how hard we try but God is always ready to forgive if we come asking for forgiveness. He appreciates his time with Gary and Mary as he continues to grow closer to his Lord. Gary and Jeremiah still meet when they can and are great friends. The age difference doesn't matter as they have a lot of fun together talking about cars and playing like big kids.

We give thanks to God for the evidence of his faithfulness in drawing Jeremiah to himself and we rejoice in the roles that many of us could play on Jeremiah's journey toward and with Jesus.

Before discovering the Dogri radio program, R. had many problems in his life and did not seem to be able to solve them. He went to various Hindu spiritual leaders for help and guidance, but always came away disappointed.

One day he happened to tune in to the Dogri-language program and found that he could not stop listening. He felt like the speaker was speaking directly to him and trying to show him a way out of his troubles. For the very first time in his life, while listening to the radio, R. was introduced to Jesus. He now looks to Jesus to help him in his time of need. He feels that Jesus is bringing him through his troubles. R. has been listening to the Dogri program for two years now and says the program is an essential part of his life.

Please pray that R. may not only see Jesus as someone who is there to help him in times of need, but as his personal Savior.

Words of Hope Dogri programs air Monday-Friday in Northern India.