

The 4th Focus

“What God, Faith and Marriage Mean to Me”

God means a lot to me and more than I can even express. He has pursued me all my life, I just didn't know it. He has always tried to lead me to Him. But I would either hear him or would not listen. He would always push me towards those who did believe and went to church. When I met Judy she too was a believer and if I wanted to stay with her, I too would have to attend church. I always had thoughts about God and Jesus but never really pursued them, until I met her and her family. Thank you Lord. Through her and 4th Church I have come a long way because of the love all of you have showed me, especially the love God has for me. I have come to lean on that love and hold on to it because I can not do it on my own, when times get rough. Some of you went through those times with me. And our Lord was always there with us. I don't know what I would do without Him in my life. There are times when we sing or when Pastor Tim preaches and I become very emotional because of the love I have for God and what He has done for me. Even through all the trials He has been with me, helping me to become closer to Him. It is not until now that I understand that fully.

Faith is something we all do not understand at some point in our life. Some can go through their whole life and still not get it. I am still learning, and getting closer. I am a work in progress. Faith is also based on love, and there are many forms of faith. There is faith in God, love, and even faith in others. My faith in all three have grown a lot. Especially my faith in God. As I have gone through my life with Judy that faith has grown because I had to learn to trust in Him and what He had done for us. Faith is not easy. You need to work at it all the time. My kids and their families are good examples of that for me, as they grow in their love for God and others. To have faith in others you are exposing yourself to hurt and pain. It is hard to do that time after time, but it builds your character and God uses it for His good. So keep the faith and let it grow, something we all need to do. My faith in God means everything to me, it makes me who I am.

Marriage to me used to mean a form of love. A way to further a relationship with the one you love. Over the years I have learned so much more. It is so much more than love for each other or having someone to grow old together with, even if that is a good starting place. Marriage is one of the three things I have had to learn. When we first start out in marriage we think we know everything about our spouse. If we're fortunate the first year goes well, but we soon learn that there are things we did not know about the other. We then have two choices. We can let these things continue to bother us or learn to understand it and except our spouse for who they are. As a couple we both have things the other does not like. We have to learn to go back to the reason we fell in love with one another, and remember that we did take an oath to one another and to God for better or worse. Judy and I both had to learn this, just as we all do. But then God took it one step further for us, and all though it was not easy, we learned to lean on God and to have faith in Him. I had to learn what better or for worse really meant. A lesson I am not sure I wanted to learn. There are times I failed, but Judy continued to trust in God and that I would get it right. Later in her life, she would ask why I was still with her, and I told her (1) God put us together (2) I learned to love her no matter what, and (3) I not only made a vow to her but to God as well. Do not take your marriage for granted or let the little things bother you so much. You don't know what you have until you lose it.

The three things I had to learn are listed above and were not easy. For me you need a love for God, for faith and all that it means, and to remember the love you had for each other no matter how long ago it was. I had 33 years with Judy and through all the trials I loved her each day, sometimes more than others. What a gift I had in her and the gift continues in our three children.

With Christian love,
Norm

Baby Shower

Blankets and bottles and booties, oh my! On Tuesday evening, June 14, several sisters in Christ gathered to welcome a new little sister. Her mommy, Jessica Ortiz and Grandma Pat attended on her behalf.

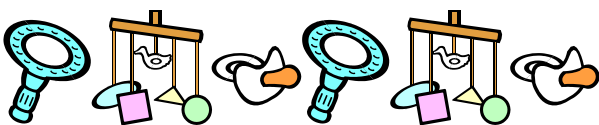
Several jars of unlabeled baby food were passed around as we wondered what kind of fruit or vegetable could be inside. Though no tasting was allowed Julie and Abbie Schalk did a great job of guessing.

Throughout the night we nibbled on fruit and crackers and cheese and cake. No calories were consumed, however.

In preparation for our new sister many sweet and practical gifts were opened by Jessica. Abbie kept the bags and gifts moving along and we think she will be planning 4th showers somewhere in the future.

We are so thankful that the Ortiz family has joined our fellowship and look forward to meeting baby Ortiz sometime soon. A special thank you to Mary Proos and Betsy Courtchie for helping plan and prepare this celebration. We praise God for His gift of life.

- Nany Aukeman



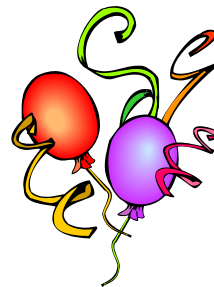
Birthdays

July

- 1 - Kari Bierens
- 2 - Jerry Wierenga
- 8 - Connie Larson
- 8 - Jeff Broene
- 11 - Anne Nordyke
- 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

August

- 3 - Charlton Meyer
- 2 - Tom Adams
- 3 - Tim Meendering
- 5 - C. Scherpenisse
- 8 - Joyce Van Neuren
- 12 - Rick Berthiaume
- 12 - Alexis Springfield
- 14 - S. 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 - B. VanderVelde
- 24 - Lynn Simone
- 25 - Amber Studebaker
- 26 - Joel Adams
- 31 - Jeff Springfield



Happy Birthday!

New Members

Erin & Jeff Broene have been married since August 2009. Jeff is an audit manager at PwC (PricewaterhouseCoopers). Erin is a registered nurse at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital, and a student pediatric nurse practitioner (graduating in 23 days if this is read 7/3/11)!

Jeff & Erin use to attend Coit Community CRC where Jeff currently serves as a Cadet counselor. For their first visit to Fourth, they walked in the wrong entrance (near the fellowship hall) and didn't know how to access the sanctuary. They arrived late, so the singing had already begun - and they ended up entering the sanctuary behind the music team in the front of church (much to Erin's embarrassment - she never expected to return after that).

The Broenes enjoy volleyball, rollerblading, traveling, fishing, camping, windsurfing, Lake Michigan, and listening to the Bolts tell stories about parenting.

Make sure you introduce yourself to the Broenes. They are a wonderful couple who love the Lord and you will surely enjoy spending time with them!

Jonathan Brinks graduated from Northview High and is currently taking core classes from GRCC. He is interested in entering the fields of either bio-medical or bio-chemical. He also works at Amway in line operations, skidding and set up.

He loves to hang out with friends, especially going to the beach in the summer and movies. Soccer, computer programming and working out at the gym are also activities he enjoys.

Jon was formally received as a professing member of our church family on Father's Day and gave an amazing and moving testimony of God's love and grace in his life. Jon's testimony revealed how his early years were characterized by significant anger and rebellion but God pursued and wooed Jon toward faith through his parents, his summers of working at Son-Life Camp, various mentors like Tim Dorn and Eric Schalk, our church family and a number of other influences.

This change in Jon's heart and life could only be the work of God and his Spirit. Jon's testimony reveals an amazing understanding of the gospel and how he could only point to Jesus and give him the credit for this transformation.

We are all encouraged to give thanks to God and pray for his grace, wisdom and protection for Jon as he seeks to serve God where he leads.

The History of 4th Reformed Church - Moving Forward

Overview: This month, we will cover 55 years of church history from the Great Depression to a time still familiar to many. Next, we go back in time to review the events leading up to the move to a new church. The final article will cover events of about the last 25 years.

By 1929, the United States had ridden a wave of outward prosperity for most people for many years. Soon to be President Herbert Hoover declared in 1928 *We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land.* Reckless fiscal practices during the 1920s would change all of this. The Great Depression deeply impacted the world, nation and Fourth Reformed Church as well. Rev. Dames D. Ellerbroek was installed at Fourth on May 7, 1929. He served throughout the entirety of an economic downturn that effectively ended with World War II. During his pastorate, church programs and funds were limited. Between the years 1930-34, disbursements fell from \$9,044.00 to \$3,315.00. The pastor took a pay cut from \$2,500.00 to \$1,517.00. The parsonage at 515 Marietta, first occupied by the Ellerbroek family, became the church's manse for the next 32 years. Early in 1940, it was learned that Rev. Ellerbroek had cancer. The minister who until our current pastor served the longest pastorate, died in office November 28, 1941.

The installation of Rev. William Swets took place on November 1, 1942. An organized neighborhood outreach was underway after Marian DeYoung became the church's first community missionary. In 1943, Rev. Bernard Hakken became the first of many foreign missionaries to be supported by the congregation. World War II came close to home as 54 Fourth men were in uniform by December 1943. Three sons of the church – Adrian Bush, Simon Van Ess and Leroy Ellerbroek – died in combat. Rev. Swets was granted a 15 month leave of absence to serve as a navy chaplain. He left Fourth in May 1949. Our next pastor, Rev. Henry P. Kik, was installed on September 27, 1949. His ministry was characterized by local outreach. Beginning in September 1950, he hosted the radio programs *From the Pastor's Study* and later *The Question Hour*. Abundant listener response was reported as "radio mail" in church bulletins. In 1952, church members locally distributed 2,000 copies of the *Fourth Reformed Beacon* publication. Rev. Kik left Fourth in April 1958. The building of our present church structure during his pastorate will be covered in the next article.

Rev. Russell E. Horton was installed as our next pastor on May 19, 1959. Organizations begun during this time included the Calvinist Cadet program in March 1961. Community outreach continued as church volunteers distributed the *Fourth Forum* publication. In April 1964, Fourth participated with nine other local Reformed churches in the P-T-R (Preaching-Teaching-Reaching) crusade. The promotion of missions continued with week-long missionary conferences between 1963-68. Rev. Horton left Fourth in March 1968.

On August 6, 1969, Rev. Arvin Wester was installed as pastor. The Calvinette (GEMS) program began in October 1969. The Lay Witness Mission in 1972 emphasized personal testimony. Overseas missions benefitted from the congregation underwriting the expense of two Bible translations in 1972-73. A church family donated a house to be used by missionaries on furlough. Rev. Wester left in July 1973. Rev. Jerome Batts was installed June 27, 1974. Children's church was begun in April 1975. The church's 100th anniversary was celebrated. Rev. Batts left in June 1977. During the interim between pastors, the congregation paid the remaining debt on all properties, celebrated with a mortgage burning ceremony on October 5, 1977. The congregation dedicated the Allen digital electronic organ on April 2, 1978. The installation of Rev. Peter Breen took place on February 15, 1979. Beginning in 1982, a Christian school fund made up of voluntary contributions helped congregational children attend Christian day school. Rev. Breen left Fourth in January 1984.

- Eric O'Brock

Next: From Ionia Street to Union Avenue

**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**

GEMS Update

Summer started out with a splash for the GEMS. On Monday, June 20, several GEMS and leaders headed out to the Ray & Joan Kroc Salvation Army Community Center.

The aquatic center was great and had something for every swim level. Julie Gleason was the first to head down the 23 foot slide and several brave girls followed. The pool included a lazy river, smaller slides, water sprays from a landing area, a 3 person lap area, an outdoor spray pad and a 17 person hot tub. The leaders were able to relax a little as there were 4 life guards on duty!

Everyone came back to church a little water-logged but safe and happy. We plan to return again and highly recommend this center for swimming and fun.

- Nancy Aukeman

Breaktime and Bakery

"After your first week what do you like the most?"

- Brian Townley reporting

Jessica - the teachers that help us with math

Saul - fun activities that we do

Kasey - everything!

Christian - stations and field trips

Faviola - learning about different countries

Ariana - projects and crafts

Cynthia - learning about other people in other countries

Abbie - learning about North America

Drea - stations, especially the math station

Jajuan - field trips

Jazmine - fun activities and free time

Dylan - computer station

Sam - hanging out with Eric

Joel - cooking

Eric - like the kids

Cameron - like learning new recipes and having fun with the kids

Isaac - baking things and field trips

Jimmy - baking stuff

Avery - being able to bake random things from scratch

Jennifer - really cool to be back and to be one of the öbossesö - really fun but tiring



TRIP Tidbit

Feel overwhelmed thinking about paying with gift cards? Many of our participants commit only to groceries and/or gas.



Support the ministry of New City Neighbors by buying gift cards from NCN at face value!