



# The 4th Focus

## “When the Light Goes On”

**W**e live in darkness. It is a darkness of sin, evil, pride and a blindness to the sin, evil and pride. Because of the pride and blindness, we are each inclined to think that we have a special ability to see—especially the darkness in others. But the reality is that this darkness courses through our veins and without some intervening help, we are like moles who aimlessly zig and zag their way through life under the turf.

This darkness is the reason that Scripture is our focus this fall with a sermon series based on Psalm 119:105: *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”* This week, we consider Psalm 36, which begins in the same way that I began this article—with a reflection on the darkness and evil in the world. But then, the author shifts into praise for God’s love and faithfulness and includes these stunning words (vs. 9): *“For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.”*

For the darkness that can overwhelm us through illness and hardship, we need the light to go on so that we can see how he is the fountain of life.

For the darkness that takes away our joy or makes us ugly and destructive in our relationships, we need the light to go on so that we can see the joy, beauty and love of Jesus in his relationship with us.

For the darkness of our hidden life where we drink a few too many or choose sexual impurity, we need the light that points to the much better alternative of a “drink from the river of delights” (vs. 8).

For the darkness that would divide us rather than bind us together in unity, we need the light of his Word to learn the magnitude of the price paid for that unity.

So how does that light in which we see light go on for us? Or, how does the Word become a light for our path so that we can see our way through the darkness? Last week’s sermon revealed how God’s Word as text is perfect in its expression of who God is and what he is doing to redeem the world. But we also saw that God also sent his son, Jesus, as the Word made flesh to fully express who God is.

Many of you have expressed your frustration with reading, understanding and applying the Bible so that the light does go on. This is one reason that Branson Parler is teaching a series throughout this fall on how to study and better understand the Word so that the light goes on. Branson teaches many of the same things to his students at Kuyper College. When we read a text, how do we take into account the genre, immediate context and at the same time, the big story. All of these things are vital for also seeing how all of Scripture points to Jesus as Word, Light, Savior and Lord. Last Sunday, the teaching focused on how we can study together—sometimes disagreeing—but do so without anxiety and in the context of love for one another.

Every day, we need light for the darkness that pervades our lives. Scripture reveals that the light in which we see light is also a work of his Spirit. Christ, through his Spirit, guides and opens our minds to see the transforming truth of his Word (Luke 24:45) and so we should pray specifically for God’s Spirit to do this for us.

Scripture also reveals how the community is vital for the light in which we see light. The Eunuch needed Philip to sit with him (Acts 8:26-40). The Pentecost believers “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship.” The light goes on when we are faithful to be with each other in community. And so this is one of the most significant reasons that we meet together in small groups—so that we can “instruct one another,” “teach and admonish one another” and then, together, practice all of the things we learn such as loving one another—so that the light goes on! Jesus said, “whoever lives by the truth comes into the light” (John 3:21). Let us increasingly learn to live by the truth and come into the light.

- Pastor Tim

## Check These Out!

## Birthdays

### Radical by David Platt

ōRadical will cause you to bounce on a spectrum between two words: *ouch* and *amen*. Tough truths do that. They challenge us to examine our lives and then choose the lasting over the temporary. Read *Radical* if you're ready to live differently.ö - Gregg Matte  
*The Christian Guide to Parent Care* and *Caring for Aging Loved Ones*

Two good practical resources that help caring for our aging loved ones easier.

### Heaven is For Real by Todd Burpo

A little boy's astounding story of his trip to heaven and back. It will change the way you think of eternity, offering the chance to see, and believe, like a child.

### Leaving and Learning by Karen Kingsbury

Two recent books in the Bailey Flanigan Series by this popular author.

### The yada yada Prayer Group Gets Caught by Neta Jackson

Don't miss this read as the Yadas toughen up their prayer knees as difficult circumstances come their way.

### One Thousand Gifts by Ann Voskamp

Voskamp teaches you how to biblically lament loss, turning pain into poetry; intentionally embrace a lifestyle of radical gratitude; and slow down and catch God in the moment. Wake up to a thousand blessings! A New York Times Bestseller.

### Halfway Herbert by Francis Chan

Halfway Herbert helps children discover the importance of honesty and offering their best for God in all they do.

## New City Neighbors

Summer has wound down, school has begun and fall weather is approaching. These are just some of the signs of transition at New City Neighbors. Breaktime and the Bakery have run their course, the garden has just a month left, and soon EMS, High School, and GEMS will begin.

Our High School program kicked off on Friday, September 16 with a night of fun. Regularly meetings will begin on Tuesday, September 27 at 7:00 PM. This year we are going to explore a number of topics including relationships, prayer, money, and scenes from the life of Christ.

EMS kicks off on Thursday, September 22. EMS is for students in 3rd - 8th grade and meets every Thursday from 6:00 to 7:30 PM. We typically serve a meal to the students, provide homework help, games, and Bible study. We will need some help with meals and would love to have you sign up to provide our students with some awesome food.

GEMS is a girls only ministry that meets on the first and third Monday's of the month. GEMS kicks off on October 3rd. GEMS is for girls in 1st through 8th grade and they meet from 6:30 to 8:15. Their theme this year is "Get Wisdom" from Proverbs.

If you would like information on how to get involved in any of these ministries, please talk to Eric Schalk.

### Sept

- 1 - Mary Proos
- 2 - Dale Springfield
- 4 - Abbie Schalk
- 7 - Timothy Brinks
- 8 - Ruby Parler
- 9 - John Gebhart
- 9 - Travis Bolt
- 10 - Dan Springfield
- 11 - Katie Faasse
- 11 - Norm Schalk
- 12 - Jajuan Woods
- 14 - Tawnie Springfield
- 15 - Elisabeth McDowell
- 17 - Eleanor DeFouw
- 19 - Jessica Berrios
- 22 - Barb Funckes
- 23 - Marty Berthiaume
- 23 - Verta Burggraaf
- 23 - Deb Wild
- 26 - Steve Burggraaf
- 26 - Eric Schalk
- 30 - Lisa Fles

### Oct

- 1 - Dave Randall
- 1 - Becky Tubergen
- 2 - Marissa Fles
- 3 - Kintaro Rossiter
- 4 - Julie Gleason
- 5 - Leah Walton
- 6 - Joshua Schalk
- 11 - Sandy Gleason
- 11 - Analie Woods
- 15 - Sue Hawkins
- 15 - Jennifer Wammack
- 15 - John Bills
- 17 - Brian Tubergen
- 18 - Richanda Bolt
- 18 - Adam Villalobos
- 19 - Diane Christians
- 20 - Rick Fles
- 21 - Grace Parmeter
- 21 - Addison McDowell
- 22 - Bob Scherpenisse
- 25 - Bob Burggraaf
- 26 - Nancy Aukeman
- 28 - Suzanne Bolt
- 30 - Phyllis Berrevoets
- 30 - Dianne Waterloo

🎉 HAPPY BIRTHDAY 🎉

### ATTENTION PARENTS!

Do you find your days so busy with activities that it's hard to spend quality time nurturing the faith of your children? Check out the Focus on the Family website [www.thrivingfamily.com](http://www.thrivingfamily.com) for time-tested Biblical guidance on marriage, parenting, and other important family matters.



## *The History of 4th Church - From Ionia to Union Avenue*

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Local industrial expansion and the departure of many church members from the immediate area led the congregation of Fourth Reformed Church to seek a new home after having been at 1031 Ionia Avenue since 1888. A desire to leave had existed for many years. As mentioned earlier, an unsuccessful appeal was made to move the church to the corner of North and Page Street as early as 1926. During World War II, church members were encouraged to buy war bonds made payable to an ever growing building fund.

A committee was finally formed in January 1951 to seek a new church location. Of three proposed sites, the choice became the 5 ½ acre Eli Cross estate at the corner of Union Avenue and Page Street. Other locations considered were the corner of Burke and Leonard Street NE and on Spencer near Portland NE. Special finance and building committees were formed in April 1951. The former greenhouse site, purchased for \$30,500.00, was paid off by January 1953.

Sacrificial congregational giving and fund raising projects brought hopes for a new church closer to reality. At a congregational meeting on September 16, 1953, it was determined that the church was in a sound financial position to have building plans drawn up. The type of architecture was soon after approved. James H. Haveman was chosen to be the architect in March 1954.

Although it had been hoped that construction could begin in the spring of 1954, a year would pass before a \$100,000.00 bank loan could be matched by congregational funds. On April 10, 1955 (Easter Sunday night), the congregation met in the old church for the last time. The property, sold to the Grace Assembly congregation for \$15,000.00, was destroyed by fire on March 19, 1957. Today, the former site is occupied by Autodie, a die manufacturing plant at 44 Coldbrook NW.

For one year, the congregation met for worship at the Ladies Literary Club, 61 Sheldon SE. Other proposed locations included Creston Christian School, Creston High School, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, 100 Sheldon SE and Fountain Street Church. Weekly activities including consistory meetings and choir rehearsals took place at Bethel Reformed Church, 1700 Coit NE.

Two committees played a major role in the realization of the new church. During the period of construction, the finance committee consisted of Lester Scherpenisse (Chairman), William Bommelje, Melvin Stuit, Franklin Ryskamp, Walter Koets, Charles Reitsma and William Wagenaar. The building committee was composed of Neil VerHage (Chairman), James Berrevoets, Seward Stoepker, Harold Zeeff, Abraham Johnson, Marvin VanderVelde and Harry DeJong.

Two events heralded the start of construction. Mr. Frank Koen, the oldest member of the greater consistory, turned over the first shovelful of dirt at the groundbreaking ceremonies on March 30, 1955. On June 15, the cornerstone was laid. Construction of the new church, coordinated by general contractor N.J. Westra and Son, was begun on April 14 and completed in about a year. Its completion was celebrated with a dedication service on April 17, 1956. A community service took place on April 20, followed by an organ recital on April 22.

The completed church, of modified gothic design, consisted of an assembly room, pastor's study, kitchen, women's lounge, a 14 room education unit and sanctuary with a seating capacity of 650. The stained glass windows in the sanctuary illustrate the theme *The Christian Life*. Final landscaping and blacktopping of the parking lot were completed by the fall of 1956. The final cost of the building and furnishings was \$225,000.00 with the total value of the church and property set at just under \$283,000.00.

Later additions would bring the church property to its present state. The storage garage was built in 1960. The present parsonage was first occupied in 1962. The present church structure was completed on March 17, 1966 with the dedication of the education-recreational addition, which includes the library, office, pastor's study, nursery and fireside lounge.

- By Eric O'Brock Next--The Last 25 years

**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**

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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



How quickly the summer has faded. Yesterday we were swimming at the Kroc Center and today we must break out the jackets. We had an eventful summer. June was swimming at the Salvation Army Kroc Center. It is a great place to take GEMS or your family. There are many life-guards and a huge slide that makes you verrrry dizzy. July we planned to travel to Rockford to have ice cream and tour the park by the Rogue

River. However, the weather was so **HOT**, that we decided to stay at church and watch a movie while eating our ice cream in the coolness of the fellowship hall. August brought the GEMS and leaders out to the cottage on Murray Lake. All the GEMS love to be in the lake, ride on the tube and just get wet. Our special guest this time was Betsy Coutchie. She was a real trooper and stayed in the water and made sure none of the GEMS drowned when jumping off the dock. Many thanks Betsy!!

This year our new theme is, "Get Wisdom, Go Beyond the Gold." The theme is based on Proverbs 9:10. "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." We will be studying the Proverbs to learn about God's wisdom. It should be a good year for the leaders as well.

GEMS begins on October 3 at 6:30 PM. We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays from October through April. We encourage all young girls from 1<sup>st</sup> grade through 8<sup>th</sup> grade to come to GEMS and find out how much fun we all have singing, dancing, eating, doing crafts and learning from God's Word. If you will be attending GEMS this year, we encourage you to bring a friend along. We love to share with others.

Also, a very special part of GEMS is our Special Friend Program. If you would like to be a Special Friend to one GEMS girl, please let Sharon know. The encouragement is so good for some of the GEMS who may not receive it from a parent or any other source. You can make a difference with just a note or a prayer. Please consider this as a service project. And a big **THANK YOU** to those who already are working with the GEMS program in this capacity.

- Sharon Van Timmeren

### TRIP Tidbit

Planning a fall home improvement project? Gift cards for Home Depot, Lowe's, & Menard's are available in \$25 & \$100 denominations.



Support the ministry of New City Neighbors by buying gift cards from NCN at face value. Questions? Stop in the office after church. Our 2011 goal is \$3000!