

Welcome to First Christian Reformed Church!
Pastor John Knoester
February 7, 2021

* Please stand in body or in spirit

"Jesus, lover of my soul,"

Prelude

Sung Call to Worship: *"Look at the World" – John Rutter*

Welcome/Announcements

* Call to Worship:

Leader: Praise the Lord, O my Soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

**People: "Praise the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits.**

Leader: Praise the Lord, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.

**People: "Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts,"
you his servants who do his will.**

Leader: Praise the Lord, all his works
Everywhere in his dominion.

People: Praise the Lord, O my soul.
—based on Psalm 103:1-2, 20-22

* God's Greeting:

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: May the love of God the Father,
and the grace of Jesus the Son,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be and abide with us all.

People: Amen!

Song of Response: *"10,000 Reasons"*

"Let me to Thy bosom fly,"

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession:

Words of Assurance:

Leader: "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

People: Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him."

—John 3:16-17, NRSV

God's Will for our Lives:

Leader: If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

—Philippians 2:1-4, NRSV

People: May the Spirit of God guide us to be obedient to this Word. Amen!

Song of Thanksgiving and Preparation: *"How Beautiful"*

(At this time children ages 3 – 3rd grade are excused for Children and Worship)

“While the nearest waters roll,”

Scripture Reading: Song of Songs 1:4b-14

Brooke: How right they are to adore you! ⁵Dark am I, yet lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, dark like the tents of Kedar, like the tent curtains of Solomon. ⁶Do not stare at me because I am dark, because I am darkened by the sun. My mother's sons were angry with me and made me take care of the vineyards; my own vineyard I have neglected. ⁷Tell me, you whom I love, where you graze your flock and where you rest your sheep at midday. Why should I be like a veiled woman beside the flocks of your friends?

People: ⁸If you do not know, most beautiful of women, follow the tracks of the sheep and graze your young goats by the tents of the shepherds.

Pastor John: ⁹I liken you, my darling, to a mare harnessed to one of the chariots of Pharaoh. ¹⁰Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings, your neck with strings of jewels. ¹¹We will make you earrings of gold, studded with silver.

Brooke: ¹²While the king was at his table, my perfume spread its fragrance. ¹³My lover is to me a sachet of myrrh resting between my breasts. ¹⁴My lover is to me a cluster of henna blossoms from the vineyards of En Gedi.

Prayer of Illumination

Message: ***“Love Returned”***

Time of Prayer

"While the tempest still is high:"

Song of Application: "O Love" – Elaine Hagenburg

* We Profess our Faith: Belgic Confession – Article 27

Leader: What do you believe about the church of Christ?

People: We believe and confess one single catholic or universal church— a holy congregation and gathering of true Christian believers.

Leader: What binds them all together?

People: They await their entire salvation in Jesus Christ, having been washed by his blood, and sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

Leader: When did this church begin?

People: This church has existed from the beginning of the world and will last until the end, as appears from the fact that Christ is eternal King who cannot be without subjects.

Leader: How is this church preserved?

People: This holy church is preserved by God against the rage of the whole world, even though for a time it may appear very small in the eyes of humankind— as though it were snuffed out.

Leader: How big is this church?

People: This holy church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or certain persons. But it is spread and dispersed throughout the entire world, though still joined and united in heart and will, in one and the same Spirit, by the power of faith.

—based on Belgic Confession, Art. 27

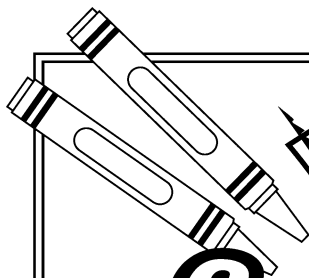
* God's Blessing:

Parting Praise: *"Doxology (God Be Praised)"* – Worship Circle

Postlude

Welcome! Let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy." Those are the words of the psalmist in Psalm 5:11. Whoever you are, wherever you are from, we welcome you and we invite you to "be glad" with us about God's goodness and mercy. Let us "ever sing for joy" and praise God with profoundly grateful hearts.

	<i>Today 2/7</i>	<i>Next Week 2/14</i>
Sound:	Tim Hibma	Henry Hammingh
Video:	Hannah Van Hofwegen	Hannah van Hofwegen
Projection:	Brandon Speck	Carson Blom
Offering:	General Fund	General Fund



PUZZLE

Praise him!

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, a large crowd cheered for him. Complete this puzzle to discover what they used (also see John 12:13).

Directions: In the number grid below, draw lines by starting with the first number in each list and stopping at the last.

122-112-116-102-112

112-68-102

102-107-92-102

102-47-92

92-97-82-92

92-37-82

22-42-44-32-9-42

42-55-52-66-62-77-72

42-19-52-18-62-17-72

82-27-72-87-82

82-42

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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
100	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121
•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132



First CRC Announcements

Sunday, February 7, 2021

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Dear Friends,

I suspect that when most of us first attempted to read the Song of Songs one of our initial reactions was, “*What in the world is **this** doing in the Bible!?*” No doubt a second common question was “*What on earth is **this** about!?*” When it comes to reading this particular book of the Bible most of us can probably identify with the confusion of the Ethiopian eunuch when Paul asks him, “*Do you understand what you are reading?*” (Acts 8:30).

Yet, in a world that often both worships sex and also treats it as something dirty – the Song of Songs provides a much needed corrective. It seems to communicate that passionate physical love is a beautiful gift from God. Not only does it demonstrate that the Bible is not ‘anti-sex,’ but it also demonstrates that biblical sex is to be celebrated with gratitude to God who made us in His image.

In short, the Song of Songs is not only a beautiful love poem, but also a parable about human love that invites us to also reflect deeply on the relationship between Christ and His followers. In other words, it gives us the opportunity to reflect on our own intimate relationship with Jesus. And therefore, certainly one practical question we should keep in front of us throughout the weeks ahead is simply this: “Are we striving to love the Lover of our soul (Jesus) with the same kind of eagerness, anticipation, and passion as we see expressed here in the Song of Songs?”

Listed below is a *tentative* outline of our study. As always, I encourage you to read the texts ahead of time. May God continue to bless us with both grace and truth as we travel this road together.

In His Love, Pastor John

1. January 24 – “*A Theology of Human Sexuality and an Introduction to the Song of Songs*” – Song of Songs 8:6-7
2. January 31 – “*A Desire for Intimacy*” – Song of Songs 1:1-1:4a

3. Feb. 7 - "Love Returned" – Song of Songs 1:4b-14
4. Feb. 14 – "Crazy Love" – Song of Songs 1:15-2:7
5. Feb. 21—"Waiting for Love" – Song of Songs 2:8-17

**More to be added at a later date

2021 Synod - Human Sexuality Report: Due to the rapidly changing sexual mores within our culture today – the 2016 Synod (the annual general assembly of the Christian Reformed Church) commissioned a study committee to articulate a "Biblical Theology of Human Sexuality" to be used as guidance for churches in our denomination. Five years later (not so 'rapid') this report is completed and will be presented at the 2021 Synod. Recently the elders have been reviewing this report and for the most part have been encouraged by the tenor and wisdom of the report itself. It's also one of the main reasons for our current sermon series on the Song of Songs. If you are interested in reading the entire 175 page report you may do so by clicking on the following link: https://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/human_sexuality_report_2020.pdf

If you would like to read the 12 page executive summary of the report or the 4 page Banner article about it – these are currently available on the walkway shelf in the breezeway between the sanctuary and the church fellowship hall. If you have any questions/concerns/expressions of gratitude about the report itself – please don't hesitate to contact Pastor John or your district elder.

The elders met briefly by Zoom and with the spike of cases and the recent announcement of more restrictions we will be adding the link to the past week's service to the bulletin announcements and as well to the announcements sent by email each week. **Last week's Sunday service link:** The link to watch last week's Sunday service online is as follows: Last Sunday's Service: <https://youtu.be/XeFJUshCDXw>

To further aid simplifying giving when we can't all be at church, First CRC now provides options to give your tithes and offerings electronically. This means you are now able to donate using a credit or debit card, as well as give directly from a bank account. Check the church's website: <http://www.firstcrcmv.com> for more information on these and other giving options.

ORGANIZATIONS WE SUPPORT

New Copies of Today's Christian Living – are on the shelf in the hallway!

REQUESTED ANNOUNCEMENTS

At-home Faith Formation Tip - The Practice of Justice and Mercy: Proverbs 14:31 says, "He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God." Who in your community is needy? What might you do to show kindness to that person or group of people? (For more on faith practices from Faith Formation Ministries, visit crcna.org/FaithFormation/Practices.)

BLACK HISTORY MONTH BOOK DISCUSSION - Join CRC campus ministers Rick Mast and Mike Wagenman on the last day of Black History Month for a discussion of *Jesus and the Disinherited* by Howard Thurman, one of the great 20th century American preachers and co-founder of the first interracial/intercultural church in the USA. This is the book that Martin Luther King Jr. carried wherever he went in the cause for racial justice. We gather on Zoom at 8pm ET (5pm PT) Sunday, February 28. The Eventbrite registration link is at www.WesternCampusMinistry.ca

Offering for CRCNA Pastor Church Resources - On Sunday February 28, we'll be taking a collection for Pastor Church Resources (PCR). This ministry focuses on the health and wellbeing of pastors, ministry leaders, congregations, and classes. Your gift enables PCR to resource, encourage, and support CRC churches and leaders in significant ways.

Focus on the Cross - Lenten Devotions - Lent is a season to focus on the hope of Jesus Christ. Receive a free Today devotional email series to help you refresh, refocus, and renew your faith during Lent. Or download the ebook! Subscribe at todaydevotional.com/lent.

GROUNDWORK: RECONCILIATION - Re-establishing peace and justice after relationships are broken is hard. Join Groundwork as we study 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Matthew 5:9, 23-27; and Matthew 18:15-20 to better understand the spiritual discipline of reconciliation and how our reconciliation with God impacts our ability to reconcile with each other. Listen now at GroundworkOnline.com and subscribe to Groundwork's weekly emails for future episodes.

TRUSTING GOD - Check out the new kids' devotion at www.kidscorner.net. Trusting God can be difficult because most times we don't know exactly what he's doing. But what we do know is that God is loving, kind, good, and does things that are the best for us. Listen now at kidscorner.net and subscribe to KC's weekly emails for all the new content.



How can
we
PRAY
for you?

People to be remembered with prayers, cards, letters & words of encouragement. Call the church office at (336-2405) or e-mail: secretary@firstcrcmv.com by 9:00 am Thursday of each week with your prayer items.

NEW REQUESTS:

Please keep both Jerry and Marion Ekkelkamp in your prayers. Marion was recently moved to the Birchview Memory Care center in Sedro-Woolley. Meanwhile, Jerry has been in the hospital for a variety of complications, but then also contracted pneumonia. Upon being discharged from the hospital he will then join his wife at Birchview. So please pray for full healing for Jerry and for a smooth transition for both of them as they settle in at Birchview.

CONTINUING REQUESTS:

Please keep **Rich Knight** and his family in your prayers throughout the days ahead. Rich's father, Richard Knight, passed away suddenly from heart failure. May God grant each one of the family the internal peace that only He can provide.

We express our condolences to **Hank and Anjean Vander Veen**. Anjean's sister, Freda Visser, passed away at a nursing home in Lynden. Please commit to upholding all of Freda's loved ones in your prayers throughout the days ahead.

Please continue to pray **for Adelaida Vega**. Adelaida is taking some new medication pills with hope that they can control the cancer in days to come. Please continue to pray for her and her family.

Chris Vander Wekken is continuing rehab at The Bridge. His course of radiation is complete. Pray that it has eradicated all of the tumor and thank you in advance for your continued commitment to pray for Chris.

Continue to pray for **Ryanne Vander Pol** as she continues with her IV therapy and some radiation treatments.

SHUT INS:

Nell Annema at Birchview Memory Care in Sedro-Woolley; **Jerry & Marion Ekkelkamp** and **Mary Koopmans** at Where the Heart is in Burlington; **Case Lanting** at Olympic Place in Arlington, WA; **Wilma Paul** at Life Care Center in Sedro-Woolley; **Andy Pippel**, **Adrianna Swanson**, and **Lona Vander Griend** at Home Place in Burlington; **Sally Reehoorn** at Creekside in Burlington; **Bev Van Slageren** at family in Grandview, WA.

OTHER REQUESTS: (CRC Communications)

February 7, 2021 - (Race Relations: Peace) Praise God, who made all of us human beings in his image. Give glory to Jesus, who came to break the curse of sin and will rule in righteousness. Ask the Holy Spirit to fill us as we pray and work against the sins of racial division, mistrust, and distress around our world. Pray that we will better reflect the mind of Christ and the will of God and shine his light in a broken world.

February 6, 2021 - (ReFrame: Burkina Faso) Ky is one of the most dedicated listeners to ReFrame's French ministry programs. Every year she collects all the scripts from the past year's radio messages to reread them. She says these messages nourish her faith so much that she cannot do without them. Praise God for Ky's faithfulness! Pray that she will continue to seek understanding of God's Word.

February 5, 2021 - (Resonate: Africa) Resonate missionaries ask for prayers for the Christian educators they work with in Nigeria, Uganda, and other countries throughout Africa. Many schools are struggling financially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially as they try to safely reopen for in-person learning. Ask God to provide for these schools. Pray for wisdom and encouragement for educators as they strive to support students and families.