

Welcome to First Christian Reformed Church!
Pastor John Knoester
December 29, 2024 ♦ 10:30am Service

***Please stand in body or in spirit**

*“Lead on, O King eternal,
till sin’s fierce war shall cease,”*

Prelude

Welcome

*** Sung Call to Worship: LUYH #1 v. 1-4**

“All People That on Earth Do Dwell”

1. All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.
Serve him with joy, his praises tell,
Come now before him and rejoice!
2. Know that the Lord is God indeed;
he formed us all without our aid.
We are the flock he comes to feed,
the sheep who by his hand were made.
3. O enter then his gates with joy,
within his courts his praise proclaim.
Let thankful songs your tongues employ,
O bless and magnify his name.
4. Because the Lord our God is good,
his mercy is forever sure.
His faithfulness at all times stood
and shall from age to age endure.

Words: William Kethe, 1561 at., P.D.; Music: Louis Bourgeois, 1551, P.D.; CCLI# 678905

*** Opening Prayer**

* Call to Worship: (Based on Psalm 90)

Leader: Lord, you have been our dwelling place
throughout all generations.

**People: Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

Leader: A thousand years in your sight
are like a day that has just gone by,
or like a watch in the night.

**People: Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.**

* Opening Hymn of Praise: LUYH #401 v. 1-4

"Hours and Days and Years and Ages"

1. Hours and days and years and ages
swift as moving shadows flee;
as we scan life's fleeting pages,
nothing lasting do we see.
On the paths our feet are walking,
footprints all will fade away;
each today as we enjoy it
soon becomes a yesterday.
2. But from sin your mercy drew us,
would not leave our souls alone.
Gracious Lord, you did renew us;
in Christ's death we are your own.
Through the mercy of your leading,
each short step along our way
now becomes a path to guide us
to the land of endless day.
3. Though swift time keeps marching onward,
it will not decide our end.
You will always be our Father,
loving God, eternal Friend.
When life's dangers overwhelm us,
you will ever be our stay;
through your Son you are our Father,
always changeless, come what may.

4. Speed along, then, years and ages,
with your gladness and your pain;
when our deepest sorrow rages,
God our Father will remain.
Though all friends on earth forsake us
and our troubles shall increase,
God with his right hand will take us
to our everlasting peace.

Words: Rhijivis Feith (1753-1824); tr. Leonard P. Brink, 1929; rev. Henrietta Ten
Harmsel (1921-2012), 1984, © 1987 Faith Alive Christian Resources CCLI #678905

* God's Greeting

* We Greet Each Other

*"And holiness shall whisper
the sweet amen of peace."*

Announcements

Invitation to Transformed Living:

Call to Confession

When we come into the holy presence of God,
our own humanity is laid bare.

When we stand in the living presence of truth,
our own falsehood is revealed.

People of God, let us acknowledge who we are
and ask our ever-present God to forgive us.

Song of Confession: LUYH #405 v. 1-3 *"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"*

1. O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home:
2. Under the shadow of your throne
your saints have dwelt secure;
sufficient is your arm alone,
and our defense is sure.

3. Before the hills in order stood
or earth received its frame,
from everlasting you are God,
to endless years the same.

PSALM 90; Words: Isaac Watts (1674-1748), 1719, alt., P.D.; Music: William Croft, 1708, P.D.; CCLI #678905

Responsive Prayer:

Leader: We are consumed by your anger
and terrified by your indignation.

**People: You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your presence.**

Leader: If we only knew the power of your anger!

People: Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due.

Song of Confession: LUYH #405 v. 4-5 *“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”*

4. A thousand ages in your sight
are like an evening gone,
short as the watch that ends the night
before the rising sun.
5. Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
soon bears us all away;
we fly forgotten, as a dream
dies at the opening day.

Responsive Prayer:

Leader: Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

**People: Relent, Lord! How long will it be?
Have compassion on your servants.**

Leader: Satisfy us in the morning with your unfailing love,
that we may sing for joy and be glad all our days.

**People: Make us glad for as many days
as you have afflicted us,
for as many years as we have seen trouble.**

Leader: May your deeds be shown to your servants,
your splendor to their children.

**People: May the favor of the Lord our God rest on us;
establish the work of our hands for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands.**

Song of Confession: LUYH #405 v. 6 *“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”*

6. O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
still be our guard while troubles last,
and our eternal home!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Offering: General Fund

Offertory Video: *“The Parables of Jesus” – The Bible Project*
(Following the offertory children ages 3-3rd grade are invited
to make their way to Children in Worship in the Fellowship Hall)

* Song of Preparation: LUYH #899 v. 1-3 *“Seek Ye First”*

1. Seek ye first the kingdom of God
and his righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you.
Allelu, alleluia.
2. Ask and it shall be given unto you;
seek and you shall find;
knock and the door shall be opened unto you.
Allelu, alleluia.

Sing acapella

3. We do not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of God.
Allelu, alleluia.

Words and Music: Matthew 6:33, 7:7, 4:4; para. Karen Lafferty, 1972,
© 1972 Maranatha! Music, admin Music Services; CCLI #678905

*“For not with swords’ loud clashing
or roll of stirring drums-”*

Scripture Readings: Matthew 13:1-23

Introduction to our New Sermon Series

Prayer of Illumination:

Message: ***“The Parable of the Sower”***

Time of Prayer

*“With deeds of love and mercy
the heavenly kingdom comes.”*

* Hymn of Application: LUYH #328 v. 1-3 *“Lead On, O King Eternal”*

1. Lead on, O King eternal,
the day of march has come;
henceforth in fields of conquest
your tents will be our home.
Through days of preparation
your grace has made us strong;
and now, O King eternal,
we lift our battle song.
2. Lead on, O King eternal,
till sin’s fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper
the sweet amen of peace.
For not with swords’ loud clashing
or roll of stirring drums—
with deeds of love and mercy
the heavenly kingdom comes.
3. Lead on, O King eternal;
we follow, not with fears,
for gladness breaks like morning
where’er your face appears.
Your cross is lifted o’er us,
we journey in its light;
the crown awaits the conquest;
lead on, O God of might.

Words: Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1888, alt., P.D.; Music: Henry T. Smart, 1836, P.D. CCLI
#678905

* A Prayer for the Mission of the Church

Leader: Lord God, we bless you for your charge to us to “make disciples from every nation and to teach them to obey all that you have commanded us.”

People: How grateful we are for your promise to never leave us or forsake us.

Leader: As we seek to plant the seed of your word, and to water the seed once planted, teach us to trust and to testify that you are the source of all the growth.

People: As the seed of your Word is planted in our hearts, help us – and all those around us – to be good soil, receptive to all that you desire for us to know, to love, and to do.

Leader: By your Spirit, increase our “love and knowledge and depth of insight.”

People: so that “we may be able to discern what is best, and be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus, to the glory and praise of God.

Leader: We pray all this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

* Sending

* God’s Blessing

* Parting Praise: "All Glory Be to Christ" v. 1-3

1. Should nothing of our efforts stand,
no legacy survive;
unless the Lord does raise the house,
in vain its builders strive.
To you who boast tomorrow's gain,
tell me what is your life?
A mist that vanishes at dawn;
all glory be to Christ.

Chorus

*All glory be to Christ our king!
All glory be to Christ!
His rule and reign we'll ever sing,
all glory be to Christ!*

2. His will be done, His kingdom come,
on earth as is above,
who is Himself our daily bread;
praise Him, the Lord of love.
Let living water satisfy
the thirsty without price;
we'll take a cup of kindness yet;
all glory be to Christ.

Chorus

3. When on the day the great I Am,
the faithful and the true,
the Lamb who was for sinners slain,
is making all things new.
Behold our God shall live with us
and be our steadfast light.
And we shall e're his people be;
all glory be to Christ.

Chorus

Chorus: Sing acapella

Words and Arrangement by Dustin Kensrue; Music: Traditional Scottish Folk Tune
© 2012 We Are Younger We Are Faster Music (Admin. by Music Services, Inc.);
CCLI #678905

Welcome! The psalmist prayed: "Restore us, O Lord God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved" (Psalm 80:19). May all who have come to worship find restoration, inner peace and spiritual strength. After the morning service all are invited to the fellowship hall next to the sanctuary for a cup of coffee or juice and continued fellowship.

Tech Team	Today December 29	Next Sunday January 5
Sound:	Mardy S.	Tim H.
Projection:	Beth B.	Beth B.
Video:	Tim H.	Brandon S.
Offering:	General Fund	General Fund

First CRC Bulletin

Announcements

December 29, 2024

The deadline for announcements this next week is Thursday, 9:00 A.M.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY:

This Week's Deep Q's with PB & J:

In what ways do you sense the Holy Spirit shaping you in your life now?

The **Men's Breakfast Bible Study** will meet on Tuesday, January 7 at 7:00 am at IHOP.

Worship Service YouTube Links:

AM December 22, 2024: N/A

PM December 22, 2024: https://youtu.be/PFY_ABkkw4M

AM December 25, 2024: <https://youtu.be/-KVCwWp7l-k>

First CRC offers the option to give *your offerings online, donations*. For information on this and other ways to give please check the "Give" page on the church's website: https://firstcrcmv.com/?page_id=1509

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ,

The word '*parable*' literally means "*brought alongside*." In the Bible, parables are short stories about familiar subjects that are used to illustrate a spiritual truth. To those with a genuine hunger for God, a parable is often an effective way to convey divine truth and is therefore a blessing. Yet, for those with hard hearts and ears, a parable is often instrument of both judgement and mercy.

Jesus himself told well over 30 parables that are mostly recorded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Throughout the seasons of Epiphany and Lent we will take a closer look at many of them. Listed below is a tentative plan of study and as always we encourage you to read and ponder them in advance before the day they are proclaimed. May God bless us in this study together.

In His Grace, - Pastor John and Pastor Brad

1. Dec. 29 *"The Parable of the Sower"*
Matthew 13:1-13, Luke 8:4-15
2. Jan. 5 *"The Lamp on the Stand"*
Matthew 5:13-16, Luke 8:16-18
3. Jan. 12 *"The Narrow and Wide Gates"*
Matthew 7:13-14
4. Jan. 19 *"The Wise and Foolish Builders"*
Matthew 7:24-27, Luke 6:46-49
5. Jan. 26 *"The Two Debtors"* Luke 7:36-50
6. Feb. 2 *"The Rich Fool"* Luke 12:13-21
7. Feb. 9 *"The Unjust Steward"* Luke 16:1-15
8. Feb. 16 *"The Mustard Seed and Yeast"*
Luke 13:18-21
9. Feb. 23 *"The Wedding Feast and Banquet"*
Luke 14:7-24
10. Mar. 2 *"The Pharisee and Tax Collector"*
Luke 18:9-14
11. Mar. 9 *"The Good Samaritan"* Luke 10:25-37
12. Mar. 16 *"The Friend at Midnight"* Luke 11:1-13
13. Mar. 23 *"The Lost Sheep and Coin"*
Luke 15:1-10
14. Mar. 30 *"The Parable of the Talents"*
Matthew 25:14-30, Luke 19:11-27
15. Apr. 6 *"The Rich Man and Lazarus"*
Luke 16:19-31
16. Apr. 13 *"The Persistent Widow"* Luke 18:1-8
17. Apr. 18 *"The Parable of the Tenants"*
Luke 20:9-19

CALENDAR:

Greeters/Coffee Hosts: December 29: ??

January 5: Tim & Heather VH, Jon & Catherine VK

Worship Team: December 29: Eliot B., Heidi B., Adriana/Tessa S.

Next Week, January 5: Henry VZ & Julie S., Adriana/Tessa S.

Nursery: December 29: Adriana S. & Myra VDB

Next Week: January 5: Brooke K., Emma S.

Children in Worship: December 29: Julie S. & France B.
Next Week, January 5: Heather VH & Milie F.

This Week:

Sunday: December 29

NO Sunday School

Worship Service: 10:30 am

NO Youth Group

Wednesday: NO GEMS

Upcoming Events:

Friday, January 24: Movie Night at Church

CRC COMMUNICATIONS:

Kids Corner: Home is a Blessing - Check out this week's kids' devotion at www.kidscorner.net. God is our rock and our foundation. The home is the place where your family chooses to make a commitment to serve God. What a blessing! Check out all the great content at kidscorner.net, like the Bible Story Podcast The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders.

Thrive Faith Formation Tip - For you Jesus Christ came into the world: for you he lived and showed God's love; for you he suffered the darkness of Calvary and cried at the last, "It is finished"; for you he triumphed over death and rose in newness of life; for you he ascended to reign at God's right hand. All this he did for you, though you do not know it yet. And so the word of Scripture is fulfilled: "We love because God loved us first." –Adapted from the French Reformed Church liturgy During this week of Christmas, tell the familiar story of the birth of our Savior with the hope of hearing it in new and beautiful ways, remembering Christ's incarnation and birth for YOU. Brought to you by Thrive:

Thrive Faith Formation Tip - As we come to the end of a calendar year, this is a fitting time to look back. At a mealtime this week, share with someone else one thing that you're grateful for, one thing you're sad about, and one way you've seen God working in the past year. Read Psalm 90 together as a reminder that God directs our days, months, and years. Brought to you by Thrive: crcna.org/Thrive

An Advent Greeting from the CRCNA - As we prepare for Christmas, the ministries of the Christian Reformed Church in North America wish to share with you the Christmas story and find comfort in God's faithfulness. Watch this short video at youtube.com/watch?v=gLDlg-9DLKY Have a blessed Christmas!

Giving Thanks for You at Christmas - Thank you for sharing God's love with people in need through World Renew during Advent. Your gift is providing help and hope for families, like Moses' in Malawi, who are facing poverty, disaster, and injustice today. If you want to help people through World Renew in the New Year, please go to worldrenew.net/gifts or call 800-552-7972. Thank you for sharing the Good News of God's love!

Year End Support for The Banner! - Help The Banner reach its annual goal of raising \$500,000 by giving before December 31. Your gift will enable The Banner to continue reaching North Americans with inspiring and insightful Christian content for another full year. Please donate now at TheBanner.org/Give

Start the New Year with a Study - Join one of our Global Coffee Break Online Zoom Studies. Here is your opportunity to participate in a CRCNA resource led by their team. Space is limited. Men, women and young adults welcome. Go to Globalcoffeebreak.org/events for more information and to register!



How can
we
PRAY
for you?

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

CONTINUING REQUESTS:

Please continue to pray for **John Velasquez**, who was recently diagnosed with a serious lung disease. He is currently on oxygen full-

time and is currently waiting to get into therapy for greater improvement. Please pray that he can get into therapy soon and that it will be effective!

Please continue to pray for those who have lost loved ones recently.

SHUT INS: ***Nell Annema*** at Birchview Memory Care in Sedro-Woolley; ***Shirley Boonstra*** at Country Meadow Village in Sedro-Woolley, ***Marjean DeGroot*** at Mountain Glen in Mount Vernon; ***Martha Haarsma*** at home in Mount Vernon, ***Mary Koopmans*** at Where the Heart is in Burlington; ***Clarence Vander Griend*** at Home Place in Burlington; ***Sally Reehoorn*** at Creekside in Burlington.

OTHER REQUESTS: (CRC Communications)

Monday December 23 - *World Renew: Christmas season*

We are grateful for opportunities to help share joy and restore hope in communities around the globe. We ask the Lord of mercy and justice to be with people experiencing disaster, conflict, poverty, and other challenges. May God's perfect peace bring comfort and joy now and in the days, months, and years to come.

Tuesday December 24 - *ReFrame: North America*

Pray for a Today devotional reader who shared, "My mother has dementia, and my son has leukemia. My wife struggles with drugs. I ask that you pray for my family and for the Lord to walk with me in these hard times."

Wednesday December 25 - *Communications: Christmas*

Today we celebrate again the birth of Jesus and marvel at his love. He came, lived among us to bring the good news of the kingdom of God, died, and rose again to redeem us and give new life to all who believe. Praise be to God!

Thursday December 26 - *Resonate: Ontario*

Resonate missionaries Nasser and Sylvie Charliekaram minister with Farsi speakers—both in person in Toronto and online throughout the world. "Pray that the gospel will continue to spread throughout Iran and the Middle East, despite many challenges," they ask. "Ask God to empower believers with boldness and courage, raising up more witnesses to share the hope and love of Christ."

Friday December 27 - *World Renew: New staff*

We praise God for our growing ministry as we welcome new staff members, including Bernad Ojwang, our new chief operations officer, and Brittani Anthony, our new chief people and culture officer. We thank God for the gifts and strengths they bring to these leadership positions, and we pray for smooth transitions for all new staff at World Renew.

Saturday December 28 - *ReFrame: India*

Lift up Bipin, who watches our Hindi ministry programs online. May God continue to bless him with strength and joy. "I found amazing peace in my heart," he shared. "May God bless you and your ministry."

Sunday December 29 - *Resonate: Europe*

Resonate missionaries Sarah and George de Vuyst give thanks for "the growth of Healing Hearts Transforming Nations in work with diaspora and refugee ministry in Europe." Ask God to continue using this ministry to heal people and reconcile communities.