

Welcome to First Christian Reformed Church!
Pastor Brad Diekema
February 23, 2025 ♦ 10:30am Service

- * Please stand in body or in spirit

"I, the Lord"

Welcome

- * Opening Hymn of Praise: LUYH #506 "Better is One Day"
 1. How lovely is Your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty.
For my soul longs and even faints for You.
For here my heart is satisfied within Your presence.
I sing beneath the shadow of Your wings.

Chorus

*Better is one day in Your courts,
better is one day in Your house,
better is one day in Your courts,
than thousands elsewhere,
than thousands elsewhere.*

2. One thing I ask and I would seek:
to see Your beauty, to find You in the place
Your glory dwells.
One thing I ask and I would seek:
To see Your beauty, to find You in the place
Your glory dwells.

Chorus

*Better is one day in Your courts,
better is one day in Your house,
better is one day in Your courts,
than thousands elsewhere,
than thousands elsewhere.*

Bridge:

My heart and flesh cry out for You, the living God.
Your Spirit's water to my soul.
I've tasted and I've seen.
Come once again to me.
I will draw near to You,
I will draw near to You, to You.

Better is one day, better is one day,
Better is one day than thousands elsewhere.
Better is one day, better is one day,
Better is one day than thousands elsewhere.

"Better Is One Day"; Words & Music by Matt Redman;

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* Call to Worship:

The eternal Father,
who loved us and set us free from our sins,
who loves us still with that love that will not let us go,
and who will love us forever,
calls us to worship him today
as the only true lover of our souls.
The Lord stoops to receive the love of our poor hearts.
He calls us to remember the depth of his love for us in Christ.
God seeks our love!

* Hymn of Praise: LUYH #568 "I will Sing of My Redeemer"

1. I will sing of my Redeemer
and his wondrous love to me;
on the cruel cross he suffered,
from the curse to set me free.

Refrain

*Sing, oh, sing of my Redeemer,
with his blood he purchased me;
on the cross he sealed my pardon,
paid the debt, and made me free.*

2. I will tell the wondrous story,
how my lost estate to save,
in his boundless love and mercy
he the ransom freely gave.

Refrain

*Sing, oh, sing of my Redeemer,
with his blood he purchased me;
on the cross he sealed my pardon,
paid the debt, and made me free.*

3. I will praise my dear Redeemer,
his triumphant power I'll tell,
how the victory he giveth
over sin and death and hell.

Refrain

4. I will sing of my Redeemer
and his heavenly love to me;
He from death to life has brought me,
Son of God, with him to be.

Refrain

Words: Philip P. Bliss, 1878; Music: James McGranahan; Public Domain,
CCLI #678905

* Opening Prayer

* Song of Response: LUYH #608 "Salvation Belongs to Our God"

1. Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb.
Praise and glory, wisdom and thanks,
honor and power and strength

Refrain

Be to our God forever and ever,
be to our God forever and ever,
be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

2. And we, the redeemed, shall be strong
in purpose and unity, declaring aloud:
Praise and glory, wisdom and thanks,
honor and power and strength

Refrain

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Sovereign; Music UK; arr. Greg Scheer © 2007 Restoration Music, Ltd./Sovereign
Music UK; CCLI #678905

"All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save"

* God's Greeting/We Greet Each Other

Announcements

Invitation to Transformed Living

Call to Confession

Leader: This is the message we have heard
from him and declare to you:
God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

**People: If we claim to have fellowship with him
and yet walk in the darkness,
we lie and do not live out the truth.
But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light,
we have fellowship with one another,
and the blood of Jesus, his Son,
purifies us from all sin.
Let us confess our sins before the living God.**

Prayer of Confession

Assurance

Song of Response: LUYH 698 "Your Grace is Enough"

1. Great is your faithfulness, O God.
You wrestle with the sinner's heart.
You lead us by still waters into mercy,
and nothing can keep us apart.

Refrain

*So remember your people, remember your children,
remember your promise, O God.
Your grace is enough, your grace is enough,
your grace is enough for me.
Your grace is enough, heaven reaching down to us.
Your grace is enough for me.
God, I see your grace is enough.
I'm covered in your love.
Your grace is enough for me, for me.*

2. Great is your love and justice, God.
You use the weak to lead the strong.
You lead us in the song of your salvation,
and all your people sing along.

Refrain

*So remember your people, remember your children,
remember your promise, O God.*

*Your grace is enough, your grace is enough,
your grace is enough for me.*

Your grace is enough, heaven reaching down to us.

Your grace is enough for me.

God, I see your grace is enough.

I'm covered in your love.

Your grace is enough for me, for me.

Words: Matt Maher © 2003 Matt Maher, published by spiritandsong.com,
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(excluding Europe which is admin. by Kingswaysongs)

Offering: General Fund

Offertory

(Following the offertory children ages 3-3rd grade
are excused for Children and Worship)

- * Hymn of Preparation: LUYH # 758 "Order My Steps"
(Repeat 2 times)

Order my steps in your word, dear Lord;
lead me, guide me, every day.

Send your anointing, Father, I pray.

Order my steps in your word.

Please, order my steps in your word.

Words: Glenn Burleigh © 1991 Glenn Burleigh, Burleigh Inspirations Music

"I will set a feast for them"

Scripture Reading: Luke 14: 7-24

Prayer of Illumination

Message: "The Parables of the Wedding Feast and Banquet"

Time of Prayer

"Here I am, Lord"

* Song of Application: LUYH #869 "Here I Am, Lord"

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.

2. I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

Refrain

3. I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

Refrain

Words: Daniel L. Schutte (b. 1947) © 1981 OCP (New Dawn Music), admin. OCP
Publications CCLI #678905

- * Proclaim Our Faith: Heidelberg Catechism Question and Answer #54
Pastor Brad: What do you believe concerning
“the holy catholic church”?

People: I believe that the Son of God through his Spirit and Word, out of the entire human race, from the beginning of the world to its end, gathers, protects, and preserves for himself a community chosen for eternal life and united in true faith. And of this community I am and always will be a living member.

- * God’s Blessing

- * Parting Praise: LUYH #959 “Glory Be to the Father”

Glory be to the Father
and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, amen.

Words: Gloria Patri, The Lesser Doxology, 2nd c., P.D.

- * Postlude

Welcome! Sunday worship is the call of God to bring special honor to his name. Give him what he asks through faithful worship. Receive this day also as his gift to you to refresh you for the week ahead. After joining us in worship, join us in the fellowship hall next to the sanctuary for a cup of coffee or juice and continued fellowship.

Tech Team	Next Sunday February 23	Next Sunday March 2
Sound:	Mardy S,	Henry H.
Projection:	Maddie D.	Isaac D.
Video:	Isaac D.	Brandon S.
Offering:	General Fund	General Fund/Gideons

First CRC Bulletin Announcements

February 23, 2025

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:

Describe your favorite place to spend time with God and what you experience there.

The **Men's Breakfast Bible Study** will meet on Tuesday, March 4 at 7:00 am at IHOP.

Women's Bible Study: If you have yet to pick up your Beth Moore study book, there are several on the sign up table.

The offering for this morning is for the General Fund. (There is no second offering for Cadets – oops) Next week will be welcoming the Gideons, and there is a special offering for them along with one for the general fund.

There is choir practice after the morning service today.

If you signed up to bring a dish to Taste of Asia, please provide Beth or Pastor Brad with the name of your dish, category (appetizer, soup, salad, main dish, dessert), and ingredients by **Tuesday, March 4, 2025**. The information will be used to create a menu for the evening. We look forward to a great evening of fellowship and food.

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 an 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

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

There are still slots open for volunteers to drive Shirley Boonstra to and from church. Check out the sign-up sheet today!

Ministry Associate Position Update: Pastor Brad's term call is coming to an end at the end of June. We are grateful for his years of service with us and trust that God will open the necessary doors for further ministry service in the weeks and months ahead. Please keep Pastor Brad and the various churches he is conversing with in your prayers.

In the meantime, we recently began advertising the Ministry Associate position again and are grateful that we have already received four applications. At the last joint elders and deacons meeting the following council and congregational members were asked and/or appointed to serve on the interview team: Joni Beezhold, Harmen De Jong, Henry Hammingh, Katie Jungquist, Jill Rouw, Jon Vander Kooy, Dave Visser, and Pastor John.

Lord willing, the hope is that the interview team will make a recommendation to the church council by early April. Afterwards, if approved by council, we hope to bring the recommended individual to Mount Vernon to meet the congregation sometime at the end of April and/or early May. Congregational approval is needed to extend a call and our hope is that this will be an item on the agenda of our May 19

congregational meeting. If you have any questions and/or concerns - please don't hesitate to reach out to a council member. In the meantime, please keep the interview team in your prayers throughout the week ahead.

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

Worship Service YouTube Links:

AM February 16, 2025: <https://youtu.be/FQOfpdVAYXo>

CALENDAR:

Greeters/Coffee Hosts: Today, February 23: Henry & Pam VZ, Kevin & Glenda K.

Next Week, March 2: Henry & Jayne H., Juliana LC

Worship Team: Today, February 23: Greg G., Mandi D., France B. & Emma S.

Next Week, March 2: Henry VZ, Julie S., Adriana & Tessa S.

Nursery: Today, February 23: Glenda K. & Tessa S.

Next Week, March 2: Jeannette F., Emily VH

Children in Worship: Today, February 23: Heather VH, Ella VH

Next Week, March 2: Heidi & Nolan B.

Volunteers to drive Shirley B:

This Week: February 23: Alice DV

Next week, March 2: Mardick S.

This Week:

Sunday: February 23

Sunday School 9:30 am

Worship Service: 10:30 am

Choir practice

Youth Group

Upcoming Events:

No Sunday School March 9 for Winter Break

Friday, March 14: "Taste of Asia"!

**A "Taste of Asia" is Coming
to First CRC in March!**

Friday, March 14, 2025, 6:30 pm.

There are two sign-up sheets
in the fellowship hall.

One sign-up sheet is for attending.

The second sign-up sheet
is if you plan to bring a dish.

Last day to sign up is Feb. 23!!

ORGANIZATIONS WE SUPPORT:

Mid-America Reformed Seminary invites you to participate in a four-part evening class led by Dr. J. Mark Beach, Learning to Believe through Samson: Finding Divine Strength in an Age of Spiritual Weaklings.

Together, we'll explore Judges 13-16, examining how Samson's story reflects our Christian walk, the challenges the Church faces, and Christ as our source of strength.

When: Thursdays, March 6, 13, 20, and 27, at 7:30 PM (CT)

Where: Seminary (In-person or Livestream)

Cost: Free! Register today at www.midamerica.edu

Mid-America Reformed Seminary is excited to welcome Dr. Kevin DeYoung on Thursday, March 13, 2025, for our Spring Student Lectures. He will present on the theme of "Godly Masculinity in the World, Home, and Church." The series of lectures begins at 1:00 pm. The event is free and will be held in our new chapel auditorium (limited seating). Registration is first come, first served. A live stream will also be available on Facebook & YouTube. Register at www.midamerica.edu and secure your seat today!

CRC COMMUNICATIONS:

Kids Corner: Show Respect - Check out this week's kids' devotion "Show Respect" at www.kidscorner.net. One way to be kind and respectful is to remind yourself that God made other people in his image (Genesis 1:27). 1 Peter 5:5 tells us to obey our elders and "be humble toward everyone else." Check out all the great content at kidscorner.net, like KC's Church in Action Comic Book.

Kids in Action Video - Kids in Action host Maya meets Hudson and Cole performing incredible stunts, balancing acts, and juggling...lots of juggling. Check out more YouTube Kids in Action videos at kidscorner.net/kids-in-action. Kids in Action, a web series by Kids Corner, tells stories of amazing kids who are doing God's work right now.

Groundwork: God's Design for Sex and Relationships - Song of Songs offers us a vision of relationships that is in stark contrast to the self-serving models we see around us in culture. Join our Groundwork conversation as we study Song of Songs 3-8 to learn about God's design for sex and love, which is filled with self-sacrifice, mutuality, commitment, delight, love, and respect and is deeply rooted in his own character. Listen now at GroundworkOnline.com and subscribe to Groundwork's weekly emails for future episodes.



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 those who have lost loved ones recently.

Please keep regular visitors **Glen and Sandra** in your prayers. Sandra is facing serious health issues right now. Pray for God's healing. Pray that God gives wisdom to the doctors as they treat Sandra. Pray that Glen and Sandra experience God's presence and wisdom as they navigate these health issues.

Continue to pray for **Amy Stiles** as she continues with new heart medication.

Continue to pray for **John Velasquez**.

SHUT INS: *Nell Annema* and *Shirley Boonstra* at Birchview Memory Care 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 February 17 - *Indigenous Family Centre: Winter*

With the cold and darkness of winter, pray that the community members here will not be lonely and will be able to get around safely in the ice and snow. Pray that staff may remain safe, healthy, and protected to be able to continue the programming at the Indigenous Family Centre.

Tuesday February 18 - *World Renew: Canadian Foodgrains Bank*

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 denominations working together to end hunger, and World Renew is a founding member. Thank God for this partnership that allows donations to be multiplied through a variety of sources. Ask God to bless the expanded impact of work that World Renew can have through alliances like this one, that more families and communities may be food secure.

Wednesday February 19 -*Resonate: California*

Chenaniah (Ken) and Merlin Perumalla have found a unique calling ministering with the Indian immigrant population in and around Livingston, Calif. Give thanks for their ministry, Outreach IndiaUSA, and the connections God is providing for them to share the gospel.

Thursday February 20 -*ReFrame: Today devotions*

Pray for Tammy, a Today reader who asks for healing for her husband, who has a swollen leg, and that he may be drawn closer to God. She thanks God that her husband agreed to attend the Christmas Eve service at her church. Pray that God's healing, peace, and love will surround Tammy and her family.

Friday February 21 - Thrive: Pastors and ministry leaders

Take a moment to pray for the pastor(s) and ministry leaders in your congregation. May they find rest, support, and a renewed sense of calling in the coming year.

Saturday February 22 - Resonate: Michigan

Give thanks for God's work through Healing in Arts, an art ministry initiated by Resonate missionary Pamela Alderman, to support Laszlo, a veteran living in Michigan, when he was struggling with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. Please pray that Laszlo will continue to find healing and hope through art.

Sunday February 23 - World Renew: Learning journeys

Several times each year, we offer the opportunity for individuals and church groups to take part in discovery trips. Praise God for the commitment of trip participants! May they be informed and inspired as they see God's work in and through World Renew firsthand and learn how God is moving through global communities. Pray for traveling mercies as participants travel overseas.