



Oskaloosa 1st CRC Newsletter

March – April 2025

Hallelujah For the Cross

Up to the hill of Calvary,
my Savior went courageously
and there He bled and died for me.

Hallelujah for the cross.

And on that day the world was changed,
a final perfect lamb was slain.

Let earth and heaven now proclaim,
"Hallelujah for the cross."

Hallelujah for the war He fought,
love has won, death has lost.

Hallelujah for the souls He bought.
Hallelujah for the cross.

What good I've done could never save,
my debt too great for deeds to pay,
but God, my Savior made a way.

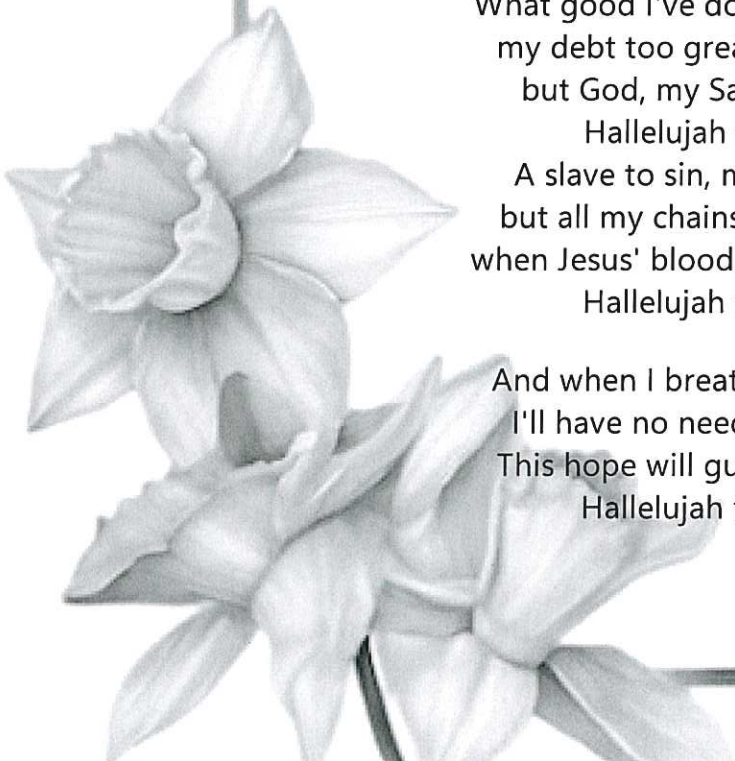
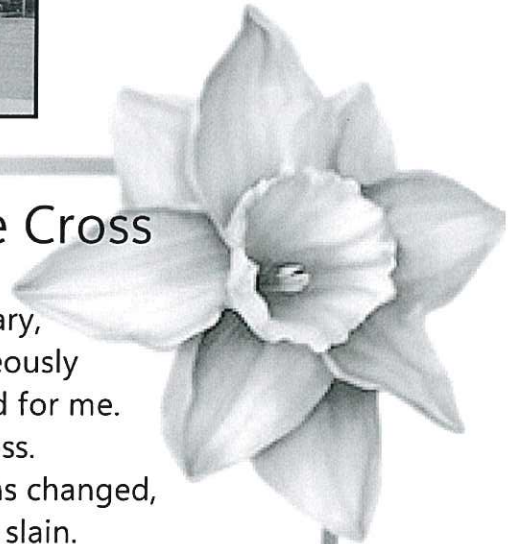
Hallelujah for the cross.

A slave to sin, my life was bound,
but all my chains fell to the ground
when Jesus' blood came flowing down.

Hallelujah for the cross.

And when I breathe my final breath,
I'll have no need to fear that rest.

This hope will guide me into death:
Hallelujah for the cross.



Ross King, Todd Wright
CCLI Song #6550556

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From Pastor Kamp's Desk

LISTEN WELL



“My brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.” James 1:19-20.

I have been reflecting upon this verse in light of what it means to lead within the Christian Reformed Church. I recently served in my third session on the Council of Delegates (COD) which is the governing body of the CRCNA between Synods. COD meetings typically take two and half to three days and during that time I spoke on two different occasions. The majority of my time in those meetings was listening to others speak on the work of the church, the challenges facing the church, and the complaints people have with the church.

It can be disheartening after listening for so long because I feel like I have accomplished very little. Speaking on the other hand feels like action, it feels like we are accomplishing something. Speaking feels like we are leading. Such thoughts often influence us as we are elected to positions of leadership within the church anticipating that now we will be the active ones. Now it is our opportunity to speak. However, in reality, church leaders often listen even more than before.

Whether in COD, council rooms, consistory, diaconal meetings, on committees, or in a pastor's office the majority of our time is spent listening. We listen to the thoughts, concerns, and ideas of other individuals whom God has placed in that room. We listen to similar thoughts from those we represent. We seek to listen to the Spirit's leading within the church. One of the most important tasks of leaders within the church is to understand the church which can only happen through patient listening.

What this also means is that it is important for those who are not currently serving in such positions to speak honestly. To listen well requires others to speak well. Do not wait for the day in which we anticipate serving in a position that can impact the church; for it will likely mean that you will be listening much more than speaking. And if not, well then James has some advice for us.

“The Lost Art of Listening” by Michael Nichols is the best book I have ever read on the importance of listening well. It is a book that I often have to return to in order to remind myself not only how to listen, but how important it is. It is also a book that reveals how often I listen poorly. In it Nichols writes, *“Being listened to means that we are taken seriously, that our ideas and feelings are recognized, and, ultimately, that what we have to say matters.”*

When I think of Jesus' example perhaps it was His ability to listen which made Him so attractive. It does not seem to matter who was speaking – whether a powerful Pharisee, Samaritan women, a despised tax collector or a Synagogue leader – high or low; loved or despised; Jesus appears to have taken each person seriously letting them know that they mattered to Him.

In particular, I am reminded of the Rich Young Ruler who came to Jesus wanting to know, *“what must I do to inherit eternal life?”* In the middle of this discussion as Jesus is trying to help him, we read *“Jesus looked at him and loved him...Go sell everything...and follow me.”* Jesus in that moment looked intently, listened actively, and loved deeply before demanding that He lead.

The section of James which began this reflection ends with these words, *“Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress.”* (James 1:26-27)

It appears that a pure and faultless religion requires us to listen well if we are ever to know the needs of the people.

Church Family News



Marion & Dorothy Vos
2102 South Market
Room #160
Oskaloosa, IA 52577

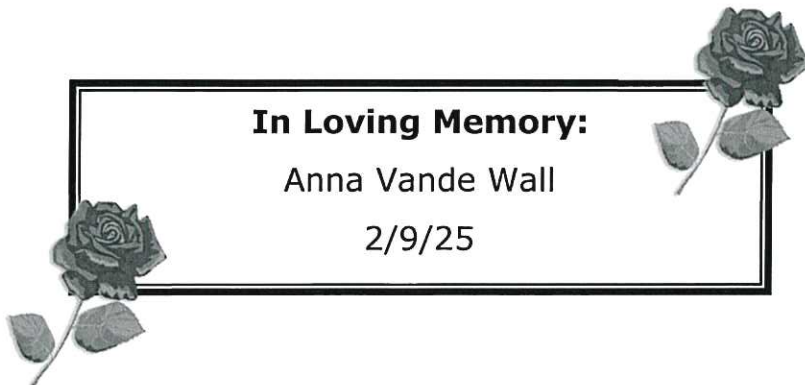
Sage Willow Rae Grafke – 2/22/25
~ daughter of Saif & Jaynee



In Loving Memory:

Anna Vande Wall

2/9/25



First CRC Council 2025

Pastor Jon Spronk	Pastor		641-295-5155 673-5693	(Cell) (Study)
Pastor Erik Kamp	Pastor		641-417-9433	
Keith Brink	Elder	2026	641-660-4031	Youth Elder
Lucas De Groot	Elder	2027	641-777-4970	Worship Committee
Brent De Ronde	Elder	2026	641-660-9472	Evangelism Comm., Bulletin, Communion, Care Groups
Allen Groenenboom	Elder	2028	641-660-6719	Building & Grounds Comm.
Tim Jabaay	Elder	2027	319-899-8343	Council Clerk, Elder's VP, & Pulpit Supply
Steve Kaisand	Elder	2028	641-891-2672	Elder's Clerk & Council VP
Doug Richards	Elder	2027	641-660-6455	Education Comm. & Library
Luke Roozeboom	Elder	2026	641-660-4150	Communion, Care Groups & Records Clerk
Jeff Van Donselaar	Elder	2027	641-295-3286	Fellowship
Kirk Veenstra	Elder	2028	641-295-3056	President, Pulpit Supply
Mike Boender	Deacon	2027	641-660-3957	Deacon Chairman & Disaster Relief Coordinator
Adam De Bruin	Deacon	2027	641-295-2111	Benevolence & Enduring Gifts
Dan McKinney	Deacon	2028	641-931-6491	Ass't General Fund Treasurer
Trent Meyer	Deacon	2026	319-231-6054	Deacon Secretary & Disability Concerns
Chris Pierson	Deacon	2027	641-670-0081	General Fund Treasurer
Brennan Plate	Deacon	2026	641-660-6949	Building Fund Treasurer
Sherwin Plate	Deacon	2028	641-670-0584	Special Offerings Treasurer & Tech. Committee
Mitchel Veenstra	Deacon	2026	641-660-3653	Vicar & C.E.F. Treasurer

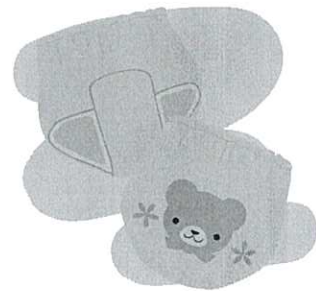
Sue De Bruin	Church Secretary		673-4272 673-7303	(Office) (Home)
Katelyn Van Donselaar	Custodian		1-641-226-1495	

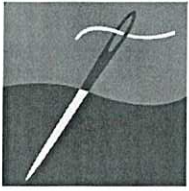
Nursery Schedule

March - April 2025

A.M.

March 2	Bethany DB (L), Cayden P Molly C
March 9	Karen DB, Nick S Cora DG
March 16	Heather C, Olivia DG Carter H
March 23	Kahrey C, Pippa DR Sophia P
March 30	Deb B, Jared R Hannah B
April 6	Tiffany R, Johnathon J Violet DG
April 13	Joyce S, Erica DB Tegan P
April 20 (Easter)	Karen F, Adalli B Lake DR
April 27	Rachael H, John B Raegan DG





Sew Day Report



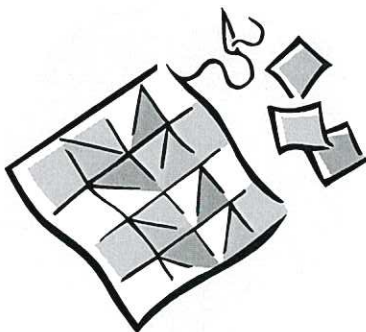
We would like to thank all those who helped with getting quilt tops laid out, tied quilts, or sewed them up at home. We have 53 quilt tops ready to sew up.

We are donating the finished quilts to The Climb, which is a faith-based organization connected with Give It Up Mahaska that helps Mahaska County residents that are in need. They will be receiving 69 quilts and 3 receiving blankets soon.

We would like to thank the lady from Tracey that donated over 25 tops that we backed and tied.

If you are interested in helping sew tops together, let Delores (641-295-2983) or Ellize (641-295-6000) know, and we will gladly help you get them. Thanks again for all the help, it is greatly appreciated.

Delores Ryken and Ellize Caligiuri





SIGNPOSTS OF GOD'S KINGDOM WORK

With Jeremiah 31:21 in mind, I invited our church to embrace being "signposts" for God's Kingdom work here in Stellenbosch. Signposts of the multicultural community in Christ that God is forming--one that calls and includes people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. Signposts of the power of God to transform lives, bring new life, and give hope. And signposts of God's faithfulness to His promises to build His church and complete His work in her and in each one of us.

As a church in this university town that is still divided in many ways--economically, ethnically, and socially--we have the privilege of pointing to the power of the gospel in our diverse congregation as we welcome and journey alongside Christians from countless countries and varied backgrounds. One such student is Job (Tanzania), who is studying Law. This past week, he helped me extend God's grace to students from Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, the UK, and Zimbabwe in the form of friendly conversation, fresh fruit, and helpful information about campus, dealing with culture-shock, and our church. It is a joy seeing the ways he has changed from being a quiet, reserved student in the background to embrace serving in our church and community, helping with our Sunday service and participating in the Devon Valley Aftercare Art program.

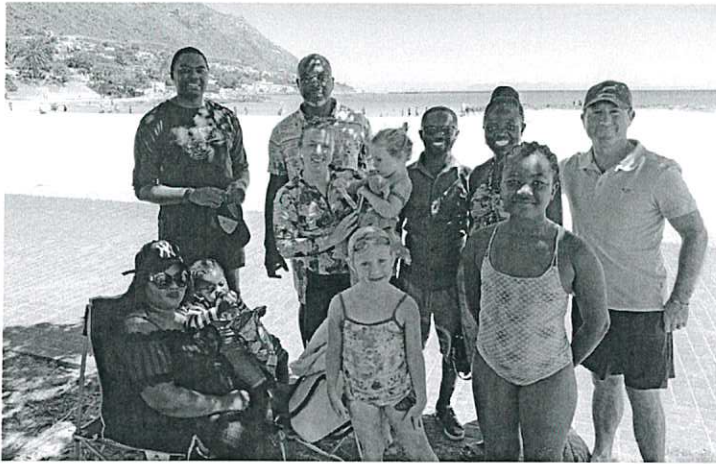
However, serving at this crossroads of life and the world, we also have the opportunity to connect with non-Christians from places like Iran and Libya, Morocco and Saudi Arabia; students and families who long for community and belonging so far from home, as well as some who are spiritually adrift--disillusioned by Islam but uncertain of what to believe and why--searching for the truth and how to make sense of their lives in the world.



I think of a post graduate student from Iran with whom several people from our church have had the opportunity build a close relationship. As a result we've had lots of shared meals and conversations over coffee. "I believe in God, but not the god of Islam," he told me as we finished a coffee together last December. I asked him what that means and he told me that he wasn't sure, but that he wanted people like me and others in our church to help him figure it out. We met again in January and I shared the overarching story of the Bible with him—Creation, Fall, Redemption, and New Creation—and the good news of Christ and the Kingdom of God. I could see how meaningful this was to him, and I encouraged him to think about what I shared and bring questions to our next meeting.

**"I WANT YOU
TO HELP ME
KNOW
GOD."**

AT THE CAFE AND ON THE BEACH: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS



A part of our ministry is building community through shared experience. One of the ways we do this is through various outings to enjoy God's creation. Our first outing for this year was to Gordon's Bay for a beach day. Despite it being a bit windier than we anticipated, a group of fourteen people joined for fun in the sun, ice cream, and conversations under a couple of trees. We were also able to welcome a new student from Benin named Israel.

We look forward to further opportunities like this with a hike in the mountains next month

and our church camp in April. Please pray that these events would not only foster deeper relationships between members of our church, but also be spaces for inviting others to join in, have fun, and find a place to belong.

In a similar way, I have the privilege of connecting with other international students who are here studying English in preparation for further studies or work opportunities abroad. Some of the most recent English students I met were from Libya: young guys ready to explore the world and to make new connections in their time here. Over the course of the semester, several of us would meet up at a local café and watch football together, sharing tapas and conversation about everything from sports and car racing to work plans and future hopes. These conversations eventually led to the question: *Tyler, why are you in South Africa?* Those nights out at the restaurants and football matches built the platform for sharing about my faith in Christ and God's calling for me to serve his church here in Stellenbosch.



**Karina's
Birthday!**

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Perseverance as we continue to wait on our visa outcome
- For our Iranian friends to come to faith in Christ and find community here at Stellenbosch International Fellowship
- For all our 2025 plans, for new students, and further equipping of members to send out to the world

JANUARY 2025

FROM THE GROUND UP



NEWS AND STORIES FROM PET FLORIDA PENNEY FARMS

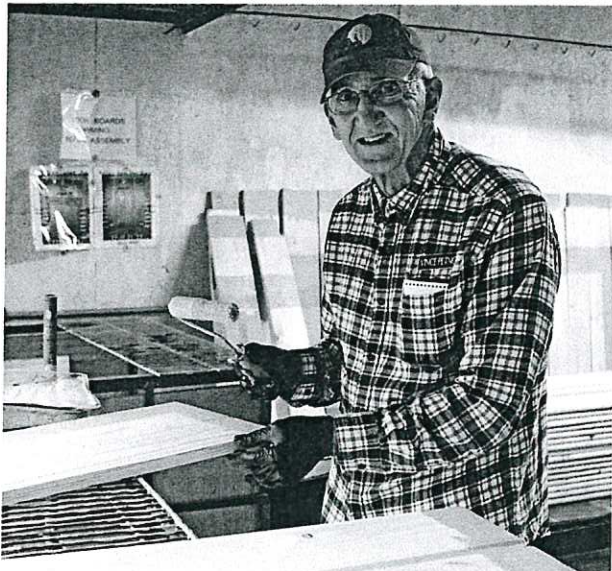
MOBILE SHOE REPAIR

If you are blessed with the ability to walk, you probably don't have much reason to think much about that when you're doing it. As the song lyrics go, you just "go where you wanna go, do what you wanna do." But people who can't walk do think about it – a lot. They long to go places and do things that their disabled legs won't allow. A common example concerns the need to provide for themselves – and many times for their family, as well. Over the years, we have received dozens of reports of PET handcycle recipients starting all sorts of businesses that they were able to launch through their newfound mobility.

The young Congolese man in this photo is such an example (sorry the image quality isn't better). Ironically, though unable to walk himself, he identified the need for shoe and



sandal repair among those who can. We could give you many more entrepreneurial examples of PET recipients who have started mobile businesses, but here's your no-charge take-away for this issue: We need to move our thinking beyond that general term – mobility – to the specifics that that makes possible for our recipients. Yes, jobs are on that list, but often it also includes going to worship (first on the list for many), medical appointments, taking kids to school, running errands – in other words everyday, ordinary stuff that was never ordinary to them – until PET.



YOUR GIVING OPTIONS

- Give by check to address below
- Give by credit card online at bit.ly/petflorida or scan here:



LIVE IN OR NEAR PENNEY FARMS?

Like the Marines, we're looking for a few good men and women – in our case, to help us do God's work in making handcycles for the disabled. Most jobs require no special skills -- just bring us your willing spirit, and we'll train you. Are you part of a church group looking for service opportunities? Our regular hours are weekday mornings, but for groups, we can arrange a Saturday time slot. Think about it – pray about it – call Mike Koladka for details and schedule a visit: 618-363-2137.



PET FLORIDA
P.O. Box 919
Penney Farms FL 32079

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Permit No. 2

First Christian Reformed Church
815 N. 11th St.
Oskaloos, IA 52577

or current resident



ReFrame Ministries

is the new name of
Back to God Ministries International

February Ministry Spotlight

English Language Ministry: *Family Fire*

Family Fire keeps relationships thriving with fresh content twice a week. In January, they tackled parenting challenges with tips on managing your child's anxiety, supporting defiant kids, and practicing loving discipline. For couples, they explored using the 5 love languages to strengthen marriages and navigate tough life transitions. They also shared insights on healing fractured relationships. Stay connected and empowered with *Family Fire* at Familyfire.com where you can subscribe to receive the weekly emails.

Family Fire is looking for new writers! If you are a pastor or a counselor who enjoys writing and would like to earn some money for sharing your wisdom, send a resume and a writing sample to info@familyfire.org to learn more. Senior producer, Rev. Deb Koster, is happy to talk with you!



International Language Ministry: *Spanish Ministry Celebrating 60 Years!*

- **1965** the first official Spanish radio broadcast was aired under the leadership of Rev. Juan Boonstra
- **1966** Spanish program is the first religious program allowed in Mexico when the government lifted its ban on religious broadcasting
- **1991** Rev. Guillermo Serrano assumes leadership and the Spanish ministry expands to include radio, television, daily devotional, and web ministry
- **2004** the first *CADA DIA* (Spanish daily devotional) is published
- **2019** Rev. Huascar De la Cruz becomes the third Spanish ministry leader and the ministry is moved to Tabasco, Mexico
- **2025** everyone is invited to join us as we celebrate the 60th Anniversary of our Spanish language ministry throughout this year (details to come!)



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more
information!

Too Busy

Satan called a worldwide convention.

In his opening address to his evil angels, he said, "We can't keep the Christians from going to church. We can't keep them from reading their Bibles and knowing the truth. We can't even keep them from forming an intimate, abiding relationship experience in Christ. If they gain that connection with Jesus, our power over them is broken. So let them go to their churches; let them have their conservative lifestyles, but steal their time, so they can't gain that relationship with Jesus Christ."

"This is what I want you to do, angels. Distract them from gaining hold of their Savior and maintaining that vital connection throughout their day!"

"How shall we do this?" shouted his angels.

"Keep them busy in the non-essentials of life and invent innumerable schemes to occupy their minds," he answered. "Tempt them to spend, spend, spend, and borrow, borrow, borrow. Persuade the wives to go to work for long hours and the husbands to work 6-7 days each week, 10-12 hours a day, so they can afford their empty lifestyles. Keep them from spending time with their children. As their family fragments, soon their home will offer no escape from the pressures of work! Over-stimulate their minds so that they cannot hear that still, small voice."

"Entice them to play the radio or cassette player whenever they drive. To keep the TV, VCR, CDs and their PCs going constantly in their home and see to it that every store and restaurant in the world plays non-biblical music constantly. This will jam their minds and break that union with Christ."

"Fill the coffee tables with magazines and newspapers. Pound their minds with the news 24 hours a day. Invade their driving

moments with billboards. Flood their mailboxes with junk mail, mail order catalogs, sweepstakes, and every kind of newsletter and promotion offering free products, services and false hopes."

"Keep skinny, beautiful models on the magazines so the husbands will believe that external beauty is what's important, and they'll become dissatisfied with their wives. Ha! That will fragment those families quickly!"



"Even in their recreation, let them be excessive. Have them return from their recreation exhausted, disquieted and unprepared for the coming week. Don't let them go out in nature to reflect on God's wonders. Send them to amusement parks, sporting events, concerts and movies instead. Keep them busy, busy, busy! And when they meet for spiritual fellowship, involve them in gossip and small talk so that they leave with troubled consciences and unsettled emotions."

"Go ahead, let them be involved in soul winning; but crowd their lives with so many good causes that they have no time to seek power from Jesus. Soon they will be working in their own strength, sacrificing their health and family for the good of the cause. It will work! IT WILL WORK!"

It was quite a convention. The evil angels went eagerly to their assignments, causing Christians everywhere to get more busy and more rushed going here and there.

I guess the question is: Has the devil been successful at his scheme? You be the judge! Does "busy" mean...




B-eing
U-nder
S-atan's
Y-oke?

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 GEMS GEMS Sunday NO Sunday School Last Winter Worship	3 Friendship Class Council, Elder & Deacon Meetings	4 Coffee Break p.m. <i>Ken S's Birthday</i>	5 Games Day Cadets GEMS IGNITE <i>Larry V.M.'s Birthday</i>	6 Coffee Break Love INC Foundation Classes <i>Jean V.M.'s Birthday</i>	7	8 1
9 Sunday School Homestead Service Evening Worship Begins Again	10	11 Coffee Break p.m.	12 Prayer Day Service – here	13 Women's Morning Bible Study Coffee Break Love INC Foundation Classes	14	15
16 Sunday School Worship Comm. Mtnng.	17 Friendship Class	18 Coffee Break p.m.	19 Games Day Cadets IGNITE w/Senior Saints	20 Love INC Foundation Classes	21	22
23 Sunday School	24 Blood Drive 	25 Coffee Break p.m.	26 Cadets/GEMS Car Races at OSCI IGNITE	27 Women's Morning Bible Study Coffee Break Love INC Foundation Classes <i>Paul F. & Pete F. Birthdays</i>	28	29 Cadet-O-Rama at Vermeer Pavilion
30  Cadet Sunday Sunday School	31 Friendship Class					



March



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Coffee Break p.m.	2 Cadets – Make SUBS IGNITE	3 Coffee Break Love INC Foundation Classes	4	5
6 Sunday School	7 Council, Elder & Deacon Meetings	8 Coffee Break p.m. – picnic <i>Leona VA's Birthday</i>	9 Games Day IGNITE Senior Night	10 Women's Morning Bible Study Coffee Break Love INC Foundation Classes	11	12
13 Sunday School Homestead	14	15	16 IGNITE – Good Friday Practice	17 Coffee Break	18 Good Friday 	19
20 Easter Sunday Sunrise Service NO Sunday School NO PM Service	21	22	23 Games Day	24 Women's Morning Bible Study Coffee Break – Brunch Love INC Foundation Classes <i>Betty H's Birthday</i>	25	26
27 Sunday School	28	29	30	<h1>April</h1> 