



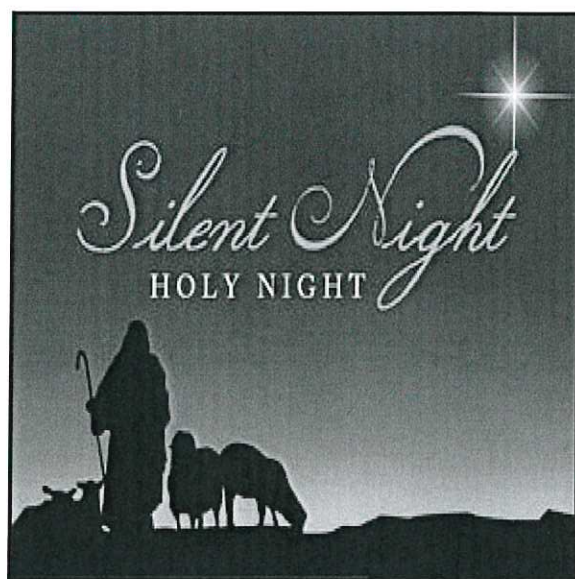
Oskaloosa 1st CRC Newsletter

November – December 2025



*Now thank we all our God
With heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things hath done,
In whom His world rejoices.
Who, from our mother's arms,
Hath blest us on our way.
With countless gifts of love,
And still is ours today.*

*In the little village of Bethlehem,
there lay a Child one day,
And the sky was bright with a holy light
o'er the place where Jesus lay.
Alleluia! O how the angels sang.
Alleluia! How it rang!
And the sky was bright with a holy light,
'twas the birthday of a King.*



From Pastor Spronk's Desk

SEEING AUTUMN BEAUTY IN UNLIKELY PLACES



When we think of natural beauty, we often think of the majestic. Raging waterfalls and snowcapped mountain peaks. Ocean beaches and desert landscapes. Alpine lakes and pine forests. You know, the images we may have as the backgrounds of our computer screens or our smart phones.

I was thinking of this a few weeks ago when I was sitting outside my house on a warm fall day. It was one of those fall days where the morning had started cool but the afternoon was heating up. I had learned as a kid that these conditions create thermal columns, rising masses of buoyant air that rise up into atmosphere. We, of course, do not see the air, the columns or the rising heat. But we can see the effects, namely birds soaring higher and higher on the thermals.

So that warm fall afternoon, I was watching the birds soar majestically high in the air. With their wingspans fully extended, the birds hardly seemed to give an effort. They circled and glided high on a blue-baked sky. Wondering what kind of bird they were, I grabbed a set of binoculars from inside, hoping they were eagles or some other magisterial bird.

This is how I learned that I had turkey vultures high in the sky over me. The vultures were not exactly as beautiful as a bald eagle. But in their way, they were beautiful. I got a little envious of their soaring freedom to see so much of the earth from such a vantage point. To them I was but a tiny dot on the landscape (though as buzzards maybe they were waiting for me to expire so they could have lunch).

In this fall season, we will see beauty of the change of leaves, the reds and golds of maples and the orange of pumpkins. But God has created beauty in so many places and we can look for the beauty of the earth in unlikely places. In turkey vultures and dried out creek beds. In bare trees and dormant grasslands. And yes, even in the first bit of frost and the first snowflakes.

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."

Psalm 24:1

Pastor Jon

Church Family News



David Boyd – 641-670-2501

Alex Fynaardt – 641-204-7614



Ace Alexander Pineda – 8/27/25
~ son of Andres & Kyah



Alex & Amy Fynaardt
1959 110th Street
New Sharon, IA 50207



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	

Updated 12/3/24

Nursery Schedule

November - December 2025

	<u>A.M.</u>
November 2	Amelia B, Kahlan K Sophia P
November 9	Cassia B, Leah S Mack J
November 16 (Communion)	Kynnah C, Anton B Tegan P, Maggie McM
November 23	Ellize C, Allison B Jayde DG
November 27 (Thanksgiving)	Mary Beth J, Anniston M Dawson R
November 30	Rachael H, Zachary DG Avery K
December 7	Bethany DB (L), Leah L Kinley DB
December 14	Karen DB, Arianna J Jude DR
December 21 (SS Program)	Deb B, Elijah B Taylor H
December 25 (Christmas)	Bethany DB (K), Aubrey K Malaki B
December 28	Erica DB, Natalie B Daxton R



Wicker Basket

The story is told of an old man who lived on a farm in the mountains of eastern Kentucky with his young grandson. Each morning, Grandpa was up early sitting at the kitchen table reading from his old worn-out Bible. His grandson who wanted to be just like him tried to imitate him in any way he could.

One day the grandson asked, 'Papa, I try to read the Bible just like you but I don't understand it, and what I do understand I forget as soon as I close the book. What good does reading the Bible do?' The Grandfather quietly turned from putting coal in the stove and said, 'Take this old wicker coal basket down to the river and bring back a basket of water.'

The boy did as he was told, even though all the water leaked out before he could get back to the house. The grandfather laughed and said, 'You will have to move a little faster next time,' and sent him back to the river with the basket to try again. This time the boy ran faster, but again the old wicker basket was empty before he returned home. Out of breath, he told his grandfather that it was 'impossible to carry water in a basket,' and he went to get a bucket instead. The old man said, 'I don't want a bucket of water; I want a basket of water. You can do this. You're just not trying hard enough,' and he went out the door to watch the boy try again.

At this point, the boy knew it was impossible, but he wanted to show his grandfather that even if he ran as fast as he could, the water would leak out before he got far at all. The boy scooped the water and ran hard, but when he reached his grandfather the basket was again empty. Out of breath, he said, 'See Papa, it's useless!'

So you think it is useless?' The old man said, 'Look at the basket.' The boy looked at the basket and for the first time he realized that the basket looked different. Instead of a dirty old wicker coal basket, it was clean.'

Son, that's what happens when you read the Bible. You might not understand or remember everything, but when you read it, it will change you from the inside out.'

Moral of the wicker basket story:

Take time to read a portion of God's word each day; it will affect you for good even if you don't retain a word.

Thought for Today: Gods Love is like the ocean, you can see its beginnings but not its end.

I really like this story because I don't retain things too well anymore...old age may have something to do with it but I just figure my brain just gets overloaded! God isn't concerned about your brains anyway; He's more concerned about your heart!

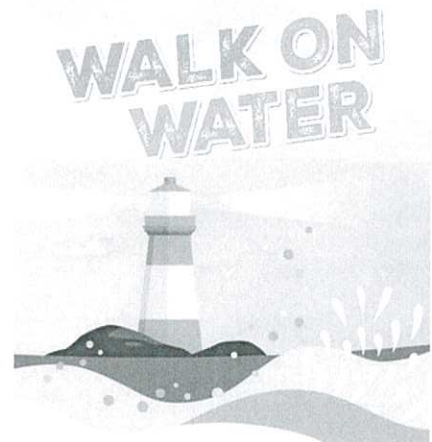


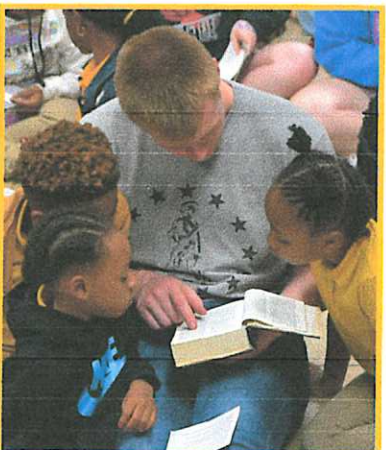
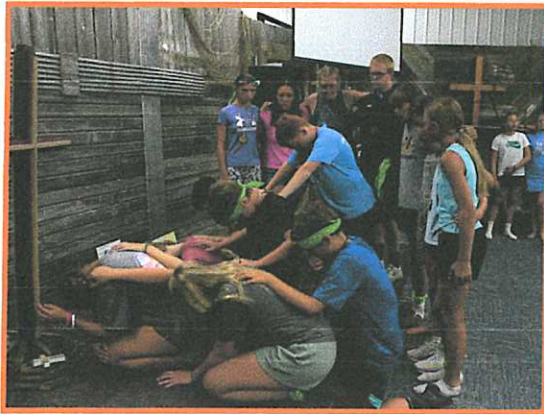
The GEMS 2025-2026 theme is: "Walk on Water" based on Deuteronomy 7:9 – *"Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments."*

We are blessed to have 11 wonderful women as counselors this year. The GEMS counselors for this year are: 4th Grade: Jill McMahan & Lyndsay Veenstra, 5th Grade: Sam De Bruin & Jenny Plate, 6th grade: Heather Collins & Deann De Groot, 7th Grade: Mary Beth Jackson & Lori McKinney, and 8th Grade: Cora Groenenboom, Laura Groenenboom, & Sarah Lobberecht.

Our first meeting was on Wednesday, September 3rd. We ate supper, went hiking & fishing, painted rocks, roasted s'mores, and had a Bible lesson to lead us on our new theme. The last several weeks the GEMS have made flower arrangements, played pickleball for Physical Fitness, went over to the hospital for the First Aid badge, painted pumpkins, and so much more.

We ask for prayers as we continue in our GEMS season that God will continue to work in the hearts of each GEM as we meet each week. If you have any questions, please contact Crystal Roberts at 660-2214 or at mandcroberts@gmail.com





Dear Friends at FCRC,

We **Thank you** for creating opportunities to share the Love of Christ through the power of Camp! You are part of the foundation of faith that Lake View stands on to provide camp opportunities and experiences filled with God's Love and His beautiful creation.

Celebrate with us all the ways that God used camp to build and deepen relationships with Him. God provided a great staff to guide campers to explore His creation, to have tons of fun, to make new friends, to share God's word, to worship, to praise, to pray, and to open their hearts to Jesus. It was incredible!

"Stories from the boat" was the theme this summer and campers and staff explored the stories and lessons that Jesus taught about getting into the boat, getting out of the boat, stormy sea's and lessons of faith that Christ taught.

Thank you for your support which allows the camp to provide opportunities to share with young and old who God is, and how much He loves them!

What an amazing joy filled - Spirit Filled Summer! Thank you for your prayers and support to help create opportunity for God to reach His children! To God be all Glory honor + Praise!

In His Service,

Diana B.
Diana L. Brummel
Executive Director



Lake View is a non-profit organization, and all gifts are tax deductible. Enclosed is your receipt for tax purposes.

new life news

volume 15

issue 04

oct. 2025

the quarterly newsletter of New Life, a prison community growing in the love of Jesus Christ

Thank you!

by Pastor Dave Gritters

The night before I wrote this article, I had the opportunity to attend a large worship event.

It was a Brandon Lake concert, and it was great—and it was worship, heartfelt worship. In the midst of the lights and sounds, the projection and fog—as entertaining as that was—it was worship. Heartfelt, genuine worship.

Sometimes during our New Life services, or when I am leading at a local “Sunday” church, I will just close my eyes and listen to the voices around me, offering their praise to our God. Listening to the sounds of His children is moving. It moves in an arena of thousands, it moves in a church of a hundred or more, and it moves in a small chapel behind locked doors. Heartfelt worship of God cannot be contained, cannot be silenced—ever!

Many of you probably know “Gratitude,” one of the songs we sang last night. In the first verse, Brandon Lake sings how all words fall short, how it’s impossible to say anything new or to fully express gratitude to God.

The context of these lyrics is the worship of our great God, but the words also ring true for us at New Life when we think about everyone who supports us. These are our words to you: THANK YOU! You support us with prayer,

with thoughts, with well wishes, and with time, and you support us financially. THANK YOU!

This summer marked the 15th Annual Pedal for Prisoners, which is our largest fundraiser for New Life. Each year a letter is sent out, riders sign up, and people respond with a donation. Each year, we are humbled by the response, and we realize that all our words fall short. Yet with our words we express our deep and heartfelt gratitude. THANK YOU!

Because of your support, great things continue to happen inside the walls of Newton Correctional Facility. The song “Gratitude” ends with an a cappella chorus that tells an important truth: Though words fall short and don’t seem like enough, we nevertheless throw up our hands, praise God, and let out a heartfelt, “Hallelujah!”

The reasons to be thankful just keep coming—in this issue, you will also find the stories of two first-time volunteers getting to experience the heartfelt worship of God at Newton Correctional Facility, worshipping with men who may feel they have nothing fit for a King—worship that cannot be contained ... ever!



Pastor Dave Gritters

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EMAIL: pastor@newlife-prison.org

WEBSITE: www.newlife-prison.org

Find us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/NewLifePrisonCommunity

Support New Life this fall!

I'd like to donate \$_____ to support New Life Prison Church.

NAME: _____ ADDRESS: _____

Contributions may be sent to: **New Life Prison Church, 408 Maple St., Pella, IA 50219**

You can also make an online gift: <http://www.newlife-prison.org/donate>



We welcome new volunteers Greg Witzenburg and Ryan Bouwkamp

by Pastor Dave Gritters

Recently, New Life welcomed two new volunteers: Greg Witzenburg and Ryan Bouwkamp.

After they attend their first service, I like to ask new volunteers to share their perspectives to help those who cannot worship at Newton Correctional Facility get a feel for what it is like. Here's what Greg and Ryan had to say.



From Greg Witzenburg

This past July, I had the humbling opportunity to help with a New Life church service for the first time. I went in with no preconceived ideas, just a heart willing to serve. What I encountered moved me deeply. The worship was raw, real, and powerful—these men sang from a place of deep need and deeper hope. There was no pretense, just an honest hunger for God. Listening to them, hearing their desire to grow closer to

the One who had given them (and me) true freedom, reminded me that the Spirit of God truly knows no walls.

What struck me most were the heartfelt prayer requests—simple, honest pleas for strength, peace, forgiveness, hope, and revival. These men prayed not only for themselves but for their families, their children, their fellow inmates, and for those who came to serve. They were extremely grateful for the families who support the volunteers, making it possible for this kind of ministry to happen. I left that day not just as someone who had come to help, but as someone who had been deeply blessed. God is clearly at work behind those prison walls, and I'm thankful that God allowed me to be a part of it!



From Ryan Bouwkamp

For the men at Newton Correctional Facility, guilt is not an abstract spiritual thought but a living verdict on their record. The government has declared their sentence, and they have had to come to grips with the reality the judge has spoken into existence. Spiritually, this should sound quite familiar to us! God the Judge

is right to sentence us to eternal punishment, for we have sinned against an infinitely good and holy God. We have broken His good laws that He put in place for human flourishing.

And yet, my experience at Newton was not one of moping around and sadness. Instead, I saw men eager to learn, worship, and meet together. Visibly much more so than the people I know outside of prison! They were quick to offer prayer requests, connect with us as volunteers, and thank us gratefully. Yet I was equally, if not more, blessed by the chance to see how God works transforming lives in all places.

New Life Prison Church Outside Council

Pastor Dave Gritters
(New Life)

Glenda Vander Leest
(Governing Elder)

Max Killoren
(Governing Elder)

Pastor Sheldon Starkenburg
(Governing Elder)

Linda Zuidema
(Administrative
Deacon)

Marv Goodyk
(Administrative
Deacon)

Keith Van Gent
(Administrative
Deacon & Treasurer)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 December 						
7 Prayer Service (am) Sunday School Program Practice	1 Friendship Class	2 Coffee Break p.m.	3 Games Day Cadets IGNITE	4 Coffee Break a.m.	5	6
14 Prayer Service (am) Sunday School Program Practice Homestead Service Candlelight Service	8 Council, Elder & Deacon Meetings	9 Coffee Break p.m. – Potluck	10 Cadets – Party GEMS – Party IGNITE – Candlelight Practice	11 Women’s Morning Bible Study Coffee Break a.m. – Brunch <i>Marilyn B’s Birthday</i>	12	13
21 Prayer Service (am) Sunday School Program Caroling <i>Henry VA’s Birthday</i>	15	16	17 Games Day <i>Joyce S’s Birthday</i>	18	19	20
28 Prayer Service (am) NO Sunday School	22	23	24	25 <i>Christmas</i> 	26	27
	29	30	31 <i>Wilbur K’s Birthday</i>			