This cover was used in the early 1990s.
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In the August 2015 issue of Beacon Lights, under the title “I’m Scared,” I wrote concerning the United States Supreme Court’s decision to legalize same-sex marriage. In lamenting this decision and condemning it on the basis of scripture, I addressed you young people, writing that I am fearful for you in terms of what will likely happen in the future.

I want to reiterate those comments from a couple of viewpoints. The first is that you are in the process of inheriting a wicked world that is very different from that of your parents and grandparents (and for some of you, ancestors of the generation preceding that of your grandparents). Today’s world is so very different from what theirs was when they were young, and in so many ways. For example, when I was a young person, sex was rarely mentioned, much less discussed, although the social revolution of the 1960s did much to change that. I do not remember how old I was before I even figured out what homosexuality was, but I certainly wasn’t young. Today homosexuality and LGBT are splashed across the headlines, shown on television, and discussed in the social media, so that even young children have a pretty good idea of what is happening in the world. The older generations have not done you any favors in leaving you to inherit the world as it is today.

The second viewpoint is that all of this will only become worse as time goes on. Having received a Reformed upbringing in school and church, you know that throughout history the truth is not static or stagnant, but in a positive sense develops and progresses. We today stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. The same is true negatively concerning sin. Since the beginning of time with the sin of our first parents, sin has developed. And it will continue to develop and become worse until the day of antichrist, when it will reach its culmination and ultimate manifestation. The time and the details we do not know, but scripture is clear that this is true. The false teachers in the church will increase in wickedness and influence, as Peter teaches in his second epistle. It is this scenario that you will have to face as you become adults and live your lives in the world.

Therefore it behooves you to know what is happening in the world and to mark the progress and development of sin. It is also necessary that you know who maintains and stands for the truth, and to stand with them.

This was recently brought home to me when I read two articles, written about three weeks apart, in The Washington Post. The subject of these articles was the issue of same-sex marriage in the United Methodist church, and what stand this church is taking or should take regarding this controversy. This information is worth summarizing and passing along. It should be said from the outset that as Reformed Christians we differ doctrinally with the Methodists in many respects; by no means are we on the same theological page. Nevertheless, the controversy in this church should not be easily ignored or dismissed. The Methodists, with churches throughout the world, including 32,400 congregations in the United States and a large presence in Africa and Asia, are the second largest Protestant denomination in the world (I think the Baptists are the largest). Thus they are influential concerning the issue of same-sex marriage. Besides, despite many differences in our respective teachings, as far as I am able to discern, they ground their opposition to same sex marriage primarily in the creation ordinance, as we do.

Both of these articles were written in the context of the Methodist General Conference, which roughly corresponds to our synod. Held every four years, the most recent meeting was this past May 10–20. The first article, written prior to the General Conference, focused on the efforts of an activist minister (so-called) who wants same-sex marriage legalized in the United Methodist church. I will not validate...
him by giving his name; more publicity, which is what he wants, plays right into his hands. Two years ago he officiated at the wedding of his daughter to another female—to use an oxymoron, a lesbian marriage. Although the Methodist authorities were aware of his actions, for reasons unknown he was not sanctioned or defrocked. Perhaps the answer is to be found in the comments of the managing editor of the church’s publications: “We are the church of the big tent. There’s room for everyone.” This is obviously the language of compromise and eventual outright denial of the truth. The article concluded by noting the sharp difference of opinion of the issue: “Some want to open the church to allow gay marriage and gay ministers. Others want to enforce the current prohibitions even more strictly, such as automatically defrocking any minister who performs two gay marriages.”

What happened to one? What do you think would happen to one of our ministers if he performed even one same-sex marriage?

The second Washington Post article recounted the events of the General Conference regarding same-sex marriage. United Methodists have not changed their stand on homosexuality, although much of mainline Protestantism has. Yet all is not well in the church. There are two distinct wings in the Methodist church. One is the American faction, which is decidedly liberal and many of whose members want the church’s laws to be changed to allow for homosexuality, although there are many traditional members who want more accountability to the laws of the church. The other is comprised of the African and Asian branches, which are growing rapidly—30 percent of the General Conference delegates came from Africa—and are much more conservative than their American counterparts, in general opposing homosexuality.

The questions whether or not to stay together as a unified denomination and whether or not this is even possible were the subjects of more than 100 proposals submitted to the conference. The issue is not just a matter of differing personal opinions, but a matter of church law, which at this time states that homosexuality is “incompatible” with Christian teaching. How to reconcile church law with the pressures of today’s culture is the subject of debate. Those who are more evangelical want the laws strictly enforced. Others are wondering aloud if it is time to “create a global book of discipline that says, ‘here’s what we agree on worldwide,’ and then one for each area of the world to help us deal with our own cultures... The issue is: What questions belong to the whole, and what questions belong to the parts?”

A group of Methodist leaders met to ask “the question of can the United Methodist Church move forward in regard to the question of gay and lesbian inclusion.” A spokesman said that the “short answer was no. The far right and the far left are entrenched in their theological understandings. The group also faced a reality that by 2020 and beyond, our African United Methodist sisters and brothers would control the church, so what this would mean practically is that the United Methodist Church would be on a trajectory to become ever more conservative on a whole host of issues. Our leaders believe the hour has come for a loving separation.”

It seems as if the American Methodists’ mission work in Africa has apparently been almost too effective and is now backfiring on them. On a more serious note, it is obvious from events at the General Conference that the winds of compromise are blowing strongly. It will be interesting to see what will happen in four years. But without doubt, the advocates of homosexuality will use the time to promote their agenda. Heretics always take advantage of every opportunity to corrupt the truth and influence the church for evil. Perhaps a division in the church would be a good thing, assuming that at least by some the truth of God is maintained.

Perhaps some of you young people have relatives, friends, or acquaintances who are Methodist, so that you have a natural interest in this subject. But whether or not you do, be aware of what is taking place in the church around you. Discern the signs of the times, and watch for false teachers, for in our day you can find one around every corner.

But above all, in the face of compromise and apostasy, hold fast to the faith once delivered to the saints, and by grace stand for the truth.
“Should I be an organ donor? I feel if I am not an organ donor, it’s almost selfish to deny my healthy organs to someone who needs them. In addition, if one of our church members needed a life-saving organ donation, we would not refuse it, would we? On the other hand, I feel if I am an organ donor, it’s as if I am denying the bodily resurrection. I am saying that I don’t believe that my body will be reunited on the Day of Judgment. I feel as if my body needs to be whole on that day, and it won’t be whole if I am an organ donor.”

Like many ethical questions, the Bible does not give a direct answer: “Thou shalt be an organ donor” or “Thou shalt not be an organ donor.” Therefore we must apply biblical principles.

If one of your family members or friends required a kidney, which you can donate while you are still alive (for you can live with only one), would you refuse him/her? You might even know of people who have received life-saving organs. If it were morally wrong to donate an organ, would it not be morally wrong also to receive an organ? Why should we receive the benefit of another person’s organs, but refuse to countenance the possibility of giving our own if they were needed? Organ donation, as well as blood donation, falls into the general category of doing good to one’s neighbor, even seeking to save the neighbor’s life. Medical technology has enabled us to do things unheard of in past generations. Medical ethics is a complicated subject, and it will only become more complicated as medicine develops.

Do we love our neighbor enough to give him/her our blood, or our kidney, or, after our death, some other organ? That is one compelling argument.

Obviously, organ donation must be voluntary. Christians must condemn the “harvesting” of organs either from non-consenting adults or worse, from aborted (murdered) children, as well as from the black-market sale of organs from Third World countries, for example.

I can understand the reticence. If I give my kidney, liver, lungs, heart, corneas, etc. for organ donation, is my body not maimed in the resurrection? I think that is the wrong way to think of the bodily resurrection. While the resurrection is a mystery, Paul does explain it in 1 Corinthians 15. Two facts stand out. My resurrection body will be the same body that Jesus redeemed. It will not be a brand new body without any resemblance to this body. Nevertheless, it will be a glorified and spiritually transformed body, a body like Christ’s (see Phil. 3:21).

Paul uses the illustration of a seed. When you sow a pinecone, for example, the pine tree that grows from the pinecone looks nothing like the original pinecone. Yet the pinecone is essentially the same as the pine tree. When you plant a pinecone, you do not expect a maple tree to grow from it. A pine tree is more glorious than a pinecone, but it is the same species, the tree being a development of the pinecone. Paul writes, “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15:42–44). A spiritual body is not an inmaterial, non-physical body, as if we will be floating ghosts. It means a body governed by and indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and a body fit for the glory of the new creation.

We do not know to what extent we will have the same bodily organs in the resurrection. Will we need kidneys, which filter the blood, for example, in the resurrection? Will we need a heart to pump blood? Will we even have blood? Should we even speculate about such matters? The point that scripture makes is, whatever happens to our body after death (whether it is eaten by wild animals, or vaporized in a nuclear explosion, or lost in the depths of the sea), God will be able to resurrect it. God will even be able to resurrect it if we donate our organs to someone who needs them.

But does Jesus not speak about entering into heaven without eyes or limbs in Matthew 5:29–30? Jesus is not speaking literally there. He is simply
It is April 11, 2008, and I am at the residence of Gary and Jean Buteyn in Randolph, Wisconsin. This is a joint interview with Jean Buteyn (JB)—the unofficial historian of the Randolph congregation—and Gary Buteyn (GB).

Mark H. Hoeksema: Jean, can you tell me where and when you were born and a little bit about your childhood?

Jean Buteyn: I was born on November 7, 1943 in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. My parents lived on a farm about six miles north of Randolph.

The Protestant Reformed Church had been organized in August of 1942. Of course, I don’t remember anything before that.

My first memories of the church would be in the old Congregational church in Randolph. Rev. [George] Lubbers was our minister.

I remember that we had catechism in various homes around the area, and the adults had an adult Bible class—and different society meetings—at the homes of the people in the congregation. They would take turns, and they would have coffee time afterwards. Quite a few of the times when we had catechism, it would be at the home of Herman and Clara DeVries, which was out in the country. They lived on a farm, and they had nine boys in their family. Saturday was a pretty busy day for her, but she let us all come there. If it wasn’t our turn to have class (if it was decent weather) we’d play outside—the boys would have a baseball game. Clara would sometimes be busy baking in the kitchen and doing her Saturday work and we’d all go in the living room.

And then one little thing I remember is that the first time one of the boys went to catechism there and came home, his father asked him if there were a lot of kids in catechism. He said, “Oh, yeah. A whole davenport full” (laughter). Rev. Lubbers would tell that little story just about every time he came.

I can remember having program practices at the parsonage because we rented that Congregational church, but we couldn’t use it for anything other than services (I think that we rented it for $5.00 a Sunday if there was no heat included. If we needed heat, it was $7.00 a Sunday). And we could use the piano, but we could not use the organ. That was off limits.

Once in a while we would have something in there on an evening. I kind of remember going down in the basement sometimes and they had coffee down there, but that was rare. Most of the time everything took place either at homes or otherwise we would rent the library basement—they had a kitchen down there.

Rev. Lubbers was really interested in all the people in the congregation. He would help people out if they were in trouble. I can remember my mom telling me that one time there was a farmer who was sick, and he couldn’t get his milking done. Rev. Lubbers came out to help. He really didn’t know a thing about milking a cow, but he did the best he could
because he wanted to be helpful. I think he really did care about this congregation because I got letters from him all through the years—he would write about my dear mother and others in the congregation and how much he thought about all of them. Those were really nice years.

MHH: How long did he stay there?

JB: I think it says somewhere in her records. He must have stayed here until Rev. [Henry] Kuiper came in 1951.

MHH: That information is available in the Acts as well.

Gary Buteyn: Yes, we could check the Acts of Synod on that. I think it was about four years.

JB: I was the first baby baptized in Randolph Protestant Reformed Church, but I was not baptized by Rev. Lubbers. I was baptized by Rev. Schipper. Rev. Lubbers didn’t come here until later, probably in 1944, and he stayed here until June 1950. Then he went to Creston congregation in Grand Rapids.

I remember his family quite well. I remember Agatha and Garretta and Cornelius and Lam. We visited a lot back and forth. They would come out to our house sometimes on Saturday afternoons—just drop in—and I have this really cute picture of them all standing out there: Garretta and Agatha with curlers in their hair and a bandana over their heads. We really thought a lot of Rev. Lubbers.

After he left, we had Rev. H. H. Kuiper. I think it was during that time that we bought that basement building [a small rectangular building, half below grade and half above grade]. We had been in that old Congregational church for all those years.

MHH: Was it used as a church at that time, or for some other purpose?

JB: The Christian Reformed Church in Randolph had built that with the intention of building on top of it someday. But they grew so fast that it was really too small. They didn’t think it paid to put a top on there, so they decided to build a new church, and that basement was for sale. I think Rev. Kuiper knew about that and kind of encouraged the congregation to buy it. They were really happy with that old basement. It had theater seats in it and there wasn’t anything really beautiful about it at all. It had a wood floor and two posts in the middle. There was an old organ in there, and we played it a couple of times. It didn’t have any foot pedals, and it had four stops on each side. But it was an organ. It had speakers in the wall in the back of church. It would get damp in there sometimes and those speakers would start making awful noises (laughter). Then if you were playing the organ, you had to walk way to the front for the piano because you couldn’t stand that noise.

It was during that time that the 1953 controversy took place, when H. H. Kuiper was here. I was only 10 years old, so I don’t remember a lot of details. But I do remember people talking about it when they would visit with each other. My mom would talk about it to me—that there was trouble in the Protestant Reformed Churches and would kind of explain to me that it was Rev. [Hubert] DeWolf who had made some statements that he shouldn’t have made.

There were a few families, I think two, that left our congregation at that time. But the other ones were all very much in agreement with Rev. [Herman] Hoeksema and thought that we shouldn’t leave the denomination. I think Rev. H. H. Kuiper was really instrumental in that. For years afterwards people still talked about it. If people had relatives in Michigan who went along with the other side, it had an influence on them. Maybe it wasn’t always good, but it was talked about for a long time. We were always very thankful that we did what we did. And those families never came back to our church again. One family went to the Christian Reformed Church and pretty well stayed there. The other family just kept looking around and moving from church to church. They never really found it again, I don’t think.

Personal things. I can remember Ruth Kuiper and I going up in the attic and playing together up there. We about cooked up in that old attic, but we had a lot of fun. I didn’t see her again for a long, long time. When we had the 75th Anniversary [celebration], we were there. They found this banner from one of the conventions up in the bell tower of the old First Church, and they asked whoever had been at that convention to come up to the front. So I did. We were all getting in line to have a picture taken. Someone was standing next to me, and I said, “Who are you?” She said, “I’m Ruth Kuiper.” Oh, my. What a time. I hadn’t seen her in years! It was nice to see her again after all that time.

I remember the closeness of the congregation, especially in the earlier years. They did things together a lot. In fact, I thought that the people in the congregation almost were like family because we did a lot of things together, because we came to each other’s homes for the adult Bible class and all the
societies. We had a lot to do with each other.

One other thing is that they did not really completely break their relationships with people from outside of the Protestant Reformed Churches. I know in a lot of areas there were a lot of family problems because of [membership in the PRC]. My parents still were friends with people in the community. We went visiting with them, and there didn’t seem to be a lot of hard feelings. We went to East Friesland Christian School, and I can’t remember that we ever, ever were teased because we went to that Protestant Reformed church, even though we were in the minority. So we really still did have friends from outside, but we were really close to each other.

But it was a close congregation. No one was rich, that I know of. Well, maybe one man in the congregation probably had a little more than the others, but we’d never have known it from the way he dressed or anything like that. But we really were not all that well off. We had a hard time just making it, especially if you had kids in Christian school. I think sometimes they were a little bit hurt by people coming from the outside and making fun of that little basement church and criticizing, because they really thought it was pretty wonderful that we had that little church, even though it wasn’t much.

GB: It wasn’t much because it didn’t even have any indoor plumbing first. I was told that you had to put that in later on. That was the first improvement that you made in the church building.

JB: Speaking of that, every Halloween we had to put the outhouse back up again (laughter). The kids in town would find that old outhouse and tip that thing over every year.

We had to have catechism in the consistory room after we got the basement church. There was a huge old furnace in the corner of that room, and the fan would come on and make so much noise. Someone would always have to jump up and turn that fan off or you couldn’t hear the minister.

Then they were having trouble with the roof leaking. Was it your dad who was here when we had pails standing on the floor (laughter)?

GB: If it was a Sunday like yesterday when it rained all day, the water would run off the light that was above the pulpit. It tilted just a little bit so the drip would come on this side and run all the way across and come down right onto the Bible. In the morning service he moved the Bible over and laid his handkerchief there to catch the drips. In the afternoon, the pulpit was moved over to the side and there were three, four, or five buckets standing there to catch the drips (laughter). It was a very common thing that that roof had to be redone every so often. This was after 1965—about every two years they had to redo the roof. Then it got to the point where you couldn’t really fix the roof anymore because there was so much tar and tarpaper up there to seal up all the cracks that the roof was starting to sag a little bit, so there were pockets in it. Then we decided to go with the new building.

JB: We also had a mouse problem in that church. You know the clock up in the front? A cord went down to the outlet, and the mice would climb up and down that cord during the services (laughter). One time I was sitting next to my friend (Judy Abel)—we were teenagers, I think, at that time. During long prayer, all of a sudden she started moving all over the place. After the prayer was done she said to me, “There was a mouse running up my leg” (laughter).

It wasn’t the nicest church building, but I think that they were kind of proud of that church.

MHH: But it was good for at least a little bit of entertainment along the way. It served the congregation for at least twenty years, didn’t it?

GB: It was in ’72 that we started building the present building. So it served for quite some time.

JB: The old timers, even at the time we built the new church, really were not all that much in favor of that. I know my mother was quite upset that we were planning to build a new church. She didn’t think that we could possibly afford to do something like that. I know my mother was quite upset that we were planning to build a new church. She didn’t think that we could possibly afford to do something like that. They just thought that old one was good enough. But I think other people at that time were advancing a little bit, getting a little bit more money; the younger ones had better incomes than some of the older ones did. Most of them had gotten along with what they had in their own homes too. We didn’t do a lot of remodeling or fixing up and getting new things. So it was hard for them to think that we should remodel or have a better church because they had just always gotten along with what they had.

GB: The beginning of the church was definitely a farm church. Almost everybody was a farmer or worked in that trade, so they didn’t have the office people or other people like that—very few of those. And the congregation was very small, about 14–15 families when they first started out, maybe not even that many. But by 1965 we were reaching around
20 families. Then we were able to start thinking a little more about building.

JB: And the people had a little more income than they did before. The younger members of the congregation and new families that were starting out were a little better off than our parents had been. Most of them had been farmers. They had a few in the building trade and one plumber, but nobody was really all that well off.

Another thing was Randolph’s singing. It was kind of discussed around the denomination, I think. One of the ministers, I don’t know who it was, said, “When Randolph sings the angels weep” (laughter). I thought it was kind of funny, but then later someone said to me, “Well, I know they’re always saying that, but I don’t think that’s so funny. We did the best we could.” And it was true. We had a lot of people in the congregation who just couldn’t keep a tune, and I guess when you can’t keep a tune, you don’t sing so loud. But it could get pretty bad sometimes, especially if the songs were unfamiliar. I started playing the organ when I was quite young, and I really wasn’t all that accomplished, either. I couldn’t count out the time real well, but there weren’t that many who could do it, so I said I would do it. If it was an unfamiliar song, I would play a solo, and I’d probably play it wrong (laughter). But that’s improved a lot.

Then we had Rev. Emmanuel. He came in 1954. His wife never came along to our church. They had three boys, and they would sit in the front of the church so we could watch them. But I don’t think she ever came in church, not even for any special occasions. Apparently she had gone along with him to church at the beginning. But when the 1953 split took place, she just couldn’t handle that for some reason. I don’t know if she agreed with the other side, or if it was just that she just couldn’t take that controversy, or what it was, but she never came. Emmanuel was here about five years, but it was not a really happy time. We did get preaching. He preached all right, and he taught us catechism. But it just didn’t feel right not to have a minister’s wife there.

MHH: He was here for five years?

JB: Five years, according to Hilda Tamminga’s [another long-time member] history here. It says five years. Then he must have made some statements that members of the consistory thought weren’t totally Reformed. I don’t think it ever got as far as classis. I think he just left for another denomination when they confronted him with it. He just left.

Then we were vacant for three years. Those were the years when I was in high school. Elders taught catechism, and we had a lot of reading services. I think that the congregation really became quite discouraged in those years. They never gave up or ever talked about giving up. But every time we’d get another decline, they would be so disappointed.

MHH: This would have been in the early 1960s?

JB: Emmanuel left in 1959 (Emmanuel must have been here from 1954–1959.) I remember a little bit his accent. He was from New York, I think, so he had a hard time speaking ours (laughter). One day he was trying to say something about a ring on a finger. And he said, “Now, when you put that ring around the finger….uh, fing on the ringer…..” (laughter). About that time my dad was almost rolling off the seat (laughter). He was trying to say the word roar once, and he couldn’t get that out, either. It was “woow”—you know, he just couldn’t get those r’s out. That’s a little humorous thing I remember about him being here.

After that we were vacant for a while again, and then Rev. Gise Van Baren came. Before they moved here, they went to see the parsonage, and Mrs. Van Baren was really disappointed. That parsonage was getting kind of bad too. We had done a little remodeling in it before Rev. Emmanuel came. We had put a bathroom upstairs, a full bath. All that was in there before was a toilet down the basement. So that bathroom was there, but the kitchen still had old cabinets with glass doors in them. Probably somebody would like to have them now? An open sink, with, you know nothing but a little skirt around the bottom to make it look a little bit nicer. And it had stood empty for awhile, so the wallpaper was looking bad. The floors were old painted floors and only around the edges, you know so where there had been a rug—no paint on the floor. She was really disappointed, so Rev. Van Baren wrote and asked if there was anything we could do to make that look a little bit better—maybe do some painting and some papering and stuff. Well, we had people in the congregation who could do all those things, so we all got busy and did them. They decided to put in a whole new kitchen. They put nice cabinets in, put new floor covering on, and put another little half-bath downstairs. So she was quite happy when she came to see that. The kitchen was quite nice too. The house was still very crooked. We know that because we lived in it later. But it looked a lot better
than it had been.

When they came, I think they had three children. And when they left, I think they had five. Those were really good years when we had him. He was a really good preacher. It was so nice to have someone who could teach catechism again. The elders always did the best they could, but it was so much better when there was a minister there. We enjoyed those years. He was the minister who performed our marriage ceremony. He left after that—in that same year yet—1965.

GB: We were married in June and he left (in fact, he took his children to Michigan, I believe so they could start school there by Labor Day). I kind of missed him because I didn’t know what it was like, coming from the Christian Reformed Church, to be without a minister.

To be continued…

The Fearless Mission of William Tyndale (Part 2)

William Tyndale had come to the realization that a spiritual reformation in England would never take place unless the Bible itself was translated into a language the people could read and understand for themselves. This had become Tyndale’s mission in life.

Last time we ended with William Tyndale’s decision that he must leave England, never to return, in order to carry out his life’s work of translating the Bible into English.

**His First Translation Published**

In 1524, Tyndale went into exile and sailed from England to the European continent, never to set foot on his homeland again. The work he was going to undertake was without the permission of the king or the church. He was clearly choosing to make himself a fugitive and an outlaw. Everything he was about to undertake was illegal. The punishment he could expect to receive, if he were to get caught, was death.

William Tyndale had come to the realization that a spiritual reformation in England would never take place unless the Bible itself was translated into a language the people could read and understand for themselves. This had become Tyndale’s mission in life.

You and I enjoy our English Bibles because of the godly devotion and willing sacrifice of such men as William Tyndale.

So Tyndale sailed to Europe. Where did he go? For the next twelve years, until the end of his life, it is hard to keep track of Tyndale’s travels. Tyndale was constantly in hiding. But let me ask you this: If you were to land on the European continent in 1524, where would you go first? To Wittenberg, Germany, of course, where Martin Luther was! (John Calvin was only fifteen years old at this time.)

It appears that as soon as Tyndale landed on the continent, he went to Wittenberg, Germany. And there, most likely, he met Martin Luther. And there, you can be sure, Tyndale received a great encouragement to take up his translation work. Only one year later, Tyndale would complete his translation of the Greek New Testament into English. This is the first ever translation from the original Greek into English.

But now Tyndale had to figure out how to publish his translation work. It is one thing to sit in hiding and translate the Bible; it is another thing to go out in public and try to hire someone to publish an illegal copy of the scriptures. Tyndale did find someone who was willing to publish his work, but it was an extremely dangerous enterprise. On one particular night, one of the publishers who was printing Tyndale’s New Testament drank a little too much wine, and began to speak too freely about the work he was doing. Soon enough, the wrong people found out, and a raid on the printing shop was arranged. In God’s providence, before the authorities could catch Tyndale, he had gathered up his work, and left the city. In 1526, after Tyndale had moved to the city of Worms, he was able to publish his translation of the New Testament. Some 6000 copies were made. But now there was the difficulty of getting these forbidden Bibles back into England.

To be continued…
This is where we see how God’s people were connected back then. In London, England, along the shipping yards on the Thames River, there was a German Lutheran community. These people were cloth merchants who were constantly bringing shipments of cotton from Germany to England. It was in these shipments, hidden among the cotton, that Tyndale’s New Testament English Bibles were placed. The Bibles were shipped from Germany to London, and the German Lutherans would conceal these Bibles so that they could enter England safely. For the first time the New Testament Bible, for a very affordable price, was making its way into the homes of the English people. There was a whole underground network of transporting Bibles, and it was entirely illegal.

Of course, as soon as the authorities in England found out about what was going on, they were furious. The search for William Tyndale and his Bibles began. The authorities started burning Tyndale’s Bibles, and tried to buy up every Tyndale Bible they could get their hands on. But that had two effects: first, it supplied Tyndale with the money he needed in order to edit his work, and produce a second edition; second, it made the people of England more curious about what Tyndale’s Bible had in it, so that more and more the people wanted to get their own copies of the Bible. From this time on, the authorities wanted badly to capture Tyndale. They sent out spies into Europe to try to find where Tyndale was hiding. This lasted for the rest of Tyndale’s life, until he was eventually caught.

**His Continued Work**

In 1529, Tyndale moved to Antwerp, in present-day Belgium, and began his translation of the first five books of the Old Testament from Hebrew to English. After he finished his translation, he realized he needed to move base because the English authorities were narrowing in on him. He gathered his things and set sail for Hamburg, Germany. However, on his way through the North Sea, he was caught in a severe storm and the ship sank off the coast of Belgium and the Netherlands, and Tyndale lost all his translation of the five first books of Moses. He had to start all over again, spending another full year redoing the work he had lost. In 1530, Tyndale was able to publish his translation of the first five books of the Old Testament. They too began to make their way into England.

With this additional publication, the authorities became even more devoted in their search for Tyndale. His enemies started calling him horrible names: “The captain of English heretics,” “a hell-hound in the kennel of the devil,” “a new Judas,” “worse than Sodom and Gomorrah,” and “an idolater and devil-worshipper.” All Tyndale wanted was to see his fellow country-folk have a copy of the Bible in their own hands.

In 1534, in Antwerp, Tyndale moved in with a group of English merchants and fell under the care and support of a wealthy English merchant. He translated the book of Jonah, and he translated the books of Judges through 2 Chronicles. He continued to revise his New Testament translation. Tyndale’s goal was to translate the entire Old Testament, but he would be captured before he could finish this work.

**His Capture and Death**

Back in England, there was a man by the name of Henry Phillips. He was the son of a wealthy Englishman. One day, his father had given him a lot of money and had sent him to London to pay off some expenses. On his way to London, Phillips gambled and lost all the money his father had given him. Phillips became a desperate man, and was willing to do anything to recover the money he had lost. And so the Church of England came to Phillips, and hired him to capture William Tyndale.

In order to capture Tyndale, Phillips moved to Antwerp. He found where Tyndale was hiding, befriended Tyndale, and gained Tyndale’s trust. One day, as Tyndale and Phillips were going to lunch, Phillips led Tyndale into an alleyway and right into the hands of soldiers who had been waiting for him. After 12 years of being a fugitive for the sake of the gospel, Tyndale was captured and was thrown into a castle dungeon in Belgium.

After being in prison for a year and a half, on October 6, 1536, Tyndale was led to his death. He was taken out of the castle dungeon and paraded through the town to where his execution stake had been set up. His feet were bound to the pole, a chain was fastened around his neck so that his back was right up against the pole. Wood was spread around his body. Gunpowder was then sprinkled on the wood. The order came, and the chain went tight around Tyndale’s neck. Tyndale gasped for breath, and the crowd of people watched him as he suffocated to death. Then, after he was dead, the wood was lit on fire. The fire touched the gun-powder, and Tyndale’s body was blown up. What was left of it fell...
into the fire. That’s how much the authorities hated him. However, before he died, these were Tyndale’s last words: “Lord, open the king of England’s eyes.” Tyndale was 42 years old.

Why did Tyndale die with that prayer on his lips? Tyndale was praying that the king would see the need for God’s people to have the Bible in their own hands. That prayer, in a way, would soon be answered: in 1538, only two years after Tyndale’s death, King Henry VIII issued a decree that a copy of the Bible in English and Latin should be placed in every church in England. In 1539, only three years after Tyndale’s martyrdom, Tyndale’s own Bible became officially approved for publishing.

After Tyndale’s death, other men picked up where he had left off. They used his work and were able to make a complete translation of the scriptures for English readers. Soon, complete Bibles were flowing into England. Soon, the boy in the field who was working the plough was reading the scriptures for himself. And soon, that same boy knew more about the Bible than the priests in the church. Tyndale not only put the Bible in the language of the people, but was an important instrument in God’s hand to bring the Protestant Reformation to England. Brian Edwards, a biographer of Tyndale, goes so far as to say, “William Tyndale was the reformation in England.”

WHAT MOTIVATED TYNDALE

One thing that stands out about William Tyndale’s life is this: his devotion to the glory of God. Tyndale gave up his entire life to follow the Lord’s will for him. And he lost his life because of it. Why? Why was Tyndale so devoted to this work?

Tyndale gave up his life to translate the Bible because Tyndale knew what the Bible was. He knew that the Bible was the inspired, infallible, authoritative word of God. And Tyndale knew that the scriptures are the gospel. And Tyndale knew what the gospel was. Even before John Calvin was on the scene, William Tyndale embraced what have become known as the five points of Calvinism. Tyndale emphasized God’s sovereignty over everything. He knew that salvation is not by works. He knew that the Bible taught the total depravity of the human race. He knew that the Bible taught unconditional election. He knew all the other precious doctrines of sovereign, particular grace: irresistible grace, limited atonement, preservation of the saints. And Tyndale had personally experienced these things in his own life. He knew that he himself was an elect, redeemed, and regenerated child of God—a sinner saved by grace alone! He knew that Jesus Christ had died on the cross for his sins. And Tyndale’s salvation was so precious to him that in thankfulness he wanted to give his life and use his gifts and abilities to the utmost of his power, so that his countrymen might come to know those precious truths as well, so that God might receive the glory.

Do you know the doctrines of grace? Do you know the riches of having your own personal Bible? Do you know that you are a sinner saved by grace alone? Then may God, in his grace, also give you the same kind of devotion that Tyndale had, the kind of devotion that says: “Here are all my gifts and abilities, Lord. I am thy willing servant. Here is my life. Use me for thy glory.”

Rev. Guichelaar is pastor of Randolph Protestant Reformed Church in Randolph, Wisconsin.

1 Brian H. Edwards, God’s Outlaw: The Story of William Tyndale and the English Bible (Welwyn, Hertfordshire, England: Evangelical Press), 170. Besides the biography by Steven Lawson, this too is a shorter biography of William Tyndale’s life that is very enjoyable to read.

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

Psalm 1:1–2
UGUST 26, 27, and 28. Are these dates of special significance to you? We in Hull sincerely hope so. They mark the days of our twelfth annual Young People’s Convention to be held this year, D.V., in the great and vast West!

Undoubtedly, various questions confront you concerning the convention. Where will you stay, what will we do there, just what is Iowa like? I’ll try to answer these question to some extent, but actually to comprehend it, you must come to the convention and enjoy the experience yourself, as a couple from Grand Rapids vicinity remarked after they had visited Iowa. Previously they had imagined Iowa as a place merely where some of our churches were located. After their visit they could recall their locations, some of the people, and any particular detail they enjoy remembering. They could do this because the experience was theirs. And thus we hope this may be your experience also.

Our Sioux County community is far from a busy metropolis. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Indeed it has been the “wild west” at one time. However, the Indians and the wild beast have disappeared by now. The only remembrance we have of them now can be found in our reservations, museums, and zoos.

How long will it take you to travel to Hull? That, of course, depends on the type of driver you are and your way of transportation. The trip, one way, should take approximately seventeen to twenty-four hours. The time element isn’t the most important factor. We want to be sure you don’t miss Hull! A word of caution, “Go slow and watch the signs!” A few years ago, one of our Eastern ministers sped past it unknowingly. When he inquired a few miles further where Hull was located, he found to his amazement, he had passed it a few miles back.

The West isn’t entirely a quiet farming community. Some of our shopping centers are “busy little cities.” We hope to spend our outing at one of these spacious parks in one of these cities. Tentative plans have been made to have our outing at Sioux Falls (a distance of approximately sixty miles). In the evening an open air meeting will be held, at which Rev. De Wolf, our speaker for the evening, will preside, and various other numbers will be given.

Where will you stay? Your places of lodging will vary. Some will stay in the immediate town district. Others will get a taste of farm life. Perhaps some of our more lenient farmers (if they aren’t worried how their cows are treated) will give you a chance to milk them somewhere between four and seven in the morning! And, if you’re wondering whether you’ll see corn, you will, and lots of it! Referring to the lodging again, we have the Lincoln Hotel for extra “conventioneers.”

We have chosen for our convention theme, the Trilogy—Faith, Hope and Love. Each of these speeches will be centered around main topics. The banquet speech will be the climax of these speeches, the speech which our entire theme is centered around. “The Greatest of These” is LOVE. This important theme is based on 1 Corinthians 13:13. Rev. Hofman is our banquet speaker. We believe every speech will be inspirational and dynamic with spiritual edification for each and everyone. It is rather self-evident that the emblems of the convention would be the cross, the anchor, and the heart: faith, hope and love. Besides the main addresses, there will be lively discussions, musical numbers, readings and essays in which all may take part.

On the final day of the convention, the always much-enjoyed banquet will take place. This will be a big occasion for us Iowans as well, since we will dine in our new community building. We’re sure you’ll enjoy the banquet with its friendly atmosphere, good food, and pleasant surroundings.

In case you’re having a difficult time securing a good route to take from Grand Rapids, for instance, I have a good one for you. Here it is:

Take Highway
21 to Holland
31 to Benton Harbor
12 to Highway 212
212 to Highway 20
Perfect Peace

When I am bowed with grief,
When troubles round me throng,
When there seems no relief,
When I can find no song,
He sends His perfect peace,
From sorrow gives release,
Through all my journey here,
Peace, perfect peace.

When I have doubts within,
When faith is far from strong,
When I behold my sin
And for His grace I long,
His cross He shows to me;
In love He gives to me,
Now and eternally,
Peace, perfect peace.

When all my life is done,
I near death’s swelling tide,
Faith’s battle fought and won,
God’s armor laid aside,
Peace, perfect peace He’ll give;
Through death with Him I’ll live
Through all eternity;
Peace, perfect peace.
Dear Daily Press readers,

Shortly before I submitted this month’s devotionals for publication, Ben Laning and I realized that we had miscommunicated regarding which psalms we would be writing on each month. As a result, we have overlapped in our study of several psalms in the past, and this month I wrote meditations for three psalms that Mr. Laning has already considered. We’re sorry! We will do our utmost to ensure that it does not happen again.

Sarah Mowery

But I Pray
Read Psalm 109

Psalm 109 begins with this earnest plea: “Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise.” In other words, “Don’t be silent! Speak on my behalf!” David prays that prayer in the face of his enemies, who need no encouragement to speak. In fact, they cannot stop their lying mouths. Though God’s servant has shown them love, they reward him evil for good, surrounding him with hateful accusations and fighting against him without cause. What is David’s response to this unjust treatment? He gives himself unto prayer.

What is your reaction when others despitefully use you? Are you quick to gossip about them? Do you allow bitterness toward them to fester in your heart? In Matthew 5:44 our Lord commands us to respond as David did: “pray for them.” For what do we pray when we pray for our enemies? We pray for their repentance and salvation, if that be Jehovah’s will. If that is not his will, then we pray that he will justly punish them for their ungodly deeds, avenging those whom they persecute (see Rev. 6:10). And note this from Psalm 109:1: even that prayer begins with praise.

Sing or pray Psalter #301.

Vengeance Belongs to the Lord
Read 1 Samuel 24

In Psalm 109 David’s enemies set themselves up as both prosecution and judge. They bear false witness against him and then condemn his soul (v. 31). David recognizes that their deeds are evil, but he also understands that he doesn’t have the right to execute justice upon them; that privilege belongs to God alone. Therefore he doesn’t avenge himself, but, as we saw yesterday, he does pray that Jehovah will judge them and repay their wicked deeds.

We’re quick to reward evil for evil. Romans 12:19-21 commands: “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto [the] wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

From our perspective, God’s justice sometimes seems long overdue. Nahum 1:1–3 reassures us: “...The LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.”

Sing or pray Psalter #253:1–5 and 12.

Let Another Take His Office
Read Acts 1:15–26

Psalm 109 is an outstanding imprecatory psalm. Do you remember what an imprecatory psalm is? It’s a psalm that calls on God to execute justice against his enemies. Indeed, it’s hard to sing the versification of this psalm without shivering in horror: “Let sudden death upon him break, / his office let another take, / his children and his widowed wife / pursue the homeless beggar’s life” (Psalter #300). Can a Christian sing those words?

Yes, we can. They are words inspired by the Holy Spirit of Christ, a truth Peter verifies when he refers to Psalm 109 in Acts 1 with application to Judas Iscariot. We may not sing this psalm in a spirit of personal vindictiveness: each of us must be very aware of our near inability to hate with righteous hatred. We’re called to bless—not curse—those who persecute us (Rom. 12:14). We sing this psalm prophetically, acknowledging the justice that God metes out in history and looking to the day when he will finally and fully condemn all his enemies. Whether he chooses to show mercy to a man or harden him, he is just (Rom. 9:18).

Sing or pray Psalter #300.

God’s Enemies and their Punishment
Read Psalm 139

Who are God’s enemies? All those who oppose his rule. In Psalm 139 David honors God as the omniscient creator. The knowledge that Jehovah determined all the details of his life from eternity moves him to praise. In contrast, the wicked rise up in hatred against him. Instead of
worshiping the supreme God, as they are created and commanded to do, they defect to gods that are less than absolute. What is the punishment for such evil? Death. Scripture speaks of two deaths. The first death comes to elect and reprobate alike when the soul departs from the body. The second death is reserved for the reprobate: it is the death of both body and soul (Matt. 10:28). Reprobate men do not cease to exist after the second death, but when the only purpose of one’s existence is torment, it “can more properly be called death rather than life” (Augustine).

What just and terrible punishment! Doesn’t the very thought make you cry, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”? (Ps. 139:23–24).

Sing or pray Psalter #383.

August 12

Annihilation?

Read Matthew 25:31–46

Like David in Psalm 109, Paul imprecates God’s justice in 1 Corinthians 16:22: “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha” (that is, accursed). The dreadfulness of the thought of God’s wrath being poured out upon unrepentant men may make us avoid praying that he executes justice at all. Couldn’t he just annihilate unbelievers at the end of time?

Satan would like us to believe that he could. The devil persists in trying to make sin less offensive than what it is, heaven less glorious than what it is, hell less horrific than what it is, and the gospel less urgent than what it is. But the Bible answers the question about annihilation with a resounding “No!” Job 34:12 says, “Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.” And what is the just punishment of all who rebel against his rule? God’s word clearly teaches that they will be punished for eternity in hell (Deut. 27:26; Matt. 25:46). But the Bible also plainly shows that there is a way to escape eternal damnation: all those who believe in Jesus Christ will not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:15–16).

Sing or pray Psalter #23.

August 13

Reprobation

Read 1 Peter 2:1–10

John 3:36b reads, “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” Are the wicked then reprobated on account of their sins?

No. The first part of the same text teaches, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life,” yet we know that the elect are not saved because of what they have done. Neither are the wicked reprobated on account of their works. As Romans 9:11 teaches, God destines the reprobate to eternal punishment even before they are born or have done any good or evil. They were appointed to stumble at the Savior and be offended by him (1 Pet. 2). To that we may exclaim, “Then it’s not fair for God to find fault with the wicked, for no man is able to resist his will!” To that the Holy Spirit replies, “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?” (Rom. 9:20–21).

Sing or pray Psalter #94.

August 14

The Kernel and the Chaff

Read Romans 9

It’s important when we consider predestination to keep the purpose of God according to election in the forefront of our minds. The fact that he reprobates at all may seem arbitrary and cruel, but as Romans 9:22–23 sets forth, God endures the reprobate in order that he might make his power known and bestow the riches of his glory on his elect. To quote my pastor, “Election and reprobation are not flip sides of the same coin.” Reprobation serves election. Just as a builder uses scaffolding to construct a building, so the reprobate serve the building of God’s spiritual house. Just as a farmer sows his field and waters it with an eye to the grain that he will harvest, so God grows his field with his eye on the wheat that he will gather into his garner (Luke 3:17).

“We ourselves are God’s own field, / Fruit unto his praise to yield; / Wheat and tares together sown / Unto joy or sorrow grown; / First the blade and then the ear, / Then the full corn shall appear; / Grant, O harvest Lord, / that we / Wholesome grain and pure may be” (“Come, Ye Thankful People, Come”).

Sing or pray Psalter #199.

August 15

Cursing and Blessing

Read Deut. 27:11–Deut. 28:9

God’s punishment of his enemies is just. Though he reprobates them before they do any good or evil, they are willing slaves to sin, and they are rewarded according to their works. Do you remember how David describes the ungodly in Psalm 109:16–17? “He remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him: as he defiled not in blessing, so let it be far from him.” There’s a warning here for us who believe but still must fight our sinful natures all our lives long. Disobedience of God’s law brings misery and desolation. As God made abundantly clear to the Israelites, his blessing is experienced only in the way of obedience. In what way are you walking?

When we walk in the way of obedience, we will not be troubled by the assaults of the wicked. “Let them curse,“
sings David, “but bless thou” (Ps. 109:28). Jehovah responds, “Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings” (Isa. 3:10). Sing or pray Psalter #40.

**August 16**

**Fat or Lean? Read Ps. 109:21–31 and Ps. 106:1–15**

The derision that David has experienced at the hand of God’s enemies is so great that he is physically wasting away. He describes himself as a shadow: his knees are weak, his body gaunt. But it’s not only persecution that has brought him to this low physical state: he so desires the blessing of the Lord that he’s given himself over to fasting and intense prayer.

For the most part, you and I know very little of such intense physical need. There are some of us who do, those whom our Father leads in the way of disability or disease. But most of us live comfortably in material wealth and physical prosperity. Rarely are we in such spiritual agony that we waste away physically. That ought to give us pause, a reason to examine ourselves and make sure that we aren’t trusting in the good gifts that God has given—and they are good!—but in the Giver himself.

What a terrible thing to be physically healthy but to have leanness in one’s soul!

Sing Psalter 290: 1–4, 6 and 9.

**August 17**

**The Anointed King Read Psalm 110**

We spent much of our study of Psalm 109 considering the relationship between the Almighty and his enemies. You and I can be hurt and offended by those who hate us. But as Psalm 110 teaches, God’s enemies cannot upset or harm him: the triune God lives in perfect peace and blessedness. Nothing that his enemies (or his disobedient people) do can hinder his will in any way. That’s true even when the wicked persecute the just. Indeed, Psalm 2 and other passages teach that Jehovah laughs at his enemies’ frenzied schemes against him and his people: he has anointed his Son to be King.

There is coming a day when those who hate him will see how they served Jehovah’s eternal purpose, and they will bow before his Son. On that day the Lord Jesus Christ will ascend his heavenly throne in the sight of all mankind and rest his feet upon his enemies, whom he has finally fully defeated.

Sing or pray Psalter #303.

**August 18**

**The Anointed Priest-King Read Matthew 22:41–46**

Psalm 110 teaches that Jesus Christ is not only God’s anointed King; he is God’s anointed Priest-King. Other scripture passages make clear that he is also ordained and anointed “to be our chief Prophet and Teacher” (HC, LD 12). Still more: he is God, the divine second person of the Trinity. Jesus pointed to Psalm 110 as proof of his divinity. As he noted to the Pharisees, in Psalm 110 David refers to his promised Son as “my Lord.” He didn’t look only for a king who would sit on his earthly throne in Jerusalem: he spoke prophetically of the King who would rule from God’s right hand. Jesus Christ, the son of David, is the divine fulfillment of the three Old Testament offices of prophet, priest, and king.

Fellow Christian, do you bear the name of the Anointed One? Then confess his name, present yourself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to him, fight against sin and Satan in this life, and look forward to the day when all his saints will reign with him eternally over all creatures.

Sing or pray Psalter #302.

**August 19**

**The Willing People Read Psalm 110:1–3 and Heb. 13:20–21**

Do you serve King Jesus, your Savior and your Lord, willingly or grudgingly? Psalm 110:3a describes Christ’s people this way: “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness...” Note two things about these subjects. First, they obey King Jesus willingly. Second, they are characterized by holiness. Other translations render “the beauties of holiness” this way: “in holy garments” and “in holy array.” The holiness that distinguishes them is not inherent in themselves: they’ve been clothed with it. Like them, you and I have been clothed in Christ’s righteousness. Those garments distinguish us as priests who are consecrated to his service.

When are Christ’s subjects willing? “In the day of thy power.” That might refer to the great judgment day or to the day when Christ’s Spirit was poured out, but Calvin also offers this rendering: “At the time of the assembling of thine army,” that is to say, as often as there shall be a convening of solemn and lawful assemblies, or the king shall desire an account of his people.” When must you and I, subjects of King Jesus, be ready to fight and ready to give him account? Today and every day.

Sing or pray Psalter #368.

**August 20**

**Youthful Dew from the Womb of the Morning Read Psalm 110:3 and Ephesians 1**

Psalm 110:3b is beautifully poetic, but what does it mean? Several commentators suggest the following interpretations.

The descent of the dew at the birth of the day is imperceptible. Likewise, the wonderful rebirth of Christ’s offspring by the work of the Holy Spirit is invisible. Like the dewdrops, Christ’s people are innumerable. Day after day, the dew invigorates the earth. Those who belong to Christ are those who “shall renew their strength” day by day, who “shall run, and not be weary; and they shall...”
walk, and not faint” (Isa. 40:31). They will flourish and multiply on this earth and then enjoy youthful vigor for eternity. The sparkling dewdrops transform the blades of grass and the strands of the spider’s web into strings of lustrous pearls. The church is similarly lovely and pure, arrayed in the garments of holiness “for glory and for beauty” (Ex. 28:2). Though the descent of dew seems mysterious, it can be explained. So too the dew that is Christ’s people: their conversion is a consequence of the wielding of his rod, of his gospel going forth.

Sing or pray Psalter #124:1–5 and 9.

Two Heads
According to my study Bible, the word heads in Psalm 110:6 is singular in the original text. The phrase could then be read this way: “He shall wound the head over many countries.” That rendering brings to mind the mother promise, doesn’t it? Though Satan rules over the kingdoms of men, our mighty Priest-King is the one who will crush his head, casting out the prince of this world (John 12:31).

The word head is also used in Psalm 110:7, which teaches that because Christ drinks of the brook in the way, he shall lift up his head. God reduced Gideon’s army to the 300 men who were so very intent on their mission that they wouldn’t even stoop to drink. Like those Old Testament soldiers, the Captain of the Lord’s hosts drinks only from the brook in the way: he will not be diverted from his singular purpose. And when every member of his church is gathered in, he will return, their glorious head, exalted over all. Sing or pray Psalter #303.

His Covenant is Forever
Read Psalm 111
Psalm 111 is a communal celebration of the Lord’s wonderful works. The psalmist describes Jehovah’s works in the following ways: they are great; they are the subject of the meditation of the godly and the source of their delight; they are honorable, glorious, enduring, right, and just. These great works are the works of a God who himself is grace and compassion. He gives his people all that they need. He makes them to know his mighty deeds, for by themselves they would be blind to those wonderful works.

Among the greatest of his works is the work which the psalmist mentions twice: he is faithful to his covenant. Jehovah has not made many covenants: he remembers the one covenant that he has made with those who fear him forever (Ps. 105:8).

Sing or pray Psalter #304.

August 21
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Sing or pray Psalter #304.

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Sing or pray Psalter #304.

August 23
The Beginning of Wisdom
Read Ecclesiastes 12
Psalm 111 teaches that Jehovah’s covenant is everlasting. It also notes two other things that endure forever: the praise of that holy, faithful God and his commandments. The secular worldview that is so prevalent in the Western world today contends that religion and reason oppose one another. The Bible contradicts that notion. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” the scriptures assert again and again. One who fears God keeps his commandments and comes before him in humble repentance whenever he breaks that law. This, declares Ecclesiastes 12:13, is the whole duty of man. Proverbs 1:7 concurs: those who despise the wisdom and instruction of God’s word are fools. Psalm 111:10 adds, “A good understanding have all they that do his commandments.” It is the Christian worldview and the Christian worldview alone that provides one with answers to all of life’s questions. That understanding belongs only to those who love and keep Jehovah’s commands.

Sing or pray Psalter #327.

August 24
Heavenly Treasures
Read Psalm 112:1–3
From a worldly point of view, the first three verses of Psalm 112 contain several paradoxes. The psalmist first declares that the person who delights in Jehovah’s commandments is blessed. The ungodly majority in our day—and our own sinful hearts—would have us believe that happiness is realized in the way of pursuing our own desires, all of which by nature are contrary to God’s commands. In verse two we read that the children of the righteous man will be mighty upon the earth, but that’s not the way it appears. Indeed, the children of the righteous, if not persecuted, are scorned, and if not scorned, are pitied as those who have been hopelessly indoctrinated by and must be rescued from their parents. The third verse teaches that wealth and riches fill the house of believers, but there are and have been many Christians who are dirt poor, materially speaking. How do we answer these seeming paradoxes?

Psalm 112 speaks of the spiritual riches that belong to the believer and his children. Do you have those eternal riches in your possession?

Sing or pray Psalter #322.

August 25
The Compassionate Man
Read Psalm 112
The righteous man bears the image of his heavenly Father. Among the communicable attributes that Jehovah bestows upon them that love him are compassion and generosity. When we clench earthly riches tightly in our fists, they flow through our fingers like sand. But when we hold them in an open palm, ready to distribute to those in need, we
lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven. In Deuteronomy 15:11 Jehovah commands, “Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.” Proverbs 11:24–25 teaches, “There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.”

Psalm 112:9 adds this note: the generous man will be held in remembrance. He is held in grateful remembrance by those to whom he has shown kindness, but more importantly, he is held in everlasting remembrance by his God, who does not forget his ministering to the least of his brethren.

Sing or pray Psalter #305.

Not Afraid of Bad News
Read Jeremiah 29:1–14

Recently an Islamic terrorist perpetrated the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history when he opened fire at an Orlando night club patronized by homosexuals. Within hours of this horrific act, several public statements were made that pointed to Christians and all who oppose the radical demands of the LGBT agenda as complicit in his crime. Already those who maintain biblical standards with regard to marriage and sexuality are sometimes labeled as bigots and are accused of perpetrating hate and violence against homosexuals and so-called transgender people. No doubt the shooting in Orlando will be used as a springboard for an increase in such slander. What should be the Christian's response to such false yet fearful accusations?

Psalm 112:7 (ESV): The man who fears Jehovah “is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting the LORD.” He knows that “our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased” (Ps. 115:3). And the plans that he has for his people are always plans of good, not of evil, plans that bring them to a glorious, expected end. Therefore, do not despair at evil tidings: turn to our great God in prayer.

Sing or pray Psalter #309.

From Rising unto Setting Sun
Read Psalm 113

What’s the first thing you do in the morning and the last thing you do at night? Multiple studies have shown that 80–90% of smartphone users begin and end each day on their phones. For those of you still unfamiliar with these devices, their users likely aren’t making phone calls. They’re texting, reading e-mails, browsing social media sites, scanning news headlines, or glancing at the forecast. The Christian, whether or not he owns a smartphone, must open and close each day a different way: “From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD’s name is to be praised” (Psalm 113:3). (Note: Not only the first and last moments of the day belong to the Lord, every moment in between does as well!)

The next morning you’re tempted to reach for your smartphone before you open your Bible, ask yourself, “In whom or in what do I seek strength for this day?” (And if you use the Bible app on your phone for devotions, guard yourself against the distractions that are only a touch away!) The next time you lie on your pillow with your phone in your hand rather than your hands folded in prayer, ask yourself, “To whom or to what do I look for a peaceful end to this day?”

Sing or pray Psalter #306.

And the Lord Came Down
Read Genesis 11:1–9

In his children’s book The Biggest Story pastor Kevin DeYoung recounts the building of the tower of Babel this way: “One time, a whole bunch of people got together to build a giant tower. They thought they could build all the way up to heaven. But it must not have been all that big because God had to come down just to see it.” Psalm 113:5-6 teaches that our God is so great that he not only humbles himself to behold the things of earth: he condescends to behold the things that are in heaven too! “Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!”

What a holy, mighty God we serve! Yet, he takes thought for us, utterly dependent and totally depraved creatures of the dust! Consider, too, our Savior Jesus Christ. Equal to the Father in holiness and glory, he humbled himself to assume our weak human nature. He then humbled himself still further to the death of the cross, all for a puny, profane, prideful people. May meditating on his wonders move us to reverent, heartfelt worship.

Sing or pray Psalter #266.

The Barren Woman Keeping House
Read Acts 9:36–42

It seems as if all the barren women mentioned in the Bible, with the exception of Michal, David’s wife, have a happy ending. Sarah, Rachel, Hannah, and Elizabeth were all given at least one child, two of them in their old age. What about God-fearing women who die childless? Is Psalm 113:9 not true for them?

Psalm 113:9 is true for the God-fearing woman. The home that she keeps is a spiritual house, the church of the living God. In that house she might be one ready to encourage her fellow believers by speaking God’s word, as did Anna, the prophetess. Perhaps she, like Dorcas, clothes the needy in her congregation. Or maybe the example she follows is that of Priscilla, who worked alongside her husband Aquila to support the mission work

Sing or pray Psalter #266.
of the apostle Paul. To her, as to all of the members of Christ’s church, belong the church’s children. What great blessing is hers—and theirs—when she freely gives of her time and resources to help teach them and care for them.

Sing or pray Psalter #27.

Barren by Choice
Read Psalm 127

The highest percentage of American women on record are childless: barren by choice. In many cases, their barrenness is a consequence of their religion, though they would be loathe to call it a religion: secularism. More and more women (and men) in our day view children as impediments on their career-building and pleasure-seeking, and for those reasons they refuse to bear children. The childbearing of Christian women (and men) must also be a fruit of their faith. God calls children—even many children—a blessing, and we must take him at his word. Though we bring forth and raise children with much sorrow, as God told Eve she would, we do so in the hope that our children are not our own, but belong to our heavenly Father and to our faithful Savior, Jesus Christ, and we look forward to the day when they will rejoice with us in all the wonders of heaven.

Sing or pray Psalter #360.

A Joyful Mother
Read Proverbs 31:10–31

There is a word in Psalm 113:9 that brings me grief, but it is not the word “barren”: it’s the word “joyful.” God has graciously given my husband and me seven children, children who fill our home with laughter and wonder, but I confess with sorrow that too often I am not a joyful mother. Instead of serving my family with the humble mind of Christ, I’m prone instead to resent the countless messes, innumerable loads of laundry, and perpetual meal preparation and cleanup that many children entail. To top it off, I’m quick to blame my self-centered attitude on the sleep I lack due to middle-of-the-night feedings rather than the sin that festers in my heart.

Essentially, the cross that a Christian mother bears is the same cross as the barren Christian woman must carry. It’s the cross of denying one’s self, laying aside one’s own desires, and willingly following our Savior in the way in which he leads us. What cross do you bear? Do you carry this cross joyfully today?

Sing or pray Psalter #359.

The Sea Fleed
Read Psalm 114

In Psalm 114 the psalmist gives inanimate, geographical features of creation animal characteristics. He does so to demonstrate that all of creation is at the beck and call of our great God. At his command and in his presence the sea flees, the Jordan river turns back, the mountains and hills skip, and the earth trembles.

What is Jehovah’s purpose in all of his workings in the natural world? Both in the Old Testament and in our day his works in creation serve a two-fold purpose. The first purpose is the glory of his own name. The second purpose is the salvation of the people in whom he dwells and over whom he rules. Children of God, what a wonder! The mountains, the stars, the sea, hurricanes, tornados, rain, and drought—all are orchestrated by our loving Father for his glory and our good.

Sing or pray Psalter #307.

Like Idol, Like Idolater
Read Psalm 115

Several weeks ago our family watched a documentary about India in which the narrator of the film visited a market place where men were crafting idols. The artisans first twisted straw into their desired shape—in this case, they were mass producing images of an elephant. They patted mud over the straw forms. When the mud dried, they added garish finishing touches: brightly-colored paint and sparkles. Throngs flocked to buy these idols. They bowed to them, sacrificed to them, and held feasts in their honor.

Little has changed in countries like India since Psalm 115 was written. The gods the majority of Indians worship are the work of their own hands. They are not alive, and they are incapable of doing anything for those who worship them. Psalm 115 declares, “They that make them are like unto them.” Tragically, those who worship gods of wood and stone are as dead as their idols, incapable of seeing, hearing, or believing the truth. Likewise, when we put our trust in idols—investments, possessions, health or strength, physical appearance, popularity, fellow human beings—instead of Jehovah, we are like them instead of like him. “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).

Sing or pray Psalter #308.

Speech Driven by Faith
Read Psalm 116

In Psalm 116 the psalmist recounts his great trouble and Jehovah’s ensuing deliverance of his soul from death. Before detailing his thankful response, he writes in verses 10 and 11 about his speech. In verse 10 he reiterates a beautiful confession: “I believed,” he declares, “therefore have I spoken.” The psalmist’s confession is a fruit of his faith. The apostle Paul quotes this text in reference to his and Timothy’s faithful preaching in the face of great persecution (2 Cor. 4:13).

Our faith must motivate us to speak, too. Paul commendsthe church in Thessalonica as examples to all the
believers in Macedonia and Achaia. What attribute of the Thessalonians did Paul want their fellow saints to imitate? “From you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing” (1 Thess. 1:8). Similarly, the saints who were scattered abroad from Jerusalem “went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8). It’s not enough that our neighbors witness us live a moral life. We must be so overwhelmed with the gospel we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard (Acts 4:20).

Sing or pray Psalter #426:1–7.

Speech Driven by Fear
Read Ecclesiastes 5

In Psalm 116:10 the psalmist’s faith compels him to speak. His was the experience that Psalm 119:27 relates: “Make me to understand the way of thy precepts: so shall I talk of thy wondrous works.” In the very next verse, however, the psalmist remembers a time when he spoke in haste. His rash words—“All men are liars”—were driven by fear.

How readily our mouths also pour out foolishness, foolishness that springs from all manner of sinful attitudes: fear, anger, pride, discontent... Proverbs 29:20 says, “Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him.”

What proceeds from your mouth—corrupt communication or words that edify and minister grace to their hearers? (Eph. 4:29). Sometimes we’re forced to “eat our words.” Proverbs 18:21 assures that us that we will always eat the fruit of what we say, if not in this life, then in the life to come: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.”

Sing or pray Psalter #386.

Precious in Jehovah’s Sight
Read Psalm 23

As he pens Psalm 116, the psalmist faces death. This confession comforts him: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” The psalmist knows that the same God who covered him in his mother’s womb will also walk with him through the dark valley of the shadow of death. Jehovah appointed the day of his birth; to him also belongs the day of his death. That great comfort is also ours as we ponder our impending deaths. Death is the terrible, just punishment for sin, but our Lord Jesus Christ has conquered death and the grave. For that reason we do not consider our own death or mourn the death of loved ones as those who have no hope.

Precious in Jehovah’s sight, too, is the death of those saints who are carelessly and brutally martyred for their faith. Not only do they receive a great reward in heaven, but he uses their witness to grow his church on earth as well. In response to the bitter persecution Christians faced in the arenas of Rome, the ancient church father Tertullian wrote: “We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed.”

Sing or pray Psalter #426:8–10.

All Nations Blessed
Read Psalm 117

At first glance, Psalm 117 may seem remarkable only in its brevity. But pause a moment and consider that the saints of the Old Testament sang this song of praise. The Israelites looked forward to the day when people from all nations would praise Jehovah with them. They knew well the promise made to Abraham: “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 22:18). How wonderful heaven will be! The Bible tells us that there every race and tribe of people will be represented among the members of Christ’s body, gathered together to jointly praise his name for eternity. Though scattered over the face of the earth, those saints praise Jehovah already in this life. They praise him for the great mercy and kindness he shows to them in forgiving their sins and supplying them with all things necessary for their bodies as well as their souls.

What’s your attitude toward those whose skin is a different color than yours or toward those who hail from foreign countries? It’s our responsibility to reach out to them, inviting them to join us in praising the God who has shown us such undeserved kindness and mercy.

Sing or pray Psalter #316.

The Foundation of our Prayers
Read Psalm 118

Psalm 118 is a psalm of grateful, jubilant rejoicing. Why does the psalmist rejoice? He rejoices because the Lord is on his side, and in his joy he calls on Israel, the priests of Aaron’s line, and all who fear Jehovah to enter the gates of the tabernacle and join him in worship. Psalm 115:9–13 addresses the same three groups of people twice and in the same order. That method brings to my mind the sometimes helpful practice of praying in concentric circles.

When one prays in concentric circles, he begins by praying for himself. Then he prays for those nearest him, perhaps his spouse, children, or parents. After that, he moves outward to his extended family, his friends, and members of his church family, followed perhaps by his neighbors, the denomination to which his church belongs, the rulers of his nation, and the church catholic. Praying in concentric circles can be a helpful way to organize one’s prayers.

The occasion of the psalmist’s praise is the foundation of all our prayers. He speaks prophetically in verse 22 of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the elect, precious cornerstone of God. The man who believes on him will never be confounded.

Sing or pray Psalter #427.
Our Lives of Joy in Christ:
Never Rejected, Always Received

Note: The theme of the Young Adults Retreat, held March 16, 2016 in Loveland, Colorado, was “Our Lives of Joy.” The theme text was Psalm 118:24. The content of this speech, now adapted for the reader, is taken largely from Psalm 118:22–24, “The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord’s doing: it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

The joy of our lives is knowing by faith that for Jesus’ sake God will never reject us but always receive us, so that with the whole of our being we want to take a psalm and praise him. The joyful believer declares, “My life of joy is grounded in the knowledge of true faith. I know. And I know this: For Jesus’ sake God will never reject me but always receive me. And my knowledge produces this fruit: I want to praise God with the whole of my being. And because God gave me 150 Psalms to use as expressions of my praise, I want to take a psalm like Psalm 118 and praise him.”

**Our Foundation**

Instead of beginning by considering our lives of joy, we must begin with the foundation of our lives, and that is Christ’s life. There is no life and joy for us apart from Christ. Sad? Learn of Christ. Discouraged? Learn of Christ. Heavy laden? Learn of Christ. When we learn of Christ we understand he was rejected by men and abandoned by God, and then received by God.

Christ’s life of suffering can be described in one word: Rejection. “The stone which the builders refused (rejected) is become the head stone of the corner” (v. 22). The psalmist is likely David, who was anointed king by Samuel, but rejected by Saul and others. Nevertheless, the New Testament, in Matthew 21, Mark 12, Luke 20, and Acts 4 clearly teaches that this verse is prophetic of Jesus Christ in his rejection.

Christ was the stone rejected by the Jewish leaders. That rejection was very wicked, for first, 1 Peter 2:4 identifies him as the “living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious.” The builders did not reject just any stone, but God’s eternally chosen and precious stone. Second, that rejection was so wicked because it was done by the builders (v. 22). The stone was not rejected by the poor and unlearned servants of the back-country, but by the educated scribes and chief priests who were supposed to be involved in building God’s Israel by leading the people to Christ. Instead, they rejected Christ.

The Jewish leaders said of Christ, who possessed all the knowledge and beauty of God, “You are ugly. You are unshapely. You have no place in the building of God!” They opposed him for his entire ministry and then crucified him. They rejected him because they hated him. They hated him because they knew he did shine with the holiness of God, exposing their hypocrisy and testifying against all their wickedness. Yet today many stumble over the stone in the preaching and reject him.

This rejection was painful for Christ. We ought not view him as a literal stone. Stones do not care if they are rejected, because stones do not care. They are lifeless objects. Christ is a living stone. Being rejected by the builders of his own nation hurt Christ. He suffered deeply.

Yet there was more to his suffering than the pain of being rejected of men. He is the Christ who bore all our sins and thus the just punishment of God. God brought that rejection upon Christ as part of his punishment. And then the inexpressible agony of it all for Christ was that when his own nation Israel had rejected him and taunted him while he was hanging from the cross, he turned to his heavenly Father who from all eternity had said, “Thou art chosen by me and precious to me.” But his Father was not
there. Christ cried out in the agonizing darkness, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me!” He was rejected by men and abandoned by his Father. Willingly he endured it all for us and our salvation.

On the third day the Father took that dead stone whom the builders had refused and cast outside the city wall, and he made it “the head stone of the corner,” (v. 22). On the third day God said, “My Son has suffered enough. He endured the punishment. He paid for all the sins. He earned life.” Then in love for his Son and us, God raised Jesus from the dead and advanced him to the highest position of honor as the cornerstone of the building of the universal church upon whom all the elect as living stones are built. “This is the Lord’s doing” (v. 23). God raised Christ. God received Christ. God made Christ the foundation of the church and the foundation of the life of all the members of the church.

**Our Knowledge**

In order to experience joy, we must know that for Jesus’ sake, God will never reject us but always receive us. There are three categories of experiences Satan uses to rob us of our joy, making the knowledge of faith so important.

First there is the temptation to fear that God will reject us because of our sins. There may be a young adult attending this retreat who is struggling with doubts and lacks assurance. You don’t have any doubt about the salvation of anyone else who registered for the retreat, but you come doubting that God will receive you, because of your sins, your foolish past, and your ongoing spiritual imperfections. You fear that the holy builder, God will say, “You are spiritually ugly and unshapely,” and reject you.

Second, Satan uses the pain of being wickedly rejected for Christ’s sake to rob us of our joy. In belonging to Christ we must expect rejection in the world. Maybe some of you have had your job application rejected for refusing to work on Sunday, or have had insults hurled at you for believing the Bible, the ten commandments, or in marriage between one man and one woman for life. Maybe other professing Christians have sneered at or slandered you for your adherence to the historic Reformed faith. When you are all alone at work or in the university it hurts to stand for the truth and experience rejection.

Third, Satan tries to rob us of our joy by using the pain of undesirable circumstances that make us feel rejected. Maybe (sadly, and God forbid) you grew up with friends who had parents who took an interest in their lives, but your father or mother never seemed interested in you. You feel rejected. Maybe (sadly, and God forbid) you grew up in a home of favoritism, or at least you perceived favoritism, so that you felt rejected, and had to fight off jealousy and bitterness. Maybe (sadly, and God forbid) you have spent much time in an environment where there is continual criticism, and though you seek to please, nothing you do is acceptable. You feel rejected. Maybe (sadly, and God forbid) your parents fight and live in enmity and you think, “Can’t they love each other for me? Don’t they love me their child enough to live in peace?” You feel rejected. Maybe you put so much work and hope into getting accepted by this college or that company for a certain desirable job, and you weren’t accepted... again. You feel rejected, and then you start doubting your character and abilities. “What am I? No one wants me.” Maybe your boyfriend or girlfriend broke up with you, and you feel rejected. Maybe you never had a boyfriend or girlfriend and you feel rejected, unattractive, flawed in some fundamental way like an ugly, unshapely stone that will never fit anywhere. Maybe people were making plans to do something and you weren’t included, deliberately or perhaps by an honest oversight, and now you feel rejected. Maybe you feel rejected because of physical limitations; you are not able to do the activities others are, so you are left out and you feel rejected and worthless. Maybe you belong to a church family and a blood family, but you feel like you are walking alone on the path called “Rejection” and you really are not close to anyone. Some believers have these struggles.

Rejection and the feeling of it are like a hammer and chisel slowly chipping away at your self-image. Little by little you lose confidence, hope, and joy. You feel unloved, unwanted, unacceptable, and worthless. The more you feel that way, the more your life is controlled by fear of rejection, and the downward spiral continues so that you feel more and more insecure, craving acceptance and overreacting to rejection or even perceived rejection. You say, “I’ll never be good enough. I know that what I say is not important, and what I think is not important. There is nothing likeable in me.” Even worse, “How could God love me? He does not. He never did.” Then the sense of rejection keeps spiraling downward so that you reject others, “I will never trust anyone again! I will never get close to anyone again! No one will
ever become important to me again! Not even God! Getting close to someone is simply setting myself up for rejection.” And when you hear the host church announces the theme of their spring retreat as, “Our Lives of Joy,” you say, “Joy? Who has a life of joy? I sure don’t.”

Remember, at the very beginning, we did not identify feelings as the source of our joy; feelings go up and down. Nor is joy rooted in circumstances; circumstances change with the wind. Joy is rooted in the knowledge of faith—in the unchangeable truth of the gospel.

Learn of Christ. First, learn this: For his sake, God will never reject you but always receive you. The infinitely glorious and holy God will never say, “You are ugly. You are unshapely in your sins. You have no place in my church and in my fellowship.” Why? Not because you are sinless in yourself, but because God sees you in Christ. Christ lived the life of rejection and abandonment for you. Because God sees you in Christ, you are a righteous, beautiful, shapely, glorious, living stone in his building. Yours is a life of joy.

Second, learn this: Because God receives you in Christ, he works all things—even that chipping you feel—for your good (Rom. 8:28). When undesirable circumstances come and through them you feel the pain of rejection like a hammer and chisel slowly breaking you down, that is God’s good hammer and chisel to chip away your pride and self-reliance, to chip away all your imperfections and shape you more and more like Christ and for your place in the building of God.

Thirdly know this: because God receives you in Christ, he gives you wisdom to understand rejection. He gives wisdom to understand that your identity is not determined by people or circumstances, or your own estimation of yourself, but by him, the loving builder. You are not an ugly, unshapely rock, but a beautiful, valuable stone fixed to Christ the cornerstone. Wisdom to understand that another’s inappropriate or even sinful behavior toward you has nothing to do with you and your value, but with their weak and sinful heart. Wisdom to understand it’s unreasonable to expect that everyone will always approve of you, or behave in a way that feels to you like approval. Wisdom to know others may feel rejected by God, by the wicked, or because of undesirable circumstances, and they may need your encouragement and prayers. Look for them. Wisdom

to know we are living stones who cannot survive outside the building, outside the fellowship of God’s people in Christ. We need to be with God’s people in church where the life is. And God’s people, though not sinless, are not cruel and mean, but truly loving and kind and do have our best interest in mind. Wisdom to know that if others are separating from you, or if you sense the separation of God, because you are stubbornly walking in unconfessed sin, you must repent. Wisdom to know as Joseph, that joy is not found in rejecting those who reject you, but in being gracious as God is gracious.

**Our Response**

Out of that knowledge of Christ arises within the whole of our being a desire to take a psalm and praise God. This is our joy. We praise him with the words of Psalm 118:23–24.

“This is the Lord’s doing!” He punished the Christ. He received the Christ. For Christ’s sake he will never punish or reject me, but always receive me. God made Christ my salvation, and not only mine, but the salvation of the whole building!

“It is marvelous in our eyes!” It is wonderful to behold and believe.

“This is the day which the Lord hath made!” For David, it was the day in which he was publicly anointed by God as king over Israel, Saul being dead. For Christ it is the day of the resurrection, when his humiliation was over and he experienced triumph, being set as the living cornerstone. For us it is every day in the new dispensation, but especially Sunday, the Lord’s day.

“And we will rejoice in it!” Knowing what God did to Christ and in Christ for me, to make me part of his everlasting, universal building as a beautiful stone, I will praise him. But my resolve is to praise him with others. We will rejoice. Satan cannot rob us of our joy. We will come together through the gates of righteousness and praise God with psalms.

This I know by faith: For Jesus’ sake God will never reject me, but always receive me. This I do in joy: I read Psalm 118 or sing a versification of it praising God. This is my life of joy.

Rev. Huizinga is pastor of Hope Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands, California.
As another Federation Board year is close to being finished, it is time to introduce our new nominees. These nominees will be brought up to the delegate meeting at the upcoming 2016 convention hosted by Grace and Wingham PRCs. For those who don’t know who we are or what we do, what follows is a brief summary.

The Federation Board of the Young People oversees Beacon Lights, conventions, Young Calvinists, Scholarship Committee, and organizing young people’s mass meetings in the Grand Rapids area. Those that are on this board are from the Grand Rapids area because we are located in Grand Rapids. Since some delegates may not know who these people are, the next few paragraphs will give them insight into who they will be voting into position at the delegate meeting at the convention.

The nominees for spiritual advisor this year are Professor Barry Gritters and Rev. Ron Van Overloop. Prof. Gritters is originally from Redlands, California. He is married with 6 married children and 18 grandchildren. He was called to the seminary in 2003 and before that was at Byron Center PRC and then Hudsonville PRC for 10 years each. He is currently teaching in the seminary. He teaches some Old Testament courses and some New Testament courses, but mostly practical theology courses, which are preaching, church government, missions, and pastoral counseling.

Our second nominee for spiritual advisor is Rev. Ron Van Overloop. He is presently the pastor of Grace PRC. He has served there since November 2008. He served the Protestant Reformed denomination as a missionary for almost ten years. In addition to Grace PRC, he has been the pastor of Hope, Bethel, Georgetown, and Byron Center. He has always had and still has a great interest in and love for the young people of our denomination. As a youth he served two terms on the Federation Board and later served as spiritual advisor. He and his wife Sue have been gifted with seven married children and blessed with twenty-eight grandchildren.

Next we have the youth coordinator. Mr. Brad Bruinsma and Mr. Daniel Langerak are the nominees for this position. Mr. Brad Bruinsma is a member of our Grandville PRC. With his wife and three daughters, he lives in Grandville MI. He has served on the Federation Board for the past two years as an advisor and liaison for the Young Calvinist Committee. As the work with this committee continues to gain ground, we asked if he would be willing to leave his name up for nomination for a possible second term.

Mr. Daniel Langerak is married to Annie and has one child, Benjamin. He works in maintenance and also as a machinist at a tool and die shop. If elected to this position he hopes to provide a helpful perspective and do his best to assist the work done on the young people’s behalf.

Up for nomination for vice president we have Brandon Kaptein and Bryce Kooienga. Brandon Kaptein attends Faith PRC and works full time for Spectrum Net Designs as a project manager. He was recently married to Macey Dykstra. If nominated he hopes to continue the faithful work that the Federation Board has done in the past by continuing to labor for the spiritual good of the young people.

Bryce Kooienga is a member of Faith PRC and works as an apprentice for Kleyn Electric. He feels that serving on the Federation Board would be an excellent opportunity to serve the young people of the church. His goal is to ensure that there continues to be a high level of interest in the Federation Board activities, fellowship between the young people’s societies, and spiritual growth of the young people.

The nominees for vice treasurer are Daniel Gritters and Justin Hiemstra. Daniel Gritters is a member at Byron Center PRC. He has just finished his first year at Grand Valley State University pursuing a major in Computer Science. His parents are Marvin and Marcia Gritters, and he has five brothers.

Justin Hiemstra is a member of Trinity PRC. He lives in Hudsonville with his wife Natalie. Justin is currently employed at ME Yacht Restoration in Holland. He enjoys boating, fishing, and working on house
and car projects. He is thankful for the potential opportunity to serve the church, especially the young people, through this position.

Last, our nominees for vice secretary are Miriam Koerner and Katelyn Van Overloop. Miriam Koerner is a member of Southeast PR Church. She is currently studying English Language and Literature at Grand Valley State University. Miriam works part-time as a waitress at Russ’ Restaurant in Wyoming, Michigan. She is excited to serve on the Federation Board because she sees it as an opportunity to serve actively with other members of the church and to encourage the young people to grow in their faith through the reading of Reformed literature and the fellowship of the saints.

Katelyn recently concluded her year as a senior at Covenant, and while she is sad to leave high school behind, she is excited for college. Lord willing, she will be going to Baker College of Muskegon this coming fall to be a physical therapist assistant. This summer and during the school year she will continue working at Keegstra’s Dollar Store in Hudsonville, where she has worked for a year now. She can’t wait to see what God has in store as she begins a new part of her life.

The Federation Board thanks the nominees for being willing to be up for nomination. A special thanks to those who are retiring this year. Nicole Kamps, Stephen Bodbyl, Prof. Dykstra, and Joel Rau, you will all be missed but we hope you have been blessed in your time serving on the Federation Board. The Board also thanks everyone for their prayers and support as we strive to glorify God in our work. Most importantly we thank God for blessing us with the opportunity to glorify him in our work as members of the Federation Board.

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**Church News**

*Melinda Bleyenberg*

**BAPTISMS**

“...that he will dwell in us and sanctify us to be members of Christ, applying unto us...the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our lives.”

The sacrament of holy baptism was administered to:

- Violet Jayne, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Derek & Brittany Koedam—Doon, IA
- Emma Janae, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Matt & Chelsey Van Beek—Doon, IA
- Charlie Michael, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joey & Sherry Mantel—Doon, IA
- Evan Joseph, son of Mr. & Mrs. Gary & Marsha Boverhof—Edgerton, MN
- Lucy Leigh, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Eric & Christa Phelps—First, MI
- Tyler Daniel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bryan & Nicole Postoor—First, MI
- Shiloh Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nick & Leanne Engelsma—Georgetown, MI
- Oscar Isaiah, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ben & Becky Peterson—Grace, MI
- Casey Everett, son of Mr. & Mrs. Justin & Heidi Griess—Loveland, CO
- Ramona Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Joe & Audra Ophoff—Loveland, CO
- Abe Willem, son of Mr. & Mrs. Ross & Jill Van Baren—Randolph, WI
- Madelyn Elise, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Zachary & Lauren Feenstra—Redlands, CA
- Mara Faith, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Craig & Erika Ferguson—Southwest, MI
- Elise Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tim & Liza Machiele—Trinity, MI
- Kayla Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jim & Renae Kiiper—Trinity, MI
- Evan Joseph, son of Mr. & Mrs. Gary & Marsha Boverhof—Edgerton, MN
- Lucy Leigh, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Eric & Christa Phelps—First, MI
- Tyler Daniel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Bryan & Nicole Postoor—First, MI
- Shiloh Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Nick & Leanne Engelsma—Georgetown, MI
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- Madelyn Elise, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Zachary & Lauren Feenstra—Redlands, CA
- Mara Faith, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Craig & Erika Ferguson—Southwest, MI
- Elise Marie, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Tim & Liza Machiele—Trinity, MI
- Kayla Joy, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Jim & Renae Kiiper—Trinity, MI

**CONFESSIONS OF FAITH**

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Proverbs 3:6

Public confession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ was made by:

- Jacob Beintema—Byron Center, MI
- Madeline Meulenberg—Grace, MI
- Isaac Griess—Loveland, CO
- Katrina Regnerus—Randolph, WI
- Mitchell Kaiser—Southwest, MI
- Wes Van Dyke—Trinity, MI

**MARRIAGES**

“For this God is our God forever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.”

Psalm 48:14

Mr. Chris Sooter and Miss Breanna Van Egdom—Doon, IA
Mr. Matthew Ferguson and Miss Leah Marcus—Edmonton, Alberta, CAN
Mr. Jared Van Overloop and Miss Jennelle Meyer—Hope, MI
Mr. Zach Kuiper and Miss Annica Bosveld—Hope, MI
Mr. Edward Hanks and Miss Jessica Higgs—Lynden, WA
Mr. Andrew Kuiper and Miss Renee Veldman—Southwest, MI
Mr. Brandon Daling and Miss Stephanie Loyenga—Southwest, MI
Mr. Steve Bruinsma and Miss Sarah Ensink—Trinity, MI
That night, when Danny and Becky were ready for bed, their mother pulled out the book on Roman armor. “We’re up to talking about the shield of faith.”

Danny peered at the picture of the Roman legionnaire standing next to his shield. The shield was so big it came up to his waist. “They had big shields.”

“Yes. The Roman shield, called a scutum, was big. It was made of three layers of wood covered with leather and reinforced with iron. At the time when Paul was writing to the Ephesians, the scutum was rectangular in shape and curved.” Danny’s mother pointed out the different parts of the shield on the picture. “But the big shields had a purpose in battle. The Roman soldiers could crouch behind their shields and the enemy swords and arrows couldn’t get to them. The shields were strong and thick enough that arrows couldn’t penetrate.”

“Like the Bible says, the shield of faith will quench the fiery darts of the devil.” Becky piped in, swinging her feet against the edge of the bed.

Their mother nodded. “Exactly. The shield of faith is very important to the Christian’s armor. The Bible says to take it up “above all.” When we crouch behind our shield of faith, Satan and the world can’t get to us. We’re protected.”

Danny frowned. “If the Roman shield was so big, then wouldn’t it be heavy?”

“Yes, it could be heavy.” Their mother nodded. “It weighed anywhere between 12 and 22 pounds. That’s about as heavy as having two gallons of milk strapped to your arm.”

Danny scrunched up his face as he tried to imagine all that weight on his arm while marching into a battle.

“Like the big, heavy Roman shields, our faith is strong and sturdy. We don’t have a flimsy, small faith that falls apart after a bit of battering. Sometimes, faith can feel heavy because it is constructed from the knowledge we are given in the Bible, like how the Roman shield was made of layers of wood to make it strong. That’s why we have to study the Bible to learn what it tells us about God and how to live as Christians. Each piece of knowledge we learn reinforces and builds our shield of faith.”

Questions to think about:

1. Read Ephesians 6:16, Hebrews 11:1, and Heidelberg Catechism LD 7 Q&A 21 by yourself or with your parents. What is faith?
2. How does faith protect us?

Find the words below in the puzzle

M Q S Q H G P W C M
D L J T Q R Q O O U
N L I N O H M O N T
P A E T U I D D F U
F R E I D L O S I C
D C O I H E F M D S
T A R Y E S E Z E H
V O R F I E R Y N O
N E B T L Z H W C G
J Z M L R R U M E D

CONFIDENCE PROTECT
DART SCUTUM
FAITH SHIELD
FIERY SOLDIER
IRON WOOD

Tricia is a member of Byron Center Protestant Reformed Church in Byron Center, Michigan.
ATTENTION CONVENTIONEERS!

There’s lots to do at Lake Williamson!

- Beach & Pool Area for Swimming with Water Slide, Bogg, Canoes, & Paddleboats
- Team Ropes Course
- 9 Square, GaGa Ball, Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer, Disc Golf
- Ping Pong, Pool Tables, Air Hockey
- Board & Card Games and more!
- TOURNAMENTS - Start creating your teams now for girls basketball (4), boys basketball (4), coed volleyball (6) & soccer (6), rook, and euchre. Sign-ups will be available soon ONLINE! Watch your bulletin for further information!

August 8-12, 2016
Lake Williamson Christian Conference Center
Visit www.prrconvention.com for more information