

The Westkirk Presbyterian Church

# Shepherd

Volume 24 No. 5 May 2009

## In Defense of the Word

‘Why did you do it?’ If you haven’t heard, the Saturday, April 11 edition of the Des Moines Register featured three letters to the editor that discussed the one of the two ‘hot topic’ issues facing our state right now – the Supreme Court opinion declaring the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) unconstitutional. One was co-authored by the four Iowa Roman Catholic bishops, one by a representative of the Interfaith Alliance, and one, co-signed by 130 clergy from around the state. I had been contacted and asked to be a signatory to the letter and had accepted the invitation. But at about noon on Good Friday (what is the ‘good’ in Good Friday all about, anyway?) I was asked to be one of the 4 main sponsors of the letter. Being a sponsor meant having my name, with the other three, email address, and photograph there for all readers to see. Since the letter was longer than the typical letter to the editor, and the letter by the Catholics had four signatures, the Register had agreed to print the letter in its entirety, but was not willing to print all 130 names. Instead, they would print up to four and list the other signers on their website.

Being one of 130 is different than being one of 4. Do you know what I mean? I had to make a quick decision and fax to the paper a signed release form. Since I had offered some editorial suggestions to the letter as it was first written, I was not opposed to being one of the main sponsors on those grounds. I had contributed to the writing of the letter. It was the possible consequences that gave me pause. What would everyone in the church think? What kind of persecution might come from this for me, the church or my family? I had time to consult with a few trusted advisors, but in the end, I knew I had to say ‘yes.’ I am familiar with the key biblical texts defining marriage, as well as those that speak to homosexuality. And chapter 24 of the Westminster Confession of Faith clearly defines marriage as “a union between one man and one woman.” Our doctrinal statement is very clear. I could have pretended to be out of the office, but once asked, to say ‘no,’ was to say ‘no’ to defending the Word of God.

Later that day, I met with a group of men to discuss theology and the chapter of the book we are reading was called, ‘The Word of God.’ Author and respected Reformed professor, John M. Frame made several points in the chapter that drove home the point. He writes, “...whenever God speaks, he not only reveals his power, not only reveals verbal content, but also reveals himself. That is to say, the word is the very presence of God among us, the place where God dwells. So you cannot separate the word of God from God himself.” Defending Scripture is defending God. How often in this lifetime do I expect the opportunity to defend God, or even be persecuted for his sake, to the entire state of Iowa? Not too many. In fact, if this be the only time, that would be okay by me. Nonetheless, once asked, to say ‘no,’ was to say ‘no,’ to God himself. Thank you for giving me the support and encouragement I need to speak the truth in love.

**Pastor Michael**

*ESV 2 Timothy 3:14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it <sup>15</sup> and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*





Westkirk  
Presbyterian  
Church

### The Session

**Moderator** - Michael Mudlaff

*Class of 2009*

David Arnold  
Van Harden  
Kevin Heer  
Kirk Yentes

*Class of 2010*

Rick Eyerly  
Gary Robinson  
Jerry Tuinstra  
Melinda Turnbull

*Class of 2011*

Chad Carlson  
John Donaldson  
Mark Scheve  
Trent Vis

**Clerk of Session** - Robin Riggins

**Treasurer** - Chris Brown

**Assistant Treasurer** - Aaron Pieper

### Commission Deacons

**Christian Education** - Sandy Tuinstra, 2010  
**Evangelism/Fellowship** - Regi Donaldson, 2009

**House and Grounds** - Hugh Sheppard, 2009

**Missions** - Gail De Graaf, 2010

**Prayer** - Paul Nelson, 2010

**Stewardship** - Chuck Heitbrink, 2009

**Worship** - Kevin Riggins, 2009

### Parish Deacons

*Class of 2009*

Barb Asman  
Benae Duff  
Marilyn Long  
Marilyn McCulloch

Fran Nugteren

John Schwien

Kris Thompson

Sandy Tuinstra

Sherie Whitehead

*Class of 2010*

Linda Aldrich

Jeff Brady

Kay Cunitz

Cynthia Fisher

Nancy Schmidt

Diane Skinner

Myra Verros

Eric Wickemeyer



- 1 ..... \*Grace Hoepker
  - 2 ..... Cindy Welsher
  - 4 ..... Cody Raisch
  - 5 ..... Lenora Chamberlain
  - 7 ..... Glen Bassett
  - 9 ..... Elaine Hurst
  - 9 ..... \*Madeline Leahy
  - 10 ..... Stacie Bland
  - 11 ..... Clarence Duke
  - 11 ..... Karen Moss
  - 15 ..... \*Conner Barron
  - 15 ..... Trent Vis
  - 16 ..... \*Lauren Brady
  - 17 ..... \*Ross Wickemeyer
  - 17 ..... Bruce Wright
  - 20 ..... Terry K. Thompson
  - 20 ..... Jack Wildrick
  - 21 ..... Ken Bratney
  - 21 ..... John Donaldson
  - 25 ..... Mary Arnold
  - 26 ..... \*Eliason Norem
  - 26 ..... Rus Norem
  - 27 ..... Janelle Leahy
  - 29 ..... Bill Oswalt
- \*Youth member



- 2 ..... Chris & Pam Brown
- 3 ..... Hugh & Deann Sheppard
- 3 ..... Stephen & Nancy Boyd
- 4 ..... Alvin & Lois Stecker
- 6 ..... Craig & Rene` Van Gundy
- 7 ..... Dave & Sandy Carson
- 10 ..... Dan & Christine Kinney
- 17 ..... Paul & Jeannie Havnen
- 18 ..... Jerry & Diane Skinner
- 21 ..... Brian & Amy Soper
- 26 ..... Pearce & Allison Brown
- 27.... Paul & Shirley MacLafferty
- 30 ..... Loy & Ellie Brooks
- 30.....Scott & Stacie Bland

### Congratulations!

On May 21, 2009 **Bradley Millis** will join the graduating class of Urbandale High School for the Commencement Exercises at the Knapp Center of Drake University. He is the son of Charles and Mary Millis. All are members of Westkirk. Good luck. Brad, on your future endeavors!

### Change of Address

#### Larry & Sherie Whitehead

14304 Alpine Drive  
Urbandale, IA 50323  
Phone: 986-5130

#### Sonja Hansen

5319 SW 14th Street  
Des Moines, IA 50315  
5felinefamily@gmail.com  
Phone: 778-8804



# The Bulletin Board

## May Activities – See related articles in this issue.

Friday	5/1	<b>Women's Bible Study</b> , 9:00 a.m. * * * * *
Sunday	5/3	<b>Mission Sunday</b> <b>Sunday School</b> , 9:00 a.m.; <b>Worship Service</b> , 10:30 a.m. <b>Mission Buffet Luncheon</b> , follows worship <b>Sunday Night at the Kirk</b> , 6:30 p.m. <b>The Gathering</b> , 6:30 p.m., Youth Room
Monday	5/4	<b>Commissions meeting</b> , 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	5/5	<b>Stephen Ministry</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	5/6	<b>WOW</b> , supper 5:45 p.m.; <b>Choir</b> , 7:30 p.m.
Thursday	5/7	<b>Prayer Shawl Ministry</b> , 7:00 p.m. * * * * *
Sunday	5/10	<b>Sunday School</b> , 9:00 a.m. <b>Children lead Worship Service</b> <b>with Holy Communion served by Elders</b> , 10:30 a.m. <b>Emeritus of Urbandale Worship</b> , 2:00 p.m. <b>The Gathering</b> , 6:30 p.m., Youth Room
Monday	5/11	<b>Omega Housekirk</b> , 6:30 p.m. <b>Commission Deacons Meeting</b> , 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	5/12	<b>New Light meeting</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	5/13	<b>WOW</b> , supper 5:45 p.m.; <b>Choir</b> , 7:30 p.m.
Friday	5/15	<b>Shepherd June articles due</b> * * * * *
Sunday	5/17	<b>Sunday School</b> , 9:00 a.m. <b>Music Sunday Worship Service</b> , 10:30 a.m. <b>Food Pantry Collection</b> <b>Closing for Carnation orders</b> <b>The Gathering</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Monday	5/18	<b>Session Meeting</b> , 5:30 p.m. <b>Parish Deacons Meeting</b> , 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	5/19	<b>The Clan Housekirk</b> , 1:00 p.m. <b>Stephen Ministry</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	5/20	<b>Last WOW</b> , supper 5:45 p.m.; <b>Children's Program</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Thursday	5/21	<b>Dorcas Circle</b> , Meet at church 12:45 for carpool <b>Prayer Shawl Ministry</b> , 1:00 p.m. * * * * *
Sunday	5/24	<b>Sunday School</b> , 9:00 a.m.; <b>Memorial Worship Service</b> , 10:30 a.m. <b>The Gathering</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Monday	5/25	<b>Omega Housekirk</b> , 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday	5/26	<b>Bagpipers Luncheon</b> , 1:00 p.m., Nick's <b>New Light meeting</b> , 6:30 p.m. * * * * *
Sunday	5/31	<b>Sunday School</b> , 9:00 a.m.; <b>Worship Service</b> , 10:30 a.m. <b>The Gathering</b> , 6:30 p.m. <b>Pentacost Prayer Service</b> , 7:00 p.m.



## Mother's Day Is May 10

A day in May is set aside for this nation to honor mothers. On **Sunday, May 10** our children will lead us in worship. Then the service will close with Holy Communion served by the Elders. If possible, please plan to attend church with a special lady or ladies who have influenced your life and let them know how much we thank God for their love, guidance and sacrifices. And, for those women who are no longer with us, we remember you with love and thanks.

## Dorcas Circle Changes Date

This month Dorcas Circle will not be meeting on May 14, but instead will meet the third Thursday of the month on **May 21** to do a mission project. All ladies of the church and their guests are invited to come to the church at **12:45 p.m.** to carpool to Meredith Drive Reformed Church to assemble Meals for the Heartland.

## Memorial Sunday at Westkirk

Each year in May, Westkirk has a special observance to honor those church members and friends who have passed on since the previous Memorial Sunday. Carnations are provided for family or friends to present in memory of their loved ones.

Watch the Sunday bulletins for forms to reserve a flower for the **May 24 service**. There is no charge for the carnations. Please be sure your **reservation** is received at the church office **by Sunday, May 17**.

## Quarterly Food Pantry Collection

Our area Food Pantry has indicated a preference for monetary donations so that they may purchase needed grocery items in large quantities which are better buys. If you would like to help in this way, please make your check payable to **Westkirk** and indicate that it is **For Food Pantry**, then place it in the Sunday collection along with your normal offering on **May 17**.

If you would rather donate food items, the Deacons will be distributing grocery sacks after worship service on May 3 and 10. Please refer to the list of items that is attached to the sack when making your donation. Also, be sure to indicate the number of items included in the sack.

Your donations (monetary or food items) will be **collected on May 17**. Thank you for caring and continuing to support this important ministry.

## Walk for Life

Celebrate Mother's Day by supporting life, hope and new beginnings! Join us for the Walk for Life at Principal Baseball Park on **Saturday, May 9**. The easy 2-mile walk begins at 9:30 a.m. Whether you run, walk, or are pushed in a stroller or wheel chair, please join us.

Walk for Life is an important fundraiser for **Ruth Harbor**, a home for pregnant girls in need of education, support and love. This is an easy and fun way to give those in need a safe place to choose life. To participate, visit with **Erica Scheve** or pick up a sponsorship form in the narthex.

## Summer Choir

During the summer, special music will be provided for Worship, including a once-a-month appearance of the "summer choir." This will be a time for anyone who wishes to sing along to join the group. Rehearsals will be after worship on the third Sunday of the month, then the group sings for the service on the fourth Sunday. If you have questions, please ask a choir member or **Director of Music Larry Kussatz**.

## Stewardship Report

March concluded the first quarter for this year with the following results.

	Current Year	Last Year
Ingathering	\$106,170.15	\$87,870.60
Expenses	107,786.93	91,483.18
Difference	(1,616.78)	(3,612.58)

We had budgeted to have nearly a \$13,500 shortfall for the first quarter of 2009. This was primarily due to assuming payment on the new mortgage and payments of the pledge loan. These two items represented almost \$16,000 for the first quarter. Additionally, all Commissions are operating within or below their planned budgeted expenses. This careful use of God's blessings has resulted in substantially reducing our planned shortfall for the first quarter.

In March an additional \$8,000 was paid on the pledge loan. These payments were over and above the general ingathering. This leaves a balance of approximately \$113,000 on the note which is due December 31, 2009.

The average attendance for the month of March was 237, with an average of over 40 in the Children's Sunday Worship Services.

We are grateful for your continued faithfulness to the ministry at Westkirk as we proceed to "Know Christ and Make Him Known."

... *Chuck Heitbrink, Stewardship Commission*

## Choir Plans Music Sunday

Just before taking a summer break, our choir has a wonderful treat in store for the congregation. On **Sunday, May 17 at 10:30 a.m.** the worship service will be a celebration in music, readings and Scripture. Some of the anthems to be presented are:

*Prayer and Alleluia*

*The Lord's Prayer*

*Father, O God, We Worship You*

*Thine Is the Glory*

*I'm Goin' to Sing When the Spirit Says Sing*

*You Are the Bread*

*Wake Up Sinner, Let the Glory In*

*Fill Me Now*

A rousing rendition of

*Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*

which features two pianos, organ and trumpet

The choir and instrumentalists are excited and anxious to fill the sanctuary with music in praise to God.

Let's honor our dedicated talented musicians by having a full house on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Invite your friends to come along to church that day to worship God through music and the Word.

## Last WOW Activities Until Fall

**Wednesday, May 20** will be the last WOW night until resuming in early September. Those of us who have been enjoying the suppers on Wednesday nights extend a huge THANK YOU to all the volunteers who prepared the suppers, brought desserts and helped with cleanup. And extra thanks to **Larry Kussatz** for planning the menus and shopping for food each week. We appreciate your dedication.

## Communion Offering

The second Sunday of each month, Worship includes Holy Communion. A special collection is taken at the close of the service as an extra gift for a designated ministry. On **May 10**, the Communion offering will be for the Urbandale Food Pantry. Look for the collection basket in the center of the narthex.



## New Members Received

We welcomed new members on March 29, 2009. They were honored at a special luncheon following worship, hosted by the Deacons.



**Sydney & Gary Arneson**  
4673 Elm Street  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
Phone: 221-9807



**Brian & Amy Soper**  
7503 Roseland Drive  
Urbandale, IA 50322  
Phone: 279-6396



**Frank & Lois Swartz**  
2527 Camelot Drive  
Urbandale, IA 50322  
Phone: 275-4142

## Welcome to the *Welcome Center*

The Evangelism and Fellowship Commission manages the Welcome Center which is a resource center for visitors and members alike. Soon, new larger casters will make it easy to move the center for greater visibility before and after the Service and for other occasions. Starting in April, a commission member will be at the center (10:00 a.m.–10:28 a.m.) to welcome visitors and assist members with:

- Visitor name tags
- First-time visitor packets: “What Is True Conversion?”
- Church magnet
- Tri-fold about Westkirk
- Postcard survey
- Pastor Michael’s Sermon tapes (\$1.00 donation)
- Reformed Theology Reference Material
- Sign-up sheet for the Explorer Class
- Sign-up sheet for prayer concerns
- Sign-up sheet for Easter and Christmas plants
- Recycle basket for *Our Daily Bread*
- Poster - “Today at Westkirk”

Across from the Welcome Center, a kiosk contains periodicals and additional information:

- Pocket Church Directory
- The *Shepherd* newsletter
- *Our Daily Bread* meditation booklet
- Prayer Shawl Ministry
- Stephen Ministry
- Hope Ministries
- Pine Rest, Christian Mental Services
- New Life,
- . . . and more

Please make all visitors feel welcome and direct them to the Welcome Center if they need more information about Westkirk.

## Why Pray?

Very broadly one could say that prayer is personal communication with God. We generally talk to God about our and others' needs and maybe we spend some time listening to God silently or through his Word.

God wants us to talk to Him because it is an expression of our trust in Him. We pray in faith, believing that God can and will do what we ask Him. That increases our dependence on Him and as our Creator He is delighted in that. Scripture compares prayer to a son asking his father for food (Luke 11:9-12) and then concludes, "*If you then who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!*" (Luke 11:13) Since God is our Father we should ask Him in faith.

God wants us to talk to Him to increase our fellowship with him. He loves us and delights in our fellowshiping with Him. Just as an earthly relationship between husband and wife or parents and their children benefit from spending time with them and talking with them, so the same holds true for our spiritual relationship with God, our heavenly Father.

God wants us to talk to Him because it involves us, God's creatures, in activities that have eternal consequences. As we pray, the work of God's kingdom is advanced. People come to faith in Christ. Others are healed. Still others experience God's peace and His strength in their anxiety and weakness.

Westkirk's Prayer Commission encourages you to continue in prayer for your church staff and officers. Bring to God your concerns about state, national and world events. Remember Westkirk's missionaries and their important work that touches lives around the world. Continue to lift up daily the people listed in the Sunday bulletin that have requested your prayers.

If you would like a member of the Prayer Commission to pray with you, please come to the front of the sanctuary after the Sunday Worship Service.

There is also a Prayer Room off the hallway behind the balcony seating that you may use for prayer anytime the church is open.

... *Paul Nelson, Prayer Commission Deacon*

## Career Support for Job Loss

While some changes are expected, others come suddenly with no warning. Either way, the reality of job loss or career change brings challenges. If you are facing an unexpected job loss due to the economic and employment challenge facing our country, come and find encouragement and support at **New Beginnings: Career Support**. Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, here in Urbandale is providing a resource room equipped with computers, printer, and a volunteer who will assist in tasks associated with searching for a job.

Along with the resource room, New Beginnings also provides support groups and special presentations to assist with the specific need one finds when faced with job loss. These support group meetings and presentations are on Thursday evenings from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

The support group meets weekly and the schedule for the workshops is as follows:

- May 7 – Job Market
- May 21 – Financial Planning/Mortgage

For more information, contact Reverend Tim Phillips at GloriaDei, 276-1700.



**Jessica Duff** Receives Love Gift From **Westkirk**, and our hearts are touched with the response from her mother, Kathy Duff:

*Oh my, this is such an amazing gift! Words are too shallow for our gratitude towards everyone.*

*Jessica is having to live out her faith right now. This has been such a difficult time for her. I already thought she was a young woman with tremendous wisdom and insight, now she has gained even more. What a blessing she is.*

*Jessica has always had a great deal of passion and dreams. When she was seven years old she told us that Jesus told her that she was going to go all over the world and tell people about Him. Throughout her childhood*

*and young adult life, we watched a beautiful tapestry being woven with all the experiences and choices she made. I smiled when she began working with Wycliffe and The Seed Company. It all seemed to fit.*

*She had dreamed of doing more graduate work in Linguistics and teaching, her true love. Perhaps even saving enough money to attend GIAL, a Linguistic graduate school that Wycliffe helped form in Texas. She had hoped that soon she would be able to assist other translation teams in other countries. And, of course, she has prayed since a young girl for God to take care of the man He was saving for her as a life partner and her children that she would have some day.*

*Seven knee surgeries held her down some, but they didn't stop her. However, with the severe head pain and medications it has been hard for her to even think clearly. Hope seems a little more distant right now. So, I would ask specifically that everyone would please pray that she will see that she still does have a future to look forward to. Your generous gift is evidence of God's great faithfulness! What a testimony she will some day have!*

*Thank you so much! Kathy Duff*

Meanwhile, it is nearly May 3 and **Mission Sunday**. "The World at Our Doorstep" is our theme, and we have had a contest. We have two wise owls visiting the various locations in the metro, as well as further out. Now we are ready to welcome our guests to our adult Sunday School classes, visit their exhibits in the Hospitality Room, and enjoy a special luncheon buffet prepared by our extraordinary Westkirk chefs. We are ready--so **PLEASE COME AND ENJOY THE DAY WITH US AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MISSIONS WE SUPPORT LOCALLY.**

On Mother's Day, May 10, we will be passing out baby bottles again for you to fill with money for **Ruth Harbor**. They need to be returned on Father's Day, June 21. This is a way the whole family can become involved in a life-saving activity.

Other activities in May include the "Walk for Life" for **Ruth Harbor**, Saturday, May 9. See Erica Scheve for more details about that.

Also on Saturday, May 9 HOPE Ministries holds its HOPE Tea, which supports the **Hope Family Center**.

Mission Commission members: Ben & Terrie Bishop, Cynthia Fisher, Somer Gillett, Lois Lundgren-Stecker, Dan Marvin, Wendy Reed, Bryan Sharp, Sherie Whitehead.

. . . Gail De Graaf, Commission Deacon

# Easter Joy at Westkirk for Everyone!



## **Our Sincere Thanks . . .**

To the Choir for the wonderful music during Lent and Holy Week.

To our Westkirk chefs and Elders who provided a delicious Easter breakfast.

To all who shared lilies to beautify the sanctuary for Easter Sunday.

## God's Garden

### Plant three rows of squash:

1. Squash gossip
2. Squash criticism
3. Squash indifference

### Plant seven rows of peas:

1. Prayer
2. Promptness
3. Perseverance
4. Politeness
5. Preparedness
6. Purity
7. Patience

### Plant seven heads of lettuce:

1. Let us be unselfish and loyal
2. Let us be faithful to duty
3. Let us search the scriptures
4. Let us not be wary in well doing
5. Let us be obedient in all things
6. Let us be truthful
7. Let us love one another

### No garden is complete without turnips:

1. Turn up for meetings, in prayer and Bible study
2. Turn up with a smile, even when things are difficult
3. Turn up with determination to do your best in God's service.

And make sure your garden gets plenty of exposure to the SON!

. . . Submitted by a Member

## Notes from Friends . . .

Dear Michael & Church Members,

*Thank you so much for the cards, support, prayers, and love you have shown our family during my father's passing.*

*Dad loved the church and was a Charter Member and was involved in many activities.*

*Michael, on a personal note: Thanks for the great service and luncheon. Congratulations on your 5-year anniversary. . .*

*In Christian Love,  
Steve Koroch & Family*

Westkirk Church Family,

*Thank you all so much for your concern & prayers during my hospitalization. I am now happy to be recovering at home! I am thankful that God has allowed me to regain my strength quickly. I really appreciate all of your prayers. The Lord is Good!*

*Love in Christ,  
Courtney Heater*

Westkirk Presbyterian Church,

*God's spirit shines through in people like you. Thank you for the beautiful plant sent for Harold's services. I appreciate the visits, gifts and prayers.*

*Our Cook family and my brother and his wife from Illinois were all together. We have also been blessed with many friends who either joined us or otherwise connected.*

*We are so confident that Harold made a "Safe Return."*

*JoAnne Cook and family*

*"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Corinthians 1:2*

# Westkirk Student Ministry

## BLAST Calendar (Junior High)

5/6 W.O.W. (Westkirk on Wednesday)

5/13 W.O.W. (Westkirk on Wednesday)

5/20 W.O.W. (Westkirk on Wednesday) \*Blast also meets for Sunday School every Sunday morning at 9 a.m. in the youth 1



## New Life Calendar (Senior High)

5/3 Sunday Night @ the Kirk @ 6:30 p.m..

Bring \$5 for ice cream afterwards.

5/10 The Gathering; 6:30 to 8 p.m.

5/17 The Gathering; 6:30 to 8 p.m.

5/24 The Gathering; 6:30 to 8 p.m.



# *Westkirk Student Ministry*

Greetings,

I mentioned in the last sermon I preached that nearly 70% of young people who grow up in the church eventually leave the church by the time they graduate from college. This is a reality that, as a pastor to the youth in our church, I find deeply troubling. Since that sermon, I have been praying for our young people and our ministry with them; and I'd like to take some time this month to share a small part of a new vision that is forming for the way we do ministry with our youth and parents at Westkirk. I say "small" because it's just one piece of the puzzle, but in reality it's a really huge (or as some of our youth might say, "Ginormous!") part of what we'd like to see happen in the coming months and years in the life of the student ministry at Westkirk. So what is it? You may want to sit down for this one.

I am praying, and I hope you'll join me, for us to establish a 3 to 1 ratio for every student in our church! What does that mean? It means that for every student connected to Westkirk, even in a small way, there will be at least three adults who know, are actively praying for, and investing in the life of that student. Isn't that a little idealistic? Isn't that impossible? Well, maybe. I'll be honest with you, I don't know a single church that even has a 3 to 1 ratio (again, that's 3 adults for every one youth) as a goal, let alone that can claim it as a reality their student ministry. I'll also admit that this goal seems lofty. We currently have about 30 youth (junior high and senior high combined) connected to Westkirk in some way, so that means we need 90 adults investing in the lives of these students. That's 90 adults who love Jesus and are willing to say, "Hey, I'd like to get to know a teenager." So yeah, this may be impossible, I don't know, but I do know for certain that if I don't ask, then we will not receive.

A common misconception of youth ministry is that it's the job of the youth pastor. Let me restate that: a common misconception of youth ministry is that the one hired to work with the youth should be the one who is working with the youth. Why is that a misconception? It does seem to make sense on the surface level? While I think there are several reasons why this way of thinking about youth ministry is flawed, I'd like to offer one really good reason: *Even Jesus could only invest in a few!* Christ came to provide community and live with us (Matt. 1:23) and then He called a small group of disciples to live and walk with Him (Mark 3:7-10,13-14). Jesus knew the multitudes had great needs, but chose to invest His life and ministry with the twelve and especially with the three (Peter, James and John). By walking with and training a few, He ultimately reached many.

We are working on restructuring our ministry with students and thinking through how we can make this 3 to 1 ratio a reality here at Westkirk, and in the coming months we'll be asking you to find a way to get involved in the lives of our teens. In the meantime I'd like to challenge you to do two things: (1) notice our youth. Look for them on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening and ask yourself, "Do I know ten things about that young person?" And (2) pray for our youth and for the opportunity to play a significant role in their lives; pray that a 3 to 1 ratio would become a reality at Westkirk.

Blessings,

**Pastor Steve**

## What Happens When You Are Referred for a Stephen Minister?

When you are referred for a Stephen Minister, a Stephen Leader will contact you to talk more about Stephen Ministry and what it can mean to you. If your needs can be best served by a Stephen Minister, you will be matched with someone who will support you through this tough time.

Confidentiality is a top priority for Stephen Ministers. You do not need to be concerned that other people will discover what you talk about with your Stephen Minister. He or she will offer caring Christian friendship and concerned listening to people when they need it most.

In times of trouble, we look to caring Christian friends to listen to us while we work through our feelings. A Stephen Minister can be such a friend, either to you or to someone you know. Twice a month our Stephen Ministers gather together to study. Their initial training is over, but they continue to learn ways of caring for people with needs. They are committed to providing Christian care for others experiencing many different trials.

If you or someone you know could benefit from the trained, caring presence and listening ear of a Stephen Minister, please see or call Pastor Michael at the church office, or Karen Breeding at 963-3954.



### Evangelism/Fellowship Commission

Commission Deacon, Regi Donaldson usually brings treats to share during planning time. If you are debating where to volunteer, give this group a try.

## Baby Bottle Blessing

On **Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10**, the children will be handing out baby bottles to everyone at the end of the service as a fundraiser for Ruth Harbor. Ruth Harbor is a local home for women who are alone and facing unplanned pregnancies. The ministry supports young mothers and their babies.

Simply fill the baby bottles with change, cash or checks. The checks may be made out to Westkirk Presbyterian Church with "Ruth Harbor" written in the memo. Then return the baby bottles on Father's Day, June 21. Thank you in advance for your contributions to help change lives!

## A Time to Celebrate

The Westkirk family celebrated the dedication of **Elliette Eileen Randall** on April 19. Ellie, who was born July 8, 2008, is the daughter of Pastor Steve Randall and Stefanie Donnell-Randall. Best wishes to this happy family.



## Are you Involved in a Commission?

The first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. Commission members attend a meeting in the Hospitality Room. After a short Bible lesson and prayer by Pastor Michael, the group splits into seven different Commissions to discuss their plans for the current month and for months to come. This activity is a critical part of the ministry at Westkirk. You are encouraged to visit on the first Monday and see where you might like to participate. God has given each of us gifts and talents. Make sure you are putting yours to work.

# Children's Ministry

Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10, is Children's Worship Sunday. The children will have the privilege of leading everyone in worship. Children in Kids of the Kingdom will sing and greet, and children in Kid's Own Worship will usher, sing, play music, speak, serve as acolytes, read scripture, and even help clean up afterward.

On Wednesday, May 20, come for a **WOW Dinner Theatre** about the Beatitudes, Psalm 23 and more. Dinner will be served from 5:45-6:30 p.m. followed by a presentation given by the children and a celebration to conclude WOW for the spring. Join us again in the fall as we start up in September.

Since summer is almost here and **Twin Lakes Christian Center** has many different camps to offer. Check out their website at [www.twinlakescc.com](http://www.twinlakescc.com), then sign up for an unforgettable, incredible week.

Do you have any ancient Roman ruins sitting around your house or have you even been to Rome? Maybe not, but perhaps you have the creative talent to help us transform Westkirk Presbyterian Church into **Paul's Underground Church** this July for our Vacation Bible School, July 19-23. Please see Gloria Huyser if would like to participate.

... Karen Admussen, Director,  
Children's Ministries

## Save Those Pull Tabs

Did you know Westkirk has a container in the Hospitality Room where you can put your pull tabs from pop cans?

Ronald McDonald House does wonderful things with those pull tabs. It's a great way to cut down on litter, too.

Any questions, call **Dick or Irene Reed, 225-1665**. Thank you for participating!

## Mark Your Calendar

**Wednesday, May 6** during dinner time: The WOW kids will have a special presentation for their moms  
**Mother's Day, May 10:** Children's Worship Sunday

**Wednesday, May 20** at 6:30 p.m.: WOW End of the Year Dinner Theater.

**Wednesday, May 27** at 6:15 p.m.: WOW children will present their End of the Year Program at area nursing homes.

There are lots of exciting events coming up and the Christian Education Commission is looking for volunteers! Below are some opportunities for service! Which of these areas would be of interest to you? Contact Karen Admussen for further information.

- Renowned author Stephen Smallman will be presenting a parenting seminar in September. We will need a committee to coordinate this event.
- Vacation Bible School is coming! It takes lots of volunteers to create this much fun!
- We are in need of a nursery coordinator. This involves scheduling an adult for each service/event (from a list of volunteers) and reminding the volunteer when it is their turn to serve.

We have wonderful new curriculum for Sunday mornings in our nursery. We need an adult to oversee this.

... Sandy Tuinstra, Commission Deacon,  
Christian Education



## ***The Shepherd***

Communication Organ of  
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