

The Westkirk Presbyterian Church

Shepherd

Volume 24 No. 8 August 2009

How Our Children Come to Faith

...is the title of one of “Basics of the Reformed Faith” booklets that are available at the Welcome Center. Written by the same author as the two very helpful, “What is True Conversion?,” and “What is a Reformed Church?,” retired Presbyterian pastor Stephen Smallman addresses many of the questions that Christian parents wrestle with as they seek to provide a nurturing, Christ-centered home for their children. It’s not a self-help booklet. It’s not a ‘follow these 47 easy steps’ guide either. Instead, Smallman offers much encouragement to real people making their way through the parenting thing, and in need of much grace. He writes to parents about how to raise their children in a spirit of faith rather than anxiety. And it all begins when parents bring their children to Jesus for his blessing. He then explains the meaning of regeneration and conversion as it relates to children raised in Christian families.

In one of my favorite sections, Stephen Smallman says:

...surefire methodologies don’t always work. We parents are sinners who have our own struggles and will never be able to “get it right” when it comes to raising children. I have often said that Peter’s word, “Love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8), was my salvation as a parent. We tried to make sure that our children were told and shown that they were deeply and unconditionally loved, but beyond that I can’t hold up any great secret to raising Christian children.

I don’t know about you, but those couple of sentences are liberating for me! As a covenant community of faith, we all must be concerned with how we bring our children to Jesus. We are looking to Jesus for our own salvation as much as for that of our children. As such, please set aside September 18-20 as we welcome Rev. Smallman to Westkirk. On Friday evening he will help us understand our own conversion experience and the place of Christian community from Matthew 18:3. From nine to noon on Saturday, Rev. Smallman will speak about: “How Our Children Come to Faith: Regeneration and Conversion,” from Matthew 19:14. And he will be our guest in the pulpit on Sunday morning as he explores that text further with the sermon, “For of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven: Teaching and Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom to Our Children.”

A gracious gift to our church for the purpose of enhancing our ministry to children and youth has enabled us to bring Rev. Smallman to Iowa. Let’s honor that gift and honor him as our guest by praying in advance, inviting others to come, and setting aside the dates ourselves. I’m looking forward to being encouraged from the Word!

Pastor Michael



^{ESV} **Matthew 19:13** *Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, ¹⁴ but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.” ¹⁵ And he laid his hands on them and went away.*



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
Marillyn 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



- 2 William Admussen
- 2 Colleen Obrecht
- 3 Linda Aldrich
- 3 *Bryce Bone
- 3 *Matthew Deviney
- 3 John Frondle
- 4 Ellen Kinnaird
- 7 Eric Schulz
- 8 Russ Harrison
- 8 Lois Stecker
- 8 *Samuel Thompson
- 10 Mack Harbour
- 11 Carolyn Chenoweth
- 12 Paul Brisbois
- 12 *Meredith Heer
- 12 Beth Mogle
- 13 *Alyssia Bone
- 14 Peggy Bone
- 14 Debbie Hoepker
- 15 Kay Cunitz
- 16 Linda Campfield
- 16 *Nicole Duff
- 17 Barb Earles
- 19 Alvin Stecker
- 20 Madeline Heer
- 20 Amy Soper
- 20 Myra Verros
- 22 Benae Duff
- 22 Dan Marvin
- 25 Paul Havnen
- 25 *Emeth Sharp
- 27 *Isaiah Mudlaff
- 28 Cynthia Stadlander
- 29 *Katarina Louk
- 30 *Jasmine Blanchard
- 30 Somer Gillett
- 30 Eleanor Smith
- 31 *Victoria Benson
- 31 Marillyn McCulloch

*Youth Member



- 4 Ron & Karen Moss
- 5 Bud & Charlene North
- 6 Chris & Karen Admussen
- 7 Gary & Sydney Arneson
- 8 Clayton & Margaret Kennedy
- 9 Kevin & Robin Riggins
- 12 Bill & Barbara Springer
- 17 Stuart & Eleanor Smith
- 20 Herb & Mary King
- 20 Don & Marilyn Lanham
- 22 Chris & Beth Mogle
- 23 Paul & Mary Carbone
- 27 Glen & Roma Bassett
- 30 Max & Barbara Asman
- 30 Donald & Nylene Dory
- 30 Jorge & Jennie Mesa

August's Communion Offering

The August Communion Offering is designated for the **Joshua Christian Academy**. This new school in urban Des Moines will offer an excellent, affordable faith-based school alternative for families desiring a Christ-centered education for their children, grades K-3.



August



The Bulletin Board

August Activities – See related articles in this issue.

Sunday	8/2	Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship Service, 10:30 a.m.
		Sunday Night at the Kirk, 6:30 p.m.
Monday	8/3	Commissions Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	8/4	Stephen Ministry, 6:30 p.m..
Thursday	8/6	Prayer Shawl Ministry, 7:00 p.m.
Friday	8/7-9	Missionaries Ward & Gwen Schmeidel visit
		* * * * *
Sunday	8/9	Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.
		Worship Service with Holy Communion, 10:30 a.m.
		Emeritus of Urbandale Worship, 2:00 p.m.
Monday	8/10	Omega Housekirk, 6:30 p.m.
		Commission Deacons Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	8/11	New Light meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Saturday	8/15	Shepherd September articles due
		* * * * *
Sunday	8/16	Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.
		Worship Service, New Mmbers Received, 10:30 a.m.
		Summer Choir Rehearsal after Worship
		Prayer Service, 7:00 p.m.
Monday	8/17	Session Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
		Parish Deacons Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
Tuesday	8/18	Stephen Ministry, 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	8/19	Sunday School Teachers Training, 6:30 p.m.
Friday	8/21	Friday Night at the Movies
		* * * * *
Sunday	8/23	Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship Service, 10:30 a.m.
Monday	8/24	Omega Housekirk, 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday	8/25	Bagpipers Luncheon, 1:00 p.m., Johnny's Steakhouse, Fleur Drive
		New Light meeting, 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday	8/26	Choir New Season Party, 7:30 p.m.
		* * * * *
Sunday	8/30	Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship Service, 10:30 a.m.

Happy Birth Day!

It was a happy day on July 2 when **Mark and Erica Scheve** became the proud parents of **Cora Elizabeth**. Little Cora was greeted at home by her three big sisters.

And Now a New Family!

Congratulations to **Barry and Sharon Johnson** on the adoption of their children **Sarah Ann Johnson** and **Jesse Ryan Johnson**. What a special and happy occasion!



Choir Season Approaches

Calling all singers! It's that time again when our choir starts preparing for the 2009-2010 season. If you have been thinking of joining the choir, now is the time. Come to Music Director Larry Kussatz' get-acquainted/reacquainted party for singers. On **Wednesday, August 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the Great Hall**, there will be desserts and beverages to enjoy while listening to some of the music scheduled for the coming season.

Then the group will have a short rehearsal to begin preparing for the choir **season which begins on Sunday, September 13**. There will be rehearsals every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. Be sure to plan to attend each one. With regular attendance of all members, our choir will get better and better.

Even if you are just thinking of joining choir, please come to this first gathering to see what it's all about. You will receive a warm welcome. Larry is currently recruiting new members, all sections. If you have questions regarding the type of music, schedules, etc., please contact Larry or any current choir member. See you on the 26th!

Save the Date!

Friday Night at the Movies
August 21, 2009
Grilled Hamburgers and Hotdogs
Dessert and Pop
Fun for family and friends!

It's Sabbatical Time

Most pastors do not have the blessing of Sabbath. On the day that most of us are called to rest, we are often putting in the longest hours of our week. So for a pastor, a sabbatical is a time to focus on the things that are most important: to the work of ministry and life as a minister. Often, sabbaticals are taken for an extended period of time (perhaps 2 to 6 months) once a pastor has shepherded a particular church for 5 to 7 years. They help pastors get away to experience a renewing of their calling and their creativity – reading, writing, coursework, prayer. For churches, the time is equally important. They use the time to renew their commitment to the church and use the gifts God has given them to 'pick up the slack' while the pastor is away. Churches provide sabbaticals for their pastors because it's biblical, and because both the church and the pastor need it!

Through the Session, you provide me with a one-week sabbatical each year. The Personnel Committee has been good to always remind me that it's not intended to be used as vacation, but for rest and renewal. Since 2006 I have twice traveled abroad to visit some of our missionaries (Honduras, Ireland) and once taken a pastor/wife retreat. Since the latter was especially blessed for Sasha, I've committed to do that every other year. So this year, 2009, the two of us are traveling to Ottawa, Ontario to participate in one of three Schools of Evangelism led by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. In fact, we are there right now! That organization was gracious to offer me a scholarship and our budget covers the rest of my food and travel. Sasha and I are paying for her expenses, and our families are participating by caring for the boys while we are gone.

Thank you for this tremendous gift! It is a true blessing and one of the highlights of my year. Please pray for us as we learn and grow. Pray for the boys in our absence. Pray for the safety of us all as we return. And finally, pray that Westkirk Presbyterian Church will harvest the fruit of this opportunity for years to come!

. . . Pastor Mudlaff

Stewardship Report

The financial results for the first five months are as follows:

	Current Year	Last Year
Ingathering	\$213,538.02	\$186,150.45
Expenses	<u>208,924.55</u>	<u>176,831.96</u>
Difference	4,613.47	9,318.49

In June an additional \$10,000 was paid on the pledge loan. These payments were over and above the general ingathering. This leaves a balance of approximately \$93,000 on the note, which is due December 31, 2009.

Thank you for your faithful giving to Westkirk, as we continue to “Know Christ and Make Him Known.”

... *Chuck Heitbrink,*
Stewardship Commission Deacon

Library News

If you haven't checked lately, our Library is located in the Church Lounge, just east of the narthex! All books now have been cataloged and placed in appropriate categories. You'll be intrigued by the selection of reading interests available!

Please dig in and search out one, a gem of spiritual growth. Whatever your interest or concern we have a book for you. The categories available for you to choose from include:

Marriage & Family, Men's Issues, Women's Issues, Other Religions, Jesus, Science, Ministers, Biographies, Autobiographies, Health, Wellness, Singles, Grief-Loss, Fiction, Devotionals, Christian Studies, Finance, Church Professionals, Deacons-Elders, Witnessing, History-Politics, Psychology-Sociology, Christian Living.

We look forward to having you check out a book that interests you. If you need assistance, please see **John Schwien**.

For your Calendar
September 20
All Church Family Picnic
immediately following Worship Service

Quarterly Food Pantry Collection

It's time once again for the Parish Deacons' collection for the local Food Pantry! Did you know there are two options for helping?

The first one involves purchasing non-perishable items. Grocery sacks will be distributed on August 2 and 9. There is a list of suggested items attached to each bag. It's also very helpful if you be sure to write the total number of items on that slip before bringing the bag back to church.

The second option is a monetary donation. The Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) uses donated funds to purchase grocery items in large quantities at discount prices. If this is your preference, please make your check payable to **Westkirk** and be sure to indicate **Food Pantry** on the memo line. Monetary donations can be placed in the Sunday collection along with your normal offering.

Your donations (either food items or monetary) will be collected on Sunday, August 16. On behalf of the Parish Deacons, Thank You so much for your continued support to this important ministry!

... *Kris Thompson, Moderator, Parish Deacons*

Marriage Covenant

On July 12, there was a celebration of marriage by members who have completed the special classes led by George and Gail De Graaf. Both new class members and those who have previously participated came before the congregation to renew their wedding vows.





Mission Commission Report

We are hearing from Europe to Mexico that quite often August is the month of vacations, and many businesses just shut down because it's too hot!!! MISSIONS don't shut down, the ministries continue to serve the Lord wherever they are. So here are some service ideas for you:

1. Help out at **Freedom For Youth's** Country Market - you may volunteer just for the two remaining Saturdays: August 1 and 8. Or you may want to go purchase fresh produce and some hand made items, and stay for coffee or lunch.
2. August 8-9 Ward and Gwen Schmeidel with Preston and Julia will be at Westkirk to share their work with **Campus Crusade for Christ**: Reaching and mobilizing students to serve the Lord. They work with universities in the Upper Midwest region. Come and get to know them better and hear how God is blessing their work.
3. You might want to complete filling your Christmas box for **Operation Christmas Child** and return it to church. Of course, you may want to hold on to it until November when all the boxes will go to Minnesota.
4. This month we are handing out plastic bags from **Meals From the Heartland** to begin collecting money for this project. Somer Gillett is signing up at least one, and perhaps two teams to fill bags at HyVee Hall, September 3-7.
5. **WALK A MILE IN THEIR SHOES** is a walk-a-thon to help the homeless in central Iowa. It is the first annual event to be held by **HOPE Ministries** on Saturday, September 5 at Copper Creek Lake in Pleasant Hill. Registration is at 9:00 a.m. The walk begins at 10:00 a.m. For more information go to www.hopeiowa.org. You may walk, support, sponsor a walker, or just watch!
6. Welcome Dan Marvin back from his trip with **International Messengers** in Hungary. When he left he was very excited about going, renewing friendships, and serving in English Camp. He will tell us all about it!
7. Lord willing, **Andrew Thompson** is on his way to U of Cal/Berkeley to serve his first year as intern with Reformed University Fellowship there. He is one of Westkirk's own, and we support him with this endeavor with our prayers, money, and encouragement by e-mail, see the article on page 11 for more details.

MISSION COMMISSION'S mission statement: "To support local and foreign ministries to enable them to make Christ known by prayer, offerings, and service." Thank you for your support and encouragement for Missions in serving the Lord right where we are! Members are: Gail De Graaf, Cynthia Fisher, Somer Gillett, Lois Lundgren-Stecker, Dan Marvin, Wendy Reed, Bryan Sharp, Sherie Whitehead, and attendees Ben and Terrie Bishop, and Lois Swartz.

. . . Gail De Graaf, Mission Commission Deacon

Thank You Notes. . .

Westkirk Family,

Thank you for your frequent visits and prayers. It was great to visit with many of you one on one. Thankfully, I never had very much discomfort and am now practically as good as new.

It is great to be back!

Jerry (Tuinstra)

Dear Westkirk Friends,

I want to thank all of you who have helped me so much following the death of my husband, Marty. I have felt the love and caring of so many of you I feel blessed. I was so pleased with the funeral service and want to thank Pastor Michael and all of those who participated.

Westkirk is such a wonderful and caring church and I am thankful everyday that Marty and I have been a part of it.

Ellen Kinnaird & Family

Special Needs for Urbandale Pantry

You are very familiar with the Food Pantry Ministry administered by the Parish Deacons with the quarterly collection of food items and cash donations for the Des Moines Area Religious Council food pantry (DMARC). In addition, DMARC supplies the food items for the **Urbandale Food Pantry** which is supported by Westkirk.



While DMARC does a fantastic job with the food donations, the Urbandale Food Pantry receives many requests for personal hygiene items. Along with seven other Urbandale churches, the Westkirk Parish Deacons have begun a monthly drive for various personal hygiene items to be donated directly to the Urbandale Food Pantry for distribution to those in need. In the month of July we gathered toothpaste; **August we will be accepting toothbrushes** and in September, deodorant.

August is also Food Pantry month and food donations will be gathered this month. Sacks will be distributed after service on August 2 and 9. For those who prefer to provide monetary donations, please make your checks payable to **Westkirk** and indicate **Food Pantry** on the memo line. Donations (both monetary and food items) will be collected on **August 16**.

The Parish Deacons thank you for your continued support to the Food Pantry Ministry and to the expanded ministry to the Urbandale Food Pantry! If you have any questions, please contact **Kris Thompson, Parish Deacons Moderator**.

Hate Crimes Laws: Censoring the Church and Silencing Christians

For more, visit www.FRC.org

While the Scriptures teach that both actions and attitudes are sinful (see Matt. 5:21-22), only our outward actions are punishable by law. In fact, Exodus 21-22 contains scores of laws and punishments against outward actions committed against others. However, no mention is made of the inward attitudes associated with those crimes. Logic would suggest that violent crimes are inherently acts of “hate.” But the new category of law known as “hate crimes” involves punishing people not only for an outward act of violence, but also for the personal opinions which are thought to have motivated the crime.

Homosexual activists and their allies in Congress are now pushing for a law (HR 1913/S 909) that would allow federal prosecution of any crimes allegedly motivated by bias, including bias against the victim’s actual or perceived “sexual orientation” or “gender identity.” The latest federal hate crimes legislation says it only authorizes prosecution of those who cause or attempt to cause “bodily injury.” However, since violent crimes are already illegal, the “hate” label and federal intervention would be based on politically incorrect thoughts alone. The truth is that wherever hate crimes laws have been adopted, there is an inevitable move to drop the requirement that there be an associated act of violence. In such cases, these laws have evolved to target what is regarded as hate speech and expression. What you say could literally land you in jail.

According to attorneys with the Alliance Defense Fund, hate crimes legislation could prove disastrous for pastors, churches, and organizations who advocate peacefully against homosexual marriage. Here’s how: Currently, every state has laws that prohibit conspiracy to commit a crime. Linked to hate crimes, preaching or teaching against homosexual conduct could be prosecuted as conspiracy to commit a hate crime. For instance, a minister who preaches from Genesis 19 or Romans 1, referencing the homosexual agenda or lifestyle, could be heard by an individual who applies it in a way prohibited by a hate crimes law. Not only would the offender be prosecuted under this law, but also the minister could be prosecuted for conspiracy. Hate crimes laws would radically impact our freedom of speech!

How Do You Memorize Scripture?

By John Piper

If you have been meaning to participate in the church-wide effort to memorize Fighter Verses this year, but aren't sure how, below is some constructive advice from Pastor John Piper at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota:

"First of all, by praying for discipline and setting aside time. I set aside a block of time in the morning (an hour or so) to be with God alone, reading my Bible, praying for my family, praying for the church, and praying for my soul. And I can generally finish my four chapters or so of Bible reading in about 20 minutes, depending on how long I pause and contemplate. And my prayers may extend for 20 or 30 minutes. So I've got 5 or 10 minutes in that hour.

"If you decide to memorize Scripture for 5 or 10 minutes a day, you can memorize a lot of Scripture! I mean, it's incredible! And I put circles around the paragraphs or the verses, and I put a little "M" beside them if I worked on them so I can come back and review.

"I got my help here from a little booklet about how to memorize long passages of Scripture. And basically it says to take your first verse, read it ten times, and then close your eyes or shut your Bible and say it ten times. And that's the end for that day. (I think if you do that you can memorize almost any verse in the Bible: ten times read, ten times said, and then you've got it.)

"Then you come back the next day. You open your Bible up, and you say that verse again 5 or 10 times. If it's easy, just 5 times. And then you do the same thing with the next verse. And then you do them both together. And then you shut your Bible and you leave. Then you come back. So basically, the answer is: repetition and review. Repetition and review.

"Here's one other little tip that I use. If I pick a verse or a couple of verses or a paragraph, I'll put it on a piece of paper and I'll carry it here in my shirt pocket. And at little times during the day, I'll pull it out and read it for my soul. For my soul! I don't memorize verses that don't help my soul.

"I'm not into mechanical memorizing. I'm into fighting the fight of faith. I want to memorize Scripture so that I can defeat the devil at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, that's why! It's so that I can minister to a saint in the hospital at 10 o'clock at night if I've forgotten my Bible. This is for our soul. So I carry it around and I review it. Review is so crucial.

"So I would just encourage people to set aside 5 or 10 minutes, and then repeat, repeat, repeat. Read the verse 10 times, say it 10 times, close your Bible, and then review it during the day from a piece of paper."

If you'd like to begin memorizing scripture with us at Westkirk, it's not too late! The Fighter Verse system is designed for people to begin at any point throughout the year. Simply stop by the Welcome Center in the narthex, either before or after church, to pick up a set of the Fighter Verse cards (which are perfectly designed to do just what Dr. Piper recommends, carrying along with you to review, review, review).

House and Grounds Update

With slightly lighter traffic in the summer months, we are taking advantage of the opportunity to re-finish the floors throughout the building. At the mid-August point, you will notice the floors with a renewed vibrant shine. We'll be going through a stripping and waxing process that will preserve the integrity and beauty of the floors in the east bathrooms, the Hospitality Room, hallway, west foyer, Great Hall and both kitchens.

Additionally, the House and Grounds Commission is in the early stages of putting together another fall workday where we will concentrate on trees and shrubbery. More details to come on this event.

If you are interested in participating with the House and Grounds Commission, please contact one of the members or myself, as we're always looking for some good help!

. . . *Hugh Sheppard,*
House and Grounds Commission Deacon

Pray for Our Children

During the Baptismal Service for children at Westkirk, Pastor Michael gives a charge to the congregation to which we answer “We will.”

“To the Congregation...”

“Do you, Christian family, acting for yourselves and in behalf of the whole Body of Christ, assume responsibility with these parents for their daughter’s (son’s) spiritual welfare?”

“Do you commit yourself to set a Christ-like example before her (him), to provide all that is necessary to the end that she (he) may one day confess Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord?”

Sometimes I think we might mouth these words and that is the end of it. Deep down we feel like we want the best for these children and when we see them later in church we may think about them and hope for their best, but do we really follow through on our pledge?

With all the negative things that are happening in our culture today, these children need a strong spiritual undergirding to withstand the evil that comes against them everyday.

The Christian Education Commission and the Prayer Commission are working together to give us all a very practical way to act on our baptismal pledge and support our children. The evening of **Sunday, August 16, at 6:30 p.m.** the Prayer Commission is hosting a **Prayer Service** focused on Christian Education. As part of that service, adults will be paired with children for the purpose of praying for them daily for the rest of the school year. If you agree to this you will receive a card with information about that child and specific concerns for which to pray. There are more than one hundred children to pray for, so we are asking for a lot of adults to get involved.

At that Prayer Service in August prayers will be offered for these children going off to school, their parents, their teachers and the adults at church that work with children and youth. The Prayer Commission would like all parents and children, teachers in the public and private schools and homeschooling parents, and all those who work with our children and youth in the church to attend and let your church pray for you. We also invite all the Westkirk Elders to attend and help pray for these people.



Plan now to join the Christian Education Commission and the Prayer Commission for this Prayer Service, Sunday, August 16 at 6:30 p.m. in this very important ministry.

... Paul Nelson, Prayer Commission Deacon

What Do You Hear at Home?

We are all eager to build a good education for our children and a continuing education for ourselves, but what we do at church is only a part of our family’s spiritual journey. It is very important that we have a happy and secure home where we and our children continually celebrate being a part of Christ’s family.

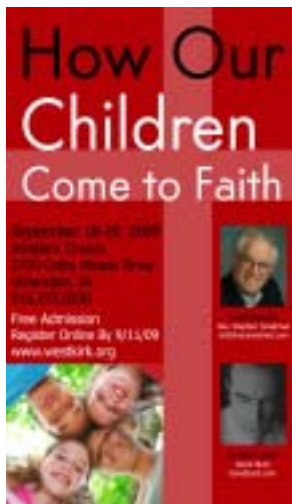
A recent scientific study shows that even at 30 weeks, the fetus is not only making facial expressions and blinking but also forming memories. Repeated exposures to certain noises are remembered. Does your home life have family devotions? Times of prayer and singing?

*... Sandy Tuinstra,
Christian Education Commission Deacon*

Biblical Parenting Conference at Westirk: September 18-20, 2009

Conference Theme:
How Our Children Come to Faith
with Pastor and Author Stephen Smallman

The Christian Education Commission would like to invite everyone to join us for a Parenting Conference that will be hosted at Westkirk on September 18-20, 2009. Our aim is to provide a place for parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, and ministry leaders to gather to be inspired, encouraged, and equipped to raise children and youth



in a spirit of faith, emphasizing the importance of bringing children to Jesus for his blessing.

Christian parents pray often for the blessing of God to be upon their children and they hope to pass on a legacy of faith that will remain with their children and the generations that follow.

They feel God's call to raise their children in a spirit of faith, rightly viewing their responsibility to care for the spiritual lives of their children as, what the apostle Paul called, "the obedience that comes from faith" (Romans 1:5). At the same time, however, they often feel profoundly inadequate to answer this call. They know that if their children and youth are to experience eternal joy, they must be firmly standing on a foundation of truth through Jesus Christ, and they call upon God to help them with this task.

This is, of course, the right thing to do, call upon God for guidance, wisdom, and faith as we seek to pass our faith on to our children, but often our sense

of responsibility for our children leads us to pray for God to help us do *our* job and fulfill *our* calling to raise children in the faith. Often we fail to stop and listen *first* to what God has revealed about *his* commitment to our children. This is the message of our invited speaker, Stephen Smallman, pastor and author of several books, including "How Our Children Come to Faith," and founder of Birthline Ministries (www.birthlineministries.com), a ministry devoted to those who are just beginning a new life in Christ, and to those who are trying to help them.

Rev. Smallman seeks to encourage parents by helping them understand that the salvation of their children is in the hands of God, but that God has given them an important role to play in their children's lives. He also seeks to encourage the church to support parents and assist in the spiritual growth of the children God has placed within their church families. Rev. Smallman will be speaking on the following passages of scripture:

Conference Schedule

Friday, September 18, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

"Understanding our own conversion experience and the place of Christian Community" (Matthew 18:3)

Saturday, September 19, 9:00 a.m. to 12 (Noon)

"How Our Children Come to Faith: Regeneration and Conversion" (Matthew 19:14a)

Sunday, September 20, 10:30 a.m. to 12 (Noon)

"For of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven: Teaching and Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom to Our Children" (Matthew 19:14b)

We want to encourage you to attend and to help us get the word out to your friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers. The conference is free of charge and childcare will be available, but we do ask that you register, either by visiting westkirk.org online or by calling our church office, so that we have some indication of how many people are planning to attend.

Congratulations, Graduates!

In June, **Andrew Thompson** was a 2009 graduate from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Andrew will serve as an intern in the Reformed University Fellowship at University of California-Berkeley for the next two years.

Heather Kaye Asman Allen has received a PhD in Microbiology from the University of Wisconsin. Heather and her husband Ian and daughter Azalea have moved to Ames to accept a position with the USDA. Heather is the Granddaughter of Westkirk members, **Max and Barb Asman**.

From our Campus Minister

Dear Westkirk,

Thank you for the tremendous welcome home from college! You have welcomed and encouraged me with open arms. I have enjoyed the opportunity to speak with each of you; for those who I have not had the privilege to meet, I look forward to connecting with you soon. Since returning home, I have had the opportunity to job shadow with Pastor Mudlaff and will even preach my first sermon in August. As some of you know, I have accepted a ministry position in California. I would like to share more about how I became involved with this ministry, what I am doing with this ministry, and how you can partner with me in this ministry.

I first met Jason Harris, the campus minister of Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) at Northwestern University, as a freshman in search of a Christian community. I accepted Jason's invitation to attend an RUF event, and have praised God for the ministry ever since. RUF is the college ministry of the Presbyterian Church in America, now on over 120 campuses around the nation. The mission of RUF is to reach students with the transformative gospel of Jesus Christ and equip those students to serve Him, not just on their campus, but throughout their lives.

For me, college was both an exciting and challenging time - one during which the gospel became profoundly true and tangible. RUF has provided a community to fully and truthfully discover for myself the truths of God's word and grow in fellowship. **I now want to share that joy with others and am writing to let you know I have been chosen to serve as an Intern with RUF at the University of California-Berkeley during the 2009-2010 school year. But to do that, I need your help.**

The RUF intern program offers me the opportunity to serve under the leadership of Brent Webster, RUF campus minister at the University of California-Berkeley. Each week in large group we worship, pray, and enjoy fellowship with one another. Additionally, I will lead small group Bible studies, dis-

ciple and meet with students on an individual basis, and assist with our local and statewide conferences.

As I take on the responsibilities of an intern, I will need faithful support and partnership. First and foremost, I need your prayers and friendship. I also need your financial support. Because our salaries and expenses are raised completely through the generosity of others, I ask that you would prayerfully consider supporting my work by financially partnering with me. Your generous gifts make the ministry possible. I need to raise \$38,000 and 75% (\$28,500) must be pledged before I move to Berkeley on August 5. Every donation will go directly to support my ministry. Gifts can be one time donations or a monthly pledge. Payment plans are available. All contributions are tax deductible. You can contact Westkirk or me directly to discuss financial arrangements.



I look forward to sharing and partnering with you in ministry at the University of California-Berkeley. I am so excited to see how God transforms lives through this ministry.

Blessings,
Andrew

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Westkirk Student Mission

Dear Westkirk Family,

I was at Target the other day and noticed that school supplies are out, so that must mean that it's August and a new school year is just around the corner. I'm really looking forward to a new year of helping youth to "Know Christ and Make Him Known." We have made several changes to the student ministry at Westkirk that I believe will, through the work of the Holy Spirit, help our youth develop a faith that will last. There are three phrases that I'm hoping you'll hear often in the coming months as it relates to our youth:

First, **"We're Playing for Keeps!"** A recent Barna survey found that nearly 2 out of 3 Christian teenagers (that's kids who grew up in the church) will, by the time they graduate from college, leave the faith for good; and unlike previous generations, they are not likely to return later in life. There are a variety of reasons for this trend that have nothing to do with youth ministry, but it's clear that the church as a whole is not serving the needs of youth. In response to this trend, Westkirk Student Ministry is going on mission and we're playing for keeps. *We desire to extend the transforming presence of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ by bringing students into the body of Christ, nurturing them in their relationship with Christ, equipping them to serve in the name of Christ, all by the grace of God, all for the glory of God. We're playing for keeps!* That's our motto, "We're playing for keeps," and rather than doing traditional "student ministry," we are going to refer to all that we do at Westkirk for youth (i.e., fellowship gatherings, youth House Kirks, local service projects, Sunday School classes), the "Westkirk Student Mission." We're on mission now, we're playing for keeps, and we need your help. How?

The second phrase I'm hoping catches on at Westkirk is **"The One."** During the 2009-2010 school year, we're going to be challenging our youth to be praying for their "one." Who is "the one"? The one is a young person, who each youth will identify on their own, whom they will pray for throughout the year, invite to church and youth gatherings, and seek

to build a relationship with them that communicates the love of Christ; and the youth would like to invite the entire congregation to join us. Please be in prayer for these "ones." Pray for their families, pray for their salvation, and pray for our youth as they seek to share the love of Christ with them.

Lastly, I pray that you all hear and respond to the call of the **"3:1"** ministry. "3:1" is not so much a church program as it is part of our church culture. We're going to be praying for, and actively pursuing, three adults to "walk life" each youth from their seventh grade year through graduation. We want to create a spiritual neighborhood of aunts, uncles, grandmas, grandpas, mentors, and friends in Christ who will support, pray for and encourage each one of our young people with the love of Christ. There are many ways for everyone to get involved, but one of the easiest is to simply pray, and we'll be seeking to "match" each member of the congregation with a young person to pray for at the Prayer Commission's August prayer service.

So that's it. Three phrases to remember and pray for: "We're playing for keeps," "The One," and "3 to 1." Please pray for this mission!! Pray that our youth would come to know Christ in a way that transforms their lives so that they desire to surrender fully to Jesus Christ for a lifetime. Amen!

For His fame,

Pastor Steve

August Youth Calendar

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| August 2-7 | Blast (Middle School) Mission Trip to Duluth, MN |
| August 15 | New Life (High School) BBQ at the Withers' 5:00 p.m. |
| August 23 | Middle School & High School Campus Prayer Walk, 6:30 p.m. |
| August 30 | New Life (High School) Bonfire at Saylorville Lake, 6:30 p.m. |

Children's Ministry

Watch out for that crocodile in the preschool room! In **Kids of the Kingdom** the children are learning about some of God's miracles with Crocodile Dock. The preschoolers will hear about the burning bush, the plagues, the passing over of the Israelites, the resurrection of Jesus and the crossing of the Red Sea. In each of these stories the children will learn about how God performed these miracles to make himself known. The children will also be encouraged to look for "God Sightings" to see how God is working in their everyday lives. Thanks to Karissa and

D a n i k a
S t a d t l a n d e r,
Gloria Huyser,
Monica Brown
and Mallory
Wickemeyer for
helping the children
develop a
sense of God's
loving presence.



At the end of the hall in the Children's Worship Center the elementary age children have been hearing testimonies from various adults during Sunday School. Last month's highlights from **My Faith and**

My Career included a presentation and a framed picture of Jesus from Marillyn McCulloch, who is an artist and picture framer. She shared how she relies on God and his word in Philippians 4:13, "*I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*" Chris Hagenow talked about his job as a State Representative for Windsor Heights and how a large part of his job is campaigning. An encouraging verse that he shared was Acts 18:9-10, "*Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.*" This month we look forward to hearing from Chad Carlson, Hugh Sheppard, Kurt Huyser, and Herb Moering.

In the **Nursery** we have lots of new babies, so we would love to have some more help. If you are interested, please talk to **Amy Withers**, the nursery coordinator.

Another way to impact a child's life is to teach or be a substitute on Sunday morning or Wednesday nights. There will be **Teacher Training on Wednesday, August 19 at 6:30 p.m.** in the East Wing. All Christian Education volunteers are encouraged to come. We have some great programs this fall and even a Mad Scientist. To find out more information contact **Karen Admussen**.



2009 VBS at Westkirk
Watch for more photographs next month

The Shepherd

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