



# IN TOUCH WITH COMMUNITY

**JULY/AUGUST 2012**

## Returning to GOD'S Word

“And there  
arose  
another  
generation  
...who did  
not know  
the Lord or  
the work  
that he  
had done  
for Israel”  
(Judges  
2:10).

The following article, *A Generation Who Did Not Know the Lord*, and God's Word in Psalms 1:1-2—“Blessed is the one...whose delight is in the law of the Lord and who meditates on his law day and night”—comprise the basis for this issue's theme: returning to God's Word. Also, included in this issue is a book review on *The Harbinger*, which reveals a prophetic message to a Nation—America—that does not know the Lord.

America has often been called a “Christian nation.” Phrases like “in God we trust” and “one nation under God” point to our Judeo-Christian heritage. Although a high majority of Americans would classify themselves as Christians, recent surveys have pointed out that things have changed.

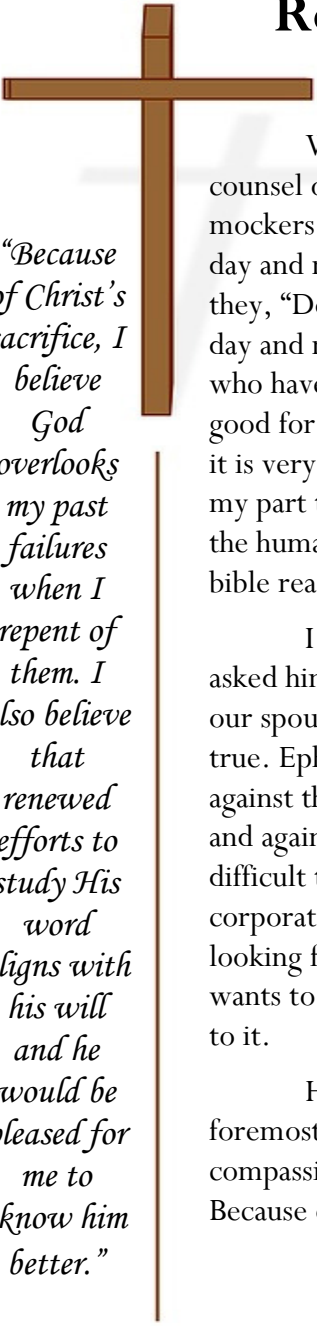
For example, it's clear that there is a great number of biblical illiteracy in North America today. Research by the Gallup Organization shows that although most Americans claim to believe in the Ten Commandments, few can name them. Only fifty percent of those surveyed could name the preacher of the Beatitudes. And seventy-five percent believe—wrongly—that the Bible says, “God helps those who help themselves.” (Actually, that was Ben Franklin.)

Secularization has grown in North America, leaving many in the same position as the people of Israel in the days of the judges. When God's Word is not known, God is not known either. We are left without common standards of truth or morality. That predicament is summarized with the words, “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25).

---John Koedyker

(Reprinted from *Words of Hope*, July 21, 2009)

## Returning to GOD'S Word



*"Because of Christ's sacrifice, I believe God overlooks my past failures when I repent of them. I also believe that renewed efforts to study His word aligns with his will and he would be pleased for me to know him better."*

We are told in the Bible, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night." (Psalm 1:1-3) In Joshua 1:8, God's people are commanded that they, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it." All who have accepted Christ as their Savior know that God's Word is good, and is good for us to study and know. But I also know, from my own experience, that it is very easy to drift away from consistent Bible study. I feel like this failure on my part to stay focused on steady devotion to daily scripture reading is part of the human condition that Paul laments in Romans 7:15. I want to be a devoted bible reader, but I am prone to fail through my efforts alone. I need help.

I recently asked my friend from Nigeria, Daniel Atiyaye, a question. I asked him why he thought it was so hard for us to pray with others, especially our spouses. "Because it is war," he told me. According to the Bible, that is true. Ephesians 6:12 tells us that "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." I think it is difficult to discipline ourselves to Bible study for the same reason it is to pray corporately. Because, "your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8b) Our arch enemy the devil wants to keep us from the bible. That is why I think it is difficult to stay devoted to it.

How then do we overcome in returning to God's word? First, and foremost, with God's grace. Lamentations 3:22b-23 tells us, "for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Because of Christ's sacrifice, I believe God overlooks my past failures when I

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repent of them. I also believe that renewed efforts to study His word aligns with his will and he would be pleased for me to “know him better.” (Eph. 1:17b) Therefore secondly, I need to acknowledge and call upon the Holy Spirit to help me. Every believer has the Spirit of Christ in them. (Rom. 8:9) I have to regularly pray for the Holy Spirit to stir in me a desire to know God’s word. Third, I need to recruit Christian brothers and sisters to help me. This can be done in many ways, I suppose. I have found that I need an accountability group. Sometimes that “group” has been a class consisting of many, and sometimes it is only a couple of others. But I definitely need help.

What has worked best for me in my bible study has been to:

- Read it. There is no substitute.

- Memorize it. Find scriptures that really speak to you and memorize them. It may be a single verse like John 3:16, or a whole chapter. The process of memorizing (meditating) has really been my greatest joy and revelation in studying the bible.

- Discuss it with others who love Christ. I find others often understand things that I fail to. Their input is helpful to me.

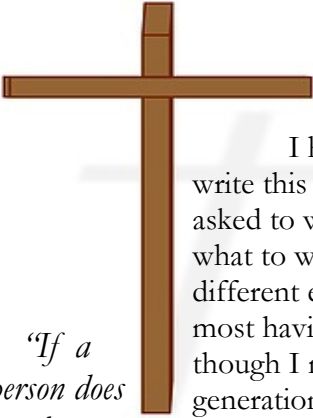
- Share it with those in your life who have yet to come to faith. We are told to “always be prepared to give an answer for the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:15b) I believe the bible helps us to flesh out that reason and the practice of sharing it with others helps to reinforce it.

Please Lord, help us as a body of believers to value your word above all else, to desire to understand it as you reveal it to us, and to follow obediently as your Son modeled for us. In Jesus’ holy name, amen.

Bud Klooster

# Returning to GOD'S Word

Submitted by Damaris Blatt



*"If a person does not have a strong community of believers surrounding them, it is easy to have doubts grow, especially since the education system disagrees with the Bible."*

I have struggled with what to write this article about since I was asked to write it, I really did not know what to write. I went through a lot of different emotions over what to say, most having to do with feeling as though I needed to defend my generation, as I feel we are constantly scrutinized about whether or not we are "Christian" enough. So being asked to write an article about delighting in God's law with an emphasis on whether or not current Christians have fallen away from God's law has made me think a lot. I wanted to know how other current Christians felt about being a Christian, so I asked a friend in Europe how Christians were treated over there. I took from my own experience as well as those of people close to me. I think we all feel the same, especially being college age, where science is in. My friend Arthur put it like this: "It's not fashionable to be a Christian. Our generation is leaving the church because they just don't believe in God anymore. The reason is that in Churches it is more about religion than having a true relationship with our creator. People are not interested anymore in following all this traditional belief. It's somehow a wake-up call for the

church leaders and all the church members to help our generation to find their way back to God." I agree with him. I think a huge reason current Christians are falling away from God's law is because of dogma. People think of Christians as boring, unintelligent, or crazy. Negativity spreads; we see that with the news headlines.

If a person does not have a strong community of believers surrounding them, it is easy to have doubts grow, especially since the education system disagrees with the Bible. I have yet to see a strong Christian doing it alone, especially a young person. We want to be self-sufficient in every aspect of life and that leads into our beliefs. I have experienced this, if I am not involved in a community of believers who study together, who can encourage me, lift me up, and remind me who God really is I begin to lose my faith. The same thing happens when you stop exercising, singing or anything else that involves practice. When I read God's Word alone it can be really boring and hard to get through, but when I am with others who talk about it, and who have a better

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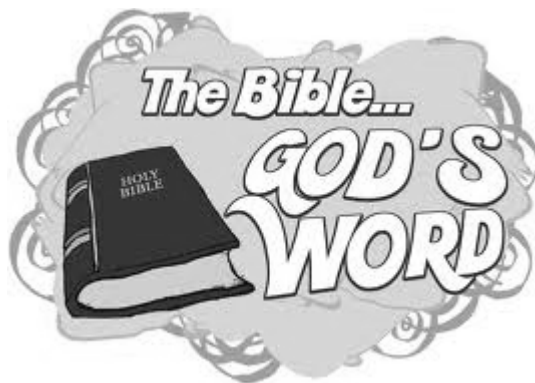
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understanding of it I get excited. Many people who have fallen away from God's law have done the same thing. They find it boring, and unexciting, and irrelevant. The general thought is "how can these old traditions and some old man's words really impact my life"?

Post Modernism also plays a huge part; Post-Modernism is the thought that everyone can create their own personal reality. With the rise of this thought process, individuals began to interpret things as they wanted them to apply to themselves. Taking what you like about the Bible and keeping it while cutting everything out, can create a vast difference in extremes. Because it is acceptable to cut out what you don't like you don't have to follow it. An example is underage drinking, many people think that the government should not be able to dictate the age at which they drink, and I know some that don't think it's a sin to do so. Hebrews 13: 17 says "obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an

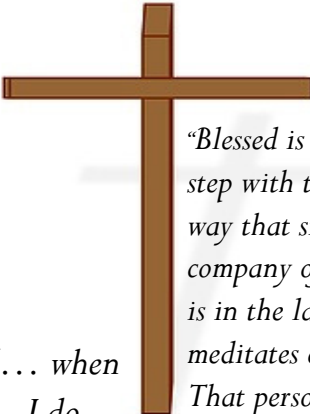
account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you." God's word says to respect and honor, post-modern thought says if you don't like it you can change it, and it's still right.

Despite all of this I have to say that the current Christians that I know, that actively have a relationship with God are incredible. You can see God in their lives; you can see that they love Him, and desire to follow in his footsteps. They do delight in God's word, and want others to as well.



## DELIGHT IN THE LAW

by Ted Polleys



“... when  
I do  
submit to  
him I find  
such  
peace; a  
peace that  
allows me  
to feel his  
guidance,  
his plan,  
his  
protection  
...”

*“Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers (Psalms 1:1-3).*

What a statement it is to “delight in the law.” To find delight in the law: rules, restrictions, parameters. When I hear the words **law** or **rules** something begins to stir in me. A voice inside of me asks, “Why must I not?” Or “It’s not fair that I can’t.” It is in these moments that I am consistently reminded of my fallen nature.

It is truly human nature to rebel against law and authority. So I am faced with my fallen self when I read the Psalmist’s words: “Blessed is the one... whose delight is in the

law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.” I am faced with the need to humble myself before the Lord, to submit myself to his laws and decrees.

It is in God’s law we find a pathway to true life. It is in the decrees of the Lord that we find a source for an abundant life; a life of prosperity that only God can provide. It is in submission to the Lord that we begin to see life with a lens that is not foggy because of sin, but is clear to show us what true abundance is and what true inheritance from the Lord is.

It is funny though, when I do submit to him I find such peace; a peace that allows me to feel his guidance, his plan, his protection

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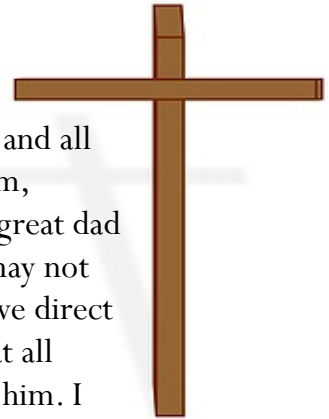
for me that would not be found in anything else. This is truly a peace that passes all understanding.

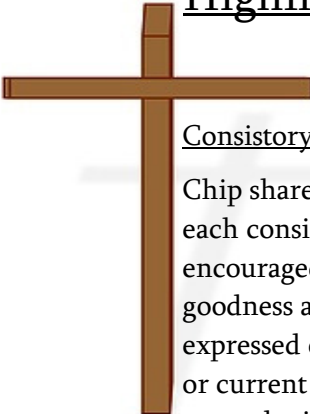
I am reminded of my childhood when I read this passage. I, like many teenagers, believed that I knew everything that my parents knew and was actually privy to more information than they had access to. I would often mock my dad when he would try to instruct me calling it another “teachable moment with dad.” I am thankful for his patience with me as I know so many of my friends did not have this input from their dad. How I wish that I could go back and redo those moments with my dad. I was in a place where I was unwilling to place myself under his authority; I was unwilling because of pride to submit to him.

Now as a dad myself I look forward to every chance I have to talk with

my dad. I try to glean any and all information I can from him, knowing that he is such a great dad and truly a godly man. I may not have been willing to receive direct instruction from my dad at all times, but I was watching him. I was studying him in a way. What I found I will never forget. He is truly a “person like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.”

In many ways our relationship with God should be that of a child to a father. I understand that we live in a world that is truly fallen and that many dads are not worth following, but our father in heaven is perfect. He is perfect in his love for you and me. His path and parameters that he has set before us are perfect in leading us to him and guiding us to be in relationship to him. It is in the Lord and his decrees that we find true, abundant life.





## Highlights from June Consistory Meeting

### Consistory News

Chip shared from Psalm 109:1 and each consistory member was encouraged to express how God's goodness and steadfast love has been expressed either in their past, present, or current life. Consistory then opened with prayer.

Ted Polleys shared with the consistory regarding the youth ministry programs as well as updates on Young Life and his participation in the Commissioned Pastor program. Ted is encouraged by what he sees taking place but expressed a need for more leaders to step into the lives of students at all age levels. Consistory then prayed for Ted and the youth & youth leaders of our church and community.

David Otis and a team of people shared about prayer. They emphasized the foundational important of prayer for our church to be who God is calling us to be. They challenged us as leaders to commit ourselves to prayer, both personal and corporate. They also reminded us of the opportunities that exist every day

to participate in corporate prayer in the prayer chapel at 6:15am M-F, and 7:15am on Sat. & Sun. Consistory then prayed with this group.

We discussed and supported a proposal from Ron Williams and Alyssa Sanderson to move forward in creating a community garden on our property across from the church on Elm Street. The purpose would be to provide a place for community people to have their own garden, recognizing that this would probably provide additional produce for Safe Haven breakfast participants. Consistory raised some questions but there was full support to move forward with this project for the summer of 2013.

We also discussed the current reality survey in terms of distribution of the results and looking forward to how this information will help us discern God's preferred future. The participation has been good.



## Children's Ministry

***Our Children's Ministry loves kids - come join us this summer!***

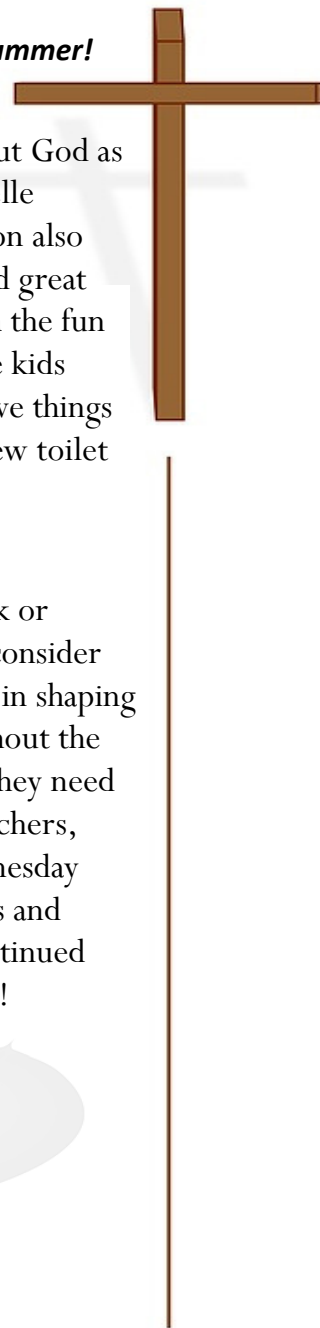
Isn't summer wonderful? All this sunshine has been such a treat for our senses. The children have been creating warmth in their Sonroom also throughout the summer. Each week, they work on a different service project for others and learn how it ties into the Fruits of the Spirit. Songs and memory work on love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control are adding layers of awareness in young hearts and minds. Thanks to everyone helping with this intergenerational Summer of Service. Our ongoing goal of developing a culture of service to our children is so valuable for all involved and kids grasp how they can serve others when we model it alongside them.

Backyard Bible Clubs were a hit! Neighborhood kids and others flocked to the homes of Tennille and Josh Dhaseleer, Stacey and Tom Schultz, and Alisa and Chip Sauer

and learned parables about God as our treasure. With Michelle Johnson and Mabel Carson also teaching, the children had great spiritual input along with the fun activities. In addition, the kids taught us all of the creative things you can do with brand new toilet plungers!

Fall will be here in a wink or two! Please prayerfully consider how you can be involved in shaping these young lives throughout the upcoming school year. They need caring teachers or co-teachers, assistants, crafts for Wednesday evenings, snack providers and more. We covet your continued prayers. Thanks so much!

-Gail Cherry



## Opportunities for ALL Women

### RCW 2012-2013 Year

## SAVE THE DATES!

#### **Monday, September 24, 2012 - RCW "Fall Social" Membership Drive**

Join us for an evening of fun as we fellowship together for our "Fall Social". Meet women of the church and community and learn more about what the RCW (Reformed Church Women) are doing within the church and community.

#### **November 2012 - Blessing Box Distribution (*for men, women and children*)**

During the first few weeks of November the RCW will distribute Blessing Boxes. These Blessing Boxes are a way for people of our church to give to the community in need. Once you receive your Blessing Box, we ask that during each day, any time you receive a blessing (big or small) in your life you drop some loose change (bills or checks) into the Blessing Box. It adds up fast. In doing this you are able to Be a Blessing to others by being Blessed. *"Blessed to be a Blessing"*.

#### **Saturday, December 1, 2012 - Annual Christmas Event**

This year we will celebrate Christ's birth together at the Country Club for a "Christmas Luncheon Fellowship". More information will be posted as the time grows closer. Be sure to save the date!

#### **Saturday, March 9, 2013 - Annual Lenten Breakfast**

Lent is the Christian season of preparation before Easter. In Western Christianity, Ash Wednesday marks the first day, or the start of the season of Lent, which begins 40 days prior to Easter (Sundays are not included in the count).

Lent is a time when many Christians prepare for Easter by observing a period of fasting, repentance, moderation and spiritual discipline. The purpose is to set aside time for reflection on Jesus Christ - his suffering and his sacrifice, his life, death, burial and resurrection.

Please plan to attend our Lenten Breakfast where we will recognize the sacrifice of God the Father and Christ suffering for our sake.

#### **Monday, May 6, 2013 - Annual Spring Fling**

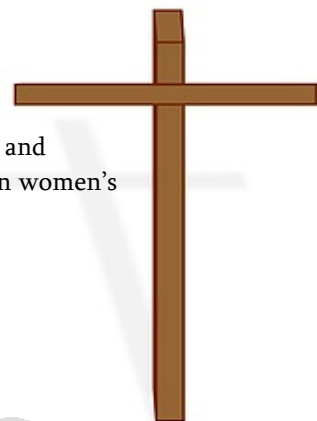
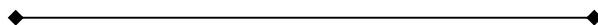
Spring is a time of rejuvenation. As we enter the season of spring we too feel the desire of rejuvenation.





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Join us for an evening of fellowship and dinner with women of our church and community. Enjoy a guest speaker who will encourage and motivate you in women's health issue.



**The RCW newly elected officers for 2012-2013 are:**

President, *Kate Chanda*  
Vice President, *Chele Cyr*  
Recording Secretary, *Vinnie Klooster*  
Treasurer, *Carrie Titus*  
Corresponding Secretary, *Pat Ricks*  
Publicity Chair, *Lynda Stolt*  
Spiritual Life, *MaryAnn Cox*  
Membership Outreach, *Kristen McClure*



**Thank you for the many years of service to our outgoing members:**

Betty Martin  
Pam Swenor  
Joanne Deckinga  
Connie Mahoney

The RCW has been blessed with the opportunity to sponsor and decorate one of the women's rooms at the Joppa House. We are very excited to be a part of this ministry within our community. We will begin painting late August/early September. Watch for news and pictures as they become available.



### CONGRATULATIONS AND BLESSINGS TO:

- \* Fred and Mandy Powell on the birth of their daughter, Ava Snow. Proud grandparents are Phil and Carol Manthei.
- \* Andrew and Mary Grace Otis on the birth of a son, Noah. Proud grandparents are David and June Otis.
- \* Jeff and Carla Geiger on the birth of a baby girl, Reese. Proud grandparents are Gary and Bobbi Geiger.
- \* Rob and Megan (Breen) Boss on their marriage on June 9, 2012.

### SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS TO:

- \* Joe Baillargeon and family at the passing of Marilyn on May 22, 2012.
- \* Patti Orcutt and her family on the passing of her sister in Florida.
- \* Jackie Rozema, Jill Ostrum, Shelly Plumm and their families on the passing of their sister Elaine.

### NEW MEMBERS AND BAPTISMS:

- \* Joel and Nancy VanRoekel were welcomed into membership of CRC on May 13, 2012.
- \* Matt Stuck was baptized and Matt and Erica were welcomed into membership of CRC on June 17, 2012.
- \* Hugh Lambert was baptized and became a member of CRC on June 10, 2012.
- \* Chris and Kari Maki's daughter, Quinn Annabelle was baptized on June 17, 2012.
- \* Rebekah Manthei was welcomed into membership of CRC on July 1, 2012.
- \* Julia Sape was welcomed into membership of CRC on July 8, 2012.

## Book Review

### *The Harbinger* by Jonathan Cahn

*The Ancient Mystery that Holds the Secret of America's Future*

Walking into my living room this winter, I was intrigued by a T.V. interview with Jonathan Cahn, the author of *The Harbinger*. After hearing the interview, I immediately ordered this book. It is written in novel form but “what is contained within the story is real.”

The book's main character is Noriel; God is speaking to him and using him. Noriel receives an ancient-looking seal in the mail and has no idea where it has come from. It is the first of nine seals called harbingers (warnings) that he will receive unexpectedly. As he tries to find the meaning of the ancient seals, a mysterious man appears out of the blue and gives him hints as to where to look for the meaning. The seal always reveals something from ancient Israel, three thousand years ago, that will line up with places and events in America that have the same meaning. Some have already taken place and some are to come.

Jonathan Cahn is a Messianic Jewish believer, a Jewish follower of Jesus. He leads Hope of World Ministries and also leads the Jerusalem Center/Beth Israel, a worship center made up of Jews and Gentiles in Wayne, New Jersey.

You will find this an easy, thought-provoking and interesting read.

Submitted by Carolyn Batdorff

## Ministry Updates



### Safe Haven Ministries Breakfast Club:

#### Our Mission:

*Love and serve His people through building relationships so that they may see him.*

After three months of operation, the Safe Haven Ministries is well underway. God has done some amazing things and we praise Him every day for the blessings we find in the relationships we are building with so many nice people!

Safe Haven Breakfast Club has expanded its hours from 7:30a.m. to 10:00a.m., Tuesdays and Fridays. Consistently, 15-25 free meals are served each day either on site or as take outs. We go through about 5 dozen eggs/day and heaps of French toast and pancakes. It seems one or two new people come each week. We are anticipating more growth in the fall/winter. We have found the best way to get someone you know who can be helped by this program, is to come in with them and sit down for breakfast. You are welcome to do this at any time.

The volunteers are amazing with energetic service, happy attitudes and loving hearts. We are so grateful for all the help we have received. If you are interested in donating a couple hours of your time, we will have a sign up sheet for volunteers at the kiosk—we need workers from mid July through August.

The donations for food staples have been tremendous and we are set until this fall. Recently, we asked the congregation for a stand alone freezer and stand alone refrigerator. Lo' and behold, the Lord answered our prayers and an anonymous donor donated a brand new freezer and refrigerator. Thank you very much to that donor! We are so thankful for the generosity of the congregation in time, money and prayer.

This spring, Jan Boss and Leslie Cunningham taught a "Becoming a Good Samaritan" class. The wave of enthusiasm was so strong, that an expansion to Safe Haven Ministries is being developed. To mention a few things, a newsletter

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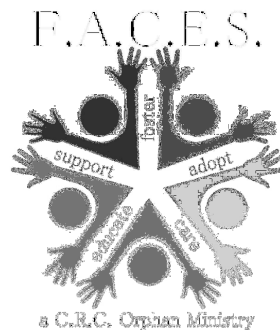
is being developed to include recipes for “green” and economical cleaning products to help preserve our earth; a dental ministry for those with no dental insurance; and a bike ministry is also in the works for 2013. For more information contact: Jan Boss, Linda Boss, Bev Boss, Joy and Nate Klooster, Leslie Cunningham, Beth Shepherd, June Otis, John and Diane Coolman, Ron Williams, or Val Pederson.

### **F.A.C.E.S. - (CRC Orphan Ministry)**

*Our Mission is:*

*To show Christ through F.A.C.E.S. to orphans  
and all those who come alongside them.*

F.A.C.E.S. (*Foster - Adopt - Care - Educate - Support*) is a new orphan ministry that is designed to not only encourage the foster-adopt-sponsor approach to eliminating the vulnerable child crisis across the globe but also come alongside to support and encourage those who are involved in the foster-adoption process.



F.A.C.E.S. will be making a public introduction soon. Watch for more information on this ministry and find out more about how you can help or *how we can help you.*

## COMMUNITY REFORMED CHURCH

Phone: 231-547-9482

Fax: 231-547-9598

Email: [crcoffice@communityreformed.net](mailto:crcoffice@communityreformed.net)  
[www.communityreformed.net](http://www.communityreformed.net)

Join us for Worship:

Sunday, 8:00, 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.

Nursery: 9:30 & 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School: Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

Prayer:

Sunday, 7:15 a.m.

Monday - Friday, 6:15 a.m.

Wednesday (2nd floor City Hall), 12 p.m.

Wednesday, 5:00 pm

Saturday, 7:15 a.m.

Our Mission:

To engage, encourage and equip people to be  
fully devoted followers of Christ

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Jan Boss, Director of Spiritual Formation

Ted Polleys, Minister of Youth

Lynda Stolt, Office Administrator

Michael Brown, Maintenance Engineer

Leslie Nitchman, Office Assistant

Theda Williams, Worship Director

Gail Cherry, Director of Children's Ministries

Amy Spegele, DivorceCare Facilitator

Dianne Coolman, Kitchen Manager

Cindy Mansen, Choir Director

The Holy Bible  
is God's Word  
Eternally True