

NOVEMBER 2025 PEW ECHO

FIRST REFORMED CHURCH
527 Giddings Ave., Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085
920-467-3251
1stReformed.org

Brad Veenendaal - Pastor
pastorbrad@1streformed.org

Sue Dempster - Office
office@1streformed.org



Give Thanks for the Gift of Thankfulness

"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

- 2 Corinthians 9:15



In this season of thanksgiving, we usually think of giving thanks as just that—something we give. Did you ever stop and think about how thankfulness is not only something we give, it's also a gift we've been given? This is by God's design. And it's all over God's Word—literally. In the original Greek of the New Testament, the words for grace (*charis*), gift (*charisma*), and give thanks (*eucharisteo*) are all related words.

Thankfulness is a gift of God's grace because gratitude and joy go together. In fact, just like the previous words, joy (*chara*) is related to the words for thanksgiving and grace in Greek. God gives grace (Ephesians 2:8-9) and joy (John 15:11) as gifts to us. In response, we give our thanksgiving as a gift to God and to others (Psalm 100:4; Philippians 1:3). Yet these things are not just related in God's Word to us; they are also related in God's will for us. Consider 1 Thessalonians 5:17 – "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Thankful people live with joy because, in giving thanks, we are reminded of how blessed we are, and how much we have to be thankful for. Thankfulness grows our capacity for contentment, which increases our joy (Philippians 4 has a lot to teach us about this). Thankfulness grows our heart for prayer (Colossians 4:2). And, as we see more of God's grace in answers to prayer, we offer our praise and thanks, which, you guessed it, increases our joy (Psalm 105:1-3).

So, as you get ready for Thanksgiving, remember that thankfulness is both the gratitude we give and a gift we've been given. And as you grow in giving thanks, you will also grow in receiving the gift of joy. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Grace and Peace in Christ,
Pastor Brad

"If the only prayer you said in your entire life was 'thank you,' that would suffice."

—Meister Eckhardt





NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Rachel Houwers
- 4 Quinn Gumm
Nolan Gulig
- 7 Anna Cleveland
- 9 Joy Cleveland
Ashley Huibregtse
- 11 Jim Kuplic
- 16 Pat Boge
- 19 Ning Zhang
- 20 Gail Huibregtse
- 22 Joseph Fabian
- 27 Kristine Fritsch

YOU'RX NXXDXD!

Evxn though my typxwritxr is an old modxl, it works quitx wxll— xxcxpt for onx kxy. I havx many timxs wishxd it workxd pxrfectly. It's trux that thx othxr kxys work grx-at, but just onx kxy not working makxs a huxg diffxrxncx.

Somxtimxs our church sxxms likx my typxwritxr — not all thx kxy pxoplx work. You may say to yoursxlf, "Wxll, I'm just onx pxrson. I don't makx or brxak thx church." But it doxs makx a big diffxrxncx bxcausx a church, to bx xffxctivx, nxxds thx activx participation of vxvry pxrson.

So, thx nxxt timx you think your xfforts arxn't nxcxsxry, rxmxmbxr my typxwritxr and say to yoursxlf, "I'm a kxy pxrson in thx congrxgation, and I'm nxxdxd vxry much."



NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES:

- 1 Jesse & Evie Frausto (56)
- 2 Ken & Amy Van Wyk (40)
- 4 Dale & Joan Hoffmann (37)
- 9 James & Betty Ten Pas (7)

WHY GOD WATCHES

An English bishop recalled a childhood visit to an elderly woman, who showed him a framed text that read "Thou God seest me."

The woman told him, "When you're older, people will tell you that God is always watching you to see when you do wrong, in order to punish you. I don't want you to think of it that way. Instead, take the text home and remember all your life that God loves you so much he can't take his eyes off you."



LEARNING TO REPENT

Just as we learn to read, share and play ball, we learn to apologize, right a wrong and repent. Grace-filled parents, teachers and other adults can guide that process.

A young visitor to a national park took home a pine cone, despite the adage to "take only photos and leave only footprints." But the child — likely prompted by Mom or Dad — later thought better of it. Opening a lumpy envelope from the mail, a park ranger was tickled and touched to discover the pine cone. An anonymous note in childish script explained regret for "my decision" and asked that the bit of nature be returned to its rightful place.

Repentance is tough, but the caring support of someone more mature in life and faith can make it easier. May we all keep learning to say we're sorry.

ARE YOU GOD'S WIFE?

While working at a shoe store in downtown Truro, Nova Scotia, I noticed a little boy standing on the hot-air register outside the bakery shop next door in his bare feet, trying to keep warm.

I was unsure whether to invite the boy into the store, or just what to do with him, when a [woman] came by. After a few words with the barefoot boy, she brought him into the shoe store. She bought him new shoes and heavy woolen socks, for which he tried awkwardly to thank her. "Are you God's wife?" he asked his benefactor.

Taken aback by the question, she took some time before replying, "No, son, I'm just one of his children."

"Well, I knew you must be some kin to him," he said as he thanked her again and ran out the door.

—Zelda Cornish

It's easy to list the blessings in life: good health, family, a satisfying career, a comfortable home. We might even be thankful for things others take for granted such as freedom and clean drinking water, reliable transportation and food enough to eat. Then there are the little things, such as gardens, sunrises, pets and coffee.



But what about life's storms or unanswered prayers? Should we be thankful for these? Loss and hardship remind us of our dependence on God. He uses trials to draw us closer to him, to show us that He is our rock and refuge. In misfortune and grief, we discover God's comfort and strength. Should we not, then, be thankful for the storms, too?

GIVE THANKS — ALWAYS?



the pain of the iron manacles cutting into his wrists and legs.

Separated from friends, unjustly accused, brutally treated—if ever a person had a right to complain, it was this man, languishing almost forgotten in a harsh Roman prison. But instead of complaints, his lips rang with words of praise and thanksgiving!

The man was the Apostle Paul—a man who had learned the meaning of true thanksgiving, even in the midst of great adversity. Earlier, when he had been imprisoned in Rome, Paul wrote, "Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Ephesians 5:19-20, NIV*).

Think of it: Always giving thanks for everything—no matter the circumstances! Thanksgiving for the Apostle Paul was not a once-a-year celebration, but a daily reality that changed his life and made him a joyful person in every situation.

Thanksgiving—the giving of thanks—to God for all His blessings should be one of the most distinctive marks of the believer in Jesus Christ. Nothing turns us into bitter, selfish, dissatisfied people more quickly than an ungrateful heart. And nothing will do more to restore contentment and the joy of our salvation than a true spirit of thankfulness.

USHERS FOR NOVEMBER

Jeff Van Wyk
Bob Bonneau



**USHER
SCHEDULE**

GREETERS FOR NOVEMBER

Nov. 2
Dick & Gail Huibregtse

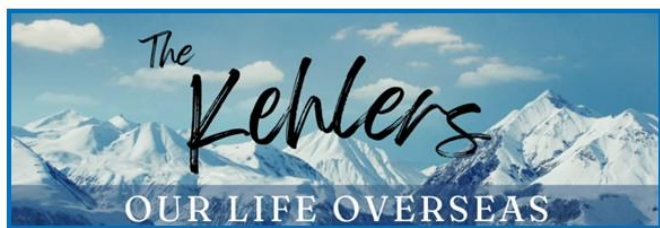
Nov. 9
Joel & Ashley Huibregtse

Nov. 16
Clint & Gina Koene

Nov. 23
Steve & Stacy Wagner

Nov. 30
Travis & Morgan Steffen





Hello Everyone!

We made it back to Nepal a few weeks ago and we are sending this update from the village!

I'm sure some of you heard already through news or social media that Nepal had some riots/ protests that happened earlier this month. We and our teammates are safe. It was a little scary at times hearing the groups protest somewhat close to our home or being able to see smoke and fires from houses that were being burnt/ targeted, but the Lord kept us out of harms way.

After the shelter in place order was lifted we were able to travel out to the village and get things settled here. Unfortunately, we had to evict probably thousands of ants from our home (picture), but from what we have seen the last week and a half being out here that was the biggest issue on the property. It wasn't fun returning to that obviously, but the property could have been in much worse shape so we are thankful for the hand of the Lord's protection.

If you want more than a glimpse, the guesthouse is open and ready to receive groups. We would love to host you! Send us an email or message if you would like more information.



A few things we are praising God for...

It has been great to begin working with the new local partners on our team and getting to see and hear their heart and desire for the gospel to be spread in this area.

We have a long-term guest staying with us for a number of months and it's a joy to have a friend join us and spend lots of time visiting with locals in the community.

We welcomed some of our close friends from the capital city to visit during the recent holiday here. It was a sweet time to fellowship and have fun together as well as a great way for us to open the guesthouse for the season. Our teammates returned and we are all excited to begin again together.

Prayer requests...

Business registration to be able to be completed. We need prayer for favor with our neighbors and government.

That our team would be united and show others the love of Jesus as we love one another.

Vision for how to serve in this community



Thank you all for your continued prayers and support!

The Kehlers

Our mailing address is:

[525 Michigan Ave, Oostburg, WI 53070](#)

Email address:

406everest@gmail.com



Dana & Brian Phipps



Dear Friends,

Universities are open again in Turkey. This Sunday was the first opportunity for born-again college students to **choose church attendance** over other options. Please pray for them to make the right choice throughout the year.

Elif (pictured left, with sparkler) is a strong Christ-follower. She just moved to Beijing to start a two-year masters program in Chinese. Because of security issues, it has not been easy for Elif to find Christian fellowship. Please pray.

Beril (pictured right, with sparkler) is also an outspoken, courageous Christ-follower. She has decided to stay home with her believing family and take a gap year before college. Please pray for Beril.



Efe (pictured middle) was denied a student visa to study Bible in Greece. Therefore, he will pursue online Bible training and intern at our church instead. Everyone is excited about how God has led. Please pray for Efe.

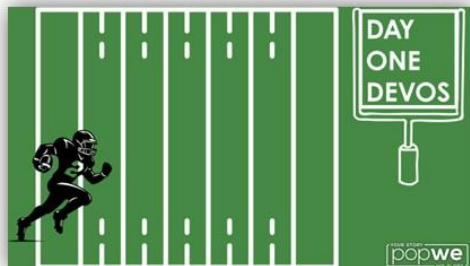
Efe's training is a strategic part of our church planting master plan. We will share more details about Efe's new education program in our next update.

Love,

Brian and Dana

Avant

[10000 N Oak Trafficway](https://www.avantministries.org)
[Kansas City, MO 64155](https://www.avantministries.org)
www.avantministries.org



Fantasy Football, Real World Faith

Each fall, my friends and I get so excited for our fantasy football league's season to begin. The trash talk starts weeks before the draft, and when draft night finally comes, there are plenty of buffalo wings and big laughs. You pick the players, study the stats, and hope your 'dream team' racks up the most points each week.

But here's the thing, it's all imaginary. It looks real on the screen, but none of it is actually happening. It's just for fun.

I've realized how easy it can be to settle for a 'fantasy league' kind of faith. You know what I mean – posting the right Bible verses online, showing up at church when it's convenient, saying all the right words, but never really living it out where it matters most.

James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." Real faith isn't about appearances, it's about action. It's forgiving the person who hurt you. It's loving your neighbor even when it's inconvenient. It's choosing integrity when no one else is watching.

God isn't looking for fantasy players who simply look good on paper. He's looking for disciples who are willing to get in the game and follow Him wholeheartedly. The real world requires a real faith – one that is tested, tried, and proven, but chooses to persevere past appearances.

This life is not a game. The stakes are eternal. So, let's stop pretending and start playing for real.

DO SOMETHING:

- Identify one area of your life where you've been 'talking the talk' but not fully 'walking the walk.'
- Take one bold step today to put your faith into action—whether it's making amends, serving someone in need, or obeying God in a difficult area.
- Get in the game.

KID'S PAGE

*Fall for Jesus
He never leaves*



Fall INTO GOD'S CREATION

"Seek and you will find!" - Matthew 7:7

☐ Colorful Leaf	☐ An Acorn	☐ A Pumpkin
		
God made every season beautiful. Ecclesiastes 3:11	Big things can grow from small beginnings. Matthew 13:31-32	God provides food in every season. Genesis 1:29
☐ A Sign Of Harvest	☐ A Bird	☐ Something Tiny
		
God made every season beautiful. Ecclesiastes 3:11	God cares for the birds—and He cares even more for you! Matthew 6:26	God cares for even the smallest things. Luke 12:6-7



What was missing from the first Thanksgiving feast?

Answer: Turkey

Here's an interesting piece of Thanksgiving food trivia: Though it's become a staple on Thanksgiving tables across the country, turkey probably wasn't on the menu at the first Thanksgiving feast shared by the pilgrims and the Wampanoag native people. Instead, they were more likely to feast on venison and even seafood, given how plentiful things like mussels, clams, and lobster are in Massachusetts.



What kind of music did the pilgrims listen to?



Plymouth Rock.

If April showers bring May flowers, what do May flowers bring?



Pilgrims.

How does Thanksgiving always end?



With a G.

Which side of the turkey has the most feathers?



The outside.

What's the best smelling thing to bring to Thanksgiving?



Your nose.

What did the pumpkin say after Thanksgiving dinner?



Good pie everyone!

Why did the turkey get in trouble?

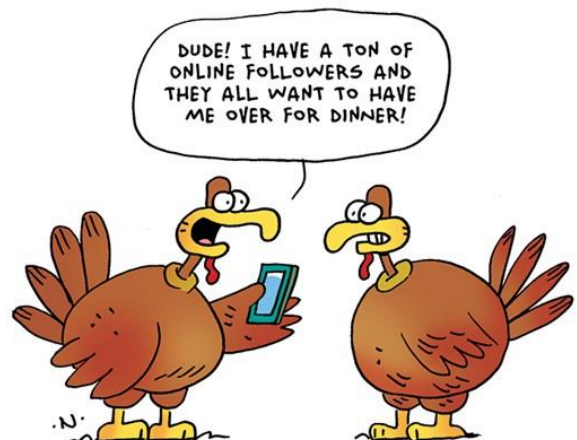


Because he used fowl language.

What's the best thing to put into pumpkin pie?



Your teeth.





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9:30am Worship 10:45am SS / POW45 10:45am Getting to Know First Reformed	3 1:30pm Living Bible Study	4 1pm Dorcas Society 7pm Elders	5 6:30pm The Chosen Sm. Group Study 6:30pm Youth Night	6	7	8
9 9:30am Worship 10:45am SS / POW45 10:45am Getting to Know First Reformed	10 6:30pm Women's Bible Study	11 7pm Consistory	12 6:30pm CrossCenter	13 6:15pm Great Commission Study	14	15 6pm Harvest Supper
16 9:30am Worship 10:45am SS / POW45 10:45am Getting to Know First Reformed	17	18	19 6:30pm The Chosen Sm. Group Study 6:30pm CrossCenter	20	21	22
23 9:30am Worship 10:45am SS / POW45 10:45am Getting to Know First Reformed 30 9:30am Worship No SS/POW45	24 6:30pm Women's Bible Study	25	26 6:30pm Thanksgiving Worship No CrossCenter	27 	28	29 



I was at the beach with my children when my four-year-old son ran up to me, grabbed my hand, and led me to the shore, where a sea gull lay dead in the sand. 'Mommy, what happened to him?' the little boy asked. 'He died and went to Heaven,' I replied. My son thought a moment and then said, 'And God threw him back down?'

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



07-20-2015

FIRST OFF, I'M HAPPY TO SEE THAT SO MANY OF YOU ARE ENJOYING THE NEW STREAMING OF OUR SERVICES ONLINE ...

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



08-07-2015

CAN YOU SCROLL BACK UP?