

OCTOBER 2026

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



Are We Hiding in Fear or Helping in Faith?

"You shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray, and hide yourself from them; you shall certainly bring them back to your brother ... You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift them up again." Deut. 22:1,4 NKJV

October is a festive month in many ways, but it can also be a fearful month for some, especially with a focus on scary things around Halloween. How often do we focus on being fearful rather than being faithful when it comes to loving and serving God and others? Jesus tells us that the two greatest commandments are to love God and love neighbors. When it comes to our neighbors, are we more likely to hide in fear or help in faith? That is the focus of a recent article that caught my attention in the "Weekly Digest" from the ministry Desiring God. Written by Greg Morse, it's titled "Thou Shalt Not Hide from Neighbors," and I'd like to share a portion of it with you.

The time for your mission has arrived. Trash bin in hand, you set poised to make it to the street, and return unscathed. One last step before you go: a quick glance outside to see who is out there. But how many thirty-minute conversations with dear old Mrs. Staley — ones unveiling the newest medical reports about Muffles, her one-eyed cat — can one man endure? And better the slowly unfolding saga of Mrs. Staley's feline than the awkward small talk with Mr. Olson, whom, in your bother, you doubt has ever had an interesting thought in his life. Not to mention the neighbors on the corner whom you suspect are participating in illegal activities. "It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out of your door," Bilbo would say. So very true.

This quick scan is not limited to back alleyways in urban areas or always fixed upon neighbors. It is often the "inwardly calculating" eye of the stingy heart that wants to know how much everything is going to cost, and defaults on an unwillingness to pay (Prov. 23:6–8). This heart doesn't want to see needy or lost neighbors, doesn't ever want to be inconvenienced or frankly bothered by others. Nor by straying sheep. The ancient Israelites were not immune to a heart focused solely on its own interests, so God commanded

them, "Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother" (Deut. 22:1 KJV). I quote the King James Version not simply because of its delicious elegance, but because of its literal translation of the Hebrew. It captures the original depiction of one gazing out of the window before taking out the trash, hiding. The "ignore them" of other translations strips the command of imagery, and with it, meaning. It is one thing to say, "Don't ignore the straying sheep"; it is another to picture a man hiding from them, as Adam and Eve from God, or Saul from the crown (Gen. 3:8; 1 Sam.



10:21–22). One doesn't ignore Jehovah's Witnesses when they come knocking at the door; one hides, turns off the lights, and makes no movement or loud exhale until they're gone.

The Israelite was commanded not to hide — from good works, from holiness, or from loving his neighbor as himself. But duty becomes so complicated when costly. Imagine it. He sees the wandering animal and reasons that he didn't lose his sheep. Nor did he schedule time for an animal return today. Truth be told, he has more pressing things to do today; and tomorrow; and every day after. It is one thing — a sinful thing — to hide oneself from helping a neighbor's animals. Having no regard for a neighbor's property is disobedience to God. It is to be unwilling to pay an inconvenient price for kindness, to refuse the cost of righteousness. What about my unwillingness to engage my neighbors? What about this heart that looks both ways to avoid a short conversation with a lost soul? If God would teach me to have pity on my neighbor's ox, should I not have pity upon my neighbor's soul? Shall I hide myself from those eternal beings I am left on earth to engage?

(continued on next page)



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

2	Katie Fabian
3	Corey Kappers
7	Clark Otte
	Morgan Steffen
9	Ronda Arthur
12	Dave Mulder
13	Chuck Otte
14	Duane Gumm
15	Bob Bonneau
17	Trenten Otte
18	Rachel Halverson
19	Dorothy Arthur
21	Jana Middlesworth
22	Marty Halverson
23	Tong Wang
25	Ann Graumann
26	Kris Beach
	Steve Stoffregen
28	Larry Meyer
31	Dennis Meerdink



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 prxfctly. It's trux that thx othxr

kxys work grxat, but just onx kxy not working makxs a hugx diffxrxncx.

Somxtimxs our church sxmxs 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 dif-fxrxncx bxcasx a church, to bx xffxctivx, nxxds thx activx participation of vxvry pxrson.

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



OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES:

3	Dale & Beth Wingert	(45)
6	Rick & Ronda Arthur	(46)
12	Steve & Linda Wilterdink	(52)
18	Lyle & Luella Justinger	(63)
22	Pastor Brad & Tonja Veenendaal	(32)
25	Dave & Jackie Stoffregen	(41)
27	Ken & Sara Born	(41)
30	Dan & Jane Van Wyk	(44)



A Simmering Idea

During a lesson on 1 Kings 18, a Sunday school teacher explained the confrontation between the prophet Elijah

and the false prophets of Baal. He described how Elijah built the altar, placed wood on it, prepared the bull, laid it on the altar and instructed God's people to pour water over the altar.

"Now," the teacher asked, "can anyone tell me why they would've poured water over the animal?"

A girl eagerly raised her hand and answered, "To make the gravy!"



(continued)

Jesus died to make us a different kind of people. He died to make us jealous for opportunities to do good. He died to make us those who wait to take out the trash until we see souls outside so that God can bless them through us. We are His possession. We live on His schedule, for His purposes. The hold on our hearts was so dark and deep that it took His death to liberate us from the penalty and power of our selfishness, and to purify us that we might be energetic for good works: good works as we walk along the way; good works as we see straying sheep; good works as we take out the trash.

Grace and Peace in Christ,
Pastor Brad

NOT FORGOTTEN

My wife, Lesa, and I attended a pastor-appreciation event put on by a radio station. When the worship leader asked attendees to turn to one another and share prayer needs, my wife met a pastor who described his church plant, which wasn't growing. He was discouraged and unsure what the future held.

When Lesa asked the name of the church, she smiled and asked if it was near a campground. The pastor said yes. Lesa responded, "Just a few weeks ago, we were camping nearby. A friend and I walked right past your church, and God led me to be praying for it!" In a room of more than 300 people, God put Lesa next to this discouraged pastor so he could know that God hadn't forgotten him.

God is working behind the scenes in ways we may never see. Despite life's challenges, God is for us and not against us. We aren't walking this journey alone.



*God often does
His best work
behind the scenes.*

A PEAS-FUL DEPARTURE

A funeral director once shared a lighthearted epitaph he found on an old tombstone. It read:

Here lies the body of Solomon Peas,
Under the sod and under the trees.
Peas is not here, 'tis only the pod;
Peas has shelled out and gone to God.

SEEDS OF VICTORY



Months before the U.S. victory at the World War II Battle of Midway, important work was happening far from the ocean. Code analysts were quietly

studying Japanese messages, using early tools that came long before the computers we know today. Their careful work helped crack a code and gave American forces the warning they needed to avoid an ambush.

It makes you wonder what those long days felt like. Did the analysts ever grow tired of searching for answers? Did they wonder whether their efforts mattered? Did they feel discouraged when the breakthrough had not yet come?

We can understand that feeling. Christians sometimes grow weary, too. We wonder whether teaching children about Jesus is making a difference. We wonder whether small acts of kindness, quiet prayers or faithful service will ever bear fruit. We see sin, sorrow and brokenness around us and wonder how victory will come.

But God sees what we cannot. No faithful work done for him is wasted. The Spirit who helps us plant seeds of truth and love is also able to bring the harvest. And because of Christ, the final victory is already secure.

USHERS FOR OCTOBER

Doug Fabian
Steve Wilterdink



GREETERS FOR OCTOBER

Oct. 4
Dave & Jackie Stoffregen



Oct. 11
Brad & Shannon Veenendaal

Oct. 18
Doug & Roxann Church

Oct. 25
Dennis & Kris Beach





Dear Friends,

We know that many Americans are currently struggling economically. Sadly, the same is true in Turkey. Over the last five years, Turkey's inflation has ranked among the highest in the

Dana and I need to catch up to Turkey's new economic reality by raising an **extra \$850** in monthly support. We are looking for friends who might be able to help us in spite of the challenges in America.

If you are interested in giving, please use our mission organization's secure donor webpage (<https://avantministries.org/missionaries>) or email us for other options. Thank you very much.



Summer vacation is over and our university students are back in town. Consequently, our church feels crowded again with around 35 worshippers on Sundays and 20 on Wednesdays. We are grateful. With all of our voices back, the change is especially noticeable in louder worship. Praise God!

Love,

Brian and Dana

Avant

10000 N Oak Trafficway
Kansas City, MO 64155
www.avantministries.org



The Best Gift for Your Pastor

October is Pastor Appreciation Month—a time to recognize and encourage those who faithfully shepherd our churches. But if you've ever asked a pastor how to show your gratitude, the answer probably isn't a plaque or applause. More often than not, it's simple: "Pray for me."

Even the Apostle Paul didn't ask for much personally, except for the prayers of fellow believers. In his letter to the Romans, he wrote: *"Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and relax in your company"* (Romans 15:30–32, NASB).

This October—and every month—encourage your pastor by offering your prayers, support, and kind words. Ministry can be demanding, but knowing the church is lifting them up makes all the difference.



Hello Friends, Family, and Partners!

We wanted to send you a little update on what has been happening here over the past couple of months and share a look at what is ahead.

INTERN

We recently had to say goodbye to our intern and drop her off at the airport. It was a blessed nearly two months of having her serve alongside us, and she definitely left an impact in our area—especially through the after-school tuition program and teaching dance. It was really fun for us to have her and it reminded us of our time with YWAM in the past and getting to see another young person experience God through cross-cultural work.

Her final goodbye with the kids was filled with tears, hugs, and lots of love. It was so special to see the relationships she had built during her time here.

Overall, it was such a positive experience that we hope to do it again soon! We are already talking with another young woman who is planning to come for five months and splitting her time between our team and one in another city. **Here is a short goodbye video from her time with us:**

<https://youtu.be/VBXwxweEFTg>



HIMALAYAN FREEDOM CO. — A BIG CHANGE

We also have some difficult news to share. The Himalayan Freedom Co (HFC) business we have been partnered with has officially entered into retrenchment and is closing down. After more than 16 years of running and operating, it is very sad to see it come to an end.

We are thankful that the women who were employed were able to receive above and beyond what was owed to them. Some of the ladies have also used the money they received to purchase their own sewing machines, with the hope of starting personal sewing and tailoring businesses from their homes.

We are definitely mourning the loss of having these ladies come to the property and work with us. At the same time, we are meeting internally and praying about what this means for our vision moving forward.

The Lord has been incredibly good to us in the middle of this transition. Recently, an investment came into the guesthouse business that created a shareholder position. Through that investment, we were able to purchase the land we are currently located on, which was previously owned by HFC. This means that, even though HFC is closing, we are still able to continue operating the guesthouse.

The entire process happened very quickly. From the first time we heard that HFC might close to purchasing the land was less than two months! This has been a major focus for us over the past few months, and now we feel like the next few months will be a time of prayer, listening, and strategy as we seek the Lord for what comes next.

Thank you so much for your continued prayers and partnership with us through all of this. We truly appreciate having people walking alongside us.

FLOOD UPDATE



I also made a short video sharing some information and highlights from our recent flood relief trip. You can watch the video here: <https://youtu.be/PGCMF14nux0>

We continue to stay connected with local people and leaders as we assess where we can continue to step in and help.



I would love to see us eventually be involved in rebuilding efforts. However, right now, many families are still in a very uncertain situation. Some locals have told us that they cannot even distinguish which pieces of land belong to them anymore because of how much the flooding changed the area.

They are currently waiting to see what the government will do—whether people will be given new land to rebuild on or whether property lines will somehow be re-established. We don't know yet what that process will look like, but it seems like it could be a long and difficult road for many of these families.

For now, we are continuing to listen, stay connected, and look for opportunities to help as needs become clearer.

If you would like to donate towards the relief efforts, please click the link below. Any funds received at this link will go directly to the aid of the flood victims. Our priority at this point is for supporting the local believers and fellowships in the district and helping them reach the needs of their communities. Praying that this leads to more **open doors and long-lasting transformation** with an eternal impact. <https://www.prosintl.org/project/nepal-flood-relief>

THE NEXT FEW MONTHS

We have some exciting things coming up!

Over the next two months, we will be hosting a group from Australia as well as a men's group from a America.

There are also two major holidays coming up that we plan to spend time in the village for. We have already had several neighbors invite us into their homes to celebrate with them. You can be praying that this would help us to build relationships in the community.

Then, in November, Hannah's mom and my mom will be traveling together here to visit us again!

There is a lot happening, and we are excited to see what the Lord continues to do. Thank you for praying for us, supporting us, and being part of what God is doing here. We are incredibly thankful for you!

— Tyson & Hannah

KID'S PAGE



?? ? Bible Quiz ? ? ?

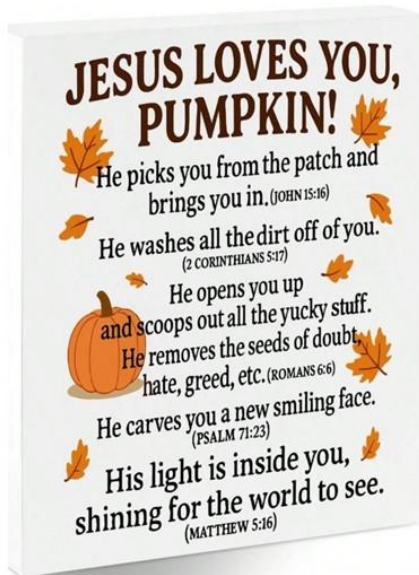
The night before Jesus' crucifixion, he demonstrates humble service by washing his disciples' _____.

A. hands
B. feet
C. hair
D. supper dishes

Q. What excuse did Adam give to his children as to why he no longer lived in Eden?

A. Your mother ate us out of house and home.

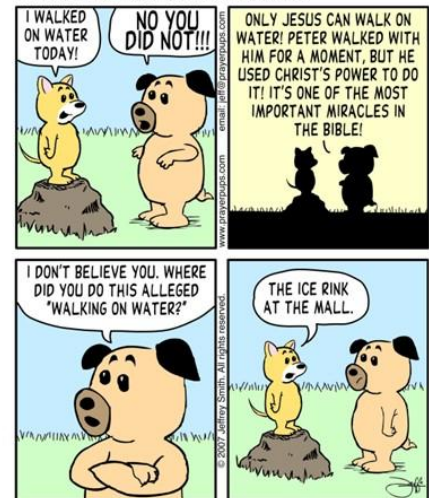
Answer: B (See John 13:1-17.)



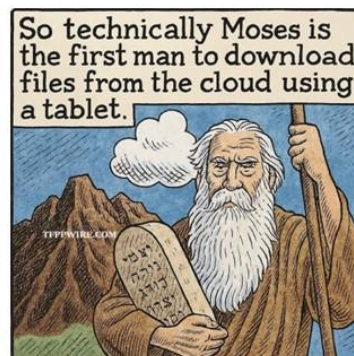
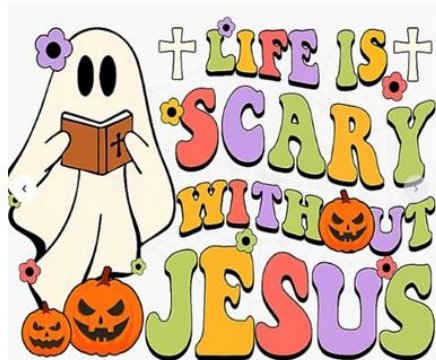
BIBLE RIDDLES

I was swallowed by a great fish. Who am I?	I built an ark. Who am I?
I defeated Goliath. Who am I?	I was thrown into a den of lions. Who am I?
I received the Ten Commandments. Who am I?	I led the Israelites out of Egypt. Who am I?
I walked on water. Who am I?	I was born in a manger. Who am I?

PRAYER PUPS BY JEFFREY SMITH



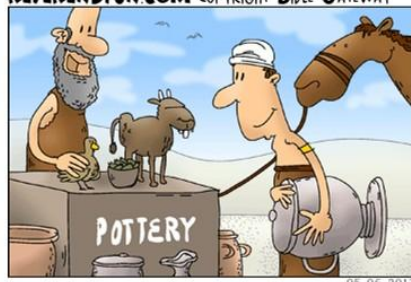
YOU CAN READ ABOUT JESUS WALKING ON WATER IN MATTHEW 14:22-33, MARK 6:45-52 & JOHN 6:16-21.





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 9:30am Worship 10:45am Sunday School	5 6:30pm Men's Bible Study	6 7pm Elders (no Dorcas—cancelled)	7 1:30pm Living Bible Study 6:30pm CrossCenter	8 2:30pm Women's Bible Study 6:15pm Women's Bible Study	9	10
11 9:30am Worship 10:45am Sunday School	12	13 7pm Executive Committee	14 6:30pm CrossCenter	15	16	17
18 9:30am Worship 10:45am Sunday School	19 6:30pm Men's Bible Study	20	21 6:30pm CrossCenter	22 2:30pm Women's Bible Study 6:15pm Women's Bible Study	23	24
25 9:30am Worship 10:45am Sunday School	26	27	28 6:30pm CrossCenter	29	30	31

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YOUR CHANGE IS ONE GOAT, A BIRD, AND A BOWL OF LOCUSTS ... THANK YOU FOR SHOPPING WITH US AND ENJOY YOUR NEW CONTAINER



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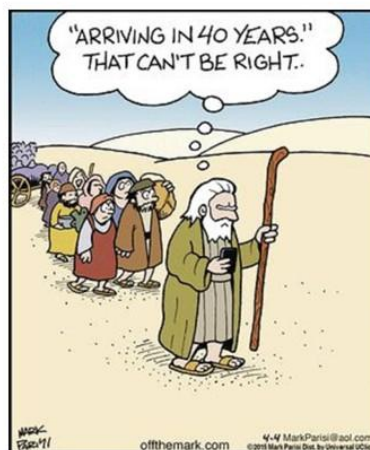


SORRY ... IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE MY LAST OFFERING



A woman went to the Post Office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. "What denomination?" asked the clerk.

"Oh, good heavens! Have we come to this?" said the woman. "Well, give me 50 Baptist and 50 Catholic ones."



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TEXTING WHILE DRIVING IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS, SIR, AND IS AGAINST THE LAW