

FIRST REFORMED CHURCH

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Coaching Changes

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."
- 2 Timothy 2:2



We are heading into a time of the year that is a lot of fun for us sports fans. Baseball is heading into the homestretch; football is about to start; and believe it or not, basketball is just a couple of months away. Many of us look forward to attending high school sports events and supporting our local student-athletes, or watching our favorite college and pro teams play in big games and compete for championships.

In sports, as well as in life, a big part of overcoming struggles and achieving success involves the impact of coaching. And, as a result of a coaching change, we often see the effect that it can have on a team. But there is a different change that I have in mind when it comes to coaching. When we are coaching someone, and when we are coached by someone, it changes us.

At the recent Gathering event for the Alliance of Reformed Churches, a strong emphasis was placed on the importance of discipleship, in the local church and throughout the denomination. Several times it was presented and discussed in the context of coaching. This concept is also incorporated into our Pathways process for preparing people to serve as ordained pastors in the Alliance. I serve on the Ordination Team for our Midwest Network in the ARC; and as part of my role, I have the privilege of coaching several young men in our network who are in the Pathways process as they learn and grow and work towards ordination in the Alliance.

During the Gathering, we were asked to reflect on these questions: Who are you coaching? Who is coaching you? In the Bible we see numerous examples of people who are being coached by someone and are then coaching someone else. 2 Timothy 2:2 gives us this framework. Timothy is being coached by Paul and is instructed to coach others, to pass on to others what he has received in order to help them learn and grow. This type of coach doesn't have to have all the answers, but does need to be willing to ask good questions, and to come alongside someone to discover the answers together.

So let me ask you: Who are you coaching? Who is coaching you? Lots of businesses and trades use this approach. It's how many of us learned a hobby or skill or recreational activity that we are now passing on to someone else. How about when it comes to our faith, our spiritual lives as followers of Jesus. Do you have someone in your life who is a go-to person, who is a mentor or person of influence who can ask good (and sometimes hard) questions, who can share insights and experiences, who can pray with you and for you? And, do you have someone in your life who you can pour into, who you can come alongside of, who you can share with and pass on what you have received? This is discipleship. This is the Great Commission, and this can have a powerful change in our lives and the lives of others.

Who are you coaching? Who is coaching you?

Grace and Peace in Christ,
Pastor Brad



SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

4	Lisa Klescewski
5	Roxann Church
12	Dale Wingert
	Julie Messner
	Makenna Veenendaal
13	Jenny Kappers
14	Jackie Stoffregen
	Aaron Lund
	Max Huibregtse
15	Beth Wingert
21	Zoey Gulig
22	Sue Dulmes
23	Howard Buehler
27	Sophia Zhang
28	Paul Graumann
	Sharon Noel
29	Dan Van Wyk
	Christine Hansen
30	Nathaniel Otte

Careful readers of Mark's gospel will discover that the writer favored a certain word. It indicates how quickly certain events transpired. The word is found four times in the first chapter of Mark and 19 more times in the remaining 15 chapters (NRSV). Choose the correct word:

- A. Momentarily
- B. Instantly
- C. Occasionally
- D. Immediately

Answer: D (It's first used in Mark 1:12, NRSV.)



SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

3	Jeff and Nancy Van Wyk	(38)
4	Dick and Joan Koebel	(55)
5	Chuck and Tiffany Otte	(34)
9	Gary and Sue Bimmel	(49)
14	Marty and Sherri Halverson	(24)
17	Ben and Joy Cleveland	(4)
19	Joel and Ashley Huibregtse	(11)
30	Mark and Jean Kappers	(54)



Most of us can remember a Sunday school teacher who made a lasting difference in our lives. Sometimes the simplest lessons become the ones we carry with us the longest.

One man recalled his high school Sunday school teacher, a businessman named Mr. Homan, who shared this advice with the boys in his class: "Don't ever go anywhere you would not want your mother or sister to go. Don't ever do anything you would not want your mother or sister to do."

Years later, the man reflected on those words and said, "That advice has served me well. I have always remembered it."

God often uses faithful teachers to plant seeds of wisdom, character and integrity in young hearts. Their influence may not always be seen right away, but the lessons they share can guide lives for years to come.

Never underestimate the power of a few thoughtful words spoken with love and conviction.

REST FOR THE SOUL

Studies show many Americans don't get enough sleep, and the effects can take a toll on both body and mind. Whether it's a packed schedule or restless nights, a lack of rest makes it harder to think clearly, stay focused and care for our overall well-being. Over time, that constant fatigue begins to wear us down.

Our spiritual lives follow a similar rhythm. When we rush from one task to the next without pausing to spend time with God, we can feel just as drained. We need consistent, quiet moments with Him to stay grounded, encouraged and strong in our faith.

Even Jesus made space for this kind of rest. Luke 5:16 tells us that He often withdrew to quiet places to pray. If He needed that time with the Father, how much more do we? When we step away from the noise and listen for God's voice, we find the renewal our souls have been longing for.



Confusion in the Age of Information

We live in a time where the amount of information available to the average person is amazing. In the last forty years, we have moved from searching volumes of paper books in libraries to having most of human knowledge in a hand-held device. Now, with an internet connection, we have access to educational, scientific, and historical resources that were previously only accessible in academic institutions. Words like algorithm and artificial intelligence (AI) were barely understood by a select few but now are understood by most people. Unfortunately, along with this vast resource comes the reality of receiving false and misleading information.

When it comes to religion, the World Wide Web is filled with thousands of commentaries, opinions, and beliefs concerning the bible. Our media feeds contain mini-bible lessons, feel-good memes, podcasts, and video shorts which will agree or disagree with almost every conceivable view of the Scriptures. In this overwhelming information overload, how is it possible to know the truth and what God wants for us?

Perhaps, for the sincere truth-seeker, it is time to back up, log off, and shut down. Maybe we should go to that dusty bookshelf and pull out that neglected paper book and begin to search the pages for the simplistic and precious words the Lord has left for us. Even with the confusion of the information age, the promise of Jesus is just as relevant, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away." (Matthew 24:35)

Yes, we still have the true words of Jesus, even though they may be concealed by the countless books about Christianity written by mere men.

The old folks used to say, "Let's go back to the bible." And the bible itself proclaims its self-sufficiency. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Also, "these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (John 20:31) With these words, do we need anything else?

USHERS FOR SEPTEMBER

Mark Kappers

Mike Rammer



GREETERS FOR SEPTEMBER

Sept. 6

Jeff & Nancy Van Wyk

Sept. 13

Steve & Stacy Wagner

Sept. 20

Travis & Morgan Steffen

Sept. 27

Dale & Joan Hoffmann



Thanking God for all He has done

AMAZON NEWS

August 2026

carolee.graf@abwego.org



A growing family 2 new grandkids



Our family continues to grow with 2 new little ones being added to the family this year.

Raissa just had a beautiful baby boy in July and now lives on a military base with her husband 10 hours by speed boat from us.



Silvia also had a little one in March. It was such a privilege to be present at her birth. And it was a very special surprise to hear her name is SARAH CAROLEE



A family encounter

Two worlds meet

After years of unsuccessful tries at getting visas to come the USA, we are so grateful for an incredible, unimaginable, never to forgetevent that happened this summer.

We were blessed in that I was able to have the opportunity to bring my Brazilian family to meet up with my American family in Punta Cana .



It was such a special time full of new things. The best part was just having our families spend time together getting to know each other and making memories to last a life time. Google translator was definitely our friend. Many of my kids had never been out of the jungle so airplanes, hotels, different foods, an ocean etc, were all adventures to experience.

It took us 3 days to arrive and there were all different emotions as we took our first flight. One cried, one was frozen in place, and one was laughing hysterically. So lots of emotion but everyone of them were so very appreciative for the trip that they will never forget and always treasure.

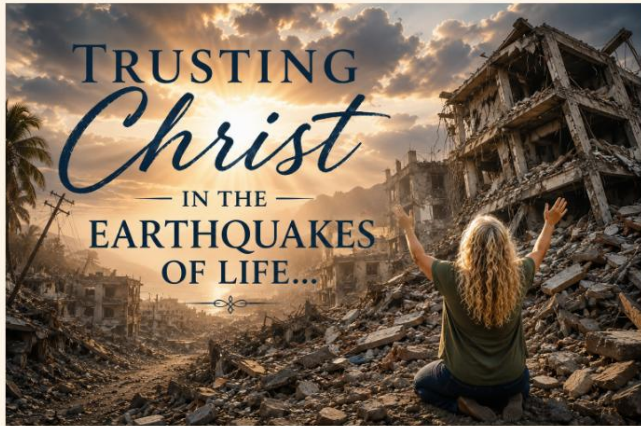


Rats with fancy collars

Something strange was happening in our house. One day we found a rat just sitting there looking at us. We noticed right away he had a pretty yellow collar. This doesn't seem normal... The next week we were even more surprised when a different rat was caught but with a nice pretty pink collar. What is happening in my house? Who would put collars on rats? Well it took us a while to figure it out but they realized there was a small box of colored elastic bands that we make bracelets out of.... the mom must have made her nest right in that drawer.

Mistery solved... but that was so bizzare.





Sometimes things seem to be going well and suddenly an earthquake can hit unannounced. The past few months have been full of “quakes” and it has been a difficult time. There were several major things that happened. We are selling the hospital and it will be a huge change for me in that for 20+ years I was there almost daily for devotions with staff and doing prenatal ministry. I was just getting ready to do some possible construction of a youth/training center and suddenly my co-workers needed to leave the field due to health issues. The construction was canceled and this will affect the youth ministry quite a bit. My house is falling off a cliff due to erosion, and we have had some challenges with our church leadership. I would appreciate prayer as I have been trying to put in practice what I teach my teens.. but anxiety and sadness do want to creep in. I need to remember always that God is good, He is in control, and I can trust Him fully .

1 Where will I live?

This will be one of the first things for me to resolve in that I have 3 daughters and 6 dogs that live with me. We are trying to purchase a piece of land next to my park that I can use for both ministry and housing. So we are hoping that sale goes through soon.

2 What will I do now?

Since I will be done with hospital ministry, and the kids ministry is being run pretty well by the Brazilians, the next big task is to help transition the youth ministry into being more Brazilian run. I will be working with the pastor to see how to best do that transition during the next few years. I now have a different direction I am looking at and it involves developing more relationships, evangelizing in all sorts of ways, really work on a discipleship and mentor program, continue to train people, and offer hope and do trauma care. There really is not enough room for all the details and I am waiting on the Lord to figure it all out, but I will keep you posted on all the new changes that are headed my way. Stay tuned and thank you for your prayers. This has been the hardest year of my ministry and I am wanting to follow God and please Him in every step we take. Thank you so very much. Carolee Graf



Fruit from Christmas Bible Study

After our Christmas program the past year we had people interested in bible studies. This is one we just completed for gals/ladies. It was a wonderful 3 month course and helped us to understand how to have an intimate walk with the Lord and know Him better.

The gals were also trained to share their faith with others so we wait on the Lord to see what He will continue to do.



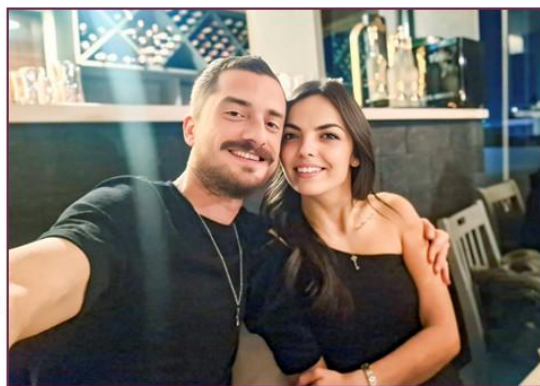


Dear Friends,

Caner and Tuğba (pictured left to right) married one year ago. For both, this is their second marriage.

Caner is a follower of Christ and has become a consistent member of our church plant. Thanks to Caner's patient encouragement, Tuğba is now attending on Sundays as well. Please pray for Tuğba's salvation.

Also, please pray for this blended family's **four children**. One of the kids has decided to read the Bible and investigate Christianity.



We routinely meet people who have come to faith in Christ **exclusively through Internet and social media resources**. This is an amazing part of God's harvest in Turkey. Oftentimes, these friends have impressive Bible knowledge, even though they have never experienced face-to-face Christian fellowship. Wow! Please pray for people like this in Turkey.

Recently, our **church ministry team** had a **play day** (left).

Love,

Brian and Dana

Avant

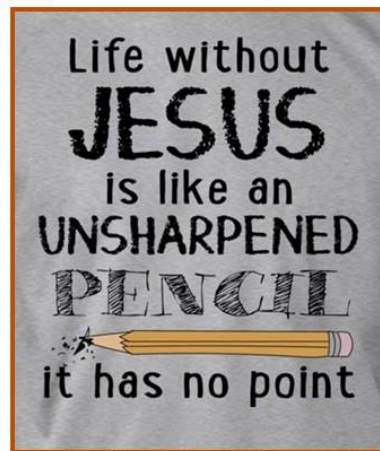
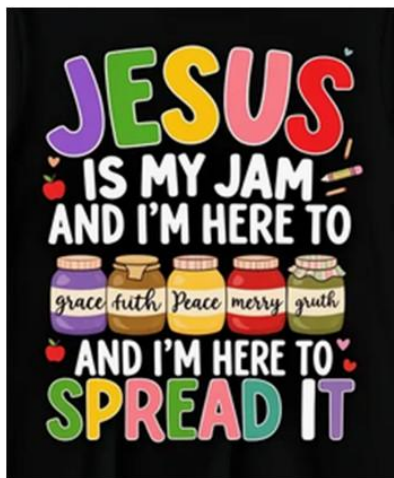
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www.avantministries.org

KID'S PAGE



CONNECT TO

GOD
THE PASSWORD IS
PRAYER



?? ? Bible Quiz ? ??



Who told Mary that her child would be called "the Son of the Most High"?

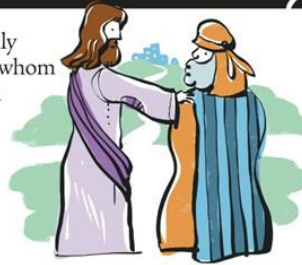
- A. Zechariah
- B. Gabriel
- C. Simeon
- D. Joseph

Answer: B (See Luke 1:26-32.)

?? ? Bible Quiz ? ??

We know the name of only one of the two disciples to whom the risen Jesus appeared on the road to Emmaus. Who was he?

- A. John
- B. Paul of Tarsus
- C. Joseph of Arimathea
- D. Cleopas



Answer: D (See Luke 24:18.)

**GOD IS
GOOD
all the
TIME**

The Lord 
is my
strength
and my
shield.
My heart
trusts in
Him, and
He helps me.

PSALM 28:7





good bye
SUMMER
hello
AUTUMN

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 1pm Dorcas Society 7pm Elders	2 1:30pm Living Bible Study	3 6:30pm Prayer Gathering	4	5
6 9:30am Worship	7 	8	9	10 6:15pm Women's Bible Study	11	12
13 9:30am Worship 10:45am Sunday School / POW45	14	15 7pm Consistory	16 6:30pm Youth Group Kickoff	17	18	19
20 9:30am Worship 10:45am Sunday School / POW45	21	22	23 6:30pm CrossCenter	24 6:15pm Women's Bible Study	25	26
27 9:30am Worship 10:45am Sunday School / POW45	28	19	30 6:30pm CrossCenter			

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Thanks to Richard Germain
IT'S TIME TO GET THE AUDIO BOOK
ALREADY

A pastor received a complaint letter from a member of his congregation. He removed the letter from the envelope. There was one word on it: "Fool!" "Hmm," the pastor said, "they signed the letter, but what's the complaint?"



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Thanks to Jeremy (See Genesis 3)
EVERY SINGLE PERSON IN THE WORLD HAS
TRIED IT BUT YOU!

