

## Hoping Against All Februaries

Lindsay Small

I've recently been getting over a case of the Februaries. Nothing serious or anything...just the usual symptoms: restlessness, shivering, wistfully searching Expedia for vacations to warm places. Once March came my symptoms subsided, especially with that burst of warm air last week. It was delightful to see the human species crawl out of their homes after a long winter...to walk the earth with coats abandoned! The birds were chirping, the air was fragrant...and then, bam! More snow. As I drove home through a snowstorm last night I felt the Februaries come on again. And as I sit here in my kitchen, my eyes see snow but my ears hear birds. A beautiful contradiction that is so often simply called 'March.'

We've been using the metaphor of 'The Journey' since we began our sermon series in September. And we've reached that part of the journey where we realize that we've gone too far to turn back but there's still quite a bit in front of us. We're thick in the middle of the Lenten portion of our journey, that section of the road where we are especially mindful of our depravity and sinfulness. It's no wonder this desolate landscape starts in February.

But we know that as we make our way through this part of the journey, a section we're calling "From the

Crowds to the Cross," there is another landscape on the other side. Our eyes see snow, but our ears hear birds. Jesus will journey to the cross, be put to death, and laid in a tomb. But the journey does not end here...it begins again on the other side of the cross.

We don't see Spring yet, but we know it's coming. The tulips are still underground but we know they are stirring. We're still miles from resurrection, but we know it's ahead of us.

This is what it means to hope. It means walking through February knowing that April will come. It means walking through the dreary parts of life knowing that there is something better, brighter, and warmer ahead...even when we cannot see them. And perhaps it even means looking around in the middle of the journey to see the traveling mercies that have been there all along.

This is the hope that we have in Christ. We are never left in February. It is a necessary part of the journey, but it is never the ending. Spring is coming...Christ will rise again. And though everything we see around us betrays this hope and points to despair and lethargy, our ears hear the promise: "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again."

*Pastor Lindsay*

## The Journey Continues...

### March 25 Palm Sunday

John 19:16b-22, Wes Granberg-Michaelsen

### March 30 Good Friday

John 19:31-42, Kyle Small

### April 1 Easter Sunday (Everybody Worships)

John 20:1-18, Lindsay Small

### April 8 (Everybody Worships)

John 20:19-31, Trygve Johnson

### April 15

Acts 9:1-19a, Lindsay Small

### April 22

Acts 16:16-34, Nate Schipper

### April 29

Acts 17:16-31, Lindsay Small

### May 6

Philippians 1:1-18a, Lindsay Small

### May 13

Philippians 2:1-13, Nate Schipper

### May 20

Acts 2:1-21; Philippians 4:4-7, Lindsay Small



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## Meet Up & Eat Up

Karen Donker

Meet Up & Eat Up is an opportunity for volunteers from Fellowship to work alongside other community agencies to provide a lunch for hungry children, while building relationships through recreation and arts/crafts activities for kids during summer vacations. There are four different Meet Up & Eat Up sites in the West Ottawa School District. These sites are at Leisure Estates, Holiday West, Pine Creek, and Quincy Apartments.

Fellowship will be participating at Quincy Apartments again this summer. Dates to volunteer are during June and August, with more specifics announced in April. The time commitment is from 11:30am -1:00pm, Monday-Friday. For more information contact Karen Donker at [kldonker@fellowshipreformed.org](mailto:kldonker@fellowshipreformed.org).



## Hand2Hand Ministry

Nate Schipper

At our New Year's Eve worship service, Ken Arthurs testified to the ways in which God has been blessing the Hand2Hand Ministry at Fellowship. We have increased our capacity this year by expanding into all of Pine Creek Elementary. Now, by the Spirit's prompting and the leading of West Ottawa Schools, we will be expanding into the Dunes Alternative High School. This school provides an alternative education route for about 30 students for whom high school has been particularly challenging.

Chad and Wendy Holstege will be leading a team that implements this ministry and seeks ways to build relationships with these students. We praise God for leading, equipping, and sustaining us for this vital ministry. We welcome your food contributions to sustain this growing ministry. See the bulletin for a list of needed items.

## Child Abuse Prevention Nancee Van Liere

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Child sexual abuse is an often unseen, but devastating problem. One in 10 children are sexually abused before their 18th birthday. Our ministry partner, the Children's Advocacy Center, encourages everyone to play a role in making our community a better place for children and families by providing awareness and the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to care for children.

The Uniting Against Abuse Task Force will **highlight the Children's Advocacy Center on Sunday, April 15.**

- We are hosting a 2 hour presentation about children and abuse presented by the CAC after the 10am service. We have invited all those involved with children and youth programming to this initial education session, and encourage others to attend who are interested in making a difference in children's lives.
- We hope to have a representative from the CAC speak during the Moment for Mission.
- We will have an information table in the Atrium before and after both services. Members of the Task Force will also be available.

Please check your bulletin each week for updates as plans are finalized.



## Easter Egg Hunt, March 31 at 11:00am, Rain or Shine!

Please come to our annual egg hunt for ages 2 - 11. Enter near the gym (Entrance H) and go to the Kid Zone for some donut holes and oranges before reading the Easter story. After that we will go outside for the hunt. We will have the hunt inside if it rains. Bring your own basket or borrow a bag from church. We reuse the plastic eggs, so you will be emptying the eggs before you leave. The hunt will go on even though it is Spring Break! If you are in town, please come and invite relatives, friends, and neighbors. We have postcards to share at the check-in kiosk.

## Cran-Hill Family Camp, July 13-15

What's not to love about being with Fellowship families in God's great outdoors? Cran-Hill weekend is awesome people, yummy food, relaxation time, or as many fun activities as you would like. (Horseback riding, hayrides, tubing, tie-dye, archery, climbing wall, slingshots, beach time, swimming, kayaking, fishing, and turtle & frog races, just to name a few!)

We would love to have you join us! We currently have six families signed-up with room for more. Reservation forms can be found in the office. Any questions please feel free to contact Jen Solis at [solisjennifer@att.net](mailto:solisjennifer@att.net) or 886-7612, or Pastor Nate.



## Pastor Search Update

Barb Eriks

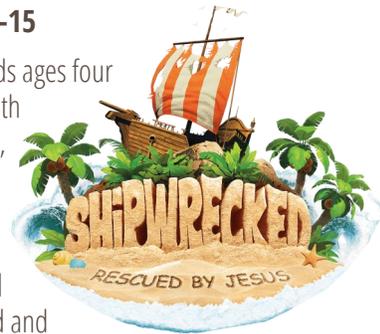
The search process for our next Lead Pastor is progressing very well. The team has held initial phone interviews with prospective candidates and has narrowed the pool to 4 or 5 strong leaders. The search team will hold Skype meetings with them the week of April 9. Pastors Lindsay and Nate will be part of this process moving forward.

The team's hope is to meet a few finalists toward the end of April, with a final recommendation in May.

If you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the chair of the search committee, Kristin Garris at [kristingarris@yahoo.com](mailto:kristingarris@yahoo.com).

## Vacation Bible School, June 11-15

*Shipwrecked: Rescued By Jesus* is for kids ages four (Kindergarten 2019) through entering 5th grade. We will meet Hope the jaguar, a lizard named Guac, and cool guy, Moe the sloth. The four-year-olds and Kinders will be in their own area called Preschool Tide Pool. Wild adventures await as we climb aboard and find out how Jesus rescues us and is our anchor of hope!



VBS runs 8:45 to 11:30am Monday - Friday, with a final Sail Away Sendoff on Friday from 11:00-11:30 that parents are invited to attend. Sign-ups will be online on the church website soon after Spring Break. Once your child is signed-up you will receive a free music CD with all of the cool VBS songs! Start listening early so you know them all by the time VBS starts. Songs include *My Lighthouse*, *I Am, Eye of the Storm*, and one we often sing in church, *Soon and Very Soon*.

Over 90 volunteers are needed to keep VBS afloat. Please consider helping! Become a Crew Leader (adults or students 11th grade & up), a Jr. Crew Leader (6th grade & up), craft or games assistant, Bible Adventures assistant, and many others. After Spring Break, go to our website to sign-up as a volunteer and choose the job you are interested in.

We can't wait to show the kids how *Jesus Rescues*. We hope your children can come aboard for this tropical island adventure!

## Mystical An Evening of Art and Song Thursday, April 26 at 7pm

Ralph Vaughan William's *Five Mystical Songs* will be performed by Jordan Clegg, accompanied by Linda Milanowski and Vonnie Ritsema. It will feature original art by the Fellowship Artist Cohort and scripture performances by Hannah and Jackson Nickolay. The concert is open to the public and accessible to all ages. Reception to follow.

# EASTER AT FELLOWSHIP

## **The First Last Supper, March 28, 5:45 p.m.**

Share a meal & explore the Passover-Communion connection

## **Good Friday, March 30, 6:30 p.m.**

A service of awe and gratitude for Christ's sacrifice

## **Easter Sunday, April 1, 8:30 and 10:00 a.m.**

Join us as we celebrate Christ's resurrection

fellowship  
CHURCH

## **Fellowship Softball**

**Co-ed and men's teams are now forming!**

Games begin the week of April 30. Last year we played on Thursday nights, but we have options for other nights if a majority would prefer to make a change.

Sign up at the Welcome Center or email Pastor Nate at [nschipper@fellowshippreformed.org](mailto:nschipper@fellowshippreformed.org) if you are interested!

## **HSM Garage Sale**

**April 21, 8am-12pm**

The High School Ministry annual garage sale is a fundraiser for our summer serve trip to Houston, Texas. We invite you to take part in this event with us. If you have any items to donate, they can be brought to the Youth Center starting April 1. If you have larger items or need help transporting items to church, please contact Bryce Vander Stelt at [bvanderstelt@fellowshippreformed.org](mailto:bvanderstelt@fellowshippreformed.org).

## *The Great Fellowship Get-Together*

**April 22, 11:15am in the Gym**

**Come one, come all to a celebration of  
food, fun, & fellowship!**

Join us for a picnic lunch followed by an update on the life of the church during our Annual Congregational Meeting. Childcare offered during the update.