

# WESTERN SPRINGS CRC

## A Joyful Word

August 2023

### FROM THE ELDERS

#### A Commitment to Communicate

Once upon a time, there existed a city in which there were only two parallel streets. One day, a person crossed from A Street to the other street called B. His eyes were full of tears.

"Someone has probably died on A Street!" – one of them cried, and everyone started crying. The rumor grew and grew, and the residents of B Street were soon convinced that their neighbors had some gross misfortune.

In time, the residents of A Street heard the loud cries from the neighbors, and started to panic.

"A war probably started on B Street and it will soon reach us" they said. Immediately, they left their homes to protect their lives from the imminent disaster.

When the people on B Street, who were now crying even louder, noticed that A Street was completely empty – they got scared too and decided to leave as well. Centuries have passed since then. Unfortunately, there is nothing but ruins left of that city with the two parallel streets.

And on two far sides of the former city, there are villages where the legend is shared of how once

the whole population of the doomed city with two parallel streets had to leave it in order to save itself from a huge disaster.

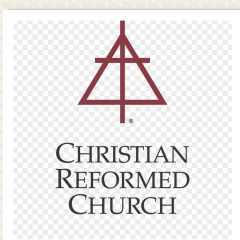
The real story was that, before passing from A Street to B Street, the man with the teary eyes – well, he was peeling onions.

The lesson of this fictional story shows what can happen when assumptions are made and individuals suffer from a lack of meaningful communication. It also has applicability to our church. As leaders, in order to promote involvement and commitment to ministry during our time of pastoral vacancy, we know we need to communicate more often. Only then can we limit misunderstanding when our members are kept fully informed.

That is the purpose of this written communication, titled "**A Joyful Word.**" it is designed at this time in our church life to keep us focused on the words of John 16:24, "Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." Keeping members informed promotes transparency and builds trust which is crucial in maintaining

a healthy and thriving church community.

It is our intent to distribute "**A Joyful Word**" once a month during the time of our vacancy. In addition to the weekly bulletin, and our quarterly issues of the Western Times, it is our hope that a strong connection to worship and ministries can



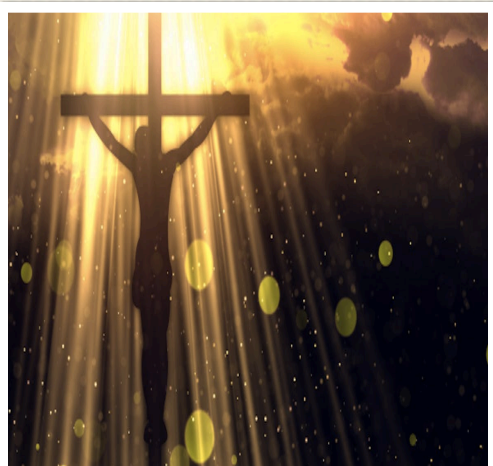


be maintained and even enhanced as together we grow in Christian fellowship.

### **A Joyful Word - Worship**

The Elders are to supervise the worship services that will be held for our congregation in our time of vacancy. Our worship philosophy is to be: God-Honoring, Biblical, Dialogical, Holistic, Unifying, Authentic, Multi-generational, and Beautiful.

To ensure there is continuity in our morning services, Pastor Ben Snoek will preach the first Sunday of every month in a service that will include communion. The 4th Sunday and months with a 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday, Rev. Ted Boswell will lead us in worship. The pulpit on the remaining Sundays will be filled by guest pastors.



Pastor Ben, as Worship Advisor, will be supporting our church weekly in planning the liturgical elements of all services while serving along with Renee DeJager for Music Ministry in monthly meetings of the Worship Committee.

### **A Joyful Word - Pastor Search**

The members of the Search Committee are: John

DeYoung, Alan Bilthouse co-chairs, Liz Casseday, Jim Buiter, (Council liaison) Lynn Veldman, Melissa Gardner, Adrian Breems.

The process of seeking a pastor in the CRC is quite different today than what it was like 16 years ago before we were blessed with the calling of Pastor Mark. With numerous vacancies across the denomination, fewer candidates completing their study at seminary with a desire to be a lead pastor, and the challenging societal issues facing churches today, the traditional method of seeking a pastor by scouring the Yearbook no longer is the most effective use of time and resources.

The committee recommended that the Rukes Group, a pastoral search firm, should be engaged to source, interview, and vet candidates for our search committee to consider.

The Administration Committee at its August meeting approved utilizing the services of the Rukes Group and are encouraged that Rev. Sam Hamstra has been assigned to assist our search committee. He will also aid in the process of determining from sessions with our congregation where we are at today and what we should be as part of God's Kingdom in the future. This visioning work is necessary in order for our Council to complete the denominational church profile.

A request has been made to the Northern Illinois Classis to appoint Rev. John Huizinga, Pastor at Lombard CRC to be our Classis Counselor. He will

ensure that appropriate Church Order protocols are followed.



Effective communication is evident when the intended message is successfully delivered, received and understood. Each member of our congregation can be assured that your Council, with God's help, will do all we can to ensure that we continue to be a blessing to all our fellow believers. God intends for us to join in a journey of faith, hope, and love.

This is a journey that calls for prayer, and for a posture that remembers our efforts fit within the larger framework of our God whose work on our behalf has already begun.

***In Christ our Hope,  
Gary Smit***

### **ELDERS**

Gary Smit  
Randy Schmurr  
Dan Westra  
Jim Buiter  
Mike Heersink  
Tom Van Koevering

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your District Elder or reach out to Gary Smit as Chair of Council.