

WESTERN SPRINGS CRC

A Joyful Word

October 2023

FROM THE ELDERS

A Joyful Word – Commitment to Communicate

In 1969, American astronauts Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong became the first people ever to walk on the moon. An iconic photo shows the tread of a boot against a gray background.

Scientists say that footprint is likely still there, unchanged after all these years. Without wind or water, nothing on the moon gets eroded, so what happens on the lunar landscape stays there.

It's even more awesome to reflect on the constant presence of God Himself. James writes, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17). The apostle puts this in the context of our own struggles: "When troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy" (v. 2).

Why does this matter for us personally and as a church? Because we're blessed to be loved by a great and unchanging God! God's love is constant, consistent, and steadfast. Despite our continual flaws, sin, and tendency to become distant from God, God's love draws us closer back to Him.

In a world where giving and receiving love is often conditional and fleeting, God's love is stable, comforting, supportive and a source of refuge. While we may not always "feel" God's love, the Bible reminds and reaffirms to us that God's love is unfailing, unmovable, and unconditional.

In times of trouble, we need to remember God's constant provision. Perhaps we might recall the words of the great hymn Great Is Thy Faithfulness. "There is no shadow of turning with thee; / thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; / as thou hast been thou forever wilt be."

Yes, our God has left His permanent footprint on our world. He will always be there for us. Great is His faithfulness.

Gary Smit

A Joyful Word – Pastoral Search

There are a number of opportunities for our members to assist the Search Committee in discerning the person God has chosen for us to be our next pastor. A perception survey was a tool that our members were recently asked to complete. This will enable the Committee to get a clearer picture of how our members see our church as it now exists and what direction we want to see our church heading in the future.

Earlier this month, Rev. Hamstra shared the search process with the congregation and

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afterwards, Council members and spouses met with him to again provide insight and feedback related to the needs of our congregation. A meeting with small groups was held this past week. Finally, the Search Committee will be hosting a listening session for the entire congregation immediately after the worship service on **Sunday, November 5**. We encourage your participation.

Please, continue to keep the Search Committee and Sam Hamstra in your prayers as we go through this process. Both the Search Committee and Elders will continue to keep our congregational members fully informed with regular communication in the bulletin and the monthly Joyful Word.

Church Profile

Before a church can seek a new pastor, a CRC Church Profile needs to be completed. The information received from the various listening sessions will be utilized to finalize our responses so that a profile of our church opportunities and challenges can be shared with interested pastors.

Here are a few of the statements included on the profile form.

- Reflect on your strengths/ gifts as a church:
- Reflect on your passions as a church:
- List specific problems with which your congregation struggles:
- What has been the most interesting and challenging event in the life of your church in the last three years?

A Joyful Word – Worship

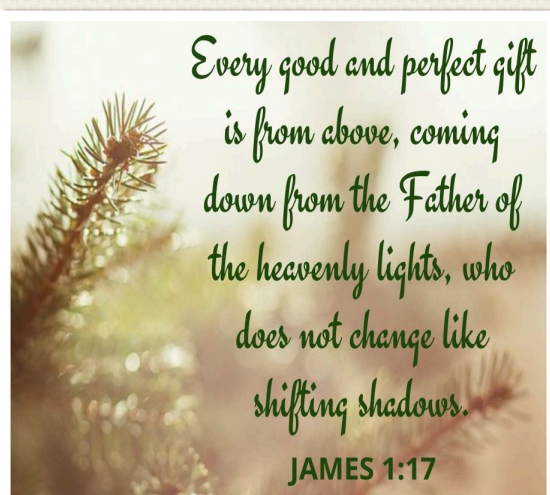
In case you missed a Sunday morning worship service in October, here are the links to our Church YouTube channel:

October 1- Pastor Ben Snoek
<https://youtube.com/live/LYmA0l2CyYg>

October 8 – Rev. Sam Hamstra
<https://youtube.com/live/F3i11gmD6zw>

October 15 – Rev. Andrew Compton <https://youtube.com/live/IWUhTih9P8>

October 22 – Rev. Ted Boswell
<https://youtube.com/live/vwUrSXCdSuUo>



A Joyful Word – Ministry

Pastor Ben's thoughts for ministry at our church in the upcoming year:

I have described myself as a resource to the congregation during this season of transition. With so many staff transitions at this church in the past year, I understand those who might be feeling apprehensive or even pessimistic toward this year of change. I hope, then, to be a stabilizing force and to use what I learn about the congregation to support a healthy and fruitful leadership transition.

I also hope that my knowledge of denominational life and

pastoral realities might offer an "insider's perspective" to these complex considerations. I hope that, in this upcoming year, we might approach this transition with a posture of courage and curiosity, daring to believe that our God will bring us to a good and blessed place.

Based on my observations in these past few months, I believe that God has blessed the Western Springs CRC with the resources, capacity, and enthusiasm for fruitful ministry in our neighborhood. What if we made room for the Spirit to surprise us, disrupting what we think is best and trusting in what God might be calling us to embrace next? I have found the WSCRC family to be a kind, generous, and passionate community, and I pray that God will bring leaders who can align our congregation with God's big dreams.

If you have questions or thoughts on how my work can serve you and the congregation this year, feel free to catch me after a service or email me at ben.snoek@crcws.org. God has great things in store for WSCRC, and I look forward to journeying together as we pursue God's will to the glory of his name.

Pastor Ben Snoek

ELDERS

Gary Smit
Randy Schmurr
Dan Westra
Jim Buitert
Mike Heersink
Tom Van Koeveering

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