

# Western Times

*Newsletter of the Christian Reformed Church of Western Springs*

**Volume 58**

**Autumn 2024**

## **Endurance**

I am always impressed with great heroic deeds where the hero overcomes great odds in the pursuit of some great objective. One such story is Ernest Shackleton and the crew of the Endurance who ventured their way to the South Pole in 1914. Their ship, the Endurance, got trapped in the ice, and the crew fought to free her from flowing ice for four months. They struggled but were unable to save their ship as it was crushed by the unrelenting ice. Their struggles continued as they took the three boats stored on the ship and the supplies they could salvage to travel to a nearby island where they faced fierce storms and unimaginably cold weather. With the miracle of warm wool, plenty of grit, and a spirit of endurance, the beaten and battered crew faced disappointment and near death before finally making the decision to split the group and send a small company for help. Most of the crew stayed behind for another 128 days after having already survived two years; they were rescued on August 30, 1916. All of the crew survived.

We are encouraged to endure and face challenges through the words of Paul when he says, “press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me” (Philippians 3:14). Of course, Paul was referring to salvation (the prize) in particular but also to the Christian life in general - a call to press on. And even though the promises of Christ are sealed, completed, finished - the job is done - we are called to press on. As Paul stated, we are to take the mind-set of saying, “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold

of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.” (Philippians 3:12).

In our Christian lives and as a church, we face challenges and disappointments. As a community, we are not in a struggle like that faced by the crew of the Endurance, but we do face disappointments that challenge our resolve. We haven’t found a pastor in the time frame we had hoped. We experience loss - both personally and as a church body - when treasured saints depart this life to be present with our Lord. These disappointments happen in the normal course of life. What is important is how we respond. “[We] do not know what the future may hold, but [we] know who holds the future” (Ralph Abernathy).

As a council, we continue to chart a course forward, leaning on Christ for guidance as we pray for the Spirit’s leading. We are inspired by faithful staff and willing volunteers. As a congregation, we support and encourage one another through Sunday morning worship, Sunday School, Growth Groups, Coffee Break, music ministries, Christian fellowship and prayer. We will continue to face challenges and changes as we learn what it means to serve God’s Kingdom in the western suburbs with the resources that God has blessed us with. We press on together in the Christian life. We do this with fortitude and encouragement in the same way as Paul expressed, “I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:14). We rest in the promise of that prize, and we press on with endurance knowing who holds our future.

Grace and Peace,  
Randy Schmurr

# Parsonage Renovation

**Jordan Stob**

While the definition of a parsonage is a church house provided for a member of the church's clergy in which to live, Western Springs Christian Reformed Church is making major moves to help 5130 Wolf Road feel even more like a home to whomever we are able to welcome to fill its space in the future.

When we really think about it, what a gift it is for our members to be able to support those leading our congregation and their family by providing a safe place to live in such a beautiful community. From its mature tree-lined streets, walking paths, vibrant downtown area, and numerous parks, Western Springs is an ideal place for any family to live.

Our church's parsonage offers a layout which has always offered plenty of communal living space- a centrally located kitchen to serve as the hub of the home, a cozy front room, a spacious family room for hosting, and a deck to enjoy a refreshment while taking in the changing of the seasons. It also offers plenty of room for family members to have their own individual space - a possible nursery for a baby, a play area for a toddler, or a bedroom to offer the coveted privacy for a teenager.

Other than painting and carpeting, the parsonage has not seen any major repairs and updates over the last 15 years. Thankfully, with money approved by Council from the general fund and additional donations, necessary fixes and welcomed updates are currently taking place under the guidance of a contractor our church has previously used in all of our spaces and volunteers who are willing to offer their time and services.

As far as the interior of the home is concerned, all three bathrooms and the kitchen are seeing major improvements. The hall bathroom, powder room, and master bathroom have been gutted and are in the process of being furnished with new fixtures, tubs, showers, sinks, toilets, and tile. The kitchen will be updated with new cabinets and

appliances, and the paneling in the family room has been replaced with drywall. The majority of the flooring in all living spaces will be replaced with new carpet in the bedrooms and engineered hardwood flooring in the living room, hallways, kitchen,



and family room. New waterproof vinyl will be installed in the basement, and the home's lighting fixtures will be replaced throughout.

While the interior has received the most cosmetic changes, the exterior has received necessary repairs to preserve the integrity of the home. The sidewalks were mudjacked/ repaired in various spots, exterior doors and screen doors replaced, and tuckpointing completed in areas of need. The previous deck was removed and will be completely replaced.



What an exciting time for our church's parsonage and a big thank you to all who have helped breathe some new life into its space!

Photos: D. Foytik

# **Recipes from the Souper Salad and Sweet Supper**

**Compiled by Brent Yurschak; submitted by the cooks themselves**

## **CHICKEN SOUP (Karen Goers)**

1 cup finely chopped onions  
1 cup chopped celery  
1 cup chopped carrots  
1 stick butter  
1/2 cup flour  
1 quart chicken broth  
2 chicken bouillon cubes  
2 Tablespoons chopped parsley  
1 1/2 cups cooked, diced chicken breasts  
1 cup milk  
1 pkg. frozen riced cauliflower; thawed  
Salt and pepper to taste

Sauté onion, celery, and carrots in butter in stock pot until tender. Add flour to make a roux. Cook 2-3 minutes over medium heat. Add chicken stock, bouillon cubes, parsley, salt and pepper. Stir until slightly thickened and smooth. Slowly stir in milk; add chicken and cauliflower. Simmer 30 minutes and serve. Freezes well.

## **CROCKPOT SPLIT PEA SOUP (Rachel DeYoung)**

1 pound dried green split peas, rinsed and drained  
1 1/2 cups cubed peeled potatoes  
1 cup each chopped onion, celery, carrot  
1 large bay leaf  
1/2 teaspoon ground pepper  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
Ham bone with some meat on it  
6 cups of water

Layer all ingredients in a large slow cooker, gently pour the water over the top. Cover and cook on low for 8 hours. Remove the ham bone, remove the meat and return it to the cooker. (Can also add additional ham or a sausage like metwurst.) Discard the bay leaf.

## LASAGNA SOUP (Denise Stob)

Brown together: 1 pound ground pork, 1/2 cup diced onion, 1 diced green pepper, and 4 cloves garlic, pressed.

Add: 32-ounce carton chicken broth, 14.5 ounce can diced tomatoes, 15 ounce can tomato sauce, and the following seasonings:

1 Tablespoon Italian seasoning

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper

1 teaspoon garlic salt

1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper

1 teaspoon dried basil

Bring to boil and boil 2 minutes, reduce to simmer and cook for 30 minutes, covered, stirring occasionally.

Add 8 lasagna noodles, broken into bite sized pieces, to soup and cook until tender, about 15 minutes. Can substitute the equivalent amount of bow tie pasta.

When ready to serve, mix in 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese. Ladle into bowls and sprinkle with 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella.



# Disability Pride Month: Larry (LJ) Wierema

**Submitted by Nancy Wierema**

*Editor's Note: This information (condensed for relevance) was published in July within a union newsletter of Kroger/Roundy's.*

Front End Courtesy Clerk Larry (LJ) Wierema is the embodiment of our commitment to provide the Full, Fresh, and Friendly shopping experience. He's a loyal associate whose tenure at 4700 Gilbert Avenue in Western Springs began 20+ years ago when the building was previously Dominick's. He has since become a cornerstone of the local grocery scene and his community.

He is known by many customers for his friendly and caring attitude. He has a passion for people that leads him to give his community the best customer service imaginable. He greets many customers by name, creates bonds by getting to know them better, asking about their lives. His engaging and positive attitude helps cultivate an inviting environment for associates and shoppers.

Service Operations Manager Jaylen finds inspiration in LJ's unwavering positivity. "Since I've started at Western Springs LJ has been a bright soul. There isn't a day or a moment that goes by when he doesn't have a smile on his face and is chatting with customers. He truly makes a positive difference in the store. Everyone in the community knows and loves him, and we are grateful for him each day."

LJ's history and experience in the grocery industry makes him the perfect mentor for new and existing associates. He gets a lot of fulfillment from being a mentor for others on the Front End, especially those with special needs as he guides them to grow their experience with the accommodations set in place.

Customer Service Clerk Destiny Pearson speaks on how she can always rely on him. "LJ is an incredible employee! He is always super friendly, and you can always count on him. I appreciate his willingness to help our customers out by helping them with

their groceries to their car or checking on his other teammates to see how they're doing. He is an excellent role model for others, and it is always a pleasure working with him!"

LJ's love for helping others is rooted in his commitment to his family. He is deeply connected with his family, living with and taking care of his mother and niece. His kindness and caring nature are cultivated at home and empowered at work by his other associates. He is the definition of friendly.

Alongside his passion for people, he is all in for his Chicago sports teams. Go to his store during the season and you can expect him to wear Blackhawks or Cubs spirit gear.

## **Inside Out Committee News**

**Rachel DeYoung**

SAVE THE DATE - the Third Annual Fall Back Breakfast will be served on Sunday, November 3. You will be up early that morning so come to church for a delicious warm breakfast.

### **BAGEL RESCUE**

Several months ago, the committee became aware of an opportunity to pick up unsold bagels from Great American Bagel in Westmont. These bagels would normally be thrown away when the store closes. Volunteers from our church pick up approximately 1,000 bagels twice a week and deliver them to a food broker in Berwyn. He then arranges delivery of these free bagels to several organizations including YMEN, Christ's Vineyard, and Ebenezer Food Pantry. Thanks to the 11 individuals/pairs of volunteers who make this possible. Please contact John DeYoung if you would like to be added to the schedule.



# **Our Newly Elected Council Members**

**compiled by Brent Yurschak**

In keeping with our tradition, we present (auto)biographical sketches of our newest-serving council members. All entries are in alphabetical order.

## **JAY EVENHOUSE, Elder**

Western Springs CRC has been a foundational influence throughout my life. While my wife and I have only been members for a few years, my youth was spent attending this church. Baptism, Profession of Faith, Sunday School, Catechism, Cadet Counselor, Usher, Sound Tech (with the original sound equipment), all took place during the BS (Before Sharon) era of my life.

Arguably the most important event in my life happened in the lobby of Western Springs CRC. That is where I met a beautiful young lady named Sharon Wagner. Shortly afterwards we started dating and not long after that we were married and moved to South Holland IL. If you get a chance, ask Sharon about that day. It's a good story. I could tell the story also, but Sharon doesn't like the way I "embellish" some parts of it.

Sharon and I have been married for over 30 years and we have three children, Kendall, Meagan and Mitchell. Each of our children are married to wonderful spouses – Kevin Swenson, Chase Hardin and Sarah (McCoy) Evenhouse – that we are thrilled to have as part of our family. Our eldest daughter and son-in-law, Kevin and Kendall Swenson, have two children and live in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. Cohen is 3 years old, and Taylor will turn one at the end of July. Meagan and Chase live in Allegan, Michigan and Mitchell and Sarah live on the north side of the Chinatown area in Chicago.

I guess I fall into the category of "Jack of all trades, master of none". I play golf, but not well. Sharon and I enjoy playing pickleball, but it is not an obsession (or, apparently, a

natural born talent). Currently I find myself drawn to trying new recipes I run across on social media. Some turn out, some don't. Luckily, Sharon is a nurse at LaGrange Hospital which gives me an unlimited number of testers for my baking attempts. (I am referring to the nurses who are very happy to try the offerings I send with Sharon, not the patients. That would be cruel. Although, if you hear about a sudden shortage of nurses at her hospital...)

This will be the first time I have served as an Elder in any of churches that we have been members. I am excited about the opportunity to serve God in this capacity, especially at this church. My plea to the other members of Western Springs CRC is that you continue to keep all the council members in your prayers during this time of transition for our church.

**BRIAN KORTHALS, Deacon**

I've been attending Western Springs CRC regularly since 2019 and have attended on Easter Sunday for much longer than that as part of visiting local family members.

This is my first time serving as a deacon though I have been very involved in a lot of other things around church. Most visibly I am part of the choir, handbells and orchestra. I also run both the Livestream and slides during services.

My parents Rod and Jean live nearby in Palos Heights. I also have a brother Scott who lives in Bloomington, Minnesota. I am the nephew of fellow congregation members Brent and Mary Yurschak.

I graduated from Illinois Institute of Technology in 2017 with a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering. I've since gotten a job working for Case New Holland (CNH) doing software work for tractors, sprayers, and combines. Initially I was working from an office in Burr Ridge but a few months ago I moved to a new office in Lombard.

My hobbies include reading science fiction books and watching different forms of

motor sports. I also enjoy messing around with my Linux based computer and 3D printer. With others I enjoy playing a wide variety of tabletop games

I don't travel too often besides going to visit family – either my brother in Minnesota or other members of my family that live in Northwest Iowa. Last summer my family did take a trip out to Glacier National Park in Montana where we hiked around and looked at gorgeous mountains.

Thank you for entrusting me with this role and please continue to pray for me as I learn how best to serve and perform my duties.

**KEN MEULINK, Deacon**

I was born in Ripon, California where I grew up on a walnut farm. We also made walnut forks – everyone in the family was involved in the process. My dad was in the process of building a walnut huller but at age 47 a massive heart attack took his life; I was a senior in high school. My mom kept the farm and my older brother ran it (finished the huller) until my mom sold it to him. My family consisted of two brothers and a sister.

After high school, I went to what is now Calvin University, where I met Jane and decided to get my degree. I joined this church in 1978, and Jane and I got married in January of 1979. We were blessed with three wonderful daughters who brought us God-fearing “sons” and 6 grandchildren. Church and school played an important part in helping raise our children.

This church has been my second family. I have served as deacon once before, helped with Cadets, and Junior High youth group. I also was involved in VBS for a number of years. Most know my love of music and this church has valued that for as long as I’ve been a member, probably even before that! Ministers come and go/members come and go but this church has families that build each other up and know it is all for God’s glory. I praise God for that every day.

I’m looking forward to serving as a deacon and covet prayer as I learn and serve.

## **BRENT YURSCHAK, Elder**

I was born in Chicago and raised in the Eastern Orthodox faith. After completing my education in chemistry at the University of Illinois at Chicago, I began working in a pharmaceutical testing laboratory. After a couple of years, a young lady also started employment at the same company, eventually ending up working across the laboratory bench from me. Long story short, she (Mary) and I were married in 1997, and I started attending Loop Christian Ministries (LCM) in Chicago (at that time sponsored by Western Springs CRC) with Mary. Mary and I have three children – Nathaniel, Rebekah and Ella. In 2004, our family began to attend Western Springs CRC.

After working in the laboratory for 13 years, I began working in the regulatory affairs department and have continued to do so until the present time.

In addition to reading (mostly non-fiction), I enjoy bowling, golf, and vintage base ball (played by the rules of 1858); the order of enjoyment is subject to change dependent upon how well I may be rolling or striking those particular spheres!

I am not a very keen traveler so many of our trips away from home are within a 5-hour radius of home. An exception to this is the Klompfen family reunion (Mary's mother's side of the family) which is held every 5 or 10 years and is always in Montana.

Previously I have served two terms on the Timothy Christian Schools board as well as one term as a deacon both here and at LCM. This is my first term as an elder and I appreciate prayers for both me and the entire council at this time in our church life.

---

### **WESTERN TIMES STAFF**

Jordan Stob  
Brent Yurschak, Editor