

First Reformed Church

Isaiah 42:6

We are the Living Body of Christ – Yielding, Loving, Reaching

2010 Biblical Theme - New Creations in Christ – 2 Corinthians 5:17

Grace and Peace to you:

First Church - Haiti Response

We begin first with encouraging everyone to passionately pray for the people of Haiti as well as the relief efforts. Consistory, with the help and input of Global Mission Council members and others, has elected to direct our church response to the United States Foundation of the Children of Haiti (USFCH) – it is the parent organization for our partner Gladys Thomas. We believe that along with our personal connection with Gladys, the funds we donate will be used directly, immediately and effectively. As you may remember, several First Church members visited Haiti and Gladys' hospital and other facilities late last year – November 2009.

Starting this Sunday (January 24), First Church members may donate to the USFCH with a check payable to First Reformed Church with USFCH noted in the memo as well as your giving envelope number if applicable. A table will be set up in the atrium and will be staffed by Deacon Ken Smith and others to answer questions and receive donations. Then, on Sunday, January 31, we will have a second offering (again checks payable to FRC with USFCH in the memo) in worship specifically for donations for Haiti via USFCH. We encourage you to prayerfully consider an offering to this effort. And we will continue to receive offerings for USFCH beyond January 31. For more information, please visit the following sites:

www.usfch.org

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/group.php?gid=249788352945&ref=nf>

Please lift up Jen Dykstra as she will be leaving for Haiti later this morning as part of a short-term medical assistance trip. She will return later this week and may be able to share some of her experience with us on Sunday. Please pray that the Lord gives her and her team strength and protection.

Sermon Series

Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done

January 24 – The Kingdom Now – Mark 1:15

January 31 – Missionary Dick Swart

February 7 – Entering the Kingdom – Matthew 18:1-4

Looking Ahead:

February/March – Standing Strong: Faith in Times of Trial

May/June – Knowing the Heart of God

Adult Discipleship Classes

We are blessed to provide you with several Adult Discipleship opportunities this semester:

The Power of Prayer (FOCUS – Starting tomorrow night with Pastor Christopher)

Colossians (Mark Davis - Last session this Sunday)

Inquirers (New Members class – first of three this Sunday)

Sanctity of Life with Mary Verwys (February 14)

Understanding Islam (Sundays February 21 to March 7 with Doug VonBronkhorst)

For Men and Women Only (Sundays in March with Jennifer Wolf and Tom Metz; based on the books of the same titles about marriage)

The Book of Acts (Sundays in April/May with Pastor Christopher)

2009/2010 Stewardship Update

Thank you for your financial offerings this past year. In a year when offerings at many churches fell short of church expenses our offerings exceeded our expenses by nearly \$6,000. You were faithful with your offerings, even in difficult times. Praise the Lord!

Here are the figures for 2009:

..	Approved budget:	\$835,657.
..	Actual offerings:	\$823,280.
..	Actual expenses:	\$817,700.

A challenge to you for 2010 and beyond:

Although the spending restraint we've shown in 2009 and 2010 is financially practical, continuing to simply freeze or cut many of our ministries year after year isn't the proper long-term response for a church as vibrant and blessed as ours. Ideally, the proper Christian response as a church and as individuals would be to noticeably increase our ministries in challenging times, rather than freezing or shrinking them.

Help us increase our ministries in these challenging times. Get active. Contribute your time and talents to our ministries. Talk to your small group members about stewardship, then hold one another accountable. Better yet, pray for wisdom, guidance, and a greater faith in Godly things than earthly things.

Stewardship update, General Fund:

January 17th offering: \$ 12,160

January so far: \$ 30,660

January goal: \$ 62,500

February 28, An Evening of Worship:

February 28 at 6pm - a time and space to worship the God of creation and redemption through singing, Scripture, and prayer. Come and be reminded of what God has done in history.

Nursery will be provided.

Vacation Bible School

Consistory has voted to hold a Vacation Bible School here at First Reformed Church. This is a great opportunity to reach out to our community with the Gospel. Our first step in the planning process is to gather a group of five individuals who will serve as the leadership team for this project. Please consider if you have the gifts to serve in this area and contact Mark Davis if you would be willing to join the team as one of the five key leaders.

2010

Building on the commitments from *The Door* and the continuing work of the Holy Spirit that we look to this year with the Biblical Theme of – *New Creations in Christ* – “*So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new.*” 2 Corinthians 5:17

The Big Picture - *Restoring the Joy of Salvation (2009)* leads to *The Awakening (2009)* which leads to *New Creations in Christ (2010)* which leads to *Becoming a Church of Ambassadors in Christ - equipped and sent to be the Living Body of Christ in the community and the world.*

Please continue to pray passionately for First Church, for its future in Christ, for one another and for those who will come to the saving knowledge and new life in Christ through us.

In Christ,
Pastor Christopher