

“Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”  
Proverbs 22:6

This issue is all about education. At any age God can use us for His kingdom.

all my sins and misery; third, how I am to thank God for such deliverance.

## High School class

Kurt Boender and Brent Pierson  
By Brent Pierson



Kurt Boender and I are leading the high school class this year. We have four girls that attend regularly, Abbie Gosselink, Brooke Van Woerkom, Grace Bokhoven and So Hee Kwon. We started out the year talking about and watching videos of some of the current events that were in the news, including ISIS destroying Biblical artifacts and Christian monasteries in Northern Iraq.

We have spent some time talking about how as a church we all know Q&A #1 and that we can recite it from memory. Then we took a look at Q&A #2 and its importance in living out our lives as Christians.

**Q. WHAT MUST YOU KNOW TO LIVE AND DIE IN THE JOY OF THIS COMFORT?**

Three things: first, how great my sin and misery are; second, how I am set free from

We have volunteered twice this school year to lead the little kids C4C class. We did one lesson on how God always cares for us. We used band-aids as a visual aid to help us. The second lesson that we did was on God caring for the Israelites in the desert by providing them manna and quail. We used popcorn for the manna and kernels of popcorn as the desert sand.

The thing that Kurt and I enjoy the most about Sunday school is just listening to the girls talk about what is going on in their lives—the joys and struggles that they have at school, work, sports and other things that they are involved in. They are a great group of young ladies and it’s a blessing to get to know them. Parents, you should be very proud of them.



P.S. If you like Carmel Apple suckers you are welcome to join us!

A little girl asked her Sunday school teacher a question, “If the people of Israel are Israelites, and the people of Canaan are Canaanites, are people of Paris called Parasites?”

**6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Rob Rus, Brad and Cheryl Veenstra  
By Nia Hoekstra



The 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday school class has recently been studying prayer. We first learned about the four parts of prayer—Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication, or ACTS. We looked into the Lord's Prayer and read it through in class.

One Bible story we read was about Elijah seeing the angel after praying for God to take his life. We read a lot of verses from the Bible, but one of the most meaningful to me would have to be Psalm 139. It talks about when, and where, you should pray. I found this chapter a great influence to me, and I wanted to confess all of the sinful ways of our world after reading this passage. I felt loved by my Heavenly Father.

We looked up verses in the Bible and wrote about what we thought the verse could relate to today. Like Psalm 63:6-8.

On my bed I remember you;  
I think of you through the watches of the night.  
Because you are my help,  
I sing in the shadow of your wings.  
I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.

As a group, we said this could remind us of when we're sick and lonely.

For other verses, like Philippians 1:3, 9-11, we listed who was praying, what they were praying about, and why they were praying.

I've found that Rob Rus is a great influence. He is very thoughtful; he listens to the sermon and ties it into our lesson. Rob is a great teacher and I love to listen to the lessons.

Brad and Cheryl are very involved in the subject. Cheryl claims to not have a book, but always almost recites the book! Brad taught us about Justice, and I had never thought from the perspective he brought. Together, they make a great team, and tease each other along the way, which brightens up the room.

Before we did the prayer unit, we studied justice. We talked about how the world is simply not fair and there is violence everywhere. We looked at newspaper articles and most of the time, there was a violence article right on the front page. We talked about a news story about a man with a gun aiming at a woman, and a man stopped him, and the gun ended up jamming.

As a group, we talked about bullying, and how wrong, and common, it is. We enjoy talking, and sharing what matters most in this broken world. Brad and Cheryl taught this lesson, and the enthusiasm of the group made them want to teach the next lesson, stewardship.

We have had a great time together learning about God this year. We can't wait until next year!

**4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Steven and Kala Talsma and Shane Tukker



The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade class has been having a fun year so far. The first half of our lessons focused on different parables each week. Some of the parables that have stuck out to the students have been The 10 Bridesmaids, The Wise and Foolish Builders and The Rich Fool. We have been able to learn through fun activities like acting out the lessons, blindfolded obstacle courses or trivia games. Since Christmas we have been learning about the early church; we are excited to continue through these lessons with the students.

**2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Sunday School Class**

Will Van Wyngarden and Kim Hoekstra



Do you ever wonder what goes on after the kids get out of church, eat a cookie, and run out of the basement? Well, not all the kids do the same thing, but the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders (along with the kids younger than them) head upstairs to sing and move to some songs and hopefully burn off a little energy. You may hear them as they leave the third floor to head down to the deacon's room for classroom time. The boys usually attempt to race the teacher and the girls downstairs and then hide under the table hoping to scare someone. Obviously, it doesn't work too often.

We have studied a lot of interesting stories this year. The kids have tried to put themselves into stories from the Bible by listening to them being read and through activities. They have wondered about:

What it would have been like to sit in the room with Jesus as the paralyzed man was lowered through the ceiling (can you feel pieces of ceiling hitting your head as you read this?). Or, what feelings they would have had while they were in Peter's boat and Jesus had to calm the storm. Or, how Jesus could have said that a young girl was merely sleeping and ask her to rise and walk when everyone else thought she was dead. Or, how they would have felt if Jesus asked them to share their small lunch to feed 5,000 people.

As teachers, we have sometimes wondered things as well, such as: How did these kids get so smart? How can they have so much energy when we seem to have too little? How can we make the stories real to them and develop a passion for the Word of God? Are we doing a good job of teaching them not only the stories, but the deep love that God has for them?

God has blessed Pella 2 with these young souls. We pray that they will mature to take the small seed that we planted and share it with others.

## Kindergarten—1st

Susan Vander Molen – Marti Zylstra



The kindergarteners and first graders have been having a lot of fun learning all the ways God has placed purpose in our lives. Samples of the lessons the kids are learning can be spotted on the basement walls.

Additionally, the children maintain a prayer journal every Sunday. Prior to the start of class, they spend a few minutes drawing pictures or writing in their journals. It is their way of connecting to God. It is our way of encouraging that meditative time of reflection and helping them understand that they are never too young to spend time alone with God. Please be sure to visit their projects in the basement and ask them about the stories we read!



## 3yr olds—Pre-K

Matt Walker and Lisa Vos



The 3yr olds—Pre-Kindergarten class has been having a great year so far. There is lots of energy and enthusiasm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor every Sunday morning!

We usually begin by finding out the important things that happened over the course of the past week. Then we dig into our story. We've talked about Jesus loving kids, David and Goliath, the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, and many other stories. The kids love when a snack is part of our story!

We finish off our time together with a story-related craft, drawing, or playing with play-dough. The kids love acting out the story or drawing on the dry erase boards.

We are so thankful for each of the kids that come each week. They are a great blessing!

## Education Committee Report

By Crystal Schreur

This year of church school has been a great year once again! Church school started in September with a "Meet and Greet" session

before the annual church picnic and will continue meeting until the end of April. Each week the classes meet from 10:50-11:35. Children ages 3 years-third grade begin each session with a time of singing up on the third floor. Melissa Tukker and Sharesa Van Arendonk take turns leading with various song videos. Children are then dismissed to their classrooms. You can read about what's been going on in each class this year in the other articles in the newsletter.

Each class is currently using the DWELL curriculum from Faith Alive Resources. This is the fourth year in this curriculum.

DWELL encourages children to wonder and think about the Bible stories from different perspectives. The lessons come alive as they apply the story to their own lives.

Again this year we have been blessed by wonderful, caring, committed teachers and helpers. We currently have at least two teachers for each class! These teachers rotate weeks/units or teach together! We have found that this set-up works quite well for everyone! Please help the Education Committee thank these people for all of their hard work preparing lessons and teaching truths from God's Word.

The Education Committee is always willing to listen to new ideas or suggestions for ways to help or improve church school.

We are also looking for volunteers for the next Christmas program committee and leaders of C4C! If you would like to become involved in some way with church school, please contact Crystal Schreur or Melissa Tukker.

Thank you to the congregation for continuing to lift up this ministry in your prayers. Here are a few specific praises and requests:

- Praise God for wonderful teachers, helpers and song leaders!
- Praise God for the children that attend our church school!
- Praise God for His Word being taught to our young people!
- Pray for willing volunteers for the Christmas program committee!
- Pray for willing volunteers to lead C4C!

### “His Design”

By Nick Braafhart

Our family has been attending Pella 2 for nearly six years. Charlie was baptized by Pastor Dan in this sanctuary almost five years ago. I feel like I know each and every person that walks through our church doors each Sunday. Many if not all of you know our biological family also, but I am sure there are some of you who have been wondering who the “extra” children are that have been with us the past 11 months.

First of all let me admit that I do not enjoy writing. I would much rather talk in person than communicate by pen and paper. So I would encourage anyone who has questions about this little testimony to please catch me before or after church or anytime during the week to chat. I would love to talk in more detail with you about the opportunity God has placed before our family.

Libby and I love interacting with people and especially children. We have been blessed with three healthy children of our own (Claire 10, Kate 8, Charlie 4). We also feel



that we are called to parent more than just our 3 children and we have done this in a variety of different ways. In 2012 we hosted Yding, a Central College international student from China, for a month over Christmas break. In 2013 we hosted Nina, a PCHS international student from Brazil, for a little over two months. Both of these situations presented us with opportunities and challenges that helped shape our family into who we are today.

Two and a half years ago, Libby and I met a couple from Pella (Harley and Jessica Janssen) who were licensed foster parents. They had children of their own that were in school with our children. They invited us over for dessert and discussion one evening. At the time Libby and I were considering expanding our family but not sure how God wanted us achieve this. That evening Harley and Jessica shared with us their experience of becoming foster parents and encouraged us to consider it for our family. We spent the next nine months or so considering foster care, adoption, and also the possibility of having a fourth child of our own. After considering this for some time and not really feeling led in one certain direction we began to pray about this. Praying out loud together is not something that we had done very often in our marriage (except for meal time), but we began to pray specifically about this every night. Within 2-3 weeks we had unexpected conversations with 3-4 different individuals (some whom we had never met before) that all led to the same conclusion.



God was calling us to expand our family through foster care.

Foster care. What is it exactly, and how do we do it? What changes will it mean for our current family and way of life? These were some of the many questions we initially had. With an open mind we took our first small step into the unknown by attending an informational foster care class at a church in Ames. This class was sort of a short crash course into the life and challenges of becoming foster care providers. After this class we sought more information about the process, continued to pray together, and eventually signed up for a Partnering for

Safety and Permanency – Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (PS-MAPP) class. PS-MAPP is a 10-week, 30-hour class which prepares families to make an informed decision about becoming foster/adoptive

families. We began the class in December of 2015 with about 12 other couples and two individuals. We jokingly (not really) called each Monday night a date night for the next ten weeks, as Libby and I would spend 5 hours together driving to and from Ankeny and attending the three-hour class. Through the 10-week class we learned a lot about ourselves, our family, foster care, and we built great relationships with people that we call friends today.

While taking the class we were assigned a licensing working who would facilitate our home study. The home study was done through a series of interviews with our immediate family, background checks,

references, and a home inspection. We completed the home study and class work by the first of March 2015. Friday March 27 Libby received a call that we were officially licensed as a Foster and an Adoptive home. During that call she was asked if we would take a placement of 2 children. The children did not fit into the ages or gender that we thought would work for our family so she declined. The next Monday another call came for a placement of 2 siblings, and again we had to decline. Tuesday she received a call shortly after lunch for placement of a 3-year-old boy and a 1-year-old girl. She said yes. Neither of us really knew what to expect next but we were about to begin a journey that no amount of classes or homework can fully prepare you for.

Around 5 o'clock on Tuesday, March 31, Vincent and Addison were brought to our home by their FSRP "worker." FSRP is an acronym used for the resource provider that works with children in foster care and their biological families. The worker stayed with us for about 45 minutes giving us as much information as she could about Vincent and Addison and their situation. Shortly after the "worker" left our home their DHS worker showed up to answer any questions about the process and to check on the children. She also stayed for about 45 minutes and then left us alone with Vincent and Addison. At this point we really begin to experience what foster care is all about.

While foster care can and often does lead to adoption, it is never the initial goal. The goal of foster care is to provide a safe environment for children while trying to change whatever circumstances necessitated the removal so the children can return home. Our case is not different from most cases in

that we have a relationship with the family of Vincent and Addison. We make phone calls to parents, assist with transportation for visits, and occasionally join them for outings or a birthday party with the family. Along with the birth families there are many other things that are brought into a home when children arrive. Children bring social workers, therapists, lawyers, court appointed advocates, behavioral aides, nurses, and other unseen baggage with them when they enter your home.

Sometimes managing the schedules of visits and appointments can seem

overwhelming. Dealing with loss, attachments, behaviors, and unpacking emotions can be draining. In all of this though, we can see God at work. We have been blessed through the support of many friends that we have met through this process. We have also been encouraged, prayed for, and supported by many long-time friends, family, and church members. All of the words of encouragement, prayers, questions, and acts of kindness that we have witnessed have truly been amazing. We continue to ask for your prayers for our family as we continue to walk down this challenging path that God has called us. We also ask for your prayers for Vincent and Addison, their families, and for a resolution that will give them a safe permanent home to live in.

Three things inspire us on an almost daily basis to help us get through tough situations. The first is the song "Lord I Need You" by Matt Maher. Our family has enjoyed this song for a long time but recently it has become significant due to our situation. When the chaos in our home seems overwhelming we begin singing this song. It has happened enough times that both Vincent and Addison will sing along with



us. I'm sure if you ask Vincent he would love to sing it for you.

Next is the chorus from a song called "Multiplied" by Needtobreathe:

God of mercy, sweet love of mine  
I have surrendered to your design  
May this offering stretch across the skies  
these hallelujahs be multiplied

It reminds us that we are doing what we have been called to do and although our work seems small that we rely on God to multiply our offering in only ways that he can.

The third is a quote from [jasonjohnsonblog.com](http://jasonjohnsonblog.com)

Your "success" as a foster or adoptive parent is not measured by your capacity to keep everything in order; it's determined by your ability to trust that even in the chaos Jesus is beautiful- and even in the mess, so is what you are doing for these kids.

Thanks again to all for the love, encouragement, prayers, and acts of kindness shown to our family (including Vincent and Addison) these past 11 months.

## **Fran Ver Heul**

Submitted by Ruth Stevenson

A lot has happened in the last 100 years around Pella. You could research history books to see what happened, or head over to the Oskaloosa Care Center and talk with Fran Ver Heul. If the Lord is willing, Fran will celebrate her 101<sup>st</sup> birthday on April 15. When your age is three digits, what do you do for entertainment? Fran enjoys the preacher who comes by every Sunday. In

2015 she also played Bingo, made cookies, listened to a live country western show, and even did some wine tasting.

Most of the time, Fran uses a wheelchair to get around, but she does walk to meals for some exercise. Memories are starting to fade, but Fran likes to be sociable and can be found sleeping in community areas. One friend Fran got to know well was Vera, but she was called home this past November. With her comical personality, she will likely find a new friend soon.

Fran enjoys visitors as well as pictures from family and friends. She would enjoy a visit and sharing that at even after a century of life, you can still make a difference in the world.

Thanks to Fran's niece Joan Willemsen for this information.

## **And So, This Fella Stopped In Pella**

Pastor Tom Dykstra

The invitation was sincere. It sounded like a quaint place, a nice change of pace for these two homeless vagabonds. They crossed the big dam and were impressed at all the water piled up, the beauty of the trees, and the lovely pace of the traffic, cluttered with tractors and big red and green machines bouncing like a happy child on Papa's knee. There is a gas station that sells more pizza than gas, and churches, oh my, there are churches.

There is the sign, Welcome to Pella. We know we are still in America because there is Wal-Mart, one of our favorite campgrounds.



It's not quite a resort, but they got stuff, and restrooms that are fairly clean. Best of all they are always free. This will be okay, now just need a local café and we could probably live here for a while, if they have a decent library that is accessible to foreigners.

My traveling partner—the one with all the connections (internet)—noticed right off one of those windmill things, then another, and another, and then looming over the whole city a windmill of such gigantic size it appeared to be the guardian of the city. Secretly, I hoped this was not their local idol or goddess. Oh, how great if we could stay near it, how safe we would feel.

The houses were all painted, and flowers and green grass with wonderful trees were everywhere. There was this square in the middle of town with a big tall thing with words we could not pronounce. I whispered, "I hope it is not a gallows for misbehaving clerics from out of town." Right across the street we found the bakery, no, wait—there are TWO! Where are we? Is this heaven? It must be because the house in which we would stay was close to both the fire department and the police station and both in the reach of the giant windmill. And yes, right across the street was a castle. Could this be heaven?

We soon found that we easily became lost in the mansion provided.

There were more rooms than we have seen in years, and frequently we had to shout to one another lest one of us lose our way. What choices! Three toilets, three showers, two tubs, which shall we use?

A "his and hers?" And water, all the water you can use, and hot, always!! No more waiting your turn. Could this be heaven?

We had a learning curve in this new land. WE soon learned that everyone played the same Dutch game of "Bingo," but be careful because "everyone was playing." We learned about the Dutch alphabet with only one letter, S. I inquired why only one and that one in particular, but the lady at the bakery seemed to think I was either ignorant or making a bad joke. We have become acquainted with Pella Bologna, buns with raisins, and things with almond paste. Did I say windmills?

Seems to be an affection for things turning in the wind.

Oh yes, we have come to know cinnamon rolls, way beyond the hope of Cinnabon, and

soda has been replaced by pop. And then there is pizza for breakfast—now that is a good thing! Of course not all pizza is created equal. Homemade Dutch, now that ranks close to cinnamon rolls. Beats breakfast tacos and Cheerios every day.

Then there are the things easily missed, the squirrel watching me as I approach it munching it's corn on a pole, the eagles below the dam sitting in the trees then

soaring high above the river. I hear the honking of hundreds of geese, I've seen pheasants in flight and running thru the corn fleeing the big green grasshopper thing that devours everything in its path and chases little rabbits 'til they get dizzy. I've seen deer and coyote, and pelicans treading water in the icy current seeking lunch on a cloudy



afternoon. Yes, I saw the two little puppies sniffing under the abandoned garage, and the big raccoon wobbling along without a concern.

I've seen the hugger person come down the street, he stops and hugs the yellow top first and then returns a little later to hoist its blue companion with a squeeze and a flip of its top and then gently returns it to its place. We have watched the powder float from the sky, and snowdrifts form near the garage. We've learned about black ice again, coats (real coats), and boots, and ear muffs and gloves.

We tried (I tried) a saucer down the snow pile, and we watched our dog plow through the snow with her nose to the ground, jumping with delight at this new found stuff, so white and cold.

We hear the church bell call the folks to worship and its mellow tone reminds me of those with a song to sing and praise to share. The people in Pella, with a voice and warmth that generates a smile a touch and a name. Oh, the names, so many are the same. Here is that game again. Few with a name like mine, but one with one similar to mine when I first arrived made me smile and laugh, and I asked, "Where am I? Is this heaven?" I've seen dancing eyes of the one who told me of his departed best friend and spouse. I watched a 10 month old scampering across the floor at the speed of a caterpillar, proud of little bit of progress, and his parents gleam in delight as he squealed with confidence and joy. We have held some hands, shared some hugs and tears, and rejoiced in shared promises. I have seen a tiny one raise his hands high above his head to have his mom interpret for him, "Fear Not!" He is a quick learner. Already we have stood by the hospital bed, and the grave, we've been to the Table and been richly fed. Soon we will be at the altar

and font, where promises are made and received. And we are reminded, we belong, it's His family.

Then we asked, "Where are we? Is this heaven?" Not yet, it's Pella II.

### ***Facing a Task Unfinished***

By Barbara Boertje DeVries

By the time you read this, many of you will have probably sung the "new" hymn "Facing a Task Unfinished" during our morning worship service on February 21, when we had a special emphasis on missions. Pella II was invited to join in the singing, and last Sunday over **5,400 churches, in 100 countries**, comprised of an estimated **one million believers in 13 languages** joined to sing this hymn to be reminded of the church's call to global missions. Below is the story behind this hymn.

First penned by China Inland Mission worker, Frank Houghton, at a time when persecution in China was at its height, "Facing a Task Unfinished" has been a rally cry for missions in the Pacific Rim for many years. In 1929, the Lord laid a vision on the heart of CIM leaders to see 200 new workers plunge into the darkness and share the light of Christ, knowing that it could well cost them their lives.

As he reflected on Jesus' words in Matthew 24:14 to bear the torch of the Gospel to all the nations, Houghton's heart was broken for the people of China, and he wrote:

*Facing a task unfinished, that drives us to our knees.*

*A need that, undiminished, rebukes our slothful ease.*

*We, who rejoice to know Thee, renew before*

*Thy throne,  
the solemn pledge we owe Thee to go and  
make Thee known.*

By 1932, the last of the 200 missionaries had set sail for China to spread the good news of the Gospel. Since that time, the church of China has grown from an estimated 100,000 who claim Christ as their Lord to millions, and the Lord continues to work in great ways because of the faithfulness of those that gave their lives proclaiming that Jesus died and rose.

Keith and Kristyn Getty (two of the arrangers of this hymn) recently added the

following refrain:

*We go to all the world, with kingdom hope unfurled.  
No other name has power to save but Jesus Christ the Lord.*

May this hymn be a reminder for us to rise up to face the unfinished task and go to all the world to proclaim salvation in Jesus' name!

## In Memory Of

Donna Hol



July 31, 1955 – December 29, 2015

Wilma Blanke



July 24, 1917 – January 30, 2016

## Congratulations

Brent and Lisa (nee Houser) Van Kooten  
Married February 20, 2016

*Pella II Newsletter invites your contribution. Drop a note in the "Newsletter" box in the church library or contact one of our editors.*

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