

“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, “I have no pleasure in them” Ecclesiastes 12:1

It has been a year of trial and uncertainty. As we say good-bye to 2020, we meet new members and look to what’s coming at Cornerstone Church.

## **Zach and Stacia Veenstra Family Profile**

By Ryan Hoekstra

One of the best parts of being a Pella II Newsletter editor is the opportunity to sit down and get to know our new and older members. I had the opportunity to visit Zach and Stacia Veenstra (and Elsie!) recently, and ask them some questions about their family. We had a great time!

Zach is a “local” guy. His dad is Kirk Veenstra. Some of you may know Kirk from his basketball days at Pella Christian High. Zach’s mom is originally from Oskaloosa. Zach attended Oskaloosa Christian School, and graduated from PCHS. He is the middle child of three boys. His parents and brothers are members of Oskaloosa First CRC. After high school, Zach graduated from Dordt College with Accounting and Finance degrees. And that’s where he met Stacia.

Stacia (Muilenburg) is an Omaha, Nebraska native. She has an older sister who lives in Seattle (WA), a brother who is a CRC pastor in Edgerton (MN), and a brother in Lincoln (NE). Stacia also grew up in the CRC,

attending Prairie Lane CRC in Omaha. She earned her Education degree at Dordt, and taught kindergarten for three years in Omaha while Zach worked in tax and auditing in an accounting firm.

While Zach and Stacia enjoyed their time living in Omaha, Zach always had a desire to move closer to home. Although Stacia liked Pella, she wasn’t so sure about moving to a small town. Through much prayer, Stacia and Zach felt God was calling them to Pella. So, about a year and a half

ago, they moved here. They own a home on East Washington Street, not too far from the square. And then, six months ago, Elsie Marie was born. Now Stacia is a stay-at-home mom, and Zach works at Pella Corporation in corporate accounting.

They met each other the first week of their freshman year at Dordt. They talked off and on, especially since Stacia’s college job was in the call center, where students call alumni and friends of the college to request donations. She frequently asked Zach if he knew or was related to some of the people she contacted. It was the perfect job for her, since Stacia is friendly, outgoing, and easy to talk to. Zach was impressed with these qualities, and so he asked her out for a date on Valentine’s Day. Stacia was caught off guard, and politely denied his request.

For a while at Dordt, Zach and a couple of friends had mohawk haircuts. Even though Stacia wasn’t impressed with his hair, later



on she did accept a date. They ate dinner at the Sioux County Livestock Company Restaurant, and the night ended with them returning to campus and Stacia cutting off his mohawk. From there, they dated all through college, and got married right out of college, in 2016!

At Pella Corp., Zach enjoys the opportunities at work to help people understand the financial reports, see opportunities to get better, and solve and fix the problems they're seeing. Besides, he says, "I enjoy playing in Excel." Some spreadsheets have been around from before he started working there, and he likes to figure out how results have been calculated. Stacia has skills and talents with kids. She is happier when she gets to use them. They come from her God-given abilities, as well as her teaching experience

The Veenstras have been members of Pella II CRC since September. They were attracted to the size of the church, and that they felt very welcomed. They know Will and Taylor, and Zach had a lot of connections to various members. They were also attracted to the musical nature of the congregation. Eventually Stacia would like to be part of a larger musical group, like choir, as well as participate in children's ministries. They enjoy the sermons and life groups, and were also drawn to the number of younger families.

Their favorite family activity is playing board games like Settlers of Catan and Carcassonne.

Their favorite foods differ greatly. Stacia loves butternut squash, acorn squash and other squash varieties, as well as pasta. Plus, she's a big fan of coffee, but Zach is a meat and potatoes guy and loves a good burger.

For hobbies, Stacia loves to read historical fiction and enjoys home décor and walking a lot. Zach plays basketball, and fantasy football. He really enjoys remodeling their home. Together, they enjoy quirky television shows like The Office and New Girl.

They also like to road trip. They've been to New York and Washington DC, along with a number of other East Coast states. But they've also travelled to New Mexico and Colorado and a few other Western states. For their dream vacation, they would like to travel to Europe, specifically the Netherlands. They'd love to hear from fellow Holland visitors for recommendations of what to do while they're there.

## Sunday School 2020

By Melissa Tukker

It's been quite a weird year. It was weird not going to church for a few months, then it was weird going back to church and having everything feel so different and distant, missing people that needed to stay home. It was weird deciding if and how we could



redesign children's programs to make them safe and appropriate for 2020, not knowing who would be able to show up on any given week. When I looked over the people attending church in person in the summer months, I counted fewer than ten kids in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and under age group.

Would more children and families return to in-person church once school was in session? Would more families choose to stay home, because the crowds at school were enough? How would exposure at school work and how often would entire grades or classes or families need to

quarantine at home due to possible exposures at school?

Of course, none of these questions had actual answers and we had to come up with a plan that could move forward without those answers. I talked through several options with a few people over the summer months and we decided to do a shortened Sunday school hour that combined the kids into two groups. We have one class for middle school and high school students and one class for students 3 years through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. That way, if a few families needed to stay home, we wouldn't end up with only one kid attending Sunday school in their own class. It also helps cut down on the number of teachers needed so we don't have to scramble to find a leader last minute if someone was sick or quarantining. Cutting the Sunday school hour from 45 minutes down to just 20 minutes helps make sure that preschoolers don't get bored when taking to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, but those 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders don't feel like they are doing preschool activities for forever. This plan isn't perfect, but nothing really is perfect about this year.

Overall, it's worked well. We have had weeks with 20 kids in our 5<sup>th</sup> grade and under class, and weeks with just 8. It's been fun watching the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders help the 3- and 4-year-olds with activities. We are thankful that we haven't had to cancel any children's programs and we are praying that we can resume normal Sunday school next year.

**Pastor's Pen**  
By Pastor Paul Bradford

Goodbye 2020.

What a year. Who could have imagined 2020 when it began! A global pandemic like the world has never seen. Sickness and loss of life. Economic and political upheaval. Rioters and looters in the streets of our nation. One of the most contested elections in our nation's history. Restaurants, gyms, churches, and shops shut down, people going out of business, the world of sports on hold, and no Christmas concerts or Christmas parties. And then there has been the isolation, the loneliness, the depression and emotional breakdowns, the soaring crime, the suicides, the sorrow, and more.

Goodbye 2020. It's a New Year.

But God has been with us through it all. I'm sure we'll be talking about "2020 hindsight" for years to come. Through hard times the Lord forms us and teaches us.



God made us for community. He's commanded the church to come together, to encourage one another, to building one another up in love. When we are in forced isolation, we realize how deeply we need each other.

In this year of upheaval, we realize how much our nation and communities need a mighty work of God. Politics are important, but they can't solve the deepest issues in our society.

In our personal lives, in our churches, in our nation, even in our world, 2020 helped us see how much we need God's grace in all things. In hard times we look up. May we continue to look up!

And may we hope in the Lord for this coming year. God is a God who makes things new. He redeems sinful humans and makes them holy. He transforms broken lives and makes them whole. He takes tough years and brings new life from the ground. He's making all things new.

And, in this New Year, he has much that's new for our congregation.

In 2021 we'll change our name to Cornerstone Church, a continual reminder that we are built on Christ Jesus, the Cornerstone, that he is the foundation upon which our congregation must be built, and upon which our lives must be built.

In 2021 we'll begin worshipping in our new building. What a process that has been!

In 2021 we'll move forward into a new and renewed ministry. Everything won't change, there's much good that must continue. But our church leadership knows we need, not just a new building, but a renewed ministry as we go forward into this new year and new decade – a ministry that is reaching our community for Christ and building his body to be mature followers of Jesus.

In 2021 we'll be renewing our focus on Life Groups, which were put on hold in 2020.

In 2021 we need to become a church of prayer as never before, for without the power of God being released on our behalf

in response to our believing prayers, all our efforts are for naught.

And I'm sure the Lord has more in store for us, things we can't even imagine, for "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9).

Welcome 2021!

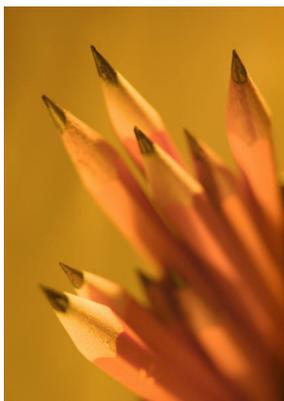
### Newsletter Articles

What would you like to see in upcoming editions of the newsletter? As editors, we try to keep bringing new articles about the congregation each issue, but we welcome your feedback.

How have you seen God acting in your life, recently or in years past? Did you read a book, or hear a song, that inspired you? Let us hear about it and maybe your experience can help others.

Archived newsletters are available for two years on the church website if you want examples. However, we will gladly accept ideas, and articles, of anything you're willing to share!

-Cornerstone Newsletter Editors



**Quotes from Charles Spurgeon**

The *joys of Heaven* will surely compensate for the *sorrows of earth*.

Let us never think that we have learned a doctrine, until we have seen its *fruit* in our lives.

Anything that makes us pray is a blessing!

The world does not read the Bible--the world reads Christians!

He who counts the stars and calls them by their names, is in no danger of forgetting His own redeemed children. He knows your case as thoroughly as if you were the only creature He ever made, or the only saint He ever loved!

**In Memory Of**

Virginia Van Kooten



April 21, 1928 – November 5, 2020

Gertrude Wassink



December 19, 1922 – November 10, 2020

*Pella II Newsletter invites your contribution. Drop a note in the mailbox of any one of our editors.*

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