

First Presbyterian Church of Glidden

December 2014



Christmas is the celebration of a baby, who is more than he seems. Of course, this is the way with children. All babies are far more than they seem. Each child, born in a hospital, carries within them the potential to change the world. Many children born in St. Anthony's have grown up to work as nurses and doctors and administrators in that same hospital. Who would have guessed, looking at that newborn baby on the third floor, that they would one day be saving lives in that very same building?

Each child born contains limitless potential. They could grow up to build or destroy a dozen cities. They might invent a device that will send humanity to the stars, or they could work in the shadows to improve the lives of millions. Could your parents ever have looked at you, when you were just a few hours old, and imagined who you'd grow up to be? I doubt it. Every baby is a new infinity, a new future – waiting to happen.

But out of all of the babies ever born, one was the most magnificent. Out of all children who ever grasped the finger of a loving mother, one had the most promise of them all. And so we celebrate Christmas. It was the most important day in history, but almost no one noticed it happen. It was a day that transformed the world, but we're pretty sure that December 25th, 1 AD wasn't even the correct date. Jesus Christ looked just like all the other babies in Ancient Israel. How were we to know just how special he would grow up to be?

One of my favorite Christmas songs (that doesn't appear in our hymnals) begins to capture the wonder of this most natural of events, Mary Did You Know.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Will give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Will calm a storm with his hand?

Did you know that your baby boy
Has walked where angels trod?
And when you kiss your little baby
You've kissed the face of God

Every child is a miracle, but this one was an extra special miracle. Every child is limitless, but this one exceeded everyone's wildest expectations. Christmas is a time when amazing things are happening, but they don't look quite as special as you might think. The God who is going to save the world, looks awfully like a helpless baby. Can you see the miracle in that sleeping baby? Can you imagine what he will grow up to become?

Did you know that that baby boy is the Lord of all Creation? Did you know that he would rule the nations? Can you look at that sleeping baby and see the truth? I wish I could see it, but I can't. All I can tell you is that his chubby little face fills my heart with wonder.

Blessings,
Pastor Brian

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Meet the Members MTM

Our trip leads us today to the south edge of Carroll at 123 W. Pleasant Ridge Rd. This is the home of David (Barney) and Rhonda Schroeder, our feature family for this month.

Barney was born at St. Anthony Hospital and was joined in the family by two brothers, Jerry and Steve. Likewise, Rhonda was born at Cass County Hospital in Atlantic, Iowa and was joined by two brothers, Steve and Bruce.

Barney graduated from Kuemper High School before attending Iowa State University. Rhonda graduated from Glidden-Ralston High School and moved on to Iowa State University, graduating in education with emphasis on chemistry.

Barney, along with his brother Jerry, purchased a business in Carroll that developed into Schroeder Siding, serving the community of Carroll and a wide area around the home base.

Prior to 2010 Rhonda was employed by the Iowa Department of Human Services. She worked in the area of child and adult protective investigation and in the later years she served as supervisor over a twelve county area. Since her retirement from the State of Iowa, she works part time for Schroeder Siding, doing everything from helping in the office to working in the warehouse.

Rhonda and Barney were introduced in 1991 by the late Paul Collison and were married in 1992 at New Orleans, LA. This marriage blessed Rhonda with four step children, and later they were blessed again with eleven grandchildren, all of whom they both adore.

Barney and Rhonda are busy people with work, grandchildren, hobbies, and community involvement. Barney is an avid golfer. Both Barney and Rhonda support Iowa State University activities, with Rhonda serving on the Board of the local Cyclone Club for many years. Rhonda has been a hiker for some time and Barney has more recently begun to fall in love with the sport. To perfect their skill, this past June, Barney and Rhonda traveled to Moab, Utah to hike in the desert canyons. There they witnessed beautiful rock formations and climbed heights that were a bit more adventurous than some in their party were comfortable with. In 2013, Rhonda traversed the Grand Canyon, hiking down one day, sleeping in the

bottom of the Canyon, and hiking back out on the second day. Whenever Rhonda has time, she enjoys reading. Rhonda is also a fan of CrossFit, a strenuous training regimen that exhausted your correspondent merely to listen to it described.

Rhonda and Barney were raised with parents who taught great values. These values of hard work, financial responsibility, respecting those in authority, proper management skills, and other life's lessons, were passed down from one generation to the next and that is guidance we can all relate to.

A unique experience in Rhonda's life was her trip to the World War II Memorial in 2010, as she served as a guardian to help WWII veterans tour the war memorial and Arlington National Cemetery. Rhonda was the only non-military or non-Casey/HyVee employee to act in this capacity on the trip. She stayed in a Des Moines Hotel the night prior to the trip, arising at 2:30am. From rising to retiring, the trip was over 24 hours. Rhonda helped with wheel chairs, provided personal assistance to veterans, and watched over their needs. With all of Rhonda's activities, the most important was listening to their stories. Some veterans related their years in captivity, while others related stories of death and close calls. Rhonda affirmed that this trip was one of the most moving and most rewarding experiences of her life. As she told these stories, her emotions demonstrated her deep gratitude for and appreciation of those who bravely served our country in the Second World War.

As we began to wind up our visit, Rhonda told a story about her Maternal Grandparents that many of us can relate to. Grandma & Grandpa farmed a small farm and occasionally, as a young girl, Rhonda would visit them on the farm. They cooked with a coal and cob fired cook stove. They heated the house with a coal fired stove. They had an outside privy, milked the cows by hand, and separated the milk and cream with a hand crank separator. They worked hard and Rhonda's grandmother stayed on the farm following the death of her grandfather. Rhonda said these people, along with their neighbors had very little, but you never heard a complaint from either of them. She concluded this story saying - we have so much! ! !

To end our journey on a seasonal note - For the past 15 years or so Barney and Rhonda have decorated 35-40 Christmas trees around their home. Barney and Rhonda do the work themselves and it takes four days to complete. They have an underground electrical system, mapped out

carefully by Barney, and numerous extension cords to connect the system to the trees. Traffic is heavy on Pleasant Ridge Road once the lights come on. Tour buses call ahead of time, to make sure the lights will be shining as they drive by. On one occasion, when a family drove by the home, a small boy asked his parents if Santa Claus lived in that house. The lights, however, don't last long and are taken down shortly after New Year's Day. Unfortunately, Rhonda said the lights on the trees might not go up in 2014 for two reasons. The trees are getting bigger and bigger so it is difficult to reach the top branches, and the winter cold weather arrived too early this year.

After a great visit, it was time to wrap up, so we thanked Rhonda and Barney for sharing their stories. Our community is blessed to have them as friends and First Presbyterian is blessed to share in their lives.

Finance Committee Report

As we enter the final month of 2014 it gives us a chance to reflect upon the financial management of the church for the past twelve months. The stock market has been good to First Presbyterian Church as values of stock increased 4.5-5.0% for the first ten months. The Capital Campaign has also had a good year as members are meeting their pledges and during the year more people added to the over-all receipts.

The only question is in the operational giving. Operational giving is the money collected to cover day to day and month to month expenses. The church is projected to be short income to cover these expenses between \$25-30,000 for the year. This shortage has been a problem for the past few years. Normally First Presbyterian receives a boost in offering toward the end of the year and in 2014 we anticipate this giving to increase as we continue to "Grow Our Faith" through generous contributions to promote the teaching of God's Word.

December Mission Emphasis

Our Mission emphasis for the month of December will be the Christmas Joy Offering. The Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four special offerings that are operated by the Presbyterian Church (USA). Gifts are split evenly between two deserving programs.

First, is our ongoing support of Presbyterian schools and colleges, with a special emphasis on historically oppressed racial and ethnic groups. Two of the schools supported by this offering are the Presbyterian Pan American School and Cook Native American Ministries. The Presbyterian Pan American School is an international college preparatory school that takes in students from all over the world, and sends 96% of seniors on to attend a college or university. Cook Native American Ministries trains up Native American leaders through special workshops and the Commissioned Ruling Elder Program (formerly Commissioned Lay Pastor Training). As you can see, Presbyterian schools seek provide new opportunities and training for people all over the world, and back here at home.

The second half of the offering goes to strengthen the assistance programs of the Board of Pensions. When Presbyterian ministers or church workers face significant financial challenges, the Board of Pensions seeks to "serve those who serve the church." Among those who have benefited from the program are Reverend Thomas (Thom) Beech of Bradenton, Florida. Reverend Beech's wife suffered from Alzheimer's disease, which quickly drained their financial reserves. The Board of Pensions offered him a Housing Supplement Grant, so that he and his wife could afford to move into a facility that could offer his wife the care she needed. Rev. Beech says that without the help of the Board of Pensions, supported by the Christmas Joy Offering, he and his wife would have been "out on the street."

Both the assistance programs of the Board of Pensions and several of our Presbyterian Schools are supported by the Christmas Joy Offering. If you would like any more information about these programs or this month's special offering, please do not hesitate to ask Pastor Brian for details.

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

1st-Lora Reeve
3rd-Harry Reeve
5th-Annette Douglas
6th-Larry DeVries
6th-Mandy Frazier
10th-Shirley Seaman
12th-Bob Wagner
12th-Charlie Newman
12th-Ethan Dettermann
13th-Tami Burdine
17th-Judy Reeve
18th-Phyllis Bender
21st-Kirsten Stidham
28th-Lillian Draves
28th-Shelly Strahl
30th-Tim and Lora Reeve Anniversary



Bible Banter

"The Deal"

A young boy had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father, who was a minister, if they could discuss the use of the car. His father took him to his study and said to him, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study your bible a little and get your hair cut and we'll talk about it."

After about a month the boy came back and again asked his father if they could discuss use of the car. They again went to the father's study where his father said, "Son, I've been real proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've studied your bible diligently, but you didn't get your hair cut!"

The young man waited a moment and replied, "You know Dad, I've been thinking about that. You know, Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair, and even Jesus had long hair...."

To which his father replied...."Yes, and they WALKED everywhere they went!"

http://jokes.christiansunite.com/Bible/The_Deal.shtml

"Kudos Korner"

Kudos to:

**DianeThelin for providing supper to a boy whose parents were out of town. Diane also organized other people to help out with food.*

**Victor Warnke for donating his labor stabilizing the Rose Window in the sanctuary.*

**Craig Luchtel for his donation of labor when painting the windows.*

**Jen Flemmig for her needle work on our "Growing Our Faith" banner hanging in the sanctuary.*

Donald Sparks Posthumously Honored

Donald Lee Sparks, a graduate of the Glidden Ralston School System and a graduate of Farm Operations Management from Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, was posthumously honored in a ceremony at the Memorial Union Great Hall in Ames. Sparks was drafted into the Army following his college graduation in 1968. He was stationed in Quang Tin Province, South Viet Nam.

Donald was captured by the enemy and was listed as a Prisoner of War. Later he was determined to have died by a military tribunal.

Donald Sparks was the son of the late Calvin and Arloha Sparks of Glidden and was joined in the family by two brothers, Ronald and Russell and one sister, Esta. The Sparks family were members of the First Presbyterian Church in Glidden.

Donald's name is also engraved on the Viet Nam war memorial in Washington, D.C. He is a well deserving recipient of recognition at G-R School, ISU, and the memorial in Washington, D.C.

He was a young man that made us proud as he called Glidden his home.

Christmas Program

*Joint Presbyterian/Methodist Sunday School
Christmas Program
Dec 21st at the Presbyterian Church at 10:00am*



Quotes of the Month

"We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face...we must do that which we think we cannot."
-Eleanor Roosevelt

"The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time."
-Abraham Lincoln

Announcements:

- *Presbyterian Women meet at Perk Central on Dec 10th at 11:30am
- *Session meets on Dec 17th at 7:00pm
- *Joint Presbyterian/Methodist Sunday School Christmas Program
Dec 21st at the Presbyterian Church at 10:00am
- *Christmas Eve service at the church is on Dec 24th at 5:30pm