

# First Presbyterian Church of Glidden

October 2016



October is a good time for scary stories. I'm not so much into horror, but I do enjoy a tale that's just a little bit creepy – a little bit off-kilter. One of my favorites is a book by Neil Gaiman, called "Coraline."

Coraline is the story of a young girl who passes through a secret doorway and discovers a mirror world. At first, everything in that world is just as she wished. The food is delicious, the animals talk and are friendly, and she has all the time to play that she wants. The only thing wrong with the mirror world is her parents – her *other* parents. The other mother wants her to stay, to stay forever, and never to return to her real parents.

The joy of reading Coraline is the joy of seeing a small girl defeat a great evil. The story can disturb you to your core, but it can also remind you of the grit that lays hidden in each of us. Coraline is a story that could give young children nightmares, but it could also give them the courage to face down those nightmares.

When Neil Gaiman was writing the story, he was hoping to illustrate an old quote from the Catholic author, G.K. Chesterton. Chesterton wrote, "Fairy tales do not give the child her first idea of the bogey-man. What fairy tales give the child is her first clear idea of the possible defeat of the bogey. The baby has known the dragon intimately ever since she had an imagination. What the fairy tale provides for her is a St. George to kill the dragon."

Or as Neil Gaiman paraphrased, "Fairy tales are more than true; not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten."

In this season of ghouls and goblins, many of us try very hard to protect young ones from all the various dangers of the world. We turn off scary movies, inspect candy, and give incessant lectures about how to cross the road when Trick-or-Treating. These are good things to do, but the carefully controlled dangers of Halloween can also be of great benefit to young imaginations. We should teach children that bogey-men are not real, but we should also teach that any bogey can be defeated by a true hero.

And this is not just a lesson for children. We often despair that lies will triumph over the truth, or that the immoral and unscrupulous will never find justice. We fear that we are too small to do any lasting good in the world. But the truth is the opposite. The truth is that our monsters have a weakness. The truth is that the challenges we face are not insurmountable. Even the very real terrors of this world do not leave us helpless or hopeless. All dragons can be beaten.

Isaiah 41:10 reads, "Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

And that's no fairy tale.

Blessings,  
Pastor Brian

**Pastor Brian's Contact Info:**

Email: [Pastor@GliddenPresbyterianChurch.org](mailto:Pastor@GliddenPresbyterianChurch.org) or Cell phone: 818-388-9779

## Meet the Congregation

Our trip today was just 3 short blocks east of the Church where we visited with Kevin and Sara Fleecs. We will introduce Kevin and then we will bring readers up to date with Sara and the rest of the family.

Kevin was born in 1973 in North Platte, Nebraska. He is the son of Sonny and Judy Fleecs. Kevin joined three siblings in the family – Lisa, David and Jamie and lived in a very small community called Birdwood, Nebraska. A one room school was located across the road from the Fleecs homestead. Later the school added another room. Kevin attended this school from K-8<sup>th</sup> grade with 10-12 other students and Kevin reports that one-half of the students were his relation. Following eight grade graduation, Kevin attended high school in the big city with a population of 550 people. Hershey, Nebraska has class sizes of 45-47 students and was large compared to what he had experienced. In high school, Kevin played football, basketball and track. His senior year he was chosen homecoming King. A real feat considering his country school upbringing.

In 1991, Kevin enrolled at Iowa State University where he studied Fisheries and Wildlife Biology with a minor in Criminal Justice. Kevin was awarded a football scholarship at ISU where he played defensive line through 1995, graduating in the spring of 1996. His body contained more bulk than it does today. One highlight of his career was a victory over a Tom Osborn coached Nebraska team in 1992.

Sara was born at St. Anthony Hospital in Carroll as the daughter of Butch and Julie Janning. Her family was dominated with women as her siblings were Dana, Jennifer and Robin. Sara attended Glidden Ralston School for 13 years and enjoyed her school days there as she participated in volleyball, basketball, track and softball. She was chosen to be majorette of the marching band. She claims she was chosen because she didn't play an instrument very well. Even though she was very busy with activities, she also worked as a waitress at Mister "D" for 5 years. She was a life guard at the swimming pool and was a baby sitter when time permitted.

Once she graduated from GR, she was off to Iowa State University where she studied pre-health for two years from 1991-93. She then transferred to Grand View in Des Moines where she studied nursing, which was not offered at ISU. She attended Grand View for three years and while at Grand View she played basketball.

In 1992, while both Sara and Kevin were attending ISU, they met through a mutual friend. During the next four years they dated, went to school and worked jobs. Between her junior and senior year, Sara worked as an intern at Mayo Clinic. Other summers Sara worked with children who had special needs. When time permitted, while visiting Sara, Kevin would stop in and help children with special needs by pushing their wheel chairs and other activities.

Graduation arrived for these young people in the spring of 1996 and on June 8<sup>th</sup> of that year, they were married at the St Elizabeth Church in Glidden. No rest for this ambitious young couple as on June 9<sup>th</sup> they moved to Rochester, Minnesota so Sara could start work at Mayo Clinic where she worked in the Ear, Nose and Throat, and plastic surgery unit at St. Mary's Hospital. While Sara worked at the Mayo Clinic, Kevin worked part time in the summer for the City of Rochester. He also worked as a park ranger and during the winter was a professional operator of a Zamboni – a machine that levels ice in an ice arena. He performed several other odd jobs for the City of Rochester.

In 1998, the couple decided to move back to Carroll where Kevin became a park ranger and they lived at Swan Lake. Their first child was born two weeks prior to the move, and after taking 3 months off from work Sara returned to part time teaching at DMACC, cared for patients at New Hope Village and worked at Wellendorf ENT Clinic.

Daughter Anna was born in 1998 followed by daughter Julia in 1999 and son Grant was born in 2001. The children attended GR School and like their parents were heavily involved in sports, plus they worked at various jobs. Anna has worked at Fareway Stores and as a waitress at the Santa Maria Winery. Each summer for the past five years, Julia has played AAU basketball and traveled a wide area as she played on a team in Ames and



provided respite care for a special needs child. Grant delivered paper for the Carroll Daily Times and then stopped due to the busy high school baseball season.

As school began this fall, Anna was off to Wayne State University on a full ride Neihardt academic scholarship. Her intent was not to play in sporting events. That didn't last long as she signed up for the women's rugby team. Wayne State is a nationally ranked team and has won several national championships and now Anna is scoring for this prestigious team.

Julia is now a senior at GR and has concentrated on volleyball and basketball. In fact, she has just received a scholarship to play basketball at University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, N. D.

Grant, the 15 year old, participates in football, basketball, track and baseball. He is also a technology intern for the GR schools.

Throughout this article, we have written about the family's sport activities, but the family's focus has always been on a balanced education. Mom, Dad and the three children have all done very well in school and at work. This leads us back to the jobs performed by Kevin and Sara. In 2000, Kevin accepted a position on the Carroll Police Department. He worked for the department until 2012 when he was medically retired.

During this same period, Sara worked in the education department at St. Anthony Hospital for four years. She also attended classes at Briar Cliff from 2008-2011 where she attained her Master of Science in Nursing. She continued to study and passed her board examines to become a Nurse Practitioner (ARNP). This certification allows her to medically perform at a doctor's level with some restrictions. Currently she works at the Greene County Hospital in Jefferson about 60 hours per week and she loves the work. The night we did this interview, Sara arrived home shortly after 7:00pm.

Kevin works for the City of Glidden during the summer months and delivers wine throughout the state for Santa Maria Winery. Kevin laughed that he used to arrest drunks, now he is delivery the product to them! Kevin also appears to be the family manager as this family is busy.

When asked about the best advice you have received, Sara quoted her grandmother by saying "you have to pick your whines". Kevin concluded his was not so much advice as encouragement. When Kevin was a senior at ISU, the assistant coach took him aside and said, "I am so

proud of you because you work so hard. I wish others had your work ethic".

Today, Kevin and Sara are busy following the children in their school activities and sports events. They also like to bicycle, selectively collect antiques plus baking and cooking.

For a unique experience, Kevin reported that he had ran the Dam to Dam race in Des Moines. Sara reported that she had run two marathons in the Twin Cities. One marathon with oldest sister Dana, and one with older sister Jennifer; just finishing was winning!

Their church life has been a journey that has taken some twists and turns and has led them to the First Presbyterian church in Glidden. As members of this church, we are delighted to count this family in the congregation. Kevin and Sara, we are proud of the work ethic of the entire Fleecs family and your accomplishments in life.

## October Birthdays and Anniversaries

- 1<sup>st</sup>-Bridget Draves
- 1<sup>st</sup>-Brooke Draves
- 2<sup>nd</sup>-Mark Conner
- 2<sup>nd</sup>-Mary Haselton
- 6<sup>th</sup>-Oliver Conner
- 14<sup>th</sup>-Ty Cose
- 20<sup>th</sup>-Loretta Hansen
- 21<sup>st</sup>-Ethan Mueggenberg
- 28<sup>th</sup>-Roy and Marge Middaugh Anniversary



## *Kudos Korner:*

- *To Kristen Stoberl and Ryan Telin on their wedding held on September 17, 2016 at First Presbyterian. The wedding was spectacular and the church overflowed with people attending. Our best wishes go out to Mr. & Mrs. Ryan Thelin for many years of happiness together.*
- *To the gracious people that donated extra for the storm windows.*
- *To Leland Bender on his fine memorial donation to the church in memory of his late wife Phyllis.*
- *To high school Sunday school class for repositioning the furniture following a Saturday evening wedding.*
- *To Moses for his attendance at elementary Sunday school on Sunday morning. His visit was reminiscent of his earlier visit as he spread wisdom amongst the youth.*
- *To Julia Fleece for being chosen homecoming queen of the GR school. Congratulations!!!*

### **Storm Windows**

Seven additional storm windows were added to the east side of church to prevent air moment through the window area and to protect the interior windows from storm damage. With these new widows, the interior colored glass windows are much more visible from the street.

We pass long a word of appreciation to the Building and Grounds committee for their prompt response on this issue. This window project has been fully funded by the generous congregation of First Presbyterian.

With the completion of this project, the church now has storm windows on the south, east and two windows on the north sides of the church.

### **Member speaks**

*As children of God, we are part of God's family. We treasure the support and unconditional love of family. When I became a member of this church, I was welcomed into this family of God with love and acceptance. My family has experienced the support, love and prayers of this church family through joyful as well as sorrowful times in our lies. Just as William Gaither wrote in a beautiful song entitled, "I'm So Glad I'm a Part of the Family of God". I am thankful for the abundant blessings of being a family of God and the First Presbyterian Church.*

## Bible Banter

**A kindergarten teacher** was walking around observing her classroom of children while they were drawing pictures. As she got to one girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was.

The girl replied, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like."

Without looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."

## Announcements

\*Sunday School is back!

-Children and Students meet at the Presbyterian Church at 9:30am

-Adults meet at the United Methodist Church at 9:30am

\*PW meets on Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>, at 11:30am at Queen Bean in Carroll

\*Pastor Brian will be on vacation from October 10<sup>th</sup> through the 24<sup>th</sup>

-Worship will be at the United Methodist Church on October 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:30am

\*Session meets on Wednesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, at 5:30pm

The Special Offering for September and October is **GRASP**

GRASP, the Glidden-Ralston After School Program, meets at the Glidden United Methodist Church, throughout the school year, Mondays through Thursdays from 3:30pm to 5:00pm. The program serves children from age 5 to sixth grade. Students are driven to the church by bus, and local volunteers provide homework assistance, snacks, and fun activities. Best of all, it is free to attend. GRASP is a true blessing to our community, so we want to support them both financially and with willing volunteers.

Last month, First Presbyterian Church sent seven volunteers to package food at Meals From the Heartland's Annual Hunger Fight. Our group packaged nearly 5,000 meals in two hours. All told, volunteers from around Iowa packaged 4.2 million meals in just 4 days at the Hunger Fight. We're proud of our church's contribution to ending hunger, and heartily thank all those who volunteered in this good work.

