



“The LORD will command the blessing on you in your barns and in all that you undertake. And He will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.”

Deuteronomy 28:8

**Rock Valley United Reformed Church
Newsletter, Autumn 2015**



Reformation and Thanksgiving *The Just Shall Live by Faith*

Praise God for the Truth of the Gospel rediscovered at the time of the Protestant Reformation: Salvation by Grace alone through Faith alone in Christ alone. Faith in Christ's accomplished work is the only ground and foundation for our justification in the sight of God. It is faith alone that justifies, but the faith that justifies is not alone. In the redemption plan of God a faith that justifies is always followed by a faith that sanctifies. In his book, "The Purifying Power of Living by Faith in Future Grace", Christian pastor and author, John Piper, proposes the very real possibility that we have not relied on faith in God sufficiently enough through the whole process of our own sanctification. His premise is that the majority of Protestant Evangelical Christians rely on the power of personal gratitude to motivate us to a lifetime of obedient living and so to make progress in the way of sanctification (becoming more holy). But is this the way God intended it should be? Did God actually endow us with so much thankfulness for His salvation that we will want to be more and more obedient? Many of us would be inclined to answer yes. After all, the law of God is found in the 'gratitude section' of the Heidelberg Catechism. But John Piper's studied answer is no! God has never given gratitude that standing in the Golden Chain of Salvation.

In his book, Piper invites us to come on a month long journey with him (that's why his book has 31 chapters - one chapter for every day of the month). By steeping our minds in what the Bible says is the proper place to find power for ever increasing, always ongoing sanctification, we will find to our soul's delight that this power is to be found in the very same place where we found justification in the exercise of faith alone by grace alone. Early on the reader will notice that Piper makes a distinction between 'Bygone Grace' (the Grace of God demonstrated and experienced in the past), and 'Future Grace' (the grace of God that is promised to and expected by the believer to be there in the future). One of Piper's key arguments is that gratitude is primarily focused on what has already happened in the past, on what God has already done. That's beautiful and wonderful, but as it turns out, it may not actually be powerful enough to change our behavior, to improve our track record, or sanctify our lives. The upshot – we might not be as thankful as we thought we were or ought to be. That's why God didn't ordain gratitude to inspire or empower our sanctification. This power God built into faith. Explains Piper, "...we find Christian obedience called the 'work of faith,' never the 'work of gratitude (1 Thess. 1:3; 2 Thess. 1:11). We find expressions like 'live by faith' (Gal. 2:20) and 'walk by faith' (2 Cor. 5:7), but never any expressions like 'live by gratitude' or 'walk by gratitude.' We find the expression, 'faith working through love' (Gal. 5:6), but not 'gratitude working through love.' We read that 'the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith' (1Tim. 1:5), but not 'from sincere gratitude.' We read that sanctification is 'by faith in the truth' (2 Thess. 2:13), not that it is 'by gratitude.' We read that 'faith without works is dead' (James 2:26), but not that 'gratitude without works is dead.' And when Jesus deals with the disciples' hesitancy to seek the kingdom first because they were worried about food and clothing, He did not say, 'O men of little gratitude,' He said, 'O men of little faith' (Matthew 6:30). Faith in future grace, not gratitude, is the source of radical, risk-taking kingdom seeking obedience". (John Piper, 'Future Grace', p. 43). The last thing Piper would want to do is confuse or confound justification and sanctification and thereby undo the Protestant Reformation. But His point is well researched and refreshingly Biblical. Our justification is by faith that God has already accomplished all our righteousness in Christ; and as it turns out, our sanctification is by faith in what an amazingly faithful God is sure to do for us today and in the future; faith working in different ways, but both by faith. Sounds like the best news I've ever heard. Sounds like something to be truly thankful for! Praise God in Christ! Do it with your redeemed life – a living sacrifice, motivated, invigorated, and progressing by faith.

Pastor Joel Vander Kooi

IN LOVING MEMORY



MR. RICHARD WALLENBURG



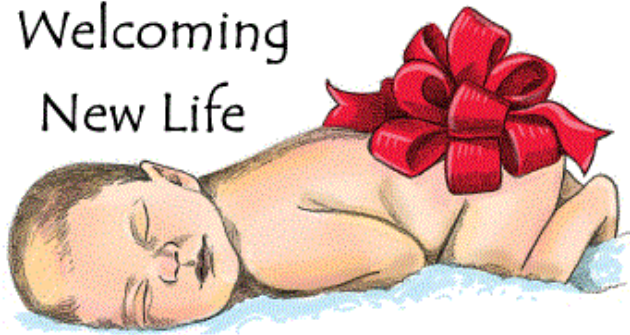
We express our Christian sympathy to the family of **Rich Wallenburg**, who was called to his heavenly home on Monday, September 14, 2015 at the age of 80. Rich had only very recently been diagnosed with stage 4 cancer of the esophagus, which had spread throughout his body, and passed away only a few short weeks after receiving the diagnosis of his condition. Funeral services were held here at RVURC on Thursday, September 17, with Rev. Vander Kooi officiating.

Rich was born on December 17, 1934 in Ireton, Iowa. On September 30, 1955, Rich married Minnie in Rock Valley, and together they walked down life's pathway for very nearly 60 years. Rich and Minnie made their home in Rock Valley, where Rich owned and operated Wallenburg Construction. Together they raised a family of five children.

Rich is survived by his wife, Minnie, and his five children: Rhonda, Ron, Kathy, Brad, and Shar. He is also survived by one brother, two sisters, 12 grandchildren and 8 great grandchildren. May the Lord tenderly comfort all those who mourn with the glorious promises of the Gospel.



Welcoming New Life



We rejoice with **Jessica**, who was blessed with a baby boy on August 5, 2015 at 9:04PM at the Sioux Center Hospital. She named him **Ryker Jay**. Ryker was 7lbs, 3oz and 21" long. Ryker is also welcomed home by his grandparents, Randy and Pam.

We pray that the Lord will bless little Ryker, and we pray that Ryker will love and serve the Lord all the days of his life. We also pray that the Lord will guide Jessica and give her the wisdom and strength she needs to love and nurture this covenant child, teaching him to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. Congratulations!



Arlin, Marijke, Mary Kate and Ben at Churchill Downs in Kentucky



RYS Convention - July 13-17 Asbury, Kentucky

My experience at the RYS convention was great as always! This year convention was located in Asbury, Kentucky, which is about 14 hours from Rock Valley. We amused ourselves by creating licorice designs, watching movies we were able to rent from the Red Box and the ever popular sleeping. On the way down, we made a stop at Churchill Downs, the famous horse racing track, to see the building, which was huge! Unfortunately, time and cost prohibited entering the facility.

Soon after we arrived at the university, it started pouring rain and there was a pretty bad storm that night, but as you have seen- we all survived! Once again it was particularly fun to see many old acquaintances and even hang out with some of my cousins from Michigan. For the day away Benjamin and Mary Kate went to a huge water/amusement park and from what I could tell, they really enjoyed it. Arlin and I went to the Answers in Genesis Creation Museum which was really cool to see- they definitely put a lot of effort into making it! They had beautiful gardens and a petting zoo that had camels, alpacas, zorses (yes, you read that correctly: half zebra, half horse) and other animals as well. We had great lectures on the topic "Amazing Love" and we had awesome fellowship with each other! This year I also joined the RYS choir - there's something exhilarating singing praises with other Christian kids. I would like to thank the church and all the support it gives the Youth Group so we are able to attend Convention! I can't wait till next year!

By Marijke



After being rained out on September 23, the Youth Group was able to reschedule their trip to the Pumpkins on Garfield Corn Maze on October 7. They followed all the clues, and obviously, they found their way back out, safe and sound. There are 10 locations within the maze that you must find, and they even located the bonus find, the minions, which means they earned themselves a free snack afterward. Lots of fun! (If you aren't familiar with minions, ask anyone under 16-they'll know.)

Our visit to the Corn Maze An October Tradition



Look who we found in the corn maze!



SUMMER CHURCH PAINTING



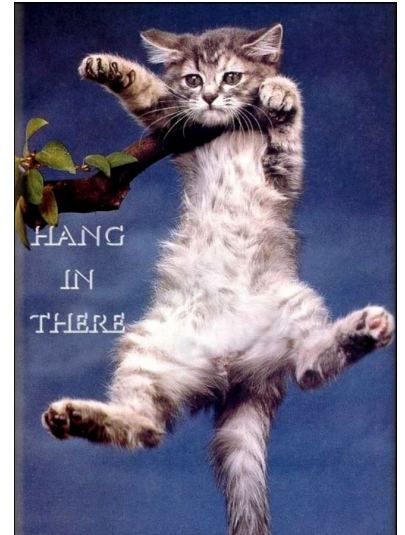
You know, this may not be the best idea I ever had...this peak seems a little higher when you get up here than it looks from the ground. In other words - HELP ME DOWN FROM HERE!!

Poor Cheryl!



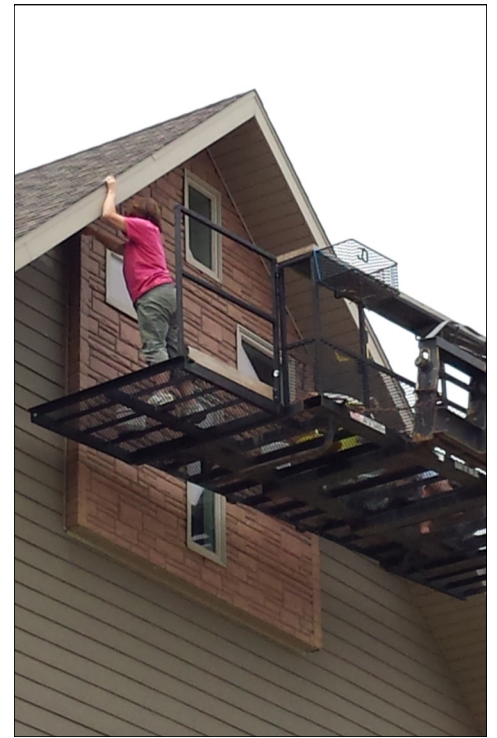
Up, up and away - our brave volunteers get lifted up for the cause. Lance, Randy, Pam, Herm, and Loren get up in those peaks with their paint brushes.

HANG IN THERE!





Randy and Pam heard that cats have 9 lives, so they didn't hesitate to get up high and without a net... but hey, you two, it's **cats** that have the 9 lives, not **Kats!**

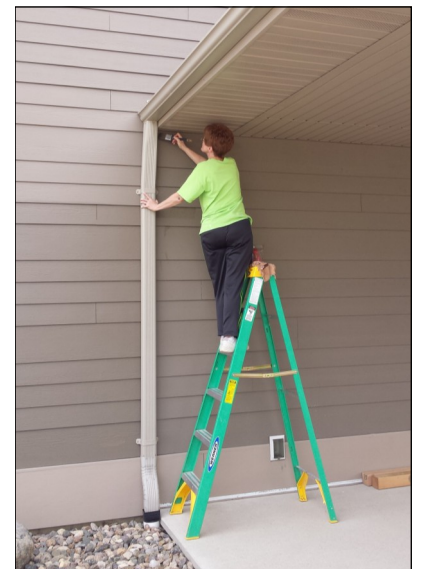


*GOD ASKS NOT ABOUT OUR ABILITY OR INABILITY,
JUST OUR AVAILABILITY*



Some-
one also
has to
paint the
bottom
third of
the
building,
right?

Ladders
go just
about
high
enough
for Lora



Lance, Loren and
Rev. Vander Kooi
celebrate taking
the final stroke of
the brush on
Saturday
afternoon.
It was a big job -
and it was done!
And - everyone
made it through in
one piece -
thanks be to God!





Steeple Addition



Up she goes!



May 2015 marked another milestone for our church building with the addition of our steeple, and along with a fresh coat of paint, it adds the finishing touches to the exterior of the building. Our church building is truly beautiful, and a wonderful blessing from God. We pray that the worship that we bring to our Lord Jesus Christ within those walls will always be beautiful in His eyes; that we will always "lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim, till all the world adore His Glorious Name!"



To
Top
It
All
Off





HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY, RVURC!

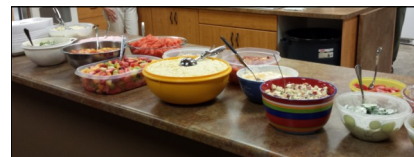
On Thursday, August 13, we celebrated the 10th Anniversary of RVURC with a delicious feast, games, and a Power Point Presentation of the various memories we've shared over the last 10 years. Truly, the Lord has blessed us richly, and it's fitting to rejoice, to remember, and to give thanks to God for all His faithfulness. And so we did!!



Lookin' good, Rev.! Real men aren't afraid to put on an apron.



Thanks, Vander Kooi family, for the *excellent* job on the pork loin. And nice job, Kitchen Crew! Ben, Marijke, Janet, Matt, Rev. and Lance.



We feasted on a wonderful meal of pork loin, potato salad, vegetable and fruit salads, and later cake and ice cream.

We played "RVURC Trivia", and although it's only been 10 years, and not 40 or 50, it's surprising how many things have happened, and who they happened to. "Oh, yeah, that's right! When was that? Oh, yeah, what was his name?"

Later we took a walk down memory lane with a Power Point Video, highlighting many of the memorable times we've shared as a Church Family over the last 10 years.



Oh, yeah, who was that?

When did we do that?

???



Owen checks out brand new baby Ryker.

Aww...



Eyes on your own paper, Mary...no cheating!





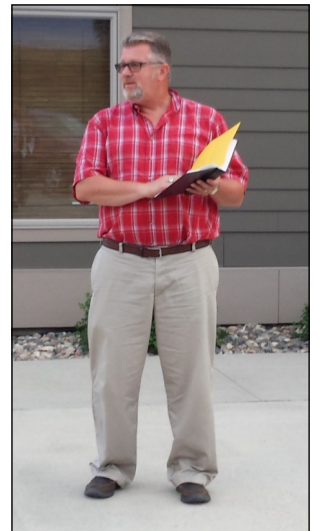
Dedication Ceremony

Along with celebrating our Church Anniversary, we also moved outside to dedicate our new steeple, and to rededicate our church, to the Lord's service and for His glory.

8-13-2015



With her trumpet, Caity led us in singing "Lift High the Cross".





Congratulations to Erin Joy and Alan Dean Who were united in Holy Matrimony!

Erin shares some memories of their special day.



On August 22nd of 2015, I said "I do" to my best friend, Alan Dean. The wedding ceremony took place in my parent's beautiful backyard. It was a little windier than we hoped it would be, but the wedding went on. After taking a little celebratory cruise in Dad's '67 Firebird, we arrived at the reception where all of our friends and family joined us for dinner, toasts, and social gathering. It was an amazing day filled with lots of love and laughter. Our hearts are over flowing with thankfulness for the support and gifts provided to us.

Mr. and Mrs. VDB, 8/22/15

It's Been a Baby Boom of Grandkids!
Just ask these proud grandparents
about their latest pride and joy!
Congratulations to all!



Recent Newborns

- **Doug and Karla** welcomed **Elisha John**, born to James and Rhonda on May 14, 2015. He was 9 pounds, 2 ounces, and 21 inches long. He has an older brother, Titus, and is grandchild #2 for the Kats'.
- **Jay and Doris** welcomed **Jase Westin**, born to Alissa and Nolan on July 31. Jase was 7 pounds, 6 ounces, and 22 inches long. He joins brothers Noah and Lucas, and is their 4th grandchild.
- **Hank and Gail** are proud to announce the birth of a new granddaughter, **Brielle Janae**, weighing in at 7 pounds, 3 ounces, and 20 inches long. She was born on August 26 to Brett and Megan. They are so thankful to God for a healthy new baby. This brings the grandchild count to two boys and two girls, and they feel beyond blessed!
- **Al and Marlene** were blessed with a new granddaughter, **Jenna Jade**, and three new *great granddaughters*, **Andi Olivia**, **Macy Lynn**, and **Finley Grace**. Wow, is their quiver ever full!
- **Rev. Joel and Janet** are rejoicing in the birth of **Taya Renee**, born to Jenna and Calvin on November 1, which, incidentally, is Rev.'s birthday...in case you hadn't heard! Taya was 9 pounds, 1 ounce, and 21 inches long; and she is the reason for that great big smile you see on Rev.'s face!
- This is hot off the press! **Randy and Pam** are welcoming their first granddaughter, **Alayna Gail**, born to Amber and Nathan on November 5. Alayna was 7 pounds, 1 ounce. Randy and Pam now have 1 grandson and 1 granddaughter.
- **Did you know** that former members **Ben and Julie** also recently had their first baby? **Luke Robert** was born on July 14, weighing 8 pounds, 3 ounces, and 20.75 inches long. Additionally, former member **Tonya (and Jon)** were blessed with their 3rd baby, **Hannah Grace**, on November 2. She weighed 7 pounds, 12 ounces, and was 21 inches long. Congratulations to all!



Answers to
Place the Face—
Autumn
And
Brooke



On October 12 the ladies got together for a Bridal Grocery Shower for Erin and a Baby Shower for Jessica . Its always fun to get together and play games, enjoy delicious food, and give gifts of love and support for the young ladies of our congregation.

Jessica received lots of diapers, baby clothes and toys for Ryker, and Erin received lots of useful things to stock her kitchen pantry. She also received LOTS of brownie mix.....so we'll be expecting brownies after church some Sunday night! Best wishes to Jessica and Erin, and may the Lord be near you as you begin new chapters in your lives.

More brownies!!





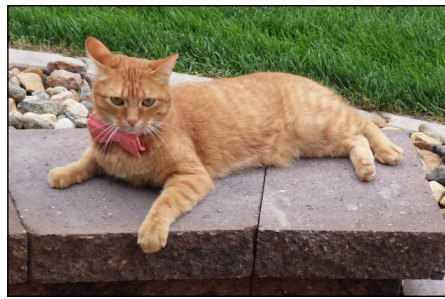
COOPERATION
IS SPELLED
WITH TWO
LETTERS
-WE



The Youth Group's annual Sub Sandwich Project was another big success. An efficient assembly line was formed, and hundreds of sub sandwiches came together quick as can be. Open the buns, stack on the cheese, fill with meat, wrap in cellophane, and fill everyone's orders correctly - these were the orders of the day...and sampling the product or licking your fingers while working on the assembly line is strictly prohibited, *right Rev.?* Thanks to everyone for your orders and for supporting our Youth Group!



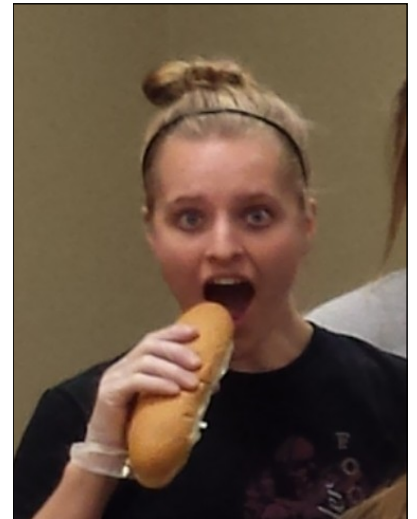
Sunny the Cat in his formal attire at Erin & Alan's wedding. (Notice his bow tie.)



Yes, I'm a cat...and I'm attending my girl's wedding, and I'm wearing a bow tie that matches the groom's...do you have a problem with that? Deal with it!



Lindsay - "What do you mean 'I can't sample the product'? Making hundreds of submarine sandwiches works up an appetite!"



Jessica once again showed rabbits at the Sioux County Fair in July. She showed 8 rabbits, and received two red ribbons, two blue ribbons, and a purple ribbon. Nice job, Jessica!



At the Steeple Dedication, the clouds and the setting sun reflected in the windows in a very beautiful way.

Also at the ceremony, newborn Ryker's little hand is contrasted with his grandfather Randy's big, strong hand



Time out, player injury!
Nursing staff Sarita and Brenda attend to Gail's injured finger.
Relax, Gail, this won't hurt a bit.





Place the Face!

Oh, boy, now who are *these* two little angels?

We assure you, although they look like mischief makers in these photos, they grew up to be very respectable young ladies. Who are they?

Answers are hidden in this newsletter.

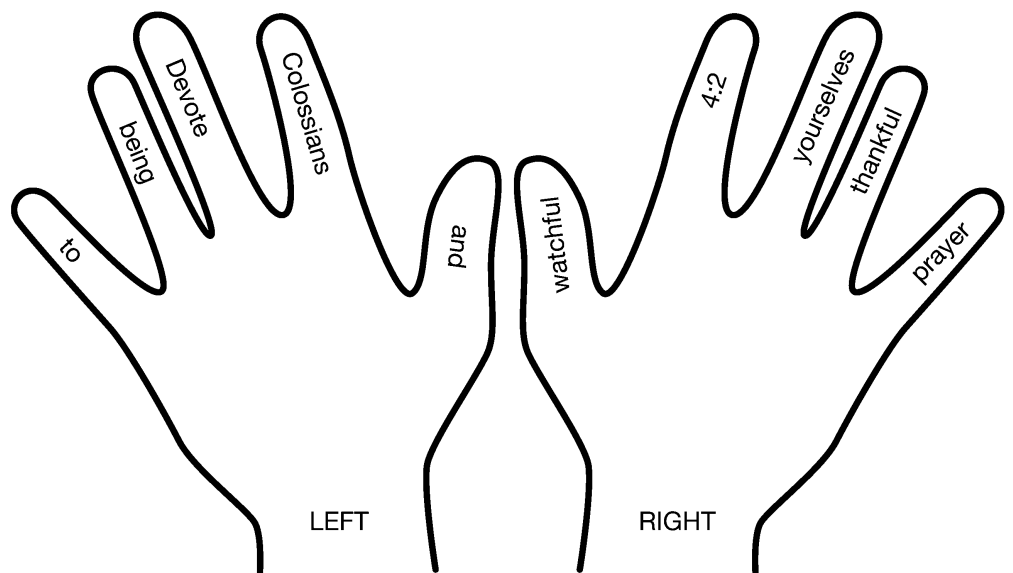


Praying Hands

It's getting very close to Thanksgiving Day, but we should be thankful to God *every* day.

One way to show our thankfulness is to bow our heads, fold our hands, and pray to our Father in Heaven.

Directions: Complete Colossians 4:2 (NIV) by selecting one word on the left hand, then one on the right and so on. Go back and forth, using the word blanks as a guide.



w

: , NIV

Sweet Potato and Pumpkin Bisque **Janet**

With about 2 cups vegetable or chicken broth, in a large pot over medium/high heat, add in;

- * 2-3 medium peeled and cubed potatoes
- * 2 ribs of celery chopped
- * stalks from a head of broccoli, peeled and chopped
- * 2 large carrots, peeled and chopped
- * 1 chopped onion
- * 1 can washed and drained chickpeas

After veggies are cooked through add in about 3 cups of cubed and oven roasted sweet potatoes/yams and 1 1/2 cooked pureed pumpkin. I oven roast the yams separately to develop flavour but they could be cooked in the broth also for simplicity.

Transfer in batches to blender and puree until completely smooth (or use immersion blender); return to pot.

Stir in about 1/2-3/4 cup flour and cook, stirring over medium heat for about 5 minutes. Additional broth (about 6 cups more). Cook over medium heat, stirring often to allow soup to thicken a bit and then add spices. This is where there isn't much of a recipe but start with a little, taste often, and add more as needed. Keep in mind the more ginger you use the 'spicier' the soup will be so not as big a sell for the younger crowd, but the right amount will add a lot of great flavour!

Add in: cinnamon (start with 1Tbsp), nutmeg (start with 1/2 tsp), ginger (start with 1/2 tsp), basil (1 tsp), oregano (1 tsp), salt and pepper to taste.

After soup has thickened, stir in about 1 cup of cream (we use half and half) to make a creamier soup, or leave as is if you prefer.

Curried Carrot Soup **Janet**

- * 2 T oil
- * 1 med onion, coarsely chopped
- * 2 t curry powder
- * 2 med potatoes, coarsely chopped
- * 2 t grated ginger
- * 5 c chicken broth
- * 3 c chopped carrots
- * 1 T lemon juice
- * 2 ribs celery
- * salt & pepper to taste

You may serve this with yogurt

Heat oil, sauté curry and ginger for 1 minute. Add carrots, celery, onion and potato – sauté for 10 minutes, stirring regularly. Add stock, bring to a boil, then simmer until the vegetables are tender. Add salt, pepper and lemon juice. Puree in a blender (use an immersion blender).

Chocolate Poke Cake **Cherie**

For Chocolate Cake:

- 1¾ cups flour
- 2 cups sugar
- ¾ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1½ teaspoons baking soda
- 1 ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup brewed coffee (or 1 cup boiling water if you don't like coffee in the cake)
- 1 cup milk
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For Chocolate Filling:

- 14 oz sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup semi -sweet chocolate chips

For Chocolate Whipped Cream Topping:

- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- ¼ cup cocoa
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1½ cup mini chocolate chips

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease and flour a 9x13 inch baking dish and set aside.
2. In a large bowl combine dry ingredients (flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, baking powder and salt).
3. Add eggs, milk, oil and vanilla and beat on medium speed for 2 minutes, add coffee (or boiling water) and mix to combine (the batter will look runny). Pour it in the baking dish and smooth the top. Bake 35 to 40 minutes, (until toothpick inserted into center comes out clean). If the cake rise too much in the center and crack, you can press it gently with your palms, when it's slightly cooled, just to smooth the top.
4. With a wooden spoon poke holes all over the top of the cake and set aside.
5. Place chocolate chips in a heatproof bowl and set aside. In a saucepan bring sweetened condensed milk to a boil and pour it over chocolate chips. Whisk until smooth.
6. Pour chocolate mixture over the cake and spread to fill in holes.
7. Set aside to cool (about an hour) then refrigerate until completely cooled.
8. To make the topping, mix heavy cream until soft peaks form, add powdered sugar, cocoa and vanilla extract and continue mixing until stiff peaks form. Spread it onto cooled cake and sprinkle with mini chocolate chips. Store in the fridge.

August 13, 2015



*Rock Valley
United Reformed Church
Celebrating 10 Years of
God's Faithfulness
To God Be the Glory!*