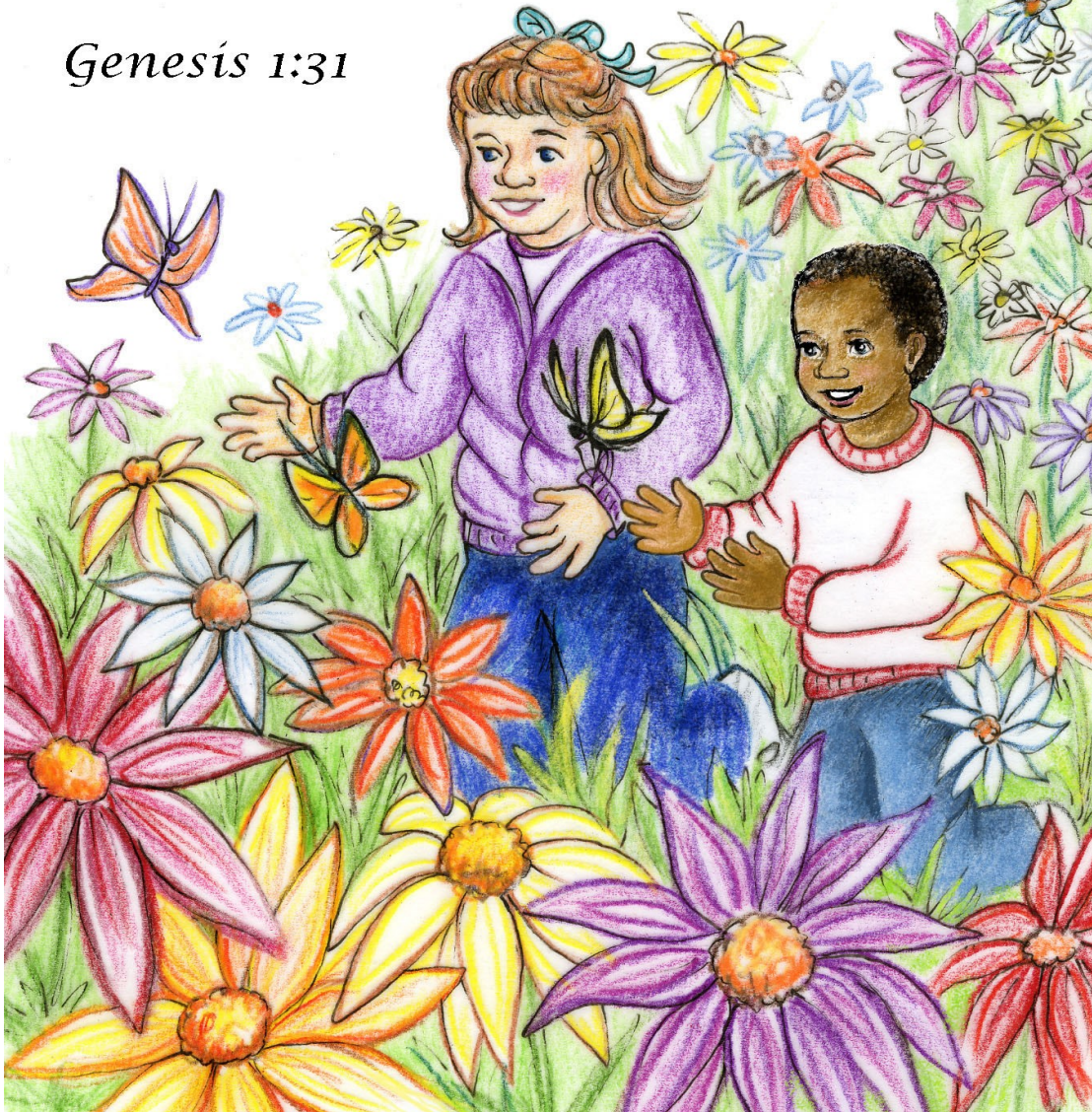


*God saw all that
he had made,
and it was very good.*

Genesis 1:31



*Rock Valley
United Reformed Church
Newsletter Spring, 2014*



There's Something Special about Seeds

Pastor Joel Vander Kooi

I've always loved seed catalogs and packets of seeds: Gurney's, Burpee's, and seed stores of all kinds. The beautiful pictures of bicolored corn, green beans, orange carrots, deep purple beets, and Yukon Gold Potatoes, blueberries, and blackberries, and all the new varieties of tomatoes, are enough to thrill the heart and imagination of every gardener. What a wonderful selection of things to choose from. All this variety reminds us of the words in Holy Scripture: *"And God said, 'Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth. And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good'"* (Genesis 1:11-12). So when we see and appreciate the different varieties we behold the marvelous handiwork of God; and when it looks so good to us we are having the same reaction to it as the One Whose image we bear. Wow, that looks good!

Seeds teach us important lessons about life: What you plant is what you get. If you plant hot chili peppers it would be foolish to expect sweet potatoes. If you plant black caps, it would be crazy to anticipate a harvest of cherries. This is the important lesson that seeds teach us every planting season. And what is true of the seeds we plant is also true of the deeds we plant. For if we're sowing impatience, discord, and grumbling; we would be foolish to expect a harvest of harmony, cooperation, and gratitude. Every day we sow a little something, and nearly every day we reap a little something too. If we're not reaping what we like to reap, we may want to take a closer look at what we're planting: faith, hope, and love would be a nice harvest to bring in. But it's not likely to happen if our conversation is always full of fear, despair, and hatred. And it's not only words which sow a harvest we will reap, but actions also have a way of establishing an entire field which will eventually multiply for harvest: babysitting, baking, lawn care, painting, being there in times of need, lifting others up, these deeds and more sow seeds.

The Bible says, *"...one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward"* (Proverbs 11:18); but, *"Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity"* (Proverbs 22:8). The law of sowing and reaping also teaches us this that, *"... whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully"*, together with this promise: *"He who supplies seed for the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness"* (2 Corinthians 9:6&10). And this fair warning and timely challenge: *"Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith"* (Galatians 6:10).

Now with the help of our God, wise and happy planting. And with God's blessing, an even more wonderful and abundant harvest for the good of all and for His Glory. Plant with prayer!



Meet Mr. & Mrs. Eric

Eric Gene and Larissa Dee were united in Holy Matrimony on Saturday, March 29, 2014 by Rev. Joel Vander Kooi here at Rock Valley United Reformed Church. Parents of the couple are Dale of Sanborn, Julie of Rock Valley, and Rick and Paula of Rock Valley. Standing up as witnesses were Larissa's sister, Ashley, and Eric's brother, Jared. Following the ceremony a reception was held in the Youth Room of RVURC.

Mr. and Mrs. make their home in Inwood, Iowa.

Congratulations, Eric and Larissa. We pray that the Lord will richly bless you as you go down life's pathway together, and that He will enable you to establish a truly Christian home.



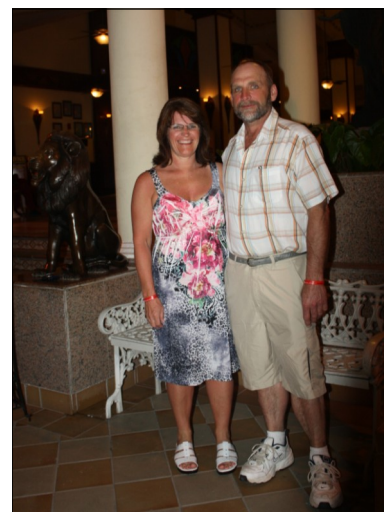
Randy and Pam were recently able to enjoy a Get Away Trip to Jamaica, leaving the girls, the farm, and the Midwest winter behind to soak up some sun and fun! Pam shared the following with us:

In February Randy and I went for a week to Jamaica with my sister and her husband. We stayed in a very nice 'all inclusive' resort.

While we were there we took a tour down a river and to a waterfall. We rode some dune buggies up into the hills a ways and saw how the people live. We also went snorkeling for a couple of hours. The water was so clear - that was a lot of fun. Then we went shopping for a day. They took us to a shopping strip and also to the shops of the local people. These shops were very small, built out of about nothing and it seemed that they all had about the same things to sell. We also spent some time on the beach relaxing.

After seeing Jamaica and how most of the people live, hearing how much they get paid a day and seeing the homes that they live in, we know we are very blessed and have way more than we need in this country.

It was a good time and very relaxing. Randy said the worst thing about this vacation was buying the summer clothes to go; but now we have them all bought, so *I hope* we can do it again some time!



The happy couple enjoying the resort and the beach in sunny Jamaica.



Rejoicing in Covenant Children!

We rejoice with Matt and Autumn in the birth of their first child, **Owen Matthew**, who was born on February 14, 2014. Owen had quite a head start—he weighed in at 9 pounds, 12 ounces, and was 23 inches long! His proud grandparents are Carl and Brenda of Sioux Center, and Bill and Brenda of Rock Valley and RVURC.



Elder, Autumn, Matt and Owen and Rev. Vander Kooi on the occasion of Owen's baptism.

Owen was baptized on Sunday, March 30, 2014, by Rev. Joel Vander Kooi.

We pray that the Lord will grant Matt and Autumn wisdom as they teach their son to love the Lord, and we look forward to assisting them in that awesome responsibility. By His

grace, we pray that we will see Owen grow in faith and knowledge of his Lord Jesus Christ and take up his place here in the Church. Congratulations!



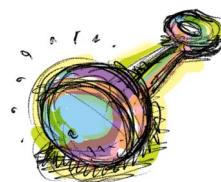
We also praise God with Ryan and Brittany for the gift of a healthy baby girl, **Maci Lynn**, born on April 21, 2014. Maci weighed 6 pounds, 13 ounces and was 19 inches long. Maci is welcomed home by two big brothers, Adam and Tobey. Her proud grandparents are Rainer and Dianne of Doon and Rick and Paula of Rock Valley.

Maci was baptized on Mother's Day - Sunday, May 11, 2014 by Rev. Joel Vander Kooi.

We pray that the Lord will grant wisdom to Ryan and Brittany, enabling them to faithfully raise Maci and all of their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord; and we pray that in her home and here in the Church Maci will learn to love and serve the Lord from the very earliest days of her life and will joyfully take up her place here in the Church. Congratulations!



Elder, Rev. Vander Kooi, Adam, Ryan and Maci, Brittany and Tobey on the occasion of Maci's Baptism on Mother's Day.





Mission Opportunities

Lorna and Gloria recently took some time to go to Costa Rica to help our missionaries, Rev. Bill and Aletha, in their work there with the CLIR Print Shop. Lorna shares their experiences with us:

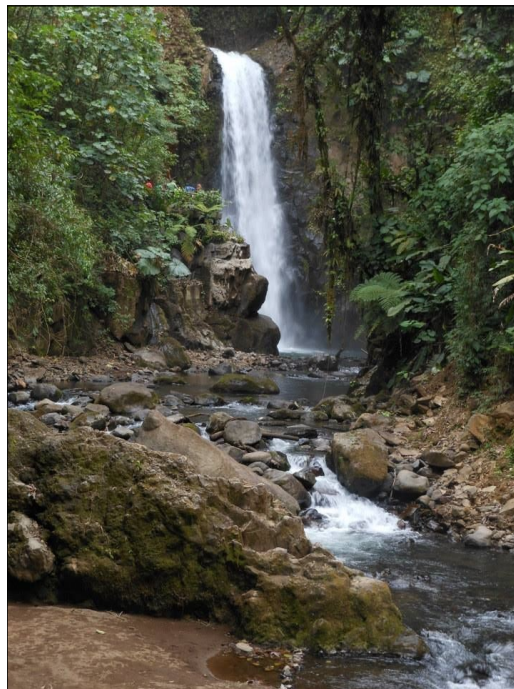
From March 18 – 26 Gloria and I visited our Missionaries Rev. & Aletha in Guadalupe, Costa Rica. Aletha picked us up at the airport and we stayed with them and worked in the CLIR print shop which is right next door to their house. We collated two books, bound recycled tablets and put together the cover of Guido de Bres book in Spanish. On Saturday we took a tour bus to the LaPaz Waterfall Gardens where we saw exotic birds, butterflies, monkeys, hummingbirds, snakes and frogs. We had a buffet lunch and then went through the Jungle Cat exhibit. The highlight of the tour was going above, below and right next to five awesome waterfalls.

On Sunday, we went with Rev. & Aletha to his church plant, meeting in a room at the Christian High School. Rev. led the singing, Sunday School Adult Class and the church service, all in Spanish. In the afternoon, they took us to the Reformed Mission Services church plant in the poorer area of Costa Rica, where Rev. Marvin is pastor. We also toured the Basilica and took a road trip further up the mountains to see the sights. On Monday, we pulled books and boxed a large order bound for the United States, for a customer to sell in a book store. On Tuesday I wrapped 140 book covers, and Gloria made 100 notebooks from scrap paper. On Wednesday, the staff gave us a farewell gift. We had cake and took a group picture. The weather was nice for the ten days we were there.

We thank God for the ability to be able to help out at CLIR and get to know our brothers and sisters in Costa Rica. Thank you for your prayers and interest in our venture.



Staff members of CLIR. Rev. Green is on the right.



Lorna meets Toucan Sam up close and personal!



Teacher Herm, Joel, Ally and Abby



Once again we have come to the end of another Catechism study year. We want to thank the teachers who gave so willingly of their time to train our children in the faith, and thank you, students, for preparing your lessons and participating in class discussions each week. We pray that the Spirit will help you to apply all you have learned to your daily life, and that you will continue to grow in grace and knowledge and love of the Savior.



Adam, Teacher Lorna, and Anna



Nick, Josh,
Teacher Rev. Joel
Vander Kooi,
Jessica, and Ben.



Caity,
Mary Kate,
Teacher Loren,
and Marijke



Joshua will be graduating from Unity Christian on Wednesday, May 21. The class of 2014 chose I Timothy 4:12 as their class verse: "Do not let anyone look down upon you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity."

Josh's future plans include attending Dordt College where he plans to major in computer science and physics. He also plans to run on the Dordt track team. Congratulations, Josh, and may the Lord go with you and guide you in all your future endeavors.

Mary Kate is our 8th Grade Graduate this year. She shared the following: "I'm graduating from Rock Valley Christian School on Thursday, May 22, 2014. My class verse is Colossians 2:6-7. It says "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving." The theme is growing to know Christ like a tree grows its roots. I had a lot of fun at Rock Valley Christian. I enjoyed playing basketball, volleyball, and soccer the most. I plan on playing basketball, cross country, and soccer in high school." We pray the Lord will bless you as you begin a very important chapter in your life, Mary Kate!





Owen helps Janet get her "Grandma fix"



Red Vs. Green Supper



If you live in Iowa long enough, you are sure to get into a debate somewhere along the line of which tractor is best, red or green? That was the question posed to us by the Youth Group on April 2, when they asked us to all pick a side and duke it out in several areas of "friendly" competition after they fed us a delicious meal featuring several red and green foods. They promised an evening of fun & rivalry, and they didn't disappoint us!



Anchor Man!

Now we know the **real reason** the Green Team was so strong...they had **Isaac** in the anchor position, and he gave it his all!



After our nourishment, it was time for the Tug-of-War, a test of brute strength and horse power. First it was the Red Men vs. the Green Men, and the Red's came out on top! But, Red's claim to fame was short lived when the Red Women went down in flames to the Green Gals, and in the combined pull, Red could not overcome the muscle of the Green Team.





JOEL



MATT



MARY



Bean Bag Toss

OUR JUDGES, CAITY & JESSICA



DEDE

Our next game in the "Red vs. Green" competition was not a "feat of strength", but a game of style and finesse, of eye - hand coordination and good aim.

Everyone gets a turn at Bean Bag Toss.

RANDY AND MARIJKE LOOK ON



ED



AMBER



CRAIG



CHERIE
WAITS
HER
TURN

AUTUMN



PAM



LINDSAY TOSSES, JONATHAN & LOREN WATCH



ISAAC
&
BRENDA

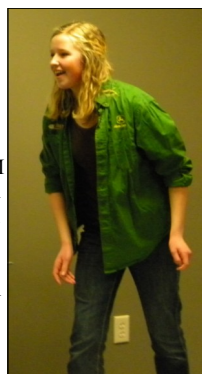


BEN

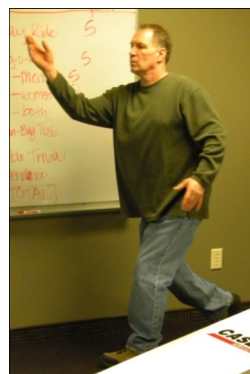


GLORIA

MARIJKE



BILL



After the feats of strength and the games of finesse, we played a Bible knowledge game, testing our memory of Bible "trivia".



Recipe Corner

*If you have a favorite recipe you would like to share,
or if you would like to request a recipe from someone,
submit your recipe or request to Lora or Cherie,
and we'll include it in the next newsletter.
Thanks to all those cooks who are willing to share!*

Cream Cheese Cookies **Peggy Van Maanen**

1 C. white sugar
1 C. Crisco
1 C. butter
1/2 tsp. salt
6 oz. cream cheese, softened
3 C. flour
2 tsp. almond flavoring

Mix and chill for about 20 minutes.
Roll dough in small balls, roll in powdered sugar and
flatten slightly with a fork. Bake at 350 degrees for
12-15 minutes or longer until slightly brown around
edges. Let cool on cookie sheet before removing.

S'Mores Bars **Lindsay Kats**

Cream together:
1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup peanut butter
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup brown sugar

Add:
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla
2 tsp baking powder
1 1/2 cups flour
1/4 tsp salt
Mix and spread 1/2 batter in 9x13 pan.

Cover with:
2 cups miniature marshmallows
1 cup chocolate chips

Crumble remaining batter on top.
Bake 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Do NOT over bake.

Guacamole Dip Recipe **(ala Kooima Co. Fellowship Feast Style)** **Rev. Vander Kooi**

3 Avocados (peeled, pitted, mashed)
2 Roma (plum) Tomatoes (diced)
1 Lime or Lemon (juiced)
1/2 Cup Onion (fine diced)
3 Tablespoons Fresh Cilantro (chopped)
1 Teaspoon of Salt
1 Teaspoon of Minced Garlic
2 Pinches of ground Cayenne Pepper (optional)
1 Tablespoon of Sour Cream (optional)

Place Avocado Pits in bowl of dip to preserve
freshness and keep from 'browning'

Taco Bake **Cherie Groeneweg**

1 pound ground beef
1 packet taco seasoning
* water as called for on back of seasoning packet
3 large flour tortillas (8-inch size)
1/2 cup Salsa Con Queso
1 1/2-2 cups shredded Mexican cheese blend

Directions:

Brown and crumble ground beef. Drain excess grease.
Add in taco seasoning and water (following directions
on back of seasoning packet). Once the taco meat is
ready, turn off heat and add in 1/2 cup salsa con
queso. Give it a good stir until thoroughly combined.

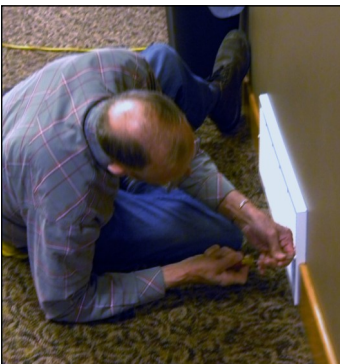
Preheat oven to 350F degrees.
Spray an 8-inch round baking pan with nonstick cook-
ing spray.
Layer the bottom of the pan with a flour tortilla.
Now add about 1/3 of the ground beef taco filling on
the first layer. Then add 1/3 of the shredded cheese.
Continue until you are done with all the layers: an-
other tortilla, more taco mixture, more cheese.

Bake at 350F degrees for about 15-20 minutes until
cheese is melted and edges are slightly golden brown.



Place The Face!

You may think you know everyone in our congregation pretty well, but do you recognize these familiar faces? Answers are hidden somewhere in the Newsletter!

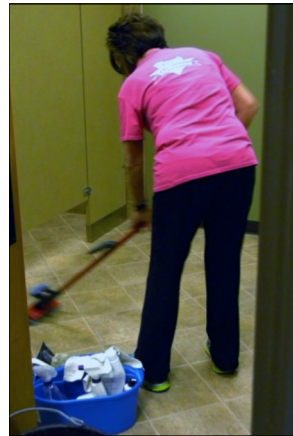


Gene

Gene must've really been standing on his head...Cheryl says if you look closely at that register, you'll see it's in upside down...



Gail



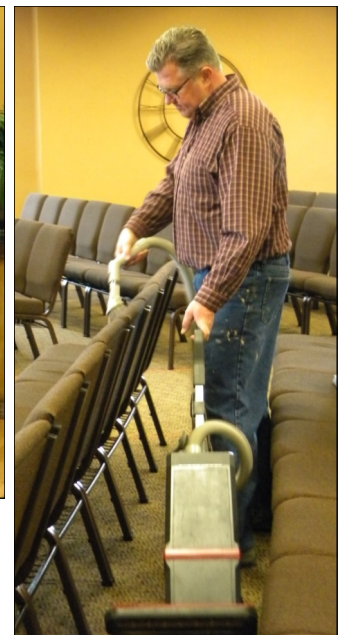
Cheryl



Karla



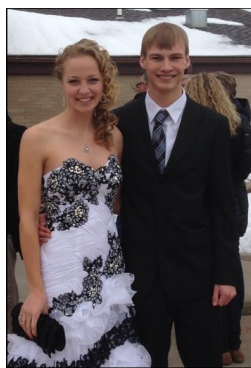
We caught everyone's best side at our Church Cleaning Day on April 14...you know, their hard working, self sacrificing, willing worker side.
(What were you thinking?)



Just look at those smiles. Cherie, Marijke & Audrey are RVURC's **Merry Maids!!**
Don't know if Rev. Vander Kooi wants to be a "Merry Maid"...he seems to be contemplating his next sermon while he vacuums.

Did You Know?

- Did you know that every four years the Rock Valley High School Band gets to take a trip together, and this year **Caity**, as a member of the band, was able to go along? Caity shared the following: “The Rock Valley High School band, along with 15 chaperones including my mom Brenda, went on a band trip to St. Louis & Branson, Missouri. The band has over 80 kids so there was a lot of activities and fun things planned to keep us all entertained. All of the students had a struggle getting up early at 4:45 AM to load up and leave Rock Valley by 5:30 on Wednesday, April 9 for a 8-10 hour drive in a charter bus. Our first stop of the trip was on our way down to St. Louis in Hannibal, MO. There, we visited a Mark Twain museum and explored a cave that has a lot of history. It was a really quick stop where we saw and learned a lot of new things. We then drove a few more hours to arrive at St. Louis. While in St. Louis on Thursday, we visited the Holocaust Museum where we got to meet a real Holocaust survivor. After the museum, all 80 of us went to the St. Louis Zoo where we saw a lot of exotic animals we normally don’t see everyday. After the zoo, of course we had to go see the Gateway Arch. I enjoyed the ride up the tram to the top of the Arch where we got to look out through a tiny window and see the whole city of St. Louis. Right along the Arch was the Mississippi River where we took a dinner cruise with live music from a Dixieland band. On Friday, the band as well as jazz band performed in front of a college professor who helped us out with some new techniques. After our class, we drove another 2 hours to Branson. On Friday Night, the jazz band got to open the show for Legends in Concert. On Saturday, our last day, we spent the whole day/afternoon at Silver Dollar City where we rode roller coasters until we couldn’t walk straight. On Saturday night, we freshened up and dressed up nice for a dinner at the International Chicken & Steak House, where it had a giant chicken statue to welcome you. We then saw an acrobatic show. The next morning, RVHS band loaded up the charter buses for a quiet 10-hour drive home. I was so glad I was able to go on this trip. My mom and I learned a lot and had a great time filled with laughter on our band trip to Missouri.” What a great experience Caity. We’re glad you had so much fun!



Josh and his date, Jordyn, looking good at Prom 2014. Love striking red shoes with the shiny red tractor. The Red Women’s Tug of War Team at the Youth Group supper sure could’ve used Jordyn’s help, but maybe in different shoes...

- Did you know **Josh** was able to enjoy Unity Christian’s Jr. Sr. Banquet on April 4? *Looking good* in that suit, Josh! Notice the background...you know you’re attending prom in Iowa when there is still snow on the roof in April. Good thing they had the Banquet in the snow, though, because this was just one week before Josh injured himself at a track meet. With his arm in a cast and in a sling he wouldn’t have been able to wear his fancy duds!

- Do you know the story behind **Josh’s** injured arm? He was participating in the MOC track meet on April 8. In one of the relay races, Josh had just handed off the baton to the next runner when he lost his balance and fell. It hurt, but he went on. Then, on April 12, he was participating in the Sioux City Relays. He had one race already behind him, but on the second race, when he used his arms to push out of the starting blocks, he began to be in a lot of pain. Despite the pain, Josh ran well in both races. After the track meet, Josh’s dad Craig took him to the emergency room, and sure enough, his arm was broken! Josh was thankful to have had the opportunity to run in the Sioux City Relays, so he was glad he didn’t go to the hospital until they were over on April 12, rather than going when the injury happened on April 8. Needless to say, once his arm was in a cast, his high school track career was over. Wow, we didn’t realize how tough and dedicated to the team you really are, Josh! We pray you will have a quick and complete recovery.

- Did you know that **Rev. Vander Kooi** has a sure-fire dandelion killer in his arsenal? Here’s his organic recipe: 1 gallon vinegar, 2 cups Epsom salt, and 1/4 cup dish soap. Mix in a bucket, then put in a spray bottle and let ‘em have it, spraying directly on the vile weed. Caution: use the “stream” setting on the spray head to apply the killer directly to the weed. Too broad of a spray could result in dead grass surrounding the weed.



A new creation

Just as spring brings beauty and renewal,
in Christ we, too, are made new.



Directions: Follow each flying butterfly to its correct number. Then write that word on the line with the corresponding number to read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

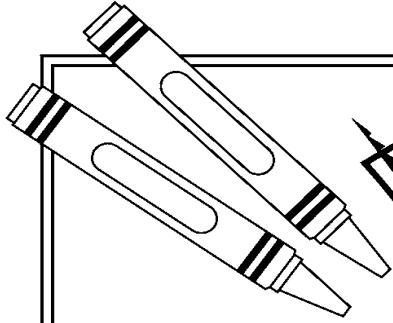
10	old	the	anyone	has	11
8					6
12	new	has		in	9
5			new		7
13	The	Christ	is	the	16
3			creation		17
2	gone	if		come	14
15					4

"Therefore, _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ , _____ 7 _____
 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____ 11 _____ : _____ 12 _____ 13 _____
 _____ 14 _____ 15 _____ , _____ 16 _____ 17 _____ is here!"

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17, NIV

Answers to Place the Face: Amber and Karen

Answer: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17, NIV



PUZZLE

KNOW THE WAY

Thomas said to Jesus, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" (John 14:5, NIV).

Directions: To read Jesus' reply, shade in the letters that contain an asterisk (*) and write them in order on the blanks below.

u n s w e r e i a m h w a
y a n t l r u t c h l f i v e
n o o n a e c s o x m e s
f a z t h e r r o u c d g h
p u m r x e s t j v g o h n

Jes ____ ans _____ d, " ____ the ____
____ d the _____ and the _____.
_____ to the
_____ except th _____."

_____ 14:6, NIV

Answer: Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6, NIV