



SUSSEX CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

April 2024 Newsletter

When the Wind is Blowing by Amy Boyd

We sure have had some wind lately! In grade school I remember we would always talk about the month of March and whether the weather would come and go like a lion or a lamb. Well, in our study of Acts, "The Gospel on the Ground" with Kristi McLelland, we've heard a fair bit about wind also! She tells us it is said in Israel that "When the wind is blowing, the Spirit is moving." I pray that is true for the ladies that are attending this study with me, but also for the rest of you!

We don't want to just *believe* in Jesus, we want to *follow* so closely in the dust of his sandals that it will be obvious to those around us that we're just like him! In Jesus' entire life, he rarely traveled outside a 100 mile radius of his birthplace and yet his name is known unto the ends of the earth. Our focus verse comes from Acts 1:8 "*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*" Something powerful we learned was that the word witnesses in Acts 1:8 comes from the Greek word *marture'o*. This is where we get our word martyr from. The verse carries much more weight when we recognize we are to live sacrificially for Christ to make him known. The Roman Empire around them was settled by Alexander the Great into Vegas-like Hellenistic cities where pleasure and power were the only concerns. The Roman Empire was one of Entertainment, Scarcity and Separation. The early church people had their property confiscated, they were harassed, tortured, arrested, jailed, burned at the stake, and yet, AND YET the pagans who were doing this to them gave them the name Christian because it was so obvious that they belonged to the Kingdom of Celebration, Abundance, and Unity that came through salvation in Christ. They did not bend knee to the emperor, they adopted unwanted children, they were sacrificially generous.

In Matthew 13:31-32 Jesus talked about the kingdom of heaven being like mustard seed. In our culture we think about the appearance of the thing and about how it's a tiny seed, but in the Jewish culture they are concerned with the function and mustard seed's function is to be a highly invasive weed! Kristi tells us that if you stand still long enough it will grow up your leg! Persecution of the early church in Jerusalem caused the mustard seed to disperse throughout the Roman empire and all through Acts you can see that weed grow!

You and I are mustard seed bringing the Kingdom of God unto the ends of the earth today. Where and who will we bring the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of celebration to? Who will recognize in our lives that we are bringing restoration to brokenness? Who has needs we can meet with our abundance? How can we bring unity where there is division? Who is tired of amusing themselves to death and looking for meaning? We are informed by the Word of God, Infused with the Spirit of God! How will the Kingdom of God be made known through YOU? Don't be a believer, be a follower!

-Amy Boyd

..P.S. It was so hard to narrow down all the insights into scripture we've been learning but I felt compelled to share something! So, if your curiosity is piqued, find an attendee or find me and get pumped up about the Gospel on the Ground!

ABOUT SUSSEX CRC

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STAFF

Senior Pastor:

Pastor Kendall Everett

Admin. Assistant:

Rachael Klein

April Birthdays

1: Colby Brands

3: Jim Kuperus

5: Paisley Sullivan

6: Richard Kuperus,
Percy Van Ek

7: Aubrey Everett, Al-
thea Quigley

9: Anneliese Gebauer,
Brianna Kuperus, John
C. Kuperus, June Os-
kamp, Joy Tallamy

11: Rachel Kuperus,
Debbie Van Saun

13: Jean Thiessen, Em-
ma Vander Groef

17: Brynn Sytsema

18: Nolan Apgar, Austin
Niedergall

19: Brian Caton

20: Rylie Everett

21: Sean Gebauer, Ty-
ler Jeltema

23: Rianne Vander
Groef

At Sussex CRC

Council Notes from the March Meeting

- The Council began using the new restructured agenda for Church Leadership meetings. Please see Pastor or any Council member for more information.
- Mutual Censure was conducted as Holy Communion will be celebrated at the Good Friday service on March 29, 2024.
- Pastor Kendall reported that the first new members class, which began on March 9, 2024 was a success. The second meeting occurred on Saturday, March 23.
- The deaconate reported a \$7,092.80 YTD budget deficit.
- The deaconate also reported that there has been an increase in the special offerings since passing of the plates began.
- The deaconate will be increasing the amount that is given to our missionaries by \$100.00 per month.
- RJ & Taylor Vander Ploeg will be heading up Vacation Bible School this Summer. The dates for the will be July 15th to the 19th and will be titled "The Incredible Race." More to come!!

Have Something for the Newsletter?

The next newsletter will come out **Apr. 26**. Stories are due by **Apr. 19**.

Newsletter articles can promote upcoming or recap recent events, highlight a Bible study, youth program, or small group, or give an update on a missionary or organization we support. If you have any questions about or something for the newsletter, contact the church office.

February 2024 Financial Statement

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Benevolent</u>	<u>Special Cause Donations</u>	
Beginning Balance	\$42,410.25	\$25,242.90	Today's Choice	\$300.00
Income	<u>\$26,673.53</u>	<u>\$447.02</u>	Cadets	\$590.01
Total	\$69,083.78	\$25,689.92	Capital Improvement	\$125.00
Disbursed	<u>\$34,283.43</u>	<u>\$184.00</u>	Griefshare	\$30.00
Ending Balance	\$34,800.35	\$25,505.92	My Brother's Place	\$25.00
			<u>Special Fund Donations</u>	
			Benevolent	\$170.01
			Missions	\$220.01
			Tuition Assistance	\$260.01
			<u>Monthly Budget Needs</u>	
Amount Needed	\$32,640.90		Classical Shares Paid through February 2024	
Offering Received	\$25,078.49		Denominational Shares Paid through February 2024	
Difference	\$(7,562.41)			
Previous month deficit	<u>\$469.56</u>			
YTD Deficit	<u>\$(7,092.85)</u>			



Baptisms

On March 3, we got to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism with Emil & Karisa Talen in the baptism of their daughters, Freya Jeanette and Willow Geesje.



Missionary Updates

Update from the Spalinks in Japan

In the latest newsletter, Larry opened with some good news he recently received. A friend and colleague got good news following a PET scan that she is in remission from breast cancer, that new programs are reporting about the infiltration of the Unification Church (AKA Moonies) of the governing party, and that there are ongoing and extensive connections with non-Christians to their services via the internet. The Spalinks are also enjoying an early spring with blooming flowers and the variety of birds and wildlife in Japan.

Recently, Larry and Ruth have been visiting churches in Japan they've interacted with in the past. It's been bittersweet for them as this may be the last time they are able to visit most of these churches as the Spalinks are scheduled to return to North America at the end of the year. They also reported that they have been conversing with three possible families considering the call towards missionary recruitment. Please pray for those considering working in Japan and that the Spalinks and fellow missionaries will be able to reach their fundraising goals.



In January, there was an earthquake and tsunami on the Noto Peninsula. Many fishing ports and about 70,000 homes were destroyed or are no longer livable. Electric and water has not been restored in all areas yet. There aren't many churches in this particular area, but they are open to relief efforts from faith-based groups. Please pray for those affected by this disaster.

Larry also mentioned the demographic changes Japan has been facing. Japan has a declining and aging population and a very low birthrate, leading to the country losing around half a million people every year. The government has programs to attract foreign workers, with around 3 million in Japan now. The most common places the workers come from are China, Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines, Brazil, Nepal, Indonesia, Taiwan, and USA. Many of these workers struggle with finances, abuse, discrimination, and many are in international marriages that don't always work out. Larry wrote about this leading to a "mission field within the mission field" for the "diaspora ministry." Please pray for the people of Japan, the foreign workers, and for those working with them.

-This article is based on an email newsletter sent by Larry Spalink on Feb. 29, 2024

Update from the Starkenburgs in Nicaragua

Recently, the Starkenburgs sent videos to our congregation to say thank you for donations towards their ministry and for Spanish Bibles. In case you missed it, you can watch these videos by clicking on the following links:

[Message for Sussex CRC Video](#)

[Miskito Bible Thank You Video](#)



The Nicaragua Christian Academy has several job openings for the 2024/2025 school year. This includes:

- Secondary Principal
- Fourth Grade
- Fifth Grade
- Sixth Grade
- Middle School English/Social Studies
- Bible Teacher
- Music Teacher
- School Librarian
- Volunteer Development Director
- Possible opening in Lower Elementary

If you or someone you know might be interested in teaching in Nicaragua, please let either Liam or Jessica know! You can learn more about the school and job openings at international.nca.edu.ni

Prayer Praises:

- God is meeting our financial needs, thanks to so many of you and some new monthly donors!
- For the provision of many Spanish and Miskito Bibles to share in our community and beyond.
- Our family was highly involved in our school's musical production, "The Newsies!"

Prayer Requests:

- That God would provide teachers for our school for the coming school year
- For Caleb as he considers college options and waits for financial aid details
- For wisdom in school leadership and a vision for the most important aspects of our school programs

RECONNECT



A Dire Situation

This past week saw a significant surge in violence as a coalition of gangs has declared the beginning of a revolution to overthrow the Haitian government. Here are the events that have transpired since the beginning of March:

- Gangs breached two main prisons in Port-au-Prince and Croix-des-Bouquets, freeing thousands of prisoners in the process
- The main hospitals, including those run by the government and NGOs, are closed
- The Haitian government issued a state of emergency and curfew, but has no real ability to contain the latest surge of violence
- Major government offices and several businesses have been looted and burned
- Our friends and colleagues are sheltering in place and fearful of venturing out even for basic necessities

We ask for continued prayer for the Haitian people, the Haitian police, and the future of the country



Right Where We Need To Be

The news out of Haiti is devastating, but we are grateful for the opportunity to continue serving the Haitian people here in Florida. As of January 2024, over 140,000 Haitians have been granted humanitarian parole and have found refuge in the United States, many of whom are settling in central and southwest Florida. We know that our relocation to Florida was no coincidence; God orchestrated for us to be here and to serve those who have been forced to flee the unimaginable horrors back home.

We mentioned in our last newsletter that Johnny is partnering with Pastor Obelto Cherubin, himself a Haitian expat, to train and equip Haitian pastors in Florida to plan Creole-speaking churches. Just recently, at a pastor training event in Orlando, Pastor Obelto offered words of encouragement to Johnny, affirming that his presence in Florida is part of God's plan to help bridge the language and cultural barriers faced by local church planters. They have set a goal to plant 5 churches in 3 years and have already met with 18 Haitian pastors determined to see it happen.



"Johnny doesn't know this, but God took him out of Haiti and sent him to me."

- Pastor Obelto