



SUSSEX CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

December 2025 Newsletter

A Note From Pastor Kendall:

Intentional Disciples:

I got to go to a conference our denomination offered this month in Florida and I wanted to share some of my experiences for you all. I plan to share more later, but this can serve as a little preview. For those who are wondering, it was only warm for half a day, then we all needed to bundle up again. The folks from Florida in particular were struggling with this cold that had blown down from the North (sometimes blaming us Northern pastors for bringing the cold with us). Anyways, the conference was called Multiply. It was all about how we as followers of Jesus and churches can multiply disciples, multiply leaders, and multiply churches. It's no secret the church in North America has faced a crisis, losing members and churches slowly and steadily for a couple decades. The Christian Reformed Church has been no exception. So what do we do about this church and membership crisis?

Fortunately, the Holy Spirit has also shown some incredible bright spots. A recent Barna study revealed a major shift in the younger generations returning to regular church attendance. There are lots of cultural factors that appear to have contributed to this movement, but based off the stories we heard at the conference, the churches that are growing the most (spiritually and in number) don't wait for others to come to them--they intentionally make disciples.

Paul writes to Timothy in 2 Tim 2:2, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

Do you see the multiplication of disciples? Paul teaching Timothy to entrust to reliable people who will also be able to teach others. As someone who grew up in church and sat in the pew every week, I learned a lot and grew in my faith. Worship was important. But what helped me grow the most--and ultimately what led me to consider going to seminary--was someone who intentionally disciplined me. He met with me regularly, we read the Bible together, we prayed together, he asked me about the important things in my life and how my spiritual life was going. He challenged me to take steps of faith I didn't think I was quite ready for yet. What was most impactful though, was not just that he was mentoring me, but he was actually helping me mentor others too. That is the key to multiplication. It's one thing to add more people who are growing. It's another to equip them to help other people grow too. If someone helps me grow, and I help someone else grow, and they help someone else grow, suddenly that first intentional discipling effort has resulted in generations of disciples who make more disciples.

Pastor's Note Continued

As a pastor, there are no shortage of opportunities to help people grow as disciples. Premarital counseling is an opportunity to disciple a couple preparing for marriage. Visits are an opportunity to disciple others. Working with our staff and other leaders is an opportunity to disciple others. But my goal is to intentionally disciple a few people who will be able to disciple others also. How about the rest of us? Discipleship is not just for the leaders of the church. We are collectively called to make disciples of all nations. We can all intentionally mentor someone in the faith of Jesus Christ. Sometimes it's scheduled meetings to talk over coffee, sometimes it's inviting others into your discipleship life. I've seen maturing believers intentionally calling others to encourage them in their faith. I've seen men inviting other men to join Bible studies and helping guide them as they seek and ask questions. I've seen mothers inviting young women into their homes to see what Christian parenting looks like. It's those intentional conversations that are helping others grow as disciples who disciple others.

Who can each of us intentionally disciple today?

Elders/Deacons & Districts

District 1

Elder: Owen Valkema

Deacon: Bryce GeBauer

District 2

Elder: Troy Yanoff

Deacon: Zack VanderGroef

District 3

Elder: Steve Van Ek

Deacon: Bob Miedema

District 4

Elder: Rick Vander Ploeg

Deacon: Dan Van Wyk

District 5

Elder: Jon Tallamy

Deacon: Matt Kuperus

District 6

Elder: Keith Niedergall

Deacon: Brandon LaBar



October 2025 Financial Statement

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Benevolent</u>
Beginning Balance:	\$95,333.85	\$23,541.13
Income:	\$36,482.30	\$356.01
Total:	\$131,816.15	\$23,897.14
Disbursed	\$33,473.70	
Ending Balance:	\$98,342.45	\$23,897.14

Special Cause Donations

Today's Choice: \$1301.30

SCS: \$150.30

My Brothers Place: \$75.30

Griefshare: \$50.30

Monthly Budget Needs

Amount Needed: \$35,486.78

Offering Received: \$33,161.20

Difference: \$2,325.58

Previous Month Deficit: \$6,917.38

YTD Deficit: \$9,242.96

Special Fund Donations

Benevolent: \$1511.31

Missions: \$1,464.20

Tuition Assistance: \$1,353.31

Cap Improvement: --

Classical Shares Paid through October 2025.

Denominational Shares Paid Through October 2025.

At Sussex CRC

Council Notes from the November Meeting

November 19, 2025 Council Meeting Highlights:

Newly elected Elders & Deacons attended the meeting as visitors. Thank you to those men for their willingness to serve the Lord in His Kingdom.

Holy Communion will be celebrated on December 28, 2025.

Final afternoon plans were presented by the Search Committee, which is as follows:

On the afternoon/evening of Saturday, November 22, 2025, the Council & Search Committee, along with their spouses will be hosting dinner with Ian Clark and his wife, a potential candidate for the new Associate Pastor of Worship & Discipleship at our church.

Ian and Susan will worship with us on Sunday the 23rd. The Search Committee will meet with Ian and his wife on Sunday after the morning worship service to review our weekend and answer any questions that they may have.

Both the Council & Search Committee ask for your prayers as God leads us down this path.

Pastor Kendall gave a report on the Multiply Conference that occurred on November 9, 10 & 11.

Rianne Vander Groef & Brittany Bosloper will be leading a new Women's Bible Study beginning on Monday, January 5, and will be consecutive Monday nights until February 16. This new Bible Study will taking a deep dive on the book of Luke and will be a video series along with the study book titled "Luke in the Land". All who may be interested in this new Bible study, should reach out to Rianne and/or Brittany.

Senior High Youth Groups is looking for additional leaders to help out with this important group. Please reach out to Jon or Rachel Kuperus if you feel God's calling to be part of the youth ministry.

Discussions occurred regarding the recent congregational meeting and the evening worship services. With some concerns being brought forth by some members of our congregation, the Council **will continue** to explore and determine **the best** path forward. The Council also covets your prayers and patience during this time.

A membership transfer for the Klingler Family (Kyle, Katie, sons Kole & Mason and Daughter Audri), was received from the Rockpoint Community Church of North Haldon. The transfer request was approved. Welcome Klinger family!!!!

STAFF

Senior Pastor:

Pastor Kendall Everett

Admin. Assistant:

Brianna Kuperus

ABOUT

SUSSEX CRC

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Happy Birthday!

December Birthdays:

12/1: Betsy Van Dokkenburg, Jackson Tilley, John Pabst

12/2: Erica Kuperus, Summer Boyd

12/3: Angelina Accettulli, Wesley Kuperus

12/5: Emily Kuperus, Kathy Jeltema, Shannon Farrier

12/6: Allison Sytsema, Jon Tallamy

12/12: Al Brands, Bill Post, Matt Kuperus

12/14: Craig Van Wyk, Dotty Valkema, Hannah Jurius, Lara Ottens, Zack Vander Groef

12/15: Eden Van Ek, Keith Niedergall

12/16: Stephen Boyd

12/17: Holly Sytsema, Jeff Vander Groef

12/18: Karen Miedema, Michelle Kuperus, Scott Woodell

12/21: Teri Kuperus

12/23: Cheryl Kuperus, Coraline Apgar, Laurel Kuperus

12/24: Daniel Van Wyk, Tracy Vander Groef

12/25: Jerry Reiman

12/28: Caleb Vander Groef

12/29: Christopher Accettulli, Jake Van Wyk

"The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you;

The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace."

Numbers 6:24-26

Missionaries

Who We Support

World Renew - <http://worldrenew.net/>

Today's Choice - www.friendsoftodayschoice.org

Prison Ministry - www.cpmministries.org

Resonate Global Mission - www.resonateglobalmission.org

Hope Thru The Valley - hopethruthevalley.org

Perrin and Jodi Werner (Resonate-Japan)

Liam and Jessica Starkenburg (Resonate-Nicaragua)

Sussex Help Center and Family Promise

Update from Perrin and Jodi Werner

On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. 2 Corinthians 1:10b-11

I stepped behind the pulpit far less prepared than I'd originally hoped. In July and August, I wrapped up our fiscal year reports. I planned to spend a lot of time preparing for my sermon in September. Outside of a church-planting conference in early September, the usual reports, and the resumption of language school, I was free.

Then, in August, the pain started to develop. Several trips to the doctor later, surgery was scheduled. That wasn't in the plan. Suddenly, my free time was gobbled up. The surgery went well, but it had sapped my energy and taken up my time. I was left with just a few days to prepare.

To say I was nervous is an understatement. I have preached hundreds (?) of sermons. Preaching is not normally a worry for me; I usually enjoy it. The problem is that I am not yet fluent in Japanese. I can hold a basic conversation, but I still have a long way to go.

A Reformed Church in Japan (RCJ) minister graciously translated my English sermon into Japanese, but it was largely unreadable for me. Japanese uses three alphabets - Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji. Kanji are small pictograms that combine to make words. There is no secret to reading Kanji; you have to memorize them. Unfortunately, there are about 2,000 Kanji one needs to know to read Japanese fluently; worse, many of them have multiple readings.

After finding the Kanji readings and adding them to my manuscript, I gave it my first read-aloud; it took 54 minutes, 19 seconds. I had been allotted 30 minutes to deliver the message. In the days leading up to the sermon, I read it several times and still couldn't read it fast enough. Providentially, I ran into a friend who suggested transliterating the Japanese into the English alphabet. A few hours later, I read the manuscript again, 33 minutes. I was on track. A few readings and lots of marginal notes later. I was as ready as I was going to be.

My prayer throughout the preparation process was this: Lord, do not let me be a distraction or a novelty. Let your Word be heard.

I preached on hope. Our hopes fail us. Either the object of our hope doesn't have the power to give us what we need, or it doesn't have the goodness necessary to do the right thing. What we need is a hope that is eternal, powerful, and good. What we need is God.

At that little Japanese church, I talked about the God who can turn every circumstance to our good, about the God who uses pain, sorrow, and hardship to conform us into the image of Jesus and bring us to glory. After the service, people were very kind (Japanese people often are), and I left hoping I had been understood.

Update from Perrin and Jodi Werner Continued

A few days later, I got a message from their pastor. The day after my sermon, a long-time member had died after a long battle with cancer. The pastor shared with me a conversation he had with one of his parishioners after the news came out. He was told, "It is hard to lose our brother, but I just heard a message about the God who can turn death into glory, and I'm comforted. It will all be okay."

My eyes watered up. My prayer had been answered; I was understood. More importantly, God's powerful promise to work all things—even death—to our good was understood.

Preaching in Japanese—even with a translated message—feels like a turning point. Only time will tell. It has been incredibly difficult getting to this point, more difficult than I can say here.

I am deeply grateful for your prayers and support. We couldn't have gotten to this point without you.

Thank you.

OTHER NEWS

1. We found a language tutor who can travel to where we are in Tokyo and give lessons to our team. Jodi and the Ohs are doing beginner lessons with Ueda-san, and I'm working through some intermediate material.
2. In January, I'll begin teaching a spiritual formation class at a local international church.
3. I have several preaching opportunities in both English and Japanese on the horizon.

At the end of the 1st Quarter, we had raised 19% of our annual budget, which means we are not *currently* on track to meet our fundraising goal for the year. We remain deeply grateful for your support.

FOR THESE THINGS WE GIVE THANKS

1. I'm grateful for a successful surgery and am feeling much better!
2. I'm grateful for growing opportunities to serve in both English and Japanese, and pray I'll have more in the future.

It has been wonderful to have a language teacher who travels to us. Before, I would spend up to 8 hours each week traveling back and forth to language school. This is a huge time-saver for all of us, and Ueda-san is a great teacher. She also happens to be a Christian, which is a big help as we learn to express our faith in Japanese.

Update from Perrin and Jodi Werner Continued

PRAYER REQUESTS

1. Please continue to pray for our language learning. Japanese is essential for both life and ministry here. Eventually, I'd love to be able to preach and teach without relying so much on others' translation help.
2. Please pray for the year ahead. I am excited by the preaching and teaching opportunities over the next ten months, including some time in the U.S. and Canada next summer. Please pray for fruitful ministry, good coordination and safe travel.

Thanks for your continued support!
The Werners



We took a short vacation during Fall Break to Miyagi Prefecture. We stopped at Senbonmatsu Farm on the way home. It was a great time.

Update from Perrin and Jodi Werner Continued



Joanna at Senbonmatsu Farm. She loved jumping.



Ellie got a taste of riding horses in Korea a couple of years ago and hasn't stopped begging to ride a horse again. She was thrilled.

My first sermon in Japanese at Tanashi Reformed Church.



The pastor of Shoutai Christian Church recounts God's faithfulness to the church. It was a marvelous message. Shoutai has a unique (for Japan) approach to ministry; it was extremely encouraging.

NICA Newsflash: November 2025 Liam and Jessica Starkenburg



Belen and other high school students had the opportunity to participate in the construction of new classrooms on our campus.

LEARNING FOR THE REAL WORLD

Over the past couple of years, NCA has been focusing on connecting learning to the real world, including talking to experts about their work, serving each other on campus, and taking field trips to do real work in our community. The feedback from our own children and from other students and teachers is that it has been a great opportunity to see how what we learn in school is valuable in real life! Here are a few pictures of work students have done.

NICA Newsflash: November 2025 Liam and Jessica Starkenburg



Asher and others from his home-room filling bags with dirt to plant cacti at a farm.



Belen and others from her home-room performing a skit for children at a nearby Christian ministry.



Judah and others from his homeroom about to dig a stuck van out of the mud during their recent service trip.



Police at our home investigating the theft of Judah's wallet.

NICA Newsflash: November 2025 Liam and Jessica Starkenburg

RESILIENCE

A couple of weeks ago on a Sunday afternoon we had a very strange experience. Liam was sitting on the porch and the kids were in the back room when Liam turned and saw a man standing in our home near the side door. Surprised, Liam called out and yelled at him, at which he jumped over our porch railing and was able to escape off of the property. He stole Judah's wallet but could have taken much more.

The next day, sitting at Asher's soccer game, I told that story to a friend who has only recently come to live in Nicaragua, and he asked, "Has anything that's happened in Nicaragua ever made you consider leaving? How can you be resilient in the face of hard things like this?" I thought it was a great question and brought it to the dinner table with friends that evening. We discussed it and decided that it comes down to this: Do I let what happens in the day to day, the frustrations or fears or bumps along the road, determine my steps? Or do I feel God's calling to be here and trust him despite the bumps?

Liam and I have not stayed in Nicaragua because it's fun. Do we love parts of living here? Definitely! The fact that we were having dinner with friends and do so usually multiple times a week is something I love about living in Nicaragua. But we don't live here because we have good friends or because of the beautiful weather in Nicaragua even while it's getting cold in Michigan. We stay in Nicaragua because we feel that God has called us here. Ultimately, we decided around the table, we each have felt a calling to the work that God has us doing here, whether that is at NCA or at another ministry. At some point we will turn over the tasks and ministries that we have here and God will call others to the job, but until then, we feel safe in His calling.

PRAYER

Praises

- Thanks to God that the recent theft was not more serious.
- We are so grateful that Liam's hip recovery has gone smoothly!
- Our family is doing well, and we are looking forward to being all together at Christmas time.

Requests

- Pray that God will continue to keep us safe and provide for our needs.
- Pray that God's calling will continue to be confirmed in our lives and the lives of those around us.
- Pray for the work of Nicaragua Christian Academy as we seek to help our students love and serve the Lord!

Second Month in Kona! Steven and Karissa Koopmans

Our second month in Hawaii has looked drastically different than our first month. This month we have been able to do some reflection, slow down, see where God's hands have been in each part of our journey in Kona... After the chaos of September, this past month has slowed down a lot and we have been able to appreciate the people in our lives and the beautiful place we get to live.

Our home! We moved at the first of this month to a new apartment. This has been a great change for us. Steve was able to get a free air conditioner from work and we have a nice open studio apartment with a beautiful view.

Our vehicle! We are in the midst of selling our Ford Ranger, which Steve has done an incredible job of fixing up. Some close family friends; Jackson and Anneke Ndcheck, have generously let us rent their Nissan Rogue for a discounted price. This has given both Steve and I lots of peace of mind.

Celebrations! My brother-in-law and sister; Ben and Brianna, had their baby! It's a baby boy named Mark, born on October 17. We are both super excited to be an Aunt and Uncle for the first time.

Life as a Teacher: I feel so privileged to be the 6th-8th, and 11th grade math teacher at this school, Wai'aha. I teach pre-PreAlgebra, PreAlgebra, Algebra, and Algebra 2.

As a math teacher I get to bring out the strengths in my students and provide lots of encouragement. It is definitely a subject where some students get it right away and others have to work really hard on it. Planning and executing engaging lessons that make math come alive is what much of my work as a teacher looks like.

The name of the school is 'Wai'aha,' meaning 'waters coming together'. A fun Hawaiian fact is that the big island was divided up like a pie by the early Hawaiians. Closer to the center of the pie is higher up and more forestry, allowing the Hawaiian people to make canoes up the mountain and then roll them down to the beaches to fish for their livelihood. The section where Kona is located was given the name "Wai'aha."

One of the many highlights of each of my days is getting to eat lunch with Steve.

Church: We have gotten plugged into the same church, Living Stones Church, that my family attended when we lived out here as a family, and it is still the same pastor that was here when we were here from 2010-2013. We sit outside next to the beach while we worship. It has been an amazing source of God-centered community.....

Ironman project my 6th graders worked on

The outside of our new home



Second Month in Kona! Steven and Karissa Koopmans Continued

Some Adventures: This month the Ironman Women's Championships took place around the big island. Steve and I volunteered at the finish line catching athletes as they came in, where we would give them a 'lei' (Hawaiian necklace) and a towel. We met some amazing women from Germany....

We were able to use our camping gear to explore a different part of the island where we went on a hike and visited some petroglyphs. We visited a beautiful valley with a steep walk down to a stunning beach. Definitely a highlight for Steve to see such amazing Hawaiian nature.

One of the families in our school is from Finland, and I go on long runs with Liina (the mom) and Steve has connected with Timmie (the dad). We have met some amazing couples and families in Kona who we get along with very well including our respective co-workers and bosses for which we are very grateful. Steve and I both really enjoy the people we work with.

We have been helping with some farm projects for friends we met through Waia'aha, who have the vision for their farm to have young and old people learning together on this property. Working here has been a highlight for me and Steve.

Thanks & Support: Steve and I can not convey how much the support of family and friends means to us. Whether that has been through prayers, emails, letters, texts, phone calls, and financial support.

If you are looking to give financially here is the link to do so:

<https://servantsintl.org/missionaries/koopmans-karissa-waiaha-school-ywam-kona/>

