

July 1, 2018

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: We hope to have a morning catechism service and an evening reading service.

Next Week: We hope to have a morning reading service and an evening catechism service.

Advance Notices:

- July 15, Rev. Adams hopes to preach a preparatory service at 2:30
- July 22, Rev. Hofman hopes to be in our midst for a 9:30 a.m. service with the Holy Supper and a 2:30 p.m. reflection service.
- All the Lord Willing-

Offerings Today: 1st General Fund Next week: 1st General Fund
 2nd School Fund 2nd Living Bread

Local Modern Media Committee: The congregations of Rock Valley, Sioux Center, and Sioux Falls have decided to form a Local Modern Media Committee that will help our church and school community deal with the challenges of modern media and digital technology. We are asking for volunteers to form this committee. Some possible activities that this committee will work on include:

- Offer Technology workshops for members of the congregations to help them with installing filters, setting up cell phone monitoring, etc...
- Helping families with cell phone use by their children. Suggest guidelines, recommendations, etc...
- Be a source of helpful articles - be finding and editing / filtering useful articles about modern media and distributing to our community
- Promote our denominational assets (for example, the NRC Lethbridge modern media website) and opinions about modern media

If you are interested, please contact Craig Timmer. We would especially like to encourage young people and/or couples to consider offering their perspectives and knowledge on this committee.

We Remember in Prayer:

-With thanksgiving, Mr. & Mrs. Craig and Anna Timmer who were blessed with a healthy baby boy, Zaccheus Daniel, on Thursday, June 28.

- Mrs. Zomer, whose sister, Hattie Hubers, passed away this past Friday, June 29. May the Lord give comfort to the mourning family.
- Mrs. Spaans who will undergo another chemo treatment in this coming week. May the Lord give her strength and bless the treatments.
- Our congregation, as we hope to hear the letter of decline read today from Candidate Witvoet. May the Lord yet grant us a man of His choosing in His time and may this need be felt in the hearts of many.
- Those who have been unable to gather with us for some time.

MEDITATION

Jonah's Prayer

*"Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God..." **Jonah 2:1***

Jonah prophesied for many years during the reign of Jeroboam II, king of the ten tribes of Israel. He was known by God's children as a 'jewel' of God's Church and as one of the few just and trusted people in the land. He was known to be godly, always praying for his country and people. Jonah prophesied, in God's Name, that the borders of the ten tribes would be 'as in the days of David and Solomon'. He prophesied that Jeroboam II would win battle after battle. These prophesies were fulfilled. We read in 2 Kings 14: *"He restored the coast of Israel... according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which He spake by the hand of His servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gath-hepher."* (verse 25).

There is no doubt that in those days Jonah was a praying man. Yet, in the first chapter of Jonah, we cannot find even one prayer. How was that possible? Running away from God's countenance and begging His countenance at the same time? Fleeing and seeking God at the same time? Rebelling against God and approaching God in prayer? Jonah, the sleeping fugitive was in the lowest part of the ship, which was heading towards Tarshish. Was that the man with so much grace? Didn't he prophesy in the name of the Lord? If the Lord had allowed him to complete his journey, he would have gone to Tarshish and never prayed again. Instead of continuing his journey, Jonah was thrown into the waves of a wild, boisterous sea.

Why? Why did the Lord stop Jonah from traveling onwards? Why was Jonah desired by God from eternity and, in time, renewed to His likeness? Why did the Lord open a way in Christ for Jonah and moreover call him to become a prophet? By nature, Jonah was dead in sin and trespasses, like all descendants of Adam. Who can ever fathom God's electing good pleasure that He chose Jonah? Who can comprehend the richness of God's mercy, applied by His great love? The Lord could not and did not want to lose His Jonah. God would take care of His own honor. God knew how to deal with the fleeing Jonah. The Fatherly rod came down on Jonah, chastising him. Did

God want Jonah to die? Far from it! God did not seek Jonah's death, but the death of his pride, unwillingness and disobedience. And the result? *"Then Jonah prayed..."* This is fruit of free grace; this is spiritual life!

Jonah was not able to stand, because there was no space in the belly of the fish. Yet, he was much better off inside the fish than above the water because, down under in the sea, he confessed that God was just to cast him away from before His eyes. From the belly of his 'grave' he begged and cried as one who knew he deserved death. What a wonder! His prayer went higher than the dark and deep waters, higher than the clouds and entered the highest Heaven. The Lord did not silence Jonah, but granted him opening in prayer: *"...and my prayer came in unto Thee, into Thine holy Temple."* (Jonah 2:7). Jonah's prayer was accepted by God and he was restored into God's favor again. *"And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."* (Verse 10). Jonah was 'kept' by his God, brought back 'from depths where none can stand.'

What does Jonah, child and servant of the Lord, have to say? His answer: "I, the chiefest of sinners having received this mercy... I am what I am". But Jonah, how can this be? His answer: "In the Temple of God's Holy of Holies is the Greater High Priest: His blood, His righteousness, His prayers. Behold, the Greater Jonah is there." The cleansing power of Christ's blood was revealed to Jonah for the last time when he died and entered into Heaven. At that time, the last wickedness was washed away, because in the Temple of God's Holy of Holies, nothing unclean will be able to enter. At that time it was fulfilled: *"O LORD my God."* (Jonah 2:6), it had a beginning, but then it will never end! Eternity!

Do we understand Jonah's dealings? Are we better than Jonah? *"Then Jonah prayed... with the voice of thanksgiving..."*, do we know this wonder of grace for our heart and soul? Do we know that tearful crying, that weeping? Is Jonah's spiritual experience ever felt by us? We all need to learn something of this before it is forever too late. The Lord does what no one can do and He grants that which no one deserves. *"Salvation is of the LORD."* (verse 9).

~Rev. C. Hogchem

Translated from "Onderdanen van de Koning"

Notes

Netherlands Reformed Congregation

Sioux Falls, SD



*Blessed is that man that maketh
the LORD his trust
Psalm 40:4a*

Church Times: 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 or 6:30 p.m.