

THE BELL

news from fellowship church



w e a r e t h e m

t h i s i s u s

You're invited to Fellowship's

FALL KICK-OFF!

Sunday, September 10

Join us for worship @ 9 or 10:30am as we begin a new worship series called "Casting Shadows" (see page 11) and then stick around or come back for lunch and the Fall Ministry Fair at 11:30am! This will be the first week of Sunday School for the year and will mark the beginning of youth groups, classes, and many other activities at Fellowship. You can check out some of the wonderful ministry opportunities for the fall/year as you visit ministry booths in the Atrium before or after grabbing your lunch and letting your kiddos enjoy the bounce house! We hope you can make it!

GET CONNECTED

What if there was a way to see study groups that are meeting and then easily connect with the leader? What if there was a way to quickly sign up to serve on a local mission opportunity? What if there was a way to check in your child for Sunday School on your way to church? What if you could coordinate your Fellowship Group without needing to send a bunch of group texts? What if there was a way to quickly give online on a Sunday morning or set up a repeating gift?

Wait, there is a way! It's through the **Church Center** App.

You can install this app by going to fellowshipholland.churchcenter.com/setup. There you will find a link to an iPhone or Android app store where you can install a free app that will give you access to everything listed above -- and more!



Don't have a smartphone and feel a bit left out? Don't worry, you can also access this from your computer by going to fellowshipholland.churchcenter.com. As long as we have your phone number and email in our records, you will be able to login.

If you see visitors at Fellowship, encourage them to get the app as well. There they can find ways to not only be welcomed on a Sunday morning, but to also connect with groups where they can belong, grow, and serve.

Sometimes technology doesn't work and can be frustrating. We get it and are here to help. Stop by the office or email gvandenbrink@fellowshippreformed.org and we'll get you rolling.



CARE @ FELLOWSHIP



tending the garden

What a joy to walk through the Fellowship Community Garden and see the abundance in the various plots! It reminds me of the abundance in the Garden of Eden and God's command to steward the earth.

Stewarding the earth seems to come naturally to many people in our congregation. Dick and Liz Carroll, along with help from Carol Walter, joyfully tend the garden at Fellowship Church with love and care. And when the flowers are in full bloom, the gardeners gather the flowers and create beautiful bouquets for the Care Team to share with those who are Homebound or going through a difficult season of life. What a beautiful way to share love with others! We are all blessed by their thoughtfulness and by so many others in our congregation who live out their faith by caring for our community, locally and abroad.

~ pat vorpagel



navigating grief class

Are you experiencing grief or finding yourself in a season of loss? Perhaps you've lost a loved one, a job, or you're experiencing a life-altering diagnosis. Licensed professional counselor and ordained minister, Rev. Kate Meyer, will guide you through a 4-week course that offers insight in allowing God to accompany you through grief and, eventually, to a place of hope.

**Wednesdays: October 11 & 18
November 1 & 8
from 6:30-8pm**

For more information or to register for the class, please email Pat Vorpagel at pvorpagel@fellowshipreformed.org or call the church office: 616.399.9280.

new guests at fellowship

This past month we welcomed new guests from MOKA to use one of our classrooms during the week! MOKA's vision is that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities would be fully included in our communities. Fellowship will play host to a cohort of 8-10 people a few days a week as a launch pad to projects in and around the Holland Community. Feel free to stop by and welcome them as they are often around Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10am-3pm.

HSM | high school ministry

this summer

It's been a great summer with our high school students! Throughout the summer we've enjoyed ultimate frisbee at Winstrom Park, played mini golf and eaten ice cream at Captain Sundae, had a bonfire at the Vander Stelt's, and went boating on Lake Mac. On top of all of these activities, we also had an amazing trip with 32 students and leaders to Estes Park, CO, where we attended Rocky Mountain High. This was a large group worship experience alongside 3,000 other students and leaders. All of this made for a fun and meaningful summer together.



this fall

It's a bummer that summer is almost over, but I am excited for September to come, because HSM will be back to our weekly gatherings on September 10 from 6-8pm. Each of our evenings begin with a meal together from 6:00-6:30, followed by activities, discussion, and small group time. Whether you're joining HSM for the first time or it's your 100th night, the other leaders and I can't wait to welcome you and get this year started. Through Sunday nights, events, and retreats, this year is going to bring opportunities to grow in your faith and in community with others.

~ bryce vander stelt



middle school ministry

ELEVATE

this summer

What an awesome summer our middle school students have had! In June, many students and several of our Elevate leaders served at VBS. That week of service was followed by a bonfire where we enjoyed s'mores and talked about God refining us into Christ's likeness, similar to fire refining gold. Each student wrote down something in their lives that could be refined by God and threw it into the fire. In July, a group of us went to the New Wilmington Mission Conference, where we learned from missionaries how God is at work all over the world, including our own lives. In August, another group of students and leaders went to the Chicago suburbs and served local ministries by sorting clothes and rocks and school supplies, pulling weeds, baking banana bread, and more. We ended the summer with the annual favorite event -- Elevate Summer Olympics!



this fall

As summer comes to a close, we are looking forward to what God has in store for our middle school students this fall! Beginning September 13, Elevate will meet for Youth Group every Wednesday evening during Community Nights from 6:15-7:30pm. At Youth Group we spend time building community, digging into God's Word, and having fun together through games, lessons, skits, small groups, and more. We also gather the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month for Sunday School during the 10:30am worship service. We are excited for the connections that will be built and the ways our middle schoolers will grow in their faith this year!

~ hannah cochrane





KIDS

and families

Our first ever **Grill Out Chill Out** on July 12 was an absolutely fantastic night, even though the weather did not cooperate. God had other plans for the night as we shifted gears and turned it into the Grill IN Chill IN and utilized our gym, concourse, and Youth Center. More than 200 people of all ages came and played, ate, chatted, and met new people. Kids had a bouncy blast on the bounce house/slide combo and many of them got some neat caricature pictures of themselves and got to choose a balloon design by our balloon artist. We are looking forward to the next Grill Out Chill Out in the summer of 2024!



As over 100 kids gathered for **VBS** every morning June 11-14, we also had 75 volunteers who made the week happen. What a blessing it was to see the kids and to get them excited about how to shine Jesus' light in our world! We learned a different Bible theme for each day, along with many fun songs with motions. During the week, our mission focus was Boys and Girls Club of Greater Holland, and we earned over \$1300 for them in the course of these four days. Praise be to God! In addition, almost half of the kids who came are not from Fellowship, so that also was a wonderful way to bless these kids and give them a sense of belonging. God is so good!



SUNDAY SCHOOL

Beginning September 10!

For the 9am service, Sunday School this year will be a little different, since it will be for kids age three (by September 1) through 3rd grade. The 4th and 5th graders will stay in the sanctuary with their parents for this service.

For the 10:30am service, Children and Worship will be offered for kids age three (by September 1) through 1st grade. The 2nd/3rd graders, as well as the 4th/5th graders, will once again be together as a split class.

We are looking forward to Sunday mornings with your kiddos!

BLAST

Beginning September 13!



BLAST - Bible Learning and Sharing Together - is our Children's programming during Community Nights. This is for kids (age 4 by September 1 through 5th graders) on Wednesday evenings from 6:15-7:30pm. BLAST is similar to VBS, where kids go to different stations in the Children's Wing throughout the night. The purpose of BLAST is for kids to learn more about their faith, along with building relationships with other kids and with their leaders. We always have a whole group lesson, and this fall our lessons will center on the nine **Fruits of the Spirit**. BLAST also includes things like small group prayers, free play time, crafts, Lego projects, serving by card-making, group games, and more.

We can't wait to see your child have a BLAST this year on Community Nights!

~ betsy bruins



FELLOWSHIP'S VALUES

How would you describe Fellowship to a friend, colleague, or neighbor? That was the burning question that drove the efforts of a team of Fellowshipians over the past couple of years. The answer to that question emerged from *your stories from, experiences of, and hopes for Fellowship*. Namely, Fellowship is **real, unifying, inviting, and equipping**.

These values reflect the very best of who we are as a church, but also who God calls us to be as his church in the world. The beautiful stories, experiences, and hopes that shaped these values not only reflect something unique and compelling within the Fellowship community, but also a deeper longing, a growing ache even, within our larger culture.

In a culture that is often pretending and performing for each other across social media platforms, politically polarized at every level, lonely and alienated from one another, and desperately searching for meaning and purpose, it truly stands out to be a Christian community committed to being real with God and one another, actively unifying around Christ and Christ alone, intentionally being inviting to friends, neighbors, and colleagues, and equipping one another to serve God and God's world. You might say it's providential that these values emerged for us in this place at this time.

Because these values reflect the very best of who we are, we want to **celebrate** the moments when we see them lived out in our community. Telling these stories is a beautiful way to inspire and uplift one another, to encourage one another, and, as the writer of Hebrews says, "to spur one another on to good works." *To celebrate, we want to hear from you as you mark the moments when you witnessed or experienced these four values. Email the front office if you have a story to share!*

During Eastertide, we engaged the 5Gs - Go Toward, Go Godward, Get Curious, Go Deep, and Get Right – to help us navigate, but also transform, conflict in our lives (OiKR 3). Over the summer, we hosted the Grill Out Chill Out as an opportunity to connect with neighbors, friends, and colleagues who don't yet know Christ or have a church home (OiKR 4). We also hosted a Wonder in Worship gathering to become more aware of the ways we experience awe in our daily worship (OiKR 1).

Because these values also reflect who God calls us to be as his church in the world, we want to continually **take steps** toward becoming more real, more unifying, more inviting, and more equipping.

There are a number of upcoming opportunities (see QR code and page 10) to take steps with us...

Steps to be **real** with God and others...

Steps to **unify** by repairing broken and strained relationships...

Steps to **invite** people into (deeper) friendship with us, with God, and with God's people...

Steps to equip and be **equipped** to steward our gifts, strengths, and financial resources...

We're excited for what God wants to do in, through, and around us this upcoming ministry year through our faithfulness in taking one step at a time. We invite you to take steps with us so that God's blessings might spill over onto those within and beyond Fellowship Reformed Church this year.

~ pastor tierra marshall

Use this QR code to view the 2023-2024 goals (OiKRS) inspired by our values, along with upcoming opportunities to practice them.



THE ALL CHURCH RETREAT IS BACK!

Mark your calendars for **March 8-10, 2024** for a weekend you don't want to miss!

IMMERSE BIBLE READING EXPERIENCE

Immerse yourself in the Scriptures with us this fall as we begin our journey through the Scriptures. We'll gather in small book clubs to discuss the impact of the text on our faith and our lives utilizing the Immerse Bible, which is a six-volume set that takes participants through the entirety of Scripture in three years broken out into two 8-week chunks per year. This experience is not only supported with a group/community but also videos and podcasts that unpack each book of the Bible as well as each week's reading.

A few details...

- You can be matched with a group or bring this to your existing group
- A discounted rate for Immerse Bible set available for a suggested donation of \$35
- Participants can hop in and out each fall and spring along the way as schedules permit
- Groups will meet on various days, including Wednesdays during Community Nights



Learn more and sign up using this QR code!



changes for LOCAL MISSIONS



We will begin the 2023-2024 school year with some big and exciting changes in our local mission efforts. Some things will look similar like the programs we do: **Kids Hope USA**, **Hand2Hand**, **Meet Up & Eat Up**, and the **Hope Christmas Store**, while other things have changed; i.e., who is leading us and the primary space we use to organize!

Kids Hope USA is an established school-based mentoring program built upon a relationship between a Christian church and local school. Volunteers from Fellowship Church meet with students at Lakewood Elementary once a week during the school year; building a supportive and encouraging relationship. As the students graduate elementary and move on to middle school, they have the opportunity to continue within the Kids Hope program by participating in **Kids Hope NEXT**.

Hand2Hand provides food for children facing weekend hunger. Fellowship helps to feed and pray for students at Lakewood Elementary and Pine Creek Elementary each weekend during the school year.

Meet Up & Eat Up is a summer food service program where nutritious meals are provided locally by WO Public Schools' food services to children up to 18 years old living in low income areas in our community. During the meal time, volunteers from Fellowship interact and build relationships with the children and families through crafts, games, books, and special events (photo above and to the right).

The Hope Christmas Store is a one-day shopping event for families experiencing excessive financial burdens. The store provides an opportunity for the families to buy gifts for one another at a very discounted rate. The gifts are all generously donated by the Fellowship congregation. The families that experience the Hope Christmas Store are from Lakewood Elementary, Pine Creek Elementary, and Fellowship Church.



The first big change is our leadership. **Diana Fonseca-Pena** and **Stacie Hoey** are the new Co-Local Missions Coordinators. They have both been involved with Fellowship's local missions for years, but they are stepping into their new roles with hope, gratitude, and excitement. Diana is the Kids Hope Director and leader for Meet Up & Eat Up. She has been a part of Kids Hope for 6 years as a mentor and has volunteered for Meet Up and Eat Up. Stacie will lead the Hope Christmas Store and is the Hand2Hand Coordinator. This will be the thirteenth year for Stacie's participation in both of these ministries.

In addition to the new leadership, the Pantry space got a facelift! *Thank you to a very dedicated team of volunteers from the Fellowship family who helped to make this happen.* The Pantry is freshly painted with new carpet and additional shelving for the food. There is also a two person workstation that has been added, allowing the new leadership team to work together in the renovated pantry. Diana and Stacie have been working hard to organize the food and various supplies into the new storage spaces. Feel free to stop by and check it out!





GLOBAL MISSIONS

trip opportunities

JUAREZ

- Dates: November 11-15
 - **Sign up by September 15**
- \$800 for adults, \$400 for 18-29 year olds
- Come witness first hand the struggle that exists at the US/Mexico border and witness the ways Christians on both sides of the border are loving people who have found themselves stuck in a strangers' town.



NICARAGUA

- Approximate dates: February 25 - March 1
 - Sign up by November 1
- \$1000 for adults, \$500 for 18-29 year olds
- This will be an opportunity to learn about what life is like in the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, along with the community development work of our mission partner. We are focusing our publicity on this trip towards parents who have young adult children (ages 18-29ish). However, ALL are welcome to join.

NETHERLANDS

- Dates: pending, late April/early May
- Curious about ministry and mission in post-Christian Europe? Wonder what church planting looks like in a secular society? Join us as we visit our mission partners and friends Christiaan and Cecilia van Dijk in Appeldoorn NL.

Contact Pastor Nate if you are interested in any of these trips:
nschipper@fellowshipreformed.org

FAITHFUL

giving

At Fellowship, our desire is that everyone would belong, grow, and serve. These often happen best in community which is why we are called Fellowship! Recently, the surgeon general released a report called "Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation" with the subheading of "The Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community." In some of the opening paragraphs Dr. Vivek H. Murthy shares:

"Loneliness is far more than just a bad feeling—it harms both individual and societal health. It is associated with a greater risk of cardiovascular disease, dementia, stroke, depression, anxiety, and premature death. The mortality impact of being socially disconnected is similar to that caused by smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day, and even greater than that associated with obesity and physical inactivity. And the harmful consequences of a society that lacks social connection can be felt in our schools, workplaces, and civic organizations, where performance, productivity, and engagement are diminished..."

Might this be a time where Fellowship, and other area churches, are uniquely prepared and ready to help people of all ages in our community experience connection and freedom from loneliness? One of our goals (OIKRs) this year is to extend more than 10,000 invitations to people in our community, where we each take responsibility to connect with others and invite them to be a part of something where they can experience a rich life with Christ and others through belonging, growing, and serving.

Thank you for being a part of the solution through your financial gifts to Fellowship. We are seeing the Spirit move as we welcome many new faces on Sunday mornings, experience new ways of growing as faithful followers of Jesus through the Immerse Bible Experience and so many other opportunities, and lean into being a place of peace in an ever divisive world.

	FYE 2022/2023	FYE 2021/2022	
BUDGET	Gifts Received	\$1,730,084	\$1,514,622
	Expenses	\$1,688,567	\$1,525,676
	Balance	\$41,517	-\$11,054
	Building Debt	\$2,019,893	\$2,156,134

We are so grateful to end the fiscal year in a positive place. We look forward to another year of faithful ministry together. If you ever want a more detailed look at the finances, please contact Steve Braunius or Pastor Nate.



WORSHIP MINISTRY

experiencing awe



This summer we gathered outdoors on a Sunday evening to *interactively experience awe* and learn about its impact and cultivation in our daily lives and Christian worship. We used the research in Dacher Keltner's book, entitled, *Awe: The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How It Can Transform Your Life* to provide us with a fresh framework and language for what has been true for ages – that God meets us in the transcendent, and changes us to become more like Christ. Keltner defines awe as "the feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends our current understanding of the world." Experiencing awe has been shown neurologically to quiet the parts in our brains that drive competitive, individualistic, lonely, and self-centered behavioral instincts. Awe draws us into a sense of greater belonging and a "right-sized" view of self. Awe is experienced in a variety of ways, but most often via the "8 Wonders of Life" (nature, music, collective effervescence, visual design, epiphany, life and death, spiritual knowing and practice, and moral beauty). If you don't know what those categories refer to, I'd *love* to talk more about it with you! We connected these wonders with what God has given us in nature and community, the teaching of the Scriptures, and the person and work of Jesus Christ. We sang, we mindfully engaged our senses in nature, and ultimately, we took home our shared epiphanies (learnings and "aha!"s) and recognized in the person of Jesus the truest fullness of "moral beauty" (courage, forgiveness, sacrifice, radical love for another, etc.) that transforms the world. We will continue to explore a mindful awareness of how we experience awe in ever-increasing ways in our worship services and are eager to grow on this integrated journey together. Join us!

~ jess mix

opportunities in **ADULT DISCIPLESHIP**

COMMUNITY NIGHTS!

Wednesdays, September 13 - December 13

We are thrilled to begin gathering again to break bread together and help one another become faithful followers of Jesus. We have a number of amazing classes and groups for adults:

- Ain't Misbehavin: an Interactive Book Study on Faith and Ethics | Rev. Dr. Kent VanTil, retired professor of Ethics at Hope College
- Financial Flourishing | Rev. Ken Eriks and various finance experts
- Navigating Grief | Rev. Kate Meyer, licensed counselor and ordained minister
- In the End...: Thinking Well about Eschatology | Rev. Dr. Suzanne McDonald, professor of Systematic Theology at Western Theological Seminary
- Sermon-based Open Fellowship Group | Burt and Marlene Braunius
- Immerse Bible Experience Groups | Various Hosts
- Band Rehearsal (open to anyone who wants to use the space to worship or for solitude)

**What better way to belong, grow, and serve than
Community Nights at Fellowship!**

WAYFINDER WORKSHOP

Practicing the 5Gs of Conflict Transformation
Sunday, September 24, 12:30–3:30pm

The WayFinder Workshop gives Christians an introduction to the work of Christian conflict transformation. Participants are presented with theological vision and Biblical frameworks that provide a Christ-based way forward in a culture that largely only offers two polarizing viewpoints. Participants will also learn and apply the five practices of WayFinder -- *Go Toward, Go Godward, Get Curious, Go Deep, and Get Right* -- imagining how they can better love God and one another through relationships and personal conversations. Lunch will be provided @ 11:45am.



Learn more about these opportunities and sign up using this QR code!





When is the last time you stopped to consider your own shadow?

Shadows are fascinating to think about. Perhaps you heard someone say, “He casts a tall shadow” or, “It’s hard to live in her shadow.” The Bible speaks often of us resting “in the shadow of the Almighty” (Psalm 91:1). It could even be said that all of world history is best understood as being “in the shadow of the cross.” It’s fascinating to think about shadows. You have a shadow - we all do! Live small, and you’ll cast a small shadow. Live large, and you’ll cast a tall shadow. But no matter the size, we all have a shadow. This fall at Fellowship, we want to invite you to think about **“Casting Shadows.”** We’ll not only consider the shadows of the Biblical “greats” who have gone before us, but we’ll also give attention to our own shadows and the collective shadow of Fellowship Church. For now, here are a few prompts to get you thinking about shadows:

1 Remember that every person casts a shadow... even you!

When Grandma speaks and a grandchild hears - that’s shadow casting. When a business leader chooses integrity over profitability - that’s shadow casting. When a teacher keeps on loving kids who are hard to love - that’s shadow casting. When your friends are gossiping and slandering but you speak up to say, “How ‘bout let’s NOT talk about that?” - that’s shadow casting. When the Bible speaks of our deeds having a generational impact (Exodus 20:4-6) - that’s shadow casting! In due time, perhaps already now, people will live in your shadow. Importantly, in the Bible, there are some famous characters who cast tall shadows - Adam & Eve, Abraham & Sarah, Jacob & Esau, Shiphrah & Puah, Ruth & Boaz, Saul & David. This fall, we intend to study their stories and to live in their shadows. We’ll find, in God’s big story, an invitation to consider how we are often just like them.

2 Accept that every person has a “shadow side”... even you!

Truly, none of those Bible characters listed are perfect, and neither are we! The only person in world history who casts a tall shadow and has no hidden flaws is Jesus, the Savior of the world. The rest of us have skeletons in the closet, or what many wise teachers call a “shadow side:” negative characteristics we wish would remain hidden but which must be acknowledged. And the reason God has designed a great rescue plan for all of us is precisely because we all need rescuing. Our shadow side - our fears, anger, and greed, our lust for power, our need to be needed or seen - these things will ruin us if we do not face them and let God redeem us. Sometimes it’s just plain good for us to admit who we really are: the good, the bad, and the ugly. So alongside the stories of some of the Bible’s most famous characters, we’ll also seek clarity about who we are, admitting together, “This is us” - for better and for worse.

A closing question: Have you ever tried to run away from your own shadow?

Spoiler alert: it doesn’t work!

A better plan is to join God in making good use of our shadows, leveraging our strengths, even while recognizing that in the spiritual life, God wastes nothing - not our gifts, not our circumstances, and not even our sins. All is fair game for God’s use in God’s cosmic rescue plan.

So, friends, in the fall of 2023, please join us as we consider together: **“Casting Shadows.”** First, in September and October, we’ll explore the stories of “The Famous Pairs” who have gone before us - the biblical legends - and we’ll admit together, **“We are them”** as we live in their shadows. Then, in November, we’ll consider our own shadows, exploring together who God is calling us to be as Fellowship Church in 2023, and we’ll dare to say, **“This is us.”** Our Gallery will be provocatively shadow-y too. So if you haven’t noticed your own shadow lately — please do so, and let it get you thinking deeply about what God is up to in the world today!

~ pastor ross dieleman





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focused on developing faithful
FOLLOWERS OF **JESUS.**

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