

Mission Group

We gather at 6:00 and share a meal together. Sometimes it is a well thought out coordinated effort of who is going to bring what, but most of the time people contribute whatever they feel like making or have in the house that particular day. Either way, there is always more than enough food, great conversation, and a game on in the background.

At 6:30 Breanna takes the Baragar boys and Henry to play outside or in the basement. We are thankful Breanna is using her gifts to engage and build relationships with the boys. And, she has no problem keeping up with them!

The rest of us spend an hour connecting and growing together wherever the Spirit leads us. We talk about the sermon or share how we have seen God working in our lives over the past few weeks. Most recently we discussed the importance of setting aside enough time to pray together and will incorporate this during our time together.

This fall we had a great time serving together as we spent a Saturday making apple pies and pumpkin rolls. With your support, we were able to raise \$2,650 for the de Leon family. Thank you!

There are many mission groups that meet on Sunday evenings and we would love to have you join.

- Becky Tubergen



Kids Hope USA

Thank you to everyone who gave donations for our Kids Hope Christmas gifts for our families! It's always a highlight of the night and greatly appreciated.



Save the date! Believe it or not, we are in our 20th year of Kids Hope! To help celebrate this milestone, we will be having a luncheon on March 24 for everyone (and their families) who have been involved with Kids Hope over these years. Watch your bulletin for upcoming details and be sure this date is on your calendar! - MK Townley

Birthdays



January

6 - Lynn Berthiaume
6 - Jennifer Parks
9 - Connie Wierenga
13 - Dave Gleason
16 - Marge Berrevoets
24 - Gary Proos
27 - Steve Wammack

February

2 - Nancy Springfield
2 - Caden Gleason
5 - Megan McDowell
11 - Ken Coeling
22 - Don Coutchie
22 - Marcia Schuur
25 - Kathy Burggraaf
25 - Brayden Hawkins
25 - Ron Schuur
26 - Ryan Faasse
27 - Ruth Meendering
28 - Maria Dorn



Check These Out!

CHILDREN

The Friend Who Forgives - A true story about how Peter failed and Jesus forgave. by DeWitt & Echeverri

I Believe In Jesus - Leading Your Child to Christ. by John MacArthur

It Will Be Okay - Trusting God through fear and change. by Lysa TerKeurst

The Hurry-Up - The exit from Egypt. by Gary Bower

Stand Beautiful - Be true to who you are! And stand up for others. by Chloe Howard

God's Very Good Idea - A true story about God's delightfully different family. by Trillia Newbell

ADULTS

All That's Good - Recovering the lost art of discernment. by Hannah Anderson

White Picket Fences - Turning toward love in a world divided by privilege. by Amy Becker

An Extra Mile - A story of embracing God's call. by Sharon Brown

The Storm-Tossed Family - How the cross reshapes the home. by Russell Moore

The Prodigal Prophet - Jonah and the mystery of God's mercy. by Timothy Keller

Prayer - How praying together shapes the church. by John Onwuchekwa

Reformers Before the Reformation



Individuals who followed John Wycliffe and John Huss promoted reform in the century leading up to the Protestant Reformation. Although generally remaining loyal to the Roman Catholic Church, they were still honored by Protestant leaders.

Girolamo Savonarola (1452-98) sought to spiritually transform the city of Florence, Italy. One contemporary historian described his preaching. *"The divine word from the lips of Savonarola descended not amongst his audience like the dews of heaven. It was a piercing hail, the sweeping whirlwind, the destroying sword"*. His ministry led to a civic repentance. The normally riotous carnival season became a religious festival.

Formally violent children now paraded through the city singing religious songs. A bonfire was fueled by a heap of cosmetics, wigs, pornographic books and gambling equipment reportedly piled 60 feet high.

After an invasion of Italy by the French, the rulers of Florence fled the city, leaving Savonarola in charge. He began to speak out against the corrupt Pope Alexander VI, who had tried to silence him by offering him the bribe of a cardinal's hat which he refused. Eventually, the pope excommunicated him and placed a damaging interdict over the city. The frightened public now opposed him and Savonarola was soon hanged. Between sessions of torture, he wrote his *Meditations* on Psalm 12 and 51, called by Luther *"a piece of evangelistic teaching on Christian piety, for in them Savonarola is seen entering in not as a Dominican monk trusting in his vows...but clad in the breastplate of righteousness and armed with the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation...an everyday Christian"*.

The period of history called the Renaissance marked the end of medieval history and the beginning of modern history where man's individuality was stressed. The Italian Renaissance extolled the greatness of secular man. The Northern Renaissance, while acknowledging man's individuality, was largely God-centered, characterized by a renewed study of original biblical languages.

John Calvin was greatly influenced by Jacques Lefevre (1455-1536). In his commentaries on the Psalms, gospels and Pauline Epistles, Lefevre stressed literal Biblical interpretation and justification by faith. Johannes Reuchlin (1455-1522) was a brilliant scholar, completing a Hebrew grammar and dictionary after 20 years of research. A devout Catholic and grand uncle of Lutheran theologian Phillip Melancthon, Reuchlin tried in vain to destroy his beloved nephew's friendship with Luther.

The greatest leader of the Northern Renaissance was Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536). Although he never became a Protestant, he was scornfully accused of laying the egg from which the movement was hatched. Trained in the godly schools of the Brethren of the Common Life and several European universities, he travelled throughout Europe, a welcome guest in all nations.

Erasmus' greatest contribution to the Reformation was the Greek New Testament. It was used to translate the New Testament into German by Luther and into English by Tyndale. Scholars could now see how the original text revealed errors in the Latin Vulgate Bible. Seeing the need for all people to read the Bible, Erasmus wrote *"I wish that the Scriptures might be translated into all languages, so that not only the Scots and Irish, but also the Turk and Saracen might read and understand them. I long that the farm-laborer might sing them as he follows his plough, the weaver hum them to the tune of his shuttle, the traveler beguile the weariness of his journey with their stories"*.

Although stressing a personal relationship with Christ, Erasmus sought to reform the church from within. Luther expressed a mixed opinion when he wrote. *"Erasmus has done what he was ordained to do. He has introduced the ancient languages in place of the pernicious scholastic studies. He will probably die like Moses in the land of Moab. He has done enough to overcome the evil, but to lead to the land of promise is not, in my opinion, his business"*.

While various social and economic factors played a role, the religious situation just before the Reformation was most significant. We will now describe the condition of the Roman Catholic Church covering everyday worship, reforming councils and papal leadership.

- Eric O'Brock

Next - The Church Before the Reformation, Part I

GEMS Update



GEMS has been having a great year. We really enjoyed celebrating Christmas with our special friends. The girls will be singing for the residents of Rest Haven on January 14. All of our special friends are invited and we are looking forward to this time with them. I've been enjoying getting to know our CITs (counselors in training) as we have been learning about spiritual gifts. It's been great to have them and reflect honestly on their own strengths and weaknesses.

Thank you for your support and prayers.

- Shay Newman



Inclusion Update



Welcome to a new year! As an inclusion team, we're so excited about what this year brings.

We're excited to tell you we've partnered with the CLC (Christian Learning Center) Network for a year's membership with their Member Church Program. Thank you to our donor who helped to make this possible!

As a team, we've begun to lay the groundwork for a deeper form of inclusion here at Fourth. As we've done this, we've recognized our passions outweighed our resources of how to do that well. We've gone to seminars and learned in various ways, but we're ready for the next step. This is where the CLC Network came in at just the right moment! In teaming up with the CLC Network, we will receive ten sessions with consultants to help us brainstorm, training experiences, and connections to other churches doing similar things! We're so excited to see how God will use these tools to continue to further his Kingdom work! And we hope you're excited too! Remember... each one of YOU is a part of it. (1 Cor.12:27)

- Julie Schalk

Youth Group



We had a great time last Friday into Saturday with the youth! We played glow golf, video games, board games, a large group game, watched a movie, and had ping pong and Football tournaments.



Our upcoming events include:

Jan. 24:
Guys Jump Night at a trampoline park

Jan 24 - 25:
Girls trip to Frankenmuth's Ice Festival



Feb 9:
Murder Mystery Dinner



- S & K Dennis

