

## December 31, 2023

**This Week:** 9:30 a.m. Catechism Reading Service (LD 28)  
6:30 p.m. New Years Eve Reading Service  
**NO** classes.

**Next Week:** 9:30 a.m. Reading Service  
6:30 p.m. Catechism Reading Service (LD 29)  
Classes after the morning service.

**Tuesday:** New Years service and installation of office bearers at  
7:00 p.m. with Rev. Slingerland.

-All the Lord willing-

**Collections:** Today: 1<sup>st</sup> General Fund Next week: 1<sup>st</sup> General Fund  
2<sup>nd</sup> Israel Mission 2<sup>nd</sup> Emeritus Fund

\*A special collection is being held in the 3<sup>rd</sup> box. Please see note on box

### We Remember in Prayer:

- The call sent out to Ds. Visser to come over and help us.
- Our widows and lonely ones, prodigal sons and daughters, and all those with hidden crosses.

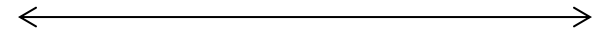
## MEDITATIONS

*"In the beginning was the Word..."* John 1:1

God alone can make a new beginning. This is also true today on New Year's Day. Today you may begin a new year. Today lies between the first day of creation and the moment when time will be no longer. In creation, God made a new beginning. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. He only had to speak, and it came to pass. He has also given you a place here upon earth. Even though the Lord is not in need of anything or anyone, yet He created the heaven, the earth, and man. He did this with the intention of receiving honor and praise from us. But what has become of it, not only in the days gone by, but also today? After our deep falling away from God, the Lord still spoke about a promised Savior Who would re-create. Through granting a new birth and conversion, He made a new beginning, only out of mere grace. The Mediator has many names. Here John called Him The Word. This name is very fitting. This Word became flesh and has lived among us. Can He come any closer than that? Everything you need to know is written

in the Word that is in your hands, also on this first day of the year. The Word is full of God being made manifest in the flesh. Will you be careful with His Word? Will you read it at set times every day of this year? The purpose is not to read long pieces but to have a quiet time with the Word of God. There is only one way to be re-created, and that is when the Holy Ghost lays His Word in your heart.

~Rev. G. J. Vandals



*"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious" I Peter 2: 7b*

My beloved hearers, in Psalm 45, we read in the first place of the Bridegroom, and then of the bride. We have heard those words of praise spoken of the Bridegroom, "Thou art fairer than the children of men" (v 2). In the heart of the bride, there is reverence for her Bridegroom. In her heart there lies the surety that no one can be compared with Him. "He is altogether lovely" (Song 5: 16). There is no spot or any blemish in Him.

The poet speaks not in the first place of Solomon, but of that heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and then of the bride who may see so much in Him, her Bridegroom. He is so precious unto her, because everything for time and for eternity can be found in Him. Seeing the beauty of this heavenly Bridegroom and how matters are with the bride, she says of herself in the Song of Solomon that she is black. What a difference! She says of herself, "Look not upon me, because I am black" (Song 1: 5), and that is the experience of the church throughout all ages.

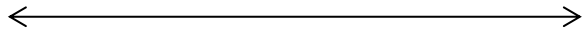
If the Lord will reveal who He is, a holy and righteous God, then He is also revealing what we are. And what is that? He reveals also that there is an unholy and a miserable sinner who is black from sin and who time and again is forgetting and sinning against the Lord. "Look not upon me, because I am black" This is a wonder when we read of the marriage between these two and that they are united with bonds of love that can never be broken. That can only be because the Lord is faithful for His church, although they may forget Him and sin against Him, days without number.

My hearers, it is such an important question whether we have knowledge of these things. Do we know something of the beauty of this Bridegroom? Have we ever come into a relationship with the Lord where we have seen ourselves as sinners before Him? On the other hand, have we ever said with the spouse, "I am black"? Have we ever said it not only with our lips, but that it became the experience of our heart? Have we realized that there is a separation between God and our soul which from our side we can never bridge over?

~Rev. A.M. den Boer

*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. II Peter 3:9*

God is not willing that any of those he has chosen before the foundation of the world should perish, but that all of them should come to repentance. Here observe, 1. Repentance is absolutely necessary to salvation. Except we repent, we shall perish. God has no delight in the death of sinners: as the punishment of sinners is a torment to his creatures, a merciful God does not take pleasure in it; and though the principal design of God in his long-suffering is the blessedness of those whom he has chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth, yet his goodness and forbearance do in their own nature invite and call to repentance all those to whom they are exercised; and, if men continue impenitent when God gives them space to repent, he will deal more severely with them, though the great reason why he did not hasten his coming was because he had not accomplished the number of his elect. "Abuse not, therefore, the patience and long-suffering of God, by abandoning yourselves to a course of ungodliness; presume not to go on boldly in the way of sinners. ~Matthew Henry



When our Lord Jesus Christ was sent to the world in the fullness of time, he declared everything that was needful for our salvation. Even today, he still raises up people as instruments of his Spirit to proclaim his will, to bring others the message of salvation, and to bear witness to that which otherwise would be hidden from us.

In light of these things, may we all be of one mind, and, whether we read in private or are taught in public, let us become stronger in the Word that God has been pleased to communicate to us. We need to remember that so we might have much greater love for his holy Word and give ourselves wholly to it. May we receive Scripture with more reverence, as, indeed, it is most worthy to be received.

Now let us fall before the majesty of our great God and Father, acknowledging him as our judge, who buries our sins in his infinite mercy. Let us pray that it might please him to accept us in mercy in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ~John Calvin

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Consistory

Elders: Mr. Rick Rozeboom, Mr. Craig Timmer      Deacon: Mr. Norm DeWit

Contacts

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Consistory meets the first Monday of the month at 10:00 a.m.

# NETHERLANDS REFORMED CONGREGATION

**Sioux Falls, SD**



*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth  
peace, good will toward men.  
Luke 2:14*

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