

# NEWSLETTER

*In Touch is the church newsletter of the First Reformed Church of St. Catharines published bi-monthly.*



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## LOVE NOT FOR SALE

**As the calendar turns to February,** those of us in the parts of the world where Valentine’s Day is celebrated are certain to be inundated with “love.” We see the trappings of love everywhere as we exchange greeting cards, floral arrangements and heart-shaped boxes of chocolates. February is the month when love is “For Sale.”

Exploiting love is one way many industries thrive in our fast-paced, often chaotic world of commerce. As long as we keep on buying, industries will keep on selling.

How are we to respond to this yearly profusion of “love?” How can

we distinguish genuine love from the romantic and often selfish love promoted by society?

Jesus Christ is our most precious revelation of love. Because of Him, love is not for sale. Jesus paid the price in full when He died on the cross. Now we are free to give love and to receive His love.

The love of God is a divine power indwelling the believer. This love is a reality, not an ideal. God

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SOMEDAY	3	BAZAAR SOCIAL	8
A REVITALIZED ‘IN TOUCH’	4	MISSION OF THE MONTH	9
45 PLUSSERS	5	LEAP YEAR	10
MARTINDALE PLACE	5	BIRTHDAY CORNER	13
PRAYER TEAM	6	A Letter from our Missionary Kim	14
SENIORS MINISTRY	7	Whatever happened to our “Sunday Best”	15



offers His love to us not just in February, but throughout the rest of the year and eternity. His love is revealed to us daily in the lives of ordinary people who abide in His presence.

**God's Love Transforms.** Stories have been told through the ages of the sovereign God who chooses a people to love and protect. We know these stories of love from Scripture: the faithfulness of God's love is shared in the lives of Abraham and Sarah; the mystery of His love is expressed by Ruth and Naomi; the romance and passion of His love is portrayed in the Song of Songs; and the gentleness of His love is shown by Jesus to the Samaritan woman at the well.

So many varied attributes of God's love—and yet there is still another attribute of God's love that is needed in the world today. That is the wonderful capacity of God's love to transform

**God's Love Restores.** The love of this world can neither transform nor restore the lives of broken and rejected people. Rooted in selfishness, love is often based on wishes and needs, exploitation and reputation. This type of love is ineffective in reaching the hearts and meeting the needs of children, moms and dads, singles and the elderly. But God's love is a love that takes broken lives and restores them to wholeness.

Marianne was born into a middle-class family. The oldest of five children, she was mysteriously singled out among her siblings as the target of ridicule and abuse for many years. But God loved Marianne.

In her own words she expresses a wonderful truth about the love that is available to us today: "Jesus loved me enough to die for me. Look at what he endured and suffered for me—an abused, half-dead little girl; a struggling, troubled teenager; a fighting, changing young woman; a loving, victorious woman. For 22 years I did not have anyone who said to me, 'I love you.' But God was saying it all along. His love was there whether I realized it, wanted it or knew it. Imagine what it is like for me to have God say that He loves me and that He wants me for His own."

**God's Love Perseveres.** Paul S. Fiddes wrote, "Our lives are a pilgrimage of love, often wrought with suffering and pain, but, by God's design, always having as the goal His future glory."

When Sandra was five years old, her world collapsed. Her mother died and her father put her into the care of an aging grandmother. The elderly woman provided for Sandra's basic needs but seemed incapable of giving proper nurture and love.

Tom grew up in a rough environment which led to an early departure from home. He met an older man who took him in and introduced him to a life of alcohol, drugs and promiscuity. Tom's view of life became twisted and distorted.

In time Tom and Sandra were introduced to the love of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, and each received a love that would endure. As they met, they began to share this love and eventually decided to marry.

Since then, sadness and despair have continued to visit the lives of these ordinary people. Living in a world where sin and circumstance rob so many of personal victory and fulfillment, they have suffered through miscarriages, the death of an infant and an awkwardness in the ability to open up emotionally to one another, resulting in marital conflict.

And yet, they know the love of the Saviour—a love which has enabled them to persevere even in the face of such trials. Tom and Sandra are not only survivors: they are overcomers and conquerors because of their persistent faith in the Lord. Their

story is real, and their testimony of love is a glorious example of what the love of God is all about.

**God's Love Is Always Sacrificial.** Max Lucado, in his book, "No Wonder They Call Him the Saviour," reminds us, in our search for love, of "a God who knows that the deepest love is built not on passion and romance but on a common mission and sacrifice." Our mission is to glorify our Father in heaven. Our sacrifice of love is harder to understand, and invariably stretches us beyond our natural inclinations.

Jesus anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane, but He chose to do the will of His Father and to demonstrate His love for you and for me. If we are to love as we have been loved, we too will be called to give ourselves to others—our spouses, a child, a neighbour or, indeed, an unreached people. The divine love of God, however, provides that, through faith, "we receive ourselves back" in fuller measure.

As Christians, our first responsibility is to love. But we will not find love in the stores. All of these "loves" that are for sale are imitations. The purest love is the love of Jesus who fills our hearts and directs our lives by the Holy Spirit.

By Gary Organ, taken from Decision

Billy Graham Association

The following poem was written by Tyler Bouw, aged 10, of Red Deer, Alberta, grandson of Walter and Dolores Bouw.

## SOMEDAY

One day on June 1, I was born.  
One day close to my first birthday I crawled with my little hand.  
One day I was outside and I stepped on glass.  
Sometimes when I go to sleep at night I dream I was in a rock band.  
Sometime I wish I could play the drums.  
Someday I will walk to my mom.  
Someday I will run to a soccer ball.  
Someday I will fly to the sky.  
Someday I will thank my mom and dad for helping me in my life.  
Someday I will feel I don't have cancer.  
Someday my heart will be filled with courage.  
Someday when I grow up I want to be in a rock band.  
Someday I will come back and see my family.  
Someday, a long time from now,  
I will remember not having cancer and living a happy life.  
By Tyler Bouw

## HEARTPRINTS

Whatever our hands touch—we leave fingerprints!  
On walls, on furniture,  
on doorknobs, dishes, books.

There's no escape. As we touch we leave our identity.

O God, wherever I go today help me to leave *heartprints!*

Heartprints of compassion, of understanding and love.

Heartprints of kindness and genuine concern.

May my heart touch a lonely neighbour or a runaway daughter

Or an anxious mother or perhaps an aged grandfather.

Lord, send me out today to leave heartprints

And if someone should say, "I felt your touch,"

May that one sense Your love touching through me.

On behalf of everyone at First Reformed, we hope and pray that God is very near to young Tyler and his family, giving them encouragement and comfort.

## A REVITALIZED 'IN TOUCH'

**The questionnaire distributed several weeks ago** regarding *In Touch* resulted in responses indicating overwhelming support for its continuing publication. With renewed enthusiasm and excitement the *In Touch* Committee met recently and made the following decisions regarding our church's publication.

### We defined its purpose.

- a. *In Touch* is to encourage our church family members in their love for God and in their efforts to follow God's leading.
- b. *In Touch* is to assist in strengthening the bond of love between church family members.

### How?

We decided to divide the different types of material to be published based on the following percentages:

#### 50% News about our church family

- reports from various committees (see below for list of contacts)
- special birthdays and anniversaries
- births and deaths of family of our members
- new members and those who have made Confession of Faith
- students away at college or university
- special events such as participation in sport, music, art competitions
- other family news

Knowing specific details about each other will enable us to engage in conversation with someone. How many times has it happened that you'd like to talk to someone, but didn't, because you didn't know what to talk about. We hope the above will be a springboard to get to know one another better and be able to have a chat.

**40% Sacred** We are a church publication and, as such, we wish to encourage growth in our love for, and our service to, our gracious Father, our precious Lord Jesus and His Holy Spirit. Therefore the majority of what is published will be of a spiritual nature.

#### 10% Secular

We will be publishing a small amount of material that will include such things as general information, jokes, recipes, etc.

#### Guidelines

- If you submit an article, please include the author and the source.
- If you write a piece yourself, it will be subject to the discretion of the *In Touch* committee. Your name is to be included and it will be published.
- The *In Touch* committee would appreciate receiving the reports from all committee and groups for every issue.
- We hope to have our publications published on our church's website: [www.firstrefchurch.ca](http://www.firstrefchurch.ca)

#### Contact People

Birthday Corner	-	Wendy DeHaan
Board of Directors	-	?
Consistory Digest	-	?
Christian Education	-	Harry Moes
Coffeebreak	-	Marlene Peacock
Evangelism/Outreach-		John Groot, Bill Sliedricht
45 Plussers	-	Leny Van Atte
Ladies Guild	-	Jane Vanderlee
Martindale	-	Gerda Visser
Missions	-	Alex VanderMeulen
New Members	-	Valerie vanHartingsveldt
Prayer Team	-	Valerie vanHartingsveldt
SALT	-	Dave Schonevville
Senior Ministry	-	Helen Hiebert
Young at Heart	-	Magda Witte
Youth	-	Christine Moes
Worship Committee	-	Jeanne teSligte

WE ARE PLEASED TO PUBLISH THE FOLLOWING REPORTS...

## THE 45 PLUSSERS

**The 45 plus group comes together every second Saturday of every other month beginning at 8:00 p.m. (February, April, June, October, December)** The meetings start with praising God in song followed by prayer. We then read from the Bible followed by a discussion on what was read. We then have coffee with some baked goodies. The people who are in charge bring them. After coffee we have the second half; we do games and sometimes a movie. At 10:00 p.m. we close with prayer.

We all care a great deal about each other. I would like to ask each and every one to come and have a good time with us. We are now about 55 years of age. But then, who's counting?

In June, we try to have a barbeque for the last meeting of the season. Dick and Corrie VanderLely and Dick and myself started off in our basement with 12 people; we now have 37 members. After Corrie and Dick stopped, Norma and Bill Huyzers worked with us. Now that I'm alone, I want to give this to someone else. I have enjoyed it very much. I have still made out the paper for next year and I hope there will be another couple to take this over. Thank you.

Love, Lena Vanatte

2008

June 14	-	Ralph and Jane VanderLee Lena Vanatte Case and Beerdje Schalk
October 11	-	Harry and Lois Schonewille Magda Witte Henk and Ann Boes

December 13	-	Bill and Gerda VanDyk Ricki Blijerveld Leo and Wendy Nauta
2009		
February 9	-	Dick and Corrie VanderLely Nel and Rin Botbyl Gail Pagee
April 13	-	Arie and Gree Vos Martin and Tineke Vuyk Joanne Hiemstra
June 8	-	Gerrit and Gree Moes Tina Schonewille Piet and Ann VanderLee
October 12	-	Ralph and Janet De Groot Dick and Cathy Kok Alda Louwes
December	-	Bill and Norma Huyzers

## Martindale Place:

“A CARING/SHARING CHRISTIAN RETIREMENT COMMUNITY”

Member of Ontario Association for Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors

**In 1988 Martindale Place was legally** incorporated as a non-profit corporation under the business name of Sixty Plus (St. Catharines) Residences Incorporated.

The Board of Martinedale Place (appointed by the Consistory of First Reformed Church of St. Catharines) set about acquiring land and finances so that its dream could be brought to fruition. It was decided that the first four phases of the development would be designed for independent living, that is, for seniors who could function independently with or without assistance from community services and/or physical aids. The

Life-Lease style of leasing was adopted to provide immediate mortgage-free financing for the project and, as well, to provide the lowest possible leasing costs for the tenants.

The apartment building opened in 1991; the first set of patio homes were occupied in 1993 and the second set of patio homes were occupied in 1998. The following Phase of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments had their grand opening on September 28, 2002. The next phase will involve the construction of more independent apartment living units with minimal accessibility to care and monitoring services.

While Martindale Place retains its affiliation with the Reformed Church and, while the management and operation is guided by Christian principles, the complex welcomes all seniors who are comforted by such guiding principles.

Presently we have “no vacancy” and have a waiting list for both apartment buildings as well as the patio homes. If you would like more information or would like to go on the waiting list and have a showing now is the time to do so. Contact our friendly sales staff: Mrs. Gerda Visser at 905-682-9405; Mr. Ralph De Groot at 905-935-1229. You may also visit the internet at [www.martindaleplace.com](http://www.martindaleplace.com) which shows you some beautiful pictures of Martindale Place and surroundings.

By Gerda Visser

## Prayer Team



**As I am concerned about the lack of** importance regarding prayer life in our congregation, I am making it my mission to pray diligently and continually that it will be, from now on, an absolute priority in all our lives. It should be every bit as vital as breathing is to keep the ‘old ticker ticking.’ In my experience, meaningful prayer, which has to be learned by practise, patience, reading the inspirational prayers from many of the people in the Bible and by listening to others who are more experienced and fluent in praying in public.

Prayer is not just asking God for things we want, or things to change in our lives, according to our desires, which is self-centred and shallow, but we should be thanking God for being in our lives, for a start, for His great love for us, for His patience with us, for His faithfulness to us, especially when we do not reciprocate, for all he is to us, Saviour, Redeemer, Shepherd, Guide, Comforter, Friend (but not buddy!), and so much more. As He is a holy God, we should be humbly praising His holy name and worshipping Him, and

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### **The Woodstock Dutch Theatre Group presents...**

“Goeie Reis Kruimel”  
Een blijspel in drie bedrijven  
door Dick van Maasland

**Friday, March 28**

**8:00 p.m.**

Great Lakes Christian College

**4875 King Street, Beamsville**

- Admission: \$15.00
- Available from Bill VanDyk  
905-562-7157
- Tickets also available at the  
door

- Net proceeds to Children’s  
Hospital of Western Ontario
- Coffee and Door Prizes in  
Intermission

not only for an hour or so on Sunday, but while performing average duties around the house, while driving the car, waiting in the doctor's office, or setting apart a certain time each day to bring our concerns to Him regarding people we know who have specific needs or difficulties in their lives. Some people find starting the day off with devotions (prayer and Bible reading), sets the tone for the day; others prefer to pray at the end of the day; but no matter what time of day we choose, be assured that God always has time to listen to us and we should reciprocate and learn to hear what He has to say to us. When we practise this enough we will become more intimate with the Lord of our life. When in prayer, asking forgiveness for our daily sins is vital and God is so willing to forgive us when we are truly penitent.

I am writing this prayerfully as I would like our small but faithful and diligent group of prayer warriors to grow in numbers. Prayer Time has been such a challenge to me, as I was never accustomed to praying in the presence of others, and I admit it was awkward at first, being hesitant and not confident in my feeble attempts. I am glad I did not quit as it has brought an exciting dimension to my life, and an indescribable inner peace to my heart. God is so full of wonderful surprises!

I would like to thank Simon for being such a wise mentor, for Ann, whose awesome prayers seem to be inspired by the King James version of the Bible (a crying towel should be supplied for such prayers) and for Anna, who is such an incredible prayer warrior, so dedicated, loving and faithful to her Lord. I would like to welcome aboard Alison, my daughter, who felt called to join us and pray she sticks it out, to gain all the fruits of the Spirit.

Please give this prayerful thought and come and look us over. Audible prayer is not an absolute if one feels nervous about praying out loud. Silent prayer is acceptable too, as long as we are made

aware of this beforehand. We would also like to thank the elders for joining us in this ministry on a regular basis. We benefit greatly by this gesture and are very appreciative for them making time for this early start to Sunday morning.

P U S H – Pray Until Something Happens  
By Valerie vanHartingsveldt

## Seniors Ministry



**The mandate of Seniors Ministry is to look** after both the spiritual and social needs of church members and adherents 75 years and older. Martin Vuyk who is our chair person and elder Bill VanDyk faithfully oversee the spiritual needs. Pastor Art is requested to see each senior once per year.

The social visitors, who are volunteers, are assigned specific seniors and are encouraged to visit on a regular basis. A record is kept of all visits and these are available to Consistory.

Martin informed us at our January meeting that he will be resigning in June as chairperson after six years of faithful service. We will miss his capable leadership and wish him God's blessing. Please pray that God will send us a leader who will have a heart for Seniors ministry.

By Helen Hiebert

# BAZAAR SOCIAL 2007

**This past year the Bazaar Social was held** earlier - Friday, November 6, 2007. Bargain hunters got some good deals from the Dollar Store. The Kids' Games were organized by Yolanda Koole and run by the youth groups. We were again blessed by many donations from businesses, croquettes donated and made by Audrey deMol, Cristine Huurman and Louise VanAtte as well as cabbage rolls made by Claudia Poirier, Kryna VanGeest and Margaret Vos. A special thank you to the S.A.L.T. and Coffee Break Groups for organizing and running the successful Penny Sale.

A beautiful "I Spy" child's quilt, made by Helen Hiebert, was raffled off and raised \$410.00 for the new kitchen.

This year's winners of the various skill and guessing games were:

Sjoelen (table shuffleboard):

Adults		Adam Fretz (116)
Kids (14 & under)	- Boys	Zack Snoei (92)
	- Girls	Jenny Wubs (47)

Guessing Games:

How Many Candles?	Mackenzie Fretz (132)
Doll's Birthday	Cristine Huurman (March 22)
Doll's Name	Cristine Huurman (Christianna)

The total amount raised at this event was \$3,867.79. The money raised will be used to support the following missions in the city and abroad:

Countryside Camp (Shalom)	\$1,000.00
St. Catharines Community Care	300.00
Teen Challenge Farm	300.00
R.A.F.T.	400.00
Bethlehem Place	400.00
Niagara Life Centre	200.00
Tim & Angie Sliedrecht	300.00
World Vision (Foster Child)	420.00

The bazaar committee of the RCWM would like to take this opportunity to thank all individuals who, and businesses which, so generously supported this year's bazaar. A special thank you goes out to Emile Schmid for coming out to emcee this event for us.

We would appreciate any suggestions or new ideas right now to help us plan for a bigger and better bazaar this coming Fall.

J. Vanderlee, Secretary, RCWM

### LIFE'S RECIPE

1 cup of good thoughts  
 1 cup of kind deeds  
 1 cup of consideration for others  
 2 cups of sacrifice for others  
 3 cups of forgiveness  
 3 cups of well-beaten faults

Mix above ingredients thoroughly. Add tears of joy, sorrow and sympathy for others. Flavour with little bits of love. Fold in 4 cups of prayer and faith. Pour into daily life and bake well with the heat of human kindness. Serve with a smile.

# MISSIONS OF THE WILLY, WE LOVE YOU! MONTH - 2008

<b>January</b>	<b>Beacon Christian Schools</b>
<b>February</b>	<b>Camp Shalom</b>
<b>March</b>	<b>Right to Life</b>
<b>April</b>	<b>Tim &amp; Angie Sliedrecht</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>Jews for Jesus</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>Vacation Bible School</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>Evangelical Fellowship of Canada</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>Kim TerAvest</b>
<b>September</b>	<b>Shalom Manor</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>Out of the Cold</b>
<b>November</b>	<b>Words of Hope</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>Montreal Church</b>

The above schedule is the Missions of the Month for the year 2008. Each mission will be collected for the entire month as assigned.

**Please continue to indicate on your pink envelopes** where you wish to direct your mission donation. It is important that the Deacons know your intentions so that your designated gift will be directed correctly. If you do not indicate your choice, then your donation will go towards the mission on the Sunday it was given.

Should you run out of pink envelopes, small letter-size envelopes may also be used.

Any questions regarding these missions can be directed to Alex Van der Meulen at 905-957-9975.

**We are so blessed and happy that God** sent you to be part of our church family. First Reformed Church would not be the same without you. Sponsoring you has been a unique and exciting experience for us—you have been such a blessing to us and we have learned so much from you. You have a great work ethic, diligent in your studies at Brock, while you hold down one or two jobs to cover some of your costs. You are truly amazing and we are so proud of your achievements so far. We wish you every success in finding work in your field of teaching once you finish your studies at Brock.

It took great courage to come to a foreign country knowing no one and especially not knowing the whereabouts or the safety of your family in the war-torn Congo. Of course, you are strong in your faith and God has guided and strengthened you to face the many difficulties you have experienced since coming to Canada.

We want to congratulate you on your marriage to Mary and wish you both God's richest blessings on this union. We hope that there will not be too much government red tape before Mary is able to join you here in beautiful Canada and, who knows, perhaps your family eventually. We will also keep your family in prayer for their safety and good health.

What a beautiful occasion when the young people of our church organized a soup and bun fund-raiser for the education of your siblings. What a feast and a wonderful time of Christian fellowship!

A well-wisher whose heart you have touched  
By Valerie vanHartingsveld



SCHRIKKELJAAR – DE GREGORIAANSE CALENDAR

It takes a year for the earth to circle around the sun, and that takes 365 days, 5 hours and 48 minutes and 45.1814 seconds. There are special clocks to figure this all out.

If we ignore the difference between the two calendars, after four years we shorten ourselves by one day. To fix this problem, each fourth year, that year gets one day added in February. To keep track of a leap year, if you divide each year by four, that will be a leap year.

In 1580, when this lunisolar calendar was implemented, they were off by ten days. Pope Gregorius XIII was worried about this; he could not figure out the date for Easter. Easter, the first Sunday after the full moon, after spring start. It came too close to Christmas, December 15. Changes were made: March 1 was changed to January 1 as the first day of the year. These changes were good until the year 5000.

Whoever was born on February 29, in addition to your parents, send a thank you card to Julius Ceasaer and Pope Gregorius XIII.

FEBRUARY 29

As far as I know, the tradition was that men always chased the women and a man asked a woman if she would marry him. He was the aggressor, the hunter. If a woman was not asked, she stayed single. If a woman asked a man to marry her, it was a bad thing.

A story was told that, in the 20th century, in a place called Hondenveldje, USA, lived Sadie Hawkins. Nobody ever asked her out. Her father, the mayor of this town named February 29, Sadie Hawkins Day. On this day, all single women were allowed to ask the men to marry them and, whoever was asked, was not allowed to resist this request. All single guys who were not interested



went into hiding on this day. To this day, in some parts of North America, February 29 is called Sadie Hawkins Day.



A CROSS IN MY POCKET

I carry a cross in my pocket, a simple reminder to me Of the fact that I am a

Christian, no matter where I may be. This little cross is not magic, nor is it a good luck charm; It's not meant to protect me from every physical harm.

It's not for identification for all the world to see, It's simply an understanding between my Saviour and me.

continued on page 11

THE BEST COMPANION

**“Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! I John 3:1**

Some people looking for love have found help in an unusual place—a taxicab in New York City. Taxicab driver Ahmed Ibrahim loves to set up blind dates for his single passengers. His matchmaking services have been featured on the Fox News Channel, *The Wall Street Journal*, and NBC’s *Today* show. He doesn’t assist just anybody though: they have to be serious about looking to settle down with someone. Ahmed loves to help romance blossom, and he even hands out roses on Valentine’s Day.

The best place to find love is not in another person but in a book, the Bible. The Bible tells of God’s great love for us. This is expressed in what my friend called the best love note she had ever received. It’s found in John 3:16.

For God so loVed the world,  
 That He gAve  
 His onLy  
 BegottEn  
 SoN  
 That whoever  
 Believes In Him  
 Should Not perish,  
 But have EVerlasting life.

God loves us like no one else ever could. He showed that love when He sent His Son, Jesus to be our Saviour. He’s also the best companion we’ll ever have. Open your Bible and learn more about Him.

*The more you read the Bible,  
 The more you’ll love its Author.*  
 Taken from Our Daily Bread

THE SIMPLE THINGS

**“So tell me,” I asked my wife, “what’s your idea of a heartfelt, genuine expression of love on Valentine’s Day?”**

I was curious because the commercials had convinced me that the only way my sweetheart would know I cared was if I gave her expensive gifts like diamonds, a fur coat, or a two-week cruise to the Bahamas.

“Well,” my wife said, “I think coming home to a clean house would be a good start. I’m usually tired after work, so that would be a great way to say, ‘I love you.’”

*Okay, I thought, that I can handle. I mentally checked off the cruise.*

“What else says, ‘I care?’”

“Um, remember the time when you and the kids had dinner ready? That was priceless.”

*Check off the fur coat.*

“What really stands out,” she explained, “are the simple things that show you have paid attention to the details in my world.”

“Not that I haven’t been paying attention, but like what?”

“Well, like making a mental note when I ooh and ahh over a particular perfume at the mall, then going back later to buy a small bottle for me.”

*Schedule time to visit the perfume count with her later this week.*

“Or a small bouquet of flowers, delivered to me at work so my coworkers can see that my husband did something sweet.”

“So you’re saying that a husband doesn’t have to take out a second mortgage in order to satisfy the expectations of his wife on “Valentine’s Day?”

When I put my hand in my pocket  
 to bring out a coin or key,  
 The cross is there to remind me of  
 the price Christ paid for me.  
 It reminds me, too, to be thankful  
 for my blessings day by day.

And to strive to serve God better  
 in all I do and say.  
 It’s also a daily reminder of the  
 peace and comfort I share  
 With all who know my Master and  
 give themselves to His care.

So, I carry a cross in my pocket,  
 reminding no one but me  
 That Jesus Christ is Lord of my  
 life if only I’ll let Him be.

“Not at all. In fact, the small gestures, handwritten notes, and tiny personal touches—rather than something over the top—warm a woman’s heart.”

“So I should cancel the airplane that’s scheduled to bomb our yard with rose petals?”

She laughed. “That’s probably a good idea.”

By Clark Cothorn, Focus on the Family

## HELLO GOD

**The man whispered,** “God, speak to me” and a meadowlark sang. But the man did not hear. So the man yelled, “God, speak to me.” And the thunder rolled across the sky. But the man did not hear.

The man looked around and said, “God, let me see you.” And a star shone brightly. But the man did not notice. And the man shouted, “God show me a miracle.” And a life was born. But the man did not know.

So the man cried out in despair, “Touch me God and let me know You are here.” Whereupon God reached down and touched the man. But the man brushed the butterfly away and walked on.

Don’t miss out on a blessing because it isn’t packaged the way you expect.

# Caramelized Red Onion Soup With Goat Cheese Crostini

Recipe #145946

3 red onions, thinly sliced  
4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced  
2 teaspoons brown sugar  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
salt and pepper  
1 cup red wine, dry  
3 cups chicken broth  
2 ounces goat cheese (1/4 cup)  
8 slices baguette, each 1/2-inch thick, toasted  
fresh thyme sprigs (to garnish) (option)

1. Heat a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Spray the pan with non-stick cooking spray and add onions, garlic, sugar, and thyme; season with salt and pepper.
2. Cook, stirring often, until onions are quite soft but haven't begun to color, about 25 minutes.
3. Pour in the wine and deglaze the pan, stirring with a spoon to loosen browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Simmer over medium heat until the liquid has evaporated, about 15 minutes.
4. Add the broth and simmer over medium heat until reduced to about 4 cups, about 10 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, spread goat cheese on the toasted bread slices.
6. Ladle soup into 4 warmed bowls and float 2 toasts in each bowl. Garnish with thyme sprigs if desired.
7. Serve hot.

BIRTHDAY CORNER



**FEBRUARY**

- 17 Mr. John Snoei
- 18 Mr. Nick VanGeest  
Mr. Willy Kisongo  
Beth Adams
- 21 Mr. Gerrit Moes  
Mr. Martin Vuyk  
Mrs. Marley Droppert
- 22 Corinna  
BrestvanKempen  
Christopher Frazer
- 23 Ethan VanderLee
- 24 Mr. Walter Bouw  
Mrs. Gaye Nauta  
Mr. Bill Snoei
- 25 Mrs. Lena VanAtte  
Mrs. Kathy Veld
- 28 Mr. Norman Witteveen  
Mr. Fred VanGeest

**MARCH**

- 01 Mr. Stephen Bouw  
Matthew Moes
- 03 Heather Wubs
- 05 Marissa VanderLee
- 07 Mr. Darrell Brenneman
- 09 Mr. Andries Rynberk\*\*  
Adrienne Schonewille  
Joshua Moes
- 10 Jacob Visser
- 11 Rebecka Dekker
- 13 Mrs. Patty Easby

- 14 Mrs. Pauline Wilts
- 15 Mr. Harry Schonewille
- 17 Marlee VanderLee
- 17 Mr. Peter VanGeest
- 18 Mrs. Marlene  
Verhoeven
- 20 Timothy Moes
- 21 Mr. Arie Nieuwland\*\*  
Mrs. Teresa DeJong  
Corey Easby
- 22 Mrs. Ricki Bleyerveld
- 22 Mrs. Wanda  
VanderMeulen
- 23 Mrs. Cristine Huurman  
Joshua Witteveen
- 24 Mr. Ken Schonewille
- 25 Mrs. Ada Louwes
- 26 Mrs. Marlene Peacock  
Mrs. Linda Bouw  
Mrs. Janet Schonewille
- 28 Ms. Corinne Darby  
Mr. Graham Poirier
- 29 Jesse Dekker
- 30 Matthew VanDyk
- 31 Mrs. Nel Nieuwland\*\*  
Mrs. Janny Verkuyl

**APRIL**

- 01 Mr. Rick Brouwer
- 02 Mrs. Theresa Dyck  
Jason Daniel
- 04 Mrs. Miep VanGeest
- 05 Mrs. Nel Brestvan  
Kempen  
Mr. Ralph deGroot
- 07 Ms. Helen Hiebert  
Julianne Moretton  
Melanie Botbyl
- 09 Mrs. Carol Moes  
Nicole Verhoeven

- 10 Mrs. Donna Gram\*\*  
Mr. Bill Easby
- 11 Christie Dekker  
Dalton Maracle
- 14 Mr. Joe Verkuyl  
Mrs. Corrie  
VanderLely
- 18 Mr. Jack Buitenwerf  
Trevor Schonewille
- 19 Michael Moretton  
Jennifer Witteveen

\*\* indicates that this person has reached the age of 80 years. A special congratulations to you! If your birthday does not appear on this list, please accept our apologies and our birthday congratulations and call Wendy DeHaan at 937-9542 so that your name can be added to our list.

## A Letter from our Missionary, Kim

DEAR FRIENDS

**Happy New Year to you** all! I'm either really late, or really early (for the Chinese New Year on February 7) but, in any case, I pray the Father bless, grow and guide you in 2008 (or the year of the rat!)

It feels like much has happened since I last sent you an update, with the whole Christmas season which already feels like a long time ago! As it no doubt was for all of you, it was a very busy time here. Christmas provides a great opportunity to, not only celebrate with brothers and sisters, but also to gather with Chinese friends to deepen relationships and to share the real reason for Christmas. (Christmas has become very popular here with young people, but just as a time to have fun with friends.) In that spirit, I hosted, assisted or attended 11 different Christmas parties (all the while studying)! It was a lot of fun. I met several new Chinese friends that I hope to follow up with, and I was connected with a Bible study group that I'll assist with next semester. So, personally, it was a fruitful season and you can pray that it will also bear fruit in the lives of the many who heard of Jesus birth for the first time.

However, it was also very

exhausting! But our Father is gracious and He provided us with a two-day break from school for New Year's Day that we didn't expect. It was just what we needed to rest and refresh in order to keep going for the final three weeks of the semester. It was rather a relief to get back to a normal schedule. But not for long, as I have just finished my first semester of studying Chinese! Now I have a nice long break, including a vacation and conference in Thailand before the next semester starts on February 25. (We'll see how much Chinese I remember once I get back!)

Thank you so much for your thoughts and emails and packages over the Christmas season! It was such a blessing to feel remembered and connected to you over the holiday, which is always sad away from home. And I would greatly appreciate your thoughts for this upcoming trip, as I'll be travelling on my own the majority of the time in an unfamiliar place. (By the way, I may be out of touch via email for the next month while I'm gone.) Thank you so much for your faithful support and remembrances to the Father! Grace and peace,

Kim

## Change Must Come From Within

**While I'm writing this,** few of us can glance at the first page of the calendar, or the newspaper report of some town's New Year's baby, without some stirrings of optimism. These are the symbols of a fresh, new year, for 2008 is still innocent, unspoiled. For many, this spirit of hopefulness inspires a New Year's resolution: this is the year in which at last we will do it—whatever "it" happens to be for each of us.

But what happens to our New Year's resolutions? Is it simply wishful thinking? We fail, and fail, and fail to renew our lives and ourselves. The project remains incomplete, the move unmade, the weight we'd vowed to lose is still with us and the pernicious habit we kicked forever on December 31 is back before January's first week has run out.

It seems that we cannot so easily escape the old. This month looks too much like the last, its "newness" turns out to be a matter of appearance merely. A rusted old car may be given a new look with a fresh coat of paint, but it will still be hard to start in January and February. And so it is with us: our best

intentions for the new year will remain forever unfulfilled if they are simply laid over the old "us."

If there is to be real change, it must surely work from within. The Bible says that, what we think and say and do, those issues of life we try to amend by our own resolve, are matters not of mere willpower, but "of the heart;" our failure to reform ourselves in small things is symptomatic of a larger problem; we are separated from God and thus unable to do ourselves or others any lasting good, because of our heart's condition of sin.

It is to the heart of mankind that God speaks in His Word, and there, that new life, and real hope, can begin. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come (II Cor. 5:17).

It is Christ alone who offers to all who call upon Him a truly happy New Year.

Taken from Christian Courier

# What ever happened to our "Sunday Best?"

**There is an old Dutch saying:**

"Kleren maken de man," They, the Dutch, even made a movie with that title. Literally translated, it means: Clothing makes the man. An overstatement, no doubt. On the other hand, clothing does count, perhaps more than we realize. Lets see.

Gradually, over the last few decades, we have seen a trend among the general population to dress more casually. Per se, there is not too much wrong with that. Having said that, the idea of dressing "for the occasion," has, for the most part, been lost in the shuffle. Now its quite trendy to attend Church in a way that is more accurately described as careless rather than casual. When one brings up this topic, it is quickly rebuffed with: "God does not judge a book by its cover." Doesn't He? We'll get back to this a little later.

This whole issue of clothing began way back in Genesis. Right after sin came into the world, God clothed Adam and Eve. Incidentally, did you know that they were clothed in light before sin had entered in? Remember Moses, who had been with God for forty days, when he came down the mountain, he shon so brightly that they had to veil him. Adam and Eve were with God and when sin entered in, their relationship with God was broken and lost, the light went out and they discovered that they were naked. Until I heard a



pastor explain it, this was always a question for me; why did Adam and Eve not know they were naked?

Immediately after they discovered they were naked they tried to clothe themselves with fig leaves. However, God thought it to be inadequate and killed an animal, took the skin and clothed them. Our salvation also illustrates this principle of clothing, through the death of Jesus, man was clothed with His righteousness. Proper clothing, spiritual or otherwise, is rather important, Matthew 24 also confirms this.

There are four purposes for clothing. Firstly: protection for the body, secondly: modesty, thirdly: symbolism and fourthly: to show whether you are a person under higher authority. Most of us are getting the drift of the first, perhaps a few comments on the latter ones may be helpful.

**Modesty** may now be considered an old fashioned concept. The story has it that a sermon should be likened to a mini skirt: short enough to make it interesting but long enough to cover the subject. Remember the mini skirt? What were we thinking? And perhaps, that is the point. Men go by

sight, what are men thinking when women dress immodestly? Not to single out women, but there is a greater emphasis on women's clothing than on men's. Just look at the fashion industry. It is a virtuous thing for the ladies to dress in such a way that morally controls the eye of the beholder.

**Symbolism** means that your dress code should indicate your gender. There are also specific dress codes for those who serve various branches of government and are directly under the authority of the government and readily identifiable by their uniforms: police, fire department, military, etc.

**Authority:** this aspect of proper clothing indicates that you are a person under higher authority and not your own. Dress code should always honor and respect those who are over us. Those over us are: parents, grandparents, teachers, Church, employers, government and ultimately, God, who is over all.

History shows that the pendulum of change is always in motion. The restless human mind is rarely satisfied with the perceived status quo. The pendulum of change not only swings dress code, most everything else does; music, morals, laws, justice. etc., they all swing in step together. The

primary reason and the level of change are proportionally related to society's level of Godliness. When prayer (and of course God ) was taken out of the schools in the USA in 1968, everything changed. Problems everywhere: quality of learning went down, problems with safety and security, morals, teen pregnancies, drugs, violence, etc. Getting out from under God's line of authority and becoming a law unto ourselves, will bring change, usually not for the better. You see, there is more to clothing trends than meets the eye!

Back to whether God does not judge a book by its cover. Scripture tells us that God judges all things, the book cover, the pages and all its content. By the way, I do not know of any publisher who would slap a sloppy cover on a book, do you? Scripturally, God considers the heart of a person rather than the pricey suite he or she wears. However, this Scriptural truth in no way absolves us from being neat and dress appropriately for "the occasion." When attending Church, we ought to be dressed for the occasion and our appearance should always reflect our respect and reverence for God, and yes, that we are people under higher authority. If any of us were invited to have tea at Buckingham Place, would we not dress appropriately for the occasion? Would we not honor

the queen and show our respect? Would we attend our mother's funeral in shorts? How much more should we stand in reverence and respect when we come together in a holy place to worship a Holy God? God invites us to worship Him and to be holy, for He is Holy. He loves to complete that good work in us, for us to be that special people. (Titus 2:14 / 1Peter 2:9) To be people of excellent spirit and behaviour in all areas of life. God then loves to "show us off " to all the world, to all powers and principalities. Having been made in the image of God, we as parents, are like that as well. We love for our children to do well, to be proud of them, and when the occasion lends itself, to "show them off." It is a tragic trend, statistics show that there now is practically no difference (only 7%) between the people of the world and Church going people.

Remember, deference does make a difference! The next time you go to Church, consider this: am I dressed for the occasion, am I forgoing my personal likes and dislikes, am I wearing my "Sunday Best?" Am I dressed in such a way that indicates that I am under God's authority? And does what I wear, reflect of what I think of God?

by Ralph DeGroot  
To God alone be Glory.