

Newsletter



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Greetings from Sioux Falls, South Dakota! While the temperatures have been cold, the snow has been blowing, and winter is upon us, the work here in the mission continues to go forward by God's grace.

Last newsletter I took time to introduce you to myself and my family. This newsletter I want to introduce you to the city of Sioux Falls and to the members of the fellowship.

Introduction to Sioux Falls

Sioux Falls is a beautiful city that is nestled among the falls of the Big Sioux River, hence its name. The Village of Sioux Falls was incorporated in 1876 as 1,200 acres of land. By 1900 the city boasted a population of over 10,000 people. Over the past 100 years the city has grown tremendously. The growth has been prompted by many factors. There are two flourishing religious colleges that date back to the late 1800's - Augustana College, a Lutheran College and Sioux Falls University which is a Baptist institution. The Baptist churches also operate Sioux Falls Seminary here in town. In the early 1900's John Morrell opened a meat packing plant here. In 1942 the Air Force established a base and a military communication training school. There is also a well-known school for the deaf in town. In 1960 it was the building of Interstate 90 and Interstate 29 that stimulated much growth.

In addition to agricultural processing and distribution companies that serve IA, MN, and SD, Sioux Falls has become a leader in the financial and medical communities. Sanford and Avera McKennan Hospitals are the two largest employers

in the city. The hospitals have clinics and satellite locations through the Midwest, drawing patients from hundreds of miles around. Sanford recently announced that they are building a specialized Children's Hospital with feeder clinics around the country. This will add hundreds of jobs to the area.

The city is a well-known retail hot-spot as the largest retail community between Denver and Minneapolis/St. Paul. The city draws between 15 and 20 million visitors each year to its huge 180 store mall and other retail stores. Often when we go to a store we meet someone we know from MN or IA who drove over to shop in Sioux Falls.

Sioux Falls is predominantly Catholic and Lutheran in its religious makeup. There are a handful of Reformed/Presbyterian churches in town.

Today the city has a population of over 150,000, covers 13 x 16 miles, and continues to experience steady growth in almost every direction. Last year the city defied the national trend by setting a record for the number of building permits, new construction, and home sales.

Membership

The past month was an exciting one due to the fact that Edgerton received the membership papers of a number of the regular attendees to the mission. At the advice of the DMC, the Edgerton consistory, on January 3, received the following families and individuals as members of the Heritage Protestant Reformed Fellowship of Sioux Falls. From Doon PRC: Andon De Boer; Paul and Erin DeJong and their baptized children Jenna, Evan & Luke; Ron and Carol Streyle; Gaylen and Laura Te Slaa, Jeffrey Te Slaa, Karla Te Slaa; Edward and Carlene Van Egdome and their baptized daughters Elizabeth & Breanna. From Hull PRC: Brian Brummel, Pam Buys, Lorraine Collmann and Kevin Westra. From First CRC in Hospers, IA: Faith Van Bruggen. On February 7, Edgerton received the membership of Eric and Dawn Traviss and their baptized daughter Olivia from Hull PRC. The membership of these families and individuals will be held by Edgerton's consistory with Edgerton exercising oversight over them and providing spiritual care as the calling church.

The fact that we have such a spiritually mature group is of great advantage for me as a missionary and for the work here in Sioux Falls. The members understand and love the distinctive Reformed doctrine and life that we preach and teach. They are prepared to defend and promote

those doctrines and practices. They are able to help in mentoring those new to the Reformed faith. In addition, we already have experienced and mature men who are qualified for the offices of elder and deacon. Two of the men previously served in the office of elder in our churches.

We took the following picture of the fellowship on the last Sunday of January. Some of the members were missing, but this gives you a general idea of the group that gathers twice each Sunday for worship in Sioux Falls. We have non-Protestant Reformed visitors at almost every service. Most are friends, acquaintances, or relatives of Protestant Reformed individuals. We know that the most effective means of witnessing is always personal, as we invite others to join us in worship to our God. And, while we all find that challenging, we are working on overcoming our fears.



I am always interested in the vocation of individuals with whom I come into contact, therefore I'll give you a brief overview of the fellowship in that regard. Our group reflects the main industries here in Sioux Falls. We have a Sioux Falls fireman, a corrugated box salesman, a purchaser for the US postal service, a SD government employee, a doctor, several nurses, several school teachers, one in a retail store, and a number of individuals who work in the banking community- some as personal bankers and others with the credit card industry. And, of course not to neglect one of the most important vocations, we have some mothers of Zion who care for their children.

Due to the college opportunities in Sioux Falls there are a dozen or more Protestant Reformed college students from SW MN and NW IA attending college here. Some of these students join us when they stay over the weekend and have expressed a desire to seek future employment in Sioux Falls.

Upcoming Weddings

We are excited to have three upcoming weddings this Spring and Summer in the fellowship.

Andon De Boer is marrying Angie De Jager (from 1st CRC Sioux Falls); Brian Brummel and Faith Van Bruggen plan to marry; and Jeff Te Slaa and Bethany Van Egdom (from Doon PRC) are planning their wedding. All of them plan to be part of the fellowship, Lord willing.

New Contacts

As missionary I am constantly seeking new contacts as I have opportunity. Thankfully I've been keeping very busy working with the existing group, but we desire to make the gospel known to as many in Sioux Falls as possible in order to introduce them to the Reformed faith. I was able to get a list of people moving into Sioux Falls from other towns and states. I mailed brochures and welcome letters that introduce our work to 50 such addresses over the past two months.

We continue to advertise weekly in the Sioux Falls Argus Leader, and we are running a sizeable advertisement in the Yellow Pages. A member of the fellowship keeps our website www.reformedsiouxfalls.org up to date. So far the number of people that have come to the fellowship via these mediums has been only a couple, and that for only one service at a time, but that too we expect from the testimony of our other missionaries. We are thankful that God assures us that the power is in the Word and that He by His Spirit will gather His church in His due time.

We are thankful for the visitors that took up our offer during the holiday season. We enjoyed many visitors from the South Holland congregation and some even from as far as Edmonton, AB Canada. Feel free to give us a call and stop by if you are traveling through the area. We covet your continued prayers as together we labor for the sake of Christ's church.

May God bless and keep you.

In Christ's Service,

Rev. Al Brummel