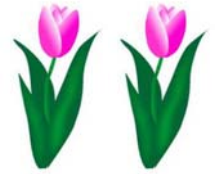


# Plymouth Pulse



Volume 6, Issue 2

May 2015

## FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR STEVE: SABBATICAL SILENCE

In case you haven't noticed, I've not spoken much or often about my sabbatical. Now that I'm gone I thought it might be good to explain.

The main reason, I suppose, is a strange sense of embarrassment. Having worked for half of my career with pastors who don't get paid at all, I'm well aware of how "good I've got it" as a pastor here at Plymouth Heights. To be paid well and to have a fully funded sabbatical on top of it strikes me as an embarrassment of riches. While people who suffer a great deal often wonder "Why me?" I can't help but ask the same question from a much more favorable set of circumstances.

And while I appreciate the sentiment behind occasional comments about the sabbatical being "well deserved," I trust we all know that that's not true. This sabbatical is an "unusual grace" for which my family and I are profoundly thankful. We're thankful to Plymouth for a generous sabbatical policy and we're thankful for the fact that the Lilly Foundation was willing to fund the plan we submitted. When people wonder out loud about someone getting 5 months off to do the kinds of things listed in our sabbatical plan, I just smile and nod. "Yes," I acknowledge, "there's no defending it. It's a gift."

But I do hope it's a gift for Plymouth too. After almost 13 years here, I'm inclined to think that hearing other voices from our pulpit is a good and necessary thing. So my hope and prayer is that Plymouth will be blessed with a rich variety of preaching while I'm gone. And I also hope and pray that the break in continuity provides opportunity for doing new things, or old things in new ways. I'm excited and thankful for what I trust God will be doing in all of our lives over the next several months. And, believe it or not, I'm eager to get back!

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### Stephen Ministers: Get Together

Some activities are better done alone, like brushing your teeth or playing solitaire. Some activities are better and more satisfying when you work with others. Stephen Ministry is one of those get-it-done-together ministries. Stephen Ministers meet regularly with another person to provide care. They also meet with other Stephen Ministers to support and encourage one another. Stephen Leaders provide training and supervision. When Stephen Leaders and Stephen Ministers work together, God accomplishes wonderful things! Is God calling you to get together with this team?

For more information, contact **Huds Nyenhuis 974-0605 or Olga Leder 808-9024.**

Equipping disciples to become neighbors...  
...inviting neighbors to become disciples.

## CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

We congratulate the students from our church graduating in 2015. You have been blessed by God to have achieved this milestone – and we are proud of you! We commend this verse to you from Psalm 105:4: “Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.”



### Middle School Graduates

**Adrianna Bolt** from Grand Rapids Christian Middle School

Parent: Michelle Bolt

Grandparents: John and Ruth Bolt

Future Plans: Attend Grand Rapids Christian High

**Morgan Rottman** from Legacy Christian School

Parents: Mary/Lynn Faber and Doug Rottman

Summer Plans: Junior Counselor at Kids Rock Camp

Future Plans: Attend South Christian High

### High School Graduates

**Jenny Noel Koopmans** from Grand Rapids Christian High

Parents: Ted and Joanne Koopmans

Summer Plans: Babysitting and a vacation to the shore.

Future Plans: Attend Calvin College to study Special Education with a Ministry Leadership minor

**Brian Rottman** from South Christian High

Parents: Mary/Lynn Faber and Doug Rottman

Summer Job: Midway RV Center

Future Plans: Attend Azusa Pacific University

**Marielle Rottman** from South Christian High

Parents: Mary/Lynn Faber and Doug Rottman

Summer Plans: TBD

Future Plans: Attend Azusa Pacific University

**Johan Sinniah** from Grand Rapids Christian High

Parents: Kumar and Chrysanthi Sinniah

Future Plans: Attend Calvin College to study Engineering

**Emily Kay Smith** from Coopersville High School

Parents: Mary and Eric Uitvlugt and Donald Smith

Summer Plans: Complete her eighth year of dance at the Academy of Dance Arts, volunteer at Reuben's Room Cat Rescue, and seek a part-time job.

Future Plans: Attend Grand Rapids Community College

**Emma Tilma** from Grand Rapids Christian High

Parents: Larry and Lori Tilma

Future Plans: Attend Calvin College to study Nursing

**Carley Van Swol** from Grand Rapids Christian High

Parents: Paul and Janeen Van Swol

Future Plans: Study Physical Education/Social Work at Hope College

**Jake Vellenga** from Grand Rapids Christian High and Kent Career Tech Center (Automotive Program)

Parents: Jeff and Linda Vellenga

Summer job: After doing an internship there this winter, Jake is working at Kool Chevrolet in the Service Department.

Future Plans: Work at Kool Chevrolet and continue his education at Grand Rapids Community College

**Calvin Van Zytveld** from Unity Christian High

Parents: David and Betsy Van Zytveld

Summer Plans: Another summer at the Meadowmount School of Music in New York

Future Plans: Attend Princeton University for a major in Cello Performance

### College and Post-Grad

**Scott Block** from Calvin College

Parents: Bert and Judy Block

Degree Achieved: Electrical Engineering

Summer Plans: Internship

Future Plans: Law school to study Intellectual Property

**Andy Diepstra** from Calvin College

Parents: Tom and Bea Diepstra

Degree Achieved: Bachelor of Science in Recreation Therapy

Summer Plans: Adventure Guide for Christian Adventures in Big Rapids

Future Plans: Internship and then look for a job

## CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!

**Amber Gilman** from Calvin College  
 Parents: Bruce and Sandy Gilman  
 Degree Achieved: Master's Degree in Speech - Language Pathology  
 Future Plans: Internship at Heartland Manor. Hopes to work with brain-injured patients in an outpatient or home setting

**Ben Post** from Cornerstone University  
 Parents: Tom and Sandi Post  
 Future Plans: Work for the Third Chair Counseling Agency

**Ranuka Stephen Sinniah** from Calvin College  
 Parents: Kumar and Chrysanthi Sinniah  
 Future Plans: Ranuka is on a one-year internship at the National Cancer Institute in Maryland. During this time he will be applying to medical schools, perhaps Michigan State University.

**Molly Tiesenga** from Hope College  
 Parents: David and Jane Tiesenga  
 Degree Achieved: Bachelor of Science - Nursing BSN  
 Summer Plans: Study for NCLEX exam and look for nursing job, spend time at cottage  
 Future Plans: Nursing job, graduate school, travel

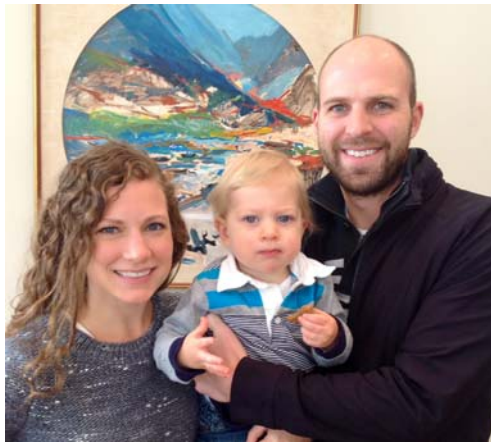
**Jonathon Vander Laan** from Calvin College  
 Parents: Doug and Karen Vander Laan  
 Degree Achieved: Bachelor of Arts in Business, concentrations in Finance and Marketing  
 Summer Plans: Job hunting  
 Future Plans: Hopes to get a job in finance or sales-- areas of interest include commercial real estate, mergers and acquisitions

*-Dawn Gebben*

## NEW MEMBERS!

Please give them a warm welcome!

Many thanks to them for sharing the following information with the Plymouth Pulse!



Welcome to David and Alyssa (Elenbaas) DeMaagd and son, Joel. Alyssa, Mary Van Wingerden's niece, was born in Minneapolis, moved with her family to Grand Rapids, attended Christian schools and Calvin College. She is a nurse in the NICU at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. David was born in the Madison, WI area, attended Christian schools, and went to college at Butler University where he was challenged to explore and discuss his faith among non-Christian professors and friends. He was a Young Life leader for three years at Butler. David works as a sales rep for Wright Medical. Joel will be two years old in April and loves cookies and playing in nursery.

Dan and Kathy Natelborg recently moved to Grand Rapids from Ann Arbor, MI. They enjoy both the Friendship program for their daughter Megan and being able to attend worship services with Kathy's mom, Dawn Gebben. You may also have seen Dan and Kathy singing in the choir. Kathy is working in Human Resources at Davenport University and Dan is caring for Megan after school and job hunting for a business/marketing position. Their younger daughter Krista is a freshman at Davenport University. Welcome Dan and Kathy, Megan and Krista to our church family!



## NEW MEMBERS! (continued)



You may have seen David Exoo playing the drums during our worship services. He grew up in North Olmsted, OH, a suburb on the west side of Cleveland. During his high school years, he was active in choir and band, and also played drums with his high school chapel band and church worship team. He began worshipping at Plymouth while attending Calvin College. In September, he started bringing his younger brother, Steven, who is a freshman at Calvin. David is a Production Support Engineer for Gentex. Recently he joined the worship team, playing the drum set every other week. Thank you, David, for blessing us with your talents at Plymouth!

You often see Cynthia Lyda on the north side of church and later having coffee at one of the round tables. Cynthia writes that she began attending Plymouth in June of 2011 at the invitation of Chrysanthi Sinniah, and she's been regularly attending since then. James Vazquez assists with her wheelchair and when he is unable, Amy Blom helps. Cynthia has a husband and 3 children in San Antonio, TX, and also has 4 older boys (3 living, 1 deceased) living in various states. "Sarah Albers and Amy Blom come and visit me at the nursing home where I live, quite often. Pastor Steve has stopped by a few times too! I no longer have family in Michigan but several people in the church have become my new family!" We're delighted that you worship with us, Cynthia!



Having lived recently in Holland, Grand Rapids, and then Peoria, IL, Ron and Pat DeHaan are glad to be back in Grand Rapids because it is a great midway point between children and grandchildren who live in Ann Arbor and Twin Lake. Ron is semi-retired, and works for Freightliner of Grand Rapids as a warranty claims processor. He also volunteers as a photographer for Habitat for Humanity. Pat is a retired preschool teacher, volunteers for North End Community Ministries Food Pantry, and brings music to the residents of Sanctuary at St Mary's. They love the summer and spend a lot of time camping, kayaking, hiking, and biking. Welcome, Pat and Ron!

## Church and Youth Events and updates

**Movie in Mulick Park.** Join the neighborhood on **Friday, May 29**, for an outdoor movie in Mulick Park. Bring your lawn chairs or blankets and play games on the playground while you wait for the movie to begin at dusk. A fun way to start the summer!

**CO Challenge 2015** is happening **June 27-July 5**. Nine of our Lifeline (High School) Youth Group members are heading to Colorado this summer for an amazing week of worship and outdoor adventure: Caleb Corell, Nathan Di-epstra, Garrit Harkema, Austen Krause, Justin Pauwe, Jacob and John VanDenHeuvel, William VanZytveld, and Shawn Yu. Todd Menkveld, Bruce Gilman and Megan Wunderink are leading the trip. We will soon be looking for Prayer Partners for our trip; talk to Megan Wunderink if you might be interested!

**Vacation Bible School** is coming to Fifth Reformed Church **July 13-17** and Plymouth Heights' kids are invited to join the fun! The theme this year is *Everest: Conquering Challenges with God's Mighty Power*. Each day, kids participate in small groups, called Climbing Crews, and discover practical ways to hold on to God's mighty power! Not only will they experience exciting Bible adventures but they'll also watch for God in everyday life through something called God Sightings. VBS meets from 9 am - 12 Monday through Friday. Children who will be five by September 15 (and toilet trained) through (incoming) Fifth Graders are welcome to attend. Space is limited, so please register your child(ren) on Plymouth Heights' website: [www.phcrc.org](http://www.phcrc.org).

**Kids' Night Out!** Save **Wednesday, August 12** for Plymouth Heights' annual night of fun, food and games. This is a great opportunity to serve and get to know our neighbors. Last summer was our biggest KNO yet! Invite your family and friends, bring your children, or plan on helping with a carnival game, painting faces, or handing out information about all our programs. There are many ways to get involved!

--Megan Wunderink

Note from Sherlynn: Donations of Melissa & Doug books, stress balls, and "quiet books" are welcome as we restock our "busy bags" over the summer.

Did you know? We offer Cadets and Gems starting in First Grade! We have been blessed with continued partnership with Fifth Reformed Church and look forward to many more faith-filled Wednesday nights in the neighborhood.



Cadets race their Derby cars.



Children's Bible Study's last night for the season.

## Mission Mail

### Mark Wiersma in Central Nigeria ([wiersmam@fastmail.fm](mailto:wiersmam@fastmail.fm))

WOW! THANK YOU TO ALL at Plymouth Heights for the surprise Christmas gift. Teacher training continues to take wing, and I'm preparing for long-term programming as well as for a conference hosted by Hillcrest (Christian) School.

Please do pray for Nigeria:

- + Thanks for eager reception of EC in-service training and AMPLE opportunities to share it.
- + Thanks for wellbeing of my family and myself
- + Asking for restraint and discouragement of terrorists and others apt to choose violent conflict. (Nearly all of the Nigerian violence you hear about is occurring 400-500 miles away.)



### John Bulten in Albuquerque NM, East Central Ministries

ECM is a community that represents many types of borders within Albuquerque: its ties to the Mexico/US border, borders of race, class, and language, and what is safe and unsafe. We work and live in a bilingual community—everything is done in both English and Spanish.

Volunteer Christy says, “Whether I’m pulling weeds, crushing honeycomb, or interpreting for Spanish-speaking patients at the dental clinic, I leave each visit to ECM feeling refreshed, like I’ve caught a glimpse of the Kingdom of God in action. It’s a beautiful mix of people from many different backgrounds, coming together to serve and be served. I feel the attitude with which they approach that process—one of humility and patience, seeking to work in partnership with, not just for, the community.”



John on Immigration - I watched with great interest as President Barack Obama announced administrative relief for some people whom I love—neighbors and friends who happen to also be undocumented immigrants. I would have much preferred a complete overhaul of this complex and broken set of laws and rules that make up our current immigration system, but in light of the daily fear that my friends live in, I rejoice that some will be able to step out of the shadows and provide for their families and communities without wondering if a deportation raid would prevent them from getting home to their children that night.

A financial request from John - We do not do this work alone because we cannot do this work alone - we need the whole Body, and I want to sincerely thank those of you who partner with us in this ministry.

You can:

- Pray—There are many difficult decisions to make day to day; most times the answers aren’t black and white. Pray for wisdom, integrity, and Jesus’ love to pour from us.
- Encourage—We are refreshed by cards and emails from you. Share with us a quote or excerpt from a book that encouraged or challenged you—we grow and are stimulated by these words.
- Give—The work we do takes money. A man just out of jail needs \$20 for a bus ticket to get to his family. The warehouse roof leaks like crazy and needs replacing (we’ve been putting this off for 5+ years). It is important that we pay our staff a livable and fair wage. We need to hire a hygienist to maximize the volunteer dentist’s time and skills. Property mortgages need to be paid.

*Thank you, Dawn Gebben, for editing the Mission Mail.*

## MORE NEW MEMBERS! (continued)



Inez Pigg is a retired orthopedics nurse who worked in the Spectrum Health System for 25 years. Her daughter Tracy, who passed away four years ago, was part of Plymouth's Friendship program. Tracy's Friendship mentor was Plymouth member Ruth Hennink, who passed away in October, 2014. Ruth was instrumental in introducing Inez to Plymouth. Inez now spends her time in retirement, caring for her sister who has health problems. Inez is faithfully using her nursing skills! Welcome to Plymouth Heights, Inez!

Brad and Becky Jansen and their family have been attending Plymouth since the fall of 2014. Brad and Becky met at Calvin College, and they recently moved from Detroit back to the Grand Rapids area. Brad works for Mead & Hunt as an airport engineer. Becky works as a dermatologist at Dermatology Associates of West Michigan. They enjoy spending time outdoors as a family with Steve (3) and Anna (9 months) and are looking forward to becoming more involved in the church community. Welcome to Brad and Becky, Steve and Anna!



Justin and Beth VanDenHeuvel have been attending Plymouth Heights together for several years. Justin grew up at Plymouth and became a member in 2003, while Beth recently joined in April. Justin is a lawyer and works with his father, Howard, at their law practice, VanDenHeuvel Law Office. Beth works for Gordon Food Service and enjoys freelance writing. Justin and Beth met at Calvin College and have been married for two and a half years. Most Sundays, you can find them in the balcony with the rest of the VanDenHeuvel family. Welcome, Beth, and thanks to Justin for bringing you into our church family!

## TRAVELING FOR FRIENDSHIP

*As parents of a daughter with severe intellectual disabilities, Ralph and Carol Honderd were determined to use their retirement years to encourage churches to become more intentional in reaching out to families and individuals struggling with the challenges of disabilities. Nearing retirement, the Honderds decided to purchase a motorhome thinking that they could use it half the time for visiting churches. But, God had His own plan. For the past 14 years, nearly all of their travels in that motorhome have been for sharing resources and developing awareness at both churches and seminaries.*



...excerpt from the Christian Learning Center blog. Thank you, Carol, for sharing the following.

Mark Stephenson, director of CRC Disability Concerns, has written, "I look to our daughter Nicole, who has severe intellectual disability, as a model for living in the present, without regret for the past nor worry for the future. She's a poster child for mindfulness!" At Plymouth Heights CRC we have been blessed to observe that trait in many of our Friendship "friends" who attend Friendship class and our worship services each week. We have also learned that this is only one of the many blessings that a church experiences when all of God's children are included as valuable members of a church family regardless of ability, disability or intellectual capacity.

Ralph and Carol Honderd travel to churches and seminaries as volunteers for Friendship Ministries creating or reinforcing awareness of such blessings. They visit and encourage existing programs, collaborate with other disability ministries, represent Friendship at disability conferences and provide packets of resource information for seminary faculty and seminarians, for church leaders and pastors and for parents of children with disability.

In addition to the many churches and disability organizations, the Honderds have visited 123 seminaries. Fourteen years ago seminaries didn't always see a need to prepare prospective church leaders and pastors for meeting the needs of families struggling with the challenge of disability. Happily this mindset has changed radically during the past few years and today their message and resource packets are warmly received.

The Honderds appreciate the welcoming and considerate atmosphere at Plymouth Heights and love to tell others of our church. They dream of the day that all churches would become as accessible; a day when Friendship friends are seated throughout the congregation in every church respected and accepted for who they are as children of God.



## Marv and Locks of Love

Perhaps you've noticed that Marv, our clean-cut custodian, is slowly changing his appearance! Below is his response to questions regarding his longer locks!

"I am growing out my hair to donate to Locks of Love, a non-profit organization that provides hair pieces to financially disadvantaged children who are under the age of 21 and suffer from long-term medical hair loss. I will try to grow my hair out for the 12 inches of hair required. I hope I can complete the task!"



We wish you success, Marv, and encourage you every inch of the way, to 12 inches and beyond!

### COMING SOON: A SHOE DRIVE!

Since 2000, Don and Alyce Boender have been volunteering several weeks each year at an agency in Rolling Fork, MS. Rolling Fork is one of the poorest counties in the U.S. This year we plan to have a "shoe drive" for shoes size 8 and larger for the Boenders to bring with them to the agency. Save your large, used shoes, for both men and women, and look for further information soon in the bulletin!



## Happy Anniversary!



Congratulations!



Richard and Ruthelaine Hoolsema  
60 years—May 19

David and Mary Kline  
35 years—June 6

All wedding anniversaries are noteworthy, but the above are special. If you celebrate a special anniversary in April, May, June or July, and it is not listed, please let the editor know. You will see it in the next

## Family Promise: Serving The King



*35 ... 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*

*Matthew 25:35-40*

Many of you heard repeatedly from Ellen and me during the last opportunity to host Family Promise. We were begging for assistance throughout the week. Many of you were at church multiple times to volunteer with Family Promise, others were there for various unrelated activities, some just don't know where or how they could fit in, most don't see it as "their thing," and for many of you we lack email addresses to send our pleas.

I will admit, the past host week was definitely the most difficult one we've had. We had some demanding, inattentive moms combined with sneaky kids with excessive energy. It seemed, at times, that this whole project was a waste of time. It crossed my mind multiple times that these families are never going to "figure it out" and these kids "don't have a chance." But I can assure you that the whole Family Promise organization is a good organization and we are just a very small piece of it. God's plan for these families is a good and perfect plan. We just don't get to see how it all works out.

When asking you to volunteer for Family Promise, we are not asking you to find the water, dig the well and walk three miles to distribute it. We are asking you to serve a glass of water to a mom who is struggling with her kids during the dinner hour. We are not asking you to plow the fields, plant the seeds, reap the harvest. We are asking you to make tacos for a family that lacks a roof over their heads and a kitchen in which to prepare a meal. In doing these activities we are asking you to serve the King.

If you are interested in serving the King by providing a glass of water, making tacos or ice cream sundaes, playing Hi-Ho Cherry-O or Lincoln Logs, coloring, doing laundry, vacuuming, making and taking down beds, sleeping (yes, you can serve by sleeping), and so much more, please talk to Chuck and Ellen Hekman or Bob and Jane Brouwer to find out how you might be able to serve the King.

—Jane Brouwer

## Council Notes and Transitions

### Elders, newly elected

Bob and Jane Brouwer  
 Chuck Hekman  
 Kathy Sikkema  
 Doug VanderLaan

### Deacons, newly elected

Merrie Brouwer  
 Ben Post  
 Todd Sytsma  
 Justin VanDenHeuvel

### Elders, retiring

Tom Brasser  
 Frank Diepstra  
 Lori Tilma  
 David Van Zytveld

### Deacons, retiring

Mike Brouwers  
 Tom Diepstra  
 Mary Faber  
 Kathy Kett

As Plymouth Heights makes changes within Council there are also a few administrative changes to note during Pastor Steve's sabbatical. While Pastor Steve is away Rev. Al Gelder will be chairman of elders. Rev. Sarah Albers is head of staff during the sabbatical and is responsible for congregational care that involves sickness and any other issues that require pastoral care.

Council has made the following arrangements for preaching and pastoral care during Pastor Steve's sabbatical May through September 2015. For the months of June through August we have secured a Calvin Seminary internship. Elizabeth (Betsy) DeVries will focus mainly on preaching, while her husband Daniel, also a seminarian, will be helping with the rest of the work in much the way they share the care of their one-year-old son, Emmett. Pastor Albers, as senior staff, will mentor Betsy DeVries and serve as our liaison with the seminary.

For the months of May and September, Rev. David Bast will be preaching. Rev. Bast, former pastor at Fifth Reformed, is now President of Words of Hope. He will also be available to the staff and our intern for the summer months, should the need arise.

Join council in welcoming these servants of the Lord to Plymouth, and join us in praising God for His leading hand in this process!



Plymouth's youngest on Palm Sunday.

**Plymouth Heights  
Christian Reformed Church**

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Phone: (616) 243-5638

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Website: www.phcrc.org

Minister of Worship, Leadership .....	Rev. Steve De Vries
Minister of Congregational Life .....	Rev. Sarah Albers
Pastor of Youth and Education .....	Megan Wunderink
Minister of Music.....	Doug De Vries
Children's Ministry Coordinator.....	Sherlynn James
Head Organist .....	Annelle Dekker
Secretary .....	Janeen Van Swol
Custodian .....	Marv Huizenga

**Church Picnic!**

- When:** Saturday afternoon, June 6  
**Where:** Palmer Park  
 1250 44th St SW, Wyoming, MI  
**What:** Games at 3 pm for all ages.  
 Supper catered at 5 pm: chicken, side dishes,  
 rolls, beverages, ice cream.  
 Ball game after supper.



Please join us! A sign-up sheet is at the Welcome Center. A free-will offering will be taken to help cover costs. Committee members are busy planning and looking forward to fun, food and fellowship: Deb Hall, chair, Jim DeJong, Janeen VanSwol, Huds Nyenhuis, Gordon Werkema, Susan Poel, Pam Menkveld, Dave Diepstra, Larry Tilma, and Pat Schmidt.

