

A 2025 Year in Review by Albino and Sandy Rodriguez

(This is a shortened version of their report—the complete report is posted on the bulletin board.)

Realizing that La Casa del Maestro is going into the tenth year of its residence program puts us in a reflective mood as we close out 2025. What started out as weekend workshops and Bible studies led by a few volunteers and us has grown into a true intentional living community. The first year, we made rules to force residents out of their rooms. The house was silent except for our own loud toddlers; now, we have to remind the youth to manage the noise levels for the neighbors. Because of your continued support, the foundation was laid and the ministry grows. Instead of lonely students in rented rooms, we have students sharing meals and hanging out in their free time. They have connected each other to employment opportunities. Specifically in 2025, we were blessed by teams, volunteers and visitors. These visits provide excitement and chances for different activities. They also bring their knowledge to teach us.

Challenges in 2025—This year we reached capacity in our housing situation, which is a good challenge. Though we may have been able to squeeze a few more students into the men's and women's spaces in 2026, we would not have provided the same quality service for which we aim. Also, a house full created more challenges with interpersonal relationships and conflicts. Leadership and resident assistants have near daily contact with students through Bible studies and meetings, but it was hard scheduling an opportunity to meet with them.

Due to a generous donation, we chose to take a leap of faith and move into new apartments. There is room for at least a couple more years. Also, we rented an extra apartment in the same building in order to reinstate the role of house parents. Now the discipleship opportunities can happen in the moment and are more personal; students also benefit from seeing a solid, Christian family living out their faith.

Please pray—Continued financial support. Each year, we trust that God will provide not only the funds to house current students, but allow us to accept incoming students who need a Christian community to surround them as they make the transition to the city. We want to commit to students for the five years of their post-secondary studies.

Pray for wisdom for the CdM leadership as they disciple students in the transition to adult life. Each individual student has unique family and personal situations that they need to navigate as they apply their faith.

First Reformed Church, Volga, SD

February 2026

Glad Tidings

"I bring you glad tidings of great joy..."
Luke 2:10

Lent Begins in February

- **February 1**— The men's group will begin the service leading the congregation in singing some hymns. Pastor Gary will conclude his series of messages on truth. We will celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Prayer Time will be held at 5 p.m. Please come and pray for the many needs of the congregation and world.
- **February 8**— A mixed quartet will lead in singing some hymns at the beginning of the service. A group will be going to Dakota Sun to present a short service there and fellowship with the residents. A Souper Bowl offering basket will be set out at the back of the sanctuary (front of fellowship hall) for you to contribute purchasing Bibles for the Sioux Valley FCA.
- **February 15**— To begin the service, the praise team will lead the congregation in singing some hymns. Kurt Turner, representing the Gideon organization will bring a brief update from the Gideons and an offering will for them will be received
- **February 22**— The praise band will begin the service by leading the congregation in some praise songs.





Your ongoing prayers for those in need of healing and those taking treatments would be appreciated: Gloria Egeberg, Whitney Goetsch, Lois Kleinjan, Jodi Koerner, Bernita Kooima, Dawn Lucas, Joel Schonewill, Lee Vande Weerd, Harold Van Hoepen, Amy Vandermeer

- Laurie Jones had total knee replacement surgery
- Bill Santema spent some time in the hospital for dehydration
- Larry Dyer has had two procedures to improve his heart condition
- Bill Van Beek had surgery to remove some infection in his leg and also had skin grafting surgery.
- Joel Schonewill is again undergoing immunotherapy. Joel has finished his series of radiation.
- Gene Kleinjan had surgery for cancer behind his ear

Upcoming Task Force Meetings

- February 4—Education Team
- February 16—Consistory
- March 10—Worship Team
- March 24—MESA Team

New Booklets Distributed for 2026

A new 2026 Administration & Organizations booklets are in your mailboxes. These booklets contain our 2026 consistory members and their offices, by-laws, lists of team members and their responsibilities, church use facility policy and a list of the work groups.

If you see any errors in spelling or phone numbers, please contact Susan.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact Pastor Gary or Susan.

Looking Back Ten Years..... February 2016!

- Souper Bowl offering was given to the Banquet in Sioux Falls
- Ash Wednesday was held on February 10 to mark the beginning of Lent
- Celebrated the infant baptism of Ashlyn Vande Weerd and Evan Sapp
- Family Night group enjoyed hot dishes/casseroles made by our cooks, Bryon and Val Mullett followed by small group Bible study and group discussions
- Some FRC members approached the Volga City Council about the possibility of having some kind of playground equipment for our use as well as for those living near the church property. A cooperative venture was formed between the city and FRC for playground equipment on the east side of the church property. Roberta Volkers represented the FRC consistory.

Highlights of Last Month (January 2025)

- Jason Hove and Michelle Vander Wal were ordained and installed into the office of elder and Allen Van Hoepen was ordained and installed into the office of deacon. Pastor Gary preached a message on ‘A Calling Confirmed’.
- Celebrated the Profession of Faith by Evelyn Ostrem and Ryan Vandermeer
- Welcomed Jim Guthmiller and Michael and Amanda Triebwasser and son Jackson as new members. Their son, Thomas, received the sacrament of infant baptism.

Hy-Vee Receipts

If you turn in Hy-Vee (Brookings only) receipts to the basket along the north wall in the fellowship hall, you can be a part of a MESA fund-raiser. When we reach **\$200,000** in receipts, Hy-Vee will donate \$1,000 toward a MESA project yet to be determined. As of **January 28**, Dori has tabulated **\$53,995.37** in total receipts.

A REMINDER: Please bring in your gas receipts also.

Keep eating, stay healthy and make every bite count.

Lent Begins on February 18

Lent is an Anglo-Saxon word meaning “spring”. The season lasts from Ash Wednesday until Maundy Thursday of Holy Week. Lent is a holy season to ready our hearts for celebrating Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection at Easter. It mirrors Jesus’ 40 days of temptations in the desert, highlighting His resistance to evil and commitment to God. Lent is also a time for inner conversion, self-reflection, and aligning one’s life with God’s will.

2026 FRC Consistory Officers and Responsibilities

- President—Pastor Gary Mulder
- Vice President—Daniel Ostrem
- Clerk—Michelle Vander Wal
- Chair of Deacons—Bruce Lucas
- Pulpit Supply—Bryon Mullett
- Chair of Sacraments—Michelle Vander Wal (Jason Hove, substitute)
- Memorial Gifts—Harold Jefferis
- Facility Use Coordinator—Jason Volkers

Search Committee for Director/Associate Pastor for Youth and Family Ministry

We invite you to keep the following team members in your prayers as they continue their search to fill this position.

- Dori Ohm, Chair**
Jason Hove, Consistory Representative
Olivia Hove, Brittany Knapp, Preston Liedtke, Caleb Schaefer,
Michelle Vande Weerd, and Scott Vander Wal

Weather Cancellation Protocol

An inquiry is initiated by pastor or consistory member. Bruce Lucas is contacted prior to 7:30 a.m. Bruce contacts Jason Hove and Jason Volkers and they make the decision with a majority vote. Bruce calls Pastor Gary prior to 8 a.m. with a decision. If the decision is to cancel, Pastor Gary calls Susan to send the message through the prayer line system. A notice will be posted on the church website.

Service Project for February and March

Option 1’s mission statement is to assist women in the Brookings area and SDSU who are experiencing unplanned pregnancies to explore choices by providing appropriate resources and support including counseling, education programs and mentoring. Option 1 recognizes that women have a right to make their own decisions about the outcome of their pregnancy and sexual health. Option 1 is available to help women and their partners make informed and thoughtful decisions. How can you help? You are invited to take a little card from the pockets on the display board in the fellowship hall, purchase the item(s) and return the card and item(s) to the tote provided. Deadline will be sometime in March.

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| <i>Baby Lotion</i> | <i>Baby Soap</i> | <i>Wipes</i> | <i>Onsie (newborn-1 year)</i> |
| <i>Blankets</i> | <i>Crib Sheets</i> | <i>Personal Items</i> | |
| <i>Baby Shoes (6 months-1 year)</i> | | <i>Tennis shoes (under 2 years)</i> | |
| <i>Latch Assist</i> | <i>Newborn Diapers</i> | <i>Baby Socks</i> | <i>Colic Balm</i> |
| <i>Gripe Water</i> | <i>Sleepers</i> | | |
| <i>Gift cards to Wal-Mart to purchase pack-n-play</i> | | | |
| <i>Gift cards to Amazon to purchase car seats</i> | | | |



About 35 years ago, Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group:
“Lord, as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, Help us to be mindful of those without even a bowl of soup to eat.”

Since that time, many millions of dollars has been raised for local charities across the country through the Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that is transforming the time around Super Bowl weekend into the nation’s largest celebration of giving and serving. Through this mission, we learn what it is like to make a positive difference in the world—as food is collected, money raised and volunteers work in charities that provide shelter to the homeless, food to the hungry and compassion to those in need. This year, the MESA Team has chosen to donate to a different organization—food that lasts! This year’s recipient will be the Sioux Valley FCA chapter and Bibles will be purchased for members and prospective members. A bowl will be set out at the bi-fold doors leading into the fellowship hall. (MESA will still be feeding the needy but using Thrivent money that is available to us.)