



President Paul Sieveking

**A thankful heart**

On Sunday, April 22, 1906, a newspaper reporter sent out this dispatch, “All that is left of San Francisco attended religious services today. Never in the history of the city has there been such an outpouring to divine services. All San Francisco is on its knees. Men who have never been in church in their lives were among the most devout worshippers today.”

An earthquake can be a powerful persuader. In times of danger, when people are shaken hard enough, they turn toward God. The prophet Isaiah reported, “Lord, they came to you in their distress; when you disciplined them, they could barely whisper a prayer” (Is. 26:16).

But, what about the good times? Do we turn to God and give thanks to Him in the good times? What about the in-between times? What about those times when we know we’re going to get by, but they are not as good as we had hoped for? Like times when we hope for a huge harvest, but a hail storm takes a toll and the prices are way down? Times when you had hoped for a raise, but the economy tanks and you feel fortunate just to have kept your job? Times like now! Can we give thanks to God in times like these?

The psalmist wrote, “It is good (for us) to give thanks to the Lord” (Ps. 92:1). It’s healthy. It’s normal. It’s a human thing to do! You may not know it by looking around at

the world today, but thanksgiving, praise, worship is what we were created to do.

Ingratitude seems much more common. Ingratitude is abnormal. It’s like a disease that eats away at us inside until it destroys us.

Ten men were ill with another dreaded disease. Leprosy was a slow and painful killer. It was so feared that lepers were forced to live outside the city. Quarantined, they had to warn healthy people to stay away. But when they heard that Jesus was coming, they called out together, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.” This was a desperate cry. They had nothing. They had no hope. They simply begged for mercy!

Jesus stopped. He spoke a word of command, “Go. Show yourselves to the priests.” The priests would determine if they were healed and then prescribe a suitable thank offering.

The lepers obeyed the command without asking any questions. They likely ran to find the nearest priest and, on the way, their thoughts must have turned to their homes, families and friends, good meals and a warm place to sleep, their jobs—to living instead of dying. With each step they became healthier and stronger.

Then one of them stopped. He was just as excited and happy as the others, but when he realized what was happening to him, he stopped and remembered the One who had made all this joy possible. He turned around and ran back to Jesus, shouting with joy and praising God. He threw himself at Jesus’ feet in humble submission, and he gave thanks.

Does that sound normal to you? Do you give thanks like that? Or would it take something dramatic,

traumatic, to shake you—to help you realize how the Lord has blessed you? Can you get that joyful about house and home, family and loved ones, food on the table, your job or farm, health, and life? That’s exactly what the Lord created you to do! That’s what He expects of you. He asked, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?” While Jesus was impressed by this foreigner, He was deeply disappointed by the ingratitude of the nine.

Ingratitude is not normal. It’s a disease more deadly than leprosy. It begins in the heart with pride in our own accomplishments. It spreads to the brain and convinces us that we can take care of ourselves. It blinds our eyes to all that God has done for us. It plugs our ears to the truth. It mutes the tongue so that we no longer speak and sing the hymns of praise. It stills our hands so that we no longer serve. Worst of all, it destroys the soul as it eats away at faith, until there is no life left.

But, there is a cure for ingratitude. St. Paul wrote, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (Col. 3:15-17). The peace of Christ ... the word of Christ ... the name of Christ. There is the power that forgives us the sin of ingratitude! Through His death on the cross and His Easter victory, Jesus heals

*(Continued on Page H.)*

# EDUCATION



Rev. Bob Riggert  
Executive Assistant

## 10:10

*"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly"*  
(John 10:10).

It's a season where abundance is noted. With thanksgiving we note an abundant harvest, abundant family and other relationships, and an abundance of opportunities in a free land. Most of all, we note the abundant life that we have through our Lord and Savior. An abundant life is ours here and in eternity.

Jesus shares these words as He describes Himself as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep. He also notes the reality of the thief who comes to steal and kill and destroy.

Satan, the thief, tricks us into scarcity thinking. Personally we lament the things that we don't have rather than celebrate God's goodness. We are tricked into thinking that God's grace is limited, and that we are too guilty to be forgiven. In the church, we are tricked into living as if God's grace is limited within the walls of our comfortable fellowship. We protect our resources as if God has only a limited storehouse and we must keep it for our own use.

The values, vision, and mission (VVM) planning process offered for more than a decade by Iowa District West staff has recently been revised as "10:10." The process is based on Jesus' words from John 10:10. Executive Assistants Rev. Mark Gerken and Rev. Bob Riggert

have begun to consult with congregations, inviting them to personally and corporately celebrate an abundant life in Jesus.

Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Indianola, is the first congregation to be involved in the process. The congregation is excited about the abundant opportunities that God has given them in the mission fields of their community and beyond. Community surveys, prayer walks, and interviews, as well as a demographic study, are all part of exploring the abundance of opportunities to share life in Jesus.

Congregations wanting to explore the "10:10" or other mission-vision processes are invited to contact the district office.

■ Often personal stewardship is based on a perception of scarcity. We give from what is leftover rather than from the abundance of blessings. "Consecrated Stewards" is a Scripture-based stewardship education process that begins with a celebration of the abundant life in Jesus and then in management of the abundance of resources which He provides. Six district consultants (Pastors Lindau, Andreasen, Hansen, Foreman, Schauer, and Riggert) recently were re-certified to provide this Lutheran Church Extension Fund-developed process.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Lake View, is excited about the abundant stewardship opportunities in the personal lives of their members and in their congregational life together. A financial partnership with the district makes this stewardship resource available to congregations at a reasonable cost.

■ Youth ministry also may be scarcity driven. Youth may get the leftover furniture in the room in the

corner of the church basement. Often youth activities are self-funded rather than budget supported.

A national youth gathering provides an opportunity for the Synod and for the congregation to spiritually nurture youth and equip them for service in the congregation and the church at-large. Registration for the July 17-21, 2010, Gathering continues. All congregations received an information and registration DVD. Visit the gathering Web site at [www.lcmsgathering.com](http://www.lcmsgathering.com) for additional information. DCEs Cindy Storm and Amy Schmidt serve as district coordinators for the Gathering. Contact them for information on the registration process.



■ The response to the five regional "Joy in Serving TOGETHER" post-convention dialogues was a demonstration of abundance. More than 200 participants from 70-plus congregations came together to begin to answer "What does this (convention resolutions) mean?" for the local congregation. Thanks to Living Faith, Clive; Trinity, Algona; Zion, Atlantic; Grace, Le Mars; and St. John, Storm Lake, for hosting the events.

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Rev. Mark Gerken  
Executive Assistant

**Bringing in the harvest in the local mission field**

Wherever there are people who do not know the Lord Jesus, there is the mission field. We don't have to cross the sea; we just need them to see the cross! Rev. Andrew Ratcliffe, serving his first call at St. Paul Lutheran in Sac City since 2007, shares one example.



Rev. Andrew Ratcliffe, Marilyn Geery, and Angela Ratcliffe.

The organ is playing, people are assembling, and the pastor is handing out songbooks to those in attendance. The candles are lit, water is in the baptismal font, and everyone joins in singing "Children of the Heavenly Father." Nothing seems out of the ordinary. Everything is just as we would anticipate, except for the location—the local nursing home.

On Aug. 30, Marilyn Geery, a resident at Park View Rehabilitation Center in Sac City, Iowa, became a member of God's family through the waters of Holy Baptism. More

than 45 people gathered in (and outside) the small chapel at the local nursing home to worship with and welcome Marilyn as a fellow child of God, saved by the same shed blood of Jesus that typically washes young children within the walls of Lutheran churches.

Not long after arriving in Sac City, Ratcliffe had the opportunity to assume responsibility for a weekly Bible study at the nursing home. Week after week is spent studying God's Word, joining God's people in prayer and, as was the case with Marilyn, forming a relationship that led to questions, a desire to become a member of St. Paul's, time for discussion and instruction with the catechism, and, finally, baptism. What great things God is doing with His children of all ages!

Whereas we typically think of fulfilling God's call to mission work by working the downtown streets of our cities, trying to connect with today's youth, or traveling to other countries, God's mission field at times is closer than we realize. How often do we neglect to consider the abilities, the excitement and the yearning for God's Word by those who are no longer able to physically care for themselves? Their love for the Lord is not diminished with age. In fact, most often it grows!

Never underestimate the ability of those living in care facilities. Don't forget to share with them the same



Rev. Andrew Ratcliffe and Marilyn Geery.

forgiveness we receive and celebrate each week when we gather for morning worship. And never assume that just because they are at that stage in life that they know everything there is to know about the Bible.

Visit with them. Share the Gospel with them. You never know when you'll come across another Marilyn, eager to receive God's gifts in the most tangible means. Thanks be to God!

**Adult baptisms and confirmations**

We rejoice with the members of St. Paul, Sac City, over the baptism of Marilyn Geery! (See above article.) We'd like to join with the angels in rejoicing (Luke 15:10).

Please share with us the good news of adults who are baptized or confirmed in your congregation that we might share a list each month as we serve together in the mission fields of Iowa District West!

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# GIFT PLANNING



Jim  
Schroeder

Many of you will recognize Rev. Robert “Bob” Riggert as an executive of Iowa District West, but the seven children in the picture on this page know Bob and his wife, Diane, simply as “Grandpa and Grandma.”

“Our family is very important to us,” says Riggert. Bob and Diane’s four children—Jennifer, Jodi, Jonathan, and Julie—were all born in Fort Wayne, Ind., where Riggert served as a principal and teacher at Trinity Lutheran School.

While living in Fort Wayne, Riggert completed his studies at Concordia Theological Seminary and received his first call in 1981 to St. Luke in Cylinder, Iowa. Riggert also served as parish pastor at Immanuel, Lone Rock, and Zion, Manning, before accepting a call to Iowa District West in 1997.

For 12 years, Pastor Riggert has worked diligently to minister to children, promote Christian education, and encourage heartfelt stewardship throughout western Iowa. He and Diane have been doing the same thing with their own family for much longer.

“Stewardship begins at home,” says Riggert. “I have the privilege of serving as executive assistant for stewardship for the district. I teach stewardship at the congregational level. While our stewardship in the church is very important, the stewardship of our time, talent, and treasure in the home is equally important. God calls us to be stewards of our children and to teach steward-

ship to our children.”

Riggert shares a personal experience. “Last Christmas season we took our grandchildren shopping to buy gifts for the gift distribution in Los Angeles (the Nehemiah project). After many years, we finally figured out that we need to help them learn that they not only receive at Christmas but that we give to others who are in need. Hopefully it will be a tradition for us.”



Rev. Bob and Diane Riggert with their seven grandchildren.

The Riggerts also use Christian estate planning as an opportunity for stewardship. Over the years, gift planning counselor Jim Schroeder has provided his assistance and expertise.

“Shortly after our ministry began in Manning, Jim offered to do a ‘Wills Awareness’ workshop for the congregation (one of his first, I believe),” says Riggert. “Following that presentation, we wrote our first will which included a Christian preamble. We have maintained professional and personal contact with Jim ever since.”

The Riggerts chose the following passage as part of the Christian preamble to their will.

“They are the children God has graciously given your servant” (Gen. 33:5).

Riggert reveals why. “Jacob explains to Esau that the family that follows him is God’s gift to him. Our children and grandchildren are a gift

from God. We want to celebrate that gift while we’re living and leave eternal treasures (and God-willing some earthly treasures) for them.”

Recently the Riggerts decided to update their will to include a charitable trust for their grandchildren. “Our will was over 20 years old and obviously out-of-date in many respects. Some of our priorities for charitable giving also had changed,” says Riggert. “Obviously, we wanted a portion of our estate to go to our children.”

With Jim Schroeder’s help, the Riggerts established a “Give It Twice” trust, which gives them the opportunity to provide a gift to their grandchildren and to various ministries. After their deaths, Bob and Diane’s grandchildren will receive an annual gift from their grandparents for 20 years and then the trust will be directed to their ministry choices.

“It was a spiritual journey,” reflects Riggert. “We rejoiced again as to how God has blessed us. He is the Giver! We were challenged to evaluate our priorities. Jim was patient with us as the process took a while. Jim was extremely helpful in explaining some options (without any pressure). He was a valuable partner in the process.”

Think what you can do to teach the next generation about stewardship. Contact Jim Schroeder to develop your Christian gift plan today. As Bob and Diane Riggert say, “Pray about it! Do it!”

For more information on developing your Christian gift plan, contact Jim Schroeder toll free at 877-913-2221 or e-mail [jim.schroeder@idwlcms.org](mailto:jim.schroeder@idwlcms.org), or visit the Foundation’s Web site at [www.lfndgp.org](http://www.lfndgp.org).

*(This article written by Kristin Kaldahl of Spencer, Iowa.)*



Gary Thies

**Students and teachers become missionaries at Mission Central!**

God always has something special in mind when people come to visit Mission Central! We have seen it over and over! One little student said, “Missionary Gary, this is a real MIRACLE PLACE!” It truly is! When people come, they see what God has done here in the middle of a cornfield!

All the teachers and staff from Zion Lutheran School came to Mission Central for a two-day retreat. They spent time planning for the year, and working together to focus on what God has called them to do. On the last day of their time together, missionary teacher Mark Wolfram reported to the group in the barn at Mission Central. These teachers from Zion Lutheran School had the unique privilege of placing their hands on Mark and “sending him off” to his assignment at Concordia Middle School in Taiwan.

The teachers appreciated hearing from a Lutheran teacher from half-



way around the world and how BOTH of these groups were touching the lives of students with the Good News of the Lord Jesus.

The words, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (Prov. 22:6), are so special to us at Mission Central. A lot of people don’t understand that the main purpose of our lives is to train the “next generation” so that they understand what the mission of the church is all about—yes, simply telling more people about our Savior Jesus.

In the last weeks, we welcomed two special groups of youth to Mission Central. Rev. Andy Carlson and the children from the triple parish of Correctionville, Anthon, and Battle Creek, came to visit



Mission Central for a tour and special chapel presentation for the students.

All of them were amazed at the unusual items in the mission museum. They saw a special program that featured pictures of people wearing some of the clothing items they had seen in the museum.

Finally, they were all “sworn in” as special missionaries for the rest of their lives to tell more and more people about our dear Lord Jesus, and how HE died for all people!

When Teacher Anna Horkey from Mainland China arrived at Mission Central, Rev. Merle F. Mahnken from Immanuel Lutheran Church at Schleswig, Iowa, wanted his youth and students to all hear from and



experience the contact with a teacher who is working in Mainland China, where the Christian church is growing at the rate of four new congregations per day, and where there is only one pastor for every 10,000 Christians.

We need to send teachers to this area of the world! The students were so interested in hearing Anna’s report. What a blessing that these young people, unlike so many others, had the privilege of putting their hands on Anna, and praying for her and sending her back to Mainland China with their personal prayers! It was an evening these young people will never forget. A little part of their lives will be transferred to the people of Mainland China.

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Ellie Menz

## Cedar Rapids cleanup project

Whether it is cleaning out flood-drenched houses in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, or making braille books for people throughout the world, it takes a servant heart to serve Jesus.

Fifteen youth and adults from Calvary Lutheran Church in Sioux City, led by Director of Christian Education Cindy Storm, set out to Cedar Rapids one year after the 2008 historic flood.

Cindy shares, "Even after one year, we encountered vacant homes and blocks of the city abandoned. We worked on two homes while in Cedar Rapids. The first home was in a neighborhood where most homes had been restored. Our workers were able to meet some of the neighbors. They expressed gratefulness for our groups' efforts in helping restore their neighborhood.

"The second home was (next to the river) in the abandoned area of the city. Other than the police patrolling the neighborhood to prevent vandal-

ism, we were the only people within 15 to 20 blocks. The houses were all deserted and left untouched after the flood. The small home we worked on had been completely immersed in the river water. Whoever lived there escaped quickly from the flood. The cupboards were full of canned items, and flood water still sat in all the pans in the cupboards. A bathrobe was found draped over the mud-filled tub.

"Although we did not talk to anyone specifically about the flood in that neighborhood, the former inhabitants expressed their thoughts on garage doors with 'please don't forget us' and 'give us hope.'

"I encourage all congregations in Iowa District West to prayerfully consider sending a team of workers to the Cedar Rapids area. It is easy to do by contacting the Volunteer Reception Center at 319-540-4810.

"God blessed our group tremendously through this service to the Cedar Rapids community and God's precious children living in the flooded area."

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## Blind and visually impaired outreach

As I was leaving Peace Lutheran Church, Marcus, after a committee meeting, I heard a questioning voice say, "Ellie Menz?" It was Ardy Dunn from Cherokee, who had been a Petal Pusher for the 2007 Pasadena trip. Soon I saw Veldene Lindell who also was a 2007 Petal Pusher. They along with Joanne Dawson, Velma Lubeck, and Bev Galles were making braille books.

I have always been intrigued by braille work because, when I was growing up in Kansas, my mother faithfully met with her church friends to make braille books.

I took their photo and asked them about their project. Here is their story shared by Lorraine Cave, who became the assistant leader in 1998 and has served as the leader since 2004:

"Braille Work Center #96 located at Peace Lutheran Church in Marcus, Iowa, was organized in October 1976. It was the first braille center in Iowa and (was) started by Albert and Grace Dorr. Ten LWML societies in the Cherokee Zone worked together at the beginning. We began by making books in Spanish braille, with 73 pages in each book. We have also printed Cantonese, 100 Bible stories in English, 2 Kings,

and 'Give God Glory,' which we are printing at the present time."

Pastor James Gruber shared that Peace Lutheran Church is a buzz of activity as, each month, 10 different LWML societies from Cherokee Zone, including Peace LYF youth and a men's group faithfully work printing Christian material for the blind and visually impaired. That's basically three different groups each week who volunteer their time to share God's Word with people around the world!

The second Braille Work Center in Iowa is at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Council Bluffs. For the past 10 years, 10 to 12 faithful workers at St. Paul meet weekly to print and assemble braille materials.

How many braille books were printed in the past 33 years of faithful service at Marcus, 10 years at Council Bluffs, and other district settings? How many people learned about Jesus through those books? Only God knows the answer.

Contact Lutheran Braille Workers to set up a work center in your

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Carole  
White

### **K.I.D.S. Count is here!**

K.I.D.S. Count is a resource for teachers and students in programs of Christian education, kindergarten through eighth

grade. Written by curriculum experts at Concordia Publishing House, this resource provides solid, Bible-based lessons that provide children a fun way to learn what it means to be a Christian disciple and steward.

In addition, the curriculum works alongside LCEF's already successful K.I.D.S. Stamp Program—giving students the opportunity to explore ways to practice these important life lessons in Sunday

school, midweek programs, Lutheran schools or at home.

K.I.D.S. Count materials are boxed together, divided into nine packets (K-8) with a coordinators guide. All grade levels have been designed with flexibility of use in mind. They may be used in Sunday school, midweek programs, Lutheran schools, or at home.

The core lessons have been written to be taught in approximately 40 min-

utes to an hour and can be easily incorporated into the portion of their math, social studies, or health curriculum where various aspects of resource management are discussed.

Each level of K.I.D.S. Count contains engaging,  
*(Continued on Page H.)*

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## PARISH NURSE



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

November is National Diabetes Month. Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starches, and other food into energy.

During digestion, sugar is absorbed into the blood stream. Normally, sugar then enters cells with the help of insulin. Insulin is released from the pancreas, a gland located behind the stomach. When you eat, the pancreas secretes insulin into the bloodstream. As sugar moves into the cells, less insulin is released.

In pre-diabetes or Type 2 diabetes, cells become resistant to the action of insulin. In Type 1 diabetes, the immune system destroys insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. This type of diabetes is more commonly seen in children and adolescents.

Eight percent of the United States population has diabetes. A fasting blood sugar between 100 and 125 mg/dl signals pre-diabetes, while a fasting blood sugar of 126 or higher indicates diabetes.

Risk factors for diabetes include obesity, high blood sugar, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, physical inactivity, and smoking. Diabetes can be prevented or delayed with 30 minutes a day of moderate physical activity and a 5 percent to 10 percent reduction in body weight.

Some diabetes symptoms include frequent urination, excessive thirst, extreme hunger, unusual weight loss, increased fatigue, irritability, and blurred vision.

Complications of diabetes include heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, blindness, kidney disease, nerve damage, amputations, dental disease, and complications of pregnancy. Testing and education requires a team effort to prevent or limit these complications. Your health care team may include your primary care provider, diabetic educator, registered dietitian, eye doctor, podiatrist, and dentist.

The American Diabetes Association is promoting diabetes awareness by the campaign "Small Steps, Big Rewards." Contact your health care provider if you have any of the previously listed diabetes symptoms or have any risk factors for diabetes.

*(Information obtained from American Diabetes Association and Mayo Clinic Web sites.)*



*In His Service,  
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# CELEBRATIONS

## K.I.D.S. COUNT IS HERE

(Continued from Page G.)

hands-on activities and tools, *i.e.*, reproducible activity sheets, classroom posters, and more, for teachers and students.

LCEF's K.I.D.S. Stamp program offers free K.I.D.S. stewardship boxes to help teach the basic concepts of sharing, investing, and spending. Remember to always encourage offering first as we give back to the Lord in love and thankfulness for all that He has given us.

Many churches and schools across the Synod have started K.I.D.S. Stamp programs. Parents have seen a growth in money management in their children as this parent attests:

"I am so excited about Logan's growth with money management since we started giving him an allowance and helping him divide it among share, save, and spend. This year



he bought all his school supplies with money from his allowance! Approaching age 9, he's become quite the comparison shopper. I hope more parents catch on to the wonderful growth that a little of their time invested can yield. Thanks for K.I.D.S. Stamps!"—*LCMS parent Diane, Eagan, Minn.*

Want to help the children in your congregation understand the blessings and responsibilities of money? Consider starting a K.I.D.S. Stamp program at your church or school this year. Contact Carole or Ruth for more information and help with starting a program.

## A THANKFUL HEART

(Continued from Page A.)

us, gives us life, and fills us with gratitude.

Jesus told the foreigner, "Go your way (live your life) your faith has made you well." The man had already been cured of his leprosy. Now he received even more. He was given the gift of faith and eternal life.

As you celebrate this Thanksgiving, take the time to stop—to think of the blessings that Jesus has given you, to turn back and shout His praise. Hear His Word, "Go your way ... live your life ... be healthy ... be normal ... be thankful!"

## We congratulate

### Birthdays

- Nov. 2—Russel Meier, 95, St. Paul, Garner.  
Nov. 7—Alberna Assing, 95, St. Paul, Webster City.  
Nov. 12—Dorothy Marten, 90, Immanuel, Spirit Lake.  
Nov. 14—James Christensen, 95, First English, Spencer  
**Nov. 30—Henrietta Schulz, 100, St. John, Charter Oak.**

### Anniversaries

- Nov. 8—Hans and Lola Clausen, 50, Trinity, Mallard.  
Nov. 8—Bob and Amy Minson, 75, Christ Our Savior, Norwalk.  
Nov. 12—Stephan and Lois Buckingham, 60, Trinity, Glenwood.  
Nov. 13—Clifford and Lavera, 60, St. John, Germantown.  
Nov. 14—Bill and Eva Horstman, 50, Hope, Des Moines.  
Nov. 20—Dale and Lois Titman, 60, St. Paul, Boone.  
Nov. 22—Roger and Nancy Albers, 50, St. Matthew, Mapleton.  
Nov. 23—Wilbert and Mildred Thee, 65, Immanuel, Spirit Lake.  
Nov. 28—Chuck and Bonnie Harder, 55, Faith, Sioux City.

## IOWAY

(Continued from Page F.)

church and to receive free materials. There is no cost to set up a work center, no postage cost to send the materials, and no cost to receive printed materials for a friend or family member who would ben-

efit from braille.

For additional information on either the Cedar Rapids servant effort or on braille outreach, contact Ellie Menz at 515-386-8420 or [ellie.menz@idwlcms.org](mailto:ellie.menz@idwlcms.org).



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