

Upcoming Events

April 14	April 15	April 16	April 17	April 18	April 19	April 20
10:00am Worship Service 1:15pm Clearwater Centre Service 2:30pm Westview Lodge Service S.S. story card #145	7:00 pm Friendship	<i>Office: Cheri-Lynn</i> 9:30 am Coffeebreak 7:30pm Elders	7:00 pm GEMS / Cadets Year end Wrap Up 7:00 pm Catechism 7:30 pm Finance Meeting	12:00pm Bulletin Deadline 7:30 pm Forum on Children at the Lord's Supper in Social Hall		
April 21	April 22	April 23	April 24	April 25	April 26	April 27
10:00am Worship Service GEMS/CADETS Sunday S.S. story card # 147	7:00 pm Friendship	<i>Office: Josephine</i> 9:30 am Coffeebreak 7:30 pm Full Council	7:30 pm Final membership class	12:00pm Bulletin Deadline 9:30 pm Ladies Craft Group - Final meeting for the season	6:30 pm Family Night in the church social hall	

All bulletins can be found online www.firstcrocky.ca

Check out our Facebook page (@FirstCRC.RockyMtnHouse) or website (firstcrocky.ca) for links to sermons.

H E L P I N G H A N D S	Thank you, for all you do!	April 14	April 21	April 28
		Pastor Ken	Pastor Ken	Pastor Ken
Serving Elder		Alan H.	Karl H.	Jessica H.
Serving Deacon		Lowell S.	Lorraine A.	Peter B.
Music Team		Six Track	The Experience	Lifted Hearts
Children's Message		Elroy L.	Corinne S.	Pastor Natasha
Nursery		Margo D., Amber B. Kelsey D., Lucas H.	Isabelle D., Colleen T. Corinne V., Shanelle T.	Justin & Mikala D. Marie A., Teslynn A.
Coffee Host		Dave & Henriette V.	Aaron & Cheryl T.	Tom & Kathy S.
Greeters/Coffee Cleanup		Dirk & Sandra V. Lowell & Chris S.	Dave & Sandra S. GEMS/CADETS	Elmer & Joanne O. Josephine & Peter B.



FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

RR3 Site 4 Box 6, Rocky Mountain House, T4T 2A3 403.845.6067

Our **MISSION** is to worship God faithfully, nurture one another to grow in Christ, joyfully tell others about Jesus, develop our gifts to serve and pursue stewardship, justice and peace in every area of life.

Pastor Ken Douma – kgdouma@gmail.com 780.728.8148

Pastor Natasha Specht- pastornatasha@rockycrc.ca (Monday -Thursday)

Church Office: Tuesday — Friday 9:00am to 12:00pm office@rockycrc.ca



Morning Worship Service

Welcome 🎵 Be Thou My Vision	Children's Message - Elroy L. Sunday School for Ages 3- Grade 5
Call to Worship God's Greeting and we greet each other 🎵 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord , O my Soul)	Announcements and Congregational Prayer Offering for Thrive Offertory
Call to confession Prayer of Confession	Scripture - Colossians 2:6-12; 3:1-17 Message - Sacramental Series #2 - Baptismal Identity- Rags to Riches (Who We Are In Christ!)
Assurance of Pardon 🎵 What a Friend We Have in Jesus	🎵 Who You Say I AM
Baptism of Jack Jannes Hornstra 🎵 Jesus Strong & Kind/Jesus Loves Me	The Blessing 🎵 My Friends May You Grow in Grace

Welcome to First CRC Rocky

If you are visiting we want to offer a warm welcome!
We pray you will encounter God today as you worship and bring him praise!

Nursery is available for infants & small children. Sunday School for Ages 3 to Grade 5 during the service.
Join us for coffee in the fellowship hall following the service.

For more Information view: www.firstcrocky.ca or [FirstCRC.RockyMtnHouse on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FirstCRC.RockyMtnHouse)

CHURCH FAMILY

*"...Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
~ 1 Thessalonians 5:16 ~*

† As a ministerial church, each church has been asked to pray for our brothers and sisters in our community,
today we are praying for **Covenant Christian Reformed Church**.

† We pray for those at home: **Pearl V., Sylvia D., Gus & Margaret V. and Joe & Lena V.** For those at the local
care facilities: **Tonia T., Diane W., Elly O., Dick O., Seenie B.** For all the caregivers: who are able to assist those
who require a little extra help and care.

† Please keep **all missionaries** in God's care, wherever they may be serving. Join us in praying that: God will open
doors of ministry, blessing partnerships and friendships, for strength and stamina, that the Holy Spirit will provide
them with words that communicate effectively in other cultures and languages, that God will keep them safe, for
an abundant harvest that will be produced as more people learn about the love of Christ, and for restoration —
physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually — that can only be found in Jesus.

Check out the Missions bulletin board, in the social hall, for updates on the missionaries that we support.

If you know of anyone that we should be keeping in our prayers for various reasons,
council asks that you please call Pastor Ken, an elder or deacon.

Your *Elders* are Anthony B., Randy D., Alan H., Karl H., Jessica H.,
Alan O., John O., Dave S., Chris T. and Albert V.

Your *Deacons* are Lorraine A., Peter B., Ken B., Doug D.,
Justin D. and Lowell S.

Upcoming Services

April 14 - Baptism of Jack Jannes H.

April 14 - Services at Clearwater Center (1:15 pm) & Westview Lodge (2:30 pm)

April 21 - Gems & Cadet Sunday



***"I waited patiently for the Lord;
He inclined to me and heard my cry."***

~ Psalm 40:1 ESV

NICARAGUA: Increased Difficulties for Christians

Under the regime of President Daniel Ortega, life for Christians in Nicaragua has become increasingly difficult. Many Catholic priests have been detained, often for being overtly opposed to the abusive actions committed by the country's governing authorities. During the last week of December alone, nine priests were detained. According to another report, between the years of 2019 and 2023, the Catholic church experienced 1,200 cases of aggression, including dozens of arrests and expulsions from the country. More recently, on January 14th of this year, 19 members of the Catholic clergy were expelled from their posts in Nicaragua and deported to the Vatican. Included among these clergymen was Bishop Rolando Alvarez, a prominent critic of the Nicaraguan president, who had earlier been sentenced to 26 years in prison on charges of treason. While the Catholic church has been repeatedly harassed by the government, other organizations within the nation that stood against the regime were also targeted. In July 2023, the Red Cross was expelled from the country for criticizing the inhumane treatment of prisoners. The members of many other Christian organizations have been subjected to harassment and false allegations. Altogether, the government has seized the properties of numerous non-profit groups, including 256 evangelical Christian associations.

For one particular American-based agency, Mountain Gateway, this opposition has resulted in charges against 14 pastors, including three church leaders from the United States. All assets of the ministry were confiscated and the 11 Nicaraguan pastors, along with two lawyers, were accused of money laundering and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 12 to 15 years. Additionally, the Christians received huge fines of over \$100 million CAD each. Charges have also been filed against the three American pastors. However, since these three Christian leaders were not in Nicaragua at the time of the arrests, they had not been detained. Speaking of the difficult situation, Jon Britton Hancock, who serves as the President of Mountain Gateway, stated: "This is not the outcome we hoped for, and it is heartbreaking to know that people who we consider family are sitting in prison for sharing the Gospel. We trust that God is in control of this situation and have faith that He will have the final say on this all."

Despite the harassment and persecution, followers of Jesus throughout Nicaragua are continuing to practise their faith. A recent survey showed that 45 percent of the country's citizens identify themselves as evangelical Christians, with a similar percentage of the population referring to themselves as Catholics. Even so, lawyer Wendy Flores describes the persecution of Christians as a "silent" matter, since many in the country still support the government and others avoid addressing the injustices of the regime for fear of reprisals.

In the midst of the increased hostility from Nicaragua's governing officials, pray that Christians throughout the country will receive greatly needed wisdom. And whenever there is uncertainty as to when they should speak up and when they need to remain silent, may these believers receive the Holy Spirit's divine guidance. On behalf of all our imprisoned Christian brothers and sisters in Nicaragua, pray that the Lord will sustain each of them with His strength, encouragement and peace, while intervening in each of their legal cases so that they can be released from custody. Ultimately, may the powerful life-transforming message of the Gospel reach all levels of Nicaraguan society – including the country's leadership – so that many more people will come to know Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

Thrive

Thrive Faith Formation Tip - Practicing celebration early in the day can help adjust our mindset and focus us on God's goodness. Consider beginning each morning by praying a Scripture passage of celebration, such as Psalm 103:1-5. Learn more at crcna.org/FaithPracticesProject

ReFrame Ministries

Kids Corner: Imagine When... - Check out this week's kids' devotion at www.kidscorner.net. How do you like to use your imagination? Maybe you imagine the characters in a book you're reading. Perhaps you can imagine a treehouse you want to design. Though your imagination is something only you can see, it can also help you shape your ideas. New inventions, solutions, and creations can all stem from your imagination! Check out all the great content at kidscorner.net, like The Spring Scavenger Hunt, and go for a hike!



***"I waited patiently for the Lord;
He inclined to me and heard my cry."***
~ Psalm 40:1 ESV

Six Kenyan merchants, all of them professed followers of Jesus, were killed in a border town between Kenya and Somalia on March 29th. The perpetrators of the crime then fled the Somalian town of Dhobley and travelled further into the country. It is believed that those responsible for the attack are members of al-Shabaab, a militant Islamic group based in Somalia. The six slain believers had been selling plastic utensils and other household goods in Dhobley for the past six years. On the day of the attack, these merchants were just opening their shops for business when a group of gunmen with covered faces drove by and shot the Christian men at close range. Four of the believers died immediately, while the other two succumbed to their injuries later while in hospital.

It is widely believed that the slain followers of Jesus were targeted for their religious affiliation and activities. Along with their business pursuits, the Christian men frequently shared the compassion of Christ to Muslims in the community. It was reported that several Muslims had been secretly attending the believers' evening prayer services to learn more about Christianity, which likely angered local Islamic militants. Prior to the mass shooting incident, one of the victims, Joseph Githonga, reported to a local church leader in February that some Muslim community members had complained about the Christians' worship activities. For the church members' safety, the Christian leader advised Joseph and the other believers to avoid singing but continue quietly holding their Bible study meetings.

In the 2024 *World Watch List*, Open Doors ranked Somalia as second among the 50 listed nations considered to be the most difficult for those practising Christianity. For more information on the persecution of Christians in this East African nation, and/or to review other posted reports, go to our [country report](#).

Pray that the Lord will minister greatly needed comfort to the friends and loved ones of these men who were recently killed for their faith. May those responsible be held accountable for their criminal actions. Also prayerfully uphold other believers living within this region of the world whose lives are at risk because of their faithful Christian witness, asking God to provide them protection, courage and strength. Last, but not least, please intercede for the salvation of those in East Africa who are opposed to the Gospel message, in hopes that many of them would turn to faith in Christ and experience His saving grace.

Deacon's Corner ~ Lorraine A., Peter B., Ken B., Doug D., Justin D., Lowell S.

Upcoming Offerings

April 14 - Thrive

Nine ministries of the Christian Reformed Church have joined together to better equip and encourage our congregations, under the name of Thrive. We continue to support churches in the areas of: faith formation, safer churches, disability access, racial justice and diversity, pastors and church support, chaplaincy, justice and worship.

April 21- GEMS & CADETS

GEMS - where woman mentor girls as they develop a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.
Cadets - Helping boys grow more Christ-like in all areas of life.

E-transfers received March 2024

Local Church Ministries \$12,270	Mission Aviation Fellowship \$40	
Calvin Theological Seminary \$40	Resonate Global \$300	Canadian Foodgrains Bank \$400

Gratefully Received March 31 - April 7

Local Church Ministries \$19,232.00	Resonate Global Missions \$892.00
Lord's Food Bank \$50.00	Caribou Church (Lomavatu's) \$500.00

There is a newsletter from the **Ministry to the Seafarer's** on the Deacon's bulletin board. If you would like to view an online version go to <https://new.express.adobe.com/webpage/bW0R6O8Qrngzk>

From the Deacons & Treasurer

There are several ways to give to the church:

Coupons allow you to give to the weekly offerings, without having to use loose change. They come in \$2, \$5 and \$10 coupons. You will be receipted for the amount of coupons you purchase. Coupons can be directly purchased from a Deacon, in the Council room on Sunday morning, after the service. They expire at the end of each year.

Budget/Local Church Ministries - Write to "First Christian Reformed Church of RMH". If you wish to have your cheque allocated to a specific cause approved by the deacons or otherwise announced please indicate that cause on the memo line of your cheque.

E-transfers - send to treasurer@rockycrc.ca on the memo please specify the cause you would like money allocated to.

Pre-Authorized Bank Withdrawals - Contact Marlene O. to sign up or get a form from the office.

There are times in life when everything seems overwhelming- times when you can't find answers or you don't know where to turn. But in every season of life the Spirit invites us into a relationship with God through prayer. This is how we align our hearts with His. It is reassuring to know He is there and is listening. Whatever you are going through-times of beauty or ones of trouble- we'd love to pray with you. Contact the team through email, the church office, phone call or through the website anonymously.

Visit www.firstcrocky.ca (via the CONTACT link or Prayer Ministries link)

From Council

Here are a few highlights from our last Council meeting. (February 26, 2024)

- As part of our ongoing discussion regarding Children at the Lord's Supper we would like to extend an invitation to parents and any others who may be interested to come out for an evening of conversation and teaching. Please join us **April 18 at 7:30** in the social hall, where we will begin with a time to address any questions you may have and then move on to some teaching that we hope will help to equip parents to have meaningful conversations with their children regarding participation in the Lord's Supper.

- Our church is blessed to be looking forward to its 75th Anniversary coming up next year! We would love to mark this milestone in a memorable way and so we are looking for volunteers to organize a celebration. If you are interested in helping out please contact Jessica Hoeksema.

- Ron deVries joined us at our last meeting to share about the church in Nordegg, and how God has been working in that community. He shared with us some of the struggles the church has been facing and also shared some ideas on ways we may be able to offer support.

Church Announcements

Community Prayer Breakfast- Rocky & District Ministerial Association invite you to the 5th annual Community Prayer Breakfast, Wednesday, May 15th at the Lou Soppit Community Centre 7:00am-8:30 am. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at the church office until May 8, or call 403.845.5710

An Organizer is needed to coordinate the Easter & Christmas singing times at the Rocky Hospital, if you would like more information or would like to volunteer to fill this role contact John & Jean B.

Summer Ministries (July 7-12, July 14-19 & July 22-25) has several opportunities to volunteer! Check out the bulletin board in the hallway to sign up. Any questions contact the camp committee members Albert V., Kelly B., Marie A., Sheldon B., Zachary B., Lydia B., Cody L., or Cheri-Lynn B. Vacation Bible Camp contact Cailyn B.

Urgent Request for a rental- My name is Chantal and I am urgently looking for a place to rent either in town or in the country, as I need to be out of the place I'm in by next week. If you can help me out even for a short while that would be much appreciated. Contact the church office for my contact number.

Thank you to the GEMS, the leaders and organizers that hosted the Grandparents social night on Wednesday. It was a wonderful evening! We enjoyed the big smiles, strong coffee and fellowship with you all!

From a couple of great-grandparents

Church Announcements

Thankyou-

Thank you for all the meals, gifts, visits and prayers as we have transitioned to a family of 5! We have felt so much love and are so grateful for our church community. - Mark, Keanna, Scarlett, Penny and Jack

Family Fun Night- You are all invited to join us for a family fun night of pizza and Yahtzee! April 26 at 6:30pm at the church. If you have a game of Yahtzee feel free to bring it along. RSVP if possible so we can know how much pizza we need! Contact Krystal, Cailyn or Kelsey.

MAY 4 - BAZAAR and BAKE SALE: By now, I hope everyone has looked at the posters to see what they can donate to the 2025 - 75th anniversary fund. We will also have CERTIFICATES for shoppers to buy if someone donates a service or item to be available at a later date. Some examples are a dinner invite or delivery, a fancy cake or buns for an upcoming occasion, a DQ meal delivered, a couple of hours housework or yard work, painting or cleaning house for a few hours, play dates, etc. Let Marilyn H. know if you can donate one of the above services and we'll fill out a gift certificate so the price of the service and info can be filled in ahead of time. It's going to be a fun day!

Life Changing! That's what **Rehoboth Camp Ministry** can be! RCM provides a one-week summer camp experience for persons with developmental disabilities, and we need volunteers. Come and be a friend to someone with a developmental disability and show them the love of Christ, and at the same time enjoy our beautiful camp facility. We are looking for all kinds of volunteers, especially nurses/LPNs, cooks, and counsellors for all of our weeks: ***R&R*** (a more relaxed week from June 23 – 28), ***Adult 1*** (June 29 -July 5), ***Adult 2*** (July 6 -12), ***Independent*** (July 13-19), and ***Youth*** (July 20 - 26). Check out our website at www.rcmflourish.ca/camps for descriptions of the weeks and more information. Anyone age 14 and up is welcome to apply. No experience is necessary and full training and support is provided. Bring a friend! For more information, please e-mail camp@rcmflourish.ca. With your help we can flourish in the land. See you at camp!

Calling all Girls! Plans are underway for **Wildrose GEMS Camp** to be held **July 29 - August 2** at the Rehoboth facility on Gull Lake. Registration forms are now available from your GEMS leader. Registration deadline is May 31, but register early so you don't miss out! Come and enjoy fun and fellowship, crafts, activities, great food, singing, campfire, worship, and sharing the love of Christ together. If you are *going into* grades 5 through 8 in the fall of 2024 and wish to have a great summer experience, this is for you! Girls entering grade 9 who wish to learn leadership skills and discover their gifts for serving at camp can register for our Transition Year. Girls entering grades 10 - 12 are eligible to register as a CIT (Counselor in Training). Interested in volunteering as a camp cook or cabin counselor or if you have questions contact Bonnie Bennik at 403.652.1078 or email wildrosegemscamp@gmail.com

ThankYou! Repairs, renovations and upgrades are nearing completion at the parsonage. A huge thankyou to all of our volunteers that helped out in one way or another! Also to those who stopped by with donuts and fresh cinnamon buns, they were appreciated! You can earmark your donations to this cause **Local Budget** to cover some of the extra expenses that came up with this project.