

CLASSIS CENTRAL PLAINS – PRAYER AND PRAISE

Feb. 2026

Tracy CRC

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. Eight new members by transfer and by profession of faith.
2. An adult baptism and an infant baptism
3. Strong, capable and willing volunteers providing leadership and instruction in Church Education and GEMS and Cadets.

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to *Bring Christ's Comfort* to those outside of our congregation:

1. Community Christmas Candlelight service presented the gospel to 105 people from the church and community.
2. The Cadet program serves from 9-13 boys from the community each week. Only one of them is a member of the church.
3. The GEMS went caroling through the streets of Tracy.

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. God will continue to lead us in teaching and preaching His Word faithfully so we grow spiritually.
2. God will bring more young families into the church so we grow physically.
3. God will bless the elderly individuals in the congregation as they experience the burdens of aging.

Newton CRC

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. We have several individuals who have expressed an interest in membership so we are offering a membership class starting in Feb.
2. We have had 3 babies born in the past 4 months
3. We have experience incredible unity within our congregation during our pastoral vacancy

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. We gave away 35 Christmas meals to our neighborhood
2. We had a "giving tree" providing mittens, hats and scarfs to our neighborhood

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. Our continued pastoral search
2. Our new members and future growth

Sully CRC

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. Professions of faith by our youth
2. Young couple have joined the church

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. Cadet, Gems, and 412 continue to have many youth from outside the church attending

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. We are continuing to look closely at the church family to determine our needs for the future.

Peoria CRC

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. Ministry of Pastor David Swinney; addition of David & Lynda to our church family
2. Profession of faith of one of our covenant youth

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. Several members making water purification systems for S.W.I.M.
2. Two members serving on a mission trip to Honduras
3. One member serving on a mission trip to Cambodia

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. Wisdom for encouraging members who no longer attend worship regularly

Peace Cedar Rapids

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. Looking back, we see God's timing in bring recent immigrants from Liberia around the same time we saw current members leaving due to COVID, remote worship and other reasons. Their arrival added to worship and congregational activities, bring a different perspective and enthusiasm, lowering our average age, making us more diverse, taking on church responsibilities, encouraging our older members, and making us a stronger and more receptive congregation in general. We are a more welcoming and active church because of them.
2. Thankful for God's blessings in giving in 2025 that allowed Peace Church to meet our budget and needs.

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. The opportunity to support House of Prayer through use of our building and excited to continue to build a relationship with them and explore ways we can support each other in ministry.

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. Prayers for God's guidance and wisdom as explore the new relationship with House of Prayer church.

New Life Prison Church Newton

Prayers of Thanks:

Leadership of our Pastor

Continued words of affirmation from our members - specifically to just how much this church means to them and how they see lives being changed (even when we cannot experience life with them daily)

Recent Baptisms

Special Christmas service in the Gym

For the prayer, thought, and financial support from Classis and our Church Families - we cannot do it without them

Prayers of opportunities

Mark Blankespoor's involvement and relationship with several returning citizens - very important to them, and to us as Dave cannot always make contact without violating policy Relationships and rapport with men released that we can have contact with

The requests that come into our 'outside' prayer chain and for Cindy's work on that - how that is also reaching and touching peoples lives and they tell us that

Prayers for future

That the doors of opportunity open even more - its hard when we have no control - but we know who does!

Specifically - Bigger room or 2nd service (or both); More time with men

Prison Fellowship Grow program starting - several New Life volunteers will also serve here which is an open door for us!

Leighton CRC

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. A strong and healthy church education program with qualified and willing teachers.
2. The vibrant new post-high school class.
3. The well-attended Wednesday afternoon Bible study at Independence Village in Pella.

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. We are able to live-stream both locally and internationally.
2. The community night sponsored in conjunction with the Ebenezer Reformed Church.
3. Our stellar softball team brings us in contact with several people.

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. God will continue to lead us in teaching and preaching His Word faithfully so we grow spiritually.
2. God will bring more young families into the church so we grow physically.
3. God will bless the elderly individuals in the congregation as they experience the burdens of aging.

Grace Fellowship Pella

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. The success of our goal of having quarterly intercultural events in our calendar such as our Back to School Worship & Prayer Night, Celebracion de Navidad with guest musicians, etc.
2. We have 6 upcoming baptisms and 1 profession of faith.
3. On any given Sunday morning we are seeing visitors who are returning.

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. Our 4-corners offerings, which supports local, regional, and global ministries, has receive consistent and substantial giving.
2. A few of our congregant have been involved to building relationships and navigating questions with refugees family who have settled in Pella.

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. Grace would like prayers for our ongoing implementation of our newly formed mission and vision. God had begun the start of renewal in our church and now we need movement and partnership in seeing it through.

Faith Pella

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. Freshman Sunday School Class planned and helped lead a Sunday morning worship service
2. Regularly have 70-80 attendees for our YP (Young People's) group most Wednesday nights
3. Strong intergenerational connections within our church family initiated by intentional ministry programs
4. Our Coffee Break for young women in the community is well attended with about 20-25 participants

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. We had the opportunity to provide housing for about 3 months for a missionary family
2. We had the opportunity to serve people through Daybreak and Celebrate Recovery at the Well
3. We partnered with Mobility Worldwide to raise funds to cover the logistics cost of sending 229 carts to Sierra Leone
4. We started a Wired Wednesday program where we provide snacks and drinks for Pella High students that park in our parking lot

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look at the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. We have two mission trips planned (Asheville, NC and Compton, CA)
2. We will be sending 16 cadets and counselors to International Camporee this summer in Alberta, Canada
3. We are hoping to find two new outreach opportunities by the end of May 2026

Crossroads Fellowship

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. We are thankful for the transfer of four families to Crossroads in the last quarter of 2025 and for already one baptism in 2026
2. We are thankful our building project is underway and is near 50% completed.

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. The food shelf continues to be held at Crossroads and is a benefit for the local community.
2. We have a mission team of five people headed to Liberia, Africa at the end of February. This team will visit churches throughout Liberia and the Ivory Coast that were built with funds from Crossroads and other Central Plains Classis churches.

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. Two long terms members of Crossroads have passed away in the last six months leaving a spouse behind. Additionally, a number of members have experienced significant health concerns in the last few months.

Cornerstone Pella

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. CONTINUED GROWTH IN OUR CONGREGATION
2. NEW PROGRAMS FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH
3. PEOPLE GETTING INVOLVED

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. GOING THROU CHURCH GROWTH IDEAS TO MAKE US MORE IMPACTFUL

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. GOING THROUGH PROCESS TO SEE HOW OUR CHRUCH CAN BE MORE IMPACTFUL
2. LOOKING AT WAYS TO GROW OUR DICIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Cedar CRC

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. Pastor Ritsema and his years of service at Cedar
2. A Christmas party with Pastor and Cindy Ritsema and our young adult families

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. Cadet Sunday with our community cadets and their families

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. As we prepare for the upcoming vacancy at Cedar, praying for God's guidance.

Trinity StL.

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. Praise for our Financial blessing of significant giving to make up our deficit during December.
2. Thank you that the parental rights the foster children Pastor Mike Bentley family are hosting were terminated. Pastor Bentley can start pursuing adoption.
3. The Elders heard profession of faith of 4 youth and 1 new adult member.

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. Deacons have been able to provide aid and support in community.
2. Pastor Mike Teaching a Bible study at The Emerson (nursing home, in St Charles)

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. God Continue to bless the congregation to be able to provide Financial Support to Trinity.

Bethel Oskaloosa

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. Birth of healthy children
2. Professions of faith
3. Pastor Doug's 13 years of service at Bethel

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. Partnering with Love INC (In The Name of Christ)
2. Worship services at our nursing homes

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. Search for a new Pastor
2. God's blessing on our Administration Committee

First Oskaloosa

We are thankful for these experiences of God's blessing in the life of our congregation:

1. Milestones in our children and youth programs in the last months
2. New leaders in our Youth Programs
3. Christmas opportunities for Caroling and Christmas Program

We are excited about the following opportunities we have had to Bring Christ's Comfort to those outside of our congregation:

1. Hosted Love INC Foundations Class' celebration meal
2. Ecumenical Food Cupboard Christmas Giving project
3. Starting work with Safe Families in Mahaska County

We ask for the prayers of classis in these areas as we look to the challenges and opportunities of the next six months:

1. We continue to discuss plans for a new youth ministry facility
2. Many of our older members are experiencing health concerns