

Every Word in a Year Together

~ an invitation to read through the Bible together in 2025 ~

“... man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”

~ Deuteronomy 8:4

Just last evening I preached on Lord’s Day 47 of the Heidelberg Catechism which teaches us that when we pray “hallowed be thy name” in the Lord’s Prayer, we’re really asking God to help us truly know him. This knowledge of God helps us to direct all our living—what we think, say, and do—to God’s glory. We should be praying for this relational knowledge of God regularly, knowing that such a knowledge of God orders and directs us to his will and way—and therefore to life.

As we think about our knowledge of God, though, we should also be reminded of the second article of the Belgic Confession which teaches us that we can know God “[f]irst, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe,” but also, and more importantly, “by his holy and divine Word, as much as we need in this life, for God’s glory and for our salvation.” Truly, “man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.”

In Northwest Iowa in 2024, we live in a community that is not only full of literal bread (and meat!) but one also full of words. Most of the words in our world—the words we encounter in our social media feeds, on podcasts and talk radio, and on TV programs and movies—do not come from the mouth of the LORD, and many speak in ways contrary to God’s Word. As a minister, I am grateful for the heritage that put a strong emphasis on Bible reading that has resulted in high levels of biblical literacy that still exist in this area. Nevertheless, I’m certain that we are not, on average, as familiar with Scripture as previous generations were. As individuals, families, and churches we need to rebalance our diet of words and stories so that God’s Word is providing us with the fuel and calories we need to rightly understand ourselves and our world.

Therefore, the elders and I invite and encourage all the members and families of First CRC to join together in a plan to read through the entire Bible in 2025. The plan will begin with Genesis 1-3 on Wednesday, January 1, 2025 and continue straight through the Bible until December 31. The plan will include readings for Monday through Saturday of every week. No readings will be assigned for Sundays in order to provide a day for catch-up in case you miss a day during the week. Each day’s reading will be roughly four chapters of

Scripture. Reading the whole Bible in a year does take a commitment of time, but doing the whole daily reading will take most people far less time than it takes to watch one episode of a sitcom.

I encourage families with small children to carve out time from their schedules to read some or all of the readings together. Family mealtimes are a great opportunity to hear God’s Word and pray together. I encourage families with older children to do the same or to do some of the readings together while encouraging all the members of the family to do the other readings on their own so that the whole family has read through the whole Bible by year’s end. For those of you reading on your own, another option is to listen to the daily readings through an audio recording of the Bible. (There are many audio-Bible options available online). A printed guide to the year’s readings will be available before the first of the year.

During the evening services of worship in 2025, I will be preaching on passages of Scripture from the previous week’s readings. We will be feasting on the same large portions of God’s Word through the week and coming back on Sunday evenings to communally taste again with greater attention some of what we’ve already read. If you don’t regularly attend the evening service, I encourage you to consider making a commitment to join with your brothers and sisters during this time as we feast together on the Word of God. I look forward to journeying through “every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD” with you in the new year!

Pastor Kurt Monroe

