

**UPCOMING SERMONS**

The theme for Lent is Christ giving us an example and the invitation to follow in His steps. Each week we will be looking at different examples that Christ shows us and how we can live into that. Please be reminded starting February 22 through April 2, we will be doing weekly communion, to remember what Christ has done.—Pastor Mario

**March 1: Family Sunday** (Pastor Scott)  
Welcoming The Unthinkable  
Matthew 8:1-13

**March 8:** (Pastor Rick)  
The Invitation to Trust  
Matthew 14:22-36

**March 15:** (Pastor Mario)  
The Gift of Life  
Mark 2:21-43  
(Quinn VanSolen Baptism)

**March 22:** (Pastor Scott)  
Being in the Moment  
John 12:1-11

**March 29: Palm Sunday** (Pastor Scott)  
The Fulfilled Promise  
Matthew 21:1-11

**April 2: Maundy Thursday**  
Even At The Table  
Mark 14:12-26

**April 3: Good Friday**  
It Is Finished  
John 19:28-36

**April 5: Easter Sunday** (Pastor Scott)  
The Story Continues

**SECOND OFFERING SCHEDULE**

Every Sunday the offering bags are passed twice. The first offering goes to The River Life (or General) Fund. This is for the normal operation of the church. The second offerings are designated for a special purpose or for one of our Kingdom Partners.

- March 1:** Benevolence
- March 8:** Christian Education Fund
- March 15:** Missions
- March 22:** World Renew
- March 29:** Destination Rehoboth (A short term mission trip that Pastor Mario will be leading this summer.)



**CARE GROUP LUNCHEONS**  
**Meet Sundays, Feb. 22—March 29**

The Care Groups spring round of lunch gatherings began Sunday, February 22 with Group 1. The Care Groups gather for lunch twice a year; once in the spring and once in the fall. These lunches are a wonderful opportunity to share a meal, build meaningful connections, and grow in community with others in your Care Group.

The remaining schedule for the Care Groups is as follows.

<b>March 1</b>	<b>Care Group 3</b>
<b>March 8</b>	<b>Care Group 6</b>
<b>March 15</b>	<b>Care Group 2</b>
<b>March 22</b>	<b>Care Group 5</b>
<b>March 29</b>	<b>Care Group 4</b>

If you do not know if you are part of one of the Care Groups, if you have not received an email to RSVP, or if you need any help with registering, please contact the church office (909.798.2221)



- March 11**    **Fall Prevention**  
Led by Rachael Keast
- March 25**    **Engaging in Godly Habits**  
Led by Pastor Scott Elgersma
- April 8**        **Fire Prevention**  
Led by Andrew Simpson
- April 22**      **Don't Ignore Your Hearing Test**  
Led by Don Bueermann
- May 13**        **Cadets Pinewood Derby Races**

Join us for dinner at 5:15 PM and Praise and Worship led by the children at 6:00 PM. Adult sessions begin at 6:15 PM.

## GENEROSITY AND OUTREACH TEAM UPDATES

The Generosity and Outreach Team will provide updates on The River missionaries and Kingdom Partners in this newsletter to give congregants a chance to develop a deeper relationship with our supported individuals and organizations.

March 22, the second offering is scheduled for World Renew. World Renew is a Kingdom Partner. Kingdom Partners are not included in the mission budget. They are supported by special offerings and individual contributions. During 2025, World Renew received \$4,680.

World Renew is an  World Renew agency of the Christian Reformed Church. It works in the areas of disaster relief, community health, economic opportunity, food security, and peace and justice. An in-depth description of World Renew can be found at [crcna.org](http://crcna.org). The website provides current news and opportunities to get involved and volunteer your time to build the Kingdom.

The February 22 second offering was taken for CarePortal. Riverside County Regional Manager, Savannah Blair, spoke during the service. Mrs. Blair talked about her own experience as a foster care child and how that moved her into working with CarePortal. She also expressed deep appreciation for The River's partnership and Debbie Bueermann's fierce commitment to the ministry.

CarePortal is a national ministry  CarePortal that assists families that are either at risk of having their children placed in foster care or are trying to get their children back out of foster care. A child or family in need asks for help from a child-serving professional. The child-serving professional vets and types needs into CarePortal online. CarePortal then alerts nearby churches and community members to the needs. Once a church (or several) responds that they can meet a need, they then coordinate gathering what is needed to help the child and their family. Church response team members who have completed special training have the unique opportunity to assist the child-serving professional in physically delivering the items, unlocking a beautiful opportunity to interact with the people directly served and sparking a chance for vulnerable families to gain ongoing, meaningful connection with members of the local faith community. Debbie Bueermann, Director of Outreach and Support, coordinates the CarePortal Ministry for The River.

Over the last twelve months, The River responded to 77 requests and was able to meet 38. Eighty-two children and their families were served. The economic impact of The River's response was \$28,005. Since beginning its partnership with

CarePortal, The River has responded to 489 requests and met 394. Three hundred ninety-three children and their families have been served. The economic impact of The River's response has been \$402,354.

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## ANNUAL RUMMAGE MARKET (FORMERLY JUNK IN YOUR TRUNK) SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 8:00 AM—12:00 PM

Just a reminder that the Rummage Market (formerly Junk in Your Trunk) will be happening on March 7. Stop by and see what members of the church and others are selling. It's always an enjoyable morning with a lot of interaction. Hot and iced coffee will be available with some other drinks. Some of the vendors usually sell sweet treats to go with your beverage.



The vendors each pay \$25 for 2 spots in the parking lot. Smaller spots, just for a table, are \$10. The proceeds from the spot sales support CarePortal. Each vendor gets to keep whatever money they make.

The Rummage Market is sponsored by The River's Hospitality and Events Leadership Team. The team also does Family Sunday the first Sunday of the month, the Cornhole Tournament in the spring, the Handmade Market in November, and Carols and Cocoa for Christmas.

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## HIKING MINISTRY PLANS OUTING TO OAKMONT TRAIL SATURDAY, MARCH 14

The River Hiking Ministry is planning to hike Oakmont Trail in Redlands on Saturday, March 14. Oakmont Trail is part of Oakmont Park, a 14.6 acre park with picnic areas and nature trails.



Hikers will meet at the church parking lot at 8:30AM with the idea to be on the trail by 9:00AM. There are a handful of parking spaces in the lot located at 31212 Sutherland at the corner of Sutherland Drive and South Lane (not South Avenue).

The hike may be subject to trail and weather conditions. For more information, contact Randall Whitman, who coordinates the hiking ministry, on his landline, 909.793.0805. The morning of the hike call 909.831.1821. If necessary, leave a message and Randall will return it when he is not driving,



## COUNCIL FORMS NEW COMMITTEE TO LOOK AT POSSIBLE BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

By Andrew Simpson

We have some exciting updates regarding our church home! The Church Council has formed a new committee to focus on building improvements that will make our space more vibrant and accessible.

### Key areas of focus include:

- A refreshed Fellowship Hall and Patio
- Updated bathrooms and children's spaces
- An inviting new front entrance

We believe these changes will greatly enhance our shared experience and help us warmly welcome new members. Look for a full proposal in the coming months! For more details, feel free to chat with Andrew Simpson or Pastor Scott. You can also talk with Barb Hirzel, who is part of the committee.

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# The River

*financial update*

January, 2026

Fund	Income	Expense	Difference
River Life Fund	\$61,548	\$62,056	\$ (508)
Mission Fund	\$2,096	\$2,700	\$ (604)
Christian Education Fund	\$2,249	\$3,100	\$ (1851)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$65,893</b>	<b>\$67,856</b>	<b>\$ (1,963)</b>

Fiscal Year to Date

River Life Fund	\$320,837	\$343,500	\$ (22,463)
Mission Fund	\$13,715	\$13,500	\$ 215
Christian Education Fund	\$15,500	\$15,500	\$ -
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$350,052</b>	<b>\$372,300</b>	<b>\$ (22,248)</b>

**YOUNG  
ADULTS**  
MONDAYS 5:30 PM

## YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

### Help with Meals for Monday Night Meeting

Karla Whitman, leader of the new Young Adult Ministry Group, is inviting members of the congregation to get involved with the ministry by helping out with meals for their Monday night meetings. The group meets at Karla's house at 5:30 PM for dinner, fellowship, Bible study, and prayer. Meals need to be brought to Karla's house around 5:00 PM. Two of their group are gluten-free. Please contact Karla for more information, details, and dates that are open (909.255.4927).

### Will VerHoef to Speak at Next Men's Breakfast Saturday, March 21, 7-9 AM

Pastor Will VerHoef will be back at the Men's Breakfast, March 21, this time talking about his family's part in the Dutch Resistance during World War II. We got a glimpse of that during his last presentation, but he will be going more in depth.

Dr. Ryan Tolsma spoke at the February Men's Breakfast. He shared fascinating life stories that show how God's care and grace have been present throughout his life.

The Men's Breakfast is held the third Saturday of every month at 7 AM. After a hearty breakfast of scrambled eggs, sausage, and pancakes, a keynote speaker shares about his life and faith. The breakfast is held in the Fellowship Hall at The River. Contribution to help cover the cost of the food is \$5. One of the best values in the Inland Empire!

## SAVE THE DATE MAY 7, NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

By David Oliver

On Thursday, May 7, The River will be participating in The National Day of Prayer for our country, state(s), churches, schools, neighbors and families. Also we will have prayer time for our denomination, the Christian Reformed Church, their leadership and programs.

There will be two ways to participate. There will be an opportunity to sign up for time slots during 24 hours of prayer that day. In the evening there will be a gathering with dinner and prayer time. Mark your calendar now to save the date.

The National Day of Prayer observance is planned and put on by the Prayer and Worship Leadership Team.

## The River Art Wall

Have you noticed The River Art Wall? It is in the hallway leading towards the Fellowship Hall, just around the corner from the Narthex. The piece that has been on display is a watercolor of a Redlands landscape by Alice Kok. The wooden frame was done by her mother, Kris Kok.



Previously featured art has included a quilt by Joanne Winefer and a fabric piece by Denise Kouwe. Teri Heemstra came up with the idea and changes the pieces periodically.

Be sure to keep an eye out and enjoy the talent of members of our congregation. Take time to thank the artists for sharing their work with us.



### Legacy Night Souper Bowl Supper Continues to be Crowd Favorite

The annual Legacy Night Souper Bowl Supper was held Wednesday, February 11. Members of the congregation brought crockpots of soup and chili to share. Most people sampled several of the soups over the course of the night. At the end of the night the crockpots were empty and everyone was pleased. Thank you to Debbie Bueermann and her team for organizing this and thank you to everyone who brought soups to share.

Legacy Nights is The River's Midweek Program. It meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. After dinner at 5:15 PM and a brief time of worship led by the kids at 6:00 PM, there are adult electives, the Middle School Youth group meets, GEMS and CADETS for elementary age girls and boys meet, and Kingdom Kids is offered for younger children.



## Arrowhead Christian Academy Intercession Week

### Please Pray for Our Students and Leaders

Several high school students from The River and some adult leaders will be going on short-term mission trips during Arrowhead Christian Academy's intercession week, March 22-28.



Jonathon Odenbaugh and Lyla Antillon will be going to Ireland along with Megan Kouwe who is one of their leaders.



David Odenbaugh and Taylor Nydam will be going to Rehoboth, New Mexico along with their chaperones, Pastor Mario and Nate Triemstra.



Isaac DeWeerd is going to Ecuador.

Amelia Rodriguez, along with Leah and Micah Slaughter, will be going to Masaya in Western



Nicaragua.



Last month's newsletter had a more in-depth piece on this with information about what they will be doing at each site. Please pray for these students and their leaders as they travel, work, and sightsee. Pray that their work will be helpful to those they serve and that their experience will be significant in their life and faith. Pray for their leaders and all the logistics of traveling.

Arrowhead Christian Academy is Redlands Christian Schools high school, or what they often refer to as their Upper School. It is located on Tennessee and Orange Avenue in Redlands.

### Walking in the Word In-Depth Bible Study is Well Received

Dr. Bill Walthall's Walking In the Word has been very well received. The study began with Matthew 1 and will include the entire New Testament.

Bill covers three chapters per week; one on Mondays at either 10 AM or 7PM, a second on Thursdays at the same times, and a third on Sunday mornings at 8 AM before worship. The Monday and Thursday sessions are held in The River House (Office Building). Sunday's session is held in Room 107 near the Fellowship Hall. The sessions are also recorded and available online.

You are encouraged to join in at any time, for any class, as you are able. Most people are not able to be at all three sessions every week but benefit from whatever classes they can attend.





**WOMEN'S MINISTRY  
WHOLE & WELL GATHERING JANUARY 30**

**Next Event will be a Soup Swap Sunday, April 19, 3:00 PM**

On Friday, January 30, a group of around 45 women gathered in the River House to take part in an evening encouraging health and self-care. The

Women's Ministry Team, led by Karen Verhoeven, did a beautiful job preparing the meeting space, setting the mood for the evening's theme with dimmed lighting, floral centerpieces, candles, a huge charcuterie board and drinks. It all helped us slow down a bit and feel more relaxed as we settled in and prepared to listen.

Nichoel Kimmerle, a licensed marriage and family therapist and a member of The River, did a wonderful job leading us. Nichoel's gentle, engaging style drew us all in. She presented us with some background information on how we are all uniquely shaped by our experiences—from our families to the world around us. She led us to think about our responses to different situations and why we are the way we are. She helped us think about our nervous systems and how to relax and care for ourselves when we feel anxious. Nichoel gave ideas as to how we might deal with stress, including drinking hot tea, exercising, or praying. She shared that sometimes because of trauma it may be helpful to talk with a therapist to get direction and ideas on how to deal with things. She used a nice mix of teaching/presenting and having us share our own experiences with the others in our table groups. I enjoyed learning from Nichoel and also getting to know better the women (of all ages) who were at my table, including some who are River members and others who were from outside our church community.

The evening concluded with a candle painting craft, meant to be a relaxing activity. Each participant received a gift bag to take home. "Being well and whole is not about constant calm, but about trusting God's grace as we move through life with compassion & resilience." We hope you can join us at our next women's ministry gathering!



The Cadets enjoyed launching their home-built rockets Saturday, January 24, in the High Desert.



Ben Huibregtse said, "Every year I look forward to the rocket launch. It's such a BLAST!"

## LOVE REDLANDS 2026

On Saturday, February 22, after gathering at Pathway Church at 8:30 AM for a time of connection and prayer, almost 500 people from 12 churches fanned out across the area to over 22 worksites to show God's love to all of Redlands. A team of people from The River and Pathway went to Betty Kremer's house to pull weeds and help with a little housework. A group from The River and Trinity painted a wall at Greg and Wanda Bachman's. Another group from The River worked at Kimberly Elementary School with people from Emmaus and Redlands Christian Center doing yard work and general improvements. A fourth group from The River and Trinity did yard work and various projects at His Place, a Men's Home for Veterans in Mentone. A couple of people from The River joined the Good News 4 Redlands Bible distribution. They reached 486 doors in the city of Redlands distributing resources, fellowshiping, and praying with people. Most of the teams were done with their projects by noon. It was a great time of fellowship and working together to show God's love throughout the community.



Betty Kremer's Yard Crew



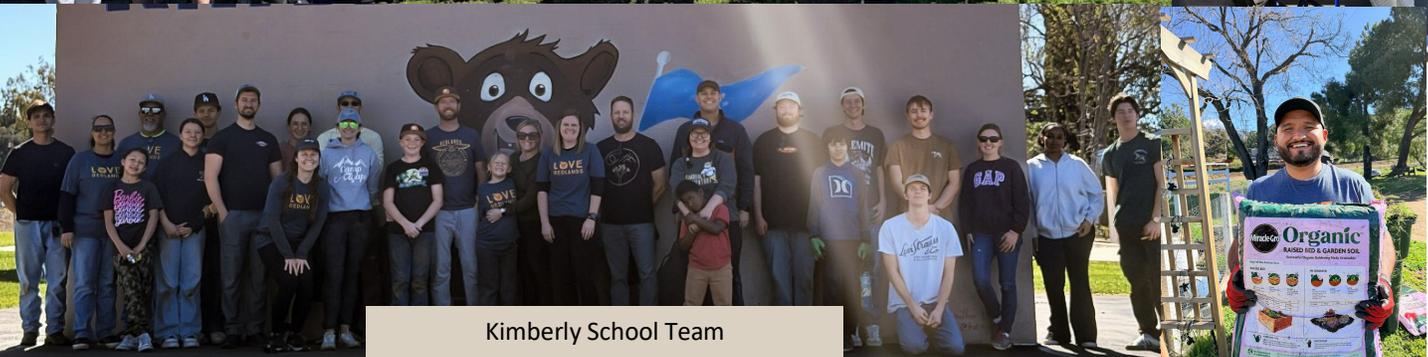
Good News 4 Redlands Distribution Team



Bachman's Painting Crew



His Place Work Team



Kimberly School Team

**THE RIVER HOSTS  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL  
WINTER CONFERENCE**

On February 27-28, seventy students from Christian Reformed Churches across southern California came together at The River for the annual High School Winter Conference. Their speaker was Andrew Pasek, a Christian Reformed Youth Champion from Chicagoland area. The weekend was filled with fun activities like laser tag and some hikes, worship and messages, and a service project at Colton Christian School. It was a great weekend! Pastor Mario, the Christian Reformed Youth Champion for the Los Angeles area, has planned and hosted the Winter Conference for the last several years.



**BOUNTIFUL HOPE FOUNDATION  
OFFERS TRIBUTE TO HARRIET BIERLING**

"In 2004, Bountiful Hope Foundation was founded in Lesotho Africa as the result of a simple question from Harriet Bierling: 'What do you need?' When told that there were high school orphans who had no one to pay for their school fees and uniforms, Harriet immediately enlisted her family to help raise funds. Twenty-one years later, we are still going strong."



In the last year Bountiful Hope was able to sponsor 62 students across eight high schools. They have sponsored over 1700 students since 2004. Their alumni work as nurses, social workers, accountants, teachers, engineers, etc. In 2025 Bountiful Hope opened their first computer lab, which has 20 computers. Classes are offered to the community free of charge on computer literacy and life skills.



You can find out more about Bountiful Hope Foundation at [www.bountifulhopefoundation.org](http://www.bountifulhopefoundation.org).

**Hope Changes Everything**

**MEN'S MINISTRY  
GOLF GROUP**

**Men's Ministry Golf Group Outing**

Men's Ministry Golf had their first outing Saturday, February 7 at Yucaipa Valley Golf Club, a 72 par course on Chapman Heights Road in Yucaipa. Nine guys participated: Andrew Simpson, Tyce, and Andrew's dad, Jeff Mercer and David Carnes, Mike DeDoes and Glenn Huibregtse. Glenn said, "It's a tough course, but it was good." Mike DeDoes said, "We aren't in it for the scores, we're there for the fellowship. We had a good time." The group teed off at 1:00 but at 2:45 had to go to the back 9 because a tournament was coming through. They finished up in the dark at 6 PM.

Andrew Simpson, who is coordinating the Men's Golf Ministry, thinks the next outing may be in May. Call Andrew at (909) 936-8765 if you are interested and would like to get involved. Young men and boys are also invited to participate.



**CONGRATULATIONS  
TO NATHAN AND KARA BANKS**

Congratulations to the Banks on the joyful arrival of their sweet baby boy, Jude, on Sunday, February 22! Jude is already so loved as he joins his four wonderful big sisters, and we celebrate this beautiful addition to their family. We praise God that both mom and baby are doing well and pray for continued health, rest, and sweet bonding in these early days.



Pete	Vander Kooy	March 01
Pam	Null	March 08
Philip	Terhorst	March 08
Janet	Jorritsma	March 12
Denise	Kouwe	March 29
Lizbeth	Stone	March 29
Beatriz	Szwabowski	March 30
Bill	Walthall	April 01
Pearl	Koning	April 07
Linda	Sirbully	April 10
Russell	Smith	April 10

## PASTOR SCOTT'S STUDY ON REVELATION CONTINUES WEDNESDAYS AT NOON

Pastor Scott's Bible Study on Revelation continues at noon Wednesdays in The River House (Office Building). Feel free to join in when and as you are able. It is always a good time of study and discussion. **The session on Wednesday, March 11, will be canceled because Pastor Scott and Kristin will be on vacation.**

### PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAISES

**Grace Florence:** Grace was admitted to Loma Linda University Medical Center Saturday, February 21. Her son found her unconscious and unresponsive. Doctors were able to revive her, removed large amounts of fluid, and put her on dialysis. As of publication, she is in ICU and fully sedated. Pray for Grace's boys as they meet with the doctors and make decisions.

**The Banks Family:** Please keep the Banks family in your prayers as they adjust to life as a family of seven and welcome Jude with so much love!

**Greg and Wanda Bachman:** Wanda has been moved to Hillsong Senior Living, 1431 Sandy Hill Dr., Calimesa CA 92320. Greg says she is adjusting well. Continue to pray for her and pray for Greg as he adjust to not having Wanda with him at home.

**Chuck and Joy Griffin:** We praise God that Chuck Griffin was able to return home after his time at Redlands community Hospital. He had a pacemaker installed and continues to recover from infection and his bout of pneumonia. Pray that he can get some good rest now that he is home. Pray for his wife Joy and their family as they care for and support Chuck in the weeks ahead.

**Ken and Pat Gopperton:** Ken Gopperton had a knee replacement February 20. Everything went well and his healing is progressing. Pray for strength as he does PT.

**The Kok Family:** Please be in prayer for the Kok family in their loss of Steve's father, Pastor Jim Kok. No matter how old or infirmed our parents are, it is always hard to say good-bye. Rev. Kok served at the Crystal Cathedral for over 30 years as a pastoral counselor. He wrote several books including *90% of Helping is Just Showing Up*. He touched the lives of thousands of people in crisis or spiritual distress.

**Jody Duncan and her sister,** Pamela's feeding tube has been removed and she is now able to eat solid food. The Parkinson's symptoms are decreasing as well. The family is very encouraged by Pam's progress. She has been deeply touched by the prayers and cards from The River family. It is especially meaningful to her that a congregation so far away would keep her in prayer,

Meanwhile, Jody took a fall at Grandparents' Day and broke her arm at the elbow. Please pray for her healing.

**Bill Bierling:** Bill has been busy with family and traveling, but he is grieving the loss of his dear wife, Harriet. Please continue to pray for Bill over the days, weeks, and months ahead.

**Debbie Clinton and Family:** Praise God that Debbie is able to get out and about even though she continues to avoid crowds. Continue to pray for her healing. Her daughter, Christy, has been struggling with health issues as well.

**Sandy McWilliams:** Pray for Sandy's continuing recovery following a stroke. Gordon and Darlene Barents shared after a recent visit, "Sandy is so upbeat and grateful for everything. She is going to speech therapy twice a week hoping for improvement with her word memory."

**Chris and Jim Nydam:** Chris is doing well following chemotherapy and immunotherapy. She is having pain in her lower back from a compressed disc. Pray for her continuing recuperation and for building up her strength.

**Rachel Keast's Niece, Ailey:** Continue to pray for Ailey as she is improving after being hospitalized with kidney problems She is doing much better but continue to pray for complete recovery and for patience for Ailey as well as her mom and dad. Ailey is ten years old.

**Fred Kempers:** Fred Kempers has been suffering with severe shingles for seven months. Fred is Marcia VanMouwerik's brother-in-law. They winter here with their daughter and attend The River while they are here. Pray for healing and relief from the pain.

**Glen Coulter:** Glen has an abdominal hernia that needs surgery, but he hasn't been able to get it done. He is in pain and that affects his ability to work, Pray for relief and healing. Pray that surgery can get scheduled.

**Claire Fik:** Claire celebrated her 98th birthday on Wednesday, February 25. Claire is essentially homebound but in good spirits. She continues to faithfully participate in worship using her I-pad and enjoys playing games on it as well. Congratulations, Claire.

**Marcia VanMouwerik:** Marcia celebrated her 90th birthday Sunday, February 22. Praise God for her good health and mobility. She is our 11th person over the age of 90 at The River. Congratulations, Marcia.

**Dianne Callahan's brother, Jim:** Jim is facing open heart surgery to repair a hole in his heart created when they were trying to stabilize him. The heart issue resulted in a fall fracturing his right elbow and hip. He is in Reche Canyon Rehab.

**Those who are homebound or limited in their activities** including Jack and Mae Bailey, Jake and Shari DeHoog, Dick Dirksen, Claire Fik, Grace Florence, Chuck Griffin, and Marie Wiersma.