

No one should be surprised by any of this about Mel. He is the 91-year-old who has few pictures in his home commemorating the past because that is not where he lives. He lives in the present, pressing forward to the future. Why else would he go door to door in the early 1990s, inviting neighbors to church and, in so doing, disciple the first African-American to join Thorn Creek Reformed Church at a time when that was definitely not the norm in South Holland? Why else in the 60s would he leave a thriving congregation in Bismark, North Dakota, to plant a church in the Seattle area all because the city was hosting the World's Fair in 1962 and it would be a great opportunity for evangelism? This is just the kind of pastor Mel DeVries is and always has been. To this day, he continues to host block parties for

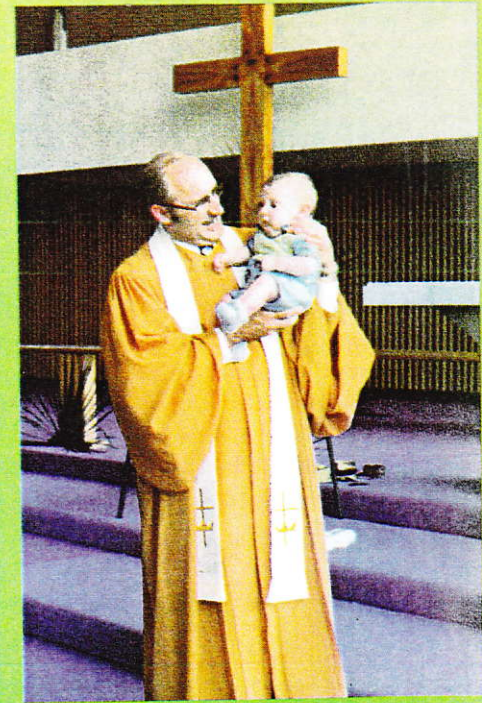
by saying, "Well, that's exactly where I want to go. They need the Gospel!" In Strasburg, South Dakota, he would preach a Sunday morning sermon, lead Sunday School and then drive across the river to lead Bible classes for Native Americans and others who could not make the 20 mile drive into church, then go back to preach at night, and then lead the youth group.

He closes most funerals by telling the story about the headstone on his first wife Marcia's grave. I'll do my best to re-tell the story. He always gets a little emotional at the part when he says, "In a little cemetery 20 miles west of Waterloo there's a headstone that reads, 'Lord is my Shepherd. That's enough.' And ya know what, He is." The Lord has been enough for this good and faithful brother for all these years. He may

not have written books, and there may not be additional degrees and letters before or after his name, but what makes Mel DeVries a distinguished alumni has nothing to do with books or degrees. What makes him distinguished are all the saints he has buried, all the babies he has baptized, all the congregations he has planted, all the new member classes

he has led, all the bedsides where he has prayed, and all the individuals he has led to Christ. Mel is distinguished because he is a pastor in the truest sense. The kind of pastor I aspire to be every day.

by The Rev. Dr. Matt Waterstone
Sr. Pastor
First Reformed Church
South Holland, IL



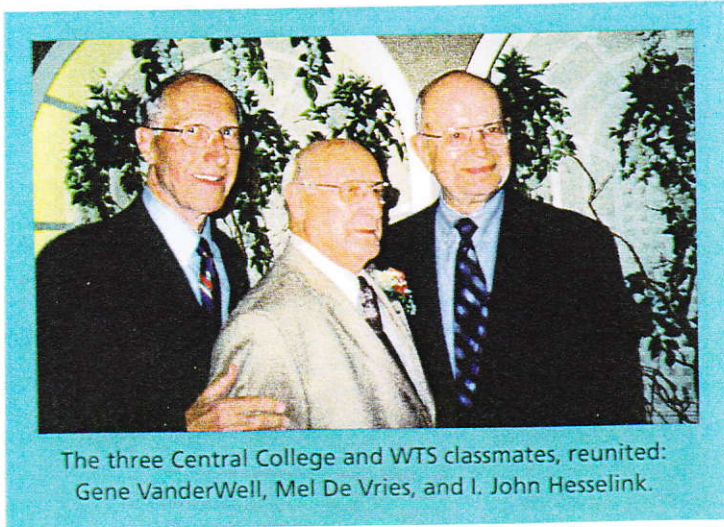
Mel baptizing his granddaughter.



High School, 1941.



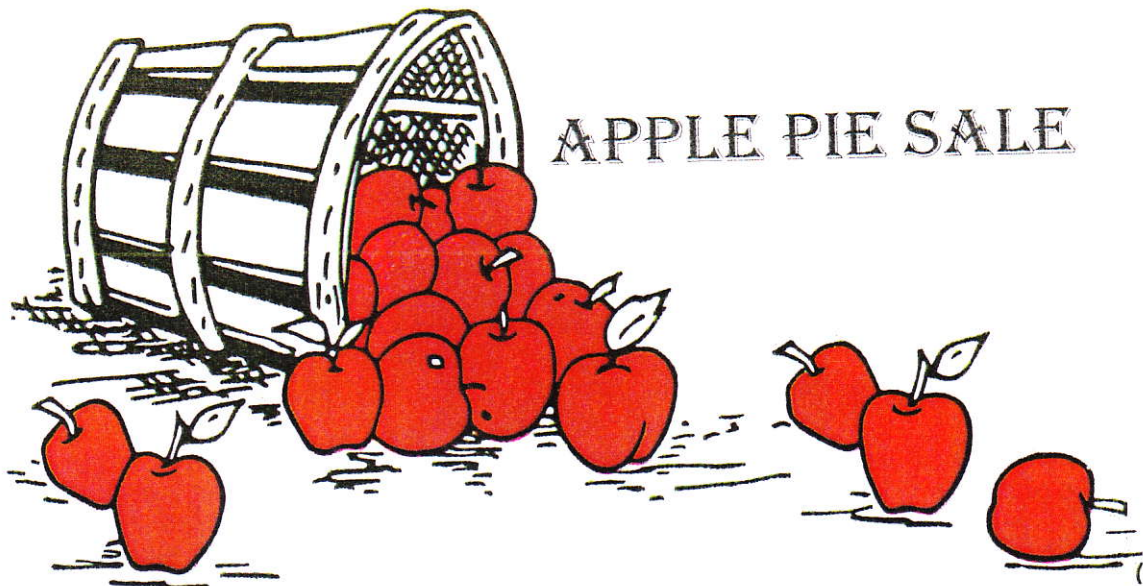
Mel and Marcia in Bismarck, ND, 1957.



The three Central College and WTS classmates, reunited:
 Gene VanderWell, Mel De Vries, and I. John Hesselink.

his neighbors on Parkside Avenue in hopes of inviting them to worship.

Mel has always had a heart for the marginalized. Long before diversity was in every congregation's mission statement, Mel sought ways for the Church to look more like heaven. He once was told, "You don't want to go to that church—it's where all the divorced people go." Mel responded



APPLE PIE SALE

Our annual Apple Pie Sale is scheduled for Saturday, November 5th. This fundraiser for missions has been a tradition here at Thorn Creek for many years. Last year we had 46 volunteers, sold 220 pies and raised \$1,631. This year we not only need you to order pies and volunteer, but we are also looking for your suggestions as to missions that you would like to support. Typically we try to select at least one foreign mission and one local mission to support, but any ideas would be welcomed. If you have questions or suggestions please direct them to Debbie Heersema.

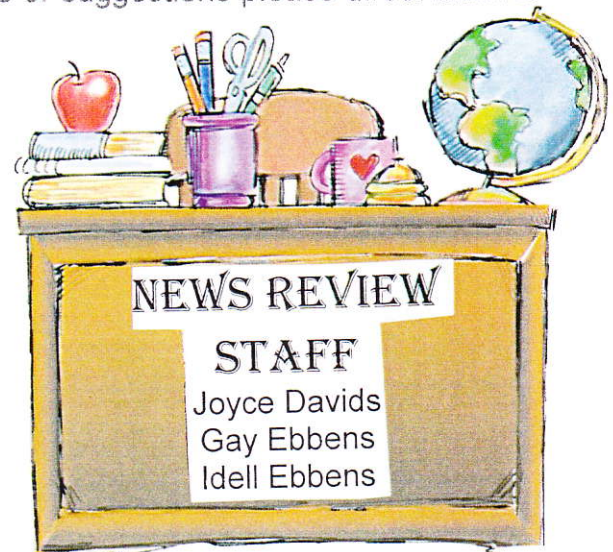
SEPTEMBER

ANNIVERSARIES

Scott & Debbie Heersema	September 2, 1983
Sid & Pam Mauldin	September 2, 1972
Hank & Cheryl Lanting	September 7, 1962
Wayne & Peggy Vanderlee	September 12 1959
Barry & Pam Voss	September 12, 1998
Ray & Lois Brown	September 28, 1947

BIRTHDAYS

September 3	Brown, Lois	September 18	Swartwort, Andy
September 4	Ogunfemi, Saviq	September 19	Ebbens, Warren
September 4	Sterk, Carol	September 19	Stegenga, Candi
September 5	Bult, Andrew	September 19	Verhagen, Carol
September 5	Huizenga, David	September 21	Zeilenga, Shirley
September 5	Ramos, Naomi	September 22	Aring, Richard
September 5	Saenz, Andrew	September 22	De Vries, Kalee
September 9	Beezhold, Lydia	September 23	Vander Steeg, Lester
September 9	Kaczmarczyk, Monica	September 24	Onyema, Josephine
September 14	Elgersma, Henry	September 25	Hart, Cheryl
September 17	Archer, Megan	September 26	Weglarz, Mike
September 17	Bischof, Richard	September 27	Heersema, Robert L.
September 17	Krzyston, Jack	September 29	Mauldin, Sidney
		September 30	Wagenaar, Austin



Please turn in
all articles for
the October
issue on
September 18th
following the
morning
service
(11:00a.m.)