

## PROVIDENCE REFORMED CHURCH

April 23, 2023; All this the Lord willing

**April 23:** Congregational singalong after evening service

**April 26:** Prayer meeting, 7:00. *Dave Kwekel*

**April 29:** Youth group dinner at church, 6:00

**May 4:** National Day of Prayer, 7:00

### Collection Schedule

**Today:** General Mission (Titus 2)

**April 30:** General Ministry Support Fund

### Nursery Schedule

**Today AM:** Kate Klaasen, Ruth Hoogmoed, David Barnard

**PM:** Heidi Schipper, Mya Schipper, Charity Vander Boon

**April 30 AM:** Faith Vander Boon, Anna Pronk, Joel Vander Boon

**PM:** Maria Verbeek, Gloria Vander Boon, Matthias Pronk

**May 7 AM:** Allison Kelderman, Mairi Heikoop, Justin Bazen

**PM:** Paula Rozeboom, Meleah Tubergen, Tanner Klaasen

### Youth Group

- **April 29:** Parent dinner, 6:00
- **April 30:** Singalong Bazen's house.

### Family Visitation

- **April 25:** Case Verbeek family
- **May 2:** Don Walma family
- **May 9:** Darci Vander Boon

### Announcements

- Save the date: Family Camp is Sept. 1, 2 at Camp Mishawana.
- The consistory is considering starting a Men's Bible study group. Please indicate your interest and what times would work best for you to Dave Meeuwse.
- The May Mission collection will be for Trinitarian Bible Society.

### Meditation

Joel 3:9-11 The Gentiles rage.

Verse 8 ends with the words, "*For the LORD hath spoken it.*" The verdict has been established. Nobody will be able to alter it, the LORD has spoken, and His word is a word of might and power that stands into eternity and has an eternal reach.

And so, we read Joel 3:9-11a, "*Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw*

*near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about.*"

We read in these verses again the movement of the Gentile nations with their mighty armies. Just as we have read in verses 1 through 8, but now this movement is described from the other side. In the previous eight verses, we heard that the LORD will gather all nations, lead them to the valley of Jehoshaphat, and repay them for their wrongdoings and sins. In verses 9-11a, we read that the Gentile nations move up in great enmity. But notice that an imperative is used up to seven times. Ultimately, God is the one who is pulling the strings right through the raging of the enemies. The enemies, acting out of pride and in their own strength, while not realizing it, are moving up to be judged. The Gentiles walk into the LORD's hands like this! The enemies are raised up to act exactly the opposite way that will happen in the kingdom of peace. There the swords will be beaten into plowshares; here, the plowshares will be made into swords.

It is a comfort to know that this world is just an instrument in God's hand. We read the same thing in Isaiah 10:15 about the Assyrians. The LORD says there, "*Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.*" It is the LORD who is in control. The world and Satan seem mighty, but the Lord is above them. We know how Christ is in control. He received (Revelation 5:7) the book out of God's right hand. He, the Lamb of God, the Mediator, the Suffering Servant, is leading world history. But the prophet Joel, hearing these words, is in great distress and cries out in Joel 3:11b, "*Thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD.*" In other words, "*Send Your army of angels Lord!*" So, the church militant cries out in distress, come to our help! But, even in heaven, the church triumphant cries out for. We read in Revelation 6:9-11 that the souls under the altar in heaven cry out, "*How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?*" But we hear the Lord promising (Revelation 20:20), "*Surely, I come quickly.*" And so, we say, "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*" Rev. J. Th. Pronk