

Interim Pastor at Zion Congregational Church

Ed Veldheisen, interim pastor at Zion Congregational church and a new member in the club, spoke at the Optimist club on September 26. He is fluent in Dutch and English. He was invited to teach in the old Soviet Union and stayed there seven years.

Ed's grandfather grew up in the Netherlands and had ten children and five acres of land. His father was born in the Netherlands in 1896 and came to the United States with his parents in 1910. His father had the philosophy "What can I do for my country?" and taught that to his children. Ed was the only one in his family who sent to college.

Ed spent some time in Belarus. People there were very welcoming of people from outside the country, because they were not allowed to travel outside the country. Looking around, it almost appears like Stalin is still alive, since his picture is everywhere.

Minsk, the capital of Belarus, looks like one of the newer cities in Europe. It has been destroyed many times, beginning with Napoleon. Before World War II there were 240,000 people living in the city. After the war there were 60,000. During the war, Russia lost as many people as all other countries combined.