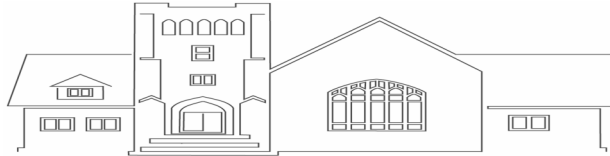


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEWTON, IOWA
641-792-2790

"The Mission of First Presbyterian Church of Newton, Iowa is to share the love of God and grow the body of Christ through joyful worship and fellowship, devoted prayer and study, and humble service in our community and world."

THE MESSENGER



December
2022

Meghan's Musings

The Camino Continues

Dear Church Family and Friends,

It's so good to be back after my sabbatical. Thank you all for this once in a lifetime opportunity! Special thanks to Linda Curtis-Stolper for filling the pulpit and for everyone who stepped up to help hold down the fort.

As you might imagine, I'm still in "re-entry" and the process of learning from my Camino, as well as my time in Scotland and other sabbatical time will continue indefinitely. I appreciate Alexander John Shaia's take in his book *Returning from Camino*. He encourages the pilgrim to think of Santiago de Compostela not as the "destination" but as the "turn-around place;" the Camino is not from St. Jean de Pied de Port to Santiago de Compostela but from home back to home. Likewise, the lessons and growth from the Camino may not appear until weeks, months or even years after the return home.

With that in mind, here's a message Shaia recommends sharing with friends and family:

The Camino is neither a holiday nor a vacation. Though enjoyable, it is arduous work, and potentially a rite of passage that will change a pilgrim in significant ways. ... [a pilgrim] cannot know beforehand what the experience will be, what will be the impact, or how it might change him or her. No matter how well you think you know your [pilgrim], you cannot know how she or he will change, nor can you know their needs upon their return.

Further, a pilgrim upon homecoming will most likely experience a fair amount of bewilderment. They will need time back in their ordinary life before they are able to make sense of the Camino, its impact and meaning. To the pilgrim, the effects and changes are usually subtle. New thoughts and attitudes only become clear once a pilgrim is back in familiar surroundings and realize they are experiencing usual events quite differently.

Meghan's Musings Continues

Some returning pilgrims need a great deal of space, patience and time to explore who they are now. Others have an even higher need to talk as they verbally process the experience. Either response can bring up various feelings (anger, impatience, frustration, envy) in those closest to a pilgrim because of her or his need for distance or increased closeness while processing their experience.

Try to view the returning pilgrim's bewilderment and questioning as an invitation for your own reflection. What areas in your own life do you wish to change? Even though you were not engaged directly in the walking, know that through the returning pilgrim the Camino invites your growth as well. Be open to change—change in your relationship with the returning pilgrim, and your own growth.

I've added the bold formatting to the final paragraph because I wish to invite you to engage in our own self-reflection as Shaia suggests. What areas in our life do you wish to change? What growth are you prepared for in your own life?

Both my older sister and I went to Triennium, the national PC(USA) youth gathering held on the Purdue campus every three years. When my sister got back she talked practically non-stop for days telling us everything about it. When I got back, I told my parents "it was good." And not much more. (It really irritated my mom who would have much rather I shared all the details.) Triennium was no less a transformative experience for me than it was for my sister, indeed considering our life paths most likely it was more so for me than for her. Our manner of sharing (or lack thereof) was simply a reflection of our different ways of processing our experiences.

I promise I will share much more with you than "it was good." But I cannot promise a timeline or manner in which I will do so. It might come up in every sermon for the next few months. Or it might come up every now and then. Meanwhile, the Camino continues...

Park Centre Residents:

Please join Meghan for refreshments and fellowship on Thursday, December 15th at 10:30 a.m. in the private dining room (by the Bistro).

Having just returned from sabbatical, Meghan looks forward to reconnecting with you and hopes you all can make it!

Days for Girls



Days for Girls final workshop for 2022 was Thursday, December 1st. The first workshop in 2023 will be Thursday, January 26th, from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. in fellowship hall, weather permitting.

At our October workshop we had two special guests share about the homeless population in Newton. We will continue to explore if the DfG sustainable feminine hygiene kits would be beneficial for Newton's homeless women.

A trip to our designated Collection Point in Liberty, Missouri was completed recently in response to a request for feminine hygiene kits for women and girls in Bolivia, South America. This delivery included the following hygiene kit components: 868 liners, 137 carry pouches, 60 drawstring bags and 133 small bars of soap. The Missouri Collection Point is housed in a warehouse where kit components are checked and packaged for distribution requests.

DfG International continues to provide sustainable feminine hygiene kits to women and girls all over the world and our DfG Newton IA Team will continue to provide kit components to support this very important endeavor.

DfG Newton IA Team – Co-team leads – Julie Fisher and Marilyn McCallister

Mission Committee Highlights

Mission Highlights

- ✦ Five accessibility ramps – three more than anticipated! -- were constructed this year in partnership with Kid Assist. Thanks to George Wilkening, Linda and Larry Anderson, Steve Gehling, Val McKee, Dana Hashman, and Tom Mott.
- ✦ The Camino fundraiser totaled \$5290, not counting any donations made on-line. CROP Walk's share of \$1058 was sent in. Thank you to all who donated!
- ✦ Thanks to the pie-makers who donated to the Mission Coalition pie sale – total raised was over \$800.
- ✦ During Advent, we will have opportunity to support the Angel Tree ministry of the Salvation Army and purchase gift cards for Progress Industries clients – look for displays in the narthex.
- ✦ Also during Advent we hope to have copies of the Presbyterian Giving Catalog available. This catalog enables the giver to select gifts such as farm animals, water filtration systems, sewing machines, and many others to help people in the developing world have a better life. The catalog can be accessed on-line at presbyteriangifts@pcusa.org.
- ✦ We are working on plans to occasionally prepare food that can be distributed to homeless people in our community. At least three other churches in Newton are doing this. Stay tuned!

Larry Anderson, mission committee chair

Fellowship Committee Report

CHURCH LIFE

*We did not have an After Church Lunch in October because we helped with the Mission Committee lunch on October 16. We also did not have one in November because of the Thanksgiving Feast potluck on November 20. In general we hope to have an opportunity to break bread together as a church family once a month.

On November 20, Church Life hosted the first Thanksgiving Feast Potluck in several years due to the pandemic. The committee provided REAL turkey and ham, drinks and table ware and asked members and attendees to bring a dish to share. As usual we had LOTS of great food. Linda Curtis-Stolper conducted the communion service after the meal. Forty three people were served. Thanks to my committee: Kay Parsons, Diane Moles and Tara Zehr. You made it happen and it was fun to do. A special thanks to Marilyn McCallister for helping with member transport and clean up-a great help!

MEMBERSHIP

*PHOTO DIRECTORY-Our committee started distributing the photo directory on October 16. We started with a total of 85 to distribute. They were available after church for three Sundays. We then started contacting those persons/families left including those out of town. We have used different means to place them, including postal mail, delivered by friends and relatives, delivered by us, and being available on Wednesday evening at the church to pick up. At this point we still have 13 to place. We have varying plans on how to place the rest of them and should be completed within 1-2 weeks. As most of you are probably aware, they are costing the church \$12 per copy to print so we are suggesting members and attendees consider a donation of that amount (or more, if possible). We are coming up a little short of the needed amount. However, we do want all members and attendees have one so we encourage you to do what is comfortable for you. If payment is made please to indicate somehow that it is for the directory.

***TRANSPORTATION MINISTRY** -We have been doing some transportation to church but when the directory distribution is completed we will try to develop this ministry more fully.

***BREAD MINISTRY**-Barb Taylor is coordinating this and it is going well. Barb arranges for two loaves of bread to be baked and brought to the church on the first Sunday of the month. One loaf is used by the pastor to break during communion and the other is given to visitors or if no visitors are present, is given to members or attendees experiencing crises or on the other hand, a special positive life experience.

***New Member**-We hope to have a new member celebration in the next few weeks.

Gary Parsons, chair

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Election of officers usually takes place in December. Our slate is complete and has already been announced in various church communication methods. According to Presbyterian rules the candidates are also to be announced at church the two Sundays prior to the election as well as the day of the election. The session decided at our meeting November 15 to have the first announcement on November 27.

Gary Parsons, chair

528th Presbytery Meeting Report

528th Presbytery Meeting Report
November 12, 2022
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Des Moines, Iowa

This was a hybrid meeting with some members meeting in person and others joining in via Zoom.

Linda Curtis-Stolper and I attended in person. Rev. Meghan Davis-Brass was excused as she is on her Sabbatical.

Highlights of the meeting were:

- As a change to our normal procedures, we held our worship service all at one time, following the Call to order. CRE Linda Curtis-Stolper from our church offered the meditation entitled "Creative Teamwork." It was a very good sermon.
- Approval of May 17, 2022 Presbytery meeting.
- Approval of the report from the Commission on Ministry
 - This involves the approval of new ministers, ministers retiring, and ministers and RE who are appointed as Moderators of Sessions or stated supply.
 - The only action was the approval of the 2023 minimum effective salary of \$55,500. This is an increase of just under 5% from the current rate of \$52,920 for 2022. **This motion passed unanimously.**
- Received the reports from the Personnel Commission, the Presbytery Moderator, the New Worshiping Community Committee, the Camping and Youth Ministries, the three Executives, the Living Legacy Fund Committee, and the Property Committee.
- Approval of the Leadership Council Committee report.
 - The manual of Operations was reviewed after updates had been made that were proposed earlier. Three more amendments were approved. **The revised Manual of Operations was approved.** Mickey Van Baale will be typing up the new manual, making all the necessary changes, formatting the manual, and adding the new amendments.
 - Approved the following dates for the meetings in 2023: stated meetings on February 11, May 16, and November 11. April 27 will be a called evening zoom meeting for GA Amendments and in August there will be the All Iowa Gathering.

528th Presbytery Meeting Report Continued

- Approval of the Nominating Committee
 - An audit was made of this committee as there were several instances where positions were not recorded properly. All committee members are recorded as they should be and with the approval of the slate of nominees today, most all committees are filled.
 - Linda Curtis-Stolper was elected as Vice-Moderator for 2023, which means she will be the Moderator of the Presbytery for 2024.
 - Larry Anderson was elected to begin his 3-year term on the Committee on the Promotion of Social Righteousness.
- Met Sara Sutter via Zoom. She is the new director of the Lakeshore Center at Okoboji.
- Budget and Finance Committee
 - Received the September 30, 2022, Financial Report
 - Approved the 2023 Budget
 - Approved having the Synod of Lakes and Prairies do the accounting functions, starting January 1, 2023.
 - The per capita rate for 2023 will be \$47.00.
- Received the reports of the Park Avenue, Des Moines First, and Greenfield First Administrative Commissions.
 - These 3 churches are closing or have closed. The church buildings have been or will be sold and the contents will or have been disposed of.
 - The Administrative Commissions for Des Moines First and Greenfield First were decommissioned.
- Celebrated the Installation of Linda Curtis-Stolper as the new Vice Moderator.

Respectfully submitted,

Mickey Van Baale, Commissioner

Advent Activities

Advent offers many opportunities to share our blessings with others.

1. The Christmas Angel Tree is in the narthex. Please take an angel and use the items listed on the back as starting points for your shopping. Return the angel and the unwrapped gifts to the church by **Wednesday, December 14th**.
2. Also in the narthex is a basket to collect \$10 gift cards to local fast food restaurants. These cards will be given to Progress Industries group home residents. Cards need to be in the basket by **Sunday, December 18**.
3. Mission Coalition is coordinating bell-ringers for the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign on **Saturday, December 3**. First Presbyterian volunteers will be ringing at Hy Vee from **10:00am-12:00pm**. A sign-up sheet is on the narthex bulletin board.

The Second Annual Tree-mendous Christmas Experience will be taking place at the Jasper County Historical Museum every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from December 2-January 1. (closed Dec. 24th) Hours on Friday and Saturday: 5:00pm-8:00pm; Sunday hours 1pm-4pm. Over 175 decorated trees will be on display throughout the museum. Entry fee is \$5; ages 7 and under are free.

Our congregational meeting to elect 2023 church officers will be held after worship on **Sunday, December 11**. The slate to be presented for discussion and approval vote:

SESSION:

Class of 2025

1. Cathy Rickers
2. Kim Miller (will serve 1 year with option to cease or continue at end of 2023)

Class of 2024

1. Gary Parsons

DEACONS:

Class of 2025

1. Linda Kirchhoff
2. Dave Stolper

Class of 2023

1. Barb Taylor

Nominating Committee At Large Representative 1. Rachel Skaggs

We will join in celebrating our **All-Church Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 18 at 10:30am**. The children will provide special music and we will all be involved. Join us!

The annual **Blue Christmas** worship service will take place on **Thursday, December 22 at 7:00pm**. This is a service of quiet recognition that Christmas is not a happy time for those who are grieving losses. There is hope, even in that darkness. Come find support and share it with others.

Candlelight Christmas Eve worship will be celebrated on **Saturday, December 24 at 7:00pm**. Join us to give thanks as we mark the birth of our Lord and Savior, share in special readings and music, and raise our lighted candles as Jesus, the Light of the World, is born.

Our Church in Pictures



Our Church in Pictures



2022 *BIRTHDAYS* & EVENTS

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
27 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship	28 9a Celtic Prayer Gathering 6p Celtic Prayer Gathering	29 11a Gentle Yoga 1p Retired Teacher's 6p Celtic Prayer Gathering	30 9a Celtic Prayer Gathering 5:15p choir 6:15p Celtic Prayer Gathering	1 9a Celtic Prayer Gathering 9 a Men's Group 9a Days for Girls 3p Chair Yoga 6p Celtic Prayer Gathering	2 Karen Quinn 9a Celtic Prayer Gathering 6p Celtic Prayer Gathering	3 9a Celtic Prayer Gathering 6p Celtic Prayer Gathering
4 Larry DeCook Barb Zacheis Macy Jontz 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship	5 Peter Van-Elswyk 9a Celtic Prayer 6p Celtic Prayer	6 9a Celtic Prayer 11a Gentle Yoga 6p Celtic Prayer	7 Erick Zehr 9a Celtic Prayer 5:15p choir 6:15p Celtic Prayer	8 9a Celtic Prayer 3p Chair Yoga (video) 6p Celtic Prayer	9 Shirley Stevens 9a Celtic Prayer 6p Celtic Prayer	10 9a Celtic Prayer 6p Celtic Prayer
11 Joan Tyler 9:00a Deacons 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship Congregational Meeting	12 9a Celtic Prayer 10a Membership 5p Worship & Music 6p Celtic Prayer	13 9a Celtic Prayer 11a Gentle Yoga 3:30p Mission 6p Celtic Prayer	14 9a Celtic Prayer 5:15p choir 6p Budget/Finance 6:15 p Celtic Prayer	15 9a Celtic Prayer 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga 10:30a Park Centre Gathering 6p Celtic Prayer	16 9a Celtic Prayer 6p Celtic Prayer	17 Monica Skokan 9a Celtic Prayer 6p Celtic Prayer
18 10:30a Worship (All-Church Christmas Pageant) 11:30a Fellowship	19 Amy Doering 9a Celtic Prayer 6p Celtic Prayer	20 9a Celtic Prayer 11a Gentle Yoga 6:30p Session 6p Celtic Prayer	21 9a Celtic Prayer 10a Women's Bible Study Gathering 5:15p choir 6:15p Celtic Prayer	22 9a Celtic Prayer 3p Chair Yoga 6p Celtic Prayer 7p Blue Christmas	23 9a Celtic Prayer 6p Celtic Prayer	24 9a Celtic Prayer 7p Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
25 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship	26 <i>Office Closed</i>	27 <i>Office Closed</i>	28 <i>Office Closed</i>	29 9a Men's Group @ Park Centre <i>Office Closed</i>	30 Toni Peska <i>Office Closed</i>	31 New Years Eve



	4	11	18	25
Worship Leader	Jane Repp	Deanna Manley	Taylor McDonnell	Gary Parsons
Greeters	Randy/Carl Camp	Elsie Nelson & Jen Norvell	Carroll Brodersen & John Taylor	Mary Jane Tripp & Suzie Funk
Ushers	Terry/Cathy Rickers	Dana Hashman & Deb Zieman	Larry/Shari DeCook	John/Barb Taylor
Audio	Terry Rickers	Shirley Stevens	Erick Zehr	Jen Norvell & Tara Zehr
Counters	Terry Rickers & Peggy/Chris Lickiss	Toni Peska & Kathy Ventling Briggs	Jen Norvell & Tara Zehr	Tom Weeks & Bev Rossow

First Presbyterian Church
220 N 2nd Ave E
Newton, Iowa 50208

Lectionary —

December, 2022

December 4 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

Isa. 11:1-10 & Ps: 72:1-7, 18-19;
Rom. 15:4-13; Matt 3:1-12

December 11 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

Isa. 35:1-10 & Ps: 146:5-10
Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matt. 11:2-11

December 18 - 4th Sunday of Advent

Isa. 7:10-16 & Ps: 80:1-7, 17-19;
Rom. 1:1-7; Matt. 1:18-25

December 25 - Nativity of the Lord/Christmas Day

Dawn: Isa. 62:6-12 & Ps: 97; Titus 3:4-7;
Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20
Day: Isa. 52:7-10 & Ps. 98;
Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14