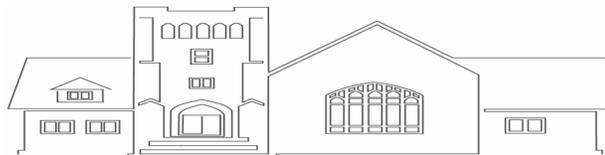


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEWTON, IOWA
641-792-2790

"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 2015

Meghan's Musings

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

It's that time of year again. That time of (usually harmless and unspoken) tension and disappointment between pastors such as myself who insist on holding Christmas at bay and really having Advent instead of jumping on the Christmas music bandwagon with the rest of our culture before the night of December 24. We really do have good, sound reasons for this. Reasons that, if memory serves me, I offered in my December newsletter article last year.

As I sit to write this year's article, my heart is pained and heavy from the weight and the sorrow of a violent and broken world. The longing and waiting for the Messiah seems perhaps even more acute this year than ever before (though I never would have thought that possible) and so I offer the words of "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" here. I invite you to read them slowly, intentionally as an act of devotion and see if they don't speak to you as well.

Come, Thou long expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

~Charles Wesley, 1744

Throughout the Sundays of Advent, let us pay close attention to the words of these hymns as we sing them in worship. Let us discover their message for us anew. May the hymns of Advent nurture your heart and soul as we wait and long for the Messiah who will, once and for all, put an end to sin, pain, suffering and death. May it be so...

Be Praying For...

- ✦ Our brothers and sisters who find themselves in harm's way, facing shootings, suicide missions, and other means that are killing their family members, friends, neighbors.
- ✦ Those who are facing the Holidays for the first time without a loved one and those who are feeling that loss no matter how long it has been.
- ✦ People everywhere who are cold, hungry and homeless.
- ✦ Those who are suffering with the season's colds, flu, and other nasty germs.
- ✦ Our military personnel and their families who will be separated from each other during the Holidays.



At our November meeting we:

- *Received a report that 30 cards had been sent to members on behalf of the deacons during October.
- *Moved to give \$300 to the Salvation Army to be used as needed.
- *Moved to give \$200 to the IMPACT Community Action Partnership (formerly RRACAP) for energy assistance.
- *Moved to donate \$150 to St. Nick's Christmas Club.

Dana Hashman, Moderator

Building and Grounds

Norm Grimm, Chair

The committee didn't meet in November, but a couple of situations have occurred.

Harold and Deanna Manley were contacted that there was no heat in Friendship House. Upon investigating it, Harold was able to diagnose the problem and purchase a part. They fixed the problem at a great savings to our church. Thank you to them.

On November 22, in the afternoon a square foot or so of paint fell off the ceiling in the church, roughly over the middle of the south aisle. We will be contacting the people who worked on the ceiling when this happened before.



Prayers go out to our custodian, Bob VanderVeer, on the death of his son-in-law, Rich Lakin. Rich died on November 8 and his funeral service was held on Friday, November 13 at Wallace Family Funeral Home. Burial was at Newton Union Cemetery. Rich was married to Bob's daughter, Lori and father to Bob's grandchildren, Erika, Tyler and Dalton and Bob's great-grandchildren, Willow, Baylin, Jaden and Layla.



During This Time of Loss

ADVENT LABYRINTH

A Heart's Preparation for Christmas

The season of Advent is upon us . . . the season of preparation for Emanuel—God with us—Jesus's birth. First Presbyterian has many ways in which to prepare for Jesus's birth this year; daily readings from our Advent Book "Angels Among Us" and participating in the Advent Art Mosaic "Be Not Afraid" are just two opportunities. Building on those themes, we will have a labyrinth back in fellowship hall, after a few years hiatus.

Please set aside some time the week of December 13-20 to spend some private time and/or time with a group preparing *your heart* to receive the joy of Christmas. Sara Hopkins will be leading two labyrinth sessions and is willing to lead more. Watch the church bulletin, weekly email and church web site for specific dates and times.





Forms will be in the bulletin where you can order a poinsettia to be used to decorate our church chancel area. The cost this year will be \$9.50.

Your form and money can be put in the collection plate on Sunday morning or left at the church office. Place your order by Wednesday to have the plant delivered for the following Sunday service.

Following our service on December 29, you may choose to take your flower home, or leave it to decorate our church during January.

Worship and Music

Linda Kirchhoff, Chair

Discussion was held on previous services and also about the Advent booklets, which were handed out November 29, plus what our committee's part would be at the Thanksgiving feast on November 22.

Linda Kirchhoff and Sharon Black will be in charge of decorating the church for Advent and Christmas. Help may be solicited from one of the men's groups. Kim DeGraff will be getting volunteers to do the reading and lighting of the candles each week.

The Christmas pageant will be December 20, following the same format as in the past. We will finalize the details of the Christmas Eve service at our next meeting, but it will be Lessons and Carols.

Sandy Simbro indicated that the organ will be tuned by a Quimby representative and also the piano in the sanctuary and fellowship hall will be tuned.

Starting with communion at the Thanksgiving feast, gluten free bread will be offered as an option.

Emergency Closure of the Church

With the arrival of winter weather, we have reviewed and updated our policies at First Presbyterian. In the event of severe weather, any changes to scheduled activities at the church will be communicated to KCOB Radio. They have assured us such information will be sent out over all 3 of their stations (1280 AM, 95.9 FM and KRTI 106.7 FM which covers Grinnell, Marshalltown, parts of Des Moines, etc.) In addition we have established an account with KCCI Television and WHO Radio. When severe weather occurs, check these sources. If First Presbyterian is not mentioned on any of these, then there is no change in our plans. However, if you have any doubts, please err on the side of caution and be safe!

The Session



Budget and Finance Corner

Jonnie Carpenter, Chair

Pledges for the month of October were \$14,676. This was \$2,858 above the amount we had budgeted. Other Regular Giving, which represents donations from people who tithe, but do not pledge, was \$630 for the month, which was \$106 below budget. In total for the month, expenses were \$1,689 over budget. Year-to-date pledges are \$6,730 over budget and year-to-date expenses are \$6,113 above budget.

The most activity was for Missions. The El Salvador Mission fund received donations of \$244. The International Mission fund paid expenses related to the El Salvador anniversary celebration. These were for food expenses and to pay Rev. Calhoun for pulpit supply and half of his travel expenses.

We received \$96.50 in October for the Rural Harvest offering. This will be sent to Presbytery in November.



Church Life Activities

Diane Moles, Chair

On Sunday, Nov. 22, we celebrated Thanksgiving with a potluck of holiday favorites, followed by a communion service. The turkeys were roasted by the Parsons, Motts, and Camps. The tables were filled with a wide variety of delicious side dishes, salads, rolls, and desserts – including pies, cakes, and cookies. No one left hungry!

In December, we'll have a caroling party on Sunday, December 20, followed by a chili supper at 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. For those who wish to carol, we'll meet at the church at 4:00 p.m., carol around the town until about 6:00, and then return to the church for a chili supper. If you'd like to bring a crock pot of chili or cookies, please let Diane know at 792-2133 or jasperdem@iowatelecom.net. We're looking for all ages (including those students home for the holidays) and all singing abilities! We have the song sheets ready and will carpool to the caroling sites. If you don't care to carol, please come on down at 6:00 for supper.

Your Church Life Committee:

Nancy Mott, Kay Parsons, Janie Moles, Dan Ritter, Randy Camp, and Diane Moles

Date & Time	Event
December 20, 2015, 4:00 pm	Christmas caroling and chili supper

Thanks to Doug Cutts for capturing some of the moments from our Thanksgiving feast and worship.



Nominating Committee

Virginia Bennett, Chair

We will have a Congregational meeting on Sunday, December 6 for the purpose of electing new officers for our church. The committee is putting the following people up for 3-year terms as Elders: Linda Kirchhoff, Marilyn McCallister, Tara Peska, and George Wilkening.

Those being recommended for a 3-year term as Deacon are: Steve and Sara Hopkins (as 1 person), Sandy Shaver, Dave Stolper and Mickey Van Baale. There is also a 1-year term for Deacon that has become open as a Deacon has found it necessary to resign before her term was finished. The committee is recommending that Kevin Peska be elected to fill that position.

Finally, an at-large member of the committee is elected from the congregation and our recommendation is Cathy Rickers. She would join the other two at-large members, Mickey Van Baale and Steve Hopkins.

Installation will be held on Sunday, January 10 and the yearly retreat for Elders and Deacons will be on January 9.

We are also pleased to announce that Toni Peska will be assuming the role of Clerk of Session starting January 1, 2016.

Thank you to the Nominating Committee for your hard work and thank you to the members listed above who have answered the call to serve our congregation.



MEMBERSHIP



MOMENT

On October 31 (Halloween) we joined Skiff Medical Center and the Methodist Church in the annual Trunk or Treat activity. There was some confusion this year because the Chamber and downtown businesses did their Trick or Treat on Thursday. Both the Methodists and First Presbyterians had about half the cars we usually have. There were a lot of competing activities on Saturday night. I hope that doesn't happen again. We still had a lot of fun. The cars involved were: Gary Parsons, Harold & Deanna Manley and Marilyn McCallister & Kathy Peterson. Kids started arriving at 5:30 and we were busy until 7:00. We had a lot of candy & tattoos and most of them are gone. Hope you will join us next year!

We have been involved in the Christmas lighting parade (the day after Thanksgiving) over the past few years, featuring our choir. The parade was canceled this year due to several problems and they are instead going to have a Christmas lighting festival with the same activities as before plus some but minus the parade. Due to difficulty getting very many people to participate plus conditions not at all favoring the appreciation of our fine choir we have decided not to participate but are encouraging people to join an inter-church choir that the chamber of commerce is trying to form.

We are planning on having a work night in January which will involve a light dinner and devotions and cleaning of the upper floors of the church. More on this later.

Gary Parsons, chair pro tem

Christian Nurture

Virginia Bennett, Chair

*Operation Christmas Child Report: There were 5 kids who helped pack 9 boxes. Christian Nurture spent \$125 on items for the boxes since donations from the congregation were low. The kids wrote letters, decorated the boxes, filled them and prayed over them. They really enjoyed the time together and helping other kids have a great holiday. The congregation has also donated money to help with the shipping costs. A total is not known at this time. Kelly Koenen delivered the money and boxes.

*The All Church Christmas Pageant will be held on Sunday, December 20. Kelly is working on adding to our costume collection. Current items have been freshened and 11 shepherds costumes have been altered to accommodate adults. Details on the pageant are being worked out. We hope everyone will take a part.

Mission Committee

Linda Erickson, Chair

Local:

Mission Coalition:

Annual pie sale at McCann Craft Sale on October 24 netted \$865. Donations of \$425.00 each were sent to IMPACT Community Action Partnership and Salvation Army.

Annual Crop Hunger Walk on October 4 brought in \$4,378 county-wide. There were only 18 walkers this year. 2016 Crop Walk is scheduled for Sunday, October 2.

The Mission Coalition day to ring Salvation Army bells is Saturday, December 5. First Presbyterian is scheduled for 2-4 p.m. at Hy-Vee and 5:30-8 p.m. at Theisens. Half hour time slots are available and there is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in fellowship hall. Those who want to ring longer than ½ hour can sign up as many times as they want.

First Presbyterian has been assigned Progress Industries again for spreading good cheer (presents) to clients. Marilyn McCallister is working with Melissa Butler at Progress Industries for client names and wish lists along with timing for gift collection and delivery. Watch the bulletin board in the narthex for the names.

Salvation Army Angel Tree: We will again have a tree set up in the narthex with angel names from the Salvation Army. The angels will indicate an age and sex of a child a gift can be purchased for, along with a few ideas. Watch for information on the date the unwrapped gifts need to be returned to the church for delivery to the Salvation Army.

Presbyterian Giving Catalog, 2015-2016: See information on page 7.

Annual Christmas Party at the prison: Our church will not be participating in this event, if there even will be one. The number of staff at the prison has decreased and this is an activity that likely will be cut due to lack of staffing.

Mariners in Mission: John & Barb Taylor attended the November 1-6 Mariners in Mission event at Kemmerer Village, in Assumption, IL.

National:

Work Week, 2016: The committee will be meeting by the first week of December to begin discussions and plans for the 2016 trip. In the discussion this year, is how the Youth Downtown group will play a part. Friendship House, where the Youth Downtown group meets, needs work, and a suggestion is to have that group, along with our church members, do a work project there which would be separate from our annual Work Week trip.

Christmas Joy Offering collected in December: This offering will be collected during the Sundays in December, with the final one being December 20. There will be inserts in the bulletin and information in the weekly Church Happenings.

International:

El Salvador:

Linda Erickson reported that the graduation greeting cards and a personal calculator for each graduate were given to the Presbytery to be taken with the medical delegation that recently took off for El Salvador.

Marilyn McCallister reported that Jane Repp had knitted stocking caps which she gave to Kimberly Schnell to distribute while she was on her vacation to El Salvador.



Continued on page 7

Continued from page 7

Soon to be Ruling Elder Ekram Kachu of Cottage Grove will become organizing pastor of the first Arabic Presbyterian Church. Dissolutions of pastoral calls were in Winterset and Atlantic.

***Congregational Health Task Force Report**

There will be a task force assigned to assist the Arabic Worshipping Community in Des Moines.

***Nominating Committee Report** (Gary Parsons is a member)

Don Freeman, pastor at Newton United Presbyterian, was elected as a General Assembly Alternative. Cheryl Ritter is a new member of the Budget & Finance Committee 2017. David Hamilton of Des Moines Covenant church was elected as the temporary (1 yr.) stated clerk of Presbytery. David was the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest from 2001 – 2009 in Idaho. He left when he moved back to Iowa in 2010.

***Cottage Grove Mission Center.** In the Stated Clerk's Report, it was mentioned that Guide One Insurance will cancel insurance as of Dec. 12 on this facility due to poor condition of parts of the building. The 2016 plan for Cottage Grove is to keep the status quo for the next year while Presbytery determines its future and priorities as relating to center. Expenses for remodeling far exceeded expectations while projection of rental fees fell short.

***Older Adult Ministry.**

All 29 people who were nominated as Faithful Through the Years applicants were honored.

***New Sharon Administrative Commission Report- Mickey Van Baale, Moderator**

Only 3 members of the church are left. They let their insurance lapse, but are covered for liability through the Presbytery policy. The building has been deemed a hazard by the city. The exemption for property taxes has been revoked. The chimney had to be taken down and capped and charged against property taxes. The committee continues to work on resolution to situation.

***Compassion, Peace and Justice Report- Meghan Davis, Moderator**

-The Just Neighbor Award was given to Morris and Betty Dyer for the breadth of their service. (21 churches are now exclusively serving Don Justo coffee)
 -Katherine Pater will be itinerating in Presbytery Nov. 13-21.
 -The Rural Partnership Offering will be returned to its original name- Harvest Offering - with half of the funds to be used in rural Iowa and half internationally with emphasis on women in agriculture.
 -An overture has been made to General Assembly by a presbytery regarding Fossil Fuel Divestment. The committee would urge the Des Moines Presbytery to consider concurring.

***Most of the day had to do with financial and personnel matters.** ((Budget Chair- Kirsten Kleper TE of Grinnell; Personnel Chair Tom Conrey) The audit of Presbytery recommended the hiring of an accountant. Betty Dyer has been keeping most of the books and is not certified to do so. Projected income for Presbytery will be a loss of at least \$25,000. The Budget Committee began by requesting that funds designated for assistance to small churches be undesignated and used for general funds. Per capita payments will remain at \$40. The Budget Committee then asked that the positions of Sudanese Ministry, Hunger Action Enabler and Communications Coordinator be eliminated, saving more than \$20,000 and allowing hiring of an accountant. After review of the newly published Des Moines Manual of Operations, it was discovered that people in positions to be eliminated needed 6 months written notice, hence 6 months salary. After much discussion (hours), a budget was finally passed in which the proposed salary for the new executive presbyter (proposed at $\frac{3}{4}$ time) be reduced to $\frac{2}{3}$ time and that New Covenant Funds be reduced by 7%, thus allowing the position of Hunger Action Enabler to be rescued, but be cut to $\frac{2}{3}$ time.

The retiring moderator, Rev. Sharmaine Chambers King, Teaching Elder, handed over the gavel to Maurice Dyer, Ruling Elder, as the new moderator. (TE and RE rotate in this position)

Phil Barrett gave his final remarks as Executive Presbyter, thanking everyone for their service.

The meeting ended with communion by intinction (using gluten free bread), with participants standing in a large circle and singing.

Advent Yoga Challenge

Rev. Meghan Davis

During the busy holiday season, it can be difficult to make time in our schedules for self-care and it's easy to let our healthy habits slide. So to encourage all you First Presbyterian yogis (past, present and future) in your practice: the Advent Yoga Challenge! Every time you come to a class between November 30 and December 22, you will be entered for a drawing for fabulous (yet to be determined) prizes. The more classes you attend, the more entries you receive. Whether you're a yoga regular, it's been a while since you've been to a class or if you've yet to try it, you are invited make the commitment to yourself to take some time away from the the Christmas chaos to connect with Christ--mind, body and spirit.

Monday 6:15 pm: Flow
Tuesday 11:00 am: Gentle
Thursday 3:00 pm: Chair
Saturday 10:00 am: Flow

Highlights from Session

Mickey Van Baale, Clerk of Session

- ◆ Set the dates for the Congregational Meeting to elect officers, officers training session and the ordination and installation of officers.
- ◆ Received an update on the current Stewardship campaign.
- ◆ Heard of the recent Presbytery meeting.
- ◆ Learned from the Nominating Committee that they are nearly done in having a slate of candidates for new officers.
- ◆ Received an update from the Foundation Committee.



2015 Advent Art Project – “Be Not Afraid”

In preparation for Advent, we are going to start a new all-church, inter-generational art project similar to the one we completed two years ago for Lent.

This time, we will have a canvas divided into 9 squares (or rectangles, depending on the canvas). Each square will represent an area of worry or anxiety in our lives, such as work, finances, health, family, hunger, world peace, our community, global warming or other nature-related worry, etc. You will be encouraged to participate by using magazine clippings from our supply, or some you bring from home, and applying them to those areas that are of particular interest to you. This is intended to be a prayerful and thoughtful experience that helps relieve some of the worry you may have about these issues as we worship through Advent and look forward to the birth of our Lord.

While the squares are being completed, the youth of the church will be creating small, white paper sculptures of wings (angels/ Faith), butterflies (Hope), doves or birds (Love) and cranes (Peace). These simple, white sculptures will be centered over a completed collage square to add a 3-dimensional aspect to the piece and represent that our worries are temporary and may be faced with Faith and Hope – “Be Not Afraid”!

As with the previous project, an easel will be set up in the Fellowship Hall with the prepared canvas, magazines and clippings, acrylic medium and brushes. This project requires no artistic talent, skill, hand strength, or the ability to draw a straight line. Anyone may participate!

If you have questions about the project, please contact Cathy Rickers. We hope to have the canvas completed before the end of Advent, so please pitch in and participate.



2015 BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

		1 Dick Means 11:00 am Gentle Yoga 6:30 pm Worship & Music	2 9:30 am WBS 5:30 pm Membership 7:00 pm Choir	3 Warren Jontz 6:30 am Early Men's Group 9:00 am Men's Group 3:00 pm Chair Yoga 4:30 pm Missions	4	5 Peter Van Elswyk 10:00 am Yoga Flow
6 11:30 am Cong Meeting - Election of Officers 6:00 pm Youth Downtown	7 Erick Zehr Steve Roesse 6:15 am Yoga Flow	8 Len Woythaler Cal Fisher 11:00 am Gentle Yoga	9 9:30 am WBS 6:00 pm Budget & Finance 7:00 pm Choir	10 3:00 pm Chair Yoga	11 Joan Tyler	12 Caitlin Mellick 10:00 am Yoga Flow
13 9:00 am Deacons 6:00 pm Youth Downtown	14 6:15 am Yoga Flow	15 11:00 am Gentle Yoga 6:30 p.m. Session	16 9:30 am WBS 7:00 pm Choir	17 6:30 am Early Men's Group 9:00 am Men's Group 3:00 pm Chair Yoga	18 Randy Ferguson	19 Amy Doerring 10:00 am Yoga Flow
20 Wade Van Baale Noel Burton Wendell Wendt 10:30 am - All Church Pageant 4:00 pm Caroling & Chili Supper 6:00 pm Youth Downtown	21 6:15 pm Flow Yoga	22 11:00 am Gentle Yoga	23 7:00 pm Choir	24 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service	25 	26 Kyle Schnell
27 10:30 am Kids Action Hour	28 Linda Kirchhoff	29	30 Toni Peska	31 Ed Mount Kent Brown		9:00 am Adult S. S. 10:00 am Fellowship 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship



December



Volunteers

December	6	13	20	27	January 3
Worship Leader Office	Gary Parsons	Kim Miller	Bev Rossow	John Taylor	Linda Kirchhoff
Host Elder/Deacon Diane Moles	Bev Rossow	Tom Mott	Shirley Stevens	Janet Shields	
Greeters Julie Brodersen	Janet Shields Valerie Barney	Chris & Peggy Lickiss	Gary & Kay Parsons	Randy & Carol Camp	
Ushers Office	Kevin & Toni Peska	Don & Sharon Black	Doug & Samantha Cutts	Ventling Family	Gary & Kay Parsons
Audio Doug Cutts	Roger Harmelink	Roger Harmelink	Roger Harmelink	Brad Ritter	Brad Ritter
Candlelighter Office	Advent	Advent	Advent	Skye Koenen	Natalie Camp
Counters Jonnie Carpenter	Tara Zehr	Dan Ritter Bill Shields	Jonnie Carpenter Tara Zehr	Roger Harmelink Dave Stolper	
Bread Ministry Baker Barb Taylor	Val McKee	Dixie Zegers	Sharon Black	Diane Moles	
Bread Ministry Taker Barb Taylor	Joan Rusk	Dana Hashman	Nancy Mott	Barb Gallaher	
Kids Action Hour Jen Norvell					
Communion Set up Linda Kirchhoff	Bev Rossow Linda Kirchhoff				Jonnie Carpenter Karen Quinn

First Presbyterian Church
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Newton, Iowa 50208

641-792-2790

Return Service Requested

Lectionary —

December, 2015

December 6 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

Mal. 3:1-4; *Luke 1:68-79*; Phil. 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6

December 13 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

Zeph. 3:14-20; *Isa. 12:2-6*; Phil. 4:4-7
Luke 3:7-18

December 20 - 4th Sunday of Advent

Micah 5:2-5a; *Luke 1:46b-55 or*
Ps. 80:1-7; Heb. 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

December 27 - 1st Sunday of Christmas

1 Sam. 2:18-20, 26; *Ps. 148*; Col. 3:12-17
Luke 2:41-52

January, 2016

January 3 - 2nd Sunday of Christmas

Jer. 31:7-14; *Ps. 147:12-20*; Eph. 1:3-14
John 1:(1-9) 10-18

January 10 - Baptism of the Lord

Isa. 43:1-7; *Ps. 39*; Acts 8:14-17
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 17 - 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Isa. 62:1-5; *Ps. 36:5-10*; 1 Cor. 12:1-11
John 2:1-11

January 24 - 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Neh. 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; *Ps. 19*
1 Cor. 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

January 31 - 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Jer. 1:4-10; *Ps. 71:1-6*; 1 Cor. 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30