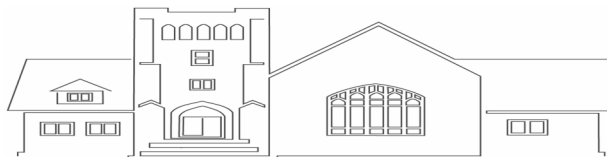


**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
NEWTON, IOWA  
641-792-2790**

*"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  
2019**

## **Meghan's Musings Advent Challenge**

I recently came across a weekend self-care "Countdown for Success Challenge." The idea is to do on both days of the weekend:

- 10 pages or minutes of reading
- 9 thousand steps a day
- 8 hours of sleep
- 7 glasses of water
- 6 minutes of meditation
- 5 servings of fruit
- 4 breaks
- 3 healthy meals
- 2 hours of no phone
- 1 workout session

I saw this challenge and my response was, "I love it! I'm in!" But... of course the weekend got busy the challenge got moved to the back burner and, admittedly, any of those things I did "hit" were coincidental, not because I was trying to complete the challenge.

If you're like me, Advent can unfold much the same. I start each Advent determined to have a truly sacred time of prayerful waiting and preparation rather than the frenzied chaos that the holidays can so easily entail. I have two or three beloved Advent Devotionals that I like to return to every year, and of course there's our annual devotional. I begin each Advent determined to read all of these devotionals daily but somewhere between the first Sunday of Advent and December 24, I fall off the wagon.

This Advent I invite you to join me in a different "Countdown for Success Challenge":

- 10 minutes of reading per day (Advent devotional, scripture or other)
- 9 personal Christmas cards (telling the recipient why they are special to you)
- 8 make treats and deliver them to 8 people who aren't expecting them
- 7 breaks: an hour (or more) to rest or do something you WANT to do but probably wouldn't do because you don't have time and you think you SHOULD be doing something else
- 6 minutes of prayer and/or meditation per day
- 5 dollar donation to a cause you like but you don't usually support
- 4 worship services in Advent (Blue Christmas and Christmas Eve count!)
- 3 "pay it forwards" (for example: buy coffee for the person behind you in line, put money in someone else's expired parking meter, etc.)
- 2 (waking) hours of no phone per week
- 1 hour volunteering somewhere you've never volunteered before

For fun, I've created a "bingo" card. See how many Bingos you can get. Maybe you'll even get a "blackout"!

Whether you do all these things or just a few or none at all, my prayer for you is that your Advent will be a truly sacred time of anticipation and preparation for the coming of the Christ Child.

# Advent Countdown Challenge Bingo

Attend Worship	prayer or meditation	Devotional Reading	Pay It Forward	Devotional Reading	Take a Break	Personal Christmas Cards	prayer or meditation	Attend Worship
prayer or meditation	Personal Christmas Cards	Peace	prayer or meditation	Deliver treats to 8 People	Devotional Reading	\$5 Donation	Devotional Reading	2 hours without a phone
Devotional Reading	Hope	prayer or meditation	Take a Break	Devotional Reading	prayer or meditation	Pay It Forward	Personal Christmas Cards	prayer or meditation
prayer or meditation	Devotional Reading	Personal Christmas Cards	Devotional Reading	prayer or meditation	Devotional Reading	prayer or meditation	Devotional Reading	Take a Break
Personal Christmas Cards	prayer or meditation	Devotional Reading	prayer or meditation	1 hour volunteering	prayer or meditation	Take a Break	Love	Devotional Reading
2 hours without a phone	Devotional Reading	Take a Break	Devotional Reading	prayer or meditation	Devotional Reading	prayer or meditation	Personal Christmas Cards	prayer or meditation
Devotional Reading	Take a Break	prayer or meditation	Personal Christmas Cards	Devotional Reading	prayer or meditation	2 hours without a phone	Take a Break	prayer or meditation
prayer or meditation	Devotional Reading	Pay It Forward	Devotional Reading	Personal Christmas Cards	Devotional Reading	prayer or meditation	Devotional Reading	prayer or meditation
Attend Worship	prayer or meditation	Devotional Reading	Joy	prayer or meditation	Personal Christmas Cards	Devotional Reading	prayer or meditation	Attend Worship

The Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Love and Joy are "free" spaces.

See "Meghan's Musings" for further details.



Carl Repp's brother, Gerald passed away on Monday, November 25 at Mercy Medical Center. At the time of writing this Messenger, services have not been finalized. Carl and his family are still dealing with the of their oldest sister, Mary Lou Abel, who died in September.

Prayers and sincere sympathy go out to Carl, Jane, Ryan and the entire Repp family.

Your church family.

## Budget and Finance

Jen Norvell, Chair

Cheryl Ritter and Mickey Van Baale were asked to attend our last meeting. Cheryl explained to the B&F committee and Mickey what tasks the committee needs to be doing. She showed us step by step how to reconcile the monthly bank statements.

Cheryl also answered questions regarding other aspects of the Treasurer position. She will not be able to continue "advising" us after the end of the year, as her demands in her full-time position will be too time consuming.

Cheryl needs to be removed as a signer from the bank accounts and from the Edward Jones account. A new signer needs to be added, but the question remains who is the best person to do this role.

A discussion occurred around who should be paying the secretary when this position is filled. As for now, Mickey will be paying herself after hours are approved by Pastor Meghan. It was decided that moving forward, Mickey will pay the new secretary.

Mickey brought the information regarding the credit cards that were issued to First Presbyterian but also had Barbara's name on them. Toni was to contact the credit card company to see if we could just have First Presbyterian on the card.

Mickey gave an update on the stewardship campaign. Jen or Toni will continue to make reminder announcements during church. Mickey will put reminders in the weekly Church Happenings. Mickey will inform Jen of who didn't return pledge cards after Thanksgiving. Jen will communicate with B&F committee and names will be divided up to do follow up calls.





For security reasons, the doors of the church are now locked at all times. Please ring the door bell to get in. If we don't come in a few minutes, please call the church office, as the door bell has occasionally not worked.

If you are coming to the church for a pre-planned activity such as Days for Girls or Yoga, the doors will be unlocked until we feel confident that everyone planning to attend is here. The doors may then be locked.

We appreciate your understanding.

## Worship & Music

Jeanette Shannon, Chair

At our November meeting, we discussed the need of having the organ and piano tuned. Other discussion centered around details related to various activities during Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas.

- \* Assembling the Advent booklet on November 19th
- \* Details related to the Thanksgiving dinner on November 24.
- \* Advent candle lighting for each Sunday in Advent and Christmas Eve was discussed.
- \* Decorating the church which will take place on Dec. 3.
- \* Ordering poinsettias, having them delivered by Hy-Vee and publication of who has given them and whom the plants are given in honor or memory of.
- \* Blue Christmas Service on December 19 at 7:00 pm.
- \* The Christmas Eve service at 7:00 pm on December 24.
- \* The Dec. 29 service will include carol singing.

## Christian Nurture

Karen Quinn, Chair

The All Church pageant will take place during worship on Sunday, December 22. Come and assume the role of Joseph, Mary, shepherds, wise men, animals, stars or angels. As in the past, costumes will be available, and the dialogue will be read by two church members. Appropriate hymns will be sung throughout the pageant. Come and be part of the greatest story!

Look for pictures of the "actors" in costume in the January Messenger.



Our college students, Natalie Camp, Emily Miller, Jordan Norvell, Brad Ritter, Megan Ritter, Garrett Sturtz, and Josh Ventling, as they prepare and take finals. Also high school senior Allie Norvell.

Our Session, as they look at pledges received and review anticipated expenses for 2020, and set a budget for us.

Those who do not have a home or money for heat as we face colder temperatures and snow.

Other churches within our Presbytery who may be facing situations we are not aware of.

People from around the country who have faced catastrophic disasters, such as fires, blizzards, and all other acts of nature.

The people of the South Sudan.

## Stewardship Campaign

Jen Norvell, Chair

We are wrapping up the Stewardship campaign and want to thank all of you who have turned in your pledge cards. Once we have completed the campaign, our committee will be putting together our 2020 budget. This is based on the amount of pledges as income and what the various committees are needing for next year. As in the past, some committees may have to cut back on their needs if we don't have pledges to cover them.

Another factor where congregation members can help is by paying their per capita. This is the per person amount our church is required to pay to Presbytery. Last year, this amount per person was \$45.00. If you are unable to pay the full amount, a portion would help.

Thank you for your continued financial support of our church.



God has given us various gifts. We are looking for those who have the gifts that can help with some of the following needs in our church.

1. Readers for special services, such as Blue Christmas or Christmas Eve. We appreciate those who have helped in the past. It is always nice to have some fresh voices.
2. People willing to be Elders or Deacons. The Nominating Committee has begun their work in finding Elders, Deacons, and a new member of the Nominating Committee. These are all 3-year commitments. Spend time with God to see if you have the talents and desire to fill one of these positions.
3. Volunteers to run the audio system on a rotation basis. Due to a variety of reasons we are down to very few audio system operators for our weekly service. Can you help? It would involve getting the microphones in place prior to the service, monitoring the sound system and recording the service. Training will be given.
4. Audio volunteer coordinator. This individual will make the yearly schedule of who will do the weekly task and send this out to those involved. They also make sure that batteries are changed in the microphones regularly.

It's said that it takes a village to raise a child ...well, it takes volunteers from the congregation to make our church and our various services run smoothly. It cannot be done by just a handful. Thanks for your consideration and saying yes as you are able.



## Church Life

Kay Parsons, Chair

Thanksgiving Feast saw 62 people eat, visit and take communion on Sunday, November 24. A wide selection of food was brought by everyone else with a wonderful selection of desserts! Communion was organized jointly with the Worship and Music committee. Elders at each table brought the elements to the table and served communion. Thank you to everyone who brought a dish to share.



Mark it on your calendar now- Sunday, December 15th. Christmas caroling and chili! Gathering at the church at 3:30 pm. We will carol for a couple hours then return to the church for chili and assorted Christmas goodies. Hope to see you there.

Church Life Committee: Tara Zehr, Diane Moles, Dan Ritter, Nancy Mott, Bonnie Rasmussen, and Kay Parsons, chair

December 15, 2019

Christmas caroling followed by chili supper



**At our recent meeting, we handled the following business:.**

- ✦ **Approved the October minutes.**
- ✦ **Discussed visits done during the month.**
- ✦ **Were reminded of the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for Carol Goodwin at the Bistro at Park Centre on Nov. 13.**
- ✦ **Reviewed financial transactions as of October 31. Some questions were raised and need to be looked into. Any dispersements of funds will be discussed at the December meeting.**
- ✦ **Decided on the Christmas gifts for those who we visit.**
- ✦ **Clarified the phone number of Matt Illingsworth's caregiver.**

**Our next meeting will be December 8th at 9:00 am in the library.**

**Diane Moles, Moderator**



## MEMBERSHIP



## MOMENT

Church Directory with photographs: Warren Erickson and Dave Stolper will be taking photographs to update our Church Directory. Members are encouraged to personalize their photo with "props" or by dressing in attire that shows a favorite activity or hobby, or by having your picture taken in a special or favorite place, or in some other way showing who you are or what you do. You will be contacted, or you may contact Warren (275-1926 or 792-8630) or Dave (840-2422) to set up a time and place for a photo session.

There will also be a form available to indicate what personal information you would like in the directory along with your photo.

The Sundays at Four concert by soprano Randy Jones, accompanied by Marlys Grimm and narrated by Norm Grimm, was fantastic! The spirituals, music and story related to the underground railroad were inspirational. Look for more Sundays at Four to come in 2020!

P.E.W. (Pray, Eat, Work) event: Eleven diligent workers enjoyed a chicken enchilada meal and devotional on "transitioning" before spiffing up the sanctuary, balcony, parlor, hallways and stairs. Whew! Ibuprofen all around! Thanks to Dave Stolper, Deanna Manley, Gary Parsons, Harold Manley, Jane Repp, Janet Shields, Kay Parsons, Linda Curtis-Stolper, Rev. Meghan, Val McKee, and Marilyn McCallister. Job well done!

The Congregational Safety program was interesting and informative. Close to 30 people attended with several from other churches. Newton Police Department Lieutenant Wayne Winchell presented the Violent Intruder Response Training which included Power Point and video. A question/answer time followed the presentation. Your Session will review our current safety practices in light of the information presented.

Thank you to all of you who volunteer to help us be a welcoming church to our visitors and members – greeters, bread ministry, transportation, etc.

Respectfully submitted, Marilyn McCallister, Session Rep. & Chair

## Mission Committee

Larry Anderson, Chair

The committee met Nov. 11 and discussed the following:

**Mission Coalition news:** First Presbyterian will ring bells for Salvation Army on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 1 to 5 PM at Theisen's. Also, we will continue our participation in the gift-giving for Progress Industries clients, as well as for the Salvation Army Angel Tree. Look for information in the coming weeks.

**Bread for the World:** the organization's Offering of Letters typically happens on a national basis in the spring so they can impact Congressional decisions early in the legislative session. Letters in the fall are also appropriate, however, and we plan to continue our church's Reformation Sunday tradition. But we will also try a letter-writing campaign in the spring outside of worship time. (See additional article on page 9)

**Harvest Offering:** planned for Nov. 24.

**Christmas Joy Offering:** planned for Dec. 24.

**Presbyterian Giving Catalog:** will be promoted to the congregation leading up to Christmas.

**Salvation Army food insecurity issues:** Original plans for cooking classes did not work out. Instead, with the help of Carol Camp, the committee is working on another idea – creating a meal menu using food items that will be received by clients at Salvation Army, having that prepared meal available for clients to sample when they pick up food, and providing the ingredients and recipes for that meal in a packaged kit for clients to take home.

**Ramp building:** there is one ramp scheduled for building in the spring.

**Presbyterian Women:** Barb Taylor attended the recent gathering and heard the keynote speech by the author of the book being used currently by the Women's Bible Study.

**Mariners in Mission:** The first work week of 2020 will be at Camp Greer in N. Carolina in March.

**Jasper County Take Away Hunger:** Had a successful 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary packaging event.

**Neighbors Helping Neighbors:** Laundry nights continue, and the winter clothing drive is under way with collection of donations at First Lutheran.

**Days for Girls:** The next work day is scheduled Dec. 5.

Larry Anderson, Mission Committee Chair



Save the Date! Meghan Davis and Curt Brass are getting married and you're all invited! The wedding will be Saturday July 18, 2020, right here at First Presbyterian Church, Newton. More details to follow.



## Offering of Letters Advocating for Child Nutrition

Larry Anderson, Mission Committee Chair

As a congregation designated by our denomination as a Hunger Action Congregation, First Presbyterian acted on this commitment on Reformation Sunday, October 27. We affirmed that the “least among us,” those young children around the world at risk of stunting from chronic malnutrition, have the same claim to life and health as our own children here at home.

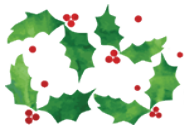
Twenty-nine letters were written during worship and nailed to the door as a statement of our dissatisfaction with the persistence of hunger and poverty alongside great wealth – echoing Martin Luther’s protest against the abuses of the Church when he nailed the 95 Theses to the door in Wittenberg, Germany, in 1517.

These letters voiced support for House Resolution 189 and Senate Resolution 260, which further our nation’s effort to impact global child malnutrition and which are supported by over 140 Republicans and Democrats in both houses, including Rep. Loeb sack and Sen. Ernst. The letters were sent together to the intended representative, with cover letters from Rev. Meghan Davis.

The Mission Committee is grateful to the congregation for fulfilling this important task. But let’s not limit our advocacy to this one act! Most of us had time to write to only one representative during the worship service. It is very simple to write a letter or email to the others, and we would encourage us all to continue speaking up on behalf of those who don’t have a big lobby in Congress. We, collectively, are a lobby of citizens, and we do have influence when we speak clearly with a united voice.

## Photos from recent Sundays at 4 Concerts





# 2019 **BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS**

**Sun**

**Mon**

**Tue**

**Wed**

**Thur**

**Fri**

**Sat**

<b>1</b>	<b>2 Karen Quinn</b>  4:45p Personnel	<b>3</b>  11a Gentle Yoga 3:30p Mission 6p Book Club Peanut Pub	<b>4</b>  9:30a Women's Bible Study 7p Choir	<b>5 Pete Van Elswyk</b>  6:30a & 9a Men's Group 9a & 6p Days for Girls 3p Chair Yoga	<b>6</b>	<b>7 Steve Roese</b>  1p - 5p Ring bells for Salvation Army at Theisen's
<b>8</b>  9a Deacons	<b>9</b>	<b>10 Shirley Stevens</b>  11a - Gentle Yoga 4p Worship & Music	<b>11 Joan Tyler</b>  9:30a WBS 2:30p Membership 6p Budget & Finance 7p Choir	<b>12</b>  3p Chair Yoga	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>  3:30p Caroling & Chili	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>  11a Gentle Yoga 6:30p Session	<b>18</b>  9:30a Women's Bible Study 7p Choir	<b>19 Amy Doerring</b>  6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga 7p Blue Christmas	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>  10:30a All Church Christmas Pageant	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>  7p - Christmas Eve Service	<b>25</b>  Office Closed	<b>26</b>  Office Closed	<b>27</b>	<b>28 Linda Kirchhoff</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30 Toni Peska</b>  Office Closed	<b>31</b>  Office Closed				



<b>December</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Worship Leader</b> <i>Mickey Van Baale</i>	Joan Tyler	Kathy Ventling	George Wilkening	Terry Rickers	Linda Campbell
<b>Host Elder/Deacon</b> <i>Church Life</i>	Jen Norvell	Mickey Van Baale	Karen Quinn	Kay Parsons	Linda Kirchhoff
<b>Greeters</b> <i>Julie Brodersen</i>	Dick & Shirley Mielke	Randy & Carol Camp	Cole Doerring Carroll Brodersen	Gary & Kay Parsons	Kevin & Toni Peska
<b>Ushers</b> <i>Mickey Van Baale</i>	Don & Sharon Black	Mary Jane Tripp Suzy Funk	John & Barb Taylor	Kevin & Toni Peska	Tom & Nancy Mott
<b>Audio</b> <i>Shirley Stevens</i>		Kyle Doerring	Kyle Doerring		
<b>Counters</b> <i>Budget &amp; Finance</i>	Dave Stolper Kathy Ventling	Tara Zehr Bret Doerring	Jonnie Carpenter Tom Weeks	Jen Norvell Janet Shields	Terry Rickers Peggy/Chris Lickiss
<b>Bread Ministry Baker</b> <i>Barb Taylor</i>	Jane Repp	Val McKee	Dixie Zegers	Sharon Black	Diane Moles
<b>Bread Ministry Taker</b> <i>Barb Taylor</i>	Carol Russell	Toni Peska	Dana Hashman	Nancy Mott	
<b>Communion Set up</b> <i>Worship &amp; Music</i>	Kay Parsons Jen Norvell				

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

641-792-2790

Return Service Requested

## Lectionary —

### December, 2019

#### **December 1 - 1st Sunday of Advent**

Isa. 2:1-5; *Ps. 122*; Rom. 13:11-14;  
Matt. 24:35-44

#### **December 8 - 2nd Sunday of Advent**

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

#### **December 15 - 3rd Sunday of Advent**

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

#### **December 22 - 4th Sunday of Advent**

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

#### **December 29 - 1st Sunday after Christmas Day**

Isa. 63:7-9; *Ps. 148*;  
Heb. 2:10-18; Matt. 2:13-23

### January, 2020

#### **January 5—2nd Sunday of Christmas**

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

#### **January 6 - Epiphany (Monday)**

Isa. 60:1-6; *Ps. 72:1-7, 10-14*;  
Eph. 3:1-12; Matt. 2:1-12

#### **January 12—Baptism of the Lord**

Isa. 42:1-9; *Ps. 29*; Acts 10:34-43;  
Matt. 3:13-17

#### **January 19—2nd Sunday after Epiphany**

Isa. 49:1-7; *Ps. 40:1-11*;  
1 Cor. 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

#### **January 26—3rd Sunday after Epiphany**

Isa. 9:1-4; *Ps. 27:1, 4-9*;  
1 Cor. 1:10-18; Matt. 4:12-23