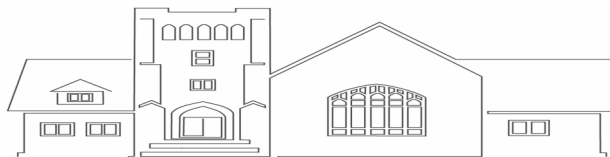


**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEWTON, IOWA
641-792-2790**

"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



**February
2020**

Meghan's Musing Blessed by Prayer

Over the course of the last year or so, my prayer practice has expanded and deepened in unexpected ways. I confess, throughout my lifetime, a regular prayer practice has been all too elusive to me, much more than I care to admit. Sure I pray in worship, I throw out "arrow" prayers if and when necessary, and of course, I pray publicly whenever called upon to do so. But a regular, daily practice hadn't been something I seemed to be able to establish. (You might be surprised how many pastors report they don't pray, often stating that they don't have time, they are under too much stress or other occupational hazards.)

But over a year ago, I began starting my day with meditation. And then I added a daily devotional. Then journaling. And about six months ago I started using a prayer journal in which I simply write the names of people/situations I wish to lift up to God. Every morning, I start with just a very brief prayer bringing God's attention to the following people. Then I re-write the names, just the names, from the day before (using a different color of pen). I end the prayer with "God in your mercy, hear my prayers." Sometimes I read a beautiful prayer given to me at the Women Touched by Grace program. Or sometimes I simply say, "Amen."

I add names to the list more often than I remove them. I'm having to write smaller and smaller to try to save space. It takes longer and longer to get through the list.

I'm part of a group on Facebook, a very small, very private group of clergy women, mostly PC(USA) and mostly younger than I. Early last year someone created a calendar so we could pray for one (or sometimes two) of the members a particular day. So on the first day of each month we pray for the two people who started the group, on the second day of the month someone else gets the focus and so on. When this list was first created last spring, I loved the idea but didn't actually use it. Then one day last fall, after starting my prayer journal, I decided that I needed to add our daily person to my daily prayers. I suspected that few of our group members were using the prayer calendar without prompting so I decided to make it a part of my practice to post in the group each morning, "Today is Sally's day. Let us lift Sally into the Light." And then I add a comment, "Sally, how may we pray for you today?" And usually Sally will respond with an update on what is going on in her life and something particular she'd like prayer for.

So, I'm telling you all this, not because I think everyone should have a prayer journal like mine or start some kind of Facebook prayer group. But because I have been so touched by the blessings of these practices. When I tell someone that I have been praying for them every day, I can tell it means something to them. The women in my Facebook group have talked about how the daily prayer (which is not the only aspect of this group) has helped them to feel more connected with the group. You see, in the group of 33 women, none of us knows everyone "IRL" (in real life). Most of us only actually "know" a couple or maybe a handful of the others. But this invaluable online support group has sprouted up and been nourished in our prayer for one another. One woman recently posted at the end of "her" day that it had been a really hard day, she ended it in tears in her living room and then she remembered that the others in the group were praying for her, and it helped. Of course it didn't "fix" any of her problems but it gave her comfort.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

I'm reminded of a study I heard about in seminary. They had two groups of sick people with strangers on the other side of the country praying for them. One group knew they were being prayed for and the other group did not know. As you might have guessed, the group who knew someone was praying for them had better outcomes than those who didn't. Other studies have shown that when we *know* the people who are praying for us, the outcomes are even better.

I know many of us struggle with prayer. We worry that God has "more important things to worry about" than whatever it is I might pray about. Or we don't believe that God plays favorites by choosing to interfere in the world. Or, we might just have a hard time getting into a regular prayer routine. But I am coming to see prayer as a great connection, not only between us and God, but among us—human to human. And though I rarely (if ever) pray on my own behalf, I have felt the blessings of prayer—yes, the prayers I lift for others—just as strongly as if I did.

And so I urge you, if you don't have a regular prayer practice, commit yourself to developing one. And if you do have one, tell people. **Tell** the people you are praying for **that** you are praying for them so that you both may be blessed. May it be so. Amen.



***Tom Weeks who spent his birthday on January 11th having brain surgery at Mercy One hospital in Des Moines. Tom is home, back to work at the high school and was in church January 26th.**

***Gladys Sparks and her family as she nears the end of life. Gladys is under hospice care at Nelson Manor, where she has lived for the past 2 years.**

***Mimi Amouzou and her children, Benila, Godspell and Regina, as they adapt to their new apartment and hopefully get a new vehicle.**

***People around the world who are dealing with earthquakes, extreme weather conditions, and other acts of nature.**

***People of the South Sudan and for peace to come to them.**

Errors in Annual Report

My apologies: a couple of names were misspelled in the report: Jeanne Bridenstine and Millie Dickinson Brenneman.

Also, the date that Brandon Jackson rejoined the church should be 8/3/2019.

Copies of the Annual Report are in the narthex for those of you who were not able to attend the meeting. Please feel free to help yourself. There will be a copy in the church office that says "Final Copy" that will reflect all these corrections.

Mission Committee raising money from congregation
for micro-lending and benevolences fund

The Session approved at its meeting Jan. 21 the establishment of a “micro-lending” and benevolences fund. This was a recommendation of the Mission Committee and will be administered by that committee.

This idea was prompted by a need experienced by a new addition to our church family, Mimi Amouzou. She began coming to church at the urging of her friend Lawrence Kenyi. Although Mimi was connected to community resources after moving here under stressful circumstances in the early fall, she and her children were still in a precarious situation. And then things got worse – Mimi’s car died.

Those of us who have been directly involved with helping Mimi have come to know her as a strong, intelligent, responsible woman and a wonderful mother. She is not in a position to get a loan for a used car at any financial institution. But we saw a possible way to help her through the church.

The Session has decided to establish the EmPower Fund, using the Power Fund as seed money. The Power Fund was a gift from a longtime member of FPC intended for benevolences for those in the church family. The EmPower Fund will extend the possibilities for helping those in our church family by using funds for loans as well as for gifts. Following is a description of how this will work:

The target for the fund will be hardship situations within the circle of our church family where a loan would help a family/individual get back on their feet financially. Although clearly defined as a loan, with a loan agreement signed, the terms of repayment will be individualized. The church will be the lending entity, and repayment will be to the church. No interest will be charged. Forgiveness of a loan would be possible if unforeseen circumstances make repayment impossible or so burdensome that it would defeat the purpose of the loan. Donors will be sought from within the congregation when there is a specific need. Donors will understand that they are making a gift toward the fund with no expectation they will be reimbursed when loan repayment is made. Instead, repayment will provide for the fund to be replenished so it is available for future loans or gifts. Donors may also be sought occasionally for general donations to the fund so it is available for future needs.

Please consider a gift designated for the EmPower Fund. **Our goal is to raise at least \$2000.** We hope to have enough money very quickly for Mimi to use for a car, as she has been without one for a few weeks and has had to rely on church members to provide daily rides. Make checks out to First Presbyterian Church and put “EmPower Fund” on the memo line.

As with all funds raised by the Mission Committee, these are not part of the operating budget of the church, so donations should not replace your giving for regular operating expenses.

Larry Anderson, chair of Mission Committee

Church Life

Gary Parsons, Chair

Our committee has not met yet to determine the activities for the entire year, but that Information will be in the March Messenger.

January's event was the Annual Meeting, which was hosted by the 2021 classes of Elders and Deacons. In February, we are partnering with the Membership Committee on February 16 for the trip to Des Moines to watch the Drake Bulldogs (with our own Garrett Sturtz) play Evansville at 3:00 pm. Following the game, the group will eat in Des Moines at a location yet to be decided. Watch the bulletins and church happenings for more information.

MEMBERSHIP



MOMENT

Join in on the activities planned for February –

Saturday, February 1 is the Newton Pacesetter's Winter Program at the Newton High School gym starting at 6:00 pm. Our own Allie Norvell is one of the participants and we have attended for 2-3 years. The skill, stamina and training these girls have is amazing. The program usually lasts 1 hr. 45 min. to 2 hrs. and is fast moving and fun to watch.

Sunday, February 16 we will travel to Des Moines to see Drake University (and 1P member Garrett Sturtz) play Evansville at 3:00 pm. We plan to eat out in Des Moines after the game (site TBD).

Please try to join us for both of these fun events!

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.

A group CPR Certification class to be held at our church was not able to be arranged.

† A CPR Certification class open to the public and sponsored by the American Heart Association will be held Tuesday, March 3, from 6:15 – 10 p.m., at the Jasper County Extension and Outreach office – Room 119 in the DMACC complex. Cost is \$65. The certificate is valid for 2 years. Contact Denise Fischer at 341-792-5437 or email fischerd@iastate.edu.

† The Newton YMCA has two CPR Certification classes scheduled in the YMCA conference center for Saturday, February 29 and Saturday, March 14, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cost for Y members is \$35 and for non-Y members is \$55. Contact the Newton YMCA @ 641-792-4006.

†

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

2019 Lenten Breakfasts and Devotions

A wonderful tradition that continues in our church is the Lenten breakfasts and devotions. These start on Ash Wednesday and continue every Wednesday morning through Lent. We start breakfast at 6:45 am with devotions following. We strive to finish by 7:45 to 7:50 for those needing to get to work.

Below is the schedule for this year. A big “thank you” goes out to Jane Repp for making the contacts to find those who will prepare the meal and those who offer the devotions each week.

We hope to see many of you there.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Cook</i>	<i>Devotions</i>
February 26	Linda Anderson	Rev. Meghan Davis
March 4	Barb Taylor	Larry Anderson
March 11	Shari DeCook	George Wilkening
March 18	Kay Parsons	Gary Parsons
March 25	Jane Repp	Mickey Van Baale
April 1	Linda Curtis-Stolper	Linda Curtis-Stolper



Lenten Breakfasts
& Devotions

Annual Meeting

Following worship on Sunday, January 26, we held our Annual meeting. Around 45 people enjoyed a potluck lunch prior to the meeting. When the meeting was called to order, those in attendance heard reports from various committees, remembered our members who died during 2019, received the financial information and 2020 budget and voted on the pastor's compensation package for the new year.

Last year, a new tradition was started of having drawings for items donated by members. This year's winners were: Joan Tyler, a box of chocolates; Karen Quinn, an model car; Don Black, a coffee cup with gift cards to Bridgehouse coffee, Uncle Nancy's, Scooters, and Starbucks; Tom Weeks, 2 Iowa Cub tickets; Nancy Mott, 2 pairs of earrings; Dana Hashman, dinner for 4 and a movie at Chez Erickson; Marilyn McCallister, one week pet sitting by Toni Peska; Linda Erickson, transportation by Peska Transportation; Toni Peska, quilt made by Linda Curtis-Stolper and Linda Gehling, 4 movie tickets.

OUR CHURCH AT WORK

The following officers are now serving our church. This is a listing you can save so you will know who the current Ruling Elders and Deacons are. The listing also lets you know when each group meets and who the Moderators are along with the Clerk of Session and Secretary of the Deacons.

On January 25, our officers held their yearly retreat. At this time, the Elders determined their committee assignments and these are listed after their name.. The committee chair's name is in bold.

SESSION

Meets third Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.

Rev. Meghan Davis, Moderator

Mickey Van Baale, Clerk of Session

2020

Toni Peska (Budget & Finance)

Jeanette Shannon (Worship & Music)

Mickey Van Baale (Christian Nurture)

2021

Marilyn McCallister (Membership)

Larry Anderson (Mission)

George Wilkening (Building & Grounds)

2022

Tom Mott (Personnel)

Gary Parsons (Church Life)

BOARD OF DEACONS

Meets second Sunday, 9:00 a.m.

Diane Moles, Moderator

Dave Stolper, Secretary

2020

Linda Erickson

Janet Shields

2021

Linda Kirchhoff

Taylor McGonegle

Dave Stolper

2022

Dana Hashman

Diane Moles

Barb Taylor

Please hold them in your prayers, as they begin their leadership of our church, and remember our pledge to them of upholding their unanimous decisions in the operations of our church.

At a special Session meeting during the retreat, the following people were elected for a one year term:

George Wilkening, President of the Corporation

Mickey Van Baale, Clerk of Session

Budget & Finance Committee, to function as Treasurer

At our meeting during the officers retreat we:

- ★ Welcomed our new/returning members, Diane Moles, Dana Hashman and Barb Taylor
- ★ Had report of December visits
- ★ Elected Diane Moles, Moderator and Dave Stolper, Secretary
- ★ Changed our meeting location to the parlor rather than the library
- ★ Were informed that Shirley Stevens has volunteered to continue the card ministry even though she is off the board of deacons
- ★ Read thank you notes for the poinsettias given during our December visits
- ★ Discussed special instructions on visiting a couple of our people
- ★ Reviewed the new visitation list and paired up for visits.

The next meeting will be February 9 (in the parlor).

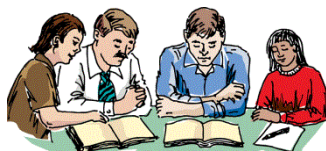
Diane Moles, Moderator



Lenten Study

In addition to the morning breakfasts and devotions during Lent, a study group will also meet at 5:30 pm for six weeks, starting on Ash Wednesday, February 26. The group will meet in Fellowship Hall and share a meal, followed by a Matthew 25 study. Study guides have been purchased and a few have not been spoken for yet. If more people are interested than what we have copies for, that is easily remedied by ordering some more.

Please let Mickey in the church office know, if you haven't already, that you are interested in attending and having a study guide.



**LENTEN
STUDY**

Mission Committee

Larry Anderson, Chair

Mission committee met on Jan. 7. Thank you to Larry Rossow, who served on the committee this past year, and Linda Erickson, who has served for many years. Both are going off the committee. This means there are openings! We will be contacting some people and asking them to consider serving on the committee, but if you read this and think that's something you'd like to do, please contact Larry Anderson. Here are several items from our meeting:

The Christmas Joy offering collected \$556.

One ramp is planned so far for this spring. (Subsequent to the meeting we learned there was a significant donation to the ramp ministry from the Charlie Brown family.)

Days for Girls' total count of sustainable feminine hygiene kits completed in 2019 was 223! Our first workshop in 2020 was scheduled for January 23rd to start creating the new "transport bags" to take the place of the Ziploc gallon freezer bag in our kits.

Many developing countries are banning all plastics from being brought into their country for the benefit of their environment. Our February workshop is scheduled for Thursday, February 27th, from 9-2 and 6-9 in fellowship hall. All are welcome.

Laundry nights continue two Mondays per month.

Mariners in Mission will have work events in N. Carolina and Tennessee this year.

We will be adding another Bread for the World Offering of Letters event in the spring in order to fit with Congress' legislative schedule. This will be after, not during, worship.

We will be working with Salvation Army to provide recipes and samples of dishes using food items unfamiliar to many food recipients. (See separate article on page 9).

We recommended to Session the establishment of a micro-lending fund. (See separate article on page 3).

Beware of scams

It has come to my attention that my name has been associated with a recent scam in which some church members have received texts appearing to be from me. In the text they were asked to purchase gift cards for an emergency, stating that I am at the hospital and cannot leave until very late that night.

Fortunately, the texts came from a number different than mine so, to help you identify any similar scams in the future, please make sure to add my phone number into your phone contacts so it will be easy to tell that it's not really coming from me. (I'll be happy to help you do this if you need assistance.)

Be assured that I would not text or call you asking for money or gift cards without having gone through the proper protocol or having spoken about it during announcements at a church service or by communicating the need via Church Happenings and the Messenger.

There is no explanation how my personal information was captured or used in this manner, but I wanted to make you all aware and caution you to not be taken advantage of by purchasing gift cards or similar requests from anyone. Please do let me know if you should happen to get a text, email or call from "me" that seem suspicious.

Blessings!
Meghan

During last year's Lenten season, Meghan led a study entitled "Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table -- Readings for Reflection and Action". Several of us signed up for the class, which involved a variety of hands-on experiences with food.

One idea coming out of the study was to explore whether recipients of the food ministries at the Salvation Army could benefit from cooking classes using food pantry items the recipients are not familiar with.

Last May, this idea was taken to the Mission Committee and some of the members arranged to meet with staff at Salvation Army. Our meeting went well and they felt that their clientele could certainly benefit from cooking classes. We enlisted the help of Carol Camp from Iowa State Extension, who met directly with Ed Poe, who oversees the food ministry. Due to Carol's experience with Salvation Army with produce donations from the Master's Gardening program through Iowa State Extension, she has been very helpful to our committee and had some great ideas which she had worked out with Ed.

Through all these in person meetings and emails, we have finally worked out a plan to offer food tasting on one day a month during a bread line day. Ed says that the Food Bank of Iowa is encouraging its users to eat more healthy food. They are sending out dry beans, peas, and lentils. Some Food Bank clients are not familiar with cooking with these foods and have been reluctant to accept them. Ed said he would like help to encourage clients to take and use these foods and give them a try. Volunteers from our church will develop recipes, prepare the food and serve samples of the prepared food during one breadline per month.

Linda Anderson, Mission Committee

Christian Nurture

Mickey Van Baale, Chair

Isn't it wonderful to see children back in church? The time has come to work on reintroducing the nursery during worship time and some sort of Sunday School. What about activities for the young couples where they are welcome to invite their friends and child care is provided at the church for all?

Some study groups or book studies done at a time when those working can attend might be possible. In fact, there is a Lenten study starting on Ash Wednesday at 5:30 pm and continuing each week through Lent. The study guides cost \$2.75 and have been received. If you hadn't requested one, that's okay as some extras were ordered. This will be in addition to the morning breakfast and devotions.

Several ideas were shared at the Officers retreat. This committee needs to become vital and offer more opportunities for learning for all ages.

Watch the bulletins, church happenings, and future Messengers for additional events. If you have any ideas, please feel free to let me know.



2020 **BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS**

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thur

Fri

Sat

						1 6p Pacesetters Winter Show
2 	3 4:45p Personnel	4 Jen Norvell 11a Gentle Yoga 3:30p Mission	5 9:30a WBS 7p Choir	6 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	7 Joan Rusk 	8 9a - 3p Presbytery Mtg at Covent Pres. in WDM
9 9a - Deacons (in the Parlor)	10 Carl Repp 	11 11a Gentle Yoga 4p Worship & Music	12 9:30a Women's Bible Study 2:30p Membership 6p Budget & Finance 7p Choir	13 3p Chair Yoga	14 Susan Weeks 	15
16 Baptism of Bennett Zehr 3p - Basketball game at Drake	17 	18 11a Gentle Yoga 6:30p Session	19 9:30a WBS 7p Choir	20 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	21 	22
23 	24 Sandy Cheney 	25 11a Gentle Yoga 6p Pub Theology	26 Ash Wed. 6:45 Lenten B'fast/Devotions 9:30a WBS 5:30p Lenten Study 7p Choir	27 9a-2p Days for Girls 3p Chair Yoga 6p-9p Evening Days for Girls	28 	29

Regular Worship Schedule

9:00a Adult Sunday School
10:00a Fellowship

10:30a Worship
11:30a Fellowship



February	2	9	16	23
Worship Leader <i>Worship & Music</i>	Dave Stolper	Shari DeCook	George Wilkening	Karen Quinn
Host Elder/Deacon <i>Church Life</i>	Gary Parsons	Toni Peska	Dave Stolper	George Wilkening
Greeters <i>Julie Brodersen</i>	Randy & Carol Camp	Cole Doerring Carroll Brodersen	Gary & Kay Parsons	Kevin & Toni Peska
Ushers <i>Worship & Music</i>	Cathy Rickers Jeanette Shannon	Gary & Kay Parsons	Tom & Nancy Mott	Randy & Carol Camp
Audio <i>Worship & Music</i>	Terry Rickers	Tom Mott	Linda Gehling	Erick Zehr
Counters <i>Budget & Finance</i>	Jen Norvell Janet Shields	Terry Rickers Peggy/Chris Lickiss	Dave Stolper Kathy Ventling	Bev Rossow Toni Peska
Bread Ministry Baker <i>Barb Taylor</i>	Jane Repp	Dixie Zegers	Joan Tyler	Sharon Black
Bread Ministry Taker <i>Barb Taylor</i>	Carol Russell	Dana Hashman	Toni Peska	Nancy Mott
Communion Set up <i>Worship & Music`</i>	George Wilkening			

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

641-792-2790

Return Service Requested

Lectionary —

February 2020

February 2 - 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Micah 6:1-8; *Ps. 15*; 1 Cor. 1:18-31;
Matt. 5:1-12

February 9 - 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isa. 58:1-9a (9b-12); *Ps. 112:1-9 (10)*;
1 Cor. 2:1-12 (13-16); Matt. 5:13-20

February 16 - 6th Sunday after Epiphany

Deut. 30:15-20; *Ps. 119:1-8*;
1 Cor. 3:1-9; Matt. 5:21-37

February 23 - Transfiguration of the Lord

Exod. 24:12-18; *Ps. 2 or Ps. 99*;
2 Peter 1:16-21; Matt. 17:1-9

March, 2020

March 1 – 1st Sunday in Lent

Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-7; *Ps. 32*;
Rom 5:12-19; Matt. 4:1-11

March 8 - 2nd Sunday in Lent

Gen. 12:1-4a; *Ps. 121*;
Rom. 4:1-5, 13-17; John 3:1-17

March 15 - 3rd Sunday in Lent

Exod. 17:1-7; *Ps. 95*; Rom. 5:1-11;
John 4:5-42

March 22 - 4th Sunday in Lent

1 Sam. 16:1-13; *Ps. 23*; Eph. 5:8-14;
John 9:1-41

March 29 - 5th Sunday in Lent

Ezek. 37:1-14; *Ps. 130*; Rom. 8:6-11;
John 11:1-45