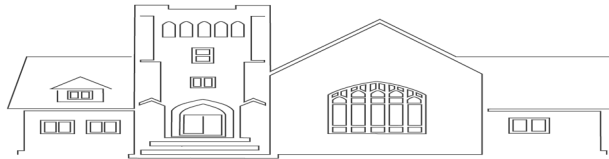


**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEWTON, IOWA
641-792-2790**

"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
2022**

Meghan's Musings

Here We Are Again

Beloved in Christ,

As I write this we have just returned to virtual only worship. Meetings are being held online. Session is deliberating over whether to postpone our annual meeting or have it on Zoom. No one wants to be here. We all want to "return to normal" but as we enter the third year of the coronavirus pandemic, though we might have difficulty even remembering what "normal" was. No, No one wants to be here.

And yet here we are. Again. But this time is different. This time we have the vaccine. This time most people aren't getting as sick (at least, if they are vaccinated). And this time we have good reason to hope that the time will be shorter that we're back to worshipping and meeting in front of our computers. And please know that session does not take these decisions regarding COVID protocols lightly. We have returned to virtual worship because of the recent spike in COVID infections in Jasper County but as soon as the situation eases up we'll be back in our sanctuary. Session is keeping an eye on conditions, using the website [COVIDactnow.org](https://www.COVIDactnow.org) as a resource. We're currently in the worst range (called "extreme"). We spent much of last year in the range just under that ("critical") and we will likely return to worship as soon as we recede back into "critical".

Out of curiosity I looked back at my first Messenger article of the pandemic and found these words, based on Psalm 23, as apt today as they were in April 2020:

And so in this challenging time, this time when we face an unprecedented reality of the novel coronavirus, COVID19, social distancing, social isolation, shelter-in-place in some states and communities, even as we face these realities, unimaginable even two weeks ago, we must turn to God, confident that even though we walk through the darkest valley, we have no evil to fear, Even though we walk through the darkest valley, God is with us; God's rod and staff — comfort us.

Friends, until we are back together worshipping in person remember that you are loved. Remember that life is short and we do not have long to make glad the hearts of those who travel this way with us. So, be swift to love. Make haste to be kind. And, know this, the world waits breathless for good news you have to share. Therefore, may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you, always. Amen.

*In Christ,
Meghan*

Be Praying For:

- ✚ Please be holding Dick and Shirley Mielke in prayer. Dick has had to move Shirley into the memory care unit at Park Centre. He knows that this is the best option for both Shirley and him but, of course, it's a really difficult transition for both of them. God in your mercy, hear our prayer.
- ✚ Karen Quinn and family in the recent death of her cousin, Rhonda Baker from Ferguson, Iowa which is near Marshalltown. Her memorial service was held Saturday, January 22, 2022.
- ✚ Charlotte Cody, Kim Miller's sister. Charlotte's husband, Larry, passed away on Sunday, January 17, 2022 due to complications from a recent stroke. He had experienced several strokes over the past few months. He was only in his late 60's. They were just married in September. Larry had found the Lord due to his relationship with Charlotte, so he did pass peacefully and is with the Lord now. Charlotte had to bury her long-time husband Nate 5- 6 years ago, their mother this July and now Larry. Prayers for continued strength for her and their family.
- ✚ Kris Simbro, Sandy's husband, and family as his brother, Calvin just received a difficult cancer report,
- ✚ Those who have contracted the Omicron Variant of COVID-19 and have symptoms ranging from mild to being hospitalized. Also those who have the flu, either on it's own or in conjunction with the variant.
- ✚ School personnel and people from all walks of life who find themselves working long hours due to staff shortages due to the high amount of absences due to various illnesses.
- ✚ The homeless who have suffered through our recent frigid temperatures. Hopefully temperatures will begin to increase as we move closer to Spring.
- ✚ Our nation which has so much turmoil with police shootings, other murders and continued unrest.
- ✚ People around the world, especially in in the Ukraine, as hostility with Russia continues to mount.
- ✚ Those around the world trying to rebuild their lives and homes after suffering acts of Mother Nature.

COVID Protocols by Session:

At their meeting on Tuesday, January 18, 2022 it was decided that everyone attending Worship will be required to wear a mask. This includes the choir or any small ensembles that might provide anthems or special music. We will continue to sing one verse of hymns and will sing responses. The Session will continue to watch the CDC rates and make adjustments when appropriate..

The COVID-19 rates in Jasper County have climbed in mid-January with the Omicron variant. This made it necessary for the return to having worship virtually via Zoom. A very hard decision was made by Session to do this, as everyone prefers to meet in person. For the safety of everyone, a weekly watch will continually be maintained to determine the best way to conduct our Sunday worship service - in-person or virtually.

This also applies to any activities within the church. Watch for notifications via emails or the weekly Church Happenings for adjustments that are made.

Please do your part by getting vaccinated, wearing a mask and washing your hands. If we are all vigilant, our hope is we can return and stay with worship in-person.

Position Open - We Need Your Help!

Our dear Mickey has felt called by God away from her roles as administrative assistant and clerk of session here at FPN. We're sorry to see her go but know that she has certainly earned a break! However, this leaves a couple of big holes to fill! If you or anyone you know are interested in either position, please let us know. For the administrative position you can contact Meghan or a member of the personnel committee (Kim Miller and Kevin Peska). For the clerk of session position contact Meghan. Thank you for your consideration.

Restructuring of Session Committees

Due to the congregational vote to reduce the number of Elders from 12 to 6, it was necessary to restructure the committees. A question asked was if the Session member had to be the chairperson of the committee. Meghan indicated it is not necessary for the chair of a committee be a member of session and there is a school of thought it would be better if the Elder was not the chairperson. A couple of members had suggestions for the restructuring, as well as Meghan. Through the chat room on Zoom, each Elder was requested to send Meghan their first and second choice on which committee they would like to be on. The final decisions, which included renaming the committees based on our mission statement (**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.**):

Worship, Prayer & Study – (formerly Christian Nurture and Worship & Music) – Elders Linda Gehling and Deb Zieman.

Fellowship – (formerly Church Life & Membership) – Elder Gary Parsons

Humble Service (formerly Mission) – Elder Larry Anderson

Administrative (formerly Budget & Finance, Building & Grounds and Personnel) – Elders Kevin Peska and Tom Mott [addendum: after the session meeting Kevin, Tom and Meghan met via Zoom and agreed that Kevin would chair the Budget & Finance sub-committee, Tom will chair the Personnel sub-committee and they will co-chair Building and Grounds.]

This restructuring may be revisited in 6 months to ensure it is functioning as hoped.

Some committees will be in need of additional members. If you see one that looks like a fit for you, please let one of the Elders or Meghan know.

The Session appreciates everyone's flexibility, patience and prayers as this restructuring takes place. There might be a few bumps along the way, as happens with changes, but it is felt these will be minimal.

Deacons Seeking Donated Greeting Cards

Diane Moles, Moderator

The Deacons are asking for our church family to clean out their greeting card stash, and bring any unwanted cards to the church. The cards will be sent to the church family as the occasions arise by Shirley Stevens, who has volunteered to continue this mission. Both cards with a message and blank cards are wanted. Orphan cards or envelopes are also welcome. There is a box in the Narthex to collect the cards. Thank you!

Help For Our Local Schools



Thomas Jefferson Elementary Health Office is in need of your help. The office is currently out of pants available for students to borrow. If you have any gently used pants (sweatpants or leggings preferably, but jeans work also) that you would like to donate, it would be greatly appreciated. Sizes 5-16 are needed. Jen Norvell and Melissa Sommars are teachers at TJ and can answer any questions you might have.

Tara Zehr, principle at West Academy, the students and staff are collecting your gently used shoes that are just taking up space in your closet. If you have some to donate, they can be dropped off at the school, (1302 1st Ave.W.) using the north doors, or they will pick up your donation by calling 641-792-0335. The deadline is February 2nd.

Tara indicates shoes are sold to a company, Funds2Orgs and then they turn around and sell them to microbusinesses in developing countries. Then those people/businesses sell them to locals to support their business.

The students and staff are collecting shoes to raise money for a kitchen area at West. Right now they don't have anything like that and are trying to have that space to provide students more life skills in the future.

We want your

SHOES



We're halfway there!
Help our kitchen fundraiser
by donating your gently used
shoes...
no skates or ski boots, please



CONTACT US FOR PICK UP
SORENSENK@NEWTON.K12.IA.US
641.792.0335
OR DROP OFF
1302 1ST AVE W
PLEASE USE NORTH DOORS

A Sincere Thank-You

Mickey Van Baale

There are not adequate words to thank each and everyone of you for your patience, support and helpfulness to me over the nearly 2 1/2 years since I took over being the Administrative Asst., when our previous one left. Thinking this would be short term, I never imagined that COVID would hit that would require a stop to the interviewing process and subsequent hiring of a person to fill this position.

It has had its ups and downs, but I truly loved serving in this capacity for our church. And as strange as it sounds, I also love being Clerk of Session, and will miss working on the inner circles of the church.

But God has shown me without question that there is something else I need to be doing in my life right now. Part of that will be working more on the Presbytery level and being a commissioner to the General Assembly meeting this summer. And a big part will be to heal myself mentally, spiritually, and physically.

My prayers will continue to be with all of you and with our church as you move into the future. I know God has big plans for this church. Blessings to you all on this journey to the next phase of First Presbyterian Church. I'll miss worshipping with you but I'm sure I'll see you around town.

News from Session

- ✠ Mission Study/Strategic Planning – Meghan informed the Elders of a four-part seminar on "Revitalizing and Reforming our Congregations" being presented by the Executives of the Tri-Presbytery. Meghan's hope is that all of the Elders participate. Session members please save the dates!

Reformation of the Congregation Retreats:

March 26, 2022, 10am-3pm location to be determined

July 9, 2022, 10am-3pm location to be determined

September 24, 2022, 10am-3pm location to be determined

November 18-19, 2022, at Lakeshore Center, Okoboji

- ✠ The January Session meeting is when the officers of the church are elected. The results of this election is as follows:

Clerk of Session, Mickey Van Baale had informed the Session prior to the meeting that she would be resigning as Clerk of Session. Having no one in attendance interested in becoming Clerk, this position will be voted on at the February meeting. This position is for a one-year term and voted on each year.

Treasurer: Having not found an individual willing to serve as our church Treasurer since our last one left, it was again approved that the Budget and Finance committee would continue to serve as Treasurer for a one-year term.

President of the Corporation: Terry Rickers had been contacted and consented to being the President of the Corporation. This was approved and is for a one-year term.

Commissioner to Presbytery: Mickey Van Baale was approved as being our Commissioner to the Stated Presbytery Meetings. This also is a one-term position.

The length of term for the officers can be for any length of time, but it has been the practice of our church to hold the elections on a yearly basis, even if the same person is re-elected year after year.

Our Church in Pictures

The remainder of this edition is going to be a collage of pictures taken by Gary Parsons and Dave Stolper, showing the life of our church. This page reflects our beloved children as they participate in Children's time. We have also started having a few of our older ones light the Christ candle and then extinguish the candle at the end of the service and carry the light of God out of the sanctuary, a great tradition that has been reinstated.





2021 Christmas Eve
Service



Please Note: Due to COVID all worship will be virtual until further notice. Yoga is on hiatus, but will return as soon as deemed safe to do so. Meetings and other events are subject to cancellation or being moved to Zoom.

February 2022 ***BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS***

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
		1 11a Gentle Yoga 4p Worship & Music	2 9:30a WBS 7p Choir	3 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	4 Jen Norvell	5
6 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship	7 Joan Rusk 4:30p Personnel	8 11a Gentle Yoga 3:30p Mission	9 9:30a WBS 6p B&F 7p Choir	10 Carl Repp 3p Chair Yoga	11	12 9a Presb Mtg
13 9:00a Deacons 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship	14 Susan Weeks 10a Mbrship	15 11a Gentle Yoga 6:30p Session	16 9:30a WBS 7p Choir	17 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	18	19
20 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship	21	22 11a Gentle Yoga	23 9:30a WBS 7p Choir	24 3p Chair Yoga	25 Harold Manley	26
27 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship	28					



February	6	13	20	27
*Worship Leader	Jane Repp	Deanna Manley	Taylor McGonegle	Gary Parsons
*Greeters	Carroll Broderson John Taylor	Mary Jane Tripp Suzie Funk	Chris and Peggy Lickiss	Rachel Skaggs Taylor McGonegle
*Ushers	Larry & Shari DeCook	John & Barb Taylor	Joan Tyler Jeanette Shannon	Kevin & Toni Peska
*Audio	Terry Rickers	Shirley Stevens	Erick Zehr	Marilyn McCallister
*Counters	Toni Peska Kathy Briggs	Jen Norvell Tara Zehr	Tom Weeks Bev Rossow	Terry Rickers Chris/Peggy Lickiss

*If worshipping in-person

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

Lectionary —

February, 2022

February 6 - 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isa. 6:1-8 (9-13); *Ps. 138*;
1 Cor. 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

February 13 - 6th Sunday after Epiphany

Jer. 17:5-10; *Ps. 1*; 1 Cor. 15:12-20;
Luke 6:17-26

February 20 - 7th Sunday after Epiphany

Gen. 45:3-11, 15; *Ps. 37:1-11, 39-40*;
1 Cor. 15:35-38, 42-50; Luke 6:27-38

February 27 - Transfiguration of the Lord

Ex. 34:29-35; *Ps. 99*;
2 Cor. 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)

March, 2022

March 6 - 1st Sunday in Lent

Deut. 26:1-11; *Ps. 91:1-2, 9-16*;
Rom. 10:8b-13; Luke 4:1-13

March 13 - 2nd Sunday in Lent

Gen. 15:1-12, 17-18; *Ps. 27*;
Phil 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35

March 20 - 3rd Sunday in Lent

Isa. 55:1-9; *Ps. 63:1-8*; 1 Cor. 10:1-13;
Luke 13:1-9

March 27 - 4th Sunday in Lent

Josh. 5:9-12; *Ps. 32*; 2 Cor. 5:16-21
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32