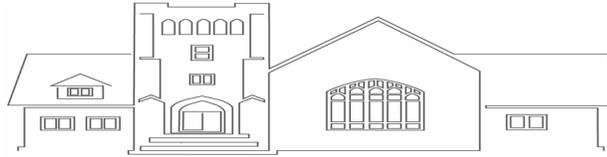


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEWTON, IOWA
641-792-2790

“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



January
2021

Meghan's Musings

Welcome 2021!!

While I hope that most of us have at least *some* good memories from 2020 (I know that having gotten married, I certainly do!) what a relief to have 2020 in our rear-view mirror! Of course, things didn't magically get better at the stroke of midnight on January 1, 2021, but with vaccines beginning to be administered and other promising developments in the works or on the horizon, we have plenty of reason to believe that the worst is behind us and better days are ahead (knock on wood).

As we begin this New Year, I will be distributing Epiphany stars. On the back of each star is written a word of a spiritual gift or quality. Of course, this year being what it is, I'll have to mail the stars out to you. Please know that I will NOT be "choosing" your star for you. I will pick your star randomly out of a basket so please don't think that I am trying to send you any specific message in the star you get. Families receiving more than one star, I invite whoever opens the envelope to blindly select one of the stars out of the envelope (or perhaps find another way to let fate decide who gets which star). Please do not pick and choose which you get. (that's cheating!)

As always, I invite you to let your star be your guide for the year, even as that bright star led the Wise Ones, let your word guide you and help you to discover, or perhaps rediscover a spiritual gift to offer to God throughout the year. When you get your star, take some time to contemplate your word and what opportunities for growth it might be calling you to in 2021.

Additionally, as I mentioned before, this year I am inviting you to join me in a "Read the Bible in a Year" challenge. We'll be including the monthly schedule in each Messenger as well as the schedule for the following month. In addition to reading the Bible together (while apart) I will also be preaching from the week's readings in Sunday worship and will be starting a weekly Zoom meeting to discuss what we are reading.

Please join me in welcoming 2021 with Epiphany star words and in diving into the Bible.

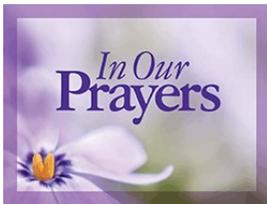


We offer our sympathy to the following members of our church family who have lost a family member during the month.

Curt Brass in the loss of his mother and an uncle.

Rev. Meghan Davis-Brass in the loss of her paternal grandmother.

Linda Gehling in the loss of her uncle, Herman Deaton.



Matt Illingworth as he is experiencing as yet undiagnosed health problems. He will be seeing a specialist later this month.

Ken Peterson and family (Kathy Peterson's nephew - Kathy is Marilyn McCallister's friend) as he lost his wife Rose in a lake tragedy just after Christmas. Rose was a mother and grandmother.

Ruby Davis and her daughter Jolane. Jolane is in Mercy One Hospital in Des Moines with pneumonia.

The people of Nashville, TN who are dealing with the Christmas suicide bombing.

Patients and their families who are suffering from COVID.

Doctors, nurses, LPNs and aides who treat those with COVID, requiring long shifts.

Those with other medical conditions or needing surgery, but are declined as our hospitals continue to be full.

Essential workers getting the first doses of the COVID vaccine and the rest of us as we wait our turn to receive it.

For nations suffering from wars and other unrest, such as South Sudan. May they find peace.

To all of us for a return to normalcy, however that may look, as we begin this New Year of 2021!



Worshipping Together, Apart

In addition to having the Crismons on the tree in the Sanctuary, Rev. Meghan Davis-Brass invited members to either provide an ornament from their home, or have their picture taken by the tree so she could make an ornament to hang on the tree.



The Zehr, Skaggs and McGonegle families.



Curt, Meghan and ZuZu



Don and Sharon



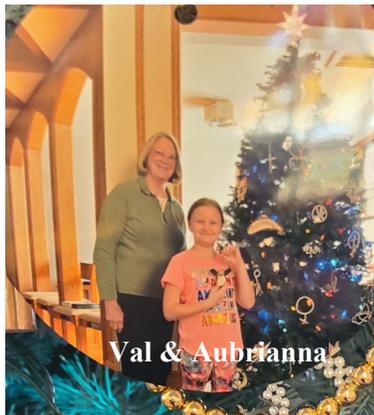
Mickey



Marilyn



Matt & Zuzu



Val & Aubrianna



Karen



Dave and Linda



Mimi, Benila, Godspell & Regina



Gary, Kay and Zuzu



Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

On Sunday, December 20 through the magic of technology, Rev. Meghan Davis-Brass was able to meet with the children of our church separately and put them together for our traditional Christmas pageant. If you did not see it, you can view it on our Facebook page or on our web page. Here is a collage of the actors. Those participating were:

- * Matt Illingworth with ZuZu
- * Benila, Godspell and Regina Issifou
- * Morgan and Jett Jackson
- * Aubrianna McDowell McKee,
- * Claire Skaggs and Mom Rachel
- * Rylie McGonegle and Mom Taylor
- * Emmett, Garrett, and Bennett Zehr
- * Meghan served as photographer, editor, and narrator.



Thank you to all in bringing us a special part of the Christmas season.

On Christmas Eve at 7 pm, 37 hearty souls met on the front lawn of the church to light candles, sing "Silent Night" and "Joy to the World" and celebrate the birth of Jesus. Larry and Linda had once again obtained the candle light that started in Bethlehem, The wind did not cooperate, however, so many showed their light with the use of flashlights or their cell phones. A very moving service. Thanks to Dave Stolper we have these pictures of some of the participants.



Reading the Bible in the Year 2021

Below is the schedule for the month of January and February. Each month we'll feature that month's readings and the readings for the following month. If you would like a copy of the schedule for the entire year, please contact Meghan or the church office.

<u>January</u>	<u>February</u>
Friday, January 1 Genesis 1-4	Monday, February 1, 2021 Leviticus 14-15
Saturday, January 2 Genesis 5-8	Tuesday, February 2 Leviticus 16-18
Sunday, January 3 Genesis 9-12	Wednesday, February 3 Leviticus 19-21
Monday, January 4 Genesis 13-17	Thursday, February 4 Leviticus 22-23
Tuesday, January 5 Genesis 18-20	Friday, February 5 Leviticus 24-25
Wednesday, January 6 Genesis 21-23	Saturday, February 6 Leviticus 26-27
Thursday, January 7 Genesis 24-25	Sunday, February 7 Numbers 1-2
Friday, January 8 Genesis 26-28	Monday, February 8 Numbers 3-4
Saturday, January 9 Genesis 29-31	Tuesday, February 9 Numbers 5-6
Sunday, January 10 Genesis 32-35	Wednesday, February 10 Numbers 7
Monday, January 11 Genesis 36-38	Thursday, February 11 Numbers 8-10
Tuesday, January 12 Genesis 39-41	Friday, February 12 Numbers 11-13
Wednesday, January 13 Genesis 42-43	Saturday, February 13 Numbers 14-15
Thursday, January 14 Genesis 44-46	Sunday, February 14 Numbers 16-18
Friday, January 15 Genesis 47-50	Monday, February 15 Numbers 19-21
Saturday, January 16 Exodus 1-4	Tuesday, February 16 Numbers 22-24
Sunday, January 17 Exodus 5-7	Wednesday, February 17 Numbers 25-26
Monday, January 18 Exodus 8-10	Thursday, February 18 Numbers 27-29
Tuesday, January 19 Exodus 11-13	Friday, February 19 Numbers 30-32
Wednesday, January 20 Exodus 14-16	Saturday, February 20 Numbers 33-36
Thursday, January 21 Exodus 17-20	Sunday, February 21 Deuteronomy 1-2
Friday, January 22 Exodus 21-23	Monday, February 22 Deuteronomy 3-4
Saturday, January 23 Exodus 24-27	Tuesday, February 23 Deuteronomy 5-8
Sunday, January 24 Exodus 28-30	Wednesday, February 24 Deuteronomy 9-11
Monday, January 25, Exodus 31-34	Thursday, February 25 Deuteronomy 12-15
Tuesday, January 26 Exodus 35-37	Friday, February 26 Deuteronomy 16-19
Wednesday, January 27 Exodus 38-40	Saturday, February 27 Deuteronomy 20-22
Thursday, January 28 Leviticus 1-4	Sunday, February 28 Deuteronomy 23-25
Friday, January 29 Leviticus 5-7	
Saturday, January 30 Leviticus 8-10	
Sunday, January 31 Leviticus 11-13	

A Christmas Poem

Gary and Kay Parsons received this poem in a Christmas card. It was written by Faith Ericsson of Lytton, Iowa.

A 2020 calendar with the last page now turned,
Unlike all others and what have we learned?
God's grace is constant when turmoil is all around,
His love and His blessings keep our feet on solid ground.

We learned that life is fragile, and in the blink of an eye,
Friends taken from us, no chance to say goodbye.
Time is very precious, spend it with love in your heart,
Try to ease someone else's burden, time to all do our part.

So Spring arrived as usual before we really knew,
This fast and spreading virus wasn't just the normal flu.
We donned our masks and kept a 6 foot space,
Resumed life as best we could, precautions in place.

We're thankful for each other and for bodies that are able,
So now we turn our praises to the Child in the stable.
For truly He's our Saviour and truly He's the reason,
We celebrate with hope this blessed Christmas season.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Reminders

- The church office is now open from 1 pm to 5 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.
- Even though the building is closed for in-person worship, meetings and other activities, the sanctuary is still in use multiple times throughout the week. Please make sure to check with Meghan and/or Mickey if you need to be in the sanctuary for any reason for musical practice, maintenance or otherwise, so we can make sure it's available for you at the time you want.
- Most weeks, the sanctuary is unavailable: Wednesday 10:45 am-12:15 pm (when Meghan teaches Gentle Yoga via Zoom)
- Thursday 2:45 pm-5:30 pm (Chair Yoga followed by recording worship)
- Additionally, special music is usually recorded on Thursday mornings.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in this matter.

Church Life

Gary Parsons, Chair

Church Life is a “hands on”, “meet and greet”, “face to face” type of committee so its activities have been severely impacted by the coronavirus situation this year. Hopefully sometime in this new year we can return to some semblance of our usual activities.

In the meantime we are going to try to incorporate the following ideas into activities for this year:

The Membership Committee is hosting a Zoom Happy Hour on Wednesdays from 6-8. People are encouraged to join at a convenient time for them with a drink of their choice and stay for the amount of time they desire. Church Life has suggested and Membership agrees that it might be fun to have the last Happy Hour of the month to be a dinner meeting if people so wish. Present rules for that meeting still apply: you may join without a drink, or join with a drink of your choice, but for that meeting we encourage you to enjoy a meal during the meeting. It is certainly not required but if you do want to eat at that time it can go from the ridiculous to the sublime. Brown bag, fast food, candle light gourmet-all are acceptable. January 27 will be the date of our first dinner meeting. Please join us.

We hope that we can meet for a short walk once a month (weather permitting). Would probably be fairly impromptu. Email sent out to as many as possible. Meet and walk 15 min. (or more-if desired) with group socially distanced, masked, then go home. Could enjoy sack lunch depending on weather and situation. Examples of destinations: Agnes Patterson/arboretum, museum trail to Maytag Park, Ashton, Neal Smith, Red Rock, Arbor Lake Trail (Grinnell), Baxter/Bondurant Bike Trail (different sections), Mariposa hiking trail, Rock Creek.

Concerted effort to get more people to join Zoom Fellowship on Sunday AM @ 11:30 (approx.) and Zoom Happy Hour on Wed.

Work on getting more contact between members and attendees each month by phone, email, text, social distancing situations.

Chancel Choir

Have you missed hearing the Chancel Choir? Did you enjoy seeing and hearing them at the Christmas Eve service and the next Sunday? Well, you are in for a treat. Thanks to Larry Anderson’s hard work and creative thinking, the choir will be doing an anthem for the special music once a month until such time as we are able to meet in person once again.

Statistics have shown that singing can spread germs more than talking, so the Andersons did some research and found special masks to be worn when singing. You may have noticed these.

Another way to help us worship together, apart. Thanks be to God!

Worship and Music

Jeanette Shannon, Chair

As we come to the close of the year, there are many things for which to be thankful. When we were forced to close the church to in-person worship, the Session and our committee began thinking of ways to keep as many people as possible involved. The guiding light through all of this has been Rev. Meghan who experimented until she found Zoom and YouTube ways to bring us together.

The palm fronds were placed on the steps and sidewalk for anyone to take one home for part of worship Palm Sunday. The lily cross was in place so it was visible during worship for Easter. Many members shared their talents with music each Sunday. Maundy Thursday, Advent and Christmas, complete with pageant, were celebrated. Christmas Eve a hardy group met on the front lawn with lights to sing Silent Night and other carols.

None of this would have been possible without the loving, caring genius of Marlys Grimm who filmed, edited and spliced the tapings whether remote by Zoom or from the church to make each day of Worship meaningful. This is a great church family that has come together in adversity to share the word of God.

I look forward to seeing you all again in person for hugs and signs of peace when the Session thinks it is safe and after I have received my vaccination.

Mission Committee

Larry Anderson, Chair

We met Dec. 8. Our primary activity currently is to remind and encourage the congregation concerning the special offerings occurring through the fall and during Advent and Christmas. One Great Hour (\$665.00), CROP Walk (\$420.00), Harvest offering (\$375.00) and Christmas Joy offering (\$145.00) have been sent in.

Thank you for also buying gifts for Progress Industries clients and the Salvation Army Angel Tree!

We heard on the news recently that the 100 largest charitable organizations in the nation (excluding churches, I believe) have seen a 22% increase in donations this year over last. Obviously not everyone is in a position to give under current circumstances, but those who can are doing so. It is one thing we can do when it's not a good idea to show up in person! And the needs are great.

Membership Committee

Marilyn McCallister, Chair

Zoom Happy Hour Open House Continues!

To stay connected (or get connected), you are invited to a social gathering on Zoom. Every January Wednesday from 6pm to 8pm, feel free to drop in and out as works best for you and your schedule. Bring a snack and/or beverage of choice and just enjoy the company of one another. Please be advised about a slight tweak in the plan: though you are free to drop in at any time between 6 and 8 pm, if things wind down and everyone logs off before 8, the event will be over. In other words, if you want to be sure to catch people, it's best to join before 7pm, otherwise, there might not be anyone left to join.

SPECIAL: Church Life is sponsoring the last Wednesday Happy Hour Open House to be a “dinner meeting”. See additional information in the Church Life article on page 7. So join the social with your dinner, if you like, or just your beverage.

Meghan Davis-Brass is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.
 Topic: Happy Hour Open House
 Time: Wednesdays 6-8 pm
 Join Zoom meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86377811346>

January 2021 Calendar items:
 Next Membership committee meeting will be Monday, January 11, 2021
 Zoom Happy Hour Open House on Wednesdays: January 6, January 13, January 20, January 27

Blessing Box

Have you noticed the new Blessing Box across the street from the church? This was built as a community service project by the Sherman Sunbeams 4-H group. The leaders of this 4-H group are members of UP church. As the pictures below show, this has been placed near the northeast corner of the United Presbyterian church parking lot, across the street from the Salvation Army building.

The purpose of a Blessing Box is two-fold. People can leave non-perishable food, or this time of year, stocking caps, gloves/mittens or scarves in the box. People from our community in need of these items are welcome to take what they need at no cost.

This article is for your information only. This is the newest Blessing Box in Newton and all have had continual use. Feel free to give or receive.



Proposed schedule to resume when deemed safe to do so.

January 2021 **BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
<p style="color: red;">All meetings, fellowship and yoga are via Zoom. Worship services are posted online and/or available via Zoom at the times indicated.</p>					1 	2
<p>3 Curt Brass 10:30a Zoom Worship 11:30a Zoom Fellowship</p>	<p>4 Rylie McGonegle</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour</p>	<p>7 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga</p>	<p>8 Patty Skokan Samantha Jackson</p>	<p>9 Marlys Grimm</p>
<p>10 Emily Miller Linda Erickson Jane Repp 9a Deacons 10:30a Zoom Worship 11:30a Zoom Fellowship</p>	<p>11 Tom Weeks 10:00a—Membership</p>	<p>12 3:30p Mission</p>	<p>13 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour</p>	<p>14 Benila Issifou 3p Chair Yoga</p>	<p>15 Megan Ritter</p>	<p>16</p>
<p>17 10:30a Zoom Worship 11:30a Zoom Fellowship</p>	<p>18 Bonnie Rasmussen</p>	<p>19 7p Session</p>	<p>20 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour</p>	<p>21 Gary Kirchhoff 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>24 10:30a Zoom Worship 11:30a Zoom Fellowship</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour</p>	<p>28 Shari DeCook 3p Chair Yoga</p>	<p>29 Allie Norvell</p>	<p>30</p>
<p>31 Scott DeGraff 10:30a Zoom Worship 11:30a Zoom Annual Mtg.</p>						

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

641-792-2790

Return Service Requested

Lectionary —

January, 2021

January 3 - 2nd Sunday of Christmas

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

January 10 - Baptism of the Lord

Gen. 1:1-5 *and* Ps. 29; Acts 19:1-7;
Mark 1:4-11

January 17 - 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

1 Sam. 3:1-10 (11-20) *and* Ps. 139: 1-6,
13-18; 1 Cor. 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

January 24 - 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Jonah 3:1-5, 10 *and* Ps. 62:5-12;
1 Cor. 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

January 31 - 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Deut. 18:15-20, 10 *and* Ps. 111;

February, 2021

February 7– 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Isa. 40:21-31 *and* Ps. 147:1-11, 20c
1 Cor. 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39

February 14 - Transfiguration of the Lord

2 Kings 2:12 *and* Ps. 50:1-6;
2 Cor. 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9

February 21 - 1st Sunday in Lent

Gen. 9:8-17 *and* Ps. 25:1-10;
1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 19:9-15

February 28 - 2nd Sunday in Lent

Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16 *and* Ps. 22:23-31;
Rom.. 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38