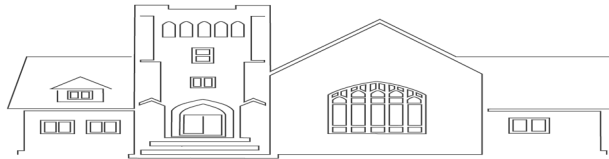


**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEWTON, IOWA
641-792-2790**

"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
2022**

Meghan's Musings

A Blessing for the New Year

I don't know about you but my feelings are pretty conflicted as we enter the year 2022. I remember being so hopeful for 2021, confident that it would be so much better than 2020. Confident that we were leaving the difficulties of 2020 behind. But then 2020 somehow bled into 2021 and while some things got better: yes, the vaccines became available to more and more people, but overall, it certainly wasn't the stark contrast to 2020 that we had all be hoping for.

And yet, as Christians, we are a people of Hope. Hope is sewn right into the fabric of what it means to be a Christian. And therefore I invite you to join with me in digging in as deeply as necessary, to find Hope for the coming year. And in the spirit of Hope, I offer this blessing for the New Year from the poet John O'Donohue from his book *To Bless the Space Between Us*:

*On the day when
The weight deadens
On your shoulders
And you stumble,
May the clay dance
To balance you.*

*And when your eyes
Freeze behind
The gray window
And the ghost of loss
Gets into you,
May a flock of colors,
Indigo, red, green
And azure blue,
Come to awaken in you
A meadow of delight.*

*When the canvas frays
In the currach of thought
And a stain of ocean
Blackens beneath you,
May there come across the waters
A path of yellow moonlight
To bring you safely home.*

*May the nourishments of the earth be yours,
May the clarity of light be yours,
May the fluency of the ocean be yours,
May the protection of the ancestors be yours*

*And so may a slow
Wind work these words
Of love around you,
An invisible cloak
To mind your life.*

And, as Father Topo, the great-great-grandfather elf cast a drimwick—that is a hope spell—on the title character in the movie *A Boy Called Christmas* I wish to cast the same drimwick on each of you as I hope: "that you would be strong and warm and always safe." Amen.

Be Praying For:

- ✚ Clarice Sigurdson, who is transitioning from being in her own home, where she experienced a fall, to going to Newton Village for rehabilitation to Newton Health Care Center, which will now be her home.
- ✚ Marilyn McCallister and her family as they grieve the loss of her brother, Jim, to COVID-19.
- ✚ Jeff White, a recipient of one of our ramps, as he copes with the death of his sister, Angie, and deals with his own health issues, which have made it necessary for him to give up his home and move to Accura East nursing home.
- ✚ Josh White, Val and Steve McKee's cousin we've been praying for: finally has a diagnosis, a rare form of pneumonia that is treatable. It will take 2-3 months but full recovery is expected.
- ✚ George Wilkening and family on the death of his nephew's wife who died from COVID.
- ✚ Many Iowans who are dealing with the devastation of another derecho and numerous tornados that hit in late December.
- ✚ Everyone around the world, as we head into a new year, hoping for the stop of COVID-19 and it's variants, praying for peace and longing for an end to wars, hunger and homelessness.

Building and Grounds

George Wilkening, Chair

Thank you to everyone for your patience as we waited for the scaffolding company to remove their materials after the painting of the ceiling of the sanctuary was completed. A big round of applause to the worker bees who came in and cleaned the sanctuary on Monday, December 6. They were Harold & Deanna Manley, Linda Curtis-Stolper, Dave Stolper, Jane Repp, Val McKee, Linda Erickson, Linda & Larry Anderson, Linda & Steve Gehling, Gary & Kay Parsons, and Sandy Simbro.

We contracted Integrity Cleaning and Restoration to clean the pew cushions and to clean the carpet in the sanctuary and balcony. The carpet had not been cleaned since it had been laid.

The circuit board went out on the furnace that heats the north part of the sanctuary. This has been replaced and things are back up and running.

It's hard to imagine that we have not had a measurable snowfall yet, but we are ready when it happens, as we all know it will. We have contracted Randy Ray to do our snow removal on the parking lot and clean the sidewalks.

Nominating Committee

Toni Peska, Chair

Following worship on December 5, a congregational meeting was held to reduce the number of officers on our board of Deacon and Session as required in our bylaws. The new slate of candidates were unanimously voted in. We still need two at-large committee members for the Nominating Committee.

This is a 3-year position, but due to the pandemic, one position will be for 2-years as the elected member in 2020 and the other will be for a full 3-years, as the elected member for 2021. Our committee is reconvening to find nominations. The two positions will be voted on at our Annual Meeting on January 30, 2022.

Should you feel God nudging you to fill one of these positions, please let me know. The committee only meets in the fall of the year to obtain candidates for the new Session and Deacon members.



Church Life

Gary Parsons, Chair

We planned to have a gathering for dinner at Pizza Ranch on December 9. The committee encouraged people to tour the Maytag Park Light Display as well as the residences listed on the Tour of Lights. The dinner was the main event and the tour could be done before dinner, after, or not at all. I asked those planning to come to let me know so I could let them know in case of a cancellation. I was not expecting a large turn out and that was what was developing that week. There were also some complicating developments that week that made me decide to cancel it that morning. Interestingly I had a call in the afternoon from a couple whose plans had changed and wanted to come and wondered if it was too late to attend. They had not seen the canceling email. Also, a person later told me she had gone to Pizza Ranch at 7 but there was no one there. She had not told me she was going to attend. If I had known about these latter developments, I probably would not have canceled.

There are no specific Church Life activities planned at this time. We are waiting to see what the post holiday Omicron infection rate will be. Church Life does not normally have a special meeting in January but plans on helping at the annual meeting. They do have their one and only official committee meeting in January to plan the monthly activities for the year. I am planning to do that.

Men's Group decided not to fix coffee at the church and continue to have people bring drink and/or treats for themselves if desired. Most don't. We have started gathering in the easy chairs at the west end of FH. Much more comfortable! We met at Park Centre with Gary Haynes and Dick Mielke on Dec. 30 as the first 5th Thursday meeting there.

Membership Committee

Marilyn McCallister, Chair

WOW! 2021 – What a Year!

We continue to work on obtaining photos and updated contact information for our Pictorial Directory.

We continue to “Spotlight” church family members in the Messenger. The more recent spotlights are highlighted on the Membership bulletin board located in the stairwell outside fellowship hall. There is also a notebook on the table in front of the bulletin board of all the Spotlights. Please consider volunteering to be a spotlight!

Starting with the “soft opening” for Sunday Worship in March, our greeters have been on the job providing a cheery welcome. Thank you to all our greeters: Carroll Brodersen, Randy & Carol Camp, Suzie Funk, Chris & Peggy Lickiss, Elsie Nelson, Jen Norvell, Taylor McGonegle, Gary & Kay Parsons, Kevin & Toni Peska, Terry Rickers, Bev Rossow, Rachel Skaggs, Mary Jane Tripp, and John Taylor.

Membership Committee worked hard at maintaining “congregational connectedness” by:

- ♦ The pool party with ice cream at the Maytag Park Pool in August. What a great time of connecting – outside – and fun!
- ♦ The first 4th of July “Watch the parade from our front lawn” event was well attended, and our parade entry was great! Thanks to all who helped make it a welcoming event.
- ♦ Reaching out with a small gift card to let schoolteachers know we appreciate their dedication and hard work helping students learn in this pandemic.
- ♦ Setting up a “zoom” fellowship every Wednesday night from 6-8 p.m. January through June.

Thank you to everyone who helped and/or participated in the Membership events and activities in 2021.

Thank you to the Membership Committee members for persisting with “congregational connectedness” during this past year: Warren Erickson, Mary Roskilly, John Taylor, and Joan Tyler.

Worship and Music

Linda Kirchhoff, Committee Member

The Worship and Music Committee has not met for a regular meeting for some time, but we have been organizing Advent and Christmas activities. The Advent booklet was prepared and delivered. The church was decorated, ushers were found for Blue Christmas and Christmas Eve, candles were readied for Silent Night, and the pew candles were set up and taken down. We wish to thank all the members who volunteered their time to help us to have as normal an Advent and Christmas as possible. One thing that was disappointing was attendance at Blue Christmas. It is such a meaningful service. It is my hope that you will support this service next year.

Committee Members: Linda Gehling, Linda Kirchhoff and Sandy Simbro

Excess Office Supplies

Mickey Van Baale, Administrative Asst.

In going through some of the drawers of the desks in the extra office, I have found that we have an excess amount of office supplies. This concerns me because I don't want to be out of an item or need it and order it only to find out we have several on hand.

I'm asking for anyone who might have some extra time available to consider coming to the church and helping collect all the extra supplies and sort them. In addition to the extra office, there is likely more supplies in the former classrooms on the 2nd and 3rd floors.

People can come individually, or gather some friends and make it a group project. There is not a definite deadline to having this done, but if it could be finished the first part of January, that would be great.

My thought is to have all the supplies gathered first and put in either the extra office or perhaps the parlor. Then boxes gathered and marked for the "type" of item and finally the items are sorted into the appropriate box. By doing it this way, if you start on working on this and then have to leave, the next person or persons will readily be able to determine where the project is at.

Thanks so much!



Updates from Session

Mickey Van Baale, Clerk of Session

Due to the number of Covid Omicron variant cases remaining high, Session members agreed that we should remain with our current protocol of only singing one verse of hymns with masks worn and to maintain social distancing. This will be addressed at each meeting to see if we are able to make further changes.

The Annual Meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, January 30. We will not have a potluck meal proceeding the meeting. This will be the time when the reports of the various committees are received, the budget for 2022 is presented and the compensation for Rev. Meghan Davis-Brass is voted on. The budget is approved by Session, not congregational vote.

The Elders and Deacons will attend the annual Officer Retreat, led by Meghan on Saturday, January 15 in Fellowship Hall. Please hold them in your prayers as they worship and do some planning together.



Christian Nurture

Mickey Van Baale, Chair



December 19 our traditional Christmas pageant was held during worship. Rev. Meghan Davis-Brass came up with a slightly different version, with only the children wearing costumes and being in the chancel area. The rest of the congregation participated from their seats.

These are most of the children who have been attending Sunday school, plus one who isn't quite old enough yet.

(l to r) Rev. Meghan Davis-Brass, Aubrianna McDowell-McKee, Lennon Langstraat, Finn Langstraat, Emmett Zehr, Garrett Zehr, and Claire Skaggs. (Back Row) Benila, Regina and Godspell Issifou. Rylie McGonegle is also a regular at Sunday school, but was unable to be at church on the 19th.



Sunday school is still going strong and new curriculum has been ordered for 2022. Teachers Linda Curtis-Stolper, Taylor McGonegle, Jane Repp and Deb Ziemann thank the parents and grandparents who bring the children each Sunday. And we appreciate the positive comments we are hearing about the Sunday school program

being up and running. We've heard comments about the students telling family members about what they have learned and are excited to show the crafts they are making.

Praise be to God that with perseverance, we are again blessed to have young worshipers among us and back in the classroom learning about the love and life of God.



Mission Highlights

Larry Anderson, Chair

Newton IA Team Days for Girls International (DfG)

Our first DfG workshop for **2022** will be **Thursday, January 27, from 9 am to 2 pm** in the First Presbyterian Church fellowship hall.

DfG workshops are scheduled once a month on the 4th Thursday of the month, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. in fellowship hall. Everyone is welcome. Our church COVID precautions are being followed:

Attend only if you are comfortable doing so. Do not feel obligated to come.

Please hold off attending if you feel ill in any way.

Social distancing is required; masks are optional for those who have been fully vaccinated; masks are required for those not vaccinated; hand sanitizer and masks will be available.

Lunch will be handled by a BYOL (bring your own lunch, snack and/or beverage).

Our last DfG workshop in 2021 was December 9 with 10 volunteers connecting with each other and working on the feminine hygiene kit elements – shields, liners, drawstring bags and carry pouches.

Looking forward to another great year of helping to provide needed menstrual products for girls and women around the world.

Happy New Year!

Julie Fisher & Marilyn McCallister, DfG International Newton IA Team

Thank you to those members who bought gifts for the Salvation Army angels, purchased restaurant gift cards for Progress Industries clients, rang the Red Kettle bells for the Salvation Army and gave to the Christmas Joy fund. We appreciate your generosity and helping those in need within our community.





2022 ***BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS***

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
						1 <i>Lawrence Kenyi</i>
2 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship	3 <i>Curt Brass</i> 4:30p Personnel	4 <i>Riley McGonegle</i> 11a Gentle Yoga 4p Worship & Music	5 9:30a WBS 7p Choir	6 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	7	8 <i>Patty Skokan</i> <i>Samantha Jackson</i>
9 <i>Marlys Grimm</i> 9:00a Adult SS 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship	10 <i>Linda Erickson</i> <i>Jane Repp</i>	11 <i>Tom Weeks</i> 11a Gentle Yoga 3:30p Mission	12 9:30a WBS 6p B&F 7p Choir	13 3p Chair Yoga	14 <i>Benila Issifou</i>	15 9a-2p - Officers Retreat
16 9:00a Adult SS 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship	17 10a Mbrship	18 <i>Bonnie Rasmussen</i> 11a Gentle Yoga 6:30p Session	19 9:30a WBS 7p Choir	20 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	21 <i>Gary Kirchhoff</i>	22
23 9a Adult SS 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 11:30a Fellowship	24	25 11a Gentle Yoga	26 9:30a WBS 7p Choir	27 9a-2p-- DfG 3p Chair Yoga	28 <i>Shari DeCook</i>	29 <i>Allie Norvell</i>
30 9a Adult SS 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a Worship 11:30a Annual Mtg	31 <i>Scott DeGraff</i>					



January	2	9	16	23	30
Worship Leader	Kevin Peska	Diane Moles	George Wilkening	Karen Quinn	Dave Stolper
Greeters	Gary & Kay Parsons	Kevin & Toni Peska	Terry Rickers Bev Rossow	Randy & Carol Camp	Elsie Nelson Jen Norvell
Ushers	Don & Sharon Black	Harold & Deanna Manley	John & Barb Taylor	Terry & Cathy Rickers	Dana Hashman Mickey Van Baale
Audio	George Wilkening	Shirley Stevens	Erick Zehr	Mickey Van Baale	George Wilkening
Counters	Terry Rickers Chris/Peggy Lickiss	Toni Peska Kathy Briggs	Jen Norvell Tara Zehr	Tom Weeks Bev Rossow	Terry Rickers Chris/Peggy Lickiss

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

Lectionary —

January, 2022

January 2 - 2nd Sunday of Christmas

Jer. 33:7-14; *Ps. 147:12-20*;
Eph. 1:3-14; John 1:(1-9) 10-18

January 9 - Baptism of the Lord

Isa. 43:1-7; *Ps. 29*; Acts 8:14-17;
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 16 - 2nd Sunday after Epiphany

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

January 23 - 3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Neh. 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; *Ps. 19*;
1 Cor. 12:23-31a; Luke 4:14-21

January 30 - 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Jer. 1:4-10; *Ps. 71:1-6*;

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)