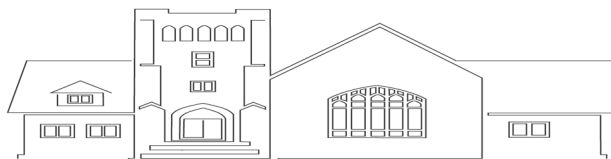


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
NEWTON, IOWA  
641-792-2790

*“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



March  
2021

### Meghan's Musings

Rose, Bud, Thorn

As we approach the one year anniversary of our experience of the COVID-19 pandemic—something none of us ever would have guessed would happen in the first place, much less last this long once it did—I looked back to my first “Musings” of this era, back when we thought we’d be apart for just a few weeks or months at the most. At that time I shared my sermon from March 22, 2020, based on Psalm 23.

*...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.**

Of course, a year on and we still find ourselves in a dark valley, though perhaps not the darkest. On one hand, there are vaccines which many of us have been able to get and we hope soon anyone who wants to be vaccinated will be. But on the other hand, there are new variants of the virus some of which are more transmissible. Slowly we’re beginning to inch back toward some semblance of “normal”, but on the other hand we may still be wearing masks into 2022.

On one hand, we are dipping our toes in the water of “re-opening” with twice monthly in-person worship, on the other hand, we will be wearing masks, keep our distance from those we don’t live with, be unable to sing hymns, hug or shake hands.

When Session decided to try this re-opening, we landed on the date March 14; without even realizing that it will be the one year anniversary of our first Sunday we weren’t together. Nor did we realize it would be the Sunday of the time change which I hope doesn’t complicate matters. And here we are.

As we approach this lamentable anniversary, I invite you to join me in reflecting on the past year. I’ve recently learned a reflection tool called: Rose, Bud, Thorn. The idea is to name one “rose”, that is something positive; one “bud,” which is an opportunity; and one “thorn,” something difficult, challenging, perhaps even painful. Of course, you’re welcome to name as many in each category as you like. I’ll give you an example for myself.

Rose: Our YouTube numbers suggest that we’ve actually had more people “attending” worship than we typically have in our sanctuary. Also, our giving has remained strong thanks to the generosity of you: our church family.

Bud: I’ve been pushed into some new and creative ways to do worship. Also, the pandemic encouraged me to start “Read the Bible in a Year” which I’ve been intending to do for years and just hadn’t gotten around to it.

Thorn: The obvious: not being able to see you all, hug you, visit you, even just have normal in-person meetings.

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*Continued from page 1*

I invite you to set some time aside, to consider the Roses, Buds, and Thorns of the last year, in your church life as well as the rest of your life. Perhaps you'll write your thoughts down. And I invite anyone who is willing to do so, to share your thoughts with me. I look forward to hearing about your gleanings from the last twelve months.

In the meantime: be well, stay home, if you must go out, wear a mask, love one another and wash your hands.

Peace,  
Meghan



Rose



Bud



Thorn



Dave Moles, and the entire Moles family. Dave is in hospice care at home so his family can visit with him. This is a result of dizziness that Dave has been experiencing which resulted in a fall that broke his nose. While in the hospital, it was determined his reoccurring brain cancer is what is causing the dizzy spells. He has seen his kids and siblings and continues to get weaker, sleeping more and eating very little.

Lauren Ferguson, daughter of Randy and Barb and granddaughter of Wilma Manning. Lauren had a total hip replacement on February 19 on the right side. Lauren has A-Vascular Necrosis ( the bone has died from lack of vessels to provide blood flow). It was present in the ball of both hips but the right hip has progressed to the point of making the hip vulnerable to break.

Bob Vander Veer, who lost his brother on February 19 at Knoxville. Bob now has COVID and is being quarantined at home. His doctor said he could return to work after ten days if he was feeling better, but he is still weak and can do very little.

Randy and Carol Camp and family in the loss of Randy's mother, Janice. She died on January 27, 2021 in Waukee, Iowa.

Those who have received at least one of their vaccines, that the symptoms are minimal.

Those that haven't received a shot yet, that they stay safe and do not develop the virus before getting vaccinated.

Everyone around the world that they could experience peace, clean drinking water, plenty of food and medical treatments, so many of the things we take for granted.

## Reading the Bible in the Year 2021

Below is the schedule for the months of March and April. 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. **We will have a weekly Bible study/discussion at 6pm on Monday (via Zoom for the time being) to discuss what we're reading.**

<u>March</u>		<u>April</u>	
Monday, March 1	Deuteronomy 26-27	Thursday, April 1	2 Samuel 1-3
Tuesday, March 2	Deuteronomy 28-29	Friday, April 2	2 Samuel 4-7
Wednesday, March 3	Deuteronomy 30-32	Saturday, April 3	2 Samuel 8-11
Thursday, March 4	Deuteronomy 33-34	Sunday, April 4	2 Samuel 12-13
Friday, March 5	Joshua 1-4	Monday, April 5	2 Samuel 14-16
Saturday, March 6	Joshua 5-7	Tuesday, April 6	2 Samuel 17-19
Sunday, March 7	Joshua 8-10	Wednesday, April 7	2 Samuel 20-22
Monday, March 8	Joshua 11-13	Thursday, April 8	2 Samuel 23-24
Tuesday, March 9	Joshua 14-17	Friday, April 9	1 Kings 1-2
Wednesday, March 10	Joshua 18-20	Saturday, April 10	1 Kings 3-5
Thursday, March 11	Joshua 21-22	Sunday, April 11	1 Kings 6-7
Friday, March 12	Joshua 23-24	Monday, April 12	1 Kings 8-9
Saturday, March 13	Judges 1-3	Tuesday, April 13	1 Kings 10-12
Sunday, March 14	Judges 4-5	Wednesday, April 14	1 Kings 13-15
Monday, March 15	Judges 6-8	Thursday, April 15	1 Kings 16-18
Tuesday, March 16	Judges 9-10	Friday, April 16	1 Kings 19-20
Wednesday, March 17	Judges 11-13	Saturday, April 17	1 Kings 21-22
Thursday, March 18	Judges 14-16	Sunday, April 18	2 Kings 1-3
Friday, March 19	Judges 17-19	Monday, April 19	2 Kings 4-5
Saturday, March 20	Judges 20-21	Tuesday, April 20	2 Kings 6-8
Sunday, March 21	Ruth 1-4	Wednesday, April 21	2 Kings 9-10
Monday, March 22	1 Samuel 1-3	Thursday, April 22	2 Kings 11-13
Tuesday, March 23	1 Samuel 4-7	Friday, April 23	2 Kings 14-16
Wednesday, March 24	1 Samuel 8-12	Saturday, April 24	2 Kings 17-18
Thursday, March 25	1 Samuel 13-14	Sunday, April 25	2 Kings 19-21
Friday, March 26	1 Samuel 15-16	Monday, April 26	2 Kings 22-23
Saturday, March 27	1 Samuel 17-18	Tuesday, April 27	2 Kings 24-25
Sunday, March 28	1 Samuel 19-21	Wednesday, April 28	1 Chronicles 1-2
Monday, March 29	1 Samuel 22-24	Thursday, April 29	1 Chronicles 3-4
Tuesday, March 30	1 Samuel 25-27	Friday, April 30	1 Chronicles 5-6
Wednesday, March 31	1 Samuel 28-31		

## Mission Committee

Larry Anderson, Chair

Last year, I joined a group called Churches for Middle East Peace, and they sent out some devotions for Lent. Below is an excerpt from the devotion for the 1st Sunday, and I thought it was a wonderful statement:

"True hope recognizes all of the reasons for doubt, yet persists. In fact, if there were no reason to doubt God's redemptive plan, believing in it would not be hope-- it would be knowledge. Nor is hope merely the belief that things will somehow improve; that is optimism. True hope, which is neither knowledge of the future or mere optimism, involves our action to bring about the state of affairs for which we hope. Because our hope is ultimately in God to bring about the redemption of the world, having hope means partnering with God's work. True hope means staying on the journey of faith, seeking peace and justice, even when all signs suggest that peace and justice may never come."

While our committee hasn't met, we are glad to see that Neighbors helping Neighbors is offering an alternative to laundry night with the help of the Salvation Army. You would have recently received an email explaining the changes, what they are working on, and how you can be of help.

## Church Life

Gary Parsons, Chair

Our committee hasn't "officially" met, but we did have a discussion about the Happy Hour Dinner meetings being done the last Wednesday night of the month in cooperation with the Membership Committee. The first one was held on January 27 and 20 people attended. Some people ate their evening meal during the meeting while others preferred not to. The second one was on February 24.

When the weather gets nicer, we hope to have an impromptu walk. Several locations or trails have been designated for doing these walks.

Gary also indicated that he and Larry Anderson are helping the Deacons make calls to church members.

## Membership Committee

Marilyn McCallister, Chair

We are starting a new feature called Member Spotlight. This is our first one.

### Meet Warren Erickson

Warren grew up in Waterloo, Iowa. His folks wanted him to become a performer . . . so piano, dance lessons and recitals were part of his young life. After declaring , “no more piano,” a friend who played trumpet introduced Warren to the band teacher who said, “With those long arms, you look like a trombonist!”



Following graduation from college, with a teaching degree in music, Warren auditioned at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center and was accepted. For all four years of his Navy career he taught in the Naval School of Music in Washington D.C. and played in the Navy Band.

Upon discharge Warren returned to Iowa and for a short time taught instrumental music in the Iowa school system. He became interested in counseling and was eventually hired at the Newton Correctional Release Center near Newton where he helped develop a cognitive program helping inmates understand their criminality and corrections. He retired in 1998.

Music has been a constant accompaniment in his life, directing the First Presbyterian Church choir many years, The InPersons, a group of singers and instrumentalists who performed in and around Central Iowa, Newton Community Theater musicals and plays, several productions with the Newton Community Orchestra and Chorus of “Messiah,” and other classical music.

The teacher who taught him trombone gave a gift that is still giving. Warren plays in the Iowa Military Veterans band, Grinnell College Band, Newton summer band and has played and arranged music for trombone groups.

Warren has always been physically active. During his working years, he would rise early, run before work and swim laps after work. Knees finally ended running but he still swims and figures he has completed several hundred miles. He learned to ride a bike as a kid and has continued to ride throughout his years and enjoys riding with the Presbyterian Peddlers.

Currently Warren shares his musical talents in worship and serves on the Membership Committee, the FPC Foundation Board and has served as a Deacon in the past. He and his wife Linda have been involved in the church’s El Salvador Mission for 20 years. They have worked as election observers, taught English in San Salvador and students at the school in Muñoces. They continue to be involved in the community,

Warren and his wife enjoy hiking in the Rocky Mountains, travel in El Salvador and Canada.

Thank you, Warren, for allowing us to get to know you better!

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## Membership Committee

Marilyn McCallister, Chair

*Continued from page 5*

Thank you to everyone who joined us on Wednesday night, February 24, for our second Zoom Happy Hour Open House with attendees having the option of eating their evening meal during our time of Fellowship. We hope more people will take part in the Happy Hour Open House each week for sharing fellowship together while we are apart.

Our committee has some ideas on documenting the way we were able to stay together as a church family during the uncertain times of 2020. It would likely be helpful to have thoughts down in print as a form of documentation of such an unsettling year. This is just in the "talking/planning" stages. Keep watching for further details.

## Music and Worship

Jeanette Shannon, Chair

Palm Sunday, which is March 28, will be an in-person service and we will have palms available. Maundy Thursday service on April 1 at 7:00 pm, will also be in person.

Easter will not be held in the sanctuary. An idea being considered is for the service to be a "drive-in" movie style with the congregation remaining in their cars in the parking lot. A transmitter would be obtained which would allow members to listen to the service over their car radio. More information will be coming in the Church Happenings and next month's Messenger.



MAUNDY THURSDAY

## Spring Forward

**Daylight Saving begins at 2 am on Sunday, March 14.** So remember to move your clocks ahead an hour before going to bed on Saturday night. March 14 will be our first in person worship service, so you want to be there on time!

Also, the first day of Spring is March 20.



## Report of the 522<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Presbytery of Des Moines

The 522nd Stated Meeting of the Presbytery was held February 13, 2021 via Zoom. Rev. Meghan Davis-Brass, CP Linda Curtis-Stolper and Commissioner Mickey Van Baale were all in attendance. The meeting began at 10 am by Lynne Hanna, the new Moderator of the Presbytery. 72 people attended the meeting.

Annika Lister Stroope, new Administrative Executive and Stated Clerk, had some changes that will now be part of the meetings. The worship service will occur throughout the meeting rather than occurring all at one time. Also, there will be and were two 5-minute breaks.

Highlights of the meeting were:

- Reports from various committees.
  - Leadership Council – two changes to the Manual of Operations were presented that covered whom would have voice and vote on the Leadership Council and that the outgoing Moderator of Presbytery would install the newly elected officers at the last stated meeting of the year. Both passed.
  - Committee on Budget & Finance – a change to the Manual of Operations, stating in a three-year cycle, a review of the finances will be done on the second year and a full audit the third. This passed.
  - Committee on Nominating – Names of people nominated to be on the Commission on Ministry (COM) were presented. They were elected.
  - Personnel Commission, of which Mickey is a member, indicated a six-month transition period is being held and Jeannie Stolee has been hired as Transitional Office Manager. She was introduced. The commission is responsible for finding the new office for UPP (United Presbyteries of the Plains), watching over the financial accounts of the UPP, and doing staff reviews, among other duties.
  - Committee on Stewardship & Mission Education – Gave information on education opportunities and reminded everyone that General Mission pledges are due, and that Sessions can and are encouraged to vote on taking up the various special offerings at one time.
- The three Tri-Presbyteries Executives, Amgad Beblawi, Mission Executive; Ian McMullen, Pastor to the Presbyteries; and Annika Lister Stroope, Administrative Executive and Stated Clerk, were installed and each gave a short report on what they have been doing in the first month in the new positions.
- About halfway through the meeting, a very moving guided meditation was held based on Colossians 3:12-17. This served as the message of the worship service.

The meeting was adjourned, and Moderator Lynne Hanna offered a prayer and benediction. The meeting concluded a little before noon.

Mickey Van Baale  
Commissioner to Presbytery

(I personally find it interesting that when we met in person our meetings ran from 9 am to 3 pm, but over Zoom we are able to conduct all our business in just under two hours.)

## What exactly is the per capita?

Every Presbyterian Church (USA) congregation is asked to pay a per-member assessment (per capita). Per capita is not membership dues. About thirteen years ago, the General Assembly approved the following definition of per capita: “Per capita is an opportunity for all communicant members of the Presbyterian Church through the governing bodies to participate equally, responsibly, and independently by sharing the cost of coordination and evaluation of mission; of performing ecclesiastical, legislative, and judicial functions that identify a reformed church, while at the same time strengthening the sense of community among all Presbyterians.” **In short, per capita is the way churches share in the work of the wider church family: the Presbytery of Des Moines, General Assembly (national level) as well as the international mission.** Assessing based on membership makes it equitable across churches. Some of each member's assessment goes to each level of governance: Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly.

It was voted at the November Presbytery meeting to leave the Per Capita assessment at \$45.00 per person for the year 2021. This is not per family, but per member of the church. Please make your check out to First Presbyterian Church and mark “per capita” in the memo section. In turn, our church will submit our assessments to the Presbytery.

The breakdown of the \$45 is as follows:

GA \$8.98

Synod \$5.50

Presbytery \$30.52

## 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 any other reason, so we can make sure there is not a conflict.
- 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.



Proposed schedule to resume when deemed safe to do so.

# **2021 BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
	<b>1</b> 6p - Reading the Bible in a Year Study/ Discussion	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour Open	<b>4</b> 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	<b>5</b> <i>World Day of Prayer</i>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b> 10:30a Zoom Worship 11:30a Zoom Fellowship	<b>8</b> 6p - Reading the Bible in a Year Study/ Discussion	<b>9</b> <i>Kevin Peska</i>	<b>10</b> 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour Open	<b>11</b> <i>Linda Curtis-Stolper Julie Fisher</i> 11a Chair Yoga	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>14</b> <i>Daylight Saving Time Begins</i> 9a Deacons <b>10:30a In Person Worship</b>	<b>15</b> 10:00a—Membership 6p - Bible Study/ Discussion	<b>16</b> <i>Godspell Issifou</i> 3:30p Mission 7p Session	<b>17</b> <i>St. Patrick's Day</i> 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour Open	<b>18</b> 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <i>First Day of Spring</i> 
<b>21</b> 10:30a Zoom Worship 11:30a Zoom Fellowship	<b>22</b> <i>Elsie Nelson</i> 6p - Bible Study/ Discussion	<b>23</b> <i>Dan Skokan</i>	<b>24</b> 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour Open	<b>25</b> 3p Chair Yoga	<b>26</b> <i>Don Black</i>	<b>27</b>
<b>28</b> <i>Palm Sunday</i> <b>10:30a In Person Worship</b> 	<b>29</b> 6p - Bible Study/ Discussion	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 9:30a—WBS 11a Gentle Yoga 6:00p-8:00p Zoom Happy Hour Open			

**All meetings, fellowship and yoga are via Zoom. Worship services are posted online and/or available via Zoom at the times indicated. In person worship will be the 2nd and 4th Sundays**

SCHEDULE  
OF



**VOLUNTEERS**

<b>March</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b> <b>In Person</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b> <b>In Person</b>
<b>Worship Leader</b>	Dave Stolper	Bev Rossow	Linda Curtis-Stolper	Terry Rickers
<b>Greeters</b>		Terry Rickers Bev Rossow		Chris & Peggy Lickiss
<b>Ushers</b>		Terry & Cat Rickers		Jeanette Shannon Linda Kirchhoff
<b>Audio</b>		George Wilkening		Mickey Van Baale

First Presbyterian Church  
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Newton, Iowa 50208

## Lectionary —

### March, 2021

#### **March 7 - 3rd Sunday in Lent**

Ex. 10:1-17 *and Ps. 19*; 1 Cor. 1:18-25;  
John 2:13-22

#### **March 14 - 4th Sunday in Lent**

Num. 21:4-9 *and Ps. 107:1-3, 17-22*;  
Eph. 2:1-10; John 3:14-21

#### **March 21 - 5th Sunday in Lent**

Jer. 31:33-34 *and Ps. 51:1-12 or*  
*Ps. 119:9-16*; Heb. 5:5-10; John 12:20-33

#### **March 28 - Palm/Passion Sunday**

**Palms:** Mark 11:1-11 *or* John 12:2-16; *and*  
*Ps. 118:1-2, 19-29*

**Passion:** Isa. 50:4-9a *and Ps. 31:9-16*;  
Phil. 2:5-11; Mark 4:1-15:47 *or*  
Mark 15:1-39 (40-47)

### April, 2021

#### **April 4 - Resurrection of the Lord/ Easter**

Acts 10:34-43 *or* Isa. 25:6-9 *and*  
*Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24*; 1 Cor 15:1-11 *or* Acts  
10:34-43; John 20:1-18 *or* Mark 16:1-8

#### **April 11 - 2nd Sunday of Easter**

Acts 4:32-35 *and Ps. 133*;  
1 John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31

#### **April 18 - 3rd Sunday of Easter**

Acts 3:12-19 *and Ps. 4*; 1 John 3:1-7;  
Luke 24:36b-48

#### **April 25 - 4th Sunday of Easter**

Acts 4:5-12 *and Ps. 23*; 1 John 3:16-24;  
John 10:11-18