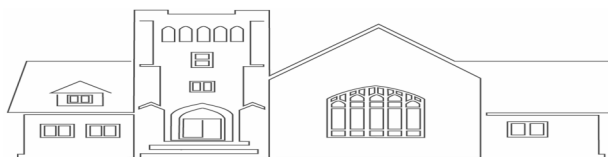


**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
NEWTON, IOWA  
641-792-2790**

*"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



**May  
2020**

## **Meghan's Musing** Epistle in the Time of COVID19

In his epistles to the early church, Paul often expresses a yearning to be with his brothers and sisters in Christ. At this stage in our coronavirus/COVID19 social distancing, I'm beginning to get a sense of how Paul must have felt. Even though most of us live within just a few miles of one another, we might as well be on opposite sides of the world. May 3, 2020, will be our eighth Sunday of online only worship. Our eighth Sunday with the doors locked and the sanctuary empty. And while I personally have settled into the new normal and come to a certain sense of peace regarding that over which I have no control, how I long to be with you once again. How I long to see your faces in real life. How I long to hug the huggers. But all of that will have to wait. And the hugging will have to wait even longer.

As most of you undoubtedly know by now, on April 27, Governor Reynolds issued a proclamation to begin re-opening businesses and churches in Iowa. However, even within the proclamation there is a recognition that this does not mean return to "normal." The Governor's proclamation begins by saying, "I strongly encourage all vulnerable Iowans, including those with preexisting medical conditions and those older than 65, in all counties of the state to continue to limit their activities outside their home, including their visits to businesses and other establishments and their participation in gatherings of any size for any purpose." Additionally, while the proclamation does allow for re-opening of churches throughout the state, Jasper County is among the counties excepted from the other loosening of restrictions and churches and other religious institutions that do re-open are required to adhere to strict sanitation, hygiene and social distancing protocols.

On April 28, I had the opportunity to attend a Zoom meeting with Dr. Megan Srinivas, an Infectious Disease expert practicing out of University of Iowa and on faculty at UNC, who is both a nationally recognized expert in the field and is also a life-long Iowan who understands our context. Dr. Srinivas, like most if not all experts in the field, strongly discourages the re-opening of churches and other businesses at this time. She said that the very earliest we should even think about slowly re-opening would be after two weeks of continued decline in cases after the "peak." Here in Iowa, we have not yet hit the peak, much less had two weeks of decline. Previous modeling predicted that the peak would be around May 4, however, that modeling was based on the continuation of the restrictions that were in place, many of which will be lifted effective May 1, and unfortunately, depending on how people respond to the loosening of restrictions (i.e. whether people start going out again or whether they choose to continue sheltering at home) the peak will most likely be pushed out further and higher, increasing the likelihood of the necessity of a second, longer, stricter lockdown than the first.

*(Continued on page 2)*

*(Continued from page 1)*

Dr. Srinivas was also asked what the age for “more vulnerable” is considered as some sources say “65 and up” and some 60. Her response took me by surprise: 50 and up. She also underscored that those with increased vulnerability include not just the very old, frail and those with compromised immune systems but even those with seemingly minor health issues such as asthma and... simply being overweight. So, if we were to open church but ask those over 50 years of age, those with any health condition of any sort including asthma and being overweight to stay home, who would that leave? For one thing, I don’t know who’d be preaching because I have asthma!

And one more piece of important information that I want to share with you is this: about 80% of those who get the coronavirus have such mild symptoms, or perhaps no symptoms at all, that they don’t even realize they have it. Unfortunately, because they don’t know they have it, if they don’t take the same precautions that those with severe symptoms might take (such as staying home and wearing masks when going out is necessary) they become “super-spreaders,” spreading the virus to up to 100 people whereas those with severe symptoms only spread it to an average of 3 others. So we stay home to protect the 20% who will have serious and severe cases. We stay home and wear masks less to protect ourselves, important as that is, and more to protect others. My mask is doing more to protect others than it is doing to protect me.

I share this information not to stoke fear or anxiety, but to underscore the importance of our continued vigilance in slowing the spread of the coronavirus and protect the vulnerable in our family and community. May 3 is “Good Shepherd” Sunday and we again hear the words of Psalm 23:

- <sup>1</sup> The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
- <sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;
- <sup>3</sup> he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths  
for his name’s sake.
- <sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff —  
they comfort me.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, the members of Session and I are in unanimous agreement that our primary concern is the health and wellbeing of our church family and the broader community. As much as we yearn to worship together again in person, our commitment is to do so only if/when/how we can do so with a certain degree of assurance that we are not putting any of our more vulnerable family, friends and neighbors at risk. We all know that the church is the people and not the building. Who would we be as a church if we disregarded the health and wellbeing of *people* in order to gather together in our **building**? I don’t want to find out. As Rev. Ben Nti from the Brooklyn and Malcom churches recently asked, if we were to reopen and someone got COVID19—or God forbid died—because they came to our worship service, how would I as the pastor live with that? I don’t want to find out.

*(Continued on page 3)*

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Therefore, Session has discerned to remain closed to in-person worship and activities through May. We will be reassessing this quickly developing situation toward the end of May to determine when and how we can reopen.

In the meantime...

Be well, stay home, love one another and wash your hands.

We will get through this.

In Christ,

Meghan



## On-Line Giving

In this usual time when we cannot meet in person and pass the offering plate, we now have the capability to receive your offerings online. The [link below](#) is on our website and on our Facebook page. We have also been sending out the link with the bulletin and links for worship services. During these difficult times, thank you for helping your church family continue our ministry and meeting our financial commitments using the manner of giving that works best for you.

Link: [https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco\\_ver3.vps?appver3=wWsk24ZWJSTZKsGd1RMKlg0BDvsSG3VIWQCPJNNxD8upkiY7JIDavDsozUE7KG0nFx2NSo8LdUKGuGuF396vbXFVTqJnOV-bS9Zo1Z9C540iYnTg5dP4O6rpX5QvPEWIBhHDN59kLZFffwKfYERpQIH2I1GPRTaB43F65iO\\_4Wo=&ver=3](https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?appver3=wWsk24ZWJSTZKsGd1RMKlg0BDvsSG3VIWQCPJNNxD8upkiY7JIDavDsozUE7KG0nFx2NSo8LdUKGuGuF396vbXFVTqJnOV-bS9Zo1Z9C540iYnTg5dP4O6rpX5QvPEWIBhHDN59kLZFffwKfYERpQIH2I1GPRTaB43F65iO_4Wo=&ver=3)



Deb Zieman, whose diagnosis of breast cancer was more extensive than hoped. She will be having a mastectomy. The date for the surgery is pending at this time.

**Prayer Requests** Wade Van Baale, who was hospitalized on April 6 for a blood clot in his leg and dehydration. He was transported to Mercy Hospital in Des Moines and spent a week there, 2 days of which were in the ICU. He is now in Nelson Manor for recuperation and physical therapy.

Kris and Sandy Simbro's new grandson who was born with 3 kidneys. At some point, he will have to have surgery for this, and in the meantime they will be watching for infection problems.

A 13 year old neighbor of Linda Kirchhoff's grandchildren in Altoona, had brain surgery the week of April 20. Prior to the surgery, she was unable to see. She will need 6 weeks of treatment after she gets out of the hospital.

Roger Harmelink who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. He has been moved to an area of isolation with the other members of Park Centre who have also tested positive.

All those working on the “front-line” to make it possible for us to get the necessities.

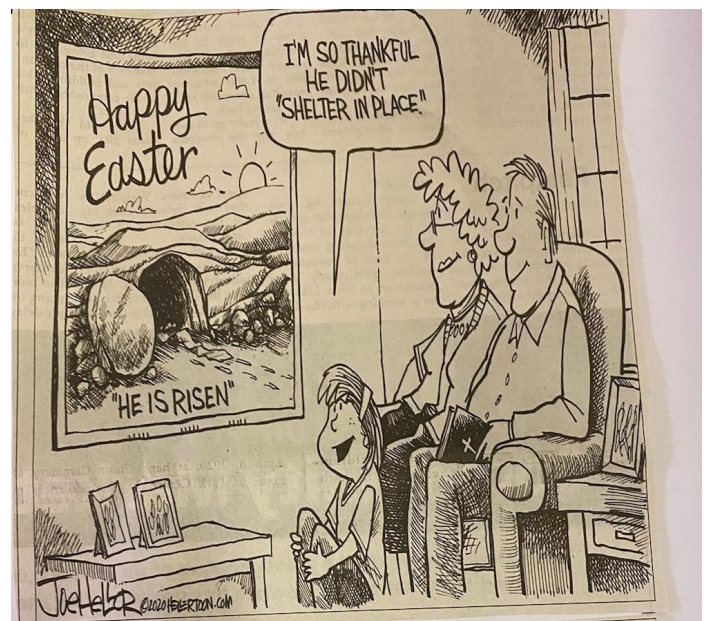
Doctors, nurses, CNAs, maintenance staff, food service staff, and all other medical staff who in one way or another are dealing with those stricken with the covidvirus.

People around the world who are suffering from the effects of not only “the virus”, but also acts of Mother Nature, or wars.



First time grandparents, Tom and Susan Weeks, announce the birth of their grandson. A quote on Facebook from dad Tom, reads: "On Thursday, April 23rd at 1:00pm, my beautiful and incredibly strong wife Elmira and I welcomed our baby boy into the world. weighing in at 8lbs 11oz and measuring at 21 inches, Dean Parsa Weeks has brought a joy into our lives that is beyond anything we could have ever imagined."

Congratulations to Dad, Mom, Grandpa and Grandma, as well as all other family members.



Submitted by Gary Parsons.



## Greetings and Tidbits from Session Members

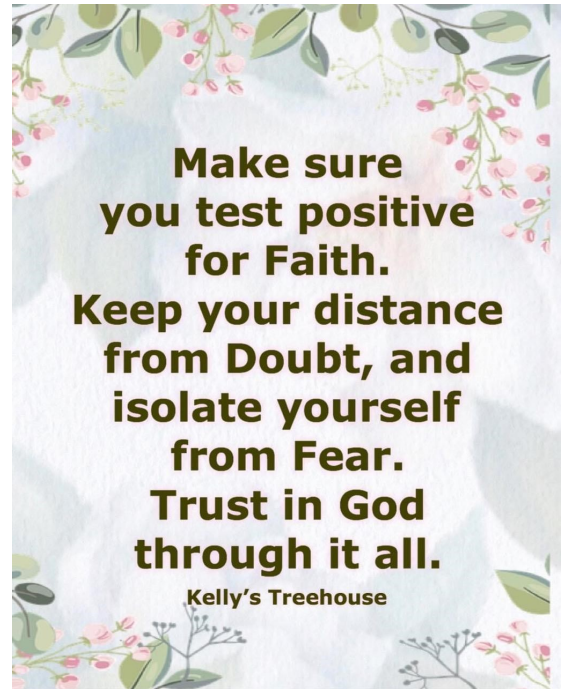
### Number 5 is on the way!



Kevin and I are excited to announce that grandbaby #5 is due October 25. Rachel and Bryce (Skaggs) just found out that they are expecting their first child. We couldn't be happier!  
Toni Peska

Shared from a friend.

Mickey Van Baale



Dr. Martin once told me that the Americans tend to think that the way we live, here in the U.S., is normal, but it is actually unusual in human history. Now that people everywhere are thinking about what we take for granted, and what's important or not, this poem might help us appreciate things day by day. Not everything is necessarily going to continue as things once did.

Tom Mott

### Ozymandias

by Percy Bysshe Shelleye

I met a traveller from an antique land,  
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal, these words appear:  
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;  
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

### The way it was in 2019.

(Pictures below and on page 6 compliments of Gary Parsons.)



Gary  
Parsons  
loaded  
potato  
from the  
potato bar.

### Choir at Maundy Thursday Service



One of my favorite Bible verses is Philippians 4:8 –

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.” (NIV)

Here is a Word Search that has wonderful attributes of God to feast our minds on – enjoy!

Marilyn McCallister, Session Rep. & chair of Membership Committee

## God is . . .

E	N	N	N	G	A	L	M	L	T	E	R	M	T
I	N	S	O	L	L	O	Y	U	I	H	N	I	N
M	G	O	I	J	F	V	L	F	H	I	L	O	E
M	S	L	E	E	S	I	O	H	A	S	U	T	I
U	R	U	O	R	U	N	H	T	A	I	F	I	C
T	N	L	O	R	H	G	J	I	U	O	I	S	S
A	T	R	I	I	I	E	I	A	G	O	C	E	I
B	E	S	I	W	C	O	O	F	F	I	R	I	N
L	I	T	R	P	P	A	U	L	J	I	E	N	M
E	H	F	S	L	E	A	R	S	M	O	M	O	O
C	P	F	M	V	A	O	I	G	N	J	U	S	T
T	N	E	T	O	P	I	N	M	O	G	O	O	D
I	N	F	I	N	I	T	E	N	L	O	I	T	R
O	M	N	I	P	R	E	S	E	N	T	I	I	N

WISE  
INFINITE  
GLORIOUS  
HOLY  
IMMUTABLE  
OMNISCIENT  
GOOD  
LOVING  
OMNIPOTENT  
GRACIOUS  
MERCIFUL  
OMNIPRESENT  
JUST  
FAITHFUL

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/1095177/>

**New Lily Cross built by George Wilkening**



**Easter, 2019 Worship Service**



## The First Earth Day: A Personal Remembrance

By Steve Hopkins, Nonpoint Source Coordinator  
Iowa DNR Watershed Improvement Section

The first Earth Day, which took place on April 22, 1970--50 years ago--sparked the creation of environmental policies and programs that helped clean up parts of the environment not only across the U.S., but also here in Iowa.

The first Earth Day, founded by U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, led to the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 1970, followed by the passage of the Clean Air Act that year, the Clean Water Act in 1972, and years later--in 1987--Section 319 of the Clean Water Act, a new program to provide funding and technical assistance to address nonpoint source pollution in the U.S. to help clean up rivers, lakes, and streams.

Iowa has actively participated in the Section 319 program. Since 1990, the Iowa DNR Watershed Improvement program has funded over 600 local, regional, and statewide clean water projects (mostly watershed projects) totaling over \$100 million, through the EPA's Section 319 grant program. Currently, the DNR provides \$1.8 million annually to locally-led watershed projects to restore lakes, streams, and river segments in Iowa.

When the Section 319 program was created, I was completing my master's degree in Land Resources at the University of Wisconsin's Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, named in honor of the founder of Earth Day.

Although I can thank many people for teaching me about nature and the environment—including my professors and fellow students at Wisconsin--among the first were my paternal grandparents, Claude and Bernice Hopkins.

At the time of the first Earth Day, I was an 8-year-old boy who loved to visit Grandpa and Grandma Hopkins at their pasture-based cattle farm in northwest Missouri, only a three hour drive from our home in Atlantic, Iowa. Grandpa loved working with and observing cattle, which he had done his entire life, and he was in fact the 1935 national collegiate dairy judging champion, while competing with the Iowa State College Dairy Judging Team.

Grandma loved animals, too, but also so much more. She not only helped Grandpa with livestock chores, she also kept a large garden of healthy vegetables and beautiful flowers, and she cooked delicious meals every day. She had studied home economics and horticulture at Iowa State, and she put her knowledge to practical use on the farm.

What I remember most about her, though, was how she loved birds. She would listen carefully to bird calls on the farm, and she had an old 78 record of bird calls that she listened to so she could learn bird calls better. She also could whistle the call of bobwhites so accurately that they would respond by calling back to her. And, in describing the musical call of meadowlarks, which sang from the tops of the many fence posts on their farm, she would say joyfully, "It sounds like they're singing 'Gee whiz, my feet are cold!'"

Grandma Hopkins would never have called herself an environmentalist. Yet she helped instill in me at an early age an awareness and appreciation for nature that has been a part of me all of my life, even long after her passing from this Earth.

On a recent visit to a watershed project here in Iowa, I heard the familiar and welcoming call of a meadowlark, singing "Gee whiz, my feet are cold!" I thank Grandma for helping me hear that call, and for helping me find my calling.



Proposed schedule to resume when deemed safe to do so.

# **2020 BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS**

**Sun**

**Mon**

**Tue**

**Wed**

**Thur**

**Fri**

**Sat**

					<b>1</b>	<b>2 Warren Erickson</b>
<b>3 Gary Parson</b>	<b>4</b> 4:45p– Personnel	<b>5</b> 11a Gentle Yoga 3:30p Mission 6p Book Club at Peanut Pub	<b>6</b> 9:30a WBS 6p B&F 7p Choir	<b>7</b> 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> 9a Deacons in Parlor	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 11a Gentle Yoga 4p Worship & Music 7p Session	<b>13</b> 9:30a @WBS 7p Choir	<b>14 Nancy Mott David Funk</b> 3p Chair Yoga	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>18 Mary Jane Tripp</b>	<b>19</b> 11a Gentle Yoga 1:30p JCRSP 6p Pub Theology	<b>20 Kim DeGraff</b> 9:30a @WBS 7p Choir	<b>21 Ruby Davis</b> 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> <hr/> <b>31</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> 11a Gentle Yoga	<b>27</b> 9:30a @WBS 7p Choir	<b>28</b> 9a Days for Girls 3p Chair Yoga 6p Evening Days for Girls	<b>29</b>	<b>30 Sandy Simbro Rick Miller Porter Hamilton</b>

## Regular Worship Schedule

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

10:30a Worship  
11:30a Fellowship



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

641-792-2790

Return Service Requested

## Lectionary —

### May, 2020

#### May 3 - 4th Sunday of Easter

Acts 2:42-47; *Ps.* 23; 1 Peter 2:19-25,  
John 10:1-10

#### May 10 - 5th Sunday of Easter (Mother's Day)

Acts 7:55-60; *Ps.* 31:1-5, 15-16;  
1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14

#### May 17 - 6th Sunday of Easter

Acts 17:22-31; *Ps.* 66:8-20;  
1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21

#### May 24 - 7th Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:6-14; *Ps.* 68:1-10, 32-35;  
1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11; John 17:1-11

#### May 31 - Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21 or Num. 11:24-30;  
*Ps.* 104:24-34, 35b; 1 Cor. 12:3b-13 or  
Acts 2:1-21; John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39

### June, 2020

#### June 7 - Trinity Sunday

Gen. 1:1-2; 4a; *Ps.* 8;  
2 Cor. 13:11-13;  
Matt. 28:16-20

#### June 14 - 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

Gen. 18:1-15 (21:1-7); *Ps.* 116:1-2, 12-19;  
Rom. 5:1-8; Matt. 9:35-10:8 (9-23)

#### June 21 - 3rd Sunday after Pentecost - Father's Day

Gen. 21:8-21; *Ps.* 86:1-10, 16-17;  
Rom. 6: 1b-11; Matt. 10:24-39

#### June 28 - 4th Sunday after Pentecost

Gen. 22:1-14; *Ps.* 13; Rom. 6:12-23;  
Matt. 10:40-42