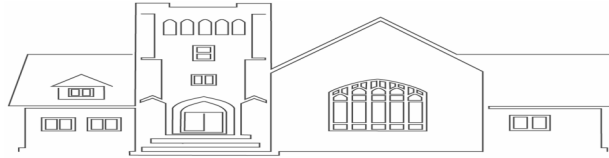


**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
NEWTON, IOWA
641-792-2790**

"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



**November
2020**

Meghan's Musings We Belong to Christ

As I write this month's "Musings," I am looking out over a beautiful, placid lake about 45 minutes before sunset. My sister's family including my beloved, wild and ruckus nephews have departed and I am gradually becoming accustomed to the peace and quiet which lured me here. And try as I might, I cannot forget the turmoil of current events, the contentious election season, the increasing polarization of our nation and our society, indeed even our world.

Of course, as I write, I do not know how the elections will go. I don't know if we'll even know who has won the presidential election come November 4 and if not, when will we know and even worse, if political tensions and crises will get worse, perhaps even violent, after the election. I try not to be an alarmist but I know there are many who fear the election could prompt actual armed conflicts.

And as I write this in mid-October, knowing you will be reading it shortly before the election or perhaps even after, what word of comfort might I offer? What is the Good News?

I was recently in a Zoom meeting in which my colleagues were discussing how we address these worries. How do we calm the anxiety that many of us are experiencing? What do we do or say on November 4 and the days/weeks/months following? And Rev. Barbara Gaddis, a retired pastor in our presbytery, made the point that what is most important to remember above all else is that we belong to Christ. No matter what. We don't belong to the Democratic or Republican party. We don't belong to Trump or Biden. We don't even belong to the United States of America, no matter how much we love our country or how patriotic we may be. Above all else we belong to Christ. Or, to paraphrase the Apostle Paul: there is no longer Red or Blue for we are all one in Christ Jesus. It is so obvious, we can easily overlook it.

And I am reminded of something another of my colleagues recently said. Her church was going to be making a decision regarding an issue that was somewhat contentious, indeed the congregation was leaning in a direction opposed to what she felt they should do. And she said, "I just keep reminding everyone that the Presbyterian way is: once a decision is made, we all come together on the same side to make it work."

My prayer for me, for you and for our whole country is that no matter what happens on November 3, that we would all do our part to come together on the same side to make it work. That we would all do our part to begin to heal the divisions that have been widening in recent years and decades. That we would all remember above all else that we belong to Christ. Amen.

A prayer as I put on my mask:

Creator,
as I prepare to go into the world,
help me to see the sacrament
in the wearing of this cloth -
let it be "an outward sign
of an inward grace" -
a tangible and visible way of living
love for my neighbours,
as I love myself.

Christ,
since my lips will be covered,
uncover my heart,
that people would see my smile
in the crinkles around my eyes.
Since my voice may be muffled,
help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words,
but with my actions.

Holy Spirit,
As the elastic touches my ears,
remind me to listen carefully -
and full of care -
to all those I meet.
May this simple piece of cloth be
shield and banner,
and each breath that it holds,
be filled with your love.
In your Name and
in that love,
I pray.
May it be so.
May it be so.

~Richard Bott

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.

Special Thank You

Dear First Presbyterian Church family,
I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your cards, notes, phone calls, prayers and thoughts as I have received treatment over the past few months for breast cancer. I have been so fortunate that it was caught very early, and that I received excellent care from all of my "team" of doctors, nurses, technicians, and all of the supporting staff members every step of the way, here in Newton and in Des Moines, Clive and Urbandale. Knowing that all of you, as well as my family and friends, were holding me close and supporting me, made this journey much less daunting than it would otherwise have been. Thank you, my angels!
Val McKee



It's a Girl!

Claire Shirley Joy Skaggs, arrived on Tuesday, October 27. Claire is the daughter and first child of Bryce and Rachel (Peska) Skaggs. She was 7 lbs, 14 oz. and 21" long. Also welcoming her are Kevin and Toni (grandparents), aunts, uncles, and cousins Emmett, Garrett, Benny and Rylie Ann.

Congratulations to all!



George Wilkening was admitted to MercyOne Newton on October 26. The diagnosis is blood clots in his lungs. He is in the ICU and hopes his hospital stay will be in Newton and that he won't be moved to Des Moines. Tests have confirmed there are no clots in his legs. George got home Thursday morning, October 29..

Marlys Grimm will have a partial knee replacement on November 5. Her surgery was originally scheduled for October 29, but a change in the doctor's schedule caused the reschedule.

Clarice Sigurdson found out that the daughter (and husband) of former church members, Marvin and Marcy Van Peursem, had to be evacuated Saturday night, October 17 from their home in Ward, CO, due to the fires. Their daughter's name is Jolene. Some of you may remember the Van Peursem family. UPDATE on Saturday morning, October 24: Marcy called Shari DeCook to report Jolene and her family are back in their home and safe.

Linda Kirchhoff heard from Bill and Jo Calhoun. Their cabin is safe, but Ron and Elaine Froelich have been evacuated. They are staying with their son in Loveland, Colorado.

Please keep Carl and Robin Halgren from Kansas, who are members of Mariners in Mission with John and Barb Taylor, in your prayers as they are both dealing with serious health issues.

Diane Moles reports that brother Dave is doing well and continues his chemotherapy. His son, Tony got married in California the end of October. Dave and Jackie were not able to attend.

Diane also said that her nephew, who is the son-in-law of Debbie Moles Merfeld, was scouting his area to go hunting and stepped in a hole. He broke the bottom of his tibia, but hasn't had surgery yet. This injury could greatly effect his job, as he is a deputy sheriff and if he hasn't healed in 12 weeks, he could loose his job plus having to pay for all of his insurance.

Please keep the people mentioned above in your thoughts and prayers, as well as others affected by the fires, which have now gone east from California to Colorado.

Prayers for all of us for patience, strength and peace as we continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic

Please pray and consider carefully your plans for the holidays. Will it be safe for everyone to hold family get-to-gathers? Or, should this be a year to social distance and only celebrate with your immediate family?.

Prayers for our country as we have the election on November 3. As the results of the voting become known, may we all show humility, peace, love and dignity to one another. And may we pray for our country, our leaders, and each other.

Soon we will be having our Stewardship campaign. Pray for the economic condition of our church and what you are able to give.

The Nominating Committee will also be making calls for a new class of Elders and Deacons. Please consider filling a position, if you are asked. Though we are meeting together - apart, the work of the church still continues.

Special 90th Birthdays

Macy Jontz will be celebrating her 90th birthday on November 7. Her daughter, Jody McCoy had planned to have a party to mark this milestone, but then the pandemic hit. So, Jody is hosting a card shower in lieu of a party. Macy's address is Park Centre, 500 1st St. N., Apt. 101. Jody also mentioned that she thinks Mom would also enjoy calls.

JoAnn Munger will also be celebrating her 90th birthday on November 29. Let's help her celebrate this milestone with cards and calls. Her address is: 613 E. 4th St. S. in Newton.

You are both:



Celebrations!

Peter Van Elswyk has completed his chemotherapy treatments.

Jordan Norvell will be graduating November 28 (virtually) from UNI. His degree is in construction management.

Emily Miller has accepted an accounting position with EY (Ernst & Young) in Des Moines for the fall of 2021! She accepted a position in the Assurance/Audit practice. Emily will graduate from the University of Iowa in May, 2021 with a degree in accounting and a certificate in Leadership. Emily plans to begin working toward her CPA next summer.

Congratulations to all from your church family.

Christian Nurture

Mickey Van Baale, Chair

I'm sorry to report that there has been a delay in getting Sunday School kicked off for the 8 young people planning on attending. The curriculum we planned to use, curriculum that was left over when we had Pre-K and K Sunday school, cannot be found. The extra materials were kept in a 2-drawer file in the closet of the now library. The file has been moved into the room, but the folders holding the stories and accompanying crafts are not there.

So, due to this and the fact that there are many projects being done in the office, I believe it is best to wait until the first of the year. We need to believe God has his hand in the timing of starting our virtual Sunday School..

By waiting until the first of the year to start, and if we are able to meet in person by the middle of February, this will give the kiddos a chance to get to know each other via Zoom for about 6 weeks before interacting in person. Hopefully they will feel comfortable seeing each other and be ready to continue on learning about God and his stories.

Church Life

Gary Parsons, Chair

Twenty-one adults, children and a dog enjoyed a time of Fellowship at Mariposa Park on Sunday afternoon, October 11. Those attending were Larry & Linda Anderson, Val McKee, John & Barb Taylor, Warren and Linda Erickson, Dave Stolper & Linda Curtis-Stolper, Mimi Amouzou, Benila, Godspell and Regina, Harold & Deanna Manley, Dana Hashman, Curt Brass & Meghan Davis-Brass & ZuZu, Joan Tyler, Karen Quinn, and Mickey Van Baale. Everyone brought their own masks, chairs, snacks and beverages. The hope was to have a bonfire and several brought the ingredients for S'mores, but the wind was a little too strong. The kids enjoyed the playground and walking down to the water, and getting re-acquainted with ZuZu. It was nice seeing and visiting with some of our church family in person. Thank you to Gary and Kay Parsons for planning this event even though they were out of town.



Mission Committee

Larry Anderson, Chair

Three years ago, our church was recognized by our Presbytery as a Hunger Action Congregation, having met the six criteria set by the denomination. Since then we have maintained and increased our actions concerning issues around hunger, and we have been re-certified for another three years. We are one of six Iowa congregations so recognized currently. Thank you for your support of these efforts! The following is the letter received in early October – the certificate and flier will be posted on the bulletin board across from the church office.

Dear Hunger Action Congregation,

Thank you for renewing your covenant as a Hunger Action Congregation, for sharing your story, and for continuing to serve in ways that help alleviate hunger and eliminate the underlying causes.

Because you are active in all six areas of hunger response, attached is a certificate to display in your church and to include in web or electronic communications as you wish. This certification is recognized for 3 years.

Also attached is flier that you may like to post to display your church's covenant as a Hunger Action Congregation.

Each year on World Food Day, we formally recognize all the Hunger Action Congregations. The list, available at www.pcusa.org/haclist, will be updated by World Food Day on October 16.

Together, let us continue to reach out to those who hunger in our own communities, including those who may be sitting near us in our own congregations, and may we respond to larger national and global hunger concerns as well.

We will continue to contact Hunger Action Congregations quarterly about upcoming trips, resources, opportunities, and important developments.

We also encourage you to write about your covenant and your hunger and poverty work to share with us, your presbytery, and your local media. We love to hear stories of creative and compassionate hunger response happening in so many places, and to be able to share photos and stories/snippets with other Hunger Action Congregations and Presbyterians around the world through our blog, Facebook, and more.

We'd like to hear from you at php@pcusa.org.

Blessings on your congregation and your ministries!

*Rev. Rebecca Barnes
Coordinator, Presbyterian Hunger Program, PC(USA)*

Advent Outreach During a Pandemic

Linda Curtis-Stolper

As with so many other things, activities that have been a part of our church's Advent calendar for many years have been impacted by the pandemic. The need to respect distancing between people, reduce handling of items, and minimize contacts outside of immediate family have dictated changes in procedures, with many plans not yet finalized. This is an update of information, to the best of our knowledge, as of October 28. Please watch for updated information as Advent gets closer.

Mission Coalition will not be coordinating a Saturday of bell-ringing for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign, but the need is still there. Last year over 11,000 people were helped in Jasper County. If you want to volunteer to support the Salvation Army in this fundraising effort, you need to go to the website: www.registortoring.com. This will give you the locations available and allow you to sign up for your turn to ring. You can also contact Kayla at the Salvation Army directly (792-6131) to schedule a day, time, and location. The bell ringing season runs from November 12 through December 24. The hope is volunteers will be able to take on a 2-hour time slot.

We are hoping to be able to fulfill the wishes of some Christmas Angels from the Salvation Army but the logistics of how that will be done have not been determined. More information will be provided in mid-to-late November.

We are hoping to be able to fulfill the wishes of some Progress Industries group home residents but the logistics of how that will be done have not been determined. More information will be provided in mid-to late November.

The Presbyterian Giving Catalog offers a wide range of ideas for gifts that provide help, hope and relief to people, families and communities in need. The catalog is available online (presbyteriangifts.org) or a few hard copies are available through the church. Call the office to arrange a pick up or to have one delivered.

Chosen for All State Twice

Micah Grimm, grandson of Norm and Marlys, tried out for All State with his Cello. Micah was chose to be a part of All State. Then the family moved to Iowa, and Micah decided to try out again in a different state. You guessed it, he was again chosen to be a part of the All State group.

While there won't be a concert due to the pandemic, it is still a great honor to be chosen for All State ... and twice is a magnificent achievement. Congratulations, Micah.

This is the view from the cabin Meghan and ZuZu have been in the past two weeks while Meghan has been on study leave. Doesn't it look peaceful?



Special Presbytery Meeting

The Presbyteries of Prospect Hill, North Central Iowa, and Des Moines have voted to join together in calling three staff members to lead the presbyteries beginning January 1, 2021. The vote, which took place at a specially called joint meeting on October 10, approved the call and election of the following people:

- The Rev. Annika Lister Stroope to be Administrative Executive and Stated Clerk;
- The Rev. Ian McMullen to be Pastor to the Presbyteries.
- Ruling Elder Amgad Beblawi to be Mission Executive

The new staffing model is the culmination of a years-long process in which representatives of all three presbyteries met, at first informally, then with the formation of a task force to work out the details of the model, and finally with a search committee led by Rev. Ken Rummer of Des Moines Presbytery and including members from all three presbyteries. The process was guided throughout by Rev. Dr. Deb DeMeester, Director of Leadership Development for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Synod Executive Elona Street-Steward advised the search committee on process. At the October 10 meeting, which was held via Zoom, the three candidates had the opportunity to introduce themselves and answer questions from all participants.

An installation service will be held after the first of the year.

This is a bold, exciting step, not only for our three presbyteries, but for the denomination, and the rest of the church is already taking note of this new model for leadership. We ask your prayers for Annika, Amgad, and Ian as they prepare to take up their new responsibilities. Gratitude is also due to the many people from the presbyteries who volunteered their energy, intelligence, imagination, and love to the process.

Thanks be to God.
By Rev. Richard Francis,
Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Additional information: The three presbyteries will operate as their own entity, holding their own meetings quarterly, with a joint meeting once a year. They will share the 3 positions listed above, along with an Office Manager and Program and Communications Administrator and there will be only one centrally located office. The office staff of the Presbytery of Des Moines are eligible to apply for the two Administrative positions, but Nancy Lister-Settle and Betty Dyer are retiring and Kristin Pike has accepted a call to Community Presbyterian Church in Hartford.

An open house was held for Nancy, Betty, Kristin and Amgad on October 31 in the parking lot of Heartland Church in Des Moines..

Proposed schedule to resume when deemed safe to do so.

2020 BIRTHDAYS & EVENTS

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thur

Fri

Sat

1 Dan Ritter Daylight Saving Ends	2 4:45p– Personnel	3 Bret Doerring 11a Gentle Yoga 4p Worship & Music	4 9:30a—WBS	5 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	6 Larry DeCook Barbara Zacheis	7 Macy Jontz
8 9a Deacons in Parlor	9	10 11a Gentle Yoga	11 Kathy Ventling 9:30a—WBS	12 3p Chair Yoga	13 Barb Taylor	14
15	16	17 11a Gentle Yoga 7p Session	18 9:30a—WBS	19 6:30a Early Men's Group 9a Men's Group 3p Chair Yoga	20	21
22	23 Mickey Van Baale	24 11a Gentle Yoga	25 9:30a—WBS	 Office Closed	27	28
29 JoAnn Munger	30					

Regular Worship Schedule

10:30a Worship

11:30a Fellowship

We will continue these hours as long we are on-line.

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

641-792-2790

Return Service Requested

Lectionary —

November, 2020

November 1 - All Saint's Day

Rev. 7:9-17 *and* Ps. 34:1-10, 22; 1 John 3:1-3; Matt. 5:1-12; *Semicontinuous:* Josh 3:7-17 *and* Ps. 107:1-7, 33-37;
Complementary: Micah 3:5-12 *and* Ps. 43;
1 Thess. 2:9-13; Matt. 23:1-12

November 8 - 23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Semicontinuous: Josh. 24: 1-3a, 14-25 *and* Ps. 78:1-7; *Complementary:* Amos 5:18-24 *and* Ps. 70; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Matt. 25:1-13

November 15 - 24th Sunday after Pentecost

Semicontinuous: Judges 4:1-7 *and* Ps. 123;
Complementary: Zeph. 1:7, 12-18 *and* Ps. 90:1-8 (9-11), 12; 1 Thess. 5:1-11;
Matt. 25:14-30

November 22 - Christ the King/Reign of Christ

Ezek. 34:11-16, 20-24 *and* Ps. 100 *or* Ps. 95:1-7a; Eph. 1:15-23; Matt. 25:31-46

November 29 - 1st Sunday of Advent

Isa. 64:1-9 *and* Ps. 80:1-7, 17-19;
1 Cor. 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

December, 2020

December 6 - 2nd Sunday of Advent

Isa. 40: 1-11 *and* Ps. 85:1-2, 8-13;
2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

December 13 - 3rd Sunday of Advent

Isa. 61:1-4, 8-11 *and* Ps. 126 *or* Luke 1:46b-55; 1 Thess. 5:16-24;
John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 20 - 4th Sunday of Advent

2 Sam. 7:1-11, 16 *and* Luke 1:46b-55 *or* Ps. 89:1-4, 19-26; Rom. 16:25-27;
Luke 1:26-38

December 27 - 1st Sunday of Christmas

Isa. 61:10-62:3 *and* Ps. 148; Gal. 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40