

HOLY WEEK



WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 20
8 & 10:30 a.m.

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, March 24
7:00 p.m.

Great Easter Vigil

Saturday, March 26
7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday

Sunday, March 27
8 and 10:30 a.m.

Easter Greeting from the FPC Staff

In the raucous noise and shouting of this season, with anxiety-creating speeches and bitter debates, with economic uncertainty and personal challenges, you and I are bidden to hear the deeper music that emerges from the very depths of creation, even beneath it. This is the music that surrounds us with daily goodness, that brought God in flesh to us, and that played below the human capability to hear at Golgotha. Now, for those who hear, the music resounds joyfully in the resurrected and re-creative presence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The staff and I wish you a heart-felt Holy Week and wondrous Easter celebration. We bid you always, always, listen to the music. ~ Pastor Sam

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Dear sisters and brothers of First Presbyterian Church,

The peace of the Lord be with you!

Of late you may have heard that Session is anticipating a capital funds campaign, to be initiated sometime this year. As you might imagine, this approaching campaign will invite us to join in many conversations together as we move forward together!

My communication today is not so much meant to announce the campaign, but to invite you to begin preparing yourself for that official announcement: mentally, emotionally and faithfully.

Permit me to begin with two items that guide me personally.

First is a saying: "It takes maturity to plant trees under whose shade you will never rest." Capital fund campaigns are not career builders for pastors anymore; for someone probably in his last pastorate, as I am, it is certainly not a career-builder. This campaign will not be about my legacy, other than perhaps trying to avoid the charge that I was too lazy or cowardly to do the right thing and lead our beloved congregation into this campaign. No, my legacy is the lives the Lord impacted through me over the years. Period.

Nevertheless, I recognize that I have helped God spiritually form people **within buildings**, and buildings crumble. I am concerned about future generations and where they will be spiritually formed if we are not good stewards of our present building.

I want the next generations, as well as their children, to have the same pristine building available for service and worship that you had when you came here. This is true especially if you have been in this building from the get-go, raised your families here, made friends here, or received spiritual nurture here.

Recently I read a letter written to our congregation in 1973, in preparation for the capital funds campaign that would lead to the erection of this building. Alice Yakish wrote the paragraph below when she was over 90 years old:

We're glad that we can contribute to the building of the new church. We want it for ourselves, and we want to spend the few remaining years of our lives enjoying it. But most of all, we want it for you, your children, your grandchildren. This may be our last opportunity to do something really worthwhile for future generations. Our time here is short, and I'm sure we shall not pass again this way.

Alice and her husband, who have since joined the church triumphant, contributed generously to that campaign because of their mature spirituality. Lord, I want to be that type of Christian!

The **second** piece of guidance for me comes from an event early in my marriage to Susan. We were under tremendous stress as a couple: Newlyweds, we had invited her parents and mine to the same Easter Sunday brunch in our home. My mother in particular represented an existential crisis for the two of us. Susan is typically calm, yet knowing my mother was coming . . . she woke up shouting orders, and I was already filled with incalculable dread.



This is when, half asleep still, I spouted one of those bits of wisdom that come so seldom to me and must have their source in God: "Honey," I said, "tomorrow is inevitable, so we can either make ourselves miserable today or make the preparations fun."

I feel the same way about capital funds campaigns. They are inevitable if we want to keep a building up and a ministry vibrant. Our attitude is key: It lies within our power to make this campaign an exciting, enjoyable, congregation-unifying, faith-growing event. Lord, keep me positive!

Below are some talking points that I hope are helpful as you look forward to this capital campaign. We are still way ahead of having a plan in hand, yet I feel these points are reasonably accurate and relevant.

- Session has adopted a preliminary list of possible projects of interest. For example, the parking lot and the organ both need significant work. This list is not yet final: It may get longer or shorter. Session is continuing to explore what else needs to be addressed. My understanding is that this process of discernment will continue as congregation members are engaged in the process. Eventually, a list will be put in front of the congregation, and the congregation will be invited to make pledges to fund the projects on the list.
- As is true of almost all successful church fundraising campaigns, Session has chosen to hire a firm expert in church fundraising to assist us. Session anticipates that the outcomes will justify the expense. The firm will both help us do a feasibility study – how much we can hope to raise and what the congregation wants us to accomplish – and assist us with the campaign itself. While there is no guarantee that a firm can provide success, many congregations find that assisted campaigns are far more successful than unassisted ones by a multiple of 2 or 3.
- We should keep in mind that all capital funds campaign goals are an assembly of the priorities of diverse members. After all, we are the body of Christ, and individually members of him. Not everybody agrees on every priority and this should not be our expectation. Unanimity of

(Continued on page 6)

FPC Family,

As you know, we will have an Easter brunch on Sunday, March 27. So far, there is only 1 person to set up and no one to clean up.

Please consider volunteering to help set up or clean up. You

can sign up by going to <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0b4fa5af2eab9-morning> or emailing Valerie Soemadi at soemadi1219@msn.com



Easter Morning Fellowship

YOU'RE INVITED! Come celebrate the joy of Easter morning with your FPC friends and family. The Fellowship Committee invites you to an Easter morning potluck on Sunday, March 27, from 9-10 a.m. The committee will provide table service and beverages.

If your last name begins with:

A through R, bring something sweet, pastries, coffee cake or fruit;

S through Z, bring a savory dish to share, a breakfast casserole, eggs or a meat.



Let's Beautify Our Sanctuary This Easter!

The deacons are taking orders for Easter plants. These plants are given in honor or in memory of a loved one and will glorify God and add to the beauty of our Sanctuary this Easter. The plants will be delivered by our deacons after the March 27 Easter service to our at-home members.

The cost for each plant is \$15, and checks need to be made to First Presbyterian Church. Order forms are available in the narthex or can be ordered by calling Susan VanDuyn-Phipps, 338-4132. **Please place orders by March 20.**



Remaining monies after the plants are paid for will be donated to the Deacons Emergency Fund. The deacons want to recognize your generosity and thank you for your participation!

February 16 Session Meetings

Clerk of Session, Nancy Weber

The session met February 16, 2016, in Coover Lounge at 7:00 p.m. Pastor Sam called the meeting to order and lit the Christ candle. Elder Sue Dallam read "Lord of Life" from a book by Ann Weems and led us in prayer.

A note from the Presbytery of Eastern Iowa thanking FPC for hosting the February 6, 2016, Presbytery meeting was circulated.

The financial report, prepared by Larry Bruner, was received. Endowment report will be given at the March 2016, session meeting.

The Servanthood denominational mission pledge per the 2016 approved budget and identical to the 2015 budget was approved.

Minutes of the January 19, 2016 stated session meeting were approved, with corrections. Minutes of the 2-14-16 FPC congregational meeting were approved.

Elder John Barr gave a report on the Capital Funds Campaign fundraiser. Three fundraising groups were considered. The Walsh group was found to be the most fitting for our needs. This organization has the most experience dealing with this type of fundraising, and they have an extensive support staff. The contract with Walsh & Associates was approved.

A Building & Grounds motion on considering including a new AV technology for Ryerson Fellowship Hall (with an estimated figure) in the capital funds campaign was discussed and approved. A motion was approved referring to B&G the task of creating a kitchen renovation plan, with price, to report back to session by no later than the March 15, 2016, session meeting for possible consideration for inclusion in the capital funds campaign.

Session discussed the provisions of the Burianek Trust.

It was noted that the property next door is not under consideration for inclusion in the capital campaign. Prior to dropping the subject entirely, session voted to postpone any conversation about the property next door until the March session meeting.

Concerning naming the columbarium for Reg Cooper and Jackie, it was suggested calling it the Cooper Columbarium. After a brief discussion, a motion naming the columbarium the FPC Cooper Columbarium was approved.

Elder Carol Ulch gave a brief update on the next steps in REALM long-range planning. Deacon Jeremy Fletcher has agreed to serve with REALM planning. The group is going to reorganize to include chairs/moderators of the

ministries.

Elder Jim Claypool gave a brief update on the personnel searches - the searches are on.

Session approved the addition of explanatory information to the fossil fuel overture and forwarding it on to Presbytery. (It is the same motion that was previously approved to send to Presbytery, but with supporting documents included.)

A motion was approved setting 10 a.m. as the FPC summer worship time.

Session approved asking the clerk to write a thank you to Mary Ellen and Jerry Stamp for their profound service with communion preparation over the years.

Elder Richard Van Rheeden gave a recap of the February 6, 2016, Presbytery meeting held at FPC. There was a worship time in the morning, lunch at noon, a Camp Wyoming presentation after lunch and various motions discussed and voted on in the afternoon.

A motion adjourning with sharing of joys and concerns, followed by prayer, was approved. Elder Judy Whitford closed the meeting with prayer.

The next session meeting will be held March 15 at 7 p.m. in Coover Lounge.

EAT OUT GROUP

Azul Tequila
720 Pacha Pkwy
North Liberty, IA
319-665-2656



March 17
6 p.m.

Hosts: Ed & Jane Cranston, 339-1102

First's Family

If you have a news item for the First's Family News that you'd like to share, please submit it for publication by April 1 to tammy.foster@firstpresbiowacity.org. Thank you!

March 15-31

3/15 Eileen Gieswein
3/16 Willard Will
3/17 Michael Anderson
3/17 Keith Long
3/17 Duane McNeal
3/17 Earline Moll
3/19 Elizabeth Aubrey
3/19 Neve Heimer-Lang
3/19 Sharon Raffensperger
3/24 Cooper Kirschling
3/25 Mary Bergman
3/26 Rebecca Blair
3/26 Andrew Marsh
3/30 Sara Burton
3/31 Ken Goddard
3/31 Nadine Oehler
3/31 Doris Yoder



Wish These Friends a
"Happy Birthday!"

April 1-15

4/1 Leroy Bain
4/1 Milord Mahinga
4/2 Bonnie Bender
4/2 Mary Hanna
4/3 Travis Martin
4/3 Sue Olson
4/4 Bob Dillin
4/4 Jacquelyn Harb
4/7 Trevor Smith
4/8 John Koch
4/9 Lee Kirsch
4/9 Joyce McMaster
4/9 Lee Van Voorhis
4/13 Lauren Fehr
4/13 Jeremy Fletcher
4/13 Bob Yager

Congratulations!

- ◆ Hailey Fay ranked 2nd in the State of Iowa for her solo in Class VII for the City High Dance Team. She ranked 5th as a freshman and 7th as a sophomore. The City High Dance Team competed at nationals and received 11th in the nation for their small group jazz portrayal on bullying. Before that they placed 1st at State. Hailey is currently competing for her dance studio National Dance Academy and receiving high points overall placements and Title Division rankings. Hailey Fay is the daughter of Nile and Heather Fay and sister of Tyler Fay. Grandparents are Duane and Betty McNeal.
- ◆ Dr. Rebecca Blair has been invited to present a paper at the Oxford Education Research Symposium March 16-19 at Oxford University, UK. The Oxford Education Research Symposium gathers a group of 30 higher education scholars from around the globe. This is the fourth straight year that Rebecca has been invited to present higher education research and serve as a respondent in the Symposium. In 2006, Rebecca was named a Fellow of the Oxford Roundtable.

Congratulations to mother Tulizo and father Lipanda.

Byema Lipanda was born February 28 to Tulizo Stany and Lipanda Byema. Following a Congolese custom, their son has his father's last name as his first and his father's first name as his last. This custom varies from sect to sect, with over 400 Congolese sects. They live within the Blue Deacon Neighborhood.

Please keep these families in your prayers ...

- Family of Bob Chadima, Helen Chadima's brother-in-law and Kitty's uncle, who died March 5;
- Elaine Tarnutzer and family, on the death of her Aunt Katie, her mom's last sibling.



Known to have been hospitalized:

Lee Van Voorhis

(Continued from page 2)

passions is not a goal. Striving to find unity in our generous support of each other's priorities and passions should be our goal.

- One of my personal goals is that we try to take care of years of wear and tear, and future needs, in this one campaign. This is an alternative to having a series of campaigns, of diminishing results, over multiple years. I believe such a stretched-out process would wear down our congregation. This emphasis on getting everything needed done in this one campaign makes it critical: We are attempting to address all building issues that we might face over the remainder of my ministry and for several years beyond my time. Having been blest by God through our building in the past, I feel we are called by God to bless those who inhabit the house of the future.
- Our fundraising specialist will do a preliminary calculation as to how much our members might be willing to give. One rule of thumb I have seen used over the years is that congregations often can manage campaigns of 2.5 to 3 times the size of their annual budgets. You and I should not underestimate our congregational capacity for giving if we challenge ourselves in the service of God.
- Financially speaking, there is no good year or bad year for having a capital funds campaign. Historically and in my personal observation, churches have found that campaigns can be successful in any economic situation. When people are concerned about the future they can be more generous toward the church, because in such times they are focused on Christ's goodness. When people feel rich and confident, they can ignore Christ and have sole confidence in their own accomplishments. This can make them less than generous.
- We cannot use the endowment corpus or the Burianek trust to fund this campaign, and we shouldn't want to do so. The church of the next generation will need income from these assets to muscle through its challenges. This will be the case especially if all predicted mega-trends come true.
- Typically campaigns like this one go beyond current congregational members and connect to other interested individuals and organizations (stakeholders) in the community that might lend support. Think about the community groups that use our building regularly and the individuals in those groups.

- Because congregations are called to worship God in the beauty of holiness and to minister to the poor, congregations seldom have the budget room to create reserve funds for large capital needs. Think about it: Would you give the church money to put in its saving account for years, rather than having the money in yours? Probably not. Most of us give pledge money for the church to spend in the current year for the glory of God, and hopefully enough for the church to keep sufficient cash in reserves to pay for sudden, yet modest, extra expenses. This is what we have done at First Presbyterian Church over the last eight years through strict budgeting. This means that, uniformly, churches like ours address the expense of large capital projects through the means of a capital campaign like the one anticipated.
- The challenge of meeting an annual budget each year is really **not** an argument for refraining from having a capital funds campaign. This is mainly because mission-driven congregations will always have greater ambitions to meet need than pledged annual resources will allow: Faithful congregations will always try to stretch further than annual pledges will allow.

Please let me know of any additional questions that arise for you prior to the formal launch of the campaign, during which many questions will be asked and answered.

Capital fund campaigns are a way for congregations to thank God for blessings already received. Equally so, they are joyful opportunities to work together to prepare for the future. I look forward to joining hands with you to accomplish this great work, to the glory of God.

God's love and blessings, and my prayers for you.

Your pastor,

Sam

He's alive! Flint reunited with parents in USA

Members of our FPC family, Milord Mahinga and Syphoriana Nyabenda, along with their children, were honored last summer to be Habitat recipients of the 2015 Memorial Build. You will be inspired by the following thank you - it chronicles refugee survival to joyful living in Iowa City.

Thank you for supporting our efforts to create safe, decent and affordable housing this year. Your gift this year helped Flint Mahinga, son of Milord Mahinga and Syphoriana Nyabenda, who are partnering with Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity (IVHFH) to build and own the 2015 Memorial Build house. Flint is just weeks from the ultimate holiday gift, living in a new house that his parents own. Fourteen-year-old Flint is a refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the majority of his life he has lived separated from his parents. In the midst of tribal wars and a civil war in his home county, his father made a decision that most parents cannot imagine. As Milord prepared to escape to a refugee camp in Tanzania, he determined that his infant son might have a better chance of survival with his family living outside of a camp in another country. During the 10 years inside a refugee camp, communication with family members caring for Flint was nonexistent. With constant news of wars, death and hardships in their home countries, Milord and Syphoriana presumed Flint was among the lives lost in the turmoil.

After years of uncertainty and living off of food rations, Milord and Syphoriana finally got news that they were selected to come to the US as refugees. The news was bittersweet as they always dreamed to reunite with Flint and grow their family once safety and security was established. In 2010, with heavy hearts, they made the trip to the U.S. and began to search for a place to live and employment. After several months in the states, Milord and Syphoriana were amazed to hear from family in Africa—Flint was alive and well! Preparations for a reunion in the US were quickly made, and Flint was finally returned to live with his parents. The family has since grown with the addition of Flint's siblings Leticia (5), Israel (3), and Jesse (5months).

While their living conditions have improved immensely, Flint and his siblings have yet to experience the stability a house can provide. Living in a small, two-bedroom apartment, the family lacks adequate living and sleeping space. The active children also desire a backyard of their own where they can play together throughout the year. Your generous support allows families like Flint's to realize their dream of homeownership.

Thank you for believing in our mission and our work. Please follow our families on our web page at www.iowavalleyhabitat.org and on Facebook to see that you are making a real difference in their lives.

Peace,



Flint Mahinga (top right) is an active member of the FPC youth group and youth choir and is one of our 2016 confirmands.

If you telephone the church office sometime between 12 noon and 1 p.m. and are directed to voicemail, please be patient. Staff takes 30 minutes a day for shared food, fellowship, and team building, so the actual time varies according to the needs of the church. At other times we may be on another line or in another part of the building addressing a ministry need. We will return your call!

And if you can volunteer to help answer the phones, that would be an answer to prayer.

MUSIC IN MINISTRY

~by Darlene Bergman
Director of Music and Liturgical Arts

TRANSITION 2016

Noun | **Transition** | Definition:

1. a movement, development, or evolution from one form, stage to another
2. passage from one state, stage, or place to another
3. a musical passage leading from one section of a piece to another

I find it intriguing that by definition the word transition has a musical meaning as well as a generic one. The musical definition resonates with me because I do plan to make the passage from my “musical work” here at FPC into the next section of my life’s musical composition. Some of you are still learning of my decision to retire on July 1. So it is that each week someone from the congregation greets me with either congratulations or grief over my decision. Some express concern for the church’s future without my leadership. While I’m honored by that loyalty, I believe that the church is well positioned to thrive after I step away. God will provide someone who will not only continue the fine tradition we’ve known but will, with God’s help and YOURS, lead us to the next “movement” of this church’s song.

Let me elaborate on two words in that last sentence: 1. God’s help and 2. YOURS. You and I have built a relationship with each other and with Jesus Christ. But God is always about the creation business. “See, I am about to do a new thing. Now it springs up, do you not perceive it?” (Isaiah 43:19) Though for some reason, we in the church find change scary, God finds it to be full of opportunity. I do believe that through prayer God will send to us a person who has an enthusiastic, innovative, nurturing spirit as well as a heart for ministry and holistic musical depth and gifts. I have no doubt that God will provide someone who will lead us onward with great conviction, great wisdom, great beauty and great love.

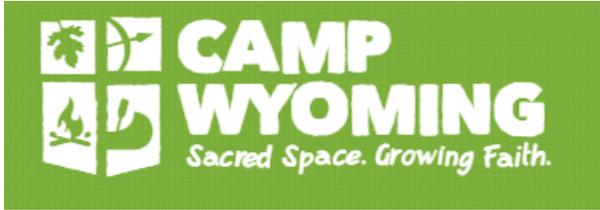
This leads to the second part of the equation—YOU. The music ministry of any church is the people, not the director of music. My role has been that of handmaiden, offering support of and for your song. The congregation will continue to be among the great choir of saints! So be welcoming to your new “conductor,” greet him/her with open hearts and voices, and continue to sing lustily your praise to God. And the supporting choirs in the loft don’t exist if there are not dedicated singers who faithfully live out their call, using their gifts to lead God’s people (the congregation) in song.

Those in the music and arts ministry have expressed a medley of responses to my news, and some have verbalized “when you leave, I will leave too.” While I’m honored by the intention of that statement, when I hear it, I find it troubling. The choir and the church’s music ministry is a team effort, one that I’m called to be only a part of. After much prayer, I do feel a call to step away from my leadership role, but unless that is your call too, I urge you to continue your partnership in ministry, and to make the transition with this new director to the next phase of the musical composition that we are all a part of. After all, my successor will certainly offer fresh insights and new energy to the “work of the people—the liturgia.” If there’s one thing you can do to celebrate and honor my ministry among you, it would be for all of you to continue to serve God with your musical gifts, to be supportive, and to empower my successor.

Many have asked me: will you stay in town? (for now, yes), does Marv plan to retire now too? (no, not yet), will you still worship here?, will you sing in the choir?, will you be available to answer questions and mentor the next person if needed? These are hard queries. Worshiping here as a member of this congregation, while at the same time offering space for my successor offers a certain amount of tension between roles that only time and space will resolve.

This is my church home. It is important to me that the music ministry continues to feed God’s people. I will do everything I can in my leave-taking to set the next person up “for success” with careful notes, resources, and a support system, but I intend to remain here in a non-intrusive way that gives blessing to the next minister of music to establish themselves and shape the future that God intends for us. As we make this “transition” together, I invite you to listen to God’s call and discern what your role is in this new “passage” of the church’s song. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

**\$\$Presbyterian Women?
Don't they give scholarships for Camp
Wyoming campers?\$\$**



Yes, it's true. Your First Presbyterian women's group provides scholarships for our young members to attend Camp Wyoming for one or two summers. Camp Wyoming is a Christian summer camp and year-round retreat center located in Jones County, Iowa. First-time summer campers are eligible for a \$200 scholarship. Campers returning for a second summer can receive a \$100 scholarship. Registration for the camp is now open — the first summer camp session opens June 19.

Interested families should register their campers using Camp Wyoming's online registration. Visit the camp's website at campwyoming.net/summer-camp/. The registration process will allow parents to fill in the amount of church support they will receive for their camper. The camp will bill Presbyterian Women for

the promised scholarship amount in early June. Families will need to pay a deposit at the time of registration. Any remaining balance after the scholarship will be due when the camper arrives for their camp session.

Your Presbyterian Women are proud to support our young campers. Our fundraising event to support this mission has been rescheduled and will be held on October 9. Watch for details later this summer — it should be tasty.

If you have questions about the scholarships contact Carol Kirsch at 325-2559 or carolkirsch52@gmail.com.



**Benefit Recital
Planned**

Taylor Mayne, one of our Music Interns, will be hosting a **Benefit Recital**,

5:00 pm on April 24th here at FPC. Taylor is a senior vocal performance major at the University of Iowa and has been the early service cantor and tenor music intern in the Sanctuary Choir since August of 2015. The recital will consist of art song, arias and musical theatre pieces by composers such as: Handel, Rossini, Mozart, Sondheim, Rogers and Hammerstein, Schönberg and more. All proceeds will go toward tuition for his participation in the 2016 Franco-American Vocal Academy. Taylor was chosen to perform the lead role of Vincent in Gounod's Mireille, which will be performed in Périgueux, France. During his stay in France he will perform in at least two vocal recitals in southern France and will receive language and vocal coachings. Please join us in supporting this young man's study abroad. Who knows, he may be the next Pavarotti!



**SPRING CARE
PACKAGES**



Each fall and spring, the Board of Deacons sends care packages to members who are away at college or serving in the military. Boxes of practical, and not-so-practical, items are sent to

let those who are far from home know they are close in thoughts and prayers. Would you like to have your family member receive a care package? If so, please e-mail Rhonda Barr at JOBTEennis@mchsi.com, by April 3. Please include an updated mailing address for each person to receive a care package.

Farewell! **TGIF: Farewell to Jim Cochrane**

Join us Friday evening April 22 for a TGIF: Farewell to Jim. Jim Cochrane, our youth director, will be moving back to Minnesota on May 1. He said the best send-off we could give him would be one really successful TGIF (Thank God It's Fellowship) event. Translated that means lots of people. Mark the date on your calendar now and plan to attend. Do not bring presents; your presence is gift enough. We will start the evening with supper at 6 p.m. followed by fun and games. **EVERYONE IS INVITED.** Please RSVP to Judy Whitford at judy.whitford@firstpreswacivcity.org by April 15, so we can have enough food for everyone. Let's give Jim a fun send-off.

Equipping Ministry



Sunday Mornings in Ryerson Fellowship Hall

Join us **anytime** between 8:45 – 10:15 a.m. for a light continental breakfast with activities for children, youth and adults.

9:15–10:15 a.m.

Early childhood (Pre K–K) faith development will continue in the Creation Station.

Childcare is provided in the Nursery for children under 5.

Wednesday Morning Bible Study

9:30 a.m. in Coover Lounge.

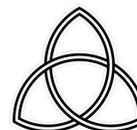
Join us as we continue our journey through the Bible; Sadie May & Pastor Sam will lead this lively discussion.

Come enjoy the fellowship, coffee and Word.

COVENANT is an in-depth Bible study in which people read and discuss the Bible together, and learn how to love God and each other – better.

Covenant represents a relationship, a living, breathing conversation.

An additional class is forming. If you are interested or have questions, please contact Judy Whitford at 351-2660 or by email at judy.whitford@firstpresbiowacity.org



Vacation Bible School

June 13 – 17, Monday
– Friday
9:00 – Noon



The Way (4th – 6th graders)

Join us for fun, food and fellowship activities for 4th

– 6th graders on Thursdays, March 31 and April 28, from 5:30 – 6:45 p.m. We will have fun and games at 5:30 followed by supper together. We will finish up in time to go to Children's Choir at 6:45.

It's Mission Trip Time!



The youth of FPC will be heading out on another mission trip this coming summer! June 19-24 they will be travelling to Rosebud Reservation, SD, to work for the week and

learn more about Native American culture. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Cochrane at jim.cochrane@firstpresbiowacity.org

Servanthood Ministry

One Great Hour of Sharing – Our Special Offering to be received on Palm Sunday, March 20

At the conclusion of World War II, Protestant churches in the U.S. made appeals for the relief and reconstruction of areas devastated by the war. In 1949, the leaders of several denominations formed a committee to organize an appeal to support their churches' separate campaigns. A program called One Great Hour was broadcast on March 26, 1949. The broadcast closed with a request that listeners attend their local church the following morning and make a sacrificial contribution. No exact measure of receipts was possible, but it was estimated that more than 75,000 churches world-wide participated.

The next year, the offering was repeated, using the name "One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)." At various times, OGHS was coordinated with both the Roman Catholic Bishops' Fund Appeal for Overseas Aid and the Jewish Passover Appeal. From the beginning, this has been an ecumenical effort. As denominations changed and merged, OGHS has varied from eight to 29 participating communions.

While each denomination allocates its gifts differently, the three programs supported by the Presbyterian Church USA's One Great Hour of Sharing offering are the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and the Self-Development of People. These programs work to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope...which helps recipients to smile indeed. To learn more about the powerful impact of this important offering, visit <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/2016-one-great-hour-sharing-video/> (make sure to allow adequate video download time). Further questions about this offering can be directed to Mission Committee chair John Barr at BarrJohnO@sau.edu or 319-541-3213.



FPC's CROP Team Sadie takes strides toward ending hunger



Members of our 1st Pres family will again take to the streets this spring to join others in our community for the annual Johnson County CROP Walk. This year, CROP walkers will leave Chauncey Swan Park in downtown Iowa City at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 3.

CROP Hunger Walks help to support the overall ministry of Church World Service, especially grassroots, hunger-fighting development efforts around the world. CROP Hunger Walks help to provide food and water, as well as resources that empower people to meet their own needs. From seeds and tools, to wells and water systems, to technical training and micro-enterprise loans, the key is people working together to identify their own development priorities, their strengths and their needs. In addition, 25% of funds raised by the local CROP Walk goes to the Johnson County Crisis Center.

New to the local CROP walk this year:

- Purchase CROP t-shirts
- Win some great prizes in a drawing at the walk on April 3
- Eat at Chili's as much as you can from April 3 through April 17; CROP Walk will receive 15% of your bill. Vouchers you need to take to Chili's will be available in Ryerson Hall Sundays & at the walk.

Visit the CROP Walk table in Ryerson Hall after Sunday services to drop off your check to support our CROP walkers, and / or to pick up your walker's envelope, then collect donations to support your walk or to support FPC's Team Sadie. Sadie May was the top FPC CROP fundraiser for years. Even though she has hung up her CROP-walking shoes, her long-time dedication to fighting hunger inspires FPC's Team Sadie.

Checks should be made out to CWS/CROP, with the walker's name or "Team Sadie" on the memo line. Please contact Mary Palmberg anytime with your CROP questions: mary.palmberg@gmail.com, 319-400-0388

A letter to First Presbyterians

Dear sisters and brothers of First Presbyterian Church,

May God's grace surround you. And those with ears, may you hear! This communication may sound alarmist, but here is the fact: The definition of the good news of Jesus Christ, as well as our discernment of who currently embodies it, is at risk. This pastoral letter is intended to awaken us to the issues and deepen our understanding of them.

Below is a quotation from evangelical theologian David F. Watson of United Theological Seminary of Dayton, OH, a United Methodist Church school. He articulates what I have been trying to express to all of you. You don't have to agree, obviously. I only ask that you hear and weigh the warning:

In 1934, at the age of 28, (theologian and pastor) Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote a letter to a friend about an upcoming conference that would involve members of churches from several countries and denominations. In this letter, he wrote, "We must make it clear—fearful as it is—that the time is very near when we shall have to decide between National Socialism and Christianity. It may be fearfully hard and difficult for us all, but we must get right to the root of things, with open Christian speaking and no diplomacy. And in prayer together we will find the way." . . . Bonhoeffer saw that one could not embrace the Christian faith and embrace the political tide of his nation that was so enamored with the Nazi party. The two simply were not compatible.

The necessity of such a distinction—between the values of our faith and the values embodied in large segments of the wider culture—is once again becoming apparent. It is alarming to see so many people in the United States embracing Donald Trump in his bid to become President of the United States. No, Trump is not Hitler, but he nevertheless embodies values that should cause serious concern among Christians. One of the great ironies of Trump's candidacy, however, is that so many of his supporters are evangelical Christians. While many evangelicals, as well as Christians of other stripes, oppose Trump, he doesn't need all of us. He only needs enough to get elected. Christian support for Trump is essential for his success moving forward . . . I myself identify as an evangelical, though this may not tell you much. The term "evangelical" has become rather diffuse over the last couple of decades . . . I will never support Donald Trump because I'm an evangelical Christian. He mocks everything Christians should embody . . . The time has come. We are going to have to choose between a false sense of national and cultural security and the values of Jesus. The xenophobic, privileged, narcissistic ethos that Trump embodies is antithetical to the values of Christ, who said, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it" (Mark 8:34-35)."

(David F. Watson, 2016. Musings and whatnot . . . : Trump, evangelicals, and the road ahead. Downloaded March 2, 2016 from <http://davidfwatson.me/2016/03/01/trump-evangelicals-and-the-road-ahead/>)

Watson does not believe that Trump will take our beloved country as far down the road as Hitler took Germany. Yet he realizes that the phenomenon of Christians selling their souls to an anti-Christian political figure is nothing new, and that such prostitution can lead to enormous suffering. On my part, I recognize that all of us have various opinions and emotions associated with the many candidates running for president. I believe personally that some of the other candidates are equally troubling and their positions inconsistent with my Christian belief about what constitutes "the good way forward, that we might walk in it" (Jeremiah 6:16). Nevertheless, I agree with Watson: I see in the Trump campaign a bright, sharp sword that allows us to separate

- on the one hand, a definition of "evangelical" that means possessing a love for Christ that may lead to political positions with which we vehemently disagree; versus,
- on the other hand, a definition of "evangelical" that means a naked quest for power at any cost.

Evangelicals of the former type sit in our own pews. Evangelicals of the latter type, especially in leadership positions across the nation, use Christian language to manipulate people's present anger and fear of the future for their own political ends. As Jesus said (Matthew 7:21), "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." To be clear, undoubtedly there are persons at all parts of the political spectrum willing to misuse religion to gain power, in this and other nations. Yet when the situation is so clear, as it is in the case of Pat Robertson's and Jerry Falwell, Jr.'s endorsements of Trump as the evangelical candidate, it obliges us to blow the whistle, throw the flag, and yell foul.

I conclude with four thoughts for your rumination.

1. Those who rally to Trump have legitimate reasons for anger and fear. Consider just these two facts: 16 million children live in poverty in this country. The gap between rich and poor is soaring. Rather than judging those who bring these

(letter cont. on page 14)



News from Friends of Pasrur

2016 Scholarships

We were thrilled to be able to announce that the scholarship goals for this year (2016) for the girls in the Pasrur Christian Girls Boarding House were met. The money has been sent over and all the girls will be able to go to school with their tuition, books, lodging, food, and health care checkups paid for.

Safety

There was a credible threat made to all schools in the Punjab province of Pakistan by the Taliban. In response to this, all the schools were required to put in even more security measures to keep the children safe. It has been an expensive but necessary process for Pasrur and for all the PEB schools. A positive outcome from this situation has been the pulling together of many different groups. The government, the police, and the parents (both Muslim and Christian) have all worked together to keep the children safe. For a few days, classes were held at other locations, often in people's homes. When all required safety measures were completed the children were able to go back to school at Pasrur.

2017 Scholarship Cost Will Increase

Due to a rise of expenses, the scholarships cost for next year (2017) will rise. This is unavoidable. The new amounts for Pasrur Boarding House students (which include all administrative costs) will be \$500 per scholarship for K-10 and \$750 for scholarships for 11th and 12th grade (post-secondary). This increase will be reflected in the automatic withdrawal costs now and in our scholarship drive next fall. We pray that this will not negatively impact our ability to meet our goal of providing scholarships for all the girls.



Needles, Hooks and Yarn

This small group comes together to share each others company while we knit and crochet. If you would like to join us, we would love to have you; we meet at Legacy Ridge from 9:00 - 11:00 a.m. on Saturday mornings. We are currently seeking plastic bags for a project; see display in the narthex. **Please recycle your bags, to help us, help others.**

For more info contact Carol Macon at 351-3847

FPC Book Club Invites You to Join Us

March 30 from noon to 1 p.m. in Ryerson Fellowship Hall to discuss *The Submission* by Amy Waldman

Bring your lunch and share in the fellowship. For more information, contact Jan Walker at 358-6737.



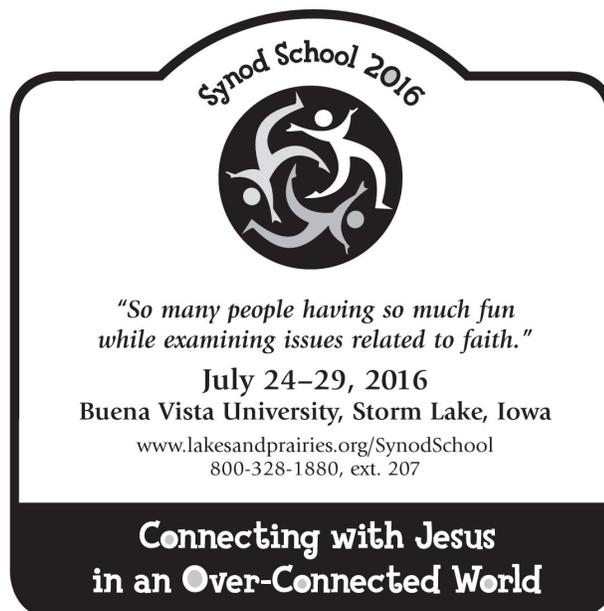
(letter cont. from page 12)

- facts to our attention as wrong, a more constructive strategy is to take their discontent seriously and even be grateful that it has been forced on our attention. Expressed anger gives us a chance to respond politically and economically to it. Indeed, we need to resist being trapped either by Trump or by the political circus around Trump. Instead, we need to give our chief focus to those whose desperate unmet need can undermine our democracy and its peace.
2. Mainline Christians have been too shy about stating their faith in the public square. We have confused humility with silence and low self-esteem. GK Chesterton once referred to the American experiment as “a nation with the soul of a church.” When we Americans try to exclude religion from the public conversation, and we refuse to engage in public discourse about religion, we betray our national character. We only leave a vacuum for the most virulently ugly forms of religion to assert themselves. To keep them confined, we of more reasonable, open-minded and negotiating faith must be willing to articulate our convictions publicly. To do so without coming across as coercive or manipulative takes skill based on practice. Yet it is necessary for us to speak in order to have a healthy American democracy (this is different, by the way, from civil religion that marries faith concepts to political rites for the sake of creating national conformity).
 3. The separation of church and state was never intended to keep faithful Christians out of office or prevent them from exercising their consciences. The separation was meant to prevent instituted government from coercing the institutional church and to prevent the church from using the instruments of political power to impose its will on the people. When we forget this constitutional fact, we open the door to the ugly religion found in 2, above. Faith talk in politics and political talk in church are normal for Christian citizens.
 4. Our mainline ignorance of the Bible is a weakness maintained by our failure to study it. The outcome of our ignorance is that we are unable to show our unchurched neighbors an alternative religious vision of Jesus, i.e. one that does not ignore his core message of the justice, mercy and faith associated with realm of God. Our inability to offer a definition of Jesus based on the Bible means our neighbor hears him defined by those who use Jesus to advance their own narrow agendas. Admittedly, in an academic community like ours, faith can be viewed negatively (even as superstition). Scholarship, science, the arts, the humanities – as well as the deconstruction of them - are of vital importance to us: They not only nurture our souls but also keep food on our tables. We don’t want religion to interfere with our personal economic survival. Yet, the blessings of our academic setting can only carry us and our neighbors so far. The human need for transcendent meaning, so ably explicated by Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, cannot be denied. If we are biblically literate and articulate in our faith, we can fill the “meaning” vacuum for our neighbors before other, more horrific presentations of spirituality do so. Democracy may be worth the risk we bear among our enlightened peers.

My hope is that whether or not you agree with my assessments found in this communication, you will seriously engage them. Thanks for reading.

Your pastor,

Sam



Presbyterian Women at FPC is NOT just Circle Membership!

There are opportunities for every woman in the church
to be involved in some way.

See how our women are making a difference!

Circle Meetings:

- Martha Circle will meet March 16 at 9:30 p.m. in Ryerson Fellowship Hall. Program and Devotions will be led by Anita Burnett, and Hostess is Jane Skinner

Synod Gathering Of Presbyterian Women

“Lord make me an instrument of your peace”

~from the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi



June 15-18, 2016, Sioux Falls, South Dakota

An exciting new venue for our Synod Gathering

Find registration information on the PW information panel in Ryerson Fellowship Hall.

Rags to Stitches

This group is under new leadership in the person of Nancy Warren. The group met to cut out the “guest bags” that will be filled and distributed during the upcoming Easter Season. Another project is in the planning stages to make some items for the UP Home in Washington ... stay tuned! The group meets on an irregular / as needed basis. Some work is done together at the church and the actual sewing is often done by members at home at a time convenient to them. There is ALWAYS room for new, interested persons to join. Speak to Nancy if you would like to be on the membership list.



Mark your calendars for these coming events:

- Annual Book and Bake Sale will be the afternoon of April 8 and the morning of April 9 Save Your Books!
- Annual Spring Brunch event will be at noon on May 3
- Camp Wyoming Scholarship Fundraiser Lunch October 9 following 10:30 a.m. worship

15th ANNUAL BOOK & BAKE SALE

Presbyterian Women’s Coordinating Team in cooperation with Four Oaks Iowa City will be holding their **BOOK AND BAKE SALE** on **Friday, April 8, from 3:00-6:00 p.m. & Saturday, April 9, from 8:00 to 11:30 a.m.** The proceeds from the sale will be divided between Presbyterian Women’s Coordinating Team and Four Oaks Iowa City.

The Presbyterian Women’s portion will be used to lend support to local human service agencies that they choose to support through their mission giving. Four Oaks Iowa City operates a Youth Emergency Shelter; PAL, an after school program for children needing more structure and supervision; and Educational & School Support Services. Four Oaks gives much support to children and families in our community.

We are asking you to collect and contribute used books (paperback and hardback), **CD’s, DVD’s, & audio-CD’s, puzzles and comic/graphic books.** (No encyclopedias, condensed books, magazines or textbooks please.) We will also be asking for contributions of baked goods. *Sign-up sheets will be available the middle of March.* The staff of Four Oaks will also be collecting items and baking for the sale and will share responsibility for setting up, helping during the two-day sale, and cleaning up.

We also will **need your help distributing flyers** around town or taping one in your car window. **We also need you as customers! You’ll be glad you came!**

If you have questions contact: Sharon Raffensperger at 351-6995 (jsraff63@gmail.com)

First Presbyterian Church

2701 Rochester Ave.
Iowa City, Iowa 52245



Public Office Hours:

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday
Ph 319-351-2660 www.firstpresbiowacity.org
Except holidays or when announced

Sundays

Worship	8 a.m.
	10:30 a.m.
Equipping Time	8:45–10:15 a.m.
Adult Ed.	9:15 a.m.
Fellowship	9 a.m.–12 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church Staff

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC &
LITURGICAL ARTS

Darlene Bergman
darlene.bergman@firstpresbiowacity.org

DIRECTOR OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Dennis Pedde
dennis.pedde@firstpresbiowacity.org

ORGANIST

Melissa Moll
melissa.moll@firstpresbiowacity.org

ASSISTANT ORGANIST

HANDBELL CHOIRS DIRECTOR
Edna Mae Fisher
edna_mae_fisher@firstpresbiowacity.org

MUSIC MINISTRIES INTERN

Emily Guthe
emily.guthe@gmail.com

DIRECTOR OF JR & SR HIGH YOUTH

Jim Cochrane
jim.cochrane@firstpresbiowacity.org

INTERIM DIR. OF EQUIPPING MINISTRY

Judy Whitford
judy.whitford@firstpresbiowacity.org

MINISTRIES COORDINATOR

Tammy Schroeder
tammy.schroeder@firstpresbiowacity.org

NURSERY SUPERVISOR

Debbie Torrens-Semler
dtorrens-semler@mphawks.org

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Saira Steen
saira.steen@firstpresbiowacity.org

CHURCH MANAGER

Tammy Foster
tammy.foster@firstpresbiowacity.org

SEXTON

Gerald Hill
gerald.hill@firstpresbiowacity.org

PASTOR

Sam Massey
sam.massey@firstpresbiowacity.org

Holy Week Worship Schedule

Palm/Passion Sunday: March 20

8:00 a.m. Worship with Communion

8:45 a.m. Breakfast and Activities

10:30 a.m. Worship with Palm Processional

Maundy Thursday: March 24

7:00 p.m. Tenebrae Service

Great Easter Vigil: March 26

7:00 p.m. Service of Light, Word, Water & Communion

Easter Sunday: March 27

8:00 a.m. Reflective Worship

9:00 a.m. Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt

10:30 a.m. Festive Worship with Brass, Choir & Organ

Childcare provided for all services