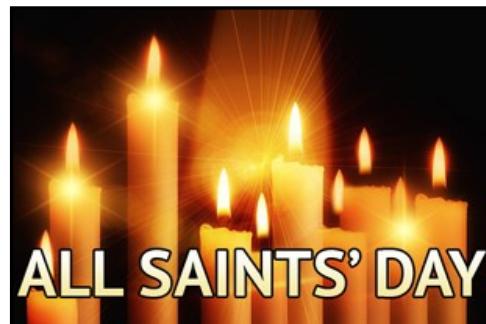


The Communion of Saints—Sunday, November 4

Who are the saints of the church? That is the question we will explore this **All Saints' Sunday, Nov. 4**. Though we especially remember those saints who are no longer with us on earth on this day, we are also reminded that we are living saints—embodiments of Christ to and for one another—here and now. We all have unique gifts and talents to share with the world to enrich the lives of those around us and become saints to one another.

On All Saints' Sunday, we lift up the lives of those children of God who have died in the past year, giving thanks for their lives and faith. We remember their lives and those of other faithful believers who have been examples of what we are called to be and do. During a time of remembrance we will have an opportunity to **light a candle in memory of or in honor of a saint** who has had an impact on our lives.

As we commemorate these saints, we are reminded that we, too, are invited to be communicants with Christ Jesus' body, both the body that is the church and the resurrected body. We are called to join those believers in witnessing to God's action in our lives. They become one of the "Cloud of Witnesses" who run the race of faith in this time and place and with this people, as well as beyond all times, places, and peoples in order to bring about the Realm of God on earth.




Buy your pumpkins at FPC this year!

We are getting our very first Pumpkin Patch! This is an incredible way to connect with our neighbors AND warmly welcome our community to meet us! Pick up your pumpkins during these times:

Sundays: 12–6 p.m.
Monday–Fridays: 11–7 p.m.
Saturdays: 9–6 p.m.
Halloween: 9–5 p.m.

Pumpkin Patch is here from October 13–November 1

Inside this issue:

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The Administration and Personnel Ministry and Session of First Presbyterian Church are pleased to announce that Layne Sheetz – church member, graduate of Fuller Theological Seminary (Master of Divinity) and husband and dad – has agreed to become a part-time employee of First Presbyterian Church! Layne will be taking on .25 FTE position description bearing the title, for the time being, of Assistant to Minister of Equipping Programs for Youth, Young Adult and Hospitality. It is a long title for a quarter-time position. Yet anyone familiar with the church knows how hard Layne has been working, as well as the long hours he has been putting in, all for the sake of encouraging his life-partner Anna in the ministry of Jesus Christ here at FPC. Layne comes with a rich experience in coffee fellowship ministry. **Welcome, Layne!**



Dear sisters and brothers of First Presbyterian Church,

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! I write on a beautiful day of sun, clouds, flowers and butterflies. It is basset hound weather! The church's kitchen and boiler renovation continues uninterrupted. While I am aware of a wider world of hurricanes and stormy politics, I feel gratitude to God for the day, our congregation's leadership and our opportunities for love and service. Life is good.

In a few weeks and yet two weeks prior to you receiving this newsletter, we celebrate World Communion Sunday. The event first arose from the ashes of the Second World War. The church of Jesus Christ, perhaps shattered by its inability to prevent two world wars as well as the excesses that led to the Great Depression, rededicated itself to the peace of Christ and Jesus' vision of the Realm of God. We have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Parent of us all. While acknowledging our differences, we gather at one table of the Lord, sharing in God's bountiful mercy as broken sinners.

The same commitment to work diligently toward a new world reflective of the love of God, one less prone to the global annihilation of God's creation, resulted in the creation of the United Nations (UN). Presbyterian political leaders, as well as other Christians, shared in its birthing. No wonder that, even after 70 years, we hear echoed the vision of God in the flesh in the very human organization originally tasked to bring to the world both peace and justice. We may recognize that for some people, the easy equation of the UN's vision with the Realm of God may sound as if I am twisting the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world's standards or endorsing all UN

actions. Not at all: I recognize that the UN falls far short of its own vision. Yet I contend that if the UN's vision were fully realized, it would look uncannily like the Garden of Eden. This truth is the deepest reality of our confession that Jesus Christ is Lord of All. At our human best, we see God's ultimate intentions for us.

Elder Ed Cranston recently commented to me how our own expression of the Realm of God reminded him of the visionary goals of the UN. I conclude with what Ed shared with me and Reconciliation Ministry that he helps to lead.

Did you know:

There is a Johnson County chapter of the United Nations Association of the United States of America. The United Nations Association is a non-partisan movement of Americans who support the goals of the United Nations and believe in international cooperation.

The Johnson County Chapter, iowauna.org/johnsoncounty, works with other organizations to:

- Host public events like the annual Night of 1000 Dinners and Celebrating the World's Children
- Support Iowa City students who attend the Iowa High School Model United Nations
- Raise funds for refugee relief
- Advocate for U.S. leadership in the UN
- Build support for these 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals



I recently joined the Iowa United Nations Association as a board member and feel these 17 sustainable development goals align with our own emphasis here at First Pres. Church.

Ed Cranston, Iowa United Nations Association board member

Thanks, Ed!

Faithfully, Your pastor,

Sam

First's Family

If you have a news item for the First's Family News, please submit it for publication by November 1 to tammy.foster@firstpresiohcity.org. Thank you!

October 15-31

10/16 Ed Mason
10/16 Dwight Younkin
10/17 Dorothy Hoak
10/18 Joye McKusick
10/18 Darlene Bergman
10/20 Emilio Estudillo
10/22 Bonnie Neubauer
10/22 Jeff Franz
10/23 Audrey Van Roekel
10/23 Faryle Nothwehr
10/23 Dan Thedens
10/24 Sally Staley
10/24 Andrew Franz
10/28 Bob Mikelson
10/28 Jerry Thorius
10/28 Janet Walker
10/30 Jane Skinner
10/30 Greg Muilenburg



November 1-15

11/3 Jeanette Winegarden
11/3 Louise Gisolfi
11/3 Carol Spangler
11/3 Sara Schwartz
11/4 John Staley
11/4 Nancy Weber
11/5 Dorothy Seebohm
11/6 Dan Katalinich
11/7 Andreas Soemadi
11/8 Duane Thompson
11/8 Alyssa Selmer
11/9 Riley Smith
11/11 MaryEllen Stamp
11/13 JJ Deryke
11/15 Nick McMillan
11/15 Joel Hurt
11/16 David Stochl



Known to have been Hospitalized:

Sue Van Duyn-Phipps, Anita Burnett, Tony Warren and Jan Wicks.

Please keep Ruth Van Voorhis and the family of **Lee Van Voorhis** in your prayers. Lee passed away October 5. Services will be in Sioux City, IA at a future date.



Baptized in the Holy Spirit

Lucille Mae Hamilton, daughter of **Jocelen and Bradley Hamilton**, was baptized on July 8 by Pastor Sam at First Presbyterian Church; Pastor Sam baptized **Braxton Chase Burtness**, son of **Chase Burtness and Jordan Kolarik**, on September 23; **Oliver Layne Sheetz**, son of **Anna and Layne Sheetz** was baptized October 7, by Pastor Sam Massey.

Deacons Bench



Care Packages for members who are away at college or serving in the military. Twice a year, boxes of practical and not-so-practical items let those who are far from home know they're being thought of. If you would like to include your family member on our care package list, please e-mail the name with postal address to Jeff Orris (jorris@mchsi.com), by **Sunday, November 11.**



Thanks to **EVERYONE** who donated and participated in the 2018 Walk to End Alzheimer's.

TeamFPC exceed their fundraising goal and raised over \$1,000.00, making us a member of the Champions Club!



This was the first walk that FPC has been officially involved in. It was inspired by the 2017 Congregational Health Ministry series on Alzheimer Awareness and my own mother's struggle with the disease.

I wanted to do something to raise awareness for the need for research funding ... TeamFPC was born. It was an honor to be apart of this wonderful event and speak as part of the opening ceremony. I am very proud of TeamFPC; that includes ALL of YOU, friends and family members.

Sincerely Blessed- Tammy Schroeder



Not in photo: Greg & Jeri Smith and Sue VanDuyne-Phipps

Recommendations from a Financial Advisor

Want to itemize your tax deductions in 2018? Pre-pay your 2019 pledge before 12/31/2018 and you may exceed your standard deduction and receive extra tax benefits for your generosity. The congregation benefits and so do you! The standard deduction in 2018 for Married Filing Jointly is \$24,000; for Head of Household it is \$18,000; and for a single person, it is \$12,000.

Did you know that some persons will be doubling their anticipated pledge this year? By doing so, the contribution that they make helps them exceed the standard deduction. Next year they can take the standard deduction. They will then alternate that pattern in subsequent years. In this way, the taxpayer itemizes in one year and takes the standard deduction in the following year. The congregation benefits and so do you!

Also, If you are 70½ years old, you are required to begin taking a minimum distribution from your IRA, 403b or 401k. You can reduce the tax burden on that income and satisfy the Internal Revenue Code by transferring the required minimum distribution directly to the church. The congregation benefits and so do you!

Parents' Night Out—Friday, October 26

Who: Parents of children, 8 years of age or younger

What: An evening of free childcare so you can enjoy some "me time"!

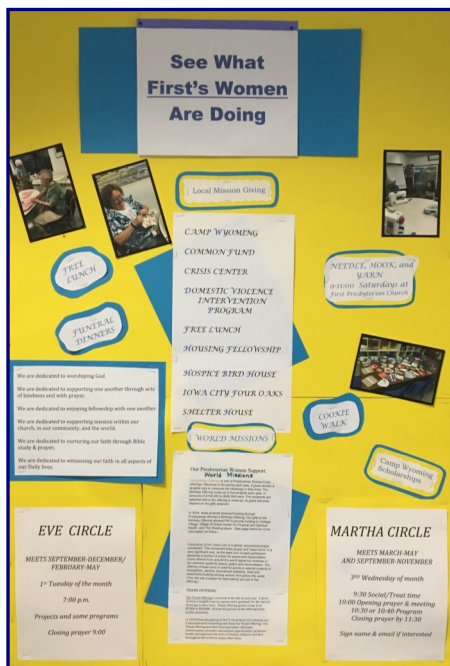
When: Friday, October 26 from 5:00-7:30

Where: Lower level of the church

Wait! Really??! Yes, really! On October 26, adult volunteers will supervise young children in fun activities along with a light supper. To reserve a spot for your child(ren), email Nancy Gardner at nancy.hayes.gardner@gmail.com by Friday, October 19. (Note: We usually hold Parent's Night Out on the third Friday of the month, but are rescheduling due to the Hawkeye homecoming parade on the 19th.)

A big thank you to last month's volunteers: Jane Cranston, Mary Ellen Stamp, and Debbie Beermann! Adult volunteers are always welcome to join in the fun! If you'd like to help out, email Nancy at the above address.





First's Women Evolving

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? (James 2:14-16)

For many years Presbyterian Women (PW) at First Church has been guided by this notion of "good works." Thousands of dollars have been donated to mission projects and local social service agencies. These funds come from church lunches, the cookie walk, the book sale, pledges from individual women in Eve and Martha Circles,

funeral receptions and various smaller fundraising projects. In the last 2 years funds have been donated to the Take Away Hunger Iowa project; the Domestic Violence Intervention Program of Iowa City; the Mayor's Youth Empowerment Program; the Iowa City Free Lunch Program; First Church's Free Lunch team; the Bird House Hospice Home; Operation Backpack; the Common Fund of the Consultation of Religious Communities; Systems Unlimited; Four Oaks; Shelter House; and the mission budget of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Worldwide.

For many years the various groups and projects that fall under the umbrella of the Presbyterian Women (PW) of First Church have been led by the PW Coordinating Team. The group has sponsored social functions, Bible studies, and eastern Iowa PW gatherings, but the primary responsibility of the team has been to administer and disburse the funds raised throughout the year. The Coordinating Team has been searching for new members and officers for the past couple of years — an effort which has so far

been unsuccessful. Thus, it has become necessary to "edit" the role of the leadership team down to this primary function of managing funds. The team has made the decision to cease pledging to the PW of the Presbytery of Eastern Iowa in order to redirect all pledge funds to local service agencies. The team will be meeting only occasionally as needed to make decisions regarding disbursing funds. We encourage input from the women of the church in this endeavor since the funds come from the dedication and efforts of these women. Martha and Eve Circles will continue to collect the Birthday, Thank and Least Coin offerings administered by the national Presbyterian Women's organization. The Coordinating Team will ensure that these special offerings are directed appropriately. All activities with willing leaders will continue.

Finally this "editing" has led us to update the PW name — opting instead for **First's Women**. Please take a look at our new bulletin board at the back of Ryerson Fellowship Hall near the door. We encourage all of the women of the church to consider joining one of our many activities and to help us to continue to do our "good works." Or better yet, create a new group or activity that could raise funds for service agencies. A walking group? A cooking group? A biking group?

Please direct suggestions or questions to Carol Kirsch, Rebecca Stockman, Laurie Thedens or Nancy Ross.

Khuda Hafis, (Hoo-da Ha-fis)

"God be with you"

Urdu for Christian Leave Taking

We are busy getting ready for our trip to Pakistan. We have seven people going from here: Amy Nicholson, Rev. Lisa Ross Thedens, Jane Cranston, Anna Sheetz, Paul Heidger, Ed Cranston, Pat Schnack, Rev. Kitch Shatzer. Amy's daughter, Emily, will be flying in from India. We plan to come back with pictures and video to share with all of you. Our commissioning will be Oct. 28.

By Jane Cranston



An Evening with the Soweto Gospel Choir

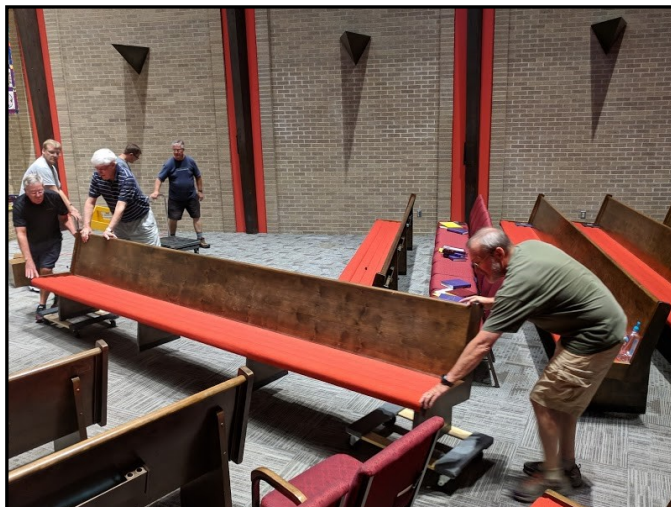
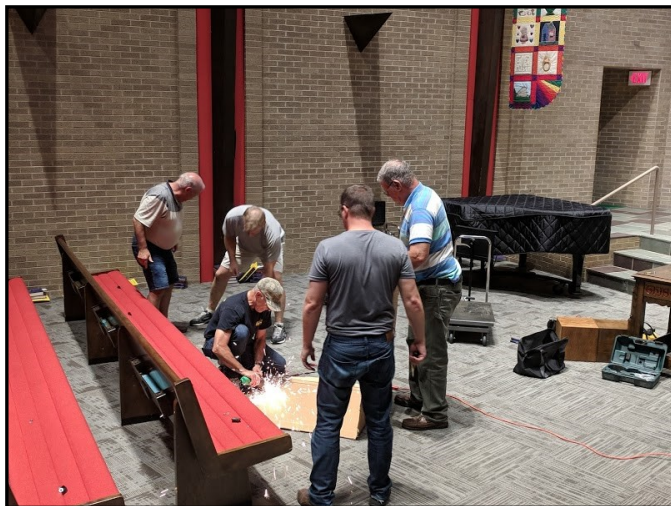
Monday, November 12, 2018

7:00-8:00 p.m., with a meet-and-greet to follow!

Hancher Auditorium, 141 East Park Road
Iowa City, IA 52242

We have been invited to a special event! As you might already be aware, Hancher Auditorium will be presenting the Soweto Gospel Choir in concert on Sunday, November 11. The Choir will remain in town for an additional day of community engagement following their Hancher performance, and we are invited to have fellowship with them on the evening of Monday, November 12th. This will be a gathering for members of local school, church, and community choirs, during which the members of the Soweto Gospel Choir will teach a song (and dance!) and answer questions about their work as touring artists and cultural ambassadors.

There are a limited number of spots, so please let Leah Bergman know if you are interested ASAP at leah.bergman@firstpresidiowacity.org or 319-351-2660.



A HUGE thank you to everyone who helped in the installation of the new chairs to our sanctuary. From planning and ordering, to unloading and unpacking, and removing pews and placing the new chairs, this was a big project, but many hands made light(er) work!



*Worship God with gladness!
Come into God's presence with singing.*

YOUTH CHOIR

Youth Choir is open to 4th–12th graders interested in singing and leading worship through music. We work throughout the year to sing, play, and read the Word of God so that the youth can lead worship several times throughout the year. Rehearsals start Thursday, August 30 at 7:30 p.m. and will be held twice a month through the fall. Contact Leah Bergman at leah.bergman@firstpreswacacity.org or call the church for more information.

YOUTH ORCHESTRA

NEW this fall! Many youth have expressed a desire to play in an instrumental ensemble made up of the youth at church. This group will be open to 5th–12th graders who play any instrument. If you are interested, please contact Leah Bergman at leah.bergman@firstpreswacacity.org or call the church. The schedule will depend on those who are interested. Consider this fun opportunity to play music with one another and for the glory of God!



Youth Choir September–December Schedule

Generally rehearsals will be on the first and third Thursdays of the month.

Thursday, October 18

7:30–8:30 p.m.

Thursdays, November 1 AND 15

7:30–8:30 p.m.

Thursdays, December 6, 13, AND 20

7:30–8:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 16

5:00–8:00 Worship at Oaknoll with pizza after

Monday, December 24

3:45–5:30 Youth Choir sings at 4:30 Christmas Eve Worship


Rehearsals will begin again Thursday, January 10



WE ARE BLESSED!

Ten years ago this past August Sam Massey started his call to be our pastor at First Presbyterian. We celebrate his ministry with us and appreciate his dedication to the church, the community and to each member of First Pres. He has seen us through a few changes in polity, changes in Sunday services, staff changes, capital campaigns, the 175th anniversary year, and right now the building improvements. He has baptized and buried and in between shown us the love of God in his sermons and especially with the hugs for everyone after church.

Thank you, Sam. We've had some very good years together and we expect many more!



JUNIOR CHOIR

Pre-K–4th Grade
Sunday Mornings
Beginning Sept. 23

Junior Choir is made up of all children grades Pre-K–4th. This group will sing and play together on Sunday mornings at the beginning of the [SPACE] break-out times. If your child is interested in singing, come on Sunday mornings before church for education time and music! This group will sing occasionally in worship during the year. Contact Leah Bergman for more information!

Youth Ministry

Join us at FPC Youth Group—Thursday nights! All students in grades 7–12 are invited to this incredible group!

Thursday, October 18; 6–7:30 p.m.

So what exactly is the balance we should reach between religious and spiritual? Come join us and let's figure it out!

Youth Choir meets at 7:30pm.

Thursday, October 25; 6–7:30 p.m.

Join us for our MISSION NIGHT and POTLUCK DINNER! We'll learn about FPC's Mission Partner, the Pasrur school and make gifts for the girls for Anna to take to Pakistan in November! Afterwards, we'll play a Big Game!

Thursday, November 1; 6–7:30 p.m.

Let's talk about Jesus. What's so special about Him? Hmm... Join us!

Youth Choir meets from 7:30–8:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 8; 6–8:30 p.m.

Our November MISSION NIGHT and POTLUCK! Bring a dish and get ready to serve!

Thursday, November 15; 6–8:30 p.m.

We'll pause our discussion about Jesus. For now. As Christians, we never stop talking about Him! Why? Come find out!

Youth Choir meets from 7:30–8:30 p.m.

FPC PUMPKIN PARTY Sunday, October 21, 6–8:30 p.m.



All are Welcome!
Join us for Fall Fun, Crafts, and maybe some Mischief and Mayhem! Join us in Ryerson Hall in your Costume! We'll have all sorts of prizes! Come join us and have a SCARY GOOD TIME!

We know that the world is a big place. That doesn't make us helpless. We can create The World We Want—but first, we need to learn about the world.

Come, all ages, and join us every Sunday, from 9–9:30 a.m.

We'll have our breakfast together and then learn about the world around us!

THE WORLD WE WANT



Sunday, October 21

Children's Sabbath & Salvation Army Sandwiches

Come celebrate the special place that children have in God's heart. We'll have a beautiful prayer led by our youth and a time of reflection. You'll be given a special devotional written by FPC's youth and children to help you remember this special day throughout the week. Join us at 8:30 a.m. to make our monthly sandwiches to send to Salvation Army, Iowa City.

Sunday, October 28

United Nations Day

A terrible infection has begun infecting the entire world! Assume your role as one of ten countries in order to create coalitions, recommendations, and resolutions. Come learn about the United Nations and see if you can save the world in only 30 minutes.

Sunday, November 4

Christian and Citizen Day

Come learn how advocacy can be discipleship. This day is based on the 1966 PCUS document which says:
Our faith is rooted in the work and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We, as people trying to live into the call of discipleship, must take our faith outside church walls by getting involved in pressing issues today.

Sunday, November 11

Diwali

Diwali is likened to the Hindu Christmas. Come make stringed flowered necklaces and lotus flower sand art as a sign of hospitality! We'll also learn the tale of Diwali—Ram and Sita's Homecoming!

Sunday, November 18

Thanksgiving & Salvation Army Sandwiches

Come have PIE FOR BREAKFAST! Bring your favorite pie to share. We'll celebrate Thanksgiving together and learn the meaning of this holiday. To show our gratefulness for bounty, please join us to make bagged lunches to take to the Salvation Army.

How will YOU make [SPACE] for faith this Fall?



Kids from 4–10 will learn all about God! Come play games, learn about incredible Bible heroes, and learn how YOU can live a life for God! We are so excited to have you join us!

Live your [Soundtrack]

re **Affirmation**

explores your individual melody as a human and how, together, our song can be greater than any wrong notes, especially if our words are used for action to further the Realm of God.

The **WiredWORD™**

If you're curious about the intersection of ancient Bible Times and the world we live in, this is the class for you. This covers this weeks' news stories and allows us to wrestle with how to be faithful in 2018.



IT'S JUST A **PHASE**

A New Parenting Group for Any Phase!

This new class is back by popular demand! First begun at VBX this summer, this was such a supportive group we decided to bring it back full time!



We Need You!

FPC Equipping Ministry wants to be the best we can be! But we can only do that with YOUR help! Anna is looking for leaders to help with The Wired Word, FPC Kids, Youth Group dinners and More. Please contact Anna at anna.sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org if you are interested!

δώδεκα • (do'-dek-ah) • Twelve

Camp Wyoming Winter Retreat
January 18–20, 2019

**Signups begin
Sunday, October 21!**



First Presbyterian Church is excited to invite you to a new life-changing discipleship experience. This program is designed for high schoolers (who will complete sophomore year in Spring 2020) and adults.

- Each participant will be responsible for a year-long commitment to this program. There will be:
- An in-depth Bible study (June 2019–2020)
- Once a month meetings to learn and grow together in community
- Research into Israel and the Ancient World
- Fundraising Opportunities
- A Capstone 2 week trip to Israel and the Holy Land (June 2020)

This is a NEW program. The first informational meeting will be held after worship on Sunday, November 18. Signups and deposits due Easter 2019. Please contact Anna for more information.

FIRST Fall FPC-Family Camping Trip

12 campers braved the cold and rain to join us at Lake MacBride for FPC's First Fall Camping Trip! We only lasted one night (temperatures reached 39 degrees with rain on Saturday afternoon), but it was 24 hours PACKED full of adventure! We had nice and warm food all weekend, took hikes around the park and lake (we even found a playground!), AND took a ride to Wilson's Orchard! We took Old Bessey the tractor to the top of the hill and she gave up—right in the middle of the flooded creek! We almost got eaten by alligators! Fun was had by all and we cannot wait for next year! Hopefully there won't be rain and a cold snap next year! But please consider joining us at FPC's Second Camping Trip— August 2019!



Junior High Mission Trip



DOOR
See the face of
God in the City

DOOR: Chicago

Through DOOR's Discover program, groups spend time serving with a variety of local agencies and ministries and learning through evening speakers and activities. The experience is about more than preparing a meal at a soup kitchen or playing with children at a day camp. It is an opportunity to work alongside local community members, to learn from local leaders, and to listen to the stories of neighbors, clients, and churches.

Trip Dates: Friday, June 7–Sunday, June 9

Total Cost: \$100

Due: Sunday, October 21 (\$100)

*Scholarships are available

Heifer Ranch, in Perryville, AR Alternative Break



focuses on the core components of an introduction to Heifer International, service learning, educational activities and taking action. This is obtained through a variety of experiential activities such as team-building development, educational

sessions, overnight village experience and hands-on service projects in our Garden, Maintenance and Livestock Departments. All are designed to increase your group's understanding of the global hunger and poverty issues that Heifer International encounters in the field.

Come join us as we travel into Heifer Ranch's Global Village! We'll travel to Zambia, Thailand, Appalachia and more—without even leaving Arkansas. This will surely be a huge learning experience for us all.

Trip Dates: Saturday, June 15–Saturday, June 22

Cost: \$200 per student

Deposit Due by Sunday, October 21 (\$100)

Second Payment due Sunday, May 12 (\$100)

*Scholarships are available

FPC Book Club Invites You to Join Us

Oct. 31 *The Curious Charms of Arthur Pepper* by Phaedra Patrick

Nov. 28 *Exit West* by Mohsin Hamid



We meet the last Wednesday of the month

from Noon to 1 p.m. at 1095 Silvercrest Circle #223

(Legacy Senior Living– Scott Blvd)

Bring your lunch and share in the fellowship.

For information, contact Janet Walker at 358-6737

Wednesday Morning



Join us in Coover Lounge from 9:30–10:30 a.m.

The class is led by Pastor Sam.

We will be studying the Book of James.

New members are ALWAYS welcome.



January 25, 2019

The first Burns supper was held in 1801 . . . FPC's first will be held in 2019!

EAT OUT GROUP

Thursday,
October 18
6:00 p.m.



Twelve01 Kitchen and Tap is conveniently located at 1201 1st Avenue, Coralville, off of I-80

The restaurant is connected to the Coralville Hampton Inn and Radisson Hotel & Conference Center.

Hostess, Val Soemadi 319-354-1219

Save the Date!



PandaMania VBX
August 5-8, 2019

Reflections from a Pastoral Counselor . . .

(The Community Pastoral Counseling Service—CPCS—was founded and is still supported by First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City, along with five other congregations. At Pastor Sam's request, The Rev. Bruce D. Williams, pastoral counselor/licensed mental health counselor at the service – will be submitting articles for our benefit and reflection. CPCS is located at the Congregational United Church of Christ, 30 N. Clinton St. in Iowa City. Appointments can be scheduled at 319-337-2519. For more information, visit the CPCS website at <http://www.cpcsofiowacity.org>.)

In the movie THE HORSE WHISPERER, Grace experiences a very serious accident while riding her horse, Pilgrim. Annie, Grace's mother, learns that there is this fellow, Tom Booker, who works with horses in a different manner. It's as if he whispers to them—and Annie decides she wants to utilize Tom for healing.

Tom's style is to offer an invitation to try to establish a relationship by communicating care and respect in the hope of creating trust. Because it is a duet, not a solo, a relationship requires a dual decision, a mutual commitment. And either party is free to withdraw.

Such an approach parallels God's style. While God wants to be in relationship with humanity, it is presented as an invitation—which includes the freedom to drop out—and is never forced upon us. With any relationship, if we choose to drop out, it is important to ask what will the benefit/cost be of not continuing. Maybe God is the People Whispere. . .

Bruce

September 2018 Session Highlights

Clerk of Session, Nancy Weber

The session met September 18, 2018 in Coover Lounge at 7:00 p.m. Pastor Sam called the meeting to order and lit the Christ candle. Elder Cathe Franz led us in devotions and prayer. Cathe read a selection from the devotion site D365 that urges us to remember, when life can feel overwhelming, that God interrupts our lives to remind us of Him, and that we can, through our actions, reveal to others the love of God.

The August 26, 2018 passing of Carol Macon was noted. Her memorial service at FPC on September 17, 2018 was led by Pastor Sam.

Treasurer Larry Bruner reported that after contacting some of the folks whose pledges have lagged, he predicts they will get back on track. Elder Ed Cranston commented that it was good to see the Finance reminder in the bulletin.

Minutes of the August 21, 2018 session meeting were approved.

Elder and REALM Planning's Carol Ulch spoke about the Garden Project concept. A brief discussion followed. The following motions from REALM Planning were approved: 1) The Garden Concept, which was offered by the Equipping Ministry and discussed informally at the August 21, 2018 session meeting, for the purpose of creating a Church-wide activity to support the garden theme expressed in the Bible and to recognize the unique gift of Iowa's agrarian resources and culture. In support, 2) REALM Planning will be appointed as the general project manager for the Garden Project. It is understood that the Garden Project will be designed and managed to integrate all appropriate Ministries and other groups of FPC interested in the project. It is further understood that Staff will be responsible for project activities

in their assigned areas, and that a number of volunteers will be recruited to participate in all areas. And finally, 3) REALM Planning will convene a Task Force from the interested parties to serve as an advisory committee during the design and implementation of the project. It is understood that this design and implementation will include learning, worship, and outreach experiences for the FPC community as well as the Iowa community external to FPC.

Session approved the hiring of Layne Sheetz for three months beginning October 1, using endowment income, to fill the .25 FTE position of Assistant to Minister of Equipping Programs for Youth, Young Adults, and Hospitality. Permanent employment through the budget is contingent on the 2019 budget.

In June, Session approved to open our church building, if the necessity arises, to post-ICE raid gatherings for the sake of providing immigrant families access to educational resources that will allow them to return to their homes equipped and empowered to provide for their incarcerated loved ones and themselves.

REALM Planning's Jeremy Fletcher distributed copies of "2019 Budget Request Summary," the first installment of the plans gathered from the ministries. This will be revised and revisited in the next month. Appreciation was expressed by all for Jeremy and Carol's hard work!

Elder and Finance moderator Dale Kraus relayed a question about the kiosk. Does it need a sign next to it explaining that a portion of a donation goes to fees? There had been a sign there at one time, but it appears to have been removed. Finance is OK with leaving it down. Elder Richard Van

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

Rheeden planned to check if, when making a donation, the kiosk already alerts donors to the possibility of adding a small amount to cover the fees.

Elder Richard Van Rheeden will report on the status of planning for the Robert Burns dinner at the October session meeting.

Elder Dale Kraus closed the meeting with prayer. The next session meeting will be held Tuesday, October 16, 2018 at 7 p.m. in Coover Lounge.



Check out the newly revamped **Congregation Health Corner**, it is full of easy to read health and wellness related information. For more info, contact Maeleen Thorius.



Navigating Charitable Giving with The New Tax Code

Bob and Millie Youngquist, Endowment/Memorial Coordinators

As you probably know, the “Tax Cuts and Jobs Act” (effective as of January 1, 2018) has left many charitable donors rethinking their tax planning strategies. The standard deduction has nearly doubled – meaning that fewer people will be itemizing on their 2018 tax returns. However, there is good news for taxpayers who want to donate to our First Presbyterian Church Endowment while maintaining important tax benefits. Some strategies to consider are:

Establishing a Non-Endowed Donor Advised Gift Fund.

Establishing this type of account allows donors to “bundle” charitable gifts for multiple years within one tax year. This would allow a donor to itemize their tax deductions in that “bundle” year. In subsequent years the donor would make charitable gifts from that account and would file their taxes using the standard deduction. Only non-profit organizations could receive funds from this type of an account.

Donating appreciated securities. The stock market has been doing very well and you may be holding stocks that have appreciated considerably since you purchased them. In the new Tax Act, the capital gains rates have not changed; therefore, cashing in such stocks can result in large capital gains taxes—possibly raising your tax bracket. By donating these stocks directly to one of the church’s endowed funds, you can avoid capital gains taxes and receive the value of those stocks as a charitable contribution.

Making a distribution from your IRA (Individual Retirement Account).

While you may no longer benefit from a tax standpoint from your charitable contributions if you do not itemize, you can still, in effect, get a deduction by contributing a portion of your IRA to charity. A Charitable IRA Rollover allows donors to direct up to \$100,000 per year per IRA owner from their traditional IRA to charity, tax-free. This gift option is open to donors age 70½ and older who have a traditional IRA, and it counts toward your required minimum distribution. This distribution should be transferred directly to the church – not cashed in and then given to the church. Donating directly to the church will exempt you from related taxes.

Of course, the most important reason to donate to our church endowment is to help yield perpetual support to our church’s ministry and give thanks for God’s guidance in our lives.

For more information on any of these options, you may contact Bob and Millie Youngquist at endowment@firstpresiohacity.org. Also, please consult your professional advisors, as this column is not intended to be financial or legal advice.

Reflections on Ministry in Crucial Times

What makes people generous? I have known people born in poverty, and they have given away a great deal. I have known others born with silver spoons in their mouths, yet they resent the few crumbs they are called on to share. How do we explain it?

I will note that gratitude, unless constantly renewed, is a short-lived emotion. Left to their own devices, people—in the blink of an eye—move from gratitude to God to one of prideful boasting in their own accomplishments and their worthiness to have what they greedily grasp.



In the church of Jesus Christ, we may oversimplify motivations for generosity. If you have the Spirit of God in your life, you generously give away your time, energy, possessions and money. Experiencing directly the love of God in your heart, you love.

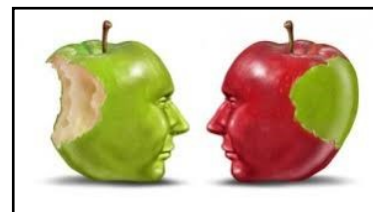
Naturally, we don't judge the mitigating circumstances in people's lives that determine their giving, yet we know them by their fruit. The bottom line typically is that people are generous or they aren't. People either give away a high proportion of what they have **right now** . . . or they don't.

Some of us give because we can't help it: It feels really good to give God joy. Others of us feel that good stewardship means that we know how the money is to be spent, and why, before we ever give it. Put another way, we need to be well-informed in order to be generous. Sometimes this can lead to "the paralysis of analysis."

Yet when the desire for more information leads to increased generosity, it is a double-blessing: The recipient receives both a deep sense of appreciation from the donor AND the money.

It is in this spirit that I am communicating with you.

This year's stewardship campaign is a big deal, a probable game changer, however it turns out. We are praying that God will inspire our people to be generous and will inspire those already generous to be even more so. We are praying for a blessing from the Spirit of God. **We are hoping and praying that our people will see the value of what we are doing and then, through pledging and giving, give us their "amen!"**



To promote generosity, I share with you that our core value in 2018 is almost 2000 years old: It is Jesus' call for us to seek first the Realm of God and its right relationships of justice, mercy and faith. In the same part of Scripture, Jesus says that you and I need to choose between serving wealth and serving God. Jesus knows that generosity creates community, and greed destroys it.



As did Jesus and the early church mothers and fathers, here at First Presbyterian Church we are trying to create a church community, one that exemplifies how all people globally should live together in joy, peace and love. Furthermore, we want to have a revolving door that draws people into our life and then sends them out to witness to the goodness of God seen in Jesus Christ.

To honor Jesus' call we must confront the demographic realities we face nationally and at First Presbyterian Church. The aging of our members has left us without the many tremendous workers and givers we have had to support the church's work in prior generations. In the course of human events, no demographic challenge is permanent. These times of shortage will pass. Nevertheless, in the short run—specifically, in the course of my ministry and beginning this year—we will have to make some decisions that acknowledge that "we're not in Kansas anymore."



If it is any comfort, we are not alone in this conundrum, although I hope we are more conscious of it. The Southern Baptists are also losing members. Mega-churches are not only disconnecting from younger generations of members; too many of them are also reinforcing the selfishness and greed of the generations worshipping with them. By doing so, they exacerbate our broader social problems.

So what are we striving to do here at FPC?

First, relying on the generosity of our members, we are renovating the church for new generations coming with new expectations. I know that some of us just don't "get" why we need to renovate or add some new items to our building. I understand: Some days I can be a rusty, dusty antique too!

Second, some programs and missions are being replaced, or at least being revised, in light of generational change. [space] on Sunday mornings is one example. You will see intentional efforts to enrich our Sunday morning worship with practices that are appreciated by members of diverse generations.



We recognize also that the mission field is no longer "over there" but rather "right here." This means our efforts are still devoted to charity and yet we are far more committed to befriend and serve the community. We join hands with people who are very different from us for the sake of the common good. This practice embodies the Realm of God in ways that money alone never can.

Third and finally, our 2019 budget strives to bridge this time of generational transition.



We continue our investment in energetic staff members who—in turn—invest in our congregation's people by empowering, equipping and encouraging them; and

We invest more heavily in programs of reconciliation (mission and justice), equipping and worship that invite us to experience personal transformation. Then we go out and transform our world.

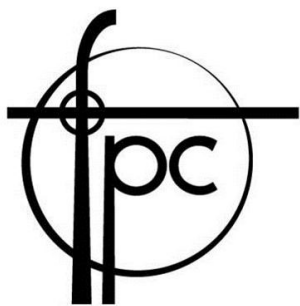
Please be generous this coming year in your pledging and giving. During this critical campaign, we could sure use your financial "amen." Even your "attaboys!" would be pretty terrific.

Blessings, Your Pastor, Sam



First Presbyterian Church

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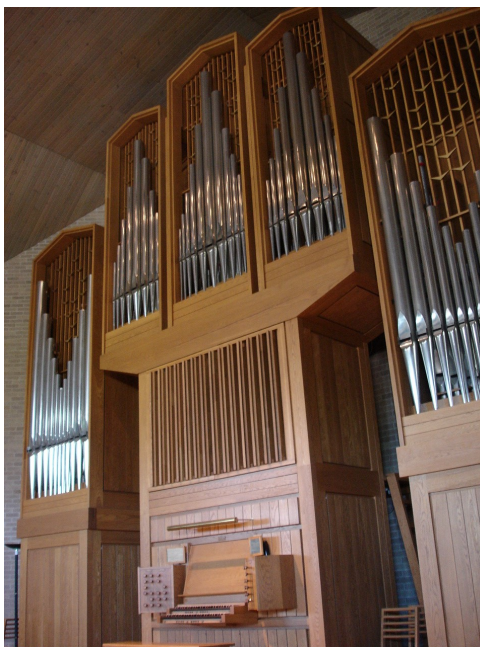
Public Office Hours:

9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. Monday–Friday
except holidays or when announced

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www.firstpresioiwacity.org

Martha Circle would like to invite everyone to come and hear a very inspiring speaker at our circle meeting, Wednesday, Oct. 17. Our social / refreshment time is 9:30 to 10:00 a.m., when our meeting starts. Our special guest speaker will be Nana Tackie from Ghana. She will speak to us about her faith and courage she experienced in her treatment for breast cancer. Come and hear about her journey.



Songs of Joy

*Organ music and poetry to
celebrate the 40th
anniversary of the
refurbished Phelps organ
(rescheduled from last fall)*

**Melissa Moll, Organ
Leah Bergman, Cello**

**Sunday, October 28
6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.**

First Presbyterian Church
2701 Rochester Ave,
Iowa City

Works by Bach, Muffat, Rheinberger,
Phillips, Hakim

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