

## FPC's COVID-19 Response

First Presbyterian Church has formed a team to monitor the COVID-19 situation in Johnson County in an effort to identify how the FPC family can best provide assistance to our neighbors who have been hit hard by the pandemic. We are in conversation with the Consultation of Religious Communities (CRC) about the needs in the community and how faith organizations in the area can coordinate efforts. As we all know, the situation is fluid right now as government, businesses, and larger service organizations put their supports in place. We will continue to work with the CRC to identify service gaps the FPC family can best help fill. The team will communicate with the congregation when a plan has been put in place and share more information about how our church family can help.

Many of you are already serving those in need through work, service organizations, or on your own. Thank you so much for your efforts and keep up the good work! If you are looking for ways to help, the United Way has posted a list of volunteer needs on their website.

[http://volunteer.unitedwayjwc.org/need/detail/?need\\_id=508831](http://volunteer.unitedwayjwc.org/need/detail/?need_id=508831).

This list will continue to change as needs are met and additional needs are identified. Please note these volunteer opportunities include strict requirements to help ensure the health and safety of all involved.

If you are aware of any service needs in the community, please share those with Jeremy Fletcher at [fletchj22@gmail.com](mailto:fletchj22@gmail.com). He will route those needs to the appropriate people and organizations. Also, please do not hesitate to contact Jeremy if you need assistance yourself. He will get that need to the people who can best help you.

Sincerely,

*FPC's COVID-19 Response Team*

*(John Barr, Rhonda Barr, Michelle Bessman, Sam Massey, and Jeremy Fletcher)*

## Free Lunch Responds

When the coronavirus began to dramatically change our idea of "normal" and Governor Reynolds asked that all restaurants only serve take-out or delivered meals, the Iowa City Free Lunch Program was faced with making radical changes. Instead of welcoming 90 to 100 daily guests to the dining room at 1105 S. Gilbert Ct. to enjoy a hot meal in a social setting, the Program made plans for handing out to-go meals at the door. Under the direction of Jama Lidral, one of the Free Lunch Program directors, we have been able to continue to provide a meal for the guests who rely on us while protecting the health of the Program's volunteers. So far about 90-100 meals are being handed out. Shelter House and the Free Lunch Program are collaborating in these times of uncertainty. Shelter House is keeping its residents in house during the day, and the Free Lunch Program is providing the noon meal. Normally, Shelter House residents are required to leave the facility and return in the evening at which time a meal is provided. At this point the Free Lunch Program is providing 30-40 noon meals per day for the Shelter House residents.

Many Free Lunch serving teams are primarily made up of seniors, causing concern and resulting in several teams temporarily stopping participation in the program. However, many of the teams (our First Presbyterian team included) have continued to provide a meal — either a hot meal in a clam shell box or a sandwich meal in a paper bag. The food isn't quite as elaborate as it used to be, and the use of disposables and plastic bags is too bad. Several guests have expressed hopes that things return to normal soon, and it's tough for volunteers to hand out a meal to someone standing out in the rain without being able to offer them a dry space where they can sit down and enjoy the food in a social setting.



*(Continued on page 3)*

*Dear beloved friends of First Presbyterian Church,*

Many of us on our church staff have charged ourselves to write you a brief note in this newsletter. Please see all the ones that follow this one.

Today the staff and I “Zoomed” with each other, allowing us to speak face to face in real time. What joy it was to see all of the home folks, even if only virtually! It reminded me how hard it is to not be with you on a regular basis: in worship, at Bible Study, when you drop in at the office, delivering home communion and at many other activities. I miss you.

Indeed, thinking of you makes me choke up some, a reaction I seldom have on any occasion. I am reminded what joy it is to serve Jesus Christ with you, and how painful it is to be apart without sure knowledge of when and where there will be a glad reunion.

The day is beautiful, with sun and increasing wind. They remind me of God’s grace beamed into our lives and the power of God’s Spirit, always with us. Yet I am aware, too, of a silent killer passing through our midst. Sin and death cling too closely right now: Sin makes it hard to be locked

in, either alone or with others. Death keeps us locked in, as surely as the Romans kept Jesus’ disciples in hiding for three days after Jesus’ crucifixion. We all pray earnestly that the threat of death will soon pass over, and it will. I assure you, it will. It may be Good Friday, yet this means that Easter is coming – not on the day we choose, yet it will come.

In the meantime, our staff folks are working diligently to provide programming through a variety of means. Check out the website, Facebook, YouTube and Zoom (the latter when invited to participate through STP). I can be reached at (319)400-9824 for chatting and/or prayer. Please keep the church supported in prayer and in your personal ministry. Many of you may be financially challenged; do what you can to be generous toward Christ and the church. Share with one another. Call one another. Pray for medical professionals, people susceptible to disease, governments trying to function, and those charged with charity and public order.

Love you all. God’s blessings.  
Your pastor. Sam

*Hello,*

Tammy Schroeder here, wishing you all health and happiness during this challenging time. I wanted to say that I miss seeing your smiling faces on Sunday mornings, when you pop into the office or running into you at the store. Please know that you are all a blessing to me!

We are all learning a new normal and I am confident with the support of each other and the grace of God we will come out of this stronger than ever.

If I can be of service to you while the office is closed, feel free to give me a shout via email at [tammy.schroeder@firstpreswacivcity.org](mailto:tammy.schroeder@firstpreswacivcity.org) or by phone at 563-889-0016.



*Dear Friends,*

During these tough circumstances that we are facing, I am grateful for the institutions that nourish us—the church, schools and organizations as—we find ways to connect with one another.

Isn’t it ironic that the same technologies we often blame for tearing apart our social fabric appear to be our best chance, now, of keeping it together?

As we experience God in different ways, may we nourish relations with ourselves and others.

Blessings,  
Tammy Foster, Minister of Stewardship & Management

*Dear Siblings in Christ,*

Many of you may have seen the meme shared that says “I didn’t plan on giving this much up for Lent.” I think we’ve all been feeling that. It is weighing heavily on my soul that I am not able to share in worship, song, and fellowship with you all each week. I have realized that there is no substitute for the energy and love shared when we gather for communal worship of God.

I take great comfort in knowing that we are all doing our part to share the love of God with our neighbors through staying at home, making phone calls, video chatting, placing hearts on our windows, and praying for one another. I pray for you all daily and look forward to that time when will meet together in joyful celebration and praise in our church building once again.

May the peace and comfort of the Triune God be with you all.

Love,  
Leah Bergman, Minister of Worship and Arts

# THINKING OF YOU...

*Hello!*

There is no way to overstate the impact the coronavirus has had on you. Parents who have trusted leaders and teachers who wear different 'hats' in their children's lives suddenly become the end all be all. Youth have a mixed bag of reactions, from anxiety of the unknown to happiness for avoiding dreaded topics at school (like the puberty talk), and the weight of grief that the high school seniors bear. There are older people in our community, cut off from families, resources, and routine for fear of their lives. The weight of this season is too much—and although we cannot physically help, the Church is trying to create ways to bring joy and hope into your worlds.

We know that Lent is a hard season of hard emotions, and now the universal loneliness. How incredible that we get to spend Easter, the day Jesus triumphed over lonely death, together in new ways. Not celebrating in rote ways that the church can sometimes bring, but in new ways that we can each define as we want. This is an incredible moment for parents to share the Gospel with their children. This is an incredible moment for children to share the Gospel with their parents.

We've tried to find ways to make those conversations easier. With new videos, content, and Zoom groups—we are excited to talk about the Gospel and what Jesus did for each of us on the cross. With creativity, silliness, and unreasonable hope, the staff trust that Easter day changes everything. What opportunities is Jesus offering now, in this moment in history that will change everything?

I can keep loving because Jesus is alive. I can be brave because Jesus is alive. I can have hope because Jesus is alive. I can be kind to myself because Jesus is alive.

With love and hope,  
Anna Sheetz , Minister of Equipping Programs

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*(Continued from page 1)*

However, as is often the case, there is also a silver lining to this whole situation. Several local restaurants have stepped up to supply hot food. Previously Table to



Table (T2T) has been the source of a lot of food for the Free Lunch Program. Right now T2T is on a temporary hiatus so these foods are very much appreciated. Several people and businesses have donated supplies that are needed to support the to-go meals, helping to conserve the Program's meager funds. Other

individuals not normally involved with the Program have volunteered to come in and help. The current meal model only requires 4 to 6 volunteers per day, so several families have come in as a unit. Hae-Won Song, who bakes

desserts for the First Presbyterian team, is baking desserts for extra days.

On March 19 our First Presbyterian team served a meal on the second day of the new take-out procedures. Several team members were understandably uncomfortable with participating, but we had enough help to pull it off. John Barr kindly stepped in to help us even though he's not regularly part of the team.



If you would like to help out the Free Lunch Program with your time, talents or donations, please contact Jama Lidral at [icfreelunchvolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:icfreelunchvolunteers@gmail.com) or Carol Kirsch at [carolkirsch52@gmail.com](mailto:carolkirsch52@gmail.com).

## Stay Connected

We would like our FPC families to stay connected. If you are not receiving emails from FPC and would like to, please email your name and email address to Tammy Schroeder at the church office.

- **Church Grounds and Sanctuary open to all**
- **Check out our labyrinth to enjoy much needed self care**
- **Ride bikes in the parking lot (use caution—as always),**
- **Release your worries at the Prayer Post**
- **Chalk our sidewalks (tubs with chalk available at entrances)**
- **Have some quiet time in our sanctuary**
- **Please practice social distancing guidelines**

## FPC Staff have a whole new plan of attack!

With all that's going on, it feels like we're always on the defense. We've got plans to put us on the offense!

**Each day of the week, you'll receive an email blast and a Facebook post.**

**Email blasts come directly to your phone, computer or iPad!** Each day, you'll receive a short devotion from a staff member and a message from each ministry to give you the most up-to-date information:

**Mondays**—Devotional by Sam Massey with message from the Support Ministry or Administration Ministry

**Tuesday**—Devotional by Layne Sheetz with message from Reconciliation Ministry

**Wednesday**—Devotional by Anna Sheetz with message from Equipping Ministry

**Thursday**—Devotional by Leah Bergman with message from Worship and Arts Ministry

**Friday**—Devotional by Judy Whitford with the Steeple to People message

**If you are not receiving these emails and would like to, simply email Tammy Schroeder at [Tammy.Schroeder@firstpresbiowacity.com](mailto:Tammy.Schroeder@firstpresbiowacity.com) and request to be put on the list.**

Each day of the week, find an inspirational message on our **First Presbyterian Church of Iowa City's Facebook page!**

**Sunday**—SPACE Sunday morning education at 9 a.m. on ZOOM, Live Worship on Facebook at 10:30 a.m.

**Monday**—Equipping Video from Anna and Layne Sheetz

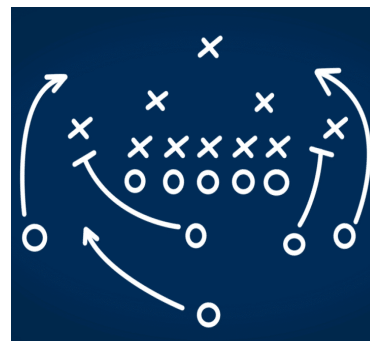
**Tuesday**—Pastor Sam's Bible Study

**Wednesday**—Equipping's Update Mailchimp and a Worship practice video by Leah Bergman

**Thursday**—Pastor Sam's Bible Study

**Friday**—Anna Sheetz will read a Children's book and give a short devotion and prayer

**Saturday**—An Invitation to worship with us again on Sunday!





# First's Family

If you have a news item for the First's Family News, please submit it for publication by May 1 to [tammy.foster@firstpreswiowacity.org](mailto:tammy.foster@firstpreswiowacity.org). Thank you!

## April 15-30

4/15 Maeleen Thorius  
4/16 Calvin Martin  
4/16 Graham Scott  
4/17 Candace Wiebener  
4/18 Betty Lacina  
4/19 Jamie Helmick  
4/19 Phoenix Skyles  
4/21 Gerianne Schaefer  
4/22 Bruce Guither  
4/22 Tyler Fay  
4/23 Jenny Kirschling  
4/23 Rachel Marsh  
4/24 Matthew Morgan  
4/26 Ann Muilenburg  
4/30 Vern Dengel  
4/30 Bill Preucil

## May 1-15

5/4 Kory May	5/7 Leah Bergman
5/6 Larry Bruner	5/7 Aurora Kennerly
5/6 Robert Ketterer	5/9 Sharon Van Dusseldorp
5/6 Kate Degner	5/9 Debbie Torrens-Semler
5/7 Kathy Clifton	5/10 Susan Van Duyn-Phipps
	5/10 Mike Phelps
	5/10 Jim Jacobus
	5/11 Barb Stanerson
	5/11 Ashley Nicholson
	5/12 Darin Schroeder
	5/13 Janet Bain
	5/13 Cynthia Chou-Liang
	5/13 Sully Steen
	5/14 Devin Smith



**Known  
to have been**

**Hospitalized:**

**Margaret Bruner,  
Tony Warren and  
Dale Hammers**

**Our  
condolences to:**

**Laurie Thedens and  
family, whose  
brother died; Mick  
Hammer, whose  
husband, Dale died,  
and to the friends  
and family of Don Kolsrud on his death.**



**Dear Pastor Sam & First's Family,**

*Thank you for the very memorable celebration in recognition of my time as treasurer at FPC. The years as treasurer have been very special to me. I was not only doing something I enjoyed, but I was also serving the Church of Christ, which has been very important to me and my family for over 50 years.*

*The celebration you had for me was overwhelming, and greatly appreciated. The gifts I received will be treasured forever—especially the beautiful plaque that was made from the pulpit used at FPC when we attended church downtown (Old Brick). It has very special meaning to me and will remind me of every pastor who served during the last 50 years! Of course the coffee mug and t-shirt will be “treasured” as well!*

*Thanks to everyone for the support I have received during these 20-plus years as treasurer!*

*Blessings,  
Larry Bruner*



# Ideas for Prayer at Home

**Breath prayer** is an ancient Christian prayer practice dating back to at least the sixth century. Historically, it is associated with the Eastern Church, particularly Greek and Russian Orthodox churches.

Known as the “Jesus Prayer” or “Prayer of the Heart,” early practitioners would repeat to the rhythm of their breath the phrase, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” In time, the prayer was shortened to, “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy” or simply, “Jesus, mercy.”

Breath prayer is a good example of “praying without ceasing,” as St. Paul admonished us to do, and has the potential to become as natural as breathing. It is intended to be a very short prayer of praise or petition, just six to eight syllables. The words of the prayer can be easily adjusted to your heart’s desire.

Praise is expressed by calling on one of the Divine names such as God, Jesus, Lord, Father/Mother, Christ, or Spirit. Or you may prefer another name of adoration. Your request or intention is comprised by the words following.

The breath prayer is usually said silently within. But some people sing it; others chant it. It’s your prayer; use it your way.

You may also use the breath prayer for a focused time during a daily spiritual practice. Simply repeat the prayer over and over-keeping your attention on the prayer. If your attention wanders, gently return to the prayer.

Begin with 5 minutes and gradually increase the time to 15 or 20 minutes as you become disciplined with the prayer. You may want to use a timer to free yourself from watching the clock. Some find it useful to write in a journal of their experience with the prayer.

## Instruction

1. Close your eyes and recall the line “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Be still, calm, peaceful, open to the presence of God.
2. With your eyes closed, imagine that God is calling you by name. Imagine that God is actually asking, “(Your name), what do you want? Like the blind man on the road to Jericho, Jesus kindly looks you in the eyes and asks, “What do you want from me?”
3. Give God a simple and direct answer that comes honestly from your heart. Write down the answer. If you have more than one answer, write them down. Your answer may be one word such as peace or love or help. It may be several words or a phrase such as “feel your presence” or “lead me into life.” Whatever your answers, they are the foundation of your breath prayer.
4. Select the name that you are most comfortable using to speak with God. Combine it with your written answer to the question God asked you. This is your prayer.
5. Breathe in the first phrase/word (generally your invocation of God’s name) and breathe out the second phrase/word (request or need).



## Tooth Brushing Prayer Song

(Sung to the tune “Twinkle Twinkle”)



Brushing teeth both morn and night  
helps my teeth stay clean and white.

Thank you God for mouths that chew,  
help them spread our love for you!

As I brush the gunk away  
hear this prayer I pray today.

## Laundry Prayer

When you empty the lint trap as  
you are doing your laundry say a  
quick prayer:

“God, help me remove the junk in  
my life that is keeping me away  
from you.”

As you throw the lint away remember that  
God loves you and forgives you!



## Go on a Prayer Walk

Take a walk around your  
neighborhood or town. Pray as you  
walk. Pray for your neighbors, their  
families, and any situations you know  
they are facing.

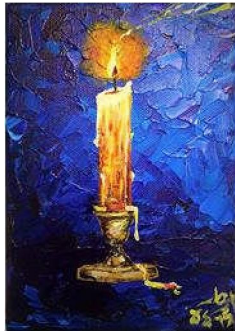
Quick, short sentences are ok! for  
example: “God, please be with the  
Smiths as they wait for their new baby  
to arrive and please help the baby to  
be healthy and strong.” “God, please help Mrs. Thomas while she’s  
sick and let her know how much you care for her.”

If you walk through town, stop to pray in front of city buildings, like  
the police or fire station, city hall, or the courts. Ask God to give  
wisdom and protection to your city workers as they serve your  
town.

If you walk through nature, thank God for the way you see God at  
work through living and growing things.



## EVENING PRAYER



*Before you begin, consider dimming the lights in the room. Light a candle as you prepare for worship.*

### OPENING WORDS

Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening     *Luke 24:20*  
and the day is almost over.

You are our lamp, O Lord.     *2 Sam. 22 : 29, 33*  
You lighten our darkness.  
You are our God, our strong refuge,  
and you have made our way safe.

### HYMN/SONG

*If you have a hymnal or songbook at home, choose a hymn that speaks to you and sing it together or simply read and meditate on the words.*

*If you do not have access to a songbook, perhaps you have a favorite hymn or song memorized that you can sing part of. Or, play a recording of a song or hymn that is meaningful.*

### PSALM

*One or more of these Psalms, or others of your choosing, may be read: Psalm 23, Psalm 46, Psalm 62, Psalm 100, or Psalm 130.*

### SCRIPTURE

*Choose one or more scriptures from the daily lectionary (<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/devotionldaily/>) or a scripture passage of your choosing.*

### HYMN/SONG

*If you have a hymnal or songbook at home, choose a hymn that speaks to you and sing it together or simply read and meditate on the words.*

*If you do not have access to a songbook, perhaps you have a favorite hymn or song memorized that you can sing part of. Or, play a recording of a song or hymn that is meaningful.*

### PRAYERS

Let my prayer rise before you as incense, O Lord, the lifting of my hands as an evening sacrifice.

God of glory, we praise you for your presence in our lives, and for all goodness that you shower upon us in Jesus Christ.

Especially we thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit ...

time to savor the goodness of creation ...  
the enjoyment of friends and family ...  
the pleasure and wonder of living ...  
all beauty that moves and delights us...

What else are we thankful for? *Share other prayers of thanks.*

God of grace, through Jesus Christ  
we are one with all your children  
and we offer our prayers for all whom you love.

Especially we pray for  
those worshipping in their homes during this time ...  
refugees and homeless people around the world ...  
those who need your guidance in helping their neighbors ...  
those who speak your word to others ...  
your blessing on those we too often forget...

What else do we pray for this evening? *Share any other prayers.*

God, be our light when shadows are falling. God, be our light when trouble is near. God, be our light as we watch and wait for the dawning of your new creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen

### CLOSING WORDS

Be patient, beloved,     *Jas. 5: 7-8*  
until the coming of the Lord.

Take heart, for the day of the Lord is near. Amen

Bless the Lord. The Lord's name be praised.

*As the service ends, consider sharing a sign of peace with those gathered.*

*This service is adapted from Saturday Evening Prayer in the Book of Common Worship. Reprinted by permission from the Book of Common Worship, © 2018 Westminster John Knox Press. All rights reserved.*

## Support the Common Fund Through the FPC Special Offering during April

As people of faith, we want to help our neighbors in need during this difficult time. But what is the best way to help those asking? Local congregations are routinely approached for assistance and have similar difficulties determining whether a request is really legitimate. Even if the need is valid, will a cash contribution actually get used for its intended purpose? Are additional services needed?

In response to these concerns, the Common Fund was created by the Consultation of Religious Communities (CRC), of which First Presbyterian Church (FPC) is a founding member. CommUnity (formerly the Crisis Center) at 1121 Gilbert Ct was chosen to administer the Fund because of its long-term experience and skill in handling crisis situations. At CommUnity, the Common Fund supports the Basic Need Program, specifically for housing & utilities. Clients also receive guidance in addressing underlying causes to help prevent situations from recurring. Funds are not given directly in cash; vouchers or checks are directed to the need. This program can

provide up to \$100 towards past due rent, water or energy bills, assisting about 20 households each week. Further details can be found at <https://builtbycommunity.org/basicneeds/>

Annually the CRC aspires to distribute \$36,000 via the Common Fund, with \$3,000 coming from members and friends of FPC in recent years. Our Special Offering during April is a new mechanism for providing donations.

Individuals wishing to donate can:

1. Mail in a check, written to First Presbyterian Church with "Common Fund" in the memo line.
2. Use the electronic kiosk in the narthex.
3. Use the link on the FPC website, <https://firstpresbiowacity.org/donate-online/>
4. Use the link on the CommUnity website, <https://builtbycommunity.org/donate/> **Under "My Donation is For," scroll to Emergency Assistance; Under "Additional Information / Comments" please note: Common Fund.**

Your prayerful support of this important community outreach is most greatly appreciated!

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## Crop Walk Report

While the planned March 29 Johnson County CROP Walk turned out to be a "virtual hike," nonetheless the support generated by the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church was quite real. A total of \$1,215 was given in support of the efforts of the six members of Team FPC, and an additional \$500 was added to the total by Reconciling Ministries, bringing the final total to \$1,715!

The money raised will be used to help people struggling to feed their families – both around the world and around the corner. In fact, 25% of all monies raised by the Johnson County CROP Walk will be given to CommUnity, formerly known as the Crisis Center of Johnson County. First Presbyterian's share in that is \$428.75. Both globally and locally, this support could not have come at a better time as so many families and individuals are struggling with the effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

A special thank you to the members of Team FPC: John Barr, Travis Martin, Jeanie Wade-Nagle, Sharon Raffensperger, and Geri Schaefer, as well as to all those from the church who gave their monetary support. And a huge thank you to Michelle Bessman and the members of Reconciling Ministries for the additional support they provided.

It is not too late to offer additional support. Local agencies such as CommUnity, the Food Pantry, the Shelter House are all being overwhelmed by the needs they are being asked to meet, as are the agencies seeking to respond to the global crisis. Please consider logging onto the Johnson County CROP Walk website to make an additional gift; or give directly to a local, national or global relief organization. Your efforts will be most appreciated.

Congratulations members and friends of First Presbyterian Church for continuing to step up to the challenge of being positive agents of change in our community and in our world.

Paul Akin, Team FPC Captain





## The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

This offering would have been collected on Sunday, April 12. In the midst of this world-wide pandemic it is so important for us to support those less fortunate than ourselves. 75% of the money raised on Easter (April 12) will go to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. 25% of the money will stay here in Johnson County, at CommUnity (formerly the Crisis Center). Please consider sharing the privileges you have received from God to help those with fewer resources. Please check the church web page for information on how to give during the COVID-19 crisis.

## Trunk Sale Postponed!

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, we will be moving the date of the Trunk Sale. During this time of quarantine, if you are so inclined to clean up and clear out unused and unwanted items, consider donating them to the Trunk Sale! More information will be shared once a new date has been decided. Please call or email Richard Van Rheeden or Michelle Bessman for more information.

## The Planned Earth Day Scrap Metal Collection has Begun.



There is a dumpster in the lower lot to discard your scrap metal. The dumpster will be picked up Monday April 20, so please bring in your old grills (no propane tanks) non running or junk mowers (please drain the gas and oil) metal lawn furniture or other metal items you wish to discard. Remember, no appliances or food cans (appliances require special dismantling and the food cans can be recycled in the normal way. The dumpster is currently about 1/3 full, so please help us to fill it up.



## News from Endowment Memorial Coordinators

*Bob and Millie Youngquist*

### June 1 deadline for the William B. and Sharon P. Oglesby Scholarship at The University of Iowa

In 2002, William and Sharon Oglesby, members of FPC, made a gift to The University of Iowa Foundation to establish a scholarship for deserving UI students who are members of First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City. Bill and Sharon believe in the power of education to live life joyfully and faithfully. The application form is available in the church office.

#### **Eligibility Criteria:**

- The applicant must be a member of First Presbyterian Church, Iowa City, Iowa.
- The applicant must be attending The University of Iowa in 2020-21.
- The applicant must have a minimum GPA of 3.0.
- Application must be made using the form available in the church office.
- The scholar(s) will be recommended by the FPC Scholarship Committee to The University of Iowa Foundation. The grant will be awarded by The University of Iowa Financial Aid office.
- The application and all supportive documentation must be post-marked or delivered to the church office (2701 Rochester Ave., Iowa City, Iowa 52245) no later than June 1, 2020.

All applicants, recipients and those not receiving a scholarship award will be notified no later than the last Friday in June. One or more scholarship will be awarded.

# Introducing Intersections

## An online study that finds the spaces of our lives where faith can be found.

This Zoom class will be created for all different generations, allowing for all different ages and stages to participate together, and inviting people from all over the USA to join us!

There will be 3 components for maximum participation:

1. A video that can be found on FPC's Facebook and website that will introduce the topics for discussion that week.
2. A Zoom group to discuss the topic at hand. With questions accessible to all ages, this is sure to be a dynamic time!
3. A recorded audio of the Zoom meeting so if you have to miss a group, you don't have to miss out on the fun!



With ever-changing news, with always new developments from CDC, there is nothing "set in stone" any more. For all updates on Youth Events, please see the Link each Wednesday on the FPC Daily Email Blast.



## Harry Potter and the Curious Crew

For those who have read or watched the Harry Potter series, this 199-chapter or 1066-minute series has a whole lot to talk about! Join Anna and Layne Sheetz for this 7-week series to discuss 7 theological topics with all 7 books!

Each **Monday** from Apr. 13–May 25, there will be a short video detailing the theological topic at hand, the Sheetzes' experiences with it, and what questions we are bringing to the group. If you are interested in providing an email, we will email you the information too!

Each **Wednesday** from Apr. 15–May 27 at 6–7:30 p.m., there will be a Zoom Group to discuss those questions.

Each **Friday**, under the "Intersections Study" on [www.firstpresbiowacity.org](http://www.firstpresbiowacity.org) will have the uploaded recorded sound file

(Those who have not read all the books are still welcome to join in; there just may be spoilers as we are talking in broad strokes!)

**People of all ages are invited and encouraged to join in!**

**[www.zoom.com](https://www.zoom.com) >> Meeting ID: 855 589 440 >> Password: 196315 or call +1 312 626 6799**

*Dear Sam and Anna,*

*Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to share about the positive impact of a camp experience with the congregation. We are so blessed to have the positive support and participation from First Presbyterian church. Blessings to you in your ministry.*

*Peace and Joy,*

*Keven Cullum,*

*Executive Director, Camp Wyoming*

**[SPACE] Sunday Morning Education has gone online! 9 a.m. Every Sunday, until May 17, 2020**  
Go to Zoom.com and click the JOIN A MEETING blue button on the top right of the webpage.

Meeting ID: 775 974 239 Password: 658762

If you do not have a computer, you can CALL in; simply dial this number: +1 312 626 6799

**The room will open at 9 a.m. each Sunday morning. This will be a time of conversation, coming together, and checking in with staff and friends. The classes will begin at 9:30 a.m. and go until 10:20 a.m.**

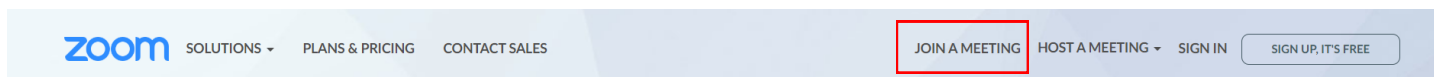
## HOW TO

Throughout this newsletter and various communications, I (Anna Sheetz) am giving shorthand instructions. The Equipping Team is using Zoom, an online “Ryerson Fellowship Hall,” if you will. It is an easy-to-use product once you get the hang of it. The shorthand instructions you’ll read are similar to this:

**www.zoom.com >> Meeting ID: 855 589 440 >> Password: 196315 or call +1 312 626 6799**

What this means, in long hand:

1. Go onto your computer, tablet or phone with internet capabilities. Type [www.zoom.com](http://www.zoom.com) into the search bar (or search Zoom in your search engine).
2. You’ll see this under your web address bar:



3. If you look to the right hand side, you’ll see “Join a Meeting.” Click that link (red box above).
4. That link will bring you a website with the dialogue box below. For our shorthand example above, you would type in the “Meeting ID” which is 855 589 440.

A diagram showing the 'Join a Meeting' dialog box. An arrow points from a generic version of the box to a version where the 'Meeting ID or Personal Link Name' field is filled with the text '855 589 440'. Both boxes have a 'Join' button at the bottom.

5. If you do not have the program downloaded, the first time you open it, Zoom will prompt you to download it. Please do so.
6. If you do have the program downloaded or once you do, you will see this dialogue box:

A screenshot of the Zoom application's 'Enter your name and the meeting password' dialog box. It has input fields for a name (pre-filled with 'Anna Sheetz') and a password (pre-filled with asterisks). There is a checkbox for 'Remember my name for future meetings' and two buttons: 'Join Meeting' and 'Cancel'.

You will enter your own name, which will allow us to know who you are once the meeting gets started! The Meeting Password is the second number in the shorthand example or **196315**. Once you type all the information, click “**Join Meeting**” and you’re in!

**Special Note:** If you are uncomfortable or do not have internet access, we still want you to join in the fun! In the shorthand, you will always see a phone number— **you can simply call into a meeting!** From a land line, a flip phone, even a rotary phone!



The Jeremiah Justice Initiative, formerly known as the Social Justice Book Club, is looking forward to going ONLINE, at least for the time being.

Jeremiah Justice Initiative, Sunday, April 19–Sunday, June 28, *\*Excluding May 24*  
6-7:30 p.m.

This spring’s book is “An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States” by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz. Please email Layne Sheetz at [Layne.Sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org](mailto:Layne.Sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org) to get on the list!

**www.zoom.com >> Meeting ID: 722-674-381 >> Password: 831672**  
**or call +1 312 626 6799**

## March 2020 Session Highlights

Clerk of Session, Ann Grosscup

Elders gathered in person or via ZOOM at 7 p.m., March 17, 2020, with a quorum noted prior to Pastor Sam calling the meeting to order by the lighting of the Christ candle followed by opening prayer.

### MOTIONS APPROVED:

- February 2020 financials.
- Approve minutes of stated session meeting Feb. 18
- Approve Dale Kraus as FPC 2020 Interim Treasurer
- Approve Special Session Meeting to welcome new members, Sunday, Apr. 5, 9:30 a.m., Pastor's Place.  
**(Meeting revision till at least late April due to approved FPC coronavirus protection plan.)**
- Rescind the following motion previously forwarded by Reconciliation Ministry and then approved at the May 21, 2019 stated session meeting: *'The Annual Trunk Sale will be held the second Saturday of June with the proceeds to go to the Green Team,'*  
and
- Approve the following motion in its place: The 2020 Trunk Sale designee be the Refugee Support mission fund of Reconciliation Ministry.
- Approve the use of First Presbyterian Church, Iowa City name in the Refugee and Immigration Association promotion of their June 2020 regional event.
- Approve a free will donation taken at the Community Easter Egg Hunt to benefit the Dodekah Ministry.  
**(Cancelled due to approved FPC coronavirus protection plan.)**
- Approve a Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser to benefit the Youth Summer Mission trip be held immediately after worship on Sunday, May 3, 2020.
- Approve Equipping Ministry working with Pumpkin Patch Fundraisers in October 2020 to benefit future Equipping Ministry projects.
- Approve Finance Cluster incorporating the functions of the Stewardship Committee and the 2020 Stewardship Campaign for 2021.
- Concur with sole Trust decision-maker Sadie May's decision that Burianek money be used, up to \$1500, to supplement other monies needed for Anna Sheetz to pay for the denominational financial requirements related to preparation for a pursuit of ordination.
- Concur with the following FPC coronavirus protection plan:

Church office closed and all church programs cancelled through Apr. 12, with the hope that we reboot everything Monday, Apr. 13. This cancellation will include Pastor Theogene's congregation.

Live virtual worship will be held each Sunday morning through Easter Sunday, Apr. 12, at 10:30 a.m.

The sanctuary remains open for prayer during the

daytime and early evening, as it has always during national crises, with the rest of the building locked down as much as is possible; yet obviously hallways and some rooms will be accessible (the installation of the elevator will continue during this time period). Signage at doors will let the public know that the sanctuary is open and the rest of the building is closed.

Re-evaluation of this closure be made on or about Apr. 1.

Normal, weekly cleaning of bathrooms and other parts of the building will continue, with warnings posted on the bathrooms that due to no more than weekly cleanings, "Use at your own risk."

Rhonda Barr, Tammy Foster and Dan Thedens are invited to put together a caring communication strategy for reaching out to the congregation by phone, especially those persons most at risk of undue isolation, with deacons, elders, care buddies, staff person, health ministry team and others being part of this organized action of caring as needed.

Easter Egg hunt is cancelled.

Tammy Foster will communicate to all other groups that they cannot meet in our building (parking lot is fine, within hours permitted by city and without use of our building). The exception is COMPEER, which has individual counseling Sessions. COMPEER will meet at their own risk and any doors opened must be checked to make sure they are closed and latched.

The website has the means to give financially to the church, and this action will be urged through the worship livestream.

All visitation will happen by telephone.

Hourly workers (nursery) who are not working their normal hours will still be paid in order to retain their services post-crisis. This is both a moral and pragmatic action. And

Solicitations for physically present volunteer help (rather than financial, for right now) from the community will be filtered through John Barr, in his capacity as communicator for the CRC, and broadcast to the congregation participants through whatever means available.

- FPC to be a temporary polling location on the following dates: June 2, 2020 and Nov. 3, 2020; Oct. 5, 2021 and Nov. 2, 2021. (There was discussion about re-visiting this decision depending on the status of Coronavirus (COVID-19.)

Written status reports were given for the Task Forces - Lil Creations Academy Advisory Committee; Volunteer; Treasurer Position; and FPC Fundraising.

Dwight Miller closed with prayer.

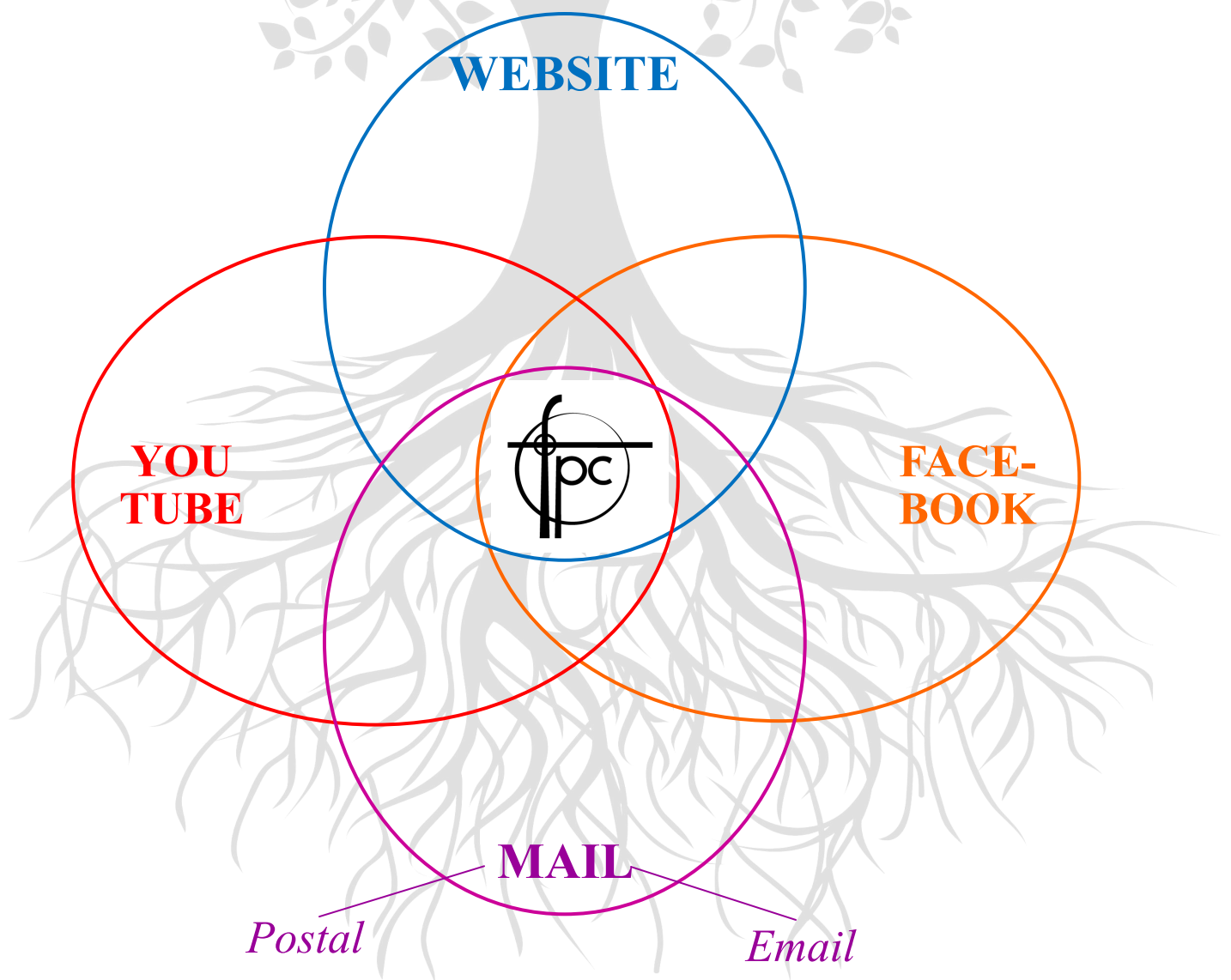
**Next meeting:** April 21, 2020, 7 p.m. in Coover Lounge  
Nancy Gardner, Opening Devotions; Vern Dengler, Closing Prayer



Please continue to support this congregation financially.

Our goal is to continue providing for our programs,  
outreach and staff, during this tough time.

Visit <https://firstpreswacacity.org/donate-online/> for a safe, easy way to give  
right from your home!



**Dear sisters and brothers of First Presbyterian Church,**

## *Message from Pastor*

The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

By now you realize the church will be closed through May 1.

Closure through June 1 is not out of the question. Below are links

and reminders for our continuing participation in ministry, although in new ways. Please see also the communication from our church's COVID-19 Response Team.

I never imagined that my daily routine would carry me back to The Grateful Dead. Yet the time has come

Dark Hollow

I'd rather be in some dark hollow where the sun don't ever shine  
Then to be in some big city, in a small room, with you upon my mind.

I'd rather be in some dark hollow where the sun don't ever shine  
Then to be at home alone and knowin' that you're gone  
Would cause me to lose my mind.

Well blow your whistle freight train carry me far on down the track  
Well I'm going away, I'm leaving today  
I'm goin', but I ain't coming back.

It may not be fun, yet self-isolation seems to be key to self-care right now. Who would have thought that prudent advice for the living could come through The Grateful Dead?

Yet I am sustained by another text, one from Isaiah 40:28-31:

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.

**29** He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.

**30** Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted;

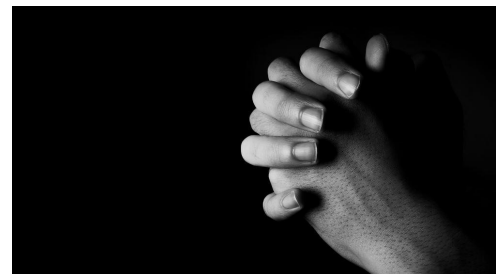
**31** but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.

I confess I grow weary of social isolation, being "at home alone, knowing that you're gone, would cause me to lose my mind." Of course, you and I are not gone: We are all here, just separate.

Nevertheless, we are waiting on God to save us, working through a variety of means including our own self-monitoring. While we do so, absent as we are from the furor of so many insistent obligations, we have a chance to renew our strength. Many of us can take a sabbatical rest and reflect on all the good that lies ahead when the circle is unbroken. Then together we shall walk, run and fly together. Sound good?

In the meantime, we can keep in prayer those for whom there is no rest, who scramble for survival or who scramble so that others of us might survive. Our medical professionals, first-responders, educators, non-profit charitable organization leaders and others are challenged to serve hurting folks safely. They need our encouragement, even applause, for their sacrifices. They will rest eventually. We can help bring that day sooner.

Love, prayers and blessings,  
Your pastor, Sam



## **A Message to Our Congregation from Veda Gill**

By Veda Gill and submitted by Friends of Pasrur

To my very dear friends,

We all are witnessing one of the most difficult and challenging times in our lives. COVID-19 continues to spread across the globe aggressively and has impacted all of our lives in ways we have never imagined. My prayer is that this letter finds you, your family and friends safe and healthy.

I would like to share my personal experience and also update you on the impact of this virus on the PEB schools and students.

I returned to Pakistan on February 9. Before landing we were handed a form on the plane to declare all the countries we had visited in the past two weeks. Once we deplaned, the entire plane was divided into four lines where 8 people with digital thermometers checked our body temperatures before being allowed to go through customs. This process took 20 minutes. I submitted my form and thankfully was allowed to leave.

I then left Pakistan on March 4 for my long-awaited trip to the Holy land. This visit to Israel was a life-changing experience: to walk on the land where Jesus walked and to experience where Jesus lived and played, to see those places where Jesus was crucified and buried, and to be on Mount Tabor where His transfiguration took place. The Bible became alive for me, and I do not have enough words to thank God for the opportunity.

Lastly, I came back to the USA on March 13 and landed at LaGuardia Airport in New York. The same procedure that took 20 minutes in Pakistan took 3 hours in New York. I finally reached home in Philadelphia, tired and exhausted. To my knowledge I did not come into contact with a person confirmed to have COVID-19; however, out of an abundance of caution for others, I decided to self-quarantine for 14 days. Currently, I am fine, in good spirits, and thankful to God.

As to Pakistan and the situation ... The airports were active but checking international travelers seriously. The schools are closed, and now the government offices will be closed down, too.

The PEB main office is working in shifts, as per the direction of the head of the government department. The principals are coming to offices for 4 hours a day. We are checking the body temperatures before staff

enter the office. The economic situation is grim as many offices are closing down, and people on daily wages are without jobs.

Interestingly, small business owners are checking the body temperatures of the customers before letting them enter in their shops. But in general, the masses have either carefree attitudes or are more worried as to how to feed their family than contracting COVID-19. They have the belief and faith that God is in control and their responsibility is to provide for their family.

As the government is becoming firmer on closing shops, the poorest of the poor are going to suffer the most, either by the virus or by hunger. It's a heart-wrenching situation.

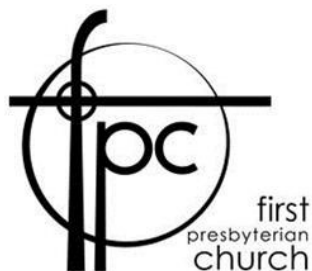
I have a huge concern for our student population sitting at home. We are trying to reach them, but social media and the internet are limited. The schools are providing homework assignments for the students, and parents are then bringing their completed assignments back. The teachers check the assignments and send them back through the parents to the students. A lot of logistics are involved, but we are doing our best to reach as many as means can allow.

The PEB financial situation is becoming dire as the parents' contributions have decreased to 50%. Our account staff is projecting it will go further down if schools and businesses remain closed.

We are working on different strategies to mitigate the losses. One big consideration is downsizing the staff or providing staff leave without pay.

Our only hope currently is to find more and more sponsors for the scholarships or find friends who can help cover the widening financial gap.

Dear Friends ... For a time like this ... it is written in the Bible in 365 different places—Fear not—one for each day. Let us all not live in fear. God above all is in control. God will protect you all and will keep you all safe from all harms, forever.



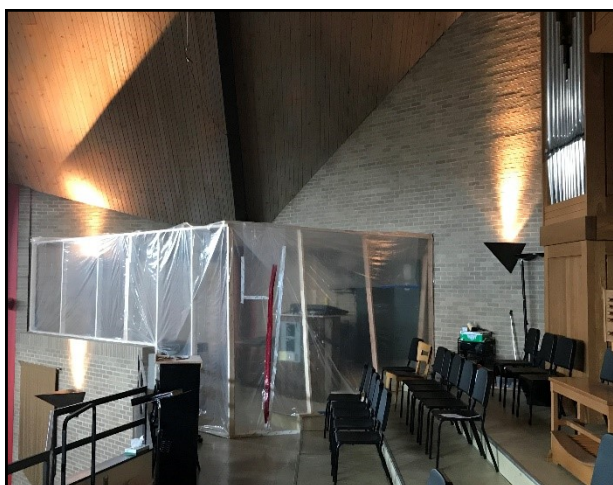
**First Presbyterian Church**  
2701 Rochester Ave.  
Iowa City, Iowa 52245

### **Elevator to be Completed by the End of May—Pledges Still Need to be Fulfilled**

Structural work on our three-story elevator shaft which began in January is now largely completed, with exterior scaffolding being removed the week of April 13. Doorways have been opened at all levels, with the organ protected by a sealed enclosure in the choir loft and a negative pressure fan.



View from the Columbarium Garden



Choir loft, with protective enclosure

The Schumacher Elevator Company is scheduled to deliver the elevator components on April 20th, with their assembly to begin soon thereafter. Our general contractor, McCreedy-Ruth Construction, will finish the entryways at all three levels and restore the damaged area of lawn. It is anticipated that the project will be completed by the end of May.

This \$400,000 project has been funded in large part by a \$200,000 contribution from the Burianek First Presbyterian Charitable and Religious Trust. We are thrilled that, to date, 117 pledges to the Capital Campaign have been fulfilled. However, 25 pledges, totaling \$48,000, are still outstanding. Prayerful consideration of pledge fulfillment, and donations from FPC members and friends who have yet to contribute to the Capital Campaign, would greatly be appreciated before the end of May. Contributions can be made by check or done via the FPC website at <https://firstpresioiwacity.org/donate-online/>

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