

## 2021 Pentecost Offering—Building a Life of Faith

The PCUSA has four Special Offerings each year with different focuses, with the Pentecost Offering being the second to be celebrated. A gift to the Pentecost Offering helps the church encourage, develop, and support its young people, and also address the needs of at-risk children. Since 1998, \$15 million has been raised for ministries that benefit younger members of God's family.

Offering funds are disbursed as follow: 40% of the Pentecost Offering is retained by individual congregations wanting to make an impact in the lives of young people within their own community. Last year FPC used these funds to support programming at Camp Wyoming; 25% goes to support Young Adult Volunteer experiences, such as training volunteers to engage in mission at more than 20 sites in the U.S and around the world; 25% sup-



FPC Youth and Leaders at the Presbyterian Triennium, July 2019

ports ministries with youth age 12–18, such as planning the annual Presbyterian Youth Triennium; and 10% goes to Child Advocacy, supporting the national "Educate a Child, Transform the World Initiative" to improve the quality of public education.

We have four different PCUSA Special Offerings each year. Please be joyful & generous in giving to this second offering, designated for Pentecost. Donations accepted though Pentecost Sunday, May 23, can made via our website at <https://firstpresiovacity.org/donate-online/> or a check payable to First Presbyterian Church, with "Pentecost Offering" in the memo line.

### Evening Prayer Service via Zoom

**Wednesdays 7:00 p.m.**

Evening Prayer services will continue on Wednesday evenings on Zoom. These are evening prayer services from 7:00 p.m.–7:30 p.m. consisting of prayer, scripture, simple sung responses, and silence.

Check the FPC Daily email and Facebook, or contact Leah at [leah.bergman@firstpresiovacity.org](mailto:leah.bergman@firstpresiovacity.org) for Zoom login information.



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## *Dear Members and Friends,*

Someone called recently to ask for an interview about religion and faith. I thought I'd hear questions in the interview about God, worship, prayer, and social justice. The questions I was asked were thoughtful and my interlocuter was well prepared, but the conversation went in a direction I had not anticipated. These are the thoughts I had prepared.

Worshipping God is the most important intention and practice we have. It is an acknowledgment that we didn't create ourselves and that life is a gift. I wonder how many people know that worship is more than "going to church."

If worship comes first, a particular element of worship, prayer, is second. I can imagine someone saying, "I've tried worship and I've tried prayer. They just don't work for me." That doesn't surprise me.

When we first stand up, walking doesn't work. When we try to read, it doesn't work at first either. The same is true for driving, swimming, talking, studying, shopping. Well, you name it. Most of what we do takes practice.

Even more than that, we don't practice only to achieve a skill. We keep on practicing to maintain that skill. I know a man who was born and raised in Europe speaking a language other than English. He went to England to brush up on the English he'd learned in school. He came to the US, worked here, and spoke English all day, every day.

## *Message from Pastor*

When he returned a couple of years later to visit his family in the land where he was born, he had difficulty speaking his native language. His siblings commented that he sounded like a foreigner and noticed that his vocabulary had deteriorated. Without practice, something so rudimentary as one's native language can even suffer.

I was raised in a family that did not worship or pray. It has taken me a long time to learn the little bit I think I know, and I often feel naïve and awkward about it.

Knowing that worship and prayer may not be easily or quickly learned by many and knowing that both take practice (to quiet one's mind, to know what is going to take place next, to appreciate the stories that are being read, to get back into the rhythm of confession and forgiveness, to breathe), you have opportunities to worship Sunday mornings and again Wednesday evenings at 7. Come, learn, practice, and be with others in worship and prayer.

If you want to move more deeply into the disciplines of worship and prayer, you can find the Zoom link in the FPC Daily emails.

With gratitude,  
Terry  
he/him/his

### ***Are you interested in contributing to our online worship?***

Contact Leah Bergman at [leah.bergman@firstpreswacivcity.org](mailto:leah.bergman@firstpreswacivcity.org) and she can help match you with a Sunday and the scripture lessons that go along with it. Then you'll record yourself at home, send her the video and she will incorporate it into the worship service for that Sunday!

Here are some ways you could offer to volunteer during this time:

- Read or act out one or more of the scripture lessons for the day
- Read a prayer or other part of the liturgy for the day
- Play or sing some special music
- Dance, draw, paint, take a picture

We are especially looking for those who would like to lead hymns either vocally or on instruments.



## FPC Congregational Health Ministry Team

The FPC Congregational Health Ministry Team strongly encourages all adults and teens 16 and older to be vaccinated for CoVID-19 as soon as you are able. This will help stop the spread of this deadly disease, and protect our most vulnerable members. The sooner we have most of our members vaccinated the sooner we can once again gather to worship together.



Once you are vaccinated, please remember the following:

- Continue to wear a mask and maintain physical distancing in public places. Continue to wash your hands frequently, and do not touch your face.
- It is possible to contract CoVID-19 or a variant strain, but if you are vaccinated, you will likely not be as sick as one who is not vaccinated. You are also less likely to give it to someone else.
- The CDC states that vaccinated adults may gather in small groups with other vaccinated people without masks or distancing. They may also visit with those low-risk individuals who are not vaccinated, if they are from one household. This means that vaccinated grandparents can safely visit unvaccinated family and grandchildren.
- As of April 2, 2021, the CDC reports that vaccinated people may travel, but only if necessary. There is no need to get a CoVID test before travel, or quarantine unless you become symptomatic.

If you are in doubt as to whether you should be vaccinated, please seek medical guidance from your physician. However, the scientific evidence supports the following:

- The vaccine (all three available) are equally effective; just get the one you are offered.
- The vaccine is probably safe and effective for adolescents and women during pregnancy and breastfeeding infants, but the scientific evidence is still being collected. The recommendations for younger children are not yet available.
- If your work brings you in close proximity to the public, especially indoors, getting vaccinated is highly recommended.

For more information: [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) | CDC](#)

If you need assistance in finding out how to get a vaccination, please call or email Rhonda Barr, [rhondabarr75@gmail.com](mailto:rhondabarr75@gmail.com) or 319-936-5998.

### FPC Garden Planting Event Postponed until Sunday, May 2

Due to concerns about ground temperatures, Equipping Ministry has decided to postpone the garden planting for a month. This will allow us to ensure that the plants will grow safely and warmly to the best of their ability.

**All Ages are invited** to join in one of two time slots: 1–2:30 if your last name starts with A–L and 2:30–4 p.m. if your last name starts with M–Z. If you are not available but would allow us to borrow garden tools, please email Cathe Franz at [ajmommy@mchsi.com](mailto:ajmommy@mchsi.com)





**Breath prayer**, known as the “Jesus Prayer” or “Prayer of the Heart,” 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.

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

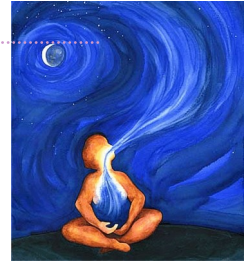
1. Close your eyes and recall the line “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10). Be still, calm, peaceful, open to the presence of God.

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? As he did to 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).



## Stations of the Cross served the church and community during Holy Week

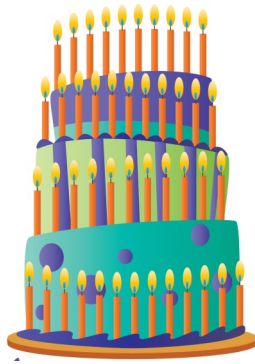
This walk through the story of Holy Week was housed on the church grounds and ministered not only to our congregation but to others in our community. We look forward to offering this opportunity to worship in future years.

# 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  
4/19 Jamie Helmick  
4/21 Gerianne Schaefer  
4/22 Bruce Guither  
4/23 Jenny Kirschling  
4/23 Rachel Marsh  
4/24 Matthew Morgan  
4/26 Ann Muilenburg  
4/30 Vern Dengler  
4/30 Bill Preucil



## May 1-15

5/2 Kevin Keith	5/10 Jim Jacobus
5/4 Kory May	5/11 Barb Stanerson
5/6 Larry Bruner	5/11 Ashley Nicholson
5/6 Robert Ketterer	5/12 Darin Schroeder
5/6 Kate Degner	5/13 Janet Bain
5/7 Kathy Clifton	5/13 Cynthia Chou-Liang
5/7 Leah Bergman	5/13 Sully Steen
5/7 Aurora Kennerly	5/14 Devin Smith
5/9 Sharon Van Dusseldorp	
5/9 Debbie Torrens-Semler	
5/10 Susan Van Duyn	
5/10 Mike Phelps	



**Known**

**to have been**

**Hospitalized:**

**Becky Ross, Dale  
Sheets and Diane  
Mattila**

A BIG  
*thank  
you*  
♥

Richard Van Rheeden and Rebecca Blair faithfully assisted with worship recording and support for over a year. They were instrumental in helping to transition to online worship and make sure that we could continue worshipping together safely from our homes. They are taking a much deserved break from this position as others are stepping up to help in this effort. We thank Richard and Rebecca for their service to this congregation!

# YOUTH GROUP CURRENT SCHEDULE

4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> grade meets on Wednesdays from 3:30–4:30 p.m. on Zoom.

7<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> grade meets on Wednesday from 4:30–6 p.m. on Zoom.

We will continue to meet on ZOOM for the time being.

Both Groups will use this meeting: Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84314271767?pwd=dDBNU1ppMVpzQTB4VzNOZmc4ZS84QT09>

Meeting ID: 843 1427 1767

Passcode: 242461

## April 21, 2021

4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> Graders will continue our Echo Story and see what the Promised Land is all about!

7<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Graders. will have their second Tough Topics discussion.

## April 28, 2021 Time Changes

4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> Graders will meet from 4–5 p.m. to work on the Youth Sunday Service.

7<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Graders will meet from 4:30–5:30 p.m. to work on the Youth Sunday Service.

## May 5, 2021 Time Changes

4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> Graders will meet from 4–5 p.m. to finish the Youth Sunday Service.

7<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Graders will meet from 4:30–5:30 p.m. to finish the Youth Sunday Service.

## May 12, 2021

4<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> Graders will visit our Echo series once more to learn about the judges

7<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Graders will meet and discuss what the summer mission project will look like.

Do you have any questions, ideas to add, or concerns? Please email Anna at [anna.sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org](mailto:anna.sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org)



Each month, there will be 3 crafts with supplies prepared and ready to take home! These will be located in the entry (immediately inside the front door of the church). There will be instructions and all the materials needed per kit. Take one craft or all three! Once prepared, pictures can be posted with the hashtag #FPCCraftingClub. Crafts will be available on the 15th of each month.

**April Crafts are "Ink Blot Monsters," "Beaded Wind Chime," and "Handprint Earth Day Craft." Come find these on April 15 right inside the front door of church.**







**A new Jeremiah Justice Initiative group will begin on April 18. This group will meet each Sunday night from April 18–June 27 (except on Memorial Day weekend) from 6–7:30 p.m.**

As Jeremiah Justice Initiative wraps up its session reading *Be the Bridge* and working through more personal and communal conversations, we turn our focus to history to continue our education and discussion. Join us next session as we work through components of the *New York Times'* 1619 Project, which was co-created by Nikole Hannah-Jones who is from Waterloo, Iowa and won a Pulitzer Prize for her work.

Sessions will run from 6 p.m.–7:30 p.m. via Zoom on Sunday nights. All are welcome to this discussion! For more information please contact Layne at [Layne.Sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org](mailto:Layne.Sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org).



### **Small Group meets from April 18–June 20**

A Small Group begins again April 18–June 20 meeting safely over ZOOM for an hour each week. Why did I sign up for a small group?

**It is a weekly opportunity to connect with FPC people on Zoom—maybe even people that you did not know before. I have made two new friends since agreeing to lead a small group.**

**It is an opportunity to visit with others about the Sunday morning sermon.**

**It is an opportunity to lead a small group. In my small group we are now sharing leadership. I love it!!**

**It is incentive to listen to the on-line service every Sunday. Maybe even more than once. It is easy to quickly listen to the sermon again the day of our small group.**

**It is a weekly chance to grow in my faith and to challenge myself.**

Email Anna today at [anna.sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org](mailto:anna.sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org) to sign up for a small group. What a great way to pass the time while we are waiting for COVID to pass. If you would like to talk to someone who has been in a small group email me at [judy.whitford@firstpresbiowacity.org](mailto:judy.whitford@firstpresbiowacity.org) and I would be glad to arrange a time to talk with you on the phone.

## **The Wired WORD**

**An Adult Curriculum**

**Scripture-based study and discussion  
about current issues in the news.**

We're excited to see you each and every Sunday.

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89921391094?  
pwd=UTFieVdqcvGwZnhKQ2lOS2grNkNFQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89921391094?pwd=UTFieVdqcvGwZnhKQ2lOS2grNkNFQT09)

Meeting ID: 899 2139 1094

Passcode: 134376


We hope you will think about joining us even if you have not been with us recently. Since we are not seeing one another at church it feels good to connect each week. We have a consistent group of 8-10 participants and new people are always welcome. Please email Judy at [Judy.Whitford@firstpresbiowacity.org](mailto:Judy.Whitford@firstpresbiowacity.org) to get the latest topic!



## Pasrur Girls Get Flu Vaccines

Beyond our 100 scholarships for the girls at the Pasrur Christian Girls Boarding House, we coordinate other projects that benefit the Pasrur school. This month the girls took a bus trip to Lahore to receive flu vaccines. Donations for this project were received from Katie Lind (a member of Friends of Pasrur) and St. Mary's Church in Iowa City. Other projects have included scholarships for post-secondary girls, reading curricula, a kitchen garden for the boarding house, and yearly medical check-ups. The majority of our funds come from members of First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City, but we also have benefactors beyond our congregation. We are grateful for our many partners in this important mission and are always working to expand our family of Friends of Pasrur.

Jane Cranston, Friends of Pasrur



### FPC Book Club invites you to join them on Zoom

We meet on the last Tuesday of the month, January through May, at 11:30 a.m. we meet on Zoom, contact Mary Linn at [jmLnn@aol.com](mailto:jmLnn@aol.com), for link or more information.

**April 27:** When We Were Young and Brave by Hazel Gaynor

**May 25:** A Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole



## FPC Spring Outdoor Work Event – Saturday May 1

Join other FPC members and friends on Saturday, May 1, 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon for this Spring Outdoor Work event to help clean up our grounds. Bring your own lawn, trimming and garden bed tools, gloves, etc. Especially needed is someone with chainsaw skills and equipment. We will gather at the main entrance to form our work groups.



If interested or have questions, contact John Barr at [BarrJohnO@sau.edu](mailto:BarrJohnO@sau.edu) or 319-541-3213.



### 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 2021-22.
- 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, 2021.

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.



Families and children of 6th grade and younger are invited to join us each Sunday for "Sunday Funday"!

We will meet weekly from 9:30–10 a.m. for a ZOOM Sunday School. Each week we read a simple story from the *Growing in God's Love Bible*, pray together, and just have fun.

Then in the afternoon, we'll meet around town for our God in the Wilderness program, when we explore, play, and laugh together from 1–2 p.m.

#### **SUNDAY, APRIL 18**

**ZOOM Sunday School** meets with the reading of "Living Together" on page 290 in the *Growing in God's Love Bible*.

**God in the Wilderness** will meet at the Veteran's Trail by the Coralville Dam.

#### **SUNDAY, APRIL 25**

**ZOOM Sunday School** meets with the reading of "Things We Do and Things We Say" on page 318 in the *Growing in God's Love Bible*.

**God in the Wilderness** will meet at the Church Garden and walk to Pheasant Hill Park.

#### **SUNDAY, MAY 2**

**ZOOM Sunday School** meets with the reading of "Philip Baptizes a Traveler" on page 294 in the *Growing in God's Love Bible*.

**Help us plant the FPC Garden!** Join us this Sunday in one of two time slots: 1–2:30 if your last name starts with A–L and 2:30–4 p.m. if your last name starts with M–Z. If you are not available but would allow us to borrow garden tools, please email Cathe Franz at [ajmommy@mchsi.com](mailto:ajmommy@mchsi.com)

#### **SUNDAY, MAY 9**

**ZOOM Sunday School** meets with the reading of "Remember to Love" on page 344 in the *Growing in God's Love Bible*.

**God in the Wilderness** will meet at Iowa River Wetland Park to see how it's changed since February!

#### **SUNDAY, MAY 16**

**ZOOM Sunday School** meets with the reading of "The Lord's Prayer" on page 338 in the *Growing in God's Love Bible*.

**God in the Wilderness** will meet at the Devonian Fossil Gorge. Be sure to wear water shoes and sunscreen!

Interested in more information? Email Anna at [Anna.Sheetz@firstpresioiwacity.org](mailto:Anna.Sheetz@firstpresioiwacity.org) today!



## *Plant a Seed - Create a Legacy* The FPC Endowment and Memorials Committee

Bob and Millie Youngquist, Coordinators

### **More frequently asked questions**

Here are two more questions that we have encountered. Perhaps they will be important for you to consider as well.

#### **10. What Are the Benefits to Leaving My Qualified Retirement Plan Assets to Charity?**

Here's one example: If you leave your qualified-plan balance to someone other than your surviving spouse or charity, it could be subject to extreme income and estate taxation. The amount of tax depends on the size of your plan and the marginal income tax bracket of the beneficiary. The reason for this excessive taxation is that Congress intended the plans for retirement, not inheritance.

Many people find that they do not need the retirement income that these plans provide, so they let their plans continue to grow tax-deferred. If you have planned to leave your qualified assets (and nonqualified tax-deferred assets such as nonqualified annuities) to children or others, you may want to examine the potential tax implications. One alternative could be to name a charity as beneficiary of the assets, thereby avoiding all income and estate taxation and providing a benefit to your community.

#### **11. What Are the Benefits of Making a Charitable Gift Through My Will?**

Charitable bequests (i.e., assets given through a will) provide substantial tax benefits and may be the most appropriate charitable giving technique for a person who is charitably inclined and yet wants to retain control of the assets during his or her lifetime. A donor who makes a bequest to a charity will be entitled to a charitable estate tax deduction for the value of the charity's interest, effectively removing the value of the gifted asset from the donor's estate.

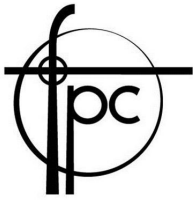
Charitable bequests may be made in a variety of ways. The simplest way is to make an outright bequest of an entire asset. In return, the donor's estate will get a deduction for the fair market value of the asset on the date of death. However, a donor may also make a bequest of a partial interest in an asset (such as a gift to a charitable remainder trust). The donor's estate will receive a deduction for the present value of the charity's interest in the asset. No matter which technique is used, the tax advantages to the donor can be significant.

Through our last few columns, we have shared many questions we have encountered. Giving in any of these ways can be such a blessing to both yourselves and our church. Do contact Bob and Millie with any questions you might have. Be sure to avail yourselves of any of the giving opportunities we have mentioned.

*The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now. Chinese Proverb*

*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Hebrews 13:16*





**First Presbyterian Church**  
2701 Rochester Ave., Iowa City, Iowa 52245 [www.firstpresioiwacity.org](http://www.firstpresioiwacity.org)

## get connected

**First things first ...** You need to sign into **My First Pres**; it is a portal on the website that lets you update your contact info, add a family photo, see your financial gifts, set up online giving, print directories, and view the church calendar. Instruction to sign in, below in green box.

### Sign in to My First Pres

1. Go to FPC website, <https://firstpresioiwacity.org/>, scroll down to the **My First Pres box**
2. Click on "Need a Login? Click Here"
3. You will be asked to enter your first name, last name and email. Enter this info and click "Find Me"
4. You should see a note congratulating you on setting up your account.
5. Once you see that note, check your email for your username and temporary password
6. You will be able to change password once you login
7. You should open up to the HOME screen; look at MY COMPLETE PROFILE for your personal information, PLEASE make sure your address and phone numbers are correct, feel free to make any changes needed. Note: changes are verified and may take 24 hours to show up. You can also sign up for online giving, pledging and see your yearly giving.

**This is where it gets handy ...** Now that you have **My First Pres** set up, you have the option to download the **Church Life** app to your phone or tablet! **Church Life** keeps you organized by allowing you to see calendar events, locate your friends' contact info (church directory at your finger tips); text, email and call plus get directions to map visits all on the go. You can keep track of your pledge and gifts to FPC, too.

Instructions below in blue box.



- 1) Download Church Life  
**iPhone— App Store Android— PlayStore**
- 2) Log in  
**Use the same username and password you use for MyFirstPres.**

**Should you encounter any issues feel free to email Tammy Schroeder at [tammy.schroeder@firstpresioiwacity.org](mailto:tammy.schroeder@firstpresioiwacity.org)**

### First Presbyterian Church Staff

MINISTER OF WORSHIP AND ARTS  
*Leah Bergman*  
[leah.bergman@firstpresioiwacity.org](mailto:leah.bergman@firstpresioiwacity.org)

ORGANIST  
*Melissa Moll*  
[melissa.moll@firstpresioiwacity.org](mailto:melissa.moll@firstpresioiwacity.org)

MINISTER OF PROGRAMMING AND COMMUNICATIONS  
*Tammy Schroeder*  
[tammy.schroeder@firstpresioiwacity.org](mailto:tammy.schroeder@firstpresioiwacity.org)

INTERIM PASTOR  
*Terry Purvis-Smith*  
[TerryPS1@me.com](mailto:TerryPS1@me.com)

MINISTER OF EQUIPPING PROGRAMS  
*Anna Sheetz*  
[anna.sheetz@firstpresioiwacity.org](mailto:anna.sheetz@firstpresioiwacity.org)

ASSISTANT MINISTER OF EQUIPPING PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS  
*Judy Whitford*  
[judy.whitford@firstpresioiwacity.org](mailto:judy.whitford@firstpresioiwacity.org)

ASSISTANT MINISTER OF EQUIPPING PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH, YOUNG ADULT, AND HOSPITALITY  
*Layne Sheetz*  
[layne.sheetz@firstpresioiwacity.org](mailto:layne.sheetz@firstpresioiwacity.org)

MANAGER OF FINANCE & PURCHASING  
*Krista Livingston*  
[finance@firstpresioiwacity.org](mailto:finance@firstpresioiwacity.org)

MINISTER OF STEWARDSHIP AND MANAGEMENT  
*Tammy Foster*  
[tammy.foster@firstpresioiwacity.org](mailto:tammy.foster@firstpresioiwacity.org)

SEXTON  
*Gerald Hill*  
[gerald.hill@firstpresioiwacity.org](mailto:gerald.hill@firstpresioiwacity.org)