

Exciting news for everyone who has signed up for MyFirstPres ...

Introducing the mobile app, *Church Life*: this handy app is free! You have instant access to the contacts and events at FPC anytime, anywhere, from your mobile phone.

Features of the app keep you organized by allowing you to see calendar events, view your friends' and neighbors' contact info, and map visits all on the go. Also, with the new mobile giving feature, you can quickly and easily make contributions ... with just one click.



1) Download Church Life

iPhone— App Store **Android**— PlayStore

Other mobile devices can enter www.churchlife.mobi

2) Log in

Use the same username and password you use for **MyFirstPres**.

If you have not yet signed up for **MyFirstPres** on the website, please do.
Simply click on the circle located on the homepage and create an account. If you have trouble, contact Tammy Schroeder, 319-351-2660.

A Word of Appreciation ...

Thanks For Making God's Presence Known

The results of our *First Things First* Stewardship Campaign have now been announced.

Pledges to the 2019 Budget (with perhaps a few more to be received) total \$470,000, an increase of \$44,400 or 10.5% over what was pledged for 2018. The generous response of our congregation has enabled Session to adopt an expanded and balanced budget in support of the growing life and ministries of our church. That growth means that First Presbyterian will almost double its mission outreach to our community and our world. In addition, our dedicated church staff will each receive a salary increase, having gone the previous year without one. And it means that our church will continue to be an effective center of mission and ministry, offering vibrant worship, quality Christian Education, and expanded Outreach ministries. But there is more to this story than just the growth in financial support for our church.

As we enter this new year, we are now in the "Season after the Epiphany," a time in the liturgical church year that celebrates how God's presence was made manifest (known) in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Hence, we celebrate the baptism of Jesus, the changing of water into wine at the wedding in Cana, and other manifestations of God's love, culminating in the Transfiguration experience of our Lord. In other words, God's presence in the world and the life of the people was being made physically manifest. The presence of the living God could be tasted, seen and experienced.

Which, of course, is the work of the church here and now:

to make God's transfixing, transforming presence known in our own day and time. And that is what your support, not only in the form of dollars but also through the investment of your time, talents, energies and abilities, is enabling to happen. First Presbyterian Church and its people will continue to be signs of God's life-giving, life-changing love, making God's presence known through who we are and what we do.

Thank you to all who responded so faithfully in giving back to God through the church as a part of our *First Things First* Stewardship Campaign. God has so richly blessed us. Now let us join together in being a blessing to others.



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Dear sisters and brothers of and First Presbyterian Church,

Dear sisters and brothers of First Presbyterian Church,

The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all! And Happy New Year!

This year-end report will also serve as my report to our session for this January.

This year has flown by, and we are five months into my 11th year as your pastor. Indeed, the past decade has flown by. Together we have watched alteration of an entire nation. We began together in the midst of the Great Recession and the oversight of our first African-American president. We ended 2018 with an underlying strong economy for some, questions for others, and a third group worried about their future. Furthermore, in 2019 we face a season of extreme polarization, a phenomenon reminiscent (at least to me) of growing up during the Vietnam War.

As the church of Jesus Christ, for us the times represent a unique opportunity. The Gospel invites us to share the larger vision of reconciliation: God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Godself, not holding our sins against us, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. This message of reconciliation is three-fold: Through Jesus Christ, God has declared love for the world that overcomes our alienation from God. God is for us, not against us. God has placed Godself on the side of social justice and mercy, that is, reconciliation between all human beings. Finally, God has promised to remake creation, and God invites us to join the environmental effort.

We have sought to contribute to God's purpose in the world through a variety of ways this year. We have continued to build a worshipping community through enriching worship services that invite us to grow in faith, hope and love. Our deacons and care buddies have nurtured our people. Our equipping programs reach across generational lines and respond to the discipleship needs of those who pass through our doors. We have had leaders visiting Pasrur to dedicate our new boys' school there and giving energy to our participation in the Johnson County Interfaith Cluster. Our kitchen is renovated and our boiler is operational. Details can be found throughout the pages of this year-end report.

To mention these few important initiatives should in no way cause us to ignore how hard our staffs, officers, members and guests have labored to honor Jesus Christ and share God's good news of reconciliation, in and out of church. Uniting our efforts is the 2019 First Presbyterian Church Plan: Growing Right Relationships. Our leaders have produced this document based on input from the congregation and community, seasoned with prayer and discernment. I believe that God has blessed us with a way

forward that will focus our ministries and missions annually. The plan can be made available through the church office if you did not receive it through the mail.

Every month I let session know about my pastoral care of the congregation, as well as other ways I have spent my time: teaching classes, preparing sermons and assisting preparation for worship, consulting with persons needing assistance, and service to the community and wider church. This coming year I will be continuing with my normal duties, while also serving to help put JCIC on a firm basis as well as serving our presbytery by assisting other congregations with organizational problems. I have also purchased software that I hope will allow me to create online classes this year that will support our evangelism and equipping ministries.

I owe great appreciation to many persons in our congregation. I have mentioned my gratitude for all of you: the labor of staff, officers, members and guests. I want to give a special shout-out to Pastor Sherry Lohman for her work with pastoral care and Pastor Paul Akin for his leadership of our stewardship campaign. I also want to thank my family and God for much support and the encouragement to remain humble and grateful.

This past month I went through a process offered by our Synod: It is for pastors beginning to think about their transition into retirement. It will be a few years, of course. I was intrigued by one of the outcomes: I don't need to develop any hobbies because the body of Christ is my vocation and my hobby, and it always will be. How I express this reality will change over time, of course.

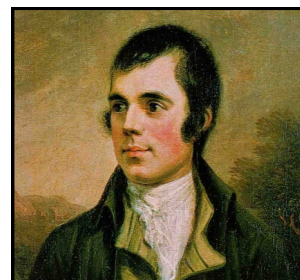
Prayerfully and with love,

Your Pastor, Sam



BURNS DINNER:
Limited seating is available; spaces are filling fast!

Our 1st Burns Dinner, Friday, January 25, 2019, starts with a silent auction at 4 p.m.; dinner is announced with a bagpiper at 5:30 p.m. At the Burns Dinner we will celebrate the life and works of Scotland's national poet, Robert Burns. Did you know the Presbyterian Church's beginnings trace back to Scotland, and Robert Burns was a Presbyterian? Tickets are \$20 / adults, \$10 / 13 and younger. This event is a FPC fundraiser with proceeds directed to the operating budget.



Pasrur Scholarships

Each year, donors contribute towards scholarships for 100 impoverished, Christian girls to attend school. At this writing, we have not made our goal. The total cost of a scholarship is \$500, which provides tuition, books, uniforms, and room and board for an impoverished, Christian girl. All contributions help to make this possible.

Local pastors, in conjunction with the village schools, select the girls. They are Christian and they are poor. Girls who are the most at-risk are chosen first.

These girls are so far away and in such different circumstances, they may seem a bit unreal. We recently visited Pasrur and had a chance to visit them. We were swept away by these lovely girls, beaming with gratitude and excitement. They sang and danced for us and we all prayed together. I prayed that members of our church would be able to send all the girls back to school again this year.

There are forms to fill out at the mission table in fellowship hall or you can just write "Pasrur Scholarships" in the memo line of your check and drop it in the collection plate.

Any questions: call Jane Cranston 319-621-3625 or email jane-cranston@uiowa.edu.



Pasrur Trip Presentation – January 20

There will be a presentation about our recent trip to Pakistan on January 20 after church. We'll share some pictures and video of the Pasrur Christian Scholarship girls and also the dedication of the Pasrur Christian Boys School. We hope you can be there!

Friends of Pasrur

Jane Cranston



Deacon's Bench

As another calendar year ends we would like to express appreciation for our Deacons who have completed their service terms in 2018. They all have served with such kindness, generosity and humility. Together we pray a word of thanks for Rhonda Barr, Tom Martin, Cory Morris, Sue Van Duyn Phipps, Audrey Van Roekel, Louise Gisolfi, Hongwook Suh, Maeleen Thorius, and Layne Sheetz for their dedication of time and acts of loving care which they have provided our congregation while serving on the Board of Deacons.

While we usher in the new year we also welcome the ushering in of new members to the Board of Deacons. Please help us welcome and appreciate Brian Kleis, Rebecca Morgan, Nancy Ross, Bonnie Bender, Pam Kautz, Sarah Klemuk and Dan Thedens for serving new terms on the board. An additional thank you to Jeri Smith for extending her term of service for an additional year.

Please keep all the Deacons in your New Year prayers as they seek God's will and guidance, call upon each other's strengths and lean on each other for support while they minister to our congregation's joys and concerns in the year ahead.





The FPC Green Team seeks to enlighten, educate and encourage everyone to live in a more environmentally sensitive way. We encourage all to decrease or eliminate using single-use items, to recycle or repurpose items you don't want or need, and guard our precious water and air resources as we care for God's Realm.

If you have a calling to serve on the Green Team, please contact Perry or Becky Ross. We also appreciate any ideas you may have on how to accomplish our goal of being sustainable.

In USA Today (June 2017): "Here's a bright idea: Switching to LED light bulbs can help the typical home save about a \$1,000 over a 10-year period. That's roughly \$8.33 a month."

Perry and Becky Ross



Recycle Your Old Cell Phones and Ink Cartridges!

Did you receive a new phone for Christmas? Updating your iPad, or just replacing the ink cartridge in your printer? Recycle those old items to help the environment and support Friends of Pasrur! Look for the bin under the Friends of Pasrur display in Ryerson Fellowship Hall and place your items inside. We accept all cell phones, ink cartridges, laptops, iPad, and digital cameras. We now even accept toner cartridges! As always, though, we cannot accept cords, phone cases, or a computer mouse.



Recycled items are kept out of the landfill where they can leak dangerous products, and Friends of Pasrur receives funds to be used in the support of our church-sponsored girls at the Christian Girls School in Pasrur, Pakistan. Everyone wins when you recycle!



A JuBELLation handbell ensemble consisting of Katie Fillmore, Ann Grosscup, Lee Tippe, Nancy Gardner and Rhonda Barr took to the road during December! A variety of Christmas pieces arranged for 12 bells were performed at Legacy Pointe and Oaknoll in Iowa City and at Crestview Care Initiatives in West Branch. Their joy-filled performances were well received by many of our FPC members and others in residence at these facilities.



First's Family

If you have a news item for the First's Family News, please submit it for publication by February 4 to tammy.foster@firstpresbiowacity.org. Thank you!

January 16-31

1/16 Jean James	1/24 Keith Brown
1/16 Kip Neubauer	1/26 David Carlson
1/20 Gabe Orris	1/26 Jim Bradley
1/20 Mary Linn	1/27 Michelle Bessman
1/22 Vivian Adams	1/28 Kathy Maxey
1/22 Ruth Selmer	1/28 Logan Schroeder
1/22 Sawyer Selmer	1/30 Evelyn Greimann
1/23 Mike Farran	1/31 Herb Wilson
1/23 Deb Minot	1/31 Betty McNeal
1/23 Ryan Bingham	1/31 Ann Grosscup
1/24 Helen Chadima	1/31 Chris Greimann

February 1-15

2/1 Steve Schomberg	2/9 Diane Mattila
2/2 Meli Kasiriba	2/10 Tammy Schroeder
2/7 Kristin Summerwill	2/12 Daissy Owen
2/7 Alex Jacobus	2/14 Linda Morris
2/8 James Winegarden	2/14 Alexandra Marsh
2/8 Laura Jacobus	2/15 Lance Christensen



Rose Youngquist, daughter of Heather and Mike Youngquist, was baptized during worship on December 9.



To the friends and family of **Earline Moll**, who died December 22, 2018. Pastor Sam led her funeral service at First Presbyterian on December 31.



Known to have been Hospitalized:

Jan Wicks, David Carlson, Shirley McFarland, Del Disselhorst, Eric Scholtz and Helen Sheets

Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts who would like to participate in Boy Scout Sunday on February 3 should contact Linda Morris about ushering that morning during the 10:30 a.m. service. Email Linda at lsmorris14@yahoo.com for details.



"Undie" Sunday is back!

Please consider donating NEW underwear. All sizes are needed.



Donations can be placed in the blue tub in Ryerson Fellowship Hall through the end of February.

These donations will go to Shelter House, 4 Oaks and Lucas School.



*Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth.
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 are on Thursdays, at twice 7:30–8:30 p.m. Contact Leah Bergman at leah.bergman@firstpresbiowacity.org or call the church for more information.

Youth Choir Schedule January–May 2019

Thursdays, January 10 AND 17
7:30–8:30 p.m. rehearsal

Thursdays, February 7 AND 21
7:30–8:30 p.m. rehearsal

Thursday, March 7
7:30–8:30 p.m. rehearsal

Sunday, March 10
Lead in worship
Rehearse at 9:45 a.m.

Thursday, March 28
7:30–8:30 p.m. rehearsal

Thursday, April 4 AND 11
7:30–8:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 20
Lead at the Easter Vigil service.
Rehearse 6:15 p.m.
Worship at 7:00 p.m.

Thursdays, May 2 AND 9
7:30–8:30 p.m. rehearsal

Sunday, May 12
Youth Sunday
Youth lead in Worship

THE OTHER HALF: MUSIC BY WOMEN COMPOSERS

Presented by Chamber Singers of Iowa City

Sunday, February 24, 3:00pm

First Presbyterian Church, 2701 Rochester Ave.

TICKETS: Adults \$16; Students FREE



Save the date!

Wednesday, March 13 7:30 p.m.

The Knox College Choir is returning to FPC for their 2019 choir tour. Our church has had an ongoing relationship with this choir program, and we are blessed to have them return to share their music with us.

****If you are interested in hosting one or more of these students after their concert, please let Leah know by emailing her at leah.bergman@firstpresbiowacity.org or calling the church office.**



Youth Group News

- * **Thursday, January 17:** Small Groups Begin!
Youth Choir meets at 7:30 p.m.
- Thursday, January 24:** We'll learn about Jesus!
- * **Thursday, January 31:** Our Fifth Thursday!
BIG GAME all night long!
- * **Thursday, February 7:** Using our Animate Series, we'll learn about Salvation.
** Youth choir meets at 7:30 p.m.**
- * **Thursday, February 14:** Stay tuned for details about our MISSION NIGHT!



You're Invited to join FPC's Equipping Ministry as we Baby Proof the Church! Join us after Church on Sunday, February 10 in Coover Lounge to learn, to serve, and to protect our Children!

The Camp Wyoming Winter Trip has been postponed to February 15–17. If you are curious about what this weekend is—this is the best year to join us! The cost per family is \$30 and per individual is \$10! That's it! Come join us for this low cost, low stress, high adventure weekend! Please contact Anna to sign up today!



SAVE THE DATE!

FPC is celebrating Mardi Gras with pancakes and King Cakes! Fun, Food, and Faith! Friends, neighbors, and family are invited!

**SATURDAY,
MARCH 2
5:30 P.M.**

Join FPC this Lent as we Walk to Jerusalem.



Did you know that Jerusalem is 6,333 miles away from Iowa City? Beginning on Ash Wednesday, March 6, FPC will start to track how many miles we walk, run, or exercise each day! Check out the February Newsletter for more information!

2019 Communion Dates:

January 13	Baptism of the Lord
February 10	5th Sunday after Epiphany
March 3	Transfiguration
April 18	Maundy Thursday
April 20	Great Vigil of Easter
May 12	Easter tide IV
June 9	Pentecost Sunday
July 14	5th Sunday after Pentecost
August 11	9th Sunday after Pentecost
September 8	13th Sunday after Pentecost (kick-off Sunday)
October 6	World Communion
November 24	Reign of Christ
December 15	Advent III



Have no fear ... the next New Member Class, will start February 24, 2019. Contact Pastor Sam for more information at sam.massey@firstpresioiwacity.org or by phone at 319-351-2660.

Parents' Night Out

This issue of the newsletter lets us promote two upcoming evenings for you to bring your kids, ages 10 and under, for fun at the church while you enjoy some time to yourself:

Friday, Jan. 18 **AND** Friday, February 15, both from 5–7:30.

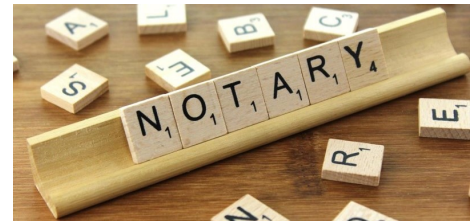
We'll provide activities and a light supper, all under the supervision of adult volunteers. And, best of all, it's free! Registration is required so we can line up our volunteers. Email Nancy Gardner at nancy.hayes.gardner@gmail.com today! Adults who are interested in helping are always welcome. Just email Nancy and let her know!



The congregational meeting for receiving reports, asking questions, and deciding the pastor's terms of call will be held after worship on Sunday, February 3. Come meet and eat!



Join us February 13 for a Youth Group Lunch Fundraiser, **Favorite Family Recipes**. We're excited to share our favorite family recipes with you! All funds raised will go to transportation costs for the Mission Trips!



FPC is happy to offer Notary Public services.

This is another opportunity for the staff to serve you.

Contact Tammy Schroeder for more information.

319-351-2660 or

tammy.schroeder@firstpresioiwacity.org

Looking to sign up for Fellowship Hour?

Signups can be found under the "Volunteer/ Donate" tab on the website. Go ahead; click down to "Sign-Up to Serve" and then over to "Morning Fellowship." It's that easy! If you're more of a paper person, we'll have a paper signup available the Second Sunday of Every Month!

Want to learn more about serving and our kitchen? We'll have a brief training every Second Sunday as well! Just find Layne Sheetz in the kitchen after service.

Let's keep our fellowship hour bright, warm, and welcoming!



Endowment/Memorial

*News from Endowment Memorial Coordinators
Bob and Millie Youngquist*

Donations are Needed for FPC Yager Garden Fund Matching

Through the use of an endowment, it is possible to create a fund to honor or memorialize a person who has been special in your life. In 2014, Robert Yager, FPC member, opened the Phyllis and Robert Yager Garden Fund for First Presbyterian Church at the Community Foundation of Johnson County. This fund is in memory of his wife, Phyllis, and was started with a gift of \$5,000.

This fund was set up as a challenge matching grant for members of our congregation. Since that time, several donations have been received, but we still have a way to go before we fulfill our matching challenge of \$5,000 and can start receiving distributions from this fund. These distributions are to be used for the care and maintenance of the Garden at FPC – additional and replacement plantings, mulch and supplies and repairs.

You may make a donation to this fund by making your check payable to: The Community Foundation of Johnson County and writing "Yager Garden Fund" in the memo line of your check. Mail your check to the foundation at: 325 East Washington Street, Suite 100, Iowa City, IA 52240.

You may also make a donation online at the community foundation's website:

www.communityfoundationofjohnsoncounty.org. Click on the green donate button on the upper right hand

corner of the page. To access the debit/credit card page, click on the "Donate with PayPal" button. On the next screen enter the dollar amount of your donation and enter "First Presbyterian Church – Phyllis and Robert Yager Garden Fund" in the specific organization field.

Continue to fill out the rest of the page with your card number and address information. Your donation will be tax deductible and will qualify for the Endowment Iowa Tax Credit program.

Endowments can honor someone in perpetuity. If you would like more information about creating such a fund contact us, Bob and Millie Youngquist, 319-653-4673, endowment@firstpresioiwacounty.org.



Bob and Phyllis Yager

December 2018 Session Highlights

-by Nancy Weber, Clerk of Session



The session met December 18, 2018 in Coover Lounge at 7 p.m. Pastor Sam called the meeting to order and lit the Christ candle. Elder Sharon Raffensperger read Matthew 22: 37-38, "Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.'" She read a devotion reaffirming that the true spirit of Christmas is the Holy Spirit. We need to act out of love for God, not duty. Our love for God needs to saturate our being and our actions. Sharon led us in prayer.

It was noted that Pastor Sam baptized Rose Youngquist, daughter of Heather and Mike Youngquist, during the 10:30 a.m. service, December 9, 2018.

Treasurer Larry Bruner reported that we are in good shape as the year ends. Ministries have kept to their budgets. We are ending the year in the black!

Pastor Sam explained the nature of the FPC inactive roll following the new Form of Government, which was adopted. It is for persons still within the care of the congregation but not contributing in money, program or worship attendance. While the congregation is informed of the rolls, persons are not sent "dunning letters threatening excommunications." The suggestion was made that it might be more appropriate to reference these folks as "other participants." Total to move to "other participants" = 26 adults, 14 young adults.

Finance Committee member Tom Martin spoke about FPC insurance policies.

Session approved a motion to purchase an umbrella policy for coverage of an additional \$1 million, and also **approved a motion** to adopt the increase in coverage to \$1 million/\$3 million child molestation/sexual misconduct insurance policy with Equipping Ministry serving as a commission to put together the child

molestation/sexual misconduct church policy to share with session. Tom will make contact with the insurance company on FPC's behalf.

Session approved the minutes of the November 20, 2018 stated session meeting and the minutes of the December 16, 2018 special session meeting to interview Presbytery inquirer/candidate for ministry Amanda Edwards. Amanda was scheduled to preach at FPC on December 30, 2018.

The Green Team, under the auspices of Reconciliation Ministry, requested more time for a comprehensive water collection property plan, including research and collaboration with REALM Planning and B&G pending Garden Project adoption. Session approved their request.

It was approved via email to "... invite the Presbytery of East Iowa to meet in our building and use our equipment, Saturday, January 19, or soon thereafter if the meeting must be postponed due to inclement weather, with the understanding that the presbytery will provide all set up, clean up and tear down; provide all musicians, food service and childcare; provide all incidentals required to run the meeting; and provide to FPC a custodial fee of \$100, plus reimbursement for snow removal on Friday night or Saturday morning if made necessary by the meeting of the presbytery that day combined with inclement weather."

Pastor Sam gave a hearty thank you for their service, and departing gifts, to elders going off session, Ann Grosscup, Carol Ulch, and Bob Youngquist, and retiring clerk of session, Nancy Weber.

Session **approved the motion** to increase proposed personnel costs for 2019 to the new request of \$449,985 (up from September proposed budget by \$1,635.)

Pastor Sam left the room while Session

evaluated "fairness of pastor's terms of call" for 2019 per Book of Order. The proposed increase of 1.5% in Pastor Sam's salary was approved.

Session voted to adopt the entire 2019 expense budget, including proposed personnel increases. Finance moderator and elder Dale Kraus gave a great presentation! We are in better shape as far as pledges than we thought we'd be in.

Income Projections: \$602,000

Request for Unrestricted
Endowment Funds: \$ 20,000

Grand Total 2019
Balanced Budget \$622,000

This year's Stewardship campaign was very successful. The number of pledges declined, but the amounts increased. The cool booklet really made a difference! Appreciation was expressed for the hard work put in by Paul Akin and the FPC staff.

Session approved Becca Morgan to assist deacons (prior to a 2019 congregational meeting, followed by training and examination), and concurred with Pastor Sam's recommendation for 2019 Elder assignments.

Elder Richard Van Rheeden gave thanks to Elder and B&G moderator Vern Dengler for upgrading the laptop used for live streaming FPC worship services.

The Presbytery meeting scheduled to be held at FPC in January 2019 may be moved to Williamsburg.

Pastor Sam closed the meeting with prayer. The next session meeting will be held Tuesday, January 15, 2019 at 7 p.m. in Coover Lounge.



FPC Book Club Invites You

January 30 meeting at FPC
The Boys in the Bunkhouse
by Dan Barry

February 27 meeting place TBD
The Butterfly Mosque: A Young Woman's Journey to Love and Islam
by Wilson G. Willow

We meet the last Wednesday of the month from 12–1 p.m. New members are welcome! Bring your lunch and join in the conversation. For more information, contact Jan Walker at 358-6737

δώδεκα • (do'-dek-ah) • Twelve

12 months; 1 life-changing experience

Dodekah is a new 12-month discipleship program designed to build community, educate, and culminating in a 2-week trip to the Holy Land.

This program will transform the Bible into vivid reality and will make Scripture a life-changing experience.

During the informational meeting held in November, interest/contact forms were handed out; these forms allow us to contact you with exciting news about the program. In order to do this, we need them to be returned **no later than Sunday, February 3.**

If you are interested in the program, pick up a packet on the Narthex table or contact Anna Sheetz or Tammy Schroeder at 319-351-2660.



Wednesday Morning Bible Study

Join us January 23 in Coover Lounge from 9:30–10:30 a.m. The class is led by Pastor Sam Massey.

New members ALWAYS welcome.

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>.)

For many mental health therapists, January brings about an increase in their caseload. It may be due to people putting therapy off until after the first of the year because the holidays are so preoccupying. Or perhaps it's due to issues arising during various holiday gatherings that now need processing.

A new calendar year also represents a fresh start or a second chance. Besides the frequent and obvious resolutions regarding exercise and weight loss, there may be a resolution concerning emotional, mental, and/or spiritual health, realizing one doesn't have to be sick to get better. Fresh starts and second chances may

involve forgiveness and/or (re)new(ed) commitment. Some may include trying harder—though trying differently may generate more profound results.

A couple of biblical stories illustrate the power of fresh starts and second chances, including Naomi and Ruth in the Old Testament and the Parable of the Lost Son(s) in the New Testament. For several of the characters, they discovered hope at a much deeper level (the jury is still out regarding the Prodigal Son's older brother), which greatly enhances their lives.

May 2019 be kind to us . . . and we to it.



October 2018

Mission Connections

A program of PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION • pcusa.org/missionconnections

Jeff & Christi Boyd | Mission co-workers serving in
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Joining Hands and Hearts to Heal

Dear friends,

"That's the soldier who killed my parents."

Thirteen-year-old Kalonji (not his real name) was responding to Christi's question about a drawing he was working on.

Earlier, Christi heard another child share how militia members had beheaded two of her brothers in her presence. Each of the 70 children gathered for the Healing Hearts children's camp had similar, terrible experiences. Even the adults trained during the event as facilitators of trauma healing came with their inner wounds. Papa Hassan confided that he was among just a few who had stayed behind when people fled in the bush after their community had come under attack. As a Muslim leader, he joined hands with a Protestant pastor to bury the bodies they found in their neighborhood, an attempt to restore dignity through a proper burial.

Last month, Christi and I were in the Congolese village of Tshikaji, where the Protestant Council of Churches in Congo (ECC), organized through its Department of Women and Families (DFF) a 12-day training for facilitators of trauma healing. This event took place on the grounds of the Christian Medical Institute in the Kasai (IMCK), a Presbyterian mission and ministry historical site. The training was held in collaboration with the Congo Bible Alliance, which provided the three specialized, experienced trainers and ensured translation of the resources into Tshiluba, the locally spoken language. Healing Hearts was launched in East Congo two years ago, and this training marked the introduction of the trauma-healing ministry to the Greater Kasai region, which comprises five centrally located provinces in Congo that were formerly known as East and West Kasai — the area where Presbyterians have the largest presence. It was my first time attending such a training event.

There is an urgency for the Healing Hearts ministry in the Kasai due to the atrocities inflicted on the population when a conflict between the State authorities and a traditional ruler sparked a horrifically quick-spreading provincial militia movement against the government two years ago. The response by security forces was harsh, and the general population bore the brunt of the abuse from barbarous and undisciplined fighters on both sides. The trainees for the ECC's trauma-healing work were selected from



Thank you for supporting Jeff's and Christi's ministries as Regional Liaison for Central Africa (Jeff) and Facilitator of Women's and Children's Interests (Christi). Your prayers and financial support helped make a difference in the lives of people in Central Africa.

places that were particularly hard hit by the conflict. To allow them to deal first with their own traumatic life experiences, the trainees worked through the classic curriculum for adults during the first five days of the training. Some of them shared fresh memories of the recent conflict, and others related decades-old unresolved trauma, such as their forcible and violent expulsion from Katanga Province. The pain remained so many years later.

Many factors influence the success of the training, but the selection of the facilitators to be trained is especially critical. Much thought and prayer were therefore given to the selection process. Besides establishing criteria for personal qualities and focusing on geographical areas that had suffered most, Rev. Nzeba, the General Secretary for the DFF/ECC, wanted equal numbers of men and women. She also desired representation from the diversity of the faith communities in the region: the ECC member denominations (Presbyterians, Methodists, Mennonites, etc.), the Roman Catholic Church, the Salvation Army, the Kimbanguist and Revivalist Churches, the Greek Orthodox Church, and the Muslim community. The atrocities were felt across all faith communities, and healing is needed in all. The provincial social services offices for West and East Kasai were therefore invited, too. Identification of the trainees was based on type of work and training: teachers, pastors, community leaders, those with training in psychology, health workers, Sunday School teachers, etc.

Once Rev. Nzeba had worked with Christi to map out the selection of trainees along these lines, she handed over the responsibility of choosing individual trainees to the Provincial ECC leadership, who then relayed the specifics to the respective church denomination leadership to finally target localities from where trainees would be chosen. The complexity of this multilayered process posed a huge challenge, but as lessons were taught and participants interacted, it became clear that prayers for a good selection of trainees were answered. With a common calling, this wonderfully diverse group worked together eagerly and collegially.



Adolphine was assigned to work with the youngest children. She has the gentleness of a loving grandmother and the patience and guiding hand of an experienced teacher.



In an emotional ceremony, children and adults brought their laments, sorrows and burdens to God, asking for help.

The healing of trauma is not about forgetting; rather, it is about confronting the pain and suffering and working to move on. And so, the joy of having 70 children with us for five days was deeply painful and sobering, as we heard time after time the brutalities that adults and children have witnessed and experienced. During the last five days of the training, the trainees worked all day with the children, and through stories, games, crafts, scriptural references and compassionate accompaniment, the men and women facilitators helped the children recognize a path toward healing, one that involves recognizing the loss, mourning, and weeping, asking for God's help with the pain, forgiving, and rebuilding. God's love for each child was emphasized throughout.

The 36 trainees are charged to return to their geographic communities, and in the coming 6-9 months each will work with at least two groups of adults and two groups of children. Those who do this and faithfully report back will be invited to the follow-up training designed to certify the qualified trainees as trainers themselves. In anticipation of that, we have already begun the effort to raise the funds to help the ECC and the Congo Bible Alliance organize the next training by mid-2019.

As the training progressed, Christi took photos and video, complemented them with text messages and sent them to a small group via What's App. A document that collects all those postings into one file may be posted on our profile page in a few weeks.

We are grateful for the Christian Medical Institute of Kasai (IMCK), which graciously hosted this large group; for IMPROKA, the Presbyterian printing press,

for working extra hours to print copies of a first draft of the Tshiluba translation of the children's booklet; for many of you who have accompanied this training with prayer; and for each individual, church and presbytery who has given financially to enable Presbyterian World Mission to support this program of the ECC Dept of Women and Families.

We hope the next training will be in April/May, but otherwise in July/August. If you wish to financially support the upcoming advanced-level training that helps these facilitators become trainers themselves, checks should be made payable to Presbyterian Church (USA) and mailed to:

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
P.O. Box 643700
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

On the "note" portion of the check, please write E052171 ECC DFF – Healing Hearts. Please include with the check a cover letter indicating the account name, account number, the amount of your contribution, and Healing Hearts.

Our ability to accompany and encourage this trauma-healing work and other important church ministries is thanks in large part to the team of supporters who pray for us and support World Mission financially. Thank you for your support that allows us to walk with our brothers and sisters in the Congo. Please continue supporting us through prayer and through financial gifts. If you are in a position to do so, please consider a year-end extra gift of support for World Mission. Please see the enclosed letter from José Luis Casal, director of Presbyterian World Mission.

May the Peace of our Lord be with you!

Jeff and Christi

Connect and support the mission work of:

Jeff & Christi Boyd

*Serving in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as Regional Liaison for Central Africa (Jeff)
and Facilitator for Women and Children's Interests (Christi)*

You are invited to continue supporting the Boyds' work through prayer and encouraged to get to know them through updates like this, personal letters and emails. If you are able, please support this ministry through financial gifts. Individual donations may be made online at pcusa.org/give, or mailed to the address below. Churches are asked to send donations through your congregation's normal receiving site (this is usually your presbytery).

Support:

Presbyterian World Mission
P.O. Box 643700
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

On the memo line, please write:

"Boyd - E200314" (individual giving)

"Boyd - D506075" (congregational giving)

For questions about supporting Jeff and Christi, please email: mission.support@pcusa.org

Connect:

Email: jeff.boyd@pcusa.org

Email: christi.boyd@pcusa.org

Read more online: pcusa.org/jeff-and-christi-boyd

Thank you for reading about the Boyds' ministry.



A Reflection on Time(less):

Periodically I lose all sense of time, especially when I engage in the practice of centering prayer. I sit cross-legged on the floor, allowing all thought to flee away, and staying with deep breath and emptiness. At times, in meditative position, thoughts, agendas, schedules, prayer concerns and much else bombard me. Failures and victories flock to me like pigeons in a park. When this happens, I wait for God's Spirit to wash through me, the waters of baptism cleansing me like an Augean stable.

At other times, I am instantly present in the moment and feel a larger presence holding me. Sometimes, the seconds slow in bliss; at other times, 20 minutes pass as if a brief dream. I wonder if this latter experience is what death will be: An overwhelming sense of God's presence, holding me in love, although without the signals of passing time, that is, feet growing numb or the pressure of sound reminding me that life is stirring elsewhere in the house. It is wonderful to feel held by God's presence in space without any sense of the passing of old Sol, then to arise from the experience like a phoenix from the ashes to re-engage life again.

Some physicists believe that time is only a mental construct based on entropy. We say we are aging day by day, yet this phenomenon is only our bodies giving way to the natural order of disassembly. We mark it through the turning of the cosmos, including our own spinning planet. Wearing down and wearing out are everyday phenomena that you and I measure with digital flickers. On the smallest, micro-level however, where matter emerges and disappears instantaneously, life happens as if in continuous contemplation immersed in the timeless presence of God. Ironically, on the most macro-level, stars get birthed signifying that regeneration and renewal can also be an outcome of the iron law of entropic descent into disorder (or so I hear).

I had two professors in college who debated the reality of evolution. The chemist, a fundamentalist Christian, claimed that the law of entropy made evolution impossible. If all things are falling apart, he contended, there must have been an original, ideal start from which we are descending into increased chaos. The physicist, whose religious allegiances remain unknown to me, argued that it is the energy available through the larger system of the universe that makes evolution possible and even necessary. Energy collapsing into matter and exploding into new, more complex forms does not deny the existence of both entropy and evolution, but affirms them. Frankly, I liked the chemistry professor better, but liked his analysis less. Later in life, I realized why: He took time way too seriously.

We celebrate the passage of time, as did our earliest human ancestors, when the bowing of the earth sunward begins to change. The darkness subsides while minutes of light get added to the calendar, at least in our part of the world. Blowing snow and ice still lie ahead, yet spring will surely arrive. In honor of the passing solstice, you and I are invited to resolve this or that, often in defiance our very experience of time: We will exercise more, eat less, write more, watch TV less, work less, spend more time with children, volunteer more, worry about money less . . .

As Christian people, we say that we dwell in the continuing presence of the Eternal God. This makes me wonder — as I rise from centering prayer this first of the year — how timeless resolutions might sound. What if I vowed more completely to rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep? What if I committed to listen with both my heart and my head? What if I spoke with greater confidence that every word, for good or ill, will return to me as a guaranteed curse or a blessing the moment I utter it? What if I live without being bound

by the mental construct of time? What if I live instead as the writer of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 urges?

This biblical writer mocks time by urging us to live our lives in response to our circumstances, rather than by the clock, to use time as a tool to fuel our faithful choices rather than seeing it as an irrepressible tyrant out of our control.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

I wish you happy and new in the moment you read this. I wish you a prayer life wherein you live sideways, broadly across time, rather than linearly, as if time enslaves you. I wish you an unravelling that invites you to reknit the threads of your experiences in new and creative ways.

Love, prayer and blessings.

Your pastor,

Sam

Take Away Hunger all church Packing Party

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, February 23, 2019 8:00 – Noon

FPC has supported this mission (formerly known as Kids Against Hunger) for the past several years. Don and Sandee Fields became the first Kids Against Hunger packaging distribution center in Iowa in March of 2003. Over the ensuing years they have directed the operation and millions of meals have been packaged and subsequently distributed worldwide to feed hungry people. In 2016, they rebranded their company to use the name Take Away Hunger. Their mission remains the same: feed the hungry and show the love of Jesus.



This year we will gather in Ryerson Fellowship Hall for another "Packing Party." This event will include several teams of 10 to 12 people of all ages who have decided to make a difference! Your team will package approximately 1,500+ meals in about 45 minutes at a cost of 25 cents each AND you will have fun doing it!

Save the date on your calendar. Watch for your opportunity to sign-up in Ryerson Fellowship Hall to be a part of a team and have some fun. Don't miss out.

Thank you to First's Family ...

For your attendance and participation at the celebration of my 25th anniversary at FPC,

For your love and support,

For your encouragement throughout the years,

Also thanks to the members of the Administration and Personnel Ministry members—Nancy Gardner, Nancy Ross, Chris Kolarik and Dan Thedens—for your expressed sincerity with humor,

And to Pastor Sam and the staff for contributions of laughter and the ministry of your servanthood hearts.

Tammy Foster

Needles, Hooks & Yarn

This is a small group who come together to share each other's company while we knit and crochet. If you would like to join us we would love you to have you. We meet at FPC from 9–11 on most Saturday mornings. For more info: Tammy Schroeder 351-2660.



We miss you at church, yet we trust you walk with God! At this year's end, as we intend to do every year's end, we ask Session to move our absent members (demonstrating a lack of pledging, giving and attendance in 2018) to our other participants roll. We do so knowing that we can restore persons to active membership status if they return to the discipline of worship and service at and through First Presbyterian Church. This action is not punitive: If someone has not been active due to some trouble and needs pastoral care, please inform the staff, especially Pastor Sam, at sam.massey@firstpresbiowacity.org (319)351-2660. In this way we can keep people on the active roll, even though temporarily activity is not possible. We want to recognize through our rolls that people's priorities and loves change over time, and we do not want to pester the uninterested. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ and the church are still here for everyone! Thank you for understanding . . . Hope to see you soon!

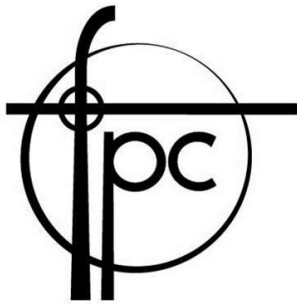


First Presbyterian Church
2701 Rochester Ave.
Iowa City, Iowa 52245
www.firstpresbiowacity.org

Public Office Hours:

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday

Ph 319-351-2660 www.firstpresbiowacity.org



While the worship and service of God are vital components of the Christian life, on any particular day your safety needs should be your priority, as well as ours.



The following guidelines presume that you will make the best decision for the care of you and your family. Please do not come to church if there is risk of harm due to weather. God and we will still love you!

1. **On Sunday mornings, the church will normally not close for inclement weather.** Whoever from the staff is available to come and lead at least a brief prayer service at 10:30 a.m. will do so. As for events after worship on Sundays, when adverse weather is experienced please contact the event leader to see if the event is still scheduled. If weather grows extreme, check KCRG or call the church to hear if any message has been left giving scheduling information.
2. **On days when the Iowa City Public School System is in session,** the cancellations or postponements announced by the school system by KCRG or other means apply also to the church.
3. **If inclement weather arrives following the close of school on a weekday,** please contact the event leader to see if the event is still scheduled. Check also KCRG and call the church to hear if any message has been left giving information.

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