

# FIRST'S FAMILY



**September 16—October 15  
2020**  
Volume 64, Issue 8

September 16, 2020

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

The grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you! Can you believe it has been 12 years that I have had the honor of pastoring you? We have watched together the emergence of an African-American man as president, as well as the onset of a pandemic, two economic crises (for those with means; one long one for those without means), and continuing risks to our democracy. Together you and I have strived to open our own church doors to all people, including precious folks in the LGBTQ community, members of recent African descent, and those fearing detention by ICE.

We have equipped people for spirituality and service. We have collaborated for justice with faith communities made up of persons of color and from a variety of faith perspectives. We have built classrooms in Pakistan as well as Habitat Houses in Iowa City, fed the hungry, and provided caring ministry and programs to our members and visitors of every age. We have worshipped God through word, dance, drama, and music in order to empower us to seek first the realm of God and God's right relationships. While we have sought to build right relationships, we have also sought to rebuild our church building's infrastructure. We have said goodbye to the saints who have moved out of town and to the saints who have joined the Church Triumphant. We have laughed and wept together.

12 years. While there have been hard times along the way, we have been blessed with new staff and congregant leadership. God always provides. We have been tested, and most of us have passed through the testing, chastened but still committed to Jesus Christ and First Presbyterian Church. Personally, while I have not broken any of the "big 10" commandments, I have felt perfectly free to be a sinner and to risk and to fail here. Sometimes I have succeeded, although I have learned over the long years of ministry that some successes are not and some failures are not. Ministry is judged by the millennia, not the temporary judgments of those of us who live so briefly on the earth. 12 years also has symbolic significance: It marks a wholeness or fulfillment. This is true whether we be speaking of the number of tribes of Israel, of disciples, or of months in a year.

12 years also marks the completion of my ministry with all of you at First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City. Many of you are aware that I have been looking toward retirement. I am taking the first step in that direction by departing all of you October 15, taking the remainder of my earned vacation leave to leave and grieve, and then arriving in Wilmington, DE by November 15. Please be patient as I elaborate below on the "why" of my departure and its timing, and why I believe it is God's will for you as well as for me.

I admit that I have felt a need for a change of pace for some time. A few of you noted that I have seemed tired or burned out and that the last few vacations have not alleviated my weariness. It is too late in my career for a sabbatical.

Nevertheless, I have resisted making a final decision, knowing that leaving you would be extremely difficult for me. Ending ministry here, with a sudden stop, although still living only two miles away with time on my hands, would

have made it very difficult for me to stay out of your business as you sought to move into a new future. Yet for any retiring pastor, giving time and space to the beloved congregation that you are leaving – in order for it to move on successfully - is tantamount to a Holy Obligation. It is also a core value for me.

Still, I couldn't conceive easily staying away from you in retirement, unless finding a way to live elsewhere and being otherwise employed.

God opened up options for our family. The approaching birth of my first grandchild in Lancaster, PA presented Susan and me with an invitation from my son Will and daughter-in-law Yana to move closer to them. Geography also offered Susan and me the opportunity to move to Wilmington, DE where I can do interim ministry for a congregation in need of one. Interim ministry is a pastoral calling unto itself. Yet this calling is often taken up by pastors like me who are moving toward retirement and yet are not quite ready to cease ministry altogether. Interim pastors typically are only willing to make a short-term commitment to serve, as I am.

*(Pastor's Message cont. on page 2)*

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*(Pastor's message cont. page 1)*

I confess that the timing for leaving feels atrocious in light of the pandemic. I grieve it. Yet this same timing may be for your benefit. I do not wish to "retire in place," as so many pastors do, taking the pay but not offering the needed leadership. That would be an unfair way for me to finish ministry. Furthermore, trained interim pastors are hard to find; yet in our presbytery there are some serving who are very fine and who might be coming available later this year. I want First Presbyterian Church to have the opportunity, working with presbytery, to obtain a great interim pastor who appreciates you and can guide you in preparation for a new pastor. The timing may not feel good at first blush; it feels to me that it is God's timing, and I hope earnestly you will come soon to arrive at the same conclusion.

I am experiencing significantly mixed emotions right now. Iowa will always be my adoptive home. First Presbyterian Church is the place to which I will go home in my heart when things get tough. I will miss all of you

terribly. You have loved me until I healed from other, tougher pastorates. You have provided generously for me and my family. Go Hawks! Yet I admit that I am also excited to discover grand-parenting and begin a new, although far shorter, chapter in ministry.

I ask that you forgive me if I stayed here too long or if I am leaving too early. I am simply overwhelmed by the feeling that it is time to find my proper place on the wall in the lower level Pastor's Place.

I thank God for all of you being you. I thank you for allowing me to be your pastor. Please continue your steadfast support of our beloved congregation in such challenging times.

Love, prayers and blessings,  
Your pastor, Sam

PS I am confident Session will arrange a way for us to say goodbye to all of you!



## Equipping Peacemakers in Congregations and Around the World.

**Offering to be received  
October 4, 2020**

A gift to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this offering to connect with the global witness of Christ's peace. Mid-councils (presbytery and synod) retain an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence,

including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

Together, through our gifts, we are building God's household through the youngest of peacemakers in our midst, to generations of peacemakers in places where compassion, peace and justice are not just heartfelt words, but lifesaving needs. Through our gifts, we are active peacemakers. We are builders. And when we all do a little, it adds up to a lot.

### Let us pray ~

Reconciling God,

continue to build us as your Church.

May we engage in ministries

that share your joy and promise with all people

and deepen our call

to be reconciled to one another. **Amen.**

## **"Making Sacred Space"** Zoom Evening Prayer Service Wednesdays in September

7:00 p.m.

Every Wednesday during the month of September Leah Bergman will be offering a brief evening prayer service via Zoom from 7:00 p.m.–7:30 p.m.

The service consists of prayer, scripture, and simple a capella sung responses.

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



## **Celebrating Reading at Little Creations**

*Submitted by Nancy Gardner*

It was a lively evening of reading and fun during the first of four Family Learning Nights at Little Creations Academy on Friday, August 21. The event, funded through an Iowa City Social Justice and Racial Equity grant, focused on parents as a child's first teacher and the importance of reading in the home. During the evening, children listened to Elementary Principal Kirk Ryan (the surprise guest reader), participated in a Book Walk, received guidance in good oral health from U of I dental residents, and selected two books to call their own. School-age students received new backpacks complete with school supplies that had been donated to FPC Outreach, while younger ones were provided a tote bag containing magnetic letters, journals, crayons, and other materials for home

literacy activities. In addition to the various stations, families enjoyed a light supper, and parents received information on reading activities to do at home.

Teachers and staff at Little Creations were led in the preparation by Director Rachael Scott along with Pastor Tony Smith. Members of First Pres provided support in set-up, registration, book distribution, and activity supervision. Thank you to: Mary Linn, Judy Whitford, Olivia Outlund, Michelle Bessman, Bob Goodfellow, Tammy Foster, and Tammy Schroeder for your assistance! We look forward to the second Family Learning Night which will take place sometime in November.

(Note: Yep, we were all masked and social distancing!)



Signing in



Filling tote bags



Getting ready to start  
the Book Walk



## FPC Outreach Ministry in Action



Judy Terry poses with 2 of 4 carts filled to the top with items for Derecho relief in Cedar Rapids



Over \$400 of food, diapers, paper products and water were delivered to Olivet Neighborhood Mission on the NW side of CR on Aug 20; at that time they were still without power as temps reached into the 90s.



### Back to School Backpacks

FPC Outreach was pleased to donate backpacks to Lil' Creations Academy Literacy Program.

Thank you to Nancy Gardner for finding backs for these lonely packs!



### FPC is offering Notary services.

Contact Tammy Schroeder to schedule an appointment at 319-351-2660 or [tammy.schroeder@firstpreswiowacity.org](mailto:tammy.schroeder@firstpreswiowacity.org)



### Needles, Hooks and Yarn

reminds everyone to be safe. If you need supplies; contact Tammy Schroeder.

# First's Family

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

## September 16-30

9/18 Amanda Molsberry  
9/19 Steve Smith  
9/19 Carol Ulch  
9/19 Anita Burnett  
9/20 Amy Johnston  
9/22 Katie Sidwell  
9/23 Marguerite Morey  
9/23 Mick Hammer  
9/24 Caroline Ruyle  
9/25 Steve Spangler  
9/26 Eric Forsythe  
9/26 Peter Dunbar  
9/27 Joyce Stochl  
9/29 Shirley Pate



## October 1-15

10/1 Al Wicks  
10/1 Jerry Stamp  
10/3 Tyson Neubauer  
10/4 Joan Maxwell  
10/5 Edmond Bigaba  
10/6 Chad Greimann  
10/7 Judy Whitford  
10/8 Bill Rubright  
10/8 Temple Hiatt  
10/8 Anna Sheetz  
10/10 Sherry Lohman  
10/10 Rachael Nicholson  
10/11 Norma Carlson  
10/12 Ken Miller  
10/14 Karen Nicklaus  
10/14 Emily Feagins  
10/15 Marvin Bergman  
10/15 Steve Hurt



### *Known to have been Hospitalized:*

**Esther Viksten and Carol Spangler**

We extend our sympathy to the family of **James Winegarden**, who died on August 9. He leaves behind his **wife** of almost 72 years, **Jeanette**, daughter **Ann (Greg) Muilenburg** and son, Van Winegarden.



**Helen and Dale Sheets** were married 65 years ago on August 28

## HAPPY Anniversary

**Ann and Greg Muilenburg** celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary on August 23.

## FPC Re-entry Survey Results

August 2020

### Overview

The survey included ten questions about lay persons' current feelings about returning to regular church activities. The survey was distributed during the time period of July 26–August 7. A total of 128 responses were received.

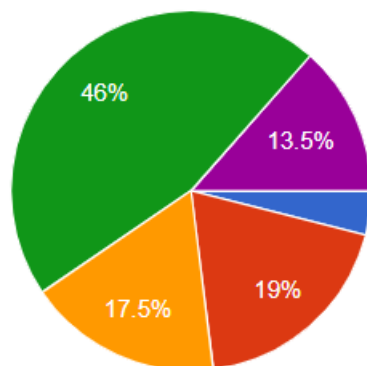
The majority of responses reflected a feeling of discomfort returning to larger group gatherings until there are very few cases of COVID-19 in the area or until there is a vaccine. There are also significant responses reflecting uncertainty about how to proceed.

Responses and charts for each question included below.

### Question 1: What best describes your attitude toward returning to a worship service at church?

(Select one)

- 46% It may be quite a while before I return
- 19% I will return at first opportunity but with some concerns and precautions
- 17.5% I will wait several additional weeks before I attend
- 13.5% Not sure
- 4% I will return the first opportunity we have



- I will return the first opportunity we have.
- I will return at first opportunity but with some concerns and precautions.
- I will wait several additional weeks before I attend.
- It may be quite a while before I return.
- Not sure.

### Question 2: Are there signals you would want to see before you return to attend a worship service at church? (Select all that apply)

- 93 (73.2%) The number of coronavirus cases near me is very small
- 64 (50.4%) Most physical/social distancing recommendations have been lifted
- 55 (43.3%) The air exchange rate of the sanctuary and other rooms has been assessed
- 35 (27.6%) Schools are open
- 27 (21.3%) Local restaurants are open
- 24 (18.9%) Local businesses are open
- 14 (11%) Not sure
- 7 (5.5%) None of these

**Question 3: What precautions, if any, do you plan to take when you return to a worship service?**

(Select all that apply)

- 122 (96.1%) I will wear a face mask and/or shield
- 117 (92.1%) I will stand and sit in places where I will be at least 6 feet from others (beyond my own family)
- 117 (92.1%) I will avoid shaking hands
- 108 (85 %) I will avoid physical contact
- 105 (82.7%) I will avoid crowded hallways
- 87 (68.5%) I will bring hand sanitizer
- 1 (0.8%) None of these

Other responses:

- Probably sit in Ryerson Hall rather than sanctuary
- Assuming I return while those precautions are still recommended
- I'll have taken a vaccine (as yet undeveloped)
- Will not participate in singing or communal call and response
- I will probably not return to worship as long as face masks and social distancing are necessary
- I will watch it online
- When I have received my vaccine shot or no more cases of Covid-19 or deaths in Iowa City

**Question 4: What precautions, if any, do you expect our church to take for worship gatherings?**

(Select all that apply)

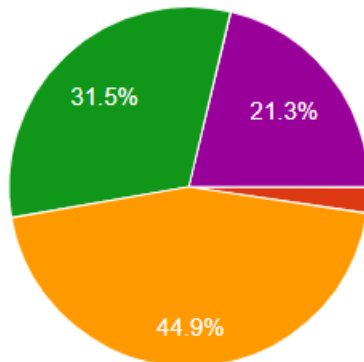
- 115 (92%) Discourage shaking hands
- 114 (91.2%) Encourage physical distancing in sanctuary seating
- 109 (87.2%) Provide hand sanitizer stations
- 103 (82%) Use a new method for distributing communion elements
- 95 (76%) Encourage physical distancing in small groups/Sunday School
- 94 (75.2%) Prop doors open so people do not have to touch handles
- 86 (68.8%) Use a new method for collecting tithes and offerings
- 78 (62.4%) Discourage singing
- 76 (60.8%) Set up one-way foot traffic entering and exiting the building and sanctuary
- 69 (55.2%) Limit handouts of any kind (e.g., bulletins, pew cards, etc.)
- 61 (48.8%) Discourage group speaking (unison prayer)
- 41 (32.8%) Allow a longer period of time between worship service hours
- 0 (0%) None of these

Other responses:

- 1) If special music was sung, could the singer(s) wear a mask or could the music be streamed?
- 2) I'd like floor and seating identification.
- I do believe that encouraging some of these things isn't enough...mandating them may need to be the case. You can encourage till the cows come home but it only goes so far. See how "encouraging" people to stay home and if they go out to wear a mask worked for the state of Iowa...high COVID-19 case numbers. Sometimes a mandate is necessary. Church needs to be safe.
- Not just discourage, but eliminate group singing and speaking and shaking hands
- Require face coverings
- Encourage face mask usage the entire service
- I'm fine with singing and unison prayers as long as people are masked.
- Wear masks, especially if group speaking/singing
- Assuming I come back any time before a vaccination
- If any of these precautions are needed, I may not be ready to attend.
- Just wait till it is safe for everyone (whenever that will be)
- I will not attend until I feel comfortable being there...right now I am not sure what that means
- Comprehensive list includes precautions I hadn't thought of

**Question 5: Which of the following describes the attendance level at which you would be comfortable attending a worship service? I would be comfortable attending if the sanctuary if ... (Select one)**

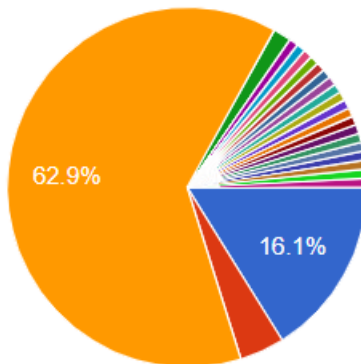
- 44.9% Half filled (most people have empty seats beside them and in front of them)
- 31.5% None of these (at least right away)
- 21.3% Not sure where my level of comfort is
- 2.4% Three-quarters filled (some empty seats throughout but no empty rows)
- 0% Filled to capacity (every seat taken)



- Filled to capacity (every seat taken)
- Three-quarters filled (some empty seats throughout but no empty rows)
- Half filled (most people have empty seats beside them and in front of them)
- None of these (at least right away)
- Not sure where my level of comfort is

**Question 6: When gatherings begin to be possible, which of the following would you prefer for our church? (Select one)**

- 62.9% Not sure
- 16.1% Resume in person worship services at our church immediately
- 4% Meet in small groups in homes for a few weeks before resuming in person worship services
- 1.6% I'm not comfortable gathering anywhere until there is a vaccine and cases go way down



- Resume in person worship services at...
- Meet in small groups in homes for a fe...
- Not sure.
- I'm not comfortable gathering anywher...
- Hybrid of stream and in-person worship
- definitely will NOT go to a home!
- Resume in person; maintain online for...
- Outside worship weather permitting

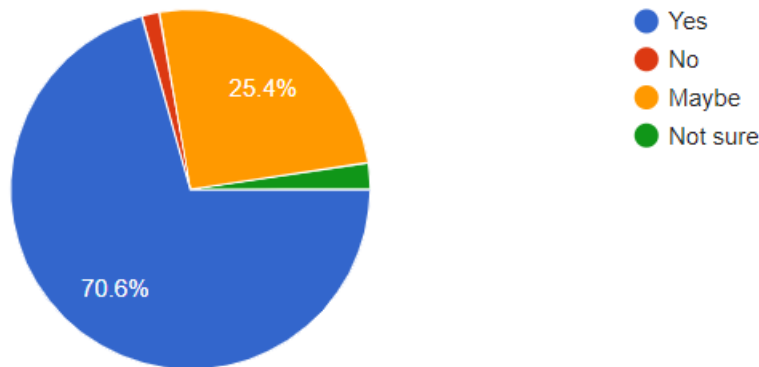
**Other responses:**

- Resume in-person; maintain online for those who can't/don't want to come.
- Continue having worship online.
- Hybrid of stream and in-person worship
- Meet in small groups in the church. Do not want to go to homes
- Small group meetings in church before resuming in-person worship services
- Definitely will NOT go to a home!
- Smaller socially distanced services — open to more than one service on a Sunday.
- Maybe two services with reservations
- Resume in stages so group time in the building is limited. e.g., do not have classes or fellowship times back-to-back with worship; spread those activities throughout the day.
- Meet outside
- Outside worship weather permitting
- Outdoor events when possible?
- I would prefer to worship in the church, but I'm also cognizant of what the county is saying.
- Wait a while to be sure it's safe
- Neither of these appeal to me.
- It depends on so many factors, most of which the church has little or no control.
- Resume in person with the appropriate guidelines followed when the medical community approves
- I want to know to the precautions the church is taking before I would make a decision about returning to worship or small groups



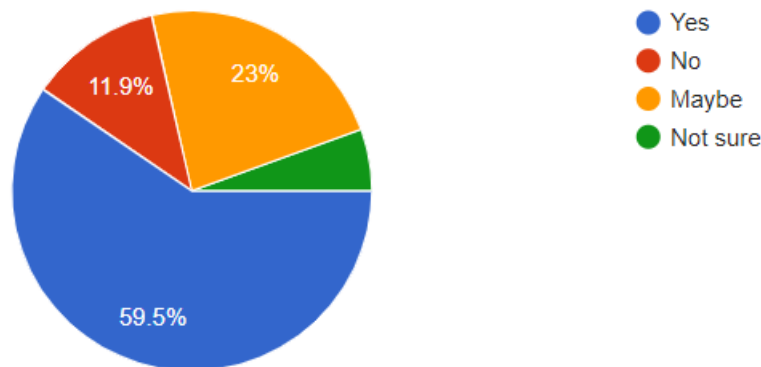
**Question 7: Would you be willing to attend a worship service at a different time than you typically attend to allow people to be more spread out in the sanctuary? (Select one)**

- 70.6% Yes
- 25.4% Maybe
- 2.4% Not sure
- 1.6% No



**Question 8: Would you be willing to attend a worship service in an overflow room to ensure people (in the sanctuary and overflow rooms) are spread out? (Select one)**

- 59.5% Yes
- 23% Maybe
- 11.9% No
- 5.6% Not sure



**Question 9: Would you be willing to attend an alternative style of worship gathering? (Select all that apply)**

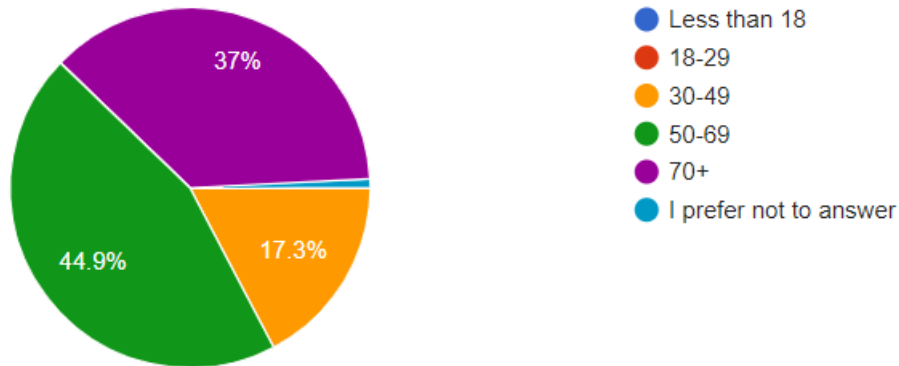
- 87 (68.5%) Gather outdoors (parking lot or lawn)
- 63 (49.6%) Gather in the sanctuary for a limited worship service (20-30 min.)
- 26 (20.5%) Not sure
- 16 (12.6%) Gather in the sanctuary with leaders behind a Plexiglass screen
- 7 (5.5%) Gather in the sanctuary with a pre-recorded service projected on a screen (without live worship leaders)

Other responses:

- Want to point out that I would not be ready to gather in the sanctuary for some time.
- Online
- I would prefer that the liturgical responses be projected on a screen and not printed.
- None of the above
- For now continue watching worship on my computer.

### Question 10: What is your age?

- 44.9% 50-69
- 37% 70+
- 17.3% 30-49
- 0.8% I prefer not to answer
- 0% Less than 18



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## Congregational Health Ministries: Cleaning and Disinfecting for COVID19

According to experts, transmission of the virus is primarily from respiratory droplets dispersed during talking, coughing, sneezing and singing. The droplets can remain on surfaces for minutes to days. However, the risk of transmission of the virus from contact with objects is very low. However, it is still advisable to clean frequently touched surfaces in order to reduce the likelihood of transmission. This includes items such as doorknobs and handles, door openers, handrails (such as in stairways), pews, chairs, tables, restroom fixtures, sinks, drinking fountains, light switches and elevator buttons.

When we progress to opening up our church building, the areas of cleaning will increase to those areas being utilized. During phase 1, most of the building is closed off and not routinely cleaned or disinfected. The sanctuary has been open for prayer, but only cleaned as needed. Wearing face covering, using hand sanitizer, covering your cough/sneezes is necessary and will be required of everyone entering the building for the foreseeable future.

When it is safe for us to move to phase 2, small groups of 10 or less will be able to meet at the church for meetings, prayer, bible study, etc. Only areas of the building that are open will be cleaned routinely by the church sexton. Use of the building will be by appointment only, and all people attending will need to sign in and out. The meeting rooms used by church leaders, staff, or visitors will be disinfected before and after use by the person chairing the meeting or a designee assigned the task. Instructions will be posted and supplies available for each room and each building entry. If windows are available, and the weather permits, open them for improved ventilation and reducing the possibility of small aerosolized virus particles.

Areas of the building that are not open will either be locked or a sign posted with a warning to not enter.

### How to clean and disinfect surfaces:

Cleaning with soap and water is important to reduce the viral load and to remove any visible dirt/debris. In most cases, it is the only procedure required except for frequently touched areas by multiple users (see first paragraph) which will require disinfecting between users. Disinfecting products will be available for use in all rooms available for use, based on the phased entry policy. For most areas (hard surfaces only, including finished wood) Clorox disinfecting wipes (EPA# 5813-79) will be available. It is important to use the wipes according to instructions to disinfect surfaces touched during the use of the building: table tops, chair arms/back, door knobs/handles, etc. Use one wipe to wet the surface, remaining wet for 4 minutes before air drying. It may be necessary to use multiple wipes for larger areas, or a spray disinfectant with paper towels. Protect eyes from splashing by holding the wipes container low and pulling the wipe out way from you slowly. Wash your hands with soap and water for 30 seconds after disinfecting procedures, using a paper towel to turn off the water faucet and dispose in the waste container.

Even with the best efforts of cleaning and disinfecting, each individual using the building will need to take responsibility for protecting themselves and others as much as possible: to wash hands frequently, use hand sanitizer, wear a face covering, and not touch one's face.



Join bitmoji Anna as she hangs out each week in the **VIRTUAL YOUTH ROOM!**

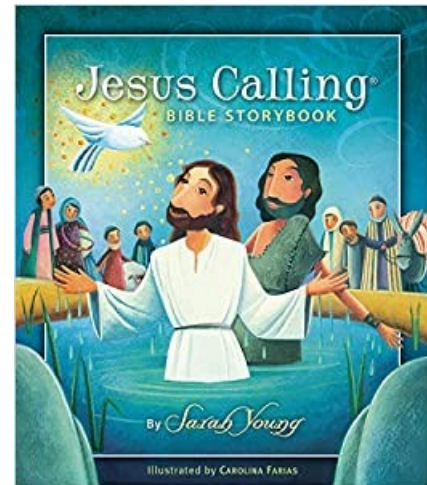
This can be found at [www.firstpresbiowacity.org/youth-and-children/](http://www.firstpresbiowacity.org/youth-and-children/)

This is going to be the hub for all things happening in Equipping Ministry at FPC! You simply have to click items for a whole lot of links to fun things. There will be new information each Wednesday!

# #FPCFamilyFaith

#FPCFamilyFaith is a campaign for our FPCer's with children and youth. This campaign, or organized work toward the goal of supporting family faith at home! Here's the campaign:

- A short 10-15 minute Sunday School during the Parent's Class during ZOOM SPACE.
- A weekly Bible story from *Jesus Calling Bible Storybook* by Sarah Young. I (Anna) chose this book because it is part of a huge library of Jesus Calling books by Sarah Young. Young does a great job of connecting Jesus' voice in each story.
- A short weekly Parent 'training' from Equipping Staff.
- A PDF document of Family Activities to activate faith at home.
- Other resources added as the stories, questions or world dictates.
- Encouraging families to use the #FPCFamilyFaith to show each other how we are learning together during this time.



We hope that we are offering valuable resources for families to develop faith at home. Please, reach out to Anna at [Anna.Sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org](mailto:Anna.Sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org) if there is anything at all we can do for you and your family.

**Fall Small Groups** will begin the week of Sunday, September 27 and go until Sunday, November 22. Each week, a group of 4-6 people meet on ZOOM to discuss the sermon, life, and faith. If you are interested in joining or leading a small group, please contact Anna at [Anna.Sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org](mailto:Anna.Sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org) by September 23.





## CONFIRMATION FOR A GROWING FAITH

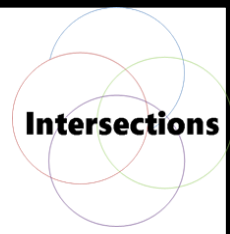
First Presbyterian Church is offering Confirmation once again this year. Confirmation is the process by which 7th and 8th graders confirm their faith and become members of First Presbyterian Church. The preliminary schedule is below:

- Sunday, September 27– First Meeting with Families
- Sunday, November 8– Meeting with Mentors
- Sunday, November 15
- Sunday, December 6
- Sunday, December 13
- Sunday, January 10
- Sunday, January 17
- Sunday, January 24
- Sunday, January 31
- Sunday, February 7
- Sunday, February 14
- Sunday, February 21
- Sunday, February 28
- Sunday, March 7
- Sunday, March 21
- Sunday, March 28
- Tuesday, March 30
- Saturday, April 3

If students and parents would like to enroll in this year's confirmation program, please email Anna at [Anna.Sheetz@firstpresioiwacivity.org](mailto:Anna.Sheetz@firstpresioiwacivity.org)

**Intersections** is a study that sees where life and faith intersect. This Summer, we kicked off this ministry with Harry Potter and the Curious Crew.

Now, we turn back in time and head past the lamp post, into Narnia itself.



Mark your calendars! Join us for the whole series or just your favorite book! We're excited to kick off this adventure!

Monday, October 5, 6–7:30 p.m.  
*The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*

Monday, October 12, 6–7:30 p.m.  
*Prince Caspian*

Monday, October 26, 6–7:30 p.m.  
*The Voyage of the Dawn Threader*

Monday, November 2, 6–7:30 p.m.  
*The Horse and His Boy*

Monday, November 9, 6–7:30 p.m.  
*The Silver Chair*

Monday, December 7, 6–7:30 p.m.  
*The Magician's Nephew*

Monday, December 21, 6–7:30p.m.  
*The Last Battle*

To sign up contact Anna at [anna.sheetz@firstpresioiwacivity.org](mailto:anna.sheetz@firstpresioiwacivity.org)

## Yappy Hour

A NIGHT OUT WITH MAN'S BEST FRIEND.



FPCers are invited to a physically distant, masked **"Yappy Hour" at Lucky Pawz Playground on Thursday, September 24 from 5:30–6:30 p.m.**

There is a fee to get into the park — either an annual pass or a \$5 pass good for two days. These can be purchased upon arrival.

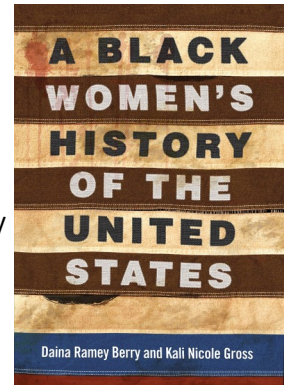
For more information, visit [www.icgov.org/dogpark](http://www.icgov.org/dogpark) or email Anna Sheetz at [Anna.Sheetz@firstpresioiwacivity.org](mailto:Anna.Sheetz@firstpresioiwacivity.org)





Jeremiah Justice Initiative starts new book;  
***A Black Women's History of the United States***  
 by Daina Ramey Berry and Kali Nicole Gross.

The Jeremiah Justice Initiative will launch their Fall Session on Sunday, September 20. This will be a 10 week series on Sunday nights from 6–7:30 p.m. and this session will end on November 22. If you are interested in participating, please email Layne Sheetz at [Layne.Sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org](mailto:Layne.Sheetz@firstpresbiowacity.org)



**ZOOM  
SUNDAY  
SCHOOL**

## Join us each Sunday on ZOOM for Sunday School!

We have two awesome offerings!

- The Wired Word; a place where adults can delve into the latest news, how faith plays a role in our lives, and where they intersect. This meets weekly from 9:30–10:25 a.m.

ZOOM Meeting ID: 725 9410 8735

Password: 496872

- FPC Faith; an intergenerational Bible story and discussion! This is a simple time for fellowship, a story, and a lesson. Join us each week from 10–10:25 a.m.

ZOOM Meeting ID: 770 6777 7897

Password: 934476

## Sponsored Girls Return to Pasrur School with Support from Capital Funds Campaign

Our sponsored girls at the Christian Girls School in Pasrur, Pakistan are returning to school after spending several months at home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently scheduled to resume their studies on September 15, the girls face very warm conditions both in the buildings and in makeshift outdoor settings to accommodate social distancing.

To address this situation, the Capital Funds Campaign Committee, with approval from the Session, has allocated the designated tithe of \$5,000, with an additional \$3,150 raised by Friends of Pasrur, to be used towards items that will bring relief to the girls as they study in the heat. Tarps to provide shade, water coolers, fans, water bottles, and additional items to equip the

school for teaching during the pandemic and adequately accommodating safety requirements will allow the girls to return to the school. After such a long time away, the girls are understandably excited to be back at Pasrur.

As always our 100 Christian girls who reside in the dorm at the Pasrur Christian Girls School are able to pursue an education through the generosity of our scholarship sponsors. If you are interested in sponsoring a student, please contact Leann Graves ([lgraves@mchsi.com](mailto:lgraves@mchsi.com)) or Nancy Gardner ([nancy.hayes.gardner@gmail.com](mailto:nancy.hayes.gardner@gmail.com)).

Submitted by Nancy Gardner

Students look forward to the day they can return to activities such as these:



## August Session Highlights

*Submitted by Ann Grosscup, Clerk of Session*

A quorum was declared shortly after 7 p.m., August 18, 2020, for the stated session meeting. Guest moderator Dr. Blair shared the Christ candle electronically when the ZOOM meeting was called to order. Vern Dengler's devotions and opening prayer, based on the Joy of the Redeemed, scripture passage Isaiah 35: 1–4, reminded to continue to see the beauty from our hope-giving God.

John Barr, Convener, Technology Subcommittee, Capital Campaign Implementation Committee (CCIT) reminded of the elevator project's financing and updated balance through the end of July.

### Motions Approved:

Minutes of stated session meeting July 21, 2020, with the following deferred motions pulled out:

The following motion was deferred (Richard Van Rheeden, abstained) for further discussion to Reconciliation Ministry Elder: Michelle Bessman; Reconciliation Member (knowledgeable about community needs): John Barr; Finance Cluster Elders: Dale Kraus, Tony Warren; REALM Planning Ministry: Jeremy Fletcher, moderator:

Session will release an additional \$50,000 from the Burianek Trust Fund for the Burianek Mission Match Challenge.

The consensus is now expected to be brought to the next stated session meeting, September 15, 2020. (Reconciliation Ministry disperses Burianek Mission Match Challenge funds.)

First Presbyterian Church will begin Phase 2 of the Reentry Plan on September 1. (Attached for reference, previously session approved: FPC Entry Policy, Activity Catalog and Appendix for cleaning and disinfecting guidelines.)

Ask staff and Ames Molsberry to develop a learning pod plan to be shared through REALM Planning at the stated session meeting on September 15, 2020.

Worship and Arts Ministry proposes holding a one-time outdoor worship service on Sunday, September 20 at 9:00 a.m. with a rain-date of September 27.

Session instructs the Finance Committee to immediately transfer \$13,000 from the \$20,000 that it has already secured from Endowment to Fund 26 in order to cover Elevator Project expenses that must be paid by September 6, 2020.

Share donation avenues with the congregation for PEI Disaster Relief.

Status reports were given for the Task Force – Little Creations Academy Advisory Committee.

Steve Smith closed the meeting with prayer.

**Next Scheduled Stated meeting: September 15, 2020, 7 p.m. via ZOOM.**

Dwight Miller, Opening Devotions; Leann Graves, Closing Prayer

A quorum, via ZOOM, was declared shortly after 7 p.m. **August 26, 2020, for the Special session meeting** called by Pastor Sam Massey to extend an invitation to Deacon Ames Molsberry to share his plan for a FPC learning pod. Guest moderator Dr. Blair noted the lit Christ candle prior to the opening prayer shared in unison.

### Called Session Meeting Item

Dr. Blair introduced the meeting agenda by informing the (REALM Planning Ministry) COVID-19 Response Team met earlier in the day due to the rising levels of COVID-19 local cases. Michelle Bessman spoke for the Response Team. Dr. Blair shared graphs showing the active or imminent local outbreak of COVID-19. The question posed to elders was: Do

we continue with Phase 2 or do we go back to Phase 1 as of September 1, 2020? The floor was opened to discussion before the official agenda item was discussed. The FPC Re-entry Policy's criteria were reviewed prior to a consensus to remain in Phase 1. The consensus necessitated undoing the approved motions at the stated session meeting August 8, 2020, later in the meeting.

Ames Molsberry was thanked for sharing with session his FPC learning pod plan, the called session meeting agenda item. His learning pod idea focuses on the children's social and emotional needs to see and share the same environment with their friends. Again, the FPC Re-entry Policy's criteria were reviewed for the

possibility of using outdoor space for an onsite learning pod in Phase 1; per policy, no gatherings on-site whether inside or outdoors. A FPC learning pod, when we move to Phase 2, is a possibility.

### **MOTIONS APPROVED:**

That the action item from (REALM Planning Ministry) COVID-19 Response Team to begin Phase 2 of the First Presbyterian Church Reentry Plan, effective September 1, 2020, approved at the stated meeting of the FPC Session on August 18, 2020, be rescinded.

That the action item from Session, approved at the stated meeting of the FPC Session on August 18, 2020, to ask the staff and Ames Molsberry to

*(Called Session 8-26 cont. on page 15)*

(Called Session 8-26 cont. from page 14)  
develop a learning pod plan to be shared through REALM Planning at the stated session meeting on September 15, 2020, be rescinded.

Due to the active COVID-19 outbreak levels in Johnson County

as of August 25, 2020, indicating a dangerous number of new cases and rapidly increasing infection rate, the Session affirms that the church will remain in Phase 1 of the First Presbyterian Church Reentry Plan in accord with the provisions of the Reentry Plan.

The Session expresses gratitude to Ames Molsberry for his work in thinking through the proposed learning pod initiative.

A unison prayer was shared to close the meeting.



Dale Kraus, Interim Treasurer

	Contributions	Misc. Income <small>Building Use, Walker Trust, Bank interest, etc.</small>	Total Income	Total Expenses	Over/Short
Jan-June	\$253,291.05	\$91,671.54	\$344,962.59	\$281,612.33	\$63,350.26
July	\$29,510.16	\$29,031.20	\$58,541.36	\$42,678.02	\$15,863.34
August	\$30,662.16	\$17,482.82	\$48,144.98	\$54,886.89	-\$6,741.91
<b>2020 Totals</b>	<b>\$313,463.37</b>	<b>\$138,185.56</b>	<b>\$451,648.93</b>	<b>\$379,177.24</b>	<b>\$72,471.69</b>

## Let Your Faith Sound Forth!

1 Thessalonians 1:8

First Church members and friends,

Change is in the wind. Right now we see pandemic, economic hardship, and political turmoil. We wonder what will happen next in education and health care. Closer to home, our pastor has announced his departure in this newsletter. We are challenged to mask, maintain physical distancing, and live either isolated or in close quarters.

What we don't see as easily is the Spirit of God calling our country into death and resurrection, into a great leaving behind and a remarkable moving ahead, into new birth and life. Our officers and staff persons invite us to embrace our primary spiritual gifts of faith, hope, and love. As the apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18,

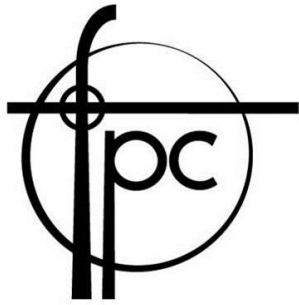
*We do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

So please don't lose heart! Please pledge and give to our First Presbyterian Church; please pray and share to keep our congregation vibrant in its witness during this season between the times of hardship and a glorious new creation. The promises of God are for you and me. Never doubt that to be true! When it arrives, please read the brochure and take advantage of the pledge card mailed to you, returning it by Sunday, October 27. Christ's church is still here for you; please be here for Christ and our congregation.



## First Presbyterian Church

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### FPC Book Club

Join us as we gather on the **LAST TUESDAY** of the month at **11:30 a.m. on Zoom**

For more info contact Mary Linn at [JmLnn@aol.com](mailto:JmLnn@aol.com)

September 29 Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate

October 27 Becoming by Michelle Obama



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

Bob and Millie Youngquist, Coordinators

### Touching Base with our Mission

As we are now starting our fall activities, let's consider our endowment mission. The Bible doesn't discuss monetary endowments per se, but it does share thoughts on money management.

Read Matthew 25:14–30 (The Parable of the Talents) remembering that an NRSV Bible footnote states that a "talent" was worth more than fifteen years of a laborer!

Many of the church's financial resources with which we work as the Endowment and Memorials Committee come from bequests that are added to our endowment. We invest the money we receive through bequests and use a portion of its income annually to support the work of Christ's church. The money is invested very wisely so

that the principal grows and increasingly empowers present and future ministry in the name of our congregation saints. We, too, are multiplying our talents and we're diversifying our investments wisely to achieve reliable growth. Ecclesiastes 11:2 states (NLT) "Divide your investments among many places, for you do not know what risks might lie ahead."

Next month, we will give an overview/introduction to the endowment for those not familiar with it. For those already quite aware of the endowment, please contribute, thereby supporting the work of our church far into the future.

## First Presbyterian Church

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