



# The Epistle

January 2015  
Volume 2015-01

## Upcoming Events

Blessed are the peacemakers:  
for they shall be called  
the children of God.  
Matthew 5:9

- 1/11—Healing Touch Circle
- 1/12—BUNKO
- 1/13—Cancer Support Group
- 1/14—Healing Touch Circle (by appointment only)
- 1/15—Session
- 1/21—Sunday School Christmas Pageant
- 1/25—Annual Meeting
- 1/31—An “Eat In, Sleep In Weekend”

## 2015: Trying New Things

Heading into a new year always makes me think of these verses from Isaiah 43:18-19:  
*Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.  
I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?*

As we begin 2015, I have no doubt that it will be a year of doing things in new and different ways as a congregation. Here’s just one example:

Back in November, around 25 people were enjoying a Night Before Church Dinner on a Saturday night. There was great food and conversation, the kind of table fellowship that is at the heart of Christian community. But while the group was having a wonderful time they realized that families with children were missing. ***So they came up with an idea of how our church might change the way we do things in order to make it easier for those families.***

(WOW, do I love this willingness to try something new for the sake of others! I wasn’t there so I can’t take any credit. I can only express my appreciation for such flexibility and creativity. It is a characteristic that will serve our congregation very well as we head into a future in which the way the church has done things will most likely no longer serve us well.)

The idea was shared with Session, and Session enthusiastically decided to give it a go. So here is our great experiment:

**An “Eat In, Sleep In Weekend”**  
Saturday, January 31 - Sunday, February 1

### **Saturday**

1:00 pm **RECREATION** - Games of all kinds for all ages begin.

5:00 pm **SHARING A MEAL** - Bring a dish to share for a potluck.

5:30ish pm **WORSHIP** - Interactive, intergenerational at our tables.

### **Sunday**

*No Sunday Activities*

Mark your calendars! You can find more details on this event on page 4 of this newsletter. (This is a wonderful opportunity to invite a friend, by the way.)

I hope you will join us we try this “new thing” January 31, trusting in the Spirit’s leading!

PS If you have a “crazy” idea of something you would like to try, talk with any member of Session.

*Pastor Lori*

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Damon Cole



# NEWS & Notes



**Bell Choir**—We need more ringers! No experience is necessary; some ability to read music is helpful. Anyone aged 12 years and up is welcome to give it a try. Contact Joey Crowley ([joanne.k.crowley@gmail.com](mailto:joanne.k.crowley@gmail.com)) or the church office if you are interested in learning more!



**Healing Touch Circle**, Sunday, January 11th, Community Room, 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm (by appointment only)



**Bunko**— Monday, January 12th, Fellowship Hall, 6:00 pm



**Cancer Support Group** — Tuesday, January 13th, Fellowship Hall, 6:30 pm



**TLC**—No meeting until further notice.



**Session Meeting**— January 19th, Community Room, 6:30 pm

An “Eat In, Sleep In Weekend,” January 31st,  
Recreation-1:00 pm, Sharing a Meal-5:00 pm, and  
Worship-5:30ish pm, Fellowship Hall  
~ **NO SUNDAY SERVICES ON FEBRUARY 1st** ~



## Watch Us on YouTube!

Did you miss a service or want to watch one again?

Carl Riechers continues to record our Sunday services and now uploads them to our very own channel (FirstPresMV) on YouTube! Find it any of these three ways:

- Click on the link on our Facebook page (First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon)
- Search “FirstPresMV” at youtube.com
- Go to [www.youtube.com/user/FirstPresMV](http://www.youtube.com/user/FirstPresMV)



## Hey, Facebook Users!

Want another way to find out what's going on at church? Be sure to 'Like' *First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon* on Facebook!

We use this page to promote events, post photos, and the occasional encouragement or interesting link.

## SESSION MEMBERS

Sue Deibner  
Paul Jerabek  
Amy Weber  
Stephanie West (2<sup>nd</sup> term)

James Cannon (youth elder)  
Lyz Erlandson (youth elder)

Those continuing their  
service are:

Becky Ahrens  
Pam Mott (2<sup>nd</sup> term)  
Rozanne Petrick (2<sup>nd</sup> term)  
Beth Simon  
Nate Willems

## SERVING OUR CHURCH:

Clerk of Session: Rozanne  
Petrick

Christian Education: Amy  
Weber & Sue Deibner

Adult Forum: Roger Johanson

Fellowship: (Pam Mott is a  
member of this committee)

Finance/Stewardship: Becky  
Ahrens

Member Care: Beth Simon,  
Nate Willems, & Sue Deibner

Memorial: Rozanne Petrick

Outreach:

Personnel: Pam Mott

Building & Property: Paul  
Jerabek

Social Concerns: Beth Simon  
and Nate Willems

Worship:



As I write this, it is New Year's Eve, and Barb Bjork and Al and Becky Ahrens are busy compiling the year-end financial reports. I'm hardly a financial analyst, but I did a little number crunching of my own and discovered something.

Between 2009 and 2014, **giving in this congregation increased by 21 percent.** Wow!

Not only that, but this reflects giving to the general fund only, and does not include the capital campaigns. Add in a rather uncertain economy during much of these past five years, and there is only one conclusion I can reach:

***You are an incredibly generous group of people!** Thank you, thank you, thank you! Words simply cannot express my gratitude for your financial support of this congregation and the work we do here, in our communities, and beyond! We keep saying it, but that's because it is true—First Pres Mount Vernon IS making a difference!*

**This growth in generosity is so worth celebrating!**

But on the other hand, it is also true that **we finished 2014 in the red by just under \$9000 (as we expected).** The Session decided to cover the shortfall using \$5000 from Mary Byerly's estate and \$3850 from the Doris Whiting Estate Mission Funds to pay for our general mission pledge that supports the work of the Presbytery of East Iowa, the Synod of Lakes and Prairies, and the General Assembly.

These two facts together—increased generosity, and a deficit budget—may leave you scratching your heads. To that end, the Finance Committee is offering:

Q&A on our Church's Financial Situation  
Sunday, January 18 – Adult Forum,  
11:00 am in the Community Room

If you have questions or concerns, we hope you will be there! Bring questions with you, or send them in advance to Barb Bjork ([bjorkbarb@gmail.com](mailto:bjorkbarb@gmail.com)), Larry Petrick ([larry.petrick@gmail.com](mailto:larry.petrick@gmail.com)) or Al and Becky Ahrens ([zz68tharm@gmail.com](mailto:zz68tharm@gmail.com)).

Again, thank you for your continued support!

*Pastor Lori*

*An “Eat In, Sleep In Weekend”  
Saturday, January 31 - Sunday, February 1  
Recreation + Sharing a Meal + Worship*

***Saturday***

**1:00 pm RECREATION**

Games of all kinds for all ages begin. If you have a favorite game, bring it! Come when you can. If there is snow, bring a sled. If you would rather sit and talk or do a craft, that's fine, too. *The idea is to play together, to laugh and enjoy one another's company.*

**5:00 pm SHARING A MEAL**

Bring a dish to share for a potluck. Make a favorite family recipe or pick up something on your way. *The point is that as we share food and our stories, we are reminded of how we belong to each other and we need each other.*

**5:30 pm (or so) WORSHIP**

While still at our tables, we will have interactive, intergenerational worship around the week's reading, Matthew 6:7-21 (The Lord's Prayer and treasure in heaven). Worship will be different than the way we usually do it, but our focus will remain on being aware of our need for God and God's presence and leading in our lives.

***Sunday***

***No Sunday Service***

Not sure what to do with yourself? A few ideas:

Sleep in + Relax + Breathe deeply + Lounge around in your pajamas + Read a book. Read the bible + Tell God what you're thankful for or worried about + Tell your loved ones what you're thankful for or worried about + Meditate + Write in a journal + Create something + Make pancakes + Go for a walk + Go to the park + Notice how beautiful the world is + Be grateful + Give a loved one your full attention + Be aware (And, if you really want to, attend worship at another church.)





## Star Gift Word

This is the fifth year our congregation has handed out a word printed on a star the Sunday closest to January 6th (Epiphany). The idea of these “Star Words” is that it is a Gift to us from God, something we receive without judgment, and then reflect on in the coming year. We trust that—somehow—God can use this particular word (regardless of whether we like it or would have chosen it for ourselves) to bless us.

Your Star Word could be...

- ...something you need more (or less!) of in your life
- ...a spiritual practice to focus your energies on
- ...a quality within you or in a relationship with someone else, or an attribute of God that could use your attention or consideration
- ...something that will bring you closer to God and bless you and those around you
- ...something you need to wrestle with in the coming year to gain understanding and insight

Some ideas of how to get started with your Star Word:

- Pray! Ask God to show you how in the world this word speaks to your life right now. And if you think you already know, ask God to take you deeper in your understanding.
- Look the word up in the dictionary, in the bible, on Google.
- Share your word with others and see what insights they have to offer.
- Post it on your mirror, the refrigerator, on the computer, wherever you can see it and keep the word in mind.
- Keep a running list of reflections on the word in a journal.



Most importantly, entrust yourself—and the word—to God!  
And see where it might take you...

### First Presbyterian Church

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Each Sunday, “Weekly Announcements” containing the most current information of dates,

## Christian Education for Children and Youth

Christian Education for Children and Youth

Confirmation Class continues each week for Grades 7-9 with Shelly Woodley and Lori Wunder.

During worship on Sunday, January 18, we will present Third Graders Uwen Boettcher, Andrew Heck and Jayce Pendergrass their very own copy of the Deep Blue Kids Bible!

For information about Sunday and Wednesday activities, watch your email!

## COMING SOON... WARMING STATION

### Sledding Warming Station @ First Pres

**Days and Times TBA—by Volunteers!**

**When the snow finally comes,  
the First Pres Warming Station will begin!**

**All sledder are welcome to come inside  
to warm up, use the restroom  
and get a cup of FREE hot Chocolate!**



## January—Worship Assistants

### *Sunday, January 4 - 9:30 am – Worship & Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*

Liturgist: Charles Halsey  
 Greeters: Lynn & Shelly Woodley  
 Ushers: Al & Becky Ahrens                      Bell ringer: Usher Select  
 Candle lighter: Ava Willems  
 Communion: Linda Nost, Greg West, Barb Bjork, & Amy Weber  
 Nursery: Hannah Garvey

### *Sunday, January 11 - 9:30 am – Worship & Birthday Blessing*

Liturgist: Beth Simon  
 Greeters: Mary Clare Coulter & Connie Boettcher  
 Ushers: Phyllis & Bill Hodina                      Bell ringer: Usher Select  
 Candle lighter: Ben Recalde  
 Nursery: Hannah Garvey

### *Sunday, January 18 - 9:30 am – Worship*

Liturgist: Marianne Taylor  
 Greeters: Rozanne & Larry Petrick  
 Ushers: Elaine Bishop & Susan Brust                      Bell ringer: Usher Selects  
 Candle lighter: Emmy Willems  
 Nursery: Hannah Garvey

### *Sunday, January 25 - 9:30 am – Worship*

Liturgist: Larry Petrick  
 Greeters: Beth Simon & Laura Werkman  
 Ushers: Linda Nost & Pam Mott                      Bell ringer: Usher Select  
 Candle lighter: Jaidyn Burge  
 Nursery: Hannah Garvey

*The kingdom of God is not something in the far future that is going suddenly to come down from heaven and settle on you and magically turn everything right. You yourselves are it. It's in you and among you; you have to do it or it will never come.*

*Beatrice Bruteau*  
 Source: [The Holy Thursday Revolution](#)



# January 2015

*Worship Every Sunday 9:30*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 <i>Office Closed</i> 	2	3
4 <i>9:30 am Worship Communion</i>	5 <i>Office Closed</i>	6 <i>7:00-9:00 pm Art Class, Community Room</i>	7	8	9 <i>Annual Report Information Due from Session Members &amp; Committee Chairs</i>	10
11 <i>9:30 am Worship Birthday Blessing</i>  <i>2:00 pm—4:00 pm Healing Touch Circle, Community Room (appointment needed)</i>	12 <i>Office Closed</i>  <i>6:00 BUNKO Fellowship Hall</i>	13 <i>6:30 Cancer Support Group Fellowship Hall</i>  <i>7:00-9:00 pm Art Class, Community Room</i>	14	15	16	17
18 <i>9:30 am Worship</i>	19 <i>Office Closed</i>  <i>6:30 pm Session, Community Room</i>	20 <i>7:00-9:00 pm Art Class, Community Room</i>	21 <i>10:00-4:00 Quilting Group, Fellowship Hall (Connie Boettcher)</i>	22	23 <i>Office Closed</i>	24
25 <i>9:30 am Worship</i>  <b>ANNUAL MEETING</b>	26 <i>Office Closed</i>	27 <i>7:00-9:00 pm Art Class, Community Room</i>	28	29	30	31 <i>An Eat In, Sleep In Weekend (no Sunday Services on February 1st)</i>

## Worship in January

From now until the Sunday after Easter (April 12), we will be reading from the Gospel According to Matthew. Here's a brief introduction to Matthew, taken from the Connect Bible (NRSV, ©2012 sparkhouse):

**What's in a name?** Matthew was the name of one of Jesus' 12 disciples. This Gospel was probably named after him as a way of showing us how important the book is. Matthew the disciple is not likely the author, however, because the Gospel of Matthew was probably written in about 80 CE (50 years after Jesus died and was raised).

**Why was this written?** Matthew writes to declare Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament—the Torah and the Prophets. Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah who has come to redeem the people. The people who heard the message of this Gospel needed to hear how God was still actively continuing the promises of old.

**What's the connection?** Matthew relies heavily on Mark's Gospel to tell the story of who Jesus the Messiah is. This Gospel also uses more quotes from the Old Testament than any other Gospel. Matthew's Gospel helps make a point about Jesus' place in Jewish history. Matthew's readers knew about the message of Israel's prophets. Matthew helps his readers to see that Jesus is the one the prophets had spoken about and hoped for.

### January 4 – Epiphany

Matthew 2:1-12 The Magi, visitors from foreign lands in the East, arrive in Jerusalem, seeking the newborn king of the Jews

*Sacrament of the Lord's Supper & Star Words*

### January 11 – The Baptism of Jesus

Matthew 3:1-17 John the Baptist is introduced and Jesus is baptized by him

*Reaffirmation of Baptism Service*

### January 18 – Tempted in the Wilderness

Matthew 4:1-17 Following his baptism, Jesus spends forty days and nights in the wilderness facing temptations from the devil. Afterwards, Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee.

*Presentation of Bibles to Third Graders (tentative)*

### January 25 – The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-20 In the opening words to the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Jesus tells about those who are blessed in the kingdom of God, as well as being salt of the earth and light for the world.

*Annual Meeting of the Congregation follows...*

### \*\*Saturday, January 31 – The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:7-21 The Sermon on the Mount continues with instructions concerning prayer, fasting, and what real treasure is. **An Eat In, Sleep In Weekend—No Sunday Services February 1st!**



## January Birthdays

- |                      |                    |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| 3—Alyssa Bennett     | 18—Hannah Shultz   |
| 3—Ted Healy          | 18—Seamus Taylor   |
| 4—Tracie Hodina      | 19—Emory Gillespie |
| 4—Ayden Erickson     | 19—Pam Mott        |
| 6—McKenna Boettcher  | 21—Martin Benesh   |
| 6—Jordon Gunn        | 21—Jessica West    |
| 8—Christopher Cannon | 23—Stephanie West  |
| 10—Scott Taylor      | 27—David Weddle    |
| 16—Nancy Jerabek     | 31—Becky Ahrens    |
| 17—Brycen Woodley    | 31—Anita Pitcher   |
| 18—Curtis Bjork      |                    |

*Please contact the church office if we missed your birthday.*



## ANNUAL MEETING

**Session members & committee chairs:** Your section of the annual report is **due in the church office by Friday, January 9th** in order for the annual report to be compiled and copied in time for the Annual Church Meeting.

**The Annual Church Meeting will be held  
Sunday, January 25, 2014  
following the worship service,  
in the Sanctuary.**