



# The Epistle

September 2019



## September UPCOMING EVENTS

- September 1—  
Communion
- September 4—  
6:30pm First  
Choir Rehearsal
- September 8—  
9:30am Birthday  
Blessing (Choir  
rehearse 8:15am)
- September 9—  
Bunko, 6:30pm in  
Social Hall
- September 11—  
6:30pm Session  
meets in the  
Community Room
- September 23—  
1:00pm Knitting  
Group at Becky  
Ahrens
- September 25—  
WEO (Wednesday  
Early Out)  
1:10-3:30pm

We are composters. Well, haphazard composters, at least when it comes to keeping the right balance between nitrogen and carbon sources. Mostly we collect fruit and veggies scraps in a bucket and dump it in the two bins in the yard outside the walk-out basement door.

The purpose of compost is to turn food scraps and yard waste into a wonderful rich soil amendment. Because of that, it's not uncommon that seeds from food scraps grow in the compost piles.

Maybe it was all the rain in the early summer, maybe it was because we were so busy going to baseball games that I didn't get the plants pulled when they were just sprouts, but this year our compost bins had lots of things growing in them—tomato plants and a couple of vines. I can't say if it was more laziness or curiosity, but I let them grow. I was especially curious about the vine. Was it a cucumber, a squash, or a melon?

July and much of August went by in a blur and not much yard work happened. Yesterday morning I headed out to the compost bins with a bucket of food scraps thinking, *I should really do something about the vine that has taken over the yard here. It's out of control!* And that's when I noticed it: while I wasn't looking or paying attention, this vine was producing a good-sized butternut squash!

This was especially funny to me because our plan was to have two raised vegetable garden beds this summer. We got the frames built, but never got soil in them. Among other things, I was planning to grow tomatoes and butternut squash. Ha!

There are at least two lessons here:

God is always doing things in our midst of which we are completely unaware.

It is not all up to us to make anything and everything happen. This is one of the lessons that the practice of Sabbath is intended to teach.

God takes the things we consider useless—like food scraps—and makes something of them. New fruit. New life. New possibilities.

I invite you to think about the times in your life when God has been at work, making good things happen in the places, people and situations you had perhaps given up on. And, be encouraged that this is *still happening* in our own lives, in our congregation, in our wider world. God's creative work is ongoing. Thanks be to God for this!

*Pastor Lori*



**First Presbyterian  
Church**

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We're on the web:  
[www.firstpresmv.com](http://www.firstpresmv.com)

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**Attention Choir Members!**

It's time to raise our voices once again on Sunday mornings.  
I am looking forward to seeing and, especially, *hearing* you again.

Here is the plan:

**Wednesday, Sept. 4— 6:30-8:pm**—A special evening rehearsal.  
This should be a fun, informal rehearsal, in the sanctuary, where  
we welcome newcomers, and try get a jump start on a number  
of pieces we will sing this Fall, including some new anthems,  
and some old favorites.

**Sunday, Sept. 8— 8:15am** warm-up and rehearsal. This will be  
our first Sunday of the Fall to sing at 9:30am Worship.  
We will dedicate the new choir loft this Sunday as well.

If you have never been in the choir before and are thinking  
about giving it a try, please know that ALL are welcome—there  
are no auditions, and we would love to have some new voices  
join us! Feel free to just show up on Sept. 4—you don't have to  
notify anyone ahead of time.

And if you are concerned about committing yourself when  
you know you can't attend every single Sunday, don't sweat it—  
it's easy and OK to take a Sunday off from choir and catch up  
again the next week.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to get  
in touch. Looking forward to seeing ALL of you!

*Julia Andrews*  
Director of Music  
[Julia.andrews4444@gmail.com](mailto:Julia.andrews4444@gmail.com)



### September Sunday Cottage Meetings

*During the month of September, we will be having "cottage meetings," small groups of FirstPresMV folk gathered for food, conversation and fellowship. We will celebrate what we've done, talk about our financial picture and brainstorm together about what we feel God is calling us to do as a congregation in this time.*

#### **September 8**

○ Host: Pastor Lori • 230 Scobey Rd. NW, MV •  
4:30-6:30 • 319-431-2227

#### **September 15**

○ Host: Susan Brust • 320 Candlestick Dr., MV •  
6:00-7:30 • 319-360-5526  
○ Host: Donald Burch • 732 S. Market St. #9, Solon •  
4:30-6:30 • 319-624-4054

#### **September 22**

○ Host: Connie Proffitt • 1650 Koehler Dr. NW, CR •  
2:00-3:30 • 319-366-3930  
○ Hosts: Becky & Al Ahrens • 313 Hill View Dr. SE, MV •  
4:30-6:30 • 319-895-8212  
○ Hosts: Barb & Ed Bjork • 721 7<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW, MV •  
6:00-7:30 • 319-551-9769

#### **September 29**

○ First Pres Community Room • 11:00 – Noon • RSVP to  
Church Office 895-6060

thanks

Thank you so much for  
the scholarship money! this  
year it will be going towards  
tuition and textbooks.  
Thank you,  
Rehanna

Dear First Presbyterian Friends,  
Thank you so much for another generous  
scholarship. I'm excited to start my second  
year at Coe. I couldn't have asked for  
a better church to grow up in. I appreciate  
your love and support.  
Jayden Weber





## Summer Twist Tasting Tea Fundraiser

The Summer Twist Tasting Tea held on August 25th was a success!

Attendees celebrated the end of summer with tasty treats, entertainment, door prizes, and a book of new recipes.

Thank you to all who helped plan this event!



### Choir Space---Finished??!?

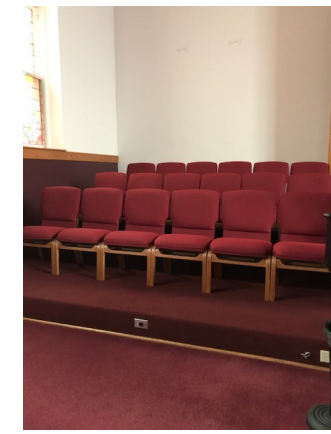
As I write this, we are virtually done with this project.

The carpet is installed on the risers and the new chairs arrived on Tuesday, August 27.

This project is funded by the music endowment.

**Thanks to everyone involved in this project!**

The inaugural use of the new space will take place in worship



**Wednesday Early Out (WEO)** **W**  
September 25, 2019 **E**  
1:10ish to 3:30pm **O**  
Theme: The Beauty of Fall!

Preschoolers on up are welcome to join us for an afternoon of fun!  
We'll be talking about covenant, creating fall art to put in the windows,  
and making apple crisp to enjoy that day and serve  
at fellowship time on September 29.  
Please RSVP so we know you're coming!



## September—Worship Assistants

**Sunday, September 1 - 9:30 am —**  
**Worship, Sacrament of the**  
**Lord's Supper**  
 Liturgist: Marie Riechers  
 Ushers: Al & Becky Ahrens

**Sunday, September 8 - 9:30 am —**  
**Worship, Birthday Blessing**  
 Liturgist: *Larry Petrick*  
 Ushers: **Need Volunteers**

**Sunday, September 15 - 9:30 am —**  
**Worship & Noisy Offering**  
 Liturgist: Angie Paulson  
 Ushers: Willems Family

**Sunday, September 22 - 9:30 am—**  
**Worship**  
 Liturgist: **Need Volunteer**  
 Ushers: **Need Volunteers**



- 1—Lloyd Mallie
- 1—J. Michael Gnagy
- 1—Mike O'Brien
- 1—Susan Salter
- 5—Jaegen Bechhold
- 7—Tom Simon
- 8—Scott Cannon
- 10—Lori Cranston
- 10—Justin Simon
- 12—Kristi Karwal-Clark
- 13—Shelly Woodley
- 15—Jaidyn Burge
- 15—Judy Vopava
- 18—Linda Nost
- 19—James Cannon
- 19—Collin Clark
- 19—Patricia Hogan
- 19—Madison Cranston
- 23—Linda Bigley
- 25—Elizabeth Erlandson

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



## Get Involved!

**Liturgists and Ushers**  
 are needed for the fall!

Sign up at the back of church  
 or contact the office to reserve

## August Session Highlights

Session met on Wednesday, August 14 at 6:30 pm in the Community Room.

Present: Ed Bjork, Carol Daly, Carole Frazee, Pat Hogan (Clerk), Roger Johanson, Larry Petrick, Larry Purvis, Scott Peterson, Jonathan Walsh, Moderator Lori Wunder

Excused: Elaine Bishop, Allan Recalde, Greg West

- Approved letter of transfer for Phyllis Hodina to Salem United Methodist Church in Cedar Rapids.
- Financial Report—we have not borrowed any money through mid-August but anticipate that will change over the coming months. We have enough money in the Building Fund (to pay the mortgage) for another year.
- Approved Healing Touch Circle's use of the Community Room the second Sunday of each month
- Approved request to move choir rehearsal space to the Community Room
- Approved August Noisy Offering to go to Presbytery of Mississippi for ministry to families affected by ICE raids.
- Snow Removal—Larry Petrick received contract from M&K for plowing and sanding. Always a concern about ice build up and traction on the hill. Ed Bjork will talk with Nick Nissen at the city about treating the hill and the part the city owns.
- Office Manager Cheryl Jackson is resigning, effective September 4. She had another job offer come along that she simply could not refuse. Marie Riechers, who had applied in May, was offered the position and accepted! She will begin "shadowing" Cheryl the week of August 20.
- Zane Marshall completed her application to enroll as an Inquirer for Ministry with the Presbytery of East Iowa. Carole Frazee, Larry Petrick, Larry Purvis and Lori Wunder met with Zane in July and Carole completed the recommendation on behalf of the Session. Zane was given \$300 from the Keedick-Dolezal Scholarship Fund for her studies this fall at University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.
- Choir Space update—as of the meeting, we were waiting on the carpet to be installed, chairs to be delivered and the last electrical and sound work to be completed. We will celebrate in worship on September 8!
- "Paris to Pittsburgh," a National Geographic documentary about how communities around the world are responding to climate change locally, will be shown at the First Street Community Center. Roger Johanson will invite attendees to participate in the Pro-Future Faith 8 week study.

## Worship in September

September 1 – Labor Day Hymn Sing  
 We'll sing some old favorites, learn a few new songs, and take requests.  
*Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*



*What happens when our world falls apart? How do we press onward when our tightly-knit plans unravel into loose threads? What do we become when our identity—or the path we're on—comes undone? In our unraveling, sometimes life surprises us with unexpected joy, love, and hope—with a new beginning we couldn't have imagined. Sometimes we need God to unravel us...*

### September 8 – Sarah Laughs: Unexpected Joy and Surprise

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7 When Sarah overhears that she will bear a son in her old age, she laughs. And yet, God's promise comes true.  
*Choir's First Sunday & New Choir Space  
 Recognition of September Birthdays*

### September 15 – Peter Sinks in the Water: Unraveled by Uncertainty

Matthew 14:22-33 – Peter takes one step onto the water and begins to sink. His confidence unravels right there in the wind and the waves. Fortunately for him and for us, Jesus is there, the boat is there, his friends are there. When we are sinking in doubt and uncertainty, let us remember God's outstretched hand.  
*Noisy Offering*

### September 22 – Zacchaeus the Wealthy Tax Collector: Radical Unraveling of Vocation

Luke 19:1-10 – Zacchaeus is a wealthy tax collector, which means he is not welcomed or wanted by most. Jesus flips the script by inviting Zacchaeus to offer him hospitality, which unravels the crowd's expectations since they deem Zacchaeus a sinner and an unworthy host.

### September 29 – The Conversion of Saul to Paul: Discovering a New Path

Acts 9:1-20 – In a flash in the middle of the road, God unravels Saul's identity as a persecutor of Christ-followers and invites him to blindly stumble onto a new path. His conversion requires Ananias, a disciple vulnerable to Paul's threats, to place his hands on Saul's eyes so that he might see the world anew as Paul the Apostle. Sometimes God calls us into uncharted territory, and maybe our unraveling is simply a holy, fresh start.





# September 2019

*Worship Every Sunday*  
**9:30 am**



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> <i>9:30am Worship &amp; Communion</i>	<b>2</b> <i>Office Closed</i>	<b>3</b> <i>Acrylics Painting 7-9pm in the Community Room</i>	<b>4</b> <i>6:30-8pm First Choir Rehearsal</i>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> <i>8:15am Choir rehearsal</i>  <i>9:30 am Worship &amp; Birthday Blessing</i>  <i>Cottage Meeting</i>	<b>9</b> <i>Office Closed</i>  <b>6:00 PM BUNKO Social Hall</b>	<b>10</b> <i>Acrylics Painting 7-9pm in the Community Room</i>	<b>11</b> <i>6:30 PM SESSION in the community room</i>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> <i>8:15am Choir rehearsal</i>  <i>9:30 am Worship &amp; Noisy Offering</i>  <i>Cottage Meetings</i>	<b>16</b> <i>Office Closed</i>	<b>17</b> <i>Acrylics Painting 7-9pm in the Community Room</i>	<b>18</b> <i>10:30 AM-2:30PM Quilting Group in the Social Hall</i>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <i>Wedding</i>
<b>22</b> <i>8:15am Choir rehearsal</i>  <i>9:30am Worship</i>  <i>Cottage Meetings</i>	<b>23</b> <i>Office Closed</i>  <b>Knitting Group 1:00 @ Becky Ahrens</b>	<b>24</b> <i>Acrylics Painting 7-9pm in the Community Room</i>	<b>25</b> <i>WEO (Wednesday Early Out) 1:10-3:30pm</i>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> <i>8:15am Choir rehearsal</i>  <i>9:30am Worship</i>  <i>Cottage Meeting</i>	<b>30</b> <i>Office Closed</i>					

## EVENTS

September 4— 6:30pm First Choir Rehearsal

September 8— Cottage Meeting

September 9— Bunko, 6:30pm in Social Hall

September 11— 6:30pm, Session meets in the Community Room

September 15— Cottage Meetings

September 22— Cottage Meetings

September 23— 1:00pm Knitting Group  
at Becky Ahrens

September 29— Cottage Meeting



### 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.

### First Presbyterian Church

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Each Sunday, "Weekly Announcements" bulletin insert contains the most current events and times..