



# THE EPISTLE

October 2019

## THE LATEST FROM THE CHURCH:

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## OCTOBER UPCOMING EVENTS

- *6th- Worship & Communion (9:30am)*
- *9th- WEO- Abbe Farms visit (1:15pm)*
- *9th- Session Meeting (6:30pm)*
- *13th- Worship & Birthday Blessing (9:30am)*
- *14th- Bunko (6:00pm)*
- *15th- Dementia Caregivers Support Group (4:00pm)*
- *20th- Worship & Noisy Offering (9:30am)*
- *27th- Worship (9:30am)*

## LETTER FROM PASTOR LORI *Cottage Meetings*

During the month of September, we held seven “cottage meetings” on Sunday afternoons at different members’ homes with a final one at church. Sixty percent of you attended, which is a terrific turnout during such a busy time of year! Thanks so much for taking the time to join us!

I had the privilege of attending and leading all seven gatherings. This made for busy Sundays, and I anticipated being worn out at the end of each day. However, I have to say—I enjoyed being with each group. It’s not tiring to spend time with people I care about, talking about something we all love and value.

Our purpose was to share face-to-face information about what’s been happening at church so anyone could ask questions and share concerns or ideas. We also enjoyed a time of conversation over good food.

Here are some of the highlights of the conversations (a summary of the financial information shared can be found on p. 4):

- We are PROUD OF—our rainbow steps, that we are truly welcoming and friendly, accepting people as they are. We value having children in our worship service, our music and our message and think we have something special here to share with the community. VBS and WEO (Wednesday Early Out) were great. We have a fantastic staff with Julia, Marie and Terry!
- We could WORK ON—how things get done (committees, by project, being permission giving); a system for figuring out who does what; communicating what per capita is; our ties to the denomination; connecting with the community and inviting them to join us; simple concession stand at a CDG event to raise a little bit of money and have visibility; making our building available to others
- Sunday School: WEO (Wednesday Early Out) has been a good thing but if we want to attract more families, we need to have this. Our goal is to begin twice a month Sunday School in January 2020. Aiming for 3 age groups (PreK-Gr 1, Gr 2-4, Gr 5-6). Kids and teachers will leave for class after Discovery Time/Anthem. Value having children in “Big Church”.
- Youth—Focus on occasional (quarterly?) social/service gatherings for Grade 7 and up. Also, we could do another summer trip, possibly to the Pittsburgh Project. Confirmation class will happen this year.
- More ideas: More opportunities for fellowship (4X4 dinners); Service or other trip for adults (social justice trip); Email survey to find out about talents; Opportunities to invite friends; Offer a time for meditation once per week

So many great ideas!

Thank you to our hosts for providing such wonderful hospitality: Donald Burch and Carole Frazee, Susan Brust, Connie Proffitt, Al and Becky Ahrens, Ed and Barb Bjork, Larry Purvis., and my husband, Jim Bonewald, who grilled and made the pulled pork for our gathering.

What a joy and a privilege it is to be pastor to this congregation. I am grateful to serve God and the world God loves together with you!

Grace and peace,  
Lori



## SEPTEMBER SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

**The stated meeting of the Session was held at 6:30pm September 11, 2019 in the Community Room.**

**Present:** Elaine Bishop, Ed Bjork, Larry Petrick, Larry Purvis, Lori Wunder, Carol Daly, Carole Frazee, Roger Johanson

**Excused:** Pat Hogan, Scott Peterson, Jonathan Walsh, Allan Recalde, Greg West

### Financial Report

- As of August 31st, the General Fund balance is \$2206.07 and we have not had to "borrow" from ourselves to pay expenses. Larry Petrick also provided a brief overview of the "under budget" items that have resulted in expenses that are ~\$12,000 less than projected at the beginning of 2019.

### Action Items

- Blessing of the Animals Service will be held on Sunday, October 6 from 3:00–4:00 pm; in Memorial Park Gazebo next to the Church.
- September's Noisy Offering will be directed to the Presbyterian Disaster Relief (post Hurricane Dorian relief efforts in the Bahamas).
- Approved Stewardship Campaign Plan & Cottage Meetings in September
- Approved hosting a new Dementia Caregivers Support Group led by Tamra Albright-Johnson from Pinicon Place in Anamosa. Meetings will be held the third Tuesday of each month at 4pm; the first meeting is October 15.

### Discussion Items

- Discussed the choir space. Almost complete—need a privacy barrier to complete the space. Ed Bjork stated that he has the materials and is willing to do the work.
- Becoming a Matthew 25 Church (Build Congregational Vitality, Dismantle Structural Racism, Eradicate Systemic Poverty) – briefly considered the Seven Marks of Vital Congregations resource.
- "Paris to Pittsburgh," a documentary that follows local efforts to battle climate change, will be shown at First Presbyterian on Wednesday, Sept 18 at 6:30pm. Roger Johanson will lead the topic related Pro-Future Faith 8-week study series during Adult Forum.

### Information Items:

- Social media plan being developed by Lori, Julia Andrews and Marie Riechers. Watch for daily posts to Facebook, Instagram and Twitter ("FirstPresMV")
- Upcoming Worship Series—"A Wonder-full Life: Looking at Money and Meaning" November 3-24; "Heaven and Nature Sing: 300 Years of Joy to the World" for Advent December 1-22

### First Presbyterian Church

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Check out our website:

[www.firstpresmv.com](http://www.firstpresmv.com)

Find us on social media:



First Presbyterian Church  
of Mount Vernon



FirstPresMV



FirstPresMV



FirstPresMV

### Office Hours:

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### Custodian:

Terry Jackson



## OUR FALL WORSHIP SERIES

*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.*

**October 6- Encouraging the Israelites in Exile to Plant Gardens & Build Houses: When Dreams Unravel (Jeremiah 29:1-7)** The Israelites called Jerusalem home because they believed God lived in Jerusalem. Yet, the Babylonian exile robs them not just of their home, but their identity, their welfare, and their perceived proximity to God. The prophet Jeremiah delivers a startling message to those in Babylon—to settle in, build homes, and plant gardens in that foreign land. What does this mean for those in exile? Where does God dwell when we are uprooted? What does God—what does Love—say when our dreams unravel?

**October 13- The Samaritan Woman at the Well: Unraveled Shame (John 4:1-29)** Her life has certainly not gone as planned—five husbands, societal shame, isolation. No one plans for that. And then Jesus finds her in the most unlikely of places—at the well at high noon—and invites her into a new world. The shame she'd known unravels. The isolation she lived unravels. Grace surprises her and offers her good news to proclaim.

**October 20- Doubting Thomas: When the Unimaginable Has Happened (John 20:19-29)** Sometimes unraveling leads us to our deepest pain. Jesus dies, leaving Thomas and the rest of the disciples alone. Thomas isolates himself from the disciples, perhaps plunged deep into despair and grief. After all of his worst fears have finally come true, Thomas is too blinded by hopelessness to believe in Jesus' return. Yet, his despair unravels when he touches Jesus' wounds and can finally see, and believe in, God's presence after death.

**October 27- Job's Lament and Loss: Seeking Understanding When Everything Has Fallen Apart (Job 28:12-28)** Everything Job holds dear—his property, his family, his wealth, his physical health—has been taken from him. Reduced to suffering and misery, Job laments his circumstances and tries to make sense of what has happened to him. How do we also seek to make meaning of our pain? Ultimately, Job discerns that God is the source of all wisdom, and to turn away from evil is to turn toward the heart of the world, which God made good.



## OCTOBER WORSHIP ASSISTANTS

### Sunday, October 6th- Worship & Communion

*Liturgist:* Paul Iversen

*Ushers:* Austerman Family

### Sunday, October 13th- Worship & Birthday Blessing

*Liturgist:* Stephanie West

*Ushers:* **Need Volunteers**

### Sunday, October 20th- Worship & Noisy Offering

*Liturgist:* Angie Paulson

*Ushers:* Kevin & Becky Whitman

### Sunday, October 27th- Worship

*Liturgist:* Lauren Kelley

*Ushers:* Don Burch & Carole Frazee



## October Birthdays

- 1- Elijah Recalde
- 4- Alexander Crawford
- 7- Scott Weber
- 8- Will Bennett
- 8- Elaine Bishop
- 10- Payson Burge
- 11- Fran Bray
- 13- Sage Boettcher
- 14- Katy McCollum
- 15- Russell Riechers
- 18- Tex Clay
- 21- Doug Hanson
- 22- Joe Mulinix
- 23- Jim Bonewald
- 23- Logan Mozingo
- 23- Michael Taylor
- 26- Marissa Cranston
- 27- Emery Willems
- 28- Jason Clark
- 28- Craig Engel
- 29- Lynde Boettcher
- 29- Rachel Bray
- 30- Jay Gunn
- 30- Jo Williams
- 31- Becky Whitman

## FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Here are some of the financial “highlights” shared at the September Cottage Meetings:

- Our **Building Loan** balance (as of 8/31/19) is \$39,640. Ten years ago it was \$479,000. This includes the new building and the connection project. Amazing! Thank you all!
- In the last ten years, we received estate gifts from Doris Whiting and Mary Byerly that enabled to pay off a significant portion of the debt. Planned giving makes a huge difference!
- Monthly mortgage payment is \$1000; we have just under \$9000 in the account to make those payments. That payment will become part of our budget in 2020.
- **2019 General Fund:** In January, Finance Committee predicted that if nothing changed, we could have a \$41,000 deficit. You have responded with
  - o 13th Month of Giving (\$1484)
  - o Contributing the \$38 per member per capita (\$1415)
  - o Volunteering to mow this summer
  - o Tasting
  - o Tea FUNdraiser in August (\$1185)

Our expenses are \$12,000 below budget so unless something changes drastically, the deficit should be below \$20,000.

The main story is how generous this congregation is. Thank you for your financial support of what we do!

If you ever have any questions, please contact Al and Becky Ahrens or Barb Bjork.

# WEO

## Wednesday Early Out

### Upcoming WEOs

- October 9 - Visit to Abbe Hills Farm (parents are welcome to join us!)
- November 13 - All About Rocks!
- December 11 - Make Our Own Christmas Pageant



## MVL Dementia Caregivers' Support Group

Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia? You are not alone!

### MVL Dementia Caregivers' Support Group

Third Tuesday of Each Month, 4:00-5:00pm

Lower Level of First Presbyterian Church, Mount Vernon

First meeting is October 15th. Refreshments are provided.

Each meeting will include sharing information and a time for open discussion led by Tamra Albright-Johnson from Pinicon Place, Anamosa

Questions? Call Tamra at 319-481-7012

## MUSTANG SNACK PACK PROGRAM

Washington Elementary School is starting a new program to hopefully increase the number of students benefiting from the weekly food that goes home.

"The Mustang Snack Pack Program" is looking for donations of the following items: \*Individually Packed, Please!\*

- Mac and Cheese (Easy Mac)
- Granola Bars
- Apple Sauce Pouches
- Fruit Snacks
- Mini bags/boxes of cereal
- Pudding/Jell-O Cups
- Beef Jerky
- Snack Crackers (goldfish, animal crackers, veggie straws, peanut butter crackers, etc)
- Juice Boxes
- Trail mix
- Or any like items



Bring your items to church during the month of October and we will deliver them to the school.

Thanks for generously helping out families and children in need

# Advent Festival

Sunday, December 1st

## WHAT IS THE ADVENT FESTIVAL?

At the Advent Festival, we will assemble emergency hygiene packets for people in crisis, and gather up the bigger items for delivery. Everything we collect will go to WayPoint Services CR ([waypointservices.org](http://waypointservices.org)) for the many women and children they serve.

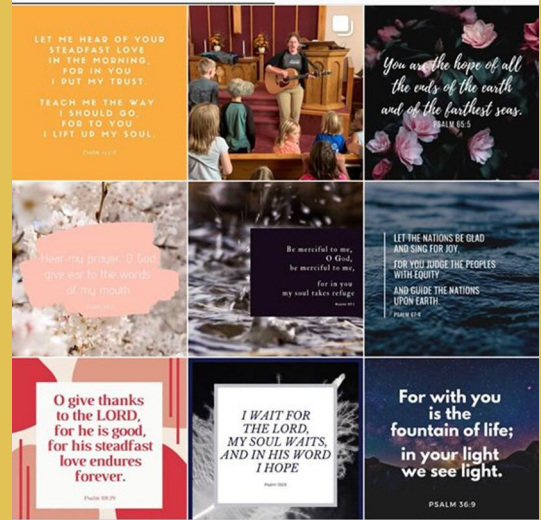
Sign up to donate in the Social Hall and bring items by November 17th.

Items needed include:

- Travel size hygiene products (NEW Shampoo, Conditioner, Body Wash/Soap, Lotion, etc.)
- 75 Washcloths
- 75 Quart freezer bags (Tall)
- Child Size L/XL Diapers
- Child Size L/XL Pull-ups
- Feminine hygiene products

Contact Carole Frazee at (319) 640-6189 with questions!

Follow FirstPresMV on Instagram for daily prayer and reflection!



## Adult Forum- Fall 2019

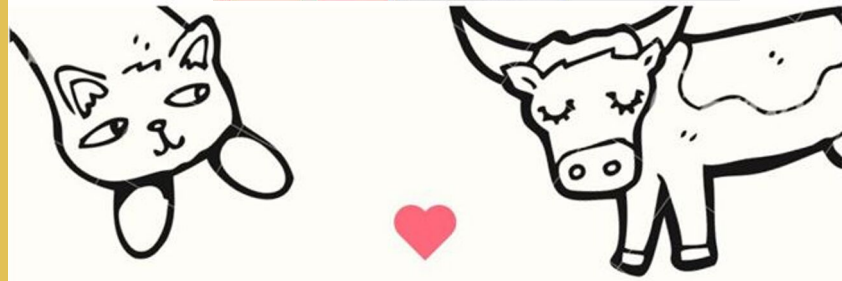
Christianity is not a spectator sport. It calls for our active participation. Adult forum is a Sunday School for adults. We would be delighted to have anyone high school age and beyond join us.

We will begin studying the series, Pro-Future Faith.

Pro-Future Faith is an eight-session DVD and discussion curriculum. The "course bridges the gap between head and heart, science and faith." A central question is, 'how does our faith inform our actions and thinking about the environment we will leave for our children, grandchildren and all who follow?' The curriculum says, "Having 'squandered our inheritance on profligate living,' we are a prodigal species. Industrial civilization and our insatiable appetites have us hurtling toward irreversible consequences."

We want to respond in a way that grows out of our Christian faith.

Note: You can come to any session without having attended before. October Dates include the 13th, 20th, and 27th.



First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Vernon invites you to an

# ANIMAL BLESSING

All animals are welcome!

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 6TH  
3:00PM  
MEMORIAL PARK

Dogs must be on a leash and other animals contained as necessary. If humans and other animals are too hard for your furry friend to be around, or if a beloved pet has passed away, feel free to bring a picture, collar, or something else of theirs to bless!

More info can be found on Facebook: @firstpresmv





# NEW MEMBER CLASS

**ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT BECOMING  
A MEMBER OF FIRST PRES?  
OR PERHAPS YOU ARE WONDERING  
WHAT IN THE WORLD IT MEANS  
TO BE PRESBYTERIAN?**

Pastor Lori will be organizing a New Members' Class in the next several weeks. The class typically meets 3 times to get to know one another, learn about what Presbyterians believe and some specifics about life together in our congregation.

If you are interested in taking the next step and formalizing your relationship with First Pres MV as a member, contact Pastor Lori (431-2227, Lewunder@gmail.com).

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

## ANNUAL CHURCH AUCTION

Sunday, November 10th, 10:45am - 1:00pm

**WE ARE CURRENTLY ACCEPTING DONATIONS OF ITEMS FOR THE AUCTION. SERVICES (YARD WORK, SEWING, PAINTING, MUSIC, ETC.) ARE WELCOME, TOO!**

Watch for our PRE-SALE! A variety of items—jams, fudge, fruit pies, pulled pork, and wood items—will be offered for a set price.



If you have questions, something to offer or want to help, please contact Becky Ahrens (895-8212), Connie Boettcher (721-7800), or Laura Werkman (895-6781).



### October 13th- Sunday Evening Meal Program at First Presbyterian Church in Cedar Rapids

It's our church's turn to serve the evening meal. A sign-up sheet is in Fellowship Hall. We meet as a group at the church at 3:30 pm and car pool to Cedar Rapids, serve the meal, clean up and return to Mount Vernon by 6:30 pm. Just a little bit of your time helps so many. What a neat way to be a blessing to others!

If you have questions contact Beth Simon at: 895-6966.



# 2019 OCTOBER



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6 Choir rehearsal 8:15am Worship & Communion 9:30am Animal Blessing 3pm	7 Office Closed	8 Acrylics Painting 7-9pm	9 WEO: Abbe Farms 1:15-3:30pm Session 6:30pm	10	11	12
13 Worship & Birthday Blessing 9:30am Adult Forum 11am SEMP 3:30pm	14 Office Closed Bunko 6pm	15 Dementia Caregivers Support Group 4pm Acrylics Painting 7-9pm	16 Quilt group 10:30am-2:30pm	17 Cornell Spirituality Retreat 8am-5:30pm	18	19
20 Worship & Noisy Offering 9:30am Adult Forum 11am	21 Office Closed	22 Acrylics Painting 7-9pm	23 Youth Service Project 1:15-3:15pm	24	25	26
27 Worship 9:30am Adult Forum 11am	28 Office Closed	29 Acrylics Painting 7-9pm	30	31		

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