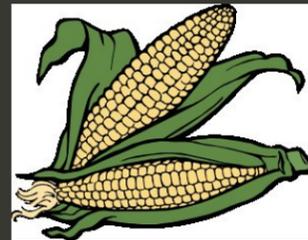




# The Epistle

August 2015  
Volume 2015-08



## Upcoming Events

- 8/2—Sunday Evening Meal Program 1st Pres CR
- 8/3—Knitting Group
- 8/10—BUNKO
- 8/11—Cancer Support Group
- 8/16—Cook Out at Wunder – Bonewald's
- 8/17—Session
- 8/22—Matt 25 Work Day

## *A Month of Blessings*

According to my *New Westminster Dictionary of Liturgy & Worship*, **blessing** is defined as “the authoritative pronouncement of God’s favor on people, places, events or objects.”

In a favorite scene from Marilynne Robinson’s *Gilead*, an elderly John Ames recalls baptizing cats as a child, “There is a reality in blessing, which I take baptism to be, primarily. It doesn’t enhance sacredness, but it acknowledges it, and there is power in that.”

Barbara Brown Taylor writes in Chapter 12 (The Practice of Pronouncing Blessings), “...pronouncing a blessing puts you as close to God as you can get.”

We occasionally bless things in our congregation—birthdays each month, prayer shawls, ordination and installation of officers. But this August provides us with the opportunity to offer blessing almost every Sunday:

**Blessing of the School Supplies (August 9)** Let’s bless the items donated to South East Linn’s Back to School Program and the children and families who will receive them.

**Birthday Blessing (August 16)** August Birthdays, please join us this day so we can give God thanks for the gift you are to us!

**Blessing of the Backpacks (August 23)** All students (from preschoolers to college students and beyond) and teachers are invited to bring your backpack or other bag to worship and place it in front of the communion table before worship begins. During the service, we will bless these bags and, most importantly, pray for the people beginning another new school year.

**Blessing of the Community (August 30)** Something altogether new! On this day, I will be looking for volunteers to write blessings for organizations and institutions in our communities—Mount Vernon’s and Lisbon’s city halls, police departments, volunteer fire departments, school districts, Cornell College, Southeast Linn Community Center, and Hallmark, Cherry Ridge and Chapel Ridge. We will share these together in worship.

Barbara Brown Taylor also notes that the incarnation (God coming to us in human flesh) shows us that, “Matter matters to God. The most ordinary things are drenched in divine possibility. Pronouncing blessings upon them is the least we can do.” (p. 201)

May each of you be blessed with an awareness of the goodness, presence and love of God that surrounds us every moment, and with that awareness, bring blessing to the world around you.

*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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First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon



Twitter:  
FirstPresMV

The office hours are Tuesday through Friday mornings 9:30am until 12:30. pm

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Music Director:  
Damon Cole



# NEWS & Notes



**Knitting Group, Monday, August 3rd, at the home of Becky Ahrens, 2:00 pm**



**Bunko— Monday, August 10th, Fellowship Hall, 6:00 pm**



**Cancer Support Group — Tuesday, August 11th, Fellowship Hall, 6:30 pm**



**Session Meeting— Monday, August 17th, Community Room, 6:30 pm**



**TLC—Will not be meeting the month of August**



**Healing Touch Circle, is taking a break in the months of July and August, they will resume September 13th.**



## 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:

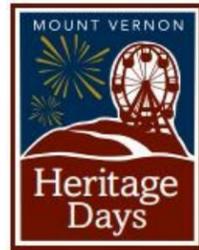
- Click on the link on our Facebook page (First Presbyterian Church of Mount Vernon)
- Search "FirstPresMV" at youtube.com
- Go to [www.youtube.com/user/FirstPresMV](http://www.youtube.com/user/FirstPresMV)



## 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.



**The Results Are In...  
Many Hands Make Light Work!**



July was a busy month and each of you made it happen! So many volunteers pulled off two major events in one month. You worked together well and did what you were able. No task was too small and all hands were needed. Here is what you accomplished: Strengthened relationships, showed that First Presbyterian Church is an important part of the Mount Vernon Community, made new friends, and saw people you had not seen in a long time.

Receipts for BOTH	\$7301.60	<b>WOW! Thank you!</b>
Expenses for BOTH	\$1262.89 (as of 7/29)	
NET PROFIT for BOTH	\$6038.71	

**WHAT IS "PER CAPITA"?**



Many church members are aware of the explanation of "Per Capita," but there are also many who are not sure what "Per Capita" means. It is our dues to the Presbyterian Church USA and a way of sharing administrative costs that belong to the whole Presbyterian Church community.

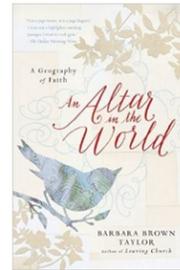
This year (2015) the cost is \$34.27 per active member bringing our total share to \$5,072.00. This amount is shared with the General Assembly, the Lakes and Prairies Synod and our Presbytery of East Iowa.

Each year we ask members to consider contributing an additional gift to help with the payment of our Per Capita.

As always, we greatly appreciate your continued support of your church both financially and with sharing of your time and talents.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT!**

## Book Discussion Groups



A few of you have asked about having discussions of *An Altar in the World*. Pastor Lori would certainly appreciate hearing what others found interesting, challenging, helpful, etc.! At the below discussions, we will have a focus chapter but can discuss anything in the book. Summary quotes from that chapter will be available. All are welcome to attend!

Wednesday, August 12

9:30am at Fuel

*Focus Chapter 10 – Feeling Pain : Breakthrough*

Tuesday, August 18

1:30 pm at Connie Proffitt's

(Please RSVP to Connie at 366-3930)

*Focus Chapter 11 – Being Present to God : Prayer*



## Southeast Linn – Back to School Supplies Program

Would you believe it's time to start thinking about school supplies?

Instead of buying all the supplies for a child, families will come to Southeast Linn and pick up what they need. We will supply them with an assortment of school supplies. Therefore you can buy as many (or just a few) of the needed supplies.

**They are distributing supplies beginning August 6th up through the start of school. So supplies brought to the church by Sunday, August 9th will still have time to get to the students who are in need of supplies. Purchased supplies can be dropped off in the space provided in fellowship hall.**

Thank you in advance for all you do to help the children get off to a good start as they start back to schools this fall.

**Classes begin: August 24th for Mount Vernon students and August 25th for Lisbon students**

2-Pocket folders (red, blue, yellow, green, orange)	Expo dry erasers	Sets of Watercolors (sets)
Backpack (boys older)	Glue sticks	Sharpies (packages black)
Backpack (boys younger)	Highlighters	Sharpies (packages colored)
Backpack (girls older)	Index cards (3x5 packages)	Small plastic boxes for school supplies
Backpack (girls younger)	Kleenex (boxes)	Spiral notebooks (Wide-ruled)
Binders (3-ring, 1-inch)	Packages of Wide-ruled loose leaf paper	Sticky Notes (packages)
Boxes 24 count crayons	Pencil Sharpeners	Washable Markers (boxes 12 count)
Calculator (simple)	Pencils (#2) packages	Zip Drives
Composition Notebooks	Pencils colored (12 count)	Ziploc Bags (gallon size boxes)
Container of Clorox Wipes	Plastic pocket folders	Ziploc Bags (quart size boxes)
Elmers Glue (bottles)	Play-Doh (4 pack)	
Erasers (Pencil Top)	Rulers	
Erasers (Pink Pearl)	Scissors (pairs pointed)	
Expo dry erase markers (4 pack)	Scissors (pairs rounded)	
	Scotch tape (rolls in dispensers)	

### Many Hands Made Light Work!

Thank you RAGBRAI volunteers. This event would not be possible without the help of each of you. No role was too small. From cutting and freezing rhubarb, making deserts, gathering other refreshments, organizing volunteers, working a shift, setting up and tearing down, to greeting bikers from around the world.

You are and awesome group of people. You make what seems impossible possible!

Check out the August Epistle for the results from hosting not one but two major events in the month of July!



### Come as You Can Cook Out Sunday, August 16

**5:00-7:00pm at the Wunder-Bonewald's  
(230 Scobey Road NW)**

- Grilled entrée, beverage and table service provided
- Please bring a dish to share if you can (if not, just bring yourself!)
  - Lawn chairs and games are welcome additions!



**Everyone is welcome!  
Come as you can  
for a time of food  
and fellowship!**

### Meals on Wheels in August



Next month it is again our congregation's turn to provide volunteers to deliver meals to our Mount Vernon neighbors.

We are asked to pick up the meals at Southeast Linn Community Center in Lisbon around 11:15, deliver them (usually 4-5 people), then return the empty trays and insulated bag to Southeast Linn.

The time commitment is around 30 minutes.

Sign up sheet is in Fellowship Hall.

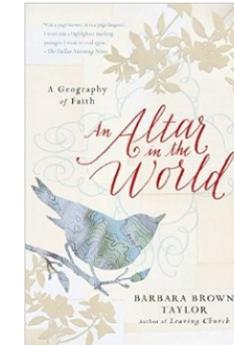


## *Worship in August*

*“Earth is so thick with divine possibility  
that it is a wonder we can walk anywhere  
without cracking our shins on altars.”*

This summer, our worship services have been shaped by chapters from Barbara Brown Taylor’s *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith*. In the book, Taylor breaks open the sacred and frames beautifully for us that God is present in all things, that our response to faith and our acts of faith are not just what we do “for church” but our every breath, our every action, our every thought.

Each Sunday, there will be quotes from that week’s focus chapter, as well as some suggestions for reflection and practice.



### **August 2 - Gabriel’s Journey**

Immigration is constantly in the news and will no doubt be a big factor in next year’s presidential caucuses and election. In an attempt to understand the issue on a personal level, Mount Vernon resident Gabriel Guardado will tell his story of how he came to the United States from El Salvador.

David Dix, piano

*Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper*

### **August 9 – Encountering Others : Community (Ch 6)**

"The supreme religious challenge," says Rabbi Sacks, "is to see God's image in one who is not in our image..." (p. 100)

Gary Connors-Boe, Preaching

*Blessing of Donated School Supplies*

### **August 16 – Feeling Pain : Breakthrough (Ch 10)**

“Theodicy is the oldest religious question in the book: if God is all-powerful and God is all-good, then why do terrible things happen to good people?” (p. 161)

*August Birthday Blessing*

### **August 23 – Being Present to God : Prayer (Ch 11)**

“When I am fully alert to whatever or whoever is right in front of me; when I am electrically aware of the tremendous gift of being alive; when I am able to give myself wholly to the moment I am in, then I am in prayer. Prayer is happening, and it is not necessarily something that I am doing. God is happening, and I am lucky enough to know that I am in The Midst.” (p. 178)

*Blessing of the Backpacks*

### **August 30 – Pronouncing Blessings : Benediction (Ch 12)**

“...pronouncing a blessing puts you as close to God as you can get.” (p. 206)

*Blessing of the Community*





# August 2015

*Worship Every Sunday 9:30 am*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						<b>1</b>
<b>2</b> 9:30 am Worship Communion  3:30-6:30 pm Volunteers for SEMP 1st Pres CR	<b>3</b> Office Closed  Knitting Group at the home of Becky Ahrens 2:00 pm	<b>4</b> 7:00-9:00 pm Art Class, Community Room	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 9:30 am Worship <i>Blessing of School Supplies</i>	<b>10</b> Office Closed  6:00 BUNKO Fellowship Hall	<b>11</b> 7:00-9:00 pm Art Class, Community Room 6:30 Cancer Support Group Fellowship Hall	<b>12</b> 9:30 am Book Discussion at Fuel	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 9:30 am Worship <i>Birthday Blessing</i>  <b>COOK OUT</b> at Wunder- Bonewald's  5:00-7:00 pm	<b>17</b> Office Closed  6:30 pm Session, Community Room	<b>18</b> 7:00-9:00 pm Art Class, Community Room 1:30 pm Book Discussion at Connie Proffitt's	<b>19</b> 10:00-4:00 Quilting Group, Fellowship Hall (Connie Boettcher)	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Matthew 25 Work Day 8:00 am to Noon
<b>23</b> 9:30 am Worship <i>Blessing of Backpacks</i>  <b>30</b> 9:30 am Worship	<b>24</b> Office Closed  <b>31</b>	<b>25</b> 7:00-9:00 pm Art Class, Community Room	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>



Using our neighborhood organizational and community development skills, Matthew 25 has grown today into a stable, committed organization that is a leader in finding a neighborhood's potential and building on it.

- **Neighborhood Building** includes organizing multi-block sustainable reinvestment in targeted neighborhoods through simultaneous new home construction, home restorations and public policy advocacy
- **Cultivate Hope** includes growing pesticide- and herbicide-free produce at an urban farm and five school gardens
- **Youth Empowerment** includes providing reading buddies during the school year and Groundswell, a neighborhood gathering space and youth arts venue

**VOLUNTEERS** make all of these things happen. Let's help Matthew 25 out this summer! [Note: Volunteers must be Grade 6 or older; younger children may participate with a parent in attendance.]

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Home \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell \_\_\_\_\_

**I am interested in doing the following work (check all that apply):**

\_\_\_ Rehab a House                      \_\_\_ Landscaping Project  
 \_\_\_ Home Repair                        \_\_\_ Vegetable Gardening

**I am available on:** \_\_\_ Saturday, August 22nd from 8 AM-12 PM

**AUGUST 2nd**  
**Sunday Evening Meals Program**  
**at First Presbyterian Church**  
**in Cedar Rapids**

It's our church's turn to serve the evening meal. Some people have already signed up but it is always good to have an extra hand or two. **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!



- 3—August Shultz
- 4—Samantha (Weber) Formanek
- 5—Charles Halsey
- 7—Chelsie Minor
- 7—Barb Mozingo
- 8—Edwin Walsh
- 8—Camron Woodley
- 13—Damon Cole
- 19—Bonnie Thornton
- 21—Ed Bjork
- 21—Shirlee Peterson
- 21—Larry Purvis
- 22—Cindy Coulter
- 23—Wendy Dorn-Recalde
- 23—Will Dragon
- 25—Franklin Walsh
- 26—Rory McCollum
- 26—Jayce Pendergrass
- 27—Ashley McDill
- 28—Bill Dragon
- 30—Nick Jerabek

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

