

PRESBYTERY CONNECTION

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter of the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill
July 9, 2020

The Presbytery Connection is a bi-weekly joint newsletter for the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill. If you would like to contribute to the Presbytery Connection, please contact Jeannie Stolee in the Presbytery office at 319-233-1747 or northiowapresby@gmail.com

If you know of someone who would enjoy receiving this communication, please email or call Jeannie.

Please consider making copies of this newsletter for your Session and running several copies to make available to your congregation.

www.presbynciowa.org

www.prospecthillpresby.org

To see North Central Iowa's calendar of events, please click [here](#).

To see Prospect Hill's calendar of events, please click [here](#).

Presbytery Office Information



The Presbytery office will close at noon on Fridays through September 4, 2020.

On-Line Worship Services



Churches are being creative in ways to continue to worship when we can't be physically present together. A list of on-line and other alternative worship services is posted on the [North Central Iowa](#) and [Prospect Hill](#) websites under a tab titled "Find Your Local On-Line Worship." You may also click [here](#) to be connected directly to that page on North Central Iowa's website, and [here](#) to be connected directly to that page on Prospect Hill's website.

Prayers of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

- Week of July 12 First Presbyterian Church, Lakota – CRE Kent Madison
- Week of July 19 Pray for other Minister members of North Central Iowa –
Rev. Le Anne Clausen de Montes
Rev. Barbara Huisman
- Week of July 26 Lakeshore Center at Okoboji – Harry Gabe, Associate Director
Cassie Gabe, Associate Director
- Week of August 2 First Presbyterian Church, Ackley – CRE Diane Martin
- Week of August 9 Northminster Presbyterian Church, Ames – Rev. Jim DuBois

Prayers of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill

- Week of July 12 United Presbyterian Church, Auburn – Rev. Rikki Sorensen
- Week of July 19 United Presbyterian Church, Denison – Rev. Jennifer Olson
- Week of July 26 Lakeshore Center at Okoboji – Harry Gabe, Associate Director
Cassie Gabe, Associate Director
- Week of August 2 Westlawn Presbyterian Church, Sioux City – Rev. Erica MacCreaigh, Moderator
- Week of August 9 First Presbyterian Church, Cleghorn – Rev. Eric Wright, Moderator

Additional Prayer Concerns

Rev. Dr. Rich King, pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Marshalltown, was taken to Lutheran Hospital in Des Moines on Tuesday of this week with slurred speech. A CT scan was inconclusive. An MRI was taken Wednesday morning and they are waiting for the results. Please pray for Rich, Valerie and their family.

Please pray for Rev. Mark Rabideau of the Greater Greene County Presbyterian Ministries as he deals with health concerns.

Please continue to pray for Josh Ullom, son of Rev. Dr. Dave and Judy Ullom of First Presbyterian Church in Estherville. Josh goes for chemo every two weeks. Please pray for effectiveness to destroy cancer, and to improve the severe nausea he has experienced.

Please continue to remember Doug O'Bannon, son of CRE Shari O'Bannon, in your prayers as he continues to battle a liver disease and all the symptoms that come with it.

Please pray for our state, nation and the world as we deal with the COVID-19 situation. Keep in prayer those families whose schedules have been upended and livelihood affected, small businesses who may not survive, those who have been afflicted with the coronavirus and the medical personnel as they do their best to take care of everyone. Please also pray for all the churches in both presbyteries and throughout the nation.

Churches in Transition

Please pray for the following churches that are in transition:

Presbytery of North Central Iowa

First Presbyterian Church, Ackley
First Presbyterian Church, Boone
First Presbyterian Church, Greene
First Presbyterian Church, Grundy Center
First Presbyterian Church, Jesup
First Presbyterian Church, Reinbeck
Eden Presbyterian Church, Rudd

Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Elliott Creek Presbyterian Church, Bronson
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Ida Grove City
First Presbyterian Church, Lake Park
Community Presbyterian Church, Lawton
First Presbyterian Church, Odebolt
First Presbyterian Church, Sioux City
Lakeside Presbyterian Church, Storm Lake
First Presbyterian Church, South Sioux City



Poor Richard's Almanac

by Richard Francis, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Prospect Hill

I have to admit that I'm a little nonplussed by the social media posts I've been seeing lately that are variations on "All Lives Matter to Jesus." In the context, it seems to be a criticism of "Black Lives Matter," but I don't see how.

In the first place, I don't think anybody who says "Black Lives Matter" means to say that "black lives matter more than white lives," and I'm even more convinced that nobody is saying "black lives matter to Jesus more than white lives." What "Black Lives Matter" is saying is that on this continent for the last 400 years, white lives have mattered more than black lives. The question is not, "Does *Jesus* love all people equally?" But "Do we love all people equally?"

You may tell me that of course you love all people equally, and I don't challenge that. What I challenge is the belief, if you want to call it that, that as a nation and even as a church, we love all people equally. We may sing,

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world;
Red and yellow, black and white,
They are precious in his sight,
Jesus loves the little children of the world,

but as followers of Jesus, we don't always act as if all the children of the world are as precious in our sight as they are in Jesus'.

For example, if we believe that black and Native American children are as precious as white children, we will make sure that every child has equal access to health care, nutrition, and education. Since all children don't have equal access to these things, I think it's fair to ask if, as a society, we value all children equally. Specifically, if as Christians we believe Jesus' words to be true—*Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me*—we should be bending over backwards to welcome all children, and by “welcome” I mean “see that their needs—physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual—are met, to the best of our ability.”

There are wonderful stories of Presbyterians all over the world who have established schools, medical clinics, and nutrition programs for children of all races and religions, and we should celebrate that. But that doesn't mean we've arrived. Jesus continues to challenge us with words like these: “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

Blessings,



Diane Wilson's Commissioning Postponed

The commissioning of Diane Wilson at Woden Presbyterian Church which was originally scheduled for July 19 has been postponed. The Session of Woden Presbyterian Church is in agreement that Diane's commissioning deserves to be celebrated and it isn't safe to do that right now. The commissioning will be rescheduled when COVID-19 numbers go down and it's safer to gather.

Tri-Presbytery Conversation on Racial Equality



The Presbyteries of North Central Iowa, Prospect Hill and Des Moines will hold a Zoom conversation at 12:00 noon on Tuesday, July 14, to discuss the church's role in bringing healing to racial tension in our society. Rev. Ryan Landino (Lead Presbyter for Transformation of Great Rivers Presbytery, and member of the PC(USA) Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation) will give brief remarks about our denomination's efforts toward racial equity and reconciliation. Please contact Jeannie in the Presbytery office for the Zoom link. You may reach her at 319-233-1747 or northiowapresby@gmail.com.

First Presbyterian Church of Greene Reports on the Mission and Technology Grant Received from the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

The following article was published in The Greene Recorder and the Butler County Tribune-Journal

First Presbyterian Church of Greene and St. John's Evangelical Church-Vilmar of Greene, were pleased to present funds to Valley View community. These funds will purchase wi-fi access points to the entire facility. This adds internet to all residents which will in turn allow better connections. Thus, Video chats, Facebook live and Zoom conferencing will be more easily accessed. During times of isolation, this will enable residents to remain socially connected to families and friends including their pastors.

Debra Haugen, Administrator of Valley View community, said, "Thank you for your generous gift to upgrade our Wi-Fi access points. ...We are adding more electronic devices to enable more virtual visits with residents and families. This will ensure that everyone can get connected! Rae Gallmeyer, RN-HSS and I are very appreciative of all you have done!"

Rev. Christopher Martin indicated the presented funds are part of a mission fund St John's is pleased to use for a variety of mission opportunities.

Rev. Cathy Belles noted they had applied to the Presbytery of North Central Iowa for a special Mission and Technology grant to be used for new outreach technologies. Churches are to constantly seek new ways to reach those who are isolated, this technology is such a blessing! We make a mistake calling this isolation "social distancing" it is physical distancing. We have the technology to bring people together, to prevent social isolation. That is such a gift from God.



Rev. Cathy Belles, First Presbyterian Church,
Rev. Christopher Martin, St. John's Evangelical
Church-Vilmar, Debra Haugen, Valley View
Administrator and Rae Gallmeyer, RN-HSS

One of our pastors has reported that members of their church are getting emails supposedly from them requesting gift cards for “women in the church who have cancer.” The pastor did not send the email and is in the process of letting the congregation know, but because this particular scam goes around from time to time, we are alerting you that you may receive one of these bogus emails purporting to come from your pastor or even a member of the presbytery staff. If so, keep these things in mind:



1. Your pastor (or presbytery staff member) will never solicit donations this way, either for the church or for themselves. (Sometimes the email will claim that the pastor is stuck in a foreign country and needs help getting home.)
2. You can always call your pastor or the presbytery and ask if an email is genuine.
3. If you do receive such an email, let your pastor or the presbytery know. Your email program may let you report an email like this as a “phishing scam” and it may help others to do that.
4. Jesus said, “See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

Rev. Richard Francis, States Clerk
Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Reflections

The Rev. Dr. Cambria Kaltwasser, a Minister member of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill who teaches at Northwestern University in Orange City, has written a biblical/theological/pastoral reflection on our corporate and individual response to the COVID-19 pandemic. You can read it here:

<https://reformedjournal.com/the-life-you-save-may-not-be-your-own-loving-our-distance-neighbors-in-a-time-of-pandemic/>

News from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Our training for **Commissioned Pastors, The Academy**, is alive and well. We have a number of new students joining us in July and are still open for more. If you are interested, please visit our website about the program: <https://engagingleaders.org/the-academy/> Due to the cancellation of Synod School, the summer classes are moving to Lakeshore Center the week of July 27. The summer classes are Reformed Theology and Old Testament. They would be terrific continuing education opportunities for anyone who is already a Commissioned Pastor. [Click here for the flyer.](#)

In October, we will be offering **The Art of Transitional Ministry Training** the week of October 12 at Christ the King Retreat Center (pandemic decline willing). If we can't have it in person, we will offer it online. You know the leaders – SanDawna Ashley, Jeff Japinga, Rachel Yates and Deb DeMeester. We have redesigned the program to be an experiential training that will equip those considering Interim Ministry as a call as well as those seeking skills/tools to lead in times of transition (such as the changes 2020 has brought to church life). [Click here for the flyer.](#)

One of the strategic priorities for the Synod is to develop a **coaching network**. We have a sub-committee at work developing this in collaboration with Laurie Ferguson. We have budgeted to help train 2-3 people from each presbytery in a way that would qualify them to become a Certified Coach. The curriculum will begin this fall and conclude in the fall of 2021. Each coach will be asked to give some free and/or reduced time to coach others in the Synod. The hope is that in an established vetted network, pastors and

congregations who would benefit from coaching can be served – not necessarily by those in their own presbytery (although they could if that is what they wanted). Please [click here](#) for more information and an application.

The **2020 Racial Ethnic Student Scholarship** application is offered by the Committee on Racial Ethnic Ministries of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies. Completed applications are due September 30, 2020 and must include an official transcript and financial aid statement. Please [click here](#) for more information.

Grants Available from Synod of Lakes and Prairies

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies has three new distinct grant programs to alleviate the threat of the coronavirus pandemic on church and camp ministries across the Synod. The Synod has created procedures and funds for pandemic support grants in three areas:

1. Church staffing and ministry support for churches whose vitality would be threatened by disruption to staffing and ministry programs,
2. Church staffing and ministry support in historically marginalized communities to churches which serve the poor and oppressed, and
3. Camp staffing and programs, particularly as they seek to maintain programs staffed by college students.

It is important to be aware that the program is designed with two application deadlines in each category and that the allocated grants would not exceed \$10,000 or one month of average operating costs. Presbyteries would apply for the funds on behalf of the ministry. The program materials in [this packet](#) provide a more complete description.

For additional information, please contact Jim Koon, jkoon@lakesandprairies.org.

Recorded Worship Services Available



Rev. Richard Francis, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill, has prepared a third worship service video to be used as needed. You may access the three video services: [video 1](#), [video 2](#) and [video 3](#).



MATTHEW 25

Matthew 25 grants will support vulnerable congregations facing COVID-19.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency president sets aside funds to be administered by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Read about it [here](#).

Stewardship Kaleidoscope

Stewardship Kaleidoscope is scheduled for September 21-23, 2020, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Please click [here](#) for the informational flyer. You may also go to their website: www.stewardshipkaleidoscope.org.

Keeping Informed on the COVID-19 Situation

The Presbyteries continue to hold weekly meetings with the pastors to keep abreast of the ever changing COVID-19 situation and to discuss how pastors and churches can continue to minister to and serve their congregations. The meetings will be recorded and the recordings uploaded to the Events section of each website (www.presbynciowa.org and www.prospecthillpresby.org). You may also click [here](#) for the recording of June 30 and [here](#) for the July 7 recording. It is planned to have these meetings weekly and the recordings will continue to be uploaded to the websites.

The home pages of the [North Central Iowa](#) and the [Prospect Hill](#) websites contain information and links on webinars and other resources on the COVID-19 situation.

Churchwide Gathering of the Presbyterian Women



Presbyterian Women's 2021 Churchwide Gathering will be held August 5–8, 2021 in St. Louis, Missouri!

The theme for the Gathering is "Rejoice in Hope" based on Romans 12:12–13, "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers."

Please click on this link for more information:

https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/what_we_do/build-community/churchwide-gathering/

Helpful Links

Academy



Deepening faith and
encountering Christ in a
new way

Please click [here](#) for information on The Academy.



Rev. Shawn Harmon was ordained to service as a mission worker with The Antioch Partners, a mission sending agency that works in partnership with Presbyterian churches in the US. You can read more about them here: <https://www.theantiochpartners.org/>. You may contact Shawn directly at: harmonhusky@gmail.com. To support Shawn financially: www.theantiochpartners.org/giving. For online giving select “partner support for partners not listed for security reasons” and type “Harmon, Shawn.”



The Iowa Heart Foundation recommends that Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) be placed wherever people gather. AEDs have become so advanced that almost anyone can use them safely. Click [here](#) for more information.



If you feel as if you're at the end of your rope or the recent floods or low crop prices have left you feeling hopeless, please click [here](#) to find a group or network who may be able to help.



Your Iowa Life – if you or a loved one are facing a problem with alcohol, drugs, gambling, mental health or suicide thoughts, you're not alone. That is why the Iowa Department of Public Health has created YourLIFEIowa.org so Iowans can chat live, text or call and get reliable treatment options and find nearby help. <https://yourlifeiowa.org/>



Farm Crisis Ministry Network - supporting farmers and those who love and care for them, sharing resources for farm families, congregations, and rural communities. <https://www.facebook.com/farmcrisisministry/>



Spectrum Spirituality Project – support resources for families with one or more children who have a sensory, emotional, and/or behavioral disorder; also equip congregations to welcome and serve these families. https://www.facebook.com/pg/spectrumspirit/about/?ref=page_internal



Iowa Faith Leadership Network – to provide a space for faith leaders to develop interfaith and ecumenical relationships, collegiality, and cooperation; to share resources, ask questions, and learn together; to improve our collective ability to minister to the faith communities we serve as well as to better the lives of people in the communities around us. <https://www.facebook.com/iowafaitheaders/>