

PRESBYTERY CONNECTION

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter of the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill
September 17, 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 Closed



The Presbytery office will be closed on Friday, September 25.

Upcoming Presbytery Meetings

Fall Presbytery meetings are scheduled for both presbyteries. At this point we don't know if these meetings will be in-person or via Zoom. Please save the date and stay tuned for additional information.

Prospect Hill Presbytery Meeting

Saturday, October 24
Lakeshore Center at Okoboji
1864 Hwy. 86
Milford, Iowa
8:30 a.m. Registration
9:30 a.m. Call to Meeting

North Central Iowa Presbytery Meeting

Sunday, November 1
Central Presbyterian Church
932 5th St.
Nevada, Iowa
1:30 p.m. Registration
2:30 p.m. Call to Meeting

Prayers of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

- Week of September 20 Greater Greene County Presbyterian Ministries – CRE Wendy Pittman
(First Presbyterian Churches, Grand Junction, Jefferson and Payton)
- Week of September 27 First Presbyterian Church, Reinbeck and – Rev. Steve Tyykila
First Presbyterian Church, Grundy Center
- Week of October 4 Bethany Presbyterian Church, Grundy Center – Rev. Al Polito

Prayers of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill

- Week of September 20 First Presbyterian Church, South Sioux City – Rev. David Koehler, Moderator
- Week of September 27 Community Presbyterian Church, Lawton – Rev. Dale Lint, Moderator
- Week of October 4 Pray for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies Staff –
RE Elona Street-Stewart, Synod Executive
Rev. Dr. Deb DeMeester, Leadership Development
RE Jim Koon, Financial Services and Treasurer
Rev. Pam Prouty, Stated Clerk
Amy Hartman, Financial Services Associate
Gretchen Milloy, Office Coordinator

Additional Prayer Concerns

Please pray for Rev. Clarence Beard, honorably retired, who is on hospice. Our prayers surround him and his family at this time of transition. Cards may be sent to: Rev. Clarence Beard, JA Wedum Residential Hospice, Room 8, 9350 Noble Parkway, Brooklyn Park, MN 55443.

Please pray for Rev. Bob Cook, pastor at United Presbyterian Church in Vail and United Church of Westside, who will be having surgery to replace an aortic valve.

Please continue to pray for Rev. Dr. Rich King, pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Marshalltown. Rich is doing much better and continues with rehab at On With Life in Ankeny.

Please continue to pray for Josh Ullom, son of Rev. Dr. Dave and Judy Ullom of First Presbyterian Church in Estherville. Josh continues with bi-weekly chemo. Please also pray for Josh's family and for Dave and Judy as they all deal with this and support Josh.

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.

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, Jesup
Eden Presbyterian Church, Rudd
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Waterloo

Presbytery of Prospect Hill

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

Mary Frahm's 90th Birthday

Mary Frahm will turn 90 on September 22, 2020. Mary was very active in the Presbytery of North Central Iowa. Birthday wishes may be sent to:

Mary Frahm
1801 20th St., Apt. J-14
Ames, IA 50010

OR

mary.frahm14@gmail.com



Poor Richard's Almanac

by Richard Francis, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Prospect Hill



I've heard people say it, and you have, too. Maybe you've said it yourself: "it just isn't worship if we can't _____." The blank might be "gather together in the sanctuary," or it might be "sing," or it might be "have fellowship time afterward without masks."

Of all the things we do as churches, worship is the one thing everyone has strong opinions about. We have strong opinions about when and where it should take place, what songs should (and shouldn't!) be sung, who should be involved and who should be excluded,¹ and so on. In fact, presbyterians have such strong opinions about worship that one whole section of 34 pages in our *Book of Order* is called the "Directory for Worship."²

Now we have other things to lay on top of those strong opinions. But I wonder if we're asking the right questions. What if we started with this question: "Who do you love?"

Most of us would say that we love Jesus, or at least that we try to put Jesus first in our lives. That means that all our other loves have to get in line behind that first love. That means we have to love Jesus more than our church, or our church building, or even our way of worshiping him. It always amazes me to think how little we know about how the New Testament church ordered their worship, much less how the people of Israel in the temple period ordered *their* worship. God has left us free to order our worship in many different ways, as long as it lifts up Jesus Christ and is true to Scripture.

That's why I get nervous when I hear people say—or hear myself say—"it just isn't worship if we can't _____." All during the Babylonian captivity, the people of Israel were unable to worship in the Temple, because the Temple had been destroyed and they were hundreds of miles away from Jerusalem. They lamented, "How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" (Psalm 137:4)—yet they found a way.

And the Church of Jesus Christ has worshiped in catacombs and cathedrals, homes and prisons, brick churches and frame churches. My Covenanter ancestor Thomas Brownmiller worshiped with his community in an open field with a sword in his hand, watching for Redcoats. As followers of Jesus we have worshiped in many different ways, and we will continue to find new ways to worship and to be faithful.

But Jesus never told us to worship him.³ Jesus did say this: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (John 14:15). John Calvin, commenting on this verse, says,

The love with which the disciples loved Christ was true and sincere, and yet there was some superstition mixed with it, as is frequently the case with ourselves; for it was very foolish in them to wish to keep him in the world. To correct this fault, he bids them direct their love to another end; and that is, to employ themselves in keeping the commandments which he had given them. This is undoubtedly a useful doctrine, for of those who think that they love Christ, there are very few who honor him as they ought to do; but, on the contrary, after having performed small and trivial services, they give themselves no farther concern. The true love of Christ, on the other hand, is regulated by the observation of his doctrine as the only rule. But we are likewise reminded how sinful our affections are, since even the love which we bear to Christ is not without fault, if it be not directed to a pure obedience.

¹ I once served a church that believed children should be excluded from worship. That didn't go well.

² It's probably another measure of our strong opinions that many of our churches don't follow the order of worship found in the Directory, W-3.02.

³ That doesn't mean we don't worship Jesus. It Jesus means that Jesus never said, "Worship me."

I won't presume to tell you what "pure obedience" to Jesus means in your life and your situation. I will presume to say that it's something that we should all strive for—as individuals, as congregations, as a denomination, as a Church.

So the first question is not, "What do I want in worship?" but "What is Jesus calling us to do in the middle of this situation that has been handed to us?" "What does it mean to be faithful to our calling to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, *and* love our neighbors as ourselves?" (Mark 12:29-31)

What if the best way to love our neighbors is to wear a mask and not sing?

What if the best way to love our neighbors is to make remote worship possible?

One of the greatest statements on worship is also found in the gospel of John. The Samaritan woman, recognizing Jesus to be, in her words, "a prophet," asks him where is the appropriate place to worship God: in the Temple in Jerusalem (the Jewish answer) or on Mt Gerizim (the Samaritan answer). Jesus answered her this way:

Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem... But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:21, 23-24)

"Worship God in spirit and truth." That should be enough to ponder for now.

Blessings,



The Character of Beloved Community



On Sunday, September 27 at 7:00 p.m. the Synod of the Trinity will be kicking off a new opportunity for us to consider some of the issues and concerns of our times in light of Martin Luther King's *Beloved Community*. Rev. Dr. James Calvin Davis, Middlebury College, will begin our time together by considering with us the characteristics of the Beloved Community. The 90-minute Zoom gathering will be a time of presentation and conversation. It will be recorded and is open to anyone. Rev. Dr. Davis' name may be familiar to you if you have read his book *Forbearance*. To see more about this opportunity and the other topics, please click on this [flyer](#).

Opportunities for Mission



- ❖ Have you been too cooped up since this spring? Are you and a small group of friends itching to get out and do some volunteer work? Would you like a free night's stay at beautiful Lakeshore Center at Okoboji for just a few hours of volunteer time? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, please see the [Fall Clean-Up at Lakeshore Center flyer](#).
- ❖ The Presbytery of Prospect Hill has created a task force to raise funds for scholarship assistance for refugees in South Sudan. This work began as a ministry of Stephen Chambang, a Deacon at Lakeside Presbyterian Church in Storm Lake. The goal is to provide \$450 per year in tuition to as many students as possible who will be studying health care at a college in the area. These students will then be able to work in the refugee camps in South Sudan, one of the poorest and most disrupted nations in the world. Donations in any amount may be sent by a check made payable to the Presbytery of Prospect Hill and mailed to the Presbytery Office, 1864 Hwy. 86, Milford, IA 51351. Please designate "So. Sudan Nurses Scholarship" in the memo portion of the check.
- ❖ Stephen Chambang (you can read about his work with the South Sudan Nurses Scholarship above) has a cousin in South Sudan who needs a hip replacement. The hospital in Storm Lake has graciously agreed to cover 80% of the cost of the surgery. An additional \$10,000 needs to be raised to cover travel expenses for Stephen's cousin and for the remainder of the cost of the surgery. **Any monetary gifts given through the Presbytery will be matched by the Presbytery of Prospect Hill.** Donations in any amount may be sent by a check made payable to the Presbytery of Prospect Hill and mailed to the Presbytery Office, 1864 Hwy. 86, Milford, IA 51351. Please designate "Chambang Medical" in the memo portion of the check.
- ❖ Pastors Bob and Tamara EnTin, along with Dr. Jon Ahrendson and Mrs. Becky Ahrendson, were the host parents of Lydia Odiambo from Kenya, who attended high school through the EF Exchange Program during the 2018-2019 school year. Lydia made many friends among the students as well as adults in the community. She attended both the Lutheran Church and the Presbyterian Church in Clarion. She volunteered often at the movie theater and helped with other projects in the community.

Lydia is home in Kenya now, and has been working to transform a neighborhood trash heap into a community garden.

As a result of the pandemic, Lydia's father has been unemployed since March. Unfortunately, the family can no longer afford the rent to live in their home in the city. The family wants to move to the country on land they inherited, but the recent rainy season flattened the mud hut they planned to live in.

Sukup Manufacturing in Sheffield, Iowa makes SafeTHomes that can be shipped to Kenya. You can click on this link to see what the homes look like: <http://www.safethome.com/>

The EnTins want to raise funds to get one of these Iowa made homes shipped to Kenya for Lydia and her family to live in. They are hoping to raise \$8,000, the cost of the building and shipping. To that end, they have started a GoFundMe page, which you may find at this link: https://www.gofundme.com/f/lydias-home?utm_source=customer&utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link_all

DERECHO NEWS

Donations for derecho relief may be made directly to the Presbytery of East Iowa by going to this link: <https://peia.org/disaster-assistance-information/>

Please click [here](#) to see a Derecho Response Update from the Presbytery of East Iowa.

Presbyterians came together on Saturday, September 5, for an All Iowa Presbyterians Day of Mission to gather and work alongside one another to help with ongoing recovery in the wake of the Derecho storm. These pictures were taken by Interim General Presbyter Rev. Ian McMullen. Thank you to all volunteers!



2021 Board of Pensions



There are several Board of Pensions (BOP) benefits enrollment changes coming in 2021. A webinar was held on September 1, 2021, with Rev. Dr. Ken Green of the Board of Pensions. You may view that webinar [here](#).

Here are some more resources describing the 2021 Board of Pensions Benefits Plans:

- BOP Benefits [website](#) for 2021
- BOP [brief overview](#) of 2021 Benefits Plan
- BOP complete overview of 2021 Benefits Plan: [Your Church and the 2021 Benefits Plan Webinar](#)

Jesus Christ and the ‘Dividing Wall’: Race and God’s Mission



Please consider registering for this webinar series, which will offer an opportunity to explore issues of racial justice with world-class speakers, and to connect and learn with people from all over the country. The dates are October 7, 14, 21 and 28, starting at 6:30 p.m. (Central Time). Besides these four lectures, there will also be five pre-recorded workshops that can be accessed and used in the future by participating churches and individuals. You may click [here](#) for more information or go to this website to get registered: <https://www.pts.edu/wmi-conference>

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies Presents The Art of Transitional Leadership



Learning Ministry Skills for Today’s and Tomorrow’s Church
Pastors, Staff, COMs and Congregational Leaders
October 12-15, 2020

The Art of Transitional Leadership training will be held virtually. It is limited to the first 32 participants. Please see the [informational flyer](#). You may go here to register: <https://synod-of-lakes-and-prairies.events.idloom.com/the-art-of-transitional-leadership2020>

Doctor of Ministry at UDTs – 2021 Cohort

The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (UDTS) is offering an upcoming (2021) Doctor of Ministry cohort that will focus on Crisis and the Church: Ecclesiastical and Pastoral Responses. Led by Dr. Beth McCaw, Associate Professor of Ministry (UDTS) and Presbytery Leader, Glacier Presbytery (PCUSA), and Dr. Bradley Longfield, Professor of Church History (UDTS), this cohort will explore ways the church has addressed crises in the past to develop the theological perspectives and pastoral skills necessary to equip congregations and their members in the present to witness to the hope of the gospel in times of crisis.

The cohort begins online on Tuesday, January 21, 2021, while the first of three annual residencies will be held May 12-19, 2021. The deadline for applications is December 31, 2020. Please click [here](#) to apply for the DMin Program.

For more information, please see this [flyer](#).

If you have questions, please contact The Rev. Timothy Mathew Slemmons, Ph.D. (tslemmons@dbq.edu or 563-589-3578) or Kayla Schween (kschween@dbq.edu or 563-589-3115).

Events at Riverview Conference Center

The Riverview Conference Center in Cedar Falls has three events remaining this fall:

- [3 Heath Brothers](#). Saturday, September 19, 2020. This would be an excellent event for a youth group or families. The student price has been dropped from \$10 to \$5 for this event. These three boys just won first place for a music video at the Christian Film Festival. They love serving the Lord and presenting the gospel through music and testimony.
 - [Soul'd Out](#). Saturday, October 17, 2020. This is a men's group of dynamic Christian singers. They encourage people of all ages with their smooth harmonies.
 - [Susie Larson](#). Friday, November 6; Saturday, November 7. Susie is an author and Christian radio speaker. This is a women's event hosted by Riverview Conference Center at Bethany Bible Chapel in Cedar Falls, with the assistance of TJ's Christian Book Store in Cedar Falls. Women will be encouraged and inspired in the lessons Susie will be bringing from God's Word.
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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.

Stewardship Kaleidoscope

Stewardship Kaleidoscope will be a three-day virtual event on September 22 & 29 and October 6 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. each Tuesday. Please click here for more information: www.stewardshipkaleidoscope.org.

Presbyterian Foundation – Church Financial Leadership Grant Program

Grants are available to assist pastors to attend continuing education opportunities which will help them in leading their congregations toward financial and missional vitality. For more information please click [here](#) or contact Rev. David Loleng, Director, Church Financial Literacy and Leadership, 800-858-6127 ext. 5901.

Transition-to-College Assistance



The Board of Pensions offers a grant program intended to help eligible families of freshmen entering college with transitional expenses, such as a computer purchase or dorm furnishings. Please click [here](#) for more information.

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/iowafaithleaders/>