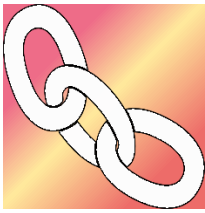


# First Presbyterian Church

321 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Burlington, IA 52601, 319-752-6626

1stpresb@1stpresb.org

www.1stpresb.org



## Connections

### August 2025



---

### Pastor's Thoughts

At the Good Friday service I offered everyone in attendance the opportunity to accept a small wooden pocket cross that can be carried in a pocket. At the time, it was a gesture that seemed to be the capstone of our Holy Week experience and allowed everyone to take with them something that would be a reminder of what Jesus Christ did for us: he mounted a cross as an innocent man, took our sins upon himself, suffered brutally for everything we have ever done that has offended God and ripped and torn the fabric of community, and died an excruciating death in our place. He did this because of the most profound and amazing love any of us have every experienced.

Just a few days after that, my life began to change in the most painful of ways – my wife of 54 years entered the hospital where we were told she had three months or less to live. There was no chance for do-overs. Everything we had hoped to do was going to be left undone or unfulfilled. I was in a strange land with emotions I had never felt before. Just as our marriage vows had not come with an operator's manual, so there was no manual on how to prepare for the death of a spouse.

It was then that I thrust my hand in my pocket, and along with my change purse, money clip and pocket knife, I felt that small wooden Good Friday cross. At the moment of greatest need, I took that cross into my hand and tightened my fist around it. In and of itself, it was just a small piece of polished wood. But I instantly knew what it was and I wept. Even though I was going to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I was being reminded that I not be afraid. Even though I had never walked that way before, or experienced what was ahead, that little cross was reminding me that I was not alone. I had someone with me who had been there and done all of this. I felt an instant presence and was reminded “do not be afraid, I am with you and will remain with you all the way to the end.” That would not be the last time I reach into my pocket for that cross. When I change my pants, that small cross is the first thing I place in my pants pocket, and whether I am coming to the church or shopping for groceries, feeding the chickens, or working out in the yard, it is a constant reminder of who and what my strength is.

That cross has no power in and of itself, but upon touching it, I instantly know I am not alone and nothing I will experience will be greater than the grace and love I find in the Lord, my God, and the amazing grace of Jesus Christ. There is a small basket on the corner of the communion table in which there lay small wooden crosses. They are there for anyone who wants to feel the peace and presence of God in Jesus Christ. As you need or desire, take one, place it in your pocket, so that every day you will feel the presence and power that makes every experience bearable and reminds us, that no matter what comes, we are never alone.



Regrettably, the summer is coming to a close and so will be our focus on the parables of Jesus. "Once Upon a Time" has been an opportunity to look more deeply into the message of Jesus. The parables are not just simple stories used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson, but used by Jesus to describe ordinary circumstances and situations that people can understand easily with the added benefit that their moral lessons teach how to live as faithful Christians as God intended.

When asked by the disciples why he spoke in parables, Jesus said, ***This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand" (Mt. 13:10).*** The fact of the matter is, Jesus knew who he was talking to and recognized they weren't open to God's message and most were skeptical of him. His messages were unpopular because they challenged people to change in ways they didn't want to. Jesus chose to teach using parables because it was simpler for people to understand stories about familiar situations than about the abstract afterlife and judgment of God. Even so, the meaning of the parables could be difficult to grasp.

We're two thousand years removed from when Jesus taught, but his message reverberates as poignantly as it did then. It could be said of us "they see, but do not believe; they hear, but do not hear or understand". Lord, open our eyes that we might see, and our ears that we might hear, and our minds that we might understand. Amen.

August 3<sup>rd</sup>      Lord's Supper  
Text: Luke 18:9-14  
Jeremiah 14:7-10, 19-22  
Title: "We're All the Same in God's Eyes"  
Video: Here I Am to Worship  
Remember My Sacrifice

August 10      Service to be held in Edwards Chapel  
Text: Matthew 13:44-46  
Genesis 29:15-28  
Title: "The Pricelessness of Truth"  
Video: I Can Only Imagine

August 17<sup>th</sup>  
Text: Matthew 20:1-16  
Jonah 3:10-4:11  
Title: TBD  
Video: Light Unto Your Path

August 24<sup>th</sup>      Worship at the Shelter in Crapo Park

August 31      Service to be held in Edwards Chapel

Text: Matthew 21:33-45

Isaiah 5:1-7

Title: TBD

Video: Who is My Neighbor?



# Chapel Renovations Are Complete

You may have noticed in the sermons for August, there are two Sunday where instead of worshipping upstairs in the sanctuary, the worship service will be held in our newly renovated Edwards Chapel. All the walls have had the plaster repaired and painted. The dropdown screen has been removed along with the projector and replaced with a large TV screen and computer. A new larger fan has been installed in the ceiling and the room is brighter because of new LED bulbs in each chandelier as well as a new adjustable light bar mounted near the ceiling in the front of the room. The large cross that hangs on the front wall has been joined with two small crosses of the same design. In time we will be adding a small 3-4 rank pipe organ. Beyond the repair and painting of the walls and the electrical work that has been done, everything else is being provided as a memorial gift.

These changes help make the chapel more useful to our worship life together. Not only will it continue to be the location for all special services like Holy Week, but also be available for other services like funerals or weddings. It remains the classroom for adult Sunday School and weekly Bible Studies, as well as any activity that might require projection of materials.

Why might we occasionally worship in the chapel? It is not something that hasn't been done before. Many of you can remember when contemporary services were once held in the chapel. It will be used more frequently for Sunday worship services as a way of conserving on the use of energy. The sanctuary requires a great deal of energy to heat in the winter and cool in the summer. With an average attendance on Sundays of 40+/-, it makes good sense to reduce costs by worshipping in a smaller more efficient space. Everything is being done to make the environment and atmosphere of the chapel feel like the sanctuary. This is not an attempt to abandon the sanctuary. It is however an intentional effort to maximize the use of all our building at the same time being good financial stewards.



# Reflections

*My heart abounds with pleasure in this fair summertime  
When God, with fullest measure, renews the world sublime,  
The earth and all the heavens does God with life imbue,  
All creatures, high and lowly, grow beautiful and true.*

So, begins one of my favorite hymns for the season of summer. Summer is in full-swing for me; I've seen my first fireflies, my first mayflies and my first mosquitoes. Summer for many of us, is a time of rest and refreshment, a time usually reserved for family vacations. And, because it is "less busy," it also has the ability for us to stop and make plans for the future. Perhaps it becomes a form of Sabbath rest for us as a family of faith.

The word "Sabbath" is a Biblical term meaning a weekly day of rest or time of worship. Sabbath is first mentioned in the Genesis creation narrative, where the seventh day is set aside as a day of rest and made holy to God. (Genesis 2:2-3). Observation and remembrance of the Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments, reminding us of our individual and corporate need to set aside time for rest so that we might "recharge our batteries."

Summer can be much like a Sabbath for us, and August especially, is like that here at First Presbyterian Church. Such a time period becomes a Sabbath time for us.

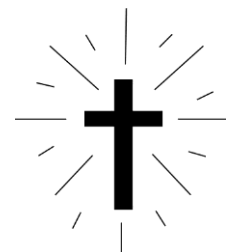
Sabbath time, a time free for the "busyness" of the program year, affords us a time of visioning, of making plans in a bigger picture for the future. I would urge you to take that time to recharge your spiritual batteries, and to ask God what new things we might consider as a part of a vision for the future. Where is God calling us, both individually and as a congregation, for service and mission in the coming year?

Lastly let me remind all of us that the Sabbath was created for humankind to have time for worship. Summer vacation does not mean to take time away from the worship of God! It is there that we get our best refreshment and our best inspiration for vision. If you have to be away, be sure to take your own Sabbath and spend some time with God.

Have a blessed time of rest.

"Warmly,"

Randy+





## Adult Sunday School Continues Through the Summer

Beginning Sunday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, the Adult Sunday School Class will begin a new series of lessons entitled, "Embracing the Prophets." This DVD based series has been written by Walter Brueggemann, a world-wide distinguished Old Testament scholar and theologian. This 6-part series identifies the cultural and spiritual context that led to the prophets speaking out to the Hebrew people and often issuing warnings. The author not only speaks to the place and role of prophets but raises the question of the significance of their messages for us today, as well as asking, who are today's prophetic voices.



---

## Summer Worship at Crapo Park

This will be the third successive year where in August we have held our worship service at the park. This year, like the past two years we will be joined by our friends from the First Congregational Church and Hope Community Church. The Revs Jim Francisco and David Selmon will join Rev. Johnson in conducting the service. The service will be held at the large shelter in Crapo Park at 10 a.m. on Sunday, August 24<sup>th</sup>. Lunch will be served following the service.



# *A Farewell to Eva Ann*

A farewell luncheon for Eva Ann Elmer was had on Sunday, July 13! As you know, Eva Ann is moving to the Des Moines area to be closer to her children. We will miss your presence, Eva Ann!

Below is a few photos from the occasion and also her last day of choir! Pictured with Eva Ann is her Granddaughter, Melissa, and her Great Granddaughter, Amaziah!

*Photos submitted by Carol Brotherson*





# Card Shower For Clifford Haskins

Clifford Haskins served as the Pastor here at First Presbyterian Church from 1976 - 1986 and on September 22, 2025, he will be turning 99 years young! To celebrate such an accomplishment, let's shower him with Birthday cards! His address is as follows:

Clifford Haskins  
5290 S. Silver Lake Rd. Route 1  
Laona, WI 54541

*(Information & address submitted by Sandy Walz)*



Happy 99<sup>th</sup>  
Birthday



---

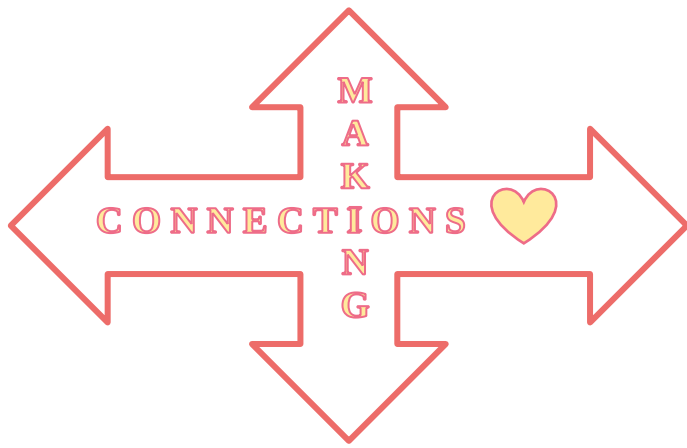
## Second Sunday Luncheon

Sunday, August 10 following the morning service

***Summer Brunch in an Iowa Farmhouse Garden***

The lunch is free. Your generous donations help to cover the costs of the meal.





**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY**

### August Birthdays

01 – Sandy Smith  
 17 – Lou Harter  
 17 – Bob Snider  
 21 – Dane Mehaffy  
 23 – Damian Haller  
 24 – Ramona Sandrock  
 25 – Barb Garcia  
 26 – Marilyn Nuss  
 30 – Jordan Huddleston  
 31 – Logan Haller

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Luncheon**

Sunday, August 10,  
 following morning service!

**“Summer Brunch in an Iowa Farmhouse  
 Garden”**

**Please Join Us**

Luncheon is free and gracious donations help  
 to defray the cost and are much appreciated.



### **Table for One**

Our July event will be held  
 Wednesday, 8/6 @ 5:30p.m.  
 @ Sue Gilchrist's home @  
 2601 Cliff Rd. Burlington,  
 IA.

## **Yum-Yums**

News from Yum Yums. A group of 13 church members and friends enjoyed good food and fellowship at The Pink in Lomax, IL on Wednesday, July 16. Those attending, chose to go to Mei's China Palace @ 119 N. Jefferson St. Mt. Pleasant, IA on Wednesday, August 20 @ 5:30pm. We will meet at Fareway for carpool @ 5:00pm. If you have any questions, call or text Sandy Russell @ 319-572-6124



# Meeting Highlights

---

Pastor Dick's Temporary Supply contract has been approved by Session and has been sent to the Presbytery for approval.

We discussed our participation in the Pride parade last month and how well it was received. Pastor Dick talked about the Homeless Task Force meeting that he, Pat Saldeen and Pat Whitmore attended. They were able to talk quite a bit about the Hased Project, and they're hoping to network and establish new contacts.

The tower work is completed and paid for. Chapel repair is coming along well, the drop-down screen and non-working projector has been removed, and a large TV screen that will be operated by a bluetooth computer has been added. A small, used pipe organ has been located and will be purchased and added to the chapel to equal the worship experience in the sanctuary.

Sunday, August 24 is Worship in the Park, with First Congregational Church and Hope Community Church joining us. It will be in the large Crapo Park shelter house at 10 AM, and all three churches will share responsibility for the food.

The next Session meeting is Thursday, August 7, 2025 at 1:00 PM.

Cheryl Lotz, Clerk of Session



# Messages from the Deacons

Don't forget the Picnic in the Park Church Service to be held Sunday, August 24, 2025 at 10AM in the large shelter house in Crapo Park!

We will again be worshipping with members of First Congregational Church and Hope Community Church and we'll all share fellowship time after the service with a sack lunch. We look forward to seeing everyone there!





A Thank you from Eva Ann Elmer

Dear Church Family,

What a wonderful celebration!! You certainly know how to do a great party!!

Thanks for the sweet wishes & great memories...

Thanks for the wonderful hugs & best wishes in my new chapter.

Thanks for the great food & friendship!!

Hugs,  
Eva Ann Elmer

A Thank you from Terri Huddleston

Thank you to those who sent cards & Birthday wishes, and singing Happy Birthday to me! It made my day!

Terri Huddleston

A Thank you from Janet Calvin

I have so many things to thank all of my church family for! Prayers, phone calls, encouragement, cards, and all your support. I HAVE enjoyed hearing from all of you! Thank you so much!

I also want to update you on my Granddaughters Xio and Kerry.

Xio has had 3 surgeries and treatment, as of now, she is still having pain from removal of lymph nodes (as of now, cancer free!). Thank you for prayers and support for Xio.

Kerri's cancer has been stage 4, with treatment her cancer is improving. She will be having surgery at the end of July to remove the last 2 tumors and lymph nodes. She has been fighting cancer for 3 years. Prayers are appreciated so much! Thank you! Kerri thanks you too!

Janet Calvin



This is Ann and Alexis Comiskey and we want to thank you for helping send us to Camp Bear Creek (formerly known as Camp Wyoming). Here are some of our favorite memories.

Annabelle:

I was in the Extreme Adventures group for my 4th year of going to Camp Bear Creek, and we did some very fun things in upper Wisconsin, super close to the Wisconsin-Michigan border. During the camping trip, we went to an aqua park (inflatable obstacle course on water), did some ziplining, and white water rafting. We also had time to hang out at our campsite and had a great time. We ended up doing all of our bible studies in one go, taking 45ish minutes. We learned about how in God's kingdom, the people who were poor, servants, or disabled were at the top while the people who were after money, power, fame, and glory were at the bottom. This is what we call "God's Upside Down Kingdom", because the values of his kingdom are the complete opposite of what ours are here on earth. Overall, I had an amazing time at camp, and I can definitely say I'll be going back for a 5th year at Camp Bear Creek.

Alexis:

This was my 4th year at Camp Bear Creek and this year I did Pioneers camp. We got to sleep in tents in a big field one night. The other nights I got to stay in Maple cabin and we won the cleanest cabin award 3 times in a row! My favorite activity was color wars, especially paint wars. I was on the red team. I made new friends, went creek stomping, rock wall climbing and swimming. In bible study we learned about God's kingdom and that it is upside down from the real world and the poor are on top and the ones who wish for power are on the bottom. I love going to Camp Bear Creek and look forward to going back by next year!



# KNITWITS

The Knitwits will meet at the church, **August 6, 2025 at 10:00 A.M.**

The group meet for about one hour and knit and/or crochet prayer shawls or lap throws. Do you know of someone who is low in spirits; has lost a loved one, companion or friend; has health issues; or just needs to know that they are loved and appreciated? Do you know of someone who is celebrating a joyous occasion such as a birthday or anniversary? The Church sanctuary has a variety of prayer shawls or lap throws; and they are FREE for the taking by anyone.

The Knitwits welcome anyone who would like to join our Prayer Shawl Ministry.

God's grace be upon you:

May this shawl be a sign of God's loving, healing presence.

May it warm you when you are weary

May it encourage you when you are discouraged.

May it assure you of God's care and comfort.

May it remind you that you are surrounded by the prayers of others.





# Missions Is Up To Doing Good

## Mission Committee Upcoming Meeting

The Mission Committee plans to have its monthly meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at 12:00 noon. Bring a sack lunch. August 6 next meeting.

### Thank You For Your Helping Hands!

Thank you to Francis McAllister for helping carry out food bags for people to their cars and Sue Gilchrist for helping with July's food bag giveaway at Farmer's Market at the Church!



## Back To School Supplies

It's that time of year again!  
Starting August 3rd through August 17<sup>th</sup>,  
we will be collecting school supplies for local schools &  
for the Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital in Iowa City.  
There will be a box in the Sanctuary,  
on the table for school supplies donations!

Thank you for your support!

The Mission Committee

# Gratitude Meal For Hospice House

On Monday, July 14, we served a gratitude meal to Great River Hospice House to 4 staff members, 1 volunteer, and 5 patients – 2 patients at home.

It was a very rewarding and emotional opportunity to serve this meal. We became engaged with one family's loved one who passed while we were there. Her little grandson, Jacob (7yrs old), came to us after her passing and was sad and needed love and comfort. He let all of us give him a hug and we were able to show him love and support that he needed. He was a very sweet little boy.

God giving opportunities in showing how important it is to have these connections.

The Mission Committee



*(pictured left to right: Sandy Walz, Pat Saldeen, Sue Gilchrist, Brenda Frederick, & Terri Huddleston)*

# Civil Rights Re-Certification Training

## **CIVIL RIGHTS TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS WHO HELP WITH FOOD DISTRIBUTION THROUGH THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FOOD PANTRY**

Most of the food the Church distributes through its Food Pantry is purchased from the Iowa Food Bank. One of the requirements of the Iowa Food Bank is annual Civil Rights Training for anyone who helps or is interested in helping with this food distribution. The fiscal year for the Iowa Food Bank is July 1st through June 30<sup>th</sup> of the following year. It is now time for our annual training.

For this current fiscal year (2025-2026), the Mission Committee has scheduled Civil Rights Training to be provided on Wednesday, August 6<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 P.M. It is hoped this training will be done in our new renovated Church Chapel. Reverend Johnson will be conducting the training, and the length of the training should be one hour.

The Mission Committee appreciates, greatly, the volunteers who help with our food distribution program. Also, we welcome any new volunteers who would like to help us. Please plan to attend this Civil Right Training presentation. Should you have any questions, please contact the Church office.





# Announcements!



Wendy will be out of the office on Vacation at Disney from Aug. 10-16. Normal office hours will resume on Monday, August 18.

Re-Certification Training for anyone and everyone helping with food bag giveaway will be on Wednesday, August 6 at 1:30pm in the Chapel.

Yum-Yums meets on Wednesday, August 20 @ Mei's China Palace in Mt. Pleasant, IA @ 5:30pm. Carpool meets at 5:00pm @ Fareway.

Farmer's Market at the Church will be on Thursday, August 21 from 4:30pm-6:00pm. If you, or someone you know, is struggling and in need of food, please come down and get a bag of food!

Shepherd's Table will be on Wednesday, August, 27 from 4:30pm-6:00pm at First Congregational Church. This is a free meal and all is welcome!

Sunday, August 24 is Worship in the Park! We will have Worship in Crapo Park at 10:00am, along with our friends from First Congregational Church and Hope Community Church! The Deacons will be serving sack lunches following Worship service!

Area schools will be starting back to school on Monday, August 25! Please keep a look out on the roads for kids walking to and from school and busses!

## Live Streaming our Worship Services

Can't make it to Sunday service? No problem! Every Sunday service is live streamed on Facebook! Please join us! Just go to Facebook on your phone, tablet, or computer and navigate to our Facebook page!

If you have not yet watched a Facebook service, or don't know how, locate Facebook on your phone, tablet or computer, search for First Presbyterian Church of Burlington, Iowa, and then sit back and enjoy. The weekly bulletin is being provided via e-mail so you can follow along and take part as you wish. Comments are appreciated.





# August 2025



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>Office Hours</b> M-W-F 1:30pm-4:30pm T-Th 9:00am-1:00pm					1	2
<b>3 8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship	4 	5	<b>6 8:30am Bible Study</b> Mission Mtg@noon <u>KnitWits</u> meets @ 10am Civil Rights Training (Food Pantry) @ 1:30pm  <u>Table 4 One</u> meets @ 5:30pm @ Sue Gilchrist's home.	<b>7 Session Meets @ 1pm</b>	8	9
<b>10 9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00a.m.Worship 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday Luncheon	11	12	<b>13 8:30am Bible Study</b>	14 	15	16
<div> <div> </div> <div> Wendy out of office on Vacation @ Disney World Aug. 10-16 </div> <div> </div> </div>						
<b>17 10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship Deacon's mtg.	18  Wendy returns to the office	19	<b>20 8:30 am Bible Study</b> Yum Yums! @ Mei's China Palace in Mt. Pleasant, IA @ 5:30pm; Carpool meets @ Fareway @ 5pm	<b>21 Farmer's Market @ the Church</b> 4:30-6pm  Deadline For Connections	22	23 
<b>24 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> Worship in the Park! 10:00 a.m. Worship @ Crapo Park Sack lunch provided by the Deacons!	25 	26	27 8:30am Bible Study  <u>Shepherd's Table</u> 4:30pm-6pm	28	29	30
<b>31 12<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship						