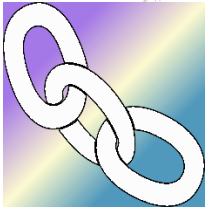


First Presbyterian Church

321 N. 5th St., Burlington, IA 52601, 319-752-6626

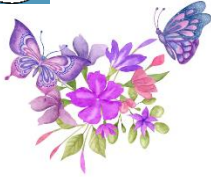
1stpresb@1stpresb.org

www.1stpresb.org



Connections

May 2025



Pastor's Thoughts

“Is That All There Is?” What comes next after Easter

In 1969 Peggy Lee, an American singer, recorded a song entitled, “Is That All There Is?” It reached #11 on Billboard. At the time, I struggled with the song as it seemed like she was intoning the spirit of a Debbie Downer. The singer didn't sing, but spoke the song. At the time it seemed to resonate with the people.

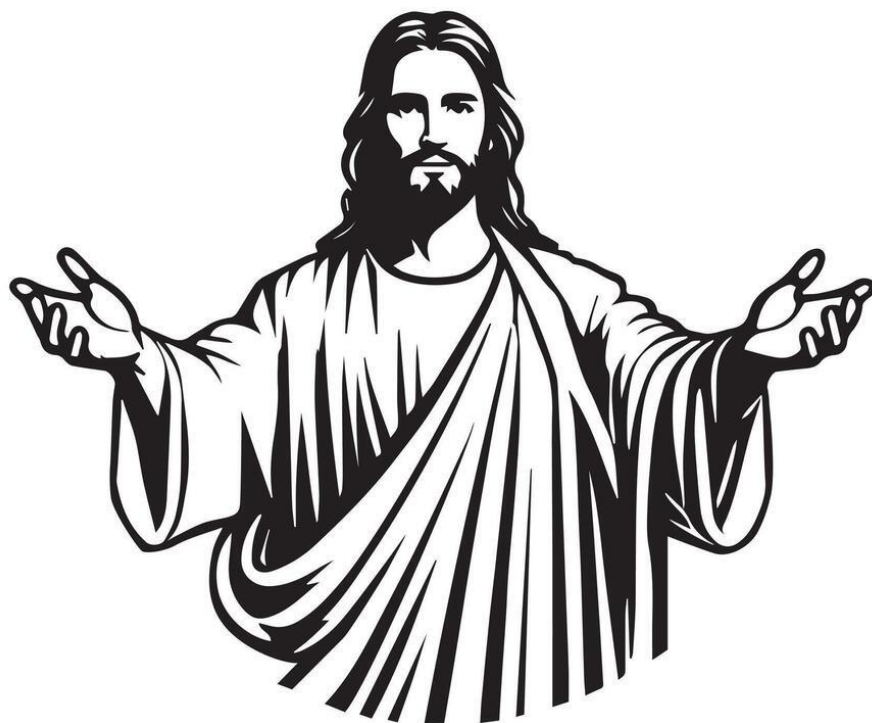
The lyrics of this song are written from the point of view of a person who is disillusioned with events in life that are supposedly unique experiences. The singer tells of witnessing her family's house on fire when she was a little girl, seeing the circus, and falling in love for the first time. After each recital, “let's break out the booze and have a ball—if that's all there is,” instead of worrying about life. She explains that she'll never kill herself either because she knows that death will be a disappointment as well. Is that all there is?

Easter has come and gone, and I assume there are those who might be saying, “Is that all there is?” We've been to the top of the mountain and felt the exhilaration of the celebration, where can we possibly go from here? In the weeks after the resurrection, the disciples weren't sure what was coming next. The disciples appear to have gone their own ways. The brothers Zebedee returned to their boats on the Sea of Galilee and were fishing. People were spending time just trying to figure out where it all went.

But Jesus' return to affirm he had kept God's promise of being raised from the dead began to serve notice that, that was not the end of the story. In fact, for the disciples this was the prologue to a vibrantly rich and exciting ministry of going out into the world further than they had ever ventured and sharing the greatest story to ever be told. Fifty days after Easter comes Pentecost, and with that the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. They were on the verge of changing the world forever.

It's 2100 years later and we have a phenomenal opportunity to change the world in and for Jesus Christ. It is our time to share the greatest story ever and to be in awe of how God transforms lives, families, communities, nations. There is nothing new under the sun. No improved model. Jesus and the message of life, hope, renewal is as fresh today as it has always been. The ingredient in this recipe is us.

Do we feel the excitement and energy and power of the gospel? Do we feel motivated to bring the world to Jesus Christ? This isn't about us, but the one who came back from the dead and lives among us and will remain with us forever.



Last Element of Mission Statement

The fourth and final element of our Mission Statement is “Empowered to Go.” Jesus never anticipated that upon coming to faith in him, we would sit around tables in classroom and Fellowship Hall and just talk about how good it feels to be saved. You might recall that following his resurrection in the gospel of Matthew, he took his disciples out of the city of Jerusalem onto a mountain, and had them look as far as they could in all directions, and told them to go out into all the nations. No more mourning his death, but celebrating his life; no more fear of reprisal, but having confidence to share the Good News to one and all. The last element of our Mission Statement reflects this sentiment and spirit.

From everything shared in the three preceding sections, it is a reasonable conclusion that we empower one another to go out into the world, to leave the security of our sanctuaries and take Jesus Christ to those places where we can teach, share, witness, testify and care. We are to go to the young, middle aged, and elderly. We are to meet with the rich and poor, males and females. People of diverse cultures, colors, creeds and orientations. We are to go where God’s people are and meet them in their state of being and need.

Being one who serves is a part of what it means to be a Christ-follower. God wants us to, through the empowerment of His Holy Spirit, follow His command from Isaiah 1:17, “Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.” We are called to serve not only the people we see in our daily lives but look for opportunities to serve the oppressed, orphaned, widows, and seek the cause of justice whenever we have the chance. All of this starts with inviting God into our days and asking Him to be our strength when we feel weak.

Let me remind you of the Lost Sheep parable Jesus told. The Good Shepherd’s concern was not for the 99 who were safe and secure, but for the 1 that was out in the world lost and alone. The Good Shepherd did not discount that single sheep as worthless or an “acceptable loss” and stay in the barn with the 99. He went out because that one sheep had value and a place in the flock. This is echoed in the Old Testament in Leviticus 19:34: “The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”

Our goal is to develop within our church members the confidence and courage to go out and seek the lost and broken, those in darkness.



Empower to go

May Sermon

“Our Role as Prophets”

This Month of May will provide us an opportunity to learn what the Judeo-Christian tradition of prophecy is, both from what it has been and what it means for today. We often think of prophets as people like Elijah who was empowered by God to perform miracles. But that is not the case. In our faith tradition, prophets see the world from God's perspective. Prophets speak God's truth, often at great risks to themselves. In the spirit of Isaiah, Jesus reminds us that we are called to speak the truth with love, but always speak the truth.

The great 20th century rabbi, Abraham Herschel, wrote: “The prophet is an iconoclast, challenging the apparently holy, revered, and awesome. Beliefs cherished as certainties, institutions endowed with supreme sanctity, the prophet exposes the scandalous pretensions.” In other words, a prophet is always in trouble with authority. Take Jeremiah, for example. He had many powerful enemies in the Judean aristocracy and the Levitical priesthood. We know he survived at least one assassination attempt. The bottom line is, if someone claims to be a prophet but no trouble comes their way, they're probably not a prophet. They're not directly challenging people in power. Instead, they've surrounded themselves with like-minded people.

Even in the middle of harshly condemning political or religious authorities, all prophets take time to speak about the goodness and holiness of God. It is through Jeremiah that that God declares: “I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God, and they shall be my people ... everyone, from the least to the greatest, shall know me.” (Jer. 31:33, 34) Jesus instructs us to speak in the light what we hear in the dark. But if we only speak in anger without expressing the joy of the gospel, that is a form of truth-telling that is better defined as protest and falls abysmally short of prophecy.

So the question we will wrestle with in May is, how often will we advocate for raising up marginalized groups and call the mighty to accountability? Do we do it only when we have nothing to lose? How far are we willing to go for God? How far are we willing to go in upsetting the powerful? How far are we willing to go for those who are loved by no one else? And equally important, how do we do it and what words do we use? Come each week and help me wrestle with what it means to be prophetic.

May 4th Communion
Texts: Micah 6:1-8
 Matthew 19:16-22
Title: Taking The Leap of Faith”
Video: “In Here, Out There”

May 11th

Text: Jeremiah 1:4-19

Title: "I Have Put My Words in Your Mouth"

Video: "A Day in the Life"

May 18th

Rev. Randy Webster, Preaching

Text: Ephesians 4:1-16

Title: "Speaking the Truth With Love"

Video: "Never Walk Alone"

May 25th

Special Congregational Meeting

Texts: II Samuel 12:1-14

Title: "The King Exposed"

Video: "Walking In Step With God"

June 1st

Communion

Text: John 8:21-32

Title: "The Truth Shall Set you Free"

Video: "Hey Church"



Courageous Outreach

On behalf of the Silver Singers, we wish to thank the congregation of First Presbyterian Church for opening their Fellowship Hall to us for our presentation "It might as well be Spring" on Saturday, April 12. Your kindness to us will long be remembered.

Randy Webster, Music Director

On behalf of the Burlington Chapter of the Southeast Iowa Symphony, we wish to thank First Presbyterian Church for opening your Fellowship Hall to us to serve dinner to the members of the orchestra before their concert on Saturday, April 26. Blessings to you all.

Randy Webster, Board member

*thank
you*

A Birthday Party for Mrs. Shirley Webster

The pleasure of your company is requested to help celebrate the Ninety-First Birthday of Mrs. Shirley Webster!

When: Sunday, May 18 from 2pm-4pm

Where: The Community Room at Oak View
1212 Indian Hills Dr.
Burlington, IA



No gifts please!



Second Sunday Lunch

Second Sunday Lunch

Sunday, May 11, following morning service!

A Mother's Day Brunch

The luncheon is free and your gracious financial gifts help to offset the costs.



Scholarships

Reminder that we have Scholarships available through the church! If you have a student that is graduating, either this year or next year, or a college student, please stop in the office and pick up a scholarship application! We have 2 types of applications being offered. Traditional, for your traditional College or University, and Non-Traditional, for trade school.

s c h o l a r s h i p



Snake Alley Criterium Route

Be advised: Know that First Presbyterian Church sits right in the middle of Snake Alley Criterium route, planned for Saturday, May 24, before making plans to come to the church that day!



Sunday School



After taking the Fall off, Youth Sunday School has resumed classes! We will meet at 9:00am on Sunday mornings. All classes will be held downstairs in the youth rooms! Join us for some fun and learn all about Jesus!



Adult Education

The Adult Sunday Morning class, which meets in Edwards Chapel at 9:00 a.m., is beginning a new series of lessons entitled “The Big Ten.” No, it is not a study of the Big Ten Athletic Conference, which means we will not be talking about Hawkeye football, basketball or anything else. We’re going to look at the Ten Commandments.

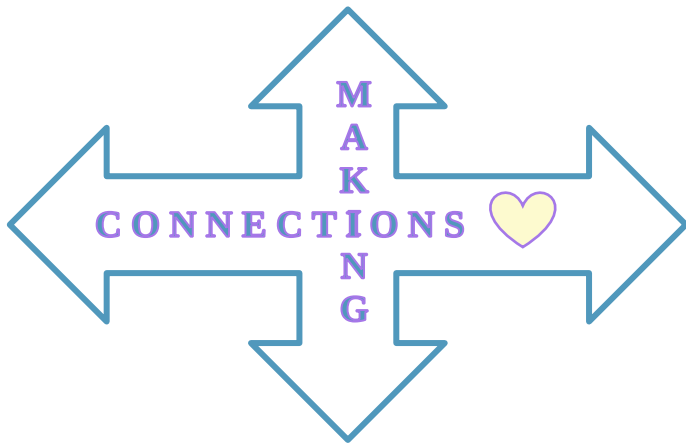
Author Ron Lavin, an ordained Lutheran Pastor, says, “The Ten Commandments are both in and out of the news these days. They are in the news because there are significant voices calling for them to be posted in classrooms and courtrooms. When Our nation faces the challenge of internal moral decline or external terrorist attacks, some people look to the Ten Commandments to point the way to national security. How effective (or constitutional) this suggested remedy might be, remains open to lively debate.

On the other hand, there are voices saying the Ten Commandments are irrelevant in today’s world. With the denial of the existence of any absolute truth or moral standards, the Ten Commandments seem to be little more than an artifact of an ancient patriarchal society. In a culture that emphasizes personal choice based almost exclusively on personal values and needs, God-given structures sometimes seem too restrictive.”

Our study will take another view. We will be working from the premise that the Ten Commandments continue to provide both significant prohibitions and helpful invitations for living a moral and godly life in the twenty-first century. We say that a person is a ten, we mean that they are exceptional. When we say that a program is a ten, we mean that it is exceptional. The Ten Commandments are intended to convey that God’s Law is not only exceptional, but excellent in every way.

I hope you will choose to spend this hour with us each week and develop a new appreciation and respect for the Ten Commandments. There is an empty seat waiting just for you.





HAPPY BIRTHDAY

May Birthdays

- 11 - Eric Nalley
- 12 - Sue Sattler
- 14 - Sue Gilchrist
- 17 - Bret Stensland
- 18 - Henry & Lily Nalley
- 18 - Shirley Webster
- 19 - Pat Whitmore
- 22 - Lauren Haller
- 24 - Vicki Johnson
- 26 - Jill Mehaffy-Nalley
- 27 - Millie Comiskey
- 27 - John Lyday

2nd Sunday Luncheon

Sunday, May 11,
following morning service!

"A Mother's Day Brunch"

Please Join Us!

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



Table for One

Our March event will be held Wednesday, 5/7 @ 5:30p.m. @ Marcia Stiefel's home @ 212 Crestview Dr. Burlington, IA

Yum-Yums

News from Yum Yums. A group of 19 church members and friends enjoyed good food and fellowship at Caulley's Shamrock at 609 S. Main St. Burlington, IA on Wednesday, April 16. Those attending, chose to go to Fort Colony Inn @ 5109 Ave. O. Ft. Madison, IA on Wednesday, May 21 @ 5:30pm. We will meet at Fareway for carpool @ 5:00pm. If you have any questions, call or text Sandy Russell @ 319-572-6124



[Our Magnolia Tree is Blooming!](#)

If you haven't noticed, our little Magnolia Tree in the side yard has bloomed!
Thank you to Doyle Ruble for submitting this photo!



Spring Clean up

Thank you to our volunteers who showed up on Monday, April 28 to help with spring cleaning! A lot was accomplished! Below is a few photos that were taken. A few volunteers not shown, but were also present were: Terri & Jordan Huddleston, Doyle Ruble, Carol Brotherson, & Matt Murray.



Spring clean up volunteers. Left to right: Francis McAllister, Kevin Eibes, Marcia Stiefel, Pat Saldeen, Brenda Fredericks, & Pat Whitmore



Spring clean up volunteers. Left to right: Cheryl Lotz, Sue Gilchrist, Christine Henderson, & Curtis Blom

Celebrating Ruth Francis

Below is an article, written by Ruth Francis' daughter, Allison, out of the April booklet from Southeast Iowa Symphony Orchestra. Ruth Francis is celebrating 50 years of being a member of the Southeast Iowa Symphony Orchestra!

Congratulations, Ruth!

50-year Member of SEISO: Celebrating Ruth Francis

This year marks 50 years that my mom has played cello in the Southeast Iowa Symphony Orchestra. Half a century. It's hard to wrap my head around that kind of dedication—rehearsals, performances, loading and unloading the cello a thousand times—but she's done it with joy. She loves this orchestra. She loves the music, the people, the energy of concert weekends.

She's missed very few performances over the years, and I can say with certainty that this group has been one of the great constants in her life. It's more than a hobby or an obligation—it's something she truly treasures.

I've watched her commitment firsthand. I've seen her squeeze in practice after long days, drive through Iowa winters to get to rehearsals, and light up when she talks about upcoming concerts.

I just want to take a moment here to say how proud I am of her. Thank you to the SEISO community for being such an important part of her world all these years. And Mom—congratulations on 50 years. That's something truly special.

written by Ruth's daughter, Allison Francis



Right: Ruth at our Masterworks 2 concert on 9 March 2025 at the Chapel Auditorium in Mt. Pleasant.
Photo by Isaac Campbell

Left: Ruth circa 1982.



Submitted by Pat Whitmore

Messages from the Deacons

The Deacons continue to pray for individuals of our church family. We are committed to pray for everyone in the year of 2025.

Please contact any Deacon if you have a need. We will try to help!





A Thank You from Rhonda Rossman UIHC
SFCH Level 11

Dear Friends @ 1st Presbyterian Church,

Thank you so much for your continued support
for the children on Level 11 @ Steadfast
Children's Hospital!

The gifts are thoughtful & fun. The children
really enjoy them!

Sincerely,
Rhonda Rossman
& your friends on L11!

A Thank You from Community Action
Neighborhood Center

We want to send our sincerest gratitude for
your generous food donation to our Food
Pantry! It has helped the pantry
tremendously and we appreciate it very
much! Thank You!

With Gratitude,
Your Community Action
Neighborhood Center Family,
Kim, Shelby, Stacy, Pat, and Tom.

A Thank You from a Prayer Shawl recipient.

Dear Friends,

I count you as friends, even though we are not
acquainted.

Thank you so much for the beautiful handmade
stole(prayer shawl). It warms my heart. Such a
loving gesture at a time when I was feeling
sadness.

Thank you again,
Sylvia R.

A Thank you from Marcia Bailey

I wanted to thank church friends for all the
prayers, cards, calls, and visits during the
last 5 months. I was released on Saturday,
April 19 and am hoping to return to a more
normal life soon.

Thanks Again,
Marcia Bailey

KNITWITS

The Knitwits will meet at the church, May 7, 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. May 6 next meeting.

A Big Thank You to all that gave towards the treasure chest collection! The children in Iowa City University Steadfast Children's Hospital love receiving a monthly box from their 1st Presbyterian friends after a treatment! So, please continue to give to this great mission!

\$45 was collected and a few toys & books during the all church birthday party.

In Love & Friendship,

The Mission Team



MISSION COMMITTEE OUTREACH TO THE COMMUNITY

The Mission of our Church is to **Engage with the lost; Establish in faith; Equip to serve; and Empower to go.** The Church Mission Committee strive to carry out the Mission of the Church and each year reach out to the Southeast Iowa Regional Hospice House; the Burlington Fire Department and/or the Police Department and provide a meal.

This year, on May 21st, the Mission Committee plan to prepare a Noon meal for members of the Burlington Police Department. Of course, the efforts of the Mission Committee are not carried out alone and help is always sought from the congregation.

Your help is sought and if you can help us, it would be greatly appreciated! In the Church Sanctuary there will be a sign-up sheet of what we plan to serve. In addition, there will be a Gratitude Card which will go along with the meal. We hope you will sign the card showing our Gratitude for the efforts of the Burlington Police Force and staff who strive to keep our Burlington Community safe.



Shepherd's Table Menu

Shepherd's Table is on the last Wednesday of the month from 4:30pm-6:00pm hosted by First Congregational Church & First Presbyterian Church at 313 N. 4th St. Burlington, IA. This is a free meal.

Below is the menu for May-July 2025!

Red-Presbyterians
Blue-Congregationalists



May 28-
Pulled Pork/buns
Coleslaw
Chips
Fresh Fruit
Dessert

June 25-
Beans and franks
Dessert
Cornbread
Pasta Salad

July 30-
Spaghetti
Garlic Bread
Fresh Salad
Dessert

Announcements!

A decorative graphic featuring a variety of colorful flowers in shades of pink, yellow, purple, and blue, interspersed with several butterflies in various colors like blue, orange, and white. The flowers and butterflies are arranged in a somewhat circular, cascading pattern.

The office will be closed on Monday, May 26 in observance of Memorial Day. Normal office hours will resume on Tuesday, May 27.

We are cleaning out the plants! If you would like a plant, please take one home with you! They are located on a couple tables in the Fellowship Hall.

We have an abundance of tupperware and casserole dishes that have been left here at the church over the last few years. They are on the back table in the Fellowship Hall. Please take a look to see if any belong to you!

Second Sunday Luncheon will be “A Mother’s Day Brunch” on Sunday, May 11!

Mrs. Shirley Webster’s 91st Birthday Party on Sunday, May 18 from 2-4pm in the Community Room at Oak View. No gifts please.

The Mission Committee would like volunteers to help with the noon meal for the Burlington Police Department on Wednesday, May 21. A sign up sheet will be available in the Sanctuary. Please see article for more information.

Snake Alley Criterium is scheduled for Saturday, May 24. Be advised, roads to the church will be closed off for the race. Friday, May 23 is also Friday night Twilight Criterium. Some roads may also be blocked off for this race too.

Farmer’s Market at the Church on Thursday, May 15 from 4:30pm-6pm. If you know someone that is struggling and in need of a bag of food, please send them down!

Shepherd’s Table on Wednesday, May 28 from 4:30pm-6pm at First Congregational Church. This is a free meal and open to the public.

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.





May 2025



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Office Hours M-W-F 1:30 pm-4:30pm T-Th 9:00am-1:00pm				1 Session Meets @ 1pm	2 	3
4 3rd Sunday of Easter 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship	5 	6 Mission Mtg @ 12pm	7 8:30 a.m. Bible Study KnitWits meets @ 10am Table 4 One meets @ 5:30pm @ Marcia Stiefel's home.	8	9	10
11 4th Sunday of Easter 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00a.m.Worship 2nd Sunday Luncheon 	12	13	14 8:30 a.m. Bible Study	15 Farmer's Market @ the Church 4:30-6pm	16 	17
18 5th Sunday of Easter 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship Deacon's Mtg. Mrs. Shirley Webster's 91st Birthday Party 2-4pm @ OakView	19	20 Deadline For Connections	21 8:30 a.m. Bible Study <i>Noon meal for Burlington Police Department</i> Yum Yums! @ 5:30pm @ Fort Colony Inn, Ft. Madison, IA. Carpool @ Fareway @ 5pm.	22 	23 Friday Night Twilight Criterium	24 Snake Alley Criterium
25 6th Sunday of Easter 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship Special Congregational Meeting	26 	27 Trustee's Mtg. @ 10 am	28 8:30 a.m. Bible Study Shepherd's Table 4:30pm-6pm	29	30	31