

December 2023

# NEWS AT FIRST

*Our Mission: To make known the love of God through Jesus Christ.*

*Our Vision: We are empowered to live out our faith in daily life.*

## Celebrate the Light

Bursting through December nights  
that could be long and cold,  
our Christmas lights bring warmth and joy  
with colors soft or bold.

Cascading from the rooftops,  
and from trees both small and tall,  
the lights cry out, "We have good news!  
We want to shout to all.

"You've seen the darkness earth can hold,  
the sorrow, war and fear;  
but God has sent his Son for all,  
to show his Love is here.

"The darkness can't put out God's Light.  
Christ's with us day by day,  
illuminating paths so we  
can follow in his way."

Light homes and streets and candles.  
Make your world shine clear and bright.  
God's love surrounds and blesses us.  
Come, celebrate God's Light!

—Peggy Ferrell

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How do we get ready for Christmas besides all the decorating, gift buying, festive celebrating, and baking? How do we get ready to celebrate the birth of Christ and not just as some historical event that took place long ago and far away?

How do we get ready to celebrate the Christmas that comes to overwhelm our hearts and minds anew with the fullness of God's love for us and all people?

Part of getting ready for me has been finding poetry to read and meditate on. One of my favorites is Ann Weems (a St Louisian). I read her poems and write my thoughts and feelings on the page. Her words seem to invoke a lot in me. She helps me to see the world around me in a very real way but also invites me into a sacred space where the spirit of love dwells.

I share one of her poems from her book *Kneeling in Bethlehem* with you with the hope it helps as you get ready for Christmas.

Donna and I wish you the fullness of God's love, joy and peace as you celebrate this Christmas season.

-Pastor Bill



### **In Search of Our Kneeling Places**

By Ann Weems / from *Kneeling in Bethlehem*

In each heart lies a Bethlehem  
An inn where we must ultimately answer  
Whether there is room or not.

When we are Bethlehem-bound  
We experience our own advent in his

When we are Bethlehem-bound  
We can no longer look the other way conveniently  
not seeing stars  
not hearing angel voices.

We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily  
tending our sheep or our kingdoms.

This Advent let's go to Bethlehem  
And see this thing that the Lord has made known to us

In the midst of shopping sprees  
Let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.

Through the tinsel  
Let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.

In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,  
Let's listen for the brush of angels' wings.

This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem  
And find our kneeling places.

### **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

211 W 1st St Monticello, IA 52310

Worship ~ Sundays 10:00 a.m.

Youth Sunday School 8:30 a.m..

Fellowship 9:30 a.m.

Facebook: @MonticelloFPC

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#### **Pastor**

**Bill Warhover**

cell 319-202-4977

[pastor@fpcmonticello.org](mailto:pastor@fpcmonticello.org)

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#### **Office Administrator**

**Mackenzie Kahler**

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#### **Treasurer**

**Dan Saunders**

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING 2023



Let us raise our voices and go Christmas caroling! On **Wednesday, December 6th**, we will meet at the church at **5:30 p.m.** We will visit the local assisted living and nursing rehabilitation facilities, as well as some of our homebound members. Bring your voices and your appetite, as pizza and cookies will be furnished afterwards. If you have any questions, call Larry Lamont, home phone 563-926-2913 or cell 563-212-4361. All are welcome. See you there!



Plan to join us for the **2023 Sunday School Children's Program: Christmas Nativity Play for Children** Sunday, *December 10th* during our 10 am worship service.

PreK-HS Youth Sunday school classes will have their **final class** for the year on **Sunday, December 10**. Classes will **resume Sunday, January 7**.

### CONFIRMATION

There will be **NO confirmation classes** December 20, 27, or January 3. Classes will resume January 10. Happy Holidays!

**WORSHIP WITH US THIS Christmas**

With Christmas Eve on a Sunday this year, First Presbyterian Church will hold two services:  
Sunday morning worship, 10 am  
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 6 pm

**DECEMBER 24 at 10:00 am & 6:00pm**  
211 W 1st St | Monticello, IA 52310

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
Find us on @monticellofpc.facebook

## Care & Share



It's *Christmas Care and Share Program* time. The deacons have adopted 5 families this year, with a total of 8 children. The Care & Share tree is now up in the overflow room and waiting for our generous members to select a tag, or two, to shop for. Monetary donations will be accepted as well. Items and monetary donations should be turned in by Monday, December 11th. The deacons will meet Wednesday, December 13th to finalize our givings. Thank you for your generosity in supporting our community!

### FILL THE CHURCH WITH CHRISTMAS SPIRIT!

**Provide a poinsettia** in memory or honor of a loved one to help us decorate the sanctuary. Poinsettias should be brought or delivered to the sanctuary the week leading up to Christmas.

*Please note: when you sign up to provide a poinsettia, please arrange to purchase it and bring it or have it delivered to the church. We do not arrange for the purchase of the plants.*

If you choose to provide a poinsettia, please notify the church office of your donation, as well as who you are donating it in honor of, so memorials can be included in our Christmas Eve service bulletin, and newsletter. Call 319-465-3393 or email [office@fpcmonticello.org](mailto:office@fpcmonticello.org). Thank you!



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### CHURCH OFFICE





Church offices will be **CLOSED Sunday, December 24 through Monday, January 1** in observance of the Christmas and New Year holidays. If you have anything you would like submitted to the January newsletter, please note the deadline of *December 15* to ensure it is completed before the holiday closure. As always, if you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Pastor Bill at 319-202-4977. Happy Holidays!

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## For Kids and Parents

Often times children need help in expressing, in healthy ways, what they are feeling. Sometimes parents, grandparents and caring adults need help in understanding ways to help children not only in expressing those feelings but offering reassurances that the child is loved and cared about in the midst of those feelings.

After the death of Aaron McAtee, Pastor Bill met with Monticello Library Librarian Penny Schmit who put together a list of books (some children's book and some adult books) to help us all help the children in our lives.

	649 Col	Parenting through crisis: helping kids in
	649 MAT	Imperfect parenting: how to build a relationship with your child
	DAY ANI JOH	Goodnight already!
	E ALB	A little spot of Sadness

You can access Penny's list by going to: <https://monticello.bibliionix.com/catalog/>. Under the What's Hot banner click on Booklists. Scroll down the list until you come to Social and Emotional and click on that list. Once in the list you can click on any of the books to find out more about the book.

Not computer savvy? Just stop by the library and talk with the librarian who can help you access the list and the books. Be sure to tell Penny thanks for all her work if you see her!



If you would like to request a pastoral visit due to being homebound, or recovering from an ailment at home, in the hospital or a rehabilitation facility (and you are able to have visitors according to facility policy), please contact the church office to arrange a visit. Oftentimes the pastor is not aware that a visit is desired until after the opportunity has passed. Call the church office at 319-465-3393, or contact Pastor Gary directly, to request your pastoral care visit.

## Thanks for Helping Out (Everyone)! {Hospitality}

It takes all of us pitching in to make the church not only work, but work in the way it was intended.

*"Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people!"*

*-1Cor 12:7 The Message*

Hospitality is something we can all do. It is not something you have to sign up for or schedule but it something that should always be on our mind whenever and where ever we are at. Hospitality is the gift of making people feel welcomed and putting them at ease. Hospitality is about letting a visitor know where the bathrooms are or that their children are welcomed in worship. Hospitality is about helping the newcomer know how things work so that they feel included in things with out feeling embarrassed. Hospitality is about remembering that we too are often the visitor or newcomer who needs help too.

In the season of Christmas when friends, family, or strangers might visit our home or us here at church let us all be practicing the gift and the art of making all feel welcomed and cared about.

**Thanks for your support!** You make the mission and ministry at First Presbyterian Church happen. You are the reason we can pay for children and youth to attend Camp Bear Creek (formerly Camp Wyoming). You make sure we can support the Food Pantry. You provide for our worship, Sunday Schools, and youth programs. Through your giving, you ensure that First Presbyterian Church continues to demonstrate the love of God in this community. Thank you!

As you consider your **end of year giving please consider directing a part of that giving to First Presbyterian Church** so we can continue to do good things in this community to the glory of God.

Thank You!



This month, we've included an envelope for our annual Christmas Joy Special Offering, which is collected during the Advent season. Please consider donating to this cause to support past, present and future leaders within the Presbyterian Church (USA). Offering envelopes can be dropped in the regular offering plate, mailed to the church, or dropped off to the church office. Thank you!

### FOOD PANTRY

REMINDER: As the cold weather approaches, the Monticello Food Pantry will be closed if the Monticello Schools are closed due to weather.

The Monticello Food Pantry will be closed **Monday, December 25** (and Monday, January 1) in observance of the holidays.

OPEN : Fridays, December 22nd & 29th

If you are able to give to our community in need this holiday season, food pantry needs are included below. Thank you for your continued support!

**Canned fruit, canned chicken, ketchup, dry soup mixes, body wash, and shampoo.**



Presbyterian Pie Committee is asking for your cooperation this holiday season by placing your pie order *early*. They will do their best to accommodate all orders, and ask for your patience at this time. Thank you!

To place your order or check freezer stock, call:

**Pam (319-480-7700) or Kris (319-480-1538).**



The family of  
**JOHN READE**

The family of  
**THOMAS BOHLKEN**  
(UNCLE OF LINDSAY RYAN)

The family of  
**AARON MCATEE**

The family of  
**LOIS PAULSON**

The family of  
**AJ GOLDSMITH**  
(SON OF LOCAL DEACON ED &  
CONNIE GOLDSMITH)

The family of  
**SANDRA STEPHEN**

**Betty Lambert**  
**Doug Mettler**  
Pennington Square

- **Lorraine Haag**
- **Frank Smith**

Monticello Nursing  
• **Marj Stubbe**

Anamosa Care Center  
• **Barb Null**

Dear First Presbyterian Church and Scholarship Committee,  
I am so grateful to again be a blessed recipient of the Dale L. Streif Memorial Scholarship. I have found my first semester at Coe College very fulfilling, and having this scholarship to lighten the load of my tuition costs is extremely helpful. I thank both the scholarship committee and the First Presbyterian Church as a whole for awarding me with the Dale L. Streif Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is bolstering my continued pursuit of my bachelor's degree in computer science, and I am grateful.

Sincerely,  
Rease Saunders



The Christian Ed Committee is very happy to share that they made **\$1170.00** dollars at the Camp & Conference Baked Potato Bar Fundraiser.

Thank you to everyone that contributed and participated in this event!



Each week, we'd like to include a couple of church families on our Family Prayer list. For the month of December, please remember to include in your prayers each week our December families:

December 3: Robyn Takes and David & JoAnn Warner

December 10: Jared, Bobby, Carter & Reagan Willms and Tom & Diane Yeoman

December 17: Betty Yount and Lisa & Mick Adams

December 24: Helen Alden and Jim & Karen Anderson



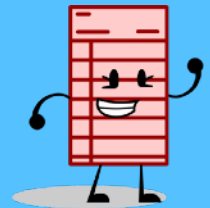
## Session Summary - November 8, 2023

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- Welcome new members Sarah Bone and Amy Gilkerson who reaffirmed their faith, Kennedy Bone who was baptized, and Pastor Bill Warhover who was installed as our called pastor, Sunday, October 29.
- Newsletter deadline will be the 15th for the months of November and December to account for the holidays.
- Working on the 2024 budget.
- End of Year Giving: please get your gifts in for the end of year.
- Annual reports coming due for the annual meeting, reminder to committee chairs.
- Camp Wyoming is now Camp Bear Creek.
- Building (Don)-Furnace heater coil ruptured and leaked all over—trying to find a reasonably priced replacement coil. When had last rain, another leak was discovered. Don trying to figure out where it is coming in and more sealing to fix.
- Confirmation going well with 6 students. Making calls to homebound.

### ATTENDANCE:

Week of:	Worship	Sunday School
Oct 29	64	9
Nov 5	79	13
Nov 12	53	8
Nov 19	53	13
Nov 26	41	10



### OFFERING & FINANCIALS

**Thank you** to those that have been giving and generous to the church. We thank you for your contribution. Every little bit helps.

October 2023 Contributions \$23,087.33  
(October 2022 \$19,275.79)

October 2023 Expenditures \$22,027.54  
(October 2022 \$15,275.89)

