
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.*



The Extraordinary Amid the Ordinary

A violinist once performed in the New York City subway, entertaining passersby for 45 minutes. A few tossed him cash, totaling about \$30 by the time he concluded.

Little did anyone know, Joshua Bell was one of the world's best violinists. That day, he played one of the most complex musical pieces ever written on an instrument worth \$3.5 million. Indeed, a few days earlier Bell had performed a sold-out concert in Boston, where tickets averaged \$100.

Sometimes God does extraordinary things right in the middle of our ordinary lives, yet we don't notice. You're offered an opportunity you almost pass up, thinking it's not worth your time or effort. But upon taking part, you find it leads to your life's calling. Or someone crosses your path, but overlooking their worth, you brush them aside, missing out on a blessing God had for you through them.

And what about you? Do you undervalue yourself as "nothing special," just an "ordinary" person? Look closer; think again. For an ordinary baby born long ago to an ordinary couple in an ordinary stable in an ordinary town was none other than ... God's Son! And you? Why, you are also an extraordinary child of God!

**FIRST
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CHURCH**

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WORSHIP

SUNDAYS 10 AM
w/ Facebook Live stream

8:30 a.m. Sunday school
9:30 a.m. Fellowship

RESUMES SEPT. 8
See you then!

PASTOR'S Ponderings

Does being at church - in church - matter?

I heard a recent interview in which the interviewer praised a political figure for being willing to address hard questions. This is one of those hard questions because in part the role of the church has changed a lot in recent decades.

In the past the local church was a depository of information and for education about the Christian faith. The local church was the place where you could go to learn about Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, or the Trinity, or what it meant to live as a disciple (follower of Jesus). We had Sunday Schools that were overflowing and sermons that were more theologically centered.

But we no longer need a local church to teach us about Christian faith; that knowledge is as close as our computer, tablet, and phone. We can join podcasts where scriptures are taught and sermons are shared.

So no. We don't need the church for these things, not that they don't have some value.

What the local church is still good at is connections. At our best, we are bringing people together with one another and with God. What the local church is still good at is celebrating life's milestones and accomplishments and holding each other's hand in difficult time. What the local church is still good at is encouraging each other to grow, not just in faith, but in our capacity for finding meaning in life and sharing life with others.

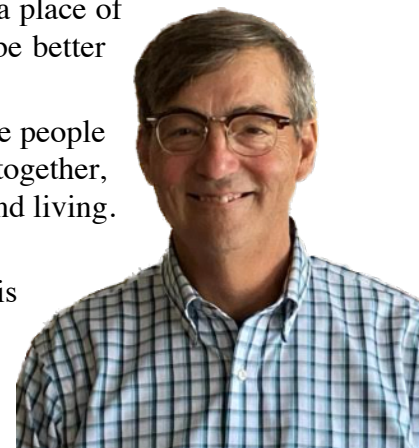
Psychologists are telling us that there is an epidemic of loneliness in the world today. The church is a place where people can connect.

When thinking about being at church, remember that the church is not a place of perfect people but of human beings with all their flaws, just trying to be better and find some encouragement and purpose along the way.

In the Book of Acts, we see a picture of the first Christian Church where people are coming together to figure out how to live like Jesus, sharing meals together, and taking time to make sure each other had what they needed for life and living. This more than anything is why being at church matters.

May we be the kind of church where people are welcomed, life is celebrated, and we find purpose.

Pastor Bill



CORRECTIONS: There were a couple of printed errors in last month’s newsletter.

- The Session members listed in the Questions, Comments, Prayer Requests, were our 2023 Session members. We appreciate their contributions, but there is a new group that should be contacted with this information. See the list in this month’s newsletter for our current 2024 Session member contacts.
- The August financials reported ‘2023/2022’ numbers. While the financial numbers printed were the correct 2024/2023 numbers, the headings were not updated.

We apologize for these errors and any confusion.



Camp Wyoming Presentation!

Join us on **Sunday, September 8, for the 10 am worship**. Campers are invited to share their experience with the congregation. In sharing camper experiences, it encourages our members and reminds our sponsors of the importance of their spiritual and financial support of this ministry: Our Youth!

Please join us.

September is a month of new beginnings. The kids are back to school, college fall term begins, and so do a number of ecumenical education programs, youth ministries, and various bible studies. Join First Presbyterian Church with a fresh start as we resume our schedule starting **Sunday, September 8**. Join us for:

- 8:30 a.m. Sunday school
(3 years old through adult!)
- 9:30 a.m. Fellowship
- 10:00 a.m. Worship



Confirmation will begin in September. Parents and students should plan on attending the Welcome to Confirmation meeting **Wednesday, September 11, at 6:00 pm**, here at FPC.

If you have or know of an 8th or 9th grader who would be interested in joining the confirmation process, please have them contact Pastor Bill at pastor@fpcmonticello.org or **319-202-4977**.

MMA's Community VBS a SUCESS!

The 2nd annual MMA Community VBS had 122 children registered and over 50 volunteer helpers. It was a fun and active week at VBS where we dove deep to learn how God is a friend, who is real, who we can trust, who is forever, and a friend for everyone.

Thanks to all who made the week a success. If you volunteered and showed up, helped with the meal, if you donated food or money, helped decorate or cleaned up THANK YOU.



Presbyterian Church,

Thank you so much for supporting me in this next phase of life. Your generous gift is very appreciated and will be so helpful when I start school this fall! I am so beyond grateful for everything this church has done for me. Again, I can't express my gratitude enough for these scholarships and the opportunities they will give me!

Thanks and God bless, Taylor Gassman



Church offices will be closed, Monday, September 2, 2024, in observance of the Labor Day holiday.

As always, if you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Pastor Bill at 319-202-4977.

Have a safe holiday weekend!

Lift Update

Good progress is being made on the installation of the new lift. Don Smith and his brother Jerry have completed the work of expanding the opening between the Fellowship Hall ceiling and Overflow Room floor. (Thanks guys!) The lift was scheduled to be shipped from the manufacturer in Canada to Access Elevator and Lifts in Des Moines the end of the August. Our hope is that the new lift will be installed by the middle of September.

Thanks for Helping Out, GREETER!

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

One of the jobs we have is that of **greeter**. The greeter arrives 15-20 minutes before Sunday worship to greet people, ‘Good morning! How are you?’ Give them a bulletin, and let them know about things like following worship on the screens or where the bathroom or nursery is (if they are visiting). The greeter closes the doors to the sanctuary at the beginning of worship.

After worship, the greeter opens the doors to sanctuary during the last hymn. As people are leaving, the greeter checks the pews, puts any hymnals or Bibles back in the pew racks, tears out the signed attendances sheets and gives them to Dan Saunders.

This job is filled one Sunday at a time so this commitment is just for the date you sign up on. It can be one person or a group of folks. There are always people around to help if you have questions. If you are interested in being a greeter, sign up on the sign up sheet or contact Mackenzie at office@fpcm Monticello.org.

Thanks for doing your part!

Noisy Coin Offering, Making a Come Back

On **Sunday, September 29**, we will be having a Noisy Coin Offering as a part of worship.

Traditionally Noisy Coin Offerings are where people bring their loose change to contribute to a special cause. In September that cause will be MMA’s (Monticello Ministerial Association) Neighbors Helping Neighbors Fund.

This fund allows MMA to provide financial assistance for individuals and/or families with rent and utility bills, and stranded and transient travelers’ assistance with food, gas, or shelter guided by our Monticello Police Officers. Funds are also used to help pay gas for individuals with medical appointments in Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, or Dubuque and reimburse mental health service for individuals unable afford co-payments or annual deductibles. Last and not least, funds help support the community VBS.

We hope to have these noisy coin offerings on the last Sunday of those months where there five Sundays, so start saving your change!

Food Pantry



The Food Pantry continues to serve the community on Mondays, 5 pm - 7 pm, and Fridays, 2 pm - 4 pm. Donations are taken at this time as well. If you have any extra produce from your late summer/early fall gardens, we would love to share your donation with a family in need. *Please leave your fresh produce donations DURING PANTRY HOURS.* Produce is being left outside of hours and produce is going bad in the heat and we're unable to share with our clients.

Monetary donations are always helpful in allowing us to make purchases at case pricing. Other needs include:

Cold cereals (not Cheerios)

Peanut Butter

Shampoo

Toilet Paper

Deodorant

Laundry detergent

Baby wipes

Tooth brushes

Tooth paste



THANK YOU!! to our Presbyterian Pie Committee for their generous donation of \$6,000 to the General Fund!

If you need a pie, please contact them at the number(s) listed below!

Presbyterian Pie Service

The Presbyterian Pie Service continues to do their work to provide pies to the people of the community.

Call today to place your order for a fresh, oven-ready or thaw-and-serve pie.

To place your order or check freezer stock, call:

Pam (319) 480-7700 or

Kris (319) 480-1538.



Questions, Comments, Prayer Requests?

If you have questions, comments, or special prayer requests, the session would love to hear from you! Oftentimes, these things go unaddressed simply because we are unaware. Please bring your questions, comments, and special prayer requests to a session member, and your feedback will be shared with the committee. Thank you!

Lisa Adams

Vickie Bone

Dan Saunders

Jim Anderson

Sherri Neofotist

Don Smith

Anita Benedict

Kris Read

Jared Willms

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

September 1: Colin, Lindsay, Aisling & Nicky Ryan and Helen & David Sackett.

September 8: Dan, Janie, Rease & Jackson Saunders and Brooke, Brayden, Eli & Amelia Scott.

September 15: Jasper, Eli & Amelia Scott and Parker and Laisee Shakespeare.

September 22: Scott & Barb Slater and Don & Kim Smith.

September 29: Eden Smith and Frank Smith.

Betty Lambert

Doug Mettler

Betty Yount



Lorraine Haag Pennington

Barb Null Anamosa CC

Frank Smith Horizon, Waterloo

Marj Stubbe Corridor, CR

If you would like to request a pastoral visit for any reason, please contact Pastor Bill to arrange. Oftentimes the pastor is not aware that a visit is desired until after the opportunity has passed. Pastor Bill can be reached at **319-202-4977**.

**Pastoral
Care**



August 2024 – Session Report



- A Memorial and Gifts policy was approved. (You can contact the office if you would like a copy.)
- The 2024-25 Confirmation Class Syllabus was approved.
- Session discussed joint service with United Church on August 5. It was a positive event, thanksgiving was expressed for United Church’s hospitality. There was appreciation for the focus on the VBS week. Session expressed being open to doing this in the future.
- There was discussion on bringing back noisy Sunday Offerings.
- CE reported Sunday School teachers are still needed.
- Pastor Bill had Session look at the Ministry Information Form that the church had filled out when it was looking for a pastor to evaluate how things were going.
- Pastor Bill spend a week at Camp Bear Creek as Camp Chaplain and attended the community wide VBS program.
- Pastor Bill will be away on study leave September 15-19.



August 4, UC joint	approx 50
August 11	42
August 18	37
August 25	39

Financial Report-Summary Yr to Date July 31, 2024

By Danny C Saunders, Church Treasurer

Income Budgeted	\$166,656.40
Income Actual	\$91,941.41
% Actual vs Budget	54.41%
Expense Budgeted	\$207,144.52
Expense Actual	\$98,047.31
% Actual vs Budget	47.33%

Checking Balance \$45,849.82



Notes:

- Received the \$55,000 from Streif Foundation account
- Repaid the \$31,162.60 to memorial account we borrowed for Lift downpayment
- Received \$11,402.77 interest from Streif foundation account
- Accepted quote from Church Mutual Insurance. Insurance will be effective August 14, 2024
- We have received the insurance policies for Work Comp and Bldg/Liability
- We have received bills for both insurance policies and checks have been written and sent.
- We will pay Work Comp annual premium Of \$1,003
- Bldg/Liability premium will be paid quarterly as we did for Guide One
- Guide One has been notified that we will not be renewing their policy
- Advised Brotherhood Insurance that we did not accept their quote.
- Paid Camp Bear Creek from Camp & Conference Fund for 7 campers fee of \$3,760
- Camp & Conference account still has \$4,366.80 remaining