

1st Pres



NEWS AND VIEWS



February 2020

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. 1 John 4:7-8,11-12.

Pastor and author Brian McLaren opens his book, *The Great Spiritual Migration*, by asking the reader to imagine they've just purchased a 12 pack of Coke from the store and tucked it in the fridge. Coming in from the heat of the day, you head over to the fridge, anticipating icy refreshment. You pull out a can, crack it open and raise it to your lips - only to find yourself spitting something that tastes like dirty dishwasher into the sink. Shaking your head you pull out another can and this time tentatively take a sip - same thing. The third can comes out, but this time you only sniff at the open top as you recognize a sewage smell. How many more cans do you think you would even try to open?

Now imagine that you call the offices of Coca Cola to complain about your experience, but instead of a sympathetic ear you get a series of questions. Was the can red? Did it have white lettering? Was the box sturdy? Was it the right size to hold the cans properly? And once having determined that cans and boxes were in order, without asking about the taste, the company declared that all was well...thank you for purchasing Coke.

What is important to the essence of a can of

Coke is the taste, not the shape of the box or the color of the can. Just like for a bike, what is important are things like weight, speed, ease of pedaling, not the color of the seat. Which then raises the question, what are the qualities of Christian faith that really matter regardless of packaging?

This actually is a pretty easy question to answer since a quick scan of the gospels will bring you head to head with Jesus' words that the greatest commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind," and the second, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus' whole life was an embodiment of that directive and without exception he related to God and to others in loving, life-giving ways. The early writers in the church, penning epistles to the communities of faith cropping up across the Mediterranean, encouraged one another in practicing that kind of love in their own communities. We have James positing that loving actions towards our brothers and sisters are an essential barometer to the inner recesses of our faith life. The author of First John denotes loving action as the proper response to the actions of a loving God. Paul paints a picture of what love looks like and shares the belief that nothing else we do matters if it is not done in a spirit of love.

As we look across the landscape of churches in our community, we see nearly one hundred different communities of believers.

[Continued on page two]

These pockets of Christians, us included, define themselves by their beliefs, their buildings, the rituals or worship styles, what they embrace or what they oppose - but all of those things have no meaning apart from the quality essential to our faith, the Coke inside the can as it were, the quality of love they embody. As Paul would say, you may have dozens of programs, 100's of small groups, packed pews every Sunday, and offering plates filled to the brim...but without love that is a noisy gong...without out love, it means nothing.

As we move through February, this month of love, let us think about how we live out the love we've

been shown through God in Christ in our own lives. But let us also consider how our congregation might become a "school of love," more closely following in Jesus' path. That people might know that by participating in our community's worship and life together they will, and we will, find ourselves becoming more loving versions of ourselves. That we embody that essential quality of Christian love in all we do and say.

Grace & peace,

Pastor Heather

February Sermon Subjects

February 2 Matthew 5:1-16

The Image of God

In the Beatitudes and the verses following, Jesus' teachings imagine a world turned upside down and blessing being found in the most unlikely of places. When we speak of being made in the image of God - what do we learn about God's essential nature through the experience of Jesus and pronouncements about the kind of light/message that we have been given to shine into the world?

February 9 Matthew 5:17-37

Sin & Salvation

Continuing where we left off in Matthew last week, we hear Jesus expanding an understanding of the law as a means to right relationship, full participation within the good life that God intends for all creation. Sin is understood as that which disrupts or breaks up this community. Salvation is that break repaired.

February 16 Ephesians 2:8-22.

The Church

"Members of the household of God," a structure with Christ as the cornerstone, a body made of many members with Christ as the head. All of these images have been used to describe the nature of the church. Ultimately, as noted in the beginning of this series, the church is a community with a message. It is a message both proclaimed, but also enacted, so the very nature of the church as community is meant to mirror the nature of God.

February 23 Matthew 17:1-9

Transfiguration

Can These Bones Live?

All these weeks of Epiphany we've been shining the light on various facets of the ways Christians grapple to understand and talk about God, God's relationship with the world, and our relationship with one another. But is this just empty consideration? This week we'll look at the some of the challenges the church faces in sharing the good news within a post-modern context. How do we share the transformative power of the gospel with others?



LENT BEGINS MARCH 1st

Lent begins in the wilderness. The Spirit guides Jesus into the wilderness where he comes face to face with temptation and struggle. Yet, in his forty days of fasting, resisting, and wandering, Jesus is shaped and formed for his ministry. Similarly, through the wilderness of Lent, we are invited to surrender to the wild leadings of the Spirit. We rarely enter the wilderness willingly, but hopefully through our wandering we remember who we are and whose we are. The wilderness can become sacred even if it remains dangerous. There is no wilderness space too harsh or threatening for God's love. This Lent, we welcome you to the journey.



Save the Date:

Mardi Gras Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, February 23rd, join us for our Annual Mardi Gras Brunch after worship. The youth will be cooking up a delicious pancake breakfast with bacon, sausages, and fruit. We will take a free will offering which will go toward the youth summer trips. This year the Senior High will grow in Christ, worship, and fellowship at Montreat and the Middle School will be going to Chicago to grow in Christ and serve others through the Chicago DOOR program.

Sunday School

As "The Lord's Prayer" rotation comes to a close this month, the kids have memorized The Lord's Prayer as well as learned how to talk to God in prayer. In the month of February, preschool-fifth grade embark upon a new rotation, "Love is...", the children begin practicing "All You Need is Love" for their end of the month performance, and JR and SR High continue working their way through the Biblical Narrative with Marty. Interested in teaching or helping with Sunday School or other CE events? Contact Andrea at andrea@fpccr.org or 319.201.9684. Remember, God is Love!

Youth Schedule

Youth Group Schedule (JR High @ 6, Dinner all ages @ 7, SR High @ 7:30)

February 2nd Souper Bowl of Caring
February 5th

Discussion: Agape, Philos, Eros, and Storge
February 12th

Discussion: Biblical Human Relations
February 19

6:00 Confirmation
February 20th

Ice Skating! All ages @ 6:00-8:30
February 26th

Discussion: God as Mother, God as Father



Save the Date VBS 2020

June 22nd-June 26th, 5-7PM

We hope your summer plans include joining us for this year's Vacation Bible School! The kids will embark upon a watery adventure around the world, visiting other children to see how they live and how they deal with limited access to safe water. Each day they will journey to a new country: Honduras, Cuba, Mexico, Haiti and Ghana, and hear the stories of children in each country learning the specific clean water needs each country faces. We'll connect the need for physical water with the many stories of the living water of the Spirit and Christ's presence in our lives through Bible study, games, crafts, songs, and mission stories. Make plans now to join us as we come together in a watershed of insight that will grow our faith and our compassion for others.

precipitation rates—including intense precipitation events and flooding. But how much has climate change affected weather events in Iowa? We'll discuss the flooding of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers in 2019 and the future we may expect in Iowa.



The Souper Bowl of Caring is a national movement of youth across the nation working together to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities around the time of the Super Bowl football game. Our youth group will have a Souper Bowl donation station set up in the Fellowship Hall on February 2nd. (You may also donate online, find the link on the Church's Facebook page under events) 100% of donations will go to an organization addressing hunger in the Cedar Rapids community that the youth will choose. Be a part of the change: make the nation's largest weekend of football into the largest weekend of caring!

For more information ask Andrea or a member of the youth group.



Climate Change in Iowa

February 7, 2020 • 11:45-1:00 pm

Featuring **Jerry Schnoor**, Allen S. Henry Chair in Engineering, University of Iowa College of Engineering

RSVP Required by **February 4 (515.279.8715)** \$10 per person (payable at the door)- includes lunch.

Climate change is known to have raised global average temperatures by about 1.6 degrees F and global rainfall rates have also increased. Oceans are warmer, causing more evaporation, while warmer air holds more moisture, causing greater



Adult Mission Trip

Aguada, Puerto Rico

July 12-17 (plus travel days)

On September 20, 2017, life changed for millions of people living in Puerto Rico (PR). That's when Hurricane María, packing winds in excess of 155 miles per hour, slammed into the island. The Category 4 storm left millions homeless, destroyed the island's power grid, and killed thousands. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) currently supports 4 volunteer host sites to provide opportunities to volunteer groups to help the people of Puerto Rico during the long recovery process.

Join Us!

We are putting together a group to travel to Aguada, PR in July. We will fly to San Juan, drive to Aguada, stay in dorm-style accommodations at the First Presbyterian Church, and work to help families rebuild. The work might include painting, debris removal, light carpentry, and door replacement.

We will also have some free time to explore beautiful Puerto Rico!

Total Expenses: Approx. \$1000

Covers: Travel, Lodging & Some Meals

Interested?

contact: Pastor Heather, Lynda Barrow or Martha Wilding for more information or to sign up!

Endowment...

Since its founding in 1847, the mission of First Presbyterian Church of Cedar Rapids has been sustained by the commitment and vision of its members. With the establishment of an operating Endowment years ago, many have chosen to permanently strengthen the Church with gifts to the Endowment, large and small, both unrestricted and restricted.

To recognize and honor individuals who currently include the Church in their estate plan, the Session in 2019 established **The Little Muddy Legacy Society**. The name recognizes the commitment and perseverance of the members of 1867 who built our current stone structure to replace the ruined first building, *Little Muddy*. *Little Muddy* had been built of grout when the brick maker absconded to the Gold Rush in 1849 with the \$400 down payment he received to begin work.

You are invited to join those early members in their fortitude and commitment by becoming a member of **The Little Muddy Legacy Society**. Charter membership will be conferred on individuals who join by December 31, 2020. Examples of qualifying gifts are:

- Establishing a will or trust provision with the Church as a beneficiary
- Making a minimum \$1,000 gift to the 1st Pres Endowment
- Making a minimum \$1,000 gift to the First Presbyterian Church of Cedar Rapids fund at the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation
- Designating the Church as the owner and/or beneficiary of all or a portion of a life insurance policy
- Naming the Church as a beneficiary of all or a portion of a retirement plan
- Establishing a charitable gift annuity with the Church as beneficiary
- Establishing a charitable trust with the Church as a beneficiary
- Making a gift to the Church of real property, with or without retaining a life estate

Questions?
To make a confidential inquiry about **The Little Muddy Legacy Society**, please contact:

Connie Richardson
Endowment Committee Secretary
connie22richardson@yahoo.com
319-541-1204 or
Rev. Heather Hayes
heather@fpccr.org / 319-364-6418

Can These Bones Live?

Gary Connors-Boe is leading sessions exploring some of the theological concepts that are at the heart of who we are as Christians. Using a series of lectures by Robert W. Jenson compiled in the book, *A Theology in Outline*, as a guide, each week will touch on a theological concept such as Jesus & Resurrection, The Image of God, or The Nature of The Church. Discussion will center on how those concepts can be understood within the modern context.

February 2: Image of God

February 9: Sin & Salvation

February 16: The Church

February 23: Can These Bones Live?



Session Notes

December 17, 2019 6:00 P.M.

OPENING & DEVOTIONS: The meeting was called to order by Pastor Hayes at 7:35 p.m. following a Christmas buffet with Elders and spouses at her home. The meeting had been opened with a blessing before dinner by Pastor Hayes.

BUSINESS FROM THE CLERK:

Motions were made, seconded and carried to accept:

- **Minutes of the November 19, 2019 Stated Session**, as submitted.
- **Statistical Report for November, 2019**, as submitted. Total membership: 445. Steve Kossayian noted a 10% month-to-month increase in attendance.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Motion made, seconded and approved** to call a congregational meeting for the election of officers on December 22, 2019.
- **Motion made, seconded and approved** to set the Annual Meeting of the Congregation for January 26, 2020. (Committee annual reports to be submitted by January 5, 2020.)
- **Motion made, seconded and approved** to set Communion to be served on January 5, 2020 by intinction.
- **Motion made, seconded and approved** to set Pastor housing allowance to \$40,000 for 2020.
- **Motion made, seconded and approved** to move Session meetings to the 4th Tuesday of the month for 2020.
- **Motion made, seconded and approved** to empower Building Task Force to move forward with Rinderknecht on Fellowship Hall remodel. (See committee report.)

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance* (Terry Trimpe): Reported that pledges of \$400,000 (updated in Sunday 12/22 bulletin to \$409,055) have been turned in against a preliminary budget of \$470,000. Additionally, we will have added interest expense in 2020. Members who pledged last year but not yet for 2020 represent an \$84,000 potential. A comparison of giving for 2018 (\$517,561) vs 2019 (\$431,000) showed a downward trend. Five top givers had moved or passed away during that time. Terry is drafting a letter to those with outstanding balances

for current year and will provide an update at the December 22 congregational meeting.

Nominating Committee: The slate of officers for 2020 was presented and will be put before the congregation on Sunday, December 22, 2019. Several newcomers nominated for committees are slated to attend a new member class and join the congregation before taking office.

Endowment (Charlie Rohde): Endowment funds are in process of being transferred from Wells Fargo to Hills Bank.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Heather has been endeavoring to take communion to all homebound members during December. Stormy has been setting appointments and managing Heather's visitation schedule; this will continue with Thursdays being designated as a visitation day. A new member class of approximately 7 prospects is being scheduled. New nametags will be introduced on January 5, 2020 and located in the Narthex for easy access from all entrances. FEMA contract workers who were leaving town contributed a gift of food and other items to FPC that they were unable to move. Resources are available to give Christmas gifts to permanent staff. Goals for 2020 include Session leading the congregation in long-range planning for ministries and a 2021 capital campaign.

A motion was made to adjourn at 8:50 p.m. with prayer for space within this Christmas season to embrace God's presence with us.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Caszatt
Clerk of Session

Rev. Heather Hayes
Moderator



February – the month of love...

Here are some books for you to love found in your church library.

The First Love Story: Adam, Eve, and Us

Containing all the humor, insight and wisdom that have endeared Bruce Feiler to million readers, The First Love Story gives us a renewed reason to celebrate Adam and Eve as central figures in our time and reminds us that even the most familiar stories still have the ability to surprise, inspire and guide us today.

Pilgrim at Tinker Creek

For the love of nature and God’s creation Annie Dillard shares a personal narrative of her experience of a one year walk through the beauty of Virginia’s Roanoke Valley. You’ll discover an exhilarating tale of nature and its seasons.

Back to the Well: Women’s Encounters with Jesus in the Gospels

An engaging book that explores six New Testament women and their encounters with Jesus. The book’s evenhanded and accessible scholarship as well as lucid writing style allows readers to consider familiar stories from a new perspective. Book includes questions for reflection and study.



In Case of Inclement Weather

As we get further into the winter months, we’d like to remind you of the church policy concerning closing in case of inclement weather. Our general rule is that the church building will be closed any time the Cedar Rapids Community School District cancels or delays classes.

Since conditions can change quickly, you should be in touch with your committee chair, music director or group leader regarding evening activity cancellations.

We do our best to always have worship services on Sunday, despite the weather. If weather closing is necessary on a Sunday morning, we will announce closures via email, Facebook and through KCRG. As always, we hope that your first consideration is one of personal safety and that you will use your best judgement regarding driving in inclement weather.



The Evening Book Group will meet on **Monday, February 17, 6:30 p.m.**, in the residence of Lois Willhoite, 1650 Koehler Dr NW Unit 241, 393-5857. The book for discussion is *This Tender Land* by William Kent Krueger. In 1932, two orphan brothers, faces at the LinOdie and Albert O’Banion, are the only white coln Indian Training School in a rural area in Minnesota. After a crime is committed, Odie and Albert are forced to flee for their lives, accompanied by two friends, Mose and Emmy. The four of them steal away in a canoe, heading for the mighty Mississippi in search of a new place to call home. This book tells the tale of their adventures on their Journey. All First Pres women and men are invited to join in the discussion.

The Food Group Will meet at **Sushi House** (2665 Edgewood Rd SW) on **February 27 at 6:00 PM**. Reserve your spot by contacting Carolyn or David Horton at **horton6902@msn.com** or **319-396-5369** no later than Monday February 24.



As we move into using the new Realm system to enhance connections within our congregation, you may be wondering - “What can I do in Realm?” Here’s a few things to get you started.

Getting Started With a Login

To access anything in Realm you need your own personal login. Without a login you cannot access any of the data in the realm system. This makes sure that all information about our church and church members is only visible to our members - no one else. If you need help setting up your login or need another invitation to Realm sent to your email, just contact Stormy.

Edit & Update Your Own Information

Change of address, email, phone number? When you log into Realm you can easily update your information (and even your picture) to reflect correct and current information.

Set Your Own Privacy

Realm allows you to manage your privacy settings and the information you share with other people. Don’t want people to know your address? Click a button and make it viewable to staff only. Want to make sure your group leader can email you? Click a button and make your email sharable to group leaders.

Use the Directory Feature

Need a phone number? Email? Want to send a card? Simply type that person’s name into the search bar and all the information that they want seen by other members will appear.

Check back next month to find out more about how Realm can help groups connect and organize!

Stewardship Corner

While the Stewardship Committee is finishing the last pieces of its 2020 Stewardship Campaign, stewardship is not a once a year event. It is a way of life. It is a living out of our faith.

Ann Weems, a Presbyterian elder and author, wrote this prayer which gets at the heart of stewardship. She writes:

O Lord, forgive our fears
that so stifle our stewardship.
Forgive our giving in and our giving up
instead of giving ourselves
to Christ’s mission of love.
Remind us that our hope
is in stand up and risking,
in taking our stewardship seriously.
Help us to remember, O Lord, that
the stewardship question is not really,
how much will we give?
The stewardship question is,
How will we spend what we have been given?
We pray it will be faithfully
and cheerfully.

As we journey together into the unknown future of 2020, may this prayer be our prayer.



Sunday February 2
Communion
Souper Bowl Sunday
 Fill the Cart for Food Bank
 9:00 Insight Adult Education
 10:15 Worship
 11:00 FPC Kids Mission
 11:15 Fellowship
 2:30 SEMP Prep
 4:00 SEMP Host & Dishwasher
 4:15 SEMP Servers
 4:30 SEMP

Tuesday February 4
 6:00 Mission Committee
 7:00 Christian Education

Wednesday February 5
 12:00 Iowans for Gun Safety
 6:00 Junior High Group
 7:00 Chancel Choir
 7:00 Confirmation
 7:30 High School Group

Thursday February 6
 1:00 Serendipity Book Club

Friday February 7
 9:00 KIVA
 11:45 Intersections

Sunday February 9
 9:00 Insight Adult Education
 10:15 Worship
 11:15 Fellowship
 2:30 SEMP Prep
 4:00 SEMP Host & Dishwasher
 4:15 SEMP Servers & Greeters
 4:30 SEMP

Tuesday February 11
 10:00 Women's Bible Study
 5:30 Deacon Meeting

Wednesday February 12
 1:00 Methwick Bible Study
 6:00 Bell Choir
 6:00 Junior High Group
 7:00 Chancel Choir
 7:00 Confirmation
 7:30 High School Group

Friday February 14
 Happy Valentine's Day
 9:00 KIVA

Sunday February 16
 9:00 Insight Adult Education
 10:15 Worship
 11:15 Fellowship
 2:30 SEMP Prep
 4:00 SEMP Host & Dishwasher
 4:15 SEMP Servers
 4:30 SEMP

Monday February 17
 Presidents' Day

Tuesday February 18
 6:00 Fellowship Committee
 6:30 Finance Committee

Wednesday February 19
 6:00 pm Bell Choir
 6:00 pm Junior High Group
 7:00 pm Chancel Choir
 7:00 pm Confirmation
 7:30 pm High School Group

Thursday February 20
 6:00 Ice Skating- Youth Group

Friday February 21
 9:00 KIVA

Sunday February 23
 9:00 Insight Adult Education
 10:15 Worship
 11:15 Fellowship - **Mardi Gras Pancake Breakfast**
 2:30 SEMP Prep
 4:00 SEMP Host & Dishwasher
 4:15 SEMP Servers
 4:30 SEMP

Tuesday February 25
 10:00 Women's Bible Study
 6:00 Worship & Music
 7:00 Session

Wednesday February 26
 6:00 pm Bell Choir
 6:00 pm Junior High Group
 7:00 pm Chancel Choir
 7:00 pm Confirmation
 7:30 pm High School Group

Thursday February 27
 6:00 Food Group @Sushi House

Friday February 28
 9:00 KIVA

Birthdays

2/1 George Humphrey
 2/2 Irene Hamous
 2/2 Jayne Peremsky
 2/3 Dick Harman
 2/5 Sarah Keuseman
 2/5 Rachel Nelson
 2/5 Chris Tyler
 2/6 Larry Simon
 2/6 Ben Wilding
 2/7 Harold Brown
 2/7 Todd Kiser
 2/7 Sheryl Smiley

2/8 Audrey Bradford
 2/8 Barb McInally
 2/10 Cynthia Burdakin
 2/10 Calum Mollman
 2/11 Jim Klinger
 2/11 Sue Latham
 2/12 Phil Thompson
 2/13 Callahan Moore
 2/14 Boyd Balvanz
 2/15 Brian Courtright
 2/15 John Cummings
 2/15 Steve Kossayian

2/16 Sonya Astor
 2/17 Stephanie Wagor
 2/19 Crete Bobenhouse
 2/19 Jim Powers
 2/20 Joseph Kettelkamp
 2/20 Merlin Osborn
 2/20 Carol Wickey
 2/23 Annette Zimmerman
 2/24 Sara Sorensen
 2/27 Mackenzie Hayes
 2/28 Gloria Klinger
 2/29 Martha Wilding

Anniversaries

02/9/1963 Carolyn & David
 Horton

02/9/1963 Merlin & Ruth
 Osborn

Fellowship Hosts

Feb 2
 Dave & Martha Booth
 Jane Looker

Feb 9
 Amy & Scott Shoemaker
 Jaime & Chad Weldon

Feb 16
 Cindy Monroe
 Joe Houtz & Mary Noland
 Houtz

Feb 23
 Mardi Gras
 Pancake Breakfast

First Presbyterian Church

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News and Views

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