

1st Pres



NEWS AND VIEWS



May 2021

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:4-6

This past Wednesday, the youth and I had a conversation during our weekly meeting about encouragement. We looked at one particular individual in scripture, Barnabas (whose name means “son of encouragement), and talked about how he encouraged and supported Paul in their shared ministry. We then named our own struggles and shared those who had been an encouragement for us. One of the themes throughout the study was the encouragement of presence. It was not the particular words that were shared with each of us that we found encouraging, but the other person’s presence, their listening ear, their concern for us that gave us hope beyond the particular difficulty being faced.

This past year has been a difficult one for most if not all of us. Even in the best circumstances there have been challenges that have stretched our reserves of patience, energy and good will. Through it all we have looked to scripture each week to find encouragement and hope.

What we have sorely missed, however, is that encouragement of presence. Of singing together, of sitting together, of praying together “with one voice” and in one place.

As we head into the summer months, we look forward to regaining that weekly encouragement that comes from being together. The Session, Worship Committee, and Return-to-In-Person Task Force have been working hard to come up with solutions that will be inclusive of the widest swath of our church and allow us to continue to offer welcome to visitors and our community. There are many coming from differing health situations, family situations, and comfort levels. We are hopeful that we have discerned a way for all to participate in the worship life of our congregation. The details are shared within this newsletter.

Here I just want to call you to encourage one another with your presence and your words. To be gracious in our differences and celebrate our shared commitment to our faith in Christ. To be willing to give up a little of our own vision of “ideal worship” in order to sit alongside each other and with one voice glorify God. I am looking forward to this new summer rhythm with you and hope to see everyone soon!

Grace & peace,

Pastor Heather

Worship Schedule

May 2nd

10:00 am Online worship

May 9th

10:00am Online worship

May 16th

10:00am Online worship

May 23rd

Pentecost Sunday

10:00am Pentecost in the Park Worship

Followed by Party in the Park

Pulled pork sandwich picnic plate & fellowship games

May 30th

10:00 am In-person worship in the sanctuary live-streamed.

*Regular Summer Schedule - starting in June
9:00am Outdoor Worship in the Parking Lot
10:15am In-person Worship in the Sanctuary



FPC Kid's Annual Spring Musical

virtual presentation

Mother's Day ~ Sunday, May 9, 2021.

Recording sessions:

Saturday, May 1 from 9:00am - 11:00am

Sunday, May 2 from 1:00pm – 3:00pm.

Summer Worship Schedule

As we begin having in-person worship options on Sunday morning, we have a few weeks of transition before settling into what will be our regular summer schedule. We hope you will be joining us as we create a worshipping community that is inclusive and welcoming of all.

May 2-16th Online worship as usual at 10:00am

May 23rd Pentecost Sunday!

10:00am Celebration worship in-person at Greene Square. Wear your red and join us for a jazz filled Sunday in the park. After worship there will be "portable picnic" foods provided by the Fellowship Committee and socially distant games for all ages provided by the Children's Committee of the CE Board.

May 30th Memorial Day weekend

10:00am Worship will be held in-person in the sanctuary this weekend. It will also be live-streamed to Youtube at that time and available to watch later as has been our practice the last year.

Regular Summer Schedule.

June 6 - August 29

9:00am Drive-in Worship in the parking lot. Much as we did all last summer, we will be offering a time of gathering, worship and fellowship outdoors in our parking lot spaces. Masks will be optional, but we ask that you respect others' comfort with spacing and contact.

10:15am Sanctuary Worship. This worship will be in the sanctuary with socially distant seating and masks required. The choir will be back with plans to sing throughout the summer months. This service will be live-streamed to Youtube as has been our practice these past months.



Plant Swap

It's time for the annual "Plant Swap" here at the church on Sunday, May 23rd. If you have annuals or perennials that you'd like to share with others, please dig them up and place them in a container that you do not need back. Please label your plant with what it is, and if it is a full-sun or full-shade, if you know this information.

On May 23rd, we will have a number of tables outside where you can swap your plants for someone else's plants. (It is an even swap, so if you bring one plant, you get to take one plant home, etc.) This is a great chance to swap things in your garden that you have lots of for something new! If you have questions about our plant swap, talk to Pastor Heather.

Matthew 25: Cultivate Hope Mega Markets

Grab fresh veggies, local goods or something to eat at the Cultivate Hope summer markets sponsored by Matthew 25 at their urban farm. Situated in northwest Cedar Rapids at 437 G Avenue NW, the farm runs markets that offer freshly picked produce each Thursday from 4-7pm beginning May 13th. On the last Thursday of each month, there is a "mega market" with extended hours, an outdoor pizza oven, food trucks, music and other local vendors. All proceeds from the market support their neighborhood revitalization ministries for the Taylor and Time Check neighborhoods.

Summer Events @ FPC

Prepare for a super summer at First Presbyterian!

The Children's Committee and CE Board are planning a regular rhythm of activities through the summer months on Wednesday nights. Beginning June 16th and running into the beginning of August, watch for a series of gatherings and meet-ups hosted throughout our larger community. Gather at a park by a member's house, grab ice cream at a local creamery, toast a s'more at the fire pit in someone's back yard, ramble through the woods at another's. All events will be held outdoors in a casual atmosphere and run for around an hour or so. Gatherings are family friendly and have children in mind, but all congregation members are welcome to come to any that might interest them.



VBS

July 19-22

ReNew your faith at Vacation Bible School this summer! Save the date for Vacation Bible School from July 19th through 22nd this summer. We will be back in person and gathering outdoors in Greene Square. Jesus' Parable of the Sower will be the scriptural theme for the week as we talk about how God sows seeds of love in our hearts and we are called to sow seeds of love in our world, even as we tend to others and our earth with care and compassion.

This year we'll be meeting in the evenings again from **5:30-7:30**.





Graduating Seniors

Is your child graduating from high school or from college? We'll be celebrating their accomplishments as the 2020-21 school year comes to a close. We'd love to have pictures and plans to share with the congregation. Contact Pastor Heather or Stormy with questions.

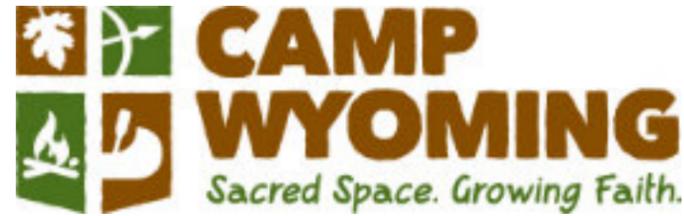
Historical Jesus Class

This past week was the last session for Gary Connor-Boe's Tuesday class on the Historical Jesus. We want to thank him for his time and efforts for leading the zoom class and leading a great discussion for our members.

Mission Outreach: Summer Reading Camp

This summer First Presbyterian will be coming alongside and supporting a long-standing ministry in Cedar Rapids. Fifteen years ago, Leslee Sandberg and Kate Rose, partnered with Jane Boyd Community House and began a week long day camp focussed on reading that is held on Coe College's campus. Each year thirty or so third graders identified by Jane Boyd as needing a little extra reading assistance come to the camp and are paired with reading buddies, play language games, have lunch in the Coe cafeteria and get some swim time in Coe's pool.

Last year the Mission Committee began conversations with Leslee and Kate about partnering with the camp as part of our own outreach into the community. However, like much else, the camp was canceled for the summer. This year, the camp is back with a limited number of children and will be running July 26th thru 30th during the day. If you'd like to learn more and become involved in this new (to us) outreach and partnership with our community, Please contact Gary Connors-Boe, Betsy Kutter, Kris Keuseman or Pastor Heather



Take a Break, Grow in Faith at Camp Wyoming!

It's not too late to sign up for the summer!

This year summer camp is back at Camp Wyoming. With smaller enrollments, changes in some of the camp procedures, and new equipment such as cabin air filtration systems, the camp is ready to safely welcome campers and give them a chance to learn more about who they are and who they want to become as they grow in their faith in Jesus Christ.

If you have any questions or are seeking more information about enrollment, head over to www.campwyoming.net. The church supports campers by paying half the cost of camp. Additional funds are available for those in particular financial need or families sending multiple children. Contact Pastor Heather for more information.



The Evening Book Group will meet on **Monday, May 17, 6:30 p.m.** As in recent months, we will meet by Zoom with host Cynthia Burdakin (cburdakin@hotmail.com, (248)701-2508). The book for discussion is *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins. This novel tells the story of Lydia and her 8-year old son Luca who flee Acapulco to escape a drug cartel that has killed her journalist husband. This book was a best seller in 2020 but received much criticism about the accuracy and quality of the writing and about the ethnicity of the author.

Session Notes

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

DISCUSSION and ACTION ITEM: The Return to In-Person Worship Task Force report began with a presentation of results from the recent congregational survey completed by 130 households (higher total numbers may reflect multiple choices): 91 (70%) indicated willingness to attend in-person worship; 40 (31%) were willing to gather outside; 15 (12%) online only. More than half agreed that appropriate conditions include masking, social distancing and singing w/masks. 118 (91%) of respondents are fully vaccinated against Covid-19; 8 (6%) plan to be vaccinated; 2 (3%) are not planning vaccination. We are well within the National Church (PCUSA) guidelines of appropriate opening to in-person worship when 75% have been vaccinated.

An idea was put forward to designate "tech deacons" to visit homebound or non-tech savvy members, bringing a laptop computer and watching the pre-recorded service together.

Spring/Summer Worship Schedule: May 23 (Pentecost/Jazz Sunday) in Greene Square, with lunch/games following; May 30, Memorial Day Weekend, memorial service (livestreamed); June 6, summer schedule begins. There will be two services: 9:00 a.m. outside and 10:15 in the sanctuary, as well as livestreamed/recorded, for the duration of the summer. According to April 27 CDC guidelines, masks will not be required for vaccinated individuals at outdoor worship; indoor worship will require masks. Suggested that we poll congregation again during the summer.

MOTION: To indicate agreement with the task force plan as a way forward from May 23 through the summer, including masking inside and masks-optional for vaccinated individuals at outdoor worship, accommodating the widest swath of our congregation. **MOTION CARRIED.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Christian Education: Kristen Wilcox and Fred Kiser are directing the Spring Musical, to be taped this weekend and livestreamed May 9. Planning safe, socially distanced games (Chalk the Walk, bag toss) for Pentecost. Brainstorming ways to include activities with kids from outside the city (Ely ice cream, woods walk, etc.). Planning evening VBS ("God's Good Creation") with a last night at Indian Creek Nature Center. Discussing youth summer

mission of working with Matthew 25 in-city. Youth are interested in helping with Reading Camp.

Endowment Our portfolio is doing well, showing moderate growth. Committee met and is working through issues on memorials. Moved a portion of our funds in the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation to its Environmental/Social Justice fund.

Finance A favorable report on revenues, reflecting the \$68,400 SBA loan forgiveness in February, encourages proceeding with "guarded optimism." We continue to move more banking relationships to Hills Bank, with online banking saving us \$4-5,000/year. **MOTION:** To receive the Financial Report for March 2021. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Fellowship Planning outdoor meal for after worship on Pentecost Sunday. Had a good turnout for crafting May Day cards for the homebound with Priscilla Polehena.

Media Continuing to recruit tech-interested committee members. Will be trying out new video configurations in anticipation of having worshippers in the sanctuary.

Mission Planning to participate in one-week Reading Camp with Coe College, involving youth and adult mentors. An estimated 15-20 3rd and 4th grade students will participate, selected by the Jane Boyd Center. Reported a \$2500 donation toward the new SEMP refrigerator.

Property A task force has met to consider technical infrastructure for livestreaming our services. Will be meeting with consultants and looking at equipment and "product" of other area churches to develop an inviting, cost-effective and evolving solution. Connie Richardson reported on landscaping work, including derecho cleanup, sod and trees.

Deacons Continuing birthday, anniversary and thinking-of-you card mission; Paula Meyer will create special cards for those celebrating a hundredth birthday.

PASTOR'S REPORT: Heather has been relieved of preaching duties for four consecutive Sundays in April/May in order to focus on visitation and connecting with parishioners, including homebound members, those not connected by technology, those who have had a particularly difficult year, and those who have drifted away. She is able to complete about 2-3 per day.

Respectfully submitted,

Betsy Caszatt Rev. Heather Hayes
Clerk of Session Moderator

CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 *Sunday Schedule	3	4 5:30 pm Mission Committee 6:00 pm C.E. Board	5 **WNA 12-1 Prayer Walk	6	7	8
9 *Sunday Schedule	10	11 11:00 Women's Bible Study 5:30 Deacons	12 **WNA 12-1 Prayer Walk	13	14	15
16 *Sunday Schedule Confirmation Sunday	17 6:30 Evening Book Group	18 6:00 Children's Sub Committee 7:00 pm Finance Committee 7:00 pm Youth Sub Committee	19 **WNA 12-1 Prayer Walk 5:00 pm Stewardship Committee	20	21	22
23 Pentecost 10:00 Worship in Greene Square	24	25 11:00 Women's Bible Study 6:00 Worship & Music 7:00 Session	26 12-1 Prayer Walk	27	28	29

*Sunday Schedule:
10:00 Virtual Worship

**Wednesday Night Activities
5:30 FPC Kids
6:00 Middle School Youth Group
7:00 High School Youth Group



5/1 Matt Davidson
5/1 Greg Thirnbeck
5/3 Rochelle Naylor
5/4 Carrie Bryner
5/4 Oliver Keuseman
5/4 Carly Ryder
5/5 Samuel Afangbedji
5/5 Cheryl Stramel
5/6 Eva Andersen
5/7 Gary Connors-Boe
5/7 Bill Ryder
5/8 Patrick Thies
5/10 Beth Davies
5/10 Tom Reed
5/10 Calli Tyler

5/10 Aubrey Weldon
5/11 Mike Davies
5/11 Tom Polehna
5/11 Michael Weems
5/12 Justin Adams
5/13 Andy Aalderks
5/13 Ryan Kiser
5/13 JJ Tyler
5/14 Richard Wagner
5/15 Wendy Frese
5/15 Megan Wesbrook
5/18 Selma Brigham
5/19 Ethan Shields
5/20 Nancy Edmondson
5/20 Charles Oldenkamp

5/21 Helaina Thompson
5/22 Deb Hoy
5/22 Charlene Reeder
5/23 Julie Hagerman
5/26 Ada Potratz
5/26 Matthew Wilding
5/27 Mary Jane Barlow
5/27 Steve Volesky
5/28 Kissy Heins
5/28 Daniel Nelson
5/28 Kayla Nelson
5/28 Jim Richardson
5/29 Nan Riley
5/31 Mindi Dixson



5/1/1999
Heather & Dave Hayes
5/3/1980
Bob & Sue Mollman
5/5/1979
John & Cynthia Burdakin
5/5/1956
Clark & Nancy Parks
5/5/1990
Matt & Suzanne Weems
5/12/1978
Roxi & John McCrane
5/15/2016
Cory & Tiffany Elwick

5/15/1999
Matthew & Karen Nelson
5/17/2003
Mark & Tracy Zimmerman
5/19/1984
Philip & DeEtta Andersen
5/23/1987
David & Carolyn Crew
5/24/1975
Carroll & Sue Edmondson
5/24/1980
Matt & Deb Hoy
5/25/1996
Steve & Nancy Barry

5/27/2004
Gary Connors-Boe & Marjorie
5/28/1988
Michael Miller & Laura Runkle
5/29/1976
Karen & Lance Humbert
5/29/1966
Herb & Bonnie Neubauer
5/30/1992
Bill & Joan Kettelkamp
5/31/1969
Jim & Diana Richardson
5/31/1969
John & Stephanie Wagor

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News and Views

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