

# 1st Pres NEWS VIEWS

September/October 2025

First Presbyterian Church • Cedar Rapids • Iowa

"How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" – Psalm 133:1

There's something that I love about this time of year in the church. After a summer of wonderful scattering – family vacations, lazy mornings, different rhythms and schedules – we're beginning to gather again. I can feel it in the energy of our worship, see it in the fuller pews, and hear it in the return of our choir. Their voices lifting together again reminds me why the psalmist called it "good and pleasant" when God's people come together.

Don't get me wrong – I love summer's slower pace (although this summer didn't feel too slow!) and the way it spreads us out across the country visiting family, exploring national parks, going to ball games, traveling on mission trips, or even sometimes sleeping in on Sunday mornings. We need time to rest, to adventure, to experience God's presence in new places and different ways. Summer gives us permission to breathe deeply and step away from our regular commitments.

But there's also joy in the return. I've been watching it happen over these past few weeks – the way conversations linger a little longer in the gathering space, how people seem genuinely happy to see each other again, the smiles as we see familiar faces we've missed and welcome new. It reminds me that we don't just attend First Presbyterian; we belong here. We're not merely individuals who happen to worship in the same space; we're a community that has been shaped by shared prayers, common struggles, and countless moments of grace experienced together.

This fall offers us many opportunities to deepen these connections that make us who we are. Our worship series, "Called to Care," isn't really about obligations or expectations – it's about exploring together how we live as faithful people in every area of our lives. When we gather to discuss stewardship of time or creation or relationships, we're not just learning principles; we're discovering more about each other and the God who calls us into community.

The same is true for the volunteer opportunities that will emerge as we kick off on Rally Sunday and our nominating committee begins their work. Saying yes to serve as an elder or deacon, or stepping up to help with any of our ministries, isn't just about filling slots on an organizational chart. It's about investing more deeply in the relationships that sustain us all.

Even our special Sundays this fall – World Communion, Reformation Sunday with a time for volunteer recognition, All Saints' – these are celebrations of belonging. They remind us that we're part of something larger than ourselves, connected not only to each other but to Christians around the globe and throughout history.

As we settle back into the rhythm of fall together, I find myself grateful for both seasons – for summer's necessary scattering that refreshes our spirits, and for autumn's gathering that reminds us we are home. The psalmist was right: there is something uniquely good and pleasant about God's people living together. Welcome home.

*Pastor Heather*

## Sermons Series This Fall

Called to Care:

Stewards of God's Abundant Gifts

### September 7th | Rally Sunday

*Psalm 90:1-6, 9-10*

Called to Care for Our Time

Stewardship is more than fundraising—it's our whole response to God's grace, starting with how we use our time. Time is God's gift, and how we spend it reveals what we truly value.

### September 14th

*2 Corinthians 9:6-11 & Luke 12:13-21*

Called to Care Through Our Giving

Money becomes a powerful tool for discipleship when we understand that giving is a spiritual practice. Through generosity, our hearts are reshaped toward God and freed from the fears of scarcity.

### September 21st

*Daniel 1:8-16 and Romans 12:1-2*

Called to Care for Our Bodies

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, making self-care a spiritual discipline. Like Daniel's faithful choices about food, how we care for our bodies reflects our deeper commitment to honoring God.

### September 28th

*Ephesians 4:11-16 and Ephesians 4:25-32*

Called to Care for Community

Community doesn't just happen—it requires intentional stewardship through our relationships, our words, and our hospitality. We're called to build up the body of Christ through both our spiritual gifts and our daily choices to love well.

### October 5th | World Communion Sunday

*Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Matthew 28:18-20*

Called to Care for the Gospel

We are entrusted with the gospel, called to live it faithfully and share it generously in word and deed. From the intimate faith-sharing of Deuteronomy to the global commission of Matthew, we plant seeds of faith for those who come after us.

### October 12th

*Genesis 1:26-31 and Genesis 2:4-15*

Called to Care for Creation

From the cosmic vision of Genesis 1 to the intimate garden of Genesis 2, we see our calling as caretakers of God's creation. The earth is not disposable—creation care is an act of worship and stewardship.

### October 19th

*1 Corinthians 10:23-33*

Called to Care in the Digital Age

Just as Paul navigated the complex cultural moment of first-century Corinth, we're called to faithful stewardship in our digital age. Technology can be a tool for flourishing when guided by the principles of seeking others' good and God's glory.

### October 26th | Reformation Sunday & Volunteer Recognition

*Luke 5:1-11 and Acts 16:11-15, 40*

Called to Care Through Our Work

From the fishermen Jesus called to Lydia the businesswoman who supported the early church, we see that all work can be holy offering. God meets us in our daily labor and transforms it into kingdom ministry.

### Bell Choir | Wed. nights 6:00-7:00pm

Comprised of those who find joy in praising God through music and helping to lead our worship, our choir calls upon the great tradition of Christian choral music.

### Chancel Choir | Wed. nights 7:00-8:30pm

We play music that engages members at all stages of their bell ringing development.

**Any interested musicians are invited to attend! We can teach you the things.**



## Library Spotlight

This month we feature three books related to social justice issues.

### ***Framed*, John Grisham, Jim McCloskey**

A fundamental principle of our legal system is presumed innocence, but once someone is found guilty there is very little room to prove doubt. This book follows ten true stories of Americans who were innocent but found guilty and forced to sacrifice decades of their lives in prison before exonerated.

### ***Anyplace But Here*, Sheriff Tony Thompson**

The uncomfortable convergence between mental illness and the criminal justice system explored by Sheriff Thompson, retired Blackhawk County sheriff. Sheriff Thompson spoke at our Sunday Insights class.

### ***Same Kind of Different as Me*, Ron Hall and Denver Moore**

An inspirational and emotionally gripping story of faith, fortitude and friendship. A “modern-day slave”, an international art dealer and the unlikely woman who bound them together in this New York Times bestseller and amazing true story.

Find these books and last month's spotlight historical fiction books by Geraldine Brooks “under the butterfly” in your church library!

## Snippet from Session

Members: Laura Behrens, Martha Booth, Kayleigh Bryant, Caroline Giddings, Heidi Kiser, Dave Kutter, Sue Latham, Susie McDermott, Michael Miller, Dan Ottemoeller, Connie Richardson, Alisa Shields

The Associate Pastor Nominating Committee presented the draft of the MDP. It was MSP with slight amendments and with permission to make minor formatting edits as necessary to accommodate the amendments. A copy of the final document will be sent to the Clerk for the record. It was noted that the purpose of the MDP is to generate enough interest in the position that candidates will take the next step. It was MSP to commend the work of the APNC on completing this first step in calling an associate pastor.

A motion from Admin to budget \$10,000 for the work of the APNC was seconded and passed.

In anticipation of a future financial request, Pastor Heather gave an update on Helping Hands, a ministry of which FPC was a founding member, along with other 3rd Avenue churches, many years ago. Helping Hands consolidated emergency funds from the churches so there is one entity to which people in immediate need for housing, food, transportation, and medical assistance may be served. Their funding has been decreasing in the last few years to the point that they are unable to exist in their current form. Their board, on which Peter Riley serves for FPC, may soon request additional assistance. This will be referred to the Discipleship Commission.

From Care Commission for the Quilting group, it was MSA to add \$1,000 as a line item to the 2026 budget for materials for quilts for graduating seniors.

From Admin Commission, it was MSA to approve a salary range of \$55,000 to \$70,000 for the associate pastor, yet to be called.

APNC reported that the MDP has been submitted Presbytery.

## APNC Update

The search for a new associate pastor continues moving forward. After a round of virtual interviews, the APNC is now moving towards the stage of reference checks and face to face interviews with the top candidates. Continue to hold the process in prayer as we look forward in anticipation of new and exciting things in our future!

The APNC members are: Alisa Shields, Chris Tyler, Lynda Barrow, Keith Rippey, and Joe Houtz







# Rally Sunday: September 7th "You Are Wonderfully Made"

Join us for Rally Sunday on September 7th as we celebrate the theme "You Are Wonderfully Made," inspired by Psalm 139. This special day recognizes that First Presbyterian is made up of all sorts of different people who connect with our community in unique and beautiful ways.

We're hosting an open house highlighting the many different ministries and opportunities at our church. This is your chance to explore our building - including spaces you might not have seen before - while filling out a fun bingo card along the way. Whether you're new to First Presbyterian or have been here for years, you'll discover something fresh about our church family.

A delicious lunch will be provided for everyone, creating space for fellowship and conversation. Don't miss our photo booth in the gathering space, complete with fun props where you can take pictures and show off your unique vibe!

Rally Sunday is the perfect opportunity to see how God has wonderfully made each of us with different gifts and interests, all coming together to create the vibrant community that is First Presbyterian. Come explore, connect, and celebrate what makes you - and our church - wonderfully unique!

# New Child Protection Policy: Creating Safe and Nurturing Spaces

At First Presbyterian Church, we believe that every child, youth, and vulnerable adult is a precious gift from God. As a congregation, we are called to provide spaces where all people can grow in faith, feel safe, and be nurtured in body, mind, and spirit.

This summer, Session adopted a new Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. The purpose of this policy is simple: to keep our children and youth safe, to protect volunteers and staff, and to strengthen trust across our community.

Here are a few of the core practices every member of our church family should know:

**Two-Adult Rule:** At least two screened adults are always present in activities with children or youth.

**Screening & Training:** All staff and volunteers complete an application, background check, and training before serving.

**Safe Spaces:** Classrooms and activity areas are open, visible, and supervised.

**Check-In & Check-Out:** Children in second grade and younger are signed in and released only to a parent or guardian.

**Boundaries:** Volunteers and staff are committed to appropriate, respectful, and caring interactions at all times.

In addition, clear procedures are in place for reporting and responding to any concerns. We want children and parents to know: if something ever feels wrong, it will be taken seriously, handled promptly, and always with the safety of the child as the highest priority.

This policy is not only about rules and guidelines — it is about living our faith. Jesus welcomed children, blessed them, and called us to do the same. By caring for the most vulnerable among us, we live into our baptismal promises and our calling as disciples.

If you have questions about the new policy or want to read the full text, head to our website or contact Pastor Heather or Director of Youth Ministry, Stan Letscher. Together, we are creating a church where God's children are safe, loved, and able to flourish.



## Ties That Bind - FPC Quilters

We are ready to start our year with a calendar of activities offering fun, information and fellowship.

Participants will make table runners, bags, placemats, pillowcases, and quilts for personal use as well as gifts for others. Last May we created memory lap quilts for all of our high school graduates and we look forward to share our talents again this year.

Martha Booth and Cindy Monroe, Organizers

Mark your calendars and join us in the basement quilting room from 1:00 to 3:00 on:

September 8 – Kickoff. Paula Meyer will teach us how to care for our machines and we will review quilting supplies and steps in production of quilts.

September 15 – Learn to make denim rag blocks with magic circles.

October 6 and 13 – Learn to make half-square blocks and the multitude of designs you can create.

November 3 and 10 – Learn to make pillowcases in time for Christmas gifts.

January 5 and 12 – Pick your own pattern block and project.

February 2 and 9 – Make quilts for our Deacons to distribute.

March 2 and 9 – Learn to make cat and dog blocks.

April 6 – Shop Hop – Travel to area quilt shops.

April 13 – Make a crazy quilt block.

May 4 and 11 – Pick your own pattern block and project.



How can we maintain an optimal quality of life & level of health in our community? What are the latest ideas for elementary education?

**9/7/25**

**No Insight – Rally Sunday**

**9/14/25**

*New Concepts in Elementary Education &*

*Community Support*

**Clint Stone**, Principal, Hoover Elementary School

**9/21/25**

*Advancements in Physical Therapy*

**Kelly Hawthorne**, Geriatric Physical Therapist

**9/28/25**

*Mental Health Through the Ages*

**Alan Whitters**, MD, Psychiatrist, & Mona Whitters,

PhD, Psychologist

**10/5/25**

**No Insight – Race for the Cure**

**STATUS OF  
DEMOCRACY  
IN EUROPE & ASIA**

How can we better understand

global issues and conflicts?

How do other nations view our role in the world?

**10/12/25**

*The Development of Democracy in Central Europe*

**D.Mikulas**, Professor of History & Vice President,

Czech & Slovak Museum

**10/19/25**

*The Development of Democracy in South Korea*

**David Nordmann**, Coe History



## Stewardship Campaign Called to Care: Stewards of God's Abundant Gifts

*"Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms." – 1 Peter 4:10*

As we enter this fall, we're embarking on a journey that will reshape how we understand one of the most fundamental aspects of Christian faith: stewardship. Too often, we think of stewardship solely in terms of our financial giving. While that remains important, God's call to faithful stewardship extends far beyond our wallets to encompass every dimension of our lives.

The apostle Peter reminds us that we are stewards "of God's grace in its various forms." Notice that word – various. God's grace comes to us through our time, our bodies, our work, our relationships, our witness, and yes, our financial resources. Each represents a sacred trust, a divine gift entrusted to our care not for our own purposes alone, but to serve others and glorify God.

We'll explore what it means to be "Called to Care" as faithful stewards in every area of life. We'll discover how the way we spend our hours reflects our deepest values, how our bodies are temples deserving of respect and care, and how our daily work becomes an act of worship. We'll examine our responsibility to future generations, our calling to tend creation, and how we navigate the digital age as faithful disciples.

As we journey together through these various forms of God's grace, you'll discover that stewardship isn't a burden to bear but a privilege to embrace. When we understand that everything we have and everything we are belongs to God, we find freedom, purpose, and joy in caring for these gifts well. We are called to care – not out of duty alone, but out of love for the God who first loved us and entrusted us with these precious gifts. Together, let's discover what it means to be faithful stewards of God's grace in all its various forms.



### Celebrating World Communion Sunday – October 5th

On Sunday, October 5th, our congregation will join millions of Christians around the globe in celebrating World Communion Sunday, an expression of our universal faith. This special day reminds us that when we gather at the Lord's table, we are not alone – we are part of a vast family of believers spanning every continent, culture, and language.

World Communion Sunday began in 1933 at Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh as a way to bring churches together in a service of Christian unity. Today, it has grown into a worldwide celebration that transcends denominational boundaries and geographic borders. From rural villages in Kenya to bustling cities in South Korea, from ancient cathedrals in Europe to house churches in South America, Christians everywhere will break bread together on this day.

As we partake of communion on October 5th, we'll be reminded that the table of Christ knows no divisions of race, nationality, economic status, or political affiliation. The same Jesus who walked the dusty roads of Palestine two thousand years ago continues to invite all people to his table of grace. When we eat the bread and drink from the cup, we proclaim our unity with believers we may never meet this side of heaven but with whom we share an eternal bond.

Plan to join us on October 5th as we celebrate not just as one local congregation, but as part of the global body of Christ. In our communion, we'll taste the unity that Christ desires for all his people and be renewed in our commitment to share his love with a world in need of hope.

Together at his table, we are one family in Christ.

## Bridge to Opportunities Group

**Time Change!** Both Monday & Thursday programs will now be 1:30-3:30pm.

**Monday, September 1st, Closed: Happy Holiday!**

**Thursday, September 4th, Game Day:** Join us to play Phase 10, Hand and Foot, Mexican Trains (a version of Dominos), Euchre or Scrabble. Or bring a favorite board game!

**Monday, September 8th,** Discover the Power of AI – Made Simple for Seniors! Join CJ Flynn for a free, beginner-friendly class to learn about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it can make everyday life easier. AI tools like ChatGPT and Google Gemini can help you save time and spark creativity.

**Thursday, September 11<sup>th</sup> | Bingo!** Besides being great recreation, playing bingo helps older adults maintain hand-eye coordination, concentration, and short-term memory skills. Come for the fun – and, with luck, win a prize.

**Monday, September 15th, Rescheduled Date: Mini Pines Event:** located at 3800 42nd St NE.

Register at a program meeting or by noon on the day of the event by calling 319-640-5357. Bring your own beverage and an optional snack to share.

**Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup>** Chair Yoga: Tammy Bayer will be leading a beginner level chair yoga class. She will adapt the class as needed to fit your needs and mobility levels.

**Monday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>** Wisdom Circle: a heartfelt gathering where we come together to share life experiences, celebrate the richness of aging, and explore what it means to grow older with intention and grace.

**Thursday, September 25th,** Choosing Among Medicare Plan Options: Medicare's open enrollment period is October 15th-December 7th each year. Whether you are new to Medicare, or reviewing Medicare plan options, SHIIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program) can help. Judy Parks, a local SHIIP volunteer, will discuss how a free, unbiased SHIIP consultation can help you choose the Medicare or Medicare Advantage plan that is best suited to your situation.

**Monday, September 29th,** Movie Day - Held at the Downtown CR Library in Beems A on the 2nd floor. The name of the selected movie will be announced and posted on the Facebook Group "Cedar Rapids 55 Plus" about a week prior to "Movie Day."



### Fall Festival Goes "Back to the Farm" - October 12th, 4-7pm

We're excited to announce that this year's Fall Festival is moving "back to the farm"! Join us on Sunday, October 12th from 4-7pm as we travel out to First Presbyterian Church Near Ely and their beautiful new facility tucked into the Iowa cornfields.

This setting offers the perfect combination of rural Iowa charm and modern conveniences - we'll enjoy the gorgeous fall scenery and open spaces while having access to shelter, restrooms, and a proper eating area.

The afternoon will be packed with activities for all ages, including both active games and quieter options, pumpkin painting, and face painting. Around 5:00 we'll gather for dinner and our popular chili cook-off, where we'll vote on our favorite recipe. The evening will conclude with ever popular piñata.

This is a wonderful opportunity to experience beautiful rural Iowa while enjoying fellowship with our church family in a unique setting. Please bring your own lawn chairs and watch for sign-ups to bring food items or volunteer in other ways.

Mark your calendars for this special "back to the farm" celebration!



## Reformation Sunday & Volunteer Appreciation

### Celebrating the Priesthood of All Believers

On October 26th, we'll celebrate Reformation Sunday by honoring a revolutionary idea that changed Christianity forever: the priesthood of all believers. Martin Luther proclaimed that every Christian—not just ordained clergy—is called to serve God through their work and witness.

This Sunday, we celebrate that truth by recognizing our volunteers who embody this reforming spirit. Whether teaching children, serving meals, maintaining our building, or caring for neighbors, our volunteers demonstrate that ministry belongs to the whole church. Their faithful service proves that the Reformation continues today—not through posting theses on cathedral doors, but through posting ourselves in service wherever God calls.

Join us as we honor both our Protestant heritage and those who live it out daily.

## All Saints' Sunday: Remembering the Faithful Departed

On Sunday, November 2nd, we will observe All Saints' Sunday, one of the most meaningful and sacred services in our church year. This special day provides us with the opportunity to remember and honor our congregation members who have died during the past year, celebrating the impact their lives continue to have on our community of faith.

During our worship service, we will read aloud the names of our church members who have died in the past year. As each name is spoken, a candle will be lit in their memory, creating a beautiful tapestry of light that represents the ongoing connection between the church here on earth and the church triumphant in heaven.

All Saints' Sunday reminds us that death does not have the final word. These members remain part of our spiritual family, and their faithful witness continues to inspire and guide us. In lighting these candles, we celebrate not just their lives, but the hope we share in Christ's promise of eternal life.

Join us for this moving service of remembrance and hope.

## Peace and Global Witness Offering October 5th

On World Communion Sunday, October 5th, we will receive the Presbyterian Church (USA)'s Peace and Global Witness Offering. This special offering enables the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world and supports peacemaking efforts both locally and globally.

Individual congregations are encouraged to utilize up to 25% of this offering to sustain their local peacemaking ministries, while the remainder supports the denomination's broader work of reconciliation and peace. The offering provides tools and resources for the church as we join together as active peacemakers, supporting work like reconciliation efforts in South Sudan, international advocacy at the UN, and peace camps for children.

Peacemaking is active not passive, doing not waiting. In our fractured world, this offering represents our commitment to building God's house of peace where all are welcome and can find compassion, peace, and justice. Your generous gift helps create tangible expressions of Christ's peace in communities near and far.

Please plan to participate in this important ministry through your offering on World Communion Sunday.

## Agape Kids: Wednesday Adventures Begin September 17th!

Calling all 3rd-5th graders! Our Agape Kids midweek program returns on Wednesday, September 17th, offering an exciting blend of faith, fun, and friendship every Wednesday evening.

From 5:30-6:30 PM, children will explore "Echo the Story" curriculum from Spark House Publishers, bringing Bible stories to life through interactive activities and creative projects. We'll also have games, crafts, and plenty of opportunities for kids to build friendships with their peers.

The evening concludes with dinner served at 6:30 PM, giving families a midweek break while children enjoy a meal together.

To connect your child & their friends with Agape Kids, just talk to/email Pastor Heather. We can't wait to welcome familiar faces and new friends this fall!



**The Evening Book Club** meets at 6:30pm on the third Monday of most months; the exception is a combined November/December meeting after Thanksgiving. **On September 15th** the Book Club will meet at the home of Cindy and John Monroe, 449 Dows Rd. SE. Our book will be *There are Rivers in the Sky* by Elif Shafak. A work of historical fiction set in ancient Mesopotamia, 19th C. London, and 20th C. London and Turkey, the book follows four characters connected by a drop of water. "Water has seen it all: the rise and fall of every self-important species, every empire, every catastrophe, collapse and extinction" (NY Times). Call or email Cindy (319-981-8356) or (cmonroe1947@gmail.com) if you plan to attend.

**On Oct. 20** the Book Club will again meet at Cindy and John Monroe's home at 6:30pm. Our October book will be *Becoming American* by Anneliese Tisdale. "Tisdale writes about her quest for acceptance and belonging after arriving in Iowa as a teenage German war bride after World War II. The reader feels her pangs of homesickness, her heartache, embarrassments and frustrations, as she evolves into an Iowa farm wife (Amazon)." Anyone who has moved to a new community where they don't know the customs and have no friends will be able to relate to Tisdale's problems fitting in and "becoming American." Note: There are several books with the same or similar titles; be sure the author is Anneliese Tisdale. Once again, please contact Cindy Monroe if you plan to attend.

## FOOD GROUP

### Granite City

4755 1st Avenue SE

9/18 @ 6:00 pm | RSVP by 9/15

### Ting's Red Lantern

540 Boyson Road NE

10/16 @ 6:00 pm | RSVP by 10/13

Carolyn Horton - 899-0255  
horton6902@msn.com



## Children's Sunday School Begins September 14th

Our children's Sunday school program resumes on Sunday, September 14th, using the beloved Godly Play curriculum. This unique approach to Christian education creates a sacred space where children encounter God's stories through carefully crafted materials, storytelling, and wonder.

### We offer two age-appropriate classrooms:

Younger Children (Kindergarten-2nd Grade)

Older Children (3rd-5th Grade)

Godly Play encourages children to explore their faith through hands-on learning and creative response. Each session includes a biblical story told with beautiful wooden figures and materials, followed by wondering questions that help children make their own connections to God's love. The program nurtures spiritual growth by honoring children's natural capacity for wonder and their ability to experience the sacred.

Sunday school meets during the worship service after the Children's Time. Children are dismissed from the sanctuary and remain in their classrooms until picked up by parents or guardians after worship.

If you'd like to learn more about supporting our children's faith formation by volunteering, please contact Pastor Heather.





## COLLEGE CARE PACKAGES

### College Care Packages

In the month of October we will begin collecting items to package up and send off to our college students later this fall. This is an opportunity to let our college students know how thankful we are for them. These packages are usually put together by our youth in November and get sent out the week after thanksgiving to ensure they arrive in time before these students take finals and prepare for the holiday break.

If you would like to make a donation, you can bring in the items when you come to worship on Sundays or to the church office throughout the week. There will be a bin in the gathering space for you to place these items on Sundays.

The following are the items that we are asking you to donate:

- Ramen Noodles in a cup (the microwaveable kind)
- small packaged chips/pretzels/other snacks
- Mechanical Pencils/Pens
- Post it notes/Sticky notes
- Gum
- Microwave Popcorn
- Fruit Snacks
- Health items (travel sized Advil/Ibuprofen, individual packets of Emergen-C, pocket sized containers of hand sanitizer)
- Homemade treats such as homemade cookies that can be mailed will also be accepted

We are also looking for additional shoe boxes to fill with these items. We are asking that the shoe boxes are medium sized (Length-13 in; Width-11 in) We filled many medium sized boxes last year and we got several responses from the college students thanking us for all that was in them. If you have questions about the box size, please contact Stan.

Thanks so much for your donations and helping to support our college students in their academics in this way.

### School Supply Drive

A huge thank you to all that donated supplies for our back to school supply that we did for the teachers and students of Cleveland Elementary School. It was a privilege to deliver and present these items last Friday along with Jocelyn Snapp (one of our middle school students) The teachers and staff were very thankful and appreciative of these donated items. These school supplies will greatly help these teachers as they teach and shape the young minds of the students that will grace the halls of their school building. Again, thanks so much for your generous donations.



## YOUTH NEWS

### Wednesday Nights

Welcome back to another year of church programming and another year of our students gathering together on Wednesday evenings.

Wednesday evening meals will continue to take place from 6:30-7 pm and will begin on Wednesday September 10th. We are asking all parents that have kids involved on Wednesdays to submit a payment of \$100 (per student)

to the church to help cover the cost of our meals for the year. Checks can be made out to First Presbyterian Church. This is a wonderful time for our students to be fed a delicious meal prepared by the amazing meal prep teams that we have in place. We have five different meals that we rotate throughout the year and this meal time allows students and adults to share in a meal together in between the hectic schedule of their day and while they are here on Wednesday evenings. If you would like to join us for these meals, you are welcome to do so, please let Stan know in advance so he can inform the meal prep teams of the numbers and how much they need to prepare.

The Middle school students will continue to meet from 5:30-6:30 pm on Wednesdays. We will return with Wednesday evening programming Wednesday September 10th. The middle school students will be diving into a new study series on Wednesdays for 6 weeks entitled: Jonah: Living a Life Interrupted. The following are the dates and the topics for each week for this study series:

September 10th: I am Jonah

September 17th: See Jonah Run

September 24th: (Jesus: God's Message (this is a separate study from Jonah because many students will not be around)

October 1st: Desperate Times, Desperate Measures

October 8th: Second Chances

October 15th: Into all the World

October 22nd: The Unmanageable God (last study of our Jonah series)

October 29th: A study on being lost and found

Our High School students will be meeting this year from 7-8:30 pm this year beginning on Wednesday September 10th. The high school students will be exploring a new study series entitled: The Gospel According to the Simpsons. We will be diving in and looking into the life of this iconic animated family as we explore various themes and topics. The following are the dates and topics that we will cover:

September 10th: What is important in Life?

September 17th: The power of prayer

September 24th: Connecting with others (this is a study separate from the Simpsons series as we will be missing many students this evening)

October 1st: Skepticism and blind Faith

October 8th: When bad things happen to good people

October 15th: What is a Soul?

October 22nd: Little sins, Big sins

October 29th: Lead us not into temptation

### Youth Events

We have entered into the busy season known as back to school. I wanted to make parents and students aware of a few events coming up. In September both age groups will meet separately to come together for food, fellowship, and a chance to simply refuel and refresh amid our busy schedules.

On Saturday September 20th, high school students are invited to join us at the home of John and Cindy Monroe (449 Dows Rd, Cedar Rapids) from 5-7 pm. Please join peers, invite a friend and come and enjoy some food and fellowship.

On Saturday September 27th, middle school students are invited to join us at the the home of John and Sarah Hoffman (3001 old Orchard Rd NE, Cedar Rapids, IA). Please join your peers, invite a friend and come and enjoy some great food and fellowship.

We will have two more gatherings in the month of October and the times and dates for those will be sent out to parents via email or text.



## Beginners Mahjong

Did you know that First Pres. has a Chinese Mahjong Group that meets every Wednesday afternoon? Six to eight people come together for a couple of hours of fun and fellowship. This is a "come when you can" group and no expectation for weekly attendance. If you think you might be interested in learning how to play this ancient game (this is not the American version) or want something new to help pass the long winter days join us for Beginners Mahjong Session, Wednesday, September 10, 1:00pm. We will go over the basics of Mahjong and then see the game in action as the regulars begin play at 2:00. So materials can be prepared please contact Karen Carver at [karencarver45@gmail.com](mailto:karencarver45@gmail.com) to register your interest.

## Nominating Committee Begins Work

Our Nominating Committee has begun the important work of identifying members willing to serve as elders and deacons for the coming term. Over the next several weeks, committee members will be reaching out to congregation members to discuss these vital leadership roles and invite prayerful consideration of service.

**Elders** serve as spiritual leaders on Session, participating in one of four commissions (Administration, Care, Discipleship, or Proclamation) that guide the church's ministry and mission. They attend monthly meetings, help serve communion, and work together to discern God's vision for our congregation.

**Deacons** focus on pastoral care and hospitality, visiting assigned members monthly, coordinating ushers and greeters, delivering communion to homebound members, and organizing meals and cards for those in need. Both positions require a three-year commitment.

If contacted by the committee, please take time to pray about how God might be calling you to serve our church community. The slate of nominees will be presented to the congregation for election in December.

Questions about elder or deacon responsibilities? Contact pastor Heather of the church office for more information.

## Welcome Glenna Houtz: Lead Sunday School Teacher

We're delighted to welcome Glenna Houtz to our staff as Lead Sunday School Teacher in our Godly Play classrooms! A graduate of Coe College, Glenna grew up here at First Presbyterian and is excited to return to serve in this new role. She's particularly enthusiastic about incorporating her background in art into her work with the children, which dovetails nicely with the creative and hands-on nature of the Godly Play curriculum. We look forward to seeing how she'll enhance our already wonderful Sunday school program when classes resume on September 14th.

Please join us in welcoming Glenna to this important ministry!



## Landscaping Ministry Update

As time and resources permit, we are continuing to develop our limited church grounds to reflect a welcoming and peaceful outdoor space for the enjoyment of our members and our community. Two major projects are the recent stone border under the lighted cross area and the anticipated rain garden on the alley side off the parking lot. The stone border area was possible by a generous gift from Suzanne Barnes and the rain garden will be the Eagle Scout project of Ben Snapp, son of Mary and Bill Snapp. The rain garden will create a solution for the water pumped from under the elevator to be diverted and dissipated.

We are grateful for the interest and support of our members for the creation and maintenance of our outside presence, one which we endeavor to reflect the values and mission of 1st Pres.



## Readers-R-Leaders Camp: A Summer Success!

Our annual Readers-R-Leaders Camp wrapped up another successful year this July with the theme "Paws, Claws, Scales & Tales." Twenty-four children from Jane Boyd Community Center spent the week strengthening their reading skills while exploring the wonderful world of animals through books and hands-on experiences.

This year's camp was especially memorable as children met a visiting author, petted friendly llamas, and encountered magnificent raptors up close. These exciting activities brought their reading to life and created lasting memories that will keep them excited about learning.

The program continues to be a vital partnership between First Presbyterian, Coe College, and Jane Boyd, providing crucial reading support for 2nd-4th graders during the summer months when learning loss can occur.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all congregation members who supported this ministry through volunteering as reading mentors and through generous donations that provided books, t-shirts, lunches, and snacks for every child. Your investment in these young readers makes a lasting difference in their educational journey.



## Especially for You Race Sunday, October 5

Those participating in the race are still planning to run past our location but they will be finishing at Hall-Perrine Cancer Center, (not Greene Square Park). They suspect that the last walkers should be flowing past our location around 9:40 a.m. Please plan accordingly as they may still have our roads blocked.



CALENDAR

Monday September 1  
Labor Day | Church Closed

Wednesday September 3  
2:00 pm Mahjong  
6:00 pm APNC meeting

Sunday September 7  
Rally Day!  
Communion Sunday  
Fill the Cart for Food Bank

10:00 am Nursery  
10:00 Worship & LiveStream  
11:00 am Fellowship  
SEMP SCHEDULE

Monday September 8  
5:30 pm Discipleship Commission

Tuesday September 9  
5:30 pm Deacons  
6:30 Care Commission

Wednesday September 10  
2:00 pm Mahjong  
6:00 om APNC meeting

Sunday September 14  
9:00 am Insight & Nursery  
10:00 Worship & LiveStream  
10:15 am Sunday School  
11:00 am Fellowship  
SEMP SCHEDULE

Monday September 15  
6:30 pm Evening Book Group

Tuesday September 16  
5:30 Admin Commission

Wednesday September 17  
2:00 pm Mahjong  
6:00 pm APNC meeting

Thursday September 18  
6:00 Food Group

Wednesday Night Schedule:  
5:30 - 6:30 Agape Kids (3-5<sup>th</sup> grade)  
Middle School Youth (6-8<sup>th</sup> grade)  
6:00-7:00 Bell Choir  
6:30 Dinner  
7:00-6:00 High School Youth  
7:00-8:30 Chancel Choir

Saturday September 20th  
5-7 High School Youth Event

Sunday September 21  
10:00 am Nursery  
10:00 Worship & LiveStream  
11:00 am Fellowship  
SEMP SCHEDULE

Tuesday September 23  
5:30 pm Proclamation  
7:00 Session

Wednesday September 24  
2:00 pm Mahjong  
6:00 pm APNC meeting

Saturday September 27th  
5-7 Middle School Youth Event

Sunday September 28  
9:00 am Insight  
10:00 Worship & LiveStream  
11:00 am Fellowship  
SEMP SCHEDULE

Wednesday October 1  
2:00 pm Mahjong  
6:00 om APNC meeting

Sunday October 5  
Communion Sunday  
Fill the Cart for Food Bank  
9:00 am Nursery  
10:00 Worship & LiveStream  
11:00 am Fellowship  
SEMP SCHEDULE

Monday October 6  
5:30 pm Discipleship Commission

Wednesday October 8  
2:00 pm Mahjong  
6:00 om APNC meeting

S.E.M.P.  
2:00 SEMP Prep  
3:30 SEMP set up, hand out, clean up  
4:14 SEMP Greeter & Guide  
  
Food Bank Hospitality M | W | F @ 12:30  
  
Bridge to Opportunities Mon & Thurs 1:30-3:30

Sunday October 12  
9:00 am Insight  
10:00 Worship & LiveStream  
11:00 am Fellowship  
SEMP SCHEDULE  
4:00-7:00 Fall Festival

Tuesday October 14  
5:30 pm Deacons  
6:30 pm Care Commission

Wednesday October 15  
2:00 pm Mahjong  
6:00 pm APNC meeting

Thursday October 16  
6:00 Food Group

Sunday October 19  
9:00 am Insight  
10:00 Worship & LiveStream  
11:00 am Fellowship  
SEMP SCHEDULE

Monday October 20  
6:30 Evening Book Group

Tuesday October 21  
5:30 pm Admin Commission

Wednesday October 22  
2:00 pm Mahjong  
6:00 pm APNC meeting

Sunday October 26  
9:00 am Nursery & Insight  
10:00 Worship & LiveStream  
11:00 am Fellowship  
SEMP SCHEDULE

Tuesday October 28  
5:30 pm Proclamation  
7:00 pm Session

Wednesday October 29  
2:00 pm Mahjong  
6:00 pm APNC meeting

BIRTHDAYS

9/1 Elijah Davis  
9/1 Jace Winger  
9/2 John Pisney  
9/2 Elizabeth Shoemaker  
9/4 Kaelyn Pettyjohn  
9/4 Lauren Stobb  
9/5 Amy Brause  
9/5 Cindy Monroe  
9/5 Melissa Randall  
9/5 Frances Sessions  
9/6 Jan Jauhiainen  
9/7 Eileen Kunz  
9/8 John Farrier  
9/9 Vivian McClimon  
9/11 Jessica Witt  
9/12 Ed Popelka  
9/12 Charity Tyler  
9/13 Amy Morris  
9/14 Caroline Giddings  
9/15 Calvin Meyer  
9/16 Joe Shoemaker  
9/16 Kyle Wilcox  
9/17 Katie Rohde  
9/18 Matthew Wagner  
9/19 Sue Mollman  
9/19 Sandy Shoemaker  
9/20 Logan Engels  
9/21 Betsy Kutter

9/21 Elizabeth Mitchell  
9/22 Lillian Buresh  
9/22 Janice Dockendorff  
9/22 Laura Koontz  
9/25 Debra Salz  
9/26 Dorris Hotchkiss  
9/27 Bob Schley  
9/29 Bob Latham  
10/1 Lisa Alexander  
10/2 Jeremy Brigham  
10/2 Tyler Denning  
10/2 David Gehring  
10/2 Peter Jauhiainen  
10/4 Alisa Shields  
10/5 Chad Pettyjohn  
10/6 Mary Wolverton  
10/7 Sherry Purdie  
10/9 Carlo Dannenfelser  
10/9 Charles Jepsen  
10/9 Ruth Osborn  
10/9 Chad Weldon  
10/11 Hannah Brown  
10/11 Ruby Davis  
10/13 Katie Buresh  
10/14 Kris Hale  
10/16 Kate Balvanz  
10/17 Mary Humphrey  
10/18 Winston Mitchell

10/18 Alyssa Privett  
10/19 Patty Powers  
10/19 Scott Shoemaker  
10/20 Jeff Beer  
10/20 Stormy Garretson  
10/21 Matt Hoy  
10/21 Karen Stewart  
10/22 Cory Elwick  
10/24 Art Potratz  
10/25 Michael Denning  
10/26 Cassie Oliver  
10/26 Judy Schoff  
10/26 Tim Seymour  
10/29 David Crew  
10/29 Susie Shew  
10/30 Doris Courtright  
10/30 Susan Goettel  
10/30 Ed Horak  
10/30 Jack Reynolds  
10/31 Dave Morris  
10/31 Rick Richardson

ANNIVERSARIES

9/3/2005 Laura & Whealen Koontz  
9/7/1969 John & Karen Carver  
9/8/1968 Cindy & John Monroe  
9/10/1977 Priscilla & Tom Polehna  
9/11/1965 Betsy & Rod Caszatt  
9/21/2012 Andy & Beth Aalderks  
10/4/1997 Carrie & Dave Bryner

10/8/2005 Mary & Bill Snapp  
10/9/1999 Sheryl & Van Smiley  
10/13/1984 Charles & Kissy Heins  
10/16/1999 Ami & Chad Proctor  
10/19/1996 Nancy & Thomas Lackner  
10/20/2001 Alisa & Todd Shields  
10/22/1983 Greg & Lisa Thirnbeck  
10/23/1999 James & Tracy Tow

FELLOWSHIP HOSTS

9/07 Rally Day - Alisa Sheilds  
9/14 Paula Meyer & HOSTS NEEDED!  
9/21 Steve & Sue Stancato & HOSTS NEEDED!  
9/28 Paula Meyer & HOSTS NEEDED!

10/5 Karen Carver & HOSTS NEEDED!  
10/12 HOSTS NEEDED!  
10/19 HOSTS NEEDED!  
10/26 HOSTS NEEDED!



## **First Presbyterian Church**

310 Fifth Street

Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401

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## ***News and Views***

***September***

***&***

***October***

***2025***

### ***First Presbyterian Church Staff***

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#### ***Head of Staff***

Pastor Heather Hayes

#### ***Office Manager***

Stormy Garretson

#### ***Bookkeeper***

Janna Murra

#### ***Director of Music Ministries***

Fred Kiser

#### ***Organist***

Ted Cronbaugh

#### ***Youth Director***

Stan Letscher

#### ***Nursery***

Lindsay Hopp

#### ***Godly Play Teacher***

Glenna Houtz

***Phone: 319-364-6148***