

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



First Presbyterian
Church
Cedar Rapids, IA



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membership statistics

membership as of December 31, 2024	374
2024 gains	+12

By Letter of Transfer	7
By Profession of Faith	3
By Reaffirmation of Faith	2

2024 losses	-9
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By Death	9
By Letter of Transfer	0
By Request	0
Be Session Action	0

membership as of December 31, 2025	377
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BAPTISMS during the year	1
WEDDINGS during the year	0
FUNERALS during the year	6

In memorium



Allen Armbrecht



Margaret Jackson



Marcia Jepsen



Fred Johnson



Pat Lusted



George Meaney



Doug Schoff



Gloria Walko



Karen Wernimont

First Presbyterian Church Staff

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Glenna Houtz Sunday School Teacher	Allie Hayes Sunday School Teacher	Lindsay Hopp Nursery



BOARDS & COMMITTEES 2025

SESSION

Serving Through 2025

Martha Booth
Heidi Kiser
Sue Latham
Alisa Shields

Serving Through 2026

Laura Behrens
Kayleigh Bryant
Caroline Giddings
Dan Ottemoeller

Serving Through 2027

Dave Kutter
Susie McDermott
Mike Miller

Elder Elect Serving Through 2028

Marty Brown
Keith Rippy
Alisa Shields
Amy Shoemaker

DEACONS

Serving Through 2025

Carolyn Horton
Barb Kean
Gisela Steffe
Darrel Wrider

Serving Through 2026

Gary Ellis
Glenna Houtz
Catherine Mawusi
Ann Schley

Serving Through 2027

Amanda Colbert
John Monroe
Amy Morris
Laura Runkle

Deacon Elect Serving Through 2028

Paula Meyer
Gerri Mitchell
Steve & Sue Stancato
Julie & Don Vanous

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION

Dave Crew
Dave Booth
Ryan Buresh
Caroline Giddings
Tom Lackner

CARE COMMISSION

Martha Booth
Heidi Kiser
Sue Latham
Susie McDermott
Sue Stancato
Shari Stewart
Darrel Wrider

DISCIPLESHIP COMMISSION

Susan Baker
Lynda Barrow
Dave Kutter
Mike Miller
Cindy Monroe
Dan Ottemoeller

PROCLAMATION COMMISSION

Kim Bramley
Kayleigh Bryant
Ted Cronbaugh
Fred Kiser
Amy Morris
Bill Ryder
Alisa Shields

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

Serving Through 2025

Connie Richardson
Tom Lackner

Serving Through 2027

Bob Latham
Keith Rippy

Members Elect Serving Through 2028

Scott Stevenson
Elizabeth Mitchell

From the pastor

As I reflect on this past year at First Presbyterian Church, I note that this year has been marked by significant milestones and meaningful new beginnings. We celebrated paying off our building renovation loan on Pentecost Sunday with a "burning of the mortgage" - a powerful symbol of being unbound from debt and released to further creative ministry. That same day, we gathered neighbors from around Greene Square for a picnic, opening our doors and hearts to the wider community. What a crossroads moment, where our careful stewarding of the legacy gifts of the past met with our desire to share those gifts with new people and our wider community.

Our ministries flourished in countless ways. The launch of our Sewing Group brought together sewers of all skill levels to create beautiful quilts for our high school seniors while building and solidifying friendships. Our Agape Kids program continued nurturing the faith of elementary students, while our Middle and High School youth programs offered Wednesday evening spaces for young people to explore scripture and grow in relationship with Christ and one another. This summer, twenty-four community children participated in our Readers-R-Leaders Camp, strengthening their reading skills through the theme "Paws, Claws, Scales & Tales," with support from Coe College and Jane Boyd Community Center.

As a congregation we have embraced opportunities to face outward and build bridges in our community. From our participation in Cedar Rapids Pridefest to opening our doors to a variety of different community groups, we sought to embody Christ's radical welcome and deepen our understanding of the challenges facing our neighbors near and far. Weekly our building is filled, not only with the clients of the Food Bank, but with Witwer Seniors playing bridge, Bridge to Opportunities programming welcomed seniors for activities, learning, and connection, the Eastern Iowa Heritage Quilters Guild and a group of support & encouragement for those living with visual impairment. And we are regularly able to

host events for the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists, the Beethoven Club, the Ladies Literary Guild and more.

The spiritual life of our congregation deepened through worship and study. Our Lenten small groups brought members together to explore questions of worship, biblical study, mission, and hospitality while also providing input for our Vision Team. Sunday morning Insight classes covered diverse topics from journalism to mental health to democracy, enriching our understanding of the world around us. We celebrated special occasions like our outdoor worship at Indian Creek Nature Center with Barefoot Becky and the Ivanhoe Dutchmen, our Rally Sunday open house, and our Fall Festival "back to the farm" at First Presbyterian Near Ely.

This fall brought exciting developments in our congregational life. After careful discernment, we moved forward with calling a second pastor. Our Associate Pastor Nominating Committee worked diligently throughout the year, and on October 26th, we joyfully elected Anna Sheetz as our Associate Pastor. Anna was ordained on December 28th and begins her ministry with us as we open 2026. We were also honored to receive a Lilly Endowment Clergy Renewal Grant - making us one of just 220 congregations nationwide and the only Iowa congregation selected in 2025 - to support my upcoming sabbatical and congregational renewal activities.

With Deep Gratitude

None of this ministry would be possible without our exceptional staff team, and I want to express my profound gratitude for their dedication:

Stormy Garretson, our Office Manager, who keeps everything running smoothly, manages countless details with grace, and serves as a welcoming presence for all who contact our church. Her organizational gifts and "get-it-done" attitude are invaluable to our ministry.

Stan Letscher, our Director of Youth Ministry, who faithfully nurtures the faith of our young people through creative programming, mission trips, and Wednesday evening gatherings. His commitment to helping youth encounter Jesus and grow in relationship with Christ and with each other provides the foundations of faith for new generations

Fred Kiser, our Director of Music Ministries, who leads our music program with excellence and vision. From our Chancel Choir's presentation of selections from Handel's Messiah to the Appalachian Winter Cantata, his leadership enriches our worship and draws us closer to God through song.

Ted Cronbaugh, our Organist, whose musical gifts enhance our worship week after week with beauty and skill and who helps us lean into our liturgical underpinnings.

Kriangsak, our Custodian, who cleans up our messes with a smile and helps keep our building sparkling clean for all the people and groups that use it.

Lindsay Hopp, our Nursery Caregiver, who creates a safe, loving environment for our youngest members and visitors each Sunday.

Mackenzie Hayes and **Christina Hunt**, our Godly Play Teachers who wrapped up their service earlier this year after teaching our elementary students about the love of God and the ability to wonder. And to **Glenna Houtz** and **Allie Hayes** who are bringing their enthusiasm and creativity to that ministry.

I am blessed to serve alongside each of you.

Looking Ahead to 2026: Building Relationships

As we turn toward the new year and we have begun meeting and planning, one of the themes that seems to be emerging is a desire to have a renewed focus on building relationships - with one another, with our neighbors, and with God. Throughout 2025, we've seen glimpses of what this can look like: in our small groups gathered for Lenten study, in our Rally Sunday celebrations that brought longtime members and newcomers together, in our outreach to the neighborhood around our church, and in new friendships formed over sewing machines or around mahjong tables.

In 2026, we'll have new opportunities to deepen these connections. Anna's arrival will bring fresh energy and additional pastoral presence, allowing us to expand our relational ministry. During my sabbatical from April through September, I trust that you will grow in relationship with Anna and with one another in new ways, discovering gifts and strengths as a community.

But relationship-building isn't something we wait for - it's already happening every Sunday in Fellowship Hour conversations, in Wednesday night dinners shared between youth and adults, in book group gatherings, in dinner fellowship groups, and in the simple act of worshiping side by side. As we move forward, may we be intentional about making space for these connections to flourish, knowing that it is in loving relationship that we most fully reflect the God who is love.

The psalmist writes, "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1). This is my prayer for us in 2026 - that we would continue to grow as a unified community grounded in Christ's love, extending hospitality to all, and discovering together what it means to be the Body of Christ in Cedar Rapids and beyond.

Grace and peace,



From the director of music

As we close another year of music, I am deeply grateful for the members of our congregation and community who have contributed to the vibrant musical life of First Presbyterian Church. Their talents and gifts—along with their generous spirit—have filled our worship with joy and peace.

What I have cherished most are the connections: when a congregation or choir member approaches me after a service to share how a song or hymn stirred a cherished memory of a loved one or a meaningful moment in their life. At other times, it is a particular text that speaks directly to the soul. These moments of connection are where my faith is renewed.

Thank you for once again giving me the opportunity to serve you in this meaningful capacity.

In peace, Fred

From the director of youth

What an amazing year it has been for our youth program here at First Presbyterian Church. We kicked off 2025 with some amazing studies with both age groups. The middle school students dived deep into the scriptures as we explored and learned about some amazing individuals in God's Word. These individuals included the stories of: Baalam & his donkey, Ehud the king and his unfortunate demise, Elisha and his encounter with some bears, Jael and his unusual experience with a tent peg, Ezekiel's vision and how amazing God is and learning about Jesus healing a blind man with his spit and a little dirt.

The high school students took a journey through the book of Mark as we explored Jesus as being a King. We looked through the lens of His character, His followers, and what it truly means to be part of His kingdom. We explored the themes of Jesus and His ministry, compassion through God's Word, tradition and worship, acknowledging Jesus as King, what it looks like to be a servant, and the death and resurrection of the true King.

During the season of Lent 2025, the middle school students explored what it looked like for Jesus in the week leading up to His arrest, His death, and His resurrection. The high school students embarked on a journey through Lent as we explored the Grace of Jesus and understanding what grace looks like in modern context. We viewed moments from the life of Jesus in the book of John to help us understand better how the Lord's favor is extended to each one of us.

We had a variety of events that took place outside of our weekly Wednesday studies which included, an overnight lock-in, some nerf war nights, an outing to a local escape room, an outing to AirFX, an afternoon out at Potter's Obsession, and a couple of movies nights.

In the spring, the students gathered for our last overnight event for the school year. We also took time to recognize five amazing seniors that graduated in May. During the first week in June, Cassie Oliver, one of my adult youth leaders, and I, had the privilege of taking six students on a mission

trip through Be The Neighbor to St. Louis, MO for a weeklong mission trip. Be The Neighbor is an organization that we discovered and their mission is being a justice-based, service-learning trip ministry that equips youth to live lives of justice, love and service. We had an amazing week of meeting new friends, having the opportunity to serve and learn about several different organizations within the community during the week while we were there. In July, Pastor Heather and I had the privilege of taking six high school students as we joined several other churches from the East Iowa Presbytery. We traveled to Louisville, KY to participate in the Presbyterian Youth Triennium (this is an event that takes place every three years). We joined with a couple of other thousand Presbyterian youth from across the country as we experience worship and listened from various speakers and discovered more about the theme which was: As If We Were Dreaming. We learned that each of us were born to dream and that we do not dream alone, but often times we dream collectively with one another. We talked about facing our nightmares that we may experience and that when we truly experience God's sacred dreams, we are never the same. This allows us to actually wake up and dream and take on the challenge of imagining new ways of manifesting the Gospel of Christ through our actions and words.

During the month of July and August we conducted a back to school drive and through the generosity of our members, we collected many items that we then presented to the staff at Cleveland Elementary School to use with their students. In September, we returned to regular Wednesday evening programming with the students and gathering once again to share in our weekly Wednesday meals. The Wednesday evening meals are orchestrated by Karen Carver and are favorite with all of our students. A special thanks to our adults who have become table parents and sit with our students during these meals on Wednesday evenings.

We kicked off the school year with some great studies for both of our groups. The middle school students embarked on a series entitled Jonah—Living a Life Interrupted. This series allowed our middle school students a chance to learn about Jonah as we explored his rebellious journey with God calling him to go and speak to the people of Nineveh. We also discovered how God interrupts

our own lives and how we need to be open to listening to the instructions that God places within our lives. The high school students explored a study series entitled: The Gospel According to the Simpsons. For several weeks, we viewed different episodes from this iconic TV series as we explored various themes and topics that included: What is important in life, the power of prayer, skepticism and blind faith, when Bad things happen to good people, sin, and temptation.

It was a busy fall that included an overnight event in November. In December, the students participated in serving their community through our annual Star Tree shopping night. We also celebrated the holiday season and reflected on the past year by gathering together for our annual Christmas party and gift exchange held at Pastor Heather's home.

We are anxious as we look forward to another great year in 2026 for our youth program as we hope to continue to grow and learn even more about each other and God's Word. We have some wonderful studies that each group will be exploring as we begin a new year and even some wonderful studies that we will explore during the season of Lent.

We are also preparing for another great summer with the students as we prepare for the mission trips our students will be embarking on this summer. The middle school students will be traveling to Columbia Missouri from June 7th to June 12th. The theme for this trip will be Disability Inclusion and Advocacy. Our middle school students will have the opportunity to learn about the concept disability from a discipleship-focused theological perspective as they learn to identify barriers while also getting the privilege of developing a voice for advocacy when it comes to inclusion. The high school students will be traveling to Fort Collins, Colorado from July 25th to August 1st. The theme for this trip will be Housing Justice. The students attending this trip will learn how housing and homelessness affects real people. This will be a hands-on service trip mixed in with eye-opening learning opportunities. Our group may have the opportunity to help in the building of an affordable housing unit, share a meal at a home that provides housing for adults with intellectual disabilities, serve breakfast to the unhoused community or

work to support families experiencing homelessness in a variety of ways.

The youth program here at First Presbyterian Church is blessed to have such a loving and supportive church family. You have always been kind and generous givers—whether it through monetary donations or by simply spending time with our youth in various ways. Thank you First Presbyterian Church family for your continued support of our youth program. Because of you, our youth program will continue to grow and flourish. Blessings to each one of you!

Stan Letscher

From the organist

2025 has been a challenging year with several happenings. First, since we have a new organ company that is maintaining our organ, it has been a pleasure working with them. They are very precise in fixing little things here and there that need repair, and they are always spot on when it comes to tuning.

The organ continues to be one of the “leaders” across the Cedar Rapids area with community groups like the American Guild of Organists (AGO) and the Beethoven Club using it for their activities and programs. It is always wonderful to be able to open up our church and music facilities to those outside our church walls.

Many thanks to the staff, congregation and Fred Kiser for being concerned, loving and supportive while I was absent for a few weeks this past year. It means the world to me. Thank you as well to Mike Davies for filling in at the organ this past year!

As 2026 begins, there will be several exciting events and programs that will involve the organ and our church, and I cannot wait to share them with you and our community. Stay tuned!

Ted Cronbaugh, Organist

From the archives

It is the responsibility of the Archives Committee to collect, preserve and protect the records and artifacts of the church. Additionally, it is our goal to insure these records and artifacts are in a form where church members can see and enjoy them without fear of damage.

The Archives contain materials from 1847, the beginning of FPC, thru today, with provisions made for the future. Most items in the Archives are not replaceable and many are in fragile condition.

In the last year great progress has been made getting our collection sorted and placed in a working order. We are now preparing an inventory. This will enable one to search our collection for information and the location in the archives room. This is a time-consuming part of our work, but a necessity in the grand scheme.

On-going responsibilities include:

- collecting and organizing records and artifacts, preserving and protecting them in an archivally safe manner.
- maintaining a repository for past, current, and future records and artifacts
- preparing displays as requested
- responding to requests for information regarding former members and church history
- preparing a catalogue of photos and history for each item in the collection
- some items may require evaluation by a professional

The Committee includes Betsy Caszatt, Mary Noland-Houtz and Melissa Randall.

As preserving church records and history is so important, it is our goal to continue the work of the Archives. We encourage anyone to contribute items of FPC interest. Please remember the Archives when going through family memorabilia, scrapbooks and records.

From the manager of facilities

It has been a busy year of events, activities, and other things happening within the walls of our church building. There have been many who have entered and have had the opportunity to experience all that our church has to offer. Behind the scenes there is a lot of work that goes on to make sure that the appearance of our church is inviting and welcoming, not just to members, but to friends and guests that walk through our doors.

Our custodian Kriansak works hard week after week to ensure that many areas of our building are clean and presentable. Whether it is cleaning the floors, cleaning bathrooms, dusting, cleaning windows or taking out trash. A huge thank you to him for all the work that he does to keep our building looking clean and presentable.

I continue to do daily and weekly checks throughout the building on various things. Currently it is monitoring and ensuring that our heating and cooling systems are running properly so that the temperature within the building is comfortable for everyone. I am also checking on a weekly basis to ensure that our boilers are also running efficiently and making sure they are working so that our sanctuary space is at a comfortable temperature for everyone who joins us for worship each Sunday. I also do weekly checks of our emergency lights throughout the building, making sure they are working effectively and are ready in case the power ever goes out in the building. We also have an annual inspection for our fire extinguishers, making sure that they are in working order and up to date and ready for use in case an emergency ever arises when we would need to use them.

I continue to do daily sweeps around the building picking up trash around the exterior of the building outside. During the summer months, I do my best of maintaining and controlling our friends that end up inhabiting our entry points of the building outside. We do have a no-trespass ordinance in effect for the church building for the overnight hours; however, we still have a few individuals who

have to be asked to move to another location when I arrive in the mornings.

This summer we had a minor leak in the gathering space and so we had T&K Roofing out to resolve that problem as well as repairing some minor exterior issues on the roof that were caused by a few of the storms we had.

There are other things that I do in and outside of the building to ensure that the interior and exterior of our property and building are in good standing. If by any reason there is something out of place or something that needs attention either outside the building or within the church, please do not hesitate in saying something to me so that I can ensure that it gets taken care of. I work hard to keep up with the appearance of our church building and I will continue to make sure that First Presbyterian Church is a welcoming and inviting place for all who walk through our doors.

Sincerely, Stan Letscher

administrative commission

Why

Admin Commission acts as a trellis, providing structure and support for the flourishing of FPC's worship, discipleship, mission and care. The AC oversees items pertaining to the building, finances, and personnel.

Who

Pastor Heather Hayes, Caroline Giddings, Ryan Buresh, Dave Crew, Tom Lackner, Dave Booth

What

At times in 2025 our full-time staff struggled to keep up with the workload associated with a vital and growing church family. To strengthen the team, Anna Sheetz was called to serve as our Associate Pastor beginning January 1, 2026. Pastor Heather Hayes is our Senior Pastor. Stormy Garretson is Facility Manager, Treasurer, and Office Manager. Stan Letscher continues full-time in a dual capacity, serving half-time as Youth Director and half-time Building Facilitator. All staff performance reviews have been completed. We sincerely appreciate the time and effort our staff members have made to keep our church family moving forward.

Donated revenue in 2025 was down about \$50,000 from 2024 and \$18,000 from 2023. Building maintenance and property insurance costs are still a drag on the expense side, however both costs went down last year, and our property insurance bill is less than half of what it was two years ago. Our electricity rates have climbed to almost double the previous year, while our usage remained relatively stable. Heat for the education wing is all electric as is the AC for the entire building. The Wells Fargo construction loan was paid off in May, so we are now debt free. A "Burn the Mortgage" ceremony was conducted during worship on June 8th. There was about \$35,000 left in the loan payoff fund which was moved to the maintenance reserve fund. We are grateful for the generosity of our members which enabled us to reach this level of financial independence.

The audio system was refurbished in early 2025 along with improvements to the system in Fellowship Hall. Though still too high, HVAC repair costs are trending lower as of late, while redundancy and reliability have improved. The chiller, which creates cool air for the sanctuary in summer, was given extra attention this year to hopefully extend its useful life a little longer. The VRF heating system in the education wing performs poorly when temperatures drop below zero. We have a cold weather protocol which we can initiate when sub-zero temperatures are expected. There were four extreme cold weather events in 2025, all of which were successfully endured. Improvements were made to the outside of the church in the way of plantings and stonework. A Rain Garden built by Ben Snapp and crew for his Eagle Scout project was also completed. The grounds are maintained by a loyal group of members. In 2026 work is planned to refurbish the outside door to the sacristy and the Bell Tower.





care commission

Why

The purpose of the Care Commission is to oversee the ministries of care at First Presbyterian. This includes promoting fellowship and hospitality, working with the deacons to attend to the physical and emotional needs of the congregation, reaching out to those outside our congregation, and fostering a spirit of welcome and inclusion.

Who

Martha Booth, Heidi Kiser, Sue Latham, Susan McDermott, Sue Stancato, Shari Stewart, and Darrel Wridner

What

We promoted fellowship and hospitality by overseeing organization and implementation of food and/or fellowship for the following occasions:

- Updating our membership book and framed photos of current staff and session members (*ongoing; Heidi Kiser and Bob Naujoks are working on this*).
- We continue to foster a spirit of welcome and inclusion by promoting wearing name tags and intentionally welcoming visitors and guests.
- A welcome desk added to the Gathering Space provides a central location for welcoming visitors and providing answers to questions from members and visitors. We are working to get the desk consistently staffed and to add needed informational materials to this area.
- Welcoming new members with new member luncheons.
- Connection Sunday, a simple sandwich lunch with chips—random assignment of members to tables with “getting to know you” Q and A exercises at each table). A fun event.
- Participating in Confirmation and Graduation celebrations. Martha Booth’s personalized quilts for graduates provided a very special addition to the honoring of our graduates. Thank you Martha.
- Pentecost Picnic with Discipleship, This event was extremely well received by our members and neighbors, and we have made a list of recommendations for next year.

- Indian Creek Nature Center Worship
- Rally Sunday, Discipleship, The event included a “picnic type” lunch of pulled pork sandwiches, hot dogs, and sides. “Random” assignment to tables fostered getting to know one another better. Following lunch attendees were invited to visit various activity areas and having your ticket “punched” in each area motivated the children and adults to learn more about our programs.
- Fall Festival- chili cookout, activities for children. The Ely Barn was a very nice venue, and attendees really enjoyed the experience, but we would like to improve attendance to this event.
- Meet the Candidate for Associate Pastor. Anna Sheetz and her family were introduced at a pie and ice cream social. Posters made by Stormy provided fun facts about Anna and each of her family members. Thank you Stormy. Anna preached the following day followed by a congregational vote approving the APNC Committee’s candidate selection. Welcome Anna, Layne, Oliver, and Emily. Anna and her family were enthusiastically received.
- Volunteer Recognition, Reformation Sunday, Four members were honored for outstanding service to the church and its ministry—Marty Brown, Bob Naujoks, Steven and Susan White. Their names were added to the 11 names of members honored in 2023 and 2024. The commission plans to honor 2-3 additional members each year, and their names will be added to the plaque.
- Vespers with WHS Madrigals Members offered to decorate individual tables with a Christmas theme and/or provided special desserts for fellowship following the event. The event was extremely well received by our visiting performers and members alike.
- Blue Christmas Written invitations were sent for the Blue Christmas service to those who had recently experienced sorrow and loss.

As we move into 2026, we will be continuing to focus on improving communication and service within and beyond our church walls.

proclamation commission

Why

The Proclamation Commission has as its charge one of the Presbyterian Great Ends of the Church, “the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind.” In that effort this commission oversees the worship life of our congregation, the live streaming of various worship services, and imagines new ways to connect with and invite the greater Cedar Rapids community into a relationship with God in Christ.

Who

Kim Bramley, Kayleigh Bryant, Alisa Shields, Bill Ryder, Amy Morris. Staff support by Fred Kiser, Ted Cronbaugh, and Heather Hayes

What

In 2025 Proclamation continued to make progress on some of our projects that had begun in the prior year. Clear signage on our parking lot overhang allows people to identify our building while driving down Third Avenue and a refurbished front letter board sign will update our corner and inform people of our staff members.

We, of course, had a number of special worship opportunities through the year, such as our Indian Creek Nature Center outdoor worship, Ash Wednesday, Blue Christmas, and the return of the Living Last Supper on Maundy Thursday. Our streamed worship services have gotten much smoother, and now Parker Garretson has been hired to run our Sunday morning streaming.

We found ourselves out in the community this year at Pridefest and added in an event welcoming new students at Coe College. We now have a “go-box” with display and information about our church that can be taken to different events to share about our church’s ministries and opportunities.

As we head into 2026, we’re anticipating the creation of a social media team that will help develop and manage our online presence.



discipleship commission

Why

The Discipleship Commission exists to create opportunities for members of all ages to grow in their faith. This includes providing opportunities for education, involvement in missions, and deepening understandings of congregational stewardship.

Who

Susan Baker, Lynda Barrow, Dave Kutter, Mike Miller, Cindy Monroe, Dan Ottemoeller, Heather Hayes and Stan Letscher.

What

Sunday School continues to use Godly Play for learning about essential stories from our scriptures. In Fall, 2025, the 4th year of the program we continued with the goals of consistent programming with the two paid positions of Lead Sunday School teacher for the upper elementary and Lower Elementary Sunday School teacher. After Mackenzie Hayes decided to accept a teaching position in Minneapolis, Allie Hayes replaced her and since fall Glenna Houtz has been the lead teacher. Good job teachers!

Middle school students traveled to St. Louis for their summer mission trip, joining the “Be Thy Neighbor Program”. The middle schoolers connected with Delmar Devine and other non-profits to learn how to be advocates for people who experience poverty, barriers and challenges. The high schoolers attended the Presbyterian Triennium program held in Louisville, KY. They joined other youth in the Presbytery and made some new friends.

Heather is leading a Confirmation class of 10 enthusiastic students. The class started in the fall with the start of school, meets each Wednesday night and will culminate on Confirmation Sunday. A mentor from the congregation is paired with each student. Mentors report a very meaningful experience with our youth and their families.

Lenten Small Groups were formed with the topic of “Wilderness: Traveling Together in Faith” which was followed in worship and in our study. This study followed the lead of Jesus, who incorporated times of prayer in deserted places into the pressing demands of his daily life to listen to God’s voice and re-orient himself to God’s call.

The Youth Protection Policy was updated for the fall programming year and approved by the Session. One change was to require adults to authorize a background check prior to working with the youth. The background check is requested by church staff and performed by a third-party.

We distributed \$30,000 to charitable organizations, divided between local and international missions. We donated \$3,000 to the Pasaur School in Pakistan, and the rest of the international funds went to Presbyterian Disaster Relief, which continues to need funds to address the many world-wide disasters. Locally, we supported nine non-profit organizations, focusing on food insecurity & homelessness/housing issues.

Food Bank Hospitality (FBH) clients continue to enjoy the welcome area in our renovated basement. FBH volunteers serve around 100 clients per week and have built meaningful relationships. Volunteers and members have donated a variety of items to be distributed, all coordinated by Cindy Monroe.

Coe Reading Camp took place July 21-25. The goal of the “Readers to Leaders” Camp, led by Martha Wilding and Heather Hayes, was strengthening the foundation for 2nd-4th graders who are part of the summer reading program at Jane Boyd. Volunteers from the church and community served as reading mentors and helped guide the children through learning stations.

Star Tree, organized by Mary Noland-Houtz and Carrie Bryner, yielded gifts for 73 young people in our community. Thank you to all who donated to this program and thanks to Mary and Carrie for organizing!

The Sewing Group was a new ministry this year (in March) for new and skilled sewing, fellowship and ministry. Group members make items for church related projects as well as for personal projects. They meet on Monday’s from noon to 3:00 pm. Come join them!

This commission has a variety of activities each year and it is carried out by many volunteers in our church, some noted here, but many more behind the scenes. The commission is grateful for all the work that you, the members, put in to make the commission’s work happen.



Terms of Call For Heather Hayes

2026 Terms of Call for Heather Hayes, Pastor

Effective January 1, 2026

Salary	\$85,165
Housing Allowance	\$15,000
Pension/Medical*	\$22,242
Continuing Education	\$3,000
Professional Expense	\$3,000
Total	<u>\$128,407</u>

Other Benefits

Vacation Leave	4 weeks (20 days)/year
Study Leave	2 weeks (10 days)/year

The amounts for pension and major medical contributions are set by Presbytery based on prescribed percentages of the effective salary. Effective salary is the total salary, housing and any medical FSA (medical expense reserve)

ANNUAL MEETING of the CONGREGATION FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA February 2, 2025

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation of First Presbyterian Church was called to order with prayer by Rev. Heather Hayes at 11:10 a.m. on Sunday, February 2, 2025. The purposes of the meeting were: to approve the minutes of the previous Annual Meeting; to receive the annual reports and financial statements from 2024, as well as financial reports and attendant business of the corporation; and to approve the Terms of Call for Head of Staff, Rev. Heather Hayes for 2025. A quorum was present. A motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the agenda.

Following the reading of the Call to the Meeting, a motion was made, seconded and unanimously carried to accept the minutes of the February 4, 2024 Annual Meeting of the Congregation as printed.

PASTOR’S REPORT: Pastor Heather noted during her remarks that the past year had been a quiet one with no crises to address. We worshipped together, enjoying the beautiful music provided through choir, organ and other instrumentalists. We learned together through Insight and small groups. We continued to support and grow our programs for young people: Agape Kids, Godly Play and our youth groups. We cared for each other in fellowship and friendship, and we reached out to serve our community through SEMP and Food Bank Hospitality. We said our good byes to some and welcomed others. It was an uneventful year of faithfulness. We look forward in 2025 to building on foundational ministries with special attention being paid to creating places of safety, connection, and welcome for our congregation and for all people. We also look forward to the unfolding process of calling a new associate pastor and pray for the Spirit’s guidance during this time.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: The Congregation was directed to Session, Commission and Deacons reports in the Annual Report for 2024. Hearing no questions, a motion was made, seconded and unanimously carried to accept the reports.

TERMS OF CALL FOR PASTOR/HEAD OF STAFF were presented by Pastor Heather Hayes:

- Salary \$82,722
- Housing \$15,000
- Medical and Pension \$20,624
- Continuing Education \$3,000
- Professional Expenses \$3,000
- **Total compensation \$124,346**

It was MSP to accept the terms of call as presented.

MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETINGS OF THE CONGREGATION AND CORPORATION: A motion was made, seconded and carried to adjourn the Meeting of the Congregation and Meeting of the Corporation. Pastor Hayes dismissed the meeting at 11:50 a.m. with prayer, asking God’s presence with us in our care for this church and each other in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,

Constance Richardson,
Clerk of Session

Rev. Heather Hayes,
Moderator

Called Congregation Meeting
First Presbyterian Church
Minutes, March 16, 2025,11:30 AM

A special meeting of the congregation for the purpose of electing a third member to the nominating committee was called to order by Pastor Heather following worship at 11:00 AM in the sanctuary.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Pastor Hayes.
Clerk_Connie Richardson declared a quorum.

Pastor Hayes put forward the name of Ryan Buresh to fill a vacancy on the nominating committee. MSP to accept Ryan’s membership on the committee.

Motion to Adjourn with prayer at 11:10 AM. Pastor Hayes gave the benediction.

Connie Richardson
Clerk

Called Congregation Meeting
First Presbyterian Church
Minutes of May 4, 2025, 11:30 AM

A called meeting of the congregation for the purpose of electing members of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee was called to order by Pastor Heather following worship at 11:00 AM in the sanctuary.

The meeting was opened with prayer by Pastor Hayes. Clerk_Connie Richardson declared a quorum.

It was MSP to elect the following to serve on the committee:

- Alissa Shields, chairperson
- Lynda Barrow
- Keith Rippy
- Christopher Tyler
- Joe Houtz

Pastor Heather Hayes is a member automatically.

Motion to Adjourn with prayer at 11:15 AM. Pastor Hayes gave the benediction.

Respectfully submitted,
Connie Richardson
Clerk

First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Congregational Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2025

Stated purpose of the meeting: The Session of First Presbyterian Church called a congregational meeting to include the following items: The presentation by the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (APNC) of a candidate, Anna Sheetz for the position of Associate Pastor and the concurrent vote to extend a call to the candidate.

Call to Order: The congregational meeting was called to order by The Rev. Heather Hayes at 11:03 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

Opening Prayer: Pastor hayes offered the opening prayer.

Determine a Quorum: Pastor Hayes asked the Clerk Pro Tem, Caroline Giddings, to determine if a quorum was present. A quorum was present.

Report of the APNC: Keith Rippy, representing the APNC, shared the thoughtful and prayerful process followed by the committee and presented the APNC report. The congregation was provided an info sheet on the candidate. Mr. Rippy introduced candidate Anna Sheetz.

Words from the Candidate: Anna Sheetz introduced herself and her family to the congregation. Anna has served as the Director of Chrisitan Education at First Presbyterian Church Iowa City for the past ten years. She has completed seminary and will be ordained if called to serve as Associate Pastor at First Presbyterian Church. Anna is passionate about her faith and answering God’s calling.

Time for Discussion: Anna and her family were escorted out of the Sanctuary so that the congregation could discuss her call. Following discussion, Sue Latham made a motion which was seconded by Martha Booth to extend a call with the terms as presented and discussed to Anna Sheetz to serve as Associate Pastor for First Presbyterian Church in Cedar Rapids to begin in January 2026. The motion passed unanimously.

Welcome: Pastor Hayes asked the congregation to join her in warmly welcoming our new Associate Pastor, the soon to be Reverend Anna Sheetz. Anna thanked the congregation and stated that she was humbled and thankful for the call and the support of the congregation. Paster Hayes called upon the congregation to welcome Anna and her family with open hearts, eager hands and deep gratitude for God who continues to shape and send our community in love and service.

Election of Congregational Representatives to Sign the Call: A motion was made by Susie McDermott and seconded by Dave Kutter to elect the members of the APNC to serve as congregational representatives to sign the call and to elect Caroline Giddings as Clerk Pro Tem, which was approved unanimously.

Closing Prayer: Anna Sheetz closed the congregational meeting with prayer.

Motion to Adjourn: A motion to adjourn was made by Sue Latham and seconded by Laura Behrens, which passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Caroline Giddings, Clerk Pro Tem

