

NEWS AT FIRST



Make sure you test positive for faith, keep a safe distance from doubt, and isolate unbelief.

Trust the Artist

We must offer ourselves to God like a clean, smooth canvas and not worry ourselves about what God may choose to paint on it, but at each moment, feel only the stroke of his brush. ... It is the same with a piece of stone. Each blow from the sculptor's chisel makes it feel ... as if it were being destroyed. ... All I know is that I must stay immobile in the hands of the sculptor. ... I have no idea what he is doing ... but I know his work is the best possible.

—Jean Pierre de Caussade



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THE BOY WITH THE LOAVES AND FISH

Jesus rises from his tomb, and we know that something cosmic has happened. We imagine it with great theatrics - lights, special effects, swelling violins and crashing cymbals. In our zoom Sunday school class last week, some of us spoke about how the message 'He is Risen' feels like fireworks to a shadowy world. In our church each year, we celebrate by letting balloons go up into the sky! We must express the sheer explosion of Christ's resurrection onto our scene or we'll burst ourselves.

At the same time, as our zoom class said, when we look at the scripture, we are also struck that Jesus' resurrection is quite intimate. In the early morning mist, Jesus sees Mary and whispers her name in a voice that belongs to him. He sees Thomas, and reaches out to touch him. He sees his friends in a boat, calls out to them and invites them to breakfast - fish roasted over a camp fire. Our zoom Sunday school class decided, Christ's resurrection is both thunderous and personal. Actually, and here's the catch, it's thunderous *because* it is personal.

In these COVID-19 months, there are great theatrics around us now, too - events that are quaking with resurrected power because they are beautiful and personal. People, in face masks, are saving the world, one person at a time. We see them - people of all faiths, all nationalities, all ages, types and kinds - working hard throughout the day and night to make sure that all of us, the vulnerable ones and the robust ones, are fed, loved, nurtured, hospitalized, rehabilitated and supported. It's happening as people collect garbage, recycling, as people shelve groceries and ring up your bill for hardware. It is an extended Easter in many ways, a theatrical time. In each illness, each IC unit, we see a tomb. In each hospital, we see Christ's resurrection in all of its power. People standing in the midst of suffering and death, declaring the goodness of life and the unfaltering spirit of generosity. And most of them seem unaware

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WORSHIP

Postponed until
further notice

Join us on FaceBook
or YouTube for virtual
worship.

Facebook:
[@Monticellofpc](https://www.facebook.com/Monticellofpc)

YouTube:
Search "Emory Gillespie"



of their own courage. “I’m just doing my job,” they say.

I keep thinking about the little boy in the Gospel of John who realized that thousands of people were getting hungry. Then he remembered that he had two little fish and five personal-sized loaves of barley bread. So he gave these to Jesus, who thanked the child, and that ‘thank you’ to the child became the beginning of what we know as our sacrament of communion. The Greek word for ‘thank you’ is where we get the word ‘eucharist,’ a word we sometimes use for the Lord’s Supper. I’m sure this child had no idea what he was igniting when he handed over his lunch!

In the early church, communion was not bread and wine, like we do today. It was bread and fish, from this story of the little boy! In the drawings on the walls of the catacombs, we see these sketches of believers sitting down, often with Jesus, and what are they eating? Bread and fish.

What is holy? What is sacred? What is filled with Jesus’ resurrected power? A can of sardines, really? I think this time of quarantine has helped some of us to see the church’s sacraments in a new way. A handmade face mask is holy. A hand-written note is holy. A handmade light catcher is holy. A funny home movie. A wave across the street. A flower. An eagle. A bright stream. A scribbly drawing. A lunchbox with a few sardines - carried by a child. This is how communion started? I can believe it. It’s theatrical. It’s personal. It’s big. It’s local. It’s out there! It’s right here. It starts from one person helping someone else, then it spreads so far, it feeds 5,000 people with many baskets left over!

The little thing you are doing today? Does it matter?

Yes, it’s holy. It’s aflame with resurrected power.

Blessings to you all,
Pastor Emory

Where flowers bloom, so does hope.

-Lady Bird Johnson



THANK YOU to Pastor Emory, Joan and all of the other FPC members who spent their time in quarantine sending greetings to our homebound, youth and other members of the congregation. Your good deeds made many feel very special!

THANK YOU, First Presbyterian Church, for the kind thoughts, words, flowers and Chamber Bucks on Administrative Professionals Day!

-Mackenzie 😊



TiLT Supporting Parents Virtually

While groups continue to be prevented from meeting, TiLT has found it possible to continue their support to parents. They are meeting through a video chat service, called Zoom, where parents can log on and still have virtual meetings to have group discussions and offer support to one another. They often meet weekly, as they always have, with the day of the week being flexible, depending on the participating parents' availability. What a great option during a time when peer-support is needed more than ever!



Baptism Held Virtually

Palm Sunday is a special Sunday in the christian community. It was a little more special for one family. While mass gatherings are being restricted, arrangements were made to welcome two more little people into God's family, because while the country is shut down, entry to His family is not.

Piper & Finn Bacon, daughter and son of Calvin & Desiree Bacon, siblings of older brothers, Knox & Korbin, were baptized into God's family via Zoom meeting. Pastor Emory, the Bacon family, friends, family and members of the church were present (virtually) to witness the ceremony. Welcome, Piper & Finn!

Thank you to the Food Pantry for their continued support to our community when they need it most, maybe now more than ever for some.

Consider making a donation, if you're able.

Current needs include:
Pasta sauce, toothpaste, paper towels and pet food.



People have been so generous with monetary donations, which enables the food pantry to order from the grocer and get case pricing.

If you'd like to make a **monetary donation**, checks can be taken by drop off or mailed to:

MMA (Monticello Ministerial Association)
PO Box 62
Monticello IA 52310.



Thank you to HACAP for allowing no-charge pick-ups for the food pantry, and to the Beef Council for their generous donation of beef vouchers.





Prayers for Students, Parents & Teachers

We pray for the parents, who just received a few more job titles (learning administrator, custodian/virus eliminator, lunch preparer, to name a few) when their students were sent home for the remainder of the school year, as they deal with additional stresses of their own, as many lose jobs, temporarily or permanently, or gain added workload and stress by being one of the many essential workers that are keeping this country running.

We pray for the students, who are still attempting to learn voluntarily outside of the comfort of the classrooms, without the typical resources they are provided, without their teachers and learning professionals standing by their side to give them guidance, without their friends on the playground or in lunchrooms giving them the mental break they so desperately need, who are being asked to forfeit activities, experiences and hobbies that shape them into the humans they will become, for their own health and safety.

We pray for the teachers who are working day and night to provide said voluntary learning opportunities for their students that they can't teach in a classroom, creating content in a way they've never done before, trying their hardest to give some comfort by way of routine to their students that are feeling uneasy in this unprecedented time, while providing for their own parents, spouses, children, who may be dealing with their own unknowns.

The work these groups of people are doing is so very important, as the children *are* our future. Amen.



"In life, there are many promotions in spiritual growth,
but there is no graduation." -T.J. Bach

Lord Jesus, as the ark
carried Noah and his
family through the
flood waters to a new
beginning, you have
carried me through
the waters of baptism
to new life (1 Peter
3:20-21.) For this I
praise you!





National Day of Prayer

May 7, 2020

On National Day of Prayer, and everyday:

We pray for the protection of those in the church who are high risk, protection of the income of those whose jobs will be affected, that this will unite us and not divid us, and that we be a church who will exude joy, peace and faith as we care well for one another.

We pray for the protection of area businesses, those in nursing homes and other high-risk individuals, provision of our healthcare system and protection of our local healthcare providers, wisdom of community leaders and protection of area churches.

We pray for the leaders of this world, that they have the strength for the many challenges they will face and the decisions they will have to make and be able to find rest and peace in knowing God is in control and has a plan.

We pray for peace this week in Oklahoma City during the 25th anniversary of the bombing.

We pray for the protection of America's military bases worldwide and unity to be found in the shared government.

We pray for the safe but speedy reopening of the U.S. economy and that no recurrences of the virus will come upon America.

We pray for wisdom for state leaders both in reopening their state's economies and in dealing with massive government funding shortfalls.

Amen. 🙏

www.presidentialprayerteam.org, www.longviewfbc.com

Keep in your
THOUGHTS &
PRAYERS

Pat Anderson

Lorie Schmidt

Marie Hein

Naomi Bender

Jane Corbin

Ron Behrends

Barb Null

Lorraine Haag

Marj Stubbe

Betty Lambert

Laura Eiben

Betty Wolken

Mary Jane Steiner

Irie Welch



Will we see each other? Will we still be in quarantine? Do I need to make the hard decision of distancing to protect her? Will I miss her because she's in heaven afar? While the uncertainty of what Mother's Day may bring this year, don't forget mom!

Come up with a creative way to

honor and love the woman in your life that dedicated her life to you! Remember, she's worried about you too! Moms never stop worrying, no matter your age. The worry just becomes about different things. Thank you, MOMS! 💕💕

MEMORIAL DAY, MAY 25

We remember, O Lord, all those people throughout the years who have made the supreme sacrifice for our country, for liberty, for us. Whenever we breathe the air of freedom or claim the right to justice or enjoy the privilege of worship, fill us with gratitude for those who selflessly gave the last full measure of devotion — their very lives — for our benefit.

May these brave men and women now know the joy of eternity and your presence. And may the families of the fallen receive comfort and peace amid their grief. Help us as we minister to their needs. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



“The mere whisper of the Holy Spirit can drown out the thundering noise of an entire world.”

-David Jeremiah



L I F E L I N E
SCREENINGS THAT
WERE SCHEDULED
FOR MONDAY, APRIL
20TH WERE
CANCELED DUE TO
COVID-19 SAFETY
PRECAUTIONS.

PLEASE WATCH FOR A
RESCHEDULED
SCREENING DATE
THIS FALL. A VERY
LIMITED NUMBER OF
VOUCHERS ARE
TYPICALLY MADE
AVAILABLE TO FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH FOR FREE
OR REDUCED-COST
SCREENINGS.

Session News

The Session communicated via email on **Wednesday, March 25, 2020**. Through an omnibus motion, the following item was approved:

Allow a request from Pam Recker, on behalf of the Pie Ladies, to sell the pies that are already made and sitting in the church freezers. Pam will offer curbside pickup only; no one but Pam will be allowed in the church. Pam will offer this service until all pies have been sold. Motion was made, seconded and carried.

The Session communicated via email on **Wednesday, April 1, 2020**. Through an omnibus motion, the following item was presented:

Allow Church Treasurer, Dan Saunders, to pursue, with assistance from Citizens State Bank, a U.S. government "CARES" loan in the approximate amount of \$24,656.46. This loan will cover payroll expenses and related money problems during the COVID-19 pandemic; specifically the time frame of Feb. 15-June 30, 2020. Our church will not incur any fees on this loan, and it will be 100% forgivable provided our expenses during the period stated above equal or surpass the period of March 2019 thru Feb 2020.

A motion was made, seconded and carried, to allow Dan Saunders to pursue this loan.

The Session held a regular meeting via ZOOM on **Wednesday, April 8th**. We welcomed Piper and Finn Bacon into our church family; they were baptized via ZOOM meeting on Palm Sunday, April 5th, and are the children of Calvin and Desiree (Eilers) Bacon. We used this meeting time to catch up with each other and to discuss things as they are happening now and what we can do to help each other and our congregation.

Cindy Plummer Clerk of the Session

OFFERING & FINANCIALS

Did you remember to tithe today?
We offer a number of options. Please contact us if you'd like to hear them. During these uncertain times, we *thank you* for your contribution.

March Contributions: \$6,059.24

March Expenditures: \$15,494.03



PPS

Presbyterian Pie Service

The PPS was able to put together a minimal crew to add pies to the freezer. NO orders are being taken at this time. They were able to offer a curbside pickup hour on Friday, April 24 on a first come, first service basis. We thank the crew for working hard and using safety measures to be able to offer this service and a "slice" of normalcy in this ever-changing world. 🥧

Continue to watch FaceBook for more information about PPS as status updates occur. Thank you for your support!