

News At First

JUNE 2020 | FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



After returning from a lengthy mission trip overseas, John Huffman and his fellow passengers were held up in customs for two hours. When he finally made it to the packed airport lobby, Huffman realized it might take a while to find his family. But suddenly his 3-year-old daughter ran toward him yelling, “Daddy! Daddy! That’s my daddy!” and launched into his arms.

“What a welcome,” he writes. “I have never felt so loved and acknowledged in my life.” Perhaps that’s how God feels when we call on his name in worship and prayer, acknowledging him as our heavenly Father — and honoring him above all else.

PASTOR

Emory Gillespie

M 319-481-7572

EmoryGillespie@yahoo.com

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Mackenzie Kahler

O 319-481-7572

office@fpcm Monticello.org

Virtual Office Hours:

M-F, 8am-12 noon

TREASURER

Dan Saunders

Office hours vary

WORSHIP

Postponed until further notice. Join us for virtual worship via:

FACEBOOK:

@MonticelloFPC

YOUTUBE:

Search “Emory Gillespie”

Life Line Reschedule

Due to COVID-19 safety precautions, the Life Line Screening even was postponed. A new date has been sent for **Friday, September 25.**

SEASONAL ALLERGIES

PASTOR EMORY
GILLESPIE



For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

*a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
3 a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
4 a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
5 a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
6 a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
7 a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
8 a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace. ~ Ecclesiastes 3*

Each spring and fall, I get hay fever. It always takes a while for me to realize what is happening, because at first it feels like I'm coming down with the flu - achy joints, slight temperature, stomach ache and zero energy. Outside, it's just starting to get pretty. There's green grass! And buds in the trees! And kids on bikes! Every spring, I race outside, all inspired, start throwing sticks for my dogs, start snapping pictures, and start wondering why I'm wheezing.

The main thing about my allergies is - they are seasonal - meaning they are embarrassing to me, because even though my symptoms are fairly severe, the diagnosis sounds like they don't matter much. The doctor says, "Oh, it's just seasonal allergies. Drink plenty of water." Something about the word 'seasonal' feels like you just need to get over yourself.

Because of my allergies, I experience spring as a mixed bag of struggle and blessing. It's a season that's big, bold and communal. It is felt in the sweeping fields of green. At the same time, it's a season that is deeply personal. It is felt in my individual bones. I hold out my arms wide and say yes to the new season along with everyone in my state, country and world. At the same time, in my heart, I am sorting out interior aches of sluggishness and even irritability at being out of sync with the world. Why, when the world is so beautiful, do I feel so rotten? Why, when the world is so inviting, do I feel like I don't belong?

This life we are living today is also a season. This is Covid-19 season, and like all seasons, including allergy season, it is a shake-up. Happenings are both great and terrible, seismic and tiny. While some of us are struggling to provide medical care to too many people with not enough supplies,

others of us are stuck at home. While some of us are working overtime, others of us have no paycheck. While some of us are completely overwhelmed, others of us have found our groove, almost thriving on an extended vacation with our kids. And the birds are singing. The tulips are up. The rivers are sparkling.

Our sacred text says, "To everything, there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven." There is a time to plant, for example, and a time to pluck up what has been planted. Yes, we've always known that we experience our seasons together as a group - planting, harvesting and Covid-19.

But our ancient text also states that you have seasons that are deeply personal...seasons that belong just to you. You have seasons of adrenaline, trusting the world! Then, you may have a season of hibernation, where you need to heal. You will have seasons of focus, when can devote yourself to hard work, and then you can have a season of release, where you must sit by a camp fire for hours and stare. You might have seasons of knowing, when you feel confident, like an expert, doing well.

Then you could have a season of not-knowing, when you feel confused and lost.

These swells and troughs happen, not because you've done something wrong, but because you are human. This is how you are made. So, even though we are experiencing Covid-19 as a world, your experience of it will be unique to you, a season of your own.

I was washing dishes yesterday, listening to a podcast, and one of the people, Dan Levy, was talking about his life. He is now considered to be a comic genius, but as he walked us through his life story, he said, "In some chapters in our lives, we don't do so well. In other chapters, we really find our stride."

To put it spiritually, whoever you are, you are experiencing a personal season of your own. Covid-19 is happening to all of us, yes, but your unique take on it - the prayers *you* whisper, the feelings *you* sense, the uncertainties *you* carry, the secrets *you* hold, the surprises *you* cherish, the disappointments *you* weather, the nights *you* endure, the strengths *you* discover - these are the wonders that God notices and loves about just you. This is the conversation that God is having with you, only you.

When Jesus had his own season of ministry, he walked among the villages of Galilee, and he encountered people one at a time. He met each of them in their own personal seasons of faith, and he adjusted his compassion accordingly. He taught some and challenged others. He healed some and forgave others. He blessed some and shared a meal with others. He sang with some and looked at the stars with others. He taught us that God meets us where we are.

In other words, God dresses for whatever season you, personally, are experiencing - summer, winter, spring, fall, Covid-19, graduation, confirmation, sadness, euphoria, resignation or motivation - and shares your emotions with you...all season long.

Blessings to you all, Pastor Emory

Loving God,

Here at First Presbyterian Church of Monticello, we pray for all people in our congregation, entrusting each one into your care and asking that you keep us all well and safe. We pray for our farming communities, asking that you continue to heal us economically and keep us strong. We pray for our world, lifting all communities toward your sustaining presence. Open our eyes, ears and hearts to the blessings you are bringing to us in this particular season, and help us to continue our hopeful journeys with you by our side into a new season of full health and strength when we will be able to laugh, feast, play and work side-by-side again.

In Jesus' name we ask this. Amen.



As we are moving into the summer months, we are making plans to have our church building cleaned thoroughly first. Some essential ministries are continuing - such as the pie ladies and the food pantry staff - in select rooms that are being cleaned regularly. Visitors to pick up pies and food are outside primarily, or if inside, only briefly, with thorough cleaning afterwards. As the medical experts say, it is important to keep encounters infrequent and brief. Keep everyone moving through the space.

After the building is cleaned, the session will continue to talk about next steps - when and how we can be together without putting anyone in danger. Meanwhile, we will continue to have our zoom Bible studies on Sunday mornings at 10:00, video sermons on Facebook, brief worship bulletins posted, zoom Session meetings, zoom and telephone counseling and pastoral care provided (Emory's number is [319.481.7572](tel:319.481.7572)) and many of us will continue to send cards to members of our church and community. Thank you to everyone who is 'being the church' during this time, reaching out to each other, sharing Christ' love in whatever ways we can.

Please, if you go into the church building:

- limit your time there
- keep the number of people to 2 or 3
- wear your face mask
- keep 6 feet from each other
- wipe down door handles, etc. with sanitizer.

Thank you!

TILT

TiLT continues to meet remotely on a bi-weekly basis.

Food at First

Food at First was able to take some of their funds and purchase vouchers from The Cone Shoppe for a free sandwich and French fries to hand out to food pantry participants. The food pantry was able to hand these out based on client family size. What a wonderful outreach from Food at First to help families who may need extra help during this time.

Food Pantry

Current needs for those wishing to make a donation are peanut butter and laundry detergent, and gift cards to our local grocers are always a tremendous help. Those items can be dropped off during food pantry hours. THANK YOU to all of our generous neighbors that make this service a possibility! ❤️👤👤



CONGRATULATIONS
To our 2020 graduates:

Charles Bruns
Caden Reinke

Welcome to
Scott and Barb Slater,
the newest members of
First Presbyterian Church.



Bless all the fathers in the world who have accepted the responsibilities of being a parent. Guide them to be outstanding role models to their children. Let them look to His example and to parent with patience, unconditional love and understanding.

Summer calls to mind a slower pace, time off from school and work. But many still face daily demands this time of year: farmers work long hours; teachers may take seasonal work to make ends meet; parents with kids now home all day may catch up on work late at night. Still, may the longer days and warmer weather beckon you into a bit of free time this season. Listen:



“When you take time to replenish your spirit, it allows you to serve others from the overflow. You cannot serve from an empty vessel.” — Eleanor Brownn (public speaker and educator)

“Sometimes it's important to work for that pot of gold. But other times it's essential ... to make sure that your most important decision in the day [is] which color to slide down on the rainbow.” —Douglas Pagels (author)

“Rest time is not waste time; it is economy to gather fresh strength. ... In the long run, we shall do more by sometimes doing less.” —Charles Spurgeon

“Come to me, all you that are weary ... and I will give you rest. ... For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” —Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30)

Pies... Pies... And MORE Pies!

Presbyterian Pie Service has resumed pie making and baking with safety precautions in place. They are working many days with limited people helping. While *they are not taking orders at this time*, they have been able to build up a supply in the freezer to host drive-through purchasing. They were able to hold two such dates in the month of May, the 8th and the 22nd, for one hour each. They offered a number of baked and unbaked, fruit, double-crust options. Cars were lined up in the parking lot and around two sides of the building, and on Friday, May 22, **143 PIES** were sold and distributed. Thank you to the pie ladies who continue to safely prepare pies for distribution, and those who continue to show up to and patiently wait around the corners for their turn for a piece of the pie.

CUSTODIAN UPDATE

The Session received a letter of resignation from our long-time custodians, Dan and Tammi Hosford, effective May 3, 2020. A motion was made, seconded and carried, to accept this resignation, with grateful thanks to Dan and Tammi for their years of service.

The Personnel Committee began the process to hire a new custodian. The Session voted best to the applicant the Personnel Committee recommended. Peggy Green will start the 1st of June, providing a complete cleaning of the building before we reopen for services.

WITH SYMPATHY...

Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of Pat Anderson. Mary "Pat" Anderson passed away April 23, 2020. A public celebration of life will be held at First Presbyterian Church at a later date when all can gather in her honor. You can sign her guest book or leave a message at goettschonline.com. We would like to thank the Pat and family for choosing First Presbyterian Church as a recipient of her memorial donations.

Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of Jeri King-Soppe. Jerilyn King-Soppe passed away Saturday, May 9, 2020. Pastor Emory lead a private family service on Friday, May 15, 2020, at Oakwood Cemetery in Monticello, Iowa. You can sign her guest book or leave a message at goettschonline.com.

SESSION NEWS

The Session received a letter of resignation from our long-time custodians, Dan and Tammi Hosford, effective May 3, 2020. A motion was made, seconded and carried, to accept this resignation, with grateful thanks to Dan and Tammi for their years of service.

The Session voted via email on Friday, May 22nd, on the following items: 1-NO to pay outside company to come in to sanitize/clean church before we reopen; 2-NO to any outside groups using the church building until we reopen; 3-YES to allowing Pie Ladies to use the church kitchen; 4-YES to hiring new custodian, Peggy Green, to start the first of June.

IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

Lori Schmidt	Marj Stubbe
Marie Hein	Betty Lambert
Naomi Bender	Laura Eiben
Jane Corbin	Betty Wolken
Ron Behrends	Mary Jane Steiner
Barb Null	Irie Welch
Lorraine Haag	
The family of Pat Anderson	
The family of Jeri King-Soppe	

OFFERING & FINANCES

We appreciate your continued financial support in these unknowing times. If you'd like to learn more about your contribution options, please contact Dan Saunders, treasurer or the church office.

April Contributions: **\$5,413.00** (April 2019 \$8678.00)

April Expenditures: **\$13,707.98** (April 2019 13,480.87)