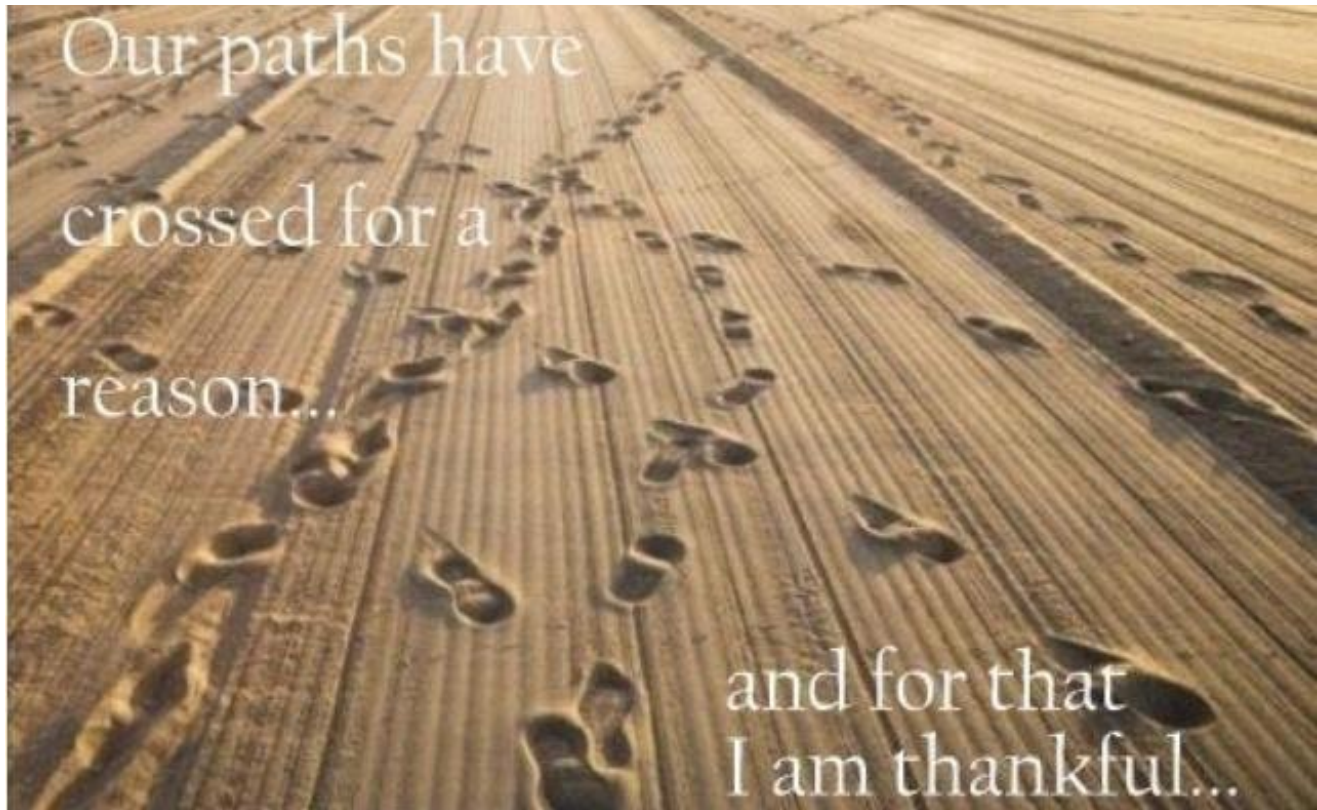


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# NEWS AT FIRST

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## When God Crosses Our Paths

Pastor and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote, “God will be constantly crossing our paths and canceling our plans by sending us people with claims and petitions.” Last spring, the whole world had plans canceled, first by Covid-19 and then by God “sending us people with claims and petitions.” Some needed prayers for healing or for coping with grief. Medical staff, teachers, pastors and others serving long hours needed support: meals, check-in calls, “thinking of you” cards. Parents working remotely while helping kids with distance-learning needed encouragement. Crucial nonprofit work still required donations.

Pre-pandemic, you may not have realized that staying home or wearing a face mask could be a ministry. Or that sending a card expresses love in Jesus’ name. Or that buying takeout from a local restaurant can be a gift to the owners. When our calendars empty, God “crosses our paths” in new ways — both to be with us and to nudge us toward others (even if virtually, or 6 feet apart!).

**FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH**

**211 W FIRST ST  
MONTICELLO IA 52310**

**PASTOR  
EMORY  
GILLESPIE**

**MOBILE:  
319-481-7572  
EMORYGILLESPIE@  
YAHOO.COM**

**OFFICE  
ADMINISTRATOR  
MACKENZIE KAHLER**

**319-465-3393  
OFFICE@FPC  
MONTICELLO.ORG**

**WORSHIP  
SUNDAYS 10 AM**

w/ Facebook sermons  
posted weekly

8:30 a.m. Bible Study  
w/ Zoom option  
BIBLE STUDY



## Jesus' Outstretched Hand

When actors read their scripts to prepare for a performance, they often talk about ‘emotional entry points.’ What they mean is that as they study their character’s part, they try to find experiences in their own life that help them step into their character’s shoes. They ask themselves, “When, in my own life, did I feel the same thing that this character is feeling?” That becomes a doorway, an entry point into the life of the story.

We do this as a spiritual exercise, too. We read our Bible stories, our sacred text, and we try to find our own ‘emotional entry points,’ so that we can feel our way through the experience of the story. By remembering our own similar experiences, we connect in a visceral way to faith stories of old. This is how we learn. This is how we grow, connecting ourselves with the sacred journey of the Bible. We find our ‘emotional entry point’ in each story.

One of our recent passages, from Matthew 14, is the story of Jesus calming the storm, and in our Bible study, we can work hard to find our ‘emotional entry points.’ We can ask ourselves, “Where is my honest emotional connection with this story?” We can ask ourselves, “Am I the ship, tossing in the storm? Am I a disciple, trying to do what is right, getting into the boat, like Jesus told me to do, and experiencing this horrible storm? Am I the storm itself, bringing my unchecked anger from home into the church, into school, into work? Am I like Jesus, reaching out my hand to help those in distress?”

For me, I definitely found my emotional entry point in the person of Peter, sinking, worrying if maybe the Jesus he saw walking toward him was a ghost or a trick. Then, that wonderful moment Peter has, realizing that Jesus was the real thing, a true help in Peter’s time of need.

That's my emotional entry point, because I know that feeling. I've known it many times. I knew it when I was crouched in the basement during the derecho storm, my fingers in my ears, my tears burning my eyes, one-hundred mph winds screaming around our house.

When we are in trouble, sometimes the people who first come to us are not really trying to help, according to this Bible story. They may look good at first, but they are not sincere. They are ghosts. Those are some awful experiences for me and for you, too, I imagine. Awful for Peter as well, thinking that Jesus may have been a ghost, someone tricking him, pretending to be helpful, but not, really.

As my own family has been struggling with the results of the derecho storm we experienced a week ago and still are recovering from - physically, emotionally and spiritually - it has been such a gift for me to receive an extended hand from many of you, a truly genuine offer of help. This is Christ in the storm. I'm also grateful for the times I was able to stretch out my hand to help others this week - cleaning out spoiled food, ruined yards and offering some emotional support, some food and drinks - trying to be Christ in the storm.

Thank you to so many of you who brought this story to life for my family and me. Thanks to you, I have a true 'entry point' into the truth of this beautiful passage in Matthew. Yes, I am trying to be Jesus, helping others. But more true this past week, I've been Peter, sinking, then realizing that there is a hand outstretched to help me, and the hand is not a trick, it's not a ghost, it's a real hand that belongs to you.

Covid-19? Racial violence? The hurricane derecho? Students back at colleges already getting sick? Tough news around the globe?

It is a storm right now, for sure. It is an old story, but a new version of it. And the emotional entry point is different for each of us. Still, whether we are the boat, the disciples, Peter or the storm itself, Christ is in the midst of it all, helping us to stay above the waves, helping us to find peace and be still and know that he is God. Amen.



Pastor Emory

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## COUNSELING OPPORTUNITY

Pastor Emory is starting an Internship for her Master's degree in Clinical Counseling this fall. If you know someone who would benefit from counseling, you may give them Pastor Emory's phone number 319.481.7572, and they can text her. She will set up four, weekly 50-minute visits. This can happen through Zoom, so they don't need to live in the area. You can recommend this opportunity to a cousin in Montana! It is completely confidential and free of charge. If you have questions about this, please contact Pastor Emory.

## Groups in the Building

After Session meeting discussion, it was decided to refrain from further opening of the building to more outside groups. They will continue to monitor the pandemic and reassess each month during the monthly session meeting. They appreciate everyone's understanding and flexibility at this time.

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### Life Line Screenings

Life Line Screening will be at First Presbyterian Church on **Friday, September 25**. Screenings offered by Life Line go beyond regular checkups to look inside your arteries for signs of plaque build up. Screening is simple, painless and non-invasive. You can sign up by calling toll-free 888-814-0416, or by registering online at [www.LifeLineScreening.com/CommunityCircle](http://www.LifeLineScreening.com/CommunityCircle). Contact the church office to inquire about a complementary screening. Limited number of vouchers available.

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### Outdoor Worship

September is a month of new beginnings. The kids head back to school, college fall term begins, and so do a number of ecumenical education programs, youth ministries, and various bible studies. Join First Presbyterian Church with a fresh start as we resume our schedule starting **Sunday, September 13**. Join us for:

8:30 a.m. Sunday school (3 years old through adult)

10:00 a.m. Worship

Our youth Sunday school program will follow the same guidelines that the Monticello Community School district is following. We ask that parents send their children only if they are comfortable with these guidelines. If you prefer to have sessions sent to your child/ren, please let us know and we will accommodate as best as we are able.

Stay tuned for more information about upcoming confirmation.

### Presbyterian Pie Service



The Presbyterian Pie Committee continues to do what they can to provide pies to the consumers of the community during this time of pandemic and precautions.

**Next drive-thru date will be Friday, September 4th.**

Please watch our Facebook page (@MonticelloFPC) for updates on times.



## CHURCH LIFE THIS FALL

Here it is, September, and unfortunately, the state of Iowa now has returned to an increasing level of Covid-19 cases. Let's keep our teachers, students and school staff members in our thoughts and prayers, as they navigate this challenging time. And all of you, in jobs where you are trying to stay safe while doing your work, our church is thinking of you. In our own church family we've had folks with the virus, and family members and friends who've gotten sick from Covid-19, and some have passed away. Some of us have lost loved ones who were weakened by the virus, then were vulnerable to something else. This has been a difficult season, and it has hit some of us in a hard, hard way. We've also know of Derecho related injury and death, too, and our hearts are heavy.

As we move into the fall, we know that the Covid-19 virus will continue to be a serious concern, and with our larger Monticello, Anamosa, Cascade, Martelle and Mount Vernon communities, our church will continue to do ministry in a way that is responsible and respectful to each other. And we will abide by the words and actions of Jesus to protect the vulnerable from harm, to love our neighbor by doing all we can to keep them healthy, and to support those who fall on health and economic hard times.

Given this Christian priority of keeping all safe, I will continue to do internet Zoom counseling, phone visits and, within certain restrictions, I've been allowed back into the hospitals now for visits, which is wonderful, and I mask myself - sometimes with a shield, too - to protect you and your loved ones. I wish it were otherwise and I miss the face-to-face contact that is more difficult these days.

Church secretary, Mackenzie, and I will coordinate our efforts (as we have been doing) by phone, email, text and zoom, creating the monthly newsletter, weekly bulletin and our Facebook presence. We too are protecting each other and our families by coordinating with each other at a distance. And office staff and I will continue - at the church office - to run bulletins, sort mail, run the newsletters, do payroll, and check on the internet for Sunday morning Bible study, worship, and other church matters.

If you need assistance please text or call me at 319.481.7572 or Mackenzie at the church office 319.465.3393 (this church number will ring to Mackenzie's location, working from home or in office). Mackenzie and I will continue to work hard to be prompt with our responses and confidential with your personal information.

Sunday mornings, we will continue to enjoy our outdoor Bible study and worship as best we can spread out under the tree. We are also experimenting with live Zoom worship during this time. We've been able to get WiFi through the church's outside wall. More about this later if we are able to be successful.

For those who would rather hear a Good Word from their home, I will keep filming a separate weekly sermon video that will be put on our church Facebook page. Our Session will meet in the Fellowship Hall, spread out with masks, as we have been doing. If your committee or fellowship group would like to convene, we can work with you to create a venue that is either outside, or spread apart in the fellowship hall, or via internet Zoom, or a combination of these.

Thank you, everyone, for working so hard behind the scenes during this very hard time to guide and support our ministry. God is with us, even now. Love, Emory



Dear Members of First Presbyterian Church,  
I am excited to have been selected for the Dale L Streif Memorial scholarship. It is humbling to receive such a generous financial gift and even more of an honor to be selected by the members of the church congregation.  
Your generous contribution will allow me to continue my Doctor of Nursing practice degree through Creighton University. I am currently in my second year of the program and plan to graduate in the spring of 2023 as a neonatal nurse practitioner. I am continuing to work as a bedside nurse at St. Luke's while completing online graduate courses and will begin my clinical rotations next summer.

The Dale L strife Memorial scholarship will help to pay for graduate courses as I complete my degree. I am incredibly grateful for this gift that eases the financial stress of going back to school while caring for a family. I appreciate the continued support provided by the First Presbyterian Church. Thank you again for this generous gift.

Sincerely,  
Lindsey R Ricklefs

Dale Streif Memorial Scholarship Committee,

Thank you so much for your very generous scholarship. I am very excited to be continuing my education as a physician assistant. Over the years the First Presbyterian Church has continuously supported me, and for that I am forever grateful.

I know I am unable to make it to church as often as I would like but every time that I return you welcome me with smiles and friendly conversation, it means so much to me. Thank you for believing in me up to the final leg of my educational journey.

Because of the scholarship my required medical equipment will be fully funded. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Sincerely,  
Katie Goettsch

God, bless all of the grandparents who put us here on this earth, and instill the values in us that make us the people we are today. **Happy Grandparents Day, September 13, 2020.**

Have you reached out to your grandparent today?

**"Youth is the gift of nature, but age is a work of art."**

-Stanislaw Jerzy Lec



**Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.**  
**-Matthew 11:28**

Wishing you all a restful and peaceful Labor Day, **Monday, September 7, 2020.** In a year that we've all worked hard to just survive, have peace.



## Food at First

Food at First is hopeful they will be able to resume monthly meals this fall. Please watch our Facebook page (@MonticelloFPC) and our monthly newsletter for updates.

## Food Pantry

The Food Pantry continues to serve the community on Mondays, 5 pm - 7 pm, and Fridays, 2 pm - 4 pm. Donations are taken at this time as well. *If you have any extra produce from your gardens this summer, we would love to share your donation with a family in need.*

Other needs include: **Paper towels, soups, ketchup, mustard, mayo and bread.**



## TiLT at the Track

TiLT has moved meetings to the track. Instead of enclosed meetings, they are meeting at the track while the weather is nice. This will be about every other week, but there is no set schedule. The group will be updated on the TiLT Together Iowa Facebook group for dates and times. "TiLT at the Track" is an opportunity for parents to walk laps around the track together. They will have casual conversations and also get some good exercise! Kids are welcome to come too. The first walk was this week and fun



September 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

*"When we long for life without difficulties, remind us that oaks grow strong in contrary winds and diamonds are made under pressure."*

-Peter Marshall

**First day of autumn, September 22, 2020** 🍁

Lorie Schmidt

Marie Hein

Jane Corbin

Ron Behrends

Barb Null

Lorraine Haag

Marj Stubbe

Betty Lambert



Doug Mettler

Marguerite Orcutt

Laura Eiben

Betty Wolken

Mary Jane Stiener

The family of

Boyd King

The family of

Todd Rollinger

The family of

Robert Rollinger

## July Contributions 2020

**\$5,962.00**

(July 2019)

(\$8,200.00)

## July Expenses 2020

**\$18,600.31**

(July 2019)

(\$12,761.57)



**August 12 Session Summary** - The Session met on Wednesday, August 9th in Fellowship Hall. The proposal submitted by the Memorial Board members for updated landscaping around the church was approved, with work to begin this fall. MSC to approve Pam Goettsch as session member on the Memorial Board. Pastor Emory led us in prayers for healing for some of our church members and others encountering difficulties due to the pandemic and derecho. Worship continues to be held outside each Sunday in

August on the west side of the church, in the shade under the tree. We are all looking forward to fall and resuming "normal" schedules and activities!