

News From First

211 W 1st St ~ Monticello, IA 52310 ~ 319-465-3393 office

Live in the Light

Often we want to be able to see into the future. We say, “How will next year be for me? Where will I be five or 10 years from now?” There are no answers to these questions. Mostly we have just enough light to see the next step – what we have to do in the coming hour or the following day.

The art of living is to enjoy what we can see and not complain about what remains in the dark. When we are able to take the next step with the trust that we will have enough light for the step that follows, we can walk through life with joy and be surprised at how far we go. Let's rejoice in the little light

we carry and not ask for the great beam that would take all our shadows away.

–Henri Nouwen, Bread for the Journey

New Year's Message

F R O M T H E P A S T O R

Hello, 2021!

How many times in the Bible do the books begin with a long litany of the big calendar events to set the stage? In the Old Testament, we have pages of big names, big events and long lists to say, “God came into our lives during this particular year.” In the New Testament, especially in the Christmas stories we’ve been reading, we have the same thing - pages of names, kings, rulers and events to drive that same idea home: God came into our lives on this particular day, when Quirinius was governor, when Caesar Augustus was the ruler, when Herod was king, for example.

For our part, we can look back at 2020, and we can see that God was here, even as we filled our hospitals around the world with sick people, even as we rushed in our protective gear to keep them alive, even as we worked overtime learning how to zoom, Facebook, video chat and post so that we could keep our children, youth, adults and grandparents safe. If we were to write a spiritual story about last year, we might begin it this way: In the year 2020, when the Covid-19 virus infected our world, the Holy Spirit dwelt among us.

And so, now we are on the cusp of a new year. . . 2021. We are hoping for something new, as Isaiah says it. We are hoping and praying that God is bringing us something we haven’t seen in a long time - a new health, a new commitment to our friends and families, a new investment in our church, a new appreciation for our communities and world.

Let us bow our heads together and offer a prayer of thanksgiving for the presence that God has given us throughout 2020. Let's bow our heads together and offer a prayer of hope that God will lead us in a new direction in 2021, when our businesses and economy will recover, when our schools will recover, when our grandparents will be able to receive visitors again, when we can make plans, when we can enjoy the great events together again - the fair, the holidays, the birthday parties and the holy days of our church. I look forward, with you, to Sunday mornings with a congregation singing in full voice again. May it be so. Amen!

Blessings,
Pastor Emory

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

211 W 1st St Monticello, IA 52310

Building Office Hours: M-F, 8 a.m. - 12 noon ~ Worship -Sundays 10:00 a.m. via
Facebook Live stream

POSTPONED: Adult Bible Study (Zoom option) & Sunday school

Facebook: @MonticelloFPC ~ YouTube: Search "Emory Gillespie"

Pastor
Emory Gillespie

cell 319-481-7572

emorygillespie@yahoo.com

Office Administrator
Mackenzie Kahler

office 319-465-3393

office@fpcmonticello.org

Treasurer
Dan Saunders

Office hours vary

PASTOR'S NOTES

Pastor Emory will be on leave **Saturday, December 26 through Friday, January 3**. She will be available by mobile phone/text for emergencies.

If you know of anyone who is in need of pastoral care, please contact Pastor Emory. 319-481-7572

Guest Leaders

Please join us during Pastor Emory's leave and hear what our guest leaders have to offer our congregation.

Sunday, December 27

Shay Stephens

Shay was born and raised in Monticello, IA. She was confirmed at First Presbyterian Church in Monticello at age 15 and volunteered with the Sunday School program during her senior year in high school. After high school, Shay left town to pursue her Bachelor of Science in Psychology. She is now in the Master of Social Work program at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. After graduate studies, Shay plans to work as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker specializing in Grief Counseling.

In her first-year undergraduate studies, Shay fell away from her faith. It was only when she endured mental health struggles when she turned to God and prayed for guidance. She was born again in early 2018 and has been striving to live a Christ-filled life since then. Her sermon will touch on her story of being a born-again Christian while navigating through college. With the new year approaching, this sermon will also incorporate themes of jealousy, sin, and repentance.

Sunday, January 3

Larry Lamont

Services will be both in-person, with social distance measures in place, as well as Facebook Live for you to join us from the safety of your home.

REMINDER: The church office will close for the holiday on Thursday, December 24. We will reopen **Monday, January 4, 2020**. Have a great New Year!



As we approach the winter weather season, watch for winter weather related announcements. A decision will be made whether to hold Sunday morning worship, ideally by 6 am. If it is decided to cancel worship, announcements will be made to KCRG, KWWL and KGAN as well as on our Facebook page: @MonticelloFPC.

Thoughts & Prayers

Jane Corbin
Betty Lambert
Doug Mettler
Lorrie Schmidt

Sunset Park Place,
Dubuque
Mary Jane Steiner

Monticello Nursing &
Rehab, Monticello
Ronald Behrends
Laura Eiben
Marie Hein

Pennington Square,
Monticello
Lorraine Haag
Barb Null
Marj Stubbe
Betty Wolken



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Our Congregation's Annual Meeting
will be held on
Sunday, January 17, 2020
at 11:00 am. following worship.

****Please submit reports by Friday,
January 8th for the Annual Report.
Thank you!



First Presbyterian Church is responsible for staffing the Food Pantry in the **month of January**. It is important to have *two volunteers staffed each shift*. Weekly times are:

- Mondays, 5 - 7 pm
- Fridays, 2 - 4 pm.

Masks are required for both volunteers and patrons, available upon request. Pre-made food boxes are being distributed, plus optional items per patron. Boxes are placed on a cart, where patrons retrieve and load. No in-house shopping at this time.

Current needs: hygiene supplies (shampoo, deodorant, anti-bacterial hand soap), soups, tuna.

Please call the church office at 319-465-3393 to help us fill the month of January. Thank you!



We would like to thank Linda Burns and Jan Takes for all the treats and long hours of hard work, Dan Saunders, Lisa Lubben, Madison Fellingner, Lydia Recker, Halle Recker for assistants with the drive thru, Peg Arduser helping customers picking up pies, Judy Mettler for the generous donation of Crisco, sugar, butter, Betty Yount for a delicious lunch, Larry and Kathy Lamont for treating us to lunches. All of their hard work and contributions are greatly appreciated. We could not have accomplished what we have done without them. Also thank you to all of our customers for supporting us. Sending blessings for a healthy and a warm holiday season. Blessings to all.

Budget REPORT

Our giving is down from last year. It could be Covid of course, but our giving has been down all year, even before Covid. So let me explain some forms of giving.

It's been a tough year, but we are grateful to be the church, and we've adapted! We've learned many things! We've learned how to zoom, stream and post online, and we are staying close to each other with

phone calls and cards. We've learned to recognize each other with masks on!

And many of us are learning how to give in new ways, too!

So let me explain some forms of giving.

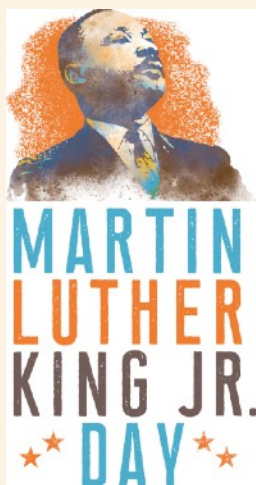
1. There is a self-addressed, stamped envelope in this month's newsletter that you may place your check into and send it to the church. Mailing your check to the church is always available for giving, but we decided to make this month's giving even easier by supplying an addressed, stamped envelope.
2. You can send your check directly to the bank if you choose. Just address the check to "1st Presbyterian Church" and in the "memo" section write "Deposit to #140160".
3. You can direct deposit your money to "Citizens State Bank, Routing Number 073921190 and checking account number 140160".
4. You can always drop your check off at church during church service or at the office between the hours of 8am-12pm Monday thru Friday.

1 Corinthians 16:2 – *"On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come."*

So I'm suggesting that we make an effort to honor our Lord by bringing forth our labors, our talents, our tithes, and our offerings and begin the New Year with renewed efforts to come together as one church, one mind, and one congregation.

Thank you for listening.

Danny C Saunders
Church Treasurer



I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become reality.

I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.

-Martin Luther King Jr.

Thank You

...to **Orbis** for the donation of their unclaimed employee holiday turkeys and hams. This will be an extra holiday blessing to some of our food pantry participants.



2021 Per Capita

\$38.03



- The Deacons wish to thank you for your generous financial donations to the Care and Share program. This year, we sponsored two families with five children. Each child received shirts, pants, and two toys. One child also needed snow pants, boots, and gloves. The families also indicated that they would welcome food and/or cleaning supplies baskets. We provided both families with Fareway gift cards. Your financial support was truly a gift for these two families!
- You are invited to stay after worship and help take down decorations after worship Sunday, January 3. Many hands make for light work!

Session Meeting Summary - December

The Session met for their regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 9, 2020. Jo Zirkelbach presented information on behalf of the Personnel Committee regarding their annual reviews with our staff. Mackenzie's salary will remain the same and Emory's financial package will be reviewed by the congregation at the annual meeting in January. Emory wishes to decline a raise this year. The Committee also recommended an annual bonus in the amount of \$100 each to the following staff members: April Keltner, Peggy Green, Dan Saunders, and Mackenzie Kahler; **MSC**.

Finance/Corporate Trust - Dan Saunders presented the 2021 budget and monthly financial report which will be reviewed by the congregation at the annual meeting. Discussion centered around the good news that all bills are paid at present time and CARES Act loan was forgiven; however our income (giving) is not keeping up with expenses. Per capita for 2021 is \$38.03, an increase of \$.03.

The Nominating Committee is finishing up with the slate of officers for 2021. Emory will be on vacation 12/26 through 1/1/21; she requested to extend her vacation an extra day through Sunday, January 3, 2021; **MSC** with pulpit supply for that day to be decided (Emory is working on filling pulpit for 12/27).

The meeting concluded at 7:50 p.m. with the Session singing-quietly-one verse of "O Come All Ye Faithful".

Cindy Plummer
Clerk of Session



Week of:	Worship:	SS:
November 29	12	-
December 6	15	3
December 13	13	0
December 20	19	0



OFFERING & FINANCIALS

Thank you for your giving and generous contributions to the church. Your contribution allows us to continue to do God's work!

November 2020 Contributions \$9,335.17
(November 2019 \$9,263.13)

November 2020 Expenditures \$13,075.64
(November 2019 \$13,275.85)