

NEWS AT FIRST

Our Mission: *To make known the love of God through Jesus Christ.*

Our Vision: *We are empowered to live out our faith in daily life.*

Life Immortal

At the end of May, Americans honor those who've died for our country – and remember all deceased loved ones. These times of reflection, often in cemeteries, can make us ponder our own mortality. Even some Christians may fear the unknown of death.

Yet because of our faith, followers of Jesus can aim to make productive use of whatever earthly time we have left. We know the grave isn't the end. Consider this poetic description of life everlasting from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: "Dust thou art, to dust returnest / was not spoken of the soul."

To our death-defying, death-defeating God we pray:

Eternal God, empower us to take hold of the eternal life to which Christ calls us, and to boldly testify of it to anyone who asks the reason for our hope. To the immortal King of the ages, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to him be honor, glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.



Pastor's (Ponderings)

After Easter, our thoughts turn to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and also to our own after life. I have heard many stories about St Peter, and the gates of heaven, the Pearly Gates. I would like to share with you one of the stories that I heard a while back.

Once there was a very rich man who bombarded the throne of God with petitions asking for the right to take his wealth with him when he died and went to heaven. He had read in the Bible, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. (Luke 11:9). Each time the man made his request, God replied, "There is no need to take it with you."

Finally, God decided to relent and said, "Since you refuse to listen to me, I will allow you to take a portion of what you have with you. You may take as much as you can carry in a suitcase."

The man was ecstatic and immediately purchased the largest streamer trunk he could find. He then set upon the task of determining what portion of his estate he would place in the trunk. "If I take stocks or bonds, it may be impossible to redeem them. If I take currency, it is not clear whether I should bring dollars, pounds, francs, or marks!"

Finally, he decided to bring gold. "There is always a market for gold." Quickly, he turned most of his wealth into gold bullion and placed the heavy bricks in to his trunk. Then he put the trunk next to his bed, and waited to meet St. Peter.

After the man died, he showed up at the gates of heaven carrying his trunk. St. Peter scratched his head and said: "Sorry. People who enter these gates must come empty-handed."

"But, I have special permission," the man insisted.

St. Peter looked in the record book and was amazed. "I've never seen this allowed before. Do you mind if I look in your trunk?" "Not at all," the man said, as he proudly opened the large container that had been packed with gleaming bricks of bullion.

St. Peter carefully examined the contents of the trunk and then looked befuddled at the man. "Paving stones," he said shaking his head. "Why did you decide to bring paving stones?"

In Christ, Pastor Gary

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Dan Saunders

WORSHIP

Sundays 10 am
8:30 am Sunday
school*
9:30 am Fellowship*
* thru May 14

Join us on FaceBook
live stream for
worship each Sunday.

Facebook:
@Monticellofpc



Congratulations to **Grant Gassman, Talan Long, Tate Long, and Dylan Ricklefs**, who were confirmed Palm Sunday (April 2nd). These young men completed their second year of confirmation classes, along with first year student Carter Willms.

Sunday, **May 14**, will be our final Sunday school class for students this school year. Students will be celebrating mothers during the morning worship service, and Sunday School students and teachers will also be recognized.



Honor Your Mother

Anna Jarvis, the woman who first suggested a national day to honor mothers, had an incredible mother to honor. Her mom, Ann Reeves Jarvis (1832-1905), was a Sunday school teacher and activist who helped lower infant-mortality rates in Appalachia and promoted friendship among families of Civil War soldiers.

At a memorial service for her mother, Anna Jarvis distributed carnations – her mom’s favorite flower – to attendees. Her idea to set apart one day each year for moms gained traction, and in 1914, President Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday of May Mother’s Day. It was customary by then to wear white carnations in honor of departed mothers and red carnations to honor the living.

Of the white flowers, Jarvis said they “symbolize the truth, purity and broad-charity of mother love; its fragrance, her memory, and her prayers. The carnation does not drop its petals, but hugs them to its heart as it dies, and so, too, mothers hug their children to their hearts, their mother love never dying.”

The church treasurer has sent in our full per capita payment of \$5,657.30, although we have received only **39.6%** to date.

If you are an active member and have not submitted **\$40.70**, please do so as soon as possible.

Thanks to everyone committed to a healthy and vital Presbyterian Church!



Thank you to those that donated Easter lilies for the sanctuary in memory of loved ones from their families:

- In memory of Alan Lubben & Robert Lubben, from the Lubben, Kelchen, Grant & Robinson families
- In memory of Bonnie & Robert Lyon, from Sandra Lyon and Anita & Roger Benedict & family
- In memory of Lola & Ernest Benedict and Lucille & Earl Benedict, from Anita & Roger Benedict & family
- In memory of Bud & Virginia Bone, Phil, Thelma & "Butch" Kuriger, and Debbie Turner, from Jim & Vickie Bone & families
- In memory of Glen, Marguerite & Rusty Orcutt and Ray, Dee & Andy Kessell, from Becky Orcutt & family
- In memory of Craig Parker, from Linda Parker & family
- In memory of Bud Bader, from his wife, four children, six grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren and their spouses
- In memory of our grandparents Jake & Lucille Bader and Fritz & Ethel Marugg, from the Bud Bader family.



Join us as we honor 2023 high school graduates (and scholarship recipients, too!) of First Presbyterian Church during worship on **Sunday, May 21 at 10:00 a.m.**

Brendan Pasker

Jase Reinke

Congratulations, Graduates!





DID YOU KNOW?...

First Presbyterian Church is joining Monticello Ministerial Association's community VBS program this summer!

All 3 year old's through 6th graders are invited to join us for this Stellar VBS to rocket kids on an out of-this-world adventure that's light years of faith-building fun!

July 31st- August 4th from 9am-1pm at the Youth Development Center.

Visit <https://forms.gle/vXbpdXPbdx9Tvh8h6> now to register!

2023 Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to our 2023 Scholarship recipients. Watch for our June newsletter for our full article highlighting our recipients and learning about these students' future plans! 2023 Scholarship recipients will be presented award certificates at worship on Sunday, May 21. Join us in congratulating them!



Thank you to the Food Pantry for their continued support to our community when they need it most.

Consider making a donation, if you're able.

Current needs include:

- Dry cereals
- Spaghetti sauce
- Toilet paper
- Shampoo
- Bleach



You can also consider 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



Each week during worship, we'd like to include a couple of church families on our Family Prayer list. For the month of May, please remember to include in your prayers each week our May families:



May 7: **Lisa Hosford and Mike & Cheryl Howie**

May 14: **Jerry Jasa and Joe, Brooke, Zander A, Asher and Ruby Johnson**

May 21: **Josh, Allison, Owen, Madalyn & Olivia Kelchen and April Keltner**

May 28: **Brien & Lisa Keltner and Keith, Amy, Brooklyn & Dylan Keltner**



THANK YOU TO PEGGY ARDUSER FOR AGAIN DONATING THE PALMS FOR PALM SUNDAY. THIS HAS BEEN A TRADITION LONG SUPPORTED BY PEGGY AND RON, AND WE ARE TRULY GRATEFUL.

Lord, we pray for patience. The search process for a called pastor can go longer than expected. It is hard work for those doing the search process. We pray for trust in the leadership.

We pray that our church will learn to place a high priority on the Word of God, the glory of Christ, and a love for His church. It is easy to gravitate towards personality, programs, or an ideal when calling a new pastor. We pray we focus on what matters: a person who loves Christ, His Word, and His church. We pray our new pastor will be a person of Christ-like character.

We pray that our church will not react to our previous pastors. We will not get a pastor like our old ones, nor should we expect to. We pray they will be loved by our church. Amen.



Mark your calendars for **July 23-28, 2023** for our 69th Synod School! Registration begins April 1.

Be prepared! Things to know about before you register: RAGBRAI, COVID-19, Online Registration, Housing – No linens this year! Construction on campus! Visit https://lakesandprairies.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/SScatalog23_B.pdf for the full catalog.



The Power of (God's) Light

Do most people truly feel happier in spring? Is the light brighter, the sky bluer? Meteorologists say yes. The shorter, blue wavelengths of sunlight scatter more efficiently than long, red ones; as the sun rises higher in spring, the light passes through less atmosphere, making the sky appear bluer. Outdoor levels of light have proven as effective as Prozac to combat depression — and May is the sunniest month!

The Bible frequently uses light as a metaphor for God: “The Lord is my light and my salvation” (Psalm 27:1); “Let us walk in the light of the Lord” (Isaiah 2:5); “The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world” (John 1:9). Darkness isn’t bad; seeds sprout in dark soil, life begins in the dark womb, and darkness protected the Hebrews fleeing Pharaoh and the holy family fleeing Herod.

But light is one apt image for God because most of us know the joy, health and energy light brings. Both in spring and through faith in the God who enlightens all, may we “live as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

—Heidi Hyland Mann

The commercial coffee maker in the kitchen was recently replaced. We are looking to sell the old coffee maker, as well as kitchen mats. Make an offer!

Further information was not available at the time of publication. For more information, contact Don Smith.



Keep in your THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

The family & friends of
Don Duncan

The family & friends of
Jane Barnts

The family & friends of
Joyce Jurgensen

Betty Lambert

Doug Mettler

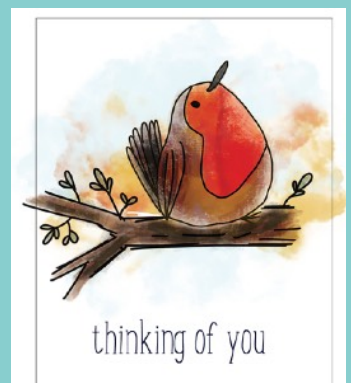
Marge Stubbe
MRNC

Lorraine Haag
Pennington

Marj Lubben
Pennington

Frank Smith
Pennington

Barb Null
Pinicon Pl





Jean Krueger sister funeral here April 29 at 11am in our church.

Don Duncan passed away March 31st.

Debbie with Lifeline scheduling in August

Next session meeting May 12th at 6:30 pm

Next stated Presbytery meeting June 15th zoom 6-8 pm

Will do community VBS July 31- Aug 4th 9-1pm Planning meeting on 27th

Paid per capita, synod and general assembly, Presbytery and One Great Hour of Sharing for this year.

Selling BIG coffee maker and floor mats if anyone is interested

Outdoor scouts will help dig up grasses and divide to plant on side with parking lot.

Will be removing evergreens, installing edgers and low maintenance plants. We will be asking the congregation to sign up to do watering the plants.

Thanks for youth special music last couple Sundays.

Scholarship (Vickie) - May 21 will be senior Sunday and scholarships will be awarded. Vickie passed out list of committee nominations for scholarships. MSC that we accept the recommendations for disbursement of scholarships put forward by the committee.

Sunday School kids created thermometer for Per Capita Sunday 2-26. Stacey and Dan to coordinate an update the last Sunday each month going forward.

PNC Currently talking with 2 pastors

Marcella and Lillian presented mission trip to TN on March 19 during worship and came to brunch to answer more questions for us the following week. They are headed back with their brother, and his friend for a 2nd trip.

Church Workday Planned for Sat Aug 26. Don & Vickie making a wish list for others to come in and help clean up church and finish projects.

Keep praying for our PNC and a called pastor for our congregation.

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 2023 Contributions: \$6,023.10 2022 \$6,389.03

March 2023 Expenditures: \$8,635.22 2022 \$15,490.38



PPS

Presbyterian Pie Service

The Presbyterian Pie Committee is taking orders and there are pies in the freezer for sale. Call

Pam (319-480-7700)

or

Kris (319-480-1538)

to place an order or for a pick up.

Thank you all for your support !

Attendance

	Worship	SS
March 26	41	12
April 2	92	11
April 9	117	8
April 16	46	4
April 23	38	4