

The background of the entire page is a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American flag, showing the red and white stripes and the blue field with white stars.

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.*

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH | JULY 2023 NEWSLETTER

FINDING FREEDOM

What does freedom look like to you? In *GraceLaced*, Ruth Chou Simons lists examples such as running unhindered, viewing a mountaintop overlook and enjoying iced tea with lemon. Because our good, creative God made us each different, our descriptions of freedom vary too. I think of deep breaths, an unhurried pace, genuine smiles, lack of regrets and deep belly laughs.

I love to laugh. Recently, during a demanding season of family celebrations, hardships and surprises, I realized I was laughing less. I felt bound to the next task on my long to-do list, but even good efficiency can shackle our spirits.

A good laugh — beyond a quick chuckle — offers many physical and emotional benefits. According to the Mayo Clinic, laughter relieves stress and pain, boosts the immune system and stimulates organs and endorphins. So today I'm determined to laugh loudly and joyfully while remembering my freedom in Christ.

—Janna Firestone

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS

Lesson 2: Learning to Ride a Bike

There are other lessons to be learned from learning to ride a bike other than to “keep peddling!” Again, my memory goes back a few years running alongside my daughter and pushing her until she peddled. I was holding her up, keeping her as erect as I could.

My second bike lesson to her was those familiar words, “Keep your balance! Keep your balance!” She instinctively made that task more difficult by suddenly throwing her weight to one side or the other when she thought she was going to fall over. She sensed she had to do something, but being a neophyte biker overcompensated, went to extremes, and thus lost the very balance she was trying to keep.

We all need to learn to keep our own balance in life's journey. One way we do that is by keeping our head up and our eyes straightly focused on those things that really count. The writer of Proverbs, for example, encourages us to look for wisdom, to search for understanding and for knowledge of God. When we focus on something of great worth like that, then we have a better chance of keeping our emotional and spiritual balance. But, beckoning to us from the side of the road, or if we start turning around on our seat to look behind us at what we've missed, and what might have been, then we are bound to lose balance and crash.

We also keep our balance by not overreacting. Most of life is not a crisis, although it often feels like it is. When our child cries in the night, or our spouse expresses anger at us, our body begins to ache, we tend to respond with anxiety. These events alarm us, and we respond with alarm. What is more healthy and appropriate for us to do is to respond to these events as alerting signals, as signals alerting us to the fact that a particular response is needed to relieve a particular stress. When we respond to events as if they are alarming crises rather than as alerting signals, then we overreact. We bounce to the extremes, take drastic action, lose our balance, and often cause others to lose their balance too. “Keep your balance!”

In Christ, GLB



211 W First St
Monticello, IA 52310
319-465-3393

Interim Pastor
Gary L Burnett
m 319-350-7638
Burnett.Anita1@gmail.com
Office Hours: W, 10am-5pm
Th, 10am-12pm

Office Administrator
Mackenzie Kahler
o 319.465-3393
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Treasurer
Dan Saunders

Worship
Sundays at 10 am

Social Media
Facebook: @MonticelloFPC

Introducing Reverend Bill Warhover—Pastoral Candidate

The first things to know about Bill is that he is married to Donna and they live in Mt Vernon, IA. Bill and Donna have three children, Matt, Erin, and Martha who all live in the St Louis area. One of the greatest joys for Bill and Donna are their 7 grandchildren, Ian, Adienn, Sage, Quinn, Mavis, Roxie, and Blythe.

Bill is a second career pastor. He was working as Director of Youth and Family Ministries in a large Presbyterian church in Crestwood, MO before going to seminary at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. On graduating Bill has served both rural and urban churches in Eastern Iowa as called pastor and interim/transitional pastor. Bill recently finished ten years with Hospice of Mercy in Cedar Rapids where he worked as a hospice chaplain. Prior to ministry Bill worked selling industrial woodworking machinery and doing service work on conveyor belts.

Bill and Donna own and operate Morning Glory which is both a vegetable farm and an event venue just south of Mt Vernon. Besides growing and selling vegetables they work to maintain connections and provide opportunities for meaningful work with clients from Goodwill of the Heartland. Bill and Donna support various feeding agencies including Southeast Linn Community Center in Mt Vernon.



New Pastor Candidate Sermon and Congregational Meeting Vote – Sunday, July 9

On Sunday July 9, 2023, the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is putting forth the nomination of our candidate, Pastor Bill Warhover, as the new pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Monticello. During this July 9 Candidating Service, Pastor Warhover will deliver the sermon during our regular 10:00am church service. Then, a Congregational Meeting will be held, with a vote to approve the Extension of a Call to him as pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Monticello.

Pastor Candidate Meet and Greet – Wednesday, June 28, 6:30pm

On Wednesday June 28th at 6:30pm, all are invited to a Meet and Greet with our Pastor Candidate, Bill Warhover, and his wife, Donna. Please join us in the Fellowship Hall for refreshments and enjoy an opportunity to meet and talk with Bill and Donna. On Sunday July 9th, Bill will be delivering the sermon during our regular church service, and a Congregational Meeting vote will be held on the approval of his Extension of a Call as pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Monticello.

**PASTOR
LEAVE**

Pastor Gary will be on vacation **July 23 - 27**.
Please call the church office in the event of a
pastoral emergency.

Dear Streif Family,

Thank you for choosing me for the Dale L Streif Scholarship award this year! I really appreciate it as I will be using the money to pay for my last year of school at the University of Iowa! First Presbyterian Church has helped me all four years, and I am super grateful!

—Caden Reinke

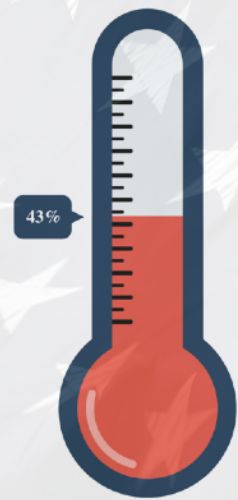
The church treasurer has sent in our full per capita payment of \$5,657.30, although we have received only **43.9%** to date.

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!



GOAL: \$5,657



As we continue on the journey of finding a called pastor, we pray that pastoral candidates that consider First Presbyterian Church of Monticello are able to get a good rest from the mental, emotional, and spiritual toll that this process takes. We pray that candidates are able to observe and pay special attention to the critical pieces that will guide them towards God's will. We pray that candidates ask good questions to learn important information about our congregation. We pray that candidates' thoughts and conversations with their families be guided by God. We pray that candidates and their families take comfort in knowing that God has a plan for them. We pray for our church at-large as there is a shortage of pastors available for the work in the harvest fields. We pray that God's will be for our pastor candidates and any congregations involved. Amen.

-adapted from *Pastoral Call Prayers*, michigandistrict.org



First Presbyterian is looking for help! If you are interested in helping, please contact a session member.

Sunday School teachers — **TWO** teachers are needed, beginning the 2023 fall term. Per the Child and Youth Protection Policy, 1) All those who volunteer to work with children and/or youth must give permission to the Pastor to do a background check. The background check will include a check of the appropriate state sex offender registries. 2) Volunteers must be members or actively affiliated with the church for at least six months before being permitted to work with children and/or youth.

Pianist — First Presbyterian Church is seeking (a) piano player(s) to accompany the congregation during worship each Sunday, on a temporary and/or permanent basis. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact a member of the Session.

The Songs & Stories of
BRENT VERNON
 SINGER-SONGWRITER • VENTRILOQUIST
 AUTHOR • ILLUSTRATOR

WITH A SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY *Sam*



A LIVE CONCERT EVENT
FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

SUNDAY, JULY 16, 2023, 6:00 PM AT
 FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 211 W 1ST ST, MONTICELLO, IA
 COST: FREE-WILL LOVE-OFFERING
WWW.BRENTVERNON.COM

MONTICELLO MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION PRESENTS:

JULY 31ST-AUGUST 4TH



3 YEAR OLD'S THROUGH 6TH GRADER

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!

Each congregation is requested to provide volunteers to make this event a success. If you are able to volunteer, please visit the Volunteer Sign-Up webpage to sign up! Don't have access, contact Pastor Frank Shepherd Jr at 563-258-3740.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c49aaac2ba4fdc52-stellar#/>

A special collection is being taken to provide our financial support of this ministry. Donate now!

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

KICK OFF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR!

FREE COMMUNITY PICNIC

MONDAY, AUGUST 21 | 5:00-7:00 PM

OUTDOOR AREA BY
UNITED CHURCH OF MONTICELLO
123 N CHESTNUT STREET

RAIN LOCATION:
MONTICELLO BERGUES CENTER

BUILD CONNECTIONS!



MENU:
 HAMBURGERS, HOT DOGS, CHIPS, APPLES, HOMEMADE COOKIES, ICE CREAM CUPS, LEMONADE & WATER

SPONSORED BY LOCAL BUSINESSES, CHURCHES, AND INDIVIDUALS



Save the Date!
 Saturday, August 26



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!
 For more information, contact Don Smith.

Turn Your Platform into an Altar

Having a platform — or an avenue to communicate with lots of people — can be useful to share important messages, as long as we don't focus on our number of followers and pageviews. A platform also may tempt us to think we're the gift being offered; instead, I like to picture an altar. It's a place of offering and humility, where we give sacrificially through the reach God provides.

Use these reminders to view your platform as an altar:

- Strive to obey and trust God, who calls and strengthens you.
- Be a good steward of God's gifts and messages, caring for the people you're reaching.
- Avoid comparisons with others, looking to God alone for validation and approval.

Through Abraham's willingness to surrender his only son, the Old Testament patriarch modeled how a platform can become an altar. So did Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God, who became the ultimate sacrifice to pay our debt. As his New Testament followers, it's our privilege to invite others into this paradoxical kingdom, to give of ourselves as a living sacrifice.

FOOD PANTRY UPDATE

Current needs for those wishing to make a donation to the food pantry are:

- **Shampoo**
- **Bleach**
- **Tuna**

Gift cards to our local grocers are always a tremendous help as we received bulk pricing.

Items can be dropped off during food pantry hours, Mondays from 5 pm-7 pm, and Fridays from 2 pm-4 pm, or 30 minutes prior to opening.

THANK YOU to all of our generous neighbors that make this service a possibility!

Synod School 2023

Last call to sign up for Synod School 2023. **July 23-28, 2023**

Be prepared! Things to know about before you register: RAGBRAI, COVID-19, Online Registration, Housing – No linens this year! Construction on campus!



For more information on Synod School 2023, stop in to the church office to view this year's program book, or visit: **lakesandprairies.org**

As the weather heats up, don't forget Presbyterian Pie Service for your dessert needs. The Pie Committee is taking orders and can make a fresh pie for your immediate satisfaction, or a frozen pie to pull out of your freezer at your convenience for your picnic or get-together, all without heating up your home!

Call **Pam (319-480-7700)** or **Kris (319-480-1538)** to place an order or schedule a pick up.

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

July 2: **Ashley, Zach, Talan & Tate Long** and **Dave & Lisa Lubben**

July 9: **Emma Lubben** and **Marj Lubben**

July 16: **Kathy Luensman** and **Sandra Lyon**

July 23: **Carmel & George Manternach** and **Pam & Curt Mayo**

July 30: **Matt, Jackie, Finley & Vivi Mayo** and **Rich & Joan McKim**

ATTENDANCE

	<u>Worship</u>
May 28	34
June 4	39
June 11	30
June 18	55
June 25	33

IN OUR THOUGHTS & PRAYERS

the family of
Bonnie Balicheck
Peg Arduser
Brett Arduser
Elaine Buol
Robert Gravel
Janean King
Betty Lambert

Doug Mettler
Janie Saunders
Betty Yount
Marge Stubbe MNRC
Lorraine Haag Pennington
Barb Null Pennington
Frank Smith Pennington

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS - JUNE 2023

- Aaron Orcutt, Suzy Gilkerson and Roger Benedict were present representing PNC. PNC has offered William Warhover the permanent pastoral position. PNC is at this meeting getting approval of benefit plan and salary. The Session approved the pastoral benefits and salary package. Candidate service set to July 9 to vote on accepting him as our called pastor. Drawing up a letter stating pastor Gary's last day/end of contract service July 31st and have clerk sign and give to Pastor Gary. PNC will have a meet & greet for incoming pastor on a Wed night. Pastor, if approved, will be starting Tue, Aug 1.
- Brent Vernon concert at our church evening of Sunday July 16th . Needs place to stay while in town – ask congregation (put in announcements and Facebook).
- Pastor did 2 home visits and 2 hospital visits this past month.
- Christian Ed Committee – Will do community VBS July 31st - Aug 4th, 9am-1pm. Will have a sign up passed in church for donations for meal and supplies. Voted to pay entire amount of our meal for VBS. First day of Sunday school Sep 10, will be when we ask kids to come talk about camp. Need to find 2 new SS teachers. Having a baked potato bar Wed, Oct 4th.
- Finance Committee – Dan handed out budget ledger for Jan-May along with payments and intake for May. Deductible for insurance going up from \$1,000 to \$2,500. Dan gave us a budget comparison with new pastor's salary in it. Dan showed us the list of what we are to check yearly for books by the book of order from presbytery.
- Building Committee – Landscaping has been paid for from memorial funds. Don changed all air exchange filters. Getting volunteers to help putting in screens in Sunday School wing and to take down next set to be repaired.
- Worship Committee – Stacey resigning at end of year from worship committee. Looking for a replacement.
- Memorial Committee– Approved to order red/white paraments with cross emblem, 3 pc set.
- Sat, Aug 26 for cleanup day. Stacey contact SS teachers and superintendent to go thru and organize their rooms. Stacey cleaned books out of library. More details as it gets closer.
- Community Back to School picnic Mon, Aug 21st, 5-7 pm, outdoor area by United Church. Looking for people to help set up and clean up and post flyers etc
- Voted to raise Sunday Worship Pianist to \$65 per Sunday. Sundays, July 2 & 23, we still need a pianist.
- Approved request for baptism - Isabel Corbin on July 16th .

OFFERING & FINANCES

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

May Contributions: **\$18,871.55**
(May 2022 \$6,966.00)

May Expenditures: **\$8,189.21**
(May 2022 \$8,624.87)

