

NEWS AT FIRST

First Presbyterian Church, 211 W 1st St, Monticello, IA 52310

Rain: A Gentle Reminder of God's Care

A rainy day can be many things ...

It can be moisture for the farmer's garden,

Or the picnic that has to be postponed;

It can be the replenishing of a stream,

Or the overflow of a flood;

It can be relief from a hot summer day,

Or the chill of an autumn wind.

The rotating cycle of clouds to Earth

Is part of Nature's plan

For stability throughout the Universe,

As old as the hills,

And dependable as the seasons.

Rain and sunshine are equal partners

In the daily expression of God's love.

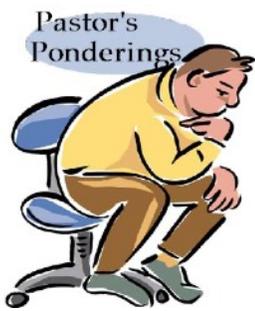
— Jeanne D. Birrell



Scholarship applications are due in physical hard-copy form **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1st!** No fooling (since they are due on April Fool's Day)! Applications can be mailed to or dropped off at the church: 211 W 1st St, Monticello, IA 52310.

We are so fortunate to be able to provide a number of options to our students looking to better their future.





On April 5th, we will celebrate Easter and enter the season of Easter. It is nice to have specific dates to observe/celebrate certain things, and it is great to have seasons to linger, but we, as Christians, are really always Easter people. People who are called to live into the hope of Easter 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Christianity is formed by Jesus' resurrection—Easter. From this point, Jesus' followers will pull away from their Jewish mother, begin a new thing, articulating what it means to follow Jesus, and working to live in the way that Jesus lived. When you stop and think about Christianity's humble and fragile beginnings and how it has grown into a faith that 2.64 billion people, or about 1/3 of the people world, adhere to, it is amazing.

I recently had a conversation with the produce guy, Matt, at the grocery store. Matt and I talk most Saturday mornings. We talk about where produce is coming from, the challenges that certain growers are having, and what he thinks I should try. We talk about family and baseball. (He's a Cub fan.) We talk about economics, and occasionally politics.

Matt started driving his wife's Prius to work lately because of gas prices. He is concerned about what rising fuel prices will mean for the cost of the produce he sells. He worried about clean water and healthy soil in a really pragmatic way.

At one point he said to me, that he is feeling pretty pessimistic.

In our life times, we have seen significant changes (in North America) to the Christian Church. In 1972, 90% of people identified as Christian, and in 2024 that number had dropped to 62%. We know this just by looking around at churches that have closed. There is a lot of hand wringing and pessimism over this decline. Smarter people than I have tried to figure out the whys of this. But in the end, at least to me, it really doesn't matter why.

At Easter, Jesus' resurrection is the answer that many people are looking for. It is not just a physical hope for some kind of eternal life, but a hope that life can be better, people can change, communities can change, nations can change. The movement that begins at Easter is built on communal caring, generosity, acceptance, working to understand the other, and service to those you don't understand. Hope.

As Easter people, 24/7/365, we are called to be hopeful in spite of the evidence around us.

Wishing you and yours a blessed, hope-filled Easter, Pastor Bill



Pastor Bill Warhover

319-202-4977

pastor@fpcm Monticello.org



**Office Administrator,
Mackenzie Kahler**

319-465-3393

office@

[fpcm Monticello.org](mailto:office@fpcm Monticello.org)

**Treasurer,
Dan Saunders**

Worship



Sundays 10:00 a.m.

8:30 a.m. youth Sunday
school

9:30 a.m. Fellowship

If you're not able to join us in person, join us for FaceBook live stream Sunday Worship service each Sunday.

Blessing of Seed and Soil, Sunday, April 12th



The service of Blessing of Seed and Soil is also known as Rogation Sunday. I learned about Rogation Sunday when I was in seminary in Dubuque through a rural ministry class. Rogation, the practice of offering prayers and fasting in order to beseech God's blessing on seed, soil, and harvest has been around since the 6th Century. Today it is more widely practiced in the Roman Catholic or Anglican traditions but Protestants have adapted the practice to fit their worship as well.

During worship on April 12th, we will gather to ask God to bless the seed and soil. We will ask God to bless and keep safe those who work the land and tend the animals that feed us.

Please plan to join us and invite others to join us as we gather to celebrate our connection to the land and to one another.

Join us on **Sunday, May 3rd, immediately following worship** for our Deacons Appreciation Brunch, serving egg casseroles and various other items.



CAMP WORKDAY

Camp Bear Creek Work Day

Camp Bear Creek will host a volunteer work day on Saturday, May 9th, from 9am-3pm. Volunteers will help get Camp ready for the summer, including tasks like setting up arts and crafts, moving furniture, cleaning lifejackets and caving helmets, organizing supplies, splitting firewood, painting, and a whole host of other things. Volunteers from our church are needed.

Please RSVP using the link: <https://forms.gle/cKtJfxkHk7WMWRD17>. *RSVP as an individual or group by the end of day on Friday, May 1st.*



Thank you to all that contributed their time, supplies, financial donations, and patronage to our annual Camp & Conference Soup Supper! Campers and volunteers were on-site and offered dine-in and carry-out service. The event served 128 people (2025-90 served). The event raised **\$2,433** for our Camp & Conference fund to send our youth to camp at no charge to youth or their family. Thank you!



Love In Between

July 26-31, 2026

Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa

What is Synod School?

Synod School is a learning and personal enrichment experience for people of all ages. We seek to create an environment of hospitality, healing, and hope. The week is designed for laity, clergy, individuals and families with classes and activities for adults, youth, and children.

People come from all over the country with their friends and families to share in this week of worship, study, play, and life together. It is an opportunity to learn something new, to continue conversations begun by key speakers with others over meals or a board game, to share talents of creativity and music, to worship without being in charge, to be energized for service, and to enjoy not having to cook for a week.

2026 Synod School Theme: Love in Between

Love in between the mountaintop and the valley. Love in between the oppressed and the powerful. Love in between the mundane and the dream. Love in between patriotism and faithfulness. Love in between crises and peace. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain..." Isaiah 40:4-5 NRSV



VBS 2026 is Announced!

August 3rd-August 7th, 2026

Parents-if your students loved the MMA VBS in 2025 at the Youth Development Center or if you missed the deadline for last year's VBS-

Please Mark Your Calendar for 2026 VBS!

Registration opens Friday, May 1st

It will again be online registration.



Registration for **Camp Bear Creek's 2026 summer camp** programs are now open.

Visit bearcreek.camp to see all of the dates and programs available this summer.

Be sure to register soon to guarantee your spot in the camp program of your choice.

Thanks for Helping Out! Giving.

It takes all of us pitching in to make the church not only work, but work in the way it was intended.

“Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people!”

— 1Cor 12:7 The Message

Each month I have been trying to remind us of how the church in general, and this church specifically, needs every one pitching in and contributing, to make ‘church’ work. I have talked about things like helping out in worship, or serving as an elder or deacon, or offering hospitality, or taking time to clean up those things that need attention. This month I want to talk about our financial giving.

One of the most important ways that we contribute to the whole is through our financial giving and generosity. It takes all of us, each doing our part, to provide for the financial well being of the church.

The church’s budget expenses this year are just over \$198,000 (down \$10,000 from 2025). Our anticipated income is budgeted at just over \$169,000 (same as 2025). Of this budgeted income amount we anticipate about \$92,000 (down \$3,000 from 2025) of giving (weekly offerings and per capita gifts) and \$77,000 (up \$3,000 from 2025) through what I would call generosity (the endowments, scholarship funds, Pie Committee contributions, special offerings, and fund raising).

Our budget is not extravagant. There is not a lot for spending on others (Mission). It basically pays the pastor and employees, keeps the building heated and cooled, and covers the insurance. (These items make up approximately 82% of our budget.)

Our giving is like a lot of things we do as the church, some of us are able to give more and some of us able to give less, but when we are all doing what we can it makes the church work the way that God intended it to.

Food Pantry Update: 🍏🍏🍞🍗🍜

*The Monticello Food Pantry is serving the community Mondays (5 p.m.-7 p.m.) and Thursdays (2 p.m.-4 p.m.).

*If you are able, consider donating to those in need. You can donate products, or consider a monetary donation. DID YOU KNOW?: When the Food Pantry receives monetary donations, they use this for needs not filled by HACAP, and those purchases are made locally (Fareway & Dollar Fresh) and are bought by the case at a discounted case pricing, so *they are able to purchase more with the money you donate. Thank you!*

*If you have a donation (product or monetary), those can be brought to the Food Pantry during normal operating hours (Mondays from 5 pm-7 pm and Thursdays from 2 pm-4pm), or a half hour before. Monetary donations can be left with the check-in volunteer located in the church. For product donations, please knock on the Food Pantry door and our volunteers would be glad to help you drop off. We will be serving people during this time, so we appreciate your patience.

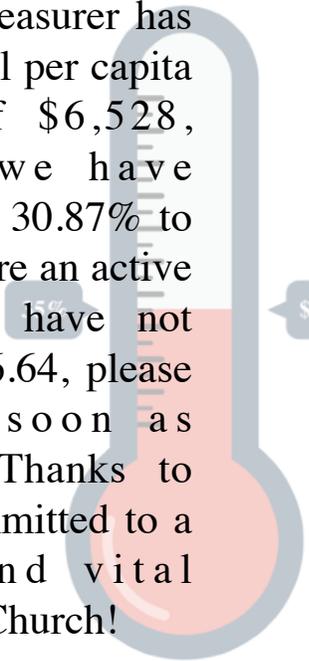
Food Pantry currently has needs, should you be able to pick up an extra item or two, or more, the next time you head to the store: **jellies/jams, chicken noodle soups, and cream of chicken soups.**

Thank you for your continued support of this local mission!

APRIL 2026

Per CAPITA \$

The church treasurer has sent in our full per capita payment of \$6,528, although we have received only 30.87% to date. If you are an active member and have not submitted \$46.64, please do so as soon as possible. Thanks to everyone committed to a healthy and vital Presbyterian Church!



Presbyterian Pie Committee

The Presbyterian Pie Committee is taking orders and there are pies in the freezer for sale. Pies make a great picnic offering, or make a regular Tuesday family dinner special. Call Kris at 319-480-1538, or Pam at 319-480-7700, to place an order or for a pick up.

We appreciate your continued business.



Evalena Lang

Barb Null, Anamosa CC

Doug Mettler

Lorraine Haag, Wellington, Decorah

Betty Yount



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



April 5: **Kathy Luensman, and Sandra Lyons**

April 12: **Carmel & George Manternach, and Curt & Pam Mayo**

April 19: **Matt, Jackie, Finley & Vivianne Mayo, and Rich & Joan McKim**

April 26: **Bill & Penny McLaughlin, and Mike & Kim McNally**



- Our **prayers and sympathy** go out to the family of LJ Takes, who died Wednesday, February 25.
- Our **prayers and sympathy** go out to the family of Marge Stubbe, who died Thursday, February 26. Memorial and service were held on Saturday, March 14 here at First Presbyterian Church.

- Congratulations to **Reagan Willms**, who was selected to be a part of the ECICDA Honor Choir.
- Congratulations to **Reagan Willms**, who was selected to be a part of the Prairie’s Young Music Honor Band.
- Congratulations to **Jackson Saunders** on his 1 rating in Choral Reading and a 2 rating in Ensemble Acting at the State Large Group Speech Contest.
- Congratulations to **Bobby Willms** (director) and **Carter Willms** (various parts) on their contributions to Suessical the Musical Jr, at Midland High School.
- Congratulations to **Jackson Saunders** (actor) on his contribution to Taming the Wild West in a Dress, at Monticello High School.
- Congratulations to **Carter Willms** on his Silver placement in Chapter Program at FFA District Competition.
- **Congratulations to Marilyn Beaudine and Joseph Chambers**, who joined the church membership March 15th. Welcome!
- Congrats to the Monticello High School Jazz Band (including **Cameron Pasker** and **Jackson Saunders**) for earning 2nd place at the NEIBA Jazz Festival, and an invitation to compete in the Iowa Jazz Championships on April 7 in Ames!
- Congratulations to the Monticello High School Boys Bowling Team (including **Cameron Pasker**) on placing 6th at State Bowling.
- Congratulations to **Grant Gassman**, recipient of the Al Lubben Memorial Scholarship, awarded at the Jones County Cattlemen’s Banquet.
- Congratulations to **Carter Willms** on his straight 1’s scores at State Speech in both After Dinner and Spontaneous.



| | Worship: | Sunday school: |
|----------|----------|----------------|
| March 1 | 68 | 10 |
| March 8 | 57 | 11 |
| March 15 | 53 | 11 |
| March 22 | 32 | 2 |

The Christian Ed Committee and Sunday School teachers are collecting **Pringles can and yogurt lids** for a Mother's Day craft. Please drop your clean donations in the collection box on the bench outside of the church office until April 24th. Thank you!



Narrative Lectionary

Text for April :

| | |
|----------|---------------|
| April 5 | John 20:1-18 |
| April 12 | John 20:19-31 |
| April 19 | Acts 9:1-19a |
| April 26 | Acts 16:16-34 |

March 2026 Session Summary

- To move the regular session meeting scheduled for May 6th . (We are hosting baccalaureate on our normal session night, May 13th.) **MSC**
- Approval to allow the Community Chorus to use the facility for their concert(s). *This is the group that Kim Specht has lead up (after Francine Head’s death, the Bravara group ceased to practice and perform here). Kim has requested that they be allowed to have their concert here the end of May (30 or 31).* **MSC**

Thank you to those that have been giving and generous to the church. We thank you for your contribution. Every little bit helps.

Thru March 8, 2026.

Income—

Actual. \$39,075.24
 Budget. \$169,183.48
 Percent. 23.10%

Expenses—

Actual. \$28,598.48
 Budget. \$198,083.81
 Percent. 14.44%



Treasurer's Report

- Notes:* 1. Paid 11th (March 2026) PILP loan interest payment, \$527.00.
 2. Paid final payment for window restoration/Phase 1 to Glass Heritage, \$11,970.00.
 3. Received Harriet Hintz quarterly interest and transferred to Memorial Account, \$82.42

Capital Campaign/Building Projects—March 2026

| | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Congregation Giving Funds. | \$131,050.00 |
| Loan Funds. | \$142,628.59 |
| Endowm/Memorial Funds. | \$26,896.75 |
| Total | \$265,775.34 |
| Expenditures. | \$242,316.38- |
| Cash on Hand. | \$58,258.96 |
| \$\$ Yet to Raise. | \$52,299.26 |