

# PRESBYTERY CONNECTION

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter of the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill  
January 10, 2019

The Presbytery Connection is a bi-weekly joint newsletter for the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill. If you would like to contribute to the Presbytery Connection, please contact Jeannie Stolee in the Presbytery office at 319-233-1747 or [northiowapresby@gmail.com](mailto:northiowapresby@gmail.com)

If you know of someone who would enjoy receiving this communication, please email or call Jeannie.

Please consider making copies of this newsletter for your Session and running several copies to make available to your congregation.

[www.presbynciowa.org](http://www.presbynciowa.org)

[www.prospecthillpresby.org](http://www.prospecthillpresby.org)

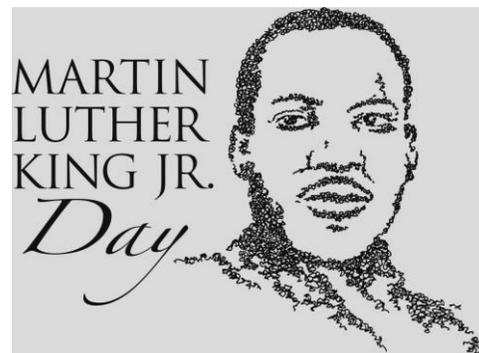
To see North Central Iowa's calendar of events, please click [here](#).

To see Prospect Hill's calendar of events, please click [here](#).

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## Presbytery Office Closed January 21, 2019

The Presbytery Office will be closed on Monday, January 21, 2019, for Martin Luther King Jr. Day



## Prayers of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

Week of January 6	Presbyterian Mission Agency – deployed mission workers
Week of January 13	First Presbyterian Church, Maxwell – Rev. Ian McMullen
Week of January 20	Salem Church of Lincoln, Lincoln – Rev. Barb Muhs
Week of January 27	First Presbyterian Church, Kamrar – Rev. Dr. Paul Fischer

## Prayers of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Week of January 6	Memorial Presbyterian Church, Cherokee – Rev. Eric Wright
Week of January 13	First Presbyterian Church, Carroll – Rev. Rikki Sorensen
Week of January 20	First Presbyterian Church, Schaller – Rev. Michael Sydnor
Week of January 27	First Presbyterian Church, Manning – Rev. Nancy Anderson

## Additional Prayer Concerns

Please continue to keep Doug O'Bannon, son of CP Shari O'Bannon, in your prayers. Doug has a very rare genetic Alpha One liver disease and it is hoped he is getting ever closer to a liver transplant. His lungs are also compromised until he receives a liver. Please include Doug's daughter, Chloe, and Shari in your prayers as well.

Please pray for the clergy and congregations of all churches in both Presbyteries as we enter a new year.

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## Churches and Pastors in Transition

The following churches and pastors are in transition:

### Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Wheatland Presbyterian Church, Breda  
Elliott Creek Presbyterian Church, Bronson  
First Presbyterian Church, Cleghorn  
First Presbyterian Church, Glidden  
Community Presbyterian Church, Lawton  
Lakeside Presbyterian Church, Storm Lake  
First Presbyterian Church, South Sioux City

### Presbytery of North Central Iowa

First Presbyterian Church, Algona  
Greater Greene County Presbyterian Ministries  
First Presbyterian Church, Irvington  
First Presbyterian Church, Grundy Center  
First Presbyterian Church, Reinbeck



Congratulations to Rev. Sara Sutter on being installed at United Presbyterian Church in Goldfield on January 6, 2019!

### 2019 Mileage Rate

The IRS mileage rate for 2019 is 58 cents per mile.

### 2019 Per Capita

<u>North Central Iowa</u>		<u>Prospect Hill</u>	
\$ 8.95	General Assembly	\$ 8.95	General Assembly
5.40	Synod	5.40	Synod
<u>22.50</u>	Presbytery	<u>26.31</u>	Presbytery
\$36.85	Total	\$40.66	Total

### 2018 Statistical Report

The 2018 Statistical Report is open and should be completed by all churches in both Presbyteries. It may be completed online by going to <http://oga.pcusa.org.stats>.

The deadline for submitting the report is February 11, 2019.

If you need help with your User ID and/or Password, please contact Jeannie in the Presbytery office (319-233-1747 or [northiowapresby@gmail.com](mailto:northiowapresby@gmail.com)).

## Ruling Elders and Clergy in Partnership

The Presbytery of North Central Iowa invites all Clergy and Ruling Elders to a one-day training on Clergy and Ruling Elders in Partnership to be held on Saturday, January 26, 2019. Dr. Joe Small will begin the conversation for a cohesive, spiritually growing and active session for your work in 2019. Dr. Small will also offer guides to begin each session meeting for 2019. Registrations must be received by January 16, 2019. Click [here](#) for more information and for the registration form.

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### Donations of Lowe's Gift Cards are Being Collected for Hurricane Florence Recovery Efforts in New Bern, North Carolina

Churches and individuals have an opportunity to make a difference in the Hurricane Florence recovery efforts in the New Bern, North Carolina area. Lowe's gift cards are being collected and will be delivered and donated to the recovery efforts when North Central Iowa's mission trip team visits the area the first week of February, 2019.

Please send gift cards by January 25, 2019, to:

Rev. David Feltman  
9206 Hess Rd.  
Waterloo, IA 50701



**Thoughts of Rev. David Feltman, Pastor to the Presbytery,  
Presbytery of North Central Iowa**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Compassion is not an option for the Christian. It does not matter if you are a Democrat or Republican, a conservative or a liberal. It does not matter if you are mainline (or sideline), Pentecostal, evangelical or Roman Catholic. Compassion is not an option.

On December 30<sup>th</sup> I preached on the epistle reading from the ecumenical lectionary, Colossians 3:12ff. Paul says, “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with **compassion....**”

Many years ago, while I was serving as Head of Staff in the Fort Dodge congregation, the staff gave me personalized license plates – GRACB2U. They did so because, for most of my years in the parish, I began worship with, “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” The plates have made me a better driver. I am less likely to cut someone off to have them read GRACB2U.

Several years ago, I was heading west on Highway 20 early on a Saturday morning, for a meeting of course. A blue Chevy was gaining on me, pulled into the left lane to pass and then dropped back. A few minutes later they were accelerating again, in the passing lane. When they were along side of me, the passenger held up a makeshift sign – “and also with you.”

I closed my sermon on Colossians 3 with this story.

One day in December I needed a little lunch and went to Taco Tico in Waterloo to get a quick bite to eat. When I pulled into the parking lot I saw an old Cadillac with the hood up and a young couple studying the problem. I went in to get my tacos. When I returned, I began driving past them to get to the exit. The young woman waved me down; she must have seen my GRACB2U plates. I suppose a “real” Christian would have stopped and asked, “Do you need some help?”

I heard their story. They were from Sioux Falls, SD, and had been to a family funeral in Indiana. The Cadillac delivered them as far as Waterloo. It would take \$300 plus to repair it. They had \$275; they needed \$86. They had two small children in the back seat. It was December in Waterloo. She asked, “Do you know of any church where we could ask for help?” I found it interesting they still thought about church when there was a need.

I know church. Where would I send them? Many, if not most churches these days, are locked up during the week. The ones which are open struggle to pay their bills and would send these folks on to other helping agencies. Some churches never did catch on that God placed Christians here to help people. I checked my wallet; I had \$74. I gave it to them with my phone number, inviting them to call me if the auto repair place would not be satisfied with a little less.

I do not tell you this story to brag. This is not the true Dave Feltman. The true Dave Feltman is a miserly old white guy who fears there may not be enough. BUT I concluded in my sermon - this grace (of Jesus) has been working on me since I was baptized in the fall of 1953 and the call to compassion is not an option for those who follow Jesus.

The world seems to be short on compassion; please memorize Colossians 3:12.

With love in Christ,  
David Feltman

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Poor Richard's Almanac  
by Richard Francis, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Prospect Hill

I was working with Presbytery Task Force that was assigned to create a job description for the General Presbyter when I made a personal appeal. "I realize I don't have a vote on this committee," I said, "but I would like to ask a favor: when you describe the characteristics of the person you want, please don't use the expression 'think outside the box.'" Naturally, they wanted to know why, and I replied that it's

become such a cliché that no one knows what it means anymore. So maybe it was inevitable that the first sample job description we looked at, one from another presbytery, said that they wanted a leader who was able to "think outside the box."

At least it provided some much-needed comic relief.

Well, I'm still allergic to that phrase, "think outside the box," but the more I think about it, the more I think it can be problematic. I believe we need leaders who can think *inside* the box.

Because we do have a "box" and we need to recognize it. It's a big box with flexible sides and top, but it *is* a box, and it's called the Reformed Tradition. We don't believe it's better than anyone else's box, but it's our box, and we can not only live in it but celebrate it.

1. For one thing, our box contains a rich confessional heritage. Many of these are easily found in the Book of Confessions, but there are others, and others yet to be written. That is part of what we do as Reformed Christians: we define and re-define our faith. But we always look back to where we have been and wrestle with what is essential and unchangeable vs. what is culturally conditioned.
2. For another thing, our box contains a rich ecclesiastical heritage. It is Christ-centered (see F-1.02, which concludes, "The Church's life and mission are a joyful participation in Christ's ongoing life and work."), democratic, and egalitarian. Teaching Elders and Ruling Elders have equal representation and equal votes at all levels of the church. No one claims it is a perfect system, but when it works as planned it works as well as or better than any other organizational system I'm familiar with.
3. Finally, our box contains a rich *ethos*. That is harder to define, and for good reason. Ethos isn't something written down or even clearly stated. Ethos is more about "who we are and the way we do things," which can be restrictive if used wrongly but liberating if used rightly.

Those are some of the positive characteristics of the "box" as I see them, and why I think it's a good idea to have leaders who "think inside the box."

Now let me say that I also believe that "thinking outside the box" is a good thing, even if I dislike the phrase.

“Thinking outside the box”, as I understand it, means constantly asking questions about why we do things this way, and at the same time asking if there might be another, better way to do them. And that, too, is part of our Reformed tradition. It is sometimes expressed in the Latin phrase, *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda*, which I am told is best translated as “The Church reformed and always being reformed.” The Book of Order puts it this way: “the church, in obedience to Jesus Christ, is open to the reform of its standards of doctrine as well as of governance. The church affirms *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda secundum verbum Dei*, that is, ‘The church reformed, always to be reformed according to the Word of God’ in the power of the Spirit.” (F-2.02) This reminds us, among other things, that we don’t reform the church. Reforming the church, like salvation, is God’s work, and it is up to us to follow God in this as in everything else. (You can read more about this subject here: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/what-we-believe/ecclesia-reformata/>)

So there are times to think outside the box. But first you have to understand and appreciate the box. And we need leaders who can do both.

Blessings,



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## Moderator Musings

Friends in Christ,

As of the first of January, I became Moderator of the Prospect Hill Presbytery. It is a part of the connectionalism which is an important part of the Presbyterian Church. We are all connected with one another, with sister churches, with the Mid-Councils, and with the national office in Louisville. We work together as a faith community seeking to bring light into a dark world and hold up and support the work that is taking place in the PC(USA).



As we move from 2018 to 2019, we can look back and see good things and not so good things both in our lives and in the world around us. Memories are important for us, but we cannot live there. Looking to the future means looking at the unknown. Richard Boyce wrote in the December 17 issue of *Presbyterian Outlook*: “One of the greatest distractions in our lives is trying to figure out what’s going to happen next. Medical specialists, financial consultants and all manner of futurists are ready to step into that role. Let us beware! Why? Because this is the one element of our lives we cannot get out of. We do not, and cannot, know what will happen next. Will our congregation grow or diminish? Will we remain behind bars or be set free? Will we live, or will we die? These are basic and essential questions – which we, as human beings, cannot answer with certainty.” But we know that we are loved by God with His promises.

A little about my background. I was raised on a dairy farm north of Jesup. After graduating from Jesup High School, I attended Iowa State University where I got both a degree and a wife, Elaine. We have now been married for more than 51 years and are blessed to have a son and a daughter, five grandchildren, one great-grandchild and other on its way in March.

For 20 years I worked for the Garst and Chrystal Families in Coon Rapids, then life took a change and I worked in Cedar Rapids for the Iowa Masonic Fraternity as the Grand Secretary (similar to executive director) and Grand Librarian for the Iowa Masonic Library and Museums. I thought that I had retired after 15 years in that position, but there came another time of transition in life.

I was a part of the first Lay Academy in 1997 and completed the classes. However, it wasn't until "retirement" that I became a Commission Lay Pastor (CP or CRE) and have served the First Presbyterian Church at Odebolt for over four years in that capacity. It is a wonderful, loving congregation that is a joy to serve.

As we look ahead in Prospect Hill, one of the things that we are looking forward to is sharing a General Presbyter with the Presbytery of North Central Iowa.

With the new year comes a change of several who serve on the various Presbytery boards and committees. Thank you to those who are going off for your service. God's blessing to those who have been elected or appointed for 2019. Especially a word of thanks goes to Donna Gray for her service as a Moderator in 2018.

While many of don't make New Year's Resolutions as such, we can look at what God does require from us. From Micah 6:8: "He has told you, O mortal, what is good: and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" That is a resolution that each of us can attempt to live up to.

Grace and Peace,

Bill Crawford  
Moderator, Presbytery of Prospect Hill

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# SAVE THE DATE

## 2018-2019 Events at Lakeshore Center at Okoboji

9.27.18 — 9.30.18

Annual Hobby and Crafting Retreat

10.11.18

Congregational Vitality 101 With Rev. Dr. Chip Hardwick

10.13.18

Fall Cleanup Day

10.27.18

Fall Festival

12.15.18

Lakeshore Christmas Open House

1.1.19

Summer Camp Online Registration Opens

1.25.19 — 1.27.19

Confirmation Retreat

2.8.19 — 2.10.18

Youth Snow Camp

2.15.19 — 2.17.19

Annual Men's Retreat

More information is on the way.  
Email [program@lakeshorecenteratokobi.org](mailto:program@lakeshorecenteratokobi.org) for details.

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# Meet the Missionaries



**Rev. Dr. Noah Park and Rev. Dr. Esther Shin –  
*Egypt***

Noah and Esther are professors at the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo, where Noah teaches biblical studies and Esther teaches Christian education. The Evangelical Seminary of Cairo is a ministry of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Egypt, and one of a handful of seminaries in Egypt that trains future Protestant pastors. Its 240 students come from across the Arab world.

Home presbytery: Riverside  
*E200536, D507591*



**Rev. Judy Chan –  
*Hong Kong, China***

Judy serves as executive secretary for communications for the Hong Kong Christian Council. Her responsibilities include producing the council's ecumenical broadcasting ministry and editing the council's English-language publications. She recently began working in the area of environmental advocacy through the Hong Kong Christians for Eco-Concern network.

Home presbytery: National Capital  
*E200323, D506109*

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Please click [here](#) for information on The Academy.