

PRESBYTERY CONNECTION

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter of the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill
November 14, 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

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

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](#).

2020 Per Capita

Prospect Hill's 2020 Per Capita is:

G.A.	\$ 8.95
Synod	5.50
Presbytery	<u>26.31</u>
	\$40.76

North Central Iowa's 2020 Per Capita is:

G.A.	\$ 8.95
Synod	5.50
Presbytery	<u>22.50</u>
	\$36.95

Prayers of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

- Week of November 10 Amity Presbyterian Church, Reinbeck – Darryl Widmayer, CRE
- Week of November 17 Burt Presbyterian Church, Burt – Walt Reemtsma, CRE
- Week of November 24 First Presbyterian Church, Woden – Rev. Sara Sutter, Moderator
- Week of December 1 East Friesland Presbyterian Church, Ackley and
First Presbyterian Church, Steamboat Rock – Lynn Arends, CRE

Prayers of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill

- Week of November 10 Honorably Retired Clergy Not Serving a Church
- Week of November 17 Pastors Who Serve as Members-at-Large – Rev. Donna Gray
Rev. Molly Dowell-Baum
- Week of November 24 The Presbytery Staff
- Week of December 1 Pray for those Elders and Pastors who have gone before us in 2019

Additional Prayer Concerns

Please keep the family of Rev. LaVern Seth in your prayers. Rev. Seth passed away on November 12, 2019.

Please pray for Tom and Jean Bower and Jean's brother-in-law, Jim, as they grieve the death of Jean's sister, Priscilla. A celebration of life was held for Priscilla in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on October 27.

Please continue to remember Doug O'Bannon, son of CRE Shari O'Bannon, in your prayers as he continues to battle a liver disease and all the symptoms that come with it.



Thank you for the calls, emails, cards and memorials on the death of my dad, and to the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill for the beautiful flower arrangement. Your thoughts and prayers have been appreciated very much.

~Jeannie Stolee

Churches in Transition

Please pray for the following churches that are in transition:

Presbytery of North Central Iowa

First Presbyterian Church, Kamrar

Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Wheatland Presbyterian Church, Breda
Elliott Creek Presbyterian Church, Bronson
First Presbyterian Church, Glidden
First Presbyterian Church, Lake Park
Community Presbyterian Church, Lawton
First Presbyterian Church, Manning
First Presbyterian Church, Paullina
Lakeside Presbyterian Church, Storm Lake
Westlawn Presbyterian Church, Sioux City
First Presbyterian Church, South Sioux City

In Sympathy

Please join in sympathy for the family, prayer for coming resurrection, and rejoicing for the life of Rev. LaVern Seth, who passed from this life on November 12 while under hospice care at Allen Hospital in Waterloo. Rev. Seth was 100 years old.

His full obituary can be found here: <https://www.kruse-phillips.com/obituary/rev-floyd-la-vern-seth>

Funeral arrangements are as follows:

Visitation

Friday, November 15, 2019
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Kruse-Phillips Funeral Home
209 E. 7th St.
Tama, Iowa

Funeral Service*

Saturday, November 16, 2019
10:30 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church
100 W. State St.
Toledo, Iowa

**Ordained leaders who attend Saturday's funeral are invited to wear robes with white stoles.*

Memorials may be sent to:

Northwest Iowa Food Bank
1605 Lafayette St.
Waterloo, IA 50703

Cards of condolence may be sent to:

Kruse-Phillips Funeral Home
Attn: Rev. Seth Family
209 E. 7th St.
Tama, IA 50703



God is doing a new thing, can you perceive it?

January 23rd, 2014 saw eight people gathered in a small conference room at Collegiate Presbyterian Church in Ames for discussions about the future of the Presbyterian ministries in North Central Iowa and Des Moines. This was the first of dozens of meetings over the next several years, some fruitful and some frustrating. Through ongoing peaks and valleys, guidance from the synod, and the addition of Prospect Hill Presbytery we realized: God's mission must lead our plans, communication is key, and we must humble ourselves to build trust among ministry partners if we are to be about faithful, joyful service to the people of Iowa. These meetings produced a model of 5 full-time shared staff that will serve all three presbyteries:

- Mission Executive – resource for the mission of the presbyteries and churches
- Pastoral Executive – support the leadership of the presbyteries and churches
- Administrative Executive who will serve as Stated Clerk and Head of Staff
- Administrative Assistant for Executive Support
- Administrative Assistant for Mission, Pastoral Care, & Presbytery Communication

On Tuesday, November 12th the Ministers and Commissioners of the Presbytery of Des Moines joined the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill in voting to approve this new, exciting, uncomfortable model of leadership.

The current staff of each presbytery will continue to serve until this new team of 3 executives and 2 assistants is formed and in place – which could take as long as 6-18 months. A search team made up of representatives from each body will convene before the end of 2019 and send out a Ministry Information Form in early 2020.

The final, affirmative vote taken at the Presbytery of Des Moines is perceived as the culmination of several years of discernment and dozens of multi-presbytery gatherings. The vote has been taken. It passed. It's over. This, however, is just the beginning. God's mission must lead our plans, communication is key, and we must humble ourselves to build trust among ministry partners if we are to be about the faithful, joyful service to the people of Iowa.

By voting to share staff among 3 distinct, unique presbyteries, we've created a new structure - a new wineskin. That's a technical solution. The challenge now is to recognize Christ in each other and join together in seeking the will of God in creating the new wine, the new ministry, which will be delightful and useful in discipling the next generation of those seeking Christ.

Rev. Ian McMullen
Transitional General Presbyter of
North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill

Buena Vista University Has a New University Chaplain and Assistant Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion



The Reverend Randle H. Lewis assumed the role of University Chaplain and Assistant Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion at Buena Vista University in August 2019. A native of Dallas, Texas, Rev. Lewis has served a variety of denominations across the U.S. and pursued his education at institutions in the States and the United Kingdom. Rev. Lewis began his ministry and ministerial education in August 1991, a year after coming to Christ. In May 1998 he received the BA in Biblical Studies (formerly the BDiv) from the Criswell College. During this time, he served as a Youth Intern and a Youth Minister at two Baptist churches, was a founding member of a church plant, taught Sunday school and small groups, and met and married his wife, Debbie.

In June 1998 Rev. Lewis and Debbie moved to South Hampton, MA to attend Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary where he completed an MA in New Testament Studies (2002) and an MA in Old Testament Studies (2004). During their time in New England, Rev. Lewis taught middle and upper school Bible at a Christian prep school, taught Sunday school and preached at several churches from Connecticut to Maine, was ordained (in the Southern Baptist Convention, 2004), and moved from the Baptist/non-denominational tradition to join the Episcopal/Anglican Church.

In October 2011 Rev. Lewis took a teaching and Bible Department Head position at a Christian high school in the Central Valley of California. While in California, Rev. Lewis regularly preached at their church, St. Paul's Anglican, Visalia, CA, and served on the Board of Examining Chaplains for the Anglican San Joaquin Diocese. Rev. Lewis also served as the coordinator for Fresno Pacific University's Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies and did a year of post-graduate work with the University of Winchester (UK).

The Lewises are excited about beginning the next chapter of their life and ministry in Storm Lake. They, along with their two Boston Terriers Fenway and Abbie, are also excited about purchasing their first home – just one block off the Buena Vista campus. Rev. Lewis looks forward to partnering with the churches throughout Buena Vista county and especially renewing the connection between Buena Vista University and the Prospect Hill Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Designated Mission Co-Worker in El Salvador

Our Sister Parish, a 501(c)(3) corporation, has a position open for a Designated Mission Co-Worker in El Salvador. Applications are being accepted until the position is filled. Please [click here](#) for the Position Announcement and information.



An Invitation for you...

ANGELUS 2019

You are cordially invited to attend the 2019 "Angelus" at Faith United Presbyterian Church, 4327 Morningside Ave., Sioux City, Iowa on **Tuesday, December 3, 2019**. A time of fellowship will begin at 6:00 p.m. followed by dinner served by the men of the church at 6:30 p.m. The evening will conclude with a quiet time of worship. The Spirituality Center labyrinth will be available for your prayer and meditation beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Angelus is an event allowing the women of our church and the community to spend time together during one of the most exciting times of the church year. In these few quiet hours, a space is created to focus on the real meaning of Advent so later we can enter into all the preparations of the season with new inspiration.

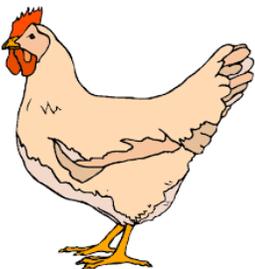
The cost of the dinner will be \$8.00, paid at the door. Please make your reservations by November 27, 2019 by calling 712-251-9891 or the church office at 276-3121.

Do come and be part of the fellowship celebrating a community of Christian women taking time to worship during Christmas preparations. This evening is designed so you experience a special time of reflection and renewal with treasured friends and family as we begin the Advent season.

Sincerely,

Linda Puttmann
Fran Graham
Sherry Koehler

Celebration of Generosity to be held at First Presbyterian Church in South Sioux City



On Sunday, November 24, First Presbyterian Church, 125 E. 21st Street, South Sioux City, Nebraska is holding a celebration of the generosity of Rev. Rex Wentzel. Rev. Wentzel has had his pulpit supply money given for chickens through the Presbyterian Giving Catalog for the past few years. This has resulted in a great ministry being done through his generosity. Rev. Jon Reinink from the Presbyterian Mission Agency and General Presbyter Rev. Ian McMullen will both take part in this celebration.

Poor Richard's Almanac

by Richard Francis, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Prospect Hill



Since we've been getting the Food Network on TV we've gotten hooked on cooking competitions. Shows like *Chopped*, *Holiday Baking Championship*, and especially the *Kids' Baking Championship* tend to fill up our idle hours. They all have different formats, but what they all have in common is that the cooks/bakers are given a challenge like "make the best dish you can using these ingredients" or "bake a holiday cake using this theme." The cooks and bakers are then judged by a panel of experts and the best cook or baker wins.

I admit it's a little odd to watch people being judged on the quality of the food they make when I can't taste it myself, but of course the interest is in the people as much as the product. And one of the things that many of the people on the cooking shows have in common is a sense of *vocation*.

Granted, I never heard anyone use the word "vocation" to describe their work, but it sure sounds like that's what they're talking about. The following exchange is typical:

Host: What would winning *Chopped* mean to you?

Chef, speaking with tears in her eyes: It would mean the this is what I'm supposed to be doing with my life.

"What I'm supposed to be doing with my life" is a pretty good definition of "vocation." Many of these folks have the feeling that they are somehow *called* to do what they are doing, and that, too, is what vocation means: being called. In many cases these are people who were doing something else, or were preparing to do something else, but felt pulled so strongly toward cooking that they left their jobs or dropped out of school, often over the strong objections of their families, to pursue this vocation, and as the exchange above shows, for some of them, appearing on a cooking show is a validation of that vocation: "this is what I'm supposed to be doing." To my ears, at least, it's a way of talking about God without mentioning God (though in fairness some of the contestants do see their vocation as God-given, and say so).

When we use the term "called" in church we tend to restrict it to people like me—people who have been "called to the ministry." But that's only a small part of God's calling. We are all called by God. It's God's calling that makes us who and what we are.

This is the point Jürgen Moltmann makes in his book *Theology of Hope*. He writes that when we ask, "who am I?" the Bible doesn't point us to creation or even to the presence of God. In the Bible, the question "who am I?" is answered by "I am who God calls me to be." This, Moltmann writes, is a future-oriented calling: God comes to us as we are and leads us into the future God is preparing for us. As John puts it, "Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is." (1 John 3:2)

One more thing: this calling doesn't leave us in isolation. It brings us together. We are who we are in communion with God in Jesus Christ and with each other. And it's in that fellowship that the calling of each one of us is revealed to us, to the glory of God and the good of the world.

Blessings,

Moderator's Musings



It is all too common to see deer in our travels. They are usually a worry to the motorist. However, recently I was driving along Highway 30 and saw the most beautiful doe. It stood in a regal pose, almost like the Disney Studios placed it there. It was an example of seeing beauty in our surroundings that is easy to take for granted.

We believe that God created the universe including the planet earth. In Genesis, we read several times that “And God saw that it was good” (NRSV) when telling the story of creation. Think about how many other things are “good” in our lives. One of the areas of our lives is enjoying the wide variety of beauty that is all around us. With our four seasons, Mother Nature continually changes the landscape for us to enjoy.

Diana Butler Bass, in her book “Grateful” quotes Parker Palmer about “soft eyes.” “In the Japanese art of Aikido there is a practice called ‘soft eyes’ – it means to widen one’s periphery to take in more of the world. If a stimulus is introduced to an unprepared person, his eyes narrow and the flight/fight response takes over. If the same unexpected stimulus comes to someone with ‘soft eyes,’ the natural reflex is transcended, and a more authentic response takes its place – such as thinking a new thought. Soft eyes, it seems to me, is an evocative image for what happens when we gaze on sacred reality. Now our eyes are open and receptive, able to take in the greatness of the world and the grace of great things.”

I had never heard of the term “soft eyes,” but it truly does make sense. Seeing that deer in a regal pose is an example. We can get so involved in our day to day lives that we cannot see anything but what is in front of us. God wants us not to just see the grandeur around us, but to enjoy it. Seeing the forest is a much greater joy than standing in front of one tree.

There is beauty all around us, not just in nature or in faces or _____ (fill in the blank). God has blessed us with beauty!

Grace and Peace,
Bill Crawford, Moderator of Prospect Hill



At the Fall Synod Meeting, Synod commissioners whose terms had ended were thanked for their service. This picture includes at the left Ruling Elder Elaine Doorenbos, Presbytery of Prospect Hill, and second from left Rev. Ian McMullen, Presbytery of North Central Iowa. Thank you for your service!

The Presbytery of North Central Iowa invites the Presbytery of Prospect Hill to join the 2020 mission trip to Chipley, Florida. If you are interested, you may find the application [here](#). Please complete it and send it to Jeannie in the Presbytery Office.

2020 MISSION TRIP CHIPLEY, FLORIDA FEBRUARY 3-7, 2020

The Presbytery of North Central Iowa's 2020 Mission Trip will be to Chipley, Florida, to help rebuild after Hurricane Michael hit the area in October 2018. The Presbytery of North Central Iowa invites the Presbytery of Prospect Hill to be a part of this mission opportunity.

The cost will be \$175 per participant. Participants will also be responsible for their own lodging and travel to Florida and back.

Further details for the trip will be sent to participants. There will also be an orientation meeting and information on that will be provided to participants at a later time.

To receive a registration form, please contact Jeannie in the Presbytery Office at 319-233-1747 or northiowapresby@gmail.com.

Applications MUST be received in the Presbytery Office no later than January 6, 2020. Please note that a registration will not be considered complete without a \$75 deposit.

We will be staying at the Dogwood Acres Retreat Center, a Presbyterian camp. <http://www.dogwoodacres.org/> Housing will be in 2 bedroom cabins, four people per bedroom/bathroom. Bunk beds. Meals to be provided by the camp staff during the week. Catholic Charities will be the local agency we will be working through.



The South Sudanese refugee crisis bulletin insert that was handed out at Prospect Hill's October 26 Presbytery meeting had an incorrect address of where to send contributions. A bulletin insert with the correct address may be found [here](#). Please feel free to make copies of this to include in your bulletins!

Blessings & Promises Worship Night



Blessings & Promises worship event is a one-of-a-kind special music service, with 12 traditional hymns performed by unaccompanied violin and a Scripture reading that accompanies each hymn. Denzel Washington arranged the hymns and Bethany Washington performs them. The Washingtons offer their Blessings & Promises Worship Night free as a ministry to churches.

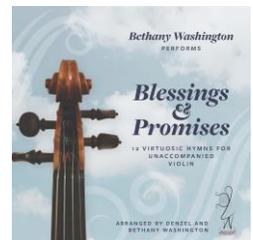
Hymns performed include: Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty; Come Thou Font of Every Blessing; Were You There; Alas, and Did My Savior Bleed (At The Cross); Blessed Assurance; I Know My Redeemer Lives; Jesus Loves the Little Children; It Is Well With My Soul; Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee; Great Is Thy Faithfulness; I Surrender All; and O Come All Ye Faithful. You may click on [this link](#) to the cd on Spotify.

Composer Denzel Washington earned his M.M. in Music Composition from University of Northern Iowa and a B.A. in Music from Mercer University and holds memberships in ASCAP and SCI. He studied under Dr. Jonathan Schwabe (UNI) and Dr. Christopher Schmitz (Mercer). He has participated in masterclasses with Drs. Zae Munn, Paul Salerni, and P. Q. Phan. His musical influences include Charles Ives, Edward Elgar, and Igor Stravinsky.

Bethany Washington holds Suzuki teacher training and taught as a Graduate Assistant while completing her Masters in Violin Performance at University of Northern Iowa. She received her Bachelor of Music in Violin Performance from the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings at Mercer University, where she also earned a composition certificate, graduating summa cum laude. Bethany performs with the Des Moines Symphony and Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony.

DLWMuse is a music composition company that provides newly composed sheet music, digital audio files, and presents special events. Together, Denzel and Bethany create music that stirs the soul. They work in all genres but are primarily focused on Sacred music and Concert music. They both are born again Christians who enjoy using the talents God has given them to share the joy of music with others.

For more information and to contact the Washingtons, please visit dlwmuse.com.



Do you have an AED in your church building? The Iowa Heart Foundation recommends that Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) be placed wherever people gather. AEDs have become so advanced that almost anyone can use them safely. Click [here](#) for more information.



If you feel as if you're at the end of your rope or the recent floods or low crop prices have left you feeling hopeless, please click [here](#) to find a group or network who may be able to help.

Academy



Deepening faith and
encountering Christ in a
new way

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