

# PRESBYTERY CONNECTION

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter of the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill  
January 9, 2020

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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## Important Information

### Presbytery Office Closed

The Presbytery Office will be closed on Monday, January 20, 2020, in honor of the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.

### 2020 IRS Mileage Rates

The IRS has issued the 2020 mileage rates:

- 57.5 cents per mile driven for business use, down one half of a cent from the rate for 2019
- 17 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes, down 3 cents from the rate for 2019
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

### Session Records Reviews

Prospect Hill's Session Records Reviews will be held in the fall this year. The locations are yet to be determined, but the dates will be:

September 12  
September 19  
September 26

North Central Iowa's Session Records Reviews will also be held in the fall. The dates and locations are yet to be determined.

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## Prayers of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

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|--------------------|---|
| Week of January 12 | First Presbyterian Church, Maxwell – Adrian McMullen, CRE         |
| Week of January 19 | Salem Church of Lincoln – Rev. Barb Muhs                          |
| Week of January 26 | First Presbyterian Church, Kamrar – Rev. Dr. Tom Bower, Moderator |
| Week of February 2 | First Presbyterian Church, LeRoy, MN – Rev. Dr. John Kerr         |

## Prayers of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Week of January 12 | First Presbyterian Church, Carroll – Rev. Rikki Sorensen                            |
| Week of January 19 | First Presbyterian Church, Schaller – Rev. Michael Sydnor                           |
| Week of January 26 | First Presbyterian Church, Manning – Rev. Rikki Sorensen, Moderator                 |
| Week of February 2 | First Presbyterian Church, Spirit Lake – Rev. Clint Loveall<br>Rev. Michael Gewecke |

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## Additional Prayer Concerns

Please pray for Jon Rottink, Youth and Family Ministry Director at First Presbyterian Church in Marshalltown. Jon had a major, lengthy surgery on January 8. Please also pray for his wife, Heather, and their children.

Please pray for Eric Olson, husband of Rev. Jennifer Olson of United Presbyterian Church in Denison. Two years ago, Eric had a very small tumor on his kidney, which was removed. All has been clear until his annual CT last week when it was discovered the tumor has returned. It is small, but it warrants removal of the kidney. Surgery will likely be in mid-February.

Please remember Rev. Kerin Sorensen, serving at-large, in your prayers. She had knee surgery on November 5 and will be having hip surgery on January 28. She is working on an online Chaplain presence while home healing: [www.virtualhospicechaplain.org](http://www.virtualhospicechaplain.org).

Please keep our nation, world leaders, church communities and members in your prayers as we enter a new year.

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.

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## Churches in Transition

Please pray for the following churches that are in transition:

### Presbytery of North Central Iowa

First Presbyterian Church, Boone  
First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Falls  
First Presbyterian Church, Dows  
First Presbyterian Church, Grundy Center  
First Presbyterian Church, Jesup  
First Presbyterian Church, Kamrar  
First Presbyterian Church, Reinbeck

### Presbytery of Prospect Hill

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

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### Pastoral Position - First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Falls



First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Falls, has started the process of looking for a pastor. Please click [here](#) for the Minister Information Form.

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### Ten Things Ruling Elders Should Know

If you are a Ruling Elder, especially a newly-elected one, you may be unsure of your duties and responsibilities. Well, wonder no more! Ruling Elder Alyson Janke, Stated Clerk for John Knox Presbytery and teacher of polity at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary has written something especially for you. It appeared in *Presbyterian Outlook* in 2015, and the Outlook reports that it was their most-read piece of the decade! You can read it here: [https://pres-outlook.org/2015/08/10-things-ruling-elders-should-know/?fbclid=IwAR2MTbYqD55R38qIQgrPGUq\\_ramnXiN2\\_Sq2IcPcJNyiwkpmgi79TqXAwhU](https://pres-outlook.org/2015/08/10-things-ruling-elders-should-know/?fbclid=IwAR2MTbYqD55R38qIQgrPGUq_ramnXiN2_Sq2IcPcJNyiwkpmgi79TqXAwhU)

Please see information on the next page about training sessions for Ruling Elders in the Presbytery of Prospect Hill.

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# ELDER TRAINING

SO YOU'VE BEEN ASKED TO SERVE ON SESSION?

WE CAN HELP YOU FEEL EQUIPPED TO SERVE GOD  
AND YOUR LOCAL CHURCH IN THIS CAPACITY!

To register, please call  
319-233-1747  
or email  
[northiowapresby@gmail.com](mailto:northiowapresby@gmail.com)

The Presbytery of Prospect Hill invites all Ruling Elders to a 3-hour training on what it means to be a Ruling Elder. By using the Book of Order, Scripture and the constitutional questions asked at your ordination as an Elder, we will equip you to serve on your Session.

We will provide you a chance to get to know Ruling Elders from around the Presbytery, as well as deepen friendships with Ruling Elders currently serving in your own church.

This is a wonderful opportunity for new Elders to know the basics and is also a great refresher for those Elders who have already served or are serving.

Please choose the date and location that works best for you. A meal will be provided after the training. Please RSVP to Jeannie in the Presbytery office to let her know that you will be attending the training and also if you plan to stay for dinner. It is important that your RSVP be received by the date listed for each location so the church can be notified for how many people to prepare. You may email Jeannie at [northiowapresby@gmail.com](mailto:northiowapresby@gmail.com) or call 319-233-1747.

|  |   |                            |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| January 12, 2020<br>2:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.  | Trinity Presbyterian Church<br>402 7th St.<br>Wall Lake, Iowa     | Please RSVP by January 6,  |
| January 26, 2020<br>2:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.  | Lakeshore Center at Okoboji<br>1864 Hwy. 86<br>Milford, Iowa      | Please RSVP by January 17  |
| February 16, 2020<br>2:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m. | Community Presbyterian Church<br>417 E. Birch St.<br>Lawton, Iowa | Please RSVP by February 10 |

## *Invitation*

*First Presbyterian Church, Glidden, will hold a meet and greet for its new pastor, Rev. Anna Small.*

*Date: January 18, 2020*

*Time: 10:00 a.m. to noon*

*Location: First Presbyterian Church  
309 Idaho St.  
Glidden, Iowa*



*You Are Cordially Invited*  
*to the*  
*Ordination*  
*and*  
*Commissioning to Overseas Mission Service*  
*for*  
*Shawn Harmon*

*Date:* February 2, 2020

*Time:* 4:00 p.m.

*Location:* First Presbyterian Church  
1220 S. Market St.  
Lake Park, Iowa

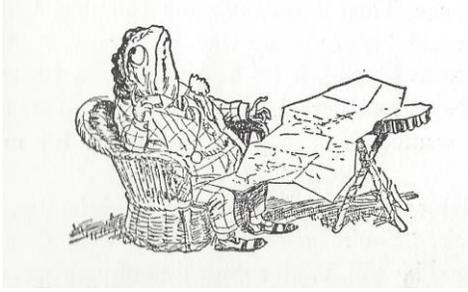
*\*\*A reception will be held in the fellowship hall after the service.\*\**





## North Central Iowa Winter Cohort Retreat

The Presbytery of North Central Iowa will have its Winter Cohort Retreat February 13 and 14 at Pilgrim Heights Camp and Retreat Center. Registration deadline is February 3, 2020. Please click [here](#) for more information and for the registration form.



### Poor Richard's Almanac

by Richard Francis, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Prospect Hill

If you're a preacher, this has probably happened to you: you spent all week working on a sermon, then something happened on Friday or Saturday, either in your community or on the national or international stage, and you needed to scrap all or part of what you had prepared in order to address what was on everyone's mind as they came into church.

I feel that way this week only more so. As I write this on Tuesday, we are in the middle of an international crisis precipitated by the killing of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in U.S. airstrike. We are also anxiously waiting for word from Puerto Rico, which just experienced a magnitude 6.4 earthquake causing widespread damage and at least one death.<sup>1</sup>

Maybe you see my dilemma: anything I write today may be obsolete by Friday or Saturday when you receive this issue of the *Connections*. Tensions with Iran may have heightened or calmed somewhat. We may find that the earthquake was worse than we thought, or not as severe as we feared. In the meantime, we are probably anxious.

I've been intrigued lately by the story of the prophet Elijah in 1 Kings 17-19. Elijah has announced that God will cause a drought in response to King Ahab's sin in leading the people of Israel to worship other gods, specifically the Canaanite deity Baal. Though the drought was severe, Elijah was preserved by God until the time was right for him to confront Ahab. Elijah challenged the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal to a kind of duel. Elijah said,

Give us two bulls. Let Baal's prophets choose one. Let them cut it apart and set it on the wood, but don't add fire. I'll prepare the other bull, put it on the wood, but won't add fire. Then all of you will call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers with fire—that's the real God! (1 Kings 18:23-24 Common English Bible)

The story is told dramatically and in great detail, and the upshot was that it was the LORD, the God of Israel, who answered with fire (1 Kings 18:38). The grim aftermath of this demonstration was that the people who had witnessed the miracle put all the prophets of Baal to death. Then Elijah prayed, and the drought ended.

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<sup>1</sup> If you would like to donate to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) for the Puerto Rico earthquake relief, you can do it here: <https://pma.pcusa.org/donate/make-a-gift/gift-info/DR000015/> There is a link for you to contribute directly and an address where you can mail a check.

Elijah should have been riding high. Everything was going according to plan. But when Ahab's wife Jezebel threatened his life, Elijah went into a funk. You expect him to say, "The God who sustained me through the drought, the God who demonstrated power far beyond the power of Baal, the God who sent the drought and then brought it to an end—that God is able to protect me from anything you can do." But this is what actually happened: "Elijah was terrified. He got up and ran for his life." (1 Kings 19:3 CEB)

We don't know why Elijah reacted the way he did, but I would venture that everything just became too much for him. 1 Kings continues:

[Elijah] went farther on into the desert a day's journey. He finally sat down under a solitary broom bush. He longed for his own death: "It's more than enough, LORD! Take my life because I'm no better than my ancestors." (1 Kings 19:4 CEB)

In the past when I've read this, I've hurried over what follows immediately to get to the "theophany" (divine appearance) of 18:11ff. But this time I was struck by the simple provisions made for Elijah in his depressed state:

[Elijah] lay down and slept under the solitary broom bush. Then suddenly a messenger [NRSV has "angel"] tapped him and said to him, "Get up! Eat something!" Elijah opened his eyes and saw flatbread baked on glowing coals and a jar of water right by his head. He ate and drank, and then went back to sleep. The LORD's messenger returned a second time and tapped him. "Get up!" the messenger said. "Eat something, because you have a difficult road ahead of you."

Sometimes the best thing we can do is take care of our own basic needs. Sometimes that's exactly what God tells us to do: "Eat something, because you have a difficult road ahead of you."

Eat something. Try to get a good night's sleep. Spend time with people who love you. Put one foot in front of the other. Trust God for the outcome. Elijah discovered that things weren't as bad as he thought, that God still had something for him to do, and that God was even looking beyond Elijah's lifetime.

Elijah's God is still in charge.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard". To the left of the name is a stylized drawing of a crown or a pointed hat with a heart symbol below it.

# GODLY RISK



**2020 MEN'S RETREAT AT LAKESHORE CENTER  
FEATURING REV. BEN JOHNSTON-KRASE  
MARCH 13-15, 2020**

Presented in Partnership with  
**the Omaha Presbyterian  
Seminary Foundation**

## Is your faith “playing it safe?”

Join our group of faith-seeking men and guest speaker Rev. Ben Johnston-Krase for a weekend of relaxation, fellowship, and discussion to explore that question. We'll have great conversations, late night card games, and plenty of downtime to enjoy the weekend.

**Who:** The Rev. Ben Johnston-Krase is passionate about what motivates congregations to move outside of their comfort zones and seek God's heart for their ministry. He is a co-founder of Farm Church, a PC(USA) New Worshipping Community in Durham, NC. He conceived of Farm Church in a dream, and left his traditional pastoral role to start a church that meets on a farm and leverages all of the resources of that farm to address food insecurity. He blogs about life, risk, ministry, and living with stage IV cancer.



**When:** 7pm March 13—11am March 15

**Where:** Lakeshore Center at Okoboji—1864 Hwy 86, Milford, IA 51351

**Cost:** \$95 per person for communal bunk room, \$125 for a Double-Occupancy Lodge Room. Cost covers all lodging, snacks, meals, speaker, and programming for the weekend.

**Register online at [www.LakeshoreCenterAtOkoboji.org](http://www.LakeshoreCenterAtOkoboji.org) under the “Events” Tab.**

Call 712-337-3313 or email [harry@lakeshorecenteratokoboji.org](mailto:harry@lakeshorecenteratokoboji.org) for more information.

The link for on-line registration is:

<http://cwngui.campwise.com/customer/presokoboji/browser-check-reg.html>



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.

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## Academy



Deepening faith and  
encountering Christ in a  
new way

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