

# PRESBYTERY CONNECTION

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter of the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill  
April 16, 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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## Prospect Hill Presbytery Meeting Rescheduled

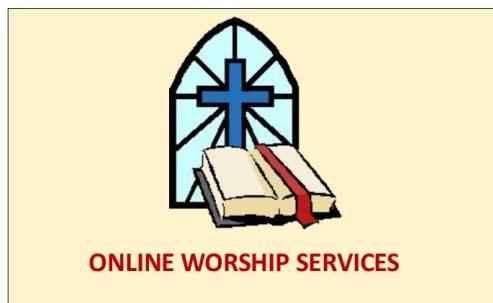
Prospect Hill's April 25, 2020 Presbytery Meeting has been rescheduled to Saturday, June 6, 2020, if the way be clear. If it is still recommended at that time that meetings not be held, the Presbytery meeting will be via Zoom.

If the way be clear to meet on June 6, the meeting will still be at First Presbyterian Church in Battle Creek. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. with the call to the meeting and worship at 9:30 a.m.

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## On-Line Worship Services

Churches are being creative in ways to continue to worship when we can't be physically present together. A list of on-line and other alternative worship services is posted on the [North Central Iowa](#) and [Prospect Hill](#) websites under a tab titled "Find Your Local On-Line Worship." You may also click [here](#) to be connected directly to that page on North Central Iowa's website, and [here](#) to be connected directly to that page on Prospect Hill's website.





MATTHEW 25

## Matthew 25 grants will support vulnerable congregations facing COVID-19.

The Presbyterian Mission Agency president sets aside funds to be administered by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Read about it [here](#).

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## Forgivable Loans to Help Retain Staff During the Covid-19 Crisis



U.S. Small Business Administration

Dear Partners In Christ,

As many of you know, the CARES Act recently passed by Congress that provides financial assistance in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic includes an SBA loan provision. This Small Business Administration (SBA) provision offers \$349 billion in loans to assist for-profit and non-profit organizations during this challenging time. The specific program is the [Paycheck Protection Program](#) (PPP). Legal counsel for the PC(USA) has reviewed the CARES Act and confirms that churches do qualify to apply for these loans. [See a summary here](#).

**In order to apply you must go through a financial institution that is an SBA lender. First, check with your local bank or credit union. You can apply beginning this Friday, April 3, 2020. There is a limit on the funds available so timing may be important.** Here is a quick summary of the PPP:

- Loans are administered by SBA Approved Financial Institutions - Check with your local bank or credit union.
- Loan amounts are up to 2.5 times average monthly payroll costs incurred during the 12-month period prior to the loan date. **You must have documentation for this.**
- If you are able to retain employees for the duration of the covid-19 crisis, all or part of the loans are forgivable. Interest rate on residual loans is 4% or less.
- Term of the loan is up to 10 years. Prepayment is eligible.
- Deferral is 6 to 12 months (interest accrues during deferment).
- Usage can be for payroll and related benefits, interest on mortgage payments, other debts, rents and utilities.
- No guarantees or collateral needed from churches or its members.

## Prayers of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

Week of April 19	First Presbyterian Church, Waterloo – Rev. Amy Wiles Rev. Pat Geadelmann
Week of April 26	United Presbyterian Church, Garner – CRE Justin Asche
Week of May 3	Pray for the Ministers in North Central Iowa who are active in Specialized Ministry – Rev. Tamara EnTin Rev. Dr. Linda Smith Rev. Kerin Lang Sorensen
Week of May 10	First Presbyterian Church, Toledo – Rev. Dr. Tom Bower
Week of May 17	First Presbyterian Church, Greene, and Eden Presbyterian Church, Rudd – Rev. Catherine Belles

## Prayers of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Week of April 19	Wheatland Presbyterian Church, Breda – Rev. Richard Francis, Moderator
Week of April 26	First Presbyterian Church, Sanborn – Rev. Gregg Johnson
Week of May 3	Zoar Presbyterian Church, George – Rev. John Pea
Week of May 10	First Presbyterian Church, Ringsted – Rev. Suzanne Wobig
Week of May 17	Elliott Creek Presbyterian Church, Bronson – Rev. Dale Lint, Moderator

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## Additional Prayer Concerns

Please pray for our state, nation and the world as we deal with the COVID-19 situation. Keep in prayer those families whose schedules have been upended and livelihood affected, small businesses who may not survive, those who have been afflicted with the coronavirus and the medical personnel as they do their best to take care of everyone. Please also pray for all of the churches in both presbyteries and throughout the nation.

Please pray for Rev. Mark Rabideau of the Greater Greene County Presbyterian Ministries as he deals with health concerns.

Please continue to pray for Josh Ullom, son of Rev. Dr. Dave and Judy Ullom of First Presbyterian Church in Estherville. Josh goes for chemo every two weeks. Please pray for effectiveness to destroy cancer, and to improve the severe nausea he has experienced.

Please also pray for Rev. Dr. Dave Ullom's father, that he may be able to stay in his own home with Home Health care. Please pray for both physical and mental strength to continue to be restored. Please pray for his accepting of his children's decision to not allow him to drive.

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.

## 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, Greene  
First Presbyterian Church, Grundy Center  
First Presbyterian Church, Jesup  
First Presbyterian Church, Reinbeck  
Eden Presbyterian Church, Rudd

### Presbytery of Prospect Hill

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  
First Presbyterian Church, South Sioux City

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## Iowa Tri-Presbyteries Leadership Team Seeking Candidates



The Search Committee for the Iowa Tri-Presbyteries Leadership Team is actively seeking candidates who might consider a call to serve the presbyteries of Des Moines, North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill as one of their three executives. If you or someone you know may be interested in such a position or interested in learning more, please connect them with the search website: <https://engagingleaders.org/iowa-tri-presbytery-leadership-team/>. Letters of interest are being received until May 22.

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## Synod Seeking Representative from North Central Iowa

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies is seeking a possible representative from the Presbytery of North Central Iowa to serve on the combined Committee on Racial Ethnic Ministries (CREM) and Self-Development of People (SDOP). CREM seeks to promote Racial Ethnic Ministries and raise awareness about issues surrounding racism and inclusion. SDOP is one of the programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing which invests in communities responding to their experiences of racism, oppression, poverty and injustice. The Synod Committee helps distribute funds for scholarships and projects of SDOP.

These are two committees with somewhat similar purposes, so the same group serves on both and they meet simultaneously to carry out their work. They meet twice a year at the Synod office in the Twin Cities, in May and in the fall, coming together on Friday night and going home when done with their work on Saturday. These positions will be elected at the October Synod meeting to begin service in January 2021 for three-year terms.

The committee seeks to have a diverse racial-ethnic membership. Members do not have to be Presbyterian but do need to have a passion for this work.

If you are interested in serving on CREM/SDOP, or know of someone who has a passion for this work, contact Brad Braley, moderator of the Synod Nominating Committee, at [bradbraley@cfu.net](mailto:bradbraley@cfu.net)

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## **A Note on Insurance During the Coronavirus Outbreak**

A representative from Guide One Insurance has pointed out that individual churches' insurance almost certainly has a clause that comes into play under our current situation. Because the governor's emergency declaration forbids us from holding meetings of more than ten people, if we violate that and someone gets sick as a result of that meeting, the church may be liable, and the insurance company probably will not help. In other cases of potential liability (like someone falling down the steps) the insurance company would provide legal assistance in case of a lawsuit, but not in the case of a virus outbreak.

As always, check your policy and/or call your insurance agent if you have questions.

Richard Francis, Stated Clerk  
Presbytery of Prospect Hill

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## **Keeping Informed on the COVID-19 Situation**

The Presbyteries continue to hold weekly meetings with the pastors to keep abreast of the ever changing COVID-19 situation and to discuss how pastors and churches can continue to minister to and serve their congregations. The meetings will be recorded and the recordings uploaded to the Events section of each website ([www.presbynciowa.org](http://www.presbynciowa.org) and [www.prospecthillpresby.org](http://www.prospecthillpresby.org)). You may also click [here](#) for the recording of the March 24 meeting, and [here](#) for the recording of the March 31 meeting. It is planned to have these meetings weekly and the recordings will continue to be uploaded to the websites.

The home pages of the [North Central Iowa](#) and the [Prospect Hill](#) websites contain information and links on webinars and other resources on the COVID-19 situation.

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## **Festival of Homiletics**

The Festival of Homiletics hosted by Luther Seminary in St. Paul, MN has gone online for free for this year!! You may register [here](#). You will also have the opportunity to view the videos at your convenience for \$75.00.

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## Poor Richard's Almanac

by Richard Francis, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Prospect Hill

*I remember once when I was walking with my teacher Ajahn Chah he pointed to a boulder in a field and asked, "Is that heavy?" I replied, "Yes, of course." Ajahn Chah smiled and said "Not if you don't pick it up." - Jack Kornfield, Twitter, 1/7/2020*

These are days when we seem to be surrounded by boulders. Churches are figuring out how to be church when we can't be together. Pastors are figuring out how to be servants when they can't stand in the pulpit in front of the congregation, call on members in their homes, or even visit the sick in the hospital. All of us are figuring out how to plan for the future when the future is even more uncertain than usual.

That's why I started off with that quotation from Jack Kornfield. I think he's telling us that *we don't have to pick up every boulder we see*. If you follow social media you may have seen posts about how now that we have all this time on our hands we should use it to learn a new language, write a novel, or build a robot.

Well, first of all, you probably don't have all that much time on your hands, especially if you have children (or grandchildren) who are home all day instead of being in school. Secondly, this is not a free-and-easy, happy-go-lucky time. It is a time filled with stress and uncertainty, and, for many of us fear—fear for ourselves, fear for our churches, fear for our families and friends, fear for our country.

All of that anxiety is real, and that is probably why the biblical writers spend so much time reassuring believers. Think of Psalm 46: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear..." Think of Romans 8:38-39: "I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Think of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 6:25: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" In that passage, Jesus goes on to point us to birds of the air and the "lilies of the field." God cares for them, Jesus says; what makes you think that God won't take care of you?

But the punch line to that passage is found in v.33: "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." I sometimes think that the whole of the Christian life consists of putting first things first. I also think that God's greatest problem is helping us to understand just what those "first things" are.

Could it be that our current crisis might help us with that? Now that we are forced to do without things we thought were essential, we might discover that some of them weren't as important as we thought they were. We don't have to pick up every boulder. We can concentrate on picking up the really important ones and leaving the rest where they are.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go work on my robot.

Blessings,

## From the Moderator of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

Dear Saints,

Although it's the only thing in the news right now, I suppose I can't write a newsletter about anything other than the current virus with which we are dealing.

On Easter Sunday, I shared a little reflection with my congregation before worship. I had heard many folks, both around here and afar, commenting that Easter wouldn't really be Easter since we couldn't be together. I did not really find that to be compelling. Easter happens when Easter happens; thanks be to God that our lives don't dictate the life of God. I personally think this is a great time to live more fully into the Liturgical Calendar which transcends the calendars of the world.

I also reflected that one of the things we affirm in our creeds is the "one holy catholic and apostolic church" and "the communion of saints." One of the beautiful things about the church is that we don't exist alone in the here in now; we are united with all the faithful who came before and all the faithful to come. And in the universal communion of saints, the inability to gather on Easter, or on any given Sunday, has never been a given.

Early Christians worshipped in catacombs to avoid persecution by the Roman government. Christians today in parts of Asia, the Middle East, and Africa continue to gather underground. And, we are by no means the first Christians in history to weather a plague/pandemic.

The Calvin Institute for Christian Worship put together a compendium of that history titled "Pandemics and Public Worship Throughout History." I found it an interesting resource. Perhaps it can fill some of your time as you "social distance":

[https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/pandemics-and-public-worship-throughout-history?utm\\_source=CICW+Mailing+Lists&utm\\_campaign=9fe6d0f70c-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_03\\_31\\_12\\_56&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_30d2461449-9fe6d0f70c-211746429](https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/pandemics-and-public-worship-throughout-history?utm_source=CICW+Mailing+Lists&utm_campaign=9fe6d0f70c-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_03_31_12_56&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_30d2461449-9fe6d0f70c-211746429)

I ended my brief pre-worship reflection by noting that we are, at this time, getting a very, very small taste of what many of our brothers and sisters have experienced, and are experiencing. But still...not really. We have been blessed with the ability to gather virtually; a gift most Christians in history did not have recourse to, and a gift modern Christians experiencing persecution often cannot utilize.

I don't like that we cannot gather for in-person worship; but it is what it is. Yes, the day we can all be together will certainly be sweet. But thanks be to God that we still have the ability, and the freedom, to gather, however imperfectly, for worship.

This too shall pass....

Your friendly moderator,  
John Molacek

## **Scholarships available for church members attending an accredited college or university during 2020-21 academic year**

*by Paul Seebeck / Presbyterian News Service*

LOUISVILLE — Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) students seeking their first associate or bachelor's degree are encouraged to apply now for scholarship awards through Presbyterian Mission Agency's [Financial Aid for Service](#) at [pcusa.org/apply4scholarships](http://pcusa.org/apply4scholarships).

The scholarships for PC(USA) undergraduate students for up to \$4,000, depending on need, align with the church's [Matthew 25 invitation](#), which encourages churches and mid councils to work at [building congregational vitality](#), [dismantling structural racism](#) and [eradicating structural poverty](#).

If need remains after the scholarship is awarded, students of color, students who are the first in their family to attend college, and those who represent the neediest 10 percent of students selected for the award based on remaining need and family contribution may be considered for an additional \$2,000 in supplemental aid.

The biggest change this year is that National Presbyterian College Scholarship, Student Opportunity Scholarship, and Native American Education Grant have been merged into a single [online application](#) process. Financial Aid for Service reminds applicants that they alone should apply for the scholarship — not their parents or friends.

Renewal of the scholarships is not automatic. Students apply in the spring for awards that will be announced by June 30. Applications are evaluated based on the response to an essay and recommendations.

***The deadline to apply for scholarship awards is May 15.***

Parents of dependent undergraduates may apply for [PC\(USA\) Parent Loan](#) with features similar to a Federal Student Aid PLUS loan, but with a lower interest rate. Students may request information for this program, or parents can apply by visiting [pcusa.org/parentloan](http://pcusa.org/parentloan).

Financial Aid for Service provides scholarships for up to 120 college students per year and awards more than \$500,000 annually to students pursuing their first degree.

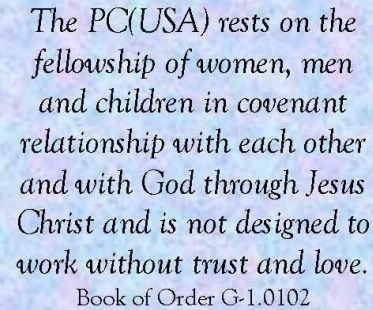


## Engaging Leaders

A Spring Learning Opportunity for Presbyterians

**May 9-10, 2020**

Join this weekend class to explore what it means to be an Engaging Leader and to Engage other Leaders. This course will be led by the Rev. Dr. Deb DeMeester who is Director of Leadership Development for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.



*The PC(USA) rests on the fellowship of women, men and children in covenant relationship with each other and with God through Jesus Christ and is not designed to work without trust and love.*  
Book of Order G-1.0102

### Who should consider taking this class?

- Anyone who wants to grow in their faith and understanding of being Presbyterian
- Session members and Deacons
- Committee chairs
- Commissioned Pastors/Ruling Elders
- Those who might be called to be commissioned pastors/ruling elders

### What will this class involve?

- This class will explore how we, as individuals, have unique gifts and preferences in our leadership, how congregational systems and size impact the way things work, how to manage the gifts, pitfalls and preferences of conflict, as well as the importance of faith formation, self-care and boundaries for all leaders.
- There will be one book to read in advance and two instruments to take prior to the class.
- Class will meet at Lakeshore Center in Milford, IA or by Zoom if your presbytery has a group of 5 or more interested in the class. Saturday 9:00-5:00 and Sunday 9:00-3:00.

### What is the cost?

- \$150 plus room/board for those who choose to stay at Lakeshore Center. For those interested in the whole series of 11 classes in the Academy, there is a discount.

### Who is sponsoring this?

- This is a class offered through The Academy, a series of classes for church members designed to deepen faith as participants encounter Christ in a new way. For those who are called or are exploring a call to become a Commissioned Pastor, this is a program that can help that happen. The Synod of Lakes and Prairies and the Presbyteries of Minnesota Valleys, North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill are the current sponsors of the Academy.

### How do I register?

- <https://synod-of-lakes-and-prairies.events.idloom.com/engaging-leaders>

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## The Great Plains Small Church Connection May 4-6, 2020

The Small Church Connection Conference (formerly the Great Plains Wee Kirk Conference) will be held May 4-6, 2020 at Camp Calvin Crest, outside Fremont, Nebraska. This year's theme is Make a Joyful Noise Unto the Lord. Kevin McChesney, composer and handbell arranger and musician, is the featured speaker. There will also be workshops on doing newsletters and blogs, technology for the small member churches, music in worship, self-care, prayer and creative/playful art. There will be archery during Tuesday break time led by level 3 NTS Coach Kim Nofel (ably assisted by level 2 NTS instructor Steve Nofel). (FYI – Steve Nofel is the new pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Algona and First Presbyterian Church in Irvington.) Please click [here](#) for the conference brochure and registration information. **(If you are interested in attending this conference, please check to be sure it will still be held.)**

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**2020  
Synod School  
July 26-31**

**Theme:**  
What Shall We Tell Them?

Registration begins March 2, 2020. Catalogs will be mailed to homes and churches in mid-February. In the meantime, please click the link below to view the catalog online.

[2020 Synod School Catalog](#)

***From the Synod - COVID-19 Update:*** We are carefully monitoring recommendations from the Center for Disease Control regarding the coronavirus. We will make a decision in mid-June about whether or not to proceed with Synod School if pandemic recommendations for social distancing are still in place. If Synod School is cancelled, all monies will be refunded.

## Conflict Workshop



May 18-20, 2020 - [Lakeshore Center at Okoboji](#)

This workshop is specifically designed to provide church leaders with the knowledge and tools necessary to address, manage, and resolve conflict in a healthy and effective manner. Participants will learn about conflict management styles, including their own default style, what the other styles look like, and how to grow in their ability to use and understand different conflict management styles. Other components of the workshop will include learning how family of origin influences one's attitudes about conflict, plus strategies for responding to conflict in the moment, opportunities for prayer, reflection, worship, and much more.

The cost for this workshop is \$450 for double occupancy or \$550 for single. Limited scholarships are available for PCUSA pastors and lay leaders, sponsored by the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation.

**(If you are interested in attending this workshop, it may be best to check as the date gets closer to confirm that it will still be held.)**

[Please click here for an on-line application.](#)

[Click here to register \(\\$450-\\$550\).](#)

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## Churchwide Gathering of the Presbyterian Women



Presbyterian Women's 2021 Churchwide Gathering will be held August 5–8, 2021 in St. Louis, Missouri!

The theme for the Gathering is "Rejoice in Hope" based on Romans 12:12–13, "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers."

Please click on this link for more information:

[https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/what we do/build-community/churchwide-gathering/](https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/what_we_do/build-community/churchwide-gathering/)

## Helpful Links

### Academy



Deepening faith and  
encountering Christ in a  
new way

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



Rev. Shawn Harmon was ordained to service as a mission worker with The Antioch Partners, a mission sending agency that works in partnership with Presbyterian churches in the US. You can read more about them here: <https://www.theantiochpartners.org/>. You may contact Shawn directly at: [harmonhusky@gmail.com](mailto:harmonhusky@gmail.com). To support Shawn financially: [www.theantiochpartners.org/giving](http://www.theantiochpartners.org/giving). For online giving select “partner support for partners not listed for security reasons” and type “Harmon, Shawn.”



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.



Your Iowa Life – if you or a loved one are facing a problem with alcohol, drugs, gambling, mental health or suicide thoughts, you're not alone. That is why the Iowa Department of Public Health has created YourLifeIowa.org so Iowans can chat live, text or call and get reliable treatment options and find nearby help. <https://yourlifeiowa.org/>



Farm Crisis Ministry Network - supporting farmers and those who love and care for them, sharing resources for farm families, congregations, and rural communities. <https://www.facebook.com/farmcrisisministry/>



Spectrum Spirituality Project – support resources for families with one or more children who have a sensory, emotional, and/or behavioral disorder; also equip congregations to welcome and serve these families. [https://www.facebook.com/pg/spectrumspirit/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/spectrumspirit/about/?ref=page_internal)



Iowa Faith Leadership Network – to provide a space for faith leaders to develop interfaith and ecumenical relationships, collegiality, and cooperation; to share resources, ask questions, and learn together; to improve our collective ability to minister to the faith communities we serve as well as to better the lives of people in the communities around us. <https://www.facebook.com/iowafaitheaders/>