

# PRESBYTERY CONNECTION

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter of the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill  
May 14, 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 June 6, 2020

To comply with continued social distancing, Prospect Hill's June 6 Presbytery Meeting will be held via Zoom. The meeting will be open at 9:00 a.m. to give everyone time to get logged on and registered before the 9:30 call to order and worship. To register it is asked that each person attending the meeting enter their name and church in the chat box.

Not familiar with Zoom or feel like you need practice? We've got you covered! There will be a practice Zoom meeting on Thursday, June 4, at 7:00 p.m.

The link to the meetings will be emailed to all churches, pastors and clerks of session when the call to the meeting is sent.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Jeannie in the Presbytery office at 319-233-1747 or [northiowapresby@gmail.com](mailto:northiowapresby@gmail.com).

## Prayers of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

Week of May 17	First Presbyterian Church, Greene, and Eden Presbyterian Church, Rudd – Rev. Catherine Belles
Week of May 24	Unity Presbyterian Church, Waterloo – Rev. Christine Kaplunas
Week of May 31	First Presbyterian Church, Mason City – Rev. Paul Collier
Week of June 7	First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Falls – Rev. Brad Braley Rev. Julie Erkel Hagee
Week of June 14	Pray for honorably retired pastors in the Presbytery of North Central Iowa (not currently serving churches) – Rev. Bruce Baillie, Rev. John Bates, Rev. Fran Beyea, Rev. Susan Cluts, Rev. Doug Darnold, Rev. Dan Emmert, Rev. Jerry Evelsizer, Rev. Dr. Paul Fischer, Rev. John Hanna, Rev. Richard Harken, Rev. Wesley Harker, Rev. Jack Mauldin, Rev. Harold P. Martin, Rev. Marian “Pete” McCart, Rev. Larry Mitchell, Rev. Gordon Moen, Rev. Charles E. Orr, Rev. John Osborn, Rev. Mark Pell, Rev. Robert Roof, Rev. Mary Wilber, Rev. Dr. S. Glenn Wilson and Rev. Cathy Young

## Prayers of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Week of May 17	Elliott Creek Presbyterian Church, Bronson – Rev. Dale Lint, Moderator
Week of May 24	St. Paul’s Lutheran & Presbyterian Church, Rockwell City
Week of May 31	First Presbyterian Church, Paullina – CRE Marj Feltman
Week of June 7	Faith United Presbyterian Church, Sioux City – Rev. David Koehler
Week of June 14	United Presbyterian Church, Vail – Rev. Robert Cook

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## On-Line Worship Services



**ONLINE 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.

## **Additional Prayer Concerns**

Please keep Rev. Al Polito of Bethany Presbyterian Church in Grundy Center in your prayers as he deals with ongoing health issues.

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.

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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, Ackley  
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, Odebolt  
Lakeside Presbyterian Church, Storm Lake  
First Presbyterian Church, South Sioux City

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## Recorded Worship Services Available

Rev. Richard Francis, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill, has prepared two worship service videos to be used as needed. You may access those services [here](#) and [here](#).

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## Book Give-Away



As Rev. Brad Braley starts clearing out his office in preparation for his upcoming retirement, he has books he would like to share. The books are free and he is willing to work with people to get the books to anyone who wants them. Please click [here](#) for the list of books available. Thank you Rev. Braley!

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## Presbyterian Association of Musicians Online Worship and Music Conference

As congregations have had to adapt to worshipping differently amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Presbyterian Association of Musicians has had to do the same with their annual Worship and Music Conference. The conference will be held online June 21-26. You can find a daily schedule of course offerings at [www.presbymusic.org/2020conference-schedule](http://www.presbymusic.org/2020conference-schedule).

A few items to note:

- ◆ If you register for the conference by May 15<sup>th</sup>, you will receive a hard copy of their conference book. If you order on or after May 16<sup>th</sup>, you will receive a PDF of the conference book.
- ◆ All conference information can be found by going to [www.presbymusic.org/2020conference](http://www.presbymusic.org/2020conference). Registration rates are \$175 for PAM members, \$250 for non-members, and \$100 for children/youth.
- ◆ As always, they have program offerings for ALL AGES. Musicians, pastors, Christian educators, congregants, families and volunteers – there's something for everyone!

Please click [here](#) for the informational flyer.

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## Tri-Presbyteries Search Committee Update

The Tri-Presbyteries Search Committee has been hard at work and you can read their update [here](#).

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## Poor Richard's Almanac

by Richard Francis, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Prospect Hill



From the very beginning of the biblical period, the people of God have been looking to Scripture to help us understand nearly everything—God's expectations of us, our relationship to God and to each other, the workings of the natural world, the meaning of history—with varying degrees of success. Even within the Bible itself there are examples of "Scripture interpreting Scripture," as Walter Brueggemann says. A prime example of that is how the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles re-examine the history of Israel and see that history with different eyes, revealing things about God and about Israel that may not

have been seen before.

In our current situation we are looking for Biblical models that might help us understand how we should respond, and my friend Paul Seefeldt, whose first call was in Prospect Hill, pointed me to Jeremiah 29, specifically Jeremiah's letter to the exiles in Babylon, which reads in part:

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

You may not have thought of yourself as being in exile, but there are parallels to our situation and the situation of the people of Judah who lived in Babylon. Like us, they were cut off from many of the support structures, including public worship, that they had come to rely on. Like us, they were forced to invent new rituals and coping mechanisms to remain faithful to God in the midst of a difficult situation.

God's message to those exiles, transmitted through the prophet Jeremiah, is surprisingly prosaic. God doesn't call them to heroic measures. Instead, God calls them to ordinary tasks like housebuilding, gardening, and family life. Perhaps even more surprisingly, God says this: "seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." This is Babylon, the enemy, and the people are to pray for Babylon and "seek its welfare."

What does it mean for us to "seek the welfare of the city" where we find ourselves in a form of exile? I believe one way is to take the advice of the experts on disease transmission. We have permission from the state to gather for worship, but we are not obligated to do so, and many of us believe that to gather in groups at this stage of the virus would not only be hazardous to us, it would be potentially hazardous to the people around us. I'm not afraid of catching the virus; I'm more afraid of picking up the virus and passing it on to someone else.

You will have to make your own decisions about this, of course, for yourself and for your congregation. I'm suggesting that as we make these decisions we consider not only the needs and desires of our members—all our members, including those who don't feel safe leaving their homes—but also the welfare of the city in which we find ourselves, "for in its welfare you will find your welfare."

A few verses down from this is another passage that has become even more famous. Many of us have claimed this promise for ourselves, but we do well to remember that it is addressed to the people as a whole: “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11) It is that hope that gives us the courage to make plans for a future we cannot yet see—a future that will be different from the past, but a future held in God’s hands. And isn’t that what we want from the future?

Blessings,



Brighten your day by clicking on this [YouTube link](#) to listen and watch the College Church Hallelujah Chorus!



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](#).

### **Stewardship Kaleidoscope**

Stewardship Kaleidoscope is scheduled for September 21-23, 2020, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Please click [here](#) for the informational flyer. You may also go to their website: [www.stewardshipkaleidoscope.org](http://www.stewardshipkaleidoscope.org).

## 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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### 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 May 5 and [here](#) for the May 12 recording. 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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**2020  
Synod School  
July 26-31**

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

[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.

# 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/)

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## 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 lowans 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/iowafaithleaders/>