

PRESBYTERY CONNECTION

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter of the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill
October 29, 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

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](#).

North Central Iowa's Stated Presbytery Meeting November 1, 2020

North Central Iowa's November 1, Stated Presbytery Meeting will be held via Zoom. The meeting will begin at 2:30 p.m. and will conclude with Boundary Training.

The Call to the meeting was emailed on October 22, 2020. If you did not receive it, please let Jeannie Stolee know.

Minister members and ruling elder commissioners will need to make reservations with Jeannie Stolee (northiowapresby@gmail.com) by noon on Friday, October 30 to receive the Zoom link for the meeting.

2021 Per Capita

Prospect Hill's 2021 per capita has been set at:

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| General Assembly | \$ 8.98 |
| Synod | 5.50 |
| Presbytery | <u>28.00</u> |
| | \$42.48 |

North Central Iowa's 2021 per capita has been set at:

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| General Assembly | \$ 8.98 |
| Synod | 5.50 |
| Presbytery | <u>24.52</u> |
| | \$39.00 |

Prayers of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

- Week of November 1 McCallsburg Presbyterian Church, McCallsburg – Rev. Tom Poppe
- Week of November 8 Amity Presbyterian Church, Reinbeck – CRE Darryl Widmayer
- Week of November 15 Burt Presbyterian Church, Burt – CRE Kent Madison & CRE Walt Reemtsma

Prayers of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill

- Week of November 1 United Presbyterian Church, Westside – Rev. Robert Cook
- Week of November 8 Pray for the honorably retired pastors in the Presbytery of Prospect Hill (not currently serving churches) –
Rev. Clarence Beard, Rev. Peg Brinck, Rev. Marshall Brown,
Rev. Ken Fells, Rev. Donald Gibson, Rev. Donald Johnson,
Rev. Dale Lint, Rev. Kenneth Meissner, Rev. Marvin Miller,
Rev. William Moore, Rev. Dr. Tom Murray, Rev. Duane Queen,
Rev. Stephen Saville, Rev. Harold Stepanek, Rev. B.J. Ukena,
Rev. Rex Wentzel
- Week of November 15 Pastors who serve as Members at Large –
Rev. Donna Gray

Additional Prayer Concerns

Please pray for Rev. Dr. Brett and Anita Becker of Collegiate Presbyterian Church in Ames. Brett's mother, Roberta Henry, passed away on October 21, 2020. Services are scheduled for October 29, 2020.

Please pray for Bruce McCart, husband of Rev. Marion "Pete" McCart, HR, as he struggles with health problems. He is determined to rally so he can cast his vote! Cards may be sent to Bruce at 1100 Grove Street, Apt. 18, Cedar Falls, IA 50613.

Please continue to pray for Rev. Dr. Rich King as he continues to deal with the after-effects of strokes. Cards may be sent to Rich at 1831 Prairie Ave., Marshalltown, IA 50158.

Please continue to pray for Josh Ullom, son of Rev. Dr. Dave and Judy Ullom of First Presbyterian Church in Estherville. Josh continues with bi-weekly chemo. Please also pray for Josh's family and for Dave and Judy as they all deal with this and support Josh.

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, Ackley
First Presbyterian Church, Boone
First Presbyterian Church, Greene
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Waterloo

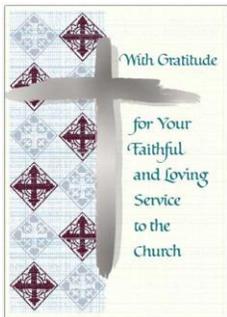
Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Elliott Creek Presbyterian Church, Bronson
Memorial Presbyterian Church, Cherokee
Westminster Presbyterian Church, Ida Grove
First Presbyterian Church, Lake Park
Community Presbyterian Church, Lawton
First Presbyterian Church, Odebolt
First Presbyterian Church, Paullina
First Presbyterian Church, Sioux City
Lakeside Presbyterian Church, Storm Lake
First Presbyterian Church, South Sioux City



Condolences are sent to Rev. Dr. Brett and Anita Becker on the death of Brett's mother, Roberta Henry.

Cards may be sent to: Brett and Anita Becker
 917 Idaho Ave.
 Ames, IA 50014



CRE Bill Crawford is retiring after serving First Presbyterian Church in Odebolt for six years. His last Sunday with the congregation will be November 8th.

The congregation is honoring Bill and Elaine with a card shower. Cards may be sent to:

Bill and Elaine Crawford
412 Arizona
Glidden, IA 51443

Poor Richard's Almanac

by Richard Francis, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Prospect Hill



I don't expect to find a lot of food for spiritual reflection in reference books, but there it was in a Bible dictionary: *At first glance a call to love one another might seem an easier command than the synoptic teaching to "love your enemy."* However, the long history of the Christian church suggests otherwise. - Colleen M Conway¹

What she is referring to is Jesus' command to his disciples found in John 13:34: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." (the command is repeated with different wording in John 15:12 and 15:17). The synoptic² teaching to love your enemy is found in Matthew 5:44, Luke 6:27, and Luke 6:35. And she's right: loving enemies is hard; loving our fellow disciples should be a no-brainer.

Yet we don't always act as if we love each other. People have been killed over differences in belief and practice, not by atheists or adherents of other religions, but by their fellow Christians.³ And we continue to be divided from each other, Catholic from Protestant from Orthodox, Presbyterian from Methodist, Baptist from Assemblies of God, and so on. We've gotten so used to those divisions that we think of them as normal. But they aren't "normal." They are an aspect of our fallenness, of our sinful humanity.

Well, I can't mend the macro divisions in the Body of Christ, but maybe I can encourage you to look at the micro divisions in the Body, that is, the ways in which we don't act like we love the other members of our own congregations, no matter how much we say we do.

It goes without saying—or at least it should—that we are all apt to be cranky right now. That crankiness may come from worry, anxiety, stress, or whatever else is happening in your life, but it can affect the people around us, and the people in our churches, those whom Jesus told us to love as he loves us, can bear the brunt of our crankiness. For example:

- The video feed for the online service doesn't work, and we blame the pastor (who is still learning how to do this stuff, often with cobbled-together equipment).
- A fellow church member wears a mask to worship, and we accuse them of making a political statement.
- A fellow church member *doesn't* wear a mask to worship, and we accuse them of making a political statement.

You can fill in the blanks. We are all, as one person put it, on a short fuse. We need to remind ourselves from time to time that all too often *what we fight about isn't what we're fighting about*. We may think we're fighting about the worship video, or about whether or not to wear masks, but we're really fighting about the stresses in our individual and corporate lives, stresses that we can't always talk about or even understand, but that come out in other ways.

I wish I had a simple remedy for this, but I don't.

Actually, maybe I do. It involves taking care of ourselves, whether we are pastors or church members or presbytery staff.

¹ From the article "John, Gospel of" in the *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Volume 3

² "Synoptic" refers to the first three Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They are often grouped together because they are similar to each other and different from John's Gospel.

³ I'm not talking about ancient history, either: the Rwandan genocide of 1994 was primarily Christian vs. Christian, and over half a million people were killed.

Shelby Foote tells about a group of soldiers who were involved in the Peninsular Campaign at the beginning of the Civil War. They were trained but inexperienced, and as they advanced toward the battle, with the sounds of fighting growing louder and bullets whizzing over their heads, they began to get nervous. Their commander, seeing the growing signs of panic in his soldiers, called a halt and put them through the Manual of Arms: “Attention!” “Present arms.” “Shoulder arms.” “Fix bayonets.” And so on. The familiar drill that they had done a thousand times in their training calmed them and they were able to enter the battle and acquit themselves well.

Our “manual of operations” is known as spiritual disciplines: prayer; reading and meditating on the Bible; sharing our struggles with other believers; worshiping together, even if it’s over Zoom or Facebook; working for justice and peace in whatever way is available to us.

And maybe—just maybe—cutting ourselves and each other some slack. Or, as Jesus would say, “Love each other the way I love you.”

Blessings,



Lunch and Learn – Why We Need Social Media

How many young people or families did your ministry attract last year? Or are you just waiting for them to stumble across your online worship or wander in the door on Sunday?

Let’s face it, there are a lot of voices vying for people’s attention – *and most of them are online*. Is your church in the conversation?

There’s no longer any question about whether your church should be on social media or not. It can be a great tool to boost your attendance for important holidays. In fact, it might be the secret weapon for struggling churches.



Join us Wednesday, November 4th at noon for a Lunch and Learn with church marketing expert Bryce Wiebe (Manager of Special Offerings PCUSA) and find new ways for your ministry to reach out to the next generation.

This webinar is for everyone in church leadership – please share this link with all your elders and deacons.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89286688802?pwd=OVIGWGV1RDdPUHQzQW1oeWVvWWxiUT09>

To call in with audio only dial: 312-626-6799

Meeting ID: 892 8668 8802

Passcode: 421923

Application for Pastors' Educational Debt Relief from the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

Pastors in the Presbytery of North Central Iowa may apply for educational debt relief assistance from the Presbytery. [Applications](#) are due by December 15, 2020.

Here I am after Saturday's presbytery meeting, dancing for joy!

I'm dancing because of all the nice things everyone, especially Ian, said about me as I get ready to end my term as Stated Clerk.

I'm dancing because of the presbytery's generosity in getting me a gift card to a woodworking store, so I can get busy this winter and make some more sawdust.

And I'm dancing because I'm still a member of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill and will continue to be your colleague, friend, and servant, as I have been in various capacities since 1992.

Thank you all for your love, support, and encouragement.



Michael



Board of Pension Annual Enrollment is Now Open



Make sure you have the coverage you need – make your elections for 2021 benefits by November 13!

Annual enrollment – your chance to make changes or elect benefits effective January 1, 2021 – is open now through November 13. This is your only chance to make changes or elect benefits for 2021 unless you have a qualifying event during the year (such as getting married or adopting a child). Click [here](#) to learn more and to log on to [Benefits Connect](#).

Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program Offering Safety and Technology Loan

While some churches have already made the necessary changes to allow for a new way of worship, some are still being challenged by inadequate technology or no technology at all to help them deliver their message electronically. To assist congregations in adding (or improving) this option to their congregation's worship experience and to prepare their churches for in-person worship once they are able, the Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program is introducing the new Safety and Technology Loan. This newest special purpose loan carries a low, discounted loan rate with terms designed to assist churches facing temporary cash flow challenges linked to the pandemic. Some of the projects the Safety and Technology Loan is available to help finance are:

Audiovisual technology and training
Air filtering systems

Air quality improvement systems
Sanitation equipment & touchless bathroom systems

To learn more please contact [Presbyterian Investment & Loan Program](#) directly. Please remember this is a loan and not a grant.

Both Presbyteries Waive the Requirement to Rotate Officers

The Commission on Ministry of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa and the Commission on Ministry of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill have approved a one-year exemption of the requirement for congregational rotation of officers in 2020. Please see your respective presbytery's letter for additional information, including steps that need to be taken by those sessions wishing to participate in the waiver.

Please click [here](#) to see North Central Iowa's letter waiving the requirement to rotate officers.

Please click [here](#) to see Prospect Hill's letter waiving the requirement to rotate officers.

Save the Date

Rev. Anna Small will be installed to service at First Presbyterian Church in Glidden at 2:00 p.m. on November 15, 2020. The installation will be live-streamed on First Presbyterian Church's Facebook page. Please click this link to be directed to that Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/gliddenpresbyterian>

Please join Rev. Anna and First Presbyterian Church, Glidden, for this very special event!

Tending to Ambiguous Losses in Uncertain Times



November 12 / 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. / \$20

Online Zoom Class Hosted by Mount Olivet Conference & Retreat Center

Ambiguous losses are perhaps the most challenging kind of loss. When someone or something is physically absent yet psychologically present, or physically present yet psychologically absent, it's hard to find clarity, it's hard to make decisions, and it's hard to grieve. The physical, emotional, economic and relational uncertainty resulting from the current pandemic further complicates ambiguous losses. This

workshop will discuss the nature of ambiguous loss and ways to deepen our resilience in these uncertain times.

Led by Carla Dahl, Professor of Congregational and Community Care at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

For more information and to register, [click here](#).

Spiritual Wellness Journey

Do you feel like your connection with God is a mile wide and an inch deep? Have you struggled to discover meaningful ways to sustain your spiritual health? In this workshop, participants will gain a better understanding of spiritual wellness. They will assess their own spiritual wellness and identify their God-shaped connection style. They will also create an action plan to position themselves to develop a closer relationship with God and others.

WHEN: Friday, November 20, 2020 / 10:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. (CT, with a lunch break)

WHERE: Virtual via Zoom (link will be sent in Welcome Email)

COST: \$75.00/participant

REGISTER HERE: <https://emc3coaching.com/spiritual-wellness-journey-workshop/>

Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation will scholarship a maximum of 12 participants for one-half of the registration cost (\$37.50). Please register and send your paid registration receipt to Joyce: opsf@opsf-omaha.org

Boy Scouts of America Bankruptcy and How it Affects Churches

This information should be helpful to any congregation that has/had a Boy Scout troop or had a troop and a charter from the Boy Scouts of America (BSA).

PCUSA General Counsel Mike Kirk has provided [this Q&A](#) for congregations that have been involved with the Boy Scouts, in relation to their bankruptcy and allegations of sexual abuse. Mike notes:

The bankruptcy action was filed by the BSA. We expect that some sort of fund will be set up by the bankruptcy court for survivors, against which they can make claims, and for parties (ex. congregations) who may be sued by survivors who might have a claim against the BSA and that party because a BSA leader engaged in sexual abuse while the troop was “hosted” by the congregation.

Congregations need to know that:

1. The national offices cannot take action on behalf of the member churches since they are, according to the Book of Order, to form separate corporations for purposes such as owning property, employing staff, and purchasing insurance (G-4.0101). Therefore, attorneys hired by congregations will likely advise congregations who believe they should file with the bankruptcy court to do it on behalf of their church corporation.
2. Churches would be wise to contact their local attorney to discuss the information in the [Q&A](#). If the information leads them to believe they may need to file something in the bankruptcy action they should seriously consider hiring local counsel to help them with that process.
3. The insurance policy that would cover liability such as this is not carried by the National group but by the local Council, so this bankruptcy would likely not affect it.

The recommendation is that there is no need to do anything regarding this bankruptcy, but it might be a good idea to check your insurance policy just to be sure how/if you're covered.

Doctor of Ministry at UDTs – 2021 Cohort

The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (UDTS) is offering an upcoming (2021) Doctor of Ministry cohort that will focus on Crisis and the Church: Ecclesiastical and Pastoral Responses. Led by Dr. Beth McCaw, Associate Professor of Ministry (UDTS) and Presbytery Leader, Glacier Presbytery (PCUSA), and Dr. Bradley Longfield, Professor of Church History (UDTS), this cohort will explore ways the church has addressed crises in the past to develop the theological perspectives and pastoral skills necessary to equip congregations and their members in the present to witness to the hope of the gospel in times of crisis.

The cohort begins online on Tuesday, January 21, 2021, while the first of three annual residencies will be held May 12-19, 2021. The deadline for applications is December 31, 2020. Please click [here](#) to apply for the DMin Program.

For more information, please see this [flyer](#).

If you have questions, please contact The Rev. Timothy Mathew Slemmons, Ph.D. (tslemmons@dbq.edu or 563-589-3578) or Kayla Schween (kschween@dbq.edu or 563-589-3115).

A Farewell Celebration for Sarah Moore-Nokes

As many of you know, General Presbyter Sarah Moore-Nokes is stepping down from the position of General Presbyter of Winnebago Presbytery at the end of the year.

Sarah has worked for the Presbytery for 15 years, first as the Associate Executive and then as General Presbyter. She has brought her quick wit, collaborative approach, empathy, and organizational smarts to this work. Anyone who has worked with her knows that she listens with an ear to equal parts people, polity, and problem-solving. She's a creative thinker and, with fairly lightening speed, assesses situations. We will miss her!

At the November 10 presbytery meeting, we will be honoring Sarah and this is where we're asking for your help! You can join in honoring her in either or both of the following two ways:

Send a note or a card:

We are creating a memory book for Sarah and collecting notes or cards to present to her at our presbytery meeting on November 10. Please send cards or notes directly to the presbytery office, attention of Jill. The deadline is November 5.

Winnebago Presbytery
181 E. North Water St., Suite 207
Neenah WI 54956
ATTN: Jill

Contribute to a gift:

We are also presenting Sarah with a going-away gift. If you'd like to contribute to this gift, please send a check made out to "Winnebago Presbytery" to the presbytery office, attention Jill. The deadline for this is November 5.

Winnebago Presbytery
181 E. North Water St., Suite 207
Neenah WI 54956
ATTN: Jill

To join us on November 10 for Sarah's farewell, register for the presbytery meeting on our website at winnebagopresbytery.org. After you register, you will receive instructions for joining the meeting by Zoom.

On the registration form, choose the option attending "Only Sarah's portion of the meeting". You are also welcome to attend the entire meeting. The farewell will begin at approximately 5:15 p.m.

Questions? Contact Jill at jill@winnebagopresbytery.org

Presbyterian Foundation – Church Financial Leadership Grant Program



Grants are available to assist pastors to attend continuing education opportunities which will help them in leading their congregations toward financial and missional vitality. For more information please

click [here](#) or contact Rev. David Loleng, Director, Church Financial Literacy and Leadership, 800-858-6127 ext. 5901.

Transition-to-College Assistance



The Board of Pensions offers a grant program intended to help eligible families of freshmen entering college with transitional expenses, such as a computer purchase or dorm furnishings.

Applications for the 2020-2021 academic year will be accepted

from August 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. Please click [here](#) for more information.

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. To support Shawn financially: 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



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/>