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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The Presbytery Connection

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

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2020 Per Capita News

The General Assembly voted to keep its 2020 per capita at $8.95, which is the same as it was for 2019.

The Synod voted to raise its 2020 per capita by $.10.

At its September 19 meeting, the Council of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa voted to keep its 2020 per capita at $22.50, which is the same as it was for 2019. Total 2020 per capita for North Central Iowa is as follows:

- General Assembly: $ 8.95
- Synod: 5.50
- Presbytery: 22.50
- Total: $36.95

The Presbytery of Prospect Hill will set its per capita at the October 26, 2019 Presbytery meeting.
Prayers of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa

Week of October 6  Bethany Presbyterian Church, Grundy Center – Rev. Al Polito
Week of October 13  Lone Rock Presbyterian Church, Lone Rock – Walt Reemtsma, CRE
Week of October 20  Barclay Presbyterian Church, Waterloo – Larry Fuson, CRE

Prayers of the Presbytery of Prospect Hill

Week of October 6  The Synod of Lakes and Prairies Staff
Week of October 13  Plymouth Presbyterian Church, Le Mars – Rev. David Koehler, Moderator
Week of October 20  Trinity Presbyterian Church, Wall Lake – Lue Baker, CRE

Additional Prayer Concerns

Please keep Rev. Suzanne Wobig in your prayers as she is recovering from a fall that resulted in a broken wrist, arm, collar bone (in two places) and five broken ribs.

Please keep Rich Belles, husband of Rev. Cathy Belles, in your prayers. Rich is recovering well after his heart attack and hopes to return to work soon. Rich and Cathy would like to thank everyone for their prayers as those prayers have been a great boost for this trying time.

Please keep Rev. Kerry Carson in your prayers as he has had a second surgery on his foot.

Please keep Administrative Assistant Jeannie Stolee’s father, Arvin Schumann, in your prayers as he has been diagnosed with lung cancer and may be undergoing tests concerning his stomach.

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.

Please remember Rev. Missy Brown in your prayers as she recovers from back surgery.

Please remember Rev. Kevin Freese and pray for his relief from a herniated disc.

Please send prayers of thanks that Cathy Sydnor, wife of Rev. Michael Sydnor, avoided abdominal surgery and pray for her recovery from breathing and mobility issues.

Please keep Rev. Erica MacCreaigh’s father, Earl, in your prayers as he underwent spinal surgery on September 19.

Please keep Rev. Paul Collier’s father, Rev. Jack Collier, in your prayers as he is under hospice care in Prineville, Oregon.
Churches in Transition

Please pray for the following churches that are in transition:

**Presbytery of North Central Iowa**

- First Presbyterian Church, Grundy Center
- First Presbyterian Church, Kamrar
- First Presbyterian Church, Reinbeck

**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

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**Fall Presbytery Meetings**

Both presbyteries have their fall Presbytery Meetings coming up.

**Prospect Hill:**
- Saturday, October 26, 2019
- Lakeshore Center at Okoboji
  - 1864 Hwy. 86
  - Milford, Iowa
- Registration/coffee 8:30 a.m. / Call to Meeting 9:30 a.m.

**North Central Iowa:**
- Sunday, November 3, 2019
- Cedar Heights Community Presbyterian Church
  - 2015 Rainbow Circle
  - Cedar Falls, Iowa
- Registration 1:30 p.m. / Call to Meeting 2:30 p.m.

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**North Central Iowa Presbyterian Women**

The announcement in the September 19 Presbytery Connection about a Presbyterian Women meeting being held on October 13 was an error. Please disregard that previous announcement. Thank you.
You are Cordially Invited
to the
Ordination
for
Mark Rabideau

Date: October 13, 2019
Time: 4:00 p.m.
Location: First Presbyterian Church
208 W State Street
Jefferson, Iowa

**Refreshments will be served in the fellowship hall prior to the ordination, starting at 3:00 p.m.**
You may know Rev. Dr. Jason Santos, who was the convocation speaker at Synod School last year. He is PC(USA)’s Coordinator for Christian Formation and is hosting a conference on the theology of play and tabletop (board) games. Registration fees are pretty low and travel scholarships may be available. Click here for more information.
Poor Richard’s Almanac
by Richard Francis, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Prospect Hill

The news isn’t good right now, and it’s likely to get worse. I suppose I could have written that sentence almost any time over the past couple of years, but it still seems appropriate right now. Since we have little control over the news, our choices all come down to our response.

The first step in our response to crises in society is to remember that God’s people have been through crises many, many times before. Psalm 11 begins this way:

In the LORD I take refuge; how can you say to me,
“Flee like a bird to the mountains;
for look, the wicked bend the bow,
they have fitted their arrow to the string,
to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart.
If the foundations are destroyed,
what can the righteous do?”

“If the foundations are destroyed.” Sometimes it feels like that’s what’s happening, or, as I heard someone say once, “Everything nailed down is coming loose.” The psalmist has been advised under these circumstances to “flee like a bird to the mountains.” But the psalmist has a different idea:

The LORD is in his holy temple;
the LORD’s throne is in heaven.
His eyes behold, his gaze examines humankind.
The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked,
and his soul hates the lover of violence.
On the wicked he will rain coals of fire and sulfur;
a scorching wind shall be the portion of their cup.
For the LORD is righteous;
he loves righteous deeds;
the upright shall behold his face.

It may feel like the foundations are destroyed, but it may be that we have been building our hopes and fears on the wrong foundation and need to revise our thinking. As followers of Jesus, we don’t depend on a particular form of government or a particular political party for our security. As the apostle Paul reminds us, “our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 3:20)

Our citizenship is in heaven, but our faith is lived out on earth, and we are called by both the Old and New Testaments to seek the good of the land in which we find ourselves (Jeremiah 29:7, Romans 13:1-7, 1 Timothy 2:1-4), never forgetting that we have no guarantee that the society we live in will be friendly to our faith, especially when our faith calls us to resist laws and policies that run contrary to that faith (Daniel 3, Revelation 13).

Just as I was wondering how to wrap this up, an article entitled “How I learned to love the doctrine of total depravity” appeared in my Facebook feed. It was from the magazine Christian Century and was written by Heidi Haverkamp, an Episcopal priest and great-granddaughter of a Dutch Reformed minister.¹ In the

¹ You can find the article here: https://www.christiancentury.org/article/first-person/how-i-learned-love-doctrine-total-depravity?fbclid=IwAR0eS_1JcvdDjt32ZbNuSmKoRWApB2WDj7c2l8hxzeOAu4eWmwpo1davJll

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article she writes that for her the doctrine of total depravity (usually associated with Calvinism) has become a source of comfort and encouragement. She puts it this way:

Total depravity frames humans not as good people who sometimes mess up but as messed-up people who, with God’s help, can do some good things—but nothing completely free of selfishness or error. We are unable to make a choice that is unquestionably, entirely good. None of our actions, loves, or thoughts can be truly without sin.

Yes, that sounds pretty bleak—OK, it is pretty bleak—but look where it lands us: right back in the arms of Jesus. We can’t save ourselves, and we can’t save the world, but God can, does, and will. We are not responsible for solving all the problems; we are responsible for being faithful and leaving the results with God. Pray, march, write your legislator, and recycle your plastic bags, all the while remembering that the future is in God’s hands.

So, if you are a pastor trying to figure how to handle the news from a Christian perspective, take heart. You probably won’t get everything right, but that’s OK: neither God nor your congregation expects you to get everything right.

And if you are a church member looking to your pastor for guidance in troubled times, be sure to lift them up in prayer and then cut them some slack.

After all, we’re all in this together—and that’s good.

Blessings,

[Signature]

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**A Word from the NCI Moderator**

“The God of all, while requiring sacrifice from time to time, serves the good purposes of God’s creation.” Last summer in my moderator’s message I wrote about a wedding that took place. The bride was a Muslim refugee from Syria and the groom a Christian from Iowa. The groom’s father had been battling brain cancer for a very long time. He was able to be present and enjoy the wedding and died two weeks later. The bride’s family is now living in Canada. She feared they would disown her for marrying a Christian….and she was right! That was their original reaction. But here is the good news. Love for their daughter and sister is stronger than the rules and regulations of their religion. The bride’s mom and sister were finally able to obtain a Visa to visit the United States. They have been here for two weeks getting to know the groom and his family, being with the bride after five years, and finally accepting a marriage they never dreamed possible. What a great example that in all of our differences….religious, political, and others….love heals and wins!

I recently spent a few days in Miami, FL. I have eight best friends from college. We graduated from the University of Iowa (go Hawks!) in 1965. We have met together regularly ever since and yearly now that we are retired and our families are grown. This takes a bit of effort as we live in California, Florida, Colorado, Texas, and Iowa. Ever since 9/11 we have met in Colorado. Our friend in Denver never liked to fly and after 9/11 was unable to get on a plane. This year our friend in Miami has some serious health
Our Colorado friend was able to conquer her fears and fly to Miami. Love and friendship won!

My favorite part of being Moderator is visiting churches in our Presbytery. On September 8 I went to Maxwell to take part in the Commissioning of Adrian McMullen. I continue to be thankful to be a part of the PC(USA) and, especially, NCI Presbytery!

With thanksgiving,

Judy Klepfer
Moderator, Presbytery of North Central Iowa

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**PC(USA) Disability Concerns**

Presbyterians for Disability Concerns has a mission to not only include all of God’s people, but that we all provide a place of meaningful participation and a deep sense of belonging and connection. Please click [here](#) to go to the website. You may also click [here](#) to see the PC(USA) Congregation Audit and [here](#) for Tips, Techniques, and Technologies.

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**North Central Iowa Session Records Reviews**

Session Records Reviews have been scheduled for North Central Iowa. Please click [here](#) for the dates and locations. Please feel free to attend whichever of these meetings is most convenient for you either in terms of date or location or both.

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The Presbyteries of North Central Iowa, Prospect Hill and Des Moines will be voting on a Joint Presbytery Staffing Plan at their respective fall Presbytery meetings. You may access that plan [here](#).

In addition, please click on [this link](#) to find videos that explain the proposal in more depth.

If you would like to ask a specific question about the proposed Joint Presbytery Staffing Plan, please plan to attend one of the following events:
• 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 20, at First Presbyterian Church, 1111 5th Avenue North, Fort Dodge, with Rev. Sara Hill
• 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 20, at First Presbyterian Church, 100 Church Street, Conrad, with Rev. Kerry Carson

Or join us on-line at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 20, from the comfort of your own home to ask a question. You can join this on-line discussion by clicking this Zoom link.

If you have any questions before your presbytery takes a vote on this exciting plan, please ask them!

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Schedule and Information for the Iowa Presbyterians Gathering!

Friday, October 18, is the last day to register for the Iowa Presbyterians Gathering to be held Friday evening, November 1, and Saturday, November 2, at Heartland Presbyterian Church in Clive. Please click here for more information, the schedule, and how to register.

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The 2019-2020 Presbyterian Planning Calendar is now available to order! To order, you may call Presbyterian Distribution Service at 800-533-4371, send a fax to 502-569-8030, or go to pcusastore.com. The cost is $14.95 each; $12.50 each for 10-49; $8.50 each for 50 or more; plus shipping. Ask for ISBN 978-0-9858964-4-7.

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Attention Church Administrative Assistants, Treasurers and Clerks of Session of the Presbyteries of North Central Iowa and Prospect Hill!

• Do you need a short getaway?
• Would you like to meet other church personnel?
• Would you like to learn about the Presbytery Office and how we can help each other?

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• Are you feeling overwhelmed?
• Would you just like a short retreat at beautiful Lake Okoboji?

If you answered yes to at least one of these questions, please join the Presbytery Office for a one-night retreat! Please click here for more information and find a registration form here.

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.

Lakeshore Center has several exciting events planned for this fall! Click on the event name to find out more.

• Fall Work Day (think of it as a mission trip close to home!): October 12
• Fall Fest: October 16

Click here to be directed to Lakeshore Center’s website
Please click [here](#) for information on The Academy.