

The holidays are upon us! Last week we celebrated Thanksgiving Day and this coming Sunday is already the second Sunday in Advent. Many people already have outdoor Christmas decorations up, holiday music is on the radio, and Christmas-themed ads are on the television. It is the busiest and most hectic time of the year.

It is also Advent. Unlike the usual perception of the holiday season, Advent historically is a time to slow down and reflect as we prepare to celebrate the Incarnation of the Son of God in the person of Jesus Christ.



It is a time to prepare for the celebration of Christ's first coming and to anticipate Christ's return.

Our Advent worship series this year is based on Isaiah's vision of the Peaceable Kingdom found in Isaiah 11:1-9, which is the inspiration for the Edward Hicks's painting of the same name. Our series is based on one developed by Carol L. Veldman Rudie.

Each week we will explore the peace which God promises: Peace through Heartfelt Worship; The Peaceable Kingdom Festival of Lessons and Carols; Peace for God's People; and Peace for the Earth. On Christmas Eve will celebrate The Peacemaker Comes! We hope that you can join us and invite friends and neighbors as well.

In addition to our Sunday services, we will also hear a performance of this year's Cantata, "A Tapestry of Light" by Joseph M. Martin at 2 pm on Sunday, December 7. Conducted by Kim Reisinger, this Celtic Christmas Celebration features instrumentalists and vocalists from the Mason City community and our own Choir of the Kirk.

While Advent and Christmas promise to be a joyous and meaningful season, it is also true that the holidays can be a difficult time for many as they find themselves lonely and missing loved ones who are no longer present. When the church focuses solely on the joy of the season, those who are struggling may feel isolated or guilty for not being able to be joyful while holding heavy burdens. A blue Christmas service acknowledges this tension and creates a space for that sadness to be named and tended in community. With this in mind, we will be having a "Longest Night" service at 6 pm on Sunday, December 21. Everyone is also invited to attend this service of light and hope.

May we all experience the mystery and wonder and peace of this season in our life together.

Church Calendar

This Week

Sunday | Dec. 7

9:00 am
9:00 am
10:30 am
11:30 am
2:00 pm

BLAST
Adult Forum
Worship with Communion
Called Session meeting after worship
"Tapestry of Light" Christmas Cantata, reception to follow

Tuesday | Dec. 9

6:30 pm

Small Group gathering at the home of Steve and Beth Ehlers

Wednesday | Dec. 10

4:15 pm

Special Needs and Endowment Ministry Tea

Thursday | Dec. 11

9:30 am

NO Bible Study
Quilting Group

Week of December 14

Sunday | Dec. 14

9:00 am
9:00 am
10:30 am

BLAST
Adult Forum
Worship

Tuesday | Dec. 16

6:30 pm

Small Group gathering at the home of Steve and Beth Ehlers

Wednesday | Dec. 17

9:30 am

Membership and Outreach Ministry Team

Thursday | Dec. 18

9:30 am
12:00 Noon

Quilting Group
Bible Study

Week of December 21

Sunday | Dec. 21

9:00 am
9:00 am
10:30 am
6:00 pm

BLAST
Adult Forum
Worship
"Longest Night" Worship Service

Wednesday | Dec. 24

5:00 pm

Christmas Eve Day
Christmas Eve Worship Service

Thursday | Dec. 25

Christmas Day
Have a blessed Christmas!



Week of December 28

Sunday | December 28

10:30 am

Worship

Wednesday | Dec. 31

New Year's Eve

Thursday | Jan. 1

Happy New Year!
Office is closed



Week of January 4, 2026

Sunday | Jan. 4

9:00 am	BLAST
9:00 am	Adult Forum
10:30 am	Worship

Tuesday | Jan. 6

10:00 am	Coffee and Conversation
6:30 pm	Small Group gathering at the home of Pastor Kip and Lee

Wednesday | Jan. 7

12:00 Noon	Pulse newsletter articles due
6:00 pm	EAT Night

Thursday | Jan. 8

12:00 Noon	Bible Study
1:00 pm	Prayer Shawl Group

Fill the Stable



The Mission Ministry Team supports the North Iowa Impact with a food pantry at the east end of our parking lot. As soon as the pantry is filled it is empty. Please support this project by filling the stable in the Friendship

Room with food items through Christmas.

Thank you ~ The Mission Ministry Team

Poinsettias



If you would like to decorate the church sanctuary with a poinsettia during this year's Christmas season, you may deliver your plant anytime during church office hours of 9:00 am to 3:00 pm on December 17 and 18.

Please let the church office know by noon on Tuesday, December 16, if you are giving a poinsettia in memory or honor of a loved one, so the information can be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

2026 Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Trip

Please consider joining the 2026 Presbytery Mission Trip for disaster relief in Canton, North Carolina, February 1 through February 7, 2026.

On September 27th, 2024, Hurricane Helene devastated the mountains of Western North Carolina and other areas in the American southeast, forever changing families, lives, landscapes, and memories. The town of Canton sustained massive damage and flooding, including a portion of the downtown that had just finished rebuilding after flooding from Tropical Storm Fred in 2021. Work will primarily be in the Canton and Asheville area.

Lodging will be at Canton Presbyterian Church, arriving Sunday, February 1, and departing Saturday, February 7. The church can accommodate up to 20 volunteers. You can also stay in a local hotel, if you prefer. Registration materials are available at:

<https://presbynciowa.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2025/11/2026-Mission-Trip-Application-and-Release-Forms.docx>.

Any questions, please contact David Little.

Annual Reports

Annual Reports from ministry team chairpersons are due to the church office

no later than Wednesday, December 31, 2025.

Please email your report in "Word" format to the office at firstpresbymc@gmail.com.

If you would like a copy of the report you submitted last year, please let the office

know as soon as possible.



It is very important to submit your report in a timely manner and your help with this is much appreciated. The 2026 annual meeting is scheduled earlier than usual, and time is needed to prepare and assemble the annual report packets for the meeting.

Advent 2025 in Adult Forum



Join us as we examine
**Every Valley: Advent with
the Scriptures of
Handel's Messiah.**

Handel's *Messiah*,
composed in 1741, uses
scripture from the Old and
New Testaments to

depict the prophecies of the Messiah, his birth, his
suffering and sacrifice, and his ascension and
glorification. This work is familiar to many of us.
Have you ever taken a closer look at the story?

We will discuss Part 1: Prophecy and Birth the
four Sundays in Advent beginning Sunday,
November 30. We will focus on the prophecies of
the Messiah's coming, particularly in the Book of
Isaiah. We will celebrate with the familiar chorus
"For unto us a child is born."

Study books are available but not necessary.
Each session will conclude with a discussion of
our beautiful windows depicting the story.



December Birthdays

December 5	—	Cheryl Schurtz
December 6	—	Steve Schurtz
December 6	—	Diane Wilson
December 7	—	Rusty Davenport
December 8	—	Adrianna Attleson
December 12	—	Suzanne Hofstrand
December 13	—	Bill Jellema
December 13	—	Carol Kelly
December 15	—	Carol Foster
December 17	—	Gretchen King
December 17	—	Kent Stevenson
December 27	—	Daisy Young
December 28	—	Kativa Weitzel
December 30	—	Merritt Balmer
December 31	—	Jacqueline Richter

January Birthdays

January 5	—	Will Jellema
January 5	—	Kristen Long
January 10	—	Shirley Harmon

Session Information

Report on the Stated Meeting of Session on
11/20/25. The following items of business
were decided:

1. Accepted the resignation of Judy Henry, effective 12/28/25, from Session and as Chair of Worship and Music Ministry Team, with thanks and appreciation for her service.
2. Dismissed the Ad Hoc Committee on Church Use Policy, with thanks for a job well-done.
3. Approved the collection of an offering for Northern Lights Alliance Homeless Shelter during the Cantata on 12/7/25.
4. Approved the purchase of a storage rack for the banners.
5. Approved a Called Meeting of Session to approve the 2026 Budget on 12/7/25.
6. Approved scheduling the Annual Meeting of the Congregation/Corporation on 2/8/26.
7. The next Stated Meeting of Session is 1/22/26.

Respectfully Submitted.
Betsy Gross, Clerk of Session

Please Note Change

Betsy Gross, Clerk of Session, has a new
email address: groeli57@gmail.com

New Photo Directory

The new photographic supplement
to the church directory is here!
Please find copies on the Welcome
Center table in the narthex.
A big thank you to Yvonne Addis,
Jean Laudner-Vollmers,
Beth Ehlers, Heidi Mechler, and
Rhonda Pyle for their assistance
in completing our directory.



Please Keep the Following People in Your Prayers

- ◆ Mike Thrams, brother of Rhonda Pyle, cancer treatment
- ◆ Scott and Paula Warren



**Legacy Giving Sunday
Paula Warren**

This is a report that lists the honorarium and memorials received in the past year and how they were used. Quarterly interest income from the Servant Endowment Fund, the First Presbyterian Endowment Fund and the Safford and Lena Lock Endowment Fund is deposited in the Undesignated Special Needs Fund.

Undesignated Special Needs Fund
Ann MacGregor Memorials
Yvonne and Al Herlitzka Honorarium

Funds for flat roof repair
Rorick Fund
Undesignated Special Needs Fund
Pipes for Organ Fund Gene and Nancy Kuehn
Capital Fund

Bob Kress memorials
Christ Candle using paraffin wax
for Communion table
Votive candles and batteries
for sanctuary windows

Donna Henry memorials
Humidity system for grand piano

Special Needs Funds for Phase One
Boiler Project
Pipes for Organ Fund Gene and Nancy Kuehn
Capital Fund
Heating System Jim Kuhlman
Rorick Fund
Undesignated Special Needs Fund

Memorial Funds designated for the Capital Fund
Donna Henry Memorials
Darrell Fisher Memorials
Barbara Busch Memorials
Jim Kuhlman Memorials
Joyce Hanes Memorials

Donation From Joyce Hanes

Joyce Hanes was a participant in the Alliance Energy Corporation Director's Charitable Award Program. Under this program, directors designate an eligible organization(s) to receive a donation from Alliant Energy in the director's name following the director's death.

With great joy and gratitude, we inform our members that Joyce designated First Presbyterian Church as one of four beneficiaries to receive a donation. Other beneficiaries are Girl Scouts Camp Tanglefoot, NIACC scholarships, and Nature Conservancy. Our church's allocation is \$13,333.00 a year for the next 10 years.

Joyce was invited to join the board of Interstate Power Company in 1982. When Interstate Power merged and became Alliant Energy, she continued to serve on the Alliant board and was the chair of the Audit Committee until 2003.

Joyce was a long-time member of our church serving as both an Elder and Deacon and on a number of committees. She also played in the Hand Bell Choir.

In the community she shared her skills and talents with many organizations including the NIACC Board of directors beginning in 1975, serving as President of the board from 1986-1993, then served on the NIACC Foundation board until 2006. She was a member and then President of Tanglefoot Inc.

She played drums beginning in high school and then at Iowa State. She played in the New Horizons Band until her death and in the North Iowa Band until 2020.

Just A Reminder....

Pastor Kip, our church committees and I will not ask you for money by email. We will never ask that you purchase gift cards for us. I have had a couple of emails asking for our church directory which includes many of your email addresses. If you get an email or message you think may be true, please contact us to double check.

Laura Little, Financial Secretary

Advent
A Season of Hope
& Expectation