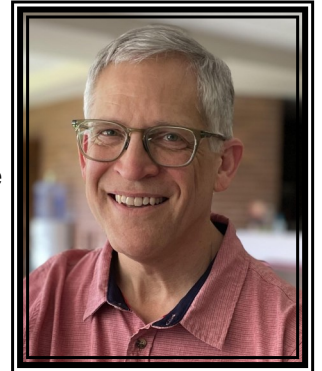


A Note from Pastor Kip

With Memorial Day coming up, I thought I would share the transcript of a talk I gave in 2018 in Harbor Springs, Michigan. -Pastor Kip



When I was asked to speak today, I was told I should give a prayer and that I should share my thoughts about Memorial Day. As a pastor, I'm pretty comfortable praying in public, but public speaking is a different matter. I'm a pastor; I preach in public every week. But this isn't supposed to be a sermon. Instead, I'm sharing my thoughts as a citizen of this great nation in which each of us has the right to share our thoughts as free speech. I'm sharing my thoughts as a Christian in a nation where each of us has the right to practice our religion and worship God in our own way. And I'm sharing my thoughts here in a public gathering, because we have the right to gather peaceably in public. We celebrate Memorial Day in memory of the people who died in service to our country to protect these rights. Yes, on Memorial Day I also think of my nephew who is a Captain in the Air Force and of all the other men and women who are currently serving, but we honor them on Armed Forces Day. I also think of the many men and women I know who have bravely served before, but we honor them on Veteran's Day. Of course we honor and respect those who have served and those who are currently serving, but today is about those who died in service to our nation.

These men and women gave their lives defending the freedoms that we enjoy. But I sometimes wonder what they thought they were putting their lives on the line for. I get the sense from veterans I have known and from many serving now, that when they are in the field, they aren't thinking so much about defending abstract freedoms, as important as those ideals are. Instead, they are putting their life on the line for the men and women they are fighting next to. They are focused on the soldiers in their unit, on protecting them. It's about looking out for the person right there with you regardless of their politics or race or religion. In the Bible we are told that we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love our fellow human beings whom we do see.

It seems that sometimes people try to honor people who have died in service to our country by arguing with other Americans about who is patriotic and who isn't. Maybe a better way to honor them is by the way we treat those right next to us without regard to how patriotic we think they are, just as those men and women gave their lives for those right next to them.

I suspect that most, maybe all, soldiers think first of those they are fighting alongside, but others do think more philosophically about what it means to risk their lives in war. One of our founding fathers, John Adams, once wrote to his wife:

"I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. My sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history, naval architecture, navigation, commerce, and agriculture, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry, and porcelain."

Cont'd on page 2

The Vision of First Presbyterian Church is to glorify God by
GATHERING as Children of God,
GROWING together in faith, hope and love, and
GOING out to make Christ known.

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We honor the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in service by looking back in remembrance of who they were and what they did, but we also honor them by looking forward to what their deaths can mean, that their sacrifice might prepare for a better world in which their children and grandchildren might live better lives. I guess, when I think about what Memorial Day means to me, it is an opportunity to honor the dead by looking back in gratitude for the sacrifices made by these brave men and women; by looking forward in hope to what their sacrifice can accomplish for our children and grandchildren; and it is a time to honor them by looking at the present with conviction, rolling up our sleeves and working here and now so that Memorial Day might be a day when we honor those who gave their lives in war by working for a day when war, itself, will only be a memory.

Church Calendar

This Week

Tuesday | May 19

6:30 pm Small Group

Thursday | May 21

3:00 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal

5:30 pm Deacons

Next Week

Sunday | May 24 Pentecost Wear **RED!**

10:30 am Worship

Monday | May 25 **Memorial Day** Church Office is closed

12:00 Noon Ministry Team Minutes due for Session packet

Tuesday | May 26

6:30 pm Small Group

Thursday | May 28

9:30 am Quilting Group

6:00 pm Session

Looking Ahead

Monday | June 1

12:00 noon Pulse articles due for June 1 publication. Please have your articles in Word format attached to an email and sent to the office (firstpresbymc@gmail.com) by noon.

Tuesday | June 2

10:00 am Coffee and Conversation in the Friendship Room,
No Small Group

Please Keep the Following People in Your Prayers

- ◆ Bill, brother of Sarah Kress, cancer diagnosis
- ◆ Deborah Howell, health concerns
- ◆ Elaine Kiger, recovering from surgery
- ◆ Lori Diehl, sister of Teri Elsbury, cancer diagnosis
- ◆ Members in assisted living and care centers: Joan Eness, Shirley Harmon, Nancy Kuehn, Kay Sloan
- ◆ Kwik Star and its employees and managers
- ◆ World leaders, our military, and others caught up in the middle east conflict, that they would be comforted and kept safe until peace is restored





Pentecost Sunday

May 24

Wear Red!

Summer Worship at FPC



There's something special about worshipping under an open sky—the gentle breeze, the warmth of the sun, and the sounds of creation joining in praise. This summer, we invite you to experience that beauty together as a church family.

On the second Sunday of June (14), July (12), and August (9), our 10:30 a.m. service will be held outdoors. It will be a wonderful

opportunity to step outside the walls of the sanctuary and gather in a relaxed, refreshing setting while still sharing in meaningful worship and fellowship.

Feel free to bring a lawn chair or blanket and settle in comfortably. If you don't have a lawn chair, don't worry—there will be a rack of folding chairs available for anyone who needs one. After the service, stick around and enjoy some fellowship time with donuts and beverages.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

A Quiet Witness

The Prayer Shawl Ministry Group has changed its meeting time to the 2nd Thursday of each month. They will meet at Homestead Assisted Living at Nancy Kuehn's apartment #5, 2501 West State Street. The next meeting will be June 11 at 1 p.m.

May Birthdays

- May 20 — Lee Murphy
- May 20 — Bruce Wuttke
- May 20 — Stan Zinnel
- May 27 — Coni Samsel
- May 28 — Ann Hanes
- May 31 — Theresa Busch



Financial Update

Feb 2026 Financials

Income: \$19,688

Expenses: \$28,183.80

Shortfall: \$8,495.80

February saw several large expenses, most of which are not monthly but regular expenses. This included the quarterly insurance bill due (\$5,734), heating in the winter (\$4,835), and tax corrections (\$2,489).

March 2026 Financials

Income: \$17,224

Expenses: \$20,477.95

Shortfall: \$3,253.95

Year to Date:

Income: \$72,095.12

Expenses: \$ 67,685.30

Surplus: \$4,409.82

Contribution Statements have been mailed. They cover the first quarter but do not include the Easter service offering. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

Laura Little
Financial Secretary



Preschool to just completed 5th grade IMPORTANT DATES

SUNDAY, JULY 19 - VBS KICKOFF WITH Parking Lot Picnic 5-8 PM

MONDAY—THURSDAY VBS 5-8 P.M. WITH LIGHT MEAL

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2—CAMP EDGE KIDS LEAD WORSHIP AT 10:30 AM

*****VOLUNTEERS NEEDED*****

Pick up a volunteer sign-up sheet in the Narthex, complete it and return it in the offering plate or to the office or contact Beth Ehlers by email at behlers0903@gmail.com or 641-430-6553.

A Volunteer Planning Meeting will be held on Monday, June 29 at 6:30 pm in the Friendship Room.

Register Now for the 2026 U.S. – Mexico Border Trip—Nov. 30 – Dec. 4, 2026

The Presbytery of North Central Iowa invites you to register for the 2026 U.S. – Mexico Border Trip! This year we will be traveling to El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico where we'll be hosted by Abara. North Central Iowa presbytery members Tom and Kristy Parker and Dave and Sue Feltman are organizing the trip, to register or for more information see the Tri-Presbyteries Connection Newsletter at presbnciowa.org.



Community Prayers

The Membership and Outreach Team is excited to begin a program to reach out to our local businesses with prayer. Once a month we will



present a business name that we ask everyone to pray for throughout the month. Pastor Kip will visit the business to let them know that our church is praying for them. This will be a time for him to ask if there is anything specific that they would like us to pray for. He will give them a card that shows First Presbyterian Church is lifting the business and employees up in prayer. If this is a business that you shop or eat at, it would be nice if you mentioned that you are praying for them. We decided to start with businesses near the church. Through the month of May we ask that you pray for Kwik Star. Pastor Kip has already called on them. If you have any businesses that you would like us to include, please share it with Pastor Kip or members of the Membership and Outreach team:

Sarah Kress, Teri Elsbury, Denna Hill, Beth and Steve Ehlers, Lee Murphy

This is all of us moving forward with our support and faith within our community.

Please Call First



Due to some maintenance issues, please contact the Building and Properties Team prior to using the kitchen in Fellowship Hall. Thank you – Nancy Beenken 641-420-5329