

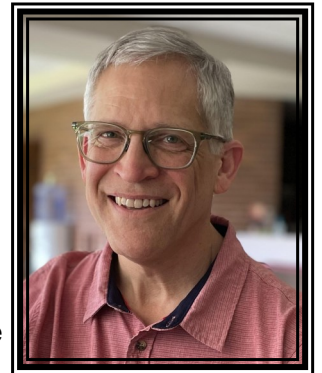
August 3 2026

Vol. 65 No. 12

A Note from Pastor Kip

Connectional Church

“All who believed were together and had all things in common.”
Acts 2:7



We members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at times hear that we are a connectional Church. I remember that the first time I heard the phrase I really didn't have any idea what it meant. My first thought was that it was another way of saying we are the body of Christ and that I can't be a Christian in isolation. As Paul so eloquently says in 1 Corinthians 12, “you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” We need each other to be the body and that means we need to have relationships with one another; in other words, we need to be connected.

As I looked further into what it means to be a connectional church, I learned that it isn't actually about being connected as individuals in the body of Christ. Instead, it is about being connected as individual congregations within the wider church. As Presbyterians that means being connected through our councils: Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly. Our Book of Order puts it this way:

*The mutual interconnection of the church through its councils is a sign of the unity of the church. Congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), while possessing all the gifts necessary to be the church, are nonetheless not sufficient in themselves to be the church. Rather, they are called to share with others both within and beyond the congregation the task of bearing witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the world. (G-3.0101) 1 **

Why should we care about any of this? Because it is directly relevant to a question raised at our recent congregational gathering; who decides what is done with a congregation's property including both real property and financial assets. As a congregation within our connectional church, all of our property “is a tool for the accomplishment of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world” (G-4.0201) and is “held in trust...for the use and benefit of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)” (G-4.0203).

The “trust clause” doesn't mean that the Presbytery has full control of our property. It means that we cannot sell or mortgage our real property without the permission of the Presbytery. However, so long as we continue to have a Session, we can use the proceeds of any sale for whatever purposes that serve the mission of the church subject to Presbytery approval. On the other hand, if and when a congregation ceases to have a Session, then the Presbytery becomes the owner of the congregation's property.

It is understandable that congregations can feel that it is unfair that property bought and paid for by a congregation is only held in trust for the larger church, but sometimes it helps to remember that the church is bigger than me and bigger than one congregation. Let it all be for the Glory of God.

*References to sections of the Book of Order are given in Parentheses.

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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Church Calendar

This Week

Tuesday | August 4

10:00 am Coffee and Conversation
10:00 am Staff Meeting
6:30 pm Small Group at the Murphy's house

Friday | August 7

5:30 Guests using the Friendship Room and Sanctuary

Next Week

Sunday | August 9

10:30 am Outdoor Worship

Tuesday | August 11

6:30 pm Small Group at the Murphy's house

Thursday | August 13

1:00 pm Prayer Shawl Group at Homestead Assisted Living

Beyond August 16

Sunday | August 16

10:30 am Worship—Rev. Cindy Saul, guest preacher

Monday | August 17

4:00 pm Membership and Outreach Ministry Team

Pastor Kip on study leave August 17 - August 21

Tuesday | August 18

6:30 pm Small Group

Thursday | August 20

5:00 pm Finance and Special Needs Ministry Team
5:30 pm Deacons

Sunday | August 23

10:30 am Worship

Tuesday | August 25

6:30 pm Small Group

Thursday | August 27

6:00 pm Session

Sunday | August 30

10:30 am Worship—Hymn Sing
2:00 pm Notes of Hope at Trinity Lutheran Church Outdoor Courtyard

Report from the July 23, 2026 Session Meeting

- ♦ Approved membership for John and Elaine Kiger
- ♦ Approved expenditure of \$400 for Bell Choir rehearsals from designated funds.
- ♦ Approved the disposal of old choir robes.
- ♦ Approved expenditure of \$950 for appraisal of the church building, from funds to be determined by Finance and Special Needs team.

Respectfully Submitted,

Betsy Gross
Clerk of Session

Outdoor Worship
This Sunday, August 9
at 10:30
Bring your coffee mug and
lawn chair and a friend!

Notes of Hope Sunday, August 30 at 2 p.m.

People from various local churches have organized a MUSICAL CELEBRATION OF HOPE to be held in the Outdoor Courtyard of Trinity Lutheran Church in Mason City.

Featured speakers include Jennaya Everist, a recent Wartburg music therapy graduate, sharing the impact of music in her life as a source of hope.

Activities for all ages, including making instruments or bringing your own, sharing your talents if you would like, refreshments and a sing-a-long, led by our own Diane Wilson.

Bring lawn chairs if you can, and sit back and enjoy yourself..

I so hope members of our church family will join with community members of other churches for this special event.

Yvonne Addis
Contact Person
ALL ARE WELCOME!

Please Keep the Following People in Your Prayers

- ♦ Cindy, niece of Carol Foster, cancer diagnosis
- ♦ Pray for our neighborhood business, Walgreens
- ♦ Our Congregation as we discern our future
- ♦ Kristi Balk, friend of the Murphy's, cancer diagnosis
- ♦ Bill and Kevin, brother and nephew of Sarah Kress, cancer diagnosis
- ♦ Lori Diehl, sister of Teri Elsbury, cancer diagnosis
- ♦ Pray for First Presbyterian Church, Ackley
- ♦ Members in assisted living and care centers: Joan Eness, Shirley Harmon, Nancy Kuehn, Kay Sloan, Cal Dorenkamp
- ♦ 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



The Prayer Shawl Ministry Team meets the 2nd Thursday of each month. August 13 at 1 p.m., we will meet at Nancy Kuehn's at Homestead Room #5.

Praying for Our Neighborhood Businesses

Please remember Walgreens in your prayers during the month of August. Offer prayers of thanks for the staff and those people who utilize their services. As many prescriptions are filled there, prayer for healing and wholeness.



Praying for the Churches and Pastors in the Presbytery

August 9 Rev. Jim Dubois,
Northminster, Ames

August 16 Rev. Jonny Craig,
Westminster, Waterloo

August 23 First, Albion

August 30 Rev. Dr. Brett Beck, Rev. Jen Hibben,
Mirrah Wilson
Collegiate, Ames



Upcoming Birthdays

August 3 Jim Hill
17 Nancy Nickerson
20 Paul Gordon
26 Roger Hunt
26 Tom Markwalter
27 Tammy Hertzell
28 David Gooch
30 Ralph Davey
31 Kathy Stephens

Dear First Presbyterian Church,

Thank you for the Bible and for celebrating my graduation. I am and will forever be grateful and blessed to say that I got to grow up in this church. Everyone has been so supportive and loving as I have grown with my faith over the years. Thank you again for all the support.

~Carter Long



Thank You

A Reminder

When bringing food items for the food pantry, we cannot use opened or expired items. Check the date before bringing, please. Thank you.





**Hawkeye
Harvest**
FOOD BANK

Double Your Blessing: Every Dollar Given This August Becomes Two!

All donations up to a total of \$20,000 will be matched in August. This special challenge match is being funded by several North Iowa businesses, professional firms, and individuals who are friends of Hawkeye Harvest Food Bank.

You as a donor can have twice the impact during August! Each dollar you donate buys six pounds of food from the Food Bank of Iowa. With this challenge match, it will now be 12 pounds!

TOGETHER WE CAN PROVIDE FOOD & HOPE!

Make your check out to First Presbyterian Church and place it in the offering plate or send it to the office by August 20. We will send a lump sum check to them to help with this challenge.

"If you want to eliminate hunger, everybody has to be involved." ~Bono

\$1=\$2

All donations up to a total of \$20,000 will be matched in August



And The Top Songs Are.....

The list has been compiled!
Here are the top vote getters
for favorite songs:

- #401 Here in This Place
- #69 Here I Am Lord
- #22 God of the Sparrow
- #43 On Eagles Wings
- #664 Morning Has Broken
- #39 Great is Thy Faithfulness
- #66 Every Time I Feel the Spirit
- #157 I Danced in the Morning
- #526 Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ
- #649 Amazing Grace
- #721 Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore
- #769 For Everyone Born
- #834 Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Make a
joyful noise
to the LORD
Psalm 100:1

Foster Grandparents Needed

We are looking for individuals 55 years and older interested in becoming a mentor and/or tutor for area children. These volunteers serve in the schools, preschools, and daycare centers in Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Mitchell, and Chickasaw County. No experience needed.

Foster Grandparents Benefits include:

- Earn extra money; receive a tax-free stipend for hours worked
- Flexible schedule, paid training, earned time off and paid holidays
- Develop relationships with children and have a healthy impact on their lives

Benefits of Volunteering

- Reduces Stress
- Combats Depression
- Prevents feelings of Isolation
- Gives a Sense of Purpose

If you would like more information regarding this program, call Carol Adams at (641) 257-6327.

Minute for Mission

Given by Kathy Stephens

We want to offer a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who has contributed to our food pantry box at the end of the drive or placed food on the shelves in the narthex. The small white box near our mailbox at the east end of the drive bears the initials of NIIT, the North Iowa Impact Team, along with the name of First Presbyterian Church.

As a church, our mission is to support NIIT's work in addressing food insecurity in our community, which is greater than many of us realize. NIIT rescues and redistributes surplus food and helps provide access to food at approximately 25 locations in Mason City, including our church. There are also locations in Clear Lake, Meservey, Osage, Nora Springs, Plymouth, Rock Falls, Rockwell, Swaledale, and Thornton.

Food is collected from several sources, including Hy-Vee bakeries and prepared-meal programs, Pizza Ranch, and farmers markets on a daily or weekly basis. In addition, NIIT maintains several garden plots and has helped supply our produce table. All food is picked up and delivered by volunteers to families and community partners, including Prairie Ridge, The Lighthouse, The Store, Shalom Tower, probation and parole offices, men's and women's shelters, the North Iowa Youth Center, One Vision, the Mason City High School food pantry, Crisis Intervention, Community Action, and Community Kitchen.

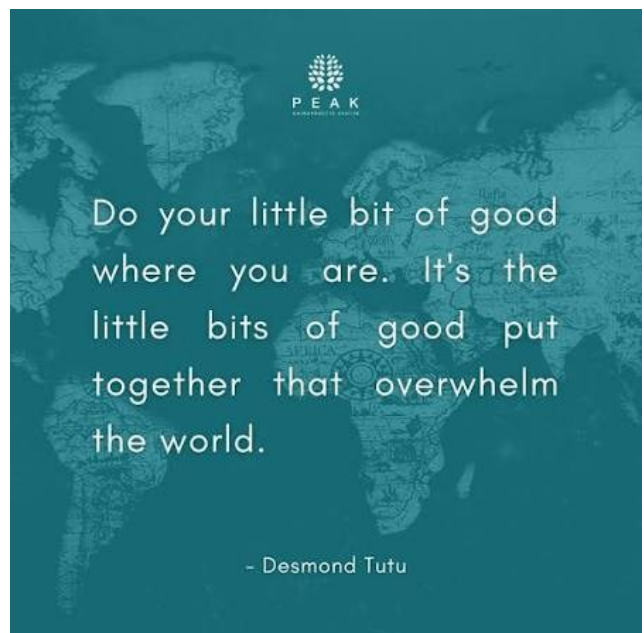
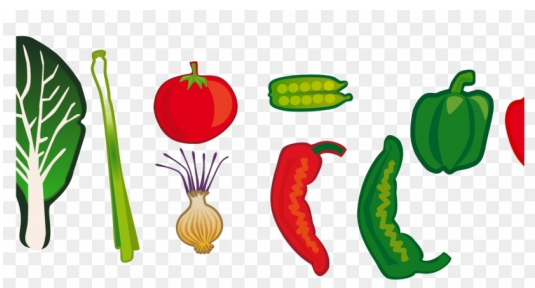
We, along with other churches and sponsors, help keep these pantries stocked with dry and canned goods. Insecurity affects not only unhoused people in our community, but also those who fall through the cracks, do not meet Hawkeye Harvest criteria, or need more than the food pantry can provide.

Thank you again for all you have given. Please continue to place food on the shelves at the back of the church and in the food pantry box itself. Many of you already do this, and your generosity is deeply appreciated. This is an important part of our church's local mission.

Has Your Garden Over Produced?

If you have more cucumbers or tomatoes or beans or zucchini and you are running out of ideas on how to use it, bring the extra to the produce stand at the church.

Feeling generous? Buy some extra sweet corn and place it there for others to enjoy. Give with a sense of gratitude!



Report from The Exploratory Team:

A point of confusion about property came up during the Congregational Meeting. Annika Lister-Stroope, Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, clarified that as long as we have a functioning Session we are able to dispose of financial resources as we see fit. Real property cannot be sold or encumbered without congregational and Presbytery approval. Furthermore, if we dissolve as a congregation these assets become the Presbytery's.

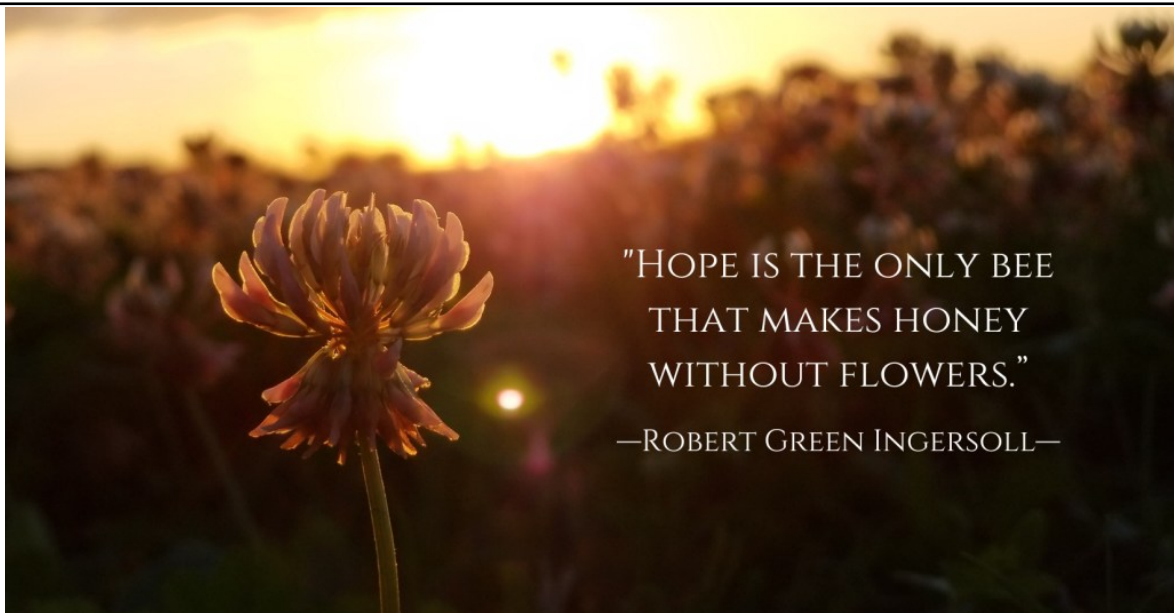
Monthly written and verbal communication will be provided to the congregation. Session will receive written reports, in addition to the verbal reports it has been receiving.

Nancy Beenken is working on getting an appraisal of the building, as well as estimates of costs for asbestos abatement and demolition. She will reach out to the Economic Development Corporation regarding resources available from them.

Kip and Pam are continuing to explore options for preserving the windows. We are reaching out to the art community, relatives of Bob White, and others who may have solutions to offer us in this area. The best option would be to preserve the windows in place. Of note, the MacNider Art Museum currently does not have the resources to help us preserve the windows.

Dave Little continues the comprehensive study of the financial assets of the church, going back 40 years. This information is critical for the Session's faithful and prudent management of our financial assets as our situation evolves.

Suggestion regarding Grants: FPC does not qualify for grants offered by The Lilly Endowment Foundation, the Beth E Reinhart Charitable Trust, or Partners for Sacred Places. Each grant has its own qualification requirements. The specifics of why we do not qualify differs by the specific grant. Please ask if you want more details.



"HOPE IS THE ONLY BEE
THAT MAKES HONEY
WITHOUT FLOWERS."

—ROBERT GREEN INGERSOLL—