



### A NOTE FROM PASTOR KIP

Vol . 65      No. 13    August 31, 2026

*I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

*Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.    Ephesians 3:18-21*



This last Friday and Saturday I spent down in Ames with other Presbyterians. On Friday the councils of the Presbyteries of Des Moines, North Central Iowa, and Prospect Hill spent the day with the question of whether and how to unite the three Presbyteries into one. We discussed how that would be presented at the upcoming meetings of the individual presbyteries and how we might proceed depending on the outcomes of those votes.

The following day was the all-presbyterian gathering where people from our presbyteries met to worship, learn, and fellowship together. Several members of our congregation attended. On Saturday I was reminded of a book I read some time ago entitled *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going* by Susan Beaumont about leading in liminal seasons.

Both our Presbytery and our congregation are in a liminal season, that is a season in which we are on the threshold of something new and different which we are not yet able to see. Liminal seasons are tough. We don't know where we are going, we have limited control of our future, and fear and anxiety naturally accompany a feeling of not being in control and not knowing.

It is common in such times for people to latch onto things they hear. Think of all the crazy things that people repeated during COVID, like vaccines making magnets stick to you! Rumors of the church being sold or closing are ones you may have heard recently. But the reality is that we hear such things because we all are uncomfortable in liminal seasons like we're in now.

There are two important things for us all to do in such a time as this. The first is to acknowledge our anxiety and try not to feed it with unverified information. Ask members of Session or the Exploratory team if you've heard something, and don't repeat what hasn't been confirmed. This also means that your session needs to continue to do our best to communicate what we do know, even when that knowledge is incomplete. To that end we are continuing to provide updates in the Pulse and we will have another informational meeting following worship on September 27th .

The second thing for us to do is to practice our faith. The more we can remember that God loves us and has good plans for us, even when we cannot imagine them, the less anxious we will feel. As we trust God's plans for our future. We don't know the end of the story, but we know the author!

**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.**

# It's Time to **Connect** !

First Presbyterian Church invites all members and friends to join us for Wednesday Connect in September and October.

Beginning **Wednesday, September 2, at 6 pm**, we'll gather **in the Friendship Room** for a light meal, fun activities, and opportunities to connect and enjoy time together. This new gathering will be in place of our former E@T meals and will be every Wednesday and include fun and varied activities for all ages.

You can look forward to the following:

- September 2 - Papa Murphy's pizza/Get Connected
- September 9 – Walking Tacos/Nooma Video
- September 16 – Barbecue Chicken/Game Night
- September 23 – Pancakes and sausage/Service Project
- September 30 – A fun Spam Night/TBD
- And more!



Come and enjoy food, laughter, and fellowship with your church family. We look forward to seeing everyone each Wednesday at 6:00 p.m.! **Bring friends!**

## Please Keep the Following People in Your Prayers

- Renee Davey, and family and friends of Adam Kofoid who passed away July 27 . A memorial service to celebrate and share memories will be held at 11:00 am on Saturday, September 19 in Fellowship Hall with a luncheon to follow
- Paul Buren, Mercy West Campus
- Cindy, niece of Carol Foster, cancer diagnosis
- Pray for our neighborhood business, Papa Murphy's Take and Bake Pizza
- Our Congregation as we discern our future
- Kristi Balk, friend of Pastor Kip and Lee, cancer treatment
- Bill, brother of Sarah Kress, cancer diagnosis
- Lori Diehl, sister of Teri Elsbury, cancer diagnosis
- Pray for First Presbyterian in Irvington, CRE Tony Raw
- 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

We Believe in the  
power of *Prayer*

## Community Prayers

We will be praying for the following businesses in the coming months:

September – Papa Murphy's Pizza

October – Avion Azul

November - Beach Buddies (indoor play area in Willowbrook Mall)

December – Sugar Stash (Candy Store on the plaza downtown owned by Tristyn Lee)

Pray for their staff and the success of their business. Pray for the people who utilize the services. Go and be a patron!

## Prayer Shawl Shindig



Pastor Beverly Butler is inviting all prayer shawl groups to the Prayer Shawl Shindig at Trinity Lutheran Church.

When: Thursday, September 10 at 1 pm

Where: Trinity Lutheran Church 213 N. Pennsylvania in Mason City. Enter through the East doors. There is an elevator for those who shouldn't do stairs.

They will be serving pie. Please let Jean Laudner-Vollmers know if you will attend by Sunday, September 6.



|              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| August 31    | Kathy Stephens  |
| September 2  | Julie Phillips  |
| September 3  | Beth Ehlers     |
| September 6  | Laura Cerny     |
| September 6  | Renee Davey     |
| September 10 | Ann Kuhlman     |
| September 17 | Dee Tracy       |
| September 19 | Emerson Weitzel |
| September 23 | Bob Elsbury     |
| September 23 | Scott Warren    |
| September 24 | Jerry Stephens  |
| September 30 | Denna Hill      |

## Listening Sessions Set

Session will host Listening Sessions with the Congregation in September. This is for discernment on what we should do for our Congregation's future. We will gather to listen to each other for understanding as we seek the Spirit's movement among us. This will be a space for holy listening, not debate or persuasion.

Session times are:

Tuesday, September 8 at 10 am by Zoom call

Sunday, September 13 at 2 pm at the Church

Wednesday, September 16 at 6:30 pm at the Church

Thursday, September 17 at 10 am at the Church

Contact the church office, 424-4273 or [firstpresbymc@gmail.com](mailto:firstpresbymc@gmail.com) regarding details for the Zoom link.

## Adult Forum is starting up again!

9/13/26, 9-10 am: Adult Forum meets in The Friendship Room for discussion about topics. Refreshments and coffee will be served.

9/20/26, 9-10 am: Adult Forum meets in The Meeting Place. Topic from Nooma led by Pastor Kip.

9/27/26, 9-10 am, in The Meeting Place, topic TBD.

Please contact a member of the Adult Forum Planning Committee with suggestions or an offer to lead a Forum: Betsy Gross, Cindy Saul, Nancy Nickerson, Pastor Kip Murphy, or you may contact the Church Office.

## Items from Session Meeting

A Stated Session Meeting was held 8/27/26.

- Received The Executive Summary and Session Stewardship Guide from David Little.
- Planning for joint session with Finance and Special Needs to review reports from David Little.
- Planning for Listening Sessions being held with Congregation.
- Information Session for the Congregation is scheduled for Sunday, 9/27/26 after Worship. A light lunch will be served.
- No motions were presented.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Betsy Gross  
Clerk of Session

### NEW ADDRESS

John and Judy Henry  
3224 Beaver Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50310

## Summary from The Exploratory Team:

The Exploratory Team met on 8/10/26 and 8/24/26.

- Dave Little is planning to have the Executive Summary and a Stewardship Guide ready for the Stated Meeting of Session on 8/27/26. The Executive Summary will be shared with the Congregation once Session has reviewed it.
- We have met with Ella Phillips, the City Planner and Shelley Oltmans from North Iowa Corridor (economic development). They both had ideas for us regarding preservation and/or development of the building and property. We will continue research in this area.
- We are continuing our conversations with Rhythm Church. Some members of their congregation have toured the building.
- The consultant, Nils Norland, has completed his assessment of the building and we are awaiting his report. We expect this will give us a value for sale of the building and property.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Betsy Gross



---

If you can help, please bring non-perishable foods for our Food Pantry, we are running low on all items. Many people are suffering from food insecurities, let's do our part to share God's love by helping to feed the hungry.

~ Oatmeal, macaroni and cheese, dried beans, rice and other whole grains, pasta, spices, popcorn, coffee, tea, boxed dry soups, sugar, flour, canned vegetables and other canned goods like tuna and chicken, baby food, pudding, juices

~ Individually packaged snacks: boxes of raisins, granola bars, protein bars, fruit snacks, powdered drink mixes

~ Food not requiring kitchen preparation: bread, nuts and seeds, dried fruits, granola, peanut butter and other nut butters, and cereal

## Church Calendar for September

|                                 |                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Tuesday   September 1</b>    | 10:00 am Coffee and Conversation in The Friendship Room<br>10:00 am Staff Meeting<br>6:30 pm Small Group at Murphys' home |
| <b>Wednesday   September 2</b>  | 6:00 pm Connect Meal and Activity for All Friendship Room                                                                 |
| <b>Sunday   September 6</b>     | 10:30 am Worship with Communion (Deacon loose offering Sunday)                                                            |
| <b>Monday   September 7</b>     | Office Closed for Labor Day                                                                                               |
| <b>Tuesday   September 8</b>    | 10:00 am ZOOM Listening Session<br>6:30 pm Small Group at Murphy's home                                                   |
| <b>Wednesday   September 9</b>  | 6 pm Connect Meal and Activity for all                                                                                    |
| <b>Thursday   September 10</b>  | 1:00 pm Prayer Shawl Shindig at Trinity Lutheran Church                                                                   |
| <b>Sunday   September 13</b>    | 9:00 am Adult Forum meets in the Friendship Room<br>10:30 am Worship<br>2:00 pm Listening Session at the Church           |
| <b>Monday   September 14</b>    | 10:30 am Worship and Music Meeting                                                                                        |
| <b>Tuesday   September 15</b>   | 6:30 pm Small Group at Murphys' Home                                                                                      |
| <b>Wednesday   September 16</b> | 5:00 pm Bells Rehearse<br>6:00 pm Connect Meal and Activity for All<br>6:30 pm Listening Session at the Church            |
| <b>Thursday   September 17</b>  | 10:00 am Listening Session at Church<br>5:00 pm Finance & Special Needs Meeting<br>5:30 pm Deacons Meeting                |
| <b>Saturday   September 19</b>  | 11:00 am Memorial Service for Adam Kofoed in Fellowship Hall                                                              |
| <b>Sunday   September 20</b>    | 8:30 am Bells Practice<br>10:30 am Worship                                                                                |
| <b>Monday   September 21</b>    | 4:00 pm Membership & Outreach Meeting                                                                                     |
| <b>Tuesday   September 22</b>   | 6:30 pm Small Group at Murphys' Home                                                                                      |
| <b>Wednesday   September 23</b> | 6:00 pm Connect Meal and Activity for All                                                                                 |
| <b>Thursday   September 24</b>  | 6:00 pm Session Meeting                                                                                                   |
| <b>Sunday   September 27</b>    | 10:30 am Worship<br>Lunch following worship with Information Session for Congregation                                     |
| <b>Tuesday   September 29</b>   | 6:30 pm Small Group at Murphys' Home                                                                                      |
| <b>Wednesday   September 30</b> | 6:00 pm Connect Meal and Activity for All                                                                                 |