

# The First Epistle



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead • Established 1872

July 2018

## **The Session:**

Moderator: Robert Drake

Clerk of Session: LuAnn Buehre

Treasurer: Chris Swee

Tim Nelson, Ineke Justitz, Frank Kratky, Scott Dobovsky, Walt Worman, Kathy McKaig, Peggy Johnson, Kim Kelsh, Mary Larson, Chris Swee

## **The Deacons**

Moderator: Elizabeth Swee

Pegi Ecker, Jim Gale, Kathy Giddings, Patti Kratky, Joni Lordeman, Arlene Munighan, John Ortez, Helen Pemble, Jane Tandberg, Kathleen Wilkinson, Barb Worman

*Communion will be celebrated on Sunday, July 8th.*

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**[www.firstpresmhd.org](http://www.firstpresmhd.org)**

## **Pastor Reflections**

I write this article one day after the Summer Solstice. From my apartment deck, at 10:30 at night, the western sky still glows a soft, hazy orange. Indeed, God made a beautiful world.

What, then, are we to do in such a beautiful world?

Throughout this issue of *The First Epistle*, you will see four wonderful answers to this question.

First, even before you opened your newsletter, you saw two colorful pictures. One was of our upcoming guest preacher, Alex O'Connell. Alex's excitement about his faith is positively electric. Providing space for Alex to share his faith from the pulpit is one way that Moorhead Presbyterian answers the question, "What should we do in God's beautiful world?" The answer: we make our church available to people like Alex. Read more about Alex in this newsletter.

The second picture you saw on the front cover was from Teddy Bear Parade at Midwest KidsFest. We shared our church's resources with over 700 children and their families. Yes, it was a very simple activity, and no, we did not solve any world problems. But, we provided hundreds of young kids a confidence booster and fun snack. Answering the question, "What should we do in the world?"; we should provide space for laughter and fun. Read more about KidsFest in this newsletter.

A third way that Moorhead Presbyterian answers the question about God's world is through our brand-new, recently inaugurated SNAP program at Moorhead Farmers Market. Over the last five months, we have been working diligently on USDA forms, grant applications, and meetings to allow recipients of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly Food Stamps) to use their benefits at the farmers market. "What should we do in the world?" We are called to help families access basic necessities when employment systems break down.

This final answer is purely fun. Soon you will see soccer nets on our north lawn. Working with Moorhead Parks and Rec, our church will be like a neighborhood park. Even if no new families join our church, we know that we are answering the question of what God wants us to do in the world: God wants us to share with our neighbors.

In closing, I would be neglecting my Christian leadership duties if I did not mention our current, public debate around immigration, child detention, illegal border crossings, and appeals to law & order. As a Christian, this issue—like every issue—must be answered after reflecting on our relationship with God as experienced through our baptism in the body of Jesus Christ. We cannot separate any decision we make from our Christian faith.

So then, as it regards immigration and child detention, how do I answer the question, "What am I to do in such a beautiful world?"; I have already provided the answer. Look back at each of the four examples of our church's recent community activism: "we make our church available, we provide space for laughter and fun, we assist families, and we share with our neighbors."

Enjoying the Summer Solstice at 10:30 at night is a free gift from God in a beautiful world. Sharing the Summer Solstice with the people of God is a priceless return on God's beautiful investment in the world.

- Rev. Robert Drake

# The First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead

**Worship: 10:30 am**

2900 Fifth Street South, Moorhead, MN 56560

[www.firstpresmhd.org](http://www.firstpresmhd.org)

218.233.1192

## E-mail Addresses:

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Church:                      [admin@firstpresmhd.org](mailto:admin@firstpresmhd.org)

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Find us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/firstpresmhd](http://www.facebook.com/firstpresmhd)

*Our mission is to be a caring community of God's people who live by Christ's teachings, reach out to others to share the love of God, and celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, thought, and action.*

## Upcoming Worship events

Coming up in July we will have communion on July 8 as Robert will not be here on July 1. We will have a guest preacher on July 15. On July 22, if the weather cooperates, we will have worship outside the church building. After worship we will have a picnic. If you are staying please bring your own meat to grill and a desert or salad or side dish.

Also look forward to a rededication service on Nov. 18 as we celebrate 50 years of worship in our current building which was dedicated on Nov. 17, 1968.

## Serving Nationally

Congratulations to Elizabeth Swee on being nominated and elected by General Assembly to serve on the National Committee of Self Development of People. She, as well as 10 other persons from across the country, will serve a three year term as a member at large. Self Development of People was started in the Civil Rights era as a way for Presbyterians to address poverty among and racism against groups of poor and oppressed people who have organized themselves to do something long term about their condition. Grants are made in partnership with SDOP, but the control and ownership belongs to the people. Funding comes from One Great Hour of Sharing. Elizabeth previously served on the national committee from 1995 to 2001 and has served at the presbytery and synod levels.

## Senior Spotlight

It was an unusual Sunday morning back in 1980 when Tom Williams and Diane Wray held their wedding ceremony during the regular morning worship service. Their six daughters sang the offertory. The reception was held during the coffee hour. Both continued to be very involved in church life over the years. Tom's unique bass/baritone voice was a regular part of the church choir. Tom served as both an Elder and a Deacon at various times but when asked about a favorite aspect of church life Tom said, "Music. Singing. Getting the notes right." Tom's wonderful voice has been truly missed in our choir since he moved to Lilac Homes Assisted Living in December 2016.

A little known fact about Tom: one summer back in the 1980's Tom was camp director for the "Eat, Fish, Sleep" men's camp at Clearwater Forest. Tom has always appreciated time spent out in a boat on a lake.

Tom truly enjoys having visitors. Deacons John Ortez and Barb Worman visit Tom regularly at Lilac. His dog, Laddie (and his wife, Diane) are frequent visitors.



*Girls singing inside during Vacation Church School at the downtown church.*



*Boys playing during recess at Vacation Church School, at the downtown church. You can see the post office in the background.*



*Church member with the longest church membership as of 1962*

# OUR HISTORY

*Thank you to everyone who submitted names for the people pictured in the photos below!*



*Confirmation class in sanctuary of old church with Rev. Henderson*

*Front Row (L to R): Unknown, Kathy Kolba, Carol Bristol, Mark Onan, Heather Sillers, Marty Jones.  
 Second Row (L to R): Jean Johnson, Janet Marty, Susan Shaw, Penny Rath, Jo Johnson, Rev. Henderson.  
 Third Row (L to R): Unknown, John Oxness, Unknown, John Dohm, Unknown, Kathy Henderson*



*Combined confirmation class of 1967 at Wright Funeral Chapel with Rev. Henderson*

*Front Row (L to R): Rich Green, Pete Gotta, 2 Unknown, Rath, Al Pickett, 2 Unknown  
 Second Row (L to R): Unknown, Gale Bancroft, 2 Unknown, Katie Evert, Unknown, Unknown, Lisa Lundel  
 Third Row (L to R): Rev. Henderson, Unknown, Pam DeJong, Linda Shaw, Connie Callahan, Sara Evert,  
 4 Unknown, Jane Faubush, 3 Unknown, Mary DeJong, Al Reiss*

### Auction & Market Bazaar!

The First Epistle of June featured the awesome history of our church building at 5th Street South; truly, a house that the LORD built. One section of the newsletter was dedicated to the events of 1968. The entry that caught my attention is, "November 17: Formal dedication of the First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead at 2900 South 5th Street. 490 persons attended the three services that day. The Women's Association contributed \$2,500 from its annual Bazaar to the Building Fund." The spiritual focus and the financial aspect came together in one entry.

The service of dedication is a uniquely important service in the life of the church. Formally dedicated to the honor and glory of the Lord, the church is the lovely dwelling place and house of our God, whose glory no building can contain.\*

The financial aspect was the check for \$2,500 from the Women's Association to the Building Fund. In today's dollars that is a whopping \$18,800. In 1968, a Mustang Fastback cost a little over \$2,800. The Women's Association and all who made that year's Bazaar so very successful deserve APPLAUSE! And the entry starting me thinking about one of our fundraisers, the annual Talent Auction.

In honor of the Women's Association, this year's Talent Auction will be renamed Auction & Market Bazaar. Mark the date, Friday, November 2, 2018. We're getting a head start on the planning process by asking a couple of favors from you, our committed, talented, and fun-loving congregation!

- Won't you invite a couple of friends to join you that evening for the opportunity to bid on awesome items, for the sheer fun of it, for Mary's famous apple crisp, or pure and simple, to be with one another and make new friends. As a surprise, I am inviting a very special friend . . . (I am not telling, yet).
- Won't you start considering what you would like to donate to the Auction? Consider something special to make Rich Pemble's day! Rich has promised to return as our auctioneer, which means that you better bring paper towels to wipe away your tears of laughter.
- Last year's auction raised a little over \$2,800 (remember that Mustang?) If you have a 1968 Mustang to auction off, please call Pastor Robert ☺



A final point: The proceeds will be used to further the mission of the First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead, "To be a caring community of God's people who live by Christ's teachings, reach out to others to share the love of God, and celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, thought, and action." The spiritual focus and the financial aspect meet again!

Ineke

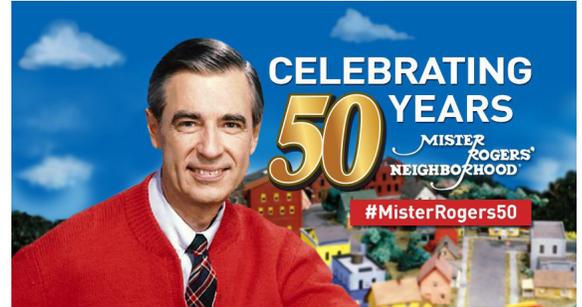
*\*From the Book of Occasional Services, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A), 1999, pp. 158-59*



## **FPCM is celebrating fifty years in our neighborhood, but we're not the only ones celebrating!**

*Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* turns 50 too! On February 21, 1968, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, with Fred Rogers wearing his comfy sweater and sneakers, could first be seen on National Educational Television (NET), which two years later became Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). Rogers once said, "I got into television because I hated it so. And I thought there's some way of using this fabulous instrument to nurture those who would watch and listen."

Did you know that Fred Rogers was a Presbyterian minister? After attending the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Child Development and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, he was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1963 with "a charge to work with children and families through the media." Eva Stimson, editor of *Presbyterians Today*, observes, "Fred Rogers never served in a traditional role of pastor, but through television [brought] his simple message of affirmation and acceptance to a 'congregation' of millions" (fredrogers.org and history.pcusa.org, accessed 05-02-2018). By giving him his unusual charge, the Presbytery certainly recognized the special gifts that Fred Rogers would bring to America's neighborhoods.



Jonathan Merritt, in a beautiful article for *The Atlantic* magazine, shares several moving stories about the profound and lasting impact of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* on children and their families. He also gives us some insight into Fred Rogers, "the patron saint of neighborliness," a man of deep faith, whose message of grace, love, kindness, and neighborliness touched people of all faiths. He tells us that Rogers prayed before entering his office each day, "Dear God, let some word that is heard be yours." You may find the article online when you Google: The Saint-Like Legacy of Mister Rogers *The Atlantic*.

Born in 1928, Fred McFeely Rogers died in 2003.

On June 29, Morgan Neville's documentary, *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* opens at the Fargo Theatre. Don't miss it. Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood!



### **IT'S A MATCH!**

In response to last month's newsletter, celebrating the 50th anniversary of our church building, a longtime church member anonymously stepped forward to offer a \$1,000 gift to the 50th Birthday Fund, if we could find another church member willing to match the gift.

Congratulations! Another longtime church member stepped forward and matched the gift. Thanks to the generosity of these two members, \$2,000 will be donated to the Birthday Fund.

But that's not all! We believe in the possibility of second match challenge. We are looking for another person to initiate a \$1,000 donation match challenge. Are you this person? If so, please talk with Pastor Robert or Chris Swee.



### **Hospitality Team**

Are you part of the hospitality team for July August and September? Please check the bulletin board to get your ideal selection to help, keeping in mind those vacation days. Sign up now and get the best selection! Questions about hospitality? Contact Elizabeth or Erik Swee.

### Midwest Kids Fest & Teddy Bear Parade

In case you weren't there, Moorhead Presbyterian had a very popular booth at the 2018 MidWest Kids Fest and Teddy Bear Parade. As you can tell from the pictures, lots of kids really enjoyed our craft activity, free caramel apples, and balloons. We gave out 500 balloons and helped at least 750 children fold their own paper origami bowl to hold free caramel apples. We also gave parents information about Moorhead Presbyterian. Take a look at these fun pictures! We'll do it again next year.



### Charitable Giving: IRA and IRS to the Rescue!

In April I took a look at the new tax law, compared the new rules to my 2017 tax return, and discovered that in all likelihood I do not benefit, and may even lose, from the changes. This came as a nasty surprise to me, especially because my social security benefits are less than they would have been had I lived and worked in the USA all my life. Not being able to itemize my deductions, I wondered whether I could still afford to contribute my fair share to the non-profit organizations and the causes I hold dear, including First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead.

Until recently, I was not sure that I could do anything to lower my taxable income and thus my taxes so as to maintain or increase my charitable giving. And then I read an article that came to the rescue! It was brilliant, and I want to share it with you. If you have an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) and you are over 70 (and yes, I am), then you already know that in the year you turn 70 ½ you must start withdrawing from that IRA account by taking a so-called "required minimum distribution" or RMD, which is taxable income.

Well, I discovered that you can direct all or part of this RMD to First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead and any other charity, which effectively lowers your income, reduces your taxes, AND makes you feel good for not having abandoned your "charitable" friends! One condition is that you instruct your program administrator to transfer the percentage or sum directly from your IRA account to the charitable organization. Your hands (that is, your bank or your savings account or your mailbox) must not touch this distribution.

If you do not need all or part of your "required minimum distribution" for your living expenses, then you can help yourself and others by generously directing all or part of the RMD to your favorite non-profit. Isn't that cool!

Ineke

*P.S. Be sure to check with your tax consultant to understand if this is a good idea in your situation. See also: <https://money.usnews.com/money/retirement/iras/articles/2017-12-04/how-to-donate-your-required-minimum-distribution-to-charity> or Google "how to donate your required minimum distribution to charity."*

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### Culture of Giving

Our church is partnering with First Presbyterian Church, Fargo and West Fargo Community Presbyterian Church to hold a stewardship workshop. Through this set of workshops we will work to Build a Culture of Generosity in the church. Building a stewardship plan for each church is unique. The program consists of four workshops over 18 months. Transforming our congregation to be cheerful givers, energizing our members through their giving, to increase ministry in our community is what we hope for the congregation. A congregational team will attend the workshops and develop short and long-term action plans between the workshops.

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### Personnel Update:

We are currently interviewing for Media Coordinator, Sunday School Coordinator, Administrative Assistant and Bookkeeper.

The Media Coordinator will be given tasks such as posting on Facebook daily, updating the website, assisting with flyers, posters and banners for upcoming events and working on a new look for the bulletin towards fall.

The Sunday School Coordinator position will help Scott Dobovsky and our other volunteers to be well prepared for Sunday morning lessons, crafts/supplies, and activities. Scott Ecker has chosen to step down from the Youth Director position at this time due to his very busy schedule. His position will not be filled at this time.

We are also working on Job Descriptions for most of the staff positions as they are ever changing.

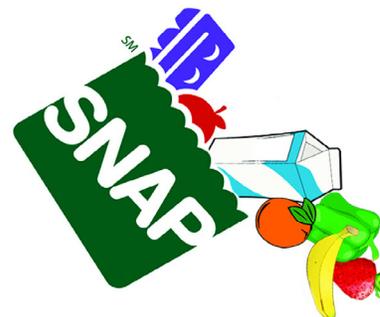
## First Presbyterian Church is at Moorhead's Farmers Market - Action Ministry at Work!

Announcing--Moorhead Presbyterian Church is the fiscal sponsor for accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) at the Moorhead Farmers Market. SNAP is a federally funded program to help individuals and families who struggle to afford food. And, SNAP participants can double their SNAP dollars they spend at the Farmers Market through a special program sponsored by Hunger Solutions of Minnesota.



Alyssa Athman (center), First Presbyterian Garden and SNAP Coordinator, will be at the Farmers Market each week to accept SNAP benefits. The Market runs each Tuesday from 3:30-6:30 in the parking lot of the Center Mall—Center Avenue and 4th St.

Be sure to support our local farmers by shopping at the Market! Stop by and say hello to Alyssa!



## Concordia Student To Be Guest Preacher

Make sure to be at church Sunday, July 15 to hear guest preacher Alex O'Connell. Alex is a Concordia student, an active member in the Army National Guard, and is very passionate about his faith. Pastor Robert met Alex at Concordia's Interfaith Expo back in May, and after just a few minutes into their conversation, Robert invited Alex to fill the pulpit as guest preacher. Alex will preach from Romans 12:1-8 and Matthew 5:1-11. His message will talk about sharing God's love and that your past does not equal your present, or your future, for that matter. Make sure to hear him in Sunday worship on July 15.

## Concordia Music Professor to Be Guest Organist

Dr. Peggy J. Johnson, professor and instructor of organ and church music at Concordia College, will be our guest organist on July 15. Dr. Johnson has served as music director and organist for Lutheran and Episcopal parishes around the world, including Turkey, The Netherlands, Hawaii, Ohio, Colorado, North Dakota, and Minnesota. She also serves on as music history faculty at NDSU and M|State.

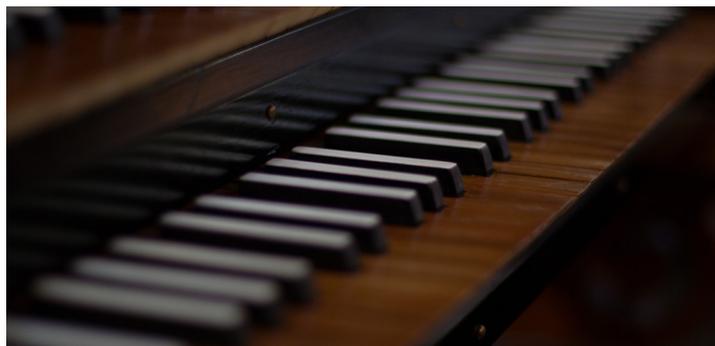
Dr. Johnson is nationally recognized in the area of music education for organists, and has been a workshop presenter at the local, regional, and national levels for the American Guild of Organists and the Anglican Association of Musicians with particular emphasis on new music for organists. She is the coordinator and a faculty member for the NW Minnesota and North Dakota Leadership Program for Musicians – a nationally acclaimed teaching program of the Lutheran Church (ELCA) and Episcopal Church (ECUSA) which gives local church musicians opportunities for study that provides them with an increased sense of vocational awareness, along with the tools and resources to enable congregations to sing well and participate actively in worship.

Be sure to be there Sunday, July 15 to hear Dr. Johnson lead us in worship music.



## New Soccer Nets

Have you ever noticed that since the flood control dyke went in, our neighborhood children lost their park? Moorhead Presbyterian is fulfilling its Christian mission by stepping in to fill the void. Partnering with Moorhead Parks and Rec, we are placing two soccer nets on our north yard. The Park Department will provide the nets, set them up, make repairs as needed, and will remove them in the fall. Along with the playground on our east side, our church is almost like a park for many neighborhood families. Make sure to wave and smile the next time you see kids playing in the new soccer field.



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead  
2900 Fifth Street South  
Moorhead, MN 56560

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## *Inside this Issue:*



***Guest Preacher July 15.  
Read more details inside!***

***Do you know how many kids we  
served at the Teddy Bear Parade?  
Find out inside***

