

The First Epistle



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead • Established 1872

October 2020

The Session:

Moderator: Robert Drake

Clerk of Session: Kim Kelsh

Treasurer: Chris Swee

Kathy McKaig, Peggy Johnson,
Kim Kelsh, Mary Larson, Chris
Swee, Mary Skalet, Megan
Wheeler, Dave Lanpher, and
Diane Wray-Williams.

The Deacons

Moderator: Barb Worman

Jim Gale, Kathy Giddings, Nicole
Hestbeck, Joni Lordemann,
John Ortez, Helen Pemble, Deb
Piekutowski, Elizabeth Swee

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World Communion Sunday - October 4th

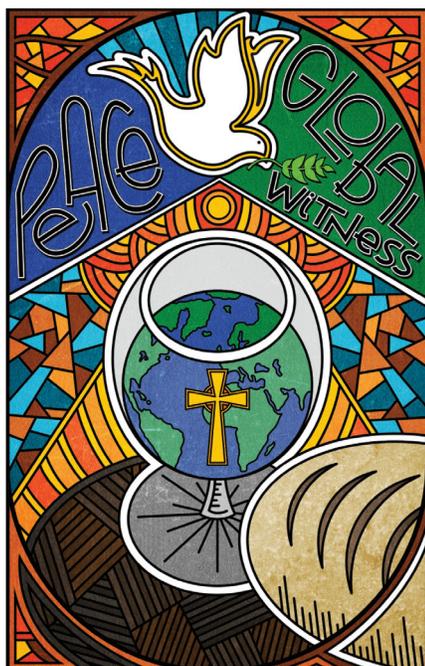
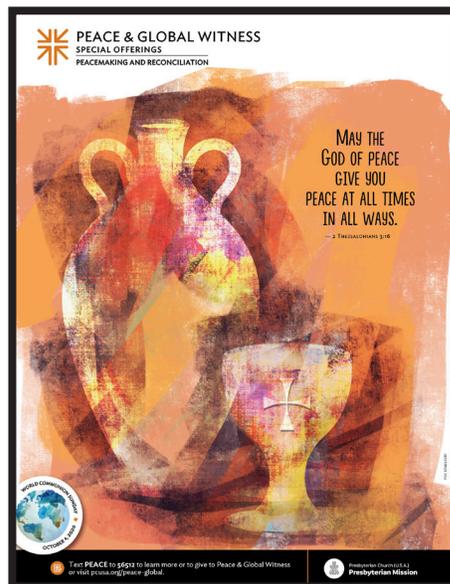
We will be gathering again in person in the sanctuary on World Communion Sunday. And as we celebrate being together in a safe space around the communion table, we will be aware that we are only one small part of the community of faith. So many worshippers around the globe will be gathering to worship on this same day. The location, style of worship, music, and communion elements will vary but we are one global community worshipping the Lord that we love and serve.

In addition, on October 4th, we can support the Peace and Global Witness Offering of the PC(USA). Your gift to this special offering empowers congregations and individuals to become peacemakers. We can help address the anxiety and discord that is prevalent throughout this broken and sinful world.

Gifts to the Peace & Global Witness Offering enable the church to promote the Peace of Christ by addressing systems of conflict and injustice across the world. Individual congregations can utilize up to 25% of this Offering to connect locally with the witness of Christ's peace. Mid Councils retain an additional 25% for ministries of peace and reconciliation. The remaining 50% is used by the Presbyterian Mission Agency to advocate for peace and justice in cultures of violence, including our own, through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness.

This year our local portion (25%) will go to Churches United's Dorothy Day Food Pantry to help address the food needs in our community during this time of high unemployment and overall insecurity.

Please bring your Peacemaking gift to our church on October 4th or mail your gift to the church office. Please add a note to let us know that this donation is for the Peace & Global Witness Offering.



PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION

The First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead

Worship: 10:30 am

2900 Fifth Street South, Moorhead, MN 56560

www.firstpresmhd.org

218.233.1192

Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/firstpresmhd

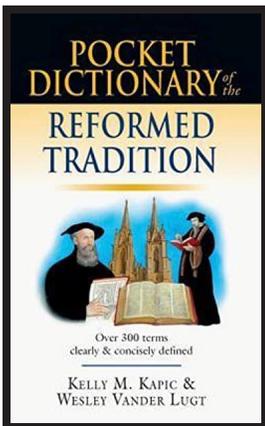
E-mail Addresses:

Rev. Robert Drake robert@firstpresmhd.org

Church: admin@firstpresmhd.org

Newsletter Articles: nadineswee@yahoo.com

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.



GRACE: The free, unmerited favor of God.

The Reformers [Martin Luther, et al.] insisted that salvation is accomplished by grace alone (*sola gratia*) and not on the basis of good works or human merit. The priority of grace is true not just of predestination and justification but the whole process of sanctification and the life of piety. Unlike some presentations of irresistible grace, the majority Reformed [now referring expressly to Reformed theology in contrast to Lutheran theology] affirms that God's grace works in dynamic interplay with human freedom and responsibility. In addition, God not only gives grace particularly to his people but shows common grace to all humanity in connection with his work of providence.

DOROTHY DAY FOOD PANTRY

As many organizations are having food drives, we know all of you are aware of the growing need to support the Dorothy Day Food Pantry and the Great Plains Food Bank.

Our church has a long history of supporting the Dorothy Day Food Pantry with volunteer hours and/or financial gifts.

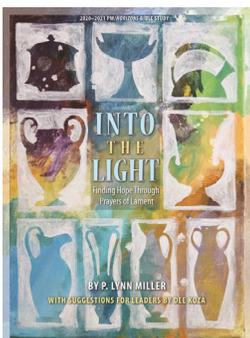
We want to thank Bill and Marilynn Woods for their long-time efforts in organizing a sign-up sheet for Dorothy Day volunteering. If you would like to sign up for a volunteer shift, please call Marilynn at 218-236-9917.

The Dorothy Day staff thank everyone who volunteered so far in 2020, and they remind everyone to continue supporting them through the rest of the year and into 2021.

Check out the September 17 Moorhead Extra for additional information about volunteering.



DOROTHY DAY
— FOOD PANTRY —



HORIZONS PW BIBLE STUDY

Our in-person Bible study is on sabbatical through May 2021. However, we are still doing Bible study, just not in person. We are currently studying a series called, "Into the Light: Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament." These are nine lessons focused on the book of Lamentations, and we do one lesson per month. If you would like us to order a study guide for you, please call Pastor Robert at 612-750-5622, and he will arrange it. There is no cost, so please don't let money be an issue.

One option we have explored is doing Zoom studies, and if you think this is a good idea, please call Marilynn Woods at 218-236-9917.

PASTOR ROBERT ATTENDS UNARMED CIVILIAN PROTECTION SEMINAR

As many of you already know, Pastor Robert is routinely in contact with area clergy from many denominations. This allows him to see what other churches are doing, what other congregations are going through emotionally and spiritually, and what is occurring in our FM area.

Due to the many protests around the country and the violent protest this summer in Fargo, area clergy decided it might be helpful if they were trained in how to de-escalate shouting matches between people and looting and destruction of property.

An unofficial group of pastors coalesced around this idea, and they partnered with *Nonviolent Peace Force*, a Minneapolis-based, non-profit.

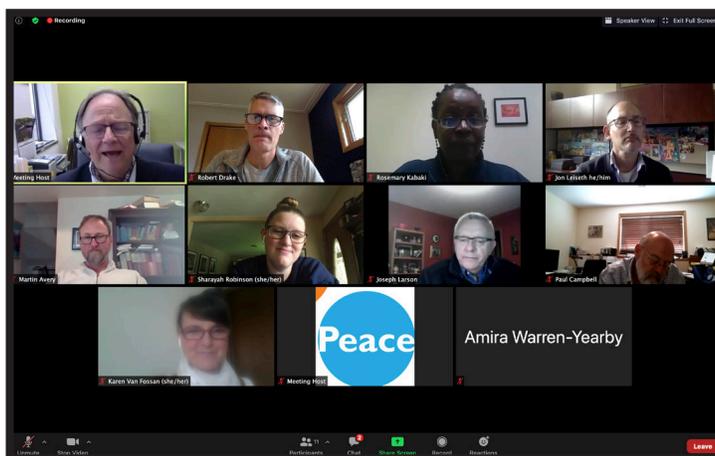
15 area clergy participated in a day-long, Zoom seminar called “Unarmed Civilian Protection.” In it, they learned how to de-escalate a situation through maintaining a calm presence and engaging in dialogue.

“After seeing the violence and looting in Fargo this summer, and especially after seeing so many videos on YouTube of protesters and counter-protesters shouting and throwing things and even killing each other on the streets around the nation, I decided that there needs to be someone willing to talk rather than just ratcheting up the anger,” says Pastor Robert.

Pastor Robert learned, among other things, how physically and emotionally demanding it is to step up into a situation where people are shouting at each other, while maintaining peacefulness and calm.

“Their training maintains that at no time should a person trained as an unarmed civilian protector engage in violence, even if violence proceeds their intervention. They teach that as long as violence is an option, things usually escalate to violence,” Pastor Robert said of their training. “I hope things quiet down, and we can finally return to talking to each other.”

Pastor Robert said that although he was only able to participate in one rally this summer, numerous other clergy colleagues of his have been at many of the downtown and Island Park rallies. This means that area churches, such as Moorhead Presbyterian, are out there letting people know that American churches are not monolithic on the political spectrum.



One of our church members is looking for a gently used toy car or truck that can be given as a present to a 4-year old boy. Size is not important, though something at least 3-4 inches would be nice. This request comes as a result of their effort to “reduce, reuse, and recycle,” so rather than buy a brand new toy from the store, they would rather save the wear-and-tear on our planet.

Please contact Pastor Robert if you have a toy or toys to donate.



THE TREE IN OUR BACK YARD

A poem by Phyllis Emmel, September, 2020

The tree in our back yard
 Was always first to change,
 Change color, drop leaves, get
 New blossoms as though it
 Couldn't wait to tell us
 What was coming next.

A boy came to live with us
 The boy loved the tree and
 The tree loved him back.
 Everyday he would climb
 The tree and be cradled
 In her leafy arms

The years have passed
 The boy has grown.
 The tree is also grown.
 But the memories and
 the love live on.



GOURMET SOUP KITCHEN IS GOING VIRTUAL!

**Tuesday, Oct 6, 2020
6 PM**

This year, you can pick up bread and soups prepared by local chefs and enjoy it at home with friends and family while watching the program online!

Our host this year will be Tim "Off Duty" Eggebraaten, and Pastor Sue Koesterman will share an inspirational message.

REV. OSCAR ELMER FOUNDING MEMBER OF PRAIRIE HOME CEMETERY

(this story first appeared in MinnPost.com, “non-profit, non-partisan journalism,” on September 14, 2020)

Prairie Home Cemetery, founded in 1875, is the oldest cemetery in Moorhead. Many of the city’s settler colonists, such as Randolph M. Probstfield and Solomon G. Comstock, are buried there. It inspired the name of Garrison Keillor’s famous National Public Radio (NPR) program A Prairie Home Companion.

In 1871 the Northern Pacific Railroad reached the Red River, which is the border between North Dakota and Minnesota. The communities that quickly sprang up on either side of the river were named Fargo and Moorhead. Presbyterian reverend Oscar H. Elmer was sent as a missionary to Moorhead to start a church, which held its first service in October 1871.

As Moorhead became established, the need for a cemetery logically followed. Reverend Elmer’s brother, John, came to visit from the East Coast in 1874 but drowned in the Red River. His body was discovered on June 1, 1874, and he was buried in a temporary location marked by a rope between two trees.

Elmer was unable to transport his brother’s body back East. This is probably what motivated him and six other prominent Moorhead residents to found a cemetery. The Lake Superior and Puget Sound Company agreed to sell a five-acre plot for one dollar for a cemetery, though the land was not officially deeded until 1876. On April 27, 1875, the Prairie Home Cemetery Association was officially incorporated. The seven founders were Reverend Elmer, Solomon G. Comstock, James H. Sharp, John Kurtz, Niles Peterson, W. B. Nickels, and William H. White.

At the time that Prairie Home Cemetery was founded, it was situated well out of town and surrounded by farmland. The first recorded burial there was typhoid victim Bernard Berg on May 19, 1875. Plots were sold for five dollars.

Space quickly became an issue in the small graveyard. Since plots were purchased by families, space ran out before the land filled with graves. At only five acres, it was smaller than most rural cemeteries, and all plots were sold by 1882.

In 1884, land was purchased north of Moorhead on the banks of the Red River for another cemetery. This land was purchased from Catherine and George Hodges at forty dollars an acre. Their two-year-old daughter, Catherine, had been one of the first burials in Prairie Home Cemetery in 1875. This second cemetery was named Riverside Cemetery. In the 1920s the Riverside Cemetery Association and the Prairie Home Cemetery Association merged.

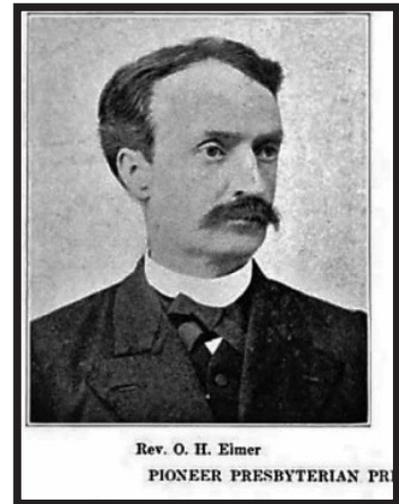
Since plots were sold so cheaply, there were no funds to maintain Prairie Home. People were expected to look after their families’ plots, but this didn’t always happen. On occasion, efforts were made to make the cemetery more aesthetically appealing, such as when fences around family plots were banned. The cemetery was not able to hire a caretaker until 1902.

Prairie Home Cemetery served as inspiration for Garrison Keillor when he needed a name for his variety radio program. In 1971, Keillor was in Moorhead to give a reading at Moorhead State University. When he went on a

walk the next day, he saw the sign for Prairie Home Cemetery. The name stuck with him, but he knew he couldn’t use the word “cemetery” in his radio program’s name. He decided on the word “companion” to honor the group of friends he spent time with during his trip to Moorhead. Thus, his radio program became A Prairie Home Companion.

In 1992 much-needed renovation work was done at the cemetery. Alleyways were filled in to allow for more graves. Due to Moorhead’s growth since 1875, the cemetery is now surrounded by homes and Concordia College, and is situated more towards the center of Moorhead.

Written by: Trista Raezer-Stursa. She is the University Archivist at Minnesota State University Moorhead. She has a master’s degree in library and information science and a master’s degree in history.



Prairie Home Cemetery, ca. 1939



HOSPICE RED RIVER VALLEY

2020 Fall Grief Class Schedule

Hospice of the Red River Valley is committed to making educational and support opportunities available to our communities. Our grief support programming is now offered virtually this fall. The classes are free and open to the public. **Registration is required for all classes.**

A complete listing of available classes follows:

Grief During a Pandemic

Grief During a Pandemic

Join us for a one-session class focused on grief in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Grief affects us through many types of losses. Participants will learn about different types of losses and grief, as well as practical ways to cope with their grief during this unique time. *This virtual class is free and open to the public. Registration is required one day prior to the class date.*

TWO CLASS TIMES AVAILABLE

- Thursday, Sept. 24 from 1-2:30 p.m. **or**
- Thursday, Sept. 24 from 6:30-8 p.m.

[Register Now](#)

Guided Mindfulness for Grief

Grief is normal, natural, and it's even necessary and good for human flourishing. If you are experiencing grief, please consider some of the upcoming online classes from Hospice of the Red River Valley. If you need help registering for a virtual class, or if you don't have a computer, please contact Pastor Robert.

Guided Mindfulness for Grief

Join us for a virtual, guided mindfulness session to explore grief and healing through mindfulness and visualization techniques. The session will help attendees cultivate positive self-care through mindfulness, breathing exercises, visualization and meditation. No experience is necessary for this class. It's important participants join from a comfortable location with minimal distractions. *This virtual class is free and open to the public. Registration is required one day prior to the class date.*

- Thursday, Oct. 1 from 6-7:30 p.m.

[Register Now](#)

Grief 101: How to Help Ourselves & Others

Grief 101: How to Help Ourselves & Others

When grief enters our lives, our world changes. Learn the basics of grief and how to manage it in your life or help those around you. Attendees will explore the grief process, learn self-care strategies and discover ways to help others who are dealing with grief. *This virtual class is free and open to the public. Registration is required one day prior to the class date.*

TWO CLASS DATES AVAILABLE

- Monday, Oct. 12 from 5:30-7 p.m. **or**
- Monday, Nov. 2 from 1-2:30 p.m.

[Register Now](#)

Journeying Through Grief

Journeying Through Grief is a free series of classes designed for those who are recently bereaved. It is intended for adults 18 years and older who have experienced the recent loss of a loved one. The sessions will help you better understand the grief process, explore methods of self-care, and embrace and carry memories with you as you move forward. *This series of virtual classes is free and open to the public. Registration is required one day prior to the first class date.*

- A series of three virtual classes held on Thursdays, Oct. 15, 22 and 29 from 6-7:30 p.m.

[Register Now](#)

Memory Pillows: A Virtual Grief Group Activity for Kids

Memory Pillows: A Virtual Grief Group Activity for Kids

Youth ages 8-16 are invited to join us for a session focused on discovering what grief is and learning how to identify their own personal grief feelings and reactions. They will also learn the importance and benefits of keeping memories alive, as well as how to practice good self-care and positive ways to cope with grief. This class will involve group participation and discussion, and making their own memory pillow. We recommend an adult be nearby or accessible during the class to assist the child, if needed.

This virtual class is free and open to the public. Registration is required by Oct. 6, so arrangements for class supply pick-up can be made.

- Tuesday, Oct. 20 from 6:30-7:30 p.m.

[Register Now](#)



be joyful always

A note from Pastor Robert:

The following poem, by church member Phyllis Emmel, will be tough to read. However, I feel it is a message that we all need to hear, as most of us go through life assuming that the rules of society are equitably applied to all people, regardless of skin color, or many other factors, such as gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc. Statistics show this to be not true, as do the personal experiences of many, though not all, people of color.

As you read this poem, please understand that Phyllis is NOT ONLY saying that we are lucky because we are white—despite the fact that her poem ends with that very statement. Rather, she is challenging us to recognize how our white skin gives us privileges that we don't even recognize, and how unfair this is.

I myself have a simple story about how my view of the world as a white male is privileged.

One time, at seminary, two friends and I were walking to a restaurant, and we came upon a chair discarded on the sidewalk, waiting for the garbage truck.

I said, "Wouldn't be weird if I just sat here, in this chair, on the sidewalk, for hours, just waving at people."

One of my friends, who is white, agreed; and we laughed at how absurd that would be, kind of like performance art.

My other friend, who is black, got really mad at us. He said, "Yes, you can think that would be weird and funny, and it could be like performance art, and people would probably wave at you as they drove by. But as a Black guy, I can tell you that someone would probably call the cops on me."

Instantly, I recognized the seriousness and veracity of his assessment. Yes, if our Black friend sat in this discarded chair on the sidewalk, waving at people, someone would call the cops. For me and for my white friend, they might just wave, and look at us like weirdos.

This is one, small, example of what Phyllis is saying in this poem.

*A note from Phyllis*

Before you read this poem, let me explain. It was about 30 years ago and I was a volunteer for People Escaping Poverty Project here in Moorhead. We had a big "Dismantling Racism" workshop at White Earth put on by the Southern Poverty Law Center. It was a really big deal and I felt honored to have been invited.

I thought it would be interesting, but wasn't sure I should be there. After all I was not a racist. Right?

People who think like that are probably the ones who most need to go to one of these workshops. About half way through the first day I realized I had a lot to learn.

In our culture we learn early on to justify our beliefs and behaviors. This is so deep seated that we confuse our justification for our reality. Here I am 30 years later, and I still have a lot to learn.

WE ARE SO LUCKY (part 2)

I stare at the TV set

Watching the scene the man with the

Cop's knee on his neck

And I wonder "why"

And I think "We

are so lucky we live here"

I read the stories in the paper

And I think" We are lucky we live here"

Night after night I watch the news

As the buildings go up in flames and

I feel relieved because we live here

Gradually, day after day

I hear the stories

and it comes to me,

We are so lucky

We are lucky because

We are white

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Inside this Issue:



We are Lucky...

World Communion Sunday

