

The First Epistle



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead • Established 1872

November 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, November 4.

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Visit our Website:

www.firstpresmhd.org

Rededication Celebration

Join us as we celebrate the exact same worship service we celebrated 50 years and one day ago. It was in the afternoon of Sunday, November 17, 1968, that this church family celebrated the official dedication of its new church building.

Officiated by their relatively new pastor, Rev. Ronald Grabham, about 400 hundred church members, presbytery delegates, architects, and community members gathered in the brand new sanctuary to formally dedicate their new church home. They even had a ceremonial "Turning of the Keys" featuring the architect of the church, George Rutter.

We will sing the same hymns, read the same Scripture passage, and recite the same Litany of Dedication written by the church's former pastor, Rev. James Henderson. We even get to sing an old favorite, "Onward Christian Soldiers"!

The Vikings play at noon that day, so morning worship will be out in plenty of time to watch the game, and the game will be over in plenty of time to make it back for the rededication.

Stay around afterwards for light appetizers, cheese & crackers, chips & dip, and punch.

Action Ministry in Action

Moorhead Presbyterian is filling important needs in our community! This summer our church applied through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to facilitate SNAP (formerly food stamps) participants to use their benefits at the Moorhead Farmers Market. This is the first time in the history of the Moorhead Farmers Market that SNAP participants could shop at the market and use their SNAP benefits to purchase locally grown produce! And, we worked with Hunger Solutions of Minnesota to increase the purchasing power of the SNAP benefits with the "Double Bucks" program at the market.

These efforts were critical for the triple win!! The Farmers Market and local growers WON! SNAP participants WON! And, Moorhead Presbyterian WON by helping our community!



a healthier community

The First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead

Worship: 10:30 am

2900 Fifth Street South, Moorhead, MN 56560

www.firstpresmhd.org

218.233.1192

E-mail Addresses:

Rev. Robert Drake robert@firstpresmhd.org

Church: admin@firstpresmhd.org

Newsletter Articles: nadineswee@yahoo.com

Find us on Facebook: 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.

A Word from the members of the Building and Grounds Committee

And God said, "Let there be Light", and there was light. (Genesis; 1 ; 3)



In God's design of the heavens and the earth, what we call "light" is the physical element that allows life to form and to be. The life giving property of "light" is well known to us through science and in our own lives. We acknowledge our sense of "knowing" when we say, "I've seen the light". We confirm our faith in Jesus Christ when we follow his commandment to go forth and be the light to the world. And we try hard to shine our "light" to those around us and not to "hide it under a bushel".

In this context of the Scriptures, we of the B&G Committee have been working to enhance the light that we at Moorhead Presbyterian Church can share with the Community and neighborhood. In the past year we have been seeking ways to enhance the physical light that our church building and property can radiate to those who come to visit us for worship or simply to share our facilities.

Most recently, we have completed a project to install new LED lamps and controls on the outdoor pole lights in our front / south parking lot. This included relighting the pole light next to our front sidewalk entry to the Narthex. The entry is now easier to see and the brighter parking lot is more welcoming and feels safer at night, especially in the dark winter evenings.

We have also trimmed the limbs of the crab apple tree in front of the northwest stained glass window and the lighted cross on the Sanctuary wall. When entering the north parking lot at night, the cross and colored light can now be seen and enjoyed.

We hope these improvements will make your experience at Moorhead Presbyterian Church more pleasant.

Sincerely, The B&G Committee

Frank L. Kratky, Moderator

Change of address for Dolores Johnson:

805 2nd Ave North #327 Moorhead

Please feel free to visit her.

Upcoming December Special Services:

December 16: The Family Advent Service during morning worship. The children will be participating. A Soup and Sweets Lunch will follow the service.

December 24: Christmas Eve candlelight and communion service at 5pm.



Circle One Bible Study

Will meet Wednesday, Nov 14 at 1 pm in Fellowship Hall. Kathleen Wilkinson will lead Lesson Three, titled "God With Us In Our Discouragement". Kathy Giddings will be our co-hostess. All are welcome!



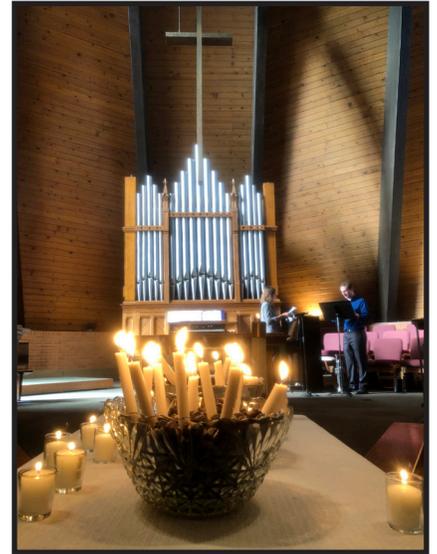
Andrew and his staff at the Dorothy Day Food Pantry thank all of you for the donations -can goods, meats, soups, vegetables and fruits, other unopened items are welcomed... please leave your donation in the DDFP box -Fellowship Hall.

Worship Update

On Sunday, Oct. 28, which was Reformation Sunday, we also celebrated Jazz Sunday. We read the yearly Necrology report which recognized and honored church and family members that have died during the past year. Names were called, a chime rung, and a candle lit by a family member. It is important to acknowledge all those that have gone before us and especially appropriate this year as we look forward to the fiftieth anniversary of our church building. We will have a rededication service on the afternoon of Sunday, November 18. Note that this is in addition to the usual 10:30 morning service.

As always the last two months of the year will be busy at the church. Sunday Nov. 11 is Veteran's Day. December 2 is the first Sunday in Advent and the yearly Hanging of the Greens to decorate the church will be that day. The Children's Advent Service will be on Dec. 16 followed by Soup and Sweets. The Christmas Eve service will be on Monday, Dec. 24.

There will be communion on Nov. 4, Dec. 2, and on Christmas Eve.

**Sunday School Update**

So, you may have heard that this year First Presbyterian of Moorhead has been trying out a new system of Sunday school. This new system is called rotation based Sunday school.

To sum up how our new system of Sunday school works most of what you need to know is in the name already, it rotates. More specifically the classes rotate between Scott and myself teaching the same story for two weeks, or for the whole month. This allows us to go very in depth and have a long time to get the story down. It also gives the opportunity to have different activities such as science, art, drama, and cooking. This can give the students variety instead of having the same thing over and over.

This system seems to be working well, it breaks up the monotony that rote memorization has while still letting them memorize the story. It also allows much more time for discussion both during and after the activity.

**Warm and Welcoming Hospitality at First Presbyterian**

Thank you to the many church members who are ushering, greeting and serving at fellowship time on Sunday mornings: Chris & Nadine Swee, Dagne Forbes, David Miller, Jane Tandberg, Julie Sorenson, Arlene Munighan, Walt Worman, Jay & Bonnie Erickson, Frank & Patti Kratky,

Julie Munsey, Steve Knorr, Flory Austin, Jim & Marlys Winter, Liz & Vern Bancroft

A sign-up sheet for November and December is posted on the easel in Fellowship Hall. Please stop by and sign up for the dates and tasks you wish to do.

Or contact Barb Worman at bgmw54@aol.com or 701.367.9498



The Flag of God Needs You

Saturday, October 27th, was an emotional roller coaster. Alongside Pastor Joe Larson of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, I presented a workshop on Queer Theology at the MN Out Campus Conference. This is a statewide conference working to improve the college environment for Queer students.

As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter about the conference, I met many students for whom God is a remote, angry, and chastising power figure. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The challenge for Queer people, in fact the challenge for all people of faith—you included, is to read Christian scripture from your perspective. You are a part of the story God is weaving amongst us now at this very moment. Each of us is part of the warp and woof of the flag of life. None of us are excluded from this flag.

There is a fancy word for reading scripture from your point of view, or from a particular perspective. That word is, "hermeneutic."

Now before you challenge me by saying that we are not suppose to insert our own, human perspective into scripture, that we are not suppose to interpret scripture, let me ask you, "Where do you think your ideas about Scripture came from?"

They came from the hermeneutic of Western culture. They came from white men of European ancestry who studied at colleges and seminaries across Europe and America, and who were members of the upper classes. The hermeneutic of patriarchal, colonial power has already been inserted into our understanding of scripture.

Interpreting Christian scripture from a particular, human point of view is nothing new; it's been going on ever since Jesus Christ died.

The goal of something like Queer Theology is to broaden that perspective. The goal of Queer Theology is for Queer people to contribute the fabric of their life into the flag of the family of Christ.

So, why was Saturday, October 27th an emotional roller coaster?

Because earlier that day, in my conference workshop, the Holy Spirit kept telling me that a certain participant was interested in seminary. As Joe and I were conducting our class, I kept getting a feeling that this young, Queer person was curious about what a seminary education might be like.

After class, I had an opportunity to talk with her. Just before we were done, I asked her, "You wouldn't, by any chance, be thinking about seminary, are you?"

She smiled and said, "That's funny, ummm, yeah, I've been thinking about it."

Our workshop helped her see that she is part of the family of God and that she has something to contribute to the tapestry of the flag of the Christian family.

Well, shortly after that amazing experience with the Holy Spirit, I walked out of class, and checked my phone. There was a news alert about the terrorist attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue.

Eleven people killed. Police officers shot and wounded. Congregation in shock.

"It's a very horrific crime scene. It's one of the worst I've seen," said one law enforcement official.

Eleven people killed while worshipping God because one person thought they should be excluded from the family of God. One person thought they were not eligible for love and inclusion. Robert Bowers took it upon himself to claim a hermeneutic of hate and exclusion.

As we turn this month towards our 50th Anniversary Rededication Celebration, it is up to all of us to remember that this church helps represent the entire family of God. No one person, no one single group of people, can fully encompass or accurately express what it means to be created and loved by God.

We need the diverse creation of God to encompass and express God's love.

Children's Worship on Sunday mornings

Immediately after the Children's Sermon, kids (ages 3 years through grade 2) may head to Room 10 where a developmentally appropriate worship environment has been prepared. The goal of Children's Worship is to help young children encounter and worship God.

Our worship time includes biblical stories, prayers, and response activities that help children understand scripture and experience God's presence. Leaders for Children's Worship are Jane Lobitz and Barb Worman. Parents can pick up their kids in Room 10 right after worship ends.

In November we will be focusing our children's worship time on scripture related to Old Testament stories (Abraham & Sarah; David). On November 4th, the children will rejoin their families in the sanctuary so they may participate in Communion with the entire church community.

PASTOR ROBERT PRESENTS COLLEGE CAMPUS WORKSHOPS

Pastor Robert has been busy making inroads at our local colleges. In addition to last year's Concordia event, Pastor Robert has been invited to two workshops at Minnesota State University Moorhead. Both workshops discuss issues of sexuality and Christian faith.

The first event was a joint invitation sponsored by Crossroads Lutheran Ministry of MSUM and SPECTRUM of MSUM. Crossroads is an inclusive, Christian student organization open to all MSUM students. They offer a unique, weekly Wednesday night "dinner church," which is a combination of food, worship, and communion. One of their primary goals is ensuring that all MSUM students, especially those who feel alienated from faith because of gender identity and sexuality, are included in a worshipping community.

SPECTRUM is an organization for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and Aromantic individuals on the MSUM campus. Their mission is to promote education about and awareness of LGBTQIA2S+ students to the campus community.

The title of Robert's talk was "God Loves You, Queer People: A Candid Discussion on Faith and Sexuality." Robert says:

"Although this title may sound shocking to many of our church members, to someone struggling with sexuality or gender identity, they far too often hear that God hates them, or that God loves them but hates their sin. Queer sexual expression is not a sin. Rather, it is part of God's plan for loving relationships based on mutual respect. PCUSA affirms same-sex marriage, and therefore we recognize the diversity in God's created order."

About ten students participated, including two students from NDSU. During the Question & Answer session, Robert was saddened to hear students express emotions of pain and rejection from their church experiences. He remarks:

"The depth from which students spoke about how much they desire a close relationship with God, but how much their church pushes back, came from their heart. They are told they can't be transgender and loved by God as transgender, or gay or lesbian, etc. This is wrong. God loves us because God created us."

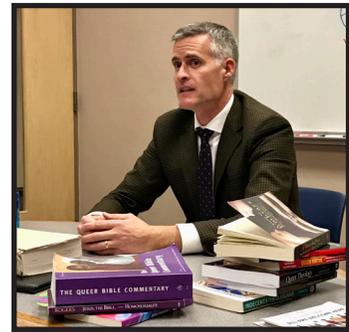
The second event was also held at MSUM, and was part of a state-wide, weekend-long workshop titled, "MN OUT! Campus Conference." Pastor Robert co-presented alongside Pastor Joe Larson of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. The title of their workshop was, "Can I Be Queer and Christian? An Introduction to Queer Theology."

About 85 students from around Minnesota college and universities attended the conference. Pastor Robert and Joe presented their workshop to eight students and three staff/faculty.

Once again, Robert was saddened that so many young, Queer people feel alienated from God because of what their church teaches.

It is erroneous interpretation of Scripture to say that God does not love Queer people and affirm their sexual and gender expression. That second part is absolutely important. God affirms our sexual and gender expression when we exhibit the fruits of the Spirit of Christ's love. How do we know if Queer people exhibit the fruits of the Spirit? Look to what Paul says in Galatians 5:22-23. Paul lists them as "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Queer people are capable of all these. When their sexual and gender expression exhibits these qualities, then, yes, Queer people are affirmed by God."

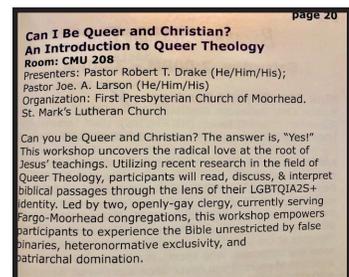
Pastor Robert's calendar is not done with these conferences yet. He conducts another workshop at University of North Dakota on November 3rd, as part of the Great Plains Affirming Campus Conference 2018.



Pastor Robert speaking at Crossroads Lutheran Ministry at MSUM



Pastor Robert with Pastor Joe Larson at MN Out Campus Conference



The title of their workshop

2019 Church Giving Pledge Process

Historically, our church has received pledge forms from about half of its members. However, this moderate return rate does not give the church a full picture in terms of giving for the purpose of budget planning. The church has found that a member's prior year giving is a good representation of likely current year giving. So, rather than ask all members to return a pledge form, our church will assume that your 2019 giving will be similar to your 2018 giving and that each confirmed member will contribute their full "per capita." If your giving will be significantly different in 2019, then in that case, please fill out a pledge form to adjust your amount or contact a member of the Stewardship & Finance Committee. Pledge forms are available from the church office.

Personnel Update

Please take time to stop in the office and welcome Lisa Gigler. Her first day will be November 5th. She is very excited to meet and work with everyone. She has lots of energy and great ideas she plans on implementing. She shares that one of her nicknames is “Gigs”.

The Personnel Committee would like to thank Kathy Shark for her willingness to work remotely to accomplish all the happenings in the office every day. She has, as usual, gone above and beyond to transition the day to day operations smoothly. Also, a big thanks to the volunteers that have been filling in since February on a regular basis. When you see Dagne Forbes, Judy Ortez, Mary Skalet, Kathy Giddings and LuAnn Buehre please acknowledge your appreciation for all their hard work. They and Kathy Shark have been why you get the bulletin every week on Sunday, among many other duties.

We are working on developing a policy, at the Synod level, for severance policies and guidelines.

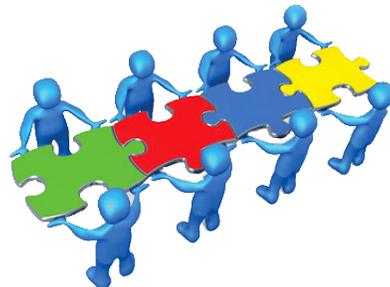
Another active goal is to review all of the job descriptions for all of our current staff positions to keep them up to date.

As you are aware, we have added 2 new staff positions of Media Coordinator – Kylee Johnson and Children’s Education Instructor – Andrew Lenz. Both are doing a fabulous job. These positions are critical in intriguing/inviting/welcoming potential new members when they walk through the doors. Providing a contemporary approach to sharing First Pres of Moorhead’s mission is essential.

It is a privilege to work with all of the staff at First Pres. We are lucky to have them.

Sincerely,

The Personnel Committee



WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH

Words are not enough to express how grateful we are for the wonderful work given to us by Kathy Shark, our Office Administrator since May of 2016.

The title of “Office Administrator” does not fully encompass everything required to be really good at this job. Kathy not only administers the office, she has ensured that our church office was a warm, comforting, and loving place for many of our church members. Countless people will recall being greeted by Kathy and her intent ear as she listened to stories of joy and news of sadness.

No matter how much was going on in the office, no matter what printing deadline was looming, Kathy found a way to share a cup of coffee and still get the bulletin done on time.

As many of you know, Kathy moved to Devils Lake when her husband, Steve, received a new job with Lake Region State College. Due to her adroit skills, Kathy has seamlessly and flawlessly served as our Office Administrator remotely from Devils Lake. She made sure the office volunteers (see their picture in this newsletter) received proper training and support over the entire nine months.

Without Kathy’s dedication and skill, our church would have had to hire an office administrator through a temporary employment agency, which would have been very expensive. Working remotely, Kathy allowed us to patiently wait for exactly the right person to fill the job (read about our new Office Administrator, Lisa Gigler, in last month’s newsletter).

Kathy has made quite an impact on our members. Dagne Forbes had this to say:

Kathy has been so much more than an intelligent, super-organized, top-of-the-line office administrator for Moorhead 1st Presbyterian Church. Her generosity and kindness of spirit have been shared with everyone she came in contact with as she so admirably discharged the many responsibilities of her position. Her assistance to the in-office volunteers the past months has been invaluable and her friendship even more so!

LuAnn Buehre says that Kathy “has been a blessing to this church. She has been the utmost professional at this job. She will be missed and has been missed since she started working remotely at Devils Lake. We owe Kathy man,y many thanks.”

From everyone at Moorhead Presbyterian, “Kathy Shark, you are amazing, you will continue to be amazing, and we all miss you.”



OLD CHURCH MEMORIES

On November 8, 1965, Mr. Alfred Oksness received a letter from the City of Moorhead stating that the First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead must either 1. Tear down the building or 2. Remove the sagging roof, tear down the walls that are pushing out and rebuild both. This letter and a later condemnation from the City of Moorhead led members of the congregation to seek alternative, interim meeting placings and to find a new location with a new church building.

We now have a wonderful building that is faithfully used by the congregation. But, many members have memories and stories about the older church and the interim sites of worship. A few are recorded here:

Liz Bancroft and Marian DeJong reported that in an effort to increase the membership in the church, all of the women had babies in 1957 yielding the biggest confirmation class a number of years later and increasing the Moorhead school enrollment for that class to record levels. (These babies were part of the baby boomers population.)

Liz also indicated that one year she had both a confirmation of her oldest daughter and baptism of her youngest in the Wright Funeral Home which was one place where services were used as an interim meeting place. Jane Tanberg says that she was one of those confirmed in the funeral home.

Jane Tanberg submitted the following narrative of the church:

I have many wonderful childhood memories of the old First Presbyterian Church. I remember entering the front door into a small vestibule, then walking into the sanctuary. I remember it was filled with blond colored pews and warm light streaming in through the stain glass windows. I remember Mrs. Henderson's and Jean Dustruds' lovely voices in the choir. I think they sang every Sunday. I remember Esther Bacon with her soft, kind words and Muriel Winter playing piano during the music time in Sunday School. We learned all of the old hymns – Onward Christian Soldiers and Tell Me the Stories of Jesus – to name two.

Every Christmas every child was handed a small brown paper bag after church. Each year it contained the same treats: an orange or an apple, chocolate covered cream filled candy, peanuts and colorful ribbon candy. I looked forward to that small brown bag each year, even if we all knew what was inside. There was always a Christmas pageant too. I played Mary one year. I remember my sister, Julie, was an angel.

Things changed in the late 60's. The church was old and had to be razed. It was a sad day for me.

Jim Beattie noted that the old church had a basketball court on the second floor. It was for youth of the church. One year the youth requested to have a dance on the basketball court. The idea was shot down. Jim Beattie said that dancing was not permitted in the old church, not even square dancing.

Jim also reported that the stained glass windows of the old church were carefully removed by the men of the church. Jim Winter, Don DeJong and Jim B. were involved in the process which included the use of scaffolding. One of the windows currently graces the north wall of Fellowship Hall. Elizabeth Swee reports that the other windows were stored in Tenie Peet's barn then transferred to the church's utility closet where they are now located.

It is urged that current members consult with those who remember the old church. It provides a base for appreciating our current building at 2900 5th Street South.

Historical documents for the First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead are in the hallway where coats are hung. It is interesting to see the deep history of this church and worth some time observing the legacy that we are carrying forward now.



Dear First Pres. friends,

Can you believe that I've been working remotely for FPCM for 9 months! Time has flown by. It has been a remarkably efficient arrangement, and much credit goes to Dagne Forbes, Kathy Giddings, Judy Ortez, and Mary Skalet who volunteered in the church office and printed bulletins and inserts, and to Erik Swee who printed the newsletters. It was a pleasure to continue working with Pastor Robert, and our many phone calls, texts, and emails enabled us to somehow get things done even though we were 170 or sometimes even 277 miles apart. Whether I worked in the church office or my home office in Devils Lake, I enjoyed every minute, and I will miss it and you. Thank you seems inadequate, but . . . thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve your church! I leave you now knowing that you are in good hands with Lisa, who will bring a fresh presence and innovative ideas to the office.

Best wishes always,

Kathy Shark

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Inside this Issue:



*Church
Rededication*

Sunday School

