

The First Epistle



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead • Established 1872



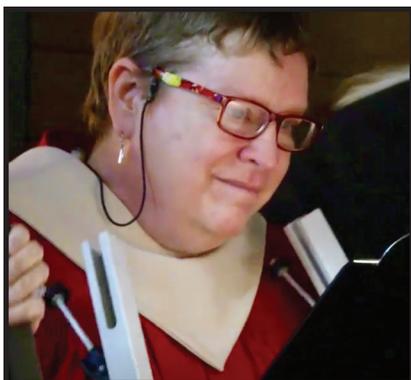
50-YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION BIG SUCCESS

Did you see us on TV? In case you missed it, you can still watch it on our Facebook page. KVRR heard about our 50-year anniversary celebration and decided it would make a great story. We received two minutes of coverage that aired on two separate days. They showed different parts of the service, interviewed some members, and even got wonderful close-ups of the chime choir.

In addition, our “Commit to 50” campaign raised \$17,492.00! Our goal was \$15,000, so we did a great job. If you were one of the people who donated, please know how much your gift helps.

If you were one of the people who donated during this summer’s “Make It a Match” campaign, please know how much your gift helped out too. Together, these two events raised more than \$22,492.

So many people helped to make our anniversary a success. For everyone who helped, please know that this event could never have happened with you! Thank you.



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.

December 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, December 2 and December 24.

Like us on Facebook:

facebook.com/firstpresmhd

Visit our Website:

www.firstpresmhd.org

Away in the Manger at First Presbyterian Church.

It's a tradition so come one and all and join in our traditional advent service, December 16th.

Our Sunday school youth will be acting out the original Christmas story.

This year the congregation is welcome to join in singing the Christmas hymns. It will be an old fashioned Christmas service telling the story that warms our hearts and we never tire of hearing. Joy to the World.

All are welcome to the Soup and Sweets Luncheon immediately following.



It's time again for the Soup & Sweets Luncheon

On Sunday, December 16th, all are encouraged to join us for a simple meal of soup, bread and sweet treats. Stay after worship for an enjoyable time of relaxation and conversation during the busy Advent season. Enjoy a tasty hot bowl of soup. Invite a friend or neighbor to join you on the 16th for worship and for the meal afterwards.

This meal will be a potluck soup buffet following the special worship service led by the children and youth. Please consider offering to bring a large pot of soup, rolls or a loaf of bread or 2 dozen cookies/bars. (Please cook your soup prior to dropping off on Sunday morning.)

To insure we have enough food, please sign up on the clipboard on the table outside the sanctuary or contact Kim Kelsh.

We are also in need of volunteers to help with set-up, serving food and clean-up afterwards. Volunteers can contact Kim Kelsh or use the clipboard sign-up sheet as well. Thank you!

Advent is Here! Come Celebrate!

Dec. 2 - First Sunday of Advent will include the serving of communion. In the afternoon at 4:00 pm we will gather again for the Hanging of the Greens! Join us as we decorate our community space with lights and symbols of the season, followed by a potluck at approximately 5:30 pm.

Dec. 9 - Worship at 10:30

Caroling at Lilac Memory Care, 2 pm.

Dec. 16 - Children and Youth will lead our morning worship at 10:30 followed by Soup and Sweets lunch in Fellowship Hall.

Dec. 23 - Worship at 10:30

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve service at 5:30 pm with communion and candle lighting.

Holidays Are Not Always Happy

Holidays and special days are typically times of joyous celebrations yet these can be very difficult times for people who have experienced the death of a loved one or the loss of a relationship. "Memories of good times and togetherness at the holiday season serve to remind us of our loss. Watching others who are feeling thankful and are celebrating when we feel overwhelmed, lonely or sad can be very painful. Holidays force us to realize how much our lives have been changed by the loss of our loved one." (VITAS Healthcare) All the fun reminders and activities of the holidays may be overshadowed by feelings of sadness, anxiety, apprehension. They are reminders of our loss - whether the loss was recent or happened years ago.

"Unfortunately, grief is not a tidy, neat series of steps that you can take and be done with grieving. It truly is a journey, and even more like a dance. It doesn't travel in a straight line but instead, shuffles: one step up, one step back, two steps sideways, skip and repeat. It doesn't have a certain timetable, only your own. It isn't the same for anyone, but different for everyone." (Williams)

"If we can make room for our grief, open our hearts to new ways of observing the holidays, and even use this precious time to honor and celebrate our loved one, we may find a new beauty and depth to the holidays. They can become a time when we experience our connection to our loved one in new and a satisfying ways." (McGrath)

Some tips for coping during the holidays:

- Set realistic expectations for yourself. Remind yourself that things are different.
- Surround yourself with people who love and support you.
- Selectively choose the activities you wish to participate in. Be flexible. Don't overload your life with busyness.
- Allow yourself to feel joy, sadness, anger – allow yourself to grieve. Grief will often show up unexpectedly.
- Take care of yourself.
- Draw comfort from doing for others.
- Keep some of the meaningful old rituals or traditions in your life. They can anchor you to the past and give you stable footing for the future. Let go of ones that are no longer helpful.
- Create a new tradition or ritual that accommodates your current situation.

I am not alone at all, I thought, I was never alone at all.
 And that, of course, is the message of Christmas. We are never alone.
 Not when the night is darkest, the wind coldest,
 the world seemingly most indifferent.
 For this is still the time God chooses.
 ---- Taylor Caldwell

Sources:

- Losing a Loved One Near the Holidays by Tom McGrath, published by Care Notes, Abbey Press, 2007
- Holiday Help: A Guide for Holidays and Special Days by Sherry L. Williams, published by Accord Grief Management Services, 2002.
- VITAS Healthcare: <https://www.vitas.com/resources/grief-and-bereavement/coping-with-grief-during-the-holidays>

Additional Resource: The current issue of Presbyterians Today magazine contains an article about depression during the holiday season and ways churches can offer light in the darkness. A copy of this issue is available in the church library.



Pastor Reflections

We've done a lot of work in twelve months. That's how long it's been since I first started here. My first day was November 28, 2017.

Since that time, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of our building in a big way. We raised more than \$17,000. KVRR did a feature story on our celebration, and the Forum ran a half-page story on us in the Lifestyle section. Even more poignant, we all learned about our church's history. For instance, before our 50th anniversary, I did not know that we are the oldest church in the entire Fargo-Moorhead area. We beat out Norwegian Lutheran Church in Fargo by five months.

We also met one of our annual meeting goals. Actually, we obliterated that goal! The Memorial Committee set out to add ten leaves to the Tree of Life, located in the narthex. By the time all the leaves are added, they will be closer to an additional 18 leaves (or more!).

Through the organizational work of Ineke Justitz and her large team of volunteers, our annual Auction and Market Bazaar raised more than \$4,000.

This September, we enjoyed our brand-new fire pit, courtesy of Eagle Scout Landon Johnson. Along with his team of volunteers, he worked all of July and August to construct a perfectly designed fire pit that we will use for years to come.

In June, when we kicked off our history newsletter, we raised more than \$5,000 in the "Make It a Match" campaign. Like the 50th anniversary, we not only remembered the important history of our church, we also raised money to put towards the budget.

Have you heard the beautiful music every month in worship? In addition to our in-house music team, we added a monthly guest musician. So far, we've heard male baritones, female sopranos, trumpets, flutes, violins, and even a local rock-n-roll singer.

Lastly, and perhaps this is the most important, I've gotten a chance to hear you. I've spoken with many you about your life, your pains, your joys, and your hopes for your personal future as well as your hopes for our church's future.

Last Sunday, as part of the sermon, many of you wrote on an index card something you "want God to reverse" or something you "do not want God to reverse." I've been reading these this past week, and I still have a few more to go. These are confidential, only I read them, and I read them in private. I read a few each day, after which, I offer a short, small, quiet prayer. I hear you, and God hears you.

In all these ways, the last twelve months have been very busy, and very hope-filled. We still have a lot to do. Yet, I am excited to complete the next twelve months, and excited to see how much more we will accomplish.

-Pastor Robert

ADVENT SERMON SERIES

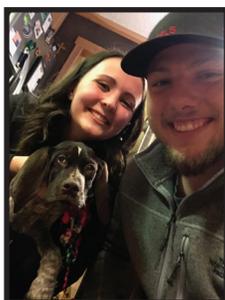
"Take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."

68.5 million people in the world today have been forced to flee their homeland due to violence. What do you think it was like in Egypt for Joseph, Mary, and Jesus? That depends on what Egypt decided to do. Join us on this fictional journey as we re-create three possibilities for the father and mother tasked with caring for God's son. This Advent sermon series takes place over three Sundays; December 2, 9, and 23.



New Bookkeeper

Personnel is happy to announce that Ehrin McKaig has been approved by Session to start in the position of Bookkeeper. This position is a Part Time position at approximately 10 hours per month. We would like to thank Garrick Larson for his countless hours, dedication and insight over the past 3 years in a volunteer position as Bookkeeper.



Beattie's 60th Anniversary

You are invited to join Jim and Myrna Beattie for an Open House celebration honoring their 60th wedding anniversary. The event will take place at The First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead January 5th from 2-4 PM.



Donations For Cooper House Residents

Once again our church is collecting donations of hygiene products for residents of the Cooper House for Christmas. These items include shampoo, soap or body wash, deodorant, razors and shaving cream, new white socks and Kleenex. There will be a box for the items in Fellowship Hall and they need to be in by December 23.

The Cooper House is an apartment building in Fargo for men and women who have experienced years of being homeless. The residents have been living in shelters or on the street before moving into the Cooper House and are dealing with a combination of physical and mental illness and addiction. Most experienced traumatic childhoods of abuse or neglect, poverty, family members with addiction, separation from family and some witnessed violence. Many have been assaulted and robbed. Many of the women have been sexually assaulted.

Christmas is a painful time for the residents as the majority are estranged from their families and they have experienced the loss of close friends. Few receive Christmas presents. We have the opportunity to let the residents know they haven't been forgotten, that people care about them. We can show God's love for them.

If you have questions about donations you can contact Bonnie Erickson at 218-233-4861. Thank you for your participation!



Children's Worship - Advent and Christmas

Our world always seems to jump right into Christmas as soon as the Thanksgiving meal is over (actually after Halloween) but in Children's Worship we will take time over the next several weeks to celebrate Advent and prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas. Through advent stories and activities the children will begin to understand the long-anticipated arrival of the Messiah, a baby born in Bethlehem.

Immediately after the Children's Sermon, children ages 3 years through grade 2 may head to Room 10 for a developmentally appropriate worship time. Leaders for Children's Worship are Jane Lobitz and Barb Worman. Parents can pick up their kids in Room 10 right after worship ends.



December 2nd: children will rejoin their families in the sanctuary so they may participate in Communion with the entire church community.

December 16: no children's worship so these young children can be a part of the family advent service.

Circle One Bible Study

Will meet on Dec 12, 2018 at 11:45 AM at the Heritage Hjemkomst Center, 202 1st Avenue North, Moorhead for a Christmas Luncheon with Music. Cost for the lunch is 5\$. All are welcome, RSVP@ 218-299-5519. If you have questions call Marilyn Woods 236-9917. After the lunch Circle One members will meet at Church for Lesson Four, entitled: God With Us When We Seek God.

Dorothy Day Food Pantry

Dorothy Day Food Pantry and our Church Volunteers thank the Auction and Market Bazaar Contributors for their monetary support as it will buy thousands of pounds of canned food. Dorothy Day Volunteers will volunteer on Dec 17 at 6:15 PM because Dec 24th is Christmas Eve. Thank You Merry Christmas, Marilyn Woods

Poinsettia Orders

Poinsettias are available to order. Deadline for ordering will be December 2nd. Price is \$10 a piece, contact Elizabeth Swee (701) 446-7479.



Auction and Market Bazaar

The Auction and Market Bazaar, held on Friday, November 2, was a fun and successful event. Highlights of the Dutch auction, which went off without a hitch, were a week's stay at a delightful cottage on Little Mantrap Lake and a weekend in a beautiful home on Lake Melissa. During the live auction, bidding wars were fought over the geology trip exploring the shores of Lake Agassiz, a Pakistani dinner for two, wines and cheeses, and a piano party. The silent auction included a masterfully crafted cross, beautiful wall hangings and table runners, as well as a fine wooden jewelry box. A first this year was the Market Bazaar selling lots of fun items. The embroidered dishtowels sold out within a half hour. The lefse was popular as was the baklava, and so were the mittens. Credit for the idea of the Market Bazaar goes to Julie Sorenson. She and Dagne Forbes brilliantly executed that idea. During intermission, we enjoyed each other's company while eating apple pie and ice cream. A good time was had by all!

The Stewardship & Finance Committee thanks all who gave of their time, talent, and treasure without which there would not have been an auction; we thank all bidders and buyers who made this auction a success, and we thank all visitors, whose presence made the evening so enjoyable, in particular Kathy Shark, our former office administrator, and her husband Steve, who came all the way from Devils Lake. A special thank-you goes to Rich Pemble, who turns the auction into a very entertaining evening, to Erik Swee, whose computer skills contributed to the successful Dutch auction, and to Ron Johnson for his encouragement and commitment of time and energy.

The Auction and Market Bazaar raised \$4,200. Session has approved the following distribution: \$600 to the Dorothy Day Food Pantry; \$600 to Presbyterian Disaster Assistance; and \$3,000 to the General Fund of First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead.

In gratitude, Ineke



Erik Swee sets up for Dutch Auction.



The auction is underway.



Pastor Robert thanks Kathy Shark for her successful long-distance work on behalf of FPCM.

Parking Spot Surprise

At our annual Talent Auction, one of the high interest items is the reserved parking space right next to the Fellowship Hall door. This year, the surprise buyer of the parking spot was someone who is not a member of First Presbyterian Church – Moorhead. Who was this intruder? What was this “outsider” doing in our church? And, what was she doing buying the prime parking spot? It turned out to be a good Samaritan visitor – whom many of our congregation know – Margaret Thompson.

Margaret is a high school contemporary of Milt Wilkinson. They have known each other since that time. In my interview with the energetic lady, Margaret said she had a good visit with Pastor Robert and her friend and sister-in-law Jeanne Walker before the auction started. She was in a good mood and when the parking spot came up for auction, she decided to buy it for Milt and Kathleen Wilkinson.

She is aware that Kathleen and Milt are regular Sunday attendees. She wanted to ease the burden for Kathleen to get Milt in the church and ready for singing, praying, meditating and hearing Kathleen shout Hallelujahs during the service. Milt said that is the nicest thing to happen to him in some time.

Margaret still attends the Baker/Downer Presbyterian church and lives on a farm outside of Barnesville. She indicated that a number of members of the First Presbyterian Church in Moorhead attended the annual fish fry in their church. (This writer plans to attend next year.) We thank her for the contribution to our church and giving us a topic of interest.

Jim Gale, Always ready for a fish fry.



LAURA HAGEMANN and HER COCKER SPANIEL, SELBY

Selby is our 16-month old cocker spaniel that is black and white and has many freckles. My parents (Ron and Maggie Hagemann) gave into my whims and let me get a puppy once my recovery was underway after the car accident, and once I was in a place that would allow dogs. I honestly think (and my parents would agree) having Selby has helped advance my progress.

I never really knew dogs, let alone cocker spaniels, could have lots of freckles. Selby does. Her freckles are my favorite feature. I even wrote a short story about them called "The Case of The Curious Freckle," in which Selby tried to find out which of her freckles made it so she always got in trouble!

I've been writing more creatively since the accident and Selby helps inspire me. Writing about and taking pictures of her are favorite pastimes. I even have an Instagram account for her, @selbysweetie.

On a non-Selby-related note, my family and I would like to thank the congregation for your continued thoughts and prayers.

Laura Hagemann

**Are you looking for a unique Christmas Gift?**

Consider church memorabilia for that special someone!

Christmas ornaments, pens, clips, mugs, water bottles, cutlery and t-shirts are available. See LuAnn Buehre for details or the church office.

Annual Meeting

The Annual meeting has been set for Sunday January 27, 2019 following worship. A potluck will precede the meeting. The deadline to submit committee and event reports is Thursday, January 17. Please submit them to the office.

Session Highlights

The session was presented with the 2019 budget at their November meeting. Some challenges exist to refine it. Session will be meeting to work on it.

The 50th Rededication Celebration was deemed a success! The participation of Presbytery, our former pastors, the special music, and the reception following made it a very special and memorable day. Thank you to all who worked so hard to put it together. Let's look forward to the 150th Anniversary in 2022 of our church!

**Warm and Welcoming Hospitality on Sunday mornings**

Thank you to this great team of church members who have ushered, greeted people at the door and served at fellowship time on Sundays during October, November and now in December: 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, Liz & Vern Bancroft. I have truly appreciated everyone taking a turn or two (or more).

-- Barb Worman

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Inside this Issue:



*Church
Rededication*

Children's Worship

