

The First Epistle



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead • Established 1872

September 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, September 2.

Like us on Facebook:

[facebook.com/firstpresmhd](https://www.facebook.com/firstpresmhd)

Visit our Website:

www.firstpresmhd.org

NEW STUDENT DAYS AT MSUM

For the first time in its history, Moorhead Presbyterian had a welcome table at MSUM's Sidewalk Cafe. This is an annual event where local businesses, social service organization, and student groups host a booth or table at MSUM prior to the start of classes. New students and returning students walk around and see everything there is to do in Fargo-Moorhead.

With help from Ehrin McKaig, Pastor Robert met and spoke with more than 200 MSUM students. This is just one of the many new events and programs designed to increase our connection with area colleges and universities. Although we may not see an immediate increase in college-age students attending our church, activities like this are crucial to "get the word out" about Moorhead Presbyterian.

One constant refrain we heard from students after finding out about Moorhead Presbyterian was, "I'm so happy to see a church represent another side of Christianity. So often, all you see are the churches who want to keep excluding everyone. God is bigger than just one church."



LOCAL ROCK STAR SINGS IN WORSHIP

If you were in worship the last Sunday in August, you got a chance to see and hear special musical guest, Jessica Vines, belt out her powerful voice on the Christian contemporary song, "10,000 Reasons," written by Matt Redman.

Jessica received her Bachelor in Jazz Studies from MSUM, where she also studied classical music, musical theater, and commercial voice. If you follow the local music scene, you know Jessica has been making big waves joining with all sorts of talented musicians. She sings at Junkyard, Drekker, Aquarium, HoDo, Speak Easy, and Red River Market.

Jessica's appearance was made possible through the newly-funded, Special Guest Musician series. Once per month, a local musician will join us in worship. Such musical appearances help Moorhead Presbyterian energize worship, bringing youth and vitality to a congregation that has always been vital to the Fargo-Moorhead area and has always been "young at heart."



Bible Study

Circle One Bible Study meets Wednesday September 12 in Fellowship Hall at 1 PM, please feel welcome to attend. Lesson One - God Is With Us Wherever We Are. Janet Van Amburg will lead the lesson; Marilyn Woods will provide dessert.

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

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.

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

MEMORIAL COMMITTEE ON TRACK



Through the amazing generosity of Moorhead Presbyterian church members, the Memorial Committee is on track to reach their 2018 goal of adding 10 new leaves to the Tree of Life. Installed in 2003, the Tree of Life, located in the narthex, reminds us how important it is to support the church financially. We only need four more leaves to reach this goal for this year.

Each leaf on the tree represents a gift of \$500 or more (beyond regular pledged giving). If you would like a leaf engraved in honor of someone, please see Pastor Robert or Arlene Munighan.

We want to send a special message to all the young families at Moorhead Presbyterian. We consider your greatest gift to the church to be the laughter, shouts, coos, and gurgles of your children. Every time one of your kids runs down the hallway or leaps up to join Pastor Robert for Children's Sermon, we see thousands of engraved leaves falling from the sky. Your children are your greatest gift to this church. Thank you.



BIBLE STUDY DONATES MONEY

The Wednesday Bible Study group donated \$52.00 to the Dorothy Day Food Pantry.

They are starting up again after taking the summer off. Join them the second Tuesday of each month at 1:00 in the Fellowship Hall. Please see Marilyn Woods for more information.

The Grateful Garden

Hello Everyone!

It is definitely harvesting time! We have shared 19 of the 20 vegetables planted at least once so far. The radishes, beets, cabbage, and peas are all done for the year, but we are now receiving tomatoes! Thanks to Growing Together Community Gardens, we have 14 different varieties of tomatoes in our garden. We also started harvesting potatoes, three types of peppers, cauliflower, broccoli, eggplant, kale, bok choy, cucumbers, and zucchini. Everyone has been doing a great job preventing weeds so most of our time is spent harvesting and sharing with one another.

Rosie Gonzalez from University of Minnesota Extension has been stopping by with snacks for everyone after gardening. Some of these snacks include pasta salad, veggies with dip, smoothies, and flavored waters.

Last year the garden consisted of four plots measuring 20ft.x5ft. This year we have doubled in size and have eight plots. With the expansion we have increased the amount food we grow. As a result, over the last month we have donated seven large bags of greens and multiple zucchini to the Dorothy Day House in Moorhead. Some of the garden members have also donated their shares to the local food pantries.

Thanks to everyone who has participated so far! The Grateful Garden group meets every Wednesday from 6-8pm. All are welcome to come share in the harvest!

Alyssa Athman, Garden Coordinator



BAPTISM JOY

Congratulations to Megan and Dan Wheeler at the birth of their son, Macsen E Donald Wheeler, on July 8th at 3:04am, 7lbs. 10oz., 19.5 inches. A baptism date will be scheduled and announced once Megan and Dan arrange the schedules of multiple family members. It's been a wonderful joy watching Macsen's older brother, Leander, keeping up with the older kids during Children's Sermon. He will be a great older brother for Macsen.



FIRE PIT COMING ALONG

Landon Johnson and his team of Boy Scouts are making good progress on the new fire pit. The fire pit is Landon's project for his Eagle Badge.



We will waste no time in putting the new fire pit to good use. Join us for the inaugural dedication on Saturday, September 8th at 7:00pm. A representative from Landon's troop will be on hand to help us. For more details see Scott Dobovsky.



During the entire month of September, we will host a hotdog roast every Wednesday from 6:00-7:00. This will be very simple, hotdogs, buns, ketchup and mustard. Bring your own beverage, water will be on hand. Plus, all the fixings for "campfire" pie" will be there.

YEARNING FOR PEACE?

We all want peace, but what does "peace" mean?

Does peace mean foregoing self-defense? Can we bear arms, and still be peacemakers? What role do taxes play in peace? Can a powerful military bring peace? What did Jesus mean when he said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you"? Does being peaceful mean being a doormat for others who want to take advantage of me?



Through a five-week study titled, "A Season of Peace: The Things That Make for Peace," published by PCUSA Mission Agency, we will examine "peace" in a way you never imagined.

Employing cultural anthropology, academic-level biblical exegesis, contemporary theology, role-playing, discussion groups, and hands-on activities, we will walk through a journey of peace, culminating in the celebration of World Communion Sunday on October 7th.

Classes meets once per week, starting the first week of September. Dates and times to be determined based on those who sign up. Register with Dagne Forbes or Pastor Robert.



Thank you all for joining us!



Stephanie and Kathy sharing a table with a church neighbor, Jim.



Elizabeth and Peggy serving up food to Eric and Sinda. You can also see Bill and Gerald.



Heather and Thistle Pipes and Drums



Tim singing awesome music

Kentucky Grow

One of the mission trips taken by Presbyterian Women at the churchwide gathering was to Kentucky Grows. The community worked with the city of Louisville to create urban space, where poverty existed, for growing gardens. In summer 2015, Louisville Grows partnered with Gate of Hope Ministries to create the Hope Community Farm, a 45-member community garden, farm, and CSA. The urban farm encompasses 5 acres, and participants are refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Uganda. The CSA offers 40 shares available to community members with plans to expand in the coming growing seasons.

**NEW MEMBER WELCOME AND BAPTISM**

Make sure to welcome our three newest members to the Moorhead Presbyterian family. Meet Justin Marek, MacKenzie Jackson, and Kayden Marek.

Justin is the grandson of Delores Johnson, and the nephew of Deb Piekutowski and Ron and Peggy Johnson, which, of course, makes him a cousin to Cassidy and Landon. Justin was born in Fargo and graduated from West Fargo High in 2012. He works at Norwood Sales as a painter and power coat technician. If you talk to him, you might find out that he's got a wicked sense of humor and loves joking around.

MacKenzie was also born in Fargo, graduating from West Fargo High in 2014. She works part-time at Double Tree as a banquet server, allowing her to also be a stay-at-home mom for Kayden. When she gets any free time, which is rare these days, she relaxes by watching Grey's Anatomy.



Their son, Kayden, is 16 months old, and is already very active. Expect to see him scrambling around Children's Sermon on Sunday morning. Kayden will be baptized on September 9th. Make sure to be there as we welcome Kayden into the family of God.

HEART-n-SOUL COMMUNITY CAFE

Thank you Moorhead Presbyterian Church for sharing your space!

We served 56 guests and raised \$502.

All the food was locally sourced from area farmers. Lady Bug Acres gave us watermelon, musk melon, and cantaloupe! The vegetables were donated from Legacy Gardens and Square Foot Gardens of the Red River Valley. Jens Bakery donated the cookies. The bread was from Breadsmith.



Volunteers came from the F-M community sharing, their time, talent and kindness.

In the photo, you will notice Tyler Ziegler from WDAY TV. We hope your members were able to see your church on TV that night. It was a really good segment. Thank you for your generosity and warm welcome.

Sincerely, Leola Daul and Heart-n-Soul Community Cafe



Elizabeth Swee and Rev. Kitch Schatzer examine needed items for a BOB (emergency box, first aid kit) needed for evacuation as part of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance training the trainers. Are you prepared?

TOM DOWDELL MOVED WEST

After losing my wife of 66 years, I've decided to move to the Pacific Northwest to join my older daughter, Linda. Our time in Fargo-Moorhead was wonderful as we enjoyed growing up with our two grandsons.

I wish everyone well at Moorhead Presbyterian Church. We had good times.

Tom Dowdell c/o Linda Dowdell
496 MacLeay Road
Sequim, WA 98382



Pastor Reflections

Have you heard the news? Mainline churches are declining.

Just in case you don't know, we are a "mainline church." This is a term applied to the historical churches in America, such as Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, Congregationalists, and others.

To be "mainline" is to be set aside from evangelical, fundamentalist, or charismatic churches.

The basic story line is that mainline churches are shrinking and evangelical "mega-churches" are growing.

I beg to differ.

Moorhead Presbyterian Church is growing its membership and attendance. Moorhead Presbyterian Church is stabilizing its finances. Moorhead Presbyterian Church is adding staff members. Moorhead Presbyterian Church is expanding its community presence.

Regarding member growth and attendance, have you seen the many new faces in church on Sunday? Some people hear about us through Facebook, some people hear about us through the Grateful Garden, and others hear about us from student events at Concordia and MSUM.

Regarding finances, did you know we raised \$5,000 in June and July? This required no volunteer hours, no event planning, and no fundraising campaign. So how did we do it? It all started with church members being energized about their church. It all started with church members being proud of who we are and what we stand for. It all started with church members knowing that good things are going on here. In fact, good things have been going on here for 146 years!

We plan to do this again in November, but only bigger. Instead of \$5,000, we plan to raise \$10,000. On November 18, we will celebrate a re-dedication of the building, and we will use the exact same bulletin we used in 1968. Leading up to this big day, we will announce a \$10,000 Birthday Fund and Make-It-a-Match campaign. I'll let you in on a little secret... (we're already half-way there).

Regarding new church staff, have you met Andrew Lenz or Kylee Johnson yet? Andrew is our new Children's Education Instructor. We started a brand new position so that our church can effectively teach kids in Sunday School all about what it means to follow Jesus Christ. Alongside Scott Dobovsky and myself, Andrew will teach a brand new rotation-based curriculum. Make sure to arrive early in church to see kids running out of Sunday School showing off their fun projects.

You might not see a lot of Kylee, our Media Coordinator. Most of her work will be done behind the scenes on Facebook, the website, and community marketing. Her work has already paid off. During our Nite to Unite party, a young woman with two children, all the way from south Fargo, attended our party because she "saw it on Facebook." Thank you, Kylee.

So, why are we adding staff in the middle of our \$30,000 projected budget deficit? Because we are growing, that's why. Over the last five years or more, we dutifully trimmed the budget to match our decreasing income. This was fiscally prudent.

Now however, we need to provide the services and amenities people want in their church. We need to provide the reason for people to visit our church. We need to let them know we are here. We need to give visitors a reason to become members. And we need to give members a reason to be proud and delighted to call Moorhead Presbyterian Church their church.

Regarding community presence, did you notice the college-aged guest musicians this spring? Did you notice Alex O'Connell, our student guest preacher from Concordia? Did you notice local music-scene, powerhouse vocalist Jessica Vine singing with us last Sunday? Did you know that 1,000 incoming students at MSUM saw our church brochure in their new-student packet? And make sure to watch WDAY in November. Our 50th Anniversary will be a community affair.

You might be wondering if all these plans are simply a waste of money if mainline churches are declining.

They are not, and here's why: Two things will soon prove that Moorhead Presbyterian Church will shine into the future.

First, we must continue strategic budgeting of effective programming and effective marketing. In other words, we must continue spending money prudently on those activities, programs, staff, and marketing that gets us excited about our church, gets visitors excited about staying, and gets people in the Fargo-Moorhead-West Fargo area excited about who we are.

Second, we are blessed in the Fargo-Moorhead-West Fargo area with a steady increase of new residents. Did you see that more than 1000 kindergartners enrolled in West Fargo? Did you see that West Fargo is close to passing Fargo in overall school enrollment? Did you see that Sanford Health plans to hire 200 more physicians and hundreds of professional support staff over the next decade? Did you see that Metro COG estimates metropolitan growth at 45% by 2045?

Our area is growing, and many of our new neighbors will be working in high-income fields. As one of a handful of progressive-Christian churches in the Fargo-Moorhead-West Fargo area, we are perfectly situated to attract new residents looking for an accepting and inclusive church in which to raise their family.

We must be ready when they visit. We must be present in the community when they open the newspaper, turn on the news, go to Facebook, turn on their computer, or open their mailbox. Our worship service must be energized and vibrant when they sit in the pew. Our Sunday School lessons must be organized and dynamic when their kids walk in the classroom.

One final question: Have you heard the news?

Moorhead Presbyterian is growing, and we will grow even more over the next few years.

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.

Towards a More Perfect Union

In the August issue of *The First Epistle* (p. 7), we met the Rev. Dr. Eugene Blake, who visited First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead on Friday, September 17, 1965. He was not only a visionary leader in the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) and the National and World Councils of Churches but also a close associate of Dr. Martin Luther King, with whom he marched on Washington on August 28, 1963.

Below we are sharing a blogpost by David Staniunas, Records Archivist, Presbyterian Historical Society (www.history.pcusa.org), who writes about the arrest of Dr. Blake and the reactions from Presbyterians around the country to Dr. Blake's activism fighting segregation and racial injustice. We thank the Presbyterian Historical Society for permission to reprint David Staniunas' blogpost.

Police were in place to meet the men who meant to go to jail. On July 4, 1963, the stated clerk of the UPCUSA, Eugene Carson Blake, was jailed in Baltimore, Md. for trespassing. Along with 283 activists from the Council on Racial Equality and the Baltimore Clergymen's Interfaith Committee, Blake had challenged the owners of Gwynn Oak Amusement Park to desegregate.

The march on Gwynn Oak was not Blake's idea. At a press conference the week before, called regarding his appointment as head of the National Council of Churches' Commission on Religion and Race, the veteran reporter George Dugan asked Blake, "Name one thing that you plan to do." Blake, flat-footed, had just heard obliquely about a CORE march in Baltimore and said he was looking into joining.

[On July 4], marchers and press gathered at Metropolitan Methodist Church, including busloads of activists from Philadelphia and New York, among them Daniel Corrigan, William Sloane Coffin, Jr., and Rabbi Morris Lieberman, who, when asked what he was doing in a Methodist church on a Thursday, replied that every American ought to celebrate Independence Day.

City and county police and private security guards were on hand when the buses pulled up to the main gate of the amusement park. Blake and the African-American Presbyterian elder Furman Templeton planned to approach first. They joked beforehand that they were stumped as to what to do if they both got in: Templeton didn't ride roller coasters, and Blake couldn't handle a Ferris wheel. Someone read the demonstrators Maryland's trespass law. Blake approached the gate when the reading was over. According to Robert H. Heinze [the Rev. Heinze was on the staff of *Presbyterian Life* magazine]:

Blake said he wanted to go into the park. The police said, "Go ahead." Blake said, "But I want to go in with my friend, Mr. Templeton, here." Templeton was denied admission. Blake pressed the matter, saying they wanted to ride the miniature Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The police suggested that what was really wanted was a ride in the paddy wagon.[...] They declined, Blake saying, "You'll have to take us."¹

Blake and the others were booked for trespassing, fingerprinted, pleaded not guilty, and were released on bond. Charges against Blake were ultimately dropped. His actions weren't without cost. Many Presbyterians were dismayed by the church's apparent abrupt transition from passive acceptance of civil rights work to active engagement. One wrote to Blake: "I am delighted to learn that you are in jail. If we could keep you there it would be a boon to Christianity. You are a disgrace (that's right) a disgrace to the Presbyterian Church and it makes me ashamed to identify myself as a Presbyterian when we have such a scallywag as you acting as the Chief Executive Officer." Another called him an "apostate," saying, "In your program, having driven our Christ out of the Church, and our Bible out of our schools, the capstone is to be putting the Negro on the roller coaster with our daughters[...]"²

Here David Staniunas ends his blogpost. The harsh words he quotes seem to come to us from a distant past. It has been 55 years since Dr. Blake deliberately challenged racial segregation and injustice on Independence Day, when we celebrate the land of the free and the home of the brave. He, and others with him, were arrested. They were vilified by some, applauded by others. Reading and rereading this piece, I am reminded of the actions by Colin Kaepernick and other athletes protesting police brutality against minorities by bowing their heads and kneeling when the national anthem is played before a match. When we bow our heads and kneel, our body and mind are united in a prayerful gesture, which shows that we respect and submit to a higher Lord. In the Middle Ages, knights knelt in the same prayerful gesture before their overlords and pledged to be brave, truthful, and loyal in their service. Thus, it seems to me that the gestures by Dr. Blake and Colin Kaepernick are not to be dismissed as trivial, disgraceful, or disrespectful. By doing so, one may overlook the meaning that points to a higher truth: the hard work towards a more perfect union is never done.

ineke

1. Heinze, Robert H. "Eugene Carson Blake among 283 arrested in Baltimore." *Presbyterian Life*, August 1, 1963. p.24-27.

2. R. Douglas Brackenridge. *Eugene Carson Blake: prophet with portfolio*. New York: Seabury Press, 1978. p.96-97.

Source URL: <https://www.history.pcusa.org/blog/eugene-carson-blake-arrested-july-4-1963>



*Eugene Carson Blake arrested, July 4, 1963
via YouTube*



Presbyterian Women's Church

One of the several dynamic plenary speakers at the recent Presbyterian Women's Church wide gathering was Marisol Jiminez.

Conversations about a broken immigration system often begin and end at the border—as if building walls and barriers would heal the injustices and offer clear answers. In her thoughtful and quietly passionate presentation on Friday night, Marisol Jiménez said that our current immigration conversation is narrow and misguided. We must accept that institutionalized racism is foundational to our current broken immigration system. And rampant consumerism makes us all complicit in a globalized system that exploits workers and endangers the environment in the service of profits for a few.

The plight of the immigrant is part of her family's personal story. Marisol's parents had a hasty courthouse wedding after her father—an undocumented Mexican worker—was turned in to the authorities by one of her mother's relatives. The money that her parents had saved for another kind of wedding was instead spent on bail. Marisol says that as a young woman, she struggled to find a way to emotionally navigate between her mother's family—who were proud of their Irish heritage—and her father's Mexican family—who were largely absent from her life.

A mission trip to the border solidified Marisol's commitment to advocate on behalf of a more just immigration system. Resolved to find a way to change legislation, she learned that there are simply not enough legal pathways or sufficiently tall walls to resolve the current backlog (some pending since 1995) of applications for legal residency.

Tepeyac Consulting, founded by Marisol, works to provide a way to connect “communities that are most often marginalized . . . with opportunities to amplify their voices and meaningfully lead social justice efforts.” They “offer the resources, tools and frameworks to develop and deepen organizations' and communities' capacity with an explicit and intentional structural analysis.” Put more simply, Tepeyac offers a sort of sanctuary for the marginalized. Sanctuary, in this sense, is not just a legal ploy to protect undocumented workers and fleeing refugees but a resolve for community and shared care. For example, Marisol and the people she serves set up a verification system as well as telephone hot lines (with trained volunteers) so that the community can live safely. Even so, recent ICE activity resulted in the deportation of several members of the community. Marisol says that a celebratory barbecue organized by the ICE officials in the very neighborhood where the deported lived was particularly stinging. But even during these very days, “such a time as this,” she revels in God's generous blessings of a funny story, a precious baby, a hopeful day.

What a wonderful sharing!

Elizabeth Swee

Mabel Schneider

I understand there may be people who don't know who Mabel Schneider is on our prayer list. She is a sweet "almost three" year old with ongoing health issues. Mabel was born October 2, 2015 with a cleft lip and cleft palate. At the age of 2 months she developed seizures which led to a diagnosis of epilepsy. It was also determined she had a congenital abnormality of brain development. In 2017 she was critically ill and spent 73 days in PICU at Children's Hospital in St. Paul. Mabel does have significant developmental delays. She has a tracheostomy, feeding tube and is currently undergoing intensive physical, occupational and speech therapy. She recently acquired devices to help her stand and sit up straight along with a customized wheelchair.



Thank you for all your prayers! She is making progress. The last time I saw her (August 5) she was giggling and interacting with other people. Mabel has a big sister Audrey(5) and will become a big sister herself in September.

-Kathy Giddings



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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Inside this Issue:



*Leander has
a baby brother!*

*Welcome Justin,
MacKenzie, and Kayden*

