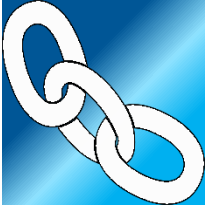


First Presbyterian Church

321 N. 5th St., Burlington, IA 52601, 319-752-6626

1stpresb@1stpresb.org

www.1stpresb.org



Connections



January 2024



Annual Reports

**ATTENTION, ALL CLERKS, RECORDERS, SCRIBES, CHAIRS, STAFF,
TREASURERS!**

It's that time of the year when we close out the work of 2023 to make room for 2024. To do that, we need to hold an annual meeting during which the congregation can review the work accomplished by all boards, committees and organizations. This report will be mailed out one week before the annual meeting so that everyone will have ample time to review it.

**THEREFORE, ALL ANNUAL REPORTS NEED TO BE TURNED INTO THE OFFICE
BY JANUARY 11TH.**

The annual meeting has been called by the Session for Sunday, January 21, 2024 immediately following the worship service. The purpose of the meeting will be to receive the annual report, elect a nominating committee, an elder and trustee, amend the by-laws and all other business that is brought before the congregation.



We're Going to General Assembly!

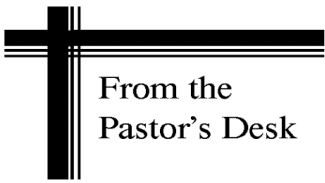
Let's clarify this. First Presbyterian Church, Burlington, Iowa will be at the General Assembly in Salt Lake City this summer through Allison Nalley, who will be representing the Presbytery of East Iowa as the Youth Advisor Delegate. Allison was endorsed by our Session to be nominated and elected to the YAD position. She will join the YADs from all the other presbyteries across the United States in deliberating on and providing the youth vote on all the matters brought before the General Assembly. Allison is a graduating senior at Mediapolis High School. She has been accepted at a number of colleges and universities, she has yet to make her final selection. Currently she is looking at a Business degree. While finishing up her studies at Mediapolis, Allison is also enrolled in courses at SCC. Youth Advisory Delegates must be between 18 and 24 years of age.

As a YAD, Allison will be assigned to a standing General Assembly Committee where she will meet and discuss with all other commissioners to the General Assembly the issues specifically referred to them and form the recommendations for action to be addressed by the entire assembly during their plenary sessions. Allison will have the opportunity to stay up late, eat pizza and meet a wide diversity of young adults from big city churches to small town churches, and grow in her understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Congratulations, Allison! We're proud of you. Get ready for a phenomenal experience.



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
WORSHIP | FELLOWSHIP | BUSINESS



From the
Pastor's Desk

The Sermon

January 6th - it is a Saturday - it is also Epiphany. For many that doesn't mean much. In ordinary conversation folks have been known to tell others of some "epiphany" experience. Generally, they are referring to an awakening to new information. In the life of the church, Epiphany is the day on which we celebrate the visitation of the Magi to Jesus, who by this time is not an infant, but a toddler. Scripture tells us the wise men did not come to the stable shortly after the shepherds, but in fact, two years after Christ's birth, and when they arrive, they come to the house in Bethlehem where the holy family resides. You have to remember, these three kings from the orient who saw the star in the sky and began following it out of curiosity, traveled hundreds of miles by camel. In spite of our romantic ideas of to place the wise men on the periphery of our nativity sets, the fact is they arrived two years after the fact.

However, I am digressing. The wise men were astronomers, men of science who followed a very unusual star in the eastern sky. Their "epiphany" occurred when they arrived in Bethlehem and realized the star they had curiously followed was a sign from God that led them to the child who would be the Messiah of God, the King of the Jews, the Savior of the world. In that moment, their eyes were opened and they saw the salvation of humankind in the child called Jesus. This would be heralded as the good news of God's plan for the salvation of the world being shared with gentiles. Here's my second "however." However, this was not a warm fuzzy hallmark moment when everyone lives happily ever after. What follows is the very opposite. According to a sermon preached by Fred Craddock, distinguished Professor of Preaching and New Testament in the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, there is a "Hard Side of Epiphany." That "hard side of Epiphany" is what the sermons of January will focus on. The Good News is not good news to everyone; the good news has enemies. Announcing the truth of the Good News makes enemies; standing up for the truth of the Good News comes with a price that not everyone wants to pay.

So, you are cordially invited to all of our worship services in January and see for yourself what the hard side of Epiphany means for each of us.

Sunday, December 31st

Texts: Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

Matthew 25:31-46

Title: "The GPS Challenge"

Sunday, January 7th Epiphany Sunday Lord's Supper

Texts: Isaiah 60:1-6

Matthew 2:1-12

Title: "An Ahah Experience"

Sunday, January 14th

Texts: Exodus 1:1-22

Matthew 2:13-18

Title: "Hard to Accept the Good News Has Enemies"

Sunday, January 21st

Texts: Malachi 3:1-4

Luke 2:22-40

Title: "Hard to Accept that Announcing the Truth Makes Enemies"

Sunday, January 28th

Texts: Jeremiah 17:9-13

Matthew 26:69-75

Title: "Hard to Accept the Responsibility to Stand Up for the Truth"

Confirmation Classes to Begin

Beginning Sunday, January 7th and continuing through April 7th , our young people from 6th grade through high school will be preparing to become members of the church. The classes will be held every Sunday afternoon from 3:00 to 4:30 pm. at the church. Each week, these students will explore the fundamentals of faith and begin laying the foundation for their own statement of faith which they will share with the Session April 14th . The curriculum will lift up the tenets of our faith as displayed in the confessions of the church. Each student will have a "faith coach," who will be a member of the church who will help guide, encourage and be an example. These coaches will be available to ask questions of, quiz their student on what they are learning, and assist them in developing their statements of faith.

Here's an invitation to you adult church members to help us honor the vows we took when these young people were baptized. We promised to stand alongside their parents in assisting these youngsters in growing in their faith in Jesus Christ so that one day they might confess him to be their Lord and Savior. If you feel called or led to do this, speak with Rev. Johnson who is the Confirmation teacher.

Confirmation

Pastor's Year-End Thoughts

By the time many of you read this, Christmas for all intents and purposes, will be in our rear view mirror. Time, as it has always done, moves on and on the horizon is New Years. Good-bye 2023, hello 2024. I never was very good with establishing resolutions, or for that matter, carrying through on them. Resolutions are great, often lofty goals designed to advance and improve our health, our financial well-being, our attitudes and behaviors. But they seldom are kept considering the unbelievable strength of will required to keep them past a few hours, days or weeks, if we're so fortunate.

I did an internet search for resolutions I could suggest for you and save you the frustrating effort of creating them on your own. Isn't that what good, thoughtful, caring pastors do? No matter how I Googled it, I was horribly dissatisfied, because in the end, underlying the whole process of resolutions is the issue of personal strength and willpower. How desperately committed are we to making changes in our lives? So, as we say farewell to 2023, which has been for me an unbelievably rich and rewarding, blessing-filled 12-months, I ask but one thing of myself and each of you. It is what Jesus asked of those he spoke to on the hillside with the Sermon on the Mount. It appears in the 6th chapter of Matthew in a section wherein Jesus lovingly and compassionately encourages his listeners to not worry. In his plain talking way, Jesus says: *"I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?"* After that he says a bunch of other things to re-enforce his concern about worrying, but concludes with what I believe should be our new years' resolution: *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."*

The Amplified Version of the Bible reports this verse this way: *But first and most importantly seek (aim at, strive after) His kingdom and His righteousness [His way of doing and being right—the attitude and character of God], and all these things will be given to you also.* Notice the parentheticals. Jesus is saying, "make as your priority (because your life depends on it) adopting God's ways as your own, doing what is right (which you already know), and not just have the attitude of God, but God's character as well. If you do this (which will take all your time and energy), be assured that everything you might have worried about will be taken care of.

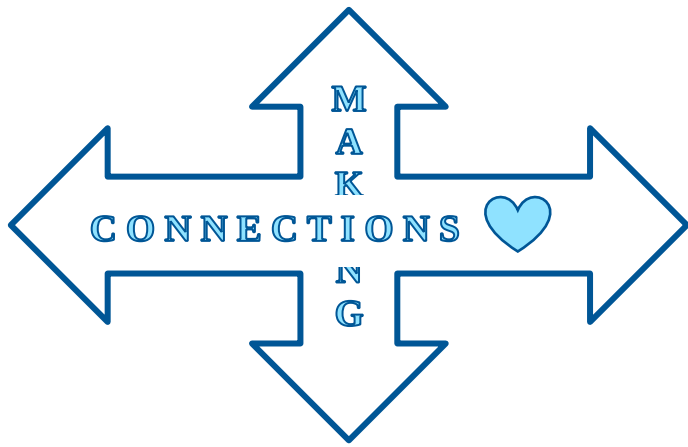
This is Jesus calling us to keep everything in perspective. How often do we waste an enormous amount of time, energy and resources worrying about things we can't change? In doing so, are we not forgetting whose will it is we should be seeking fulfilled? By seeking God's kingdom and righteousness first we can't help but find perspective for everything else. Christ's wisdom contin-

ues when he concludes by reminding us, *“Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*

There you are, my friends, the “mother” of all resolutions. As huge as this may seem, know this isn’t all on you. You have a partner, a coach rooting for you. Jesus is walking with you and will provide you strength and courage. With this resolution, you can’t fail.

Happy New Year, everyone!





**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY**

January Birthdays

- 5 - Gary Brotherson
- 15 - JoAnn Williams
- 19 - Mark Kunz
- 22 - Patty French
- 29 - Bernie Garcia; Dick Hoisington

2nd Sunday Lunch

Plan to stay after worship on Sunday, December 10 following the morning service.

You are invited to bring gifts for the Treasure Chest ministry.

Luncheon is free and gracious donations help to defray the cost.

Table for One



Our December event will be held Wednesday, 1/ @ 5:30p.m. @ Marcia Stiefel's home, 212 Crestview Dr. Burlington, IA 52601

Yum-Yums

Yum Yums will be meeting on January 18, 2024 @ 6:00pm @ Uncle Ronnie's. All are welcome and bring a guest if you wish!



My youngest, Corbin, celebrated turning 6 years old on December 20th, so here is an adorable photo of him with a Mini Highland calf at Danville's Christmas Walk earlier in December!



The Shepherd's Table

First Congregational Church along with First Presbyterian Church have started hosting a free community dinner once a month on the last Wednesday of the month. For January, it will be held on January 31. The event will be held from 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. at the Congregational church.

There are no income guidelines, and everyone is welcome. Members of each congregation are donating desserts.

There will be a sign-up sheet set out for a couple of weeks prior to each month's meal for those that would like to donate or help.



Meeting Highlights

Session Highlights from December 14, 2023 Meeting

Certainly a highlight from the December session meeting was Pastor Dick informing the group that our presbytery needed a **Young Adult Advisory Delegate (YAAD)** to General Assembly in Salt Lake City, Utah, next summer, and that we had a very qualified young person in our congregation, **Allison Nalley**. He had spoken with Allison, and she was willing to serve. Session unanimously approved nominating her to present to presbytery as a delegate. Presbytery will vote on December 20, and is expected to elect her to this important role.

The Trustees recently elected the following **officers of the corporation** as follows: President – Doyle Ruble, Vice President – Marcia Stiefel, Secretary – Leona Byars, and Treasurer - Eva Ann Elmer. Session approved their report.

Session voted to recommend the following church bylaw changes for approval by the congregation at the January 21, 2024 congregational meeting. The first two are needed to function in new ways in this electronic age and to comply with the Book of Order. Proposed bylaws: (1) The Church authorizes Session to use electronic forms of voting, as described in the Book of Order. (2) The Church allows congregational and session meetings to be held electronically, as described in the Book of Order. (3) Delete Bylaw #20 which says “A quorum for Session shall be the pastor or other presiding officer and a majority of the elders.” Reason: Session determines its own quorum.

Committees: **Mission** - The Angel tree provided Christmas gifts for 13 adults and 20 youth. Ten food baskets were filled. For Stead Family Children’s Hospital in Iowa City, 24 books were sent as Christmas gifts for the children, with Target gift cards provided for the adults. The monthly special mission project, benefitting the NICU in Iowa City, yielded a total of \$1,062, which Wendy used to purchase needed items and gift cards. **Tech & Communications** – Wendy is working on the new website, with the goal of having it functional January 1.

For 2024: Communion dates were approved, with it being served traditionally and by intinction on alternating months. The proposed budget for 2024 was reviewed and approved, to be presented at the January congregational meeting. Per Capita next year is \$42.17 per member. With 91 members on our roll, our total is \$3,837.47.

Session will elect a new Clerk of Session in January. It needs to be an ordained Elder, either one currently on session or a non-serving one.

Upcoming: Next Session meeting will be January 11, 2024, at 1:00 P.M. Date of annual congregational meeting is January 21, 2024.

Carol Brotherson, Clerk of Session



Messages from the Deacons

Just a reminder to let us know if there is someone from our congregation that needs something, a meal, a prayer, please let one of your Deacons know and we will do our best to fulfill the need. We are here to serve.

RIDES TO CHURCH:

Deacons are looking for assistance. We have a few people who would like to come to church but have no transportation. If you could help out on occasion, we are putting together a list of willing people to pick up and take home our members on Sundays. This would be only on occasion, as we hope to have enough people offer so no one has to do it very often. Please notify the church office at 319-752-6626 or contact any deacon. Thank You!!

A lovely Christmas Card from Linda Tickel!



Merry Christmas!
Hope to see you
during a visit in
the Spring!
Love,
Linda



From Level 2 of the Stead Family Children's Hospital

Dear Church Family

Thank you so much for the wonderful gifts for the Treasure Chest on Level 2 of the Stead Family Children's Hospital!

The children get so excited when they get to choose a prize!

Blessings to all and Merry Christmas!
Rhonda Rossman and Staff

From Community Action Neighborhood Center

We are so grateful for your kind donation to our Neighborhood Center. Together, we can make a difference in our Community.

We appreciate you all for donating food to our Food Pantry! It has helped us a lot, especially around the Holidays!

Thank You!

With Gratitude,
Your Community Action Neighborhood Center Family
Kim, Shelby, Stacy, Pat, and Tom

From University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics Neonatal Intensive Care Unit(NICU)

Dear First Presbyterian Church,

On behalf of UI Health Care, thank you for thinking of our patients with your generous donation. We appreciate your thoughtfulness!

Your generous donation of sleepers and swaddles will bring comfort to the little ones of the NICUs!

Best Regards,
Sheri Austin
Concierge Services
UI Health Care

From The Family of Charles G. Bell

In Deep Appreciation

Your kind expression of sympathy is gratefully acknowledged and deeply appreciated.

Love,
Sally Bell and Family



24 Hour Hotline:
800-373-1043
www.dvipiowa.org
dvpip@dvipiowa.org



1105 S. Gilbert Court
Suite 300
Iowa City, Iowa 52240
Business Line: 319-356-9863

Safety and Dignity. Always.

December 13, 2023

First Presbyterian Church
321 N 5th St
Burlington, IA 52601-5317

Dear ,

Thank you for supporting DVIP and victim-survivors this holiday season!

Your donation supports our efforts to provide comprehensive services to victim-survivors throughout our eight-county service region. DVIP advocates provide counseling, safety planning, and resources with the ultimate goal of safety and dignity for all.

Because of your generous donations we have been able to provide families with homes, transportation to safer locations, medicine for sick children, safety planning and countless hours of advocacy at the hospital, court house, and in finding the next steps to a safer future.

Every December, for over 21 years, DVIP opens a holiday store for clients to shop for their families at no cost. We are able to provide a space for parents to shop and choose the gifts that best fit their child, along with pajamas, stuffed animals, books, and stocking stuffers. Upon entering the holiday store, one client told staff through tears of joy that, it was a true Christmas miracle to be able to get amazing gifts for her kids this year since she just moved into their first apartment. Because of the generous support of our community we were able to provide this service for 51 individuals and 171 youth and children last year. We anticipate 2023 will bring even more miracles for families.



Thank you for your generous support ! Your donation of \$600 on 11/14/23 is vital to DVIP's mission and has been designated for our Des Moines County.

With gratitude,

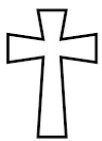
Melissa Russell, Development Coordinator
melissa@dvipiowa.org, 319.333.4099



Sunday School



Come join the fun every Sunday morning starting at 9:00 a.m. downstairs in the church basement and learn all about Jesus!



Adult Education



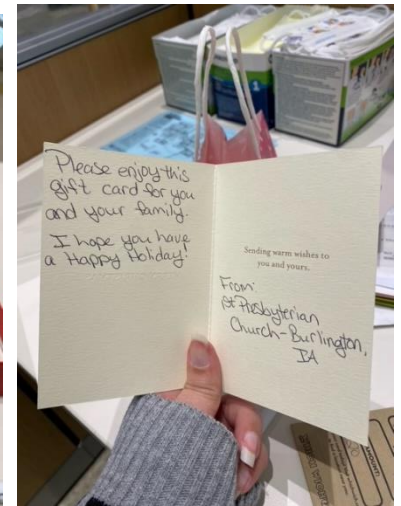
Come and see what this class is all about. Come to the chapel on Sundays at 9:00. You won't be disappointed!

Missions Is Up To Doing Good

Back in November, the Mission Committee raised funds for the University of Iowa Children's Hospital NICU, in honor of World Prematurity Awareness Month. We raised \$531 and Mission Committee matched that for a total of \$1,062! I(Wendy) went up to Iowa City to shop and donated the items! This is what was bought and donated for the NICU and also to NICU Families! (Disclaimer: I would have gotten more or better photos, but alas, my phone died, so I did my best!)



NICU Mission Continued!



Altogether, there was 22 sleepers purchased, 2 of which was preemie sized and the rest newborn or 0-3month, 15 swaddles and 8 muslin swaddle blankets, 20 children's books, 10 of which came from our very own Burlington By the Book, 10 journals for parents, various \$20 gift cards to Olive Garden, Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakhouses, Cheddar's, and Which Wich(Sandwich place similar to Subway), HuHot Mongolian Grill, 2-\$25 gift cards to Jethro's BBQ, and 10 \$10 gift cards to Dunkin Donuts that were passed out to various NICU families to enjoy! Gift Cards were placed into Christmas cards! Thank you everyone for your generosity to this amazing NICU and the families!!

Mission Committee Upcoming Meeting

The Mission Committee plans to have its monthly meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at 12:00 noon. Bring a sack lunch. Jan. 3rd next meeting.



Cozy Tree



The Cozy Tree will be staying up through the 2nd week in January. If you haven't already brought items to keep the kiddos cozy, please do so now. The items will be donated to the Burlington Community School District to be distributed in our schools! Let's fill that tree!

Angel Tree



A BIG Thank You to everyone who helped with making a "Brighter" Christmas for so many individuals and families this year!

We gave gifts to 13 adults, 5 young adults, and 20 children!

Also, 10 families received food baskets!

Their Joy...is the Gift to you!

The Mission Committee,
Leona, Pat S., Pat W., Brenda, Jill, Janet and Terri
Also, Cheryl, Barb G., and Steve W. for all their help as well!

And a shout-out to Terri's brother, Jeff White and his friends, who helped us with these Christmas projects! Such an amazing group!!

Announcements!



The Trustees would like everyone to know that a new railing has been installed on the staircase at the Washington St. entrance!

Women's Bible Study will resume on Wednesday, January 3rd @ 8:30a.m., Men's Bible Study will resume the following week on Wednesday, January 10 @ 7:15a.m.

Sunday School will resume on January 7th at 9:00am.

Annual Congregational Meeting will be held Sunday, January 21 immediately following Worship Service. Reports will be distributed on Sunday, January 14.

Live Streaming our Worship Services

Can't make it to Sunday service? No problem! Every Sunday service is live streamed on Facebook! Please join us! Just go to Facebook on your phone, tablet, or computer and navigate to our Facebook page!

If you have not yet watched a Facebook service, or don't know how, locate Facebook on your phone, tablet or computer, search for First Presbyterian Church of Burlington, Iowa, and then sit back and enjoy. The weekly bulletin is being provided via e-mail so you can follow along and take part as you wish. Comments are appreciated.





January 2024



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Happy New Year 	2	3 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study Mission meets @ noon	4 Session Dockets Due	5	6 Jill Mehaffy-Nalley 4-H meeting 9am-12pm Fellowship Hall
7 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00a.m. Worship Deacon's Meeting following worship	8	9 	10 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study Table for One meets @ 5:30pm @ Sue Gilchrist's home	11 Session Meeting 1pm-3pm	12	13
14 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00a.m. Worship 2nd Sunday Lunch Annual Reports distributed	15	16	17 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study	18 Yum Yums meets @ 6pm @ Uncle Ronnie's All are welcome & bring a guest if you wish!	19	20 
21 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship Annual Congregational Meeting	22 Trustees meet at 10am <u>Deadline for Connections articles by 2 pm</u>	23	24 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study	25	26	27
28 9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship	29	30 Yodel for Your Neighbors Day 	31 The Shepherd's Table 4:30pm-6pm			