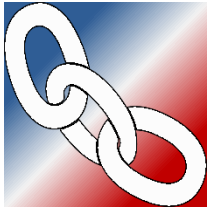


First Presbyterian Church

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

1stpresb@1stpresb.org

www.1stpresb.org



Connections



July 2024



From the Pastor

One of my favorite quotes comes from a Beatles song composed by John Lennon and included in the song, "Beautiful Boy" which was inspired by the birth of his son, Sean. It says, *Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans.* It would be easy to look at Lennon, a pop music icon and consider him remarkably astute with this insight. However, the quote has been around a long time, not always in the same form. In Proverbs 16:9, it says *In his heart a person plans their course, but the Lord determines their steps.* In Thomas a Kempis' devotional book, "The Imitation of Christ," there is a passage that speaks of God' power and says, "The purposes of just men depend for their fulfillment rather upon the grace of God than upon their own wisdom; and, in whatever they take in hand, they always trust in His help. **For man proposes, but God disposes;** for man's way is not in himself."

I have always said when people have humorously asked me to change the weather because they believe I have that power because I work for the One who control the weather, "I am in sales, not management." We often presume our lives are our own to do with as we please. Forget that whenever we pray the Lord's Prayer we ask, "thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." We plan our lives without consulting God and map out each stage and phase without asking, "Lord, what would you wish for me to do?" And then as the quote says, life happens and disrupts or even cancels out our best made plans.

This is addressed in the book of Ecclesiastes 3 where it says, *For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven.* God does not need to ask our permission to interrupt our plans. In fact, there is that deeply insightful bumper sticker that says "Stuff Happens!" One person named Donna said, "You can make all the plans you want for yourself, but life probably has a completely different set of plans. Everyone has been let down at one time or another when their life hasn't quite gone the way they would like. I know my life is far from what I had planned and I'm sure a lot of people have had that happen to them, too. Life molds you as time goes on changing your life as it

sees fit. I had planned a life where I would be self-sufficient and could take care of my family. Instead, I'm on disability and have to depend on my family for help. Life is what happens to you when you're busy making other plans."

Everyone of us have had this happen. I was in a near fatal automobile accident that totally changed the trajectory of my life. It isn't so much that life happens, but what we do in response to life. I'd like to ask Donna, "so how you you doing?" Did she become bitter and resentful because things didn't turn out as she planned? I've always told my kids "you can't put spilled milk back in the bottle. You clean it up and move on." Here is where faith becomes a vital part of what happens next. First, God isn't responsible for all of "life" that happens while we're making plans. My accident was caused by the sinful, reckless behavior of a man who made the decision to drink too much and then drive. Yes, it threw my life upside down and turned it inside out, but look where it all brought me? I will never be convinced God caused that man to become drunk, to drive recklessly and hit us head on so that I would make the decision to become a minister. God works in all situations, moments and tragedies to bring about good IF we will open ourselves up to his counsel. God is always there to help us clean up, reorganize and move on.

Next, none of us have crystal balls that allow us to see and know all. People come into our lives and things happen and as a result it enables us to see the flaws and limits of our own planning. They came into our lives at the right time, for the right reasons and as a result, our plan improved and allowed us to become the better versions of ourselves. God is always with us and has repeatedly promised that he will not allow us to fail.

John Lennon was absolutely right: life does happen while we're making plans, and God is always with us to navigate through life to live the plan God and us create that allows us to live wonderful lives.

Looking Toward New Days

Your Session has made a decision that is intended to provide our ministry new perspective and lead us all to embrace a new identity as a congregation. We may have been founded in the 19th century, but we're living in the 21st century with 21st century needs and challenges. Their decision was to approve a new Mission Statement. As of today, our mission is ...

Engage with the lost ... Establish in Faith ... Equip to serve ... Empower to go

Each of the components of this statement reflect Christ's expectation that we be engaged in locating his children wherever we can in whatever condition they may be in and help them discover a faithful relationship with him and strengthen their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. In all of that, we need to help each other discern God's call to serve and not just encourage people to serve, but equip people with the gifts already endowed by God to step forth in faith to serve God and others. And ultimately, we are to work together to empower one another to go out and do the work of disciples.

This statement is very intentional and proactive. It places upon all of us all the realization that Christ expects us to not wait for the world to come to us, but that we go out into the world in and with the love of Christ for all. This statement is a declaration of confidence and hope. It is putting ministry into gear and looking for moments and opportunities when God guides us to those he knows we can speak the words of love, grace and hope to. Our periscopes are up and we are on the lookout for God moments.

Here Is A God Moment!

Those of you who are Star Trek fans know how each episode opened. Captain James T. Kirk would say: “*Space: the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. Its five-year mission: to explore strange new worlds; to seek out new life and new civilizations; to boldly go where no man has gone before!*” With that we strapped on our laser blasters, tightened up our seat belts, and made ready to see what new galaxies we’d encounter.

I want you to loosen your seat belts and open your hearts to a mission project that will take us boldly where we have never been before. It began to develop last September during a Mission Committee meeting as the group debriefed their recent experience with the Shepherd’s Table. We recalled that when it all began, it was a program designed to provide meals to the homeless. We realized that the audience to whom the Table was reaching was not the homeless community, but people from our churches and the community who, for a host of reasons, welcomed the opportunity to eat a “home cooked” meal. That program is thriving and each month seems to be reaching more and more people. Praise God!

But it left our Mission Committee asking the question, “How do we reach out to and begin to meet the needs of the homeless, particularly the children. We were unaware of the scope of the problem and realized in very short order we were woefully ignorant about homeless children. That led us to contacting Burlington High School and the Social Services Department (my terms, not theirs). What we discovered was that there are an alarmingly huge number of students attending school who are homeless.

The outgrowth of that inquiry and those discussions led to the Mission Committee developing The Hased Project. What follows is the Committee’s description of the project which will be the focus of the worship service on July 7th.

This is a project the Committee hopes everyone in the congregation will enthusiastically choose to support. There’s so much that could and should be said, but there will be time in the future to answer all questions. Join us Sunday July 7th to hear the amazing story of “The Hased Project.”

Mission Outreach:

The *Hased* Project

Definition of Hased: Many biblical words such as *mercy*, *compassion*, *love*, *grace*, and *faithfulness* relate to the Hebrew word *hased*, but none of these completely summarize the concept. *Hased* is not merely an emotion or feeling but involves action on behalf of someone who is in need. Hased describes a

sense of love and loyalty that inspires merciful and compassionate behavior toward another person.

This project is born out of a concern for the high school age students who are classified by the Burlington school district as “homeless.” Specifically, these are full-time students who do not live with their guardians and “couch surf.” [1] In spite of the overwhelming odds these young people must address each day year round, they are not just attending class every day, but are academically performing well with aspirations to extend their educations beyond high school and achieve diplomas and certificates in vocations that will enable them to advance beyond the poverty, homelessness, and insecurity they live in currently.

Apart from some school staff, these young people receive little encouragement and affirmation. They have grown suspicious of adults of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds. They frequently lack self-esteem. In some instances, these young people have been abandoned, rejected, and abused. But in spite of this, they are working to secure for themselves a better life.

This project begins by “adopting” 4 students and providing a caring structure that seeks to underwrite their will to rise above where they are. We will be working with the support and encouragement of the social workers and counseling staff of the Burlington High School, whose responsibility is to (1) protect the well-being and security of their students by protecting their identities and personal situations; (2) selecting those students willing to be in this relationship with this congregation; and (3) provide us the information needed to meet individual and specific needs.

Just as hunger is not seasonal, our support of these students would be year-long. It would supplement the services being provided by the school. *This project is built on the theological belief that every child is a child of God and no one is a mistake or a “throw-away.” It is our belief that each of these children needs to have the same opportunities as more privileged classmates have and to not feel inferior to others.* Their needs are extensive. It is not just needing shampoo, toothpaste, soap, food and basic daily items, it is occasionally having something that allows them to feel pretty, equal to others, to grow their self-respect and personal pride. Such things might be a bottle of perfume, a pair of shoes like “all the other kids have,” a new top or new underwear that doesn’t come from a discount bin. The circumstances these children live in didn’t just happen. They have fought against being beaten down and even told they have little or no worth. Their needs can’t be met in one grand gesture, but in a steady, intentional, conscientious effort by those concerned for and about them. Most times their basic daily needs can be met going to stores like Walmart and Target, but there are those times when it will be a thrill to go into a store like Kohls and purchase something “more” and feel special. When one of these students graduates from Burlington High School and has aspirations to attend

college or a vocational school, our goal would be to provide scholarship assistance to enable their dreams and ambitions.

It may come to pass that these students will choose to become known to us and even meet us. If that is the leading of the Holy Spirit, we will open our doors, arms and hearts to these young women. These young people are living in an emotional, physical and spiritual deficit. If it is God's will, we may be offered the opportunity to share the life affirming, transforming word of Jesus Christ. Minimally, we will pray fervently for these young people and implore God to heal and make whole their lives, their hearts and their souls.

Financial Implications: \$1,000/year/student

[1]Lori Bray, Licensed Mental Health Coordinator, Burlington Community High School

Our Mission ...



Engage with the lost



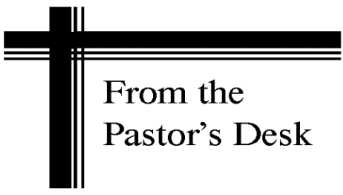
Establish in faith



Equip to serve



Empower to go



From the
Pastor's Desk

July Sermon

When I begin a new confirmation class, even though I know the students, I ask them to introduce themselves. With that they tell me their name, age, where they live, the school they attend, etc. When they're done, I generally have to remind them they were not altogether correct. I have to remind them that first and foremost, before all those other descriptors, they are children of God. Who We Are is absolutely essential to knowing what we are to do. Scripture tells us in Ephesians 2:10 **"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."** The prophet Jeremiah in 29:11 said, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." John wrote in Revelation 21:3, "And I heard a loud voice saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

We, First Presbyterian Church, Burlington, Iowa are one of God's crown jewels. Since the very first days of our existence, we have had a special place in God's purposes. Just like Jeremiah said, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope." This month's sermons are going to speak to "Who We Are" through what we do, why do do it and with that foundation embrace an identity and attitude. When we are finished, I hope you will be able when asked tell people Who We Are.

July 7 Focus: The Hessed Project Lord's Supper
Texts: Isaiah 58:6-8
 James 2:14-17
Title: "The Hessed Project"

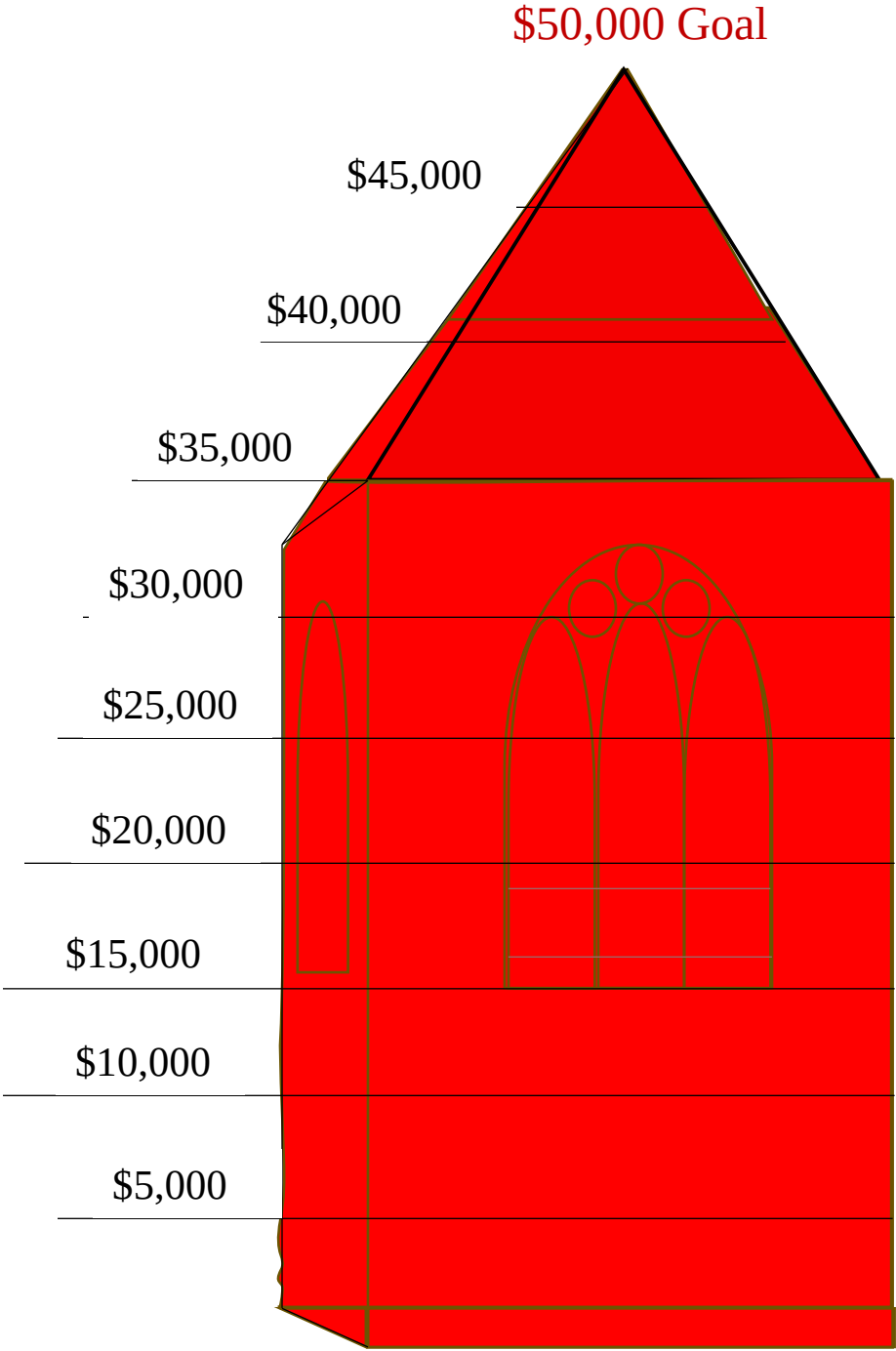
July 14 Focus: New Mission Statement
Texts: Isaiah 52:7-10
 Luke 4:16-21
Title: "What It's All About"

July 21 The Rev'd Randy Webster, preaching
Texts: Jeremiah 18: 1-10
 Ephesians 4:1-16
Title: "Supporting our common life together"

July 28 Focus: Our Identity & Attitude
Texts: I Corinthians 3:9-23
 I Peter 2:4-10
Title: "Be All You Can & Ought to Be"

We have reached our goal for the Tower Repairs!

Thank you everyone for your generosity and getting us to our goal!

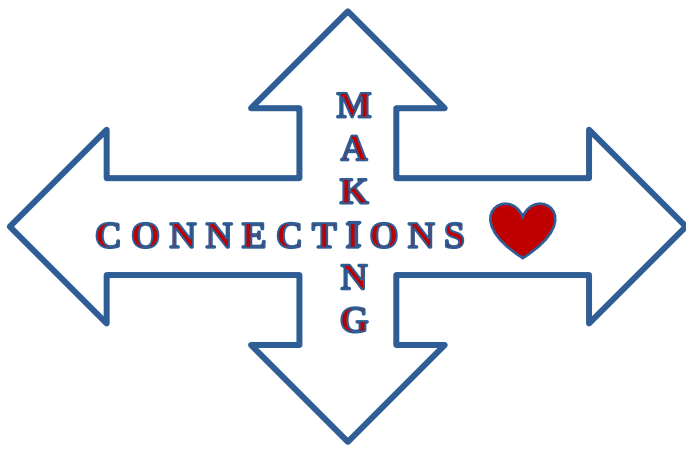


Church Security

A few months ago, someone stole the copper tubing off the 3 air conditioner units in the back of the church. It cost the church \$3,100 to repair the damage. A camera was installed on June 25. The camera is monitored 24 hours a day. If you cross the white chain, the police will be called. If you need to access this area, call Doyle Ruble @ 763-412-2364 or Randy Webster @ 570-766-2181 or Marcia Stiefel @ 319-750-8920, so the camera can be turned off. Later this month, motion detectors and keypads will be installed inside the church. Training will be given to the key holders as how to access the security system.

Thank you - The Trustees





July Birthdays

- 01 - Barb Blom
- 03 - Mary Daedlow
- 07 - Linda Tickel
- 09 - Jeff Huddleston
- 11 - Eileene Buxton
- 13 - Vernave Garcia
- 14 - Janet Calvin
- 19 - Andy Opiekun
- 20 - Daniel Kinney
- 21 - Terri Huddleston
- 22 - Whitney Kinney
- 22 - Marcia Stiefel
- 28 - Curtis Blom
- 31 - Ruth Francis
- 31 - Nathan Mehaffy

2nd Sunday Lunch

“A Star-Spangled Spectacular”

Sunday, July 14 following morning service;
A picnic lunch celebrating Independence Day!

Hot dogs will be provided and you are invited to bring picnic side dishes and desserts! Plan to join us!

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



Table for One

Our July event will be held
Wednesday, 7/3 @ 5:30p.m.
@ Marcia Stiefel's home;
212 Crestview Dr.
Burlington, IA 52601

Yum-Yums

News from Yum Yums. A group of 20 church members and friends enjoyed dinner and fellowship at the Turnwater Bar & Grill in Ft. Madison in June. Those attending chose to go to The Filling Station in Yarmouth, IA in July. Come and join us next month and bring a guest if you wish. We will meet on July 18, 2024 @ 6:00pm @ The Filling Station. If you would like to carpool, meet @ 5:30pm in the parking lot of Fareway Grocery. If you have any questions, call or text Sandy Russell @ 319-572-6124.



Messages from the Deacons

Greeting Cards Update!

Want to send a card to someone in the congregation that you are thinking about? Birthday, get well, thinking of you, and more are there for you to choose. The cards will now be at the table in the sanctuary with the rest of the sign-up sheets. A church directory is nearby so you can look up the address of a fellow church member. Leave the addressed envelope on Wendy's desk in the office. She will add a stamp and put it in the mail.





A Thank you from JoAnn Williams

Thank you to all the members of First Presbyterian Church I have enjoyed many years feeling welcome and involved as a member of this church. Although I am moving away, all of you will often be in my thoughts and prayers, and I will certainly come back to visit my church family occasionally.

JoAnn Williams

A Thank you 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 want to extend our sincerest gratitude for your generous food donation to our Food Pantry! This will have an impact on helping individuals and families in our community. Thank you!

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

KNITWITS

Want to be warm, able to relax, enjoy conversation with others and not feel guilty about it? We have the perfect answer for you: join the prayer shawl ministry group. Stop by the Church Parlor for an hour between 10:00 and 11:00 on **Wednesday, July 3rd**.

Whether you know how or would like to learn to knit or crochet, we will have willing and patient teachers on hand to help. Needles and yarn and some patterns will be provided, or you can bring your own.

Hope to see you there.

Questions?

Contact Pat Whitmore 319-850-6803



Missions Is Up To Doing Good

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. July 3rd next meeting.



We are always looking for plastic grocery bags

For the farmer's market food giveaways.



Thank you!



Also, just a reminders that we have ongoing collections for the Treasure Chest, Homeless Shelter, Transitions DMC and Community Action all year.



Thank you for your generosity!



The Mission Committee

A Big Thank You to Curtis & Barb Blom & Brenda Frederick for their help with the June Food Giveaway!



Also, a Big Shout Out to Janet Calvin for helping with many Missions from behind the scenes!



Announcements!



Second Sunday Lunch-“A Star-Spangled Spectacular” will be on Sunday, July 14, following morning service. A picnic lunch to celebrate Independence Day! Hot dogs will be provided and you are invited to bring picnic side dishes and desserts. Plan to join us!

Greater Burlington Partnership Night at the Burlington Bees on Thursday, July 11. There is a sign up sheet up in the sanctuary for anyone that is interested in purchasing tickets for that night. If there is 10 or more signed up, the pre-ordered tickets will be \$4/person. Otherwise, tickets are \$9 for Adults, \$7 for Seniors Age 60+ and Youth Ages 6-17yrs. Please bring your money for your tickets to Wendy. We must have a total number of people going and money due by Sunday, July 7. Cut off date for us to pre-order is Monday, July 8th.

Wendy will be out of the office on Monday, July 22 and Wednesday, July 24 due to Des Moines County Fair week.

Just a little reminder, if you borrow something from the office (i.e. scissors, stapler, tape, 3 hole punch, etc...), please return that item where you got it in the office. I need to be able to use those items when I need them, or I cannot perform my job correctly. Thank you! ~Wendy~

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.





July 2024



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Office Hours: M-W-F 1:30pm-4:30pm T-Th 9:00am-1:00pm	1	2	3 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study Missions meets at Noon Knitwits meets @ 10:00 am Table for One meets @ 5:30pm @ Marcia Stiefel's home	4  HAPPY 4TH OF JULY! OUR OFFICE IS CLOSED TODAY IN OBSERVANCE OF THE HOLIDAY.	5	6
7 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00a.m. Worship	8  NATIONAL FREEZER POP DAY	9	10 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study	11 Session Meets 1pm-3pm Burlington Bees game Gates open @ 5:30pm Game starts @6:30pm	12	13
14 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00a.m.Worship 2nd Sunday Luncheon	15	16	17 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study	18 Yum Yums @ 6pm @ The Filling Station in Yarmouth, IA Farmer's Market @ the Church 4:30pm-6pm	19 Deadline For Connections	20  NATIONAL MOON DAY.
21 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship Deacon's Meet	22 Trustees Meet @ 10 a.m. Wendy out of office	23	24 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study Wendy out of office	25  HAPPY NATIONAL HOT FUDGE SUNDAE DAY	26	27
28 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship	29  INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY	30	31 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study Shepherd's Table 4:30pm-6pm			