

# First Presbyterian Church

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## Connections



September 2024



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### Pastor's Thoughts

Flexibility ... we can talk about the ease of bending without breaking ... a physical thing, or, we can talk about attitude or behavior: “The ability to be easily modified” or “the willingness to change or compromise.” As I have gotten older the physical dimension of flexibility is increasingly more challenging. My friend Arthur-itis visits regularly and makes bending tremendously difficult. There’s nothing I can do about ol’ Arthur.

But I am finding the older I have become, the more willing I am to modify my thinking; I seem to be more open to change and compromise. I can’t be “cool” anymore, and the more I try to be cool, the more I embarrass myself. So for me, the cool thing is to be flexible in my thinking, to be open to new thoughts and new ways.

Our culture is changing at warp speed. I would be embarrassed to tell you what version my computer’s operating system is. The changes that come there happen faster than I can change my socks. My cell phone has more functions and capabilities than I will ever use. I don’t know how to load “apps” and I can’t “scan.” I really resist using self-serve check out unless push comes to shove, and I am struggling with ordering fast food and have to use a kiosk. I prefer face-to-face, person-to-person contact. You see, I am the definition of “uncool.”

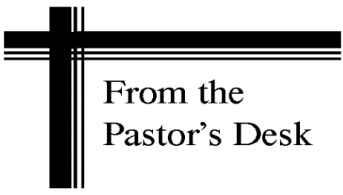
That said, where flexibility counts is in our ability to listen and hear what people are saying and slow to judge and dismiss out of hand. We are inflexible when we set our jaw, tightly cross our arms and take the attitude “I’ve made up my mind; don’t confuse me with facts.” My faith is non-negotiable, but I am willing to hear what others have to say and what they believe, and to ask, “how did you come to that conclusion?”

If we want to be inviting and appealing, it is going to require flexibility. If we want more people to join us on Sundays, we’re going to have to be more flexible and open ... and accepting. It’s okay to not agree; it’s okay to be different. What is not okay is to dismiss people, their ideas and beliefs because they don’t

line up with ours. It's easy to read this and think, "hey, that's not me. I'm one of the cool kids." In our heads that may be the case, but when presented with those who are different in so many ways, we often have a default attitude that kicks in.

Being flexible is cool. Being flexible and accepting of others is cool. It doesn't mean always agreeing, but it does mean possessing a willingness to listen, even change and compromise. That according to the language of Gen Zers is BRAT and that is cool.





From the  
Pastor's Desk

## September Sermon

In the course of traveling to and fro upon the earth, have you found yourself asking the question, “what has happened to humanity?” I have, numerous times. There’s the abruptness and rudeness; the decline in kindness and patience. A professor who instructs teachers and school administrators, recently wrote, “There seems to be some absenteeism of kindness these days. More than kindness, our society may have lost sight of what it means to be good humans.”

When we experience these unfortunate behaviors, it might be the character of individuals that is truly lacking. Character includes the virtues, moral or ethical qualities and traits individuals use to respond appropriately in different situations. Character is critically important to how we function and collaborate in a common society. So for the month of September we’re going to be seeking to provide insight into what is good character and why does it matter?

September 1 Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

Text: Isaiah 32:1-8

Matthew 5:14-16

Title: “The Character of a Nation”

September 8

Text: Matthew 23:1-25

Micah 6:1-8

Title: “How To Be a Bad Christian”

September 15

Text: Matthew 23:25-28

Ezekiel 8:7-13

Title: “Who are You When No One is Looking?”

September 22

Text: Genesis 12:1-12

Colossians 3:1-14

Title: “Christians in Costumes”

September 29

Text: II Peter 1:3-11

Colossians 2:6-10

Title: “Mirror, Mirror On the Wall”

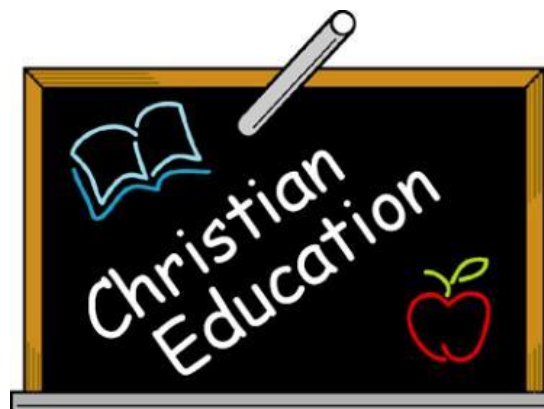
# The Christian Education Dilemma

Ordinarily, on the second Sunday of September after school has gotten underway and the Labor Day holiday is in our rear view mirror, we launch a new season of Sunday School. This year we won't. Life demands for our Christian Educator, Millie Comiskey, will require her to be gone during the Fall quarter, which will cancel Youth Sunday School. We'll evaluate the situation in December to determine next steps.

Sunday School as it has been known for generations, has become in this modern world a relic. Because of a significant number of youth events being held on Saturdays AND Sundays, kids aren't available on the weekends. Sadly, in the calculus of what's important in a family's life, church/Sunday school are equal in value to any number of activities the entire family can undertake. For that reason, many churches have abandoned Sunday School for youth classes and events on Wednesday afternoons and evenings. But here again, this is fraught with the challenges of transportation and school events as well as other clubs and organizations.

Into this mix is the awkward realization that we don't have a large population of school age children eligible to attend Christian Education classes regardless of when they are held. It would be easy to read this and simply resign ourselves that nothing can be done, but we here at First Presbyterian we are not going there or doing that. This requires a serious conversation among church leaders and church members. All of this comes when we have begun thinking more seriously about who we are and what we will be. There are no easy answers and pining for the past doesn't do any good. This is not a time to just "throw ideas against the wall and see what sticks." That is not responsible planning.

So, we're going to engage in some serious heart-to-soul conversations. There's no quick fix and it is all multidimensional. This will require some unconventional and out-of-the-box thinking, but we're all capable of doing it and doing it well.





## September Birthdays

- 01 - Bob Bowen
- 01 - Ava Kinney
- 02 - Debbie Opiekun
- 03 - Jim French
- 06 - Marilyn Leight
- 17 - Penny Rucker
- 21 - Alexis Comiskey
- 22 - Ed Whitmore
- 27 - Melanie Young

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Lunch

Rally Day: It's time to get back to church!

Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, following morning service!

**Please Join Us!**

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

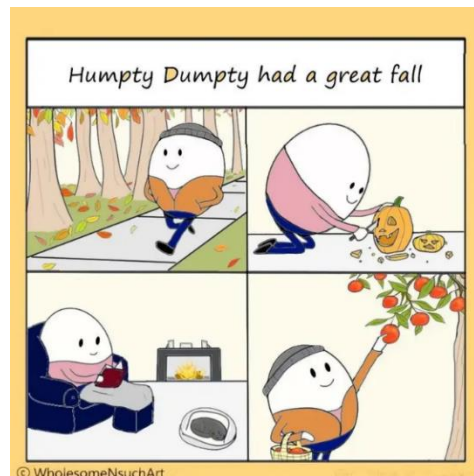


## Table for One

Our August event will be held Wednesday, 9/4 @ 5:30p.m. @ Eva Ann Elmer's home @ 1431 Cambridge Dr. #301 Burlington, IA 52601

## Yum-Yums

News from Yum Yums. A group of 10 church members and friends had dinner & fellowship at The Grange in Mt. Pleasant, IA. Come join us next month! Attending chose to go to The Fort Colony in Ft. Madison, IA. We will meet on September 19, 2024 @ 6:00pm @ The Fort Colony. 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.





# Meeting Highlights

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## August Session meeting highlights

On Saturday, November 23 we will be hosting the 214th Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of East Iowa here in our church. The meeting will be held from 10 AM to 2 PM. There are 61 churches in our Presbytery, so we might possibly be hosting 75 people. We will be providing lunch after the meeting, so we will need plenty of volunteers to help make this meeting a success. More details will be provided closer to that time.

The Rev. Randy Webster is planning some exciting events the next couple of months to raise funds for the Polish the Jewel campaign. Stay tuned!

Per Mar Security is wrapping up the installation of security measures in our church and will be finished soon.

Work is still being done on our website, two people from Drake Hardware and Software have finished cleaning up things on our end, and we are just waiting for the provider to finish things on their end.

The next Session meeting will be **Thursday, September 12 at 1 PM.**

Cheryl Lotz, Clerk of Session



# Messages from the Deacons

Just a reminder of the card box on the table in the sanctuary. It is there for your convenience, to send a letter to anyone you are thinking and praying for. Pick out a card, make your message, address it and put it in the office after church. Wendy will put a stamp on it and be sure it gets mailed. Stamps have been provided by an anonymous giver. There is a directory in the box also for addresses of our members.

We are looking for addresses of college students. If your child is in college please contact a Deacon with their address.

Deacons are praying for all of you individually. We draw names each month and pray for that person throughout the month. Hope you can feel the love being sent.





### A Thank you from Janet Calvin

My sincere thanks to each one of you for all the prayers, cards, gifts, texts.

Your prayers have been felt every day. Thank you. I am to be released from kleins to go home with help. My son and wife will be here to take me home on Saturday, and stay several days.

Thank you all so much  
Many Blessings to you and your families.

Janet.

### A Thank you from Allison Nalley!

Dear congregation, thank you for all of the gifts and kind words of encouragement on my graduation from high-school and college! The reception you all planned for me in the fellowship hall was amazing! I wish the cake we had at the reception was my graduation party cake. It was so good!! Everyone has been by my side since day one (literally) and I could not think of a more loving church family. From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much.

Allison Nalley

### A Thank you from Marcia Bailey

I would like to thank congregational friends for all the cards and prayers (and visits) last week during my surgery and hospital stay. I hope to be back soon.

Marcia Bailey





# 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. September 4th next meeting.



### Farmer's Market at the Church



If you would like to volunteer to help with the food giveaways on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month, please let a Mission committee member know. We would love to have you help with this great mission in our community!

Thank you!  
Mission Committee



# Lou Harter's 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration!

On Sunday, August 18, Lou Harter came to visit and we celebrated her 95<sup>th</sup> Birthday!! Below is a few photos taken of the occasion! Hope you had a wonderful 95<sup>th</sup> birthday, Lou!





## Hymn Festival!

Sunday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm

*"How Awesome Is This Place"*

In thanksgiving for the restoration of the exterior of the Church!





# Announcements!



The office will be closed in observance of Labor Day on Monday, September 2. Regular Office hours will resume on Tuesday, September 3.

There will be no Sunday School this fall. Please refer to the article on page 3 for more information.

The office will be closed on Tuesday, September 10 & Wednesday, September 18, due to Wendy being out of office.

Farmer's Market at the Church is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month from 4:30pm-6pm! This month will be on September 19<sup>th</sup>. If you know of someone in need of food, please send them!

Shepherd's Table is the last Wednesday of the month from 4:30pm-6pm at the First Congregational Church and is a free meal that is open to the public. This month will be on September 25<sup>th</sup>. There is a sign up sheet on the table in the Sanctuary if you would like to help.

Randy is looking for some things for a fund-raising event, later in the autumn. If you have any quart Mason jars (with rings) that you can donate, or a source of inexpensive apples, could you please let him know? He is not collecting them as of yet. Thank you.

## 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.







# September 2024



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b> 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00a.m. Worship	<b>2</b> 	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study <b>Missions meets at Noon</b> <b>Knitwits meets @ 10:00 am</b> <b>Table for One meets @ Eva Ann Elmer's home 5:30pm @ 1431 Cambridge Dr. #301 Burlington, IA</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8 Rally Day!</b> 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00a.m. Worship <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Luncheon</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Office Closed Wendy Out of Office	<b>11</b> 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study	<b>12</b> <b>Session Meets @ 1pm</b>	<b>13</b> 	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00a.m. Worship <b>Deacon's Meet</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 	<b>18</b> No Bible Study Office Closed Wendy Out of Office	<b>19 Yum Yums @ The Fort Colony in Ft. Madison @ 6pm. Carpool @ 5:30pm @ Fareway Grocery</b>  <b>Farmer's Market @ the Church 4:30pm-6pm</b>	<b>20</b> <b>Deadline For Connections</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship	<b>23</b> <b>Trustees Meet @ 10 a.m.</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 7:15 a.m. Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m. Women's Bible Study  <b>Shepherd's Table 4:30pm-6pm</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Happy National Bunny Day! 
<b>29</b> 9:00 a.m. Adult Ed. 10:00 a.m. Worship	<b>30</b> 	<b>31</b>				<b>Office Hours</b> <b>M-W-F 1:30 pm-4:30pm</b> <b>T-Th 9:00am-1:00pm</b>