

Pastor: Rev. Trey Hegar
Organist/Bell Choir Director: Marj Thimmesch
Choir Director: Marlene DePriest
Congregational Ministries Director: Sarah Hegar
AV Technician & Web Coordinator: Leo Clark
Administrative Assistant: Esther Wonderlich
Custodians: Rusty & Karen King

The mission of the First Presbyterian Church, Mt. Pleasant is to encourage and nurture diverse expressions of the love of Christ in our congregation and community, and to embrace Christ centered ministries around the world.

Financial Secretary: Jane Creager
Treasurer: Marvin Bricker
Bookkeeper: Deb Sinclair

Reminder:
Sunday, January 27
Annual Meeting
Following our Service

Annual Report Booklets
will be available
on January 20.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
902 SOUTH WALNUT
MOUNT PLEASANT IA 52641

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ALERT

First Presbyterian Church

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Spiritual Jijitzu

I love our family dog, Maggie. We trained her early as a pup. She learned to walk well on a leash, do a few tricks, and load up in her kennel for bed each night. We didn't force her to learn these things. We rewarded her for doing things she already loved.

You can't drag the puppy on a leash behind you to teach it walk. Also, you can't toss the puppy in the kennel and say, "load up" and expect the puppy to go into the kennel the next time you said 'load up.'

No! Lasting results don't work like that. This is how to train a puppy to load up in a kennel. Use puppy's interests and desires to get it to go where it needs to be. Puppies love treats. They also love cozy enclosed dens. So space out some treats on the floor. Lay one near the kennel. Lay another closer to the kennel. Then put one in the kennel. Let the puppy's appetite guide itself. Then reward the puppy for doing something it likes to do, eat treats and be in a cozy den. Soon you find the puppy enjoys going right into the kennel, too.

We can take a cue for our New Year's resolutions from this lesson. Whether you are trying to change your lifestyle, create a new environment in the workplace, or lead a congregation like me; one of the best ways to change behavior is to use small incremental steps.

Many things are hard to do in life. Changing behaviors and starting a new lifestyle are two of the hardest. Often we attempt to go against the grain to start new things or force a change of direction.

We especially do this with New Year's Resolutions. We hope to better ourselves. We promise we will start over new. We toss ourselves in a proverbial kennel one time without conditioning and expect to do it again daily on command. Before January ends, we realize we don't have the energy to keep up the initial force or the stamina to maintain a new direction. The old grooves and comfy ruts lull us back into mediocrity. By February our ambitions are held at bay. The defeat lacks luster. It just is. That's the way things go. Right?

Isn't it near impossible to start from scratch or reverse course in reality? No, not at all. Change is possible. But most lasting change doesn't go against the grain. It isn't forced. It happens with natural momentum and incremental steps. Then we can defeat old habits without beating ourselves up too much.

My college roommate was a boxer. He loved to get his opponents on the ropes. He was often successful even when the opponents didn't want to have their backs to the ropes. How did he do that? Did he force them? Shove them? No, he barely used any energy at all. He let them do it. As they stepped into him, he stepped back with small pivots. He would counter with the opposite hand to make them continue in a semi-circle. Before the opponent knew it, they had their back to the ropes. They had also expended a ton of energy to get somewhere they didn't want to be, while my roommate conserved his strength for a barrage of blows. He would do this incrementally round after round until it was like clock work. It took remarkable discipline, foot work and psychology. He let the other boxer help him win. They wanted to hit him. So, he let them try over and over until he had them conditioned to be where he wanted them to be. Genius!

Stewardship Session Notes - December 10, 2018

So, what if for your New Year's resolutions you kept moving forward with incremental changes instead of trying to force a change. I call it Spiritual Jijitzu. Here is Jijitzu defined: "*verb (used with object) to turn (a situation) to one's advantage by exploiting one's own weaknesses and strengths.*" We expect immediate changes of ourselves and others. We beat ourselves up for not keeping up with a new lifestyle or best practices. We slander others for not going from a zero to hero overnight. In truth that rarely works.

Sure, all change takes a first step. But lasting change creates a new pattern in a new direction away from the old ruts. It takes time to get into those new grooves. So what if this New Year, you and I built on the positive momentum and natural inclinations to be even better than the year before? Let's make it so. Here's to a New Year of becoming better using our Spiritual Jijitzu in the name of Christ.

Rev. Trey Hegar

Session Highlights

by *Ed Kropa*, Clerk

The 2019 per capita was shared as follows: GA \$8.95, Synod \$5.40; Presbytery \$23.65 = \$38.00

The following motions were passed:

- 2019 Communion Dates: 1st Sunday of each month, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Easter, and Christmas Eve.
- 2019 Special Offerings: One Great Hour, Peacemaking, and Joy Offerings.
- Regular Session Meetings on the second Monday each month except for July.

The newly elected Elders **Brian Sinclair, Kevin Hoenig & Barb Miller** were welcomed to the meeting. They were previously trained on December 9, 2018. Appreciation was extended to the outgoing Elders **Janet Cermak, Lynn Ellsworth, Carl Frank and Bonnie Kremer.**

TREASURER'S REPORT:

1. Pledges for November were under budget by (\$2,447.39). Other incomes included: Loose Plate of \$118.35, Rental Income of \$934.95, Designated Contributions of \$100.00, Per Capita of \$40.00 and Online Giving fees of (\$10.23). These brought the November total revenue to \$18,163.57.
2. Expenses for November were over budget by (\$995.64) and under budget (\$44,018.84) for the year.
3. Net income after eleven months is a negative (\$37,871.19).

BALANCE SHEET:

1. Checking account balance for October was \$23,105.71 and for November is \$11,941.90.
2. The BDB YTD checking account balance was \$21,267.58 last month and is currently \$11,267.58.
3. Memorial account balance was \$11,811.36 last month and is currently \$11,986.87.
4. Building accrual account was \$18,903.14 last month and is currently \$20,903.14

INCOME STATEMENT:

- a. **Income:** General Pledges was under budget by (\$5,367.40) for the year. We are currently slightly behind in budgeted pledges. Our net income for the month was a negative \$9,480.34. Our pledge rate was down in November by negative \$2,447.39 from the budget.
- b. **Expenses:** For the year, we are doing well on expenses as we are (\$44,018.84) under budget. In November our expenses were over budget by \$995.64.
- c. **Net Income:** We currently have a negative net total income of (\$37,871.19) year-to-date vs a budget of negative (\$7,424.85). Keep in mind, we had a proposed budgetary endowment transfer of \$52,107.39, which has not been utilized.

OTHER:

- A. 2018 Pledges-to-date is approximately **\$208,339.40** of the budgeted goal of \$233,134.69. {2017 Pledges total was \$233,748.00.}

Special thanks to **Jane Creager, Deb Sinclair, Marvin Bricker** and our **Financial Clerks** for all of their work.

Carl Frank & Kevin Knox, Stewardship Co-chairs



IowaWINS' April Events

Many thanks to **Pastor Trey, Sarah and all of our church family**, who have supported the efforts of IowaWINS to assist the immigrant families affected by the ICE raid last May. We are very grateful for the many donations and volunteers from our church and the Mt. Pleasant community that make support for shelter, food and basic household needs possible. We were just notified this month that we have been awarded a grant from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for \$24,000. We have been supported by many churches and organizations from across Iowa and the nation. Christmas gift baskets have been prepared by an Iowa City church and are being combined with other gifts from around the state to be given to the immigrant families this month.

The immigrant families are looking forward to a chance to give back by sharing a La Posada celebration on December 23 from 4 to 6 PM at our church. We will gather in the Gathering Space and follow Mary and Joseph to the fellowship hall. This tradition follows the path of Mary and Joseph, as they seek shelter and are frequently turned away but at last are welcomed, sheltered and fed. Please join us in this beautiful tradition. The immigrant families will be bringing samples of Central American foods and you are also welcome to bring samples of North American or European foods.

Tammy Shull

Iowa WINS (Iowa Welcomes Immigrant Neighbors)
A Commission of the First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Pleasant
<https://www.facebook.com/IowaWINS/>
<http://www.firstpresbyonline.org/iowawins.html>

Tammy Shull, Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Commission Chair
<http://www.firstpresbyonline.org/refugeeimmigrant-assistance-commission.html>

Treasurers: Please turn in your financial reports for our Annual Reports as soon as possible. Please bring your bank statements and checkbooks to our church office for audit.

Annual Report Booklets will be available on Sunday, January 20. Please read them and bring them back with you the following week.

Annual Meeting of our Congregation

Sunday, January 27, 2018 following our Worship

We will receive the Annual Reports from all Committees, Membership update, and all Business of the Corporation. Our Press On Youth will prepare and serve a lunch following our meeting.

The **2019 offering envelope boxes** are on the table in the Gathering Space. If you would like a box of envelopes, please contact the office.

I will be meeting with all Financial Clerks on Sunday, January 6 at 8:45 AM in Peter's room. Please bring your calendars and ideas on what months you would like to sign up for. Thank you all for your dedication and hard work.

Jane Creager, Financial Secretary

2019 Per Capita: \$ 38.00 per communicant member
(General Assembly \$ 8.95 Synod \$ 5.40 Presbytery \$ 23.65)
A special envelope is included in this ALERT. Please note **Per Capita** on your check to First Presbyterian Church.

Our church can accept donations online. Simply go to firstpresbyonline.org and click the **GIVE NOW** button or scan the QR code with your phone. Please identify the donation in the note section.



Good and Beautiful Life Book Study

We will resume our discussion with chapter 7 on Sunday, January 13 at 6:00 PM. In the meantime, the soul training activity is Praying for the Success of Competitors. I very much look forward to these discussions again. If you have not read the first half of the book, but would like to join us you are more than welcome. Book Study continues on Sundays, January 20, 27, February 3, 17 & 24 from 6–7 PM. (Skipping February 10 due to the Symphony concert)

Sarah Hegar

Book Group

Thursday, January 10 at 7:00 PM *Varina* by Charles Frazier
at **Kay Young's** (305 West Monroe)

February (TBD what Thursday as Feb. 14 is Valentine's Day)

The Boys in the Bunkhouse by Dan Barry

at **Kay Young's** (305 West Monroe)

March 14 *The Girl With Seven Names*

by David John and Lee Hyeon-seo place TBD

Presbyterian Women

Thursday, January 3, 2018 at 1:30 PM

Gathering Space

Planning the New Year – Bring Ideas!

Hostess: **Susan Farnsworth**

I would like to thank the Presbyterian Women for the Christmas check. I enjoy helping your group. Please let me know what I can do to help. Esther Wonderlich

Presbyterian All-Church Game Night!

Saturday, January 12 from 4:00-6:00 PM

COME AND PLAY!

This will be an afternoon of fun games meant for us to get to know each other better. No game experience needed. No one is too old or too young to participate. Let's escape the dead of winter by warming ourselves with fun and fellowship.

REVOLUTION

Wednesday Church School Kids (Kindergarten-5th Grade)

Revolution Concludes a Successful Fall Semester!

We've had so much fun with the children in the Revolution program this fall! They are wonderful kids and it's so much fun watching them grow and teaching them in their faith. We average 22 kids each week.

A thank you to each of our teachers **Bonnie Kremer, Martha Wiley, Sara Kremer, and Robyn Willham**. A very special thank you to **Bonnie Kremer, Martha Wiley, Kathy Schimmelpfennig, and Callie DePriest** for helping and planning the Christmas program.

I also want to thank all who served as a Rover or Kitchen Rover during the month of December: **Kathy Wiley, Stephanie Chalupa, Janet Cermak, Susan Ryon, Val Willham, Martha Wiley, Erica Redgate, and Tara Beauchamp**.

Special thanks to the **Lowe Family** for allowing Revolution and Press On to watch a movie at the movie theatre on December 19. The kids sure enjoyed this fun outing!

The New Year will be here before we know it! Revolution takes a break for Christmas and will resume on Wednesday, January 9. A new clipboard is in the Gathering Space for January Rovers and Kitchen Rovers. If you would like to volunteer with this wonderful program - please sign up on the clipboard or see me. *Sarah Hegar*

SOUPER Bowl Sunday - February 3

You are invited to bring a non-perishable donation to church on Super Bowl Sunday. Two bins will be marked with each team playing in the big game - or you can cast your vote for the puppy bowl. Let's see which bin fills up first!

Donations will go to the Fellowship Cup and other area pantries in need.

Greeters Job Description

The Worship Committee invites you to sign up to be greeters on the clipboard in the Gathering Space. Hospitality is so important to newcomers and congregation members alike.

If you sign up to greet, please arrive about 9:20 AM, pick up a name tag on the shelf at the back of the sanctuary near the sound booth, and then put on your smile! Please inform people that they can pick up a bulletin on the tables at the back of the sanctuary.

Also, please stay at the back of the sanctuary for about ten minutes into the service so that you may greet any latecomers and help them find seating.

We appreciate your help in providing this welcome each Sunday. *Lynn Ellsworth*, Worship Committee Chair

Worship

Sunday Morning Building Assistant: **Bryce Creager**

Nursery: **Courtney Bowman & Angel King**

Financial Clerk: **Mark Kauffman**

Liturgists: Jan. 6 **Carl Frank** Jan. 13 **Robyn Willham**
Jan. 20 **Steve Readinger** Jan. 27: **Lois Roth**

January 20 - **Sound Appeal** plays in church

Sun., Jan. 5 Communion Preparer: **Pat Richenberger**
Servers: **Jean Carpenter, Rev. Trey Hegar,**
Tim & Sally Olson,
Pat Richenberger, Wendell Thimmesch

SPECIAL THANKS to all who helped with the "Hanging of the Greens."
Please join us following worship on **Sunday, January 6**, when we will be "taking down the greens" in the sanctuary.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR RETIRING ELDERS: **Janet Cermak** (Personnel Chair), **Lynn Ellsworth** (Worship Chair), **Carl Frank** (Stewardship Co-chair) and **Bonnie Kremer** (Christian Education Co-chair).

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR RETIRING DEACONS: **John Arp, Adam Creager, Mary Liechty**

WELCOME OUR NEWLY ELECTED ELDERS: **Kevin Hoenig, Barb Miller, Brian Sinclair**

WELCOME OUR NEWLY ELECTED DEACONS:
Jean Carpenter, Mary Murphy

Congratulations to **Erin, Jonathan and Gavin Stensvaag**, who welcomed their newest family member, **Ethan Russell Stensvaag**, on November 26.

Congratulations to **Al & Sandy Memler** on their 59th Wedding Anniversary on November 29!

Prayer Concerns: **Linda Albright, Wade Benge, Randy Cermak, Shirley Steele, Janet Wolin; Pastor Melisa Bracht-Wagner; Diane Brooks' mother (Jan Largent); Lois Roth's brother (Mark Veldhizen); Monroe James-spinal surgery (10 year old daughter of Matt & Erin James); Shelby Kite (heart); Rev. Jerry Kelly's friend (Linda Ginsberg); All of our shut-ins and those in care centers; All those affected by the ICE Raid in Mt. Pleasant; Iowa Wesleyan College**

Our Christian Sympathies to **Bob & Sandy Breazeale Family** on the death of **Bob's mother, Betty Breazeale**, on December 1, 2018.

*Let's continue to share God's Love,
Shine God's Light and Shape God's People"*

Welcoming Statement

First Presbyterian Church, Mount Pleasant, Iowa

Who is welcome here?

If you are Asian, Hispanic, Black, or White . . .

If you are male or female or transgender . . .

If you are three days old, 30 years old, or 103 years old . . .

If you've never stepped foot in a church; or if you are Buddhist, Roman Catholic, agnostic or are a life-long Presbyterian . . .

If you are single, married, widowed, divorced, separated, or partnered . . .

If you are straight, gay, lesbian, or bisexual . . .

If you are a Republican, Democrat, Independent, Socialist, or not registered to vote . . .

If you have, or had addictions, phobias, an abortion, or a criminal record . . .

If you own your home, rent, live with your parents, or are homeless . . .

If you are fully-abled, disabled, or a person of differing abilities . . .

You are welcome here! All are welcome here!

First Presbyterian Church, Mount Pleasant, Iowa affirms that all people are children of God. This congregation is committed to being a radically loving and welcoming community of faith. We believe it is our responsibility to follow the teachings of Jesus and bring the kingdom of God to the world through love of and service to others.

As 2018 closes, we wish to thank:

- Rev. Trey Hegar
- Sarah Hegar (Director of Congregational Ministries)
- All Elders, Deacons, Leaders/Chairs and their Committees
- Marvin Bricker (Church Treasurer)
- Deb Sinclair (Church Bookkeeper)
- Jane Creager (Financial Secretary)
- Marlene DePriest & the Westminster Choir
- Marj Thimmesch, Sound Appeal & Soul Notes
- Leo Clark (AV Technician & Web Coordinator)
- Rusty & Karen King (Custodians)
- Teachers, Rovers, Sarah, Volunteers - Revolution
- Ryan Chabal, Sarah, Trey and Leo Clark—Press On
- Liturgists, Greeters, Ushers
- Charlene Hinrichs & Claudia Streeter- Funeral Courtesy
- Presbyterian Women for all of their contributions
- Deb Sinclair (Coordinator) and Spaghetti Supper helpers
- Adam Creager (Parking Lot Coordinator) & Volunteers
- Kevin Van Dorin & Adam Creager for computer technology
- Patty & Ken Madden, Jack Becker, helpers- Fellowship Cup Meals
- Susan Farnsworth, Liz Wasson & Art Hamm – Quilt Ministry
- Arnette Hunger for sending cards for various occasions
- Building & Grounds Volunteers
- Take Away Hunger Participants
- Outside Christmas Decoration Donators
- Maggie Epperson, Peggy Frank, Pat Heusmann, Charlene Hinrichs, Kathie McWhirter, Jean Thomson, Barb Welander, Kathy Wiley, Valerie Willham, and Rose Mary Wise for serving as hostesses for picture taking for our new directory
- All who filled out the “Time and Talent” Survey
- Sherla Arp, Jean Carpenter, Charlene Hinrichs, Kathie McWhirter, Pat Richenberger, Wendell & Marj Thimmesch, Liz Wasson and Janet Wolin for collating and Arnette Hunger, proofreader, when available
- **ALL WHO CONTINUE TO SHARE THEIR TIME, TALENTS, PRAYERS, AND SUPPORT FOR OUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY**

Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 3 Elaina Liechty
- 12 Jordan Ashton
- 13 Hailie Baccam - Sandy Breazeale
Ann Corrigan - Karen Kauffman
- 14 Stephanie Chalupa - Annie Mills
- 15 Michaela Mathews - Marj Thimmesch
- 17 Kathy Schimmelpfennig
- 19 Duane Wiley
- 22 Kathy Wiley
- 23 John Baker - Kay Young
- 26 Mary Beth Young
- 27 Liz Wasson
- 29 Jennifer Stater
- 31 Bob Breazeale

Our 2019 Church Yearbook/Directory will be published in January. Please let Esther know of any address, phone or cell phone changes. We will only publish e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers for those who give us permission. If there are any changes or additions, please e-mail the church at firstpresbymtp@gmail.com.

If your birthday was not listed or your anniversary was not listed in our **ALERT** this past year, please e-mail or call the office (986-5851). We would like to include our whole church family.