

ALERT

First Presbyterian Church 319-986-5851

Mount Pleasant, IA 52641 <http://www.firstpresbyonline.org>

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Where is God in the Disasters of Life?

The week was a disaster. Sarah was off on a well-earned vacation. However, that meant I had extra the daddy duties. That should be read as “doodies.” Most of you know our little angel Hudson can be a little devil sometimes, too. I was happy to do it and glad to send Sarah off for respite, but it is humbling to take on all that she does for Hudson and me. At one point I walked in the kitchen and said, “this place is a disaster.” It was clean before Sarah returned.

On top of that I was assigned to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance task force for Cedar Rapids. I was literally working on a disaster recovery from the “Derecho” storm with 140 mph wind gusts. I was busy with extra planning and coordinating meetings. The brainstorming of how to do the most good seemed to be as chaotic as the storm.

Then, we had the worst kind of disaster. Scott and Amy Lowe lost their lives in a plane crash. A lovely family and community lost two souls who were a mom and dad, son and daughter, brother and sister, and fabulous friends.

My goodness, the week was a disaster. It’s enough to make a pastor sit down and reflect, “Where do I see God in the disasters of life?” I asked myself that question. I didn’t like where my mind took me.

As I ruminated, I came to the conclusion long reached by others, “2020 has been a disaster.” We have experienced Covid-19, race riots, economic insecurity, anxiety, and political divisions that are straining our emotional lives.

Knock, knock: “Hello, God? It’s me Trey. Can we talk?”

God and I spoke, not literally of course, but spiritually.

I recalled lessons from other pastors, teachers, devotions, and books I have read. It was like the Holy Spirit was bringing to mind memories about what I have learned about finding God in tragedy and chaos.

One of my favorite lessons from scriptures is the story of Elijah. Hiding in a cave, Elijah voices his complaint that all of God’s prophets had been killed by Jezebel and he alone had survived. God instructed him to stand on the mountain in God’s presence. Then the Lord sent a mighty wind which broke the rocks in pieces; then he sent an earthquake and a fire, but his voice was in none of them. After all that, the Lord spoke to Elijah in the still small voice, or “gentle whisper.”

The point of God speaking in the still small voice was to show Elijah that the work of God need not always be accompanied by dramatic revelation or manifestations. Divine silence does not necessarily mean divine inactivity. Zechariah 4:6 says God’s work is “*not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,*” meaning that overt displays of power are not necessary for God to work.

But God is not limited in how God speaks. As one friend said after hearing this lesson about Elijah, “I don’t want my God to be quiet and passive.” God has also spoke loudly through the writers of Scripture. The common thread in all the prophets is the phrase, “Thus says the Lord.” Then they proclaim that the disastrous calamities shall not last. The people of God will rise again.

Most graciously, however, God speaks in times of Chaos through Jesus. The writer to the Hebrews opens his letter with this truth: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son who says, “My spirit is with you.” We are then instructed to heal the broken

hearted, give food and water to those in need, bring release and comfort from disaster.

God's people have weathered disasters. They are more worn for having gone through a catastrophe. Yet, as one old saying goes (and pardon my language), "If you are going through hell, KEEP GOING!" As God's people we have historically kept going! The Good News is that our ancestors made it through. However, it wasn't on their strength alone. We find God's strength in the disasters of life.

Rev. Trey Hegar

Derecho and Helping in Cedar Rapids

After the derecho storm, we learned that our friends to the north had experienced significant damage. Our Presbytery has created a special task force to work together to help those in need which **Rev. Trey and Rev. Sarah** have been appointed to. We have already received one grant from the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for long term recovery efforts. Our tithes and offerings support the PDA annually. The task force along with PDA is coordinating with the United Way and McAuley Center. The persons who lost their homes have been housed through those two organizations. For an immediate response on August 14, our church along with United Presbyterian in Washington, delivered over 600 sack lunches to a neighborhood in downtown Cedar Rapids. We will continue this relief effort and offer more opportunities to help in the future as long-term rebuilding plans are solidified.

Monday Morning Meditation

Every Monday from Noon to 1 PM, the church door will be unlocked. For many of us we have not spent time in the sanctuary since March. You are invited to come in over the lunch hour on Monday and sit and pray and be in silent reflection.

Sarah Hegar, Director of Congregational Ministries

Session Highlights

by *Ed Kropp*, Clerk

The following motions were passed:

- to continue to meet for worship outside at the Wright Family Pavilion through the end of September with the exception of Sunday, September 6, when McMillan Park will be closed to vehicular traffic. On that Sunday we will meet under the trees on the church yard. If the weather is dicey, worship will move to Zoom.
- to allow the Farmers Market to use the church parking lot on Saturday, September 5 when McMillan Park will be closed to vehicular traffic.
- to participate in the Pop-Up Presbytery Mission project in Cedar Rapids related to the Derecho Storm that hit Iowa.
- for **Marj Thimmesch** to proceed with restarting bell choir by following her written protocols.
- to table until the next meeting to formalize the Anti-Racism group that has been meeting on Zoom.
- for **Rev. Trey Hegar** and **Lois Roth** to set a date for the Nominating Committee to meet.

Bible in 90 Days

We began our journey exploring the Bible in 90 Days on Monday, August 24. We hope that this can be a meaningful experience for everyone involved. Our weekly zoom sessions will be on Sunday evenings at 6 PM. If you'd like to join our weekly zoom sessions, please ask **Trey or me**. **Pastor Trey** will also be preaching on the reading every week during this series. **Let's read!**

Sarah Hegar, Director of Congregational Ministries

Treasurer's Report for July 2020

JULY 2020	CURRENT MONTH	CURRENT MONTH	YEAR TO DATE	YEAR TO DATE	2020 YEAR
<u>REVENUES</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>
General Pledges	\$17,503.00	\$20,208.00	\$154,382.00	\$141,458.00	\$242,500.00
Other Revenue	\$101.00	\$7,581.00	\$27,322.00	\$53,966.00	\$108,870.00
Total Revenue	\$17,604.00	\$27,789.00	\$181,704.00	\$195,424.00	\$351,370.00

EXPENSES

Pastor	\$8,977.00	\$9,705.00	\$63,172.00	\$67,182.00	\$115,555.00
Personnel	\$9,735.00	\$10,476.00	\$72,742.00	\$73,334.00	\$126,396.00
Worship and Music	\$352.00	\$317.00	\$1,285.00	\$2,217.00	\$3,800.00
Adult Christian Education	\$0.00	\$67.00	\$30.00	\$467.00	\$3,300.00
Youth Christian Education	\$399.00	\$5,875.00	\$4,859.00	\$13,125.00	\$19,000.00
Stewardship	\$0.00	\$131.00	\$42.00	\$919.00	\$3,276.00
Building and Grounds	\$645.00	\$2,396.00	\$12,947.00	\$19,270.00	\$33,750.00
Operations	\$520.00	\$767.00	\$3,991.00	\$5,367.00	\$9,200.00
Technology	\$273.00	\$429.00	\$2,527.00	\$3,004.00	\$5,150.00
Mission	\$1,100.00	\$2,245.00	\$7,628.00	\$18,216.00	\$31,943.00
Special Giving	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Expenses	\$22,001.00	\$32,408.00	\$169,223.00	\$203,101.00	\$351,370.00
NET INCOME	(\$4,397.00)	(\$4,619.00)	\$12,481.00	(\$7,677.00)	\$0.00

Respectfully submitted, Marvin Bricker, Treasurer

Special thanks to **Ginnie Swarm, Deb Sinclair, Marvin Bricker** and our **financial clerks** for all of their work.

Brian Sinclair, Stewardship Chair

Tithes and Offerings: We would ask that you continue to give to the church during this time, so we can continue to help and support our community and other programs and offer support to you. You may bring your offering to our outdoor services, mail your checks to 902 S. Walnut St. or give online by copying this link <https://bit.ly/2x46F6I>. Again, we want to discourage people from dropping their checks off in person.

Rev. Trey Hegar

Outside Worship Services

We will continue to worship outside at the Old Threshers Wright Family Pavilion through September. Please bring your own lawn chair. A mask is recommended. Also, we should refrain from singing out as a group. We will have one person lead the singing from a safe distance. All others are encouraged to hum or sing softly from their masks. The Spirit of God is everywhere! We will join with the Spirit in prayer and devotion.

Online Worship Services

To access the service via Facebook Live, please "like" or "follow" the First Presbyterian Church Mt. Pleasant Facebook page. You can also choose to receive notifications when we are going live. Once the service starts streaming, you can join or you can log in to view the service later.

Worship with us for our live 9:45 AM online service

at <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/2372664501> .

You can always visit our worship archives from our website <http://www.firstpresbyonline.org> . Just click on pre-recorded services.

Worship in church yard on Sunday, September 6

Sunday Morning Building Assistant: Tim Olson

Financial Clerk: Liz Wasson

Liturgists: September 6: Curt Swarm

September 13: **Mary Beth Young**

September 20: **Bob Mueller**

September 27: **Marilyn Vincent**



Our Church is on Facebook!

We are working to increase our online presence. Please visit our Church page "First Presbyterian Church Mt Pleasant Iowa" and press the blue thumbs up or press 'like.' This way what we share as a church will show up in your feed. 'Like' and 'share' so that we can spread the good news about what this church is up to.

Sarah Hegar, Director of Congregational Ministries

Worship Blessings in the Age of COVID-19!

Worshipping in the Wright Pavilion at Old Threshers this summer has presented the following blessings in the age of COVID-19:

- the chance to worship together in person in the same space
- the chance to visit with friends while socially distancing
- the opportunity to stretch ourselves to discover how to adapt our service to unique circumstances; and challenges
- how to make changes in our service to fit a new space in a new location
- how to carry and set up all the paraphernalia needed to worship off site
- how to safely sing hymns
- and how to safely do communion.

Music has always been an important part of worship at First Presbyterian Church. Since many of the special music providers from previous summers sang or played as part of a group, it became a challenge for them to participate in worship as they have done in the past. After starting the summer without special music until we “got our legs under us”, we did enjoy **Four Souls** (bell ringers **Katie McCormick, Anya Clark, Natalie McCormick**); **Sound of Eight** (bell ringers **Mindy and Adam Creager, Jeff Epperson, Jane Creager, Martha Wiley, Marilyn Vincent, Sally and Jeff Fager**); and vocal soloist **Tim Olson** in July. In August **ClasSax 2.0** (**Annika and Elijah Rynders, Nick McCormick, Luke Ryon, Adam Creager**); vocal duet (**Lynn Ellsworth and Sarah Hegar**); **Sound of 10** (**Jeff Epperson, Jane Creager, Mindy and Adam Creager, Ginnie Swarm, Bonnie Kremer, Martha Wiley, Marilyn Vincent, Sally and Jeff Fager**); and soloist **Anya Clark**.

We want to thank especially those people who stepped up to lead singing while everyone else sang or hummed into their mask (kind of feels like standing up in front singing three solos!!). During the summer we've been led by **Annie Mills, Marlene DePriest, Lynn Ellsworth, Sarah Hegar, Lea McCormick, Steve Readinger, and Tim Olson** (several of them stepping up more than once). THANK YOU, BRAVE SOULS!!! Thanks to **Trey** (June) and **Lynn** (July and August) for booking this line-up.

Respectfully submitted,
Marj Thimmesch
(for the Music Department and the Worship Committee)

SPECIAL THANKS TO **MARJ THIMMESCH** FOR HELPING WITH AND ADAPTING TO ALL OF THE ABOVE!

Calling All Ringers!

We will tentatively plan to start regular rehearsals on **Wednesday, September 9 at 5:30 PM for Soul Notes and 6:15 PM for Sound Appeal**.

We will plan (as of now) to ring pieces that do NOT require tables, so that we will be able to mask and socially distance, while rehearsing and performing. The plan is to play for in-person worship (if there is any) or for online services.

If there are any youth or adults who would like to learn to ring, please let me know (385-2717) and we'll work you into one of the groups.

Thanks!
Marj Thimmesch Director Sound Appeal & Soul Notes

IT'S TIME FOR THE 2020 SPAGHETTI SUPPER!!



Wednesday, September 2
5:00 – 7:30 p.m.

DRIVE-THRU ONLY

We have the best spaghetti near or far;
this year we will bring it your car.

VOLUNTEERS

Plan to arrive at the church
around 4:00 PM for assignments.

Thank you to everyone who sold and bought tickets.

We are all looking forward
to this year's unique drive-thru spaghetti supper!
Deb Sinclair, Spaghetti Supper Coordinator

REVOLUTION

Wednesday Church School Kids (Kindergarten-5th Grade)

Revolution is returning! The Christian Education Team has put a lot of careful planning and effort into providing a space for our children and youth to learn and grow in their faith this school year.

Revolution will begin on Wednesday, September 9. The children will be split into **two groups**, so that about **ten children will be at Revolution each week**. Each child will be assigned either the **1st and 3rd Wednesday** or the **2nd and 4th Wednesday** of the month. We hope this will be a way to minimize our contact with one another, but continue to offer the quality Wednesday afternoon program that is so important.

Please register your child by completing the Revolution Registration Form found at the office. We can also email it to you.

Sarah Hegar, Director of Congregational Ministries

Book Group

The Book Group continues to meet and discuss our book selections via Zoom. We have had great discussions and encourage any interested readers to contact me, if you would like to participate. Our next Zoom Book Group meeting will be Thursday, September at 7:00 PM. We will discuss The Book of Longings by Sue Monk Kidd.

September's book is American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins.
October's book is White Fragility by Robin Diangelo.
You will receive an email for the Zoom link before August 14.

Happy reading! Patty Madden

If you need help with ZOOM, please call Trey or me. We will happily do a practice session with you to make sure your audio and video are working correctly, so that you can join in for worship and other events. *Sarah Hegar*

Another Opportunity to Help

Ann Porter recently received a letter from her niece, **Jean Mariner**. The Navajo Nation Reservation of Arizona/ New Mexico has been harshly affected by the Covid-19 virus. One need is for washable newborn baby items: receiving blankets, caps, booties, crib blankets - either sewn, quilted, crocheted or knitted. If you have any of these items (or will make some of them), please drop them off at the church or take them to Barb Welander. She is collecting them for **Ann**. Any donations will be greatly appreciated. If you wish to know what other items are needed, Ann has a contact number for information. There is no deadline set as of yet. **Ann** will then ship them.

Thanks!

Barb Welander & Ann Porter

Churchyard Stewards

August 24 - 29: **Steve Readinger**

August 31 - September 5: **Chris & Travis Van De Berg**

September 7 - 12; September 14 - 19: **Tom & Betty Lowe**

September 21 - 26; September 28 - 30: **Carol Remick**

Church Outreach Continues

Our Elders and Deacons have each been assigned a group of church friends. They are the representatives of our church. They will reach out to you several times over the coming weeks just to check in. It may seem like a short phone call to ask how you are feeling about things that week. However, it's our way of saying we care about you, because God cares about you. It's an important way we will stay connected as the church.

Please note: If anyone needs someone to run errands for them, please be sure to call the church. We have people who have volunteered to help. *Rev. Trey Hegar*

Office Closed: We want to discourage people from just dropping by at this time. We are glad to schedule appointments, talk on the phone, FaceTime, Skype, Zoom, text message or email. We will keep all lines of communication open. *Rev. Trey Hegar*

If no one happens to be in the office to answer the phone (986-5851), because of the **Corona Virus** concerns, please don't hesitate to do one of the following:

- **Leave a message.** (We will check messages.)

If only one person is in the office and is on the phone, he or she cannot always switch over to take the call on the other line.)

- **Email one or all of us:**

treyhegar@gmail.com sarah.f.hegar@gmail.com

Esther at firstpresbymtp@gmail.com

- **Or call:** **Rev. Trey Hegar** 319-217-3407

Rev. Sarah Hegar 319-217-9444

Esther Wonderlich 385-3899 or 319-931-5810

Prayer Chain

If you would like to have our prayer chain people pray for you, please don't hesitate to call **Esther Wonderlich** at our church (986-5851) or at home (385-3899) or **Pastor Trey Hegar** (219-3407).



IowaWINS'

We are moving forward with expanding the number of families using the pantry from 28 to about 40, thanks to the many generous people and organizations that have provided support for IowaWINS. With the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic conditions, the number of food insecure immigrant families has grown and we are fortunate to be able to respond. Every other Monday, there is a drive-up for pantry supplies. Each family gets a sack of household supplies, refills of their detergent and cooking oil bottles, a \$50 HyVee gift card and a sack of produce from the Community Gardens. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has provided IowaWINS with a second \$5,000 grant this year to help expand the pantry. We also received a \$2,000 grant from Farm Credit Services for the pantry expansion. Coupled with the support of IowaWINS sustaining members, who provided regular monthly contributions, we have enough funds for the pantry into 2021. We are continuing to write grants and encourage donations.

Many immigrant families planted their own gardens and are interested in how to preserve foods for the winter. IowaWINS hosted a canning class for immigrants on Sunday, August 23 in our new kitchen. We limited the size of the class to allow for social distancing and all wore masks. Many thanks to **Barbara Rainbow** from Fairfield, who taught the class, and to **Alondra Sanchez Torrez**, who is translated.

Many thanks to all of the IowaWINS volunteers and supporters!

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Shull, Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Commission Chair
Iowa WINS (Iowa Welcomes Immigrant Neighbors)
A Commission of the First Presbyterian Church of Mt. Pleasant
(319) 986-5173 Home
<http://www.firstpresbyonline.org/refugeeimmigrant-assistance-commission.html>

SPECIAL THANKS to:

- **Sarah & Trey Hegar** for coordinating our **Pop-Up Derecho Mission**.
- **All who** donated food and water for sack lunches
- **All who** made sandwiches and helped fill the sacks
- **Sarah & Trey** for delivering sack lunches and extras to Cedar Rapids.
- **All who** donated money for mission expenses, etc.
- **Trey Hegar** for his chain saw help
- **Jack Becker and Tammy Shull** for cleaning some areas in the kitchen and assisted with the folding dividers in fellowship hall on August 8.
- **Chuck Albright, John Arp, Bryce Creager, and Kevin Hoenig** for dismantling the folding dividers and loading them into dumpster on August 8.
- **John Arp, Adam Creager, Bryce Creager, Pastor Trey Hegar, Kevin Hoenig, Steve Readinger, Dan Shull, Brian Sinclair, Mike Vincent, and Loren Woodruff** for removing the rest of the dividers and cleanup on August 9.
- **Paula Hoenig** for painting the restroom by the kitchen and the wall area in fellowship hall where the curtains were fastened. **Kevin** cleaned the dishwasher, part of the stove and oven and painted legs on the dishwasher stand.
- **Charlene Hinrichs, Susan Farnsworth** and others for cleaning out the kitchen cupboards and finding new homes for items no longer needed.

Special thanks to the following people who helped trim the trees and picked up branches in our church parking lot from Thursday through Monday noon: **Chuck Albright, John Arp, Kevin Hoenig, Matt Lawler, Al Memler, Dan Shull, and Mike Tometich**. Thanks to **Kevin and Matt** for hauling them away! GREAT WORK, VOLUNTEERS!

Thank you so much for the prayers, cards and delicious food I've received following my surgery. My recovery is going very well. We are truly blessed to have a wonderful Church Family.
Barbara Welander

PRAYER CONCERNS: Karen King; April Pforts; Doris Goering; Pastor Melisa Bracht-Wagner; Maggie Epperson's sister (Susan Moenssen-True); Lois Roth's brother (Mark Veldhizen); Our shut-ins and those in care centers; Our nation/world, as they deal with COVID-19; Those affected by the Derecho impact; Jeremy Lee (deployed to Kuwait on May 28)

Our Christian Sympathies to the **Family of Tom & Betty Lowe** on the death of their **son and daughter-in-law, Scott and Amy Lowe** on August 16, 2020. Their family includes **Scott & Amy's daughter and son, Allison & Jacob Lowe, as well as Scott's sister, Kristin (Ryan) Boese, Jackson & Madi**. Christian Sympathies also to **Amy Carlson Lowe's father and their family**. Scott and Amy died in a plane crash in Osage Beach. The family gathered to celebrate **Tom & Betty's 55th wedding anniversary**.

The **Families of Scott and Amy Lowe** would like to say thank you to everyone who has reached out to them during this devastating time. They appreciate your overwhelming support, kind words, prayers and for allowing them time to grieve privately as a family. The family had a private memorial service. They plan to have a celebration of life when safety permits a larger gathering. They know Scott and Amy were loved by so many. In lieu of flowers, a memorial has been established to honor Scott and Amy's legacy. Contributions can be made to: Wayland State Bank, 301 S. Main Street, Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641. As people of faith, we have hope in Christ that there will be peace everlasting and that one day we will all know each other again in a place where there are no more tears. We cling tightly to that hope in Christ even as our hearts break for the loss of two wonderful people. *Rev. Trey Hegar*

September Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1 Jean Thomson
- 2 Mike & Heidi Riepe's Anniversary
- 3 Angel King
- 5 Jelen McCall – Brad Mills
Kevin & Shelley Van Dorin's Anniversary
- 7 Martha Wiley - Dana Lloyd
Bethany Brooks
Gary & Carole Lauger's Anniversary
- 8 Lauryn Willham
- 9 Marilyn Jones – Happy 91st Birthday!
- 10 Beverly Ray
- 11 Jaqui Tolson
Heath Brooks
- 12 Mike Mathews – Chris Van De Berg
- 13 Don Wiley
- 16 Matt Lawler - Bob Mueller
- 17 Ed Kropa
- 20 Jack Kremer
Matt & Jean Lawler's Anniversary
- 21 Connie Best
- 25 Judy Fye
- 27 Caitlyn DePriest
Bob & Sandy Breazeale's Anniversary
- 28 Sara Kremer
- 30 Becky Siberts

Regular, large and kids facemasks are still available in the foyer. Special thanks to **Diane Brooks** and **Bev Hamm** making these masks for anyone who needs them.

Final Deadline for October ALERT
is **Thursday, September 17**