

The First Epistle



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead • Established 1872

April 2021

The Session:

Moderator: Robert Drake

Clerk of Session: Kim Kelsh

Treasurer: Chris Swee

Peggy Johnson, Kim Kelsh, Mary Larson, Chris Swee, Mary Skalet, Megan Wheeler, Dave Lanpher, and Diane Wray-Williams.

The Deacons

Moderator: Barb Worman

Jim Gale, Kathy Giddings, Nicole Hestbeck, Joni Lordemann, John Ortez, Helen Pemble, Deb Piekutowski, Elizabeth Swee

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COVID 19 DOES NOT STOP DEACONS IN THEIR WORK

The ministry of the Deacons in the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) is stated as one of compassion and service. The Deacons in many ways serve as intermediaries between the church and members whose circumstances may limit their full attendance and participation in the church.

Before Covid 19, this meant visitations with members, delivery of literature, delivery of beautiful leftover floral bouquets from funerals, attending to member transportation in certain situations and generally paying attention to the needs of all church members who have undergone stressful or severely changed circumstances due to surgeries, passing of loved ones or changed personal lives. It was in many cases a physical relation between Deacons and members of the church.

Covid 19 changed that relation. In many cases, the relation became electronic. Deacons contacted church members by telephone or text or good old-fashioned postal mail. Attention to members was different, but concern and caring were not lessened.

During Covid 19, Deacon John Ortez has been using the telephone. But John says he is looking forward to the time when he can do his usual Deacon visits without a mask. He wants to keep members updated and connected to the church. He thinks that the best way to do that is person-to-person over a cup of coffee and an occasional cookie. We all agree with John!!!

If you know of someone (church member, or not) who would benefit from a card, call, or prayer, please contact one of the current Deacons: Jim Gale, John Ortez, Elizabeth Swee, Joni Lordeman, Helen Pemble, Nicole Hestbeck, Kathy Giddings, Barb Worman (moderator – bgmw54@aol.com or 701.367.9498).



The First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead

Worship: 10:30 am

2900 Fifth Street South, Moorhead, MN 56560

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218.233.1192

E-mail Addresses:

Rev. Robert Drake robert@firstpresmhd.org

Church: admin@firstpresmhd.org

Newsletter Articles: nadineswee@gmail.com

Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/firstpresmhd

Our mission is to be a caring community of God's people who live by Christ's teachings, reach out to others to share the love of God, and celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, thought, and action.

RED RIVER VALLEY BEEKEEPERS

The Red River Valley Beekeepers are the newest renters of our church's Fellowship Hall. They meet every third Tuesday evening, from 6:30-8:30, starting in March and ending in September.

The goal of our group is to, "educate and mentor new beekeepers, demonstrate sound beekeeping practices and support beekeepers of all skill levels. We want to educate the community about issues facing pollinators," says President, Lisa Burns. "The space at the church is fantastic for us, large with lots of light, and there's space for social distancing."

Another reason our Fellowship Hall is good for them is the large screen monitor, which is used for demonstrations, and to facilitate Zoom meetings, as seen in the photo.

"When I first got here three years ago," says Pastor Robert, "one of the goals church leadership told me we needed to work on was finding more renters, more community groups, who could use our space when we're not using it."

We now have five, non-religious, community groups renting and/or using our facilities, one Hindu cultural association renting our space, and one independent Catholic church renting our space (see the March newsletter for information). That's in addition to the Korean Church, the bagpipers, and Silver Sneakers. There's A LOT going on throughout the week at Moorhead Presbyterian.

If you are interested in beekeeping, and would like attend a meeting, they are free and open to the public. Just email Lisa Burns for more information: redriverws@gmail.com





JOIN US IN-PERSON IN THE SANCTUARY - EASTER SUNDAY, 10:30AM

Nick Wheeler singing "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today"

Tim Ortez featuring his own original arrangement

Joni Lordeman on organ and piano

The Chancel Choir singing "Thine Is the Glory"

COVID precautions will be strictly followed: masks, social distancing, no congregational singing or speaking, no coffee hour.

"We're still wanting to be very careful, and yet we all want to come back into the sanctuary," says Worship Team member Dave Lanpher. "If you decide to come, please call the church office, just so we know how many to plan for."

Pastor Robert adds, "In lots of ways it will feel just like a regular Easter, lots of wonderful music, Scripture, communion, the joy of Easter." But there will be some differences, too, Pastor Robert adds. "We are keeping it shorter, and we don't want the congregation singing or speaking, that's part of the COVID precautions. Plus, we're live-streaming for the very first time! It's a lot of moving parts and new methods, yet at the same time, we are doing what we're supposed to do, which is worship God and celebrate Jesus Christ's resurrection."



One Great Hour of Sharing

One third of our annual OGHS offering goes to the Self-Development of People (SDOP) program of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). SDOP was formed more than 50 years ago in response to injustices within our society perpetrated upon people of color. Today, as then, racism, classism, bigotry and white privilege exist as never before. SDOP participates in the empowerment of economically poor, oppressed and disadvantaged people seeking to change the structures that perpetuate poverty, oppression and injustice through the funding of grassroots organizations that are addressing the needs in their communities.

Over the years SDOP has funded several programs in our local area. In 2020, SDOP used funds originally designated for the 50th Anniversary celebration (canceled due to covid) to fund additional programs. Here are three local initiatives that have received SDOP funding:

The South Sudanese Foundation in Fargo was recently awarded a grant to hire a Distance Learning Coordinator and a Rapid Response Community Coordinator. The Distance Learning Coordinator will help refugees and immigrant students access and acclimatize to distance learning and work with students, parents, and teachers to make sure all students have what they need to learn outside of school. The Rapid Response Community Coordinator will keep up with and translate CDC, federal, state, and local announcements, information from medical professionals and information about available resources.

African Aid, Fargo, has been awarded funds to support an abuse crisis center with outreach for victims of abuse where the Rape and Abuse crisis center does not connect due to cultural differences. Members of the group have themselves been abused and provide intervention and liaising with local authorities and social workers.

About 5 years ago, SDOP funded the Tenant Coalition Training of Fargo-Moorhead, a group of low-income refugees that sought to become economically self-sufficient and to improve their financial skills. They received training in facilities management, business plans, tenants' rights and microenterprise. Long-term goals focused on sustaining financial security, workforce development and cultural marketing by preventing conditions that perpetuate joblessness, homelessness and poverty. The project helped reduce poverty and dependency on public assistance and made the transition of living in a new country less frightening and somewhat easier for them as new refugees.

We Presbyterians and all people of goodwill must continue to declare through our words and deeds that "justice must roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream." We thank God for the 50-year ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) through SDOP. Let us continue to give so that others may have a sense of dignity, self-worth and economic empowerment in the name of Jesus Christ.

The other two important mission programs supported by the OGHS offering are Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the Presbyterian Hunger Program. Gifts to OGHS are being collected through Easter. Please bring your gift to church on Easter Sunday or mail it to the church with OGHS designated on the check.



BASKETBALL HOOPS COMING SOON

Do you remember when there was a city park down by the river near the church? Well, that was before the flood of 2009, when the city removed the park to make way for the new levee and dyke system.

If you look around the church's neighborhood now, you won't find any parks, basketball courts, soccer field, or playground equipment.

Except, you will find three of those right here on our church property!

"The first thing we added was the playground equipment east of the church, that was awhile ago. And then in 2019, we added the regulation size soccer nets, those came from Moorhead Parks and Rec, but we maintain them," says Building and Grounds moderator, Mary Skalet.

Because a church's mission must always adapt to the current situation going on around it, Moorhead Presbyterian decided one of the roles it can perform is that of being a community park. During the summer months, there's kids playing on the equipment, and this winter some kids built a huge snow fort on the north lawn.

The church is surrounded by six, low-income apartment complexes, all of which have numerous families with kids. If you drive around the neighborhood in the summer, you will see why part of our church's mission includes sharing our church facilities with these children.

"Over the last two summers, there's been this family of three young kids and their parents who are practicing biking on our large, south parking lot. They live just a few houses down Brook Avenue, I talked to them one day, and they said they like our parking lot because it's safe, shaded, and the asphalt is nice and smooth," says Pastor Robert. "I think there's lots of ways to share the Gospel, and providing hospitality to neighbors is part of that, even if we never actually talk about the Gospel."

The church is ready to take the next step by adding a basketball court in the east end of the south parking lot.

"When we re-paved the parking lot in 2010, we did not paint stripes on that section, it was always our plan to use it for basketball, I never imagined it would take this long, but we're almost there!," says Diane Wray-Williams.

Jim Gale, Mary Skalet, and Garrick and Mary Larson are spearheading the planning and decision making. They intend that the poles, backboards, and hoops, will be as durable and maintenance free as those installed at area parks.

"I play basketball, I know a little what works and what it needs, I drove around, took a look at the outdoor courts, and we are consulting with a local company to make sure we do things right," says Jim Gale.

Once all the information is gathered, Mary Skalet and Pastor Robert will submit a grant proposal to our district presbytery office. If the church can contribute 60% of the funds, the other 40% will come from the presbytery grant.

Mary already reached out to the Memorial Committee for financial assistance, and an anonymous church member stepped forward to contribute a significant portion.

If you would like to make a contribution to this project, just contact Mary Skalet, Jim Gale, or Pastor Robert.



Existing soccer field, and low income apartment in background



Location of proposed basketball court

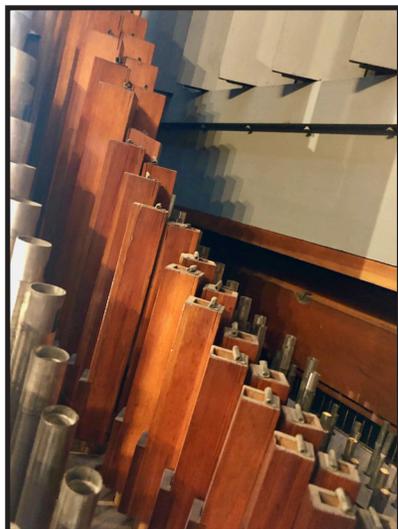
ORGAN GETS A REGULAR TUNE-UP

Shown here is organ tuner, Mike Nelson, doing the heavy lifting to get our organ ready for Easter. We usually get the organ tuned twice per year, but with COVID, we did not do the fall tuning, so we're doing it now.

Did you know that our organ is over one hundred years old?! Yet, it's in very good condition.

"It's a very reliable instrument," says Nelson, "and what I really like about it is its warmth."

The organ is all set and ready to play your Easter hymn favorites. Make sure to join us in-person or on live-stream, Sunday, April 4, 10:30.



BUTTERFLY GRAFFITI

Do you know this masked graffiti artist? Be on the lookout, she is considered compassionate, generous, and armed with butterfly stickers.

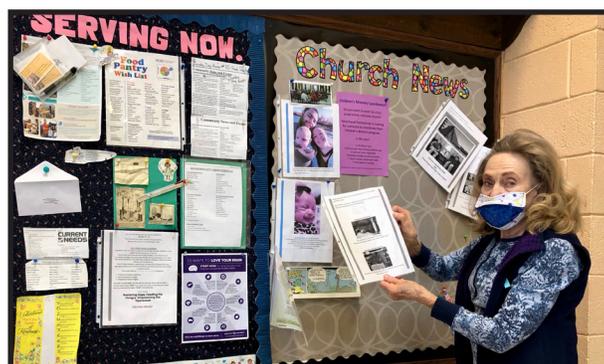
Before fleeing the scene, she is reported to have shouted, "Who paints a picture of a garden without butterflies??? Preposterous! We must do what we must do. Every garden needs butterflies!"

DESPITE PANDEMIC, KEEPING TRADITIONS ALIVE

For many years now, Marilyn Woods has been making sure all the news of the church is posted for everyone to see. Before COVID, everyone walked past this bulletin board on their way into Fellowship Hall for coffee hour. Even during COVID, Marilyn made sure the bulletin board still kept people up to date about all the stuff going on with our church family.

"I post the newsletter every month, and I now I post the Monday Message from Pastor Robert," Marilyn reports.

If you missed anything, you can always stop in at church and catch up on the news.



"I'm always amazed at all the little things our church members do behind the scenes," says Pastor Robert, "I mean, most people might not know who takes the time to post this news, or who takes the time to do all the other things it takes to run a church, like monitor the boilers, organize closets, repair broken doors, or mail out the Monday Message to seniors who don't do email. There's multiple people just doing their contribution to this church. I think it's awesome."

In Remembrance

We extend our sympathy to the Biever family on the loss of both Beverly and Richard this year. They were wonderful members of our church family, they will both be truly missed.

Beverly Ann Biever (Nelson), devoted wife, mother, sister, grandmother and great-grandmother, passed away peacefully on February 24, 2021 at Serenity Assisted Living Center in Dilworth with her granddaughter Amanda and daughter-in-law Shelly surrounding her. A private service was held on February 26.

Beverly was born on June 2nd, 1934 in Winger, MN to Alma and Edwin Nelson. She married the love of her life and best friend, Richard Biever, on December 4, 1954. They had two children, Cammy and Todd. Beverly went on to work as a nurse at St. Ansgar Hospital for many years and then worked at Eventide until retirement. The Bievers joined our church in 1961.

Beverly had a passion for people and left a lasting impression with her bubbly and caring personality. She had a love for animals and animals had a love for her. Beverly was an avid watcher of Days of Our Lives, Wheel of Fortune, and Lawrence Welk. She cherished her family and spent a majority of time talking about her great grandchildren. Each and every day she looked forward to her cup of coffee and daily conversations.

Beverly is survived by daughter, Cammy (Kirk) Gates; daughter-in-law, Shelly Biever; grandchildren, Melissa Boone, Joshua (Karen) Gates, Amanda (Alex) Sauve, and Travis (Alissa) Biever; 8 great-grandchildren; nieces, nephews, and many friends. She was preceded in death by her husband, Richard; parents, Alma and Edwin; brother, Gordon; great-grandson, Ethan; and son, Todd.



SAUSAGE FEST

Yep, we're still working on the preliminary planning for a fall event called, "Sausage Fest," potentially slated for Saturday, October 2.

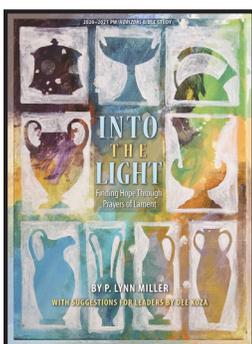
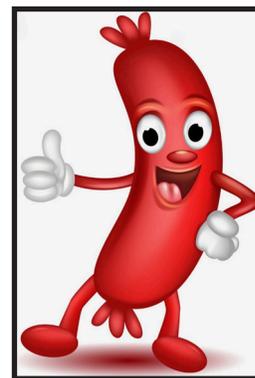
"We're still in the early stages of deciding on feasibility, can we pull this off, get this idea up, do we have enough stamina, volunteers, those types of questions," says Sausage Fest team leader Mitch McKaig.

"Our idea is that an event like this, with music, authentic food, and local beer, will reach an audience we haven't reached before," says Pastor Robert.

Other team members include Kathy McKaig, Ron Johnson, and Tim Ortez, who is shown here getting carded at Speak Easy (at the age of 49!!!)

So far, the plan is to feature sausage varieties from NDSU Meat Science Labs, German sides from Würst, beer from either Swing Barrel or Drumconrath, music from local favorite Dad Band and one other local band, plus games for kids.

If you'd like to join the team or have an idea to help this fall event get off and running, just text Kathy McKaig at 701-212-3789



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

April's reading is Lesson #7 entitled "Creation Laments," and it focuses on Isaiah 24:4-6, 8,19; Romans 8:19-23; and Isaiah 11:6-9. Our Bible Study author, P. Lynn Miller, asks whether humans can lament with creation. Lament or repent. Which is the proper response for humankind? Join our discussion on April 14, 1:00pm on Zoom. Our discussion leader will be Marilynn Woods. All are welcome to join the discussion. For questions or if you want to be added to the Zoom link email, call Marilynn at 218-236-9917.

First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead
2900 Fifth Street South
Moorhead, MN 56560

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Inside this Issue:



Preparing the Organ for Easter

How will you be joining us for Easter?

