

The First Epistle



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead • Established 1872

June 2020

The Session:

Moderator: Robert Drake

Clerk of Session: Kim Kelsh

Treasurer: Chris Swee

Kathy McKaig, 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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AWESOME B&G TEAM SPUCES UP FOR SPRING



Dan Wheeler and Ron Johnson on weed control



*Mary Skalet sweeping in
summer weather*



Mac McKinnie Memorial Garden



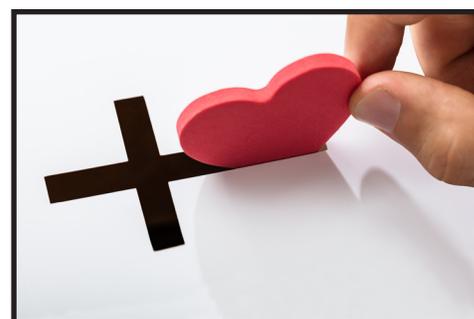
*Frank Kratky, Ron Johnson, and
Landon Johnson*

INCREASED GIVING DURING CORONAVIRUS

If you've been wondering how the church's finances are doing during coronavirus, we have some good news to report.

According to the Stewardship and Finance Committee, our giving is approximately **\$10,000 - \$12,000 above** this same time last year. That's great news! Thank you to everyone who has made this possible. This shows that First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead has a really strong reason to be hopeful for the future.

If you've been considering ways to increase your financial support of the church, but you're still on the fence or are looking for financial tools, please feel free to talk with Pastor Robert or Chris Swee and Garrick Larson of the Finance Committee, all three will keep your questions confidential.



The First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead

Worship: 10:30 am

2900 Fifth Street South, Moorhead, MN 56560

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E-mail Addresses:

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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.

A POEM from TOM WILLIAMS

Tom Williams wrote this poem while sitting in church one Sunday in 1992

NOT Holy Assurances
NOT Pious Proclamations,
NOT Saved Soul or Converted Sinner,
for we sin no matter the conversion,
and are God-welcome
no matter the sin.
The Good News
is neighbor helping neighbor,
humans caring enough
to gather together
to build community

to cry out, stand up
and seek justice and renewal
for earth-Life.
The greedy, singularity absorbed Self,
the deity of mindless consuming self-interest
must go.
Life-reverence and respect
for all beings
on our interdependent
infinitely small
and precious planet.
THIS is GOOD NEWS!
Dear friends, Let us live it.

Federal Payroll Protection Plan

In late April, the Session approved plans to apply for the 2nd round of the Federal Payroll Protection Plan, which is a forgivable loan to help pay employees their regular salary for 8 weeks. After application our church was surprised and happy to be granted a PPP loan and just recently signed the final paperwork May 13. Prior to the PPP loan taking effect, the church continued to pay its employees based on the number of hours they worked, which may have been reduced due to waning demand in some cases. After the PPP funding expires, the church plans to return to that same system of utilizing staff based on the needs of the church. Session felt strongly about the PPP as a way to advocate for salary relief on behalf of its employees. S and F, Session and Personnel have worked hard to protect our employees during this difficult and challenging time.

CARING for NEIGHBORS in NEED STARTS UP AFTER COVID BREAK

Julie Sorenson and Caring for Neighbors in Need are once again hard at it, after taking a two-month safety break for COVID-19. They would like to thank the Awesome Foundation for the grant they received this January.

Caring for Neighbors in Need is a new mission of our church that Julie started in 2019.

By leveraging coupons, they are able to buy a lot of products like the ones shown in this photo and then donate it to area homeless shelters and food banks.

Through Julie's skill in grant writing, this important, local mission of the church does not pull any money out of the church budget. However, if you would like financially support Caring for Neighbors in Need please contact Pastor Robert.



GRATEFUL GARDEN EXPANDS

The Grateful Garden in the backyard of the church has doubled in size to 1,600 square foot garden! WOW, that’s a lot of carrots!

How did this happen? Well, let’s ask Mary Larson, Moderator of Action Committee.

“How did the expansion come to pass? Diane Wray Williams went to the City of Moorhead to ask about their capacity to deliver compost to our community garden. She spoke with Dan Mahli (City of Moorhead employee) and Steve Lindaas (City Council member). They were really excited about the community garden and expressed a lot of enthusiasm for it.

This led to a discussion that was coordinated by Ken Foster, Concordia Professor and Bush Innovation Grant Coordinator for community resilience for the City of Moorhead. I was invited to that conversation and was asked if the church would be interested in expanding the space for gardening. I told them DEFINITELY!, but we might need some help in the form of strong arms and backs, since we’re an older congregation.”

A few weeks later, 30 yards of good, black dirt was delivered, and with a bobcat operator doing the rough work, and a local, Christian labor group called “His Workmanship” providing the fine tuning, the expanded garden is all set for carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers, and everything else.

“The garden expansion is really beautiful! Please come out to take a look and join us on Wednesday nights from 6-8 pm to garden,” Mary adds.

Even as a smaller church, with a generally older congregation, we still have A LOT of strengths, and we can still have a very positive impact on the local community. Connecting with Concordia college and the Bush Foundation is one way for us to leverage our strengths to give back to those in need.



The expanded garden with raised beds of compost and soil



Guys from “His Workmanship Labor Services,” a local affiliate of a regional, Christian-based organization spread dirt and wood chips



2020 Garden Coordinator, Jane Swanson, and Mary Larson layout the garden plots

“I WANT A PICNIC”

Last month, after the first three weeks or so of coronavirus lock-down, Leander Wheeler exclaimed to his parents, Megan and Dan, “I want a picnic.” So after stopping at Burger King, they headed over to the picnic table at the backside of the church property. Located right next to the Mac McKinnie Memorial Garden, the picnic table offered a nice, shaded, comfortable spot to have the perfect, coronavirus-social-distancing picnic.



Leander and his brother, Macsen, enjoy lunch at the church

Donald “Don” DeJong

Donald DeJong, 97, of Frazee, MN, passed away peacefully on May 12, 2020, in Bethany on University in Fargo, ND.

Donald was born April 10, 1923, in Prinsberg, MN. A long-time resident of Moorhead, MN, Donald worked at the West Fargo (ND) stockyards from the 1960s until retirement, doing business as McNulty Cattle Company and DeJong Cattle Company.

Don was very proud of his service to his country while in the Army during World War II. There he participated in the liberation of Europe. Highly decorated, he was awarded two Purple Hearts for wounds suffered during the fighting in Europe.

A devoted family man, he delighted in spending time with his children and grandchildren, frequently playing host for the family at his lake cabin. He enjoyed many activities including fishing, hunting, bowling and umpiring softball games. Donald was an accomplished woodworker and enjoyed making things for his friends and family. He particularly enjoyed making items of religious significance, and nearly met his goal of giving away 1,000 crosses to whomever he crossed paths with.

A long-term member of First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead, Don held numerous volunteer roles over the years, and could be counted on as a dependable assistant for any job that needed to be done.

He had an unfailing ability to put the needs of others before himself. He was known for his sense of humor and overall positive nature. His love, kindness, compassion and outgoing personality will be missed by all, but never forgotten.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Dick and Jeltje DeJong; sister, Nellie Hoekstra; and brothers, Eli, Andrew, Cornie, John, Richard, and Harry DeJong.

He is survived by his wife of 73 years, Marion DeJong; children, Donald K. DeJong, Moorhead, Lynn Diane Olson, Frazee, MN, Mary Jeanne Skarnes, Maple Grove, MN, Cheryl Rae Brendemuhl, Gainesville, FL, and Douglas James DeJong Vancouver, WA. He is also survived by thirteen grandchildren and nineteen great-grandchildren. (Not an outlaw in the bunch).

A celebration of Don's life will be held at a later date. Memorials preferred to First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead. Arrangements by Korsmo Funeral Service, Moorhead, MN



James “Jim” Winter

James “Jim” Winter, age 81, of Moorhead, MN, passed away on May 20, 2020 at his home, surrounded by loved ones.

Jim was born on June 23, 1938 in Moorhead. He grew up in North Moorhead and graduated from Moorhead High School in 1957. Jim met the love of his life, Marlys Jacobsen, and they were married on November 23, 1957. They lived in a small house on Marlys's brother's (Ray Jacobsen) farm north of Glyndon, MN along the Buffalo River. In 1961 they built their house north of Moorhead. Jim belonged to the North Dakota Air National Guard and was an aircraft mechanic on P-51 Mustangs. In 1964 Jim went to work at Kegal Sign Co. in Moorhead as a commercial artist and later manager.

Jim loved gardening. Both Jim and Marlys were active members of the North Dakota State Garden Club. Jim served as president of the club for two 3- year terms. He loved the outdoors and hunting, especially bow hunting. Jim was a Boy Scout and earned his Eagle Scout rank. He loved oil painting, especially outdoor and wildlife. Jim especially cherished the time he spent with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife, Marlys, of Moorhead; son, Jeff (Sue), of Glyndon, MN; daughters, Paulette Winter, of Rochester, MN and Sheryl Gilroy, of Lawrence, KS; grandchildren, Erik Winter, Candice (Bob) Hanold, Tyler (James Sink) Winter, Bradley (Chelsey) Winter, Kayla Gilroy and Katherine (Eric) Thornton, and 8 great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents and brothers, Stephen Jr. and Thomas.

A private family service will be held on a later date.



A FUNERAL DURING CORONAVIRUS

Mary Lou Kley lost her mother, Althea T. Brandt, on May 8th of this year. She was exactly 100-years-and-one-month old, having been born on April 8, 1920.

Pastor Robert had an opportunity to speak with Mary Lou about the sadness of losing her mother, and also about what it feels like to have a funeral during coronavirus.

Many of us have had the fortunate, though difficult, blessing to be able to be next to a mother, father, or a grandparent shortly before they pass or maybe even during their passing. But coronavirus has made that almost an impossibility. Instead, Mary Lou said, “We were all on Zoom when she died, not a way to see your mother die, but the best we can do during these times.”

They were still able to have a graveside funeral, though not a memorial service. The graveside included immediate family only, and as you can see from the photographs, everyone wore masks.

“Our sons were disappointed that they could not be at the funeral,” Mary Lou added. “Originally, we were going to keep it small, with just the siblings and our spouses, but then my nephew and niece showed up too. But since that was not the original plan, we had not invited our sons. When they found out that their cousins were there, they were disappointed.”

As you can see, the normal routines of a funeral, where everyone from the family is invited, are disrupted during coronavirus. In the case of Mary Lou’s mom’s funeral, this change in traditional routines caused some hurt feelings. If you are planning a funeral during this time, Mary Lou recommends making sure everyone knows what the expectations and limitations are.

If you or your family are wondering about funeral services during coronavirus, Pastor Robert is available to discuss ideas and options. Please feel free to contact him, his email address is on the back of this newsletter.



Minister and family wearing masks

MINNEAPOLIS PROTESTS COME CLOSE TO HOME

Mary Skalet’s nephew, Joel and his family live very close to the neighborhood in south Minneapolis where George Floyd was murdered. Joel and his wife, Minke, who is from the Netherlands, have 15-year old, twin boys, Noah and Oliver.

Because they care about their neighborhood and everyone who lives there and shops there, they participated in some of the peaceful protests, and have the following information and photos to share.

Minke includes these comments about what has been going on over the last week:

“These photos are all from the first protest, which was powerful and angry, but also totally peaceful until the over a thousand people were met by cops in riot gear, blocking their path a block down from the now-burned 3rd precinct. Our area is now occupied by white supremacists and anarchists coming from out of state, seizing the opportunity to wreak havoc and chaos. Many big trucks with confederate flags and no license plates are hassling my neighbors of all races and targeting minority owned businesses. Thank you for sharing some of what is happening, and for prayer. We can certainly use it.”



Joel and his son, Noah, on the far right



Joel holding sign

CHURCH RE-OPENING SLOWLY

One of the top questions many of you are wondering is, “When will the church re-open?”

Well, at this point, we can give you a definitive... it depends.

As far as when we will return to in-person, live worship in the sanctuary, session has so far decided to take a “wait-and-see” approach. There are a number of reasons for this, such as member safety, clean-up and disinfectant procedures, and establishing worship protocols. There will be a lot of work for B&G, our custodian, Worship Committee, and Personnel Committee to do as we get ready to return to in-person worship.

If you’re wondering what other churches in our area are doing, Pastor Robert has been making phone calls around town. A few churches are doing drive-in worship, some have returned to in-person worship, and some are doing exactly what we’re doing by taking a “wait-and-see” approach.

“I’ve heard from a few pastors in the area and their unofficial, off the record opinion is that they won’t even consider in-person worship until August or even January,” says Pastor Robert. “And I just heard from Community Presbyterian Church in West Fargo, they’re doing drive-in worship for the first time starting June 14 and their first in-person worship service will be June 28.”

Pastor Robert has a clergy friend in Wisconsin, and her presbytery recommends that “churches do not consider the matter of gathering in person until the end of June at the earliest - and even then it might be for very small groups, not the whole body.”

If you have an opinion about when the church should consider in-person worship, please feel free to let session and/or Pastor Robert know. Your session members are: Kim Kelsh, Megan Wheeler, Peggy Johnson, Mary Larson, Diane Wray-Williams, Chris Swee, Mary Skalet, and Dave Lanpher.

The church is slowly re-opening in other ways, however. You may see a bunch of gardeners wearing masks in the back yard of the church on Wednesday nights. That’s the Grateful Garden crew.

Some of our small-group renters are also returning to the church, such as the Bagpipers, Silver Sneakers, and other renters that can abide by the 10-person limit.

Of course, they will all be required to follow a set of protocols that the Re-Opening Task Force is currently establishing. The task force consists of Mary Skalet, Mary Larson, Garrick Larson, and Pastor Robert.

We all want everything to return to normal as soon as possible, but we also want to stay safe. The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead is working hard to ensure that we find a way to both at the same time.

ONLINE WORSHIP BY THE NUMBERS

Have you wondered how many people watch our online worship service? Here’s some of our recent stats. Each stat includes the number of people who watched our online service and the average amount of time they watched the service.

	<u>Facebook</u>	<u>YouTube</u>
April 19	47 people/18 min average	54 people/15 min average
April 26	56 people/14 min average	60 people/24 min average
May 3	45 people/19 min average	64 people/20 min average
May 10	75 people/19 min average	63 people/18 min average
May 24	48 people/27 min average	48 people/12 min average
May 31	50 people/18 min average	56 people/28 min average

Keep in mind that some of the worship videos were shorter, and some were longer; many people are church members who watch the entire video, some are friends of members, and a few are people who have never visited our church. As you can see from the stats, we are consistently reaching more people online than we currently reach in our pre-coronavirus Sunday service.

This is the silver lining for our church. The coronavirus forced us to explore alternate ideas for worship, and although we all look forward to the day we can worship in our sanctuary again, we will also be exploring ways we can maintain our online presence.

POLIO MEMORIES

Back in the middle of May, Pastor Robert asked people to send in their memories of the 1950s and '60s polio epidemic.

His request was spurred by a conversation with Diane Wray Williams when she shared with him her memories of a young, neighbor boy who suffered from polio. She said, "All day and night, you could hear the little boy crying. It was very sad."

This got Robert thinking that maybe other church members have memories of this difficult period. In addition, our collective memory of the polio epidemic might help us weather our current coronavirus pandemic.

Below are the responses of everyone who sent in their memories. If you have a memory that you would like to share, just call Pastor Robert and he will add your story to the Daily Message email.

From Ineke Justitz

Interesting, just yesterday (05-26) I was thinking about anti-vaxers in light of the Covid-19 crisis and my hope for a vaccine in the foreseeable future. The Netherlands experienced polio epidemics in 1952 and 1956. The polio vaccine arrived in 1957. I can still remember my parents' excitement, gratitude, and relief when my brother and I were first vaccinated against polio. Jonas Salk was their hero! This sense of my parents' utter relief I can still feel. A girlfriend of mine and my former mother-in-law both suffered from polio. Their mobility was affected, and they would always limp or wear a leg brace.

Phyllis Emmel

When I was about 4 or 5 years old, I spent time in the hospital in Ventura, California. I was told I had something called polio. I really don't know how long I was there. Time is so different for a child. I remember being weak and unable to stand up. One of the treatments was something we kids called "hot pants", which actually was like being in a hot tub. The nurses were very kind. I remember them asking me where I got my dimples. Since I wasn't old enough to read, I never knew if I should finish my lunch. There was always this little carton on my tray. I was told I couldn't open it till I finished my lunch. I always hoped it would be ice cream, so I would try to finish my lunch. Imagine my disappointment when sometimes it was cottage cheese. There was a string hanging from the ceiling above my bed. They told me I couldn't go home until I could pull myself up by the string and stand up. Eventually I was able to do that. When I was much older, I called my mom one day and asked her to tell me about the time when I had polio. She said she didn't think it was polio, but something like it. I'll never know.

Liz Bancroft (as told to Pastor Robert)

Liz Bancroft remembers when the polio epidemic shut down the annual Box Car Days in her hometown of Tracy, Minnesota. The year was 1946, and a component of Box Car Days, the crowning of the lucky girl who would be Miss Tracy, was also cancelled. When Liz was last visiting her hometown, she stopped at the town's museum, Wheels Across the Prairie Museum, where she took this photograph of a display showing how many events were cancelled that year. Box Car Days and the Miss Tracy contest is still going on every Memorial Weekend, and Liz wonders if they will have to cancel them again, 84 years later.

Diane Wray Williams

In the 50's we lived in Syracuse, NY. As the polio epidemic carried on, we moved from the house we had bought (one block from the municipal swimming pool) into the second church manse. [Diane's father was a Presbyterian pastor]. Not a problem. I was never allowed to go swimming in that pool even though it was only a block away. But on my new street there was a house where a boy lived who contracted polio. At night when things got quiet, we could all hear him cry out in pain. It was a heart wrenching time...particularly when the cries stopped, and we never saw him again.



First Presbyterian Church of Moorhead
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Moorhead, MN 56560

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Inside this Issue:



Greatful Garden

Who doesn't love a PICNIC?

