



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

E-Link

April 8, 2020

Adult Forum

On hiatus

Worship

10:30 am

Holy Week Services

Since we have cancelled our in-person Holy Week services, the Presbyterian pastors of the Cedar Valley collaborated to offer a brief worship experience Monday-Saturday this week. Just click on the link in your daily email from our office and enjoy a meditation on some aspect of Holy Week, along with music and prayers.

This Sunday, April 12 - Easter Sunday

A special online worship experience will be available for viewing anytime this weekend. Lynette will send out an email when it is ready for viewing with a link to the video. Just click on the link and it should take you right to it.

The worship theme will be *"I Have Seen the Lord!"* based on the story of the Mary's encounter with her risen Lord in John 20:1-18.

Pastor's Ponderings - "Do Not Be Afraid" - Brad Braley

This Sunday we will explore the Easter story from the gospel of John. In this column I thought I'd highlight one of the themes from Matthew's story of the first Easter in 28:1-10.

When two Mary's arrive at the tomb there is an earthquake and an angel from heaven comes down and rolls away the stone blocking the tomb. *"For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid..."* and sent them off to tell the disciples that Jesus was risen and would meet them in Galilee.

"So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy... Suddenly Jesus met them and said... 'Do not be afraid..."

Recently country music superstar Carrie Underwood shared best advice she has received: *"In the Bible there are so many sentences that start off with 'Do not be afraid.' I feel like one of the hardest things to do in life is to not worry, to not be afraid, especially when you want to have it all mapped out like I do"* (Parade magazine, 3/15/20).

I imagine many of us can relate to those thoughts. It is so hard not to worry or be afraid when there is so much uncertainty in the world today. We know this pandemic will end, but when? We know we'll get to see our loved ones again, but when? We know we'll be able to move about freely again, but when? We know the economy will bounce back, but when? We want to be able to control our lives as much as possible.

I was busy making plans for my last Lent, and Holy Week, and Easter with you. Now I don't even know if we will be worshipping together again by Pentecost or even before my time with you ends.

We want to have our lives all mapped out for us, so that we can be ready and there will be no surprises. We like to feel like we have control of things.

But all the disruption of this pandemic is just one more reminder that we don't control everything in life, that our best-laid plans can quickly be turned upside-down, and that we need a hope and strength beyond us.

But the Bible repeatedly reminds us, **"Do not be afraid."** We aren't the first ones to have our plans upset and our lives disrupted with fears and uncertainties. Over and over again the Bible stories tell us of people much like ourselves who are facing fears and uncertain futures and are told, *"Do not be afraid;"* which can be put another way: **Trust God!**

Don't let your worries and questions about the future overwhelm you with fears. Trust that, as God was with countless people in the past to bring them through their worst fears and to set them on a new path, so we can trust God to be with us and bring us through this temporary crisis to find new hope and fresh guidance into the unknown awaiting us.

When we turn our fears over to God we can find an inner peace that will calm and comfort us in any situation.

Church Birthdays

Apr. 8-David Lemons, 11-Mel Reimer, 12-Saskia Jacobson, 14-Lee Nicholas, 15-Carol Downs, 18-Carolyn Stephenson

CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS

The church building is closed until further notice but staff is available. Please call 277-3930 or email: firstpres@cfu.net if needed.

For your prayers...

Doug & Sandy Lawry's son, Nick, who is a policeman in California and their daughter-in-law, an OB nurse who just tested positive. She is not hospitalized.

Stephanie Swenson's mother's Aunt Lois has been admitted to the hospital with COVID-19.

Notice...

Second Sunday Concert

The April Sunday Concert (planned for April 19) is canceled.

Office closed

The office will be closed Monday, April 13 for the Easter holiday.

Thanks for serving last week:

Pianist: Connie Herbon

Vocalist: Mason Sealock

Videographer: Eric Braley

Mailings: Nancy Hoppe, Bruce and Pete McCart

Sanctuary decorations: Sue Luck

Website Technical Advisor: Neal Leeper

New Website!

Take a moment and log onto our revamped website: firstprescf.org. Most of the elements are still the same but with quite a bit of rewording and updating. There are still a few “tweaks” needed and Lynette has yet to be trained on it. The design is by In Form Creations, a company here in downtown Cedar Falls.

Other Ways of Giving

- We have switched our online giving service to PayPal, a secure transfer service. You may use credit, debit or direct transfer from your account. You can use an existing PayPal account or log in as a guest. Please be sure to note on the memo if you wish your gift to go to a designated account, otherwise it will go to the general fund. Transaction fees will be deducted.
- For re-occurring monthly pledges, we still offer direct autopay which has no additional transaction fees. Contact the office if you're interested!
- If you wish to donate by check, please send your offerings to: First Presbyterian, 902 Main Street, Cedar Falls IA, 50613. Be sure to write **First Presbyterian** on the “Pay to the Order of” line on your check! Otherwise it may be rejected by the bank. Write any designation (OGHS, Food Bank, etc.) on the memo line at the bottom.

Thank you for your faithful stewardship!

NO activities are taking place at the church building until further notice. The staff is still working and available to respond to anything with which we can help. Call or email the church office.

Serving This Coming Week

The Deacon Driver service is being temporarily suspended. Sunday Suppers are suspended until further notice.

Children's Offering

The children and youth recently raised \$11.50 for Young Parents Together for the purchase of baby hygiene products.

Membership Milestones:

Wow! March was such a hectic month we missed recognizing some significant member milestones.

55 years – Audrey Schoeman, 3/28/1965

50 years – Darrel and Marsha Flater and Steven Brown, 3/16/1970

And for April: 25 years – Alex (A.J.) Seeley, 4/9/1995

Thanks to these members for their faithful service to God as important parts of our congregation!

Quarterly Devotionals

Copies of the spring ‘These Days’ are available in the east entryway vestibule if you wish to pick one up.

Ghost Ranch

If you would like to view a unique Holy Week video, Ghost Ranch has one available: <https://vimeo.com/404356671>. Ghost Ranch is an education and retreat center of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in New Mexico.

Thank You

Dear First Pres.,

Thank you so much for all you have done for me these last four years. Ever since my first time coming as a freshman you welcomed me with a smile. You treated me like family and made me feel like I belonged. I can't express how grateful I am for the scholarship and friendship. Thank you Pastor Brad for all your great sermons and always caring for me.

Hopefully we'll meet again

~ Brad Ritter

Thanks to everyone who makes it possible for us to worship and Sundays and during Holy Week.

~ Doug and Sandy Lawry

Mission Donations

Please leave donations in the tubs in the downstairs entryway by 10:00 am Friday. Thank you!

- Plastic Easter egg fillers (erasers, chocolate, stickers, etc.) for our Egg Hunt - whenever that may be.
- Diapers, wipes, and other baby hygiene products for Young Parents Together.

Thank You

Dear Friends,

At Hawkeye Community College we recognize that our students come from a variety of backgrounds. Since 1966 Hawkeye has prided itself on ensuring that students succeed by delivering quality educational experiences. Your generous contribution of \$800 to the Hawkeye Foundation's Family Literacy Fund will allow us to continue to serve the ever-changing educational needs of the communities we serve.

Todd Holcomb, President

Hawkeye Community College

The gift is from our designated mission fund.

Mission in Action:

- This is the last week for receiving baby items for **Young Parents Together**. Donations may be dropped off inside the north entry during office hours.
- **Your One Great Hour of Sharing Gifts at work!** Like many small businesses, the dynamics of the coronavirus pandemic are putting a strain on a lot of churches — some of which were already hanging on by a thread.



“We are beyond grateful for the ways Presbyterians are reaching out to their communities to serve and to heal as we live through this pandemic together,” the Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, president and executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency wrote. “But we also know this: In this season of challenge, many of our own congregations who were getting by and getting God’s work done are now at risk. These congregations, whose work is among the most vulnerable, in communities of color who live with oppression and who serve our refugees and immigrants, are continuing to serve while themselves being unsure how to keep the lights on, pay the pastor or the mortgage. As you have shown up for the least of these, we are here to show up for you.”

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has made available \$3 million in grants to congregations and international mission partners to support work in response to and impacted by COVID-19. The gifts were possible in part due to One Great Hour of Sharing, the Special Offering that culminates its 2020 campaign this week.

“This allows us to also support congregational continuity during a very challenging season,” said the Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus, director of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. “Being able to offer grants both for outreach and for internal congregational support is a demonstrable way of balancing self-care with service in our congregations, as together we face the impact of the pandemic. PDA is grateful to be part of a church that seeks to stand with those most vulnerable and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.”

“We hope that these resources, modest though they may be, will support churches as you see and come alongside those who are hungry, thirsty, strangers, imprisoned and sick, serving them as you gladly serve our Lord.”

Please support the One Great Hour of Sharing. If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot!