

January Connections 2016

Christmas At FPC...Photos by Rex Beetner



Glimpses of Gods Grace

Dear friends,

It is with mixed emotions that I write this Glimpses as we begin 2016. God has been very faithful to us the past nine years as we have sought to grow our ministries, upgrade our equipment and facilities and remain faithful stewards of the resources He has provided. He is faithful still!

In 2015 you may remember that we worked with a faith budget, trusting that God (and you) would provide the funds needed to overcome our budget deficit of about \$7,000. As I write this in mid-December it appears that we will end the year in the black. Thanks be to God!

The Trustees and Session have approved a balanced budget for 2016 to present at the Annual Congregational Meeting later in January. However, it has come at a cost. For 2016 we did not have any rollover reserve, as in the past few years. We were approximately \$30,000 short as we began looking at the needs of the Session committees and the pledges received. Taking into account our best guess for the amount usually received in loose offerings and the predicted income from our investments, the Trustees realized without significant cuts, it would be impossible to present a balanced budget. Therefore they asked Session to cut 10% of its requested budget, including Personnel.

Each committee cut its budget by the requested amount; with much anguish and discussion, Session approved the following Personnel Committee cuts: Reduction of hours for staff, with a 3% raise on the new hours. Some staff were already working fewer hours, voluntarily. That is why the church office is closed on Fridays; the Choir is not practicing on Wednesday nights.

The reduction of Administrative Assistant Sandy Morrison's hours mean the church office will now be closed at noon on Thursdays as well, beginning the week of January 4. Most of Youth Director Tammy Hulett's hours will be worked on Sundays and her job description will reflect that change. The Rev'd Randy Webster's job description will also be changing to accommodate his reduction of hours. Christine Dwight, our weekday custodian, will not be working Wednesdays.

I am grateful for the hard work of our dedicated staff in 2015. I am grateful to all of you who continue to support the work of this church through your gifts of tithes, offerings and acts of service. I also know there will be challenges in our ministry in 2016 as we seek to find ways to 'fill in the gaps' that are being created with these cuts. I ask for your patience and prayers.

In His service,

Deb

Trustee Report

Statement of Income & Expense November 30, 2015

	Budget	Actual	Variance	Percent of Budget
Balance Forward	\$16,678.00			
	\$11,000.00			
Income				
Pledge	168,558.00	153,124.50	15,433.50	90.8%
Non Pledge	24,000.00	31,927.60	-7,927.60	133.0%
Investment Income	18,027.00	19,850.35	-1,823.35	110.1%
PerCapita	3,000.00	2,437.88	562.12	81.3%
Misc Income		4394.96		
Total Income	241,263.00	211,735.29	29,527.71	87.8%
Expenses				
Personnel	179,160.00	160,891.33	18,268.67	89.8%
Youth Ministries	2,650.00	2,745.38	-95.38	103.6%
Radical Hospitality	1,350.00	1,460.26	-110.26	108.2%
Deacons	750.00	323.62	426.38	43.1%
Property	61,330.00	49,141.02	12,188.98	80.1%
Worship	3,150.00	2,496.50	653.50	79.3%
Total Expenses	248,390.00	217,058.11	31,331.89	87.4%
Differential		-5,322.82		
Estimated Income Hanna	\$31,540.00	\$29,660.43	1,879.57	94.0%
Mission Budget	\$25,180.00	21,199.95	3,980.05	84.2%
Differential		8,460.48		

**Per Capita
Apportionment
for 2016 is \$33.00**

Reflections from Randy Webster

Dear friends,

In short order a new year will be upon us. I find it interesting that the first month is called January, named for the Roman god Janus. Janus is depicted with two faces, one looking backwards and one looking forwards. January is a time for looking forward and looking backwards.

One of the things that many of us do in January, especially at New Year's, is the making of resolutions. Many about new health habits or new financial resolutions, many of which we have already broken before Epiphany. Sometimes we can also make resolutions about our lives of faith in the new year.

I think my resolution for 2016 is to not become Zechariah. Zechariah is one of the biblical characters that we hear little about. Zechariah and Elizabeth were the parents of John the Baptist. His story is recorded in the first chapter of Luke, a story not often told in the season of Advent. They were a childless couple who lived in the hill country of Judah. Zechariah was a priest, and at one point he was selected to perform a high, holy act-- he enters the inner sanctuary alone, lights incense at the altar, and emerges to bless the people. But, while he's in the sanctuary an angel appears and tells him that Elizabeth will have a son. The angel instructs him to name the baby John and says that he will prepare the way for God's own son.

Zechariah is scared and skeptical and says so. The angel strikes him dumb. He can't speak until after the birth of John. The people expect him to name the boy Zechariah, which is how men gained eternal life, having offspring that bear the father's name. But instead he asks for a tablet and writes, "His name is John." With that his voice returns, and he says, "Blessed be the God of Israel...he has raised up a mighty Savior for us."

Barbara Brown Taylor is a contemporary theologian, and she suggests that Zechariah's sin was not so much doubt and disbelief as "a failure of imagination.. a habit of hopelessness." As it turns out it wasn't so much Elizabeth was barren as was Zechariah because he cannot entertain anything new and hopeful. His is the barrenness of us all who fall into despair from the one that we confront every morning in the newspaper.

Kathleen Norris says further, "I read Zechariah's punishment as a grace, in that he could not say anything to further compound his initial arrogance when confronted with mystery. When he does speak again it is to praise God: he's had nine months to think about it."

Recently I ran across a meme on Facebook, and it said, "God never gives you a dream that matches your budget. He's not checking your bank account, He's checking your faith." I keep it with me in my pocket to remind me of God's calling in my life, and I've made a resolution to not give up on imagination and dreams just because they don't match the resources of my bank account. I think to do so gives up on God and stands as a reflection of my own faith in a God who can make all things new if we only let him.

I invite you to make the same resolution as we enter this bright new year.

Warmly,
Randy+



How awesome is this place

Sunday, January 24

2-4 p.m.

*Photographic Exhibit celebrating the 128th anniversary of the dedication of our building
viewable in both Edwards' Chapel and the Sanctuary*

How Awesome Is This Place

Hymn Festival

3 p.m.

Reception to follow in Edwards' Chapel

News-worthy Notes...

The following is the speech Andrew Wells gave at his Commencement where he received his GED.

First of all, I would like to thank my teachers, Mr. K and Mrs. B, for without them I would still be stuck in Math. I would also like to thank my grandfather, Richard Wells, who is here today. Life has been hard on him this year. He lost his wife of 53 years last Christmas Eve but through that and countless other things, he has still been here for me. So today I would like to dedicate this to my Grandpa and my late Grandma. I would also like to thank Jim I. for his help in trying to teach me math.

When I first came into prison I had a 5th grade education. Now, in a little over a year, I can say that I have a high school education. Even though I still can't spell and I never want to see another Algebra equation again in my life, I hope to go to college while I am still in prison or when I get out. With this Hiset program, the opportunities I have will be greater than ever before.

Aristotle said "education is the best provision for old age". I know that throughout the rest of my life the education I have received here will stay with me for as long as I live. This is the first step in rehabilitation for me. While I still have a long way to go, I am confident that when I do get released I will be ready to face any challenge that comes to me. Thank you.

The Christmas Box...by Christine Dwight

I have a box to give you. It is not a big size.
It holds many items that will bring a smile to your face.

Given to you with love, from someone across the miles
They wish you a Merry Christmas and hope to make your day bright.

There was a baby boy born many years ago
Born in a stable with no home of his own.

Three men came to see him, to celebrate his birth
With them came three boxes, gifts for him to share.

So when you receive your Christmas box, remember the little boy
Who received his Christmas box that day so long ago.



Worship Schedule

Worship Schedule for January

Jan. 3: *Lessons and Epiphany Carols*; from Isaiah 60, Psalm 72, Ephesians 3 and Matthew 2; Communion around the Lord's Table

Jan. 10: *Baptism of the Lord*; from Isaiah 43 and Luke 3; Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows

Jan. 17: Youth Sunday & Puppets; *Cultivating Fruitfulness: Following ...* from Psalm 42 and Matt. 4:18-22

Jan. 24: *Cultivating Fruitfulness: Devoted To ...* from Acts 2:36-47 and Phil. 2:1-5

Jan. 31: *Cultivating Fruitfulness: Rooted In ...* from Matt. 18:20 and Eph. 3:14-20

Staff Reports	November, 2015	Pastor Deb Kinney
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<p>Worship 4 worship services 1 graveside service</p> <p>Education 11 DVD study groups</p> <p>Connections 17 Drop-ins/appointments/calls 1 home/hospital/prison visits 20 cards/letters sent</p> <p>Church Meetings Session Trustees Missions Passionate Worship Staff (3)</p>	<p>Church Activities/Events Attended Knitwits Veterans Potluck Cooking class (briefly)</p> <p>Presbytery Part of installation service in Ft. Madison</p> <p>Other 1 Spiritual direction session <i>Connections</i> work Advent, financial work Separate meetings with staff (12)</p> <p>Leave 1 Sunday, 3 work days 2 sick days</p>
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Dir. of Youth Ministries	November, 2015	Tammy Hulett
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<p>Worship Young Disciples (5)</p> <p>Church Meetings & Events Meetings with Pastor (4) Working in KidZone (5) Bible Study (3) Youth Ministries Committee Meeting Veterans Potluck</p>	<p>Contacts Phone-calls and e-mails: 40+</p> <p>Education Children's Message Prep (5) KidZone Prep (5)</p> <p>Other <i>Connections</i> articles Worked on KidZone activities Worked on Christmas Pageant Worked on Sunday School material</p>
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Minister of Faith & Worship	November, 2015	Randy Webster
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<p>Worship services (5) Preaching (1) Mission Committee meeting Worship, Music and the Arts Committee meeting Worship Committee work day</p> <p>Planning for the seasons of Advent and Christmas Set the sanctuary for Thanksgiving Set the sanctuary for Advent I</p>	<p>Private practice Pastoral care coverage Clergy luncheon with Southeast Iowa Planning Commission Staff meetings</p>
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Church Happenings

PW News

January 6, 2016
At 9:45 a.m.

Co:Hostesses: Pauline Johnson at Church
Donna Siefken

Study Leader: Nancy Lazenby

Mission: CCC (bring a can)



Holiday Hours for the Church Office

December 24 Office closes at noon
December 25 through January 3 Office closed
Office open on January 4, 2016

Note: Pastor Deb will be on vacation Dec. 25-31. If there is a emergency, please contact Pastor Randy at 570-766-2181 or Deacon Craig Gilchrist at 752-9611.

Yum Yums took a break for the month of December but will resume their gatherings on January 21st at 6:00 p.m. at the Great Wall in Burlington. We urge everyone to come. Call Bonnie White or Sue Carter for more information.



From Deb Heater, Food Pantry Director, SEICA

I want to thank all of you for everything you do for our community. WE serve 300+ families each month and your donations to our food pantry are greatly appreciated! The bags you give us help those walking and riding the bus to carry their food home. The blankets are given to those who are homeless or living in their cars.

SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP TEAM: Charles Bell, Jim French, Steve Hemphill, Cheryl Lotz, Marilyn Nuss, Camille Reynen, Julie Schulthies, Ed Whitmore, JoAnn Williams (Clerk of Session), ruling elders.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP TEAM: Bill Carter, Sue Carter, Adele Coulter, (secretary), Ruth Francis, Barb Garcia (moderator), Craig Gilchrist, Carey King, Pat Saldeen, Jay Schafer, (vice-moderator), Jolene Schafer, Sandy Smith, Pat Whitmore.

GOD'S STEWARDS TEAM: Connie Bowen (Secretary), Terri Huddleston, Larry Lazenby (Co-President), Francis McAllister, (Treasurer/Co-President), Chuck Rucker.

January 3	Carl Boley
.....	Ken Velharticky
January 6.....	Christine Dwight
.....	Deb Kunz
January 4	Jim Hugg
January 8	LaDonna Putnam
January 10	Libby Eibes
January 15	Jo Lynn Clayton
January 16	Vi Ernst
January 17	Rex Beetner
.....	Sally Jamison
January 18	Bob Sattler
January 20	Jeanine Anderson
January 21	Lauren Briggs
.....	Vickie Carhoff
January 23	Jolene Schafer
January 25.....	Randy Webster
January 27	Pauline Johnson
January 29	Anita Erickson
.....	Brenda Frederick

**Minutes of the Stated Meeting of Session
November 16, 2015
First Presbyterian Church, Burlington, Iowa**

A Stated Meeting of the Session of First Presbyterian Church, Burlington, Iowa, was held in the Parlor on November 16, 2015. The Moderator, Reverend Debra Kinney, opened the meeting at 7:02 P.M. with prayer.

A quorum was present.

Present: Rev. Debra Kinney and Elders Charles Bell, Jim French, Steve Hemphill, Marilyn Nuss, Camille Reynen, Julie Schulthies, Ed Whitmore, and JoAnn Williams, Clerk.
Excused: Cheryl Lotz

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda, seconded and approved by voice vote.

Everyone having received copies of the minutes from the session meeting on September 21, 2015; the staff reports from Rev. Debra Kinney, Tammy Hulett and Rev. Randy Webster; the session committee reports; the trustee reports; and the financial report, no one had any questions or comments regarding same. A motion to approve all said reports was made, seconded and approved by voice vote.

Report of the Clerk

A motion was made to reaffirm the motion electronically approved earlier in November to allow Jill Nalley to use Fellowship Hall and the Kitchen on Thanksgiving Day from 10:00 A.M. to 5:0 P.M. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote.

JoAnn Williams, Clerk of Session reported that she had attended the Presbytery Minutes Review Meeting and that our minutes for the past year were approved.

Worshipful Work

Camille Reynen, Charles Bell and Ed Whitmore reported on their meeting with Michael and Vicki Elmer for a membership "examination". They were pleased with their visit with Michael and Vicki and recommended they be accepted as members. Michael has previously been a member of this church, and Vicki will be baptized before they become members. A motion was made to approve the membership of Michael and Vicki Elmer. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote. A motion to approve the baptism of Vicki Elmer was also made, seconded and approved.

The nomination of an elder as Nomination Committee moderator for 2016 was discussed as well as the need to nominate a ruling elder not currently serving on Session to serve on that committee. As there were no immediate suggestions, it was decided that all should pray and consider these needs which will have to be decided at our next meeting.

It was announced that Julie Schulthies has resigned as moderator of the Missions Committee and that Steve Hemphill will now be moderator of that committee.

Rev. Debra Kinney provided each Elder with a copy of a preliminary budget proposal, which was based upon the budget needs submitted by each committee. She stated that almost all expected pledges have been received, so the estimate of income on this preliminary budget should be close to the actual income to be expected. Unfortunately, this preliminary budget proposal projects a deficit in the neighborhood of \$30,000, and it became very obvious that cuts must be made in all areas. Each of the committee moderators reviewed their committee budgets and items that could be cut in each were discussed at length. All agreed that while cuts in the budget are not easy, they are necessary. By the end of the budget discussion, all agreed on several changes that need to be made in order to develop a more balanced budget and that the budget proposal should be revised to reflect these changes before it is submitted to the Trustees.

What's Happening Now!

Sharing of good news from committees:

Worship, Music and Arts. Ed Whitmore reported that the committee has had two meetings since our last meeting and that they are working to implement new ideas for advent and Christmas and decorating of the sanctuary.

Radical Hospitality. Camille Reynen reported that they have not had a recent meeting but have been communicating by texts and e-mail. Name tags seem to be going well, and they hope to develop a better system for displaying the name tags so each can be located more easily. The first cooking classes were held, and everyone who attended seemed to enjoy it. The freezers are now well stocked to help with the Deacons meal ministry. The Veteran's Day Potluck was successful. Plans are being made for an afternoon of caroling, refreshments and fellowship in December.

Nominations. Marilyn Nuss reported there are currently no vacancies.

Youth Ministries. Marilyn Nuss reported that Sunday School has been going well but that not much else is happening in regard to activities for youth.

Missions. Steve Hemphill noted that the Dr. Don Allgood Living Waters Ministry is seeking donations for the purpose of providing a larger pump and better filtration for the well previously drilled for a village in India. Mike Gorman has been doing a number of repairs at the Domestic Violence Shelter, and 33 shoeboxes were filled and delivered for distribution. They also plan to prepare and deliver 22 Thanksgiving baskets to families in need this year.

Gifts, Memorials and Scholarships. Charles Bell reported that he is continuing to look into the management of endowment and scholarship funds to ensure that these funds will be preserved, and he is working with the Trustees and Endowment Committee regarding same.


After asking if anyone had prayer requests, Rev. Debra Kinney closed the meeting with prayer at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

JoAnn Williams
Clerk of Session

Reverend Debra Kinney
Moderator

First Presbyterian Church
 321 N 5th Street
 Burlington, IA 52601

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Office Closed	2
3 8:30 AM Choir rehearsal 10:00 AM Worship	4 10:00 AM Staff Meeting	5	6 7:15 AM Men's Bible Study 8:30 AM Women's Bible Study 9:45 AM PW	7 Office Closed at noon 4:00 PM Trustees Meeting	8 Office Closed	9
10 8:30 AM Choir rehearsal 10:00 AM Worship	11 10:00 AM Staff Meeting	12 6:00 PM Worship Committee	13 7:15 AM Men's Bible Study 8:30 AM Women's Bible Study 9:30 AM Knitwits 7:00 PM Mission Committee	14 Office Closed at noon	15 Connections Deadline Office Closed	16
17 8:30 AM Choir rehearsal 10:00 AM Worship 10:00 AM Worship/ Youth Sunday	18 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Session Meeting	19 10:00 AM Presbytery Book Study	20 7:15 AM Mens Bible Study 8:30 AM Women's Bible Study	21 Office Closed at noon 1:30 PM Hope Haven Birthday Party 6:00 PM Yum Yum Group	22 Office Closed	23
24 8:30 AM Choir rehearsal 10:00 AM Worship 11:00 AM Congregational Meeting 3:00 PM Hymn Festival	25 10:00 AM Staff Meeting	26	27 7:15 AM Men's Bible Study 8:30 AM Women's Bible Study	28 Office Closed at noon	29 Office Closed	30
31 8:30 AM Choir rehearsal 10:00 AM Worship	