

The Home Page

First Presbyterian Church, Hastings, Nebraska 68901-5175
Vol. 25.16 Weeks of August 2 and August 9, 2020

NOTABLE NOTES

FROM PASTOR GREG

Dear First Presbyterian Church Family:

July 24, 2020

Back in March, together with Session, we made what I thought was going to be one of the hardest decisions in my ministry career: to suspend in-person worship. So much of our shared life together as the church is grounded in Sunday morning worship as we gather to praise God together, to learn together, and to share fellowship as a family of faith. Fortunately, that decision was made easier because of our radio, television, and internet broadcast ministry, so we could still praise God and learn together remotely, but I knew that missing out on the opportunity for fellowship was going to be hard. Sunday mornings give us a chance to look into one another's eyes, to pass the Peace of Christ, and to check in on and care for one another. I have missed that so much, and I know that many of you are missing that too, which is what made the decision to suspend worship in March so hard.

Little did I know that an even harder decision would be facing us, the decision of when to re-start in-person worship. There is not one "right answer" to this question, and each church has to make the decision that is best for them. Your Session met on Monday, 7/20, to discuss worship for the month of August. Prior to our meeting, we read an article from USA Today about outbreaks in churches that reopened. <https://bit.ly/3fXRugB>

We also looked at the data trend lines of new cases in our region: <https://bit.ly/c-19trend>

Finally, we looked at the metrics that track the engagement of our members, including the number of people participating in services, giving, and others: <https://bit.ly/HEMetrics> Thank you to all of you for continuing to participate in the life of the church and continuing to faithfully give to our church's ministry and mission!

After prayerfully reviewing all of this data and spending more than an hour in conversation, Session voted to continue to suspend in-person worship *in the church building* through the month of August. We will meet again on August 20 to discuss the plans for September. We recognize how hard this decision may be for some of you; it was a hard decision for us to make. There is much grief and lament as we miss the opportunity to gather in person. We ask that you pray with and for the Session as we continue to try to navigate this unprecedented time, seeking to balance the health and safety of our congregation and community with the desire to gather as a family of faith.

The good news is that we will create more opportunities to worship together in August! Following the positive feedback on our Worship in the Park services, pending approval from Hastings Parks and Recreation, we have decided to hold worship in the park every Sunday at 9am starting August 2. So if you want to gather with your family of faith, we invite you to come to Alexander Park on Sunday mornings at 9am (weather permitting). Please bring your own chair and a facemask. We will also continue our traditional Stay-at-Home worship broadcast on Sundays at 10:30am via Facebook Live and the radio.

Session also reaffirmed small group and committee meetings in the church building with restrictions and voted on Monday to allow weddings and funerals for up to 100 people in the church building with restrictions, including facemasks and social distancing.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me or any member of your Session. Thank you for your prayers and your steadfast commitment to the Church and our call to serve Jesus Christ in this time.

Your Servants in Christ,

Pastor Greg and the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Hastings

Mary Seiler, Brian Johnson, Kay Georgiana, Mary Fisk, Pat Kern, Kris Horton, Bev Rader, Erik Nielsen, Harold Korb, Joe Black, Neil Riley, Scott Shardelow, Cheryl Lockwood

FPC Prayers for:

Alana DeBellis & Family
Jim Duval
Cheryl Ann Elfond
Irina Erickson's Mom
Jim Hahne
Jim Harrenstein
Everly Hogan

Kristine Cook (Katharine Davis' sister)
Cale, Noble, Zach Henderson
Connie & Tom Kubicka (Chris Junker's parents)
Elaine Schumacher (Vicki Howard's Mom)
Melba Trehern (Lisa Unger's Mom)
Chris Wheeler (Carol Wheeler's son)
Jim Cooke
Henry Black (Joe & Amy Black's son)

Gretchen Lainson
Tommy Thomsen
Mike Hahne & family
Jeff Howard
Carol Medsker
Megan Welton

Please let us know if you would like to be added to, or removed from, the prayer list by calling the church office at 402-462-5147.



Sunday's service will be broadcast

- live on Facebook at www.facebook.com/fpchastings
(You don't need to have an account to watch.)
- on the radio during Sunday service at 10:30 a.m. on KICS 1550 AM.
- on Channel 181 Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. and Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
- at Good Samaritan Village, the service will be broadcast on Channel 3 on Sunday at 12:00 noon and on Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.

"When working with your attorney to **update your will and estate plan**, please consider including a gift to the First Presbyterian Church Foundation." - Moderator of the Foundation

HOSPITAL REMINDER

Due to hospital privacy regulations, for the church to know that either you or a family member will be hospitalized or have been admitted, please take a moment and call the church office at 402-462-5147. Remember, we don't always know what's happening unless you tell us!

A copy of any Sunday service is available on DVD disc upon request at no charge. Contact the church office at [402-462-5147](tel:402-462-5147).

Birth Announcements If you would like a rose on the pulpit to celebrate the birth of a new child in your family, please notify the office.



Looking for a way to give during our time of "Stay at Home" Church?

The church counts on your giving to carry on its work. As you participate in "Stay at Home" Worship,

please take time to

1. mail your donation in,
2. drop by the church and leave your offering in the new locked "tithing box" located on the second brick column under the portico.
3. sign up for electronic fund transfers,
4. or give on-line at <https://fpchastings.org/give-online/>

In the days and weeks to come, the church will continue to play a vital role in responding to this virus, just as we did with the flood relief efforts in Nebraska last year. Thank you for your continued support and provision in this time.

Dear First Presbyterian Church, I want to say a special thank you for the beautiful flowers Jan Bolliger brought me after church one Sunday when I had my surgery. Also, thanks to "Food from the Heart" for the delicious casserole Mary brought. Your thoughtfulness was truly appreciated. I pray we can all be back together soon. Love to all and God Bless,

Marie Rasmussen

Dear Friends, Thank you for the prayers, caring messages, beautiful Birthday and Anniversary cards, food, etc.! Jim is now in Hospice Care and may have a long journey. Please keep him on your prayer list. I am so gratified for all the help.

With gratitude, Mary Jeanne Cooke

FRAUD ALERT

If you receive an email or a text message that looks like it is from Pastor Greg, Pastor Damen, or one of the other church staff asking you to buy gift cards, please ignore it and report it to the church office. The phone number and email address will be incorrect.

Someone is sending these emails and text messages masquerading as Pastor Greg stating that he is visiting someone in the ER or the hospital and needs help to order or purchase a gift card. Pastor Greg will never ask a church member to purchase a gift card by sending you an email or text message, so please don't respond. Always pay attention to the return email address and check it for accuracy.



Brooks's Bookshelf Our son, Brooks, was born on October 10, 2018. Three days after his birth, he was diagnosed with Trisomy 21: Down Syndrome. He is a happy, strong, loving, unique individual and a true blessing to our family.

Brooks's Bookshelf was created in celebration of our amazing son. He is an inspiration to anyone who is lucky enough to know him! The bookshelf is a way to share the joy of reading and also spread the awareness of Down Syndrome. Bookshelves, where children are welcome to take a book home, will be located throughout our community!

Each bookshelf will include books of all interests with some specific books focused on kindness, on compassion, and on individuals with unique differences. Books to range from picture/baby up to early readers.

Every story and every person is unique and beautiful. We hope that you'll find it in your hearts to donate a book or send a monetary donation to help us in this celebration.

Check out our Amazon wish list under Brooks's Bookshelf and other places to donate on our website at brookssbookshelf.org

Follow us on Facebook & Instagram!

-Kindly, Brooks Borrell & Family



FPC has a medical equipment library from which members can borrow equipment that they need on a temporary basis. These items will include walkers, bath chair, crutches, toilet riser, knee scooter, etc. If you have any equipment cluttering your basement that you would like to donate or if you have a temporary need for such an item, please contact Erica Brooks at ericalynn128@gmail.com.

What If?



What if, GOD couldn't take the time to bless us today because we couldn't take the time to thank Him yesterday?

What if GOD decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we didn't follow Him today?

What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when GOD sent the Rain?

What if GOD didn't walk with us today because we failed to recognize it as His day?

What if GOD took away the Bible tomorrow because we would not read it today?

What if GOD took away His message because we failed to listen to the messenger?

What if GOD didn't send His only begotten Son because He wanted us to be prepared to pay the price for sin?

What if the door of the church was closed because we did not open the door of our heart?

What if GOD stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to love and care for others?

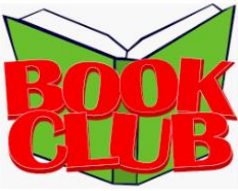
What if GOD would not hear us today because we would not listen to Him?

What if GOD answered our prayers the way we answer His call to service?

What if GOD met our needs the way we give Him our lives?

- Unknown Author

Summer Book Club Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh has been guiding a discussion of the book *Heaven and Hell: A History of the Afterlife* by Bart Ehrman. Summer Book Club has been meeting at noon since May 13th and will continue for the next 15 weeks via Zoom Conferencing. Please obtain a copy of the book from your favorite vendor. Contact Sharon Brooks, sbbrooks52@gmail.com for more information on how to join the online conversations.



The next Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 1, 2020**, from 12 noon – 6:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. Mark your calendar now! Watch this space for the new date. To donate or volunteer your time, please call Erica Brooks, FPC Parish Nurse, at [402-469-9285](tel:402-469-9285) or sign up at www.redcrossblood.org.



Third Saturday of the Month
Annex Building
Lincoln and 7th St. Hastings

Sponsored by:
First United Methodist Church
First Presbyterian Church

A mobile pantry is a traveling food pantry that delivers food to families in need through a one day distribution. Our goal is to provide food where there is a high need, but resources are limited. The mobile food pantry is available to all free of charge. The institutions providing the food are equal opportunity providers.

	August 15, 2020	
I, J, K, L	May park and get number starting	9:45 AM
M, N, O	May park and get number starting	10:00 AM
P, Q, R	May park and get number starting	10:15 AM
S, T, U	May park and get number starting	10:30 AM
V, W, X, Y, Z	May park and get number starting	10:45 AM
A, B	May park and get number starting	11:00 AM
C, D, E	May park and get number starting	11:15 AM
F, G, H	May park and get number starting	11:30 AM

~~Those interested in receiving food should bring boxes or bags. To volunteer, simply show up on the date of the next distribution and check in at the volunteer sign-in table. Volunteer shifts are 9:30-12:00 and 12:00-2:00. Plastic bags can be brought to the church office and donated to the cause.~~

CLEANING OUT YOUR CLOSETS??

The First Presbyterian Church and First United Methodist Church would love to receive your gently used winter coats for our coat drive that will be held in October.

Coats of all sizes are needed for Men, Women and Children.
(Adult XL and XXL are in high need)

Donations accepted now through October at these Hastings locations:
First Presbyterian Church,
First United Methodist Church, YMCA
and Pershing Orthodontics.
Thank you in advance!!

We are NOT ready to start collecting coats or, but please save them for when we are!

NOW MORE THAN EVER...

PW in the Synod of the Lakes & Prairies presents:
Beginning to Dismantle Structural Racism




“Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. It is also a lie about God, for it falsely claims that God favors parts of creation over the entirety of creation.” PC(USA) anti-racism policy



The study is free to all men and women who wish to participate via ZOOM. We will be meeting on the following days: ~~June 29, July 13, July 27~~, August 3, August 24, and August 31. Sessions are offered at either a 1:30 – 2:30 PM or a 6:30-7:30 PM (Central) time.

Racial Justice Challenge

You don't need to be present at all sessions. Check your calendars and send an email to Marilyn Stone at: mmstone52@att.net Include in your email your name, presbytery, email address, and cell phone number (so we can text you information if needed). You must be registered to receive the ZOOM invitation.



Learning Together
Weekly Meetings July 13th - August 17th

Join local clergy and congregations this summer as we reflect on race, injustice, and violence in America. Reading groups will meet weekly over Zoom.

For more information, contact Jean at First Presbyterian Church in Hastings at 402-462-5147 or fpc@fpchastings.org
Registration is required!

I'M STILL HERE
BLACK DIGNITY IN A WORLD MADE FOR WHITENESS
AUSTIN CHANNING
BROWN

Anti-Racism Conversation Groups

Join your First Presbyterian Church Family in conversation about anti-racism and how our faith calls us to educate ourselves and work to dismantle racism in our society.

We started in June by encouraging the whole church to watch the movie *Just Mercy* that was available for free streaming for the month of June. We hosted a discussion group about this movie on July 1.

For the month of July we invite you to read the book *The Hate U Give* and join us for discussion groups starting the week of July 13. For more information or to sign up for a discussion group, please email the church office at fpc@fpchastings.org or call 402-462-5147

Gilead Gleanings: A First Pres Summer Reading Project

What are you doing this summer? Why not join pastors Greg and Damen (as well as a few other notable guests) as they read through *Gilead* by Pulitzer Prize winning author Marilynne Robinson?

Set in Gilead, Iowa, the novel takes the form of a letter written from a Congregationalist minister to his son. The touching book reveals much about the human condition and the heart of faith. It is sure to tell us as much about ourselves as the characters it contains.

In addition to securing a copy of the book and reading along, folks can join in the fun by listening to three podcast conversations which will be released on June 26, July 10, and 24. In those podcasts, the pastors and guests will discuss the book and how they find it relating to the world around them. There will also be open conversations (hosted via ZOOM) which readers can join to discuss the novel. Those open conversations will take place ~~July 2, 16,~~ and 30.

There will be a few copies of the book available in the church office, though we sadly cannot buy a copy for everyone. Here are the links to the Gilead Gleanings things.

Soundcloud

<https://soundcloud.com/damen-heitmann/062520-gilead-gleanings-a-summer-read>

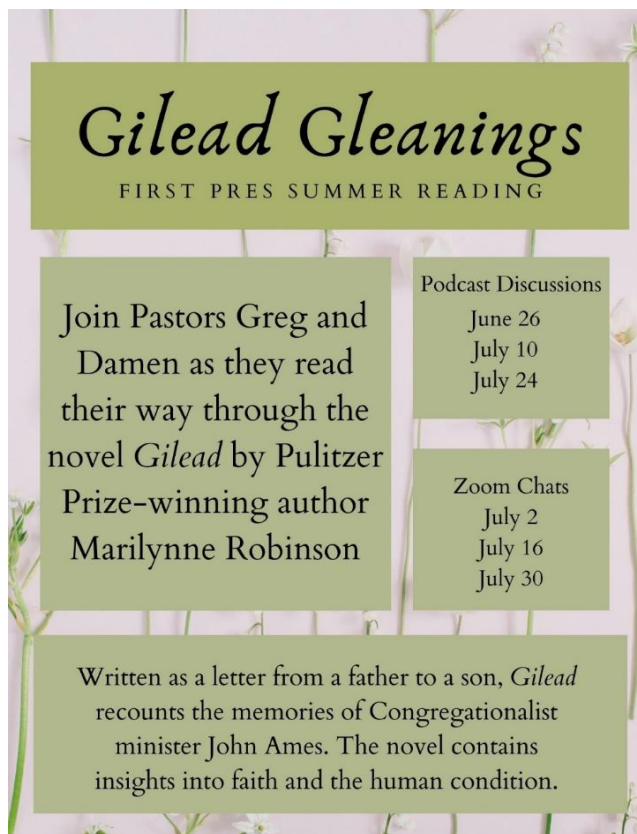
<https://soundcloud.com/damen-heitmann/070920-gilead-gleanings>

<https://youtu.be/PiHepPZYpyo>

Youtube: <https://youtu.be/-egyU233vo>

<https://youtu.be/gDEunH6fVyk>

<https://youtu.be/PiHepPZYpyo>



Gilead Gleanings
FIRST PRES SUMMER READING

Join Pastors Greg and Damen as they read their way through the novel *Gilead* by Pulitzer Prize-winning author Marilynne Robinson

Podcast Discussions
June 26
July 10
July 24

Zoom Chats
July 2
July 16
July 30

Written as a letter from a father to a son, *Gilead* recounts the memories of Congregationalist minister John Ames. The novel contains insights into faith and the human condition.

Trackable Metrics to gauge how we are doing after 4 months of suspended in-person worship:

Update on "Attendance" Numbers:

	2020 "Attendance" Numbers	2019 "In-Person" Numbers
3-May	312+50 "Drive-in" worship 362	230
10-May	Mother's Day 274	260
17-May	308	200
25-May	282	163
31-May	232+75 in Pentecost Parade 307	191
7-Jun	272	219
14-Jun	252	214
21-Jun	169+100 Worship in the Park 269	169
28-Jun	278	208
5-Jul	235	181
12-Jul	214	175
19-Jul	181+100 Worship in the Park 281	161

Update on Engagement through our weekly touchpoints:

- Monday Check-In and Friday Feature: 720 Views on YouTube, 1,480 plays on Soundcloud

Update on Giving:

March: \$31,484 (people were adjusting to mailing in checks or switching to on-line giving)

April: \$67,795 (we recovered)

May: \$66,891

June: \$36,643 (we always see a drop in giving during the summer months)

YTD: \$303,187

We need *average* giving of \$53,000/month to make our budget for the year. We are right on track with where we need to be. We ordinarily see a big boost in giving in November and December, when many people pay their whole pledge at once.

We do usually see a drop in giving during the summer as people are traveling and not bringing their offerings in, and we are seeing that this summer.

Update on Spending:

March Expense: \$61,389

April Expense: \$48,185

May Expense: \$47,100

June

Expense: \$49,955

YTD TOTAL Expense: \$317,458

YTD Budgeted Expense: \$346,722

We have underspent the budget by \$29,264 so far this year.

Upcoming/Ongoing events:

Late June-August: Gilead Gleanings Churchwide Book Group

July-August: Movie/Book/Conversation Group on anti-racism and our faith

July-August: Summer Sermon Song Series

August 16: United Harvest Mobile Food Pantry Distribution

In-Person Engagements:

April 5: Palm Sunday Parade

May 3: "Drive-In" Worship/Communion

May 31: Pentecost Holy Spirit Parade

June 21: Worship in the Park

July 19: Worship in the Park



Mark Your Calendar

Please check the calendar on the church website for the most accurate list of activities.

www.fpchastings.org

**Sunday Worship services are currently limited to
“Stay at Home” worship at 10:30 am.**

Broadcast live

- ✓ 10:30 a.m. on Facebook at www.facebook.com/fpchastings
(You don't need a Facebook account to watch/listen.)
- ✓ 10:30 a.m. service on KICS 1550 AM
- ✓ on Channel 181 Tuesday at 1:00 p.m.
- ✓ Sunday at 9:00 a.m.

What's Happening at FPC --- August 2 – August 15, 2020

Session has voted that all in-person meetings must follow the following guidelines through August 31 for the safety of our congregation and staff and to comply with the State-Directed Health Measures. 1.) 15 or fewer in attendance, 2.) 1 hour or less in length, 3.) Facemasks will be required, 4.) Social distancing of 6 ft. seating. All boards and committees will have to option to meet in person or continue to meet via conference call or some combination of both to be coordinated by the church staff representative.

Sun, Aug 2	9:00a	Worship in Alexander Park (pending approval)
	10:30a	“Stay at Home” Worship Service
Mon, Aug 3		“Monday Check-in” Communication from Pastor Greg and Pastor Damen Sent out via email and social media
	12:00p-1:00P	Memorial Committee via Zoom Conferencing
Tues, Aug 4	10:30a-11:30a	Staff Meeting via Zoom Conferencing
	12:00p-1:00p	Bible Study via Zoom Conferencing
	5:30p-6:00p	WAM via Zoom Conferencing
Wed, Aug 5	11:00p-12:00p	PW Coordinating Team in Fellowship Hall
	12:00p-1:00p	Summer Book Club via Zoom Conferencing
Thurs, Aug 6		
Fri, Aug 7		“Friday Feature” Communication Sent out via email and social media
Sat, Aug 8		
Sun, Aug 9	9:00a	Worship in Alexander Park (pending approval)
	10:30a	“Stay at Home” Worship Service
Mon, Aug 10		“Monday Check-in” Communication from Pastor Greg and Pastor Damen Sent out via email and social media
	8:30a-4:30p	Staff Meeting via Zoom Conferencing
Tues, Aug 11	12:00p-1:00p	Bible Study via Zoom Conferencing
	5:30p-6:30p	Congregational Life via Zoom Conferencing
	6:00p-7:00p	Trustees via Zoom Conferencing
Wed, Aug 12	12:00p-1:00p	Summer Book Club via Zoom Conferencing
Thurs, Aug 13	4:30p-5:30p	Mission Committee via Zoom Conferencing
	5:00p-6:00p	Personnel Committee via Zoom Conferencing
Fri, Aug 14		“Friday Feature” Communication Sent out via email and social media
Sat, Aug 15	9:30a-2:00p	United Harvest

First Presbyterian Church
621 North Lincoln Avenue
Hastings, NE 68901
Phone: 402-462-5147, Fax 402-462-6818
Email: fpc@fpchastings.org
Website: www.fpchastings.org

Address Service Requested

The Home Page

A publication of
First Presbyterian Church
621 N. Lincoln Ave.
Hastings, NE 68901

Senior Pastor: Greg Allen-Pickett

Publishing Guidelines: The *Home Page* is a twice-monthly publication for the people and mission of First Presbyterian Church.

The newsletter seeks to inform, instruct, and challenge its readers to become engaged in the ministry of FPC.

Articles will be accepted by the Thursday prior to publication. Submissions may be edited for length and suitability. You may send articles to the church office: fpc@fpchastings.org or call 402-462-5147.

¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains –
where does my help come from?
² My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
³ He will not let your foot slip –
he who watches over you will not slumber;
⁴ Indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
⁵ The Lord watches over you –
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;
⁶ the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.
⁷ The Lord will keep you from all harm –
he will watch over your life;
⁸ the Lord will watch over your coming
and going both now and forevermore.

Psalm 121