

The Home Page

First Presbyterian Church, Hastings, Nebraska 68901-5175
Vol. 26.16, Weeks of August 15 and August 22, 2021

NOTABLE NOTES

FROM PASTOR GREG

Dear First Presbyterian Church Family:

I am once again writing a letter to you about COVID-19 precautions in our church building. If I can be honest with you for just a moment, I am really getting tired of this. Pandemic fatigue is a real thing, and we are all feeling it. I know that we want things to return to some sense of normalcy. We all want to be back in our church building, singing our beloved hymns, sharing fellowship, and worshipping God. We don't want to think or talk about COVID-19 anymore, and for some of us, the idea of putting on a facemask again is challenging. I want to name that lament and let you know that I feel it deeply along with all of you. Psalm 13 asks, "How long, O Lord? How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long?" While the Psalmist was probably not writing about a pandemic, this Psalm gives voice to feelings that arise in any of the many trials that a person undergoes in life, so I think it applies accurately to our context today.

Just because we are lamenting and fatigued, we are still called to pay attention to what is happening with COVID-19 and take the most faithful steps we can to help protect our church family and our community. To that end, Session, the leadership council of the church, met on Thursday, August 5, to discuss the developments of this disease over the past month. You may recall that in late June, Session voted to suspend the mask mandate in our building for those who are vaccinated, and also remove the social distancing protocols we had set up. We were following the guidance of the South Heartland District Health Department. Their assessment was that the risk of the spread of COVID-19 was low enough in our community, that we could resume indoor worship without the vaccinated wearing masks or social distancing.

Unfortunately, that has changed in the last five weeks. Your Session members looked at a variety of data points as we considered the mask and social distancing policies in the church:

-We went from 0-4 recorded cases per week in the month of June to 16 recorded cases last week and 25 recorded cases so far this week. NTV reports that at least 21 of those cases were the Delta variant: <https://bit.ly/NTV-Covid>

-Mary Lanning Healthcare has seen a rapid increase in patients hospitalized this week due to COVID-19: <https://bit.ly/ML-Covid>

-The South Heartland District Health Department last updated their "risk dial" on July 27, and they had moved the dial back into the middle of the "moderate" risk category: <https://southheartlandhealth.org/public-health-data/covid-19-risk-dial.html>

-We studied letters written by the Bishop of the ELCA Lutheran Churches in Nebraska and from Presbyterian pastors and presbyteries in Florida and Ohio which helped to frame our discussion biblically and theologically: <https://bit.ly/8-5Letters>

After reviewing all of this data, out of an abundance of caution, and grounded in the commandment that Jesus gave us to "love our neighbors as ourselves," your Session voted to reinstate the mask and social distancing policy in our building, even for those who are vaccinated. This policy will be in place for Sunday morning worship as well as all other meetings in our building. Session will reconvene on Thursday, August 19 to assess this policy. We want to extend an invitation to any church member who is interested to attend that Session meeting. The meeting starts at 5:30pm and the COVID-19

Protocols and Precautions will be the first item on the agenda following the opening prayer and devotion. If you are interested in seeing the discernment and discussion that goes into these decisions, or are interested in sharing your perspective on the masking policy, please come and join us, we will meet in the sanctuary.

We recognize just how frustrating and hard this change in policy will be for many of our church members. Session knows that some people were not attending church in-person because of our mask policy that was in place through June, or our policy that limited congregational hymn singing, so we know that this may have an impact on attendance and participation in the life of our church. The good news is that we will continue to hold our outdoor worship service in Alexander Park, weather permitting, on Sunday mornings at 9:30am. At that service, masks are optional and congregational hymn singing is permitted. We will also continue to broadcast our 10:30am worship service on Facebook Live for anyone who chooses to participate in that way.

Finally, I would ask that you pray. Pray that this disease is brought under control. Pray for the pandemic fatigue that we are all feeling. Pray for our beloved church as we attempt to faithfully follow God during a pandemic and seek to balance our desire to worship and share fellowship together with our call to love our neighbors and care for our community.

Your Servants in Christ,

Pastor Greg and the First Presbyterian Church Session

Kay Georgiana, Mary Fisk, Kathy Amyot, Kris Horton, Bev Rader, Jodi Graves, Harold Korb, Joe Black, Neil Riley, Scott Shardelow, Cheryl Lockwood, Ben Welsch

FPC Prayers for:

Family of Arnold Boehler	Family Jack Stinson	Elaine Schumacher
Rich Portwood	Robin Koozer	Rachel Lay
Lois Hafer	Neil Riley	Pam & Don Canaday
Bev Stein	Rev. Dr. Cheryl Ann Elfond	Tommy Thomsen
Gayle Fandry	Melba Trehern (Lisa Unger's mom)	Carol & Frank Medsker
Shirley Gass	Chris Wheeler (Carol Wheeler's son)	The Tut Ruei family
Brad Davis	Lanae Hall's mother	Katherine Sachtleben

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.



STAY CONNECTED

We'd love to have all of our members in the sanctuary each Sunday to see your smiling faces and feel the warmth of fellowship united. Although we know this not possible, it doesn't mean we still can't find a way to worship together in spirit. If you haven't yet, try one of these options:

- live on Facebook at www.facebook.com/fpchastings (You don't need to have an account to watch).

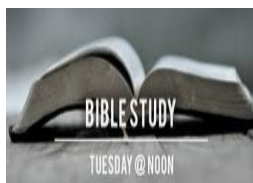
- on the **radio** during Sunday service at 10:30am simulcast on KICS 1550AM and 92.7FM
- on **TV** Channel 181 Tuesday at 1:00pm and Sunday at 9:00am.
- at **Good Samaritan Village**, the service will be broadcast on Channel 3 on Sunday at 11:30am and on Tuesday at 2:00pm.
- 10:30am at **College View** live on Facebook in the small theatre room; residents and their families are welcome.
- A **DVD** of any Sunday service is available at no charge. Contact the church office at [402-462-5147](tel:402-462-5147).



There is a **lost and found** shelf just inside the doors of the church offices, keep this in mind as you are on the search for an item that has gone missing. As of recently, we have a pair of animal print glasses (appear to be women's). There is also a basket and coat rack by the pop machine, those items will be donated if not picked up by the last day of August.



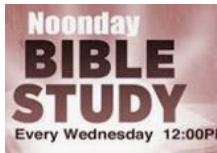
If you were at Duncan Field for the American Legion Mid-South Baseball Tournament, hopefully you got to hear the Chours of the Plains/Barbershop Choir as they sang the American National Anthem. What an honor for this group to have been heard out in the community.



Study with Pastor Greg

All are welcome to join this weekly study. The focus for the group discussion and study each week is on the verses to be used on Sunday during worship. The group gathers either by ZOOM Conferencing or in person in the Anderson Room. To join by ZOOM, contact the church office.

Join us for Noonday Bible Study via Zoom



at noon every **Wednesday** with Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh as the leader. We are discussing a book by John Dominic Crossan that wrestles with seemingly opposite visions: one of a loving God, and one of a vengeful God. Crossan explains how Christians can better understand these

passages in a way that enriches their faith. The intriguing title? *How to Read the Bible and Still be a Christian*. Contact Sharon Brooks for more information at sbbrooks52@gmail.com.

On August 9th The Mission Committee delivered 45 long-sleeved shirts to Proteus in order to help protect migrant workers from the outside conditions in Hastings, NE. This is the last delivery for the year, thanks to all of you who donated. Start saving up again for the Spring cleaning shirt drive.



Are you interested in helping to run the camera, sound board, or T.V. on Sunday mornings? Erik Nielsen will be training new volunteers. Let him know you

want to help. Email Erik at kazgratz@gmail.com

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!



Looking for a way to give?

The church counts on your giving to carry on its work. No matter how you participate in worship, please take time to:

1. mail your donation in,
2. drop by the church and leave your offering in the locked "tithing box" located on the second brick column under the portico,
3. sign up for electronic fund transfers,
4. Give online at fpchastings.org



The Mission Committee delivered 80 diapers to Catholic Social Services this month. Thank you to those who left donations, please know they did find their way to people who need them.



I am grateful that many church members and others continue to purchase Cafè Justo from our **Hands Around the World**

Store on Sundays, or from our church office during the week. I wanted to inform or remind members of how purchasing this delicious coffee is a way to support our International Mission Partner, Frontera De Cristo, and coffee farmers in southern Mexico. Frontera de Cristo is a Presbyterian border ministry located in the sister cities of Agua Prieta, Sonora and Douglas, Arizona. I have joined other members of our church on two trips to this border ministry, including one longer trip where we stayed in the homes of the coffee farmers in Salvador Urbina, Chiapas. These coffee growers, with support from Frontera de Cristo, joined together to form a cooperative of families to grow, roast and package their 100% organically grown coffee. When the local growers remain involved in the packaging and marketing process, they are able to make better wages for their families. If you want to know more about the mission of Cafè Justo or about how Frontera De Cristo is responding to current border issues, you can visit their websites:

fronteradecristo.org
justcoffee.org

Greg Allen-Pickett, Denny Storer, Jan Ham, Pam Lay, Sharon Brooks, Margaret Marsh, Jeanne Hastings or I would all be happy to share our experiences from visiting Frontera De Cristo.

Gratefully,
Jeni Howard

The Hastings Food Pantry at FPC is always



open and willing to accept your donations. You can find the drop off bin in the Fellowship Hall. In addition to food, you will also find donation bins for: **Brooks'**

Bookshelf, new or gently used children's books; **Happy Nappys**, diapers, Pull-Ups or wet wipes; **Pine Ridge**, feminine hygiene products; **SASA** toiletries and personal hygiene products. Members of The Mission Committee check these bins regularly and disperse items to the intended recipients. Again, your donations do make a difference.

DONATE BLOOD
SAVE LIVES



The next Red Cross Blood Drive is scheduled **Tuesday,**

September 14, 2021 from 12:00pm – 6:00pm in Fellowship Hall. 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.



Our Place After School Care Inc.

The designated Communion Offering for August is Our Place After-School Care. *"The Mission of Our Place After School Care is to create a caring community that will encourage teenagers with special needs, ages 13-20, to practice academic, social and life skills and enable them to be involved in community service and enriching experiences."*

-Held at Faith Lutheran Church

What's Happening at FPC --- Weeks of August 15 and August 22, 2021

Sunday 8/15	9:30a-10:15a	Outdoor Worship	Alexander Park
	10:30a	Stay at Home & In-Person Worship	
	11:30a-1:30p	HC International Students Picnic	Alexander Park
	2:00p-4:00p	Joyce Harrenstein 100 th B-Day Celebration	Fellowship Hall
Monday 8/16	8:30am	Walkers	PEACE Center
	9:00am	Walkers Coffee	PEACE Center
	1:00p-3:00p	1 st Pres Pickleball Open Gym	PEACE Center
	7:00p	Chorus of the Plains	Choir Room
Tuesday 8/17	8:30a	Walkers	PEACE Center
	9:00a	Walkers Coffee	PEACE Center
	10:30a-11:30a	Staff Meeting	Zoom
	12:00p	Bible Study	Anderson/Zoom
	6:00p-8:00p	Hastings Pickleball Club	PEACE Center
	6:45p	Deacons meet	Zoom
Wednesday 8/18	8:30a	Walkers	PEACE Center
	9:00a	Walkers Coffee	PEACE Center
	12:00p	Noonday Bible Study	Zoom
	7:00p-9:00p	Woodcarvers	
Thursday 8/19	8:30a	Walkers	PEACE Center
	9:00a	Walkers Coffee	PEACE Center
	5:30p	Session Meeting	Anderson/Zoom
	6:00p-8:00p	Mexican Dance Class	PEACE NE Classroom
	6:00p-8:00p	Hastings Pickleball Club	PEACE Center
Friday 8/20	10:00a-12:00p	Mahjong Ladies	LL Church
Saturday 8/21	9:30a-2:00p	United Harvest	PEACE Parking Lot
Sunday 8/22	9:30a-10:15a	Outdoor Worship	Alexander Park
	10:30a	Stay-At-Home and In-Person Worship	
	12:00pm	Music Ensemble Music Planning	Lydia Room
Monday 8/23	8:30a	Walkers	PEACE Center
	9:00a	Walkers Coffee	PEACE Center
	1:00p-3:00p	1 st Pres Pickleball Open Gym	PEACE Center
	7:00p	Chorus of the Plains	Choir Room
Tuesday 8/24	8:30a	Walkers	PEACE Center
	9:00a	Walkers Coffee	PEACE Center
	10:30a-11:30a	Staff Meeting	Zoom
	11:45a-1:15p	Habitat for Humanity Board Meeting	Fellowship Hall
	12:00p	Bible Study	Anderson/Zoom
	6:00p-8:00p	Hastings Pickleball Club	PEACE Center
Wednesday 8/25	8:30a	Walkers	PEACE Center
	9:00am	Walkers Coffee	PEACE Center
	12:00p	Noonday Bible Study	Zoom
	6:30p-9:00p	Wood Carvers	
Thursday 8/26	8:30	Walkers	PEACE Center
	9:00a	Walkers Coffee	PEACE Center
	6:00p-8:00p	Mexican Dance Class	PEACE NE Classroom
Friday 8/27	10:00a-12:00p	Mahjong Ladies	LL Church
Sunday 8/29	9:00a-10:15a	Christian Education Kick-Off	Fellowship Hall
	9:30am	Outdoor Worship	Alexander Park
	10:30a	In-Person and Stay-At-Home Worship	

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR
Sunday School &
Wednesday Night Live

Interested in investing in the lives of children and serving God? We have an opportunity for you!

Whether it is once a month or every Sunday, we would love you to be part of our family! Please contact Steph at 402-462-5147 or Stephanie@fpchastings.org



With these hot summer days we're having, it is hard to believe that Fall is just around the corner...which means Youth and Adult Programs are just around the corner too! Stephanie Brader, Director of Education has worked tirelessly over the summer to prepare another fantastic season of learning for our youth. The learning cannot come to life though without your help. Please consider teaching a Bible Study class or helping at Wednesday Night Live. There are many volunteer opportunities, reach out to Stephanie to find out more: stephanie@fpchastings.org OR 402-462-5147.

2021/2022 Youth & Adult Programs

Kick-Off Celebration

Sunday, August 29

*please
join us*

Families with Children

9:00am-10:20am: Bouncy House & Slide (supervision provided) in the playground area for children age 3 to 5th Grade. The staffed Nursery will be open for children 3 and under. Parents/Guardians drop your children off in the playground or nursery, and then gather in the Fellowship Hall for the information meeting.

9:15am-10:15am: Parents/Guardians will meet in the Fellowship Hall for Sunday School and Wednesday Night Live registration and parent information meeting followed by the adult activities/classes information meeting.

Families/Others without Children

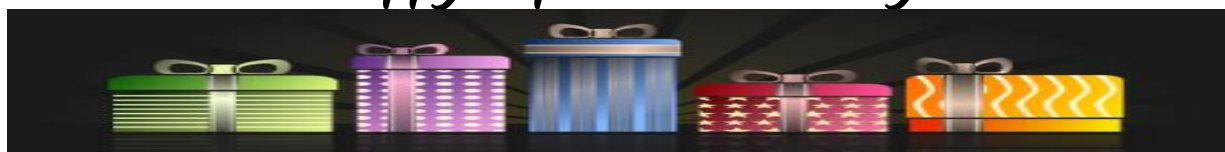
9:45am-10:15am: Meet in the Fellowship Hall to hear about all of the Fall 2021 adult enrichment opportunities.

**Take
Note**

Wednesday Night Live activities will begin on **September 8.**

Sunday School (Children & Adult classes) will begin on **September 12.**

Happy September Birthday to You:



9/1 Geraldine Carlson	9/8 Constance Malloy	9/17 Tim Canaday
9/2 Mike Ziemba	Bill Talbert	Karen Doerr
Dalton Adam	Sharon Harvey	9/18 Sharon Talbert
Mary Crum	9/9 Cheryl Schukei	9/19 Jeff Howard
9/3 Neil Riley	Mary Olsen	Sarah Allen
9/4 Tethloach Duang	Matthew Brooks	9/21 Lori Schroeder
Peyton Mitchell	Caroline Echternach	9/22 Jane Marsh
Hilarie Redline	9/10 Gary Anderson	Jack Shardelow
Willis Horton	9/11 James Ellerbee	Jim Hahne
Daveta Brader	Jared Wilson	9/25 Ted Schroeder
9/5 Dave Glass	9/12 Jane Foote	Shelby Rhodes
Kinnick Pumroy	9/13 Cade Hemje	Porter Ourada
Septer Duang	Cora Hemje	9/28 Tyler Lay
Pat Ochsner	9/14 Dixie McDonald	9/29 Jane Johnson
9/6 Nyanhial Duang	Neal Hoff	9/30 Carole Pederson
Truman Welsch	Cheryl Wray	Phil Odom
9/7 Joe Black	Kim Kern	Addyson Hermes
Sung Shin	9/15 Ronald Maul	Francis Vineyard
Weston Mullen	9/16 Teresa Canaday	
Mike Hogan	Roger Schukei	
	Lennon Launchbaugh	
	Nadine Hunnicutt	
	Byron Jensen	

Happy Anniversary

Stephanie & Doug Ourada 9/1/2001

Laurie & Kraig Iofquist 9/01/2007

Amy & Joe Black 9/03/2007

Lois & John Meeske 9/04/1966

JoAnn & Craig Williams 9/05/1970

Susan Meeske & Brady Rhodes 9/05/2005

Hannah & Damen Jensen-Heitmann 9/6/2020

Jessica & Justin Klaassen 9/09/2017

Jane & Chuck Bauer 9/14/1980

Shannon & Todd Welton 9/16/1989

Linda & Jim Donohue 9/21/2002

Jodi & Bruce Phelps 9/21/1989

Hilarie & Tim Redline 9/22/2001

Patti & Jim Deveny 9/22/1973

Becky & Mike Meyer 9/28/1991

Susan & William Oliver 9/28/2002

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

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621 N. Lincoln Ave.
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Senior Pastor: Greg Allen-Pickett
Associate Pastor: Damen Jensen-Heitmann

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.

Please let us know if you have something you think we should share fpc@fpchastings.org or call 402-462-5147.

