

First Presbyterian Church

GREG ALLEN-PICKETT, SENIOR PASTOR

DAMEN JENSEN-HEITMANN, ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Home Page



Dear First Presbyterian Church Family:

Exactly two years ago, on March 17, 2020, I wrote a letter to the congregation sharing that Session, the leadership council of the church, held an emergency meeting to discuss this new virus called COVID-19. At that meeting, Session voted to follow the recommendation of the South Heartland District Health Department and the guidelines of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to suspend in-person worship, along with most of the other activities in our building.

A lot has happened in the last two years. We continued to follow the guidance of the South Heartland District Health Department and went for 11 months with no in-person worship in our building. Instead, we had our broadcast ministry and held car parades, outdoor worship services in the park, parking lot hymn sings, and a drive-in Christmas Eve service. We also did remote Sunday School for children and youth with videos and packets, along with adult education classes and bible studies.

In February of 2021, we restarted in-person worship with an RSVP system, social distancing, masks, no singing, and other precautions. When the cases dropped to single digits last summer, we removed our mask mandate for six weeks. When cases started to rise again in August of 2021 due to the Delta surge, we put our mask mandate back in place, again following the advice of our local health department. Session consistently tied our masking policy to the metrics published by the health department, voting that we would end the mask mandate when the spread of COVID-19 dropped into the "moderate" range and stayed there for two weeks. We continued to monitor those metrics every week.

Two weeks ago, the metrics published by the South Heartland District Health Department finally dropped into the "moderate" risk range. On March 15, the health department also acknowledged this writing, "... The district had maintained an overall 'moderate to substantial' community transmission of SARS-CoV-2 for 14 days in a row." As a result, the health department has discontinued the COVID-19 Health Advisory this week. You can read about that here: <https://bit.ly/SHDHD3-15>

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621 N. LINCOLN AVE | HASTINGS, NE 68901 | 402-462-5147

Session met last night, March 17, 2022, two years to the day from our first emergency meeting, and voted to follow the guidance of the health department and remove the mask mandate for all of the facilities at First Presbyterian Church of Hastings, effective immediately. This means that masks are now optional for all activities in our building, including Sunday morning worship. We will also be removing the social distancing ropes in the sanctuary.

Much thought and prayer went into this decision. Not only did we look at the metrics and follow the data, we also looked at vaccination rates as well as the widespread availability of KN95 masks, which provide protection to the person wearing the mask. Masks will continue to remain an option for anyone who chooses to wear them, and will still be available at all the entrances to the church. The church will also provide KN95 masks for anyone who needs one, just call or stop by the church office.

Our masking policy was always based on a desire to care for the most vulnerable in our community, particularly those who are not yet eligible for the vaccine and those who are immunocompromised. That stems from our faith in Jesus Christ who calls us love one another with a self-sacrificial love. We sacrificed our own comfort and wore masks to support the health and safety of others in our church family and our community. Now the local conditions make it safer to lift the mandate with less than 2 cases recorded per day last week in our community.

For the last two years, Session has faithfully prayed and discerned each time we have met. I have been so grateful to have a group of 13 leaders making these decisions together. It has not been easy and we are keenly aware of the challenges that our COVID-19 precautions have caused for some of our members. We are deeply grateful for your patience and grace as we have worked our way through these challenges, sometimes meeting multiple times each month. If you see a member of Session who has served anytime over the past two years that we have been navigating this pandemic, please thank them for their service, and say a prayer of thanksgiving to God for them.

We hope and pray that we will be able to continue our return to normal, and we ask that you join us in this prayer. Session will also remain vigilant and continue to monitor the local conditions of COVID-19 spread and respond as necessary. At this point in the pandemic, the best way to protect ourselves and those around us is to please stay home if you are experiencing any symptoms.

As always, should you have any questions, please feel free to reach to me or any member of Session. Thank you again for your patience and grace over these last two years. I look forward to seeing some of your smiling faces on Sunday!

Your Servant in Christ,

Pastor Greg and the Session of First Presbyterian Church

Mary Seiler, Mary Fisk, Neil Riley, Steve Illingworth. Bev Rader, Kimberly Creech, William Oliver, Joe Black, Brian Johnson, Dave Cooke, Cheryl Lockwood, Kathy Amyot, Richard Johnson





Jacob Shin 4/3
Brett Erickson 4/3
Wendy Propp 4/4
Will Locke 4/6
Andrea Franzen 4/6
Norma Saathoff 4/6
Ruth Swingle 4/6
Kevin Turner 4/6
Kenton Grams 4/6

April Birthdays

Michael Brooks 4/7
Barb Harrington 4/8
Doug Ourada 4/8
Irina Belikova-Erickson 4/8
Luna Epp 4/9
Anne Halbert 4/9
Dennis McPherson 4/9
Cathy Pershing 4/9
John Pershing 4/9
Mattie Eddleman 4/11
Carolyn Miller 4/11
Carol Medsker 4/12
Sarah Nottage-Tacey 4/12
William Hermes 4/13
Kevin Junker 4/13
Marty Hoch 4/14

Monroe Runcie 4/15
Harold Korb 4/15
Collin Hermes 4/16
Jaxen Mitchell 4/17
Evelyn Smidt 4/18
Dean Meyer 4/18
Belinda Nuss 4/20
Robert Grams 4/20
Kenny Graham 4/22
Jenni Bauer 4/22
Walker Hermann 4/22
Kathy Warriner 4/21
Norah Snell 4/24
Elaine Specht 4/26
Brett Miller 4/26
Thomas Kerr 4/27
Curtis Reimer 4/27
Dave Johnson 4/27
Kristan Manske 4/29
Julia Reimer 4/30



Vera & Dan Zabloudil 4/21/1973

Mary & Jorn Olsen 4/26/1975

Colleen & George Adam 4/26/1975

Belinda & Paul Nuss 4/8/1978

Judy & Marty Hoch 4/21/1979

Sandra & Dave Dirks 4/29/1989

Jodi & Danny Graves 4/6/2002

Marcia & Mike Hogan 4/2/1983

Tammy & Todd Lay 4/11/1987

Happy
Anniversary



First Presbyterian Church Family
and Friends -

Thank you so much for your support and prayers for our family as we welcomed our newest addition of our daughter Taralyn. We greatly appreciated all the volunteers who brought over food for us for the first four weeks at home as we adjusted to being brand new parents. We also enjoyed our visit with Pastor Greg at the hospital and the prayer he offered over Taralyn when she was in the NICU. We look forward to setting up her baptism when she is a little older. We also appreciate all the prayers everyone has offered for Tony's recovery after his accident and surgery. We are thankful for yet another meal train as we adjust our schedules, yet again, to recovery, back to school and our new normal. Thanks again for everything!

David & Tony Davis (11)





Blood Drive
Hastings First Presbyterian Church

Tuesday, March 29, 2022
12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Thanks for always showing up!

For an appointment, contact Erica @ 463-0402



Scan to be directed to
RapidPass 5

Come give blood in March and get a \$10 e-gift card, from our partners at Fanatics! PLUS, get a chance to win a trip to the 2022 MLB All-Star Game in LA, including round-trip airfare and 4-night hotel accommodations for 2! See rcblood.org/team for details.



Scan to schedule
an appointment.

Schedule a blood donation appointment today:

Download the Blood Donor App | RedCrossBlood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767

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**COVID
antibodies
testing available
at this drive; not
only if you have
them, but at
what level too!**





Scholarship Committee Opportunities:

Information available in the church offices or at the contacts below.

First Presbyterian Church

Ann L Binfield Scholarship

The criteria for the Ann L Binfield Scholarship require a recipient:

1. to be an outstanding student,
2. to have financial need*
3. to be a member of First Presbyterian Church, Hastings NE
4. to attend a Presbyterian college or university.

Amount of the scholarship will vary, depending on the number of applicants. The scholarship will be paid directly to the recipient's college for the 2022-2023 school year.

View the application as an opportunity to persuade the Scholarship Committee that you meet the four criteria for the scholarship. For example, tell us about your church and school activities, your proposed academic major and career plans (if you know those), and the school you plan to attend.

The application is due to the church office on or before March 21, 2022. Completed applications can also be emailed directly to WilliamTOliver@gmail.com

If you have questions, you are welcome to contact William Oliver, moderator of the Scholarship Committee, 402-705-2238 or WilliamTOliver@gmail.com.

In addition to the application, each student must also submit the following items to First Presbyterian Church
Attn: Scholarship Committee, William Oliver

1. Completed signature page-see below
2. ACT/SAT scores (first application only)
3. High school transcript/class rank (first application only)
4. College transcript (for renewing application)

*If your family submits FAFSA information to the college that you plan to attend, we will receive a financial need analysis from that institution. However, if your family does not submit a FAFSA, you should explain your financial need in your Binfield Scholarship application.

Chip Essex Memorial Scholarship

The criteria for the Chip Essex Memorial Scholarship require a recipient:

1. to be a member of First Presbyterian Church, Hastings NE
2. to attend a 2 year or 4 year, post-secondary education

One scholarship will be awarded for \$500 and it can be renewed one time only. The scholarship will be paid directly to the recipient's college for the 2022-202 school year. Preference will be given to students that are not currently receiving an Ann L Binfield Scholarship.

View the application as an opportunity to persuade the Scholarship Committee that you meet the criteria for the scholarship. For example, tell us about your church and school activities, your proposed academic major and career plans (if you know those), and the school you plan to attend.

The application is due to the church office on or before March 21, 2022. Completed applications can also be directly emailed to WilliamTOliver@gmail.com.

If you have questions, you are welcome to contact William Oliver, moderator of the Scholarship Committee, 402-705-2238 or WilliamTOliver@gmail.com

EASTER LILIES 2022



This year, there are a limited number of lilies available to us due to a shortage through our distributor. In order to be fair to our neighbors, a limited number of lilies have been ordered for our church. You still have the opportunity to honor or memorialize a loved one by symbolically purchasing an Easter Lily in their name which will still appear in the bulletin. The Deacons will be delivering all of our Easter Lilies to a specified group of our members who are not able to make it to church in person.

The lilies are \$12.00 each, monies raised above the cost will be donated to the YWCA's *The Zone*. *The Zone* is a free After School Program providing a fun, safe, drug and alcohol-free environment for local middle school students. Those who attend *The Zone* are able to take advantage of a free dinner program, homework tutoring, arts and crafts, sports games, classes and lessons, academic enrichment opportunities and community service projects. - YWCA

If you would like to honor a loved one, please fill out the reverse side of this card and return to the church office by April 8.



EASTER LILIES 2022

Lily in memory of:

Lily in honor of:

Given by:



First Presbyterian Church
621 N. Lincoln Ave.
Hastings, NE 68901
402-462-5147
fpc@fpchastings.org

Return Service Requested

Mail To:



First Presbyterian Church of Hastings
Sharing the love of Christ in the heart of Hastings since 1873

Head of Church: Jesus Christ
Senior Pastor: Rev. Greg Allen-Pickett
Director of Children & Family
Ministries: Rose Koepp
Organist and Music Coordinator: Linda Vollweiler
Calvin/Westminster Choir Director: Linda Johnson
Praise/Alleluia Choir Directors: Teresa & Tim Canady
Praise/Alleluia Bells Choir Director: Dr. Susan Oliver
Accompanists: Mary Plock
Scholar in Residence: Dr. Dan Deffenbaugh

Ministers: Members of the Church
Associate Pastor: Rev. Damen Jensen-Heitmann
Parish Associate: Kili Wenburg
Bookkeeper: Deb Hamburger
Chancel Choir Director: Dr. Robin Koozer
Chancel Bells & Calvin/Westminster
Bells Director: Dr. Byron Jensen
Church Office Administrator: Sarah Allen
Facilities Manager: Tony Calhoun
Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dr. Bill Nottage-Tacey