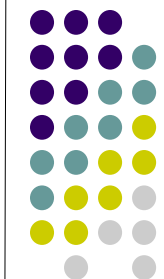


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The Bridgebuilder

August 2022

Inside this issue:

Pastor's Letter	2
Youth, Session	3
Mail, Message	4
Prayers	5
Finance, Mission	6
Calendar	7

Summertime Gratitude

Lord, you make a pink flower from a gray seed,
an ear from a kernel,
a carrot from a seed the size of a pinhead,
an oak tree from an acorn.
You have programmed your soil to provide food for your plants,
wooden trees to make apples, feathered hens to lay eggs,
grass-eating cows to give milk.
And you, grand Creator, you have us take care of your grand creation.

In your mercy, Lord, send rain to water our crops and gardens.
Let your sun shine on our fields so that seeds will produce abundantly,
so that vines and stalks and trees will hang heavy with fruit and grain.
And Lord, let your grace be as rich to our cattle as it is to us;
let it keep our hogs free of disease, our hens laying eggs, and our cows giving milk.
May our animals be fertile;
may our lambs and calves and pigs frolic in your green pastures
so that even in their play we may see your grace.

Help us to live on your good earth—preserving and caring for the life
and soil you bless, ever thankful that for our good
you gave your laws of nature and your law of love.
Help us for our good and your glory to see those laws as you see them
and as the psalmist saw them—as good and perfect, pleasant to think about.

And Lord, teach us to share the abundance you have given us,
never gloating in our excess
but always giving our first bushels to feed the hungry in your name.
Enlighten our hearts, Lord, so that our thank-yous ever rise in a crescendo to your throne.
See and hear us through your Son, Jesus. Amen.



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Worship Sourcebook, 2013, Faith
Alive Christian Resources

First Presbyterian Church of Hoopeston

Head of the Church	Jesus Christ
Ministers of the Good News	All of Us
Session Elders	Gwen Bandy, Wayne Bandy, Sadie Hofer, Christy Lee, Waylon Lee, Jill Nelson, Missy Prosis, Julie Stump, Ray Stump
Deacons	Gina Morgan, Debby Dixon Linda Martin
Organist and Music Director	Rick Brackmann
Administrative Assistant	Pat Catron
Custodian	Gary Deck
Youth Group Director	Sadie Hofer
Pastor	Wade Meranda
Childcare Provider	Lindsey Paredes



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We're on the web!
www.fpchoopeston.com



Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends,

I hope you are able to slow down and recharge a bit during these lazy-hazy days of summer. I hope your calendars are less full and you have some time for you. Taking care of yourself is ministry too.

The Session remains engaged in conversation with the Community Development Institute. CDI has expressed interest in moving its Hoopston Head Start program into our facility. The terms of a possible agreement to lease two rooms from us have been preliminarily approved by the Session and CDI, however, CDI has some significant fire code compliance issues to work out with the State Fire Marshall before a lease could proceed. In the meantime, the Head Start Program will remain at the Christian Church as the school year begins, but could move to our facility sometime during the school year should the way be clear. Time will tell. Wherever it resides though, it's an important program for our local families.



Something like 70% of Presbyterian churches are small churches like ours. Here are some excerpts from an article by Rev. Katy Shevel (*Presbyterian Outlook*, May 9 issue). She writes about the blessings of small churches. I bet you will enjoy her insights and images of the church life we know so well.

Blessings, Wade

Big Lessons from Small Churches

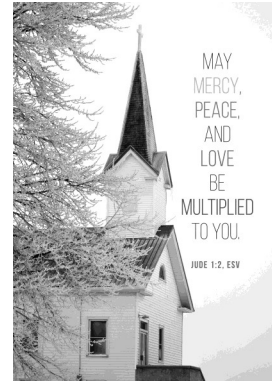
In his 2010 book *The Gifts of the Small Church*, Jason Byassee suggests that the local church is not a problem to be solved, but instead is a "part of God's solution." Byassee writes, "Megachurches and suburban churches are well suited to an age that likes things fast and professional, but most of us through most of time have met Jesus in small churches." In the book's forward, Methodist Bishop Will Willimon admits that "the good country folks . . . will continue to be the face of most of mainline Christianity."

Members of small churches are imaginative, scrappy survivors. Anyone who spends significant time in a little church knows those blessed folks are a force. Small worshiping communities have been the primary means for the body of Christ to gather and worship throughout history.

Small churches prioritize relationships. "A small congregation is like an extended family," says pastor Ben Gosden in a MinistryMatters post. That church directory? It's a short read, if the church even has one. Everybody knows your name. For better or worse, that likely means everybody also knows a little something about your private business. Small-church saints make it their personal responsibility to celebrate milestones with you, and they show up for you at your darkest moments with a casserole. Prayer requests and community announcements in small churches go on and on . . . and on. Folks dutifully pop out of the designated pews on Sunday mornings to share personal joys and concerns as well as to remind people about the pancake breakfast at the local firehouse or to lift up little Suzie's lacrosse semifinals this Tuesday night.

The church family as a whole takes time to listen to what each person is saying, often asking each announcement to be repeated at least once because everyone knows that Gladys in the back and can't hear well.

At their best, small churches are models of Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians 4:2 to "bear with one another in love." They don't have the luxury to delegate duties of hospitality and fellowship under the purview of a committee. Members of small churches have become experts at organizing potlucks, picnics and luncheons in honor of special occasions in the community.



Most folks in small churches also aren't in a hurry to rush home after worship. In my experience, they like to linger sometimes for hours. It so often amazed me that small church folks go out of their way to sit at a table after church, nursing a plate of homemade cookies and listening to the same cantankerous man tell the same embarrassing stories every week. A beautifully raw vulnerability resides in the heart of small church communities.

When worshipping with the same twenty or so people every Sunday, folks learn to abide with one another, flaws and all.

Loss is central to the local church experience. When a member passes away or moves, the loss is palpable felt. Even one death can shake a small church family to its cores. Loss is a particularly prominent feature of the small church. . . Small-church wisdom teaches us to find hope even in our losses, to see that God's grace prevails in and through all the empty spaces in our pews. After all, each space in every pew reminds us that we are part of something much larger than ourselves, that we are all members of the eternal family of God that stretches far beyond the limits of this lifetime.

Small churches know this to be true. That's why we are so darn stubborn. We have historical records of God's prevailing grace inscribed into our souls.

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August 2022

Sabbath Day of Rest	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Elder of the Month: Jill Nelson	1 Pray for Barb Park	2	3 9:00 Bible Study	4	5	6 Youth Mini Mission Weekend
7 10:00 WORSHIP 11:00 Refreshments	8 Pray for Jerry and Missy Proise	9 4:00 HAMMA	10 9:00 Bible Study	11	12 Recycling	13
14 10:00 WORSHIP 11:00 Refreshments	15 Pray for Jennifer Robinson, Mites, Parker	16 10:45 Meals on Wheels	17 9:00 Bible Study	18 6:30 Presbytery Meeting	19	20
21 10:00 WORSHIP Change for Change Offering 11:00 Refreshments 11:30 New Member Inquiry Class	22 6:00 Session Pray for Logan Robinson	23 8:00-4:00 Vermilion County Preschool Screening	24 9:00 Bible Study	25	26 Recycling	27
28 10:00 WORSHIP 11:00 Refreshments 11:30 New Member Inquiry Class	29 H.A. Schools First Day of Class Pray for Karen Root	30	31 9:00 Bible Study	Sept 1 Sweetcorn Festival	Sept 2 Sweetcorn Festival	Sept 3 Sweetcorn Festival

General Fund Giving

	2022	2021	2020
Given as of July 31	\$56,361	\$54,879	\$65,208
Total for Year	tbd	\$95,085	\$100,396
Pledged for Year	\$92,000	\$108,458	\$112,345

Living with Gratitude

Words to the congregations from the Apostle Paul:

“As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as

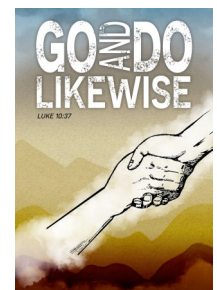
the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed your were called in the one body.

And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” - Colossians 3:12-17



Change for Change

Our **June 19** mission offering was \$159 and supported the environmental clean-up work that the Keep Vermilion County Beautiful organization provides. We are grateful for all they do.



Our **July 17** mission offering was \$190 and supported the our local animal shelter, the Hoopeston Area Rescue Team. We are grateful for the kindness and care they provide to our dogs and cats.

Our **August 21** mission offering will support Save the Lorraine Foundation as it continues to restore and operate our historic downtown theater. We are grateful for their work to preserve this landmark.

Golden Ticket for Kids

On the first Sunday of the month, one person receives a \$100 Golden Ticket in their worship bulletin and he or she uses it to support a youth program in town.



The funds are provided by our McFarland City Fund.

The recipients have provided \$100 to support the following youth programs this year: special needs program at Maple School, caring for kids program at the UMC, Infant Needs Center at the Christian Church, youth bowling program at Fast Lanes, back to school supplies at the Multi Agency, and the after-school Project Success program. We’ll keep supporting children and youth programs in our area all year long, one ticket at a time.

McFarland Fund Helping Children

The Session directs the proceeds from the McFarland City Fund to support children and youth programs in the Hoopeston area. About \$20,000 is available for use every year. We are grateful for Dick McFarland’s generous endowment gift and for entrusting us to administer it on his behalf. The following support has been provided so far this year.



John Greer Read to Feed Program	\$200
DACC Scholarships, four for \$1,000	4,000
Golden Ticket for Kids	700
Teen Burn Victim	300
New Skateboard Park at McFerren Park	5,000
HA Softball Association	200
DACC Summer Program for Kids	200
Hoopeston City Pool Passes, Kids in Need	1,000
Back-to-School Shoes for Little Souls	200
Back-to-School Supplies, Multi Agency	1,200
Infant Needs Center, Christian Church	500

Youth Weekend of Service

Our youth will be participating in a Mission Weekend on August 6 and 7. Youth will help with projects as the Hoopeston Public Library, the Hoopeston Multi Agency, and at the Fair Hope Children’s Ministry in Danville. They may wash some windows at the church too. The weekend will also include a meal, devotion, and possible scavenger hunt and movie.



We are grateful for our youth, for all they do, and for our youth director, Sadie Hofer. Plans are being made for additional youth activities for the fall and winter months. May God bless our youth during the upcoming school year and church year.

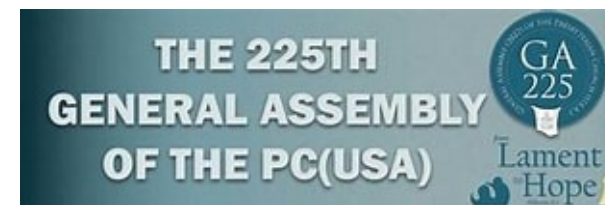
225th General Assembly

The 225th meeting of our denomination’s General Assembly was held June 18 – July 9 using a hybrid format of online and in person gatherings in Louisville, KY. About 380 elders and pastors from churches around the country were called to serve as commissioners to the G.A. and to engage and discern God’s will concerning the complex issues of the day in church and society.

As you know, Presbyterians come from all walks of life and perspectives, but we have a deep tradition of embracing and respecting the discernment of the majority in all matters. A determined spirit of democracy resides among us Presbyterians! We believe the truth of God’s will is more apt to be uncovered by the majority than by the individual. Many denominations operate in much the same way.

We also believe that our love for one another is much more important than our getting our own way on every issue or situation. We take to heart the Bible’s guidance to “seek and speak the truth in love.”

A summary report of the G.A.’s conversations and actions is available in the narthex. - Rev. Wade



New Member Inquiry Class

Rev. Wade will host two-session New Member Inquiry Class after worship on Aug 21 and 28. This is a time to hear more about our church and denomination and for Q&A as well. Church membership is a way to become fully engaged in the blessings our church provides. Let Wade know if you might be attending.

Session Highlights

June 13 called meeting:

- 10 of 10 present
- Heard a proposal from the Community Development Institute non-profit organization, operators of the Federal Head Start Programs in Vermilion, Ford, and Iroquois counties, about the possibilities of leasing space in our facility Head Start.
- Approved engaging in conversation with CDI, reviewing lease agreement draft, and consulting with our attorney with the goal of developing an agreement that works well for both CDI and our church.

July 23 stated meeting:

- 8 of 10 present
- Heard update on the status of the CDI Head Start inquiry, no action taken.
- New Member Class scheduled for Aug 21 and 28.
- Plans made to sort through and clean up basement storage area, discarding items no longer needed.
- Approved McFarland grants: \$1,200 HMA Back to School Supplies, \$200 Shoes for Little Souls, \$2,000 to Memorial Fund for William/Mason Steiner.
- Reviewed a PCUSA General Assembly roundup report. The 225th G.A. was held this summer.
- Reviewed Aug calendar; Pasta Dinner planning.
- Directed Aug 21 Change for Change offering to the Save the Lorraine Foundation.
- Reviewed Nominating Committee plans.
- Received Pastor’s report.
- Received June Finance Report; all is in good order.
- Moved the next called Session meeting to Aug 22.



In the Mailbox

For memorial service:

Thank you so much for the beautiful memorial service for Mom. As was also with Dad's service. They so loved belonging to your church family. So, by your having kindness to my parents, you blessed my heart. I appreciate you all so very much. Thank you. - Matt Smith

For memorial service:

Thank you for the memorial service for Mom. She will be with us in spirit and I know you all will continue to be that church that Mom and Dad loved. I will stay in touch and always pray for you. - Marshall Smith



For reception and gift for seven years as Youth Director:

Thank you so much for the lovely reception and beautiful rose bush. I greatly appreciate the love and support that has been given to me and the youth group in the past seven years. It has been an honor to serve, learn, and grow with the youth of our church. With love and a grateful heart - Kathy Watson

For Change for Change support:

The Legion Auxiliary is so appreciative of your generous donation towards the V.A. in Danville. This will definitely be a great help. Thanks you so much. - Kebby Knake, Legion Auxiliary

For McFarland Fund support (\$200):

The Danville Area Community Foundation's Board of Directors and staff gratefully acknowledge your gift for the College for Kids summer program at our Hoopeston location. Working together, we can make a difference in the lives of children and youth. - Tonya Hill, Executive Director

For Golden Ticket (\$100) and McFarland Fund support (\$1,200):

We are so thankful and blessed to receive your kind and generous contribution to the Hoopeston Multi Agency's Back-to-School Supplies Drive. This a true blessing to the children of our community. - Beth Bray Knecht, Director

Clerk Denounces Latest Shootings

Message by Rev. J. Herbert Nelson, Stated Clerk of the PCUSA denomination, days after the May 24 mass shooting of 19 young children and 2 adults at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.

There comes a point when there are no words. We have seen the pain and devastation that mass shootings have place on families, friends, and communities. We have heard from those same individuals as they have cried out for action to be taken on gun control. We have heard from our politicians on both sides of the political aisle touting their position on this highly debated issue.

We have also seen that despite all of the cries, nothing changes. We go about our lives and wait for the next mass shooting and then wait for the barrage of arguments for and against measures to keep this from happening again.



While we debate the merits of stronger gun laws, parents, siblings, spouses and children are learning to live a new normal, a normal that means living without a loved one. We offer our thoughts and prayers, attend funerals and go back to our lives. But the must go on with an empty place in their hearts.

When will the bloodshed end? When will it be enough for our society and our government to take the necessary steps to end this senseless violence?

I believe hearts are so hardened that God's voice is not being heard. I believe our eyes are closed so that God's healing power is not being seen. But I also believe that God is still here and it is up to us to hear God's call.

Rev. J. Herbert Nelson,
Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



Condolences

Our condolences go out to the family and friends of Karl Steiner (40) who died on July 5. Are hearts are broken. We have lost a friend.

We pray for Karl's wife, Holly, for their boys, William and Mason, and for the rest of the family. May God be with them.



A funeral service was held on July 11 at Anderson Funeral Home with burial at the East Lynn Cemetery. A luncheon was held at our church afterwards. Thanks to all who helped with the luncheon.

Memorials in honor of Karl may be given to:

- Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois, 435 Limestone St, Indianapolis, IN 46202-2819
- Riley Children's Hospital of Indiana, P.O. Box 3356, Indianapolis, IN 46206
- Steiner Children Memorial Fund at the Frederick Community Bank, 102 S. Second St, P.O. Box 36, Cissna Park, IL 60924

Karl actively participated in the entire life of our congregation. He worshipped regularly, was ordained as an Elder, and served in Christmas programs and at Pasta Dinners. Karl had a heart for service in the church and we are eternally grateful for his kindness, generosity, and friendship.

Karl was the co-owner of Steiner Farm Drainage, where he worked alongside his father and brother. He served on the Rankin Fire Protection District, the Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association, and as an auxiliary officer for the Hoopeston Police Department. We are grateful for his gift of public service as well.

The Lord is your keeper.

The Lord is your shade at your right hand. (Psalm 121)

August Birthdays

05 Jerry Prosisie
10 Melissa Betka
23 Christy Lee

August Anniversaries

08/26/1967 Larry and Gloria Jahn

In Our Prayers

Those who grieve for: Karl Steiner, Sadie Evans (R. Carter's friend), Sharon Blackwell (M. Prosisie's friend), Donna Rich (D. Lankford's sister), Helen Jahn (L. Jahn's sister-in-law), Sally Keith (Joyce Nelson's friend), Eileen Leemon, Sue Davia (D. Dixon's sister), Patti Martin (J. Stump's friend), Judy Clinger (Wade's aunt), Paul Nash (K. Watson's step-father), Joyce Stock (V. Keller's friend), and Roscoe Elmore (K. Watson's uncle).

Those with immediate concerns: Scott Watson, Larry Betka, Linda Martin, Rick Brackmann, Dwight Judy (D. Dixon's friend), Vera Keller, Vickie Anderson (J. Stump's sister), Ann Wise (L. Martin's friend), Landon Potter (S. Burton's cousin), Kathy Grobowski (L. Martin's friend), Sherry Clinton (K. Watson's family), Emma Winslow (G. Morgan's friend), Mark Spidle (J. Stump's friend), Bob Murphy (M. Betka's dad), Tanya Obenland (R. Carter's daughter), Christopher Graham (H. Steiner's nephew), John Schertz (G. Jahn's nephew), Mary Ann Hilleary (R. Carter's sister-in-law), Karla Von Huben (J. Stump's friend), Mike Johnson (R. Carter's friend), Rhonda Miller (Watson's friend), Karen Evans (R. Carter's friends), Marie Seaman (D. Boyer's friend), Lindsay Boyden (C. Lee's friend), Tina Skender (C. Flint's daughter).



Those with long-term concerns: John White, Larry and Jan German (L. Martin's friend), Marcie & A.J. Wright (L. Flint's cousins), Sam Matthews (home fire), Jane Steiner, John Roark (M. Prosisie's friend), John Zollar (E. Donley's brother), Beth Farias (L. Martin's cousin), Sue Burton, Roberto Martinez (R. Carter's friend), Crew Feltner (child with leukemia, K. Kelnhofer's friend), Tina and John Hanson (Vi Hanson's children), Perry Mitchell (T. Hanson's fiancée), Leonard Goldstein (D. Boyer's brother), Patti Root (K. Root's mom), Joyce Cottingham (L. Martin's friend), Mary Kane (K. Root's aunt), Natalie Zollar (E. Donley's niece), Martha Barner, Carole Ronane (J. Stump's friend), Beth Meese (G. Morgan's friend), Sandy Glenn (J. Steiner's cousin), Mason Steiner, Cookie Galloway (B. Schellhardt's sister), Carol Schrepfer (J. Stump's friend), Ian Anderson (J. Stump's nephew), Karen Peterson (D. Dixon's sister), Troy Flint, John Long (D. Dixon's brother), Brian Lemenager (M. Foster's grandson), Rob Burton Family (J. Stump's brother), John Masengale (S. Burton's dad), Lori Egnew Vaughan (G. Morgan's friend) and Sophia Voyda (E. Donley's niece).



Those homebound in assisted living or nursing homes: Marty Kloska, Mike Blankenship, Judy Benjamin, Sam Terrell, and John Haughee.

Those in church leadership: Our Session and Deacons, Rev. Wade, Rev. Ann, Rev. Ruth Santana-Grace and Rev. Shavon Starling-Louis (General Assembly Co-Moderators), Rev. J. Herbert Nelson (G.A. Clerk), Rev. Jean Wollenberg (Presbytery Moderator), Rebecca Blair (Lead Presbyter).