

From the Pastor

These past few days of delightful weather have been a wonderful gift after long stretches of unusually hot weather. This shift – increasing heat – has been coming on us for a few decades. The climate of Planet Earth changed who knows how many times before humans ever came along, and is no doubt continuing to do so alongside whatever humans are contributing to climate change. Most - not all! - scientists agree, though, that we have been the source of drastic changes in God's creation.

Right now, very often, it seems that our decisions about the climate grow out of urgency and avoiding disaster. Many scientists have run mathematical models and agree that if the right proportion of us made the right kind of changes, we could actually make a difference to the health of our planet. So we can add the possibility of having an impact to guidelines of urgency and avoiding disaster.

Avoiding disaster and making changes because of urgency means we haven't been tending to something along the way. For example, it was once urgent for me to get a cake out of the oven that had been baking for hours and was currently sending up smoke. (I wish I was making this up.) If something isn't pressing us for immediate response, we forget, and we become neglectful, not thinking about the ramifications of our actions. For example, that not putting a timer on the cake might lead to your smoke alarm going off.

Lately it occurred to me to think differently about how I respond to climate change. The climate won't change because I think differently, but my response could change. So I've been thinking recently in terms of love and service. In other words, stewardship.

Recycling becomes a gift for stewardship, doesn't it? We recycle out of love for God's creation. It doesn't fix everything, but it is a response of love and thanksgiving. Especially when we can connect directly with recycling

centers that turn our used cartons or bottles or plastic into new things, like park benches. There are innovators around the world turning garbage and trash of all sorts into things like bricks for building homes. And there are millions of people around the world who are in need of the shelter Jesus commanded us to provide for those without. (Matthew 25)

Love and service. I think we need to remind ourselves that these are the defining marks and boundaries of stewardship. Stewardship is not a stop-gap: stewardship does not come into the picture when things have gone badly, or when we're running out of resources. Stewardship, I think, is how we *begin*. Stewardship is one of those aspects of our lives that can carry us through changing times and circumstances, because stewardship is the response of love and service, which always adapts to the object of love.

We can think about how we treat nature, God's creation, for example. We can certainly consider how love and service might shift how we think about our financial resources (as such thinking has done for a long time). But the stewardship that popped into my imagination this morning is how we steward each other.

What if we stewarded the earth and each other and our resources following the model of the Lord who is our shepherd? A good image, of a steward, I think, would be Psalm 23, which tells us so much about God's love and service to us. This is just some of how the Lord stewards us. The Lord:

- is our shepherd
- makes us lie down in green pastures
- leads us beside still waters
- restores our souls
- is with us and comforts us
- prepares a table before us
- anoints our heads

If we are to be people of God, disciples of Christ, our stewardship of our neighbors needs to be like God's stewardship of us. As does our stewardship of our finances and God's creation.

It may be a lot harder than we think to grasp this. It entails remembering that each other person is no less (and no more) important to God than we are. Each other person has their own calling from God, their own gifts and talents and quirks in a unique array. Each other human being we encounter or hear about has a unique dignity granted by God: when we look at any human being - any human being - we are looking at God's holy creation, someone God has created in God's own image.

I forget this a lot, I am mortified to say. Especially when people are far removed from me. They may be geographically far away, or far away on the other side of an issue. People I don't see, don't hear much about, people easy to ignore.

Of course, me forgetting this doesn't change how precious each human being is to God! When Christ came that all might have life and have it abundantly - lived to the fullest - Christ came because God so loved *the world*. (John 10 and John 3.) So when I neglect others for any reason in any way I am neglecting God's holiness. I am neglecting God's image, and if I am treating them poorly, writing them off, thinking of them with disdain or condescension, accepting their loss of life as collateral damage, etc., I am treating Jesus Christ himself in the exact same way. (Matthew 25)

This holds for resources and the earth as well. When we neglect the earth God created, or our resources, for any reason in any way we are neglecting God's holiness. But if we look at it from the other side, it means that *God gives us - us! - things to take care of for the Lord!* God asks us to be stewards, agents for the Triune God in the here and now.

Maybe in the coming days you can ponder at least one thing you can add to what you do that shows love and service for God's creation and people - which is love and service for God.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. -Michelle

Kathy Staddon forgot to say...

When I preached on August 10th, I meant to call your attention to this paragraph in the bulletin from Kathleen Norris' book, *Dakota*. But I forgot...so here it is. I love it. See you in church!

Why Come to Church?

By Kathleen Norris

On the Sunday mornings when I found it difficult to leave a warm bed, or when my doubts were much stronger than my faith, I had to remind myself of why it was I needed to go. It's the one place I know where I am allowed to sing in public, no matter what my voice sounds like, and where I receive a blessing just for showing up. Even more important, it is a place set aside from the noise and relentless commerce of the world for giving thanks for all that is larger than myself. I can join a ragtag band of other people and I praise the God who made and sustains us, and who every week renews our hope that a loving and creative spirit is at work in us, and in the whole creation. Like nothing else I know, it brings me back to my senses.

Friends and Family News

Julie William's husband Tony had hip replacement surgery recently and is recovering, but that didn't stop her from providing delicious goodies for fellowship after the August 10th worship, together with Linda Comingore. Thank you Julie and Linda!

Tod Davisson is recovering from foot surgery.

What happened at Session?

Call to Order

Voted to approve the Clerk's Report. *MSA*

From the Pastor's Report

Emergency preparedness supplies have been received. With Kristi's help, Bethany organized and stored the supplies in four locations: church office, women's bathroom, sanctuary, and basement.

After conversation with personnel, Pastor Michelle will take her two weeks of study leave between September 8 and 22nd. Jennifer Burns Lewis will fill the pulpit on September 14th and Kathy Staddon will fill the pulpit on September 21st.

New Business:

1. Ratified email vote to approve Prairie Arts Councils use of Fellowship Hall during Art Camp
2. Ratified email vote to approve Shelly Estimate for air conditioning
3. Motion to appoint Karen Craig and Rick Comingore to an *ad hoc* committee for the sole purpose of developing procedures for our financial life, so that a finance committee and the session know how to oversee our stewardship.

Property.....Kristi Slaby

On August 4th, Shelly Heating and Cooling was notified to proceed with installation of a new sanctuary air conditioner for \$12,230. There has been a shortage of refrigerant which is required for installation. The refrigerant was found on Tuesday the 12th. Installation will begin next Tuesday the 19th. A new larger access hole in chapel ceiling will not be required, access will be through the existing return air event.

Daniel Lewis, Rodney Lewis's son, found a large plaque in Rodney's possessions and brought it to the church. It is leaning against the wall just inside the fellowship hall. It is dated 1960 and commemorates the new building addition, fellowship hall and offices, as the Education Building. The building committee consisted of John Hopkins, La Marr Courtright, Nell Murry, Fern Marsh, Florence Kirk, Edward Loy, Raymond McKay, Walter Randle, and Keith Padgitt. The pastor was Charles Filson. The plaque will be placed in the basement unless session instructs otherwise.

Worship/Music..... Suzanne Jordan

Sunday attendance for July was 61, with communion served to 19 by Elders Kristi Slaby and Suzi Jordan. Naomi Hamstra played piano in Stephanie's absence. Tony Butler filled the pulpit while Michelle was away fulfilling other obligations. Church service continues in the Lounge while awaiting air conditioning in the sanctuary.

Covenant Conversation: Indiana: "A Deeper Welcome, A Wider Table"

Saturday, September 27, 2025

Northminster Presbyterian Church 1660 Kessler Boulevard East Drive,
Indianapolis, IN, 46220 United States

Covenant Conversation: Indiana *"A Deeper Welcome, A Wider Table"*

On Saturday, September 27, Presbyterians across Indiana will gather at Northminster Presbyterian Church (1660 Kessler Blvd. E Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46220) for Covenant Conversation: Indiana from **10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (EDT)**.

Registration and refreshments begin at 9:30 a.m. The event is co-sponsored by the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, Northminster Presbyterian Church, and the Presbyteries of Ohio Valley, Wabash Valley and Whitewater Valley.

This daylong educational program will equip church members and leaders with resources to better understand, include and affirm LGBTQIA+ neighbors. Together, we'll discuss theological and practical ways to widen the church's welcome for all people of God.

Registration is \$20.00 and includes lunch.

To register and for a schedule of the event's activities, go to

<https://www.covnetpres.org/events/covconind>

Discount for groups of 3 or more from the same congregation and for those with financial need.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CALENDAR



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 	2 Bible Study 4:00 pm	3 Youth 5:00pm-6:30pm	4 Bridge Club 12:00pm	5	6. AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7:00 pm
7 Worship 9:30 am Communion	8 Book Club 4:00 pm Michelle on study leave until the 22nd —	9 Bible Study 4:00 pm	10 Youth 5:00pm-6:30pm	11 Bridge Club 12:00pm Forestry Council 5:00pm	12	13 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7:00 pm
14 Worship 9:30 am Fellowship	15	16 Bible Study 4:00 pm	17 Youth 5:00pm-6:30pm	18 Bridge Club 12:00pm	19	20 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7:00 pm
21 Worship 9:30 am	22	23 Bible Study 4:00 pm	24	25 Bridge Club 12:00pm	26	27 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7:00 pm
28 Worship 9:30 am	29	30 Bible Study 4:00 pm				

Hymn For The Hurting

by Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate

Everything hurts,
Our hearts shadowed and strange,
Minds made muddied and mute.
We carry tragedy, terrifying and true.
And yet none of it is new;
We knew it as home,
As horror,
As heritage.
Even our children
Cannot be children,
Cannot be.
Everything hurts.
It's a hard time to be alive,
And even harder to stay that way.
We're burdened to live out these days,
While at the same time, blessed to outlive them.
This alarm is how we know
We must be altered —
That we must differ or die,
That we must triumph or try.
Thus while hate cannot be terminated,
It can be transformed
Into a love that lets us live.
May we not just grieve, but give:
May we not just ache, but act;
May our signed right to bear arms
Never blind our sight from shared harm;
May we choose our children over chaos.
May another innocent never be lost.
Maybe everything hurts,
Our hearts shadowed & strange.
But only when everything hurts
May everything change.



First Presbyterian Church
220 North Cullen Street
Rensselaer, Indiana 47978

**Do you have any interesting ideas for the newsletter?
Come share them with me and we can talk about
them! ~Pastor Michelle**

**Don't throw your Sunday bulletin away! Take it home
and reread the prayers, scripture and extra things on
the last pages. Maybe you'll want to cut them out and
stick some on your fridge.**