

From the Pastor

Have you ever had to get your sea legs while on a boat? The few times I have tried to walk on a boat I have sworn to myself NEVER AGAIN!!!

That's because I'm one of those folks who struggled with getting my sea legs, and I didn't love being on a boat enough to stick with it. But I know people who can walk on a sailboat with no problem, or a small cruise ship, or stand up without falling on a fishing boat.

Getting your sea legs is finding stability on a vessel that is not only moving forward, but is also rocking back and forth in a rhythm you can't predict. Some folks are like me, I guess: I just struggle to find the balance.

Steadiness and balance go hand in hand, and implied in the words is the notion that we're not in control of how things operate in our world. Our bodies learn (supposedly) how to balance and adjust on a boat when it is wavering. There's also yoga, a discipline about balance: the more one practices yoga, the more one's muscles become used to adjusting to be stable. In some of the scenes from the gospels, storms become deeply unsettling for the disciples because they can't control the boat they're in. They have some balance, surely, but not for terrible storms that they aren't ready for.

The New Testament writers were aware of the need for steadiness and balance, for stability. But stability is not a quality of our lives in which we can control our circumstances or how our circumstances unfold. Stability is not found in things going the way we think they should. Because the worshiping communities were some distance from the

apostles, the letters the apostles wrote were an encouragement to remain steady: not in control of things, but responsive to God's calling in any situation. Stability is always coming back to love of God and neighbor as the touchstone that allows us to remain firm and steadfast as people of faith, even in a world that is sometimes openly hostile to Jesus.

Our stability is not in government, not in money or any other institution of power, not in status or beauty or education. Our stability is love. In Ephesians 4 we read:

Christ himself granted that some are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. *We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.*

Or, more exactly our stability is love grounded in God and in the body of Christ. It is a stability that we create together, with Christ. We create it by growing into maturity as disciples who live more and more deeply out of Christ and not our own

“deceitful scheming.” We respond to God’s love by becoming an ever more complex and vast community of love: “as each part is working properly, [we promote] the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”

This is our stability in a life packed to the gills with changes. Constant, unexpected changes that seem to unfold from all the other changes. God is love; God is our stability, and God’s love is our stability in the body of Christ, no matter the changes.

All of this makes sense to me but it doesn’t yet address *why* stability matters. Stability matters because the world is full of terrible and beautiful things and constant change, and because we have a very particular call. From the beginning of Ephesians 4:

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, *beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called*, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to *maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*: there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

Our calling is to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. To clarify, we are to maintain *our* unity as the body of Christ *in* the bond of peace. We do this because “God so loves the world.” (John 3:16)

In addition, our mission is in this world God so loves, *for* this world God so loves. This is the world in which and for which Jesus taught us that when we see someone who is hungry or homeless we feed them or shelter them. (Matthew 25) The world God sends us into to serve is one in which some changes are good and support growth and rootedness, and in which sometimes changes

are destructive of body and soul, vindictive, or violent.

So our steadiness is not rarefied, like an orchid that is rooted and grows well in a specialized greenhouse that protects it from the elements. We are in a world in which the elements, whether from human beings or creation itself, are often chaotic. Steadiness is part of our daily call as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Since our existence in the world God created and loves is key to who we are, we might ask ourselves some questions:

-How does my response to conversations or events, or to daily news from here and around the world evoke reflection in me? Is it second nature to me to immediately consider “how do I respond in such a way as to reveal my love for God and my love for my neighbor as myself?”

-When something in the world destroys the lives or livelihoods of human beings, how do I react? How *should* I react? Whether it is a flood that wipes out a small town or ICE agents taking a nursing infant away from its mother or laws designed to oppress LGBTQIA+ people, how does Jesus want my heart to react? If I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, how shall I think? How might Jesus react to whatever situation we’re considering?

Stability is not just about us as individuals and our belief in God. Stability that makes it possible to live “in a manner worthy of our calling” is something that we live out together, in Jesus Christ, in this world God loves.

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, while we are apart.

-Michelle

What happened at Session?

July Session was opened with prayer and devotion.

1. Rick Comingore as guest to discuss finances/budget for each Session meeting.

Panic button costs. Two panic buttons that alert the local Police

2. Email vote to change July communion from July 6 to July 13, 2025,

3. Worship space will remain in the Lounge for the time being until air conditioning is replaced in the sanctuary.

4. Bethany to receive training in QuickBooks that she thinks would help her learn and become comfortable using the program

5. The Directory is being printed when time permits.

6. Email vote for signed facility use form from the Forestry Council to use the lounge on Tuesday, June 24th from 1:00pm-7:00pm

Mission: Julie reported the Pentecost offering from June. Also, the youth group has already selected their choices from the Presbyterian Giving Catalog for 2025

The committee will ask the congregation to fill buckets for the Rensselaer Fire Department of thick gloves, socks, and other cold weather gear they can use.

Kathy Staddon will report in August on KIVA, a non-profit organization that makes microloans around the world.

Property: The sanctuary air conditioner failed on Sunday June 22. It is the original unit installed 29 years ago. It has developed a gas leak, probably a crack in some of the copper tubing. We have 2 contractors preparing estimates, one for complete replacement and the other for repairing the existing system. The indoor part of the system is located above the ceiling in the chapel. If the system is replaced, a larger access hole in the ceiling may be required since newer units are larger.

Website:

In addition to regular weekly updates, updated website with VBS info making registration forms available to download

Streaming:

Tested lower 3rd overlay features (displaying the lower 3rd of slides on top of the camera feed)

Testing camera adjustments shortcut keys to brighten up the liturgist area of platform

Other:

Submitted 1st drafts emergency exit route signs

Trained Michelle and Bethany on the Mass Announcement Service

Worship and Music: Paraments were changed to green for Ordinary Time. Sally Berger and Naomi Hamstra were substitutes for Stephanie in her absence.

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



2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7:00 pm
3 Worship 9:30 am Communion	4 Book Club 4:00pm	5 Bible Study 4:00 pm	6	7 Bridge Club 12:00pm Forestry Council 5:00pm	8	9 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7:00 pm
10 Worship 9:30 am Fellowship	11	12 Bible Study 4:00 pm	13	14 Bridge Club 12:00pm	15	16 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7:00 pm
17 Worship 9:30 am	18	19 Bible Study 4:00 pm Dance Magic 3:30pm	20	21 Bridge Club 12:00pm	22	23 AA- Alcoholics Anonymous 7:00 pm Ministry Formation Meeting 10am-4pm
24 Worship 9:30 am	25	26 Bible Study 4:00 pm Dance Magic 3:30pm	27 Youth Starts 5:00pm- 6:30pm	28 Bridge Club 12:00pm	29	30 AA-Alcoholics Anonymous 7:00 pm
31 Worship 9:30 am						



First Presbyterian Church
220 North Cullen Street
Rensselaer, Indiana 47978

**** SAVE THE DATE ****



From 1966 ...

**A time to remember and give
thanks
for all that has been
and all that is yet to be.
Details to follow ...**



To 2025 ...

**Saturday, September 6, 2025
10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Celebrate the
60-year ministry of
Geneva Center.**