



The Spire First Baptist Church, Ames, Iowa

Pastor's Word: Re-Opening News

A Re-Opening Committee has been formed to lead us in planning for a return to in-person worship services and other gatherings. The committee held its first meeting June 23. Members include Wes Johnson, Mindy Phomvisay, Patricia Izbicki, Elizabeth Stegemöller, Aaron Stegemöller, Joe Parrish, Moderator Jere Maddux, and Pastor Dave Russell. In forming the committee, we took care to include representatives from trustees, deacons, and the worship committee as well as those involved in Christian Education, familiar with safety and sanitation procedures, with technology skills, and with ties to the university.

In preparation for the first meeting, the group read a number of documents including recommendations of health authorities and denominational and ecumenical task forces, as well as the experience of other congregations. At the first meeting, the committee listed the various issues and questions that surround meeting in person again. The list was fairly long; re-opening the building is a lot more difficult than closing it. The committee was in agreement on some key matters:

- When we return to in-person worship, we will want to continue to offer a virtual option. There are many at-risk persons in our church, and we understand that some may not feel safe about returning to the sanctuary until there is a vaccine.
- Given the recent spike in COVID cases in Ames, it seems wise to wait until after school starts to see what affect the return of students has on cases in the community before determining the next step.
- In-person worship will be different when we return, and group singing is especially problematic. This is a matter of concern for us.
- The “road to re-opening” may come in steps. We can foresee having worship outdoors for a time when we return, as this is much safer than gathering indoors. After that, the next step might be a “soft” indoor re-opening.
- All of the plans we make are tentative; as we have seen, conditions can change quickly.
- Loving our neighbors is the guiding principle behind our response to the virus.

Committee members are researching a number of issues, including possibilities for music, technology needs, sanitizing procedures, a congregational survey, the capacity of our sanctuary with necessary distancing, and more. If you have comments or questions, please contact one of the committee members.

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
200 Lynn Ave.
Ames, IA 50014-7188
Worship Sundays 9:45 am

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First Baptist Church is an open and caring family of faith where worship is central and faith engages both heart and mind. We are warmly ecumenical, delight in our diversity, and cherish our Baptist heritage of freedom. We are called by Christ to share God's love with the campus, community, and the world.

As we seek to follow the way of Jesus, we welcome all people to fully participate in our fellowship: all ages, colors, backgrounds, political affiliations, and physical and mental abilities; male and female, gay and straight, rich and poor, single and married. We are all God's children, and all are welcome here.

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Following the Re-Opening Committee meeting, our deacons met and made the decision to continue with Zoom worship through at least the end of August. We hope to be able to meet in person this fall, possibly beginning with outdoor services.

I have to say that after the decision to continue with our current format through the summer, I felt a bit disheartened. “Bummed” is actually the word. I know that this was the right decision; it wasn’t even a hard decision. But as the pandemic drags on, being apart does not get any easier. We miss being together. We miss the handshakes and hugs and meals and close fellowship.

Having said that, I want to say how proud I am of this congregation. We have pulled together in an amazing way through a difficult time. Folks are caring for one another and for their neighbors, and our ministry has continued – and even grown in some ways. I know that many of you have contributed to local agencies that provide food, shelter, and other assistance to people in need during this difficult time. We are reaching out with cards and phone calls and grocery runs and technology help. And I received an email from a person living in another state who said that one of the nicest things about the pandemic was being able to worship with our church.

Thank you for all that you do, and I look forward to seeing you this Sunday!

Blessings,
Dave

Emma Phomvisay Joins Music Staff



Since our worship went online in March, Emma Phomvisay has been a vital part of our worship team. She serves each week as song leader and soloist, and plays violin in worship as well. Worshiping via Zoom is new to all of us, and Emma has stepped up in a big way to help carry our worship forward in this challenging time.

In recognition of her contributions, the worship committee has named Emma as our Summer Music Associate. For a number of years, we have regularly offered small scholarships to college students who sing in our choir, thanks to the Lee Hoover Fund. Emma is not yet a college student, but this is not a typical time, and she has received a scholarship from this fund.

Emma will be a junior at Roosevelt High School in Des Moines, where she participates in Show Choir, Chamber Choir, and the Bridges to Harmony Gospel Choir. She is also a part of Honors Orchestra and theater productions at Roosevelt. She enjoys hiking and kayaking and is a counselor for Day Camps at Pilgrim Heights Camp. (She would have been a counselor for our Music Camp this summer had it not been canceled.) She recently received her lifeguard license and is also a lifeguard at Pilgrim Heights.

Beyond all of that, Emma is wonderfully kind, caring, and fun to be around. We are so thankful that Emma is willing to share her musical gifts with us!

In Christian Sympathy

We were saddened to learn of the death of **Viola Thomas**. She died on April 25 at age 90. After moving to Colo following her husband's death, Viola looked for an American Baptist church and she and her son Douglas joined us in Ames, attending our church for several years until declining health made the drive to Ames difficult for her. We remember her smile and warm presence. Our love and prayers are with Doug and the family.

Our love and prayers are with Ruth McCully and family on the death of **John McCully** on June 25. John was raised Southern Baptist in Mississippi. He came to Ames and taught English at Iowa State, focusing especially on medieval literature and also teaching a course on the Bible. John and his family were members of our church and he taught our University Church School Class for a number of years. In 1978, he became Roman Catholic and eventually, after retiring from Iowa State, was ordained a deacon and served at St. Cecilia.

He and Ruth were especially involved in preparing couples for marriage, and John led Bible studies in the parish. Seeing the needs of the Latino community, he learned Spanish and began ministering to that community, which eventually led to a weekly Mass.

John was always a wonderfully kind and gentle presence. Years after becoming Catholic, John came back and preached here at First Baptist a few years ago. John was a resident at the Northcrest Health Care Center.

Weekly Devotion **Thursdays 6:30 pm via Zoom**

We invite you to join us on Thursdays at 6:30 pm for our weekly check-in time with devotion and prayer. Starting July 2, we will be viewing and sharing conversation around an interview with Ibram X. Kendi on being anti-racist. Kendi talks about uprooting injustice and inequality and replacing it with love. You can follow the regular Sunday morning Zoom link to join us.



Virtual Coffee Shop **Tuesdays 2:00 pm via Zoom**

Grab a cup of coffee, or whatever suits your fancy, and join other FBC folks as we sit down at the coffee shop and visit. No agenda, no program – just a time to connect and chat, which a lot of us could use during this time.

July Anniversaries

Brian and Stephanie Starrett	4
Alex and Serena Parrish	9
Rosemary and Patrick Coffey	16
Dale and Jill Grauman	19
John and Lorrie Whitaker	23

July Birthdays

Wayne Shireman	2
Nancy Maydew	3
Chris Parrish	3
Adde Stegemöller	3
Julie Johnston	5
Michael Leininger	6
Jerilyn Logue	7
Rita Parrish	7
Lee Davidson	13
Mary Anderson	15
Joyce Davidson	16
Mindy Phomvisay	19
Aiddy Phomvisay	21
Kitty Vang	22
Randy Lambert	23
Jon Pritchard	23
Jan Thompson	23
Katy Seidel	24
David Starrett	24
Brian Parrish	29
Dean Seidel	29



In lieu of the annual World Mission Conference held at Green Lake, American Baptist International Ministries will hold a series of World Mission Conference Live Streams on **July 14, 16, 21, 23, and 28 from 5:00 pm – 5:30 pm each evening**. When you register, you can choose to participate in 1 Live Stream or all 5. Each Live Stream will feature at least two of our global servants (missionaries). This is a great opportunity to learn about those who are representing us in missions around the world. For more information and a list of global servants participating on each date, [visit the IM website](#).

Worship Notes



FBC now has a [YouTube Channel](#)! Videos of some of our worship services are available along with other videos. Check it out!

Our choir continued to meet through the month of June on Zoom – to visit and stay connected, as singing is not possible via Zoom. The choir is putting together another **virtual choir video**, so stay tuned!

We will celebrate **communion** on July 5. You will need to have your own bread and juice (or something similar) on hand.

On August 2, we will have our annual **service at Brookside Park** together with Ames UCC and First Christian Church. Only this time, none of us will actually be at the park, and this will be a virtual service. We look forward to worshipping again with friends from FCC and the UCC!

Card Shower



Note from Carol Mallgren: Former Member Margo Mallgren is having her 80th birthday on July 15th. We would love to 'shower' her with love via birthday cards this year.

Please send your birthday greetings to:
Margo Mallgren
322 W. Jefferson
Winterset, IA 50273

July

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 6:30p Weekly Devotion	3	4 
5 9:45a Worship, Communion	6	7 2:00p Virtual Coffee Shop	8	9 6:30p Weekly Devotion	10	11
12 9:45a Worship 11:00a Library Class	13	14 2:00p Virtual Coffee Shop 5:00p World Mission Conf. 7:00p Re- Opening Committee	15	16 5:00p World Mission Conf. 6:30p Weekly Devotion	17	18
19 9:45a Worship 11:00a Racial Justice Conversation	20	21 2:00p Virtual Coffee Shop 5:00p World Mission Conf.	22	23 5:00p World Mission Conf. Conference 6:30p Weekly Devotion	24	25
26 9:45a Worship 11:00a Library Class	27	28 2:00p Virtual Coffee Shop 5:00p World Mission Conf.	29	30 6:30p Weekly Devotion 7:15p Deacons Meeting	31  6:30p Virtual Trivia Night	



Join the **AMOS CCC Campaign** to reflect on lessons from history and the 1930s New Deal, share stories about the pressures facing our communities today, and build our capacity to create more just communities in the months and years to come.



First Baptist will hold a CCC Workshop for members and friends of our church this summer – be watching for details. You may contact the church office or Barbara Woods for more information.

www.amosiowa.org

AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy) is a growing broad-based organization of 39 faith and community organizations throughout Central Iowa. We seek to channel individual action into a responsible and powerful organized force for the common good.

Responding to Racial Injustice

As our nation continues to come to grips with its long legacy of racism, our church will be providing opportunities for study, reflection, and conversation. As Cathy Parrish shared in last month's Spire, our church library has a number of books for all ages, many just added, addressing matters of race and injustice. You can call the church to set up a time to stop by the library, or contact Cathy. We can deliver books to you!

Our **Thursday night devotion** will spend the next three weeks (July 2, 9 and 16) watching and discussing portions of a TED interview with [Ibram Kendi](#). Kendi is a historian, leading scholar of race and discriminatory policy in America, and author of best-selling books including *Stamped from the Beginning* (winner of the National Book Award) and *How to Be an Anti-Racist*. In this interview he talks about how to uproot injustice and inequality and replace them with love. We will look at short (around 15 minute portions) of the interview each week.



Then on Sunday, July 19, we will have a **forum following worship** – as we typically do a few times over the summer. We will watch and discuss a presentation from the Baptist Joint Committee's annual luncheon held June 26, featuring a conversation with [Robert P. Jones](#) on "White Supremacy and American Christianity." Jones is the author of the forthcoming book *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*, and *The End of White Christian America*, which won the 2019 Grawemeyer Award in Religion.

As is the case for much of what we are doing right now, these virtual gatherings will happen via Zoom. We look forward to opportunities to reflect and consider together how things really are and how we can work to make things better.



Our "prairie strip" at the back of the parking lot is in bloom!

First Baptist Church
200 Lynn Avenue
Ames, Iowa 50014-7188

Our Church Staff:

Rev. Dr. David Russell	Pastor
Mindy Phomvisay	Director of Music
Dr. Patricia Izbicki	Associate Director of Music
Emma Phomvisay	Summer Music Associate
Hope Deets	Office Manager
Kathy Greiner	Custodian

TRIVIA NIGHT

During this time of staying at home, we are nevertheless finding ways to stay connected and have fun. Around 30 people participated in last month's Trivia Night. Congratulations to the winning team of Jack Cleasby, Zoe Russell, Susan Russell, and Martha Russell (Team name: Jack Russell Terriers). **We will hold our next Trivia Night on Friday, July 31 at 6:30 pm** via Zoom. The questions come from a range of general knowledge topics, with a few "churchy" questions thrown in. We will form teams, and the teams can discuss their answers to each round's questions in Zoom breakout rooms. We will use the same Zoom link that we use on Sunday mornings. Contact Pastor Dave for more information.