

PRESBY-NOTES

September 2026

It is the mission of First Presbyterian Church of Beatrice to know Christ, to make Christ known, and to exhibit Christ's love through worship, education, and service.

Paul says, "We have gifts that differ…"

More than forty years ago, when I first began attending First Presbyterian Church, I sat in the back pew. I clearly remember Sarah Novotny asking me one Sunday if I would like to help with Sunday School.

I quickly said no and explained that my son, Zac, wasn't old enough to attend Sunday School. Those of you who remember Sarah probably know that a small thing like the word "no" wasn't going to stop her. She asked how old Zac was. When I told her he would soon be three, apparently that was close enough. Before long, I was part of Sunday School.

And today I no longer have back-row seating. I have thought about that conversation many times over the years. Sarah saw someone who might have something to offer, and she asked.

But as I thought about it while preparing my message for August 23, I realized Sarah's invitation was only the beginning. This congregation has continued to encourage me along the way. When I preached my first sermon, you said kind and encouraging things that gave me confidence to continue. When I decided to attend Synod School as part of becoming a commissioned pastor, the church supported me financially. And when I have come with an idea and said, "What if we tried this?" you have often been willing to say, "Let's give it a try"—and then you have helped make it happen.



Pastor Doris sits in the pew she occupied when she first started attending First Presbyterian in the 1980s.

So my story isn't really just my story. It is part of our story. It is an example of what can happen when a congregation sees gifts in people, encourages them, gives them opportunities to use those gifts and sometimes takes a chance on them.

Paul writes in Romans 12:6, "We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us."

Those words seem especially important for us right now.

During the past month, we have said goodbye to four members of our congregation, ages 102, 100, 93 and 94. Two of of them had served on Session at some point. But their service certainly did not begin or end there. Think of all those years of meetings attended, decisions made, hyms played, school bags sewed, prayers offered, money given, projects supported, meals served, people welcomed and countless acts of service most of us will never know about. They offered their gifts to this congregation, and we are grateful.

When faithful people are no longer with us, however, it is natural to look at the spaces they leave behind and wonder, "Who is going to do all the things they did?" Maybe that isn't quite the right question. Maybe we can't do everything they did. Maybe we don't have the same gifts they had. And maybe God isn't asking us to.

Faithfulness does not mean sameness.

Those who came before us offered the gifts God gave them for the time in which they lived. Perhaps the best way we can honor their faithfulness is not by trying to become them, but by doing what they did: offering ourselves.

God isn't calling us to become the people who came before us. God is calling us to offer who we are now.

That may mean the church changes. Churches often struggle with change. We cherish our traditions and remember the people who made our congregation what it is. But a church is a living body, and living bodies change.

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...according to the grace given to us."

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The question is not simply, "How can we keep everything exactly as it has always been?" The better questions may be:

- **Who has God gathered here now?**
- **What gifts has God given us?**
- **What needs has God placed before us?**
- **And what can we offer?**

In *The Equipping Church*, Sue Mallory says that people need to be "taught and then caught serving the Lord."

I love the idea of catching one another doing ministry because I suspect many of us don't realize how important our contributions are to the work of the body of Christ.

When you call someone who is lonely, that is ministry. When you welcome someone you don't know, that is ministry. When you teach a child, prepare food, make a repair, offer a prayer, give generously, listen to someone who needs to talk, or simply show up when someone needs you, that is ministry.

Maybe we need to become better at noticing those things in one another and saying, "Do you realize what you just did? You have a gift for that."

More than forty years ago, Sarah Novotny did something very ordinary. She asked someone sitting in the back pew to help with Sunday School.

Neither of us could have known where that invitation would lead.

She didn't need to know.

She simply saw something I might be able to offer, and she asked.

As another church year begins, perhaps we can do the same for one another. We can recognize and encourage the gifts we see. We can value the ministries that sometimes seem too ordinary to matter. We can be willing to try something new when God places a new opportunity before us.

And instead of looking at those who came before us and saying, "I can't do what they did," perhaps we can ask a different question: **What can I offer?** Then we can offer it—and trust God with what comes next.

SESSION NEWS

*Sunday School begins September 13 at 9:30am with Super Sunday in Fellowship Hall.

*Everyone is encouraged to sign up for coffee fellowship if you are unable to serve someone will serve for you just let someone from the Worship Committee know.

*The VBS "Road Trip" was held on July 13-15 with 17 children and youth participating.

*The asbestos removal for the lift will take place soon and the lift construction will begin soon after.

*We will be applying for a grant from the Beatrice Hospital Foundation to replace our AED

*The fall picnic went well with approximately 100 people attending

*We will serve Warren's Table again on September 1st, if you can help with serving or with food contact Julie Hay or Fran Martin.

*Nominating committee for Session will be meeting soon if you or you know someone who would like to The on the Session let the Nominating Committee know.

*The next stated Session meeting is September 21, 2026 at 6:45pm.

Prayer Concerns
This past month

PRAYERS: Connie Dake; Diane Mayer; Gayle Eskra; and Gary Higgins.

Also: Shannon Fanning; Imogene Johnson (Connie Dake's sister); Norma Mitschler Frank's sister); Janet Parde; and Alyssa Lock (Kristin Jurgens' granddaughter).

Our sympathy is with the family and friends of Verna Tubbs who passed away Monday August 3, in Connecticut.

Our sympathy is with the family of Paul Mitschler, Frank's brother, who passed away Wednesday, August 12, at Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Our sympathy is with the family of Jodee Bolli, sister-in-law of Jesse and Betsy Bolli who passed away Monday, August 17, at Burwell, Nebraska.

The first PW meeting of the year will be September 17 at 9:30 a.m. in the parlor. All women of the church are welcome to join. Women's Bible Study will follow at 10:00 a.m.

Please call or email the church office if you want a study book ordered for you by September 8.

A sign up sheet for serving monthly treats will be on the table at the back of the sanctuary for the nest few weeks. Please pick the month that works for you.

Renee Jones, Moderator

News & Notes

Many thanks to everyone helping and coming to the fall picnic on August 9th. Back Alley BBQ made delicious smoked chicken and made extra food for us to cook at Warren's Table on September 1st. We served 87 people in line and many more that helped in the kitchen. We couldn't have done it without you. Help is always welcome on the 1st Tuesday of the odd numbered months. Come around 4:30-5:00 p.m..

The nominating committee is looking for three people to serve on the session. As Doris's said in a sermon, you can get the opportunity to serve Christ. Please let me, Julie Hay (402-239-1389) know if you are interested in a three year term.

DIRECTOR OF Children & Youth NEWS

Children and youth Sunday School begins with a Super Sunday September 13, at 9:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.



Shirley Mitschler	4
Barbara Harrison	10
Andy Carothers	14
Mercedes Zimmerman	16
Savannah Bolli	20
Diana Jamison	20
Shirley Haner	26

JOIN US FOR PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The first meeting will be on Sept. 17 with the business meeting at 9:30 a.m. and Bible Study at 10 a.m. We hope all women will join us at First Presbyterian Church. Contact the church office at 402-223-3933 to have a book ordered.



Lesson One
Unity in Christ, Wisdom from God



Lesson Two
Connected in Christ



Lesson Three
Freedom in Christ



Lesson Four
Living Freely and the Responsibility to Care



Lesson Five
For the Good of the Community



Lesson Six
"Now You Are the Body of Christ"



Lesson Seven
Christian Love



Lesson Eight
Hope in the Resurrection



Lesson Nine
Connected by God's Love

Will you join us?



ONCE A MONTH, SEPTEMBER THROUGH JUNE, FOR CONVERSATIONS ABOUT

Sept. - We the People

Oct. - Future of Childhood

Nov. - Future of Food

Dec. - Immigration

Jan. - Purposeful Living

Febr. - Loneliness

March - Masculinity

April - Death and Dying

May - Mental Health

June - Art and Society

Please get registered by Sept. 4 by emailing pastordorismartin@gmail.com. Meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month a 6 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church. Hosted in partnership with the Interactivity Foundation

Blessing of the Animals

Join us on Sunday, Oct. 4, at 2 p.m.
on First Presbyterian Church's
Front Lawn as we bless our pets.

A Freewill Offering will be given to the Beatrice Humane Society.



St. Francis loved all creatures and so do we!
For the blessing, please ensure your pets are on a leash or safely in a carrier. Pets need to be current on their vaccinations.