

Murray Presbyterian Messenger

March 2018

Murray Presbyterian Church
P.O. Box 196, Main Street Murray, NE 68409
www.murraypresbyterian.org Tel: (402)235-2754

Featured This Month: Holy Week



Palm Sunday March 25

10:00 a.m. Worship Service
Followed by Palm Sunday Luncheon
Sponsored by the Mission and Outreach Leadership Team

Maundy Thursday March 29

7:00 p.m. Evening Service

Easter Sunday April 1

8:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast
Sponsored by the Worship and Family Life Leadership Team

9:00 Sunday School

10:00 Easter Worship

An Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by
Worship and Family Life Leadership team follows the service



Upcoming Events

March 6

8:30am Breakfast Club, HyVee
Plattsmouth

March 7

1:00pm Afternoon Bible Study

March 18

AED (defibrillator) Class

Immediately following worship

March 25

10:00am Palm Sunday Service
followed by One Great Hour of
Sharing Luncheon

March 29

7:00pm Maundy Thursday Service
Open Hearts Kitchen Volunteering

April 1

EASTER SUNDAY!

8:30am Easter Breakfast

9:00am Sunday School

10:00am Worship Service followed by
Easter Egg Hunt

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Pastor's POV

Pastor McConnell



Like anyone impacted by his ministry, I've been thinking back over my experiences with Billy Graham during the past week. I grew up in a family where he was perhaps the most revered figure in all of Christendom, so for me he's been an indelible fixture on the Christian landscape throughout my entire life. My parents were counselors at his "movie crusades" in our local theater and my mother sang in one of his crusade choirs. I attended my first crusade at Madison Square Garden in 1969. It was the first of a handful of occasions in which I would hear him preach in person--all the way up until I served as a "clergy counselor" at his Meadowlands, New Jersey crusade in 1991.

In one of those strange twists of providence, I happened to be attending a national gathering of evangelical Presbyterian pastors and church leaders in Atlanta, Georgia when news came that Dr. Graham had passed away. One thing that made this setting interesting was that I had just met up with a ministry colleague I hadn't seen in 12 years, and I remembered that he had come to faith at a Billy Graham crusade. He shared the story with me again and it was a poignant reminder of all the multitudes of people, serving the Lord in a myriad number of ways, who can trace their spiritual journey back to a conversion experience at one of these crusade events.

On the afternoon of Dr. Graham's passing, the conference attendees traveled as a group to the Martin Luther King historical site, where we had the opportunity to tour a small museum, visit Dr. King's birthplace and grave, and sit in the pews of the Ebenezer Baptist Church. Again, it was bizarre to be there that day, recalling how Billy Graham and Martin Luther King were probably the two foremost religious figures of my childhood--with different, yet complementary, callings. There has been some debate over whether Graham was as proactive on civil rights issues as he could have been, but there seems to be consensus that he engaged in some rather bold gestures for the time--going so far as to personally remove barriers intended to segregate worshipers at rallies in the South in the 1950's.

On the day the conference ended, I toured the museum at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library. It was another auspicious outing. In one display, there's a photograph, which Graham autographed, of him seated alongside then-Gov. Carter at a prayer breakfast. It was a reminder of how Jimmy Carter had carried Billy Graham's "born again" style of Christianity into the White House and how Graham's influence extended into the upper echelons of power.

Finally, I was struck in retrospect by how the entire gathering I had been a part of that week represented a little ripple effect of Graham's ministry. The newspaper accounts all refer to him as a Southern Baptist preacher (which, technically, he was). But in reality, he had just as many connections to the Presbyterian tradition. He grew up in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. His younger sister is married to Leighton Ford, an honorably retired member of Charlotte Presbytery and their son is a PCUSA minister (and church consultant) based out of Boston. Dr. Graham's late wife, Ruth, was a lifelong Presbyterian, raised on the mission field by Presbyterian missionary parents. Her father subsequently became an esteemed elder statesman in the Southern Presbyterian Church and her brother was pastor of our denomination's largest congregation. Graham maintained his Southern Baptist ministerial credentials by holding membership in the First Baptist Church of Dallas, TX (a city where he never lived), but his family actually worshipped at Montreat Presbyterian, one of the flagship churches among southern Presbyterians.

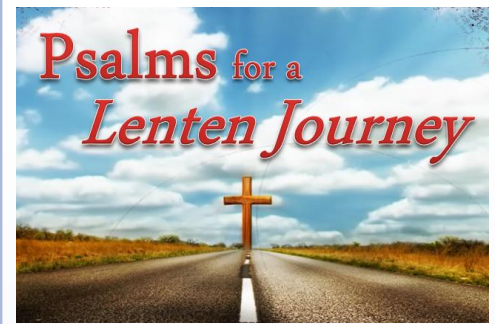
Beyond these personal ties, Graham's ministry also helped lay the groundwork for the resurgence of a moderate form of evangelical Christianity, able to permeate denominational traditions like ours. George Marsden, the leading historian of evangelicalism in America, says in his book *Reforming Fundamentalism*, that Graham believed "he could make marvelous inroads into America's major denominations if he could only jettison the disastrous fundamentalist images of separatism, anti-intellectualism, and contentiousness" (p. 159). One way he pursued that objective was by aiding in the formation and development of two independent evangelical seminaries: Gordon-Conwell outside Boston (where Graham is regarded as a co-founder, by virtue of his role in merging the two predecessor seminaries and acquiring property for the campus) and Fuller Seminary in Southern California (where he was a long-time trustee who played a pivotal role at some crucial junctures). For at least a couple of generations, these two institutions have sent a steady stream of solidly evangelical pastors into the pulpits of Presbyterian churches. To whatever extent a strong biblical witness has been preserved in our denomination, it is due in no small measure to the impact of these schools and their graduates. Appropriately enough, the president of Fuller Seminary (a PCUSA minister) was the keynote speaker at the Atlanta conference I attended, as his predecessor (also a PCUSA minister) had highlighted our inaugural gathering in Minneapolis five years ago.

One of Billy Graham's signature accomplishments was serving as a bridge-builder: between the races, between Christians of the Global North and South (through the Lausanne Movement) and between Christians divided theologically. His objective, as he expressed it early in his ministry, was to "plant the evangelical flag in the middle of the road" and to "combine the best in liberalism and the best in fundamentalism without compromising theologically" (letter by Graham quoted in Marsden, p. 158). In our increasingly polarized religious and political context, some of the truest spiritual heirs of Billy Graham's remarkable ministry are those who try to share the gospel in a winsome fashion and uphold the integrity of the Bible in a spirit of gracious orthodoxy. May that legacy live on!

Adult Education Elective

Invitation to Psalms

Come experience the Psalms in a fresh, new way this Lenten season and tap into their "unexpected power" for your life! Along with the messages during the worship services, there will be a special adult education class featuring a video series put together by Michael Jenkins, a PCUSA minister who serves as dean and Professor of Pastoral Theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. One video segment each week will present a creative interpretation of a Psalm text, through such techniques as dramatic reading, music, dance, and images. Another segment will feature insights from two leading biblical scholars: Julia O'Brien (Prof. of OT Studies at Lancaster Theological Seminary, PA) and Stephen Reid (Prof. of Christian Scripture, Truett Theological Seminary/Baylor Univ., TX). Join us in the sanctuary Sunday mornings at 9am starting February 18.



Worship Opportunities

February 11

"Homesick in Babylon"
(Psalm 137)

February 14

Ash Wednesday
"Roadmap to Repentance"
(Psalm 51)

February 18

"Listen to Your Life"
(Psalm 107)

February 25

"The Longest Journey"
(Psalm 139)

March 4

Women's Retreat Service

March 11

"The Dark Night of the Soul"
(Psalm 42)

March 18

"Seeing Clearly in the Sanctuary"
(Psalm 73)

March 25

Palm Sunday
"Open the Gates"
(Psalm 118)

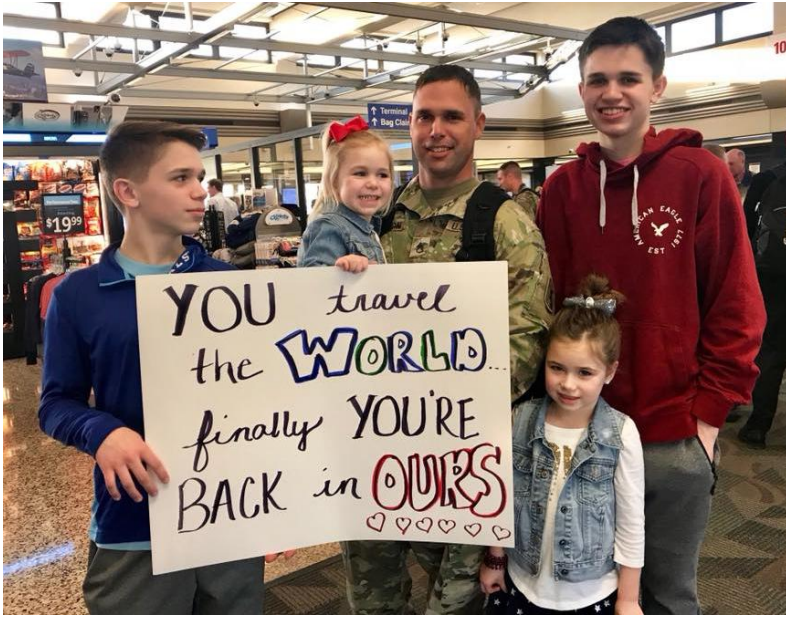
March 29

Maundy Thursday
"When God Was Silent"
(Psalm 22)

April 1

Easter Sunday
"Resistance is Futile"
(Psalm 2)

Welcome Home Jason!



Christian Education

Julie Nickels, Team Leader



Calvin Crest Church Camp Registration Forms are on the back table of the church!

**Youth participate in MPC all church service opportunity
Serving dinner at Open Door Mission, Omaha
April 29, 2018
5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

Further details to follow in the April Newsletter

**NEXT Youth Group Meeting:
May 6th from 5-7pm at MPC, dinner served**

Youth Room Dedication

Sunday Feb. 25th



Leadership Teams

Worship and Family Life

*Sherrill Konrst, Team Leader
Amanda Anderson, Jeff Anderson,
Rebecca Gillaspie, Linnea Hill, and
Laraine Young

Mission and Outreach

*Ann Wieringa, Team Leader
Jennifer Corrick, Sharon Rivas
Stacey McConnell, Diana Puls, Sara
Remmers

Christian Education

*Julie Nickels, Team Leader

Properties and Finance

*David Schwindt, Team Leader
Ray Avidano
Gary Reike

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One Great Hour of Sharing

Support the "Hands Around the World" campaign and help us reach our goal of \$750 for this special offering. One Great Hour of Sharing proceeds are divided almost equally between the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and the Self-Development of People program. Every \$15 raised puts one more piece on the puzzle at the front of the sanctuary. (You can give through the special offering envelopes in the pews, the fishboxes, or by making a donation at the Palm Sunday luncheon).

Save the Date: April 29th



All church mission project at the Open Door Mission in Omaha from 5-7pm. More information and carpooling details will be available closer to the date. To find out how you can join be part of this event contact Ann Wieringa.

Open Hearts Kitchen, Plattsmouth

Thank you to those who have been able to volunteer at Open Hearts Kitchen at First United Methodist Church in Plattsmouth. Murray Presbyterian has committed to serve meals there on the third Thursday of each month. A sign-up sheet is located in the back of the church for individuals and families to reserve a volunteer spot. This important ministry is open to anyone in need of a meal from 4-7pm on the third Thursday of the month.

Next Volunteer opportunity March 15

Session

Moderator

Rev. William McConnell

Clerk of Session

Debra South

Class of 2018

Julie Nickels

David Schwindt

Class of 2019

Sherrill Konfrst

Ann Wieringa

Class of 2020

Ray Avidano

Debra South

Deacons

Class of 2019

Mike South

Jocelyn Deterding

Patricia Hansen

Class of 2018

Jennifer Corrick

Peggy Etherington

Lee Hill



Free copies of **Our Daily Bread** available in the back of the church.

Share one with a friend!

Worship and Family Life Sherrill Konfrst, Team Leader

Breakfast Club March 6 at HyVee Plattsmouth 8:30 a.m.

8:30 a.m. Easter Morning Breakfast and after service Easter Egg Hunt

Come to church EARLY for breakfast including a delicious selection of egg casseroles, cinnamon rolls, and fruit! Stay AFTER church for a children's Easter Egg Hunt immediately following the service.

Be on the lookout for coming details...

June Event: Family Baseball Game Outing to watch the Omaha Storm Chasers play

Spiritual Formation

Afternoon Bible Study February 7

On the first Tuesday of the month join us in the social room at 1:00 p.m. for a topical Bible Study based this year on the book "Growing Older and Wiser," by Dale and Sandy Larsen. It's never too late to join or invite a friend!! See Sherrill Konfrst for more details.

Devotional Prayer Gathering

Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. Anyone is welcome and there are no study materials. Devotions are from *The Prayer Bible* followed by a time of prayer. Come as you are able. Feel free to add your prayer requests to the "prayers" bulletin board in the back of the church. Stick notes are provided for your use. The prayer gathering collects these requests to pray over weekly.

March 7 , March 14 March 21 , March 28

Women's Retreat Highlights

On the first weekend of March 2018 nearly 80 sisters in Christ gathered at Lied Lodge for the 9th Annual MPC Women's Retreat. It was a weekend of respite, reunion, learning and spiritual development.



Worship Music



Healing Service

