

Murray Presbyterian Messenger

February 2018

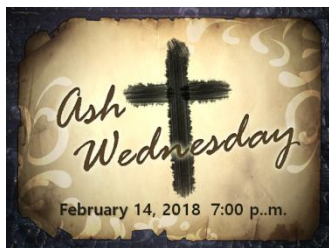
Murray Presbyterian Church
P.O. Box 196, Main Street Murray, NE 68409
www.murraypresbyterian.org Tel: (402)235-2754

Featured This Month:

Women's Retreat: March 3-4 at Lied Lodge, Nebraska City

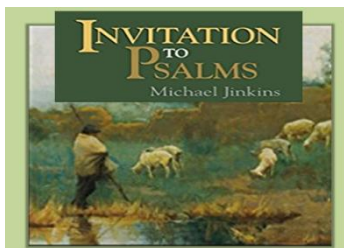
"The Invitation" is the theme of this year's retreat featuring Rev. Suzanne Gorhau, interim pastor of the Carson and Oakland Sharon Presbyterian Churches (Iowa), and Pastor Kathy Noble of Macedonia Assembly of God Church (Iowa). When Jesus encountered people he extended to them an invitation--an invitation to new life and a new way of living. Over the weekend our speakers will introduce us to four women who heard Jesus' invitation and how accepting it changed their lives forever. If you are still interested in attending, there may still be seating available. Please contact Julie Nickels as soon as possible for more details.

The retreat will be followed by a special worship service on Sunday March 5th with presentations by participants.



Begin Lent With Us

Ash Wednesday
February 14th 7:00 p.m.
Murray Presbyterian Church



Adult Education Opportunity

Invitation to the Psalms
DVD series in the sanctuary
Sundays at 9 am starting 2/18



Upcoming Events

February 6

8:30am Breakfast Club, HyVee
Plattsmouth

10:00am Cass County Ministerium

February 7

1:00pm Afternoon Bible Study

February 14

7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service

February 15

Open Hearts Kitchen Volunteering

February 18

Installation of Officers

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Pastor McConnell



Every hit movie needs a great sound track to go along with it. What would *Star Wars* be without John Williams' stirring (and at times foreboding) musical accompaniment? One of my all-time favorite television shows was *Northern Exposure*. But I've never tried to acquire it on DVD. Why? Because there's a crazy copyright dispute that prevents the original soundtrack from being used--and longtime fans of the show who have watched it in this format say that without the music, the experience is ruined.

Just like our favorite movies and TV shows have their own signature soundtracks, the passion narrative that we start focusing on during the season of Lent has a soundtrack as well. It's found in the book of Psalms, the Old Testament songbook of Israel. The Psalms would have accompanied Jesus all the way to the cross--and beyond. As pilgrims made their way to Jerusalem for the Passover festival, they would have been chanting the Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120-134; so-called because going to Jerusalem from any direction involved an uphill climb). The "hosannas" (Heb. *hōshia-nā'* "save now" or "please save") of Palm Sunday were taken right out of Psalm 118 (vs. 25), one of the psalms that the pilgrims would have been singing as they approached the gates of the Holy City. The "hymn" (Mark 14:26) that was sung by Jesus and his disciples at the close of the Passover meal and before they departed the Upper Room for Gethsemane would have been the *Hallel*--taken from Psalms 113-118. The Psalms were on the lips of Jesus as he hung on the cross--all the way up until (according to Luke's Gospel, 23:46) he surrendered his soul to God, using the words of Psalm 34, a traditional Jewish child's bedtime prayer. And after Jesus rose from the dead, his followers came to understand the meaning of that event through the ancient psalms that had talked about the righteous sufferer being vindicated through deliverance from death (Psalm 16), the rejected stone becoming the cornerstone (Ps. 118:22), and the Anointed Son thwarting the rebellious schemes of the nations (Ps. 2). (For examples of such citations, see Acts 2:25-28; 4:11, 25-27.)

Not only do the psalms form the soundtrack to the passion narrative, they also provide the soundtrack for the spiritual life. John Calvin called the Psalms "An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul;" explaining that "there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious that is not here represented as in a mirror." Picking up on the journey theme, expressed most fully in the Psalms of Ascent, church fathers like Augustine said that the Psalms depicted the soul's journey on the way back to God.

So as we enter the Lenten season this month, it seemed to me that there is perhaps no better way to tie together the two primary themes of Lent--the journey with Jesus to the Cross and our own individual process of self-examination and spiritual renewal--than to give our attention to the Psalms. That's what I'll be inviting us to do, starting this month, as we begin a series of Lenten messages entitled "**Psalms for a Lenten Journey.**" (In the interests of full disclosure, the title is borrowed from the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, but I have made extensive modifications in the structure of the series and psalms that are used.) And for those who want to delve deeper, once again there will be a Sunday morning adult class tied to the preaching series. Through the medium of video, we will have the opportunity to do two things. First, we will see some creative renditions of the Psalms. Then, we will listen to a pair of top-notch biblical scholars unpack what they meant in their original setting--and what they might mean for us today.

Whether it's through individual reflection, participation in worship, or by attending the adult class, I hope lots of us will join in this journey with the Psalms--and discover a fresh language of prayer and a new way of talking about our walk with God.

Special Note From the Pastor

On a personal note, I should let you know that I will be out of town one week this month, attending the 2018 National Gathering of the Fellowship Community at Peachtree Presbyterian Church in Atlanta (our flagship church in the PCUSA). The Fellowship Community is a network of gospel-centered, disciple-making, mission-focused churches (and individuals) within the PCUSA. At a time when (quite sadly) many of our evangelical brothers and sisters are feeling compelled to leave the PCUSA, the Fellowship Community is designed (in the words of Paul Detterman, the group's first national director) for those who are "staying in and reaching out." I look forward to being part of this conference and sharing about it with you when I return.

Christian Education

Julie Nickels, Team Leader

Youth News

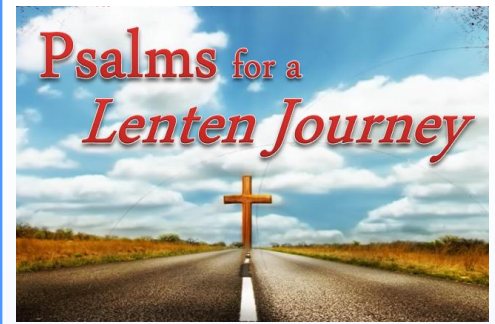
It's a great time to be a youth at Murray Presbyterian! In January our newest members took their places in the pews for the annual Congregational Meeting. There, sophomore Jocelyn Deterding was elected to the office of Deacon and sophomore Mathew South was elected to the 2018-19 Nominating Committee.

Another exciting update has been progressively taking place in the lower level of the church, where a team of dedicated youth and parents have been hard at work developing and implementing the design for a new "youth headquarters". Now, the vibrant paint is dry, the furniture moved in, and the game table assembled for play. During the latest Sunday School session, the kids got to break in a brand new Keurig serving up hot cocoa all around! There are just a few more details to work out like the electricity and structural supports for the new wall mount television installation, and perhaps some more wall art. Once the work is completed there will be a church-wide invitation for everyone to come and check it out, but in the meantime it's okay to take a peek!



The youth are all thankful for the support of the session in designating funds from memorial contributions to make these improvements. This space has been created not just for our kids to hang out in, but to be a place they'll want to bring their friends as they grow in their faith through fun and study!

YOUTH MEETING: FEBRUARY 4TH 2-4 PM AT MPC



Worship Opportunities

February 4

"A New Hope That's Real"
(Star Wars, pt. 5)

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

"Open the Gates"
(Psalm 118)

March 29

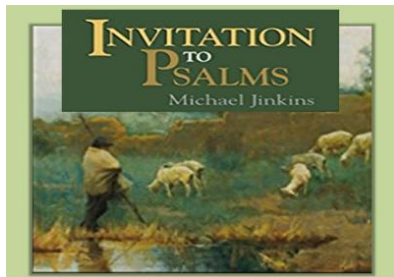
"When God Was Silent"
(Psalm 22)

April 1

"Resistance is Futile"
(Psalm 2)

Christian Education

Julie Nickels, Team Leader



“Whenever the Psalter is abandoned, an incomparable treasure is lost to the Christian church. With its recovery will come unexpected power.”

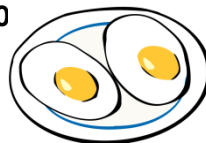
— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pastor and WW 2 Christian martyr

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 and Family Life

Sherrill Konfrst, Team Leader

Breakfast Club February 6 at HyVee Plattsmouth 8:30



BINGO IS BACK!

Watch for details on February Soup Fest and Bingo Night!

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.

**February 7 , February 14 ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE,
February 21 , February 28**



Leadership Teams

Worship and Family Life
*Sherrill Konfrst, 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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Devotional Prayer Gathering UPDATE

Our Wednesday evening prayer gathering has been meeting faithfully to thoughtfully reflect on scripture and to pray for many things. We pray for our world, our community, our personal lives, our church, and especially for you! We've prayed our way through all the name tags on the magnet board! Now we would like to offer to pray for your special needs as they may arise. If you would like us to pray for you or your loved ones, please place your requests on the new prayer board near the "sign ups" table so we can add them to our prayers on Wednesday evenings. You don't have to list your name and requests are confidential.



A session will be scheduled in March for those interested in training on the use of our AED (Automated External Defibrillator). Contact Julie Nickels for more details.

Outreach and Mission

Ann Weiringa, Team Leader

ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING:

Stay tuned for information about this year's One Great Hour of Sharing offering--traditionally received in the PCUSA during the Lenten season. As always, funds received are divided between three different program areas: Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (which responds to natural disasters and other emergencies with relief and rebuilding efforts), the Presbyterian Hunger Program (working to alleviate hunger and its root causes) and Self-Development of People (supporting grass-roots initiatives to lift people out of poverty). Sometime towards the beginning of Lent, our young people will be receiving their fish boxes and we all will have the opportunity to give through special offering envelopes.

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

Murray Presbyterian Church, Murray, NE
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Leadership

Session

Moderator

Rev. William McConnell

Class of 2018

Julie Nickels
David Schwindt

Class of 2019

Sherrill Konfrst
Ann Weiringa

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!