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# Murray Presbyterian Messenger

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October, 2022



Murray Presbyterian Church

P.O. Box 196, Main Street Murray, NE 68409

[www.murraypresbyterian.org](http://www.murraypresbyterian.org) Tel: (402)235-2754

Featured This Month: Chili Cook-Off

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**Murray Presbyterian Church Building**

**Soup & Chili**

**Cocoa and Cider**

**Pumpkin Decorating**

**Outdoor Fire Pit**

**see page 6**

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## Upcoming Events

**Oct. 11** Dinner for Fire Dept

**Oct. 12** Womens Bible Study 1 pm

**Oct. 16:** Reformation Celebration

**Oct. 22:** Trunk or Treat 5-7 pm

**Oct. 29:** Litter Clean-Up 9:30 am

**Oct. 30:** Chili Cook-Off 5-7 pm

**Thank you for your ongoing financial support of Murray Presbyterian! Contributions may be deposited in the offering plates during worship services, mailed to the church at P. O. Box 196, Murray NE 68409 or made online at [www.murraypresbyterian.org](http://www.murraypresbyterian.org). Click on the "Give Now" button at the bottom of the homepage.**

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Back at the manse, we have a framed document attesting to the fact that on March 18, 1895, one Alexander McConnell appeared before a Pennsylvania Common Pleas Court seeking citizenship and declaring his intent to “renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to every foreign Prince, Potentate, State, and sovereignty whatever, and particularly to Victoria Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland of whom he was before a subject.” Yet, here I was,



Alexander's great-grandson, getting up at 4 am last month to watch the funeral of Victoria's great-great granddaughter, streaming live from Westminster Abbey. For all our democratic egalitarian instincts, we Americans are endlessly fascinated by royalty. No wonder “The Crown” has consistently been one of the top-rated shows on Netflix. For a lot of us, there's something almost irresistible about all the pomp,

pageantry, tradition, and mystique of monarchy.

And when we don't have actual royals to focus on, we invariably create surrogates. That's what explains the regrettable tendency—in both political parties—to turn the presidency into an “elected monarchy.” Celebrities, star athletes, and business moguls also become ersatz royalty.

It's an impulse that's existed from time immemorial. The world's myths, legends, and fairy tales are replete with stories of kings and queens, princes and princesses. A longing to restore a golden age of Camelot or a yearning for the true

king to return and set all things right are universal literary archetypes, showing up in everything from the King Arthur cycle to the fantasy writings of Tolkien. We may pay lip-service to egalitarian ideals, but it's almost as if we're hard-wired to crave a rightful ruler, who will reign wisely and beneficently. We're ready to give our hearts and our allegiance to one who would provide stability and rule selflessly in the interests of all.

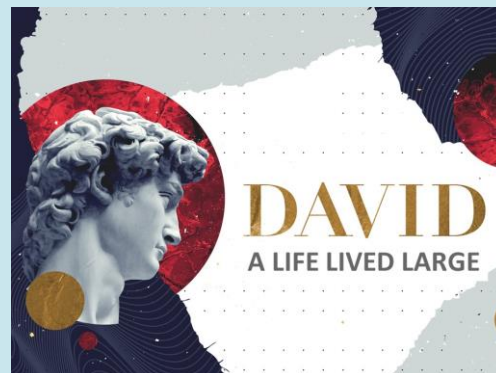


The problem is that such figures are in exceedingly short supply, and the track record of actual monarchies is pretty dismal. The immense respect Queen Elizabeth II enjoyed resulted from the fact that she exemplified the sort of qualities we expect: a life-long devotion to duty and serving her people. It's a hard act to follow. When the newly-proclaimed King Charles III started throwing hissy fits over malfunctioning pens and other irritants, it wasn't a good look. Privilege for

## Upcoming Worship Opportunities

### Fall Sermon Series

### “David: A Life Lived Large”



Shepherd boy. Giant-killer. Musician. Fugitive. King. Adulterer. Penitent. Elder Statesman. The life of David has it all. Join us this fall as we follow the ups and downs of David's fateful and tumultuous life—seeing the lessons it has for our lives and how it points us to Jesus, David's greater Son.

**Sept. 11:** David & Samuel: Calling  
(1 Samuel 16:1-13)

**Sept. 18:** David & Goliath: Valor  
(1 Samuel 17)

**Sept. 25:** David & Jonathan: Friendship  
(1 Samuel 18, 20)

**Oct. 2:** David & Saul: Magnanimity  
(1 Samuel 26)

**Oct. 9:** David & Israel: Reconciliation  
(2 Samuel 3)

**Oct. 16: REFORMATION SUNDAY  
with Rev. Janice Desterhaff**

**Oct. 23:** David & Mephibosheth: Grace  
(2 Samuel 9)

**Oct. 30:** David & Bathsheba: Failure  
(2 Samuel 11)

**Nov. 6:** David & Absalom: Heartbreak  
(2 Samuel 15-16)

**Nov. 13:** David & Joab: Counterpart  
(2 Samuel 19)

**Nov. 20:** David & Solomon: Legacy  
(1 Chronicles 28-29)

privilege's sake is rather unbecoming. It's those kinds of shortcomings, and the perception of an unmerited sense of entitlement that creates ambivalence about monarchs.

The grand narrative of the Bible reflects these ambivalent feelings and enables us to make sense out of them. As we've seen in the providentially-scheduled series on David, Israel started out recognizing no king but Yahweh God. But then, there was a clamor for a human king who could lead the people in battling their enemies. Samuel warned them about the potential downsides—heavy taxation, military conscription, and tyranny. But as the demands became more persistent, kingship was introduced, and that ambivalent perspective came to be fully on display. David is the recipient of a covenant promising an eternal dynasty. But no sooner is the covenant given than the narrator starts exposing all the sordid misdeeds of David. The royal psalms pour lavish praise on the ideal king who reigns justly. But according to the historians who actually chronicled the reign of kings, most were wicked. And even in the case of the best of them, there is invariably some shortcoming. (“Nevertheless, he did not remove the high places,” etc.) Eventually, the whole enterprise fails.

But that does not lead to the abandonment of kingship as an ideal! Instead, the dream emerges of a coming king who would embody the standard perfectly! Isaiah says about this ruler that “of the increase of his government and peace [shalom: universal well-being], there will be no end” (Isa. 9:7). In other words, as a recent editorial put it, “Here is a king whose personal interests align so closely with the good of his people that his royal power and their peace increase together.”

The good news of the gospel is that this universal human yearning has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. There's a reason we have a deep-seated affinity for royalty. There's a reason so many of our cherished stories revolve around a returning king who makes things right. There's a reason we have an ideal image of kingship that's never quite realized in human history. The myths and stories came true in Jesus! The ancient Hebrews were faced with a dilemma: should God be their only king or do they need a human king? The Christian gospel says that in Jesus, God *became* a human king. He ruled so selflessly that he literally gave his life for his subjects. His throne was a cross. Best of all, his reign is an everlasting one. As the editorial quoted above pointed out, one of the reasons the death of Queen Elizabeth was so jarring, even though, intellectually, we all knew it was inevitable, is because “we instinctively feel that a good reign should not come to an end.” That instinct is pointing us to the one perfect reign that has no ending.

I look forward to seeing you in worship (or having you join us online) as we continue looking at the Old Testament model of kingship (flawed as it was) revealed in the story of David.

## Leadership

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### Session

#### Moderator

Rev. William McConnell

#### Clerk of Session

Debra South

#### Class of 2022

Linnea Hill  
Michael Stahl

#### Class of 2023

Denise Ayers  
Melanie Honaker

#### Class of 2024

Kenny Drake  
Dave Friedli

### Deacons

#### Class of 2022

Kari Drake (Treasurer)  
Sherrill Konfrst

#### Class of 2023

Delaney Deterding  
Dana Stahl (Moderator)  
Ann Wieringa (Secretary)

### Personnel Announcement

At its September meeting, the Session accepted with regret **Stacey Plevel's** resignation as our church's administrative assistant. Her service to our church is appreciated!

At the same time, the Session concurred with a recommendation from the Personnel Committee to hire **John McConnell** for this position. (Rev. McConnell abstained from playing any role in this process.) John will be working in the office one or two days a week after school.

# Worship & Family Life

Linnea Hill, Team Leader

## Reformation Celebration



Come find out about **"The Verse That Changed the World"**! That's the topic for a special Reformation celebration on October 16. Guest preacher, the **Rev. Janice Desterhaff**, will be inviting us to consider the life and legacy of Martin Luther,

the vital biblical insights that changed the course of history.

Rev. Desterhaff is a minister member of the Missouri River Valley Presbytery. She was born in Massachusetts. Her father is a retired Presbyterian minister and her two sets of grandparents were missionaries in China, where both her parents were born. When she was seven, her family moved to Iowa City, Iowa, home of the University of Iowa. She soon fell in love with all things Hawkeye and knew she had to attend college there. She graduated from there in 1988. Janice has devoted her life to serving God through working many years with severely emotionally disturbed youth and then four years as a 5th grade teacher in Christian schools. She graduated from Fuller Theological Seminary in 2005, over 50 years after her father was in the second graduating class! She enjoys reading, writing, singing, playing volleyball, watching and writing movies, laughing/joy, and virtually any board game and especially an occasional cribbage game.

Let's give Rev. Desterhaff an enthusiastic welcome on October 16 and celebrate an important moment in the church's history!

## Christian Education Denise Ayers, Team Leader

### Friday Nite Bites



The church building was once again buzzing with energy and excitement last month as Murray Presbyterian hosted Conestoga students following three Friday night home football games. Kudos to the volunteers who served and to the students who were so mannerly and appreciative of the hospitality.



## Leadership Teams

### Worship and Family Life

*Linnea Hill, Team Leader*

Amanda Anderson  
Jeff Anderson  
Adam Gillaspie  
Rebecca Gillaspie  
Sherrill Konfrst  
Laraine Young

### Mission and Outreach

*Melanie Honaker, Team Leader*

George Collins  
Sydney Honaker  
John McConnell  
Stacey McConnell  
Deanne Slaffer  
Dana Stahl  
Ann Wieringa

### Christian Education

*Denise Ayers, Team Leader.*

Sharlyn Deterding  
Kathy Friedli  
Julie Nickels  
Linnea Hill

### Properties and Finance

*Kenny Drake, Team Leader*  
Dave Friedli, *Session Rep.*  
Michael Stahl, *Session Rep.*  
Sharlyn Deterding  
Norm Koester  
Gary Reike  
Jerry Slaffer

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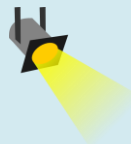
Young people attending worship are dismissed near the start of the service to attend Sunday School in the rooms downstairs. Recently, the students have been talking about how God enables us to confront our fears.

### Adult Sunday School

Adults are invited to join the Bible study group that meets downstairs Sunday mornings at 9 am. The current topic is "1 & 2 Thessalonians: Keep Calm and Carry On," a video-based series featuring bestselling author and pastor **Levi Lusko**.

### Women's Bible Study

"What do you know about the Holy Spirit?" That question's at the heart of this year's video-based study series, **Jesus in Me: Experiencing the Holy Spirit as a Constant Companion**, featuring best-selling author and international speaker **Anne Graham Lotz**. This group meets the second Wednesday of the month at 1 pm.



## Member Spotlight

by Dana Stahl

### John McConnell



**In what city were you born?** I was born in Kittanning, Pennsylvania in the Pittsburgh area right around where my mom is from and where my parents met.

**How long have you been a member of Murray Presbyterian?** I have been attending Murray Presbyterian Church since 2016 when my dad was called to serve here. In 2020, I became a confirmed member.

**What is something about you people might not know?** In 2016, right before we moved here, when we were packing up all of our things, I got something like 5 Pez dispensers that were laying around gathered up from their various spots and joked "I could start a collection." Then, that Christmas, I got my first box sets that I had been looking at and I actually started collecting. Now I probably have somewhere around 1,000 Pez dispensers.

**What is your favorite place in Nebraska?** Nebraska has some pretty cool sights and places to visit, but I think that nowhere in this state will ever be as special to me as the high school where I have worked so hard for all of my activities and made some good memories along the way.

**Where do you feel closest to God?** I guess this is kind of the stereotypical answer, but I feel closest to God at the church. It's just kind of infused with his presence and the hymns and scripture and sermons really make the connection even stronger.

**If you could take a month-long trip anywhere in the world, where would you go?** I really want to visit Germany. It has a lot of old European architecture and art and so much history.

**What's your favorite thing about Murray Presbyterian?** I appreciate the tight-knit community at the church. Everyone knows everyone. I especially like when we hear from visitors who say that our congregation is welcoming, because that is such a necessary aspect of a church that some places don't have. So I think it's great that ours does.

### Community Chili Cook-Off



Invite friends and neighbors from our community to come on out to a Chili / Soup cook-off on **Sunday October 30, 5:00-7:00 pm**. This is a **community outreach event**, following the model of our successful Picnics in the Park during the summer months. That means it's designed to draw in neighbors from the surrounding area and provide an opportunity for us to build relationships. Along with the chili and soup, there will be hot cocoa and cider, pumpkin decorating, and an outdoor fire pit. Join us for this time of fellowship and community hospitality!

### Trunk or Treat (Oct 22, 5-7 pm)



Our church is sponsoring one of the "trunks" this year dispensing goodies to the kids of Beaver Lake. Along with the treats, there will be wood cut-out of our building and a sign reminding those who stop by to "Fall in Love with Jesus." You're invited to be one of the volunteer helpers manning our station on October 22, 5:00-7:00 pm at the Beaver Lake Clubhouse

### Litter Clean-Up (October 29)



Starting this year, Murray Presbyterian has taken responsibility for litter clean-up along a 2.5 mile stretch of Hwy 1 encompassing Conestoga Jr/Sr High School. Our next clean-up event is scheduled for **Saturday, October 29, meeting at the high school at 9:00 am**. Come out and serve the Lord by serving our community and preserving the unmarred beauty of God's creation.

### Lasagna Dinner for Fire Department

In keeping with the practice of recent years, members of our Mission and Outreach team are once again serving a lasagna dinner to the members of the Murray Volunteer Fire Department on **October 11**. This is a way of showing appreciation for those who serve our community in this way.

### Keep Filling the SENCA Cart



Thank you to everyone bringing in non-perishable food items for the SENCA cart! The suggested items for October are **non-perishable fall feast / Thanksgiving foods** (since what we collect in October will be distributed in November.)