
Murray Presbyterian Messenger

September, 2022



Murray Presbyterian Church

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

www.murraypresbyterian.org Tel: (402)235-2754

Featured This Month: Fall Kick-Off



Sunday School Rally Day – p. 5

New Adult Sunday School series – p. 6

New Women's Bible Study series – p. 6

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Upcoming Events

Sept. 11 9 am Adult Sun. School
10 am Sunday School

Rally Day

Sept. 14 1pm Women's Bible
Study

Sept. 25 4-6 pm Community
Picnic

Thank you for your ongoing financial support of Murray Presbyterian! Contributions may be deposited in the offering plate at the door (for in-person services), mailed to the church at P. O. Box 196, Murray NE 68409 or made online at www.murraypresbyterian.org. Click on the "Give Now" button at the bottom of the homepage.

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The David story looms large in the biblical imaginations of any of us with a church upbringing. Virtually the only series of Vacation Bible School lessons I remember are from the year I was in kindergarten and the week focused on David. In my mind's eye I can still picture myself and my classmates in Primary Department Sunday School singing "Only a boy named David"—our little fingers making the motions of the rippling brook, our arms swinging as we sang about the sling going round and round, and, finally, all of us tumbling down to the floor like the giant. Years later, as a college student, I was privileged to sit under the ministry of one of the most gifted Bible expositors I've ever encountered. For a couple of years, his Sunday evening messages went through the David narrative, chapter by chapter. Many of the insights gleaned from that series have stayed with me for the past 40 years—and they will no doubt show up in my messages this fall.

To whatever extent we're captivated by the David story, our attention is not misplaced. First of all, it's central to the biblical narrative. Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann says: "David is the dominant figure in Israel's narrative. . . . More than any other person, Israel is fascinated by David, deeply attracted to him, bewildered by him, occasionally embarrassed by him, but never disowning him." Spanning parts of three Old Testament books (1 and 2 Samuel and 1 Kings), the David story includes 65 chapters and 40,000 words. Were it a book to itself, it would be the longest one in the Bible. In fact, not only does it stand out in the biblical record for its length, it also stands out in the annals of antiquity. Robert Alter says the David story "is probably the greatest single narrative representation in antiquity of a human life evolving by slow stages through time, shaped and altered by the pressures of political life, public institutions, family, the impulses of body and spirit, the eventual sad decay of the flesh."

Secondly, as Alter implies, David's story is the quintessential human story. Eugene Peterson says: "The theme of the David story is becoming human. What does it mean to be human, *become* human, be a real woman, a real man?" In terms of psychological depth and tangled plotlines, the David narrative has Shakespearean overtones, except, as one critic observed, to rival the David saga, you would have to *combine Macbeth, Hamlet, and King Lear*. His was truly (as I've entitled my sermon series) a "life lived large." Everything he did was done on a grand scale. David engaged in magnanimous gestures that virtually defy comprehension. And yet, when he messed up, he messed up royally! It's as if we're looking at ordinary human traits in exaggerated proportions.

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:** David & Mephibosheth: Grace
(2 Samuel 9)
- Oct. 23:** David & Bathsheba: Failure
(2 Samuel 11)
- Oct. 30: GUEST PREACHER**
- 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)

With his sometimes-cut-throat tactics, underhanded machinations, and chaotic family life, David is hardly an exemplary role model. What he offers, instead, according to some biblical interpreters (like Peterson) is a template for “earthly spirituality”—a “man after God’s own heart” (as he’s called in 1 Samuel 13:14) who nonetheless operates in the nitty-gritty, Byzantine, rough-and-tumble world of Ancient Near Eastern geopolitical power struggles.

Finally, as with all of Scripture, we ultimately focus on David in order to enhance our understanding of and commitment to Jesus, the new and greater David. To again quote Peterson, “The David story anticipates the Jesus story. The Jesus story presupposes the David story.” In the Contemporary English Version, the opening words of the New Testament (in Matthew 1:1) are “Jesus Christ came from the family of King David. . .”—the first of 54 New Testament references to Israel’s illustrious king. Repeatedly, Jesus is identified (or addressed) as the “Son of David.” The whole messianic hope Jesus came to fulfill began with the dream of a restored Davidic monarchy. Without David, we’d have no notion of a “Christ” (literally one anointed, as David was) or a Savior who is a king. The Christmas story is incompressible without its background in the story of David and his Bethlehem roots—just as the story of the Passion and resurrection would never have taken the form it did without the (ostensibly) Davidic Psalms and their portrayal of the Righteous Sufferer (e.g., Psalm 22) and the one who defies death (e.g., Psalm 16).

With all these considerations in mind, our sermon series this fall will take us through the ups and downs of David’s fateful and tumultuous life. We’ll see him as a shepherd boy, giant killer, outlaw, king, and fallen hero. Along the way, we’ll hopefully gain insights into what makes up a life well lived—qualities to embrace and pitfalls to avoid. And we’ll hopefully also be strengthened in our relationship with Jesus Christ, David’s greater son. I look forward to seeing you in worship—and at other events this fall!

Sources Cited:

Robert Alter, *The David Story* (NY: W. W. Norton, 1999)

Walter Brueggemann, *David’s Truth in Israel’s Imagination and Memory* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985)

Eugene Peterson, *Leap Over a Wall: Earthly Spirituality for Everyday Christians* (NY: HarperCollins, 1997)



Leadership

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)

Mission & Outreach

Melanie Honaker, Team Leader

Community Picnics at Tyson Park



Thank you to everyone who has been supporting the Community Picnics in Tyson Park throughout the summer! Due to the overwhelmingly positive response from folks in our congregation and community members, two more events have been planned.

September 25 from **4-6 pm** will be **Taco Night** at Tyson Park. Bring a side dish, chair, and table service and join us for tacos, yard games, and fellowship. There is a sign-up sheet on the back table for anyone who would like to contribute taco ingredients.

Then, stay tuned for more information about a **chili cook-off** coming up in October!

Keep Filling the Cart



Fall is just around the corner. And for a lot of folks, a steaming bowl of chili is just what's needed to beat the chill on a nippy fall day. That's why October is National Chili Month! Help our neighbors in need take part in this autumn ritual with your September donations to the SENCA food cart. Any donation is appreciated, but this month's theme is chili fixings: canned chili, beans, sauce, spices, cornbread, etc.



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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Sunday School Rally Day



Rally Day Sunday, marking the start of Sunday School for preschool through high school is **Sunday, September 11**. Join us at 10:00 am, when adults are invited to attend worship. Sunday School students will be participating in games and lessons outside on the lawn. This year we will be discovering more about God and how we are called to serve our community together as Jesus did. At 11:00 am, there will be a **special fellowship hour**, featuring meatball sandwiches.

Friday Nite Bites



The church building was bursting with energy on Friday, September 2, as over 75 Conestoga High School students gathered for pizza and dessert after the football game. Friday Night Bites will be held after all upcoming home games: September 16 and 30 and October 13.



Member Spotlight

by Dana Stahl

Helen Grzebielski



In what city were you born? I was born in Brookings SD.

How long have you been part of Murray Presbyterian? About 4 years.

What is something about you people might not know? I don't know about unique. I used to teach aerobics at my church in Omaha for years. And I love to pick through junk to find treasures.

What is your favorite place in Nebraska? My favorite place in Nebraska is Lauritzen Gardens in Omaha.

Where do you feel closest to God? When I sit outside in my swing and enjoy nature - it's so peaceful and I'm so grateful.

If you could take a month-long trip anywhere in the world, where would you go? I would go to Sweden and Norway.

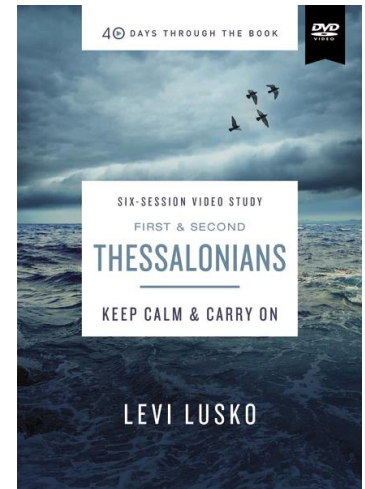
What's your favorite thing about Murray Presbyterian? I love how friendly everyone is, the bible study group, fellowship after church, Pastor Bill's wonderful sermons. It all feels so comfortable to me.

Christian Education (cont'd)

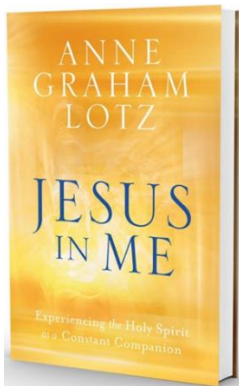
Adult Sunday School

Have you ever been discouraged in your faith? Or wondered if you are staying grounded in what you believe? This was the issue facing the believers in Thessalonica. So, Paul compelled them in two letters to not be deceived by false teachers but remain diligent in doing the work set before them as they looked forward to Jesus' return.

"**1st and 2nd Thessalonians: Keep Calm and Carry On**" is the subject of a new video-based adult education class starting September 11 at 9:00 am. Join us as bestselling author and pastor **Levi Lusko** guides us through those letters from Paul, revealing what the apostle's words meant to his original readers and how they apply to us today. You will be encouraged to learn both the content and the context of the letters and then apply the message to your daily life. The class meets **every Sunday morning at 9:00 am** in the downstairs youth room.



Women's Bible Study



You may know something about God and something about Jesus, but what do you know about the Holy Spirit?

The Women's Bible study group will be exploring that vital topic this year, through a video series entitled **Jesus in Me: Experiencing the Holy Spirit as a Constant Companion**. Drawing on rich biblical knowledge and personal experience (including a recent bout with cancer) best-selling author and international speaker **Anne Graham Lotz** will lead participants in exploring seven key aspects of the Holy Spirit that promises to revolutionize how they relate to this vital member of the Trinity. The group meets the **second Wednesday of every month, starting September 14 at 1:00 pm**.

Instadium (at Calvin Crest)



MPC members joined 24 youth and their leaders from various churches at this overnight retreat, Aug. 20-21. Instadium (planned after Triennium was cancelled) included food, activities, worship, campfire, and presentations.

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