
Murray Presbyterian Messenger



May 2023



Murray Presbyterian Church

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

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

Featured This Month: Pentecost Sunday



**Put on your red apparel
and join us for worship as we
celebrate the birthday of the church,
welcome new members and
observe the sacrament of baptism!**

Upcoming Events

Sundays

9:00 am: Adult Sunday School

10:00 am: Morning Worship

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. Click on the "Give Now" button at the bottom of the homepage.

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Here's an historical trivia question for you: **Who founded Murray Presbyterian Church?** A lot of folks would be prone to say it must have been Murray, the one our church and town is named

after. But actually, our illustrious namesake, George Murray, was only 15 years old and living in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania when our church was organized. People more well-versed in the history of our congregation might say it was Rev. Thomas McCartney, the frontier evangelist who was the first pastor when our congregation was formed over at Rock Bluff in 1860. But technically, although Rev. McCartney may have been the organizing pastor, the congregation would have been established by the Des Moines Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church of North America, the body which sent him to what was then the Nebraska Territory. If it was done correctly, the presbytery would have formed an administrative commission to organize the church.

So if someone was looking for the name of a specific person who founded our church, I'd be inclined to say it was Jesus! If that sounds far-fetched, I'd point out that the two standard histories of American Presbyterianism—one by Lefferts Loetscher, the other by James Smylie—both begin their account with Jesus and the apostles.

Here's how I'd tell the story: Jesus had a circle of apostles who were witnesses to the resurrection and who were commissioned by him to carry the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth. According to Eusebius, one of those apostles—Peter—went to Rome planted the church there. As the Christian faith spread throughout the Roman world, it eventually reached the Province of Britannia, where a church was established that was in communion with the rest of Christendom. (There was a British delegation at a church council held in 353 AD.) From Britain, Patrick embarked on his mission to Ireland and Irish clerics like Columba brought Christianity to Scotland.

Over the centuries, the church became increasingly corrupt, and Reformers sought to remedy those abuses. In Scotland, that Reformation was led by John Knox and resulted in the Scottish Kirk, mother church of Presbyterianism. Note very carefully: *the Reformers never thought they were starting a new church!* Such a thought would have been anathema to them. They were endeavoring to *reform* a church that already existed in their part of the world (hence the term Reformers).

Upcoming Worship Opportunities Sundays in Easter



For the last two Sundays in the Easter season, we look at how the power of the resurrected Christ living within us helps us deal with our own shortcomings and struggles.

May 14: "Crack(ed) Pots for Jesus"
 (2 Corinthians 4:1-7)

May 21: "Knocked Down by Not Out"
 (2 Corinthians 4:7-12)

Pentecost Sunday



Beginning on Pentecost Sunday (Memorial Day weekend in the civil calendar) and continuing throughout the summer, we'll be looking at the Presbyterian Brief Statement of Faith and considering what Presbyterians believe about the vital tenets of our faith.

May 28: "In life and in death we belong to God"
 (Romans 14:5-9)

From that Kirk in Scotland (and Ireland), there emerged a body of staunch Presbyterians who thought the church of their day had compromised the purity of the gospel. These so-called Covenanters were persecuted and ostracized. But when likeminded presbyters began forming separate presbyteries, they again were not, in their minds at least, founding a new church. As one source puts it, they considered themselves to be “the true Church of Scotland, driven into the wilderness by a corrupt and tyrannical majority.”

By the early 1700's, Scotch-Irish Covenanter Presbyterians were emigrating to America and settling primarily in Pennsylvania and eventually in Ohio. So in 1751, the (Covenanter) Reformed Presbyterian Presbytery of Scotland sent its moderator, the Rev. John Cuthbertson, to minister among them. When two other teaching elders joined him, they organized a presbytery comprised of congregations in their stream of Presbyterianism. It was a General Assembly of Presbyterians in that tradition that sent Rev. McCartney, a good Scot-Irish Presbyterian, to the Nebraska Territory in 1860.

If you have gotten lost in the thicket of names and dates, here's the basic point to be made from this (admittedly) very simplistic version of history. ***The story of Murray Presbyterian Church is simply one tiny little fragment of the Presbyterian story, which is part of the Protestant Reformed story, which is part of the Christian story that goes back to Jesus and the apostles.*** Jesus started the church! After that, it spread. It generated offshoots. When it fell into error, leaders tried to reform it. Sometimes that led to division. But local expressions of the church have an organic connection to the whole. First and foremost, that connection grows out of a shared relationship with Christ, the living head. But there are also structures of accountability and mechanisms whereby ministers are credentialed and commissioned for their ministries and missions. It was really only in twentieth century America that we bought into a secular business model and turned “churches” into entrepreneurial start-up ventures created by independent free-lancers. Our Christian forebears would have recoiled at such a notion.

And that, in a nutshell, is why we celebrate the birthday of the church, not on August 18, the date on which our congregation was organized in Rock Bluff, but on Pentecost Sunday (May 28 this year). The church started when the Holy Spirit empowered a band of disciples gathered in an Upper Room in Jerusalem. And it just kept spreading and branching out until one tiny little offshoot cropped up in Rock Bluff, Nebraska in 1860. So let's all come out and have a great birthday bash this year. We expect the day to be capped off by the reception of new members and a pair of baptisms. We'll also be kicking off a summer sermon series on what Presbyterians believe. I hope you'll be there to share in the festivities!

Leadership

Session

Moderator

Rev. William McConnell

Clerk of Session

Debra South

Class of 2023

Denise Ayers

Melanie Honaker

Class of 2024

Kenny Drake

Dave Friedli

Class of 2025

Sharlyn Deterding

Debra South

Deacons

Class of 2023

Delaney Deterding

Dana Stahl

Ann Wieringa

Class of 2024

Kathy Friedli

Sherrill Konfrst

Julie Nickels

Graduate Recognition Sunday



April 30 was a day for celebrating our high school graduates and sending them on to the next chapter in their lives with our prayers and blessings. Being honored that day were (l-r in the bottom photo):

Ethan Avidano (son of Ray and Melissa). Ethan plans to study business administration at Peru State College.

Sydney Honaker (daughter of Mike and Melanie). Sydney will be attending University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she will be majoring in environmental science and participating in the honors program.

Delaney Deterding (daughter of Tony and Sharlyn). Delaney will be attending Wayne State College, majoring in fashion merchandising, with a minor in communications.

Ian Fitzpatrick (son of Erin Spencer) was recognized on the following Sunday. Ian will be continuing in the life skills transition program at Conestoga High School.



Vacation Bible School



Save the dates of **July 10-13** (Monday - Thursday evenings) and get ready to embark on a cosmic quest to shine Jesus' light into the world! More information will be forthcoming about about **STELLAR** VBS, including a registration link.

Mission & Outreach Melanie Honaker, Team Leader

Community Picnic



The tradition of community picnics in Tyson Park continues this summer with an event scheduled for Sunday, **June 25, 4-6 pm**. There will be potluck meal, with hotdogs and brats provided. More details to follow.



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 Slaffter
- 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 Slaffter