
Murray Presbyterian Messenger



June 2025



Murray Presbyterian Church

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

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

Featured This Month: Vacation Bible School



Murray Presbyterian Church Building

Friday June 27 6:00 – 8:15 pm

Saturday June 28 9:30 am – 12:00 pm

Sunday June 29 10:00 – 11:00 am

See p. 5 for details and registration link

Upcoming Events

Sundays

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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One of the most incredible worship experiences I've had in my life was the time I heard **Marj Carpenter** preach at the Presbyterian Church in Madison, New Jersey. A one-time moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly, Marj was, for decades, our denomination's most passionate promoter of overseas mission. "I am sinfully proud to be a Presbyterian," she would exclaim, with her trademark Texas drawl. Then she would regale audiences across the country with story after story after story of

how Presbyterian missions were making a difference around the world. "The Presbyterians," she would say, "have opened more mission fields than any other church in history. We have taken very seriously the commission to go into all nations and take the gospel to all people, and we don't even know we've done it. **Actually, of any church I know, the Presbyterians have done the best job of taking mission out into all the world. . .**"

Sadly, that rich heritage, spanning two centuries, came to a close at the end of March, when the Presbyterian Church (USA) shuttered its World Mission Agency and laid off the last of our global mission co-workers (i.e., missionaries). The spin-meisters in our denominational headquarters tell us that the era of sending mission personnel overseas has ended and we are transitioning into a new model of "global ecumenical partnerships." Nonsense! According to the Joshua Project, out of the 8 billion people alive in the world today, 3.4 billion (42%) of them live in unreached people groups, with little or no access to the gospel. The only way they will hear the message of salvation is through an "external witness." **The task of world evangelization is far from being completed!**

The other rationale is that, with a dwindling membership, we can no longer afford overseas mission personnel. Once again, I'm reminded of Marj Carpenter and the story she used to tell about looking up General Assembly minutes from 1864. As the Civil War was ravaging the nation, the northern Presbyterian Church decided to appoint three missionaries to open a brand-new mission field in the Cameroons. The "Foreign Missions Report" explained: "*The world is watching us in our travail to see if we're serious about the global mission and the Great Commission.*" At the same time, the "Foreign Missions Report" to the General Assembly of the southern (Confederate) Presbyterian church said: "*Our backs are to the wall and our homes are being burned and our churches destroyed, but we must send another missionary to Brazil.*" Marj's takeaway: "*Those four missionaries were sent out at greater sacrifice than anything we have done in a long, long time.*" Can we say we're in a worse condition today, or have our priorities shifted?

Upcoming Worship Opportunities Sundays After Pentecost



June 8: Pentecost Celebration
Wear red and join us as we celebrate the church's birthday on Pentecost!
Message: "The Life-Giving Spirit" (Acts 2:1-11)

June 15: Trinity Sunday
One of the most important gatherings in history was taking place exactly 1700 years ago this month and the Christian Church was divided—over an iota. Find out what it was all about and why it matters for us today!
Message: "The Difference an Iota Makes" (Hebrews 1:1-4)

June 22: "Daring to Draw Near" (Summer Series) Begins

June 29: VBS Sunday
Catch the spirit of VBS at this special service which will include VBS songs.

To be sure, individual congregations can develop meaningful relationships on their own, as we have done with mission partners in Nicaragua and Guatemala. But for most congregations, our Presbyterian mission co-workers have been a vital link to the global church. During my two previous pastorates, the churches I served always adopted an overseas PCUSA mission co-worker. We supported them financially, corresponded with them, prayed for them, and sent supplies for their ministry work. Their visits during stateside furloughs were among the highlights of my tenure in those churches. One year, a mission partner came during VBS week. His children participated in the program; he talked to the VBS students about his work in Niger. The theme that year was the Parable of the Sower and one of our members hand-painted the scene on a huge canvas tarpaulin. When our missionary mentioned how meaningful that would be to the rural people in Niger, we boxed it up and sent it over. So far as I know, it might still be hanging up in the Dagon Gao Bible School! Those kinds of experiences with mission partners are absolutely priceless. It will be our loss to not have those connections in the future.

The good news is that **God's mission in the world continues with or without the PCUSA!** God is still at work in the world calling out people from "every nation and tribe and people and tongue" to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. By scaling back our mission involvement, our denomination is by no means impeding the spread of the gospel. We're just missing out on the opportunity to play a bigger role in what God is doing in the world.

The other piece of good news is that **the rich tradition of Presbyterian mission lives on!** It lives on, first of all, in all the daughter churches we have planted all over the world. The Presbyterian Church in Korea, established by missionary pioneers at the dawn of the twentieth century, is now one of the major missionary-sending bodies in the world. The legacy continues in the conservative denominations that have broken away from the PCUSA. The Presbyterian Church in America, with a membership less than half that of the PCUSA, has an overseas mission force of 509. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church, smaller still, fields 141 missionaries. The legacy is also being carried on by Presbyterian-related independent mission organizations. As our denomination went theologically adrift, Bible-believing, mission-minded Presbyterians established groups like the Outreach Foundation, Frontier Fellowship, and the Antioch Partners. They are faithfully carrying on the work.

This month, as we celebrate Ascension Sunday and Pentecost, remembering how the Risen Lord Jesus commissioned his Spirit-empowered followers to take the gospel to the world, we lift up thanks for the rich heritage of mission in our own denomination. We grieve this recent retrenchment. And we pray that this worldwide witness will continue through other avenues.

Note: The Marj Carpenter quotes are all taken from *To the Ends of the Earth: Mission Stories from Around the World* (Presbyterian Publishing Corp., 1995)

Session

Moderator

Rev. William McConnell

Clerk of Session

Debra South

Class of 2025

Sharlyn Deterding
Debra South

Class of 2026

Tanner Miner
Julie Nickels

Class of 2027

Melanie Honaker
Dana Stahl

Deacons

Class of 2025

Ryleigh Hill
Stacey McConnell
Karla Remmers

Class of 2024

Jocelyn Bennett
Kathy Friedli
Mike Honaker

Community Picnic in the Park



Murray Presbyterian Church
would like to invite you to a

COMMUNITY PICNIC IN THE PARK

Join us for fellowship, food, & fun!

Sunday, June 8
Tyson Park in Murray, NE
4:00 to 6:00 PM

Bring a covered dish to share & lawn chairs. Brats, hotdogs, & table service will be provided.

Enter to WIN a
SUMMER FUN basket!

YEE HAW!!
Join Us for
VBS
June 27-29

Worship on the Water



*Worship
On the
Water*

Sunday, August 17, 2025
10:00 am
Beaver Lake Pavillion 1

Mark your calendars now and think about the neighbors you can invite to this worship experience for our entire community!



Leadership Teams

Worship and Family Life

Dana Stahl, *Team Leader*
Deb South, *Session Rep.*
Christina Dolvin
Linnea Hill
Julie Nickels
Sherrill Konfrst
Laraine Young

Mission and Outreach,

Melanie Honaker, *Team Leader*
George Collins
John McConnell
Stacey McConnell
Dana Stahl
Ann Wieringa

Christian Education

Julie Nickels, *Team Leader.*
Denise Ayers
Sharlyn Deterding
Kathy Friedli
Linnea Hill

Properties and Finance

Tanner Miner, *Team Leader*
Sharlyn Deterding, *Session Rep.*
Dave Friedli
Linnea Hill
Norm Koester
Peg Lawton
Gary Reike
Michael Stahl



Vacation Bible School

Registration is now open for **YEE HAW**, this year's wild frontier-themed, weekend VBS. The dates and times are Friday, June 27 (6:30 - 8:15 pm, with family meal at 6:00 pm), Saturday, June 28 (9:30 am-12:00 pm), and Sunday, June 29 (10:00-11:00 am). Volunteers are needed to work at the various stations and to serve as crew leaders or junior crew leaders. To sign up VBS participants (pre-school to sixth grade) or to volunteer, go to www.myvbs.org/Murray2025VBS.

Worship & Family Life

Dana Stahl, Team Lead

Brent Vernon Concert & Ice Cream Social



An exciting opportunity for our church and community is coming up on **Sunday evening, July 20**, when we are honored to be hosting **Brent Vernon**, Christian singer-songwriter, author-illustrator, and ventriloquist. For the past 30 years, Brent has been touring the country, thrilling audiences young and old alike with his repertoire of energetic, hope-filled songs. His ventriloquist sidekick, Sam, is always a hit with kids of all ages. Brent has released three studio albums, two instrumental albums, and several other recorded works for children and adults. He also is the author and illustrator of seven children's books, including the Audrey Amaka and the Gingerbread series. (See his website: brentvernon.com) Mark your calendars and be sure to join us for this special event! An ice cream social will follow. The cost is a free-will offering.