

Life Together



The First Presbyterian Church
of Morrison, Illinois
~est. March 28, 1855~

Reaching out to our neighbor with open hearts;
sharing God's blessings with others.

All Are Welcome!

September 2026 • Vol. 69/No. 07

September slides in sipping summer's simmering sunshine. Suddenly the season slips to autumn's arrival. Attentions turn to apples and ciders, ball games and bonfires, the harvest and celebrating. Too soon, it seems, that another school year has begun, which is now well under way. The ticking clock adds to our age, spinning curiously ever faster. So here we are, one more September before us. Homecomings await alumni who've spun around the sun once more. A year has come. A year has gone. Heading our way into the battle of summer and winter, we bid adieu to what has been, and brace for what will be. But will we really live these days or will we just let them pass us by?

When I was somewhere in my mid-twenties, I began to pick up on people talking about how fast time goes by, and how much quicker the years pass the older they grow. Perhaps it was my grandmothers who shared this with me. I know my mom had pointed it out. But the older I got, and the more I associated with folks in the generations ahead of me, the more I heard them speak of it. Amazed and perplexed, I assumed they were NOT meaning that I would experience the same. After all, my twenties were taking for ever, but then again, that whole decade felt like a year in 3rd grade. Perhaps they were right. Perhaps it does seem to go faster. And so I began to ponder. Perhaps it's just because at one day old, a day to a human is 100% of their life, yet at one year, a day is only 1/365 of their life. And so it goes. With each passing day, the ratio shrinks time before us. Or, perhaps time *is* actually going faster. Perhaps that's why older women can complain that today's families complain about not having enough time, but back in their day, they could have their eight kids cleaned up and to Sunday School (and not one of them complaining) before the worship service while managing to also prepare a lunch ahead and have it roasting in the oven. The first theory is more likely. The second has been challenged by middle aged women who say perhaps the memory of their elders isn't quite telling the truth. Afterall, humans are more adapt at not remembering our struggles. We more readily retain memories of the good times. No matter what the answer is, everyone experiences it. In short, even if there is no empirical evidence for why time seems to speed up as

we age, there is evidence that everyone experiences it, in which case, why not accept that it is real?

Though we can embrace what we experience, humans can't yet explain this phenomenon. However, humans can do something about the course of their life and how they live each day.

How often do we stop to think about how brief life is? How often do we contemplate how fragile life is? Our time on earth is only known to God. Yet we so easily live it in waste. We allow days to pass without seeking to embrace any portion of the day. We stay busy, or we stay bored. We rush through it with blinders on, or we sit around and let it wander away. Why not embrace every moment? Why live as though we have eternity on earth? Why waste the moments of each day with stagnant routine or busy burdens? Though we have responsibilities which must be met in each passing day, we can take joy in our toils. Ecclesiastes 3:9-13 tells us, "What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil." Vanity among vanities, the Teacher (the author of Ecclesiastes) tells us. All is striving after the wind. What's the point of life anyway?

(Please push pause on reading this article, pick up your Bible or enter into the search engine on your phone "Ecclesiastes". Give it a quick read and then come back to this article.)

Depressing, right? Thirty-eight times the authors says, "vanity among vanities." And what does vanity actually mean? It means *breath* or *vapor*. How is it that one can ever catch the wind? Why should we even contemplate striving after it? Certainly we can harness the wind, but if we chase after it, it will always blow beyond the grasp of our fingertips. In the same vein, if we are striving after a full life but do not have God in our life, then the true life we can live will also pass through our fingertips. Indeed, vani-

ty among vanities.

I still have a strong memory of trying to fall asleep on the night before starting 3rd grade. My mom came to check on me and asked what was wrong. "Mom," I asked, "what's the point? Why do I have to go to school tomorrow? Why can't I just stop going to school now? I mean, I'll go to school and finish 3rd grade and then 4th grade and eventually graduate high school and college and I'll get married, have a family and then retire and then die. Why do I have to do that? Can't I just drop out of school now and enjoy life?"

I honestly don't remember my mom's response, but I am sure it was encouraging. And likely why I still remember this is because she would often bring it up to me for the rest of her life. In that moment, she understood that her son understood the vanity of life. And from that point on, I would never be able to shake it. When I would eventually one day read Ecclesiastes, I thought, "That's it! That's what I've been feeling since that night of going into 3rd grade!!!" But what the Teacher taught in Ecclesiastes was what my mom wanted me to understand and embrace, that life was for living, but most of all, it was living for God and with God. I could have spent my life from age 8 until now depressed because of the vanity of life and the passing of time. I could have seen everything as meaningless as it is all fleeting and will soon enough be gone. But I didn't. My natural inclination has always been to enjoy life to it's fullest. That's actually what I proclaimed the meaning of life was somewhere in my teens. It was the only way I could comprehend there being a point to life. And I hadn't read Ecclesiastes yet. But I was missing still the connection of living life to it's fullest and living life to it's fullest with God at my center. I didn't yet fully grasp how spirituality fit in. Yet as I matured, this faith became a conviction.

Once in a job interview my senior year of college, I was asked, "What is your passion? What are you most passionate about?" I thought about it for a minute, not caring about what they wanted to hear. I had never contemplated it before. Finally, I said, "My passion is to enjoy life."

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Church News

CHURCH EVENTS

Worship Opportunities

Join us for worship in-person at 10:15AM every Sunday morning. We livestream each service from our Facebook group page:

facebook.com/firstpresmorrison.

The services are also posted on Monday mornings to our YouTube channel:

youtube.com/@firstpresmorrison

Bible Study

Bible Study will be held at 10AM at La Bella on Tuesdays throughout the month. Everyone is welcome!

Bingo at Homestead

Homestead invites one and all to join residents and friends to play BINGO on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 2—3:30PM. There will be refreshments and prizes!

Resthave Presbyterian Social Hour

Join us every 3rd Monday of the month at 2PM for “Presbyterian Social Hour” at Resthave. There will be plenty of coffee and conversation! Weather and illness permitting, please join us on September 21st!

Harvest Celebration and Pie & Ice Cream Social

Our annual celebration of the harvest will be on September 13th. Join

us for a special worship service, including communion. Following, we will have our annual pie and ice cream social. Please bring a dessert to pass (anything that goes with ice cream, including pie, is recommended).

Free Community Meal

Our next meal will be on Thursday, September 10th. The meal is a baked potato sloppy joe with sides. It begins at **5PM**. In-person and drive-up meals are available. Help is needed Wednesday at 1:30pm and on Thursday at 4PM.

Guest Worship Leader

On September 20, we will have a special worship leader. JD Benko will be leading the service as well as preaching. JD has completed a worship leader/ preaching program through the United Methodist Church. He’s excited to get to be a leader and preacher for us. Don’t miss out!

Sunday School & Coffee Hour Events

Something new is in the works for Sunday School for children and youth, and also special coffee hour events which will include a combination of learning opportunities and multi-generational shared experiences. They won’t be happening every Sunday, but when they do, you’ll be sure to want to be there!

More information will be shared when all the planning is complete.

Family Event

The first official family event for the school year will take place on Sunday, September 27. We will have a backyard bonfire and BBQ at the Selburgs starting at 5PM. No need to bring anything. Just show up! This is for families of children and youth in our church.

Newsletter Deadline 09/21

Please get information to be included in the October *Life Together* newsletter to the office e-mail or voicemail by September 21st.

Looking Ahead...

October 4: World Communion Sunday with some sort of potluck TBD

October 25: Reformation Sunday

November 1: All Saint’s Remembrance Sunday & “Remembered Recipes” potluck

Nov 6-8: Stronghold Youth Retreat

Nov 22: Christ the King Sunday

Nov 29: First Sunday of Advent/ Church Decorating/ Hanging of the Greens

December 24: Christmas Eve Service 4PM

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Triumphant

Margo Atherton, a former long-time member of our church, completed this portion of life on Friday, August 28, 2026.

Prayer Requests



Those who have served the church in the past month; the Mission Starfish Haiti School; Yucatan Peninsula Mission; Victory Center; Sauk Valley Food Bank; Morrison Food Pantry; Stronghold Camp & Retreat Center and Blackhawk Presbytery; God’s Will Giving Center; and those in need of healing and support: Nursing & retirement home residents and staff, medical workers, essential employees, school teachers & staff; family & friends of Margo Atherton, Rick Barr, Bev Bealer, Glenda Hegwood, Dale Johnson, Marian Osborn, Mike Zigler

Office Closed

The church office will be closed on Monday, September 7th in observance of Labor Day. Stacie will be back in the office on Thursday, September 10. Have a safe holiday!

Favorite Hymns

Pastor Mike is still looking for new hymns (or old hymns we could sing more often) to add to our collection. Scott Vandermyde will be returning to the organ soon and we would like to begin to add new hymns into the services in the upcoming year. Please let Pastor Mike know if you have any suggestions.

Per Capita

The per capita in 2026 is \$45 per church member. If you haven't paid it yet, please do.

2025-26 Communion Dates

Tentative Communion dates for 2026 are: 9/13; 10/4; 11/22; 12/20.

Children's Chairs for Sale

We have several old children's chairs that have been stored in various places in the church and it's time for them to find a new home. They have metal frames and wood seats and backs. We are asking for donations of your choice.

BUILDING UPDATES

We are still looking for donations to help cover the costs of our several expenses we have accrued this year. It's been an excruciating year of building needs and we are having to sell stocks to pay for it all. We are really in need of donations to our building fund. In process and recently completed projects are:

SANCTUARY AC

We have replaced one of the two AC units for the sanctuary. The cost for the temporary fix of the unit and the new unit which was installed in late August is approximately \$10,000.

BOILER ISSUES:

Major work to the boiler is finally near completion. Thankfully, we

have also tied down two major issues of heating issues over the last several years to simply two radiator traps. One is tied into Pastor Mike's radiator, and this has caused a relay of issues throughout the church that ended up causing severe damage from steam and overheating last year. The other is in the men's education wing bathroom. We will replace that trap and also put in a knob thermostat to control the temperature. That bathroom has been overheating for years. We don't know the costs of these projects, but we will definitely be going back to paying the boiler company \$1,000 per month to pay it off for some time.

BELL TOWER RENOVATION NEAR COMPLETION

The final work to the bell tower interior is set to be completed in September. Final costs will be reported in the October newsletter.

The interior of the bell tower also needs fixed due to water damage over the years. We are going to attempt to do the work ourselves. The walls need a plaster coating in areas, ceiling tiles need replaced, and the wood walls need scraped and painted. Also, the doors have not been flush for a long time and we need to rehang them.

SANCTUARY DAMAGE

We are looking to have Deer View/Color Star fix the plaster issues caused by rain over the last decade coming in at areas surrounding the bell tower within the sanctuary, some of which are at the very top of the wall, well beyond our capability to fix. These areas will then be repainted. The current estimate is approximately \$1,000 for this work.

NEW INTERNET & UPCOMING UPGRADES INCLUDING LIVE-STREAMING

We now have fiber optic internet throughout the building. Pastor Mike installed a mesh network, meaning, once you are hooked up to the internet, you can be anywhere in the church and you don't have to sign in to another network. We did

FOOD RESOURCES

Golden Meals:

Call 815 626-4442 (Mon—Thurs, 7:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.) Hot meals delivered Mon—Thurs. (With frozen/sack meals for weekends.)

Morrison Food Pantry:

Open Thursday mornings, 8-10 a.m., for curbside pick-up of food and dry goods. Now located at the old bowling alley at 629 E. Lincolnway.

morrisonfoodpantry.org

Ebenezer Church

Free fresh produce given away on Thursdays 9:45a.m.

God's Will Giving Center

Limited free food, essential items, as well as household items. Open Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Sauk Valley Food Bank:

Offers drive-up "pantry day giveaways" on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon, where food is provided to residents of the Sauk Valley area. 1801 Plant Drive Sterling, IL

saukvalleyfoodbank.org

211

Have other needs? Call 211. This directory of regional help covers a myriad of needs. Part of United Way.

not receive the \$5,000 technology grant via the Presbyterian Foundation. In such, Pastor Mike is working with William Patton to purchase and install an affordable system to enable us to offer a better live-stream of our services.



September 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 10AM Bible Study @ La Bella	2	3	4	5
6 15th Sunday after Pentecost 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	7 Office Closed Labor Day	8 10AM Bible Study @ La Bella	9 1:30PM Meal Prep 2PM BINGO @ Homestead	10 5PM Free Community Meal	11	12
13 16th Sunday after Pentecost 10:15AM Worship & Communion 11:15AM Coffee Hour	14	15 9:30AM Presbytery Meeting (Zoom) 10AM Bible Study @ La Bella	16 1:30PM BINGO @ Resthave	17 8AM Social Hour @ The Loft	18 Morrison UMC Rummage Sale & Bake Sale 9AM Erie Car Show 3PM GLOWapalooza Block Party	19
20 17th Sunday after Pentecost 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour 3PM Resthave 4PM Homestead	21 Newsletter Deadline 2PM Social Hour @ Resthave 6:30PM Session Meeting	22 10AM Bible Study @ La Bella	23	24 10AM La Bella Worship Service	25 Morrison City Wide Garage Sales 5PM Prophetstown Ladies Night Out	26
27 18th Sunday after Pentecost 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour 11:30AM Resthave Family Fun Day	28	29 10AM Bible Study @ La Bella	30			

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Food Pantry Needs

The Food Pantry personal items needed. Drop them off in the narthex. Any size is appreciated.

Toilet Paper	Paper Towels
Kleenex	Shampoo
Bleach	Bar Soap
Laundry Soap	Dish Soap
Men's & Women's	Deodorant

Social Hour at The Loft

The Board of The Loft hosts a Third Thursday social hour each month, on — you guessed it — the Third Thursday of each month from 8-10AM. The Loft is a non-profit business on Main Street. Please stop in and check it out.

Rummage & Bake Sale

Morrison United Methodist Church will be holding their annual Rummage & Bake Sale on Friday, September 18 from noon-5pm, and Saturday, September 19 from 8-11am.

If you are looking to clean out a closet or two, they are accepting donations of gently used items as well as baked goods for the bake sale. All pro-

ceeds help benefit local and global mission work of the church.

Chalk the Block

Morrison's Department of Fun is turning Main Street into one giant canvas on Saturday, September 19 from 3-10pm! You can purchase your own chalk square and create your own design.

Then, as the sun sets, it's time to GLOW! There will be blacklights, neon and everything that glows.

You can enjoy glow crafts, glow sticks, neon face painting and a DJ spinning your favorite hits.

For more information, search events for "Chalk the Block and GLOWapalooza" on Facebook.

Prophetstown Ladies Night

Prophetstown Proud is hosting a Ladies Night Out on Friday, September 25 from 5-7pm. You can enjoy shopping for unique gifts, home décor and boutique items, treat yourself to dinner or a drink, and win prizes!

For more information, search "Prophetstown Ladies Night Out" on

Facebook events.

City Wide Garage Sales

Morrison's City Wide Garage Sale will be held on September 25 & 26.

The Chamber will be accepting ads to be included in the flyer beginning September 1st, with a deadline of September 20th. You can get your ads to the Chamber office by direct Facebook message or email to morrisonchamber@morrisonil.org.

Family Fun Day

Resthave is hosting a Free Community Family Fun Day on Sunday, September 27 from 11:30am—3pm.

There will be fun for ALL! Enjoy lunch with your choice of pork chop or hot dog with sides and snow cones while they last. There will be face painting, a petting zoo, magician and balloon animals, BINGO, crafts, a bounce house & much more!

Bring your family and enjoy the day! Parking is available at Ebenezer Church with a shuttle to and from Resthave.

...Continued from page 1

Well, that was the incorrect answer. I was told that all the employees shared the same passion: software. I replied, "Yeah, this job isn't for me, and I got up and left." So it goes. However, it was also at that time period that I started turning to God in prayer to show me what I was supposed to do with my life. As I wanted to enjoy life, I wanted God to guide me as to how to enjoy and live life.

Still, my sights were set on making as much money as I could, and in less than two years of automotive engineering, I realized if I kept that path, I would end my career feeling that I had simply chased after the wind, and that all I would accrue would be vanity. And so I began to pray again. Then suddenly the job offer came to become the Director of Youth and Family ministries at my home church. I was contemplating making the switch, I found the short autobiography of my grandpa, Rev. Dr. Marshall Simpson. At the end he wrote, "The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." I thought to myself, hey, I like Grandpa's version of the meaning of life much better! It ties God into it! I'm living for God, not for myself. When I live for God, I will enjoy God and what God gifts to me throughout my life.

When I was in seminary, I for the first time read the Westminster Catechism from 1647, which was a common

instruction manual of questions and answers for communicants and new church members. I realized that Grandpa's statement was the answer to the first question: "What is the chief end of man?"

Indeed, enjoying life to just enjoy life is futile. That in itself is vanity and chasing after the wind. The Teacher told us so. The Teacher had amounted all the riches, all the knowledge, all the power, all the things that bring joy to our physical senses, but removed from God, these are nothing. These too are lessons continually taught by Jesus. In his years of ministry, Jesus taught the people to live for the Spirit, to live for an everlasting relationship with God—right now. It is in living with God that we are able to reach the peak we seek to climb that brings us to the utter fulfillment and enjoyment of life. Indeed, we can find pleasures from our toils and our gains, but separated from God, they are a void. They are vapors. They are a passing breath, the passing wind.

Jesus reminded us that though we might think that we are living life to the fullest, if God is not in it, then we are living only for the flesh. And though we think that we have real love tied into our lives, the truth is that God is love, and that without God present, then love is not fully present. We just get the feelings of love, but not the full impact of love. Love without God is love without the Holy Spirit, love without our Crea-

tor, love without our Savior. It is empty love, which too is vanity—a vapor that mimics love, but has no substance. It is fleeting. And striving for it is chasing after the wind. In such, to fully live is to fully embrace the Triune God in our life, to embrace the beauty of all creation, to embrace the gift of our own life and the gift of the life of others, and the building of relationships with God, self, creation and humanity that is grounded and grown in love.

In our life together, we will find time to continue to slip by out of our control. We will see the years spin past us at a dizzying rate. Yet every day is still a day to embrace. Every day has the opportunity to wake up, give acknowledgement and thanks to the Triune God, to give the day over to God, and to live the day for God. In this, we will be more awake. We will be more open to the Spirit, to the Word, to the Creator. We will see more, feel more, embrace more, and remember more. We will store more memories into the chapters of our life. And when we get to the end of this life all too soon, we can look back and say, I didn't waste it. It was not vanity. I did not chase after the wind. I lived it to the fullest in love, glorifying God, and enjoying God and all that God gave me. And as I lived this life to the fullest, I shared it in love with one another.

Grace and Peace,
Mike

Leadership and Staff

**Session Elders/
Board of Trustees/
Personnel Committee/
Safety Team/
Stewardship Team**

Rick Barr '26
Carol Wolf '26
Ron Shank '27*
Tim Reynolds '27
Jim Palmer '28
Angela Reamer '28

Stacie Baker, Clerk

**Elders in their 2nd consecutive term*

Corporation Officers

Ron Shank, President
Tim Reynolds, Vice President
Scott Vandermyde, Treasurer

Nominating Committee

Bryan Etter
Tim Reynolds
Greg Rider
Carol Wolf
Deb Zigler

**Resthave Home
Board of Directors**

Nancy Shank
FPC Representative

**Resthave Home
Women's Auxiliary Board**

Deb Zigler

Finance Team

Angela Reamer
Tim Reynolds
Scott Vandermyde

Staff

Rev. Dr. Mike Selburg, Pastor
Stacie Baker, Office Manager
Scott Vandermyde, Organist
Courtney Bruckner, Custodian



September Scripture

Sept. 6: Ezek. 33:7-11
Ps. 119: 33-40
Rom. 13:8-14
Matt. 18:15-20
Sept. 13: Gen. 50:15-21
Ps. 103:(1-7) 8-13
Rom. 14:1-12
Matt. 18:21-35
Sept. 20: Jonah 3:10-4:11
Ps. 145:1-8
Phil. 1:21-30
Matt. 20:1-16
Sept. 27: Ezek. 18:1-4, 25-32
Ps. 25:1-9
Phil. 2:1-13
Matt. 21:23-32

Birthdays

09/01: Arlene Burkholder
09/02: Nancy Shank
09/30: Sally Hayden
09/30: Ron Shank

Anniversaries

09/24: Daniel & Junee Cortes

Upcoming Free Drive-Up Community Meals First Presbyterian Church, Morrison

Sept. 10—Baked Potato Sloppy Joe
Oct. 8—Chili & Cinnamon Roll
Nov. 12—Chicken & Veggie Soup
Dec. 10—Christmas Ham Dinner



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www.firstpresmorrison.org

https://www.facebook.com/firstpresmorrison

YouTube Channel: First Presbyterian Church of Morrison, Illinois

Contact Pastor Mike at revselburg@gmail.com



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one another.
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each other.