

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!

December 2025 • Vol. 68/No. 11

Advent arrives in a blanket of snow. It's a new year of the Christian calendar with a blank canvas on the landscape. An open slate of opportunities for us all. December enters in as a winter wonderland. The old year lives out its final month, awaiting a brand new start. With Thanksgiving now behind us, we decorate and celebrate for Christmas, beginning the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child, and anticipating a fresh beginning.

Can we feel the magic that is in the air? Can we embrace the spiritual presence that is all about us? Can we move away from whatever gloom that may have us entrapped? Can we move into a feeling of being able to breathe, to be able to let go, to feel light again, to feel calm, to feel excitement, to feel warmth, to feel alive? What burdens lay on our mind? What heaviness is in our heart? What sickness is in our body and mind? What can we do to overcome? How do we become renewed? How do we find firm ground? How do we build back up? How do we step up from the places in life we feel that we are near or at the bottom? How do we work our way to the new norm in which we say, 'Here I am, alive, and full of life'?

Advent brings with it five candles to remember a way to live; five ways to be filled with the Spirit; five ways to anticipate a new beginning; five ways to strategize and work toward; five way to readjust; and five ways to live anew.

The first four candles are lit the four Sundays before Christmas: Hope, Joy, Peace and Love. The final candle is lit on Christmas Eve and is the Christ Candle.

The first Sunday of Advent begins with Hope. There is hope in the com-

ing of our King—a Savior for all humanity. We have hope in the assurance of our Creator's love, hope in the forgiveness we receive, hope in the gift of faith bestowed upon us, and hope in eternal life. The Christ child to come is the Wonder of wonders. It is with him whom all our hope is placed. And it is in our Lord where our hope comes from.

From Hope we move to Peace. Peace is a state of harmony found in proper balance. However, for humans, peace is difficult to obtain. There is peace within the self and mind, peace with fellow humans, peace with nature, other life on earth, and peace with our Creator. Advent marks a time in the year in which we reflect the peace God has made with us. Through Jesus' life, death and resurrection, our sins and trespasses have been forgiven. We have been made right with God, and in such, have been blessed with peace. If our Creator can extend peace to us, who so often go astray, then we too can learn to extend peace to all life around us. Advent marks a time of the year to forgive, accept differences, understand that we are all connected, and that God calls us to seek harmony in all aspects of our life. It is through peace that we might learn to live as we have been created.

From Peace we move to Joy. What greater way to express the Advent season than with joy? In this time of reflection, we recognize all the wonderful gifts we have received this year and in life from the Lord. With great thanksgiving we are filled with joy. And most of all, there is a joy in the air that only exists in the anticipation and arrival of a new baby. And how much greater the joy when the child to be born is the King of kings!?! Here, the time of the Ad-

vent season has reached a joyful state. No longer shall we worry, contemplate, and dread the toils and issues of our life. Joy Sunday marks a time to really begin celebrating if we haven't already, to get ourselves in gear to be festive and merry. If we aren't out of the gloom by this point, we need to really make an effort to let joy enter all of our hearts. It is time to have the mindset to give thanks for what has been given to us and smile for the joy which surrounds us.

From Joy we move to Love. God is love. As there is nothing higher than God, there can be nothing higher than love. The greatest achievement any person can ever reach is to be full of love, to love God back and to love all people and all of creation. Jesus affirmed the Great Commandments: to love God with our entire being and our neighbor as our self. Jesus gave us a new commandment: to love one another. In this season, we are reminded of God's love for us through the birth of Jesus. On Love Sunday, we are behooved to remember the teachings of Jesus and the love which poured from him, and by following Jesus' example, we can seek perfection in love as we strive to love one another.

And finally, on Christmas Eve, we move from Love to the celebration of Christ. On this eve of the birth of the Christ Child, we gather together to celebrate the birth of Jesus, our King and Savior. In God there is no beginning nor end, which is represented by the circle of the Advent wreath. And in the center, we place Christ, who was God incarnate, for it was in Jesus that humans fully came to know and understand the true God. Christ is placed at the center of our lives.

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Church News

CHURCH EVENTS

Worship Opportunities

Join us for worship in-person at 10:15AM every Sunday morning. Virtual worship will continue to be provided indefinitely. 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 9:30AM at La Bella (formerly Highlight Health/Pleasant View) on Tuesdays throughout the month.

La Bella (Formerly Pleasant View) Ice Cream Socials

On December 2nd, and the first Tuesday of every month, we will have an ice cream social at 4:15PM. We switch up the dessert every month. Come enjoy this time of fellowship with the residents and staff at La Bella of Morrison.

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!

Advent, Church Decorating, and Hanging of the Greens

Advent season began on Sunday, November 30. However, we canceled in-person worship that day due to snow. Festivities for that day have been postponed to December 7. For the 3rd year in a row, we are going to decorate the church that morning starting at 9:15AM. Everyone is invited to attend and help make the church beautiful for the Christmas Season. We will have our annual "Hanging of the Greens" worship service when we finish decorating the sanctuary, or at 10:15AM if we finish decorating before then.

Flower Fund

Please donate to our flower fund to help us purchase poinsettias for our sanctuary this Advent. You may donate any amount. Forms are available at the church if you would like to donate in honor or memory of people. Excess funds will be used to buy Easter flowers as well as outdoor flowers in the summer.

Sunday School

Children and Youth Sunday School will be held during coffee hour on December 7th and 21st.

2026 Pledges Due

Please return your 2026 pledge forms by Sunday, December 7, so we can have the budget finalized for the December 14 Congregational Meeting. In order to ensure the continuation of our works as apostles of Christ, the time is now to commit to giving. Let us remember, together, the words of St. Teresa of Avila:

"Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours."

Nursing Home Worship Service

Pastor Mike will be filling the pulpit on Thursday, December 11, 10AM at La Bella. Come worship with the residents!

Free Community Meals

Our next meal will be on Thursday, December 11. The meal is Christmas ham dinner. It begins at **4:30PM**. In-person and drive-up meals are available. Help is needed for food prep on Wednesday the 10th at 1:30PM and Thursday at 3:30PM.

New Member Sunday, Congregational Meeting & Cookie Frost-Off

We will bring in two new members into congregation on December 14: Brian Etters and Greg Rider. Join us as we celebrate their commitment to our church. Stay after for a short Congregational Meeting on Sunday, December 14. Action will be taken

Prayer Requests

Those who have served the church in the past month; student Youdelka Philippe, her family and 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; Larry & Bev Bealer, Dan Brandon, Glenda Hegwood, the family of Jane James, Dale Johnson, Lynn Knox, Marian Osborn, Jody Tucker, Ray Tucker



on the 2026 Budget and to elect Elders. Children and youth will head to the dining room during the meeting to begin frosting cookies. The rest of the congregation can join them after the meeting.

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! Join us on December 15!

Session Meeting

The Session will meet on Monday, December 15 at 6:30PM.

Newsletter Deadline 12/22

Please get information to be included in the January 2026 *Life Together* newsletter to the office e-mail or voicemail by December 22.

Christmas Eve Service

Our Christmas Eve Worship Service will be at 4PM. Join us as we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child.

Office Closed

The office will be closed Thursday, December 25 in observance of Christmas Day. It will reopen on Monday, December 29. Have a very Merry Christmas!

Christmas "Comfy Clothes" Sunday

Join us for a laid back service on Sunday, December 29. Children are invited to wear pajamas and bring a stuffy. Adults are encouraged to dress comfy.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Church Triumphant

Jane Ann James completed this portion of life on the evening of No-

vember 17 at Resthave Home, at age 97. The family had a private burial on November 20, of which John Reynolds and Pastor Mike presided. There will be a celebration of life worship at a later date, likely this spring.

Please keep the James family and friends in your prayers. You can send cards to Nancy & Ron Shank at 14245 Lister Rd, Morrison, IL 61270.

Per Capita

The per capita in 2026 is \$45 per church member. Of that total, \$30.11 is kept by the Presbytery (which includes various missions); \$3.81 is forwarded to the Synod of Lincoln Trails; and \$11.08 goes to the General Assembly of the PC(USA) for its administrative budgets.

2025-26 Communion Dates

In 2025, the final Communion date is December 21. Tentative Communion dates for 2026 are: 1/11; 2/15; 4/2; 5/24; 6/21; 7/19; 8/16; 9/13; 10/4; 11/22; 12/20.

LOOKING AHEAD— SAVE THE DATE

January 4: Epiphany Worship Service Celebration; Family Post-Christmas Epiphany Party with Dinner & White Elephant rejected Christmas Present Exchange

January 11: Baptism of the Lord Sunday & Communion

January 25: Annual Meeting Worship Service; Potluck

Feb 8: Family First-Half Super Bowl Party

Feb 15: Transfiguration of the Lord; Communion; Mardis Gras Coffee Hour

Feb 18: Ash Wednesday

March 29: Palm Sunday

April 2: Maundy Thursday

April 3: Good Friday

April 5: Easter Sunday

May 24: Pentecost

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.



December 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 9:30AM Bible Study 4:15PM Ice Cream Social @ La Bella	3	4	5 9AM MCH Auxiliary Bake Sale	6 4PM UMC Community Meal 6PM Christmas Walk
7 2nd Sunday of Advent 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour 11:30AM Sunday School	8	9 9:30AM Bible Study	10 1:30PM Meal Prep 2PM BINGO @ Homestead	11 10AM Worship Service @ La Bella 4:30PM Free Drive Up Community Meal	12 9AM Resthave Coffee Hour & Bake Sale	13
14 3rd Sunday of Advent 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour / Cookie Frost-Off 5PM Youth Group	15 2PM Social Hour @ Resthave 6:30PM Session Mtg.	16 9:30AM Bible Study	17 1:30PM BINGO @ Resthave	18 8AM Social Hour @ The Loft	19 7PM Voices of Praise @ Emmanuel	20 3PM Voices of Praise @ Emmanuel
21 4th Sunday of Advent 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour 11:30AM Sunday School 7PM Voices of Praise @ Emmanuel	22	23 9:30AM Bible Study	24 4PM Christmas Eve Service	25 Office Closed 	26	27
28 1st Sunday of Christmas 10:15AM Worship	29	30 9:30AM Bible Study	31			

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.

Hospital Auxiliary Bake Sale

The Morrison Hospital Auxiliary will be holding a bake sale in their lobby by the main entrance on Friday, December 5th from 9am—2pm. They are accepting donations of baked goods if you would like to support their sale. You can drop off your donations on Thursday, December 4th from 9am-noon or before 9am on Friday.

Christmas Walk

The Chamber of Commerce will be hosting Morrison's Annual Christmas Walk & Parade on Saturday, December 6th from 3-7pm. There will be something for the whole family. From the tree lighting, sleigh rides and barrel cars to the festive parade, Christmas concoction contest, hot cocoa and more. And don't forget to stop in and visit with Santa before you leave!

Gingerbread House Fun

Stop into Upcycle Junkie during the Christmas Walk on Saturday, December 6 from 3-7pm for a free hands-on craft to celebrate the season.

You will be able to decorate your own gingerbread house, made out of sturdy cardstock, with acrylic markers and many embellishments. This craft is perfect for all ages, will get you into the holiday spirit and give you a great memory to take home!

And don't forget that Upcycle Junkie also offers many great craft workshops throughout the month. You can find them on Facebook at

facebook.com/upcyclejunkie or check out their website at <http://www.upcyclejunkie.com>.

Resthave Auxiliary

Resthave Auxiliary Coffee Hour and Bake sale is from 9-10:30am on Friday, December 12th at Resthave Care and Rehabilitation, 408 Maple Ave, Morrison. Stop in and bid on the silent auction items, take home some baked goods, and enjoy coffee, juice, coffee cake or rolls at their coffee hour.

Visit With Santa

Stop into Farmers National Bank, 1100 E. Lincolnway, Morrison, on Saturday, December 20 from 8am-noon to enjoy a visit with Santa! Here is one last chance to give Santa your most wanted Christmas gift list. :-)



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Nothing can ever be more important or take precedence over Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word of God, who always was and always will be. And through the Word, we are taught about all the great gifts in our world which God has given to us, mainly those of hope, peace, joy and love. Our ability to be the children of God comes from the guiding light of Christ. On Christmas Eve, we light the Christ candle, remembering all we have been given by God, and most of all, of the gift of God through Jesus. Just as the Christ candle completes the lighting of the Advent wreath, so the birth of Jesus fills the needs and voids in our own lives, letting us be whole and allowing us to join together in common love, worship and praising our Creator and performing the works of our Lord. Praise be to God for the birth of our Savior.

We are given these Sundays in

Advent as a solid blueprint of readjusting our lives. In the early times of Christianity, Advent was a time spent somber and sober, seeking to reflect, to find humility, to repent and to reconnect to God. It was a time of expectation, a time to anticipate the Second Coming and that at any moment Jesus could come back. It was a time for preparation. It was not a time of celebration. Yet our culture saves that ancient practice only for our Lenten practice. Instead, in the Christmas season, we indulge in celebrating and set our hearts to thinking of others, of gift giving, of reunions, and getting ready of all our festivities. By following these five pillars of Advent, we can actually find a balance in living within both of those traditions. We can still take time to reflect, repent, and prepare ourselves to be solid Christians and fellow humans, while finding true hope, peace, joy and love in our lives.

In our life together, we do not need to go into this season of Advent alone. To be a Christian is to be in community. It is argued that one cannot be a Christian individually, for Christ came to unite us, and we cannot separate ourselves from others and still be true followers of Christ. Instead, it is in the love that we share with one another that we find our true Christianity. Be it with friends, family or strangers, the love that we have between us is the act of us receiving the love of God that we know through Christ, utilizing that love and passing that love on. Love binds us together. Love helps us help one another. Love will get us through this season, onto the path we need to be, and to be able to be the best individuals we can by binding ourselves as a beloved community together.

Merry Christmas,
Mike

Leadership and Staff

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

Lexie Laughlin '25*
Scott Vandermyde '25*
Rick Barr '26
Carol Wolf '26
Ron Shank '27*
Tim Reynolds '27

Stacie Baker, Clerk

**Elders in their 2nd consecutive term*

Corporation Officers

Ron Shank, President
Scott Vandermyde,
Vice-President & Treasurer

Nominating Committee

Lynn Knox
Lexie Laughlin
Angela Reamer
Tim Reynolds
Deb Zigler

**Resthave Home
Board of Directors**

Deb Zigler
FPC Representative

**Resthave Home
Women's Auxiliary Board**

Deb Zigler

Finance Team

Lynn Knox
Tim Reynolds
Scott Vandermyde

Staff

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



December Scripture

Dec. 7: Isa. 11:1-10
Ps. 72:1-7, 18-19
Rom. 15:4-13
Matt. 3:1-12
Dec. 14: Isa. 35:1-10
Ps. 146:5-10
Luke 1:46b-55
James 5:7-10
Matt. 11:2-11
Dec. 21: Isa. 7:10-16
Ps. 80:1-7, 17-19
Rom. 1:1-7
Matt. 1:18-25
Dec. 24: Isa. 9:2-7
Ps. 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)
Dec. 28: Isa. 63:7-9
Ps. 148
Heb. 2:10-18
Matt. 2:13-23

Birthdays

12/05: Myra Huizenga

Anniversaries

12/12: Tom & Karen Genz
12/31: Greg Kruse &
Susan Davenport

Upcoming Free Drive-Up Community Meals

First Presbyterian Church, Morrison

Dec. 11: Christmas Ham Dinner
Jan. 29, 2026: Beef Veggie Soup
Feb. 26, 2026: Chili & Cornbread
Mar. 26, 2026 Ham & Potato Chowder



First Presbyterian Church of Morrison IL
100 E. Lincolnway, Morrison IL 61270
Phone: 815-772-3510

firstpresmorrison@gmail.com

www.firstpresmorrison.org

https://www.facebook.com/firstpresmorrison

YouTube Channel: First Presbyterian Church of Morrison, Illinois

Contact Pastor Mike at revselburg@gmail.com



Life Together is published 11 times per year by the
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Love
one another.
Feed
each other.