

# 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 2021 • Vol. 64/No. 11

Advent is upon us. It is time to prepare for the arrival of the Christ Child. It is time to prepare for Jesus' return. It is time to get our life in order. It is time to let go of the old and live into the new.

All of what we are taught to believe about Advent is easy to digest, that is, except for the Second Coming. The original Apostles believed they would see Jesus return in their life time. The authors of the canonized Gospels wrote about it. Yet Jesus didn't return to them in any sort of apocalypse, rapture or 2nd coming. Instead, they had to wait until they died to meet up with Jesus. And here we are still waiting. Though the destructive and hateful state of the world always seems to show the signs of Jesus's imminent return, it has yet to come. So, we turn away from anticipating Jesus' return, and instead, set our sights on how to live this life in a way that follows and serves Christ. We predict we'll meet up with Jesus when we take our final breath.

For me, this is a better way to live. Focusing on a rapture invokes fear in me. To be left wondering if I have been good enough to be *chosen* by God to enter heaven (or even worse, to have had my eternal life preordained regardless to how I lived) simply creates dread, anxiety, fear, angst, etc. In such, it is easy to have a relationship with the Triune God which is always tied up in emotions that spiral us into a pit of despair. But is that the relationship God wants with us? Looking at the Gospel of John, we are reminded that our Father in heaven desires a personal relationship with us which is based on love. When we attach ourselves to God's love through loving one another, we bind ourselves to God and begin living within eternal life on earth, thus creating heaven on earth in our personal reality. This loving relationship is to set us free from fear, and all the other emotional distress. This is not to

say that we may not still suffer from chemical imbalances within ourselves that triggers these undesired emotions. But it does release us from the emotions that society can place on us. Any church that creates fear, stress and anxiety within their congregation is not a church that is being led by Jesus Christ. Indeed, Christ came to set us free in this life, and in the life to come.

So then, how do we live within this personal relationship that God desires to have with us? There are five tenants of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and Christ.

We must embrace hope, not fear. God wants to free us from fear, for fear creates bondage. Fear builds walls and obstacles, destroys bridges, muddies paths, and skews vision. But hope brings us face to face with our challenges and opens up the door of faith to move beyond the fires that blockade us from moving forward.

We must embrace peace. Peace is obtained when there is balance in relationships. Balance is obtained by making relationships right. This is done with mindful actions. It could mean there is need for forgiveness to be extended and/or received. It may require repentance, either individually or communally. We must recognize that to find harmonized peace, our actions must bring justice to the world around us.

We must embrace joy. Again, this life wasn't created for us to live in fear or engulfed in other outwardly imposed negative emotions. The first question of the Westminster Catechism is, "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is, "...To glorify God and enjoy (God) forever." In such, in embracing the glory of God, and living within that glory, we not only enjoy God forever, but we enjoy the life God has given us and enjoy this earth with all of our might, and then to enjoy our union with God in our next life. Yet we need to keep in mind peace and love

when we celebrate within joy. We can easily get carried away in jubilance, which will lead us away from our relationship with the Triune God and lead us off the path of life.

We must embrace love. We cannot have peace without love. We cannot utilize hope or faith without love. We cannot know joy or Christ without love. Love is how we best understand God. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them (1 John 4:16b). Love is at the center.

How then, do we best understand what love truly is? How do we best embrace God's love for us? We can look to Jesus' life and his teachings. We can believe that God came to us in human form as God's only son to teach us how to truly live by loving God with our entire being, by loving ourselves and by loving our neighbor as we love our own self. We know of God's love through God's sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, through Jesus' resurrection, through the old laws being abolished and replaced with the living Holy Spirit. We can understand God's love through the new life God continually offers to us. God's path is always before us. It is up to us to follow it.

In our life together this Advent season, may we embrace hope, peace, joy and love through a communal and personal commitment to Jesus Christ. As we walk upon God's path, we need to utilize the gifts it offers. Together, we can be the beloved community which, through the Triune God, brings justice to the world in which all needs are met and all people are allowed to truly live. We cannot find freedom as individuals or in our communities if there is not true freedom for all. And that freedom is found in living for and through God's actions in all that we do. May this be the Christmas present we all desire, and the focus of our mission.

Merry Christmas,  
Mike

# Church News

## CHURCH EVENTS

### Call to Meeting

All active members are called to a congregational meeting on Sunday, December 12th following the 10:15 worship service. We will be voting on the 2022 budget as well as the slate of nominated Session Elders and Deacons.

### In-Person Worship

Join us for worship in-person at 10:15a.m. every Sunday morning. Masks are required and we ask that you space yourselves apart.

Virtual worship will continue to be provided indefinitely. We livestream it at 10:15 from our Facebook group page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/firstpresmorrison>. The services are also posted on Monday mornings to our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCzlobAb6lcNXGA0cbuuVdg>.

### Bible Study

Feel free to meet us for our Zoom Bible Studies. We meet at 9:30 a.m. on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd (& 5th) Tuesdays of the month. All are welcome to attend.

### Sunday School—December

Pastor Mike is going to lead a children's Sunday School class for all children (non potty-trained kids are welcome to come, but a parent needs to stick around). Classes will be from 9:30-10:05 on **December 5, 12, and 19th**. Room in church TBD. Snack and drink provided at the end of class. We will learn about the themes of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and the birth of Christ. Mike will talk with the families and they will decide if and when then they want to continue to have Sunday School after the holidays. If you know of anyone with children who would like to be part of our Sunday School program, please let them know. You can also

put them in touch with Pastor Mike.

### Cookie Bake-Off & Frost-Off

The Cookie Frost-Off is back! Once again we will be delivering cookies to people whom we want to help brighten their Christmas season.

This year we are adding a 'bake-off' to make all the cookies together at the church, instead of asking people to bring them.

Join us on December 15 at 1:00PM in the kitchen for an afternoon of baking cookies and fellowship. We'll do most of the work sitting in chairs in the dining room.

On December 16 we will meet at 9:30AM for the FROST-OFF! All are welcome. We also need people to deliver the cookies.

### Drive-Up Meals

In December, we will be serving holiday ham dinner for our meal on the 9th. Mike will announce the needs for volunteering the Sunday before the meal.

We have continued to hand out 300 meals at each of our Free Community Drive-Up Meals!!!

Thank you for your support!

### Deacons Meeting

Deacons will not be meeting in December. They'll be helping with the bake-off and frost-off instead.

### Session Meeting

Session will meet December 20 via Zoom at 6:30 p.m. A link to the meeting will be sent to the elders.

### Newsletter Deadline 12/23

Please get information to be included in the January *Life Together* newsletter to the office voicemail or e-mail by December 23rd.

### 2022 Stewardship

#### Campaign

You should have received the 2022 Stewardship Campaign information and forms in the mail. This year we are only asking for a pledge of treasures at this time. These pledges of support are so valuable to the life and vitality of our church. Please turn in your Stewardship form by Sunday, December 5th. Ways to pledge your time and talents are made available throughout the year through our varying ministries and missions.

### Poinsettias

Please use the order form on page 5, or available at worship services, to place your order for poinsettias this Christmas season. Let's fill the sanctuary with beautiful flowers from K&R Greenhouse! Please return the form ASAP.

### Christmas Eve Service

We are making the Christmas Eve service earlier this year. It will start at 4PM and should be done about 4:45PM. We are hoping this will make it easier for families of all ages, including family who are visiting, to make it to the service, and get you home in time to cook dinner and begin (or continue) your Christmas Eve celebrations.

As there is not a Sunday School Christmas pageant this year, we will bring back an old tradition of the children's nativity during the service. We need all children and youth to help participate in the worship service. We will dress them as Mary, Joseph, Magi, shepherds and angels and have them at different times walk down the aisle as we read the scripture, and they will stand up front until the end of the scripture readings.

## CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

### *The Church Triumphant*

Nancy Rector completed this portion of life on November 1, 2021. Please keep her family in your prayers.

### *Deacons Are Here For You*

Feeling a little down or lonely? Do you have physical, spiritual or emotional needs that we can maybe help with? The Deacons exist to help members and friends of the congregation in their times of need. You can utilize this ministry by calling one of your friendly Deacons. They want to help!

Junee Cortes  
Mavis Best  
Jane James  
Jan Kelly  
Greg Kruse  
Marian Osborn  
Doris Robertson

**Prayer Requests** Have a prayer request? You can now email them to [prayers.firstpresmorrison@gmail.com](mailto:prayers.firstpresmorrison@gmail.com)

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### *Christmas Walk*

The Morrison Chamber of Commerce is hosting the annual Christmas Walk on Saturday, December 4. The theme this year is Comfort & Joy.

The LIVE Window Walk will begin at 3PM, with the parade beginning at 4:30PM. The Christmas Tree Lighting will be immediately following the parade.

Be sure to follow The Morrison Chamber of Commerce Facebook Page and the 2021 Morrison Christmas Walk Event for more updates and announcements!

@gmail.com. Please pass this on to others!

### *Helping Hands*

We are again helping a family in need this year through the Helping Hands program. If you would like to purchase a gift for a local child in need please check the list of gifts online at [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1T8jjKuPJhxq3ap-K02qQcwHJbX4Qos2pH9RlFw\\_yjw8/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1T8jjKuPJhxq3ap-K02qQcwHJbX4Qos2pH9RlFw_yjw8/edit?usp=sharing) and sign up for one you would like to purchase. To keep it consistent they are asking for 6 gifts per child, with one of them being a toy or game etc.

Once purchased, wrap it and put a post-it note on it indicating what the gift is and the age of the child it's for, and you can drop it off at the church office or call to make arrangements for someone to pick it up. Donations need to be to the church office no later than **Monday, December 13**. Once all the gifts are collected, Stacie will place tags on the gifts with the children's names. Thank you for helping make Christmas bright!



**LOVE ONE ANOTHER!**

## LOCAL AND OTHER RESOURCES

**Golden Meals:** Call 815 626-4442 (Monday-Thursday, 7:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.) Hot meals delivered Monday-Thursday. (With frozen/sack meals for weekends.)

**Morrison Food Pantry:** Open Thursday mornings, 7:30-9:30 a.m., for curbside pick-up of food and dry goods.

**Sauk Valley Food Bank:** Offers drive-up "pantry day giveaways" on some Saturdays where food is provided to residents of the Sauk Valley area. Call 815-626-4556 for details.

**Sullivan's Foods:** The Morrison location has also begun online grocery ordering for curbside pick-up or delivery. Call 772-4696 or see <https://www.sullivansfoods.net/>

**Local Restaurants:** Some are offering pick-up, curb-side pick-up and delivery. Call for details.

**City News:** Keep up on local news at our city's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/thecityofmorrison>

**Morrison Hospital:** The hospital's Facebook page provides information on new check-in procedures and other updates: <https://www.facebook.com/MorrisonCommunityHospital>

**Whiteside County Senior Center:** The Center is not open for walk-ins or events but some services are being provided by phone. Call 815-622-9230 and see their Facebook page or website: <https://www.wcseniorcenter.org>.

**PC(USA):** The PC(USA) COVID-19 dedicated webpage adds new information and resources regularly in many areas: <https://www.pcusa.org/covid19/>.

# December 2021



| Sun   | Mon                            | Tue                             | Wed  | Thu   | Fri                         | Sat                        |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
|   |                                | 1                               | 2  | 3   | 4                           |                            |
| <i>5</i><br>2nd Sunday of Advent<br>9:30AM Sunday School<br>10:15AM Worship<br>11:15AM Coffee Hour  | <i>6</i><br>9:30AM Bible Study | <i>7</i><br>9:30AM Bible Study  | <i>8</i>   | <i>9</i>  | <i>10</i>                   | <i>11</i>                  |
|   |                                |                                 |  | 4:30-6PM Free Community Drive-Up Meal                     |                             |                            |
| <i>12</i><br>3rd Sunday of Advent<br>9:30AM Sunday School<br>10:15AM Worship<br>11:15AM Coffee Hour | <i>13</i>                      | <i>14</i><br>9:30AM Bible Study | <i>15</i><br>1:00PM <b>Bake Off</b><br>(Cookie Baking) | <i>16</i><br>9:30AM <b>Frost Off</b><br>(Cookie Frosting) | <i>17</i>                   | <i>18</i>                  |
|   |                                |                                 |  |   |                             |                            |
| <i>19</i><br>4th Sunday of Advent<br>9:30AM Sunday School<br>10:15AM Worship<br>11:15AM Coffee Hour | <i>20</i>                      | <i>21</i><br>9:30AM Bible Study | <i>22</i>  | <i>23</i>   | <i>24</i><br>Christmas Eve  | <i>25</i><br>Christmas Day |
|   |                                |                                 |  |   | 4PM Christmas Eve Service   |                            |
| <i>26</i><br>1st Sunday of Christmas<br>10:15AM Worship<br>11:15AM Coffee Hour                      | <i>27</i>                      | <i>28</i>                       | <i>29</i>  | <i>30</i>   | <i>31</i><br>New Year's Eve |                            |
|   |                                |                                 |  |   |                             |                            |

## PROPERTIES UPDATES

### Sanctuary Supports Completed

The work for the vertical support columns was completed in early November. We can now have confidence that the sanctuary floors are adequately supported, which will also help the outer brick walls from cracking. Thanks to those who have supported this project so far. We have raised \$2,100 out of \$7,650. If you would like to help support, you still can. You can send in a check, leave one in the collection plate, or use PayPal. Just make sure you let us know it's for this project.

### Lending Library Update

This work has been slow going due to weather and the schedule of our two volunteers, Jim Palmer and Miguel Velasco, not meshing up. Most dates they have scheduled have ended up not being weather they can work in. So far, the support beams have been cemented into the ground and bricks have been laid. However,

## 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; and those in need of healing and support: Individuals and families fighting COVID-19 infection, nursing & retirement home residents and staff, medical workers, essential employees, school teachers & staff; Bob Atherton, Richard Black, Dan Brandon, Orville Goodenough, Glenda Hegwood, Omar Manchester, Joyce Mathew, the family of Kurt Mills, Shirley Mills, the family of Nancy Rector, Cookee Shawver, Jean



the ground settled in an unexpected way, luckily before they permanently sealed the bricks together. So, they need to re-level the ground, re-lay the bricks, seal them in, then the library can be hung on the supports.

### Free Produce Table

The Free Community Produce Table will continue to sit out for the winter. Food items are continually being donated to the table, and people are regularly picking up the donations. As

far as a permanent structure, we are still moving in slow motion...something will happen at some point. You can help with the table by either donating food items to it, or by helping keep the area tidy. If you are passing by the table and see cardboard boxes, you can pick them up and toss them down the steps in front of the boiler room and we'll take care of them later. Rotten food can be tossed, along with the box it is in, into the church dumpster.



## Poinsettias to the Glory of God!



Order beautiful poinsettias, provided by K & R Greenhouse, for use in the sanctuary this Christmas season. Bring them home after the Christmas Eve service, if you wish, to enjoy for additional weeks. Single plants with 5-8 blooms are \$12.80 each. Double plants with 12-15 blooms are \$18.80 each.

Total number of SINGLE plants \_\_\_\_\_ at \$12.80 each

Indicate the NUMBER of single plants of each color you would like:

Red \_\_\_\_\_ Burgundy \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_

Marble \_\_\_\_\_ Pink \_\_\_\_\_ Red Glitter \_\_\_\_\_  
(salmon & white) (red & white)

Please order poinsettias no later than **Thursday, November 18**. Payment may be made in the offering plate, in the church office or mailed to FPC, 100 E. Lincolnway, Morrison IL 61270. Please note "poinsettia" on your check, *made payable to First Presbyterian Church*.

Total number of DOUBLE plants \_\_\_\_\_ at \$18.80 each

Indicate the NUMBER of double plants of each color you would like:

Red \_\_\_\_\_ Burgundy \_\_\_\_\_ White \_\_\_\_\_

Marble \_\_\_\_\_ Pink \_\_\_\_\_ Red Glitter \_\_\_\_\_

Who would you like to commemorate with the poinsettia(s)?

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

In celebration of \_\_\_\_\_

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate the NUMBER of poinsettia(s) you will take and/or leave after the Christmas Eve Service:

I will take \_\_\_\_\_ (#) poinsettia(s)

Please use \_\_\_\_\_ (#) poinsettia(s) in the church ministry

# Leadership and Staff

**Session Elders/  
Board of Trustees/  
Personnel Committee/  
Safety Team/  
Stewardship Team**  
 Rick Barr '21\*  
 Jim Palmer '21  
 Angela Reamer '21  
 Lexie Laughlin '22  
 Scott Vandermyde '22  
 Carol Wolf '23  
 Lynn Knox '23\*  
 Tim Reynolds '23\*  
 Jan Kelly, Clerk

\*Elders and Deacons in their second consecutive term

**Deacons**  
 Junee Cortes '21\*  
 Jan Kelly '21  
 Greg Kruse '21  
 Marian Osborn '21\*  
 Mavis Best '22  
 Jane James '22\*  
 Doris Robertson '23\*  
**Nominating Committee**  
 Rick Barr  
 Greg Kruse  
 Marian Osborn  
 Tim Reynolds  
 Nancy Shank  
 Deb Zigler

**PW Coordinating Team**  
 Lynn Knox, Moderator  
 Jane James, Secretary  
 Angela Reamer,  
 Treasurer

**Resthave Home  
Board of Directors**  
 Stephany Trossbach,  
 FPC Representative

**Resthave Home  
Women's Auxiliary  
Board**  
 Deb Zigler

**Finance Team**  
 Lynn Knox, Angela Reamer,  
 Scott Vandermyde

**Staff**  
 Rev. Dr. Mike Selburg, Pastor  
 Stacie Baker, Office Manager  
 Scott Vandermyde, Organist  
 Jenn Reynolds, Custodian

## BIRTHDAYS

12/5: Myra Huizinga  
 12/6: Joel Roberts  
 12/12: Kohen Blasdell  
 12/13: Jean Temple  
 12/18: Lisa Sage  
 12/30: Rachel Tucker



## ANNIVERSARIES

12/12: Tom & Karen Genz  
 12/15: Ken & Shirley Mills  
 12/31: Greg Kruse &  
 Susan Davenport



## December Scripture Readings

**Dec 5:** Luke 3:1-6  
 Phil. 1:3-11  
 Mal. 3:1-4  
 Luke 1:68-79

**Dec 12:** Luke 3:7-18  
 Phil. 4:4-7  
 Zeph. 3:14-20  
 Isa. 12:2-6

**Dec 19:** Luke 1:39-45; (46-55)  
 Heb. 10:5-10  
 Micah 5:2-5a  
 Luke 1:47-55  
 Ps. 80:1-7

**Dec 26:** John 1:1-14  
 Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12)  
 Isa. 52:7-10  
 Ps. 98

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*Life Together* is published 11 times per year by the  
 First Presbyterian Church of Morrison IL.  
 1st Printing: July 29, 2021



## Upcoming Free Drive-Up Community Meals

Dec. 9: Holiday Ham  
 Jan. 27, 2022: Soup

