

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!

May 2023 • Vol. 66/No. 5

April passed in reverse. We wore shorts and applied sunscreen the first two weeks, turning then to freezing nights and cool days, while the 30th closed the month out with a cold wind and rain. April watched as daffodils shot up, and faded far too early. The rushing bulbs slowed their emergence when the cold came mid-April, until finally an onslaught of tulips arose, who are delicately embracing the chilly temps. The blossoms of the sour cherry trees endure a record duration of clinging to the branches, which buzz on sunny days in the sound of bees. As the lilacs open, all the fruit trees are aflame with passionate flare. Redbuds dazzle in their glory. Red and yellow finches, red breasted grosbeaks and blazing orange orioles frequent feeders. Blinding carpets of dandelions welcome May's entrance. She appears brilliantly in high gusts of wind. Soon, all the flowers will turn to tones of purple before the month is over, while we transition into meteorological summer (June 1). And here we are, in the midst of God's greatest beauty, in the depths of spring's grand production.

It has been a beautiful spring, despite the crazy change in temperatures. This spring has been a constant reminder of the beauty of God's creation. It gives us insight as to how God creates and how God is at work. God's creation is marvelous, and we get to be part of it, and we have the opportunity to recognize it and embrace it. Yet it is easy to fall into the routines of life, become busy and distracted, and even become filled with negative critique. In our culture, it is easy to gain a mindset of looking for the problems with everything. We can get stuck in only noticing what is wrong with the world. We can program ourselves to only notice the ugly. Often, when we succumb to this way of being, we don't even notice we are doing it. Especially for us in the Midwest, it is easy to have accu-

mulated winter's doldrums as our baggage, and to the world around us, we become a wet blanket, full of woes, complaints and despair. Then spring arrives. Spring beckons us to step out of winter and the gloom we have accumulated in our life. Spring encourages us to recalibrate our mindset and defragment our soul. Spring reminds us there is no need to stay stuck in our woeful ways, but rather, to celebrate the amazing life we have each been blessed with amidst a world full of hope and promise.

When life gets us down, when our focus turns sour, and when we just expect the worse, we set up a barrier around us that pushes away love. If a perfect spring day cannot fill us with joy, ease our minds and raise our spirits, then there is much work for us. Yet if we can let go of our strong grasp on the ills of life, and replace it with smiles and carefree attitudes, then we have the ability to be filled with love. God is prodding us with nature to be the person God has created us to be.

God's love is so great that we cannot fully conceive it. However, we can experience it in various portions in unending ways. When contemplating God and love, it is good to first turn to 1 John 4. Verse 8 tells us, "Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love." Verse 16 continues, "So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them." We can imagine God in many ways, but the greatest way to imagine God is God as love. If we embrace this theology, then we can conceive that all of God's creating and maintaining of the universe, our planet, and all that dwells upon and within the plant are created and governed by love. The beauty of spring is an expression of God's love. The love that we pass on between one another and the love we feel for our pets and

for nature's beauty connects us to God's love and gives us the potential to share God's love.

Throughout human existence, humans forget about, neglect, and refuse God's love. Humans make their life and their world about themselves, and push God into a spiritual realm where we only need God when we want God. We forget that God is everywhere and that all came into being and continues to exist because of God. And when we, in our arrogance, experience love, we so easily have no thought of God being present in that love. It is as though love is manmade, human controlled, and limited in the way we want it to be utilized. We divide ourselves from one another. We fight. We hurt. We create war. We despise. We elevate some below us. We place others above us. We create injustice and inequality. We disrupt the natural balance and try to be a god of the world on our own. This is human folly. This is a waste of the potential of our life's experience. This is a sad way to live.

God love is so great in that God is love. God has chosen love to be the nature of God. God chose for all of creation to be made in love. And God does everything in God's power for everything to be part of that love. Yet humans have always struggled with love and relationships. So God has always found ways to reach out to humanity and direct them in the ways of love. It came to the point where God came to earth in human form to be our leader, our teacher, our shepherd, our king, and our savior. God wanted us to know that we can be with God always if we receive God's love, if we embrace God's love, if we utilize God's love to mentally and spiritually heal us, and if we pass on and receive God's love from others. God does not separate Godself from us. We separate ourselves from God. So God reaches out to us, continually, in all the possible ways in which we can recognize

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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: <https://www.facebook.com/firstpresmorrison>. The services are also posted on Monday mornings to our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@firstpresbyterianchurchofm3749>

Bible Study

Bible Study will be held at 9:30AM at Pleasant View Nursing Home on Tuesdays throughout the month. Rick Barr leads the studies that Pastor Mike is unable to attend.

Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour hosts for March:
 May 7: Carol Wolf & Deb Zigler
 May 14: Pastor Mike
 May 21: No Coffee Hour (Fireman's Breakfast)
 May 28: Tim Reynolds
 If you would like to volunteer to host a coffee hour in June or July please see the sign up sheet in the entryway or contact the church office.

Sunday School

Sunday School is for children up through 5th grade, and classes start at 9:15AM. Dates for the rest of the school year are as follows: May 7, 21

Confirmation Sunday

Come one, come all to celebrate our Confirmands as they publicly dedicate their lives to Christ and become members of our congregation on Sunday, May 7th! We will continue the celebration during coffee hour.

Tie-Dye Event

We will have our next Tie-Dye Event on Sunday, May 7th from 2-4:30PM in the church yard. Bring 100% white cotton materials to dye, we'll supply the rest. Rain date is May 21. Pray for nice weather!

Session Meeting

Session will meet May 15 in person at 7:45PM at the church.

Children's Sabbath

May 21st is our last day of Sunday School, and our children will lead the worship service that day! No coffee hour this Sunday. Please support the Fire Department at their annual pancake breakfast.

Safe Place Training

Our congregation will become certified as a 'safe place' on May 21 starting at 6:30PM at the church. Chase Norris, executive director of Clock, Inc. in Rock Island will lead the training. All members are encouraged to attend. This is mandatory for the Session elders.

A Safe Place is a community that gathers in a certain location, like a church, who pledges, and is trained, to be a safe environment for all people. It's a sanctuary, if you will. The specific focus is to be a safe place for any person of the LGBTQ+ community. We want our church to be able to proclaim that our love is truly for all and that all are welcome. To put actions to where our words are, being trained, with ongoing education, is our best path forward.

We had a presentation by CLOCK, Inc in January 2022 focusing on LGBTQ+ 101. CLOCK, Inc is based in Rock Island and serves the LGBTQ+ community, especially youth. To learn more about them, visit their website at <https://www.clockinc.org/>

Newsletter Deadline 05/25

Please get information to be included in the June/July *Life Together* newsletter to the office voicemail or e-mail by May 25.

Drive-Up Meals

Our May meal will be on Thursday, May 25. The meal is pulled pork sandwiches and begins at **5:00PM**. Help is needed for food prep on Wednesday at 1:30PM and Thursday starting at 4:15PM.

Worship in the Park

We will once again have our Worship in the Park with Brethren in Christ on Sunday, June 18th. More info in next month's newsletter.

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; Dan Brandon, Orville Goodenough, Janet Johnson, Joyce Mathew, Shirley Mills, Marian Osborn, Wayne Osborn, Cooke Shawver, Jean Temple, Rachel Tucker, Ray Tucker, the family of Dick Vandermyde, Michael Vegter, Jr.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Earth Care Team

We are now officially an Earth Care Congregation through the PC (USA). We are only one of four such congregations in Blackhawk Presbytery! We are assembling a team that will oversee this mission of our church, to ensure we are being the best stewards of God's creation as possible. We'll begin planning for educational opportunities, explore ways we can further reduce our environmental footprint, and explore what we can do with our church yard. Please contact Angela Reamer, Carol Wolf, or Pastor Mike if you are interested or simply would like more information.

Blessing of the Bikes

Abate of Iowa, District 21, is holding their 34th Annual Blessing of the Bikes on Sunday, June 4 beginning at 1PM in downtown Fulton. Officiating the Blessing will be Father Matthew, Pastor Jon and Pastor Mike.

There will be vendors, 50/50 drawing, beer garden and more! Bring a canned good to benefit the local food pantries. All vehicles are welcome, including golf carts and side by sides. This will be held rain or shine!

Presbytery Women Project

PW, which includes all women of our church, is undertaking a new project. Resthaves are in need of walker caddy bags. These are cloth bags which attach to the walker and are used for the resident to carry things with while using the walker. I have been assured that they are simple to make and use a minimum of material. You can find a pattern on Pinterest by searching "walker caddy pattern" or contact Deb Zigler.

Summer Hours

The Session decided at their February Meeting that we will remain at 10:15AM in the summer, and that the intention is to no longer change service hours in future years.

Thank You!

A big thank you to all of the volunteers that helped with the archive clean up. It was much needed! The remaining records have been reorganized for better storage.



May Scripture

- May 7: Acts 7:55-60
Ps. 31:1-5, 15-16
1 Pet. 2:2-10
John 14:1-14
- May 14: Acts 17:22-31
Ps. 66:8-20
1 Pet. 3:13-22
John 14:15-21
- May 21: Acts 1:6-14
Ps. 68:1-10, 32-35
1 Pet. 4:12-14; 5:6-11
John 17:1-11
- May 28: Acts 2:1-21
Ps. 104:24-34, 35b

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, 8-10 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.

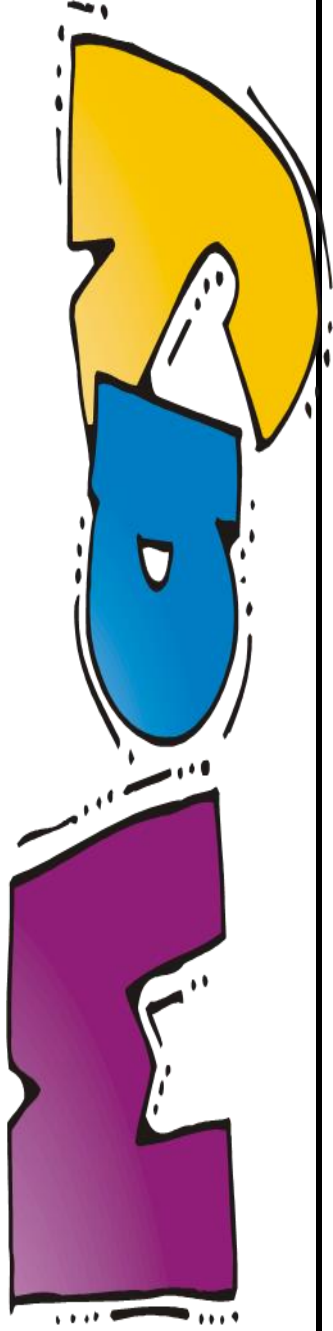
City News: Keep up on local news at our city's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/thecityofmorrison>

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.wc-seniorcenter.org>.

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



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		9:30AM Bible Study		2PM Pleasant View Worship Service		10AM Umpire Clinic @ Sports Complex
7 <i>5th Sunday of Easter</i>	8	9 9:30AM Bible Study	10	11	<i>Cinco de Mayo</i> 12	13
9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour 2PM Tie-Dye Event						
14 <i>6th Sunday of Easter</i>	15	16 9:30AM Bible Study	17	18	19	20
10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour						8AM Community Garage Sale @ Fairgrounds
<i>Day of Pentecost</i> <i>Mother's Day</i>	7:45PM Session Mtg.					
21 <i>7th Sunday of Easter</i>	22	23 9:30AM Bible Study	24	25 <i>Newsletter Deadline</i>	26	27
7AM Fire Dept. Pancake Breakfast 9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 6:30 PM Safe Zone			1:30PM Community Meal Food Prep			
28 <i>Day of Pentecost</i>	29	30 9:30AM Bible Study	31			
10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour 2PM MHS Graduation 4PM PHS Graduation	<i>Memorial Day</i>			5PM Free Drive Up Community Meal		

COMMUNITY EVENTS

AARP Volunteers Needed

Looking for something to do this winter? AARP Foundation Tax-Aide offers free tax-filing help to those who need it most. We are looking for compassionate and friendly people to join our volunteer team this upcoming tax season. We'll provide the training and you'll get a great feeling from helping someone else. Help is needed from greeting the tax payer to preparing the tax return. You do not need to be an AARP member. We work at the Morrison Library. If you are interested or would like more information, please call Karen Berg at 815-625-5314.

Donations Needed

Resthave is asking for donations of shampoo and conditioner 2-in-1, such as Pantene, and scented body wash for their residents. If you would like to donate, you can drop them off at the church or contact Deb Zigler.

Fireman's Breakfast

Please join the Morrison Fire Department for their Annual Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, May 21 from 7AM—1PM. We will not be hosting coffee hour this day.

From the Food Pantry

The Food Pantry personal items needed.

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

We do not need the full size products. Dollar Tree, Dollar General, Family Dollar and Walmart usually have the small size.

Plant Sale

The Morrison Garden Club will be hosting their Annual Plant Sale on Saturday, May 20 from 9am-1pm at the Odell Library Community Room. It's never too early to start thinking about gardening!

Play Ball!

Morrison Youth Baseball & Softball is looking for umpires for the upcoming baseball/softball season. If you are interested or know someone who is, they are holding an Umpire

Clinic at the Morrison Sports Complex on Saturday, May 6 at 10AM.

If you have questions regarding training or scheduling, contact Brianne Hamstra at 815-590-6165 or janssenbrianne@sau.edu.

Pleasant View Donations

The Activities Department at Pleasant View is requesting donations for upcoming activities.

- * Body wash and body wash puffs
- * Brushes and combs
- * Keurig cup pods
- * Hot chocolate
- * Individual wrapped snack size candy bars
- * Cloth tablecloths (seasonal also)
- * Cheese puffs or puff corn
- * Hot glue gun glue sticks
- * Glue sticks
- * Elmer's glue
- * Construction paper
- * Markers
- * Crayons

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and open up to love. God lets us know that our preconceived notions of God which separate us from God, are not binding. We have recorded God in history in many ways. We begin to worship this history as law, and in this law, we bind ourselves to limited notions of God based off previous human experience. And before Jesus, this historical experience lacked the presence of the Holy Spirit in individual and communal life. Humans perceived God as aloof, detached, hard to reach, and often missing. It was a theology that pushed God to come as Jesus and teach us to go beyond those laws and to focus on the law of love. In love we find ourselves eternally connected to God, starting right here in this very moment. We don't need to be trapped in scripture. We can be released in and with love. Certainly, the Gospels are the only authoritative sto-

ries we have about the life and teachings of Jesus. They let us know of the life he lived, his ministry, his teachings, his healings and his sacrifice. They show us how much God really loves us and how much God wanted us to move beyond where we were in our relationship to God and one another. Yet the scriptures are intended to free us in life, not encapsulate us. The scriptures lead us to embrace the beauty of God's creation, to seek out love, to embrace love, to utilize love, and to pass on and share love.

In our life together, we have the ability to love one another as Jesus has commanded. Life will toss out variables to trip us up, lead us astray, and set us in a negative and pessimistic mindset. Hate, anger, fear, despair and all those other life-taking emotions want to cling onto us. But we have the ability to turn from that. We must awaken to the beauty in the world

around us. We must focus on what is good, and the potential we possess. We must see that love is all around us, and that means God is all around us. We must share love with one another, and not limit our love to our own select groups.

Springtime is for everyone. God's love is for everyone. We can individually enjoy spring. We can individually enjoy love. Yet when we embrace, share and enjoy it mutually, then the power of the beauty and the power of love increases as we increase the space in which we give and receive love. So let us melt the winter within and live into this new spring so that we may harvest an abundant crop of love in the summer of our life.

Grace and Peace,

Mike

Leadership and Staff

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

Carol Wolf '23
Lynn Knox '23*
Tim Reynolds '23*
Angela Reamer '24*
Ron Shank '24
Deb Zigler '24*
Lexie Laughlin '25*
Scott Vandermyde '25*

Stacie Baker, Clerk

Nominating Committee

Rick Barr
Mavis Best
Jan Kelly
Lynn Knox
Jenn Reynolds
Deb Zigler

PW Coordinating Team

Lynn Knox, Moderator
Angela Reamer, Treasurer

**Resthaves Home
Board of Directors**

Lynn Knox
FPC Representative

Resthaves 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

**Elders in their 2nd consecutive term*

Birthdays

05/01: Maddie Huizenga
05/05: Katie Browning
05/06: Tim Reynolds
05/07: Karl Kruse
05/08: Margaret Esse
05/11: Lexie Laughlin
05/12: Deb Zigler
05/14: Lynn Knox

Anniversaries

05/07: Jeremy & Stacie Baker
05/17: Mike & Kelly Vegter

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

May 25: Pulled Pork Sandwiches
June 29: Brats
July 27: Hot Dogs
(Fire Dept. Benefit)
August 31: TBD
September 14: Baked Potato Sloppy Joes
October 12: Chili
November 9: Soup
December 14: Ham Dinner



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