

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!

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Adversity iz the catalyst, but we need something more, if we are to become a caring rather than a competitive society with a value system based on individual responsibility & mutual cooperation; in fact, we must admit to ourselves that it iz impossible to go it alone. We need something beyond ourselves that iz more competent; i.e., the omnipotent love of God in the form of the Holy Spirit deep inside ourselves. "Love Lifts," from *Chewable Fat* by Orville Goode-nough.

February freely forms fancies of friendship and fondness. The focus of Valentine's love permeates in our societies from toddlers in day-cares to seniors in living centers. Every child who can weld a pair of scissors will be folding paper in half and cutting out heart shapes. Children are busy decorating boxes to receive cards that school-mates have busily been writing their name upon, from scribbles to perfected penmanship. Junior high students begin to ponder the flutter they feel in their chests when someone they fancy catches their eyes. Young couples contemplate the right gift for their loved one, hoping to bring about sparks of passion. Old couples remark, "It's February 14th already? Wasn't it just here?" The non-sentimentalists say, "It's just a Hallmark holiday." Still, there is no denying, February enters with the thought of love in the air.

What is it that we are to do with love? In the end, love is to be used as the binding force among humanity, as well as among nature. In the second chapter of Genesis, God creates man, and then God recognizes that man is alone. So God creates all the animals, and even allows the man to name them, creating a loving bond between man and nature. But it's still not enough, so God creates a part-

ner for the man. And right off the bat there were issues. As God created the perfect partnership between humans, it proved that humans are imperfect, and all relationships are imperfect, and in such, in order to stay together in right relationship, we really need to depend upon love, forgiveness, and starting over in love. Think about, as the Bible tells, these first two paired humans deceive each other, throw each other under the bus when questioned by God about their own poor choices, and then have two sons, one of which kills the other. Only love can get that family through those trying times. It wasn't too good of a start for humans, according to this story, and we haven't done much better since. Humans are always deceiving, betraying, hurting, and even killing one another. It's amazing we've made it this long. If it wasn't for the brief yet intense pleasure of making children, I'm sure humanity would have faded away long ago. Humans have proven how easy it is to hate and to hurt, over and over again. Humans have shown how hard it is to keep love constant among themselves.

In our misery that we have created in our world, we look to blame one another just as Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. In our distress, we isolate our own selves more and more in order to protect our own self. That's what Adam and Eve were doing when questioned by God. To try to stay out of trouble, they placed the blame elsewhere, even though God knew good and well exactly what had happened. It's part of our way of survival. It goes with the concept of "how do you survive a bear chasing you and someone else?" You outrun the other person. Simply, humans started off in our early evolution-

ary process with the drive to stay alive. We carry that with us today.

Humans have continued to evolve both physically and mentally, and also in maturity of knowledge and wisdom. As the story of Adam and Eve tells, we took a bite of fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil and everything in between. We have learned over the many years of our existence what is good and what is bad. We have learned what we should and shouldn't do. We have created societal norms based off these understandings, and we use those norms to govern us with laws.... You can do *this* but you can't do *that*, and if you do *that*, there will be punishment. Nonetheless, despite endless generations of knowledge and development of moral and ethical social standards, we still have that base rudimentary reptilian brain in our head that triggers our fight or flight reaction when faced with anything that poses a threat to us. Adam and Eve's quick reaction was to put the blame on someone else. Their son Cain's quick response was to kill his brother. We haven't changed a much, it often seems.

But what about love? Where is love in humanity? Love is also part of our human instinct. Love is also part of the makeup of our brain. Love has evolved in God's creatures over the eons. Love has been used by humans to bind us to one another. Though love can be used as a protection mechanism, and can separate people from each other by categorizing them into the "loved" and "unloved" categories, love also gives us the ability to overcome boundaries and categories, uniting humanity into beloved communities.

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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/@firstpresmorrison>

Bible Study

Bible Study will be held at 9:30AM at Pleasant View Nursing Home on Tuesdays throughout the month.

February Coffee Hour

Feb 4th is available

Feb 11th: King Cake and Cookie Frost-off

Feb 18: Lunch with Blackhawk Presbytery General Presbyter Eric Heinekamp

Feb 25: Lexi Laughlin

90+ Birthdays

On January 15, Marian Osborn tagged another year on life. In February, Doris Robertson (4th) and Larry Bealer (6th) both have birthdays. Former member Ann Menenoh also has a birthday on the

20th. Feel free to reach out to them with a card or a visit. Addresses will be emailed out to church members or can be obtained from the church (just not printed here).

Nursing Home Worship Services

Pastor Mike, accompanied by pianist Carolyn Aiken, will preside over the worship services at all three nursing/retirement homes twice in February. They will be at Resthave at 3PM and Homestead at 4PM on Sundays, February 4 & 25. They will also host the service at Pleasant View at 10AM on Tuesday, February 6 and Thursday, March 1.

Cookie Frost-Off & King Cake Party

We'll have our next cookie frost-off on Sunday, February 11th during coffee hour. We need donations of sugar cookies to frost. Come and join the fun with us. As it's Mardi Gras weekend, we'll have a king cake for coffee hour!

Lent Begins Soon

Sunday, February 11th is Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday. We will partake in Holy Communion during the worship Service. We will begin Lent on February 14th with our an-

nual Ash Wednesday Worship Service at 7PM.

Family First-Half Super Bowl Party

We're throwing a party for families with children and youth on February 11th, starting at 5:15. We'll party until the halftime show is over and then head our separate ways. We'll have a potluck for dinner. Bring whatever you please to share!

Lenten Lunch Series

For the 2nd year in a row, the Morrison Ministers' Council will host a noon Lenten Lunch Series at various churches during the course of Lent. The lunches will be soup and bread and will have a time of reflection by the host pastor. This year's theme is "The Body of Christ." In this Lenten season we remember all that Jesus did for us. We especially remember the suffering that he went through. As we look at the body of Christ, we also recognize that we as His followers are the body of Christ. Come join us on 5 Wednesdays during Lent, at Noon for a brief Lenten message and a free simple meal.

Wednesday, February 21 - The Head of Christ
Bethesda Lutheran Church

Wednesday, February 28 - The Heart of Christ
Morrison Brethren in Christ

Wednesday, March 6 - The Hands of Christ
First Presbyterian Church

Wednesday, March 13 - The Feet of Christ
Emmanuel Church

Wednesday, March 20 - The Mouth of Christ
Ebenezer Reformed Church

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; Larry & Bev Bealer, Dan Brandon, the family of Orville Goodenough, Janet Johnson, Cooke Shawver, Jean Temple, Rachel Tucker, Ray Tucker

Guest Preacher and Lunch

Blackhawk Presbytery's Transformational General Presbyter will be our guest on February 18th. He will preach during the service and stay for a lunch, along with a meeting with the Session. Please plan to attend!

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! On February 19, we will be celebrating Larry Bealer's birthday.

Sunday School

Children's Sunday School will be held on February 4, 11, and 25th starting at 9:15AM.

Newsletter Deadline 02/22

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

Drive-Up Meals

Our February meal will be on Thursday, February 29. The meal is chili & cornbread and begins at **4:30PM**. Help is needed for food prep on Wednesday the 28th at 1:30PM and Thursday at 1PM to make cornbread and further help starting at 3:45PM.

CHURCH

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Visitation Ministry Team

Pastor Mike is hoping to create a visitation ministry team, in which church members will go visit other members, and possibly others in need of a visit, in pairs. We'll meet for training and scheduling. If you are interested in being part of this ministry team, please let Mike know.

Presbytery Women Project

PW, which includes all women of our church, is undertaking a new project. Resthave is 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.

Presbytery Assembly

Commissioners

Rick Barr has been elected by the Session to serve as our Commissioner at the February Blackhawk Presbytery Assembly Meeting, which will take place via Zoom. All members are able to attend this Zoom meeting, but will not have voting rights. Scott Vandermyde has been elected as Commissioner to the May, Sept. and Nov. Assembly Meetings.

Corporation Officers

At our congregational meeting on Sunday, we adopted new ecclesiastical and corporation bi-laws. Part of the corporation bi-laws are that we need to have a president, a possible vice president, treasurer and secretary for the corporation. We can have one or multiple people in all of these positions. The Session voted last night the following for 2024:

Corp. President: Ron Shank
Corp. Vice-President: Scott Vandermyde
Corp. Treasurer: Scott Vandermyde
Corp. Secretary: Scott Vandermyde

Communion Dates for 2024

Communion is planned to be served on the following days in 2023: February 11, March 28, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 14 or 21, August 18, September 22, October 6, November 24, and December 22.

New Phone System

We have a new phone company at the church which is saving us a lot of money. When you call the church office, it will go straight to a message. Press 1 to be directed to the office phone. Press 2 to leave a message for Pastor Mike, which will be sent to him via an email. This will also help cut down on the amount of unwanted promotional calls.

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

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.



February Scripture

Feb. 4:	Isa. 40:21-31 Ps. 147:1-11, 20c 1 Cor. 9:16-23 Mark 1:29-39
Feb. 11:	2 Kings 2:1-12 Ps. 50:1-6 2 Cor. 4:3-6 Mark 9:2-9
Feb. 18:	Gen. 9:8-17 Ps. 25:1-10 1 Peter 3:18-22 Mark 1:9-15
Feb. 25:	Gen. 17:1-7, 15-16 Ps. 22:23-31 Rom. 4:13-25 Mark 8:31-38

February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
4 <i>5th Sunday after Epiphany</i> 9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	5	6 9:30AM Bible Study 6PM Presbytery Mtg. Zoom Only	7	8 5PM Chamber Annual Meeting 6:30PM Golden Agers BINGO	9	10
11 <i>Transfiguration of the Lord</i> 9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	12	13 9:30AM Bible Study	14 <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	15	16	17
18 <i>1st Sunday in Lent</i> 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	19 6:30PM Session Mtg.	20 9:30AM Bible Study	21	22	23	24
25 <i>2nd Sunday in Lent</i> 9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	26	27 9:30AM Bible Study	28 1:30PM Comm Meal PREP	29 4:30PM Free Drive Up Community Meal		

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Food Pantry Needs

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

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

Golden Agers BINGO Night

Morrison Parks and Recreation will be hosting a Golden Agers (50+) BINGO night on Thursday, February 8 beginning at 6:30 in the Odell Library Conference Room. Come prepared to yell “BINGO” and win some fun prizes! There will be multiple rounds so you have plenty of opportunities to WIN!! There will also be snacks and beverages available.

Youth Volleyball

The Morrison Parks and Recreation is hosting youth volleyball for 1st through 4th grade boys and girls. It will be held on Tuesday nights February 27 through March 26 at Morrison Junior High.

If you have any questions, contact Nathan Jacobs at njacobs@morrisonil.org or to register visit www.quickscores.com/morrisonSports.

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God created humans out of love. The best we can understand God is as love. We have come to realize that we do not need to fear God nor hide from God nor lie to God. Rather, we can turn to God no matter what. God loves us. God asks us to return that love. In this loving relationship, God extends forgiveness. Had Adam and Eve recognized this, maybe they wouldn’t have hidden from and lied to God. The God we understand as Christians would have responded to Adam and Eve more along these lines, “Hey you two, I see you ate from the forbidden tree even though I told you not to. I get it. You’re humans. I made you that way. So here’s the deal. Want to start over? Want to make it right? If so, I need you to repent. I need you to recognize what you have done, take ownership, figure out how to not do that again, ask to be forgiven, and have faith that I will forgive you, and then you can start over. If you do stray again,

please, don’t keep doing it. Stop whatever it is. Repent. Turn to me. I’ll help you. I’ll forgive you. I’ll love you, always.”

If we can embrace the love that God has us as we understand through Jesus Christ, then we can embrace how God wants us to live, which is to be in loving relationship with not just God’s self, but with all of God’s creation as well. Jesus commanded us something new—love one another. In this approach to life, we build up beloved communities around us. We strengthen who we are as individuals by strengthening the people around us. This is far better than our fight or flight protective response. Living outside of love destroys our own self and it destroys the relationships between humans and between humans and nature. But living within love, we create a world that emulates heaven on earth.

In our life together, may we let go of that which divides us. May we first seek to receive God’s love. May we take control of our own lives and follow God’s path of love and forgiveness. May we start over when needed, by using love as our center. May love be the catalyst that pushes us beyond our boundaries and categories. May love give us the hope and faith we need to be brave enough to engage in right relationships with God, our own self and one another.

This world has a chance of becoming something full of love. We can irradicate the darkness if we all turn on our love lights. God is calling to us to be these people. Let’s not hide. Let’s not make up excuses. Let’s expose ourselves to God’s love, receive its forgiveness, and live into a world of love together. We need each other. Let’s bind ourselves in love!

Grace and Peace,
Mike

BUILDING LOVE

Oh my. Issues keep arising with our building. The boiler has been extra finicky this winter. Every time the boiler company has to come fix something with the boiler, it costs about \$800-\$1,000. They’ve been here several times so far since the fall and we are waiting on bills.

On January 10th, the radiator in the northeast room on the 2nd floor of the education wing spring a leak, filling the 2nd floor of the wing with steam. It took two visits over two days for the boiler company to get it fixed. We hired SERVEPRO to help with the situation. Luckily, the dam-

age was minimal. That back corner room had to be gutted and we tossed out the ping pong table as well as some other items. On February 1, the remaining carpets and furniture is getting shampooed. We’ll be coming up with a plan to recreate the room. Many thanks to all who have helped to take care of the problem, especially Ron Shank who has overseen all the work being done. Thankfully, this whole issue will only cost us \$2,500 for our insurance deductible.

The men’s dining room bathroom remodel is currently on hold as of printing this newsletter, but will likely be resolved a few hours after it goes to print. We are in conversation

with our insurance company to see if we only have to pay the deductible or if they want to deny the claim. More info on that soon.

Oh, the joy of our old building. Please consider donating to the building fund. We had nearly \$40,000 in repairs and upgrades in 2023 and there will be plenty more in 2024. As the Margie Haines Account has been fully used, we are left using money we have accumulated in interest as well as other monetary donations from the past which have also been invested in the building fund investment account through Raymond James.

In summary, HELP!

Leadership and Staff

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

Angela Reamer '24*
Ron Shank '24
Deb Zigler '24*
Lexie Laughlin '25*
Scott Vandermyde '25*
Rick Barr '26
Carol Wolf '26

Stacie Baker, Clerk

Nominating Committee

Lexie Laughlin
Deb Zigler
Jan Kelly
Tim Reynolds
Nancy Shank

PW Coordinating Team

Lynn Knox, Moderator
Angela Reamer, Treasurer

**Resthave Home
Board of Directors**

Lynn Knox
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

**Elders in their 2nd consecutive term*

Birthdays

02/04: Doris Robertson
02/06: Larry Bealer
02/06: Aiden Dolieslager
02/06: Shari Kuehl
02/08: Arlyn Hayen
02/12: Britney Sage
02/20: Ann Mennenoh

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

Feb. 29: Chili & Cornbread
Mar. 28: Ham & Potato Soup
April 25: Pulled Pork Sandwiches
May 30: Sloppy Joe Sandwiches
June 27: Brats
July 25: Hot Dogs (Fire Dept. Benefit)
Aug 29: Pulled Pork Sandwiches
Sept 12: Sloppy Joe Baked Potatoes
Oct 10: Chili & Cinnamon Roll
Nov 14: Soup (TBD)
Dec. 12: 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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