

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!

March 2025 • Vol. 68/No. 3

As I contemplated an article to write this month, I began thinking of the ruts that are appearing in the thawing ground, and how we too create ruts in our lives and get stuck in ruts, and that we can break out of ruts. And then I was going to go on to speak about Lent, and the ability it has to help us break free from our ruts and find solid ground. But then I remembered this article I wrote for March 2021, and thought, well, I might as well share that one again instead. I've just made a few changes to talk about this past winter, not winter 2021. So, without further adieu....

March morosely melts winter's whitened waters. Softening snow sags and sinks into soggy soup. Groggy grasses greet groans of children chastising and chiding warmer weather which wakens woeful winds and forbodes fun from frolicking friends who sorrowfully shut away sleds in sheds. Ah, March.

Here is a month that could easily be traded in, yet we're always forced to wade through it for 31 days. Our yards and all the land we see are spotted in dirt-laden snow and bogs of deep mud and puddles which the thawing earth can't drink up. Mornings greet us with sheets of ice across all walkways and yards. Travel is treacherous as the blacktopped roads are riddled with potholes and salt residue, while gravel roads are often rutted and slippery. The temperatures tease us that the warmer weather is coming, but the cold remains.

Through all this, we squint and search for spring. We begin to see it, but it comes on so slow...almost unnoticeable. The first flowering bulbs appear but the grand gardens wait for the soil to heat up. The honeysuckle and forsythia bushes might give us tiny electric leaves by month's end, the willow branches may have turned bright yellow, and

the dogwood hedges should glow in brilliant red...but the world still feels naked. The days turn longer than the nights. Perhaps we are even blessed with a warm spell. Still, spring tauntingly stays away. And so, we wait, and we wait, and we wait for spring. Such a long month, March can be.

Nonetheless, March is a necessary month, despite the pain and gloom it can inflict. It brings with it the season of Lent, which is not meant to be a season of ease and joy. Lent is a painful time. It is an extended moment in the year in which we are asked to take a deep look at ourselves. No, it's not just about giving up sweets and high fructose carbonated beverages. It's a time to really delve deep...to see where we are butting up against the world. It's a time to work on fixing our rough edges and heal the hidden pains. If we take the season of Lent seriously, then it is going to reflect the harshness of March.

Yet is it all really harsh? March has its beauty. March does spring forth snow drops, crocuses and perhaps the first tulips. The first clumps of green grass can rise up from the earth in our yards, mocking turtles slowly emerging from the depths of an ancient lake. Its effect is contagious as the grasses around it begin to brighten and perhaps even grow. The forests might reveal carpets of flowering dutchmen's breeches, spring beauties, and violets.

Flocks of rare birds begin to pass through, stopping to snack and rest at a lucky feeder for a spell. Robins return pecking and proving that the worms are back to the surface. A sunny afternoon can lead to rosy cheeks on a soon-to-be tanned face. Windows can sometimes be opened to let fresh air flow though and flush out the staleness of winter.

On a rare wet warm night, spring peepers will waken in the ditches

and forests, singing their old frog song that floats though the open windows into our homes, reminding us that life will continue. Later sunsets and earlier sunrises let us enjoy more of the day. And the eager gardeners may find warmed patches of garden where the frost has fully thawed, turning the soil with spading forks, then smoothing out the clumpy dirt, planting spinach and radishes, and watching just how slow they grow.

Lent doesn't have to be so hard, even when we give it our best go. Like a rug being hung out on a line to have the winter's dust and grime pounded from it, the rug becomes fresh and new, and has renewed life. We don't have to actually pound ourselves though. We don't physically have to die on the cross. We can be kind to ourselves. We just have to be honest and committed. In this hopeful journey, we will find faith in that the opportunity to be the best person we can be and to live the best life we can possibly live and make the best impact we can possibly make on the world around us is a reward worth working toward.

Lent offers us this time to really go for it. We can seek the help we need. We don't have to try to do it all by our self. We don't have to do it alone. There are others in our life, and it is quite likely there will be new people we had not expected, who are willing to be there for us and to help us. They will appear, quite often, when we need them the most. When we try to improve who we are, we are seeking to open ourselves up to love, so that we may give and receive love to the best of our ability. And when we open ourselves to love, we are opening ourselves to God, for God is love. And when this is our objective, then we can have faith that God is with us.

In spring, the world is trans-

Continued on page 5

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 Highlight Healthcare (formerly Pleasant View) on Tuesdays throughout the month.

Highlight Health (Pleasant View) Ice Cream Socials

On March 4th, and the first Tuesday of every month, we will have an ice cream social at 4:30PM. We switch up the dessert every month. Come enjoy this time of fellowship with the residents and staff.

Bingo at Homestead

Marian Osborn invites one and all to join residents and friends of Homestead to play bingo on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 1:30—2:30PM. There will be refreshments and prizes!

Sunday School

Children's Sunday School will be held on March 2nd, 9th & 16th, starting at 9:15AM.

Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday & King Cake

The season of Epiphanytide is coming to a close. Join us for Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday on March 2nd at 10:15AM, followed by our annual King Cake coffee hour. Note, we had mentioned previously there would be a potluck this day. Instead, we have chosen March 30th for the potluck.

Ash Wednesday Service

Lent begins on Wednesday March 5th. Join us for our Ash Wednesday Worship Service starting at 7PM and will include the imposition of ashes.

MMC Lenten Lunches

For the 3rd 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 "From the Cross." In this Lenten season we remember the words Jesus spoke from the cross..

March 12: First Presbyterian

-Forgiveness

March 19: Bethesda -Salvation

March 26: Ebenezer -Love

April 2: Emmanuel

-Loneliness and

Physical Suffering

April 9: United Methodist

-Triumph & Reunion

Resthove Presbyterian Social Hour Canceled

We will NOT have the regularly scheduled social hour at Resthove on March 17th as there is a St. Paddy's Day party going on then. But feel free to join their fun at 2PM that day!

Easter Flowers

We are ordering our Easter flowers from Didier Greenhouses in Rockford. Orders must be into the church by Sunday, March 23rd. Order forms will be in the bulletins the next three weeks. You can choose to donate \$10 to the flower fund to put toward buying Easter Flowers, or you may purchase a flower that you can take home after the Easter worship service.

-Easter Lillies: \$11.50

-Tulips, Hyacinths, Jonquil or Geraniums \$10.50

-Azaleas or Hydrangeas: \$18.50

-Kalancoes, Rieger Begonias or Pot Mums: \$12.00

Newsletter Deadline 03/24

Please get information to be included in the April *Life Together* newsletter to the office e-mail by March 24th.

Drive-Up Meals

Our next meal will be on Thursday, March 27th beginning at **5PM** (note the time change from winter hours). The meal is ham and potato chowder. Help is needed for food prep on Wednesday the 26th at 1:30PM and Thursday at 4:15PM. We will be

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: Nursing & retirement home residents and staff, medical workers, essential employees, school teachers & staff; Larry & Bev Bealer, Dan Brandon, Glenda Hegwood, Dale Johnson, Jody Tucker, Rachel Tucker, Ray Tucker

continuing to offer in-person dining for our meals.

170th Birthday Celebration

Can you believe it? The church is turning 170 on March 28th!!! On March 30th, we will celebrate in worship and coffee hour. We will rededicate our church to God and reaffirm our baptismal vows. We'll conclude with a potluck coffee hour. Bring a dish to pass, be it a dessert, side, salad or main course!

FPC Worship at Care Facilities

We will be hosting worship services at care facilities on March 30th: 3PM @ Resthave; 4PM @ Homestead. Tuesday, April 1 during our Bible study time at Highlight Healthcare (formerly Pleasant View). Join Pastor Mike and pianist Carolyn Aiken as they lead worship at these beloved facilities.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

2025 Communion Dates

In 2025, the planned Communion dates are: March 2, April 17, May 11, June 8, July 6, August 10, September 14, October 5, November 23, and December 21.

Ministry Funding 2025

Please financially support the ministry and missions of our church. The time is now to give. Donations in the beginning of the year will give us cash-on-hand and help us postpone selling stocks from our investments. We still need to increase our giving by an additional \$23K in 2025. Our mantra for our 2025 ministry funding are 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."

Per Capita

The per capita in 2025 is \$44 per church member. Of that total, \$29.35 is kept by the Presbytery (which includes various missions); \$3.81 is forwarded to the Synod of Lincoln Trails; and \$10.84 goes to the General Assembly of the PC(USA) for its administrative budgets.

LOOKING AHEAD— SAVE THE DATE

April 13: Palm Sunday

April 17: Maundy Thursday

Services:

Highlight Health 10a.m.

Resthave 1p.m.

Homestead 2p.m.

FPC 7PM

April 18: Good Friday
Worship at 7PM

April 20: Easter Sunday

April 27: Bulletin Free Sunday

May Baskets

Clean-up at Rockwood

May 13: Presbytery Assembly Mtg

May 18: End of Sunday School

Year Party

Children Led Worship

Service

June 8: Pentecost

Stronghold Summer Camp

Staff attending worship

Community Tie-Dye Event

August 4-8: Vacation Bible School

Reminder: Every month...

1st Tuesday, 4:30PM:

Ice Cream Social

at Highlight Healthcare

(formerly Pleasant View)

3rd Monday, 2PM:

Resthave Presbyterian Social

Hour

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.

Love
one another.
Feed
each other.



March 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 <i>Transfiguration of the Lord</i> 9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	3	4 9:30AM Bible Study 4:30PM Ice Cream Social @ Highlight Health	5 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 7PM Ash Wednesday Service	6	7	8 5PM Morrison Music Movie Trivia Night 6PM Fat Saturday (Mardi Gras Party)
9 <i>1st Sunday in Lent</i> 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	10	11 9:30AM Bible Study	12 12PM Lenten Lunch 1:30PM BINGO @ Homestead	13	14	15 6PM Kunes of Morrison's Fundraising Night of Trivia
16 <i>2nd Sunday in Lent</i> 9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	17 2PM Social Hour @ Resthave 6:30PM Session Mtg.	18 9:30AM Bible Study	19 1:30PM BINGO @ Resthave	20 8AM Social Hour @ The Loft	21	22
23 <i>3rd Sunday in Lent</i> 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	24 <i>Newsletter Deadline</i>	25 9:30AM Bible Study	26 1:30PM Meal Prep	27 5PM Free Drive Up Community Meal	28	29
30 <i>4th Sunday in Lent</i> 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Potluck	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.

Morrison Music Movie

Trivia Night

The Morrison Music Boosters are hosting a Music Movie Trivia Night on Saturday, March 1 at Odell Public Library. Doors open at 5pm with Trivia beginning at 6. The cost is \$10 per person with teams consisting of 4-8 people. There will also be pulled pork sandwiches, chips, dessert, pop and water available for purchase.

Email anni.suman@morrison-schools.org to register your team.

Fat Saturday (Mardi Gras Party)

Morrison's Department of Fun is hosting Fat Saturday on Saturday, March 1 beginning at 6pm at Double G Saloon. Be prepared to let loose

and have the time of your life at their Fat Saturday party celebrating Mardi Gras!

There will be colorful cocktails, tempting treats and delicious food specials all night. There will also be a costume contest if you want to dress the part!

Check them out on Facebook for more info.

FUNdraising Night of Trivia

Kunes of Morrison is hosting a FUNdraising night to benefit God's Will Giving Center and the Morrison Food Pantry on Saturday, March 15 from 6-8pm at Double G Saloon. For teams of 4 registration is \$60. Email jim.thicksten@kunes.com for more information or to register.

Continued from page 1 formed. With so many days being cloudy, we have been forced to stare at a color palate of white and black, gray and brown. The mere sight of a cardinal or blue jay is astonishing. A clear blue sky is as delightful as a birthday cake or a Christmas stocking. This year we experienced cabin fever more than we have in the last few years. The weather never cooperated to make spending time outdoors enjoyable. Further, the amount of illness was great, and still is, leaving us waiting to see when we might come down with something that would knock us out for a week or more. Yet finally this past week we have been gifted to able to return outside again to warmer weather is life giving, though squish through soggy yards and wait for the salt to disappear from the streets. Nonetheless, we are transitioning. New life is coming. The color is returning. Spring, no matter how long it takes, will be here.

We too can transform. We too can transition as needed to be the children of God we have been created to be. Our individual and communal transformations are a process. They take exploration, time and the dedication and respect a true journey deserves. Whether we know it or not, the Triune God is with us on this journey...no matter where we are, how we feel, or how balanced we are. We just have to open up to it.

Prayer is a wonderful way to begin. We need to be sincere in our desire to connect with all that is of and from love...seen and unseen. We can open ourselves to the Holy Spirit. We can open ourselves to the Word of God. We can seek open doors and the blank slate our Creator offers before us. We can address, find and accept the parts of us that need to be left behind. We can let our old life die on the Cross with Christ on Good Friday. We can rise to new life on Easter morning. We can find our own new spring, no matter how young or old or stubborn or down-trodden we may be.

Yet we cannot become transformed if we seek to believe we are perfect. It's not a time to say we are *just fine* and that we are done growing and maturing. Nor is Lent a time to make oneself believe that you are good-for-nothing and that you are broken—because you are not. You're just a human going through life, just like everyone else. It's not a time to fill you with low self esteem and pessimism. Rather, it's a time to find simplicity; a time to find truth; a time to find and embrace one's own self; and it is a time to begin to move forward to grow closer to the love of God.

In our life together, we can seek to be the disciples of Christ in our world today. We can work together to be the best we can be so that we

can find the way to turn on God's loving light wherever the darkness dwells, both within our own selves, our own homes, our own communities, and throughout the world around us. It might not be something that we are able to actually accomplish by late April. Like spring, sometimes it takes a long time for it to get here. But, in the end, the only thing that may truly take a long time is a milestone transformation, because those usually require us to go through many transitions, which take a lot of time, effort and continued renewal.

Though we keep our sight on the great transformations, we need to embrace the small wins as well. We can find springtime immediately as soon as we let love into our life and let love pass through us. Every action of love that we perform, regardless of its size, is a victory. Every time we allow ourselves to receive love, a victory is won as well. In love, we are able to find the continued healing we need to endlessly walk along the journey of life that always calls us to mature, grow, and better ourselves and the world around us. Together, in Christ, we can do this, no matter what. Just say a prayer and be open to the gift to begin again.

Grace and Peace,
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

Nominating Committee

Lynn Knox
Angela Reamer
Deb Zigler

**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

03/05: Angela Reamer
03/06: Blake Huizenga
03/15: Jim Palmer
03/17: Steve Wolf
03/20: Collin Wolf
03/29: Cynthia Reynolds

Upcoming Free Drive-Up Community Meals

First Presbyterian Church, Morrison

Mar. 27: Ham & Potato Soup
Apr. 24: Pulled Pork Sandwiches
May 29: Sloppy Joe Sandwiches
June: No Meal Served
July 31: Brats (MFD Benefit)



March Scripture

March 2: Ex. 34:29-35
Ps. 99
2 Cor. 3:12-4:2
Luke 9:28-36
(37-43a)
March 9: Deut. 26:1-11
Ps. 91:1-2, 9-16
Rom. 10:8b-13
Luke 4:1-13
March 16: Gen. 15:1-12, 17-18
Ps. 27
Phil. 3:17-4:1
Luke 13:31-35 or
Luke 9:28-36
(37-43a)
March 23: Isa. 55:1-9
Ps. 63:1-8
1 Cor. 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9
March 30: Josh. 5:9-12
Ps. 32
2 Cor. 5:16-21
Luke 15:1-3,
11b-32

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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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