

# 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!*

**February 2022 • Vol. 65/No. 2**

February arrives with air temperatures in the forties, melting away the snow that first fell on New Year's Day. January is now behind us and the Groundhog ushers us to winter's halfway point. Despite whether or not he sees his shadow, winter weather will take hold once more. The chance of seeing a crocus in February is a fleeting thought. We might as well accept that a long winter is upon us, and focus on the beauty that is at hand.

January through March are difficult months in the Midwest. Seasonal depression threatens all of us. We are stuck inside too much. We are unable to be with others as much as we need. Air gets dull in our homes. The lack of color drags us into doldrums. Cloudy days threaten to never leave. It's no wonder we look to the Groundhog for saving.

The old saying goes that if the Groundhog sees his shadow on February 2nd, then he goes back into his den and we have six more weeks of winter. But if he awakens on a cloudy 2nd day of February, then he will remain out of his den and spring is 'right around the corner'.

The true story of groundhogs is this: the male groundhog typically wakes up before the female. When he is awake enough, he comes out of his den and begins to smell out female groundhogs. He finds her in her own den and will either find her awake (or waking up), or still sleeping. Now, when a groundhog hibernates, they turn their body temperature down extremely low and their breathing and heart rate seem to nearly cease. There's no way the male groundhog can wake up the female. She's not waking up until

nature tells her it is time. So, if the females are still sleeping, then spring is not yet near, and the male goes back to his den and falls back asleep. He repeats this process until the female is awake, and then, if lucky, he gets to mate. At that point, spring is on its way. In such, groundhogs really do let us know when spring is coming, but they are not our savior of winter. They are just one other indicator...like the chirping frogs and toads, the red-wing blackbirds and robins, snowdrops and crocuses, and the many other appearances of nature which tell us winter is on its way out.

If we can't look to the Groundhog for saving, who then do we need for a savior in midwinter? Well, the answer is always the same when we ask who or what we need as a savior at any time....Jesus! But, let's be honest, that can seem like a cheesy answer that's easily used in order to skirt having to directly deal with the issue(s) at hand. What does it mean anyway, that Jesus will be our Savior in our time of need? How is it more than just a scapegoat?

Let me give it a try... February is also a month in which we celebrate love. School children have Valentines Day on their mind most of all in early February. They are cutting out paper hearts, constructing shoeboxes into valentines' mail boxes, and struggling to write their names on valentines cards they've picked out. Young romantics are thinking about their partners and how they can show them their love. The rest of us, well, we're all over the place with Valentines Day, but overall, we are all reminded of love.

And where does love come from? The Epistles of 1 John is filled with statements that God is love. The early church embraced Jesus' teachings to love one another. Built upon the Great Commandments to love God with our entire being and our neighbor as our self, we are aware that God's main concern is love. Through understanding Jesus, the early church came to understand God as love. As humans, we can find nothing greater than love, and if there is nothing greater on earth than love, then God must be love, and love must be the essence of God. As we seek to become one with God, we seek to become love. We do this by ridding ourselves of the darkness and fill ourselves with the light. All of our actions are to be concentrated on love.

And how do we, today, understand God as love? It is still through understanding Jesus, for it's through Jesus that we best understand God. Jesus' ministry was focused on helping us to understand and embrace the love God has for us, the personal relationship we are to create with God, our own self, and with others—in and through love. Jesus showed us in his teachings and actions how to *be* love.

In such, besides that Jesus is our spiritual Savior because of his sacrificial death on the cross and his rising to new life on Easter morning, Jesus has physically and mentally saved us because he shows us how to love, how to forgive and be forgiven, and start over when needed.

As we sludge through winter, what we need most of all is love. We need to be able to extend love and we need to be able to receive

# Church News

## CHURCH EVENTS

### 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>.

### Snow Day Sundays

In the event that in-person worship gets canceled this winter due to weather, Pastor Mike will livestream a short service from his home on our Facebook group page at 10:15a.m. (assuming power is not out). Thanks modern technology!

### Guest Preacher

On February 6th, Ray Gimenez, Director of Victory Center in Clinton will be our guest preacher. Please come and hear what he has to share!

### 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

Sunday School, Time with Growing Church and Kids Corner are currently on hold until February 13. There are new coloring pages available for children to take to their seats and color during worship services.

### Drive-Up Meals

There will be one meal in February on Thursday, February 24th. We will be serving chili. Volunteers are needed to help make the chili on Tuesday the 22nd starting at 1PM. More help needed Thursday the 24th at 3:30PM.

### Deacons Meeting

Deacons will meet again on February 21 at 10AM via a phone conference call, as 3 of our 5 deacons are away for the winter.

### Session Meeting

Session will meet February 21 via Zoom at 6:30 p.m.

### Guest Organist

Doug Harridge will play the organ for our February 27th worship service. Thanks, Doug!

### Newsletter Deadline 2/21

Please get information to be included in the March *Life Together* newsletter to the office voicemail or e-mail by February 21st.

## CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Annual Reports

Copies of the 2021 Annual Report are still available. You can pick one up from the church office or when you attend a worship service.

### Celebration!

Please join us in wishing a very Happy **18th** Birthday to Mr. Aiden Dolieslager! May you have a great day!



### 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! Their names are listed on page 6.

### Prayer Requests

Have a prayer request? You can now email them to [prayers.firstpresmorrison@gmail.com](mailto:prayers.firstpresmorrison@gmail.com). Please pass this on to others

### Presbytery Meeting

The next Presbytery Assembly meeting is scheduled for February 8 via Zoom at 6:30 pm. Angela Reamer will attend as our commissioner. Blackhawk Presbytery is trying something new this February. Since we are meeting via Zoom for this meeting, we are seeking to allow for Elders who normally not able to attend a daytime meeting to attend as Commissioners. Thanks to this, we are able to send Angela to her first Presbytery Assembly meeting. If you would like to join the Zoom meeting, you can email Loreen Stravers at [loreen@blackhawkpresbytery.org](mailto:loreen@blackhawkpresbytery.org) to sign up and get the link. If you attend, you will get to be part of a breakout group for the learning opportunity, which is led by Mike and the Visioning Task Force team. Note, you won't have voting rights.

### Statements

2021 Contribution Statements were mailed the end of January. If you have any questions or you did not receive one and you should have, please contact the office.

## Update from Scott Vandermyde

A lot of folks have noticed me struggling with a bad left knee. Fortunately, I am scheduled for total knee replacement surgery on February 21. I won't be playing for a few weeks after that, not only due to surgery but also due to some travel plans. ;-)

So with that, thanks to Doug Harridge who fills in when he has availability and thanks to technology for pre-recorded high quality organ music! A friend from Chicago stopped by in November and we went on an "organ crawl" and he was most impressed with our instrument. And this is an experienced organist who does NOT "mince words"!

So thanks to God for all of the above. And thanks to the congregation for their support of me and Doug.



## February Scripture Readings

- Feb. 6: Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13)  
Psalm 138  
1 Corinthians 15:1-11  
Luke 5:1-11
- Feb 13: Jeremiah 17:5-10  
Psalm 1:1-6  
1 Corinthians 15:12-20  
Luke 6:17-26
- Feb 20: Genesis 45:3-11, 15  
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40  
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50  
Luke 6:27-38
- Feb 27: Exodus 34:29-35  
Psalm 99  
2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2  
Luke 9:28-36 (37-43)

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### Morrison Food Pantry

Beginning in February, the Morrison Food Pantry's hours have changed their time to 8-10 am on Thursdays instead of 7:30-9:30.

Clients will not have to enter the church. Please enter the driveway from Lincolnway. Volunteers will be outside to take orders for one-a-month food rations. From there you will turn right onto Knox St. and await your pickup.

You can contact MFFP Director Deb Wikoff at 815-718-5643 or Kathie VanderVenne at 563-212-1874 for any questions.

### Emmanuel Free Meals

Emmanuel Reformed Church, 202 E. Morris St. is offering free community drive through meals every Wednesday from January through March 16 from 5:30-6pm. See their website [www.emmanuelreformedchurch.org](http://www.emmanuelreformedchurch.org) for more information.

## 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>

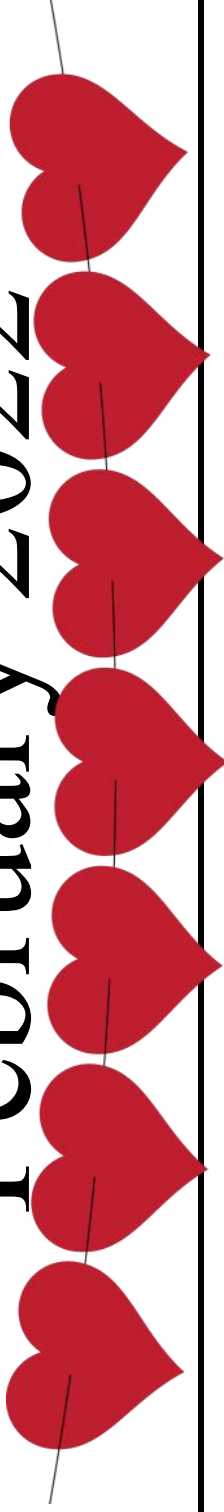
**Morrison Hospital:** The hospital's Facebook page provides information on new check-in procedures and other updates: <https://www.facebook.com/MorrisonCommunityHospital>

### 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/>.

# February 2022



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 9:30AM Bible Study	2	3 **8-10 AM Morrison Food Pantry Open	4	5
6 <i>Presentation of the Lord</i> 10:15AM Worship	7	8 9:30AM Bible Study	9	10 **8-10 AM Morrison Food Pantry Open	11	12
13 <i>6th Sunday in Ordinary Time</i> 10:15AM Worship	14	15 9:30AM Bible Study	16	17 **8-10 AM Morrison Food Pantry Open	18	19
20 <i>7th Sunday in Ordinary Time</i> 10:15AM Worship	21 10AM Deacon Mtg.	22	23	24 **8-10 AM Morrison Food Pantry Open 4:30 Free Drive Up Community Meal	25	26
27 <i>Transfiguration of the Lord</i> 10:15AM Worship	28					

**\*\* NOTE:** Time change for Food Pantry hours.





## 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, Shirley Mills, Wayne Osborn, Cooke Shawver, Jean Temple, Cynthia Vanderleest, Dick Vandermyde, Michael Vegter, Jr.

love. Helping others and being helped by others will give us what we need to feel saved. And we are able to give and receive this help best of all if we do it the way Jesus taught us.

As humans, we need one another. Though it is far easier to be hurtful than it is to be helpful, we are behooved as Christians to do what we can to do the right thing when we have the opportunity and ability. Thus we ask, in what ways can we be beacons of light to others in these dark winter days? How can we be there for others in their times of need? In what ways do we need to open ourselves to receive light? And on the flip side, how do we need to open our own selves to receive help, kindness and love from others? How do we let down our defenses, and open up to love that is being directed toward us?

Jesus saves us because Jesus is of God and God is love, and love is what gets us through the hardest of times. Therefore, it's not just 'turning' to Jesus that's going to be our answer. It's actually emulating Jesus and accepting the love of Jesus from others that will get us through all our times of trial.

Beyond the spiritual aspect of loving actions leading to feeling better and getting past the woes of winter and of life, there is also an underlying mental/physical aspect. Our body creates neurochemicals that can be called happy and unhappy chemicals. These chemicals, that get released into our brain, evolved in order to promote reproduction. Yet in today's world, we understand that these neurochemicals can also affect how we feel. The three main happy chemicals are based on love: dopamine, oxytocin and serotonin. Dopamine is stimulated by the 'chase' aspect of love. Oxytocin is stimulated by touch and social trust. Serotonin is stimulated by the status aspect of

love. Meanwhile, when love becomes a disappointment, cortisol is released, which makes us feel unhappy. However, it also triggers us to seek after the happy chemicals (it tells us to keep trying, because we don't like the unhappy feeling).<sup>1</sup>

Since we are no longer animals trying to survive in the wild, we no longer need to be focusing on reproduction in order to obtain these neurochemicals. By simply loving others and being loved by others, we are able to receive the happy chemicals. We are mentally rewarded, which we feel throughout our body, when we are loving and being loved. And when we are not loving or being loved, we get a shot of cortisol to push us back into the direction of seeking love. In such, if we really want to feel better in the winter, or at any other point in love, then we can seek to be in loving relationships (not just romantic relationships). In the end, when others extend love to us as well as when we extend love to others, we naturally feel better. What better way to beat the blues than with a good dose of love? It's even all-natural!

Therefore, Jesus really does save us. Jesus teaches and directs us to be in love. Our loving actions, both on the giving and receiving

end, put us in the correct state of body, mind and spirit.

In our life together, we can pursue to be helpful and kind to one another. When we do, we will be twice rewarded...we will feel better and we will live out our spiritual calling. When we forget to be kind and helpful, our mind will naturally trigger us to change our actions, because the mind and body desire to be in a caring state. So though it is easier to be mean and hurtful, we naturally are designed to be kind and helpful. Together, we can help each other to feel better and live into who we have the ability to be, following Christ all along the way.

Grace and Peace,  
Mike

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<sup>1</sup> Breuning, Loretta G., Ph.D.; *The Neurochemistry of Love: Love is a Cocktail of Brain Chemicals*; February 13, 2018. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/your-neurochemical-self/201802/the-neurochemistry-love>.

# Leadership and Staff

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

Lexie Laughlin '22  
Scott Vandermyde '22  
Carol Wolf '23  
Lynn Knox '23\*  
Tim Reynolds '23\*  
Jim Palmer '24\*  
Angela Reamer '24\*  
Deb Zigler\*  
Stacie Baker, Clerk

## Deacons

Mavis Best '22  
Jane James '22\*  
Doris Robertson '23\*  
Nancy Glazier '24  
Jody Tucker '24

## Nominating Committee

Rick Barr  
Jan Kelly  
Jenn Reynolds  
Ron Shank  
(Session Elders TBD)

## PW Coordinating Team

Lynn Knox, Moderator  
Jane James, Secretary  
Angela Reamer,  
Treasurer

## Staff

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

## 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

*\*Elders and Deacons in their  
second 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  
02/25: Victoria Volckmann

## Upcoming Free Drive-Up Community Meals

### First Presbyterian Church, Morrison

Jan. 27: Beef and Veggie Soup  
Feb. 24: Chili  
Mar. 31: Ham and Potato  
Soup

### Emmanuel Reformed Church, Morrison

Free Community Meals  
every Wednesday from 5:30-6pm January—  
March 16



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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](mailto:revselburg@gmail.com)**



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