

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 2025 • Vol. 68/No. 2

Here's a decade old reprint of the article I wrote for February 2015, as a new father with a 7 month old. Reflecting on what to write for this February, I decided to once again share this article instead. Enjoy, and remember, God loves you.

February...such a month, promising to be short, but always so long. A month for presidents, the groundhog and black history. A month of winter almost being over, but not quite yet. Most of all, February is set aside as a month for love. All the stores already are decorated with reds, pinks and whites, with hearts pasted to walls and hanging from ceilings. Despite the commercialization of Valentine's Day, it is nice that love gets a special holiday all to its own. Love is a word that equates to an emotion, an action, and a way of being. Love has been regarded as the greatest of everything since the beginning of humanity, and love is the center of our Judeo-Christian heritage. In English, the word love, be it a noun, verb, adverb or adjective, is scattered all over the Bible. When studied, it is found to be the central theme to the laws of Moses, the teachings of Jesus and the charges of the Apostles.

The books of law in the Old Testament repeatedly bring the people back to a state of love, so much so, that it cannot be argued that love is the basis for all the laws. One love pericope of the deuterocanonical laws is found in 10:12-21: "So now, O Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you? Only to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the Lord your God and his decrees that I am commanding you today, for your own wellbeing. Although heaven and the heaven of heavens belong to the Lord your God, the earth with all that is in it, yet the Lord set his heart in love on

your ancestors alone and chose you, their descendants after them, out of all the peoples, as it is today. Circumcise, then, the foreskin of your heart, and do not be stubborn any longer. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the Lord your God; him alone you shall worship; to him you shall hold fast, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise; he is your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things that your own eyes have seen."

This love is confirmed by Jesus in the New Testament who proclaimed indeed that the Greatest Commandment is to love God with our entire being and the second is to love our neighbor as our self. Jesus, toward the end of his life, gave us his own new commandment, "To love one another." (John 13:34).

There are many ways to describe love, for there are many types of love. Just as the Eskimos have 50 words for snow, both the Greek and the Hebrew translations of the bible have many words for love. Nine Hebrew words for love are found in the Old Testament. Ancient Greek has four words for love: eros, storge, philo and agape. Eros is a sexual love (this is not used in the New Testament); storge is the natural affection between kinfolk (used in Romans 12:10 combined with philo); philo is that natural spontaneous feeling of love; and agape is the eternal unconditional love. Agape love is the common love spoken about in the New Testament and is the unconditional eternal love that God has for us.

Being a father has made me reflect much on love. Over the months, I have started to change, as a father should, in my recognition and understanding of family and love. I have begun to be able to truly understand agape love of a father, such as God has for us. I see it all from a whole new perspective and now better grasp the love of God for all of creation. It has changed the way I engage relationships with others, as well as my leadership style, as I now find that I cannot interact with another without seeing them as having once been a baby who was once held and loved as I love my son. I see people as the fragile and beautiful creatures that they are. For me, barriers have been destroyed and limitless potential has been revealed.

When I look at the world around us, I find that we have separated ourselves so much from nature and one another that it has become easy to lose the focus on love. Yet it is presumptuous to say that this is something new. These laws were necessary thousands of years ago in a time in which people lived in small tribes and collections of families. If such tight-knit people had such a hard time loving that God needed to pass on these laws of love, then how much harder might it be for us to love today? The common denominator through the ages is that humans are naturally disposed to being self-focused, creating us to easily become upset with others and have a difficult time to forgive. When we are centered on our own self, we are only able to really have eros love. Eros is a love in which we just want love for our own gain. The sexual desire associated with eros is wired in our primitive reptilian brain. We see something and a burning desire makes us want it badly enough that we are filled with

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 February 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!

Mardis Gras Coffee Hour

Feb 2: PW Celebration
Feb 9: Cookies (we'll have a valentines cookie frost-off that day. We also plan to serve sub sandwiches as well as a fundraiser)
Feb 16: Pie
Feb 23: Brownies
March 2: Potluck & King Cake

Presbyterian Women Farewell

The Presbyterian Women (PW) organization of our church has decided to disband. Our guilds disbanded pre-2020 and only the coordinating team has been meeting, which only happened in early 2024. We will celebrate the life of this organization during our worship service on February 2nd, followed by a coffee hour celebration. Help us honor and celebrate an awesome legacy!

Sunday School

Children's Sunday School will be held on February 2nd, 9th & 23rd, starting at 9:15AM.

Undecorating AND Annual Meeting Worship Service Take 2 x 2

It's time to take down the Christmas decorations. No one showed up a month ago for our initial undecorating day. We are going to make it

happen on February 9 at 9:15AM. All hands on deck, please. Also, our Annual Meeting worship service has been postponed to February 9th, due to Pastor Mike being sick on January 26th. It is set to start at 10:15AM, but if we aren't done undecorating yet, we will start once we are done with that.

Valentines Cookie Frost-Off

Join us on February 9th during coffee hour as we host our next cookie frost off. Donations of cookies to frost are needed. We'll deliver the cookies to those who need a pick-me-up.

Super Bowl First-Half Party

The families of children and youth are invited to our 2nd annual Super Bowl First-Half Party on February 9th. Come as early as 5:15PM. Kick-off is at 5:30. We will watch on the big screen in the dining room. Bring food to pass...this is potluck style. We'll have pulled pork sandwiches as well. Please RSVP to Pastor Mike.

Presbytery Assembly Meeting on Zoom

The next Presbytery Assembly meeting will be on Zoom on Tuesday, February 11th, starting at 6PM. Scott Vandermyde has been elected by the Session to be our voting commissioner in 2025. If you would like to attend the Zoom meeting or future meetings as a non-voting member, please contact Pastor Mike.

Golden Oldies

We will have our next Golden Oldies lunch on Thursday, February 13th, at Homestead. Please contact Marian Osborn if you would like to attend.

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, Dale Johnson, Jody Tucker, Rachel Tucker, Ray Tucker

Resthabe Presbyterian Social Hour

Join us every 3rd Monday of the month at 2PM for “Presbyterian Social Hour” at Resthabe. There will be plenty of coffee and conversation! Join us on February 17th!

Newsletter Deadline 02/20

Please get information to be included in the February *Life Together* newsletter to the office e-mail by February 20th.

Burrito Fundraiser for God’s Will Giving Center

We are opening our kitchen the week of February 17th to prepare for a burrito fundraiser. Paula Rodriguez is hosting this fundraiser to help pay for a new furnace at God’s Will Giving Center. All excess proceeds will go to purchase food and essential items which are distributed for free at God’s will. Burritos will be distributed from our church on Saturday, February 22nd. You can help with the fundraiser by purchasing a dozen burritos! A sign up sheet is available in the narthex.

Drive-Up Meals

Our next meal will be on Thursday, February 27th beginning at 4:30PM. The meal is chili and cornbread. Help is needed for food prep on Wednesday the 26th at 1:30PM and Thursday at 3:45PM. We will be continuing to offer in-person dining for our meals.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

2025 Communion Dates

In 2025, the planned Communion dates are: February 9, 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.

FPC Morrison Blackhawk Presbytery Volunteers 2025

In 2025, Scott Vandermyde and Mike Selburg continue to hold leadership rolls as volunteers with Blackhawk Presbytery. Scott is the moderator of the Finance and Properties Committee and sits on the Presbytery Council. Mike is the moderator of the Personnel Committee, sits on Presbytery Council, and is also a member of the Vision and Assembly Planning Committee as well as the Land and Name Acknowledgement Committee. Mike led the presbytery in a staffing restructuring in 2024. In October 2024, the presbytery transitioned to hiring a bookkeeping firm. At the February 2025 Assembly meeting, Blackhawk Presbytery will hire a

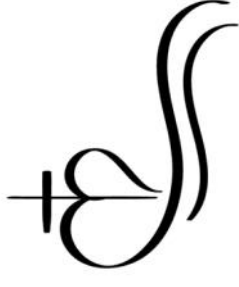
new Treasurer and Associate Stated Clerk. Mike is leading a search committee to hire a new Presbytery Office Administrator, as our current administrator is retiring at the end of March. At the end of July, Transformational General Presbyter and Stated Clerk Eric Heinekamp will finish his five year contract with Blackhawk. He is signing onto a two year contract as General Presbyter and Stated Clerk. Now that he is no longer acting as bookkeeper, treasurer, and has help with his Stated Clerk role, he will have more time to spend in his General Presbyter roll, especially in assisting the Commission on Ministry.

LOOKING AHEAD— SAVE THE DATE

- March 2: Transfiguration of the Lord
Worship
Potluck & King Cake
- March 5: Ash Wednesday
- March 12: MMC Soup Lunch
@ FPC, noon
- April 13: Palm Sunday
- April 17: Maundy Thursday
- April 18: Good Friday
- April 20: Easter Sunday
- April 27: Bulletin Free Sunday
- May 13: Presbytery Assembly Mtg
- May 18: End of Sunday School
Year Party
Children Led Worship
Service
- June 8: Pentecost

Love
one another.
Feed
each other.

February 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>2 <i>4th Sunday after Epiphany</i></p> <p>9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p> <p>9:30AM Bible Study 4:30PM Ice Cream Social @ Highlight Health</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9AM Early Childhood Resource Fair @ Odell Library 2PM Euchre Tournament</p>
<p>9 <i>5th Sunday after Epiphany</i></p> <p>9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship/Annual Meeting 11:15AM Coffee/ Cookie Frost-Off 5:30PM Super Bowl Party</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>9:30AM Bible Study</p>	<p>12</p> <p>1:30PM BINGO @ Homestead</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>16 <i>6th Sunday after Epiphany</i></p> <p>10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour</p>	<p>17 <i>No School</i></p> <p>2PM Social Hour @ Resthava 6:30PM Session Mtg.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>9:30AM Bible Study</p>	<p>19</p> <p>1:30PM BINGO @ Resthava</p>	<p>20</p> <p>5PM Absolute Science! @ Odell Library</p> <p>8AM Social Hour @ The Loft</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>23 <i>7th Sunday after Epiphany</i></p> <p>9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p> <p>9:30AM Bible Study</p>	<p>26</p> <p>1:30PM Meal Prep</p>	<p>27</p> <p>4:30PM Free Drive Up Community Meal</p>	<p>28</p>	

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.

Early Childhood Resource Fair

Stop by Odell Public Library on Saturday, February 8 from 9am—12 pm for the Early Childhood Resource Fair. It will be a morning of kid-friendly activities from several local organizations. You will also have an opportunity to learn about local community programs and other resources. This is a free drop-in event!

Euchre Tournament

Morrison's Department of Fun has planned another fun event to be held on Saturday, February 8. Registration is from 2-3pm with the tournament from 3 to 7pm. It will be held upstairs at Happy Joe's Pizza. The cost is \$20

per person to enter and there will be a cash pay out for 1st, 2nd and 3rd. If you have questions or want to reserve a spot, contact Kelly at 815-218-6705.

Absolute Science!

Absolute Science is coming to Odell Public Library to share hands-on science on Thursday, February 13 from 5-7pm.

This free, drop-in program will allow kids to explore engineering, magnets, simple machines, rock identification and SO MUCH MORE!

This program is sponsored by Odell Public Library Friends and CGH Medical Center.

Continued from page 1

a loving emotion which helps us in obtaining it.

Despite that it fulfills passionate desires, this is empty and shallow love. It is not quite philo love. For philo wants to be in a relationship with another. It wants to give and receive. Philo allows for that bridge in relationships. It is through having philo that we can love God and love our neighbor. It is that feeling of love that brings people together on a mutual plane. Through philo, we can break down walls and build each other up and be together as we walk through this life.

As philo bridges people together, storge love allows people to really see the bond and to not want to break away from that bond. Storge, which we associate with the love of families, makes us all the same in each others' eyes because it is a love that unites us as a single people. Storge love is necessary in order for us to live out Jesus' commandment. Not only did Jesus state that we are to love one another, he tells us that "because he loves us, we too are to love one another." Jesus sees us as his brothers and sisters. Jesus wants us to be united together. Jesus wants our love to be a unification of the kingdom of heaven. Both philo and storge love live within the mammalian brain. It is something we can recognize in other mammals.

But it is in the higher creative mind, in the neo-cortex which Jesus is always calling us to live within, that we are able to grasp agape love. There are many scholars who will say that only God is able to have true agape love—that it is something outside of the realm of human acquisition. This may very well be true, yet we are all behooved to strive for it. We must, for sure, learn the other lower forms of love in order to be able to seek assentation of agape love. I believe that it is agape love in which the world is able to be healed in all its facets, for it is agape love that never ceases and will do whatever it can to help heal everything and to live in peace and harmony with all of creation.

As we look at our world today, it is indeed a miasmal place in many ways. Indeed, we have become separated from other humans and nature to an extreme that has never been seen before in history. Yet, at the same time, we are also closer to one another and the earth than ever before. The world is shrinking and we are learning more and more about how everything is connected and the need to care for everything. We can see the variety of ecosystems of this world and how everything truly is dependent upon one another. Unlike any other time in history, humanity has the power to truly unite together

and to care for the earth. Still, there will always be that significant hurdle of overcoming our own selfish ways and all the greed and ill that comes from such a way of being.

In our life together, we have the ability to love one another as a family, as friends, and as individuals. God has gifted us with love and has taught us of its importance. God has guided us to be able to overcome the obstacles that keep us from loving one another and to allow God's own agape love to enter us. Then, let us together, allow that agape love to extend out of us. Let us allow the Spirit of God to prevail in all our actions and allow ourselves to be the beacons of love which God has created us to be. It is a charge which we must strive after if we are going to continue to have existence here on earth. Not only is it our Christian calling, but it is also the calling of all people in order to bring the necessary healing to the earth in order to right the wrongs of our history and to usher in God's kingdom here on earth. In such, let us love one another and all of God's creation, just as Jesus has loved us.

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

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
02/08: Arlyn Hayen
02/20: Ann Mennenoh



February Scripture

Feb 2: Jer. 1:4-10
Ps. 71:1-6
1 Cor. 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30
Feb 9: Isa. 6:1-8 (9-13)
Ps. 138
1 Cor. 15:1-11
Luke 5:1-11
Feb 16: Jer. 17:5-10
Ps. 1
1 Cor. 15:12-20
Luke 6:17-26
Feb 23: Gen. 45:3-11, 15
Ps. 37:1-11, 39-40
1 Cor. 15:35-38,
42-50
Luke 6:27-38

Upcoming Free Drive-Up Community Meals

First Presbyterian Church, Morrison

Feb. 27: Chili & Cornbread
Mar. 27: Ham & Potato Soup
Apr. 24: Pulled Pork Sandwiches
May 29: Sloppy Joe Sandwiches



First Presbyterian Church of Morrison IL
100 E. Lincolnway, Morrison IL 61270
Phone: 815-772-3510

firstpresmorrison@gmail.com

www.firstpresmorrison.org

https://www.facebook.com/firstpresmorrison

YouTube Channel: First Presbyterian Church of Morrison, Illinois

Contact Pastor Mike at revselburg@gmail.com



Please Recycle