

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!

September 2023 • Vol. 66/No. 8

Note: This is from the Sept. 2014 "Life Together". This was the first article of its type I wrote (and have continued to write for 9 years). Amidst a very busy month here in 2023, I chose to reprint it. Still one of my favorites, written 2 months after Henry was born.

September serenades summer to slumber as cicadas sing soliloquies. Crickets chirp in chorus, counting down summer's closure to all creatures. The old dog snores and whimpers in his sleep, dreaming of some ancient chase. The new father holds his tiny baby tight, praying he'll always stay this way. But the days must pass, autumn must arrive, the dog must have his final chase. The baby boy must grow up soon, so we pray for passage to a ripe old age.

The Prophet prayed upon the hill, watching the world spin. Deep into the cosmos he saw creation still at work. Around him, down below in the valleys, he watched the humans toil. Rejoining them, he let them know the secrets of his Father. He gathered those who would listen together, and here is what he said.

There will soon come the day, he told them all, in which I must be murdered. They'll do this all so man may have his way, and live in greed and self-centeredness. But this is not the way for things, this is not the intention. Let me ask you all these questions...if your child were sick, would you not care for your child until she was better? If your baby was dirty, would you not clean him? If your grandmother was hungry, would you not feed her? If your sister was widowed, alone and sad, would you not visit her? If your nephew was abroad for the first time and scared, would you not write to him? Of course you would. You would do whatever you could for those you love the most, and so you are willing to give your life for them. But tell me, what will you do for the person next to you with whom you have no relation? What would you do for the stranger? And even more, what would you do for the person you despise, or are taught by culture you should not affiliate yourself with? Do you not know that the love for you of the one who created you has the same love for everyone? Do you not know that the love gifted to you is not for you to keep to yourself? Do you not know that love is only offered to you so

that the love may be shared? So fear not, my love for you is so great that I will give myself over to die for everyone, for the forgiveness of your ways of neglecting to share God's love with others, so that you might be saved from yourself, and learn to live a new life in which you truly are able to love God with your entire being and your neighbor as yourself. And because I come from God, I truly cannot be killed, and in three days' time I shall return to you. And Peter cried, No Lord, don't let this happen. Stay right here forever. Don't let anything ever change. Let it be as it is right now for eternity. And Jesus looked at Peter, and felt the heaviness of humanity in his heart. Son, he said, that is the darkness speaking. Get rid of that darkness and let the light take over! Change must happen. Change is inevitable. The seasons must pass. But if we let the seasons pass and we hold onto these old ways of neglecting love and living for the self, then the darkness will win out. The time is now to make the change. The time is now to embrace tomorrow. Let me help you in the most ultimate way possible. Let me die for you. But then you must do something, or all will be for naught. Take up your cross each and every day and follow me in doing good works. Turn from the darkness and the ways of the world. Turn from what the greedy are telling you. Recognize that your culture is telling you to serve it so that it can grow fatter, while it milks you of your life. Break away from it. Break away from the lies and deceit. Break away from the evil that permeates humanity. Shed the old clothes. Put on the new garments I give you. Let them be a shield from the evil. Let them give you the power, energy, direction and perseverance to change your ways and make each of your actions an action of love. Let go and live into the new.

Each day has passed since this story, as recorded in the 16th chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, and in those first few days, Jesus' prophesy did come true. He was killed and he did rise from the dead. Yet his warning was poorly heeded by humanity. Today we look around us, and inside our own self, and recognize that the darkness still has its claws sunk deep. Regardless of how much we try to live in the realm of love, we are constantly

pulled away. We are tricked and deceived by others, just as we trick and deceive others. We are blinded and we are spiteful. We hold a grudge as though it is something we are to be awarded for. We look to those closest to us, and choose who to care for, while ignoring the others, both near and far. Despite the teachings of the Christ, and despite his death and resurrection, we are refusing to live into that new tomorrow. We continue to live for the world and the self.

The rains come, watering the ground. The seeds sprout and create food for all creatures. The harvest comes and it is ours for the taking. Yet we refuse and neglect to fully receive the gift. The sun rises, the day offers endless opportunities to live, love and enjoy. The sun sets and the day finishes with the chance to have made peace and to be at peace. The weeks, months and years pass, allowing for a full life to be lived. It is all a gift, and it is all so brief. Like Peter, we long to hold onto the moment, to stay right there where we are and to enjoy it to its fullest. And this is not so wrong. But where Peter erred was that he wanted to refuse to acknowledge that not only was there a need to move forward, but that it was in what was to come in which full life could be experienced.

Today, we still await humanity to live into that new expectation. We are still fiddling with our cross, figuring out how to sling it over our shoulder, finding that leverage to pick it up and the balance to keep it there. Then we complain of its weight and awkwardness, and eventually toss it down, so we can return to the older and, seemingly, easier life. But what we are missing is that, in our life together, we can help each other to lift the cross, to keep it balanced and to walk together into the new life, helping all in loving and caring, so that none of us may stumble and drop the cross, and regress to the ways of old, the ways within darkness' hold.

Let us together live into the new life that was granted us through Christ. Let us begin a new season, embracing both the moment at hand, and the change that allows us to not only become the light, but to spread the light everywhere.

—Grace and Peace,
Mike

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 September
 Sept 3: Tim Reynolds
 Sept 10: Lynn Knox & Angela Reamer
 Sept 17:
 Sept 24: Carol Wolf

If you would like to volunteer to host a coffee hour in October please see the sign up sheet in the entry-way or contact the church office.

Office Closed

The office will be closed Monday, September 4 in observance of Labor Day. Stacie will be in the office on Thursday, September 7 from 8:30—2:30.

Rally Day

Sunday School for children will begin on Sunday, September 10 at 9:15AM. Our kick-off event will take place outside, weather permitting, with a bounce house, games, and more. Sunday School is for children in grades pre-K through 5th grade. For more information, please contact Pastor Mike.

Tie-Dye Event

We are offering another free tie-dyeing event on Sunday, September 10 from 3-5PM. Bring 100% cotton materials to dye and we'll supply the rest. No experience needed. We can help you learn to tie-dye! Fun for all ages. Think ahead to Christmas...these make great presents!

Harvest Celebration, Communion, Pie & Ice Cream Social

Our annual celebration of the onset of autumn will be held on September 17 this month. We'll celebrate the harvest along with Communion dur-

ing the worship service and conclude with a pie and ice cream social. Please bring desserts to share (pie is great, but cookies, brownies, cake, etc. won't be turned away!). The church will supply ice cream.

Kenya Partnership Event at Stronghold

Blackhawk Presbytery has long held a relationship with Imenti Presbytery in Keyna. Representatives from Blackhawk have been sending delegates for over two decades to Kenya. For the first time, Kenyans are able to come to the US to visit us. Unfortunately, only 3 of the 13 travelers were granted visas. There will be a special retreat on Monday, September 11 from 1:30-8PM at Stronghold. Pastor Mike will be attending from 1:30 until they break for dinner. If you would like to attend, please contact him. For more information, please see: <https://blackhawkpresbytery.org/2023/07/28/blackhawk-imentiretreat/>

Presbytery Assembly Meeting at Stronghold

The next Blackhawk Presbytery Assembly meeting is at Stronghold starting at 9:30AM on Tuesday, September 12. Scott Vandermyde will attend as our delegate, along with Pastor Mike. If you would like to join them, please contact Mike. For more information on the meeting, please see: <https://blackhawkpresbytery.org/2023/07/18/blackhawk-assemblies-september-12-at-stronghold/>

Drive-Up Meals

Our September meal will be on Thursday, September 14. The meal is baked potato sloppy joes and begins at **5:00PM**. Help is needed for food prep on Wednesday at 1:30PM and Thursday starting at 4:15PM.

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, Janet Johnson, Cookee Shawver, Jean Temple, Rachel Tucker, Ray Tucker, Michael Vegter, Jr.

Session Meeting

Session will meet September 18 in person at 6:30PM at the church.

Newsletter Deadline 09/21

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

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Earth Care Team

We will have our first Earth Care Team meeting on Sunday, September 24th following the worship service. Please join us as we finally set sail. We will have three focuses for the remainder of the year for this group:

- 1) How well are we doing environmentally at the church? What does our footprint look like? We know that we are doing very well at this, but what might we be overlooking?
- 2) What can we be doing with our yard? How do we move forward with landscaping? How can our landscaping be ecologically focused?
- 3) What else can we be doing to be helping others learn to be good stewards of the earth?

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.

Corner Renovation

We may have been pre-mature with our declaration that the corner of Lincolnway and Genesee will get renovated. There are a lot of false rumors floating around town creating lots of negativity, including a petition against it. Please consider attending the City Council meetings (dates TBA) to show your support, or contact the aldermen of the city. More information about this will be posted on Facebook and an email will be sent out. For an article in the Whiteside Sentinel, please see the top of page 2: <https://issuu.com/shawmedia/docs/whiteside-08-22-2023>



September Scripture

- September 3: Jer. 15:15-21
Ps. 26:1-8
Rom. 12:9-21
Matt. 16:21-28
- September 10: Ezek. 33:7-11
Ps. 119:33-40
Rom. 13:8-14
Matt. 18:15-20
- September 17: Gen. 50:15-21
Ps. 103:(1-7) 8-13
Rom. 14:1-12
Matt. 18:21-35
- September 24: Jonah 3:10-4:11
Ps. 145:1-8
Phil. 1:21-30
Matt. 20:1-16

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, curbside 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/>.

September

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
3 14th Sunday after Pentecost 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	4 Office Closed	5 9:30AM Bible Study	6	7	8	9 9AM Funslinger Run—UTV Ride 5PM Morrison Block Party
10 15th Sunday after Pentecost 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	Labor Day 11	12 9:30AM Bible Study	13	14	15	16 9AM Harvest Hammer 12PM Paint the Town
17 16th Sunday after Pentecost 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour 3PM Resthabe 4PM Homestead	18	19 9:30AM Bible Study/ Worship Service	20	21 5PM Free Drive Up Community Meal	22	23
24 17th Sunday after Pentecost 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour 11:30AM Resthabe Family Fun Day	25 6:30PM Session Mtg.	26 9:30AM Bible Study	27	28	29	30

COMMUNITY EVENTS

From the Food Pantry

The Food Pantry personal items needed. Drop them off in the narthex.

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.

Resthava Family Fun Day

Resthava Care & Rehabilitation will be hosting a Family Fun Day on Sunday, September 24 from 11:30am to 3pm. There will be free pork chop or hot dog meals, games for all ages, face painting, hoola hoop contest, bags, bounce house and tons of PRIZES! There will also be a chance to win a bike, but must be present to win. If you would like more info or would like to volunteer, contact Karla or Jamie at 815-772-4021.

Rules of the Road Review

Patrons of Odell Public Library and our surrounding community are finding it very difficult locating help to review the Rules of the Road prior to taking

their test. It is my hope to assist our seniors and allow for them to feel comfortable and informed when they have to participate in the testing process at the Illinois Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Our local offices are in Chadwick IL and Sterling IL, but they do not offer classes.

On Wednesday, October 18, from 10am—12pm, Odell Public Library will offer a Rules of the Road Class for Seniors. This will be presented by Nancy Johnson, IL SOS Rules of the road Review Course AARP Smart Driver Course Coordinator. Call 815-772-READ (7323) or stop in at Odell Public Library to register by October 14 at 3pm.

This opportunity is sponsored by Odell Public Library, Morrison Police Department and The City of Morrison.

— Lisa Boles, Assistant Director,
Odell Public Library

Harvest Hammer

The 35th Annual Harvest Hammer Duathlon will be held Saturday, September 16. Kids races begin at 8am in front of Morrison High School. The 5K begins at 9am followed by the 21 mile bike ride.

Following the completion of the Duathlon, there will be a festive color fun run at approximately 11:15am.

To register for these events, visit www.getmeregistered.com/

harvesthammer.

Paint the Town

Morrison's Annual Paint the Town will follow the Harvest Hammer on Saturday, September 16 beginning at 12 noon. There will be plenty of color and fun throughout the day!

Check out Eventbrite.com to get registered.

As always, this event benefits CAPA—Children's Art Preservation Association. Come out and spread some color!

Rewind—Adult Homecoming

On September 30, at the Whiteside County Fairgrounds, Morrison School Foundation NFP is hosting a Decades Rewind—Adult Homecoming to dance through the decades and celebrate the past MHS style!

A dinner buffet will begin at 7pm, serving your favorite throwbacks from Morrison's school cafeteria—chili & cinnamon rolls, rectangular pizza & corn, and Butterfinger bars, but you can skip the carton of milk for spirits.

For your music selections, 30 West will help you dance the decades away!

For more information, search "Decades Rewind Adult Homecoming" on Facebook under Events.

MONETARY DONATIONS NEEDED

2023 has been an expensive year for our church. We have had some planned and unplanned building and property expenses. To date, we have not received any donations toward these projects. We still have approximately \$39,132.24 to go, though we know our need will be higher than this amount due to other projects in queue.

CONCRETE WORK: \$3,000

ELECTRIC WORK: \$6,800

PLUMBING: \$900+

We are contracting Alvarado's to fix a leak that we have been patching ourselves for several years in the youth group room. It is time to have it professionally fixed.

DISHWASHER REPAIR: \$1,014.20
Daycare is paying for half.

NEW AC UNIT FOR FELLOWSHIP ROOM/ OFFICES: \$4,802

OLDS BOILER COMPANY:
(Invoices dating back to 2020, including major work in 2023):
\$20,116.04

MEN'S BASEMENT BATHROOM RENOVATION: \$2,500 to cover insurance deductible due to water damage via boiler pipe

BELL TOWER/ ROOF LEAK: We are in need of patching the roof around the bell tower yet a plan has not yet been finalized, so we don't know the amount yet.

FREE PRODUCE TABLE: Same as above. TBD.

LINCOLNWAY BEAUTIFICATION: Once the city fixes our corner and puts in a new sidewalk along Lincolnway, we plan to beautify our Lincolnway property, including repairing/blacktopping parking lot, fencing in the dumpster, landscaping in front of the church, and anything else we see needs improved.

And there are definitely several more projects that need worked on.

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

**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

09/01: Arlene Burkholder
09/02: Nancy Shank
09/30: Sally Hayen
09/30: Ron Shank

Anniversaries

09/24: Daniel & June Cortes

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

September 14: Baked Potato Sloppy Joes
October 12: Chili
November 9: Soup
December 14: Ham Dinner



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