

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!

January 2025 • Vol. 68/No. 1

December splashed in with a smack of winter air and left warm, soggy and muddy before January freezes us with arctic air. The season of Advent passed quickly. Christmas came and went before I had a chance to catch a breath. Like Charlie Brown, I must admit that I have a hard time being in the Christmas spirit before Christmas Eve. The reason is not religiously or socially related. Rather, it's because there is so much to do within that busy season that it is difficult to pause and enjoy the moment within. I can't say it's because I'm a pastor, because I hear so many other adults say the same thing. I hear it most from parents of children and youth. At this stage in our life, we are pulled in so many directions and have so many responsibilities that we get pushed away from the celebrating aspect and placed into the state of "being responsible to make sure everything transpires *and* goes as well as possible" during this chaotic time of the year. But on Christmas Eve, after presents are wrapped and Santa has filled the stockings, I can find sleep. I can breathe easy. I can enjoy Christmas Day AND RELAX! But then the 26th rolls around and our lives push us back to the grindstone. Not unlike a wedding, the celebration for Christmas takes so much effort, and then it's gone in a day. But, really, is it? Did you know that we really shouldn't be celebrating Christmas for only one day? The majority of our world actually celebrates it for twelve days. Most societies go on holiday from December 24th through January 6th. Imagine continually enjoying the full twelve days of Christmas with an extra day at each end! Then, there are many cultures in our world who continue with another festive season that lasts from January 6th until Ash Wednesday. They rest during Lent.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." Our church year is set in seasons which celebrate different aspects of both the natural world and Jesus' life and ministry. We are relatively good at celebrating the church seasons at the First Presbyterian Church of Morrison. We are very mindful of Advent, from the first Sunday in which we hang the greens, through Christmas Eve. We are mindful to celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord on January 6th or the Sunday before. Epiphany is also called the Feast of Light, celebrating the entrance of light into the darkness, and also the manifestation of Jesus to gentiles, as the Magi followed the star of Bethlehem and found baby Jesus. This day is actually an ancient celebration, long pre-dating Christianity and even the Roman calendar. It is the day each year when the sun finally rises earlier and the days grow longer at both ends. We also celebrate Baptism of the Lord Sunday the following week. We then celebrate Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday, which is the Sunday before Lent begins. We like to celebrate Mardi Gras that Sunday by having a King Cake during coffee hour. We enter Lent and observe it from Ash Wednesday until Holy Week, and worship together on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. We then try to remember Ascension of the Lord, which never falls on a Sunday (40 days after Easter), and indeed celebrate Pentecost. After Pentecost, we are in the season of Ordinary Time. That season concludes with Christ the King Sunday, which closes out the Christian Calendar year. The following week brings us back to the first Sunday of the Christian Calendar, which is the first Sunday of Advent.

So, what are we missing? We are actually missing what is going on right now...Christmastide and then Epiphanytide. After Advent ends as the clock strikes midnight on Christmas Eve, we enter into the season of Christmastide. These are the 12 Days of Christmas. The last of these twelve days, January 5th, happens to be on a Sunday this year.

Next comes the Season of Epiphany, also called Epiphanytide and the Sundays after Epiphany, starting January 6th. This is the Season of the Light. The popular festivals of Mardi Gras and Carnival are actually other names for this season. In my time with you, we have not paid attention to the Epiphany season beyond noting in the bulletin which "Sunday after Epiphany" we are in. The first Sunday after Epiphany is celebrated by remembering Jesus' baptism which started his ministry. The Season of Epiphany follows Jesus' early ministry in the liturgical Gospel readings. Epiphanytide ends at midnight the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, which we know as Fat Tuesday and Shrove Tuesday (and even Pancake Tuesday). The last Sunday of Epiphanytide celebrates the transfiguration of Jesus when he takes a few disciples to a mountain top, sees and speaks with Moses and Elijah, and hears God talk, telling Jesus that the Father is pleased with his ministry. There, Jesus is transfigured into a state of glowing and being dressed in brilliant white cloth. In the Gospels, the descent from the mountain marks the beginning of Jesus' final journey into Jerusalem, where he offered the Last Supper, gave the new commandment to "love one another", was arrested, beaten, tried and convicted, and hung on a cross to die, only to come back to life on Easter Sunday.

In Epiphanytide, there is another holiday found in certain traditions

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 January 7th, 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!

Epiphany of the Lord & Festive Sweater Sunday

On January 5, we will celebrate Epiphany during worship. This Sunday closes out the short season of Christmastide. We will celebrate this Sunday with festive sweaters! Wear your favorite festive sweater one more time before you put it away!

Epiphany Family Party

On January 5th, we will have our 3rd Annual Post-Christmas Epiphany Family Party and white elephant present exchange. All the families of the children and youth of our church are invited for a time of games, crafts, dinner and present exchange. Please bring a wrapped RECYCLED (unwanted and regifted) gift per person (for all who want to participate). Starts at 5PM in the dining room.

Semi-Un-Decorating Event

We will be putting away the Christmas decorations on Sunday, January 12th beginning at 9:15AM. We will decide this morning exactly what decorations we want to take down. As we are seeking to celebrate Epiphanytide this year (see cover article), we don't have to take all the decorations down yet! Come be part of the fun and the decision making!!

Baptism of the Lord

On January 12th, the first Sunday of Epiphanytide, we will celebrate the Baptism of the Lord and serve communion during worship.

Epiphany Season Coffee Hours

We are going to start something new this year during Epiphanytide. We'll celebrate this festive season every Sunday with a special coffee hour. *Note, we need 2 people to sign up to bring specific treats on Jan 12, 19; Feb 16, Feb 23. We'll have a sign up sheet.

Mardis Gras Coffee Hour 2025:

January 12: Brownies*
January 19: Cake*
January 26: Potluck
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

Annual Reports

Annual reports are due to the church office by Monday, January 20th, 9AM. Please e-mail or drop off at the church office. E-mail is preferred.

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! Join us on January 20!

Newsletter Deadline 01/23

Please get information to be included in the February *Life Together* newsletter to the office voicemail or e-mail by January 23.

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, Brandy Claeys (a friend of Stacie's), Dale Johnson, the family of Bob Sim, Jody Tucker, Rachel Tucker, Ray Tucker

Annual Meeting & Potluck

The Annual Meeting worship service will be held on Sunday, January 26. Please join us for the installation of new and returning Session Elders (Tim Reynolds and Ron Shank), say thank you to our outgoing Session Elders (Angela Reamer and Deb Zigler) and a recap of 2024. We will have our Annual Meeting Potluck following the worship/ meeting. Please bring a main dish, side, salad or dessert to pass.

Sunday School

Sunday School will resume on January 26th. Classes begin at 9:15AM in the youth group room.

Drive-Up Meals

Our next meal will be on Thursday, January 30 beginning at 4:30PM. The meal is beef and veggie soup. Help is needed for food prep on Wednesday the 29th at 1:30PM and Thursday at 3:45PM. We will be continuing to offer in-person dining for our meals.

Sub Sandwiches

We are planning to sell sub sandwiches again this year. It's been 5 years since we've done so. More information will be coming soon. Deadline to place an order is Sunday, February 2nd. They will be distributed on February 9th. This is a fundraiser for the crew heading to Yucatan Peninsula Mission in June 2026. Please help us raise money!

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!

CHURCH

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Life Triumphant

Bob Sim completed this portion of life in the late afternoon on December 19th. A celebration of life was held on Friday, December 27th. Bob had a big heart and a huge laugh that went with it. He had a lot of room to love his family, friends, nature and his animals. Please keep them all in your prayers.

2025 Communion Dates

In 2025, the planned Communion dates are: January 12, 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.

LOOKING AHEAD— SAVE THE DATE

Feb 2: PW Celebration

Feb 9: Sub Sandwiches & Cookie Frost-Off
Family Super Bowl
First-Half Party (5PM)

Feb 11: Presbytery Assembly
Zoom Mtg (5PM)

March 2: Transfiguration of the Lord
Worship
Potluck & King Cake

March 5: Ash Wednesday

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

Reminder: Every month...

1st Tuesday, 4:30PM:

Ice Cream Social
at Highlight Healthcare
(formerly Pleasant View)

3rd Monday, 2PM:

Resthabe Presbyterian Social
Hour

Love
one another.
Feed
each other.

January 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 <i>New Year's Day</i>	2	3	4
5 2nd Sunday of Christmas 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour 5PM Epiphany Family Post Christmas Party	6 <i>Epiphany of the Lord</i> <i>Back to School</i>	7 9:30AM Bible Study 4:30PM Ice Cream Social @ Highlight Health	8 1:30PM BINGO @ Homestead	9	10	11
12 <i>Baptism of the Lord</i> 10:15AM Worship/ Communion 11:15AM Coffee Hour	13	14 9:30AM Bible Study	15 1:30PM BINGO @ Resthave	16 8AM Social Hour @ The Loft	17	18
19 2nd Sunday after Epiphany 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	20 <i>No School</i> 2PM Social Hour @ Resthave 6:30PM Session Mtg.	21 9:30AM Bible Study	22	23	24	25
26 3rd Sunday after Epiphany 9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship/ Annual Meeting 11:15AM Potluck	27	28 9:30AM Bible Study	29 1:30PM Meal Prep	30 4:30PM Free Drive Up Community Meal	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.

"Messiah" Rehearsals to Begin January 12

The Morrison Ecumenical Chorus will present the Lent and Easter portions of G.F. Handel's "Messiah" on Palm Sunday, April 13 at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Morrison at 7pm. All interested singers are invited to be a part of this performance. The concert is sponsored by the Morrison Minister's Council and will be directed by Kathy Janicek, choir director at Bethesda Lutheran Church and accompanist will be Christine Holmer of Clinton, Iowa. These "Messiah" concerts have been a meaningful part of Morrison's Easter traditions since 1956.

Rehearsals will begin on Sunday, January 12th at St. Peter's at 2pm. Rehearsals will not be every Sunday,

due to conflicts with area music events. A complete rehearsal schedule will be available at the first rehearsal. Singers are asked to attend at least half of the rehearsals. We will be using the G. Schirmer (the gray) edition and there are scores available for singers to borrow.

Those who wish to participate, but can't attend the first rehearsal or anyone with questions can call Mrs. Janicek at 815-772-2874.

Resthave Remembrance Service

On Thursday, January 23rd, at 2PM there will be a remembrance service for residents of Resthave who completed this portion of life in the past year. This year, the Morrison Ministers' Council will help officiate the service. All are welcome to join this event at Resthave.

Continued from page 1

tied to Roman Catholicism, which occurs on February 2nd. We commonly know this day as Groundhog Day. Yet it also has other names in the Christian Church. Candlemas stems from the ancient celebration of reaching the halfway point between winter and spring, and every day following is that much closer to the vernal equinox and that much further away from the winter solstice. Also called Presentation of the Lord, it celebrates when Mary and Joseph brought newborn Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem. Also on this day, Mary is purified by the temple priest, for a woman was considered spiritually unclean for a period of time after childbirth due to physical impurities (laws from when the Israelites wandered the wilderness with Moses, based upon blood making one physically unclean and thus making them spiritually unclean and unable to be around other people, and thus, are temporarily outcasts around anyone of their same Jewish religion). In such, this day is also known as the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary or Feast of the Holy Encounter.

So why not pay more attention to these special and festive church seasons in our church life and our daily life? Sure, for those of us with jobs in the United States, we are still go-

ing to be required to work or take vacation days during Christmastide. Epiphanytide is just too long of a period of time for societies to go on holiday that entire expanse. In such, as Christmastide goes, it just needs to be a state of mind. We don't have to look at December 26th as the day to take down the Christmas decorations. Leave those up until at least January 6th, and feel free to keep them up until Fat Tuesday. It's customary in so many other cultures! We don't have to feel like Christmas is just celebrated before the 25th, or only on the 24th and 25th. Relax. A lot of work went into getting us to Christmas. Enjoy the Christmastide!

Epiphanytide is also largely a state of mind. Winter can easily get us down. Why not be festive, stay connected to our communities, and celebrate the life we have together? We will be more mindful at our church during Epiphanytide 2025. See pages 2 & 3 of this newsletter to learn of ways we will be celebrating at our church.

The psalmist writes in Ecclesiastes 3:9-13, "What gain have the workers from their toil? I have seen the business that God has given to everyone to be busy with. He has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they

cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil."

In our life together, we will find hardships. We have many toils, which change depending on the season of our life, and yet, no matter what they are, they are always there, and are often consuming. And yet, despite these toils, God calls us to take rest, to enjoy this life, to celebrate, and to be merry with one another. Life is short. It's up to us to enjoy it. No one is going to do that for us. A new year is on the way. Let us remember that Jesus did the hard work for us already. He defeated the darkness and created the ability for us to make the world around us a place of light and love. The Holy Spirit is with us to guide us and give us the power to overcome hardships and to live into this realm of God's love, of which our Creator sets before us. Let's all take a breath, say thanks for the year that was, and be mindful in the year to come to be the light, and enjoy God's love together, in all the seasons!

Happy New Year,
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

01/03: Jace Velasco
01/10: Greg Kruse
01/15: Marian Osborn
01/19: Leah Huizenga
01/27: Mitch Dolieslager

Anniversaries

01/14: Clay & Alyssa Sibley



January Scripture

Jan. 5: Jer. 31:7-14
Ps. 147:12-20
Eph. 1:3-14
John 1:(1-9) 10-18
Jan. 12: Isa. 43:1-7
Ps. 29
Acts 8:14-17
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
Jan. 19: Isa. 62:1-5
Ps. 36:5-10
1 Cor. 12:1-11
John 2:1-11
Jan. 26: Neh. 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
Ps. 19
1 Cor. 12:12-31a
Luke 4:14-21

Upcoming Free Drive-Up Community Meals

First Presbyterian Church, Morrison

Jan. 30: Beef & Veggie Soup
Feb. 27: Chili & Cornbread
Mar. 27: Ham & Potato Soup
Apr. 24: Pulled Pork Sandwiches



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YouTube Channel: First Presbyterian Church of Morrison, Illinois

Contact Pastor Mike at revselburg@gmail.com



Please Recycle