

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—February 2026 • Vol. 69/No. 01

The lingering drifts of hardpacked snow that have been hiding since late November and early December's storms have finally melted in the rains and warm temperatures of early January. Dirty mounds of plowed snow still stand in parking lot edges. Cloudy skies have dominated. A peek of sun or stars has been rare. The extended outlook shows weather dancing between the standards of mid-January to mid-April. The earth is thoroughly confused. It pairs well with the political climate of our nation and world, as we are left wondering if all checks-and-balances are gone, and if there is any norm to governance or if it's just a free-for-all. Further, in each of our individual lives, as well as in the lives of loved ones, there are many random variations in our mental and physical wellbeing. Overall, we are experiencing great instability, which makes it difficult to feel faithful in having a grounded future. 2026 is entering as a year in which we feel we could just throw up our arms and say, "I give up already!" Not even two weeks in, and there is an unbalanced overabundance of gloom...and we're praying for something else. But everything seems completely out of our hands. We can add to seasonal depression a dose of global anxiety and national fear.

Life often feels overwhelming because life *is* often overwhelming. As I contemplate in my own life how to find some sort of control, I turn my sights to the residents of La Bella nursing home in Morrison, IL. La Bella, known better with its older name, Pleasant View, has long been known by locals as the nursing home in which you don't want to end up. With former ownership that turned over leadership frequently and minimized the importance of providing a modern facility and care beyond physical care of the residents, it has held a stigma in our community for decades. Pre-COVID, it was a building that one nervously entered, flinching at the overwhelming smell of urine flooding the nostrils. La Bella has been both a place for people to recover and as a final dwelling

place. Certainly, no long-term resident there ever thought to themselves, "I hope I can retire at that home." Instead, it is mostly occupied by residents who had led normal lives until their bodies or minds gave out on them. Most of the residents are in their late 60s and 70s, finishing off their life in a way they never imagined. It would seem that once a person entered there, they would give up all hope. What would be the point to continue? The answer is, their faith.

In the late teens, members of our church decided to create a ministerial presence in this home. We have offered several opportunities, and the most lasting so far is our weekly Bible study. What we have learned in our years of visiting with residents there, is that they have built an incredibly beautiful beloved community. They didn't wait for the corporation to change their practices. Rather, they decided they would make the most of the life they all had left and to put love at the center of their lives, looking out for one another and spreading kindness among themselves. The staff joined them, and with loving hearts and minimal pay, they seek to care for the residents in order to provide the best life for them as they can, which further nourishes the residents' ability to grow in their love for one another. In each of their personal struggles, they seek to look beyond their own woes and be there for one another. Though they have their right to be selfish in their agonies, they strive to be selfless in their giving of love to one another. So how do they do this? How do they remain so positive and loving amidst the great gloom that surrounds them? They all answer the question the same: they pray. They keep God close to them in prayer. They pray constantly. Prayer keeps their faith alive. Prayer keeps them focused on what is most important, which is to love their neighbor. While it seems they all should live depressed lives, they instead choose to look at what is good in their lives, give thanks to God for still being alive, look for opportunities to help one an-

other, and they keep on praying. They keep God at their center. They let the light of Christ shine through their faithful souls. Then they are open to enjoying life. Instead of focusing on their woes, they focus on what is good, and together they celebrate each day.

I have my share of complaints. Life has its difficulties for sure. Between losing my mom, paying more attention to my dad, being a dad myself, as well as a husband and a pastor, and everything else that goes with life including being in this crazy world, I have my own pile of heavy things weighing down on me. Indeed, all people have their own weights in life which are unique to their own selves. It is relative. When I look at the positivity, prayerfulness, faith and love among the residents at La Bella when I visit with them each week, I continually remember that if they can stay positive and celebrate life amidst what they are going through, I certainly can as well. I need to remember to pray. I need to remember that I don't have to be in control. I can turn it over to God and ask for help. I can have faith in the Triune God. I can find assurance in my faith, believing that the Holy Spirit is with me, that Christ is showing me the way, and that my Creator is going to help me along a manageable path. This will lead me to living my true life where I am able to receive and give love with my greatest potential.

In our life together, in this time of gloom, let us be prayerful together. Let our faith remain strong. Let us stick together, to help one another. Let us be kind, generous and caring. Together, we can help each other through whatever life brings our way, and with prayer and faith, we can manifest love in our caring actions. Then, together, we can also celebrate the beauty of life which is still all around us. No matter what life tosses at us, we can help each other remember that life is good, and that life is to be enjoyed, with God and with one another.

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:

facebook.com/firstpresmorrison.

The services are also posted on Monday mornings to our YouTube channel:

youtube.com/@firstpresmorrison

Bible Study

Bible Study will be held at 9:30AM at La Bella (formerly Highlight Health/Pleasant View) on Tuesdays throughout the month.

La Bella (Formerly Pleasant View) Ice Cream Socials

The first Tuesday of every month, we will have an ice cream social at 4:15PM. We switch up the dessert every month. Come enjoy this time of fellowship with the residents and staff at La Bella of Morrison.

Bingo at Homestead

Homestead invites one and all to join residents and friends to play BINGO on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 2—3:30PM. There will be refreshments and prizes!

Free Community Meals

Our next meal will be on Thursday, January 29. The meal is beef veggie soup. It begins at **4:30PM**. In-person and drive-up meals are available. Help is needed for food prep on Wednesday the 28th at 1:30PM and Thursday at 3:30PM.

Our February meal will be on the 26th beginning at 4:30PM. The meal is chili and cornbread. Help is needed for food prep on Wednesday the 25th at 1:30PM and Thursday at 3:45PM.

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!

Session Meeting

The Session will meet on Monday, January 19 at 6:30PM. We will meet again on February 16 at 6:30PM.

Call to Annual Meeting & Potluck

The Annual Meeting worship service will be held on Sunday, January 25. Please join us for the installation of new Session Elders (Angela Reamer and Jim Palmer), say thank you to

our outgoing Session Elders (Lexie Laughlin and Scott Vandermyde) and a recap of 2025. We will have our Annual Meeting Potluck following the worship/ meeting. Please bring a main dish, side, salad or dessert to pass.

February Cookie Frost-Off

Join us on February 1st 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 a Super Bowl First-Half Party on February 8. 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 10, starting at 5:30PM. If you would like to attend the Zoom meeting or future meetings as a non-voting member, please contact Pastor Mike.

Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday & King Cake

Join us for Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday on February 15 at 10:15AM, followed by our annual King Cake coffee hour.

Ash Wednesday Service

Lent begins on Wednesday, February 18. Join us for our Ash Wednesday Worship Service starting at 7PM and will include the imposition of ashes.

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; God's Will Giving Center; and those in need of healing and support: Nursing & retirement home residents and staff, medical workers, essential employees, school teachers & staff; Bev Bealer, the family & friends of Larry Bealer, Mavis Best, Dan Brandon, Glenda Hegwood, Dale Johnson, Lynn Knox, Marian Osborn, Jody Tucker, Ray Tucker, Edna Ulrich

MMC Lenten Lunches

For the 4th year, the Morrison Ministers' Council will host a noon Lenten Lunch Series at various churches during the course of Lent. We will begin each lunch with a short worship service. The meals will be served on Wednesdays 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18 and 3/25. The MMC is still planning the theme and locations. We do know that FPC will host on March 4th. Volunteers will be needed to oversee the lunch.

Newsletter Deadline 02/19

Please get information to be included in the March 2026 *Life Together* newsletter to the office e-mail or voicemail by February 19.

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church Triumphant

Larry Bealer completed this portion of life on January 3, 2026. We will celebrate Larry's life at our church on Friday, January 16 with a service of remembrance at 11AM, followed by a luncheon and then the committal of ashes at Grove Hill Cemetery. We give great thanks for the dedicating Larry gave to our congregation and the church's building and grounds.

Per Capita

The per capita in 2026 is \$45 per church member. Of that total, \$30.11 is kept by the Presbytery (which includes various missions); \$3.81 is forwarded to the Synod of Lincoln Trails; and \$11.08 goes to the General Assembly of the PC(USA) for its administrative budgets. Thanks to all whom have already paid their 2026 per capita.

2026 Pledges

Thank you to all who have pledged toward the General Fund for 2026, as well as to all who contribute financially in your own way. You mone-

tary donations keep our staff employed and the functioning of our missions and ministries.

2025-26 Communion Dates

Communion dates for 2026 are: 2/15; 4/2; 5/24; 6/21; 7/19; 8/16; 9/13; 10/4; 11/22; 12/20.

Presbytery Updates

The Blackhawk Presbytery Assembly voted at their November 2025 meeting to change the name of the presbytery to *Illinois Prairie Presbytery*, which will take effect on March 13, 2026.

Scott Vandermyde remains the moderator for the Finance and Property Committee, and is serving his final year on the Mission Committee. Pastor Mike is free of leadership duties this year. He is serving his last year on the Vision and Assembly Planning Committee. He will be helping separate these two committees into the Assembly Planning Committee and the Visioning Committee. Mike will transition on to the Visioning Committee.

Hybrid meetings have been done away with in 2026. We will have Zoom only meetings on February 9 and September 15. We will meet in person at Stronghold on May 19 and November 10, location TBD.

LOOKING AHEAD— SAVE THE DATE

January 25: Annual Meeting
Worship Service; Potluck
February 1: Cookie Frost-Off
Feb 8: Family First-Half Super Bowl Party
Feb 15: Transfiguration of the Lord;
Communion; Mardis Gras
Coffee Hour
Feb 18: Ash Wednesday
March 29: Palm Sunday
April 2: Maundy Thursday
April 3: Good Friday
April 5: Easter Sunday
April 19: Bulletin-Free Sunday
May 24: Pentecost

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.



January 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Office Closed 	2	3
4 2nd Sunday of Christmas 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour 3PM Resthava 4PM Homestead 5PM Epiphany Party	5 Epiphany of the Lord 9:30AM Bible Study @ La Bella 4:15PM Ice Cream Social @ La Bella	6 Epiphany of the Lord 9:30AM Bible Study @ La Bella 4:15PM Ice Cream Social @ La Bella	7	8 10AM Worship @ La Bella	9 10AM Worship @ La Bella	10
11 Baptism of the Lord 10:15AM Worship & Communion 11:15AM Coffee Hour	12	13 9:30AM Bible Study @ La Bella	14 2PM BINGO @ Homestead	15 8AM Social Hour @ The Loft	16 11AM Celebration of Life for Larry Bealer followed by luncheon	17
18 2nd Sunday after Epiphany 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	19 2PM Social Hour @ Resthava 6:30PM Session Meeting	20 9:30AM Bible Study @ La Bella	21 1:30PM BINGO @ Resthava	22 3PM MMC Remembrance Service @ Resthava	23	24
25 3rd Sunday after Epiphany 10:15AM Worship & Annual Meeting 11:15AM Potluck	26	27 9:30AM Bible Study @ La Bella	28 1:30PM Meal Prep	29 4:30PM Free Drive Up Community Meal	30	31



February 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 4th Sunday after Epiphany 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour & Cookie Frost-Off	2	3 9:30AM Bible Study @ La Bella 4:15PM Ice Cream Social @ La Bella	4	5	6	7
8 5th Sunday after Epiphany 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour 5:15PM Super Bowl First Half Party	9	10 9:30AM Bible Study @ La Bella 5:30PM Presbytery Meeting (Zoom Only)	11 2PM BINGO @ Homestead	12	13	14 Valentine's Day
15 Transfiguration of the Lord 10:15AM Worship & Communion 11:15AM Mardi Gras Coffee Hour	16 2PM Social Hour @ Resthave 6:30PM Session Meeting	17 9:30AM Bible Study @ La Bella	18 Ash Wednesday 1:30PM BINGO @ Resthave 7PM Ash Wednesday Service	19 Newspaper Deadline 8AM Social Hour @ The Loft	20	21
22 1st Sunday In Lent 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	23	24 9:30AM Bible Study @ La Bella	25 12PM MMC Lenten Lunch @ TBD 1:30PM Meal Prep	26 4:30PM Free Drive Up Community Meal	27	28

Leadership and Staff

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

Rick Barr '26
Carol Wolf '26
Ron Shank '27*
Tim Reynolds '27
Jim Palmer '28
Angela Reamer '28

Stacie Baker, Clerk

**Elders in their 2nd consecutive term*

Corporation Officers

Ron Shank, President
Scott Vandermyde,
Vice-President & Treasurer

Nominating Committee

Lynn Knox
Lexie Laughlin
Angela Reamer
Tim Reynolds
Deb Zigler

**Resthave Home
Board of Directors**

Deb Zigler
FPC Representative

**Resthave Home
Women's Auxiliary Board**

Deb Zigler

Finance Team

Tim Reynolds
Scott Vandermyde

Staff

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



January & February Scripture

- Jan. 4: Jer. 31:7-14
Ps. 147:12-20
Eph. 1:3-14
John 1:(1-9)10-18
- Jan. 11: Isa. 42:1-9
Ps. 29
Acts 10:34-43
Matt. 3:13-17
- Jan. 18: Isa. 49:1-7
Ps. 40:1-11
1Cor. 1:1-9
John 1:29-42
- Jan. 25: Isa. 9:1-4
Ps. 27:1, 4-9
1Cor. 1:10-18
Matt. 4:12-23
- Feb. 1: Mic. 6:1-8
Ps. 15
1 Cor. 1:18-31
Matt. 1-12
- Feb. 8: Isa. 58:1-9a (9b-12)
Ps. 112:1-9 (10)
1 Cor. 2:1-12 (13-16)
Matt. 5:13-20
- Feb. 15: Ex. 24:12-18
Ps. 2 or Ps. 99
2 Pet. 1:16-21
Matt. 17:1-9
- Feb. 22: Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-7
Ps. 32
Rom. 5:12-19
Matt. 4:1-11

Birthdays

- 01/03: Jace Velasco
- 01/15: Marian Osborn
- 01/19: Leah Huizenga
- 02/04: Doris Robertson
- 02/06: Aiden Dolieslager
- 02/08: Arlyn Hayen
- 02/20: Ann Mennenoh

Anniversaries

- 01/14: Clay & Alyssa Sibley

Upcoming Free Drive-Up Community Meals

First Presbyterian Church, Morrison

- Jan. 29, 2026: Beef Veggie Soup
- Feb. 26, 2026: Chili & Cornbread
- Mar. 26, 2026 Ham & Potato Chowder
- Apr. 30, 2026 Pulled Pork Sandwich



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

