

# 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!

April 2025 • Vol. 68/No. 4

Children over the last few generations have been known to ask their grandparents what life was like in black and white. They have made the assumption that since television and movies were all in black and white and not color, then that is what the world must have been like. Well, by this point in the year, we are pretty certain we know what the world looks like without color. But already there are crocuses, snowdrops and other early spring bulbs in bloom. Daffodils have appeared with their yellow and white flowers in protected sunny areas. Tulips their "rabbit ears" up past the matted leaves. Honeysuckles and lilacs have budded. Trees begin to push forth their pollen sacks, preparing to sprout their leaves. Star magnolias have begun to open. The rest of the flowering trees are soon to follow. So soon the world will be a kaleidoscope of electric Technicolor. In less than a month (pray it is in less than a month as it should be), morel mushrooms will be popping in the woods amongst the ferns, trillium and Dutchmen's breeches. The fragrance of magnolias, lilacs and hyacinths will sweeten the air. Bright yellow dandelions will smother the yard amidst the brilliant green grass which will soon need cut. Honeybees will sip upon nectar and stuff their pollen sacks, beginning to fill their comb for our spring honey. Birds will have built nests and will be seeking mates and laying on eggs. Winter will fully be gone. Spring will lead us to summer's dress.

Or is that all a dream? Is any of that real? Will it really happen? Has it really happened before, or was it imagined? Honestly, if the past week hadn't brought about all of these spring-time changes, I would be inclined to say that this is how life is

and how it always *has been* and always *will be*. My faith in spring appearing always begins to diminish as March teases us with the promise of change, but takes so long to show what April will have in store. And early April, so often, just teases us as well. We wait and we wait and we wait. Then suddenly, new life is before us. We can see it beginning. It is almost here. New life awaits!

Two thousand years ago, give or take a few, a man named Jesus walked this earth along the shores of the Jordon River and the Sea of Galilee. He spoke out to the people who gathered to hear him speak. He told them that the world that they had come to know was not really the world as God had created it to be. He showed them that the world was beyond the world which society was telling them that it was.

Instead, he said, the world is full of color. The world is a brilliant place full of life. But the step to get from the dull colorless existence to seeing color all around you is to live within God's love and to pass on the love of God.

I can imagine that, as Jesus walked, a rainbow aura trailed behind him. I can see flowers blossoming in the footprints he left in the barren sand and dirt. And why not? Did not Jesus turn the sick, blind, deaf, lame, the tormented and even the dead into healthy new individuals? It was as though he was touching wilted flowers who miraculously sprung back to life. All the beauty they could have ever desired was given back to them, and they had a chance at life once more.

As we are half way through Lent, hopefully we are each finding ourself to be in the process of seeing the color of life around us. I pray we are

each getting to a point where we are spiritually finding ourselves in the process of becoming renewed. If not, then what better time than the awakening of spring to motivate us toward the Cross of Christ?

If our focus for the next three weeks is the Cross, we will be focused on looking at the areas of corrosion in our own life. We can see where color has been dulled. We can see how we are treating other people and the earth poorly. We can notice how our mindset can be negative and quick to complain or to put others down. We can recognize our pessimism, our biases, our bigotries, our greed, our hoarding, our haughtiness and our hypocrisy. We can detect our impatience and irritations. It's like looking for a weed in the garden. First we must learn to recognize the weed (for without knowing what the weed is, we cannot remove it). Then, with the guidance of the Spirit through prayer and meditation, as well as practiced action, we are able to not only remove the weeds, but we become enabled to also replace their emptiness with an array of beneficial flowers which belong in our life. For a weed is only a plant that is growing where we do not want it. They are typically beneficial in their right place, but they can be invasive and keep what is native from growing. Love is the native flower in our being, and only that which blossoms into love belongs in the garden of our life.

The path to a life of color is found in a life lived full of love. It is when we are receiving and extending love that we are able to open our eyes to the world around us. Through living in and for love, we recognize countless places where the beauty of God's creation is

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# 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 April 1st, 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!

### Sunday School

Children's Sunday School will be held on April 6th, 13th and 27th, starting at 9:15AM.

### MMC Lenten Lunches

For the 3rd year in a row, the Morrison Ministers' Council will host a noon Lenten Lunch Series at various churches during the course of Lent. The lunches will be soup and bread and will have a time of reflection by the host pastor. This year's theme is "From the Cross." In this Lenten season we remember the words Jesus spoke from the cross..

*April 2:* Emmanuel  
-Loneliness and  
Physical Suffering  
*April 9:* United Methodist  
-Triumph & Reunion

### 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 April 21st!

### Newsletter Deadline 04/21

Please get information to be included in the *May Life Together* newsletter to the office e-mail by April 21st.

### 16th Anniversary Free Community Meal

Our next meal will be on Thursday, April 24th beginning at **5PM**. This is our 16th anniversary of offering Free Community Meals, which began on the last Thursday of 2009! The meal is pulled pork sandwich and sides. Help is needed for food prep on Wednesday the 23rd at 1:30PM and Thursday at 4:15PM. We will be continuing to offer in-person dining for our meals.

### HOLY WEEK

#### Palm Sunday

Celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem while we wave palms and shout hosanna. We will start off Holy Week on April 13th.

#### MMC Maundy Thursday Services

The Morrison Ministers' Council has chosen to retire the Good Friday Community Cross-Walk and will instead offer Maundy Thursday services at our town's three retirement/care facilities. This has been developed by Pastor Mike. Pastors from various churches in town will lead worship services which will include Holy Communion. The community is invited to attend any or all of the services:

-10AM Highlight Healthcare  
-1PM Resthave  
-2PM Homestead

#### Maundy Thursday & Good Friday Services

-Maundy Thursday & Holy Communion Service, April 17: 7PM  
-Good Friday Last Words of Christ Service, April 18: 7PM

#### Easter Sunday

Join us on Sunday, April 20th at 10:15AM to celebrate our risen Lord! Note, no coffee hour.

## 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; Larry & Bev Bealer, Dan Brandon, the family of Karen Genz, Glenda Hegwood, Dale Johnson, Barbara Marti, Allyison Mucci, Marian Osborn, Jody Tucker, Rachel Tucker, Ray Tucker



## Bulletin-Free Sunday

Our annual Bulletin-Free Sunday will be on April 27th. In recognition of Earth Day and our desire to be good stewards of the earth, we will save paper by not having bulletins that Sunday Morning. We will also celebrate the essence of Earth Day.

## May Baskets

Join us after worship on April 27th to make May Baskets. This is our 3rd annual May Basket Sunday. The baskets will be delivered to those who could use a pick-me-up. Please let the church office or Pastor Mike know if you have any May Baskets you would like to deliver so that we have enough supplies. Sign up by Easter Sunday.

## CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Welcome New Members

Edna Ulrich joined our congregation on March 30th. Edna began attending our church in 2024. Edna lived with her husband outside Coleta for 15 years. He passed away in August of '23. They had been looking for a church home for that period of time. Edna wishes he were here to meet the congregation and Pastor Mike. He would so have enjoyed our church. Edna remarks, "Thank you, for welcoming me into your church home. I so look forward to being with you all."

We also welcome back to our congregation Ann Mennenoh. Ann transferred her membership from First Presbyterian Church of Galeana, IL. Ann resides at a care facility in Georgia. Please contact the church office for her contact information if you would like to get in touch with her.

## Welcome to the World

Silas Hayes was born to Allyison Mucci on March 29th, weighing in at 6-14. Both baby and mom are doing well. Proud grandma is Rachael Tucker, and proud great grandparents are Jody and Ray Tucker.

## The Church Triumphant

Karen Genz completed this portion of life on March 30th. We give thanks for her life and ask for prayers for Tommy, Bree and all of her family. There will be no services for Karen.

## Birthday Kits

The Session is collecting items to donate for birthday kits to the Morrison Food Pantry. Birthday kits are handed out through the Food Pantry to families that have an upcoming birthday in the month.

All donations are due by 9:15AM, Sunday, April 13. The Sunday School will assemble kits that morning.

A birthday kit consists of 1 box cake mix, 1 can cake frosting, 1 package of candles, 6-8 cups and plates, 1 package of napkins and a birthday bag to hold the kit. Our goal is to make 20 kits.

We have a sign up sheet for anyone who would like to contribute donations. If you would like to donate money instead of shopping, please reach out to me or one of the Session Members.

## 2025 Communion Dates

In 2025, the planned Communion dates are: April 17, May 11, June 8, July 6, August 10, September 14, October 5, November 23, and December 21.

## 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.

## Blackhawk Presbytery Staffing Updates

Pastor Mike, as Moderator of Blackhawk Presbytery (BP) Personnel Committee, spent the past year leading the presbytery through a staffing model study, which was approved by the Presbytery Council in November.

In October, BP hired the services of an accounting firm out of Ottawa to handle the bookkeeping for the presbytery. In February, BP hired Alan Willadsen, a former CPA as well as a commissioned pastor in our presbytery and a member of Great Rivers Presbytery, to be our Treasurer. Rev. Dr. David Spaulding, retired pastor from Dixon, was hired as the Associate Stated Clerk. This is to take a load off Eric Heinekamp's Stated Clerk responsibilities. In March, we hired Jeannete Stromquist Sheehan, a member of Rockford Third Presbyterian Church, to be our new Presbytery Office Administrator (POA). Loreen Stravers retired as our POA on March 31 after 12 excellent years of service. Eric Heinekamp will begin a new two-year contract on August 1st as his 5 year contract expires then. He will remain our Stated Clerk, and his other position title will lose the 'Transformational' and will be simply called our 'General Presbyter'.

## LOOKING AHEAD— SAVE THE DATE

*May 13:* Presbytery Assembly Mtg

*May 18:* End of Sunday School  
Year Party  
Children Led Worship  
Service

*June 8:* Pentecost  
Stronghold Summer Camp  
Staff attending worship  
Community Tie-Dye Event

*August 4-8:* Vacation Bible School

# April 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 9:30AM Bible Study 4:30PM Ice Cream Social @ Highlight Health	2 12PM Lenten Lunch @ Emmanuel	3	4	5
6 5th Sunday in Lent 9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	7	8 9:30AM Bible Study	9 12PM Lenten Lunch @ UMC 1:30PM BINGO @ Homestead	10	11	12
13 Palm Sunday 9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour	14	15 9:30AM Bible Study	16 1:30PM BINGO @ Resthava	17 Maundy Thursday 8AM Social Hour @ The Loft 7PM Maundy Thursday & Holy Communion	18 Good Friday	19
20 Easter Sunday 10:15AM Worship No Coffee Hour	21 Newsletter Deadline 2PM Social Hour @ Resthava 6:30PM Session Mtg.	22 9AM Resthava Volunteer Breakfast 9:30AM Bible Study	23 1:30PM Meal Prep	24 5PM Free Drive Up Community Meal	25 7PM Good Friday Service	26 9AM Morrison Recycle & FNB Shred-It Day 10AM 2nd Annual Adult Wiffleball Tourney
27 2nd Sunday of Easter 9:15AM Sunday School 10:15AM Bulletin-Free Worship 11:15AM Coffee Hour Rockwood Clean Up Day	28	29 9:30AM Bible Study	30			



## 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.

### Morrison Recycle Day

The Morrison Lions are once again

holding their annual Recycle Day on Saturday, April 26 from 9am-12noon at the Whiteside County Fairgrounds. For more info check out the City of Morrison on Facebook.

FNB will also be holding their Shred It Day during this event.

### Volunteer Breakfast

Resthave is having their annual Volunteer Breakfast, Tuesday, April 22 at 9am, and they want everyone who has ever volunteered or is planning to do so in the future to come and participate. They will be serving omelets, pastries, coffee and juice.

### "Messiah" Concert

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. The concert, which is sponsored by the Morrison Ministers Council, begins at 7 p.m. A free will offering will be taken.

### 2nd Annual Adult Wiffleball Tournament

Morrison IL Parks and Recreation is hosting the 2nd Annual Adult Wiffleball Tournament on Saturday, April 26 at the Morrison Sports Complex. Registration begins at 10am, followed by the tournament at 12pm.

The team cost is \$100 with a max of 10 players. All players must be at least 18 years old.

For more information contact Nathan Jacobs 815-535-1105 or [njacobs@morrisonil.org](mailto:njacobs@morrisonil.org). To register, visit [www.quickscores.com/morrisonssports](http://www.quickscores.com/morrisonssports).

## 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](http://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](http://saukvalleyfoodbank.org)

**211** Have other needs? Call 211. This directory of regional help covers a myriad of needs. Part of United Way.

*Continued from page 1* found while we also see where love is vacant. Striving for love creates a passion for love within us, thus creating a conviction to figure out how to fill the dark spaces with the light of love. In these actions, we get to know the world at a deeper level, which allows us to see the intricacies of creation that we normally would miss. Just as the way we are able to see color is by seeing the spectrum of light reflect off the intricate variations on the surface of all objects, the way we are able to see our own world in the color of love is to recognize and appreciate the intricate variations of all creation. To believe this, it takes faith. To

live this, it takes even more faith. Like losing faith in spring's return, it is easy to believe the world is only what we see from a glimpse. But with faith we can see that, through love, the world is full of color and goodness.

Let's, in our life together, seek to live at peace and harmony with all creation so that we may allow the rainbow of God's love to blanket us. Let's strive for this life of color as we seek for the darkness within us to die on the Cross with Christ this Good Friday. Then, may we awaken to our new life with our risen Lord on Easter Sunday. May the dull parts of our life be painted like an Easter

egg, and let us shine in the love of Christ.

It's time to start our spring gardens. We already have all the tools needed. The seeds of love are free. All we have to do, is plant them. And together, we can watch love sprout and grow. And together, we can reap the harvest of a life and a world filled with love.

—Grace and Peace,  
Mike

*Adapted and amended from the April 2014 Newsletter.*

# 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

*\*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**

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

## Birthdays

04/14: Rick Barr  
04/22: Alyssa Sibley  
04/29: Miguel Velasco



## April Scripture

April 6: Isa. 43:16-21  
Ps. 126  
Phil. 3:4b-14  
John 12:1-8  
April 13: Luke 19:28-40  
Ps. 118:1-2, 19-29  
Phil. 2:5-11  
Luke 22:14-23:56  
April 20: Isa. 65:17-25  
Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24  
1 Cor. 15:19-26  
John 20:1-18  
April 27: Acts 5:27-32  
Ps. 118:14-29  
Rev. 1:4-8  
John 20:19-31

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

Apr. 24: Pulled Pork Sandwiches  
May 29: Sloppy Joe Sandwiches  
June: No Meal Served  
July 31: Brats (MFD Benefit)  
Aug. 28: Pulled Pork Sandwiches

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Love  
one another.  
Feed  
each other.