

First Presbyterian Church
P.O. Box 297
915 E. Orange St
Hoopeston, IL 60942
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First Presbyterian Church
Hoopeston, Illinois



The Bridgebuilder

February 2020

Mardi Gras Potluck and Games

Mardi Gras is a Christian holiday that dates back thousands of years and is celebrated in many countries around the world as the festive prelude to the season of Lent. *Mardi* is the French word for Tuesday, and *gras* means "fat." In France, the day before Ash Wednesday came to be known as Mardi Gras, or "Fat Tuesday," and French settlers brought the tradition to New Orleans. Fat Tuesday got its name from the binge eating of rich and fatty foods that occurred prior to the long six weeks of Lenten fasting. Mardi Gras traditions include feasts of fatty foods, colorful costumes, dancing in the streets, parades, marching bands, floats, and wearing and throwing beads and other trinkets. In England and Ireland, a tradition of eating pancakes on Fat Tuesday began long ago.



We'll have a Mardi Gras Potluck Dinner and Game Night on Sunday, **February 23** at 5:00 p.m. Sign up on the board to bring a dish. Bring a game too. We'll prepare for Lent with good food, good friends, and good fun. Our hosts are Cheryl Steiner and Melissa Betka.

Ash Wednesday Worship

Ash Wednesday falls on **February 26** this year and marks the beginning of the forty day Lenten Season. This year Easter falls on April 12. On Ash Wednesday we'll worship at 7:00 p.m. and we'll receive the imposition of ashes, a tradition goes back to the early church that marks the beginning of the Lent. During Lent we'll reflect on Jesus' life and his unjust suffering, awful death, and his unexpected resurrection. We'll use these forty days to reflect and renew our faith. We'll reflect on our mortality and on our calling to repent and receive our resurrection. From the ashes comes new life.



Ash Wednesday

Family Bowling at Fast Lanes

All are invited to go bowling at Fast Lanes on **February 9** after worship (11:30). We have reserved the alley and the restaurant will be open for breakfast as well. Pizza and drinks are also available. Bowling is \$3.50 a game (including shoes). Children, youth, and adults are all invited for some mid-winter exercise. Pizza will be provided for the children and youth.



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First Presbyterian Church of Hoopeston

First Presbyterian Church
915 E Orange St
PO Box 297
Hoopeston, IL 60942

Phone: 217-283-6229
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Head of the Church	Jesus Christ
Ministers of the Good News	All of Us
Session Elders	Larry Betka, Melissa Betka, Donna Boyer, Elizabeth Donley, Missy Prosize, Jill Nelson, Christy Lee, Cheryl Steiner, Shirley Wagoner
Deacons	Rita Carter, Debi Lankford, Gina Morgan
Preschool Assistant Teacher	Mechelle Berlin
Organist and Music Director	Rick Brackmann
Administrative Assistant	Pat Catron
Custodian	Gary Deck
Pastor	Wade Meranda
Youth Group Director	Kathy Watson
Preschool Director	Margo Watson



We're on the web!
www.fpchoopeston.com



Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends,

I wonder if Jesus would be pleased with our celebrating his birthday and then just eight weeks later preparing for his death and resurrection? Maybe so. Maybe beginnings and endings are the most important time of life, a liminal time when God is especially close by.



Rick tells the choir and handbells that the first and last notes of the piece are the most important and the rest is, well, not so important. "Begin well and end well and the rest will be fine." I trust he's right.

Let's do the ending of Jesus earthly life – the season of Lent – well. It begins with Ash Wednesday worship where Psalm 51 is read. Try pondering this passage well during Lent and maybe Jesus' ending will resurrect something in your life too.

Blessings, Rev. Wade

Psalm 51

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, you alone, have I sinned,
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence
and blameless when you pass judgment.
Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.

You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Condolences

Our condolences go out to the family and friends of Charles Chester "Chet" Catron (81) who died on January 26 at Heritage Health Nursing Home. We pray for his wife Pat and their son Mike, and for all his family and friends. May God abide with all who grieve.

A memorial service was held on January 31 at Anderson Funeral Home, officiated by Rev. Wade, followed by luncheon at our church. We thank Gwen Bandy for coordinating the lunch.

Chet worked for Union Pacific Railroad for over forty years. He served in the U.S. Navy and was a member of the Hoopeston Star Lodge. Chet enjoyed bowling and was a member of the Hubbard Trail Golf Club where he enjoyed playing golf.

Chet and Pat were married on December 6, 1961 at our church. Their son Michael and his wife Melanie reside in Chicago.



February Birthdays

- 3 Shirley Wagoner
- 10 Owen Root
- 12 Annie Nelson
- 24 Matt Morgan
- 28 Gail Lithgow



It's a Boy!

A grandson has been born. A grandson has been given. Stan and Shirley Wagoner's grandson, Joseph Benedict Wagoner, was born on January 19 to parents Toby and Kim Wagoner. The family lives in Canton, Georgia. Congratulations to the Wagoner family! Jo-Jo-Jo-Joseph was born with a coat of many colors on and weighed in at 8 lbs. 13 oz. May God bless his life. We thank God for the hope that all babies bring to the world.



We've Got Mail

For birthday celebration:

To my church family. How nice of you for helping celebrate my 90th birthday. Was so nice to share cake and ice cream with all of you after church on the 12th of January. Hope each of you reach your 90th. — Arlene Miller

For \$200 support from Pasta Dinner and \$196 from Change for Change:

You gift is truly appreciated as we rely solely on donations and fundraisers to provide food, medical care, and supplies needed to care for our homeless pets. HART is an all volunteer, open intake, no kill, not for



profit animal rescue service serving the Hoopeston area. We do not turn away animals needing refuge. Please know that your gift is truly saving a life. - Deb Hefner, VP Hoopeston Area Rescue Team

For McFarland Fund support, for four \$1,000 scholarships:

Thank you for inspiring student success. Thanks to you, our loyal donors, at this year's Honor Program we awarded over 500 scholarships valued at \$665,000. Thank you for your generosity. The DACC Foundation appreciates your continued support. - Larry Jahn, DACC Foundation Board



I urge that
SUPPLICATIONS,
PRAYERS,
INTERCESSIONS,
and THANKSGIVINGS
be made for everyone ...

1 Timothy 2:1, NRSV

In Our Prayers

Those who grieve for: Chet Catron, Becky Timmons (B. Huffman's daughter), Bill Clinger (Wade's uncle), Harold Williams (S. Watson's grandfather), Ann Coffman (G. Morgan's friend), Sue Hofer (R. Hofer's mother), Annabelle Bird (P. Catron's aunt), Willis Bird (P. Catron's uncle), Ethyl Roach (R. Carter's aunt), Steve Johnson (S. Wagoner's friend), Dave Dixon, JoAnne Howard (R. Stump's friend).

Those with immediate concerns: Patti Root (K. Root's mom), Liam Blakeney (J. Steiner's great nephew), Rita Haggerty (S. Burton's friend), Suzi Root, Mike Bailey (M. Carlson's family), Sam Milton (M. Carlson's cousin), Tammy Lewis (R. Carter's friend), Karl Steiner, Jeanette Deck, Betty Hutton (D. Boyer's friend), Candy Baltz (W. Bandy's cousin), Jackie Morse (R. Carter's cousin), Peter Krimble (L. Martin's friend), Tom and Judy Benjamin, Sam Milton (M. Carlson's cousin), Cookie Green (R. Stump's friend), Sue Williamson (D. Dixon's friend), Tina Skender (C. Flint's daughter), Karen Evans (R. Carter's friend), Bonnie and Stephanie Sterrenberg (G. Bandy's friends), Shawn Lane (S. Wagoner's cousin), Eileen Leemon, Beau Edrington (S. Betka's cousin), Charles France (J. Smith's brother), Judy Stevens (E. Donley's cousin), Marla Haas, Shirley Wagoner, Gary Fritz (H. Steiner's dad), Kevin Moore (Burton's friend), Joyce Cottingham (L. Martin's friend), Linda Fritz (H. Steiner's mom), Brenda Pelman (K. Cox's mom), Nathan Allis (C. Newman's nephew), Mary Kane (K. Root's aunt), Natalie Zollar (E. Donley's niece), Ian Anderson (J. Stump's nephew), Vickie Anderson (J. Stump's sister), Martha Barner, Carole Ronane (J. Stump's friends), Beth Meese (G. Morgan's friend).



Those with long-term concerns: Karen Peterson (D. Dixon's sister), Sue Davia (D. Dixon's sister), McKenzie Baughn (M. Prosis's daughter), Linda Martin, Mason Steiner, Rachel Fenner (G. Morgan's friend), Juan Robles (Brackmann's friend), Troy Flint, Mechelle Cook (R. Carter's friend), Marge Carlson, Jane Steiner, Jeremy Hirschland (B. Huffman's grandson), Kelley Clem (P. Clem's son), John Long (D. Dixon's brother), Tina and John Hanson (Vi Hanson's children), Brian Lemenager (M. Foster's grandson), Felix and Louise Morgan (M. Morgan's grandparents), Paula Sims, Ruth Highfill, Marty Kloska, Rob Burton Family (J. Stump's brother), John and Dawn Lindley, Gary Deck, John Masengale (S. Burton's dad), Mason Whitaker (G. Deck's grandson), Sue Burton, Charlie Pajor, Linda Briscoe (L. Huffman's niece), Lori Egnew Vaughan (G. Morgan's friend) and Sophia Voyda (E. Donley's niece).



Those homebound in assisted living or nursing homes: Vader Clements, Mike Blankenship, Pat Vacketta, Lois Lankford, Jeanette Couch (C. Lee's grandmother).

Those in church leadership: Our Session and Deacons, Rev. Wade, Vilmaria Cintron-Oliviere and Cindy Kohlmann (General Assembly co-moderators), J. Herbert Nelson (G.A. clerk), Karen Russell (Presbytery moderator), Bill McLean (Pres. PCC), Cindy Bean (Pres. clerk).

Stated Clerk: What Per Capita Pays for and Why It Matters

by Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Note: In this article, the Stated Clerk of our denomination provides helpful information about our Presbyterian system of funding the work of the larger church. It's a fair-share system called Per Capita. In 2020, every congregation is expected to make a fair-share contribution based in its size. Our congregation's Per Capita is \$3,738 (\$42.00 x 89 members) and our Session will assure the full amount is paid. Our Session asks each member to help our congregation by contributing \$42.00 this year. Our denomination provides support to all 9,161 PCUSA congregations in all sorts of ways. Here are excerpts of a recent article in our denomination's Presbyterians Today magazine. Reprinted with permission. – Rev. Wade

Understanding per capita

Per capita is a set amount of money – sometimes referred to as “apportionment” – that congregations pay to the larger Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Said another way, it is like a Presbyterian community fund – part of the glue that holds Presbyterians together. Because Presbyterians share in the benefit of the PC(USA)'s system of government, the expenses associated with performing the functions of that system are shared by everyone.

Deeply rooted in Presbyterian history – the first-known mention of per capita dates back to 1734 in a letter to ministers – per capita makes it possible for the OGA to organize and manage General Assembly, as well as to staff and support special committees and commissions, provide legal counsel for churches dealing with staff issues and seek ways to minister to a growing immigrant population.

When Presbyterians participate in per capita, they're saying, “I'm in. I'm a part of this denomination. We are connected to it. We intend to support it.”

Where the per capita system has worked best over the years, sessions have taken seriously the unity of the church and have supported their presbyteries in working out a formula by which the per capita is distributed for support of the more inclusive governing bodies. Reflecting the unity of the church from congregation to General Assembly, per capita dollars help sustain mission at the local, regional and national level. In effect, per capita becomes the channel through which local Presbyterians can see their role in not only local mission programs but also the regional, national and worldwide mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



When giving stops

Over the last 30 years, per capita giving has been declining, and it is not just due to declining membership. In some cases, small struggling churches haven't had the money to pay and some have chosen to withhold their share as a means of expressing disagreement with the policies of the national church. And as churches have pulled away from the denomination, the financial burden on presbyteries has grown. The snowball effect continues as the ministers and staff of the Office of the General Assembly, who provide services to all levels of the church, are impacted.

Per capita giving makes the work of those like the Rev. Dr. Tim Cargal possible. Cargal is the manager of preparation for ministry and examinations. In that role, he helps prepare the next generation of pastors who will be serving Presbyterian churches. He also helps congregations explore different ways of going about ministry and thinking about the role of the pastor.

“The work that I do with regard to ordination exams is funded in part through per capita as well as examination fees,” he said. “The share that is carried through per capita helps us to be sure that we can control the amount of fees that are going to have to be paid by the candidates as they take exams.”

If per capita were not available, Cargal says, the denomination would have to switch to a fee-for-service basis to cover costs for some of the work.

Building connections

Laurie Griffith, OGA's associate director of constitutional interpretation, agrees. “I could not do the work that I'm doing – and I don't think some of the presbyteries and synods could do some of the work they are doing – without the per capita assessment,” she said. “We live out our faith within the congregation, and per capita is an assessment of all of those who come together to nurture our sister communities and congregations.”

Saint Valentine's Day

One early tradition of Valentine's Day says that it was the day that the birds began to choose their mates; only later did it extend to the human population. The first written reference to Valentine's Day is from a poem written by Geoffrey Chaucer in 1381. The line said: “For this was St. Valentine's Day, when every bird of every kind comes to this place to choose a mate.”

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing; but rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never dies.

– The Apostle Paul, 1Corinthians 13



A kiss is a lovely trick designed by nature to stop speech when words become superfluous. – Ingrid Bergman

I never knew how to worship until I knew how to love. – Henry Ward Beecher

Better to have loved and lost, than to have never loved at all. – St. Augustine

To love another person is to see the face of God. – Les Misérables

When you realize you want to spend the rest of your life with somebody, you want the rest of your life to start as soon as possible. – Nora Ephron, When Harry Met Sally

Senior Citizen Sweetheart Banquet

The Hoopston Area High School Student Council is sponsoring the 29th annual Senior Citizen Sweetheart Banquet on Friday, **February 14** at 1:00 p.m. in the Hoopston High School Gymnasium. Any Hoopston area or Rossville senior citizen interested in attending is asked to call the high school by February 7 at 283-6661 and leave their name and how many will be attending in their party. The meal is dine-in only. We look forward to providing you with an afternoon of food, fellowship, and entertainment! (This notice is from the HA School District.)



Ash Wednesday Q & A

Q: What is Ash Wednesday?

A: Ash Wednesday is the day Lent begins. It derives its name from the early church custom of putting ashes on the heads of believers on that day as a sign of penitence. The purpose of Ash Wednesday is to move us intentionally into the Lenten season, which is why the mood and liturgy of an Ash Wednesday worship service is serious and solemn.

Q: What does Lent mean for me?

A: Personally, Lent is a period for increased religious reflection and contemplation. It is a time for us to acknowledge the sin, evil, and injustice we participate in both individually and collectively. During Lent, we seek God's mercy and to extend mercy to others. We examine our lives and symbolically “burn” away what is not working so new life and hope can grow. Lent leads to Easter hope.

Q: What about fasting? Is it required?

A: Many Christians find that fasting is a meaningful discipline during this season, because it helps them focus more clearly on Jesus' journey to the cross. One can fast from occasional meals, activities that are distracting, or behaviors and attitudes that are not consistent with Jesus' teachings. As long as the fasting is done in a spirit of faithfulness to God, it can be a powerful way of experiencing God.

Q: Why do we have our foreheads marked with a cross?

A: In the Bible, a mark on the forehead is a symbol of the one to whom a person belongs. By having our foreheads marked with the sign of the cross, we symbolize that we belong to Jesus Christ, who died on the cross. Christ loves us from ashes (birth) to ashes (death).

Q: Why is the sign of the cross made with ashes?

A: Ashes are a biblical symbol of mourning and penance. In ancient times, believers were supposed to fast, wear sackcloth, sit in dust and ashes, and put dust and ashes on their heads. While we no longer wear sackcloth or sit in dust and ashes, we do recognize the customs of fasting and putting ashes on our foreheads as signs of mourning and penance.



Ash Wednesday

Q: What else do the ashes signify?

A: Ashes symbolize purity and purification. They also symbolize death and so remind us of our mortality. Often the pastor uses the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return,” God's word's to Adam in Genesis 3:19.

Q: Where do the ashes used on Ash Wed come from?

A: They are made by burning palm branches that have been saved from Palm Sunday of the previous year. On Palm Sunday we remember that the people rejoiced at Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. They celebrated his arrival by waving palm branches, not realizing that he was coming to die on the cross. By using palms from Palm Sunday, we are reminded that we not only must rejoice in Jesus' coming but also regret the fact that human sin made it necessary for him to die.

General Fund Giving

	2020	2019	2018
Given as of Jan 31	\$8,933	\$7,038	\$7,672
Total for Year	tbd	\$103,960	\$105,385
Pledges for Year	\$112,345	\$101,710	\$102,925



Our Fair Share: Per Capita

The Session encourages every member to contribute a Per Capita gift of \$42.00 by February 29. Presbyterians fund the administrative costs of the larger church - the



GA, Synod, and Presbytery - by requiring every congregation to provide a contribution based on its size (\$42 x number of members). Our church is assessed \$3,738 for 2020 based on 89 members. Note Per Capita support on your check.

Per Capita 2020

Enclosed is a gift to support our church's Per Capita assessment for 2020. Every Presbyterian churches is assessed \$42 for each member to support the ministry of their Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly for their work to connect our congregations.

Name(s): _____
Per Capita Enclosed \$ _____

Please return this pledge card to the church by **February 28**.
Mail to: First Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 297, Hoopston, Illinois 60942. Make checks payable to the church.

Change for Change Mission

You are invited to give on **February 16** to support the Ronald McDonald House that serves families at the Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis.

On **January 19** our mission offering was \$466 and will support the Church World Service's Blanket Sunday ministry.

Meals on Wheels

For many years, our congregation has been delivering Meals on Wheels to our fellow citizens. The CRIS Heathy Aging Center of Vermilion County prepares the meals and local groups take turns delivering them to homes twice a week. About thirty residents in Hoopston receive meals. Our church delivers every six weeks or so, at 10:45 a.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays. We thank those who regularly deliver meals on our behalf: Arlene Miller, Rita Carter, Pat Catron, Larry/Gloria Jahn, Wayne/Gwen Bandy, Debby Dixon, Barb Park, Debi Lankford, Chalmers Flint, Carol Sapochetti, Ray Stump, Shirley Wagoner, and others. Let Rita Carter know if you would like to help; next deliveries are March 10 and 13 and April 28 and May 1. The CRIS website describes its meal mission:

The home delivered meal program is designed for those 60 and over who are not able to prepare a meal and unable to leave their home. The benefits of Home Delivered meals include: a nutritious noon-time meal, social contact and a friendly visit from volunteer. Nutritional, financial and functional assessments are completed as an added benefit, and referrals are made to appropriate agencies based on individual needs. You must be home to receive the meals and able to heat up your frozen meals and keep the cold food cold. The Home Delivered Meals are affordable to all- suggested donation, sliding scale, based on income. We deliver to all four corners of Vermilion County.



Youth Ministry

On **February 2** the youth will make Super Bowl subs after worship. Youth and parents will turn the church kitchen into a sub assembly station. Move over Jimmy Johns! The sub sale will help fund the summer mission trip. Thanks to all who ordered subs.

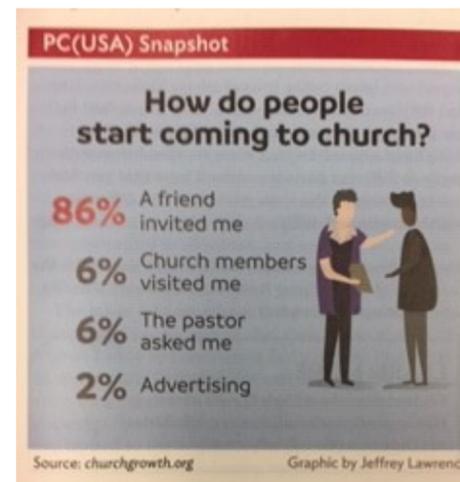


The youth will participate in our Family Bowling event at Fast Lanes on **February 9** at 11:30 a.m. Pizza will be provided.

Session Highlights

From the **January 20** stated meeting:

- 6 out of 10 present
- Heard good news about Christmas Eve worship, ordination of officers, choir/handbell schedule changes.
- Elected officers for 2020: Pat Catron, clerk; Barb Park, treasurer; and Jill Nelson as president of corporation.
- Assigned elders for planning the church activities for each season of the church year.
- Approved communion schedule for 2020.
- Approved Family Leave Time for employee.
- Directed the February Change for Change offering to the Ronald McDonald House at Riley Hospital for Children in Indianapolis.
- Received pastor's monthly report.
- Reviewed and approved the year-end finance report for 2019. All records are in good order.



Animal Teeth at Preschool?

What if we woke up tomorrow with beaver teeth or the tusks of an elephant? What kind of amazing or ridiculous things could you do? This month at Small Wonders Preschool we will be reading several books about teeth and learning how to take care of our own teeth. February is National Children's Dental Health Month. We will discuss the importance of going to the dentist and what to do when one of your teeth become loose.



February is full of fun holiday discussions including Groundhog's Day, President's Day, and Valentine's Day. Of course we will have a Valentine's Day party! In

March we will be doing a fundraiser for our spring field trip to the Indianapolis Zoo. Please be on the lookout for more details to follow about the fundraiser and field trip. Thank you everyone for all the amazing donations for our preschool snacks. - Margo Watson



Let the little children come to me ... it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.

Mark 10:14, NRSV

