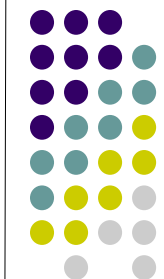


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The Bridgebuilder

February 2023

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Prayer of the Children

Lord God, thank you for making us part of your family
and for giving us our own families.
Help us to love each other as you love us.
Keep us safe and healthy, and help us to enjoy being with each other.

Thank you for giving us all kinds of people to teach us –
our parents and grandparents,
babysitters and friends,
Sunday school leaders and school teachers,
ministers and many more.
Make them excited about what they teach
and make us all excited about learning more about you.

Lord, we can't even think of all the people who help us each day.
Lead our president and government leaders to make good decisions.
Please keep our firefighters, police officers, and all other people
who work to keep our city safe.
Thank you for these and other strong people who take care of us.

We also pray for people who need help –
for everyone who is sick or scared.
We know you heal better than any doctor on earth.
Give your strength to everyone who is suffering.

We also ask you to bless each of us.
You are the great shepherd who loves us.
Help us to know you will always give us everything we need,
and help us to be happy with what we have.
Continue to watch over us, and teach us to live for you all of the time.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen



First Presbyterian Church of Hoopeston

First Presbyterian Church

915 E Orange St
PO Box 297
Hoopeston, IL 60942

Phone: 217-283-6229
E-mail: church@fpchoopeston.com

Head of the Church	Jesus Christ
Ministers of the Good News	All of Us
Session Elders	Gwen Bandy, Wayne Bandy, Skip Betka, Donna Boyer, Sadie Hofer, Kristy Kelnhofer, Gina Morgan, Julie Stump, Ray Stump
Deacons	Debby Dixon, Linda Martin, Shirley Wagoner
Organist and Music Director	Rick Brackmann
Administrative Assistant	Pat Catron
Custodian	Gary Deck
Director of Older Youth Group	Sadie Hofer
Pastor	Wade Meranda
Childcare Provider	Lindsey Paredes
Director of Younger Youth Group	Lindsey Paredes



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



Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends,

I encourage everyone to send in a picture of your childhood church, or another important church in your life, and we will print it on a bulletin cover sometime. Several have been shared already. Some of you grew up in our church here in Hoopeson, but many grew up in a church elsewhere.

I think of faith as a journey we begin early in life, at our baptism, and along the way, the church has a way of making itself available wherever we may be. God is with us in many, many sanctuaries, so thank God for all churches everywhere.



The church, in its many forms, has nurtured the people in our pews past and present, so there really is one church in the world and we are all members of it. There is one faith, one baptism, and one Lord of all. Christ is one, but has many, many locations, more than Starbucks and McDonalds combined!

The season of Lent will be upon us soon. My prayer is for hearty attendance in worship during this six-week holy season. We will prepare our hearts for Jesus' despair during his holy week and for his resurrection on Easter morning. It's good to be prepared for such matters for we are God's children too. He made his way through it all and we will too.

I'm happy to be part of a congregation who gets to tell the most important story ever told.

Blessings, Rev. Wade

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

The annual meeting of the congregation will be held on February 5 following our morning worship service. We'll review the 2022 Annual Report and look ahead to our ministry in 2023 as we continue to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. In Presbyterian polity, all members are given voice and vote at meetings of the congregation and the pastor moderates the meeting.



Sacrament of Baptism

Parker Owen Robinson (15) and Miles Daniel Robinson (17) will receive the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on February 26. In baptism, God claims us and cleanses us with divine grace. God is faithful and invites us to live a life of faith as well. May God bless Parker and Miles on their special day.



It's a Boy!

Congratulations to Ryan and Shannon Donaldson on the birth of their son, Charles Edgar Donaldson, on January 10 in Urbana. Charlie was born at 6 lbs 13 oz and 20 inches long. His three-year-old brother Xander is happy too. Congratulations to grandparents Julie and Ray Stump. May God bless baby Charlie and his family. Babies bring joy to the world!



It's a Girl!

Congratulations to Toby and Kim Wagoner on the birth of their daughter, Anna James Wagoner, on January 17 in Canton, Georgia. Anna is pictured with her three-year-old brother, Joseph. She was born at 9 lbs 2 oz and 20 inches long. Congratulations to grandparents Stan and Shirley Wagoner as well. May God bless baby Anna and her family. Babies bring hope to the world!



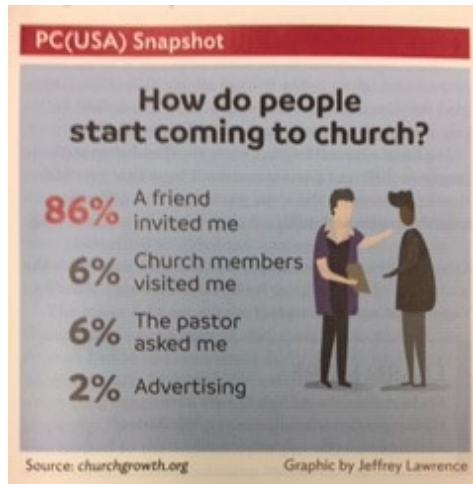
First Presbyterian Church
915 East Orange Street, Hoopeson, Illinois 60942
www.fpchoopeson.org 217-283-6229



February 2023

Sabbath Day of Rest	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	Elder of the Month: Kristy Kelnhofer Pray for Trent Betka	7 5:00 HAMA	1 9:00 Adult Study 6:00-8:00 Confirmation Class	2 9 9:00 Adult Study 6:00-8:00 Confirmation Class	3 10 Recycling 1:00 HAHS Senior Citizen Sweetheart Banquet	4 11 10:00 Presbytery Meeting
5 10:00 WORSHIP 11:00 Annual Meeting 11:30 Refreshments 6:00 Younger Youth Group 6:00 Older Youth Group	6 Pray for Jerica Brackmann, Genevieve 13 Pray for Brad and Sue Burton	7 14 21 6:30-8:30 Project Success Pancake Breakfast (Building Use)	8 15 9:00 Adult Study 6:00-8:00 Confirmation Class	9 16 23 22 9:00 Adult Study 6:00-8:00 Confirmation Class	10 17 24 Recycling	11 18 25 26 10:00 WORSHIP Baptisms: Parker and Miles Robinson Lenten Imposition of Ashes 11:00 Refreshments 6:00 Younger Youth Group 6:00 Older Youth Group

Season of Lent
The forty days before Easter excluding Sundays, begins Feb 22



PCUSA Stated Clerk Reacts to Altercation in Memphis

(From PCUSA News Service, Jan 30, 2023)

Tyre Nichols was a father, son, friend and co-worker. But on Jan. 7, he became the face and victim of the latest violent clash with law enforcement. He was 29 years old.

The release of body camera and surveillance video last week (Jan 27) shows that Nichols was stopped by police near his home in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was brutally beaten and kicked. Based on the video released by authorities, they continued to beat him until he could not stand. There appeared to be no urgency to administer medical attention.

Law enforcement once again took on the role of judge, jury and executioner. It didn't have to be that way. Now, a child has lost a father, a mother has lost a son and a community mourns another life needlessly taken by those who are sworn to protect them. We keep seeing this play out over and over again as names like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor come to mind.



There is something about policing in this country that must be transformed. While there are good officers out there who care about their communities, there are still those who carry a badge and believe that sets them above the law. We have got to talk about policing in a different way in the U.S. and focus on the toll this behavior is taking on marginalized people. The impact on marginalized individuals spills over into other issues such as a lack of educational opportunities and poverty. It's all part of the death of the human soul. People are being left behind, and as a result, find themselves on the receiving end of injustice as we've witnessed through these videos. There is no respect for human life and that must change.



I call on all Presbyterians and individuals who say they are concerned about human rights and social justice to step up, get involved, connect with your communities. It's not just about social justice. It's about shaping our communities so that people can be respected regardless of their socioeconomic background. How do we value people again?

I join others across the country who weep for Tyre Nichols as a young promising life was snuffed out too soon. I ache for his family who must live their lives knowing their son didn't have to die. I pray for our country as we struggle to find our way. We must be monitors of this type of behavior, and the faith community has to do something about it. I ask Jesus Christ to come into our hearts, minds and lives, energizing us to make positive change so that this young man and others will not have died in vain.

J. Herbert Nelson, Stated Clerk

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

In Our Prayers

Those who grieve for: Paul Ziemnisky (R. Carter's friend), Marie Brown, Jim Shields (R. Carter's friend), Marty Kloska, Cheryl Gillins (L. Martin's friend), Phil Voegelé (Joyce Nelson's friend), Linda Carlson, Rich Thompson (R. Carter's friend), Melvin Miles (S. Burton's uncle), Ellen Martin-Huff (L. Martin's cousin), John Smock (R. Carter's uncle).

Those with immediate concerns: Rex Redden (R. Stump's friend), Shirley Wagoner, Mike Lancaster (J. Stump's cousin), Dave Anderson (L. Betka's friend), Wynston Kaufman (2 yr old, S. Burton's friend), Sam Matthews (home fire), Amanda Garman Landers (S. Wagoner's friend), Larry Betka, Aleyah Carley (youth, S. Burton's friend), Katherine Cox (D. Dixon's niece), Judy Brockway (K. Kelnhofer's friend), Scott Watson, Barbara Stump (R. Stump's sister-in-law), Toby and Kim Wagoner, Vickie Anderson (J. Stump's sister), Landon Potter (S. Burton's cousin), Mark Spidle (J. Stump's friend), Christopher Graham (H. Steiner's nephew), John Schertz (G. Jahn's nephew), Karla Von Huben (J. Stump's friend), Marie Seaman (D. Boyer's friend), Tina Skender (C. Flint's daughter).



Those with long-term concerns: Bob Murphy (M. Betka's dad), Mason Steiner, Linda Martin, Scott Drollinger (R. Carter's friend), Dwight Judy (D. Dixon's friend), Patti Ziemnisky (R. Carter's friends), Ann Wise (L. Martin's friend), Kathy Grobowski (L. Martin's friend), Emma Winslow (G. Morgan's friend), Lindsay Boyden (C. Lee's friend), Larry and Jan German (L. Martin's friend), Marcie and A.J. Wright (L. Flint's cousins), Jane Steiner, John Zollar (E. Donley's brother), Beth Farias (L. Martin's cousin), Sue Burton, Crew Feltner (child with leukemia, K. Kelnhofer's friend), Tina and John Hanson (Vi Hanson's children), Patti Root (K. Root's mom), Joyce Cottingham (L. Martin's friend), Mary Kane (K. Root's aunt), Natalie Zollar (E. Donley's niece), Martha Barner, Carole Ronane (J. Stump's friend), Beth Meese (G. Morgan's friend), Sandy Glenn (J. Steiner's cousin), Cookie Galloway (B. Schellhardt's sister), Carol Schrepfer (J. Stump's friend), Ian Anderson (J. Stump's nephew), Karen Peterson (D. Dixon's sister), Troy Flint, John Long (D. Dixon's brother), Brian Lemenager (M. Foster's grandson), Rob Burton Family (J. Stump's brother), John Masengale (S. Burton's dad), Lori Egnew Vaughan (G. Morgan's friend) and Sophia Voyda (E. Donley's niece).

Those homebound in assisted living or nursing homes: Mike Blankenship, Judy Benjamin, Sam Terrell, and John Haughee.

Those in church leadership: Our Session and Deacons, Rev. Wade, Rev. Ann, Rev. Ruth Santana-Grace and Rev. Shavon Starling-Louis (General Assembly Co-Moderators), Rev. J. Herbert Nelson (G.A. Clerk), Rev. Jean Wollenberg (Presbytery Moderator), Rebecca Blair (Lead Presbyter).

Season of Lent

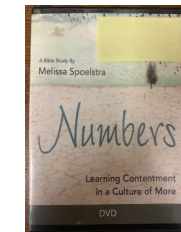
Long ago, the church set aside a forty-day period of reflection prior to the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. Easter Sunday falls on April 9 this year, so the Lenten season begins on Feb 22, Ash Wednesday. We will provide the imposition of ashes during worship on Feb 26, the First Sunday in Lent. We will not worship on Ash Wednesday this year.

Lenten Bible Study

During the season of Lent, our adult Bible study will be: "Numbers: Learning Contentment in a Culture of More." We meet on Wednesday mornings from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall for a light breakfast, prayers, and conversation. Rev. Wade would be glad to offer the program for a second group at another time if there is enough interest.

Lent is a season of reflection on the life and death of Jesus and how that reflects on our life and death. The six sessions of this video-led program are:

- Mar 1 Content in Deliverance
- Mar 8 Content in Preparation
- Mar 15 Content in Uncertainty
- Mar 22 Content in Obedience
- Mar 29 Content in Opposition
- Apr 5 Content in Blessings



Confirmation Class

Please pray for our confirmation class as they continue to prepare for the confirmation of their faith in Jesus Christ and become members of our church (His church!) Pray for the seven: Owen Root, Brylie Cox, Abby Steiner, Ethan Steiner, Nolan Lee, Parker Robinson, and Miles Robinson. We are grateful to God for their participation and for the nurturing of their faith, a faith that will serve them well in the years ahead.



Upon completing the class with Rev. Wade, the youth will share their statement of faith with the Session and be received into membership during worship on Confirmation Sunday (date tbd). The upcoming class dates are: Feb 1, Feb 15, and Feb 22 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

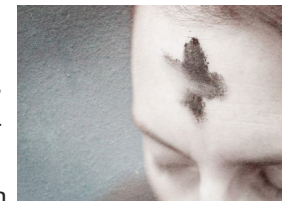
Why Do We Mark People with Ashes?

(By David Gambrell in *Presbyterian Worship: Questions and Answers*, Westminster John Knox Press, 2019, page 58)

Ashes are an ancient biblical symbol of repentance, sorrow, poverty, and sacrifice. They are connected with the image of dust as a sign of mortality; as God told Adam, "You are dust and to dust you shall return." When Abraham prepared to advocate for the people of Sodom, he said, "Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes." When Tamar was raped by Amnon, she put ashes on her face and tore her garments. Job's whole ordeal was framed by ashes and dust – immediately after he was afflicted, he "sat among the ashes," and at the end of God's speech from the whirlwind, he declared he would "repent in dust and ashes." When Jonah gave the people of Nineveh forty days to repent, the king "put on sackcloth and sat in ashes." By contrast, God is the one who "raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap."

The sign of ashes marks the beginning of the season of Lent. We are marked with ashes, tracing the sign of the cross – the sign of Jesus, who gave his own life for our salvation. At the first service of Lent we face our own mortality, repent of our sin, and commit our lives to the grace of God.

For those who take up spiritual practices during the season of Lent, Ash Wednesday is the beginning of this intentional period of fasting, service, and prayer. . . For all of us, Ash Wednesday is a call to reconciliation, to be restored to right relationship with God and one another and to seek peace in the world God loves.



Traditionally, the ashes are made by burning the palm branches of Palm Sunday of the previous year. This is fitting, as the symbols of ashes and palms thus frame the season of Lent. The ashes of Ash Wednesday anticipate the dust of death we face on Good Friday. Nevertheless, with the prayers of the psalmists and hope of the prophets, we trust that God will raise us from the ashes and dust.

General Fund Giving

	2023	2022	2021
Given as of Jan 31	\$9,075	\$7,509	\$4,795
Total for Year	\$9,075	\$7,509	\$4,795
Pledges for Year	\$95,082	\$92,000	\$108,458

Our Fair Share: Per Capita

The Session encourages every member to contribute a Per Capita gift of \$40.00 by February 28. Presbyterians fund the administrative costs of the larger church - the GA, Synod, and Presbytery - by asking every congregation to provide a contribution based on its size (\$40 x number of members). Our church is assessed \$3,360 for 2023 based on 84 members. Note "per capita" on your check.



Session Highlights

From the January 23 stated meeting:

- 10 out of 10 present
- Welcomed new Elders. Set elder of month schedule for the year. Set communion schedule for the year.
- Approved officers for the year: Clerk (Pat Catron), Treasurer (Barb Park), Commissioner to Presbytery (Ray Stump), President of Corp (Wayne Bandy).
- Set the Imposition of Ashes for the first Sunday of Lent, Feb 26. No Ash Wed service.
- Determined guidelines for youth mission trip.
- Set the Feb Change for Change offering to support HA Schools New Teacher Welcome Baskets.
- Theme for 5th Sunday service on Jan 29 to be Local Missions. Representatives from Multi Agency, HART, and Food Cupboard will speak.
- Set Annual Meeting (Feb 5) to be immediately after worship in the sanctuary.
- Approved Financial Report for the month of December. All records are in good order.
- Approved McFarland Fund grants: Hoopeston Area Softball Program \$200 and John Greer Read to Feed Program \$200.
- Plans made to repair and paint walls in youth group/childcare room and clean carpet.

Child and Youth Ministry

Both the younger group (Pre- 5th) and older group (6th -12th) will meet on February 5 and Feb 26 from 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. for fellowship, devotions, prayer, crafts, Bible stories, and snacks.

The Childcare/Younger Youth Room is currently being cleaned and painted, including carpet cleaning, and then the room will be renovated with new age-appropriate decorations and furnishings. We want a new and friendly room for our younger children!

Change for Change Mission

Our mission offering on January 15 was \$327 and supported the Blanket Sunday ministry administered by the Church World Services. Every \$10 provides a blanket for someone in the world in need.

Our mission offering on February 19 will be support the HA schools New Teacher Welcome Baskets. Baskets of information about our community and goodies are given to newly hired teachers before they begin service in the fall.



In the Mailbox

For Pasta Dinner proceeds:

Thank you for your generous donation (\$400) to our mission to care for homeless dogs and cats in our area. We are so grateful for your continued support!
- HART (Hoopeston Animal Rescue Team)

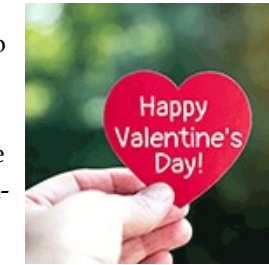
Recycling Ministry

- **Recycling paper, cardboard, glass, and plastic.** If you are not able to participate in Hoopeston's curbside program, bring your recycling to church. Pickup is every other Friday. Recycle bins are outside by the trash bins.
- **Recycling batteries and light bulbs.** Both batteries and CFL bulbs contain toxic heavy metals. Bins for these smaller items are on the counter in Fellowship Hall.
- **Recycling ink jet cartridges and cell phones.** The ink in printer cartridges is very toxic.
- **Recycling pop tabs.** Tabs from beverage cans are collected for recycling to support the Ronald McDonald House at Riley's Children's Hospital in Indianapolis.

St. Valentine's Day

Most of us know St. Valentine's Day as a time to send cards – and perhaps chocolate or flowers – to people we love. We often say things like "be my Valentine" and yet the original Valentine would probably be quite surprised to learn of the way in which we celebrate this day.

No one knows for sure just who St. Valentine really was. Early church histories list several different people by this name. One was a priest in Rome and another was a bishop. The most commonly accepted story, however, concerns a Christian from North Africa. Put in prison for his faith in Jesus Christ, Valentine was sentenced to die. While in jail, he cured the jailer's daughter of blindness. On the day Valentine was to die (Feb 14), he sent a note to the young girl and signed it "from your Valentine" and from there the custom grew.



Yet another story relates to a Roman priest who was remembered for secretly marrying Christian couples at a time when Christian marriages were not supposed to be conducted in Rome. This may be where the connection between the saint's day and romantic love comes from.

Either way, when you celebrate St Valentine's Day, why not think of these saints who courageously lived their faith, and do a few random acts of kindness as well as sending cards and gifts? *(Printed with permission from Logos Productions, Feb 2009)*

Senior Citizen Sweetheart Banquet

The Hoopeston Area High School Student Council is sponsoring the annual Senior Citizen Sweetheart Banquet on Friday, February 10 at 1:00 p.m. in the Hoopeston High School Gymnasium. Hoopeston area or Rossville senior citizens who are interested in attending are asked to call 283-6661 by February 6 and leave their name and number attending. 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.)*



Reflections on Love

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.
- Apostle Paul, 1Corinthians 13

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

I believe in the sun even if it isn't shining. I believe in love even when I am alone. I believe in God even when he is silent. - Unknown

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. - Victor Hugo

You can give without loving. But you cannot love without giving. - Amy Carmichael

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*

It is not what we do that is important, but how much love we put into what we do: we should do small things with great love. - Mother Teresa

February Birthdays

- 3 Shirley Wagoner
- 10 Owen Root
- 12 Annie Nelson
- 16 Joe Watson
- 17 Lennox Flint
- 19 Lincoln Chaffin
- 24 Matt Morgan
- 28 Gail Lithgow
- 28 Trenton Hufford

