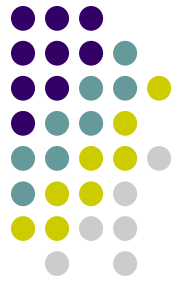


First Presbyterian Church  
P.O. Box 297  
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Hoopeston, IL 60942  
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First Presbyterian Church  
Hoopeston, Illinois



# The Bridgebuilder

January 2023

## Prayer for Baptism of Children

Lord our God, forever faithful to your promise,  
we thank you for assuring us again  
that you will forgive us and receive us as children in Christ.  
Grant wisdom and love to parents and congregations  
as we carry out the vows we have made to these children.  
We pray that you will guide our little ones throughout their lives.  
Enable them to respond in faith to the gospel.  
Fill them with your Spirit and make their lives fruitful.  
Give them strength to endure trials.  
And when Christ returns, let them celebrate with all the people of God  
your greatness and goodness forever in the joy of your new creation. Amen.

### Inside this issue:

Pastor's Letter, Condolences	2
Church Life	3
Prayers, MLK	4
Mailbox, Dates	5
Finance, Mission, Session	6
Calendar	7

## First Presbyterian Church of Hoopeston

First Presbyterian Church  
915 E Orange St  
PO Box 297  
Hoopeston, IL 60942  
Phone: 217-283-6229  
Email: 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](http://www.fpchoopeston.com)

### Audrey Elizabeth Curtin

Baptized on December 18

Child of Michael and Anna Chaffin



### Oliver Edward Watson

Jolleen Petrova Watson

Baptized on January 1

Children of Joe and Margo Watson



**Pastor's Letter**

Dear Friends,

*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)*

One of the great themes of the Bible is this: With God all things are possible. It's a helpful perspective as the new year begins. It's a good reason to keep God - the giver, comforter, and savior of your life - with you at all times. It's a good reason to never lose hope for better days ahead. I'm pretty sure that faith in God is the best way to keep our spirits up no matter what obstacles comes our way.

The baptisms of Audrey Curtin, Oliver Watson, and Jolleen Watson in recent weeks were not on our radar this time last year. The initiative and efforts of Sadie and Lindsey to try to create new youth groups in the church were not on our radar either. Who would have thought our average worship attendance would head up from 27 to 39 in 2022? Who would have thought that an insurance claim would provide a brand new roof on our facility? Who would have thought that our staff would not get frustrated and resign during the difficult and disappointing pandemic years? The record number of guests attending our first Pasta Dinner in three years was not on our radar either.

I don't pretend to have much of a radar for what lies ahead in 2023, but I will do my part, worship and give faithfully, and I know you will too. I don't pretend to know what God is up to this year, but the Bible says that God will be shaping us as a potter does and will be tending to us as a shepherd does and will be calling us to serve as a master does. Let us rejoice and be glad for the year ahead, for this is the year the Lord has made.

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humble with your God? (Micah 6:8)*

Blessings, Wade



**Condolences**

Our condolences go out to the family and friends of **Marty Kloska** (90) who died on December 7 at his residence at Heritage Health. Our hearts are saddened and we will miss the spirit of warmth, comfort, and encouragement he brought to so many.

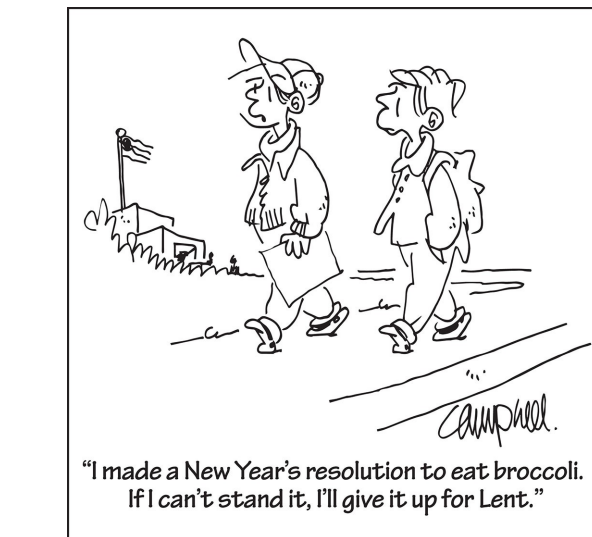


Marty and his wife, Carol, joined our congregation in June 2010 and we are grateful for their service. Carol died in 2018.

We pray for Marty's children: Mary Lou (Rick) Brackmann, Kathleen (Steve) Margevich, and Marty Jr. (Jodi) Kloska. We pray for his grandchildren (8) and great-grandchildren (8). May God be with them.

Marty was a proud veteran of the United States Army. He enjoyed woodworking, scrapbooking, and spending time with his family. He also enjoyed being his jovial Santa Claus for the children of his family, community, and for our preschool children here at church.

*The Lord is your keeper. The Lord is your shade at your right hand. The Lord will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forever more. (Psalm 121)*



**January 2023**



**First Presbyterian Church**  
915 East Orange Street, Hoopston, Illinois 60942  
www.fpchoopston.org 217-283-6229

Sabbath Day of Rest	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Elder for the Month: Gwen Bandy						
<b>1</b> 10:00 WORSHIP 11:00 Refreshments	<b>2</b> Pray for Wayne and Gwen Bandy	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> No Adult Study 6:00 Confirmation Class	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Epiphany	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 10:00 WORSHIP 11:00 Refreshments 11:15 Undecorate the Church 6:00 Older Youth Group	<b>9</b> Pray for Aiden Berg	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 9:00 Adult Study 6:00 Confirmation Class	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Recycling	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> 8:30 Handbells 10:00 WORSHIP Ordination/Installation of Officers Change for Change, Blanket Sunday 11:00 Refreshments	<b>16</b> 6:00 Session Pray for Larry and Carol Betka	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 9:00 Adult Study 6:00 Confirmation Class	<b>19</b> 10:00 Deacon Meeting	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> 8:30 Handbells, play in worship 10:00 WORSHIP 11:00 Refreshments 6:00 Younger Youth Group 6:00 Older Youth Group	<b>23</b> Pray for Skip and Melissa Betka	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 9:00 Adult Study 6:00 Confirmation Class	<b>26</b> 8-4 Preschool Screening, Vermont County Schools	<b>27</b> Recycling	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 10:00 5th SUNDAY WORSHIP 11:00 Refreshments 3:45 Nursing Home Devotions 6:00 Younger Youth Group	<b>30</b> Pray for Trent Betka	<b>31</b>	<b>Feb 1</b> 9:00 Adult Study 6:00 Confirmation Class	<b>Feb 2</b>	<b>Feb 3</b>	<b>Feb 4</b>

### General Fund Giving

	2022	2021	2020
Given as of Dec 31	\$98,535	\$92,807	\$111,979
Total for Year	\$98,535	\$92,807	\$111,979
Pledges for Year	\$92,000	\$108,458	\$112,345

We're grateful to all who gave generously in 2022. We pray the spirit of generosity will be alive and well in our members and friends in 2023 as well.

### Final Pasta Dinner Accounting

Ticket sales for the **November 11** Pasta Dinner were \$4,216, an all time high! Cost of supplies was \$1,689. As it does every year, the Session returned about half of the net proceeds to the community and retained half to build up our own ministry. Distribution: \$250 Heritage Health Activities Program, \$250 Autumn Fields Activities Program, \$300 Multi Agency, \$300 HART Animal Shelter, \$500 Kitchen Fund, \$120 Christmas Lights, \$707 Parking Lot Tree Fund.

### Change for Change

You are invited to give on **January 15** to support the CWS Blanket Sunday ministry. Church World Services has been providing blankets for people in need around the world for several decades. Please give.

Our **December** mission offering was \$241 and supported The Refugee Center in Champaign which helps settle refugees from around the world in central Illinois.

### Presbyterian Special Offerings

We participate in all four of our denominational special mission offerings each year. Thanks to all who gave this year. Our 2022 offerings:

\$570	<b>One Great Hour of Sharing</b> for disaster assistance
\$200	<b>Pentecost Offering</b> for children and youth at risk
\$163	<b>Peacemaking Offering</b> for non-violent reconciliation
\$205	<b>Christmas Joy Offering</b> for retired church workers and Presbyterian racial-ethnic colleges

### Our Fair Share: Per Capita

Presbyterian congregations fund the operation of our denomination - Generally Assembly, Synods, and Presbyteries – with a fair-share system called Per Capita where each church provides funding based in its size. In 2023 each congregation will remit a Per Capita payment of \$40 times its total number of members. Per Capita enables the larger church to provide the necessary support and connections that congregations need.



Our congregation's Per Capita for 2023 is \$3,360 (\$40 x 84 members) and we will pay it in full. The Session encourages every member to contribute \$40.00 toward our congregation's Per Capita obligation. Please indicate "Per Capita" on your check and provide it by February 28.

### Session Highlights

From the **December 19** stated meeting:

- 6 out of 10 present
- Approved a confirmation class beginning Jan 4, lead by Rev. Wade. Possibly seven youth.
- Received finance report for month of November with no anomalies noted.
- Reviewed pledge drive totals and approved budget for the 2023 General Fund. Total budget will be \$144,000, same as 2022.
- Reviewed the terms of pastor compensation with no changes for 2023.
- Thanked the out-going elders for their service: Missy Prorise, Jill Nelson, Christy Lee, Waylon Lee.



### Ordination and Installation of Officers

The act of ordaining and installing elders and deacons to service belongs to the Session. This is holy moment in the life of a congregation and the "laying on of hands" is a powerful Biblical tradition that passes the responsibilities of church office to another set of disciples in an orderly way so the Spirit of God will continue to lead the church without interruption.



On **January 15**, *Kristy Kelnhofer, Skip Betka, Donna Boyer, and Gina Morgan* will be ordained/installed to the office of Elder and *Shirley Wagoner* will be installed to the office of Deacon. These new officers will join with others on the Session and Deacon Board and will seek the will of God for our congregation. Officers will take vows to serve the Lord with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

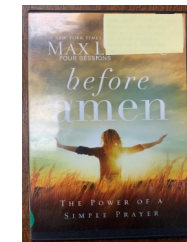


Officers completing their terms of service are elders *Missy Prorise, Jill Nelson, Christy Lee, and Waylon Lee* and deacon *Gina Morgan*. We are grateful for their service.

### Adult Study Group

Our Adult Study Group will begin a video led program titled "Before Amen: The Power of Simple Prayer." The group meets at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday mornings. The four-week program begins soon.

Jan 11	Father, You Are Good
Jan 19	I Need Help
Jan 25	They Need Help
Feb 1	Thank You



This is a relaxing time to share and pray and discover something new about God and living faithfully. We cover many topics over the course the year.



As We Start the New Year

### 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 Annual Report, remember 2022, and look ahead to our ministry in 2023 where we will 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.

### Poinsettia Gifts

We thank all who provide poinsettia plants that graced our sanctuary during Advent and Christmas. We remember our loved ones in Jesus' name.



Given by	In Memory/Honor of
Pat Catron	Chet Catron
Connie, Janet, Rita, John Larry/Carol Betka	Delbert and Ferol White Keith and Lillian Betka, John and Betty Cowan
Jane Steiner Morgan's, Coffman's, Schulte's	Paul Steiner and Karl Steiner Marge and Ray Gregoire Evelyn Slinn
Donna Boyer Elizabeth/Michael Donley	Mary and Leonard Goldstein Mark Donley, David Donley, Charles/Helen Zollar, Newburn Girls
Wade and Ann	Keith and Sue Meranda, Tom and Pat Schwartz Loved Ones
Rita Carter Marge Foster	Glen Foster Bob and Helen Johnson
Deborah Bunn, Clark, Rob Debby Dixon	Dave Dixon Dick and Ev Martin
Martin's and Danner's Joe/Cheryl, Ethan, Abby Vera Keller	Paul and Karl Steiner, Grandparents Ralph Keller
Kristy Kelnhofer	Art, Joy, Dale, Herbert Kelnhofer, Cain and Ellis Families
Ray and Julie Stump	Robert and Janice Stump Gene and Ruth Burton
Terry and Laura Flint Skip/Melissa/Trent	Carol Flint Keith and Lillian Betka, John and Betty Cowan, George and Marie Keitzman, Jack and Iris Murphy
Lee Family Brackmann Family	Bill Couch, Lee Family Grandparents Marty and Carol Kloska Edward Brackmann
Larry and Gloria Jahn Elizabeth Donley	Our many loved ones. Michael Donley and John Zollar

## In Our Prayers

**Those who grieve for:** Marie Brown, Jim Shields (R. Carter's friend), Marty Kloska, Cheryl Gillins (L. Martin's friend), Phil Voegel (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:** Amanda Garman Landers (S. Wagoner's friend), Larry Betka, Jason Grill (R. Brackmann's son-in-law), 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, Dwight Judy (D. Dixon's friend), Vickie Anderson (J. Stump's sister), Landon Potter (S. Burton's cousin), Kathy Grobowski (L. Martin's friend), 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:** Mason Steiner, Linda Martin, Scott Drollinger (R. Carter's friend), Paul and Patti Ziemnisky (R. Carter's friends), Ann Wise (L. Martin's friend), Emma Winslow (G. Morgan's friend), Bob Murphy (M. Betka's dad), Lindsay Boyden (C. Lee's friend), Larry and Jan German (L. Martin's friend), Marcie and A.J. Wright (L. Flint's cousins), Sam Matthews (home fire), Jane Steiner, John Zollar (E. Donley's brother), Beth Farias (L. Martin's cousin), Sue Burton, Roberto Martinez (R. Carter's friend), Crew Feltner (child with leukemia, K. Kelnhofer's friend), Tina and John Hanson (Vi Hanson's children), Leonard Goldstein (D. Boyer's brother), 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).

## Youth Groups

The Younger Youth Group (Pre-5th) will meet at the church on January 22 and 29 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. for devotions, snacks, and activities.

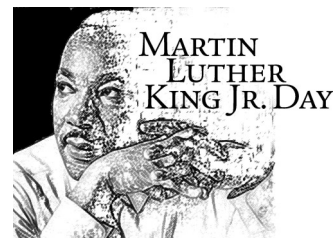
The Older Youth Group (6th-12th) youth will meet at the church on January 8 and 22 from 6:00-7:30 p.m. devotions, snacks, and activities.



## Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Consider celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Monday, January 16 with some of his most poignant quotes. All are worth contemplating.

- We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.
- Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.
- Forgiveness is not an occasional act. It is a permanent attitude.
- I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.
- Faith is taking the first step even when you don't see the whole staircase.
- Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'
- Never succumb to the temptation of bitterness.
- Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.
- We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now.
- Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.
- Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend.
- Let no man pull you so low as to hate him.
- If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.



## In the Mailbox

*For staff Christmas gift:*

To my church family: Thank you so much for the gift certificate you gave me. It was very much appreciated. — Blessings, Pat Catron

*For staff Christmas gift:*

Thanks for the cards and gifts and all the personal support you give. Belonging to a loving and faithful congregation is a highlight of my life. — Rev. Wade

*For staff Christmas gift:*

Dear church family: Thank you for thinking of me at Christmas. A 112 gift card is just right and will definitely be used. I love being a part of our congregations. — Barb Park, Treasurer

*For staff Christmas gift:*

Thank you so much to the congregation and handbell choir for remembering me with gifts at Christmas. I especially appreciate the gift cards from local businesses. Also, thanks to everyone who participated in either bells or choir during Advent and on Christmas Eve. Some of you have been part of our music ministry for decades, some are new to handbells, and several of you contribute as needed throughout the year and on Christmas Eve. Thank you to all. — Rick Brackmann

*For Pasta Dinner Proceeds Support: (\$250):*

Thank you for your generous gift to our activities program. God's blessings upon you during the Christmas season. — Blessings, Rachel Schmidgall, Heritage Health

*For Pasta Dinner Proceeds Support (\$300):*

Thank you for your continued support of the Hoopston Multi Agency. You are all a blessing to us and the community. — Beth Bray Knecht, HMA Director

*For Change for Change Support (\$241):*

Thank you for your generous donation. After the evacuation of Afghanistan in 2021, The Refugee Center was tasked with settling 75 newcomers from Afghanistan in the CU community. We appreciate your support on behalf of the clients and communities we serve. — Lia Wilson, Executive Director of The Refugee Center

*For Prayers and Cards:*

Thank you for the lovely card you sent me during my illness. Your thoughts and prayers are very much appreciated. — Judy Brockway

*For College Care Package:*

FPC Youth Group: Thank you for the finals week care package. I greatly appreciate it. I hope everything is going well and you all are learning a lot about our faith and religion. Hope you all had a great holiday and Happy New Year. — Sincerely Cameron Watson

*For College Care Package:*

FPC Youth Group: I just want to say thank you for the finals week care package. It was very thoughtful and I appreciated it very much. I hope you all had a great holiday and Happy New Year! - Sincerely, Cooper Watson

*For Golden Ticket (McFarland Fund) support (\$100):*

The Feed My Lambs program would like to gratefully acknowledge your donations that enable us to continue to serve Jesus and feed the children. About 120 children (K-5th) receive a sack of food every Friday during the school year for the weekend. — Feed My Lambs

*For Change for Change and other Mission Giving (\$615):*

The Grant Township Food Cupboard is grateful for your donation. This generous donation will bless many families this holiday season. Thank you so much! - Janet Crouch, Food Cupboard

*For McFarland Fund support (\$1,600):*

Project Success thanks you for supporting us and making our 23rd Christmas Wish List program a success. We were able to provide warm clothes, shoes, winter coats, hygiene items, and toys and gifts to 265 Vermilion County children at Christmas. The families we assist are all involved in one of our after school programs. — Project Success Staff

*For Building Use for Blood Drive on Dec 30:*

Thank you for your dedication as an American Red Cross blood drive sponsor. This year has been a crisis for families and communities, from extreme climate disasters to the conflict in Ukraine, and many depend on the Red Cross for help and hope. We look forward to partnering with you again in

## January Birthdays

05	Barb Park
07	Levi Chaffin, Craig Lithgow
09	Jordan Flint
9	Zachary Hufford
18	Kristy Kelnhofer
19	Linda Martin
22	Brad Burton
23	Wade Meranda
27	Wayne Bandy
28	Michael Chaffin
29	Alex Berg



## January Anniversaries

01/01/2000 Terry and Laura Flint