



First Pres News *monthly*



Volume II | February 2026

A note from pastor...

February brings with it the beginning of the season of Lent. I hope you will join us for our Ash Wednesday service and luncheon on Wednesday the 18th at noon. This Lent we will once again be using materials from *A Sanctified Art*. I am excited for this series since one of my favorite seminary professors is part of the creative team this time around. I am going to let the folks from *Sanctified Art* explain the theme for you and I look forward to a Lenten season filled with good news.

“Lent was originally a season for new converts to learn and prepare for their baptism on Easter. During that time, they would study what was central to Christianity. As we crafted this series, we studied what was central to Jesus’ life and ministry: radical welcome, love for neighbor, care for the vulnerable, nourishment for the hungry, nonviolence in the face of injustice. At the heart of Jesus’ teachings, we find liberation, love, mercy, and grace—all of which are meant to be very good news for us all.

Jesus’ ministry can be described as ‘radical’ which comes from the Latin word ‘radicalis,’ meaning ‘root’ or ‘ground.’ Therefore, the good news should bring us back to our roots. Emulating Jesus and embodying his teachings should ground us in who God created us to be. Can we be ‘good news’ people in a world too often burdened by bad news?

This Lent, let us remember that the good news really is *good news*. It is joyful—like fine wine saved for celebration. It grows like a mustard seed and smells like perfume poured from an alabaster jar. It tastes like bread passed endlessly through a hungry crowd. It sounds like laughter and feels like mercy. The good news is alive in the world.

We hope this series will provide fertile ground for conversation and worship, rooting our hearts and lives in the expansive goodness of God. This Lent, let the teachings of Jesus lead us forward. May the good news inspire us to take action in a world desperate to hear, see, and taste what is good.”

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2026 Per Capita Apportionment

2026 Per Capita Apportionment
is \$43.42 per communicant member
(based on membership as of 12/31/2024.)
(GA \$11.26; Synod \$5.50;
Presbytery \$26.66)

A Celtic Blessing

May the deep blessings of Earth be with us.
May the fathomless soundings of seas surge
in our soul.
May boundless stretches of the universe
echo in our depths
to open us to wonder
to strengthen us for love
to humble us with gratitude
that we may find ourselves in one another
that we may lose ourselves in gladness
that we give ourselves to peace.

- John Philip Newell,
Praying with the Earth

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY
TO YOU!

- 3 Kate Gleason
- 6 Jim Hall
- 8 Bonnie Eastman
- 18 Fumi Nakayama
- 19 Nancy Buck
- 20 David Higgs
- 21 Nicholas Hansen
Catherine Neal
- 26 Marilyn MacCaughey
Elizabeth Shelton



Happy Anniversary

Alan & Susan Galle
February 22, 1992

Happy Valentine's Day

LOVE is patient,
love is kind. It does not envy,
it does not boast, it is not proud. It
does not dishonor others; it is not
self-seeking; it is not easily angered.
It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not
delight in the evil but rejoices with the
truth. It always protects,
always trusts, always hopes,
always preserves.
1 Corinthians
13:4-7



*Happy Anniversary
First Presbyterian Church!*

February marks the 187th year of First Presbyterian Church,
with the actual date being February 13th.

Mission Initiative for February

MARCH 15TH—Mark your calendars for the First Presbyterian Church:

Join us after worship in the dining room for some fun fellowship and a mouth-watering traditional Cuban sandwich (for any first timers, they are not spicy).

This year we are delighted to be preparing additional sandwiches for Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church (OBUUC). They are having a luncheon following our event and will be ordering sandwiches from us to help support the Cuba Mission fund. We are so appreciative that they want to help contribute to the success of this important Mission Initiative.

Join us in the dining room or get yours to go if you prefer. \$5 per sandwich. We will have 100+ sandwiches available so take orders from your friends and family or better yet, bring them all along.

If you would like to be involved in the set-up, food preparation or supplies donation, please contact: Georgia Herrera: georgiaherrera@cs.com or Meg Daniels: megprefersthephone@icloud.com

Food Pantry

We continue to provide a valuable lifeline to members of our community. Our heartfelt thanks to all of you who are bringing in food donations of non-perishable items or making monetary contributions to the First Pres. Food Pantry. Your support helps fill essential gaps and augment the emergency food boxes we are providing.

During these bitter cold months, donations of new or clean, gently used winter hats, mittens, gloves and scarves (all sizes) for our food pantry clients would be greatly appreciated. These items can be left in the food collection box located across from the office, by the elevator door.

Gratefully submitted on behalf of the Mission Initiatives Committee,
Meg Daniels and Georgia Herrera

The holiday season is over, but the fight against hunger is a year-round battle. According to the USDA, one in five children in the United States struggle with food insecurity every day of the year. Think about that for a minute—**one out of every five children!!** We all need to do what we can to help keep the shelves stocked at our food pantry.

Winter can be a particularly harsh time of year for the 47 to 48 million Americans who are facing hunger.

We encourage all of you to donate cans of soup/stew, mac & cheese, peanut butter, hot chocolate mix, coffee, and hearty meals like canned chili.

This month is the perfect time of year to spread the love, to show you care and to truly make a difference.

Spread the Love





Tuesday, February 10 at noon we are excited to welcome Pauline Mitchell of the Professional Women's Network of Service (PWNS) to speak with us on the Underground Railroad in Racine. PWNS is the organization primarily responsible for the plaques around town commemorating Racine's abolitionist history. Pauline is a learned educator with extensive knowledge about the Underground Railroad in Racine.

Tuesday, February 17 at noon we will gather for a light lunch and then take a tour of First Presbyterian Church of Racine and its connection with Racine's abolitionist history and the Underground Railroad.



A Story of History, Courage, and Community

In honor of Black History Month, experience *Ozella's Quilts*, a striking collection rooted in the history of the Underground Railroad, on display in downtown Racine at Stitched Quilt Shop, 505 6th St. On **Sunday, February 8 at 11:30 a.m.**, Kathi Wilson will share **Ozella's Story**, an oral history passed down through generations that reveals how quilt patterns may have been used to guide enslaved people toward freedom. Join us for an engaging presentation that brings together history, storytelling, and the power of community.



The Deer's Cry

(A daily prayer for Lent)

I arise today
Through the strength of heaven;
Light of the sun,
Splendor of fire,
Speed of lightning,
Swiftness of the wind,
Depth of the sea,
Stability of the earth,
Firmness of the rock.

I arise today
Through God's strength to pilot me;
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me,
God's shield to protect me,
God's hosts to save me,
Afar and anear,
Alone or in a multitude.

Christ shield me today
Against wounding,
Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ in the heart of everyone
who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone
who speaks of me,
Christ in the eye that sees me,
Christ in the ear that hears me.

I arise today
Through the mighty strength
Of the Lord of creation.

Amen

The Deer's Cry—A Hymn by St Patrick

This prayer was composed by Saint Patrick in the year 433 AD. He was aware that there was an ambush to try to kill him and his group en route to the King's court. It was during the march that they sang the Deer's Cry. As the druids lay in hiding, ready to kill, it is said that they saw not Patrick and his men, but a gentle doe followed by twenty fawns. The miracle saved Patrick and his men. "The Deer's Cry," is known by several names, "Lorica" and "The Breastplate of St Patrick" which is another version of the prayer of St. Patrick. It is a beautiful prayer celebrating a God who lives with his children, guiding them, sheltering them, strengthening them. A God who is with us and in us through his Creation.

To hear a beautiful rendition of the hymn,
recorded on Easter Sunday, April 10, 2023,
please click on the following link:
<https://youtu.be/6k0Xol-ENr4>



It's Happening! First Pres Gets "Organized"

The First Presbyterian Organ Restoration Project, which began with research in 2023 and with a proposal and commitment in 2025, is finally in full swing. Along the way there were numerous supply chain issues and scheduling challenges, resulting in months of delay! But, listen up:

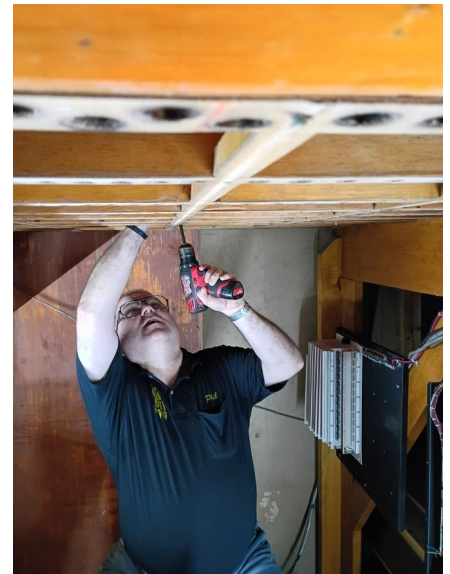
Fabry Pipe Organs is currently on site removing old, crumbling materials and installing new valves in the Swell, Choir, Great A and B pipe chests of the organ.

Within the month we should be able to hear sounds we haven't heard in many years - and not hear those obnoxious, malfunctioning organ ciphers!

On April 18 the organ will be premiered in the Choral Arts **Fantasia** Concert. The program includes the resounding *Bach Prelude and Fugue in D Minor*! Get your ticket now by going to the CAS website

<https://choralartsonline.org/attend/>

- Pat Badger



Racine Arts Council hosting ArtSeed Showcase

First Presbyterian Church members are invited to celebrate local creativity at Racine Arts Council's **ArtSeed Showcase: Creativity in Bloom** on **Saturday, March 21, 2026**, at UW-Parkside's Rita Tallent Picken Regional Center for the Arts & Humanities. This inspiring event highlights community-based arts projects supported through ArtSeed grants. We are especially pleased that **Music & More's Candlelight Concert**, an ArtSeed grant recipient, will be among the participating organizations. Join fellow art lovers for community connection and complimentary appetizers as the Racine Arts Council honors those who enrich our area through the arts. The showcase features performances, artist presentations, and opportunities to support the arts that enrich Racine's cultural and creative community. *Black Arts Council of Racine*, *Over Our Head Players*, and *Racine Symphony Orchestra* will be performing. Details, tickets, and sponsor information is on their website at <https://www.racineartscouncil.org/artseed-showcase.html>

Choral ARTS Society

Randy Bush Featured Guest Artist on CAS *Fantasia!* Concert

On Saturday, April 18, the Choral Arts Society will welcome guest artist Randy Bush to the stage in a thrilling evening presentation of Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on the Old 104th*. This program will also feature nationally known organist Nick Renkosik on the newly restored First Presbyterian Church organ, presenting Bach's mighty *Toccata and Fugue in d minor*. Randy and Nick will also play piano four hands to accompany the chorus in the lovely choral version of Fauré's *Pavane*.

Artistic Director James Schatzman said of this program, "It is an honor to feature two tremendously gifted artists, concert pianist Randy Bush and nationally recognized organist Nick Renkosik, playing the newly refurbished organ and First Presbyterian Church's outstanding Steinway piano. *Fantasia on the Old 104th* will highlight these amazing instruments, with Racine's premiere chorus, filling the historic sanctuary with the dazzling sounds of this incredible composition. This *Fantasia* brings to our community and showcases the contributions of our guest artists, these remarkable instruments, and the lyric beauty and power of the Choral Arts Society. Rarely does a composition so dramatically feature all three aspects in one piece. The 104th will be one of the highlights of all 2026 concert presentations in Racine. You won't want to miss it."

The concert will also include *Nella Fantasia*, featuring the tune, "Gabriel's Oboe," which was main theme for the 1986 film *The Mission*, with Robert de Niro, Jeremy Irons, Liam Neeson. The theme has been called "unforgettable" and a "celebrated melody."

A special aspect of the concert will be a vocal and instrumental performance of *Greensleeves* in memory of Frank Suetholz, local legendary flutist. Guest Young Artist Addison Kelnhofer of Carthage College will be the soloist.

Fantasia! will take place in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church at 7PM. Tickets are \$25 for Adults/Seniors and \$15 for Students, and they can be purchased at www.choralartsonline.org. To contact the Choral Arts Society, email admin@casewi.org or call (262) 634-3250. Advance ticket purchase is highly recommended.

The Choral Arts Society's 39th season is supported in part by a grant from the Racine Community Foundation, a grant from the Racine Arts Council's ArtSeed Grant Program funded by the Racine Arts Council and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin, a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts, and the generous support of individual donors and private foundations.





Dancing Couple - Vanessa Bell, 1913

Just after midnight
we stand beside the stove
holding each other,
your thumb slowly relearning
the portal of my spine.
Satie's first *Gymnopédie*
slips stepwise through the room,
the tune like starlight emerging
after a storm blew down all the trees.

We are almost, but not quite, still.
How little movement it takes,
plus an opening in the mind,
to know the body as dancing.
How little beauty it takes
to know a sad moment
as a moment both sad and beautiful.

And what of a year? What of a life?
How much beauty can we bring
with the days we are given?
How would the years change
if we believed we were not
just moving through them,
but dancing?

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