



THE STEEPLE

Welcome!

all ages · all cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities · all gender identities and expressions ·
all sexual orientations · all physical and mental abilities · all socioeconomic backgrounds ·
all family structures · all political perspectives · all religious backgrounds

All people are safe here.

In keeping with the teachings of Jesus Christ, we are an accepting and affirming community where diversity is celebrated. We welcome all into the full life and ministry of our congregation.

Galatians 3:28: There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free,
nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Romans 8:38-39: For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Micah 6:8: He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

The above statement is a new welcome statement that our Session has adopted for our church. It was developed in 2024 under the guidance of our Welcome All committee as part of our desire to be a more welcoming community of faith. I want to thank the Session and the committee for their hard work on this. I also want to thank you, the church family, as you provided input through an extensive survey and as you have continually expressed a desire to be loving and welcoming in the Spirit of God's Grace. I hope all who enter our doors feel loved, welcome, safe, and embraced.

in Christ, Pastor Rob

Budget Committee Gratitude

Before we say "Goodbye" to 2024, the Budget Committee praises God with gratitude for all He has done for our faith community:

- Gratitude for generous offerings from the congregation to end the year with a balanced budget.
- Gratitude for Session Elders, Deacons, and committees who provided Ministry with careful stewardship of funds.
- Gratitude for Trustees who maintained AND improved our facility with prayerful diligence:
 - Installing the solar system;
 - Repairing the parking lot, boiler system, and air conditioning systems; and
 - Redecorating and updating areas in the older sections.
- Gratitude for Roger Cox who volunteers his time to carefully document all offerings and conscientiously process all invoices in a timely manner.
- Gratitude for our staff who received grant money to provide summer programming and address neurodiversity.
- Gratitude for all the individuals who serve in the church to make sure God's word is seen and felt in our community.

Looking forward to all that 2025 will bring.

Announcements

2025 Ordination & Installation

Elders

- Annette Eckert, Mission Elder
- Keely Giles, Mission Elder
- Lynn Hauver, Youth Ministries
- Kristen Link, College & Young Adult Elder
- Dick Palmer, Worship Elder
- Ken Stange, Member Connections Elder

Deacons

- Ann Breeden
- KC Clayton
- Joyce Dyer
- Mary Hesdra
- Coni Jackson
- Mary Jo Mordhorst

Trustees

- Shawn Lankford
- Mark Nicholson
- Bruce Reeder

Nominating Committee

- Chris Brown
- Nancy Kreeb
- Leah Lankford
- Julia Weeks



These Days

These Days daily devotional books for January-March 2025 are available at the Chapel entrance and at the reception desk in Cornell Commons.



Lenten Devotionals

2025 Lenten devotionals from *Presbyterian Outlook* are available this year. Each daily reflection, beginning with Ash Wednesday and culminating on Easter Sunday, will combine personal reflection, scripture, and prayer. Printed copies will be available February 23 at the reception desk in Cornell Commons.

Email Rhonda at reugea@firstunitedpres.org for the link to download a copy.

from the Deacons

December Deacon's Meeting: Deacons Present - 14. Total contacts - 301 (34 calls, 223 cards, 24 visits, and 20 emails & texts).

United Bells Ringing our Praise!

We meet every Wednesday at 5:30 pm. Experienced ringers and anyone interested in learning to ring are welcome. Please consider joining this committed group who work, laugh, and pray together, all to the glory of God! For more information, please call or email Julia Weeks, (618) 531-5002, juliaaweeks@gmail.com.

from the Trustees

The Trustees are thankful for the generous donations that covered many non-budgeted projects throughout 2024. In addition to routine maintenance, these are the highlights for the month:

- Since installation, our solar panels have produced 66,196 kWh of electricity and has cut our Ameren bills significantly. Solar production has supplied about 75% of our total electricity needs since installation. Next year we will be able to "bank" excess solar usage during peak production summer months to apply towards winter months when our electricity usage is very high and solar production is low.
- Bendler Boiler finalized installation of the new high-efficient boiler in time for the cold months. We are evaluating options for long term maintenance contract.
- The shingle roofs on the church and bus garage are being replaced as a result of hail damage in 2024. We expect the work to be completed by the middle of January.
- We will be installing a new surveillance camera in the area outside the Youth Room to replace an older camera that stopped working. Camera upgrades will continue as we replace outdated equipment. Work is in progress to extend internet to the bus garage. This will allow us to further enhance our video surveillance of the solar array and bus garage.

December 15: Christmas Cantata



December 15: Christmas Connections



December 18: Bingo for Christmas Cookies



Fellowship & Caring Ministries

FEBRUARY 7 Sand Dollars

The Sand Dollars will meet Friday, February 7 at 6:00 P.M. in Eversull Hall for dinner and a meeting. If you are a family (children included), couple, or single adult and would like to share a meal in a very relaxed atmosphere with Christian fellowship, please join us. Anyone interested, please contact our Skippers, Brenda & Joe Fedak, (618) 558-7086, or Jan Nevois, (618) 402-7170.

FEBRUARY 13 Book Club

In February, the Book Club will discuss *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane* by Lisa See. We will begin at 6:30 pm via Zoom. Please contact Joyce Dyer, joycejdyer@att.net for the Zoom ID and passcode. The book selection for March is *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman.

FEBRUARY 26 Prayer Shawl

If you like to crochet or knit or would like to learn, join the fellowship of this exceptional ministry next year! Plan to join us on February 26 at 9:30 am in Cornell Commons. Prayer shawls are continually added to the inventory. Be part of this outreach to those celebrating joy or needing comfort. Shawls are in the bookcase in the Narthex. For more information contact Mary Teague, (618) 920-7589.

Merry Mates

Merry Mates will not be meeting in February.



FAMILY NEWS

Our Deepest Sympathy

For the Bechtold & Gula families & friends upon the death of Timothy Gula who passed away December 14, 2024 in Maple Grove, MN.

For Sheila & Dave Misselhorn and family & friends upon the death of Sheila's mother, Lucile Katty who passed away December 22, 2024 in Ellisville, MO.

For Betty Scherrer and family & friends upon the death of Betty's aunt, Cathy Lukie who passed away December 25, 2024 in Freeburg, IL.

from the Deacons an interview with... Julie Wilder



Each month the Deacons will provide a glimpse into the life of one of our newer members. It will allow readers to become better acquainted with the new faces at First United!

Please identify and describe the place you call your hometown.

I was raised in Bay City, MI and have spent the past 20 years of adulthood in Belleville.

Why did you choose First United Presbyterian Church?

My previous church was smaller and older. I live close by and knew people from here and have visited over the years.

What has been your moment closest to Christ?

I was raised a Christian. In my 20s I chose God personally. It became my own.

How are church and your love of God shaping your life?

The name of Jesus is the first thing I utter in the morning.

What makes you smile?

Seeing my young adult children finding their way.

What fills your days?

I work fulltime as a legal secretary.

What are your hobbies/interests that enhance the quality of your life?

I love music and reading and have joined the choir and United Bells.

Of all God's blessings, what are the three closest to your heart?

Family; Things He has provided: job, car, people at work

Adult Discipleship

There are numerous learning, connecting, and fellowship opportunities available for adults throughout the month of December.

Connect & Gather

Looking for a casual way to reflect with others about life and faith? Join other adults in the Library from 9:15-10:00 am on Sunday mornings for a time of fellowship and discussion. Come see what questions await in the three mystery boxes!

Pray

In February, we will continue sessions two, three, and four of the four-week series from the *Follow Me* curriculum called *Pray*. Prayer is both a central spiritual practice for followers of Jesus, and, for many, one of the most difficult to grasp. It seems like prayer should be simple, just talking to God. But we worry about how we are praying, if we are saying the right words, or doing the right things and we wonder if anyone is really listening. The practice, *Pray*, shows us how when we believe that prayer is important enough to worry about messing up, that someone is listening, and that the listener is concerned. We are engaging in supreme acts of trust. Prayer relies on our belief that God cares for us and hears us. On February 2, the session is "Pray Persistently and Humbly" based on Luke 18:1-14. On February 9, the session is "Pray With and For Others" based on James 5:13-16. On February 16, the session is "Pray with Your Whole Self" based on Psalms 63:1-4, 88:14-18, and 139:15-16. This class is hybrid, meeting on Sundays at 9:15 am in-person in the Vista Room or via Zoom on Sundays. For details and to receive study materials, contact Rhonda Eugea at reugea@firstunitedpres.org. Login information for Zoom is included in the eWeekly every Friday.

Walk Humbly

On February 23 we will begin a four-week series from the *Follow Me* curriculum called *Walk Humbly*. The saints, servants, and sages of the church are frequently praised for their humility. They delight in simple things, avoid the spotlight, eschew material goods, downplay their accomplishments, and make their lives among the lowly. Yet, as will be seen in this practice, humility is hard to grasp. Indeed, the act of grasping at humility—striving for success at humbleness—seems to cause it to slip through our fingers. And perhaps that is the point. Through studying these sessions, participants will learn that humility is found in the knowledge that life is not a prize to be seized, but a gift to be received with gratitude. All our achievements, our powers, and possessions, ultimately come from God and return to God—everything is grace. On February 23, the session is "Remember that You Are Dust" based on Genesis 2:7, 3:19b, and Luke 12:16-21. This class is hybrid, meeting on Sundays at 9:15 am in-person in the Vista Room or via Zoom. For details and to receive study materials, contact Rhonda Eugea at reugea@firstunitedpres.org. Login information for Zoom is included in the eWeekly every Friday.

THE CHOSEN

Come join us to watch and discuss season 4 of *The Chosen*, the groundbreaking movie depiction of the life of Jesus and His disciples. We will meet on Wednesday, February 5 from 5:30-7:00 pm in the Blue Room (former preschool room downstairs). Bottled water and popcorn will be provided. Feel free to bring supper-in-a-sack or snacks to share. For more information contact Roger Doll, (618) 402-1822 or Brenda Doll, (618) 444-9660.



DURING THE WEEK

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Men's Bible Study Group meets hybrid every Wednesday morning at 8:30 am, both in-person in the Vista Room and via Zoom. Contact the Church Office for more information.

WOMEN'S CIRCLES

FUPC two women's groups meet in-person and via Zoom. Gathering monthly from September through May, their purpose is to nurture women's faith through prayer and Bible study. If you would like more information, please contact a leader.

- Lamplighters Circle will meet February 18 at 1:00 pm, Amy Brummitt, (618) 235-4226.
- Lydia Circle will meet February 20 at 1:00 pm, Jan Jensen, (626) 894-6580.

GIVE a MEAL a MONTH

Give-A-Meal-A-Month for February takes a break to make way for Souperbowl of Caring. Please support this PYC event!!



Let's tackle hunger together!

On Sunday, February 2 and Sunday, February 9 the children and youth of the church will be collecting non-perishable items and monetary donations for the Community Interfaith Food Pantry. Items can be brought to Cornell Commons on both Sundays.

Mobile Market: February 20

Our next Mobile Market will happen be Thursday, February 20. Volunteers are asked to arrive at 8:00 A.M. and to dress for the weather! . Once the truck arrives from the St Louis Area Foodbank, we sort the food and then load it into waiting cars which line up outside the Commons area. Mobile Market is a great opportunity to serve the underserved in our community and it only takes a few hours once a month. Join us in this effort! Questions can be directed to Judy Stratton, (618) 978-5485 or Laurie Brown, (618) 520-8112.

Wish List:

- Canned goods: vegetables, fruits, beans, soup, pasta sauce, tuna, stew, chili
- Box meals: hamburger or tuna helper, mac 'n cheese, stuffing, pasta or rice sides
- Breakfast: pancake mix, syrup, cereal
- Condiments & oils: peanut butter, jellies, ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, salad dressing, salt, pepper, cooking oil
- Staples: flour, rice, sugar, coffee, tea, hot chocolate mix, corn muffin mix, cake mixes, frosting
- Baby items: diapers, wipes
- Hygiene: shampoo, soap, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, feminine products, combs, razors
- Cleaning: dish soap, laundry detergent, paper towels, disinfectant products
- Children's snack food: pudding cups, fruit snacks, graham crackers, crackers, chips
- Monetary donations to buy items in bulk



COFFEE HOUR COFFEE HOUR COFFEE HOUR COFFEE HOUR COFFEE HOUR COFFEE HOUR



Coffee Hour was hosted on December 22 with quite the spread! Hosted by Sue & Bill Donaldson and Mike & Laura Rumer

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from Stewardship

Throughout the beginning of 2025, our sermons have drawn inspiration from the Gospel of John. As noted in last month's column, the challenge was not to make resolutions for 2025, but rather to develop a commitment and covenant to make God a greater part of our lives. It was suggested this journey would include the following elements: Read the Bible, both individually and in communion with others; Pray (even wrestle) with God; Share our blessings and live a life of gratitude; and Forgive others as we have been forgiven through the grace of God.

These elements are epitomized by the words found in the Gospel of John. We are reminded to pick up the Bible to better know our God and to enrich our understanding of the endless nature of God's grace - "grace upon grace." These words also call us to submit to God by taking on the identity as a "child of God." Through John we learn not to be afraid of our calling, but to embrace it, to live and model our faith by living in and through Christ. To share with others the stewardship of hope, love, and grace of the Word. As noted in the profound first passage in John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." We are all called to live our life in that light.

-The Stewardship Committee

Children & Youth Discipleship

Wednesday Night Ministry for Children and Youth!!

Every Wednesday during the school year (except during holiday breaks), there is fun, food, and faith for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. Each night has games, dinner, and faith discussions for every age. If you would like to sign up a child or youth for Wednesday nights contact Rhonda Eugea at reugea@firstunitedpres.org or you can scan the QR code and fill out a digital form.



Wednesdays for Grades K-5

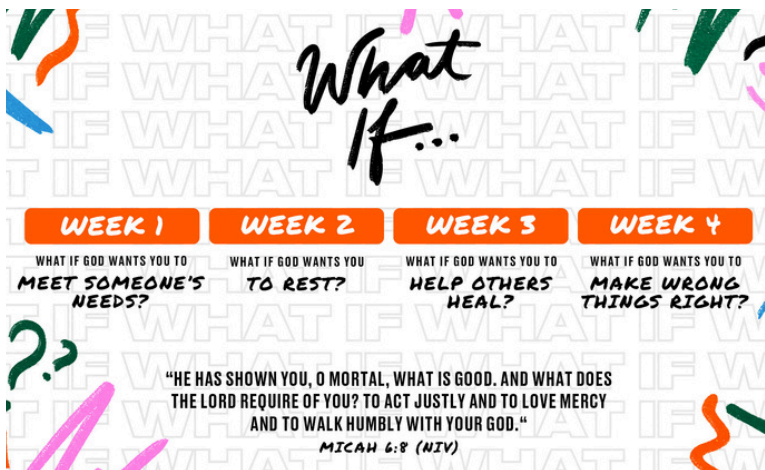
February 5, 12, 19, and 26: We are continuing our five-week series called "Jesus Beginnings." On February 5 we will learn about "When Jesus Was Twelve" based on Luke 2:39-52. On February 12 we will learn about "Shhh, Listen!" based on Luke 3:1-6. On February 19 we will learn about "An Awesome Day" based on Luke 3:21-22. We will also have drum circle on February 19. On February 26 we will learn about "A Wild Test" based on Luke 4:1-12.

Wednesdays for Grades 6th-12th

February 5: We will be finishing our four-week series on leadership. The big idea is great leaders follow God's lead.

February 12, 19, and 26: We will begin a new 4-week series on righting wrongs called "What if..." Some of the most incredible pieces of art were created when the artist wondered, "What if I ...?" Their curiosity inspired them to look at what was in front of them to imagine something entirely different. As we grow closer to God, we realize that God asks us to do something similar—to look through the hurt, pain, and evil in the world and wonder what it might look like for things to be different. In this four-week series from the New Testament and Prophets, we will wonder about what it might look like to be part of making a difference as we explore questions like what if God wants you to meet someone's needs, rest, help others heal, or make wrong things right?

Sunday, February 16 Winter Festival from 5:30-7:00 PM in Eversull Hall: All 6th-12th graders are welcome for a night of chili, hot chocolate bar, crafts, and an escape room. Come for a fun evening of fellowship and fun!



Children and Worship at FUPC

All children are welcome in worship at FUPC! There are also two special places for children during the 10:30 am service.

Childcare During Worship for birth through age 3

Two caring volunteers are in the Toddler Room ready to welcome children ages 3 and younger. The volunteers are members of FUPC and have been trained and background checked.

Children's Chapel for age 3 through grade 3

After a special time with the pastors, children are invited to leave with a Worship Leader and Greeters to continue to worship in Children's Chapel. This is a special place where children will hear stories of God's people and respond.

Sunday Discipleship for ALL Children and Youth — SUNDAYS 9:15-10:00 AM

There are opportunities for all ages to grow in their faith on Sunday morning. Safe, interactive childcare will be available in the Toddler Room for children 5 years old and under. Kids in grades Kindergarten through 5th have a time of **Faith & Fun!** This will help younger children build their basic beliefs and knowledge about God in fun and engaging ways. Sixth through 12th graders are invited to come eat some waffles and explore the Bible in meaningful ways during **Waffles & the Word.**



First United Presbyterian Church

Welcome New Members!

On Sunday, January 19, we welcomed Vicki & David Doetsch and Gretchen Rath to our FUPC family.



FEBRUARY'S WORSHIP FOCUS



Staff Leaders

Rev. Rob Dyer, Senior Pastor / Head of Staff
rdyer@firstunitedpres.org

Rev. Alex Lysdahl, Associate Pastor
alysdahl@firstunitedpres.org

Rhonda Eugea,
Director of Christian Discipleship
reugea@firstunitedpres.org

Jami Olsen, Administrative Assistant
office@firstunitedpres.org

Kayla Descher, Children and
Youth Support Specialist

Dr. Andy Jensen, Director of Music
ajensen@firstunitedpres.org

Mat Conway, Worship Music Leader

Diana Umali, Pianist / Accompanist

Dale Overstreet, Director of Audio /
Visual Ministries + Custodian
videoministry@firstunitedpres.org


the Steeple

To submit articles and suggestions each month, simply email the team!

**theSteeple@
firstunitedpres.org**

FIRST UNITED
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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office hours
Monday-Friday
8:00 am-1:00 pm 

Sundays

8:00 am Chapel Worship
9:00 am Chancel Choir
9:15 am Sunday School
10:30 am Sanctuary and
Zoom Worship

Wednesdays

5:45 pm Children & Youth
5:45 pm United Bells

