

PASTOR'S CORNER

The year 2021 has come to its end. As I look back over this last year, what strikes me are the ways that the Church pulled together to celebrate the blessings that flowed to us. We used our 150th sesquicentennial to reach out to our community. We made a conscious effort to be a source of joy for those suffering from Covid-19 throughout the year. We help so many people in our community in small and large ways. We loved our neighbors as we followed mask and distancing mandates. We stepped up our mission spending to an unprecedented level. We helped our public school's students, and those that work for them deal with the way the pandemic has disrupted their lives. Not every gift was large, but every gift was appreciated. We have been instrumental in helping our city to overcome the devastation caused by the Aug 12th flood. Members have donated money, time, and talent to the ongoing recovery effort, even as we dealt with the church's own losses. There were times of great joy. Our 150th birthday celebration was very successful, thanks to the effort and talents of Mary Clow and Meladee Ferguson. I was blessed to be able to baptize Trudy's and my grandsons in December. It was awesome to do it in front of so many family and friends. If I could figure out how to have 1 or 2 baptisms every month, I would be a very happy pastor. Now it's time to look forward. 2022 is waiting for us with open arms. Let's meet it together, loving God and neighbor.

Pastor Ray Lantz



Pastor Lantz baptizes his grandsons Wesley James and Theodore Joseph Lantz during our Sunday service on December 5, 2021. Congratulations to all.



Elder and Grandma, Trudy Lantz, presents the twins for baptism.



Dad Ramie holds Teddy and mom Jennifer holds Wesley.

PRESBYTIDINGS JANUARY 2022

Pastor Ray Lantz

Worship: 10:30 a.m.

This Newsletter is a publication of First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City IL.

Website: www.firstpresbygibson.org

Meladee Ferguson: Administrative Assistant

Mary Clow: Ministry Coordinator

Every year the Presbyterian Church struggles with enormous moral questions. Presbyterians are not do-it-yourselfers. We make decisions as a community. This is a way of living out the Biblical notion that God has created a covenant community. We base our decisions on our traditional sources of authority and guidance — the Bible and the church's constitution. We pray and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in interpreting these sources of authority. We listen to each other, believing that God speaks in the community of the church. Our representative form of government puts significant responsibility on all members of the church. It is not easy to be a Presbyterian. We are continually called upon to decide whom we should elect and what side of multiple issues we should support. For example, some denominations believe that Christians should always support the civil government, especially in matters such as war. Other denominations have an inherent suspicion of civil government and tend to withdraw their support from it. For Presbyterians it is always a judgment call. Like John Knox and five friends who produced the Scots Confession in 1560, we should obey the orders of "rulers, and superior powers ... if they are not contrary to the commands of God." That big **if** is why we study things so much. We always need to discern what the will of God is and how it should be applied in complex situations. Our Presbyterian predecessors in earlier centuries were keenly aware of our human limitations. For example, in the Westminster Confession of Faith, finished in 1647, we are reminded that "all things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all." Those things "necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation" are clear. However, "in all controversies of religion" the church needs to use scholarly study to help us sort out

our differences. That requires us all to be patient with each other and do our homework until we reach some consensus. The authors of the Westminster Confession of Faith did not exempt themselves from examination. They honestly asserted that "all synods or councils since the apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help in both." We must prayerfully seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and listen to one another in the church in order wisely to use the insights of our sources of authority and guidance. Neither Scripture nor confessions are rightly used when we pull sentences out of their context and make them into universal laws.

The Presbyterian way of making decisions looks a lot like the way the New Testament church made decisions as recorded in Acts 15:1-21. When there is a disagreement, we turn it over to a chosen group of representatives. In Acts those representatives were the apostles and the elders. They listened to expert testimony from those who knew the issue best—Peter and Paul and Barnabas. There was a lot of dissension and debate. People understood the Old Testament Scriptures differently. In the end the apostles and elders discerned that a new thing was happening, the conversion of the Gentiles. They discovered that it was in accord with God's plan as revealed in Scripture. Then they made some practical compromises so that the values of differing groups were honored. Their decision opened the door of the church to us. Making decisions as Presbyterians is often a slow process that takes a great deal of work. Making decisions this way, however, usually yields wise judgments rooted in God's revelation and our best human reflection.



tion. If we listen attentively to the Spirit of God, as we hear the greatest diversity of voices and earnestly seek to be faithful to the Bible and our constitution, we are as likely as humans can be to make good decisions.

Presbyterians believe that the best decisions are made when the broadest possible representation of our diversity participates. We believe in the equality of all people before God, and therefore our system represents a parity, an equality, of persons. There are always both elders and ministers qualified to vote in every governing body. We seek to have women as well as men represented. We encourage people of every race and ethnicity to participate.

At times in our history we have been captive to a general cultural prejudice that prevented us from welcoming diversity. For example, from the founding of the Presbyterian Church in this country down into the 1950s we tolerated first slavery and then racial segregation in church and society. Until the mid-20th century the only persons voting in our governing bodies were white men. Several landmarks on the road to diversity:

1930 — Women are admitted to the office of elder
1956 — First woman is ordained as a minister of Word and Sacrament
1964 — First African American is elected moderator of the General Assembly
When it is time to make a decision, Presbyterians do not just pull ideas out of the air. Our system of government enables an orderly process of discerning the will of God in which everyone participates. Next month we will take a look at how discernment works.

By Jack Rogers

January 2122

January 2122						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 <i>HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!!!</i>
2 10:30 a.m. Worship <i>Luke 2:41-52</i>	3	4	5	6 <i>Chamber of Commerce Luncheon</i>	7	8
9 10:30 a.m. Worship <i>Luke 3:15-17, 21-22</i>	10	11	12	13	14	15 <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holy Brook</i>
16 10:30 a.m. Worship <i>John 2:1-11</i>	17	18	19	20	21	22 <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook</i>
23 10:30 a.m. Worship <i>Luke 4:14-21</i> 30 10:30 a.m. Worship <i>Luke 4:21-30</i>	24 31	25	26	27	28	29 <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook</i>

Pastor Ray will be preaching on the scripture listed in bold on each Sunday.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH...

Please note: The previous week's sermon will broadcast at 7:45 a.m. every Sunday morning on WGCY.

Please note: Online Live Sunday Services will be available on our Facebook Page noted below:

First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City

[https://www.facebook.com/
profile.php?id-
142499619134911&ref=br rs](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=142499619134911&ref=br_rs)

Meladee's working hours:
Meladee will be in the church of-
fice from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday.

New Email Addresses: As part of the hardware and software upgrade for our church's technology, there are email addresses as noted below:

Pastor Ray:

Ray@fin
Meladee

Office@firstpresbygibson.org.

THE NEW FLOWER CHART IS UP IN THE SOUTH EN- TRY.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

January

02: David Stolz
06: Rick and Aizza
Kerchenfaut
13: Danny and Vonna
Heustis

15: Ramie Lantz
23: Edith Kaufman

February

03: Addison Kerchenfaut
11: Karen Mott
15: Charles and Cheryl Schultz

16: Jean Williams
19: Anneliese
Kerchenfaut
23: Ruthie Lantz

K. P. Duty

Jan: Carla Ashmore
Feb: Danny & Vonna
Heustis

Communion Server

**Jan 9: Rick Kerchenfaut
and Jean Williams**
**Feb: 27: Sharla Williams &
Tim Swanson**

Second Sunday Offering

Jan 9: McCormick Tutoring

***Feb 13: Food Pantry/
Shepherd's Closet***

Ushers

Jan: Rick and Aizza Kerchenfaut
Feb: Danny & Vonna Heustis



THANK YOU!

Dear Friends,

It is difficult to express our appreciation for the overwhelming support of our 2021 Fund Drive.

Thank you so much for assisting us in our continued store improvement projects. It is truly a blessing to live and operate the stores in such a caring and generous community as ours. Blessings, Annie, Shepherd's Close

Thank you! so much for the generous donation we received. It is so nice to be remembered. We all thank you. Gibson City Area Telcare Board Members and Employees

Thank you so much for your continued support of the Hanley School Fund. You are appreciated! Bonnie Clark, Hanley School Fund

***** Dear

Presbyterian Church Family, Thank you so much for the kind and generous gift. It's been wonderful to hear about all the church has done to give back to the community. Your gift to me will go towards earning my bachelor's degree as I begin my journey as an educator for inner city youth in Chicago. Well wishes and Happy Holidays, Greg Clow

Dear Presbyterian Church: The Gibson Area Food Pantry (GAFP) gratefully acknowledges your recent gift of \$ 500 (for the purchase of paper products) to support the distribution of food for those in need in the Gibson City Area and throughout Ford County. Currently all financial donations go for the purchase of food. The Gibson Area Food Pantry (GAFP) is by far the largest food pantry in Ford County. In 2020 it served families in 14 different counties with 87% of the food going to residents in Ford County. Children 18 and under receive 31% of the food and seniors receive 20%. In 2020 GAFP:

- Delivered food to 65 shut-ins each month
- Provided food to 45 families

through Back Packs at GCMS Elementary School

- Provided food to 36 families through Back Packs at Head Start
- Provided food to 413 different families

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the demand for food has increased by approximately 40%. We are serving many first-time users because of the unprecedented shut down of our local economy. Your generous donation will help us to continue to support that increased need. We thank you for your contribution to your local food pantry. Gibson Area Food Pantry Board

Dear First Presbyterian Church, On behalf of the Gibson Area Hospital Foundation, I wish to express our gratitude for your generous gift of \$1,500 on October 5, 2021 to sponsor the 2021 Glo Bingo. Your gift, along with that of many supporters such as yourself, ensures that GAHHS has the charitable and community resources to create excellence in healthcare programs and services, in support of a healthy community. We are grateful for your generosity, your trust, and most importantly, your commitment to our mission. The hospital could not make the impact that it does without the generous support of a caring community. Thank you again for your thoughtful gift to Gibson Area Hospital Foundation.

Sincerely,
GAH Foundation

Dear Session Members: We are grateful to be remembered in needing assistance due to the flood. We definitely will put the money to good use. Love, Tim and Janice Swanson

Thanks So Much! The phrase is simple and the words are few, but behind them is a whole lot of appreciation. Central Bus for GCMS

Dear First Presbyterian Church, "Let all that you do be done in love." I Corinthians 16:14 Your generosity speaks volumes about your commitment to the children of Kemmerer Village. Thank you for making this mission possible. Your recent gift of \$1,000 restricted for our KV Orchard, given in Honor of First Presbyterian Church, Gibson City, on 11/24/2021 ensures our ability to care for children and families now and for many Christmases to come. This Christmas at Kemmerer Village the excitement is palpable on campus. Holidays can be difficult for our children. There are lots of exciting activities, parties and feasts to brighten their spirits. We create amazing memories by showering them with love and attention all children deserve. We are grateful you give us this opportunity. Thank you for your partnership as we all look forward to a new year. Sincerely, Autumn Warren, Director of Development and Fundraising

Thank you for all your help after our incident. Your contribution will go a long way and help us out a lot. Thank you once again for all your prayers and support through it all. The Patels at the Dairy Queen.

Thank you so very much for the Gibson Bucks for Christmas and for allowing me most all of the week off to spend with my family. We had three days of Christmas with different family members, lots of food and plenty of fun. Thank you for allowing me the time to do this. Your secretary, Meladee Ferguson

Thank you! Your kindness means so very much. Thank you for everything you guys do for me.

Noah Swanson



Jean Williams (aka GG) with all her great grandchildren celebrating their Annual Christmas Baking Weekend. Look at all those smiles!



Ron and Mary Clow traveled to the Waltham Presbyterian Church in Utica to have our church books and minutes audited as required by Blackhawk Presbytery. They were approved with no exceptions. Pictured above is a picture of their beautiful sanctuary located out in the country surrounded by farmland.



Addison Kerchenfaut along with her teammate Sophia Ray show how teamwork helped them win their game against Tri-Valley.



Gibson City's Addison Kerchenfaut goes up for a layup attempt during a Junior Varsity game against PBL.



Congratulations to Anneliese Kerchenfaut who was named student of the month for December. She is involved in Student Council, Spanish Club, Prairieland CEO, and National Honor Society. She is also a cheerleader for both football and basketball. She plans to attend a 4 year school studying international business. She hopes to study abroad and wants to learn multi-



Anneliese Kerchenfaut is a 2022 member of the Prairieland CEO Program creating entrepreneurial opportunities to utilize partnerships that provide an overview of Business development and processes. The local Business Community partners with area schools to create project based entrepreneurial projects where students are immersed in real learning experiences.



Dail Renee Kirkpatrick recently got engaged to Foo Williams after a proposal at Central Park in New York



The Gibson Girls Home Extension Organization met on November 30th to fill Christmas bags for young women in need in Gibson City. Our Mission Committee donated \$1,000 to this organization back in March.



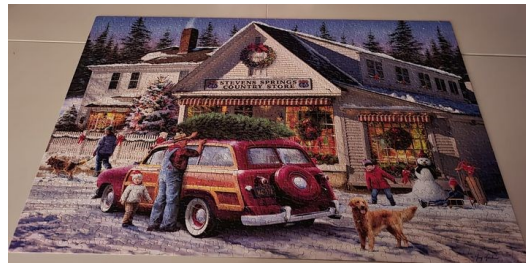
Anneliese Kerchenfaut having fun on the ice at the rink set up just south of the old Hager Lumber building on Sangamon Avenue.



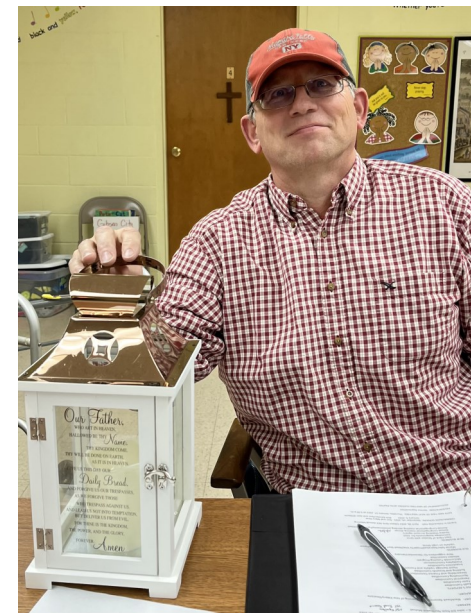
Meladee Ferguson with her son John and daughter-in-law Becky and her brother Mike Hastings and his wife, Barb. I love them all!!!!!!



My son John with his 3 year old granddaughter, Collins Layne Ferguson. (Meladee's great granddaughter.)



There was even time to put together a 1,000 piece Christmas puzzle at the Ferguson household. Something John, Becky and Meladee really enjoy doing!



Elders Charlie Schultz and Danny Heustis were presented with LED lanterns with the Lord's Prayer printed on the glass for their service as Elders at their final meeting on December 12th. Thank you Charlie and Danny. Sharla Williams (pictured) was also presented with a lantern along with Carla Ashmore (not pictured) for their service as Deacons. Thank you to Sharla and Carla.



From Ron and Eileen Woolums regarding our \$4,000 donation for supplies for the victims of the Mayfield, Kentucky tornado. "We don't know what to say but we are so grateful. We are going to help so many more people thanks to your generosity. God Bless your congregation!"

To the church congregation: Christmas was a favorite time of year for Larry Richoz. He visited many churches during this season. Since he can no longer hand out his handmade Christmas ornaments, we feel it is only appropriate that we make his presence known in a different way. Please accept this donation in Larry's name and know how important the churches of Gibson City were to him. (A check for \$10,000 was included with the letter.) Sincerely,
Lee Ann and Kevin Seymour, Executors of Larry's estate



Girl Scout Troop # 2548



Kemmerer Village 2021



Holiday fun with longtime friends. Some may look very familiar to us.

**KNOW
YOUR
PASTOR!**



The facts:
I, Raymond Edwin Lantz III, was born 5/17/1955, son of Raymond, Jr. and Barbara Chapman Lantz at Hamilton AFB, Marin County, California. My brother, Thomas, joined us in May 1956, and brother, Douglas, was born in 1958. Dad divorced in 1959 and was awarded custody of the three young boys. The four of us landed at Chanute AFB, Rantoul, IL in 1960. It was the fifth and last state I have lived in. Dad met and married a young widow, Oleta Lee Gaudio, who he married in Aug, 1960 in Gibson City. Mom had two young children, Ronald and Debra. In September, 1961, Pamela was born. Our blended family consisted of six children, under the age of 8. We lived in a one-bath, two-bedroom house to which an enclosed carport was added that became the boys’ bedroom. I grew up playing baseball, football, swimming and diving. I loved to read. I loved school. I liked the attention both sports and academics brought to me. I worked setting trap, delivering papers, and making pizzas. I spent as much time at the Gibson Swimming Pool as possible. I loved the water and the sun. I was called a “pool rat”, to me it was a compliment.
Dad served in the Air Force until the beginning of my junior year of high school. Although he served in Greenland and Michigan my first two years of high school, the family did not join him. I attended Gibson City schools all thirteen years. I have never heard of another military family that can boast of that. 1973 was an important year for me. I graduated high school and began college at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. College would teach me I could compete in the wider world. More importantly, Tom Hunt hired me at the pool to life-guard and coach the swim team. There I began to date Trudy Jo Swanson, daughter of Jo and Ted Swanson. Trudy and her family took me under their wings. They

were different. She taught me and continues to teach me how to love unconditionally. I asked her to marry me at Homecoming her senior year, and she said yes. We married on August 14, 1976. I finished college and Trudy attended Parkland College. We were young and poor and happy. During college, another Gibsonite, Steve Miller, hired me to work with him selling carpet. He taught me a lot, and Trudy and I returned home in 1978 to take over a small flooring store that Steve had started. We bought a house and a business. We were still young and poor and happy. Our son, Ramie, joined us early in 1979, and Ruthie, in 1982. We were young, poorer, blessed with two great children, and happy. I leave it to Trudy to tell you about the kids, their spouses, the grand-kids, and grand-dogs. We worked hard, but life happened. The store never made any money and closed in 1982. It was the first time I had ever felt defeated. I did not handle failure well. I poured myself into a new job, learning all I could, and when I had the opportunity, I opened another flooring store but this time in Champaign-Urbana.
How I ended up a pastor?
I did not handle failure well. I know I just wrote that, but it is important to my story. My failure made the selfish part of me stronger, even dominant. What I wanted became so important that I became dangerously close to losing everything I loved. It was a hard time but Trudy’s love and strength of will and church helped me to survive. I began to heal, but it was a long, long process, and it continues today. It was during this time that church became more important to me. After our wedding, I had began to attend the First Presbyterian Church. I was not active until Jean Williams approached me in the mid-eighties, and suggested that it was time to join the church. I found myself surrounded by role models that I wanted to be like. The church helped to rebuilt my self-confidence. I was a trustee, and then an elder, positions of trust that made me evaluate how I was living my life. I wanted to become less selfish. I wanted to become more Christ-like. Pastor Kathy Luke invited me to join a Presbyterian Disaster Assistance work project after Hurricane Katrina. The unselfishness of the volunteers was an eye opener. Our next pastor, John Oerter, began a friendship that contin-

ues. He was the first to suggest that becoming a commissioned pastor was a possibility. I thought he had smoked something in one of his pipes that made his thinking fuzzy, but the idea would not go away. Frank Fisher, the interim pastor after John, mentioned it again. I won’t repeat what I told him, but I remember it not being very pastoral. But as I soon discovered, God had made a decision that I could not decline. Soon it was not only possible, but a reality. Frank helped me get start working with the Presbytery. The Session approved of the idea. Most importantly, Trudy approved of it. Working as the moderator of the Pulpit Nominating Committee that recommended Pastor Mike Brazelle delayed the process for a year, but it helped me to understand the relationship between the pastor and the church that is being served. It was invaluable in my training. Soon I was applying to take classes through Dubuque Seminary. I found time to balance family, work, and studies. The three years from 2014-16 flew by. I felt God calling me and was eager to learn. Life intervened again. I fainted driving 70 mph on I-74 through Urbana. The accident was bad. Ruthie came home and nursed Trudy and I. Our recoveries were slow. The saving Grace of the accident was that Ramie stepped up to run the store, which he continues to do to this day. I stepped away without fear of causing another failure. I was commissioned the pastor of First Presbyterian of Kankakee in January 2017. I served there part-time for two years. I loved the people there: loving, generous, and strong-willed. A lot like here. When Mike Brazelle’s call was not renewed in Feb 2018, the Session here asked if I would be interested in returning. I did not think it was a possibility, because from the first, I had been told by the Presbytery that I would not be allowed to pastor my home church. I understood their reasons, and was willing to abide by their decision. But God’s Will has a way of changing human decisions. By May 2018, I was hired as a part-time commissioned pastor here, sharing time with Kankakee. Then in January 2019, I was commissioned full-time here. I just signed a contract for another 3 years. This is where God wants me to be. Whom am I to question? Let us continue to love God and our neighbor together!

UPDATE FROM RON AND EILEEN WOOLUMS on their trip to Mayfield KY. (Our church donated \$4,000.)

We put the word out that we were taking a trailer of supplies to Mayfield, and if anyone wanted to donate, we’d use that money to buy whatever was needed to help with their recovery. We had hoped for \$5,000 but we had over \$20,000 in just 2 days.
We bought every generator a local business had, and then went and got more. When a store asked how many, RON said , “All of them”. When they learned it was for Kentucky, they gathered and loaded our trailer in record time.
With the help of Beth Birkner, we connected with His House Ministries in Mayfield. Ron and Eileen Woolums and Gary Allen left at 6:00 a.m. on December 18th and when they first arrived, everything looked normal until they crossed an overpass and saw several homes damaged by the storm. They found the church and were immediately met with several helpers who were very thankful, saying they had a waiting list for supplies and the generator list was longer. Deliveries like ours, were being moved to a storage area downtown, so they gave us directions and a warning of what we would see. We had to drive right through the heart of all the damage. Pictures don’t do it justice. We saw devastation that we hope to never see again!!
A crew of people, many local, but several from across the country, unloaded our donation which included 46 generators, 6 propane heaters, and several tarps, battery operated lights, rope, and electrical cords. We were told that the items would go to people in Mayfield and in the surrounding communities.
On our way out of town, we stopped to fuel up and ended up striking up a conversation with the woman making coffee. When she checked us out, we told her that we had just delivered several generators. She said “Hold On” and immediately posted it on Facebook.
When the Woolums got home and finally relaxed, they cried for the neighbors in Kentucky that are suffering and for the overwhelming generosity of their family, friends, businesses, churches and even people they never met.
They would like to thank everyone from the bottom of their hearts. We, and this “we” is everyone who donated or sent loving thoughts their way - did a really, really great thing. God Bless and Merry Christmas!



Acts 20:35

In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’



Matthew 25:40

And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’



Hebrew 13:16

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.