

# PASTOR'S CORNER

## LENT IN PLAIN SIGHT!

God is often at work through the ordinary: ordinary people, ordinary objects, ordinary grace. Through the ordinary, God communicates epiphanies, salvation, revelation, and reconciliation. It is through the mundane that we hear God's quiet voice. In this devotional for the season of Lent, Jill J. Duffield draws readers' attention to ten ordinary objects that Jesus would have encountered on his way to Jerusalem: dust, bread, the cross, coins, shoes, oil, coats, towels, thorns, and stones. In each object, readers will find meaning in the biblical account of Jesus' final days. Each week, readers encounter a new object to consider through Scripture, prayer, and reflection. From Ash Wednesday to Easter, Lent in Plain Sight reminds Christians to open ourselves to the kingdom of God.

**Reviews:** In this short but sweet book about the ordinary things that Jesus would have encountered on his way to Jerusalem, author Jill Duffield suggests that God delights to work through the ordinary objects we encounter throughout our lives.... Each week, running from Ash Wednesday to Easter, Duffield shows us how God's grace becomes tangible in the mundane things of our lives." —*Christianity Today* "In this thoughtful new book, ten objects, common in our life and in the life of Jesus, mark a way of prayer through Lent: dust, coins, oil, thorns, and even towels. Duffield invites us to reflect on love, redemption, and God's promise in these simple, ordinary things, reminding us of the simple, ordinary, yet extraordinary reality of the gospel in our everyday lives." —Heidi Haverkamp, author of *Holy Solitude: Lenten Reflections with Saints, Hermits, Prophets, and Rebels*

"Lenten journeys are not meant to be solitary excursions into self but a long walk with good companions along the way of the cross. Like prayer itself, the journey is hard, and we need help to sustain us along the way. Jill Duffield is one such good companion and faithful guide whose prayers and devotions, centered on the commonplace, draw the

reader more deeply into the uncommon grace of Lent's mysterious gifts. Read this book, and you will find the gospel in ordinary bread that becomes, for the pilgrim, the bread of life."

"Want to observe a holy season of Lent? Want to make Lent more than a long detour the church takes between Easter and Christmas? Read this book."

—Presbyterian Outlook

Please join this Lenten season as we talk an hour each Wednesday morning to study this book.

Pastor Ray Lantz

### Continued from front page

... and it's still ongoing. Hopefully our rebuilding will start fairly soon." What that will look like is still to be determined.

Barger sees his role as asking questions, sometimes playing devil's advocate, to help the church think about what it wants to be and how a new building will serve those goals.

"As we were talking with the architect last night, one of the things he encouraged us to ask as we talk to the congregation is what is your mission in Mayfield?" Barger said, recalling the January 10 session meeting. "What do you do? What do you want to do? That will determine what your structure looks like."

Barger and the Uptons say so far answers to those questions point to staying where they are, where groups that use the church facility for things like Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and community meals can easily get to the building. They also say that the church would like to be part of a revitalized core of Mayfield.

"What you hear is people who have grown up in Mayfield say they want Mayfield to live again. They don't want downtown to disappear," Barger said. "We want to be a part of that regrowth, that revitalization downtown." The mission-oriented

questions may come into play more in what the structure looks like and how it can be structured to serve the congregation and the community. There are also considerations over how some elements of the old building, including the bell, may be incorporated into the new structure.

For now, the church has made the breakroom at Kendor Wood, a kitchen cabinet door factory owned by the Uptons, its worship space. The space includes objects from the former building, including a stained glass window, the Communion table cross, and the choir room piano, which was filled with dust from the tornado, making it a challenge to retune.

The Uptons said the church received offers from other area churches that were not damaged to use their space. But for now, they say First Presbyterian is comfortable having its own space where it does not have to work around another congregation's schedule. There is even talk of having picnics at a park space adjacent to the factory when spring and summer come and developing other creative alternatives for worship. "It's not a big deal for us since it is a family business and the whole family goes to church there," Danny Upton said.

"What's in the future for us? I don't know. But right now, we are looking forward to heading down the road."



*The site of First Presbyterian Church Mayfield's former building was for the most part cleared a month after a tornado destroyed the structure.*

# PRESBYTIDINGS

## FEBRUARY 2022

Pastor Ray Lantz

Worship: 10:30 a.m.

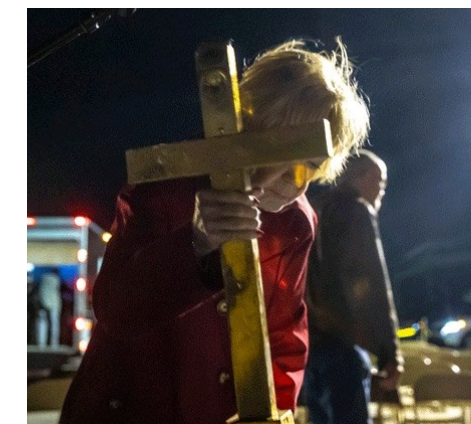
This Newsletter is a publication of First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City IL.

Website: [www.firstpresbygibson.org](http://www.firstpresbygibson.org)

Meladee Ferguson: Administrative Assistant

Mary Clow: Ministry Coordinator

### After a tornado destroyed its building, a Kentucky church begins to move forward . . .



*Renie Barger lifts a battered and dented cross that was recovered from First Presbyterian Church in Mayfield, Kentucky on December 24 2021.*

**With cleanup and recovery done, First Presbyterian Church of Mayfield begins to think about its mission and rebuilding.** That decision is not final as "we feel the whole congregation needs to be involved in that," session member Danny Upton said. So the question will be considered during an upcoming congregational meeting. But over the month since the church's 106-year-old building was all but leveled by a historic tornado, members have completed the process of recovering items that could be salvaged and clearing the site. That began simply with intrepid church members who went in on the days after the tornado struck to retrieve items including a stained-glass window, the cross from the church's communion table, the church's handbells, and the blueprints for the building. In subsequent weeks, the church retrieved some larger items

such as the choir room's upright piano, culminating with the church bell.

In the midst of that activity, on Christmas Eve the church gathered at the site of its home for more than a century to say goodbye.

It was billed as a candlelight service, though Pastor Don Barger says it was hard to keep candles lit in the wind, even with hurricane lanterns, so cell phone flashlights were substituted. It was a meaningful time, shared with neighboring First Christian Church of Mayfield.

"It gave people an opportunity to go across and pick up a brick if they wanted that souvenir to take home as a memento, to look fondly one more time, to recall stories, rethink previous Christmas Eve services that were held there." Barger said, "I get choked up every Christmas Eve service as we sing 'Silent Night' by candlelight, and trust me, this year was no easier at all."

Upton and his wife Juanita Upton said their entire family was there including four sons who had been baptized in the church and raised in the church. Several of the Uptons' sons were married there, and their grandchildren were baptized there. "We actually got to do a family picture in front of the building," Juanita said. "Somebody said, 'Isn't that a little morbid, like a family picture in front of a coffin?'" Danny continued, "We've got lots of family pictures in that church. So, this was the last one. We got a chance to just say goodbye to that building. That is the past. Right now, a clean lot is present, and hopefully the future will be a new church standing in that location. Then we will have a family picture in front of that church." Looking to the future, the church has

been encouraged by many, including Barger and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

National Response Team members said to think about the mission of the church and how by rebuilding they may be able to better accomplish that mission. First Presbyterian Mayfield has received a church damage grant from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance through the Presbytery of Western Kentucky.



*The bell of First Presbyterian Church in Mayfield was found in the rubble of the church building after it was destroyed by a December 10th tornado.*

The Uptons said the church has been grateful for financial and material donations from around the country since the tornadoes.

"Real America showed up in Western Kentucky," Danny Upton said. "They came. They gave their time. They gave their wealth. They gave their hearts to our plight . . .

**Continued on back page . . .**





# February 2122

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3  <i>Chamber of Commerce Luncheon</i>	4	5  <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook (if COVID free)</i>
6 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i>  <i>Luke 5:1-11</i>	7	8	9	10	11	12  <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook (if COVID free)</i>
13 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i> <i>11:30 a.m. Annual Meeting</i>  <i>Luke 6:17-26</i>	14	15	16	17	18	19  <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holy Brook (if COVID free)</i>
20 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i>  <i>Luke 6:27-38</i>	21 <i>American Red Cross Blood Drive 12:00 to 5:30 p.m.</i>	22	23	24  <i>7 p.m. Session</i>	25	26  <i>9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook (if COVID free)</i>
27 <i>10:30 a.m. Worship</i>  <i>Luke 9:28-43</i>	28					

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 office 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@firstpresbygibson.org](mailto:Ray@firstpresbygibson.org)  
Meladee  
[Office@firstpresbygibson.org](mailto:Office@firstpresbygibson.org)

**THE NEW FLOWER CHART IS UP IN THE SOUTH ENTRY.**

**HEED THE CALL FOR THE CONGRATIONAL MEETING: Sunday, February 13th: Annual Congregational Meeting—** A dinner will be served during the annual meeting and the new logo shirts will be distributed at the meeting. "Investment strategies will also be discussed."

**THERE WILL BE NO RECYCLING UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE DUE TO HEALTH ISSUES ON THE PART OF THE RECYCLER.**

**Free at home covid tests are available at [covidtests.gov](https://covidtests.gov). You just fill out the form on line and they will mail 4 individual tests to your home. It is easy and quick to do.**

### MISSION COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS – JANUARY 2022

Blackhawk Presbytery.....	\$4,000.00
Stronghold Camp & Retreat Center.....	\$4,000.00
Community Chest.....(Meals on Wheels).....	\$1,000.00
Telecare.....	\$1,000.00
GCMS High School Scholarships	
Trade School/Beauty School/HVAC.....	\$1,000.00
Nursing/Medical School.....(2).....	\$2,000.00
General Scholarships.....(2).....	\$2,000.00
Scholarships – members	
Emma Swanson..... Year 2..... May award.....	\$1,000.00
Nicole Schultz – ..... Year 2..... May award.....	\$1,000.00
Anneliese Kerchanfaut..... Year 1 – Out of State....	\$1,500.00
Harvest Fest Gold Level.....	\$2,500.00
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>\$21,000.00</b>

<b>BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES</b>		<i>K. P. Duty</i>	<i>Communion Server</i>
<b>February</b>		<i>Jan: Carla Ashmore</i>	<i>Jan 9: Rick Kerchenfaut and Jean Williams</i>
<b>March</b>		<i>Feb: Danny &amp; Vonna Heustis</i>	<i>Feb: 27: Sharla Williams &amp; Tim Swanson</i>
<b>February</b>		<i>Second Sunday Offering</i>	
<b>03: Addison Kerchenfaut</b>	<b>02: Neil Nelson</b>	<i>Jan 9: McCormick Tutoring</i>	
<b>11: Karen Mott</b>	<b>04: Blake Alexander</b>	<i>Feb 13: Food Pantry/ Shepherd's Closet</i>	
<b>15: Charles and Cheryl Schultz</b>	<b>04: Meladee Ferguson</b>	<i>Ushers</i>	
<b>16: Jean Williams</b>	<b>11: Maddox Alexander</b>	<i>Jan: Rick and Aizza Kerchenfaut</i>	
<b>19: Anneliese Kerchenfaut</b>	<b>18: Sharla Williams</b>	<i>Feb: Danny &amp; Vonna Heustis</i>	
<b>23: Ruthie Lantz</b>	<b>18: Janice Swanson</b>		
	<b>29: Ruth Davis</b>		





## THANK YOU!

Dear “folks,” From the bottom of my heart I thank you for remembering me—it helps very much to know that people care. I’ve had a rough 6 months: fell down basement steps, chipped a bone in right wrist, had covid, was in the hospital for three days due to pneumonia, and just got over acute bronchitis. We won’t mention any others! **THANK YOU ALL. GOD BLESS! Sandy Brucker**

**Pastor Lantz and congregation,** Thank you for the \$1,000 check you sent us following our house fire. May God wrap his arms around you and the congregation and keep you safe and well. **“Mac” and Ruth McClure**

**Dear First Presbyterian Church,** Thank you for your contributions and support that helped the Gibson Area Hospital Foundation to have a successful 2021! Sincerely, **Robert Schmitt (\$1,500)**

**Members of Session:** Thank you so much for your annual contribution to Gibson Area Music Foundation via First Presbyterian Church’s special Sunday giving program. The impact of congregational giving with your matching check meant an impressive total of \$600 was donated. Sincerely, **Jean S. Noellsch, Treasurer**

**We are so grateful for your generous donation to the Christmas Basket Committee.** We could not have helped those in need this Christmas season without your support. You helped us make a difference for our community once again and bring joy to families in their time of need. Thank you so very much?! **American Legion Post 568, Christmas Basket Committee (\$1,000)**

**Hello Ray and leaders at Gibson City:** Happy New Year! Thanks so much for the gift card you recently sent. It is really appreciat-

ed. You are a blessing to the Presbytery and your community! **Peace, Eric Heinekamp, Blackhawk Presbytery**

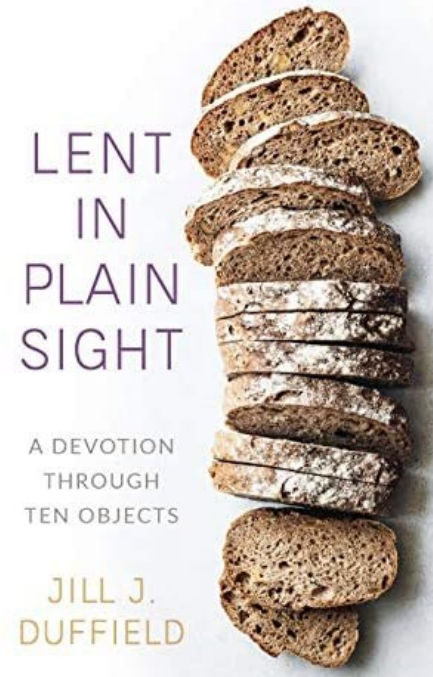
**First Presbyterian Friends:** How delighted I was to find your Christmas card and gift card in my mailbox today! That was so thoughtful of you to take the time and effort to remember me and the other Presbytery staff. When people ask me if I like my job, I always enthusiastically reply, “Yes, the people are great!” This was another example of the caring always shown to me. Thanks again. **Loreen Stravers, Blackhawk Presbytery**

**Dear First Presbyterian Church:** The Gibson Area House Rehab Foundation thanks you for your generous gift of \$1,070. This gift, along with others, will be spent with volunteers and guidance of professionals to assist the victims of the August 12, 2021 storms. Sincerely, **Rich Kerchenfaut, GAHRF Treasurer**

**Dear First Presbyterian Congregation:** Thank you very much for your recent gift to the Kemmerer Village Orchard. Your congregation’s long time dedication to the Kemmerer Village Mission has made a significant impact. We are proud of our services and proud to be part of your community. **Sliales Nayle, Executive Director**

**Thank you so much for your generous gift of Gibson City Bucks.** I plan to use it towards supplies for my classroom. I am blessed by your kindness. Thank you again. **Sharla Williams**

**Mary,** Thanks for all the Anniversary celebration things. Looks like you had a wonderful event. I am sure it was a lot of work, but a labor of love. Some of the things will find a home here at Stronghold, so they thank you too! **Mer-ry Christmas Loreen Stravers**



This book of devotions for Lent has been ordered and will be distributed to members sometime in February. If you did not receive one and/or would like one even if you are not a member, please contact Meladee in our office.



**New navy blue long sleeve shirts with church logo will be handed out at the Annual Congregational meeting on Sunday, February 13, at 11:30 a.m.**



### KNOW YOUR PASTOR’S WIFE: TRUDY SWANSON

I was born May 9, 1958 to Ted and Jo Swanson. I am their first born and I have a brother Tim and a sister Sara. I grew up always knowing I was loved with lots of family around, grandmas, grandpa, aunts, uncles, and lots of cousins.

On August 14, 1976 I married Ray Lantz. We moved to Champaign as Ray had one more year at the University of Illinois. I went to Parkland for one year. We lived there for two years and then moved back to Gibson. We bought a little house and I started keeping cousins’ little ones and really enjoyed it.

We started our family and January 15, 1979 Ramie was born and February 23, 1982 Ruthie was born. I loved being a wife and mother. I continued to keep multiple children as I raised our own.

After five years in our little house we bought a big ol’ fixer upper. I ended my daycare and started work-

ing on the house. We learned to strip wallpaper, strip woodwork, I made curtains and enjoyed the home improvements. The kids continued to grow and keep busy going to swim meets and baseball games.

I decided to start working at McDonald’s. I went to work at 5:00 a.m. so Ray got kids up and off to school and I was home after school. We continued working on the house and I learned to wallpaper, paint and decorate and I loved it. The kids were very busy with school activities, sports, band and chorus. I loved helping with and going to all their games, programs, meets and contests.

After working at McDonald’s five years I went to work at the Bank of Gibson City. I worked there for 18 1/2 years and loved it. I made many good friends while working there. When I left the bank I went to work at Carpet Advantage with Ray and Ramie and I am still there today, but just a couple of days a week.

In 2020 I got the good news that Ruthie and Dannon were going to move back to Urbana. What a joy! I was thrilled! I also got the good news that Ramie and Jennifer were going to have twins! What a blessing!

Today I am loving and enjoying my family and friends. I love being a Grandma and enjoy spending time with my grandsons, Wesley and Teddy. I enjoy family get togethers and all the good times we have together.

When I was born I was baptized in the church. I always sang in the children’s choir and attended Sunday school for many years. Ray and I were married in the church and our children and now grand-children were baptized in the church. As an adult I have been a deacon many times and now I enjoy being an Elder on the Session. The church and church family have always been an important part of my life.





A big Thank You to Danny and Vonna Heustis and Ray and Trudy Lantz for taking down all of the Christmas decorations and the Christmas tree in the sanctuary.

Our church hosted a funeral dinner for approximately 20 people at the Country Kettle on Tuesday January 25 for the family of Steve Sunderland. Steve lost his wife in a car accident in December and he and his daughter, Ginger, and family were in Fisher for a graveside ceremony.

Ogg Farm Update: We received notice from our farm manager that the cash rent has been raised from \$225 to \$250 per acre for the Ogg Farm. It is currently being farmed by Kurt Sommer.

Investments: Session held a Zoom meeting with John Dill from Northwestern Mutual to review the church investments from the sale of the Farlin Farm. Due to a downfall in the stock market, our eleven month return was 2.43 percent which was short of the 4 percent we hoped to reach. Pastor Lantz will discuss investment strategies at the Congregational meeting in February.

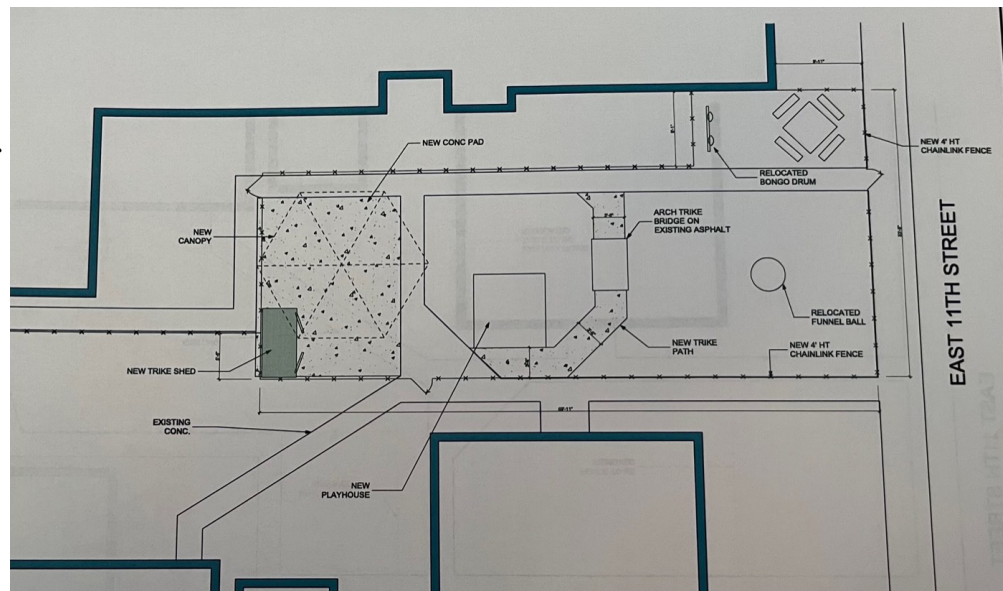
Update on the Manse: Ron and Mary Clow met with attorney Ellen Lee to inquire what is needed to move the property line before it can be put on the market. After some discussion, it appears we need approval from the City of Gibson. Rick Kerchenfaut is in the process of contacting the City to see what our next steps are to obtain their approval.

Session approved a new three-year contract starting January 2022 with Pastor Lantz at the December meeting. Congratulations and thank you for your leadership and spiritual guidance.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER:** The Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, February 13, at approximately 11:30 a.m. in the fellowship hall. A dinner will be served. This is a very important meeting for the life of our church, please plan to attend if at all possible.

We wish to express our deepest sympathy to Janice Swanson upon the passing of her mother.

Charlie, Addison and Anneliese Kerchenfaut all made High Honor Roll at GCMS for the 2nd Quarter.



The Community Development Institute that administers the Head Start Program in our building received a federal grant to redo the playground for the Head Start students. Above is a map that outlines the new equipment that it includes: a Trike Path, Arch Trike Bridge, Trike Shed, new Playhouse and Large Canopy. The Bongo Drums and Funnel Ball game will also be relocated. Work on the playground began January 25th.



Ron and Mary Clow escaped the January weather again in South Padre Island Texas. They always have the greatest Sand Castle's Contest.



Ron and Mary Clow enjoy dinner with friends from Minnesota they met five years ago and enjoy the island with every January.

