

PASTOR'S CORNER

Because Easter is early this year, we do not have the luxury of reading all of the Sermon on the Mount in consecutive weeks. Instead, please take the few next minutes and read the entire sermon in one sitting. I hope you find it as powerful as I do.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. “You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the

kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. “You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’ ;and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift. Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell. “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery. “Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.’ But I say to you, Do not

swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be ‘Yes, Yes’ or ‘No, No’ ;anything more than this comes from the evil one. “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you. “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

“Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. “So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you,

Continued on page 3.

PRESBYTIDINGS

February 2023
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



AGING GRACEFULLY: Ritual Honors the Richness of Growing Older by Tracy Mehr-Muska/Presbyterian Today

In his book “Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life,” Richard Rohr acknowledges that “many, if not most, people and institutions remain stymied in the preoccupations of the first half of life.” Given that the 2022 PC(USA) membership statistics show that a majority of those sitting in pews are 56 and older, churches have both the obligation and opportunity—to address the needs of those in the second half of life.

One powerful tool that the church can use is ritual. Ritual can be any activity that acknowledges and honors the joys, losses and hopes related to transitional moments. Developing rituals for people in mid and later life can help destigmatize aging, combat the epidemic of loneliness among older adults and deep-

en a sense of community connection. The following are some examples of what can be ritualized to honor the complexities and richness of aging.

Ritual for Retirement— There are many expectations and hopes related to retirement, and a meaningful ritual can acknowledge and normalize the many different-and sometimes conflicting-feelings people might be experiencing. A ritual of this type might include honoring the grief related to saying goodbye to one’s identity tied to vocation, recognizing the anxiety related to the impending lack of routine, and inviting an exploration of one’s purpose and passions.

Ritual for downsizing— Downsizing to a more supportive living situation is also rife with mixed feelings. Even when these types of transitions are desired, there is a great deal of grief associated with changing one’s place of residence. There could be a blessing held at the former home that would invite the sharing of stories and memories. Similarly, a blessing could be done at the individual’s new residence.

Ritual for new love— Adults in mid and later life may find themselves in romantic rela-



tionships that they did not anticipate. There are occasions when marriage may not be an option because of family dynamics or one’s emotional sense of responsibility to a former partner. In these instances, a blessing could be done that acknowledges the joy of new love discovered, honors the families and former partners of everyone, and invites the couple to live into the next chapter with intention, integrity and joy.

Other rituals— Additional rituals that can help people feel seen, loved and supported include rituals related to experiencing menopause, paying off one’s mortgage and even giving up one’s driving privileges.

If Pastor Lantz and/or our church can help you with any of these rituals, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.



February 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 RECYCLE 9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook
5 10:30 a.m. Worship Annual Congregational Meeting-Lunch at Horsch Radish Matthew 5:13-20	6	7	8	9	10	11 9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook
12 10:30 a.m. Worship Matthew 5:21-37	13	14 Happy Valentine's Day!	15	16 5:30 Session	17	18 9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook RECYCLE
19 10:30 a.m. Worship Matthew 17:1-9	20 Hospital Auxiliary Blood Drive President's Day-Church office is CLOSED	21	22	23	24	25 9 a.m. Bible Study at Holly Brook
26 10:30 a.m. Worship Matthew 4:1-11	27	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 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

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

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

Pastor Ray:
Ray@firstpresbygibson.org

Meladee
Office@firstpresbygibson.org.

THE NEW FLOWER CHART IS up on the bulletin board outside of the secretary's office.

Next Session meeting will be Thursday February 16, 2023.

February is mostly recognized for **Valentine's Day**, flowers, and, depending on where you are, being incredibly cold!

Of all the words you can misspell, February is one of the most misspelled words in the English language. Even the White House has misprinted the word "February" before in a press release!


February is the only month where it's possible to go the entire time without having a full moon.

Sadly, on **February 1, 2003**, the Space Shuttle "Columbia" broke apart in flight, which killed all seven crew members. The accident was believed to be a result of damage that occurred during lift-off. The tragedy occurred only 16 minutes before the shuttle was scheduled to land.

There are many U.S. states that entered the Union during the month of February. These include **Massachusetts, Oregon, Arizona, and Mississippi**, which were readmitted.

How do they say February in other languages? The word February translates to over 100 other languages. Some of these languages are as follows: Èryuè – Chinese (Mandarin), Februari – Dutch, Février – French, Februar – German, Febbraio – Italian, Februarius – Latin

How many people are born on February 29? The probability of February 29 birthdays is 1 in 1,461. U.S. Census Bureau data reveals that only about 0.07% or 205,000 people in the U.S. have a February 29 birthday. Another interesting fact about February: People born on February 29 are called "leapers." How cool is that!? "Leapers" get to celebrate their actual birthdays only every four years. They usually celebrate their birthdays on February 28th or March 1st and use these dates on official documents.

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES		Second Sunday Offering	Where did the word February come from?
		Feb 12: Food Pantry/ Shepherd's Closet	Since other months, like January , are named after Roman gods, you'd be forgiven for thinking February was named after the Roman god Februs. But, the word February comes from the Roman festival of purification called <i>Februa</i> , during which people were ritually washed. In this case, the god was named after the festival, not the other way around.
February	March	Ushers Feb: Danny and Vonna Heustis Mar: Ron and Mary Clow	
03: Addison Kerchenfaut 11: Karen Mott 15: Charlie & Cheryl Schultz 16: Jean Williams 19: Annilease Kerchenfaut 23: Ruthie Lantz	02: Neil Nelson 04: Meladee Ferguson 17: Karen Ladd 18: Sharla Williams 18: Janice Swanson 29: Ruth Davis	Communion Servers Feb 19: Danny and Vonna Hesutis Feb 26: Ron and Mary Clow March 5: Charlie Schultz and Tim Swanson	

THANK YOUS AND MORE

Members of the Presbyterian Church: Thank you so much for the very generous donation to the GCMS After Prom. We are grateful and appreciative of your continuous support of GCMS students. Sincerely, GCMS After Prom Committee

Dear First Presbyterian Church: On behalf of the Gibson Area Hospital Auxiliary, thank you for your donation of \$1,000 in support of our Love Lights a Tree campaign. Your gift, along with that of many others, will be used by the Auxiliary to purchase items for Gibson Area Hospital and Health Services. The Love Lights a Tree Program is our way of helping to support and provide excellence in healthcare. Thank you again for your continued support. Ruth Neal, GAHHS Auxiliary Co-First Vice-Chair and Donna Siders, GAHHS Auxiliary Co-First Vice-Chair

Jean Williams: Thanks to you and Head Start for the gift you gave me. I enjoy this little task. Tom Hartford

First Presbyterian Church: Thank you for the flowers for Marinell's funeral. Ralph and family

Dear Friends at First Presbyterian Church: I was so delighted to open your Christmas greetings and generous gift card! To be remembered in this way and thanked so unexpectedly is truly the greatest gift. I am always grateful to have a job where I can be helpful to many people and in some small way further the message of Christ in the world. Perhaps some day I will have a chance to meet more of you. Thank you again and may you find many blessings in 2023! Loreen Stravers, Blackhawk Presbyterian Office Administrator

My heartfelt thanks to Session and my Presbyterian "Family" for the very generous gift of Random Acts of kindness. I have (and still) en-

joy being your church treasurer and being included in your activities and thoughtfulness. I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Sincerely, Phil Noellsch

I would like to thank personally, as well as the entire Gibson Area House Rehab Foundation, (now you know why we go by "GAHRF!") for the gift card to the Horsch Radish. It is very much appreciated. And we thank the Presbyterian Church for allowing us to meet in the Fellowship Hall. Thank you for your support. Phil Noellsch

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ: On behalf of the Presbyterian Historical Society, thank you for your gift of \$200 received on December 20, 2022. Your generosity is truly appreciated as we continue our innovative work in collecting and sharing the multifaceted history that makes up the Presbyterian experience. Your donation supports our core archival services such as reference and digitization while also helping us strengthen the partnerships that facilitate an active engagement with archival collections and lead to a deeper understanding of our shared history. The Presbyterian Historical Society looks forward to the work ahead. We are committed to ensuring that PHS's collections both reflect and support the changing church-and further the PCA (USA)'s faithful witness in the world. None of this would be possible without the support of donors like you. We are grateful for your gift. Thank you! Grace and Peace, Nancy J. Taylor, Executive Director

Pastor Lantz and Church Congregation: Thank you so much for your very generous donation of \$500 to the Ford County Sheriff's Office. I want to express how grateful I am for all the support and prayers you have given to this office, especially the past few years where the law enforcement job has

become much more challenging and stressful. The appreciation you have shown toward the deputies goes a long way in helping them maintain a positive attitude when things seem at its worst. Chad Johnson, Ford County Sheriff

Thank you Jeanette Hensley and the Women's organization for restocking the kitchen supplies.



Jean Williams, pictured above, is the winner of our Word Search Puzzle for the month of January. There were twelve (12) entries this month (Val Hunt, Janice Swanson, Sherry Tomlinson, Denise Birky, Jean Williams, Sharon Collings, Addy Kerchenfaut, Danny Heustis, Jodi VanSwol, Phil Noellsch, Barb Williams and Jeanette Hensley). Anyone receiving this newsletter is eligible to win a \$20 gift card to County Market. Please see the **HOT PINK** colored card sheet in the center of this newsletter to play. Turn it in to the church office by February 25th! Not at the church: Mail it or place in the black box outside the east church door.

Be certain to read the Bible verses attached to the puzzle each month. I FOUND EVERY WORD LISTED IN THE FEBRUARY PUZZLE. Meladee

SCOUT NEWS

Mary Clow is happy to report that our Church has donated \$500 to each of the five Scout Troops in Gibson City. Studies show kids in Scouts do better in life. Scouts help youth develop self-confidence, leadership skills, ethics, and problem-solving skills. Listed below is information on each Troop.

- Lori Patton – Troop Leader Girl Scouts Age 11-18 -Troop 2548
- Boy Scouts Age 11-18 -Troop 29
- Lora Russell Girl Scout Brownies Troop # 2011 Kindergarten
- Erin Nuss - Troop Leader Cub Scouts Grades K to 5th Grade – Troop 185
- Laura Lynch – Troop Leader Girl Scouts Grades 4th to 6th Grade – Troop 2913
- Kate Provin – Troop Leader Girl Scout Brownies Grades 2nd & 3rd - Troop 2939



McCormick Tutoring Program at GCMS: Sharla Williams is happy to report the 1st semester tutoring numbers as follows:

- Elementary School—Four teachers provided seven students with services.
- Middle School—One teacher provided nine students with services.
- High School—One teacher provided seven students with services.

That is a total of 23 students who received tutoring services!! What an awesome program we support with the help of the Funk Foundation and Gibson Area Hospital.



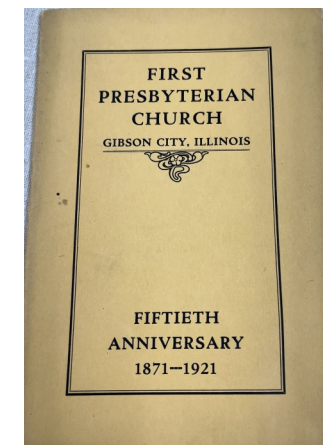
Elders

Trudy Lantz and Rick Kerchenfaut were presented a Lantern with the Lords Prayer for their service as an Elder that ended on December 31st. Thank you both for your service to our church.

Mary Clow is happy to report that our logo cloth tablecloth has arrived and will be used for special occasions and funerals. A second one was ordered and has also arrived.



Jeanette Hensley recently brought in some items from our church past. This program is over 100 years old and was printed for the Church's 50th Birthday. There was no date on the beautiful plate with the church's building picture. Both will be available for review at the annual meeting on February 5th.



See picture to the right. Thanks!

As noted last month, Session has designated up to \$3000 from the Brickman Memorial Fund to help restore the Gibson City Nativity Display. Local residents Ellen Hanks and Kathy Walker Steidinger will be meeting after the holidays to discuss the project. As you can see in these pictures, the paint is peeling and there is a hole in the front plexiglass cover. The roof also leaks. Further updates will be provided.



Hopefully you are able to see at least some of the damage that has occurred over the years.



A BIG THANK YOU TO Denis Fisher who recently repaired and painted the ceiling outside the kitchen. He did not charge us because of all the good things we have been doing in the community. How nice to be recognized and appreciated.



A blast from the past of two of our favorite members Val Hunt and Jean Williams.



Uncle Tim holding Wesley and Aunt Janice holding Teddy.



The Second Sunday offering for February is Shepherds Closet and their Emergency Food Pantry. It is a non-profit thrift shop and they also have available some food for families experiencing food emergencies. This is separate from the Gibson Area Food Pantry. The Shepherds Closet and Closet Too stores are managed by Leanne Barnett and several volunteers. Donations are welcome. Session will match up to \$500 donated towards this program.

Fun Sunday - What joy there was on Sunday, February 15th as the Lantz's twin grandsons came to church with Grandpa Ray and Grandma Trudy. Uncle Tim and Aunt Janice helped entertain them during service.



Teddy and Wesley

Addison Kerchenfaut made the GCMS High Honor Roll for the First Semester of the 2022-23 School Year. Charlie Kerchenfaut made the GCMS Middle School Honor Roll for the First Semester of the 2022-2023 School Year.

Thank you so much for your generous donation. With your continuing support I am able to put smiles on children's faces Christmas morning. This year of 2022 I was able to help 3,940 children with everyone's support. Looking forward to another great year in 2023. Thanks again, Sheryl Hovel (Remember, every child deserves a little Christmas.) Toys for Tots



John and Leanne Barnett, managers of Shepherds Closet.

See more pictures of the twins in the column to the right.

MISSION COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS – JANUARY 2023

Blackhawk Presbytery 2023 Pledge	\$ 4,000.00
Stronghold Camp & Retreat Center.....	\$ 4,000.00
Community Chest.....(Meals on Wheels).....	\$ 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
Subtotal.....	\$14,000.00

Pastor's Corner continued from back page . . .

they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in

secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we

wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

If you can't wait until next month's Pastor's Corner for the last third of this sermon, go to Matthew 7:1 and continue reading.

Amen!

P.S. Lent begins Wednesday February 22nd and Easter is April 9th.

Pastor Ray Lantz



Kerchenfaut Christmas: Rick, Charlie, Aizza, Addison and Anneliese and, of course, Santa in the front.



It was a three- generation Christmas at the Clow's. Ron and Mary hosted the Christmas celebration with Ron's parents, Ron and Carolyn Clow (and their dog Meadow), and Ron's son Greg Clow and his girlfriend Erin Heyes, both of Chicago.



Christmas 2022 at the home of Pastor Ray and Trudy Lantz.



Teddy and Wesley, otherwise known to Grandpa Ray and Grandma Trudy as Pride and Joy!



Ramie (dad) and Ted Swanson (great-grandpa) in the background. Teddy standing and Wesley playing with truck.



Grandma Trudy, Teddy and Wesley



The Lantz Family Christmas

Christmas at the home of Jean Williams with her family. (1) Jan and Joe Fisher and grandkids. (2) Jean and 5 of her great grandchildren. (3) Daughters Linda Chiczewski and Jan Fisher with mom, Jean, in the middle. (4) Granddaughter, Kristin Mackey, Jan Fisher, Jean and granddaughter-in-law Jen Fisher. (5) Jan and Joe Fisher and their children, Jason Fisher and Kristin Mackey.

3 things will last forever
 - faith, hope, & love
 & the greatest of these is
love.
 I CORINTHIANS 13:13



