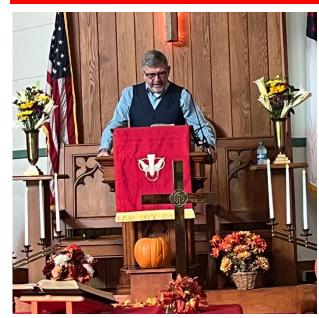
PASTOR'S CORNER



Thank you Pastor Paul Thomason for a wonderful sermon on Sunday November 5th. We were so blessed to have you lead and worship with us. Thank you for encouraging God's word and helping us understand the Scripture.



Those preaching or reading in December 2023:

December 3: Pastor Judi Geistlinger

December 10:Dr. Jim Dunnan

December 17: Pastor Paul Thomason

December 24: Pastor Paul Thomason

December 31: Pastor Judi Geistlinger—Communion



Thank you Reverend Cindy Shepherd for again preaching at our church on November 12th. Your sermon was enjoyed by all. Mary Clow especially took note of you telling us during your sermon that your thought each morning when you woke up was "it is a magnificent time to be alive in a time that matters".

Left: Thank you Pastor Connie Bandy for preaching on November 19th. Your message was inspiring and appropriate for the day.

Right: Thank you Pastor Judi Geistlinger for preaching and serving communion on November 26th and December 3rd. Everyone enjoyed your sermon and your beautiful singing voice.

Those reading and lighting the Advent Candles:

December 3: Tim and Janice Swanson

December 10: Charlie and Cheryl Schultz

December 17: Jean Williams and Sharla Williams

December 24: Rick Ker-chanfaut and Family





Thank you Beverly Nagle for playing special music at the November 12th service. You are a talented lady and everyone so enjoys your music.

PRESBYTIDINGS

December 2023—January 2024

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

CONFIRMATION AND INSTALLATION SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH.



Congratulations Addison & Charlie Kerchenfaut on your Confirmation and membership to our Church. Addison and Charlie are the children of Rick and Aizza Kerchenfaut. You are now citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. Thank you Janice Swanson for teaching and guiding Addison and Charlie Kerchenfaut through this life changing process. Our church is truly blessed to have you as a member of our church and teaching elder.

Congratulations Jean Williams and Rick Kerchenfaut on your installation as Elders for our Church. The current Elders look forward to leading the church together with you.

Thank you Pastor Connie Bandy for moderating our meetings and presiding over the confirmation and installation services. Our church is truly blessed to have your guidance.

Thank you Mary Clow for your part as the Clerk of Session and putting all the pieces together to make this happen.



Church members witnessing these events included Ron & Mary Clow, Rick & Aizza Kerchenfaut, Tim & Janice Swanson, Val Hunt, Jean Williams, Carolyn Clow, Jeanette Hensley, Trudy Lantz, Ted Swanson, Meladee Ferguson, Carla Ashmore and Danny & Vonna Heustis. Not pictured Charlie & Cheryl Schultz and Pat Farris who were also in attendance.



December 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 RECYCLE
3 10:30 a.m. Worship: Pastor Judi Geistlinger	4	5	6	7 2 p.m. Heaven Bound, a gos- pel group, will preform at Holly Brook	8	9
10 10:30 a.m. Worship: Dr. Jim Dun- nan	11	12	13	14	15	16 RECYCLE
17 10:30 a.m. Worship: Pastor Paul Thomason	18	19 5:30 Session	20	21	22 ME HRIS	23 RRY
24 10:30 a.m. Worship Pastor Paul Thomason 31 10:30 a.m. Pastor Judi Geistlinger— Communion	25 Happy Birthday, Jesus! Merry Christmas! Church office will be closed.	26 The church office will be closed all this week.	Meladee will be popping in to do her work at odd times during the week.	28 Church office will be closed.	29 Church office will be closed.	30

The church office will be closed from December 25th through January 1st.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH... FUN FACTS ABOUT DECEMBER.

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:

Meladee

fpcgc60936@sbcglobal.net Officefirstpresbygibson.org



December is a month for celebration! While many Christians and non-Christians alike celebrate Christmas, other cultures mark this time of year with their own holiday traditions. Kwanzaa, celebrated by African Americans, is a way to connect with African culture and historical heritage. Hanukkah, celebrated by the Jewish population, is known as The Festival of Lights.

If you were lucky enough to be born in the month of December you will belong to the zodiac sign of <u>Sagittarius</u> (December 1st to 21st) or Capricorn (December 22nd to 31st). Sagittarians are represented by the archer and are independent and compassionate. Capricorns are represented by the goat and are practical and stubborn.

Lights are very symbolic to the month of December. Millions of people decorate their houses with twinkling lights at Christmas. Others light candles and place them on the windowsills. There's the Fête des Lumières in Lyon, France, a celebration of the Virgin Mary with a spectacular Basilica light show. This is one of the biggest light shows in the world. There's also the lighting of the Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center in New York City which is always pretty special. And let's not forget the nine candles that are lit during Hanukkah. Basically, lots of lights!

As the year comes to a close, most people have a chance to reflect on the past year and what they may want to achieve, change or continue as the calendar switches over. New Year's Eve celebrations take place around the world on December 31st with raucous crowds, live music, drinks, fireworks and a countdown to midnight. December is the only month that ends with a kiss and a hug and a cheer of Happy New Year!

Merry Christmas!

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

December 07: Charlie Schultz

25: JESUS

27: Elinor Nelson

Happy Birthday Jesus January
02: David Stolz
06: Rick and Aizza
Kerchenfaut

13: Danny and Vonna Heustis

15: Ramie Lantz

23: Edith Kaufman

Second Sunday Offering

Dec 10: Christmas Joy Offering

Jan 14: McCormick Tutoring

Ushers

Dec: Ron and Mary Clow Jan: Rick & Aizza Kerchenfaut

Communion Servers

Dec 31: Ron & Mary Clow Jan: To be announced

The name December is derived from the latin word decem, meaning 10. But wait? Isn't December the 12th month of the year? It is now. But the early Ro-

man calendar consisted of only 10 months before <u>January</u> and <u>February</u> were added later by Roman ruler Numa Pompilius, so it used to be the 10th and final month of the year. We just don't think *Duodecimember* (the latin word for twelve) has the same ring to it.



THANK YOUS AND MORE

Dear Church Family, Thank you for the lantern given in remembrance of my mom, Jean Jardine, and honoring her and other past members during worship. My family and I enjoyed the church's birthday luncheon, and as my grandson, Bruce, said, "There was lots of delicious food!

Teresa Alexander

Ron and Mary Clow were thrilled to be able to meet Lisa Helgesen who works at the Gibson City Police Department. Session recently approved a \$2000 donation to Lisa to help with her medical costs due to kidney failure. Please continue to keep Lisa in your prayers.



Dear Friends, Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$2,000 towards my medical expenses. It will help me so much with all the incidental expenses that insurance does not cover. It sure makes me feel good that there are people out there willing to help. I visited your church once, on Thanksgiving. I liked it very much and my daughter commented on how friendly everyone was. You have a very special ministry in Gibson City. God bless you as you continue to bless others. Sincerely,

Lisa Helgesen

Thank you so much for your donation! We so appreciate all the support we get from the First Presbyterian Church. You guvs are amazing!

The Gibson City Harvest Fest/ **Christmas Committee**

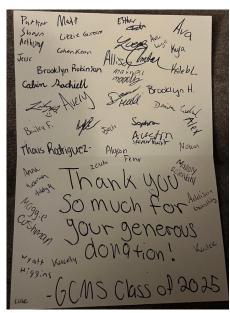
Elder Ron Clow recently presented a \$1,000 donation from our **Church to the Gibson City Police** Department to Police Officer David Nelson who was on duty that day. Our donation included a letter telling them how grateful we were for their continued efforts in keeping the neighborhoods of Gibson City safe. We should all continue to pray and ask God to protect them from harm in the performance of their duty to stop crime.



Dear Members, The Gibson City Police Department wishes to thank you for your generous donation of \$1,000. That was certainly a nice surprise for us and thank you for thinking of us. We plan to use the money towards the purchase of new mobile data computers for the squad cars. The ones we are using are badly outdated and this will help us to replace them. The officers use these mobile data computers for everything from looking up license plates to communicating with other officers and agencies. Your gift will go toward replacing the ones we have, which are at least 15 years old. Thanks again for thinking of us, and thanks for all the good you do for the community. We really enjoy reading your newsletter each month and wish vour church all the best with vour ministry going forward. Sincerely, Chief Adam S. Rosendahl

Dear Presbyterian Church: Thank vou very much for being a VIP Sponsor at our Fall Glo Bingo Event. We hope that you and your guests had a glowing time. We look forward to seeing you at our Spring Event on April 19, 2024. We Appreciate You! Jami Smith and Bill Kirby, Gibson Area Hos-

A warm and sunny thank you! Thank you so much for your generous donation. We will make some vets a nice Christmas! Denny **Troyer, Commander 568**



For After Prom Fundraiser Donation: The GCMS Class of 2025

Thank you for your contribution to our 140 Men and Women Campaign. Your monetary donation allows G.C. Restoration Association to focus our efforts on restoring the historic Burwell Building and to make the structure a thriving part of the downtown area once again. We appreciate your support in this mission and we are blessed to have your partnership. Sincerely, Dawn Klintworth, **Board Member and Secretary,** Gibson City Restoration Association

FROM OUR CHURCH FAMILY



Here is a picture of Emma Swanson while working at Tea and Grounds as a barista. Emma has her Associates Degree in Digital Media and is working on her Associates Degree for Horticulture.



With basketball season starting soon, Coach Thompkins had team bonding with the players volunteering to work the November 4th recycling event. Pictured are some of the players with Charlie **Kerchenfaut front row 2nd from** right.



Val Hunt wears a witches hat and waits for tricker treaters to arrive at Hollybrook on Halloween. It was a fun evening.

> To the right: Charlie and Cheryl Schultz recently took their

grandsons Bash and Sutton to a rodeo in Gordyville. Don't you just love the hats!! Charlie and Chervl sure are cool grandparents.

Pictured below: 2nd from left Charlie Kerchenfaut with friends at 2023 GCMS Homecoming.





Val Hunt with her always growing and adorable great grandsons Cayden and Tyson.





Falcon Proud/ **Church Family** Proud

Our very own Addison Kerchenfaut was elected President of the Junior Class at **GCMS** for the 2023-2024 school vear.



Our Church was chosen to be one of the Grand Marshals in the Gibson City Christmas parade on November 18th. What a great time our group had riding a float with our light up hats and gloves. The streets were lined with so many families. Participating in the fun left to right was Rick and Aizza Kerchenfaut, Ted Swanson, Janice Swanson, Jesse and Noah Swanson, Val Hunt, Jean Williams, Mary and Ron Clow and Tim Swanson.











A little about Mike Hastings, our monthly poem writer (and brother of our Administrative Assistant, Meladee Ferguson) What can I say about Mike Hastings? He is a little more on the shy side than his outgoing sister. He is easy on the eyes. He has a dazzling smile and uses it often. He whistles a lot. He is a very happy person loving the Lord with all his heart. (Needless to say, as his wonderful sister, I am very proud of him and I love him to the moon and back.)

He has been married to his lovely wife, Barbara, for 49 plus years and they live in Tolono, Illinois. He has two sons, Ryan and Joshua and three grandsons (Ryan has two boys, Roman and Zeke and Joshua has one son, Noah.) They have a new puppy, Bailey. They are regular attendees at their church in Champaign and very active in that church.

Mike has a deep relationship with the Lord. He loves praising our Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through his poetry. He can be taking a walk, driving down the road, or just relaxing at home and a clear phrase will pop into his mind and he has to find pen and paper immediately so he can jot the words down on paper that God places in his mind and on his heart. Mike is very emphatic that this is not his doing, it all comes from God. (We recently had a sermon on the talents God gives each of us. To quote Leo Buscaglia, "Your talent is God's gift to you. What you do with it is your gift back to God.")

He also writes poems about people and he does impressions of famous people. At Dr. Etherton's 80th birthday party he read I found it in my heart, a poem he had written about Dr. **Etherton and did it as Jimmy** Stewart. (Jimmy Stewart is one of his very best impressions.)

We have had so many favorable comments on Mike's poems and we are so happy and blessed that he is sharing his talent with us each and every month.

Written by Meladee Ferguson



WHERE IS CHRISTMAS?

By: Mike Hastings Where is Christmas? I didn't find it at the mall, Though many found it there. It wasn't in the tree we bought, Though its perfume filled the

It wasn't in the turkey In the oven slowly baking. Nor in the Christmas cookies That soon we would be making. It wasn't in the stockings Hung neatly in a row. Nor in the frosty winter air That hinted falling snow. It wasn't in the specials That were showing on TV. Nor the carols on the radio Though they sounded good to me.

No, Christmas wasn't to be found

In what's listed up above. It was in my Father's love. He sent a baby boy child Himself, born in a manger To a lost and dying world Where each soul lived in danger. He sent that child to save us That our souls would not be lost The star that shown above Him

Must have veiled a shadowed cross.

So at this time of year If you're asking, "Where is

Christmas"?

The answer lies within your heart

It's Emmanual, God with us.



Two men were talking about the power of prayer. One made a bet with the other to pray for six months about a specific thing, event or persons to see if there were any answers to prayer. So the prayer person picked a country about which he had no knowledge of its status or Christian values. To put it in a capsule, he prayed diligently over the six months, visited the country, saw some changes that needed to be made and was then invited to come back to initiate major change for the good.

I was so taken by this act of faith, that I decided I wanted to do it also. So, I have chosen a group of people and am praying every night for a change in their lives with a relationship to our Lord. May I invite you to join me? Pick a situation that isn't part of your daily prayer and pray fervently. This isn't a test of God, it is to honor God. We may never know the outcome of our prayers, but I know God hears. Whether you participate or not, or maybe you already are practicing this journey, let us not limit the love and care of God through prayer.

This idea was submitted by Jeanette Hensley who had received it one Christmas from David and Ellie Stolz. And what a lovely idea it is!



Facebook Post from the Gibson City
Restoration Association: We would like
to introduce you to our first Platinum
Sponsor. First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City has been a very strong supporter
of ours, and we are so happy that they
chose to become a sponsor in our 140th
year. Thank you, First Presbyterian
Church of Gibson City. We appreciate
your support so much.

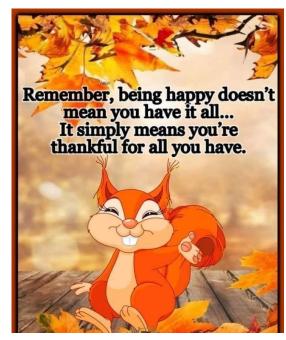
Gibson Area Chamber of Commerce

Ministry Coordinator Mary Clow attended the Gibson Area Chamber of Commerce meeting on Thursday November 2nd representing the Church. The first speaker was Rob Schmitt who announced that the Gibson City Rotary Club has disbanded. There is a new organization called the Gibson Area Service Association being started to assume some of the same goals. Active membership dues will be \$20 and Supportive membership dues will be \$30 per year. They hope to have quarterly meetings. More information will follow on future projects and fundraising events.

The second speaker was Dawn Klintworth from the Gibson City Restoration Association with an update on the Burrell/Loy Building. Dawn announced that roofers have started replacing the roof and they have applied for several grants. The organization has also applied to have the building designated as a Historical Place with Illinois Landmarks which may help with the grant applications. In addition, the Board approved a plan as to what the future use of the building will be. This should also help with grants and was explained in our last month's church newsletter. Dawns final announcement was on the celebration of the buildings 140th birthday in December with a fundraiser offering various sponsorship levels. Session recently approved the \$1400 Platinum Level Sponsorship.



Acting Stated Clerk of Presbytery USA issues call to pray for latest Israeli Palestinian conflict.



Email Address Requested: In an effort to communicate as quickly as possible if something important should happen, please provide Meladee Ferguson with your email address. This information will not be shared or put in the Red Book unless you give us approval to do so. Thank you.

More pictures of the Christmas Parade held on Saturday, November 18th.





Merry

Christmas

To

Each

Of

You!









Pastor Nominating Committee Update: The PNC met on Tuesday November 14th to interview an applicant that applied through our Indeed on-line ad for a pastor. The interview went well and there was more discussions with Blackhawk Presbytery about compatibility, position requirements, Commission on Ministry input and the internship request from the applicant. It was decided at the November 30th Session Meeting to not pursue an internship with this applicant due to the time commitment. The two matches from last month on the PCUSA Church Leadership Connection software were asked to apply to our position. Unfortunately, they denied our request. There have been no new matches provided through the CLC software program for the part time pastor position or the part time commissioned pastor position.



Please note the Church has a Facebook Page. Please make sure and find it and follow it for the latest news and celebrations about our Church.

MISSION COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS - NOVEMBER 2023

November, 2023		
Year to Date October	\$1	56,973.00
Gibson City Restoration Committee 140 th birthday	\$	1,400.00
Kurt Saban (death of his wife/missionary in Japan)	\$	800.00
Gibson City Christmas Parade Committee	\$	1,000.00
Addison & Charlie Kerchenfaut Confirmation	\$	200.00
Gibson Area Hospital Auxiliary Love Lights a Tree	\$	1,000.00
Lions Club Cash Bash Fundraiser	\$	1,000.00
Credit for Nativity House – Donation Craig Kummerow	-\$	50.00
Credit for Nativity House – Donation Lutheran Church	-\$	500.00
Madison Oliver and Family Hotel Room one night	\$	77.00
Toys for Tots	\$	1,000.00
Gibson City Recycling Program	\$	500.00
American Legion Christmas Baskets	\$	1,000.00
Suzie Tongate (Random Acts of Kindness)	\$	500.00
Beth Tabor (Random Acts of Kindness)	\$	200.00
Chamber Commerce Change Someone's Christmas	\$	300.00
Gibson Area Service Association	\$	5,000.00
Gibson City Sleep in Heavenly Peace Chapter	\$	5,000.00
Total	\$1	75,400.00

MISSION COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS - DECEMBER, 2023

December, 2023		
Year to Date November	\$1	75,400.00
Gibson Bucks (Meladee/Bev/Sharla/Phil)	\$	200.00
Gift Cards Cleaning Ladies	\$	200.00
Head Start Teachers/Students Christmas	\$	500.00
Blackhawk Presbytery Gift cards (Eric,Loreen,Dave,Roy)	\$	200.00
Gibson City Streets & Alley (Random Acts of Kindness)	\$	500.00
Anneliese Kerchenfaut Scholarship for studying abroad	\$	2,000.00
Vicki Good in honor of Alan Good	\$	100.00
Total	\$1	79,100.00

Hymns to go with different occupations:

The Dentist's Hymn Crown Him with Many Crowns
The Weatherman's Hymn There Shall Be Showers of Blessings
The Contractor's Hymn How Firm a Foundation
The Tailor's Hymn Holy, Holy, Holy
The Politician's Hymn Standing on the Promises
The IRS Agent's Hymn I Surrender All
The Gossip's Hymn It Is No Secret
The Electrician's Hymn Send the Light
The Shopper's Hymn In the Sweet By and By
The Realtor's Hymn I've Got a Mansion Just Over the Hilltop
The Massage Therapist's Hymn He Touched Me
The Pilot's Hymn I'll Fly Away
The Paramedic's Hymn Revive us Again
The Judge's Hymn Almost Persuaded
The Psychiatrist's Hymn Just A Little Talk With Jesus
The Waiter's Hymn Fill My Cup, Lord
The Baker's Hymn When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder
The Shoe Repairer's Hymn It Is Well With My Soul
The Geologist's Hymn Rock of Ages
The Librarian's Hymn Whispering Hope
The Mail Carrier's Hymn Deliverance Will Come
The Nurse's Hymn Rescue the Perishing
The Telephone Operator's Hymn . Jesus on the Mainline

FATHER, HOW DO WE THANK YOU?

The Fisherman's Hymn Shall We Gather at the River?

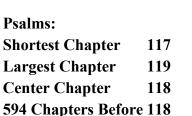
By: Mike Hastings

Father, how do we thank You for Christmas Speak what our words can't convey? For You sent us the gift of a Savior Long ago in that soft manger hay. A boy child, born to be King A King, born to die for our sin. Father, how do we thank You Where do we even begin?

We know that Your love is unfailing
That is why You gave us Your son.
We know that you want us with You
That You don't want to lose even one.
That's why You sent us the Christ child
That's the reason for His sacrifice.
The first Christmas gift ever given
Came at a very high price.

Oh, that our hearts could speak of it
Oh, that our souls had a voice.
Oh, that those who don't know You
Would meet you through Christ and rejoice.
That babe that was born to be Savior
For a world oh so totally lost.
Father, how do we thank You for Christmas?
We embrace what He did on the Cross.





Interesting Facts Found in

the Center of the Bible:

118.8

594 Chapters After 118 Center Verse in the Bible

BLESSINGS
NAME THEM
ONE BY ONE
COUNT YOUR MANY
BLESSINGS SEE WHAT
GODHAS
GODHAS

Pictured Right: TERESA ALEXANDER is the winner of the Bible Word Search Puzzle for November. There were eighteen(18) who entered this month: Janice Swanson, Sherry Tomlinson, Jean Williams, Danny Heustis, Jodi VanSwol, Sharon Collings, Lisa Helgeson, Val Hunt, Jeanette Hensley, Teresa Alexander, Stacy Johnson, Denise Birky, Mona Summers, Lyndi Barnes, Sharon Heavilin, Linda Graham, Connie Thomason and Trudy Lantz. Anyone receiving this newsletter is eligible to win a \$25 gift card to County Market. Please see the Red and Green colored card in the center of this publication to play. Turn it in to the Church office by December 25 and January 25! Not at the church: mail it or place in the black box outside the south east church door. Be certain to read the Bible verses attached to the puzzle. I found every word listed in the December and January Puzzle. Meladee



Since Teresa lives in Bloomington, she will be gifting her winning card to the people renting her home in Gibson City as they recently had a new baby.





Jean Williams and family enjoying their 2023 annual Christmas cookie baking time together. What darling bakers proving their holiday cookie baking skills.

Our December Special Offering supports the "Christmas Joy Offering" program. The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years.



Thank you Danny & Vonna Heustis, Vonna's daughter Anita Epperson, Jean Williams, and Ron & Mary Clow for decorating the church for Christmas.









Natural Christmas wreaths purchased from Addison Kerchenfaut for the GCMS after prom fundraiser.

The counted cross stitch ornaments on the Chrismon tree were hand made by Meladee Ferguson.







Sharla Williams spent two weeks in November in Mesa, Arizona spending time with her brother Lance. Left: Sadona Arizona—Red Rock

Pictured below are friends of Lance and Sharla at the Las Sendas Golf Club.



January 2024

Wednesday

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	w ednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Happy New Year!	1 Happy New Year Church of- fice closed	2	3	4	5	6 RECYCLE
7 10:30 a.m. Worship: Pastor Paul Thomason	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 10:30 a.m. Worship:	15	16	17	18	19	20 RECYCLE Baby Shower in the fellow- ship hall
21 10:30 a.m. Worship:	22 2 p.m. Election Judge School	23	24	25	26	27 FPC to work food pantry
28 10:30 a.m. Worship	29	30	31			



Sleep in Heavenly Peace Chapter

Matthew Ertel, CEO of Gibson Area Hospital is starting a SHP chapter in Gibson City. This charity was first started 12 years ago in Idaho. The founder heard a child ask for a bed for Christmas. He thought no child should have to ask for a bed at Christmas time. The mission is "no kids sleep on the floor in our town". Sleep in Heavenly Peace now has 270 chapters in the United States. Illinois currently has 12 chapters. They build beds for kids. In January, Matt will be flying to Lehi, Utah for training on how the process works. They estimate the average cost of a bed that is built is around \$250.00 which covers lumber, supplies, a mattress, sheets, pillow and a comforter. Every bed is the same twin size. It is for children 17 and younger. Applications are

available online. They estimate that at least seven children in the GCMS School District need a bed as of right now. The Session approved a \$5,000 donation to this charity to help with their start up.



Watch for our Church's Holiday Banners that should be up downtown in time to celebrate the holiday season. They look so awesome next to the city wreaths and go well with the downtown blue Christmas lights.





PRESBYTIDINGS December 2023—January 2024

Two-Month Newsletter

Please note that this is a two-month edition of our newsletter. This will allow our hardworking secretary some time off to enjoy with her son who is coming from Texas over the holidays for a visit. This will also allow our Clerk of Session time to enjoy the holidays. We have tried to cover as much as we can for both months and anything we missed will be provided in the February edition. We are providing two puzzles to be completed each month, two monthly calendars of events and November and December mission awards. Please note there will be some follow-up mission dollars award in late December for 2023 that will be published in the February newsletter. Have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mary and Meladee



Our January Special Offering: The McCormick Tutoring Program provides after school tutors to help the students of the GCMS school system. Tutors are existing GCMS teachers who offer their services at the Elementary School, the Middle School, and the High School. Currently there are at least 23 students receiving assistance. Sharla Williams is the Program Liaison for our church. In addition to providing tutoring services, college scholarships are awarded every year to two GCMS senior graduates.





The Restoration of the Gibson City Nativity Set

The Gibson City Nativity Set purchased in 1987 has been restored and a new house for the figures has been built. This all came about after three Gibson City residents Ellen Hankes, Cathy Steidinger and Mary Clow started working together in early May. The old house had weathered and leaked and there were holes in the Plexiglas window. Many of the figures were discolored and there was damage to the resin. One of the legs was broken on the crib.

After research by Hankes, it was found that the Set was purchased in October of 1987 by the Gibson City Community Council of Churches which is no longer in existence. The Gibson City Courier indicated it was purchased by the Council under the leadership of Karen Leenerman and Anita McKeever for \$995 and was a Fontanini by Roman starter set from Italy by Artisans of Tuscany. Many community and church groups as well as individuals contributed the money to acquire the nativity set 36 years ago. The ladies continue to search for the Council of Churches official records and ask anyone with information to contact them.

To start fund raising for the project, the ladies decided they needed to know the estimated costs for the restoration. Therefore, Clow wrote a bid for restoration services and contacted the Art Departments at the University of Illinois and Illinois State University who provided her with two contacts. The bid for restoration was awarded for \$3,500 to Church Supply Warehouse in Wheaton, Illinois. Their proposal included picking up the figures and delivering them back after the work was completed. Steidinger met the Church Supply Warehouse driver in mid-July so they could acquire the figures as they were being stored at that time in the Edward Jones storage garage. While the set was being restored, the ladies reached out to the churches in the area. The First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City donated \$3,500 from the Hank and Phyllis Brickman Memorial Fund and Dale Ashmore Memorial Fund to cover the restoration costs.

The next part of the project included building a new house for the set. Bob Crossman built the original stable. Clow contacted experienced carpenter Bill Hunter for an estimate. Hunter offered to build the house and not charge for his labor. The United Methodist Church 10:10 a.m. Sunday School Class, the American Lutheran Church and the Neighborhood Ace Hardware helped with the cost of materials. In addition, Randy Wyant from Precision Plastic donated Plexiglas for the window and offered to install it.

On October 12th, the ladies were notified the restoration of the figures was complete, and they were delivered to the First Presbyterian Church where they will be stored off season in a climate-controlled room. The delivery driver told Clow that his grandfather was the artist that did the restoration and really enjoyed and had fun doing the work.

Hunter designed the new house so it could be broken down into seven pieces for easy transport. After several weeks of work, the new house was completed in time to be enjoyed for the holiday season. It was placed in front of IPG Insurance Company who provides power for the lighting inside of the house. Clow noted that special thanks for helping with the transfer and placement of the new house goes to Hunter, Phil Noellsch, Ron Clow, Rick Young, Reese Ramirez, Greg Pool and Craig Kummerow.

Hankes, Steidinger and Clow are thrilled and very happy with the results. They felt it was very important to save the set due to the history of its origin and its importance to Gibson City. The figures are once again beautiful, and they are securely protected and beautifully displayed in their new home. Some day they hope to add another animal, possibly a donkey, to the set. They would like to thank all those who helped to make this happen.





The new Nativity Set Stable built by Bill Hunter was made in 7 pieces to accommodate disassembling and reassembling as needed. Pictured helping Hunter put it in place on November 29th is Ron Clow, Phil Noellsch, Greg Pool, Rick Young, Craig Kummerow and Reese Ramirez.





Thank you Phil Noellsch, Bill Hunter and Ron Clow for placing the nativity set figures in their new Stable.











