

PASTOR'S CORNER



Thank you Reverend Judi Geistlinger for filling the pulpit once again for us on February 4th. We all enjoy you and your sermons and your lovely singing voice.

The Reverend Dr. Roy Backus filled the pulpit for us on Sunday, February 18 and moderated our Annual Meeting in the fellowship hall. A good meal was prepared for us by Goin Places and the desert pies were wonderful.



Those preaching or reading for the month of March:

March 3: Rev. Judi Geistlinger

March 10: Mrs. Jean Williams

March 17: Rev. Connie Bandy

March 24: Pastor Paul Thomason

March 31: Rev. Dr. Roy Backus, Communion will be served—Easter

Thank you to our dear friend Jean Williams for filling the pulpit on Sunday, February 11. She does a great job and we are thankful for her in so many ways.



Thank you Dr. Billie Bates for preaching on February 25th and singing to us. Your voice is beautiful and the song was enjoyed by all. Thank you Ron Clow for assisting.



WHAT AN AWESOME GROUP OF PEOPLE! THANKS TO ALL WHO FILLED OUR PULPIT IN OUR TIME OF NEED!!!!!!



Thank you Judi Geistlinger for preaching on March 3rd. Everyone really enjoyed your sermon and was thinking twice about going home and working instead of honoring the Sabbath.

PRESBYTIDINGS ***March 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



Current Session Elders:

Back row left to right: Rick Kerchenfaut, Ron Clow, Tim Swanson, Charlie Schultz and Danny Huestis.

Front row left to right: Jean Williams, Clerk of Session Mary Clow, The Reverend Dr. Roy Backus, Vonna Heustis and Sharla Williams.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The Pastor Nominating Committee and the Session/Elders of the Church are pleased to announce that Rev. Dr. Roy Backus will serve as our new pastor as of April 1, 2024. After a long search, we are delighted that God has answered our prayers and that Dr. Backus will begin his journey with us. Rev. Backus has served as our moderator for several months. He lives in Morris, is married to his wife Ann and has 6 adult children and 6 grandchildren. He received his Master of Divinity degree from the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago and his PhD from Marquette University in Milwaukee. Rev. Backus was the Head of Staff at the First Presbyterian Church in Morris from 2008 until 2021 when he retired. Before 2008, he was a pastor at churches in Michigan and Iowa. He was also an Associate Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Olivet College in Olivet, Michigan from 2000 to 2003. Rev. Backus continues to participate in community activities which includes serving as a volunteer Chaplain at several Fire Departments, Police Departments, and Hospitals in various Municipalities. He is also a Jazz music leader and performs at various Community events in Morris and Grundy County. Rev. Backus has years of experience, a no-notes approach to sermons, and has a great sense of humor and we praise God for his continued blessings on our church. Tentative office hours will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please be sure to welcome Rev. Backus and watch for information on an Open House that is being planned to welcome Rev. Backus to the Community. Rev. Backus will be preaching at our 10:30 Easter Sunday service.

March 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 RECYCLE
3 10:30 a.m. Worship: Rev. Judi Geistlinger	4	5	6	7 Meladee will be away from the church of- fice at a doc- tor's appoint- ment in Cham- paign.	8	9
10 10:30 a.m. Worship: Jean Williams	11	12	13	14	15	16 RECYCLE
17 10:30 am Worship: Rev. Connie Bandy preaching 	18	19 Primary Elec- tion Day in the fellowship hall	20 Meladee will be away from the office at 2 doctor ap- pointments in Champaign Mr. Rogers Day	21	22	23 FPC to work at the food pantry.
24 10:30 am Worship— Pastor Paul Thomason 31 10:30 am Worship-Rev. Dr. Roy Back- us	25 Meladee will be away from the church office at Gai- ley Eye Clin- ic in Bloom- ington	26	27	28 Maundy Thursday 5:30 Session	29. Good Fri- day 	30

***** Easter Sunday, Communion will be served, Rev. Dr. Backus will lead us in worship.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH . . . FUN FACTS ABOUT FEBRUARY

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 up-
grade for our church’s tech-
nology, email addresses as
noted below:

Meladee
fpcgc60936@sbcglobal.net
Officefirstpresbygibson.org

Now that nicer weather is
upon us, office hours will
resume to 10: 00 a.m. to 2:00
p.m.

March marches in with a bang, named after the mighty Mars, the Roman
god of war. It’s no wonder the month is synonymous with the start of
spring, as it charges forward with a warrior-like determination to bring
in the new season with a flourish.

March is National Nutrition Month in the United States, which is one of
the interesting fun facts about March. March is a time to focus on fuel-
ing our bodies right, as National Nutrition Month takes center stage in
the [United States](#). From mindful eating to ingredient education, this an-
nual event serves up a heaping helping of healthy habits and tips, re-
minding us that what we eat truly is what we are.

The Ides of March, made famous by Shakespeare, is on March 15th.
March 15th brings with it a dramatic flair, as the Ides of March take
center stage. Made famous by Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar, this fateful
day saw the assassination of the Roman emperor and forever cemented
its place in history as a warning against betrayal. So, watch your back,
and don’t trust anyone because, on the Ides of March, anything can hap-
pen.

The April Fool’s Day pranks often start on March 31st. March 31st sig-
nals the start of the silliest season, as [April Fool’s Day pranks](#) begin to
take over. With whoopee cushions, fake spiders, and the occasional jelly
-filled donut, this holiday is all about laughter, mischief, and good-
natured fun. So, watch your back, keep your wits about you, and be on
the lookout, because when it comes to [April Fool’s](#) Day pranks, anything
can happen!

The Great Blizzard of 1888 hit the US northeast in March. March in the
US northeast was a force to be reckoned with in 1888, as the Great Bliz-
zard hit with a vengeance. With howling winds and towering snowdrifts,
this storm was a true test of survival. So, batten down the hatches, grab
a cup of cocoa, and hunker down, because when the Great Blizzard of
1888 hit, the northeast was in for a wild ride!

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES		<i>Second Sunday Offering</i> <i>Mar 10: One Great Hour of Sharing</i> <i>Apr 14: Gibson Area hous- ing Rehab Foundation</i> <i>Ushers</i> <i>Mar: Ron and Mary Clow</i> <i>Apr: Jeanette Hensley and Sharla Williams</i> <i>Communion Servers</i> <i>Mar 31: Charlie Schultz and Tim Swanson</i> <i>Apr 7: Donny and Vonna Heustis</i> What does the month of March mean and symbol- ize? March is the third month of the year in the Gregorian calendar, with
March 2: Neil Nelson 4: Meladee Ferguson 17: Karen Ladd 18: Sharla Williams 18: Janice Swanson 29: Ruth Davis	April 06: Charlie Kerchenfaut 24: Barb Kirkpatrick 25: Harry and Dorri Groom 27: Ron Clow 28: Tim Swanson	31 days. It is named after Mars, the Roman god of war, and symbolizes the beginning of spring and new beginnings in many cultures. March is also as- sociated with various sig- nificant events and holi- days, such as St. Patrick’s Day, International Wom- en’s Day, and National Nu- trition Month.



BASKETBALL SEASON IS HERE!



Charlie Kerchenfaut in action on the basketball court.



Congratulations to Addison Kerchenfaut and the GCMS Girls Varsity Basketball Team for winning the Regional Championship on February 15th defeating Ridgeview 57 to 15.



Perhaps a little “attitude” is shown here by our girl, Addison, and that’s okay by us!



IMPORTANT CHURCH NEWS

SECOND SUNDAY COLLECTION FOR MARCH
ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING - PRESBYTERY USA

Three programs are supported by One Great Hour of Sharing - the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, and the Self-Development of People - all work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope. Typically received during the season of Lent, each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing supports efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promote development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assist in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. If you wish to donate, make sure and include One Great Hour of Sharing on your check. Session will add \$500 to whatever is collected for this Program. Remember your impact on giving: Restoring Hope, Feeding the Hungry, Empowering the Oppressed

MISSION COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS – FEBRUARY, 2024

Year to Date January.....	\$20,500.00
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
Fellowship of Christian Athletes.....	\$ 2,500.00
CWS Kits.....	\$ 500.00
Family of Judy Jo Arbour.....	\$ 1,000.00
GCMS After Prom School Event.....	\$ 500.00
GCMS Swimming Pool Signs on Referendum.....	\$ 250.00
GCMS Future Business Leaders of America.....	\$ 1,000.00
Year to Date February.....	\$31,250.00



Christ’s
Empty
Tomb

NO
TOMBSTONE
NEEDED!

He Lives Forever – An Easter Reflection

The Reformed tradition has a particular way to interpret the events of Holy Week. Our focus is not the cross or the suffering of Jesus but his resurrection. Easter is the center of the celebration. Good Friday and Maundy Thursday are meaningless without Easter.

The meaning of Easter is Jesus Christ’s victory over death. His resurrection symbolizes the eternal life that is granted to all who believe in him. The meaning of Easter also symbolizes the complete verification of all that Jesus preached and taught during his three-year ministry.

If He had not risen from the dead, if He had merely died and not been resurrected, He would have been considered just another teacher or rabbi. However, His resurrection changed all that and gave final and irrefutable proof that He was really the Son of God and that He had conquered death once and for all.

Since church proclamation at Nicea in 325 AD, Easter has been celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the Vernal Equinox. This date was determined by noting that the Last Supper, as Christians came to know it, was actually a Passover seder, and Jesus’ resurrection occurred on that Sunday. Passover occurs on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan on the first full moon on or after the Equinox.

A further connection to Passover is the fact that it celebrates the angel of death *passing over* the houses where the doors were marked with the blood of a sacrificial lamb. Jesus is seen by Christians as the sacrificial lamb whose blood was shed so that they would have everlasting life.

Today, the meaning of Easter for millions of Christians is that of honoring and recognizing Jesus Christ’s resurrection from the dead, and his glorious promise of eternal life for all who believe in him. Easter gives us hope for the future and strength to face the challenges of our lives.

Apart from the meaning of the word Easter and its historical background, there is a permanent message of hope and new life that is implicit in every Easter celebration. The image of Jesus’ triumph over death is a strong message that challenges our fears, pains and sorrows.

Some people say that New Year’s Eve is the time to make commitments for our future, but I believe Easter is the right time to think in the future with a positive attitude. After a year full of problems and difficulties, what we need is not a new beginning or fresh start — we need the example of Jesus, who proved with his own life that we have a new opportunity thanks to his death and resurrection. We can live because he lives!

Written by Rev. Jose Luis Casal, April 1, 2010, El Paso, Texas



Rick Kerchenfaut recently went to Spain to see his daughter Anneliese who is studying there majoring in Food Industry Management.



Some of the buildings they saw, including a church built 850 years ago, at which they attended services.



BELOW: One of our favorite couples, Jim and Susie Dunnan, celebrating St. Patrick’s Day in style.



Pictured are 17 pairs of boys shorts, 20 pairs of boys underwear and 12 bouncing balls that were sent to the Dress A Girl Dress A Boy campaign under the Hope for Women International Organization. The shorts were made by Ellen Hanks with assistance from other members of the Gibson Girls HCE Unit. Dresses and shorts are sent to children in need in many countries throughout the World including Uganda and the Appalachians.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING



Thank you Rev. Dr. Roy Backus for preaching on February 18th and moderating our Annual Congregational meeting.



Thank you Beverly Nagle for playing Special Music *Jesus Loves Me* on February 18th. It was especially enjoyed by all.



Clerk of Session Mary Clow, Treasurer Phil Noellsch and Moderator Reverend Dr. Roy Backus went over the annual reports with the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting on February 18th.

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCH FAMILY

IN MEMORY OF JUDY JO HUNT ARBOUR



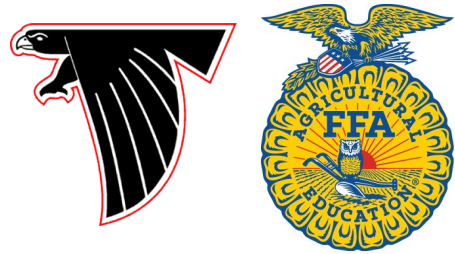
It is with great sadness that we announce that Judy Jo Hunt Arbour passed away on February 28th at Riverside Hospital in Kankakee. Judy Jo is the daughter of Val Hunt and sister of Dorri Groom and aunt of Stacy Johnson. She was confirmed in our Church in 1968 along with classmates Sharla Williams, Susie Dunnan, and Ron Clow. She was such an exceptional person. All those who knew her, loved her. She was a great cheerleader for our church and came back for holidays and important celebrations. We will miss her smile, her positive attitude, and her laugh. There will never be another Judy Jo. We were honored & blessed to know her. Rest in Peace.

Services for Judy jo Hunt Arbour: Saturday, April 13, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m., Jensen's Funeral home, Kankakee IL



JUDY JO AND HER FAMILY!

SHE WILL BE MISSED BY US ALL!



Mary, Words cannot express our sincere gratitude for this very generous donation. On behalf of the chapter and our students, Thank You! We really enjoy our partnership working with the church on the community garden and hope to see it prosper even more in the future. Thank you for your unwavering support for our students and for Agriculture Education. Mr. Jeff Reale, GCMS High School Agriculture Teacher and FFA Advisor

That's fantastic, Mary. We are humbled and so thankful for the support. That is fantastic. It is a big undertaking and this will be a tremendous help. Just a heads up, this year's camp will be July 22-25 from 9am-3pm. We will plan on touching base as we get closer to the date to see if you and/or anyone else from the church would like to come see it in action. Josh Carter Fellowship of Christian Athletes

Mary: Wow, just wow! Thank you so much! I am in awe of your generosity! That will be so huge for our program!!!! We Thank you from the bottom of our hearts! We would love to have you visit the program, reach out when a time is convenient to you and we can work on setting something up! Appreciatively, Sarah Wurmnest Board President Little Achievers Program



March 4th was a wonderful day for our secretary, Meladee. It was her 76th birthday and she was inundated with a plethora of cards, calls, emails, tests, facebook wishes as well as flowers, meals out, gift cards, shoes and so much more. (She said she kind of felt like Sally Field on her Oscar win so many years ago when Sally said, ("You like me!") Thank you so much to everyone for your love and concern.



Flowers from my brother and his wife, Mike and Barb Hastings.



My first ever Virgin Pina Colada (or any other kind for that matter) from my daughter, Jodi. (It was yummy, but very sweet. No more for me.)

Thanks so much for the \$25 gift card. I'm enjoying the word search puzzle. I really appreciate it. In Christian love, Mona Summers

Mary Clow and The First Presbyterian Church, Thank you for your support of the University of Dubu-

que with your investment in Seminary Students Scholarships. Your support of UD and our seminary students is greatly appreciated. Wishing you many blessings in 2024. Thank you, Scott Pime

Dear First Presbyterian, Hello everyone. Thank you so much for your extremely generous financial support in 2023 of us and our ministry in Senegal. We are very grateful for your kindness. Sincerely, thank you for all your support. Bless you. Robb and Sheila Warfield and family serving at Dakar Academy

I would like to thank you for your generous support for Livingston and Ford Counties Toys for Tots, without your support we could not make over 3500 children smile on Christmas morning. We were able to assist over 2,700 families. Remember, every child deserves a little Christmas. Thank you, Sheryl Hovel, Local Coordinator.



Carla Ashmore enjoying Holly Brook's University of Illinois basketball game watch party on February 13th. Carla must of brought them luck as they beat Michigan 97 to 68.

Pictured Right: LINDA GRAHAM is the winner of the Bible Word Search Puzzle for **FEBRUARY** There were fourteen(14) who entered this month: Mona Summers, Jeanette Hensley, Sharon Collings, Jodi VanSwol, Sherry Tomlinson, Janice Swanson, Linda Graham, Barb Williams, Denise Birky, Lisa Helgesen, Jean Williams, Phil Noellsch, Danny Heustis and Val Hunt Anyone receiving this newsletter is eligible to win a \$25 gift card to County Market. Please see the **LIME GREEN** colored card in the center of this publication to play. Turn it in to the Church office by **APRIL 1!** 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 each puzzle. I found every word listed in the **MARCH** Puzzle. Meladee



THERE NEVER WAS A TOMBSTONE by Mike Hastings

There was a sign above the cross
Where Christ was crucified.
King of the Jews it read
It hung there 'til he died.
He then went from cross to tomb
Death's dark deed completed
But he never had a tombstone
'Cause there never was one needed.

See, a tombstone means finality
It marks a grave by name.
Just like the sign above the cross
Shouldn't a stone now read the same?
But Christ did not stay in the tomb
Long enough to get one made,
It was not His final resting place
Just a place where He once stayed.

See, Jesus Christ our Savior
Jesus Christ our Lord
Took away the sting of death
When He rose to His reward.
There was no need to mark a grave
That would not be occupied
You only need a marker
When the dead have really died.

Yes, our Lord Jesus lives again
At His Father's right hand seated
He never had a tombstone
'Cause there never was one needed.
No, there never was one needed
Where Jesus Christ would lay
No stone with His name etched out
Just a stone that rolled away.



Chamber Meeting: The group playing Music Bingo. Sharon Heavilin was a winner!

Ron and Mary Clow enjoyed a 2-week winter getaway to Gulf Shores Alabama and stopped at some interesting sites along the way.

Ron in front of Superman in Metropolis, Illinois. Superman is 15 feet tall and weighs 6000 pounds.



Ron and Mary stopped at the Unclaimed Baggage Store in Scottsboro, Alabama which sells items from airlines unclaimed baggage.

Mary in front of Bamahenge in Alberta, Alabama which is a fiberglass replica of Stonehenge 21 feet tall and 104 feet across built for billionaire George Barber.



Floats from the Mardi Gras Parade in Mobile Alabama.



What a fun team-building event enjoyed by this awesome group of Presbyterians attending the March 7th Gibson City Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner. Our church is a Gold Level Sponsor of the Chamber. Attending were Sharla Williams, Tim & Janice Swanson, Jean Williams, Val Hunt, Ron & Mary Clow, Pat Farris, Ted Swanson and Sharon Heavilin.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MAILBAG

FPC MAILBAG CONTINUED

