

# WORSHIP LEADERS



Thank you Pastor Connie Bandy for preaching on December 15th. We loved your sermon.



We were blessed to have Lindsey Gordon preach for us on December 29th. She attends Princeton Seminary School in Princeton, New Jersey. She is going to be an awesome pastor. Her lovely parents came with her.



Thank you Cindy Shepherd for preaching on January 5th. Your sermon was really good and enjoyed by all.



Thank you Jean Williams for preaching on January 12th. It was a really good sermon.



Thank you Ron Clow for leading us in worship on January 19th. The sermon on everyone needing a "Mary" in their life was most appropriate.



Thank you Jim Dunnan for preaching on January 26th. Your sermon was awesome. You are so loved and appreciated by our Congregation.

## ***PRESBYTIDINGS*** ***February 2025***

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



### A PRAYER FOR WALKING INTO A NEW YEAR

Holy God, As we look out on the horizons of a new year, it is hard to see your promise with fresh eyes. The memories we carry in our bodies, the patterns we know from the lives we have lived, and the stories we have told cloud our vision. We are weighed down by the fears of all the years, the old fables, the generational wounds, the trusty and cautious hopes that got us through this far.

But God, you are not the slowly bending arc of his-

tory. You are not the past warmed up to meet us yet again in infinite and gently looping cycles. You are not likelihood and probability, plausible outcomes and logical conclusions. You do not come to us in the slow march of progress or the incremental degradation of structures and institutions.

Your story is the deeper magic from before the drums of history, before our forming stories and earthen bodies set us here to walk this particular, human road — and yet you walk with us even here in this in-between space.

As we look to a new year, we ask that you dispel the ghosts we conjure and fear. Meet us again with genuine newness. We are so tired of what has been, so afraid of what may come again. Stay with us as we wait for what will be.

Spirit of new life, give us eyes to see what feels implausible. Grant us the

hope and the diligence to follow the seeds of revolution and revelation already planted. Point us again to the surprise and delight of nature and neighbor. Reintroduce us to the people you have made and the communities to which you have called us. Grant us the presence and good sense to look up and out, to seek eyes that might meet our own and sun to touch our skin. Remind us that the past we drag with us does not govern your future, that the future you bring is broader and wider and newer than all we have ever known.

As we look out on the horizon of a new year, give us the courage and trust to see you even there. Join us as we walk into your new morning. Amen.

Karen Rohrer, Presbyterian Outlook



FEBRUARY 2025

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

						1  RECYCLE
2  10:30 a.m. Worship	3	4	5	6	7	8
9 10:30 a.m. Worship/ Congrega- tional Meet- ing and Lunch  Rev. Cindy Shepherd	10	11	12  Lincoln's BD	13	14  	15  RECYCLE  Slated Meeting Southeastern Presbytery
16  10:30 a.m. Worship	17  The church office will be closed in ob- servance of President's Day	18	19	20	21	22
23  10:30 a.m. Worship	24	25	26	27  5:30 Session	28	

First Presbyterian Church of  
Gibson City

See us on Facebook

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 technolo-  
gy, email addresses as noted  
below:

fpcgc60936@sbcglobal.net  
Office@firstpresbygibson.org


FUN FACTS ABOUT FEBRUARY ...

Why is February shortened to 28 days? Believe it or not, a past Roman superstition made this happen. The Roman King Numa Pompilius added January and February to the original 10 month calendar to fully sync a new calendar with the lunar year. However, Numa wanted to avoid having even numbers in his calendar, as Roman superstition at the time held that even numbers were unlucky. To try and avoid this, he chose February, a month that would be host to Roman rituals honoring the dead, as the unlucky month to consist of 28 days.

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!?

No full moon? February is the only month in the year that could miss having a full moon completely. Some months get a blue moon (two full moons in a month), and February often ends up with none! However, sometimes, like in 2022, the full moon of February is called the Snow Moon.

Surprisingly, the flower of February isn't the rose Because of Valentine's Day, you'd probably think the flower of February is the rose. Well, you'd be wrong. It's actually the violet and the primrose. Violets signify watchfulness, loyalty, and faithfulness. Give a violet to someone to let them know you'll always be there for them!

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES		<b>Second Sunday Offering</b> Feb: 9: Food Pantry/ Shepherd's Closet Mar 9: One Great Hour of Sharing	sult of damage that oc- curred during lift-off. The tragedy occurred only 16 minutes before the shuttle was sched- uled to land.
February 03: Addison Kerchenfaut 11: Karen Mott 15: Charles & Cheryl Schultz 16: Jean Williams 19: Anneliese Kerchenfaut 23: Ruthie Lantz	March 02: Neil Nelson 04: Blake Alexander 04: Meladee Ferguson 11: Maddox Alexan- der 17: Karen Ladd 18: Sharla Williams 18: Janice Swanson 29: Ruth Davis	<b>Communion Servers</b> Feb: To be announced Mar: To be announced	
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 re-			



## THANK YOUS AND MORE

Happy Holidays! Your teams generosity is always very appreciated. I will be placing the \$10,000 in our Operating and Maintenance Fund to be applied directly to our playground project. Jeremy Darnell, Superintendent GCMS School District

*Thank you for your generous donation in 2024. As we operate on donations only, we would not be able to function without people like you. Thank you, God Bless! Gibson Area Telecare*

Thanks, beyond Grateful, thank you so much for remembering me at Christmas. Your thoughtfulness was greatly appreciated. I will put the Gibson Bucks to very good use. Sincerely, Sharla Williams

*Dear Friends at First Presbyterian, Thank you so much for remembering me again this year with a generous gift card! It is always a delightful surprise. I have enjoyed my twelve years in Blackhawk Presbytery, working with and serving generous, giving and forgiving people like you. Have a wonderful Christmas and Blessed New Year. Loreen Stravers*

Thank you so much for the use of your church building for our events over the years. Please accept this donation (\$500) as an expression of our appreciation. Blessings, Gibson Area Music Foundation

*We are 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. The American Legion Post 568 Christmas Committee*

Dear First Presbyterian Church,  
On behalf of the Gibson Area

Hospital auxiliary, thank you for your donation of \$1,000 on October 23, 2024 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. GAH Auxiliary

*Dear First Presbyterian Church, 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 a matching check meant a very impressive total of \$970 was donated. Thanks to everyone for being part of GAMF's mission to bring quality musical experience to all! Sincerely, Margy Shambrook*

Dear First Presbyterian Church, Your generous donation has made a significant impact on our community, particularly for the children who now have the comfort of a bed to sleep in. Your support enables us to purchase essential materials like lumber and mattresses, providing a sense of security and peace for our children. Your donation was \$2,500 dated June 28, 2024. With heartfelt gratitude, Larry Uphoff, Sleep In Heavenly Peace, Mahomet IL

*Dear Beloved Community, we are committed to using your gift faithfully in support of our community. Thanks to you, our Crisis Assistance Program, needed building renovations and further programming will be possible in the year to come! You have blessed us that we may be a blessing to others. THANK YOU! Sam Horsch, Operations Manager, Shepherd's Closet*

Dear Presbyterian Church,

Thank you for your continuing support of our mission here at Stronghold. We strive to provide our guests with meaningful experiences when visiting our camp and retreat center. With your help we are able to continue our desire to make meaningful differences in many people's lives. May peace be with you. The Stronghold Staff

*As our successful 2024 campaign for Livingston and Ford Counties comes to an end; we would like to thank you for your generous support. We are pleased to say that we were able to place smiles on over 3,000 children's faces this Christmas morning. Without your continued support weather it be a toy collection box, a fundraiser or a collection canister, we could not make this happen. We would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts and we are looking forward to another successful year in 2025 as we enter our 14th year of helping children feel the magic of Christmas. Thank you again and please remember "Every Child Deserves a Little Christmas." Sheryl Hovel, Local Coordinator, Toys for Tots*

Dear First Presbyterian Church Session and Staff, Happy New Year. I just received your letter and scholarship in the mail today. Thank you SO much! Your kind words, generosity, and ongoing support mean the world to me. Thank you so much for this amazing gift and encouragement as I begin my next semester of seminary. Blessings, Lindsay Gordon

*Dear Phil, Hope you Jean are well. I appreciate you looking after the church. Sorry you are again looking for a pastor. We have a wonderful chaplain here at Hoosier Village. We just started a study of the book of revelations which will take us most of 2025 to finish. I miss all of you in Gibson City. What Wonderful memories of great friends I will always have! Beverly Swanstrom*

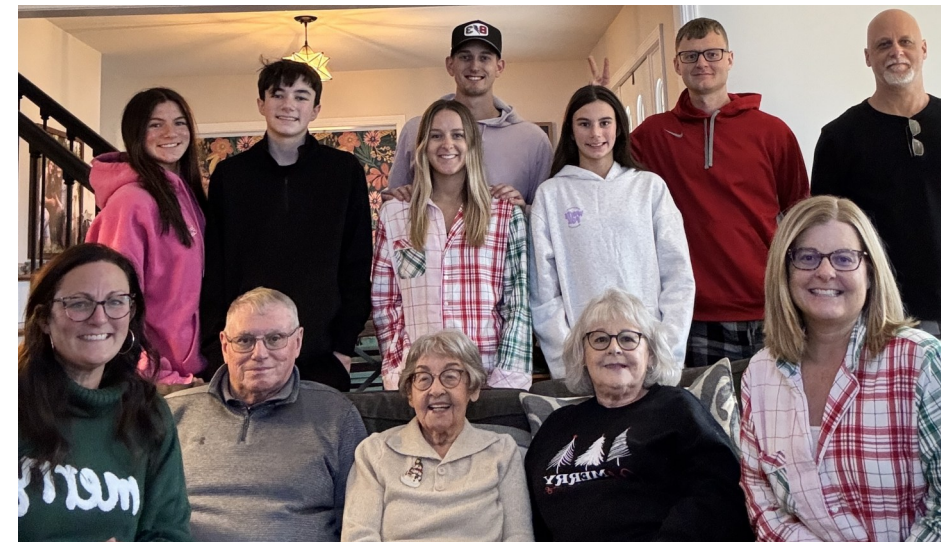
## CONGREGANT ACTIVITIES



Villas of Hollybrook showed their appreciation for the staff by making a free will donation to the American Legion Post 568 Christmas Basket Program. Pictured in the center is Val Hunt and friends including . . .Dottie B., Jan Gill, Jane Tankersley, Shirley Rosendahl and Mona Summers seated in front.



Gibson High School Class of 73 friends got together to celebrate the holidays. Pictured is Becky Lunde-McDivitt, Martha Benefiel Heavilin, Shara Williams, and Susie Etherton Dunnan



Val Hunt and family at Christmas. Family members include Harry & Dorri Groom, Sherriff Chad Johnson and Stacy Johnson and Sarah Groom Boucek and children.



## CHURCH FAMILY HAPPENINGS



Our Church donated \$250 to the GCMS Girls Basketball Teams 'Ballin' for a Cure Cancer Fund-raiser. That's our Addison #25 seated in the middle.



Addison Kerchenfaut was named student of the Month for December. She is active in FBLA and Interact Club. She participates in 3 sports and has been the president of her class for 4 years. She is pictured with GCMS English teacher Miss Leake and Barb Nagle from the Bank of Gibson. Congratulations Addison.

**CONGRATULATIONS  
ADDISON AND CHARLIE  
KERCHENFAUT  
FOR MAKING THE GCMS HIGH  
SCHOOL  
HONOR ROLL FOR THE FIRST SE-  
MESTER**



Charlie Kerchenfaut #25 playing against El Paso Gridley on December 21st.



Thank you Kerchenfaut family for lighting the Advent candles on December 22nd.

## CHURCH FAMILY HAPPENINGS

Sharon Heavilin's granddaughter Harper intently waiting for the opening of Christmas presents at Grandma Sharons Christmas party. Such a cutie!



Sharon and Tom Heavilin at their annual family Christmas party.



To the left: Charlie and Cheryl Schultz enjoy the music program of great niece Miley in green along with her sister Austin in pink.



Thank you Charlie and Cheryl Schultz for lighting Advent candles on December 15th and December 24th, Christmas eve!



## CHURCH NEWS

### And the Winner Is



Pictured above: Barb Williams is the winner of the Bible Word Search Puzzle for DECEMBER-JANUARY. There were sixteen (16) who entered this month. Anyone receiving this newsletter is eligible to win a \$25 gift card to County Market. Please see the LIGHT GRAY colored card in the center of this publication to play. Turn it into the church office by FEBRUARY 25TH! 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.

### Valentine's Day Prayer For Family

Dear Lord  
I ask for your grace and favor upon  
my family on this day of love  
Help us strengthen the bond of  
affection between us  
Help us love each other in trying and  
testing times  
We pray that the love that we share  
continues to grow stronger and  
stronger each day  
Let us always be there for each other  
Give us the strength and heart to  
forgive each other's faults and  
imperfections  
Help us grow in love and strength in  
Jesus' name



*Amen*

THE GRACEFUL CHAPTER

When we read and say this prayer, let us also think of our Church Family especially as we seek guidance, strength and unity while we search for a new pastor.



Jean Williams and Dorri Groom enjoyed the University of Illinois basketball win against Purdue on January 27th

## FACTS AND FIGURES

### February Second Sunday – Shepherd's Closet Food Pantry

Shepherd's Closet Food Pantry is a provider of emergency food and supplies for those in the Gibson City Community who are in need of immediate assistance. This food pantry is different from the Gibson Area Food Pantry that we also provide donations to.

**HEED NOW THE CALL** for the Annual Meeting of the First Presbyterian Church of Gibson City Illinois to be held on Sunday, February 9, 2025 following worship and lunch in fellowship hall. Reports will be received and the 2025 budget will be discussed and received and any other business that can properly be transacted. The Installation of Officers will also take place at this time. All members are encouraged to attend this meeting.

### MISSION COMMITTEE SUGGESTIONS – JANUARY, 2025

Blackhawk Presbytery 2025 Pledge .....	\$ 2,000.00
Monical Family Fire (Family of five) .....	\$ 2,500.00
Latham Family Fire (Family of five) .....	\$ 2,500.00
Jodie Allen -1 week hotel.....	\$ 410.00
Don Ledoux – hotel assistance.....	\$ 290.00
GCMS Girls Basketball Cancer Fundraiser.....	\$ 250.00
Community Chest.....(Meals on Wheels).....	\$ 2,000.00
Gibson City Chamber of Commerce Sponsorship.....	\$ 2,500.00
High School Scholarships	
Trade School/Beauty School/HVAC.....	\$ 1,000.00
Nursing/Medical School.....(2).....	\$ 2,000.00
General Scholarships.....(2).....	\$ 2,000.00
Year to Date January.....	\$17,450.00



The Latham Family picture.



The Monical Family Picture



# CHURCH NEWS



Carolyn Clow is pictured with the flowers that she purchased that were placed on the altar on January 19th in honor of her 70th wedding anniversary with Ron Clow Sr. on January 23rd.



Ron and Mary Clow enjoyed 10 days in Gulf Shores, Alabama escaping the Illinois winter weather. Left: they enjoy lunch and drinks outside at LuLus which is owned by Jimmy Buffett's sister Lucy.



## Searching for a new Pastor and Transitioning to a new Presbytery.

As many of you know, our Church requested a transfer from the Blackhawk Presbytery in Oregon, Illinois to the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois is Urbana, Illinois. We are pleased to report that Blackhawk did approve our request at their November 19, 2024 meeting. The Presbytery of Southeastern will vote on our request at their February 15, 2025 meeting.

On December 20, 2024, Ron and Mary Clow and Jean Williams had a very nice preliminary meeting with Dr. Rebecca Blair, Lead Presbyter for Transformation and Stated Clerk. Dr. Blair will be working in coordination with Rev. Eric Heinekamp, General Presbyter and Stated Clerk for Blackhawk on our transition.

Because of the holidays and this transition process, the Pastor Nominating Committee did not meet until late January. Preliminary discussion will include talking about our needs for a pastor and the minimum hiring/financial requirements from the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois. Dr. Blair will also be assisting us on our search for a new pastor. We will be utilizing the Church Leadership Connection Software Program and hope to have our Ministry Discernment Profile online soon. Additional information will be released as soon as possible.

At this time, we would also like to thank Ron Clow, Jean Williams and Janice Swanson for stepping up as needed to lead worship. We would also like to thank Meladee Ferguson for working so hard on filling the pulpit when she can with retired pastors and commissioned pastors from the area and from Southeastern Presbytery. They have been most helpful, and we are excited about being a part of this new Presbytery.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions for a new pastor, please do not hesitate to reach out to Clerk of Session Mary Clow as she will be glad to share your information with the Pastor Nominating Committee.

Thank you as always for your patience and understanding as we navigate this process. Our Church Family may be small, but we are united and supportive of each other and our Church future.



Dr. Rebecca Blair, Lead Presbyter and Stated Clerk from the Presbytery of Southeastern Illinois.



# SUBMITTED BY SUSIE ETHERTON DUNNAN

## CHURCH IS HARD.

Church is hard for the person walking through the doors, afraid of judgement.  
Church is hard for the pastor's family, under the microscope of an entire body.  
Church is hard for the prodigal soul returning home, broken and battered by the world.  
Church is hard for the girl who looks like she has it all together, but doesn't.  
Church is hard for the couple who fought the entire ride to service.  
Church is hard for the single mom, surrounded by couples holding hands, and seemingly perfect families.  
Church is hard for the widow and widower with no invitation to lunch after service.  
Church is hard for the deacon with an estranged child.  
Church is hard for the person singing worship songs, overwhelmed by the weight of the lyrics.  
Church is hard for the man insecure in his role as a leader.  
Church is hard for the wife who longs to be led by a righteous man.  
Church is hard for the nursery volunteer who desperately longs for a baby to love.  
Church is hard for the single woman and single man, praying God brings them a mate.  
Church is hard for the teenage girl, wearing a scarlet letter, ashamed of her mistakes.  
Church is hard for the sinners.  
Church is hard for me.  
It's hard because on the outside it all looks shiny and perfect. Sunday best in behavior and dress. However, underneath those layers, you find a body of imperfect people, carnal souls, selfish motives. But, here is the beauty of church—  
Church isn't a building, mentality, or expectation.  
Church is a body.  
Church is a group of sinners, saved by grace, living in fellowship as saints.  
Church is a body of believers bound as brothers and sisters by an eternal love.  
Church is a holy ground where sinners stand as equals before the Throne of Grace.  
Church is a refuge for broken hearts and a training ground for mighty warriors.  
Church is a converging of confrontation and invitation. Where sin is confronted and hearts are invited to seek restoration.  
Church is a lesson in faith and trust.  
Church is a bearer of burdens and a giver of hope.  
Church is a family. A family coming together, setting aside differences, forgetting past mistakes, rejoicing in the smallest of victories.  
Church, the body, and the circle of sinners-turned-saints, is where He resides, and if we ask, He is faithful to come.  
So even on the hard days at church—  
The days when I am at odds with a friend, when I've fought with my husband because we're late once again.  
When I've walked in bearing burdens heavier than my heart can handle, yet masking the pain with a smile on my face.  
When I've worn a scarlet letter, under the microscope.  
When I've longed for a baby to hold, or fought tears as the lyrics were sung.  
When I've walked back in, afraid and broken, after walking away.

I'll remember, He has never failed to meet me there.





## POETRY PAGE

### WE ALL HAVE OUR PRISONS

By: Mike Hastings

We all have our prisons  
Sin helped to build each cell.  
We all have our hidden guilt  
Our own personal hell.  
Hidden thoughts and hidden secrets  
We hope we never have to tell.  
We all have our prisons  
Sin helped to build each cell.

Some of us want freedom  
There are some of us content.  
Some want to reclaim the time  
While others say "Well spent."  
All have one thing in common  
There is sin in every past.  
And we all need a Savior  
To be truly free at last.

Yes, we all need Jesus Christ  
He holds the key, we'll find.  
To free us from our prisons  
And leave our cells behind.  
But some of us don't seek Him  
Saying, "We don't care."  
So some may never find Him  
With the key he's holding there.

While some may cry out to Him  
When sin drives them to their knees.  
Finding He's the only answer  
And He only holds the keys.  
All have one thing in common  
There is sin in every past.  
We all need the Savior Christ  
To be truly free at last.

We all have our prisons  
But it doesn't have to be.  
Jesus, in His nail scarred hands  
Holds out our freedom's key.

### A PRAYER OF THANKS

By: Mike Hastings

Father God in Heaven  
As I speak to you in prayer  
I thank you for your mercy  
Your grace and loving care.  
I thank you that you gave your Son  
To die on Calvary's tree,  
I thank you for the empty tomb  
And the truth that set me free.

To say that I'm a sinner  
Would be to understate  
It seems to me that I might be  
The greatest of the great.  
But to you that didn't matter  
For you loved me anyway  
You sent your Son to shed His blood  
And wash my sins away.

So, thank you dearest Father  
For the victory that's been won,  
Not through efforts of my own  
But through those of your Son.  
You saw a down trod sinner  
Who seemed forever lost  
Took control, redeemed my soul  
When I met Jesus at the cross.



Dear First Presbyterian Church, Thank you so much for your generous donation for our Cancer Awareness Night. We are incredibly grateful that you helped us for an amazing cause. Thank you!! GCMS Girls Basketball Team '24-'25




Left: Addison Kerchenfaut and Sophia Ray pack a box of food for Food Pantry clients.

Above: GCMS FFA helped at the Food Pantry on January 25th including our Addison Kerchenfaut upper left.



**GIBSON CITY AMERICAN LEGION POST 568**

**CHRISTMAS BASKETS UPDATE**

The Gibson City Post 568 American Legion Christmas basket committee would like to thank everyone who donated whatever they could toward the 2024 baskets.

With your donations, we were able to brighten Christmas for 65 families! We can't thank you enough!

God bless and have a wonderful 2025!!!

Legion Post 568 is at 203 N. Sangamon Ave., Gibson City





