

First Presbyterian Church  
221 East Sixth Street at Lincoln  
Bloomington, IN 47408  
(812) 332-1514



# First Press

*Celebrating Christ and Serving Community*

February 2024 Volume 63, No.1

## Inside this Issue

Pastoral Letter	2
Ash Wednesday & Guest Speakers	3
What's Happening at FPC	4-7
FPC Blood Drive	8
Your Generosity Makes a Huge Impact	9-10
New Groups	11
Session Notes	12
Financial Status & Budget Update	13
Calendar	14



## Pastoral Letter

If it weren't for a calendar telling me otherwise, I'd say that the Christmas season ended only a week or two ago, and New Year's was practically yesterday. Truth be told, the Grimm family Christmas tree stood strong all the way up to last week. Nevertheless, personal feelings aside, it's now my pastoral duty to alert you: the season of Lent is coming and nearly upon us. The time to prepare is now.

I wonder if that sounds like a warning to you. Lent can feel as if playtime is over, the holiday has ended; it's time to cut the humor, get serious, and get to work. The season begins under the banner of ashes, as if the fire has died—Ash Wednesday. We reacclimate our tongues to pronounce uncommon words: penance, disciplines, solemnity, holiness, mortality, and repentance. It all can sound rather somber and serious, can't it?

But what if this year we approach Lent like an invitation for renewal? Listen to this story from theologian Julie Canlis, writing in the magazine *Christianity Today*.

*When I hit a desert season in my spiritual life some years ago, I felt haunted by the abundance I had left behind. I missed about 10 years of sermons due to pregnancy nausea, crying babies, toddler tantrums, dirty diapers that needed changing right in the middle of the service, or my own human sin. (At least I thought it was sin, but it was more likely total and complete exhaustion.) I was a frazzled mother who brought my children to church in their pajamas and often felt disconnected from Christ there and everywhere else.*

*At the time, I thought my spiritual dry spell simply reflected how poorly I was doing and how undisciplined I felt in the chaos of parenting young kids. I believed that my faith could only grow in abundance—the abundance of felt worship, prayerful focus, and passionate commitment. But I was wrong. It took me years to learn that the Lord speaks in silence. And years again to learn that he holds onto me more tightly than I hold onto him. And still more years to realize that grace is best understood in periods of apparent failure, absence, and desolation.*

*As I look back on those desert years, I see that hard-won truth for what it is—a Lenten lesson. Although we often think of Lent as a time of strict discipline and self-denial, it requires something much more: a deep understanding of our belovedness.*

We'll enter Lent together on Ash Wednesday, February 14th, with worship at 7pm. Every journey requires preparation, so you might begin thinking now: how can you meet God this season not only in abundance but especially in failure, absence, and desolation? How might you simplify your life by pulling back just a bit on the perfectionism and high expectations? What are the small, doable practices that might allow you to better hear and rest in that voice that calls you beloved?

We'll prepare as best we can, yet the gift of Lent is its truth that we're never prepared enough, never disciplined or devoted or holy enough, yet grace abounds. Being renewed in Christ's transforming mercy and love—that's something worth looking forward to.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Tommy

## Ash Wednesday Worship - February 14th at 7:00 p.m.



Begin the season of Lent with contemplative worship in the sanctuary on Ash Wednesday. The Church sets this day apart to clear away the clutter in our lives and to let go of the distractions that weigh us down. We muster the courage to name how short and frail our lives are, and we discover how clarifying and renewing God's grace is. Come with a spirit for spiritual adventure. The service will include an invitation to receive the sign of the cross on your forehead or hand, imprinted in ashes.

## Upcoming Faith Forum

**Sunday, February 4th at 11:15 a.m.** - Liz Mitchell Award winning Historian and journalist, Cofounder of Resilience Productions, Producer, writer, director of "Labor of Love" her documentary of the restoration of the Second Baptist Church of West Baden, IN History of the Black citizens of Bloomington.

**Sunday, February 11th at 9 a.m.** - Come and prepare for worship early at 9am with our guest preacher and speaker Rev. Dr. David Gambrell, who will be teaching on the way in which congregational singing shapes Christian faith. Rev. Dr. David Gambrell is associate for worship in the PC(USA) Office of Theology and Worship. He is co-editor of the *Book of Common Worship* and author of *Presbyterian Worship: Questions and Answers* and *Breathing Spirit into Dust: Fifty Hymn Texts*.

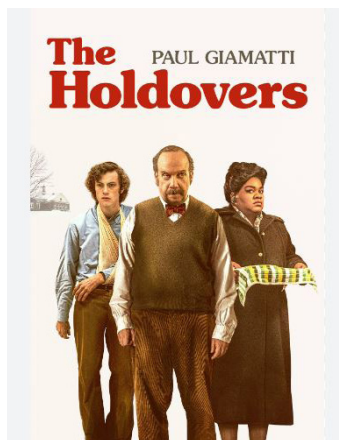
During Lent Pastors Tommy and Kelley will lead Faith Forum in the study through the Lenten scriptures.

## IU Organists' ChoralFest - Feb 2nd

Students of the Organ Department at the Jacobs School of Music will present ChoralFest 2024: "Through the Ages A Song Rings On" at First Presbyterian Church, Bloomington on Friday, Feb. 2, 7 pm. The program will include settings of sacred choral and organ music spanning two millennia. From Gregorian chant to live improvisation, Anglican chant and classic anthems, Sacred Harp hymnody, Byrd, Bach, Duruflé, Phillips, newly composed works, and some handbell music to boot. The concert promises to be a veritable buffet of great music through the ages. Free and open to the public, so bring a friend from another church!



## Faith & Film - Feb. 4th



**Sunday, February 4th (3pm)** - A cranky history teacher (Paul Giamatti) at a remote prep school is forced to remain on campus over the holidays, along with a troubled student who has no place to go and a grieving cook (Da'Vine Joy Randolph). Giamatti and Randolph won the 2024 Golden Globe awards for their performances in this film. It's a coming of age story about the student, but may also be seen as one about the middle-aged teacher. Sessions run about 2 1/2 hours in rm 7, time to watch the movie, have a brief discussion and enjoy fellowship.

## Interrupting Racism for Children

Training offered by Child Advocates - Friday, February 9th (8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.)


Lunch will be provided.

The Racial Justice Task Force at FPC (through the generosity of our Myrtle grant) are hosting a one-day workshop on Interrupting Racism in Children. This training, offered by Child Advocates, offers the opportunity for adults to learn more about ways in which they can recognize and reverse patterns of racist behavior in children. This training is open to the community and will be hosted here, in Lyman Hall. Join us or pass along to a friend!

Pre-register with Pastor Kelley at [kelly@fpcbloomington.org](mailto:kelly@fpcbloomington.org) by Monday, February 5th.







# Mark your calendars! Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday, February 11, 2024 11:00 a.m.

All are invited to come to Lyman Hall following worship to share in food and fellowship together, where there will be hot, yummy soup & more!

Join FPC's Youth in our annual fundraiser to help the hungry near and far!

Proceeds go to:

- \*Shalom/Beacon for daily meals in Bloomington
- \*Posoltega hot lunch program in Nicaragua
- \*Youth Mission in West Virginia



### Senior Singles - Sunday, Feb. 11th



For single men and women 50+. We meet after church service for good food and fellowship at Sakura Restaurant. Contact Maggie Knust at [knustma@yahoo.com](mailto:knustma@yahoo.com) for more information.

### Presbyterian Association of Musicians - Feb. 11th

The Presbyterian Association of Musicians in conjunction with Montreat Conference Center offers two sessions of worship and music conference each summer. If you are interested in an opportunity to learn more about this conference and may be interested in joining a small group for the conference in the near future, please join Karen Hahn after the February 11 faith forum with David Gambrell to learn more about this conference.

### Men's Breakfast - Feb. 16th

The Men's Breakfast will once again be scheduled for the third Friday of each month. Mark your calendar for the next gathering on February 16, 2024 at The Bedrök Café. Contact Don Hollinger for more information, [drhollinger1@comcast.net](mailto:drhollinger1@comcast.net)



### Presbyterians Outdoors - Feb. 17th



Presbyterians Outdoors will “try again” to walk the Clear Creek Trail on Saturday, February 17 at 1 PM. Contact Maggie Knust for details and to RSVP. Let's pray for kinder weather!

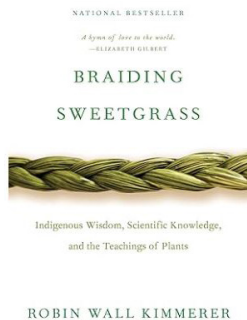


## Christian Men's Retiree Group - Feb. 20th

Christian Men's Retiree Group (4:30pm - 6:00 pm)—For men approaching, contemplating, and enjoying retirement, an opportunity to get together and develop faith and relationships on the third Tuesday of the month in the parlor. For more information, contact Gary Crow at [gcrow@iu.edu](mailto:gcrow@iu.edu) or (812) 361-6603



## FPC Book Group - Feb. 25



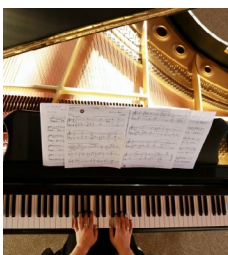
FPC Book Group - Feb. 25th (7:00 p.m.) - Meetings are held on the 4th Sunday of every month, either at Bell Trace or on Zoom in the winter. This month's book is Robin Kimmerer's, "Braiding Sweetgrass," with discussion leader Ann McEndarfer. Please contact Allan Edmonds at [allan.edmonds@gmail.com](mailto:allan.edmonds@gmail.com)

## Library News

Many found jigsaw puzzles as a way to stimulate the mind during COVID. Now those puzzles may be taking up closet space. The church library can help. The library accepts puzzles in good and complete condition. During your post-holiday/spring cleaning, keep in mind that you now have a place to bring puzzles you no longer want (and you know where to find them if you want to try them again). Also remember, you can check out a puzzle to keep you occupied when you are not able to get out as often. Please check out the library (lower level, just inside the doors opposite the office). There is a wide variety of books for all ages and subjects.



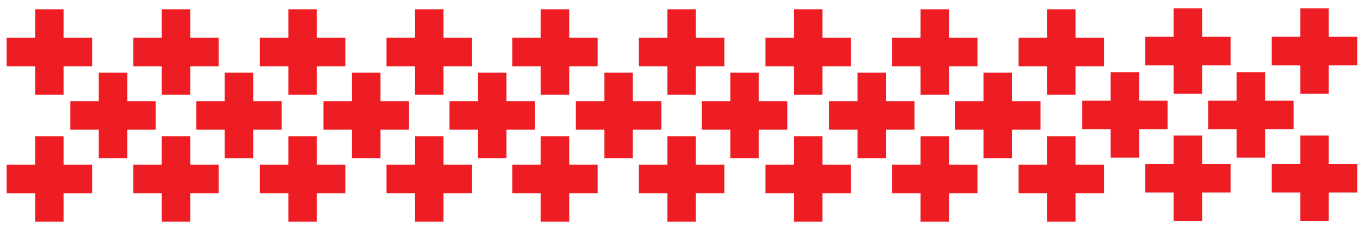
## Playing the Piano for Pleasure



Let's get together to share pieces of music we are working on. What you play is up to you. Contact Yvonne Reinier if you are interested, her information is in the church directory. You would need to be well acquainted with notes and rhythms. The only cost is the pleasure of playing the piano and good fellowship.

# American Red Cross

*Give blood.* Help save lives.



## **Blood Drive** **First Presbyterian Church**

Lyman Hall  
221 E. 6th Street  
Bloomington

**Wednesday, February 21**  
**2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter: FPCBLOOM to schedule an appointment.



Scan to be directed to  
RapidPass®

**Share your heart! Come give in Feb. for a \$20  
Amazon.com Gift Card by email. See [rcblood.org/heart](http://rcblood.org/heart)**



Scan to schedule  
an appointment.



## Celebrating Christ and Christmas in Posoltega, Nicaragua!



Koinonia’s Christmas Store was tremendously successful this year, permitting us to increase the financial support provided by our “Proyecto de la Navidad” to \$1,500. Through this annual project, we celebrate Christ alongside the Jesus of Nazareth Parish of Posoltega. We share the joy of Christmas—and of the Christmas Store—by using proceeds to fund fiestas in Posoltega and the purchase of small gifts for children who would have none.



Thanks go out to many: to the hard-working women of Koinonia; to Kent Honeycutt for his generous donation of nativity scenes that Anne had collected; to everyone who supported the Christmas Store with purchases and donations; and to the hard-working leaders of the Jesus of Nazareth Parish, including Father José Antonio Jácamo, who made this year’s project a reality—not only in the central Posoltega church but also in the outlying church community in El Ojochal. Above all, thanks be to God for our sister-church relationship. Gloria a Dios!

## Thank you for your generous support of the FPC Equal Exchange Coffee Cart this past Christmas and throughout 2023!



As most of you know, Equal Exchange fairly traded coffee, tea, and chocolate products are made available one Sunday each month at the FPC Coffee Cart (generally set up in Lyman Hall after worship). Members and friends are given the opportunity to buy products that are organic and sustainably grown by small-scale farmers from around the world. The farmers are better able to provide for their families, improve their communities, and care for our planet.

In addition, the profits from the coffee cart go toward our mission in Posoltega, Nicaragua. Our profits in 2023 were

\$2,084, with sales of \$5,798 (FPC & law school) minus \$3,714 of Equal Exchange costs.

That Posoltega mission is a continuing all-year project, with basic support from the Outreach portion of the budget for the congregation of the Jesus of Nazareth Parish and its music school program for children. There are other expenses that are not covered by the budget and that the coffee cart profits help cover, including Western Union fees, additional support for the parish, and the costs of instrument repair and special performances by the music school.

The coffee cart funds are especially crucial when our church sends a delegation to Posoltega. In 2023, coffee cart funds were used to pay for all the groceries and our two cooks throughout the 12-day trip; to pay for hotel rooms and meals for mission trip participants near the Managua airport at the start and end of the trip; and to pay for a bus trip to the beach to thank all of our kind hosts for opening their homes to us during our stay.



## Thank you for your support!

The coffee cart is available the first Sunday of each month - February 4, 2024 will be the next. If you have any questions, please contact Debbi Conkle – [debbiconkle@gmail.com](mailto:debbiconkle@gmail.com)



## Lent Zoom Study, Tuesday Evenings 6 - 7 pm



We invite you to join members from First Presbyterian (Columbus), Fairlawn, First Presbyterian (Bloomington) and Grace Hope Presbyterian (Louisville) as we study and pray together this Lent. We will be reading the book *Pause: Spending Lent with the Psalms* by Elizabeth F. Caldwell. The book will help us “take up the spiritual practice of encountering, sinking into, and deeply engaging with one psalm each week during Lent and Holy Week.”

10 books will be available in the church office for use.

Questions: Please contact Pastor Kelley

[kelley@fpcbloomington.org](mailto:kelley@fpcbloomington.org)

We will meet on Zoom from 6-7pm on Tuesdays in Lent (Feb 20, 27; March 5, 12, 19, 26) at this zoom link:

Meeting ID: 868 5841 9229

Passcode: 383786

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86858419229?pwd=cjZYaTh1OXFTUG55RHV5NkJja3krZz09>

### Bereavement Support Group

Have you experienced the death of someone close to you in the last few years? Has it been at least 3-4 months since their death? A bereavement support group may be a helpful way to support and assist in your healing. First Presbyterian Church is offering a bereavement support group beginning in March. Six to eight members will gather once a week for six weeks in the parlor. Each session will last 1 ½ hours and consist of learning about grief, as well as sharing our experiences including what has been helpful and what the challenges have been. Our time will also include moments of prayer. Participants are asked to commit to attending the entire six weeks. The facilitator will be Rev. Wendy Baptist VanderZee, retired Hospice Chaplain and Bereavement Coordinator with I.U. Health Bloomington Hospice. If interested, please email Kirma at [office@fpcbloomington.org](mailto:office@fpcbloomington.org) for more information.



## Session Meeting Notes - January 21, 2024

### Session Actions:

- Approved the minutes of the Congregational Meeting of January 14, 2024
- Approved special collections for: One Great Hour of Sharing, Peace and Global Witness and Christmas Joy

### **Elected:**

Treasurer – Mary McClellan

Clerk of Session – Tom Gardner

**Commissioner to the Presbytery:** Karen Hahn

**Alternate Commissioner to the Presbytery:** Sue Connell

**Appointed:** Jane Gallagher as Session Liaison under the Child Protection Policy

### **Elected Corporate Officers:**

President – Sherry Knighton-Schwandt

Vice President – Don Hanna

**Member at Large:** Bill McGregor

- Approved the submission of the Office of the General Assembly Report of Session to the Presbytery

## Financial Status & Budget Update

To keep the congregation well informed, here is a brief financial update and a celebration regarding the results of the 2024 generosity campaign.

Thanks to your generosity, we received significantly more in December than we spent and came much closer to meeting our 2023 budget than we had projected. Unfortunately, we finished the year with an \$18,379 deficit after a surplus in 2022. This is not ideal; however we're happy to report that the church fulfilled all of our outreach commitments to partner non-profits in 2023. We are working to better clarify the church's ongoing costs and needs in order that ministries can spend funds confidently and congregants can give generously and knowledgeably.

FPC is starting 2024 significantly stronger with early pledges to the general fund totaling \$430,000, which is 71% of the budget and is an increase over last year. Your contributions are what make it possible for us to celebrate Christ and to continue serving both the local and the larger community. We are grateful for your broad-based support both in the rising number of pledges received and the annual increases that those pledges represent. We're excited about the congregation's journey toward even greater financial health and maturity.

There is still time for you to make a financial commitment for 2024. Use the link below for an electronic pledge card or contact Mary McClellan, Treasurer, at the church office:

<https://forms.gle/vNFEvxpsH8gjztBy9>

You may also make financial contributions in support of FPC's mission in our Sunday offering or give online through the church website.

	Month of December	Year-end 2023
Total received *	\$78,066	\$566,299
Total expensed	\$65,570	\$584,678
Gain/(Loss)	\$12,496	(\$18,379)

\*Includes pledge and non-pledge giving, plate offering, building income, and miscellaneous amounts received.

The Stewardship committee will continue to provide periodic financial updates and celebrations as Christ leads us through our challenges. If you have any questions about items related to the church's finances, feel free to discuss with our Treasurer or any member of this committee.

Cathy Walker, Chair  
Bill McGregor  
Lynn Schenck

# FEBRUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 1:00 pm Circle Mary Rehearsal 5:45 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	2 7:00 pm IU Organist ChoralFest  ■ Julia Strycker ■ Nicholas Swank <b>Groundhog Day</b>	3
4 10:00 am Worship Service 11:00 am Coffee Cart 11:00 am Girl Scout Cookie Sale 11:15 am Education Hour 3:00 pm Faith & Film	5 11:30 am Emmaus Group  ■ Emily Bobo	6 6:30 pm Deacon's Meeting  ■ Todd Wright	7 4:30 pm Committee Night  ■ Steve Creech	8 5:45 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal  ■ Nancy Ruff	9 8:00 am Child Advocates - Interrupting Racism for Children	10   ■ Ava Schneider
11 10:00 am Worship Service 11:15 am Education Hour 11:30 am Senior Singles 11:00 am Souper Bowl of Caring ■ Jean Kory	12 5:30 pm Racial Justice Task Force  ■ John Stackhouse <b>Lincoln's Birthday</b>	13 7:00 pm Koinonia Circle	14 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday Service  <b>Valentine's Day</b>	15 <b>First Press Deadline</b> 5:45 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal ■ Maxwell Riggle ■ Michelle Talbot	16 8:00 am Men's Breakfast	17 1:00 pm Presbyterians Outdoors  ■ Dea Schneider
18 10:00 am Worship Service 11:15 am Education Hour 6:00 pm FPC Session  ■ Judy Crow ■ Carol Peterman	19 11:30 am Emmaus Group	20 4:30 pm Men's Retiree Faith Group	21 2:00 pm Blood Drive	22 5:45 pm Bell Choir Rehearsal 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal	23   ■ Mike Riggle	24
25 10:00 am Worship Service 11:15 am Education Hour 7:00 pm FPC Book Group	26   ■ Samantha Nickel	27	28 <b>Area 10 Grocery Bagging &amp; Delivery</b>	29 <b>Washington's Birthday</b>		