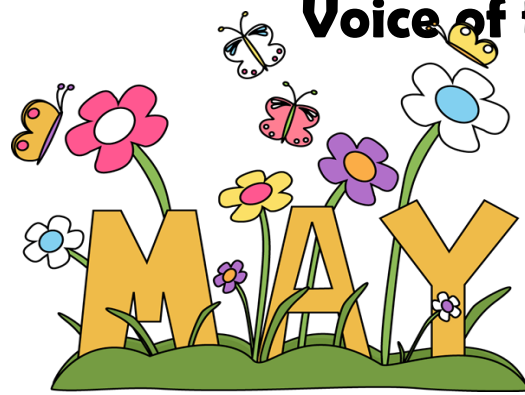




Voice of the Servant

2023



Points of Interest:

- ⇒ Garage Sale, Pentecost offering and Matthew 25 Pg. 2
- ⇒ Mission Focus Pg. 3
- ⇒ Session Highlights Pg. 5

Church Members and Friends,

I am humbled to serve as your covenant pastor. It has been a joy to get to know you and I look forward to getting to know you better as the weeks and months go by. You are welcome to reach out to me directly or to leave a message for me with Donna if you have a pastoral need, a question, or a suggestion.

Recently, the church joined the Matthew 25 initiative in Blackhawk Presbytery. As part of this PCUSA-wide initiative, you agree to work on one or more of three focus area: building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty. The first, congregational vitality, is what we can continue to work on during your search for a full-time pastor. This Matthew 25 initiative suggests that church vitality has seven indicators. Over the coming months I will present these marks of vitality for your own self-assessment.

The first mark is a commitment to forming disciples over every member's lifetime. This leads first to personal transformation, as people put on the heart of Christ, and then to social transformation, as people joyfully go forth into the community and tackle the issues facing today's culture.

It was my observation during this year's commissioning of new elders, that most of the congregation came forward as elders for the laying on of hands. Your church is filled with disciples... elders, deacons, and committed members. This time between permanent pastors is a time when the work of disciples is critical. Some people think they are not "qualified" to be disciples because they have not been personally transformed. Disciples are not already personally transformed, they are open to and in the process of personal transformation. Disciples are being formed over every member's lifetime. Their work is not focused inwardly, taking care of the church. Their work is focused outwardly, using the church as a foundation for reaching out to the community tackling the tough issues we face.

Congregational vitality means that our existence is vital to the community we serve. Are we making ourselves part of the life and well-being of our broader church community?

Matthew 25:44-45. 44 "Then they will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?'

45 "And he will answer, 'I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.'

By grace together,
Laurie Walker
Covenant Pastor



Mission Statement

Empowered by the Holy Spirit through every aspect of our lives, we strive to become more like Christ. Our purpose is to praise and worship God, support each other as a family, and reach out to others to spread the good news of our salvation through Jesus Christ!




Mark your calendars!
 July 21 & 22 there will be a church wide garage sale. If you have gently used items, you can begin to drop them off at the church. Monday through Thursday 9 to noon. Please no electronics, TV's etc. If you need help moving items, please contact Jessica Cox or the office. 815-538-5603



Another great fundraiser by State Farm.
 They offered photos with the Easter Bunny and the families brought a nonperishable item for the Micropantry.
 Thank you to Kurt Bruno and all the families.



 Habitat for Humanity of LaSalle—Bureau—Putnam Counties, Inc. is pleased to announce that applications are open for our next house build in Peru, IL in 2023. To qualify applicants must show a need for adequate housing, be willing to partner with Habitat in the building of the house, and show an ability to repay a low interest affordable mortgage loan.
www.localhabitat.org or call 815-434-2041 for more information.

BOOK SALE

JEWELRY SALE
BAKE SALE
FRIDAY, MAY 19TH
9 AM ~ 3 PM
 MENDOTA AREA SENIOR SERVICES (MASS)
 MENDOTA CIVIC CENTER
 1901 TOM MERWIN DRIVE

Pentecost Offering

 **PENTECOST SPECIAL OFFERINGS**
 CHILDREN AT RISK • YOUTH • YOUNG ADULTS

BY GIVING TO THE PENTECOST OFFERING
 you're supporting ministries that unite young people and inspire them to share their faith in Christ.



40%	10%	25%
Congregations keep for local ministries with children at risk	Children at risk	Ministries with Youth
		Young Adult Volunteers

PENTECOST SPECIAL OFFERINGS CHILDREN AT RISK • YOUTH • YOUNG ADULTS
 Matthew 25 and One Great Hour of Sharing is the largest way that Presbyterians come together in mission and ministry to be “repairers of the breach” (Isaiah 58). Its work focuses on material need and its root causes—from direct famine and disaster relief to the implications of systemic poverty and structural racism growing from naturally occurring and human-caused phenomena. The Pentecost Offering concentrates on building a foundation of faith among youth, young adults, and children at risk. This Offering confronts the inequities of our educational system and helps shape the faith of young people so that they might serve those who have least now, as well as persist in a witness to Matthew 25 their whole lives. Congregations retain 40 percent of this offering for initiatives they choose serving children, youth, and young adults.



Micro Pantry

The pantry can use the following:
All personal hygiene and snack foods.
Bar soap, shampoo/conditioner, body wash, deodorant, feminine products, diapers, wipes.
Cereal bars, chips, pudding cups, gummy packs, cheese & crackers, PB & crackers.
All food & cash donations are greatly appreciated.

**Please consider helping re-stock the Micropantry during the week.
There is a sign up on the table in Fellowship Hall.**

Check out the Facebook page: facebook.com/MendotaMicroPantry

Missions

**Our Mission Focus for May and June
will be Abigail's Baby Bottles.**

On Mother's Day the bottles will be available
and returned on Father's day, June 18.



Thank you for your generous gift of \$348 to the CWS Blankets program. As families and communities around the world recover from emergencies and struggles in the face of unprecedented challenges, you are standing with them. Now more than ever we are so grateful for your generous support.
*Sincerely,
Rick Santos
President and CEO Church World Service*



On behalf of the Presbyterian Mission Thank you for your congregation's commitment to the ministry of Jesus Christ through the gift of \$295 for the Christmas Joy offering and \$20 monthly for Shared mission.

Weekly Coffee Hour
Please sign up to bring cookies or baked goods and to make coffee and set out cheese, crackers and juice the morning of. Juice, coffee, cheese & crackers are supplied by the Fellowship Committee.
The sign-up is on the wall outside the Kitchen.

May Coffee Hour
07 Carol Erwin
14 Second Sunday Breakfast
21 LaVerle Carter
28

Second Sunday Breakfast
May 14, 9 AM
Please bring a breakfast goodie or dish to pass.
We will provide drinks and table service.
If you have questions, please contact Diane Moore.

May Lectionary Readings

07—Acts 7:55-60; Psalm 31:5, 15-16; Proverbs 4:10-18; Psalm 119:9-32; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14
 14—Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 66:8-20; Ezekiel 34:1-7; Psalm 115; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21
 21—Acts 1:6-14; Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35; Isaiah 45:1-7; Psalm 21:1-7; 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11; John 17: 1-11
 28—Acts 2:1-21; Numbers 11:24-30; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; Acts 2:1-21; John 7:37-39



Thank you for all the new book donations for the students to take home the end of the school year.



Prayer for Farmers

Dear Lord,
 As the farming season begins, I ask for Your protection and blessings upon the farmers work. Keep them and their family safe as they work the fields, and grant them good health and strength.
 Help them to be productive and efficient, and to make the most of the resources You have provided. May Your hand of grace be upon them as they work, and may Your blessing be upon the fruits of their labor. May you keep them and their machinery safe and healthy.
 In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

By: Jessica Cox



2023

Per Capita
 is \$42.00
 Per Person
 Per year

Income and Expenses at First Presbyterian March 2022

	MTD	YTD
Budget	\$9,555	\$28,666
Income	\$5,387	\$34,396
Expenses	\$8,289	\$23,179
Reserves	\$-	\$-

Session Highlights

Your session met Tuesday, April 11 for our regular April meeting. Pastor Laurie led us in an opening devotion based on the 20th chapter of the gospel of John; the exchange between the Risen Christ and Doubting Thomas. Pastor Laurie reminded us that we shouldn't get impatient and there is no shame in questioning. We can take our questions to God. And, by believing, we have life in His name. She then led us in an opening prayer.

We established the dates and time for the next two Session meetings: May 16 at 7 PM and June 13 at 7 PM. Communion will be served on May 7.

The PNC reported that the change to effective salary for our MIF was approved by COM and Presbytery. Based on our updated MIF, we received 12 new matches. The PNC reached out to all twelve potential candidates and received 3 "decline" responses, 1 "interested" response, and the other 6 did not respond. PNC will be scheduling a 1st meeting via ZOOM with the interested candidate.

Diane Moore and Pastor Laurie attended the April 11 Presbytery meeting. It was Diane's first time to attend. She found it very enlightening and interesting and confusing. She reports that it was nice to meet all the clergy and elders in attendance. She voted on the amendments of which she had sufficient knowledge to form an opinion. It was a hybrid meeting with 46 in-person and 26 ZOOM attendees. There was a great worship service. Pastor Laurie commented on how nice it was to hear so many good voices raised in praise during the

singing of hymns. A group that does mission through quilt-making had many quilts adorning the pews and spoke about their ministry. Pastor Laurie was commissioned to go to Kenya. There was a farewell for Rev. David Spaulding as he enters retirement. Discussion was brought by the visioning committee regarding the need to train lay leaders.

The office received a note from Bill Coughlin requesting that he be removed from the membership of Mendota First Presbyterian, as he has moved to Peru. With deep regret, Session voted to honor Bill's request and remove him from our membership.

The clerk expressed that Session is very thankful to Donna for working on making ZOOM meetings available to us again. We appreciate all she does for our church.

This month's financial report shows income ahead of expenses year-to-date, thanks to faithful giving from the congregation. Treasurer Peggy Etheridge purchased, with Session's authorization, two CDs with funds which have been held in our reserves account to gain higher rates of interest on our holdings.

Pastor Laurie reported that she has started making visits to our church family who are not able to attend worship in person and often do not have the technology to attend via ZOOM. Once she returns from her Kenya trip, she will meet with the Deacons, so she can complement their visiting schedule. She knows that many from the church family feel disconnected from the rest of the church family and life of the church and she wishes to change that. Pastor Laurie will be away April 17 to 29. In her absence, those who need pastoral care can reach out to any member of Session or John Heinekamp. Pastor Laurie has been thinking about more ideas to strengthen our position as a Matthew 25 church. How do we draw in young couples and families? How do we engage with and serve them with what we currently have to offer? Our church has a beautiful facility that could be used more, we have a good internet signal, we have an excellent camping facility in Stronghold. What are their needs? Could we open up an area for supervised homework time for use by kids whose families don't have internet access? Could we provide camper scholarships and then have the campers come back to the church and share their experiences with us? There is a home-school group looking for a space to meet. Can we fill that need?

It was decided by the teachers that Sunday School will start after the children's sermon. Sandy reports that it worked well for the students to come up to the sanctuary for communion.

Don reported on a few small issues concerning the building. We did not sustain much damage from the recent storms, though a minimal amount of water did backup into the basement, due to the main pipe has some blockage from tree roots. Also, a neighbor reported seeing a small piece of slate roofing tile come off in the storm. The walls have been repaired and trim and caulking completed from when the birds needed to be removed from inside the walls. One live bird has been seen in the church recently.

Sandy reminded session that Donna will be on vacation April 17-25. The office will not be staffed in her absence, but Sandy will check the answering machine for messages each day.

The Evangelism and Outreach Easter ham distribution went really well. All the hams have been distributed. It is always encouraging to see God's hand at work in the numbers available and the numbers needed when we do these food distributions. We are currently doing a book drive for the Head Start preschool children. Books appropriate for children ages 3 to 5 need to be to the church before the end of April. The staff really appreciates all we do to help them in caring for area children. Jessica provided them with 17 boxes of cereal from the Micropantry to help feed those students who come to school without breakfast. She will provide the families with a note sharing the location of the two local micro pantries so they can fill in needs on weekends and once summer arrives.

Andra has made some updates to the church's web page. She will be adding Matthew 25 information. The mission for Mothers' Day through Fathers' Day will be the Abigail's bottles. One Great Hour of Sharing donations are still being received.

We need more hosts to sign up for Fellowship following worship. Second Sunday breakfast will resume in May.

Our next regular Session meeting will be May 16 at 7 PM.

Submitted by Kim Van Rheenen



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4 9a Elevator Insp. 6:30p Webelos	5 Office Closed	6
7 10a Worship/ Communion In-person & Facebook live 11a Fellowship	8	9	10	11 6:30p Webelos	12 Office Closed	13
 14 Mother's Day 9a Second Sunday Breakfast 10a Worship In-person & Facebook live 11a Fellowship	15	16 9a Presbytery, Rockford 6:30p Session	17	18 6:30p Webelos	19 Office Closed Newsletter Deadline!	20
21 10a Worship In-person & Facebook live 11a Fellowship	22	23	24	25 6:30p Webelos	26 Office Hours 9 to Noon	27 12-4p Sue Brown Bridal Shower Fellowship Hall
28 10a Worship In-person & Facebook live 11a Fellowship	29 Office Closed Memorial Day 	30 Printing Newsletter	31			



May Birthdays

- 02 Faye Smith
- 06 Joanne Wacker
- 06 Sean Dullard
- 11 Jamie Stanford



May Anniversaries

- 27 Jason & Jennifer Donahue
- 27 Ray & Faye Smith



Matthew 25

We are a Matthew 25 Church!
 Our congregation has accepted the PC (USA's) invitation to follow Jesus' teachings in Matthew 25:31—46 by becoming active disciples and making a difference in our community and the world.

Monthly there will be additional information as the congregation becomes more familiar with Matthew 25



May Sunday School Teachers

- 07 Sandy Rebholz
- 14 Carol Erwin
- 21
- 28

Ushers/Communion

- 07 Larry & Kay Christen
- 14 Sandy Rebholz, Suzan Wilburn
- 21 Kevin & Ann Goy
- 28 Chuck & Betty Baumann



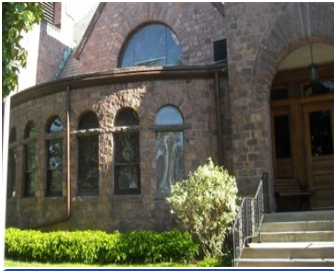
May Pianists

- 07 Brady Hughes
- 14 Peggy Etheridge
- 21 Peggy Etheridge
- 28 Laura Sutton



Continued Prayers

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Angie (Faye Smith) | Ev McNutt | Mike Boyle |
| Barb Christopher | James Moxness | Pam Schmidt |
| Becky Matheson | Janet Sutton | Pat Schmidt |
| Bennett Michaels | Jason | Sarah Arter |
| Carol & Don Gooden | Jim Reilly | Sandy & Donald Schultz |
| David Erwin | Cathy Dahm | Tim Rebholz |
| Debbie Goffinet (Sandy R) | Kevin | Tim Sondgeroth |
| Dorothy Becker | Kim Van Rheenen | Trisha Smith |
| Dixie Tonozzi | Lu Zeinert | |



First Presbyterian Church
 1003 5th Street
 Mendota, IL 61342-1911
 Website: www.fpcmendota.com
(815) 538-5603



Label

Sunday Morning Worship 10 AM: In-Person and www.facebook.com/fpcmendota

**Sunday Fellowship 11 AM,
 Second Sunday Breakfast 9 AM**

↔

Join Zoom Meetings & Gatherings:
[https://us05web.zoom.us/j/994 465 263](https://us05web.zoom.us/j/994465263)
 pwd=zF6RMy
 Or dial in for voice only: 1-312-626-6799
Meeting code: 994 646 5263
Password: zF6RMy



MAY
2023

