



Voice of the Servant



FEBRUARY

2026

Church Family and Friends,

It makes me cold just thinking of all of you! But, it has given me the inspiration to write this letter to you...who some may call the “frozen chosen.” Are you familiar with this label? It has been used for Presbyterians and other Reformed Christians who appear emotionally reserved. In other words, some think we can be a little stiff during worship. It begs the question how the Holy Spirit is evident among us.

The Session is studying the book Sailboat Church and discussing the role of the Holy Spirit in our church. So, it seems like a good time to write about the third person of the Trinity. Yes, the Spirit is a “who” and not a “what.”

Would you say that you better relate, or more often relate, to the Father, to the Son or to the Holy Spirit? We know the Spirit as the breath of life at creation, we know the Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary to cause her pregnancy, and the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus at His baptism. Finally, we know Jesus said to the believers who would become His church...

<sup>16</sup>... I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—<sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. (John 14:15-17)

The Holy Spirit is God’s gift to the church. Do you know him? We know God, we know Jesus, but it is critical that we know the Spirit, too. The Spirit is God with us today. The Spirit transforms us to be like Jesus. But...

Without the Spirit moving and acting in power, the church devolves from the living body of Christ into a well-intentioned but generally impotent religious organization. (Gray, Joan S.. Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink Its Mission and Practice (p. 33))

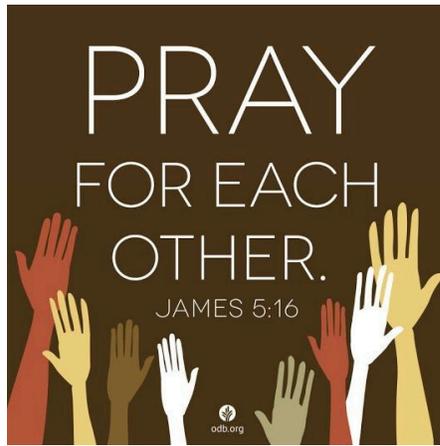
The Spirit assures us that we are His church and He is with us today. The Spirit is our advocate and our partner. The Spirit guides us and give us a vision for the future. And, the Spirit unites us. It makes me think of how the Chicago Bears roused our spirits this year with their last-minute wins, and united us in rooting for them. Well, this year and every year, God fills us with the Spirit so that He can unite us and use us, His church, to triumph.

If you feel frozen, turn to the Holy Spirit to warm you, and to give you, life and purpose. May the Holy Spirit give you eyes to see what the Lord is doing this day.

By grace together,  
Laurie Walker, Covenant Pastor

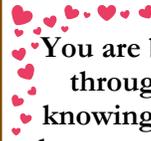


Lent Begins  
February 22



**Gift of Prayer**

Remember you Prayer Warrior for Valentines.



You are blessed to pray for one person throughout the year without them knowing who is praying. You can also leave a card or small thoughtful gift on the table in Fellowship hall.

*Evangelism and Outreach Committee*

**Keeping the Community Warm**

We will collect: Hats, scarves, & gloves for January and February. They are distributed through the Micropantry and are well received.



**Mission Focus for February**

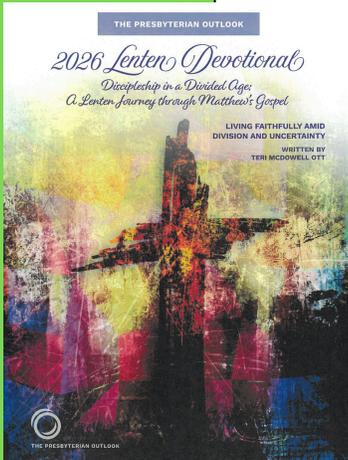
**Souper Bowl of Caring**  
February 8, 2026 Super Bowl Sunday. Souper Bowl of caring began in a church in 1990 with a simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy this Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat." The food items and donations will go to the Micropantry.



**Lenten Daily Devotions**

The 2026 Lenten daily devotions will begin via email, February 18 and end April 5.

If you would like a hard copy, please contact Donna @ [mendotafirstpres@gmail.com](mailto:mendotafirstpres@gmail.com) or call the office (815) 538-5603



We have a lending closet which is available to anyone. There are walkers, wheelchairs, canes, crutches, shower chairs, and other miscellaneous items.



## Micropantry

The Micropantry can use the following:

- Canned meats:
- Tuna
- Chicken
- Spam
- Vienna sausage
- Pork
- Roast beef
- Salmon

- Hearty soups
- Canned Veggies
- Gravy Packages
- Granola Bars
- Shelf Stable Milk
- Common Spices
- Cooking Oil
- Canned/Packaged Meals

Cans with pull tabs to open will be helpful to those who don't have can openers. Basic hygiene items are always needed. Shampoo, deodorant, soaps, shaving cream, razors, hand creams.

We have a temperature controlled cooler so perishables can be distributed.

### Hands of Hope (Joliet Pick-up)

Pick up Dates February 6 and 20

If you can help pick-up, unload or stock the food items at 3 PM please sign-up.

### Facebook Live Presenter

Please prayerfully consider volunteering to record the Face- book live Sunday Worship. If you would like to know more, ask any of the women below.

- 01 Joni Bratney
- 08 Andra Goy
- 15 Andra Goy
- 22 Joni Bratney

### Produce Sorting

If you are able to help sort fresh produce. Please sign-up.

No produce in February



### Facebook Live

If you are unable to attend worship in person, you can watch it live on Facebook. or recorded.

[www.facebook.com/fpcmendota](http://www.facebook.com/fpcmendota)



### Second Sunday Breakfast

February 8, Second Sunday Breakfast 9:30 AM Please bring a goodie or dish to pass. We will provide drinks and table service. If you have questions, please contact Joni Bratney.



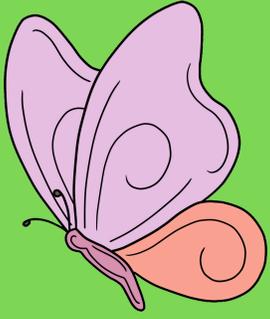
### Weekly Coffee Hour

Please consider hosting coffee hour at 9:45 AM. Bring a simple dessert, make coffee, pour juice. Cheese and crackers are supplied by the Fellowship Committee. **The sign-up is on the wall outside the kitchen.**

### Coffee Hour

- 01 Carol Erwin
- 08 Second Sunday Breakfast
- 15 Kim Van Rheenen
- 22 Joni Bratney

## Session Highlights



Session Highlights from **January 20** meeting for February newsletter  
Your session met January 20. Pastor Laurie led us in a review of chapter 3 of Sailboat Church, then opened our meeting with prayer.

**Communion** will be served February 1.

**PNC Report:** There is nothing new out there, the PNC has requested a re-match but has not received an updated list. Please continue to keep the PNC and the process lifted up in your prayers.

**Presbytery Report:** 1) February 10 will be the next Presbytery meeting. Peggy will attend as our commissioned Elder for the February meeting. 2) Presbytery's new name, Illinois Prairie Presbytery, will become effective March 13.

**Financial Report:** 1) Our overall financial position has improved over the past 12 months. 2) The monthly report was received into our records.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Laurie is happy to make and receive phone calls and keep our church family in prayer while she is in Arizona. 2) Session voted to extend Pastor Laurie's covenant for a year. 3) Donna will be sending out daily Lenten devotions similar to those we received during Advent.

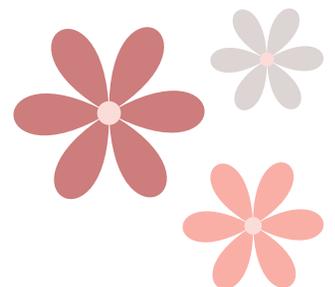
**Maintenance and Property:** 1) The ignitor for the boiler for the front steps has been fixed. 2) A valve that controls the radiators in the sanctuary needs attention. Matt from Steam Whisperers is working on this. 3) The annual elevator inspection will take place February 18. 4) Church Mutual Insurance is doing away with their alarm notification system. Flood and temperature sensors will remain in place. We have smoke detectors in place.

**Missions:** 1) PC (USA) has produced some informative videos regarding missions. 2) We are currently receiving the Blanket Offering. One Great Hour of Sharing will begin in Lent.

**Fellowship and Parish Life:** 1) Fellowship is going great. People are signing up to help host. 2) There will be a chili and cornbread lunch following Worship on March 15.

Kim closed our meeting with prayer.  
Our next regular Session meeting will be February 17.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kimi Van Rheenen, Clerk of Session



## February Lectionary Readings

01--Mica 6:1-8, Psalm 15, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, Matthew 5:1-12  
 08--Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12), Psalm 112:1-9 (10), 1 Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16),  
 Matthew 5:13-20  
 15--Exodus 24:12-18, Psalm 2 or Psalm 99, 2 Peter 1:16-21, Matthew 17: 1-9  
 22--Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7, Psalm 32, Romans 5:12-19, Matthew 4:1-11



### SPECIAL OFFERINGS

The Churchwide Special Offerings — One Great Hour of Sharing, World Communion Offering, and Christmas Joy Offering — are ways Presbyterians collectively participate in ministries of justice, hunger, disaster, Christian formation, education, peacemaking, leadership development and global witness.

#### Offering Seasons for 2026



#### One Great Hour of Sharing | Season of Lent

Received during the season of Lent, especially Palm Sunday or Easter  
[pcusa.org/oghs](http://pcusa.org/oghs)  
 Resources distributed in January



#### World Communion Offering | Season of Preparation

Received during the Season of Preparation, especially World Communion Sunday  
[pcusa.org/wcco](http://pcusa.org/wcco)  
 Resources distributed in July



#### Christmas Joy Offering | Season of Advent and Christmas

Received during the season of Advent, especially the Sunday before Christmas  
[pcusa.org/christmasjoy](http://pcusa.org/christmasjoy)  
 Resources distributed in October

#### REMITTING FUNDS:

**Congregations**  
 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
 PO Box 643700  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700

**Mid Councils**  
 Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
 PO Box 643751  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3751

#### CONTACT:

[special.offerings@pcusa.org](mailto:special.offerings@pcusa.org)  
 800-728-7228, ext. 5047  
[pcusa.org/specialofferings](http://pcusa.org/specialofferings)



### ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The work done in support of the causes supported by One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) — disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change, and immigration/migration and ref — serves individuals and communities in need. This work provides people with safety, sustenance and hope.

Received during the season of Lent (Feb. 18–April 5), each gift to OGHS helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. The Offering provides us a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need. In fact, OGHS is the single, largest way Presbyterians come together every year to work for a better world.

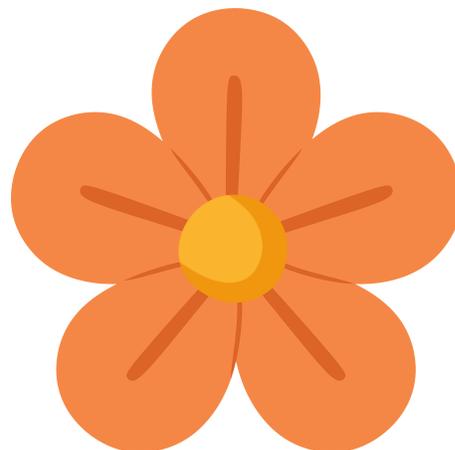
Thank you for promoting and supporting One Great Hour of Sharing, an Offering that responds directly to the call to do justice in Micah 6:8.

**IF WE ALL DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP TO A LOT!**



Thank you for your gift of \$800!  
 Marion Medical Mission will use 100%  
 of your donation as designated, for wells.

*Tom Logan, President MMM*



# FEBRUARY 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>1</b></p> <p>9:30a Fellowship 10:30a Worship Communion</p>	<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>1p PEO</p>	<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>5</b></p> <p>10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos</p>	<p><b>6</b></p> <p>Office Closed 12:30p HOH Pick-up 3:00p Unload and stock HOH foods</p>	<p><b>7</b></p>
<p><b>8</b></p> <p>9:45a Fellowship 10:30a Worship</p> 	<p><b>9</b></p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>5:30p Presbytery evening zoom</p>	<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos</p>	<p><b>13</b></p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> 
<p><b>15</b></p> <p>9:30a Second Sunday Breakfast 10:30a Worship</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>Office Closed Presidents Day</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>5p Session</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> 	<p><b>19</b></p> <p>10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos</p>	<p><b>20</b></p> <p>Office Closed 12:30p HOH Pick-up 3:00p Unload and stock HOH foods</p>	<p><b>21</b></p>
<p><b>22</b></p> <p>First Sunday of Lent 9:45a Fellowship 10:30a Worship</p> 	<p><b>23</b></p>	<p><b>24</b></p>	<p><b>25</b></p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos</p>	<p><b>27</b></p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p><b>28</b></p>

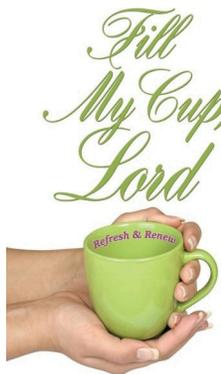
Online Giving



# Happy BIRTHDAY

Birthdays

- 02 Joni Bratney
- 09 Ron Blum
- 09 Ashley Inman
- 14 Gary Holland
- 17 Amy Brewer
- 17 Trenton Stanford
- 20 Erin Stanford
- 22 Travis VanRheenen



Every Thursday  
at 10 AM  
Come and gather with  
us for tea,  
coffee, hot chocolate  
and conversation.  
All are welcome.

Ushers

- 01 Kay Christen, Carol Erwin
- 08 Fay Smith
- 15
- 22



Please be patient with me.  
I am learning a new program  
to create many of the  
publications  
you receive and see.  
Thank you, Donna J.

Pianists

- 01 Peggy Etheridge
- 08 Peggy Etheridge
- 15 Jake Schmitt
- 22 Laura Sutton

Continued Daily Prayers

Julius Hagan—Belgian Missionary  
Kenyan Partners  
Angie (Faye Smith)  
Diane Moore  
Dixie Tonozzi (Ray Smith)  
Finn (Pastor Laurie grandson)  
Jason

Joe (Cindy's boyfriend)  
John Pohl  
Kelly (Gary & Debbie's friend)  
Margina & Larry (Kay Christen)  
Laura (Diane T's Neice)  
Mike Boyle  
Pam Schmidt

Pastor Dave Spaulding's brother  
Pat Schmidt  
Ray Smith  
Sarah Arter  
Sandy & Donald Schultz  
Cheri DeLong (Kay Christen)  
Tim Sondgeroth

Income and Expenses at  
First Presbyterian  
December 2025

	MTD	YTD
Budget	\$7,702	\$92,425
Income	\$10,998	\$90,446
Expenses	\$10,544	\$87,858
Reserves	\$-	\$-

2026 Per Capita \$45 per person

Presbytery	Synod	General Assembly
\$30.11	\$3.81	\$11.08



First Presbyterian Church  
 1003 5th Street  
 Mendota, IL 61342-1911  
 Website: [www.fpcmendota.com](http://www.fpcmendota.com)  
**(815) 538-5603**  
**Pastor: Laurie Walker (815) 274-3444**



Label

In-Person and [www.facebook.com/fpcmendota](http://www.facebook.com/fpcmendota)  
 Check out the Facebook page: [facebook.com/MendotaMicroPantry](https://facebook.com/MendotaMicroPantry)  
 Fellowship will be at 9:45 AM  
 Worship will be at 10:30 AM  
 Second Sunday Breakfast 9:30 AM

February  
 2026

Happy  
 VALENTINE'S  
 DAY

Ash  
 wednesday