



Voice of the Servant MARCH

2026

Church Family and Friends,

The Lenten season is upon us, a time for pause and preparation, a time to gain perspective and refocus, and a time to grow in our relationship with God and each other. Lent is a gift of time. Let's all take advantage of it and prioritize our spiritual exercise and spiritual wellness.

This can be done by taking time each morning to read and meditate on the Lenten devotional that Donna is emailing us, *Discipleship in a Divided Age- A Lenten Journey through Matthew's Gospel, Living Faithfully Amid Division and Uncertainty*. I hope it makes you feel connected to your church family, as it does me, to read and pray the same devotional each morning. I also hope you choose to attend the weekly Bible Study at 3:30 on Tuesdays to discuss what you have read.

As we focus on Christ's life as shared by the Apostle Matthew, we become more aware of His presence with us each day. We call this presence the Holy Spirit. Your Session continues in their study of the book *Sailboat Church* and are being reminded of the critical role the Holy Spirit plays in our church. As we read, the church was created to be a Spirit-powered mission movement.

(Gray, Joan S.. Sailboat Church: Helping Your Church Rethink Its Mission and Practice, p. 44)

Is this the definition of the church today? Or, do we seem more of a self-serving group who keeps to ourselves satisfying our own needs? Or, do we devise projects to attempt and do what we can? And, do we not worry that all we can do is not enough? Well, we are right to worry! Our mistake is using only our own minds and trying to operate on our own limited power when we are meant to fruition in partnership with God who supplies us with the never-ending inspiration and power of the Holy Spirit.

If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5b)

The journey of Lent leads us to the birth of the church, not just the birth of the original church, but to the birth and re-birth of our church today, the body of Christ.

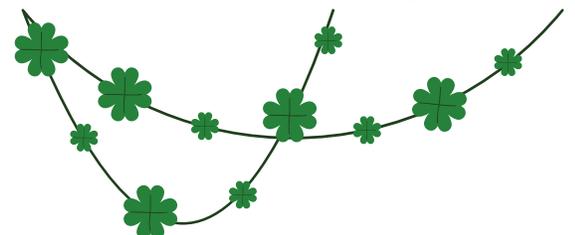
²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

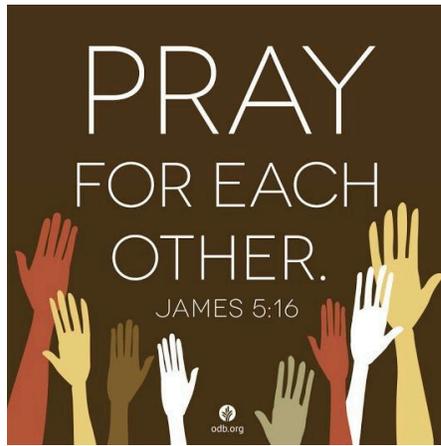
(I Corinthians 12:27)

As we approach the cross, we approach the beginning of the church. And if you think of the church as a sailboat, may we together stop consuming our energy rowing and instead raise its sails to capture the power of the Holy Spirit, recognizing that Jesus...

... is the captain of our Sailboat. His cross is its mast. He calls believers to live as sailors, setting sail by the Spirit and navigating in the flow of God's will. (*Sailboat Church*, p. 43).

By grace together,
Laurie Walker, Covenant Pastor





Gift of Prayer

Remember your Prayer Warrior for St. Patrick's Day.

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



**Chili, Chicken Noodle & Cornbread Lunch
Sunday, March 15, 11:30 after worship**

Please plan to join in on the fun of our chili luncheon following worship on March 15. Please sign up to bring chili, cornbread, chicken and noodles or dessert. No time to cook? Come anyway to enjoy this time of fellowship with your friends.



Easter Meal Distribution

We'll be putting together 50 meal bags. Items we can use are:

- Hams
- Canned peas
- 1# bags of carrots
- Boxed biscuit mix or cornbread mix
- Family sized box of Jell-O any flavor
- Individually wrapped Easter candies (each family will receive 1 bag of candy)
- 1 1/2 pounds bags of small yellow potatoes
- Butter (each family will receive one stick of butter)

As always, cash donations are welcome, so we can shop for the items we don't get through donations.

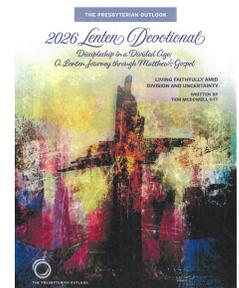
If you have questions, contact Kim VanRbeenen



Lenten Daily Devotions

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

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



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 March 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 taking the opportunity to spread the word via Facebook Live.

- 01 Joni Bratney
- 08 Joni Bratney
- 15 Peggy Etheridge
- 22 Peggy Etheridge
- 29 Andra Goy

Produce Sorting March 3rd and March 17th

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



Facebook Live

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

www.facebook.com/fpcmendota



Volunteer to host a coffee hour!



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
- 08 Second Sunday Breakfast
- 15 Carol Erwin
- 22
- 29



Second Sunday Breakfast

March 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.



Session Highlights

February 17, 2026

Your Your Session met February 17. Pastor Laurie led us in a review of chapter 4 of Sailboat Church, then opened our meeting with prayer. Communion will be served March 1.

PNC Report: We did receive one match. Peggy sent an invitation to the match, but they declined our invitation. Please continue to pray for the candidates seeking churches, the matching process, and our church as we search.

Presbytery Report: 1) Peggy attended the February 10 Presbytery as our commissioner via ZOOM. 2) Items for discussion were a revision of Presbytery by-laws, committees and commissions, the new naming of our Presbytery which becomes official March 13, sabbatical leave for pastors, and the upcoming Presbytery meeting May 19. 3) A sobering statistic from Rev. Heinekamp – In our Presbytery for the period of 2019 to 2025, we went from 73 churches to 60 churches and 10,272 members to 5784 members.

Communications: 1) Donna was granted vacation leave for March 25-31. 2) 10 Stronghold scholarships will be offered again this year.

Clerk's Report: Clerk submitted our Annual Statistical Report.

Financial Report: We had a big month regarding income, due to a donation that is given annually.

Pastor's Report: 1) Lenten devotionals will begin arriving daily via email. If you prefer to receive a paper copy, please contact the church office. 2) We will be offering an Easter meal distribution to the community the week leading up to Easter. 3) Discussed the possibility of an Easter Sunrise Service. 4) Owen has been manning the booth for our Worship PowerPoint and sound system. It is a blessing to have him worshipping with us and helping in this way. 5) MHS will be having a spring musical. Gracie, Abe, and Owen are involved. The musicals are always very enjoyable. 6) Pastor Laurie will be out of the pulpit April 12, June 21 and 28, July 26, October 11 and 18, and November 8 and 15. 7) Pastor has been keeping in phone contact with several members and friends of the church while she is in Arizona. Will be making more calls throughout the rest of the month.

Maintenance and Property: 1) The paper towel dispenser key is broken in the new bathroom. Gary will replace both locks. 2) We will need to order new pads for the AED in the fellowship hall, as the current ones are expiring. 3) The boiler that keeps the front steps clear of ice and snow has been shut off for now. There is no snow in our forecast. 4) Ron for the thermostat reset and adjusted. He reminds everyone to please not adjust the thermostats, as they are programmed for use of the building.

Christian Education: We will be using the Lenten daily devotionals for a discussion study each Tuesday at 3:30 PM beginning February 25. Everyone is welcome!

Missions: One Great Hour of Sharing is our mission focus throughout Lent.

Fellowship and Parish Life: We had good attendance at our most recent Second Sunday Breakfast. Folks are signing up to help host fellowship time and more are encouraged to do so.

Kim closed our meeting with prayer.

Our next regular Session meeting will be held March 17 at 5 PM at the church.

March Lectionary Readings

01~Genesis 12:1-4a, Psalm 121, Romans 4:1-5, 13-17, John 3:1-17, or Matthew 17:1-9

08~Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 95, Romans 5:1-11, John 4:5-42

15~1 Samuel 16:1-13, Psalm 23, Ephesians 5:8-14, John 9:1-41

22~Ezekiel 37: 1-14, Psalm 130, Romans 8:6-11, John 11:1-45

29~Palms: Matthew 21:1-11, Psalms 118:1-2, 19-29

Passions: Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 31:1-16, Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 26:14-27:66 or Matthew 27:11-54



Lending Closet

We have a lending closet which is available to anyone.

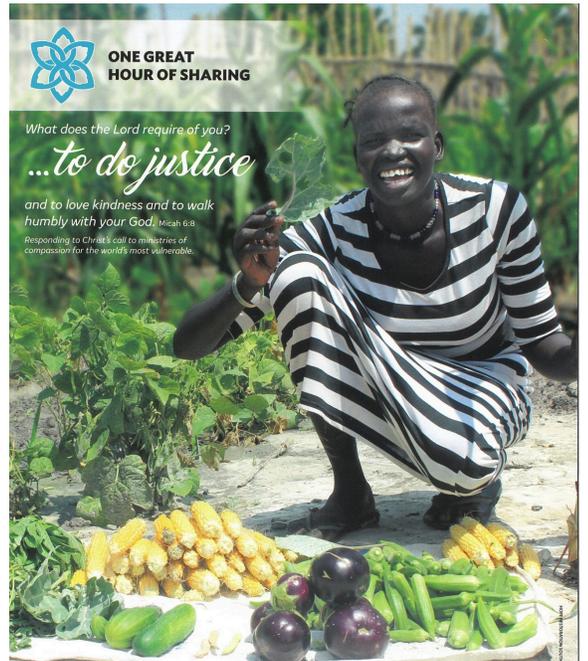
There are walkers, wheelchairs, canes, crutches, shower chairs, and other miscellaneous items.

Mission Focus for MARCH (OGHS)

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—disaster, hunger, poverty, climate change, and immigration/migration and refugees—serves individuals and communities in need. This work provides people with safety, sustenance, and hope.

Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday

Thank you for your gift of \$83 and several bags of non-perishable items.



MARCH

2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
<p>1</p> <p>9:30a Fellowship 10:30a Worship Communion</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>12:30p Produce 1p PEO 3:30p Bible Study</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Office Closed 12:30p HOH Pick-up 3:00p Unload and stock HOH foods</p>	<p>7</p>	
<p>8</p> <p>9:30a Second Sunday Breakfast 10:30a Worship</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>3:30 Bible Study</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>14</p>	
<p>15</p> <p>Worship 11:30a Chili/Cornbread Lunch</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>3:30p Bible Study 5p Session</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Office Closed 12:30p HOH Pick-up 3:00p Unload and stock HOH foods</p>	<p>21</p>	
<p>22</p> <p>9:45a Fellowship 10:30a Worship</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>3:30 Bible Study</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Newsletter Deadline</p> <p>10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Office Closed</p>	<p>28</p>	
<p>29</p> <p>9:45a Fellowship 10:30a Worship</p> <p>PALM SUNDAY</p> 	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>3:30 Bible Study</p>					
							



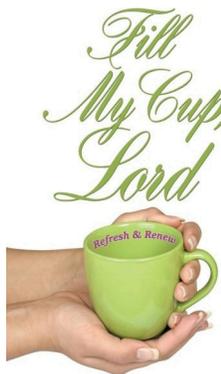
Online Giving



Happy BIRTHDAY

- 01 George Pohl
- 06 Emily Etheridge
- 08 Thomas Bratney
- 11 Christen Minder
- 12 Jenilyn Roether
- 13 Betty Baumann
- 13 Jenifer Donahue
- 14 Anthony Arjes
- 14 Karen Newberry
- 14 Gary Stevens
- 18 Patrick Goy
- 25 Brady Hughes
- 28 Michael Minder

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.



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

Ushers

- 01 Carol Erwin & Kay Christen
- 08 Ron & Melissa Blum
- 15 Faye Smith & Sandy Rebholz
- 22 Kevin & Andra Goy
- 29 Bill & Joni Bratney



Pianists

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

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

Pat Schmidt
Ray Smith
Sarah Arter
Sandy & Donald Schultz
Cheri DeLong (Kay Christen)
Tim Sondgeroth

Income and Expenses at First Presbyterian January 2026

	MTD	YTD
Budget	\$8,023	\$8,023
Income	\$15,710	\$15,710
Expenses	\$6,549	\$6,549
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
(815) 538-5603
Pastor: Laurie Walker (815) 274-3444



Label

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

