

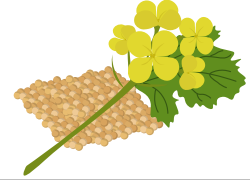


# MAY

# 2026



## Pastor's Page



Church Family and Friends,

My grandchildren tell me that the ABC countdown has begun. That is news to me, but I appreciate their enthusiasm in counting the days left of school. I understand it all ends with “Z” when they zoom out of school and into summer vacation! What I enjoy is the spring countdown of flowers blooming from tulips to daffodils, to bluebells, to lilacs, to cherry trees...just to name a few.... God’s creation never ceases to amaze us and remind us of His promise of new life!

Speaking of summer vacation, please help us advertise the availability of full scholarships to attend camp at Stronghold Camp and Retreat Center. The gift of a camping experience can be life-changing! Mini camps start with students just completing second through fourth grade. A variety of week-long camps are available for students up through high school. Go to [strongholdcenter.org](http://strongholdcenter.org)

Your session continues in their study of Sailboat Church with the chapter on “The Making of Sailors.” We extend the metaphor of sailing to describe the influence of the Holy Spirit in moving us in the direction God calls us to go, with God calling church members to be sailors. Members who are just members worry about pumping up membership and activities. Members who are sailors realize we cannot fix ourselves by ourselves let alone fix our community or our world. We need to trust Jesus and let Him take control. We need to join in what God is already doing. “It is a shift from being self-defined to being defined by the call and purposes of Jesus who gives us this new life (p.58).”

<sup>3</sup> *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.* <sup>4</sup> *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,* <sup>5</sup> *made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.*  
(Ephesians 2:3-5)

We tend to think of being individually saved, but notice the plural, “us.” God’s plan in the past, present, and future is to make us, His church alive in Christ.

*“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)*

So, to be good sailors, good disciples, we need to keep being filled by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18b). Only the power of the Holy Spirit can make us effective and faithful sailors.... By focusing on the Spirit, we orient ourselves away from the problems and disagreements and toward what Jesus has done and is doing for us.

Finally, our celebration of Easter will culminate on May 26 with Pentecost Sunday. May the fire of the Holy Spirit burn in our hearts!

By grace together,  
Laurie Walker, Covenant Pastor



Online Giving



Gift of Prayer

Remember your Prayer Warrior for Mother'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*



**Abigail's Baby Bottle Fundraiser**  
**Mothers day to Father's Day**

Collect spare change From May 10<sup>th</sup> to June 21. This will help support the ministries of Abigail's Women's Clinic.

**First Presbyterian Church is sponsoring 10 full scholarships so youth can experience Summer Camp.**

**REGISTER NOW**

# STRONGHOLD FAMILY CAMPS

**Grandcamp**

June 28- 30

Start a new family tradition! Gather up the grandkids and come to Stronghold for GrandCamp. Summer staff provides the program, everyone stays in private rooms with bath. Inter-generational experiences provide time for stories and song, hiking and swimming as well as quality "one-on-one" time. Shared activities include swimming, special craft projects, campfire time and story-telling. Join us for this special camp at Stronghold! For Grandparents and Grandchildren age 5-12

**Family Camp**

July 24 - 26

Enjoy a new adventure for the entire family. Parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and all the cousins are invited for a weekend of games, crafts, swimming, campfires, and fellowship in the beauty of God's creation. Stay in one of our beautiful retreat buildings or bring a tent and stay at the Stronghold Family Campground area. Your camp fees include lodging, food, activities, and programs for ages 3 to 103! There are no charges for infants and toddlers and childcare is provided for them. Join us for this special weekend at Stronghold!

[www.strongholdcenter.org](http://www.strongholdcenter.org)

# STRONGHOLD SUMMER CAMP 2026

Join Us for a Summer Filled with Fun, Learning, and Exploration!

**Different Camps Every Week**  
 June 14 - July 26

**Camp Highlights:**

- Outdoor Adventures
- Arts & Crafts
- Friendship
- Bible Study
- Campfire Nights
- Canoeing
- Faith Development
- Tons of Fun!

**Camps for all Ages:**

- Overnight Camps
- Day Camps
- GrandCamp
- Family Camp Weekend

[www.strongholdcenter.org](http://www.strongholdcenter.org)

## Micropantry



### The Micropantry can use the following:

We are so fortunate to have a busy, very utilized Micropantry. God continues to provide food and paper goods for our recipients. One of the ways He provides is through your generosity, both in donations and in time and energy maintaining the pantry. One area where we are currently seeing an increased need is for protein sources. Some suggestions for donation:

- |               |                   |               |                 |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| canned tuna   | canned chicken    | Spam          | Vienna sausages |
| canned pork   | canned roast beef | canned salmon | tuna pouches    |
| peanut butter |                   |               |                 |

We also have a temperature controlled cooler by the micropantry, so refrigerated or frozen meat can be donated.

Thank you for helping us feed His children!

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.

## Hands of Hope (Joliet Pick-up)

**Pick up Dates May 1 & May 15**

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.

- 03 Joni Bratney
- 10
- 17 Joni Bratney
- 24 Andra Goy
- 31 Andra Goy

## Produce Sorting May 12

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



## Second Sunday Breakfast

**May 10, 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.

## Coffee Hour

- 03 Melissa & Ron Blum
- 10 Second Sunday Breakfast
- 17 Karen Menzel
- 24 Carol Erwin
- 31

## 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.**

*Volunteer to host a coffee hour!*



## Session Highlights

### April 21, 2026

Session met April 21, 2026. Pastor Laurie Walker opened our meeting with a review of chapter 6 of Sailboat Church and led us in an opening prayer.

**Calendar:** 1) Communion will be served May 3. 2) Jenilyn Roether's voice students will be offering a recital in the sanctuary on May 17 from 4-5 PM.

**PNC Report:** There is nothing new out there.

**Presbytery Report:** 1) The next Presbytery meeting will be held May 19 at 9:30 AM at Stronghold. 2) Summary reports can be read on the Presbytery website following the meeting.

**Communications:** 1) We received an email request from Scout pack 4018 regarding the need for a new charter organization representative from the church when Steve Dullard retires. Peggy Etheridge has volunteered and been approved by Session to represent the church in that capacity. 2) On April 30, Donna will be out of the office to have a root canal procedure.

**Clerk's Report:** 1) Session discussed the Corporation By-Laws distributed at our last meeting. Following discussion, session approved them as presented. At our next regular meeting in May, we will elect officers for the corporation. 2) After a slight restructuring of the Session Committees, chairs were appointed. They are as follows: Fellowship and Parish Life: Joni Bratney, Worship and Music: Bill Bratney and Peggy Etheridge, Personnel and Pastoral Relations: Sandy Rebholz, Christian Education: Andra Goy, Mission Outreach: Andra Goy, Finance and Stewardship: Peggy Etheridge, Maintenance and Property: Gary Stevens, Ron Blum.

**Financial Report:** 1) The requested colorization of the graph didn't work out. 2) Both income and expenses were up slightly for the month, leaving us with a slight deficit for the month. But our income is still ahead of expenses for the year-to-date.

**Pastor's Report:** 1) Pastor Laurie thanked session members for alerting her to new people attending. 2) She has a MAMA meeting next week and will find out the dates of VBS. 3) She is talking to high school students about joining the church membership. 4) She encouraged Session members to consider attending the upcoming Presbytery Assembly meeting. 5) She met with Pastor Elise from St. John's Lutheran and discussed ways that they could partner with us on the micropantry.

**Maintenance and Property:** The door closer in the ladies' restroom in the addition is broken. Ron will look at it.

**Christian Education:** 1) VBS planning meeting was held at First United Methodist. St. John's will be joining in this year. 2) Stronghold Camp scholarships are being made available. The church is offering up to 10 scholarships this year. 3) Session discussed the topic for a new Bible study. Topics of interest include studies on Romans, Revelation, prayer, the Holy Spirit, and a study by Dr. David Jeremiah. Kim passed on a study book to Andra for her consideration. Other topic suggestions are welcome.

**Worship and Music:** Bill has all the pulpit supply covered for the year.

**Mission Outreach:** 1) information has been received from Presbytery regarding a South Dakota Mission opportunity: helping with the Bible School there June 13-19. 2) Habitat for Humanity is gearing up to build a home in Mendota. Flyers are on the table in Fellowship Hall for anyone seeking more information. 3) We will be focusing on the Baby Bottles for Change offering from Mother's Day to Father's Day. 4) Marion Medical Mission's shallow wells project will be our focus in July and August. 5) In September and October we will focus our giving on the World Communion offering.

**Fellowship and Parish Life:** 1) The funeral dinner for Jaime Rodriguez's mother went well and was appreciated by the family and friends. The family reimbursed us for the cost of the purchased food. Several salads and desserts were provided by the ladies of the church. 2) Laura Sutton's piano students will be offering a piano recital on June 7 in the sanctuary. Time to be announced. 3) An outreach event for the neighbors is a possibility.

**New Business:** 1) One of Bill's Gideon brothers is involved with an outreach to distribute household essentials to those in need through his church, Bethel Baptist in Ottawa, Illinois. Bill suggests we discuss at our next meeting expanding the items we include in our pantry. 2) Gary reported that the attendance at the Men's Lenten Dinner was disappointing this year. 3) We discussed making Musick Scholarship applications available to our students.

Kim closed our meeting with prayer. Our next regular Session meeting will be May 19 at 4:30 PM at the church.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kim Marie Van Rheenen, clerk of Session

## May Lectionary Readings

03--Acts 7:55-60, Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16,

Proverbs 4:10-18, Psalm 119:9, 1 Peter 2:2-10, John 14:1-14

10--Acts 17:22-31, Psalm 66:8-20, Ezekiel 34:1-7a, Psalm 115, 1 Peter 3:13-22, John 14:15-21

17--Acts 1:6-14, Psalm 21:1-7, 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11, John 17:1-11

24--Acts 2:1-21, Numbers 11:24-30, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b, 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13,

Acts 2:1-21, John 20:19-23, John 7:37-39

31--Genesis 1:1-2:4a, Psalm 8:, 2 Corinthians 13:11-13, Matthew 28:16-20

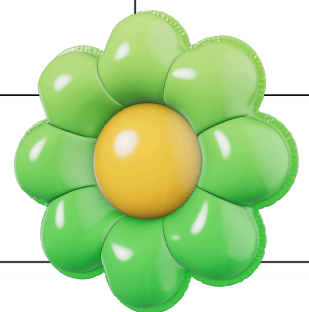




# may 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					<b>1</b> Office Closed 12:30p HOH Pick-up 3:00p Unload and stock HOH foods	<b>2</b>
<b>3</b> 9:45 Fellowship 10:30a Worship Communion	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos	<b>8</b> Office Closed	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> 9:30a Second Sunday Breakfast 10:30 Worship 	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 12:30p Produce	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos	<b>15</b> Office Closed 12:30p HOH Pick-up 3:00p Unload and stock HOH foods	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9:45a Fellowship 10:30a Worship 4-5p Voice Recital followed by cake	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 4:30p Session Presbytery Meeting Stronghold	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Newsletter Deadline 10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos	<b>22</b> Office Closed	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9:45a Fellowship 10:30a Worship	<b>25</b> Office Closed Memorial Day	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> 10a "Fill My Cup" 6:30p Webelos	<b>29</b> Office Closed	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 9:45a Fellowship 10:30a Worship						

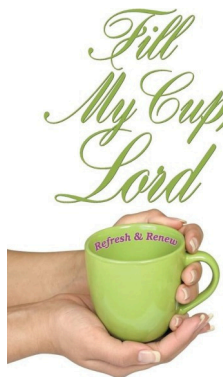


# Happy BIRTHDAY

- 02 Faye Smith
- 06 Sean Dullard
- 11 Jamie Stanford
- 21 Jasmine Matheson
- 23 Rudy Bielema
- 31 Bob Etheridge

# Happy Anniversary

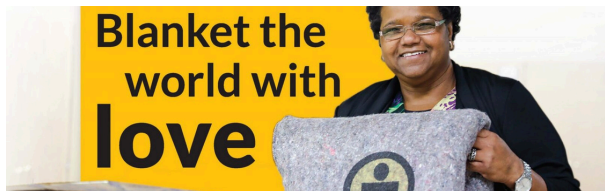
- 15 Mark & Deborah Inman (44 yrs.)
- 27 Jennifer & Jason Donahue (20 yrs.)
- 27 Ray & Faye Smith (59 yrs)



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



Thank you for your generous gift of \$100 to the CWS Blankets program. Your contribution provides warmth, comfort, and hope to neighbors near and far. It provides a tangible reminder to migrant families that they are not alone as they seek safety.



*Sincerely,*  
*Rick Santos*  
*President and CEO*  
*Church World Service*

## Ushers

- 03 Carol Erwin, Kay Christen
- 10 Faye Smith, Sandy Rebholz
- 17 Ron & Melissa Blum
- 24 Bill & Joni Bratney
- 31 Bill & Joni Bratney



## Pianists

- 03 Peggy Etheridge
- 10 Peggy Etheridge
- 17 Jake Schmitt
- 24 Jake Schmitt
- 31 Laura Sutton

## Continued Daily Prayers

- Art Beck
- 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 recent cancer diagnosis (Tess)
- Tim Sondgeroth

Income and Expenses at First Presbyterian March 2026		
	MTD	YTD
Budget	\$8,023	\$8,023
Income	\$4,861	\$20,571
Expenses	\$6,980	\$13,528
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**

may  
 2026

