

The Tower

March 2026

Holy Week

Looking ahead to Holy Week 2026.

Youth Easter Celebration (March 28th) 10:30-12:00

Palm Sunday (March 29) Worship 10:00 a.m.

Maundy Thursday (April 2) Worship 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday (video release on the YouTube Channel)

Easter Breakfast (8:30) See info. on Page 9

Easter Sunday (April 5) Worship 10:00 a.m.

First Friday Concert

Join us on Friday, March 6th at 7:00 pm. Joe Jencks is a 25-year veteran of the international folk circuit, an award-winning songwriter, and celebrated vocalist based in Chicago.

Merging conservatory training with his Irish roots and working-class upbringing, Joe delivers engaged musical narratives filled with heart, soul, groove and grit. Having penned several #1 Folksongs including the ever-relevant *Lady of The Harbor*, Jencks was also co-founder of the harmony trio, *Brother Sun*.

“The spirit of Folk music is people working together. Joe is a fantastic singer who carries on the traditions.” ~ *Pete Seeger*

Tickets are available at the Granite City Folk Society website:
www.granitecityfolk.org



First Presbyterian Church

340 South 5th Avenue
Saint Cloud, MN 56301
Telephone: 320-251-8277
www.fpcstcloud.org

Church Staff

REV. DARIN SEAMAN
Pastor

KRISTINA SCHAAB
Administrative Assistant

JULLIAN EUTENEUER
Music Director

LORA HANSEN
Youth Director

BRAD JOHNSON
Facilities Coordinator

PATTY SCOTT
Custodian

DON ONDRACEK
Assistant Custodian

Pastor's Reflections

Lent is strange, isn't it? We begin with ashes and end with an empty tomb. In between we study, reflect and give up something or take something on. Some churches put away their "alleluias" and save them for Easter. Others prohibit loud instruments from being used during Lent. They save trumpets and tubas for the Easter season. Some churches don't participate in anything during Lent. It is "business as usual" they might claim. It is a strange time in the church calendar.



Rev. Darin Seaman

For decades, Presbyterians have observed Lent in some form or fashion. We have participated in offerings, study groups, home groups, and through mission and ministry. It is a season for preparation.

Lent is the period of 40 weekdays prior to Easter, beginning with Ash Wednesday. It was originally a time to prepare candidates for baptism and became a period of penitence for those who have been baptized. We believe the season of Lent helps us re-direct, or focus, our lives. The theologian Kay Northcutt wrote about her understanding of Lent in an article a few years ago:

"The spiritual practice of Lent is nothing less than an invitation to live essentially, whether one is healthy or chronically ill. Lent, with its introspection and sparseness, aims at stripping life down to its holy, mundane essence so that bits of heaven on earth might be discovered: without and within."

During this season of Lent, we will be studying together "An Unlikely Advent" by Rachel Billups. The first gathering will be held on Sunday, March 15 after worship. We will meet in the Campbell Room. Books are available in the church office.

A book study is not for you? Other Lenten devotionals are available this year as well. Check with Pastor Darin for a daily devotional if that suits you.

The grace and peace of Jesus Christ be with you.

Darin

Northcutt, Kay, "A Holy, Mundane Essence." Christian Century, March 21, 2012, p. 12.

March Sermon Titles

March 1 Second Sunday in Lent
"Why Do We Pray?"
1 Peter 5:5-11

March 8 Third Sunday in Lent
"What Should I Pray For?"
Philippians 4, selected texts

March 15 Fourth Sunday in Lent
"Persevering in Prayer"
Luke 18:1-8

March 22 Fifth Sunday in Lent
"The Prayers of the Bible"
1 Kings 3

March 29 - Palm Sunday
"Who is This?"
Matthew 21:1-11

MUSIC



Special Easter Choir!

There is still time to join the Special Easter Choir!
All ages welcome!

I am so very grateful for your willingness to be part of this special Easter celebration. Your time, gifts, and joyful spirit mean so much, and I am truly looking forward to making beautiful music together.



Jullian Euteneuer

Our rehearsals will be held on Wednesdays at **5:00 pm**, with the children's choir joining us at **5:45 pm**. Our rehearsal dates are:

- Wednesday, March 11 | 5:00–6:00 pm
- Wednesday, March 18 | 5:00–6:00 pm
- Wednesday, March 25 | 5:00–6:00 pm

We will also gather for a final rehearsal on **Easter Sunday morning, April 5, at 8:15 am** here at First Presbyterian Church.

I'm excited to share a few recordings to help you become familiar with our Easter music:

Intergenerational Song – “This Little Light of Mine” (Professional Recording):

<https://www.jwpepper.com/this-little-light-of-mine-8056691-1437350/p>

• Traditional Hymn – “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” (Professional Recording):

<https://www.jwpepper.com/christ-the-lord-is-risen-today-10058395-120727/p>



YOUTH

C.O.R.E. Youth Ministry

On Super Bowl Sunday the youth participated in “Souper” Bowl of Caring” by assisting with collecting and counting donations. The youth collected almost \$900 in donations.

The options for voting this year were the Patriots, Seahawks or Commercials. The Seahawks came in first place with Commercials coming in a very close second place and the Patriots trailing behind in third place.



Thank you to all who donated. The funds will go towards helping fight hunger locally. Thank you for your generosity!

In February we began our new series “In Season”.

A special thank you to Karen Ondracek for her assistance with creating a fun visual board to help children remember Jesus is available in every season.

Check out the visual board down in Fellowship Hall. Please remember to pray for our mid-week program and the youth programs throughout the year.



Upcoming Youth Events

Wed., March 4th No youth ministry

Sunday, March 8th No youth Sunday school

March 15 G.I.F.T. 11:00 - 12:00 pm

March 18 Wednesday Meal 5:00 pm

March 28th Youth Easter celebration 10:30 - 12:00 pm

SAVE THE DATE

June 20th Summer Carnival

Easter will soon be upon us. Helping others celebrate Easter is an excellent opportunity for our church family to come together and outreach to our community. The Youth Committee is organizing an event on March 28 from 10:30 until 12:00. We are looking for volunteers to help explain activities to participants, give out prizes, take pictures, and help with registration. Please be on the lookout for an Easter SignUpGenius invite.



Who's Who in the Pew?**Tell us about yourself.**

Presently I am the Youth Director at FPC.

How long have you been attending FPC? Before that, where have you attended?

I began attending FPC last April when I started working here. Previously, I attended and served at Free Grace United Church in Saint Cloud.



Lora Hansen

Share anything you wish about your family/children.

I have five children from 20-29. I have been blessed with one grandchild.

Where is the most interesting place you've been and why?

Little Gasparilla Island. It was a last minute trip because the original flight was cancelled. We ended up on a private island accessible only by boat.

What is a Bible verse or verses that hold deep meaning for you?

2 Timothy 1:7

For God does not lead through a spirit of fear, but through power, love and sound mind.

What are favorite pastimes/hobbies of yours?

I love to entertain. I love playing 500 or Wist. Anything in the lake.

What are some small things that brighten your day?

Watching my dogs play.

If you could have been a cast member of any TV show past or present, which one would you pick to be on, and why?

Any show about a zoo. Our home is active with children and animals all the time. We have three dogs, four lizards, five hermit crabs and any critter outside that I get to hang out with before the dogs chase it off.

Share anything unique or memorable you do/have done that others might not know about you.

Not sure why but people are amazed when they find out I can backup the trailer, launch and land the boat with my girls.

Easter Flowers

Embrace Easter by purchasing one or more of the available plants. These plants not only add beauty to the church but serve as a reminder of the themes associated with Easter. You can take them home or gift them after worship on Sunday, April 5th.

These plants are Minnesota hardy so you can actually plant them in your garden (when the weather permits) to enjoy year after year.

There are two plant offerings this year.

Easter lily \$14.50 A classic choice that symbolizes purity, and rebirth.

Bulb garden \$14.50 (includes three types of spring bulbs) Tulips, daffodils and hyacinths



All orders should be received by March 30th. You can find order forms on the sanctuary back table.

Margaret Brooks Celebration

What: 85th Birthday with a meal catered by the Brooks family

When: Sunday, March 8, 2026 following Sunday service

Where: Fellowship Hall

Join us as we celebrate Margaret's birthday with her.



Ministry Opportunities

We are looking for volunteers to serve on the Funeral Committee, Crusade Choir Concert Committee, and Community Meals Committee. These ministries are wonderful ways to support, serve, and connect with our church and community. If you are interested in joining, or continue to serve on, any of these groups, please contact the church office or Jeanne Duinick (320-249-6778) for more information.

Funeral Committee:

Help with setup, provide kitchen support during the reception/meal, assist with cleanup.

Crusade Choir Concert (December):

Assist with calling for cookies, help with setup and arranging cookies on days of the concert, help with cleanup and packing up extra cookies.

Community Meals Committee:

Assist with setup and serving of the meal. (There are seven Wednesday evening meals and two Sunday potlucks.)

Deacon's Corner

Mother Hubbard's Cupboard

“Old Mother Hubbard went to her cupboard,
 To get her poor dog a bone.
 But when she got there, the cupboard was bare,
 And so the poor dog had none.”



So goes the nursery rhyme. And, unfortunately, it goes for far too many people as well. Once again the Deacons are offering an opportunity to help those in need. Please consider bringing in donations during March for our twice-yearly food drive. Donations of non-perishable food products (please check expiration dates), health care items, and paper products may be dropped off at the church through the end of March.

A table will once again be set up by the main entrance to the sanctuary. Welcomed food items can include peanut butter, jellies and jams, canned soups, vegetables, and fruit, pasta, sauces, dry cereal, boxed dinners. (Please take the time to check for outdates!) Additional needs are cleaning supplies, paper towels and tissues, soaps and shampoos, toothbrushes.

Cash donations in the form of a check made payable to First Presbyterian Church are also appreciated (please write “Food Shelf” in the memo line). This mission is for those in our own community, and items donated during this Spring season will benefit Catholic Charities, Place of Hope, and the Salvation Army.

2 Corinthians 9:7:

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

We the Deacons thank you in this endeavor, and also appreciate the generous giving to this drive in past seasons.

Thank you for your support of this effort!

Gail Aalderks

One Great Hour of Sharing (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 (OGHS) — 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. Typically received during the season of Lent, this Offering helps to improve the lives of people in these challenging situations. We receive this offering on Palm Sunday (March 29) and again on Easter. If you are filling a "fish" bank, bring it with you on one of these Sundays.



SPECIAL OFFERINGS
ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

2026 Easter Breakfast Invitation

I hope this finds you all well! The Fellowship Committee warmly invites you to participate in this year's Easter Breakfast. Please mark your calendar to celebrate with family, friends, or other special people dear to you. Each breakfast will include scrambled eggs, bacon and sausage, fresh fruit, and your choice of muffin or croissant or hot crossed bun. Please join us on Easter Sunday, April 5.



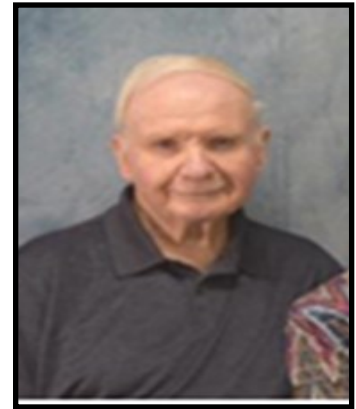
We are offering two opportunities to participate:
IN-PERSON BEFORE the 10:00 AM Worship Service, and
CURBSIDE PICK-UP AFTER the 10:00 AM Worship Service.

We are requesting a \$10 donation for each Easter Breakfast. All proceeds support Feeding Area Children Together (FACT). Please reserve your Easter Breakfast by Monday, March 30. Reservations may be submitted by turning in the form to the church office or by placing it in the offering plate. For more information, please contact Brenda Espelien at (320) 291-5084.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

A Tribute to Don Casey

On behalf of the Finance Committee, we would like to recognize the many years of service that Don Casey has given to our committee. Don Casey had been a member of the Finance Committee for 35+ years. His knowledge and expertise were instrumental in the success of our committee over the years.



He was a mentor to several of us as we joined the committee over the years. He had the background and history that most of us lacked. Each month he gave his “perspective” of the financial condition of the church, both current and future. This helped us identify and discuss issues before they became a problem.

Don and Bill Bretherton were key members of the team working through the financial issues of the new entry/renovations within the church. They contributed endless hours of expertise to the success of the project. (Most of us were fairly new to the committee during this project.)

Thank you, Don, for your contributions to our committee. You will be missed greatly.

Karen Ondracek

Tom Horn

January Finances

Total Income	\$63,469
Total Expenses	\$39,144
Net over/under	\$24,325



Our congregation is very generous. Our income for January 2026 was exceptionally high. A portion of the high amount is from retirement accounts given directly to our church. This is done through Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) or Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). This is a good way to give to our church. If you are interested in this type of giving, speak with your financial advisor.

This starts our year in a positive financial position.

Thank you,

Tom Horn and the Finance Committee

Service Group — March
Chairs - John and Sharon Johnson
Dale and Vonnie Swanson

Linda	Bettison
Nancy	Coleman
Judith	Hook
Daryll/Sandy	Hylla
Sandy	Johnson

Leah	Jacobs
David	Morreim
Lynn	Osteraas
Jean	Peterson

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVERS SCHEDULE

Listed below is the Server Schedule for Sunday Worship. If you are unavailable for the assigned date, please swap with someone else scheduled that month. Also notify the office of any swaps. Thank you for your service to the Church.

	Worship Leader	Ushers (2)	Greeter (1/2)
03/01/26	Dick Andzenge	Ron/Karen Larson	Carrie Raiche
03/08/26	Rachel Buchin	Randy/Kathy Arnold	John Bowden
03/15/26	Tamara Calhoun	Nancy Coleman & John Detra	Phil/Jeannie Chu
03/22/26	Rickie Espelien	Joe/Stephanie Jacobs	Stephanie Randolph
03/29/26	Mary Jost	Lynn Rae Olson/Carrie Raiche	Ken/Norine Schmitt
04/05/26	Stephanie Merrell	Dan Owen & Linda Bettison	Mike Rutter & Gail Aalderks
04/12/26	Gene Williamson	Ryne Pentz & Duane Scherbing	Kari Ahles
04/19/26	Randy Hammond	LeRoy & Paula Tift	Nancy Coleman
04/26/26	Linda Bettison	Mike & Kim Tollefson	John Hoffman

William Janssen 03/04
 Margaret Brooks 03/05
 Janna Warren-Perry 03/07
 Randy Arnold 03/08
 Jeremy Grittner 03/08
 Debbie Picha 03/09
 Randy Wickmann 03/09
 Shirley Francis 03/10
 Rodney Kadlec 03/11
 Tammy Brook 03/12
 Leah Jacobs 03/13
 Lynne Osteraas 03/13
 Lonny Wild 03/15
 John Hoffman 03/16
 Gary Lenzmeier 03/16



Sam Eggers 03/18
 Beth Adamek 03/20
 Lois Buchin 03/20
 Kari Ahles 03/23
 Sean Hornibrook 03/23
 Cathy Anderson 03/25
 Michelle Chan 03/25
 Lynn Miller 03/25
 Donna Radeke 03/25
 Jackson Randolph 03/26
 Steve Isaacson 03/28
 Linda Addicott 03/31
 Robin Hasslen 03/31
 Carole Pike 03/31
 Jon Tufte 03/31

First Presbyterian Church
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Our Mission Statement

*"Bringing the Living Hope of
the Gospel to the World by
Knowing and Serving Jesus
Christ"*

Our Vision Statement

*"The Kingdom of God made
known one sacred space at a
time"*

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
BIBLE STUDIES**

Tuesday 9:00 a.m.
Men's Bible Study

Wednesday 9:15 a.m.
Women's Bible Study

Friday 7:00 a.m.
Men's Bible Study

*You're invited to join a study that
works for you!*

MARCH 2026

SESSION

Pastor Darin Seaman, Moderator
Bobbie Lampi, Clerk

Class of 2026: Tom Horn (Finance), Marsha Elg (Worship),
Bob Butter (Worship), Norine Schmitt (Personnel)

Class of 2027: Jim Anderson (Youth), Brenda Espelien
(Fellowship), Thijin Gatwech (Mission), Sandy
Ross (Fellowship)

Class of 2028: Rhonda Siltman (Mission), Jacob Priest (Property),
David Pennertz (Finance), Charlie Pentz
(Nominating)

DEACONS

Class of 2026: Michael Rutter, Gail Aalderks, Paula Tift, Mary Lease,
Carrie Butter

Class of 2027: Jackie Benn, John Johnson, Sharon Johnson,
Linda Sarff, Lori Smith