

The Tower

February 2025

Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday (Feb. 9)

Join us for an exciting opportunity to raise funds and support local food charities - all while celebrating the thrill of the Big Game! Let's team up to make a powerful impact in the fight against hunger. This program has raised close to \$200 Million for food charities with thousands of mobilized groups across the country helping support local hunger relief. The campaign kicks off on January 12, 2025 and runs through February 9th 2025. Together, we can make a difference!

Our youth group will be collecting donations on February 9th to help tackle hunger. Please consider bringing cash or a check to support this important cause.

Thank you for your generosity!



First Presbyterian Church

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Church Staff

REV. DARIN SEAMAN
Pastor

BECKY STUDNISKI
Administrative
Assistant

JULLIAN EUTENEUER
Music Director

BRAD JOHNSON
Facilities Coordinator

PATTY SCOTT
Custodian

DON ONDRACEK
Assistant Custodian

Pastor's Reflections

How well do we equip the saints for the work of ministry? As a pastor I see evidence that we do this quite well at times. We have committees that distribute work and equip people for service. These committees, and their leadership, understand the need for many people to join in the ministry and equip others to support them in faithful ministry. At other times I sense that some folks are a bit self-seeking. "If it is to be, it is up to me" is their mantra. These are the kind of folk who take ownership of their ministry and don't allow others to step up and help.

At the January Session meeting we reviewed the characteristics and qualities that make for a good elder. They included but are not limited to: faithful prayer, openness to the Scriptures, collaboration, and a willingness to listen to the voice of the Spirit and colleagues in ministry. There were many others that were mentioned.

I continue to pray for an understanding of ministry that includes all the servants in the church and that the church would be receptive to others and their gifts for ministry. How can we best accomplish the task of equipping others for ministry?

We can do this by identifying people who have gifts for a particular ministry. We can encourage their creativity and commitment to Jesus Christ. We can encourage their ideas and their insights for ministry.

We can do this by inviting others to join us. Ministry ordinarily begins with an invitation. "How would you like to help with the Friday event?" In fact, discipleship begins with an invitation. Jesus invited his followers to "come and see" what was happening.

We can do this by praying for our church. We can pray for more workers to accomplish the tasks of ministry. We can pray that all of us understand the need for people to serve willingly.

I like how Lillian Daniel put it in a writing she crafted for a book entitled, "This Odd and Wondrous Calling." She wrote about her daughter's elementary school musical. The program read, "This musical was originally written for 15 actors, but it has been adapted to accommodate our cast of 206. She goes on to write: *We are called to be like the volunteer geniuses behind the elementary school musical that took a play with 15 parts and creatively made room for 206.*

We take a few loaves and fishes and feed thousands, at the church potluck or at the homeless shelter. We take a task we could simply pay someone to do, and we divide it into fifteen parts so that everyone has a job. Is it efficient? No. Not if all you care about is getting the job done.

But in the church we should care less about getting the job done and more about the people doing it. We are not in the



Rev. Darin Seaman

February Sermon Titles

Feb. 2
"Get to Church"
Acts 2:42-47

Feb. 9
"The Holiness of
God"
Isaiah 6:1-8

Feb. 16
TBD

Feb. 23
"Lip Service"
Luke 6:27-38

efficiency business. We are in the business of making disciples. We want to offer as many people as possible the chance to know Christ in service and in community.

The grace and peace of Jesus Christ be with you.



(1) See Ephesians 4:12.

(2) See John 1:39.

(3) Daniel, Lillian and Copenhaver, Martin B. *This Odd and Wondrous Calling*. Erdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 2009, pp. 115-116.

Valentine's Day (Feb. 14)

The history of Valentine's Day—and the story of its patron saint—is shrouded in mystery. We do know that February has long been celebrated as a month of romance, and that St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition. But who was Saint Valentine, and how did he become associated with this ancient rite?

The Roman Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made better soldiers than those with wives and families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, realizing the injustice of the decree, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death. Still others insist that it was Saint Valentine of Terni, a bishop, who was the true namesake of the holiday. He, too, was beheaded by Claudius II outside Rome.

Other stories suggest that Valentine may have been killed for attempting to help Christians escape harsh Roman prisons, where they were often beaten and tortured. According to one legend, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl—possibly his jailor's daughter—who visited him during his confinement.

Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today. Although the truth behind the Valentine legends is murky, the stories all emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic and—most importantly—romantic figure. By the Middle Ages, perhaps thanks to this reputation, Valentine would become one of the most popular saints in England and France.

-From History.com



G.I.F.T. Sunday (Generations in Faith Together)



Sunday, February 16th

After worship

Meet at the youth area

Everyone is welcome!

Create Your Own Decorative Sign!

Unleash your creativity and design a custom decorative sign for your home, office, or as a gift! Stencils and supplies are provided—come join the fun and take home something special for yourself or a loved one!

Sunday School Schedule

February 2	9:00 a.m.	Regular Sunday School
February 9	9:00 a.m.	Regular Sunday School
February 16	After worship	G.I.F.T. Sunday
February 23	9:00 a.m.	Regular Sunday School
March 2	NO SUNDAY SCHOOL	
March 9	9:00 a.m.	Regular Sunday School

Summer Camp Registration



Registration for Clearwater Forest summer camp is now open! Create unforgettable summer memories surrounded by God's woods and waters while growing in your faith and connecting with Him.

Clearwater Forest offers a variety of camps for all ages—from kids to adults—including family camps. Be sure to check out their website for all the details and offerings:

www.clearwaterforest.org.

Sunday School Room Update

We are deeply grateful to the Finance and Property Committee for their assistance in cleaning our Sunday school rooms. Our PreK classroom has now moved to the Noah's Ark room for a fresh start. Stay tuned for more updates! Thank you for your support in helping us create a nurturing space for our children.



Who's Who in the Pew

Jim Anderson

Hello All! I am from St. Cloud and have lived here all my 61 years. I've been married 40 years with 2 children and 3 grandchildren. I work at the St. Cloud Hospital as the unit support person in Telemetry. This job includes keeping patient rooms stocked with medical supplies, equipment management, and upkeep.

A great part of my role is bringing our Christian values to interactions I have with patients and families. Sometimes making simple conversation and connecting with patients helps to ease their fears, anxiety or loneliness. Things like a friendly smile, showing compassion, being caring, providing comfort and prayer can be very helpful. This is the unseen and most rewarding part of my job that I strive for. Much of what I do is similar to the Spiritual Care Team role at CentraCare. Knowing I've helped in some small way brightens my day and enriches my life.



I must say, finding FPC was a happy accident. For a short time, I worked with FPC's former Music Director, Don Fortner. When talking music, I told him I used to play guitar. He told me to come "sit-in" with the band sometime. So, I "sat-in" and never left. I thoroughly enjoy playing Christian music with that wonderful group of people called LowerTown.

Then, after attending and listening to some services and sermons, again I never left. I am very grateful for Don, unknowingly, bringing me back into music and Christianity. In that way I am somewhat of a prodigal. Perhaps that is why I have an affinity for the parable of the Prodigal Son, although I never squandered an inheritance, I did live a "wild life" as a young man. My father, a kind and gentle Christian man along with my sweet loving mother, always welcomed me back home. They were amazing, wonderful parents. Add to this, being welcomed back into music and the church, it's easy to see why I relate to that parable. Repentance and forgiveness are themes that I've lived.

There is much more to tell, but suffice to say I am grateful to be part of First Pres! This is a fantastic welcoming group of people. Thank you ALL from the Prodigal Son with the old guitar.

P.S. Besides music, I love fishing and the great outdoors!

DEACONS CORNER

DO YOU WANT TO GO FOR COFFEE?

Do you want to go for coffee? That is “code” for do you want to engage in conversation about your life and my life while consuming something we like to eat or drink. These may be a double espresso latte with a squirt of French vanilla and a splash of cinnamon involved. Or it might be coffee black. A sugar coated raspberry muffin may sneak it’s way in there somehow.



But we could each go to the coffee shop or stay at home and consume the same beverage or food. Why do we want to “go” for coffee? There is something about that fellowship of two or more people chatting in a place where other people are also chatting that makes it fun or fulfilling or helpful.

Maybe we have something that we are pondering that we want to share. Maybe we need some help. Or our friend needs our help. That is where the adventure begins...

1st John 1.7 says *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his son, purifies us from all sin.”*

The Deacons are prayerfully looking for ways to reach out to members of the congregation. Deacon’s currently do home visits for those that enjoy a fellowship visit. We will continue to do the home visits. If you, or someone you know, would look forward to fellowship outside the home, Deacons are looking into meeting members for coffee at a place of your choice and time that would work. Maybe you would enjoy a game of cribbage or a visit to Munsinger Gardens (in the summer). Maybe you or someone you know needs to be at home with a loved one and could use a break. If interested, please contact the church.

The experience is rewarding, not only for the recipient, but for the giver as well. Can you help us with this mission as ambassadors for Christ? How can we help you or someone you care about?

-- Sharon Johnson

Community Meal - February 19th

Wednesday, February 19th - Join us and warm up as we enjoy homemade soups, breads & desserts. Serving begins at 5:00 p.m. and continues until 6:30 p.m.

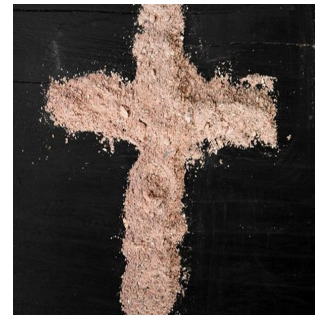
A free-will offering is collected which supports Youth & Campus Ministry opportunities.



Ash Wednesday, March 5th

Service will be held at 5pm.

Each year, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and is always 46 days before Easter Sunday. Lent is a 40-day season (not counting Sundays) marked by repentance, fasting, reflection, and ultimately celebration. The 40-day period represents Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, where he fasted and where Satan tempted him. Lent asks believers to set aside a time each year for similar fasting, marking an intentional season of focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection.



Sohail Aslam Visit

Rescheduled: On Sunday, Feb. 23, 2025, we welcome Sohail Aslam from First Presbyterian Church in Springfield, IL to give us a brief introduction to Pakistan Christian Outreach Foundation, a 501c3 organization in the U.S. which has projects in various areas of health, education. In addition to the brief introduction during our service, we will have a reception in the library after church for further conversation about the United Christian Hospital and Nursing School.

Our local mission committee has focused on the United Christian Hospital and Nursing School in Lahore, Pakistan. We have contributed money to the complete renovation of the kitchen, dining, and washing areas of the nursing school which are in dire need of upgrades. By upgrading and renovating the facilities, the goal is to enhance the education and training provided to nursing students. This will involve improving the infrastructure, acquiring necessary equipment, and ultimately offering a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree.⁵



The kids and I would like to thank everyone for all the cards, prayers and all the support we received when Richard died. A special thank you to Pastor Darin, the casket bears, all volunteers and everyone who helped that day. It really meant a lot to our family, we greatly appreciate all the support and kindness shown to our family and send our thanks to everyone.

-- Sara Dorn

Darin, Richard, 1st Pres Staff and Volunteers. Thank you for making our parents funeral a wonderful celebration of life and hope. My prayer is that those who attended and watched online took one step closer to Jesus.

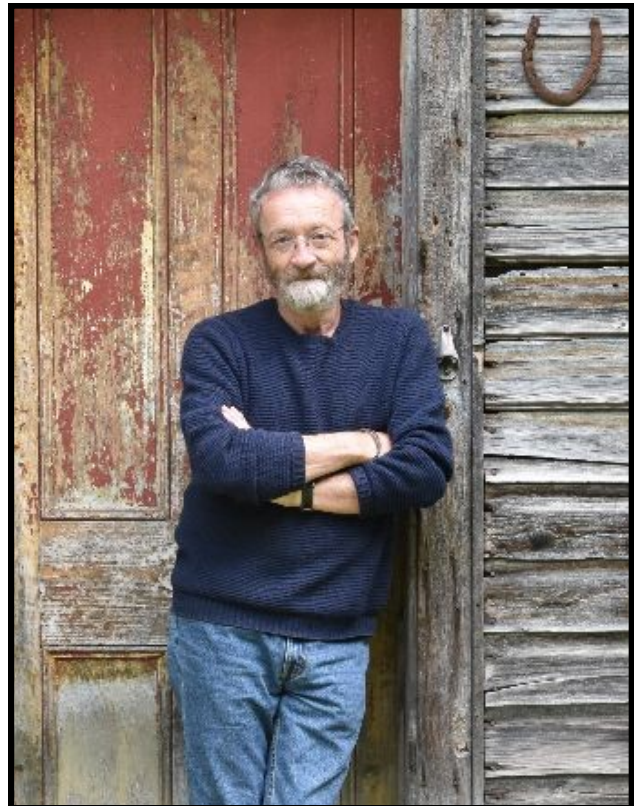
-- Tom and Tim Tingblad

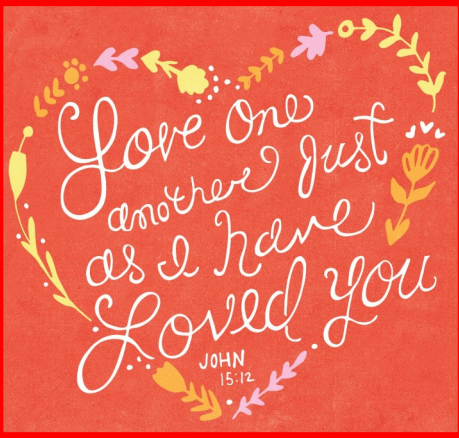
First Friday: David Francey

February 7th at 7 pm

David Francey returns to our stage--this could get to be a habit. David's songwriting reflects his family's emigration from Scotland to Canada, his blue-collar work history, and always his sharp and compassionate vision of life as it is lived. His work has won (among other prizes) three Juno Awards, the USA Songwriting Competition Folk Category, and a John Lennon Songwriting Award. It will be good to hear his voice again.

Tickets can be purchased at the door for \$30





Service Group – February

Chairs - Kari Ahles
 Tom/Linda Addicott
 Jackie Benn
 Floyd/Elaine Fautsch
 Randy Hammond
 Ryne Pentz

Michelle Chan
 Alvin Yu
 Rhonda Siltman
 Jerry/Julee Sticha
 Bill/Lynn Yueill

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVERS SCHEDULE

<u>Date</u>	<u>Worship Leader</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Greeter</u>
2 Feb	John Pike	Gail Aalderks/Mike Rutter	Kathy Arnold
9 Feb	Tami Calhoun	Linda Bettison/Duane Scherbing	Betty Payne
16 Feb	Rhonda Siltman	Jeanne Duininck/John Hoffman	Nancy Coleman
23 Feb	Dick Andzenge	Lynn Rae Olson/Carrie Raiche	John Hoffman
2 Mar	Ryne Pentz	Randy/Kathy Arnold	Linda Bettison
5 Mar	Bob Butter	Lynn Rae Olson/Carrie Raiche	n/a
9 Mar	Carrie Butter	John Bowden/John Detra	Alvin/Michelle Yu
16 Mar	Stephainie Merrell	Phil/Jeannie Chu	Joe/Stephanie Jacobs
23 Mar	Bobbie Lampi	Ron/Karen Larson/John Pike	Lynn Rae Olson
30 Mar	Bailey Seaman	John Hoffman/Duane Scherbing	Leroy/Paula Tift

As a reminder, if you are unable to serve on your particular Sunday, please switch with someone and notify the office staff of the change.

Barbara Isaacson 02/02
 Sharon Johnson 02/03
 Daniel Calhoun 02/06
 Scott Varner 02/07
 Grayden Ewing 02/09
 Mary Giese 02/09
 Sharon Minet 02/09
 Chuck Pelzer 02/09
 Mary McMullen 02/10
 Pat Hontos 02/12



Arlene Wickmann 02/14
 Paige Nutter 02/16
 Dan Owen 02/20
 Steven Shaler 02/21
 Alvin Yu 02/24
 Stephanie Jacobs 02/25
 Carole Lysher 02/25
 Phyllis Bowden 02/26
 Don Fortner 02/27

Stewardship Update

The members of our church family are very generous with their time, talents, and tithes. Because of your generosity, 2024 was an unexpectedly strong year for our operating budget. Income was \$369,793 -- \$31,403 more than anticipated.

The primary factors were non-pledge giving (+\$24,219) and pledged giving (+\$14,342). (We often fall slightly short of budget; individual circumstances change, members move or pass away.). Operating expenses were \$356,313 -- \$11,341 under budget. Major factors: Utility bills more than \$10,000 lower with an unusually mild winter and an unfilled Christian education coordinator position.

As a congregation we will have more projects going into the future. With careful prudent planning and God's help we will be able to meet our obligations. We are excited to see where God leads us. We are truly blessed with a generous and active congregation. Our people give of their time, talents, and treasures in very charitable, unselfish, and kind-hearted ways. All of this is possible through the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and your generosity.

Respectfully submitted,
Tom Horn, Chair



Finances

December Contributions	\$30,890.00
December Expenses	\$55,512.21
Monthly (over/under)	-\$24,129.21
Year to Date (over/under)	0.00

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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!*

FEBRUARY 2025

SESSION

Pastor Darin Seaman, Moderator
Bobbie Lampi, Clerk

Class of 2025: Rhonda Siltman (Mission), Randy Hammond
(Property), Lynn Rae Olson (Campus),
Mark Scholer (Worship & Evangelism)

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

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

DEACONS

Class of 2025: Kari Ahles, Margaret Brooks, Karen Larson,
Julia Owen, Duane Scherbing

Class of 2026: Michael Rutter, Gail Alderks, Audrey Taatjes,
Paula Tift, Mary Lease

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