

JULY 2019

FIRST FOCUS NEWSLETTER

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

A Note from Pastor Matt Wilcox

Do you know what all of these things have in common: lasagna, prayers, lawnmowers, greeting cards, text messages, Happy Meals, craft projects, gift cards, hugs, phone calls, brownies, and cups of coffee? Until the last month or so, I wouldn't have known what they have in common either. I've learned that these acts of kindness and more are all expressions of the love and support my church family offered Caitlin, Levi, Isaac, and myself during what was the most terrifying chapter of our family. And, friends, I cannot thank you enough. Literally, I mean that. Early on in the hospital, I tried to keep a list of every card, call, and gift that blessed my family, and it eventually became too much for me to keep track of.

I don't say this lightly: I don't know how I personally would have made it through the month of May without you. On April 22 Caitlin was rushed in an ambulance to the emergency room with very alarming symptoms. That night she would end up at the St. Francis medical center in Peoria where she would stay until May 22. She was treated for a severe blood clot that had formed in a central vein of her brain and also for dangerous swelling around the brain. As my incredibly strong wife fought for her life, my world was set into a tailspin of crushing possibilities and fearful uncertainties. Through it all, we were never alone. From that first trip to the ER to the end of Caitlin's hospital stay, we had the constant prayers, presence, and support of our unbelievable church family. My boys were well-loved, played with, and cared for through it all, while I stayed by Caitlin's side at the hospital. I had enough snacks and gift cards that I could have fed the entire nursing staff on the ICU. And I received hundreds (literally, hundreds) of messages from you all and our friends and family elsewhere through this ordeal.

Thank you for loving me as your pastor and for treating my family and me as your own. Thank you for loving my two squirrely little boys. Thank you for putting up with my puns. Thank you for being the family we so dearly needed in that painful chapter and for being the church God has called us to serve. I can't repay you all for the kindness and love you showed my family and me, but I will continue to serve this church and our community with all the passion and energy I possess. We are truly thankful for this place and for all of you.

-Pastor Matt and the Wilcox Family



SEEKING A PART-TIME CUSTODIAN

We are seeking a part-time custodian and would welcome recommendations or referrals. This position is 10 hours per week, would primarily be on weekends, and would require some heavy lifting. Please contact Kelly Martin with any potential candidates or questions at kmartin@firstpresnormal.org.

VOLUNTEER AUDIO/VISUAL TECHS NEEDED

We are looking for volunteers to assist in technological aspects of Sunday morning services and help as needed with special church events. If you can help and would like to learn more about training, please contact Tyler Gatto, Lead AV Tech at tech@firstpresnormal.org.

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Session would like to express their appreciation to Phil Enge for his guidance and leadership during Pastor Matt's absence. The Transitional Pastor Nominating Committee was approved. The committee will begin filling out the Ministry Information Form.

CLASS OF 2019

Lynn Litwiller
Jerry Ringer
Julia White
Rose Yahnig

CLASS OF 2020

Rachel Carpenter
Sara Garrett
Kathryn Gillespie
Tim Pantaleone

CLASS OF 2021

Teresa Herbert
William Schaup
Matt Stombaugh
Marilea White



MOVING FORWARD

Many have asked what the next steps are for our church with Pastor Larry Gaylord's retirement. The session is happy to provide an update of what has been done to-date. The first step that has been taken is the formation of a Transitional Pastor Nominating Committee (TPNC). This group is tasked with finding a transitional pastor to come and serve our congregation. The primary role of a transitional pastor is to help bridge the gap between our rich past and the future of our church. The transitional pastor will serve in worship, perform as the head of staff, and foster the work of the Pastor Nominating Committee for the next Senior Pastor of First Presbyterian Church.

Finding the transitional pastor God is preparing for First Presbyterian Church is a delicate and critical task. We have been blessed by the presence, guidance, and expertise of leaders from Great Rivers Presbytery and the TPNC is thrilled to share that the Ministry Information Form (MIF) is now up and active on the PCUSA national database. Some have asked what the timeline is going forward. The identifying and calling of a transitional pastor is an intricate process and so it would not be appropriate or beneficial to try and set a time frame. Rest assured that the TPNC and the session are working prayerfully and diligently in ensuring this process is fostered in the fullest and healthiest fashion. All friends and members of First Presbyterian Church are asked to pray continually for the session, the TPNC, and the staff as we continue through a time of transition and hopeful anticipation.

REVISED BUILDING USE POLICY

We are fortunate to have such a wonderful facility here at First Presbyterian Church. Over the years, our church has hosted countless events for all sorts of functions and organizations. In an attempt to practice proper stewardship of our facility and our custodial staff, the Session and the Property Committee have done the diligent work of creating a revised Building Use Policy as well as a new Building Use Application. We know that many congregation and community members have enjoyed use of the church for various events. From this point forward, all individuals and organizations requesting use of the church facility are asked to follow the newly revised policy and submit the updated Building Use Application form.

FIRST FOCUS SUBMISSIONS

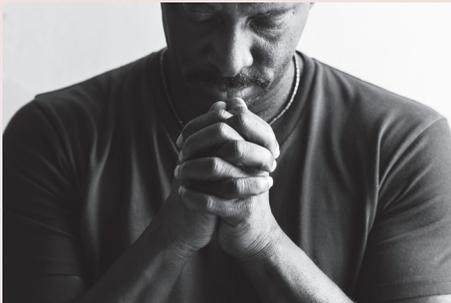
This is a reminder that the deadline to submit text for any church newsletter is always the second to last Monday of the month. IF that Monday falls on a holiday, the deadline is that Friday BEFORE that Monday, by 10am. Early submissions are encouraged. Please be sure your article is less than 200 words. You can email your information to Anne Lunt, the office Administrative Assistant at alunt@firstpresnormal.org. Thank you!



DOMESTIC ABUSE

Did you know that one out of every four women in the United States will experience domestic violence at some point in their lifetime, most often by someone they know? Each year the Neville House addresses the needs of victims of domestic violence and their families. This past fiscal year, over 750 local residents were served – 91% of them women. In July, we have an opportunity to contribute to this cause. A beautiful quilt, made by the members of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, will be shared with the congregation as

one of several fundraising activities for the Neville House. Our congregation members will have the opportunity to take this quilt home by purchasing tickets that will be included in a drawing in July. Thank you for your support of this very worthy cause. If you have questions, please contact Kathy Tosh at (309) 530-2050.



JULY & AUGUST “START FRESH” MEN’S PRISON MINISTRY DRIVE

This ministry is requesting men’s boxers and under-shirts to replenish the Start Fresh clothing pantry. Please only donate new boxers and undershirts (sizes L-2X). You can drop off your donations in the available bin just inside the doorway of the Hershey Road entrance. Please contact Nancy Harvey with any questions at nancyharvey51@yahoo.com.

We also want to THANK everyone who has donated. With your continued faithfulness and support, “Start Fresh” prison clothing ministry is blooming. After 27 months, we have served 550 men leaving Lincoln Correctional Center to start a new life of freedom. That’s an average of 20 men per month. The gently used, casual clothes are an immediate and practical way to help these men get back on their feet with dignity. Prayer for each man by the volunteers also goes with each bag of clothing.

As this new ministry has grown, God has also given us a way to share with other local ministries. Clothing items we can’t use are shared with: Clad Tidings Pantry, Home Sweet Home Ministries, Abundant Life Church, and Heartland College. Thank you, we couldn’t do any of this without you!



If you enjoy gardening, you’re welcome to join the First Pres Gardeners! Anyone is welcome to help maintain the Peace Gardens. We meet weekly on Tuesdays, 8am-9am (on non-rainy days). If you have questions, please contact Barb Gaffron at bgaffron@gmail.com.



GREEN CORNER NEWS: SHARING TABLE

Do you have radishes and kale coming out your ears? Are you wondering what you’ll ever do with all the tomatoes and zucchini you’ll soon be harvesting? How about bringing your extra bounty, as your harvest allows, to the Sharing Table at church on Sundays in July and August? Feel free to drop off your extras; take some home; share recipes. No garden? No problem! Take some veggies and leave a small donation. Excess produce will be donated to Home Sweet Home, and cash donations will be given to the Fairview (Elementary School) Angel Tree.

MEET THE DEACONS

Each month we'll introduce you to another few Deacons. If you don't see your name on any flock lists, please let Diane Brent know at cdianebrent@gmail.com. Deacons focus on helping members of our church family who are in need, by providing sympathy, support, and service.

Deacons support their flocks with personal visits, notes and calls. They respond to home communion requests, coordinate funeral receptions and other hospitality events as requested. In addition, Deacons coordinate meals and other help for those who are in need of assistance. Deacons also organize numerous service projects for church participation.



SALLY BAILEY

I came to Illinois in 1980 with my husband, Dave, who took a position as chair of the IWU Chemistry Department, and we joined the church in 1982 (as well as the choir). I mostly I worked at ISU in the Registration Department, I retired in 1997. Originally I am from Johnstown, PA and like to travel where there are hills, mountains, and oceans, although I consider central Illinois home. I have three children and several grandchildren and great-grandchildren scattered all over the country. My passions are travel (I can talk endlessly on the subject), gardening (I am an Illinois Extension Master Gardener) and music.

PSALMS FLOCK: Angela & Darren Brant, Virginia Clarahan, Kathryn & Tom Darnall, Andrea Eaton, Daniel Elder, Barbara & David Gaffron, Gwen Heite, Bob Hunt, Jennie & Matt Johnson, Carol Kehl, Barb & Dave Lemmon, Brenda & Pat Michaels, Joyce Moncelle-Kaye, Jennifer & Tim Peterson, Sandy Peyton, Elizabeth & Samuel Redd, Cindy Schrantz, Joan & James Sloneker, Sherry Smith, Julia & David White, Becky Yamamoto.



DAVID & DIANE BRENT

We have been members of First Pres since 1990. Diane is retired from State Farm and I work for First Student. We usually attend the second service, where we sing in the RLT choir. We have five married children and 14 grandchildren. Diane has served on several committees and Session. I have been active in choir, and adult/youth mission trips. We have also been active in Small Groups.

CORINTHIANS FLOCK: David Ashbrook, Sally Bailey, John Crew, Sarah and Roger Garrett, Heidi and John Hancock, Amy and Martin Hobbs, Rosalie and Thomas Huskisson, Michelle and David Kinley, David and Julie Koh, Laurie and Norman Larsen, Anissa and Kenneth Leber, Marilyn and Joseph Long, Connor and Maggie Morton, Sara and Sverre Olsen, Sue O'Neal, Pat and Jerry Parsons, Mary Ann Pullin, Becca and Rob Rice, Jill Timbers and Lexa Saajasto, Rachel and Jim Wilson, Jennifer and David Woodward.

OUR DEACONS

2019

Debbie Brown
Irene Denbesten
Joyce & Roger Reinmann

2020

Sally Bailey
Diane & David Brent
Katie & Scott Hendereson
Fred Lamkey

2021

Darren & Angela Brant
Cheryl Hoepker
Bruce & Kathy Patterson
Sam & Shirley Redd
Jim & Rachel Wilson



THE SALVATION ARMY CARE & SHARE NEEDS

Baby Wipes
Diapers (size newborn, 4, 5)
Sanitary Napkins
Canned Meats
Peanut Butter
Canned Vegetables

**Donations can be
dropped off into
the grocery carts
available at the
College and
Hershey entrances**



JULY 2019 BIRTHDAYS

Nancy Wolter	1	Kyle Byrd	13	Zachary Toulon	19
Calem Kruger	1	Barbara Gaffron	13	Faith Ten Haken	20
Dave Schulz	2	Wendy Satchwell	13	Cash Martin	20
Becky Pull	3	Evangeline Herbert	13	Judy Stone	21
Anne Eaton	4	Glenn Katzenburger	13	Laura Dulee	22
Cameron Herbert	4	Margaret Wolf	14	Ron Guthoff	24
Kevin Byrd	5	Norman Larsen	14	Marian Schulz	24
Jim Wilson	5	Sue Burrill	15	Darren Brant	24
Brenda Pish	5	Tommy Harris	16	Conner Morton	24
Bob Hunt	7	Fred Schultz	16	Julie Ewan	25
Tom Buckles	7	Paul Harmon	17	Sarah Butler	29
Becky Cobert	7	Margaret Foster	17	Wally Crouch	29
Jenny Johnson	7	Marilyn Long	18	Cruz Martin	29
Terry Tosh	8	Mary Evenson	18	Emily Rule	29
Joe Long	8	Lisa Ehlers	18	Ken Kashian	30
Catherine Holland	8	Levi Wilcox	18	Brandon Nice	31
John Crew	10	Rebecca Bishop	19	Parker Meyer	31
David Cobert	10	Rex Woodward	19		

If you would like to be added or removed from the monthly birthday list, please contact Anne Lunt, Administrative Assistant, at alunt@firstpresnormal.org, or, call the office at (309) 452-4459.

