

THE BURNING BUSH

I was planning to write an article about a recent Presbyterian Outlook article called “Interim Pastors are Called to Take Out the Garbage.” While there was a point or two made in the brief article that I agreed with, I didn’t agree with the choice to characterize challenging relationships and other situations in the life of a church as “garbage.”

However, I am currently sitting in a train station in Champaign, Illinois and it has been an interesting couple of days. The plan to have my vascular procedure on a weekend that was not my daughter-in-law’s mandated work weekend was thwarted when her work weekend was moved... So quickly, another plan had to be put into place. I would still have my procedure on Friday, but my husband would have to drive me to Peoria/Farmington later that day since I was needed to babysit on Saturday, but I could not drive for 24 hours after my procedure. This necessitated getting me down to Carbondale without leaving a car down there. My daughter-in-law agreed to drive me to the Amtrak station in Champaign on Wednesday since that was the day that my 1:35 pm arrival would work for my husband. I enjoy a good train ride and it has been entirely too long since I have been on one, so I was glad to do that. The fact that my car is currently not safe to drive and is sitting in front of the kids’ house in Peoria waiting for a part that will hopefully fix it, is simply an explanation for this article being written at the last minute in a train station.

So, back to the story. When I asked my daughter-in-law to drive me to Champaign, she assumed that meant that she needed to pick me up. I assumed that I would drive myself to their house so that we could leave at the appointed time of 9 am from Peoria for a 10:49 am train departure in Champaign. When I arrived in Peoria, her car was missing and when I asked my son who had just woken up, where she was, he assumed that she was taking Lilly to daycare. However, when she didn’t arrive home 15 minutes later, he called her. She was driving to Farmington. Now, it was going to be tricky to get to Champaign on time! The second she pulled in the driveway in Peoria, I went out to her car and we hit the road. We made good time with virtually no delays.

When we pulled into the train station, the train was on the tracks waiting. I jumped out, ran up the stairs, and as I reached the top of the stairs, I saw the train slowly rolling forward. I caught the attention of the Amtrak employee on the walkway to the track and he explained that unless the conductors had their head out the window, there would be no way to contact them. He completed that statement as the last train car cleared the walkway. He graciously rebooked my ticket for the next train at 6:36 pm. To many, these past few days would only be seen as horrible and some might wonder what I did or didn’t do to deserve these trials and tribulations.

Meanwhile, my daughter-in-law assured me that she wouldn't leave until she knew that I was on the train. Moments later we drove to one of my favorite places to shop. We had a delightful lunch, purchased a puzzle for my granddaughter, purchased some sweets for later, and grabbed some caffeine. She took me back to the train station and only let me out of the car when I explained that if it got too "sketchy" that there were 3 restaurants within a block that would be safe places to wait. Then I had the same conversation on the phone with my husband. Finally, I settled down with my laptop to write my newsletter article.

The Amtrak employee who helped me earlier leaned over his counter and told me that the train that I was supposed to be on was within sight of the platform in Mattoon but was stopped due to mechanical failure. It was supposed to be in Carbondale twenty minutes later. I don't know if the air conditioning or bathrooms are working on that train, but I know that they are working in the train station. I know that if anything gets tricky in the train station that the Amtrak employee is watching out for me and is within earshot.

I see this whole experience as a chance to get out of my routine. The fact that I am not on the train that is broken down is just the icing on the cake... but I like some cakes without icing... and I like to think that may have been my attitude if I was on the broken-down train. At any rate, I am grateful to be where I am with the hope of a smooth ride home this evening.

And while I like to think that God was winking at me when I didn't quite make that train, I don't presume to think God was working negatively for those who are on that train. I rest in the assurance that God is present in the good times, and the challenging times... in a nice dry, cool train station... and on a broken-down train... God is in the slow afternoon of people watching and writing in a train station... and in the misunderstandings... Praise be to our constant traveling companion!

Blessings,
Pastor Cindy Bean

SNIPPETS

by Pat

Snippets from the September 7 Session Meeting.

Financial Reports/Discussions: Kathy went over the Financial Reports and answered any questions. She then explained that the Edward Jones Cash account is accumulated interest from the Edward Jones CD's. There is also accumulated interest of from the Christy/Gibson CD. The Session voted to approve transfer of these monies to the Church checking account.

- CLERKS REPORT:
 - Correspondence: None

- Email/Text Approvals: Text sent 8/23 to all Elders except Beth Martin, because Beth asked to borrow the Hand Chimes for use at her school job. No response so sent again 8/31. Because there needs to be discussion the Moderator declared that this item will be added to the Agenda for the Sept. 7 Session Meeting. (NOTE: Text votes are only appropriate for simple "Yes or No" items.)

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

- **Worship Team – Alissa & Beth (co-chairs), Brady, Sam Sprecher, Diana Rolando & Jane Rutledge.**
 - Attendance has been low the last few weeks due to vacations.
 - Jennifer Sakata will be filling in for Pastor Cindy on September 17.
- **Christian Education Team – Bonnie (chair) & Alissa**
 - The report for the Visioning grant and pictures has been sent to Presbytery.
 - A reminder text has been sent to all Sunday School parents about the Sunday School Round-up breakfast.
- **Stewardship/Finance/Memorial/Personnel Team – Ryan (chair) & Liz**
 - Info - Trustees likely to hold Fall grounds cleanup after Spoon River Drive (3rd or 4th weekend in October)
 - Personnel – yearly conversations to take place over next couple weeks. Janitress (Deb), Tech (Brady), Organist (Diana), Pastor (Cindy).
 - Finance - Church had a bad August of giving inflows. About 3k below operating expenses. Somewhat typical for late summer each year.
Kathy mentioned our per capita is sitting around \$1,200 for the year and Presbytery expectation is \$3,000. We received \$1,900 in VBS grant money and worried funding might be pulled eventually if we don't meet expectation. We didn't meet it last year and may not this year.
- **Fellowship and Mission Team – Jodi & Liz (Co-Chairs)**
 - No Report.
- **Evangelism Team – Jodi (chair), Bonnie & Beth**
 - No Report.
- **Technology Team – Brady (chair), Ryan**
 - The Session voted to approve Brady dispose of the Assisted Hearing items.
 - Discussion on Electronic offering options
 - The one option that a local church in the Peoria area uses is [Tithe.ly](https://tithe.ly). The church would not be charged anything. The website would collect the charges from the congregation as the donation is given. The rates are as follows:
 - 2.9% + \$0.30 per trans.
 - ACH/Bank: 1% + \$0.30
 - AMEX: 3.5% + \$0.30
 - The website does give the option for the congregation member to "cover" the transaction fees as they give. So, for example, say you want to give \$20, either they would collect the fees from the \$20, so the church would get less than that after the

fees are taken out. Or they could check the box and the church would get \$20 but the member would pay a little extra to cover the fee.

- The website also allows for automatic intervals of deposits directly into a bank account. So once the site is set up, it would not have to be managed very often.

- **Nominating Team** – Elder-Beth (chair), Deacon-Sue Lane & At-Large members Cozy Hoover, Kathy Welch and Tony Rolando.

- Beth said the Team would be meeting soon.

- **Active Member Review** – Pat.

- Pat presented the final list of possible contacts. The Session voted to approve going forward by sending letters to each.

Deacon's Report

MEETING AUGUST 13, 2023

The Deacons met in the CE Building after worship. Meeting opened at 11:45am with prayer by Chair Chris Evans. Those in attendance were Chris, Sue Lane, Glenene Benson, Missy Herron and Pat Welker. July Minutes were approved.

Missy reported that the Treasury balance is still \$233.26

Cards: Cards sent for July - Chris 3, Sue 3, Glenene 1, Missy 3 and Pat 1. Some of us have not sent all the Aug. cards so will report totals at the Sept. meeting.

Communion: Aug 6 served 38 in worship. Home Communion was served to 13. (Note: This was not brought up at the meeting, but Sue provided the information after the meeting.) Sunday, Sept. 3 is next Communion. Chris will bring the bread and Sue and Pat will help prepare elements. Sue will take care of paraments. For Home Communion, Pat (or Sue) will accompany Pastor Cindy.

Next meeting Sunday, Sept. 24, after worship.

Meeting closed at 11:55am with prayer by Missy.

Pat Welker, Secretary

- **Pastor's Report** – September 2023

Since our last Session meeting, I have done the following:

Visits:

- With members at the manse, on the phone, and with Pat Welker and her family at her home.
- Will have conducted home communion visits by the time of the meeting.

Worship:

- Planned texts and sermon titles and selected hymns through the end of November. I still have to select the liturgy (the bulk of the work) besides the sermon prep. This time

the music staff chose not to meet to select hymns. However, the hymns have been distributed to them for their feedback. I want to know which hymns are new to the congregation and if there are hymns that Diana prefers to play out of a different hymnal.

- Led the graveside service on August 29, 2023, for Ralph Welker who died on August 24, 2023.
- Did what I could to help Alissa find pulpit supply for September 17th. She really stuck with it and we need to thank her for that!

Presbytery

- I was unable to attend the Presbytery meeting held on Saturday August 26. I discovered that I was not on the Presbytery email list and have addressed that with the virtual office assistant.
- I did volunteer to lead worship at the Illinois Presbyterian Home in Springfield on Sunday, August 27th.
- Our new Executive Presbyter, Ann Schwartz sent a list of names of people who could help fill the pulpit in the future. In the future her husband, Rev. Wade Meranda may be able to help on occasion, but his membership is still in PSEI where he is the Treasurer. He would have to travel here from Bloomington.

Confirmation

- All the parents have been contacted and we are looking to begin classes "after the weather turns" on Sunday afternoons. We will have to address scheduling as the class progresses due to the youth and family's busy schedules.

Mission Study Team

- Need an update on recruitment.

Continuing Education

- My husband and I will be gone the evening of October 23 - 25 for a Board of Pensions workshop on retirement planning in Arlington Heights. We will split the costs between the two churches.

○ **TRUSTEE'S REPORT:** September 2023

▪ Projects completed:

- Otto-Baum finished the repair work and installed a beam supporting the brick wall above the East SS Room. They also bricked the holes that were created with the removal of the old vents on the south side of office. Vents were from the old heating system.
- Landscaping work done on the front entrance of the Church; trimming, weeding and mulch. Weeding and trimming in the Memorial Garden. Trimming of burning bush on south side of office.

- Projects Ongoing:
 - Finish trimming bushes around the A/C and entrance into the office. Also, trim bushes on east side of office as well as at the Manse.
 - Replace timer on stained-up date. glass windows. (Appears to be completed.)
 - Locating electrical problem in bell tower. (Appears to be completed.)
 - Set fall clean-up date.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Mission Study Committee: Bonnie asked Randy Welch to join and he declined. Beth checked back with Michelle Lane but has no answer yet.
- Alissa attended the Aug. 26 Presbytery Meeting via Zoom. She reported that there were votes taken to approve new people to Great Rivers from other Presbyteries. There was also discussion on Per Capita that is not being received by Presbytery and the fact it is affecting the bottom line for Great Rivers.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Started to discuss the request from Beth Martin to borrow the Hand Chimes. Beth informed the Session that she no longer needed them as it was only for the first couple weeks of school.
- The Session voted to approve a Celebration of Life for Daryl Phillips on October 21, Saturday as requested by Jodi and Kevin.
- Discussion and Visioning time. The discussion this time will be Creating our Church Culture: dreaming about what “church” would feel like, look like, and act like if we truly lived out the gospel every time we gather together. This discussion was around how we worship and it was stated that we would like to have ‘Passing the Peace’ brought back to worship. Also discussed trying to get a Community Youth Group started. Alissa and Missy have been interested in trying this again so Session is excited for them to try this and will support it fully.
- The Session voted to approve the following dates for PEO to use the CE Building: Dec. 5, 2023 from 5-9:30pm; Jan. 16, 2024 from 6-9:30pm; March 5 from 5-9:30pm; May 7 from 5-9:30pm and June 18 from 6-9:30pm.
- Next Meeting October 12, Thursday at 6pm
- The Session voted to adjourn at 8:52pm with the Lord’s Prayer by all.

First Presbyterian Church Officers 2023

ELDERS: Liz Johnson, Brady Johnson, Beth Martin, Alissa Holder, Ryan Stobaugh, Jodi Phillips, and Bonnie Suydam— Interim Pastor Cindy Bean

DEACONS: Chris Evans, Melissa Herron, Linda Riley, Pat Welker, Sue Lane, and Glenene Benson

TRUSTEES: Clark Evans, Joe Herron, Kevin Phillips, Jake Suydam, Kathy Welch, and Tim Ulm

TREASURERS: Kathy Welch and Cindy Daniels

FINANCIAL SECRETARIES: Mickie Ulm and Michelle Lane

CLERK OF SESSION: Pat Welker

Pastoral Care Contact Information

Church Address: 83 N. Cone St. Farmington, IL 61531
Contact Phone: Interim Pastor Cindy Bean (618)316-1171
Email: cindyb825@gmail.com
Mon, Tues, Wed 8:30 – 2:00 (subject to change)
Office Phone: 309-245-2914(messages checked weekly)
Email: firstpresfarmington@gmail.com

Mission Giving

Food Pantry

The Farmington Food Pantry is open on the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 12:30pm – 1:30 pm. The Food Pantry is located at New Hope Fellowship Church 1102 N. State Route 78, Farmington, IL 61531. You do not even need to get out of your car. It is open to anyone in the Farmington area school district or who lives in Elmwood. There is no income requirement. You can now follow the Food Pantry on Facebook at Farmington IL Food Pantry.

Little Free Pantry

On the east side of the CE building, just south of the door, is a Little Free Pantry that the local Girl Scouts put together. This little free pantry is open and free for anyone, anytime. Feel free to drop off any food to help keep it stocked. Also, feel free to take any food that you might need, no questions asked. This food pantry supports those in our community who might need some extra food on those days when the Food Pantry is closed.

Our Church Life

Presbyterian Women

The Presbyterian Women will meet again October 13, Friday, at 1pm for Bible Study Meeting & Dessert. Ladies, please mark your calendars and join us.

Feed the Faith Bible Study

The first meeting of Feed the Faith Bible Study was held on Thursday, Sept. 19 at 6:30pm. There were 6 adults there. We listened to a podcast and then there was a period of great discussion. I learn so much from others. Next meeting will be October 24th. The main thing is to come and listen to the Podcast and join in the discussion. It is very worthwhile. Pat

Sunday School Breakfast - Mission

The Annual Sunday School Breakfast was held on Sunday, September 10 with pancakes, sausage and syrup. There was a big crowd of families as well as several adults. It was great to see all the kids after a long summer.

This year, the breakfast was also a Mission that Ben Arnold of our congregation. Ben spent a few years in Jakarta, Indonesia and attended a couple churches there. He met a Christian convert, Iraj, originally from Persia (Iran). Iraj became Christian and therefore had to flee Iran with his family, for

safety. He and his wife have a special needs son who is 4 years old. Ben said this little boy could not speak. Ben said that since Iraj is a refugee in Indonesia, he is not allowed to work. He lives off the generosity of Churches, etc. Last year they did fundraising for him in Jakarta and had enough to send this boy to school. After one year, the boy is now able to speak a few words. Ben is again trying to support this boy and send him to school this year.

So, it was decided to make this SS Breakfast a mission to support this boy and his family. We were able to raise \$399 for this mission. What a great thing!

If you would like to help with this mission, just write on your check that it is for “Ben’s Mission” and it will get to the right place. All help would certainly be appreciated by Ben and this family.

Thank You – From Pat Welker & Family

I want to thank everyone who prayed, sent cards, donations or helped with the funeral luncheon for Ralph. I don’t know what people do in times like this, when they don’t have a Church Family to lean on. Plus, our Prayer Chain has many on it who do not necessarily attend our Church, but all prayers definitely help. So, I want to say thanks to everyone who thought/prayed/helped me and my family during this time of great loss.

Monthly Calendars

October 2023

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|----------------------------|--------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 10:30 AM | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 Session 6pm | 13 PW 1pm | 14 |
| 15 10:30 AM | 16 | 17 | 18 Choir Practice 7pm | 19 | 20 | 21 Daryl Phillips Celebration of Life |
| 22 10:30 AM Choir sings | 23 | 24 Feed the Faith Bible Study 6:30 – 7:30pm | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 10:30 AM | 30 | 31 Halloween | | | | |

November 2023

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--------|---------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|----------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 Communion 10:30 AM | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 Session 6pm | 10 PW noon | 11 |
| 12 10:30 AM | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 10:30 AM Hanging of the Greens | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 Thanksgiving | 24 | 25 |
| 26 10:30 AM | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | |

Joys & Concerns



October Birthdays

8 Dale Bensen **10** Haven McMaster **11** Lori Danley **12** Morgun Daniels **14** Adela Herron **23** Kurt Daniels **25** Brielle Herron **29** Ben Vermillion **31** Gary Hoover, Wilma Brentz

November Birthdays

7 Trevor Martin; Gayle Lucas **8** Brady Johnson; Tate Ulm; **11** Karen Goggin-Wilson **13** Aniston McMaster **14** Cozy Hoover **15** Pat Welker; Tony Rolando **16** Larry Roberson

October Anniversaries

20 Liz & Steve Johnson **25** Ryan & Heather McMaster **27** Gayle Lucas & Paul Watters **30** Darren & Kari Berry

November Anniversaries

10 Mike & Paula Monari; **26** Randy & Kathy Welch; **30** Gary & Cozy Hoover

✝ Prayer Requests ✝

Joys: Choir is Back! Brielle Herron is loving FCJHS Cross Country and doing great! Adela Herron is loving FCHS Band! Tim & Mickie Ulm celebrated 54th anniversary! Sydney Johnson & John Lock were married! Emily Phillips and Christian Miller were married!

Prayer Requests: Bonnie Suydam; Kaitlyn Stobaugh; Cheryl Fryman; Pam Lainge; Dale Benson's son-in-law, Kevin; Chris Evans' sister, Michelle & brother-in-law, Chris; Darryl Phillips; Dave Moermond, Wanda Ohaver's son-in-law; Corbin Rutledge; Sam Rutledge.

Bereavement: Ralph Welker family. Daryl Phillips family.

Those in Assisted Living: Blanche Wilson and Wilma Brentz at Courtyard Estates; Wanda Ohaver at Farmington Village Nursing & Rehabilitation; Leigh Ann Taylor, The Loft; Eileen (Diana Rolando's mom) Red



We try to keep our BB prayer list as current as possible. Please notify the office to update a prayer request listed, to add a new prayer request, or to remove a prayer request. Please contact us at firstpresfarmington@gmail.com

The church needs your help! Please consider volunteering to be on the Misson Study Team!

Per Capita is \$36.25 – Please consider providing this valuable support for the Presbytery

New Audio Equipment in the sanctuary to help pick up hymns during the service for Facebook/You Tube –
Be Aware – You may be recorded!

If you would like to add something to next month's Burning Bush, please submit it to the office by the last Monday of the month. We prefer receiving it by email at firstpresfarmington@gmail.com or by dropping it off in the office.

Moving....Please be sure to provide your new contact information to the church office or a session member.

We thank you for sending in your tithes and offerings, especially. You may either bring your tithes and offerings to worship or you may send your tithes and offerings directly to Mickie Ulm, financial secretary. Her address is 516 Idlewhile Ct. Farmington, IL 61531. OR now you can sign up on Tithe.ly via our church website by clicking "GIVE" on the Home Page. www.firstpresfarmington.com There are many settings of offerings – monthly, weekly, etc.

The Burning Bush
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
83 North Cone Street
Farmington IL 61531-1248



COME WORSHIP WITH US:

First Presbyterian Church of Farmington, IL
Worship Service is at 10:30AM, Sunday
mornings, on Facebook Live and in person

Video of worship service will be posted on:

YouTube: First Presbyterian Church of
Farmington, IL
&

On the website:

www.firstpresfarmington.com

Blessings on:

**“In the
Beginning
was the
Word, and
the Word
was with
God, and
the Word
was God.”
(John 1:1)**

