

THE BURNING BUSH

As I write this newsletter article, I am keenly aware of dying and death. We have a member and we have loved ones who are in the dying process. WAIT – this is the DECEMBER newsletter article. Why aren't you writing an article about Christmas, Pastor Cindy?!

I have a friend, a fellow Presbyterian minister, that I met in August of 1988 as we both moved into a dormitory on the campus of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Little did we know that our future husbands also moved into the dorm that same day. Neither of us came to seminary expecting to marry someone – it really was the furthest thing from our minds – Truly.

October of 1989, I drove to Pittsburgh to be in Cathy and Jon's wedding, and she was in my Louisville wedding to Kerry in August of 1990. Off and on throughout our 35 years in ministry, we have kept in touch with each other. As the pandemic began, we realized that we needed to reconnect regularly with each other and our three other closest female friends from seminary. We were all feeling isolated, overwhelmed, and burned out. Little did we know how important that reconnection would become.

Shortly after we reconnected, Jon began to suffer from very serious health issues that kept him in the hospital for much of the first year and a half of the pandemic. Finally, on February 24, 2022, Jon died of lymphoma. And on February 28, the other four of us watched on Zoom as Cathy and the gathered family and congregation celebrated Jon's life and remembered the promise of the resurrection. From a distance, we sent all the love and prayer we could muster for our friend Cathy in her time of deep loss.

Shortly after the funeral, Cathy developed COVID twice, suffered from a detached retina, and it just seemed that she would never get through the challenges of health, life, and grief. Meanwhile, another group member lost both of her brothers to cancer within six months of each other. Grief came to roost in her body for quite some time. All of this sparked renewed grief in third group member whose sister had died unexpectedly 5 years ago and her mother 3 years ago. We, in the midst of busy lives and grieving during the late spring and summer of 2023, failed to meet for a couple of months and little did we know what a wake-up call we would get.

On September 10th, Cathy wasn't making sense while leading worship and people took her to the hospital. By Monday they had performed brain surgery. On Tuesday, Cathy awoke and by Wednesday, she could talk fairly well. On Thursday, we got our wake-up call that our friend was seriously ill. By October 12th, she reached out to us to tell us that she was ready to Zoom again and that her tumor was a malignant glioblastoma. Two weeks later, the miracles of Zoom connected Buffalo, NY; Colton, NY; Charleston, IL; Farmington, IL; and Noblesville, IN. And we have learned the

lesson that we are NEVER too busy to meet with one another, listen to one another, and love on one another.

We are working hard to bring hope, peace, joy, and love into the midst of lives filled with grief and pain. This is the real light of Christ – the light of love for one another in dark times. This is the real meaning of celebrating the birth of Christ as we go through our lives, especially as we age. With the birth of a child comes the promise of death to this life and the gift of eternal life. May we all remember this Advent and Christmas season to make the time for those in dark places, for those whom we love, for those who are far away, and for those who are near. Reach out to your neighbors, strangers, those who are estranged, and those you miss. May the promises of Christ be born again this day, this month, this year.

Blessings,

Pastor Cindy

SNIPPETS

by Pat

Snippets from the November 9 Session Meeting.

Financial Reports/Discussions : Kathy Welch went over the Finances.

- CLERKS REPORT:
 - Correspondence: See under Active Member Review.
 - Email/Text Approvals: None

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

- **Worship Team** – Alissa & Beth (co-chairs), Brady, Sam Sprecher, Diana Rolando & Jane Rutledge.
 - Pastor Cindy requested that there be a Worship Committee meeting scheduled to talk about the process of selecting hymns. There was discussion, but no action was taken.
- **Christian Education** - Bonnie Suydam (chair) & Alissa Holder
 - The Sunday School Christmas program has been selected, parts distributed, and music files forwarded to all parents for the children to practice at home. Curriculum for the next quarter has been ordered.
- **Stewardship, Finance, Memorial, Personnel Committee** - Ryan Stobaugh (chair) & Liz Johnson.
 - Finance – Need to meet to work on the 2024 Budget.
 - Personnel – Continue to meet with employees. Still need to talk to the janitress.
***Further, Ryan, chair of Personnel, reported that in Pastor Cindy's review, she expressed the desire to move out of the manse. Pastor Cindy is very happy with the manse, but for family and financial reasons, she would like to stay in her home in Carbondale or her son's home in Peoria. She will work out of the Pastor's office during the week in addition to

working from home. She did state that she did not want/expect to receive a housing allowance. Kathy Welch raised possibilities about the ways that Pastor Cindy's salary package could be constructed when this change is made.

- Stewardship, Memorial – No Report.
- **Fellowship and Mission Committee** - Jodi Phillips & Liz Johnson (co-chairs)
 - Soup Supper on Saturday, November 11.
- **Evangelism Committee** - Jodi Phillips (chair), Bonnie Suydam & Beth Martin
 - No Christmas Walk this year so we won't be able to participate.
- **Technology Committee** - Brady Johnson(chair) & Ryan Stobaugh
 - No Report.
- **Nominating Committee** - Elder Beth Martin, chair; Sue Lane, Deacon; At-Large Members - Cozy Hoover, Tony Rolando & Kathy Welch.
 - Team working to fill positions. Found out that there will be 3 Elders needed and having trouble finding someone willing to do it.
- **Membership Review** - Clerk Pat Welker
 - Session voted to approve moving Mick & Debbie Threw and Lori Danley from Active Member List to the Friends/Family List per their request.

Deacon's Report OCTOBER 29, 2023

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

September Minutes were approved.

Treasury balance is still \$233.26

Cards: Additional cards sent since August 13 Meeting as well as September –

October

Chris	1
Sue	3
Glenene	4
Missy	0
Pat	24

Communion: Sept 3 served 16 in worship. Home Communion was served to 4. Sunday, Nov. 5 is next Communion. Pat will bring the bread and Missy & Glenene will help prepare the elements. Sue will take care of paraments. For Home Communion, Glenene will accompany Pastor Cindy.

Next meeting Sunday, Nov. 19, after worship. Our Annual Thanksgiving Basket donation will be discussed at this meeting. Missy is going to talk to the sister of a mother of 3 who recently passed unexpectedly to see if a basket or gift cards would be better for the family.

Meeting closed at 12:05 with prayer by Chris.

○ **Pastor's Report** – November 2023

- Coordinated an observance of All-Saints Day
- Home communion visits with Wanda Ohaver (unable to take communion due to health reasons), Wilma Brentz, Blanche Wilson, Larry Roberson, Donna DeGroot, assisted by Deacon Melissa Herron
- Nursing Home visit with Wanda Ohaver on Sunday, October 29.
- Home visit with a member on Tuesday, November 7
- Prepared for Confirmation and taught on Sunday, November 5th – 2 lessons. Will meet again on Sunday, November 12 and 26 from 12pm to 3pm. The first week was shortened by 1 hour due to a schedule conflict for two confirmands. The group would like to take December off and then we'll work to find more Sundays (or other days) that work with everyone's schedules.
- Went to Chicago for Continuing Education with the Board of Pensions.
- Attend the Presbytery of Great River's on the Road event in Peoria at Panera on Tuesday, October 31, 2023.
- Attended the required Boundary Training on Zoom from 3:00 – 5:30pm on Tuesday, October 31 and Wednesday, November 1st. This meets the requirement to attend Boundary Training once every three years.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Mission Study Committee: Still only have 2 people committed to the Study.
- Alissa and Missy held their first Youth Group meeting in the CE Building on evening of October 29. They had a great time. Next meeting will be Sunday, Nov. 12, then Sunday, Nov. 26 followed by Sunday, Dec. 10.
- Pulpit Supply – There has been some parishioners wondering who can fill the pulpit when needed. Presbytery COM was contacted, because there had been some interest in knowing if a previous pastor could fill the pulpit. COM has stated that there is a rule that a Supply Pastor cannot fill the pulpit for a congregation that they previously had served as the congregation's Pastor.
- Advent starts Sunday, December 3.
- Hanging of the Greens will be Sunday, November 26. There will be a luncheon served.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Next Meeting December 14, Thursday at 6pm
- The Session voted to adjourn at 8:00pm with the prayers from each person around the table.

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
Office Hours: Please contact Pastor Cindy
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 met on Friday, November 10 with 9 ladies in attendance. We had our meeting, Bible Study followed by Fellowship. Dessert was furnished by Kay. It was a good meeting/fellowship. The next meeting will be our Annual Cookie Exchange, on December 8, Friday, at noon for a furnished luncheon. We will have a short business meeting to pick our favorite charities to give the money we have collected through the year. We will also have our Christmas Trivia game. If you wish, bring a couple dozen cookies or some candy to share with each other. You don't have to bring cookies, but please come join us. All ladies in the congregation are invited so please mark your calendars and join us.

Feed the Faith Bible Study

The Feed the Faith Bible Study was held on Tuesday, November 14 at 6:30pm. There were 6 of us in attendance. We listened to a podcast by David Jeremiah, who has a popular radio and tv show. We had a good discussion.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the net meeting on Tuesday, January 9th at 6:30pm and see what is going on in the Church. It's a good time for learning about the Bible. – Pat Welker

Soup Supper November 11th

As you probably know, the Soup Supper was held on Saturday, November 11 from 4:30 – 7pm. People started coming in around 4:15pm which was fine because we were ready for them.

There were 7 different soups available as well as chili and/or hotdogs. There were many, many desserts and you could pick your favorite from pies, cakes, and cookies.

I tried to keep track of the choices, but I'm sure I missed a few, but here is what I had marked down; Chili – 21 bowls; Cheeseburger Chowder – 37 bowls; Turkey Rice – 19 bowls; Chicken Noodle – 16 bowls; Green Pepper – 21; Tomato Bisque – 12 bowls; Broccoli Cheese – 26; Chili Dogs – 104; and Hotdogs – 20.

There was a steady stream of people coming in until around 6pm. We were able to clean-up and headed home by 7-7:30pm.

In addition to all the soup makers, chili/hotdog makers, there was a crew that kept the tables cleaned off and dishes done. There were lots of folks in the kitchen, but everyone got along, and we all enjoyed the event.

The best part is that the money was going to be donated to the Honor Flight for Veterans to help pay for the plane tickets for the veteran's escort, the person that goes along to help the veteran get around. This is really a great thing for the veterans. I have been to the Washington DC Memorials and Arlington several times and it just takes your breath away. For the veterans to be able to see the Memorials that honor their service, is a wonderful thing. Because of everyone's hard work, there will be \$1,101 donated to the Honor Flight cause. A great big thanks to everyone involved in any way. – Pat Welker

Elders Needed

It is that time of year once again, when the Nominating Committee has the massive task of finding folks to be officers of the Church. If you have never been on the Nominating Committee, you could volunteer for it in 2024 at the Annual Meeting to be held in January, 2024.

The Committee starts with the Active Member list which contains around 100 people's names. You go through the list and mark out all those who do not attend Church. Then you mark out all those names of folks currently holding an office. Then you mark out the folks who are up in years and have held offices many, many times and don't want to do it anymore. By this point, you have a very short list of folks who might feel compelled to take an office.

Well, this year, the Committee is having a very hard time getting anyone willing to become an Elder. There are 3 Elder positions to fill. So, say some prayers and if this is something you could do, please let Beth Martin, Sue Lane, Kathy Welch, Tony Rolando or Cozy Hoover know. This is a very important position in the Church and very much needed. Please help if you feel so compelled.

Hanging of the Greens

After worship on November 26, 2023, we held Hanging of the Greens after worship. Between 30-35 folks enjoyed a soup luncheon that included chili or hot dogs. There were also plenty of delicious desserts to be had also. It was especially great to see so many kids in attendance.

Once people were done eating, they either went to the Sanctuary to decorate Christmas Tree and also putting out all the greenery on windowsills and other strategic places. It always looks so beautiful in the sanctuary when it is all decorated. Those who are not decorators clean up the kitchen. There was also a meeting of the kids going through confirmation as well as crafts for other kids. So, there was something for everyone. – Pat Welker

Wanda Ohaver

We have lost another stalwart of the Church, Wanda. After a long battle with her failing body, she passed away around 2:00 am on Thanksgiving Day, November 23. She lost her husband/partner, Delano a little over a year ago, as he passed away on November 12, 2022. She really missed him, as she had been with him since high school and were married 69 years.

Wanda was a very busy woman in the Church and town. She was always willing to listen and/or help anyone. She and Delano ran apartment houses, so they never discarded anything, because it might be needed to repair something. She used to tell me, if you need something, check with us before you go buy it and chances are we have it somewhere. She was a very generous person, because if she had it and you needed it, it was yours. She was very involved in everything that interested her. She will certainly be missed. I miss sitting at her kitchen table visiting over a cup of coffee. She was the main person in Presbyterian Women and could organize a funeral dinner like no one else.

I also know that she was very involved in the PEO. She worked hard to help several local ladies with funds through the PEO. Even while residing in the Nursing Home, she was still looking for women in the community that she could help through PEO.

Once she was your friend, you were her friend forever. I am really going to miss her. – Pat Welker

Monthly Calendars

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Communion 10:30 am Advent Begins	4	5 PEO 5:30 pm	6 Choir 7 pm	7	8 PW Noon Lunch & Cookie Exchange	9
10 10:30 am Choir Sings	11	12	13	14 Session 6 pm	15	16
17 10:30 am Childrens Christmas Program during worship	18	19	20 Choir 7 pm	21	22	23
24 10:30 am Christmas Eve Service 6:30 pm Choir Sings	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 10:30 am Communion	8	9 Feed the Faith Bible Study 6:30 – 7:30 pm	10	11 Session 6 pm	12 PW 1 pm	13
14 10:30 am	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 10:30 am	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 10:30 am	29	30	31			

Joys & Concerns



December Birthdays

1 Darrell Elliott; **4** Liz Johnson; **5** Darrell Gomes; **8** Stephanie Franks;
10 David Black; **17** Randy Welch; **19** Marissa Ulm; **21** Kent Kowal & Heather
McMaster; **25** Jesus; **31** Ellie Duley

January Birthdays

9 Mason Gomes; Claire Herron **14** Conner Berry; Tadd Swanson **15** Darren Berry
19 Dexter Ulm **24** Donna DeGroot **27** Clark Evans

✝ Prayer Requests ✝

Joys: Steve & Liz Johnson celebrated 33 year anniversary; Landry Duley's football team celebrated a 3rd football championship; Randy & Kathy Welch's grandson's high school football team won their state championship game; Claire Herron joined the choir; Soup Supper – Huge Success!!

Prayer Requests: Ed Fryman; Donna Degroot; Marilyn Garrett; Ben Arnold and Ben Arnold's mom; Pastor Cathy (Pastor Cindy's friend from NY); Dale Benson's son-in-law, Kevin; Chris Evans' sister, Michelle & brother-in-law, Chris; Dave Moermond; Corbin Rutledge; Sam Rutledge.

Bereavement: Wanda Ohaver Family; Cheryle Fryman Family

Those in Assisted Living: Blanche Wilson and Wilma Brentz at Courtyard Estates; Leigh Ann Taylor, The Loft; Eileen (Diana Rolando's mom) Red Oak Estates.



UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 10:30 am, 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)**

