

THE BURNING BUSH

As I look over our last year together, I realize how many great things are going on in this congregation! Here are a few.

1. We are very welcoming to families with children. I have NEVER seen anyone glare at a baby or a child making noise – NEVER. That’s almost unheard of in churches! This congregation truly delights in the gifts of children and youth. I’m surprised there hasn’t been more tussles over holding babies.
2. We are gifted with talented musicians – singers and accompanists. We must remember that keeping that talent at such a high level requires practice, practice, practice. There is a dedication and a sacrifice of time and energy that we may not fully appreciate. Remember to thank our musicians! And thank them for mentoring our young people who are singing in the choir. (More evidence of Item 1.)
3. We love working together especially when food is involved. It took me a year to fully appreciate how deeply true this is. There is food at almost every single week during Fellowship time; Soup Supper fundraisers; the Fourth of July food booth; dinner and snacks each night during Vacation Bible School; meals after funerals... Hospitality is a mandate in the Bible. Jesus depended on the hospitality of others as he traveled and ministered. Many of Jesus’ teachings were presented while at table with others (very prevalent in Luke’s gospel).
4. An overwhelming percentage of the people present on any given Sunday give of their time and talent in service to the church or community. From mowing the yards, to filling up the Little Food Pantry, to teaching Sunday School, to organizing the kitchen, to providing lunch and snacks to the confirmands (More evidence of Item 3), to changing the outdoor sign weekly, to serving on the Session/Deacons/Trustees, to volunteering to be a Financial Secretary/Treasurer/Church Secretary/Clerk of Session. And the list goes on – WHEW! THANK YOU!
5. People are willing to risk trying new things! This is exceptional. Many people are afraid of failure and so they won’t try. For instance, Jodi has started the Feed the Faith program. Alissa (with the help of others) has started a Junior/Senior High Youth Group. A Men’s Bible Study group gave it a good try. ***What would you like to try in 2024?***

What a great year! I can’t wait to see what God and others bring to life in this next year!
Happy New Year! – Many Blessings, Pastor Cindy

SNIPPETS

by Pat

Snippets from the December 14 Session Meeting.

Financial Reports/Discussions: Financial reports were discussed under the Finance Committee.

- CLERKS REPORT:
 - Correspondence: See under Active Member Review.
 - Email/Text Approvals:
 - On Dec. 3, Pastor Cindy sent email requesting approval of Liz Johnson to head the Nominating Committee for the time being. Elders approved.
 - On Nov. 13, text sent with request from Pastor Cindy. Wants to use CE Building and kitchen on Wednesday, November 22nd. Her best friend is coming for Thanksgiving and would like to help cook, but the manse bathrooms don't work for him, so he would like to cook at the Church. They will be in there from 10:20am-5pm. Six Elders responded/approved.
 - On Nov. 22, text sent with request from Pastor Cindy to use the CE Building on Thanksgiving for their family meal. There will be 12 in attendance, and they will be sure to clean up. Six Elders responded/approved.

MINISTRY TEAM REPORTS

- **Worship Team** – Alissa & Beth (co-chairs), Brady, Sam Sprecher, Diana Rolando & Jane Rutledge.
 - No Report.
- **Christian Education Team** – Bonnie (chair) & Alissa
 - The Sunday School Christmas program will be this Sunday, December 17. We have been having good practices and the children are excited to present to the congregation. There are 20 plus kids in the program.
- **Stewardship/Finance/Memorial/Personnel Team** – Ryan (chair) & Liz
 - Finance – Finance committee met with Kathy, Cindy and Mickie to set 2024 budget. When finalized, it will be presented to the Session for approval.
 - The Church Yearly Mission Pledge amount was discussed but had already been decided in a previous meeting and reported to Presbytery, so won't be changed at this point.
 - Personnel – No report.
 - Stewardship/Memorial – No report.
- **Fellowship and Mission Team** – Jodi & Liz (Co-Chairs)
 - Soup Supper on Saturday, November 11, was a great success. Were able to raise \$1,101 for the Honor Flight Guardians of Fulton County. This will provide 2 flights. We had a wonderful night with a lot of great help.
- **Evangelism Team** – Jodi (chair), Bonnie & Beth
 - No Christmas Walk this year.

- **Technology Team** – Brady (chair), Ryan
 - No Report.
- **Nominating Team** – Elder-Beth & Liz Johnson (chair), Deacon-Sue Lane & At-Large members Cozy Hoover, Kathy Welch and Tony Rolando.
 - In Beth's absence, Liz reported that the following people are proposed for the Class of 2026 officer slate. Thank you to all who have volunteered.
 - Elders - Liz spoke to past Elders Cozy Hoover and Steffanie Ulm. After some thought they both agreed. Further Dale Benson has agreed to be an Elder.
 - Deacons – Tammy Duley and Michelle Lane will be joining the Deacons.
 - Trustees – Kevin Philips and Joe Herron both agreed to stay on another term as Trustees.
- **Active Member Review** – Pat.
 - 14 letters sent to 20 individuals/family groups. 4 letters returned.
 - The Session voted to move some from Active Membership to the Friends/Family Roll having returned the letter with their request.
 - The Session voted to approve the others to be moved from Active Membership to the Friends/Family Roll. They were contacted but did not respond with their wishes, so will be automatically moved.

Deacon's Report

DEACONS MEETING
DECEMBER 10, 2023

The Deacons met in the CE Building after worship. The meeting opened at 11:20am with prayer by Chair Chris Evans. Those in attendance were Chris, Sue Lane, Glenene Benson, Missy Herron, Pat Welker, and Pastor Cindy.

October and November Minutes were approved.

Missy reported that the Treasury balance is still \$133.26. \$100 used for gift cards (see Gift Basket report below).

Cards Sent:

December

Chris	2
Sue	13
Glenene	17
Missy	8
Pat	40

Communion: Dec. 3 served 30 in worship. Home Communion with Pastor and Pat was served to 4.

Sunday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve, is the next Communion. Chris will bring the bread and Missy help will prepare the elements. Sue will take care of the paraments. There will be no Home Communion. Sue reported that there are enough individual candles for Christmas Eve. The Herron Girls will pass out the candles to parishioners.

Missy reported that lots of folks have signed up for poinsettias. She will get the order placed and arrange delivery. They will be in the sanctuary for worship on Christmas Eve Day morning and evening services.

Thanksgiving/Christmas Basket - We are helping the Coyle family of 3 kids who recently lost their mother unexpectedly. We have purchased 3 each \$50 gift cards for Wal-Mart so that each kid can purchase what they want for themselves. Missy is going to make arrangements with the kids' Aunt to get the cards to the family.

Pat is going to update our mailing lists with needed changes.

Sue is in charge of the gifts for our shut-ins and has them ready to go. Pat will get some purse size Kleenex for her to include in the gifts.

Next meeting will be decided at a later day. The meeting closed at noon with prayer by Chris. -- Pat Welker, Secretary

- **Pastor's Report** -- December 2023

- **Pastoral Care**

- Visits - Wanda Ohaver - in Forest Park at OSF 2x's, in Hospice House 2x's - Also visited with Mary, Suzie and Dino.
 - Sam Rutledge - at Carle - one successful visit; and one attempted visit where I just met family.
 - David Moermond - at OSF; also visited with Mary and David's brother.
 - Home Communion visit with Larry Roberson, Donna DeGroot and Pat Welker.
 - Reached out to Ed Fryman, but never connected with him.
 - Several phone calls, text messages with members and friends of the church.
 - Attended Wanda Ohaver's funeral services.

- **Meetings**

- Attended Deacons' Meeting.

- **Teaching**

- Confirmation Class - taught 6 lessons during classes on November 12 and November 26th. Still need to set up a next meeting date.

- **TRUSTEE'S REPORT:** No meeting in December.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Mission Study Committee: Still only have 2 people committed to the Study.

- Community Youth Group - Alissa and Missy. – we will be coming up with dates for January - May soon. The kids have already asked about sleepovers in the CE building. The girls spent Sunday night signing and making Christmas cards for the nursing home. We are also starting to collect hand warmers, granola bars, and either blankets or fleece to make blankets for the homeless. We are also looking into going to the Mission to serve sometime, likely in February.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Session voted to approve the following Communion Dates for 2024: January 5; February 4; February 14, Ash Wednesday; March 28, Maundy Thursday; March 31, Easter; April 7; May 5; June 2; July 7; August 4; September 1; October 6, World Communion; November 3; December 1 and December 24, Christmas Eve.
- The Session voted to set the following dates: 1) Congregational Meeting for January 14, Sunday, to hear the report of the Nominating Committee and elect the officers for the Class of 2026. 2) Set Congregational Meeting for January 28, Sunday, to install new/returning officers. 3). Set Annual Meeting for January 28 Sunday, to review the Annual Report, elect 3 At-Large Nominating Committee Members for 2024, etc. This meeting will follow worship and include a potluck luncheon.
- The Session voted to hold Officer Training for Elders and Deacons after worship on January 21, Sunday. There will be a brief Session Meeting at the end of the training to question and approve the new officers for installation.
- The Session voted to change the January 11 meeting to Thursday, January 18.
- Pastor Cindy informed Session that she planned to be out of the Manse by the end of December.
- When Trustees were cleaning the room behind the choir loft, they found some flags. There was a question if they should be moved to the sanctuary. After some discussion, it was decided to table any decision until next meeting.
- There was a question from Laura Reason, COM concerning the balance due we still had for Per Capita. The Session voted to use Pauline Grebe's Memorial Money of \$1,775 to pay the \$2,233.80 balance down. The clerk was to inform our Treasurer of this decision.
- Alissa sent a survey to the Elders and asked them to have it ready to discuss at the next Session Meeting. It will help with the first steps of the Mission Study.
- Next Meeting January 18, Thursday at 6pm per vote above.
- The Session voted to close the meeting at 8pm with prayer by Bonnie.

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 Vary: 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, December 8 with 15 ladies in attendance. We had a wonderful luncheon with soups provided by Marianne, Pauline and Jodi. There were also Subway sandwiches. After we enjoyed our lunch and fellowship, we held our meeting.

We were able to distribute a total of \$1,500 to the church as well as some old/new charities. We gave \$500 to the Church, \$300 to The Fulton County Humane Society and \$350 each to the Christmas Hope Chest of Farmington and the Farmers Feeding Farmers Backpack Program at our local school.

We then split up into two teams, with a West Team and East Team. Pat was the emcee and asked the Christmas Trivia Questions. As it so happens, the East Team won consisting of Marianne, Pauline, Kay, Carol Robert, Billie Bohannon and Rosie Patterson (our Baptist friends). They each won a goodie bag of treats and candies.

We then got to sample the many cookies and candies that were brought to share. Then everyone took a few of each kind home with them to enjoy at a later time. It was a great day of fun and fellowship. Looking forward to next year. We will meet on Friday, January 12 at noon for a potluck, weather permitting. All ladies welcome.

Feed the Faith Bible Study

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the next 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.

Children's Christmas Program

I didn't attend worship on December 17th, the day of the kid's program as I was sick. So, I watched it online later in the week. The kids are such a delight and to see so many youngsters is just wonderful. The program was great with a great story to tell. There was even one young sibling who joined the group unexpectedly, but that is part of the fun, isn't it? Kids are unpredictable and so my enjoyment to those around them.

Thanks to Bonnie and all her helpers as well as all the kids and their families for making this happen for us once again. It is something I look forward to each year. – Pat Welker

Upcoming Annual Meeting & Potluck

The Annual Meeting is coming up January 28 directly following worship. We will review the Annual Report, ask any questions, and then approve it as well as the Pastor's Terms of Call. Further we will be voting for 3 at-large members for the Nominating Committee which is charged with filling the officer positions for the Church, Elders, Deacons, Trustees, Financial Secretaries and Treasurers. We will have a Potluck Luncheon prior to the meeting.

Monthly Calendars

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 Choir Practice 7 pm	11	12 PW Noon Potluck	13
14 10:30 am Choir Sings Congregational Meeting	15	16	17	18 Session 6 pm	19	20
21 10:30 am Officer Training	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 10:30 am Annual Meeting & Potluck	29	30	31			

February 2024

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



January Birthdays

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

February Birthdays

5 Jane Rutledge; **9** Gary Suydam; Alexis Haynes; **11** Nyle Staley; **13** Kari Berry **17** Ryan McMaster; **18** Linda Riley; **19** Zec Black; **20** Michelle Lane; **21** Rachel Elliott; Denise Lane; **22** Kaitlyn Stobaugh; Brea Marinich **23** Melody Martin

✝ **Prayer Requests** ✝

Joys: Children's Christmas Program! Christmas Eve Services!

Prayer Requests: Eileen (Diana Rolando's mother); Allison Smith; 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: Rick Threw family (Deb O'Donnell)

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.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION – PLEASE READ

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

Sunday School 9:15 am
Every Sunday All School Ages

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

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

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 – one-time, 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)**

