

First United Presbyterian Church
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Lanplighter

DECEMBER 2025



For
unto us
a child is
BORN, unto us
a Son is given
and his name will be
called, wonderful, counselor,
mighty GOD, the everlasting Father
the Prince of Peace

AND THE
peace of God,
WHICH TRANSCENDS
ALL UNDERSTANDING,
WILL GUARD YOUR HEARTS
AND YOUR MINDS IN
Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:7, NIV



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CALENDAR



December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
		Book Club - zoom 7:00 PM Starter Seeds	Quilt Club 8 AM-4 PM Cub Scouts 6:30 PM Advent Study #1 @ 7:00pm at 1st Presbyterian Church of Elmwood	Prayer Group 9:00 AM Pastor COM Mtg 10 AM - 2 PM	Vendors will be Setting up for the Vendor Fair	Elmwood Christmas Walk 4-7pm Vendor Fair at Presbyterian Church
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
2nd Sunday of Advent 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service Communion Congregational Meeting following worship to hear from Nominating Cmte & approve slate of officers	EBW 6:00 PM		Advent Study #2 @ 7:00pm at 1st Presbyterian Church of Elmwood	Prayer Group 9:00 AM Session Meeting 6:30 PM	Pastor Marla will be out of the office thru the 15th	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
3rd Sunday of Advent 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 9:30 AM Kids Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 11:30 AM Deacons Meeting Anni Krummel Reinking preaching Cookie Exchange following worship			Stuff-the-Bus Quilt Club 8 AM-4 PM PEO 5:00-6:30PM Advent Study #3 @ 7:00pm at 1st Presbyterian Church of Elmwood	Prayer Group 9:00 AM		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
4th Sunday of Advent 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service 11:30 AM Worship Comm Mtg Installation of New Church Officers	PEO 6:00 PM		Christmas Eve Service @ 9pm	 Office Closed	Office Closed	
28	29	30	31			
9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Service Deacons Coffee Hour						



December Elder

Brandy Stevens

Elder to be Liturgist & Assist Treasurer

December 7th Anita Asbell
 December 14th Calie Stalter
 December 21st..... Marty Tarter
 December 28th Brandy Stevens

Advent Readers

November 30th Meyers Family
 December 7th Alcaraz Family
 December 14th Stevie & Aubrie Beckstrom
 December 21st..... Larry & Diane Criswell
 Christmas Eve Service.. Stevens Family



3rd: Janelle Meyers	12th: Calie Stalter
5th: Tyler Meyers	15th: Peggy Cox
6th: Larry Criswell	16th: Anna Roberts



14th: Al & Bonnie Welker
 22nd: Bryce & Stephanie Beckstrom



Thursday morning Bible Study & Prayer Group
Thursday's @ 9am in the Fellowship Hall.



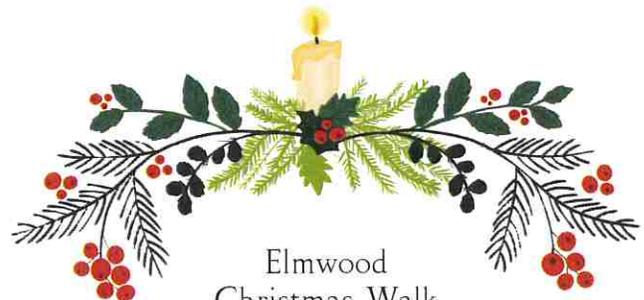
Children's Sunday School

for ages 4 - 7 will meet
on the 2nd Sunday
every month @ 10:30am



Congregational Meeting

December 7th
following worship
to hear from
Nominating Cmte
& approve
slate of officers



Elmwood Christmas Walk

December 6th 4-7pm

During the Christmas Walk
there will be a Vendor Fair
at the First Presbyterian Church.



Session Meeting
December 11th
@ 6:30pm

Deacons Mtg
December 14th
following worship



Christmas Eve
Service
@ 7pm



CHRISTMAS COOKIE EXCHANGE

December 14th
following worship

Take home the amount of
cookies you brought

Thank You!



Thank you to Steve Winslow for organizing the church work day on Nov. 15th, and to all who came and helped spruce up the church grounds!

Another BIG thank you to Steve for cleaning out the grease trap!

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE JANUARY 7TH

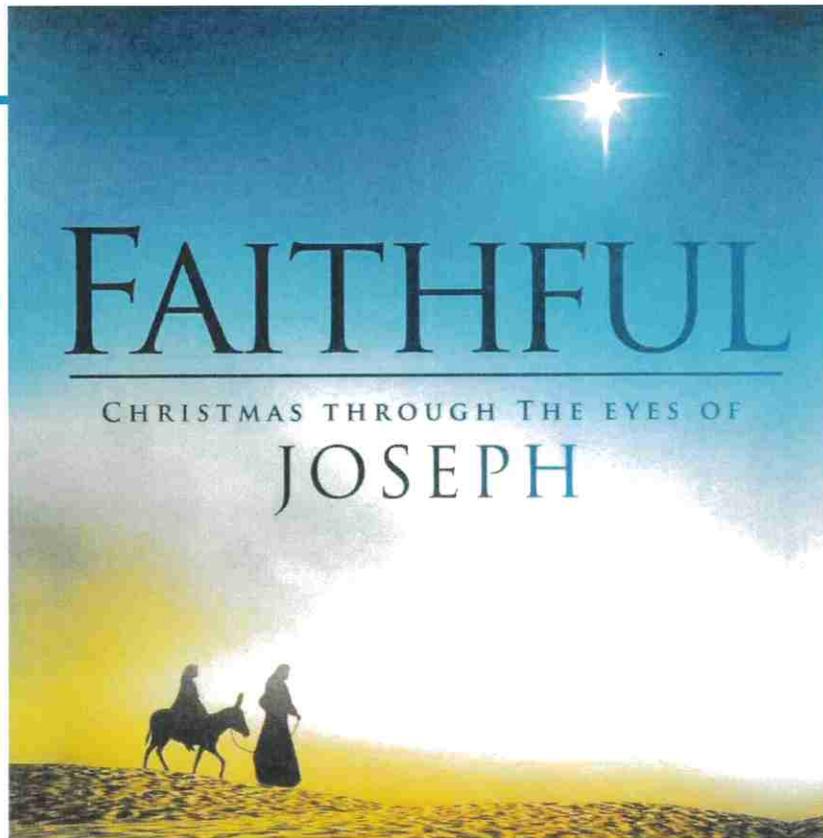


Let Brandi know if you need a copy of last years report to review

WE WISH YOU A
Merry
CHRISTMAS
& A Happy NEW

ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Congregational Mtg will be held on January 25, 2025 following the worship service.



**Advent Study at First Pres of Elmwood:
Dec 3rd, 10th & 17th at 7pm**

~ *FAITHFUL: Christmas through the eyes of JOSEPH* ~

Everyone is invited to join us as we journey through Advent using Adam Hamilton's study of looking at Christmas from the perspective of Joseph. From his beginnings as a humble carpenter to his all-important role as the earthly father of Jesus Christ, Joseph's place in the Nativity story is sometimes overlooked but contains valuable lessons for all of us. His courageous actions were crucial to the birth of Christ and God's salvation plan for humanity examine the evidence, and consider why Christmas really matters and why it's still so relevant today.

Both the Elmwood and Yates City churches will join together once again on these Advent studies. Meet in the Sanctuary of First Pres of Elmwood at 7pm.

Wednesday Dec. 3rd - Session #1: A Carpenter Named Joseph
Dec. 10th - Session #2: Whose Child is This?
Dec 17th - Session #3: Raising a Child Not Your Own & Session
#4: The Journey to Bethlehem

Haley (Carter) Amenu Update

Back in Ethiopia!

To my faithful supporters,

Hello everyone!

I am very happy to say I have been back in Ethiopia for about 3 weeks now and have been resettling in after being in America for 2 months. I had surgery at the end of August to fix the broken rod in my leg and thankfully everything went very well. I was able to put weight on my leg immediately after surgery, but it had to be locked straight in a brace for 6 weeks before physical therapy could start. My surgeon is not exactly sure why it broke but guessed that maybe I have been walking on it too much at one time. Not like I'm active or anything :)

The best part about this whole situation was that my husband Sami was able to get an expedited visa approved to meet me in the US! He was finally able to meet lots of my family and friends and to see where I grew up! This was truly such a special thing, and we are so grateful that he was able to be there with me after surgery for 2 whole months. We kept him busy while in the US and I've included pictures of our adventures together. My leg is doing well now, and I will continue doing physical therapy on it at our gym here at Bingham. All in all, it has been an unexpected start to the school year, but as always God knew best and provided for us every step of the way. Until next time!

Love, Haley (Carter) Amenu



Such a joyous time meeting Sami at the airport! His visa got approved about 1 week after my surgery and was a huge help in the recovery process.

Sami's first time carving a pumpkin



We spent lots of time in Chicago going to doctors appointments, but we also got to make the most of it and explore the city!



NOVEMBER 8

True Religion

*Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this:
to visit orphans and widows in their distress,
and to keep oneself unstained by the world.*

JAMES 1:27 NASB

Many people today ask what religion can do for them. How can it alleviate their fears, save them from death, and improve their quality of life? Christianity has never been about what we can get from it.

True religion, the kind that is acceptable to God, is found in giving ourselves to those who need the most. It's not about our comfort, our happiness, or even our ticket to heaven. It's about reflecting the glory of Christ on the earth. The tender Father heart of God is far more interested in developing your love and Christ-like character than he is in keeping you comfortable. His compassion and intense love for mankind will not be satisfied with comfortable, cushioned Christianity.

If you want to bring praise to God, intentionally seek out situations where you can put into practice your undefiled religion. Make it your mission to meet needs, to love, and to bring life.

***Submitted by Gene Vaughan**



FROM THE PASTOR

December 2025

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register. ⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. Luke 2:1-7

Good Tidings to each of you! We are almost to December and we celebrate the upcoming days of Advent as we look forward to rejoicing on the day of our Savior's birth! And what could be more familiar than the Christmas story and what could be more extraordinary?

We tend to read the gospel narrative through two millennia of traditions, and so we think of Jesus as the hero of the story. Yet he's not acting alone. He's not intruding himself to change the course of events. He's passive: nursed and placed to sleep in a manger, where he's worshiped by the shepherds, found on his mother's lap by the magi, and carried away by his father's strong arms to Egypt. Our hero is enclosed in his family – his very obedient family. A family who loves Jehovah God, worships only Him and obeys His commands (and especially obeys dreams!)

This year, may I suggest that you re-read the Nativity story. Consider the events not from a modern, civilized standpoint, but imagining yourself present there 2000 years ago. Listen for differences in sights, smells, traditions, culture and worship. And see if your heart changes—even just a little—when you consider Christ's birth in a new (but really old) way.

May this Advent and Christmas Season bring you joy, peace, hope and the knowledge that you are loved and saved by the Gift of Grace given by our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Blessing,

Pastor Marla

Joyful
MERRY & BLESSED

First United Presbyterian Church, Elmwood, IL
Session Meeting Minutes October 9, 2025

A regular meeting of the Session of First United Presbyterian Church of Elmwood was held in the Fellowship Hall on October 9, 2025. The meeting was opened with devotions and prayer by Calie Stalter at 6:30 p.m.

Elders present: 2025 – Anita Asbell
2026 – Ron Cox, Brandy Stevens and Marty Tarter
2027 – Larry Criswell and Calie Stalter

constituting a quorum. Absent was Steve Winslow. Rev. Marla Bauler moderated the meeting. The guidelines for a quorum were established at the January 9, 2025 Session Meeting as the presence of 50% of currently serving Elders.

Elder Training: Calie Stalter on the topic of the Discipline of Worship.

The meeting agenda was reviewed and approved.

The Deacons Report dated September 14, 2025 was reviewed.

Clerk's Report

The minutes from the September 11, 2025 Session meeting were reviewed & approved. New correspondence from Great Rivers thanking us for paying our Per Capita and explaining how the funds are distributed.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report for September 2025 was reviewed. Approved. We discussed listing the following in the bulletin each Sunday: Amount of offering received the prior month, amount of expenditures going out the prior month, the prior week's offering and attendance.

Pastor's Report

Pastor Marla gave a formal report which listed her monthly ministry activities. Communion was served to 35 members of the congregation on October 5, 2025.

Committee Reports

Personnel: Chair – Ron Cox

No report given.

Finance: Chair – Marty Tarter

Please refer to notes under the Treasurer's Report.

Worship/Membership/Christian Ed: Co-Chairs –Anita Asbell & Calie Stalter

Worship: No committee meeting.

Membership: Time for the rolls to be reviewed.

Christian Ed: Adult Sunday School continue their studies. Children's Sunday School meets the second Sunday of each month.

Adult Sunday School reports the following financial accounting:

Beginning Balance as of 9/01/2025 = \$470.04.

Deposits: \$135; \$180; \$150; \$133 Interest: \$2.83

Ending Balance = \$1,070.87 as of 9/30/25.

Marketing and Evangelism: Chair – Brandy Stevens

The Palace Theater is no longer running our advertisement before each movie.

Missions: Chair – Marty Tarter

Quarterly giving continues to be paid.

Building and Grounds: Co-Chairs Steve Winslow and Larry Criswell

Noted that the flood lights appear to be on 24/7. This has been resolved.

The urinal in the men's restroom has been fixed.

November 8, 2025 will be a workday for both inside and outside.

New Business

Larry Criswell has an informational meeting with the committee in charge of Elmwood's YMCA project. We discussed the need for better organization of the closet spaces and with the Deacon's help, hoping to figure out a way to get all seasonal flowers into one location.

There being no further business to come before the session, the meeting adjourned with a short prayer offered by Pastor Marla at 7:44 p.m.

The next session meeting is November 13, 2025 with Devotions & Prayer by Steve Winslow.

(Prayerfully Submitted,

Anita Asbell, Clerk Pro-Tem
(aa/bdt)

Moderator,

Rev. Marla Bauler