

First Presbyterian Church of Woodstock

January 2026 Newsletter

Rejoice Anyway

Epiphany is a season of light, but it does not pretend the darkness isn't real. The world feels unsettled and noisy. Fear is easy to come by, and hope can feel fragile. If you begin this new year feeling less than calm, you are not alone.

As I mentioned in my sermon on Epiphany Sunday, the story of the Magi takes place in a world shaped by fear. When they arrive in Jerusalem looking for a newborn king, they encounter Herod, a ruler troubled by the threat to his power. Scripture is honest about how anxious the world can become when power feels exposed.

And yet, when the Magi leave that place and see the star again, Matthew tells us they "rejoice with exceedingly great joy." This joy does not come because the world has suddenly become safe. Herod is still dangerous. The future is still uncertain. But the light has not gone out. God is still at work, and that recognition is enough.

This is joy that knows exactly how dangerous the world is, and rejoices anyway.

That kind of joy matters, especially now. It is not denial or escapism. It is a refusal to let fear have the final word. It sharpens our vision and helps us see where hope truly comes from.

This month, as we remember the life and witness of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we are reminded of another voice who insisted on hope in the face of real danger. Dr. King named injustice plainly and still trusted in the possibility of beloved community. He believed that light was stronger than darkness, and love stronger than hate.

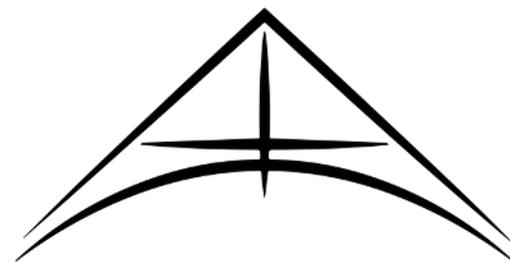
That witness continues in small but meaningful ways, including gatherings like the MLK Interfaith Prayer Breakfast noted in this newsletter. When people come together across differences to pray and hope together, we catch glimpses of that same light still shining.

As we move into this new year, we do not know all that lies ahead. Neither did the Magi. But may we have eyes to see the light when it appears, and the courage to rejoice anyway.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Eric



THE PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF WOODSTOCK



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From Pastor Eric	Page 1
Together to Laugh & Learn	Pages 2-3
Caring Together	Pages 4-6
Leading Together	Page 7
Together in Worship	Page 8
January Calendar	Page 9



SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE In the Great Hall @ 9:30 a.m. or online at fpcwoodstock.org/worship

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Carol Hubner

REPORTERS

Eric Corbin, Mark Bundick, Bob Clark,
Kay Darby, Joyce Maynard,
Chris Mathews, Pam Moorhouse,
Pat Morozink, Lynne Sobczak

TOGETHER TO LAUGH AND LEARN

Men's Bible Study

John Moorhouse
815-236-7408

Lectionary Bible Study

Velma Downes
815-245-4043

Adult Spiritual Growth Groups

Ray Thuma

Hospitality Team

Fred Strauss

Music Ministry

Christy Johanson
815-382-5234

No-Name Knitters

Kay Darby
815-572-1729

T.L.C.

(Tender Loving Care)

Mary Hill
815-338-6051

Meals-On-Wheels

Carol Hubner
815-338-2627

WACM Local Mission Team

Pat Morozink
815-338-7769

Food Pantry

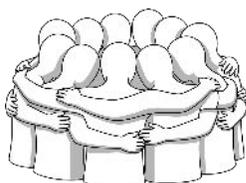
Joyce Maynard
815-338-7265

Diaper Distribution

Nancy Bingham
815-823-5107

Fishing Mission

Bob Clark
847-274-8247



MEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Saturdays at 7:00 a.m.

All are welcome to join with us during this time of learning and fellowship, trusting that God is in charge and, by God's grace, we experience God's love through right relationship with Jesus Christ.

Contact John Moorhouse,
815-236-7408.

LECTIONARY STUDY

Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m.

The group gathers via Google Meet. We select a single reading from the Revised Common Lectionary and take turns leading the discussion. Join us for lively discussion, thoughtful readings and good fellowship.

Contact Velma Downes to be added to the mailing list or for more information.

Woodstock Food Pantry

The Woodstock Food Pantry is excited to announce that we now own our new space at 708 Washington Street! Due to the generosity of our community, we were able to close on the building earlier than expected. Renovations have begun and we have reached 75% of our goal for our capital campaign. If you're interested in donating, you can do so through our website woodstockfoodpantry.org. Or by mailing a check to the pantry at 1033 Lake Ave. (Please put 'Feed our Future' on the memo line). The food pantry is grateful for the continued support from our congregation.



January Red Wagon Donations

A BIG thank you to all who continue to keep our red wagon filled! The Woodstock Food Pantry is extremely grateful for our congregation's commitment to fighting hunger in our community and assisting in their efforts.



Corn, Sweet Peas, Green Beans,
Tomatoes, Mixed Vegetables,
Pork and Beans

To contribute financially online,
[click here](#) and type "Food Pantry"
in the notes.

N.O.W. Team News

The N.O.W. Team is kicking off our Spring 2026 season. After a brief Advent break, we're revving up to get back to a regular schedule of dinners and brunches. Here's a look at our January menus.

Date	Event	Menu
Wednesday, January 07	Dinner	Soup starter, sloppy Joes, chips, salad
Wednesday, January 14	Dinner	Soup starter, Spaghetti and Meatballs
Sunday, January 18	Brunch	Eggs, Sausage, Fruit
Wednesday, January 21	Dinner	Soup starter, Pulled Pork
Sunday, January 25	Brunch	Casseroles
Wednesday, January 28	Dinner	Lasagna, green beans

During January, we'll be experimenting with serving a "soup starter." Think of it as a little appetizer that'll warm you up on those cold nights. And be sure to let the N.O.W. Team know how you like it!

For the "Souper Bowl" on February 4, pull out your favorite soup recipe and bring a pot to share. Unlike some of our other events, this one isn't a contest. It's just a chance to share your favorite soup with other FPCers. Please let a N.O.W. team member know if you're going to bring soup on February 4.

A reminder that we'll be hosting brunch on Sundays whenever there is Sunday School. Join us for worship followed by some tasty brunch fare, and always good fellowship. If you have ideas or suggestions for future dinner or brunch dishes or themes for our events, please let any N.O.W. team member know.

The N.O.W. Team

Cheryl Wormley

(indepublisher@comcast.net)

Lee Nedjl

(nejdlwoodstock@hotmail.com)

Matt Thuma

(mrthuma@yahoo.com)

Linda Hansen

(lkhanen53@gmail.com)

John Moorhouse

(johnmoorhouse54@gmail.com)

Katie Spaldon

(kspaldon@gmail.com)

Jane Jensen

(jensenjane74@gmail.com)

Mark Bundick

(mbundick@comcast.net)

Pay your pledge, reduce your income tax!

Those of us age 70 ½ or older can use our IRAs to pay our pledges. There is no income tax on those payments. Simply direct your IRA custodian to make your pledge payment(s) directly to First Presbyterian Church – Woodstock.

You will be glad you paid your pledge using funds from your IRA.

Jim Wormley

Generosity Team Member

P.S. As always, confirm with your tax advisor.



CARING TOGETHER

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- Caryl Lemanski 1/2
- Brayden Sobczak 1/4
- Dylan Lawler 1/4
- Angela Boe 1/7
- Christy Johanson 1/7
- Scott Greenlee 1/9
- Patrick Moorhouse 1/12
- Marcia Gummerson 1/25
- Thea Moorhouse 1/25
- Colin Kaye 1/27
- Mike Lawler 1/27
- Evie Roewer 1/29

Hello! I am Carol Hubner, and happy to serve as the Office Administrator for First Presbyterian Church. Your faces are becoming more familiar each day and I look forward to meeting again at the upcoming NOW dinners which I enjoy so much.

My regular office hours are **Monday through Thursday, 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM**. You may also see me in the office earlier or later, depending on the needs of the day. I'm excited to be part of this community and look forward to connecting with you! You can reach me at carol@fpcwoodstock.org or 815-338-2627.



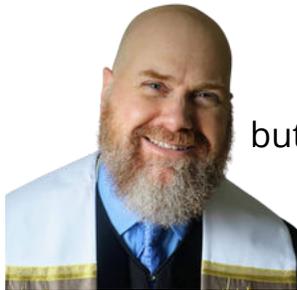
JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- Eric & Kristi Corbin 1/3
- Robert & Jane Jensen 1/5
- Ken & Joyce Maynard 1/6
- Ryan & Gwen Wormley 1/25
- Jim & Cheryl Wormley 1/25

.....

You'll find Pastor Eric in the office at various times throughout the week, but you're most likely to catch him during his regular office hours:

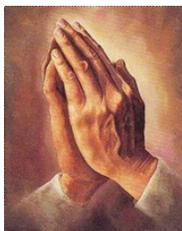
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm and Wednesdays, 1:30 - 4:30 pm.



These hours may shift occasionally if he's called away for visits or meetings, but he's always glad to arrange another time. You can request a specific time at fpcwoodstock.org/meetwitheric.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Heidi Barber, Jane Jensen, Jim Wormley, John Hudson, Pat Clickner, Patty Christian, Paul Thuma, Sue Krause, William Heim, John Krauss, Fred Strauss



Hospitality Team Update

The Hospitality Team hosted a hot cocoa bar at the last service of the year. It helped warm us up on a dreary day!

We look forward to 2026 and continuing our active role in the life of our church.

--The Hospitality Team

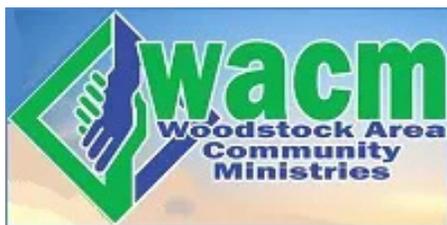


WACM NEWS

With a new year comes new opportunities for Woodstock residents to receive help with their basic needs through WACM's Direct Assistance Program (DAP). This past year a family with two children got help with an overdue ComEd bill to relieve pressure during a job layoff. For a husband who cares for his sick wife, a monthly gasoline voucher helped them get to medical appointments.



A family of four was able to move into a new apartment after receiving funds toward their security deposit.



Please consider making a donation to WACM's Neighbors-in-Need program so this assistance can continue.

You can donate at www.wacmgroups.org.

Giving Tree

Our thanks to all who contributed gifts for the 2025 Giving Tree families. It was a wonderful response and gratefully appreciated by those two local struggling families during the Christmas season. It even brought tears to their eyes. Your generosity offered a glimpse of the hope and love we celebrate at Christmas.



A few of the gifts with the tree

Craft and Bake Sale

Thank you to all who contributed crafts and baked goods, as well as all who purchased and/or volunteered during our December annual craft/bake sale. The variety of goods was amazing and the proceeds of \$550.00 (our highest yet) went into the youth funds in our congregation for their 2026 events and activities.

Another successful outreach during our 2025 Advent season!



NO NAME KNITTERS

January is described as a month of new beginnings, opportunities, and inspirations! Our knitters and crocheters are always looking for new people, groups, organizations, or possibilities, where we can share in the joys or concerns of others. And even the smallest thought, conversation, idea, or dream can lead us to the biggest inspiration!



The "old" ways keep us stable, reflecting on the past, and committed to our mission of helping others, through gifts of handmade items, such as prayer shawls, lapghans, baby hats or blankets, winter hats and scarves, and pocket crosses. All made with love and prayers (and nimble fingers!)

If you are looking for something "new" in '26, come join us! Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at 10 a.m., and on the third Wednesday at 6 p.m. Call Kay Darby at 815-572-1729 for more information.

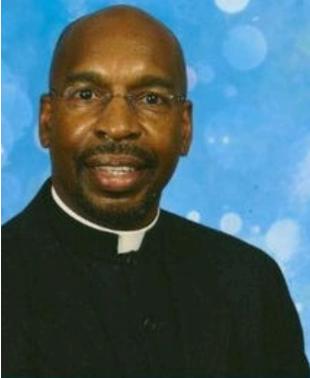
"Let this January be the beginning of all you hope for!"

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

--Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

17th Annual
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr Interfaith Prayer Breakfast
Monday, January 19, 2026
 Vegetarian Breakfast at 7:30 am - Program from 8-9 am
 Holiday Inn Chicago NW Crystal Lake Elara Convention Center
 800 S. Illinois Route 31, Crystal Lake, IL 60014

Keynote Speaker:
Rev. Dr. Norval Ignatius Brown
Can you feel a Brand New Day?
 "The Beloved Community is a realistic vision of an achievable society-one in which problems and conflicts exist but are resolved peacefully and without bitterness." - Coretta Scott King



Tickets (\$30 for adults; \$20 for youth) can be purchased at www.FaithBridgeinterfaith.org




DEACONS

Happy New Year! A time to be open to the fresh beginnings God is unfolding for each of us. For this new year, do you want to start reading daily devotions? Pastor Eric can send you a short devotion each morning tying in the sermon to carry the message through the week. It's a great way to start the day! If you are currently not receiving these devotions and would like to, please contact the office or your deacon to have your email added to the distribution list.

Please contact your deacon if you need to be lifted in prayer or you have a joy to celebrate. Your deacon is happy to be a listening ear! If you're not sure who your deacon is, on the bulletin board outside of the Great Hall is all of the deacons 'pictures and contact information, as well as a list of names in each of their flocks. Go and check it out!

Thank you!	<u>Carol Brefeld</u>	815-653-3005
Mary Carol	<u>Mary Carol Dunker</u>	815-245-4829
	<u>Kristen Matter</u>	847-609-8340
	<u>Barb Parrish</u>	815-353-2749
	<u>Tom Schaeffer</u>	717-994-3819
	<u>Cheryl Wormley</u>	815-519-7402



January Session Highlights

- The annual Presbytery review of the Session Minutes and Church Register was completed successfully.
- Starting in March, Keeping Families Covered will directly take on the monthly diaper distribution that FPCW has been participating in for several years. This will take place at the site of the new Woodstock Food Pantry. We will be helping our current clients with the transition during the January and February distributions at the church.
- The 2026 Church Budget was approved at the December meeting.

Compassion, Peace & Justice (Awareness, Service)
Chris Mathews
cwmathews8@gmail.com

Congregational Life
(Hospitality, NOW Team)
Fred Strauss
showski1@aol.com
815-728-1430

Education & Spiritual Growth
(Adult, Youth, Child, Intergenerational)
Ray Thuma
rpthuma@sbcglobal.net

Ministry Support
(Finance, Staff Management)
Bob Clark
robtmclark@aol.com

(Building & Grounds, Staff Management)
Chris Dahm
cdahm@dahmco.com
815-378-0273

Worship, Music and Arts
(Worship Arts, Worship Leadership, Audio-Visual)
Tiffany Sobczak
815-790-9360
tsobczak82@gmail.com

Clerk of Session
Chris Mathews
clerk@fpcwoodstock.org

January Worship Schedule

We are grateful for all who serve in worship leadership each week. Below is the January schedule:

Date	Text	Liturgist	A/V	Greeters and Ushers	Acolyte	Hosting Fellowship
1/4	Matthew 2:1-12	Dawn Cook	John Moorhouse	Pam & John Moorhouse	Emersyn Cook	{Undeck the Halls}
1/11	Matthew 3:13-17	Angie Boe	Kristi & Christopher Corbin	Chris Mathews & Tom Schaeffer		Chris Mathews & Tom Schaeffer
1/18	John 1:29-42	Erin Kaye	Dave Johanson	Tiffany & Brayden Sobczak	Gianna Ferrera	{Brunch}
1/25	Matthew 4:12-23	John Moorhouse	Brayden S., Elin K.	Rick & Pat Morozink	Ryan Traimany	{Brunch}

Sunday School

Greetings, Sunday School Families!

Happy New Year! We hope you had a wonderful and refreshing holiday break. We are excited to welcome everyone back to Sunday School on Sunday, January 18, and we look forward to seeing you then.

Below is the Sunday School schedule for the remainder of the school year:

- January 18
- January 25
- February 8
- February 22
- March 8
- March 22
- April 12
- April 26
- May 10

Be sure to stick around for a delicious NOW brunch following worship and Sunday School on these dates.

We can't wait to see everyone on Sunday, January 18!

Grace and peace,
Erin & Jackie



JANUARY 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				<i>New Year's Day</i>		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8:30a Adult Sunday School 9:30a Worship 10:30a "Un-decking the halls" with pizza	1p Grief Group	5p Girl Scout Troop 2051 meeting	8:30a Lectionary Study 10a No-Name Knitters 4p Diaper Distribution 5:15p NOW Dinner	12p McHenry County Faith Leaders luncheon 7p Scouting America Troop 159 meeting	winterXtreme Trip (Jr. High)	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
winterXtreme Trip 8:30a Adult Sunday School 9:30a Worship 11a Session		10a TLC Ladies 4p Deacons 5:30p Education and Spiritual Growth	8:30a Lectionary Study 5:15p NOW Dinner	3p Hospitality Team 6p Compassion, Peace and Justice 7p Scouting America Troop 159 meeting		7a Men's Bible Study
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8:30a Adult Sunday School 9:30a Worship 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a NOW Brunch 11a Confirmation Class	<i>Martin Luther King Day</i>	10a Nominating Committee 5p Girl Scout Troop 2051 meeting	8:30a Lectionary Study 5:15p NOW Dinner 6p No-Name Knitters	2:30p Finance Team 7p Scouting America Troop 159 meeting 7p Worship Arts Mtg		7a Men's Bible Study
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
8:30a Adult Sunday School 9:30a Worship 9:45a Sunday School 10:30a NOW Brunch 11a Confirmation Class			8:30a Lectionary Study 5:15p NOW Dinner	7p Scouting America Troop 159 meeting		7a Men's Bible Study

JANUARY 2026



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF WOODSTOCK

CELEBRATING AND SHARING GOD'S LOVE

MINISTERS

*All members and friends
of the congregation*

STAFF

*Rev. Eric Corbin
Pastor*

*Carol Hubner
Office Administrator*

*Christy Johanson
Worship Arts
Coordinator*

*Harrison Cole
Accompanist*

Facebook: fb.com/fpcwoodstock

Website: www.fpcwoodstock.org

E-mail: office@fpcwoodstock.org

Phone: (815) 338-2627

**2018 N II Route 47
Woodstock, IL 60098
Return Service Requested.**

