



FIRST LOOK

February 2025

Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton

2025 Annual Meeting Recap

A Message from Pastor Kellen

When ministry in the church is going well, which is never a given, it's always about building or sustaining momentum. Building or sustaining momentum is the opportunity and the challenge of ministry. In the coming months, First Pres Wheaton has a rare opportunity to do both, as together we imagine what God may be able to do for the future of our church.

When is the last time you studied the Tribe of Issachar? In the Bible, the phrase "understanding the times" originates from the Tribe of Issachar. It refers to the idea of being able to discern the current situation and act accordingly, based on God's will. The most prominent example of this is described in 1 Chronicles 12:32 as, "those who understood the times and what Israel should do." As a church, we are preparing to launch a new initiative, a campaign for the future of our church. It's an opportunity for us to "understand the times" of the opportunity we have, to take a step of faith forward as a congregation and see what God will do.

As a church, we are poised for new potential. We are on the precipice of a new beginning. We are nearing a chance to take our next step in fulfilling our mission for all generations.

In the Presbyterian Church (USA) there are ordination vows for ordained officers: pastors, elders, and deacons. Within the vows, there is a question that has to do with imagination. The question is: Will you pray for and seek to serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?

Imagine with me for a moment...

Imagine feeling excited to invite someone to church so that they can experience our refreshed church campus. How would it make you feel if that person became involved in the church, faithfully walking with Christ? Can you put a price tag on that kind of spiritual satisfaction?

Imagine walking a new family into enhanced kids and student ministry spaces. How would they feel seeing the kind of investment that the church is making in the younger generation? It could be that, as a result, they become an active part of the church family, even inviting new families into the church themselves.

Imagine helping an older adult access our renovated sanctuary through an easy-access entry way. With multiple access points and ease of entry, it's clear to this person that the church has thought of them before they arrived. Won't they have a peace of mind knowing they can freely come and participate in the church's impactful offerings?

Stay tuned, more will be coming out in a few short weeks! Thank you for praying in advance for how God, with our imagination, will use this initiative to help us step boldly into the future for First Pres Wheaton.

Blessings,

Pastor Kellen

The **2024 Annual Report** is available online and will be available in printed form soon.

Highlights:

- 20 new members joined the church family
- Total mission giving was \$164,000
- 10 baptisms were celebrated
- Pledged giving for 2025 surpassed \$1 million for the first time in over a decade
- VBS enrolled 180 kids

We thank God for all that was accomplished in 2024! You can access the report online at firstpreswheaton.org/AnnualReport2024.



Save the Date: Sunday, March 2 – The Wheaton College Gospel Choir will sing at both services.

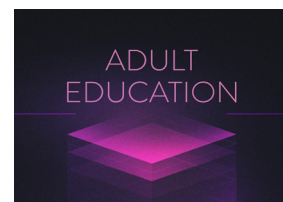
Don't Miss Scout Sunday on February 2

Scouts from Troop 23 will be serving home-made donuts between services in the Rotunda on Scout Sunday, with trays set out after the second service. The Scouts will also be serving as greeters and presenting the Minute for Mission at both services.



Adult Education

"Mere Christianity"
Sundays through February 23
10:30 a.m. in Stewart Hall
Led by Pastor Greg Anderson & Guests



Pastor Greg Anderson, along with several C. S. Lewis scholars, will lead this lecture/discussion course to help us take a fresh look at our Christian faith through the eyes of C.S. Lewis.

Serving Opportunity at The Bridge



On Tuesday, February 18, we will be the host team at The Bridge, a 20-year mission project now supported by First Pres.

- Travel to 1443 Roosevelt at Ashland in Chicago, carpooling from First Pres around 5:30 p.m. to arrive at 6:30 (or you can drive on your own)
- Short training/update session, and welcome of our guests (some of whom will be new to The Bridge that night)
- Participate in their worship service, then serve guests a wholesome meal that may be their best (or only) one of the day
- Clean-up and return home around 9:30 p.m. This will be an unforgettable experience!

Learn more about The Bridge [here](#). Contact the church office at office@firstpreswheaton.org if you are planning to come.

Micah 6:8 Event: Practicing Presence: What Does It Look Like To Do Justice?

Wednesday, February 5
6:30 p.m. in Stewart Hall (following The Table)

Please join us to hear Pastor Jonathan Brooks talk about what justice looks like in practice. God's call in Micah 6:8 is to "love mercy, do justice and walk humbly with God." What does that "do justice" piece look like, practically speaking and in action?

Jonathan Brooks is the Lead Pastor of Lawndale Community Church in the Lawndale neighborhood of Chicago. Pastah J, as he is affectionately called, is a sought-after speaker, writer and artist. Along with speaking, training and consulting, he has written numerous blogs and contributed to various books. He is the author of the book *Church Forsaken: Practicing Presence in Neglected Neighborhoods*, published by InterVarsity Press. During his tenure at Canaan (where he previously pastored), the church released a gospel album titled *Recommend Jesus* to be used as an avenue to share faith as an integral component in community transformation. Lastly, Pastah J has also recorded four hip-hop albums with the group Out-World and a mixtape to accompany the book *Church Forsaken*.

All are welcome! This event is sponsored by the Micah 6:8 group of First Pres.





High School
Ministry

WF Winter Retreat

The Winter Retreat to Camp Timber-lee was an incredible weekend. Students focused on Jesus being our true north, meaning our compass for all things we do in life. We left feeling encouraged by the fellowship of each other, and encouraged by ways to love God and others better.



First Pres Food Pantry

Join us in showing support for the People's Resource Center and the Interfaith Food Pantry. A collection basket is located in the Rotunda, along with a sign listing suggested items. The Mission Committee is featuring a monthly focus for most-needed donations.

Thank you for supporting our neighbors in need.

The greatest needs
this month are:
Baby Items
(Disposable Diapers, Baby
Wipes, Baby Food, Pull Ups)





Outreach Senior Christmas Luncheon

On December 20, First Pres hosted the annual Outreach Senior Christmas Luncheon. The 116 seniors in attendance were treated to a ham dinner and received a gift of a desk lamp.

Many thanks go out to the 41 volunteers who helped serve, worked in the kitchen or made a donation to make the luncheon a success. Christmas music was provided by 73 students from Monroe and Franklin Middle School.

The older adults from south Carol Stream say "Thank You!"

5th Sundays at First Pres Winter Concert

We closed out the year of 2024 with our final concert in the 5th Sundays at First Pres Concert Series on December 29. We were blessed with the music of Raymond Wise, which included collaborations with several local area churches and a choir of nearly 80 voices.

What a fitting ending to a glorious year of music at First Pres!



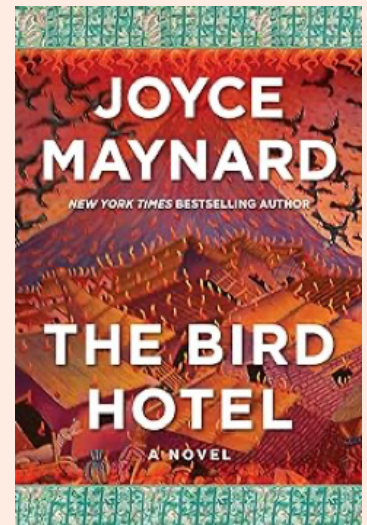
Martin Luther King, Jr. Event

Donna Lapetina, Julie Hardwick, Barb Gassensmith, and Pastor Kat joined Dr. James Shannon, pastor of Peoples Community Church in Glen Ellyn. Dr. Shannon's church hosted an MLK Day luncheon with panelists from our community who discussed the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

February Book Club

Thursday, February 27 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
The Bird Hotel by Joyce Maynard

After a childhood filled with heartbreak, and a tragic decision involving her husband and young son, Irene, a talented artist, finds herself in a small Mayan indigenous village in Guatemala, staying at a beautiful, but decaying lakefront hotel called La Llorona at the base of a volcano. Ultimately Irene finds herself restoring and running La Llorona. With a mystery at its center, filled with warmth, drama, romance, humor, pop culture, and a little magical realism, *The Bird Hotel* is about a rich assortment of characters that live in the village or come to stay at the hotel. Join your FPC book club for a great discussion with good friends. Contact Mary Kinsey at marykinsey79@gmail.com for the Zoom link.



Legacy Partner

What will your legacy be? Please remember the church in your will and beneficiary designations, and become a legacy partner. Contact Beth Spiegel at bspiegel@firstpreswheaton.org for more information.



See the online calendar
for up-to-date listings of church events and meetings.

firstpreswheaton.org/calendar

Church Office Hours

Monday through Thursday – 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Friday – 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

You can give to the ministry of First Pres quickly and easily by scanning this QR code with your smartphone camera app.



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