FIRST LOOK

November 2026 *Newsletter of the First Presbyterian Church of Wheaton*

The Gift of Being Together

Though there are many of us, we are one body in Christ, and individually we belong to each other.

~ Romans 12:5

Church Family,

One of the great blessings of the church is that we do not walk through life alone. We belong to one another. In a culture that can often feel disconnected and hurried, the church reminds us that we are created for community: to encourage one another, bear one another's burdens, and celebrate one another's joys. To grow together in Jesus is a gift.

I am reminded of this gift often:

- During conversations in the Rotunda after worship
- Around tables on Wednesdays at The Table
- In the care extended by our deacons to someone going through a difficult season.

These moments may seem ordinary, but they are at the heart of what it means to be the church.

As we enter November and approach Thanksgiving, I pray we recognize just how much of a gift it is to belong to a community of faith. We are more than people who gather in the same building on Sunday mornings. We are brothers and sisters in Christ, called to share life together.

I'm thankful that we get to walk this journey of faith together.

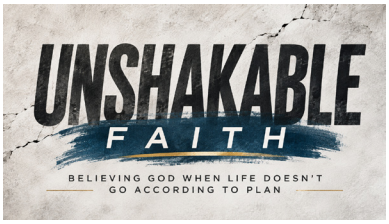
Blessings,

Pastor Kellen

Unshakable Faith

Sermon Series November 8-22

Believing God When Life Doesn't Go According to Plan



What do you believe about God? When the future is uncertain, the circumstances seem impossible, or your past makes you feel unworthy, we can struggle having faith in Jesus. Faith is tested in these moments, but it's also when faith is strengthened. Hebrews 12:28 says, "we are receiving a kingdom that can't be shaken." In Unshakable Faith, we'll explore the stories of Abraham, Moses, and Rahab from Hebrews 11, the Hall of Faith. Their stories remind us that faith isn't about having all the answers, overcoming every obstacle, or earning our place in God's story. We'll discover three dimensions of an unshakable faith: believing God for what we cannot see, believing God can do what seems impossible, and believing God's grace is greater than our past. Together, we'll be invited to hold onto grace.

Fall at First Pres

NOVEMBER

Sunday, November 1	All Saints Sunday
Sunday, November 1	Generosity Sunday
Fri-Sun, November 13-15	WF Fall Retreat Stronghold Retreat Center, Oregon, IL
Wednesday, November 18	Thanksgiving Feast (Last date for The Table)
Sunday, November 29	Advent Begins / Christmas Tree Lighting
Sunday, November 29	5th Sundays Concert – Adam's Voice

DECEMBER

Tuesday, December 1	60+ Fall Luncheon
Friday, December 4	Kids Ministry Nativity Night
Thursday, December 10	Women's Christmas Gathering
Friday, December 11	Men's Christmas Breakfast
Saturday, December 12	Christmas Sharing Event
Sunday, December 13	Lessons & Carols
Sunday, December 13	WF Christmas Party/Progressive Dinner
Sunday, December 13	Genesis Christmas Party
Friday, December 18	Outreach Senior Luncheon
Thursday, December 24	Christmas Eve Services: 10:30 a.m. – Family Service 4:00 p.m. – Casual Service 6:00 & 8:00 p.m. – Candlelight Services
Sunday, December 27	One service only – at 10:30 a.m.

JANUARY

Sunday, January 3	One service only – at 10:30 a.m.
Sunday, January 10	Hot Cocoa Sunday
Saturday, January 16	Women's Ministry Pizza & Puzzles (kids welcome)
Fri-Sun, Jan. 22-24	WF Winter Retreat at Timber-Lee
Sunday, January 31	Annual Congregational Meeting

Generosity 2027 Thank You!



We are deeply grateful for the gift of generosity that fills our congregation. Your faithful giving of time, talent, and resources makes our shared ministry possible and dynamic.

If you've already made your 2027 pledge, thank you! Your intentional giving helps us plan with confidence for the year ahead. If you haven't yet had the opportunity, there's still time to participate. You can return your Pledge Card by mail, in person, or complete your pledge easily online at Firstpreswheaton.org/Generosity2027.

Thank you for your continued prayerful and financial support of First Pres Wheaton. Because of you, God's work continues to grow and bless lives for a growing life with Jesus Christ.

Giving Notice: If you are making an IRA distribution to the church, please make sure to have your financial institution include your name in the documentation. This way we are able to credit your account appropriately. In the case of gifts of stock that you plan to send to the church, please notify Beth Spiegel at bspiegel@firstpreswheaton.org.

FOR ALL GENERATIONS

Renovation Oversight Committee November Update

I am very pleased to report that the HVAC units for the Sanctuary and Rotunda have arrived and are scheduled for installation during the week of November 9, 2026. This installation will require a coordinated effort between Solaris Roofing Company and the technicians from PremiStar, our HVAC partner. Be on the lookout for cranes in the parking lot that week!

Additionally, the variable-speed control device has been installed in the Ministry Center, making it a much quieter and more comfortable space for all of us to enjoy as it becomes our temporary worship location at some point in the new year.

We have also made significant progress on interior selections. Carpeting, floor tile, and paint colors have been selected for all areas included in the renovation. Pew selections and cushions have also been finalized, and we are currently exploring options with the best lead times to keep the project moving forward.

We continue to work closely with our partners at Williams Architects and Ostrander Construction as we finalize selections for lighting fixtures throughout the areas of the church affected by the renovation. We anticipate completing these selections in the coming weeks.

Finally, we have partnered with Next Door and Window Company and Gilbertson and Son Studios on the replacement of windows that will complement and enhance the design of the Sanctuary, Narthex, and Rotunda.

This is truly an exciting time for First Pres Wheaton! Thank you for your continued support of the Renovation Oversight Committee and its work. We are grateful for the encouragement of this congregation and energized by the opportunity to create a beautiful and welcoming place of worship for all generations!

Gary Blauser
Chair, Renovation Oversight Committee

DEVOTED COMMUNITY *Feast With Us!*



The Table midweek refreshment

Wednesday, November 11 – 5:30-6:30 p.m. in Stewart Hall

All ages are invited to join us on Wednesday evenings for a catered meal, music and a brief teaching. There will be activities for children and a Toddler Corner for kids two and under. November 11 will be a Southern Fried Chicken dinner. Register by Monday, November 9 (9:00 a.m.) at firstpreswheaton.org/TableNov11.



Thanksgiving Feast

Wednesday, November 18 – 5:30-6:30 p.m. in Stewart Hall

Join your church family for a celebratory Thanksgiving Feast. The week before the holiday, all generations are invited to enjoy this time of giving thanks while sharing a delicious meal. Get the details and register by Monday, November 16 (9:00 a.m.) at firstpreswheaton.org/Thanksgiving.



60+ Christmas Luncheon

Tuesday, December 1 – 11:30 am-1:30 p.m. in Stewart Hall
Cost: $15

Inviting all 60+ members and friends to join together for an uplifting time of fellowship and inspiration. We will have a delicious catered lunch, enjoy entertainment, and welcome a guest speaker. Invite a friend to join for this delightful occasion. Details to come.



Men's Christmas Breakfast

Friday, December 11 – 7:00-8:00 a.m. in Stewart Hall

All members and friends of First Pres Wheaton are welcome to join us for the Men's Christmas Breakfast. Make plans to be a part of this morning of fellowship and hear a message planned especially for the men of our church and community. Watch for additional information to come.

5th Sundays at First Pres Concert Series



Sunday, November 29 at 4:00 p.m.
in the First Pres Sanctuary

– Free Concert for all ages –

We welcome back Adams Voice for our final 5th Sundays Concert of the year. Adams Voice has been able to communicate God's love through song across the United States for over 30 years. The focus of their ministry is to attest to the power of God through worship. Woven into their repertoire of the familiar, are original songs resonating with scripture, written from personal testimony inspired by real-life situations. Their music spans a wide range of styles, as they endeavor to reach all age groups. The younger generation will be attracted by their youthful vitality but at the same time, you will clearly see the core of their musical message emulating a much older generation of Christians who have distinctively molded their lives. God is still in control and changing lives is the reoccurring theme throughout their music.



Children's Christmas Tree Lighting

Sunday, November 29

Following the 10:30 service

Thanks to our Visual Arts Committee, the Rotunda will again be graced with the Children's Christmas Tree, decorated with ornaments made by our Kids Ministry and Preschoolers. You are invited to our annual Christmas Tree Lighting for a festive start to the season!

WESTMINSTER CHOIR

Calling All Singers!

If you'd like to sing with Westminster Choir for Lessons and Carols on Sunday, December 13, you are welcome to attend the first set of rehearsals on Thursdays, November 5, 12, and 19. Choir rehearsal is from 7:00-8:30 p.m., and Lessons and Carols rehearsals will begin at 7:30 pm.

Please reach out to Pastor Donté at dford@firstpreswheaton.org with any questions.

Advent

Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 13
9:00 and 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Services

Thursday, December 24

10:30 a.m. – Family Service
4:00 p.m. – Casual Service
6:00 and 8:00 p.m. – Candlelight Services
In-person and online at
firstpreswheaton.org/Livestream

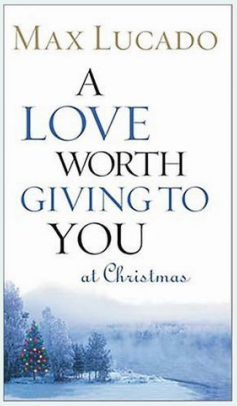
Join us on Christmas Eve for Pastor Kellen's meaningful message and inspiring music.

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

"A Love Worth Giving To You at Christmas"

Author: Joel Heck,
Inspired by C.S. Lewis

Available starting Monday, November 23



An Advent Gift for You

As we prepare for the season of Advent, we have a special gift for every household in our church: a copy of *A Love Worth Giving to You at Christmas* by bestselling author, Max Lucado. This book offers a meaningful way to slow down, reflect on the depth of God's love, and prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christ's birth. Before we can share Jesus' love with others, we need to receive it ourselves. We hope you will take a copy home and make it part of your Advent journey this year!

Celebrating Pastor Donté's Ministry

Join us on Sunday, December 13, during Lessons & Carols Sunday, as we celebrate and give thanks for Pastor Donté's faithful ministry among us at First Pres Wheaton. After more than four years of sharing his gifts in music, worship, preaching, and pastoral leadership, he will be concluding his ministry on our staff at the end of the year as he begins a new chapter of service at Christ Temple Cathedral Church of Chicago in January.



We will have a special reception between services to express our gratitude, celebrate his ministry, and share our love and blessings with Pastor Donté, Latoya, and their family. Please join us as we give thanks for all that God has done through their ministry among us!



On October 18, First Pres families had a blast at the annual Family Fall Fest!]We enjoyed great food, a bounce house, games, pumpkin decorating, and more!













First Pres staff and friends joined together on October 27 to celebrate our pastors with a potluck snack time in recognition of Pastor Appreciation Month.

December Newsletter Submissions

If you would like to submit information about an event or program to be included in the December newsletter, please email it to: Caryn Andrews, Communications Coordinator, at candrews@firstpreswheaton.org.

Holiday schedules are extremely tight, so to ensure that your information can be included, it will need to be submitted no later than Sunday, November 15.



We were blessed to have Dr. Dan Meyer as our 2027 Distinguished Preacher on October 4.

Women's Ministry

Women's Retreat 2026

Under beautiful fall skies, 26 women gathered October 2-4 for our retreat, ***Living Fully: Embracing God's Purpose in Every Season.*** After a Friday kickoff dinner at a Greek restaurant in Racine, Pastor Kat led three sessions: acknowledging our broken places, recognizing the season we're in, and being faithful where God has us now. Through reflection, vision boards, and life maps, we explored Frederick Buechner's words about where our deep gladness meets the world's deep hunger—and named one faithful next step.











Dress-a-Girl Around the World

Our team of seamstresses and crafters set aside October 15 and 16 to make dresses for girls from other countries who don't have access to new clothing. Over 80 dresses were completed with numerous dresses still being made at home from kits.

A special thank you goes out to Donna Boyd, who made at least 62 of the dresses!















Save the Date:
Women's Christmas Gathering



Thursday, December 10
6:00-9:00 p.m.

Before the season gets too busy, set aside an evening to slow down and celebrate with the women of First Pres. Save the date and plan to join us! Watch for details and RSVP information to come.



October 4 was a perfect weather day for people to bring their furry friends to church for a short outdoor service and special blessing from Pastor Kellen.















Sunday School Children's Art

We have some fine art on display through December 15, created by our Sunday School children. The children have been learning many stories from the Old Testament:

• Jacob's Dream • Joseph
• The Burning Bush • The Wilderness

Every story had a different "BRITE idea" each week, along with the children learning a memory verse. On display are the pictures they drew with their own personal touches.

Christmas Sharing

2026 Christmas Sharing is Saturday, December 12

Dec 12

Christmas Sharing will again be held at First Pres Wheaton in the same format as last year. Please note there will be no collection of used goods. First Pres has set high goals to provide for 175 families and pray the congregation will be able to fully support the effort in providing for District 200 families in need.

This year's goal is to provide $15,000 in $75 gift cards, winter coats (which were previously purchased on clearance) and new items from the list below for each family we host. When you are Christmas shopping, please keep this list in mind with all of the sales quickly approaching for the holidays. Questions can be directed to Sharon Carroll at christmas.sharing.dist200@gmail.com .

Financial contributions are encouraged before Thanksgiving, so we can purchase gift cards for families. Financial donations can be made at firstpreswheaton.org/onlinegiving, using the Christmas Sharing drop down.

Donation of items may be brought to church between Sunday, December 6 and Friday, December 11.



VOLUNTEER

All volunteer help is needed and appreciated!

There are many volunteer opportunities at church the week of Christmas Sharing, December 7-12. Volunteer signup information will be available soon.

New Items Most Needed:

- Twin / Queen / King sheet sets
- Gifts for children age 12 and up (athletic balls, bluetooth headphones, bluetooth speakers $20 or less)
- Games for ages 12 and up

Sundry boxes and contents lists will be available for pickup starting Sunday, November 15.

Filled boxes should be returned to the church from Sunday, December 6-Friday, December 11.

How you can help Christmas Sharing in November ...

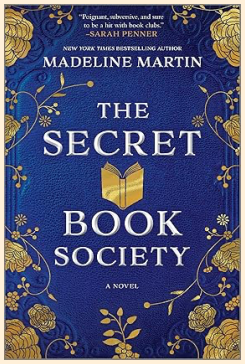
Tuesday, November 17 from 5:00-8:00 p.m.
235 North Avenue, Glendale Heights

Enter promo code PORTILLOS2 for online/app orders or present this copy in-restaurant.

20% of sales benefit Christmas Sharing Wheaton/Warrenville.



November Book Club



Thursday, November 19 • 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
***The Secret Book Society* by Madeline Martin**

In 1895 London, three women receive a mysterious invitation to an afternoon tea at the home of the reclusive Lady Duxbury. Eleanor Clarke, a devoted mother, is suffocating under the tyranny of her husband. Rose Wharton, a transplanted American "dollar princess," struggles to fit the mold of an aristocratic wife, and Lavinia Cavendish, is an artistic young woman haunted by a dangerous family. Beneath the genteel facade of the gathering lies a secret book club—a sanctuary where they can discover freedom, sisterhood, and the courage to rewrite their stories. As the women form deep, heartwarming friendships, they uncover secrets about their marriages, their pasts, and the risks they face. Their courage is their only weapon in the oppressive world that has kept them silent, but when secrets are deadly, one misstep could cost them everything. Join your FPC book club via zoom for a great discussion with good friends. Contact Mary Kinsey at marykinsey79@gmail.com for the Zoom link.

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: baking supplies





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.

The office will be closed Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27 for Thanksgiving

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of Wheaton

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