

# NEWS AT FIRST

## TRUE LOVE

Many of us celebrate Valentine's Day in both fun and serious ways. Children exchange treats and humorous cards with classmates and friends; some bring home handmade cards for the adults in their lives. Romantic partners may go out to eat and present each other flowers, chocolate, a fancy card — maybe even an engagement ring!



As playful as Valentine's Day can be, it's also a great time to remember the serious side of love, as indicated by these quotes:

- “When you love someone, you love the whole person as he or she is, and not as you would like them to be.” —Leo Tolstoy
- “You don't love someone because they're perfect; you love them in spite of the fact that they're not.” —Jodi Picoult
- “Love ... is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. ... It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weaknesses.” —Ann Landers

We can do the difficult work of true love — actions, not just feelings — only because God loved us first. He did (and does) so despite our imperfection, and in Jesus, God shows us how to share true love with others. This Valentine's Day, if you don't remember any other profound quotes, hold this one in your heart:

- “We love because God first loved us.” —1 John 4:19 (NCV)

## A Prayer for Presidents Day

Lord of heaven and earth, we offer you our deepest gratitude for this country and the freedom to worship you. Stir up a sense of stewardship so we all may care for our nation and each inhabitant of it.

We pray especially for our leaders, that you will bless them with wisdom and humility. Prompt everyone in positions of authority to pursue righteousness, justice and the welfare of all.

Remind us of the psalmist's teaching: “Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12, NRSV). May that promise be fulfilled “from sea to shining sea.” Amen.



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**Treasurer:**

Dan Saunders

**Worship:**

10:00 a.m. Worship

8:30 a.m. Youth

Sunday School

9:30 a.m.

Fellowship

Facebook:

@MonticelloFPC



*Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord [always doing your best and doing more than is needed], being continually aware that your labor [even to the point of exhaustion] in the Lord is not futile nor wasted [it is never without purpose].*

*1 Corinthians 15:58 The Amplified Bible*

In January we celebrated what it means to be church. We did this by thinking (a lot) about what it means to be baptized and celebrating the baptisms of Heidi Kay Fellingner and Jayde Ann Kraus. We thought about baptism and participated in a service where we reaffirmed our baptismal vows, professed our faith, and ordained and installed our elders and deacons. We did this by remembering how baptism is not just about belonging to God, but belonging to one another as church, and recalling how we have lived as church during our annual meeting.

At our annual meeting, we celebrated the energy and excitement that we find in the children and youth who joined us in this journey of faith. We remembered those who came before us, who showed us what being faithful might look like, even as we remembered the work of those who are living out their faith among us now. Together, there was appreciation for what was, and hope for what will be.

In my report to you all, I spelled out some of the challenges that we need to begin to address, to have conversations about.

We have a large gap between our income and expenses. (About \$36,442 in 2024, and estimated to be about \$36,669 in 2025). I owned the fact that this gap comes from having a full time pastor, me. I shared how the solar project that has been committed to will help immediately with that gap by reducing expenses by \$8,000 - \$9,000.

We have the desire to do more things but lack the people in order to do them. We have to be mindful of the things we commit to to make sure they align with our mission and vision, even while we invite more people to help us accomplish the things that are important to us.

We have to begin conversations about pastoral leadership in the future. I am not going anywhere, but one day I will. We need to reengage with our Presbytery and with the University of Dubuque Seminary as we think about pastoral leadership, and develop the relationship that can help us find ways to have the pastoral leadership that will encourage and nurture our faith.

What I want to say to you, in light of all these things, is well done, good and faithful servants. And at the same time, for us all to be mindful of Paul's words to the church in Corinth, 'don't give up.'

Pastor Bill

## Capital Campaign and Building Projects Update

Thanks to you all for your support of this capital campaign and these building projects.

As of January 24, 2025 we have received \$ 106,500 in gifts and pledges.

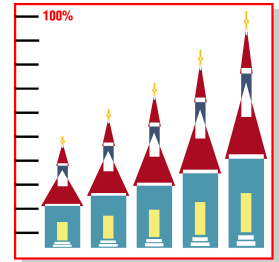
Of this amount we have already received \$27,500.

The budgeted cost of the work on the sanctuary windows, solar panels, mini splits in the office and education area, and kitchen floor totals \$300,000

Dan Saunders has been working on finalizing the loan from the PCUSA Investment Loan Program. This loan will give us the working capital (or cash flow) we need to get the projects going while giving us time to get them paid for.

We have signed a contract with Glass Heritage for \$ 47,587.00 plus tax. This contract covers Phase 1 of the sanctuary windows and covers the three most critical windows that need immediate attention. A deposit of \$ 11,896.75 was paid at contract signing. That money came from the Memorial Fund. We anticipate this work will take place during the summer.

If you have any questions about the projects or campaign, please do not hesitate to contact Pastor Bill, Don Smith, Dan Saunders or any Session member.



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

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### CAMP & CONFERENCE SOUP SUPPER DRIVE-THRU Wednesday, February 26, 4:30 pm — 7 pm

Please join us for our annual Camp & Conference Soup Supper. We will be serving taco soup, potato soup, vegetable beef soup, homemade bread, and dessert for **\$7.00**.

This is a fundraiser to support sending our youth to camp at no cost to the camper. Come enjoy a delicious meal and help support our youth!



Our 2024 Annual Meeting was held **Sunday, January 19th**. If you were unable to attend, you can still get a copy of the Annual Report from the church office.

Scholarship application packets are now available. If you would like a packet, please stop in to the church office, or email [office@fpcmonticello.org](mailto:office@fpcmonticello.org) to receive a packet via email.

*Reminder: all applications must be submitted in hard copy format to the church office by **April 1st**.*





## Thanks for helping out! *Funerals*

It takes all of us pitching in to make the church not only work, but work in the way it was intended.

*“Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people!” -1Cor 12:7 The Message*

You all are good at providing support and comfort to others at the time of someone ’ s death. Opening the church where people can gather to find comfort through the words of others and the presence of God is one of the ways you do this. Offering the warmth of genuine hospitality is another.

But there is also the funeral luncheon. In my mind, the luncheon is the place where many people experience comfort and support. At the funeral luncheon, the quiet and more somber notes of the funeral service give way to the noise of stories and laughter being shared.

It takes a lot of folks to host a funeral luncheon. Sides, salads, and deserts are needed, as well as helpers to provide a warm welcome, set up the meal, help people with trays, and clean up afterwards.

To help with funeral luncheons, your schedule has to be a little flexible because we never know exactly when they will come up. The commitment can be providing a dish or desert or working the luncheon. The commitment for those working the luncheon can vary by the time they have available to help. Some come to help get ready, some come to help clean up, and many help for the whole thing which can be a four-hour or more commitment.

Kris Read is the contact person for funerals this year. If you want to help, let Kris know so she can contact you when the need arises. Thanks!

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Registration for the 2025 Summer Camp at Camp Bear Creek (formerly Camp Wyoming) is now open. The camp director has contacted us to let us know spots are filling faster than normal. If you have a youth who would like to attend, please make plans to register today to ensure they are able to attend the date they’re available during the busy summer months. Early bird pricing is available until March 15th. After that date, all prices will increase by \$25. Visit: [bearcreek.camp](http://bearcreek.camp)







## Per Capita 2025 is \$45.34 Per Member

WHAT IS PER CAPITA **Per Capita** is the primary source of funding for the Presbytery, as well as the Synod and General Assembly, and is **how Presbyterians mutually and equitably share the costs** of coming together to perceive the Spirit’s leading for the future.

**Paying per capita is similar to:** • contributing one’s dish to a potluck meal • paying to be connected to the

**internet • paying for the benefit of utilities, such as electricity, gas, water • pitching in with others to pay for gasoline on a road trip.**

WHERE DO LOCAL PER CAPITA DOLLARS GO? The per capita apportionment in the Presbytery of East Iowa is based on the operating expenses of the Presbytery. This would include administration expenses and some salaries, detailed in each annual budget approved by the Presbytery, including managing Presbytery office and expenses, salaries to cover the office of the Presbyter and Stated Clerk, salaries of the Financial Secretary and Office Manager, insurance coverage, legal counsel, annual audit, and costs for committees.

At the time of newsletter print, 23.36% (\$1,450.88) of our congregations per capita has been received. (\$45.34/member x 137 active members = \$6,212)

Thank you to congregation members that have already submitted their per capita offering. If you haven’t yet submitted your per capita offering, please do so. Offerings can be marked ‘per capita’ to ensure they go to the appropriate fund. Thank you!



PC(USA) Special Offering **One Great Hour of Sharing** will be received on Easter Sunday (April 20th). Watch next month’s newsletter for the OGHS offering envelope. Offerings can be mailed in, dropped off to the church office, or dropped in the offering plate. You can use your OGHS envelope, or memo your offering “OGHS.” Thank you!

Each week, we’d like to include a couple of church families on our Family Prayer list. For the month of February, please remember to include in your prayers each week our February families:



**February 2:** Phil, Amy, Quinn, and McKinley Gilkerson, and Keith & Carol Gillmore.

**February 9:** Pam Goettsch, and Lori Gravel.

**February 16:** Dennis Gray, and Lorraine Haag.

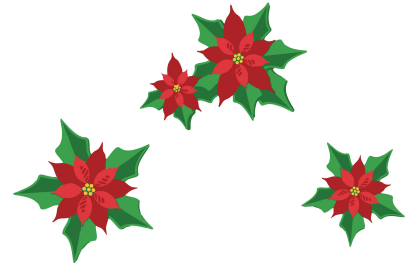
**February 23:** Shay, Jacob & Beckham Haase, and Brooke Holmes, Brayden Cigrand & Eli and Amelia Scott.



WE APPRECIATE THE COMMUNITY'S CONTINUOUS SUPPORT OF THE FOOD PANTRY! THIS MONTHS NEEDS INCLUDE:

**Pasta, mac and cheese, pasta sauce, cake mixes, pancake mix, hygiene supplies (shampoo, laundry detergent, toilet paper, regular-sized toothpaste).**

DONATIONS CAN BE DROPPED OFF DURING FOOD PANTRY HOURS (MONDAYS 5-7PM, FRIDAYS 2-4PM).. THANK YOU!



Thank you to those that provided poinsettias for the sanctuary during the Christmas season.

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In memory of **GINNY & Bud Bone, Barb Adam, Phil, Thelma & "Butch" Kuriger, and Debbie Turner**, from the family of Jim & Vickie Bone

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In memory of **Ron & Peg Arduser**, from Angie, Mark & Gage Dutra, and Brett, Michelle & Cole Arduser

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In memory of **Robert & Bonnie Lyon**, from Sandra Lyon and Roger & Anita Benedict and family

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In memory of **Ernest & Lola Benedict and Earl & Lucille Benedict**, from Roger & Anita Benedict and family

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In memory of **Craig Parker**, from Linda Parker and family

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In memory of **Ray, Dee, & Andy Kessell, and Glen, Marguerite, & Rusty Orcutt**, from Becky Orcutt & family

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In memory of **Marj Lubben**, from Dave & Lisa Lubben & family, Allison & Josh Kelchen & family, and Emma Lubben & family

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In memory of **Al Lubben**, from Allison & Josh Kelchen & family, Emma Lubben & family, and Dave & Lisa Lubben & family

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In memory of **Isabelle & Dick McKim Jr, and Milton Gonner**, from Rich & Joan McKim

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In memory of **Paul & Lucille Warner**, from David & JoAnn Warner

## Presbyterian Pie Service

Instead of a box of chocolates this Valentine's Day, treat your sweetie to a pie!

To order your valentine pie, contact the Pie Committee to place your order.

**Pam (319) 480-7700 or  
Kris (319) 480-1538**

Attendance, Week of:	Worship:	Sunday school:
December 24	71	-
December 29	35	-
January 5	48	-
January 12	41	9
January 19	65	7

## Thank You to our 2025 Elders, Deacons and Nominating Committee!

**Elders:** Lisa Adams, Jim Anderson, Vickie Bone, Grant Gassman (youth, 1-year term), Bill Gilkerson (Clerk), Sherri Neofotist, Jeff Parker, Kris Read, and Jared Willms.



**Deacons:** Pat Bonjour, Jill Cheney, Kim McNally, Becky Orcutt, Linda Parker, Lindsey Ricklefs, Barb Slater, Kim Smith, and JoAnn Warner.



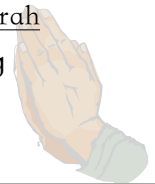
Thanks so much to all who volunteered their time serving the Monticello Food Pantry during the month of January: **Roger & Anita Benedict, Carmel Manternach, Bill & Suzy Gilkerson, Cindy Plummer, Karen Anderson, Dan & Jack Saunders, Pat Bonjour, Sherri Neofotist, and Angie Dutra.** You are a blessing to all who count on our assistance with food needs!

## In our thoughts and prayers...

Betty Lambert  
Evalena Lang  
Doug Mettler  
Betty Yount

Anamosa Care Center  
Barb Null  
Corridor, Cedar Rapids  
Marge Stubbe

Wellington, Decorah  
Lorraine Haag



### VBS 2025 is Announced!

July 28th-August 1st, 2025

Parents-if your students loved the MMA VBS in 2024 at the Youth Development Center or if you missed the deadline for last year's VBS-

**Please Mark Your Calendar for 2025 VBS!**

**Stay tuned for registration date announcements**

It will again be online registration. More information to come!



As we approach the winter weather season, watch for winter weather related announcements. A decision will be made whether to hold Sunday morning worship, ideally by 6 am. If it is decided to cancel worship, announcements will be made to KGAN, KWWL, and KCRG, as well as on our Facebook page: @MonticelloFPC.

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## Session Meeting Highlights - January 2025

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- \*Approved the borrowing of up to \$230,000 to provide the cash flow necessary cash flow for the capital improvements projects.
- \*Approved the installation and ordination of incoming elders and deacons.
- \*Approved the baptism of Heidi Kay Fellingner.
- \*Approved the baptism of Jayde Ann Kraus.
- \*Elected Bill Gilkerson as Clerk of Session for 2025.
- \*Elected Dan Saunders as Treasurer for 2025.
- \*Camp and Conference drive thru Soup Supper is scheduled is Feb.26, 2025.

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## OFFERING & FINANCIALS



**Thank you** to those that have been giving and generous to the church. We thank you for your contribution. Every little bit helps. Year-to-date: December, 2024.

**Checking Balance \$24,321.48**

**Income—**  
 Actual. \$158,973.28  
 Budget. \$168,656.40  
 Percent. 94.26%

**Expenses—**  
 Actual. \$195,413.20  
 Budget. \$207,144.52  
 Percent. 94.34%