NOVEMBER 2026

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THE CONNECT

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS THIS MONTH

As we enter this season of gratitude, let's reflect on the people who make our community special. May we celebrate the good in each day and find ways to share that gratitude with others.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE YOU'LL FIND:
Recaps • Upcoming Events • Ways to Get Involved • Advent Events and Dates

CHURCH CLOSURE

Second Pres church offices will be closed on Thursday, November 26 and Friday, November 27 in observance of Thanksgiving. Worship service will still be held Sunday, November 29.

ADVENT POINTSETTIAS

The Deacons have purchased poinsettias for our members unable to join us in person. To remember or honor a loved one in the Christmas Eve bulletin, please fill out a card at the Connection Point or front desk during the week. Donations can be made Sunday, November 22 through Friday, December 18. The suggested donation is $20.00

UPCOMING COMMUNION

NOV 22 | DEC *9 | DEC 24

The table is open to all!
Please note: All bread used for communion is gluten free.
***Communion at Westminster Village**

GET INVOLVED WITH CHOIR

SHARE YOUR MUSICAL GIFTS THIS ADVENT SEASON!



Come sing with the choir this Advent season, and fill our sanctuary with music for the Glory of Christmas cantata and pageant, and Christmas Eve. This is a fun and easy way to try choir out without the pressure of making a big commitment.

Rehearsals will be held on Wednesdays (with no rehearsal during Thanksgiving week) from 6:30-8:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary, with a brief Sunday morning warm-up before worship. Childcare will be provided during rehearsal times.

Questions? Contact Brian Tanaka at music.director@secondpres.com or 309-533-2724.

SUPPORT OUR SCOUTS

ANNUAL SCOUTS PANCAKE BREAKFAST

The annual all-you-can-eat Scouts Pancake Breakfast is about much more than a good breakfast! This fundraiser helps make Scouting affordable for families while teaching young people valuable lessons in hard work, responsibility, and community service.

By selling tickets, Scouts build confidence, communication skills, and connections with their neighbors. On breakfast day, they put those lessons into action by serving guests, including veterans and members of our outreach community.

Your support helps Scouts fund their own adventures while taking pride in what they accomplish. So come enjoy some pancakes and help our Scouts make a difference!

The breakfast will be held Saturday, November 14 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Sunday, November 15 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Adults tickets are $10 and kids (age 5-12) tickets are $5. Proceeds will benefit Scout Troops 903 & 9903.

NEW SECOND PRES STAFF MEMBERS

We are very excited to announce new staff members here at Second Pres!

Please join us in welcoming Taylor Johnson as our afternoon Receptionist, Bryce Sanders as our Assistant Custodian, and Jordan Baker as our new Audio Video Technician!



Taylor brings more than five years of experience in customer service and administrative support, with a background in coordinating schedules, managing records, and assisting clients. Known for her positive attitude, strong communication skills, and welcoming personality, Taylor is excited to support the staff and congregation at Second Pres. Taylor began working with us in April and has been a friendly face too all that enter our building.



Bryce is joining Paul and Steve as a member of our custodial crew. Bryce comes to us with many years of custodial experience, primarily with Bloomingtons District 87. He has demonstrated years of expertise in building maintenance and basic repairs. Please welcome Bryce as the newest member of our exceptional staff. We are excited to have his fresh set of eyes around our halls!



Jordan brings eight years of experience in audio engineering, live event production, and audiovisual technology. She holds a bachelor's degree in Audio Engineering Technologies from Belmont University and has worked with touring productions, live concerts, and sporting events. With a passion for music, technology, and problem-solving, Jordan is excited to bring her skills to Second Pres and help enhance our worship and production experiences. We're glad to have her on the team!

LOCAL MISSIONS UPDATES

submitted by Jan Harrell

TENNIS SHOE DRIVE UPDATE

The Local Missions Committee would like to send out a huge THANK YOU!!! to everyone who made our Tennis Shoe drive such a tremendous success. Our inventory of shoes was so depleted and due to your donations we have been blessed by so many smiling faces wearing new shoes, Thanks to all of you who donated.

REVERSE ADVENT - BEGINNING NOVEMBER 29

Just a reminder, we will once again be doing our Reverse Advent this year. The calendars will be coming out right before the start of Advent which is November 29th. You have all been so gracious in helping restore supplies for both the Food Pantry as well as the Clothing Pantry. Thank you in advance for your support

REVERSE ADVENT

▸ BLOOD DRIVE RECAP

submitted by Karen LaVoie

We wrapped up our final Red Cross Blood Drive of 2026 yesterday, marking the end of a truly inspiring year of service. Across five Drives, our volunteers showed up with heart, purpose, and a shared commitment to making a difference in countless lives.

We have some exciting numbers to share! Over the course of 2026, we collected a total of 139 units of blood on an overall goal of 131! Not only did we meet our annual goal, but we EXCEEDED it! Our hard work impacted 417 lives! What an amazing accomplishment!

Each event was strengthened by our dedicated volunteers who worked tirelessly—and sweetened by the delicious food Gerald and his crew lovingly prepared. We are also deeply grateful for the Staff members whose support makes every Drive run smoothly.

The Second Pres Blood Drive continues to be the best in Bloomington-Normal, and that reputation is earned through the faithful work of volunteers and staff who give their all, every single time.
Planning for 2027 is already underway. Stay tuned…

▸ GET INVOLVED

EASY STITCHES MEETING



submitted by Karen LaVoie

As the crisp days of Fall settle in and Winter's chill begins to whisper at our doors, there's no better time to gather in community and create something that brings warmth to others. Do you sew, knit, or crochet—or have you always wanted to learn? If so, we'd love to welcome you into a ministry that wraps others in warmth, one stitch at a time.
Easy Stitches, founded in 2023 as a ministry of Second Pres, brings handmade love to those in need—locally and globally. In just a few short years, this small but mighty group has created and donated over 3,000 handcrafted items to organizations including Sunday Brunch friends, BroMenn Nursery, Home Sweet Home Ministries, Life Long Friends, OSF Nursery, Salvation Army, Hammitt School, Bright Point, and the international Pads Project.
Whether you're a seasoned stitcher or just curious to try, you are wholeheartedly welcome. We meet quarterly at Second Pres to share ideas, encouragement, and a few laughs—then work on our projects at our own pace between gatherings. It's flexible, fulfilling, and full of heart.

NEXT MEETING:
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11
9:30 AM IN GRACE HALL

Come see what we're all about—we'd love to meet you and share the joy of stitching with purpose. For more information, contact: Karen LaVoie at 928-713-6996 or karenlavoie41@gmail.com.

NOV

THIS MONTH AT A GLANCE:

5 **Theology On Tap**
5:30-7:00 p.m., Paxton Building

7 **Helping Hands (Rain date 11/14)**
8:30 a.m., Denny's Doughnuts

8 **Adult Christian Education**
sponsored by Second Half
10:15 a.m., F100A

14-15 **Scouts Pancake Breakfast**
Saturday 8 a.m.-12 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m.-12 p.m.

15 **Veterans Breakfast**
10:30 a.m., F100A

17 **Presbyterian Women Lydia Circle**
9:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall

19 **Friendsgiving - Lifelong Access & Rotary**
12:00 p.m., F100B

19 **Presbyterian Women Ruth Circle**
4:00 p.m., Fellowship Hall

22 **Adult Christian Education**
Frontier Fellowship, 10:15 a.m., F100A

29 **Adult Christian Education**
Advent, 10:15 a.m., Chapel



THEOLOGY ON TAP
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5
5:30-7:00 P.M.

Have good food, drinks, and theological conversation with friends! Parking can be found outside the Paxton building on the street, PNC Bank lot, or at Second Pres. Dinner is $5 and local beverages can be purchased with cash donation.



VETERANS BREAKFAST
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15
10:30 A.M., F100A

All veterans, spouses, and guests are invited to join us for a breakfast in honor of those who have served our country. Our program will be held during the breakfast. Please RSVP by calling the church at 309-828-6297.



SECOND HALF HELPING HANDS
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7
8:30 A.M., DENNY'S DOUGHNUTS

Volunteers will meet at 8:30 at Denny's Donuts for coffee, donuts and fellowship before heading out to work assignments. Contact Gene Gant at (309) 963-4361 or thegants@frontiernet.net to request help with leaves or ask about volunteering. Rain date will be held on Saturday, November 14.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
LYDIA CIRCLE GATHERING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 17
9:30 A.M., FELLOWSHIP HALL

Program: Public Defender Craig Queen
Devotions: Janice Lewis.
Contact Janet Adkins,
randy.janet@frontier.com or (309) 838-3712



ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8
10:30 A.M., F100A

Join Second Half during this special Adult Christian Education that focuses on the topic of "Balancing Between Loss and Gain...Life's Ebbs & Flows and Sometimes We Get Stuck." This class will be presented by Rebecca Lynn, licensed clinical professional counselor at Blue Skies Counseling, specializing in grief, loss, and trauma. Contacct Gene Gant at thegants@frontiernet.net. for more info.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
RUTH CIRCLE GATHERING
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19
4:00 P.M., FELLOWSHIP HALL

Hostess: Elizabeth Rust
Mission: Sunday Brunch
Bible Study Leader - Susan Rhodes for Lesson 2 "Connected in Christ".
Contact Sandy Groves, slittle@ilstu.edu or (309) 830-1517



ADVENT

ADVENT AT A GLANCE

NOV 29 – DEC 20
Adult Christian Education
Advent Study
10:15 a.m., Chapel
*No ACE class on December 6

NOV 29 – DEC 20
Sunday Worship Services
9:00 a.m.

3
J-108 Holiday Jazz Program
10:30 a.m., South Entrance

5
Immanuel Bible Foundation Women's Christmas Celebration
8:00-11:00 a.m., DoubleTree by Hilton

6
The Glory of Christmas Cantata & Pageant
9:00 a.m.
Advent Brunch to follow

6
The Messiah
presented by Illinois Symphony Orchestra
3:00 p.m.
Tickets may be purchase at ilsymphony.org/concerts-events

12
Spirit of the Season
presented by the Sound of Illinois Chorus
2:00 p.m.

13
Family Ministry Gingerbread Build
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., Grace Hall

24
Christmas Eve Worship Service
4:00 p.m.

FROM THE HERITAGE ARCHIVES

Nov. 2026 *submitted by the Heritage Committee, David Strand*

WHAT IS THE HERITAGE MINISTRY?

The Heritage Ministry gathers and preserves the church's history, sharing the information to celebrate God's work as part of the inspiration for our future. Second Pres is one of the oldest churches in Bloomington/Normal, having been founded in 1855, 16 years after Bloomington was incorporated, two years prior to the establishment of Illinois State University, in 1857, and 5 years after the founding of Illinois Wesleyan University, in 1850. Documents pertaining to the more than 170 -year history of the church are archived and preserved, for reference and use by church governance groups, church members and staff, the McLean County Museum of History, Immanuel Bible Foundation, and Illinois State University.

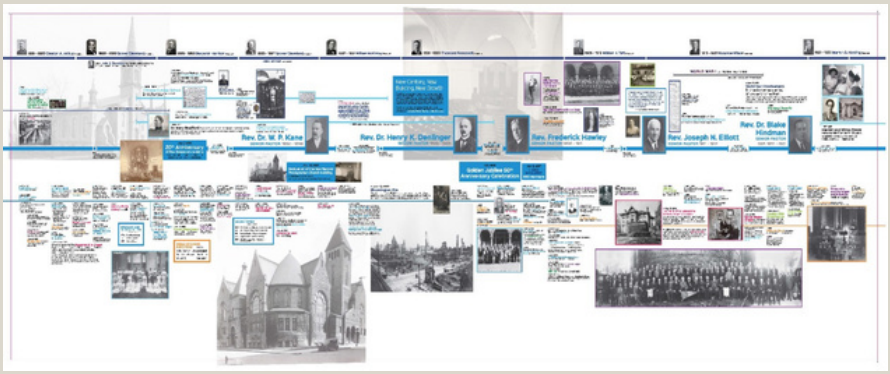
Why does it matter if there is a Heritage Ministry? Second Presbyterian Church has a distinguished ministry, not only to its members, but also locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Documents relating to these various ministries are gathered, preserved, and archived, as part of the Heritage Ministry. For example, Second Pres established Western Avenue Community Center, and one of its members was instrumental in starting Home Sweet Home Ministries, both of which are in Bloomington. Mission teams have gone to many locations, to assist people in need, including Alaska, Louisiana, Mexico, and the Philippines, to name a few. Choral mission trips have carried the Word of the Lord, musically, to many states and numerous countries in Europe. A former pastor, Dr. Harold Martin, was selected as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church USA. Documents relating to these numerous activities, and many other events, are maintained, for historical and future reference, by the Heritage Ministry. The Heritage Ministry is self-sustaining, financially, meaning no church operating budget funds, only donations, are utilized for the gathering and preservation of these documents.

Yes, it matters that there is a Heritage Ministry. As a result of the efforts of the Heritage Ministry, our distinguished church history is preserved, to celebrate God's work, as an inspiration for the future.

Photos:
[1] Heritage Room F204
[2] Panel in Heritage Hallway
[3] Heritage Corner in South Entrance



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2



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For more Heritage Highlights or information on the history of Second Presbyterian Church, its buildings, or its members, contact the Heritage committee by calling the church at 309-828-6297, or emailing Jeanie Wendt at wendtfarm@gmail.com.

▶ GLORY OF CHRISTMAS CANTATA & PAGEANT

Come experience the beauty of the Christmas story and celebrate the season with us at Second Pres on Sunday, December 6! Featuring The Glory of Christmas by Lloyd Larson, this musical celebration brings the Christmas story to life through the voices of our choir, the sounds of a live orchestra, and a nativity reenactment performed by children of our Family Ministry program. Join us for a morning filled with music, storytelling, and the timeless message of hope, love, and joy that makes Christmas so special. Whether you're a longtime member or visiting for the first time, all are welcome!

▶ FAMILY MINISTRY GINGERBREAD BUILD

Get in the holiday spirit with us on Sunday, December 13th, from 10:30-12:30 for a cozy morning filled with creativity, fun, and family time!
What to Expect:

1. Pre-built gingerbread houses ready for your unique decorating touch (One per family of 4, families of 4 or more will get 2 houses.)
2. A spread of festive decorations to make your creation truly magical
3. Hot cocoa to sip on while you work your holiday magic

All supplies are provided—just bring your holiday cheer and tissues for Fox Creek Elementary.



BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

1 Ian Wang
2 Linda Bergren
2 Anne Bliss
2 Bob Fleming
3 Ravi Gadhiraju
3 Ronald Grizzle
3 Darrell Winterland
5 Rachel Brandt
5 Sahana Surendiran
6 Jim Ely
6 Melissa Juvinall
6 Karen Meister
6 Zella Otterman
6 Jenny Worth
6 Rachel Wylie
7 Judy Holder
8 Thomas Briggs
8 Amanda Brucker
8 Robyn Brucker
8 Danielle Brucker
8 Marilyn Freedlund
8 Lincoln Goveia
8 David Kaeb
8 J.J. Miller
8 Marge Shaffer
8 Bob Wright
10 Barbara Ely
10 Keith Palmgren
11 Jan Brandt
11 Larry McCray
11 Otto Muesken
12 Phil Peterson
14 Pat Graves
14 Gayle Thomas
15 Joe Brannan
17 Donna Witte
18 Jason Kaiser
20 Will Higby
21 Jase Cain
22 Marty Payne
22 Peggy Vogelsinger
23 Marcia Higby
23 Louis Rodawold
23 Many Rodawold
24 Scott Dixon
24 Peggy Jones
24 Vivaan Reddy
24 Jeannie Swanson
26 Renee Dunlap
26 Ruth Hargis
28 Anneke Crowe
29 Lois Matsler
29 Mary Murphy
29 Jared Parker
29 Kevin Smith

▶ FINANCE UPDATE

FINANCIAL SUMMARY THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2026

Actuals compared to the Prorated Budget

	Actual	Prorated Budget	Net Result
Contributions	$870,941	$800,173	$70,768
Other Receipts	$180,956	$153,136	$27,820
Foundation Support	$200,000	$200,000	$ -
Expenses	$1,142,646	$1,171,950	$39,304
Net Total	$109,251	-$18,641	$127,892

Contributions are favorable compared to the prorated budget by $70,768. Other Receipts are favorable being $27,820 more than the prorated budget. Additionally, during the first nine months of 2026, $200,000 of the budgeted Foundation support was needed to support church operations. Expenses are favorable as they are $39,304 less than the prorated budget.This provides a $127,892 favorable variance for the first nine months of 2026. The 2026 annual budget includes a $40,575 deficit. Stewardship Sunday was Sunday, September 13th. As of October 26, the church collected 88 stewardship cards totaling $662,075. Please have your 2027 pledge returned by Sunday, November 15, 2026 to have your pledge included in the 2027 annual budget. Thank you for your continuing gifts and supporting our mission.
If you have any questions, please contact Mark Wylie, the finance elder, or Joanne Randolph in the church's finance office.

▶ UPCOMING EVENTS IN DECEMBER

20 JOY FELLOWSHIP TRIP TO THE BARN III SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 11:30 A.M.

JOY Fellowship is going back to the Barn III to see "Christmas Around The World" Sunday, December 20, 2026 We will carpool to Goodfield, IL from Second Pres after church. Doors open at 11:30 am. Lunch begins as soon as we are seated and ready with our order. Announcements are at 1:00 pm and the show begins at 1:30 pm. $75.00 includes ticket to the performance and reserved seating. Guest choice of any salad, sides, entrée, and dessert off the menu, plus bread and beer cheese & crackers. Unlimited coffee, tea, soda, and water (adult beverages are available). Gratuity of $7.00 for your server. Last day to order will be Tuesday, December 1. We had a great time last year enjoying live theatre.