

November First Focus Newsletter

First Presbyterian Church 2025



November 2 Daylight Saving Time Ends



Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour! Most devices are automatic, but your coffee machine and car clock might not be!

Save the Date! Dec. 14 Artisan Sale 8am-12pm



This event is hosted by our Knit-Crochet Ministry and features handmade items from our talented artisans! More information will be available soon!

November is The Last Green Team Story Stroll of 2025



The Story Stroll features the book: Up in the Garden, Down in the Dirt. QR codes will provide questions and answers to interesting information.



Households of Faith (Nov. 9-23)

Making our households more hospitable toward outsiders is a challenge. In this 3-week video study on Sundays at 9:45am in the lounge, we'll learn that by applying spiritual disciplines, extending hospitality, and engaging in spiritual conversations, we can transform our households into more open and engaging places. With scripture verses, family testimonies, and research to reinforce key objectives, we'll help make our households places where God's love is shared, and we are encouraged to learn more about Jesus. Please sign up on the website by Thu., Nov 6. Contact Pastor Karol for more information.



RightNow Media Featured Study

The Bible Project: Read Scripture Series has a live-illustrated video for every book of the Bible that outlines its literary design and main ideas, showing you how it fits into the entire biblical story.

To find this and many other video studies for individuals, kids, families, and groups: scan the QR code, text FPCNORM to 49775, or visit app.rightnowmedia.org/join/firstpresnormal (this is also linked on our website) to log in to your free account.

Contact Pastor Karol for more information.





Kemmerer Village

ADOPT A CHILD'S WISHLIST

We believe no child should go without God's love this Christmas!

Our church supports the Kemmerer Village's ministry each year by providing children with Christmas presents. Please consider adopting a child's wishlist from our website, where you will find a sign-up with all the instructions. We ask that you spend a minimum of \$50 per child. For gift delivery, we ask that you place your gifts in an OPEN gift bag WITHOUT tissue paper and attach the child's name onto the bag. The drop-off dates are 12/5, 1-2:30pm, and 12/6 from 10am-noon. Contact Jenny Hoffman at (309) 825-7321 with any questions.

Advent Series – A Trio of Concerts

4PM CONCERTS - EACH FOLLOWED BY A RECEPTION



DECEMBER 7

Chicago Recorder Trio: Winter's Charm: Baroque Delights and Seasonal Joy



DECEMBER 14

A Trio of Organists: Brian Tanaka, Louie Jones, & Philip Enge



DECEMBER 21

Festive Trio of Organ, Vocal, and Christmas Carols



Financial Update

The table below displays our actual receipts and expenses compared to budgeted receipts and expenses for the nine months ended September 30, 2025:

	ACTUAL	BUDGET
General Contributions	\$ 556,429	\$ 568,454
Expense Recoveries and Miscellaneous Receipts	12,404	14,700
TOTAL CASH INCOME	568,833	583,154
General Budget Expenses	617,114	632,430
EXCESS (DEFICIT) OF RECEIPTS OVER (UNDER) EXPENSES	(48,281)	(49,276)
Investment Market Gain	49,598	-
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN OPERATING RESERVE	\$ 1,317	\$ (49,276)

General contributions to the operating budget in the first three quarters of 2025 fell below budget by about \$12,000 and were slightly behind actual receipts for the same point in the prior year. Investment gains were excluded from the budget due to unpredictability; market returns have been positive year to date.

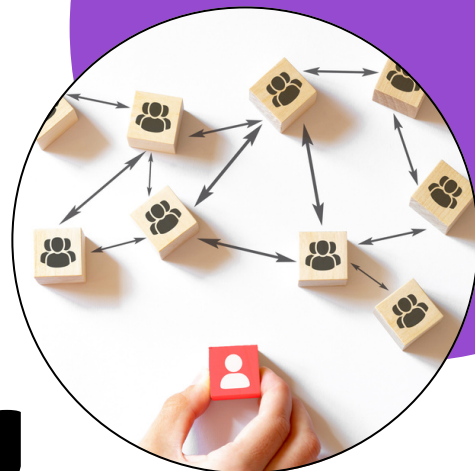
Property-related expenses are above budget so far this year, primarily due to unexpected repair and maintenance costs related to heating and cooling systems and repairs in the kitchen area. Expenses are below budget in every other budget category.

We expect expenses to exceed contributions at this point in the year due to seasonal fluctuations in our giving patterns.

The unrestricted operating reserve stands at \$446,279 as of September 30, 2025, representing about six months of 2025 general budget expenses. The operating reserve has increased very slightly so far in 2025.

Meet Our

Newest Members!



AMARI DRYDEN



I grew up in the Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, and have been involved in numerous Presbyterian events (e.g., attending the Montreat Youth Conference every summer in high school and participating in and planning for the Presbyterian Youth Triennium). I moved to BloNo last September and knew finding a church home would be a way to find community. I've found community through being part of the Green Team, the Mission Committee, and serving as one of the youth group leaders. Outside of church, I enjoy watching college sports (Ohio State, Illinois State, Louisville, and Vanderbilt) and visiting libraries and bookstores.

DEB HANSING



The first time I visited this church I was greeted by such warmth from people I had never met. Now, years later, I see how this congregation truly cares about each other. They console in sorrows and celebrate the triumphs. I am also impressed with how involved the youth are in the church. It takes dedicated leadership to provide the mentorship to support and guide their spiritual journey. Pastor Matt and Pastor Karol provide inspiring messages each week and I always leave with joy in my heart.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GREG & LEXI HUSS



We were looking for a welcoming and inclusive church to raise our daughter, Miller (4 mo.) We are thankful to have found First Pres. We enjoyed participating in Hope Bags last year and look forward to being involved in more ways, including Small Group for Greg and Lexi and Sunday School classes for Miller. Outside of church, we love attending ISU and Illini sporting events and spending time with friends and family!

MELISSA MORAN



Desmond and I have attended VBS the past 2 years, as well as Sunday school. We have enjoyed putting together Hope Bags for Cedar Ridge and working with the youth at Midwest Food Bank. I enjoy the time with children and how the kids are involved in the service, from singing to noisy collection days. I love that the church is so welcoming to everyone.

MELISSA PASCHOLD



I was a previous member of First Pres. and have returned. It has been impressive to see how much the church has grown and developed. I've been married to my husband, Larry, for 48 years. We have two children, Bryce Paschold and Alli Wrzesniewski, who were brought up at First Pres. They have blessed us with five precious grandchildren. Besides spending time with our grandchildren, I enjoy playing tennis, golf, and bridge. I look forward to becoming re-engaged with this wonderful faith community.

ALLIE PLUMB



I was born in Danville, IL, and moved to Bloomington with my family in 1992. I attended Unit 5 schools, high school at U-High, and then attended Illinois State University for my undergrad and graduate degrees. After college, I accepted a position with Caterpillar Inc. My husband Rob and I were married in 2014 and welcomed our son, Truman, in 2017.

Upon moving back to Bloomington in 2022, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. My journey back to health led me to step out of my previous career path and move into a role that required much less travel and responsibility. I am really enjoying this new phase of spending more time with my family.

DEBRA RISBERG



I joined the online book group during Covid. When we started meeting at the church, I enjoyed meeting Pastor Matt and Pastor Karol. Our conversations in the book group have been stimulating and I have truly appreciated the sermons and the music on Sundays. I've lived in Bloomington/Normal for over 30 years since I came here to teach at ISU. I was also a curator at the University Galleries and then went on to open the first yoga studio in town, Main

Street Yoga that I ran for 20 years before retiring in 2015. My husband Russell Giannetta teaches Physics at U of I. We both love living here.

SONYA AND CHEYENNE SANCHEZ



What drew us to First Pres was its spirit of inclusivity and genuine warmth. From our first visit, we felt embraced by such a welcoming community and sensed God drawing us here. We knew right away that we wanted to get involved. Cheyenne has been serving as a Sunday school teacher and helped with Vacation Bible School this past summer. Sonya is a member of both the Mission Committee and Bell Choir. One of our favorite memories has been serving together at the rummage sale - it was such a joy to work alongside others and connect with new people in the community.

JEN SHUCK



I have wonderful memories of church as a kid and wanted Hailey to have the same. I was drawn to the traditional worship service, warm people, and children's programs. I work at Illinois State University. Hailey is eight and in third grade. She enjoys Kids Worship, VBS, Kids of the Kingdom, and being part of an "Awana" Club in town. She loves to dress up for church, art, and being creative. She is shy but loves to play games and "feels free to be a kid" at church.

JAN WEYHRICH



Andrea and I first attended First Pres. on Christmas Eve, 2023. We started attending regularly in 2024 and feel blessed to call First Pres. our "church home". Andrea is a Presbyterian pastor; we have both been involved in various roles with congregations in the Presbytery over the years. We are now "retired". Andrea is an office manager for our daughter's chiropractic clinic in Normal (Lakeside Chiropractic), and I'm involved with risk management for various large insurance companies (Weyhrich Insurance Services LLC). We are members of Alpha small group, sing in the choir, and I'm looking forward to serving on Session starting in 2026.