

The Peoria Christian

January 2026
Vol 115 ~ Issue 5



As the new year begins, and we turn our attention to what 2026 will have in store for us, I am so excited and proud to share with you our 2026 Worship theme... Loving Our Neighbors.

In polarized times, when the lens of national politics seems to color every perspective on life, it is easy to remember the table-flipping Jesus - the one who calls out your oppressors. It is harder to remember the Jesus who makes those same demands of you. The Jesus that insisted his disciples turn the other cheek and walk the second mile (revealing another's violence as weakness). The Jesus who warned us about judgement. The Jesus who invited to the table those the culture had discarded. The Jesus who gave us a ministry of reconciliation.

The most powerful aspect of Jesus' commandment to love our neighbors, is how a neighbor is defined. For, in the parable of the good Samaritan, our enemies are our neighbors. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we will use this focus to make ourselves and our community a better place. If for no other reason, it will have slightly more loving people living in it.

The commandment to Love Our Neighbors is foundational to the experience of a Christian life. But love is a complex subject, which can't be easily explained and understood in a week or two, because the ramifications of love touch every aspect of our lives. So, each month will feature a new sub-theme for Worship which will allow us to explore various dynamics of Love and Neighborliness. (See the next page for the monthly themes)

I believe that our 2026 Worship theme will create opportunities for us as a congregation to consider critical questions to the future thriving of our church, namely:

Who is my/our neighbor (metaphorically and demographically)?

How do I/we best embody God's love?

What might it cost to put love of neighbor above all else?

As we discover the answers to these questions, we will also deepen our capacity to grow and share the gospel's good news to those who desperately seek it out.

The Pew Research Center does the most comprehensive polling on the subject of religious practices in America. And this year, for the first time in a decade, the decline in mainline church participation has statistically leveled off. Forty percent of the nation still solidly identifies as Christian and either participates or desires to participate in an appropriate worshiping community of faith for their lives.

There is a spiritual hunger growing amongst the population (especially in young adults), and many who are looking for congregations that will make space for them - for their questions and doubts, for their discernments and transformations, for their becoming new by the presence and power of God.

I am committed to living into a legacy that is now 180 years-young here at First Christian, and that is to help hurting people heal by the grace and peace of Christ. Whatever else we do, let us always commit to that good gospel work. It is going to be a miraculous year ahead, because we will be led by the Spirit of God in Christ. Praise be to the Lord!!

Grace and Peace of Christ,
Pastor Adam



Food Pantry

In January, items donated will be going to Redeemer Lutheran. Any non-perishable items are much needed.

Thank you!



December Giving

DMF	\$1258.33
Thanksgiving Offering	\$1040



Stewardship

We are surrounded by God's benefits. The best use of these benefits is an unceasing expression of gratitude.

- John Calvin



Creation Care

There is more beauty than our eyes can bear, precious things have been put into our hands and to do nothing to honor them is to do great harm.

- Marilynne Robinson

Loving Our Neighbors



2026 Worship Theme

01

JANUARY

What Is Love?

02

FEBRUARY

Learning to Love Yourself

03

MARCH

Lent:
Learning to Love the Dust

04

APRIL

Who Is Our Neighbor?

05

MAY

When Neighbors Feel
Like Enemies

06

JUNE

Love Wins

07

JULY

Pursuing a
Liberating Love

08

AUGUST

God's Unbreakable Love

09

SEPTEMBER

Stewardship Campaign:
When Love Is Enough

10

OCTOBER

A Just Love

11

NOVEMBER

Responding to Love

12

DECEMBER

Advent:
Love Embodied



WORSHIP INFO



January 4, 2026

In the Company of Angels

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Special Music: *Mary Did You Know?* - Jerry Hornbacker

Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

The Magi's true gift wasn't gold, frankincense, or myrrh - it was adoration. They traveled far to worship what heaven had named precious, and in this season of hope, peace, love, and joy, when was the last time you truly adored something?



January 11, 2026

Scripture: Romans 12:10-13

Jubilate Ringers: *Epiphany Carol* - by Linda R. Lamb

Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

Sibling love is uniquely life-giving: shared history, deep understanding, and the ability to speak hard truths with love. So when we call one another brothers and sisters in faith, the question is whether we're willing to live into that kind of relationship.



January 18, 2026

Scripture: Song of Solomon 2:1-7

Sanctuary Choir: *In This Very Room* - by Ron & Carol Harris

Rev. Mason Fitch, preaching

Romantic love in Scripture isn't dismissed - it's honored as part of God's good, embodied creation. Song of Solomon shows desire and delight without shame, reminding us that our bodies and longings matter to God, and that when romance is rooted in mutuality and respect, it can point, imperfectly but truly, toward the sacred.



January 25, 2026

Scripture: John 13:34-35

Jubilate Ringers: 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime - arr. William Ringham

Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

This morning we turn to the heart of the Christian life: to love one another as Christ has loved us; simple to say, and extraordinarily hard to live. This year our mission is to know that love, grow in it, and share it, trusting that this is how the world will recognize us as followers of Jesus. Glory be to God.





2026 Lay Readers & Greeters

We are looking to expand our team of Lay Readers and Greeters! Do you have a friendly face (which all of you do!)? You can greet!!

Are you at least a little comfortable with being in front of people? You can lay read! If you have any questions about either of these opportunities, please reach out to Debra Kreps or Mason Fitch. Sign up at the information desk!



Sunday Morning Study - January *Life Lessons from James* led by Kevin Wolfe

Join Kevin as he finishes the second half of this book. If you missed the first half, please join us anyway!

James, the half brother of Jesus, wasn't impressed with talk. He knew that a life of faith was all about actions that revealed a difference in a person's life. For him, it was not that works save the Christian, but that they mark the Christian. In his letter, he boldly deals with the practical issues of faith not bound by culture or place.



Responders Class led by Becky Sisk

In the Responders adult Sunday School class, we use Wired Word lessons each

Sunday, 9-10 am. We examine current events from the point of view of the Bible and our faith. Our topics are current and often challenge us in new ways. Come join us!



Weekly Bible Study

Pastor Adam is leading a study and deep dive into the book of Romans. All are welcome to join!

Regional Committee on Ministry



The Committee on Ministry is entrusted with the sacred work of commissioning, licensing, ordaining, and caring for clergy and congregations across our three-state region. This ministry requires theological depth, pastoral sensitivity, wisdom, and a commitment to the ongoing formation of leaders for the Church. **Pastor Adam** has been asked to serve with this group for the region. He has a passion for helping to raise up new pastors, and had served on this committee in Indiana.

Service of Installation



On January 25th at 2pm, First Christian Church is gathering for a Service of Installation for Rev. Adam Bradley. Members of the regional staff will be there to officiate, including the newly elected regional minister and president, Rev. Dr. William Crowder. Rev. Crowder will give the sermon for the service.

Please come to celebrate Pastor Adam's installation, and this momentous occasion for First Christian!

Rescheduled - Christmas Trivia



Join us on Saturday, January 3rd at 2pm for a fun-filled afternoon of Christmas Trivia. Sign up at the information desk and bring a Christmas snack to share!

CONGREGATIONAL BOOK STUDY

with Pastor Adam

Coming in January!!

New Year, New Learnings!

One Class, two ways to attend!

Tuesdays @ 10:30a - in person!

Thursdays @ 6:30p - on Zoom!

Sign Up Today!!

Books are available for \$20

January Birthdays

Heather Woods	1/1
Sands Gibson	1/3
Cheryl Davis	1/6
Elizabeth Carrico	1/6
Steve Peters	1/7
Barb Furkin	1/19
Joe Rex	1/26
Carnie Lewis	1/28



January Anniversaries



Tasting Peoria

Sugar

January 8th @ 6pm

Sugar is a unique quick serve dining experience that will tantalize your senses with made-from-scratch wood fired pizzas and sandwiches, fresh, crisp salads and hand-made gourmet sweet treats. Enjoy lunch, dinner or a late-night snack with one of our Artisan beers or a bottle from our modest wine collection.



Disciple Women

January 13th @ 12pm

This month we will be making Valentine cards. Bring your your best appetizer and your joyful spirit!



Movie Night

The Six Triple Eight

January 22nd @ 6pm

The Six Triple Eight plot follows the real-life 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion, the only all-Black, all-female U.S. Army unit in WWII, as they overcome severe racism, sexism, and brutal conditions in Europe to clear a massive backlog of millions of undelivered mail, boosting soldier morale with "No mail, no morale" under the command of Major Charity Adams.



Book Club

The Widow

January 21st @ 5:30pm

The Widow is a 2025 legal thriller by John Grisham about a small-town lawyer, Simon Latch, who becomes the prime suspect in the murder of his wealthy elderly client, an eccentric widow named Eleanor Barnett, and must find the real killer to clear his name.



January Potluck - January 25th

Please sign up if you can help with prep and/or cleanup. Bring your own tableware to help reduce waste.



SERVING SCHEDULES

Date	Elders	Deacons	Lay Reader	Acolyte	Greeters	Counters
1/4/26	Connie Sinn Dave Sinn	Beth Reynolds Tim Dougherty Peter Hinshaw Lindsey Hinshaw Levi Holloway	Becky Sisk	Natalie Woods	Sandy Surface Chris Carrico	Steve West Ralph Tegg
1/11/26	Beth Cox Kevin Wolfe	Beth Reynolds Tim Dougherty Peter Hinshaw Lindsey Hinshaw Levi Holloway	Kate Spielman	Natalie Woods	Sandy Surface Chris Carrico	Roger & Vickie Baker
1/18/26	Kevin Cheatham Steve West	Beth Reynolds Tim Dougherty Peter Hinshaw Lindsey Hinshaw Levi Holloway	Cheryl Davis	Natalie Woods	Sandy Surface Chris Carrico	Mike & Laura Buckley
1/25/26	Chere Peters Jenny Tripses	Beth Reynolds Tim Dougherty Peter Hinshaw Lindsey Hinshaw Levi Holloway	Larry Weber	Natalie Woods	Sandy Surface Chris Carrico	John & Lisa Best

Date	Friends with Jesus	Growing Disciples	The Open Table
1/4/25	Jenny Tripses	Kathleen Wheeler	Kevin Wolfe
1/11/25	Chere Peters	Kathleen Wheeler	Kevin Wolfe
1/18/25	Jenny Tripses	Kathleen Wheeler	Kevin Wolfe
1/25/26	Linda Rex	Kathleen Wheeler	Kevin Wolfe