

# The Peoria Christian

February 2026  
Vol 115 ~ Issue 6



February brings, along with the bitter end of winter weather, opportunities for us to focus on love.

The most obvious (secular) occasion bringing our attention to love is that Valentine's Day falls right in the middle of the month. But here at the church, love is so much bigger than boxes of chocolates and red roses. The world of Hallmark and Hersey's wants you to focus on your beloved in February, a spouse or partner with whom you can exchange gifts and maybe even go out on the town. But, in Worship this month the Church will be asking you to focus on God's beloved, that is to say, on Learning to Love Yourself.

Learning to Love Yourself isn't optional. It isn't just a best practice for the spiritually acute. It is critical for a Christian life - for a Human life, for that matter. The reason for this is quite simple: you can't truly love anyone else, without first loving yourself.

You are God's beloved, made in God's own image, and precious in the eyes of the Lord. But are you precious in your own eyes? Sometimes Christ's call for humility makes us believe that we shouldn't see ourselves as anything special, but if we are really made in the image of God - how can we not be precious?

Oftentimes we are our own worst critics. We speak (or think) more harshly about ourselves than we ever would about someone else. We punish ourselves for mistakes that if made by another, we wouldn't think twice about forgiving. Rarely do we speak an encouraging word to ourselves, even if we truly enjoy encouraging others. More often and more easily than we should, we slip into self-deprecating words about ourselves. To the point that eventually these unkind words start to take on an identity of their own. So fearful of being seen as conceited or vain or self-righteous, we instead can treat ourselves so cruelly.

February leads us into the liturgical season of Lent, with the final week of the month being its first Sunday. As we see ourselves in the ashes and dust, may we also see our messy-selves through God's eyes - refined and tempered by Holy Love.

"See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, [...] he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness." -Malachi 3:1+3



## Food Pantry

In February, items donated will be going to Woodland Baptist. Any non-perishable items are much needed.

Thank you!



## January Giving

DMF	\$1258.33
3 Gifts of Christmas	\$933



## Stewardship

In God's Kingdom, money is meant to be in constant movement, changing hands regularly to fulfill its mission from place to place; blessing many along the way.  
- Sebastien Richard



## Creation Care

Our ancestors dreamed us into being. The least we can do is listen when the earth speaks back.

- Lawrence Nault

# 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



## February 1, 2026

Scripture: Genesis 1:26-27 & Colossians 3:9-10  
Sanctuary Choir: *Holy Is the Lord* - Mary McDonald  
Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

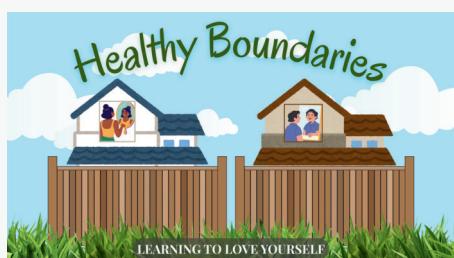
What does it mean to be made in the image of God? It's a question humanity has wrestled with for centuries. Is it our minds, our hearts, our moral sense, or our capacity to love? This week, we explore the sacred woven into the human experience, and what it means to recognize God's image in ourselves.



## February 8, 2026

Scripture: Mark 1:9-11  
Jubilate Ringers: *Lord, Be Glorified* - arr. Michael Ryan  
Rev. Mason Fitch, preaching

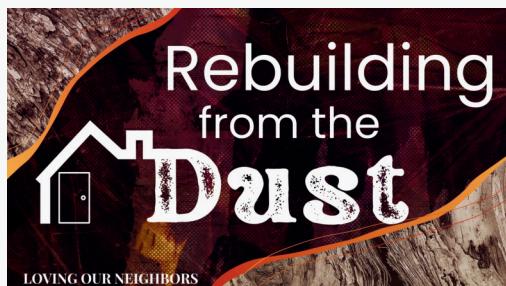
When Jesus rises from the Jordan - before he proves anything - God names him "Beloved." That moment is our pattern. In a world that tells us to earn our worth, faith begins by receiving a love that comes first and freely. Learning to love yourself isn't vanity; it's growing into the name God has already spoken, and from that belovedness, we learn to love others without fear or comparison.



## February 15, 2026

Scripture: Proverbs 4:18-27 & Matthew 17:1-9  
Sanctuary Choir: *At the Cross (Hallelujah)* - arr. Harold Ross  
Rev. Adam Bradley, preaching

Peter is the kind of person who is so eager to do right, and so determined to be needed, that he is constantly embarrassing himself - or at least missing the main point. This Sunday, we look to the story of the Transfiguration. And maybe even ask ourselves, what would we do in Peter's situation?



**Lent information will be coming soon!**



## 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 *The Book of Hebrews* led by Frank Wheeler

We invite you to join us as we begin a study of the Book of Hebrews. Remaining faithful to our commitment to follow Jesus and his way of life is not always easy. As we read through Hebrews, we will see that the early followers of Jesus struggled with their commitment to Jesus as well. They faced some of the same issues we face today and even some that we don't. Let's see how the Letter of Hebrews encourages and motivates its readers to maintain their faithfulness and perhaps we will find a renewal of our own commitment as well.



## 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!

## Cluster Laity Sunday

Again this year, our Cluster will be offering a Lay Service on Sunday afternoon, February 11 at 4:00 p.m. at Glen Oak Christian Church, 1115 E. Republic Street, Peoria. Sheila Carrell, from the Glen Oak congregation, will be preaching. Her sermon title is, "I Still Believe: Incredible Moments with Peter." Our offering will be used to further fund our Week of Compassion "Illinois Valley Cluster Circle of Compassion." A light supper will be served following worship.



Our Lay speaker, Sheila Carrell, joined the Disciples of Christ in 2002 at West Bluff Christian Church in West Peoria. When West Bluff closed in 2009, she joined Glen Oak Christian Church (2010). She has served the church in many capacities over the years and currently serves as an elder, a Worship team member and a member of the Chancel Choir. In 2025, she attended her first General Assembly for the wider Disciples Church. Sheila loves to quilt, to read (and makes great book recommendations!), to spend time with her family/friends and to walk her sweet dog, Gypsy, on the Rock Island Trail.

Mark your calendar to join others from area Disciples of Christ churches!

**BAPTIZING AMERICA**  
How Mainline Protestants Helped Build Christian Nationalism  
Brian Taylor & Beau Underwood  
Foreword by Adena Thorpe  
Senior Minister of the Riverside Church

**CONGREGATIONAL BOOK STUDY**  
with Pastor Adam  
Tuesdays @ 10:30a - in person!  
Thursdays @ 6:30p - on Zoom!  
February 5<sup>th</sup> @ 6pm  
Dinner with the Author,  
Rev. Beau Underwood

Join Pastor Adam either in person on Tuesdays at 10:30 am or Thursdays on Zoom at 6:30pm for a study on the Book, Baptizing America. We have also invited Rev. Beau Underwood for a dinner and discussion on February 5th at 6pm here at First Christian. The whole church is invited to attend this dinner even if you didn't join for the book study. Please Sign up at the information desk for the dinner so we can have enough food for everyone.

# FELLOWSHIP

## February Birthdays

Kevin Wolfe	2/2
Tom Nicoll	2/2
Sherry Wolfe	2/8
Pete Clausen	2/14



## January Anniversaries

Beth & Dan Cox	2/6
Connie & Steve Julien	2/14
Kathy & Craig Fenton	2/22



## Disciple Women February 10th @ 12pm

Our Guest Janet Middleton will lead us in an activity called Fiber Fun. Dessert is provided, bring a sack lunch, and all are welcome!



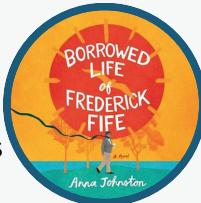
## Tasting Peoria Indian Tadka February 12th @ 6pm

An Indian restaurant with modern ambience, a pleasant bar, and excellent service! They only use the freshest ingredients and Halal certified meats of the highest calibers. Their flavors range from spicy to mellow but all of them pack a punch.



## Book Club The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife February 19th @ 5:30pm

*The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife* is about kind-hearted, elderly Fred Fife, who, after being evicted and facing homelessness, is mistaken for a deceased resident, Bernard Greer, at a nursing home and assumes his identity to get a place to live, leading him to spread joy, mend broken relationships, and discover new purpose and connection in later life; exploring themes of loneliness, forgiveness, and finding family.



## Movie Night Wicked: For Good February 26th @ 6pm

Now demonized as the Wicked Witch of the West, Elphaba lives in exile in the Ozian forest, while Glinda resides at the palace in Emerald City, reveling in the perks of fame and popularity. As an angry mob rises against the Wicked Witch, she'll need to reunite with Glinda to transform herself, and all of Oz, for good.



## February Potluck - 2/22

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
<b>2/1/26</b>	Vickie Baker Roger Baker	Monica Hinrichs Steve Hinrichs Jan Cusac Chris Carrico	Connie Sinn	Natalie Woods	Lindsey & Peter Hinshaw	Monica & Steve Hinrichs
<b>2/8/26</b>	Becky Sisk Mike Buckley	Monica Hinrichs Steve Hinrichs Jan Cusac Chris Carrico	Liz White	Natalie Woods	Lindsey & Peter Hinshaw	Jim & Beth Smittkamp
<b>2/15/26</b>	Carmen Nicoll Sandy Surface	Monica Hinrichs Steve Hinrichs Jan Cusac Chris Carrico	Larry Weber	Natalie Woods	Lindsey & Peter Hinshaw	Steve West Ralph Tegg
<b>2/22/26</b>	Kathleen Wheeler Frank Wheeler	Monica Hinrichs Steve Hinrichs Jan Cusac Chris Carrico	Kevin Wolfe	Natalie Woods	Lindsey & Peter Hinshaw	Roger & Vickie Baker

Date	Friends with Jesus	Growing Disciples	The Open Table
<b>2/1/26</b>	Jenny Tripses	Randy Williams	Frank Wheeler
<b>2/8/26</b>	Chere Peters	Randy Williams	Frank Wheeler
<b>2/15/26</b>	Jenny Tripses	Randy Williams	Frank Wheeler
<b>2/22/26</b>	Linda Rex	Randy Williams	Frank Wheeler