



## Holy Land Trip

This month I'll be in the Holy Land for 10 days. It's one of those early hopes and dreams which I have carried with me since my first memory of hearing about the land of the Patriarchs and the Lord. Oh, I've seen pictures, and I've spent hours looking over all kinds of maps of the Middle East and Israel in particular:

- maps which show the borders of the land during different periods of Israel's life:
- maps which show the movements of the tribes and other people
- maps of the major battles which Israel fought against their foes
- maps of the Exodus

- the movements of David in his exile
- the movements of Jesus
- the Missionary journeys of Paul, and so on

All the pictures and maps are wonderful, but I've always wanted to actually see where Jesus walked and experience the wonder of knowing that I'm physically right there where he was physically. It's just different and very important to me.

(Cont. on page 3)

# Texts & Sermons February

On February 4<sup>th</sup> we finish the pre-Lenten guidelines for Christian living and move into a time of considering our Lord's life, as seen through the eyes of the Early Christians and placed within context in our lives. The Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord, gives us new ways to understand the Covenant Faith of the Hebrew Patriarchs and our Lord's mission on earth. It's my prayer that you'll read the texts for each Sunday and allow them to penetrate your hearts and minds.

*Grace and peace, Pastor Roy*

## **Sunday, February 4, 2018: Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B): Communion Sunday**

Call to Worship: Psalm 147:1-11, 20c  
First Lesson: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23  
Second Lesson: Mark 1:29-39  
Sermon: %s Anything Too Hot for Him to Handle?+  
(The Prophet: Isaiah 40:21-31)

## **Sunday, February 11, 2018: The Transfiguration of the Lord: Jazz Sunday: Ordination & Installation**

Call to Worship: Mark 9:2-9  
First Lesson: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6  
Second Lesson: Psalm 50:1-6  
Sermon: %The Definition of Beauty+  
(The Hebrew Lesson: 2 Kings 2:1-12)



## **Wednesday, February 14, 2018: Ash Wednesday** - Service at 7:00 p.m.

Call to Worship: Psalm 51:1-7  
First Lesson: 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10  
Second Lesson: Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21  
Sermon: %The Lord's Chosen Fast+  
(The Hebrew Lesson: Isaiah 58:1-12)

## **Sunday, February 18, 2018: The First Sunday in Lent (Year B):** Deacon David Hammen Leading Worship

Call to Worship: Psalm 25:1-10  
First Lesson: Genesis 9:8-17  
Second Lesson: Mark 1:9-15  
(The Epistle: 1 Peter 3:18-22)

## **Sunday, February 25, 2018: The Second Sunday in Lent (Year B)**

Call to Worship: Psalm 22:23-31  
First Lesson: Romans 4:13-25  
Second Lesson: Mark 8:31-38  
Sermon: %It's not About the Desert+  
(The Torah Lesson: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16)



# Holy Land Trip

(Cont. from page 1)

So, while we prepare for our celebration of the Resurrection through the winding pathway of Lent, I'd be keeping in my heart the confusion and wonder of the Apostles as they traveled with and got to listen to the Savior of all humankind.

For focusing your prayers the following is our itinerary:

- Feb. 15 Depart for Israel
- Feb. 16 Tel Aviv and the Mediterranean Sea
- Feb. 17 Journey North through the Valley of Meggido and Nazareth
- Feb. 18 Western Galilee, Caesaria Philippi and the Mount of the Beatitudes
- Feb. 19 Journey to Jerusalem
- Feb. 20 Jerusalem, the Old City, the Western Wall of the Temple, and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher
- Feb. 21 Jerusalem and Bethlehem
- Feb. 22 The Dead Sea and Masada
- Feb. 23 Return Home

Keep us in your prayers, and may the Lord bless our congregation, our future together, our service to the Savior as we seek clarity to God's call and mission through our life together.

*The Lord bless you,*

*Pastor Roy C. Backus, Ph.D.*

---

## 2018 Priority Planning Report:

The devotions were based on John Chapter 1 and the way we come to the Lord, as the Lord comes to us, in discipleship. The movement of the story of John the Baptizer and the Apostle Andrew in relationship to the Lord gives insight into our spiritual journeys and call to ministry.

The conversations of our 2018 Priority Planning time revolved around the following: How has God blessed us in 2017? What has God accomplished through us in 2017? What do we do best? Who do we reach the best? Have we changed in our priorities and style of ministry? What do you believe should be our focus in 2018? First half of 2018? Second half of 2018? Overall? The conversations were open, lively and productive.

There were four major Priority Areas which were emphasized:

- 1) The unanimous first Priority of the participants is Securing ministry help to fill the Associate Pastor position. This is a two step process:
  - a) Interim Help (immediate, temporary assistance).
  - b) Installed Help (called and continued ministry.)(For more detailed information concerning the process, ask the office to send the Flow Chart for Calling a Pastor.+It is used as a guide by the Commission on Ministry in our Presbytery. Pastor Roy and Elder David Perry are both on the Commission on Ministry, and Elder Jay Roth has served and is knowledgeable of the process.)
- 2) Involvement and reaching of our Younger Families.

There are several ideas which were mentioned to we can approach care for our younger families:

  - a) Be more intentional and stay in contact with younger families.
  - b) Have families be liturgists.
  - c) Families as ushers
  - d) Encourage youth to sing, play and lead in worship.
  - e) Fellowship Pot Lucks
  - f) Include Cub Scouts in more activities and tasks with the church
  - g) Youth, Sunday School children, and Scouts team with the Deacons to visit Shut ins.
  - h) Jr. Choir Sing more often
  - i) 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Pot Luck and add Youth and Family Worship Sunday
- 3) Stewardship
  - a) Continue to create a strong financial, secure basis for staff and ministries of the church.
  - b) Salaries of Staff to Return to pre10% Level
- 4) Use of Social Media
  - a) Webinars
  - b) Finding ways to reach the Younger Families. David S. will help.
  - c) Pod Casts. Cody Rogers and Company??)

(Cont. to page 8)

# Christian Education Connection



**Nursery Volunteers:** Can you share 1 hour of your time during Sunday worship occasionally to be an extra pair of eyes in the nursery? Yes, we have staff attendants, but sometimes it is necessary for them to take children to the bathroom, get them a drink, etc. and an extra person is needed at those times. Please contact Mary Lee if you can lend a hand to help with the youngest members of our church family.



**Ink & Cell Phones:** Don't forget to recycle your pc or mac ink cartridges and old cell phones. There is a bin in the Christian Education office for them. All proceeds go to the youth group mission trip.

## LESSONS IN FEBRUARY:

Parents, we have listed below the lessons your children will be learning for the next month, so you can have family discussions about them at home.

Pre-K	K-2nd Grade Class	3rd—5th Grade Class	Junior High
Elisha and Naaman	Mary Honors Jesus	The Amazing Healing of Namaan	Being Givers
Jonah and the Giant Fish	A Crowd Honors Jesus	Elisha and the Blind Soldiers	Not Takers
Daniel and the Lions	Jesus Dies	Joash Repair the Temple	Telling the Truth
Anna Waits	Jesus is Alive	The Fall of Samaria	Learning Content & Growing in Faith

### FAITH CHEST: Middle School Milestone

In this milestone, we suggest the gift of a magnetic mirror, to be used in a school locker. It is one tool in this transitional time of life that can help youth remember they are created in God's image.

#### Caring Conversations

Begin with conversation:



- Who is one of your best friends?
- Why do you like to be with your friend?
- Why are friends important?
- What qualities make you a good friend?

#### Devotions

Read Psalm 8:3-6 (CEV)



I often think of the heaven your hands have made and of the moon and stars you put in place. Then I ask, *Why* do you care about us humans? Why are you concerned for us weaklings? You made us a little lower than you yourself, and you have crowned us with glory and honor. You let us rule everything your hands have made. And you put all of it under our power.

- Why does it matter that you are created in God's image?
- Does that fact change the way we should look at and interact with other people? How?
- God knows our names, cares about us and is always with us.

#### Service

Discuss ways your family can help one another and show respect in your own home. What are some ways you can encourage someone who is struggling with their self-image? Talk about how being made in the likeness of God relates to ways we can serve one another with love and compassion.



#### Rituals and Traditions

Closing prayer:

Gracious God, you have promised to be with us always. Be present with \_\_\_\_\_ during this time of beginning a new school year in middle school. Protect all of your children from being hurt by others and from hurting others. Guide them with your love and remind them that you are with them every moment. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.



**What commemorative token will you have to represent this milestone in your Faith Chest?**

# Missions of the Month

## "Off the Grid" Giving

Once each year, instead of highlighting one specific mission, the Mission Team compiles a list of the undertakings that have been **"money in, money out"** for the previous year. In other words, the mission work that is outside of our annual budget—those projects that people have been called towards besides their regular participation in the budget and life of our church. These contributions may be in the form of money or it may come in the form of time, talent or materials. We refer to this as our **"Off the Grid"** spreadsheet.

While some of these mission projects have an exact dollar figure to be reported, others are more difficult to assign a value (Mobile Meals, for example), so the Mission Team, comprised of Jolynn Patterson, Karen Peterson, Lori Johnson, with outgoing member Penny Rund, have determined a value based on various factors such as time spent, materials donated and money contributed. You will note, by looking at the information listed below, that we have divided the off-the-grid giving into a monetary category and a volunteer hours category. We also acknowledge that this is an inaccurate accounting of all the wonderful mission work carried out by members of our church family.

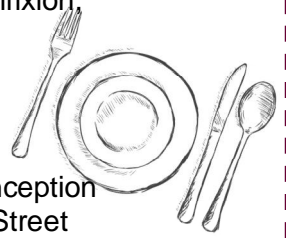
We hope that after you look at this list you will be impressed with all that our congregation has done here at First Presbyterian Church and that you will be inspired to **up your game** in the mission field in 2018!!

<b>Non-budgeted Items</b>		
CWS - hygiene kits	97 kits	
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$673.00	
Pentecost Offering		
Peace Offering	\$550.00	
Christmas Joy Offering	\$1,480.00	
Presbyterian Disaster Relief . Hurricane Harvey	\$7,470.00	
Presbyterian Disaster Relief - Maundy Thurs.	\$346.00	
Giving Catalog - June Mission of the Month	\$800.00	
Pres. Disaster Relief - Hurricane Maria	\$3,000.00	
Presbyterian Shared Mission Support	\$150.00	
We Care food truck	\$775.00	
Loving Deeds for Kids in Need	\$4,775.00	
Adopt-a-Family	8 families @ \$250/family	
St. Vincent's Table (4 X \$100)	\$400.00	
CHAOS mission trip	\$16,980.89	
Outreach meals for new mothers		Deacons
Knit for Kids	18 sweaters	
Music Scholarship	\$3,000.00	
Alex's Lemonade Stand	\$310.00	
Sunday School Offering - CROP	\$498.20	
Stronghold Day Camp (VBS)	We Care - canned goods	
Pastor's Emergency Fund	\$3,761.10	
CYC snacks (9 times/year)	\$450.00	
Deacons local emergency fund		Deacons
Deacons greeting cards and delivery of meals		Deacons
Deacons delivery of altar flowers		Deacons
Deacons "blue box"		Deacons
Deacons "funeral box"		Deacons
PADS - Chili Cook-off	\$164.70	
Loving Deeds Quilters	9 quilts	
Mobile Meals (45 days)	150 hours	
PADS Overnight Shelter	175 hours	
CHAOS service projects	58 hours	
Campbell Soup and Box Tops	3 hours	
REACH workcamp	720 hours	
Deacons' home communion		Deacons
Funeral Luncheons	7 funerals, 202 hours	
<b>Total dollars for non-budgeted items</b>	<b>\$47,583.89</b>	
<b>Total volunteer hours</b>	<b>1308 hours</b>	

## 2018 Lenten Luncheon Schedule

Theme: 2018 is one of those years when we need to pay attention to the Lord's life and message in the Gospels, so this year the Lenten Luncheons will center on the Lectionary Gospel texts for each coming Sunday. The Gospel message will remind us of our journey with the Lord Jesus to his Crucifixion and challenge us with his call upon our lives.

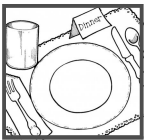
*Please RSVP to the host church, if you plan to attend.  
Each Luncheon starts at Noon, and lasts 1 hour.*



Date	Text	Topic	Host Church
2/21	Mark 8:31-38	The Son of Man Must Undergo Great Suffering+	Immaculate Conception 516 E Jackson Street Morris, IL (815) 942-0620
2/28	John 2:13-22	The Cleansing of the Temple and the Sign of Resurrection+	Living Water Church of the Nazarene 118 E Jefferson Street Morris, IL (815)942-2000
3/7	John 3:14-21	The Lifting Up of the Son of Man+	First Presbyterian Church 200 E Jackson Street Morris, IL (815)942-1871
3/14	John 12:20-33	Father, Glorify Your Name+	First United Methodist 118 W Jackson Street Morris, IL (815)942-0809
3/21	Mark 15:1-15	Barabbas or the King of the Jews?+	Peace Lutheran 101 Candlelight Lane Morris, IL (815)942-1010



**Per Capita:** We as members of First Presbyterian Church are part of the larger connection to the Presbytery of Blackhawk, Synod of Lincoln Trails, and Presbyterian Church, USA. Our contribution of Per Capita helps support the ministry and mission of our larger church organizations. Per Capita means per person. Every congregation pays an assessment based on their number of active members including Confirmed young people and older adults. This year, in 2018, we will pay \$36.34 per member. Please consider paying your Per Capita above and beyond your regular giving/pledge. This year, the Presbytery of Blackhawk will receive \$24.80; the Synod of Lincoln Trails- \$3.81 and General Assembly- \$7.73. Just mark your check with Per Capita in the memo line or Per Capita on the outside of a pew envelope. Any questions, please contact Leslie Chouinard in the church office.  
*Thank you!*



**Guess Who's Coming to dinner?:** Would you like to visit with a small number of your church family while enjoying a delicious meal in someone's home? Do you enjoy a little bit of mystery and surprise along with your fellowship? Sign up to participate in the next event on Saturday, February 24 at 7:00p.m. You'll receive a phone call or email close to the date when a member of the Outreach/Fellowship committee will tell you the address of your dinner and what sort of dish you should bring to pass (dessert, salad, etc.) Please indicate on the sign-up sheet whether you are willing to host 4-6 people in your home and also provide the main dish. This casual, friendly fellowship event is always fun! Sign up in the Fellowship Hall today!



# Committee Communication Corner

## Building & Grounds Committee:

We welcome Kevin Meany to our staff as church Sexton. He has been very busy since he began in mid-December, and his past experience with HVAC systems in large buildings is most valuable. We continue to monitor temperatures in both the nursery and the youth group room. Sealing the windows in the nursery seems to be helping control draftiness in that area. Brian Cleek is working on another quote to help provide supplemental heat to the youth area. In order to provide good stewardship of our funds, and still serve the church in the best possible way, we are exploring different options to solve the temperature problems. Other routine maintenance issues were discussed.

## Deacons:

- CYC Meal on 01/23/18
- Funeral Dinners for 2017 - 8 Total
- New Deacons to be Ordained the 1st Weekend of February.

## Christian Education Committee:

- CE will present Stronghold Traveling Day Camp again this summer.
- The background checks on all new teachers were clear.
- A description of class curriculum is in Presbyts each month as a result of the parent meeting.
- There will be nursery or lap sit for Saturday night service, but Saturday Discovery Class will continue.
- Two nursery volunteers will be needed while Courtney Hammen is on maternity leave.
- We are working on gifts to our teachers for Teacher Appreciation in February.

## Outreach/Fellowship Committee:

- Sunday, February 11- bowling (family fellowship event)
- Saturday, February 24- Guess Who's Coming to Dinner
- Sunday March 4- *Spamalot* at JJC
- Wednesday, March 7- Lenten Lunch in Upper Fellowship
- Sunday, March 11- Potluck and Talent Show in Upper Fellowship
- Thursday, July 26- Pool Party and Ice Cream Sundaes at Morris Pool
- Sometime in August- Secret Pal Reveal Party in Upper Fellowship

## Stewardship/Finance Committee:

The financial statements were reviewed and no significant issues were encountered. Discussions are being held in order to determine how we can achieve the goals of the church within the limitations of our funding. An increased emphasis on accurate budgets resulted in expenses finishing the year within 1½% of the projections made at the beginning of the year. This greatly helps in preventing financial surprises at the end of the year. The Per Capita amount for each congregation member in 2018 is \$36.34. This funds our local, regional and national Presbyterian offices. These organizations provide support to churches that are experiencing problems as well as helping to guide our denomination in a modern world. Last year our share of the expenses involved came to \$10,652.00, of which \$2,886.85 was donated by our congregation. The remainder came from our General Fund. Please help defray this expense by making a donation and writing %Per Capita+on either your offering envelope or your check.



Neil Born & Donna Cockream  
Jeff & Brooke Little  
Sara Abels

## 2018 Priority Planning Report (Continued):

Other Discussions and Ideas of Interest:

- The Importance of Personal Invitation
- The need of Spiritual Gifts, Talents, What I enjoy doing, etc. inventory to include more folks in doing what they enjoy. This should include youth.
- Direct Contact when recruiting volunteers. (Phone calls. few people respond to email or general invitations to volunteer.)
- Training Opportunities->How to play a guitar? Music help. How to load music on to your computer. How to take advantage of your smart phone. How to fix stuff around the house. Etc...
- Heat in Lower Fellowship Hall



# January Session Highlights

## Clerk's Report:

**Minutes** . Session approved the minutes of the Stated Meeting December 20 and Called Meeting December 24, 2017.

**Baptisms – Avery Marie Little**, daughter of Brooke (Kopczick) Little and Jeffrey Little was baptized on December 24, 2017.

**Deaths – Thomas “Tim” LeRoy Kewley, Sr.** passed away December 21, 2017 with funeral by Pastor Roy at Fred C. Dames Funeral Home, Morris on December 29.

**Membership – Sara Anne Abels and Jeffrey & Brooke (Kopczick) Little** were accepted as new members on December 24, 2017.

**Weddings** . nothing to report.

**Mission Report** . \$1480 was collected for Christmas Joy Offering.

**Correspondence** . received a thank you note from Presbyterian Historical Society for Session's \$50 donation.

## Session approved:

- After a presentation on family scouting by leaders from Cub Scout Pack 480, allowing girls to form their own den and meet at our church at the same time Cub Scout Pack 480 meets.

- The acceptance of the Statistical Report provided by Records Clerk Sue Jaeschke.

- Authorizing Records Clerk Sue Jaeschke to file the 2017 Annual Church Report with PC USA.

- Jay and Cheryl Roth to coordinate the Living Last Words presentation on Maundy Thursday, March 29, 2018 and the disciples be allowed to serve Communion.

- Changing the February 21, 2018 Stated Session Meeting to February 28, 2018 at 7pm as several Session members and Pastor Roy will be on the Israel trip.

- Barb Hildy and the Arts Guild of Grundy County's request to use our Sanctuary on Sunday, February 11 at 2pm for an Opera performed by Kyle Minett. If the Arts Guild is unable to find funding to pay for an accompanist for the Opera, a free-will offering to cover the cost is also approved.

- Cub Scout Pack 480's request to collect a Valentine's Day Offering during Worship on Sunday, February 11. This offering would go to support the Scouts.

- Tyler Eschenbaum and fiancée's wedding in our Sanctuary on Saturday, October 6, 2018.

Next Stated Meeting is **Wednesday, February 28, 2018 at 7pm.**

# Stewardship & Finance Report

## December



For the month of December, our total giving to the church came to \$149,287.34. This is due in large measure to a very generous one-time donation. Expenses were \$37,800.22. For the year, our income was \$530,660.39. Expenses were \$422,003.30. We have spent about \$21,900 less this year than last year coming extremely close to our budget predictions at the beginning of the year. We would like to thank the congregation for their financial support throughout the year.

We appreciate your continued support of our Lord's work. If you would like to sign up to have your donation automatically transferred electronically from your checking account to the church, please contact Sue Jaeschke or Leslie Chouinard. We also offer the option to donate using PayPal.

Respectfully, your Stewardship and Finance Committee:

Matt Seidel, Karen Gore, Marilyn Winters, Cyndy Olson, Jay Roth, John Ellsworth

First Presbyterian Church, Morris IL - Morris IL  
Consolidated Fund Activity Report for December 2017

Account #	Account Name	Beg Balance	Receipts	Disbursements	Transfers/JE's	End Balance
300.100	General Fund	63,169.33	149,287.34	37,800.22	1,030.00	175,686.45
310.200	Buildings & Grounds Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
320.200	Loving Deeds for Kids in Need Fund	12,482.26	(947.88)	0.00	0.00	11,534.38
320.300	MPW-Final Disbursements Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
330.100	Prepaid Pledges Fund	1,030.00	23,320.00	0.00	(1,030.00)	23,320.00
330.200	Emergency Funds General Reserve	34,748.84	0.00	0.00	0.00	34,748.84
330.300	Vehicle Repairs & Maint Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
330.400	Major Maintenance Fund	16,424.26	1,125.00	0.00	51.35	17,600.61
330.500	Pastor's Continuing Education Fund	1,951.36	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,951.36
330.550	Associate Pastor's /Continuing Education Fund	297.25	0.00	0.00	0.00	297.25
330.600	Mission Trip Fund	3,195.92	1,425.00	510.80	6,071.40	10,181.52
330.650	Jr Hi Youth Activity Fund	1,688.92	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,688.92
330.700	Church Property & Buildings	2,961,176.86	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,961,176.86
330.800	Pastor's Emergency Fund	2,256.41	287.50	909.89	0.00	1,634.02
330.900	Capital Improvements Fund	0.00	100.00	48.65	(51.35)	0.00
330.950	Sabbatical Fund 2015-2016 Balance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
340.100	Adult Ministry Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
399.999	Suspense Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$3,098,421.41</b>	<b>\$174,596.96</b>	<b>\$39,269.56</b>	<b>\$6,071.40</b>	<b>\$3,239,820.21</b>