



# The Circuit Rider

Princeton First United Methodist Church  
316 S. Church Street ♦ Princeton, IL 61356  
princetonfirstumc.org

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Pastor Michael Ray Hickok

Cell: 630.781.5814

Email: [pastormike@princetonfirstumc.org](mailto:pastormike@princetonfirstumc.org)

Church Office: Mon -Thurs 9:00--4:00

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♦ MARCH 2025 ♦

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## A Word from Pastor Mike

Lent is a season of forty days, not including Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday, the day before Easter. Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, which points to the lengthening of the days as spring approaches. The season is a preparation for celebrating Easter. Historically, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism for new converts to Christianity. Later it became a time of reflection and self-examination for all Christians.

At the heart of our Christian faith is our participation in the life, suffering, death, resurrection, ascension and promised return of Jesus Christ as Lord. These events are true whether or not I prepare for Easter. However, without my heart and life being ready, I may not experience the depth and power of these realities. Lent is an intentional, yearly reminder of the need for the renewal of our Christian faith. Living in such a busy age, requires a time to refocus our thoughts and practices. Surrounded by a group of Christians who love and encourage us, helps us to honestly examine our motives and actions.

The Princeton First United Methodist Church family walks together on this journey each year. We will begin this important season with our **Ash Wednesday Worship on March 5, at 7:00 pm**. We will gather to sing, pray, open God's word, and receive ashes on our foreheads as a sign of our need for repentance.

As we journey together during this season of Lent, please worship with our church family each week on Sundays at 9:00 am and on the first and third Saturdays at 5:30 pm. We invite you to practice some of these Inward and Outward Spiritual Disciplines.

### Inward and Personal Disciplines

- Read the entire Gospel of Luke
- Read a Christian book for inner growth.
- Focus on thanksgiving, rather than on asking, in prayer.
- Forgive someone who has hurt you.

### Outward and Social Disciplines

- Write a letter of affirmation to a person who has touched your life.
- Plan to visit a "homebound" neighbor or church member.
- Go to coffee or dinner with someone you want to know better.
- Say "No" to something that is a waste of money and time.
- Assist a Senior Adult with a task they cannot do for themselves.

May God in Christ bless you richly,  
*Michael Ray Hickok*

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## March at a Glance

March 11 - 1:30 Care Team Meeting

March 20 - 6:30 Finance Meeting

March 24 - 6:30 Trustees Meeting

## Holy Communion

The sacrament of Holy Communion will be served on the first weekend of March - **Saturday the 1st** and **Sunday the 2nd**. If you prefer to take communion at home with the live broadcast, you are welcome to pick up a communion pack from the office during the week before.



## Our Table

Our Table will meet twice in March to provide a meal and fellowship to anyone who would like to attend. Everyone is invited to come on Mondays, **March 10 and 24 from 5:00 – 6:00 pm.**



## March Worship Schedule

Sunday Worship  
Sundays 9:00

Saturday Evening Service  
March 1st 5:30\*  
March 15th 5:30

Holy Communion  
March 1st 5:30\*  
March 2nd 9:00

Ash Wednesday  
Wednesday March 5th  
7:00 pm

## March Change the World

March's Change the World will be donated to **Arukah**. Arukah Institute of Healing provides client-centered therapeutic, crisis, and wellness services spanning the continuum of prevention, treatment, and recovery in rural communities. Please consider donating your change into the glass jar outside the Sanctuary. Thank you for all generous giving!

## Change the World February Report

We collected over \$412 for Loads of Love. With the match from Missions, the anticipated donation will be over \$824 donated to this organization which provides quarters for people in need to wash and dry their clothes.

## Ash Wednesday Service

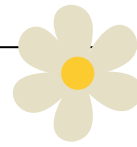
Ash Wednesday begins the season of Lent in the church. PFUMC has a worship service where we learn about sin and repentance, and share in the imposition of ashes. We will share in this service again this year on Wednesday, March 5 at 7:00pm

## Looking Ahead Holy Week

Schedule of Holy Week Services:

- Palm Sunday April 13 9:00am
- Maundy Thursday April 17 7:00pm
- Good Friday April 18 7:00pm
- Saturday (Easter Observed) April 19 5:30pm
- Easter Sunday April 20 at 9:00am

# SUNDAY SCHOOL



## CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Despite the snow and cold temperatures this month, we have learned a lot at Children's Sunday School! We read stories about God leading the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, the Transfiguration, and Peter's prayers while imprisoned. The kids enjoyed building a Tabernacle out of pipes and connectors just like the Israelites did and discussing times of the day they pray like Peter. We also had a lot of fun talking about our predictions for the Super Bowl and creating valentines for the church members that are in the local nursing homes.

Amanda Noord-  
Children's Sunday School Leader



## YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Youth Sunday School is for children grades 6-12 meets at 10:15 following Sunday Worship on the second Sunday of the month. Youth Sunday school will meet March 9.

## ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

The **Righteous Renegades** Sunday School welcome anyone who would like to **join in Cushing Hall at 10:15.**

**The Middles** Sunday School meets Sundays in **the library at 10:15.** The group will begin a **Lenten Study starting on March 9.** They will use the book: Jesus for Our Time by J. Ellsworth Kalas. The books are already in the library (previously used) and can be picked beginning Sunday 3/2.



## YOUTH GROUP LEADER VACANCY



Julie Kuhne has ended her service as Youth Group Leader. We appreciate her service and hope someone will step forward to keep our youth group active. Hours and schedule are flexible and negotiable. Please send your letter of interest to Pastor Mike, care of the Church Office.



## LENTEN STUDY SERIES WITH PASTOR MIKE

Pastor Mike will offer a Wednesday night study during Lent. We will meet in Cushing Hall from 5:30-6:30 on **March 12, 19, & 26** and **April 2, 9, & 16**. Our study will focus on the book: *Give Up Something Bad for Lent*, by James W. Moore. He was a beloved United Methodist Pastor and author of 40 books. There is no charge for the book and you can see Pastor Mike to pick up your copy.



## UPCOMING WINTER/SPRING LAITY EVENTS

March 22 (Saturday) - Lay Leadership Training  
9:00 AM – Noon Oregon UMC

March 29 (Saturday) - Lay Servant Ministries (Lay Academy) Session 1

April 5 (Saturday) - Lay Servant Ministries (Lay Academy) Session 2  
Times & location TBA

April 24 (Thurs. night) – April 27 (Sun. afternoon) Men's Walk to Emmaus  
East Bay Camp, Lake Bloomington

May 15 (Thurs. night) – May 18 (Sun. afternoon) Women's Walk to Emmaus  
East Bay Camp, Lake Bloomington



## PRAIRIE SOUTH LAY ACADEMY

This year's Lay Academy will be held at Mendota First UMC on **Saturdays, March 29 and April 5**, from **approximately 8:30 am – 3:00 pm**. Classes include: "Ministry With the Forgotten" a book study led by Janet Becker, United Methodist Polity, led by Peggy Hansen, For the Common Good: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts, led by Clifford Peddicord, Congregational Care Ministry, led by Pastor Peyton "Buzz" Wheeler, and Leading Personal Prayer, led by Raleigh Shifflette. You can register online. Cost is \$40/per participant. Youth are encouraged to attend at no cost as long as they are accompanied by a paying adult. A light breakfast and lunch will be provided.



## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Our March meeting will be held on **Wednesday, March 19th at 1:30 PM** in Cushing Hall. The program will be presented by Mary Jane Dolk, explaining the Reading Program of UWF. She will also be introducing us to the new books acquired in our library. If you are looking for a new read, this is the program for you! All women are invited to attend. Hostesses for March are Mary Jane Dolk and Judy Harris.

A big thank you goes to Shelly Grabill for completing and printing our UWF Yearbooks for 2025. They were hot off the copy machine for our February meeting and presented to those who attended. If you were not at the February meeting and did not get a copy of the 2025 Yearbook, you may pick one up off the table in front of the church office.

Also, a big thank you to all the women who contributed to our mission offering for "Loads of Love". A total of \$140 was collected at our February meeting and sent to Open Prairie United Church of Christ to aid them with their mission of helping people afford clean laundry. "Love never ends and neither does laundry!"

## ECUMENICAL WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Women's Ecumenical Bible Study will start a six week **Lenten Study on March 10**, entitled "The Walk". This video study will include the Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life...Worship and Prayer, Study, Service, Giving, and Sharing. The Ecumenical Bible Study is open to all women regardless of faith or denomination. They meet **every Monday morning at 10:00 am** in the Church Library. This group is a "drop-in" group which means attendance every week is not required. If you have questions, please reach out to: Janet Becker at [beckerjnj71@gmail.com](mailto:beckerjnj71@gmail.com).



## PROMISE SALE



The first sale dates are Saturday, **March 8 from 10 am – 2 pm**, and **Sunday, March 9 from 12 – 4 pm or by appointment**. There is a huge selection of prom and special occasion dresses in sizes 0-22 priced at \$50 or less in the lower level. We can always use anyone's help to hang dresses back on the rack, or direct girls to an empty dressing room. If you can help on either day, please contact Shelly Grabill in the church office.



## YOUNG AT HEART

We had a fun soup and sandwich luncheon on Valentine's Day. Pat James and Donna Prinz lead us in singing love songs. We played some trivia games and guessed how many kisses were in the jar. Judy Harris was the winner with guessing the exact amount.

Our next gathering will be a baked potato bar on **Wednesday, March 12th at noon** in Cushing Hall. We may be celebrating St Patrick's Day. Everything will be provided. Signup sheet will be outside the office. Please join us.

Future events include a Gospel Show & luncheon at White Pines Lodge on April 23rd and a lunch cruise on Celebration Belle on the Mississippi River on June 12th.



## TRUSTEES UPDATE

Women of the church will soon be able to use the totally renovated women's restroom. Bill Wendle & Bill Kuhne have spent countless hours bringing this project to fruition. Please thank them when you see them.

Shelly's office will soon be updated as well as the replacement of ceiling tiles to Cushing Hall. When the tiles arrive, we will need approximately 8-10 volunteers each day to complete this task in a timely manner. I will be recruiting volunteers soon.

The Capitol Campaign continues & projects are being completed thanks to your generous donations. Our work at PFUMC is never done. With YOUR continued support, other major projects will continue to be completed.

I will be updating all of you as to our next Trustee projects. My goal is to do this quarterly. If you notice things around the church that need repair, please bring them to my attention so they can be rectified. Thank you & God bless.

Respectfully,  
Sherri Parker Trustees chairperson



## GREEN TEAM



The Green Committee would like to help our congregation improve sustainability for the health of the planet. **Goal one is avoiding single use Styrofoam.** In our church this is Styrofoam cups, plates, and bowls. We can make a difference by:

1. Choose to purchase single use products such as paper cups and recyclable plastic leftover containers.
2. Choose food products and other items in cardboard/paper/recyclable plastic containers rather than Styrofoam. i.e. eggs in cardboard cartons.
3. Reuse any Styrofoam you already have: crafts, stuffing toys, starter pots for plants, and more.
4. Practice using your own durable containers such as thermoses for coffee.

Be on the lookout for more helpful tips on ways to be more Green at home and church, plus much more!



## DONATION CART REMINDER



Just a reminder, that we are always accepting food items for Tri-County Food Pantry. Please feel free to bring them in and drop them in the shopping cart located in Cushing Hall. Items they are most in need of are: Hamburger Helper, peanut butter, canned fruit in syrup, canned chicken, white or brown rice, canned ravioli, and any kind of snacks. The need is great, and all gifts are appreciated.



## APRIL BELLS & CHOIR



Please note: There will be no Bells rehearsal on April 1 and no choir rehearsal on April 2.



## CHURCH COMMUNICATIONS



Please continue to send Newsletter submissions, social media posts, and digital sign update requests to Elizabeth Schlender at:  
[comm@princetonfirstumc.org](mailto:comm@princetonfirstumc.org)  
Photos of smiling faces at church events are always appreciated!

## Finance Report

Here's a brief report on the church's finances through the end of January. (Note that each month is worth 8.33% of the year, and we have completed this year.)

- Income in January: 6.5% of annual budget
  - Total year income: 6.5% of annual budget.
- Expenses in January: 7.6% of annual budget
  - Total year to date expenses: 7.6% of annual budget

## Worship Videos Online

The Sunday worship videos are always available on PFUMC's youtube.com channel. Open the YouTube app on your device, or type [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) into your internet browser. Then search for 'Princeton IL First United Methodist Church'. When you see one of our videos show up on your screen, click on it. If that's not the one you want to view, simply click on where it says 'First United Methodist Church' under the video that's playing. Then you'll be able to see the whole selection of videos you can choose.

Worship Videos are live Sundays on the church's Facebook page.



## PRINCETON BOARD GAME GROUP

Every Friday night the Princeton Board Game Group meets at 6:00 pm in Cushing Hall. Everyone is invited to join the fun! All player levels are welcome. For more information, contact Carla Towne or Jon McCutchan.



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Are you interested in serving your community? **The Princeton Closet is looking for volunteers** and part time cashiers. The Princeton Closet is a non-profit organization focused on giving back to communities in Bureau County. Started over 50 years ago by a group of church women who learned of children without shoes and families in need, today The Princeton Closet is an upscale resale store filled with treasures from donations of furniture, home decor, household goods, clothing, accessories, toys and much more. If you want to be part of this passionate group, please email Amy Murphy at [theprincetoncloset@gmail.com](mailto:theprincetoncloset@gmail.com) or stop by during regular business hours Thursday-Friday 10-4pm and Saturday 10-3pm.



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## FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH MOVIE

The First Lutheran Church will be showing the movie “The Most Reluctant Convert” which tells the story of C.S Lewis’ journey from hard-boiled atheist to “the most reluctant convert in all England” on **Sunday, March 9** at 10:45 am in their fellowship hall. Any questions, call the church at 815-875-1685.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR FINANCIAL PERSEVERANCE

On behalf of the PFUMC Finance Committee, we would like to say a big 'thank you' to all the people who have continued to contribute financially to the ministries of our church. Below are some of the ways in which you can give to the church.

1. Via mail – 316 S. Church Street, Princeton.
2. In the locked white mailbox by the main glass doors of the building.
3. Via your bank’s on-line bill pay program. A physical check is then mailed to the church.
4. An automatic withdrawal (EFT/ACH) taken from your checking, savings or investment account. This can be done through your bank, or at our bank. **Contact Shelly Grabill for the bank information (i.e. routing number and acct. number).**
5. Through PayPal. Just visit our website ([princetonfirstumc.org](http://princetonfirstumc.org)) and click on the ‘giving’ button. Then follow the instructions. You can set it up for a one-time use, or on-going. See Shelly if you have difficulties.

We continue to do ministry because of God’s grace and your support.

## REMEMBERING PFUMC IN YOUR WILL

We never like to think about the time when we won’t be here, but it comes for all of us. Thankfully, we know the next phase of our life is a joyful one – being reunited with loved ones and with God. But we will all leave behind both the ‘stuff’ of this life and a legacy. What better way to combine both than by including your church in your will. Hopefully you have wonderful people to leave gifts to as well, but if you include PFUMC in your will, you’ll be ensuring important ministry will continue long into the future because of your generosity. See a member of the Endowment Committee if you have questions.

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## PRAYER CORNER

Remember in your prayers...Joyce Linker (health issues), Becky Guither (recovery), Margaret Palmer (broken hip recovery), Brooke (Alan Bergh's friend's granddaughter – missing), Gerald King (Joyce Bickett's nephew – cancer), Kristie Cass (recovery), those with cancer, flu, COVID-19 or illness in our congregation, those awaiting tests/results, those recovering from surgery & treatments, those traveling, the lonely, the homeless, military personnel, health care workers, law enforcement, fire and emergency personnel.

**\*\*IF YOUR LOVED ONE IS IN THE HOSPITAL OR AT A NURSING HOME, PLEASE LET THE CHURCH KNOW WHERE THEY ARE AND THEIR STATUS. MOST HOSPITALS/NURSING HOMES DON'T LET THE CHURCH KNOW WHEN YOUR LOVED ONE IS ADMITTED.**



## PARKING ANNOUNCEMENT

We have a number of people who have difficulty walking in our congregation. It is important for them to find a parking space near the ramp or the Cushing Hall entrance. We encourage those of you with no limitations on your mobility to park on the north and west sides of the building. This will free up spaces on the east side for those who need to park closer. Thank you for your kindness.



### Altar Flowers

If you're interested in providing flowers for the altar, let the church office know. Flowers are a beautiful part of God's creation, and people love seeing them in the Chancel area. You can order them from a florist, or pick them from your garden. Share the beauty with others as we worship God!



### Treats for Social Hour

Volunteers are needed! The church provides the coffee, lemonade and water, but we rely on your baking skills/donations for the treats. Please consider signing up on the sheet outside the office, if you can provide treats of your choice. Thank you!



### Donation Cart

If you have items to donate to Tri-County Food Pantry, please feel free to bring them in and drop them in the shopping cart located in Cushing Hall. The need is great, and all gifts are appreciated.

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# MARCH

## *Celebrations*




### Birthdays

- |          |                   |           |                  |           |                |
|----------|-------------------|-----------|------------------|-----------|----------------|
| <b>1</b> | Jack Becker       | <b>13</b> | Jamie Bystry     | <b>23</b> | Jeff Grabill   |
| <b>2</b> | Ginger Freeberg   |           | Tom Etheridge    | <b>26</b> | Eleanor Walker |
| <b>4</b> | Arlene Peters     |           | Mary Wooden      | <b>27</b> | Max Boes       |
| <b>5</b> | Courtney Atkinson | <b>14</b> | Karen Metternich | <b>29</b> | Julie Kuhne    |
| <b>6</b> | Ruth Ann Wright   | <b>20</b> | Veronica Carroll |           | J.D. Orwig     |
| <b>8</b> | Tyler VandeVenter |           | Anna Roadhouse   | <b>31</b> | Douglas Faber  |
|          | Randy Warren      | <b>21</b> | Joshua Wooden    |           |                |
|          | Jacquie Woodley   | <b>22</b> | Christie Lucas   |           |                |

### Anniversaries

- |           |                       |
|-----------|-----------------------|
| <b>8</b>  | John and Mary Damon   |
| <b>14</b> | Scott and Diana Piper |
| <b>15</b> | Jerry and Jan Piper   |

# March 2025 at First United Methodist Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>March Change the World: Arukah</p>						 <p>5:30 Saturday Evening Worship with <i>Holy Communion</i></p>
<p>2 9 am Worship with <i>Holy Communion</i> in-person or live-stream Children's Sunday School 10:00 Righteous Renegades 10:15 The Middles</p>	<p>3 10 - Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>4 6:00 Handbells Practice</p>	<p>5 5:30 Ash Wednesday Service</p>	<p>6 6:00 Board Game Group</p>	<p>7 Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Game Group</p>	<p>8 Promise Sale 10:00- 2:00</p>
<p>9 9 am Worship in-person or live-stream Choir Sing Children's Sunday School Youth Sunday School 10:00 Righteous Renegades 10:15 The Middles Promise Sale 12:00 - 4:00</p>	<p>10 10:00 Women's Bible Study 5 pm Our Table </p>	<p>11 1:30 Care Team</p>	<p>12 10:00 UWF Board Meeting 12:00 Young at Heart Baked Potato Bar 5:30 Lenten Study w/ Pastor Mike 6:30 Choir practice</p>	<p>13 12:00 Princeton Ministerial Assn (Cushing Hall)</p>	<p>14 Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Game Group</p>	<p>15 5:30 Saturday Evening Worship</p>
<p>16 9 am Worship in-person or live-stream Handbells Play Children's Sunday School 10:00 Righteous Renegades 10:15 The Middles</p>	<p>17 10:00 Women's Bible Study </p>	<p>18 6:00 Handbells Practice</p>	<p>19 1:30 United Women in Faith Meeting 5:30 Lenten Study w/ Pastor Mike 6:30 Choir practice</p>	<p>20 6:30 Finance Meeting</p>	<p>21 Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Game Group</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>23 9 am Worship in-person or live-stream Choir Sing Children's Sunday School 10:00 Righteous Renegades 10:15 The Middles</p>	<p>24 10:00 Women's Bible Study 5 pm Our Table 6:30 Trustees Meeting</p>	<p>25 6:00 Handbells Practice</p>	<p>26 5:30 Lenten Study w/ Pastor Mike 6:30 Choir practice</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28 Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Game Group</p>	<p>29</p>
<p>30 9 am Worship in-person or live-stream Children's Sunday School 10:00 Righteous Renegades 10:15 The Middles</p>	<p>31 10:00 Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>6:00 Handbells Practice</p>	<p>6:30 Choir practice</p>			



## The First United Methodist Church of Princeton, Illinois

Worship Service	9:00 a.m.
Saturday Service (1st & 3rd Saturdays)	5:30 p.m.
Michael Ray Hickok	Pastor
Fallon Bush	Treasurer
Josh Bush	A/V Technology Director
Charles Gebeck	Organist
Pat James	Chancel Choir Accompanist
Shelly Grabill	Office Manager & Financial Secretary
Amanda Noord	Children's Sunday School Leader
Shelley Orwig	Youth Sunday School Leader
Karen Newby	Handbell Choir Director/Chancel Choir Director
Tom Newby	Lay Leader
Elizabeth Schlender	Communications Director
Chris Rucinski	Nursery
Church Office	(815) 872-2821
Church General E-mail	<a href="mailto:office@princetonfirstumc.org">office@princetonfirstumc.org</a>
Church Website	<a href="http://princetonfirstumc.org">princetonfirstumc.org</a>

**The First United Methodist Church of Princeton**  
**316 South Church Street**  
**Princeton, IL 61356**

**POSTMASTER:**  
**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



**March 2025 Circuit Rider**