



FROM PASTOR ERIC

“To fall in love with God is the greatest romance; to seek God the greatest adventure; to find God, the greatest human achievement.” ~ Saint Augustine

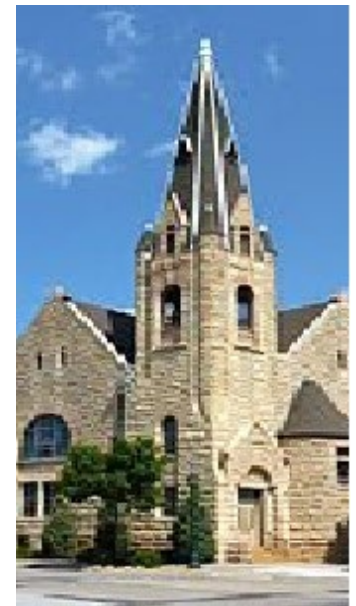
Despite growing up Presbyterian, the church of my childhood was decidedly Evangelical. As such, we placed a high value on personal encounter with God. Some would emphasize the centrality of Jesus for this task, while others favored the Holy Spirit, and most common of all was an emphasis on the daily reading of Scripture and personal prayer. Even though the experience of God may happen via corporate worship, the focus tended to remain on what I felt as an individual.

While I benefited a great deal from my childhood community, I grew up into the problem of not know where I fit into this worship and practice when I neither felt what I was supposed to feel nor believed what I was meant to believe. And I don’t believe that I was alone, since there were woefully few guides to offer wisdom or direction for what it might mean to say with Job: “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.”

Following my departure from the church in undergrad, as I was coming back to a belief, I realized that my concerns about how to pursue meeting with God remained. However, something had changed. I was no longer without guides, having been introduced to the many followers of Christ who’d come before me and commented on their process of encountering the Divine. My childhood church was not particularly concerned with the lives of the saints prior to the Reformation, but in finding them now, they were helping me to understand how personal encounter with God might strengthen the corporate life of the church; how contemplation could fuel action.

Regardless of whether we call them mystics or saints or holy fools, there is a lineage of Jesus’ disciples who’ve made it a point to conduct field research into the Divine, and then report back to the people of their communities. They have not wandered off into esotericism, unconcerned with the problems of the world, since they are tethered to other people by love. Such is the aim of any encounter with God, since God’s love for the world compels us to love it as well.

Continued on next page...



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Prayer Requests	1
Volunteers	1
Church Calendar	2
Program Calendar	3
February Birthdays	3
Theology on Tap!	3
Other Programming	4
Presbyterian Women	4
Library News	4
Session Minutes	7
Sermon Series	9
Church Contact Info	10



**Sunday, February 2 is
Fair Trade Coffee Hour!**

**Sunday, February is
2-Cents-A-Meal**

Continued from Pastor Eric

When we meet with God in powerful ways, we are equipped powerfully for the good. As the 13th Century mystic, Mechthild of Magdeburg writes: "I cannot dance, Lord, unless you lead me. If you wish me to leap joyfully, let me see you dance and sing." I believe that we all could use some guidance into finding joy these days. We all might receive some direction for learning how to dance with the Lord.

Throughout the year ahead, I would like to reiterate this invitation: *let us together pursue encountering the Lord.* For whenever a person encounters the Lord, they cannot be the same again. Like Jacob become Israel, we will joyfully limp along into a future where we are grateful to be changed. So starting with this article, and then in a sermon on February 23rd, and then in a Lenten offering, we will be asked with one another what it looks like to practically pursue God with one another. I hope that you will join me taking this leap into faith. I pray that we all might encounter God and be changed by how our contemplation leads us to action.

In Christ,
Eric



Do you know someone who is in the hospital, someone who would like to hear a friendly voice, or someone who would like to make a prayer request? The FPC Pastoral staff and Deacons would like to hear from you!

You can complete a Prayer Request form online at www.fpcmankato.org/prayer-requests, call, or email the Church office and our administrative assistant will get you connected to Pastor Eric and the Deacons! 507.387.2160 | info@fpcmankato.org

A graphic of the word "PRAY" in large, bold, block letters. Each letter is a different color: P is green, R is purple, A is blue, Y is orange. The letters have a textured, slightly distressed appearance.

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS

Every Sunday, FPC members **generously volunteer their time** during worship services and for many other activities—we **just want to say**

THANK YOU!

For all you do! We couldn't do it without you!

If you would like to volunteer during a worship service, please visit our SignUp Genius website here: [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0c4ea8a92fa1fe3-livestream#/,](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0c4ea8a92fa1fe3-livestream#/) or, please call the church office and Lori can help you with getting signed up.

FEBRUARY CHURCH CALENDAR



February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 10:00 a.m. Communion Worship 10:30 a.m. Kidz Club Fair Trade & 2-Cents-A-Meal during Coffee Hour 11:20 a.m. WiredWord 11:30 a.m. Faith Formation	3 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Youth Room Not Available	4	5 Weekly E-Blast Articles Due 6:00 p.m. Love Thy Neighbor Book Club	6	7	8
9 10:00 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Kidz Club 11:20 a.m. WiredWord	10	11 6:00 p.m. Budget Committee 6:00 p.m. Community Engag. Team	12 Weekly E-Blast Articles Due 5:30 p.m. Properties Committee	13	14	15
16 10:00 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Kidz Club 11:15 a.m. Deacons Meeting 11:20 a.m. WiredWord	17 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Youth Room Not Available	18	19 Weekly E-Blast Articles Due 9:30 a.m. PW Meeting 5:00 p.m. Worship Committee 6:00 p.m. Session	20 March Newsletter Articles Due 6:00 p.m. Theology on Tap!	21	22
23 10:00 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Kidz Club 11:20 a.m. WiredWord 11:30 a.m. Families Connect	24	25	26 Weekly E-Blast Articles Due	27	28	

FEBRUARY

2025

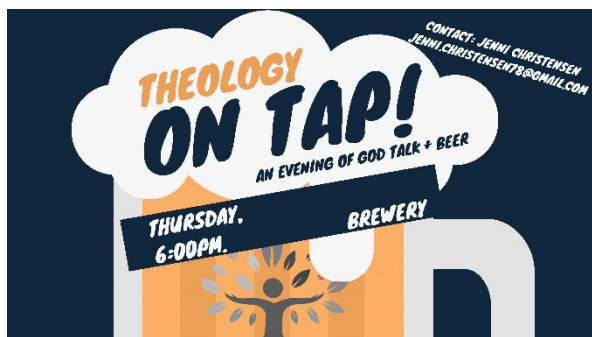
PROGRAMMING DATES



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 Choir Rehearsal 9 AM Sunday School 10:20 AM Wired Word 11:20 AM	3	4	5 Love Thy Neighbor Book Club @ 6 PM	6	7	8
9 Choir Rehearsal 9 AM Sunday School 10:20 AM Wired Word 11:20 AM	10	11	12	13	14	15
16 Choir Rehearsal 9 AM Sunday School 10:20 AM Wired Word 11:20 AM	17	18	19 Presbyterian Women @9:30 AM	20 Theology on Tap @6PM	21	22
23 Choir Rehearsal 9 AM Wired Word 11:20 AM No Sunday School	24	25	26	27	28	
Families Connect at 11:30 AM						

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

5 Nancy Evans	Phyllis Dahl 20
5 Katelyn Prahm	Mari Lopez 20
12 Joan Fredericksen	Ariana Lopez 27
15 Hannelore Leipold	Holly Stolp 28
16 Eydie Swanson	



THEOLOGY ON TAP!

**Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
At LocAle Brewery, 228 Poplar Street, Mankato**

We're looking for future speakers/panel discussion members for future gatherings!

I've been a member of our church for less than 2 years, and I'm learning some wonderful things about a few people in our congregation. However, wouldn't it be nice to learn about the journeys of the lives/careers/faith of more of our congregants? I heard from one member that said it's a shame that we often don't learn about our fellow church members until we attend their funerals. Pastor Eric, Lizz, and I would love to have some volunteers that are willing to share, whether as a solo or duo or as a small group, followed by discussion.

If a brewery is not your comfort zone, we can plan some of our gatherings in our fellowship hall. We will also be sending out requests to individuals that have been recommended, but we want to start with an open invitation 😊

Please respond by email or text or phone (below), or you may send an email about your willingness to be a speaker or panel member to Lori in the church office at administrative@fpcmankato.org.

Thank you!

Jenni Christensen

jenni.christensen78@gmail.com

651-703-6116

and

Pastor Eric Garner

pastor@fpcmankato.org

507-519-2633

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children Kidz Club

Classes during the
Worship service for age
groups:

Pre-K – 5th grade
10:20 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Children's room

No registration Required.
Contact Lizz with any
questions!

YOUTH GROUP

Youth

11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Every Sunday with
Lizz. Tons of activities
planned for fall!

No registration required.
Contact Lizz at with any
Questions!

educator@fpcmankato.org



CHANCEL CHOIR

Sunday morning rehearsals at 9:00 a.m. in the FPC Chapel, choir sings at 10:00 a.m. during Worship Service in the Sanctuary.

Contact Dr. Andrew Kendall at music@fpcmankato.org

Our adult choir provides beautiful musical offerings during our Sunday worship services. This is a low-commitment opportunity to sing with a group and dive more deeply in worship arts practices.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CIRCLE

The PW Circle will meet Wednesday, February 19 at 9:30 a.m. in the Lower Level. Thank you to Pam Grems who will lead the *Horizons Bible study lesson 5: Air Quality*, and thanks to Marcia Richards who will serve as hostess.

All are welcome for this time of fellowship!



LIBRARY NEWS

New Book in the Library: *The Small and the Mighty: Twelve Unsung Americans Who Changed the Course of History, from the Founding to the Civil Rights Movement* by Sharon McMahon has been added to the church library, an enlightening and engaging book donated by Sally Coomes.



Families Connect

Sunday, February 23, at 11:30 a.m. at FPC.

- Pastor Eric will be teaching the symbols of Baptism
- Celebrate with a birthday cake!
- Lunch is provided!

Contact **Lizz Kendall** at educator@fpcmankato.org

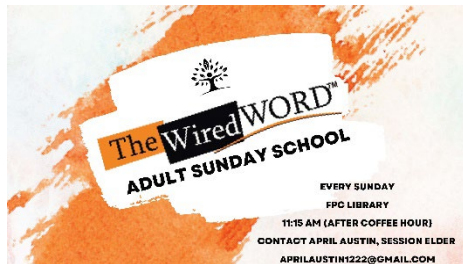
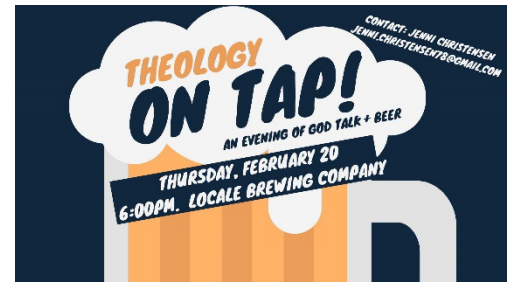
All families are welcome!

Theology on Tap!

Thursday, February 20, at 6:00 p.m. at the LocAle Brewing Company, 228 Poplar Street, Mankato.

Contact **Jenni Christensen** at jenni.christensen78@gmail.com

An evening of God talk & beer!



Every Sunday at 11:20 a.m. in the FPC Library

for Adults

Contact **April Austin** at aprilaustin1222@gmail.com

“Love Thy Neighbor” Social Justice Book Club

Wednesday, February 5, at 6:00 p.m. in the FPC Narthex.

A low-commitment group for anyone (all adults) who cares about making a difference in their corner of the world. Didn't finish or read the book? No problem! Join us for a great discussion anyway.

Contact **Sophie Hoiseth** at sophie.hoiseth@gmail.com

Just show up! No sign-up required.



JANUARY 15, 2025, SESSION MINUTES

Prayers & Devotions

- Moderator: Pastor Eric Garner opened meeting at 6:00 p.m.
- Motion by Brad Leiding and seconded by Sophie Hoiseth for voice but no vote for guests, Deb Kienholz, Greg Burkhardt, and Nancy Zallek.
- Devotion: April Austin
- Elders expressed their Joys and Concerns
- Opening Prayer

For the Record

- Attendance: April Austin, Jim Connors, Sophie Hoiseth, Lynn Kuechle, Brad Leiding, and Joyce Prahm.
- Excused: Kelly McBride and Paul Peterson.
- Guests: Greg Burkhardt, Burkhardt & Burkhardt, Ltd.; Nancy Zallek, Chair of Endowment Committee; and Deb Kienholz, Deacon representative.
- December 18, 2024, Minutes approved via email.
- Communion Count for January 5: 69
- Communion count to homebound members for December: 1, Chuck Rowen and January: 1, Lee Williams.
- Births in December: Isabella Grace Kendall, December 27.
- Baptisms in December: N/A
- Members who passed in December: N/A
- New members in December: 7; Anneva Garner; Elizabeth, Andrew, Chloe, and Isabella Kendall; and Katie and Matt Simon.
- Transfer members in December: N/A
- Members who resigned in December: 0.
- 2024 Church Statistical Report submitted 1/14/25 online via PC USA OGA statistical reporting site.
- Next Session meeting is Wednesday, February 19.

Review of Financial Reports

Committee Reports – Unanimously Approved to receive Committee Reports as submitted.

- Budget, 1/14/25, Minutes.
- Community Engagement, 1/9/25, Minutes.
- Deacons, 12/15/24, Minutes.
- Endowment
- Faith Formation
- Nominating Committee
- Personnel
- Properties, 1/8/25, Minutes.
- Worship

From the Pastor (Eric Garner)

- While the livestream laptop has broken, additional hardware was discussed to fill the need.
- The joint/all committee meeting night will launch in February. Meetings will be on the second Tuesday of the month at 6:00 p.m.
- Eric recapped the support the congregation provided for the Dakota Exiles Riders.
- Eric reported on the Presbytery's six-month follow up on February 2 regarding his call and will meet with available Session members.

Continued on next page...

SESSION MINUTES CONTINUED

Continued from previous page...

From Budget Committee (Brad Leiding)

- Budget and accounting presentation by Greg Burkhardt.
- Endowment presentation by Nancy Zallek. Discussion followed regarding future congregation conversations and education on the church's budget and pledges. An ad-hoc committee will be formed to continue the conversation. Initial members include Pastor Eric, Brad Leiding, Theo Black, Nancy Zallek, Mark Taylor, and Sophie Hoiseth. Additional members may be added.
- December 31, 2024, Financial Compilation Report.
- Brad presented the 2025 Budget for discussion and explained the main points. Discussion followed including the ongoing meetings that will be held. Motion made by Sophie Hoiseth and seconded by Theo Black, to approve the initial 2025 Budget as presented. Motion carried.
- CD's moved into the checking account on December 20, 2024.

From Corporate President (Jim Connors)

- No updates.

From Board of Deacons (Deb Kienholz)

- No updates.

From Community Engagement Team (Joyce Prahm, Lynn Kuechle)

- Community Engagement shared the success of the Fair Trade market held in November. The market will be held again on November 23, 2025. A minute for mission related to Fair Trade will be hosted on October 5, 2025.

From Faith Formation Committee (Sophie Hoiseth)

- No updates.

From Nominating Committee (April Austin)

- No updates.

From Personnel Committee ()

- No updates.

From Properties Committee ()

- Theo Black moved, and April seconded a motion to allow Connections Ministry to hold their monthly board meetings at the church ensuring appropriate communications for reserving a meeting room.

From Worship Committee (April Austin)

- No updates.

From Church Office (Eric Garner)

- 2025 Session Meeting Devotions signup for May through December 2025.

Motion to Adjourn by Jim and seconded by Joyce to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m. Motion approved.

Closing Prayer

SERMON SERIES IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

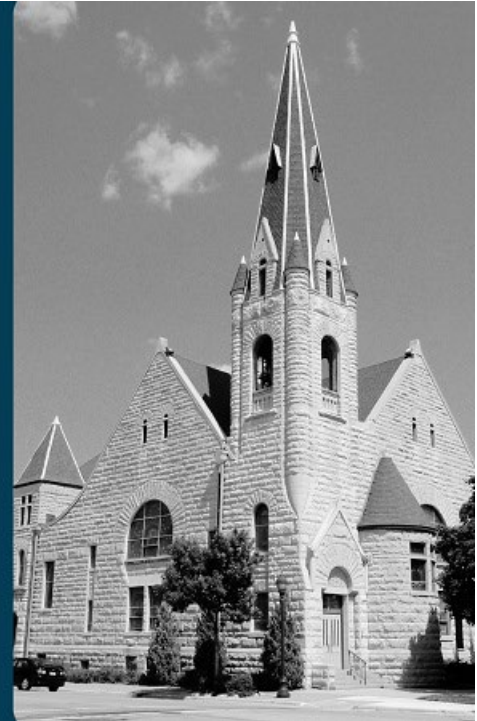
January 5 ~ February 16

SERMON SERIES: JANUARY 5-FEBRUARY 16

Presbyterians of the 21st Century



EXPLORING THE WAYS THAT OUR PRESBYTERIAN TRADITION AFFORDS US WITH USEFUL RESOURCES FOR THINKING ABOUT ABOUT THE WORLD AND ADDRESSING ITS NEEDS. THIS SERIES WILL ATTEMPT TO SPEAK TO US AS BOTH INHERITORS OF THIS TRADITION AND AS PEOPLE CONFRONTED WITH THE UNIQUE PROBLEMS OF LATE-MODERNITY.



February 23 ~ March 30

SERMON SERIES: FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 30

The *Impossibilities* of Forgiveness

A theological consideration of the challenging work of forgiveness and reconciliation. This study will look at how God not only encourages us to practice forgiveness, but also why this is Christ's chosen tool for powerfully changing the world.



FPC Leadership, Staff, and Contact Info

Pastor and Head of Staff

Reverend Eric Garner

FPC Session ~ Elders

Jim Connors, President | Brad Leiding, Treasurer | Joyce Prahm, Clerk of Session
April Austin, Worship | Sophie Hoiseth, Stewardship and Faith Formation
Lynn Kuechle, Community Engagement | Kelly McBride, Properties | Paul Peterson, Personnel

FPC Board of Deacons

Mark Taylor, Moderator | Derek Fette, Treasurer | Chris Renne, Secretary
Karen Anderson | Nancy Black | Amily Crowell | Kathy Gordon | Deb Kienholz
Marcia Richards | Diane Murray | Susan Schoon | Jeanne Steiner

FPC Staff

Ben Marti, Organist | Dr. Andrew Kendall, Director of Music Ministries
Lizz Kendall, Director of Outreach & Faith Formation
Mark Zallek, Building Manager | Lori Olson, Administrative Assistant
Noa Malone, Faith Formation Intern | Katelyn Prahm, Custodial Assistant

Staff Contact Info:

Pastor Eric Garner: pastor@fpcmankato.org | 507-519-2633

Administrative Assistant, Lori Olson: administrative@fpcmankato.org | 507-387-2160

Building Manager, Mark Zallek: buildingmanager@fpcmankato.org | 507-327-7907

Pianist and Organist, Ben Marti: music@fpcmankato.org | 507-387-2160

Director of Music Ministries, Dr. Andrew Kendall: music@fpcmankato.org | 507-387-2160

Director of Outreach and Faith Formation, Lizz Kendall: educator@fpcmankato.org | 507-246-6381

Custodial Assistant, Katelyn Prahm: info@fpcmankato.org

Copyright © 2024 First Presbyterian Church of Mankato, All rights reserved.

220 East Hickory Street, Mankato, MN 55901 | 507-387-2160 | administrative@fpcmankato.org