

The Messenger

First Presbyterian Church,
Kewanee

FEBRUARY 2025

Elmira United Presbyterian
Church, Toulon

Upcoming Scripture:

- **February 2**
 - 1 Corinthians 13:1-13: When I was a child.
 - Luke 4:21-30: The prophet not accepted
- **February 9**
 - Isaiah 6:1-13: Send me
 - Luke 5:1-11: Fish for people
- **February 16**
 - Psalm 1: The way of the righteous
 - Luke 6:17-26: Blessings and woes
- **February 23**
 - Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40: The lowly shall possess the land
 - 1 Corinthians 15:35-50: The mystery of the resurrection

Rev. Art Blegen Wife: Annabell

Phone: (910) 354-8540

Email: art.blegen@gmail.com

First Presbyterian Church Kewanee

(309) 852-2564

307 S Tremont Street

Kewanee, IL 61443

Email firstpress307@frontier.com

website: fpckewanee.org

Elmira United Presbyterian

(309) 896-3481

7874 State Rte. 93

Toulon, IL 61483

Pastor Art's Office Hours are as follows:

Tuesday and Wednesday - Kewanee church office 10:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Thursday – Elmira church office 10:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m.

Administrative Assistant office hours in Kewanee

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 1:00 to 4:30 p.m.



From the Pastors Desk:

When Pain is Good for You

Each Sunday during the service, we ask if anyone has prayer requests. Many of you lift up family, friends, and neighbors who are suffering. These prayers are for other people, seldom to any of us admit to our own suffering. But when we're honest, we must admit we suffer too. We suffer in different ways and at different times and to different extents, but suffering is part of what it means to be human. As it says in Acts 14: *"through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God"* (Acts 14:22).

For millennia, people have asked: "If God is good, and God is omnipotent, why does he allow suffering?" Many different answers have been proposed, but I believe God will allow (but not cause) suffering at times because it is actually good for us.

Sometimes suffering may be a form of discipline. When one of God's beloved children wanders away, He may use suffering to bring them back.

Suffering equips Christians to understand and stand beside others who suffer, offering the comfort that we have received from God.

Suffering reminds us that this world has fallen and keeps our eyes pointed on the eternal kingdom. Amid our suffering, we cling to God. Paul addresses this in his second letter to the Corinthians when he says, *"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed"* (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). We will go through times of suffering in this world, but as Paul says above, we are not crushed, not forsaken, not destroyed. God remains by our side to lift us up and promise a future free from pain.

Suffering can help us keep our priorities straight. Those who are rich find it much more difficult to focus on heaven than for those who are impoverished and persecuted. When life is comfortable, we lack motivation to look beyond our earthly existence towards eternity.

Many times, Christians suffer for the same reason Jesus did. Our message to the world is an uncompromising truth that Jesus is the only way to God. Our society does not want to hear this and lashes out in anger.

The question then becomes how we should respond to suffering when it comes. First, we are called to be thankful in all circumstances. Amid suffering is the perfect time to exercise this as we pray to God and give thanks that he is there with us, lovingly supporting us in our darkest times. Then we put our suffering to use sharing this comfort with others.



The church, rather than a gathering of the perfect, is a refuge for the suffering. When a member is hurting, the church applies the bandages; when a member is down, the church encourages; when a member is in need, the church comes alongside to help. Once we have experienced and survived our own trials, we have personal experience of both the suffering itself and of God's comforting and sustaining power. This equips us for ministering to others.

Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, "This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." We go to great lengths to avoid suffering, but we should look on the afflictions that exist in this world and know that they are but temporary conditions. God allows this suffering in our lives for the sake of our eternal joy and glory.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Art

Memory Verse: 1 Corinthians 15: 42-44

⁴² So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.

⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.

⁴⁴ It is sown a physical body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

Memorization of Scripture should never be seen as a burden, but as a way to grow closer to God. Psalm 1 tells us that our "delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law [we] meditate day and night." With that in mind, try to memorize one verse of the following passage each week. If you struggle with memorization, don't worry about it. Spend some time reading and thinking about each verse. When we get to this passage at the end of the month, God's words will already be alive in your heart.

Prayer Prompt:

Father in heaven, I feel weak, perishable and less than honorable. Help me to feel your saving power within me....

At First Presbyterian Church of Kewanee, we commit ourselves to worshipping God, growing spiritually together, and reflecting Christ in our daily lives.

KEWANEE SESSION NEWS

Minutes from Session:
December minutes approved
2025 budget approved,
Mission - \$205 received for the Joy offering
Nominated Elders will be presented for a vote at the January Congregational meeting
Bible School is set up- using True North,
Trusting Jesus in a Wild World
Next Communion will be February 2, 2025



MISSION FOR FEBRUARY IS SALVATION ARMY

When you give to The Salvation Army, you help your neighbors navigate food insecurity, natural disasters, unexpected job loss, housing instability, and so much more.



VALENTINE ADULT FELLOWSHIP

We will be having a Valentine's Day, adult fellowship get together on Sunday, February 16th in the West Minister Hall beginning at 5:30 p.m. We will be having soup, sandwiches and dessert for supper. Activity TBA at a later time, but whatever it is, it will be fun!!! If you would like to bring something for the supper, or if you would just like to join in, please call or email the office.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

3 – Grant Martin
14 – Parker Hulslander
22 – Lisa Hammons
24 – Melanie Johnston
26 – Frannie Newman

PRAYER CONCERNS

Baker, Lisandra – stroke
Behnke, Tommie Jane – health problems
Bennett, Cody – car accident, grandson of Vicki Bennett
Bock, Lauren – 14-year-old diagnosed with leukemia,
Wendy Smith's, friend's daughter
Bornstein, Jaimee – stage 4 cancer – cancer is in remission
Bowman, Jeff, and Peg – cancer
Butler, Rich – health problems
Bridgewater, Kari – seizure disorder
Brown, Jeff – health problems friend of Lanny & Carolyn Anderson
Craig, Clifford – recovering from heart surgery
Cruse, Lynette – leukemia
Diane – health issues
Don & Jan – health problems, Bill & Ruth Anne's friend
Donavon, Kevin - cancer – friend of Chris & Curt Reeves
Duncan – health issues
Edelman, Dave – health problems and Sharon for his care
Evans, Dan – health problems
Faber, Peggy – MS and dementia
Ferkel, Randy – recurrence of cancer
Feldner, Hannah – recovering from eye surgery
Fryer, Alvah – breast cancer, friend of Lanny & Carolyn Anderson
Gasaway, Larry – health problems, friend of Lanny & Carolyn Anderson
Good, Billie – Health issues
Green, Ruth – severe arm injury, Mary Jane's friend
Harding, Jack, Robert, Richard & Susan – health problems
Heane, Jeremy – tumor and angina
Huber, Denny – recovering from hip replacement Janet

Huber's son
 Huber Karessa _ - health problems, Janet Huber's daughter-in-law
 Huber, Mallery – needs extra prayers for her lupus
 Huggins, Cindy – health problems
 Jackson, Estavan – health problems, Annabell's grandson
 Johnson, Clay – many health problems
 Johnson, Jerri – health problems
 Johnston, Don – recovering from brain surgery, Roger's brother
 Johnston, Melanie – broken right arm and Roger for Melanie's care
 Larson, Ken – health problems, , friend of Lanny & Carolyn Anderson
 Lindstrom, Madeline – health issues
 Lloyd, Carla – recovering heart surgery, Pastor Annabell's cousin
 Martin, Anna – daughter of Freddie Martin, Jr. has MS
 Marselle, Frank –health problems
 McCullough, Kathryn – health problems
 Miller, Bob – more surgery, Mary Jane's brother
 Naslund, Ron – health problems, friend Lanny & Carolyn Anderson
 Newell, Nylan – 7-year-old has Lorenzo's Oil Disease (ALD)
 Olson, Rusty – inoperable tumor
 O'Neill, Kay – her family
 Pease, Mark - infection
 Perrin, Steve & Debby – health problems
 Reeves, Curt – knee surgery
 Scott, Gene – has MS- wife Rowann – health issues
 Scott, Ruth Anne – health problems
 Skinner, Dave – health problems
 Smith, Wendy – good, on-going test results
 Stacie – pancreatic cancer, Mary Jane's friend
 Stead, Tim – heart problems, Chris & Lisa's cousin
 Thompson, Michael – stamina
 Thron, Butch – serious health problems
 Thurston, Elmer – health problems
 Wade, Lori (Scott) – MS & diabetes
 Ward, Debi – congestive heart failure, Lanny & Carolyn's niece
 Ward, Dona – Parkinson
 Welgat, Nick – stage 4 lung cancer Abby Hamilton's brother
 Wentworth, Al – health problems
 Wentworth, Michele – continuing health problems
 Winter, Debbie – health problems
 Williams, Alan – many health problems, Annabelle's brother
 Wood, Chris – cancer
 Wolf, Jackie – health problems
 Family and friends of Willa Drake who passed away January 2, 2025

Elmira United Presbyterian Church, we will continue to be a thriving faith community reaching out to our community and the world.



OUR "LITTLE WHITE CHURCH"

For the Month of January we averaged 24 people attending church per Sunday. Thanks to those who

ventured out on some cold Sundays. There is always warmth and light at our "little white church" when worshipping with family and friends.



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Annual Congregational meeting of the Elmira United Presbyterian Church was held on January 19, 2025 at 1:00 pm. with 18 members present. Business before the group was election of Elders and Deacons, election of Treasurer and Clerk of Session, members to serve on Nominating and Memorial committees and receive year end reports from committee chairmen of various church committees. Paige Milburn was recognized by several members for doing a GREAT job with Sunday School. Nominating chairman Reuben Currier placed in nomination the name of Laurie Steger, to serve a three year term as Elder. The names of Linda Grant and Caitlyn Ryan were placed in nomination to serve a three year term on the Deacons. No other nominations were received and no opposing votes were received so Laurie Steger will be the Class of 2028 Elder, while Linda Grant and Caitlyn Ryan will serve as the Class of 2028 Deacons. Treasurer was next on the agenda and the name of Karen Steward was placed in nomination and voted on unanimously as Treasurer for the year 2025. Reported in the 2024 year in Treasurer's report was the fact that \$22,000 was received from the Nebraska farm this year. Names placed in nomination as Co-Clerk's were Carissa Currier and Paige Milburn. With no opposition, these two were unanimously approved as Co-Clerks for the year 2025. Elected to serve a one year term on the Nominating committee were Tim Montooth, Tom Milburn, Jim Winslow and Dave Milburn. Serving on the Memorial Committee will be Millie Whitmer, Donna Kay Elliott and Cindy Milburn. All volunteered and were unanimously elected to serve a one year term.

Ordination and installation of Elders and Deacons will be held during morning worship on February 2, 2025.

SESSION NEWS

Session news: The Session of the EUPC met on Sunday afternoon, January 26, at 2:00 pm., in person, for their regular meeting. A quorum of 4 was present. John Oliver is going off Session this year to be replaced by Reuben Currier as Building and Grounds committee chair, Laurie Steger will take over as Chairman for the Nominating committee. John Oliver volunteered to continue trimming the hedge and to be the Church Representative for the Nebraska Farm. It was voted that Reuben would also be a rep. for the Nebraska Farm as well. This was voted on and approved. Pastor Art reported the website for giving on line is up and going. Carissa Currier asked permission to use the church for starting a young womens/mother's group for a time of visiting, devotionms and emotional and spiritual support for each other. Plans are in the process, but thought this would be helpful for those with the stress of young children, work and a home to run. This project was eagerly supported by the Session. Betty Oliver suggested forming a committee of board members and congregational members that

would do visitation to sick and shut ins. After discussion, decided this would be a great project for the Deacons to work on. More information to come. If you would like to volunteer for this committee please let Dawn Milburn, Betty Oliver, Kay Grieve, Cindy Milburn, Linda Grant or Caitlyn Ryan know. We are continuing to take our special offering up for a family with ties to the Elmira area, a distant member of the Dorothy Reed family, whose home was destroyed in the California fires. You may give through Sunday, February 2, 2025 by sending to Karen Steward, treasurer. Put Special offering-Fire in memo line. Thanks to all that have given

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

5 – Clarence “Cy” Thurston
 7 – Justine (Ryan) Code
 7 – Laurie Steger
 19 – Hailey Lane
 20 – Sonna Bishop
 22 – Hudson Esquer

ANNIVERSARIES

17 – Tom & Cindy Milburn

Prayer Concerns

Abbineti, Dave & Lisa
Archer, Colin
Barnhold, Debbie
Bayer, Peggy Grant
Bean, Cecelia
Beck, Lia
Bennett, Cody
Bennet, Matt & Chris
Bishop, Jeremy
Bishop, Sonna
Bickhauser, Angie
Brady, Dean
Brattie, Nancy
Bimmerle, Mike & Annette
Boardman, Donna
Campbell, Nich & Jenny
Carlson, Mike
Campbell, Jennie
Cantwell, Barb
Chapman, Frank
Clark, Gloria
Cline, Kaitlyn
Cook, Dave
Collette, Brian
Currier, Ron
Daniels, Eunice & Tom
Dennis, Chrystal
Dienst, Rodney
Donavan, Kevn
Doran, Amanda
Dybdal, Maryann
Ehnle, Dean
Eddy, Jack
Elliot, Beth
Elliot, Debbie
Emily, Ellie
Foglesong, Carolyn
Foglesonger, Pat
Fry, Matthew
German, Brenda
Goodall, Pat
Grant, Austin

SEND CARDS TO:

Donald Oliver 860 Sunset Drive Box 112 Kewanee IL 61443	Lois Seger 3121 Macineery Dr #110 Council Bluff IA 51501
Barb Shambaugh 203 Willow Street LaFayette IL 61449	

PRAYER CONCERNS

Grant, Dave
Green, Allison
Greene, Samantha
Green, Ken
Grieve, Kay
Hebdon, Ali
Heminger, Jeff
Hotchkiss-Kucukas, Diane
Hulslander, Donna
Jackson, Ed
Jackson, Estevan
Jackson, Lisa & David
Jacobson, Del
Johnson, Alex
Jones, Noah
Kemmerer, Bob
King, Judy
Klien, Kaitlyn
Lindstrom, Diane
Maher, Jack
Marshall, Maggie
May, Scott
McGill, Mary
McGinnis, Debby
Milburn, Dave & Family
Milburn, Cindy
Milburn, Tom
Miller, Bob
Miller, Carol
Minton, Tom
Montooth, Tim
Nelson, Dan
Nelson, Paul
Parish, Brandon
Parish, Jim
Parker, Jim & Arlene
Perkins, Kathleen Grant
Peters, Julie
Pullen, Whitney
Rose, Sue
Russell, Melissa
Sandy & Beth
Schaeffer, Bob
Scott, Gene
Seckman, Marilyn
Seger, Lois
Sellnow, Celina
Sinkovich, Cindy
Smallee, Kaylee
Smith, Charlie
Sovey, Angela
Shanklin, Sophia
Shipp, Matthew & Matt
Steelman, Kendra
Steward, Karen
Talbot, Ben

Taylor, Debbie
Thurston, "Sy" & Gary
Tolley, Joe & Jenna
Tuthill, Connie
VanVoren, Rev Patrick & Pat
Verbout, Nancy
Welgat, Nick
Wentworth, Al & Michelle
West, Emily
Williamson, Larry
Whittaker, Rob
Wilkinson, Katheryn

Wilkinson, Patty
Williams, Alan
Wilson, David
Wilson, Nancy
Woods, Chris
Joe, Jenna, Kathy, Olivia, Katie, Emily, Cassia
Kypton, Jessica, Josalyn & Sophia
Extra Prayers for Dave Milburn family and Karen
Steward

HAVE FAITH, TRUST IN GOD, PRAY FOR:

Health for our Teachers and Students

Our lost and suffering communities

That the Holy Spirit work through our children's hearts.

Those living in fear of our violent world.

Those effected by the Wildfires in California.

The children of Stark County Elementary School

The epidemic of Drug Abuse, especially in our schools

Those undergoing medical treatment or testing.

All children with unfortunate family lives.

Mental and Emotional care and support for all who need it.






Revival of the church

Sy and Gary Thurston

Taylor Wilkinson and her Stark County FFA competitors as they go on to nationals.

All who grieve. Especially the families of Mike Bishop, Barb Elliot, Becky Vigor, John Hand, Geneva Morse, Dave DeWolfe, Laurie Butler, Willa Drake, Mary West & Leo Seckman

FEBRUARY 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>2 Elmira Service 9:00 a.m. Kewanee Adult Discussion 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 Service 11:00 a.m. Communion for both churches</p>	3	4	5	6	7	<p>1</p>  <p>Black History Month</p> <p>8</p>
<p>9 Elmira Service 9:00 a.m. Kewanee Adult Discussion 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 Service 11:00 a.m.</p>	10	11	<p>12</p>  <p>Full Moon</p>	13	<p>14</p>  <p>Happy Valentine's Day</p>	15
<p>16 Elmira Service 9:00 a.m. Kewanee Adult Discussion 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 Service 11:00 a.m.</p>	<p>17</p> 	18	19	20	21	22
<p>23 Elmira Service 9:00 a.m. Kewanee Adult Discussion 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 Service 11:00 a.m.</p>	24	25	26	<p>27</p>  <p>New Moon</p>	28	