

The WFPC News

The Winnebago First Presbyterian Church Newsletter for January 2026

*First Presbyterian Church of Winnebago:
Where community, faith, family, and friends come together.*

"Our Common Purpose"

by Pastor Lisa Lopez-Meyer

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." -Matthew 28:18-20

Whenever people ask me about their purpose in life, I cannot help but think about the Great Commission. While here in the West we tend to think about our life purpose as something individual, something different according to our particular gifts and opportunities, Jesus spoke about purpose collectively more than individually. Even though he gave different tasks to different disciples at different times, their main calling was shared: Learn from Jesus, Share the Good News, Bring Others Along.

After Jesus ascended into heaven the church flourished because the disciples were united in their shared purpose to make other disciples. Some stayed in Jerusalem, like Peter, nurturing the church there. Others traveled far and wide across the known world sharing the message of Christ with others. All embraced the Great Commission, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, did their part.

That's how the church can still flourish today. We need to recognize that the privilege and responsibility to make disciples has been given to all of us who follow Jesus, not only to a few select leaders or to some with particular gifts. We need to understand that we have all been given the same overall mission to reach out with the good news and shape others into faithful followers of Jesus Christ. We can employ different methods or strategies, but the calling is the same.

As we start a new year, it's important to reflect on how we are being obedient to Christ's call in the Great Commission. Consider the following questions:

- Do you see yourself as someone God has called not just to learn from Jesus for your own good, but also to teach others the ways of Jesus?
- How are you encouraging others to trust God and learn from Jesus?
- How are you reaching out to others to share some aspect of the good news?
- How are you inviting others to participate in the mission of Christ, through the work of the church?

Ideally, you would be able to say yes to the first question, and name at least one or more things in response to the others. But if you find this difficult to do, it means it's time to pay some attention to the Great Commission in your own spiritual journey.

We'll be paying special attention to the Great Commission and other passages that help understand different aspects of our evangelistic mission through our Sermons in the month of January. Don't miss them! I will also be offering a learning opportunity on evangelism discussing many of the areas of a disciples' life that work for outreach and growth. We will be using materials from the new PC(USA) resource *The 8 Habits of Evangelism*, and focusing on the Habits of Radical Welcome, Prayer, Teaching, Fellowship and Generosity. **We will meet via Zoom on Thursdays at 6:30 pm from January 8-February 5th. You won't need to read anything ahead of time to join the class, but if you'd like to have the book, you can download the free PDF from 8habits.org.**

Session Updates

by Stefanie Kluck

The Session met on Monday, December 1 at 7 pm. All Session members were present, except Bev Williams, who was excused. Ryan Bomgarden and Matthew Bomgarden, who were elected to serve as Elder and Youth Elder for 2026, respectively, attended as guests.

Greg led us through opening devotions sharing with us Jeremiah 33:14-16, focusing on a message of hope and the joy that is coming. Pastor Lisa led Session in an opening prayer.

Session received the clerks', pastor's, treasurer's, and commissioner's reports.

Action items included:

- Approved the use of the chapel for Saturday, December 6, 2025, at 3pm for a wedding ceremony.
- Church Communion Dates for 2026.
- Communion to homebound at Dimensions Living Winnebago when invited to do services.
- The Ordination/Installation Date for New Officers on Sunday, December 28, 2025.
- Approved Session meetings for 2026 be held on the 1st Monday of the month at 6:30 pm. Exception of September, the meeting is September 14, 2026.
- Approved the 2026 Budget.
- Approved the following end-of-year mission disbursements totaling \$2,500: \$500 to the following: Northern Illinois Food Bank, and Pecatonica Food Pantry, and \$300 to: Rock House Kids, Carpenter's Place, Remedies, Haven Network, and Rockford Rescue Mission.
- Approved the 2026 Shared Mission pledge for \$500.
- Elected Stefanie Kluck as Clerk of Session, Terry Schweitz as Church Treasurer, and Sue Jansen as Assembly Commissioner for 2026.

The next Session meeting will be January 5, at 6:30 pm.



All reports are due by January 7th. Reports are **one page only**, using "The Checklist for Creating an Annual Report". (Guidelines have been emailed)

Annual Congregational Meeting!

We will be having our Annual Congregational Meeting immediately after worship on Sunday, January 25, 2026. A church potluck in the Fellowship Hall will follow the meeting.

Calling all new and currently serving Elders and Deacons!

Officer training is scheduled for **Saturday, January 17th**, from 9 am to noon in the Fellowship Hall.



Deacon Ministry

by Janet Klinger

Deacons met on December 16 at 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Devotional: The Christmas Story was read by Sheree.

Treasurer and Sunshine reports were received. November Minutes were approved.

Old business:

- Driving for Care List
- Poinsettias Delivered
- Turned in visit/contact sheets for year end report
- Christmas Eve Communion prep - Sue and Gregg

New Business:

- Congregational Concerns
- Revise Care List
- Communion January 11th - Marcee and Teresa
- Communion schedule for care list was determined
- Deacon of the month 2026 schedule will be set at the next meeting.
- Thank you to outgoing members Sue, Christine, and Bev for the caring and outreach you have provided as a Deacon.

Next meeting is Jan 20th, 2026 at 6:30 pm.

PW-Ruth Circle

by Sue Jansen

Thank you to everyone who supported the Cookie Walk-Mini-Bazaar by Baking, Bringing and Buying! A huge thank you to Avis Lind who coordinated the event and the volunteers.

I encourage those of you who are able, to join our group. We have a good time as we plan for the events we are involved in, and work to maintain the kitchen. Come and visit one of our meetings, the third Tuesday of each month at 10 am. Our next meeting will be January 20, 2026 at 10 am.



Youth Group Returns for 2026!

Sunday, January 11

6:30-8:00 pm in the Youth Room

Come eat, pray and play with us! We'll also be scheduling some Spring activities together.

Sunday, January 25 - Bowling Night!

6:30-8:30 pm at the Cherry Bowl, 7171 Cherryvale North Boulevard, Rockford. Come bowl with us! Cost of bowling, shoe rental and snacks covered by the youth budget when you RSVP by January 18. Meet at the church at 6 pm for carpooling, otherwise meet us there. Bring pocket money for extras.



by Bev Williams

Join us on Sunday, January 25th for a potluck after the Annual Congregational Meeting! Bring your favorite dish to share. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the church bulletin board.

Trustees

by Gwen Vietmeier

The Trustees met at church for a work meeting on December 9 at 6:30 pm. Five members were present.



- Incoming Trustees, Lisa Mitchell and Jim Morrison, were invited to the meeting to discuss the best day and time for future meetings.
- Outgoing Trustees, Jason Ackerman and Brent Thompson, were thanked for their outstanding commitment and service.
- We painted the Confirmation Classroom.
- Rick changed a valve in a radiator.
- Snow removal was assigned by the day.

Maintenance and repairs during the month:

- Repaired the south door lock.
- Bruce primed the Confirmation Classroom.
- Snow removal.

Future Projects:

- Refinish tables in the Nursery Classroom.
- Seek additional quotes for a new lift system.
- Install a light above the micropantry.

Our next meeting is January 13 at 5 pm.

Save the Date!

We will be taking down Christmas decorations on January 4th after the worship service. Please stay and lend a hand. Your help is greatly appreciated. Thank you in advance, the Worship Committee!



by Barb Whitney

Chicks with Sticks

Chicks with Sticks will meet Tuesday, January 13 and 27 from 10 am-noon. Join us for this time of fellowship as we knit or crochet items.

Northern Illinois Food Bank

Our date to volunteer at the NILFB is Wednesday, January 21st from 9-11 am. We will be stocking the shelves to help them prepare for their market day.

Workcamp 2026

Workcamp 2026 will be in Lincoln, IL. We are in need of one to two adults to join us as we serve the residents of Lincoln through home repair projects. It's an amazing week with an AWESOME group of youth!

Operation Christmas Shoes

Many thanks to all who contributed to Operation Christmas Shoes. We were able to purchase 41 pairs of shoes and socks for families in need in the Winnebago School District. Thirty-two families received \$50 gift cards to Sullivan's. Any extra funds will be used to purchase gift cards or items for the micro pantry. A special thanks to Susan Gambrel for shopping with me, Teresa Ackerman for contacting and coordinating with the families, and Bev Williams, Karen Finch, Kristy Busch, Sheree Sensel, Ann Fuller, and Gwen Vietmeier for helping me wrap the shoes this year.

For more information on these outreach opportunities contact Barb Whitney at 815-289-4207.



The high school Sunday School class is hosting a winter clothing drive through the end of January. As you receive new clothes during the holidays, please consider sharing **clean, gently used** items you no longer wear. Donations can be brought to the church, and we'll deliver them to the Rockford Rescue Mission.

Community Education



Olson Funeral Homes

Peace of Mind Seminar

Advance Funeral Planner:
Kristine Ranger

Please join us for an advance funeral planning seminar hosted at First Presbyterian Church of Winnebago. We will be discussing the steps involved in getting a funeral plan in place, how that plan will effect your loved ones, and answering your questions on funeral service.

Location:

Fellowship Hall
First Presbyterian Church
208 W Winnebago St
Winnebago, IL 61088

Date and Time:

Sunday, January 18th at 2:00 PM



Topics Discussed

- Advance funeral planning
- Types of services
- Death away from home
- Planning financially for services
- After the funeral service

Topics covered in the presentation

- How to prepare for services
- An overview of a funeral home's responsibilities.
- Why plan ahead? How can it benefit you and your family now and at the time of need?
- How we plan ahead. Utilizing a final wishes organizer to put all your wishes and information in one place.
- A breakdown of service options
- Planning financially for funeral services
- What happens if someone dies away from home?
- Estate settlement; available resources.
- Grief counseling and support resources.



Do you know there is now a small fridge under our micro pantry shelf?

During the winter it will continue to be used as insulated storage for items that may otherwise freeze. During the summer it will help keep essential items fresh. Feel free to take what you need from our micropantry and tell others who may need to use it as well.



Communion Preparation Class

On January 18, 2026 during the Sunday School hour (9:15-10:15 am) but after the singing time for the day, Pastor Lisa will be leading a special communion preparation class for children Pre-K through 7th grade. The class will help kids understand what the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is all about. Any parents that would like to attend with their children are welcome as well.

Presbytery News!

Did you know our Presbytery is getting a new name? Blackhawk Presbytery has voted to change its name to Illinois Prairie Presbytery as soon as the change can become official through the denomination. While the new name will likely not go into effect until after March 2026, you may start hearing the name with regards to regional events.

A Prayer for the Day

God of new mercies,
Thank you for the gift of this day.
Quiet my spirit so I can notice Your presence
in every conversation, every task, every breath.
Guide my steps with wisdom.
Fill my heart with compassion for those I meet.
Give me courage where I feel uncertain,
strength where I feel weary,
and peace where I feel stretched too thin.
May Your light shine through me today—
not in grand gestures,
but in small acts of kindness,
steady hope,
and faithful love.
In Christ's name, Amen.



Anyone can help with Worship!

We are looking for members who would like to serve as liturgists and Scripture readers during services. See Pastor Lisa if you are interested in liturgist or reading.

Stewardship updates

Current financial updates for the church operating fund:

November Debit: \$18,107.91

November Credit: \$27,285.15

Gains: \$9,177.24

Thank you for your generosity!

Contact Information:

Rev. Lisa Lopez-Meyer (Pastor Lisa)
(815)742-7503 or thewfpcpastor@gmail.com

Clerk of Session - Stefanie Kluck
stefaniehassel@gmail.com

Deacons - Marilyn Larsen
marilyn.larsen94@gmail.com

Trustees- Rick Carr
rsarr@comcast.net

PW-Ruth Circle - Sue Jansen
LSJan@yahoo.com

*Newsletter items for February
are due by January 7th.*

*On the web at: thewfpc.org and Facebook: @thewfpc208
Located at: 208 W. Winnebago St. Handicap accessible*



First Presbyterian Church of Winnebago
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