

The WFPC News

The Winnebago First Presbyterian Church Newsletter for March 2026

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

“Holy Obedience through Seeking Justice”

by Pastor Lisa Lopez-Meyer

As we move deeper into the season of Lent, many of us are connecting with God through spiritual practices like devoting more time to prayer, reading Scripture and attending mid-week worship services. What is less usual is to seek to connect with God through pursuing justice as a Lenten spiritual practice.

Nevertheless, seeking justice is just as essential to growing in our relationship with God as praying or studying the bible. The prophets were often sent to clarify to the people that without seeking justice in society, God would not accept their religious observance as good. For example:

- “Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen, for your hands are full of blood...learn to do good, seek justice, correct oppression...” (Isaiah 1:13-17)
- “Take away from me the noise of your songs, to the melody of your harps I will not listen. But let justice roll down like water, righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” (Amos 5:23-24)

While justice is a broad category encompassing right relationships among people, there are some often neglected aspects that come up repeatedly through the bible. Among them are:

- Being generous with vulnerable members of society and advocating for their rights (widows, orphans, foreigners, etc.) See Leviticus 19:34; Isaiah 1:17, 23; 58:7,10; Jeremiah 5:26-28; 7:1-7; 22:3; Matthew 25: 31-46.
- Being fair in economic transactions (no cheating, price-gauging, taking advantage of those without options or taking bribes) See Amos 2:6-7; 5:11; Micah 6:10-11:7:3; Deuteronomy 16:19; Luke 20:47; James 5:4.
- Being content with enough (as opposed to hoarding property) See Isaiah 5:8; Micah 2:1-2; Jeremiah 6:13; Luke 12:13-21.
- Telling the truth (renouncing and rejecting lies) See Isaiah 59:3; Micah 6:12b; Jeremiah 5:2; 30-31; Ephesians 4:25.
- Protecting due process in the courts. See Leviticus 19:15-16; Jeremiah 2:34; John 7:50-51; 1 Timothy 5:19.
- Pursuing peace (as opposed to practicing violence) See Isaiah 2:3-4; 58:4; 59:3, 6-8; Micah 6:12a; Hosea 4:1-2; Matthew 5:9.

As we seek to grow in justice, some spiritual practices include: donating to charities that serve vulnerable populations; partnering with organizations that defend the rights of marginalized groups; setting fair prices when selling goods and services; supporting fair-trade practices when buying; paying livable wages to employees; simplifying your lifestyle to avoid hoarding property; eliminating lies from our speech (including exaggerations, equivocations, cover-ups and evasions); refusing to take bribes or use legal loopholes for gain; giving up violent words or actions in daily life; promoting peaceful resolution practices in society.

This Lent, go ahead and pick one or more of these practices, especially one that is new to you, and focus on it.
The result will be holy obedience.

Session Updates

by Stefanie Kluck

The Session met on Monday, February 2, 2026. All Session members were present, except Ryan Bomgarden, Terry Schweitz, and Stephanie Freimuth, who were excused.

Pastor Lisa led us through devotions by reading 1 Timothy 3:1-16, highlighting that the desire to lead, shepherd, or serve as church elder is honorable, worthy, and serious work. It's a position of great integrity and one should work well with others.

The clerk's and pastor's reports were received. The treasurer's report was not available due to timing of the month-end. It will be sent and reviewed electronically this month.

Action items included:

- Approved Bill Newkirk and Terry Schweitz as authorized signers on the Vanguard account.
- Discussed different ways to distribute the monthly newsletter in the future.
- Reviewed and approved edits to the Church Bylaws. The edited version will be presented at the next Congregational meeting in November for Congregational approval.
- Approved up to \$3,000 from Memorial Funds for the purchase of round tables for the Fellowship Hall.

The next meeting will be Monday, March 2, at 6:30 pm.

Trustees

by Gwen Vietmeier

The Trustees met at church on February 10th at 5 pm with all members present. We installed a bracket and TV monitor, secured a bookcase to the wall, and repaired the heating pipe leak in the preschool room. We also repaired the hinge on the sanctuary overflow door and adjusted the lamp on the organ.

Maintenance and repairs during the month:

- Completed the refinishing and painting of three round tables in the preschool room.

Our next meeting is scheduled for March 10, TBD.



Deacon Ministry

by Janet Klinger

Meeting was opened with the Deacons' Prayer. Seven members present, one excused. Marilyn led the devotional with Jeremiah 29 :13-14. Reports were received.

Old Business:

- Thank you notes were shared.
- Evangelism/contacts were suggested and cards will be sent.
- Follow up with the Mobile Market Program.

New Business:

- 2026 Officers: Marilyn Larsen - Moderator, Janet Klinger - Secretary, Sheree Sensel - Treasurer
- Congregational Concerns
- Care List updated
- Communion for Care list set for March and April.
- Deacons to provide soup supper March 11th.
- March Deacons-Sharon and Karen
- Good Friday Service is at 3 pm.
- Pastor provided education for responding to requests for assistance outside of congregation.

The next Deacons' meeting is March 17 at 6:30 pm.



Save these dates!

Sunday, March 8, 2026

Roller-skating! Join us at Skateland from 2:30-4 pm for a fun afternoon together. Church covers the admission fee for all who RSVP by Friday, March 6. Bring pocket money for any extras, like snacks or other games. Carpool from church at 2 pm or meet us there. Feel free to bring a friend.

Sunday, March 22, 2026

Praying the Psalms. Come for light supper, sharing about our lives, and learning more about the Psalms and how to use them in our own lives of prayer. Youth Group Room, 6:30-8 pm

Sunday, March 29, 2026

Palm Sunday Worship with Dimensions Living Winnebago residents. Meet at 1:50 pm at Dimensions Living Winnebago (500 E McNair Rd) to hand out palms and greet residents before a quick worship service, 2-3 pm.



by Bev Williams

March 1st the Chancel Choir will host fellowship after the worship service. Please stay and join us.

Holy Week Dates for 2026

Palm Sunday

Sunday, March 29
10:30 am: Joyful Worship with Palms

Maundy Thursday

Thursday, April 2
5:30 pm: Soup Supper
6:30 pm: Foot Washing & Communion Worship Service

Good Friday

Friday, April 3
3:00 pm: "Journey to the Cross" Worship Service

Easter Sunday

Sunday, April 5
7:00 am: SonRise Service (led by Sr HS School Class)
8-10:15 am: Donuts and Coffee Fellowship in Fellowship Hall
10:30 am: Traditional Service with Chancel Choir



Workcamp

Workcampers will begin selling Workcamp Shares in March. This year's campers include: Tianna and Thea Mitchell, Gavin Early, Matthew Bomgarden, Sara and Noah Wright, Ryan and Noah Melin, Teague and Colton Whitney. Steve Wright is one of the chaperones. We'd love to have you join us! We have 3 spots on a waiting list but will need an extra adult (21 or older) if we add any campers.

I would like to support our 2026 Workcamp Team by purchasing _____ shares @\$10 a share for a total of _____.

Please apply to _____ or _____ apply to any camper.
Camper name(s)

Name _____

Address _____

Make checks payable to: First TEAM.

Return to Barb Whitney or Workcamp mail slot. Thanks for your support!



PW-Ruth Circle

by Sue Jansen

On Sunday, March 15 we will be collecting for the Birthday Offering. Donations received this year will fund grants to the City Mission of Findlay, Ohio and Haywood Christian Ministry in Waynesville, North Carolina, each in the amount of \$125,000.

Thank you for your support to our mission projects!



Chicks with Sticks will meet Tuesday, March 10 and 24 from 10-noon.

Northern Illinois Food Bank on Wednesday, March 18 from 9-11 am. If you'd like to help us stock the shelves, please contact Barb Whitney.

If you are interested in participating in any of these events please contact Barb Whitney at 815-335-1048.



One Great Hour of Sharing Offering

We will be collecting the OGHs offering (fish coin banks and envelopes) on Sunday, March 29, 2026. Please support this offering! Proceeds support disaster recovery, anti-hunger and poverty relief initiatives at the national and global level through the PCUSA.

Newsletter Changes

As post-office requirements and costs for mass-mailing are changing, we are considering some changes in how we approach newsletter distribution. If you would like to receive the newsletter **in electronic format only, via email**, email the office to communicate this preference. If you would prefer receiving the newsletter **in paper format via mail, as usual**, please call the office to communicate this preference. If you do not currently receive the newsletter but would like to receive it in e-mail or snail-mail format, contact the office as well. Your answers will help us determine the next steps to ensure access for all and potentially reduce costs in the process.

Contact Information:

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Trustees- Rick Carr
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PW-Ruth Circle - Sue Jansen
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*Newsletter items for April
are due by March 11th.*

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

A Sharing Calendar for Lent 2026

Each day at or after a meal time, gather around this map activity. Consider the reflection and questions, place a coin or a bill (a “gift”) in your fish coin bank or a jar.

Ash Wednesday: Read Micah 6-8. What does God require of us? How can we “do justice” in our day today?

Thursday: Our fish coin boxes will hold many gifts of money this season, but what other kinds of gifts can we give? What gifts can you give or share?

Friday: Sunday is Blue T-Shirt Sunday. What does the PC(USA) do to show God’s love during a disaster? Choose something blue to wear or bring to church to celebrate.

Feb. 22–28

Sunday: After a natural disaster, it may be hard to find places to cook or buy meals. Say a prayer of thanksgiving and give a gift for each meal you ate today.

Monday: Over 18 million Americans live in a food desert, but from a store where they can buy groceries. Give a gift for each grocery store nearby.

Tuesday: Electricity is usually the first utility that is lost in a storm. Give a gift for each electrical outlet in the room you are currently in.

Wednesday: Is water necessary for good health? Using the map, find Zambia and read what the PC(USA) is doing there. After learning more, give a gift for each drink you had today.

Thursday: On the online OGHs map, look at the U.S. states where the PC(USA) is working. Pray for each by name and give a gift for each state you’ve visited.

Friday: If you can read, you are more likely to be healthier. Learn a new word today and give a gift for every letter in your name.

March 1–7

Sunday: Most people around the world don’t have access to the many varieties of fruit and vegetables we have. Give one gift for each type of fruit in your house.

Monday: Climate change is forcing farmers worldwide to either adjust their farming methods or move away. Give a gift for each type of animal you saw today.

Tuesday: When families move, building a new community of friends and neighbors can be hard! Make a card or gift for someone new in your church or neighborhood.

Wednesday: Without the right nutrition in the first two years of life, a child’s physical and mental development is compromised. Give a gift for each toddler you know.

Thursday: When roads are closed and electricity is off, going to see a doctor can be hard. Give a gift if you’ve been able to see a doctor in the past year.

Friday: It is estimated that 1 in 5 kids in the U.S. will experience hunger this year. Give at least one gift if you have not experienced hunger this year.

March 8–14

Sunday: Where does your water come from? Many people carry buckets of water long distances to their homes every day. Give a gift for every faucet in your home.

Monday: In Panama, the PC(USA) partnered in the construction of a 25,000-liter tank, helping families with clean water for drinking and cooking. Give a gift for each drink of water you had today.

Tuesday: Social barriers are like locked doors that hold people back and keep them from thriving. Give a gift for every door that can lock in your home.

Wednesday: If you could start a business of your own, what would it be? Give a gift for every good business idea you hear from those you are with.

Thursday: Rainwater is rare in some places, so special collection systems are built to catch the water. Give one gift for every day it rained (or snowed) in the past week.

Friday: Changing weather patterns mean old ways of farming don’t work in some areas anymore, so farmers need to be taught new techniques. Give a gift for every farm you’ve visited.

March 15–21

Sunday: In some places, people walk for hours to go to church, where they find support and encouragement from friends and family. Give a gift for every time you went to church this month.

Monday: Hunger-related causes kill thousands of people every day around the world. Give a gift for meals you’ve had today.

Tuesday: Some people can’t find jobs and care for themselves because they don’t have access to a car or the right bus route. Give one gift for every wheel in your garage that helps you get places.

Wednesday: Poverty can make people feel like they are always falling two steps back with surprise expenses or problems. Give a gift for every set of steps in your home.

Thursday: The most vulnerable are often the most impacted in emergency situations. Say a prayer for children impacted by disasters, and give a gift for every flashlight in your home.

Friday: Sometimes people need help advocating for their rights — like lawyers fighting for those impacted by unfair employment practices. Say a prayer for those who advocate for the poor.

March 22–28

Sunday: In South Sudan, women have found hope as they learn to farm so they can grow food for their families. Give a gift per plant in your house.

Monday: In Ohio, refugee women are able to market their sweet and savory treats at the farmers market, helping to take care of their families. Give one gift for every sweet treat you had today.

Tuesday: Immunizations give us hope for when certain diseases will no longer cause sickness and pain. Give a gift for each immunization you have received.

Wednesday: In Haiti, hope is seen in the leaves of the morninga tree, a superfood that can help many hungry people! Give one gift for every tree at home.

Thursday: Give a gift for every year you have been in school and find three books you can donate so another person can read and learn.

Friday: Learning new languages can be hard! Give five gifts for every language your family members speak.

March 29–April 4

Passion/Palm Sunday: Blankets are used internationally to comfort those impacted by disasters. Give a gift for each blanket in your home, or find some blankets you can donate.

Monday: Teaching healthy food choices and food safety can change the health of an entire community! Find some healthier foods you can donate to a food pantry or soup kitchen.

Tuesday: Find a location on the OGHs map you have not learned about yet. Spend some extended time learning about and praying for the ministry and people there.

Wednesday: Communication can be incredibly difficult after a disaster. Give a gift for every computer in your home, and call, email or text a loved one.

Thursday: God’s love is shown in so many ways. Find three things you can do today or tomorrow to share God’s love.

Friday: Clean water is a precious resource all over the world. Find some ways you can conserve or use less water every day and commit to doing at least 1 for a month or more.

April 5

Sunday – Resurrection/Easter/One Great Hour of Sharing: Present the gifts in your coin box to your congregation. Say a prayer for all those who will receive help from your generosity.

For more locations and ministries, go to pousa.org/oghsmmap or scan this code.



**ONE GREAT
HOUR OF SHARING**



First Presbyterian Church of Winnebago
P.O. Box 38
Winnebago, IL 61088
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