



# The Circuit Rider

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

Pastor Michael Ray Hickok

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♦ APRIL 2026 ♦

## A Word from Pastor Mike

We have been journeying together as a church family through the season of Lent. Our observance of this holy time enables us to reorient our lives and turn to the Lord with all of our hearts and minds. We experience vibrant worship, a thoughtful Lenten devotional booklet and a Wednesday Lenten study. Our newly constituted Witness Team is organizing a prayer vigil that begins on Thursday, April 2. This vigil will continue all day on Good Friday, April 3, and we will share in A Service of Tenebrae in our Good Friday worship at 7:00pm. On Holy Saturday, April 4, we will celebrate the resurrection at our 5:30pm Worship. We eagerly anticipate our Easter Worship on Sunday, April 5 at 9:00am when we will sing, pray, and share in the Lord's Supper.

In our Liturgical calendar there are seven Sundays of Easter continuing through May 17. This is a helpful reminder of our privilege as Christian believers to experience the power of the resurrection for several weeks. We are blessed that JD Orwig will speak on the Second Sunday of Easter on April 12. Please make a special effort to attend as we continue to celebrate our hope as Christian believers in worship.

Beginning on April 19, we will share a series of sermons based on the book: *Living the Resurrection*, by Eugene Peterson. He was the faithful pastor and scholar who developed the Message version of the Bible, which has made it possible for many persons to gain a deeper appreciation of God's word. Throughout the years, his books have informed and inspired by ministry. Peterson was a Pastor who served the same church for 29 years before becoming a professor. We trust this emphasis on Christ's resurrection will strengthen your faith.

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

### April Worship Schedule

Sunday Worship  
Sundays 9:00

Saturday Evening  
Service  
April 4th 5:30\*  
April 18th 5:30  
(\*Easter Observed)

Holy Communion  
April 4th 5:30\*  
April 5th 9:00

### Holy Week Services

April 2-3 Prayer Vigil  
April 3 Good Friday Service  
7:00pm  
April 4 Holy Saturday  
Worship with Communion  
5:30  
April 5 Easter Sunday with  
Communion 9:00

## April at a Glance

April 1 - 5:30 Lenten Study  
April 6 - Church Office Closed  
April 14 - 1:30 Care Team Meeting  
7:00 Church Council  
April 15 - 1:30 UWF Meeting  
April 16 - 11:30 Red Cross Blood Drive  
6:30 Finance Meeting  
April 27 - 6:30 Trustees Meeting

## Holy Communion

The sacrament of Holy Communion will be served on the first weekend of April- **Saturday the 4th** and **Easter Sunday the 5th**. 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 April to provide a meal and fellowship to anyone who would like to attend. Everyone is invited to come on Mondays, **April 13 and 27 from 5:00 – 6:00 pm.**



## April Change the World

For April, Change the World funds will be donated to **The Bishop's Appeal**. The 2026 Bishop's Appeal is for Education for Central Conferences, supporting two key initiatives: a high school in Tanzania led by NIC missionary Christina Kim, and broader theological education efforts identified by the Council of Bishops. This year's appeal is not only about charity; it is about empowerment, and partnership. Please consider donating your change into the jar outside the Sanctuary, as we "change the world" with each and every coin!

## Red Cross Blood Drive

The Red Cross will sponsor their next blood drive on **Thursday, April 16 from 11:30 - 5:30 pm in Cushing Hall**. Did you know that every donation can save up to three lives when given to someone in need? Consider signing up online: <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive> to reserve your time and help make sure enough blood is on hand when the need is great.

## Change the World March Report

During the month of March, \$ \$852.44 was raised for Our Table. This ministry is for anyone in the community that wants to join us for a meal and fellowship.

## A Few Notes To Remember

- **Church Office Closed** Monday April 6
- **Pastor Mike Vacation** April 6 -13  
Pastor Bill Shields of First Lutheran Church of Princeton will be available for funerals. Call Shelly in the church office for assistance.
- **Parking Announcement:** 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.
- **Updates and Events:** Be sure to download the PFUMC App and like and follow the PFUMC Facebook page to be updated on events happening in our Church.

# SUNDAY SCHOOL



## CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children's Sunday School was so much fun this month! Our faith focus was "Jesus shows us how to trust" and we read stories from the Bible about Jesus trusting God in the desert, Jairus trusting Jesus, and the teaching of the Lord's Prayer. The children enjoyed exploring with kinetic sand and brainstorming ways to trust God. We also created a shamrock craft to remind us that God is the father, the son, and the holy spirit.

*Amanda Noord, Children's Sunday School Director*



## YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Youth Sunday School is for children grades 6-12 meets at 10:00 following Sunday Worship.

## ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Adult Sunday School is held at 10:00 am following Sunday worship. The Middles class meets weekly in the library, Righteous Renegades meets in Cushing Hall. All are welcome.



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL SAVE THE DATE

Make sure to save the date for this year's Vacation Bible School which will be July 6th through July 9th from 6-8pm. More details to follow.



## UPCOMING WINTER/SPRING LAITY EVENTS

The **Men's weekend starts Thursday evening April 23 through Sunday, April 26. The Women's weekend is Thursday evening April 30 through Sunday, May 3.** This is a great chance to get away from the busyness of the world and spend three days with Christ - listening, studying, praying, and laughing with other Christians. Please see Beckers, Newbys, Pattersons, or anyone else who has previously attended a weekend for more information. It is a weekend you will never forget!



## PRAIRIE SOUTH LAY ACADEMY

This year's Lay Academy will be held at Ottawa First UMC on Saturdays, **April 25 and May 2, from 8:30 am – 3:00 pm.** Classes include: "For the Common Good: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts" led by Jeany Gewin, "Life Together in the United Methodist Connection (United Methodist Polity)" led by Karen Newby, "Congregational Care Ministry", led by Pastor Peyton "Buzz" Wheeler, and "Leading Public Prayer", led by Marcia Peddicord. You can register online. Cost is \$40/per participant which includes a light lunch. Youth are encouraged to attend at no cost as long as they are accompanied by a paying adult.

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH



United  
Women  
in Faith

On March 21, the United Women in Faith were pleased to host 31 women for coffee and cinnamon rolls. Judy Harris gave a presentation on "The Orphan Train" and her grandmother's journey, being part of that movement. A schedule of the UWF get-togethers was handed out to each person attending that day. We hope to see new faces in the upcoming months.

The next meeting of the United Women in Faith will be held on **April 15th at 1:30 pm** in Cushing Hall. All women of the church are invited to attend. There will be a presentation given by Kari Cain from Flowers By Julia on flower arranging.



## YOUNG AT HEART

Please join us for food, fun and fellowship. The Young at Heart Pizza Party will be held **Wednesday, April 29 at 12:00 pm** in Cushing Hall.



## LENTEN STUDY

Pastor Mike will be offering a Wednesday night study during Lent entitled “The Easter Experience” by Kyle Idleman. The final session will meet in Cushing Hall from 5:30-6:30 on April 1.

## ECUMENICAL WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY

The Women’s Ecumenical Bible Study is doing a 6 week Lenten study titled “Unlikely Lent”. This Bible Study meets every Monday at 10:00 am in the Conference Room. It’s a “drop-in” group which means attendance every week is not required. The Ecumenical Bible Study is open to women of all faiths or denominations.

Questions about this study or our group can be directed to Janet Becker at [beckerjnj71@gmail.com](mailto:beckerjnj71@gmail.com).

## ZEARING SCHOLARSHIP

If you are a graduating senior from either Princeton High School or Bureau Valley High School, and are active in this church, you are eligible to apply for the Joseph and Nancy Zearing Scholarship this year. Applications are available upon request in the office. Deadline to turn in the application is **Sunday, April 26**.



## PROMISE SALE



This month’s sale dates are **Saturday, April 11 from 10 - 2 pm**, and **Sunday, April 12 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.



## GRADUATE RECOGNITION

We will be recognizing our 8th grade, high school, college, trade school and advanced degree graduates in the near future. But we need to know who they are! Please let the church office know if you have a graduate in the family. Once we find out the graduates, we’ll contact them to determine the best date to recognize them on Sunday and celebrate and share their future plans. *(See info sheet at the end of the newsletter.)*



## GREEN TEAM



### **Our Living World, Part 5: Air by Ask the UMC**

*Please visit [UMNews.org](http://UMNews.org) for the complete article. The following is a short summary of direct quotes.*

**The Biblical Story:** Air is not mentioned in the creation story until Genesis 2:4, where it is equated with the “breath of life”.

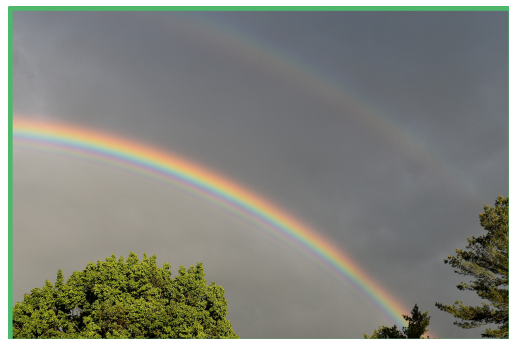
The Hebrew Bible equates whether a being is living as whether it breathes. Air is never described as created by God. Its presence is taken for granted in the creation story. We tend to take air for granted until it becomes uncomfortable or polluted.

**Social Principles:** “Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God’s creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings”.

**Biblical priorities for the Church.**

In Resolution 1033, “Caring for Creation: A Call to Stewardship and Justice”, United Methodists believe clean air is a basic right and necessity for all life. Air must be...outside the control of different nations and instead must be developed and preserved for the benefit of all.

“United Methodists are involved in international efforts to improve air quality by working with the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. We are also charged to reduce our impacts on polluting the air and compromising the atmosphere in ways that contribute to the acceleration of global climate change. We are to advocate for social policies that assist the cleanup of polluted air. We can follow practices in our personal lives that reduce air quality such as idling internal combustion engines or burning plastic trash. We can work with our neighbors for social justice to keep dangerous air pollution out of residential areas.





## OUR STORIES, HIS GLORY

### Monthly Stories of God's Presence from our Congregation

As I was raised in the church, and continued to be a church "goer", my witness to Christ has evolved gradually, hopefully, growing in God's love and grace. Attending church, Sunday School, church camp, teaching Sunday School, participating in Emmaus, Bible study, and also, relishing in the love of family and friends has contributed to building my faith. I know that Christ's love surrounds me and propels me in this tumultuous world of ours! Hopefully, I have found a peace that doesn't depend on my circumstances.

-JoAnne Patterson



### Book Discussion Group

Please join the church book club on **April 14** to discuss "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus. We will meet at **10:00 am** in the library.



### Knitter's Group

Calling All Knitters and Crocheters! All skill levels are invited to come knit, crochet, loom or just chat on **Tuesdays at 2:30 pm** in the conference room.



### Princeton Board Games Group

This group meets on **Fridays at 6:00 pm** in Cushing Hall. Everyone interested in learning more about modern board gaming and any player level is welcome to join this friendly group.

## THANK YOU

To the Women of the Church:

We would like to thank everyone who helped bake, set up, served and, yes, cleaned up for our funeral dinners during the last two years. We were overwhelmed with your kindness. We want to thank Ruth Denault for taking over this responsibility. Let's all support her in this endeavor. Thank you all so much!

Sincerely,  
Judy Harris and JoAnn Patterson

## FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT FEBRUARY 2026

	Month	Year to Date	Percent of Budget	Percent of Year
Income	\$23,967	\$63,442	20	16.6
Expenses	\$27,853	\$54,954	14	16.6
Net income	(\$3,886)	\$8,486		

Expenses held constant from January at \$27,500 per month. Revenue (pledges) were back to a more normal level as we had several annual contributions in January.



### PRAYER CORNER

*Remember in your prayers...Family of Robert Wheeler (Janel Goodale's father), Family of Joyce Bickett, Anna Roadhouse (health issues), Pam Cochran (Jeany Gewin's friend – health issues), Marcia Hudson (broken hip), Deb Eckberg (Anna Roadhouse's daughter - health issues), Marlene Klingenberg (stroke), Joyce Linker (health issues), Jim Bradshaw (Carol Byrd's dad – health issues), Heidi Anderson (Lynne Rausch's daughter-in-law – cancer), Mark (Pat James' son in law – cancer), Rich Mair (health issues), Jim Metz (Sue Ray's father – health issues), Russ Frye (Jeany Gewin's cousin – hospice), John Sayers (cancer treatments), Bob Parker (health issues), storm victims in our nation, those with cancer, or illness in our congregation, those awaiting tests/results, those recovering from surgery & treatments, the lonely, the homeless, refugees, immigrants, 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.**

### BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Everyone is welcome to come celebrate Julie McCutchan's 90 years of wisdom and love on Saturday, April 11 from 3-7 pm at the Metro Center in Princeton. Please RSVP to Dee McCutchan at 773-710-0407 or [drmccutchan@icloud.com](mailto:drmccutchan@icloud.com).



### 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.

## 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.

## 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.

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# APRIL

## Celebrations

### Birthdays

**5** Bryce Hildebrand  
Susan Johnson  
**7** Karen Newby  
**9** Emma Wahlgren  
**10** Julie McCutchan  
**11** Tiffany Grove  
Crystal Lilley  
Tom Newby  
**12** Deb Lawson  
Perry Noble IV  
**13** Judy Berryman

**14** Rhonda Leadley  
**16** Paul Byrd  
Henry Noord  
**18** Aiden Menerey  
**19** Jack Orwig  
Remi Rawlings  
**20** Trent Goodale II  
**22** Jan Piper  
Ken Stabler

**25** Brian Jackson  
Lillian Simpson  
**26** Matthew Denton  
Marg Wendle  
**29** Reid Orwig

### Anniversaries

**1** Jeff and Christie Lucas  
**12** Trent and Janel Goodale  
Erick and Staci Wahlgren  
**14** David and Karen Kuebel  
**23** Byram and Donna Vigars



## DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS GRADUATING?

The church would like to know of any graduates in the congregation. If you have a family member, or know of someone who will be graduating from Junior High, High School, College, Technical School, Trade School or Military Academy, please let us know so that they can be recognized in the June Circuit Rider newsletter.

*(\*Only graduates from our church family will be recognized on Graduate Sunday, but the names of all graduates will appear in the June newsletter).* Please complete the form below and return to the church office by dropping it in the offering plate, in the white mailbox, mailing it, or e-mailing it ([office@princetonfirstumc.org](mailto:office@princetonfirstumc.org)) by **May 15**.

**Name of Graduate(s):**

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**Name of Parents:**

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**Name of Junior High, High School, College, Trade/Technical School or Military Academy:**





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**Graduate's Future Plans (if known):**

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# April 2026 at First United Methodist Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>5 EASTER SUNDAY</b> 9 am Worship <i>in-person or live-stream</i> with <b>Holy Communion</b> Children's Sunday School 10:00 Youth Sunday School 10:00 Righteous Renegades	April Change the World: Bishop's Appeal  10 - Women's Bible Study Church Office Closed <i>Pastor Mike Vacation</i>	2:30 Prayer Shawl Group <i>Pastor Mike Vacation</i>  10:00 Book Discussion Group 1:30 Care Team 2:30 Prayer Shawl Group 7:00 Church Council	5:30 Lenten Study  10:00 Witness Team	Easter Prayer Vigil  <i>Pastor Mike Vacation</i> 11:30 - 5:30 Red Cross Blood Drive 6:30 Finance Committee	9-5 Easter Prayer Vigil 6:00 Board Games Group Good Friday 7:00 Worship  Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Games Group <i>Pastor Mike Vacation</i>	5:30 Saturday Evening Worship Easter Observed with <b>Holy Communion</b>
<b>12</b> 9 am Worship <i>in-person or live-stream</i> Children's Sunday School 10:00 Youth Sunday School 10:00 Righteous Renegades  Promise Sale 12:00-4:00 <i>Pastor Mike Vacation</i>	10 - Women's Bible Study 5 pm Our Table Meal  <i>Pastor Mike Vacation</i>	10:00 Book Discussion Group 1:30 Care Team 2:30 Prayer Shawl Group 7:00 Church Council	10:00 Witness Team	11:30 - 5:30 Red Cross Blood Drive 6:30 Finance Committee	Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Games Group <i>Pastor Mike Vacation</i>	Promise Sale 10:00-2:00   5:30 Saturday Evening Worship
<b>19</b> 9 am Worship <i>in-person or live-stream</i> Children's Sunday School 10:00 Youth Sunday School 10:10 Righteous Renegades 10:00 The Middles 6:00 Youth Group	10 - Women's Bible Study 5 pm Our Table Meal  6:30 Trustees Meeting	2:30 Prayer Shawl Group	12:00 Young at Heart Pizza Party	Men's Walk to Emmaus	Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Games Group	APRIL SHOWERS Bring MAY FLOWERS
<b>26</b> 9 am Worship <i>in-person or live-stream</i> Children's Sunday School 10:00 Youth Sunday School 10:10 Righteous Renegades 10:00 The Middles	10 - Women's Bible Study 5 pm Our Table Meal  6:30 Trustees Meeting	2:30 Prayer Shawl Group	12:00 Young at Heart Pizza Party	Men's Walk to Emmaus	Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Games Group	APRIL SHOWERS Bring MAY FLOWERS



## The First United Methodist Church of Princeton, Illinois

Sunday Worship	9:00 a.m.
Saturday Worship (1st & 3rd Saturdays)	5:30 p.m.
Michael Ray Hickok	Pastor
Fallon Bush	Treasurer
Josh Bush	A/V Technology Director
Charles Gebeck	Organist
Shelly Grabill	Office Manager & Financial Secretary
Amanda Noord	Children's Sunday School Leader
Shelley Orwig	Youth Sunday School Leader
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**



**April 2026 Circuit Rider**