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First Presbyterian Church, Batesville AR

February 2026
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Good News

The Love God Desires

God's love is never meant to stop with us; it's meant to flow through us. When we love others, we reflect his very heart. As 1 John 4:12 (NIV) reminds us, "If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us."

This is the true mark of a Christian — love that reaches beyond comfort zones, opinions and differences. Jesus said in John 13:35 (NIV), "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

The world is watching, not to see how loudly we profess our faith but how deeply we practice it. Every act of compassion, every gentle word and every moment of grace reveals something divine — God's love at work in us. The more we give that love away, the more it grows within us, mirroring the heart of Christ, who gave Himself for all.

It is January 21, 2026, and as I write this article, Batesville awaits the arrival of a winter storm. We have been promised frigid cold, the possibility of snow up to six inches, and an accumulation of ice. As a result, the session voted just last night to cancel worship for this coming Sunday and we are reaching out to First United Methodist Church in order to assist them in providing a warming center for those who are unhoused in our community. By the time you read these words, of course, this particular storm will be behind us, but there will be other storms to come. There will always be other storms.

A significant part of life has to do with finding our way through the difficult moments, the challenges that confront us from time to time. And while the Christian faith cannot teach us how to control the weather, it can prepare us and support us through times of loss and pain and can show us a path to follow when our way appears to be blocked.

Beginning in mid-February, FPC will be offering a confirmation class intended to help our young people understand the meaning of the Christian faith and their involvement in the church as active members. In discussing how we might carry out this training, Kathy Altom has made the point that young people really need a foundation on which to stand. They need to know that they have a place to turn when life becomes truly difficult. I couldn't agree more. Those of us who are already members of the church owe our young people a very clear idea of what they might expect in the years ahead and what will be expected of them at the same time.

I was ten years old when I went through what was then called communicants class and I still remember the process and the act of confirmation (which I believe took place on April 11, 1971). It was clear to me then that faith in God through Jesus Christ lay at the very heart of the matter. We need to make this point clear to the young people currently in our care. Please keep our upcoming confirmation class in your prayers and look for ways to support those who participate in it. Let the young people know how important this process is to you and how important it will be to them as well.

Storms come and go in life, but at all times our faith in God remains a source of help and guidance. May the community of Batesville and the surrounding area suffer no serious damage in the days ahead. And together may we continue our walk in the Lord in the years to come.

Blessings,
Jim Freeman



2/1	Luann Baker
2/4	Paulette Freeman
2/11	Mayfan Thomas
2/13	Lily Gillihan
2/19	Penelope Nelms
2/21	Anna Richards
2/22	William Pope

Join us for Fellowship Lunch after worship on Sunday, **February 8th** in Fellowship Hall in conjunction with the installation of new officers! Come share some great conversation with your church family and enjoy a tasty lunch.

Ash Wednesday

This year, Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, falls on February 18th. Pastors in many Christian churches that day will dip a finger in ashes (often made by burning branches from the previous Palm Sunday) and make a cross on parishioners' foreheads during the worship service.

Flower Chart

If you would like to provide flowers for the chancel shelf this year, please sign up on the chart outside of the pastor's office. Flowers can be placed in memory or in honor of someone, or an event, or just because you're willing to provide flowers. Thank you!



Why ashes? Traditionally, they're a sign of mourning, humiliation and penitence. Ashes also represent the frailty and temporary nature of human life ("You are dust, and to dust you shall return," Genesis 3:19). Christians are pained because our sins led to Jesus' death. With repentant hearts, we begin the season of Lent, knowing that it leads to Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday.

For Ash Wednesday — and throughout the 40 days of Lent — ponder this prayer from an Italian sacramentary, or liturgical book: "O God, you know how fragile is our human nature, wounded as it is by sin. Help your people to enter upon the Lenten journey strengthened by the power of your word."



Dementia & Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group Meetings in Batesville

Two meeting times available:

Tuesday, Feb 10, 2-3 pm or
Thursday, Feb 12, 11 am - 12 pm

First Presbyterian Church Parlor
775 E Boswell

Enter through the office
Call 318-617-6282 for more information.

Lessons Learned about Dementia: A Former Caregiver's Perspective

Join us for an informative and compassionate program led by Paulette Freeman, former caregiver and former Executive Director of the Bridge Alzheimer's & Dementia Resource Center in Shreveport, LA.

Lessons Learned about Dementia: A Former Caregiver's Perspective

Presented by Paulette Freeman, Former Caregiver, and Former Executive Director of the Bridge Alzheimer's & Dementia Resource Center in Shreveport, LA

Tuesday, February 17th
1pm, in the
Janis M. Walmsley Public Meeting Room

Who should attend:

- If you're caring for someone with dementia
- If a family member or friend has recently been diagnosed with a form of dementia
- If you would like to learn more about dementia

Attendees will receive additional resources and information from groups specializing in dementia care



CURRENT ELDERS:

Class of 2026

Wanette Baker
Lenora Baldwin
Deborah Stroud
Janet Thomas

Class of 2027

Steve Lange
Jeffrey Friert
Clint Thomas
Kathy Altom

Class of 2028

Andrea Weaver
Celeste Whipple
Barry Gehm
Mary Lee Thessen
Gerri Coleman, Clerk

CURRENT DEACONS

Class Of 2026

Clint Howard
Larry Whipple
Rachel Baker
Payne Moser

Class of 2027

Laura Geary
Mayfan Thomas
Miriam Moore
Sandy James

Class of 2028

Clark Baker
Preston Nelms
Sarah Jones
Melissa Qualls



Donations for February will be snacks for PDS. Please add Goldfish, pretzels, cereal, cheese, yogurt, carrots, animal crackers or fruit to your next grocery list.



Mat Makers Featured on KARK and Fox 16



On January 12th, our church was buzzing with excitement as a camera crew arrived to interview our dedicated mat makers. The segment, which highlighted their incredible mission, aired several times across two Little Rock television stations. The story even caught the attention of the **Synod of the Sun (PCUSA)**, who shared the feature on their Facebook page! Since then, we've been flooded with inquiries. We were especially moved when a group drove all the way from Hot Springs on MLK Day just to see the team in action. We are so proud of these ladies and the impact they are making!

Presbyterian Day School

This February, our local mission efforts are dedicated to supporting **PDS**. As they navigate the busy winter months, we have a wonderful opportunity to bless the students and staff with much-needed snacks and essential supplies.

Add to Your Grocery List

When you head out for your weekly shopping, please consider picking up a few of these high-priority items:

- **Snacks:** Goldfish, pretzels, cereal, cheese, yogurt, carrots, animal crackers, or fresh fruit.
- **Health Supplies:** Disinfecting wipes and boxes of tissues (especially helpful during this cold and flu season!).

Where to Drop Off:

The Narthex in the Sanctuary



Your generosity helps keep our preschoolers nourished and healthy. Thank you for continuing to show such a spirit of giving!

Would you like to help PDS? The day school would welcome any donations in the form of snacks, supplies or **scholarship** contributions. Please check with Ms. Alyson or Ms. Laura if you would like to donate snacks or supplies. Any scholarship funds may be brought to the church office.

Worship Schedule

February 1st –4th Sunday after Epiphany

Liturgist– Bruce Johnston

Acolyte– Avery Moore

February 8th –5th Sunday after Epiphany

Liturgist–Bruce Johnston

Acolyte– Ryan Moore

February 15th –Transfiguration of the Lord

Liturgist– Bruce Johnston

Acolyte– Mettler Bell

February 18th–Ash Wednesday 6:00pm

February 22nd-1st Sunday in Lent

Liturgist - Bruce Johnston

Acolyte– Isabelle Geary



Each Wednesday in Lent, not including Ash Wednesday, join with believers from other local congregations as we journey through Lent together. We will meet on Wednesdays to share Scripture, Silence, and Soup with our friends from First United Methodist, Central Ave. Methodist, St. Mary's Catholic, and St. Paul's Episcopal Churches.

Special Dates for February 2026

- Black History Month, *February 1-28, 2026*
- Groundhog Day, *February 2, 2026*
- Valentine's Day, *February 14, 2026*
- Presidents Day, *February 16, 2026*
- Ash Wednesday, *February 18, 2026*



Pastoral Care

PLEASE REMEMBER these members and friends of First Presbyterian Church in your prayers.

MEMBERS: Shelly Moser, Amy Howard, Bob and Sandy Qualls; Kathy Whittenton; Trish Boylan.
FAMILY AND FRIENDS: Paula Pollock, (*friend of Janet Thomas*); Gretchen LeMieux (*sister of Jo Gehm*); Tanya Anselm (*cousin of Jo Gehm*); Rose Scales (*friend of Mayfan & Clint Thomas*); Brayden Johnson, (*friend of Sam Smith*); Hattie Parker, unborn daughter of Anna Parks Arnold (*friend of Kathy Lanier*); Dana Mathis, (*friend of Sarah Jones*); Amber Lacewell (*friend of LeAnn & Price Homes*); Fin Anderson (*granddaughter of James and Camille*); Kathy Magness, (*friend of Amy & Clint Howard*); Andrew Langenbach (nephew of John Ried); The Bentley Family; Libby King (Daniel King); Sam Crawford (*friend of the congregation*); Chip Rayford (*son-in-law of Theodora Hightower*); Bill Olson (*friend Amy Crouch Howard*); Dwight Barnett & family (*brother of Carlene Lewis*); Kelli Sarrett (*niece of Celeste Whipple*); Dr. Mark Williams (*friend of Carlene Lewis*); Daniel Neal (*friend of Zack Mobley*); Charlie Robuck (*grandson of Jo Cudd*); Paul & Susan (Critz) Guthrie (*friend of the congregation*); Marjorie Seasholtz (*friend of Kathy Whittenton*); Don Weatherman (*friend of the congregation*); Todd Phillips (*nephew of Camille Anderson*); Eloise Kikkert (*granddaughter of Don & Lynn Weatherman*); Betty Howard (*friend of Kathy Whittenton*); Susan Anselm (*sister of Jo Gehm*).

IN THE PRESBYTERY OF ARKANSAS, we remember to pray for these ministries:

Please Pray for...		Feb. 1	First, McGehee	Inquirers & Candidates for Ministry
		Feb. 8	Commissioned Ruling Elders	First, Heber Springs
		Feb. 15	Synod of the Sun	Church Musicians
		Feb. 22	First, Jacksonville	Presbyterian Disaster Assistance



Sermons

Would you like to receive Jim's Sunday sermons in your inbox? He emails his sermons on Monday mornings. If you are interested, send him an email:

jimfreeman1960@gmail.com.