



First Presbyterian Church Effingham, IL 2023 Annual Report

The first word that comes to my mind in describing the First Presbyterian Church in 2023 is **Resilient**. Resilience is the ability of an organization to overcome challenges (hard choices, trauma, tragedy, crises, or simply life's problems), and come through them stronger, wiser, and even more powerful.

An article by Julia Wallace in *Making Church Decisions* newsletter describes that Resilience in a congregation can be found in five signs.

1. A Clear, Compelling Vision - When a congregation knows where it is headed and what is important to their very life and mission, there is energy and purpose. A clear vision draws people together. It points to the future that God intends for them. It fosters a commitment to meet God in the days to come in fresh, renewing methods that brings life.

2. A Curious Sense of Humor - A group that can laugh together has the attitude to weather all sorts of storms. Yes, life happens. People make mistakes. Yet, the power to be curious and look honestly at oneself offers a buoyancy that can help you rise above life's challenges.

3. A Learning Heart - Resilient leaders are curious to discover what works today to reach people for Christ. They assess the ministry. Evaluate. Improve. Resilience comes from understanding what to hold on to and what to let go.

4. A Forgiving Nature - Having the humility to acknowledge that we are only human and make mistakes is essential for resilient organizations. We are loved by God while acknowledging there is room for improvement. We are able to be compassionate and caring no matter what.

5. Living into God's Blessings - Whenever we find ourselves in difficult situations, we count our blessings.

We are thankful for the community that opened its arms to us following our church fire. We are thankful for the Cross Foundation for providing us with a comfortable place to worship God. We are thankful for our church leaders for working together in stressful times towards a brighter future. We are thankful for our church family's patience, understanding and spiritual faith. We are thankful...We are thankful...We are thankful.

God's Blessings,
Theresa Harner, Session Clerk





Administrative and Worship Committee

Sharon Macklin, Chair

Administrative and Worship committee resumed meeting in August 2023. At the August meeting, a suggestion was made to have all committees meet at McAlister's Deli on the same day and same time to make access easier for committees to work together on projects. Session agreed.

The Administrative and Worship committee began working again on our church's Manual of Operations. This manual includes guidance for the nominating committee, handbooks for ordained ministry, elders, deacon, personnel committee, finance committee and employees, ethical conduct for ordained officers, child protection policy, sexual misconduct policy, fire/safety policy, wedding policy and funeral policy. This includes creating forms to be used for building use, funeral planning, sexual misconduct policy receipt form and children & youth participation forms. As these are completed, they will be given to our Session for approval and then forwarded to Presbytery for final approval.

This committee organized

- Filling the pulpit until interim pastor is found.
- October "Outside the Church" service and workday. Church service was held at the New Harmony Playground pavilion. Following the service, members of the congregation went to the homes of members needing help preparing their homes for the upcoming winter.
- Ordering of poinsettias and planning Christmas Eve services.
- Resuming homebound communion.



Mission Committee

Theresa Harner, Chair

The results of a Mission Questionnaire found the congregational priorities of mission as follows.

International – Marion Medical Missions Malawi wells and Operation Christmas Child

National – Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) and Mission Trips

Local – Manna Closet and Nursing Home Visits

Member Care – Meals for Sick Members, Phone Calls to and Visits with Homebound

Other write-ins were Salvation Army, helping members at home, El Shaddai Home,

Communion to homebound, Bible study group and cards to homebound.

The mission of Funeral Dinners and Member Care Meals transitioned from Presbyterian Women to the Mission Committee. While the women still provide the main support, the Mission Committee is now the contact for organizing.

Our 2023 Projects:

- We had a monthly collection item each month for the Manna Closet such as canned pasta, laundry detergent, body wash, shampoo, underwear and hygiene products. The Manna Closet provides assistance to individuals in the community with toiletry and household items as well as individuals and families in need of emergency housing. Along the same thought, we are now researching the idea of an Outdoor Food Pantry.
- February and September brought us on visits to Lakeland Nursing Home for singing and visiting the residents. The kids gave out valentines in February to residents which was delightful.
- March had five members attend a one-day mission trip to Kemmerer Village to help with Easter egg hunt preparations (about 2,000 eggs). Kemmerer Village provides a wide range of quality services to children and families who face stress and turmoil in their lives.
- April found us hosting two tables at a fundraiser for CASA Very Fancy Tea Party. The themes of “Under the Sea” and “Steam Punk” were so creative and charming. Court

Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) supports and promotes court-appointed advocates for abused or neglected children.

- El Shaddai Home, a new residential maternity home, received our support with donated baby items, potted flowers for the new home and parking was available at our church for their Open House. We rejoiced when the first baby resident was born.
- May had us collecting support for the First Presbyterian youth and friends for the Montreat Youth Conference “In Joy” in June. Our church family shared their support by collecting over \$600 towards their expenses.
- “Church on the Go” was held twice throughout the year. Following worship at the Cross on a Sunday in June, 22 church volunteers divided up to go to five homes for various projects. Again, in October, we had worship at Harmony Playground followed by 16 volunteers going to four homes. We completed yard work, washed fencing, secured a mailbox, moved landscaping rock, and put away patio furniture among other requests. While back at the home front, members prepared cards for our prayer list group. After all our hard work, we were rewarded with pizza at the park. We loved being able to offer our services to those in need of a little help.
- In July, our Mission Team of six went to Mayfield, KY area to clean up after a tornado. Work included building a new deck, wheelchair ramp, cleaning walls, floor, and cabinets, painting, and siding. We were so excited to get the Mission Team back together after the three-year shutdown and can’t wait to plan next year’s mission trip. We found that all level of skills from no training to building a house can be very useful when on such a mission.
- For Samaritan’s Purse Operation Christmas Child (OCC), we packed 210 boxes to be sent all over the world. OCC is an international project to provide shoeboxes filled with small toys, hygiene items, and school supplies as a means of reaching out to children with the Good News of Jesus Christ. These simple gifts are shipped outside the United States to children affected by war, poverty, natural disaster, famine, and disease.
- The Presbyterian Joy Offering was collected on Christmas Eve with a total of \$1,037 which was the most collected in several years. This offering supports an Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and Leadership development and education at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.



An individual can only do so much for spreading the Gospel in the world. Yet, through a church mission program we are privileged to pool our resources to help fund the spread of the Gospel throughout the world. God wants the world to know about Christ. He has chosen us as individuals and as churches to share that Gospel with others. With God's guidance we look forward to 2024 projects and invite anyone with a heart for Missions to join us.

Faith Formation Committee

Kristen Schoonover, Chair

Faith Formation committee again evaluated the direction we were going. We agreed that we wanted to continue to work on planning dinner clubs, small groups, and building our youth programs. We were unable to offer some opportunities for adults, and some community outreach programs that we would like due to the difficulty in not having a location. However, we plan to continue to build on those programs in 2024 as we move back into the church.



The Youth Group continued to meet the entire year of 2023 even with the lack of the church building as a weekly meeting place. We met in various restaurants for dinner and when weather allowed, we participated in other activities. Last fall, we took up pickleball and kickball.



We enjoyed a Super Bowl Party, helped with Stellar Vacation Bible School, Stellar Christmas program, and had a fun Christmas party. We also took a trip to Dahnke Family Farms to get to see the reindeer and play some fun outdoor games and enjoyed snacks at the concession stand. We also made some special stops and visits to some members of the church with a little surprise. We were supposed to be anonymous, but we got caught a lot! The youth group participation and help made some of these special activities possible. The junior high and senior high school group has about 10 to 14 youth that faithfully participate in youth group. We had another fantastic group of youth attend the Montreat Youth Conference. This conference is such a great experience for the youth to learn more about themselves, their peers, and grow in their relationship with God. Each year this proves to be true as we watch these youth members bond and grow together. This past summer they learned about finding JOY. What a great conference and important topic for these teens. Again, this year, we enjoyed a few youth services, with the sermon and church service all led by our wonderful youth! We are also planning a special class for our Senior High School age this spring. "Faith in an Anxious World." It will be open to the public as well.



The Elementary Kids Club, which includes our group of kindergarten to 5th grade, had some events to attend as well. We gave them a book at Easter time. We worked with the Methodist church to provide them with Vacation Bible School over the summer. This Christmas they participated in a fun Christmas Party at the Hendersons with dinner, snacks, and crafts, and participated in the Stellar Christmas program. We offered a block of tickets for families to attend the Polar Express Movie event at the EPC. We are looking forward to some movie and popcorn events and game nights as we get back in our Church.



The adults continued to enjoy our monthly dinner clubs. They have been so well attended that we are starting to have options for some of these dinners with two different dates to attend. We had a family event again this year at Pinky's for one of our summer Dinner clubs. We had a craft night at KNR Custom Designs and made some signs. The JOY – (Just Older Youth Group) attended the Chihuly Garden in St. Louis this summer and had a wine trip to Vahling Vineyards this fall. The Chicks on Lit Book Club continues to meet monthly. We have begun giving two book options a month for those wanting to read more. Some members of the book club again participated in the United Way Witches Ball, and even won the Best Group Costume! We are planning our annual movie and Christmas Party too. We started a Stages Not Ages Group to offer events to all adults of the church. The first event was the Branson Christmas Show at the EPC in November. We held our annual Progressive Dinner in December. Our Young Adult group (The Gathering Group) continues to meet and have fun. This is our 18+ and twenties group. They enjoy game nights, going to dinner, and just hanging out together.



We continued to meet for Sunday School throughout the school year. We started late in the fall, and the youth met with the younger kids to practice for our annual Christmas Program. Our committee and the Sunday School teachers continued to keep Sunday School going and met at other locations. We look forward to attending in our Sunday School Rooms soon.

It has been another challenging year, but we continue to persevere and make things happen for our congregation. We look forward to continuing to offering a little bit of something for everyone. We are planning some Bible Studies on Wednesday night to begin when we get in the Church, and looking at a Lenten study as well. Watch for more information! We are ready to begin planning for other activities in our building. Thank you again to all those families who opened their homes to host activities or meetings.





Building & Grounds

Ellen Ritz, Chair

Though the fire restoration kept our committee out of our building, we still had many projects that were completed in 2023 on our outside campus. Committee members for the year are: session-JoAnn Wear/Nancy Joslyn/Ellen Ritz/Jerry Tolliver. Deacons-Paul Eatherton/Rod Cekander/Elizabeth Hartke. At large-Phil Toops/Brian Toops/Fred Wear/Karen Schmitz/Joe Freimuth/Julie Jeffries. We are always looking for more at large members to attend meetings & help with projects.

Committee members Karen Schmitz & Joann Wear were tasked with consulting with Wright's in Dieterich to pick out carpeting/flooring/blinds. Also, countertops for kitchen & bathrooms, furniture in Broom Lounge. Our committee also picked out the replacement glass in the front entrance/foyer area.

Projects/issues in 2023:

- Rear shed door secured after two attempted break ins.
- City repaired the Maple Street culvert in late October after talking to them several times starting in January.
- Secured Judy Wiethop to clean at the Cross every other week.
- Researched office space to rent for Debbie & pastor Katie. Settled on Heartland Human Services facility.
- Maple Street sign repaired
- There were several break ins to the church last year in the Sunday school wing. Dan's glass adjusted the windows and no further break ins since.
- Spoke to Bob Schultz with the cross foundation to get the OK to spread rock in the parking lot at the cross. Schoonover's and Ron Walls spread the rock.
- Burn pile taken care of.
- Inspiration Garden weeded and cleaned up. Then mulched.
- May workday: several members of the congregation helped to lay new landscape fabric & spread mulch to the circle drive bushes to help control the weeds. Some prep work was completed ahead of time. Also, other bushes trimmed in front of the church.
- Area on south west corner of the sanctuary seeded

- Jerry Tolliver continued to maintain the rose bushes on the east & south side of the church.
- More work completed on Inspiration Garden relocating plants and adding new ones. Members watered all summer.
- Weeds sprayed in the parking lot/sidewalks/ditch several times
- Ameren contacted to repair & seed the area along Temple where Wabash Fiber severed the gas line.
- Drees plumbing cleaned out the weep drain that goes into the church (Hagman Hall) and located where it joins the chases underneath the floor.
- Sweetgum trees & Inspiration Garden bushes trimmed, and sticks picked up.
- Drain hoses attached to several downspouts to get water away from the church foundation.
- Roof leaks over Broom lounge and kitchen repaired.
- Yews trimmed around the circle drive and the church.
- Issues with homeless camping on church property throughout the year. Have recorded several people on camera & police were doing extra patrols and checking the areas at night. Also, several groups of teenagers vaped at the arbor. Activity stopped this fall after the weather turned colder.

Our committee will be planning and working on several projects in the coming year. Feel free to join us!



Church Fire

Many things happened in the church building in 2023 after the fire in October 2022. After delays, the asbestos abatement was finally completed in March. There were several delays with approval of the office reconstruction plans with the permit issued in June. The office area was completely deconstructed with only the walls standing. The office area now has an ADA approved bathroom off the pastor office, a workroom, new roof and air conditioner. Additional items replaced were: sinks & countertops in the kitchen, ADA bathrooms (stalls, stools,

countertops), ADA drinking fountain, all walls painted, carpeting and flooring throughout the church, all lights replaced with LED's, emergency lights, electrical outlets & switches, 12 inch sprayed foam insulation in the ceilings replacing bat insulation, ceilings & gridwork, lights in the front of the sanctuary (as previously planned but postponed due to cost), sanctuary pendant lights and sconces (ordered), narthex cabinet rebuilt, register covers in the sanctuary (missing during deconstruction), New gutters on east side on building, soffits outside office, organ & clavinova, doors between foyer/narthex, woodwork/windows in foyer & narthex area entrance, narthex/sanctuary windows, scorched doors/woodwork replaced or refinished. Blinds have been selected, but not yet ordered, Pew pads will be ordered after we are back in the church after reviewing the contents budget. Tables and chairs will be ordered in January or February. Also, several roof leaks were repaired in the kitchen, Hagman Hall, & Broom lounge. A direct fire alarm is installed also security cameras will be installed on the building perimeter. There will be Wifi throughout the building, internet fiber has been run to the building and will be installed in the office. The sound system has yet to be completed. Rachelle, FTS, Eric Light are working on this. Aaron Toops and his company are installing the WiFi/security equipment at a lower cost and will monitor & troubleshoot at no cost to the church. Servpro will be returning items that have been cleaned plus boxed items. Phil Toops is planning to have people go through the boxes in their Sunday school rooms & decide what to keep or discard if not needed. This will be done in small groups. Phil would like everyone to know that State Farm & Servpro have been fantastic to work with. Also, thanks to the congregation for our patience in this process. Since we did push to rush the process, many items were able to be moved from contents to building coverage after looking closer at the policy coverage or negotiating with State Farm. Hopefully we will be able to be back in the church by the end of February.

Financials

Tom Henderson and Matt Cekander, Co-Treasurers

Committee	2022 Budget	2023 Budget	2024 Budget
WORSHIP & ADMINISTRATION			
SALARIES			
PASTOR	\$64,272	\$64,272	\$55,167
YOUTH DIRECTOR	\$12,360	\$12,360	\$12,000
OFFICE	\$17,176	\$17,176	\$17,691
MUSIC	\$14,729	\$14,729	\$15,171
CHILDCARE	\$1,236	\$1,236	\$1,273
JANITOR	\$5,933	\$5,932	\$8,000
BENEFITS			
PASTOR (medical, Pension, DD)	\$23,781	\$29,397	\$34,869
*PASTOR (professional expenses)	\$8,118	\$8,118	\$3,200
YOUTH DIRECTOR	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$2,500
SOCIAL SECURITY	\$3,935	\$3,935	\$3,935
OFFICE			
GENERAL	\$3,100	\$3,100	\$3,100

TECHNOLOGY	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$3,000
INSURANCE	\$8,000	\$8,831	\$13,006
ADVERTISING			
ACTIVITIES	\$0	\$0	\$0
ADVERTISING COSTS	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000
WORSHIP			
MUSIC	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,400
SUPPLY PASTORS	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$3,000
SUPPLIES	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,300
PER CAPITA	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500
FORMATION			
ADULT CURRICULUM	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,288
FELLOWSHIP			
FOOD	\$3,250	\$3,250	\$3,300
ACTIVITIES	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,750
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION			
CURRICULUM	\$1,600	\$1,600	\$1,500
VBS	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,200
ACTIVITIES	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
SUPPLIES	\$750	\$750	\$750
MONTREAT	\$0	\$0	\$11,000
MISSION & OUTREACH			
INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS (call-em-all, website, etc.)	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250
MISSION PLEDGE	\$17,000	\$17,000	\$17,510
MISSION TRIP	\$500	\$500	\$1,000
INTERNAL MISSION	\$300	\$300	\$300
PROPERTY			
BUILDINGS & GROUNDS (lawn & snow)	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500
VAN OPERATIONS (gas, inspections, repairs)	\$1,300	\$1,300	\$1,300
JANITOR SUPPLIES	\$700	\$700	\$700
UTILITIES	\$17,000	\$18,700	\$19,200
TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET	\$232,789	\$240,936	\$253,160

Schopmeyer Report

Keith Hartman, Chair

Investment Balance 12/31/23: \$807,863.42

The committee voted December 2021 to sell any funds once the fund has a balance over \$850,000 and to give to local charities. In 2022 & 2023 the fund did not grow over \$850,000 so no funds were sold. \$32,000 was transferred into the General Fund.

Presbyterian Women

(all women of the church)

Submitted by Nancy Joslyn

This was a little different year for PW with the fire etc. but we managed to continue.

February: Was Pledge Month for PW. Also, we mailed valentines to church members.

March: Volunteers worked over 100 hours at the Silk Purse, and we were reimbursed \$3,000.

This replaced our two-yearly rummage sales.

April: We collected food items for the annual "Easter Baskets" one to each of the following schools: ELC, Southside and Central.

May: This was our big meeting in which it was decided to add a third circle to be totally inclusive of our church women:

Faith Circle: meets 9:15 to 11:00 on the first Tuesday of the month at Mary Lou Sams.

They are doing the Horizon Bible Study Sacred Encounters – The Power and Presence of Jesus in Luke and Acts.

Hope Circle: meets the second Thursday each month Sept. to May at 4:30 at members homes or at church. This year we met at McAlister's Deli.

Love Circle: will begin meeting in the evenings – details to follow once the church opens.

We took a break over the summer but had a pool party at Laura Linders in August.

October: We sent out 12 gift cards to our college students (in place of goody boxes). The money for these cards came from donations of our church members.

November: We collected the Thank Offering - \$750.00

December: PW purchased four new Christmas Trees for the church. Two 12 ft. matching trees for the front of the church, one 6 ft. tree for the Sunday School wing, and one 9 ft. tree for Hagman Hall for the Captain Underpants mission. The Hagman Hall tree will be dedicated to Janet Henderson for all her work with PW missions. Also, the church collected for Captain Underpants Mission of underpants, socks, sweatpants, gloves and caps.

Presbyterian Women's Association Report of Income and Expense		
January - December 2023		
Checking Account Balance Beginning January 1, 2023		\$5,184.03
Income		
	Kemmerer Books	\$3.00
	PW Pledges	\$1,225.00
	Shopmeyer Donations	\$0.00
	Equal Exchange	\$0.00
	Silk Purse	\$3,000.00
	College Boxes	\$400.00
	PWSEIP	\$750.00
	Janet Henderson donation	\$200.00
Total Income for Year		\$5,578.00
New Checking Balance		\$10,762.03
Expenses		
	PWSEIP	\$910.00
	Central School	\$0.00
	ELC	\$0.00
	SouthSide	\$0.00
	Effingham Junior High	\$0.00
	Effingham High School	\$0.00
	Effingham Study Shoppe	\$0.00
	East Side Preschool	\$0.00
	Ellen Ritz	\$0.00
	SAFE	\$0.00
	SWAN	\$0.00
	ASPIRE	\$0.00
	TLC	\$0.00
	CASA	\$0.00
	Marion Well	\$0.00
	Manna Closet	\$0.00
	Altar Flowers/décor	\$0.00
	Pastor Appreciation	\$0.00
	Pastor Christmas Gift	\$0.00
	College Boxes	\$400.00
	Lana Henderson 2 pies/Niemergs Janet Henderson funeral	\$100.00
	First Presbyterian Church 4 Christmas trees	\$1,612.96
	Kemmerer Village paver for Janet Henderson	\$100.00
Total Expenses for Month		\$3,122.96
Ending of month checking account balance December 31, 2023		\$7,639.07
	Church Improvement Fund	\$0.00
	Triennium Fund	\$3,037.00
	PWSEIP (\$250 x 4 plus 100 Contingent) to be discussed for 2024	\$0.00
Money Available for Use		\$4,602.07
Rita M Toops, PW Treasuer		