



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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♦ OCTOBER 2025 ♦

A Word from Pastor Mike

On the third weekend of October, my wife, Linda, and I will attend the wedding of our nephew Eric and his beloved Nadia. We look forward to this occasion for many reasons including the opportunity to see the magnificent fall foliage in West Virginia. Family weddings also serve as family reunions where we reconnect with loved ones who are so dear to us.

In some other family weddings, for our son and three of our nieces, my purpose was to serve as a pastor. For Eric and Nadia's wedding my role will be the supportive uncle. Eric comes from a long line of pastors including his great-grandfather, for whom he is named, and his grandfather. We have watched with gratitude as we have seen the Lord's blessings in Eric's life. He achieved the rank of Eagle Scout and graduated in engineering from Penn State University, where he met Nadia.

When our family gathers to support and bless this young couple, there will be laughter and tears, hugs and kisses, feasting and dancing. We will offer our prayers and commitment to support their marriage. Long after this joyous weekend, we will continue to pray for Eric and Nadia as they establish their own family and home.

Currently in our Middles Sunday School Class at Princeton First UMC, our topic is parenting our adult children. Our lively discussion led me to reflect on our roles as parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. The extended Christian family is one of our ways to share the Lord's blessings with the next generation. The developer of the resource we are using in the Middles Class, Jim Burns, reminds us of how our roles change as these young women and men, entrusted to us by God, grow older. Jim explains that we reinvent the relationship as we encourage them to mature in their life and faith.

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

October Worship Schedule

Sunday Worship
Sundays 9:00

Saturday Evening
Service
October 4th 5:30*
October 18th 5:30

Holy Communion
October 4th 5:30*
October 5th 9:00

From the Office

Please coordinate with the office on any events or repairs going on at the church, so we don't have two things happening in one room. Thank you!

October at a Glance

October 5- 6:00 Youth Group
October 14 - 1:30 Care Team
October 15 - 12:30 UWF Board Meeting
October 16 - 11:30-5:30 Blood Drive
6:30 Finance Meeting
October 21 - 7:00 Church Council Meeting
October 27- 3:00 Nominating Committee

Holy Communion

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



October Change the World

Change the World for October will be donated to **Princeton Ministerial Association** which helps residents of Bureau County primarily with their rent and utility costs, as well as gas for cars and groceries (in smaller amounts and on a case-by-case basis). Your donations are greatly appreciated.

Change the World September Report

During the month of September we collected \$2,578.23 for Princeton Habitat for Humanity, and \$5,156.46 with the match from Missions. Thanks for 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, October 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.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children's Sunday School started back up on September 7th! This month, we have been talking about how God rescues us. Each week, we have read a Bible story about Moses. Students have enjoyed making All About Me posters to hang up in the classroom and playing games such as "The Burning Bush Says". Any child from Preschool-5th grade is welcome to join us any Sunday immediately following the Children's Moment.

Amanda Noord, Children's Sunday School Director

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

The **Righteous Renegades** adult Sunday School meets Sundays after the worship service in Cushing Hall, beginning with several weeks of Bible study led by Tom Newby. We invite you join us for lively discussion on topics that are relevant to the Christian life.

The Middles Sunday School group ,meets Sundays the library after the worship service. They are currently discussing a multi-part series focusing on parenting adult children.

YOUTH GROUP

Youth Group is for anyone interested in grades 6-12 and will be held at church on Sunday Oct. 5th and Sunday Oct. 19 from 6-7.

UPCOMING NORTHERN ILLINOIS CONFERENCE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Tuesday 10/14/25 7:00 PM Local Church Board of Trustees 101

This webinar is intended to help the local church Board of Trustees to understand their responsibilities as described in paragraph 2533 of the Book of Discipline. The NIC Board of Trustees will share templates, examples, and "best practices". There will be a Question and Answer section at the end of the webinar. Presenters: Katie Voigt (NIC BOT Chairperson) and NIC BOT members: Jeff Brace, Robert Wood and Dan Saavedra

Prairie South Fall Lay Academy

Saturday 10/11/25 8:30-3:00

Saturday 10/18/25 8:30-3:00

This year's lay academy will be held at the Rochelle UMC from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm on both Saturday, October 11, and Saturday, October 18. The cost is \$40 which includes lunch. The classes being offered are "Lay Ministry Basic", "Leading in Worship", "Lay Servants Lead in Conflict Resolution" and "From Your Heart to Theirs: Delivering an Effective Sermon". All books may be purchased at your favorite bookseller. The registration link is: <https://www.umcnic.org/calendar/prairie-south-lay-academy-fall-2025>



YOUNG AT HEART

On Tuesday, October 7th, the Young at Heart group will go to Tanners Orchard again for lunch and shopping. Come and enjoy a fun, Fall day. We will carpool from the church at 10:30. Signup sheet is on the table outside the office.



UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

The next UWF meeting will be on **Wednesday, October 15 at 1:30 PM**. The speaker will be Amy Murphy from Princeton Closet. She will give us update on how The Closet operates and its accomplishments as a resale shop. We may even learn how we can support its efforts and how we can get involved. Hostesses for the meeting will be Pat Eddy and Becky Guither. The board will meet prior to the general meeting at 12:30. We hope to get an update from the Nominating Committee for the 2026 officers. As always, ALL women are invited!

ECUMENICAL WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

The Women's Ecumenical Bible Study is doing a 10 week study called "The Twelve Disciples". This Bible Study meets every Monday at 10:00 am in the Church Library. It's a "drop-in" group which means attendance every week is not required. The Ecumenical Bible Study is open to women of all denominations. If you have questions, contact Janet Becker at 815-866-1801 or beckerjnj71@gmail.com.



BOOK GROUP

Please consider attending our next discussion on **October 14 at 10 am** in the church library. Here is the current schedule for the rest of 2025.

October 14 *Brought this Far* by Sharon Lee Meisenheimer

November 11 *Someone Knows My Name*

December 9 *How Far to Bethlehem* by Norah Lofts



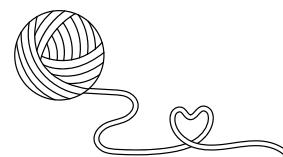
GRIEF SHARE

This weekly group meets through November 17 on Mondays from 1-3 pm at the **Evangelical Covenant Church** in Princeton for those grieving the loss of a loved one. There is no fee for the course. There is an optional workbook for \$20. For more information call 815-875-2124.



All Saints Sunday November 2

We want to remember your loved ones who have passed in the last year. If you have a picture you could give to the church office either by email or bringing it in to scan, we can include them in the annual recognition. **Please have these pictures in no later than Oct. 19.** Kind reminder – this is for those who've passed since the last All Saints Day one year ago.



Knitter's Group

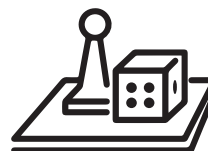
Calling All Knitters and Crocheters! All skill levels are invited to come knit, crochet, loom or just chat on **Tuesdays at 2:30 pm** in the conference room.



Thank You Musicians

We were so blessed this summer to have multiple people share their musical talents while the Vocal and Bell Choirs took a break. Thanks go out to:

Joyce Bickett	Paul Kautz
Fallon Bush	Men's Group
Vicki Cabral	Jennifer Merth
Charlie Gebeck	Karen Newby
Linda Hickok	John Sayers
Angie Hughes	Pat James



Princeton Board Games Group

This group meets on Fridays at 6:00 pm in Cushing Hall. Everyone who's interested in learning more about modern board gaming and any player level is welcome to join this friendly group. Any questions, talk to Jon McCutchan, Carla Towne, or Teresa Stanley.

BELL CHOIR CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY



The celebration of the bell choir's 50th anniversary was highly successful. The service and subsequent party in Cushing Hall was attended by former bell players and family members of former bell players. The bell choir debuted their commissioned piece, "Echoes of Joy" by Joel Raney. The bell players loved playing it and the congregation was very appreciative. The piece was paid for in part by the Gary James Memorial Fund. Prior to the piece being played, bell director Karen Newby gave a brief history of the start of the bell choir, as follows:

On January 22, 1975, this church purchased its first set of handbells. The cost for two octaves was \$1,470 and the money was provided by the Memorial Fund. The first time the bells were rung in service was February 9th of 1975. Lois Revell and Julia McCutchan rang 2 bells each accompanying the choir in the anthem, "Brethren, We Are Made to Worship."

The first rehearsal of the bell choir was held on May 20, 1975, from 9:00 to 10:00 AM under the direction of Elaine Soderberg. Original members were Mabel Ackerson, Norma Cottington, Linda Howarter, Alice Lord, Marian Middleton, Marge Pierson, Irma Shurtz, Joanne Swan, and Marzetta Walters. The name Elm City Belles was adopted officially on November 7, 1975. The extra e was dropped later when men joined the group.

A third octave of bells was added on December 11, 1975. The money for the bells was donated by Norma Coddington in memory of Dick Coddington. No information on the purchase of the fourth octave of bells was available, but the fifth octave was added in 1983.

Elaine Soderberg remained the director of the bells until she passed away in 1993 and then Joanne Swan took over. Joanne was the director until she retired in 2014 and then Karen Newby became the director.





FROM THE GREEN TEAM

A Four Part Series: Christian calling, Save water, save lives by Joe Iovino
(<mailto:jiovino@umcom.org>)

Part 1 (of four parts)

During the summer months, many United Methodists in the United States and elsewhere spend time near water. We camp by a lake, vacation at the beach, or lounge by a pool. Water is so readily accessible we can take it for granted. For much of the world, however, the search for clean, safe water is an everyday chore that never takes a holiday.

Following Jesus's call to care for all people, Christians should be good stewards of water through acts of conservation and protection. "Our objective," says Elizabeth Lee, United Methodist Women Executive for Economic and Environmental Justice, "is to minimize our use of this most precious natural resource." While water access issues can seem overwhelming, there are easy steps we can take to become better stewards of God's precious gift of water.

USE LESS FOR BATHING

Take showers instead of baths is a great way many of us already conserve water. The average tub holds 35-50 gallons of water and the average shower uses less than 25. If you have a small child, a bathtub insert can significantly decrease your water usage. Also, turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth or shaving.

DRINK TAP, NOT BOTTLED

Tap water is cheaper, usually cleaner, and often tastes better than bottled water. Drinking tap water and filling reusable bottles, help reduce the production and disposal of plastic bottles-processes that are sometimes responsible for water pollution. "If you're concerned about water that is tainted or has pollutants in it, put in a filtration mechanism," advises Lee. "That's a lot better than getting bottled water."

in our rural area, where agricultural chemical contamination threatens ground water for wells, good options are to buy water from a municipal source for drinking and food preparation.

The privatization of water is also a concern. For example, Lee points to a dispute between a community in Michigan and a water bottling company that is requesting to pump 400 gallons of water per minute into their plant.

(Part two to follow in November Circuit Rider.)

Photo Credit: Jannifer Powelson



ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Our Princeton First United Methodist Church Endowment Funds were established over 40 years ago from generous Church members.

These generous gifts over 40 years ago still pay BIG dividends to our Church today. The Endowment Funds are only used to improve and maintain our Church Building and Grounds. Endowment funds are not used for Church operating expenses.

Our Church is very fortunate to have these Endowment Funds. Without these Endowment Funds, it would be extremely difficult for Our Church to maintain the Church building and grounds to high standards. Improving and maintaining our beautiful Church building and grounds heavily depends on our Endowment Funds.

Endowment Fund Balance:

August 29, 2025 \$817,027.32
July 25, 2025 \$809,276.65
June 27, 2025 \$794,736.48
May 30, 2025 \$766,080.10
April 25, 2025 \$726,612.69
December 31, 2024 \$730,968.83.
December 31, 2023 \$683,466.55.

From 2022 – 2025, the Endowment Fund will provide \$200,000 towards \$400,000 of much needed improvements to our Church building and grounds. The Endowment Committee matched an anonymous \$50,000 donation in 2022, in addition to the 3-year capital campaign match of \$150,000 for the \$200,000 total.

The Church Endowment Committee encourages all Members to contribute to our Church Endowment Fund as you plan your Estate. New Gifts to the Endowment Fund will help improve and maintain our Church Building and Grounds for the next 40+ years.

Ways you can contribute to the Endowment Fund are: Gifts of Cash, Stocks, Bonds, Real Estate (farms, homes, commercial), retirement fund required minimum distributions, and naming the Church Endowment Fund as beneficiary of Life Insurance policies.

Please contact an Endowment Committee member with your questions. Endowment Fund information brochures are available in the lobby. Please take one.

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Endowment Committee

Doug Ray
Barb Skean
Birney Brown
Brian Church
Mike Vrana
Lora Corban



PRAYER CORNER

Remember in your prayers...Crystal Lilley (health issues), Melody Powell (health issues), Marilyn Egli (health issues), Gerald & Rhonda Leadley (health issues), Bob Parker (health issues), Bob Lindsey (Alan Bergh's friend – health issues), Scott Pfeiffer (Jeany Gewin's friend – health issues), JoAnn Patterson (recovery from shoulder surgery), Chris Noel (Sheryl Noel's son – cancer treatments), Lynn Kautz (Paul Kautz's sister-in-law – lung cancer), Jim Bradshaw (Carol Byrd's dad – recovery from broken leg), Stacy White (Amanda Noord's mom – recovery from surgery), 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.**



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

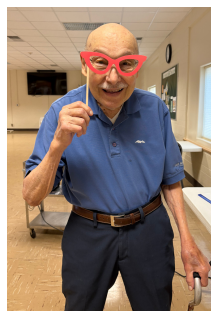
If you have items to donate to Tri-County Food Pantry, please feel free to bring them in and drop them in the shopping cart located in Cushing Hall. The need is great, and all gifts are appreciated.

October **MOMENTS**

Bell Choir Celebrates



Taco Bar



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 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.

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) 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.

REMEMBERING PFUMC IN YOUR WILL

We never like to think about the time when we won't be here, but it comes for all of us. Thankfully, we know the next phase of our life is a joyful one – being reunited with loved ones and with God. But we will all leave behind both the 'stuff' of this life and a legacy. What better way to combine both than by including your church in your will. Hopefully you have wonderful people to leave gifts to as well, but if you include PFUMC in your will, you'll be ensuring important ministry will continue long into the future because of your generosity. See a member of the Endowment Committee if you have questions.

OCTOBER

Celebrations

Birthdays

2	Christine Anderson Joe Birkey Debbie Brewer	11	Ruth Denault	22	John Plumley Joan Simpson
3	Kelly Loftus	12	Alaina Anderson	23	Landon Bush
4	Guy Marella Scott Piper Jim Smith	13	Tina Eckdahl	24	Georgia Schlender Stuart VandeVenter
6	Lynn Rausch Nathaniel Faber	15	Gerald Leadley Bryce Taylor	27	Sandy Steele
7	Betsy Beams	19	Marissa Cruse Phyllis Duffy	28	JoAnn Patterson Jerry Piper
8	Lou Ann Birkey Todd Ericson Glenda Johnson		Adam Faber Lynette VandeVenter	31	Robert Merth

Anniversaries

1	James and Jeanette Bystry	18	John and Darlene Plumley
4	Scott and Jane Robbins	21	Cal and Christy Gramer
5	Kenneth and Eloise Stabler	25	Bob and Sherri Parker
9	Scott and Christine Anderson	27	Frank and Rita Dunlap
10	Randy and Sally Farrell Dan and Cara Kniss		

October 2025 at First United Methodist Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5 9 am Worship <i>in-person or live-stream</i> with Holy Communion Children's Sunday School 10:15 The Middles 10:15 Righteous Renegades 6:00-7:00 Youth Group	6 10 - Women's Bible Study October Change the World: Princeton Ministerial Association	7 10:30 Young at Heart Tanners Orchard 2:30 Knitters Group 6:00 Handbells Practice	8 6:30 Choir practice	9	10 Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Games Group	11 5:30 Saturday Evening Worship with Holy Communion
12 9 am Worship <i>in-person or live-stream</i> Choir Sings Children's Sunday School 10:15 Righteous Renegades 10:15 The Middles	13 10 - Women's Bible Study 5 pm Our Table Meal  <i>Pastor Mike Gone</i>	14 10:00 Book Group 1:30 Care Team 2:30 Knitters Group 6:00 Handbells Practice <i>Pastor Mike Gone</i>	15 12:30 UWF Board 1:30 United Women in Faith 6:30 Choir practice <i>Pastor Mike Gone</i>	16 11:30 - 5:30 Red Cross Blood Drive 4:45 Memorials 6:30 Finance Committee <i>Pastor Mike Gone</i>	17 Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Games Group <i>Pastor Mike Gone</i>	18  Saturday WORSHIP 5:30 Saturday Evening Worship <i>Pastor Mike Gone</i>
19 9 am Worship <i>in-person or live-stream</i> Handbells Play Children's Sunday School 10:15 Righteous Renegades 10:15 The Middles 6:00-7:00 Youth Group <i>Pastor Mike Gone</i>	20 10 - Women's Bible Study <i>Pastor Mike Gone</i>	21 2:30 Knitters Group 6:00 Handbells Practice 7:00 Church Council 6:30 Choir practice <i>Pastor Mike Gone</i>	22	23	24 Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Games Group <i>Pastor Mike Gone</i>	25
26 9 am Worship <i>in-person or live-stream</i> Choir Sings Children's Sunday School 10:15 Righteous Renegades 10:15 The Middles	27 10 - Women's Bible Study 3:00 Nominating Committee Meeting 6:30 Trustees Meeting 5 pm Our Table Meal 	28 2:30 Knitters Group 6:00 Handbells Practice 7:00 Church Council 6:30 Choir practice	29	30	31 Church Office Closed 6:00 Board Games Group Halloween	Saturday



The First United Methodist Church of Princeton, Illinois

Worship Service

9:00 a.m.

Saturday Service (1st & 3rd Saturdays)

5:30 p.m.

Michael Ray Hickok

Pastor

Fallon Bush

Treasurer

Josh Bush

A/V Technology Director

Charles Gebeck

Organist

Pat James

Chancel Choir Accompanist

Shelly Grabill

Office Manager & Financial Secretary

Amanda Noord

Children's Sunday School Leader

Shelley Orwig

Youth Sunday School Leader

Karen Newby

Handbell Choir Director/Chancel Choir Director

Tom Newby

Lay Leader

Elizabeth Schlender

Communications Director

Chris Rucinski

Nursery

Church Office

(815) 872-2821

Church General E-mail

office@princetonfirstumc.org

Church Website

princetonfirstumc.org

**The First United Methodist Church of Princeton
316 South Church Street
Princeton, IL 61356**

**POSTMASTER:
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



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