



First Report

Jan. 2023
Issue 54
Volume 1



Annual Celebration (aka meeting)

Sunday, February 5, 2023 @ 11:15 in Fellowship Hall

(otherwise known as the annual meeting of the congregation, corporation and foundation)

Followed by lunch hosted by the Youth Group

Every year we gather for an annual celebration of what we've done the past year, and what we're looking forward to in the coming year. This year we have a lot of exciting things to share, a few "unveilings" to enjoy, we'll hear from some of our ministry teams doing new things, and we'll celebrate what God did through us in 2022. We'll also be electing board members for the Foundation, possibly another elder and deacon, and congregational nominating committee members. Zoom or In-Person – join us for the event!

To get the zoom link: Click the "EVENTS" tab on the website and register for the zoom link.

Direct link: <https://fpclincoln.org/event/cong-meeting/>

Want lunch? Make reservations by either contacting Carrie in the office (churchadmin@fpclincoln.org) or

registering for lunch on the event page. Lunch is free, but donations are always welcome to support youth ministry activities.

Sunday Worship Times

In-Person Worship Services

10 am - English - (Livestreamed at <https://fpclincoln.org/live>)

12 pm - Nuer

Events & Opportunities
fpclincoln.org/events

Online Sermons:
[Fpclincoln.org/sermon](https://fpclincoln.org/sermon)

A Letter from Pastor Sue

Over the past few months, we have celebrated what God did through us in 2022 – we impacted lives in ways we never expected at the beginning of 2022. We helped build schools, provide water for villages, connected with people who have never before found a church where they felt safe and accepted. We've also been talking about our vision for 2023 so that we can continue to bring hope both near and far. We have some big dreams, and how far we can go with them is directly related to our own giving.



Like many of you, Linda and I give to a variety of organizations that speak to our values and our passions, but the largest portion of our giving goes to this church, for several reasons, one being practical. There are thousands and even millions who give to the other charities we support. There are less than 200 who give to First Presbyterian Church. We simply aren't that big! We know that our giving is needed and makes a bigger impact here than anywhere else we give. If we don't give this year to the World Wildlife Fund, they are not going to go over their budget and say "Well, Sue and Linda didn't give this year, therefore we can't do X." But if we don't give to First Presbyterian Church, there's a very real chance that some of what we want to do won't happen.

Our primary reason for giving is that we care about the ministry of this church. We have seen first-hand how having staff available to be with people in crisis matters. We have seen lives changed by being accepted and loved by this church. We have seen children grow up with a strong foundation of faith. We have seen the behind the scenes work that staff and volunteers put in so that we can have meaningful worship (online and in person!), and a place out of which to do ministry, not to mention the support that most people never see that is needed for all of our ministries to flourish. We have seen dreams rise up and thus helped form an organization (Justice in Action) whose sole purpose is to make our community a safer and healthier place.

We know God is not done with First Presbyterian Church, so once again, the largest portion of our charitable giving for 2023 will go here. Will you join us? If you haven't yet made a pledge, please fill one out on the website (fpclincoln.org/give), or you can download one there and bring it to church. We'll be dedicating all of our pledges on February 5, and then we'll know better how we can respond to the opportunities and needs God has placed before us!

Thank you for your continued generosity!

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sue Collier". Below the signature, in small blue capital letters, is the text "ROOTED IN GOD - OPEN TO GRACE - FILLED WITH JOY".

ROOTED IN GOD - OPEN TO GRACE - FILLED WITH JOY





What's happening with online ministry? A Lot! As part of our strategic plan to grow our online presence and reach more people with a message of hope, and do more than just put worship and sermons online:

- We are working with a consultant who is helping us expand our social media ministry and connect with agencies who are doing the kinds of things we care about. We're still in the early stages of this, so it will take some time to see results, but we've started!
- We are developing a new website that will be more responsive to people looking for churches like ours, and (hopefully) we'll be ready to unveil that at our annual meeting on Feb. 5.
- We are finding ways to use what we're already doing in multiple ways (increase output without increasing the workload too much), such as using quotes from sermons in social media posts, and even looking at converting them into blogs that people can subscribe to that you can share.
- We are exploring a grant from the Presbyterian Church USA to help us as we develop our online presence.

Pastor Sue and Vena are taking a seminary class on Spiritual Entrepreneurship, which is really what our online ministry is, so we can learn about how best to grow it and how to reach people. The exciting thing – the class hasn't even started at the time this article is being written, and already we're getting ideas on how to use what we're learning from our readings in our in-person ministry! (Stay tuned – sometimes it takes a while to implement what we are learning.)

As with any new endeavor, we are looking at trying things and tweaking things as we learn. We value your prayers and support, your generosity and participation as we continue to grow a robust, online ministry that works hand-in-hand with our robust in-person ministry!

First Presbyterian Church Foundation

Our Foundation supports our church in so many ways and has for generations and will for generations to come. Our Foundation supports the church budget, supports our music, caring, mission, and Christian education programs, just to name a few. As we lift up our Foundation, we want to make you aware of the new way to give to the Foundation Birthday Club.

During the month of your birthday, you will receive a note from our Foundation asking to you participate in the Foundation Birthday Club, this is a way you are able to support our Foundation.

If you have any questions regarding this program or any other questions about our Foundation, please contact Cheryl Rennick in the church office. finance@fpclincoln.org

Finance

Your Stewardship Committee & “Our Money Story”

How does our story about money impact our faith – and how our faith impacts the stories we tell ourselves about money.

We all have a money story, whether we recognize it or not. Perhaps we are living from a story of fear or shame. Or a story that the church is dying and no longer relevant. Or a story that our actions won't have an impact. Or a story that we don't have enough. Where might God be speaking a new narrative into the limited ones we have told ourselves? This theme invites us to discover and tell our money stories in light of God's money story of liberation and justice. This series encourages us to transform our stewardship practices into more full expressions of who we are and what we believe.

This theme is intentionally direct—it invites us to name exactly what we're talking about and not skirt around it. To speak of money is to invite tension into the room. We so quickly want to avoid it. But it's time we reframe this.

Money and possessions are one of the most common topics in scripture, and Jesus talked about money more than faith and prayer. Our money story, therefore, is a spiritual story. Thinking about God's money story should be liberating, inviting, and transformative. This stewardship season, we invite you to remember, release, reimagine, and restore your money stories so that we can write the one God is begging us to live into.

Please use your devotional booklet as your daily devotion guide.

Come and join us as we write our new money story!



"If how I live doesn't reflect the values of my faith, or maybe better said, the hopes of my faith, then I should probably re-evaluate how I'm living. I need to re-evaluate the world I am supporting. Because faith isn't just an intellectual exercise. It's a way of life, and an expression of my hope, not just for me, but for you and the world." ~ Pastor Sue Coller

Session Notes

Session Highlights

Lots of routine motions: setting times for worship and communion for the year, electing corporate officers, appointing people as presbytery commissioners, nominating committee members, and such. All that will be in the annual report handed out on Feb. 5.

Our annual meeting on Feb 5 now has an option for people to zoom in. So we're also working on a poll feature for zoom, so members zooming in can vote on the actions we take at the meeting.

We're looking at what we as a congregation want to do while Pastor Sue is on her clergy renewal leave later this year. Ideas include a pottery workshop, and a retreat. More to come!

Our online ministry team is creating a new website that is geared for people looking for a welcoming, accepting church, where they can explore their beliefs rather than being told what to believe. We had a great conversation about how wide the understandings are in our own congregation about who God is, who Jesus is, what it means to say Jesus is Lord and Savior, etc. We don't always have deep theological conversations at Session, but sometimes we do!

We approved participation in Give to Lincoln day by Arts for the Soul

We made initial plans for our Session retreat Feb. 24/25 at the International Quilt Museum



FPChristian Education

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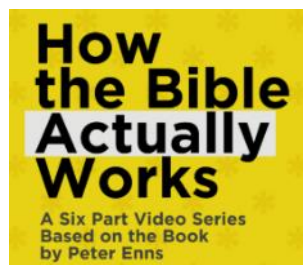
The last few years, even before COVID, there has been a movement to help families with faith formation at home. The church and our educational programs will always focus of faith formation and education of children, youth, and adults, but in reality that's generally only 1-2 hours a week for children. The other 166 hours of the week are at home, school, or asleep. Faith formation is more than just Sunday mornings and it's something that (hopefully) intersects with all aspects of life. Faith is not just something we have or practice, it's something we live every day, every hour of the week. Beginning in February, the Christian Education ministry of First Presbyterian Church will be sending out a monthly resource to help families with faith formation at home called "Beyond Sunday". This resource provides a weekly family activity that goes along with the church calendar (Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost and Ordinary Time, etc.) as well as ideas how to make a special place in your home (a corner, a table, etc.) that can serve as an intentional space, intentional holy ground where holy encounters and moments can occur. We hope these short activities and lesson help you and your family grow your faith beyond Sundays.



5th Sunday Breakfast returns this month on **Sunday, Jan. 29th** at 9:00 am in Fellowship Hall. This morning features a potluck breakfast and all church intergenerational time of faith formation. Young and old and all in between are invited to bring some breakfast item/dish to share and learn from one another. The theme for the this 5th Sunday Breakfast goes along with our worship series "Our Money Story" as we join together for an congregational art project.



Coffee and a Muffin Book Study kicked off this Saturday morning but it's not too late to join in. The book this group is studying is "If God Is Love, Don't Be a Jerk" by John Pavlovitz. For more information on the study, the book, and how to log-in on Saturday mornings, please visit the Coffee and A Muffin events page on the church website.



How the Bible Actually Works is the new series in the Foundation/Hebrews Class on Sunday mornings. This is a 6-part video series based on a book by scholar Pete Enns through "The Bible for Normal People." Join us for a discussion on what the Bible is (and is not) and what do we do with it.

Music & Property Notes

The next two concert of the Arts for the Soul season are:

Saturday, March 4 at 7:00 pm ~ Sing from the Heart featuring the First Presbyterian Church choir and soloists. Proceeds for this concert will go to The Gathering Place.



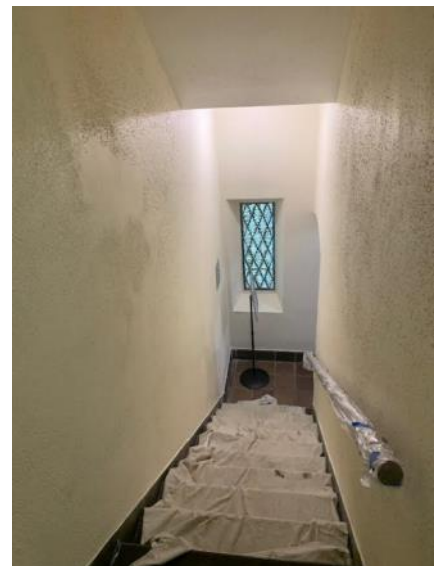
Our final concert of the Season will be on Saturday, April 15th at 7:00 pm featuring the Sultans of String.

Sultans of String thrill audiences with their genre-hopping passport of Celtic reels, flamenco, Gypsy-jazz, Arabic, Cuban & South Asian rhythms. Fiery violin dances with kinetic guitar, while bass and percussion lay down unstoppable grooves. Sultans of String have hit #1 across Canada on Top 10 national radio charts, and received multiple awards and accolades, including 3 JUNO (Canada's Grammy) nominations.

Property Notes

Deterioration of plaster on walls and ceilings is common in older buildings. Our 1926 church is no exception as walls in the sanctuary, chancel, halls, and stairwells have had significant cracking and flaking of plaster. The

Property Committee has focused on the repair of these walls over the last two years. The two major projects have been re-plastering and painting the walls (1) in the chancel surrounding the organ pipes and (2) in the west balcony surrounding the stained glass windows (see photo) and in the two stairwells leading from the narthex to the west balcony (see photo). The chancel project was completed in 2021 and the west balcony project is nearly finished with painting of the walls in progress. Bill Janike, Property Committee Co-Chair, coordinated the work of the private contractors who have done the plastering and painting.”





First Presbyterian Church
840 South 17th Street
Lincoln, NE 68508
www.fpclincn.org
[Info\[at\]fpclincn.org](mailto:Info[at]fpclincn.org)
402.477.6037

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Please notify the church office of any name,
address, email, and/or telephone changes.

First Presbyterian Church

Where faith is nurtured, curiosity is encouraged, diversity is welcomed, and all are loved.

Did you know?

That it is easier than ever to make your Pledge
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You can still give by text as well by **texting MissionPossible to 73256**

Contact us:
<http://fpclincn.org>
[Info\[at\]fpclincn.org](mailto:Info[at]fpclincn.org)
402.477.6037