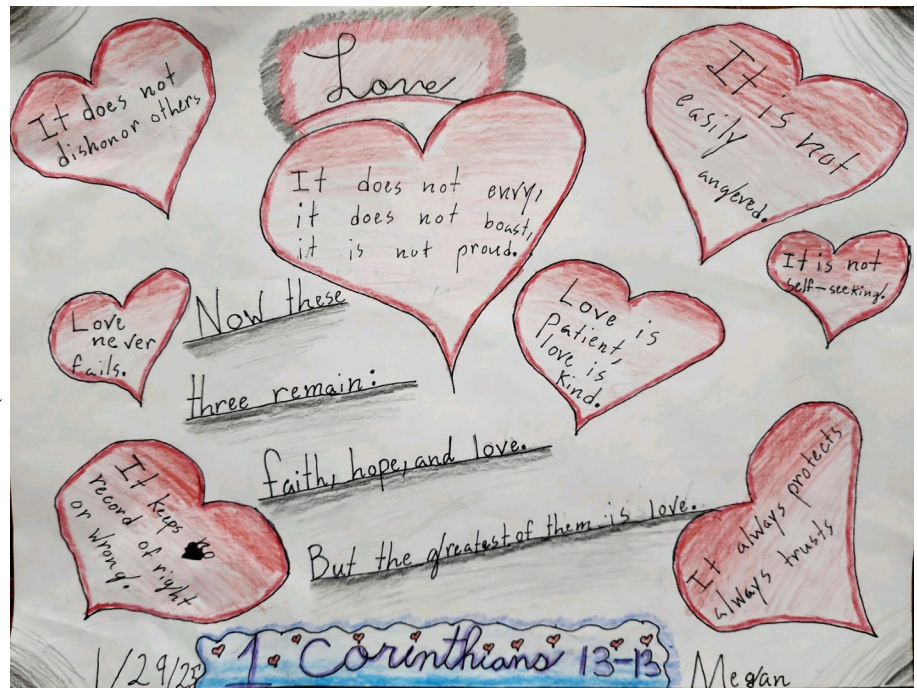
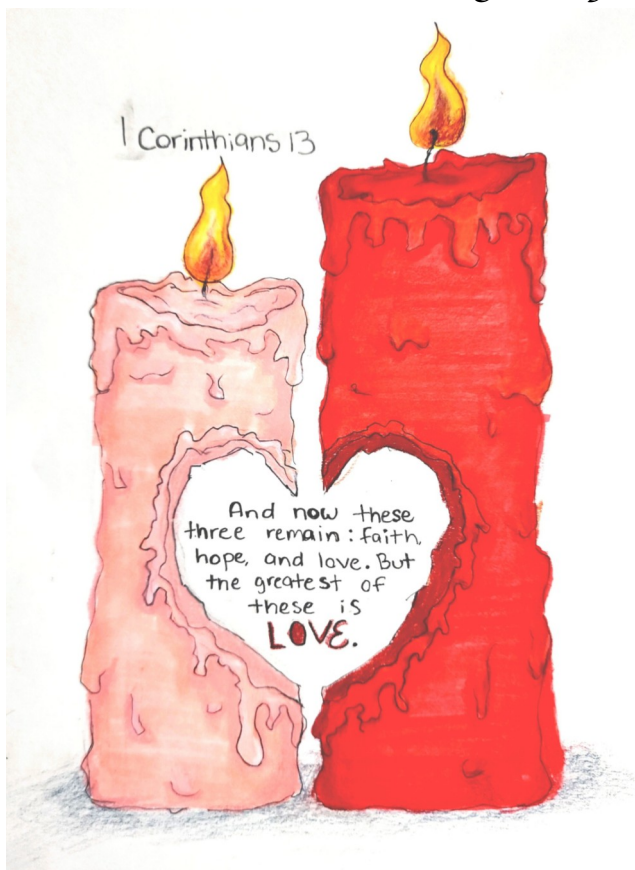


The Greatest of These is Love

“Love” is a word we throw around a lot. We love pizza and we love going on vacation. And we hear about those who “fall in love” (you know, like on the Hallmark Channel). But the love that Paul talks about in the “love chapter,” 1 Corinthians 13, is not about romantic love or about the things we prefer.



Paul is emphasizing the importance of love within the body of Christ. In this beautiful explanation of love, he emphasizes that any of the other gifts we have are of no value if we don't have love. Love is an agent which will last when everything else passes away. Real love results in actions. God knows us, loves us, and also makes it possible for us to be loving toward others.



Artwork by Megan (above) and Denisse (left)

A Note from Jennifer

Thank you so much for your generous Christmas gift. I greatly appreciate it. Your thoughtful generosity is just one of the many, many, many reasons I love working here. Thank you again!

A Note from Providence Park

Karen and Team,

Thank you for all that you and your team did to meet the needs of those most in need. Your partnership in this work is felt. Thank you,
Mandy

Dear First Pres,

Thank you for the generous gift you gave me at Christmas. I am blessed to be your minister and I am grateful to be joined in ministry with all of you. Your kind hearts and dedication to God make my work a pleasure.

With gratitude and joy,

Mary Jane

Thank you

Barbara and Jeannie are rotating off the Session this year. They are dedicated to our church and committed to our mission. They have given of their time and energy as leaders in our congregation. Thank you, Barbara and Jeannie!



Looking ahead-Lent begins March 2

This year, we're letting the Gospel of Luke guide us through Lent. Beginning with Jesus setting his face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), this worship series flows through several familiar stories—the Good Samaritan, Mary and Martha, the fruitless fig tree, the Lost Sheep, Zacchaeus, and more. Many of these stories are well-known in both sacred and secular imagination and hold significance in pop culture, church history, politics, and everything in between. Our theme, “Everything In Between,” invites us to navigate the polarities in our lives with more faith, intention, and openness to be transformed. You will see that each weekly sub-theme explores two supposed binaries, like “faith & works” or “rest & growth,” or “grief & hope.” We often consider these ideas to be opposing. However, as we explore these concepts within the scriptures, we find nuance and complexity. We find that these dichotomies are false. We might begin to see a full spectrum instead of black and white. We might find that God is present in between.

Jacksonville Warming Center By the Numbers

Our fellowship hall has been used 16 evenings and nights in December and January. We had between 17 and 30 people stay each night.

28 people volunteered for an entire shift. 13 people volunteered for a few hours.

12 organizations and 12 individuals brought food and other items.

Many of you volunteered your time or donated food and other items. Thank you for your generosity with your time, donations, and the use of this building. We especially want to thank Karen Finney who organized this ministry. We are sharing the love of God by providing shelter for those who would otherwise be out in the cold on those frigid nights.

Save the Date!! The next edition of R.E.M. (Ruling Elders in Ministry) retreat will take place at the University of the Ozarks on Friday, February 28 through Saturday, March 1. This event will focus on congregational membership care and integration, and personal, congregational and public prayer. The event is free for any Ruling Elder in the Presbytery of Arkansas. You can talk to Mary Jane or Mary Lee if you have questions. Contact [Phil Blackburn](#) to register.

Hosting Interns from University of the Ozarks

Our church will host two interns from the University of the Ozarks next summer (June and July). They will be joining us in worship and in all of our activities. They will also provide help with the missions of our church. These young people will become a part of our church family while they are here. We will have opportunities to get to know them, and make a difference in their lives, as I'm sure they will make a difference in ours. Our Intern Task Force has begun planning. We would like for the interns to be able to stay in homes of our members. Please be prayerfully considering this opportunity.

January Report from the Community Care Room

In the month of January, we gave members of our community:

- 8 pairs of shoes
- 35 hygiene packs/individual hygiene items
- 6 bags/backpacks
- 50 pairs of pants or sweatpants and 83 t-shirts, flannel shirts, sweatshirts, or sweaters
- 6 blankets, sheets, or other bedding items
- 92 pieces of clothing such as socks or underwear
- 61 outer accessories such as gloves, scarves, and hats
- 21 jackets or coats
- 179 snack bags

Thank you for giving to this ministry—your donations make a difference!

Attendance for December and January

Dec. 22: 28 Dec. 29: 20

Jan. 5: 28 Jan. 12: No services Jan. 19: 22 Jan. 26: 29

Preachers and Scriptures for February

Feb. 2 Mary Jane Psalm 19 I Corinthians 13:1-13

Communion

Feb. 9 Rev. Elizabeth Isaiah 43:1-8 Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

Baptism of the Lord

Feb. 16 Mary Jane Psalm 1 Luke 6:17-26

Feb. 23 Rev. Elizabeth Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40 Luke 6:27-38

March 2 Mary Jane Psalm 99 Luke 9: 28-36 (37-43a)

Announcements

Welcome to our new elders: Beth, Perla, Ivan, and Michael. They were all installed in January. We also had the privilege to ordain two new Ruling Elders: Beth and Ivan. Please pray for the Session as they seek God's guidance in 2025.

The **Bible Study** Group meets on Wednesdays at 1:00 pm. Everyone is welcome.

We will have a Lay Leaders Workshop on February 9. Anyone interested in Lay Leading is welcome to attend.

The Ladies Circle will meet February 18 at 10:00 am. All the ladies of the church are welcome.

The Community Care Room is in need of men's and women's underwear, all sizes.

God is Good!

With joy we give
thanks!

Please feel free to add
your prayers of
gratitude to our board.

*Rejoice always, pray continually,
give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is God's will for you
in Christ Jesus."*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV)



Prayer Requests from December and January

Ann
Beth
Beth
The B. family
Cassandra and Bill
Catherine
Cheryl
Darla
Diane
Dianne
The family of Dick
The family and loved ones of Wayne, Karen's brother
Duke
Gabe and family
Glenn
Hannah and family
Jamila
Jim
Katie
Larry
Laura
Lida and family
Louise
Lynette
Margot
Michael
The N. Family

Pam
Pat
Tara
Toni
Homeless
The leaders of our city, state, and nation
People affected by natural disasters
Peace for those affected by wars
Students, teachers and staff at all schools
People of Syria
Those trapped in war zones
World leaders



*Artwork by
Lisle Gwynn Garrity
"River of Grace"*



Nothing Can Separate
Us From the Love of God
Romans 8:31-39

Contact Us
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(501) 982-2876
firstpcjax@gmail.com

[https://
www.facebook.com/fpcjax/
firstpresjax.com](https://www.facebook.com/fpcjax/)

*May the Christ who walks on wounded feet walk with you.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands stretch out
your hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart open your
heart to love.
And as you leave this place, may you see the face of Christ on
everyone you meet, and may everyone you meet see the face
of Christ on you.*

First Presbyterian Church
1208 West Main Street
Jacksonville, AR 72076

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

If you are receiving this newsletter by mistake or would rather get one at the church in person, please let us know. If you know of someone who would like to receive this newsletter in the mail, please call us at 501-982-2876. God Bless You!