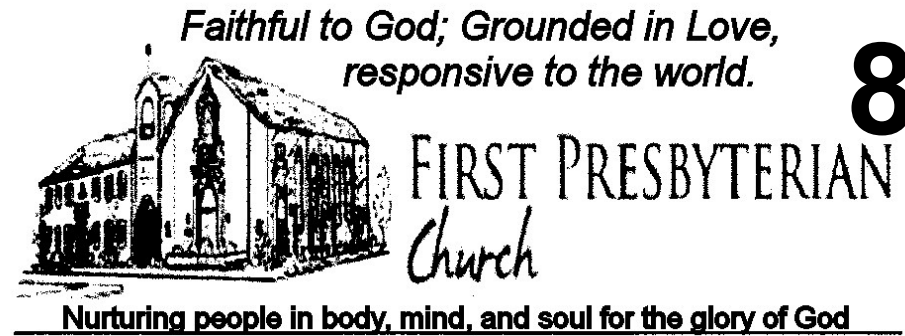


**8<sup>th</sup> & Holly newsletter**  
 First Presbyterian Church  
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**8<sup>th</sup> & Holly**

Our 139<sup>th</sup> year

The monthly newsletter of First Presbyterian Church of Medford, Oregon

January 2024

## From the pastor's study

By Murray Richmond

Happy New Year!

For many people this day marks a huge transition—if nothing else from 2023 to 2024. While the overall flow of events is not affected by a simple calendar date, it is a marker.



As I look back on 2023 there were many significant events in the life of our congregation. We started with me on a sabbatical, and the church thrived under Pastor Mike's leadership.

If I just look back on the last few months, we had a benefit concert to raise money for Ukrainian immigrants, where we raised \$28,000. We had a wonderful Christmas concert, which was a great lead-in to the holidays. Our Christmas Eve service was outstanding.

This year we thought we might end up with around a \$170,000 deficit, but thanks to your generosity, it was only around \$40,000. That is not good, but it is better than \$170,000!

I have some New Year's resolutions, and I expect many of you do as well. I have goals for the New Year, and I hope you do.

It is said the past is history and the future is a mystery, so all we have is the present and that is a gift—which is why it is called the present. I think we should do some looking forward though. For example, we know the only sure way to handle our financial crisis is to get new members.

But let me rephrase that. What a gift we are! We offer incredible music, pastoral care (thanks mostly to Pastor Mike) and food for the hungry. Our worship services are inspiring. Our care for people is amazing. Why should we not share this wonderful gift we have with others then?

What can you do to introduce our remarkable congregation to others? Invite a friend? That is, by the way, the number one-way newcomers visit a church—they are invited. It's not so hard. After all we invite people to all kinds of things we love—why not church?

Maybe that can be a goal for the New Year—to invite at least four friends to our worship services.

My last wish is that you have a blessed New Year and grow closer to God this year.

**Happy New Year!**

## Palestine for Beginners



ABC News

Images of the Hamas-Israel War have filled TV news reports for nearly 90 days. This is a Gaza City mosque after an Israeli air strike. A January Sunday morning class will look at the backstory of this conflict.

A special January Sunday morning class will look at the backstory of the Hamas-Israel War. Avram Sacks has studied Holy Land history for 40 years and is part of a group called Jewish Voices for Peace. He is a member of Ashland's Havurah Synagogue. Join him in a Sunday morning class during January. The class will meet at 9:45 a.m. each Sunday, January 7, 14, and 21, in the Fireside Room. It will trace the modern history of the Holy Land from 1948 to the present.



A series of maps documents shifts in control of land over 77 years.

There's a signup sheet in the Narthex. Please sign up so we can assure there's seating for everyone. And if you have a friend or neighbor interested in what's happening in the Holy Land, invite them to join you for this special class.

[www.IfAmericansKnew.org](http://www.IfAmericansKnew.org)

# January at First

**1 New Year's Day**  
Office and Sarah Corson Center closed  
6:30 p.m. **Narcotics Anonymous women's meeting**, Fellowship Hall

**2 Tuesday**  
Sarah Corson Center reopens after holiday break  
10 a.m. **Staff meeting**, workroom  
12:30 p.m. **Food Bank**, 950 Columbus Ave.

**3 Wednesday**  
5:30 p.m. **Choir Practice**, Sanctuary

**5 Friday**  
6:30 p.m. **"It Checks Out" Narcotics Anonymous**, Fellowship Hall

**6 Saturday**  
7 p.m. **"Circle of Friends" Narcotics Anonymous**, Fireside Room

**7 Sunday**  
8:30 a.m. **Informal worship**, Fellowship Hall  
9:45 a.m. **Palestine for Beginners class**, Fireside Room  
11 a.m. **Traditional Worship**, Sanctuary

**8 Monday**  
4:15 p.m. **Christian Ed Committee**, Library  
6:30 p.m. **Mission Committee**, Fireplace Room  
6:30 p.m. **Narcotics Anonymous women's meeting**, Fellowship Hall

**9 Tuesday**  
10 a.m. **Staff meeting**, workroom  
12:30 p.m. **Food Bank**, 950 Columbus Ave.

**10 Wednesday**  
5:30 p.m. **Choir Practice**, Sanctuary

**12 Friday**  
6:30 p.m. **"It Checks Out" Narcotics Anonymous**, Fellowship Hall

## January vespers

Guitar player Allen Giardinelli returns for Jazz Vespers January 14, backed by two well-known musicians. Giardinelli played vespers in October. Joining him for the 5 p.m. service are Mark Hamersly on bass and Eric Pollard on drums.

Elision Wind Quintet presents the January 28 Classical Vespers. Led by Margaret Bismark on bassoon, members include Luna Bitzer, flute; Lorin Groshong, oboe; Clara Haptonstall, clarinet and Shea Pasche, French horn. Vespers begins at 5 p.m.

**13 Saturday**  
7 p.m. **"Circle of Friends" Narcotics Anonymous**, Fireside Room

**14 Sunday**  
8:30 a.m. **Informal worship**, Fellowship Hall  
9:45 a.m. **Palestine for Beginners class**, Fireside Room  
11 a.m. **Traditional Worship**, Sanctuary  
Noon, **Worship Committee**, Library  
5 p.m. **Jazz Vespers, Allen Giardinelli Trio**, Sanctuary

**15 Monday**  
6:30 p.m. **Narcotics Anonymous women's meeting**, Fellowship Hall

**16 Tuesday**  
10 a.m. **Staff meeting**, workroom  
12:30 p.m. **Food Bank**, 950 Columbus Ave.

**17 Wednesday**  
5:30 p.m. **Choir Practice**, Sanctuary

**18 Thursday**  
9 a.m. **Personnel Committee**, Library

10 a.m. **Finance Committee**, workroom

**19 Friday**  
6:30 p.m. **"It Checks Out" Narcotics Anonymous**, Fellowship Hall

**20 Saturday**  
7 p.m. **"Circle of Friends" Narcotics Anonymous**, Fireside Room

**21 Sunday**  
8:30 a.m. **Informal worship**, Fellowship Hall  
9:45 a.m. **Palestine for Beginners class**, Fireside Room  
11 a.m. **Traditional Worship**, Sanctuary  
12:30 p.m. **Deacons**, Fireside Room

**22 Monday**  
6:30 p.m. **Narcotics Anonymous women's meeting**, Fellowship Hall

**23 Tuesday**  
10 a.m. **Staff meeting**, workroom  
12:30 p.m. **Food Bank**, 950 Columbus Ave.  
6:30 p.m. **Session**, Fireside Room

**26 Friday**  
6:30 p.m. **"It Checks Out" Narcotics Anonymous**, Fellowship Hall

**27 Saturday**  
7 p.m. **"Circle of Friends" Narcotics Anonymous**, Fireside Room

**28 Sunday**  
10 a.m. **Combined Worship**, Sanctuary  
11 a.m. **Annual meeting** of the congregation, Sanctuary  
5 p.m. **Classical Vespers, Elision Wind Quintet**, Sanctuary

**29 Monday**  
6:30 p.m. **Narcotics Anonymous women's meeting**, Fellowship Hall

**30 Tuesday**  
10 a.m. **Staff meeting**, workroom  
12:30 p.m. **Food Bank**, 950 Columbus Ave.

**31 Wednesday**  
5:30 p.m. **Choir Practice**, Sanctuary

## Another deficit budget

Session in late December adopted a \$1,037,144 church budget for the coming year. It anticipates \$860,250 in income and uses \$176,894 from reserves to balance the budget. It also received a final report from the Financing the Future Task Force formed one year ago when the 2023 budget was balanced by transferring funds from reserves.

The task force concluded that at the current rate of spending and congregational giving we have three years before we are out of reserves. It repeated key points in a letter to the congregation presented at the 2023 annual meeting:

### What can you do to help?

*First, you can pray. This is God's church, and we are in God's hands. While we need to be realistic, it is also important that we have faith in God as well. Our faith needs to go hand-in-hand with actions.*

*Second, we need your ideas. Maybe you are sitting on something that would be very helpful for us! Let us know what you think!*  
*Third, we need to do a better job at welcoming and bringing in new people. Pastor Murray had lunch with a woman this week who said she had attended First Presbyterian, and no one spoke to her! That should never happen! It is not hard to greet visitors, and it only takes a moment or two. But when visitors are not made to feel welcome, they do not come back. Anyone who visits our church should be greeted by at least four people. Do not assume it will be four other people. Instead, assume that you are one of the four!*

*Fourth, consider increasing your donations....*

The full task force report along with materials they gathered is in the church office for reference.

## January birthdays



- 3 Phoenix Olivia Bursk
- 5 Janet Seim
- 10 Tom Dyer
- 11 Patty Herkert
- 12 Connie Sams
- Tammy (Hideko) Snider
- Emma Ward
- 17 Lisa Welt
- 20 Ed Hyde
- 23 Rod Voss
- 26 Steven Richmond
- 28 Loretta Barker
- Sandi Frey
- Carole MacKenzie
- 29 Glen Gourley
- Diane Centanne-Bartley
- 30 Doreen Bradshaw
- 31 Meredith Foxx
- Carol Holst
- Mary Standridge

## Annual meeting notice

First Presbyterian Church congregation's annual meeting is Sunday, January 28. The meeting follows a single Sunday morning worship service at 10 a.m.

Business includes election of new classes of elders and deacons, election of members of the 2024 Congregational Nominating committee, consideration of terms of call for the pastor and a report on church finances.

The 2023 Nominating committee continues its search to fill vacancies. Please contact Chair Kathy Gordon or the church office if you would like to nominate someone or have your name placed in nomination. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor during the meeting.

Vacancies on the Board of Deacons include a one-year term to fill the remainder of Linda Colehower's term, and four members of the new Class of 2027. Nominees include Betty Tozier, presently serving her first term, and Barbara Moore. Two additional 2027 deacon positions remain open.

The new Session Class of 2027 has three positions. Nikki Keating, now serving her first term, is nominated for one position, two nominations remain unfilled.

The 2024 Nominating committee has vacancies for four members-at-large from the congregation, plus two serving elders nominated by Session and one serving deacon nominated by the Board of Deacons.

## First Presbyterian Church

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Office hours Mon. through Thurs.  
9 a.m. to noon.

Pastor ...Rev. Murray Richmond  
Congregational Care Associate  
.....Mike Hubbard  
Associate for Visitation and Pastoral Care  
.....Rev. Mary Wright Gillespie  
Minister of Music and Media  
.....Tony Chunn  
Administrative & Financial Assistant.....Elizbeth Mahan

Sarah Corson Childcare & Learning Center.....Jaime Snider

### Session Committee chairs

Building & Grounds—Monty Holst  
(541) 324-1630

Christian Education—Vacant

Church Growth — Tom McDermott  
(541) 734-4675

Fellowship—Doris Sjolund  
(541) 857-6646

Finance — Cathy de Wolfe  
(541) 773-7350

Personnel—Carol Holst  
(541) 899-1147

Mission—Bob Frey  
1-(503) 779-5558

Worship & Music—Kathy Gordon  
(541) 772-6526

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