

**May 25, 2025**  
**Sixth Sunday of Easter**  
**11:00am — Sanctuary**



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
WEST WAYNE STREET



*\*Those who are able, please stand*

*Congregation responds in bold*

## **GATHERING**

### **Prelude**

Gather Us In

Marty Haugen, arr. John A. Behnke

### **Pealing of the Bells**

### **Call to Worship**

Many voices are speaking to us today in the movie theaters, on the concert stages, and online.

**Today, Lord, we choose to listen to Your voice, to respond to Your desires, and to follow Your highest path for us.**

Many voices are speaking to us today in our homes, in our friendships, and in our community.

**Today, Lord, we choose to listen to Your voice, to respond to Your desires, to follow Your highest path for us.**

Many voices are speaking to us today through celebrities, through commercials, and through social media.

**As many voices ring in our ears, we say that we choose to listen for Your voice, to do what pleases You, and to stay true to the path You have lovingly set before us. Strengthen each of us to choose the high road, to live up to the greatness You placed within us, and to honor You in all our ways. Lord, we will listen for Your voice. Amen.**

**\*Hymn No. 401**

Here in This Place

GATHER US IN

### **\*Call to Confession**

We come to God as we are: messy, joyful, imperfect, guilty, righteous.

But most of all, we come to God as ourselves: human confessing, forgiving, and in need of community. Let us come to God with all we are.

### \*Prayer of Confession

Loving God, You call us into community, teach us Your ways, and bless us with abundant life.

Yet we turn aside to follow other paths: we take the easy way out, listening to the world's call rather than Your call to commitment; we quarrel with one another, letting differences divide us; we cherish our resentments, shutting off our hearts from forgiveness and reconciliation; we cling to petty jealousies, feeling we deserve more than we have.

Forgive us when we wander from Your love. Draw us into community with each other that we may grow in faithfulness and work together in peace. Amen.

### \*Declaration of Forgiveness

God is at work, nurturing our growth and showing us the ways that lead to life.

God is at work, reconciling us to one another and teaching us the paths of love.

God is at work, hearing our confessions, forgiving our disobedience, and blessing us in love.

**Thanks be to God. Amen!**

### \*Passing the Peace of Christ

The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

*As you are comfortable, we invite you to take a moment to share the Peace of Christ with those around you with a smile, wave, or other signs of connection.*

### \*Responsive Hymn No. 582 Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me

1. Glo - ry to God, \_\_\_\_\_ whose good-ness shines on me, and to the Son, \_\_\_\_\_ whose grace has  
2. World with-out end, \_\_\_\_\_ with - out end. A - men. World with-out end, \_\_\_\_\_ with - out

par - doned me, and to the Spir - it, \_\_\_\_\_ whose love has set me free. As it  
end. A - men. World with-out end, \_\_\_\_\_ with - out end. A - men.

was in the be - gin - ning, is now and ev - er shall be. A - men.

## **HEARING THE WORD**

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Old Testament Reading**

Deuteronomy 31:1-8

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

**Anthem**

“O Clap Your Hands”

John Rutter

**New Testament Reading**

Philippians 4:1-9

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon**

“Graduation and Commencement”

Rev. Dr. Annie Epling

## **RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

**\*Affirmation of Faith**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;  
he descended into hell;  
the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
the holy catholic church;  
the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body;  
and the life everlasting.  
**Amen.**

## **Graduate Recognition Litany - May 2025**

*Special Recognition of our Graduates: Emily DeLong, Julia Epling,  
Henry Satter, Evan Schulenberg*

### **Introduction**

#### **Litany from the Congregation**

Today we honor you who are graduating, for you are on a sacred journey.

**Your journey is not only the learning of your minds but the growing of your hearts.**

We celebrate the effort you have given to accomplish this.

**And we ask God's blessing for the journey yet to come.**

May God always give you gifts of curiosity and discipline.

**May God give you the courage to explore new things.**

May the Spirit work in you that in all you do you may serve God.

**May the Spirit give you grace to do justice, to love kindly,  
and to walk humbly with God.**

May you always know that Christ goes with you.

**We who have made many journeys give you our blessing.**

By the grace of God, we surround you with our prayers.

**Our spirits will go with you as part of your great cloud of witnesses. For we,  
too, are always learning, always, by the grace of God, beginning anew.**

**Wherever you go, may you go in peace, and serve God with joy.**

### **Prayer of Blessing for our Graduates**

**\*Hymn No. 451**

**Open My Eyes, That I May See**

**OPEN MY EYES**

### **Announcements**

#### **Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

## Invitation to the Offering

### Offertory Anthem

“And the Father Will Dance”

Mark Hayes

### \*Responsive Hymn No. 609 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

The musical score is written for a single voice part in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The melody is simple and hymn-like, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are: "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Praise God, all creatures here be - low; Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Praise God a - bove, ye heaven - ly host; Cre - a - tor, Christ and Ho - ly Ghost. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!" The score consists of four lines of music, each with a staff and a key signature change from F# to C#.

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow. Praise God, all crea - tures here be -  
low; Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Praise God a - bove, ye heaven - ly host; Cre -  
a - tor, Christ and Ho - ly Ghost. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia! Al - le -  
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!

### \*Prayer of Dedication

Lord our God, we appreciate the many blessings that you have provided us with. Empower us to bless others through our actions, words, and resources so that we may support and love others as you have loved us, so we can truly be your people in the city. May we use this offering to reflect you in our world. Amen.

## SENDING

### \*Hymn No. 327

From All That Dwell Below the Skies

LASST UNS ERFREUEN

### \*Benediction

### \*Postlude

Organ Sonata No 2: America, A Fugue

Eugene Thayer

## CHANCEL FLOWERS

The Chancel flowers are given in loving memory of Pat Parker, Mr. & Mrs. Crawford F. Parker and Mr. & Mrs. E. F. Opie by the Maclyn T. Parker family.

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## Assisting with Worship this Morning

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**Pastor:** Rev. Dr. Anne Epling (she/her), Rev. Carrie Winebrenner (she/her)

**Elders of the Month/Greeters:** Betsy Perry-Patton, Marj Sapp

**Ushers of the Month:** Eric Evans, Penny Pulz, June Schwertfager, Anita Wolfe

**Interim Organist and Handbell Choir Director:** Irene Ator

**Interim Chancel Choir Director:** Jonathan Busarow

**Assistant Organist:** Kathryn Miller

**Chancel Choir:** Chris Bay, David Beer, Quinton Davis, Susan Dorion, Andrew Graham, Liz Graham, DuWayne Hintz, Joan Kern, Scott McMeen, Kathy Miller, Kip Ormerod, Mary Jane Ormerod, Ellis Pedersen, Josh Rakoczy, Carol Rhudy, Marj Sapp, Sandy Shearer, Jill Therrien, Mary Winters

**Live Stream Operator:** Dick Florea

**Sound Board Operator:** Jeff Slater

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## Prayer List

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|----------------------|---------------------------|
| • Bob & Kathy Beatty | • Jane Gastineau          |
| • John Ruble         | • Barbara McCants         |
| • Art & Lou Brickman | • Jim & Sondra Mergenthal |
| • Marcie Weissner    | • Dana & Les Gurney       |
| • Mary Winters       |                           |

**If you are in need of prayer or an encouraging word, let us know.**

## Welcome to First Presbyterian Church!

Whether you are worshipping with us for the first time or you're a longtime member, we are thrilled to have you join us as we explore our shared journey with Christ. I hope you find the worship service uplifting and meaningful.

Here at First Presbyterian Church, we hold our 193-year-old history in creative tension with 21st-century challenges. We honor traditions that have shaped generations before us while exploring how Jesus's message speaks to the complexities of life today. Our members come from different backgrounds, carry unique stories, and approach faith with a variety of perspectives. Some of us may have questions, others may have doubts, and many of us are navigating challenges—yet we come together as one body to worship and grow in faith.

You're welcome to visit our website at [www.firstpresfortwayne.org](http://www.firstpresfortwayne.org) for more information about the church, and I invite you to talk to any of the pastors, stop by the Welcome Table in the narthex (lobby) after church, and/or join us for coffee in McKay Hall following worship. We have many programs and community groups to feed your soul and expand your spirit. Try one out. And, if you are looking for a church home, we hope you'll get connected at First Presbyterian. It would be an honor to be your church family.

Blessings,  
Annie Epling Pastor/Head of Staff

### —> Hearing Loops

To use the “Hearing Loop” during the service, please switch your hearing aid or cochlear device to the “T”, T-Coil or telephone position.

### —> Families with Children

Jesus loves the little children, and we do too! But should you decide that today would be a good time to explore the nursery, your child, ages 6 months thru five years, is always invited. Our nursery meets in the first-floor day school wing, so please ask an usher or the front office volunteer for assistance and a key fob.



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## News and Events

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### **Touchy Topics Book Club — May 28**

The next Touchy Topics Book Club is Wednesday, May 28 at 6:30pm in the Parlor. Join us for a discussion of Matthew Desmond's Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. We know it's a dense and emotionally challenging read, so if the full book feels like too much, consider listening to the audiobook—or even reading a summary or review online to get the key themes. However much you're able to engage, we hope you'll come. The conversation is what matters most.

### **Table Talk Summer Hiatus — May 28-Sep 3**

The Table Talk women's book study will have their last meeting before taking a summer break on Wednesday, May 28 at 10:00 am on Zoom. The group will resume on September 3.

### **Wired Word — Sundays at 10am**

Wired Word will continue throughout the summer, excepting today and July 6. Please join us in the parlor at 10:00 AM for coffee and discussion!

### **Annual Joint Worship Service — Sunday, June 8 at 11am**

Join us as all the Fort Wayne Presbyterian churches come together for a joint worship service at First Presbyterian Church! Erin McGee, Lead Transitional Presbyterian, Whitewater Valley Presbytery, will be preaching. Fellowship time will immediately follow in McKay Hall.

### **Retirement Reception — Sunday, June 22 at 12pm**

Please join us as we gather to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Kathy Miller, as she prepares to begin her well-earned retirement! Kathy has faithfully served at First Pres as our Assistant Organist for many years, and she will be greatly missed!

A special reception will be held in McKay Hall on June 22 after worship. This will be an opportunity to celebrate Kathy's contributions, spanning over 50 years, to our church and music ministry and to express our appreciation for her dedication and service.

## **Realm Assistance Available — June 10 & 17**

Cheri Umphrey will provide personal in-house assistance to those members who need help with creating an online Realm account. Creating an online Realm account will enable you to change your contact information and give you access to the church member directory. Please bring whatever device you use to access your personal emails.

Cheri will be available to help on the following dates and times.

### **Tuesday, June 10:**

- 10:00am
- 11:00am
- 12:00pm
- 1:00pm

### **Tuesday, June 17:**

- 10:00am
- 11:00am
- 12:00pm
- 1:00pm

Please use the QR code to sign-up online for the date and time you wish to stop by the First Presbyterian office.



You may call the office to sign up for a time at 260-426-7421.

## **Chancel Flower Sponsors Needed — June 8, 15, & 29**

Chancel flowers create an uplifting and welcoming worship space and remind us of God's presence. The flowers can be used to honor the memory of deceased loved ones, as honorariums, or to mark special occasions like weddings or anniversaries. The following dates are currently available for sponsorship: June 8, June 15, and June 29.

Please contact Vicki Davis by calling or texting 260-466-5116 or email at [vsrdavis46@gmail.com](mailto:vsrdavis46@gmail.com).

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## GETTING CONNECTED

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### **MEMBERSHIP**

Whether you live in the Fort Wayne area or worship with us online, we welcome you to join our family of faith. Through Coffee with the Pastors, you'll learn more about First Presbyterian Church, its history, and its current ministry in a relaxed atmosphere. Whether you're sure membership is right for you, or you're just beginning to wonder if this might be your spiritual home, we'd love to have you join us for coffee. We will be hosting Coffee with the Pastors on May 4 at 9:15am in the Session Room. All are welcome.

### **ADULT EDUCATION**

#### **Wired Word — Sunday Mornings, 10am**

Join us each week as we delve into a topic inspired by recent news and explore how the Bible speaks to the events shaping our world today. Each Sunday brings a fresh topic, making this group perfect for those with busy schedules who may not be able to attend every week. Topics are emailed each Friday, so please let Luci Gilpin at [lucifoltz@gmail.com](mailto:lucifoltz@gmail.com) know if you'd like to receive that email. All are welcome — come as you are and join the conversation.

#### **Touchy Topics — Quarterly Meetings**

This group reads a book (religious or not) about a touchy topic and then comes together to talk about it. Previous books include *Fever in the Heartland*, *Canary in the Coalmine*, and *This is How It Is*. Information on upcoming books can be found in the Friday e-news and News & Events section of the bulletin.

#### **Men's Bible Study — Summer Hiatus**

This group is led by Rev. Youngsoo An and meets on Zoom. For more information, email Rev. An at [ysan@firstpresfortwayne.org](mailto:ysan@firstpresfortwayne.org).

#### **Women's Bible Study — Fridays, 1pm**

This group is led by Rev. Ann Pitman and meets on Zoom. For more information, email Rev. Pitman at [apitman@firstpresfortwayne.org](mailto:apitman@firstpresfortwayne.org).

## **English and Korean Small Group Study — Summer Hiatus**

The lessons are published in both Korean and English, and the study is led by Rev. Youngsoo An and Rev. Annie Epling. Email them for more information at [ysan@firstpresfortwayne.org](mailto:ysan@firstpresfortwayne.org) or [aepling@firstpresfortwayne.org](mailto:aepling@firstpresfortwayne.org).

## **Table Talk for Women — Summer Hiatus**

The Table Talk women's book study will have their last meeting before taking a summer break on Wednesday, May 28 at 10:00 am on Zoom. The group will resume on September 3.

## **FELLOWSHIP GROUPS**

### **North and South Dinner Groups — 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month, 5:30pm**

A great way to get to know other First Pres members is through our local area Dinner Groups. These groups meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month. The South Dinner Group meets at Hall's Coventry (5745 Coventry Lane) at 5:30pm. No need to RSVP, just ask for the First Pres tables. It's a big group, so you can't miss it! The North Dinner Group meets at 5:30pm at Don Hall's Factory. Please RSVP to Sondra Mergenthal at (260) 437-9892 or by email at [lisoninc@aol.com](mailto:lisoninc@aol.com). We look forward to seeing you!

### **Faith, Fiber, and Fellowship — Mondays, 3pm**

This group meets weekly at 3pm on Mondays in Room 302 on the 3rd floor. Bring your latest fiber project for a time of fellowship and crafting.

### **Body, Brain, and Belief (3B) — Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30PM in McKay Hall**

Maintaining balance is essential as we age. A decline in stability increases the risk of falls, impacting independence and quality of life. Good balance helps prevent falls, supports daily activities, and reduces the risk of serious injuries.

Join us for 3B, a lifetime fitness class designed to improve balance, flexibility, and strength using chairs and other provided equipment. These free classes are open to all adults aged 50 and older and are filled with fun, fellowship, and fitness. Our holistic approach combines proven physical therapy exercises, healthy brain activities, and opportunities for spiritual, emotional, and social growth. Classes meet twice a week in McKay Hall. We'd love to have you join us!

## **CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**

### **Sunday School for Children and Youth — Summer Hiatus**

Two Sunday School classes for children and youth are offered during the worship hour. We all begin worship in the sanctuary, then the children head to Sunday School after Time with Children. Please note: Sunday School classes will not meet on Communion Sundays so that we may all participate in that sacrament as a family.

#### *Holy Moly — for children in Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade*

Join Mrs. Rachel and Friends for another fun semester of learning from the Holy Moly curriculum from SparkHouse. Each class includes a Bible story, video, and craft time, with an opportunity to earn Bible Bucks for fun prizes and treats.

#### *Level Up — for youth in 5<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades*

Taught by Pastor Carrie and other members of the church, we explore big questions about our church, our faith, and the world, such as science, politics, social justice, and environment.

### **Youth Group — Summer Hiatus**

Building relationships while burning off some energy is important! Through service, games, food, and more, we have many events to decompress from school and extracurriculars throughout the year. All 6th-12th graders are encouraged to join this amazing group of young people!

## **MISSIONS**

Our **Green Team** is active throughout the year. In the winter, you can find them distributing the “Bag of Bags,” which are reusable grocery bags. In the spring, they have a booth at Eco Fest, sponsor a recycling drive at Hands ON Fort Wayne, and host our biennial Pet Blessing with a collection of items for local animal shelters. Throughout the year, they sell Fair Trade chocolate with proceeds supporting our food bank ministry.

Through our **Missions Ministry**, many of our members and friends are engaged in volunteering and advocacy. Our programs include making and serving dinner at the Rescue Mission on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month, providing a meal for the residents of St. Joseph Missions monthly, packing weekend meals for Washington Elementary students on Sundays after worship in McKay Hall, and our annual Hands On Fort Wayne day of service. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month, we collect food for local food banks. We also maintain mission partnerships with many local, national, and international partners. They include:

- Help Not Handcuffs
- Washington Elementary School
- South Wayne Elementary School
- South Side High School
- St. Josephs Mission
- Wellspring Interfaith Services
- East Wayne Street Food Bank
- United Faith Presbyterian Church Food Bank
- Amistad Presbyterian Church
- Matthew 25 Clinic
- Rescue Mission
- Reproductive Rights Action Committee with Plymouth UCC
- PC(USA) Mission Co-Workers in Costa Rica, Taiwan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon

### **FWCS Clothing Bank**

The Schools Team wishes to remind everyone that a designated bin is available in the Small Dining Room to deposit gently-used clothing for the Fort Wayne Community Schools Clothing Bank. Through school referrals, the Clothing Bank has provided clothing for thousands of students and families in need, sometimes enabling the attendance of students who have no appropriate clothing for school. All types of gently-used clothing in all sizes (baby to adult) are needed, as well as shoes, coats, boots, gloves/mittens, and hats. (Socks and underwear must be new.) If you're paring down your wardrobe, please remember to bring in a bag of wearable items for the FWCS Clothing Bank bin. Thank you!

## **FINE ARTS MINISTRY**

The **Fine Arts Ministry** consists of the Art Gallery, Music Series, and the Theater. Throughout the year, the three art forms together present exhibits, concerts and shows which seek to enhance our faith through visual art, music, and drama all while highlighting themes and challenges within our world. The mission of the Fine Arts Ministry is to *Enrich Our Faith Through the Arts*. This important ministry seeks to create artistic beauty and to help us grow in our faith with God right along with the mission of the church. A full listing of these events can be found at <https://firstpresfortwayne.org/arts/>.

The **Music Ministry** at First Pres includes the Chancel Choir which meets in the Music Room on the second floor. Rehearsals are from 7-8:30 pm on Thursday evenings, and 10-10:40 am on Sundays, from Labor Day until June 8th. The Handbell Choir also meets on Thursdays from 5:30 - 6:30 in Room 201. They will not be practicing during the summer months but will resume in the fall.

Our **Theater**, established in 1968, creates entertaining, educational, and inclusive theatre productions to inspire and motivate our audiences. We produce comedies, musicals, and dramas that teach us about ourselves and the world we live in. Our engaging productions have something for everyone, including pertinent messages like love, compassion, and bravery, while focusing on the human condition which can be funny and traumatizing.

## **CALENDAR**

Today

**10:00 am**

**Wired Word.**—2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Parlor

**Choir Warmup.**—Music Room.

**11:00 am**

**Worship.**—Sanctuary & Livestream

**Korean Language Worship Service.**—Chapel & Livestream

**12:00 pm**

**Hospitality Time.**—McKay Hall. Join us for coffee, cookies, and connections with our faith family.

This Week

**Mon May 26**

**All Day**

**Church Campus Closed for Memorial Day**

**5:00 pm**

**Serving Meal at St Joseph.**—Offsite.

**Tues May 27**

**6:30 pm**

**Drama Team Meeting.**—Session Room.

**Wed May 28**

**1:30 pm**

**Body, Brain, and Belief (3B).**—McKay Hall. Lifetime fitness class for adults aged 50 and older.

**6:30 pm**

**Touchy Topics Book Club.**—Parlor.

**Fri May 30**

**1:00 pm**

**Women's Bible Study.**—Zoom. Email Rev. Ann Pitman [apitman@firstpresfortwayne.org](mailto:apitman@firstpresfortwayne.org) for more information.

*Coming Soon*

**Mon Jun 2**

**8:00 am**

**MAD2 Camp Starts!**—Entire Campus.

**Sun Jun 8**

**11:00 am**

**Joint Worship with FW Churches.**—Sanctuary.

**Sun Jun 22**

**12:00 pm**

**Kathy Miller's Retirement Party.**—McKay Hall after worship.