

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
February 8, 2026
11:00am — Sanctuary



Engraving of the Prophet Micah by Gustave Doré.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WEST WAYNE STREET

**Those who are able, please stand*

Congregation responds in bold

GATHERING

Prelude

Variations on the hymn tune “Restoration”

Southern Harmony/Wilbur Held

Chiming of the Hour

Call to Worship

Lord, we come into your sanctuary with eagerness.

May we hear your call and speak your truth.

Lord, we come to abide with you in love.

Gather us in honest and faithful community.

Lord, prepare us to be people of hope and grace.

Kindle in us courage to live as brave and faithful disciples.

Let us worship our God together in this holy place.

Alleluia. Amen.

***Hymn No. 459**

O Word of God Incarnate

MUNICH

***Call to Confession**

With what shall I come before the Lord? We come, knowing we’ve lived imperfectly, knowing we need forgiveness, and we ask what we could possibly offer for such a gift. But when we come in honesty and repentance, we find a God who is ready to love, ready to forgive, and ready to renew us as children of God. Trusting in that grace, let us confess our sin, first together and then in silent prayer.

***Prayer of Confession**

Merciful God, we come before you in confession. You have showered us with blessings, but we hoard those gifts, refusing to share with our neighbors in need. You have given us freedom to live justly, but we choose to oppress and judge others. You have called us to live in peaceful community, but we sow discord and breed fear among ourselves. Forgive us. Soften our hearts and open our minds to hear your call. Inspire us to act justly, love fiercely, and walk in your way each and every day.

***Declaration of Forgiveness**

The mercy of the Lord is deeper than the depths of the sea and wider than the whole of the earth. Friends, hear and believe the good news of the gospel: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, healed and made whole.

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

Time with Children

Children and youth in kindergarten thru 9th grade are encouraged to head to Sunday School after the Time with Children.

Prayer for Illumination

Old Testament Reading

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Isaiah 58:1-9

Anthem

There is a Balm in Gilead

arr. Robert Lau

Gospel Reading

Matthew 5:13-20

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon

“Spicy Christians”

Rev. Dr. Annie Epling

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

***Affirmation of Faith**

In Jesus Christ,

God was reconciling the world to God’s self.

Jesus Christ is God with us.

He is the eternal Son of the Father,

who became human and lived among us

to fulfill the work of reconciliation.

He is present in the church

by the power of the Holy Spirit

to continue and complete his mission.

This work of God – the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit –

is the foundation of all confessional statements

about God, humanity, and the world.

Therefore, the church calls all people

to be reconciled to God and to one another.

To God be the glory in the church

and in Christ Jesus to all generations!

Amen.

***Hymn No. 749**

Come! Live in the Light!

WE ARE CALLED

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.

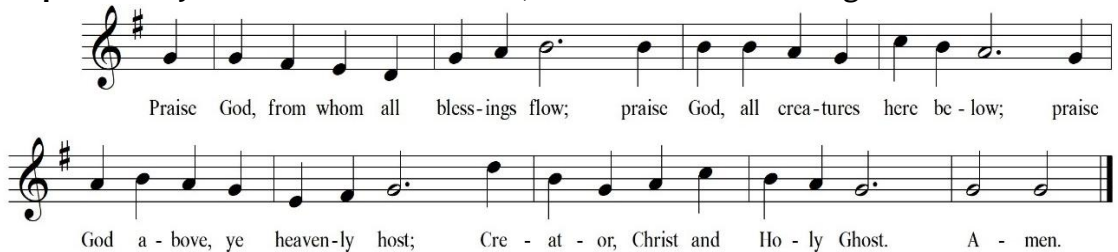
Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

Hear My Prayer

Moses Hogan

*Responsive Hymn No. 606 Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow



*Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God, thank you for the many blessings of our lives. Bless these gifts we give today. May they be used to bring about justice and joy for those who need them most. Amen.

SENDING

*Hymn No. 744

Arise, Your Light Is Come!

FESTAL SONG

*Benediction

*Postlude

Prelude in A minor BWV 543

Johann Sebastian Bach

Assisting with Worship this Morning

Pastors: Rev. Dr. Annie Epling (she/her), Rev. Carrie Winebrenner (she/her)

Director of Music Ministries: Colin Andrews

Elders of the Month/Greeters: Carol Rhudy, Sandy Shearer

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

Assistant Organist: Irene Ator

Chancel Choir: Richard Baughman, Edith Coplin, Quinton Davis, Susan Dorion, Andrew Graham, Liz Graham, DuWayne Hintz, Joan Kern, Jane McGeehan, Scott McMeen, Alli McQueen, Kemel Mitchell, Kip Ormerod, Ellis Pedersen, Carol Rhudy, Marj Sapp, Sandy Shearer, Jill Therrien, Mary Winters

Live Stream Operator: Dick Florea

Sound Board Operator: Bill Patterson

Prayer List

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Kathy Miller | • Jennifer Kern Kelly |
| • Tina Hickman & Family | • Jim and Sondra Mergenthal |
| • Bob & Kathy Beatty | • Susan Bolinger & Family |
| • Mary Winters | |

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

Care & Support

FPC is a **Stephen Ministries** congregation and has a dedicated group of Stephen Ministers. Stephen Ministers are lay congregation members trained to provide one-to-one care to those experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation. The Stephen Ministry is completely confidential, and open to all FPC members. For more information, please contact Carolyn Krebs at 956-844-3890 or Marcie Weissner at 260-312-5733.

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 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 through 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.

NEWS AND EVENTS

First Pres Theater

Don't miss the chance to see *What the Constitution Means to Me* at FPT. The last showing is **today** at 2pm!

By blending storytelling, wit, and political insight, *What the Constitution Means to Me* examines the document's lasting impact on individual lives and on contemporary America. Hilarious, hopeful, and aching human, the play invites audiences to reflect on the Constitution's relevance today and imagine how it might shape the next generation.

Tickets are on sale now by calling ArtsTix at 260-422-4226, or purchase online by scanning the QR code! See you at the theater!



FPC Dinner Groups

We love to eat! So why not eat with friends? Each month, on the second Monday, First Pres goes out for dinner. You are invited!

Be sure to join the North Dinner Group **tomorrow** on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 5:30 pm, location is Don Hall's Factory. Please RSVP to Marj Sapp at 260-413-2639 or by email at marj.sapp@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing you!

Please join the South Dinner Group for dinner at Hall's Tavern at Coventry (5747 Coventry Lane) **tomorrow** on Monday, February 9, 2026, at 5:30 pm. We look forward to fellowship with you!

Ash Wednesday

Join us for a special Ash Wednesday Taizé Service on **February 18 at 7:00 PM in the Chapel** as we begin the season of Lent. This service will include the imposition of ashes (both traditional and sparkly), prayer, and space for reflection, inviting us to name both the fragility of our lives and the good news God is still writing in and among us. Come as you are, carrying both what is heavy and what is hopeful, as we enter Lent together with hearts open to grace, mercy, and love. All are welcome!

2026 FPC Chili Cook-Off

Turn up the heat and claim your crown! The annual FPC Chili Cook Off is back (with a Mardi Gras flair) and we want your chili in the lineup! Join the fun on Sunday, February 15, after worship. Bring a large crock pot of your signature chili (plus a list of ingredients for those with food sensitivities) and drop it off in McKay Hall before the 11:00 AM service and we'll take care of the rest! Trophies, bragging rights, and serious chili glory await the top three entries! And, as a special treat, we'll have an authentic King Cake, straight from New Orleans! Sign up in the church office and show us what you've got!

February Food Bank Donations

The date for the February Food Bank Collection will be February 15th. Please bring your contributions to the church on Sunday. Food items can also be dropped off at the church office during the week. Monetary donations are also greatly appreciated. Please specify your donation for "Hunger Relief." The following items are requested:

Canned Pineapple Chunks or Fruit Cocktail
White or Brown Rice - 1 or 2 lb. bags
Peanut Butter
Canned Chili

Instant Mashed Potatoes
Canned Chicken or Tuna
Canned Soup

Thank you very much for your contributions and help for this ministry. Hunger Relief is an important part of First Presbyterian's mission to our surrounding community. We support three food banks: Wellspring Interfaith Social Services, United Faith Presbyterian Church, and East Wayne Street Center.

Welcoming Reception

Join us immediately after worship on Sunday, February 22, for a time of fellowship as we welcome Jordan Plohr, our new Director of Drama Ministries. All are invited to stop by, meet Jordan, and enjoy this time together!

First Pres Art Gallery

Join us at the First Presbyterian Art Gallery for "Art Will Set You Free: Portraits of Lives Affected by Incarceration. Featuring 4 decades of artwork created behind bars, this special exhibition explores creativity, humanity, resilience, and hope under confinement.

Showing: February 27-March 20, 2026

Opening Reception: February 27, 5:30-7:00 pm

The opening night reception includes art, music, refreshments, and conversation!

2026 Presbyterian Scholarship

The 2026 selection period for First Presbyterian Scholarship is now open. Scholarship recipients may be of any age if they are/will be full-time students taking degree-directed courses during the 2026-2027 school year. If interested, please email Sarah Kelley (skelley@firstpresfortwayne.org) in the Financial Office for more information and an application. Completed applications, with supporting documents, must be received by **April 1, 2026**.

"Tell Me Something Good" for Lent

This year, our Lenten worship series is built around the theme "*Tell Me Something Good*." Despite what we may traditionally think, Lent is not a death march to Good Friday—it's a journey toward life and Easter. And honestly, we could all use some good news, yes? Join us this Lent to be inspired by stories of hope, to tell good news, and to become people of good news in a world that often pushes us to be otherwise.

"Good News Only" Facebook Group

This Lent, we're creating space to notice and share the good that so often goes unnamed. *Good News Only* is a dedicated Facebook group where each day you'll receive a simple prompt to help you look for signs of hope all around you...from a favorite song on the radio, to a quiet act of kindness, to a recipe that unexpectedly delights. Daily prompts begin February 19 and continue through Maundy Thursday, April 2. All are welcome to participate, and you do not need to be a church member to join. Come as you are, scroll when you can, and help us tell the good news together. Find us by scanning the QR code.



“Good Times, Great Company” – Lenten Series

To go along with our Lenten worship theme, Tell Me Something Good, we’re doing something a little different this year. Instead of a book study or traditional Bible study, we’re going on the road—just for fun—for the six weeks of Lent. Join us as you’re able for weekly, low-key activities that build new relationships, make new friends, and reconnect with one another. No prep, no pressure, just time together and a little good news along the way.

Feb. 21, 3-4:30PM Riverfront Lunar New Year

In partnership with Fort Wayne Korea Festival! We’ll meet at the white sculpture at the corner of Harrison and Superior. This is a FREE event.

Feb. 26, 5-6:30PM Botanical Gardens

Stroll through two different shows, the Sweetheart Orchid Display and Fern’s Fairytale Express (with a model train.) This event is \$1 per person.

Mar. 6, 11:30-1PM Lunch at Ducky’s

Join us for lunch and a bit of duckpin bowling! This activity is accessible for all ages and abilities. Cost is only for your lunch order.

Mar. 12, 5-6:30PM 2nd Thursdays at FW Museum of Art

Join us as we take a curated tour the latest gallery show, The Spellbound Spirit: Photographs by Kirsty Mitchell. This is a FREE event.

Mar. 21, 7:30-9PM Glo Wild at FW Zoo

Don’t miss your opportunity to see the Zoo transform into a wild and wonderful nighttime lantern festival. This event is \$15 per adult and \$10 pr child. RSVP before March 14 by scanning the QR code.



Mar. 24, 5:30-7:30PM Mahjong at Two Bamboo

Want to learn how to play American Mahjong? Are you already a pro? Join us for a fun night of learning and playing at the newest spot in town, Two Bamboo owned by a friend of our own, Betsy Perry Patton! For those who already know how to play, some tables will be designated for open play all evening. This event is \$15 per person, and RSVP is required by March 17. To RSVP scan the QR code.



GETTING CONNECTED

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. Keep an eye out for our next date of Coffee with the Pastors. 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 know if you'd like to receive that email. All are welcome — come as you are and join the conversation.

Women's Bible Study — Fridays, 1pm

This group is now led by Rev. Susan Keirn Kester and meets on Zoom. For more information, email Susan at keirnsusan@aol.com.

Table Talk for Women — Wednesdays, 10am

This group reads a book at their own pace and is led by members of the group on Zoom. ZOOM Meeting ID: 870 6712 2177. ZOOM Passcode: 260 426 7421. For more information, please contact Marj Sapp at 260-413-2639 or Marcie Weissner at 260-312-5733.

Men's Bible Study — Fridays, 10am

This group is led by Rev. Youngsoo An and meets on Teams. For more information, email Rev. An at ysan@firstpresfortwayne.org.

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

North and South Dinner Groups — 2nd 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 2nd Monday of every month at 5:30pm. The South Dinner Group meets at Hall's Coventry (5745 Coventry Lane). 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 Don Hall's Factory. Please RSVP to Marj Sapp at 260-413-2639 or by email at marj.sapp@gmail.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

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 4th grade

Join us 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 5th through 9th grades

Join us as we explore big questions about our church, our faith, and the world, such as science, politics, social justice, and environment.

Youth Group — 3rd Sunday of each month, 12:15-2PM, lunch provided

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! Keep an eye on the Family Ministry bulletin board (by the elevator) for schedules and plans.

MISSIONS

Through our **Missions Ministry**, many of our members and friends are engaged in volunteering and advocacy. Our programs include collecting, making, and serving meals for shelters, schools, food banks, and more. We also maintain mission partnerships with many local, national, and international partners including:

- 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

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. All types of gently-used clothing in all sizes are needed. (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!

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.

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/>.

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.

The **Chancel Choir** sings for all English Worship Services, and they welcome anyone who enjoys singing God’s praises. Chancel Choir rehearsal is on Thursdays 7pm-8:30pm, and Sundays at 10am. The **Handbell Choir** practices Thursdays 5:30pm-6:30pm and rings occasionally in Worship.

CALENDAR

Today

- 10:00 am** **Wired Word.**—2nd Floor Parlor.
Choir Rehearsal.—Music Room.
- 11:00 am** **English Worship.**—Sanctuary & Livestream.
Korean Language Worship Service.—Chapel & Livestream.
- 12:00 pm** **Fellowship Time.**—McKay Hall.
Blessings in a Backpack.—McKay Hall.
- 2:00 pm** **“What the Constitution Means to Me”.**—Theater. Don’t miss the final production of this pertinent show.

This Week

Mon Feb 9

- 1:30 pm** **Body, Brain, and Belief (3B).**—McKay Hall.
- 3:00 pm** **Faith, Fibers, and Fellowship.**—Room 302.
- 5:30 pm** **North and South Dinner Groups.**—Offsite.

Wed Feb 11

- 1:30 pm** **Body, Brain, and Belief (3B).**—McKay Hall.

Fri Feb 13

- 10:00 am** **Men's Bible Study.**—Teams.
- 1:00 pm** **Women's Bible Study.**—Zoom.

Coming Soon

Sun Feb 15

- 12:00 pm** **Annual Chili Cookoff.**—McKay Hall, after worship.

Wed Feb 18

- 7:00 pm** **Ash Wednesday Service.**—Chapel.

Sat Feb 21

- 3:00 pm** **Riverfront Lunar New Year.**—Offsite. We'll meet at the white sculpture at the corner of Harrison and Superior.

Sun Feb 22

- 12:00 pm** **Welcoming Reception for Jordan Plohr.**—McKay Hall. Help us welcome our new Director of Dramatic Arts Ministries after worship.