

Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time
July 26, 2026
11:00am — Sanctuary



Marc Chagall, Jacob Wrestling with the Angel (c.1963).



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WEST WAYNE STREET

**Those who are able, please stand*

Congregation responds in bold

GATHERING

Prelude

Prelude

Théodore Dubois

Chiming of the Hour

Call to Worship

A love that never ceases,

A creativity that designed the universe,

A hope that cannot be quenched,

A pursuit of reconciliation no matter the cost:

These are the things that are of God,

Then let us worship God.

***Hymn No. 435**

There's a Wideness in God's Mercy

IN BABILONE

***Call to Confession**

We live fractured lives, and God seeks not to punish us for those faults and fault lines, but to reconcile and restore us. Trusting in God's grace and mercy, let us then make our confession together, first in silent prayer.

***Prayer of Confession**

Loving God, help us. When we have run away, when we have turned our backs on love, when we have sought immediate satisfaction and not long-term healing, help us.

Merciful God, forgive us. When we have been selfish, when we have been mean, when we have closed our ears to the cries of others, forgive us.

Powerful God, heal us. When we are so broken we cannot move, when we don't know how to stem the bleeding of our wounds, when we are too ashamed to seek community, heal us.

Give us the courage, the strength, and the hope to accept your grace and hear your call in Christ. Amen.

*Declaration of Forgiveness

Friends, hear this Good News: the love of God is beyond measure, and you are included in that love. Know that you are forgiven and thus freed to love and serve. **Alleluia! Amen.**

*Passing the Peace of Christ

The peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Let us now share Christ's peace with others.

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

Genesis 32:22-31

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

New Testament Reading

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon

“Finding God In Unexpected Places: On the Wrestling Mat” Rev. Dr. Annie Epling

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

***Affirmation of Faith**

We believe that God meets us in unexpected places.

When we are afraid, God is with us.

When we wrestle with doubt, grief, or change, God does not abandon us.

We believe that every encounter with God has the power to change us.

God calls us by name, gives us new identity, and invites us into new life.

Like Jacob, we seek God's blessing.

Like Jacob, we may bear the marks of our struggles.

Yet we trust that God is always at work,

shaping us into the people we are called to be.

We believe that God does not leave us as we are,

but through grace continually reforms us,

renewing our hearts, our minds, and our lives. Amen.

***Hymn No. 697**

Take My Life

HENDON

Announcements

The 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.

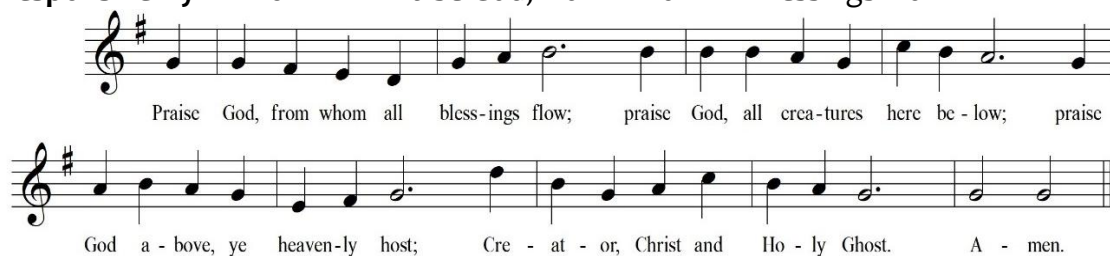
Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

In Babilone

arr. Wilbur Held

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



***Prayer of Dedication**

Attentive God, you see us as we are. As we bring these gifts, shape our lives to reflect your righteousness—faithful in love, honest in action, steady in compassion. Open our eyes to behold your face in the neighbors we serve and the work we share. Let our giving become praise in motion, a testimony that we seek your presence in faithful steps forward. Receive these offerings as signs of our desire to live in right relationship with you and with one another. Amen.

SENDING

***Hymn No. 693**

Though I May Speak

GIFT OF LOVE

***Benediction**

***Postlude**

Carillon

Louis Vierne

Assisting with Worship this Morning

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

Liturgist: Tina Hickman

Substitute Organist: Noah Vancina

Elders of the Month/Greeters: Denise Davis, Sherrie Steiner

Ushers of the Month: Anne Barnett, David Beer, Dan Serban

Live Stream Operators: Dick Florea, Alexi Jetmore

Sound Board Operators: Mark Schulenberg

Prayer List

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| • Janice Roddy | • Tanner, nephew of Jennifer Stone |
| • Jennifer Kern Kelly | • Lisa Keirn, sister-in-law of Susan Kester |
| • Sam Shepherd | • Ashley Lassiter and Family |
| • Beth White | • Joyce McGiffin |
| • Sarah Kelley | • Carolyn Krebs |
| • Family of Barbara Kerch | • Donna Jesse |

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.

NEWS AND EVENTS

Help Shape a Child's Faith This Year

One hour. A few Sundays. A lasting difference.

As we prepare to begin Sunday School on August 16, we're looking for a few more volunteers to serve with our Kindergarten–5th Grade and LEVEL UP (Middle School) classes.

Teaching K–5 is easy! Everything you need is provided—lesson plans, activities, and supplies. You don't have to be a Bible scholar or a professional teacher. Just bring a caring heart and a willingness to spend time with our children.

And what about middle schoolers? Despite their reputation, they're actually one of the most rewarding groups to teach. They're thoughtful, funny, full of questions, and eager for adults who will listen, encourage, and help them explore their faith.

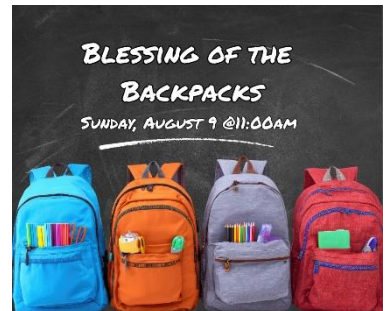
Whether you can teach once a month or a few times during the year, we'd love to have you on the team. Investing in the next generation is one of the most important ministries of our church. Scan the QR code to sign up!



Start the school year with a special blessing!

Join us for our annual Blessing of the Backpacks during 11:00 AM Worship on Sunday, August 9, as we pray for a year filled with learning, growth, and courage.

Whether you're heading to preschool, college, the classroom, or the school office, we'd love to send you with a blessing for the year ahead. Students of all ages, teachers, administrators, and school staff are invited to participate! Bring your backpack, tote, briefcase, or whatever accompanies you each day! Everyone is welcome!



FPC Rummage Sale:

Get ready for two days of treasure hunting at the First Pres Rummage Sale!

Where: First Presbyterian Church in McKay Hall

When: Friday, August 14 | 9:00 AM–4:00 PM

Saturday, August 15 | 9:00 AM–3:00 PM

Discover hidden gems, browse unique finds, and enjoy delicious treats from our bake sale and concession stand! Whether you're searching for bargains or just love the thrill of the hunt, there's something for everyone!

Volunteers Needed! It takes many hands to set-up and run the rummage sale! Volunteer for the 2026 First Pres Rummage Sale, to be held on August 14-15! We need greeters, cash register attendants, and food sales attendants! We also need donated baked goods! Sign-up today by scanning the QR code. Contact Bill Patterson with any questions at bpatterson@firstpresfortwayne.org.



Sunday School Resuming

We're excited to welcome children back to **Sunday School beginning Sunday, August 16!**

Following the Children's Message in worship, children (Pre-K through 5th grade) are invited to join us for a fun and engaging time of Bible stories, hands-on activities, and growing together in faith. Whether your family has been with us for years or you're joining us for the first time, there's a place for every child.

As a new school year begins, we look forward to learning, laughing, asking big questions, and discovering God's love together. We can't wait to see you on August 16!

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 — On Summer Hiatus

Table Talk for Women — On Summer Hiatus

Men's Bible Study — On Summer Hiatus

FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

North and South Dinner Groups — 2nd Monday of the month, 5:30pm

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

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.

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

Sunday School for Children and Youth — On Summer Hiatus

Youth Group — On Summer Hiatus

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
- Josephine's Place Women's Shelter
- 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, during June, rehearses on Sundays at 10am. **Handbell Choir** is currently on Summer Hiatus.

CALENDAR

Today

- 10:00 am** **Wired Word.**—2nd Floor Parlor.
11:00 am **English Worship Service.**—Sanctuary & Livestream.
 Korean Worship Service.—Chapel & Livestream.
12:10 pm **Fellowship Time.**—McKay Hall.

This Week

Mon Jul 27

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

Wed Jul 29

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

Coming Soon

Sun Aug 9

- 11:00 am** **Blessing of the Backpacks.**—Sanctuary during worship.

Sun Aug 16 **Sunday School Resumes!**

Sun Aug 23

- 12:00 pm** **Get Connected Ice Cream Social.**—McKay Hall after worship.

—> **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.