

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time
August 16, 2026
11:00am — Sanctuary



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Wisconsin Historical Society /
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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WEST WAYNE STREET

**Those who are able, please stand*

Congregation responds in bold

GATHERING

Prelude

Canon in D Major

Johann Pachelbel

Chiming of the Hour

Call to Worship (Psalm 98)

O sing to God a new song; sing to God, all the earth.

For great is the Creator and greatly to be praised;

God is to be revered above all gods.

For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but God made the heavens.

Say among the nations, "God reigns.

The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved.

God will judge the peoples with equity."

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;

let the sea roar and all that fills it; let the field exult and everything in it.

Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy

before the Creator, for God is coming,

for God is coming to judge the earth.

God will judge the world with righteousness and the peoples with truth.

***Hymn No. 41**

O Worship the King, All Glorious Above!

LYONS

***Call to Confession**

Come, draw near to the One who made you, the One who is beyond borders, beyond control and coercion. Come, draw near to the One who judges the world with righteousness, inviting us to be a people of truth and equity, reflecting the diverse abundance of God's grace.

***Prayer of Confession**

God beyond borders,

though we are made in your image, so often we have tried to create you in ours.

We have adorned our country's flags with the image of the cross,

desecrating that place where you conquered

state power and sin once and for all

with our own idolatrous nationalisms.

We have confused our political preferences with your divine will.

We have even dared to believe you love us best.

**What a mockery we make of your message
of letting the children of all nations come to you, Jesus.**

What harm we have caused upon bodies and faiths
seen as less faithful, or less American, or less patriotic than our own.

**What violence we have worked in our collusion of state and religious power,
the very same violence you subvert on the cross.**

**Forgive our comfortable and profitable idolatries,
and burst forth from all the boxes we have forced you into,
bringing in your wake abundant life for all people, for all nations.**

(silent prayer of confession)

Amen.

***Declaration of Forgiveness**

Hear the good news, and let it dwell in your body: How things are, or how they have been, is not how they must always be.

The God of all nations is at work still, growing flowers in the cracks between the walls we build. All creation bears witness to a God beyond borders, a God on the move still working through ordinary people, like you and me, to claim and create abundant life for all people, for all nations, for all faiths. God is not held captive by our ideologies of idolatry; we need not be, either. We are a people made new! A forgiven people. A diverse people of grace in many languages.

Thanks be to God!

***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

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

Exodus 20:1-16

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Anthem

The Call

Ralph Vaughan-Williams

New Testament Reading

Matthew 22:15-22

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon

“Christian Nationalism: A Theological Error”

Rev. Dr. Annie Epling

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

***Affirmation of Faith** (Barmen Declaration, Thesis 1)

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me (John 14:6).

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. I am the door; if anyone enters by me, he will be saved. (John 10:1, 9)

Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear, trust and obey in life and in death.

We reject the false doctrine that the church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation, apart from and besides this one Word of God, still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God's revelation.

***Hymn**

We Trust the One Who Brought to Life

KINGSFOLD

*We trust the One who brought to life the earth, the sky and sea,
who authors every breath we breathe, and holds eternity.
Though idols tempt at every turn, to God alone we sing.
We train our hearts to seek and serve the justice God will bring.*

*Trust not the passing breath of those whose voices roar and rage,
who think themselves above reproach, who rise in every age.
Bear fruits that praise our Living Lord, whose reign endures alone.
Though mortals die and turn to dust, our God is on the throne.*

*God keeps the faith when leaders scheme to silence and oppress.
God sets the prisoners free in love and raises the distressed.
God watches over strangers' ways, upholds the bruised and bent,
and brings to ruin wicked ones, till all their power is spent.*

*To you, O God, we lift our praise; for you, our hearts arise;
In you, we mortals place our trust; with you, we name the lies:
The lies of violence, greed, and fear, the lie of scarcity.
In you, we find the truth of life, the truth that sets us free.*

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.

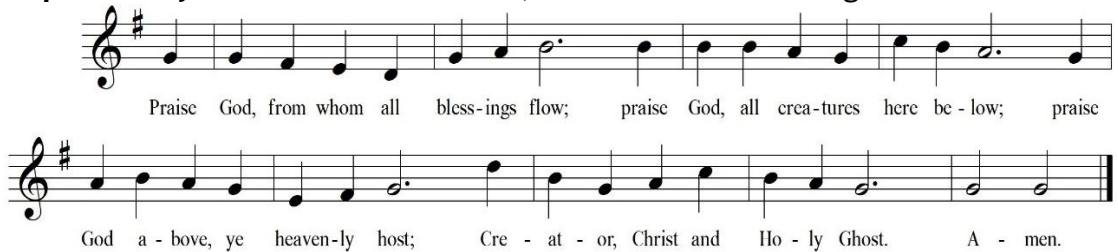
Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

Allegretto

Cèsar Franck

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



*Prayer of Dedication

Holy God, source of every good gift: the tithes and offerings we bring to you are simply a token of our desire to walk more closely beside you. We give, knowing that “rendering unto you what is yours” would mean leaving everything to you—all we have and all we are. We are not there yet, but with your help, we are on the road to getting there. Bless what we give; may it speak words of compassion, mercy, and love as it empowers your mission and ministry. We pray this in the powerful name of Jesus, whose light we seek to follow. Amen.

SENDING

*Hymn No. 340

This Is My Song

FINLANDIA

*Benediction

*Postlude

Fugue in D minor BWV 565

J. S. Bach

CHANCEL FLOWERS

The Chancel flowers are given in loving memory of Tom Barnett by Anne Barnett.

Assisting with Worship this Morning

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

Resident Pastor: Ian Clarke

Director of Music Ministries: Colin Andrews

Soloist: Liz Graham

Elders of the Month/Greeters: Brittney Bodine, Andrew Kopec

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

Live Stream Operators: Alexi Jetmore

Sound Board Operators: Mark Schulenburg

Prayer List

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| • Janice Roddy | • Tanner, nephew of Jennifer Stone |
| • Jennifer Kern Kelly | • Lisa Keirn, sister-in-law of Susan Kester |
| • Sam Shepherd | • Joyce McGiffin |
| • Beth White | • Carolyn Krebs |
| • Family of Barbara Kerch | • Donna Jesse |
| • Bob & Kathy Beatty | |

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

Rummage Sale: Congregation Last Chance!

Stop by McKay Hall before or after church to rummage through the remaining items from the Rummage Sale! A free will offering will be accepted for any items remaining! Monday morning, the Salvation Army will take whatever remains!

Schools Team's Blessings in a Backpack packing begins on Sunday, August 23!

Please join us every Sunday, usually after worship, as we gather in McKay Hall to pack bags of food for the children at Washington Elementary School to put in their backpacks and have over the weekend. This is a relatively quick volunteer activity that allows us to help bridge the food insecurity gap that children face when they are not in school. With enough volunteers, it should only take us 15 to 20 minutes to fill these bags and know that we are providing a valuable service! Please note we will pack before worship on Sunday, August 23, due to the Ice Cream Social in McKay Hall.

Men's Bible Study Resumes

Beginning Friday, August 21, the Men's Bible Study will resume meeting online every Friday from 10:00 AM to 11:15 AM via Microsoft Teams.

Started in 2019, this ongoing Bible study takes us on a journey through the history of Israel through the reading of Scripture. Having covered the entire Old Testament—beginning from the Book of Exodus—we will now explore the history of the New Testament through the Gospel of John starting this August. In addition, we will use *The Bible in the Early Church* by Justo L. Gonzalez as a supplementary text to learn about how the Bible came to be formed.

If you are interested in joining, please contact Rev. An at ysan@firstpresfortwayne.org or Steve Weissner, at stevewwmew@gmail.com.

Hay Fever Tickets

Tickets are on sale now for First Pres Theater's 2026/27 season opener, the delightful HAY FEVER, by Noel Coward!

Step into the delightfully chaotic world of the Bliss family, where the drama never stops, and the guests never quite know what they've gotten themselves into. HAY FEVER is a sparkling comedy of manners filled with sharp wit and larger-than-life personalities. With hosts this outrageous, escape may be the only option... but will the guests make it out with their dignity intact? Directed by Jordan Plohr.

August 21, 22, 23 – August 28, 29, 30
FRI/SAT @7:30pm, SUN @2:00pm

Tickets are available by calling ArtsTix at 260-422-4226 or purchase online by scanning the QR code!



Get Connected! Ice Cream Social

Looking for ways to connect with others, serve your community, or discover a new opportunity to get involved? Join us for our Get Connected! Ice Cream Social on **Sunday, August 23, at 12:15 PM**, immediately following worship.

Enjoy an ice cream treat while exploring the many ministries, programs, and volunteer opportunities that make First Presbyterian such a vibrant community. From serving our neighbors and supporting local outreach to music, theater, art, education, and fellowship, you'll have the opportunity to meet the people who make these ministries happen, ask questions, and discover where your interests and gifts can make a difference.

Whether you've attended First Pres for years, you're new to the area, or you're simply looking for a welcoming community where you can connect and serve, we'd love to meet you.

Table Talk

This Women's Book Study meets online on Wednesdays at 10:00 am. We take turns "reading around the table", so no homework is assigned. Participants obtain their own copies of the book. The group will begin a new book on September 9.

We will be reading *Braving the Truth* by Rachel Held Evans. It is a compilation of more than 10 years of Evans' posts, which are as honest, brilliant, funny, and timely as she was. It offers a courageous faith that addresses contemporary faith issues.

ZOOM Meeting ID: 870 6712 2177

ZOOM Passcode: 260 426 7421

If you have any questions, please contact Marj Sapp at 260-413-2639 or Marcie Weissner at 260-312-5733.

Women's Bible Study Resumes

This Zoom group will be resuming on Friday, September 11, at 1pm. During the the 2026-2027 season, the group will be reading: *United through Christ, Bound to Each Other, a study of Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians* by Rhonda Mawhood Lee. There is no preparation required as the group reads through the study together. All women interested in studying the Bible as a group are welcome. For more information, please contact Susan at keirnsusan@aol.com or at (260)445-5475.

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 — Resumes September 11!

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

Table Talk for Women — On Summer Hiatus

Men's Bible Study — Resumes August 21!

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

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 — Resumes August 16!

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 — 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 Choirs resume on August 27! The **Chancel Choir** sings for 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.
11:00 am **English Worship Service.**—Sanctuary & Livestream.
 Korean Worship Service.—Chapel & Livestream.
12:10 pm **Rummage Sale/Fellowship Time.**—McKay Hall.

This Week

Mon Aug 17

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

Wed Aug 19

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

Fri Aug 21

- 10:00 am** **Men's Bible Study Resumes.**—Teams.

Coming Soon

Sun Aug 23

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

Fri Sept 11

- 1:00 pm** **Women's Bible Study Resumes.**—Zoom.