

Friday, August 7, 2026



This Week @FirstPresFW

A publication of First Presbyterian Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana

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Pastor's Letter



Dear First Pres Members and Friends,

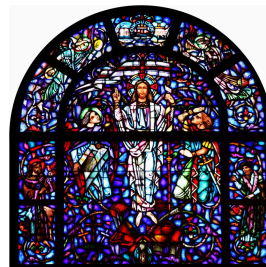
This Sunday, we're blessing backpacks for our children, youth and educators. If you're a student or in education, bring what you have for a time of special blessing. This is for all ages!

As school begins for so many, I'm reminded that we're never too old to learn. Indeed, the root word for disciple means "learner". Along these lines, I've been spending time this summer learning what I can about Christian Nationalism. This is in preparation for a sermon series I'm beginning on August 16. Some of you know that the General Assembly declared in July that Christian Nationalism is a "theological error". The series will begin with this. We'll also delve into how we read the Bible as compared to how Christian nationalism reads the Bible and conclude with white Christian Nationalism. This is a series rooted in theology and the Bible.

I hope to see you in worship as we learn together and deepen our faith.

Blessings,
Annie

Sunday Worship



English

- 11:00 AM Sanctuary, Rev. Dr. Anne Epling preaching
- Watch livestream via [Website](#) and [YouTube](#)
- Public Access Channel 1 and Channel 25, Sun 4:30 PM & Mon 10:30 AM
- Public Access via [Digital Archive](#)

Korean

- 11:00 AM Chapel, Rev. Dr. Youngsoo An preaching
- Watch livestream via [Website](#), and [YouTube](#)

Bulletin

- The complete weekly bulletin may be found [here](#).

E-News submissions should be sent to [Jenny Conrad](#).
Bulletin submissions should be sent to [August Burger](#).
The deadline for submission is Wednesday at 10:00 am.

News & Events

Click the buttons below to read past editions of the e-news and to see a calendar listing of upcoming events!

[Weekly Announcements](#)

New College and Career Dinner Group

Join Us August 15: You are super highly encouraged to attend our new Totally Awesome Dinner Group! This new dinner group, created for the college and career members and friends of First Pres, is meeting on Saturday, August 15, for dinner and relaxed conversation, and we would love for you to join us!

We'll meet at the church at 6:30 PM to gather and introduce ourselves, and then we'll either walk or carpool together to dinner at a nearby restaurant. It's a relaxed way to share a meal, meet some new faces, and enjoy a little time together outside of Sunday morning. No agenda, no program... just good food and great company!

If you're able to join us, or would like more information, please email [Esther Coplin](#) so we know how many seats to plan for. And a plus one is absolutely invited!

Hope to see you there!

New Sermon Series August 16–30

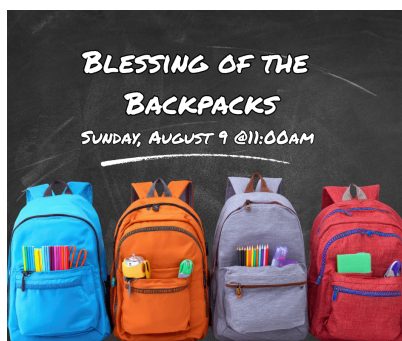
Christian Nationalism: A Theological Error

Beginning Sunday, August 16, Rev. Annie Epling will lead a three-week sermon series titled "Christian Nationalism: A Theological Error."

In July, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) declared Christian nationalism to be a "theological error." This series will explore the theological foundations of that statement, examining how Christians read and interpret Scripture, how those interpretations differ from those associated with Christian nationalism, and concluding with a discussion of white Christian nationalism.

Grounded in theology and the Bible, this series invites thoughtful reflection and faithful conversation as we consider what it means to follow Christ in today's world.

Backpack Blessing



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!

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!

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.

Sign up here: [Sunday School Volunteer Sign-Up](#)

Welcome Ian Clarke August 16

Ian Clarke will join First Presbyterian Church as a Resident Pastor, beginning August 16, 2026.



Ian is a Candidate for ordination in the PC(USA), and a graduate of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary as of May 2026. He grew up in Indianapolis, IN, and attended Northminster Presbyterian Church until college. Ian has worked with young people for essentially his entire adult life, with experiences ranging from teaching preschool and elementary school to mentoring middle and high schoolers, and served as a Children, Youth, and Families Intern at Triumphant Love Lutheran Church in Austin, TX. His inclinations in ministry are toward liturgical theology and liturgical design, rest and renewal, and Reformed theology. Ian is a musician, coffee guy, sports fan, and chess novice. He otherwise enjoys playing Magic the Gathering, reading, watching movies, eating good food, and hanging out with his partner Anna & their two cats, Remi & Marley.

Please join us in warmly welcoming Ian on August 16, at worship and afterwards during coffee in McKay Hall!

Get Connected! Ice Cream Social

Save the Date! August 23 | 12:15 pm

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.

Everyone is welcome!

2026/27 Theater Season Opening



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.

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

Tickets are available by calling ArtsTix at 260-422-4226 or purchase online by clicking the button below!

Theater Tickets

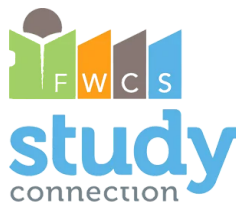


Open auditions for FPT's production of *Middletown* by Dan Clancy will be held on Sunday, August 23, and Monday, August 24, at 7:00 pm. No advance sign-up required!

Directed by John Tolley. Click the link below for all the details:

<https://firstpresfortwayne.org/2026/08/middletown-open-auditions-announced/>

Study Connection Tutors Needed



As many of you know, our Study Connection group, which had supported South Wayne Elementary for more than a decade, lost their “home” when South Wayne was closed. At that time, a number of tutors decided that it was a natural time to “retire” after many years of enriching the lives of students.

The small group of tutors remaining are planning to merge with the Rotary tutors at Washington Elementary, a school with which we already enjoy a connection through Blessings in a Backpack and our Schools Team support there. We would love to have a

few more tutors to serve as many students as possible, so please watch the accompanying FWCS video that explains the program. You can view the video at this link:

<https://www.fortwayneschools.org/families/face/study-connection>

We will be meeting at Washington Elementary at around 3.30-4:30 pm on Tuesdays, and we have substitutes for those times when you can't be there. Thanks for considering this worthwhile activity with children in our church neighborhood. If you have questions, call or text Kathy Adair, (260) 437-0584.

Missions



The date for the August Food Bank Collection will be August 16th. Please bring your contributions to the church on Sunday. Food items can also be dropped at the church office throughout the week. Monetary donations are also greatly appreciated.

Please specify your donation for "Hunger Relief."

The following items are requested:

- Rice - white or brown (1-2 lb. bags preferred)
- Peanut Butter
- Canned Fruit: Pineapple or Peaches
- Cereal - Your choice
- Canned Chicken or Tuna
- Mac-N-Cheese
- Canned Soup

Thank you for your contributions and help with 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.

Rummage Sale

New items are arriving daily: Two days of treasure hunting are coming up at the First Pres Rummage Sale! Here are the details:

- August 14 & 15
- First Presbyterian Church in McKay Hall



- 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!

Fellowship Opportunities

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.

Currently, about 9 to 11 participants attend each week, and everyone is warmly welcomed! If you are interested in joining, please contact Rev. An at ysan@firstpresfortwayne.org or our group communicator, Steve Weissner, at stevewwmew@gmail.com.

Women's Bible Study

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.

North Dinner Group: Be sure to join the North Dinner Group on Monday, August 10, 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!

South Dinner Group: Please join the South Dinner Group for dinner at Hall's Tavern at Coventry (5747 Coventry Lane) on Monday, August 10, 2026, at 5:30 pm. We look forward to fellowship with you!

Readers' Choice Awards Final Voting!

Let's make our voices heard! 🥳 **The second round of Fort Wayne Newspaper's Readers' Choice Awards voting is now open, and runs until August 9!** We need your daily support to shine a spotlight on the incredible work of First Pres, First Pres Theater, and the Day School! *Cast your vote daily* for First Pres, First Pres Theater, and the FPC Day School at the links below:



FPC:

<https://www.fortwayne.com/promo/?pid=8612#/gallery/552211460/>



FPT:

<https://www.fortwayne.com/promo/?pid=8612#/gallery/552211408/>



FPCDS:

<https://www.fortwayne.com/promo/?pid=8612#/gallery/552211623/>

Staff Farewell



Please join us in sending prayer and best wishes to August Burger, as we say farewell and extend our heartfelt gratitude for her faithful service in our front office for the past 2 years. While we are sad to see her go, we wish her God's blessings on the journey ahead as she moves to a new opportunity at Purdue Fort Wayne assuming the role of Music Tech

Operations Manager for the new Surack-Sweetwater Music Industry Building!

Stephen Ministry

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. Please contact Carolyn Krebs at 956-844-3890 or Marcie Weissner at 260-312-5733 for more information.

Prayer List

- Barbara Kerch & Family
- Ashley Lassiter & Family
- Sam Shepherd, staff member
- Tanner Hisey, nephew of Jennifer Stone
- Jennifer Kern Kelly
- Janice Roddy
- Joyce McGiffin
- Lisa Keirn, sister-in-law of Susan Kester
- Beth White
- Carolyn Krebs
- Donna Jesse

If you are in need of prayer or an encouraging word, [let us know!](#)

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