

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 13, 2026
11:00am — Sanctuary



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FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WEST WAYNE STREET

**Those who are able, please stand*

Congregation responds in bold

GATHERING

Prelude

Variations on “Bangor”

Wilbur Held

Chiming of the Hour

Call to Worship

Grace is the cup of tea, the warm welcome and the sweet embrace:
it's the school rebuilt, the playground equipped and the hungry heart fed.

Grace dwells deep and sends us out.

Grace is the effort in our hopes, the movement of our dreams:
it's forgiving the wrong and working for right.

Grace is speaking the truth and claiming the change.

Grace is the challenge to raise the olive branch when push invites shove:
it's the courage to embrace and the struggle to live a new way.

We gather in grace, to celebrate God's call to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly side-by-side.

***Hymn No. 39**

Great is Thy Faithfulness

FAITHFULNESS

***Call to Confession**

***Prayer of Confession**

What if God paid us back in full for all the wrong we have done?
(pause)

O Lord we seek your mercy...

yet we ourselves look for payback when we are wronged.

**We think it “only fair” and “what is right” when we retaliate
and use harsh words**

and withdraw from relationship.

**The forgiveness you offer on our account
is larger than we can comprehend,**

still we withhold forgiveness

and carry the grudge over petty items.

We are eager to do your judging.

And the worst: we conspire our inner thoughts

**to secure your forgiveness
while avoiding honest repentance.
Forgive us Lord for the sins we know in our hearts.
Save us Lord from the sins we hide.**

(pause for reflection and self-examination)

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and has not dealt with us according to our sins.
Instead, God has chosen the sacrifice of God's own son on our account.
It is because Jesus Christ pays the last full measure
that our sins are forgiven.
This gift of forgiveness makes us able,
with the power of the Holy Spirit,
to choose to forgive, renew
and live again in right relationship with each other and with our God.
In the name of the Father, and the Son,
and the Holy Spirit.
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**

The musical score is written for a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. It consists of three systems of music with lyrics underneath. The first system has two verses of lyrics. The second system continues the melody with more lyrics. The third system concludes the hymn with a final line of lyrics. The music is in a simple, hymn-like style with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature.

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 12:1-14

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Anthem

Let the Praise Go Round

Boyce/Hopson

New Testament Reading

Matthew 18:21-35

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon

“The Unforgiving Servant”

Rev. Dr. Annie Epling

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

***Affirmation of Faith**

**We believe there is no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus;
for we know that all things work together for good
for those who love God,
who are called according to God’s purpose.
We are convinced that neither death, nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come,
nor powers, nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

***Hymn No. 754**

Help Us to Accept Each Other

BARONITA

Announcements

Moment for Stewardship and Mission

Erin Ness, Executive Director, Josephine's Place

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.

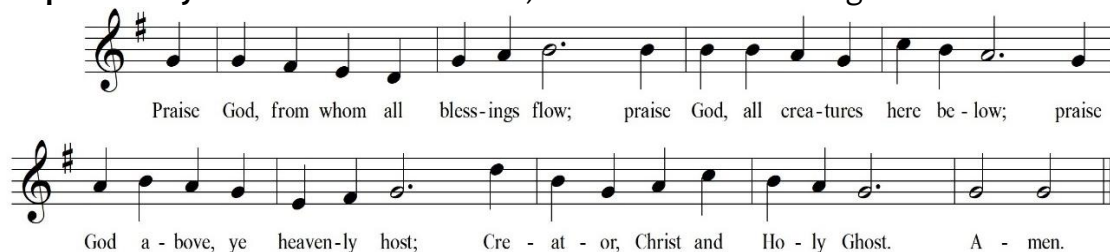
Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

Great Day

Spiritual arr. Moses Hogan

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



*Prayer of Dedication

Bless these offerings and use them to extend your healing, reconciliation, and love to a world burdened by brokenness and division. Teach us to give as generously as you forgive. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

SENDING

*Hymn No. 697

Take My Life and Let It Be

HENDON

*Benediction

*Postlude

Comes Autumn Time

Leo Sowerby

CHANCEL FLOWERS

We apologize for not including the chancel flower dedication in last Sunday's bulletin. The flowers on September 6 were given by Gil and Susie Perry in memory of their son, Fritz. We are grateful for the opportunity to honor Fritz's memory and regret that this acknowledgement was missed.

A reminder: To be included in the Sunday bulletin, worship information must be received by Wednesday of the preceding week. Please send information to jepling@firstpresfortwayne.org. Thank you for understanding.

Assisting with Worship this Morning

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

Resident Pastor: Ian Clarke

Director of Music Ministries: Colin Andrews

Accompanist: Edith Coplin

Elders of the Month/Greeters: Brittney Bodine, Diana Wyss

Ushers of the Month: Scott McMeen, Steve Weissner, June Schwertfager, Carol Offerle, Eric Evans, Esther Coplin, Anne Barnett

Live Stream Operators: Alexi Jetmore, Dick Florea

Sound Board Operators: Mark Schulenburg

Choir Members: Richard Baughman, Andrew Budd, Brendan Caffé, Edith Coplin, Susan Dorion, Andrew Graham, Liz Graham, Elliot Hammond, DuWayne Hintz, Joan Kern, Kemel Mitchell, Kathy Miller, Jane McGeehan, Scott McMeen, Kip Ormerod, Ellis Pedersen, Carol Rhudy, Marj Sapp, Sandy Shearer, Jesse Spencer, Jill Therrien, Mary Winters

Prayer List

- Janice Roddy
- Jennifer Kern Kelly
- Beth White
- Bob & Kathy Beatty
- Penny Pulz
- Tom Sites
- Lisa Keirn, sister-in-law of Susan Kester
- Joyce McGiffin
- Carolyn Krebs
- Wendell Cree
- Ashley Lassiter

Need Pastoral Care? Please Let Us Know!

We want to be there for you when you need us. If you or someone in your family is in the hospital, moving to a rehabilitation facility or nursing home, would like a pastoral visit, or simply needs someone to talk with, please let us know.

We don't always know when someone is experiencing a difficult time or has been hospitalized. Hospitals, nursing homes, and rehabilitation facilities do not notify the church when one of our members is admitted or transferred, even if you tell them you're a member of First Pres.

If you would like a pastor to visit, pray with you, talk with you, or simply be present, please reach out and let us know.

For pastoral care, please contact Rev. Dr. Youngsoo An, Associate Pastor, at (260) 426-7421 x105. We want to walk with you through life's joys and challenges. Let us know how we can be there for you.

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

Schools Team's Blessings in a Backpack packing

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!

North and South Dinner Groups

North Dinner Group: Be sure to join the North Dinner Group on Monday, September 14, 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, September 14, 2026, at 5:30 pm. We look forward to fellowship with 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 began 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.

Children, Youth, and Families Picnic at the Pavilion!

Help to welcome our new Resident Pastor, Ian Clarke, by joining us for a picnic at Lakeside Pavilion on Friday, September 18 from 6:00-8:00pm. This is for all families with young folks in the church to get to know Pastor Ian and one another a little bit better. The pavilion is close to a playground and there will be yard games as well, so it should be a ton of fun!

This will be a potluck, so bring your favorite side dish, dessert, or drink! The church will provide sandwiches, dishes, and cutlery. If you'd like to join us, please RSVP to Virginia Kreamer-Lutz, or email Pastor Ian at iclarke@firstpresfortwayne.org for more details and to receive a SignUp Genius link. We look forward to seeing you there for fun and fellowship!

Four Internationally Acclaimed Artists. One Unforgettable Afternoon of Music!

Join us on Saturday, September 19 at 2:00pm for "Sing Unto Him a New Song," a showcase concert featuring organ masterworks and gems from the vocal repertoire, as FPC kicks off the 2026/27 Music Series!

This special concert brings together four exceptional artists from the United States, Poland, Belgium, and Ukraine – David C. Jonies, Jan Bokszzczanin, Peter an de Velde, and Anastasiia Staroselska – celebrating the beauty, power, and artistry of the pipe organ and the human voice.

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, September 19, 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 at copline7@gmail.com so we know how many seats to plan for. And a plus one is absolutely invited! Hope to see you there!

Open Call for Parish Artwork!

Our biennial parish show, "Diverse Artists, One Community" is coming up in January 2027 and the gallery should be filled with your work! We are looking for any craft, art, poetry, writing, spoken word, anything creative, that has been made entirely by you (not from a kit or paint-by-number, etc.).

To give everyone's work enough breathing room, we ask that larger items (like quilts or installations) be on the smaller side. There will be a section of the gallery devoted to tiny art. Small canvasses will be available for you to draw, paint, glue, stitch and alter, as you see fit, but certainly submit anything else tiny as well. And we would love to show work made by our youngest members!

The gallery will accept work starting now until the deadline of Friday, January 8, 2027. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email Beth Iserman at bdiserman@firstpresfortwayne.org.

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 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

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

College & Career Dinner Group

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, meets monthly on a Saturday 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 at copline7@gmail.com so we know how many seats to plan for. And a plus one is absolutely invited!

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

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.

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 Side High School
- Josephine's Place Women's Shelter
- Wellspring Interfaith Services
- East Wayne Street Food Bank
- Amistad Presbyterian Church
- Matthew 25 Clinic
- Rescue Mission
- Reproductive Rights Action Committee with Plymouth UCC
- United Faith Presbyterian Church Food 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. 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 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.

CARING MINISTRY

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.

CALENDAR

Today

- 10:00 am** **Wired Word**—2nd Floor Parlor
11:00 am **English Worship Service**—Sanctuary & Livestream
 Korean Worship Service—Chapel & Livestream
12:00 pm **Blessings in a Backpack**—McKay Hall after worship
 Congregation Gallery Opening—Gallery

This Week

Mon Sept 14

- 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**

Wed Sept 16

- 10:00 am** **Table Talk for Women**—Zoom
1:30 pm **Body, Brain, and Belief (3B)**—McKay Hall

Fri Sept 18

- 10:00 am** **Men's Bible Study**—Teams
1:00 pm **Women's Bible Study**—Zoom
6:00 pm **Children, Youth, and Families Picnic**—Lakeside Pavilion

Sat Sept 19

- 2:00 pm** **Organ Showcase Concert**—Sanctuary
6:30 pm **College & Career Dinner Group**

Coming Soon

Sun Sept 20

- 12:15 pm** **Confirmation Intro Class**—Youth Room