

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
September 27, 2026
11:00am — Sanctuary



Parable of the two sons. 2021. Canvas, oil. 70 x 100. Artist A.N. Mironov.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WEST WAYNE STREET

**Those who are able, please stand*

Congregation responds in bold

GATHERING

Prelude

The Peace May Be Exchanged

Dan Locklair

Tolling of the Hour

Call to Worship

Why do we come to this place?

We seek the path of righteousness and truth.

Do you come ready to hear and learn giving attention to God's Word?

We come with open hearts and minds seeking to learn from the one whose authority is founded on God's love.

Friends, lend your ears and open your hearts because this is God's house, built by love and sustained by hope, where God seeks to align our work and witness.

***Opening Hymn**

Once a Father Told His Children

1. Once a fa - ther told his chil - dren, "Go and do your dai - ly chores. Go and
2. Once a church was filled with Chris - tians who were proud and feel - ing blessed. "God has
3. Once a wom - an, quite the sin - ner, strug - gled deep in pain and doubt. As she
4. God of love, you call your chil - dren; some say, "No!" and some say, "Yes!" Lord, for-

work out in my vine - yard; all that's mine will soon be yours." One re - spond - ed, "I won't
called us and we've an - swered! We have tru - ly an - swered, "Yes!" On a chill - y Sun - day
passed that church in win - ter, there she saw that man walk out. He was home - less, worn and
give us for our judg - ing who will be a - mong the blessed. For your king - dom is sur-

do it!" Then he changed his mind and went. One said,
 morn - ing, when a home - less man came by, they said,
 wear - y, so she stopped her car and said, "I'm no
 pris - ing; some you call will not o - bey; those we

A D G D A⁷ D

"Yes! Just send me to it!" But he went back home a - gain.
 "Go! It's not yet storm - ing! God is love, he will sup - ply."
 saint but you look hun - gry, let's go buy some soup and bread."
 find our - selves de - spis - ing, may be those who seek your way.

WORDS: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (Matthew 21:23-32)
 MUSIC: Wyeth's *Repository of Sacred Music, Part Second*, 1813

NETTLETON
 87.87 D

*Call to Confession

*Prayer of Confession

Eternal God, we come before you aware that you know the truth of our hearts before we can utter a word. You know when our good intentions exceed our capacity for gospel living. You know when we embrace the good news of liberation with our lips but don't change our actions. We imprison ourselves with the assumption that you will judge us as mercilessly as we often judge ourselves and one another.

Forgive our shortcomings and the times we have failed to live the words we say. Restore us in the confidence of people who have heard good news and remind us that even when we arrive late. There is still work to be done.

*Assurance of Forgiveness

*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 17:1-17

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Anthem

Teach me, O Lord, The Way Of Thy Statues

Thomas Attwood

New Testament Reading

Matthew 21:23-32

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Sermon

“The Parable of the Two Sons”

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. 442**

Just as I Am

WOODWORTH

Announcements

Moment for Stewardship

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.**

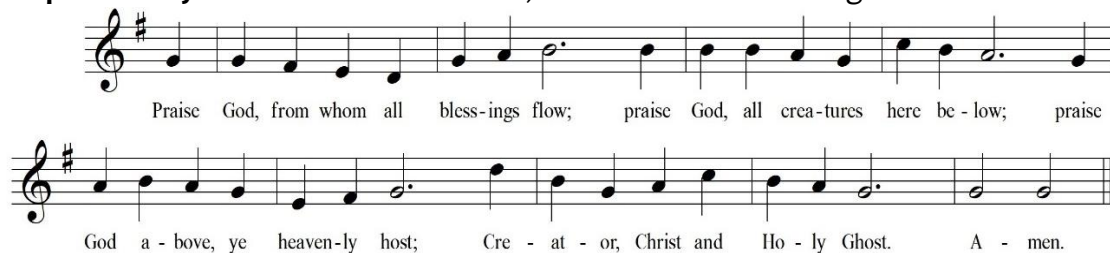
Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

Hear My Prayer

Moses Hogan

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



***Prayer of Dedication** (by Teri McDowell Ott)

Holy God, bless these gifts for your good use. May these tokens of our gratitude be of service in blessing the poor, feeding the hungry, clothing and sheltering those struggling to survive. Use these gifts to further Christ's mission and ministry in a hurting world. Amen.

SENDING

***Hymn No. 722**

Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak

CANONBURY

***Benediction**

***Postlude**

Dialogue on the Mixtures

Jean Langlais

CHANCEL FLOWERS

The Chancel flowers are given by the Foundation in honor and loving memory of Alan Johns for his many years of sponsoring flowers for the Johns family.

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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

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, Jessi Spencer, Jill Therrien, Mary Winters

Prayer List

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

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

Confirmation Kicks Off September 27!

We will begin our Confirmation class today, Sunday, September 27th after worship! If you joined the Intro Meeting, you should have the tentative schedule. Even if not, you are still more than welcome to come to the first class! We will learn about each other and start to form an understanding of our faith identity. If you have any questions, or if you know you cannot make it, please contact Ian Clarke at iclarke@firstpresfortwayne.org or text (317) 488-7786.

Solar Project Install Happening Now!

Over the next few weeks, we are excited to welcome some construction-like equipment and folks busy at work. Do not be alarmed – the solar project construction is underway! If you have questions about this, ask Bill Patterson!

Jesus Was a Subversive Storyteller: Stories That Won't Behave

This fall, join us for a four-week sermon series exploring some of Jesus' most provocative parables. These familiar, and sometimes surprising, stories challenge our assumptions, turn expectations upside down, and invite us to see God, our neighbors, and ourselves in new ways.

If you're looking for a fresh perspective on faith, wondering what Jesus' teachings mean for your life today, or simply ready to be challenged, this series is for you. Come discover why Jesus' stories still won't behave—and why the might change the way you see the world.

Good New: Our Future Is Already Here

Look around on Sunday morning and you may see our future walking—or skipping!—down the aisle.

There is energy around children and youth at First Presbyterian, from Holy Moly and the Day School to MAD2 Camp and Level Up for our middle schoolers. We are investing in young people as they learn, grow, build relationships, and discover what it means to follow Jesus.

And our future isn't just something we hope for someday. It is already here, in the children and young people who are part of our church today.

We are a church that cares about our future generations. And through Stewardship 2027, you can be a part of this.

You should have received a stewardship letter from Annie, and by now, you should have received a mailing from the Stewardship Team with more information about Stewardship 2027. We'll receive our pledges next Sunday on October 4. We hope you'll prayerfully consider how you can be a part of the good news happening here—all week long.

Your generosity helps us nurture that future. And you can be a part of it.

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
 Confirmation—Youth Lounge

This Week

Mon Sept 28

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

Wed Sept 30

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

Fri Oct 2

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

Coming Soon

Sun Oct 4

- 11:00 am** **World Communion Sunday & Pledge Dedication**

Sun Oct 11

- 7:00 pm** **Music Series Concert: Interstellar**—Sanctuary