21th Sunday in Ordinary Time
October 18, 2026
11:00am — Sanctuary



The Adoration of the Golden Calf ,painting by Nicolas Poussin, produced between 1633 and 1634. National Gallery, in London.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

WEST WAYNE STREET

*Those who are able, please stand ***Congregation responds in bold***

GATHERING

Prelude Psalm-Prelude #1 Howells

Tolling of the Hour

Call to Worship

When uncertainty unsettles us, we look for something to hold on to.
God, help us to trust your presence, even when we cannot see the way forward.
When fear leads us astray, God remains faithful.
Even when we wander, God does not abandon us.
Come, let us worship the God who calls us back to faithfulness.
We worship the living God, whose mercy is greater than our failures and whose love never gives up on us. Amen.

***Hymn No. 475** Come, Thou Font of Every Blessing NETTLETON

***Call to Confession**

Confession is not an easy or a pleasant thing to do. We would like to think that we have been good and faithful disciples, following your way. But we know in our hearts the many ways in which we have turned our backs on you and rejected your will for us. Join me in the prayer of confession:

***Prayer of Confession**

Like the people in the wilderness,
we create for ourselves idols and worship them,
only to discover their shallowness and emptiness for our lives.
And we wonder what went wrong.
Stop us in our tracks, O Lord.
Help us to be open to your will for our lives.
We know what you want us to do.
Give us the persistence and the courage to do your will.
Heal us from our wayward actions and attitudes.
Remind us that we must reach out to others in compassion and peace.
Merciful God, come to us this day with your healing power

and help us again to be your disciples,
offering hope and peace to your hurting and wounded world.
In Jesus' Name, we pray. Amen.

***Assurance of Forgiveness**

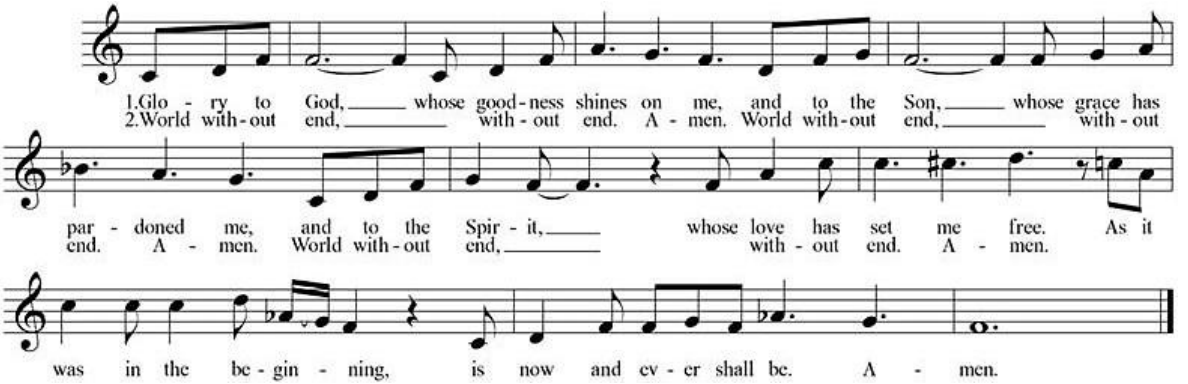
God, who has never strayed from you, is with you.
God will heal your hearts and direct your steps.
Place your life in God's loving care. **Amen.**

***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



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

New Testament Reading Exodus 32:1-14

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

Anthem With a Voice of Singing Howells

Gospel Reading Matthew 22:1-14
This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God!

Sermon Golden Calves and Other Such Nonsense Rev. Anne Epling

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

***Affirmation of Faith** (From *A Brief Statement of Faith, PC(USA)*)
We trust in God the Holy Spirit
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.
The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,
and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,
praying "Come, Lord Jesus!"
With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

***Hymn No. 697** Take My Life HENDON

Announcements

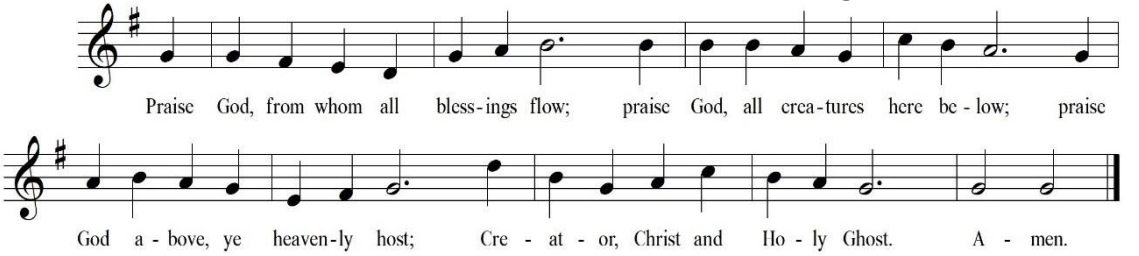
The Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us

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 Guide My Feet Spiritual

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



***Prayer of Dedication**

Faithful God, receive these gifts as signs of our trust in you. Use them to bring hope, justice, and love to a world in need. Turn our hearts from what we seek to control toward what you call us to become. May our giving reflect your mercy and faithfulness. In Christ's name, Amen.

SENDING

***Hymn No. 716** God, Whose Giving Knows No Ending BEACH SPRING

***Benediction**

***Postlude** Prelude in D major BWV 532 J.S. Bach

CHANCEL FLOWERS

The Chancel flowers are given in loving memory of Miles J. Davis by the Philip R. Davis 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: Betsy Perry, Chip Davis

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

Live Stream Operators: Alexi Jetmore

Sound Board Operators: Mark Schulenburg

Choir Members: Richard Baughman, Andrew Budd, Brendan Caffe, 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
- Jennifer Kern Kelly
- Beth White
- Bob & Kathy Beatty
- Penny Pulz
- Nancy Sites & Family
- Kip & Mary Jane Ormerod
- Lisa Keirn, sister-in-law of Susan Kester
- Joyce McGiffin
- Carolyn Krebs
- Wendell Cree
- Ashley Lassiter
- Joan & Scott Pattison
- David McCants

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of the death of beloved friend and FPC member Tom Sites. Tom died on Monday, October 5, 2026.

The funeral service will be held on Thursday, October 22, at 1:00 pm in the Sanctuary. Please hold Nancy and their family and friends in your prayers as they carry the weight of this loss.

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

Monthly Food Bank Collection

The date for the October Food Bank Collection will be October 18th. Please bring your contribution to the church on Sunday. Food items can be dropped off at the church office throughout the week. Monetary donations are greatly appreciated too. Please specify your donation for "Hunger Relief."

The following items are requested:

- Instant Mashed Potatoes
- Stuffing Mix (Boxed)
- Oatmeal in Packets
- Gravy Mix Packets
- Canned Vegetables – Peas or Green Beans
- Canned Chicken or Tuna

Thank you for your contributions and help with the Hunger Relief 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.

Tell Me Something Good — and Be Part of It

On Sunday, October 4, we joyfully dedicated our stewardship pledges during worship. If you haven't yet made your pledge, there's still time! We invite you to join us as we celebrate the many ways our generosity helps us share God's love and be part of something good together.

***Middletown* opened on Friday, October 16, at 7:00 pm at First Pres Theater**

Experience the humor, heart, and honesty of Middletown, a moving and deeply relatable story about life, love, and lasting friendship.

This comedy-drama follows two couples, the Hogans and the Abrams, as they reflect on 33 years of shared experiences, recounting the moments that shaped their lives and their bond. Through witty, fast-paced dialogue filled with sharp one-liners and familiar truths, their story unfolds with both humor and emotional depth.

Told in a unique style, the couples turn the pages of their own lives, and perhaps our own as well. What emerges is a powerful, cathartic journey that captures life's highs, the lows, and everything in between.

At once funny, poignant, and universal, Middletown is a celebration of friendship, love, and the connections that carry us through a lifetime. Directed by John Tolley.

The show runs October 16-October 25. Performances on Fri/Sat at 7:30pm, and Sunday at 2:00pm. Tickets are $20.00, and are available by calling ArtsTix at 260-422-4226, or visit www.firstpresfortwayne.org/theater to buy online.

All Saints Worship Service - Submit Names for Remembrance

As we prepare for our All Saints worship service on Sunday, November 1, we invite you to submit the names of friends and loved ones you wish to have remembered during the service. Please submit names by Monday, October 26. You can do so by emailing jepling@firstpresfortwayne.org or by turning in your name(s) to the office on Sunday morning. Let us honor their memory together in this special time of reflection and gratitude.

Stephen Ministry Resource Library

Easy Access Resource Library Now Available! The Stephen Ministry resource library is open to browse in the small dining room! The books deal with a range of issues, including grief, mental health, aging, dementia, and end of life planning. The full list of books available on our website or simply browse through the bookshelf at your convenience and borrow the books of interest to you!
A clipboard is available for signing out books. Borrowers are requested to return the books to the small dining room and reshelve the books alphabetically by the author's last name. Additional books are available in the Stephen Ministry office and can be accessed by contacting Marcie Weissner or Carolyn Krebs.

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
KLM Fellowship 48th Anniversary
2:00 pm ***Middletown***—Theater

This Week

Mon Oct 19
1:30 pm **Body, Brain, and Belief (3B)**—McKay Hall
3:00 pm **Faith, Fibers, and Fellowship**—Room 302

Wed Oct 21
10:00 am **Table Talk for Women**—Zoom
1:30 pm **Body, Brain, and Belief (3B)**—McKay Hall

Fri Oct 23
10:00 am **Men's Bible Study**—Teams
1:00 pm **Women's Bible Study**—Zoom
7:30 pm ***Middletown***—Theater

Sat Oct 24
7:30 pm ***Middletown***—Theater