THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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Church E-mail: firstpresofc@gmail.com
Web Address:
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Rev. Diane Flynn, Transitional Pastor
Hope Labutis, Secretary/Treasurer

Office hours: Tues & Thurs 9:00-2:00pm

September 2026

Church Elder Information

Thank you, Session, for your faithful service to FPC.

Clerk of Session – Priscilla Hare

Class of 2028:

Becky Mahon

Ed Jobes

Class of 2027:

Karen Fish

Class of 2026:

Keith Hare

Chris Rainey

Worship

Communion will be served on Sunday, September 6th.

Please remember that our Sunday worship services will now be held in Chapel until further notice.

The Church Mice

The volunteers lovingly referred to as the Church Mice meet on Tuesdays mornings to clean and prep our church for the upcoming week. If you would like to help in this ministry, please contact Priscilla Hare.

Y-Healthy Backpack Program

FPC is still actively participating in food packing and food delivery at the facility on Swans Rd. **1st Tuesdays of the month!** If you are interested in participating in a Community Packing Party please sign up at the link below or contact Sarah Bowles: https://signupgenius.com/#!/showSignUp/10C084FABA922A0F9C61-50942615-ymca

Congregational Care

September Birthdays

Jean Holman 9/4

Kay Kittel 9/4

Rose Novell 9/8

Gaye Gibson 9/13

Jim Rodeniser 9/21

Lorraine Cox 9/22

Jo Deweese 9/24

September Anniversaries

Steve & Kenita Keck 9/17

Make Me a Blessing

The most requested food items for the blessings box include: trail mix, tuna or chicken in pouches, pop tarts, crackers, canned pasta, and granola bars. Please remember that canned goods are best with pop top lids.

SCRIP

The next Scrip order is **September 6. Please note that the October order will be taken October 11.** Please consider ordering gift cards from our Scrip program. Remember that the funds generated are used for church needs. Thank you to all who order on a regular basis. See Gaye Gibson to order.

Celebrating Reagan Labutis: Klecker Memorial Scholarship Recipient

Congratulations to Reagan Labutis, who was recently awarded the Klecker Memorial Scholarship in the amount of $5,000!

Reagan is a junior at Asbury University in Wilmore, Kentucky, where she is majoring in Secondary Mathematics Education with a minor in Worship Arts. The Session is delighted to honor Reagan for her outstanding academic achievement, including maintaining a 3.85 GPA, as well as her faithful service on the university's worship team. She is the daughter of Mark and Hope Labutis and attends Spring Hills Baptist Church in Granville where she serves on the worship team and in kid's ministry.

In early August, the Session had the joy of surprising Reagan and her family at their home to present her with the scholarship. We were also pleased to learn that Asbury University matched our congregation's gift with an additional $1,000 award.

Reagan shared that the scholarship will help her purchase books and other necessities, pay for required state teaching examinations, and continue saving for her education. Reflecting on the gift, she said, "I feel like a huge burden has been lifted off my back for this semester, and now I feel I can be more prepared for the future."

We are grateful for the opportunity to support Reagan as she pursues her calling in education and ministry. Congratulations, Reagan! We are proud of you and look forward to seeing all that God has in store for your future.

Cleaning House

While we are waiting for further news from our insurance company, the Session has decided to take an inventory of some large-scale items that we no longer have need for and potentially sell them at auction.

Before we took this important step, the Church Mice and I toured the building and took photos of items that we identified as possible candidates for auction. Hope and I will put together a document with photos detailing these items and present it to the Session at its August 27th meeting for discussion and approval.

But before anything is sold, the congregation will have an opportunity to view the items and offer comments. If some of these items have sentimental value to you or your family, we want to hear that. We will take your thoughts into consideration. Our goal is to raise funds to help defray the cost of the sizeable insurance deductible for which we are responsible if and when the plaster is repaired.

-Pastor Diane

Rev. Flynn on Vacation

Rev. Flynn will be on vacation Tuesday, Sept. 8th – Tuesday, Sept. 22nd. She will return to work on Wednesday, Sept. 23rd. There will be guest preachers leading the worship service in her absence.

Adult Sunday School is Back

Adult Sunday School begins September 13th at 9:30 am. Stay tuned for details!

Liturgists for September

September 6 – Keith Hare
September 13 – Carol Floyd
September 20 – Gaye Gibson
September 27 – Ed Jobes

Evangelism and Outreach: Montana de Luz

The Next Step in their Journey:
Erick & Christian

Montaña de Luz

This year, we are celebrating an incredible milestone as Erick and Christian, both 17, will graduate high school this November. Both have worked hard to overcome significant challenges and are now taking the next big step in their journey – pursuing a college education!

Erick and Christian represent two different sides of Montana de Luz (MdL). Erick, who came into our care after his mother died when he was just four years old, has lived nearly all of his life at MdL. Despite experiencing heartbreak and discrimination from family, Erick has grown into one of the most mature, responsible young men we've known. He's kind, remarkably bright, and a positive influence to the younger youth at MdL.

Christian was one of the first recipients of a MdL educational scholarship. To help support his mother, he worked in the hot fields picking onions before being connected to us in 2022. Despite years of interrupted education, he will graduate high school this year at the top of his class. Both young men hope to attend university next year, with interest in exploring opportunities for study abroad.

Congratulations and God bless Erick & Christian. We at First Presbyterian are honored to support Montana de Luz.

Evangelism and Outreach: Operation Christmas Child

September Wishlist for Shoeboxes

Our Operation Christmas Child team is collecting school supplies and small toys to bless children around the world. We are currently in need of larger pencil sharpeners, crayons, rulers, notepads, coloring books, rounded-edge scissors, colored markers, jump ropes, small shoe box–sized dolls, and other fun summer toys. Your gifts can help share God's love and bring joy to a child who may have never received a gift.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." — Matthew 19:14

Thank you for your continued generosity in helping us pack shoeboxes that bring hope, love, and the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Finance Report

As of Tuesday, August 25, the bank account balances are:

Checking: $11,801.20

Savings: $2,916.17

SCRIP: $2,825.48

The checking balance includes payments for the electric bills and the August 26, 2026 payroll. However, there are outstanding payments:

- The scholarship check has not yet cleared.
- The gas utility bill has not yet been paid.
- The board of pensions payments get paid at the beginning of September.

-Keith Hare, FPC Finance Chair

Property Update by Pastor Diane

Plaster Collapse Update – We received notice from the insurance company that they need more time to determine the cause of the collapse before they can make a determination of coverage. They enlisted the services of an engineer who will be onsite in late August to view the damage. In the meantime, we have been told we can begin to seek estimates from contractors to make the necessary repairs. Rev. Flynn and the session are working with the presbytery in this effort.

Lighting Project – We have ordered several 4-foot LED tubes to replace florescent tubes throughout the building. Thank you to Keith Hare and his helpers for sharing the "light of Jesus" throughout our building.

Auction Items - The Session has decided to take an inventory of some large-scale items that we no longer have need for and potentially sell them at auction. See the article, "Cleaning House" for more details.

Chapel Roof – During an inspection of the chapel, we discovered that several shingles on the roof had been damaged by the severe microburst and thunderstorm that struck Newark on July 21st. Robert Stokes has completed temporary repairs by replacing the damaged shingles and has recommended that we move forward with replacing the entire roof to prevent future issues. The roof replacement is expected to begin soon, weather permitting.

Chapel Steps – The Session recently approved repairs to the church steps at a cost of $8,750. The project will be completed by Brothers Masonry, with work expected to begin within the next two months.

From Our Pastor

God Is Not Finished Yet

by Pastor Diane

Psalm 138 reminds us of a simple but powerful truth: God is not finished yet. Even when life does not unfold as we expected, God's steadfast love remains.

The psalm begins with gratitude. David declares, "I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart." His gratitude is not based on a perfect life or easy circumstances. He gives thanks because he has experienced God's faithfulness.

The Hebrew word for "give thanks" can also mean to praise, acknowledge, or confess publicly. Gratitude, then, is more than a feeling, it is something we practice.

That can be difficult because we often become so accustomed to our blessings that we stop noticing them. We focus on what is missing rather than what is present. We worry about tomorrow and forget what God has already done today. Psalm 138 invites us to stop, look around, remember, and give thanks.

But the psalm goes deeper. David does not say, "If I walk through trouble." He says, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me." Trouble is part of the story, but it is not the whole story.

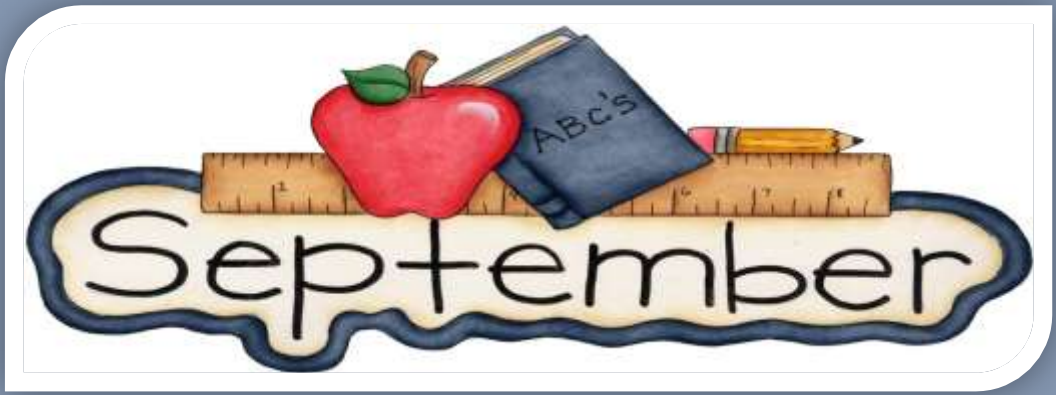
Sometimes God answers our prayers by changing our circumstances. Sometimes God changes us in the midst of those circumstances. And sometimes God does both. David says, "On the day I called, you answered me; you increased my strength of soul." God may not always remove the difficulty immediately, but God gives us strength to face it.

That truth becomes especially meaningful when life takes an unexpected turn. We may lose something we counted on—a job, a relationship, our health, a dream, or a vision for the future. In those moments, it can be difficult to imagine what comes next. Yet Psalm 138 reminds us that our circumstances do not determine the end of our story.

Instead of looking only inward and asking, "What am I going to do?" Psalm 138 invites us to look up—toward the God whose love endures forever, who hears us when we call, strengthens us in trouble, and never abandons us.

Whatever you may be facing today, your story is not over. The Lord is still at work. God's steadfast love continues, and God's purposes for us are still unfolding.

So, give thanks. Pray. Trust. Remember what God has done. And keep believing. God is not finished yet.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2026		1 10:00 Church Mice	2	3	4	5
6 SCRIP/ COMMUNION **Liturgist – Keith Hare** 11:00 Church - Chapel	7 	8 10:00 Church Mice ____ Candlewick Dinner ____ Rev. Flynn Vacation (through 9/22)	9	10	11 	12
13 **Liturgist – Carol Floyd** 9:30 Adult Sunday School 11:00 Church – Chapel	14	15 10:00 Church Mice	16 	17	18	19
20 **Liturgist –Gaye Gibson** 9:30 Adult Sunday School 11:00 Church – Chapel	21	22 10:00 Church Mice 	23 Rev. Flynn Returns to Office	24 Session Meeting 6:30 pm	25 	26
27 **Liturgist – Ed Jobes** 9:30 Adult Sunday School 11:00 Church – Chapel	28	29 10:00 Church Mice	30			