



First Press

Weekly Newsletter

January 4, 2026

First Presbyterian Church

Our Pastor

Rev. Dr. Helen Hutchison

Email: helen@firstpreslawrence.org

Helen will be in the office Monday through Thursday.

Our Mission

We are a community of Christ's disciples who celebrate God's inclusive love by ministering to one another and the world.

Church Office Hours

9 am to 3 pm Monday through Friday.

Welcome!

We encourage everyone to come as you are, be who you are, and be in community with us! Whether you are joining us virtually or in-person, as a long-time member or a first-time guest, we are happy to have you with us anytime! If you are new to First Presbyterian Church, please let us know you are here by signing the **Friendship Pad**: If you are worshipping with us online either live or recorded please **email us at linda@firstpreslawrence.org** letting us know you joined us in worship. We look forward to getting to know you. If you are interested in membership at FPC please talk with Pastor Helen.

Cards of Encouragement: Blue cards found in the pew rack ~ please put in offering plate and we will send them out in the mail.

Adult and Youth Sunday School

- Jeff Southard will lead the Adult and Youth Sunday School in the Fireside Room at 9:15 am. He will be talking about Indigenous people in Kansas both historically and in the present.

Children's Sunday School

- **Sunday School Classes for Children** - We are back in session on January 11 at 9:15 am. We will meet in room 14.

Pastor Helen's Monday Class will meet on Monday, January 5, 2026, at 2 pm in the Fireside Room and start a study on the Lord's Prayer.

Youth Activities

- **January 4, 2026** – **FPC Winter Break Youth Retreat** – 11:30 to 6 pm – will include art, cooking, lunch, games, service opportunities, fellowship time, and lots more! Other area church youth will be invited.

Do you have something you want to add to the Youth calendar? Need more information?

Contact Kelly Jones-Grube at 785-691-7445 or Kellygal78@hotmail.com

Volunteers needed to work in the church office.

Thanks to everyone who is helping in the church office. I have placed a sign-up sheet in the narthex showing 2-hour shifts. I will keep the sign-up sheet updated as we move forward. Thank you so much for your willingness to help me out! Gratefully, Linda Bridges

Coming up in January!

- January 3 We will be serving at LINK. Sign up to help serve or provide food in the Narthex today!
- January 4 In worship we will each pick our star word for the year and after worship we will take down Christmas decorations.
- January 11 We will Ordain and Install our new Elders and Deacons. We hope you will be in attendance to support them as they care for us and offer leadership for our ministry at FPC.
- January 18 The FPC EcoTeam is hosting the 2026 Edition of the Earth Care Forum. This is a five week class featuring a variety of community speakers on topics about how we care for the earth and our environment. Speakers and topics will be available soon.

Meals for 7 or 8 is regrouping!

It is time to reorganize the meals for 7 or 8 for 2026. Signup sheets will be in the Narthex. Look for Marilyn Heikes or members of the Welcome Committee if you have questions. They are offering the following options:

- Coffee / pastries / breakfast in restaurants
- Lunches at Perkins
- Lunches at other restaurants (not Perkins)
- Dinners at restaurants
- Dinners in group members' homes

We will gather for coffee and pastries in the Fellowship Hall in January 11 from 9:30 to 10:15 to have each group select a contact person and decide where and when the first meeting will be. If you didn't find Marilyn you can call her at 540-539-3725.

This is a great way to meet new people in the church!

Thank you!!

To the Deacons for their care and support for each of us this past year.

To the Elders for their good leadership and direction for us and the church this year.

To the Mission Committee for using our resources to help care for those in our community who appreciate our assistance and support.

- The delivery of three large bags of mittens, hats, scarves, and blankets to the Salvation Army
- For the gifts for our Salvation Army and Family Promise Adopted families
- For the meals several times this year at LINK with the Youth and for providing green beans for the community Thanksgiving Dinner there.
- For the gifts to the Special Offerings of PC(USA) from our congregation
- For the care of our planet and creation through the work of the EcoTeam
- For the leadership of our Matthew 25 cohort in creating opportunities for growth and justice in our world.

To all our committees for their work in various areas making us an important part of our members and friends lives as well as a significant part of our community.

To our Pastor for her leadership, care and ministry with us.

Our blessings abound for 2026 and we will continue to insist on hope even when we are fearful!

Our Stewardship Campaign, "What Is that in Your Hand" has been successful in several ways. As of December 29, we have received 90 pledges totalling \$405,448.00 and we are grateful! We also have only a few missing pieces to our puzzles. That is an apt description of our lives together – we all have missing pieces and must depend on each other to fill in the gaps. In addition to returning your puzzle pieces and making your pledges for 2026, you told us how you are or would like to, participate in the life and ministry of First Presbyterian Church. If you indicated new ways you would like to be a part of the church you will be hearing from someone about how you can do that. So, remember, just because your don't recognize the phone number it might be someone offering an opportunity for service, fellowship, friendship, and/or ministry!

New Officers for 2026 – Officer Ordination and Installation will be a part of our worship on Sunday, January 11. Plan to attend in support of these members who are taking responsibility for our leadership and care. We welcome Elders: Kelly Jones Grube, Linda Maxey, Suzanne Galle, Larry Flottman, Paul Laird, and Deacons Dorothy Devlin, Charles Tuttle, Linda Longino, Nikki Barcomb, Mary Parkinson, and Melinda Roblee Fischer.

Epiphany Stars – In 2025 we started a new beginning to a new year. Epiphany star words are a modern spiritual practice where people choose a single word, often on a paper star, to guide them through the year, inspired by the Magi following the star to Jesus. This tradition links to the biblical story of the wise men's journey, symbolizing trust, divine guidance, and discovery, allowing individuals to reflect on how God moves in their lives through their chosen word (like "Share," "Trust," or "Generosity") throughout the year. We will have star words available for you to choose at random (they will be upside down in a basket – let the word be a surprise, not something you choose). This is a great time to reflect on how your Star Word for 2025 was significant in the year and how you see 2026 shaping up! If you miss picking one up on Sunday, they will be available in the Church Office until they run out.



The Deacon Love Fund has been busy in December. A decision was made to move some of the Mission Committee support for the Lawrence Ministerial Emergency Fund to the FPC Deacon Love Fund making some additional options available to assist our friends and neighbors facing challenging times. In December the fund provided over \$2000 in rent and utility assistance for 15 individuals or families. We expect that housing is going to become more challenging for some in 2026 as some of the assistance funding is no longer available. This is a place where we can help fill in the gaps for our friends who need a few extra dollars that we might have available. Please prayerfully consider a gift to the Love Fund!

FPC has Medical Equipment to share! In December we loaned eight items to folks who were mostly having surgery of some kind. We also had 16 items returned from folks who are finished using them and wanted someone else to have the opportunity to borrow something. We have walkers, toilet risers, canes, peddlers, bath chairs, transfer benches, knee braces, crutches and commodes, to name a few. If you are in need or know someone who is, be sure to let them know this service is available. These items are expensive to purchase – especially for only a short time! Thanks for getting the word out. We also accept most donations.

New Year Clean Out! Often the new year brings cleaning out closets, basements, and drawers with plans for new or just clearing out the “extras” we no longer need. Our families in Family Promise Lawrence might be very happy to receive some of these items and hope you will keep them in mind as you go through your closets! Some things they are looking for include: Queen size metal platform bed frames (that don't need box springs), AA batteries, small tool kits with basic tools, laundry baskets and hampers, frying pan sets, silverware, bakeware, disposable Tupperware, Swiffer mopping sheets, both wet and dry. If you have items to share or need more information, contact our coordinator for FPL, Lois Dutcher at grammydutcher@yahoo.com. Thank you!

Oh the weather outside might be frightful - During this season when the weather can change without warning, the Session has determined that if the Lawrence School District closes schools, then the Church Office will also be closed. In the event of a storm system affecting us over a weekend, please check our website www.firstpreslawrence.org or our Facebook page at First Presbyterian Church Lawrence KS for information about building closures and or changes to worship times.

Thank you to everyone who sent cards, gifts and treats to the church staff. We are grateful for all your support! Best wishes to everyone in the New Year! Your FPC Office Staff

Pastor Helen

Linda Bridges

Debbie Miller

Wayne Hathaway

Claire Boyette

Amber Kaplinger

2025 – A Review in Pictures



March Game Night



Worship at the Lake



Community Garden Harvest



First 5 Years Carnival



Presbyterian Women's
Rummage Sale