



First Press

Weekly Newsletter

February 8, 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.

Youth Activities

- **Today! Everyone is invited to the Pregame Souper Bowl Tailgate Party after worship.** A can of soup (or two or three) will be your ticket to the event. The Chiefs might not be in the Super Bowl this year, but hungry children are still in the game. Bring cans of soup, cheer for your team, and help hungry families – That is a win – win – win! **Soup and other non-perishable items will be accepted through the Winter Game Night on February 15! As of 2-4-26 we have collected 106 cans. Our goal is to collect 200 cans of soup – or more!**
- **Winter Game Night** – February 15 at 4:00 pm in Fellowship Hall Potluck soup supper and games for all ages and interests. This is an all-church event hosted by our youth! Plan to come out and enjoy an evening of fun and games. RSVP on the Friendship Pad on Sunday! Thank you.

Do you have something you want to add to the Youth calendar? Need more information? Contact Kelly Jones-Grube at 785-979-2713 (please note the new number!) or Kellygal78@hotmail.com

Children Sunday School

- **Sunday School Classes for Children**
 - Our Children gather for fun and adventure in Room 14 at 9:15 am. Everyone is welcome to be a part of the fun!

Adult and Youth Sunday School

- **Pastor Helen's Monday Class** is meeting on Monday afternoons at 2 pm in the Fireside Room. They are currently studying the Lord's Prayer. Everyone is welcome!

- **Earth Care Forum for 2026 – *The Challenge of Capitalism – When Less is More*** – A panel of presenters will share the major aspects of Jason Hickel's critique of capitalism as described in his book, *Less Is More: How Degrowth Will Save the World*. Hickel presents a case for rethinking our relationship with growth and consumption. His advocacy for degrowth offers a transformative vision for a sustainable future.
 - Next Sunday the topic is **An Alternative to Capitalism that Affirms Earth Care**

We are hiring! Help us spread the word. We are looking for someone to work in the church office parttime as an office assistant. This person will be the first person our members and guests encounter during the week, so we are looking for a friendly and helpful person to greet our guests on the phone and in person. Hours are 10 am to 2 pm and we can be flexible. The successful candidate will need to be able to use Microsoft 365, basic business machines, and be willing to learn how to use our database. This might be a great job for a mom with children in school or perhaps a college student? If you know anyone who might be interested, please ask them to call Linda Bridges at 785-843-4171 or send their resume to her at linda@firstpreslawrence.org

In the meantime - 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



Welcoming First Time Guests to FPC One of the functions of the Welcome Committee is to welcome new guests at FPC. This used to be done by the “Muggers” who delivered information about us and a FPC mug. When we ran out of mugs, we decided to change to delivering a bag, and the name was changed to the “Bag Brigade”. A “Bagger” is contacted by the office if a delivery is needed in the week they volunteered to deliver. The office organizes the Bag and the delivery information for the Bagger. The Bagger then

welcomes a new guest with a Bag with information about our programs. It is as easy as that. This is a volunteer opportunity that does not require heavy lifting, cooking, gardening, cleaning or committee meetings! Join our Bag Brigade! Contact the Church office (785-843-4171) if this is your cup of tea. Another thing EVERYONE can do is encourage a new guest to provide contact information so we can deliver the Bag. We can also provide a Bag for pick up if they provide an email address. Thank you!

We would like to introduce you to our Ensemble Singers. This week we feature **Maddie James, soprano.** Maddie James is a soprano hailing from St. Louis, Missouri. She is a Doctor of Musical Arts in Voice student at the University of Kansas School of Music. There she received her Master of Music in Voice studying under Dr. Stella Markou and continues to serve as a Graduate Teaching Assistant for the Voice & Opera department. She has starred in multiple opera and musical theater productions along with numerous soloist appearances with local Lawrence, KS bands, including Lawrence City Band and Free State Brass Band. She is a proud alumnus of the University of Missouri - Saint Louis and the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis Artists-In-Training Program.



This is a great time to join the choir if you are interested. They rehearse on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 pm and on Sunday mornings before worship. All singers, all skill levels welcome. If you like to sing, we would love to have you join us! Check in with Adrian Hartsough on Sunday morning or at adrian@firstpreslawrence.org.

Grieving Together – This is a new group at FPC and those who are working through the loss of a significant person in their lives (recently or years ago) are invited to come share their experiences moving through the grief. The group will meet weekly on Wednesday at 10:30 am in the Library. You may come every week or as often as the group meets your needs. It rarely is a good idea to manage grief on your own, but sometimes family and friends aren't quite right either. Come see if this group is the right one for you right now. Need more information? Contact Peg Livingood at livingoods54@gmail.com.

Annual Meeting of the Congregation The Session is calling a meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, February 15 immediately after worship. The purpose of the meeting is to receive the Annual Report, receive the 2026 Budget, and approve Pastor Helen's terms of call. We will also have Membership Directories available for you to pick up. The meeting will also be live streamed for those at home. Thank you for participating in the life of the church by attending!



Ash Wednesday Services will be held on February 18th from 12:30 to 1:30 and 6:00 to 7:00 in the Chapel. This experiential service will help us focus on the Season of Lent which starts this year with an invitation to come and join us because we all want to be invited! Everyone is welcome to this come and go service. Our theme for Lent is "Tell Me Something Good". Let's start off the Lenten season by grounding ourselves in the good news and inviting someone to share in that news with us.

Tell Me Something Good Lenten devotional booklets are available in the Narthex. We can all use some good news right now and these devotional booklets might be a great way to start or end your day on a positive note.

We are invited to the Installation service for Rev. Benjamin "Ben" Houchen at First Presbyterian Church of Hays, Kansas on Sunday, February 15th at 4:00 pm – 2900 Hall St. Congratulations to Rev. Houchen and FPC Hays!

Financial Update

	Actual	Budget
January	\$ 97,623	\$ 102,684

Justice Matters

Update on Justice Matters research into improving Youth Trauma outcomes in Douglas County:

Kansas Power of the Positive (KPoP)

Ad Astra per Aspera, "to the stars through difficulties", captures the spirit of Kansas and its enduring story. For over 10 years, the KPoP Coalition has been leveraging the science of positive and adverse childhood experiences to lead efforts in achieving its vision: that all Kansas children live in safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments.

Together, KPoP partners continue to navigate a wide variety of challenges that impact children, their families, and the communities where they live, learn and play, helping pave the way to the stars.

The Power of Positive Childhood Experiences

Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) help children develop the skills that enable them to grow into thriving, healthy adults by preventing and mitigating the lifelong impacts of individual and community adverse experiences. These positive experiences are grouped into four key "building blocks"¹:

- Safe, stable and nurturing relationships.
- Safe, stable and nurturing environments.
- Opportunities for social and civic engagement.
- Opportunities for emotional growth.

The research committee is looking for a Proven Solution to the problem of 25% of Kansans with high levels of childhood trauma. This level of trauma has not changed in the last 10 years. What Proven Solution will move our community systems to improve this outcome?

Here is how to be more informed:

Attend the monthly Research Committee meeting at First Pres: February 7, March 7, 10am-noon

Join the FPC network for pancakes on Tuesday, February 17 to hear more

Attend the Justice Matters Solutions Briefing:

Tuesday, March 24, 6:30pm-8pm: Trinity Lutheran Church

Attend the Justice Matters Nehemiah Assembly:

Sunday, April 26, 2pm-3:30pm: Double Tree Hotel

Are you interested in finding a way to participate in the life of the church?
We are always looking for people to serve on our committees and teams.

Learn a new skill! Join the Sound Board Team. They will train you on sound, the camera, or the board. It takes at least two to make the live stream happen, so the more folks who know how to do this the better off we all are. We have at least 20 to 25 people who regularly join us via You Tube on Sunday morning and about that same number who watch the recording later in the week. Lots of people depend on our Sound Board team!

If you like being outdoors and helping people have access to healthy vegetables and herbs you need to consider being on the **Community Garden Team**. They will be planting the winter garden before you know it and will need folks to water and weed. Signing up for times that work for you and a frequency that fits your schedule can offer satisfaction that you are a part of a food solution!

The **Memorial Garden Committee** is in need of people who can help keep the garden clear of weeds, mulched in the spring and fall and stays a nice place for our friends to visit and be with their loved ones. The work is seasonal and sporadic, but we can let you know when we need help.

Do you have a knack for working with flowers? The **Worship Committee** is looking for someone or a team to be in charge of the **Sunday flowers**. We have a place for people to sign up to provide the flowers, but sometimes there isn't anyone signed up and we need to have something at the front of the Sanctuary – even well-placed greenery is helpful. We have a closet full of vases and baskets for use as well as silk and faux flowers. Contact Erinn Barcomb-Peterson if you are interested.

Ushers and Greeters - Can you provide a welcoming handshake or wave on Sunday morning? We are looking for people who can greet at the front doors or usher folks into the Sanctuary. This is especially important for our guests! It is always nicer to be greeted with a smile and helpful information when you are new to a place. Commitment can be as little or as much as your schedule will allow. Sign up on the Friendship Pad or call the church office. Thank you.

Fellowship Opportunities in 2026

The Fellowship Committee has plans to host the following events this year. While they are responsible for the planning, they could use our help to make all of these events fun and enjoyable for all of us. If you can help setting up or cleaning up or in some other way, please contact Chris Heider at v.c.heid25@gmail.com. You can volunteer for one event or several. Helping hands are a great way to meet new friends!



February 8 - Pre-Game Tailgate Party begins at 11:30 in Fellowship Hall. Bring your favorite tailgate food to share with everyone. Chips and salsa, roll-ups, wings, meatballs, sliders, whatever is your favorite! We could use help before worship, setting tables and getting water pitchers ready. After the party, please help clean up.

The Youth are sponsoring the Souper Bowl of Caring so please bring a few cans to fill their football field and help support the hungry in Lawrence! They are challenging us to beat their record from last year by collecting over 185 cans of soup. Let's do it!

Coming up later in the year:

March – TBD

April – Maundy Thursday Potluck

June – FPC Picnic

July – Ice Cream Social

August – School Year Kick Off

October – 2nd Annual Chili Cook-Off

December – Christmas Dinner