



First Press

Weekly Newsletter

September 27, 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.

Children Sunday School

• Sunday School Classes for Children

○ Our October Study is called Honor God's Diversity

When you read the Bible closely, you can see that one of its amazing qualities is how its pages embrace a great diversity of voices. From one book to another—and even within a single book—the Bible is able to hold diverse genres, contexts, perspectives, and even theologies together. A beautiful example of this is at the very beginning of the Bible where we have, not one, but two creation stories back to back. Their mere presence testifies to a biblical valuing of diversity, and the content of these stories actually shows us some important principles about honoring God's diversity.

Just as the biblical text honors God's diversity in its many perspectives and in the balance that is struck between the broad and the specific, we are called to honor God's diversity in ways that balance broad inclusivity with specific foci. To truly honor God's diversity, the acknowledgment and praise of the diversity that we see in the Bible, creation, or our communities is one step. But it is not the end goal. Honoring diversity, as opposed to just seeing or having diversity, requires the difficult work of striving toward justice and equality. The following four central principles can guide us down a path of truly honoring God's diversity. We must:

- Affirm people who are marginalized
- Center voices from the margins
- Work for liberation while challenging oppression
- Use advantages to overturn inequality

Adult and Youth Sunday School

Grieving Our Loss of Democracy will begin on September 27th. Watching and reading the news and scrolling on social media can lead to sadness, fear, anger, and helplessness. We might even be grieving. But wait! There is always hope at the intersection of our current world crises and our faith! We can seek to grieve prophetically, seeing our world, even at its darkest, with the spirit and energy of the Hebrew prophets and the resurrected Christ. We are called to make a difference and contribute to the greater good. We will discuss the book, ***Grieving Our Loss of Democracy*** by Anne Hays Egan, with Rev. Marc Giedinghagen leading the discussion. Marc is a retired parish minister, chaplain and Clinical Pastoral Educator.

Grieving Our Loss of Democracy

by Anne Hays

Class led by Rev. Marc Giedinghagen



Meeting in the Fireside Room
Sept. 27 and Oct. 4

Youth Activities and Opportunities –

- **Be sure the CROP Walk is on your calendar for October 4th at 1:30.** Sign up with Claire Boyette to walk for this great cause! Please keep Kelly and family in your prayers as she continues with Chemo.
- **Our next collection – Shoes!** We have collected 81 pairs of shoes for donation to the HRC. We will continue collection through the end of October. Please bring any donations you have collected by 10/31.
- Cooler temps may signal we have made it to fall. In the spirit of cooler weather we are announcing a **FALL FEST on Sunday, October 18th.** We will gather at my place, 3113 Winston Drive at 6:30. We will have a bonfire, pumpkins to paint, apple cider and snacks. Please RSVP if you plan to attend so we will have enough supplies for pumpkin decorating. Bring a friend or two and join us for some relaxing, outdoor time. PLEASE BRING A CHAIR for relaxing around the fire pit, as you are able. We will also welcome donations of gently used shoes that we are collecting, in support of HRC.

Worship for October and November

Every Gift Tells a Story

This past year has been one with wars in the international setting, battles in our political spheres, and people struggling to keep up with expenses. As we move into October and November our sermon series will be focused on ordinary people doing extraordinary things. There are many examples in Scripture and many examples in our church and community. This is our Stewardship Theme reminding all of us that we make a difference. When I get discouraged I look to two quotes that inspire me:

- “It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you at liberty to neglect it,” from Rabbi Tarfon (Pirkei Avot 2:16)
- “I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do.” Helen Keller

As we seek to acknowledge there are amazing things happening in a crazy world, we acknowledge God is working and engaged, and we offer ourselves trusting that with God we make a difference.

Pastor Helen’s Monday Class will not meet this week but will gather together on October 5 to start a new class called **Christianities: the first 4 centuries C.E.** at 2 pm in the Fireside Room. We will be looking at different theological understandings in the early church movement. We will start with Acts of the Apostles and look at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–13, 2:22–36, 41), Phillip and The Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26–40), Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10:24–48) and The Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1–21). If you have a chance to look over these passages and ask yourself how do these early disciples understand Jesus and his role and ministry? Everyone is welcome.

World Communion Offering – Sunday October 4

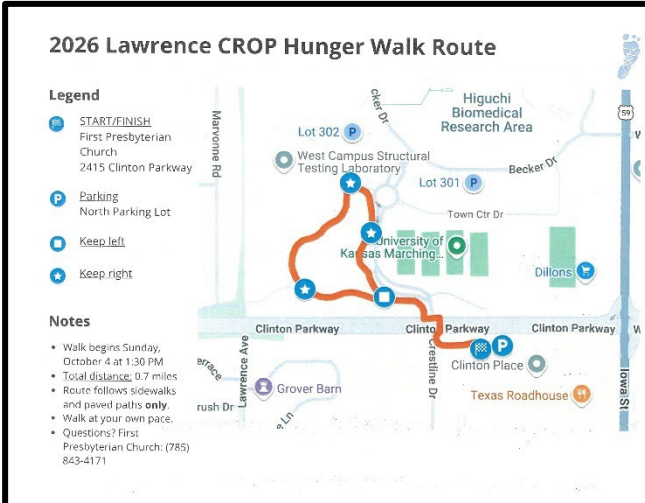
The World Communion Offering works to ensure all God’s people flourish as God intends through ministries working for racial justice, gender justice, peacemaking, global witness, and ecumenical and interfaith relations. Thank you for supporting this PCUSA Special Offering.

CROP Walk

The CROP Walk is NEXT SUNDAY, and we're in the home stretch! 🇺🇸
We are already more than 35% of the way toward our fundraising goal, but there is still time to make a donation and help us reach it!

Registration for walkers is still open, too.

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/team/first-presbyterian-church-15>



The route is approximately 0.7 miles, fully paved, and relatively flat. Everyone is welcome to participate, and walkers are encouraged to go at their own pace. Make sure to wear your blue FPC t-shirt or any old CWS/CROP Walk t-shirts if applicable. Whether you walk the entire route or only part of it, we would love to have you join us! If you have any issues making an online donation or registering to walk, please contact Claire (claire@firstpreslawrence.org) and she will get you set up.

This Sunday is the last day to sponsor a section of the CROP Walk route in honor or memory of a loved one! We only have two spots left! If you picked up a submission form or intended to make your

submission via email, please get that information to Claire (claire@firstpreslawrence.org) by Sunday, September 27. All persons honored/remembered will be featured in a memory book available on Walk Day.

CROP Walk consists of two things: donating and walking.

1. **Donating:** We have a goal of raising \$3,000 through the CROP Walk. 75% of the funds raised will go to Church World Service to support their various ministries including child protection, disaster response, housing stability, and access to education. The remaining 25% stays local, meaning if we meet our fundraising goal, we will be able to make a significant gift to a hunger agency in our community. Can you help by contributing to the fund?
 - a. **Donate:** events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/event/lawrencecks
 - b. **Walking:** The physical act of walking reminds us of our shared responsibility to care for our neighbors. Just as we walk together, we share the responsibility of building a community where no one faces hunger alone. Our walking route is approximately 0.7 miles, flat, and paved. We will start and end at our church building, and we will also have a chance to see the new development at the Crossing. The map will be released on Walk Day. Anyone is welcome to join us!
2. **Register:** events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/team/first-presbyterian-church-15

Sponsor a part of the CROP Walk route

You can sponsor a section of the CROP Walk route in honor or memory of a loved one. All persons honored/remembered will be featured in a memory book available on Walk Day (October 4). Please contact Claire (claire@firstpreslawrence.org) with your submission. All submissions must be in by Sunday, September 27.

Have loose change taking up space in your purse or pockets? Consider dropping them in the CROP Walk donation basket!

A donation basket will be available on Sunday mornings at the coffee table in the Narthex. During the week, the donation basket will be moved to the church office. Every little bit helps!

[Click here](#) if you can help us get the word out about the CROP Walk!

Handbell Ringers are Still Needed!

The Westminster Ringers Handbell Choir is looking for new ringers for both treble and bass bells. Rehearsals are held on Mondays, from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The group regularly participates in the 10:30 am worship service on the third Sunday of each month, September through May, with occasional additional services throughout the year.

FPC Westminster Ringers bell choir will celebrate 50 years of ringing in 2027! If you would like to be part of this dynamic and fun group of musicians, contact director Carol Fleeger at carolfleeger@yahoo.com or 225-235-9285. We are looking forward to having YOU join us!

Blessing of the Animals

Several people have asked that we have a Blessing of the Animals service. So, on Saturday, October 10th we plan to do just that! The Lawrence Humane Society has agreed to work with us on this project and in return we will help them with some much-needed supplies. You can bring your donations of soft dog treats, dog and cat food, peanut butter, paper towels, sheets, blankets, small rugs, and spray cheese to the box in the Narthex. The Humane Society will bring some of their pets to share (adoption has to happen at their facility, so will not be available at this event). You might be a lucky person who can take a pet home for a day – if you are interested. Watch this space for more information as we get closer, but bring in those donations anytime!



Answering the Question: But What Can We Do? Haskell Cemetery Donations

The Matthew 25 group is leading First Presbyterian Church's initiative to develop a closer and more informed, aware relationship with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. Part of that initiative is financially supporting the cleaning, refreshing, refurbishment, and resetting of the 103 gravestones in the Haskell Cemetery. This sacred space contains the burials of children and teens who died while at Haskell, predominantly spanning the years 1884 – 1913. Most of the tombstones were placed in the 1930's and detail the children's names, tribes, and lifespans. In a conversation with Travis Campbell, Director of the Haskell Cultural Center, inquiring about how First Presbyterian could be of meaningful support, he shared that he and Courtney King, Manager of Haskell's Eric Allen Greenhouse, are in the process of refurbishing the cemetery gravestones. This task requires substantial funds to purchase special gravestone cleaning kits with appropriate brushes and chemicals and to reset the stones as needed. Mr. Campbell was delighted and enthusiastic to hear that First Presbyterian will be making a financial contribution to this vital work of honoring those buried there. You can learn more about Haskell's early years and those buried in the cemetery in *Haskell Institute: 19th Century Stories of Sacrifice and Survival* by Haskell Professor Emerita Dr. Theresa Milk. You can donate by stopping by the Matt 25 table in the narthex or by giving by check or online to First Presbyterian Church, Haskell Cemetery Project.



Second Annual Chili Cook-off

Are you ready for some Chili?

The Fellowship Committee is hosting our second annual Chili Cook-Off. Larry Flottman is ready to defend his first-place title. This year we are hoping to answer the question: Does chili have to have beans to be chili? We are planning to have 8 to 10 contestants. If more people than that sign up to cook, we will have a lottery. We are also looking for judges to taste all of the entries and determine the winner. Sign up on the appropriate list in the Narthex today!