



First Press

Weekly Newsletter

October 11, 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

- **Beginning Sunday, October 11**, Jeff Southard will offer a class "Islam in a Nutshell". He will provide an overview of the basic beliefs of Islam, which is helpful as we try to understand the current events unfolding in the Middle East. All are welcome to join him in the Fireside Room.

Youth Activities and Opportunities –

- **Please keep Kelly Grube** 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 Kelly's house, 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 continue a study 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.

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 asked if a few of our members can sign out a dog for the afternoon and then bring them to be blessed. Many of these animals have been with the Humane Society for a long time and will cherish a walk, a DQ pup cup, some treats, etc. Or just take them home for some cuddles! There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex if you would like a pet-friend for the afternoon. You will also need to sign a document at the Humane Society when you check out one of the animals. They love having children take them out but will need a parent to sign for the animal. The Humane Society is located at 1805 E. 19th Street. Be sure to tell your friends about this opportunity to share some time with a sweet dog or cat as well as having them or your pets blessed!



The Deacon Love Fund – In September you provided \$2,270.00 to help people meet their rent, utilities, and for gas and car repair to keep their employment. Even with that we were not able to fill all appropriate requests. The calls keep coming, including a unusually high number from people who have never had to ask for help before. Thank you for your support of the Deacon Love Fund which allows us to be helpful to those around us.

Justice Matters – Please join Annette Camlin and Margie Dyck to discuss the new season of Justice in Douglas County. We “LISTEN” so we may hear your concerns. We will also give updates on ongoing issues. We will be picking a new issue for the coming year. This session is open to all. Sunday, October 11, at 11:40 am in the FPC Library. Snacks will be provided.

Justice Matters is an interfaith organization made up of thirteen diverse religious congregations and two neighborhood networks in the Lawrence Kansas region. We have come together to move toward a city where justice rolls down like a mighty river. We work toward this vision as an expression of our faith and values of love, relationship, and justice. We lift up these “neighborly” values in contrast to a culture dominated by the pursuit of material consumption and individualism. This is the first step of the process to choosing our next issue. We hope you will join us for the full ride, but attending this session does not require further involvement in the research process. Thank you. Margie Dyck – 913-220-3363

Congratulations to Dr. Alex Red Corn, Ed. D. on his appointment as president of Haskell Indian Nations University. His selection reflects the Bureau of Indian Education’s commitment to community-rooted leadership and to advancing Haskell’s mission and future. As president, Dr. Red Corn will oversee Haskell’s efforts to enhance student success, strengthen sovereignty, and maintain stable institutional leadership. His vision aligns with broader efforts to empower tribal nations through education, capacity-building, and self-determination.

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.



A Note of Thanks

To all FPC volunteers and donors,
The gift baskets for the Auction Party were so great.
Thank you for showing up for our families!!
Wishing you the best always!
Ashley Thornton, Family Promise staff

We are invited! Wakarusa Presbyterian Church is having their **37th Annual Ham and Bean Feed** at the church, 10135 SW Jordan Rd., Wakarusa, KS, on Saturday, October 17th from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm.

Adult Meal is \$13, Youth is \$10, Children 6 and under are free.

Entertainment provided by the Topeka Barber Shoppers and B&C Rescue Pony Rides

Need more information? Call Helen at 785-249-3343



The FPC Acknowledgement of Place

We at First Presbyterian Church acknowledge that long before the church was built, these lands were cared for by indigenous peoples including the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Pawnee, Osage, and Kanza. As an institution rooted in faith, local communities, and history, First Presbyterian Church fully acknowledges and celebrates the Native cultures and organizations that make Lawrence stronger. Furthermore, we recognize the experiences of Native people in our own community and elsewhere in an effort to heal and bring forth a brighter tomorrow.

September	Budget	Actual
Membership Gifts – Sept	\$ 40,572	\$ 36,087
Membership Gifts – 2026 – YTD	\$ 427,309	\$ 379,187



Second Annual Chili Cook-off

Are you ready for some Chili?
Sign up to be a judge today!!

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 have all of our contestants signed up. Now we need judges! We have eight contestants, so you will try all eight entries and then decide which is the best! No pressure. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex just waiting for your name to be on the list! It will probably help if you like chili, but everyone is

welcome to sign up to be a judge – unless you are a contestant. The Fellowship Committee is excited that our weather is finally more conducive to having chili! We are looking forward to a fun time!

Sunflower Baroque Fall Concert – Paul and Joy Laird invite you to their Sunflower Baroque Fall Concert on Monday, October 12 at 7:30 pm in Swarthout Recital Hall in KU's Murphy Hall. The ensemble will be joined by soprano Stella Markou, professor of voice and opera at the University of Kansas. The concert is free and open to the public.

Church Fall Clean Up – On Saturday, October 24, you are invited to help us clean up some areas of the church. We will work outside if weather permits, and inside with several projects. We will be cleaning and polishing in the Sanctuary, deep cleaning in the large kitchen, shining up the brass items and getting the dust bunnies out from under the pews – in the Sanctuary and in the halls. Bring your own cleaning items or we will have some to share. Thanks for your help getting ready for our holiday guests!

