



First Press

Weekly Newsletter

October 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.

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 with Rev. Marc Giedinghagen** concludes this Sunday at 9:15 am in the Fireside Room. 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! Marc is a retired parish minister, chaplain and Clinical Pastoral Educator.
- **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 –

- **Join Claire Boyette for the CROP Walk at 1:30 today, October 4th.**
- 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.

Join Us to Support Social Justice on Communion Sundays

So many members of our congregation put their time, money and effort into causes that focus on helping our neighbors. The Matthew 25 committee invites you to "show your colors" by wearing our blue FPC shirt or one from an organization or cause that you support. Together we will fill the sanctuary with a rainbow of colors as we gather for worship and communion on the first Sunday of each month.

CROP Walk



The CROP Walk is this afternoon, and we're in the home stretch! 🌈 We are almost 50% of the way toward our fundraising goal, but there is still time to make a donation and help us reach it!

Join us at the church at 1:30 pm to walk. Claire has swag bags for each walker! You can register when you arrive if you haven't already. The weather looks like it will be great for a walk through part of The Crossing at KU.

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!



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.



Second Annual FPC Chili Cook-off Save the Date!

October 18, 2026
11:30 am

*If you are interested in
being a contestant,
please see Chris Heider
for information.*

Second Annual Chili Cook-off

Are you ready for some Chili?

Sign up 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 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!

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!

Worship and Dinner with friends from Haskell Indian Nations University on September 20, 2026



Solar Panel Report

Monthly Yield = 9.702 MWh
97.9 = Full load hours
142.52 = Tons of CO2 reduced
57.2 = Tons of Coal saved

We are doing our part!

