



First Press

Weekly Newsletter

September 20, 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 September Study is called **Cross Borders**

Typically, borders are lines that separate two geographical areas: two countries, regions, cities, neighborhoods, and so on. For this study we are considering borders as points of separation, the lines imagined or real that separate us from them and you from me. God's creation is a full, rich, diverse place, a place where flourishing is inextricably entwined with that diversity. Our differences are cause for celebration and our unique voices compose a holy chorus. In Scripture, we see over and over again the stories of borders between people of different faiths, cultures, classes, genders, and ethnicities. Even communities that wandered had boundaries that they carried with them. The people of God are called over and over again to cross borders in order to live more faithfully, in relationship with one another and with God.

Here, we will focus on four aspects of the ways borders are crossed in Scripture and in the Christian life:

- Leave Your Comfort Zone
- Challenge Exclusion
- Embrace Relationships
- Speak God's Language of Love

Adult and Youth Sunday School

- Jim Woelfel's class *Varieties of Unbelief: George Eliot, Bertrand Russell, Simone de Beauvoir* will conclude on September 20 -. If you missed any of these wonderful classes you can watch them on our YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vt730utua5M&list=PLCua4jteUzKo>

- **New class 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.

Summer Sermon Series is called Epic Meltdowns in the Bible and How God Responds. It may help us in our own meltdowns or meltdowns around us to know that God Forgives, God Waits, God Humbles, God Protects, God Instructs and God Provides Help.

Pastor Helen's Monday Class will continue their study of the History of Religion in the United States on Mondays at 2 pm in the Fireside Room. Everyone is welcome to join in the discussion.

Our next collection being gathered by our Youth will be to supply the HRC with a stock of **adult-sized shoes**. We are looking for donations of any size or gender, gently used (or new) shoes. Donations can be brought to the church office or to me for collection. Kelly Jones-Grube, Youth Coordinator

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

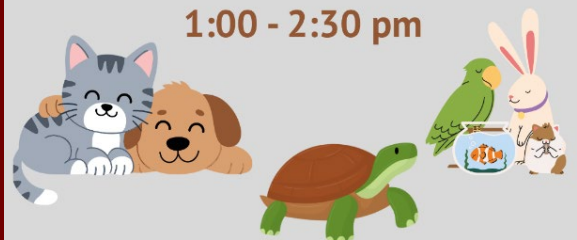
Several people have asked that we have a Blessing of the Animals service. So, on Saturday, October 10th we plan to do just that! The Lawrence Humane Society has agreed to work with us on this project and in return we will help them with some much needed supplies. You can bring your donations of soft 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!

First Presbyterian Church

Blessing of the Animals

Saturday, October 10th

1:00 - 2:30 pm



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.

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

We are getting super excited about the CROP Walk coming up on Sunday, October 4 at 1:30 PM! But we need your help in making the Walk a success! CROP Walks consist 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
2. 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!
 - a. 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!

Food Insecurity Rises: FPC Responds

Our congregation continues to address the rising incidence of hunger in our community by contributing to our community food bank, Just Food, and facilitating lunches at LINK. During the past month the church office has experienced a 41% increase in calls for assistance from social service agencies representing individual clients. We are also receiving two to three calls a week from people who have never had to ask for help before and don't know where to find it in our community. In October, FPC will ask other congregations in Lawrence to join us in the CROP Walk, a nationwide program coordinated by Church World Service. (See above for more information.)

In alignment with the FPC Witness Statement, we also participated in legislative advocacy through Bread for the World. This past week, members met with a staff member from Representative Tracy Mann's Manhattan office to speak out for people who are food insecure in our area.

Members Margie Dyck, Heather Soper, Kathryn Roblee, Linda Watts, and pastors Helen Hutchison and Thad Holcombe participated in the conversation.



On Friday, September 4th, Linda Watts met with a group of KC area hunger advocates who held a conversation with Jason Osterhaus, Kansas staff member for Senator Jerry Moran.



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? How about some cooler weather?

Save the date and contact Chris Heider if you are interested in being a contestant!

Family Promise Update

Hello FPC Parishioners: Thank you to all who gave in support of Family Promise! I was able to purchase gift cards to add to ones I was given for four baskets totaling \$670 for the Silent Auction at the Family Promise Fund Raising Event. You are all so awesome!!

We also provided a meal for 23 individuals at Mt Hope on Friday, September 18th. There are now 6 families in Mt Hope. A very busy place - included in these 23 individuals are 9 toddlers and 1 infant!! Wow!!

May God bless you for your very generous and caring hearts!

From, Lois Dutcher

