



First Press

Weekly Newsletter

December 7, 2025

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 firstpreslawrence@gmail.com** 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.

Adult and Youth Sunday School

- Pastor Helen will be leading the class in the Fireside Room using Adam Hamilton's *The Journey, Walking the Road to Bethlehem*. In *The Journey*, Adam Hamilton travels from Nazareth to Bethlehem in a fascinating look at the birth of Jesus Christ. As he did with Jesus' crucifixion in *24 Hours That Changed the World*, Hamilton once again approaches a world-changing event with thoughtfulness. Using historical information, archaeological data, and a personal look at some of the stories surrounding the birth, the most amazing moment in history will become more real and heart-felt as you walk along this road.

Children's Sunday School

- On December 7 Chris Heider and Linda Longino will lead the Children's Sunday School in their singing in worship. On December 14 they will be doing a service project for our friends at the Manor. We will meet in room 14.

Pastor Helen's Monday Class will be taking a break for December. We will meet again on Monday, January 5, 2026 at 2 pm in the Fireside Room and start a study on the Lord's Prayer.

Poinsettias – Sign up to purchase a poinsettia this year to honor or remember a loved one! Order forms are in the Narthex. You can take your flower home after worship on Christmas Eve or on Sunday, December 28th. Thank you.



Youth Activities

- **December 7** – Annual Youth Holiday Party – We will gather at the Hoover-Elo home. Please RSVP to Kelly Jones-Grube
- **January 4, 2026** – FPC Winter Break Youth Retreat – 11:30 to 6 pm – will include art, cooking, lunch, games, service opportunities, fellowship time, and lots more! Other area church youth will be invited.

Do you have something you want to add to the calendar? Need more information? Contact Kelly Jones-Grube at 785-691-7445 or Kellygal78@hotmail.com

The Youth Group joined the Eco Team to make ornaments from natural items (pinecones, dried pods, etc.) and hung them on the tree. Check out the joint effort in the fellowship hall. The ornaments are beautiful. Thanks to all who helped FPC prepare for Christmas!

Session calls a Congregational Meeting

On December 7th after worship the Session calls for a Congregational Meeting for the purpose of electing the Officers for the Class of 2028 and other open positions. We will also hear an update on our Solar Panels. We don't expect this to be a long meeting so we hope you will plan to stay to support our new Elders and Deacons!

Special Christmas Giving - Order forms are available in the Narthex. Bring your checkbook or mark your requests for giving in the memo section of your check. We have nine organizations to support, and all are most appreciative of our help. Every year it is important to share what we are giving with others, but it feels like this year it is especially significant to help others in our community who may have been struggling to find the basics and don't have the energy or opportunity to make the holidays special. Perhaps we can help with that.

Mitten Tree – The Mitten Tree is up and ready for your warm winter decorations! Bring mittens, gloves, scarves, blankets, and all things warm for those in need of warm things. Items accepted through December 7. Thank you!

Star Tree – After the mittens have been distributed, we will transform the tree with stars. Each star will be a request from one of the First 5 Years classrooms for items that they would like to have or need. Take a moment to explore the stars on the tree beginning December 14th!



Christmas Dinner – Sunday, December 14 – after worship

The Fellowship Committee will provide Ham, potatoes, green beans, and beverages.

The Congregation is asked to bring side dishes to share.

If your last name begins with A-L bring Salads.

Last names beginning with M – Z please bring desserts.

Our table decorations are compliments of Sharon Rankin.

Everyone is welcome – an RSVP is appreciated. Sign up today on the table in the Narthex.

Insisting on Hope this Advent

Luke's Gospel begins the story of Jesus with this opening line: "In the time of Herod..." This detail may seem minor to modern readers, however, it reveals layers of information about the fearful world Jesus entered, one filled with rampant oppression, economic disparity, uncertainty, and instability. A world not so unlike our own. And yet, throughout the stories of Christ's birth, the whispers of angels deliver a surprising message: "Do not fear." In our own time, we might ask: is it even possible to be fearless in a fearful world? When Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and the magi are each called into God's redemptive story, they do not deny their fears—they move through them. They ask questions, hold fast to courage, trust in good news, and say, "Here I am, Lord." When we find ourselves in fearful times, can we acknowledge our fears while also insisting on hope?

Advent Calendars and Devotionals available. In the Narthex, you will find a coloring advent calendar for children, an advent calendar for youth and adults and an Advent devotional. These resources are available for you to use and hopefully provide some Spiritual reflection during the advent time.



Music, Music and more Music! In December we will be sharing the hope of our most beloved seasonal music.

December 7 – Our children will start out the season with their version of “Go, Tell It on the Mountain” and you will hear them tell it!

December 14 – The Chancel Choir will lead worship performing Vivaldi’s *Gloria* providing the setting for our Season of Hope. When we put God in charge, how can we despair? The music will lift your spirits.

December 21 – It is Westminster Ringers turn to lead worship with their joyful ringing. They will have several pieces to share, so don’t miss this one.

December 24 – Christmas Eve worship will begin at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary. There will be candle light and singing as we welcome the birth of the Christ Child.

Volunteers needed to work in the church office.

Thanks to everyone who is helping in the church office. Even when you are not busy it is helpful to know that the phone will be answered and so will the door! There might be other projects to do while you are here but bring a book or something to do just in case! 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, so if you are not available now – you will have another chance!

Thank you so much for your willingness to help me out! Gratefully, Linda Bridges



Matthew 25 information for you – Coming Together to Address Hunger in Our Community - Just Food is putting together a collaborative effort in Lawrence to address the pending and continuing crisis of food insecurity. With the unstable funding provided by the SNAP program, families, children, the elderly, and disabled are facing a dire emergency of food access. Data shows that for 2024, in Douglas County, an average of 4,832 individuals received SNAP benefits. FPC has been a long-time partner with Just Food, contributing food and volunteers. Please consider making a donation or volunteering your assistance. Monetary donations are recommended by Just Food as they are able to purchase food at a lower price, getting more “bang for the buck”. The online fundraiser through the Douglas County Community Foundation is now available. As part of the plan, community members can also sign up to volunteer to help through [United Way of Kaw Valley](#).

As a Matthew 25 congregation and an ally of Haskell Indian Nations University, you are encouraged to register for their fall fundraiser scheduled for December 16.



Christmas Joy Offering – We will receive your gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering on Sunday, December 21. Through the Joy Offering we reflect God’s perfect gift to us. 50% of our gifts smooth the path for current and retired church workers and their families in their time of need. 50% prepare students to learn and grow in faith at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Please consider a gift to support these PC(USA) causes. Thank you.

This is the last day to place an order for the 2026 Art Calendar produced by First 5 Years in the Narthex. Forms are available in the Narthex. Place your order form and payment in Amber’s mailbox in the church office. Thank you for your support!



Join us on Christmas Eve as we insist on hope for the world in the form of a child. Worship begins at 7:00 pm and will include music, candles, and a wonderful story filled with hope. Bring your family and friends as we share this time together.

Family Promise has invited us to volunteer at their annual winter festival, Winter Wishes, on December 11! There are available volunteer shifts on December 10 and 11 at various times. Volunteer roles include preparing supplies and stuffing stockings, helping to set-up and decorate before the event, assisting with arts & crafts and other family activities, and more! This is one of many ways to give back this holiday season, and if this is something you are interested in, you can sign up using this link: <https://wkf.ms/3Lc5Iz6> Please sign up by December 1. Contact Claire with any questions you may have!



The FPC Mission Committee invites you to join them in purchasing requested gifts for their Salvation Army families. Pick up a gift tag request on Sunday then go shopping! Your gifts need to be returned by Sunday, December 14th. Thank you for making these families Christmas a little brighter!

Here are some things that our Sunday School kids made for Family Promise. They made three giving trees for Thanksgiving table decorations at Hope House and filled bags of Chex Mix for a treat. Then this last Sunday they made 80 candy cane reindeer to be put in the stockings for the children at the upcoming Winter Wishes Festival. They did an incredible job!!! Thank you to all of the children and their teachers!! You are really appreciated so much by Family Promise and all of their guests!!

Bless you, Lois Dutcher



Many thanks to our youth who led the "Deck the Halls" event last Sunday! Our Chrismos tree and the traditional Christmas tree look wonderful in the front of the church! Afterwards they joined the EcoTeam in making Eco-Ornaments for their tree. We are so grateful for your service to the church and to others in our community!

