



THE GRAPEVINE

First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint, Idaho
October 2025

From the pastor

Philippians 4:11-13, Paul boldly declares, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."

Together with one another we face a time of turbulence and forced wandering. A time when things don't make sense. A time of hate that has been growing and becoming more difficult to endure within our now lethargic bodies. A time we anticipated and each tried in our individual ways to prevent. We are living through a time we did not ask for. We try to respond, we do some good, but in the end, we know more neighbors and more loved ones are slipping through cracks. We wish to seek a place of respite, normalcy, and maybe just some manners.

Perhaps the wisdom we truly seek is not an escape from this time, but the understanding that our endurance is our strength. We did not ask for this, but through it, we can discover a different kind of purpose. We are not just survivors; we are definers. In the face of a world that makes no sense, we are the ones who can create meaning. Let us carry the weight of this knowledge not as a burden, but as the quiet, steady strength of a congregation who know what they are capable of. Our solace is found in accepting the moment and recognizing that our worth is not measured by the perfection we hoped for, but by the quiet grace with which we persist.

And so, our wandering must become a pilgrimage. Not a search for an end to the storm, but for the calm that exists within us and between us. Though we cannot hold back the tide of a turbulent world, we can still choose how we navigate it. We can find our strength in one another, in the small, deliberate kindnesses that fortify some against the rising tide of hate. Instead of watching cracks form, we can put our hands together to mend what we can. Our respite, our normalcy, and our peace are not to be found in a past we long for, but in the small, consistent steps we take forward, together.

We wished for respite, for normalcy, for a return to simple manners. Yet, in our forced wandering, we have been stripped of pretense and left with what truly matters: the simple act of facing this time together. Our lethargic bodies still hold hearts that can beat in time with another, voices that can share a meal, and eyes that can meet with shared understanding. Maybe contentment was never about having everything fixed. Maybe it is found here, in the humbling realization that this is enough, this shared present, this mutual recognition, and this quiet, enduring commitment to one another.

I pray we all, together, find contentment in this world and especially in this time. May we create a holy pocket of peace here in Sandpoint and beyond.

May the Peace of Christ be in you and within all of you, Beloved and Capable Children of God,

Rev. Catherine Lyle

SESSION NOTES

The session (church council) met on September 17, after a two-month summer break from in-person meetings. Between meetings, church business requiring session approvals are frequently take place by email followed by official vote in the consent agenda in the next meeting.

Since our clerk of session, Bill Love, was uncharacteristically unavailable because of a scheduling conflict, Judy Labrie took notes. Here are some highlights.

Pastor Catherine called the meeting to order after an opening prayer. The building use items on the consent agenda were approved. Stay tuned for notices for some wonderful concerts and performances this coming year.

Pastor Catherine reported:

- recent meeting of interim pastors facilitated by Presbytery in Spokane. It's comforting to know she is being held and supported by other interims and by the Committee on Ministry. The process of calling a permanent pastor is done with discernment and can take between 1-2 years.
- she started a new Zoom Bible study with an open invitation to the United Methodist and Presbyterian congregations. The class focuses on nonjudgemental financial planning, budgeting, and the benefits of living a life of simplicity.

Committee Reports:

Judy Labrie reported on the Sunday Morning Adult Christian Ed that is facilitated by Sharon Anderson. Since reconvening after summer break, the group began exploring the book, *Holy Envy* by Barbara Taylor Brown. The author reflects on her experiences teaching world religions and the unexpected lessons she learns from faiths outside her own. Taylor Brown explores how encountering different spiritual traditions can deepen one's own beliefs while cultivating respect for others.

Session approved permission to arrange field trips to visit meeting places of other faith traditions in Spokane and Newport, WA. Sharon will be coordinating these outings and reporting on how visits will be coordinated. All are welcome to join in this fascinating study on Sunday mornings, 9:30-10:30 am, in-person in the Fireside Room or via Zoom.

There is still time to register for the Dream Workshop series set for October 11 and 18. See the flyers posted on the church website Announcements and on church bulletin boards.

The FPC Facebook page was taken down after Pastor Andy retired because it was attached to his personal account. Session and Pastor Catherine will look at what it would involve to establish a new page and who would administer it. In the meantime, the church website is kept up to day by Dana Stockman, Office Administrator, and members and friends can see the church calendar and coming events there.

Please be mindful to check and lock all the exterior doors when using the building midweek.

Mary Sturgis reported for Building and Grounds that there have been some successful summer work parties to clean flower beds, install weed barrier and lay down new bark. Also the lower part of the outdoor walls and soffits have been painted. The yard and new paint looks great!

This summer there were two outdoor plumbing leaks fixed and repair bills will ensue. The church roof has lost some more shingles which will need to be repaired. Eventually, new roofing will be the permanent solution. So far there have not been any leaks.

FINANCE

The congregation's generosity in giving of time, talents and resources are reflected in the current stable financial status at First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint. While the income received and the expenses are both higher than anticipated relative to the modified budget, there is an overall positive gain this year of about \$4000.

A few changes over the summer months included:

- Avista conducted a review of the annual electric/natural gas usage resulting in a reduction in the monthly expense from \$531 to \$453
- The third CD at Washington Trust renewed on August 30th for another three-month term at the same rate of 3.4%

PERSONNEL

The personnel committee met in September to conduct the annual reviews with employees and contracted workers. Topics considered during this process included an exchange of information to ensure a shared understanding of expectations and performance standards, acknowledgement of work accomplishments, employee input and suggestions for improving the work environment, and feedback from the committee with any improvement suggestions.

Overall, employees reported appreciation for flexible work schedules, friendly and helpful colleagues and congregants, and support for accomplishing work tasks. A few items for follow-up include consideration of upgrades in the church office equipment, potential bundling of phone and internet services, consideration of a church directory and/or name tag usage, pigeon deterrents and possible installation of a rain gutter at the side fellowship hall door, and encouraging planned time away as needed for respite, renewal and personal growth.

It is with great appreciation that we acknowledge the commendable work by the current church staff. Thank you for your dedicated service at First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint!

- Pastor Catherine, Interim Pastor
- Susie Haskins, Finance Secretary
- Mo Martin, Custodian
- Natalie Miller, Treasurer
- Dana Stockman, Office Administrator and Choir Director
- Anne Welle, Pianist

Respectfully submitted,
Millie Rinker, Paula Vincent, Dyno Wahl
Personnel Committee

STEWARDSHIP

The past several weeks Pastor Catherine has encouraged us to think about practical ways to be content with “enough” and challenged us to think about ways we can simplify our lives. Similar ideas are reflected in the most recent edition of the Presbyterian Outlook* and shared here as a reflective prayer.

Almighty God, you call us to lives of service, but ...

we ignore our neighbors in need right outside our door.

You call us to share our abundance, but ...

we choose our own comfort over generosity to others.

You call us to build community, but...

we are too often gatekeepers, letting in only the ones that make us comfortable.

Help us to be content with enough and inspire us to share what we have – our prosperity, our power and our love – until all your children have life and dignity in beloved community.

Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.

Later this month, Session will begin work on the ministry plan and supporting budget for our church in 2026. Copies of the current plan are available on the entry tables to the sanctuary.

Are there additional ways for our congregation to be neighbors to those right outside our door and the world beyond? How might our actions contribute to a stronger community? In what ways can we demonstrate our love for all of God’s children?

Please join with us as we work on the new ministry plan and narrative budget by sharing your ideas and praying with us for guidance, openness and creativity as we consider God’s will for our congregation in the year ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy McComish and Paula Vincent, Elders

*© Presbyterian Outlook, 2025 Liturgy written by Rev. Rae Watson and provided for free distribution. For more resources, visit pres-outlook.org

MISSION

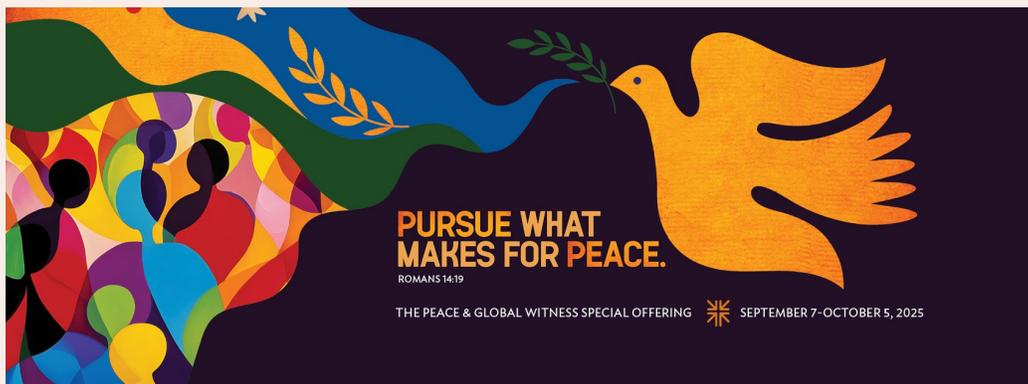
Peace & Global Witness Special Donations:

Each Fall, PC(USA) holds a special offering focused on peace. The theme this year is “Pursue What Makes for Peace.” Romans 14:19

Peacemaking is central to the gospel and the mission of the Church. Peace is possible, and it begins with us pursuing peace in every interaction and decision we make.

- The “Season of Peace” is September 7 through Oct 5.
- **On October 5, World Communion Sunday, we will be receiving the Peace & Global Witness Offering.**
- 25% of the Offering stays with local congregations, and 25% with regional Presbyteries to unite congregations to support peacemaking.
- 50% of this Offering supports the work for peace and reconciliation being done by Presbyterians across the globe.

In the past, FPC has given donations to organizations like Bonner Homeless Transitions, Priest River Ministries Advocates for Women, and NAMI. What are the major needs in Sandpoint and Bonner County now? What ideas do you have for using FPC’s 25% of the donations we receive in the Peace & Global Witness Offering this year? Please share your ideas with the Missions Committee (Mary Sturgis, Carol Curtis, Judy McComish).



Ezra 3 Project:

The Presbytery of the Inland Northwest has received a grant from the Lilly Endowment: Thriving Congregations Initiative, entitled the Ezra 3 Project. Through the Ezra 3 Project, the Presbytery is exploring how we can steward our land and buildings for community impact in a way that aligns with the mission of the church – how we can use our buildings in ways that help the community flourish.

Cohort 2 for this project is in full swing. The churches in this cohort must put together a design team, identify a pressing community need, and come up with a project that will enable the church to use their building in a new way to meet that need. At the end of the first year, each church will be able to apply for a \$10,000 seed grant to implement the project. Churches that are selected to receive a grant will be assigned a coach to help implement their project.

MISSION

Churches with 100 or fewer members are included in Cohort 2, which includes Bethany, Post Falls, Sandpoint, Washtucna, and Whitworth. The FPC leadership team for this project is Pastor Catherine, Victoria Oliver and Judy McComish.

Currently, our team is talking with members of the congregation and friends of FPC to identify strengths and challenges of our church and ways we have met challenges in the past. In September, we, the congregation and friends of FPC, began exploring the community that we serve by walking or riding around town to look more closely at what is around us. We are writing down our observations, using a list provided by the Ezra 3 national leaders. The list of things to observe includes things like “something beautiful, something ugly, something that smells good, something that stinks, something you would miss if it was gone.” Please let us know if you would like a copy of the list. We are still collecting observations to help us gain a deeper understanding of our community.

In the next few months, we will also be holding a meeting with community leaders to help us identify needs in the community. This will include a tour of our church and a discussion with those leaders. Let us know if you would like to be part of this endeavor.

The next group meeting of Cohort 2 takes place on October 21 in Washtucna, WA. We will learn more at that meeting and will continue to engage with congregation members, friends of FPC, and the community to discern how we can best use our building and land to meet a pressing need in our community. Please join us in this process.

Ezra 3 team: Pastor Catherine, Victoria Oliver and Judy McComish.

Judy McComish
Elder, Missions

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Each year we nominate elders to serve on Session, and a few other positions from the congregation at large for committee work. If you are interested in serving on Session, or on a standing committee, please contact Kirsten Thompson, Mary Sturgis, or Jane Fritz to let us know that you would like to serve. Any interested member of the church is eligible to serve as an elder.

Nominations are placed before the congregation at our annual meeting in January. If you're a regular attendee at First Presbyterian, but haven't joined the congregation “officially”, please contact any of the members of Session, or Pastor Catherine, to inquire about becoming a member. We love regular attendees and would love to welcome you as members if you are interested.

Questions?? Please reach out and ask any member of the congregation about what membership in the Presbyterian church entails. No secret handshakes, just a long tradition that we enjoy keeping in motion here in Sandpoint. I myself grew up in this congregation and was baptized as an infant at First Presbyterian in Sandpoint. After a few decades away, it has been a great joy to rejoin this congregation, and become part of a vibrant church family here in Sandpoint. I hope that some of you who are considering membership will follow up with your questions in the coming weeks and months.

Kirsten Thompson 503-816-6384, thompsonkj2019@gmail.com

BONNER HOMELESS TRANSITIONS UPDATE

A Snapshot of August

In August, we served 29 adults and 34 children across our three facilities. Behind every number is a story, a story that you helped write.

At our North Facility, 8 women and 11 children are living in safety. This month brought both challenges and victories. Three children were reunited with their fathers, a reminder that restoration is possible. In another case, we partnered with local agencies to support a young woman in leaving a dangerous trafficking situation. That moment wasn't just about one person's safety; it was a victory for dignity, for freedom, and for a future that once seemed out of reach.

At Trestle Creek, we are home to 8 adults and 15 children. A highlight of the month was helping a single father and his teenage son move into subsidized housing. In just 24 hours, their apartment was furnished with everything they needed to begin again. Because of the quick turnaround, another family was able to move into the space they left behind the very next day. In one weekend, two families' stories shifted dramatically.

At the South Facility, 13 adults and 8 children are working daily toward stability. Thanks to a flooring project underway, families will soon have a more comfortable and dignified living environment. It may seem like just floors, but for the people who live here, it's the difference between feeling like they're surviving and feeling like they are finally home.

Stories of Hope and Resilience

When one mother relapsed, it could have meant weeks of uncertainty and danger for her four children. Instead, through close collaboration with her parole officer, we secured immediate detox and an inpatient treatment bed within 24 hours. Her children remained safe, and she began a new path forward without the usual 30 plus day wait list.

A father and teenage son, once unsure where they would sleep at night, now have a place to call their own — furnished, safe, and stable.

With the help of our partners, three children are back in their fathers' care, beginning a new chapter of family stability

Partnerships That Make It Possible

We are excited to share that this month we began building a relationship with the Marcus Anderson Foundation and formed a direct partnership with Phillips Ranch, which is now giving us immediate access to treatment beds for our clients. These collaborations, combined with the support of local nonprofits, service agencies, and your congregations, allow us to respond to urgent needs with speed and compassion.

Strengthening Our Team

Behind the scenes, we've made changes to better support families. We brought on additional help in bookkeeping and marketing, freeing up our case manager to focus more of her time where it matters most, walking with clients through the day-to-day challenges of rebuilding their lives. Staff morale is high, and our team feels better supported, which translates into better care for families.

BONNER HOMELESS TRANSITIONS UPDATE

Operations & Blessings

- Flooring projects at The Joanne House are nearly complete, with only a few rooms left.
- A car repair originally quoted at \$6,200 was ultimately covered under warranty — a huge relief for our budget.
- Tree removal is needed at Trestle Creek before winter, and we're exploring whether this can be a community volunteer effort or whether we'll need to hire professionals.

How You Can Help Right Now

We continue to rely on the generosity of our community for both financial and in-kind support. Right now, our biggest needs are:

- Paper towels, trash bags, Kleenex, dish soap, and hand soap
- Bath hand towels, twin sheets, kitchen towels
- Cleaning supplies for bathrooms and kitchens
- Copy paper

Looking Forward

As we step into the fall season, our focus is clear: preventing relapse, supporting family reunification, transitioning families into permanent housing, and preparing our facilities for winter. These are big goals, but with the continued support of our local churches and community partners, we know they are within reach.

Friends, please know that your church's support is not just keeping doors open — it is changing lives. Every donation, every collection drive, every moment of prayer and encouragement has ripple effects you may never see, but families feel every single day.

Thank you for being part of this work. Because of you, parents are finding strength, children are finding stability, and families are discovering that new beginnings are possible.

Take good care,

Rebekah Little, Executive Director
Bonner Homeless Transitions
P.O. Box 1696
Sandpoint, Idaho 83864
rebekah@bonnerhomelesstransitions.org
208-265-2952 - Office
208-610-5351 - Cell

Conversations with the Unconscious:
Unveiling the inner self through dream symbols
Dream Workshop Series



When: Saturdays, October 11 & 18
Time: 9:00 am - Noon, both days
Where: First Presbyterian Church Sandpoint
Facilitator: Colleen Russell
Suggested donation: \$75 includes both days
Registration is required, space is limited
email: registration@fpcsandpoint.org



"Dreams are letters from God and most of them remain unopened", attributed to Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estes. Come explore your dream story.

You are invited to join us for an exciting dream workshop series on two Saturdays in October.

Conversations with the Unconscious: Unveiling the inner self through dream symbols.

When: Saturdays, October 11 & 18
Time: 9:00 am - Noon, both days
Where: First Presbyterian Church Sandpoint
Facilitator: Colleen Russell

Suggested donation: \$75 for both sessions, there are scholarships available
Registration deadline is October 6. Space is limited.
This workshop series is designed for participants to attend both sessions.
email: registration@fpcsandpoint.org

- In the first session, learn about the foundation of dream exploration. Why look at dreams? What are the benefits? Learn how to record dreams and bring a dream to session two.
- In the second session, look at particular dreams and explore what your dream story might be communicating.

Colleen Russell holds a master's degree in Transpersonal Psychology and is a 2010 graduate of a three-year BodySoul Leadership training taught by Jungian Analyst Marion Woodman. Working with dreams is part of this ongoing training.
You can find more about Colleen by visiting www.selfdiscoverythruart.com

Sign up soon! Space is limited. Feel free to share this information with someone who may be interested.

Have questions? Contact the church office at 208-263-2047.

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

Each season of the year holds something special in Sandpoint. Every year I try to decide which one I like the most... Winter for skiing or watching the snow? Spring for the new growth? Summer for long lazy days and lake time? Or Fall, for crisp cool nights, days that are bright and temperate, and leaves changing color before they tumble to the ground. At the moment, Fall is starting out with extra beauty – can't say it's the all-around favorite, but it's close.

Fall is also the season when things start up in the community. School for local kids, including athletic events that the rest of the community can support, harvest dinners, Halloween, Thanksgiving. For us in the church community, we begin to have choir rehearsals again. Our choir now meets at for an hour in the sanctuary at noon each Wednesday. Dana Stockman has selected a variety of music suitable for size and configuration of our choir. If you're curious about singing, please join us and give it a try. The choir is welcoming, supportive, and fun! The current plan is to sing on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month beginning in October. As always, there may be occasional schedule adjustments, and special music for special days.

Each week I send out emails to the volunteers who usher, live stream, and serve as worship assistants. If you don't get my emails and would like to be added to the list, please contact me at thompsonkj2019@gmail.com, or email the church office and ask Dana to reach out to me. I also bring a sign-up clipboard to church periodically to add names to the schedule. Please let me know if you need additional or different reminders (phone calls are less common, but are certainly fun)

Soon it will be time to put up special decorations for Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas. Keep alert for opportunities to help decorate our beautiful sanctuary as autumn progresses.

Many blessings - Kirsten Thompson
503-816-6384, thompsonkj2019@gmail.com



EARTH CARE



Earth Care Team Tidbits

Autumn in beautiful northern Idaho invites us to explore. Soon the maple leaves and the western larch needles will be demanding our attention, but in the meantime, bathe yourself in the forest, soak up the emanations from the trees, and observe the other-than-human lives.

Recommended reading: *Braiding Sweetgrass*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer, or her latest book, *The Serviceberry*; and *Guardians of the Trees*, by Kinari Webb, MD.

Lexie de Fremery and the Earth Care Team

BOOK REVIEW

Judy LaBrie has also both read *Guardians of the Trees* and highly recommends it. Bill Love adds, “Although I am just getting started in reading the book, it conveys strong humanitarian and environmental messages in very personal descriptions. No secrets - professional or personal - are left untold.”

Guardians of the Trees by Dr. Kinari Webb is a powerful memoir that blends medicine, conservation, and hope. Webb recounts her journey from medical training to the rainforests of Borneo, where she works to save both human health and the forest ecosystem. Her story highlights the deep connections between environmental destruction and community well-being, showing that healing the planet and its people are intertwined. The book is both heart-wrenching and inspiring, filled with personal stories of patients and the challenges of creating systemic change. It leaves readers with a sense of urgency — and optimism — about what’s possible when compassion and science work together.

FOODRAISING FORAGE, NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Mark your calendars for our kick-off on November 2nd. First Pres is teaming up with the Methodists and Episcopalians to tackle stocking the shelves of the food-bank. Our plan is to try to break last years collection of food, which was 3,714 pounds.

Check out the Thursday Fresh flyers at your local grocery stores. Additionally, we will have an opportunity to collect for at Super 1 on November 21st and December 19th. More info to follow.

FELLOWSHIP

Volunteers are needed to host coffee hour after church on October 19 and October 26!



FAMILY FAVORITES

Do you have a treasured (non-copyrighted!) family recipe that you'd like to share with the church family? Drop them off in the church office or email them to Dana at Office@fpcsandpoint.org. Please share a little info about the person who created the recipe, if you can.

This month's favorite recipe comes from Geri Stockman. It's a perfect cake to snack on. Peanut butter and chocolate chips—what's not to like! Plus it's easy to make. Maybe it will show up at Fellowship one of these Sundays...

Peanut Butter Crunch Cake

1 pkg yellow cake mix	1/4 c. vegetable oil
1/2 c. brown sugar	3 eggs
1 c. peanut butter (smooth or chunky)	1/3 c. chopped nuts (your choice)
1 c. water	6 oz. chocolate chips

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease and flour 13x9 pan. Beat dry cake mix, brown sugar, and peanut butter in bowl on low until crumbly. Reserve 2/3 c. of crumbly mixture. Beat remaining crumbly mixture, water, oil, and eggs on low, scraping bowl constantly, until moistened. Beat on medium, scraping frequently, 2 minutes. Pour batter into pan. Sprinkle reserved crumbly mixture, nuts, and chocolate chips over batter. Bake until cake springs back when touched lightly in center, 40 to 45 minutes.





OCTOBER EVENTS

- 9/29-10/1** **Pastor Catherine in Wenatchee**
- 10/5** **Peace and Global Witness Offering**
- 10/9** **Earth Care Meeting, Retreat Room 11 a.m.-12p.m.**
- 10/11** **Dream Workshop, Fellowship Hall 9 a.m.-12 p.m., see article on page 10**
- 10/18** **Dream Workshop, Fellowship Hall 9 a.m.-12 p.m.**
- 10/21** **Ezra Project Meeting in Washtucna**
- 10/27** **November Grapevine articles due, 9:00 a.m.**



10/1 Carol Curtis
10/7 Barney Ballard
10/19 Marilyn Robertson
10/20 Wesley Dustman
10/30 Ken Callison
10/31 Catherine Lyle

*Did we miss your birthday or get the date wrong?
Email the office and let us know!
office@fpcsandpoint.org*

REGULAR MONTHLY EVENTS



Sunday

- 11:00 a.m. Worship, In-Person and Livestream (<https://www.youtube.com/@firstpresbyteriansandpoint>)
- 7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Monday-Saturday

- 7:00 a.m. AA meeting

Monday

- 9:00 a.m. TOPS meeting (Take Off Pounds Sensibly)
- 6:00 p.m. Al-Anon meeting

Tuesday

- 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Book Study and Contemplative Prayer Group
- 7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Wednesday

- 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Rainbow Soup Kitchen community meal
- 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. Church choir practice
- 7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Thursday

- 12:00 p.m. Al-Anon meeting
- 7:00 p.m. AA meeting



First Presbyterian Church

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Ministers

Members and Friends

Pastor Catherine Lyle

Pastor cell phone: 509-570-3938

Office hours

Monday 9:00-12:00

Wednesday 9:00-12:00