



## From the pastor

We walk as Easter People!

Christians who worship on Sunday because it is 3 days post Good Friday make a bold declaration each Sunday. We proclaim that God is capable to do anything, and with the aid of Christ we overcome death, turn weapons into plows for crops, and God's abundance can provide for each person. We are called to keep the faith, to work towards the eventual kin-dom to come as it is in heaven and to love our neighbors.

It is not easy work, and we can get lost in the ways we are losing sight of these dreams. With new large-scale acts of violence, rising costs yet again for the dwindling middle class and ever growing lower economic class, and loneliness at an all-time high... we wonder. We wonder if we are failing and will we ever get back up again. We even doubt that the Holy Spirit walks among us today. We might even settle into depression and other shadows, trying to remain hidden as wounded as we are, without creating new scars.

So back into Plato's cave we see images from the media flashing on the walls that remind us to stay in the cave. To stay in the darkened cold, shivering, and frightened. Perhaps we find ourselves longing like the male disciples to stay locked in an upper room and away from the streets and workers with no choice but to fend for themselves. Hiding is a natural inclination and for hundreds of years following the death and resurrection of Jesus, Christians had to worship in secrecy as Christianity was defined by war loving politicians in power, as an illegal cult.

At some point we must decide. Do you stay and remain in a cave slowly rotting and waiting for the flashing images to change into a palatable scene? Or do you take the hand of Christ, step out into the light, and co-create with God making the world more like God's good Kin-dom for all? Do you stop letting yourself be persuaded by evil and do what is right, simply because it is the right thing to do.

We are closer to God in our time than we realize as once again war loving politicians are telling religious leaders, peacekeepers, and even the Pope to get back into the cave. To hide in upper rooms of churches and leave the streets to their unchecked whims. Easter People, this is our time to walk not just on Sunday but everyday among the foulness of this world and love our neighbors. Easter People, God is calling you to turn from flickering shadows and walk into real conversations with your neighbors, the workers, the orphans, the widows, and even the tax collectors hiding in trees. Today Easter People are called to rise again. To walk into the unfamiliar bright light and face the heat of the sun alongside others with no shelter nor worldly assurance. In this time, we live up to our namesake as Easter People.

Pastor Catherine

P.S. Another email claiming to be from "Pastor Catherine" is making the rounds, using a slightly alternate email address. I would never directly ask people for money or gift cards. This is a scam! When in doubt, contact the office or me directly, using the phone number or email address in the church directory.



**If you are interested in attending one class or them all, please sign up with Pastor Catherine. We will be teaching from the “What’s Up With That?” digital curriculum with Rev. Becky Anderson.**

*They will be Sunday afternoons in the Fireside Room. 12:30-2pm*

- April 26 at 12:30pm — Our History (Methodist and Presbyterian)
- May 3 at 12:30pm — Government (PCUSA and Methodist)
- Skip Mother's Day (May 10)
- May 17 at 12:30pm — Our Theology
- May 24 at 12:30pm — Worship & Lingering Questions



## Session Notes April 15, 2026

Since the March meeting occurred a week earlier than normal, Session had a busy agenda for April. Our meetings begin at 1:30 PM and target adjourning at 3:00 PM. We achieved that goal despite the lengthy agenda. I'll briefly mention some the highlights of the meeting.

With spring cleaning on everyone's to-do list, Mary Sturgis, Building and Grounds elder, listed several items to spiff-up our facilities:

- A roofer has been contacted to replace the missing shingles on the sanctuary roof.
- Session discussed either replacing or removing the unused drinking water fountain in the hallway between the pastor's office and the retreat room. Since the water supply contains galvanized, leaded pipes, a motion to remove the fountain was approved.
- Session approved adding additional hours to our custodian's contract to accommodate the increased use of church facilities.
- Schedule a "deep cleaning" day in May for both indoor and outdoor projects.
- Permits were issued from the Sandpoint Urban Forestry Department to remove the two dead flowering plum trees within the city right-of-way on Fourth Avenue. They will be replaced with two similar trees.
- Session approved a motion from the Earth Care Committee to plant a serviceberry and wild currant shrub in the Peace Garden in memory of Marilyn Robertson and Dave Pietz.
- Session approved designating several reserved parking spaces in the alley for church staff. A no-parking zone will be delineated in front of the dumpster.

Judy McComish reported that the Ezra 3 Project committee is seeking approval to apply the anticipated \$10,000 grant toward adding a new handicap-accessible restroom in the educational building. These grants normally cannot be used for improving church facilities. However, the lack of adequate restrooms significantly hinders the community outreach goals that we hope to implement through Ezra 3.

Paula Vincent, outgoing finance elder, and Susie Haskins met with Kurt Hartvigsen, Financial Administrator of the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest, to conduct an external financial review of the 2025 FPC finances and procedures. We were commended for our accurate record keeping along with several recommendations to ensure the integrity of our financial controls. Bravo to our financial team!

Pastor Catherine prepared a draft Church Mission Study for our review. This important document is the first phase in calling a permanent pastor. She also announced that Rev. Becky Anderson will assist her in conducting a new members class.

Yes, it was a busy and productive session meeting.

See you on Sunday,  
Bill L., Clerk of Session

## Missions

### **St. Patrick's Day Dinner:**

The St. Patrick's Day Dinner was held at FPC on March 14 in collaboration with the Sandpoint Senior Center (SASi). It was a great success, with 68 meals served and approximately \$1,100 raised for FPC and SASi, each.

### **One Great Hour of Sharing Special Offering:**

The One Great Hour of Sharing Offering is collected each year during Lent, typically on Easter Sunday. Around the world, millions of people lack access to sustainable food sources, clean water, sanitation, education, and opportunity. The One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering supports work in disaster relief, hunger, poverty, climate change, and immigration/migration and refugees. It provides people with safety, sustenance, and hope by supporting people facing these challenging situations. Our church donated \$559 to this offering. Thank you for your generosity!

### **Ezra 3 Project**

**Save the Date! April 26, 2026**

The Ezra team wants to hear from you about our current ideas for a project.

We will provide brunch.

### **Ezra Overview/Update:**

The Presbytery of the Inland Northwest (PINW) 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.

In August 2025, our church joined Cohort 2 of this project which will continue through summer of 2026. Churches with 100 or fewer members are included in Cohort 2, which includes Bethany, Post Falls, Sandpoint, Washtucna, and Whitworth. The FPC design team for this project is Pastor Catherine, Paula V., Mary S., and Judy M. FPC has been very busy over the past nine months. Our congregation, along with the design team, has completed online surveys, engaged in interviews both with members of the congregation and with others who are actively involved in our church, explored our neighborhood (I Spy) to “see” our community in a new way, met with community leaders and a consultant team from Partners for Sacred Places (Community Conversation, November 2025). All these activities were focused on identifying needs in the community and ideas for ways we can use our building to help meet those needs. In early January 2026, we received the report from the Partners for Sacred Places that summarized the needs identified in the Community Conversation and made recommendations for moving forward. Copies of this report are available in the church office. Finally, at the January 29, 2026, Cohort meeting, our design team developed a Property Mission Statement that was presented to and approved at a special meeting of Session on February 1, 2026. The Property Mission Statement builds on the FPC Mission Statement and will be used to guide our thinking as we go forward and engage with potential partners for future project(s). The complete text of the FPC Mission Statement and the Property Mission Statement are attached in an Appendix.

**Strengths of our church:** We are a church that welcomes everyone, is engaged in building community, and committed to taking the love of Christ into the world. Our Vision is: Living, Loving, and Learning the Joy of Faith. Music is and has always been an important avenue for expressing our faith within the community.

The needs and challenges identified in the Community Conversation were consistent with those identified by our design team and congregation (see p. 7 of PSP Report).

## Missions

### Needs:

- Affordable meeting space
- Affordable preschool/childcare
- Affordable housing
- Desire to stave off the loneliness epidemic

### Challenges:

- Lack of accessible restrooms
- Lack of temperature regulation
- Lack of parking

**Next steps:** At the January 29, 2026, Cohort meeting, each team was asked to identify our top three ideas for an Ezra project. Partners for Sacred Spaces has labeled these projects as a “Social Enterprise.” The FPC team stated that we are not at that point yet, and we were reassured that we can proceed at the pace that seems right for our church. Our design team met on February 16 to begin to refine our ideas about a Social Enterprise that addresses the identified needs and will help our community flourish. Our current thinking is that we may be able to address needs in the following areas and we have some tentative ideas for consideration:

- Child drop off, short-term daycare (e.g., 2-3 hours/week)
- Socialization (e.g., coffee club, men’s group, game day, etc.)
- Music groups (e.g., Youth Bell Choir)
- Peace Garden enterprises

To be able to increase use of our church space we must first address the challenges that were identified. **The area that we currently plan to address is accessibility.** Two areas where this is needed:

- Creation of an accessible restroom
- Access to the chancel so that people (such as musicians) with mobility limitations can utilize our sanctuary

On March 18, our church hosted the four other churches in the Cohort and staff from the PINW. At that meeting we shared our tentative ideas for potential projects with the other groups and learned about their ideas. One thing that was reassuring is that other churches are still working to identify a project—and that all churches can move forward at their own pace.

Our design team looks forward to continued discussions with the congregation to help us refine our ideas and identify community partners who can help us design a Social Enterprise that we can move forward in late summer for potential funding.

**Join us in Fellowship Hall on April 26, 2026**

**We want to hear your ideas!**

Respectfully submitted,

Ezra Design Team, Pastor Catherine, Mary S., Paula V., Judy M.

## Missions

### APPENDIX FPC PROPERTY MISSION STATEMENT

**FPC MISSION:** *We are called to take the Light and Love of Christ into the world!*

We carry out our mission by:

- NURTURING people on their faith journeys
- WITNESSING to our faith in ministry and mission beyond ourselves and
- PROVIDING meaningful, changing worship every week.

#### **EZRA Project**

As participants with the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest Ezra project, we are exploring ideas for stewarding our land and buildings in ways that align with our mission and contribute to a flourishing community.

**Tag Line:** *“Building Community in the Heart of Sandpoint”*

#### **Property Mission/Purpose**

The property mission of the First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint is to demonstrate the Love of Christ through

- the creation and care of welcoming, affordable and accessible space for community use
- the development of partnerships with others to serve the common good, and
- the promotion of an inclusive, compassionate, and just world.

Approved 01.February.2026

## Fellowship

Gosh, I hate to be a broken record, but here I am again asking for volunteers for our weekly Fellowship gatherings. If two people sign up, it's not a strain on anyone. Many others are kind enough to jump in and help. There are often leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer; please check there so they don't go to waste. There are instructions taped to one of the green cabinets. Don't forget, if you have to purchase items, we have our tax number registered at Yokes, Safeway and Super One. All you have to do is tell the checker, and you will not be charged tax. You will be asked to sign. Thank you to all who regularly sign up as I think we can all agree, this time of fellowship helps bring us closer together as a church family.

As a reminder, I am still collecting aluminum pull tabs for Ronald McDonald House. There is a collections spot outside the church office.

With much appreciation,  
Sylvia H., Fellowship Elder



## Worship and Music

### Changing Seasonal Colors

The Easter Season continues at First Presbyterian Church. What are the signs and symbols of Easter that you notice?

A first clue of the Easter season was Palm Sunday – with the palms that decorated the church sanctuary on March 29 – the beginning of Holy Week and the last week of purple paraments on the pulpit marking the season of Lent.

Beginning on Easter – April 5, the paraments changed to the liturgical color of white and continue as white for the season of Easter – April 5 through May 24. On May 24 we celebrate the day of Pentecost and decorate with red paraments. After Pentecost, the paraments are green for “Ordinary Time” until All Saints Day and Christ the King Sunday in November with white paraments. In December, the color changes to purple for Advent. The Season of Christmas (December 25 – January 6) is marked with white paraments, then we transition to green paraments until we begin the season of Lent.

These color changes have deep symbolism in the Christian calendar and are tangible reminders of the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. We change the colors to remind us of our shared faith story, and deepen our understanding of where we’ve been, and where we’re going.

Each Sunday as we participate in Worship, we greet one another, we pray together, we sing together, we bring our tithes and offering, and we share in fellowship. This weekly gathering together, helps to “reset” our spiritual clocks, and help keep us centered in our faith. The colors we see in the church are tangible reminders of where we are in the rhythm of church year, and Easter is where our story truly begins.

As always, I’ll be sending out emails looking for volunteers to assist on Sundays, and other special occasions. Many thanks to all our volunteers! Ushers, worship assistants, live streamers, fellowship hosts, choir members, decorators, planners... Our church family is very active in all of these functions, and we are blessed.

Kirsten T. – Worship Elder



## Bonner Community Food Bank

In the last 3 months:

- 18,000+ pounds of food rescued
- 3,000 households served each month
- 92 volunteers making it happen

From sorting donations to stocking shelves, this work is happening every single week—and it's making a difference for families across our community. Each number represents a neighbor, a shared meal, a little more breathing room.

### Volunteer Highlight: Tammie Harder

Tammie has been a part of the Food Bank family for over a decade, and we couldn't be happier to welcome her back! With her heart of gold, deep experience, and meticulous attention to detail, she's making our front office shine.

Shoppers love her, and her presence brings both joy and order to our busy little corner of the community. From helping behind the scenes to greeting everyone with a smile, Tammie reminds us what makes our work so special: people like her.

We love you, Tammie!



Tammie stands on the left side of the image, bringing her signature warmth to the team.

### Death to Lawns

Our longstanding tradition of growing nonnative grass lawns—trimmed to perfection—is actually creating a biological desert hungry for water, a mono-crop without any natural diversity. There are around 40 million acres of grass lawns in the United States—an area roughly the size of Wisconsin. All these lawns consume nearly 9 billion gallons of water each day. Lawn care itself is a billion-dollar industry. The pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers—many banned in the European Union—contribute to an unsustainable world. So before they kill us and the rest of nature, it is time we change our behavior.

Before you gas up (or plug in) your energy-eating lawnmowers, weed-whackers, and leaf blowers—RETHINK. What could be more drought-resistant, need little tending especially mowing, and actually bring more beauty into your yard?? Plant native plants, clover grasses and pollinator-loving shrubs. They can be a little messier, but according to PhD botanists like Robin Wall Kimmerer, Benjamin Vogt, and my friend Bren Beckwith, they can bring more essential insects, bees, moths and butterflies, both for pollination, shelter and a stable food source. Certain flowers and shrubs have essential relations—insects that evolved only to relate to that particular plant. And since everything in nature is interconnected, insect-eating birds like yellow warblers will thrive as well. Or plant a vegetable garden instead of your front lawn grass for all to admire when they drive past your home.

Dandelions are Eurasian in origin, but have established themselves so long in our country, so leave the dandelions for the earliest emerging pollinators, or eat them yourself. The roots, leaves and flowers fried like fritters, are not only delicious, they are packed with nutrients that will strengthen and heal the body. I agree with Reader writer Soncirey Mitchell; “Too bad people hate these happy little flowers so much that they risk cancer to kill them.”

Check out Kimmerer’s new online site—[plantbabyplant.com](http://plantbabyplant.com). Or Doug Tallamy’s updated and expanded book *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife With Native Plants*. Or Benjamin Vogt’s site—[www.prairieup.com](http://www.prairieup.com) for more information. Or Vogt’s new book, *A New Garden Ethic: Cultivating Defiant Compassion for an Uncertain Future*.

Ultimately, there’s a Christian component to all of this retraining of our behaviors: “Our outdoor spaces should be sites where ‘we encounter God and the diversity of the beauty of creation, and nurture it as stewards, not control it to a very limited and not very fertile place,’ says theologian Erin Lothes. Lawn culture represents a mindset of control, consumption, and individualism. Lawns reflect not only questions about sustainability and creation care, but they also raise issues about wealth and human dignity and the use of resources that could benefit the common good.” —source: [www.uscatholic.org](http://www.uscatholic.org) “A Catholic Case Against Lawns” by Cassidy Klein.

Have a good spring and enjoy planting a new way. A New Creation!  
Jane F., Earth Care Team Member

## 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](mailto:Office@fpcsandpoint.org). Please share a little info about the person who created the recipe, if you can.

This month we have Mary B.'s recipe for Simple Taco Soup that she found on the Taste of Home website. Mary always brings this delicious soup to our soup suppers, and now you can make it, too, just in time for Cinco de Mayo! ¡Olé!

### Simple Taco Soup

2 lbs ground beef  
1 envelope taco seasoning  
1 1/2 cups water  
1 can (16 oz) mild chili beans, undrained  
1 can (15 1/4 oz) whole kernel corn, drained  
1 can (15 oz) pinto beans, rinsed and drained  
1 can (14 1/2 oz) stewed tomatoes  
1 can (10 oz) diced tomato with green chiles  
1 can (4 oz) chopped green chiles, optional  
1 envelope ranch salad dressing mix  
Optional: sour cream, green onions, shredded cheese

In a Dutch oven, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink, breaking it into crumbles; drain. Add taco seasoning and mix well. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes or until heated through, stirring occasionally. If desired, garnish with sour cream, green onion, and shredded cheese.





## MAY BIRTHDAYS

|             |                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>5/1</b>  | <b>Mary B.</b>                  |
| <b>5/2</b>  | <b>Judy McC.</b>                |
| <b>5/8</b>  | <b>Jim S.</b>                   |
| <b>5/9</b>  | <b>Don H.</b>                   |
| <b>5/18</b> | <b>Ted R.</b><br><b>Stan L.</b> |
| <b>5/30</b> | <b>Nancy A.</b>                 |

*Did we miss your birthday or get the date wrong? Please let the office know at [office@fpcsandpoint.org](mailto:office@fpcsandpoint.org).*



- 5/3** New Member Class, 12:30-2:00, Fireside Room
- 5/10** Mother's Day
- 5/12** Earth Care Team meeting, 10:00-11:30
- 5/17** New Member Class, 12:30-2:00, Fireside Room
- 5/18** Festival at Sandpoint Youth Orchestra concert, 6:00
- 5/20** Session Meeting, 1:30-3:00, Fireside Room
- 5/24** Pentecost (Wear red to church!)  
New Member Class, 12:30-2:00, Fireside Room
- 5/25** Memorial Day  
Grapevine articles due, 9:00

## 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. 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. Church choir practice
- 7:00 p.m. AA meeting

### *Thursday*

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



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## ***First Presbyterian Church***

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[www.fpcsandpoint.org](http://www.fpcsandpoint.org)

### ***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