



First
Presbyterian
Church *of Sandpoint*

The Grapevine

September 2026

Ordination Potluck Gratefulness!

Thank you, Methodist and Presbyterian friends, so much for all your time putting together such a lovely potluck. We loved the food, words of encouragement, the two beautiful stoles, and thoughtful gifts. My family and I have always had the practice that ministry is a family business so when the hard and good times happen (like our potluck) we share the load and blessings. Each one of our boys thought they could each keep a stole which totally made laugh. I told them that when they become pastors, they can wear them. To which Braeden said he wants to be a lawyer because they make more money and Rowan said he'll think about it.

Thank you all of you for doing ministry with me. Ministry of the church works the best when we share the load as a church. Sharing the load as churches in our community during these changing times once again is the way we are called to love our neighbors and lead by example. Thank you all for all that you are doing, and I am excited to see where we go before we are all done with our own individual race and are reunited with loved ones in heaven before our Creator and Redeemer.

God Bless!
Pastor Catherine

Blessing OUR Educators & Little Learners

Join us Sunday, September 13, as we bless our school children, teachers, parents, volunteers, and supporting staff of our community. We also have a Jesus key chain to give to them! We will be praying together that their lessons be achievable, their safety insured, new friends are made, and older friendships might gain some fun new memories.

Summer Ending and Fall Beginning Sermon Series

This past summer we spent a few weeks with playdough and reflected through Jeremiah's illustration of the potter and their clay, the ways God is molding and reshaping our lives. We sat with the southern community of Jeremiah's time with armies on their doorstep and leaders within who claimed to be close to God but did anything but what God instructed them to do. We remembered that God has been with countries like ours and we rested assured in the peace that God will be with us as we are being reshaped and molded once again. Our peace never came from politicians, nor the voters who put them there. But rather our peace comes from our faith knowing that we serve a God who loves us, redeems us, and sustains us.

This Fall we are going to be talking about the kind of spiritual jars we are and the ways God intends to bless us from within. Rather than decorating our outward bodies like decorating the outside of a church, how is it that God works from within? What are the types of prayers that God hopes we pray for? What ways does a spiritual God manifest within the lives of us today? How might we be more in sync with the Holy Spirit? For us to be more like Jesus, we need to ask for the deeper more meaningful questions and ways of being. The process matters and your choice to participate in God's dreaming is the first step. Dream with us as we are filled with the gifts of God this Fall.

Worship and Music

My goodness! What a summer it's been. Given the heat, the fire danger, and the general business of living in North Idaho, I'm sure that many folks feel a sense of relief as we return to shorter days and cooler nights in September.

As we swing into Fall, please be looking for the emails with attached schedules for Worship Assistants, Live Streamers, Ushers, and Sanctuary Opener/Closer. All of these tasks add to the warmth and meaning for worship, and I am so grateful for the way that folks raise their hands to serve. I include a reminder about Fellowship hosts in my schedule. Don't forget to sign up during Fellowship following church, and check in with Sylvia H. about the particulars. Thanks, Sylvia, for helping me to navigate the mysteries of making coffee last Sunday. 😊

Choir will resume rehearsals on September 9 from noon to 1 p.m. Director Dana S. says that choir will be singing in Worship on scheduled dates being in October.

The Fall Adult Sunday School class led by Sharon Anderson will be starting up on Sunday September 6 at 9:30. The curriculum for the fall is based on the PCUSA curriculum and the Revised Common Lectionary and should be an excellent preparation for and companion to our worship experience on Sundays.

See you in the Fall! Kirsten T. – Worship Elder



A Big Thank You

Our alley parking has now been striped and labeled, and the handicap spot by the Alder Street entrance has been repainted.

Kudos to Elder Mary S. and custodian Mo M. for getting the job done, and especially Arby's owner Pierre, who loaned us Arby's paint striping equipment and stencils.

Building Use

The Tuesday Book Study is starting up the fall sessions on September 8, from 12:30 - 2:00 pm. Join us for a half hour of contemplative time followed by an hour of reading and reflecting on the essays in the book. These sessions are hybrid meetings both in-person at the church and by Zoom. So if it's better for you to join from home, feel free to do so.

The pick for this fall is *The Perennial Tradition* from the Center for Action and Contemplation Oneing series. Participants do not need to buy anything. Judy will email out the readings well in advance of the sessions.

The Perennial Tradition teaches that beneath the differences among the world's religions and philosophies lies a recurring wisdom: there is a Divine Reality within and beyond all things, and human beings have an innate capacity and longing to experience it. Richard Rohr and the contributors to Oneing emphasize that the goal of spiritual life is not to prove one tradition superior to another, but to awaken to the deep unity, love, and divine presence that mystics and wisdom teachers have recognized throughout history. In this view, the task is less to discover a new truth than to retrieve and live the ancient truth that all creation is connected in God, while honoring the rich diversity through which that truth is expressed.

Essay contributors include Richard Rohr, David Benner, Cynthia Bourgeault, Diana Butler Bass, John Esposito, James Finley, Robert Sardello, and others.

Contact Judy or Sharon if you have questions or you are welcome to just show up on Tuesday, September 8, at 12:30 pm.

Adult Sunday School

This fall, our Adult Sunday School class will follow the Scripture readings from the Revised Common Lectionary. Our study will use the *Feasting on the Word* curriculum from the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA).

Feasting on the Word

Based on the PC(USA) curriculum and the Revised Common Lectionary (Year A)

Series Overview

Feasting on the Word follows the Revised Common Lectionary, allowing people of all ages to study the same Scripture each week and encouraging families to grow in faith together.

Discussion Questions

- What is important to know?
- Where is God in these words?
- So What does this mean for our lives?
- Now What is God's Word calling us to do?

First Fall Session

Many Christians seek clear guidance from God when facing important decisions. Yet God's call can be unsettling, especially when it leads us beyond our comfort zones or into the unknown. In our first session, we will explore a biblical story of an unexpected encounter with the holy and consider how God calls ordinary people to new paths of faith.

I Am Amazed

March 24, 2026

I am amazed
at the way my mind
leaps from thought to thought,
building bridges
where none may exist.
One thing happens,
then another,
and I quickly name
the connection.
Coincidence.
Synchronicity.
God.

But what do I really know?
Did it simply happen?
Was it meant to be?
Did God arrange it,
or did I create meaning
afterward?

And if God caused the joy,
did God also cause the sorrow?
Did God take the life?
Send the pain?
Choose the loss?

I cannot believe
that suffering is punishment
or that every wound
was carefully planned.
Perhaps God is not
the cause of every event,
but the presence within it—
the love that remains,
the hand that reaches out,
the courage that rises,
the quiet voice that whispers,
Pay attention.

I can question my thinking
without losing my wonder.
I can live without certainty
and still remain open
to mystery.

Oh, what a strange life we live.
What do we really know?
Perhaps only this:
We are here,
we are connected,
and something sacred
moves among us.



Missions

Spokane Fires Disaster Relief Fund

Our church will be donating \$3,000 from the Missions Fund to the Spokane Disaster Relief Fund that is being established by the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest.

If you would like to make a donation to add to our church's donation, please put a check in a Pew Envelope and put it in the offering plate. We will hold our donation until the beginning of September and will send in your donation along with ours.

Make check payable to: Presbytery of the Inland Northwest

Note on memo line: Spokane Disaster Relief Fund

Ezra 3 Project Update – August 2026

Overview of Ezra 3

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. Each church can write a proposal for funding for a church-specific project for up to \$10,000.

FPC Involvement

In August 2025, our church joined Cohort 2 of this project which will continue through 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 Rev. Catherine Lyle, Paula Vincent, Mary Sturgis, and Judy McComish.

FPC has been very busy over the past year. 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.

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. The complete text of the FPC Mission Statement and the Property Mission Statement are available in the church office.

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 Report were consistent with those identified by our design team and congregation (see p. 7 of PSP Report).

Missions

Community Needs:

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

FPC Challenges:

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

To be able to increase use of our church space by members of the community we must first address the challenges that were identified. **In collaboration with the congregation, the challenge that the design team has decided to address with the Ezra Project is accessibility. We will do this by creating a restroom that is available to all people, family friendly and wheelchair accessible.**

In May, 2026, our design team presented our idea for the restroom project at the Ezra Cohort meeting in Spokane and received support to move forward with our idea. Following that, FPC's Session approved us to move forward with approaching builders to obtain a cost estimate.

On June 10, 2026, our design team held our initial meeting with Dustin Lutz, of Red Dog Construction, to look at our space and share ideas about what area(s) of the church would be the best option for a new restroom. Together, we explored areas of the educational wing that can potentially be used, considering the cost issues we may encounter.

Subsequent meetings were held with Mr. Lutz and a plumber on June 13, with an electrician on June 21, and with a mechanical engineer on August 5 to determine what is needed for the project. We are currently awaiting an estimate for the project from Mr. Lutz.

Our next design team meeting is scheduled for August 26. At that meeting, via Zoom, we will meet Rev. Ben Robinson, the Coach that we were assigned by the PINW. Rev. Robinson has extensive experience with fundraising for church projects and with renovation of a church building, including creating an accessible bathroom.

Finally, Paula V. and Judy M. have begun a draft of the proposal which we will submit to PINW. After the proposal is reviewed by Rev. Robinson and the PINW staff, we will make revisions and submit the proposal to the Lily Foundation for funding.

Respectfully submitted,

Ezra Design Team

Pastor Catherine, Mary S., Paula V., and Judy M.

Bonner Community Food Bank News

BCFB Fall Cleaning Day: Come Find a Treasure!

We're getting ready for our big move and sorting our storage spaces—and you never know what you might find! Come browse a fun assortment of holiday décor, office supplies, and more.

Everything is FREE to take! No prices, no checkout, no purchase necessary. If you find a treasure you'd like to take home, we simply invite you to make a voluntary donation to BCFB if you're able.

Come take something off our hands and help us clear the way for our next chapter!

September 10, 1707 Culvers Drive Parking Lot

Our team has also been busy helping collect and distribute food to support people displaced by the devastating fires in the Spokane area. We're proud to be able to respond when our neighbors need us—and we couldn't do it without the incredible members who step up alongside us!

Fellowship

First I would like to thank everyone who participated in the BBQ last month. Oh my, we had plenty of food, thank you all! Special thanks to the folks who helped set up and clean up and a special kudos to Chef Brian.

We still have some time for the consumption of soda, etc, so if you can remember, I would appreciate your saving the pull tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. They can be left on the table next to the church office.

Another reminder for Fellowship volunteers. There are always plenty of folks willing to help with cleanup and I will be glad to assist in set up if you've never done it before. It can be as simple as a tray of cookies. Grab a buddy and don't forget, anything you purchase will be tax free at the three major grocery stores in town, just tell the checker.

Many Blessings!
Sylvia, Fellowship Elder

Earth Care Team

Plant Dedication in memory of Marilyn Robertson and Dave Pietz



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.

It's zucchini season, so I'm breaking out Mom's never fail Zucchini Nut Bread recipe for you. It makes two loaves, one to enjoy now and one to put in the freezer for later. —Dana S.

Zucchini Nut Bread

3 c. sifted flour
1 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
1/4 tsp baking powder
3 eggs
2 c. sugar
1 c. cooking oil
1 Tbsp vanilla
2 c. grated, unpared zucchini
1/2 c. chopped nuts (I like to use walnuts, can also be omitted)
1 tsp flour

Sift together 3 cups flour, cinnamon, baking soda, salt, and baking powder.

Beat eggs well in bowl. Gradually add sugar and oil, mixing well. Add vanilla and dry ingredients; blend well. Stir in zucchini.

combine walnuts with 1 tsp flour; stir into batter. Pour into 2 greased 8 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 2 1/2 inch loaf pans.

Bake in 350 degree oven 1 hour or until bread tests done. Cool in pans on racks 10 minutes.

Remove from pans; cool on racks. Makes 2 loaves.



Calendar



9/1	Sylvia H.
9/21	Carol B.
	Judy L.
9/24	Karen R.
9/30	Marian C.

*Did we miss your birthday or get the date wrong? Please
let the office know at office@fpcsandpoint.org.*



- 9/2-6 Pastor Catherine in North Carolina
- 9/7 Labor Day, Church Office is closed
- 9/9 Choir practice resumes, 12:00-1:00 p.m.
- 9/15 Earth Care Team meeting, 10:00-11:30 a.m.
- 9/16 Session meeting, 1:30-3:00 p.m.
- 9/19 Bonner County Human Rights Task Force presentation on the separation of church and state, noon
- 9/21 October Grapevine articles due, 9:00 a.m.

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 (starting September 9)
- 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