



First
Presbyterian
Church of Sandpoint

The Grapevine

October 2026

From the pastor

The Church Doesn't Need a Savior and his name is Jesus.

What the church needs is the Body of the Church to be in right relationship with God and each other. We were called in the time before Jesus, when we were still discovering and exploring the nature of God to, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (Deuteronomy 6:5) In case someone tried to interpret being a follower of God as a license to be mean to others, we were called to "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18).

When time moved on and we were at some of our lowest points in human history under the Roman occupation in a world full of petty false God's, Jesus came in sacrificed himself. Just in case we thought we were done loving our God and our neighbor because times were cruel Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." (Matthew 22:37-40). We often print the words of Jesus because he paid for them with his own blood and life. Let us be reminded that the hard work is already complete.

So, how do we honor our God, Jesus, and the church without formulating a savior's complex. Simple, we love each other. When we love another person, we do not get to speak for them or gossip about them. If each heart is loved, then that heart and only that heart can speak for themselves. We have faith that they will not answer to us but to our God who knows every heart. When people feel safe and respected, they are drawn to that church because everyone from the widow living on a tight fixed income, to the wealthy, to the custodian and to the pastors, is loved, whether they are in the room or not. We sustain holy ground by living out our values in good and bad times. We are not called to fix each other. That is work of God and if we let God do what God is already doing we can expect our church and the body of Christ to only grow closer to God's ways and kingdom available to us all today.

So, this October as the seasons change and kids think about a costume they would like to wear on Halloween, let us shed the sheep's clothing disguising us as the saviors of the church. Let us have faith that we will have enough candy for everyone. Let us be reminded that the veil between heaven and earth is thinned so long as we love one another. Let us live in God's assurance now and forever. Amen.

Pastor Catherine

Session Notes September 21, 2026

Session took its usual summer vacation and did not meet in July and August.

For several years, session met on the third Wednesday of the month beginning at 1:30 PM. However, because of several conflicts this month, we opted to meet on Monday, September 21. The date looked good for most elders but, unfortunately, things came up and we lacked a quorum to hold an official meeting on the rescheduled date. This did not deter Judy M., Pastor Catherine and me to have informal discussions on the various agenda items.

During our summer vacation, Session gave email approval for several organizations to use church facilities. We need to formally ratify those requests at our next meeting with a quorum.

A couple of these events took place during the summer, including a request from the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force to host a Christian Nationalism program attended by approximately 50 people. Also, Cynthia D. and Linda N. hosted a Sophie Polderman's presentation that was well attended.

The Kinninnick Chapter of the Native Plant Society normally holds their monthly business/educational meetings at the East Bonner County Library. However, they have been displaced due to a construction project and request meeting in our fellowship hall from October 2026 to March 2027. We view this as compatible and complimentary to our Earth Care Congregations mission and will consider waiving the rental fee.

The Suzuki Strings and the Festival at Sandpoint Youth Orchestra requests to use our facilities for upcoming rehearsals and concerts. Both of these organizations appreciate our accommodations along with the wonderful acoustics of our sanctuary.

We deferred a request from Sharon Rings to conduct A Course in Miracles study group on Monday evenings until we have a quorum.

Judy M. was pleased to announce that our church sent a donation of \$4,745 to the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest to support Spokane Fire Disaster Relief. This includes \$3,000 from the former Deacon's fund with the remainder donated by individuals. Our gift, when channeled through the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program, is multiplied many times over by churches nationwide.

With the increased use of church facilities, Session approved purchasing an AED device and a professional quality first aid kit. They should be installed soon and we prefer they not be used, but like the Boy Scout motto, we will "Be Prepared" if needed.

Judy M. gave an update on the Ezra 3 Project to construct an additional accessible unisex restroom in the educational building. A bid has been received and will require session approval before proceeding with a funding scheme.

We also discussed the status of our handbells that are on loan to the Music Conservatory of Sandpoint. Because they have a current replacement value of over \$50,000, we itemize them separately in our church insurance policy. We informally discussed developing a written agreement to MCS to continue using the bells and the possibility of charging a rental fee.

Well, as you can see, our small group conducted lengthy discussions on a number of topics as we look forward to our October meeting of Session to make decisions on them.

Peace and all good,
Bill L., Clerk of Session

Adult Sunday School

God is Love

Betty Cady

I choose to be delightful today,
In everything I do and say.

I could win or I could lose
It is up to me what I choose.

I would rather be happy
Than feel so morosely sappy.

I prefer to smile
Than run a mile
The other way
As I may.

I respond with, "Good morning,
Good afternoon,
Good night."
To everyone I encounter, rather
Than I take flight.

This way I never meet a stranger
So, what is the eminent danger?

However, that is not all
Because when I execute a fall
I can rise beyond and walk proud and tall.

The decision is mine
Every solitary time.

I love everyone on earth
Regardless of their birth.

Do not have misgivings or fret
It is simply not over yet.

If it is not,
Do not be distraught.

In the end everything will be OK
Act in love each day
It is the only way.



Missions

Spokane Fires Disaster Relief Fund

Our church has generously provided \$4,745 for the Spokane Fires Disaster Relief Fund.

\$3,000 of this money is coming from the Missions Fund. \$1,745 was donated by members of our congregation. The money was sent to the PINW.

Thank you for your generosity and compassion for the people affected by the fires!

Ezra 3 Project Update – September 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.

In August 2025, our church joined Cohort 2 of this project which will continue into 2027. 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, Paula V., Mary S., and Judy M.

FPC Involvement – current status

A comprehensive update for the last year was provided in the September issue of The Grapevine. This update is for the month of August 2026.

In August, we received a quote from Dustin Lutz, Red Dog Construction, for creation of a **restroom that is available to all people, family friendly and wheelchair accessible**. Session will review that construction proposal at their meeting on September 21.

On August 26, the Ezra Team met Rev. Ben Robinson via Zoom. Rev. Robinson is 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.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Ezra Design Team

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

Calendar



10/1	Carol C.
10/7	Barney B.
10/20	Wesley D.
10/30	Ken C.
10/31	Catherine Lyle

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



10/16-19	Pastor Catherine away
10/17	Suzuki Strings student recital, 5:00 p.m.
10/21	Session, 1:30-3:00 p.m.
10/26	November 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
- 3:00 p.m. Church choir practice
- 7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Wednesday

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

Thursday

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



NEW CHOIR TIME



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