First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint

The Grapevine

November 2026

From the pastor…

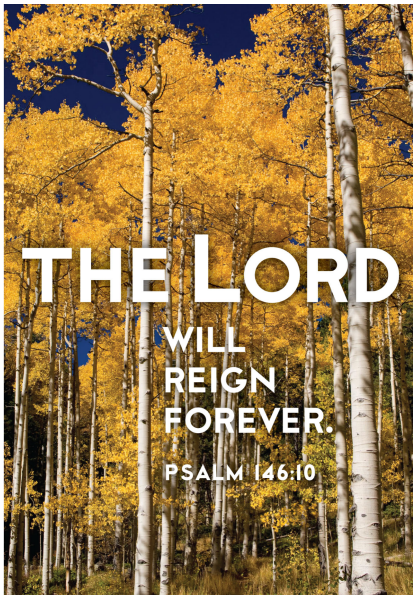
A Golden Drive Through November

As I was driving along the water from Sandpoint to Ponderay with a list of things in my head I could not get done and was just about to strategize what I might get done at home… I saw the most beautiful gold. The aspen trees were turning yellow, and the setting sun was shining through them. It felt as though I was driving through a threshold of a rich golden air and the entire world changed in that moment. I was in the midst of something glorious. Something that extended beyond the worries of my days. Something beyond the dirty mom car. Something so much more than me alone. I was in something holy and timeless. Something so beautiful that only our Creator could do. Words that slipped through my mouth were, "Oh God." Before I knew it, I was home, and it was like waking from a dream and finding yourself back in your own bed but longing to go back to the dream. I longed to be back where time and space blended into gold and peace existed everywhere.

Here we are in a November month where much happens. We begin with All Saints and the celebration of those who passed this year entering into the golden embrace of our loving God. We have elections and for that you do need to be awake, research, and cast your vote. We have Thanksgiving and food drives. Then we begin Advent on Sunday, November 29, where we prepare our hearts to receive the full gift of Jesus in our lives. The moment we remember not to put God into a box but rather spend time with God unwrapping the many layers as we journey closer to God's heart and what really matters. I pray God greets you in the business and reminds you what really matters. You will know you have found it when, and only when, it is too beautiful to have been created by us.

God Bless,

Rev. Catherine Lyle



Session Notes
October 28, 2026

Session normally meets during the afternoon on the third Wednesday of the month. However, due to travel and other commitments among the seven elders serving on Session, we disrupted our routine and scheduled our October meeting a week later on October 28. That date also coincides with Dana's deadline for *Grapevine* submissions. So rather than listing the highlights of a meeting that has not yet occurred, this article will mention several items we hope to accomplish during our October meeting.

As several of us gathered last Saturday to rake leaves from the church lawn, it served as a reminder that fall is well underway. Just as predictable as leaves falling from our beautiful Norway maples and paper birch, Session agendas for the remainder of the year will focus upon the church budget – closing out the current fiscal year while anticipating 2027. (How is that for a metaphor? Leave it to a forester to connect deciduous trees dropping their foliage to church finances!)

For almost 125 years, our church finances have been guided by acts of faith that generous giving will allow us to meet expenses to further our mission within the community and throughout the world.

Of course, you can anticipate hearing more about financial situation in the coming weeks.

Fall is also the time that our Nominating Committee contacts members to serve on session or various church committees. Rather than waiting to be asked, why not consider volunteering? You can likely claim first dibs by taking the initiative to choose your favorite position.

Well, now you know what we will be discussing during our October Session meeting. I'll fill you in on the details in the next edition of the Grapevine. Or, if you are impatient, just catch me on Sunday morning.

By the way, more maple leaves fell following our raking party last week.

Peace,
Bill L., Clerk of Session
Certified Forester-Retired



Pastor Nominating Committee

Greetings from the Pastor Nominating Committee! We are a hard-working committee, that has been diligently going through the steps to describe and advertise the position we have open for an install pastor in a half-time position at FPC. The Presbyterian church is a connectional church with regional and national resources available to assist churches like FPC which are seeking a called and installed pastor. Our Ministry Discernment Profile went live on the PCUSA Church Leadership Connection website on September 16, 2026.

Interested applicants can self-refer, or match through the CLC website at clc.pcusa.org. Reverend Becky Anderson is our liaison with the Presbytery helping us to understand the process and communicate with the Presbytery. Although Presbyterian clergy need to go through the PCUSA process, the PNC is happy to receive applicants who self-refer through the church office, or directly to the committee. We are flexible!

As part of our efforts to get the word out, Mickey H. on the committee has posted a link to the application information on LinkedIn, and on her personal Facebook page. If you're on Facebook, consider taking a look and resharing her post. We would be happy to receive applicants. Get the word out that FPC is actively seeking a pastor for a called position. Keep the PNC, the church, and the pastor who will ultimately be called in your prayers as we go through this process of search and discernment. The position is open until filled.

An important aspect of the PNC is that our deliberations and meetings are confidential, so the committee can only share the general information, that we are hard at work, and we'll give you a more specific report when we can. A thorough and patient process is best, and we are attempting to hold to that standard.

Kirsten T., Chair of Pastor Nominating Committee

Here's a copy of Mickey's post, which is beautifully worded. Her post also includes two lovely pictures of the church, not shown here. Please feel free to share!

Reaching out to share this announcement because it is so often not what you know, but who you know. And you never know when a connection of a connection of a connection will lead to a wonderful new opportunity! So, with that said, I am sharing that the First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint (PCUSA) is seeking a part-time installed pastor!
First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint, Idaho is an inclusive, compassionate congregation where all are welcome — an Earth Care Congregation, living out our vision of Building Community in the Heart of Sandpoint.
The position: Part-time installed solo pastor (approximately 20 hours per week). The pastor leads weekly worship with biblically grounded preaching, administers the sacraments, provides pastoral care, moderates Session, and equips and empowers lay leaders for shared ministry.
Qualifications: Ordained (or eligible for ordination) in the PC(USA); Reformed theological grounding; gifts for preaching, listening, and collaborative, equipping leadership.
Compensation: Minimum effective salary plus housing allowance, per Presbytery of Inland Northwest guidelines.
How to apply: Apply through the Church Leadership Connection (CLC) website. **https://clc.pcusa.org/**
Questions? Contact the church office at 208-263-2047 or office@fpcsandpoint.org.
Application deadline: Open until filled

Worship and Music

As the days get shorter and the nights get colder, the church calendar takes a turn toward the different holy days that fall in November including All Saints' Day on November 1, Christ the King Sunday on November 22, and the first Sunday of Advent falling on November 29. In addition to Pastor Catherine, and lay leadership by the worship assistant, the choir will be singing on November 1, 8, and 22. If you haven't had the chance to help out during worship as an usher, worship assistant, or by livestreaming, please look for an email asking for you to volunteer.

Our worship experience is made more meaningful by friendly faces greeting folks as they come and go. Pastor Catherine appreciates the extra help up front from the worship assistant. If you feel a calling to any of these roles – including singing with the choir, please reach out to Kirsten T., or call the church office. There's always a need for more volunteers!

Food Drive

We have two dates for hosting a community wide food drive at Super One Foods in Sandpoint. The dates are; Sat. Nov. 21th, from 2pm- 6pm, and Fri. Dec. 18th, same time. Please mark your calendars and consider taking a one hour shift.

On Monday, October 26, I delivered 96 pounds of food to the food bank. Well done! The foodbank is still encouraging canned food with proteins. Packages of assorted beans are helpful, too.

If you prefer to donate money, please write checks to Bonner Community Food Bank and drop into the offering plate. We will take checks to the Food Bank and track those donations. Thank you for your participation.

Sue H.



Leave the Leaves: No Rake Approach is Environmentally Friendly

Letting leaves remain on the ground and decompose through the fall, winter, and early spring nourishes the soil as well as provides habitat for wildlife. Leaf litter provides critical winter shelter, and food, and overwintering sites for caterpillars, moths, bumblebee queens, butterflies, and amphibians. Many creatures make fallen leaf layers their homes in the fall. Raking or blowing leaves disrupts their life cycles. **As the National Wildlife Federation puts it, "The leaf layer is its own mini-ecosystem."**

Left in place, the leaves eventually break down, a natural fertilizer for soil around the trees which produce them. Fallen leaves feed the trees! Leaves as they decompose are not only beneficial to the soils around trees, not raking them saves you time. Leaving the leaves also eliminates the noise and air pollution of leaf blowers and the fossil fuels that run them.

If letting leaves lie where they fall is not an option, leaves can be raked into selected areas like garden beds and around shrubs and trees – where they can maintain soil moisture and temperature and prevent weeds, erosion, and soil compaction – or composted in a compost bin to create topsoil. Leaves don't belong in plastic bags as landfill-bound trash.



Wildlife-Friendly Outdoor Lighting

You can help many wildlife species, especially birds during fall and spring migrations, and important pollinators like moths and other nighttime insects who gather around outdoor lights that confuse, trap, disorient and even kill them as well as make them vulnerable to predators. Birds are disoriented from their migration pathways or collide with windows. Nocturnal wildlife are also thrown off their normal survival behaviors which depends on a dark sky.

What can we do? Use light only where it is needed, when it is needed, and no brighter than necessary.

- Turn off outdoor lights when they are not needed.
- Use motion sensors, timers, or dimmers for security lighting.
- **Choose warm amber bulbs labeled 2700K or lower, or yellow Bug Lights!**
- Direct lights downward with fully shielded fixtures.
- Keep flower gardens, trees, shrubs, and natural areas dark.
- Close curtains or blinds so indoor light does not spill outside.
- Consider reflective markers instead of lights, including solar lights, along walkways.

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 was 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 L., Paula V., Mary S., and Judy M..

FPC Involvement – current status

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.**

On August 26, the Ezra Team met with Rev. Ben Robinson, our Coach, via Zoom and reviewed the quote from Red Dog Construction. The quote provided meticulous detail and was deemed reasonable considering the complexity of plumbing, electrical and structural issues that will be required. However, Rev. Robinson encouraged us to get a second quote as that is considered “best practice.” We have not able to obtain another bid even though several other contractors have been approached.

The maximum funds that can be obtained through the Ezra Project is $10,000. In September, the Ezra team submitted a proposal to Session to accept the Red Dog Construction bid and look for options to fund the remaining monies that would be needed to complete the bathroom. However, there was not a quorum at the September meeting, so the topic has been placed on the agenda for the October 29, 2026 meeting of Session.

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



11/2	Jim D.
11/3	Jane C.
11/14	Kelly C.
	Paula V.
11/16	Esther I.
11/26	Tim C.
11/26	Nova D.

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



11/1	All Saints' Day
	Daylight Saving Time ends—hope you changed your clock on Halloween
11/3	Election Day—don't forget to vote
11/11	Veterans' Day
11/18	Session Meeting, 1:30-3:00
11/23	December Grapevine articles due, 9:00 a.m.
11/26	Thanksgiving



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
- 3:15 p.m. Church choir practice
- 7:00 p.m. AA meeting



NEW CHOIR TIME

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



First Presbyterian Church

417 N 4th Avenue, Sandpoint, ID 83864
208-263-2047
office@fpcsandpoint.org
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