

 KALAMAZOO
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
"A Sanctuary in the City... Living Faith"



“The prophet Jeremiah would say to God, ‘You misled me. You called me to be a prophet, and I said I don’t want to be a prophet. And you said, no, I will be with you. All you have made me say to these people—people I love very much—is to condemn them.’ Yes, that is how I do it. Jeremiah is my favorite prophet in the Bible for precisely this honesty that he had. You go to God and speak all you have, pouring it out ... It is also good to recognize—speaking from our struggle against apartheid—how incredibly noble people are. You know human beings are basically good. That’s where we have to start. That everything else is an aberration. Anything that swerves away from that is the exception—even when they can be very frustrating. People are remarkably, remarkably good, incredible in their generosity. And we had the opportunity of seeing this, especially during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. It was amazing to listen to people who had suffered, not only black people, you know—white people, too.... We’ve always got to be recognizing that despite the aberrations, the fundamental thing about humanity, about people, is that they are good, they were made good and really want to be good.”

-Archbishop Desmond Tutu

AUGUST 24 2025, ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

THE GATHERING

Wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here—with whatever joys, questions, or tears you bring today—as we worship God, who welcomes us all! You are invited to listen for God's Spirit speaking to you through the music of the Prelude as we prepare our hearts for worship.

Bold type indicates congregational response.

Where there is an asterisk, we are invited to stand together in God's Spirit.

PRELUDE

I Love to Tell the Story

Emma Lou Diemer

CALL TO WORSHIP

God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations.
Let us worship God.

- * DOXOLOGY #607 Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow Old Hundredth
- Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise Christ, all creatures here below;
praise Holy Spirit evermore;
praise Triune God, whom we adore. Amen**

* OPENING RESPONSES

Wisdom cries out in public squares, from the edges of the city to busiest intersections.
With people in all ages, God calls us into loving relationship to serve the welfare of all.
Young and old, rich and poor, strong and weak, from all directions and conditions,
We come with hope or hesitation, joy and questions. Gather us, God, in your grace.
Guide us in this house of prayer for all as we praise you and seek your purpose!

- * HYMN 465 What a Friend We Have in Jesus Converse

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**God of Mercy, your love for us never ends even as we falter in faithful service.
We are here to center our lives in your hope and promise, and to say sorry
for judging too quickly, forgetting your gracious generosity and others' need for ours;
for harming community with unkind words, selfish choices, or thoughtless complicity;
for abusing creation when you trust us to nurture life abundant for all.
Hear us as we hold regrets in this silence and release them into your hands.
Heal us in the many wounds of body, mind, and heart that we cause and carry.
Help us repent—to reorder our lives and world with love and peace as you desire.**

Prayer continues in silence.

KYRIE #551

Lord, Have Mercy

Land of Rest

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy, Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS AND PEACE from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

Jesus proclaimed God's reign: preaching and teaching, healing and forgiving, calling all to repent and believe the gospel. God raised Jesus, breaking the power of sin and evil.

Loving us still, God frees us and gives us courage in a broken and fearful world.

We belong to God! With believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, strive to serve Christ in daily tasks and to live holy, joyful lives. Pray without ceasing. Bear loving witness among all peoples as we work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. The peace of Christ be with you!

And also with you!

Please stand and take a moment to share Christ's peace with others.

* GLORIA #582

Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me

Vasile

Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,

and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,

and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen.

THE WORD

MOMENT WITH YOUNG WORSHIPPERS AND BLESSING

Children: You are loved!

Congregation: **You are loved!**

There will be no Sunday School this morning. All children are invited to remain in Worship. The nursery is open for children age 3 and under.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

We open our ears, longing to hear your voice, Loving God.

We open our hearts, longing to be part of life the way you want it.

Teach us your way in Christ; inspire us to seek it and share your grace with others.

Through all the ways we can bear witness, empower us to serve your will in our world.

Amen.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Old Testament, p. 698

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM

All Things Bright and Beautiful

John Rutter

Text by Cecil Frances Alexander

All things bright and beautiful, all creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful, the Lord God made them all.

Each little flow'r that opens, Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors, He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain, the river running by,
The sunset and the morning that brightens up the sky;

The cold wind in the winter, the pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden, He made them ev'ry one;

He gave us eyes to see them, and lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty, Who has made all things well.

SECOND READING

Luke 13:1-9

New Testament, p. 76

For the word of God in scripture, for the word of God among us,
for the word of God within us.

Thanks be to God!

SERMON

Prophetic Repentance

“Ahh, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak ...”
(Jeremiah 1:6)

* HYMN 286

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

Trentham

THE THANKSGIVING

TIDINGS OF THE CHURCH

We give thanks to God and live faith, offering ourselves through worship,
work, service, and love in all its forms.

OFFERTORY INVITATION

Freely we receive at the hand of God; freely let us open our hands
for the work of God. Let us worship God with our offerings.

OFFERTORY ANTHEM He's Got the Whole World in His Hands African Am. Spiritual arr. Moses Hogan

He's got the whole world in His hands,
He's got the whole world in His hands,
He's got the whole world in His hands,
He's got the whole world in his hands.

He's got all the power...

He's got you and me brother...
He's got you and me sister...
He's got the little baby...

He's got mother and father...
He's got the stars and moon...
He's got ev'rybody...

* OFFERTORY RESPONSE #701 *(sung twice)* Lord, Prepare Me Sanctuary **Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true. With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.**

*OFFERTORY PRAYER *(continuing to pray in unison)*

**In every age, God, you give your servants gifts of courage, faith, and joyful trust, and
send people out to spread good news of Holy Love. Grant us a like spirit in our time
and place. Work your purpose in all we say or do, that hidden things may be revealed
and new ways found to touch the hearts of all, through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray....

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, now and forever. Amen.

THE SENDING

* HYMN 320

The Church of Christ in Every Age

Wareham

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

PARTICIPANTS

WORSHIP LEADERS

Meredith Alspach
Seth Weeldreyer
Chrissy Westbury

READER

Ginny Dell

ACOLYTE

David Dell

MUSIC

Autumn, organist
Michael Montgomery
Summer Choir
Gerald Case-Blanchard, soloist

GREETERS

Grace Cook, South Street
Michael Roberts-Riggle, Lovell Street

SOUND TEAM

Bob Murray
Mark Ohrstrom

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FLOWERS IN THE SANCTUARY

The flowers in the Sanctuary are here for the Glory of God and
to honor the memory of Betty Lee Van Der Slik (8/14/43—8/25/22).

To this day, her peaceful influence is still felt and appreciated
by her family and those who loved her...by
Ron, Chris, Michelle, and Juliet Van Der Slik

DEACON'S PRAYERS

One of the great gifts of a community of faith is that we take time and intention to pray for one another. This week, we pray especially for RICK TAYLOR and the parish group listed below, that they may feel God's presence and power in their lives. Next week, we will pray for another Deacon and parish group.

Jennie Barry	Frank Johnson	Amber Nettleton	William Smyser
Joan Colgren	Jimmy Johnson	Ethan Nettleton	Carol Steinman
Phyllis Davis	Sarah Johnson	James Nettleton	Gayle Stephenson
Martha Flynn	Brian Kastman	Natalie Nettleton	Ronald Tanis
Nancy Hamilton	Minnie LaPoint	Will Nettleton	Alex Wall Emerson
Susan Hanselman	Dennis Mattingly	Noel Ocen-Gorgone	Catherine Wall Emerson
Janet Hildebrandt	Sharon Mattingly	Helen Rathbun	Paisley Wall Emerson
Carol Johnson	Gene Miller	Ann Rohrbaugh	Robert Wall Emerson
	Jean Miller	Kathy Smyser	

TODAY

Children's Ministry

Following worship, room 304—This is for anyone who may enjoy working with children in Sunday School or the nursery. Volunteers are the very heart of our children's programs and we need you! If you want to help but cannot make it today, please contact mereditha@fpckzoo.org

Adult Faith Formation

After worship, room 306—Do you lead a small group or adult education program? Are you interested in helping to organize or lead adult education opportunities at FPC? Whether it's a one-time class on a topic, a book study, or a longer-term small group, the possibilities are endless. Come join with the Adult Faith Formation Task Force to plan out our calendar for this fall.



CHILDREN & YOUTH

SUNDAY SCHOOL -

There will be no Sunday School this week. All children are invited to stay in Worship.

NURSERY -

The nursery is open each Sunday morning, starting at 9:45, for children age 3 and under in Room 204. Parents will be given a pager in the event they need to be contacted during worship.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Thursdays at 9:30 for coffee and fellowship; study begins with prayer at 9:45— Room #306

Join Pastor Chrissy for a study on the Fruits of the Spirit, inspired by *Tending the Wild Garden* by Eugenia Anne Gamble. In a world focused on appearances, this book invites us to cultivate a deeper relationship with the Spirit, where love, joy, peace, and other virtues grow naturally. Gamble offers a vision of spiritual growth rooted in God's nurturing presence, rather than a checklist of traits. Through reflection and guidance, we learn to tend the soil of our souls so the Spirit's fruit can flourish. The book is optional and available online or at local bookstores.

NOODLING AT NOON

We will begin to Noodle again together on September 9. We will center conversation in Bill McKibben's book, *The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon*. In this revelatory cry of the heart, McKibben digs deep into our history (and his own well-meaning but not all-seeing past)--race and inequality in America, the rise of the religious right, and our environmental crisis. He finds that he is not without hope. And he ponders what from our past could, or should, be reclaimed in the fight for a fairer future. The book should be available at your favorite local or online retailer.

PRAYER PARTNERS

At 9:00 a.m. on the second Sunday of each month, members of the congregation gather for prayer for the church, the community, and the world.

CHOIR RESUMES THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 AT 7 PM

Love to sing? Looking for community? Join the choir! Open to ages 14+, no audition required. Weekly anthems span diverse musical traditions. Basic music reading skills recommended. Rehearsal Schedule:

- Choir: Thursdays at 7 PM (Choir Room)
- Red Door Ringers: Thursdays at 5:30 PM (Bell Room) – *currently full*
- Children's Choir: During Sunday School

For more info or other music opportunities, contact: Michael Montgomery, michaelm@fpckzoo.org

*"Singing is for the one who loves.
I love this saying attributed to
St. Augustine. Sometimes we just can't
help but sing. Music reflects the
creative love of God and gives wings to
his Word."* -Michael

DIVINE DREAMING: HOW GOD FINDS US IN OUR DREAMS

Hello! My name is Gabriella Barry, and I am a Religion major and senior at Kalamazoo College.



I'm conducting a research project exploring how our dreams might offer insight into our understanding of religion and spirituality. If you've ever had a dream that felt sacred, spiritual, or deeply meaningful, I'd love it if you filled out my questionnaire. All responses are confidential and will be used only for academic purposes. Please complete the questionnaire by **August 31st**. To take the survey, click the link in the announcements email or scan the QR code provided. Thank you!

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN – MARTHA CIRCLE

Purpose: "To nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study" and "To build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the PC(USA) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom." Monthly Gatherings, second Wednesday, 2:00 p.m. in The Gathering Place.

Upcoming Bible Study, begins **September 10:**

"Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ"

New to Martha Circle? Expect sharing joys and concerns, planning activities, Bible study, fellowship, and warm hospitality. Come grow with us!

Contact for questions: Elaine Johns, 269-808-7109 or emjohns513@aol.com

ISAAC—BELOVED COMMUNITY

WALK/RUN/ROLL 2025

Justice on the Move: Rally, Resist, Reform—September 6, 2025 at Spring Valley Park. Register by **August 29** for the best price. Scan code for link to more details:



GATHERING GROUNDS NEEDS YOU!

We are looking for volunteers to help with Sunday morning coffee before and after worship this summer. If you haven't done it before, you can partner with an experienced "barista"! Please sign up on the sheet by the coffee makers in the Gathering Place. Thank you!

DOWNTOWN WALKING GROUP

Want an opportunity to get some fresh air, to connect with others, and just to move your body? Come join the Monday walking group with Pastor Chrissy starting at the Lovell Street entrance at Noon. From there, we'll wander our neighborhood and see where the Spirit leads us!

#KUDOS

Kalamazoo United Day of Service would love your help to form a team to help winterize homes in the Northside neighborhood. Supplies will be partially provided from the Ford Neff fund, as approved by Session in July. Sign up now for the October 3rd work, fellowship and outreach opportunity. Questions? Contact Wendy King at jeffwendyking@gmail.com

NEW MEMBERS EXPLORATION CLASS

Are you interested in learning more about our church and what it means to become a member? Join us for a New Members Exploration Class on Sunday, September 14, immediately following worship in Room 314. This informal gathering is a great opportunity to ask questions, explore your faith journey, and discover how you can get involved in our church community. Hors d'oeuvres will be provided, and the gathering will end by 1 p.m. RSVP to Pastor Chrissy at chrissyw@fpckzoo.org and indicate any dietary needs so that we can be sure there is food for all. We look forward to seeing you there!

SUNDAY HELPERS

Thanks to all greeters, acolytes and lay readers! Your hospitality and participation is appreciated. Please look at your calendar and consider signing up to serve in this easy and fulfilling way. You'll find the sign-up poster in the Gathering Place.

WEEKLY CONNECTION!

To start receiving Thursday announcements and other updates, visit fpckzoo.org, scroll to the bottom of the page and subscribe! You may also need to add communications@fpckzoo.org to your contacts so we don't end up in the spam folder. If you need assistance with this, you can reach out to dawnr@fpckzoo.org or call 344-0119, extension 209.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAY, AUGUST 24

- 9:00 a.m. **Summer Choir**, Sanctuary
- 9:30 a.m.—11:30 a.m. **ISAAC Sign-up Table**
- 9:45 a.m. **Child Care, Nursery**, #208
- 10:00 a.m. **Worship**, Sanctuary
- 11:00 a.m. **Adult Faith Formation Meeting**, #306
- 11:00 a.m. **Children's Ministry Volunteers Meeting**, #304

MONDAY, AUGUST 25

- 9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **Recovery Institute**, Dining Room/#308
- 12:00 p.m. **AA**, #314/315
- 12:00 p.m. **Walking Group**, Lovell Street Entrance

TUESDAY, AUGUST 26

- 7:00 a.m. **Men's Fellowship**, Archives
- 9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, D.R./#308
- 11:00 a.m. **Staff Meeting**, Archives
- 12:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m. **Organ Practice**, Sanctuary
- 6:00 p.m. **League of Women Voters**, Gathering Place

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27

- 9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, D.R./#308
- 12:00 p.m. **Prayer Service**, Sanctuary
- 1:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m. **Organ Practice**
- 5:00 p.m. **CTV, Red Door Dinner**, D.R.
- 6:30 p.m. **Session Meeting**, #306

THURSDAY, AUGUST 28

- 9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, D.R./#308
- 9:00 a.m. **Library work time**
- 9:30 a.m. **Women's Bible Study**, #306
- 11:00—1:30 p.m. **Piano Practice**, Sanctuary
- 12:00 p.m. **AA**, #314/315
- 4:30 p.m. **Food Addicts**, #314/315
- 5:00 p.m. **Kalamazoo Poetry Fest**, Library

FRIDAY, AUGUST 29

- 9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **Recovery Institute**, Dining Room/#308

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31

- 9:00 a.m. **Summer Choir**, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. **Child Care, Nursery**, #208
- 10:00 a.m. **Worship**, Sanctuary

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:
MONDAY - THURSDAY 9 A.M. - 3 P.M.
CLOSED FRIDAY & SATURDAY
CLOSED FOR LABOR DAY

KALAMAZOO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
321 W. SOUTH STREET, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN 49007
FPCKZOO.ORG • FACEBOOK.COM/ASANCTUARYINTHECITY
PHONE: 269.344.0119/FAX

KALAMAZOO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF
(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Meredith Alspach , Director of Youth, Families & Outreach, x208	mereditha@fpckzoo.org
Autumn , Organist, x214	autumn@fpckzoo.org
The Reverend Dr. Liz Hakken Candido , Parish Associate	elizabeth.candido@kzoo.edu
The Reverend Annamarie Groenenboom , Parish Associate	annamariieg@fpckzoo.org
Michael Montgomery , Director of Music, x220	michaelm@fpckzoo.org
Dawn Reitano , Communications Coordinator, x209	dawnr@fpckzoo.org
Kelly Short , Operations Coordinator, x205	kellys@fpckzoo.org
Shawn Smith , Building Superintendent, x213	shawns@fpckzoo.org
Louise Taylor , Financial Coordinator, x206	louiset@fpckzoo.org
The Reverend Dr. Seth Weeldreyer , Pastor, x203	sethw@fpckzoo.org
The Reverend Chrissy Westbury , Associate Pastor, x204	chrissyw@fpckzoo.org

South Lobby Receptionists, x221: Kailynn Bachman, Jennie Barry, Bob Brush,
Sandy Sinotte, Deb Weurding
Custodians: Logan McCafferty, Randy Randt **Library:** library@fpckzoo.org

UPCOMING WORSHIP — 10:00 A.M.

August 31 Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost The Rev. Chrissy Westbury Jeremiah 2:4-13, Hebrews 13: 1-8	September 14 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer Psalm 25:1-10, Luke 15:1-10
September 7 Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost Communion The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer Psalm 139:1-18,23-24; Luke 24:13-35	September 21 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost The Rev. Chrissy Westbury Psalm 113, Luke 16:1-13

*Grounded in living faith, receiving diversity as a gift, we seek to reflect Christ's light in God's world.
Continually discerning God's vision of grace and peace, we share inspirational worship,
spiritual nurture, compassionate service to others, and the pursuit of justice...
all to the glory of God.*