



“... focus not on the faithless judge but on the faithful widow. Her persistence in a broken system is a model for us to follow, knowing as we do that God’s economy of grace is not ruled by the whims of a judge. Her persistence is an emblem of faithfulness. Her boldness is rewarded. Her courage to draw upon the seemingly meager “weapons of the weak” in a system that would sideline her and deny her justice is a path to follow as we await our deliverance. Perhaps this is precisely the kind of faith Jesus wonders if he will find on his return (verse 8)—a faith that demands justice in a world coursing with injustice, a faith that persists in seeking life even in systems seemingly ruled by the forces of death, a faith that looks to God’s promises and lives as if they will be fulfilled today.”

Dr. Eric Barreto, Working Preacher

OCTOBER 19, 2025, NINETEENTH 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

Préambule

Louis Vierne

## 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

I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?  
**Our help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.**  
God will not let our feet be moved;  
**the One who watches over us never slumbers nor sleeps.**  
Come, beloved of God: let us worship the One who is our keeper and our hope,  
**trusting that all shall be well.**

\* HYMN 2

Come, Thou Almighty King

Italian Hymn

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Persistent God, we confess that we grow weary in the struggle for justice.  
We see the brokenness of the world— violence and hatred, greed and indifference—  
and sometimes we lose heart.  
We forget your promise to keep us, to watch over us, to bring healing and wholeness to  
all creation. Forgive us for the times we give in to despair. Renew our trust in your  
steadfast love. Make us bold in prayer and tireless in seeking peace,  
so that we may join you in the work of creation.**

*Prayer continues in silence.*

## KYRIE #430

Remember Not, O God

Southwell

*Cantor* Remember not, O God, the sins of long ago;  
in tender mercy visit us, distressed and humble low.

*All* **Then, safe within your fold, we will exalt your name;  
our thankful hearts with songs of joy your goodness will proclaim.**

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

Friends, trust in Jesus, who proclaimed God's reign: preaching and teaching, healing, eating with outcasts and forgiving. God raised Jesus, breaking the power of sin and evil. In everlasting love, the Spirit frees us to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor.

**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.**

Grateful to God, empowered by the Spirit, strive to serve Christ in daily tasks, and to live holy and joyful lives. In a broken and fearful world, pray without ceasing as we work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

May 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 #583 *(sung twice)*

Taizé

**Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo!**

**Gloria, gloria, alleluia, alleluia!**

## THE WORD

### MOMENT WITH YOUNG WORSHIPPERS AND BLESSING

Children: You are loved!

Congregation: **You are loved!**

*Sunday School is available for preK-5th graders this morning.*

*The nursery is open for children age 3 and under.*

### PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**God of mercy and justice, open our hearts to your Word today.**

**By your Spirit, give us the courage to pray without ceasing, to hope without wavering, and to persist in your ways of peace and justice; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

**Amen.**

FIRST READING

Psalm 121

Old Testament, p.571

The Word of God for the people of God.

**Thanks be to God!**

ANTHEM

The Majesty and Glory of Your Name

Tom Fettke  
arr. Allen Pote

When I gaze into the night sky and see the work of your fingers;  
The moon and stars suspended in space.  
Oh what is man that You are mindful of him?

You have given man a crown of glory and honor,  
And have made him a little lower than the angels.  
You have put him in charge of all creation:  
The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea.  
But what is man, Oh what is man that you are mindful of him?

O Lord, our God, the majesty and glory of your name  
Transcends the earth and fill the heavens.  
O Lord, our God, little children praise you perfectly,  
And so would we, and so would we.

Alleluia, Alleluia, the majesty and glory of your name!

SECOND READING

Luke 18:1-8

New Testament, p.81

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

Nevertheless, We Persist

“I lift my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? My help comes from  
the Lord who made heaven and earth. “

(Psalm 121:1-2)

\* HYMN 379

We Shall Overcome

African America Spiritual text

# 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 MUSIC

\* OFFERTORY RESPONSE #654 In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful

**In the Lord I'll be ever thankful; in the Lord I will rejoice!**

**Look to God; do not be afraid. Lift up your voices; the Lord is near.**

**Lift up your voices; the Lord is near.**

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

**Faithful God, we bring these gifts as signs of our trust in you.**

**Use them to sustain the work of justice and mercy and to bring hope to those who long for good news. Strengthen us to be generous in spirit and steadfast in prayer, so that in all we do, we may be witnesses and cocreators of your realm on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.**

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray...

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
holy is your name.**

**Your kingdom come,  
your will be done  
on earth  
as in heaven.**

**Give us today  
our daily bread;  
and forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those**

**Save us from the time  
of trial,  
and deliver us  
from evil.**

**For the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory are yours, forever.  
For ever,  
and ever.**

**Our Father  
in heaven,  
holy is your name.**

# THE SENDING

\* HYMN 378

We Wait the Peaceful Kingdom

Merle's Tune

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

## PARTICIPANTS

### WORSHIP LEADERS

Meredith Alspach  
Seth Weeldreyer  
Chrissy Westbury

### READER

Rick Wielopolski

### ACOLYTE

Deb Bender

### MUSIC

The Choir  
Marylou Boughton, cantor  
Autumn, organist  
Michael Montgomery, director

### GREETERS

JoAnn Yochim , South Street  
Linda Swope , Lovell Street

### SOUND TEAM

Chris Honeysett  
Dana Underwood

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## IN MEMORIA

William (Bill) Kelser

October 21, 1950 – October 1, 2025

We remember Bill Kelser, a beloved member of our church and community. A retired educator and avid bridge player, Bill shared his life generously with others and was known for his warmth and kindness. A memorial bridge game was held in his honor on October 10 at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club.



Blessed are those who act justly; who always do what is right.  
Psalm 106:3

## 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 JOANNE DUNLOP 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.

Bonnie Ayotte	Patricia Corse	Andy Hamilton	Donald Parfet
Laura Boersma	Linda Dalrymple	Elizabeth Hamilton	Crystal Richman
Michael Boersma	Nik DeHaan	Alexandria Jonas	Rollin Richman
Caitlin Brooks	C. Rem DeJong	Angie Jonas	Todd Richman
Susan Brooks	Susan DeJong	Doug Jonas	Jo Russell
Thomas Brooks	David Dell	Mackenzie Jonas	Jennalie Shepherd
Gary Brown	Ginny Dell	Carla Kennedy	Adriane Siefert
Logan Brown	Guy Dennehy	Mike McShane	Arden Siefert
Nancy Chandler	Sandra Dennehy	Mary Nazarians	Becker Siefert
Cathy Cook	Alan Griffin	Sargon Nazarians	Jeff Siefert
Daniel Corse	Lana Griffin	Ann Parfet	Phyllis Youse

## ADULT FAITH FORMATION

### WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

#### **The Book of James – What You Do Matters!**

Join us for a 7-week study on the Book of James, at 9:30 AM in Room 306. We'll gather for coffee and conversation, followed by prayer and discussion at 9:45. James challenges us to live out our faith through action—what we do truly matters. Pat Stromsta will facilitate. All are welcome! (No class on October 24.)

### NOODLING AT NOON

Tuesdays in the Library: This week we end with Bill McKibben's book, *The Flag, the Cross, and the Station Wagon*. On October 28, we'll start discussing *The People's History of Christianity*, by Diana Butler Bass. In this spirit of the Reformation, we reflect on how the church has lived faith in the past and how we witness into the future. On 10/28 and 11/4 we'll cover the Introduction and Part III: the Word. The book should be available at your preferred local or online retailer.

### MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Every Tuesday at 7 a.m. in the Archives (Room 207). Returning and new faces welcome for coffee, donuts, and conversation to begin the day!

# CHILDREN & YOUTH

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## 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.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL

There will be classes available for PreK—5th grade students after the Moment with Young Worshippers. “Music with Michael” will occur weekly at the end of Sunday School. Adults, please pick your children up immediately after worship.

## YOUTH GROUP & T.A.G.

We will have a pizza and movie night this week from 5-7:30pm at the church. Sunday, October 26 is the middle and high school Halloween Party from 5-7:00pm at the church. Costumes are encouraged and prizes will be given!

## CONFIRMATION

Confirmation for all 8th-12th graders will begin on Sunday, November 2 and continue Nov. 9, 16, and 23. We will meet in the Youth Room immediately following worship until 1pm each week. We will also offer two service opportunities on December 7th and 14th. Confirmation will take place on December 21st during worship. Please contact Meredith for more information or to register your student. [mereditha@fpckzoo.org](mailto:mereditha@fpckzoo.org)

## SAVE THE DATE!

The Children's Christmas Program will be held on Sunday, December 21st during worship.



Last week, our youth prepared 250 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for Kalamazoo's Night Outreach program. We are so proud of them and being a part of helping our neighbors.



## CARD MINISTRY

Cards are available in the Gathering Place **today**. Please check out the display after Worship!



## FPC'S RACIAL EQUITY POLICY CLASS

**TODAY at 11:30 a.m.—Room 306**

The PC(USA) Book of Order requires that all councils of the church have a policy on anti-racism. What is in the policy our Session recently passed, and how can we live into it?

## WORSHIP AT PINE ISLAND

**Tonight at 5:00 p.m.** we gather at our Pine Island Chapel for a Taizé service of prayer. It's a more contemplative time together centering in singing more simple hymns with prayerful repetition, a few prayers and readings, interspersed with moments of silence — a quieter, meditative experience of the Sacred. If you have any questions, please connect with Pastor Seth.

## PLEDGE UPDATE

We have already received \$273,720 of our \$610K goal for the coming year! Thank you for your contributions! Pledge Dedication Sunday is October 26th.

## JAMES ABBINGTON: HYMNS, SPIRITUALS AND GOSPEL MUSIC

**Sunday, October 26 after worship in the library**

Together we will watch a presentation by the late hymnologist Dr. James Abbingtion. We'll learn some history of African American Spirituals, Hymns, Gospel Music and how each style informs and interacts with one another; time for questions and discussion include. Dr. Abbingtion was an author, editor of several hymnals, and taught at Emory University's Candler School of theology for many years. Join us as we enrich our knowledge of sacred music!

## EMPTY NESTERS/PARENTS OF YOUNG ADULTS

Are you part of this weird transition time in life when your kids are no longer kids and you have to figure out how to navigate this new relationship and new dynamics in your home? Would you like to get together with others who are going through the same transition for community and conversation?

We are starting a new group - beginning with a social gathering at One Well (4213 Portage Street) on October 29 at 6:30. We'll get to know each other, maybe play some games, and talk about what this group might look like. RSVP to Chrissy ([chrissyw@fpczkoo.org](mailto:chrissyw@fpczkoo.org)) if you are planning to come so that we can be sure we have the right sized table!

## CAREGIVER EVENT

You are Loved. We say it. We mean it. We show it.

You showed love at The Opportunity Fair—signing up to care for the environment, children, neighbors in need, music, and even donuts and coffee!

But some love isn't on a sign-up sheet.

**Family caregiving** is one of those quiet, powerful ways we care—through daily acts of compassion for parents, spouses, children, friends, and neighbors. **We see you.**

And we want to show you some love.

**Save the Date: November 18, 2025!** In honor of National Family Caregiver Month, we're planning something special. If you're a caregiver—or know one—reach out to your deacon or Pastor Chrissy to learn more. Let us help you refresh before the holidays.



## THESE DAYS DEVOTIONAL

Looking for daily inspiration? *These Days*, from the PC(USA), offers scripture, reflections, prayers, and even adult coloring pages—all in a beautifully designed quarterly booklet. Free copies are available in the Gathering Place kiosk, courtesy of the Deacons. Want your own subscription? Call 800-624-2412 or email [customer\\_service@wjkbbooks.com](mailto:customer_service@wjkbbooks.com)

## HOSPITALITY WITH HEART

We invite volunteers to join our Memorial Hospitality Team. This caring group helps host receptions following memorial services by setting up refreshments, welcoming guests, and offering comfort to families during this tender time. If you feel called to serve in this meaningful ministry, please get in touch with Kelly Short at [kellys@fpckzoo.org](mailto:kellys@fpckzoo.org) for more information.



Our Sanctuary is equipped with a Hearing Loop. Use your T-coil-enabled hearing aids or borrow headphones from the sound booth for clearer sound.

## Prayer Chain

Digital form on website. Scroll down to "Prayer Chain".



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

## WEEKLY CALENDAR

### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19

- 9:00 a.m. **Cards on Display**, Gath. Pl.
- 9:00 a.m. **Choir Rehearsal**, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. **Child Care/Nursery**, #208
- 10:00 a.m. **Worship**, Sanctuary
- 10:15 a.m. **Sunday School**
- 11:00 a.m. **Racial Equity Policy**, #306
- 1:00 p.m. **Communications**, Pine Island
- 2:00 p.m. **Crescendo Recital**, Sanctuary
- 5:00 p.m. **Pine Island Worship**
- 5:00 p.m. **Youth Group & T.A.G.**, FPC

### MONDAY, OCTOBER 20

- 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 St
- 4:30 p.m. **Stewardship Committee Meeting**, Archives
- 6:30 p.m. **Deacons Meeting**, #306

### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21

- 7:00 a.m. **Men's Fellowship**, Archives
- 9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, Dining Rm/#308
- 11:00 a.m. **Staff Meeting**, Archives
- 12:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m. **Organ Practice**
- 12:00 p.m. **Noodling at Noon**, Library
- 3:00 p.m. **Congregational Life Meeting**, Library
- 6:00 p.m. **Kalamazoo Pipe Band**, Dining Room

### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22

- 9:00 a.m.—4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, Dining Rm/#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, OCTOBER 23

- 9:00 a.m. **Library work time**
- 9:30 a.m. **Women's Bible Study**, #306
- 12:00 p.m. **AA**, #314/315
- 4:30 p.m. **Food Addicts**, #314/315
- 5:00 p.m. **Kalamazoo Literacy Council Fall Reception**, Dining Room
- 5:30 p.m. **Red Door Ringers**, Gath. Pl.
- 7:00 p.m. **Church Choir Rehearsal**, Choir Room

### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24

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

### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26

- 9:00 a.m. **Choir Rehearsal**, Sanctuary
- 9:45 a.m. **Child Care/Nursery**, #208
- 10:00 a.m. **Worship**, Sanctuary
- 10:15 a.m. **Sunday School**
- 11:30 a.m. **Music in the Black Church interview & discussion**, #306
- 5:00 p.m. **Youth Group & T.A.G.**, FPC

KALAMAZOO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
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PHONE: 269.344.0119/FAX

KALAMAZOO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF  
(IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

<b>Meredith Alspach</b> , Director of Youth, Families & Outreach, x208	<b>mereditha@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>Autumn</b> , Organist, x214	<b>autumn@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>The Reverend Dr. Liz Hakken Candido</b> , Parish Associate	<b>elizabeth.candido@kzoo.edu</b>
<b>The Reverend Annamarie Groenenboom</b> , Parish Associate	<b>annamariieg@fpckzoo.org</b>
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<b>The Reverend Dr. Seth Weeldreyer</b> , Pastor, x203	<b>sethw@fpckzoo.org</b>
<b>The Reverend Chrissy Westbury</b> , Associate Pastor, x204	<b>chrissyw@fpckzoo.org</b>

**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.

**October 26**  
**Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost**  
The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
Psalm 65; Luke 18:9-14

**November 2**  
**All Saints Sunday / Communion**  
The Rev. Dr. Seth Weeldreyer  
Psalm 139:1-18, 23-24; Ephesians 1:11-23

**November 9**  
**Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost**  
The Rev. Annamarie Groenenboom  
Psalm 145

**November 16**  
**Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost**  
The Rev. Chrissy Westbury  
Luke 21:5-19, Isaiah 65:17-25

*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.*