



SEPTEMBER 13, 2026
SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST



"If you're ever going to move forward, You've got to let go of the past. It's not about forgetting. Letting go just means not allowing your scars to hold you back anymore. What a shame to live a long life and not be completely covered in scars. They're the evidence of a life fully lived." - Paul (played by Harrison Ford) in the television show "Shrinking"

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

Four Pieces for Flute Clocks

Franz Joseph Haydn

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

Come, all you people! Come from east and west, north and south!
Come across bridges, come along streets, come by car, bike, or foot!
Come! We are delighted that you are here!
We are here to sing, to pray, to greet, to wonder, to give thanks.
So let us worship God.

*HYMN 408

There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Loving God,
When we have wandered, and when we are lost,
We pray that you would find us and help us find our way home.
When we cannot quench our thirst,
when we want that which is harmful to ourselves or others,
Satisfy us with your love and grace.
When we need forgiveness, shower us with your unending mercy.
Receive this prayer, and the silent prayers of our hearts.

Prayer continues in silence.

KYRIE 467

Give Us Light, v 4,5

Jyothi Dho

Save us now; save us now; save us now, O Lord.

Give us grace; give us grace; give us grace, O Lord.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS AND PEACE

from *A Brief Statement of Faith*

Trust in Jesus who proclaimed God's reign: preaching, teaching, healing, forgiving, and calling us to believe the gospel. God raised Jesus, breaking sin's power, redeeming all creation. Loving us still, God 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.

In a broken and fearful world, God's Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness to Christ as Lord and Savior, to hear voices of people long silenced, and to 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**

Glory to God

Gloria

Glory to God, glory to God, Glory in the highest!

Glory to God, glory to God, alleluia, alleluia!

THE WORD

MOMENT WITH YOUNG WORSHIPPERS AND BLESSING

All children are invited to join us at the front of the sanctuary.

Children: You are loved!

Congregation: **You are loved!**

Infants & children through age 3 are invited to our nursery, Room 211.

Sunday School is available for children in PreK-5th grades.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Guide us, O God, by your Word and Spirit, that in your light we may see light, in your truth find wisdom, and in your will discover your peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FIRST READING

Psalms 103:1-13

Old Testament p.554

The Word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God!

ANTHEM

It Is Well With My Soul

arr. John Ness Beck

When peace like a river attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll,
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say
It is well, it is well with my soul.

My sin - O the joy of this glorious thought -
My sin, not in part, but in whole
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more:
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll:
The trumpet shall sound, and the Lord shall descend,
“Even so” it is well with my soul!

SECOND READING

Matthew 18:21-33

New Testament p.20

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

The Limit Does Not Exist

***HYMN 754**

Help Us Accept Each Other

Baronita

THE THANKSGIVING**TIDINGS OF THE CHURCH AND PSA**

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 647** Give Thanks

Give thanks with a grateful heart; give thanks to the Holy One;
Give thanks because we're given Jesus Christ, the Son.
And now let the weak say, "We are strong";
let the poor say, "We are rich because of what the Lord has done for us!"
Give thanks. Give thanks.

***OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Gracious God, you have no hands but ours, no feet but ours, no voice but ours
to share your love in the world. Receive these gifts we offer and use them to
bring healing, justice, and compassion to all who are in need. Shape us,
through our giving, to be the body of Christ in action. 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 774**

There Is Now a New Creation

Stuttgart

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Toccata in G Minor

Théodore Dubois

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PARTICIPANTS

Worship Leaders
Susan Agostinelli
Meredith Alspach
Rev. Chrissy Westbury

Acolyte
Joseph Sablan

Reader
Mari Wielopolski

Music
Bill Cessna, organist
Hal Hobson-Morse, director

Sound & Video Team
Bob Murray
Jim Van Buren

Greeter
Joyce Artman (South)

DEACON'S PRAYERS

As a community of faith, we offer one another the gift of intentional prayer through our weekly rotation of deacons and parish groups. We uplift in prayer PHYLLIS YOUSE and the parish group listed below, that they may feel God's presence. If you are in this group, stop by the Gathering Place near the name tags after worship to say hello to your deacon.

Maddie Alspach
Susan Anthony
Caitlin Brooks
Karen Cooper
Bob Cowell
Marcia Cowell

Michelle Greve
Angie Jonas
Doug Jonas
Katie Long
Vanessa Miller
Sargon Nazarians
Ann Parfet

Crystal Richman
Rollin Richman
Todd Richman
Jo Russell
Julie Shaw
Kenneth Sparks



VOLUNTEER FAIR TODAY



Celebrate the start of a new season at FPC by visiting the Gathering Place after worship today. The Stewardship Committee invites you to enjoy snacks, connect with others, explore volunteer opportunities, and consider how your time and talents can help our church family and community flourish.



All are welcome as we find our places in the next chapter at First Pres.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Nursery

The nursery is open each Sunday, starting fifteen minutes before worship, for children age 3 and under (Room 211). Parents will be given a pager in the event they need to be reached during worship. Please pick your child up immediately following worship.



Sunday School Kick-off is Today!

Sunday School is available for all pre-K through 5th grade students. Please pick your children up immediately after worship—
PreK-1st grade, Room 208; 2nd -5th grades, Rooms 304/305.

Youth Group

Youth Group meets today! All middle and high school students are welcome. We will gather in the Youth Room at the church from 5:30–7:00 p.m. this evening. Bring a friend!

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Noodling at Noon with Meredith

The current book we will read and discuss is *The Way of Befriending* by Parfait Bassale. For Noodling on the 22nd, we will read Part 1 of the book, chapters 1-3. ***Note: Noodling will NOT meet on September 15th** as the staff will be at a planning retreat.

Tuesday Morning Men's Fellowship

Join us weekly at Panera Bread on West Main at 7:30 a.m. New faces are always welcome!

Women's Bible Study

Starting on September 17, Pastor Chrissy will lead a study on the Apostle Paul — his background, his letters, what we know about him from historical sources, and most importantly what he did and did not say! If you love Paul, if you hate Paul, if you're ambivalent or just want to learn more, join us in room 306 on Thursday mornings from 9:30-11.

Thoughtful Readers

All are welcome to join us for this book club! We usually meet on the 4th Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in Room 300. Our next book is *The Emperor of Gladness*, by Ocean Vuong with discussion on September 28.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Expanded Greeter Coverage

You may notice expanded greeter coverage at our Lovell Street entrance, especially during evening activities. This added presence helps us provide both a warm welcome and a safe, secure building for everyone.

Hearts to Hands Card Ministry

Our ministry of caring within the life of the congregation is based on the thought that sending someone a handmade card helps us share the love of Christ. We gather monthly, the next card crafting session being scheduled for September 14 from 1-3:00 p.m. New and returning friends are welcome. Please look for the cards on display in the Gathering Place before and after service on September 20.

Hearts to Hands Stitchers

The Hearts to Hands Stitchers meet once a month to sew items for the church and the community. Past products have included baptism blankets, lap quilts, floor pillows, Christmas pageant costumes, pew cushions, kitchen items, items for Sunday school and VBS, and warm garments. The group will meet the third Tuesday of each month at 1:00 in the Sewing Room. The first meeting of the season is September 15th. All sewers are welcome.

Koinonia at Pine Island

Koinonia meets September 20 at the Pine Island Chapel (8882 W Q Ave). This monthly fellowship service, led by Pat Stromsta, gathers on the third Sunday of each month. Join us for food and fellowship at 5:00 p.m., with devotion beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Helping Us Keep our Building Safe

We are now asking everyone who is in the building during the week to **sign-in upon arrival and sign-out when leaving**. A sign-in sheet is available at the Lovell Street entrance. This simple addition to our daily procedures helps us know who is in the building in the event of an emergency and also assists our greeters and staff throughout the day. **There will be no sign-in requirement on Sundays for worship.** Thank you for your patience and understanding as we all adjust to this new process.

Pick-up Choir

All middle and high school-aged youth and adults are welcome to join our pick-up choir. The group will meet each Sunday at 9:00 a.m. to prepare simple anthems for worship. Like Summer Choir, there is no evening rehearsal, no long-term commitment, and no previous experience required. Come as you are able and sing with us! Regular Church Choir and Handbell Choir rehearsals will begin on Thursday, October 8.

CTV: Red Door Dinner

Thank you for filling the September Red Door Dinner schedule! This Wednesday evening meal ministry still has open dates in October and throughout the rest of the year. Sign up on the calendar outside Meredith's office to help our neighbors. Individuals and small groups are welcome. Recipes, tools, and support are provided—and you won't have to do the dishes!

You're Invited to a Wedding...

After 25 years together, FPC Operations Coordinator Kelly Short and his partner, Nick Bosk, are making it official! The congregation is warmly invited to celebrate their wedding and life together on Saturday, September 26 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary, followed by a cupcake reception in the Gathering Place.

Hope for Creation Concert

Join Hope for Creation on Saturday, October 3, for an evening of music, food, drinks, and good cheer as they raise funds to support a more just and resilient future for southwest Michigan. Tickets are expected to sell out, so reserve your spot soon: hopeforcreation.net

Bible Collection: A Night of Hope and Healing

We are collecting new and gently used Bibles to support an upcoming Night of Hope & Healing in Battle Creek. If you have a Bible you would like to donate, please place it in the collection box in the Gathering Place. Donations will be accepted through November 1.

Name Tags

Wearing your name tag at church may seem like a small thing, but it can have a substantial impact on everyone's comfort. Name tags help bridge generations, support inclusivity, and make volunteers and leaders more approachable. If you need a new name tag, please reach out to Kelly in the office. Thank you for always making people feel loved at FPC!

Noisy Coins

Thank you for bringing your loose change for the offering. All loose coins go to the Deacon's Benevolence Fund which exists to help church members with emergency needs.

Hearing Assistance

The sanctuary is equipped with a Hearing Loop system. Use your T-coil-enabled hearing aid or borrow loop-compatible headphones from the sound booth.

FROM JUST SANCTUARY...

"Freedom is incomplete without social justice." -Atal Bihari Vajpayee



Borrowed from Sybil MacBeth's book by the same name, "Praying In Color" is adaptable to all kinds of prayer and meditation and requires no art or prayer skills. Some ways to get started include doodling about a line of scripture, a hymn, a poem, the names of people you're praying for, or something for which you are grateful. You could also move into listening mode and doodle with no words or agenda.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

- 9:00 a.m. **Connections**, #302
- 9:00 a.m. **Pick-up Choir Rehearsal**,
Choir Room
- 9:00 a.m. **Nominating Committee**,
Archives
- 9:45 a.m. **Child Care/Nursery**, #211
- 10:00 a.m. **Worship**, Sanctuary
- 10:15 a.m. **Sunday School, PreK-5th gr.**
- 11:00 a.m. **Volunteer Fair**, Gathering Pl

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

- 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. **Recovery Institute
(R.I.)**, Dining Rm/#308
- 12:00 p.m. **AA**, #300
- 12:00 p.m. **Walking Grp**, Lovell Entrance
- 1:00 p.m. **Card Ministry**, Crafting Room
- 1:00 p.m. **Financial Review Team**,
Archives
- 7:00 p.m. **Connecting Chords
Rehearsal**, Choir Room
- 7:00 p.m. **Scouts**, Dining Room

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

- 7:30 a.m. **Men's Fellowship**, Panera
Bread, West Main Street
- 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, Dining Rm/#308
- 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. **Office Closed**, Staff
Planning Retreat
- 12:30 p.m. **OLLI**, #306
- 1:00 p.m. **Stitchers**, Sewing Room
- 3:00 p.m. **Congregational Life**, Library
- 6:45 p.m. **Kalamazoo Male Chorus**,
Choir Room

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

- 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, Dining Rm/#308
- 12:00 p.m. **Prayer Service**, Sanctuary
- 1:00 p.m. **Organ Rehearsal**, Sanctuary
- 5:00 p.m. **CTV: Red Door Dinner**,
Dining Room

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

- 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, Dining Rm/#308
- 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. **Library Work**
- 9:30 a.m. **Women's Bible Study**, #306
- 12:00 p.m. **AA**, #300
- 1:00 p.m. **Organ Rehearsal**, Sanctuary
- 4:30 p.m. **Food Addicts**, #314/315
- 6:30 p.m. **Personnel Committee
Meeting**, Archives

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

- 9:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m. **R.I.**, Dining Rm/#308

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

- 9:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m. **Cards on Display**
- 9:00 a.m. **Pick-up Choir Rehearsal**,
Choir Room
- 9:45 a.m. **Child Care/Nursery**, #211
- 10:00 a.m. **Worship**, Sanctuary
- 10:15 a.m. **Sunday School, PreK-5th gr.**
- 5:30 p.m. **Koinonia Service**, Pine
Island Chapel (8882 W Q Ave)

OFFICE HOURS: 9 A.M.–3 P.M.
MONDAY – THURSDAY
CLOSED FRIDAY – SUNDAY

KALAMAZOO FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

321 W. South Street, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007

fpckzoo.org

Facebook.com/ASanctuaryInTheCity

269.344.0119

Church Staff (in alphabetical order)

Meredith Alspach , Director of Youth, Families, Outreach, x208	mereditha@fpckzoo.org
Bill Cessna , organist, x214	billc@fpckzoo.org
Hal Hobson-Morse , Director of Music, x223	halhm@fpckzoo.org
Logan McCafferty , Custodian	loganm@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 Chrissy Westbury , Associate Pastor, x204	chrissyw@fpckzoo.org

South Lobby Receptionists, x221: Kailynn Bachman, Jennie Barry, Sandy Sinotte

Custodians: Logan McCafferty, Randy Randt **Library:** library@fpckzoo.org

Upcoming Sunday Morning Worship Services

September 20

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Kathleen Robertson King
Psalm 105:1-6; Matthew 20:1-16

October 4

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Chrissy Westbury
Genesis 1:9-13; 1 Corinthians 11:17-26

September 27

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Chrissy Westbury
Philippians 2:1-13; Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

October 11

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

The Rev. Chrissy Westbury
Exodus 32:1-14; Philippians 4:1-9

*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.*

408 There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit

1 There's a sweet, sweet Spir - it in this place, and I
2 There are bless - ings you can - not re - ceive till you

know that it's the Spir - it of the Lord; there are
know him in his full - ness and be - lieve; you're the

sweet ex - pres - sions on each face, and I
one to prof - it when you say, "I am

know they feel the pres - ence of the Lord.
going to walk with Je - sus all the way."

Refrain

Sweet Ho - ly Spir - it, sweet heav-en-ly Dove, stay right here

with us, fill-ing us with your love; and for these bless-ings we

lift our hearts in praise; with-out a doubt we'll know that we have

been re - vived when we shall leave this place.

Help Us Accept Each Other 754



1 Help us ac - cept each oth - er as Christ ac - cept-ed us;
 2 Teach us, O Lord, your les - sons, as in our dai - ly life
 3 Let your ac - cep - tance change us, so that we may be moved
 4 Lord, for to - day's en - coun - ters with all who are in need,



teach us as sis - ter, broth - er, each per - son to em - brace.
 we strug - gle to be hu - man and search for hope and faith.
 in liv - ing sit - u - a - tions to do the truth in love;
 who hun - ger for ac - cep - tance, for jus - tice and for bread,

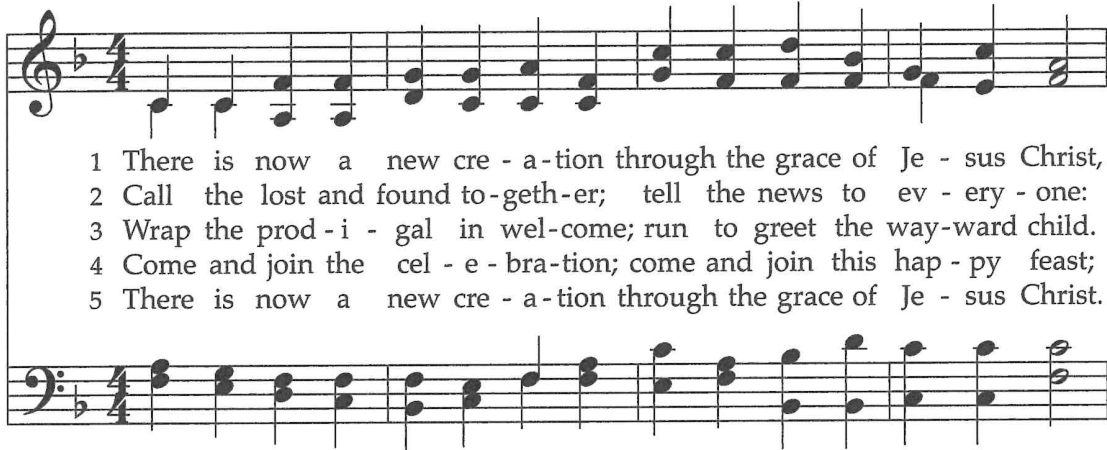


Be pres - ent, Lord, a - mong us and bring us to be - lieve
 Teach us to care for peo - ple, for all, not just for some,
 to prac - tice your ac - cep - tance un - til we know by heart
 we need new eyes for see - ing, new hands for hold - ing on:



we are our - selves ac - cept - ed, and meant to love and live.
 to love them as we find them, or as they may be - come.
 the ta - ble of for - give - ness, and laugh - ter's heal - ing art.
 re - new us with your Spir - it; Lord, free us; make us one!

774 There Is Now a New Creation



1 There is now a new cre - a - tion through the grace of Je - sus Christ,
2 Call the lost and found to - geth - er; tell the news to ev - ery - one:
3 Wrap the prod - i - gal in wel - come; run to greet the way - ward child.
4 Come and join the cel - e - bra - tion; come and join this hap - py feast;
5 There is now a new cre - a - tion through the grace of Je - sus Christ.



peace and rec - on - cil - i - a - tion with the God of end - less life.
now the past is gone for - ev - er and a new life has be - gun.
All is fin - ished and for - giv - en; let us now be rec - on - ciled.
Je - sus makes an in - vi - ta - tion to the great - est and the least.
Sing, with thanks and ad - o - ra - tion, to the God of end - less life!