

First Press

November 2023 - Volume 71 - Number 10

November

Ramblings *from the* Reverend

This month's newsletter was being compiled just as Pastor John Sowers learned his mother Donna Sowers had died unexpectedly. He took some leave to grieve and make family arrangements and appreciates the church's prayers. This letter by Greg Loew was written for the Stewardship booklet mailed out in mid-October and will stand in for this month's "Ramblings" column.

Friends, thank you for making the space to allow God's hand to work in your heart as we embark on this stewardship season. My name is Greg Loew and I serve as an Elder on our Session. My responsibilities as an Elder include serving on the church's finance committee. Like all of us who have a home budget, our church has a budget, and it is feeling the effects of 18ish months double digit inflation and long-term church trends. With that in mind I would like to share with you about the financial health of First Presbyterian, Spokane.

First, we are in a stable financial position, and we understand the steps needed to improve that outlook. We have had faithful giving year after year, and it shows. We are bucking the trend of many churches in our community and country. We have strong cash and reserve accounts. This year our staff has been able to continue or expand their ministries in real and meaningful ways. Contractors have completed upgrades to spaces that were long overdue.

I share that while we are stable and blessed, we are not without our financial challenges. As we come to the end of 2023, while you have been faithful and generous, we will still likely realize a loss this year. Pledged giving has met expectations and thankfully, non-pledged giving has exceeded our budget forecast. This will likely lessen the 2023 loss. Early in my career I worked for a retired general who was very quick to remind me that "there are two ways to improve the bottom line Loew, increase revenue or decrease expenses." As we prepare the 2024 budget and consider financial years '25 and '26 we will have to see sizeable increases of 12-15% in pledged giving and implement measures that shift the trajectory of the expense curve to balance our budget for long term stability.

I would not want to share all of this and not tell you about how we are responding in big ways to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. I am excited to share how we have responded to Christ's call for hospitality in our community. We have been able to use, as a steward of God's financial generosity, money to step in and bridge a funding gap for Proclaim Liberty, a church affiliated nonprofit with whom we have had a long standing multi decade relationship, as they embark on the construction of 54 housing units in Spokane's South Perry District. This housing will bless 150 lives with shelter and services needed in Spokane. This loan was made possible by generations of faithful gifting to First Presbyterian.

Brothers and Sisters, let me end with this. God is the giver of all good gifts. What is freely given from the LORD is freely received by us. The gifts and bounty in our life are made possible through God's will. Your Elders ask you to pray and consider your pledge to First Presbyterian Church for 2024. Please notice that I distinctly asked for a pledge. By making that written commitment you allow church leadership, including myself, to plan with a degree of certainty versus guessing. That certainty will be critical as we work though a budget, line by line, being faithful stewards and responding to needed ministry as Christ's church.



IHS,
Greg Loew

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THE GREAT REGIFTING

PACKETS WITH PLEDGE CARDS WERE MAILED OUT
OCTOBER 16TH.

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR PLEDGES BEFORE OR ON
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH WHEN WE WILL HOLD
OUR WORSHIP CELEBRATION.

YOU MAY ALSO PICK UP A PLEDGE CARD IN A PEW,
AT THE FRONT OFFICE, OR CALL TO HAVE ONE
MAILED TO YOU.



S T E W A R D S H I P 2 0 2 4
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Handel's Messiah Sing-a-long

Saturday, December 9 at 3pm
Sing-a-long rehearsal at 1:30pm

Reservations required and will be
available starting November 1

Admission Free
Suggested donation \$10



spokane-fpc.org/messiah

SUNDAYS
after worship

ACT II Communities

November 19, 26 & December 3

Adult Community - Bible Recap Group - Gospel of John

Young Adult Community - High School Community - Middle School Community

PreK to 5th Grade ... Downstairs in the Family Ministries Area

Nursery Care, birth - 2yrs ... Main Level



The Gathering

November 12

Join us after worship for intergenerational fellowship, activities for all ages and treats!

1920s

1930s

1940s

1950s

1960s

Boomers & Beyond

for everyone born in the 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, or 60s

Sunday, November 19 ~ Concert & Gathering

3pm ~ Premiere Concert of Whitworth Community Chorale ~ Sanctuary

There is no charge for the concert, but seating is limited, so [reserve your seat soon!!!](#)

[Go to www.whitworth.edu/community-chorale-concert-fall-23](http://www.whitworth.edu/community-chorale-concert-fall-23)

4pm ~ Boomers & Beyond Gathering ~ Fireside Room

[Bring an appetizer to share.](#)



Wednesday, December 6

Unwrap the Gift

A special event for women to begin the Advent season with our focus on the gift of Jesus

Music & Inspiration
Dessert & Tea will be served

Cost: \$8 per person
Reservations begin November 5

THURSDAYS

in November

www.spokanefpc.org/events

EVENSONG

rest reflect worship

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9

WORSHIP @ 6:00

DESSERT POTLUCK TO FOLLOW

WHAT IS EVENSONG?

Evensong is:

Praise

Quiet

Lament

Worship

Art

Song

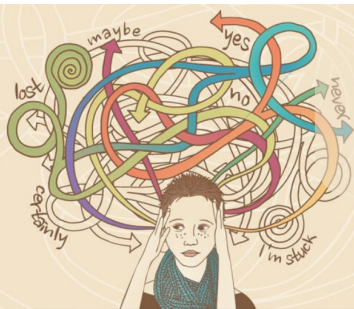
Prayer

Scripture

Poetry

“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.”

After worship we will join together in the Fellowship Hall for a dessert potluck, so bring your tastiest morsels to share!



CAN I ASK THAT?

Space to Ask Imperfect Questions About the Israel-Gaza War

Nov. 16

Dinner @ 5:30

Jer Swigart is the co-founder of Global Immersion, part of our FPC family, and was in the Israel-Gaza region when war broke out. His work and passion has taken him to the region over a dozen time, and Jer has a deep belief in the way of peacemaking.



Congregational Care

Preparing for the Holidays... in Grief

Why do I Find Myself Dreading Holidays?

By by Victor Parachin

Most griever find that it is not only holidays which are difficult because there is an 'empty chair,' but also anniversaries, birthdays, Mother's Day, Father's Day and so on. Here are some effective ways to manage these special days:

- Plan ahead. How will you spend the day? With whom?
- Talk about your deceased loved one. This will let others know that you want to hear his/her name and to talk about that person.
- Establish personal priorities. Decide what you want to do, how you wish to celebrate, and with whom you wish to spend time. Follow your instincts.
- Express your feelings. If the holidays make you more weepy, then cry. If you feel the need to talk about the loss, then find a good friend who will listen.
- Value your memories. You loved, and the price of losing a loved one is pain. Cherish the time you had together and value your precious memories, which can never be taken away from you.
- Reach out to others. Take the focus off yourself and your pain by helping another person
- Avoid isolating yourself in grief. Just because you are in pain, do not cut yourself off from others. Stay in touch. Keep communication open with family, friends and colleagues. Accept some invitations for social events, even if you do not feel like it.
- Be hopeful and optimistic. Many find that the holidays or special days are not as bad as they had anticipated.

You might also find help by taking time to prayerfully consider the following prompts.

- I predict that the most difficult parts of the holiday season for me will be:
- The most difficult people to be with might be:
- My grief triggers will be:
- My support people (those who can hear my grief) are:
- Last year or years prior to my loss I celebrated holidays by:
- This year I want to include the following traditions in my holiday:
- This year I do not want to include the following traditions in my holiday:
- I would like the following people to be with me:
- I do not want to spend my holiday with the following people:
- Some things that might help me when I am feeling intense pain are:

Remember, Jesus is the Lord who knows our grief and shares it. During Advent we will read many passages from Isaiah about the One who Comes to Redeem. We believe Jesus is "... a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief... Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows." Isaiah 53:3b and 53:4a

GriefShare classes continue weekly on Wednesdays, 6-7:30pm through Dec. 6, 2023. Consider stopping in to this "ER for grief" and find a warm community who will understand your pain. Also save the date for the Solstice Service on Thursday Dec. 21, 7pm in the FPC sanctuary, as a time to share grief, loss, and hope.

Joining the Church Triumphant
Cal Fankhauser died on October 8, 2023
Thanks be to God for the lives of his faithful servants.

LAUNCH PAD

ARE WE THERE YET?

Can you imagine needing to walk through the desert? You'd be surrounded by cacti, sand, snakes, and more sand. With the heat of the sun, we'd wind up so thirsty and wondering "Are we there yet?" That's probably how the Israelites felt as they wandered around the desert, waiting to enter the Promised Land. But no matter how tired our feet get, we can focus on what's happening in our lives right now rather than just on where we're going. In this series based on stories from Exodus, we'll explore how we can choose to be thankful, love God and others, turn to God when we're lost, go to God when we need rest, and remember God's promises!



NOT SO SILENT NIGHT! FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1ST 5:30-8:30PM

Hey kids!!! It's the most wonderful time of year, and we want to celebrate as we kick off the Christmas season!!! We've got a fun-filled night full of games, food, and holiday shenanigans that will never be forgotten! For parents, take a few hours off and grab a nice dinner, go Christmas shopping, or just take a nap! Let us take care of the kids for the night as we kick off the season with some festive fun!



YOU ARE INVITED TO
LAUNCH KIDS

No So SiLENT NiGhT

Dec 1 | 5:30PM
\$10 | TO 8:30PM

UGLY SWEATER CONTEST!
FESTIVE FUN!
& ALL KINDS OF CHRISTMAS CHEER!

Sunday 11/12 @ noon

Bring a Lunch!



Meet at church and head over together!

Buy tickets online or in person at the MAC!

Questions? Contact Lydia (lydiap@spokaneipc.org)

MINECRAFT AT THE MAC!

Families! Come check out the Minecraft exhibit with us at the MAC on Sunday November 12! We'll meet at the church at 12 after the Gathering and head over to the museum together. This isn't a drop-off event, just an opportunity to see this exhibit with your church family. No need to sign up, just buy your own tickets either online or in person (\$20/adult, \$15/student, 5 and under free) and come wander around the museum with us! Bring a lunch and enjoy fellowship and the creativity of Minecraft (not to mention the rest of the museum).

Find museum details at <https://www.northwestmuseum.org/> Contact Lydia Halma (Lydiap@spokaneipc.org) with any questions!

Serve.

“The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” — John 1:14, The Message

Mission Team Member Visits Thai Mission Partners.

In July, I (Lance Potter) visited Thailand with my family. I lived and worked in Chiang Mai for nine years with my wife, Debbie. Three of our four kids were born there so it was like going home. While visiting old friends and favorite places, the family took time out to visit some of our mission partners, supported by FPC. Our longest standing mission partner in Thailand is Ajahn (like Rev.) Sirirat, who has a church outside of Chiang Rai in the far north of Thailand. We borrowed a car and made the three-hour drive over the mountains and through the summer monsoon rains to visit her. In the past, FPC has supported Aj. Sirirat’s various ministries like an orphanage and a women’s work project that created items sold at our annual Jubilee sale. We found that her ministry has transformed over the years to meet the needs of her community.

Sirirat is a frenzy of activity. She now spends a lot of her effort reaching out to poor children in the neighborhoods surrounding her church. Many of them live with grandparents or other relatives because their parents have had to leave town and travel to Bangkok to work, as the economy in Chiang Rai is quite distressed. She helps support about 100 children and their families with basic necessities and school fees. Aj. Sirirat also still supports supports five young adults who used to live in her orphanage three of whom are now in seminary. She hopes at least one will return to her church and help sustain and further her various ministries, including restarting the orphanage. Sirirat is proud of seven orphans who lived in the orphanage who are now teachers. She is the chair of the board of a 2000-student Christian school and the chair of the oldest hospital in town, which is owned and operated by the church as well. It is hard to over-estimate her involvement in her community. She seems to be everywhere.

We also were able to visit two other ministries our church supports in Chiang Mai. The KLDP, or Karen Leadership Development Program is a Karen-led organization that supports and equips college students from the Karen (ka-REN) ethnic group. They are all what we would call first-generation college students, and are often overwhelmed and ill-prepared for college and city life. The program provides a simple dormitory and a support system for the students. The staff provide structure, teach academic and leadership skills, and deliver Christian teaching. Our connection to the ministry is Debbie’s friend Lu Hawley.



Next, we followed our hosts out of town on a main road for about 20 minutes. We turned onto a small road through a village, then down an even smaller country lane to a large, mostly empty lot. KLDP in the process of developing a compound that is close to one of the universities their students typically attend. It already has a house for Keeki and her family, with a plan to build a dormitory for men, another for women, offices, meeting rooms and an activity center. When completed they will be able to serve many more students than they do now. To learn more about KLDP, go to www.kldf-cnx.org.

All-in-all, visiting our mission partners was enlightening, refreshing, and encouraging. Seeing committed Christians dedicated to serving God and the people in their communities is a tangible demonstration of God’s love, power, and positive impact in our world and a witness to what we can do with our own lives when we choose to serve God with our lives. — Lance Potter

INTERGENERATIONAL TIJUANA

SUMMER 2024

INFO MEETING • NOV 5 • 9AM



We are excited to explore the possibility of sending an intergenerational team down to Tijuana to build relationships and homes with our long-standing partner, DOXA! Join Brad in the Fireside Room to ask any questions you might have and receive preliminary information on timing, cost, what ages are appropriate, etc. If you've ever wanted to be part of a TJ trip for the 1st or 9th time - make sure to join us!

We'll meet together at 9am, before worship, on Sunday, November 5th.

FPC Financial Update

- Pledged income is \$72,855* favorable to budget. *A large increase to October's pledged income is due to a balance transfer of \$80,491 prepaid pledges to current pledged income. Otherwise, pledge income would be \$7,636 unfavorable to budget.
- Non-pledged income is \$52,215 favorable to budget.
- The expenses are \$59,877 favorable to budget.
- Church operations is \$212,341 favorable to budget.

Church Only	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Pledge Income	\$ 960,222	\$ 887,367
Non-Pledge Income	\$ 139,545	\$ 87,330
Other Income	\$ 113,593	\$ 86,199
Total Income	\$ 1,213,360	\$ 1,060,896
Expense	\$ 1,225,806	\$ 1,285,683
Income over (under) Expense	\$ (12,446)	\$ (224,787)

First Presbyterian Christian School



Welcome Ms. Spradley!

First Presbyterian Christian School is having a great autumn, because we've already added a new classroom! We are thrilled to welcome Ms. Savanna Spradley to our elementary teaching staff as a kindergarten teacher. Ms. Spradley is a Whitworth University graduate with endorsements in reading and in math, as well as a minor in theology. Her calm demeanor and love of teaching has already made her classroom one of the loveliest places to be in the school. We are thankful that she has been called to serve our students this year!



The other exciting aspect of adding a kindergarten class to our roster is that FPCS has placements available again for new kindergarten and first grade students. We are passionate about the exceptional education we can provide with highly qualified Christian teachers; opening a new room enables to invite new students to our community while maintaining those high standards. We invite families with a kindergartener or a first grader in search of a loving small classroom environment to reach out to us for a tour and more information. Call us at 509-747-9192 or email FPCSoffice@spokanefpc.org.


ASIC STEM

First Presbyterian Christian School invites elementary students from all local schools to join us in our after school STEM elective this November and December! This session's STEM elective is about sequencing and programming. It's perfect for aspiring computer scientists... and any kid who loves technology and logic! Thanks to generous grants from AVISTA and STCU, this elective is FREE to all attendees. Registration opens on November 7th at 8:00am via the QR code provided.

FREE AFTER SCHOOL ELECTIVE
KINDERGARTEN - 5TH GRADE

STEM SEQUENCING & PROGRAMMING

THURSDAYS, 3:15-4:15 PM
NOV. 16 & 30, DEC. 14 & 21



PreK STEM

No one loves to experiment and ask why like a preschooler! That's why First Presbyterian Christian School is delighted to invite preschool-aged kids to join us at our after school STEM elective this November and December. It's all about sequencing and programming, which is the logical heart of computer science. Thanks to generous grants from AVISTA and STCU, this elective is FREE to all attendees. Registration opens on November 7th at 8:00am via the QR code provided.

MONDAYS, 12:15-1:30 PM
NOV. 13, 20, 27, DEC. 4, 11, 18

SEQUENCING AND PROGRAMMING

Free STEM Elective
Preschool 3s & 4s



MOPS Christmas Wreath Sale



This year, MOPS is partnering with Latah Creek Nursery to offer beautiful wreaths for the holidays! The wreaths are 22 inches and are hand tied with decorative berries.

Cost is \$35 per wreath, and will benefit the MOPS program at First Presbyterian Church, which brings together mothers to foster community, growth, refreshment and support.

Orders are due by 12pm on Tuesday, November 7.
Wreath pick up is from 9am-1pm on Wednesday, November 22 at First Presbyterian Church.



SIGN
UP FOR
PRAXIS
FALL
CAMP



PRAXIS CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

- 11/1 Spaghetti Night! 7:00-9:00
- 11/8 Praxis 7:00-9:00
- 11/10-12 Fall Camp @ Camp spalding
- 11/15 Praxis 7:00-9:00
- 11/15 Parent's Meeting about TJ 7pm
- 11/21 Movie Night! 6:30-8:30
- 11/29 Praxis 7:00-9:00

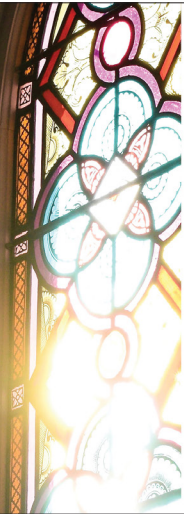
CONTACT INFO

Jessie: jessiek@spokanefpc.org
509-747-1058 ext 175

Follow us on Instagram!
[@praxis_spokane](https://www.instagram.com/praxis_spokane)

GLORIA RV 589 VIVALDI

ADDITIONAL WORKS BY HOPSON,
SHAW, RANEY, RAY AND MORE



WHITWORTH
COMMUNITY CHORALE
Joshua Chism, conductor

SUNDAY
NOV. 19 3 p.m.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SPOKANE
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC,
BUT TICKETS REQUIRED DUE TO LIMITED SPACE.

For tickets, scan the QR code or go to
www.whitworth.edu/community-chorale-concert-fall-23



STUDENT MINISTRIES

SHIFT CALENDAR

NOVEMBER

- 11/7 Spaghetti Night! 6:30-8:30
- 11/14 Shift 6:30-8:30
- 11/21 Movie Night! 6:30-8:30
- 11/28 Shift 6:30-8:30

CONTACT INFO

Kezia: keziar@spokanefpc.org
509-747-1058 ext 175

Thank you, Veterans

November 11th, 2023



Coming Up

- Nov. 5 *Tijuana Intergenerational Meeting*
- Nov. 9 *Evensong*
- Nov. 12 *Stewarship Sunday*
The Gathering
MAC Minecraft
- Nov. 16 *Can I Ask That?*
- Nov. 19 *Whitworth Concert at FPC*
- Dec. 1 *Not So Silent Night*
- Dec. 6 *Unwrap the Gift*
- Dec. 9 *Messiah*

Contacts (509) 747-1058

Pastoral Team

John Sowers (250)
Betsy Wynne (253)

Administration

Stephanie Coy (244)

Finance

David Repp (242)

Worship/Music

Derrick Parker (307)

FPC Christian School

Tracy Blue & Shawna Harris (120)

Family Ministries

Ryan Schmall (163)

Childcare/Nursery

Ryan Childers (164)

High School Ministries

Jessie Kuehner (174)

Middle School Ministries

Kezia Rhodes (173)

Intergenerational Ministries

Brad Hauge (252)

Preteen Ministries

Lydia Halma (161)

Young Adult Ministries

Jourdan Cornell

Adult Ministries

Brenda Norton (243)

Newcomers Ministry

Sue Reidt (241)

Communications

April Egly (245)

Barton English Language School

Becky Rempe (212)

Deacon Prayer Line: 747-1050

Office Hours

M-Th 8:30am-4pm and Fridays 8:30am-1pm

Sunday Worship Services

Online and In-person Sundays at 10am



First Presbyterian
Church of Spokane

For more information about ongoing programs, visit our website at www.spokanefpc.org or pick up a brochure at the church