



The Session and members of First Presbyterian Church Fargo extend a sincere welcome to you. We are grateful for your presence today! We welcome all persons regardless of race, nationality, disability, gender or sexual orientation. This includes an open invitation to membership, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, marriage, funerals, memorial services and to serve as an officer of the church.

Everyone is invited for coffee and fellowship in the Gathering Space after worship.

We recycle! If you are not taking your bulletin, please drop it in the blue bin at the door as you leave.

✠ Please rise in body or spirit.

November 23, 2025

We Gather in Christ

PRELUDE

10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)
Second Avenue Band

arr. Jon Nicholas

INTROIT

Building Zion
Friendship Choir (K-2); Erin Torpey, director; Elliot Sander, piano

arr. Angie Killian

WELCOME

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Gracious and ever-faithful God, you crown each season with your goodness and fill our lives with grace upon grace. For the gift of this day, for the joy of community, and for the work of your Spirit among us, we give you thanks.

✠ CALL TO WORSHIP

The Rev. Sarah M. Bigwood

Come, you thankful people, come, and rejoice in God's goodness.

For the Lord has done great things, and our hearts are glad.

We remember God's faithfulness through every season of our lives.

From first breath to final song, God's mercy endures forever.

Forget what lies behind; look, God is doing a new thing!

Waters spring forth in the desert, and joy rises where sorrow once stood.

With hearts full of praise, we come to bless the Lord together.

Come, let us worship God with joy and thanksgiving!

✧ **HYMN 367**

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

Come, ye thankful people, come; raise the song of harvest home.
All is safely gathered in, ere the winter storms begin.
God, our Maker, doth provide for our wants to be supplied.
Come to God's own temple, come; raise the song of harvest home.

All the world is God's own field, fruit in thankful praise to yield,
wheat and tares together sown, unto joy or sorrow grown.
First the blade, and then the ear, then the full corn shall appear.
Lord of harvest, grant that we wholesome grain and pure may be.

For the Lord our God shall come, and shall take the harvest home;
from each field shall in that day all offenses purge away;
give the angels charge at last in the fire the tares to cast,
but the fruitful ears to store in God's garner evermore.

Even so, Lord, quickly come to thy final harvest home.
Gather thou thy people in, free from sorrow, free from sin,
there forever purified, in thy presence to abide:
come, with all thine angels, come; raise the glorious harvest home!

✧ **CONFESSION AND DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS**

God of all seasons and all generations, we confess that we do not always live as your thankful people. We hold too tightly to what we have, and we resist the new things you are doing among us. We forget that your grace is not ours to keep, but ours to share. We allow worry to crowd out wonder, and busyness to muffle the quiet joy of your presence. Forgive us, O Lord. Turn our hearts again toward gratitude and trust. Open our eyes to see your blessings, our hands to serve our neighbors, and our lives to reflect the hope we know in Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

✧ **RESPONSE 452**

Open the Eyes of My Heart

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord. Open the eyes of my heart;
I want to see you; I want to see you; **(repeat)**
to see you high and lifted up, shining in the light of your glory.
Pour out your power and love as we sing “Holy, holy, holy.”
Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy, holy. Holy, holy, holy, I want to see you.

✧ **PASSING OF THE PEACE**

GIFT OF MUSIC

With a Joyful Noise

Ruth Elaine Schram

Text based on Psalm 100

Kids of the Kingdom (3-6) Choir;

Pam Andrist-Burns, director; Virginia Stern, piano

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

The Word

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 43:18-21, pp. 659

Tom Dawson, reader

Philippians 1:3-11, pp. 1068

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey

SONG

10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)

arr. Jon Nicholas

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning;

It's time to sing Your song again.

Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me,

let me be singing when the ev'ning comes.

Chorus: Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, worship His holy name.

Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship Your holy name.

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger,

Your name is great and Your heart is kind;

For all Your goodness I will keep on singing,

ten thousand reasons for my heart to find. **(Chorus)**

And on that day when my strength is failing,

the end draws near and my time has come;

Still my soul will sing Your praise unending,

ten thousand years and the forever more. **(Chorus)**

Bridge: Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise Christ, all people here below.

Praise Holy Spirit evermore;

Praise Triune God, whom we adore. **(Repeat)**

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O my soul, worship His holy name.

Sing like never before, O my soul, I'll worship Your holy name.

I'll worship Your holy name,

Solo: Lord, I'll worship Your holy name.

Sacrament of Baptism

PRESENTATION OF THE CHILD

*Abigail Grace Sundberg; child of Dan & Laura Sundberg; grandchild of Gary & Sharon Secor, and Duane & Patricia Sundberg.
Sharon Secor; presiding elder.*

✧ RENUNCIATIONS

✧ PROFESSION OF FAITH

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THANKSGIVING OVER THE WATER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

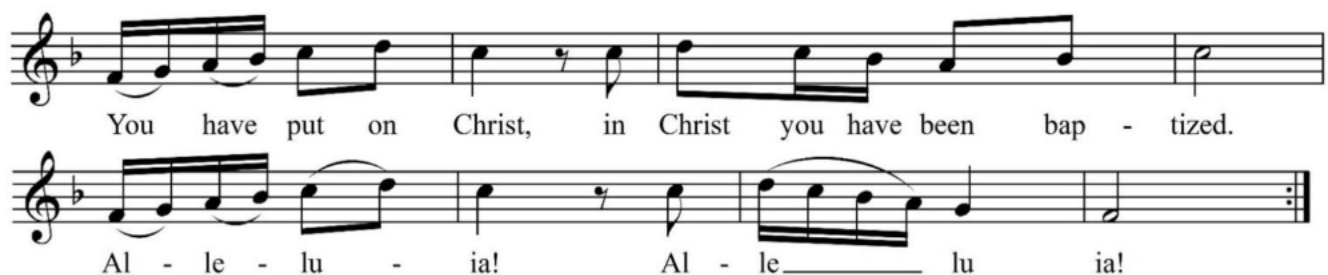
BAPTISM

WELCOME

Elder: ...Let us welcome the newly baptized.

With joy and thanksgiving we welcome you into Christ's church to share with us in his ministry, for we are all one in Christ.

BAPTISMAL RESPONSE 491 *You Have Put On Christ*



PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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, forever. Amen.

Responding to the Word



OFFERING MESSAGE – *Festival of Trees*

Jody Hudson

Use the QR code to access the secure giving portal on our website!

OFFERTORY

With Praises Ring

Barbra Kinyon

Genesis Ringers; Elliot Sander, director

✦ **RESPONSE 647**

Give Thanks

We dedicate this beloved song in honor of The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey's retirement at the end of 2025. This hymn has touched her heart throughout her ministry.

Give thanks with a grateful heart; give thanks to the Holy One;
give thanks because we're given Jesus Christ, the Son. **(repeat)**

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!" **(repeat)**
Give thanks. Give thanks.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Bearing the Word into the World

✦ **HYMN 80**

You Shall Go Out with Joy

arr. Richard Huggins

We dedicate this beloved song in honor of The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey's retirement at the end of 2025. This hymn has touched her heart throughout her ministry.

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace;
the mountains and the hills will break forth before you;
there'll be shouts of joy, and all the trees of the field
will clap, will clap their hands.
And all the trees of the field will clap their hands; (clap, clap)
the trees of the field will clap their hands; (clap, clap)
the trees of the field will clap their hands (clap, clap)
while you go out with joy. **(Repeat)**

✧ BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

You Shall Go Out with Joy
Second Avenue Band

arr. Richard Huggins

Thank you to Fred Hudson and Tetteh Dottey on livestream and soundboard, Tom Dawson for assisting in worship, and our Welcome Team: Steve Wonderlich, Dianne Connelly, Jody Hudson, Sydney Goddard, Josh & Becky Trumbo and Dave & Virginia Stern for taking such good care of us this morning.

A special thank you to our musicians: the Friendship Choir (K-2) with Elliot Sander directed by Erin Torpey, the Kids of the Kingdom (3-6) Choir with Virginia Stern directed by Pam Andrist-Burns, the Genesis Ringers directed by Elliot Sander, and the Second Avenue Band: Elliot Sander, piano; Brian Peterson, guitar; Josh Trumbo, bass; Jack Lawrence and Kevin Thomas, percussion; Rusty Bender, Sam Johnson, and Erin Torpey, vocals.



2026 TERMS OF CALL (REV. SARAH BIGWOOD)

	Current 2025	Proposed 2026
Effective Salary (salary, retirement, housing)	\$ 81,370.00	\$ 83,811.00
Pastors Participation Plan (pension, medical, SECA)	\$ 25,927.51	\$ 28,006.07
Other Benefits (mileage, professional, continuing education)	\$ 4,100.00	\$ 4,100.00
Annual Cost to FPC	\$ 111,397.51	\$ 115,917.07
Total Additional Cost to FPC		\$ 4,519.56

Other Agreements:

Vacation: 30 days, including 5 Sundays.

Study Leave: 18 days, including 2 Sundays. Can be accumulated.

Continuing Education: Continuing Education Expenses are cumulative up to three years, provided pastor declares them for future use by the end of the year so session can set aside funds.

2028 Officers — Elders

Tom Dawson



Wayne Sander



Jeana Scheffler



Kathy Scheffler



Troy Schmidt



Erin Torpey



2028 Officers — Deacons

Virginia Stern



Toby Christensen



Gracia Fulwiler



Taaren Haak



Aubrey DeCoteau



2026 Officers — Deacons

Brian Peterson, for Amy Wilkens



Jan Carlsen, for Wayne Sander



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF FARGO



Sunday Worship

November 23, 2025

Play it Forward! Do you have a band or orchestra instrument in your house not being used? Please consider bringing them to the church! We will make sure they're given to our local schools. We want all children to be able to participate in a music ensemble! Bring your donations to the church office for safekeeping. The deacons will take it from there.

Retirement Party for Pastor Mary: First Presbyterian Church of Fargo invites you to join us for a luncheon celebrating Pastor Mary as she retires after 33 years of faithful service. The luncheon will take place on Sunday, December 7th, following worship in the Social Hall. No RSVP needed! Questions? Contact Casey in the church at clemier@firstpresfargo.org. The festivities run from November 23 to December 28, 2025. Even if you cannot attend the lunch, come any Sunday to congratulate Mary.

Upcoming Opportunities to Celebrate

- Nov. 30 - Celebrating Mary's pastoral care
- Dec. 7 - Celebrating Mary's mission
 - Luncheon to follow worship at 11:45 a.m.
- Dec. 14, 10:30 a.m. - Celebrating Mary's teaching
- Dec. 21, 10:30 a.m. - Celebrating Mary's leadership

Delivering Thanksgiving Meals! Again this year, we are partnering with Heart-n-Soul to deliver Thanksgiving meals on November 26th. Sign-ups are on the Volunteer Opportunity board, or you can contact Director of Church Life, Rusty Bender directly at rbender@firstpresfargo.org. Deliveries will start about 10:30am. Thanks for your support this holiday season!

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED
NOV. 27, 2025



Covenant of Prayer: Sara Schenck and family at the loss of Brad Schenck, Jan Harrison and daughter Lisa Johnson, recovering from surgeries; David Hoffman, recovering from back surgery; Penny Andrist, immunotherapy; Beatrice Janaka's husband, James

Red Kettle Campaign: The Salvation Army's Red Kettle Campaign is off to an early start. If you are able to take a turn at participating this year, please stop at the table in the Gathering Space to sign up, or call Ginger Deitz! All sites are indoors again this year. Proceeds go to support the Salvation Army's feeding programs.

\$21,338 to Great Plains Food Bank: The Mission Committee sends great thanks to all who contributed in November in response to the special appeal for funds for the Great Plains Food Bank. Together, the Fargo and Baker-Downer congregations raised more than triple the amount that the Mission Committee set as a matching challenge from its Emerging Needs budget. With \$16,338 in individual donations and \$5,000 from Mission's Emerging Needs match, First Presbyterian has sent a total of \$21,338 to the food bank, for distribution to food pantries across all of North Dakota's counties, plus Clay County in Minnesota.

The needs continue, and donations through the church will still be accepted and relayed to the food bank. Donations by check should be designated on the memo line with the word "Food" and online at www.firstpresfargo.org/give by selecting the category of "Great Plains Food Bank."

Festival of Trees: The Mission Committee has set up their Christmas Trees in the foyer, sponsoring a variety of outreach needs in our community and across the globe. Keep an eye out for more information in coming bulletins and the December Messenger, as well as in the offering messages during Sunday worship this Advent.

ALL WOMEN ARE
INVITED TO THE

PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN'S

Christmas Tea

DECEMBER 2 @ 1PM

Program presented in the Sanctuary
by the *Noteables*, director Jill Post

Coffee and cookies to follow
in the Jennie Roberts Room

Hearing devices are available, please ask an usher for assistance.

Nursery: Staff will be present **beginning at 9:15** for infants-3 years, in the nursery complex on the 1st floor.

Activity Bags for Children: Fun-filled tote bags are located at both doors.

Restrooms: Restrooms are located in the Gathering Space and on the lower level.

Prayer Request Cards: Cards are in pew racks for your use. Prayers will be committed to God along with the other offerings and also lifted up in prayer by the staff.

Peace Candles: The candle burning on the chancel symbolizes peace. We ask guests to take a candle back to your church as a gift from us. Peace candles can be found at the Welcome Center, near the west doors.

Wi-Fi: Wi-Fi is available throughout the church. (password: community650)

FPC Officers

Session: Curt Brickman, Kathryn Byrd, Deb Dawson, Tom Dawson, Colleen Ford-Dunker, Jody Hudson, Kurt Kooyer, Dick Laraway, Bruce Maylath, Brian McClure, Jim McEvers, Sharon Secor, Paula Thomas (clerk), Jeff Wilkens, and Steve Wonderlich. **Deacons:** Paula Christensen, Toby Christensen, Dianne Connelly, Steve Dawson, Brenda Deckard, Sydney Goddard, David Hoffman, Gayla McGoldrick, Wayne Sander, Candy Shultz, Virginia Stern, Kathleen Thomas, Kevin Thomas, Debbie Tight, and Amy Wilkens.

Church Treasurer: Sherri Stern.

Church Staff

The Rev. Sarah M. Bigwood: *Head of Staff, Pastor*

The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey: *Associate Pastor*

The Rev. Daniel Billings: *Parish Associate*

The Rev. Cathie Bishop: *Parish Associate*

Rusty Bender: *Director of Church Life*

Bryan Poyzer: *Adult Choir Director*

Elliot Sander: *Interim Organist*

Carrie Lawrence: *Sunday School Coordinator*

Jan Lundgren: *Business Manager*

Casey LeMier: *Communications & Admin Assistant*

Rick Fiebiger: *Facilities Manager*

Drew Brovold: *Custodian*

Staff emails are: (first initial and last name of person)
@firstpresfargo.org



Attention Snow Birds!

Please notify the office of your winter address along with the dates you'll be away. Year-end giving statements are mailed at special non-profit rates and will not forward even if you have a forwarding order at the post office.

Please help us stay in touch!

L: Live Stream Option, H: Hybrid, Z: Zoom
Times shown in italics indicate am.

Sunday, November 23

11:30 Fellowship & Congregational Meeting

11:45 Decorating the Sanctuary

5:30 Confirmation Session III

Monday, November 24

No Church Events

Tuesday, November 25

No Church Events

Wednesday, November 26

5:30 St. Andrew's Brass

6:30 Westminster Bells

Thursday, November 27

Office Closed — Happy Thanksgiving!

Friday, November 28

No Church Events

Saturday, November 29

No Church Events

Sunday, November 30

9:15 Sunday School

10:30 Worship Service (L)

11:30 Fellowship

Reminder: Use the QR code found in the bulletin to access the secure giving portal on our website. Also, like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram!

For Your Information

Contributions received Nov. 9, 2025: \$10,647.34

November 16, 2025 Attendance: 208

164 in person

44 households livestreamed

Contributions received: \$3,602.40



Church Information

Office Hours:

M-TH, 9:00 am-4:00 pm

Phone: 701-293-6311

www.firstpresfargo.org

650 2nd Ave. N.

Fargo, ND 58102