



First Presbyterian Church, Fargo & Baker Downer

The Messenger

NOVEMBER 2025

Space for Healing

At First Presbyterian Church of Fargo and Baker Downer Presbyterian Church, we are creating spaces where people can experience the healing of Christ. That kind of healing does not happen by accident. It grows when we choose to lead with love, when we decide that our faith in God's goodness is bigger than our need for control or comfort.

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline." Paul's words, written from prison, were full of peace and courage. He reminded Timothy to hold fast to faith and love, and to trust in God's power to bring new life.

That same charge is ours today. As a church, we face seasons of change, new people joining us, new ideas taking shape, and new leaders rising among us. At Fargo, we see it in the energy of our committees, the creativity of our worship, and the steady stream of visitors who are finding a spiritual home. Each new face and idea brings the possibility of renewal if we can approach change with grace instead of fear.

How we respond makes all the difference in the world. We can let our discomfort and skepticism rule the day, muttering under our breath, creating distrust and hard feelings, sending people who want to join us in our efforts packing. Or we can choose another way. We can help. We can come alongside new ideas, welcome new people by learning their names, inviting them to an event, and telling them how excited we are that they are here.

At Baker Downer, this same spirit of welcome is taking shape in tangible ways. With a new business now operating out of our church building, we will be moving some things around and making room, physically and spiritually, for new possibilities. And as another new business begins in the grain elevator next door, we may soon find ourselves greeting new visitors and forming new connections. These are holy opportunities. They are invitations to practice faith that trusts in what God is doing rather than clinging to what we have always known.

(cont.)

A recent sermon reminded us that "love without pressure" is the heart of the gospel. Christ's faithfulness frees us from the need to control outcomes or insist on perfection. We are called instead to love with the gentleness and patience of grandparents, cheering from the sidelines, forgiving easily, and delighting in every sign of growth.

This is what it means to live by the power of God: to show up with joy, to make space for others, and to trust that God is already at work among us. Whether in Fargo or Baker Downer, we are building communities of belonging where God's healing can take root and grow.

Pastor Sarah
Pastor Sarah

Serving at Micah's Mission

Our next date for Micah's Mission is Thursday, November 13. We need four preparers and two people to help serve from 5:00-7:00pm. The menu consists of Stouffer's lasagna, garlic bread, salad, vegetable, and dessert. Come and help with this vital project! Please sign up at the Volunteer Opportunities Board in the West Foyer if you're able to help. Thank you for your continued support of Micah's Mission and Churches United for the Homeless!

Give Old Instruments New Life!

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 safe keeping. The deacons will take it from there.

Church Event Parking

If you are frequently at the church during workday hours, please stop by the office for a "church event" parking permit rear view mirror hang tag, or you can call the church office and we'll leave one for you to pick up on Sunday. Occasionally, there is a walk-through done in the parking lot to identify those who should not be parking here. If you do receive a yellow warning ticket, don't panic, call the church office to let us know.

Monthly Bible Study for Men Begins

The men's Bible study continues with Lesson 2 on November 11th at 6:45 a.m., in the Jennie Roberts Room. The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month, October through May. Coffee and breakfast pastries are served. Intended to help men understand what the Bible says in relation to what is expected of a Christian man, the study this year examines the Book of Ecclesiastes. A copy of the study guide can be obtained online, or you can request a copy from Bruce Maylath at ring4linguist@yahoo.com. No advance preparation is required for each month's study.

Presbyterian Women News

PW Bible Study Leaders: On November 12 Pastor Mary Holtey will lead a discussion on Lesson 3 of this year's Bible Study, *Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ*.

PW Circles: The morning PW Circles will meet November 18 in the Jennie Roberts Room at 9:30am, and the afternoon Circle will meet at 1:00pm. All women of the church are invited to attend. If you are interested or have any questions, please contact Barbi Kessel at (701) 261-6215.

PW Christmas Tea: PW's Christmas Tea program will take place on December 2nd at 1:00pm, where the Fargo Moorhead Area's Music Club *Noteables* will perform in the Sanctuary and treats will be served afterwards in the Jennie Roberts Room. All are invited!

2nd Annual Peace Summit

Together we create peace by making room for every neighbor—addressing hunger, homelessness, and the call to belong.

Building on last year's call to create community in a chaotic world, this year's Peace in Pandemonium summit invites us to take the next step—*Making Room at the Table*. We'll explore what it means to live peace through radical hospitality, shared sustenance, and compassionate action. Join us on **Saturday, November 15, 2025**, for a day of reflection, story, and solidarity as we confront hunger and homelessness with courage and care. Be part of a community where everyone is seen, valued, and welcomed.

Tickets are free! Find us on Facebook & Eventbrite.

Quad Pianos Concert Nov. 16

Please join us in the sanctuary on Sunday, November 16, at 4:00 pm for an exciting concert featuring Four Steinway Pianos played simultaneously, as well as two- piano duos and piano duets. Ten pianists will be participating in works by Brahms, Beethoven, Chopin, Ravel, Gershwin, and others. There will be a reception following the recital. A free-will offering will be taken to support the maintenance and tuning of the church's pianos.

FPC Financial Summary August 2025 — General Fund Only

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Increase/ Decrease	Annual Budget
Income	\$619,269	\$591,519	\$27,750	\$841,370
Expense	705,897	749,923	-44,027	976,243
Net/Shortfall	-\$86,627	-\$158,404	\$71,777	-\$134,873
Insurance Proceeds & Repairs				
Proceeds	11,141.76			
Repairs	-38,672.58			
Net P&R	-27,530.82			
Grand Total (Income-Expenses)	-\$114,157.91			

**“Praying Our Goodbyes”
Pilgrimage Class**

With her own retirement looming, Pastor Mary will lead a two-part class; the premise of which is that God remains present in our goodbyes.

**Thursday, Nov. 13 & 20
6:00-7:30pm
Jennie Roberts Room**

*“Goodbyes are as much a part of life as the seasons of the year.”
- Joyce Rupp*

Over a lifetime there are many ways we say goodbye – when a child starts kindergarten or college or the military; when one leaves a marriage or a job or a community or an addiction; when one retires. Perhaps the most poignant goodbye in our lives is at the time of a loved one's death.

The word goodbye originally meant “God be with ye” or “Go with God,” pointing to God's significant part in the going. For those of us who struggle with goodbyes, perhaps it gives us strength knowing that God remains with us in the struggle. Some goodbyes bring joy, others bring dread, still others bring sorrow.

The class will be held on Thursdays, November 13 and 20, 6:00-7:30pm. The Pilgrimage Program is sponsoring this course, but ALL are welcome to attend! Recommended, but not required reading is Joyce Rupp's book, “Praying Our Goodbyes.” The church library has a copy that can be borrowed.



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!

Presbyterian Women Mission Update

Thanks to all the women of the church who have pledged to PW for ongoing mission work. This spring we presented a scholarship to the Northern Plains Botanical Garden Society, specifically the Japanese Garden, as part of our Bible Study on ecological justice. In May, the Town Hall Lecture Series concluded after 54 years, and the PW will be giving a generous donation to the Emergency Food Pantry with its remaining funds. Thanks to Laura Sundberg and her family who are taking on the responsibility of transporting pillows to the YWCA. The PW collaborates with the entire congregation as the "Pillow Church". Throughout the year circle members collect hygiene items to donate to the EFP. Additionally, the PW is proud of their ongoing support of YouthWorks, New Life Center, Rape and Abuse Crisis Center, Chogoria Woman's Guild, and Bdecan youth.

URGENT: Nursery Attendant Job Opening

We are seeking an additional Nursery Attendant on Sunday mornings from 9:15am to 11:45am to provide safe and nurturing care to our precious children ages 0-4. The duties include playing with the children or directing their play, all while exhibiting patience and love. This is a paid position. **Requirements:** At least 18 years of age or older, experienced in caring for children ages 0-4, must have current CPR training/certification for infants and children, and be willing to submit to background and drug screenings. To apply: Submit a letter addressed to the Personnel Committee in care of the church office describing your interest, along with a short resume highlighting any experience. The church wishes to fill the position as soon as possible. Please contact the church if you have any questions. Thank you.

Milestones

We list FPC's births, baptisms, weddings, and deaths, hoping to stay better connected with one another.

Baptisms: **Julia Youning Blaufuss**, child of Jeffrey and Hong Blaufuss, August 31

Victoria Charlotte Rosenkranz, child of Megan Ness and Brian Rosenkranz, September 21

Lavinia Duarte Vieira Goulart Brito and

Alice Vieira Brito, child of Uyara and Raphael Brito, October 19

Macklin Grey Sonneson, child of Amanda and Ryan Sonneson, October 26

New Members: Ray Allord; Uyara, Raphael, and Lavinia Brito; Matthew Pechtl; Maxin and Rosemary Peters; and Nick Winistorfer, October 12

Fellowship of Frolicking Friendly Females (4F's)

On Saturday, Oct. 18th, 9 members of the 4F's group from church traveled to Minneapolis to attend Irving Berlin's White Christmas performance at the Chanhassen Dinner Theatre. The day was terrific! Besides good weather we heard beautiful vocals and watched amazing dancers with beautiful costumes and sets. It was a full day and we were tired, but it was well worth it.

Remember that 4F's is for 55+ age single females in our church. If you are not receiving emails about events and are interested, please let one of the following people know: Marcia Foss, ndmomfoss@gmail.com or Elaine, Rudd elainerudd1@hotmail.com. We will be happy to add you to our group.

Watch for upcoming fun events in the next two months!!



Church Life Update

A Season of Celebration, Reflection, and Connection

As the sounds of the bagpipes and hymns of heritage fill our sanctuary for the Kirkin' o' the Tartans, we are reminded that this beloved tradition marks both a celebration of faith and a joyful start to one of the busiest, most meaningful times in our worship and music life. The energy and anticipation of this season carry us forward as we begin our journey toward Advent later this month.

We are honored to host a memorial concert celebrating the life and ministry of Dr. Rodney J. Rothlisberger on Thursday, November 6, at 7:00 p.m. This special evening will feature members of the Red River Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists and the MSM Choral Department, offering a moving tribute to a gifted musician and faithful servant who blessed our congregation for many years.

This month also brings moments of heartfelt transition as we prepare to celebrate The Rev. Mary Jo E. Holtey, our beloved Associate Pastor, who will preach her final sermon with us on Sunday, November 23. We look forward to honoring her ministry each Sunday leading up to her retirement at the end of December, giving thanks for her faithful leadership, care, and friendship through the years.

In other exciting news, our 2025 Confirmation Class has officially launched! Eight wonderful youth have joined with five dynamic mentors to journey together in faith, learning, and community. Please keep them in your prayers as they grow in their understanding of God's call and the life of the church.

And on Saturday, November 15, from 10:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., we'll gather for our 2nd Annual Peace Summit: "Peace in Pandemonium – Making Room at the Table." This event will kick off Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (November 16–22) and offer a day of meaningful conversation, reflection, and action centered on compassion and community care.

From joyful music and worship to sacred milestones and opportunities for growth, this season reminds us how deeply God's Spirit moves through our shared life together. May we continue to make room—for music, for ministry, and for one another.

Cheerfully In Christ! Rusty Bender, Director of Church Life

BD Womens's Retreat

Inspire. Empower. Serve.

Women of all faith backgrounds, you are invited to understand servant leadership as modeled by Christ, learn to foster self-care practices that align with spiritual servanthood, and equip yourself to serve others without losing your sense of self; to lead with humility, courage, and faith. This retreat will take place November 22nd at Baker Downer and will be lead by Carrie Lauber and Kelly Meyer. Visit the BD Facebook page to get tickets!

Fall Musicians Schedule

Nov. 2 (9 & 11am)	<i>Clar'sair Bienn</i> Heather & Thistle Pipe Band Kirkin' Orchestra Sanctuary & Proclamation Choirs
Nov. 9	Genesis Ringers Westminster Ringers Elliot Sander & Alex Swanson, organ & piano duets
Nov. 16	Sanctuary Choir Second Avenue Strings Elliot Sander, organ & piano
Nov. 23	Friendship Choir Kids of the Kingdom Choir Genesis Ringers Second Avenue Band
Nov. 30	Sanctuary Choir Elliot Sander, organ & piano

Dates to Remember

Nov. 2 — Kirkin' o' the Tartans Services (9 & 11)

Nov. 6 — Taizé Service @ 5:30pm

Nov. 9 — Communion

Nov. 13 — Preparing & Serving
@ Churches United - Micah's Mission

Nov. 15 — 2nd Annual Peace Summit

Nov. 16 — Remembering the Saints

Nov. 23 — Congregational Meeting

Nov. 27 — OFFICE CLOSED

Dec. 2 — PW Christmas Tea

Dec. 7 — Communion & Luncheon celebrating
Pastor Mary's 33 years of service to FPC.

The Food Pantry Thanks You!

Thank you to everyone who took a shift at the Emergency Food Pantry during our week to volunteer. Volunteers included: Shirley & Rick Herberg, Marion Anderson, Joe Stanley, Barb Kessel, Nancy Johnson, Chuck and Geri Munro, Candy Shultz, Carrie Lawrence, Jill Post, Amy Wilkens, Cindi Bondy, Laurie Schlenker, Don Larew, Jean Pladson, Sheila Hastings, Jessica Poyzer, Claudia Hansen, Carol Hanson, Jan Carlsen, Bruce & AnneMarie Maylath.

During our shifts, food baskets were distributed to help 217 families in Fargo. In addition to food, the Emergency Food Pantry is always in need of personal care items such as shampoo, toothpaste, laundry soap, toothbrushes, razors, etc. We are collecting items in the basket in the coat room. Donations are taken over every Monday. Thank you for your generosity in giving your time and donations.



First Presbyterian Church
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Celebrating Mary's Retirement

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.

Opportunities to Celebrate

- November 23, 10:30 a.m. - Mary's final Sunday to preach
- November 30, 10:30 a.m. - *Behold the Promise*, celebrating Mary's pastoral care
- December 7, 10:30 a.m. - *Behold the Branch*, celebrating Mary's mission
 - Luncheon to follow worship at 11:45 a.m.
- December 14, 10:30 a.m. - *Behold the Healing*, celebrating Mary's teaching
- December 21, 10:30 a.m. - *Behold the Name*, celebrating Mary's leadership
- December 24, 5 & 10 p.m. - Christmas Eve Services
- December 28, 10:30 a.m. - *Behold the Legacy*

Date	Elder on Duty	Deacon on Duty	Usher Team	Reader
Nov. 2 (9am)	Kathryn Byrd	Toby Christensen	<i>Need 2 more ushers</i>	<i>No Reader Needed</i>
Nov. 2 (11am)	Sharon Secor	Amy Wilkens	<i>Need 4 more Ushers</i>	<i>No Reader Needed</i>
Nov. 9	Colleen Ford-Dunker	Kevin Thomas	Rick Herberg	Scott Swanholtm
Nov. 16	Jeff Wilkens	Candy Shultz	Troy Schmidt	Lisa McEvers
Nov. 23	Steve Wonderlich	Virginia Stern	Trumbos & D + V Stern	Tom Dawson
Nov. 30	Deb Dawson	Wayne Sander	Steve Wonderlich	Tom Dawson

November 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Activity Key: (L) - Livestreamed (H) - Hybrid (Z) - Zoom Only						1 10:00am - Kirkin' Rehearsal <u>Baker Site</u> 2:00pm - The Randall's 30th Anniversary
2 <u>Fargo Site:</u> 9:00am - Kirkin' Service (L) 10:00am - Celtic Dancers & Fellowship 11:00am - Kirkin' Service (L) 12:00pm - Fellowship	3	4 ** Evening Committee Meetings	5 5:00pm - Wednesday Activities Dinner 5:30pm - Building & Grounds Committee Meeting * Wednesday Evening Activities	6 12:15pm - Centering Prayer 5:30pm - Taizé Evening Prayer <i>(Note change of time)</i> 7:00pm - Rod Rothlisberger Tribute Concert <i>Sponsored by the RRVAGO & MSM</i>	7	8
9 <u>Fargo Site:</u> 9:15am - Sunday School 10:30am - Worship Service & Communion (L) 11:30am - Fellowship 5:30pm - Confirmation I <u>Baker Site:</u> 9:00am - Worship Service & Communion 10:00am - Reception Celebrating Pastor Mary	10 7:00pm - FM Music Club Program (L)	11 6:45am - Men's Bible Study 5:30pm - Board of Deacons Meeting (H)	12 10:00am - PW Bible Study Leaders 12:00pm - M&F Committee Meeting (H) 5:00pm - Wednesday Activities Dinner * Wednesday Evening Activities	13 12:15pm - Centering Prayer 3:00pm - Preparing meal @ Micah's Mission 5:00pm - Serving meal @ Micah's Mission 6:00pm - Pilgrimage Class <u>Baker Site</u> 5:00pm - Church Growth Conversation (H)	14	15 10:00am - Peace in Pandemonium: Making Room at the Table 10:00am - PW Circle (H)
16 <u>Fargo Site:</u> 9:15am - Sunday School 10:30am - Worship: Remembering the Saints (L) 11:30am - Fellowship 5:30pm - Confirmation II 7:00pm - Quad Piano Concert (L) <u>Baker Site:</u> 9:00am - Worship Service	17 6:30pm - Session Meeting (H)	18 9:30am - PW Circles 1:00pm - PW Circle	19 5:00pm - Wednesday Activities Dinner * Wednesday Evening Activities	20 12:15pm - Centering Prayer 6:00pm - Pilgrimage Class	21 12:00pm - Messenger Article Deadline	22 <u>Baker Site</u> 9:00am - Empowering Women's Leadership Retreat
23 <u>Fargo Site:</u> 9:15am - Sunday School 10:30am - Worship (L) 11:30am - Congregational Meeting 11:45am - Fellowship 5:30pm - Confirmation III <u>Baker Site:</u> 9:00am - Worship Service 10:00am - Advent Decorating	24	25	26 5:00pm - Wednesday Activities Dinner * Wednesday Evening Activities	27 Office Closed	28	29
30 <u>Fargo Site:</u> 9:15am - Sunday School 10:30am - Worship (L) 11:30am - Fellowship <u>Baker Site:</u> 9:00am - Worship Service	<u>** Evening Committee Meeting Schedule:</u> 5:30pm - Mission Committee Meeting (H) 5:30pm - EduCon Committee Meeting 5:30pm - Worship Committee Meeting (H) 5:30pm - Personnel Committee Meeting (H) 6:30pm - Stewardship Committee Meeting (H)			<u>* Wednesday Evening Activities:</u> 5:30pm - St. Andrew's Brass Rehearsal 5:30pm - Genesis Ringers Rehearsal 6:15pm - Children / Youth Choirs Rehearsals 6:30pm - Westminster Ringers Rehearsal 7:00pm - Youth Group 7:30pm - Sanctuary Choir Rehearsal		

Please note that events are at the Fargo location unless listed otherwise