

First Press

September 2023 - Volume 71 - Number 8



September

Ramblings *from the* Reverend

Friends,

Thank you for my sabbatical time away – thanks to the staff that kept the church moving forward, thank you to the Session for your leadership and thanks to the folks in our congregation that volunteered for everything from VBS to preaching.

Myra Watts, retired staff member and former elder, leads our staff and new officers in leadership training. One of the tools she uses is called Strength Finders; it's a program that surveys participants and then identifies particular strengths and gifts. The beauty of it is, rather than focusing on our weaknesses and how to combat them, it recognizes (at least for those like us who see it from a Christian perspective) that God has given us distinctive gifts and strengths, with the intention that we exercise and share them. Here's how Myra summarizes what this tool can do: "Our best strategy is to hone the strengths that we already have because that is what creates real success."

Paul uses this idea of the Holy Spirit gifting individual followers of Christ with gifts that, gathered together, strengthen the whole of the church: Find your strength, give to others with your strength, make the Body whole by bringing all those gifts together.

I believe that hospitality is a mutual strength of our congregation, and a strength we have been given by the Holy Spirit for mutual encouragement of each other, and for sharing with our community. The reflection that we went through in last year's consulting process lifted this up and bore this out. Hospitality is a collective gift that we have been given by the Holy Spirit. So, what do we do with that?

Let's acknowledge that "hospitality" is a bit of an amorphous word. I keep thinking about the motel chain whose tag line is, "we'll leave the light on for you." Play dates with kids, a neighborhood cook-out, and of course the church potluck, these are all demonstrations of hospitality but there is a biblical model of hospitality that takes us Christ-followers deeper.

Here's what Henri Nouwen says in his book, *Reaching Out*: "At first the word 'hospitality' might evoke the image of soft sweet kindness, tea parties, bland conversations and a general atmosphere of coziness... But still, if there is any concept worth restoring to its original depth and evocative potential, it is the concept of hospitality. It is one of the richest biblical terms that can deepen and broaden our insight in our relationship to our fellow human beings."

In worship this fall, I'm going to ask us to hear what the scripture has to say about, firstly, God's hospitality extended to us individually and as a church, secondly, how does the scripture call and equip us to be hospitable to each other as sisters and brothers in Christ in our church, and then, what are the biblical examples and gospel call to be hospitable to those who are strangers to us?

When I think about all the loneliness that is out in the world, the isolation that has become epidemic in our culture, the need to extend hospitality to "strangers," just as Jesus has extended his hospitality to us, I call upon the Holy Spirit to equip us to extend that grace of Christ as an ongoing act of hospitality to each other and to those to whom the Lord calls us.

Blessings – John

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Building Updates

The summer was a busy one for our facility staff! The Kitchen, Nursery, Well room, Embark room, and School have all received deep cleanings and makeovers. Ted, Larry and Erik have been painting, recarpeting, cleaning, decluttering, and replacing furniture. Please stop by to enjoy the updates!



Local Fire Relief

In light of recent events concerning the fires in our area, we have added a specific fund on our website's Giving page to allocate money to help congregants in our church and also neighbors in our community. Donations can be made by going to www.spokanefpc.org/give-online and selecting Fire Response 2023 from the drop-down menu.



SUNDAYS

after worship

THE GATHERING

Fall Kickoff September 10

Join us in the gym for fellowship around the table as we share a pancake breakfast together.



ACT II

September 17, 24 & October 3

Biblical Hospitality

Led by our Elders in the Fireside Room. We believe the Holy Spirit has gifted us as a community with the charism of hospitality. Come explore what the Bible has to say about hospitality, how Christians have traditionally practiced hospitality and what it all means for us as a church.



Gospel According to John

An in depth look at the Gospel. Taught by historian and biblical scholar, Bruce Gore. Join him in the Sanctuary.



The Bible Recap

This group uses The Bible Recap podcast to engage with scripture everyday. They get together on Sundays (Room 213) to have meaningful conversation about these scriptures.

Circle of Security

Parenting Group led by Myra Watts in Room 209. Please preregister by September 10.

Hospitality Out

Showing hospitality on the streets in our neighborhood. This group makes sandwiches or care kits and takes them out to share with people we meet in our neighborhood.



QUESTIONS?

suer@spokanefpc.org
brendan@spokanefpc.org

FIND OUT MORE...

www.spokanefpc.org/adults

BIBLE STUDIES

Fall Sessions

Sign up at spokane-fpc.org/adults or come to the Connect Center.



Monday Evening Women's Bible Study

**Mondays @ 6pm ... in person & online
September 11 - October 16**

The Simplest Way to Change the World:
Biblical Hospitality as a Way of Life

This study, by Dustin Willis and Brandon Clements, focuses on biblical hospitality as a way of life. The goal is to learn how to open up our lives to others and find opportunities to follow God's mission. Our meetings include fellowship, large group study discussion, and small groups for discussion and praying for each other. We also value social times after our meetings and throughout the month.

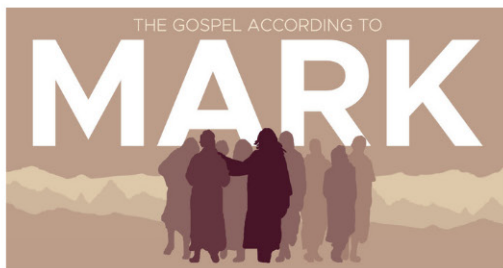


Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study

Thursdays 9:30-11:30am, September 7 - December 7

First Corinthians: Living Love When We Disagree

Through this study, by Melissa Spoelstra, we'll discover how to handle our differences with humility and grace, always showing the radical love of Jesus Christ, and we'll find encouragement and practical help for walking this out in our daily lives.



Thursday Morning Men's Bible Study

1st & 3rd Thursdays 9:30-11:30am

Led by Pastor John Sowers, beginning October 5

Join us for fellowship, teaching and discussion as we work our way through the Gospel of Mark. No need to sign up. Just show up with your Bible ... and bring a friend.

Thursday night events are back starting on September 28th! Due to popular demand, we'll be playing Family Feud again! Be on the lookout to take the official survey AND we need teams! Teams can be intergenerational families by blood or by friendship. If you want to participate email bradh@spokane-fpc.org.

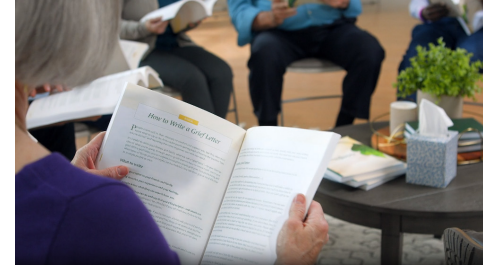


Congregational Care

Grief Share



First Pres GriefShare facilitators look forward to working together again after a successful first session in the Spring. This group of volunteers received training several weeks prior to the first meeting in March. They were, of course, a little apprehensive about their ability to work with people who were heartbroken. But, at the end of the 13 sessions, every one of them signed up to continue their ministry to those struggling with the pain and hurt of the loss of a loved one. Their lives were enriched by this experience as they came to love and care for the people in their small groups.



During the next session of GriefShare we will use updated material just recently made available. Through the use of videos, discussion groups and home exercises, GriefShare offers a special weekly seminar and support group designed to help you through the difficult days ahead. Sometimes described as “an ER for those in grief”, the group is open to join at any point throughout the fall.



The time of healing is sometimes referred to as “stages of grief”, but that’s not really the best description of the experience. GriefShare believes grief is a journey which scripture can guide us through. You will learn how to recognize the symptoms of being stuck in grief and how to cope with the emotions that come when grieving the death of a loved one. You will learn valuable information on facing life situations, and you will gain renewed hope for the future. Questions about your anger and your regrets will be discussed as well as how to approach loneliness and sadness.

Well-known experts on grief are included in each weekly video. They will share their expertise with the grief process. Ordinary people who have suffered significant loss are also interviewed, and share how they navigated the healing process—what helped and what was not so helpful. Through hearing their stories, you will begin to see similarities with your own experience and will understand that your reactions are normal. Each participant receives a Participant Guide to use at home during the week that will carry them from one session to another with exercises, scripture help and suggestions for helping with the grief process.

The fall session is open at any time to any adult regardless of whether your experience is recent or in the past. Those of all faith levels are welcome to join us, from any church (or none). Child care is available. The fall session begins on Wednesday, September 6th and will conclude before Christmas. You can sign up by calling the church office, going to spokaneipc.org/care, or register directly on the GriefShare website at griefshare.org/groups/168425. The group meets 6-7:30p each Wednesday, and registration is \$20 (scholarships available).

Joining the Church Triumphant

Carmen Hagman died July 26th, 2023
Dr. Don Roberts died August 13th, 2023
Eleanor Otto died August 26th, 2023

Thanks be to God for the lives of his faithful servants.

LAUNCH PAD

IN YOUR DREAMS

As the sun sets and you nod off to sleep, an entire nighttime world awakens. Along with our dreams and slumber, the night can also mean shadows and unfamiliar sounds. Who makes us feel safe when the world is dark and scary? In this series based on the life of Joseph, we'll learn about how God watches over us and loves everyone the same. No matter what we go through, God will make things right, which is why we can obey God above anyone else.



READY, SET, GLOW! A BACK-TO-SCHOOL PARTY!

Hey kids! To celebrate the start of a new school year, you're invited to a glow night party to celebrate with us! We'll be playing games, having fun, and there will be all kinds of glow-in-the-dark fun to be had! We hope you can join us for an amazing night together! Parents, this is a night off for you! All kids from infant through 5th grade are invited to be a part of the fun that night! We'll have age-appropriate games and spaces for everyone!



The cost is \$6 per child, and the event will run from 5:30PM-8:30PM.

****For this event, we ask that you pack your own dinner for your child. Please make sure to not pack anything with peanuts due to allergies. We will be having snacks during the night.***



HELLO, 4TH & 5TH GRADERS!

Hey families of 4th and 5th graders! If we haven't met yet, I'm Lydia Halma, the Associate Director for Preteen Ministry. As your kids embark on these last couple years of elementary school, my goal is for them to get to know Jesus, one another, our church family, and themselves better. This is a time with a lot of big questions and changes, and we want to honor that process and walk alongside your student—and you—together this year. Please reach out (lydiap@spokaneipc.org), I'd love to take you and/or your student out for coffee or ice cream and get to know you better! I can't wait to spend time with your students both during Sunday service and Act II, and at some of our PreTeen events coming up throughout the year!

Grace & Peace, Lydia

COMING SOON...

- Fall Fest will be Saturday, October 21st. More information to come!
- Calling all Elementary and Middle Schoolers! Would you like to be part of our Christmas Eve play? Whether you want to act, sing, or work behind the scenes, we've got a place for you! Talk to Ryan to sign up. Rehearsals start in October!

Serve.

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

Zab Potter Update from Burma

Note from Brad:

Last spring the Mission Team received a request from Zab Potter for financial assistance as she would be spending two months in parts of Burma/Myanmar. Burma has been engaged in civil war for over 70 years, and this past year the military dictatorship has continued to attack ethnic minorities with a new force and efficiency. Zab arrived unsure of exactly what she'd be doing, but knew she'd be sharing "health, hope, and love" alongside the Free Burma Rangers and Good Life Club (GLC), which focuses specifically on meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of children within conflict zones.

I recently received this update from Zab to pass along to the Mission Team, but also wanted to share it with our entire community. Her letter is a bit long, but we promise it's worth your time. Her story not only provides insight into a lesser-known conflict, but also ways our church is involved in supporting and sending saints like Zab as a force of Christ's love.

Dear FPC Family,

I am back in Chiang Mai (where my family joined for a bit!), safe and sound after an eventful, incredible, heart wrenching, and overall unforgettable 6+ weeks in Burma/Myanmar.

After about 10 days in Ta U Wah Camp, which is basically Free Burma Rangers (FBR) headquarters within Burma and where we spent our time preparing for the mission, going on hikes and trail runs, making creative recipes, and playing sports, we headed north to Karenni State. By "we" I mean the small team of foreigners, which included our close family friends and founders of FBR the Eubanks, volunteers, and journalists, as well as two large local teams from Karen, Shan, and Kachin states. We totaled around 60-70 people.

When we arrived in Karenni State, we were met by another 50 or so rangers consisting of Karenni (Kayah), Kayan, Shan, and Burman ethnicities. Until the coup in 2021, Karenni State had been relatively peaceful—but not free—because it was occupied by the Burma Army. Since May 2021, the resistance in Karenni has remained strong as the local people groups are fighting to reclaim their land and freedom. The Burma military has one major advantage, however, and that is the air; they mercilessly blast villages, hospitals, churches, and schools with airstrikes, bombs, machine guns, and mortars, leaving much of Karenni's stunningly beautiful landscape and villages in a state of desolation. Naturally, a spirit of fear permeates many Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps and the few villages that remain intact. I can tell you it is absolutely terrifying hearing planes and explosions overhead, not knowing where they will land.

To help combat this fear and bring some laughter and hope to people living in such a precarious and helpless situation, we put on Good Life Club (GLC) programs. A small group of Karenni rangers ran the show while the rest of us helped out with



**Above: Zab, Htwe, Mo Mo U, and Si Pi Wah
Below: Karen rangers singing at Blade's baptism**



dances, skits, songs, and passing out shirts and food at the end. Meanwhile, another team set up a medical clinic and would treat anywhere between 50-200 patients each program. Hypertension and depression were common among IDPs, revealing the stress and exhaustion of living under constant threat of attack. Finally, another group, of which I had the privilege of being a part, interviewed IDP camp leaders, teachers, and community members.

Many GLC programs included IDPs from several camps, so we heard a lot of stories. We would ask about their situation, including why they had to move in the first place and how many times since, learn how many families and individuals live in each camp as well as their religion (a majority was Roman Catholic, some were Baptist, others Buddhist), and ask about the village and school needs. Based on this information, we'd provide money (usually not nearly enough to meet their needs), encouragement, and prayer. While a couple of us prayed about how much to give and counted money, somebody else would share a word of encouragement, usually Scripture and/or personal testimony. Importantly, we'd end the interview portion by giving anyone present the opportunity to share prayer requests and a message to the world. Most people are praying for justice and peace, a safe place for children to go to school, and for the fighting to end so they can go home. They want the world to become more aware of the situation in Burma and respond accordingly with financial assistance and pressure on the Burma military, including the establishment of a no fly zone over parts of Burma.

I've put finishing this email on pause for a few days because I can't seem to adequately describe probably the most significant aspect of my many weeks in Burma...

To continue reading about Zab's reflections on her time in Burma, look for the letter in its entirety in First Word on Monday, September 4th and 11th.



Bite2Go for the '23-'24 School Year

It's time to start ramping up our funding for this year's Bite2Go program, which ensures food-insecure students have access to quality food when at home during the weekends. \$180 (\$15/mo) will support one student for the entire school year. You can give online on the First Pres website at <https://www.spokanefpc.org/give-online>. Be sure to use the Fund drop down to select Bite2Go. If you prefer, you may drop a check off at the FPC office but be sure to put Bite2Go in the memo line.

FPC Financial Update

- Pledged income for the seventh month of the year is \$22,258 unfavorable to budget. Non-Pledged income is \$68,499 favorable to budget.
- The expenses for the seventh month of the year are \$15,783 favorable to budget.
- Church Operations was \$91,484 favorable to a budget of -\$172,285 showing an loss of -\$80,801.
- Net Church Income/Loss was \$81,624 favorable to budget of -158,091 showing an loss of -\$76,466.

Financial Update - 2022 Operating Budget

July-23

Church Only	Year to Date	YTD Budget
Pledged Income	\$ 699,571	\$ 721,829
Non-Pledged Income	123,925	55,426
Other Income	94,009	64,550
Total Income	\$ 917,505	\$ 841,805
Expense	998,306	1,014,090
Income over (under) expenses	\$ (80,801)	\$ (172,285)

First Presbyterian Christian School



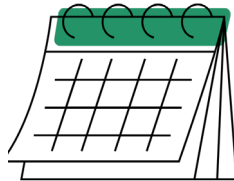
Hello Church Family!

We still have a few open spots in our classes! We would love to give you a tour and have you join us this year. Please call our office for more info or to schedule a tour! 509-747-9192.

Tracy Blue and Shawna Harris
Co-Principals

Important School Dates:

- Thursday, August 31st - Meet the Teacher Day
- Tuesday, September 5th - First Day of School
- Sunday, September 10th - First Presbyterian Church Blessing of the Backpacks & Pancake Breakfast - 10:00 a.m. service
- October: After School Electives Begin including our **free STEM electives** for our kids, church kids, and community kids! These will take place in our **new STEM room!** *The Preschool STEM Elective will be from 12:45 - 1:30 one day per week and the K-3 STEM Elective will be from 3:30 - 4:30 on Thursdays, starting October 8. Give our office a call if you are interested in teaching a session (5 or 6 weeks) this fall or if your child might be interested in joining the class!*



BARTON ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOL



Fall Term Begins September 8

MWF 9-11:30am

Free English classes for adults

Free childcare upon request

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CHILDCARE, DOOR GREETING, SNACK MAKING, TRANSPORTATION, AND LIGHT OFFICE WORK. CONTACT BECKYR@SPOKANEFPC.ORG FOR MORE INFO.

Young Adults

Sundays Beginning Sept 17

Spiritual Formation

After Sunday morning worship each week we will learn & practice a way of connecting with God—some new and some ancient. Join us as we expand our spiritual life and practice with prayer, visual art, poetry, & scripture.

Welcome, Jessie!

First Pres has hired Jessie Kuehner to join our staff as the Director of Student Ministries. We are excited for her to join our community!

Jessie is moving to us from Houston, TX. She graduated with her MDiv from Fuller Seminary with an emphasis in Family, Youth, and Culture. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Nebraska where she majored in sports medicine and was pre-med. Jessie is a huge Huskers fan and is excited to live in Washington where the Huskers will travel for games she can go to! She has been in ministry for more than 10 years, working with youth and all ages from birth to college. Jessie has been married to her husband, Brian, for 10 years. Brian owns a company called Kuehner Solutions and previously worked at NASA. Jessie and Brian have 3 kids: Lauren (3rd grade), John (kindergarden), and Phil (2 years old). They also have a dog named Dillon. Jessie and her family will be arriving in a few short weeks! Welcome, Kuehners!



SHIFT CALENDAR FALL 2023

SEPTEMBER

9/19 Kickoff! 6:30-8:30
9/26 Shift 6:30-8:30

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

OCTOBER

10/3 Spaghetti Night!
6:30-8:30
10/7 Green Bluff! 12:30-6pm
10/10 Shift 6:30-8:30
10/17 Shift 6:30-8:30
10/24 Halloween Party!
6:30-8:30
10/27-29 Fall Camp @
Camp Spalding

12/5 Spaghetti Night! 6:30-8:30

DECEMBER

12/8-9 Toy Store
12/12 Shift 6:30-8:30
12/19 Christmas Party! 6:30-8:30

CONTACT INFO

Kezia: keziar@spokaneffc.org
509-747-1058 ext 175
Alivia: aliviab@spokaneffc.org

PRAXIS CALENDAR FALL 2023

SEPTEMBER

9/20 Kickoff! 7:00-9:00
9/27 Praxis 7:00-9:00

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
11/21 Movie Night! 6:30-8:30
11/29 Praxis 7:00-9:00

OCTOBER

10/4 Spaghetti Night! 7-9pm
10/7 Green Bluff! 12:30-6pm
10/11 Praxis 7:00-9:00
10/18 Praxis 7:00-9:00
10/25 Halloween Party!
7:00-9:00

DECEMBER

12/6 Spaghetti Night! 7-9pm
12/9 Toy Store
12/13 Praxis 7:00-9:00
12/20 Christmas Party with
a Purpose! 7:00-9:00

CONTACT INFO

Kezia: keziar@spokaneffc.org
509-747-1058 ext 175
Alivia: aliviab@spokaneffc.org
Jessie: jessiek@spokaneffc.org

follow us on instagram to see what we've been up to!
@praxis_spokane

Praxis in Westport

Praxis took 18 high school students and adults over to Westport, Washington, at the beginning of August and held a VBS for preschool-6th graders at South Beach Presbyterian Church! The kids in Westport absolutely loved the "Super VBS World" theme and all the characters that came with it. It was wonderful to watch the Westport kids build relationships with our high school students and with God through stories, songs, activities, games, and crafts! We already can't wait for next year!



SHARE YOUR CREATIVE GIFTS!

FALL IS FAST APPROACHING, AND WITH IT COMES OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE YOUR GIFTS!

CHANCEL CHOIR

THE CHOIR WILL START THE SEASON WITH A POTLUCK DINNER ON 8/31 AT 5:30 PM, FOLLOWED BY REHEARSAL AT 6:30 PM. THIS WILL BE A WONDERFUL WAY FOR NEW AND OLD MEMBERS TO CONNECT/RECONNECT. THE CHOIR WILL SING TWICE A MONTH, STARTING IN SEPTEMBER.

HANDBELL CHOIR

THE CHOIR WILL START THE SEASON ON 9/20 AT 7 PM AND WILL BEGIN PLAYING IN SERVICES IN OCTOBER. THERE ARE LIMITED SPACES, PLEASE CONTACT DERRICKP@SPOKANEFFC.ORG IF YOU ARE INTERESTED.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR AND DRAMA TEAM

REHEARSALS FOR THE CHRISTMAS EVE MUSICAL WILL BEGIN IN OCTOBER. THE MUSICAL WILL BE PERFORMED AT THE 4 PM CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE.

DETAILED REHEARSAL SCHEDULES WILL BE POSTED ON OUR WEBSITE, SPOKANEFFC.ORG IN THE COMING WEEKS. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT ME AT DERRICKP@SPOKANE.ORG.

IF YOU HAVE OTHER ARTISTIC TALENTS NOT REPRESENTED ABOVE, PLEASE REACH OUT TO ME! THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO SERVE AND SHARE YOUR GIFTS.

Blessing On The Backpacks Sunday, September 10th



Students & Educators; bring your backpacks to worship. We want to pray a blessing over you at the beginning of this school year!

The Gathering



Fall Kickoff

September 10

Join us after worship for breakfast in the gym.

Coming Up

- Sept. 5** *FPCS First Day of School*
- Sept. 8** *Barton Fall Session Begins*
- Sept. 10** *Blessing of the Backpacks*
Gathering: Pancake Breakfast
- Sept. 15** *Launch: Ready, Set, Glow!*
- Sept. 17** *Act II Resumes*
- Sept. 19** *Shift Kicks Off*
- Sept. 20** *Praxis Kicks Off*
- Sept. 28** *Thursday Night Family Feud*
- Oct. 21** *Fall Fest*

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

Middle School Ministries

Kezia Rhodes (175)

Intergenerational Ministries

Brad Hauge (252)

Preteen Ministries

Lydia Halma (162)

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