



**THE GRAPEVINE**  
**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SANDPOINT, IDAHO**  
 November 2021

From the Pastor...

For the eleventh year in a row, we didn't have any trick-or-treaters visit our house out on Shiras Drive for Halloween. But I'm ready if they do come, and this year we had chocolates from our visit to the Rittersport chocolate factory in Germany. Those kids missed a haul!

I'm ready every year to hear the doorbell ring, then open the door to the "Trick or Treat!" shout. I'd be generous if I could hand out candy. But since we didn't have any kids show up, then, like all the other years, I'll end up eating the chocolate. That's how I buy it, asking, "What would I like to eat?" Shawna might have some too, of course. Come on over if you want some!

Then again, if I really want to offload all that chocolate, it might be better to take it somewhere and give it away. I am sure I could find people who would appreciate it, or places that would coordinate its use if I donated it, such as a food bank. Then again, maybe I could save it at home for next year? I could put it in the freezer and pull it out if company

comes! At the very least, I need to hide it so I am not tempted to overdo it and get a belly(ache). If I ignore it and let it sit for months, it may get stale, and certainly wouldn't be doing anyone any good. Like all food, there's a sacredness to it, and a rich heritage lay behind the craft of creating it. Chocolate is meant to be eaten and enjoyed.

Speaking of kids visiting, since Covid, our in-person worship attendance has been around 25 people. Before Covid it was 42. We do have worship participants via Facebook and the church website, and are able to reach vast distances, but we as a congregation don't have kids involved. All our Active Members are beyond childbearing age and don't have "young families" anymore. Most Sunday's the nursery is empty. This is the reality we face. Like me at home on Halloween, I can't make the doorbell ring or force kids to come.

Over the last several months, I've seen three young families come, one at a time. They come to worship, sit in the back pew by the door, then go. Perhaps our teachings are too hard for young people because we explore second-half-of-life-spirituality and are a "progressive church," as a PC(USA) congregation?

Maybe our long-held traditions are unusual for people who don't have a church background? When a young family comes and sits in the back, could it be they don't experience the "critical mass" of other young people here? Do they want active programs and other kids to become friends? It could be a mix of all of this, but we are not alone in this dynamic of church life. Decline is systemic.

Sheryl Kinder-Pyle, Executive Presbyterian of Inland Northwest Presbytery, visited us during worship last Sunday, which was Reformation Sunday. She then took my wife and I out for lunch and conversation. One of the things she mentioned in passing was that in 2010 our Presbytery had 8,400 presbyterian members spread throughout 43 churches in our region. Today that presbytery membership number is reduced by half that amount, to 4,200 spread in 40 churches. Over those 10 years, three congregations left the denomination entirely, and other members in other churches also left, often over theological disagreements. Another large demographic in aging congregations are those who die. The PC(USA) is not getting younger, and older members who die are not being replaced. Sometimes new members do join, but this is not enough to stem the tide of decline. Trends are trends, and eventually lines fall off the chart.

Does this sound gloomy? Scary? Like a pessimistic Halloween? I suppose it could sound that way. But it's been predicted for decades.

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, I had my 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary for Ordination as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (USA). For my entire "career" as "professional clergy" the church institution has wrestled with many issues. I have discovered through these various struggles that it is not my job to save the church. It is my job to help people "go deep," if they are open to it, and to partner with other church leaders who share ministry gifts. I preach every Sunday, and it resonates with some. The Tuesday book study and Sunday school classes, largely led by others as I participate, are excellent in helping us as a community open our hearts to the Holy Spirit and "grow" by going deeper. We host retreats from time to time, and these bring people together from the larger region for focused, contemplative experiences.

In terms of facilities, the Community Peace Garden welcomes those who seek hospitality during their busy days as they find a bench to sit on for a while, to read, to pray, like a sanctuary without walls. FPC is generous in allowing others to use the building for events, concerts, recitals, and support groups.

I'm not sure what church looks like in 2022. One thing I do know and trust very much is that God is with us in this moment, and we are all called to have eyes to see and ears to hear the presence of the Living Christ. Practicing spiritual disciplines to help us stay attuned and attentive to divine Presence is our calling as Jesus invites us to "follow on the Way."

November flows through a time of thanksgiving but doesn't stop there. We merge into Advent, a season of preparing, where we wait, embrace silence and face darkness, all with the hope of God's light in Christ in the promise of Christmas. Even as we face larger issues, we catch our breath in the wresting, and enjoy the sweet taste of divine gifts in our midst. May God help us learn new ways to give ourselves away for the life of the world to "follow on the way."

Peace and All Good,  
Pastor Andy Kennaly



## THE SESSION SUMMARY NOVEMBER 2021

This edition of The Session Summary includes our meetings in September and October. During the September meeting we scheduled two congregational meetings: December 5, 2021 – To receive nominations for Elders, Deacons and other leaders and to approve the Pastor's Terms of Call for 2022; January 30, 2022 – the Annual Meeting of the Congregation.

Also in September, we gladly approved the request from the Membership and Mission Committee to collect kitchen items for inclusion in Welcome Kits to present to World Relief of Spokane for distribution to refuge families. We also endorsed a request from the Earth Care Congregation Team to encourage the Sandpoint Farmers Market vendors to minimize the use of plastic bags by replacing them with mesh, cloth, or paper containers.

The highlight of our October meeting was to welcome Judy McComish and Lexie de Fremery as new Active Members.

Sue Helander, Building and Grounds Committee, recommended some maintenance needs to address before the arrival of winter. These include a minor roof repair for an issue detected during the annual inspection. The recent restoration of decayed wood along the sanctuary roofline now requires installing new gutters and thermostatically controlled heating cables. This necessary task will reduce the risk of dangerous icicles and sidewalk icing along the north side of the sanctuary. Like all building maintenance matters, it's much better to address them earlier rather than later.

Session also approved a recommendation to prune the Norway maple tree along the south property line to reduce the shading over the new community garden. At the same time, the arborist can remove dead wood from the paper birch growing along the sidewalk by Fourth Avenue. The bronze birch borer, a small bark beetle, has been causing gradual top kill in this tree.

Peace,  
Bill Love, Clerk of Session

## MINUTES of DEACONS MEETING

**October 10, 2021**

The meeting began with a prayer by Millie Rinker.

**ATTENDANCE:** Victoria Oliver, Jill Murphy, Millie Rinker, Carol Curtis, Lynn Pietz. Dyno Wahl did not attend.

**MINUTES of LAST MEETING:** Approved

### TREASURER'S REPORT:

Deacon's Discretionary	\$135.14
Escrip	679.95
Food Bank	135.00
Missions	300.00
Noisy Offering	-23.09
Pastor Discretionary Mission	165.98
Scholarship	1,150.00

### ALLOCATION of FUNDS:

Now that we are in the last quarter of 2021, Deacons voted, after discussion, to donate \$300 each to The Magnolia Center and The Senior Center, when we receive the funds in our account.

### REPORTS:

**SESSION:** Lynn attended the September meeting. There will be a Congregational Meeting on Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021, following Sunday worship to receive nominations from the Nominating Committee for Ruling Elders, Deacons, and other leaders, and to approve the Pastor's Terms of Call for 2022. A contingency plan was discussed in the event that Pastor Andy should become infected with Covid-19. Session approved our proposed "Welcome Home" lunch reception for Pastor Andy and Shawna after church Sunday, the 17th of October. Carol will represent Deacons at the November meeting.

**COMMUNION:** November 7, Dyno; December 5, Millie.

### MISSIONS:

**MEMBERSHIP:** A brief discussion of re-assigning congregation members for our prayer and support indicated that we should delay this until the beginning of 2022.

**FOOD BANK:** Victoria has taken 14# in the last month; Lynn reported a total of 32# total produce from the garden for the summer..

**SCHOLARSHIPS:** No report.

**COMMUNITY GARDEN BEDS:** Lynn reported that the gardens have been “put to bed” for the winter. A concern for the gardens is that the maple tree offers too much shade for successful growth of the vegetables. A hope is for the tree to be pruned by planting time in spring of 2022. Lynn will make a proposal to Session about this.

**PRAYERS:** Continued prayers for Marge Pietsch and Jim Shirrell. Marge and Gary have home health workers coming weekday mornings, but sometimes Gary will need someone to be with Marge should he have an appointment later in the day.

**WELCOME HOME PARTY FOR PASTOR ANDY & SHAWNA:** Planning ensued for a welcome home lunch for Pastor Andy & Shawna set for Sunday, October 17. We will make a “stuffed potato” lunch for a projected group of 55 people. Seating can be outdoors, weather permitting. Plans will be to purchase paper goods and biodegradable flatware because of Covid concerns. Millie will order a “Welcome Home” cake, and Lynn will pick it up. Lynn and Victoria will purchase food from Yoke’s. Deacons will assemble ingredients and pre-prepare food Saturday afternoon for Sunday’s lunch.

The meeting adjourned with a prayer. The next Deacons meeting will be November 14.

## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!**

We welcome two new members to the Active Member Roll and Life with First Presbyterian Church. Judy McComish and Lexie De Fremery joined during worship on Sunday, October 31, 2021. Judy actively volunteers at the local Food Bank and has a heart for mission. Lexie is active with our Contemplative community through Sunday school, Tuesday book study, prayer group and retreats. Welcome to Judy and Lexie!

## **IRELAND, SCOTLAND, ENGLAND 2022!**

A trip is in the works, and planning has begun. Don and Patti Deters, Bill Love, and Pastor Andy have been in communication regarding a church trip in 2022. So far it looks like 11 days in Ireland, 11 days in Scotland, and three nights in London are possible, not necessarily in that order. Some may come for the whole time, some may come for one or another of the places during the first or second halves. We are still discussing the format, destinations, and costs. Keep your eyes open for more information, and feel free to talk to us about your ideas, interests, and intent in visiting these amazing places.

## **HIGHWAY CLEANUP NOVEMBER 6**

The October date was postponed due to wet weather. November 6 is the new date so hopefully Mother Nature will cooperate for the Highway Cleanup. We meet at the Westmond Store on south highway 95 at 10:00 a.m. Bring work gloves and sturdy boots. Contact Sylvia Humes ([humescs@msn.com](mailto:humescs@msn.com)) for more information

## **TREE TRIMMING IN PEACE GARDEN**

The large birch tree and the large maple tree in the Peace Garden were given a trim by Arborists from Sand Creek Tree Service. This helps by removing dead branches from the higher portions of the trees, and gives more sunshine to the raised garden beds. Thank you, Sue Helander for coordinating this! [https://www.facebook.com/pg/First-Presbyterian-Church-of-Sandpoint-ID-651226501675878/photos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/First-Presbyterian-Church-of-Sandpoint-ID-651226501675878/photos/?ref=page_internal)

## WORLD RELIEF OF SPOKANE PROJECT

Most of us remember 2017, when the children's choir from World Relief came and sang at our church, and then came back the next year to sing for us again. These were refugees from various countries, who told their stories of running for their lives in their home countries.

We're now waiting for 300 Afghans set to arrive in Spokane. As refugees, they come with very little, and will need items to help them settle into their own places. World Relief has offered us a way to be good neighbors, by providing "Welcome Kit(s)," one for kitchen items, another for bedding, a third for back to school items. For more information, visit: [www.worldrelief.org/spokane](http://www.worldrelief.org/spokane)

We thought we would be welcoming neighbors by supporting one family, starting with a welcome kit of kitchen items, and move to the other kits as we fill that box.

It should be easy to do. Together, we can fill that box by each bringing one or two items, until it is filled. This is teamwork! It should not be a hardship for any of us to do.

We already have one group connected with the church, thinking of donating a box.

Other small groups might want to consider this. We're hoping to have this done by the end of October.

Look at the lists and see what you can do! (All items donated should be new.)

Thank you,

Membership, Outreach, and Missions Committee



## **JUST A REMINDER**

It's been a while since we've been reminded about all the things the church is collecting to be used again. It doesn't cost anything, and it's very much worth the effort. Just bring your donation to the church, and it will get to the right place. Here's a revised list (we don't collect Box Tops for Education anymore, because they are now scanned into cell phones).

**Used Eyeglasses, Sunglasses, and Glass Cases.** These are taken by Eye Care International, a group of doctors and volunteers who provide them to the underserved in El Salvador along with optical services.

**Plastic Grocery and Produce Bags and Brown Paper Bags.** These are really appreciated at the Bonner Community Food Center.

**Food** for the Bonner Community Food Center.

**Used Computers, Monitors, Keyboards, and Printers.** These are refurbished by a volunteer group in Coeur d'Alene and sold at a reasonable amount to or given to those in need.

**Used Cell Phones and Accessories.** HopeLine from Verizon refurbishes these and provides them to victims of domestic violence.

**Pull Tabs from Aluminum Cans.** These go to a nationwide fundraising effort for the Ronald McDonald House charity.

**Used Bibles.** These go to the Bible Foundation in Newberg, Oregon, that distributes them in the US and around the world. They welcome Bibles in any condition – torn, parts missing, damaged, etc.

**World Relief.** We're collecting items for kitchen kits to be provided to relocated Afghans coming to Spokane, who have lost everything including their country. There are lists of requested items at the church.

Anna Bates

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## STEWARDSHIP, FINANCIAL, MEMORIAL

*“... serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.” - 1 Peter 4:10*

### *November stewardship*

With the turning of the fall leaves we are also looking toward the turning of the calendar to a new year and a new budget. Our stewardship letter requesting your prayerful consideration of financial gifts to support the work of First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint follows this financial update. We encourage you to email your pledge info or return a copy of the pledge form at your earliest convenience to aid in the budgeting process.

November is also a time to offer thanks and we want to acknowledge the continued gracious giving of the members and friends of First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint. Your generosity is keeping us on track with our budget through the first three quarters of the year.

As the end of the third quarter, offerings, pledges and gifts totaled **\$108,618.00** which represents **74%** of the budget. Expenditures through September totaled **\$107,613.00** which represents **73%** of the budget.

**Giving** through October 24<sup>th</sup> added \$11,172 dollars which brings us within \$27,000 dollars of meeting the anticipated budget revenues by the end of the year.

Major expenditures during the third quarter were related to the use of the Heritage Trust Grant matching funds and building fund reserves as authorized by Session in January 2020 to repair and replace damaged soffits, fascia and corbels surrounding the exterior of the original roof structures. This project is in its final stages.

### **Major Funds**

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Jan. 2021</b>	<b>Sept. 2021</b>	<b>Change</b>
Building Fund	\$16,122	\$14,996	\$(1126)
Heritage Trust Grant Match	\$ 5,676	\$ 0	\$(5676) *
Deacons	\$ 3891	\$ 2543	\$(1348)
Memorial	\$23,725	\$16,330	\$(7,395) **
Peace Garden	\$ 2,743	\$ 5266	\$ 2523

\* Building Repair/Heritage Trust Grant project

\*\*Memorial Fund contributions toward live streaming equipment

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Vincent

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good;  
and what does the LORD require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God? - Micah 6:8.*

When I first visited the congregation at First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint, I was struck by the friendly and welcoming congregation. With no prior connections to this church, I was accepted as I was and invited to participate in whatever way fit my comfort level. In addition to this open and warm invitation, I was attracted to the many ways I could see the congregation yearning to do that which is just and fair, encouraging that which is kind and helpful, and seeking to walk humbly before God and alongside our neighbors.

These initial observations have been reinforced many times through the past few years and even as we have adjusted to living in a time of pandemic, I see these principles continue. FPC shows love in the community by supporting events and activities of the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force, contributing to the Bonner Community Food Bank, Bonner Homeless Transitions, Sweet Magnolia House and Sandpoint Area Seniors, to name a few. We care for our earth through sponsorship of a stretch of Highway 95 and continued improvements and care of the Community Peace Garden, including the newly added garden planters. And through it all, we deepen our walk with our Lord through weekly study and worship together even when located across the country or around the world, thanks to online connections. First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint is truly blessed by the Spirit and the few examples above illustrate some of the ways God is leading our church.

These ministries and many more are made possible by the financial generosity and volunteer time of our members and friends. As we plan for our 2022 budget, we recognize the importance of sharing our resources to continue outreach within the community, we are cognizant of the rising maintenance and repair costs associated with the care of an historic building, and we hope to support a cost of living increase for Pastor Andy and staff. Your consideration of an increase in your financial gifts for the coming year will help Session meet these goals. Thank you for your prayers for the mission of our Church and your consideration of financial support as we seek to do what is good and just, to encourage that which is kind and fair, and to walk humbly with our God and alongside our neighbors.

Blessings to you,

Paula Vincent, Finance Elder

**2022 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE**

Thank you for your support of the ministries and mission of First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint, Idaho.

To aid in budget development, it would be helpful to receive your completed form by December 5, 2022.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ total annual gift to be paid. I wish to give (please mark one):

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ per  week  month  quarter  year

I can support with my time and talents in these areas: buildings and grounds, Christian education, earth care, fellowship, finance, membership, missions, music, peace garden, retreats, technology, worship, other

\_\_\_\_\_.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



**November Birthdays**

**1 Dayna Maddox**

**1 Lynn Pietz**

**2 Jim Dustman**

**3 Jane Clark**

**14 Kelly Curtis**

**14 Paula Vincent**

**16 Esther Inselman**

**26 Tim Cochran**

## Regular Monthly Events



*Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m. In-Person and Facebook Live*

*Monday - Al-Anon 6:00 p.m.*

*Tuesday - Book Study Group 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.*

*Contemplative Prayer Group 3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.*

*Choir Practice postponed*

*Second and Fourth Tuesday - 6:00 p.m. PFLAG*

*Wednesday - 6:00 p.m. Al-Anon*

*Thursday - 12:00 p.m. Al-Anon*

*7:00 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous*



**First Presbyterian Church**

*Ministers: Members and Friends*

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