



**THE GRAPEVINE**  
**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SANDPOINT, IDAHO**  
 September 2022

From the Pastor...

Well, I've done it! I've decided to make the switch. This involves embracing rather than resisting change. Maybe I've given up the struggle, or perhaps decided it's not worth the effort to push back. More likely, the reality has sunk in. The sooner I adjust the happier I will be, and better able to focus on my larger purpose and intent. Honestly, I like the switch.

What am I talking about? Two things, the first is the space, of course. The space after a sentence. I was a good student and took lessons to heart. Mrs. Peterson taught my eighth grade typing class that after the end of a sentence, the left thumb pushes TWICE on the space bar. Two spaces to separate sentences. That extra, slight pause helps our brains absorb thoughts better than with only one space. But the literary world notices financial incentives and only one space is half the price of two. Most newspapers, magazines, and the more and more prominent online, digital medias now edit for one space between sentences.

So now, I am retraining my brain, and my left thumb. Muscle memory is a tough one. Habits are difficult to switch. It takes considerable conscious effort to stick with one space after a sentence. The affluent days when two spaces were affordable will be missed. Hopefully it will get better over time as I learn to work faster with less margin. It will be better in the long run, for sure.

This conversation regarding the change in space after a sentence is a fact, but I'm also using it here as a metaphor. Most people may not notice the difference between sentences, just as many people have not noticed that the Pastor position at First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint has been part-time for almost two years. This is a change in a well-established structure. It is an entirely new system of call for a church and pastor. New, in an old way.

The full-time structure, historically, is a more recent development based on cultural affluence and church prominence in culture. The facilities-based model using professional clergy and an attractional approach assumed that if you build it, they will come. Membership and worship attendance, budgets and mission endeavors all are affected by institutional decline and marginalization of the church. This is something people don't tend to talk about, even though it's a reality.

The early church was no stranger to part-time models. And lately, half the congregations in Inland Northwest Presbytery utilize part-time clergy. But again, this is rarely emphasized.

In 2021 the Pastor position here at FPC Sandpoint shifted five hours, from 40 to 35 per week. The same was true in 2022 as 30 hours per week became the model. This is a different structure than what we're used to, and to be proactive the Session appointed a Task Force to study and make recommendations. On Sunday, August 21, after worship the Task Force presented their findings and held a conversation with the congregation in Fellowship Hall.

People ask me how I'm doing, whether I am in favor of this change. Seminary education assumed a full-time model as career clergy. To be parttime is an adjustment in mindset and skillset, a change in habits and assumptions. It is the reality we face. I don't see parttime as a failure, or something to fix, and I appreciate the faithful core much of Christian history has embraced regarding it. I do notice a few things: the financial aspects, my task lists linger, and visitations have been reduced. But I also notice the laity and how the people are the church, and the people do the ministry. Thriving churches with part-time clergy have dedicated people who live and share the love of God with the community and larger world. This is our opportunity. By virtue of our baptisms, we are all ministers in Christ's name.



## Bike and Build

First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint (FPC) was happy to host 17 riders from Bike & Build on August 17 -19, 2022. From June through August, these young adult riders pedal from New Hampshire to Bellingham, WA. On their way across country, they stop in small towns and volunteer for projects associated with local needs for affordable housing.

FPC provided overnight lodging, dinner on their first evening and breakfast for the two mornings they were here; and helped them procure access to showers and other things such as bike repairs or health care should the need arise. They arrived in Sandpoint on August 17, volunteered with Bonner Homeless Transitions on the 18<sup>th</sup>, and hit the road again on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>.

While at Bonner Homeless Transitions, working in extremely hot conditions, they cleared a storage area and hauled multiple loads of material to Habitat for Humanity and Bonner County Solid Waste facility. According to Joanne Barlow, program manager, Bonner Homeless Transitions is considering options for use of the space, including renovations for making it usable for housing the homeless.

The mission of FPC, “Loving, Living, Learning the Joy of Faith,” encourages engagement with projects that match volunteer efforts with community needs. Many members and friends of FPC participated in hosting this ministry to promote affordable housing. Many thanks to all volunteers and church staff who helped to plan and carry out this wonderful event!

Bike & Build, Inc., is based in Philadelphia, PA. The organization’s mission states, “Through service-oriented cycling trips, Bike & Build benefits affordable housing and empowers young adults for a lifetime of service and civic engagement.” Learn more: [www.bikeandbuild.org](http://www.bikeandbuild.org)

Judy McComish  
Elder, Missions





## EARTH CARE UPDATE

The garden is doing well; supplies of green beans and tomatoes have been delivered to the Food Bank. Those Earth Care Team members maintaining the garden (Lynn Pietz, Lexie de Fremery, & Marilyn Robertson) appreciate the maintenance of the sprinkler system by Pastor Andy, through some problems with stoppages & leaks.

We remind everyone that we encourage recycling at the church and in your homes. The potential items for recycling from the church kitchen are being put in separate designated boxes, for delivery to Pacific Steel & Recycling by a Deacon. Since Pacific Steel runs a business, the materials are actually delivered to places that can make them into useable products. Glass and plastic are not accepted.

If you live in Sandpoint, we hope you are using the blue Recycling bins for tin, aluminum, cardboard, newspaper, office paper, and limited plastic & glass. Waste Management told us that the only plastic and glass items they want are bottles and jars, without lids. NO PLASTIC BAGS are wanted by either Pacific Steel or Waste Management. If you put plastic bags or an item with food on it, in the blue Waste Management containers, they will discard the entire load.

Ideally, we are all trying to use less single use plastic, because of the hazards to the environment, especially the oceans. At grocery stores, you can select produce into mesh bags, and use cloth or long-term use plastic bags at checkout. For food storage at home, glass containers, bees' wax wrap, and bags from Mighty Fix and other companies can often replace plastic bags. With some thought and planning, we can help our environment on a daily basis.

We just learned this from a LIVING ON EARTH presentation for public radio: "Plastic pollution is one of the biggest environmental threats to the planet, and according to the advocacy group Beyond Plastics, greenhouse gas emissions from plastics production in the US are on track to outpace domestic coal emissions." So, producing plastic is a major contributor to Climate Change.

Marilyn Robertson, for the Earth Care Team



## **Membership Outreach and Mission**

The Stand With Ukraine Benefit Dinner was held July 22 on the church lawn. It was a classic summer evening in Sandpoint, Idaho. Shade was spreading over the Community Peace Garden and tables had been put out and fancied up with tablecloths, flowers, wheat and salt; welcoming our guests. There was music coming from a distant park. The best of Sandpoint was on display. The Bonner County Human Rights Task Force teamed up with The First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint to host the fundraiser to support Ukrainian refugees resettling in the region.

The 60 guests were greeted and found their seats where they were served family-style dinner. The menu, made by several volunteers, was perogies, pelmenis, cabbage rolls, borscht and potato bread. Dessert was halvah, Ukrainian tea crackers, and poppyseed cake. Meanwhile in Fellowship Hall, guests could bid on donated items including beautiful hand painted Ukrainian eggs, delicious desserts, and lovely homemade textiles reflecting Ukrainian culture. There was a jar to donate money for bus passes in Spokane, and cooking appliances for families who were moving into a repurposed hotel called The Thrive Center. Approximately \$3,400.00 was raised to support people, who had to flee a war zone with maybe just a suitcase.

After dinner a candle was lit and a moment of silence was held. Pastor Andy said a few words of welcome, Linda Navarre (BCHRTF), and Christine Holbert (Lost Horse Press), shared Ukrainian poetry. Gratitude was expressed for the over 30 volunteers who helped make the evening possible. We have received many compliments about the scrumptious food, program and the support for Ukrainian people.

A week later, members of the church met Violet Syukalo, an Ukrainian American, at The Thrive Center in Spokane. She's a member of one of the Slavic churches that created the Ukrainian Relief Coalition (URC). We learned that Spokane has about 35,000 Ukrainian and other Eastern European people already living there so there is an active community to help. The faith-based URC is supporting The Thrive Center to host about 168 people including 75 families. The hotel is currently at capacity with a waiting list and as housing opens up for them, the hotel residents are moved out toward independence into the community or elsewhere in the US. After leaving Violet with \$2,500 worth of Spokane Transit bus passes and numerous Instant Pots and toaster ovens, the FPC members had lunch at Feast World Kitchen with Becky Rempe, who teaches English to refugees at the Spokane First Presbyterian Church across the street from the kitchen. Becky is the director of The Barton Language School at the church. Having lunch at the Feast World Kitchen, that day was an authentic Korean menu, and hearing about Becky's work and church mission to support the immigrant and refugee community was inspiring and fascinating.

We have overwhelming gratitude for the 30 volunteers who made this fundraiser a success. The best of Sandpoint was on display! It was a joy to bring this fundraiser here and hopefully move the Light and Love of Christ into the world.

Warmly,

The Ukrainian Benefit Dinner Committee





Fall Schedule Begin September 11, 2022 10:30 a.m.

BCHRTF Poet for change September 24, 2022 1:00 p.m.

Sacrament of Communion September 4, 2022

Deacon Meeting September 11, 2022

Presbytery of Inland NW in Spokane September 15

Session September 20, 2022 6:00 p.m.

Adult Christian Formation begins September 18, 2022 9:00 a.m.





**September Birthdays**

**1 Sylvia Humes**

**2 Judy Labrie**

**7 Marge Pietsch**

**21 Carol Ballard**

**24 Karen Rockhill**

## Regular Monthly Events



*Sunday Worship 10:30 a.m. In-Person and Facebook Live starting September 11, 2022*

*Adult Christian Formation Class starting September 18, 2022 at 9:00 a.m.*

*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 on Zoom*

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

*7:00 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous*



**First Presbyterian Church**

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