



THE GRAPEVINE

First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint, Idaho
December 2024

From the Pastor...

Have you ever walked through the woods? Slowly? One aspect of a slow, stealthy walk is the quiet, and how amid that quiet you notice noises that otherwise may have been overlooked. A squirrel's chatter up a tree, a stick's *SNAP*, ice crystals and dry leaves that crunch underfoot, and other parts of the wild all around us.

Years ago on a cool fall morning, on a trail north of town, a unique sound I hadn't heard before caught me by surprise. I heard some kind of crunching. I stopped. I heard it again, crunch, crunch, crunch, but could not figure out where it came from or what it was. The sound paused, so I stood still. A minute later the crunch continued, and I caught sight of a nearby tuft of grass that wiggled with the crunch. Something underground munched away at the roots of those plants. There was no obvious, external sign on the surface to suggest a network of tunnel trails beneath, but as I took a couple steps, the noise stopped. The subterranean creature sensed my presence and moved on to deeper caverns.

This experience is a metaphor for the nature of Advent, for the reality of inner, spiritual work, and the power of steady faithfulness to change the world at the roots. Often with our faith we assign visible externals, like church buildings, sanctuaries, scheduled events such as worship or fellowship, and church structure like councils. The grander they are the more successful we feel.

But externals also imply distance and separation, and even belief and doctrine can hold sincere faith at arm's length. Entering the season of Advent helps remind us that faith is a mixture of external and internal realities, largely a matter of the heart and soul and mind, inner experiences of God's living Presence.

Advent is a time of waiting, to be active in preparation for the gift of God in Jesus the Christ. This is a call to dive deep into the internal, the hidden, the not-so-obvious, the mysterious. Sometimes it can feel frightening or unnecessary to move below the surface. But God's love runs deep, like a bottomless abyss, and our souls are rooted in Divine favor. Advent invites us to cultivate the ground of our being, to come to awareness of the depth of God's good news in Christ who claims us and loves us. This awareness brings joy to the surface, one of the greatest gifts we can ever experience.

As cultural and religious expectations compound in this holiday season, find ways to slow down, to act with intention to stand still and notice how the wild speaks to you. Enjoy the Advent journey to the heart of life.

Peace and All Good,

Pastor Andy



Advent Journey: A Labyrinth Workshop & Walk



Saturday, December 14, 2024

10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

417 N. Fourth Ave., Alder Street entrance
Sandpoint, Idaho



Claim the light within on the Advent journey.

- ⇒ Introductory presentation
- ⇒ Experience a hand-held labyrinth
- ⇒ Walk a canvas labyrinth
- ⇒ Gain understanding in some history
- ⇒ Learn how to use this prayer tool
- ⇒ Get familiar with various designs.

Bring a desire to learn and try something new,
an openness to ancient wisdom,
and comfortable socks to walk without shoes, if able.

Registration required, space is limited, by donation.

Sign up via email: registration@fpcsandpoint.org

Or call 208-263-2047



Andy Kennaly, Labyrinth Facilitator
First Presbyterian Church

November Session meeting notes and highlights

The Session met for their regular monthly meeting on November 20, 2024. Moderator Pastor Andy Kennaly led the meeting with Sharon Anderson (by phone), Sylvia Humes (by phone), Judy McComish, Mary Sturgis, Judy Labrie, Paula Vincent, and Kirsten Thompson in attendance. Sue Helander was excused.

The Session affirmed a few decisions which were made by email, including: the Food Drive Flyer, AA community use of Fellowship Hall and kitchen for Thanksgiving and Christmas Day meeting/dinner, Sean Bostrom of Sandpoint Piano recital in the sanctuary on Sunday, December 8, and the Teremark Electrical Group lighting replacement contract. October session minutes were approved.

Pastoral update: Pastor Andy reported that Sandpoint Special Needs has requested funding recently – referred to Missions. Pastor Andy shared the flier he has prepared for the Labyrinth workshop December 14, 2024, from 10 - noon. Pastor Andy noted that the panic bars have now been installed on three exterior doors including sanctuary, peace garden, and alleyway doors. Still some rekeying needs to be done.

Mission: Judy McComish and Mary Sturgis met to discuss disbursal \$2000 between Bonner Homeless Transitions, Community Cancer Services, Priest River Ministries advocates for Women, and NAMI. Panhandle Special Needs will be considered in next distribution. Funds had previously been distributed via Deacons.

Judy M. is preparing for the Christmas Joy offering which is split equally between the Board of Pensions and Leadership Development related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. Fliers and envelopes will be available for worship during December.

The nominating committee is completing its work. Judy M. has agreed to serve again in Missions. Lynn Pietz and Dyno Wahl have also agreed to come on Session. One additional elder is needed. Also needed are one new member each for the nominating committee, memorial committee, and personnel committee. The report to the Congregation should occur on December 8, 2024, at the Congregational meeting.

Building use committee: Judy Labrie reported that she, Paula Vincent, Judy McComish, and Kirsten Thompson met to discuss our pending insurance renewal, and existing policies. Finding that the church did not have a current safe conduct policy, a proposed policy was drafted. The draft policy was approved by Session with modest changes. A complete copy of the policy will be provided to the church's insurer, and is available for review.

The Session approved updating signage outside the restrooms to include "no unaccompanied minors". Though we have limited child visitors, this is a sensible safety precaution given the number of visitors to the church facility.

PC USA recommends that churches adopt clear policies for alcohol use for church sponsored events whether on or off premises. By no means does the church purchase alcohol except for eucharist. A specific policy will need further discussion.

The Building Use Committee will work on updates to the building use agreement to incorporate necessary changes.

Session meeting notes, cont.

Personnel and Finance: Session approved Paula's recommendation that two CDs held at Washington Trust Bank be renewed at end of November.

To date in November the Church has received over \$124,000 as against an annual budget of \$132,000. Eight of 32 pledge units had pledged as of November 20. Pledge sheets will be distributed again. Given that emails have bounced back, pledge sheets may be mailed.

The church received a check from the US Treasury for over \$3000 from the CARES Act. As a result, the Personnel Committee recommended and the Session unanimously approved a distribution of an annual bonus of \$1,225 between the five employees and two contracted workers of the church. Specific distribution to be per personnel committee recommendation.

Christian Education: Sharon Anderson plans to organize a series of classes on death and dying based on a recent community class she organized. The class will be held at the church on Saturdays in two-hour sessions on February 8, 15, and 22, 2025. Ginna Maus, LCSW, has agreed to lead the series. Session approved this class development.

Worship notes: Pulpit supply will be by Barbara Rolph on December 1, the first Sunday in advent.

Church decoration for Advent will be held on December 7 at 10 a.m. – noon.

The Christmas Eve service will be at 6 p.m. this year.

The advent wreath will be removed December 29 after church. Removal of Advent/Christmas decorations (undecoration?) will be scheduled for January 5, 2025, after worship.

Pastor Andy will plan an Advent Labyrinth workshop for 10 – noon on December 14.

A simple service of Christmas carol hymn sing will be planned for December 29. Annie Welle does a great job of playing these beloved and familiar tunes.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer by Pastor Andy. The next Session meeting is set for December 18 at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kirsten Thompson, Clerk of Session



Personnel

The personnel committee met with Pastor Andy to review the annual Terms of Call and a 2025 draft was presented to Session for review in October. The proposed Terms of Call provide a 2.5% increase in salary and 4% change in total package costs. An increase in healthcare costs represents the largest change from the 2024 Terms of Call. This information will be presented to the congregation for consideration at the annual meeting on December 8th.

Tim Cochran, Dyno Wahl, Paula Vincent

Personnel Committee

Stewardship, Finance, Memorial

Stewardship Update

You are invited to participate in the pledge drive! We are thankful for the many ways each of you contribute to the ministry of FPC and hope you will complete a pledge form and service matrix. This information is used to establish the 2025 budget and to inform working committees of individuals that may wish to join in.

Pledges for 2025: Eight pledges were received through Nov. 17th with a goal of 32 pledging units. As you participate in this collective activity, may you find connection in being a part of the FPC community... loving, living and learning the joy of faith.

Finance Summary

January 1, 2024 through October 31, 2024 (Annual budget of \$132,000)

Received through October 31: \$100,011.46

Expenses through October 31: 111,915.41

Budgeted through October 31: \$110,000

Several general fund gifts were received in November which put the budget on track to meet anticipated expenses through year end: \$124,316 received through Nov. 17th

Per Capita Received this year: \$1238 (\$2496 expended in 2024 or \$39.00 per member). For anyone wishing to make a *per capita* gift, please designate this on your check, pew envelope, etc.

Grant Received: Thanks to the hard work of the FPC Treasurer, Natalie Miller, FPC received a \$3100 grant through the pandemic relief funds (CARES Act). This grant was submitted many months ago and was received by the church in October.

Thank you for your continued financial support for the mission of the First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint. If you have questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Judy McComish and Paula Vincent, Elders

2025 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE

Thank you for your support of the ministries and mission of FPC of Sandpoint. We believe God calls us to be generous and joyful givers of our time, talents and resources.

Please return this form in the manner most convenient for you.

Place in the Sunday offering plate

Drop in the secure box located at the Alder Street church entry

Mail to First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint, 417 N 4th Ave., Sandpoint, ID 83864

Give online through your personal financial institution's bill pay system

Utilize the link on the church website, <https://www.fpcsandpoint.org/give/#stewardship> to set up on-line giving through the Presbyterian Foundation

Email this info to Susie Haskins, Financial Secretary: willandsoozie@gmail.com
Thank you for your generosity!

Please select gift frequency and indicate the amount below.

\$ _____ /week \$ _____ /month \$ _____ /quarter \$ _____ /year

Total Annual Gift \$ _____

Per Capita Information. Each year, FPC sends dollars as requested to support our connectional church with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery. The current assessment is thirty-nine dollars (\$39) per member. For members and friends wishing to make an additional gift to offset this expense, please write "per capita" on the designation line of checks, offering envelopes, etc.

Please complete the information below.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, & Zip _____

Phone _____

We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 2-3

Greetings and blessings,

Apostle Paul’s letter to the Thessalonians sets the intention to greet the church with thankfulness and prayer, to rejoice in actions that spring from love and faith. As we focus on stewardship this month, we also celebrate a wonderful past year and commit ourselves to continue our journey as a loving community that seeks to **love, live and learn the joy of faith.**

In the narrative budget for 2025, you can review some highlights of the past year and our ministry plan for the new year. Join us to proclaim with joy the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Thank you,

Judy McComish, Paula Vincent, Elders

Called to serve? Share your gifts of time and talent.

Please indicate areas in which you have an interest (check all that apply) and return via email to office@fpcsandpoint.org, US mail to First Presbyterian Church of Sandpoint, 417 N 4th Ave., Sandpoint, ID 83864, or place in the Sunday offering plate. Thank you!

<input type="checkbox"/> Buildings and grounds	<input type="checkbox"/> Music
<input type="checkbox"/> Christian education	<input type="checkbox"/> Retreats
<input type="checkbox"/> Earth care	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Fellowship	<input type="checkbox"/> Visioning Task Force
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Worship
<input type="checkbox"/> Membership	Other: _____

Name(s): _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Membership, Outreach, Mission

Donations needed for Sandpoint's Homeless Population

- Sleeping bags
- Sleeping pads
- Tarps (all sizes)
- Tent pegs
- Nylon cord
- Small flashlights and batteries
- Rain ponchos
- Duct tape
- Small towels
- Socks
- Hand warmers
- Non perishable food items (instant coffee, granola or protein bars, dried fruit)

Contact Paddy (208-290-0685) at the Rainbow Soup Kitchen for donation pick-up or any questions.

It's Poinsettia time!

We will soon be decorating the sanctuary for Christmas! The addition of poinsettias always makes it so festive. If you would like to buy a poinsettia, please fill out the order form that will be in your bulletin on Sunday and turn it into the offering plate with your payment of \$12 by December 15th. You may also drop it off at the office or mail it by December 17th.



Mission



CHRISTMAS JOY SPECIAL OFFERINGS

LEADERSHIP: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Throughout Advent, especially on the Sunday before Christmas, we will be participating in the Christmas Joy Offering. This year, the Christmas Joy Offering begins on December 1, the first Sunday of Advent and goes through December 22.

This Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s.

50% of the Christmas Joy Offering is distributed to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions

50% is distributed to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color

The **Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions** provides financial assistance to current and retired church workers and their families. Over the past several years, the size of our congregation at FPC Sandpoint has been decreasing. As a result, in 2022, Pastor Andy's position was changed to half time. Through this Board of Pensions program, in 2023, he received a Sabbatical Support Grant for \$5,000 that allowed him to complete his sabbatical – which had already been moved back due to the Covid pandemic. Over the years, other pastors have received needed funds when they have experienced hardship after retirement, such as when they face health problems. In 2022, 272 retired church workers and surviving spouses received assistance. These funds are available to current church workers other than pastors who face hardship (pcusa.org).

Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years. In 2022 alone, \$1.1 million from Christmas Joy gifts was used to provide education and leadership development to students attending Presbyterian-related schools and colleges, many of whom are the first in their families to enroll in higher education. Schools being supported include:

[Menaul School](http://menualschool.com), Albuquerque, NM (menualschool.com)

Menaul School is the most diverse private high school in the Albuquerque area, with students from 15-20 countries attending each year. It is ranked the best Christian high school and 5th best private high school in New Mexico by Niche (niche.com).

Mission (cont.)

Presbyterian Pan American School, Kingsville, TX (ppas.org)

Over the past 25 years, students enrolled in this high school have come from 26 countries. 100% of graduates are accepted into colleges and universities in their home countries or in the US.

Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, AL (stillman.edu)

Stillman has been selected a College of Distinction from 2019 to 2022 for Christian education, Teacher education, Support of Military and Veteran Students, Preparing Business leaders, and Equity and Inclusion (collegesofdistinction.com/school/stillman-college). The student body is 87% first generation in college.

Kyley Thompson, a Stillman graduate now enrolled in graduate school at the University of Alabama said, “The money you give goes directly to students and keeps them in college. Like me, many students often feel like they are hanging by a thread. Your donation fills in the threads and makes a rope...” (pcusa.org).

Judy McComish

Elder, Missions



Food Drive

FIRST PRES. & METHODISTS MEET UP AT FOOD BANK

Monday, Nov. 25, the Methodists and Presbyterians had a chance meeting at the Food Bank, both delivering hundreds of pounds of food, each from our congregations! Dave & Lynn Pietz just happened to drive into the delivery lane of the BONNER COUNTY FOOD CENTER in Sandpoint right after Dee and Ray Kosse, so we had to pose for a picture together with part of the stash.

We are in a teamwork effort to beat our last year's record of 3,000 pounds, and we're well on our way! We have surpassed the halfway point already and will be working hard until December 31st to make this the best year in the three years we've been collecting food together.

The afternoon of November 15, a group of First Pres. volunteers were in the entryway at Super 1, giving out lists and asking for donations from shoppers. As they left, the shoppers would place groceries into our Food Bank shopping baskets, bringing in 676 pounds. That includes one turkey and 23 pounds of toilet paper! Joy was the most wonderful thing shared by our volunteers and the customers as they donated those many pounds!

Our next Super 1 donation time will be the afternoon of Friday, December 20. There is time to sign up for one-hour shifts. Meanwhile, we are collecting food donations at the church Sunday mornings. Look in your email for our next review of grocery bargains and bring food items to church. Keep our campaign going!



Building and Grounds

Three Claps for Yard Help

Helpers turned out to finish off putting our yard to bed for the winter. Big thanks to those who also set-up our lunch for those who were working in the yard. Those who contributed their time and efforts were Millie Rinker, Victoria Oliver, Dee Dreisbach, Donna Bricker, Cynthia Dalsing, Nova Dodd, Lexie De Fremery, Judy Labrie, Paula Vincent, Marilyn Robertson, Dave and Mary Sturgis, Patty and Don Deters, Don Helander and myself.

The church has been approved by Avista for an upgraded lighting project that will remove all of our old fluorescent lights and have them replaced with LED. Work should begin sometime in January.

Panic bars are being installed on our Sanctuary Doors as well as the door from the Alley. The work is being done by Selkirk Glass and Cabinets.

Sue Helander, Elder

Fellowship

There will be a lunch after the congregation annual meeting after church on Sunday, December 8. Sign-ups will be with the bulletin on Sunday, December 1. Sylvia Humes needs to know how many people are coming so that she and her crew can prepare.

Church Decorating

We will be decorating the church for Advent and Christmas on Saturday, December 7, starting at 10:00 a.m. O Come, O Come, Ye Presbyterians....



Family Favorites

Do you have a treasured (non-copyrighted!) family recipe that you'd like to share with the church family? Drop them off in the church office or email them to Dana at Office@fpcsandpoint.org. Please share a little info about the person who created the recipe, if you can.

What's Christmas without some cookies? Dana shares one of her favorites from her grandma's collection of cookies. They are soooo light; they just dissolve in your mouth. Instead of sprinkling with colored sugar, you can also just roll the balls in colored sugar or sprinkles before flattening them on the cookie sheet. Baking time will depend on your oven and your cookie sheets.

OLD FASHIONED SUGAR COOKIES - Ada Phillips

1 cup margarine or butter, softened
1 cup white sugar
1 cup powdered sugar
2 eggs
1 cup oil
2 tsp vanilla
1 tsp grated lemon rind
4 1/4 cups flour (unsifted)
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. cream of tartar
1 tsp. salt

Cream margarine/butter and sugars; beat in eggs.

Add oil, vanilla and lemon rind to the creamed mixture.

Combine the dry ingredients and gradually add to the creamed mixture.

Wrap and chill dough for several hours. Divide into thirds, leaving part in refrigerator.

Form into balls and place onto greased cookie sheet. Flatten with glass dipped into sugar.

Sprinkle with colored sugar. Bake at 325 degrees for 8-10 minutes. Let cool for 2-3 minutes before removing to wire racks.





- December 7** **Decorate for Advent, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**
- December 8** **Congregation Annual Meeting, after church, with lunch to follow**
- December 8** **Sandpoint Piano student recital, 5:00 p.m.**
- December 10** **Bonner County Human Rights Task Force Celebration of Human Rights Day, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**
- December 12** **Bella Noté student recitals, 3:30, 5:00, 6:30 p.m.**
- December 14** **Advent Labyrinth, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**
- December 14** **Suzuki Strings student recital, 4:00 p.m.**
- December 16** **Festival at Sandpoint Youth Orchestra concert**
- December 18** **Session, 1:30 p.m.**
- December 24** **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 6:00 p.m.**

DECEMBER Birthdays

12/22 Geri Stockman

*Did we miss your birthday or get the date wrong?
Email the office and let us know!
office@fpcsandpoint.org*



Regular Monthly Events



Sunday

- 9:00 a.m. Adult Christian Education
- 10:30 a.m. Worship, In-Person and Livestream (<https://www.youtube.com/@firstpresbyteriansandpoint>)
- 7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Monday-Saturday

- 7:00 a.m. AA meeting

Monday

- 9:00 a.m. TOPS meeting (Take Off Pounds Sensibly)
- 6:00 p.m. Al-Anon meeting

Tuesday

- 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Book Study and Contemplative Prayer Group
- 7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Wednesday

- 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Choir practice in sanctuary
- 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Rainbow Soup Kitchen community meal
- 7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Thursday

- 12:00 p.m. Al-Anon meeting
- 7:00 p.m. AA meeting



First Presbyterian Church

417 North Fourth Avenue, Sandpoint, Idaho 83864

208-263-2047

office@fpcsandpoint.org

www.fpcsandpoint.org

Ministers

Members and Friends

Pastor Andy Kennaly

pastorandy@fpcsandpoint.org

Pastor cell phone: 208-304-5488

Office hours

Tuesday 9:00-12:00

Wednesday 9:00-11:00