

# FPC Messenger

NOVEMBER 2023 | VOLUME 85 ISSUE 7





Dear Friends,

Do you believe that prayer makes a difference? That's a question that a team from our church was asked when we attended the Breakthrough Prayer Initiative, sponsored by the Presbytery of Northern Kansas, at a workshop this past September. Jerry Foster, John Gould, Walt Menninger, Pat Yancey and I took a little day-trip to Salina one Saturday to learn all about the power of "breakthrough prayer."

First, we were reminded that if we are the body of Christ, prayer is our nourishment, and we are invited to do more than just "snack"—we are invited to feast! Next, we learned that a "breakthrough prayer" is essentially a component we add to our regular, daily, routine prayers. By adding this component, we change the focus of our prayer from "down and inward" to "up and out." We begin to expect and anticipate that God will act! "Breakthrough prayer" also helps us surrender our own preferences, and asks God to remove roadblocks so that GOD'S will can be done, not ours. We heard inspiring examples of how this kind of praying has led to unexpected new life in several congregations.

Back home, after the workshop, our team gathered and prayerfully listened for a new prayer for our church. By the end of our second meeting, we had it: *Lord, like the light breaking through our windows, break through our resistance to change, show us the new things you want to do through First Presbyterian Church, and empower us to embrace new opportunities.* Our session heartily endorsed it later that same day. Prayer DOES make a difference, and it is a powerful thing to join our hearts, minds, and voices in praying for one another and our church. Would you join me in praying our new prayer each day at 4 pm, and anytime you gather with other members? YOUR prayers, whoever and wherever you are, always make a difference! "See you" at 4 pm.

Yours in Christ,



P.S. THANK YOU, CARRIE

Friends, please join me in saying THANK YOU to Carrie Riordan, who has served as our Director of Communications for the past three years. During her time with us, she has significantly elevated the quality of our church's communications, including our newsletters, social media, media relations, stewardship packets, annual reports and more. While our contract with her ends this month, the excellence of her work has made an important and lasting impact, and we are grateful for her contributions.

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## A Fond Farewell to an Amazing Congregation

by Carrie Riordan

As I write this, I'm winding down my time with First Presbyterian Church and editing my last issue of Messenger. It has been a joy to serve this congregation the past three years as your contract director of communications. To see, be part of, and help tell the story of all of your ministries, community collaborations, and outreach activities as you live into your mission of loving God, loving neighbors, and living with purpose, has been an honor. The staff team at FPC has a diverse set of talents and gifts and it has been rewarding to work with such a fun team of folks. Much grace and peace to you all! Carrie

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**Cover photo:** FPC, Grace Cathedral, St. John AME, and Topeka First United Methodist hosted the 2nd Annual Love Your Neighbor Community Worship Service in celebration of World Communion Sunday on October 1 at Everyg Plaza.

**Publication note:** The FPC Messenger was not published July through October, 2023.

# Session Highlights

## OCTOBER

- Pastor Brown led an extended discussion of the first chapter of *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going*, by Susan Beaumont. All elders have read the book and will continue discussing in the next few months.
- The session approved the purchase of two spray bottles of Naloxone (Narcan), an antidote for narcotics overdose, to have on hand in case of emergencies in the building or the neighborhood.
- The elders will be meeting in a discernment retreat on January 20.
- John Dorsey was commissioned to attend the next Presbytery of Northern Kansas meeting on November 4 in Ellsworth.

## SEPTEMBER

- A report was received from the latest Presbytery of Northern Kansas meeting, for which Walt Menninger served as commissioner.
- The Adult Education Team is reviewing possible curricula.
- Dean Hill and Dick Adams are assisting in procuring storage for blueprints in the church's archives.
- A contract has been completed with Church Mutual Insurance Company to replace the church's previous insurance provider. The policy went into effect August 23.
- Employee benefits for full-time non-pastoral staff were approved to continue at the same rate in 2024.

## AUGUST & JULY

- The Personnel Committee reported that Herman Jones had been hired as Family Ministries Coordinator. Subsequently, Herman resigned from Session in order to serve on staff.
- Neighborhood Ministries reported that the church's FoodShare distribution had been approved by Harvesters. Additional shelving and storage will be needed to accommodate the program.
- The Finance Committee reviewed the church's financial status and requested that the congregation be made aware of needs.
- The Adult Education Team is making plans for the fall.
- The Session accepted and approved Pastor Brown's sabbatical report. The report will also be shared with the congregation.
- Funds from undesignated memorials were approved for purchase of two adult chairs to be used in the nursery.
- Bill Nichols reported extensive research regarding the church's insurance coverage. The Session approved contracting with a new company for a policy that will be more affordable and will more reliably meet the church's needs.
- The Representative Nominating Committee will reconvene to propose a candidate for the open seat on the Session.
- Session discussed various ways to cooperate with other Presbyterian churches in Topeka.
- The Session will be reading *How to Lead When You Don't Know Where You're Going: Leading in a Liminal Season*, by Susan Beaumont, and then discussing future goals for the church.
- A group from the church officers will join Pastor Brown in participating in the Presbytery-sponsored Break-through Prayer Initiative on September 9.



*Photo: A joyful moment during a Sunday worship service in August.*



## Sunday School Curriculum

With the onset of Sunday school this fall, we are exploring the life of God's people during the times of the Old Testament, and discovering how we can closely relate to the challenges individuals faced during those days. We are challenged with very similar matters in our everyday lives today.

## Parents' Night Out - December 2

It will be a great time for parents to have a date night on Parents' Night Out on Saturday, December 2, from 4:30-8 p.m. in Willard Hall. Young disciples will cozy up to watch the movie *The Polar Express*. A meal and special movie-themed treats will be served. Children are encouraged to wear their favorite PJs and bring a cuddly bedtime buddy. Register by contacting Herman Jones at [hjones@fpctopeka.org](mailto:hjones@fpctopeka.org), or (785) 233-9601, ext. 106.

## Thanks and Gratitude in November

Let's show our gratitude as we celebrate Thanksgiving near the end of November. Every day is a day to give thanks to others in our lives. Let's give/show our thanks each day leading up to the special holiday of gratitude. Consider choosing one of these discussion prompts and have a conversation within your household.

Talk about:

- A family member you are thankful for
- A joyful memory you are thankful for
- A special food you are thankful for
- A special place you are thankful for
- A special friend you are thankful for
- A special animal or pet you are thankful for
- A special time of the day you are thankful for
- A gift you have received that you are thankful for
- A special item of clothing you are thankful for
- A special bit of information you are thankful for
- A special event you are thankful for
- A special gift or talent that you are thankful for
- A bit of nature that you are thankful for
- A special time of the year you are thankful for
- A special holiday you are thankful for
- A special present you received that you are thankful for
- Something about church you are thankful for

## *Thankful & Grateful*

**Photo:** Children's moment during 8:30 a.m. worship service.





The youth ministry team has many fun and meaningful activities planned for this fall! Below is a schedule of upcoming activities. If you know of a young person (grades 6 through 12) who might be interested in joining us for F4 ("F to the 4th" –fun, food, fellowship, and faith-building), please invite them to join us! For more information, please call Patrick Yancey at the church at (785) 233-9601, ext. 101.

## November

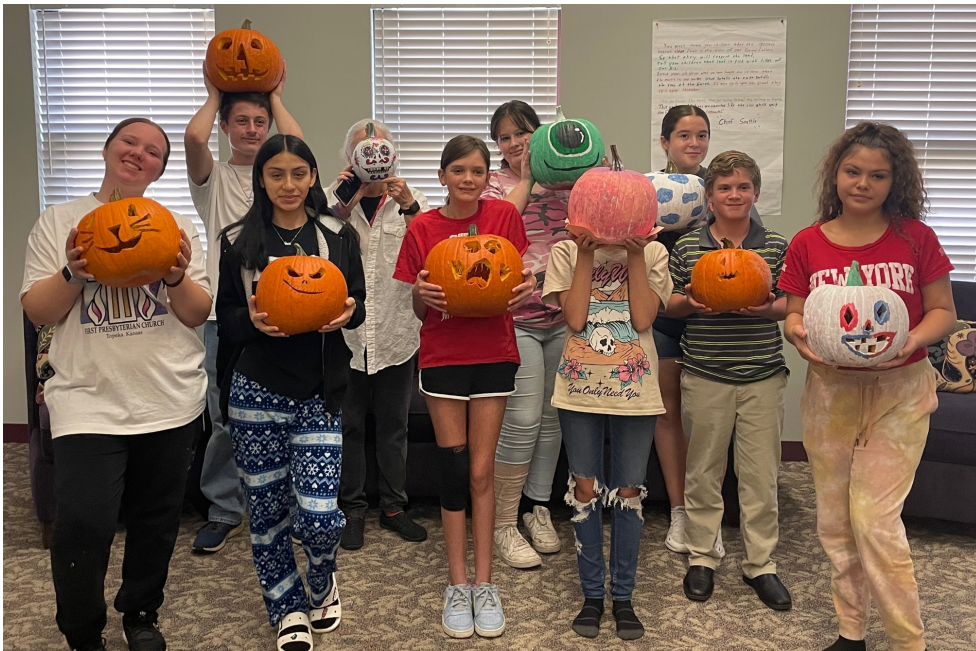
- 5 F4 (food, fun, fellowship, and faith-building)
- 12 F4
- 19 F4 (Youth help sort food for Thanksgiving food drive)
- 26 Thanksgiving weekend—No Youth Group
- 28 Hanging of the Greens (Tuesday evening church potluck)

## December

- 3 F4 (Decorate cookies)
- 10 F4 (Christmas caroling and deliver cookies)
- 17 F4 (Holiday Christmas party and white elephant gift exchange)
- 24 Christmas Eve—No YG
- 31 New Years Eve—No YG



Join us Sundays from  
Noon to 2 p.m. in the  
FPC Youth Lounge  
Ages 6th grade through 12th grade



*Photos: The youth had a great time carving and decorating pumpkins on Sunday, October 22.*



**FOOD, FUN, FELLOWSHIP, & FAITH BUILDING!**

Text Pat Yancey at 785.608.7540 for more info!



## Upcoming Events

### Women's Bible Study - November 6

Women's Bible Study begins again on the first Mondays of the month (except January, which will be the 2nd Monday due to New Year's Day), beginning in November, from 6:15 to 7:45 p.m. Come for a light dinner, conversation with other women of faith, a little laughter, and a discussion of our new study: Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts.

### FoodShare with Harvesters - November 8

Our 2nd Wednesday food distribution will be at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, November 8. We will not have a 4th Friday food distribution in November due to the Thanksgiving holiday. Please contact John Dorsey for more information.

### Needlework Group - November 9

The Needlework Group will meet on Thursday, November 9 at 2 p.m. in the church library. We're working on replenishing our prayer shawl supply, or you can bring a project of your own to work on. Come enjoy a great afternoon of fellowship, devotion, and stitching!

### Tasty Tuesday Lunch - November 14

Join us on Tuesday, November 14, for our final Tasty Tuesday gathering of 2023. We'll meet at El Torito, located at 3000 NW Topeka Blvd., at 11:30 a.m. Come on your own or bring a friend—you'll be in great company!

### Faith & Flour - November 18

Faith & Flour baking group will meet November 18 to bake FPC Nourishing Wholewheat Bread to handout at a special Thanksgiving Foodshare for selected Doorstep families. Bakers can register for the 9 a.m.–noon session or the 1-4 p.m. session.

### Hanging of the Greens - November 28

Hanging of the Greens will be an intergenerational event on Tuesday, November 28, at 6 p.m. We'll have a potluck dinner, a craft or two for kids, and some singing, in addition to decorating our church for Advent

Women's Bible Study - Begins Nov. 6

## Sacred Encounters

The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke — Acts

First Mondays from November - July

10 - 11:30 a.m. or 6:15 - 7:45 p.m.

Open to ALL women - bring a friend!

FIRST PRES  
FOOD  
SHARE



Wednesday  
Nov. 8  
@ 5 p.m.

No 4th Friday distribution in Nov.

## Needlework Group

Thursday, November 9  
2 p.m. in the Library

TASTY TUESDAY LUNCH  
NOVEMBER 14 - 11:30 A.M.

EL TORITO  
3000 NW TOPEKA BLVD

FAITH & FLOUR  
FPC Nourishing  
Wheat Bread

Saturday, November 18



American Red Cross

BLOOD DRIVE  
AT FPC

Register online at  
[redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org)  
sponsor code: FPCTOPEKA

Tuesday  
Dec. 12  
12 - 6 p.m.



# Advent and Christmas Events at FPC



## Hanging of the Greens and Potluck Dinner

**November 28 @ 6 p.m.**

### Noon Noels - November 29

The first Noon Noel service will be Wednesday, November 29 at noon. The guest choir will be Deo Gloria from Cornerstone Family Schools, Dorothy Iliff, director. The Neighborhood Ministries Team will serve a lasagna lunch at 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., with a suggested donation of \$5 per person.

### Handbell Concert - December 2

The Lawrence Handbell Choir will perform a free concert at First Presbyterian Church of Topeka on Saturday, December 2, at 1:30 p.m.

### Parents' Night Out - December 2

The Children and Family Ministries Team will host a Parents' Night Out on Saturday, December 2, from 4:30-8 p.m. This event is free.

### Noon Noels - December 6

The second Noon Noel service will be Wednesday, December 6 at Noon. The guest choir will be This Generation from Washburn Rural High School, Ben Holcombe, director. The Fellowship Team will serve a Baked Potato Bar lunch at 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., with a suggested donation of \$5 per person.

### KS Youth Chorale Concert - December 10

Join the Kansas Youth Chorale for their "A Season of Singing" concert at FPC on Sunday, December 10, at 7 p.m. This is a ticketed event.

### Noon Noels - December 13

The final Noon Noel service will be Wednesday, December 13. The guest choir will be the Choraliers from Shawnee Heights High School, Nicolas Carr, director. The Chancel Choir will serve a soup lunch at 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., with a suggested donation of \$5 per person.

### Blue Christmas - December 13

The Blue Christmas Worship Service will be held at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13, in the sanctuary. The service will also be livestreamed. Please watch for more information coming soon in the Sunday bulletins and the Friday email newsletter.

### Sunday Worship - December 24

We will hold Sunday worship at 10:30 a.m. in the sanctuary the morning of December 24. Donuts & Discussion, Children's Sunday School, and 8:30 a.m. worship will not be held the morning of December 24.

### Christmas Eve Worship - December 24

The Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service will be at 7 p.m. on Sunday, December 24, in the sanctuary. Special Christmas music will begin at 6:30 p.m. This is a beautiful service and you are encouraged to invite friends and neighbors to attend. The service will also be livestreamed on Facebook and our website, [www.fpctopeka.org](http://www.fpctopeka.org).

## NOON NOELS

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF TOPEKA

NOVEMBER 29

DECEMBER 6

DECEMBER 13



## Blue Christmas Worship Service

December 13, 2023  
6:00 p.m.

In person and online





# Recent Happenings at FPC

**Photos:** Left column, top to bottom: A fun and delicious day at the church picnic on October 15 at Crestview Park; it was a full house at the October 18 Silver Wings Supper. Right column, top to bottom: baking joy at the September 24 Faith & Flour; Gayle, Sergio, and Phil at World Communion Sunday; the sacrament of communion at World Communion Sunday at Every Plaza.

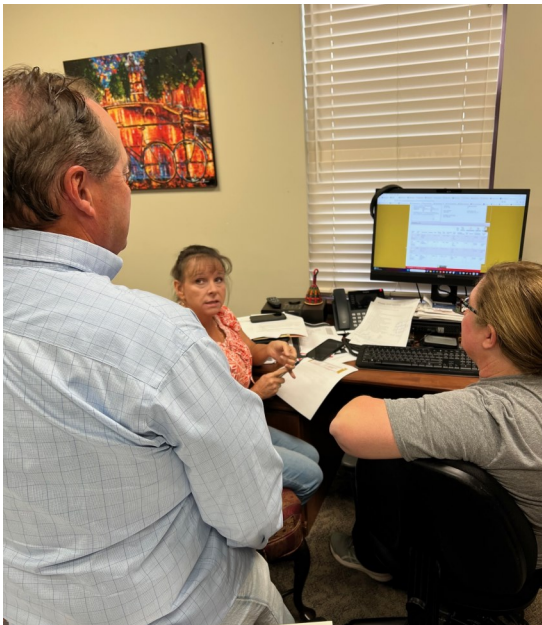




# Recent Happenings at FPC



**Photos:** Top row: On October 4, FPC hosted a community prayer vigil in response to the horrific death of 5-year-old Zoey Felix. Clergy from our downtown partner churches participated, and prayer shawls were distributed. Middle Row: The Needlework Group met October 12 to begin replenishing the prayer shawl supply. Bottom Row: (l to r) Pat, Gayle, and Jill met Oct. 18 to set up our Harvesters online food ordering system for the FoodShare Ministry; the FUN Fellowship Team posed for a group selfie after hosting the Silver Wings Supper on Oct. 18.





The big story this year has been the sharp increased need for food assistance both in our community, and here at Doorstep. Our original budget for food purchases in 2023 was \$8,000 because that had been the average for the past several years when paired with donations of food. Our actual food purchases by year-end will likely be \$50,000 or more. The need is up, prices are up, and donations of food items have been down, creating our current situation. When you go to the store or order food to pick up, if you are able to help, please remember Doorstep and get a few extra items for us to give to your neighbors in need.

We have reached that time of year again when Doorstep turns much of our focus towards our Christmas Adoption Project. Again, this year we will adopt 260 households from the Christmas Bureau applications. This amounts to over 800 individuals that we will provide Christmas gifts, food, blankets, hygiene items and gift cards. But we cannot do that without the help of our member congregations, individuals, and community groups.

Items we currently need donated for Christmas are: (NEW)

- Queen and King Size Blankets (NEW): Please NO THROWS. We need a total of 260 to provide at least one to each household!
- Full-size hygiene items: shampoo, conditioner, bar soap, body wash,
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, razors, brushes and combs
- Household Items: griddles, silverware sets, dish sets, cookware –sauce pans, sheet sets (queen and king), small laundry baskets with cleaning supplies (all-purpose cleaner, laundry soap and softener, dish soap, rags, scrubbing pads, window cleaner) (NEW)
- Gifts: tool sets, cologne and perfume Sets, body care sets (men/women)
- Toys and Games: Nerf guns, Lego sets, action figures, dinosaur toys, family board games, puzzles, 'Barbie the movie' toys
- Hoodies: men/women/teens – varying sizes (Medium – 4X), colors, designs, sports teams, or plain
- Monetary donations: to purchase food, gift cards and items we're lacking

You can mail tax-deductible donations to Doorstep, Inc., 1119 SW 10th, Topeka, KS 66604 or go to our website, [www.doorsteptopeka.org](http://www.doorsteptopeka.org), to donate by credit card. Please indicate the name of your congregation when you donate. THANK YOU for helping your neighbors by supporting Doorstep!

### Thanksgiving Dinners for Doorstep Friends

FPC, through the Neighborhood Ministries Team and generous donations from church members, will be providing Thanksgiving dinners to 55-60 families this year. Doorstep will identify the families and their needs, and FPC will assemble meal boxes each containing a turkey, stuffing, canned corn and green beans, cornbread mix, instant potatoes, cranberry sauce, homemade bread baked by the Faith & Flour ministry, butter, pumpkin pie ingredients, and more. Families will be responsible for picking up their boxes from the church on November 19.

All loose offering monies (bills and coins) collected through the white offering boxes through November 19 will go toward the purchase of turkeys and other needed items. You are also invited to donate non-perishable items on the above list to help with the food boxes. Thank you for helping bless families this Thanksgiving!





# November

*Lord, like the light breaking through our windows,  
break through our resistance to change,  
show us the new things you want to do through First Presbyterian Church,  
and empower us to embrace new opportunities. Amen*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>5 Usher Team 5 Nursery &amp; Childcare Open Communion 8:30am Worship Service 9:30am Children's Sunday School 9:30am Donuts &amp; Discussion, Library 10:30am Worship, Sanctuary &amp; Online 12pm Youth Group 3pm NA Group in WH 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>	<p>6 Jerry Foster-AM Vol/Susan Rowell-PM Vol 10am Women's Bible Study 4pm Pause for Prayer 4:45pm KS Yth Chorale 6:15pm Women's Bible Study 7pm Festival Singers</p>	<p>7 Marguerite Underhill-Vol 10am Staff Meeting 12pm Fellowship Team Meeting 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>	<p>8 Pat Glidewell - AM Vol Gideons - PM Vols 7am Men's Bible Study 4pm Pause for Prayer 5:30pm Deacons MTG 7:30pm 12 Step, WH</p>	<p>9 Melanie McQuere-AM Vol Lorraine Hyle - PM Volunteer 2pm Needlework Group - Library 4pm Pause for Prayer 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal 8pm NA Group in WH</p>	<p>10 Office Closed Pastors' Day Off Marty Snyder - AM Vol John Conlee-PM Vol 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>	<p>11 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>
<p>12 Usher Team 1 Nursery &amp; Childcare Open 8:30am Worship Service 9:30am Children's Sunday School 9:30am Donuts &amp; Discussion, Library 10:30am Worship, Sanctuary &amp; Online 12pm Youth Group 3pm NA Group in WH 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>	<p>13 Jerry Foster-AM Vol Susan Rowell-PM Vol 4pm Pause for Prayer 4:45pm KS Yth Chorale 5:30pm Finance Com Mtg 7pm Festival Singers Rehearsal</p>	<p>14 Marguerite Underhill-Vol 10am Staff Meeting 11:30am Tasty Tuesday, El Torito 4pm Pause for Prayer 5:30pm Children and Families Team Meeting 7pm Stephen Ministry Mtg</p>	<p>15 Pat Glidewell - AM Vol Gideons - PM Vols 7am Men's Bible Study 4pm Pause for Prayer 7:30pm 12 Step, WH</p>	<p>16 Melanie McQuere-AM Vol Lorraine Hyle - PM Vol 4pm Pause for Prayer 6pm Youth Ministry Team Meeting - Zoom 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal 8pm NA Group in WH</p>	<p>17 Pastors' Day Off Marty Snyder - AM Vol John Conlee-PM Vol 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>	<p>18 9am Faith &amp; Flour 1pm Faith and Flour 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>
<p>19 Usher Team 2 Nursery &amp; Childcare Open 8:30am Worship Service 9:30am Children's Sunday School 9:30am Donuts &amp; Discussion, Library 10:30am Worship, Sanctuary &amp; Online 11:30am 3rd Sunday Lunch 12pm Youth Group 3pm NA Group in WH 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>	<p>20 Pat on vacation Melanie McQuere-AM Vol Susan Rowell-PM Vol 4pm Pause for Prayer 4:45pm KS Yth Chorale 5:30pm Topeka Festival Singers Board Meeting 6pm Session Mtg 7pm Festival Singers Rehearsal</p>	<p>21 Pat on vacation Marguerite Underhill-Volunteer 10am Staff Meeting 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>	<p>22 Pat Glidewell - AM Vol Gideons - PM Vols Pat on vacation 7am Men's Bible Study 4pm Pause for Prayer 7:30pm 12 Step, WH</p>	<p>23 Office Closed Pat on vacation Lorraine Hyle - PM Volunteer Melanie McQuere-AM Volunteer 4pm Pause for Prayer 8pm NA Group in WH</p>	<p>24 Office Closed Pastors' Day Off Pat on vacation No Harvesters Food Distribution 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>	<p>25 Pat on vacation 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>
<p>26 Usher Team 3 Nursery &amp; Childcare Open Pat on vacation 8:30am Worship Service 9:30am Children's Sunday School 9:30am Donuts &amp; Discussion, Library 10:30am Worship, Sanctuary &amp; Online 3pm NA Group in WH 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>	<p>27 Jerry Foster-AM Vol Susan Rowell-PM Vol 4pm Pause for Prayer 4:45pm KD Yth Chorale 7pm Festival Singers Rehearsal</p>	<p>28 Marguerite Underhill-Vol 10am Staff Meeting 3pm Widows, Tea, and Fellowship, Location TBD 4pm Pause for Prayer 6pm Hanging of the Greens</p>	<p>29 Pat Glidewell - AM Vol Gideons - PM Vols 7am Men's Bible Study 12:00pm Noon Noels 4pm Pause for Prayer 7:30pm 12 Step, WH</p>	<p>30 Melanie McQuere-AM Vol Lorraine Hyle - PM Vol 4pm Pause for Prayer 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal 8pm NA Group in WH</p>	<p>1 Pastors' Day Off Marty Snyder - AM Vol John Conlee-PM Vol 4pm Pause for Prayer</p>	<p>2 1:30pm Lawrence Handbell Concert 4pm Pause for Prayer 4:30pm Parents' Night Out</p>



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF TOPEKA**  
Loving God, loving neighbors, and living with purpose

**First Presbyterian Church**  
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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/topekafpc](http://www.facebook.com/topekafpc)  
Phone: (785) 233-9601

**Ministers**

All the Members of the Congregation

**Pastors**

Sandra Stogsdill Brown, *Pastor*  
Pat Yancey, *Commissioned Associate Pastor*  
Neil Weatherhogg, *Pastor Emeritus*

**Program Staff**

Herman Jones, *Family Ministries Coordinator*  
Carrie Riordan, *Director of Communications*

**Music Staff**

Dr. Kevin Kellim, *Director of Music*  
Dr. Dina Pannabecker Evans, *Organist*  
Dr. Cynthia Neufeld Smith, *Assistant Organist*  
Norma Pettijohn, *Organist Emeritus*

**Administrative Staff**

Melissa Ashwill, *Office Manager*  
Patty Foster, *Office Assistant*  
Treven Broxterman, *Videographer*  
Will Hartner, *Videographer*

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**NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

- Mark Heilmann — 3
- Dorothy Funk — 4
- Jill Adams — 7
- Carolyn Little — 15
- Connie English — 17
- Susan Frydrych Palmer — 21
- Rick Burton — 23
- Brogan Johnston — 23
- Dan Pauls — 25
- JoAnn Pfuetze — 25
- Dennis Habiger — 26
- Jailey Garinger — 28

**NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES**

- Lyall and Margaret Ford — 21
- Craig and Cathy Lutz — 25
- John and Andrea Conlee — 28
- John and Julia Ford — 28

**Giving  
Sunday**

**November 19**

