

Shepherding the Flock – From the November Session Meeting

Pastor Will's devotional was based on a reading from a book by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The theme was "why we sing." God is present when his people sing. When we sing together, it is possible to speak and pray the same word together at the same time. The more we sing, the more we express joy. The voice of the church has heard in singing together. It supports community and unity, and music aids the memory ... we remember more if we sing words rather than just speaking them. Singing music in the church is not an afterthought, it is an integral part of worship.

Consent agenda items were approved:

- Agree that the items on the updated wish list, given joyfully to this congregation, will further Christ's work and the mission of our Church. (See end of this article for updated wish list.)
- Approve the Pastor's Housing Allowance of \$36,269. The housing allowance is a budgeted portion of Pastor Will's salary. The pastor can declare the amount of the salary for housing allowance which is then not taxable.
- Approve the Christmas choir fundraiser.
- Move Joe Madson, youth director, to a salaried position. This is an employment status change and has no financial impact.

Report of the Clerk | Elder Lolly Lawrence

- Will have all elder job descriptions updated by the end of January, so they are available for the new nominating committee.
- Continuing work on the Child/Youth/Vulnerable Adult policy. Aiming to have a working draft ready for legal review and advice by mid-December.

Pastor's Moment | Pastor Will Wilson

- The committee to fill new music team positions will be led by Jamie Roberts.
- Continue onboarding with Joe Madsen. Hearing positive feedback on Joe from students.
- Encouraged by stewardship campaign results.
- Continuing pastoral care for members.
- The advent preaching and teaching series theme will focus on Mary, with a class titled "The Real Mary" after second service. The class will start on 11/30.
- All are encouraged to be welcoming to all who attend Sunday services.
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New Member Outreach | Elder Kyle Halweg

- Preparing for the Live Nativity, our living Christmas Card to the world. Promoting this to the new neighborhoods surrounding FPC. The live nativity will be held on Saturday and Sunday, December 13th and 14th from 5 to 8 PM. We will also be marketing this more broadly. All are encouraged to sign up for live nativity roles.

Adult Nurture & Spiritual Growth | Elder Jim Fitzgerald

- New Elder & Deacon selection process begins 2/1/26.
- Interim Mission Elder update
 - Reviewed 2026 budget planning criteria for missions. We're planning a 10% tithe of the proposed 2026 General Fund total level. The new missions elder will determine/manage specific missions ministry charities and donation amounts based on this plan.
 - Arranged for Giving Tree(s) to be up on 11/23.
 - The balance of our planned 2025 Missions Ministry charitable donations will be paid out in November/ December.

The Adult Nurture Ministry Team is "re-imagining" what our Sunday Adult Education Classes will become based on our decreased attendance and the potential service time change. May go to one Sunday school class.

Fellowship | Elder Krista Wallace

- Coffee hosts continue to assess the quantities and needs.
- Have received lots of positive feedback over the past few months regarding people's appreciation of the treats and beverages being served on Sunday mornings.
- Attended the New Horizons event on Nov 12 and further discussed their needs for next year.
- Beginning to look into the future for our next event... possibly a breakfast?
- May consider a Mallard's game event this summer for a fellowship event

Personnel | Elder Rick Mueller

- We are moving forward with updating our employee health care agreement with GHC at 9.8% increase.
- The Personnel budget was submitted for the 2026 fiscal year
- Recommendations have been made to Pastor Will regarding the provision of additional staff training for new ministry staff on sexual abuse awareness/prevention, and possibly other topics. Proposing the use of "Ministry Safe." Will roll this out to staff and will include youth volunteers.

Stewardship | Elder Barb Cash

- Pledge amounts during week one were up by \$89,683.00, with 71 pledgers as opposed to 62 from last year, and with 8 new pledgers. Week one pledge amount was \$345,755.00. Week two brought the amount to \$442,055.00. We were up to \$512,495 after week three, tracking with last year during the same timeframe.
- Even with new pledges, the overall income may not change, because there are people who gave without pledging in 2025, and some of those have now moved to pledging for 2026.

Worship and Music | Elder Amy Lewis

- The W&M committee will move Joyful Noise from the 7 PM Christmas Eve Service to the 4 PM service, with hopes the music options will attract more people to the 4 PM service, to even out attendance.
- The music director search committee is currently being formed.
- Session approved going back to one Sunday service, starting at 9:30 AM, starting on December 21, 2025. Session will not consider going back to two services until we have a consistent 250 average attendance for six months.

Finance | Elder Monty Cordell

- Completed 2024 audit, and will bring the report to the next session meeting for review and approval
- Reviewed draft budgets and researched key financial metrics and trends. Discussed the budget and set targets based on first drafts submitted this cycle. Referenced:
 - Trends in giving data, faith budget, and cash balance, including 2025 anticipated carry over cash balance
 - 2026 initial summary and net position (aka faith “stretch” budget)
 - 2027 potential impact including full year recommended salaries
- Budget observations:
 - 2025 income is very similar to 2024.
 - Some unpledged income is becoming pledged income for 2026.
 - We need to continue to find ways to increase our membership, which should then also increase our pledged income.
 - Session will vote to approve 2026 budget, or send back for further refinement, at the December meeting.
- Continued implementing ACS, planned the remaining steps needed to cut over in April and run in parallel for two months
- Defined Church Windows data archive plan to retire this system in June/July of 2026 and completed a proof of concept to retrieve archived data
- Held Q3 quarterly endowment committee meeting
- Continued recruitment of fourth endowment committee member

Building and Grounds | Elder Ryan Horst

- Miscellaneous repairs are continuing. A new drinking fountain was recently installed outside of Fellowship Hall.
 - New flooring will be installed in Fellowship Hall kitchen, outside of the kitchen, and the lower-level entryway. Dates of installation are Nov 18-21. Thank you to Schall family for use of the Sheldon Schall Memorial funds for a portion of this expense.
 - Will revisit building use policy in a future meeting.
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The Session of our Church has agreed unanimously that any or all of the items on this list, given joyfully to this *congregation*, will further Christ's work and the mission of our Church. If you would like to donate an item on this Wish List, you may contact Kristina Maher, Church Business Administrator, at (608) 949-9453 or finance@myfpc.org, or Monty Cordell, Finance Elder, at financeelder@myfpc.org.

Adult Nurture & Spiritual Growth | Elder Jim Fitzgerald

1. Donations to the Church Adult Library of new or gently used Christian books and DVDs, or monetary donations of any amount for these items. We would like to restock and continue to build on the Adult Library with appropriate Christian books, videos, and study guides to help enhance personal and/or small group study for our Christian Adult Education programs.

Building and Grounds | Elder Ryan Horst

1. General donations to the Capital Improvement Fund to help maintain the church's facility and grounds (driveway resurfacing, furnace and A/C maintenance or replacement, etc.).
2. Fix drainage areas and improve walkways for the Outdoor Family Area. (\$7,000)
3. Window coverings for all doors windows for intruder safety. (\$500)

Children's Ministry | Elder Peter Bergmann

1. An outdoor storage container for the outdoor games and other items for the Outdoor Family Space. (\$200)
2. Donations to enhance the Outdoor Family Space such as a grill, outdoor yard games (bocce ball, koosh balls, footballs, kickballs, bases, frisbees, etc. (Cost \$30-\$120 each)
3. Technology for 3 Sunday School classrooms:
 - a. Bluetooth speakers to replace CD players. (\$30 each)
4. Church Children's Library: Donations of new or gently used Christian books and DVDs are needed, or monetary donations of any amount for these items. We would like to restock the Children's Library with age-appropriate Christian books.
5. Canvas prints of large Children's Ministry pictures. Cost to be determined at time of order.
6. Donations to help fund Children and Family Ministry programs. (All amounts most welcome.)
7. New furniture for the Wiggle Room (couch, rocking chair)

Deacons | Moderator David Good

1. Stephen Ministry New Leader Training – Provides care and nurture to people in need. (\$3,060)

FPC Endowment

1. Extra donations including monetary gifts, stocks, or planned giving to do the Church's work into the future - both large and small - may be made at any time. The Endowment Trustees will prayerfully work with Session to put such gifts to use in the areas of greatest need.

Fellowship | Elder Krista Wallace

1. Commercial, high-temperature conveyer dishwasher for downstairs kitchen. (\$6,000-\$15,000)
2. Upright freezer for downstairs kitchen. (\$1,000-\$1,500)
3. Refrigerator for downstairs kitchen. (\$1,500-\$2,500)
4. Two Nesco roaster ovens, 26-28 quarts. (\$75-\$125 each)
5. Insulated coffee creamer carafe. (\$30-\$50)

Finance | Elder Monty Cordell

1. Postage stamps.
2. Office supplies such as printer paper and toner, shredder, IT equipment, etc.
3. Undesignated monetary gifts the first half of the year to help with cashflow.

New Member Outreach | Elder Kyle Halweg

1. Ongoing support of The Live Nativity, our living Christmas Card to the world.
2. Subscription to Rightnowmedia.org, providing online 24/7 access to Christian-based video programs for families and adults (\$3,060 for entire congregation, members, and regular attenders who attend FPC membership "Faith" class).

Personnel | Elder Rick Mueller

1. \$10 gift cards to local coffee shops, restaurants, etc. for appreciation and celebration gifts

Student Ministry | Elder Emily Bauer

1. Donations to help continue to fund Student Mission and to help provide scholarships to students in need as well as keep costs affordable for families.

Worship and Music | Elder Amy Lewis

1. Twenty [non-slip seat cushions](#) for sanctuary pews
2. Sound Board replacement. (\$8,000)
3. New hymnals ([Glory to God \(Purple Pew Edition, Presbyterian\)\)](#) for the pews. (\$6,250)