



First Presbyterian Church, Fargo & Baker Downer

The Messenger

JUNE & JULY 2026

MESSAGE FROM PASTOR SARAH

One of the gifts of a long and faithful pastorate is that a congregation comes to know and trust a particular person's way of caring. After more than thirty years of Pastor Mary's ministry among us, many of us came to recognize pastoral care through her voice, her presence, her rhythms, and her particular way of showing up.

That is a beautiful legacy.

Now that Pastor Mary has retired, I have been finding a new rhythm for pastoral care in the life of our congregation. Less care is not being offered. Care is being offered through more people, each with different gifts, different personalities, and different ways of being pastoral.

Pastor Dan and Pastor Nancy are now serving as parish associates, which means they are ordained pastors who are connected to our congregation and share in ministry under the guidance of the pastor and session. Along with our staff, deacons, and trusted church members, they are part of the wider network of care surrounding this congregation.

A visit from me, Pastor Dan, Pastor Nancy, one of our staff members, one of our deacons, or a trusted church member is not second-best care. It is the body of Christ doing what the body of Christ is called to do.

In this season, our pastoral care system includes weekly contact with those who are sick, grieving, or in an immediate season of need. I call people the night before known surgeries when that information has been shared with me. I contact those who need longer-term care on a monthly basis so they are not forgotten after the initial crisis has passed. I also coordinate parish associates and other caregivers to visit those who need consistent, ongoing attention, especially when the need extends beyond what one pastor can responsibly sustain alone.

I do make personal visits, especially in emergencies or during hospitalizations and care facility stays. In many cases, I am the initial visitor. If it becomes clear that someone will be staying for a longer period of time, I help coordinate additional care and support so that the person continues to be remembered and visited.

There is one practical challenge that is important for everyone to understand. Hospitals and care facilities do not share information the way they once did. Because of HIPAA and current privacy practices, the church often does not know when someone has been hospitalized, moved to a different facility, or discharged unless the person or their family tells us. I may call a person or family member to ask whether someone is still in the hospital or care facility before making a visit. If I do not receive a call back, I do not automatically go to the hospital or facility simply to find out whether someone is there.

That means pastoral care depends on communication. If you or someone you love is hospitalized, preparing for surgery, moved to a care facility, grieving, lonely, or in need of a visit, please contact the church office. If you believe someone is being missed, please let us know their name. We can only respond well if we know of specific needs.

This is also a spiritual transition for our congregation. When pastors leave, they give congregations the opportunity to remember something essential: God is the one who cares for us. Pastors matter. Relationships matter. Familiar voices matter. But no pastor is the only source of the church's care. God is.

Sometimes God sends care through a person you were not expecting, but they are still God's care arriving at your door.

As we move through this season together, I invite you to help us strengthen the care of this congregation. Let us know when care is needed. Receive care when it comes in a form you did not expect. Trust that the ministry of compassion belongs to the whole body of Christ. And above all, remember that God has not stopped caring for this church or for you. God is still showing up, often through the hands, voices, prayers, and presence of one another.





MIDWEST KID FEST

We are once again joining with other Presbyterian Churches in the area to host a booth at the 2026 Midwest KidFest. You can help teach children how to fold origami bowls and then fill them with caramel apples as a sweet but nutritious treat. Sign up for a two hour shift by using the QR code or visiting firstpresfargo.org/kidfest.



It's Time Again to Register for VBS!

VBS 2026 June 8-11

ADULT VBS IS BACK!

Adult VBS is back! By popular demand, Adult Vacation Bible School returns to 1st Presbyterian this summer, Monday–Thursday, June 22-25, 7:00–8:00 p.m., in the Jennie Roberts Room.

Monday and Tuesday evenings will feature presentations by Bruce Maylath, starting with the sequel to last year's presentation, "Translating the Bible," followed by "What Happened to Jesus at Easter?" drawn from historian Paul L. Maier's book *First Easter*.

On Wednesday, Kurt Kooyer will present "Medieval Corruption: Catalyst for the Reformation." The series will wrap up on Thursday with Scott Holdman presenting "Room for Doubt and Space to Believe." Please join us for hymns, scripture, discussion, and insights.

***Refreshments will follow in the Gathering Space.**

NEW SUMMER HOURS!

Attention!
Office hours are changing for the summer!
Starting after Memorial Day, the church office will be open:
Monday - Thursday;
9:00am - 3:00pm
Thank you!!

FINANCIALS

First Presbyterian Church Financial Summary - General Fund Only April 2026

	Year to Date <u>Actual</u>	Year to Date <u>Budget</u>	Increase <u>(Decrease)</u>	Annual <u>Budget</u>
Income	\$286,917	\$287,461	-\$544	\$842,800
Expense	310,137	316,599	-6,462	875,737
Net/Shortfall	<u>-23,220</u>	<u>-\$29,139</u>	<u>\$5,918</u>	<u>-\$32,937</u>

ASSOCIATE PASTOR FORUMS

Associate Pastor Readiness Task Force

FORUMS

The Associate Pastor Readiness Task Force is seeking input from the congregation and will be holding three forums to discuss possible models for pastoring.

Sun., June 7, 11:45 a.m.

(Jennie Roberts Room)

Last Meeting! We encourage everyone to take advantage of this final opportunity to share your thoughts, concerns, and ideas.

The Associate Pastor Readiness Task Force (APRTF) will determine whether moving forward with a full-time associate pastor is viable and wise, and will develop a mission-aligned readiness plan that is financially responsible and supported by the congregation. You're invited to come. For forum location, check the lobby display when you arrive.

APRTF Chair: Sharon Secor

FAITH FORMATION & FELLOWSHIP

Come join us! Originally formed years ago by combining the Education and Connectivity Committees, EduCon recently created an updated committee description. In the process, the committee selected a new name that better explains its purpose and function: Faith Formation and Fellowship. The committee will continue to provide support for church-sponsored educational offerings, as well as planning, organizing, and implementing social events that provide the opportunity for fellowship and/or learning.

Faith Formation and Fellowship meets on the first Tuesday of the month. If you'd like to learn more, or if you would consider serving on the committee, please reach out to moderator, Pam Andrist-Burns at pcapuch@msn.com. In addition, you are encouraged to share your suggestions for educational opportunities or social events by contacting Pam or other committee members: Sarah Anderson, Penny Andrist, Kathryn Byrd, Vicki Dawson, Gracia Fulwiler, David Hoffman, Carrie Lawrence, Becky Trumbo, and Maria Weller.

LOST & FOUND

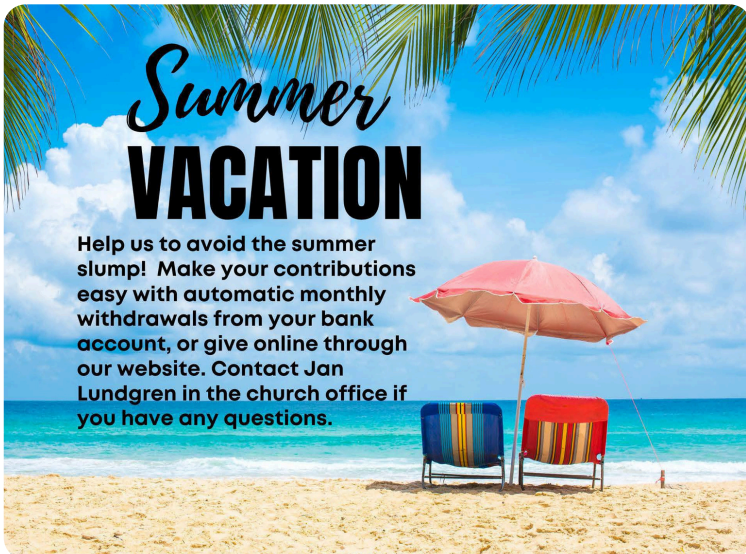
Please take a moment and look over our Lost & Found items. Any items unclaimed by July 15th will be donated.





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SET IT AND FORGET IT!



HOLY BUCKETS

