



First Presbyterian Church, Fargo & Baker Downer

The Messenger

MAY 2026

MEET OUR PARISH ASSOCIATES

A parish associate in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is an ordained minister who serves a congregation in a volunteer capacity at the invitation of the called and installed pastor and with the approval of the Session. Parish associates do not replace called pastors or staff, but they extend the congregation's ministry through their experience and faithful presence. Their work may include worship leadership, preaching, teaching, pastoral care, visitation, and special projects. While this is a volunteer role, the church provides a small budget for travel or meetings when parish associates represent the church in their ministry. We are grateful for these faithful leaders, who help Head of Staff Rev. Sarah Bigwood meet the pastoral and spiritual needs of the congregation.

Meet our parish associates and learn more about the gifts they share with our church.



Rev. Daniel Billings

Rev. Daniel Billings is a retired Minister of Word and Sacrament who continues to serve congregations through pulpit supply within the Presbytery. During his ministry he served churches in Kansas, Minnesota, and North Dakota, including

Smith Center, Canby, Pipestone, and Midway Community Parish.

Rev. Billings attended Rocky Mountain College and later Dubuque Theological Seminary, where he met Lori Jean Olson of Fargo. They were married on September 4, 1976, at First Presbyterian Church of Fargo. Daniel earned a Master of Divinity, and he was ordained in 1979.

Daniel and Lori have two children, John and Rebekah, and grandchildren. Lori passed away on October 2, 2024. Blessed be her name.



Rev. Nancy Emerson

Rev. Nancy Emerson is a long standing member of the Presbytery of Northern Plains. She served as pastor of the Moorhead congregation for seven years before accepting a teaching position at NDSU. For the past 16 years Pastor Nancy

has taught accounting while serving as pulpit supply for a number of congregations in the eastern side of our Presbytery. She also served on the board of Clearwater Forest as well as its treasurer.

Pastor Nancy's pastoral wheelhouse include teaching, preaching, and pastoral care. In the summer you can find her on the lakes of MN and WI reveling in the serenity of God's amazing creation while pursuing her next big catch.



Rev. Catherine Bishop

Rev. Catherine Bishop is a retired Minister of Word and Sacrament. She served at Community Presbyterian Church in West Fargo before her retirement in 2023. Rev. Bishop received her Master of Divinity from Dubuque Theological

Seminary in 2015 and was ordained in March of 2016.

Rev. Bishop lives an active life of hiking and biking. She and her husband, Paul, have recently moved to Ohio to be closer to family. We will miss their weekly presence at First Presbyterian.



Midwest KidFest

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 oragami 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.

Shine-On Campaign Update

We are grateful to share that the **interior renovation** work for Shine On Today is substantially complete. Masonry restoration, plaster repair, and painting are finished, and lighting replacement is nearly done.

Now that weather allows, **exterior work** is underway, including masonry restoration, stained glass storm panel sealant, roofing above the north sanctuary doors, exterior door replacement, window and door painting, and replacement of the north steps.

The quality of work has been excellent. As of this report, \$130,823.85 has been paid for construction contracts, architectural work, and the building permit.

A few adjustments have been needed, as expected with older buildings. Some costs came in lower than expected, while other needed work was added. These changes remain within the project contingency, with \$10,658.15 still available.

Construction is expected to be complete by June 30, with final payments and grant reporting finished by July 15.

Thank you for helping care for this building as a place of worship, welcome, mission, and community.

Men's Bible Study - May 12

The men's Bible study continues its exploration of the Book of Ecclesiastes with Lesson 7 on May 12th at 6:45 a.m. The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month, October through May, typically in the Jennie Roberts Room. Pastries and coffee will be served. Intended to help men understand what the Bible says in relation to what is expected of a Christian man, the study guide for Ecclesiastes can be obtained at pcusa.org/sites/default/files/087011.pdf, or you can request a copy from Bruce Maylath at ring4linguist@yahoo.com. Participants may join at any time. No advance preparation is required for each month's study.

Presbyterian Women



THANK YOU!

First Presbyterian Church had a great turnout to volunteer the week of April 20 to 24 at the **Emergency Food Pantry**. Many thanks to the following people who volunteered this week: Joe Stanley, Rick & Shirley Herberg, Marion Anderson, Ginny Twete, Candy Shultz, Virginia and David Stern, Tom Bigwood, Carrie Lawrence, Mary Simle, Sharon & Gary Secor, Sheila Hastings, Ed Deckard, Jan Carlsen, Don Larew, Val Anderson, Steve Dawson, Nancy Lium.



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.

Wed., May 6, 6:30 p.m.

(Social Hall)

Sun., May 17, 9:15 a.m.

(Jennie Roberts Room)

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

(Jennie Roberts Room)

Following Pastor Mary's retirement, the Session created an Associate Pastor Readiness Task Force (APRTF) with the purpose of discerning whether going forth and calling a full-time associate pastor is viable and wise, and to develop a mission aligned readiness plan that is financially responsible and supported by the congregation. You're invited to come to one or all. For forum location, check the lobby display when you arrive.

APRTF Chair: Sharon Secor

Thank You, Musicians!

As we wrap up another wonderful program year, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all of the musicians who have generously offered their time and talents to enrich the life of our church. Whether you participated in the St. Andrew's Brass, All-Church Orchestra, Genesis & Westminster Ringers, Friendship (K-2), Kids of the Kingdom (3-6), Proclamation (7-12), or Sanctuary Choirs, or shared your gifts through solos and small group offerings, your contributions have been a true blessing.

Your dedication and passion have brought beauty, meaning, and inspiration to our worship throughout the year, and it is deeply appreciated.

We also offer special thanks to our directors—Bryan Poyzer, Jill Post, Pam Andrist-Burns, and Erin Torpey—for their leadership, commitment, and guidance in nurturing this vibrant ministry.

As we look ahead to the summer months, our Director of Church Life will be coordinating the Gift of Music and Offertory schedule. If you are interested in participating, please reach out via email at rbender@firstpresfargo.org to share your availability and interest.

Thank you again for sharing your gifts so generously.

Cheerfully In Christ!

Rusty Bender, Director of Church Life

Financials

First Presbyterian Church Financial Summary - General Fund Only March 2026

	Year to Date <u>Actual</u>	Year to Date <u>Budget</u>	Increase <u>(Decrease)</u>	Annual <u>Budget</u>
Income	\$237,480	\$228,045	\$9,435	\$842,800
Expense	<u>241,960</u>	<u>249,046</u>	<u>-7,085</u>	<u>875,737</u>
Net/Shortfall	<u><u>-\$4,480</u></u>	<u><u>-\$21,001</u></u>	<u><u>\$16,521</u></u>	<u><u>-\$32,937</u></u>

FAITH FORMATION & FELLOWSHIP

EduCon has a new name! 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.

Musicians Schedule

May 3	Sanctuary Choir St. Andrew's Brass
May 10	Friendship (K-2) Choir Kids of the Kingdom (3-6) Choir Genesis Ringers
May 17	Sanctuary Choir Westminster Ringers
May 24	TBD
May 31	TBD



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It's Time to Register for VBS



Register
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VBS 2026  June 8-11

Holy Buckets Collection

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