

The Compass

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—Portland, Indiana

May - June 2026

On Triune Presence from Eastertide to Pentecost and After | A Pastoral Perspective

On Trinity Sunday, the theme of worship observes a particular aspect of Christianity (regarded as among monotheistic religious traditions) which espouses the notion of a triune God—that is an attribution to the divine of such holy characterization as “Three-in-One”—a manifest “Tri-Unity” that is integral in the very essence of the Lord our God’s being Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Trinitarian language itself can be indescribable between believers themselves having difficulty in conveying their own understanding of the theological concept as stated and affirmed in Christian creeds, confessions, and statements of faith.

From tutelage in childhood and youth through catechesis, confirmation, and re-affirmation of faith into adult maturity, followers of Jesus the Christ may find wisdom in varying measure(s) at times elusive. The pastor-theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer provides pertinent exposition regarding challenges on this subject matter.



THE HIDDEN WISDOM OF GOD

God’s thoughts are not obvious, not common sense. God does not let himself be simply grasped right where we want to grasp him. Rather, the church speaks of the secret, hidden wisdom of God. God lives in mystery. His being is a mystery to us, a secret from eternity and to eternity. None of the thoughts that we have about God can ever serve to do away with this mystery or to turn God into something generally comprehensible and not mysterious. Rather, all thinking about God must serve to make visible his mystery, which is totally beyond us, to make God’s secret, hidden wisdom visible in its secretiveness and obscurity—not to rob it of this, so that perhaps through this mystery, the homeland from which God comes will become visible. Every dogma of the church is only a reference to the mystery of God. But the world is blind to this mystery. It wants a god that it can take into account and exploit, or it wants no god at all. The mystery of God remains hidden from it. The world doesn’t want it. It makes gods for itself according to its wishes, but the near, mysterious, hidden God it does not know.¹

By God’s grace unto the glory of the Lord, may we experience further blessings of the triune presence as we journey from this holy season of Easter into the Sundays after Pentecost. In the Wisdom and Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Pastor Rex Espiritu

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¹ *But we speak God’s wisdom, secret and hidden ...” (1 Cor. 2:7–10). Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. I Want to Live These Days with You: A Year of Daily Devotions (p. 148). Kindle Edition. <https://a.co/01AG3ubj>*

EASTER AT FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

As usual, Easter at First Presbyterian was filled with joyful celebration in remembering the Risen Christ. The sanctuary was beautifully decorated and a time of family fellowship was enjoyed following the service. *Photos by Claire Smith.*



A CHOIRED TASTE TO PERFORM MAY 5

By Eric Rogers, *A Choired Taste* Director

As part of our community outreach program, First Presbyterian Church will present *A Choired Taste*, our community choir, on Tuesday, May 5 at 7:00pm. Admission to the concert is free of charge.

This year's theme will be *Celebrating the American Spirit*. The program will feature a variety of music composed, arranged, or given new lyrics by Americans since our country's founding.

The 28 singers of *A Choired Taste* perform under the direction of Eric Rogers.

Works will include *The Star-Spangled Banner*; *O, America!*; *Lift Every Voice and Sing*; *And*

Wherever You Go; *Summertime*; *Anything Goes*; *Sweet Betsy from Pike*; the spiritual *Steal Away*; and the Civil War era folk song *How Can I Keep from Singing?* In addition, the choir will sing *Song of Welcome*, an anthem by America's first successful female composer, Amy Beach. *A Choired Taste* will be supported by accompanist Linda Braun, as well as saxophonist Jordan Wickey, trumpeter Kelly Smeltzer, and violinist Rachel Arnold.

A Choired Taste began its rehearsals early last month with 28 singers, the largest number since the group's founding. Presbyterians are well-represented, including choristers Pastor Rex Espiritu, David Loyd, Jennifer Rupe, Gloria Green, Pamela Rogers, Julia Schwomeyer, and Claire Smith. The concert will be dedicated to the memory of Donna Haggengjos, who sang with the choir from the very beginning.

We hope this event will draw a large audience including some new faces and, of course, a great turnout from our congregation. **Our goal is to demonstrate to the community that First Presbyterian is a welcoming place.** You can help support our goal and our Church's mission by attending and inviting your friends to the concert. If you see someone you don't know that evening, please introduce yourself!



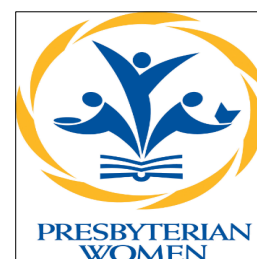
A Choired Taste Performing in 2025. Photo by Claire Smith.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN SPRING BRUNCH

Saturday, May 16 @ 10:00am

Speaker: Tina O'dell,

Life Center of Jay County





SPECIAL OFFERINGS

PC(USA) CHANGES TO SPECIAL OFFERINGS

Editor's Note: the following letter from Rev. Wilson Kennedy, Associate Director for Special Offerings and Appeals, has been edited for brevity. The complete letter is available in the church office. These changes to the Special Offerings are important for us to understand since our church congregation has taken part in all four previous Special Offerings for over 20 years. First Presbyterian Portland's dedication to our worldwide church at large and its various causes is apparent in the generosity of giving. The reasons behind these changes include:

- *Declining Participation: Only a portion of congregations (40%) were participating in all four special offerings, suggesting that reducing the number would increase effectiveness.*
- *Financial Pressures: While not the only factor, financial constraints and the need to streamline administrative costs for supporting ministries contributed to this change.*

Dear friends of the churchwide Special Offering,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ! The 225th General Assembly approved several changes to the churchwide Special Offering effective January 1, 2026. These changes were recommended by the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board through the Special Offerings Review Task Force.

The biggest change you will notice is the new lineup of offering:

- One Great Hour of Sharing
- World Communion Offering
- Christmas Joy Offering

That means:

1. The **Pentecost Offering** will be discontinued. However, all current recipient causes will continue to be funded through the churchwide Special Offerings. Specifically, ministries focused on children-at-risk, youth, and young adults will now be part of the Christmas Joy Offering.
2. The **Peace & Global Witness Offering** will transform into the **World Communion Offering**. In 2026, there will be a new grant-making process to support local and regional ministries. Your congregation or mid council will be able to apply for a grant for your own ministries that align with the causes supported through this new Offering. *(Editor's note: prior to this change our congregation was invited to retain a percentage of gifts from this offering to distribute to local organizations.*
3. Overall, causes rather than programs will receive funds. This does not mean currently funded programs will no longer receive funding. Broadening the scope of funding areas will invite more congregations, mid councils, and individuals to support the churchwide Special Offerings while discovering new ways to do God's work in the world.

VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT

The Deacons would welcome anyone who would like to be a Greeter or furnish cookies for Cookies, Coffee and Conversation! Thank you for considering this opportunity. It takes a village!!



A CHOURED TASTE COMMUNITY CHOIR IN CONCERT

Tuesday, May 5, 2026
7:00pm

First Presbyterian Church
FREE ADMISSION



May

June



The Church Office
will be closed on the
following days:

Monday, May 25 (Memorial Day)
through Thursday, May 28
Monday, June 15
Tuesday, June 16

BREAD OF LIFE MEAL

The next Bread of Life
Community Dinner First
Presbyterian Church will host is on
Monday, June 30.



If you want to help serve or
if you would like to provide some of the food, please
contact Julia Schwomeyer at 726-4761 or call the
church office at 726-8462.

Reminder: You can view, download and
print a color copy of this newsletter from
the church website
www.firstpcportland.org.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Our Vision Statement

“To provide a ministry which will lead people to strengthen their faith in Jesus Christ and reach out with God’s love.”



CALENDAR



May

- 03 Communion/Cookies, Coffee & Conversation
- 04 5:30pm *A Choired Taste* Rehearsal
- 05 **7:00pm *A Choired Taste Concert***
- 07 4:15pm Worship & Music Committee Meeting
- 5:30pm Choir Rehearsal
- 10 **Mother's Day/Choir Sings**
- 12 6:30pm Joint Session & Deacons Meeting
- 6:45pm Deacons Meeting
- 6:45 Session Meeting
- 16 **10:00am PW Spring Brunch**
- 17 **Christian Education Sunday**
- 24 Day of Pentecost- Rev. Ron Naylor, guest preacher
- 25 Memorial Day-Office Closed
- 26-28 Office Closed

June

- 03 Presbytery Meeting @ Boggstown Presbyterian Church
- 07 Communion/Cookies, Coffee & Conversation
- 08 9:00am Newsletter Deadline
- 15-16 Office Closed
- 23 Office Closed
- 29 Bread of Life Community Meal

**Church Office hours:
Monday-Thursday 9:00am-3:00pm
Closed on Friday**

Sunday Morning Worship 9:30am