

FIRST PRES NEWS MONTHLY

VOLUME IX | SEPTEMBER 2026



A NOTE FROM PASTOR...

On Sunday mornings this month we will be looking at the theme of forgiveness and mercy through the words of Jesus. Matthew chapters 18-20 represents a set of teachings by Jesus collected by Matthew to teach his community how to live together. Reconciliation and forgiveness are the enduring themes. We can imagine that the constant call for forgiveness was as difficult for Matthew's community to hear as it is for us today. There is a spoken word poet Rudy Francisco that frames the idea of mercy in terms of the golden rule albeit with a spider. The beginning of the practice of forgiveness is best seen in this light. Forgive as you would want to be forgiven. Matthew will go on to show that building beloved community requires the strong foundation of mercy alongside justice, but lets not get ahead of ourselves.

She asks me to kill the spider.
Instead, I get the most
peaceful weapons I can find.

I take a cup and a napkin.
I catch the spider, put it outside
and allow it to walk away.

If I am ever caught in the wrong place
at the wrong time, just being alive
and not bothering anyone,

I hope I am greeted
with the same kind
of mercy.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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GREETERS

Sept. 6 Bev Eifert, Ginny Holle
13 Bud Eastman, Katie Humphrey
20 Nancy Reeser, Linda Schubert
27 Joe & Jean Boticki

USHERS

Sept. 6 John & Linnea Brooke
13 Larry Dickerson, Sharon Campbell
20 Steve Simpson, Ken Schacht
27 Dave Easley, Alan Galle

LITURGISTS

Sept. 6 Larry Dickerson
13 Royce Earnest
20 Ken Schacht
27 Mary Bernstein

FELLOWSHIP

Sept. 6 Deb Yale, Bev Eifert
13 John & Linnea Brooke
20 Dave & Ginny Holle
27 Jen Seversen, Ken Schacht



Please vote for Music & More, Mark Paffrath, and First Presbyterian Church!

Link: **[Check out 2026 Racine - Best of Racine County \(Voting\)](#)**

You can vote once a day in each category through Sept. 9.

Best of Sports & Entertainment Category - 2 spots to vote for Music & More
for Best Entertainment/Live Music and Best Free Entertainment

Best of Professional Services Category - 1 spot to vote for Mark Paffrath
for Best Band/Musician

Best of Local Life Category - 1 spot to vote for First Pres for
Best Place to Worship

MUSIC & MORE

What an incredible 33rd season! We celebrated with a Summer Series Finale Concert on Friday, August 14 to wrap-up our 10-week series of FREE noontime concerts with a great evening of music and community outreach. This was one of our best seasons yet! We hosted 145 talented musicians—including 11 new acts—who filled our sanctuary with exceptional performances from solos, duos, trios, and large ensembles.

We were entertained every week with three varied acts. Some highlights:

- ♦ Duets from Mark Paffrath & Elizabeth Steffensen captivated the audience.
- ♦ Waiting for Eddie band and the Bouterse-Alumbreros Family had attendees asking for more.
- ♦ Monte Bedford's soulful oboe performance with piano accompaniment from Fumi Nakayama. Monte comes from Minnesota each year and generously performs at no charge just to support this program!)
- ♦ The crowd-pleasing Corporate Downsizing Quartet performs an energetic set list each year, also at no charge.
- ♦ Multi-instrumentalist/singer/songwriter Zachary Scot Johnson also comes from MN each season to share his talents, this summer he was at our Steinway.
- ♦ Charlotte Bush came from New York City and dazzled us with some Broadway showtunes, alongside dad Randy Bush at the piano.
- ♦ Organists Sharon Adel & Jessi Kolberg gave our newly renovated organ a work-out.
- ♦ A fabulous solo piano performance from Fumi Nakayama in July wowed attendees.
- ♦ Doug Clum & Amy Maack rocked the house with powerful vocals and instrumental.
- ♦ And, a stunning performance from Swedish soprano Cecilia Andersson concluded the series.

Music & More dispersed \$8,200 this season. Generous donations to the summer freewill offerings totaled \$4,700. Representatives from Health care Network and the Women's Resource Center each received checks for \$2,350 for their agencies. We estimate more than \$90,000 in freewill offerings have been given back to our community to benefit a variety of non-profit service agencies since M&M began in 1993. And, Health Care Network, which started in 1987 in donated space in our church basement, has received more than \$27,000.

Seven student musicians were awarded \$500 checks from the three M&M Youth Music Scholarship Funds. Randy Bush presented checks to Jack Breiwick (accepted by dad Jamie Breiwick), Claire Holle, and Miles York. All three were seniors at The Prairie School and played in the Prairie Jazz Band. Victoria Mahl Vollman presented checks to vocalists Lucinda Garrigan and Leila Mayew from the Mearl Mahl Fund. Both are from Kenosha and were recommended by their voice teacher, Ami Bouterse. Ed Guion presented checks to vocalist Alexander VanDeLoo and to Riley Saenim who is the four-time winner of the Wisconsin State Poetry-Out-Loud Competition.

The Finale entertainment was outstanding! Pat Badger arranged a premiere performance by the 10-piece Jelly Rolls Ragtime Orchestra. The audience loved their lively selections and the energetic foot-stomping that followed. Adding to the spectacular lineup, Bob Benson & Friends from the Racine Theatre Guild performed a sensational set of musical theatre favorites. Their performance included memorable songs from Les Misérables and The Phantom of the Opera. There were two enthusiastic standing ovations, and attendees are already requesting we have both groups back to perform at noontime concerts in 2027.

Many attendees stayed for the after-concert reception. Thanks to volunteers Elie Hunt, Steve & Mary Bernstein, Bev Eifert, Joe & Jean Boticki, Dave Holle, Katie Humphrey, and Deb Yale for their help with the reception.

Special thanks to Shelley Maurer for designing colorful programs for each concert, and to Theresa Revis for keeping track of all the money. The Buildings & Grounds crew deserves a shout-out for moving furniture each week. And, thanks to sound techs Steve Comeau and Sam Peters for smoothly navigating all the set-ups and set changes.

Music & More continues to be an important community outreach program. It brings joy to our concert attendees while providing an acoustically superior venue for musicians. And, beyond the music, the program raises unrestricted funds for local service agencies, supports talented youth musicians with scholarships, and shines a bright light on our historic downtown church. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of this amazing 2026 season: our generous donors, enthusiastic concert attendees, dedicated community agencies, faithful M&M volunteers, and the more than 145 talented musicians who shared their gifts with us this summer!

Gratefully,
Georgia Hall

Save The Dates:

Sat. Dec. 5, 2026 at 7^{PM} – Carols by Candlelight, in collaboration with the Choral Arts Society of S.E. Wisconsin

Sat. May 8, 2027 at 7^{PM} – Spring Sampler

Thurs. June 3 – Aug. 5, 2027 at NOON – Ten FREE Concerts

Sat. Aug. 14 at 7^{PM} – Summer Series Finale Concert



This sketch was done by Marcia Schrotenboer from Holland, MI

SEPTEMBER MISSION INITIATIVE 2026

Fall may be in the air but we are going to enjoy every last possible warm day as we head into planning for the next year of Mission Initiatives at First. On September 13, 2026, after worship in Ihrman Hall we will have a "Talk it Over." Please come for a glimpse of what we may plan together involving future mission work. We would love to share your thoughts. All ideas are welcome. Please join us.

Can you say Cuba on my mind? Yes, lots of Cuba news to share. \$7000 from FP members was donated in monies that went to Cuba via Pastor Utley. Please recall that there is no banking system in Cuba. It is very hard to send monies to Cuba without taking money on your person. A bit unsettling to take larger sums of cash to Cuba as we are all so accustomed to cards that navigate so much commerce. We are grateful to First Presbyterian Church of Naples, Florida for their monetary gift of \$3000 also sent to our sister church in Matanzas, along with our monies and in-kind donations. We are also grateful to OBUCC for their support of Central Church of Matanzas and of Julian Thomas.

Cuba continues to experience black outs on a consistent basis. The lack of oil hampers daily life in Cuba so please keep the Cuban people in your prayers. Please don't forget to read the flyer in church that allows you to pray each night for our sister church in Matanzas. (also on the opposite page!)

We are so blessed to have so many generous people at First. Please give a big thanks to all the volunteers that make our church family so special and consider ways you might contribute to mission at First.

By the time you receive this update the *Julian Thomas School Supply Drive* will be complete. Thank you to all that support the Julian Thomas School. The school has been a long-standing beneficiary of your generosity. Thank you.

I, along with Kathi Wilson will continue to co-chair mission initiatives. We give a shout out to Meg Daniels for all her co-chairing work on mission and Session, thank you.

We are brimming with hope and energy for what comes next in mission at First. Please join us on September 13, 2026, after the service.

Respectfully shared,
Georgia L. Herrera and Kathi Wilson

Family of faith, the Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba invites you to join us in our daily prayer, every evening at 9:00P^M.

Let us raise our prayers with one voice, for our people and their churches:

"God, our Father and Mother, in these times when we as a people feel exhausted and discouraged by a harsh reality that saps our hope, times when human suffering surfaces as part of the struggle for survival and when it may seem that our own needs prevent us from recognizing our neighbors, we cry out to you, good God.

We humbly ask that Your church remain a place of welcome, a space where all people are received—a great table of communion where all may find a seat. May every need be transformed into a ministry of service and compassion, and may we be that great family that lives, weeps, walks alongside others, laughs, celebrates, prays, sings praises, and whispers of Your presence in every corner where peace and justice are envisioned.

We place this people before You; make us, as a church, proclaimers of hope, affirming Your constant presence—manifested in service and in love that is shared, proclaimed, and celebrated. Grant us the grace to We cry out for peace, for an end to violence, war, and greed; and we implore that we, as Your children, may be instruments of that peace—the peace that comes hand-in-hand with justice and heralds Your eternal reign. To You be the glory, good God! Now and forever, Amen."

Delivery of Julian Thomas School Supplies!





May the angels of light
glisten for us this day.
May the sparks of God's beauty
dance in the eyes of those we love.
May the universe
be on fire with Presence for us this day.

May the new sun's rising
grace us with gratitude.
Let Earth's greenness shine
and its waters breathe with Spirit.
Let heaven's winds stir the soil of our soul
and fresh awakenings rise within us.

May the mighty angels of light
glisten in all things this day.
May they summon us to reverence,
may they call us to life.

© John Philip Newell, Praying with the Earth





"Light of a Clear Blue Morning"

–Dolly Parton

It's been a long dark night
And I've been a-waiting for the morning
It's been a long hard fight
But I see a brand new day dawning
I've been looking for the sunshine
You know I ain't seen it in so long
But everything's gonna work out just fine
And everything's gonna be all right
That's been all wrong

'Cause I can see the light of
a clear blue morning
I can see the light of a brand new day
I can see the light of a clear blue morning
Oh and everything's gonna be all right
It's gonna be okay

It's been a long long time
Since I've known the taste of freedom
And those clinging vines
That had me bound, well I don't need 'em
I've been like a captured eagle
You know an eagle is born to fly
Now that I have won my freedom
Like an eagle, I am eager to fly

'Cause I can see the light of
a clear blue morning
I can see the light of a brand new day
I can see the light of a clear blue morning
Oh and everything's gonna be all right
It's gonna be okay

Choral
ARTS
Society

Celebrating
40
Seasons of Song

Honoring 250 Years of America

Saturday, October 17, 2026 • 7:00 PM

First Presbyterian Church
716 College Avenue, Racine, WI 53403



Paul Revere House
Paul Revere Memorial Association

REGIE GIBSON

Massachusetts Poet Laureate and author of "Dear, Paul Revere or Forge, Shape, Shine"

Regie Gibson's residency is supported in part by the Paul Revere House.

Pre-Concert Event included with Admission: 5:45-6:15PM

"Forging Beyond Iambic Pentameter" with Guest Artist-In-Residence Regie Gibson

TICKET PRICES

Adult \$25 • Senior \$25 • Student \$15



Advance tickets available at:

Personal Touch by Julie Florist in Racine – 5445 Spring Street – with cash or check,
online at www.choralartsonline.org, or by calling (262) 634-3250.

This season is supported in part by a grant from the Racine Community Foundation, a grant from the Racine Arts Council's ArtSeed Grant Program funded by the Racine Arts Council and the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin, and a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.

