

Sunday Morning Schedule FAQ

Why are we changing the worship schedule?

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. As church leaders, we believe we should continually evaluate whether the way we organize ministry best serves the people God is calling us to reach.

After prayer, discussion, and careful consideration, the Leadership Board believes moving our modern worship service to 9:30 a.m. removes a significant barrier for many guests and others in our community while strengthening opportunities for worship participation.

Why 9:30 instead of 8:30?

Research, experience, and conversations within our congregation suggest that 9:30 is a more accessible worship time for many people in our community while still allowing us to maintain two distinct worship services each Sunday.

When does the new schedule begin?

Sunday, September 13, 2026

What will the new Sunday morning schedule be?

- Modern Worship – 9:30 AM
- Traditional Worship – 11:00 AM

Sunday School classes will meet according to their individual schedules.

Sunday School

Will every Sunday School class change?

No.

Each class will determine the meeting time that best serves its participants and ministry.

Why won't every class meet between the services?

Because the start of our services will now be only 90 minutes apart, there is no longer enough time for every class to meet between worship services.

Instead, classes will meet at times that best fit their participants.

Children & Students

What about nursery and children's ministry?

Nursery and children's programming will now be available to children of all ages during both worship services.

What about youth Sunday School?

Youth schedules will be communicated directly by our Student Ministry leadership. Youth Sunday School will meet following the 9:30 worship service.

What about God's Crew (Special Needs Ministry)?

God's Crew leadership has been involved in these conversations and will communicate any schedule adjustments directly to participants, families, and volunteers.

Worship

Will anything else about the worship services change?

No.

Only the start time of the modern worship service is changing.

Is the traditional service changing?

No.

Traditional Worship will continue to begin at 11:00 a.m.

Will music styles change?

No.

Both worship services will continue offering the same worship experiences they do today.

Decision Process

Who made this decision?

The Leadership Board approved this recommendation after prayer, discussion, and careful consideration.

Were church members consulted?

Yes.

Before the recommendation came to the Leadership Board, Pastor Sean met personally with many of the individuals and ministry leaders most directly affected by the proposed schedule.

Those conversations helped identify ministry impacts, hear concerns, and shape the implementation plan.

Why wasn't the whole church asked to vote?

Within our church's governance structure, decisions regarding worship schedules fall under the responsibility of the Leadership Board.

Is this change permanent?

The Leadership Board believes this schedule better positions our church for future ministry and intends to move forward with it. Like every ministry decision, we will continue evaluating how effectively it helps us fulfill our mission.

What if I prefer the 8:30 start time?

We recognize that some individuals genuinely preferred the earlier time, and we understand that this represents sacrifice. We are deeply grateful for those willing to adjust their routines as we seek to create greater opportunities for others to encounter Christ through our church.

Mission

Is this change about increasing attendance?

Our hope is that more people will worship with us, but attendance is not the goal.

The goal is to remove unnecessary barriers that may keep people from encountering Jesus Christ through worship, discipleship, and community.

Won't this make us feel like two separate churches?

We understand that concern because relationships matter deeply to us. One of the strengths of First United Methodist Church is that people genuinely care about one another.

At the same time, we believe the unity of our church has always been rooted in something deeper than sharing the same hallway for a few minutes on Sunday morning. We are united by our shared mission, our worship of Christ, and our commitment to one another.

As our church grows, meaningful relationships will continue to be built through worship, Sunday School classes, serving together, small groups, and church-wide events. In fact, this change encourages us to be even more intentional about creating opportunities for our entire church family to gather, celebrate, and serve together.

Does this mean the church is changing its identity?

No.

Our mission remains the same.

Our worship remains the same.

Our beliefs remain the same.

We are simply adjusting our schedule to better serve our mission.

Why make this change now?

As we look toward the future of First United Methodist Church, we believe this is an appropriate time to make a mission-driven adjustment that positions us well for continued ministry in our community.

Practical Questions

Will this change cost the church money?

There will be some modest costs associated with implementing the new schedule, but they are expected to be minimal.

Most communication materials—such as emails, printed information, announcement slides, and temporary signage—are part of our normal communication efforts and will be produced using existing resources.

The most significant long-term expense will be updating our permanent exterior signage. However, that update was already needed. Some of our signage has become outdated over time, and this provides an opportunity to refresh it so it more clearly communicates who we are and when we worship.

For example, our current sign includes information about Friendship Circle, but it does not clearly identify it as our preschool. Updating the signage allows us to provide clearer information for first-time guests and better represent the ministries of our church.

The Leadership Board believes these limited, one-time costs are a responsible investment in helping visitors find accurate information and making our church more welcoming to our community.

Will the building open at different times?

Yes.

Building access times will be adjusted to reflect the new schedule.

Will coffee and fellowship still be available?

Yes.

Hospitality ministries will continue under the new schedule.

Where can I find updated Sunday School times?

Class leaders will communicate schedules, and updates will be available through the church office, website, and printed materials. These will roll out over time.

How will we know if this was the right decision?

Like any ministry decision, we will evaluate this change over time. Success will not be measured simply by attendance numbers, but by whether this schedule helps us better welcome guests, engage our community, encourage consistent worship participation and support our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

I still have questions.

Please contact Pastor Sean, the church office, or a member of the Leadership Board.

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Our prayer is that this change will not simply alter our schedule but strengthen our mission.

Thank you for your flexibility, your grace, and your continued commitment to making disciples of Jesus Christ in West Plains.