

REPORT OF THE PASTORS AND SESSION

January 2026

The Lord has blessed our congregation this past year, and we are so thankful to him for all he is doing in and among us.

Over the course of 2025 we saw a 9% increase in our overall membership. Especially exciting is that we had 27 baptisms this year: 20 infant/child baptisms, and 7 adult baptisms. This is the highest number of baptisms we've had in a single calendar year in over 3 decades, and from our records it looks like it was the most adult baptisms we've had in a calendar year since we started keeping records almost 50 years ago. This is not our doing. It is the Lord's. And we should pause to give him thanks and praise, for using us as his instruments not only to welcome new covenant children, but to welcome new believers in Jesus Christ, into the family of God.

Along with this, in 2025 we also saw an increase in attendance at morning worship (about 2%), though there was also a slight decline in attendance at evening worship and prayer meeting. That said, small group participation remains high, with 14 small groups active at the end of 2025, and 182 adults involved in a small group. We are so thankful for the range of ways that God is working through these ministries to make, maintain, and mature disciples for Jesus Christ.

As always, the preaching of the Word of God continues to be central to the health and vitality of our church. This year, we continued to follow a "rotating trimester" pattern for our morning sermon series. We heard from the Gospel of Mark (which we began in 2022) from January to May, Philippians (which we began in 2023) from May to August, and Deuteronomy (which we started in 2021) from September through December. In addition to these series, Pastor Nicoletti preached on the biblical themes related to key moments in the church calendar when we came to them (Epiphany, Palm Sunday, Easter, Ascension Sunday, Pentecost, Trinity Sunday, and Christmas Sunday), Pastor Gutiérrez preached several sermons from the Book of Genesis, Pastor White preached sermons on Matthew, Psalm 13, and Christian community, and Evan Kvale preached to us from Daniel 7.

In our evening services, our three ministers concluded their shared sermon series in the Book of Acts, and in September they started a similar shared series in the Book of Kings, moving through the book together, preaching on a rotating basis. Pastor Emeritus Dr. Rob Rayburn preached on several occasions in the evening, and we also heard sermons from our Elder the Rev. Dr. Jeff David, and our Elder Emeritus Dick Hannula. We were blessed to hear sermons from several men in or from our congregation who were in various stages of preparing for pastoral ministry: Evan Kvale, Devin Satterwhite, and Tim Bentson (who has since completed his ordination process). At our Covenant High School service, Pedro Moura preached a sermon on Christian education. In addition to all this, our evening worship was blessed by other guest preachers as well, from our presbytery and beyond.

In the church office, our beloved administrative assistant Kim St. John retired this past year. After several months of assistance in the office from Dana Isenberger and Emma Haas, Kaicee Jackson joined the church staff in November, and has been a blessing to our church in that role.

On our pastoral staff, Pastor Gutiérrez's wife Alicia was diagnosed with breast cancer this spring. After undergoing surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation, we give thanks that there is no longer any evidence of cancer in her body, and we are praying for her as she looks ahead to recovery, preventative treatment, and other procedures in the year ahead. We are also thankful for Pastor Gutiérrez's faithfulness, as he walked with Alicia through this difficult season, while continuing to bless our congregation and especially our youth through his ongoing ministry here at the church. Our other pastors have sought to grow in their own ministries this year through continuing education, as Pastor White began a fellowship program with the Theopolis Institute, and Pastor Nicoletti began work on a master's degree in theology & disability (MTh) at the University of Aberdeen.

When it comes to strategic planning and our proactive development as a church, before the year began, the Session identified our primary defining objective for 2025 as further establishing our new small group ministry in the life and culture of our congregation. We continue to be pleased with this ministry, with the high level of participation in it, and the ways the Lord has used it to nurture and grow relationships and community within our congregation, and also to help our congregants grow as disciples of Christ, as they wrestle together with God's Word and how to apply it to their lives. We are thankful for Pastor White's work in leading this ministry, for the dedication of the small group leaders and hosts who have made this ministry possible, and for the many congregants who have stepped out of their comfort zone to discuss God's Word and build deeper relationships with others in our church.

Along with the further establishment of the small group ministry, the Session went into 2025 with three additional areas where we also hoped to see further development in our church.

One was to develop a culture of evangelism and outreach in our congregation. We are thankful for the ongoing efforts of our evangelism committee towards this goal, for the work of Better English on 6th to serve and share the gospel with members of our community, and for our congregants who have invited their non-Christian friends to join us on Sundays and at other church events. By God's grace, we have seen a significant increase in adult baptisms, and we've had so many new or non-Christians worshipping with us, that addressing this new need has become our primary thematic goal for the year ahead (more on that below).

Another goal for us in 2025 was to further develop a culture of international missions involvement in our congregation, and we are so thankful for the dedicated work of our Missions Committee this past year, which has helped us to be more strategic in our financial support of missions work, and which is also developing new ways for us to educate our broader congregation on the missionaries we partner with, in order to increase awareness, prayer, and personal investment in the work the Lord is doing through these missionaries we know and love.

Finally, a goal we have had this past year has been to further equip our pastors and elders for the work of shepherding. Since the fall of 2024, the elders and pastors have added an additional meeting most months, focused exclusively on individual shepherding needs among congregants, discussion on the best ways for us to address those needs, and prayer for our congregants. In addition to the other ways our elders seek to minister to congregants (one-on-one conversations, hospitality, etc.), our elders have been highly involved in the new small group ministry, with

almost every elder participating in or leading a small group, and using it as one more opportunity to get to know and build relationships with congregants. In all these ways, the elders have continued to develop their ministry among the congregation. Along with that, our pastors have also continued to carry out shepherding work in their roles, and have sought ongoing equipping in their work of pastoral care and counseling.

As we look at these goals for 2025, we are encouraged by the progress that has been made and the developments we have seen in our congregation.

In the fall of 2025, the session met again to review our theological vision together, to consider our aspirational goals, and to discuss the best concrete steps for us in the year ahead.

As one would expect, our core purpose and values remain the same. Faith Presbyterian Church exists to be God's instrument in making, maintaining, and maturing disciples for Jesus Christ. Central to our ministry as we do this is the deep exposition of the Holy Scriptures, our engagement in thoughtful & robust liturgical worship, the cultivation of a culture of Reformed catholicity, and the nurture & equipping of covenant children.

Our aspirational values (those things we value in theory, but believe we need to improve on in practice) remain the same as well. We want to see our church continue to grow in relationships and community; in shepherding and discipleship; and in evangelism, outreach, and missions.

After discussion, and reflection on the Lord's work among us, we determined that our primary goal for the year ahead was to better integrate newcomers to our congregation into the life of the church, and new believers among us into the Christian faith.

As noted above, we have witnessed more adult baptisms in our church than any previous year. We've also had very new Christians and a number of non-Christians attending our church. In addition, we've had other visitors with us from a range of church and theological backgrounds. We see serving these individuals, nurturing the faith of those who are new to following Jesus, and helping each newcomer get more deeply connected to the church community as one of our more pressing needs at this time.

To that end, we've identified three concrete steps we plan to pursue in the year ahead to help us make progress in this area.

One is the start of a "Christianity 101" class for new believers and seekers. This class launched with our other book-based discussion groups during the Sunday school hour. Led by Pastor Nicoletti and Pedro Moura, we have been blessed to be joined by a range of seekers and new believers each week, as we work through the basics of the Christian faith, using the Apostles' Creed as our outline for the course.

Our second concrete step forward is to improve our systems for follow-up with visitors and new believers after their initial visits. We have already begun to develop this process and look forward to refining it further in the year ahead.

Finally, a third concrete step we hope to pursue is to identify and develop additional bridges and pathways within the church that would help people move from visitors or new believers, to being integrated into the life, ministry, and worship of the church.

We are excited for the new faces the Lord has brought to our congregation, and we ask for your ongoing prayer as we work to serve them and connect them with Christ and his people.

In addition to this primary thematic goal for the year ahead, we also identified two secondary thematic goals which we also hope to make progress on in the year ahead.

One of those goals (which has remained a priority for us for the past few years) is to continue to develop a culture of evangelism and outreach in our congregation. This remains a priority for us, and we are so thankful for the ministry of Better English on 6th, our Evangelism Committee, and many other individuals and ministries who have worked towards this end, as we seek to be faithful to the great commission that the Lord has given us.

Finally, in the year ahead we will continue to work to ensure the future of our music ministry. We continue to be blessed by Melissa McMillan's ministry to us, and plan to work with her so that she can lead us musically to the extent she is able and desires to, as she navigates her ongoing health challenges. Melissa blesses our congregation in so many ways. We don't know what the Lord has in store for her going forward, but we will be intentionally working with her and others as we plan for the future of our music ministry here at Faith.

As we look backwards and forwards, we give thanks once again that Christ is the Head of his Church. He loves his people far more than we can imagine, and he is at work to give life, health, and growth to his Body.

And so, confident in his goodness, power, and love, we entrust the year ahead to the Lord, knowing he will work all things for the good of his people, and the glory of his name.

Warmly in Christ,
The Pastors and Session of Faith Presbyterian Church