

First Reports

First Presbyterian Church
Evansville, Indiana



SEP/
OCT
2025

www.fpcvv.com

Imagining the Future

Friends, we have entered into an amazing season in the life of First Presbyterian Church of Evansville, Indiana. Hang on, pay attention, and keep showing up. Watch for the ways God is at work in us and through us!

You may have noticed new folks joining us in both services with many returning again and again. You may have noticed folks that have been mostly online (or on a break) back with us again and again. If you *are* these folks - *Welcome!* - we see you and we are glad you are here! If you have been considering moving from regular attendance to membership, watch for opportunities for talking about that (or contact Rev. MB!)

So how are we imagining the future? More than fifty people attended one of seven *Imagining the Future* sessions (to discuss plans for the restoration/renovation of the historic sanctuary) that were offered in August. Thank you to those who took the time to participate. There will be more opportunities for your input as we move forward.

Here are some **things I learned** as I prepared for this work and **things we've discerned** through this process:

- **About this congregation:** The past five and a half years have been challenging for all organizations but particularly for this congregation.
 - ♦ The COVID-19 pandemic emerged in 2020 and every part of life felt the impact. (This is its own book!)
 - ♦ This congregation experienced the sudden, unexpected death of a beloved pastor in February of 2022. (And this loss was not this congregation's only loss during this time.)
 - ♦ This congregation survived the difficult transition to the present (through griefwork with bridge pastors, through an intentional transitional minister, through the Pastor Nominating Committee process, to the weekend this congregation met me and voted unanimously to call me to this work, to my first Sunday in October of 2024, to today).
- **About this congregation's commitment to quality and vision for the future.** Every time this congregation decided to build something, this congregation chose to do it with very nearly top-of-the-line plans and materials.
 - ♦ From unseen foundations to carefully selected finishes and furnishings - both craftspersons and materials were selected with care.
 - ♦ Every decision for expansion or rethinking a use of space was framed for the future.
 - ♦ People gave of their resources with passion and purpose - not simple decisions to give from their abundance but intentional investments for an unknown future.



(continued on p.2)

Imagining the Future - continued from page 1!

→ **About the congregation's rich history of transformation.** This church and this property have historically been in a state of transformation:

- ♦ from adding the rose window to the historic sanctuary (no, it wasn't always there)
- ♦ to adding a kitchen and balcony to the Mulberry side of the fellowship hall (what were they thinking?!)
- ♦ to moving the organ and choir from the chancel to the balcony (yes, the choir used to be in the chancel)
- ♦ to hiring a decorator from New York City to transform the historic sanctuary with stenciling and red carpet and more (in the late 1930s and early 1940s)
- ♦ to adding a gym to the other side of the parlor (yes, there was a gym)
- ♦ to moving the kitchen and balcony out of the fellowship hall and putting this kitchen where it currently resides (brilliant!)
- ♦ to creating a second floor with classrooms and offices in the upper level of the gym (glad to give you a tour)
- ♦ to adding the education wing and chapel to the property where the manse used to be (yes, there used to be a historic home about where the Bible Bunch room is now)
- ♦ to adding the Fisk Organ to the sanctuary (yay!)
- ♦ to refreshing the fellowship hall and rethinking the use of the parlor (also yay!)
- ♦ to adding the courtyard, courtyard entry, rethinking the office suite and space where Little Lambs currently is along with adding updated restrooms (and probably many other small things that seem like they've always been that way!)



→ **About our leaders' commitment to transparency and clarity in this work.** No decisions about the historic sanctuary (or the rest of the property) will be entered into lightly - we will literally count the cost before we make decisions about what is next (that's biblical!) and all decisions about the future will be made with the long view (50 to 100 years) in mind (not just the next 5 to 10 years).

- ♦ As we work toward figuring out how to best care for this space so that First Presbyterian Church can use this space as a tool for ministry well into the next century, know that the leadership of this congregation commits to being transparent in our process and in the ways we seek resources to do this work.
- ♦ A team of folks to steward the work with the building is being formed. (Watch for more about them in the next publication of *First Reports*.) Some who are already on board are Paul Blaylock (chair of Building and Grounds), Bill Nix, Boo Shields, and Dick and Jane Bernhardt. Others will be added.
- ♦ A team of folks to steward the development of a comprehensive campaign to raise resources to support ongoing ministry (our annual pledged giving), to support future ministry (through endowed and legacy giving), and to support capital needs (for restoration of the historic sanctuary, the repair of the flat roofs, the possible addition of handicap accessible family restrooms and an elevator) is in place and working with Rob Henson, the coach the session has hired to work with us through this process. The chairs of the FutureHope Comprehensive Campaign Team are Scott Wylie, Sarah Cross, and Tony Aiken. Other members include Sue Schriber, Jill Griffin, John Strange, and Carrie Aiken (our clerk/scribe). I (MB) am also part of this process.
- ♦ The Session of First Presbyterian Church of Evansville, Indiana has been elected by this congregation to serve as the spiritual leaders of the congregation. They are the ultimate deciders. The Session will be given recommendations upon which to act and advice and information from working groups, teams and committees with which to make decisions.

Again, I continue to live with gratitude for the call to serve with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love.

Mary Beth
Rev. MB

mb@fpcevv.com; 812-872-4882 (text or voice)



4th Sundays at First Pres

DO WHAT MATTERS. LEARN WHAT MATTERS. TOGETHER.

An Engaging, Intergenerational Gathering for Service, Learning, Worship and a Meal

4:30-6:00 p.m. on the 4th Sunday evening of each month

Come and experience a new way to connect with God and each other. Planned to be a gathering of all ages around a monthly theme, we'll explore the connections between simple service projects (putting together hygiene kits or school supplies, for example), arts, crafts, prayer stations, activities, an uncomplicated time of worship (some songs and scripture expressed through storytelling, skits, movement, and art) with communion, followed by a simple meal (might be pizza, might be tacos, might be spaghetti, might be a baked potato bar...come and see!) Who is this for? EVERYONE!

September 28	WELCOME ALL
October 26	HONOR GOD'S DIVERSITY
November 23	LIVE IN COMMUNITY
December 28	HOPE*



On the Sunday after Christmas, December 28, 4th Sundayst at 1st Pres will happen in the morning! There will be **One Worship Service with Communion at 9:30 a.m. with Wide Awake and Sanctuary Worshipers followed by breakfast.*

It's Time for Follow Me!



On Sunday, September 7, children's faith formation classes will resume during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. At the appointed time, children from 5th grade and below will be invited to come forward and be accompanied to their *Follow Me Time*. Companion *Follow Me* worship bulletins and take-home sheets for families to use at home will be available on the "Choose Your Adventure" carts located in the back of the Sanctuary and in the hallway between fellowship hall and the sanctuary.

First Light Youth Group Fall Kickoff

Our first regular FIRST LIGHT YOUTH GROUP meeting for this program year is Sunday, September 7 from 5:30-7:00 p.m. Plans for an EPIC Game Night are in the works. Bring your favorite snacks to share!

FIRST LIGHT YOUTH GROUP will meet every Sunday evening from September 7 through December 14 (with the exception of Sunday, October 12 when we'll take the evening off.) Rev. MB and Rev. Jerusha will be sharing the leadership (most of the time together - sometimes just one of us) with other adults helping with games, activities, snacks, etc. A printed schedule is available.



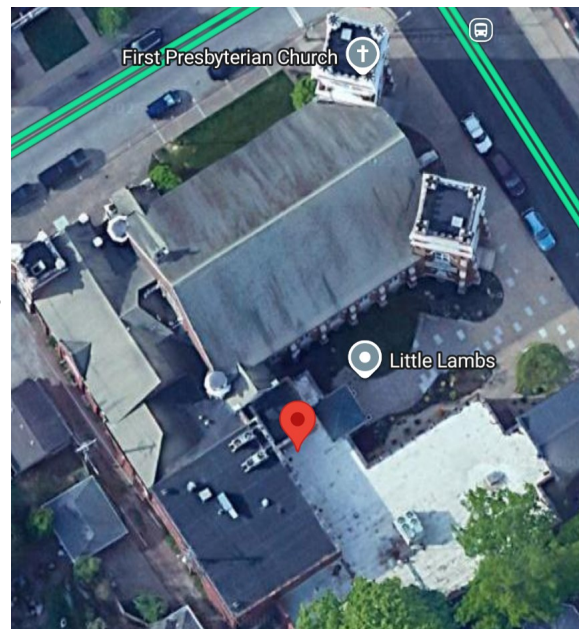
We're working on a YOUTH SUNDAY for sometime in the Fall (when the youth will lead most of the worship service) and we'd like to work with any youth who are interested in serving as regular liturgists (readers) for either worship service. Another Halloween Candy Giveaway is in the works.

Contact Rev. MB: mb@fpcevv.com or 812-872-4882 (voice or text) if you have questions or if you would like to be added to the First Light email list.

TRANSPARENCY ALERT - *for your information* - FLAT ROOF REPLACEMENT

First Presbyterian Church's building has flat roofs over every part of the structure *except the historic sanctuary, fellowship hall, the parlor, and the chapel. Each flat roof is well beyond its expected lifespan. Each flat roof is leaking (some with gusto!) Each flat roof must be replaced.*

We have received bids to replace the roof above the second story (the part of the building that was originally a gym and that now houses the kitchen and offices downstairs and offices and classrooms upstairs) plus some small contiguous sections over Robert's office and the upstairs restrooms, choir room, and music storage. The roofer chosen for this project has been asked to submit a separate bid for the education wing so that the Session can discern whether to do all of this work at once. (Which would likely be much more cost effective since there would only be one rental of large equipment.) As I write this, we have not yet received that bid.



Some questions people have asked:

- 1) **Is it possible to change the flat roofs to roofs with some kind of pitch?** It's possible but not practical nor cost effective. We cannot change the structure of the roofs without changing the structure of the buildings that support the roofs. Adding the kind of structural support that would be necessary to support a different roof would require those buildings be brought up to current code (which includes significant requirements since we are in seismic zone 2a.) The cost of doing that would likely be as much as double the amount of replacing the roofs (or more) and would not eliminate the need for ongoing maintenance. Putting a 20-year roof on with plans to replace it in 15-25 years (depending on how it ages) makes more sense at this time.
- 2) **How much will this cost and how will we pay for it?** The cost of the project mentioned above (without the education wing) is about \$100,000. The finance committee confirmed that there are resources available to borrow from ourselves to complete this part of the project with the commitment to pay that money back to ourselves as part of an upcoming Comprehensive Campaign. We are currently waiting on the second bid for the education wing roof. With input from the Building & Grounds and Finance Committees, the Session will make that decision as soon as that information is available. The education wing roof project is a much larger space than the second story roof project that came in at \$100,000.
- 3) **Are there any other options to pay for these roofs?** I'm glad you asked.



If several people were motivated to make gifts above their regular pledged giving, it could be possible to pay for the roofs without borrowing from ourselves. This would be ideal.

If this is interesting to you, please reach out or simply submit a gift with "2025 roof replacement" on the memo line. Any gifts in excess of what is needed to replace the flat roofs will be used to help put a continuous cap on the limestone and tile caps around the edges of the roofs after the roofs have been replaced. Any gifts in excess of those needs will be set aside for the upcoming restoration and renovation of the space unless the giver designates some other priority.

If you have other questions, please reach out to [Paul Blaylock](#), chair of Building & Grounds, or to [Rev. MB](#). Exciting (*and drier*) days are ahead!

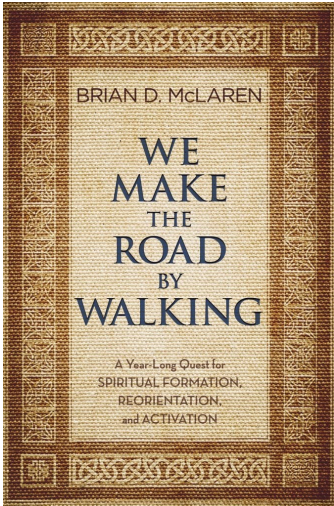
We Make the Road By Walking: Starting Sunday, September 7

WE MAKE THE ROAD BY WALKING: A Yearlong Quest for Spiritual Formation, Reorientation, and Activation by Brian McLaren is described as a *brilliant retelling of the biblical story and a thrilling reintroduction to Christian faith*. *We Make the Road by Walking* is described as a guide to exploring the difference that an honest, living, growing faith can make in our world today.

Weekly Conversation Groups:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m., Wednesdays at noon and 7:00 p.m. (All times are CST)
Zoom links can be found on the website and in Connect (our weekly e-newsletter)

A note from Rev. Jerusha:



Hello Friends,

As I begin the third year of my doctoral work in spiritual formation, I am excited to share this year-long journey with you as we read about and discuss spiritual formation from a progressive lens. Theologian Brian McLaren is one of the foundational theologians that helped me untangle my faith from a rigid understanding of what the Christian life should be. I hope this study of *We Make the Road By Walking* will be beneficial to you as you wrestle with doubt and deepen your faith.

You can choose to read the book on your own or you can choose to read weekly and join in some conversation. As the leader for this year-long journey, I hope you will join me in person when you can. Drop in at any time along the way. Other times can be added if requested. Groups will be available in person and online.

Dreaming of a just and peaceful world,

- Rev. Jerusha

Lunch and Learn!

The Mission Committee is beginning a new series of opportunities for church members and friends to learn more about organizations and programs supported by your contributions to the church budget. Each year, the Mission Committee distributes a portion of your offering to others doing God's work in our community and the world. You are invited (encouraged!) to come and learn more about the work of these and other organizations.

The inaugural Lunch and Learn program is Monday, September 15, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The speaker of the day is Dave Doehnert, who has been part of the National Response Team of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) for over a decade. He will talk about his recent experiences including PDA responses to flooding throughout Western North Carolina Presbytery after Hurricane Helene in 2024.

The Lunch and Learn gathering will be in fellowship hall. Mr. Doehnert's presentation will begin at noon and last as long as an hour (including time for questions). Bring your own lunch as early as 11:30 to enjoy informal chatting with others. Drinks will be provided.

This program is being co-sponsored by Presbyterian Women who are organizing an October project and meeting to fill Disaster Clean-up Buckets that will be used by PDA teams responding to future national disasters. (*See the Disaster Bucket article for more details!*)



LGBTQ Group Gathering



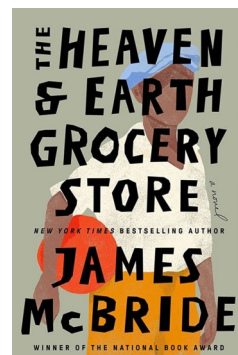
All First Pres LGBTQ folks (including LGBTQ friends of FPC) are invited to meet the 'Van Camps' at their home (259 Washington Ave.) on Friday, September 12 at 6:00 p.m. for a good meal and the company of friends. This is the first gathering of 2025. The LGBTQ group will meet every six weeks for a Friday night dinner/activity, and/or a Sunday lunch. It is our hope that gathering together will spark fun and a deeper sense of community and support for one another. For more information or to RSVP, contact Rev. Jerusha (jerusha@fpcvv.com). *Save the date: Sunday, October 26, lunch, location TBA.*

Calling All Readers:

Book Group at First Pres meets next on Monday, July 14, 6:30-8:00 p.m. in Room 105 in the Ed Wing. A Zoom option is available; contact Francie Hubbard (francie@myhubbards.com) to learn how to sign in.

September's book is *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store* by James McBride. What begins as a murder mystery becomes a story of small-town place and community, of love and hate, and of compassion and violence.

On October 13, the group will discuss *The Barn* by Wright Thompson - a history of the 1955 murder of Emmett Till in Drew, Mississippi.



Disaster Buckets

First Pres' Presbyterian Women group, in partnership with the Mission Committee, will assemble Disaster Buckets for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance on Saturday, October 4 at 11:00 a.m., with pizza for lunch once all the work is completed! There are many ways you can participate: buying requested items (*PW has already procured the buckets*) and bringing them to the church, helping assemble the buckets, and/or donating funds to ship the buckets to PDA.



The items needed are (*please purchase new items as described*):

- ✓ scouring pads (not stainless steel nor soap pads)
- ✓ sponges (small and large)
- ✓ scrub brushes
- ✓ lightweight, multipurpose cleaning towels (not paper)
- ✓ 16 to 34 oz bottles of liquid dish soap (antibacterial preferred)
- ✓ 12 to 40 oz bottles of liquid concentrate (type that can be mixed with water) household cleaner (no spray bottles)
- ✓ 50 to 100 foot clotheslines (cotton or plastic)
- ✓ N95 dust masks
- ✓ Heavy-duty/multi-use dishwashing gloves (latex-free preferred)
- ✓ 30 to 45 gallon heavy duty/contractor-type trash bags
- ✓ Heavy-duty reusable work gloves (leather, cotton w/leather palm, or nitrile OK)

If you're not a shopper, donations for the shipping (and any extra supplies PW might need to purchase) can be written to Presbyterian Women, memo: Buckets! Thank you!

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE



PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE

Happenings In and By the Music Department



Start of the season - It's always a good time to get involved in the music programs!

The Choir, Handbell, and Flute Choir seasons get fully underway at this time of year, so it's a great time to join, or encourage others to join our church's music programs. This a great way to get involved in the life of the church on a regular basis. Contact Robert (robert@fpcevv.com) or Bri (bri@fpcevv.com) to arrange an introduction for anyone Grade 2 through adult to The Choir School, the Handbell Choir, and the Flute Choir.

Front Porch Fest happens in the First Pres neighborhood on Saturday, September 6.

Robert and friends present "First Street Classical" at 1115 SE First Street from 3:00-5:30 p.m. PLUS, members of our choir will sing from 5:00 p.m. onwards. There are food trucks around the fountain at Haynie's Corner and live music on forty-three porches all through our neighborhood until 8:00 p.m., and on Sunday, an after-party at Haynie's Corner. If you haven't experienced this event before, come and check it out: frontporchfestevv.com for maps and way more information (we are Porch #31)!



First Friday Recitals at 7:00 p.m.

We welcome Jieun Kim Newland to play the First Friday Recital on September 5. Jieun is new to the area and lives in Henderson where she is the new musician at St. Paul's Episcopal Church and her husband is the new Rector. Jieun is a wonderful person and musician and has great expertise and interest in early music, owning a number of copies of interesting historical keyboard instruments. Help us welcome her to the region by attending the recital!

On October 3, the First Friday recital will be played by a student from the IU Jacobs School of Music.

Silent Movies - October 24 and 25

One of the First Pres traditions in October is Silent Movies with organ accompaniment! Now in its thirteenth year, Robert will ascend the stairs to the Fisk organ to make up a live soundtrack while the film plays on a big screen in the front of the church. This year, on Friday, October 24, we enter the dark, twisted, Expressionist realm of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), and on Saturday, October 25, Robert is really excited to present the extraordinary and monumental *Metropolis*, Fritz Lang's 1927 masterpiece, which has dazzling visual design and special effects, and dramatizes the conflict between wealthy uber-capitalists and rebellious subterranean laborers - orchestrated by a diabolical scientist capable of destroying them all.

Both films begin at 7:00 p.m. and are preceded by a Q & A. Entry is free to both movies with a suggested donation of \$20 to help raise money to send kids in our programs to summer church music camps. Seating is unreserved.



Robert with EPO at Saint Benedict Cathedral, Sunday, October 12, 4:00 p.m.

Robert has been invited to perform with the Evansville Philharmonic Orchestra showcasing the new organ at Saint Benedict Cathedral. The program is a mixture of orchestral works and solo organ pieces concluding with the glorious *Organ Concerto* by Francis Poulenc (1938). Tickets will be available at evansvillephilharmonic.org soon.

WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAYS

8:30 a.m. Wide Awake Worship
 9:30 a.m. Fellowship Time, Adult Sunday School,
 Choir Rehearsal, We Make the Road
 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary Worship, Follow Me Time
 11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour
 5:30 p.m. First Light (4:30 on 4th Sundays)

MONDAYS

6:30 p.m. NA Group

TUESDAYS

11:30 a.m. Staff Meeting
 3:45 p.m. Teen Rehearsal
 4:45 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal
 5:45 p.m. Chorister Rehearsal

WEDNESDAYS

12:00 p.m. We Make the Road
 1:00 p.m. *Little Lambs Store Open*
 5:30 p.m. Chorister Rehearsal
 7:00 p.m. We Make the Road

THURSDAYS

4:00 p.m. Choir Beginners
 5:00 p.m. Chorister Rehearsal
 6:00 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

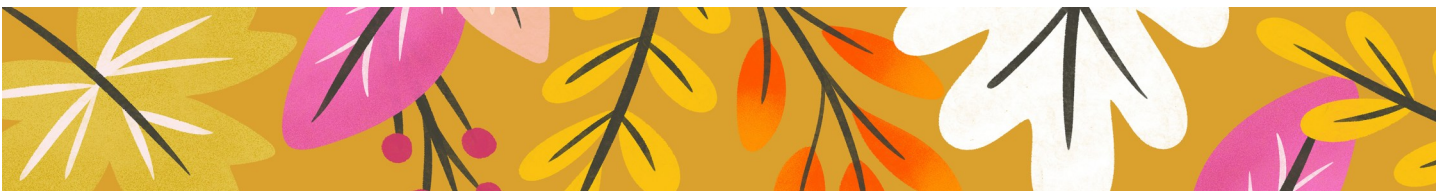
FRIDAYS

Church Office Closed

SATURDAYS

8:30 a.m. Outside Cleanup Crew (1st and 3rd weeks)
 10:00 a.m. *Little Lambs Store Open*

**Items in italics are non-FPC events*



Happy Birthday!

SEPTEMBER

Anne Asbury	1
Elizabeth Becker	2
Leo Peyronnin	4
Sam Ungar	6
Mark Fox	7
Brennan Downs	9
Carolyn Stilwell	9
Maria Mastropaolo	12
Roger Colman	14
Jenni Rodgers	14
Jerusha Van Camp	15
Martha Goldman	17
Suzana Josenhans	17
Heather Grigsby	20
Eli Pearce	20
Andrew Singleton	24
Tiffany Ball	25
Jean Beckman	25
Barbara Moorman	25
Charlotte Roth	25
John Whinrey	25
Susan Colman	26

Lora Blaylock	29
Sharon Rea	29
Garnet Ungar	29
Kyler McReynolds	30



OCTOBER

Karen Kuykendoll	1
Lynn Kyle	1
Diane Reynolds	1
Katie Ruthenburg	1
Gina Robinson Ungar	2
Deborah Shepherd	2
Peter Ungar	3

Eddie Erickson	4
Jane Bernhardt	5
Francis Hubbard	8
William Nicholls	8
Marilyn Moore	9
Austin Boyle	10
Laura Haywood	12
Miles Moore	12
Pat Wu	12
Analisa Hein	14
Susie McCool	15
Barb Witte	16
Lillian Montgomery	17
Sandy Ehlen-Martin	20
Beth Mottley	23
Art Mengon	24
Hugh McKinney	25
Caroline Haynie	26
Tom Stein	27
Mary Colvin	28
Lisa Jones	28
Regan Stein	29
Meg Singer	31



- 1 MONDAY LABOR DAY
Church Office Closed
- 4 THURSDAY
5:15 p.m. Personnel Committee
- 5 FRIDAY
7:00 p.m. First Friday Recital: Jieun Newland
- 8 MONDAY
10:30 a.m. Feeding Mission at UCS
6:00 p.m. Finance Committee
6:30 p.m. Book Group
- 9 TUESDAY
5:30 p.m. *Little Lambs Executive Board Meeting*
- 10 WEDNESDAY
9:00 a.m. Deacon Meeting
7:00 p.m. Deacon Meeting
- 13 SATURDAY
11:00 p.m. Choir Youth Pool Party
- 14 SUNDAY
11:30 a.m. Music Support Committee
- 15 MONDAY
11:30 a.m. Mission/Presbyterian Women
Lunch & Learn
- 16 TUESDAY
6:00 p.m. Session Meeting
- 17 WEDNESDAY
6:00 p.m. Worship Committee
- 28 SUNDAY
4:30 p.m. Fourth Sundays at 1st Pres

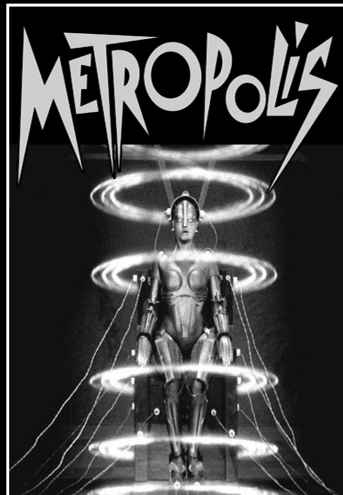
- 2 THURSDAY
5:15 p.m. Personnel Committee
- 3 FRIDAY
7:00 p.m. First Friday Recital
- 4 SATURDAY
11:00 a.m. Presbyterian Women: Disaster Buckets
- 5 SUNDAY
11:30 a.m. Music Support Committee
- 10 FRIDAY
6:00 p.m. *Haunted Historic Evansville: Ghost Walks*
- 11 SATURDAY
6:00 p.m. *Haunted Historic Evansville: Ghost Walks*
- 13 MONDAY
10:30 a.m. Feeding Mission at UCS
6:00 p.m. Finance Committee
6:30 p.m. Book Group
- 14 TUESDAY
5:30 p.m. *Little Lambs Executive Board Meeting*
- 20 MONDAY
10:00 a.m. Mission Committee
- 23 THURSDAY
5:30 p.m. *Little Lambs Board Meeting*
- 24 FRIDAY
7:00 p.m. Silent Movie: *The Cabinet of Dr. Calagari*
- 25 SATURDAY
7:00 p.m. Silent Movie: *Metropolis*
- 24 SUNDAY
4:30 p.m. Fourth Sundays at 1st Pres
- 28 TUESDAY
6:00 p.m. Session Meeting

October - Time for Silent Movies!!

SILENT MOVIES

with pipe organ accompaniment

Friday,
October 24
7:00 p.m.



Saturday,
October 25
7:00 p.m.

Free Admission Suggested Donation \$20

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