



9 AM Contemporary Service • Sunday, September 6, 2026

Order of Worship

THE GATHERING:

Countdown

Opening Song – ***“Awesome God”***

Welcome

Paul Wonacott

Invitation to Worship

Ben Wonacott

Leader: The focus this day is justice. We are called to be just and to respect justice, to honor the law. We are reminded by Micah and Jesus that justice is not about avenging and revenge but about reconciliation and reconnecting. The laws of God guide us so that we may be faithful and work toward the healing of relationships and communities.

All: Come, let us worship God in hope and in thanksgiving.

Opening Prayer

Paul Wonacott

Praise Song – ***“Mighty To Save”***

Greet your neighbor!

(Before you sit down, please turn and greet your neighbor. Also, please take a moment to sign the Friendship Pad located at the end of each pew and pass it along to the person next to you. Thanks!)

Children’s Message

Shannah Vergote

(Children are invited to come forward at this time for the children’s message.)

THE WORD:

Scripture Readings – Micah 6:6-8

Matthew 18:23-35

Message – ***“Justice without Mercy is not Justice”***

Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard

RESPONSE & SENDING:

Time for Reflection and Song of Response – ***“Here I Am To Worship”***

Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard

For Communion today everyone is invited to come forward by the center aisle to receive the gluten free bread and juice. After partaking of the elements, you may return to your seat by the side aisle.

Pastoral Prayer & The Lord’s Prayer

Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Giving Back to God

Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard

- Our Offering- Your gifts honor God and help provide financial support of the ministries and mission of this church.
- Our Service- Get connected! Fill out a Connection Card to get more involved in the life and ministries of the church.
- Our Prayers- How can we help you in prayer today? Fill out a prayer card and let us know.
Please place your financial gift, Connection Card, or Prayer Card in the Offering Box in the narthex.

Announcements

Paul Wonacott

- Fall Kickoff Sunday, September 13 – Backpacks, Bibles and New Beginnings
- The Art of Vinemaking New Sermon Series begins September 20

Closing Song – ***“Trading My Sorrows”***

Mission Statement

Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard

Leader: In the coming week what does God call us to do?

**People: We are called to: Introduce Jesus Christ to those who do not know Him;
deepen the faith and commitment of those who already know Him;
and demonstrate Christ’s way of love in service to the world.**

Charge and Benediction

Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard

Leader: Go into the world to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.

Seek reconciliation where there is division,
offer mercy where there is hurt,
and share the grace you have received with others.
And may the God of justice guide you,
the grace of Jesus Christ sustain you,
and the Holy Spirit strengthen you
to be instruments of healing, mercy, and peace.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

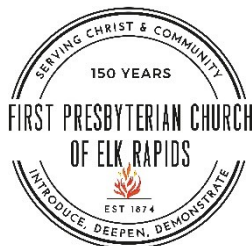
All: Amen.

Postlude

Worship Concludes – Service Begins!

Thank you. Special thanks to our usher: Mark Weber, and Randy & Bonnie Johnson, our snack volunteer, and our coffee volunteer: Lorraine Berak.

Thank you to our communion servers: Hannah Barrow, Lorraine Berak, Mel Matchett and Kathy Rogols.



10:30 AM Traditional Service • Sunday, September 6, 2026

Order of Worship

Countdown to Worship

Prelude – *“As Long As I Live”* by Choplin

Welcome and Announcements

Cheryl Knight

- Fall Kickoff Sunday, September 13 – Backpacks, Bibles and New Beginnings
- The Art of Vinemaking New Sermon Series begins September 20

Invitation and Centering Words

Cheryl Knight

Leader: The focus this day is justice. We are called to be just and to respect justice, to honor the law. We are reminded by Micah and Jesus that justice is not about avenging and revenge but about reconciliation and reconnecting. The laws of God guide us so that we may be faithful and work toward the healing of relationships and communities.

Ringling of the Historic Church Bell

Call to Worship (Praise the Lord! based on Psalm 149, of today's lectionary)

Lynda Nichols

Leader: Sing to the Lord a new song,

People: praises for the Lord in the assembly of the faithful.

Leader: Let Israel be glad in its Maker;

People: let the children of Zion rejoice in their King.

Leader: Let them praise the Lord's name with dancing,

People: making melody to God with tambourine and lyre.

Leader: For the Lord takes pleasure in God's people;

People: and adorns the humble with victory.

Leader: Let the faithful exult in glory; let them sing for joy.

All: Let us worship God in hope and in thanksgiving.

Opening Prayer

Lynda Nichols

All: Gracious God, we come to worship you with thanksgiving and gratitude for the power of your gifts of grace and love. Help us to be those who listen with open hearts and minds for your Word to us this day. May we be those who gather in community to support, encourage, challenge and love one another in your name. In Christ's name. Amen.

Opening Hymn 435 – *"There Is a Wideness in God's Mercy"*

Prayer of Confession

Lynda Nichols

All: Gracious God, we are mindful that our lives are not always lived in accordance with your love and your laws. We confess our sins expecting your grace and forgiveness, yet we know that we are not always so willing to acknowledge our shortcomings. We are called to respond to the needs of our neighbors, yet too often we remain focused on our own needs. We speak words of judgement upon others, to avoid remembering our own unfaithful actions. God of hope and love, may your Spirit move among us, helping us to seek and work for healing in ourselves and in the world around us. We ask these things in the name of your Son that we pray. Amen.

(Please pause for prayers of silent meditation)

Assurance of Pardon

Lynda Nichols

Leader: Friends, the good news of the gospel is not based on appearances or pretense. God knows us fully and loves us completely. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, restored, and made new. We are set free to live with honesty, courage, and genuine love.

All: Thanks be to God! Amen.

Passing of the Peace

Lynda Nichols

Leader: The Peace of Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you!

(Share signs of Christ's peace with one another. Also, please take a moment to sign the Friendship Pad at the end of the pew and pass it along to those sitting beside you.)

Anthem – *“Bread of the World”* by McDonald

Scripture Readings –Micah 6:6-8
Matthew 18:23-35

Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!

Sermon “Justice without Mercy is not Justice”

Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard

Responsive Hymn 515 – *“I Come With Joy”*

Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard

Leader: The Lord be with you

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts,

People: We lift them up to the Lord

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Leader: Holy and gracious God, creator of the universe....

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Doxology – *“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”*

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Offering Prayer (Based on a prayer by J. Philip Newell)

Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard

All: Holy One beyond all names, as we bring before you these offerings, may love rise again in us today as we offer these gifts seeking to provide food for every table and shelter for every family, for comfort for those who mourn and struggle. May these gifts help to reshape a world of challenge and struggle that people among us and far from us would find and grow in hope, peace and a sense of grace.

Closing Hymn 721 – *“Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore”*

Mission Statement

Rev. Dr. Karen Blanchard

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Charge and Benediction

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Leader: Go into the world to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.
Seek reconciliation where there is division,
offer mercy where there is hurt,
and share the grace you have received with others.
And may the God of justice guide you,
the grace of Jesus Christ sustain you,
and the Holy Spirit strengthen you
to be instruments of healing, mercy, and peace.
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: Amen.

Benediction Response – *“Let There Be Peace On Earth”*

Postlude

Worship Concludes – Service Begins!

Thank you. Special thanks to our ushers: Dave Nussdorfer & Ryan Nussdorfer, our snack volunteer, and our coffee volunteer: Lorraine Berak.

Thank you to our communion servers: Keith Burns, Peggy Bushnell, Janice London, and Don Reynolds.

Thank you for your generous support! Your gifts help sustain the ministries and mission of our church. You can give by mail (404 Spruce St., Elk Rapids, MI 49629), online at www.erfpc.org (click “Giving”), or by contacting Treasurer Mike Husby at Treasurer@erfpc.org. Thank you!

Nursery – Qualified caregivers welcome infants and children during the service.



Today is Loose Change Sunday – All donations collected in the red bucket in the narthex will be given to the Safe Haven Program of Child & Family Services of Northwestern Michigan. Safe Haven provides a safe, welcoming place for children to visit a non-custodial parent or transition safely between parents during difficult family situations. Thank you for helping support this vital ministry of hope and protection.

Listening for God – Contemplative Prayer Gathering

All are invited to join *Listening for God*, our contemplative prayer gathering, as we seek a deeper awareness of God’s presence through silence, prayer, and reflection. **The next gathering will be Tuesday, September 8 at 12:00 noon in the Sanctuary.** We normally meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. Come experience a peaceful time of resting in God’s presence and listening for God’s guidance.

Sunday School & Youth Kickoff – September 13

Join us on Sunday, September 13, for our Sunday School & Youth Kickoff! After the 9:00 a.m. Contemporary Worship Service, children, youth, and parents are invited to gather at the Lighthouse for breakfast. Children and youth will enjoy a group activity while parents meet together to learn more about the upcoming ministry year. All children, youth, and parents are welcome!

Celebrating Our 90-Year-Olds! – Sunday, September 13

Join us on Sunday, September 13, as we honor members of our church family who are celebrating their 90th birthday this year. The Deacons will host a cake reception between the worship services as we give thanks for their lives, faith, and the many ways they have blessed our congregation.

This year, we are especially celebrating our newest 90-year-olds, Connie Claar and Leonard Orzechowski. Bags for Connie and Leonard are available on the Welcome Table, along with cards if you would like to write them a special birthday message. Please feel free to place your cards in the appropriate bags.

We hope you'll stop by to congratulate them and enjoy a time of fellowship together!

Joyful Abundance! Women's Conference on Saturday, September 19

Save the date September 19 for Joyful Abundance! Psalm 16:11 "In Your presence is fullness of joy." The Antrim County Christian Community of Churches is having a Women's Conference featuring author/writer Christine Hoy. It is on Saturday, Sept 19 from 9-2 at the Bellaire High School Performing Arts Center. We will be carpooling to Bellaire. Cost is \$20 pp. including lunch. Register at our website (erfpc.org) on the Women's Retreat scrolling banner or use this link: <https://newhopecc.churchcenter.com/registrations/signups/3568994>. Call or text Marcia Sumerix at 989-964-1420 for more information.

The Art of Vinemaking – New Sermon Series & Small Groups

A new sermon series begins September 20 through Oct 18 based on the book The Art of Vinemaking by Bette Dickinson. Books are available on Amazon for \$18.99 or on Kindle through Amazon for \$7.99. We also will have copies available in the narthex for \$20. In addition to the sermons on Sundays we will be having a small group discussion on Monday evenings at 7 pm for those that want to explore the deeper meaning of John 15 "I am the vine, you are the branches, if you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit." Monday evenings will be a video and discussion format. Please sign up in the narthex beginning September 6.

Save the Date: The Art of Vinemaking Retreat – Saturday, October 24

Save the date for The Art of Vinemaking Retreat, a half-day spiritual formation retreat led by Bette Dickinson. Come for a meaningful time of reflection, creativity, and spiritual renewal as we explore the art of growing and tending our faith. More details coming soon!

Resources for Grief Care – Stephen Ministry offers one-on-one support and grief resources, including pamphlets and a display in the narthex. Information on local counseling options is also available. To meet with a Stephen Minister, please contact the office or a Stephen Minister directly.

Alzheimer's & Dementia Caregiver Support Group – 3rd Friday of Each Month at 2PM For those caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia. Share support, encouragement, and guidance in a welcoming environment. The group meets on the 3rd Friday of each month from 2:00-3:00 p.m. Please contact facilitator Kathy Dork at 248-568-4651 if you'd like to attend or if you have questions.

Community Cupboard – Thank you for supporting the Elk Rapids Community Cupboard! The Cupboard is open twice every other week: Saturday from 9:00–11:00 a.m. and Tuesday from 4:00–6:30 p.m. Visit elkrapidscommunitycupboard.com or call Pam Coleman at 847-445-8239 for more information.



Discover Your Gifts! Take our quick Ministry Match Survey to find where you can best serve. Scan the QR code or use the link: volunteeraccelerator.ministryarchitects.com/ERFPC/survey.html
Thanks for your willingness to help out!

This Week's Activities

Sun. 9/6
9:00 a Contemporary Service
10:30 a Traditional Service
Mon. 9/7 – Labor Day
Church Office Closed
Have a wonderful holiday!
Tues. 9/8
12:00 p Contemplative Prayer Gathering
7:00 p Outreach MT - Cf
Wed. 9/9
9:00 a Finance Committee - Cf
6:30 p Praise Team Prac.
7:00 p Personnel MT – Cf
Thurs. 9/10
7:00 p Trustees – FH
Fri. 9/11
10:30 a Choir Rehearsal – FH