

Sunday Morning Schedule Change

Frequently Asked Questions

How did we get our current schedule?

On the heels of Covid, the Session tasked a small group with developing a new worship schedule recommendation that would be healing for our community after the pandemic. That team (the Encounter & Equip Task Force) spent time listening to the congregation, developed a list of values, wrestled with many options, and ultimately presented the Session with the recommendation that has been our current worship schedule. The driving force behind the schedule was the “breathing room” it held for organic connection in community. After two months of prayerful discernment, the Session voted to adopt the schedule in the spring of 2022.

How was the decision made to change our current schedule?

Soon after my arrival as your new Senior Pastor in February of 2025, the Session requested a review of our worship schedule in order to consider something different. This began a new process of discernment, during which we consulted with the Senior Leadership Team, staff, and members of the Worship & Music Committee and Discipleship Committees, in addition to some members of the former Encounter & Equip task force. In light of these conversations, the Session decided to make the change to our schedule in November of 2025.

What was the rationale for this change?

The primary rationale was to provide a schedule that better fosters worship (encountering God) and discipleship (equipping one another) for our Covenant Partners, so as to better carry out our mission (engaging the world for Jesus). We determined that our current schedule has been very important for helping us reconnect after Covid, but that it also created a sense of competition between worship and discipleship opportunities (i.e., many Covenant Partners have expressed feeling forced to attend a certain worship service or Sunday School class, due to the more compressed schedule; youth programming at 9:30, for example, has required youth to attend the 11:00 service). Our hope is to alleviate this competition by allowing more room for choice on Sunday mornings, along with a renewed prioritization of worship and discipleship commitments. Throughout our conversations as a Session, it became clear that – although there is no one “right” schedule – the current schedule has been the most appropriate for the season we have been in, and this new schedule is the most appropriate for this new season in the life of our church.

What implications will the new schedule have for children’s ministry programming?

Our Preschool friends will continue to receive loving care throughout the entire morning, as well as an age-appropriate Bible lesson. Our Elementary friends will have Sunday School at 10:00am. Children’s Church during the sermon will be offered for children in Kindergarten through 3rd grade at both the 8:45am and 11:00am services. Our Children’s Ministry Director, Hannah McNeely, will be in touch with parents to share more details about what this means for them and their families. In the meantime, please contact Hannah with any questions.

What implications will the new schedule have for student ministry programming?

Our Sunday School classes for Middle and High School students will meet along with other Sunday School classes from 10:00-10:45am. Our Confirmation class will meet from 9:50-10:55am to allow students to attend either worship service while receiving the additional time needed in that class. Please contact Emory McNeely with any questions.

What Adult Sunday School offerings are available?

A list of our current Sunday School classes is available at 1stpres.com/sunday-school. We will also have a congregational meeting on Sunday, February 22 (the last Sunday under our current schedule), during which we will share more information about joining a Sunday School class for the season ahead. Please contact me (Blake) or Rev. Amy Carlan with further questions.

How will this affect Gathering Time?

We will continue to offer opportunities to gather in our beautiful, newly-renovated Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings. Beverages will be provided in this space throughout the morning – with coffee starting at 8:15 – and light snacks will also be offered between 9:45 and 11:00. We encourage you to take advantage of our discipleship opportunities by attending Sunday School at 10:00, but we also hope that you will stop by the Fellowship Hall before or afterwards (9:45-10 or 10:45-11) to enjoy some refreshments and visit with friends new and old. And if you find yourself engrossed in conversation and staying in the Fellowship Hall instead of going to Sunday School, then perhaps that’s God’s will for you that day (read: no one will kick you out!). For further questions, please contact Debbie Hunter.