

FIRST NEWS



Your **Weekly News** from
First Presbyterian Church
St. Petersburg

April 23, 2021

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY

Join us at 10 AM in the Sanctuary
for an In-Person Worship Service
this Sunday, April 25
Fourth Sunday of Easter

Rev. Megan H. McMillan
Scripture: [Psalm 23](#), [1 John 3:16-24](#), [John 10:11-18](#)

We are excited to return to in-person worship this Sunday! Please see below for more details.

If you still feel uncomfortable or are unable to worship with us in person, you can click [HERE](#) to watch the service online.

*As a reminder, we will begin the organ prelude just before 10 AM,
so please plan to arrive a few minutes early!*

Please remember in prayer: Ron & Millie Bradley, Bob Burkhardt, Carol Daniel, Joan Evans, Julie Evans, Sandra Fay, Sarah Fechter, Teresa Gasper, Margo Hart, John & Dorothy Harte, Larry & Diane Heath, Agnes Ingles, Russ & Connie Johnson, Iberia Johnston, Anne Justiss, Alisa



Keys, Margie Laughlin, Dave & Pam Malone, Nancy McLaughlin, Peter Pav, Richard Pfleider, Janet Poling, Jane Pruitt, Ken Robinson, Judy Smith

Please keep in prayer all those who have been physically, emotionally, and financially affected by the coronavirus, and join us in praying for an end to this situation.

Please pray for our family and friends serving in the military: Marc-Antoni Julia', USN LT; CPT. Taina Specie, USA; 1st LT. Liam Shelton, USA; 1st LT. Mallory Wasik, USMC; CPT. Robert Wilson, USAF. *Please provide us with mailing addresses for our card ministry.*

Thank you for choosing to use your time to give this important gift of prayer to our church family. *The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.* - James 5:16

If you have any additions, deletions, or updates to the weekly prayer concerns, please contact Amy Grossenbacher at amyg@fpc-stpete.org.



**WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR IN-PERSON WORSHIP
SUNDAY IN THE SANCTUARY AT 10 AM!**

We are asking that you make a reservation every week to attend in-person worship services. There are two ways to register:

1) **Go online!** Every Monday morning, you will receive an email with a link to click to RSVP for the upcoming Sunday. You will also find the RSVP button on the main page of our website. Please remember to complete ALL boxes, then click the "Submit" button at the bottom. We will take reservations for this Sunday until noon today.

OR

(2) Call the Church Office (727-822-2031) before Friday at noon.

If you plan to attend in-person on Sundays, PLEASE NOTE:

- *If you have had a fever, cough, above normal temperature, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath, reduction of sense of smell, or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days, we ask that you stay home and watch the service online.*
- **Masks will be required.**

- Seating will be limited to ensure social distancing.
- For your safety, prior to service, you will check in at the front doors, and be seated by ushers at a safe social distance.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in several easy-to-access spots.
- **Our elevator will NOT be accessible.**
- The Sanctuary will have **one entrance and one exit** only. Signs will point you in the right direction.
- We ask that you do not congregate in the Sanctuary at all after the service. If you wish to stop and visit with friends, please make your way out of the Sanctuary first and visit outside.

Thank you in advance for your patience with these safety procedures.
We look forward to seeing you in-person on Sunday morning!

Join us for a Town Hall Meeting following the 10 AM Worship Service NEXT Sunday, May 2

At the meeting, we will get updates from the Visioning Team, the Financial Planning Team, and the reconciliation process (guest speaker: Jay Wittmeyer of the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center).

Update from your Visioning Team April 23, 2021

Creation and Purpose. The Visioning Team FPC Future was created by the Session as part of our church's overall revitalization effort. The Visioning Team's purpose is to carry our church's revitalization process farther by developing a vision and plan for our church going forward. Members of the congregation were asked to apply for the team and were selected on the basis of their interest, experience and capabilities in visioning and planning. The Revitalization Task Force selected team members and these members and the team itself were approved by the Session on November 4, 2020.

Team Process. The Visioning Team began meeting on November 12, 2020 and has met virtually almost every other week since then. Our work so far has involved three major phases: 1. Reviewing demographic and survey data relevant to our church; 2. Interviewing community leaders for insights about changes and needs in our community and how our church might be involved; 3. Interviewing other Presbyterian and other churches around the country that are thriving churches or have faced and addressed challenges like the ones our church faces.

Phase 1: Data Review. In this phase, we reviewed data relevant to our church and its future. This included reviewing and discussing the consultant's report on our congregational survey and summaries of meetings conducted as part of the reconciliation process as well as conclusions and recommendations from 2019 task forces. We also examined and discussed other survey and demographic information about our church's service area. Examples of results we reviewed include reasons people in our area were un-churched and what drew them to a church or kept them away. Data reviewed included demographic profiles of our surrounding community in terms of religious affiliation, income, education level, ethnicity and other relevant characteristics.

Phase 2: Community Leaders Interviews. Visioning Team members interviewed community leaders in government, education, health and mental health, housing and homelessness, the arts, public safety, business, philanthropy, and religion. These leaders shared their experience and insights about our

community, how it is changing, and how our church might be involved in improving our community. We have been encouraged by many suggestions for how FPC could make a difference in our community by partnering or coordinating with other organizations, both secular and religious.

Phase 3: Interviews with other Presbyterian and other Churches. The Visioning Team is currently reaching out to other Presbyterian churches and other churches around the country to learn how they have addressed the kinds of challenges we face. These churches range in size, geographic location, and strategies used to address their challenges. We are also interviewing already-thriving churches to learn from their successes. Before this phase, the Visioning Team was working with consultant Cameron Trimble of the Convergence firm. Information for the interviews with other congregations has been provided by the Presbyterian Foundation and other sources. The Visioning Team is now collaborating with the newly-created Financial Planning Task Force to identify a vision that meets God's call and can be sustained with our congregation's resources.

Next Steps. Next, as our charge from the session dictates, the team will look to the congregation for your hopes and dreams for our church. You will be invited to participate in either online or in-person conversations about our vision. Then, consolidating all of the information gathered from many sources, the team will prepare a report for the session and congregation that presents a vision for our church going forward. You are invited to call Visioning Team members if you have questions or suggestions. Team Members also will be present following the worship service on April 25th to talk informally with congregation members about ideas for our vision. In the next few weeks, the Visioning Team will be present after worship to describe more formally their process, answer questions and hear your ideas about the future of our church. Check First News for details.

Please keep our church's visioning effort in your prayers.

Visioning Team: Mikel Carothers, Kevin Clark, Vicki Fox, Jim Garnett, Vit Gulbis, Joan Karins, and Cathy Swanson

Staff: Pastor Dawn Conti and Associate Pastor Megan McMillan



WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE -- ONLINE EDITION --

Everyone is welcome to join; feel free to send the links to friends and family!

7:00-8:00 PM

Social Justice - A series of talks and panel discussions are being arranged on issues of social justice. Join us next **Wednesday, April 28**, as we are joined by a representative of **CASA**, speaking about the issue of domestic violence.

[CLICK HERE](#) for Zoom Meeting Link

Or go to [Zoom.com](https://zoom.us) and enter the Meeting ID: 851 4775 5193 and Passcode: justice

Or dial in by phone: 1-301-715-8592

Meeting ID: 851 4775 5193, Passcode: 0664377

If you missed earlier weeks' discussions, you can see the recorded version [HERE](#). Future speakers and programs will be announced as the dates approach.

Peaceful and Powerful Parenting Workshops - [Mondays at noon!](#)

Each session includes practice of building skills interactively, as well as a short Q & A problem-solving discussion at the end. Join us next Monday, April 26, as we discuss Understanding and Redirecting Misbehavior.

[CLICK HERE](#) for Zoom Meeting Link

Or go to [Zoom.com](#) and enter the Meeting ID: 871 8995 8365 and Passcode: peace

Or dial in by phone: 1-301-715-8592

Meeting ID: 871 8995 8365, Passcode: 691341

PLEASE NOTE: the Zoom call will be hosted by the workshop leader, Julie Menke, starting May 3. If you would like to join the classes moving forward, you will need to contact her directly.

Deacon's Corner

Submitted by Marilyn Mulcahy

Who is that person who keeps contacting you each month? It could be a church volunteer just checking in on you, but it could also be your own personal Deacon! Our church family has 14 people who try to connect monthly with approximately 250 families through calls, emails, or cards. These 14 people are your Deacons or Deacons' Helpers (Bless them!) and you now have an opportunity to meet them in person after church.

As the Deacons each feel comfortable, they will begin attending worship services in person. Look for their name tags, and when you find them, introduce yourself! Of course we all will be social distancing, but we can still be friendly. This coming Sunday, you will find most of us outside after the service, in the back parking lot where the Praise Band will be playing. (Call me at 714-580-5619 if you need a reminder of who your Deacon is.)

We're the Family of First Pres....let's get to know one another better!

Why I love being a member at FPC St. Pete

submitted by Karen Mossman

The real reason we joined the church 28 years ago was so our eldest son Andrew would move to the top of the waiting list at the Day School! Little did we know, at FPC we would find a loving church community where we would make lifetime friends. We didn't realize that we would desire to come back to FPC even after having been away for 20 years. Chris and



I moved in 1999 and went on to serve at Christ Presbyterian in Tallahassee, First Presbyterian in Greenville, NC and First Presbyterian Lexington, KY over a span of 20 years. I never forgot my friends at FPC and I always knew I would come back. Over the years, I always felt I had unfinished ministry work at FPC. At FPC St. Pete, you make friends for a lifetime! The friends and the church

community at FPC left such an impact on us that we always wanted to return. Gratefully, with the hand of God, Chris was promoted again and we were able to transfer back to Tampa Bay in 2018 and we are home again.



Devotionals Available!

Copies of the April/May/June edition of "These Days" and "Our Daily Bread" large-print devotionals are still available for pick-up from the Church Office during normal business hours.

If you have concerns about social distancing, just call ahead, and a copy can be left outside for you.



Grieving? Know someone who is? Join our GriefShare group on Sundays at 4 PM (via Zoom)

Whether your bereavement experience is recent or not so recent, you will find encouragement, comfort and help in grieving the death of a spouse, child, parent, sibling, other family member, or friend.

This program features biblical, Christ-centered teaching that focuses on grief topics associated with the death of a loved one. The 13-week DVD seminar features nationally respected grief experts and real-life stories of people, followed by a small group discussion about what was viewed. This is a great opportunity to be around people who understand what you are feeling. Don't allow fear of what others may think to keep you from what could help you. Confidentiality is very much a part of this program.

Need more information? Want to sign up? Call the Church Office at 727-822-2031.

Below is the lament that PW Circles will be using in April:

A Lament in Search of Comfort

--by Sarah Fechter, March 2021

O Jesus, it has been more than a year
do you know how sad life has been —
so many desperately ill loved ones
dying before their time?

Do you care that we are lonely
missing hugs from family and friends
stuck at home, unable to work or play
or even to worship in your house?

In the midst of this pandemic I confess
how often I have failed to obey you
ignored your commandment that
we love one another
I have hurt you and those around me

been ungrateful for your care
yet never have you failed me
your forgiveness exceeds my worth
I bow down and you lift me up
always sharing my pain
comforting me with your love
and now promising hope for better times
soon to be.

All of us at First Presbyterian
are working to stay as connected as possible
during this time of social distancing.



- If you need anything – a phone call, a prayer, a friendly conversation, or a few errands run – PLEASE call the Church Office at 727-822-2031! Our staff and volunteers are happy to help during this time.
- Help us stay connected by sending us your pictures and prayer requests!



Pastor Dawn invites you to join us for a time of devotion, discussion, and prayer where we connect online with God and each other as we read and discuss the sermon text that will be

preached the following Sunday. All are welcome!

For sign-in information to the Zoom call, please contact the Church Office at 727-822-2031 or click [HERE](#) to join. PLEASE NOTE: If Zoom prompts you to enter a password, the password for Monday devotionals moving forward will be "prayer."

During this season when we are physically apart, we are especially thankful for the generosity of all of the people who continue to financially contribute to the church.



For your convenience, there are several ways which you can give:

- (1) Give online using a credit card or bank transfer ([click here](#) for the link). For assistance using the online system, please call the Church Office or
- (2) Send a check through the U.S. mail or
- (3) Drop by the Church Office and slip an envelope through the mail slot in the front door.

Thank you for the many ways you support the work of God's church at FPC – St. Petersburg!

FPC Calendar At A Glance

- [Click HERE](#) to view the full church calendar online. *Groups may not appear on the online church calendar. Please contact the Church Office if you would like to update our online calendar with your meeting.*
- [Click HERE](#) for April Birthdays



Most groups are continuing to meet virtually (online). If you need help navigating the Zoom conference call technology, we will be happy to help you

with it so that you can join meetings and/or stay better connected. Please contact the Church Office (727-822-2031) for more information.

- **Sundays, 8:30 AM**, Faith Journey Sunday School Class, Room S-202.
- **Sundays, 10 AM**, In-Person Worship Service, Sanctuary or [Online](#).
- **Sundays, 11:15 AM**, Contemporary Faith Sunday School Class. For Zoom sign-in information, email Lynn Kiehne (lkiehne@gmail.com).
- **Sundays, 11:15 AM**, Westminster Sunday School Class. For Zoom sign-in information, email Jim Garnett (jim.garnett237@gmail.com).
- **Sundays, 4 PM**, GriefShare. For Zoom sign-in information, email Petra Garnett (petra.garnett@gmail.com).

- **Mondays, 10 AM**, Online Devotional with Pastor Dawn. Click [HERE](#) to join. If you are prompted, use "prayer" a password.
- **Mondays, 12 PM**, "Peaceful and Powerful Parenting" Workshops via Zoom.

- **Tuesdays, 7 PM**, Weekly Meditation, virtual. For more information, contact Carlen Maddux (cmaddux@maddux.com).

- **Wednesdays, online, 7 - 8 PM** - Wednesday Night Live! (Social Justice).

- **Fridays, 7:30 AM**, Men's Bible Study, in person in Room N-123.

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- **Sunday, May 2**, Town Hall meeting, in the Sanctuary following worship service, in the Sanctuary.

Deadline For "First News"

Items for "First News" should be submitted as early as possible with a cut-off for any Friday's "First News" being end of day the Tuesday before publication. Please submit copy which is as concise as possible. Send copy to [Amy Grossenbacher](#).

First Presbyterian Church
701 Beach Drive NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 822-2031

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A Stephen Ministry Congregation of the PC (USA) - Christ empowering people to care for people.

