

FIRST NEWS



December 16, 2022

Your Weekly News from
First Presbyterian Church
St. Petersburg

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP
this Sunday, December 18, 2022
Fourth Sunday of Advent

CONNECT SERVICE at 9 AM (Youth Center)
or
SANCTUARY SERVICE at 11 AM (Sanctuary)

Rev. Ginny Ellis
Sermon: "What Joseph Knew"
Scripture: [Isaiah 7:10-14](#), [Matthew 1:18-25](#)

Click [HERE](#) to watch the 11 AM service online.

This link may also be found on the home page of the church's website (www.fpcstpete.com - click the "Watch Here" button) as well as on the church's Facebook page. The service is also available for viewing on [our YouTube channel](#) throughout the week. Feel free to share the link with family and friends!

Click [HERE](#) for the 11 AM worship service bulletin.

We have a **MASK-OPTIONAL** policy for worship services and on-campus activities.



Please remember in prayer: All the victims and clean-up efforts from Hurricanes Ian & Nicole, Millie Bradley, Ellen Carnahan, Bob Clark, John Daniel, Joan Evans, Julie Evans, Sandra Fay, Teresa Gasper, Margo Hart, Dorothy Harte, Larry & Diane Heath, Agnes Ingles, Iberia Johnston, Anne Justiss, Susan Key, Alisa Keys, Margie Laughlin, Taffey Lichter, Dave & Pam Malone, Nancy McLaughlin, Alan Pfleider, Richard Pfleider, Janet Poling, Henry Shaw, Judy Smith, Jane Snoke, Marsha Starkey

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 Juliá, USN LT; CPT Taina Specie, USA; CPT Liam Shelton, USA; 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 McCutcheon at amym@fpc-stpete.org.

From the Desk of Pastor Ginny

Dear Friends,

My 9-year-old grandson Carter left a stuffed toy ("Hippo-Hippo") at our house when he visited us in November then flew back to Connecticut with his parents and older brother. In the weeks Hippo-Hippo has been here he has visited the church. Some of you have smiled at him, making him feel welcome. Some of you have given him a hug, or patted his head, realizing he might be lonely for Carter, just as Carter has been lonely for Hippo-Hippo. Don't worry: I have taken lots of pictures of Hippo-Hippo's adventures here in Florida; Carter will like that. And I will take Hippo-Hippo back to Carter when I go visit Connecticut after Christmas.



Here's a picture of Hippo-Hippo in the Christmas Tree at Westminster Palms (what's he doing in the Christmas tree?), and another picture of him making friends with Clover our frog, at our Connect service. What makes me happy is how you



have all made Hippo-Hippo so welcome. I am sure you make the people who come to our church welcome too. People who, like Hippo-Hippo, might be missing someone, people who might be far from home, people who might need a new and helpful friend. After all, maybe that's why they came to the church, needing a smile or a new friend – and you make them welcome! I am so glad for the open and welcoming people you are. Thank you!

As we come more and more into the light of Advent, let us continue to smile at the people around us, and to watch for God's presence in each one. That's one way we find Jesus himself: in the stranger and in the least of these. We find Jesus in the hope of this time. I find Jesus in you.

Blessings, Ginny Ellis

Christmas Family Fun Event THIS SUNDAY, December 18 from 3-5 PM

Come get in the Christmas spirit! Join us for an afternoon of Christmas Family Fun on Sunday, December 18 from 3-5 p.m. in Fellowship Hall for Christmas cookie decorating, ornament making, mission project creations, Christmas carol singing, and hot chocolate! (and maybe even some Christmas-y games - back by popular demand!) Please sign up via the Evite link [HERE](#) so we have plenty of supplies prepared! Invite your family and your children's friends to come! Let's make this a season of joy for everyone!



TWO Christmas Eve Services Saturday, December 24

4 PM - Family & Children's Service
7 PM - Candlelight Service

We invite you and your family to spend Christmas Eve at First Pres...

4 PM Family & Children's Service

Please join us for an unforgettable way to celebrate the coming of baby Jesus into our lives at 4 PM on Christmas Eve. This year we are doing something unique, if not daring! We are hosting an open Christmas Eve pageant. You and your kids show up and decide if you'd like to participate in the

pageant in any role...from shepherds to angels to stable animals, or kings. (We have plenty of new halos, crowns assorted animal ears and headdresses to help you get into the roles...or dress up at home and come the way you like.) And, if



Christmas Pageant

you're really wanting to be Mary or Joseph or baby Jesus, you will be dubbed their assistants. (Yes, we do have a real live baby and his mom and dad to do those parts!). It could be a little chaotic without any rehearsals, and we may have more kings than shepherds, but it's going to be amazing, too. After all, Mary and Joseph didn't get time to rehearse what they went through, and it still turned out to be a holy night! Afterwards, we'll celebrate Christmas joy with light refreshments on the patio out front.

7 PM Candlelight Service

A traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will cap off the evening of this holy night. Stirring music, scripture readings, prayers and candlelight will bathe us all in hope, peace, joy and love as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.



Lectio/Visio Divina on Christmas break

Our Monday morning Zoom sessions will not meet on Dec. 19 or Dec. 26. We will be back online Jan. 2 and hope to see you then!

The Power Hour Sunday school class will be meeting this coming Sunday, December 18 in Room N-123. Please note that we will not have class on Sunday, Dec 25 or Jan 1. Class will begin again on January 8 back in the Youth Center at 10 AM.

Many Moods of Christmas Concert

What a wonderful evening, with beautiful music by candlelight and a crowd, even with crazy downtown traffic! And we raised just over \$8,089 for the St. Pete Free Clinic! Thanks to all who supported us!

M I S S I O N C O R N E R

Members on a Mission

"Boy, were we surprised...I'm so excited!" exclaims new church member Sarah Helck. She and husband Greg decided to do a Neighborhood Thanksgiving Food Drive this year in partnership with First Presbyterian. What started with a hope and a dream ended with 271 pounds of food and 30 pounds of hygiene items delivered to the St. Petersburg Free Clinic, all in the church's name.

Sarah says she wrote up [a flyer](#) and handed out 100 of them in their Old Northeast neighborhood. "I'm going to do a lot more next year, maybe 300." She and her children took two hours to pass the flyers out. "By the time we returned home, several bags were already at our house." In the flyer she wrote, "The Free Clinic is special to us—Greg's Mom Abby was ... a passionate



volunteer before she passed. The Clinic also is a long-time mission of First Presbyterian." The Clinic is more than grateful, she wrote, for any and all food donations as well as any daily necessities, while listing examples of each.



In the flyer, Sarah also described the Helck family's long-time involvement with our church school, now called St. Pete Primary. "We recently became involved with First Presbyterian Church. The church was lucky enough to get Pastor Ginny Ellis; her passion, humor, and open arms not only to us, but also the community, were overwhelming." Sarah then continued in the flyer with a list of upcoming family events at FPC.

Thank you, Sarah and Greg and Preston, Emmi, Madison, and Grayson for having such an open heart and creative mind. Sarah says she would be glad to share her ideas with anyone wanting to start such a food drive in their neighborhoods next year. Her contact information can be found in the church directory or by calling the church office.

"This has been such a great way to meet our neighbors. We're going to make this an annual thing for our family."



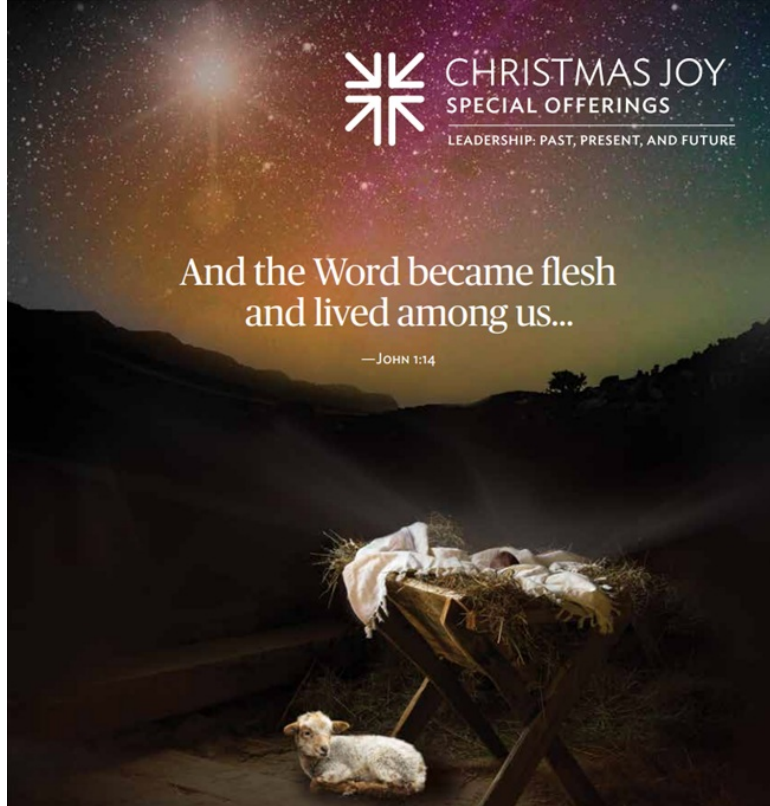
Deacons Distribute Christmas Poinsettias

How did our Deacons finish our service for 2022? We visited some of our church family and gave them a poinsettia to enjoy during this season of Joy. Many of us are going nonstop to make sure all the family traditions are fulfilled. We Deacons also include those who have been slowed down by life and unable to get to worship. Spending time with them just makes our days, hearing old stories and always laughter! Sally Lyle, our faithful Secretary pictured here, helped load and organize the plants. Thank you, Deacons!



Christmas Joy Offering

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but



those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well.

By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

To give to the Christmas Joy Offering online, click [HERE](#). There will also be paper envelopes available in the

Sanctuary and Youth Center this Sunday and next (checks should be made payable to Presbyterian Church U.S.A.).

Pastor's Christmas Basket...Another Way to Help Those in Need

As you address your Christmas cards this season, please consider bringing a card for the Pastor's Christmas Tree (which is a basket this year!) and

enclosing a donation for the Pastor's Assistance Fund. All the monies collected are used at the pastor's discretion throughout the year to provide confidential financial support to members of our congregation and others recommended by local social services to help pay for bills, medical needs, shelter, and other expenses that help people survive unexpected hard times.



You can make your donation by:

- Mailing a card to the Church
- Dropping it off in the Church Office during regular office hours (or after hours through the front door mail slot)
- Giving online (click [HERE](#)); select Pastor's Assistance Fund
- If you worship in person, you may place your donation in the basket, which is in the back of the Sanctuary.

Please be sure to write "Pastor's Fund - Christmas" on the memo line to ensure your donation is recorded properly. Thank you.

Christmas Poinsettias



You are invited to make a \$20 donation **in memory of** or **in honor of** a loved one or friend to help purchase poinsettias and greenery for FPC. Be sure to designate the individual to be honored or memorialized. We will compile and list the names of all those honored or remembered for inclusion in First News. Call the Church Office with any questions.

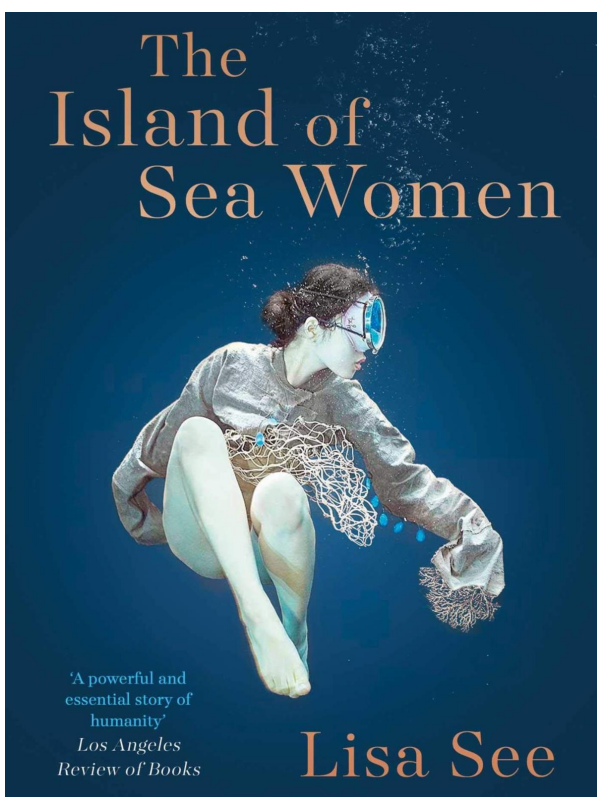


ONE Christmas Morning Service Sunday, December 25 at 11 AM

Sound the Trumpets! Worship with us on Christmas Day as we join in concert with the brass orchestra and celebrate the birth of Our Lord. What an amazing time to celebrate and feel the Christmas Joy, together!

ONE Praise Service to kick off the New Year Sunday, January 1 at 11 AM

Join us in the Sanctuary to start 2023 with praise and worship!



Faith & Fiction

Our next meeting will be on January 9th since the first Monday falls on the legal day off for New Year's. This means everyone has an extra week for reading! Our January read is "The Island of Sea Women" by Lisa See. Historical fiction, it is the fascinating tale of the famous Korean women divers who were the breadwinners for their families while the husbands stayed home and cared for the babies. Linda Santoro will lead the discussion.

See you next year! - January 9th - Room N-123 - 7:00 p.m.

All of us at First Presbyterian are working to stay as connected as possible.



- 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.
- Help us stay connected by sending us your pictures and prayer requests!



Have you friended us on Facebook or Instagram?

If you haven't, please do so! Also, be sure to SHARE our Facebook and Instagram posts as much as you can! That can help us increase numbers of followers of the church Facebook and Instagram pages. Thank you for helping us be more visible!

During this season, we are especially thankful for the generosity of all of the people who continue to



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 December Birthdays



Some groups are still meeting 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.

Regularly Scheduled Events:

- **Sundays, 9 AM**, Praise & Worship Service, Youth Center
- **Sundays, 10 AM**, Faith Journey Sunday School Class, Room S-202
- **Sundays, 10 AM**, Power Hour Sunday School Class, Room N-123
- **Sundays, 11 AM**, Classic Worship Service, Sanctuary or [Online](#)
- **Mondays, 10 AM**, Lectio Divina, via [Zoom](#)
- **Tuesdays, 7 PM**, Christian Meditation, meeting in-person (in the Chapel) on Dec. 13; meeting virtually Dec. 20 and Jan. 3; not meeting on Dec. 27
- **Wednesdays, 7:00 PM**, Praise Band Rehearsal, Youth Center
- **Thursdays, 6 PM**, Bell Choir Rehearsal, Choir Suite
- **Thursdays, 7 PM**, Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Choir Suite
- **Fridays, 7:30 AM**, Men's Bible Study, Room N-123
- **Fridays, 12 PM**, Men's Lunch Bible Study, via Zoom. For more information, contact John Underwood (pjfwon@gmail.com)

Upcoming Events:

- **Tonight, December 9, 7 PM**, Many Moods Christmas Concert
- **Sunday, December 18, 3 PM**, Christmas Family Fun Day

- **Saturday, December 24, TWO** Christmas Eve services: 4 PM for Families & Children and 7 PM Candlelight Service
- **Sunday, December 25, 11 AM, ONE** traditional service in the Sanctuary
- **Sunday, January 1, 11 AM ONE** praise 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 McCutcheon at amym@fpc-stpete.org.

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Church Office Hours: Mon-Thur. 9 AM - 5 PM; closed Fridays

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



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