

FIRST NEWS



December 23, 2022

Your Weekly News from
First Presbyterian Church
St. Petersburg

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP
this Sunday, December 25, 2022
Christmas Day

ONE WORSHIP SERVICE at 11 AM (in the Sanctuary)

Rev. Ginny Ellis
Sermon: "What Mary Pondered"
Scripture: [Luke 2:15-20](#)

Click [HERE](#) to watch the 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 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, Merry Christmas!

I don't know what is on or under your Christmas tree, but my "Charlie Brown" tree has a collection of ornaments that remind me of people and places from long ago, and even some from not so long ago. They all remind me of the love of God that I have experienced in people who have unselfishly showed me who God is. The homely tree reminds me how grateful I am for the deep and abiding love of this great God, and God's fragile young baby son who is our Savior.

The church staff is working hard on the many details of what is going on around the church: last Sunday, a gathering of about 70 adults and children from church and school and community, decorating and eating cookies, enjoying Christmas music and a story, making ornaments and wreaths and cards, playing games. There was even a train circling about under a big Christmas tree. It was wonderful. And tomorrow (Saturday is Christmas Eve!), we will gather in the Sanctuary at 4:00 and at 7:00 to hear and experience the Christmas story and sing the beloved carols. The music and scripture, the prayers, the lights! It will lift your hearts. I hope to see you there.

Then on Sunday, we will worship at 11:00, on a holy Christmas Day, with brass and music in the Sanctuary. I'll be reflecting on Mary, the mother of Jesus and

the things she pondered as this baby was held close in her arms, entrusted to her care. Jesus is entrusted to our care, too, as we live for him, as we share his love and justice and peace with the world. Come be with us this week, and this coming year. Invite friends and neighbors and family to come with you. Come fill this place, join in with both our worship and our work: most Sundays at 9:00 for the Connect service with the band in the Youth Center, or at 11:00 in the Sanctuary with the pipe organ and the choir. It is all rich and energizing and full of the Spirit of God.

And I am grateful for you!

Blessings and Merry Christmas, Ginny

TWO Christmas Eve Services Tomorrow - 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 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.



Christmas Pageant

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.



PLEDGES for 2023

We have gratefully received pledges for the 2023 budget, dedicating many at worship on December 11. If you have not been able to send in your pledge yet, please do so; humbly we invite your faithful support. You can pledge on the

church website [HERE](#), or ask us for a new pledge card. Together we will follow God's call on our Road Ahead. Thank you!

Christmas Family Fun was a BLAST!

Last Sunday afternoon, kids, their families, and friends gathered for a real Christmas treat! Fellowship Hall was beautifully transformed into a Christmas Workshop Wonderland with Christmas music playing and cookie smells wafting through the air. Tables were spread for decorating cookies with every color of icing, sprinkles, even googly eyes (a big hit!)! Warm welcomes and Christmas trees beckoned to all, one with an electric train.



Craft tables abounded for making colorful Christmas wreaths, clothespin reindeer ornaments, yummy chocolate boxes and cookie plates for delivering to others, glittery angels and snowmen, Christmas cards, nativity scenes and even a big table with a free children's book giveaway! And... there were Christmas-y games for kids when they needed to be active! Pastor Ginny read a Christmas story to children and hot chocolate, coffee, tea and cookies were consumed with relish!



MANY THANKS to each person who came and to those who helped from set up to tear down to advertising,



shopping, decorating, donating, preparing crafts, food and drinks: CE Committee members – Diane Zuercher, Kathy Bardin, Karen Brooks, Kyle Brinkman; volunteers Marilyn Mulcahy and Greg Barnes; and staff – Johnny Miller, Dave Hunt, Jeanie Barnes, Ginny Ellis, Dave Aumack, Ashley Hardy, and Amy McCutcheon.

Lectio/Visio Divina on Christmas break

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

The Power Hour and Faith Journey Sunday school classes will not be meeting Sunday, December 25 or Sunday, January 1. Classes will begin again on January 8 at 10 AM (Power Hour in the Youth Center and Faith Journey in Room S-202).

Deacon's Corner by Marilyn Mulcahy

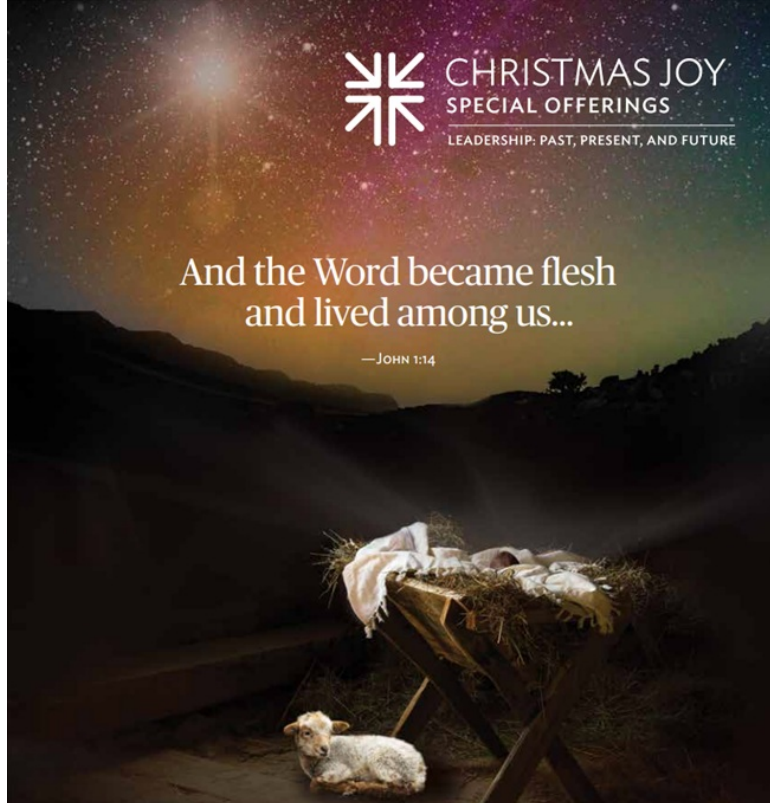
I love Christmas. I love the (over)stimulation of bright, colorful lights, carols and holiday songs on the radio while driving, decorated yards at night, silly hats with flashing lights, anything with sugar, and laughter. All of that makes me smile more than normal. Then, when I reflect on why we do all of this, I remember God and His great gift to us, Jesus, our Messiah. No earthly gift can even compare and if that's all we ever get, Jesus is more than enough. Jesus' gift to us is grace. Forgiveness. Opportunities to be better people than we try to be.



I have been blessed to be part of the Deacons for the past 6 years and now, by rule, must take a one-year break. This has been one of the most meaningful experiences of my life and I had the privilege to serve with wonderful caring men and women who exhibit God's love to others. Larry Kirsch, sadly, passed before his term ended, and Rue Ann Porter, Linda Santoro and I will find other ways to serve. Please welcome our new Deacons: June King, Cathy Milburn, Ginger McCoy, and Judie Underwood, who will care for you, pray for you, and share in God's joy for one another.

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.

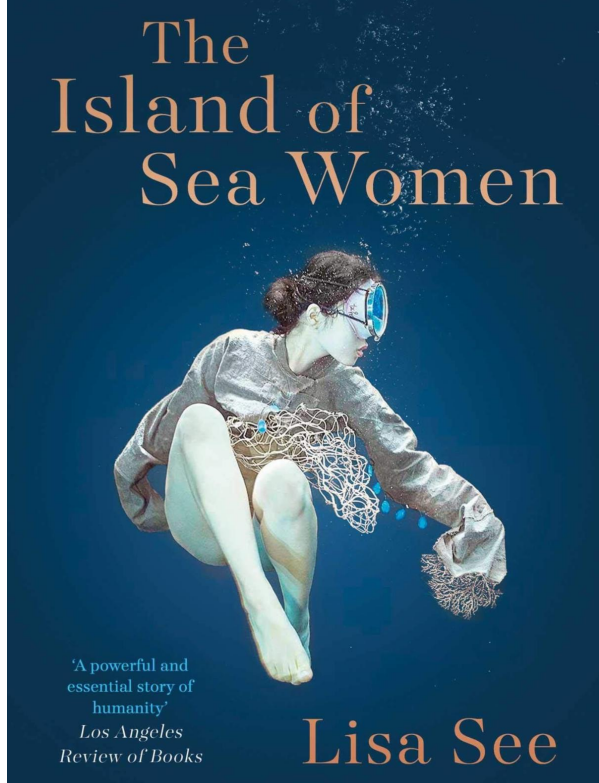
Please be sure to write "Pastor's Fund - Christmas" on the memo line to ensure your donation is recorded properly. Thank you.

**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 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 January 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, Connect Worship Service, Youth Center
- Sundays, 10 AM, Faith Journey Sunday School Class, Room S-202
- Sundays, 10 AM, Power Hour Sunday School Class, Youth Center
- Sundays, 11 AM, Sanctuary Worship Service, Sanctuary or [Online](#)

- Mondays, 10 AM, Lectio Divina, via [Zoom](#) (next meeting will be Jan. 2)

- Tuesdays, 7 PM, Christian Meditation, not meeting on Dec. 27, meeting virtually Jan. 3

- 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:

- Friday, December 23 and Monday, December 26, Church Office closed for Christmas
- Saturday, December 24, TWO Christmas Eve services: 4 PM for Families & Children and 7 PM Candlelight Service
- Sunday, December 25, 11 AM, ONE Sanctuary service in the Sanctuary
- Sunday, January 1, 11 AM ONE Connect service in the Sanctuary
- Monday, January 2, Church Office closed for New Year's
- Monday, January 9, 7 PM, Faith & Fiction

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.

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

[Contact Us](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)

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



First Presbyterian Church | 701 Beach Drive N.E., St. Petersburg, FL 33701-2618

[Unsubscribe amyg@fpc-stpete.org](mailto:amyg@fpc-stpete.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

Sent by office@fpc-stpete.org powered by



Try email marketing for free today!