

FIRST NEWS



November 24, 2023

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

**JOIN US FOR WORSHIP
this Sunday, November 26, 2023
Christ the King Sunday**

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

**Rev. Ginny Ellis
Sermon: "Pumpkin Pie"
Scripture: [Matthew 25:31-40](#), [Ephesians 1:15-23](#)**

Click [HERE](#) to watch the 9 AM service online.
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 9 AM worship service bulletin.

From the Desk of Pastor Ginny

Dear Friends,

Thanksgiving is such a good time to CELEBRATE, to ponder all that has felt right in your life and in your setting. It's not all a celebration, of course. There are things we would have liked to be different. But so much goes well for us. We have shelter and food and safety, we Americans. We have a church where we can worship, where we are important and where we are welcome, we Presbyterians.

In this past year (starting last December 1, so exactly a year ago), we have offered two separate styles and times for worship. With the beginning of the two services we currently offer, I saw people come who had not felt fed in the post-COVID single blended service we had offered before last December. Seeing those faces, worshipful and joyful, helped me to know that the Session had made the right decision, for that moment. We can celebrate the welcome and the doors that have opened here at 701 Beach Drive NE because of that decision.

Now we ask for your SUPPORT. Help us put a strong foundation under the ministries we have begun in the last year or two. Help us find the leadership, the ideas, and the participation, as well as the financial underpinning, to continue our many new ministries.

Pledge Sunday is December 10; we ask you to let us know how you will try to support the ministry we celebrate so joyfully. Your financial pledge cards and your time and talent cards will help us with our planning for next year! If you would like to make your pledge electronically, [CLICK HERE](#))

Happy Thanksgiving to each of you! Whether you are fans of apple pie, mincemeat, or pumpkin (as you know I vote for pumpkin!) or if you prefer vanilla ice cream, know that I am giving thanks for you this holiday. You are a treasure; a blessing God has given me and the St. Petersburg community.

Blessings and love,
Ginny Ellis

Also remember, we invite you to join us for a Blue Christmas Comfort Service at 5:00 on Thursday, November 30, in our main Sanctuary, as we offer a holiday service for comfort for all who suffer grief or disappointment during the holidays. Bring a photo of someone you might be missing with this year's holidays. All are welcome.



Please remember in prayer: Millie Bradley, Will Catul, Joan Evans, Julie Evans, Sandra Fay, Teresa Gasper, Jane Harris, Margo Hart, Dorothy Harte, Larry & Diane Heath, Agnes Ingles, Iberia Johnston, Anne Justiss, Alisa Keys, Taffey Lichter, Dave & Pam Malone, Ginger McCoy, Nancy McLaughlin, family and

friends of Edson Murray, Alan Pfleider, Richard Pfleider, Vivian Ramirez, Henry Shaw, Jane Snoke, JB Starkey, Denny Zuercher

Please pray for our family and friends serving in the military: LT Marc-Antoni Juliá, USN; 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.

Called Congregational Meeting - December 10

The session has approved a congregational meeting to elect church officers. There will be a meeting at the end of each worship service on Sunday, December 10.

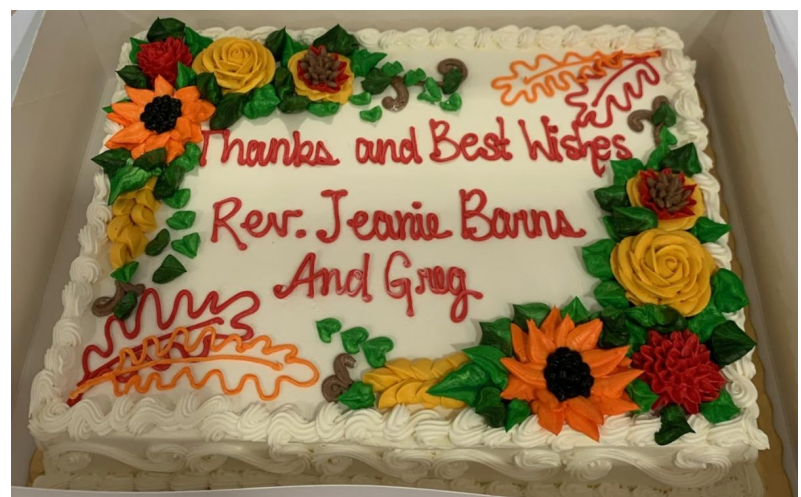


The Church Office is closed today for the Thanksgiving holiday. There will be no meetings or rehearsals on campus.

With Heartfelt Thanks and Blessings

from P/T Parish Associate Pastor
Jeanie Barnes

Dear Friends at FPC,
Thank you so much for your kind words and expressions of thanksgiving and love as Greg and I concluded our time with you in St. Pete. During the last fourteen months, we so enjoyed getting to know you and sharing in exciting ministry together as we prayed for God's will to be done. As clearly as God called me to serve alongside you, now God has called me to pass the baton of my responsibilities and to re-retire with Greg! Knowing we remain in Christ's great fellowship of love gives great comfort. Until we meet again, may God bless and keep you.



**We are so thankful for new
A/V equipment!
(Sound Booth Overhaul!)**

"In the Business of Sound, Static is NOT what you want" – Dave Aumack



We have had a lot of changes recently here at First Presbyterian Church, particularly in my department of Media (sound and visuals). While I know change can be difficult, in the business of sound, static is not what you want! The Youth Center received a shiny new soundboard - complete with chrome knobs and sliders— it truly is shinier!



Additionally, we took advantage of some early Black Friday deals and upgraded the worship computers for 1/3 the cost. A great deal!



Organizing and running two production-quality studios wouldn't be possible without some great helpers. A big THANK YOU to our A/V Teams for their excellent and selfless service! Stop by before or after service, get a tour, and share your thanks!

Come be a part of the parade!

Put on your Santa hat and walking shoes and join us as we walk with the Christmas decorated church bus in the **downtown Santa parade TOMORROW, Saturday, November 25**. We will be meeting up at 5:00 PM at Albert Whitted Airport Park, just behind Mahaffey Theater (along the waterfront), where our bus will be decorated and lighted in Christmas fashion! Come walk or ride with us. Strollers, wagons are permitted! (just no golf carts) Bring your friends, bring your family and have a great time sharing the Christmas Spirit. Bus transportation back to your car after the parade will be provided (so you don't have to walk twice!).



Lectio/Visio Divina Resumes Monday, November 27

Join us in a Zoom devotion time at 10 a.m. on Mondays for the practice of Lectio/Visio Divina, a contemplative study of Scripture (and corresponding art) that will be used in worship the following Sunday. Click on the link [HERE](#) to join or enter meeting code 859 9201 7591 and password *lectio*.

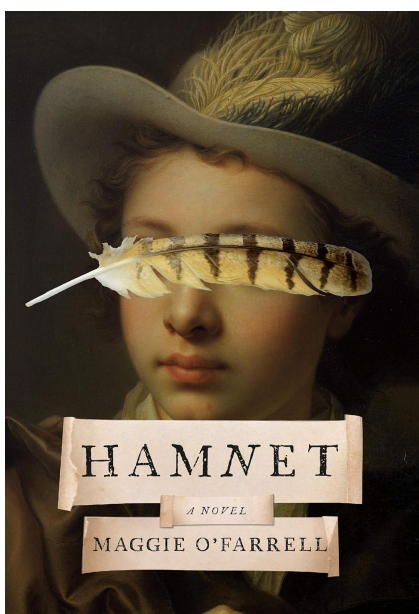


Blue Christmas Comfort Service Thursday, Nov. 30, 5 PM

We plan to hold a Blue Christmas Comfort Service this year, at 5:00 in the afternoon on Thursday, November 30. The service is meant to provide comfort, especially for those feeling sadness this holiday season. Perhaps a loved one is missing this year, due to death, divorce,

travel, or even service overseas. Perhaps the holidays are always hard for you, because of painful situations in your past. We are planning this to be a quiet service in the Sanctuary, with candles and music. You are welcome to bring pictures of those you will especially miss this year, or to lift up a word or phrase for our prayers together.

Jesus said: *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.* In this Blue Christmas Comfort service, we will acknowledge our sorrows and claim the comfort and peace we find in the Prince of Peace. Family and friends are welcome to attend this service.



Faith & Fiction

Monday, December 4, at 4 PM in Room N-123

Hamnet, by Maggie O'Farrell

Discussion Leader: Linda Santoro

Open the cover and be transported back to England, 1580's, where the Black Plague ravishes the countryside, and a struggling young playwright must deal with life's difficulties.

Christmas Greenery Donations

Christmas is just around the corner, and soon it is time to decorate the church!

- You are invited to make a donation in memory of or in honor of a loved one or friend to help

purchase poinsettias and greenery. Be sure to designate the individual to be honored or memorialized. We will compile and list the names of all those honored or remembered in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

- If anyone would like to help **decorate the Sanctuary**, come join the Sanctuary Guild on **Tuesday, December 5th**, starting at 9:30 AM, or contact Chris Agee (727-488-5217 cfagee@gmail.com) for more info!



Expect the Unexpected This Christmas

Join the Power Hour Sunday School class in December in the Youth Center as we look at often overlooked characters in the Nativity story. This 4-week DVD program will take us through the themes of hope,

joy, and peace through the stories of Elizabeth, Zechariah, Herod, the Magi, and the shepherds. Each character teaching us something about living faithfully on the journey to Christmas. Questions? Email Karen at karenamossman@gmail.com.

December's "Wednesday Night" Supper is on a Tuesday for **HoHoHo TACO TUESDAY!**

On Tuesday, Dec. 12 at 5:30 PM, we'll be serving Make-Your-Own HoHoHo Tacos Galore – ground beef and shredded chicken, soft shell, hard shell, plus all the fixings including grated cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, onions, salsa, avocado and bean dip and chips (thank you, Fran!)! Take your pick and eat up! No one is going home hungry! PB&J's are on standby, as usual. You can bring something sweet and Christmas-y to share if you'd like, but that is totally optional! Please sign up [HERE](#) (and click the "yes" button) if you plan to attend. Merry Christmas, y'all! HoHoHo!!!



December 12 will also be the last evening practice for *Make a Joyful Noise Music Makers* till the new year, and practice will run from 6:10 to 6:40 PM in the Youth Center. This talented young choir will be performing at our Family Christmas Eve Service in the big Sanctuary on Dec. 24 at 4 PM. Plan now to attend!



The Many Moods of Christmas

a benefit concert for St. Pete Free Clinic

featuring

Pinellas County Center for the Arts choirs and orchestra

The Gay Men's Chorus of Tampa Bay

The First Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir with Jack Rain, organ

Friday, December 15, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church | 701 Beach Drive Northeast 33701 | 727-822-2031

If you would like to donate online to
St. Pete Free Clinic, you can [CLICK HERE](#)
or use this QR code:



A Beautiful Expression of Gratitude

Soon after the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus performed so gloriously in our sanctuary, our Carlen Maddux composed the following thought-filled poem reflecting on the entire 'Ukrainian' experience.

September 17, 2023: The Day that Joy Flowed Through Hearts Scarred with Strife

One church. One choir. Two countries.
Bound together in this moment in time, in a city interestingly named...
St. Petersburg.
All hurt by loss, some tragic, some lesser.
All pained.

On this day, twenty-eight young women from Ukraine
Walked into the womb of a sanctuary to sing their hearts out.
A thousand and more heard. They listened, they experienced, they responded.

A church struggling to recover its way opened its heart and its doors.
These young women struggling with loss of home and loss of loved ones
Sang music and song forged from

The blood of their heartland.

Both church and choir united in one accord, as givers and receivers.
Both church and choir wept tears and erupted in laughter
Long lost and forgotten.

On this day, in this moment both church and choir
Were woven as one, graced in love and hope.

And just days later, while these young women
Shared meals with their hosts and visited museums and beaches,
Their President and our President spoke with one voice to the United Nations:
"Stop this tragic loss! Stop this unwarranted war!"

And in St. Petersburg, at this church they call First Presbyterian,
Its members as one experienced a deeper and fuller sense of
God's Presence.

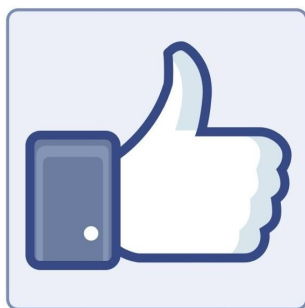
Is this what You call a holy moment?
Is this Your resurrection moment?
Is this just a mere "coincidence"?

However described, we are...
Captive to Your Love, our Father and Creator;
Grounded in Your Humility, our Brother and Christ;
Embraced by Your Joy, our Mother and Spirit.
Thank You. Thank You. Thank You.

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!



We continue to be thankful for the generosity of all who contribute financially to our church, along with the other contributions they bring to our ministry.

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, 8:30 AM-12:30 PM**, childcare is available, Room S-203
- **Sundays, 9 AM**, Connect Worship Service, Youth Center or [Online](#)
- **Sundays, 9:45 AM**, Faith Journey Sunday School Class, Room S-202
- **Sundays, 10 AM**, Power Hour Sunday School Class, Youth Center
- **Sundays, 10 AM**, Young Adults/Parents Sunday School Class, Room S-206
- **Sundays, 10 AM**, Teens' Sunday School Class, Room S-205 (meets every other week)
- **Sundays, 11 AM**, Sanctuary Worship Service, Sanctuary or [Online](#)

- **Mondays, 10 AM**, Lectio Divina, via [Zoom](#)

- **Tuesdays, 9 AM**, Ladies' Bible Study, Youth Center
- **Tuesdays, 7 PM**, Christian Meditation, Chapel (meets in-person the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month)

- **Wednesdays, 7 PM**, Praise Band Rehearsal, Youth Center

- **Thursdays, 6 PM**, Bell Choir Rehearsal, Choir Suite
- **Thursdays, 7 PM**, Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Choir Suite

- **Fridays, 8:00 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, November 24**, Church Office closed for Thanksgiving
- **Saturday, November 25**, FPC participates in the downtown St. Pete Santa Parade

- Thursday, November 30, 5 PM, Blue Christmas Comfort Service
- Tuesday, December 5, decorating worship spaces for Christmas, starting at 9:30 AM
- Sunday, December 10, Congregational Meeting at the end of each worship service
- Tuesday, December 12, HoHoHo Taco Tuesday, 5:30 PM (Fellowship Hall), and Kids' Choir, 6:10 PM (Youth Center)
- Friday, December 15, 7 PM, *Many Moods of Christmas* benefit concert

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.

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

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.



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

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