Love is First

We are delighted that you are joining us for worship today! We are a curious, inclusive, and diverse gathering of imperfect people united by our common hope in Jesus Christ. Through worship, study, and service, we seek to know and show the transformative love of God found in the pages of scripture and revealed in the person of Jesus. No matter who you are or where you are on your spiritual journey, know that you are welcome here.

Sunday, February 15, 2026

If You Are New Here Whether you are searching for a church home or visiting from out of town, thank you for worshiping here today. If you are interested in receiving more information about membership or the ministries of this congregation, please be sure to speak with the pastor after today's worship or share your information on the pew pad or friendship card. We would love to get to know you.

Prayer Concern? Please let us know how we can be praying for you by filling out the welcome card and placing it in the offering plate or by calling the church office: (941) 955-8119.

Children Of All Ages Are Welcome in Worship! At the New Song (9:00 a.m.) service there are coloring sheets on the tables and an activity center in the corner. At the traditional (11:00 a.m.) service, children are invited to take a worship bag hanging in the narthex. Sunday School is from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. in the children's wing on the second floor. Ask a greeter for directions.

To Aid In Worship In the sanctuary, a T-Coil Hearing Loop is available for people with equipped hearing aids. Headphones to amplify sound are also available at the tech booth in the rear of the sanctuary.

Worship Online Livestreams of the contemporary and traditional worship services are available at www.firstpressarasota.org/worship-live and on YouTube at www.youtube.com/@fpcsarasota4017.

Ways To Give There are many ways you can support the mission and ministries of First Presbyterian. During worship, you may place your gift in the offering plate or you can scan this QR code. It will direct you to our online giving portal. Additionally, you can mail a check to the church office. Thank you for your gifts. Questions? Contact Finance Manager, Lisa Garcia: (941) 955-8119/Lgarcia@firstpressarasota.org.

Sanctuary Flowers

The sanctuary flowers this week are given to the glory of God and in loving memory of Joseph Semple by John and Kathleen Kutz.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held today at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We encourage all members to attend as we reflect on the past year of ministry, celebrate what God has done among us, and look ahead with hope to the year to come. Copies of the Annual Report are available in the foyer of the Fellowship Hall and in the Narthex of the Sanctuary.

Ash Wednesday | February 18 | 5:30–7:00 p.m.

Join us for an intergenerational meal followed by worship as we enter the season of Lent together. We will pause to remember our dependence on God's grace and turn our hearts toward the love and mercy revealed in Jesus Christ. Worship in the Fellowship Hall will include scripture, prayer, silence, the imposition of ashes, and a meditative walk through the labyrinth. Dinner will feature soup, bread, mac & cheese, vegetables, and cookies. We are seeking donations of 8 crockpots of soup, 8 trays of mac & cheese, 3 vegetable trays, and 2 cookie trays. Bread and beverages will be provided. To help with food, please contact Carol Papa at carolpapasrq@gmail.com.

Immigration Justice Coalition of Southwest Florida, Next Sunday

Barbara Smith-Bacon, chair of the Immigration Justice Coalition of SW Florida's education team, will present on the coalition's mission and work on February 22 at 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Learn how the coalition advocates for immigrants, refugees, and asylum-seeking neighbors, and gain insight into current immigration policies and practices. Barbara is a lawyer and a member of First Congregational United Church of Christ, Sarasota.

First Connect / Adult Education 10:05 –11:00 a.m.

The Final Word Class Resumes March 1 – Unpacking the Mysteries of Revelation It's not too late to jump into "The Final Word," our collaborative exploration of the mysteries of Revelation. We are unpacking "wild imagery" in a safe, open space that favors mutual learning over traditional lectures. Come discover how this "horrifying, but also so comforting" book offers enduring relevance and a call to bold living for our world today.
Dates: Ongoing Location: the library
Facilitators: Doug DeCelle, Richard Cole, Paul Urbanick

Wonders of Worship Parent Group
How can we help our children truly engage with God during worship? Join our "Wonders of Worship" group where we'll share simple, sustainable ways to involve our kids in the prayers and music of the church. These 40-minute conversational sessions are designed to fit your busy life while providing deep encouragement for your family's faith journey.
Dates: March 1, 15, & 22
Time/Location: 10:15-10:55 | Hospitality Suite

NEW Lent First Connect Class: Stewards of Living Water

Join us this Lenten season for "Stewards of Living Water: Co-Laboring for the World's Flourishing," a new study written by Eric Robinson. We will explore how God interrupts our spiritual dryness and invites us to become active partners in bringing life-giving water to a thirsty world. The class will meet on **Wednesdays** at 12:15 p.m. offering a meaningful midday pause to connect your faith with tangible action. Wednesdays, February 25, March 4, 11, 18 & 25, April 1 in room 203 and Zoom 12:15-1:15 p.m. the leaders are Eric Robinson and Susan DeWyngaert.

Brentwood Bookmark Project + Combined Sunday School | February 22

Next Sunday, children and youth will meet together for Sunday school to decorate bookmarks for Brentwood Elementary School. Parents and teachers may attend the Immigration Justice Coalition Presentation during this time. The congregation is invited to help finish the bookmarks the following two Sundays during and after the New Song service.

NEW First Connect Class: Lost Christianities – the Forgotten Background of the Middle East

For over a thousand years, Christianity was centered in Africa, Asia, and Europe around Jerusalem. Not until nearly 1500 AD did Christianity become closely identified with Europe. The history of Christianity in the Middle East helps us understand today's religious conflicts in Israel, Iraq, Syria, and Egypt. Join Dent Davis for a three-week class exploring this rich and complex history. Led by Dent Davis, retired minister and former Columbia Seminary faculty member. Room 203, March 1,8 and 15, 10:05—10:55 a.m.

Finding Our Joy in Christ: I Will Say It Again – Rejoice!

How do we find joy in a chaotic world? Christian joy is more than just happiness—it comes from trusting that God is good and reigns forever. Our study is based on Philippians 4:1-23, where Paul, even while in jail, encourages the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord. Join us as we discuss how to experience joy, even in the midst of life's challenges. Wednesday, February 18 at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom, Flossie Paul will be the leader, for Zoom information or a lesson copy, contact Jinny Miller at jinnyron@gmail.com

Volunteers needed - Sunday Coffee Fellowship

Enjoy welcoming others? Help us offer simple hospitality between services by serving as a Fellowship Host for one Sunday!
• Before the 9:00 a.m. service: Set out snacks and refreshments (about 20 minutes)
• Around 10:45 a.m.: Light cleanup and kitchen reset (about 20 minutes)
Signing up for just one Sunday—one or both shifts—makes a big difference and is greatly appreciated. Sign up in the Fellowship Hall kitchen or contact Kim Whitford at 941-413-8796 (call or text).

Inquirers' Class

Are you curious about First Presbyterian Church, eager to learn more about our faith, or thinking about becoming a member? We'd love to have you join us for our next **Inquirers' Class**! The class will meet on **Sundays, March 8, 15, and 22, 2026, from 10:00–11:00 a.m. in the parlor**. It's a relaxed, welcoming space to ask questions, explore our beliefs, and discover how we live out our faith together as a church family. New members will be recognized in worship on Palm Sunday, with one combined service at 10:00 a.m. on March 29. For more information or to register, call the church office or contact Janet Olshewsky at (941) 376-4431. We can't wait to meet you!