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, December 14, 2025

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.

Bless Brentwood Families — Today Is the Last Day to Turn Stars In!

Gold stars on the trees suggest $30 or $100 gift cards to support 50 children and their families this Christmas. Each child receives two $30 cards, and each family receives at least two $100 grocery cards. Thank you for your generosity. We will be delivering gifts to Brentwood Elementay on Monday.

The Ultimate Youth Christmas Bash —Tonight RSVP to Eric Robinson

Get ready for a fun night with great food, games, and holiday cheer! We'll also be spreading joy by filling stockings for our friends at Brentwood. Wear your ugliest Christmas sweater and bring a friend! On Sunday, December 14, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Celebrate Advent with Devotion

This season, pick up **An Illustrated Advent for Families** for weekly devotions, coloring pages, and activities reflecting on Jesus' birth, or **The Will to Dream**, a devotional of inspiring stories revealing God's presence in everyday life. Copies are available in the Narthex and Fellowship Hall.

Upcoming Holiday Worship & Events

Christmas Eve – Wednesday, December 24
- 4:00 p.m. – Intergeneration Nativity Service
- 7:00 p.m. – Candlelight Service with Communion

Sunday, December 28 *One Combined Service*
- 10:00 a.m. – in the Fellowship Hall
- 11:00 a.m. – Young Adult Brunch

Sunday, January 4 – Epiphany Sunday - 2 services
9:00 and 11:00 a.m.
Star distribution during worship

Sunday, January 11 - *One Combined Service*
10:00 am – in the Sanctuary
Chili Cook-Off following worship (proceeds support youth trips)
Celebration of Lisa Garcia's 20-year anniversary

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

The Final Word – Unpacking the Mysteries of Revelation
Join us as we explore the mysteries of Revelation, uncovering its symbolism, first-century context, and message of hope. In today's class, Paul will lead us in a discussion about the Great Seals of Revelation 6!
Dates: Ongoing
Facilitators: Eric Robinson, Doug DeCelle, Richard Cole, Paul Urbanick
Location: The Library

Advent Class: The Will to Dream
Join us for an engaging study and discussion of the Advent themes from the *Will to Dream* devotional. Be prepared to grow together during this season of waiting for Christ's coming.
Dates: December 14 & 21
Leader: Dave Householder
Time & Location: 10:05-10:55 in Room 203

Mark Your Calendar:
Screwtape Letters
with Rev. Steven McConnell
Join us for a four-week discussion of C.S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters*, a humorous and insightful look at human vulnerability through the imagined correspondence of two devils. Please pick up a copy of the book to read along as we discover how the greatest temptations often lie within ourselves.
Dates: January 4, 18, 25 & February 1
Leader: Steven McConnell, retired pastor from Church of the Palms and author of *Take Me to Aslan: C.S. Lewis and the Art of Trusting*.

2026 Offering Envelopes Are Here

If you are a regular user of offering envelopes we have ordered them for you. Please pick up your box either before or after services, December 14 and 21.

Thoughtful Giving Booklets
Give Hope This Christmas: Support Our Mission & Justice Partners

Each year, we joyfully give financial gifts in honor of family members and friends to support our mission partners. Through these gifts, we help **give hope** to those in need. Thoughtful Giving booklets are available to help you explore this year's giving opportunities. You may pick one up as you exit worship or find it in the *News @ First*.

Presbyterian Women Bible Study

This month we will study the fourth lesson of "Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ." Joy is the second fruit of the Spirit—preceded by love and followed by peace (Gal. 5:22–23).
We will reflect on the familiar story of the prodigal son and the joy of the father when his lost child returns. This beautiful image reminds us of the joy God has when any of God's children come home. In our discussion, we'll explore how both the eldest child and the lost child are deeply loved by God. God's love and grace are unconditional, not because of what we do or have done, but simply because we are beloved children of God. We will meet via Zoom on December 17 at 10:00 a.m. Led by Barb Andrews. For Zoom information or a copy of the lesson, please contact Jinny Miller at jinnyron@gmail.com.

Young Adult & College Holiday Gathering
Sunday, December 28 • 11:00–12:30 p.m. • The Parlor

All college students and young adults are invited for a festive morning of catered bites, gifts, and games! Join us after the 10:00 a.m. worship service—whether you live here or are in Sarasota for the holidays, this is a great opportunity to meet with others in their late teens and 20s connected to First Pres. Bring a friend, see an old friend, make a new friend — all are welcome!

Join us for the Perlman Music Program Winter Residency

From December 26–January 10, First Presbyterian Church will host exceptionally gifted young classical musicians from around the world.
Free events open to the public include orchestra and chorus rehearsals, student recitals, Works In Progress, (WIPS), and masterclasses. Advance sign-up is required—see the PMP Suncoast website for details.
Volunteer opportunities available: Members can help serve lunch or dinner in the Fellowship Hall, where meals—prepared by a caterer—will be served to students and faculty.
Come experience world-class music and support these talented young musicians!

Support the Christmas Joy Offering

During Advent and Christmas, we honor church leaders—past, present, and future. This Offering supports Presbyterian church workers and their families in need and helps fund education and leadership development for communities of color at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges. We will be taking this Offering on **December 21**.