December 12, 2021 Announcements

We're glad you joined us today!
We hope that you experience the love of God
and of this congregation
as we worship, celebrate, and serve together.



Welcoming Our New Members

Today we welcome ten new members to our church. We are delighted to have them as a part of our congregation. Be sure to give them a warm greeting!

Valbona (Val) Blinishta grew up in an isolated area of Albania, and was taught to read by a Christian missionary from the U.S. She has lived and worked in Chicago and New York, and is currently employed by Amazon. She and her husband, Klod Shehv, have a 2-year-old daughter, Clara, and a 4-year-old son, Edrian.

Marije *(pronounced much like "Maria")* Blinishta, Val's mother (also from Albania) is a retired nurse. She lives near her daughter and helps to care for Edrian and Clara. Her English is limited but her smile says it all!

Shari Greenberg is one of two Presbyterian PKs (preacher's kids) in this class of new members. Retired from teaching, she has acted professionally in hundreds of plays, directed many church programs, and is a talented addition to our choir.

Jennie Harrod lives much of the year in Lockport, Kentucky, with frequent stays at her home in Bradenton. Jennie has been attending FPCS since 2018, and is welcomed by the choir any time she is in town. While in Kentucky, Jennie helps to tend a family farm and serves as the elected attorney for Henry County.

James Jordan grew up in Staunton, Virginia, where his father was the pastor of Olivet Presbyterian Church. After nearly three decades as Ballet Master with the Kansas City Ballet, James accepted the same position with the Sarasota Ballet in 2014. James also manages the house for Sarasota Estate Auction. Meeting Steven Phillips led James to First Presbyterian.

David Purdy hails from Kentucky, where he was an elder at the First Presbyterian Church of Owensboro. David now splits his time between Kentucky and Florida. Widowed after 48 years of marriage, he was introduced to FPCS by his former neighbors, Bob and Ellen Forbes.

Jenn Stutler is a Construction Management Consultant, who has lived in Sarasota for the last 20 years. She is married to Denver, and has 14-year old daughters, Jaidyn and Kaitlyn. Jenn was raised in the Roman Catholic Church. Michelle and David Young first encouraged the Stutlers to visit FPCS.

Denver Stutler, Jenn's husband, is a civil engineer by training, but he also has experience as a professional referee. From 2003 to 2005 Denver served as the Chief of Staff to Governor Jeb Bush. In 2005, he was appointed and confirmed as the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation. In 2011 he co-founded U.S. Submergent Technologies. Denver has two grown sons.

Shelley Watson and her family (husband, Charles; and children Oliver, 7, and Lochlan, 5) found their way to the church through our preschool. Shelley is an attorney by training, though she is currently at home with her sons. We are grateful to have Shelley serving on our preschool board.

Suzanne Waxman formerly served as a registered nurse, but is currently working in the field of commercial construction. She is a dedicated equestrian who has called Florida home for 35 years.



Adult Education In-person Class:
"Spiritual and Moral Issues in American Fiction"
Continues Today, December 12, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 223

This class taught by **Dr. John Parks** continues today, and finishes December 19. Stories are posted in *News@First* and on the church website under the "Grow" tab.



Adult Education Zoom Class
"Advent: The Season of Hope and Expectation"
Continues December 14, 11:30 a.m., through Tuesday, December 28

You can sign up for the class by emailing **Elaine Barnett,** class leader, at ewbarnet@me.com.

Dec. 14: Advent Love | Dec. 21: Christmas Savior | Dec. 28: Epiphany Light



New Eight-Week Adult Education Class
"Every Living Creature: God's Design for Animals"
January 16, 23 & 30; February 13 & 20; March 6, 13 & 20
Room 223, 10:00 a.m.

Most of us who have had pets intuitively understand that animals are wonderfully noble and have a capacity to love that only can come from God. However, we never hear much in church about animals—why God created them or what God intends for them. The scope of grace is vaster and more creative than we had once thought. Bible verses such as Colossians 1:15-20, which speak of God's interest in all things, in fact abound in the Old and New Testament.

Several academic theologians are beginning to think freshly about all living creatures as players in God's plan. This class will draw on their work and set before the participants the biblical evidence that God's intention is to preserve all things, bringing them to perfection and a joyous, harmonious existence. We will consider the nature and destiny of the whole created world.

This class will be taught by **Doug DeCelle,** retired minister, and **Hal Serrie,** anthropologist. For more details about this unique class, visit Doug DeCelle's website:

The *Horizons* Bible study is on **Wednesday, December 15** at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom. **Jinny Miller** is leading the fourth lesson on *Ruth and Loyal Love* in the study guide. Everyone is welcome to join; the study guide is not required to participate. Contact Elaine Barnett at ewbarnet@me.com to get the Zoom link.



Invest in Children



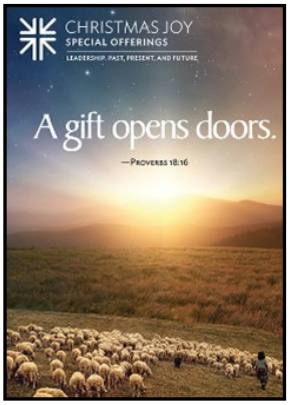
Thank you to the many of you who have generously responded to help bless Brentwood Elementary students, their families, and their school with your love and compassion. You are making a difference as you share Christmas joy!

***We are extending the deadline for gift-giving for the Blessing Tree until tomorrow*—Monday, December 13,** at 4:00 p.m. because there are still some stars on the trees yet to be received. Please help provide gift cards to all the intended children and families by picking up a star today. Their needs are great and your gift will brighten their Christmas. Please drop off your gift cards or write a check with "BES Christmas" in the memo line, returning either to the office by 4:00 pm. Thank you so very much!

FPC Sarasota Blood Drive
NEXT Sunday, December 19
8:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Contact **Cheryl Track, Faith Community Nurse,** to sign up: (941) 320-3828; 4tracks@comcast.net. You may use the Quick Pass to begin the blood donation process on the day of your donation.

Access Quick Pass at
https://suncoastblood.org/donate/quickpass/



Good News of Great Joy Christmas Joy Offering

The PC(USA) offers you the chance to bring Good News of Great Joy to the poor in circumstance or spirit.

Your gifts to this special offering will be distributed to retired ministers and missionaries in need and our Presbyterian racial-ethnic colleges. We will be receiving the Joy Offering **NEXT Sunday, December 19**.



Christmas Poinsettias



As the joyous season of Christmas approaches, our thoughts turn to holiday traditions. Each year we decorate the church with poinsettias for Christmas. Plants may be ordered in memory, or in honor, of loved ones. **To assure quantities, all orders are to be submitted by Wednesday, December 14**. Please make checks payable to First Presbyterian Church with "poinsettia" in the memo. Order forms may be turned into the office.

Number of poinsettias at $10 each: _____

Paid by check #: _____

Amount by cash: _____

Name:_____

Home phone:_____

IN MEMORY OF_____

_____

IN HONOR OF _____

_____

Please check one:

___ I will pick up my poinsettia(s) after the 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service.

___ I wish to donate my poinsettia(s) to the homebound.

___ I wish to help deliver to the homebound.

Sarasota Music Club invites you to a free, open to the public, concert in the Fellowship Hall on **Friday, December 17,** at 10:30 a.m. This Christmas program titled, "Together for the Holidays," will present a variety of Christmas and Hanukkah songs led by Julia Dadekian and Constance Bulawka. All are welcome to attend!

In Our Prayers

Our sister, **Marcia Kleinschmidt** (age 88), died Saturday, December 4, 2021. Marcia and her husband, Phil, have been members for twenty years. Marcia was a deacon and a part of Mary-Martha Circle. Memorial service arrangements are yet to be determined. Thank you for keeping Phil and their family in your prayers. Notes of condolence may be sent to Phil Kleinschmidt, 3225 Lake Pointe Blvd., Sarasota, FL 34231-6827.

Our sister, **Mary Jo Steltmann** (age 80), died Thursday, November 25, 2021. Mary Jo and her husband, Harry, have been members for eight years. More recently, the Steltmanns have been living in St. Petersburg. The memorial service will be on Saturday, December 11, at St Matthew's Episcopal Church, 738 Pinellas Point Dr. S., St Petersburg, FL 33705. Notes of condolence may be sent to Harry Steltmann, 5801 Bahama Shores Dr. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33705

Weaving
a new tomorrow

2022 Stewardship Pledge Update

You are such a generous congregation. You give of your time and energy and expertise to bless this community and further God's work in the world. You line up on Thursdays to hand out food. You gather for worship and study. You teach our children. You serve on the committees of the church. You volunteer at Brentwood and Misión Peniel and countless other places. You visit homebound members and serve as Stephen Ministers. You build friendships across generations. You sing. You work for justice. You live your faith.

Thank you for your financial generosity. **For 2022 pledges to date, we have received 88% of the total amount that was pledged for 2021. We need to finish strong in order to prepare for the coming year.** If you have not had a chance to complete a pledge card, we need you! Your gifts will make such a difference, as we prepare for a new season of ministry and service. Won't you join us?

Electronic pledge cards are available through the church website (www.firstpressarasota.org), or you may call the church office to request a new stewardship packet. Thank you for all the ways you embody the hope that is within you!

2022 Offering Envelopes

This Sunday, December 12, and next Sunday, December 19 there is a table set up for you to pick up your 2022 offering envelopes as you enter or depart from services. Please pickup your envelopes so we can avoid the cost of mailing.

FPC Sarasota Giving Options

Offering baskets will be available as you exit. Your gifts make a great difference during this transitional season.

Online: If you are interested in giving electronically through our secure e-giving process, please visit FirstPresSarasota.org and select the online giving button.

Texting: Are you interested in the convenience of contributing by text message? Text FPC2050 to 73256 to donate via text. Standard rates may apply.

Mail In: All mail, including contribution checks, securely arrives to our church office.

If you are not currently receiving the weekly electronic newsletter, *News@First,* and would like to, please call the church office at (941) 955-8119 or email info@firstpressarasota.org to sign up!