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 17, 2023

If You Are New Here Whether you are searching for a church home or visiting from out-of-town, we are delighted that you are worshiping with us today. If you are interested in receiving more information about membership or the ministries of our congregation, please be sure to speak with our pastor after today's worship or share your information with us in the pew pad. We would love to get to know you better!

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 Livestreaming of the contemporary and traditional worship services is available at www.firstpressarasota.org/worship-live. Additionally, sermons are archived on YouTube.

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.

Upcoming Service Schedule

Sunday December 24, **No services at 9:00 a.m. or 11:00 a.m.**

Family Christmas Eve Service - Sunday, December 24, 4:00 p.m.

There will be all the elements of the Nativity service that our church family has cherished for years, coupled with bright stars, traditional Christmas music, and participation by the children and youth of our congregation and preschool.

Communion & Candlelight Christmas Eve Service Sunday December 24, 7:00 p.m.

Come and experience the sights and sounds of anticipation for Christ's arrival. Worship together by singing familiar Christmas hymns and carols, sharing communion, and lighting candles together.

Epiphany Sunday, December 31, **services at 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.**

Star words will be available during this special service.

Sunday, January 7, One combined service at 10:00 a.m.,

installation of new church officers
followed by Chili Cookoff, benefiting Family Promise.

2024 Offering Envelopes TODAY IS THE LAST DAY

There will be a table set up for you to pick up your 2024 offering envelopes. **To save on the cost of mailing, please make every effort to pick up your envelopes.**

Chili Cookoff—January 7

After our combined 10:00 a.m. worship service on **January 7,** we are having and potluck-style lunch. This time, we are having a chili cookoff with cornbread and salad, along with a fundraiser for Family Promise. Vote by dropping dollar bills into a container next to your favorite pot of chili. Proceeds will go to Family Promise.

If you would like to bring chili, salad or cornbread email Sue Hargis Spigel at Hargisspigel@yahoo.com and indicate what you will bring. You can also find her during the 10:00 a.m. fellowship hour on Sundays December 17 and December 31.

New All Faiths Food Bank *Account*

FPC has been an official agency of All Faiths Food Bank for three years. We distribute food weekly to approximately 100 families. The agency agreement for 2024 has changed significantly and now requires FPC to help purchase some of the food we distribute through our program. To continue to provide services efficiently all donations to All Faiths Food Bank will go into one FPC All Faiths designated account where we can use funds to purchase and provide food to families throughout the year with excess funds being forwarded to All Faiths headquarters.

The Nursery is Open

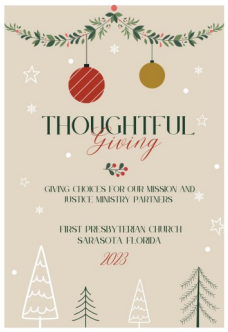
Our nursery will be open to accommodate the families in both services of children under five (with a parent) who may need a little more room to "wiggle and giggle" during any portion of the service. The nursery is located in the hallway behind the sanctuary, room 133. The service will be live streamed via a laptop in the nursery throughout both services so parents and children may still feel connected worship. The nursery is not staffed at this time, a parent must stay with your child.

Christmas Joy

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 **TODAY, December 17.**

Thoughtful Giving Booklets

Each year we look forward to giving financial gifts in honor of our family members or friends to one or more of our mission partners. These booklets are available for you to consider your giving opportunities. You may pick them up as you exit the services or download from the *News @ First.*





Our 2024 pledge goal is $880,000. That is a 20% percent increase over our 2023 pledges. This much-needed increase will be used to fund our full-time Director of Christian Education, give our current staff cost-of-living increases, and maintain the excellence of our music program. Your elders and deacons have set the pace, and we are a little over 90 percent of the way there. Now we need you to get in the boat with your commitment. Please send in your pledge and consider increasing your pledge for 2024. Every Sunday we will report on the progress towards our goal. Pick up a paddle and help us get there!