



## December 18, 2022 Announcements

*We're glad we can worship together today!  
We hope that you experience the love of God  
and of this congregation as we worship,  
celebrate, and serve with one another.*

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### ADVENT EVENTS

#### **Family Christmas Eve Service - Saturday, 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. If your family is taking part, please meet in the Fellowship Hall at 10:00 a.m. today!

#### **Communion and Candlelight Christmas Eve Service Saturday, 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.



#### **Thoughtful Giving Booklets**

Each year we look forward to giving financial gifts in honor of our family members and friends to one or more of our mission partners. The booklet is available as you exit the services. You may also print it using the link in *News@First*.

#### **Christmas Day Worship Service**

##### **Sunday, December 25, one service at 11:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall**

This service, in-person and live-streamed, will be a relaxed time together. We will be singing Christmas carols and telling of the Christmas story in a fun way with audience participation. Wear your "ugly" sweater and bring your left-over cookies to share!

#### **First Sunday of Christmas Worship Service**

##### **Sunday, January 1, one service at 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary**

Let's bring in the New Year together with music of the season and a message to guide us. The service will be in-person and live-streamed.

#### **Epiphany Sunday with Communion**

##### **Sunday, January 8, 9:00 a.m. NewSong and 11:00 a.m. traditional worship services**

Come and receive your special "star" with a word on it to inspire you throughout the year ahead. Be like the wise ones long ago who followed that special star that led them to Jesus.

#### **Christmas Joy Offering Today**

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 to our Presbyterian racial-ethnic colleges. We will be receiving the Joy Offering TODAY!

#### **2023 Offering Envelopes Available Now**

This Sunday, December 18, is the final Sunday to pick up your 2023 offering envelopes. **To save on mailing costs, please pick up your envelopes.**

#### **Contributions for 2022**

The end of 2022 is quickly approaching, and the last day to receive contributions to be credited towards this year is **Saturday, December 31**. Please bring your donations to the church office (by Friday, December 30) or put them in the mail; they must be postmarked no later than December 31.

## Invest in Children



Committee sends heartfelt **thanks** and wishes for a blessed Christmas to all!

**THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU** for sharing such an abundance of love for the **Brentwood Elementary School children and their families!** Because of your generosity, we were able to increase the grocery store gift cards to \$200 for each family. What a helpful, amazing gift! All of the gifts through the **Blessing Tree project** will bring joy and support to these families in such difficult times. The Invest in Children Steering



## From the Membership and Fellowship Committee

A hearty thank-you goes out to everyone who brought food for the **reception after A Celtic Christmas musical program** last Friday evening. A million thanks go to everyone who helped set up, replenish, and clean up the bounteous refreshments. All of you made the reception a big success!

We invite interested people to join our team—or help when you can—at the 10:00 a.m. Sunday fellowship hour or special events. Contact Sue Hargis Spigel at [hargisspigel@yahoo.com](mailto:hargisspigel@yahoo.com) or, until December 31, Joanne Simons at [simonsjc1@gmail.com](mailto:simonsjc1@gmail.com), or anyone you see helping at fellowship time. It's a great way to meet your fellow church members and friends. Thank you!

## Thank You, Blood Donors!

Thank you to all who came out to donate blood to SunCoast Blood Centers last Sunday. 15 donors were screened, 17 units of blood and 1 pack of platelets collected, potentially helping 54 people! Yes, you can now donate platelets on the bus, but please pre-register.



SunCoast serves Sarasota Memorial, Manatee Memorial, Lakewood Ranch, Doctor's, Englewood and Fawcett Hospitals, as well as Encompass Health, the U.S. Military, Blood Emergency Readiness Corps, Post Acute Medical and Moffitt Cancer Center. See you at the **next drive Sunday, March 19, 2023!**



## Salt Shakers

One wonderful way for members and friends of FPC to get to know each other better is to break bread together. Groups of 6-8 people (couples or singles) meet once a month from February through April or May.

Each **Salt Shaker** group decides whether they want to have a potluck at a member's home, dine at a restaurant, have a picnic, or brunch or something else. Groups are encouraged to be creative! **Sign up through the end of January.**

*Questions?*

Call Diane Bittner: (941) 755-2268 or Marcia Schaper: (941) 922-5245

**Pick up a registration form today in the sanctuary narthex or in the foyer of the Fellowship Hall.**

## Preschool Happenings



For many families, the Christmas season is a time when longstanding traditions are enjoyed together. Some of our preschool families, children and staff offered their children's favorite holiday traditions; chocolate advent calendars and spending time together; making toffee from a family recipe handed down from generation to generation, baking a special bread, presents and cookies, and driving around to enjoy neighborhood Christmas light displays.

First Presbyterian Church's Christmas Pageant is a 33-year tradition brought to our church by the Kerr family. Originally in 1950, it was a sermon written by Rev. Donald C. Kerr to tell the story of Jesus' birth and the children of his Baltimore church acted the parts in pantomime. Later in 1989, Rev. Kerr's son and daughter-in-law were inspired to write a script that would tell the nativity story through the acting of our congregation's children and youth. Come experience, be a part, of First Presbyterian Church's longstanding Christmas tradition this Christmas Eve. **If your family is looking to start a Christmas tradition, maybe enjoying the performance together could be a good start.**

First Presbyterian Preschool also performed their Christmas songs for family, friends, and church family members—a Christmas preschool tradition which always brings smiles to the faces of those who experience it. The sweet voices and precious nature of each child brought joy to those in attendance. Afterwards, everyone enjoyed the age-old tradition of Christmas cookies together. Thank you to everyone who was a part of the preschool's tradition this year.

## Cuba Trip Update

In a few weeks (**February 8-14**), thirteen First Presbyterian Church members will head to Cuba to visit our partner church, Juan G. Hall in Cárdenas, and visit the seminary in Matanzas. Cuba is in the grip of dire shortages of food and medicine, and power outages occur daily. COVID has greatly worsened the situation.



The travel team asks for your abundant prayers for their trip and the situation in Cuba. More details will be coming. Thank you for supporting the partnership!



## The Rev. Dr. Timothy Boggess to Preach on 'Day 1'® Radio Program (Article published by 'Day 1')

The Rev. Dr. Timothy T. Boggess, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Sarasota, FL, is the **featured preacher December 25, Christmas Day, on "Day 1"**, the nationally broadcast ecumenical radio program also **accessible online at [Day1.org](http://day1.org)**.

His sermon "In the Dark" is drawn from the beloved nativity story found in Luke 2:1-20. "It's been 34 months and we're still in the dark about when this pandemic will finally be over. Over these past few years, we have lost many whom we loved," says Boggess. "Which is why we need to hear the message of Christmas now more than ever."

"Featuring outstanding preachers from the mainline denominations, "Day 1" is distributed to 200 radio stations across America and overseas. Check out the program's website, <http://day1.org>.



## Consider a Year-End Gift to Support First Presbyterian Church

You are invited to consider making a year-end gift to First Presbyterian Church. You may make:

- A cash donation
- A gift of appreciated securities
- A direct to charity transfer from your IRA (if you are over 70 ½ and have not given more than \$100,000 from your IRA to charities this year)
- A gift from your donor-advised fund or private foundation

The gift can be directed in two ways:

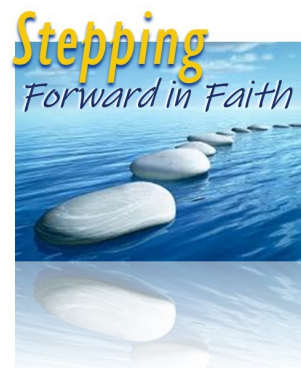
- To **First Presbyterian Church** to be added to the current operating budget
- To **The Foundation for the First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota** to be added to the endowment to ensure/support our missions into the future

Your gift may be specifically directed to scholarships, youth programs, building funds, or to mission and ministries of the church. Or you may leave this decision with the session for the careful stewardship of your funds. Discuss these opportunities with your tax advisor to see which may be best for you, as these can be used by many as deductions for income tax purposes.

If this is not the right time for an over-and-above donation, please consider joining the Covenant Society by making a pledge to include the Foundation in your will or estate plan as a legacy of your faith that will impact generations to come. Contact Lisa Garcia at the church office for more information on making a year-end donation. A link to the Covenant Society pledge form is in *News@First*.

## Stewardship Update

Thank you to those who have stepped forward in faith with your 2023 pledge. **If you have not made your pledge, it's not too late! All pledges are needed**—you can return your pledge card to the church office or pledge online through the church website: [www.FirstPresSarasota.org](http://www.FirstPresSarasota.org) and select member login.



## We're Here for You!

The FPC care team, Stephen Ministers, deacons, elders and church staff continue to be available for you. Please feel free to reach out to **Cheryl Track**, Faith Community Nurse (941) 320-3828 or call the church office (941) 955-8119 if we can be of support to you.

## If You're in the Hospital . . .

Be sure to notify the hospital that you are a member of First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, and would like visits from your pastoral care team.

## FPC Sarasota Giving Options

Offering baskets will be available near the entrance. Your gifts make a great difference!



**Online:** If you are interested in giving electronically through our secure e-giving process, please visit [FirstPresSarasota.org](http://FirstPresSarasota.org) and select the online giving button.

**Texting:** Text FPC2050 to 73256 to donate via text. Standard rates may apply.

**Mail In:** All mail, including contribution checks, securely arrives at our church.

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](mailto:info@firstpressarasota.org) to sign up!