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 21, 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.

Rehearsal Schedule for Christmas Eve Pageant

Today, 10:05-10:55 a.m. rehearsal in the forum.
Monday, December 22, 10:00-11:30 a.m. dress rehearsal in the sanctuary.
Wednesday, December 24, 3:15 Arrival in fellowship hall.

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 today.

December 28 – Stories and Carols *10:00 a.m. Combined Service in Fellowship Hall*

Kids come in your Christmas pajamas, adults wear your tacky sweater or casual Christmas attire for this relaxed worship service! Come and hear the Christmas story as imagined in children's books, reflect on a liturgical dance, and sing carols accompanied by Steven Phillips, Isaac Mingus and Mark DeRose. Coffee, hot chocolate and donuts will be served.

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 for "The Final Word," a new study that unpacks the mysteries of Revelation through facilitated discussion, focusing on its rich symbolism and original first-century context. Together, we will move beyond literal predictions to grasp its core message of hope and find enduring relevance for our lives today. In today's class, Paul will lead us in an discussion about Revelation 9.
Dates: Ongoing
Facilitators: Eric Robinson, Doug DeCelle, Richard Cole, Paul Urbanick
Location: The Library

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 & Feb. 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*.

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 21
Leader: Dave Householder
Location: Room 203

Contributions for 2025

The end of 2025 is quickly approaching, and the last day to receive contributions to be credited towards this year is Wednesday, December 31.
Please bring your donations to the church office Wednesday, December 31 by 5:00 p.m. or mail them; they must be postmarked no later than December 31.

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

First Presbyterian Church is proud to host the Perlman Music Program (PMP) Winter Residency from December 26–January 10. During this time, gifted young string musicians from around the world will rehearse, study, and perform on our campus.

Students ages 14–20 train under Toby Perlman, Maestro Itzhak Perlman, and a distinguished faculty. All residency events—including rehearsals, recitals, and masterclasses—are free and open to the public.

Our congregation can also support the residency by helping serve meals in the Fellowship Hall. Use the QR code to sign up and share the gift of music with these remarkable musicians.

Third Annual Chili Cook-Off & Youth Fundraiser

Join us Sunday, January 11 after the combined 10:00 a.m. worship service in the Fellowship Hall for our Third Annual Chili Cook-Off.

Taste the chilis and vote for your favorite by placing dollar bills next to each pot. The chili with the most dollars wins! All proceeds support our youth attending Montreat.
Want to compete? We have space for 12 chili chefs, first-come, first-served. Contact: Kim Whitford (941) 413-8796. Chili must be in a crock pot, labeled with ingredients/allergens, and unnamed for blind judging.
Not cooking? Bring a side dish or dessert, or just come—we always have plenty!
Chefs, please take leftovers home or trade afterward. Come enjoy the fun and support our youth!

Lisa Garcia's 20-Year Anniversary

Since joining FPC on December 1, 2005, Lisa Garcia has been instrumental in securing grants for the church, organizing annual stewardship campaigns and the budgeting process behind the scenes, and managing monthly expenses. Lisa has also edited various versions of the church newsletter, prepared the monthly bulletin, and kept Realm up to date, all with warmth and friendliness to her coworkers and church members. We will recognize Lisa on January 11 during the 10:00 church service and the chili cookoff that follows. There will be a gift basket for those who wish to give Lisa cards and thank you notes.

Would you like to receive our Friday E-Newsletter? E-mail info@FirstPresSarasota.org to be added to our distribution list.