

# FIRST NEWS



**December 1, 2023**

**Your Weekly News from  
First Presbyterian Church  
St. Petersburg**

**JOIN US FOR WORSHIP  
this Sunday, December 3, 2023  
First Sunday of Advent / Lord's Supper**

**CONNECT SERVICE at 9 AM (Youth Center)  
or  
SANCTUARY SERVICE at 11 AM (Sanctuary)**

**Rev. Ginny Ellis  
Sermon: "Needing to Find Hope"  
Scripture: [Isaiah 64:1-4](#), [I Corinthians 1:3-9](#)**

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Click [HERE](#) to watch the 9 AM service online.  
Click [HERE](#) to watch the 11 AM service online.

This link may also be found on the home page of the church's website ([www.fpcstpete.com](http://www.fpcstpete.com) - click the "Watch Here" button) as well as on the church's Facebook page. The service is also available for viewing on [our YouTube channel](#) throughout the week. Feel free to share the link with family and friends!

Click [HERE](#) for the 9 AM worship service bulletin.  
Click [HERE](#) for the 11 AM worship service bulletin.

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**COMMUNION SUNDAY:** We will be celebrating the Lord's Supper this Sunday during both worship services. If you are joining us online, please gather bread, crackers, or rolls and something to drink (juice, wine, milk, water) ahead of time for all in your home who will be participating.

## From the Desk of Pastor Ginny

Dear Friends,

This Sunday begins Advent, with the theme of Waiting and Hoping. One of my Advent devotionals offers this prayer for the first of the four weeks of Advent: *Gracious God, I put myself before you in this moment with waiting heart, expectant desire. Open my eyes that I may see your promise fulfilled; open my ears that I may hear your word whispered to my deepest being. Amen.*

That prayer reminds me to place myself in God's very presence and to pray expectantly, not passively. It reminds me to pray hopefully, ready to see and hear God speaking to me. Thinking of my prayer in this way, I am stirred to think that if I listen really well, I really may hear God's word whispered into my deepest being, right there, within me.

What word might be whispered to you?

Might God whisper to you one of these things?

*It will be okay.... I have a job for you to do... I love you, no matter what....*

*You will get through this.... I have heard your prayer and I will answer....*

*Well done, good and faithful servant....*

I love to imagine us praying as a church: expectantly, hopefully. Listening for the words of God to fill us with peace, to guide us into service, to lead us to generosity for the world's great needs.

As we pray for our Pastor Nominating Committee, we join them in expecting God's love wrapping itself around this church as you move into the future, with leaders and ministries as yet still unknown to us, but known to God.

As we pray for our staff, we lift them up in their work and in their faith, for God's blessing.

As we pray for our congregation, we pray for their health, their comfort, their encouragement.

I join you in praying today and in these weeks of Advent, with waiting heart and expectant desire.

Blessings,



Please remember in prayer: Millie Bradley, Will Catul, Joan Evans, Julie Evans, Sandra Fay, Teresa Gasper, Jane Harris, Margo Hart, Dorothy Harte, Larry & Diane Heath, Agnes Ingles, Iberia Johnston, Anne Justiss, Alisa Keys, Taffey Lichter, Dave & Pam Malone, Ginger McCoy, Nancy McLaughlin, family and friends of Edson Murray, Alan Pfleider, Richard Pfleider, Vivian Ramirez, Henry Shaw, Jane Snoke, JB Starkey

Please pray for our family and friends serving in the military: LT Marc-Antoni Juliá, USN; CPT Taina Specie, USA; CPT Liam Shelton, USA; CPT Robert Wilson, USAF. *Please provide us with mailing addresses for our card ministry.*

Thank you for choosing to use your time to give this important gift of prayer to our church family. *The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.* - James 5:16

If you have any additions, deletions, or updates to the weekly prayer concerns, please contact Amy McCutcheon at [amym@fpc-stpete.org](mailto:amym@fpc-stpete.org).



We are looking forward to celebrating the 107th birthday of long-time FPC member Agnes Ingles next Friday, December 8th!

We will have cards in each worship service this Sunday for everyone to sign!

### Lectio/Visio Divina

Join us in a Zoom devotion time at 10 a.m. on Mondays for the practice of Lectio/Visio Divina, a contemplative study of Scripture (and corresponding art) that will be used in worship the following Sunday. Click on the link [HERE](#) to join or enter meeting code 859 9201 7591 and password *lectio*.

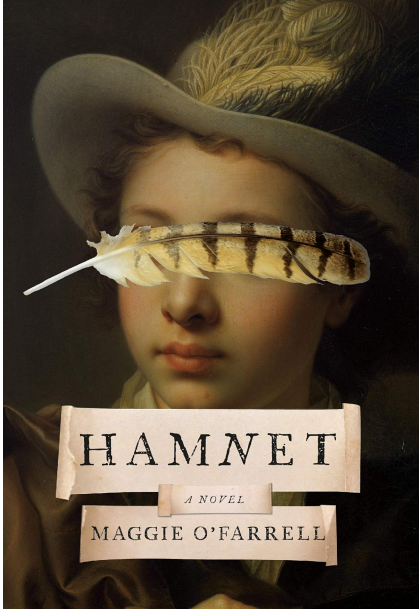
### FPC at the Santa Parade last Saturday (11/25)!



How exciting it was for FPC to be a part of St. Pete's Santa Parade again this year! The church van was designed and decorated by Karen Brooks and Dave Hunt. Participants included Karen Brooks, Dave Hunt, Kirby Volz, Gretchen Letterman, Karen Mossman, Dave & Kendra Aumack, and Pastor Ginny.

### Faith & Fiction

Next Monday, December 4, 4 PM, Room N-123



*Hamnet*, by Maggie O'Farrell

Discussion Leader: Linda Santoro

Open the cover and be transported back to England, 1580's, where the Black Plague ravishes the countryside, and a struggling young playwright must deal with life's difficulties.

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## Christmas Greenery Donations

Christmas is just around the corner, and soon it is time to decorate the church!



- You are invited to make a donation in memory of or in honor of a loved one or friend to help purchase poinsettias and greenery. To let us know you would like to order one or more, there are sign-up sheets in either worship service, or you can call the Church Office. You can make your donation of \$25 by check, or you can give online ([HERE](#)); be sure to designate the individual to be honored or memorialized in the memo line. We will compile and list the names of all those honored or remembered in the Christmas Eve bulletin.
- If anyone would like to help decorate the Sanctuary, come join the Sanctuary Guild this Tuesday, December 5th, starting at 9:30 AM, or contact Chris Agee (727-488-5217, [cfagee@gmail.com](mailto:cfagee@gmail.com)) for more info!



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### Called Congregational Meeting - December 10

The session has approved a congregational meeting to elect church officers. There will be a meeting at the end of each worship service on Sunday, December 10.

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### *Celebrate and Support the Ministry at FPC* Pledge Sunday is December 10

The church has much to CELEBRATE this year! We know that the SUPPORT of all of us is essential in order to sustain the amazing momentum in our ministry and even help it increase. Help us put a strong foundation under the ministries we have begun. Help us find the leadership, the ideas and the participation, as well as the financial underpinning, to continue our many new ministries.



On Sunday, December 10, we will CELEBRATE our ministry and recognize the SUPPORT of the congregation by dedicating our gifts and pledges, as well as

our time and talent hopes for 2024. You can complete a paper card and bring or mail it back to the church or you can pledge electronically by clicking [HERE](#) any time from now until December 10. We ask you to let us know how you will try to support the ministry we celebrate so joyfully. Your financial as well as your time and talent pledge cards will help us with our planning for next year!

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## Expect the Unexpected This Christmas

Join the Power Hour Sunday School class in December in the Youth Center as we look at often overlooked characters in the Nativity story. This 4-week DVD program will take us through the themes of hope,

joy, and peace through the stories of Elizabeth, Zechariah, Herod, the Magi, and the shepherds. Each character teaching us something about living faithfully on the journey to Christmas. Questions? Email Karen at [karenamossman@gmail.com](mailto:karenamossman@gmail.com).

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## December's "Wednesday Night" Supper is on a Tuesday for **HoHoHo TACO TUESDAY!**

On Tuesday, Dec. 12 at 5:30 PM, we'll be serving Make-Your-Own HoHoHo Tacos Galore – ground beef and shredded chicken, soft shell, hard shell, plus all the fixings No one is going home hungry!

PB&J's are on standby, as usual. We will also have our annual Christmas cookie decorating project! After dinner on Dec. 12, we'll be decorating cookies to be served at the 4 PM Christmas Eve service (AND you can probably take one - or two! - home with you!). Please sign up [HERE](#) (and click the "yes" button) if you plan to attend.



December 12 will also be the last evening practice for *Make a Joyful Noise Music Makers* till the new year, and practice will run from 6:10 to 6:40 PM in the Youth Center. This talented young choir will be performing at our Family Christmas Eve Service in the big Sanctuary on Dec. 24 at 4 PM. Plan now to attend!



# The Many Moods of Christmas

a benefit concert for St. Pete Free Clinic

featuring

Pinellas County Center for the Arts choirs and orchestra

The Gay Men's Chorus of Tampa Bay

The First Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir with Jack Rain, organ

Friday, December 15, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church | 701 Beach Drive Northeast 33701 | 727-822-2031

**Celebrate the miracle of Christmas through this beloved annual benefit concert!**

If you would like to donate online to St. Pete Free Clinic, you can [CLICK HERE](#) or use this QR code:



## Cedarkirk's Christmas Wish List

DID YOU EVER GO TO CAMP AS A KID, or as an adult? We have had a GREAT year at our church; others have not been as fortunate. Is there anyone who could help our beloved Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center with their wish list? Check it out by clicking [HERE](#). The items listed are not outrageous, but could really have an impact on children and adults that use the camp. If you have any questions or need clarification, please reach out to me at church, send me an email ([dhunt@fpc-stpete.org](mailto:dhunt@fpc-stpete.org)), or call me (513)-604-6090. Thank you for considering this mission!

Dave Hunt  
Cedarkirk Board Member and  
Coordinator of Pastoral Care, First Presbyterian Church

All of us at First Presbyterian are working to stay as connected as possible.



- If you need anything – a phone call, a prayer, a friendly conversation, or a few errands run – PLEASE call the Church Office at 727-822-2031! Our

staff and volunteers are happy to help.

- Help us stay connected by sending us your pictures and prayer requests!



## Have you friended us on Facebook or Instagram?

If you haven't, please do so! Also, be sure to SHARE our Facebook and Instagram posts as much as you can! That can help us increase numbers of followers of the church Facebook and Instagram pages. Thank you for helping us be more visible!



We continue to be thankful for the generosity of all who contribute financially to our church, along with the other contributions they bring to our ministry.

**For your convenience, there are several ways which you can give:**

- (1) Give online using a credit card or bank transfer ([click here](#) for the link). For assistance using the online system, please call the Church Office or
- (2) Send a check through the U.S. mail or
- (3) Drop by the Church Office and slip an envelope through the mail slot in the front door.

Thank you for the many ways you support the work of God's church at FPC – St. Petersburg!

## FPC Calendar At A Glance

- [Click HERE](#) to view the full church calendar online. *Groups may not appear on the online church calendar. Please contact the Church Office if you would like to update our online calendar with your meeting.*
- [Click HERE](#) for December Birthdays



**Some groups are still meeting virtually (online).** If you need help navigating the Zoom conference call technology, we will be happy to help you with it so that you can join meetings and/or stay better connected. Please contact the Church Office (727-822-2031) for more information.

### Regularly Scheduled Events:

- **Sundays, 8:30 AM-12:30 PM**, childcare is available, Room S-203
- **Sundays, 9 AM**, Connect Worship Service, Youth Center or [Online](#)
- **Sundays, 9:45 AM**, Faith Journey Sunday School Class, Room S-202
- **Sundays, 10 AM**, Power Hour Sunday School Class, Youth Center
- **Sundays, 10 AM**, Young Adults/Parents Sunday School Class, Room S-206
- **Sundays, 10 AM**, Teens' Sunday School Class, Room S-205 (meets every other week)
- **Sundays, 11 AM**, Sanctuary Worship Service, Sanctuary or [Online](#)

- **Mondays, 10 AM, Lectio Divina, via [Zoom](#)**
- **Tuesdays, 9 AM, Ladies' Bible Study, Youth Center**
- **Tuesdays, 7 PM, Christian Meditation, Chapel (meets in-person the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month)**
- **Wednesdays, 7 PM, Praise Band Rehearsal, Youth Center**
- **Thursdays, 6 PM, Bell Choir Rehearsal, Choir Suite**
- **Thursdays, 7 PM, Chancel Choir Rehearsal, Choir Suite**
- **Fridays, 8:00 AM, Men's Bible Study, Room N-123**
- **Fridays, 12 PM, Men's Lunch Bible Study, via Zoom. For more information, contact John Underwood ([pjfwon@gmail.com](mailto:pjfwon@gmail.com))**

### Upcoming Events:

- **Monday, December 4, 4 PM, Faith & Fiction, Room N-123**
- **Tuesday, December 5, decorating worship spaces for Christmas, starting at 9:30 AM**
- **Sunday, December 10, Congregational Meeting at the end of each worship service; Pledge Sunday**
- **Tuesday, December 12, HoHoHo Taco Tuesday, 5:30 PM (Fellowship Hall), and Kids' Choir, 6:10 PM (Youth Center)**
- **Friday, December 15, 7 PM, *Many Moods of Christmas* benefit concert**
- **Sunday, December 24 (Christmas Eve), Regular morning worship times of 9 AM and 11 AM PLUS two evening Christmas Eve services: 4 PM (kid-friendly) and 7 PM (by candlelight). All are welcome at the evening services; there will be no childcare provided.**

## Deadline For "First News"

Items for "First News" should be submitted as early as possible with a cut-off for any Friday's "First News" being end of day the Tuesday before publication. Please submit copy which is as concise as possible. Send copy to Amy McCutcheon at [amym@fpc-stpete.org](mailto:amym@fpc-stpete.org).

First Presbyterian Church  
701 Beach Drive NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
(727) 822-2031 | [www.fpcstpete.com](http://www.fpcstpete.com)

Church Office Hours: Mon-Thur. 9 AM - 5 PM; closed Fridays

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A Stephen Ministry Congregation of the PC (USA) - Christ empowering people to care for people.





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