

FIRST NEWS



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

December 24, 2021

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY

Join us at 10 AM in the Sanctuary
for an In-Person or Online Worship Service
this Sunday, December 26
First Sunday of Christmas

Rev. Ginny Ellis
Sermon: "Runaway Savior, Runaway Christmas"
Scriptures: [I Samuel 2:18-20, 26](#), [Psalm 148](#), [Luke 2:41-52](#)

If you are unable to worship with us in person,
you can click [HERE](#) to watch the service online.

Praise Band Preview - Our gift to you!

I (Kevin) was recently approached by Karen Mossman about the Praise Band Christmas videos we've been showing each week. She told me about how much her family enjoyed them, and that it would be nice if there was a way to find all the videos in one place. Well, thanks to some special assistance from Dave Aumack, the answer is now "YES!". Click the link below to see all the FPC Praise Band Christmas videos & feel free to share with anyone you think may like them. God bless & Merry Christmas everyone!

*As a reminder, we will begin the organ prelude just before 10 AM,
so please plan to arrive a few minutes early!*

UPDATED FPC Mask Policy



Beloved Members and Friends,

This is to let you know the Session has reinstated a mandatory mask mandate for worship at First Presbyterian beginning with our Christmas Eve services. We have done this at the recommendation of the Return to Church Task Force. Both the Task Force and the Session are committed to keep our people safe, and we are watching the COVID statistics as information becomes available.

Our joyous Christmas Eve services will be held in the sanctuary as planned. As of this moment, the only change is the mandate for masking, with the suggestion that worshippers observe social distancing as they are able. We have also asked the choir to wear masks, except that they have to option to remove masks during anthems or other special featured pieces.

Once again: please stay both safe and hopeful, as we follow recommendations. The church will continue to monitor the COVID situation and will make any other changes if and when they prove necessary.

Pastor Ginny Ellis



If you would like to give to the PCUSA Special Christmas Joy Offering, your gift will honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

There are special envelopes in the pews and at the Welcome Center, or you can give online [HERE](#).



Please remember in prayer: Millie Bradley, Bob Burkhardt, Carol Daniel, Peter Eckert, Joan Evans, Julie Evans, Sandra Fay, Teresa Gasper, John & Dorothy Harte, Larry & Diane Heath, Agnes Ingles, Russ Johnson, Iberia Johnston, Kathy Jose, Anne Justiss, Alisa Keys, Jean Kohler, Margie Laughlin, Taffey Lichter, Dave & Pam Malone, Nancy McLaughlin, the Pav family, Alan Pfleider, Richard Pfleider, Janet Poling, Jane Pruitt, Ken Robinson, Henry Shaw, Judy Smith, Jane Snoke

Please keep in prayer all those who have been physically, emotionally, and financially affected by the coronavirus, and join us in praying for an end to this situation.

Please pray for our family and friends serving in the military: Marc-Antoni Juliá, USN LT; CPT. Taina Specie, USA; 1st LT. Liam Shelton, USA; 1st LT. Mallory

Wasik, USMC; 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.

**Two Christmas Eve Services @ FPC!
Join us! All are welcome!**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Procession of the Nativity

Children and Family

Christmas Eve Service

December 24, 2021 4 pm



We invite you to bring a single figurine from your own nativity set at home, a small action figure/toy, or small stuffed animal to join in on the procession.

You will get it back and extras will be available.

The Christmas Eve Children and Family service at First Presbyterian Church will be at 4 PM in the sanctuary. It will be a procession of the nativity. Each child or family is invited to bring a figurine from their own nativity set at home, a small action figure/toy or stuffed animal to join in on the procession. They will get it back and we hope to have extras.

If you can't join us in person, join us online: <https://youtu.be/bG0IibleZ5o>



At 7 PM, join us for a traditional Lessons and Carols service in the Sanctuary. We will end the evening with a beautiful candlelight celebration. *Valet service will be available starting at 6 PM.*

If you can't join us in person, join us online:

<https://youtu.be/fdBA6xfeExA>



Congregational Meeting January 9

The Session has called a congregational meeting for the election of Deacons to be held in the Sanctuary after worship on January 9, 2022. Being nominated for the class of 2024 are the following: Chris Agee, Bill Burtchaell, Debbie Factor, and Diane Zuercher. We hope you will be present for this meeting.

Deacon's (Christmas!) Corner

On behalf of all our Deacons: Rue Ann Porter, Petra Garnett, Dick Luehrs, Jill Whelpley, Lynne Mormino, Tai Specie, Eva Popovich, Larry Kirsch, Debbie Factor, Dottie Young, and our two faithful Friends of the Deacons, Sally Lyle and Diane Zuercher (who replaced our Sarah Fechter), Linda Santoro, and I would like to wish you all a most Merry Christmas! All of you, our Church Family, have been so supportive of us and encouraging in our efforts to keep us all together.



Sadly, we lost some of our dear family members and friends this year, but our focus is on the best gift, Jesus Christ, our Savior. The birth of a child is always a joyful occasion, and the gift of Jesus reminds us of how much God loves each of us. What greater gift than that?

May the peace of God's presence be with you now and always, and may the New Year grace us with new opportunities to share His love.

Opportunities for New Ushers

We are in the process of organizing our 2022 Schedule for our ushers. We are looking for additional ushers to help with the 10:00 AM worship service.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Al May at 727-867-8285 or ATM4983@gmail.com. This is an important job as we greet and welcome our members and visitors as they arrive each Sunday.

FPC Church Ladies Christmas Tea at Chattaway



The ladies enjoyed assorted tea sandwiches, scones with lemon curd and clotted cream, crumpets, and chocolate mousse cups. Tentatively, a tea luncheon will be planned in the springtime to be held at the church.

Fellowship Time on December 19

Thanks to all who joined us in the Fellowship Hall after service last Sunday! We all enjoyed watching the creative ways our members & friends helped to tell the Christmas story in video format as well as having a wonderful time together eating and chatting! Thanks especially to the Men's Ministry for helping to serve!



Pastor's Christmas Basket

As we wrap up the Christmas season, please consider giving a donation to the Pastor's Assistance Fund. All the monies collected are used at the pastor's discretion throughout the year to provide confidential financial support. Please be sure to write "Pastor's Fund - Christmas" on the memo line to ensure your donation is recorded properly. Thank you.



CONGRATULATIONS and best wishes to Rev. Dr. Dawn Conti who has been elected Co-Pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church in Clearwater, beginning January 16, 2022.

ANNOUNCING A CONTEST

We need to name our frog! The frog comes to worship with us especially during the Moment for All Ages. Everyone can suggest a name and we will figure out how to choose a winner: draw name from a basket? Vote on the best? We'll put the first two suggested names in for starters: Leaves and Bert.

Meanwhile, keep an eye out for the frog, who turns up all over the place! This week, it's in the office by the Christmas tree. See where this character turns up next!





Featuring: Marco A. Jimenez

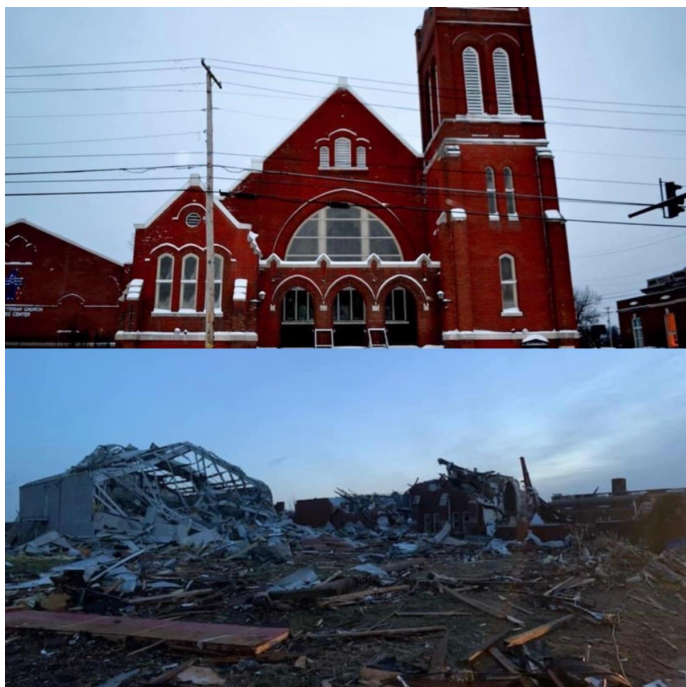
Sunday, January 2, 2022 at 4:00 PM

Local organist Marco Jimenez will return to St. Petersburg to perform while on break from his studies at *The Julliard School*. Marco will share his skillful keyboard playing on our Reuter Pipe Organ and Steinway Piano. In the second half of the program, Marco's friends will join him to perform duo and trio pieces. Offering will be taken for Marco Jimenez.

Mission Corner

On Friday, December 10th, winds came in the night and leveled out many areas in central USA. Tornadoes touched down and devastated areas across 6 states, ranked as the longest tornado track in US history. Mayfield, Kentucky got the worst of it, as you may have seen on the news. The death toll is up to 74, and first responders are still sifting through the rubble.

This hits me (Pastor Megan) on another level, because my dear friend, Mason, was the pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Mayfield from 2012-14 and it was completely destroyed (photo below). They are in touch with church members about immediate needs on a day-to-day basis right now. I know we're all hearing from all over the place about ways to help in KY, but I thought I'd share what I'm being told by people on the ground.



First, please go make a donation to Presbyterian Disaster Relief as they have already been in touch with First Presbyterian Church in Mayfield and will be on the ground shortly. You can give online [HERE](#).

Next, if you'd like to contribute to food resources (click [HERE](#) to donate), a local volunteer is a part of Mercy Chefs, who is on the ground. Mercy Chefs is providing hot meals and bottled water to anyone and everyone who needs to eat. It's cold in Mayfield right now and people don't have heat.

Next, if you like to do tangible things, Costco, Amazon, and Walmart are all currently delivering to the area. Please contact me for a shipping address at meganm@fpc-stpete.org.

Here is the most recent list from my friend:

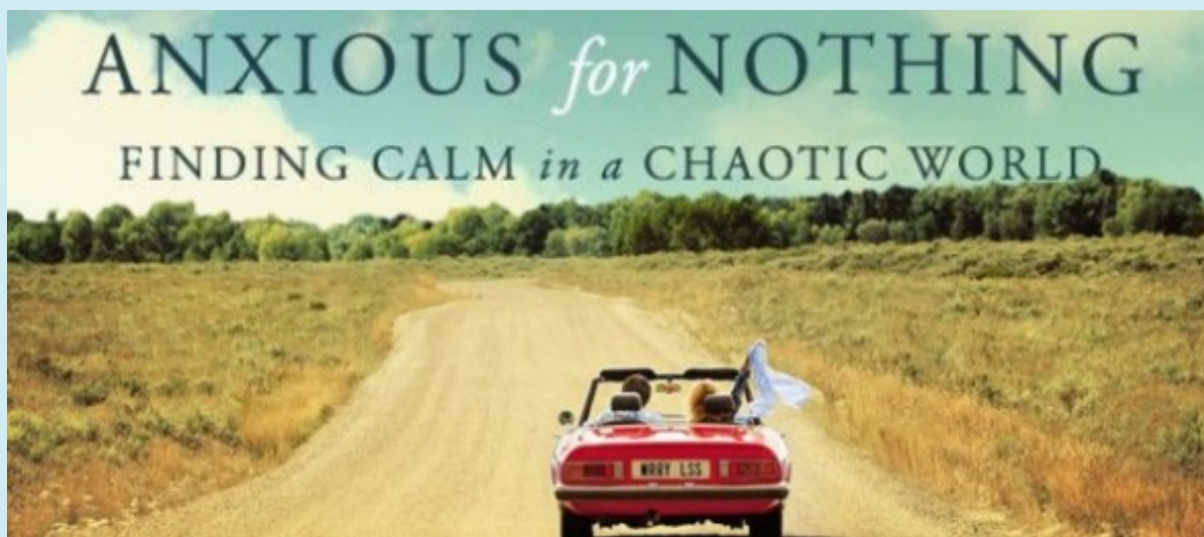
- *new* clothes (not used)
- baby items
- water
- canned foods, can openers
- boxed foods (not requiring heating)
- chips, snack foods

- flour, sugar
- hygiene products
- blankets, tarps
- flashlights & batteries
- laundry detergent
- dog food, cat food

Most importantly, please keep the people of Mayfield (and other areas) in your prayers. They joke is that nothing exciting ever happens in "sleepy little Mayfield" and this is the most exciting thing to happen...ever, but it's not the type of excitement any of them want.

On a happy note, the FPC of Mayfield congregation has plans to begin having church services, including Christmas Eve at a church member's business warehouse. They said, "it won't be pretty, but we'll be worshipping together and that's what matters."

"The Power Hour" Adult Sunday School Class Sundays at 9:00 AM in the Youth Center



It is not too late to drop in for the "Power Hour" Sunday school class. It's a fun group studying Phil 4:5-8, God's treatment plan for anxiety. Join us as we discover A life of calm and develop tools for combating the onslaught of anxiety. Using Max Lucado's DVD study "Anxious for Nothing". Join us for coffee, pastries & fellowship too!

First Presbyterian Church is hiring!



We are looking for qualified individuals to provide pre-school care during worship and church events.

- ⇒ Regular hours would be 8:45 - 11:15 AM on Sunday mornings
- ⇒ Occasionally other hours can be added (fellowship events, concert events, Christmas Eve services, etc.)
- ⇒ \$20 per hour
- ⇒ Background check will be required, as well as interview and references.

To apply, please submit the following information to the Church Office (email to office@fpc-stpete.org or mail to 701 Beach Drive NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701):

- Name
- Address
- Phone number
- Date of birth
- Experience working with children
- Religious affiliation
- Permission to run a background check

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!

Pastoral Emergency Number

If you have a pastoral emergency, please call (561) 805-1514.



Online Giving



During this season, we are especially thankful for the generosity of all of the people who continue to financially contribute to the church.

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 continuing to meet 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.

- **Sundays, 8:30 AM**, Faith Journey Sunday School Class, Chapel.
- **Sundays, 9:00 AM**, Power Hour Sunday School Class, Youth Center
- **Sundays, 10 AM**, In-Person Worship Service, Sanctuary or [Online](#).
- **Sundays, 4 PM**, GriefShare (via Zoom)

- **Tuesdays, 1 PM**, Praise Band Rehearsal, Sanctuary
- **Tuesdays, 7 PM**, Christian Meditation, meeting every other week in the Chapel at 7 PM (next in-person meeting is **Jan. 4**). For more information, contact Carlen Maddux (cmaddux@maddux.com).

- **Fridays, 7:30 AM**, Men's Bible Study, in-person, Room N-123. For more information, please contact Ken Young (youngkd1492@comcast.net). **Not meeting Dec. 24 or 31.**
- **Fridays, 12 PM**, Men's Lunch Bible Study; the last Friday of the month is in-person in Room N-123; otherwise, via Zoom. For more information, contact John Underwood (pjfwon@gmail.com)

- **Friday, December 24, Christmas Eve**
 - **4 PM**, Family/Children's Service
 - **7 PM**, Candlelight Lessons & Carols Service

- **Friday, December 24, and Monday, December 27** - Church Office closed for the Christmas holiday.
- **Friday, December 31** - Church Office closed for New Year's Eve

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.

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

