

FIRST NEWS



Your Weekly News from
First Presbyterian Church
St. Petersburg

December 4, 2020

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY

Join us for our 10 AM Worship Service
In-Person and Online
this Sunday, December 6
Second Sunday of Advent

This Sunday's Sermon: "Tidings of Comfort & Joy"
Pastor Dawn Conti

Scripture: [Mark 1:1-8](#), [Psalm 85:1-2; 8-13](#), [Isaiah 40:1-11](#)

As a reminder, we will begin the organ prelude just before 10 AM, so whether you plan to attend in person or online, please join us a few minutes early! When the organ music starts, please observe respectful quiet as those around you use the time for prayer and preparation for worship.

COMMUNION SUNDAY: We will be celebrating the Lord's Supper this Sunday during our worship service.

- If you are worshipping with 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.
- If you are worshipping with us in person, here's what to expect:

When you check in on Sunday morning, you will receive small pre-packaged communion kit. Take it with you to your seat. When Pastor Dawn asks you to, remove the

clear plastic top, revealing the wafer. Later, you will remove the second top and drink the juice. After the service, make sure to dispose of the remains in the garbage cans at the exit.

For those who need gluten-free wafers, you will receive a gluten-free wafer in a sealed bag. Use this when you take the bread. Discard the wafer from the kit, which IS NOT gluten free.



Watch The Service Online or Attend In-Person Worship In The Sanctuary

Detailed instructions for watching or attending in-person worship are included below in *First News*.



Please remember in prayer: Carol Abernathy, Ron & Millie Bradley, Bob Burkhardt, Carol Daniel, Joan Evans, Julie Evans, Sandra Fay, Teresa Gasper, Ron Hall, John & Dorothy Harte, Larry & Diane Heath, Jim & Iberia Johnston, Anne Justiss, Glenice Kelley, Alisa Keys, Margie Laughlin, Dave & Pam Malone, Nancy McLaughlin, Howard Moser, Eleanor Nicholas, Peter Pav, Richard Pfeider, Janet Poling, Jane Pruitt, Jean Schultz, Judy Smith, Hildegard & Will Sondermann.

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 Julia', 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 Grossenbacher at amyg@fpc-stpete.org.



Introducing Sonshine City Podcast

Take a listen to this week's Sonshine City Podcast [HERE](#) as Pastor Dawn and Pastor Megan introduce and chat about the scripture on which Sunday's sermon is based.

Sonshine City Podcast will appear weekly in *First News* to shine the light of Christ's love into your day.

Notice of Called Congregational (Special) Meeting next Sunday, December 13

There will be a called congregational meeting on Sunday, December 13, 2020 at 12:30 PM by Zoom conference call. The purpose of the meeting is to elect a Nominating Committee for 2021 and approve a change in Pastor Dawn's terms of call.

All active and affiliate members of the church are invited to register in advance for this meeting [HERE](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing

information about joining the meeting including the link for the Zoom meeting.

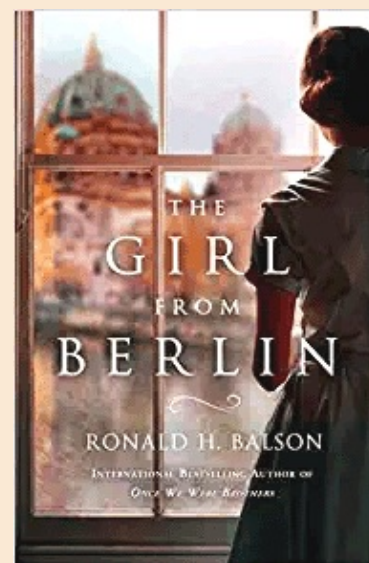
All others are welcome to watch the meeting on our YouTube link [HERE](#).

Faith & Fiction Discusses *The Girl from Berlin*

Faith & Fiction will meet via Zoom on Monday, December 7 at 7:30 PM to discuss

The Girl from Berlin by Ronald Balson

All who are registered with us will receive a link to the meeting. We welcome any additional persons and request that you phone Linda Santoro (727-897-9543) to receive the link. Kindly join us a few minutes before 7:30 PM so that we may begin promptly.



The Many Moods of Christmas Concert To Be Presented Virtually

The Many Moods of Christmas will be a virtual concert this year on Sunday, December 13 at 4:00 PM. As in years past, students from the Pinellas County Center for the Arts will join musicians from First Presbyterian Church to benefit the St. Petersburg Free Clinic. The concert will be posted on both the church's and school's YouTube channels.



The Living Crèche, A Favorite Memory From Carol Lee Wathen

(Featuring Radar, The Donkey)

It was in 1967 that our minister, Dr. Douglas, had the inspiration for a Living Crèche, and we had the perfect spot.....facing Beach Drive. But who would do it? Who would plan, design, build, sew, cook, and take responsibility for such a big task? The Highlanders Sunday School Class, of course! And they did! It took a year of many hours to make sure everything was ready for December.

The talents of everyone were needed...a stable to build, costumes to make, animals to secure, music and script to prepare, sound system to set up, and cookies to bake! Whew! The whole church was invited to help ...it brought our church together. We were excited that we could share this experience with our community.

During the daytime, it was Bill Highfield's job to watch over the animals to make sure they were safe. However, one woman felt sorry for the donkey named "Radar." She thought he was tethered too long, so she decided to take him for a walk along Beach Drive. You can just imagine what a "stir" he and the woman created! She lost track of time and soon it was time for the Crèche to open. It took a while to get Radar back, as he was not too happy to return...he had a taste of freedom!

Even though the Highlander class is gone, their gift to the church is still giving to us and our community every year. The Living Crèche brought our church family together because everyone was

needed...even Radar!

(Pictured at right, Carol Lee and Ed Wathen)

Submitted by Diane Zuercher



Do you have any large print books?

FPC member, John Harte, is in need of some large print books. While the Hartes' dear friend and caregiver, Elaine, knows that the library offers these, because of COVID restrictions, they would have no way to access and return them. If you have any, or know of a good source, please call Pastor Ruth at 352-278-0757. She will arrange for them to get to John via Elaine.



Thank you and bless you for all the love and care you give to each other through these pandemic days.

Presbyterian Women's Circles Focus on The Light of the World

In December the PW Circles will be focusing on Light with a lesson especially prepared by Helen Kantner. This poem was written by FPC member Sarah Fechter.

The Light of the World

O God of Infinite Wisdom
who gave us the moon and stars for night
and the light of the sun for day.

When that wasn't enough
you gave us more light
your Son — the Light of the World.

We read his words:

"I am the light of the world..."
If we follow him
we will never
walk in darkness.

"Believe in the light while you have the light..."
His light abides
let us share the light
of the gospel
that others too may believe.

"You are the light of the world..."
Carry your lantern high
the world will see
the good that you do
and glorify God.

"Whoever lives by the truth comes into the light..."
May we live in the light
helping others see the truth
and the way.

We offer our praise to you, O God
for the light you give us
through the words of your Son
the Light of the world.

Sarah Fechter, December 2020

From the Family of Del Poling . . .

After much prayer and thought, Del's family has decided to postpone the celebration of Del's life until after a vaccine for the virus has been administered. When a date for the service at FPC-St. Petersburg has been determined, it will be published in the FPC weekly newsletter and announced from the pulpit. Please continue to keep Del's wife, Janet, and his daughters and their families in your prayers. Thank you.

Rev. Dr. Dawn M. Conti



Extravagant Generosity To Free Clinic Facilities

'Tis the season of giving in this season of great need in our world and in our community. Our congregation stands

out as a beacon of generosity and hope. Because of this, the FPC Mission Committee would like to share a way for you to personally donate to residents of one of St. Petersburg Free Clinic's facilities. Simply choose an item, or items, from one of the wish lists below, and your purchase will ship directly to people at the shelters. We are thankful for the extravagant generosity of our church.

Baldwin Women's Residence -- The Baldwin Women's Residence provides housing and services for women who are recovering from substance abuse and assists them as they cultivate healthy and independent lifestyles. Follow this link to access the wish list: [BWR Wishlist](#) then choose this shipping address: Baldwin Women's Residence, Attn: Wishlist's Gift Registry Address.

Family Residence -- The family residence provides safe and supportive housing for homeless families. Use this link to access the wish list: [Family Wishlist](#) then choose this shipping address: St Petersburg Free Clinic, Family Residence, St. Petersburg, FL. (the address is hidden for privacy).

For questions, contact Gay Wasik-Zegel at gwzegel@gmail.com

Here Are Instructions For Watching Our Sunday Worship Service Online

Persons who are at high risk and feel uncomfortable coming back to worship in person are encouraged to take their own risk assessment and stay home if they feel uncomfortable. Those individuals can continue to enjoy our vibrant online worship service.

Click [HERE](#) to watch the service online. This link may also be found on the home page of the church's website (www.fpcstpete.com - "Click Here to Watch Sunday Services") as well as on the church's Facebook page.

Here Are Instructions For Attending In-Person Worship In The Sanctuary

If you attend in person, please remember:

You will need to reserve a spot to attend. There are two ways to register:

(1) **Go online!** An email will be sent to you each Monday morning with a link to click to RSVP for the upcoming Sunday. You will also find a RSVP button on the main page of our website, or you can go directly to fpcstpete.com/rsvpforsunday. Please complete ALL boxes, then click "Submit to RSVP" OR

(2) **Call the Church Office (727-822-2031)** Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and noon. You will be asked a series of questions; some will be health-related. All information collected will be kept confidential. No reservations will be accepted after Friday at noon, and voicemail messages are not RSVPs. If you aren't able to RSVP, we are accepting walk-ins on Sunday morning as space is available.

- **Remember: You will be required to wear a mask.** If you forget one, we will have extras available.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in several easy-to-access spots for your safety.
- Please note that the elevator will NOT be accessible.
- The sanctuary will have **one entrance and one exit only**. Signs will point you in the right direction.
- For your safety, prior to service, you will check in at the front doors, and be seated by ushers at a safe social distance.
- We ask that you do not congregate in the sanctuary at all after the service. If you wish to stop and visit with friends, make your way out of the sanctuary first and visit outside. We want you to spend as little time inside the sanctuary as possible.

Thank you in advance for your patience with these new procedures. We look forward to meeting for in-person worship while maintaining the safest environment possible!

We Need Volunteers To Pass The Peace, VIRTUALLY!

As we return to worship in person, the Passing of the Peace, the time where we used to stand and greet each other in the name of Christ, will be done as a video greeting.



We are asking individuals, families, or groups to record a short Passing the Peace video greeting. These videos will be played during Sunday worship for those in the Sanctuary and those watching from the couch at home.

For a sample script, contact the Church Office. For assistance with video production, our online worship expert David Aumack will set up a convenient time to help you. Please contact the Church Office (727-822-2031) as soon as possible to let us know you can participate, and then send your videos to daumack@fpc-stpete.org. You can also contact him with any technical questions you may have.

All of us at First Presbyterian
are working to stay as connected
as possible
during this time of social
distancing.



Stay
CONNECTED

- 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 during this time.
- **Help us stay connected by sending us your pictures and prayer requests!**

Healing Scripture

As part of our pastoral care ministry, we will be offering a daily scripture meditation read by Pastor Ruth. Each weekday until Christmas, the church will send out an email to all those on the *First News* email list with a link to a short YouTube video of a scripture reading from the daily lectionary. The reading will be followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Pastor Dawn invites you to join us for a time of devotion, discussion, and prayer where we connect online with God and each other as we read and discuss the sermon text that will be preached the following Sunday. All are welcome!



MONDAY DEVOTION

For sign-in information to the Zoom call, please contact the Church Office at 727-822-2031 or click [HERE](#) to join. **PLEASE NOTE:** Zoom is now requiring a password for all meetings. If Zoom prompts you to enter a password, the password for Monday devotionals moving forward will be "prayer."



Online Giving

During this season when we are physically apart, 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](#)

Most 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, 9 AM, Faith Journey Sunday School Class. For Zoom sign-in information, contact the Church Office.
- Sundays, 10 AM, Worship Service [Online](#) and **In-Person** in the Sanctuary.
- Sundays, 11:15 AM, Contemporary Faith Sunday School Class. For Zoom sign-in information, email Lynn Kiehne (lkiehne@gmail.com).
- Sundays, 11:15 AM, Westminster Sunday School Class. For Zoom sign-in information, email Jim Garnett (jim.garnett237@gmail.com).
- Sundays, 4 - 5:30 PM, GriefShare Support Group. For Zoom sign-in information, contact Petra Garnett (petra.garnett@gmail.com).
- Mondays, 10 AM, Online Devotional with Pastor Dawn. Click [HERE](#) to join. If you are prompted, use "prayer" as a password.
- Tuesdays, 7 PM, Weekly Meditation, virtual. For more information, contact Carlen Maddux (cmaddux@maddux.com).
- Fridays, 7:30 AM, Men's Bible Study, meeting **in person** in Room S-100.
- Monday, December 7, 7:30 PM Faith & Fiction, For Zoom sign-in information, contact Linda Santoro (727) -897-9543

- Sunday, December 13, 12:30 PM Called Congregational Meeting
- Sunday, December 13, 4 PM, Many Moods of Christmas Virtual Concert. Posted on YouTube

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 [Mary Johnson](#) and [Amy Grossenbacher](#).

First Presbyterian Church
701 Beach Drive NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701
(727) 822-2031

[Contact Us](#) | [Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTUBE](#)

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

