

# FIRST NEWS



**December 8, 2023**

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

**JOIN US FOR WORSHIP  
this Sunday, December 10, 2023  
Second Sunday of Advent**

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

**Rev. Ginny Ellis  
Sermon: "Preparations"  
Scripture: [Isaiah 40:10-11](#), [Mark 1:1-8](#)**

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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 Live Streams 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 these links with family and friends!

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



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

Join us at the 11 AM service throughout the month of December for some beautiful Advent Anthems!

**Advent Anthems**

**Hope**  
Sunday, December 3, 2023  
**All Things New**

**11:00 Sanctuary Service**  
featuring the music of  
Elaine Hagenburg

**Peace**  
Sunday, December 10, 2023  
**I Will Be a Child of Peace**

**Joy**  
Sunday, December 17, 2023  
**Wexford Carol**

**Love**  
Sunday, December 24, 2023  
**O Love**

**Handbell Choir Feature**  
On **Sunday, December 24, 2023**  
the Handbell Choir will lead  
worship playing, "Ding Dong  
Merrily on High."

**First Presbyterian Church**  
*...being and making disciples of Jesus Christ.*

### From the Desk of Pastor Ginny

Dear Friends,

This Sunday we'll light the second Advent candle: the candle of Peace. Is it double-dipping, do you think, since we light a separate peace candle at worship every Sunday? We talked about this, and decided we needed to light them both. The Advent wreath gives us the Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love candles, and those are important, as a set. But we don't want to leave out our regular Peace candle at worship. Peace is too important in today's world; it is too important in our lives. We simply need to continue to weave peace into our worship and into our prayers. So this week we will do both. We will simply light the usual peace candle without saying much about it. The Advent Peace candle will have the focus.

So much happens during the weeks leading up to Christmas. At church this Sunday, we will see the sparkle of wreaths, ribbons, Christmas trees, lights, and banners. We are enjoying Advent and Christmas music, and the wonderful scriptures that set the stage and tell the story. Next Tuesday, our Fellowship Dinner event will feature tacos! as well as the decorating of Christmas cookies, and Christmas music (to which we will be able to sing along!) played by our Mary Blazier. The children's choir will be practicing their Christmas song for the 4:00 Christmas Eve service. And with our Many Moods of Christmas concert next Friday evening, Dec. 15, we'll have groups doing musical set-ups and rehearsals



every evening next week. It's all so exciting!

So be here Sunday to pray for PEACE.

Bring your Financial Pledge Card and Time and Talent Card this week if you haven't brought it yet, as we celebrate and support the church for the coming year. This week is the dedication at worship.

Above all: pray for the church, its officers, its staff, all its ministries and programs. Your prayers hold us up. Your prayers are a gift. You are a gift.

Blessings and love,  
Ginny Ellis



**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, Kathie Mayhall, 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).

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## **Called Congregational Meeting - This Sunday, 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. For those of you who watch the services online, please note that the Congregational Meetings will be live-streamed at the end of each worship service (there will not be a separate link for the meeting).



The Officer Nominating Committee will be bringing nominations for 4 elders and 5 deacons. Being nominated:

- **For Elder three-year terms:** Fernando Gonzalez, Greg Helck, Joan Karins, and Fran Sims
- **For Deacon three-year terms:** Cameron Blair, Jan Clark, Eva Popovich, and Molly Krebs. **For Deacon one-year term:** Linda Donaldson.

To see a photo and a short bio of each nominee, [CLICK HERE](#).

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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.

This 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. 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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**Lectio/Visio Divina on Recess**

Our Monday morning zoom devotion time is taking a holiday break. We'll resume Monday January 8. Plan to join us then for a great hour of prayer, Bible reading and discussion about the following Sunday's scripture passages.

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**It's Beginning to Look A Lot Like Christmas...**

A big THANKS to all our volunteers who have worked hard this week to help get our worship spaces ready for the upcoming Advent and Christmas season!



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

This 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!



## Christmas Greenery Donations

Christmas is just around the corner!

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 (click [HERE](#) and choose "Flower Fund"); 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.



# 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:





## Join FPC on Christmas Eve!

We will have our usual Sunday morning Worship Services at 9 AM (Youth Center) and 11 AM (Sanctuary) AND



### 4 PM Children & Family Service

Join us for a kid-friendly re-telling of the nativity story! Our 4:00 PM Christmas Eve service will feature the Christmas Story, with all children invited to come forward to depict the different parts of the story. Christmas carols will be sung, accompanied by the piano. This family-friendly service will be about 45 minutes long. Everyone is welcome in the service; there will not be childcare.

### 7 PM Candlelight Service

Join us for a beautiful candlelight & carols service! At our 7:00 PM Christmas Eve service, the Christmas story will be presented through scripture, and carols, ending with the candlelight singing of Silent Night. Organist Jack Rain will play the pipe organ, and other music will be led by choir and brass quartet. All are welcome!

Everyone is welcome in the service; there will not be childcare.



### Christmas Joy Offering

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. God has blessed the Church with incredible leadership in every time and place, but those leaders often need to be supported by their communities as well. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you 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. To give to the Christmas Joy Offering online, click [HERE](#). There will also be paper envelopes available in the Sanctuary and Youth Center for the next few Sundays (checks should be made payable to Presbyterian Church U.S.A.).

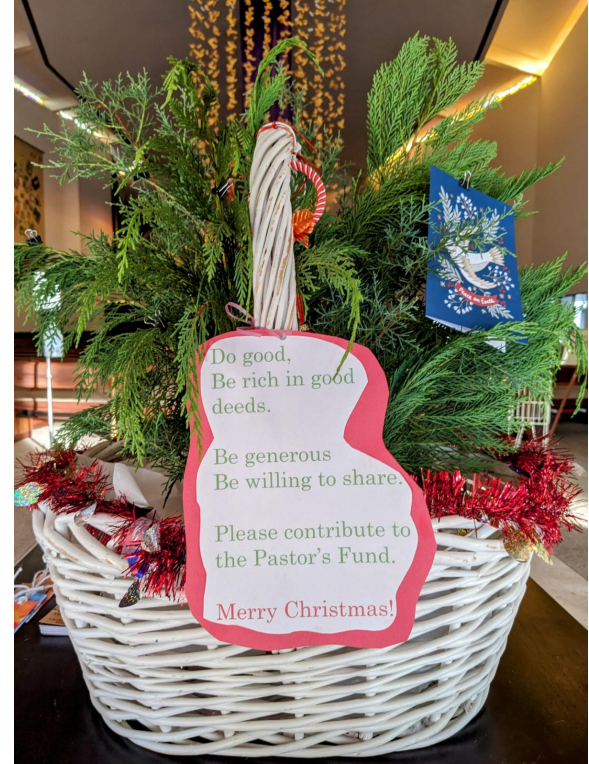
### Pastor's Christmas Basket: Another Way to Help Those in Need

As you address your Christmas cards this season, please consider bringing a card for the Pastor's Christmas Basket and enclosing a donation for the Pastor's Assistance Fund. All the monies collected are used at the pastor's discretion



throughout the year to provide confidential financial support to members of our congregation and others recommended by local social services to help pay for bills, medical needs, shelter, and other expenses that help people survive unexpected hard times. You can make your donation by:

- Bringing your donation on Sunday morning and placing it in the marked basket located in either worship space
- Mailing a card to the church (701 Beach Dr NE, 33701)
- Dropping it off in the Church Office during regular office hours (or after hours through the front door mail slot)
- Giving online (click [HERE](#))



If you're paying by check or cash, please be sure to write "Pastor's Fund - Christmas" on the memo line (or enclose with a note) to ensure your donation is recorded properly. Thank you.



## Cedarkirk's Christmas Wish List

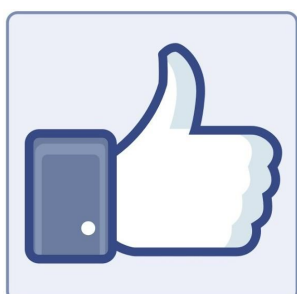
DID YOU EVER GO TO CAMP AS A KID, or as an adult? We have had a GREAT year at our church; others have not been as fortunate. Is there anyone who could help our beloved Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center with their wish list? Check it out by clicking [HERE](#). The items listed are not outrageous, but 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!



## Online Giving



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](#) (on break until Jan. 8)
  
- **Tuesdays, 7 PM**, Christian Meditation, Chapel (meeting in-person December 19)
  
- **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:



- **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.
- **Monday, December 25** and **Tuesday, December 26**, Church Office closed

## 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.



First Presbyterian Church | 701 Beach Drive N.E., St. Petersburg, FL 33701-2618

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