

FIRST NEWS



Your Weekly News from
First Presbyterian
Church
St. Petersburg

November 13, 2020

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY

Join us for our 10 AM Worship Service
In-Person and Online
this Sunday, November 15
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

This Sunday's Sermon: "Let Your Light Shine!"
Pastor Dawn Conti

Scripture: [Isaiah 48:1-9a](#), [Psalm 112](#), [Matthew 5:14-16](#)

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

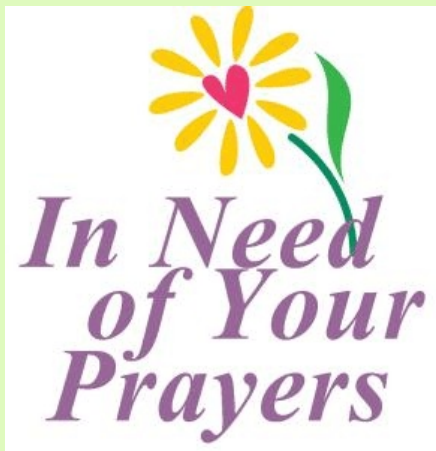
This link may also be found on the home page of the church's website (www.fpcstpete.com - "Click Here to Watch Sunday Services") as well as on the church's Facebook page.

If you attend in person, please remember:

- You will need to reserve a spot to attend. You can still RSVP for this Sunday's service until noon today. Please click [HERE](#) or call the Church Office (starting Monday morning).
- 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.

- Valet parking will be available.
- 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 returning to in-person worship while maintaining the safest environment possible!



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, Margie Laughlin, Dave & Pam Malone, Nancy McLaughlin, Howard Moser, Eleanor Nicholas, Peter Pav, Alan Pfleider, Richard Pfleider, 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.

Welcome Back

To In-Person Worship in the Sanctuary!

The time has come for us to welcome you back safely! We return to In-Person Worship this **Sunday, November 15, at 10 a.m.** for those who feel comfortable worshipping in person.

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. For those of you at low risk and who feel comfortable coming back to in-person worship, we look forward to seeing you!

One thing to remember: **you must wear a mask**. If you forget one, we will have extras available. Plenty of hand sanitizer will be available for your safety, and you will move through the sanctuary one-way-in and one-way-out. Also, for your safety, you will be seated by ushers at a safe social distance. We ask that you 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.

You will need to reserve a spot to attend in-person worship services starting with the November 15 service and moving forward.

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 can help answer phones in the mornings on Tuesdays, please let Amy know!



Congregational Meeting Notice

There will be an online congregational meeting on **Sunday, November 22 at 12:30 p.m.** to receive a motion from the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee to **approve a call for an Associate Pastor for FPC-St. Petersburg.** The terms of the call package will also be approved and details of the candidate will be provided at the meeting.

We hope to have this meeting in person. In order to do that, we will need a quorum (41 active members) present. If we do not have at least 41 active members present, the congregational meeting will be held via Zoom call. We will keep you updated.

Many thanks to the members of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee: Al May, (Chair), Bill Burtchaell, Jim Garnett, April Hussung, Taina Specie, and Don Zegel and to member, Marty Wallace, who has provided funds to make this possible.

HERE'S TO OUR FUTURE!

Great news: The session has approved a slate of members to begin in earnest the work of discerning God's direction for the future of our church. Meet your Team FPC Future:

Mikel Carothers

Kevin Clark

Vicki Fox

Jim Garnett (moderator)

Vit Gulbis

Beth Houghton

Joan Karins

Cathy Swanson

This highly qualified and committed group will be trained by our consultant the Rev. Cameron Trimble and our pastor, the Rev. Dr. Dawn Conti. The team's tasks will include **conducting interviews with community leaders and stakeholders to gather information for a community "needs assessment," data gathering and research, writing strategic documents, communicating to and engaging the wider congregation, organizing online small group gatherings within the congregation, exploring insights from other congregations, and vision team process management.**

Please thank these members for their willingness to serve in this important capacity.



Sunday School Class

To Study *The Common Rule: Habits for Purpose for an Age of Distraction*

The Contemporary Faith Sunday School Class is starting a study of a new book called *The Common Rule: Habits for Purpose for an Age of Distraction* by Justin Whitmel Earley. This book focuses on changing our habits and helping us create new routines designed to create lives of love for God and neighbor and align our habits to our beliefs.

The class meets at 11:15 AM on Sundays via Zoom. Contact Lynn Kiehne at lkiehne@gmail.com to get the zoom ID. Plan to join us!

Healing Scripture

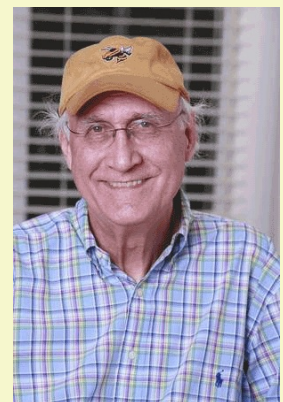
As part of our pastoral care ministry, we will be offering a daily scripture meditation read by Pastor Ruth. Each weekday until Christmas, the church will send out an email to all those on the *First News* email list with a link to a short YouTube video of a scripture reading from the daily lectionary.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



The month of November brings thoughts of family, food, and memories as we celebrate Thanksgiving. This is the second of this series in which FPC members share their memories of a special Thanksgiving. Enjoy!

Our First Thanksgiving

I don't remember all the details of our first Thanksgiving after my wife was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 1997. That period is such a blur. I do know that all Martha's family gathered at her parents, Frank and Grace Elizabeth Cooper, and none were aware of Martha's diagnosis except for our children David, Rachel, and Kathryn.



Martha had just turned 50 when we heard her diagnosis on September 23rd. Our world wasn't turned upside down. It imploded before us. Martha's first words to me when we got home from the doctor's were, "I don't want to tell anyone. Not our children. Not my parents and brothers, and certainly not our friends."

But she was willing to talk with our good friend Lacy Harwell, whom some may remember as the long-time pastor at Maximo Presbyterian. Lacy encouraged us to visit his friend in Kentucky, Sr. Elaine Prevallet with the Sisters of Loretto community. "I've never met another person with Elaine's gift of discernment."

So four weeks after Martha's diagnosis, we went. The Loretto "motherhouse" was set on a large farm of about 800 acres, which gave us a lot of room to walk and talk and vent and pray while sharing with Sr. Elaine. (Down the road was a provider of a different sort of spirit, the Maker's Mark bourbon distillery, for any who cares to know).

Not far away is the Abbey of Gethsemani, which Thomas Merton helped make famous through his many writings. Martha and I drove there one evening for its Compline service and listened afterwards to a Fr. Matthew Kelty. Hearing him, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry, his homily was deep and poignant and humorous. He is one of the most incisive Christian speakers I've heard. He touched Martha so deeply that she asked to meet

with him, which they did the next day for an hour.

After a restful week's visit with Sr. Elaine we drove back home, preparing for our first Thanksgiving in this strange and bizarre world they call Alzheimer's. More than two decades later—as I reflect on this year's Thanksgiving and on the responsible, life-loving adults our children have become—the voices of Sr. Elaine and Fr. Matthew still ring true and clear in my heart:

Fr. Matthew: "Suffering has something to do with salvation. We know that much. To say anything more is dangerous business."

Sr. Elaine, quoting an ancient Eastern Orthodox verse: "Fold the wings of your mind. Place your mind in your heart. Come into the presence of God."

Fr. Matthew to Martha: "You came calling on me. You are now one of us. So from now on, you are in my prayers." (Tears came to Martha's eyes as she listened.)

Sr. Elaine: "Your main calling at this time is to trust that you belong to God and not to yourselves. And to deepen your love for God and between yourselves."

May this Thanksgiving be meaningful and life-giving to you and your family during these weird and strange times.

—Carlen Maddux



Calling all those who love to write a good old-fashioned note!

Other communities have engaged in note-writing during COVID to those who are literally "stuck" at home due to COVID related concerns or live in assisted living, nursing homes, etc. where visitors are seldom or not allowed. If you would like to join me in taking a moment to write to members of our Congregation, please contact me (Lynn Kiehne) at lkiehne@gmail.com or get in touch with Amy at the

Church Office, and she will see that I get your indication of interest and I will share names with you who might enjoy a note.

Pass The Peace, Staying Safe

We Need Volunteers to Pass the Peace, VIRTUALLY!



As we return to worship in person soon, our service will be different from before - in many ways - to keep everyone as safe as possible. One way is that we will not have the Passing of the Peace, the time where we used to stand and greet each other in the name of Christ.

Instead, we are asking individuals, families, or groups to record a short Passing the Peace video greeting. We think this is a great way to help members get to know each other as well as to stay safe. These videos will be played during Sunday worship for those in the Sanctuary and those watching from the couch at home.

The Return to Church Team has provided a sample script, which you can adapt to your own liking, as long as it is short and sweet and passes the peace (contact the Church Office for wording). If you are unable to record your own video on your phone, you can ask our online worship expert David Aumack to record you. He will set up a convenient time.

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.

Thank you in advance for helping us virtually Pass the Peace!

GriefShare: Surviving the Holidays

When you are grieving a loved one's death, the holiday season can be especially painful. Our Surviving the Holidays seminar helps participants discover:

- How to deal with emotions
- Helpful tips for surviving social events
- What to do about traditions
- How to find hope for the future



The Seminar will be offered **IN PERSON** on **Saturday, Nov. 21 at 10 AM** in the Chapel. Please email Petra Garnett (petra.garnett@gmail.com) if you have any questions or if you would like to join.

Please click on the video below to learn more about this event:



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



- 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!

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!



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."



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 November 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, [Online and In-Person Worship Service](#). Beginning Sunday, Nov. 15, the sanctuary will be open for **In-Person Worship Services**.
- 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 Virtual Meditation, online. For more information, contact Carlen Maddux (cmaddux@maddux.com).
- Fridays, 7:30 AM, Men's Bible Study, meeting in **person** in Room S-100.
- Saturday, Nov 21, 10 AM, GriefShare: Surviving the Holidays **in-person**, FPC Chapel
- Sunday, Nov. 22, 11:15 AM, Congregational Meeting to approve a call for an Associate Pastor (see article in this newsletter for more information)

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](#).

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

