

# FIRST NEWS



**December 15, 2023**

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

**JOIN US FOR WORSHIP  
this Sunday, December 17, 2023  
Third Sunday of Advent**

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

**Rev. Ginny Ellis  
Sermon: "John the Baptist: The Preacher"  
Scripture: [Isaiah 61:1-4](#), [John 1:6-8, 19-28](#)**

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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**

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

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

### From the Desk of Pastor Ginny

Dear Friends,

You all seemed to enjoy my donning a brown shepherd head cloth at worship last Sunday, December 10. I know I probably looked silly, which isn't always a bad thing. I get that. Anyway, I have been talking with the children (and everybody) about our family-friendly 4:00 Christmas Eve service, suggesting what headgear the children might choose to wear during the Nativity part of the service. I love that young Wesley wanted to put on one of the shepherd cloths too, He was really cute! Then when I took mine off, he took his off too. He is so dear, and that he was doing what I did was such a compliment!

We are so blessed with the children who come, and bring pictures they drew or bracelets they made, and share their stories, their ideas, their questions. I am just blown away by them, as you might be too.

And I wanted to share the following precious story with you: one more way you, as a church, are making a difference in our community. Listen to Jeannie Doddridge's account:

**FIRST CHURCH SERVES THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY EACH MONTH**

Six FPC folk ventured out in the rain to serve at Missio Dei, a Presbyterian

worshiping community for the homeless in St. Pete. Here's a report on the experience they had on December 10:

We picked up the 7 pans of food cooked by our marvelous Men's Ministry Team, and we also took 7 boxes of stockings to deliver. Thanks to Diane Zuercher, Marilyn Mulcahy, and the crew of Sailboat 33703+ for providing 60+ filled Christmas stockings.

There were more people at Missio Dei than usual; they were participating with Rev. Sam Picard in his Bible Study and Celebration of Communion. The physical building could be described as a bit dingy, but all of us found shelter in it. There was fellowship, protection from the rain, food for the hungry and Christmas Stockings! Taking a break from serving salads, Jennie and I sat and visited with the homeless, talking about Christmas Carols and favorite musicians and memories of the past.

One lady, maybe in her 60's, shared that this was the first Christmas stocking she had ever received. I resisted the urge to give her another, fearing it would take away from that special feeling of receiving her first. As we were leaving, we saw her riding off on a bike into the dark rainy night with another meatloaf dinner for later and her first Christmas stocking.

It takes a lot of people to make this ministry happen each month, but it matters. Thanks for all you do, with this mission and the many other missions we support as a church!

(submitted by Jeanie Doddridge)

#### PLEDGES AND TIME AND TALENT CARDS

Thank you all for bringing your cards to be dedicated on December 10. We are grateful for both the pledge cards of Financial support and the Time and Talent Cards indicating ways you may want to be involved.

Note that we did receive a few Time and Talent cards with no names attached, so if you offered to help with something and don't hear back from us, be sure to let us know (again) how you would like to be involved. We always want to honor your offers of connection and involvement.

Ginny



**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

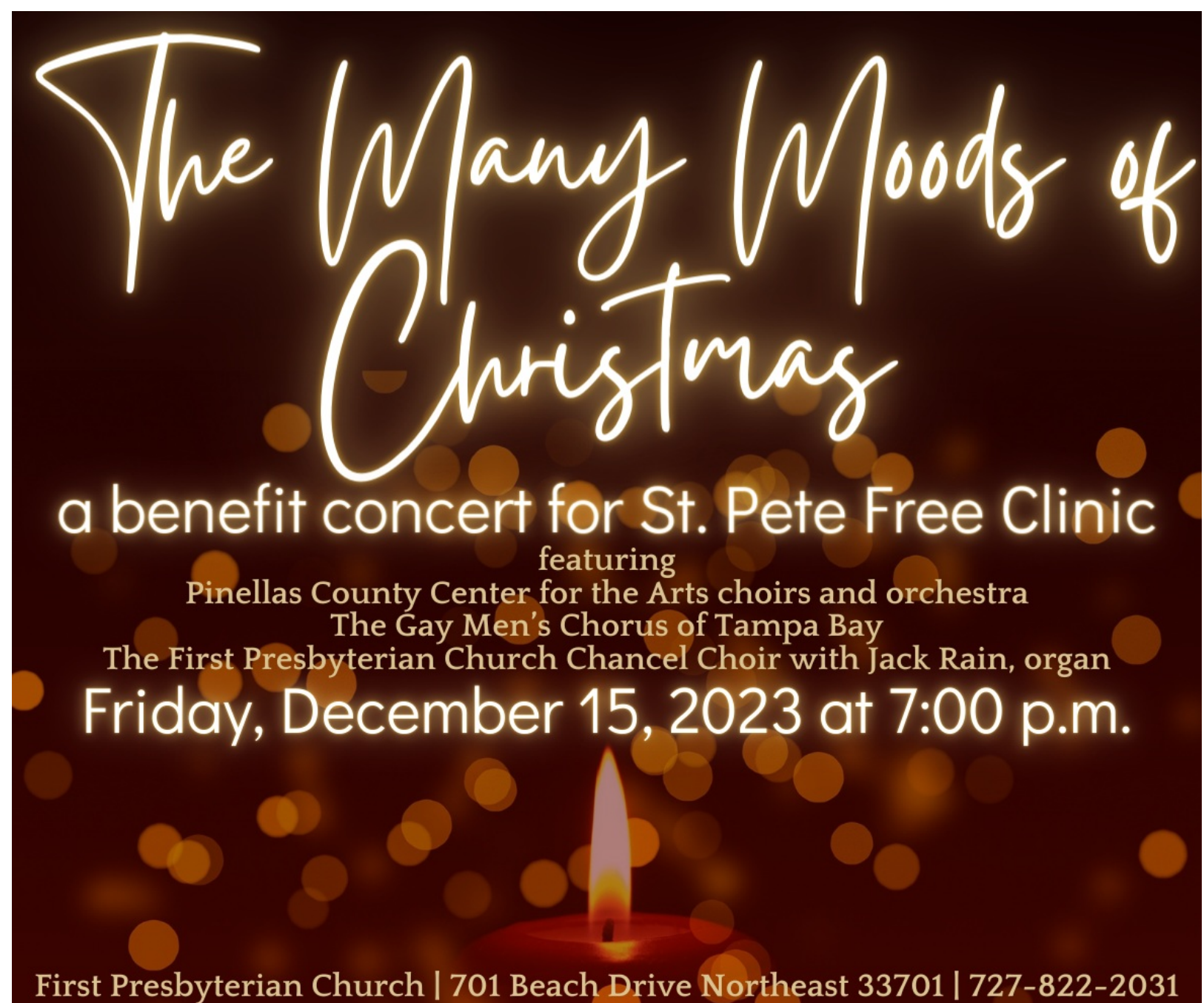
If you have any additions, deletions, or updates to the weekly prayer concerns, please contact Amy McCutcheon at [amym@fpc-stpete.org](mailto:amym@fpc-stpete.org).

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## Join Us TONIGHT for Many Moods of Christmas!

Celebrate the miracle of Christmas through this beloved annual benefit concert! Come early to get a seat! Doors open at 6 PM and valet parking will be available.

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



**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



### A Nudge from God Takes Off

As Pastor Ginny mentioned, two people "got" an idea, then another, and ultimately about 20 helped fill 64 Christmas stockings for our friends who attend Missio Dei on Dec. 10. Jeannie Doddridge reported that they were surprised and grateful for the goodies, along with the delicious meatloaf dinner that our Men's Ministry provides once a month. Thank you, God, for our nudge.

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**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.



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The 16th annual **Homeless Memorial Service** will be held next Friday, December 22, at Unitarian Universalist Church, 100 Mirror Lake Drive, St. Petersburg. There will be music at 4:00 PM and the service will start at 4:30 PM. Our Sam Picard will be the MC of this event, as the community honors the homeless who have died in Pinellas County this year.

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### 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.



#### Remember The Little Free Library on your Christmas list

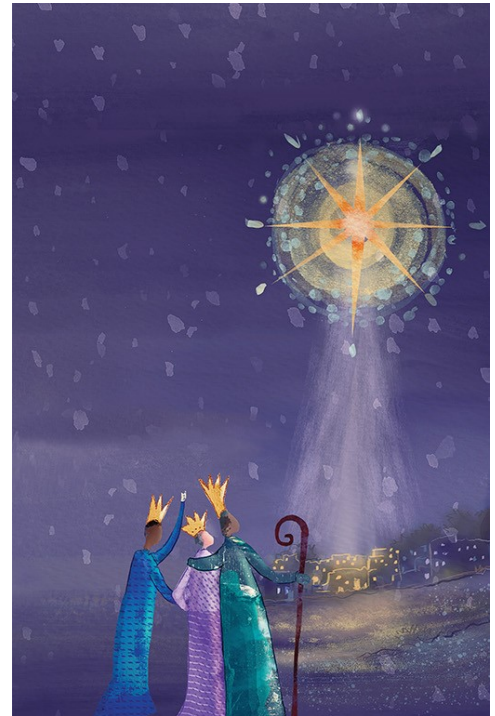
One, two, or more books tucked in the Library Box on Beach Drive are a welcome addition! Needed are: Bibles, histories, bios, novels, fiction, religious, children's, etc. If you can't

get your gifts in the Little Free Library, leave them at the Welcome Center in the rear of the Sanctuary, and an elf will deliver them for you!

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## 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.

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## Next Faith & Fiction - January 8, 2024

2:30 PM, Room N-123

*Sisters of Night and Fog*, by Erica Robuck

Discussion Leader: Kathy Arsenault

Two women, two countries. Nothing in common but a call to fight. An exciting new tale based on true stories of an American socialite and a British secret agent whose

stunning acts of courage collide during WWII. Plus, there is a connection to FPC!



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](#) (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 (on break Dec. 22 and Dec. 29)
- **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:

- **Tonight, 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
- **Monday, January 1**, Church Office closed
- **Sunday, January 7, 4 PM**, Concert by solo organist [Bradley Welch](#)
- **Monday, January 8, 2:30 PM**, Faith & Fiction, Room N-123

### **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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