

FIRST NEWS



March 1, 2024

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

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP
this Sunday, March 3, 2024
Third Sunday in Lent / Lord's Supper

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

Rev. Ginny Ellis
Sermon: "Covenant of Law: Setting a Framework"
Scripture: [Exodus 20:1-17](#), [John 2:13-20](#)

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 - 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.



COMMUNION SUNDAY: We will be celebrating the Lord's Supper this Sunday during both worship services. If you are joining 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.

From the Desk of Pastor Ginny

Dear Friends,

One thing I missed because of COVID (boo, COVID!) was the chance to stand up at the Annual Congregational meeting to be sure you heard this awesome news: IN 2023 WE ENDED THE BUDGET YEAR IN THE BLACK!!! There was to be a pause for this information to sink in, and then:

Applause!!! Cheers!!! Jubilation!!!

One thing I have learned through my ministry is that there are a number of indicators of the overall health of a church. Good attendance is one indicator. Responsiveness at worship is another. I love to hear good singing, laughter at light moments, feedback related to ideas shared....and financial reports give yet another indication of the church's health. The reality is that I am seeing strong indicators of health here at First Presbyterian: strong attendance, new people participating in ministries, laughter and joy at worship.

So it was important to me that you knew this other piece of good news: that last year's budget ended so well! Friends, being in the black is really good news.

How did this happen? Well, the 2023 year showed good and faithful congregational giving. The Church had some new income streams, thanks to good management by Finance Committee and the Session; and there is good growth by St. Petersburg Primary School which has a lease with us for use of space. These things work together to support a thriving ministry, which is what you have here at First Presbyterian Church. **Congratulations! Good work!**

I guess the wind continues blowing, the Holy Spirit keeping this seaworthy craft moving in ready and growing ministry. I stand back, sometimes, in awe at what God seems to be doing here. Thank you for being on this voyage with me, with us, together. God be praised!

Blessings,
Ginny Ellis

Please remember in prayer: Millie Bradley, Joan Evans, Julie



Evans, Sandra Fay, Teresa Gasper, Jane Harris, Margo Hart, Dorothy Harte, Larry & Diane Heath, Carol Hunt, family & friends of Agnes Ingles, Iberia Johnston, Anne Justiss, Alisa Keys, Taffey Lichter, Dave & Pam Malone, Ginger McCoy, Nancy McLaughlin, Alan Pfleider, Richard Pfleider, Robert Safransky, Henry Shaw, Judy Smith, 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.

Join us tonight at 8 PM for
The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay Concert
and Guest Speaker from the Florida Holocaust Museum



In collaboration with The Florida Holocaust Museum, [The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay](#) invites you to explore excerpts of Anne Frank's diary in a performance of James Whitbourn's *Annelies*. The program also features the world premiere of a commissioned work by Nico Gutierrez.

Praised by music critics from local media as "one of the country's finest choirs," "an amazing instrument," and a "cultural treasure," The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay has consistently delivered some of the most profoundly moving music performances in the area.

This is a ticketed event. Please purchase your tickets in advance through the Master Chorale of Tampa Bay (click [HERE](#) or call 813-355-9609).

WOW!

Jack Rain celebrates his 55th anniversary as organist of FPC today, March 1st. Our congregation and visitors have been so blessed by his dedication and talent over the years!



What a fun day!

A big thank-you to our kids, to Barbara Brownlee (Director of the Kids' Choir), and to the Praise Band for bringing us some great music at the Connect service last Sunday!

Easter Egg Collection

For the next few Sundays, we will have baskets in both worship spaces to collect donations of individually wrapped candy and plastic eggs. The eggs that come already filled are the best (and you can find them at most stores!)



These eggs (and candy!) will be for our Easter Egg Hunt at 10:15 AM on Palm Sunday (March 24) on the front lawn. **All children are invited to participate** in the egg hunt and/or to carry palms into the Sanctuary at the 11:00 service! After the children process, they will sing a song up front and then be taken to the Fellowship Hall for a time of fun and crafts. (Parents can pick up their children in the Fellowship Hall following the service!)

Lectio/Visio Divina, Mondays at 10 AM

Try a new way of studying the Bible with Lectio/Visio Divina, a guided practice of reading and discussing four different translations of a passage that will be used in the following Sunday's worship. The hourlong Zoom session meets at 10 a.m. on Mondays and includes discussion of art that corresponds to the scripture. Click [HERE](#) to join.

Faith & Fiction

March 4, 2024, 4 PM, Room N-123

We're reading: *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison

The story of a young black girl who prays for her eyes to turn blue; so that she will be beautiful, so that people will

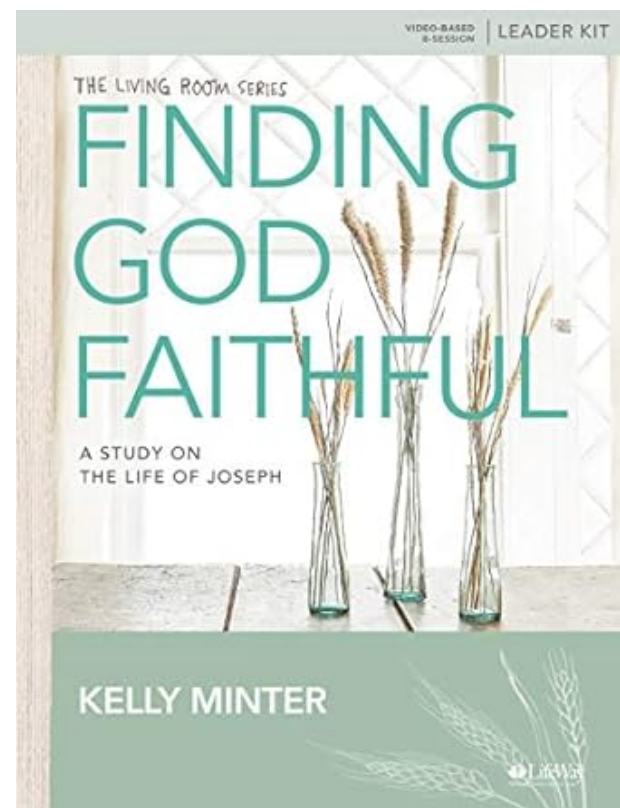


look at her, and so that her world will be different. First published in 1970, recently banned in FL public schools. Susan Luehrs will lead our discussion.

Ladies, you are invited to Bible Study: *Finding God Faithful - A Study on the Life of Joseph*

In this 8-session study from Kelly Minter, we will be reminded of God's faithfulness through Joseph's story. No matter what we walk through, God's presence is constant; His provision is enough, and His purposes are unstoppable.

Join us on Tuesday mornings,
March 12th - April 30, 2024
9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. in the FPC Youth Center



Everyone is welcome – no previous Bible study experience is required. Workbooks will be available for \$25 (includes streaming video access for all sessions). Bring a friend! If interested, please contact April Hussung at (727) 420-1758 or stapler39@aol.com. Sorry, at this time there is no childcare available.

New Member Inquirer's Class - Sunday, March 17, 10:10 AM, in the Church Office Conference Room

Whether you have been visiting FPC St. Pete for a brief time or for longer, you will want to join us for a new member inquirer's class. This is your opportunity to learn about what it means to be a Presbyterian, plus hear the answers to all those questions you may have about our church, faith, and what you need to do to become a member. We will meet in the Church Office Conference Room Sunday, March 17, immediately following the 9 AM worship service, where we will enjoy a great program from Pastor Ginny. Elders will be on-hand should you wish to join the church following the class. This is a great chance to learn about and join downtown's most welcoming church!

SAVE THE DATE!

Join the Explorers of First Presbyterian (Fun, Fellowship, and Friends group) on Sunday, March 17, at 1:30 PM at the [Tampa Bay Automobile Museum](#) which features a unique collection of vintage cars and vehicles that demonstrate special creativity and imagination in their history and



engineering.

Questions? Want to participate? See Dave Hunt on a Sunday morning or contact him any time (513-604-6090, dhunt@fpc-stpete.org).



Our next "Beach Drive Forum" will be on Wednesday, March 20!

MARCH 20: *The Dynamic History of St. Petersburg's Marine Science Complex* by Peter R. Betzer, PhD,

Founding Dean Emeritus of the College of Marine Science at USF. Dr. Betzer will talk to us about what propelled him to create the marine science program, why it was needed then, and why it is important today to have this academic program in our own back yard.

Also mark your calendars for:

APRIL 17: *From Folk Medicines to Therapeutic Drugs* by Akiko Tanaka PhD, president, and co-founder of The Tampa Bay Research Institute (TBRI). TBRI has spent over 40 years investigating the relationship between viruses, cancers, and the functioning of the immune system. As a result of our research, TBRI has uncovered the details of the healing properties of an ancient folk medicine – an extract of pinecones. Our on-going studies have now brought forth new synthetic molecules that are being developed into lifesaving immune-altering therapeutics.

Beach Drive Forums are monthly conversations for the community with intriguing speakers on thought-provoking topics. Wednesdays from 5:30-7:30 PM in Fellowship Hall (doors open at 5:30, presentation at 6:00). Refreshments and Q&A included. Open to the public; best parking is the church lot off N. Shore Drive.

BUDGET HELP – Your Giving Matters!

It helps us be the church we want, hope, and need to be! One expense in our budget is the Per Capita. This is our contribution to the expenses of the larger church (Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly). We pay \$35.56 per active member. If you are able and willing to pay this amount for yourself and the members of your family, it is appreciated. You would just note the payment as "per Capita."



College Scholarships - Apply Now!

We are now accepting applications for college scholarships! These scholarships include the Ohrns Scholarship for undergraduates and the Osborn Scholarship for Theology students. We only require one application is for both Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters (awards are split); the applicant needs to let us know if they only need it for one semester.

The deadline for Undergraduate/Graduate Scholarships is [March 10](#); The deadline for Theological Study Scholarships is [April 30](#).

For further details about these scholarships (including downloadable application forms and deadlines), [CLICK HERE](#). Please note to apply for either of these scholarships, you will need to include:

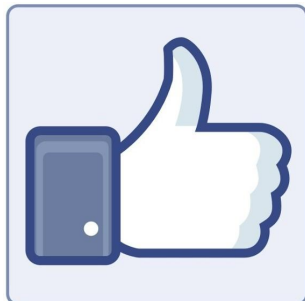
1. a completed application form;
2. a copy of your most recent high school or college transcript;
3. a 500-word essay describing your involvement in church-related activities as well as extra-curricular and community involvement activities, why you want this grant, and what you expect to do following the completion of your education.

The Scholarship Committee will review the applications and the Session will approve the final awards. Successful applicants will be asked to provide proof of enrollment and acceptance by their educational institution. Funds for the scholarship will be sent directly to the institution so be sure to give the proper name and address to which the funds are to be sent. Questions? Please call the Church Office (727-822-2031).

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 March 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 "Next" Sunday School Class, Room S-100 (new room!)
- **Sundays, 10:10 AM**, Presbyterianism class, Church Office Conference Room
- **Sundays, 11 AM**, Sanctuary Worship Service, Sanctuary or **Online**

- **Mondays, 10 AM**, Lectio/Visio Divina, via **Zoom**

- **Tuesdays, 9 AM**, Ladies' Bible Study, Youth Center (resumes March 12)
- **Tuesdays, 7 PM**, Christian Meditation, Chapel (meets in-person the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month)

- **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)

Upcoming Events:

- **Tonight, March 1**, Concert by The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay, 8 PM in the Sanctuary
- **Monday, March 4**, 4 PM, Faith & Fiction, Room N-123
- **Sunday, March 10**, 2 PM, Men's Meal Ministry cooking, Fellowship Hall
- **Sunday, March 17**, 10:10 AM, New Member Inquirer's Class, Church Office Conference Room
- **Sunday, March 17**, 1:30 PM, Outing to the Tampa Bay Automobile Museum
- **Wednesday, March 20**, 5:30 PM, Beach Drive Forum
- **Sunday, March 24**, Palm Sunday; Easter Egg Hunt at 10:15 AM
- **Thursday, March 28**, Maundy Thursday (dinner at 5:30 PM followed by a

- service)
- Sunday, March 31, Easter Sunday

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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(727) 822-2031 | 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.



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