



Our Mission. We believe we are called to faithfully serve the Lord Jesus Christ, giving glory to God.

Our Vision. We desire to be a leading, faithful, witnessing, diverse, and growing community of God's people.

Core Values

- Leading:** we have an ongoing tradition of leadership in our community. We are committed to meeting the ever-changing spiritual and physical needs of our community.
- Faithful:** our life together centers on vibrant worship and praise as we glorify God. We are a dynamic community of faith – Reformed and always reforming. We strive to be faithful managers of the gifts that God has provided for us.
- Witnessing:** through compassionate service and working for justice, we share the hope we have in Jesus Christ seeking to become spiritual partners with our neighbors.
- Diverse:** as a community of Jesus Christ, we unconditionally welcome all people in the manner of our Lord and Savior.
- Growing:** we seek spiritual growth for children and adults through prayer, the teaching and study of Scripture, and the sharing of our faith journey.

Sunday Worship Services

- 8:15 a.m. Traditional service in the chapel fall/winter/spring
 - 9:00 a.m. Contemporary service in the fellowship hall
 - 10:00 a.m. Spanish speaking service in the chapel
 - 10:00 a.m. Sunday school for all ages
 - 11:00 a.m. Traditional service in the Sanctuary
- Nursery & child care – 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

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Welcome to First Presbyterian Church Come walk the labyrinth

Experience our gift to you, a pathway to God,
as you walk the labyrinth within the
cathedral of palms.



*Show me the path of life. In your presence,
there is fullness of joy. Psalm 16:11*

The History of Labyrinths

The labyrinth is ancient. Thousands of years ago, people carved the pattern of the labyrinth in stone, marked it out with rocks in the desert, or cut into the turf in village greens. The spiral motif was imprinted on coins, and woven into fabric and baskets. There is evidence for the use of labyrinths from Iceland to India, Mexico to the Mediterranean, and Scandinavia to Spain.

During the Middle Ages, the Christian church adapted the basic form of the labyrinth and made it less linear. Instead of simply spiraling inward, the path was newly designed to twist and turn, creating a complex pattern which resembled a cross. Although evidence is scarce, it has been suggested that the path of the labyrinth was meant to represent the road to and from Jerusalem. In an age when pilgrimage to holy places was cherished as a sacred act, the inward and outward movement of the labyrinth may have offered to those unable to leave home a way of imitating that pilgrimage. Walking the labyrinth may also have symbolized the Christian life, following the path set out by Christ.

The History of First Presbyterian's Labyrinth

The prayer labyrinth here at First Presbyterian Church is one of only two in Sarasota and is based on the 11-circuit labyrinth of Chartres Cathedral in France. The labyrinth was constructed using bricks from the original street built in 1928 that ran in front of the church. The street was named Bowman Court after one of the pastors at FPC. For a century, the saints of First Presbyterian Church have walked in and out of the worship space of the church. It seemed only right to honor those generations of Christians to create another sacred path using those same bricks.

In 2006, after a back-hoe dug up the bricks of Bowman Court, several dedicated members hand-selected the ones that were used for the project. It has been estimated that 37.5 tons of bricks were hand placed on pallets to be used by the Portuguese team who then laid the bricks into the labyrinth. Also included was the construction of a 2-foot high wall around the periphery to separate the sacred space from the parking lot and Fellowship Hall. It was not realized until after the project was completed that this wall created a phenomenon of sound amplification when standing in the center of the labyrinth.

Walking the Labyrinth

The labyrinth is a path of prayer; a time to open yourself to the presence God. It is a personal walking meditation, a body prayer.

A simple way to begin your walk is to stand at the entrance, pause, and quiet your mind. You may choose to take a deep breath or say a silent prayer.

When you are ready, enter and follow the path.

The labyrinth has only one path that winds throughout – there are no dead ends.

Relax and walk at a pace that is comfortable for you. If you meet others while walking, you may step off the path and go around them or let them pass you.

Feel free to pause at any time and especially as you reach the turns in the path.

The walk toward the center is a time of letting go. With each step, release the details of your busy life, shedding thoughts and emotions, quieting and emptying your mind.

When you reach the center, sit or stand, and stay as long as you like. The center is a place of reflection, meditation and prayer. Be open to receive what there is to receive.

As you leave the center, follow the same path out. While walking, experience whatever healing, peace or sense of well-being may come.

Walking the labyrinth is a different experience for each person, each time. It is our hope that this winding path has become a mirror of where you are in your life. We invite you to return as often as you like.



*Make me know your ways,
O God; teach me your paths. Psalm 25:4*