



• ***It's an Excellent Time to Be the Church***

Jan Edmiston is the former co-moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). She now serves as general presbyter in Charlotte, North Carolina.

In a recent blog post she points out that life expectancy in the United States declined during the last two years. She points to the prevalence of loneliness and despair as one of the main causes, in addition to the opioid addiction crisis. Then she goes on to proclaim . . .

**“Why am I hopeful? Because it’s an excellent time to be the Church.**

“2019 and beyond could be the most Spirit-filled years that God has ever bestowed upon us, IF we are truly fearless disciples.

“What will the Church offer if we are being faithful?

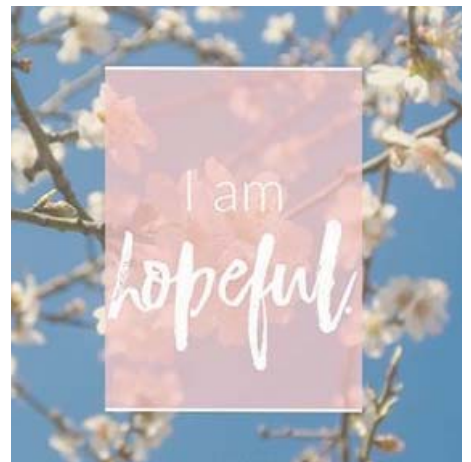
- **Community** (“God with Us” is not just a pithy promise.)
- **Healing** (from broken souls, bodies and promises.)
- **Inclusion** (even addicts and screw-ups and every kind of skin color, nationality, orientation, ability, gender and language)
- **Authenticity** (which is everything in a world when truth-telling is rare)

“Let’s pay attention out there.

**Every. Day. God. Is. Revealing. New. People. To. Love.”**

Thank **YOU** for all your gifts and graces - and all the ways you make our congregation such a healthy, Christ-centered Church. Happy New Year!

Peace,



• **Love Notes**



Thank you, First Presbyterian Church, for your dedication, commitment, and understanding of all the work it takes to help children succeed. Your willingness to support Brentwood means more than words can express. We cannot thank you enough for all that you have done and continue to do to support our staff and families. We are humbled by your extreme generosity of supplies and monetary contributions.

We look forward to our continued partnership this year with your members.



Sincerely,  
Brentwood Staff

Dear First Presbyterian family,

I am so grateful for the love and support of my First Presbyterian family during my recent recovery from a fall. Your prayers, visits, calls, and “We Care” posted filled my heart. Glen, your prayers and visits meant so much to me!

Janet Clark

Dear Children,

What a wonderful surprise! You reminded me of our children. Our hearts were filled with joy. Thank you for the gift. May God bless you all and have a good new year.

Velma Allen

• **Epiphany Sunday, January 6  
All Services**

Are we done with Christmas yet? If we think of Christmas as the understanding that God is with us, then, no - we are never really done with Christmas. The church’s celebration of Epiphany marks the time when Christ was made known to the world through the magis’ visit to the Christ child. We will celebrate with stars and light and a special appearance of the magi in worship.

• **Salt Shakers**

If you love food and fellowship, don’t forget to sign up for the next Salt Shakers. Groups of eight to ten people get together once a month from February through May for potluck dinners or lunches. Sometimes a group will choose to meet at a restaurant. This is a fun opportunity to get to know others within your church family. Complete the form and drop it in the offering plate or turn it in to the church office. The last Sunday to sign up is January 27. Bon Appetit!

If you have a question, please call Diane Bittner at (941) 755-2268 or Marcia Schaper at (941) 922-5245.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please check:

I am willing to host the first potluck and organize a date with my group.

I am willing to host a following potluck.



## • **OakStreet Stage Event**

On **Thursday, January 10**, come and enjoy the Majorajah Flamenco Trio, the first OakStreet Stage concert of the year, at 7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall!

Majorajah FlamencoTrio is an energy-charged act that combines the talents of three Florida State University alumni. Their sound blends the flavors of Spain, Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean and more.

January 2019



Now that we are all settled into our beautiful new sanctuary space, refurbished offices and updated classrooms - it's time for the fellowship hall! We anticipate the renovations of the space to begin **Monday, January 14**.

Please note that during construction, there will be limited use of the fellowship hall and, at times, there may be no access allowed. The 9:00 a.m. New Song service will take place in the sanctuary until the project is complete. This will be a great opportunity for our 9:00 a.m. folks to enjoy the beauty of our renovated sanctuary and restored stained glass windows!

We are grateful to all who are making, or have completed their pledge to the *Imagine the Future* capital campaign. The construction of the stage is contingent upon receiving all pledges made at the beginning of the campaign. Please contact Lisa Garcia, finance manager, (941) 955-8119 if your status regarding your pledge has changed.

## • **A Festive Celebration**

by Mary Elle Hunter



On the third Sunday of Advent a special gathering of students from Brentwood Elementary School with their parents, teachers and staff joined with First Presbyterian school volunteers and church members to celebrate an early Christmas. The event was the culmination of the second annual Brentwood Blessing Tree project.

The families and their children were the recipients of Blessing Tree presents of toys, clothing, and grocery gift cards. (The gifts were discreetly given to the parents to be distributed when they chose.) As each family arrived at the fellowship hall, a photo was taken of their own group as a remembrance of the occasion. Then the young guests had a chance to take part in a variety of activities, such as handprint decorations, a beanbag toss, or ornamenting Christmas cookies and pinecones.

After a traditional dinner of turkey and all the fixings, with chicken tenders and macaroni and cheese for the youngest ones, there was caroling and the recitation of the Christmas story with enthusiastic audience participation. The celebration closed with a presentation of a gift to Holly Brody, assistant principal, for new library books for the media center, and the joyful singing of "We Wish You a Merry Christmas".

Holly Brody and a delegation of teachers took a major part in the celebration, including having a staff photo taken. Teacher, Johanna Caminero observed "Everyone had a great time," adding her thanks to the volunteers from the church that spend time helping in the classrooms.

"The whole occasion was wonderful," said Holly Brody. "There was a feeling of togetherness and joy and fun! It made me feel so happy for the Brentwood families."

A profound and moving expression of gratitude from the steering committee of Invest in Children is offered to the First Presbyterian members who gave so generously to the Brentwood Blessing Tree project and for taking the opportunity to be a part of the special holiday dinner celebration. We all have been blessed in such a meaningful way this Christmas season.



• ***The Anti-Resolution Plan: Three Steps to Lose Weight and Love Your Body for Life***

*by Rebecca Henson MPT, MN, RD*

Do you want to lose weight and get healthy this year? Have you ever made a New Year's resolution that ends up falling off track by February? Here are some practical tips to help you achieve your goals by 2020:

1) **Be realistic.** Set yourself up for success by setting goals that you can realistically accomplish. For example, if you are currently eating sugary desserts after every meal and your favorite recipes all include frosting, then you may not want to vow to completely give up sugar for the year. Instead, consider a more reasonable goal, like incorporating 3 new healthy desserts into the rotation or allowing for one special sugary dessert per day instead of 5.

2) **Set measurable goals so that you know whether or not you have achieved them.** For example, instead of "I am going to work out more", try something like "I will walk for at least 10 minutes every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday morning." This way you are clear about what you are accomplishing, and you can make any necessary adjustments if things are not working out according to plan.

3) **Seek support.** Consider enlisting the support of a healthcare professional to help you with your goal setting and keep you on track. Accountability is key, and a great trainer or dietitian can be the difference between success and failure. Studies show that people who have support are much more likely to achieve lasting transformation. Other options might include a workout buddy or friend/family member who can keep you accountable.

**If you missed the October and November health programs I had at First Presbyterian, I would love to connect with you! For the month of January, I am offering a few complimentary sessions to help you identify what is holding you back from achieving your health goals. You can also find out how I might be able to support you in achieving your goals this year. Go to [calendly.com/rebeccathedietitian](https://calendly.com/rebeccathedietitian) to set up an appointment.**

• ***SunCoast Blood Drive***

A special thank-you goes to all who came out for the December SunCoast Blood Drive! 23 people were screened and 21 units of life-saving blood were collected!

**BLOOD DRIVE HONOR ROLL**

SunCoast Blood Bank wishes to extend its heartfelt gratitude to the donors of FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH and honors and thanks them for their valuable contribution — THE GIFT OF LIFE!

Margaret Benini  
William Conroy  
Kay Dunn  
Victor Garraus  
Robert Kirkpatrick  
Paul Klick  
David Low  
Rachel Martin  
John McLeod  
Phillip "Scott" McLeod  
Wendy Miller  
Jack O'Neill  
Anthony Parshall  
Kenneth Papa  
David Pipe  
Brynne-Lei Radcliffe  
Mary Fadcliffe  
Richard Saba  
Marcia Schaper  
Trisha Sparble  
Sue Spigel  
Sherry Storms  
Cheryl Track

The next blood drive will be Sunday, March 31, at 8:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

## • **Letters from Anne and Martin**

Embracing Our Differences, the SCBA Diversity and Inclusion Committee, the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee and the Boxser Diversity Initiative presents “Letters from Anne and Martin” on Tuesday, February 5, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at Temple Beth Sholom (1050 S. Tuttle Avenue, Sarasota).

Combining the iconic voices of Anne Frank and Martin Luther King, Jr., this compelling production evokes the timeless message of hope for peace and a more united world. A discussion led by the Hon. Charles E. Williams will follow the performance.

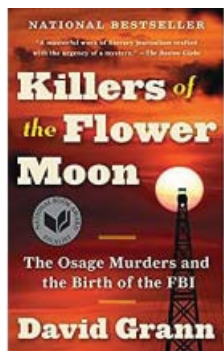
General Admission-\$30 | VIP-\$100 | Students-\$10 call (941) 350-1089 for tickets.

## • **Cowden-Smith Library News**

***Killers of the Flower Moon - The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*** by David Grann is the One Book One Community 2019 for Sarasota.

The book is history written as a detective novel. In the 1920s, the richest per capita in the world were members of the Osage Nation in Oklahoma. After oil was discovered beneath their land, they rode in chauffeured cars and lived in mansions. Then, one by one, the Osage began to be killed under mysterious circumstances. The case was taken up by the newly created FBI and one of the most chilling conspiracies in American history began to unfold.

This is the book chosen by the Sarasota County Library System to be read by the Sarasota Community this year for group events and speakers that explore the book’s themes of social injustice for the Native Americans and disregard for the natural world which the Osage regarded as sacred. Cowden-Smith Library has a copy for our First Presbyterian community to read and discuss.



## • **Presbyterian Women**

The annual PW Peace River Presbytery gathering is on **Saturday, February 2** at Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers. The keynote speaker is Rev. Brenda S. Lindsey Harcourt, an ordained pastor who has been a mission co-worker for over 10 years, teaching leadership development in Ghana and Kenya and has also taught at Presbyterian University of East Africa. There will be a parade of PW banners from each church and special music and communion during the worship service. The cost of \$12 includes continental breakfast and lunch. Check-in begins at 9:00 a.m. Lunch is served from 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. **The registration deadline is Monday, January 14.** Call the church office or Mary Webb at (941) 758-6035 to register. Please pay Mary before the deadline as she must send a check to Cypress Lake Presbyterian with our church’s registration. When making your registration, please indicate if you would like to carpool from church. Come and fellowship with ladies from all over our presbytery.

**PW Lite meets at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, January 8 in the forum.** Jean Luker and Jean Martin, who visited Cuba in October, will tell us of their experience and share photos. Also during our time together, we will address birthday cards to PW members for the entire year. Donations of stamps are appreciated.

Note the change in date; because New Year’s Day falls on the first Tuesday, PW Lite will meet on the second Tuesday and Bible study will meet on the third Tuesday in January.

Anyone that can’t attend the January meeting but wishes to donate stamps can leave them in the church office. For more information about any PW activity, call Pamela Lamb at (941) 210-7478 or Flossie Paul at (941) 536-0974.



• **SURE**

*by Dorothy Murphy*

The SURE personnel committee, of which George Chorba and Dorothy Murphy are members, confidently and enthusiastically recommends Brandon Henshaw to be the new lead organizer for SURE. The committee conducted a thorough interview with Brandon following the DART process including the formal rating scale on passion, recruiting, fundraising, coachability, dependability, calling, turnout and issue victories. None of the members rated Brandon any lower than 4 on any of the attributes [1 low - 5 high]. The committee believes Brandon has the passion, humility, intellect, organizational and leadership skills to lead SURE today and in the future.

Co-Chairs Rev. Wes Bixby and Rev. Patrick Miller send the following message: “We are pleased to announce the hire of our new executive director, Brandon Henshaw.”



Brandon comes to us from our sister DART organization, BUILD in Lexington, Kentucky. He brings knowledge, experience, and a passion for justice. Brandon will begin on January 2, 2019. Brandon was successful in working with BUILD to get the city to consult with national experts to reduce violent crime in Lexington.

Brandon is originally from Butler, Pennsylvania, a small town outside of Pittsburgh. He attended Allegheny College where he studied philosophy and political science. After getting his undergraduate degree, he spent two years

teaching seventh grade math and science in rural North Carolina. He decided to become a community organizer because he was frustrated with many of the injustices that his students faced, and he was tired of feeling powerless to do anything about it.

Brandon and his wife, Mindy, are excited to be with us in Sarasota. He looks forward to joining us in working to make Sarasota more like the city that God intends it to be.

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

With Brandon’s leadership, those of us committed to the moral issues SURE addresses, look forward to working for bold answers to some of the injustices people living in Sarasota encounter on a daily basis.

**SURE Dates:** Later in January (date and place to be announced in a Sunday bulletin) an informal welcome with Brandon will be an opportunity for connection and fellowship among our SURE churches.

**Monday, February 25,** at 6:00 p.m. - Come to the Rally, First Presbyterian has committed to have 40 in attendance.

**Monday, March 25,** at 6:30 p.m. - Come to the Sarasota Municipal Auditorium. First Presbyterian has committed to have 90 in attendance. The goal for the entire audience is set at 1, 189.

**Cross Connections** is a monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, Florida, Volume 37 Issue #1. Please submit articles for the next issue by January 15, 2019. Articles submitted are proofed and edited.

• **Birthdays**

2 Marilyn Bulkley  
Pat Feeney  
Melissa Lowery  
Cindy Jean  
4 Barbara Chase  
5 Kay Mathers  
Jane Messimer  
Rod Rhoades  
6 Kyle Kellogg  
Mary Ellen Miller  
7 Jen Smith  
Jean Emery  
Ellen Hayes  
Sarah Moore  
8 Jeannine Counts  
Bob Rodriguez  
Rick Bagwell  
Alex Morrison  
Nick Stine  
9 Barbara Woods  
Don Stahl  
10 Vincent Becking  
Pat Jirus  
Steve O'Rourke  
11 Kristen Kelly  
Bill Wishart  
Harry Steltmann  
12 Buck Fry  
Jessica Burnham  
Marti Cleland  
Sally Furtick  
Gerald Moody  
13 Keaton Van Nostrand  
Greg Courter

14 Bob Friday  
Elaine Rice  
15 Allison Wright  
Michael Daly  
Danielle Daly  
Dick Teckenbrock  
Darla Gulliver  
Laura Morris  
James Millikan  
17 Bradford Nees  
18 Barby McKown  
Patty Haupt  
Tracy Bretoi  
Lily Walther  
19 Lisa Saba  
Dave Muir  
Taylor Hill  
20 Francesca Muir  
Sara Boudarga  
Jacob DiDonato  
Van Baker  
21 Malcolm Good  
22 Donna Ferguson  
Hayes Frandsen  
Thom Dederer  
23 Dylan Interval  
Tom Jirus  
24 Amanda Morris  
Brynne Radcliffe  
25 Steven Moore  
Phil Hohmann  
Jean Hall  
Jerry Bedford

26 Cindy Millar  
Lois Moebus  
Jami Kellogg  
Betty Hastings  
Alina McDonald  
27 Juliette Williams  
28 Janice McLeod  
Jill Fegan  
Tyler Reasoner  
Emily Cain  
29 Brett Catlin  
Carrie Mills  
Lynette Taylor  
30 Leigh Ann Webb  
Sam Hall  
Victor Garraus  
31 Tom Andrews  
Steve Knopik  
Thomas Carter

• **Anniversaries**

3 Bill & Sindy Burggraf  
7 Paul & Julie Klick  
8 Kim & Chris Whitford  
13 Tom & Velma Allen  
20 Bill & Elaine Rice  
23 Bill & Jean Fulton  
28 Jim & Jane Minton



**Blessings from  
your church family**



## **Cross Connections**

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[www.FirstPresSarasota.org](http://www.FirstPresSarasota.org)

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