



• **What Now?**

- Raging waters over and across the Florida Panhandle. An earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia. A devastating monsoon strikes the Philippines and south China. And thousands still struggle to recover from Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico and Hurricane Florence in North and South Carolina.

- Dear friends of many years succumbing to cancer and complications after surgery and heart disease.

- Approaching elections with starkly contrasting choices for governor and senator here in Florida, with seemingly very little agreement on any major issues.

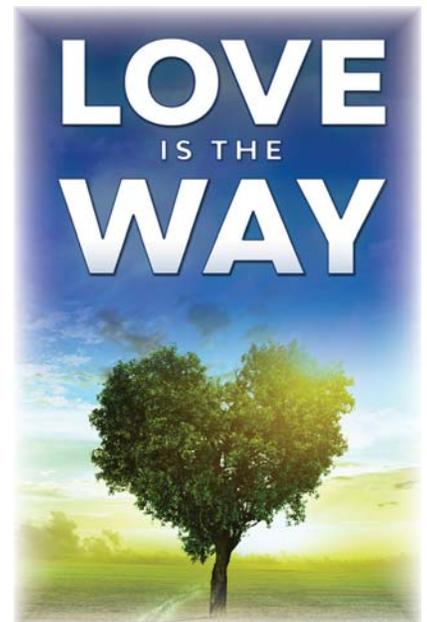
This is a difficult moment.

Edward Grinnan is the vice president of Guideposts and the author of *The Promise of Hope: How True Stories of Hope and Inspiration Saved My Life*. He writes this:

*“For every moment of pain in my life,
there have been many more corresponding moments
of kindness and compassion.
Yes, we might be a collection of our wounds,
but we are even more so
a reservoir of the love that has healed us.”*

You and I have been given the love of God in Christ, a powerful, transformative love. Through our wounds, through the difficulties of these moments, may we be a reservoir of love. May we know God’s power – the power to open our hearts and share God’s love with others.

Peace,



• Love Notes



A visiting Presbyterian from Wisconsin recently attended worship at First Presbyterian. She was impressed with the *Invest in Children* program through reading about it in the bulletin. With a background in teacher education, she contacted Jinny and Ron Miller, and immediately signed up to spend week-days of her vacation as a volunteer at Brentwood.

The following is an abridged version of an email received by the Millers from the vacationing volunteer:

I want to thank you again for helping to organize my assisting at Brentwood Elementary. This is a terrific program, and it has been working well. I helped every day for over two weeks, with tutoring, copying, organizing handouts, giving spelling tests, etc. The teachers pretty consistently commented on how helpful it was to have another adult in the room and virtually every classroom with a willing teacher could benefit from extra assistance from an adult.

I strongly advocate for/encourage as many church members as possible to participate. I think the teachers at Brentwood are terrific—very well organized and prepared, skilled in classroom management, knowledgeable about curriculum and wonderful and patient with the kids. Many of the Brentwood children are doing well and are right on target. But, obviously, many children across the country, including at Brentwood, have unmet emotional and learning needs. Thank you again!

*All my best,
Susan Root*

Church Friends and Ardis Rea,

So touched by your thoughtfulness. Thank you for all your prayers.

Love,
Tom & Velma Allen

Gratitude

A huge thank-you to Clare Carter, director of our award-winning preschool. Clare and members of her staff invited Brentwood School volunteers to join them in a 16-hour interactive seminar titled “A Mind in the Making.” Two

experienced trainers led us through science-based discoveries of how infants and young children develop seven essential life skills: focus and self-control, gaining perspective, communicating, making connections, critical thinking, taking on challenges, and self-directed learning. My personal appreciation for helping me be a more effective classroom volunteer, and for seeing how much Clare’s faculty enjoy, support and encourage one another.

George Chorba

• Help Our Homeless Thanksgiving Luncheon

Caregivers will tell you that the greatest need for people experiencing homelessness is friendship and family. Thanksgiving can be a depressing time, reminding many suffering with homelessness that they may not be with their family. Give the gift of your friendship for 90 minutes this Thanksgiving Wednesday by caring for Sarasota’s homeless.

Table hospitality host volunteers are very much needed at the **Wednesday, November 21**, Thanksgiving Wednesday Sarasota Ministerial Association Luncheon for those experiencing homelessness. This, the 18th annual, family-style-all-the-trimmings Thanksgiving luncheon and program, will be at First Baptist Church (1661 Main Street, Sarasota). Volunteers will need to arrive between 11:00-11:15 a.m. and help until 1:00 pm. Comfortable, casual attire is appropriate.

To volunteer or for more information, e-mail Chaplain Tom Pfaff at tompfaff@verizon.net or call Chaplain Tom’s assistant, Carolyn at (941) 549-9650.



November 2018

Fellowship Hall Update

We are very excited that a contractor has been selected for the build-out of our permanent stage and new storage area, as well as the much-needed renovation of the bathrooms! It will take approximately twelve weeks to complete the project and we anticipate work to begin mid-January.

Notes From Our Mission Partners

Dear First Presbyterian,

Thank you for your donation to Family Promise of Sarasota, Inc. Your generosity helps us to provide a "help up" to families and get homeless children into stable housing. Your contribution will allow us to continue to help children and their families who have become temporarily homeless. First Presbyterian has been a long and faithful partner in Family Promise and we are eternally grateful.

Sarasota County suffers from an epidemic of child homelessness and it is our goal to help stamp it out, one family at a time. It is through the kindness of donors like you that we are one step closer. Again, we thank you for your generosity and participation in this greatly needed ministry.

*Sincere regards,
Toska Strong, Trustee*

Dear First Presbyterian Members,

We at Brentwood Elementary can't begin to express our gratitude for your generosity and blessings. Your gift of \$22,000 will make a tremendous impact on our students, families and staff. Through your kindness, we can purchase furniture for our new media center.

Construction has been underway for many months and our students have had limited access to library materials. Many of our students do not

have books and learning materials at home. Our renovated media center is nearly complete, and we will soon have a gorgeous building which has been redesigned on the inside with new carpet, doors and windows. We were given minimal funds for outfitting our new space and because of your support, we can buy furniture that will allow the newness of our new media center to shine. Students will now have interesting and fun places to read and families will have comfortable seating waiting for guidance and counseling support.

First Presbyterian has given Brentwood more than just financial support, but also the time and energy of volunteers who have worked supporting our students with reading, writing, math, science and art. You have also given our students and teachers much needed school supplies. We are so grateful to the congregation of First Presbyterian. You have made a tremendous impact on our Brentwood community. Our students, their families and staff are better for all that you've given and all that you've done. We appreciate each gift you've given to our Brentwood family.

Thank you for your generosity, support and love.

*Sincerely,
John Weida, Principal*



• **New Member Bios**

submitted by Mary Elle Hunter, membership committee

Dorothy “Dottie” Albright and James Millikan were among the new members who joined First Presbyterian in September. A married couple, they moved to Sarasota from Atlanta where their entrepreneurial spirits thrived.

They have been together for forty years. The first ten were as great friends, and they will soon celebrate thirty years of marriage.

James, already a member of the First Presbyterian choir, pursued a career in Atlanta as a musician and entertainer. Dottie ran her own marketing firm, and together they helped clients-friends plan down-sizing moves.

They were drawn to First Presbyterian by Glen’s “on-message” sermons, as well as Kelly’s inclusive warmth, and what they describe as Steven’s magical music.

Among the newest members of First Presbyterian Church are **Paul and Margaret Benini**, who joined the FPC family in September. Coming to Florida since the 70s to visit Margaret’s sister, in 2004 they initially bought a home in Nokomis as snowbirds, where they attended Venice Presbyterian Church. They moved to Sarasota last year.

Margaret and Paul both grew up in northern New Jersey, and after their marriage became Presbyterians. Their family, composed of three married children and five grandchildren, live in New England, New York and Brussels, Belgium where their daughter is with the State Department.

Paul’s career as an electrical engineer included a position with a nuclear plant in Salem, New Jersey, which occasioned a move to nearby West Chester, Pennsylvania. Now fully retired, he enjoys playing the piano, and was active with building homes for Habitat for Humanity families.

Margaret’s career was as a stay-at-home mom, but she found time to do a lot of animal rights volunteering over the years. She also participated with Meals on Wheels, serving meals at a homeless shelter, and being a school helper.

When the couple first attended a service at First Presbyterian, they immediately felt the warmth expressed by the congregation and the ministers, and they knew that it would become their church home.

Geraldine “Jerry” Bernier joined First Presbyterian Church in September. She and her husband, Ed, moved to the Meadows three years ago from Alexandria, Virginia where she was a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church.

Jerry attended Indiana University, the University of Washington, and studied French, Arabic and Farsi, as well as area studies at the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Virginia. Joining the United States Information Agency as a Foreign Service Specialist, she pursued a career in Washington, D.C. and in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Egypt, and Algeria.

She and her husband, who was also a Foreign Service officer, retired at the same time and spent ten wonderful years on Hilton Head Island in South Carolina before returning to Virginia. They have two daughters, and five grandchildren, one of whom lives in Bradenton with her husband, another is a Peace Corps volunteer in the Ukraine, and three are living in northern Virginia.

A busy person in her retirement, Jerry loves to read, cook, entertain and garden. She shares leadership responsibilities for the Meadows Book Club and serves on the newly-formed steering committee for the Meadows Garden Club. She also volunteers in registering voters and getting out the vote.

Her membership in the Presbyterian Church began at age 14 in Yakima, Washington. Since then she has attended several other Presbyterian churches and was ordained and served as a deacon in the Arlington, Virginia and the Hilton Head Island churches, and briefly as an elder at Hilton Head.

After three years of attending various churches in Sarasota, Jerry visited First Presbyterian.

(cont. on page 5)

• **New Member Bios** (cont. from 4)

From the first Sunday, she knew this was the church where she felt most welcomed and comfortable. She loves the ministers, the choir, the friendly congregation, but most of all she was impressed with what the church does through its outreach programs into the community to further social justice, tutoring support for disadvantaged youth and so many other local missions.

Wayne and Rita Estes joined First Presbyterian Church in September, along with their two adult daughters, **Allison** and **Jennifer**. They also have a son, Steven, who resides in Tennessee, their former home before moving to Florida. The story of how they chose Sarasota and First Presbyterian is a unique one.

The move to Florida came three years ago when Wayne became associated with Sebring International Raceway. Because preparations for Sebring racing take place in January, February and March, the “season” means something entirely different to them. After traveling throughout the state, during the off months, they were intrigued with Sarasota and bought a place here, with expectations of becoming longtime residents when Wayne retires.

Rita has “sort of” retired from her career as a respiratory therapist. She received her degree from the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta. Wayne’s career began as a sports writer in Savannah after receiving a degree in journalism from Georgia Southern. He has become a top executive in motorsports, where he is happy to put on the show, rather than being a part of it.

The Estes started their married life in Savannah, Georgia, lived in other cities in the “Peach” state, as well as in Bristol, Tennessee. They were always members of Presbyterian churches, having served as elders and deacons and taught Sunday School. Rita loved the trips she took to Montreat with youth, and had a passion for an Appalachian mission program that repairs houses for families in need.

Wayne and Rita felt more at home when attending the New Song service at First Presbyterian than any other church they had

visited in the Sebring area. They were also impressed with the incredible musical talent at the *Celtic Christmas* service which made them feel like they were back in Appalachia. They hope to be a part of the First Presbyterian family most of the other nine months of the year, and say that they will “give up their seats” to snowbirds come January, February and March.

David Low and **Sherry Storms** became members of First Presbyterian Church in September. The couple are long-standing Sarasota residents with Dave previously an Illinois resident, and Sherry originally from Pennsylvania.

Their combined families of four children, two each from a previous marriage, are composed of nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Sherry has two daughters, one of whom, an attorney, lives in Roswell, Georgia with her husband and two boys. The other daughter, who has a master’s degree in psychology, and her husband are Orlando residents and have a son and daughter.

Dave, with a degree from Western Michigan University, is a licensed general contractor, primarily building commercial structures. He says the Lord has blessed him through the building of five churches over the years. Presently, he is working as a project manager/ estimator for a Bradenton firm. Sherry followed a career in human resources, retiring from Sarasota County government in 2015.

Sherry was raised in a Presbyterian church, while Dave has been a member of several churches of various denominations. Currently, they attend a community Bible study that meets Thursday evenings in Sarasota, and have benefited from learning God’s word.

They have been looking for a new home church, and have found it in First Presbyterian. Sherry says they felt very comfortable when they first came to visit. They particularly enjoy coming to the early service.

• **Peace River Presbytery** **A Visit to Cuba**

by Jean Luker, elder

Jn 4:7-8 A Samaritan woman, came to draw water and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink."

Water, water, everywhere, and all the boards did shrink; Water, water, everywhere, Not any drop to drink. -Coleridge

Cuba, surrounded by the waters of the azure Caribbean, is as you may imagine it, lush and tropical. You may picture a place where the people live simple lives and are sustained by bountiful natural fruits and vegetables. When twenty-seven members of the Peace River Presbytery traveled to Cuba to visit the Presbyterian Churches and the Seminary at Matanzas at the end of September, we were thrilled and surprised by what we found there.

The island is lush, and small homes are sometimes surrounded by banana trees and other edible vegetables and fruits thriving in the tropical sun. But; food is rationed on the island, we were told. Yet the people of the Presbyterian churches that we visited in the Matanzas Presbytery found ways to share more food than any of us could consume. However, this part of Cuba is filled with structures that may soon collapse.

At the seminary, we heard from the Rev. Dr. Ary Fernandez, who serves as the head of the synod, co-pastor of one of the churches in Matanzas and professor at the seminary. Ary was the guest speaker at Peace River Presbytery's meeting at First, Sarasota in February of 2018. Together with other clergy, we learned about the programs that the seminary offers to prepare people to serve in ministry in the ways that (all) churches need. Their programs allow the future servants of God and the church to learn and work in tandem. The seminary at Matanzas is related to the seminary founded in the late 1940s in Havana (by Justo Gonzalez and others).

Ary and his wife, Beidy, serve a Presbyterian Church in Matanzas, where there are currently 11 other churches and include a number of mission churches with the presbytery. The Presbyterian churches face many difficulties starting with very limited financial resources, and resultant very low pastoral salaries. The churches have taken up the challenges in proclaiming the

love and reign of God and in recognizing the diversity of the people of Cuba. This effort to re-connect with the people of the United States actually began with a conversation in 1985. There are now more than 90 PC(USA) churches sharing in partnerships with other Presbyterian churches throughout Cuba!

Over the weekend, the PRP group was divided up to allow us to visit seven different churches in the presbytery. The delegation from First, Sarasota spent two days in the city of Cárdenas visiting the Juan G. Hall Church where Alison Infante Zamora and his wife, Sarai, serve as pastors. They live in a comfortable apartment in the church with their two young children. We met with Presbyterian Women, who offered crafts for sale for missions (I bought several of these and could barely close my suitcase for the return trip!). We also met with a group of medical professionals to hear their concerns about their ability to offer the care that is needed by the population.

It was wonderful to meet both groups and learn about their ministries. The most enlightening experience was to meet with the youth. Youth in Cuba include preschoolers (3 or 4 years old) to age 30! The young adults care for and include the youngest children in the activities that are planned for the youth of the church. They include the youngest children in appropriate activities, supplying advice and patient love in abundance with the youngest members of the group. The youth offered a Beatles concert for the whole Juan G. Hall congregation on Saturday evening following supper. Pastor Alison's two-year-old son clearly desired to be amongst those who participated in the watching, singing, and dancing of the iconic Beatles music.

We saw how fragile the buildings in Cuba are in Cárdenas at the Juan G. Hall Presbyterian-Reformed Church on Sunday, September 30. A carefully planned and executed worship service was in process when a rainstorm suddenly began. Shortly, the foyer of the church was filling with water. The members told us that recent rains had actually flooded the very sanctuary where we were sitting. But, on the Sunday we were there, everyone quickly worked to soak up the rain and dry the floor.

After the church service, we toured the city
(cont. on page 7)

• **Peace River Presbytery - A Visit to Cuba**

(cont. from page 6)

of Cárdenas. We rode in the ubiquitous horse-drawn carriage, through a section of the town to the edge of it where there is an industrial park that once was inhabited by the plants that produced such iconic Cuban products as Bacardi Rum. Now the industrial area stands as a dusty silent marker of the way things once were.

I leave you with this thought, as the woman at the well moved on from serving water to Jesus, to serving God’s people through Jesus: We too can offer the Word, and serve with our Cuban Presbyterian brothers and sisters in this new Presbytery partnership.



• **Stephen Ministry**
Care For People
Facing Tough Times

Are you going through a difficult time?

There is no need to go through it alone. A Stephen Minister can help.

Stephen Ministers Care.

Stephen Ministers are members of our congregation who listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support for people experiencing a crisis or going through a difficult time.

Stephen Ministers receive special training to provide one-to-one Christian care to those in our congregation and community experiencing challenges in life—grief, loneliness, divorce, hospitalization, disability and many other life difficulties.

If you or someone you know needs a Stephen Minister, please call the church office (941) 955-8119) to speak with Pastors Glen Bell or Kelly Fitzgerald or with Stephen Minister Leader Steven Phillips.

If you would like to learn more about the Stephen Ministry program at First Presbyterian Church, go to firstpressarasota.org and find our “Stephen Ministry” category in the linear menu. Click on it to learn about this important confidential, one-on-one ministry that is available to you.

Therefore encourage one another and build up each other. - 1 Thessalonians 5:11



• **Presbyterian Women**

Monday, November 5, at

11:30 a.m., PW will gather in the fellowship hall for a luncheon followed by guest speaker

William McKeever, director of The Academy at Glengary which provides support, education and job training for adults with mental health issues. One of the participants will come and share their story. Tom Andrews will play the piano during social time and lunch. **Please bring canned food to be donated.** We will also collect the annual Thank Offering. To make a reservation for lunch, please contact either Mary Webb (941) 758-6035 or the church office (941) 955-8119. **The deadline for reservations is Friday, November 2.** The cost of lunch is \$10 and will be collected at the door in cash or check. Everyone is welcome! If you can’t join us for lunch, come at 1:00 p.m. to hear our guest speaker.

Tuesday, December 4, at 9:30 a.m., all members and guests are invited to the church sanctuary for the fourth annual Presbyterian Women’s Advent Retreat. Join us for a morning of prayer, reflection and fellowship followed by a catered lunch. Please bring a pair of new, petite tennis shoes to be given to children at Beth-El. The cost of the program and lunch is \$10. To make reservations for the retreat and lunch, call the church office at (941) 955-8119 or contact Mary Webb at (941) 758-6035 no later than Thursday, November 29. Payment will be collected at the door in cash or check. Please contact Flossie Paul (941) 536-0974 or Pamela Lamb (941) 210-7478 with questions about any PW activity.

Comments received from the 2017 Advent retreat:

It was a perfect day.

The Advent journey was original and especially meaningful!

This cherished event is an annual blessing.



• ***Are You Hearing As Well As You Could?***

Free Hearing Screening at First Presbyterian

*submitted by Cheryl Track,
Faith Community Nurse*

Hearing loss is often gradual and, therefore, something that you adapt to. You may not notice it for months, even years. But slowly, the hearing apparatus that nature provided does wear out for many as we grow older and it's simply part of the aging process - and not one of the good parts.

There's a growing collection of detailed studies that demonstrate, clinically, that people with hearing loss do better addressing the limitation when they act quickly. In other words, the first time the family tells you to turn down the TV, it's time for a hearing test.

Why? When the hearing nerves and the areas of the brain responsible for hearing are deprived of sound, they atrophy - weaken - making recovery from hearing loss through mechanical means, also known as a hearing aid, that much more difficult. The fancy term used by hearing professionals is auditory deprivation.

The key to hearing better longer is to keep the ear bits active and NOT let them atrophy. Through the use of hearing aids - early, when you first notice hearing loss - you'll enjoy a better quality of hearing longer.

Causes of Auditory Deprivation in Adults

The most common cause is simple. The person with the hearing loss chooses not to treat their hearing loss with amplification - hearing aids. When no action is taken and the nerves of the hearing mechanism aren't used, they become deprived of stimulation and slowly become weakened.

Can Hearing Aids Give Your Ears The Work-Out They Need?

Well, there are several studies that indicate that the ear can recover from the effects of auditory deprivation; things get better with a pair of hearing aids. The sooner you recognize hearing loss, the sooner you get treatment for hearing loss, the more success you will have with hearing aids and the better hearing you will have.

Then There's The Brain

You don't actually "hear" a sound until the brain's hearing centers receive electrical signals from the ear, process those signals for location, proximity and cause and generate some reaction.

Not only do the hearing nerves weaken over time, the hearing centers of the brain, under-utilized, also tend to weaken - atrophy - as a result of auditory deprivation. In other words, the hearing centers no longer receive and process as many electrical hearing messages from the ear.

The recovery of the hearing centers of the brain also weaken slowly over time. Starting to get the picture?

"But I Don't Want To Go!"

Research clearly shows the sooner you treat hearing loss the better outcome you will have with using and adapting to hearing aids.

The solution? Keep your hearing nerves fresh and stimulated - don't deprive them. See a hearing professional when you first suspect hearing loss. And, if you've suspected (or known) you have hearing loss, move your ears to a hearing professional instead of turning up the TV and radio.

Finally, a pair of hearing aids, regardless of your age, will improve life's quality. Today's hearing aids are lightweight, sleek, very discrete, powerful and packed with conveniences that make hearing fun again.

The All Ears Hearing mobile van will be at First Presbyterian, Sunday, November 4, 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Look for the van in the church parking lot outside of the fellowship hall.

Taken from allearshearingservices.com

Mark your calendar:

The SunCoast Bloodmobile will be at First Presbyterian Sunday, December 9, 8:45 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. To schedule your gift of life, please call the church office (941) 955-8119. If you donate at a SunCoast location, make sure to give them our church drive code number 186, crediting the church for your donation.

• **Join the Heart Walk!**



My name is McLain Miller! I'm a 17 year-old senior at Riverview High School and part of First Presbyterian Church. I have participated in Heart Walks since the age of one because I was born with five heart defects and was diagnosed with Shone's Complex shortly after. I have undergone three open-heart surgeries and multiple other procedures. Every year I participate in the Heart Walk and raise money for the American Heart Association to help other people going through a similar journey as me. While I still face a major surgery in my future, every year I look forward to making a difference in the lives of those who are impacted by stroke and heart disease! Please join me and Team McLain for this three-mile walk in this year's Sarasota Heart Walk at JD Hamel Park (Main Street and S. Gulfstream Avenue) on **Saturday, November 10 at 7:30 a.m.**

If you also want to support the American Heart Association as part of Team McLain, you can follow this link: http://www2.heart.org/site/TR/HeartWalk/GSA-GreaterSoutheastAffiliate?px=11522677&pg=personal&fr_id=3703

For more information, contact me at mclainsrq@gmail.com or Cheryl Track at the church (941) 955-8119. Thank you!

• **Cowden-Smith Library News**

Connections - A Lectionary Commentary for Preaching and Worship, Volume 1 is now on the new book shelves of Cowden-Smith Library. Three of the commentary essays were written by our Rev. Glen Bell. The commentaries are designed to connect congregations to scripture. Glen's commentaries connect the lectionary readings from 1 Samuel, Jeremiah, and Nehemiah to other texts and themes throughout scripture. Other commentaries connect texts with themes in the larger culture outside scripture. This volume takes us from Advent through Transfiguration Sunday which is very timely for Advent and Christmas!

Also, for those looking inward this month of Thanksgiving, visit our spirituality section which includes **Here and Now - Living in the Spirit** by Henri Nouwen, **Devotions** by Mary Oliver, and **Help Thanks WOW** by Anne LaMotte. These are very diverse authors but with the same message of gratitude.

WWW.FIRSTPRESSARASOTA.ORG

• **A Fulfilling Christmas Project**

by Mary Elle Hunter



Look for the special trees that will be placed in the sanctuary narthex, chapel and the fellowship hall on Sunday, November 18. Each tree is a Brentwood Blessing Tree (formerly called Angel Trees) to provide Christmas joy to children in need and their families through our *Invest in Children* partnership with Brentwood Elementary School.

The trees are adorned with stars, each one representing a \$30 gift of clothing, a toy, a grocery store gift card or a contribution to the Brentwood library fund. Select a star(s), and be sure to put your name and "star code" on the sign-up sheet and take an important instruction sheet with you. Then return your selection(s) to the church by Sunday, December 9.

The project will culminate with a dinner celebration for the children and their families on Sunday, December 16. Members of the church are invited to share in the celebration. However, space is limited, so watch for reservation information in the church bulletin or in the December *Cross Connections*. You may also wish to take a star from one of the trees to contribute funds for the dinner itself.

What an inspired way this is to share how we have been blessed by being a blessing to others!





• **SURE: Bringing Positive Change to Sarasota**

by Dorothy Murphy

Members of the 19 congregations comprising SURE met on Monday, October 15, at Bethlehem

Bible Church for its Community Problems Assembly. Much was accomplished. We heard reports regarding affordable housing, restorative justice (out-of-school suspensions) and a criminal justice collaborative report.

What's Next: Affordable Housing

We learned on a phone call with the Florida Housing Coalition that the city and county are aware of the tools to effectively address this issue. But there are political obstacles. SURE is going to work this year to identify how the county and city could fund a Housing Opportunity Fund, while also demonstrating why it would be beneficial. We are working on growing our list of community endorsements, creating a summit of stakeholders to vouch for the need for a housing fund, and garner more support for this cause. In many other communities, the pursuit for a housing fund took over five years. SURE is entering its third year of work on this issue. Our hope is to eventually have a fully-funded Housing Opportunity Fund in place. We will continue to push for affordable housing developments and a pilot program along the way to get a fund in place.

Restorative Justice: Problem Areas

Last year our school district suspended over 2,400 students. These suspensions disproportionately affect African-American children. Although they make up less than 10% of the student population, they accounted for 30% of the suspensions.

New issues for this year include the creation of a new police department for our schools. We are unsure how this new group will affect restorative practices. Previous school resource officers did receive training in this program. SURE is concerned with the lack of adequate data that tracks this program and its effectiveness.

After a successful visit to a program in Jacksonville, SURE is meeting with our school

district officials to discuss implementing restorative strategies in all grade levels and schools.

SURE has scheduled a meeting with the new school police chief Grohowski for Tuesday, October 23 in order to discuss both restorative practices and civil citation usage in this new department.

Statewide Criminal Justice Collaborative Report

The Florida legislature passed a civil citation bill last March. It wasn't until October 1 that the Department of Juvenile Justice changed protocol. The change might mean that children who get a post-arrest diversion would still be searchable by background checks.

The Department of Juvenile Justice currently is allowing officers to check "No reason given" for not giving a child a civil citation. This is counter to the intent of the bill, which was meant to ensure all children got a civil citation, unless there was a qualifying reason they shouldn't. Our collaborative has made progress on this issue, but we have not yet resolved it.

Our statewide collaborative is working to monitor this new bill, but is also listening for other issues we can address in the criminal justice system. Our collaborative will be meeting four times throughout the next year to discuss our research and next steps. To be part of this statewide effort, affordable housing or restorative justice, please contact Dorothy Murphy at (941) 485-3518.

But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

- Amos 5:24

• **Birthdays**

1	Jeannette Hohmann Morgan Angel Gayle Kloss	13	Josh Hord Betty Silvertooth Caroline Steinwachs Will Steinwachs Mary Williams	24	Jim Jackson
2	Bob Kimbrough Doug Adamson		Adaline Tyrna-Leshko David Householder	25	Ron Saba Alison Ulsh Betty Mills Isabella Mendenhall
3	Fred Becking Jill Houglund Sue Pantling	14	Denis Romanenko Lindsey Capps Steve Largo	26	Emilie Kimbrough Trudy Loeffelman Kassidy Saba Hayden Khuu Joe Brown, III
4	Bobbie Stevens Bonni Arbuckle Ed Clissold Marta Jimenez-Aquino	15	Jo-an Keep A.J. Jones	28	Andy Reasoner
5	Sue Peters Abby Wishart Jerry Feeney Brandon Taaffe	16	Samuel Kellogg Bob Flint Bob Lindsley Kelly Saba Ruth Shaw Ann Fowler	29	Bob Barkley, Jr. Susan Carter Kelly Rhodes Ruth Gonzalez-Brewer John Tatum Olivia Mendenhall
6	Lamar Matthews, Jr Dave Lamb Emma Johnson	17	Steve Phillips Bettie Blake Morgan McSweeney Julieta Diaz Marcy Secor-Harrington	30	Fran Lawrence Molly Cole
7	Jim Kimbrough	18	Judy Bosold Billie Burquest Charlie Stottlemeyer David Johnston		
8	Bill Heburn Clarence Jones Abbey Tyrna Mike Bressan	19	Don Fleming Thom Olshewsky Monica Steiner		
9	Georgia Yeomans	20	Jim Dean Raymond White Lela Ronan Liam McGuire Paul Smith Mary Cady		
10	Al McFadyen, Jr.	21			
11	Andrew Millar John Schaub, III Jason Herron David Halstead Daina Strong Steven Phillips	22			
12	Joan Maxwell Sally Thompson Austin Garraus Olivia Bressan	23			

• **Anniversaries**

2	Tony & Daina Strong	22	Raymond & Twila White
3	John & Jennifer Hutchens		Mark & Carol Smith
6	Kym & Helen Biggar	23	Brian & Cheryl Track Nathan & Papitchaya Simpson
8	Sandy & Jean Kirkpatrick	26	David & Michelle Young
11	Shelley & Vicki Wacksman	27	Mike & Mary Groninger Bob & Mary Kelly Joe & Joan Callan
12	Troy & Aly Papa	29	Lamar & Jo Watson Robert & Mary Willis
16	Bill & Barbara Epperson		
19	Ray & Judy Hord Dennis & Barb McSweeney		
20	David & Darla Gulliver		
21	Jo Jo Morrison & Nery Diaz Van & Sue Baker		



**Blessings from
your church family**

Cross Connections is a monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, Florida, Volume 36 Issue #11. Please submit articles for the next issue by November 15, 2018. Articles submitted are proofed and edited.

