



• ***From the Bridge Pastor***

The days of Eastertide are upon us—fifty days between Easter and the “birthday of the church”, Pentecost. This year the Day of Pentecost falls on May 31st which means we have an entire month to enter more deeply into the meaning of Christ’s resurrection. In the words of Peter Marshall, “May we never live another day as if He were dead!”

What would it look like for you and me to truly live as a post-Easter people? The words of the Apostle Paul come to mind:

*Let love be genuine; hate what is evil,
hold fast to what is good;
love one another with mutual affection;
outdo one another in showing honor.*

- Romans 12:9-10

For us as a congregation, those are powerful words as we work through the inevitable emotions that follow the unexpected departure of two pastors in the midst of a Covid-19 lockdown. But we can do it! You can do it.

Ideally, we would be meeting together to hear updates, ask questions, listen to one another’s thoughts and process all of this together. The Session and church staff are doing just that each week via Zoom conference calls. You play a critical role in this process as well as you continue to:

- pray for the people of First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, its staff and leaders,
- financially support the work God is doing and will do through this congregation, and
- find creative ways to reach out in love.

God is with us. Christ is alive and the power of the Holy Spirit is already showing us the way through the challenges of today to the promises of tomorrow.

Live in peace,
Pastor Kathi Wiggins



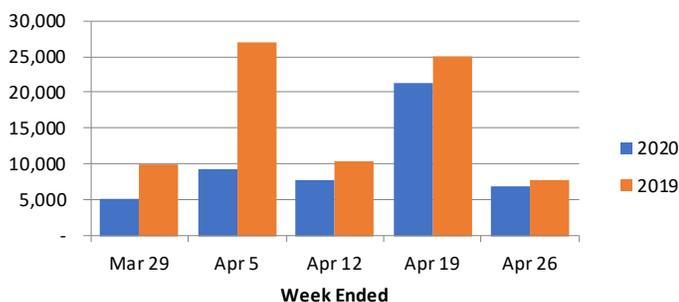
• **A Word About Church Finances**

by Craig Gesell, co-moderator business affairs

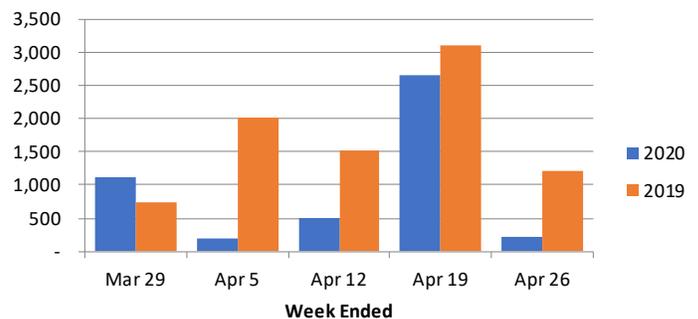
Our members and guests are hurting not only from the COVID-19 Pandemic effects, but also from the sudden loss of both of our pastors. We have not been able to meet as a church family for over a month. During times of social upheaval and disruption, people most need and value the faith community. We need your help now, more than ever, to maintain our missions and ministries and service to our community. Your financial support makes this possible.

Not surprisingly, our pledge and non-pledge collections have dropped off in recent weeks. Pledge receipts, the financial lifeblood of our church, is down nearly 40% from last year during this five-week period.

Pledge Receipts



Non-Pledge Receipts



The good news is that we are still slightly favorable to our budget through the first quarter. We are doing what we can to conserve our financial resources. We have asked all staff and committee chairs to eliminate and delay non-essential spending.

We want to thank you for your faithful giving and remind everyone that even though we are not meeting as a congregation, there are easy ways to continue to support our church.

Giving Options

Please continue to mail your contributions to us at the church or donate online. Your gifts make a great difference during this challenging season.

Mail In: During this time of social isolation when the church campus is closed, all mail, including contribution checks, securely arrive to our church office. Our same trusted system of processing, recording and depositing gifts goes on.

Online Giving: If you are interested in giving electronically through our secure e-giving process, please visit FirstPresSarasota.org and select the online giving button, or scan the QR code with your mobile device.



Text Giving: Are you interested in the convenience of contributing by text message? Text FPC2050 to 73256 to donate via text. Standard rates may apply.



• **Love Notes**

I want to give a big thank you to Cheryl Track our faith community nurse for putting together such a wonderful heart-filled *Walk to Jerusalem*. Also to all the team members for their devotionals and questions they had for us. And of course for all the participants in our journey. Even now that we are all separated I find myself rereading the devotionals and asking myself many of the questions asked of us. Loved being able to see and read the many places we have visited. What a wonderful way to see the path of so many going to Jerusalem. Until we meet again. May the peace of Christ be with you all.

Love,
Barbara Chase



• **Presbyterian Women**

It's time to order the **2020-2021 PW/Horizons study guides** *Into the Light: Finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament*. Please contact your circle leader or call Mary Webb at (941) 758-6035 by Friday, May 15. The cost is \$10.

2020 Birthday Offering of Presbyterian Women

PW supports projects that improve the lives of people in need through generous giving with their annual birthday offering. This offering provides grants to both national and international organizations. This year's grant recipients include:

- Center for Social Assistance to the Disabled, Family and Children – Preobrazheniye Assisted Living Facility in Davydovo, Russia
- GAP Ministries of Augusta, Georgia
- Community Presbyterian Child Learning Center in Payson, Arizona
- Liberty Community Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota

Funds to support these projects would not be possible without your generous contributions. To contribute to this year's Birthday Offering, please mail your check made out to Presbyterian Women to Mary Webb, 3016 21st Court West, Bradenton, FL 34205-4300. Please write "Birthday Offering" in the notation line and mail it by Friday, May 15.

For more information, visit:
www.presbyterianwomen.org/birthday

WWW.FIRSTPRESSARASOTA.ORG

• **Schools Are Closed But Education Continues**

by *Jinny Miller, co-coordinator of Invest in Children*



On April 14, Holly Brody, Brentwood Assistant Principal, sent this update on how Brentwood Elementary is coping with the closure of schools. Read on . . .

Brentwood's distance learning is in full swing! Teachers are busily planning and meeting with students via online applications such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Classes consist of some learning, but a good portion is excitement of the students showing their homes and pets. It's a much-needed break for students and teachers as they manage this new way of learning and teaching.

There are several families that are caring for multiple children with only a single computer. This presents scheduling challenges for parents still trying to work a normal job from home and teach their children.

Brentwood is committed to not only educating students in this time, but also simply offering encouragement and support. Some parents do not have the wherewithal to lead their students' learning and our Brentwood teachers are taking this in stride. Many of our own teachers have young children at home that they also need to teach.

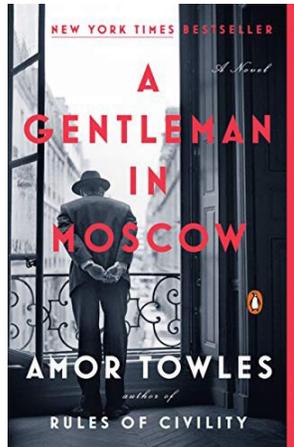
There are long hours for our teachers and they are willingly and selflessly trying to maintain some sense of normalcy for their students. It is truly a unique, unparalleled time for us all. Everyone has open hearts and minds to best serve Brentwood's students.

Thank you, First Presbyterian Church, for your prayers and support!

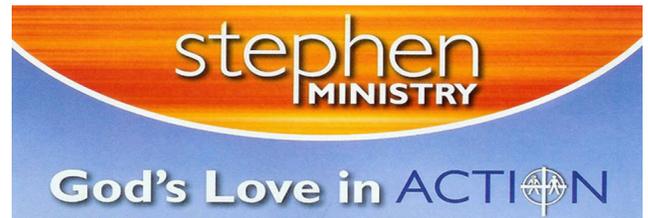


• Cowden-Smith Library News

A Gentleman in Moscow is a book about new beginnings under the most difficult circumstances and in finding strength, humility, and grace in those beginnings. In 1922 Count Alexander Rostov is deemed an unrepentant aristocrat by a Bolshevik tribunal and is sentenced to house arrest in an attic room in the grand Hotel Metropol across the street from the Kremlin. His life in the decades to follow, in the words of the author Amor Towles, exhibits “a will to joy in the human spirit.” He is open to forging relationships with others in the world of the Metropol including deep friendships with a talented chef, a beekeeper on the roof, a temperamental actress, and a precocious little girl whom he adopts. In doing so, he becomes a man of purpose.



Essentially, this is a book about how to live life to its fullest and expanding our world even when the circumstances are such that the world is closing in on us. This clever book full of humor, charm, and hope is on the shelves of the Cowden-Smith Library and can be easily downloaded for anyone looking for a page-turner during this social distancing time at home.



• The "After" People Stephen Ministers Provide Care in Life's Crises

Just call Stephen Ministers the “after” people—
... after you find the pink slip in what’s now your final paycheck;
... after the doctors have said there’s nothing more they can do;
... after the relationship ends but the wounds are still bleeding;
... after family and friends have heard your story one too many times but you still need to talk it out.

That’s when the Stephen Ministers step in. They are there to listen and care—not to solve problems or fix things. They understand that Christ is the “cure giver” while the Stephen Minister is the “care giver.”

Our Stephen Ministers are church members who have received 50 hours of Christian caregiving training in such topics as actively listening to feelings and issues, maintaining confidentiality, and ministering to people in specific life crises such as challenges in pregnancy and childbirth, divorce, serious or terminal illness, and any form of loss or grief. This is especially true during these months of the Covid-19 pandemic. You may be experiencing deep anxiety, fear, or grief over the illness and loss of life. Maybe for the first time in your life you need someone to help you through this difficult time.

Stephen Ministry is confidential. The identity of those receiving care and what happens in each caring relationship is private.

If you would like a Stephen Minister to call on you, a loved one, or a friend, please contact Cheryl Track, faith community nurse, or Steven Phillips, music director and congregational care.

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.



• **Build Your Daily Routine By Optimizing Your Mind, Body, and Spirit**

*submitted by Cheryl Track,
Faith Community Nurse*

Six weeks into an eight-week challenge, the gym I attend had to close its doors temporarily as many businesses have had to do. It was not more than 24 hours and the gym reached out to its members with a training app to be able to continue our routines at home. Part of me was sad, as I was only a few weeks away of being able to check that challenge (which consisted of changing your eating habits and high intensity training) off my list and move on to something else. I don't want to lose all that I had gained, so I continue with my daily routine of exercise.

I can say the same thing about our 12-week virtual challenge, *Walk to Jerusalem*, that recently came to an end. Done, check it off the list, move on to something else. No! I made great strides in my spiritual life by participating in this challenge.

I made the time to incorporate both of these challenges into my life and realized the activities I have been doing are going to be a part of my lifestyle and are not temporary changes. My daily routine continues, making the choice to eat well, exercise, meditate and have devotional time.

Here are a few tips to help you build your daily routine:

Seize the Morning, Optimizing your Mind:

- At night, before going to bed, lay out your workout clothes, eliminating excuses in the morning!
- Set your morning alarm for the same time every day.
- Start the day with a mantra. Positive thinking helps manage stress.
- * Be proactive. Don't check email or social media first, which starts your day off in a reactive mode instead of proactive mode.
- Start your days focused on **you** and you will be in a better state-of-mind to help others.

- Read a book, even if it's one page a day. Reading can boost your intelligence, increase your brain power and strengthen your ability to empathize with other people.
- Make a daily to-do list. Helps to plan your day in a way that allows you to get the most out of it.

Optimizing your Body:

- Breathe: practice deep breathing, so when you really need it, it will come naturally.
- Eat productive foods: fish, nuts, seeds, avocado, blueberries, dark chocolate.
- Drink more water.
- Get out of your chair...often.
- Exercise and move!
- Get enough sleep, no less than 7 hours.

Optimizing your Spirit:

- Get quiet, try meditation.
- Find a well of inspiration from books, music, podcasts, videos, and people.
- Practice gratitude.
- Learn something new every day.
- Give to others, open a door, smile, give a genuine compliment to someone.

Establishing a positive daily routine is a self-investment and a way for you to do your best for the rest of the world!

Taken from open.buffer.com/daily-success-routine/
Chris Winfield

• **Dial Hope**

Dial Hope is a daily devotional program, founded by the late Dr. Roger Kunkel, former parish associate of our church. For encouragement and hope, every single day, please dial 941-955-8929 or go to dialhope.org.



• **SURE**

by Dorothy Murphy, SURE Team Leader



As we shelter apart, yet together as one family of faith, our SURE ministry continues. Micah's charge to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God" is the same today for us as it was thousands of years ago. SURE research teams of Restorative Practices, Affordable Housing, and Criminal Justice continue their work in Sarasota. When we meet using virtual technology, teams continue to discuss, develop, support, gather and interpret data, and create agendas for meetings. Always, we work toward bringing solutions to our core issues. It is interesting and heartwarming to discover those in key positions feel it is necessary to be included in SURE's mission.

We look forward to our house meetings in the fall and our Community Problems Assembly on October 5. We need to hear the stories of how our First Presbyterian congregation has been affected regarding these key issues.

Stop the Arrest of Children in Florida

In 2016, SURE successfully achieved the implementation of juvenile civil citations. The intention was to reduce the number of children who were being arrested in Florida. Accountability was included as part of this effort. The question to be monitored: Why are children eligible for a civil citation arrested? Officers were to state why an eligible child was arrested.

Unfortunately, there is a box on the officer's paperwork that allows an officer to check, "No reason given" for an arrest. Out of the

approximately 5,000 civil citation eligible children who were arrested last year, 4,700+ had the "No Reason Given" box checked. This is unacceptable.

The statewide collaborative of Florida DART organizations (of which SURE is part) have tried to meet with Department of Juvenile Justice Secretary Marstiller without results.

The SURE Criminal Justice steering committee is asking members and friends living all around Florida, to email Secretary Marstiller urging her to have the "No reason given" box removed. The link to the email is <https://sure.good.do/stoparrestingchildreninflorida>.

Together, with our ten sister organizations in Florida, we must work to stop the arrest of children in Florida for "No reason given."

For more questions or information, please contact the SURE office, suresarasota@gmail.com or Criminal Justice Chair, Laurie Etter, laurietter@gmail.com.

*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction,
faithful in prayer. - Romans 12:12*

• **Birthdays**

1	Pam Harding	14	Kate Keeley	28	Leona Huber
	Sean Boudarga		David Boehm	29	Richard John
2	Tyler Schaub		Cord Van Nostrand		Rob Morris
	Jay Swick		Conor O'Neill		Branford Adumuah
	Eric Delp		Ron Vander Schaaf		Flossie Paul
	Keysha Rivera	15	Susan Reaves		Jane Minton
3	Charlotte Davis-Friedman	16	Jeff Rencher		Terri Runk
	Gunther Lahm	17	Rachel Martin	30	Matthew Eastmoore
4	Kim Schwartzkopf		Marcia Brown		Marshall Eastmoore
	Roger Guerrero	18	Beth Ann McFadyen-Boyer		Ellen Forbes
	Jean Luker		David Lalmond		Michelle Messick
	Bill Racine		Sara Miller		Madeline Blanton
5	Dan Kelly		Daniel Rosa	31	Alexander Taaffe
	Dave Luebs	19	Valerie Schaub		Ron Saba, Jr.
	David Landers		Cynthia Widman		Mark Saba
6	Jane Boyden		Emily Weitekamp		Matthew Morris
	Diana Hovorka		Chloe Alsum		Debbie Delaney
	Jean Dumas	20	Dorothy Powrie		
	Colleen Forristall		Clare Carter		
7	Jim Barnett		Sydney Garcia		
	Lucas Raynor		Joanne Simons		
	Molly Harding	21	Ansley Saba		
8	Rainey Blomgren		Kris Abitz		
	Karen Johnston		Emily Harding		
	Janet Barley		Scott Griffith		
9	Devin McSweeney	22	Sheryl Vieira		
	Ella Schwab		Anna-May Jacobsen		
	Maryann Boehm		Patty Haas		
	Cameron Khuu	23	Candy Swick		
	Julie Griffith	24	Betsy Chapman		
10	Shelby Harding		Abby Clissold		
	Seth Westerberg		Victoria Guenther		
12	Phil Kleinschmidt		Jane Wright		
	Diane Price		Margaret Benini		
	Mary Groninger	25	Kirsten Whitford		
	Bob Kelly	26	Katherine Keeley		
	Barbara Zappala		Nery Diaz		
	Nathan Dunn		Aislynn Loyless		
	Star Allen		Pam Schweizer		
13	Kay Steinman		Rebecca Carlstad		
	Caden Tyrna-Leshko	27	Kelsey Anderson		

• **Anniversaries**

1	Steve & Michelle Fantauzzo		
2	Don & Stephanie Fleming	23	Dave & Pamela Lamb
4	Cord & Sarah Van Nostrand		Dent Davis & Mary Ziegler
6	Jordan Cook & Lynn Riechmann		David & Lisa Dunlap
10	Robert & Cynthia Widman	24	Connor Davis & Karen Eber Davis
	Nick & Amy Stine	26	Adam & Patricia Martin
	Mike & Susan Okey		Kelly & Scott Rhodes
13	Darrell Cain & Kim Thomas-Cain	27	Carl & Geri Stover
20	Doug & Stephanie Tarnowsky	30	Charlie & Marcia Morris
22	Craig & El Gesell		



**Blessings from
your church family**



Cross Connections

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