



• **One Step at a Time**

After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, the Lord spoke to Joshua, son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying, "My servant Moses is dead. Now proceed to cross the Jordan River, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the Israelites. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you, as I promised to Moses." - Joshua 1:1-3

Talk about painful transitions and reeling emotions! The one they had followed for 40 years, the one who had shared their hardships, helped carry their burdens and promised to lead them into the Promised Land was gone. An entire generation had been born and raised under his leadership. And now this.

It's not hard to imagine the rollercoaster of emotions that swept over Israel's camp that day. Grief, anger, fear, confusion. . . the list goes on. And yet, God does not even pause in telling them "what" to do and "why" to do it:

"Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given to you."

What were they to do? Keep moving forward. Step by step, they were to walk into, then through, those troubling waters. One step at a time they were to walk into new territory carrying with them memories of the past and hope for the future.

Why were they to do it? Because to hold back was to lose ground. To reach the Promised Land they had to place one foot in front of the other and keep on going, together. To give up, reverse course or veer in another direction was to forfeit some part of the promise. Yes, God promised the land, but their steps were required to take possession.

The promises of God have led this congregation for 114 years. Not always with ease or smooth sailing, but always with the knowledge that God has a plan for this church in this place at this time.

Friends, now is the time to walk together one step at a time,

Pastor Kathi

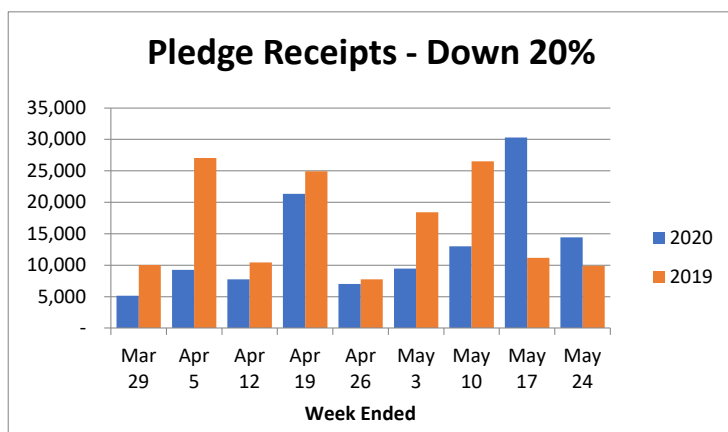
*Surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord,
plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.
-Jeremiah 29:11*



• **A Word About Church Finances**

by Craig Gesell, co-moderator business affairs

A big THANK YOU goes out to everyone who has continued to pledge during this difficult time and especially those who have gone above and beyond to help keep our ministries and missions operating in our community. Our church has suffered a decline in revenues since mid-March when the Florida Stay-at-Home orders were enacted. The last few weeks have demonstrated an encouraging trend in pledge receipts; however, we are still down 20% from last year during this period.



The financial aspects of keeping our church vibrant and healthy can be stressful in normal times. Folks, these are certainly not normal times and the effects of the pandemic have only been intensified for our church family as we struggle with the untimely departure of our pastors and the raw feelings that we are coping with as we begin to search for new leadership.

We have a dedicated staff and a team of volunteers that continue to adapt and carry on with the missions and ministries of our church. Please continue to pray for them and for our leaders. With God's grace and in time, we will be able to re-open our doors and once again welcome our church family to worship together.

In the meantime, please continue to give what you can as every bit counts in this time of need for 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.

Online: If you are interested in giving electronically through our secure e-giving process, please visit FirstPresSarasota.org and select the online giving button.

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

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.

• **We're on the Look-Out . . .**

First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota strives to be a strong, member-led congregation. Please help us continue to grow our ministry by sharing possible nominees for the office of elder and deacon with the Church Officer Nominating Committee. When suggesting a name, please indicate which office you believe the potential nominee is best suited for and the reasons you feel they would be a good leader. Below are the basic requirements for those who would serve as officers:

- Attend worship regularly
- Make a financial pledge and honor that commitment
- Faithfully attend committee and session meetings (elders) or board of deacon meetings (deacons)
- Actively participate as a session committee co-moderator (elders)
- Participate in serving communion the first Sunday of each month (elders - although deacons are welcome)
- Commit to working as part of a supportive group

Send potential nominee suggestions to the nominating committee co-moderators:

Rebecca Clissold, rebeccaclissold@gmail.com
or
Lisa Saba, riclissaba@aol.com



• Love Notes

Merle and I will always be grateful for so many friends in our church family. In April, when I returned from Sarasota Memorial Hospital for quarantine and recovery from viral pneumonia and the Coronavirus, each day brought a flood of cards and notes and texts and prayers too numerous to name here. Know it was like “a band of angels watching over me.” I will always remember your care and concern.

George Chorba

I want to thank the “We Care” poster team for the wonderful expression of prayerful support that I received today!

On May 6, I had a precipitous drop in my heart rate that led to a momentary blackout and minor accident (the palm tree came out much better than my van!). I was EMTed and received a pacemaker that should give a boost to a 77-year-old heart if/when needed. I feel great and look forward to more adventures and opportunities ahead! Stay safe all and may blessings abound!

Floyd Churn



SURE

by Dorothy Murphy
SURE Team Leader

SURE

You are not alone in wanting to know when our lives, our work, our church, or any plans for 2020 will be able to return to some sense of normalcy. Uncertainty does not rest easily within us. Matthew 6:34 as interpreted in *The Message* translates it this way, “Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.” But until “the time comes” we pray, asking God to provide us with daily resources of comfort, strength, guidance and peace.

As we continue to shelter apart and practice hygiene and physical distance directives, SURE perseveres in its work for justice. SURE continues to work with community leaders seeking to influence justice principles for the ways in which policies are designed and implemented.

Important Issue Updates: Affordable Housing

Dozens of SURE leaders met virtually with Sarasota Mayor Ahearn-Koch to discuss next steps that we want to see taken towards the establishment of an affordable housing fund with \$5 million in dedicated revenue.

Criminal Justice

SURE leaders participated in a statewide effort to remove the “no reason given” option on the state form that officers must fill out when they choose to arrest a child who was eligible for a civil citation. Thousands of people participated in this campaign across the state, and it resulted in us getting a meeting with the Department of Juvenile Justice to discuss the matter.

Restorative Practices

SURE leaders met with school board members Goodwin and Zucker in March to discuss the continuation and growth of the restorative practices pilot program that we won in the spring of 2019. Both board members agreed to support the plan to continue training at the five elementary schools that are a part of the pilot, and to add three other elementary schools.

New Associate Organizer Hired

Joining lead organizer, Brandon Buker-Henshaw, we are pleased to welcome Taylor Marzouca who began work on May 1.

Hi, my name is Taylor Marzouca and I’m the new associate organizer at SURE! I was born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, and I just graduated from Allegheny College with a BSc in Global Health Studies, where I also minored in Community and Justice Studies. I’m the youngest of five sisters. I’ve played tennis for most of my life, and I love cooking and baking for others. I’m very excited to be working with SURE and I’m looking forward to meeting everyone soon.

Cross Connections is a monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, Florida, Volume 38 Issue #6. Please submit articles for the next issue by June 15, 2020. Articles submitted are proofed and edited.

• **Thoughts About Communion**

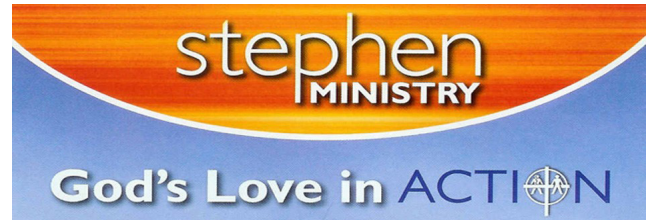
by David Householder, elder

In session's discussions about communion I have been reminded of a teaching that may be worth sharing during this Covid-19 time. The gospels tell us about the meal when Jesus created a new sacrament to remember the new covenant he was about to die for. It replaced the Jewish Passover feast which was instituted by the Lord to help the Jews remember the old covenant and how he saved them.

The words of institution include "For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." There is another way to hear this without changing the meaning. Whenever you eat or drink remember . . .

We don't have to be in a formal setting, but whenever we enjoy the fruits of the earth, whenever we eat and share a meal, remember we do not live by bread alone, and the one who gives us the food we give thanks for also gave his life for our salvation under the new covenant.

While we are not able to celebrate communion in public worship, perhaps its more important to remember the covenant each time we say grace for our meal.



We like to think of ourselves as being self-reliant and pride ourselves on being able to take care of our own needs. Phrases like "carry your own load," "be your own man," "pull yourself up by the bootstraps" are common idioms in our American culture. These values guide us to be responsible and individualistic. There are times, however, when these ideals may keep one from seeking timely help. Sometimes life surprises and humbles us. We simply may not be able to solve or deal with a problem all on our own. A sudden change in life, a loss, unwelcome news, and yes, a bad healthcare diagnosis can create a crisis that may become overwhelming. At times like this, it may be important to have someone listen, care, and walk with you. That is the wonderful service that Stephen Ministry provides.

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 Cheryl Track, Faith Community Nurse or Steven Phillips, Director of Music Ministries/Congregational Care.

If you would like to learn more about the Stephen Ministry program at First Presbyterian Church, go to www.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.





• **The Gift of Listening**

*submitted by Cheryl Track,
Faith Community Nurse*

People are reaching out more because sheltering at home is getting arduous. The novelty has long worn off, and the emotional, relational, and economic stresses are mounting. Part of what makes what we are all experiencing so difficult is there isn't anything any of us can do to fix it. This is when listening becomes even more critical.

There are times when the goal of listening to someone talk about a challenge is so we can offer a possible solution. For example, if someone is struggling with how to use Zoom and asks if we can help, we listen until we have enough information to offer a helpful response. A different, deeper kind of listening is needed, though, when we are listening to problems that cannot be solved. In this case, the gift, the intention of our listening, is for the other person to feel truly cared for and heard.

The word compassion means "with suffering." To listen with compassion is to stand with a person in the midst of their struggle. It is to be present with them in a way that helps them to feel loved, honored, and respected. It is one of the greatest gifts we can give one another.

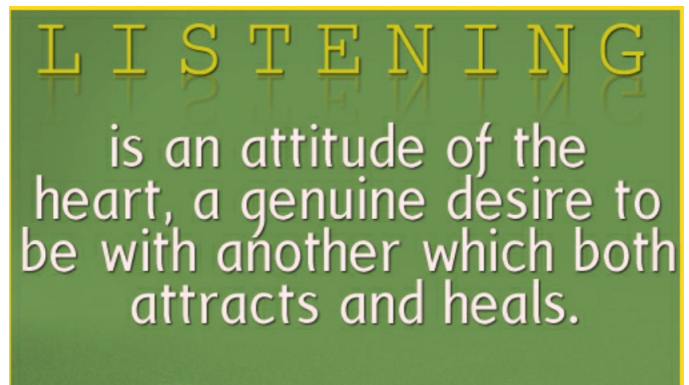
It has been pointed out that it is perhaps not a coincidence that the words listen and silent contain the same letters. To truly listen, we have to be comfortable with silence. We also have to be comfortable with silence or not speaking or responding too quickly so as to hijack the other person's story.



You don't need to merely take my word on the power of truly listening to another; you can experience it. Over the next day or two, I invite us all to make an effort to listen intently to the people with whom we interact. Practice the discipline and intention it takes to listen deeply to another person. As you listen to them, listen to truly understand what they are saying, experiencing, feeling, and thinking, and not merely to respond. Ask clarifying questions that let the person know you really care about what they are experiencing. Be still within yourself and be fully present to what they are saying to you. Try this several times and note what happens.

And because reading is a form of listening, I would like to thank you for listening to what I have shared here. I hope it inspires you to listen more carefully and to be more fully present to the people in your life, especially those who are feeling frightened, overwhelmed, and alone right now.

Taken from: *Weekly Words of Wellness - Living Compass*, Scott Stoner, May 1, 2020



• **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.



• **Family Promise is Moving Ahead**

submitted by Barbara Chase

This letter was received from the Family Promise board of trustees. We are thrilled with their anticipated re-opening. If there is anyone interested in helping coordinating our FPC volunteers please contact Barbara Chase at (941) 953-5092.

Dear Family Promise of Sarasota Friends,

The Board of Trustees hopes this note finds you and your families safe and healthy.

It has been our promise to keep you informed as to our progress toward opening and sheltering homeless children and their families. As you might imagine, the homeless situation has become worse during the quarantine, which highlights the urgency of our needed progress toward opening our homeless shelter program.

We have made some significant progress toward this goal by securing a day center and office space at Grace Church near Vamo and Tamiami Trail. Soon, we will start construction to make the space comfortable for our staff and guest families as they search for jobs and housing. Grace Church is one of our host churches, and they have been as excited as we are about helping us move forward. We really appreciate all the support they have given us.

Should you know of anyone who works in construction and might be willing to help us in some way, please let me know. Joining together to help those in need is an opportunity to show our solidarity and compassion for each other.

Another critical milestone to our opening and to our long-term success is the search for a director. We are excited to say we have started the search process and will advertise our search in several venues, including the National Family Promise newsletter.

The board would like to ask for your help. It is possible that a qualified candidate may be part of your congregation and would appreciate hearing about the opening.

The board of trustees is also looking for prospective board members, especially those with fundraising experience, community connections and communications experience. Please contact me or any board member to express your interest.

With many of our host congregational campuses temporarily closed due to COVID-19,

our board has been in discussion about how we might help homeless families until we resume sheltering in our host congregations. There are ideas that have been used around the country with other Family Promise affiliates. We will be discussing these options with our partner congregations shortly.

We hope this update keeps you as excited as we are about our progress and our commitment to serving the homeless families in Sarasota! Should you have any concerns, recommendations or questions, we encourage you to share those with us. You are the heart and soul of Family Promise of Sarasota, and without your support we will not be successful.

May God bless you and keep you and your families safe.

Sincerely,

*Doug Francis
President, Board of Trustees
Family Promise of Sarasota
dfrancis112@comcast.net
941-921-6820*

Once again, we'd like to give special thanks to our partner congregations for their patience, commitment and support:

- *Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church*
- *Church of Hope*
- *Church of the Incarnation*
- *First Congregational United Church of Christ*
- *First Presbyterian Church*
- *First United Methodist Church*
- *Grace Church*
- *Greater Hurst Chapel AME Church*
- *Islamic Society of Sarasota Bradenton*
- *Northminster Presbyterian Church*
- *Pine Shores Presbyterian Church*
- *Seventh Day Adventist Church*
- *Siesta Key Chapel*
- *St. Andrew United Church of Christ*
- *St. Boniface Episcopal Church*
- *St. Margaret Episcopal Church*
- *St. Martha's Catholic Church*
- *St. Paul Lutheran Church*
- *St. Wilfred Episcopal Church*
- *Temple Beth Sholom*
- *Temple Sinai*
- *The Shore Church*

• **Birthdays**

1	Peggy Fry	15	Adam Martin	24	Cheryl Track
	Blake Williams		Bobby Dorshaw, Jr	25	Marilee Young
	Kathie Dodge		Kat Brass-Piper	26	Jesse Adumuah
	McKayla Taaffe		Annette Landes		David Clapp
2	Juliet Noble	16	Stephen Mitchell	27	Bill Rickloff
	Heather Blanton		Steve Dean		Dottie Goodale
	Jeff Bartell		David Federico		Susan McDonald
3	Eric Walther	17	Dennis McSweeney		James Taylor, II
	Larry Myers		Reva Mitchell		Brooke Saba
4	Thyra Schwab		John Edds	28	Suzie Barnwell
	Tom Hanway	18	Chuck Holmes, III	29	Matt Bretoi
5	Bill Dunn		Judy Kuebbeler		Becky Allen
	Bill Fulton		Ryken Miller		Hal Davidson
6	Jinny Miller		Willie Sutton		Bonnie Lankford
	Lilly Dean		Emory Frandsen		Gary Gering
	Steve Fantauzzo	19	Barb McSweeney		Christine Mathis
7	Rebecca Clissold		Jennifer Contreras	30	Dee Stottlemeyer
	Bill Mutryn		Dorothy Murphy		Aubrey Weedman
8	Rich Dulaney, Jr		Katie Saba		Phyllis Kennette
	Sarah Raynor		Steven Gaeta		Judy Rhoades
9	Diane Bittner	20	Deborah Downs		David Low, Sr
10	Twila White		Heather O'Neill		
	Connor Landers		David Morris		
11	Wendy Miller		Karen Eber Davis		
	Katie Smith		Gay Tennis		
12	Dick Webb, IV		Sara Schwartzkopf		
	Robbi Lyn Armstrong	21	Cooper Davis		
	Paul Klick, III		Patrick Mitchell		
	Jeanne Manser	22	Andrea Mack		
	Bonnie Strickland		Elliott Johns		
13	Marilyn Barkley		Carolyn Cooke		
	Phyllis Ewald	23	Leslie Lindell		
	Bryan Loyless	24	Janet Clark		
	Dick Aubry		David Young		

• **Anniversaries**

6	Greg & Heidi Knudsen	20	Ed & Rebecca Clissold
	Larry & Sara Myers	21	Kent & Sara Miller
8	Ron & Jinny Miller		Kyle & Allison Mendenhall
9	Thom & Janet Olshewsky		David & Mary Federico
10	Bill & Emily Rickloff	22	Tom & Barb Andrews
	Don & Jane Wright		George & Merle Chorba
11	Bob & Nancy Lindsley		Steve & Erin Dean
	Chuck & Linda Hollen		Jim & Marcia Brown
	Roger & Mary Cady	24	Bill & Kay Dunn
12	Roy & Jennifer Yahraus	25	Thomas Friedman & Charlotte Davis-Friedman
	Tom & Margaret Noble	26	Dwight & Donna Ferguson
13	Mark & Jean Martin		Phil & Harriette Humphreys
14	Bradford & Leona Nees	27	Richard & Edith Phillips
	Jim & Dorothy Murphy		Gary & Debbie Williams
	John & Marilyn Wadsworth		Wayne & Rita Estes
15	Phil & Judy Kuebbeler	28	George & Gail Buermann
	Vance & Dana Bauer	29	Lamar & Jan Matthews
	Thomas & Rachel Martin		Jim & Elaine Barnett
	Jerry & Anna Bedford		Graham & Linda Hart
17	Roy & Betsy Chapman		Bill & Nancy Racine



**Blessings from
your church family**



Cross Connections

First Presbyterian Church
2050 Oak Street
Sarasota, FL 34237-7038

(941) 955-8119

www.FirstPresSarasota.org

Return Service Requested

• Invest in Children

The certificate at right is for our Brentwood volunteers and all those in the congregation who have supported this awesome mission initiative. Your time, talent, supplies, Christmas gifts, financial support and prayers made a significant difference during the 2019-2020 school year!



SUPERSTARS
BRENTWOOD ELEMENTARY



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

YOU ARE APPRECIATED

BECAUSE OF YOUR
INVESTMENT IN
THE CHILDREN OF

BRENTWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

May 17, 2020

Thank You!

FROM THE FPC STEERING COMMITTEE
KAY DUNN, LORRAINE FOLTZ, RACHEL MARTIN,
ALAN & LINDA NELSON, SANDI SOPER, DREW STUART
JINNY AND RON MILLER