



CROSS CONNECTIONS

November
2020

Dear Friends,

I want to thank you for taking the time to respond to the session's survey about congregational life and worship during the pandemic. More than 140 responses were received, and the session is even now pouring over lengthy documents containing the responses. A team of three elders will work to distill those results and report back to you with what we're learning.

In the meantime, I want to share news of upcoming opportunities for you to return to 2050 Oak Street, as you feel ready.

On **Sunday, November 1**, at 4:30 p.m., there will be a brief service of remembrance in the sanctuary, in honor of All Saints' Day. We will light candles in memory of those who lit the path for us. Come pray, listen to Steven Phillips on the piano and Isaac Mingus on the cello, and draw strength from the scriptures we will share. Masks will be required in the sanctuary; we will have all the doors open; and we will be seating in every third pew. (For those who prefer to worship from home, we will include an All Saints' remembrance in our morning worship, which will be recorded and available any time after 7:00 a.m. on November 1.)

We also are delighted to announce that (weather permitting) our own Ted Eastmoore, Jimi Camastro, and Steven Phillips, will offer a live outdoor concert on the church campus with *Goodbye Eddie*, on **Saturday, November 21**, at 4:00 p.m. Bring masks, lawn chairs, and your own non-alcoholic refreshments. There will be plenty of room to spread out while we enjoy a family-friendly concert of vintage rock and R&B. Please park in the municipal lot, as we anticipate using the church parking lot for seating.

Assuming that those two gatherings go well, we're hoping to have at least one worship opportunity and one fellowship opportunity each month (in addition to the fellowship that is occurring quite naturally among members who are helping with the All Faiths Food Bank distribution each Thursday!). We hope that pattern can continue until the time comes when we return to a more normal rhythm of life together.

And if you are interested in gathering for casual conversation, I will plan to be available at the labyrinth each Monday morning in November from 10:00 until 11:00 a.m. Please feel no pressure to come (I travel with a book!), but I'll plan to be there if you should want to connect. I'd love to know you better.

Grace and peace,

• Stewardship 2021



*I will open rivers on the bare heights,
and fountains in the midst of the valleys;
I will make the wilderness a pool of water,
and the dry land springs of water. - Isaiah 41:18*

In the Bible, living water—water that moves and is not stagnant—is closely associated with the presence of God. Our stewardship theme, *Currents of Faith*, reminds us that we, too, are carried and sustained by the movement of the Spirit.

Over the past several Sundays, we have heard three members of our congregation—Joanne Simons, Claire Steiner, and Michael Fingerle—share how they have been led by God’s movement through this place.

We all can tell our stories of what First Presbyterian Church means to us. Relevant worship, mission opportunities, education and spiritual formation, friendships that span generations, faithful staff, and a welcoming facility—all equip us for service in the world.

On November 1 we will celebrate Commitment Sunday as we bless and give thanks for all that we have received and all that we are able to give. If you have returned your pledge card—thank you! If you have not—it’s not too late! If we are going to meet the challenges that the coming year will bring, we will need your prayers, your insight, your compassion, and your gifts.

We know that circumstances vary:

- If you are not able to maintain your current level of giving, we will understand completely, and would love to support you in any ways that we can. How can we help?
- If you are able to maintain your current level of giving in 2021, we will be grateful for your commitment to God’s work in this place.

- If you are in a position to help make up some of this year’s inevitable shortfall, your generosity will enable our ministries to thrive in a time when they have never been more needed.

Here are ways you can make your pledge:

- Mail in your pledge card in the envelope provided.
- Drop off your pledge card to the church office, making arrangements with Lisa Garcia at (941) 955-8119.
- Pledge online through our website, www.FirstPresSarasota.org. Select Member Login, then select Pledge Now.

Please join us, in whatever ways you can, as we witness to God’s transforming power and love. We can’t be the Church God intends without you.





2050 Oak Street
Sarasota, FL 34237
(941) 955-8119
www.firstpressarasota.org

October 12, 2020



Dear First Presbyterian Church Family,

We are writing to give you an update on the progress of the Designated Associate Pastor Nominating Committee (DAPNC). On Sunday, October 11, the DAPNC was able to meet for the first time to discuss the process of selecting a Designated Associate Pastor. While a majority of the work being done by the DAPNC is confidential until its conclusion, we will be as transparent as possible throughout the process.

Currently, the DAPNC is working on completing the Ministry Information Form (MIF), which provides a general overview of our church, our congregants, and characteristics of an ideal associate pastor candidate. The MIF will be used to match candidates for the position of the Designated Associate Pastor. This is the formal process for hiring for a new position. We are working to create the best possible MIF that reflects the characteristics and values that we would like the candidate to possess that would help grow the culture of our church family moving forward.

We ask that the church family continues to pray for the DAPNC throughout the process. Any questions can be directed to Rebecca Nicholson, who is the Administrative Commission Chair by emailing her: love2point@yahoo.com.

The next meeting for the DAPNC is scheduled for Monday, October 26. At the conclusion of that meeting we will share with our congregation the progress of this process.

In faith,

Sean Harrington, Chair
Darla Gulliver
David Landers
Steve Largo
Wendy Miller
Carrie Mills
Joanne Simons

Rebecca Nicholson, AC Chair

• **Respecting Each Others Needs During This Time of COVID-19**

by Lisa Saba, elder

As unique and wonderful children of God, we have different perspectives on how to deal with the challenging times we face. All of our needs and feelings are worthy of respect and consideration. After seven months of extreme caution and research on the subject, Ric and I recently made the decision to visit our daughter in Wyoming. After returning from our trip, we have tested positive for coronavirus.

Ric and I have been very careful throughout the entire pandemic and have a strong belief that all CDC recommended guidelines, such as wearing masks, handwashing and social distancing, are crucial to fight the spread. We also believe the theory that my mask protects you, your mask protects me. For these past months, we have been willing to forego all social engagements and sweated in the Florida heat while wearing our masks, if it meant we could protect ourselves and others. However, after seven months of isolation and much research on how to fly safely, we broke down and traveled. When we flew on the plane, we wore safety goggles, double masks, and had multiple containers of wipes and sanitizer so that we could disinfect all surfaces around us. In light of when symptoms began after my flight, the doctor believes that I actually contracted the virus prior to traveling home. While away, I was staying in my own condo, eating most meals in, and if I did eat out, I only dined outdoors. I spent all of my time hiking or fly-fishing. Both activities you would think would be safe and socially distanced. I participated in nothing indoors except for being in my own condo or in my car. Yet, I still contracted the virus. As it turns out, on the final day of my trip, I made a mistake. I gave a quick hug goodbye (with both of us wearing masks) to someone who a few days later tested positive for the virus. At the time of the hug, we both thought this person was suffering from fall allergies as their only symptoms were sneezing and head congestion. That was all it took. Fortunately, for Ric and me, the virus has presented mild symptoms. We are praying God continues our healing in a positive direction.

I share this experience with you because while I am sure all of us are experiencing coronavirus fatigue, we still need to stay on alert. No experience or activity is more important than the health and safety of each other. However, I can recognize, that just like my desire to see my daughter, many of us have a desire to return to in person worship. Nothing is more meaningful in our spiritual lives! After my experience, it will be some time before I am comfortable returning to this practice. But I know others of you are ready now. I am confident that our staff and the Reopening Task Force are doing all they can to ensure everyone's safety. All of us have to do our part as well! Whatever your personal stand on masks, please wear them at all times for your fellow members. And resist that overwhelming temptation to hug or stand close to others. Familiarity breeds complacency so it's easy to let your guard down. Let's go above and beyond to protect ourselves and others, even if it seems like overkill. It's always better to be safe than sorry, especially when it can mean life or death. None of us knows how our body might respond to the virus. With that unknown, it is the responsibility of each of us to consider the one next to us even if we are not concerned about catching the virus personally.

For those who have the slightest hesitation about returning safely because of your personal health reasons or risk factors, remember God knows your heart. God knows you are worshipping in your own ways even if that isn't in our sanctuary. I praise God's healing graces. I know God will guide us through this challenging time. I am also confident God is relying on us to help protect ourselves and others. Let's rise to that challenge.



Goodbye Eddie



with our own Ted Eastmoore, Jimi Camastro & Steven Phillips

SATURDAY • November 21 • 4 pm

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

2050 Oak St, Sarasota 34237

941.955.8119 • www.firstpressarasota.org

WEATHER PERMITTING; in case of rain, concert will be rescheduled.

PLEASE PARK IN THE MUNICIPAL LOT nearest Payne Park. Church parking area will be used for concert seating.

BRING YOUR OWN LAWN CHAIRS and any refreshments you'd like to have. (Alcohol is not permitted at this event.)

WEAR A MASK and social-distance from others outside your family / COVID-bubble.

RESTROOMS adjacent to the fellowship hall and sanctuary will be open. Please wear masks and distance socially if you choose to enter the buildings. Hand sanitizer will be available at multiple stations.

Enjoy the music and a chance to wave to your friends!

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING PANDEMIC FATIGUE?



Are you feeling exhausted from all the disruptions to life brought on by the pandemic? Are you or someone you know struggling with challenges like . . .

- ISOLATION AND LONELINESS
- ANXIETY OVER HEALTH
- GRIEF DUE TO MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF LOSSES
- TENSION FROM JUGGLING WORK, CHILDCARE, AND SCHOOLING
- FINANCIAL STRAIN OR JOB LOSS
- UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE
- OTHER UNEXPECTED LIFE CHALLENGES?



**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

If so, you don't have to face it alone. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support.

A Stephen Minister will meet with you privately—by phone, by video chat, or, if safely possible, in person—to offer care and support. It's free and completely confidential. For more information, call our church office.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

• **Growing Strong Together**

by Lydia Chapdelain, Preschool Administrative Assistant and Children and Youth Leader

My experience with First Presbyterian Preschool began about 11 years ago. My husband Ryan and I were both born and raised in Sarasota. We moved back to our hometown in 2002. We were married, bought a home and were ready to start a family. In 2010, we found out that we were expecting twins. It was important for us to begin looking for a church to raise our children. Ryan and I were both raised in different denominations, we did not know where to begin. Ryan always had fond memories for his preschool experience at First Presbyterian Preschool. We wanted this experience for our children too, and they had not even entered the world at this point. Our next step was to attend a church service to see if First Presbyterian would be a good fit for our family. We were looking for a worship space that was friendly, inviting, traditional and shared our same values.

This is exactly what we found at First Presbyterian Church. We were impressed by the comfortable, friendly environment and could visualize our children being baptized, attending Sunday school, and beginning their love of learning with the play-based programming at First Presbyterian Preschool. We became members of First Presbyterian Church in 2010 and our journey began.

In February 2011 Charlotte and Spencer were born and were able to experience the different services, depending on their sleeping schedule. They were baptized at the 8:15

a.m. service in April 2011 by Associate Pastor Rev. Clay Thomas and Elder Cord VanNorstand. We have fond memories of Easter and Christmas Eve services.

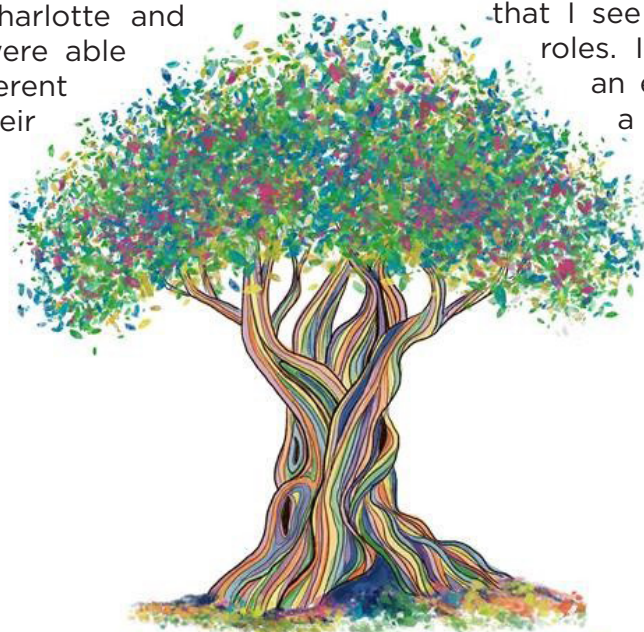
Ryan and I were so excited to have them begin preschool; I think we called Preschool Director, Clare Carter, every couple of months with questions. Finally, the day came in 2013, their first day of First Presbyterian Preschool!

Our family had such a great experience with Mrs. Taber and Mrs. Ferguson, Mrs. Pribble (now retired), and then Mrs. Clissold. Our children were blessed to be in a program where they were loved, where they learned by play and where they grew strong. We credit their success in elementary school to the strong roots they developed at First Presbyterian Preschool.

Once they began preschool, I had a couple of hours that I could contribute back to our church family. I began volunteering with VBS, LOGOS and Sunday school. I have been a part of the Education and Formation and Pastor Search Committees. These experiences are what have led me to my roles today.

I am currently working with the preschool and the church. I am so grateful to spend my time in a space that is rewarding and I feel supported. I am very grateful for the outpouring of kindness, compassion, generosity, and love that I see every day in both of my roles. I am proud to be a member, an employee, an alumnus and a family member. Thank you to the staff, members and volunteers who work tirelessly to make this campus a home.

#GrowStrong



Growing Strong Since 1947



• **10 Reasons to be an Unoffendable Person**

submitted by Cheryl Track, Faith Community Nurse

We live in a world where we are easily offended. We can choose to be unoffendable in a very offensive world and restore our joy. Proverbs 19:11: *Good sense makes one slow to anger; it is to our benefit or glory to overlook an offense.* Here are 10 reasons why it is to our glory to be unoffendable:

1. Unoffendable people have more free time by staying off social media and not responding to others' posts you disagree with. Ephesians 5:15-17: *Be very careful then, how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

2. Unoffendable people are well rested. Anger and rest are always at odds. You can't have both at once. Learn to let things go; release them and you will sleep better. Ephesians 4:26: . . . *Do not let the sun go down on your anger.*

3. Unoffendable people have better relationships. Have a deep love for people, not a surface relationship. Deep love looks past the actions and into the intentions, past nit picking. Focus on the love, not the issues; there will always be issues. Grow in love! 1 Peter 4:8: *Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins.*

4. Unoffendable people trust God to avenge them. God is your father, you are God's son or daughter. You have two options when someone hurts you. Take control yourself or let God avenge those who have hurt you. Romans 12:18-19: *If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, ever avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*

5. Unoffendable people love God's Word. If you find yourself easily offended, take time daily to pray and read God's Word. When you read God's Word it becomes alive and you see the character of God and get transformed into his character realizing these things are temporary, small issues. Psalm 119:165: *Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.*

6. Unoffendable people are compassionate. Don't look at every news conference or read everyone's social media updates. Look at people with compassion, knowing there is more to their story. Ecclesiastes 7:21-22: *Do not give heed to everything that people say, or you may hear your servant cursing you; your heart knows that many times you have yourself cursed others.*

7. Unoffendable people are creative. It takes creativity to give people the benefit of the doubt. It's easy to jump to conclusions. We judge ourselves by our intentions, but we judge others by their actions. Colossians 3:13: *Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other, just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

8. Unoffendable people have better prayer times. It's difficult to pray and be mad at the same time. You cannot be in communion with God and confrontation with people at the same time. Put your attention back onto God. Matthew 5:23-24: *So, when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister and then come and offer your gift.*

9. Unoffendable people are a witness to the lost world. People watch how you respond and how you don't respond. Respond to others in love. Ephesians 4:32: *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.*

10. Unoffendable people are happy. You aren't looking backward and moving forward at the same time. You have learned to let things go. 2 Timothy 2:23-24: *Have nothing to do with senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient . . .*

To sum it up, from Proverbs 19:11: *Those with good sense are slow to anger, and it is their glory to overlook an offense.*

Taken from
Florida.thejoyfm.com/carmen/podcast/2020/09/22/episode-15-aaron-burke



We SURE Want to Be the Change We Want to See

*Submitted by Dorothy Murphy
SURE Team Leader*

“Take my hand Precious Lord” as we “Lift Every Voice and Sing.” God is among us and SURE does have a story to tell. We are bold as we forge ahead with our faith formation. At the October 5 Community Problems Assembly, the 200+ SURE network members and friends (via Zoom attendance) welcomed two covenanting congregations: Church of the Redeemer Episcopal and Koinonia Life Impact Church.

SURE Executive Committee Officers This Year

Co-Chairs: Rev. Wayne Farrell, St. Boniface Episcopal Church and Bishop Kenneth Ellis, Koinonia Life Impact Church

Vice-Chair: Valerie Reeves,
New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

Treasurer: Tim Kelly, Twelve Springs Church

Recording Secretary: Nancy Taylor,
Faith Lutheran Church

At-Large: James Brown,
Bethlehem Bible Church
Reverend Ashley Nicolls,
St. Paul Lutheran

Research Teams Update: Restorative Practices The Impact of Suspensions

Sarasota County School District suspends 2,500 children from school each year. That is more than Miami-Dade County School District, which is eight times larger. One suspension possibly lowers a student’s ability to graduate by as much as 50%. Suspensions negatively impact student performance which affects state funding for our schools.

In 2019, SURE leaders won a commitment from the Sarasota County School District to implement a restorative practices pilot program in five elementary schools. This year, the District has expanded the program to include three additional schools. The program will benefit over 5,000 students. This SURE research team has recommended that we work our restorative practices to the monitoring phase while we gather data and keep a close eye on the implementation of the pilot program. FPC SURE research members are Phil and Judy Kuebbeler and George and Merle Chorba.

Affordable Housing

The Sarasota County Commission recently voted to remove affordable housing requirements on new developments, despite the worsening of the affordable housing crisis with the COVID-19 pandemic, and the City of Sarasota has not included any additional funding in their 2020-2021 budget for housing that would be affordable for families, including many of our essential workers.

Call To Action for Affordable Housing

Write a letter or send an email to your county commissioner. Some potential bullet points might include:

- “I am disappointed that the county commission recently voted to remove affordable housing requirements on new developments.”
- Share a personal statement, for example: “My family has personally experienced the lack of affordable housing. My son had to move out of the area after graduating from college because of a lack of affordable options for young people in Sarasota.”
- I urge you to meet with SURE leaders before the January 13 public hearing on the matter of affordable housing requirements. A SURE staff member will be reaching out to set up a meeting in the near future.

FPC SURE research members are Bob Kirkpatrick, Barbara Chase and Mary Willis. Thank-you to Colleen Forristall and FPC members who have already written letters or sent an email.

Criminal Justice - The Problem

1,700 people were permanently branded for misdemeanor arrests in Sarasota County over the past six months. Hundreds of these people would have been eligible for a civil citation in other counties like Pinellas or Miami-Dade. Each time a person is arrested, it costs taxpayers an average of \$6,500. These misdemeanor arrests cost our community \$11 million over the past six months alone.

The solution is the statewide legislation that created the impetus for local communities to

(Continued on page 9)

***We SURE Want to Be the Change
We Want to See*** (continued from page 8)

establish juvenile civil citation programs in 2016. It also encouraged state attorney offices to create an adult civil citation program. State Attorney Ed Brodsky has agreed to work with SURE leaders to develop and implement an adult civil citation program. Over the next several months we will be researching best practices, drafting a proposal alongside the state attorney, and working to get all local stakeholders on board. FPC research team members are Pat Higgins and Jim and Dorothy Murphy.

*God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, witness and worship.*



• Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women's Thank Offering is received annually in the fall. This offering is a tangible way to express gratitude for the special blessings in our lives and has made possible hundreds of projects, addressing issues such as agricultural development, child care, community organization, criminal justice, drug counseling, economic justice, elderly care, employment training, homelessness, literacy, violence and women's concerns. At least 40% of this offering supports health ministries throughout the world. The remaining 60% funds new creative ideas for mission. To contribute to this year's Thank Offering, send your check made out to Presbyterian Women to the church office to the attention of Mary Webb. Please write "Thank Offering" in the memo line. This year's grant recipients include Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center. For a complete list of grant recipients go to presbyterianwomen.org.

The next gathering is on **Monday, November 2** at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. We will dedicate our annual Thank Offering. Matthew Shick, Acting Executive Director at Cedarkirk, will join us to tell how their Thank Offering funds will be used. We will also present the lifetime membership award. You are welcome to linger after the meeting for a time of fellowship. The Zoom link is: <https://zoom.us/j/96628778405>.

Presbyterian Women will make Christmas stockings for the Brentwood Elementary school children again this year. You can help

by donating Christmas fabric suitable for a child's stocking or money to purchase fabric. We also need volunteers to sew the stockings. A pattern, supplies and simple instructions will be provided. Please contact Pamela Lamb at (941) 210-7478 if you wish to donate or construct some stockings.

We will gather on **Tuesday, December 1** at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. All women of the church are welcome to attend. We encourage you to show everyone a Christmas item that has special meaning for you and tell us the story behind it, or you can share a special family Christmas tradition. Watch for the Zoom link in the Friday *News at First*.

At our Christmas gatherings, we traditionally adopt an organization for mission giving. This year's organization is Misi3n Peniel and they are requesting items for adult hygiene. Please note, items must be **new and unopened and trial or single use size. No large shampoo bottles or bars of soap, please.** A hygiene kit consists of the following eight items placed in a gallon-size plastic Ziplock bag:

Toothbrush	Toothpaste
Shampoo	Bar soap
Deodorant (men's or women's scent)	Disposable razor
Socks	Washcloth



You may create one or more kits or donate items for some kits. We will also accept money and purchase the items for you. Items may be dropped off at the church and checks may be mailed to the church office to the attention of Mary

Webb. Make checks out to Presbyterian Women and write "hygiene kit" in the memo line. Kits or kit supplies may be dropped off at the church office Tuesday, November 16 or 23 from 9:00-11:00 a.m. Wednesday, November 17 or 24 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Contact Flossie Paul at (941) 779-6055 or Pamela Lamb at (941) 210-7478 if you have questions.



In the last several years our congregation has been extremely generous in providing thoughtful gifts for students in need from Brentwood Elementary school (BES), their siblings and parents. We have received stars from our Blessing Trees, shopped for gift suggestions received from the families, and celebrated together at a spectacular dinner in the FPC Fellowship Hall. Due to COVID-19, this year we have imagined a new possibility for expressing our love and care to these students and their families. We will still . . .

- **Provide gifts for BES students and their siblings** (fifty children total) from families in need—in the form of *two \$30 gift cards each!* (Target or Walmart, suggested)
- **Bless their parents with two \$50 grocery gift cards!** (Publix, Winn-Dixie, Target or Walmart, suggested)
- **Joyfully receive checks to support this project and Brentwood Elementary school—**made out to FPC with "BES Christmas" in the memo line.

Please deliver your gift cards and/or checks to the church office by December 5.

Your support is needed to reach our goal of one hundred \$30 gift cards for the children and forty \$50 gift cards for groceries for the whole family. Thank you in advance for your generosity. You will be a blessing for these families in need!



• Love Notes



The letter below is from Brentwood Elementary School regarding a donation we sent to purchase computers. The funds were from our Thoughtful Giving fund for City Kids. City Kids was a summer program in Newtown that First Presbyterian participated in weekly during the summer months to bring snacks to the children. This program sadly ended several years ago and we were left with contributions. The Mission and Justice Committee decided these funds could be used for children's programs that we support. The need for computers for children while we still fight the pandemic was a perfect fit for the Thoughtful Giving funds.

Dear First Presbyterian Members,

The staff, students and families at Brentwood want to sincerely thank you for your generous donation of \$3,458.47 for computers for our students. This gift was such a wonderful surprise.

We are so grateful that you continue to support us even in these most trying of times. Our need for technology has grown exponentially since the pandemic. When students and staff are ill

or quarantined our school provides a device to continue the learning. Your gift will allow us to better meet this need.

Our teachers work so hard to prepare engaging lessons that students can access in person and online. If they are required to stay home, they must take their laptop and teach from home if they are able. This means that the individual covering their class must also have a laptop so students can access their teacher online. And if any students are quarantined, they must also be sent home with a laptop. The school's resources are being stretched beyond capacity. We cannot begin to thank you enough for your kindness. It was such a relief to know that we'd be getting additional technology for our students.

Please know how grateful we are for all that you've done and continue to do to support Brentwood. Thank you for always thinking of us, no matter what!

Sincerely,
John Weida
Principal

Holly Brody
Assistant Principal



• Update from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers

The agricultural industry continues to have farmworkers toil in working conditions where physical violence and gender-based violence are a daily threat. Farmworkers earn well below the poverty level. 80% of farmworker women experience gender-based violence and their aggressors run free.

After years of struggling to end the wage theft and violence they faced, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) launched the Fair Food Program (FFP), a protection mechanism that has been recognized by the United Nations as the benchmark for ensuring farmworkers' human rights. This program that started in Immokalee in 2011 has expanded to seven

other states, protecting tens of thousands of workers from abuse and helping supplement their wages. Fourteen corporations have signed on to the FFP, agreeing to only purchase from farms that ensure the farmworkers' safety they employ. All of the top fast-food corporations have signed on, except Wendy's.

On **Sunday, November 8**, at 10:30 a.m. during

Virtual Coffee Hour, join Uriel Zelaya-Perez, the National Faith Coordinator with the Alliance for Fair Food (AFF) and a farmworker from the CIW, as he speaks on the conditions that farmworkers face and how we can continue to support CIW's mission.



- **Stewardship Thought:
An Easy and Tax Efficient
Way to Donate**

If you are 70½ or older and have a tax-deferred retirement account, a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) may be an excellent way to donate to fulfill your pledge to First Presbyterian. We have seen a rising number of QCD contributions and anticipate a growing number of our contributors will join this trend and take advantage of the current IRS rules. If you have any questions, ask our Finance Manager, Lisa Garcia. Please check with your tax accountant or IRA custodian to see if you qualify.

- **Donating to a Charity Using a
Qualified Charitable Distribution
(QCD)**

Taken from Fidelity Learning Center

If you are age 72 (previously 70½) or older, the IRS rules require you to take required minimum distributions (RMDs) each year from your tax-deferred retirement accounts.

A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA, payable directly to a qualified charity. Amounts distributed as a QCD can be counted toward satisfying your RMD for the year, up to \$100,000 per individual. The QCD is excluded from your taxable income. This is not the case with a regular withdrawal from an IRA, even if you use the money to make a charitable contribution later on. If you take a withdrawal, the funds would be counted as taxable income even if you later offset that income with the charitable contribution deduction.

Why is this distinction important? If you take the RMD as income, instead of as a QCD, your RMD will count as taxable income. This additional taxable income may push you into a higher tax bracket and may also reduce your eligibility for certain tax credits and deductions. To eliminate or reduce the impact of RMD income, charitably inclined investors may want to consider making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). For example, your taxable income helps determine the amount of your Social Security benefits that are subject to taxes. Keeping your taxable income level lower may also help reduce your potential exposure to the Medicare surtax.

Tip: With the recent tax law changes, there's one additional factor to consider: you may take advantage of the higher standard deduction (\$12,400 for single filers, \$24,800 if married and filing jointly). This means that if you claim the standard deduction, you won't be allowed to itemize things like charitable donations. However, since QCDs are not includable in income, the QCD is also not deductible. As such, the QCD can remain an option for your charitable giving, even if you claim the standard deduction in a given year.

If you are 70½, own a Traditional or Roth IRA, and donate to charity, QCDs may make sense for you; consult a tax advisor regarding your specific situation.

- **New for 2020**

The CARES Act expands charitable giving opportunities by allowing taxpayers who take the standard deduction on their tax return to make up to \$300 of charitable contributions to a qualified charity this year as a deduction. For those who do itemize their deductions, the new law allows for cash contributions to qualified charities to be deducted up to 100% of your adjusted gross income for the 2020 calendar year.

Also, please note that the CARES act temporarily waives required minimum distributions (RMDs) for all types of retirement plans (including IRAs, 401(k)s, 403(b)s, 457(b)s, and inherited IRA plans) for calendar year 2020. This includes the first RMD, which individuals may have delayed from 2019 until April 1, 2020.

• **Virtual Coffee Hour with CEPAD**

Join us at Virtual Coffee Hour time **Sunday, November 15**, 10:30 a.m. to hear CEPAD's (Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua) leadership speak of their work in breaking the cycle of hunger and poverty in Nicaragua. Learn of COVID-19's effect in Nicaragua and what CEPAD is doing to help combat the virus. FPC has been a longtime supporter of CEPAD through programs in leadership training, sustainable agricultural practices, and economic development. Hope to see you there!



Our congregation will be supporting Family Promise by providing meals for families housed at the Family Promise Day Center on Vamo Road in Sarasota. (Until it is deemed safe, we will not be welcoming families into our church buildings to sleep, as we had in the past.) It will take about 12 people to shop for food, make and deliver meals, and launder sheets and towels when it is our week to host. As soon as the schedule is announced, you will be able to sign up for this vital project. You can always contact Joanne Simons (SimonsJC1@gmail.com or 703-798-7330) to let her know of your interest.

In celebration of National Family Promise week, Family Promise reminds all of their partners that homelessness is a serious issue in our community. It is estimated that in Sarasota County alone, more than 1,000 children are part of a family experiencing homelessness. Family Promise provides case management, transportation, career development, and other critical services to help families remain in sustainable housing.

Anyone may help these efforts by donating at www.familypromisesarasota.org or by purchasing an item from their Amazon Wish List.

• **Virtual Adult Education Class**

Hope: The Anchor for Your Soul

New virtual adult education class, led by Elaine Barnett



The Church confesses that Jesus Christ is its hope and is itself a community of hope. This study introduces us to the basics of Christian hope in Christ. God is making a new creation, a new beginning for human life and for all things. We live on the strength of that promised new creation even when the times are tough and hope is difficult.

Through biblical and theological insights, the participants will explore the hope that is within us, the hope that does not disappoint us, and the hope in which we can rejoice.

The class meets for six weeks on Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m. via Zoom beginning November 3.

November 3 The Difficulty of Hope

November 10 Thy Kingdom Come:
The Reign of God

November 17 Resurrection of the Body
and Life Eternal

November 24 Christ's Return
and the Last Judgment

December 1 The New Creation

December 8 Living Hope in Church and World

To register for the class email Elaine Barnett at ewbarnet@me.com

• **Birthdays**

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

• **Anniversaries**

2	Tony & Daina Strong	23	Brian & Cheryl Track
3	John & Jennifer Hutchens	24	Joe & Wendy Mastripolito
6	Kym & Helen Biggar	26	David & Michelle Young
7	Andrew & Stephanie Copa	27	Mike & Mary Groninger
8	Sandy & Jean Kirkpatrick		Bob & Mary Kelly
11	Shelly & Vicki Wacksman		Joe & Joan Callan
12	Troy & Aly Papa	29	Lamar & Jo Watson
16	Bill & Barbara Epperson		Robert & Mary Willis
19	Ray & Judy Hord		
20	David & Darla Gulliver		
21	Jo Jo Morrison & Nery Diaz		
	Van & Sue Baker		
22	Mark & Carol Smith		



**Blessings from
your church family**

Cross Connections is a monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, Florida, Volume 38 Issue #11. Please submit articles for the next issue by November 15, 2020. Articles submitted are proofed and edited.



Cross Connections

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

(941) 955-8119

www.FirstPresSarasota.org

Return Service Requested

Sign up NOW to volunteer at First Presbyterian's
ALL FAITHS FOOD BANK EMERGENCY FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITE

Volunteers are needed each Thursday. Task options include sorting and distributing food,
setting up, cleaning up and directing traffic.

NEW Volunteer Times

First, third and fifth Thursdays:
8:45-11:30 a.m.

Second and fourth Thursdays:
3:45-6:30 p.m.

All safety measures are in place: Masks and closed-toe shoes required for volunteers;
gloves and hand sanitizer provided; masks required for walk-up food recipients

FOR MORE INFORMATION contact
Bob Kirkpatrick, rkirkhv@aol.com or (941) 761-2455
or Dave Householder, dphouse47@gmail.com or (724) 462-4235

