



CROSS CONNECTIONS

August 2021

Friends,

With new COVID-19 cases surging in our area, and evidence that the Delta variant is more easily transmitted than previous strains (including fully-vaccinated, asymptomatic persons), the session has decided unanimously to require masks of all persons (over the age of two) who are on our campus, including outdoor gatherings. An exception was granted for fully-vaccinated adult groups who are working outside (with no children present). Such groups may decide together whether or not they intend to mask. This policy will go into effect on August 2.

We do this out of concern:

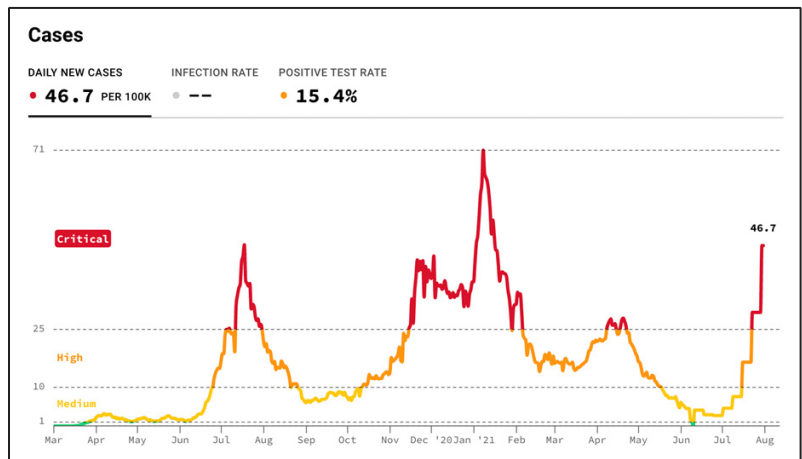
- for our children, who are not able to receive vaccinations;
- for the most vulnerable members of our community, who may be at risk, even if vaccinated;
- for the larger community, in an attempt to help to slow the spread of the virus.

It can be discouraging to take what may feel like a step backwards, but your session is committed to remaining flexible enough that we can respond to circumstances as they change. The staff and committees of the church will be taking a fresh look at activities planned for the coming weeks. It's likely that some of those plans will need to change, but we will work hard to keep you updated.

We will be blessed to have each other as we navigate whatever challenges the coming weeks and months will bring. We will worship with joy—whether online or in person—and give thanks in all circumstances. If there is any way that the church can be helpful to your household, please don't hesitate to call the church office and let us know how we might be useful. We honor God as we care for each other.

Grace and peace,

Margaret

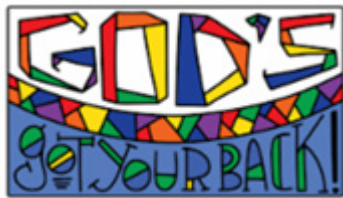


Data available for Sarasota County as of August 1, 2021

Two-Service Worship Format Resumes Sunday, August 15

We will return to a 9:00 a.m. contemporary worship service in the Fellowship Hall and an 11:00 a.m. traditional service in the sanctuary, beginning Sunday, August 15. Sunday school classes for all ages will be offered at 10:00 a.m.

• **Children & Youth 2021-2022 Kick-Off**



AUGUST 15

**AUGUST 8
BACKPACK BLESSING
10:00 a.m. Service**

Students of all ages, educators, and volunteers! Bring your bag or backpack for a special blessing in worship beginning at 10:00 a.m.! Kids will be able to craft a special personalized backpack tag or lanyard for their bag.

All children, youth, volunteers, and their families (and anyone else who wants to experience the excitement) are invited to join us for **RALLY DAY** to kick off the beginning of Sunday School Season 2021-2022.

Please meet in the Fellowship Hall beginning at 10:10 a.m.

Meet your teachers, tour your classroom, and enjoy sweet treats!

YOUTH - Come and build your activities for the year. Your opinion matters. Let us know what mission, fellowship and activities are important to you! Sign-up.

**AUGUST 22
SUNDAY SCHOOL
BEGINS**

All Sunday School classes begin. Please meet your teachers in the Fellowship Hall at 10:10 a.m.

All students will meet their teachers and walk upstairs together.

*Parents will sign in all elementary students at this time.



• **SunCoast Blood Center
Concierge Service**

by Anne Whiteside, member

Did you know that the SunCoast Blood Center has a concierge service? I did not know that until recently.

A friend told me she was not comfortable going into a blood mobile or to the center these days, but knew they were desperate for blood. As her family has several medically fragile members, I knew they were also taking health precautions seriously.

She arranged for the concierge van to visit her house and made appointments for three of us at the one stop. It was quick and easy. We had each completed the quick pass on-line and had our barcodes ready. The first person

went into the van to donate with only the tech present. After she finished, the next person received a text when the tech was ready and she donated. Then the third person received a text and donated.

If you are uncomfortable going to the center or to a blood mobile, this may work for you. Recruit some friends and family members so one trip out secures multiple donations. Schedule your concierge donor appointment by calling (844) 972-6819. Be flexible with your appointment time as they could be running a little early or a little late.

• **Financial Update Through the Second Quarter**

by Craig Gesell, Moderator, Business Affairs

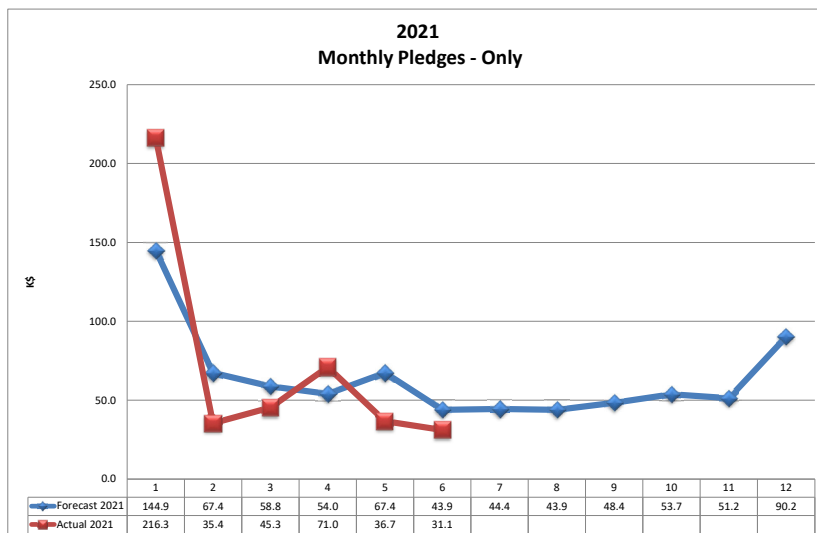
As previously communicated, our pledges for 2021 were down approximately 25% from our 2020 campaign. However, with your faithful giving last year, coupled with conservative spending and the full forgiveness of our PPP loan, our 2021 budget was developed with expectations that we would be able to return to in-person worship services and fully support our various missions and ministries for the year at near pre-pandemic levels.

June Year-to-date Results

Through the first six months of 2021, our pledge receipts are running just slightly behind our budget.

However, as illustrated in the graph, most of our 2021 pledge collections thus far took place in January, thanks to strong pre-payments received in late 2020 and in January, 2021. The trend for the remaining five months of this year has been less enthusiastic. While we are accustomed to seeing a slowdown in collections during our summer months, the last two months have fallen well short of our budget estimates.

On a positive note, we continue to keep a close eye on our expenses and we are currently \$112,000 under our budget in spending for the first half of the year leaving us in a very stable financial position despite all of the challenges we have faced over the last 15 months.



Moving Forward

Our staff and volunteers have worked very hard to deliver an inviting worship experience to our church family and our campus is ready to accommodate additional community outreach opportunities. As we begin to transition back to in-person worship, open the preschool for a new year, and host community activities, we will see more re-engagement with one another and hopefully, a return to normalcy for our church family.

The session will continue to keep a close eye on giving and we will match that to our spending levels to ensure that we maintain our solid financial footing through these trying times. With your help, we will continue to support the vital missions and ministries of our church.

Giving Options

Please continue to mail your contributions to 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: All mail, including contribution checks, securely arrives to our church office.



Social Justice Corner

by Dorothy Murphy
SURE Team Leader

Continuing with the Goal in View

The Affordable Housing research team has been placed on hiatus awaiting a full review of this justice issue. Our SURE network members are not deterred from their ongoing efforts on behalf of the many teachers, fire-fighters, police, service personnel and others in Sarasota County who lack affordable housing.

SURE Carries on Regarding Juvenile Justice

We are active participants in the DART (Direct Action and Research Training Center) Criminal Justice Collaborative. This statewide chart shows the percentage of children who have gotten access to juvenile civil citation, thereby avoiding arrest:

ICARE, Duval	99%
FAST, Pinellas	96%
PACT, Dade	92%
PEACE, Polk	83%
SURE, Sarasota	71%
FAITH, Volusia	53%
PEACE, Palm Beach	47%
BOLD, Broward	45%
HOPE, Hillsborough	42%
CAJM, Leon	39%
LIFE, Lee	33%
JUST, Escambia	28%

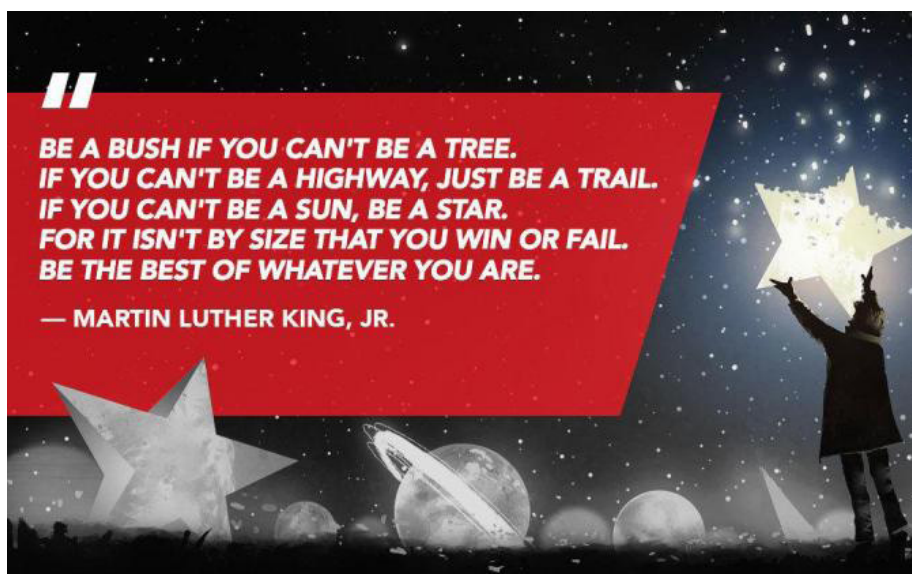
The SURE Criminal Justice research team, led by Rev. Laurie Etter and Rev. Demetrius Jifunza, persists in monitoring the Sarasota County juvenile justice numbers. We continue to meet with Sheriff Hoffman, State Attorney Brodsky, and Clerk of Court Rushing to clarify some on-going issues.

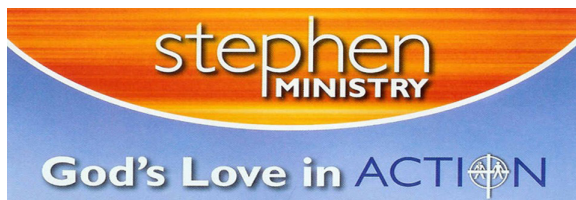
The Community Is Becoming More Aware

Advisory Board, First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, and SURE network member Steve Fantauzzo, recommended that SURE make a presentation at the July 16 Police Advisory Board meeting. Rev. Laurie Etter, of First Congregational Church, will relate the breadth of SURE participation within the 23 participating churches and give an update regarding juvenile and adult civil citation.

Local Media Coverage

SURE is grateful that *Venice Gondolier* staff writer Morgan Simpson was one of seven media representatives in the statewide Zoom collaborative. Her June 26 article accurately stated what is happening regarding juvenile and adult civil citation issues. Both Sheriff Hoffman and State Attorney Brodsky were quoted as supporting both programs.





One of the greatest messages that comes from the words of Psalm 23 is the comfort that God has not left us alone. The lines, "He leads me by still waters, he restores my soul. . . Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me. . ." are some of the most comforting words ever written.

There are times, however, when the crisis of life, the sadness of a loss, or the suddenness of a diagnosis may overwhelm us. It is at this time when a fellow brother or sister in Christ can be most comforting and show the reality of God's presence. Stephen ministers are specially prepared for just those times. They are trained to listen and give confidential comfort. Most of all, they can be there to simply listen.

If you or someone you know is hurting, find out more about Stephen Ministry. Please call the church office (941) 955-8119 to speak with Margaret LaMotte Torrence, Pastor; Cheryl Track, Faith Community Nurse; or Steven Phillips, Director of Music Ministries and Congregational Care.

• **Caritas at Herrig Center Seeking FPC Volunteers**

Volunteers are requested to interview clients needing emergency financial assistance with utility bills, prescription medicine, work boots, SCAT tickets, food and clothing. **FPC operates with two to three volunteers on the first, third and fifth Thursdays of each month, 9:00-11:00 a.m.** CDC guidelines will be followed and all will be masked. For more information, contact: Brian Bowen at (941) 360-6717 or email: bbowen38@verizon.net

**Caritas is a coalition of five churches in downtown Sarasota. Its primary purpose is to provide temporary emergency assistance to those who find themselves in acute financial need.*

The first baby has been born in our Family Promise of Sarasota chapter! Prayers and blessings for baby Moses! Mom, Carline, and baby are doing well.

Carline is a single mom of two other children and was living in her car while working at a local pharmacy. She is working hard to save money for her own apartment, but she will need to be out of work and without income for about 4 weeks. Florida does not offer ANY form of financial support, such as "temporary disability," for new moms. Carline is left without any income while she is out on maternity leave.

Carline is considering returning to work against medical advice because she's concerned about finances. Doing so would not only endanger her health but could expose Moses to health challenges because he is too young to be around other children in daycare.

Any contributions made on her behalf will be used for the costs of shelter and basic needs for Carline and the baby as she looks for a more permanent place to live for herself and her children.

Several members of our congregation have generously made donations to support this family. If you would like to join them in contributing, please send donations to:

Family Promise of Sarasota
8499 Tamiami Trail, PMB 267
Sarasota, FL 34238

Mark all donations for "Carline/Moses" so that they may be used for this family. And please offer prayers for continued health for mom and baby Moses, as well as his brother and sister.

• **SunCoast Blood Drive**

Our next scheduled SunCoast Blood Drive at First Presbyterian, will be **Sunday, August 29, 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.** Contact Cheryl Track at 4tracks@comcast.net or (941) 320-3828 to reserve your space. Masks are required.

The Quick Pass allows you to begin the blood donation process at home the day of donation. Access Quick Pass at scbb.org/donor-quick-passhtml.

• **Invest In Children**
An Appreciate Investment



by Jinny Miller, Steering Committee Chair

Last spring, when Brentwood student Sophia died in a tragic vehicle accident, the Invest in Children steering committee decided to adopt Sophia’s classroom as well as the classroom of her twin sister, Adriana. Books dealing with grief were given to each classroom in memory of Sophia and Roman (another Brentwood student who died two years ago in another tragic vehicle accident). Notes from the teachers are below.

Thank you for adopting our classroom and for the books! We loved reading the books and seeing Sophia’s name in them.

*Thanks,
 Ms. Antonino*

Thank you for adopting our classroom. The passing of our classmate, Sophia, was difficult to process. It was very kind of you. I was able to create “Summer Boxes” for the students. This included flash cards, art crafts, and reading materials for the students to do over the summer in order to stay busy. Thank you so much.

*Sincerely,
 Dinnah Pere*

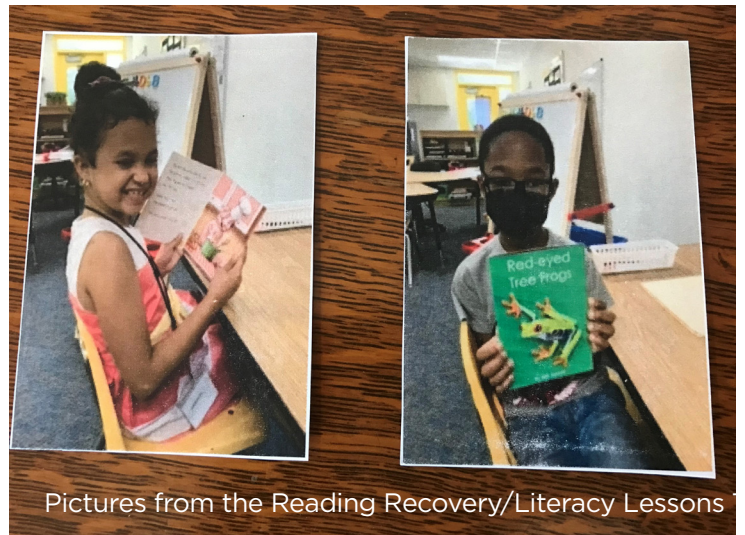
At the same time, the Invest in Children steering committee chose to adopt the Reading Recovery/Literacy Lessons Team to honor their work. Thank you, First Presbyterian Church members who invested the funds to make each of these adoptions happen. A note from the RR/LL Team follows.

Just a little note with a great big thank you for the adoption of our Reading Recovery/Literacy Lessons Team. Thanks to your very generous donation we were able to add 20 titles to our collection. These books are our tools and will help us teach hundreds of children to read throughout the years. Enclosed are some pictures of the children this adoption has touched. Again, thank you so much. We are a group rarely adopted so this means even more to us to feel your support. We hope you have a lovely summer!

*With regards,
 Heather McAleer
 and Robin Kerestely*



Adopt-a-Classroom thank-you



Pictures from the Reading Recovery/Literacy Lessons



• **Presbyterian Women**

The in-person churchwide PW gathering in St. Louis this summer was cancelled. However, there will be an online churchwide gathering event **Thursday, August 5**, from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. on Zoom and also livestreamed on PW's Facebook page. The Zoom capacity is limited but the livestream on Facebook is open to all.

Go to PW's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/presbyterianwomenpcusa/>) just a few minutes early or whenever you can join in. This online event is free and includes plenary and worship. Speakers include authors of the current and future *Horizons* Bible studies. Go to PW Churchwide Gathering for more information on the gathering and the business meeting that precedes it.



• What could you do with a penny? By yourself, could you raise 6,664,500 pennies to donate to 16 projects in 15 countries on three continents? This is what Presbyterian Women did in

2020 by contributing to the Fellowship of the Least Coin with Christian women around the world. Fellowship of the Least Coin is a global, ecumenical prayer movement begun in 1956 by Shanti Solomon of India, who believed that women anywhere could have a sense of being part of a worldwide family of faith. As coins are gathered from around the world, they become a sign of our oneness in a common quest for peace, justice and reconciliation. Grants are awarded from our loose change to fund special projects of evangelism, service, ecumenical solidarity, awareness-building among women and relief throughout the world. Fellowship of the Least Coin is just one of the many charitable organizations PW supports. Come join Presbyterian Women in mission support, Bible study and fellowship.

Let's play trivia on *What My Grandmothers Taught Me: Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus*, the PW Bible study starting in September. Glve yourself a star in your crown for each right answer!

1. The story has been told of a virgin who once gave birth to a special baby boy. Before his birth, two names were given to him. Which of the names below are correct? (Matthew 1:21-23)

- a. John and Jesus
- b. Jesus and Immanuel
- c. Josiah and Jesus
- d. Jesus and Joshua

2. What was the name of the woman who was chosen above all women to be the mother of Jesus?

3. The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, recorded in the gospel of Matthew, gave the names of Jesus' grandfather and great-grandfather. Of the names mentioned below, which two are theirs?

- a. Jacob and Matthan
- b. David and Jesse
- c. Isaac and Abraham
- d. Enoch and Jacob

4. Besides Mary, the mother of Jesus, only two women were mentioned by name in His ancestral line in Matthew 1:5. Which are their names?

- a. Rahab and Ruth
- b. Eve and Hannah
- c. Ruth and Orpah
- d. Leah and Rachel

5. Jesus' family tree includes one of the greatest kings of Israel, a former shepherd. What was his name?

- a. Saul
- b. David
- c. Ahab
- d. Omri

- 1. Jesus and Immanuel
- 2. Mary
- 3. Jacob and Matthan
- 4. Rahab and Ruth
- 5. David

Trivia answers

• **Update/Add Your Membership Photos Online**

Do you have an individual or family photograph that you would like to use in your church profile? You can upload photographs through your member login at our website (www.firstpressarasota.org).

If you don't have any personal photos to upload there is good news. In the fall, the Fellowship Ministry Team plans to have a photographer take your picture and will add it to your church profile. Dates and times to be announced.

Directions to upload individual photo:

- 1) Go to website and select member login.
- 2) Enter username/email and password (if you have never used member login select "Need a login?")
3. Select "My Complete Profile" in the "I Want to View" box.
4. Select "Edit." Select "Personal Photo."
5. Here you will upload your individual photograph by selecting "Choose File" (your picture cannot exceed 10 MB and must be a .jpg extension).
6. Once uploaded, select preview. If you like the photograph press save and you are all set.

Directions to upload family photo:

1. Follow steps 1-3 for individual photo directions.
2. Select "Family Info." Select "Family Photo."
3. Follow steps 5 and 6 for individual photo directions.

If you have any questions, please call Lisa Garcia in the church office (941) 955-8119.



Church Life is an app that is available to church members with iPhones or Androids. You can search for members and view phone and address information, photos, and family members. Send a text or call with a simple tap on the phone number. You can even send an email. Also, it is a quick way to give online.

Ready to go? Here are two simple steps:

1) Download ACS Church Life in your App Store using either iPhone or Android (Blackberry and other mobile devices can enter www.churchlife.mobi from any mobile browser).

2) Log in. Use the same username/email and password you use for your member login on our website.



• **College/Continuing Education/ Technical School Scholarships**



Scholarship money is available for the upcoming school year. Interested students and families should go to the website www.firstpressarasota.org, go to "Grow" tab and select "Young Adult" and print

application. The application and transcripts must be received by **Thursday, September 30**. Transcripts, including those from the spring 2021 semester, should be included or forwarded as soon as available. Returning applicants need only to update their grades and contact information. All college and technical school students are encouraged to apply.

• **Birthdays**

1	Amy Davis Cecile McPheeters Tiffany Campbell Nicole Muir	14	Tina Jiva Heather Buinicki Charles Winship	29	Sue Benjamin Karen Gremlie
2	Marcia Kleinschmidt Dana Gaddis Bill Conroy Dick Wigton	15	Susie Smith Maryann Wells-Bowman	30	Barbara Anderson Garrett Heburn Patrick Monahan James Griffith
4	McLain Miller Molly DiDonato Stephanie Copa	16	Elaine Barnett	31	Henry Mills Jane Friday William Morgan Verna Dederer
5	Bob Messick Mark Johnson Marilyn Tschirgi Pam Mathes	17	John LaMotte		
6	Tish Goodale	18	Beverly Eckert		
7	Bobbie Dean Joey DeLuca	19	Rich Paul		
8	Velma Yost Anne Whiteside Mary Federico	20	Michael Brown Sarah Van Nostrand		
9	C. Manly Molpus	21	Judith Hart Kitty Werner Toni Westerfield		
11	Molly Hudson	22	Linda Hildebrandt Vicky Urban Phil Humphreys Jeff Craig		
13	Emmy Schmidt Neal Price Yajaira Adumuah Sue Spigel	23	Joan DePlonty Barbara Shepherd		
		24	Vicky Scott		
		25	Margaret Cass Claire Copa		
		26	Rogers Moore Eric Tingstrom		
		28	Carla Harding Charlotte Harrington Lark Rippy		

• **Anniversaries**

1	Steve & Patty Largo	24	Bob & Emilie Kimbrough
2	Scott & Janice McLeod		Al & Barbara Zappala
3	Marvin & Mary Ellen Miller Jack & Trisha Senterfitt	25	Matthew Leshko & Abbey Tyrna
4	Ron & Kelly Saba, Jr. Sean & Christine Harrington	26	Floyd & Janet Churn
5	Sam & Muffie Ochi	27	Charles & Jerry Bernier
6	Rod & Judy Rhoades	28	Gunther & Linda Lahm
7	Scott & Julie Griffith		Bob & Michelle Messick
9	Joey & Thyra Schwab	28	Bruce & Melinda Marsh
11	Dick & Kay Steinman Lorenzo & Carrie Mills Bob & Patti Wrobel	29	Ken & Marsha Fischl
18	Tim & Cindy Hallinan	31	Ted & Mary Jo Kline
20	Larry & Marcia Schaper Andy & Barbara Anderson		Tony & Mary Williams
21	Tim & Lynne Goslee		
22	Kent & Joanne Simons		
23	John & Valerie Schaub		



**Blessings from
your church family**

Cross Connections is a monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, Florida, Volume 39 Issue #8. Please submit articles for the next issue by August 15, 2021. Articles submitted are proofed and edited.



Cross Connections

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(941) 955-8119

www.FirstPresSarasota.org

Return Service Requested



WE NEED YOUR HELP

with food distribution for
FPC's Mission Partnership with All Faiths Food Bank

The need to assist our neighbors with food continues.

If you haven't volunteered before—or it's been a while—please consider lending a hand with our fun and dedicated team of volunteers.

Sign up to help

Thursdays: 9:15-11:30 am

(Distribution: 10:00-11:30 am)

The food distribution is by drive-through with volunteers loading cars as clients circle in the parking lot during the allotted time. Volunteers are needed each Thursday. Task options include sorting and distributing food, setting up, cleaning up, and directing traffic.

For more information or to sign up

Contact Bob Kirkpatrick: rkirkhv@aol.com or (941) 355-0809
or Dave Householder: dphouse47@gmail.com or (724) 462-4235

Be a part of this exciting ministry to our community!