



# CROSS CONNECTIONS

April  
2022

Dear friends,

We live in rhythms of time: some linear, some cyclical, and then there are the moments when we sense God's intrusion and time seems to stand still. We never know when we will sense such a moment.

As I write, holy week is fast approaching. **Easter will fall this year on April 17.** But I want to put another date on your calendar, in addition to Easter. I hope you also will make plans to be with us **three days earlier, on April 14 at 7:00 p.m.** for a service in which we will experience Matthew's account of the last days of Jesus' life. We will share communion (safely, but with real bread!), and watch as the darkness gathers (the ancient name for this service is Tenebrae, which means darkness). As we proceed through the story, candles will be extinguished one by one, until the final flame is snuffed as Jesus dies on the cross. Before we leave, we will whisper the Apostles' Creed in the darkness. In communities that annually offer this service, members often say it is their most meaningful worship experience of the year. I hope that you will be with us, if you can. For if we have not been willing to enter the darkness, we cannot truly experience the gift of the light, when it breaks through.

We also are hoping for a good turn out for our **meal-packing event on Sunday afternoon, April 24!** We will be packaging 20,000 meals that will be transported into Poland and the Ukraine. It's a big project and we will need many hands. You do not need to stay for the whole afternoon. We'd be delighted to have you offer whatever amount of time will work well for you. Come and renew connections as we also offer support to war-torn neighbors.

As I watch the calendar turn, I am aware that my time with you is drawing to a close, but we have nearly two months remaining. We will celebrate the season of Easter together; my last Sunday with you will be May 22. The task force working to identify a **bridge pastor** expects to make a formal announcement before the end of April, once everything has been approved by the presbytery's Committee on Ministry. And your **Pastor Nominating Committee** was pleased to report at our March session meeting that they have moved from the stage of reviewing applications into the next stage of their discernment. They covet your prayers in this vital next chapter of their work. They are working diligently and are committed to taking whatever time will be necessary to find a pastor whose love of God and the world will be a fruitful and life-giving match for this congregation.

It is a privilege to watch and work and worship with you through this season. God is good.

Grace and peace,

GOD is good

• **Plan Now for the Annual Tradition of Our Easter Cross!**

First Presbyterian's Easter Cross will be prepared for you and your family to place flowers on it before or after the services on April 17. The cross will be stationed in the courtyard near the Fellowship Hall for the 9:00 a.m. NewSong service; it will be outside the entrance to the sanctuary for the 11:00 a.m. traditional service. You are invited to bring your own flowers or use some of the flowers that will be provided.



In Isaiah 58, God issues a call and a challenge—to love one another more deeply by sharing what we have with those in need. Together, we become the household of God where those seeking shelter, food and renewed hope are welcome.

Received during the season of Lent, One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is the single, greatest way that Presbyterians come together every year to build God's household and welcome our neighbors in need around the world. We provide relief from natural disasters, food for the hungry, and support for the poor and oppressed. Each gift to OGHS helps to improve the lives of people in challenging situations through three impactful programs:

- **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance:** Works alongside communities as they recover and find hope after the devastation of natural or human-caused disasters.
- **Presbyterian Hunger Program:** Takes action to alleviate hunger and the systemic causes of poverty so all may be fed.
- **Self-Development of People:** Invests in communities responding to their experiences of racism, oppression, poverty and injustice and educates Presbyterians about the impact of these societal ills.

This special offering will be received on Easter, April 17. If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot!

• **Sarasota's Good Friday Pilgrimage**

Walk the **Stations of The Cross, Good Friday, April 15.** The COVID Protocol has been approved as part of the city permitting process. for this outside observance.

City and county commissioners, pastors (Margaret Torrence will be leading the prayer at the 7th station), priests, church leaders, choirs and youth groups will be taking parts, with a choir leading the procession and performing at two stations. To volunteer for the choir, contact Chaplain Tom.

The Christian pilgrimage gathers at 7:15 a.m. and begins at 7:30 a.m. in front of the Hollywood 11 Theater. You can park at the final station (Church of the Redeemer Episcopal Church), Siesta Trolley will be transporting from church to Hollywood 11, beginning at 6:30 a.m. The final station is at the Church of the Redeemer. (For information, contact Rev. Dr. Tom Pfaff, at [chaplaintompfaff@gmail.com](mailto:chaplaintompfaff@gmail.com).)

• **Easter Lilies and Hydrangeas**

April 17 is Easter Sunday. If you would like to purchase lilies or hydrangeas for Easter worship service, please fill out this form and return it with your check (marked with 'Easter flowers' in the memo) to the church office. Order deadline is Monday, April 11. No orders can be accepted after this date.

PRINT VERY CLEARLY.

Name of donor: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of lilies @ \$12 ea. \_\_\_\_\_

Number of hydrangeas (limited quantity)  
@ \$20 ea. \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

I will pick up my flowers.

I wish to donate my flowers to home bound.



# HOLY WEEK & EASTER

## **Palm/Passion Sunday, April 10**

Join us for a palm parade and **one combined worship service at 10:00 a.m.** (a blend of musical styles with leadership from the NewSong Band and choir), followed by a **potluck brunch at 11:00 a.m.** (food may be dropped off in the fellowship hall prior to the 10:00 a.m. service). And you won't want to miss the **egg hunt for the children** (to begin shortly after 11:00 a.m.) and **photo booth** for everyone!

## **Maundy Thursday, April 14, Communion and Tenebrae\***

**7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary**

Through scripture and song, this experiential service invites us to remember the final events of Jesus' life. As candles are extinguished and darkness descends throughout the service (\*Tenebrae means darkness), we acknowledge our complicity in Jesus' death, even as we hold fast to the assurance of God's forgiveness. Come and gather at the table and experience again the depth of God's love. Participating in this service will increase the joy you discover on Easter morning.

## **Good Friday, April 15**

On Good Friday, an ecumenical walk of the stations of the cross will begin at 7:30 a.m. in front of the Hollywood 11 Theater, downtown. For those who want to park at the final station at the Church of the Redeemer Episcopal Church, Siesta Trolley will be offering transportation from Redeemer Church to Hollywood 11, beginning at 6:30 a.m.. The final station is at the Church of the Redeemer, 222 S. Palm Ave., which should be reached about 8:30 a.m., when all are invited to a Service of Morning Prayer.

## **Easter, April 17**

- 9:00 a.m. contemporary worship in the fellowship hall with leadership by the NewSong band
- 11:00 a.m. traditional worship in the sanctuary with choir, string orchestra, dance, and organ.

Before either service, come add flowers (your own, or blooms that will be provided) to the flower cross, as a reminder of the life that is stronger even than death.

• **Stories of Faith and Difference**  
**April 22, 6:00 p.m.**  
**in the Fellowship Hall**

On Friday, April 22 you will have a unique opportunity to come and join our deacons for conversation with members of our congregation who also identify as LGBTQ+. The evening will provide an opportunity for us to hear each other's stories and to grow in our understanding of the myriad ways God's love finds expression. Hors d'oeuvres will be served and a basket will be available to receive donations to defray the cost of the food. To allow us to plan appropriately, we would be grateful to know if you hope to attend. Please call the church office at (941) 955-8119. We will meet at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All interested persons are welcome. Margaret Torrence will moderate the conversation and we will conclude the gathering with a brief time of worship.

• **Meal-Packing Event to Benefit Ukrainian Residents and Refugees**  
**50 Volunteers Needed**  
**Sunday, April 24 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.**

Meal-Packing events has been well supported at FPCS in the past, but we've never attempted to pack this many meals on one day. On **Sunday, April 24**, beginning at 1:00 p.m., we hope to package **20,000 meals to be transported into Poland and Ukraine**.

The sponsoring organization, Kids Against Hunger, has worked out a special price of \$.34/meal. All shipping costs are being donated. Volunteers will package highly nutritious, vitamin-fortified soy-rice casseroles, which require only water and heat for preparation.

This is a great event for people of all ages and all abilities. There are sitting jobs, standing jobs, and tasks that kids can easily perform. The Education and Formation Committee and the Mission and Justice Committee have teamed up to fund this event, but we need **you** to help pack the meals. Please hold the date, and watch for the sign-up, coming soon.



• **Save the Date**

Youth Sunday will be on **May 1** with **one combined service at 10:00 a.m.**



• **Current COVID Guidelines**  
**On-Campus**

Due the significant decline in COVID rates in our area, masks are now optional for worship and while in any buildings on campus for those who are fully vaccinated.



• **Love Note**

To my First Presbyterian Family,

I am sending a very heartfelt **THANK-YOU** for your prayers, support and love during the recent sickness and death of my daughter. Your kindness and caring touched my heart. I will never forget it. My love to all of you.

Bonni Arbuckle

New address as of  
 April 6, 2022:

Dr. Margaret E. Towner  
 7377 Scotland Way,  
 Unit 6203  
 Sarasota, FL 34238



## • ***Expanding a Mission that is Near and Dear to Our Hearts***

*by Rachel Martin, Operations Manager*

605 Payne Parkway (the tan house at the SE corner of Oak Street and Payne Parkway, previously known as the sexton's house) is going to become part of the Children First facility that we have on our campus.

In early 2000, First Presbyterian purchased the house at 2036 Oak Street to be used by the Head Start Program, offered by Children First. At that time, the hurdles that were overcome to make that partnership successful were significant: design, zoning and permitting took over 18 months.

In 2000, First Presbyterian received a grant from the Dalbeck Memorial Foundation. Mrs. Dalbeck had been a member of this church and had been devoted to the importance of a healthy, loving environment for children. In addition, we received donations from the Community Foundation of Sarasota, Sertoma Club of Greater Sarasota, Presbyterian Women, and many donations from church members to round out the funding. On November 10, 2001, members from First Presbyterian had a work day at the infant center to start the renovations.

May 5, 2002, the doors of the Linnie Dalbeck Early Head Start Center were opened. The center has been fully enrolled ever since with 16 children. It is run by Children First of Sarasota and serves low income families and children at risk of developmental delays.

First Presbyterian continues to own the house, but Children First maintains the building.

For the last two decades, the house at 605 Payne Parkway, immediately south of the Center, has been occupied by various church sextons (our maintenance worker). In addition to a salary, part of the compensation package was the use of the house and utilities.

Over time, we realized that the house was going to need much more maintenance and it was no longer necessary for the sexton to live on the church campus.

The Business Affairs Committee worked with the Personnel Committee to restructure the sexton position and to explore what the house at the corner could be used for. Deep gratitude is

owed to Craig Gesell for the original inspiration and legwork. Children First was contacted, and they said YES, they would love to expand their program currently at 2036 Oak Street into 605 Payne Parkway.

Currently, the house is vacant. Phillip Tavill, executive director of Children First, is working with his program director, staff, and a construction company to design a way to repurpose the house by adding two more classrooms and an office to complement the current facility. They will be able to share the kitchen to prepare food, and utilize the fenced in yard to expand their outdoor play space. Phillip said, "This house is ideal for our needs, and we will be able to take 16 babies and toddlers off the waitlist."

In 2021, we received another Dalbeck Grant for \$25,000 to help Children First get started on the needed renovations. Just last week Phillip let us know that a generous benefactor of Children First matched that grant! Next, Children First will work with a construction company to accomplish the repairs, window replacement, HVAC equipment with UV sanitation, vinyl plank flooring, renovations to the bathrooms, kitchen, and playground.

FPCS will extend the same in-kind lease for the additional building to Children First as we do for the Dalbeck Center.

### **The vision statement of Children First is:**

*Children First envisions a vibrant community that cherishes education, provides opportunities for children and families to grow and thrive, and encourages and empowers families in supporting their children.*

This is a wonderful mission partnership that is near and dear to the heart of First Presbyterian Church. We want to help Children First fulfill their mission statement as we continue to partner with them to enable children and families to thrive in this challenging time.



• **Social Justice Corner**



## SURE Nehemiah Rally Tuesday, April 5, 6:30 p.m.

Your participation is needed for the annual SURE Nehemiah Assembly on **Tuesday, April 5**, at 6:30 p.m. at First Congregational Church, 1031 S. Euclid Avenue, Sarasota 34237-8124. **Face masks will be required.**

### At This Year's Action...

- Help us influence **State Attorney Brodsky** to create a fair and free adult civil citation program! This program will ensure that those who commit first time, non-serious misdemeanors will get a second chance and NOT be branded for life with an arrest record.
- Meet **SURE's new Executive Director - Dai Thao**.
- Hear about the exciting future we are stepping into at SURE.
- Get caught up on the great work our Criminal Justice Committee has been doing.
- Learn how you can get re-engaged with SURE!

SURE is asking participating congregations to help make the greatest impact by attending in-person. However, if it is not possible for you, the rally will also be available via Zoom (link in the weekly newsletter *News@First*). **We are looking forward to seeing everyone at our first in-person Action in two years!**

**Please arrive early to sign in.**

PEOPLE POWER NEEDED  
TO KEEP JUSTICE ROLLING!



*This is what the Lord requires of us:  
To do justice, love mercy, and to walk  
humbly with our God. - Micah 6:*



### • **Presbyterian Women**

On **Tuesday, April 5 at 11:30 a.m.** all women of the church are invited to meet for **lunch at the Breakfast House** for a time of fellowship. You need not be an active member of PW to attend. Guests are welcome, too. The restaurant is located at 1817 Fruitville Road in Sarasota. There is ample parking and both inside and outside seating is available. No reservation is needed to attend. The Breakfast House menu featuring soups, sandwiches, salads, and breakfast items can be found on their Facebook page.

### • **Adult Education Opportunities**



**Look To the Cross: A Lenten Study**  
**Tuesdays, Continues through April 12**

Lent is a time to focus on the cross as a central symbol of Christianity. Ever since early Christians began to reflect on the death of Jesus Christ, they knew the three hours when Jesus hung on a Roman cross were decisively important to their eternal salvation and their relationship with God. They found the cross had the power to change lives forever, through the forgiveness of sins and the new life that comes through the power of God. Biblical and theological perspectives will be explored to understand why and how Jesus' death is so crucial to our faith. This class will be led by **Elaine Barnett** via Zoom and held **Tuesdays at 11:30 a.m.** Sign-up by emailing Elaine at [ewbarnet@me.com](mailto:ewbarnet@me.com). Lesson titles are:

- April 5 - The Cross in the Tradition of the Reformers
- April 12 - The Invitation to Live into the Way of the Cross



The First Presbyterian congregation has a group of dedicated and trained members who are available to be with you for those times when you may be in a long-term crisis, loss, or terrible diagnosis. Stephen Ministry provides confidential companionship for those who may be suffering alone and for as long as they are needed. They are also equipped to help you find resources that may be appropriate for you through a dark time.

Currently, we have openings to offer care assistance. 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 Pastor Margaret LaMotte Torrence, Faith Community Nurse Cheryl Track, or Director of Music Ministries/Congregational Care Steven Phillips.

### • **Thank-you Lydia Chapdelain**

On Sunday, February 27, Lydia was celebrated for her service as the Children and Youth Leader. Lydia has stepped down from the position, but will remain an active parent with the children and youth.



Lydia Chapdelain and Molly Horner with the flowers and gift basket



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

*submitted by Cheryl Track,  
Faith Community Nurse*

Hearing loss is often gradual and therefore something that you adapt to. You may not notice it for months, even years. Slowly, the hearing apparatus that nature provided wears out for many as we grow older and it is simply part of the aging process.

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

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

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

### **Causes of Auditory Deprivation in Adults**

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

### **Can Hearing Aids Give Your Ears the Work-Out They Need?**

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

### **Then There's the Brain**

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

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

### **"But I Don't Want to Go!"**

Research clearly shows the sooner you treat hearing loss the better outcome you will have with using and adapting to hearing aids. The solution? Keep your hearing nerves fresh and stimulated - don't deprive them. See a hearing professional when you first suspect hearing loss. And, if you've suspected (or known) you have hearing loss, move your ears to a hearing professional instead of turning up the TV and radio. Finally, a pair of hearing aids, regardless of your age, will improve life's quality. Today's hearing aids are lightweight, sleek, very discrete, powerful and packed with conveniences that make hearing fun again.

**Sunday, April 24, All Ears Mobile Hearing Services will be at First Presbyterian from 8:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.,** providing hearing evaluations at no charge. Appointments are required. Please contact Cheryl Track, faith community nurse, to reserve your space. (941) 320-3828, 4tracks@comcast.net

## **Invest in Children**

by Jinny Miller, co-coordinator



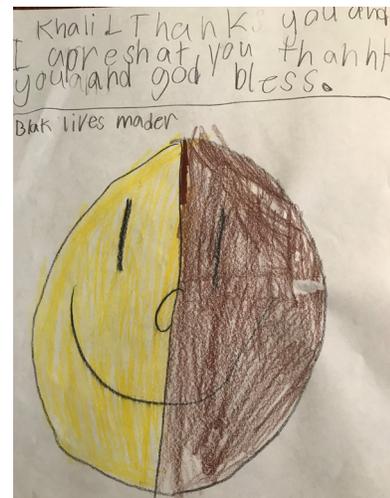
First Presbyterian volunteers are joyfully returning to Brentwood Elementary School in a variety of ways — classroom volunteers, helping in the media center, one-on-one mentoring, assisting in the art room, and more! The Brentwood teachers, staff and students are so glad they are back! Thank you, FPC volunteers!!

We also continue to receive thank-you notes from teachers whose rooms our church has adopted. Enjoy the notes and pictures below.

*Hi, this is Mr. French from Brentwood Elementary. First Presbyterian sponsored/adopted our class for this school year. My class and I are very grateful for your donation. We can't thank you enough. The class is very excited about getting some new supplies and items for the treasure box.*

*We created some appreciation cards for you. One of the cards is pictured to the right. Thanks again! First Presbyterian has made such a huge impact on Brentwood over the few years I have worked here.*

*Steve French*



*We just wanted to thank you for sponsoring and adopting our class. We are a special needs pre-kindergarten class and here are the smiles you helped to put on their faces. Many thanks for all your church does for Brentwood.*

*Leigh Bennett & Jane Moll*



**PRESBYTERIAN  
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**  
*OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE*

**UPDATE on UKRAINE**

Many churches are already providing assistance with basic items for survival. PDA's first priority is to provide funding to partners on the ground.

**What exactly is PDA doing?** PDA is in the emergency response phase, primarily supporting refugees in transit (Internally Displaced Persons [IDPs] in Ukraine, in addition to refugees who have crossed borders) with food, hygiene items, potable water, baby supplies, first aid, psychosocial support and more. PDA's partners on the ground have shared that they anticipate this crisis to require mid-term and long-term response, so the needs will change over time.

A heartfelt thank-you goes to those who have already contributed. We sent a check this week for \$1,080 from last week's contributions—for a total of \$7,130 to-date. To support the response by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, make your check out to First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, with "Ukraine" in the memo. You can also give online via our church website or by texting giving. Please select "Psby.Dis.Asst." fund and "Ukraine" in the optional memo.

**• Volunteer Day Trip to Beth-El Farmworker Ministry**  
**Sponsored by the Mission & Justice Committee**



**NEXT TRIP: Wednesday, April 27**  
**Work at Beth-El:**  
**9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon**

You are invited to be a part of the group from First Presbyterian, Sarasota, that gathers at Beth-El Farmworker Ministry in Wimauma to volunteer sorting food or related activities on the last Wednesday of each month. This mission partner distributes food to help 600-900 folks each week—a lot of help is needed.

To sign up or for more information, contact Dave Householder at [dphouse47@gmail.com](mailto:dphouse47@gmail.com); call or text (724) 462-4235. Let us know of your interest in carpooling. Come and make a difference!

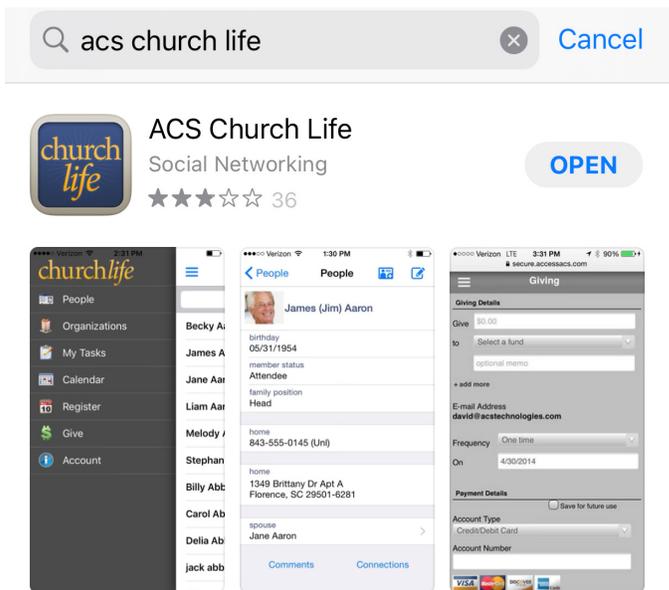
**• Get Easy Access to Church Member Photos and Contact Information**



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. You can 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 from your App Store using either iPhone or Android (Blackberry and other mobile devices can enter [www.churchlife.mobi](http://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.

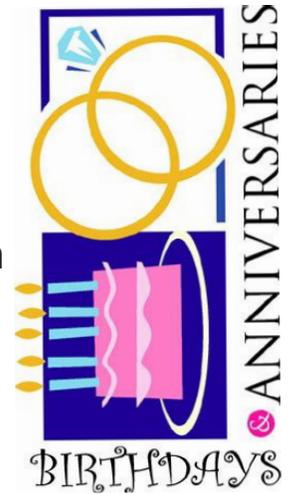


You can bring your phone into the church office and Lisa Garcia, finance manager, would be happy to help you navigate getting Church Life on your phone. Please call (941) 955-8119 to set up a time.

• **Birthdays**

1	Marcia Schaper Sara Jenoure	16	Glenn Millar Dean Ward
2	Michelle Young Jane Nicholl Melinda Marsh		Beth Byron-Reasoner Adalyn Papa Chloe Westerberg
3	Nancy Phillips	17	Haleigh Smoot
5	Barb Andrews William Klick	18	Mick Dean Barbara Atkins
6	Ron Wright Allyson Cooney		Tom Bell Jack Keeley
7	Naomi Pearson Abby Steinwachs John Matta		Carmen Pedicini Layton Huber Anna Bedford
8	Marvin Miller John Smith	20	David Gulliver Mariah Martin
9	Lyra Fokianos	21	Linda Hollen
10	Irene Dulaney Frank Frey Elijah Bressan	22	Travis Barnes Roy Yahraus Ethan Schwab
11	Carol Papa Jack McDonald		Patti Wrobel Jodilyn Khuu
12	Doris Harff Rick Spaulding, Sr Kara Fokianos	23 25	John Allen Sam Keeley, Jr. Kim Williams
13	Pat Maloney Jim Leslie		Kim Thomas-Cain Margaret Torrence
14	Nick Steinman	27	Lisa Sabin
15	Judy Melly Carol Brightman	28	Bev Wright Ellis Frandsen
		29	Linda Hart Joan Callan

**April  
Blessings  
from  
your church  
family**



• **Anniversaries**

4	Tom & Betsy Marshall
10	David & Denise Landers
11	Ed & Jean Johnston
12	Matt DeLuca & Kris Abitz Rick & Lorraine Foltz
14	Todd & Heather Rippy Bob & Beverley Scholten
18	James-Allen & Jennifer McPheeters
22	James Millikan & Dottie Albright
24	Ken & Carol Papa
28	Andy Reasoner & Beth Byron-Reasoner Daryl & Maggie Alsum



**Cross Connections** is a monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, Florida, Volume 40 Issue #4. Please submit articles for the next issue by April 15, 2022. Articles submitted are proofed and edited.



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*Return Service Requested*