

What We've Got



The Executive Summary of the Holy Cow survey taken at First Presbyterian of Sarasota in one section said the following: The energy that members want invested in two particular goals of the church will be beneficial in numerous ways. The two goals are stated in this sequence.

Strengthen the management and support of persons in various ministries....and

Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships.

So where do we begin? I am reminded of the rationing of sugar my parents told me about during World War II. Everybody was a part of making sacrifices for the war effort. Sugar was not free for heavy consumption. One teaspoon per customer was all the sugar allowed in your morning coffee.

A true story is told of a man who came into a diner, was given his one teaspoon of sugar and then began to complain to the waitress arguing he was entitled to additional sugar since his teaspoon full was not as extensive as others. He threw verbal abuse and insults in the direction of the waitress while asking for more "sweet stuff." Suddenly in the presence of all

the other customers she looked the man directly in the eye and said, "Shut up, and stir up what you've already got."

In Proverbs 18 we are told, "Where there is no vision the people perish." The longer I serve as your Interim Pastor, I am convinced that the vision Christ has for this Christian family is to stir up what we've already got. God's grace has poured forth a bountiful harvest, and God's grace is evident in numerous ways in the present history of this church. So I invite you to listen to the voice of God and then act out the Spirit's leading in your life as you "stir up what you've already got."

Sitting around committee tables verbally requesting more "sweet gifts from God" is not the answer. Expecting to fulfill the two goals stated above will demand that each of us 'stir up what we've already got' for the glory of God and the new vision of Christ's ministry that God has placed on the horizon. The vision awaits our joyful participation.

In Christ's Love,

John

Interim Pastor/Head of Staff: The Reverend Dr. John Ross

Associate Pastor: The Reverend Clayton Thomas ***Pastor for Spanish Ministries: The Reverend Julio Travieso***
Director of Music Ministries: Jack M. Levick ***Intern for Youth & Families: Daniel McCurdy***

Love Notes

DOCS

Dear friends and prayer supporters,



We want to share a great answer to prayer for DOCS and your prayers and support.

Today December 28, I received an e-mail that we have been granted official recognition of our Family Medicine speciality by the Congolese Ministry of Health. This is a major step in our education program in the Congo. Many of you have been faithful supporters and prayers for the DOCS program. The program was launched just before we moved to Sarasota and this church has been a big part of it through the years.

We want to share this with you so you can rejoice with us and continue to support this mission work of DOCS.

Dr. & Mrs. G. Paul Groen

Dear friends,

We'd like to thank all who have conveyed to us messages of condolence on the sudden death of my son in England. Such support in days of grief has been of great comfort to us.

Brian and Lois Bowen

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for your love and support over the past months going back to the beautiful "We-Care" poster given to my husband Paul when he was in The Inn. All the personal notes and signatures were appreciated. When Hospice took over his care, many heartfelt messages were received offering hope and compassion. Finally, when Paul's memorial service was held in the Sanctuary on December 12, the Presbyterian Women arranged the reception in Fellowship Hall. How can I ever say "thank you" enough? We have such a loving church family here at First Presbyterian. I thank God with my whole heart for all of you and pray for God's blessing for each one. Thank you, thank you.

Betty Fee

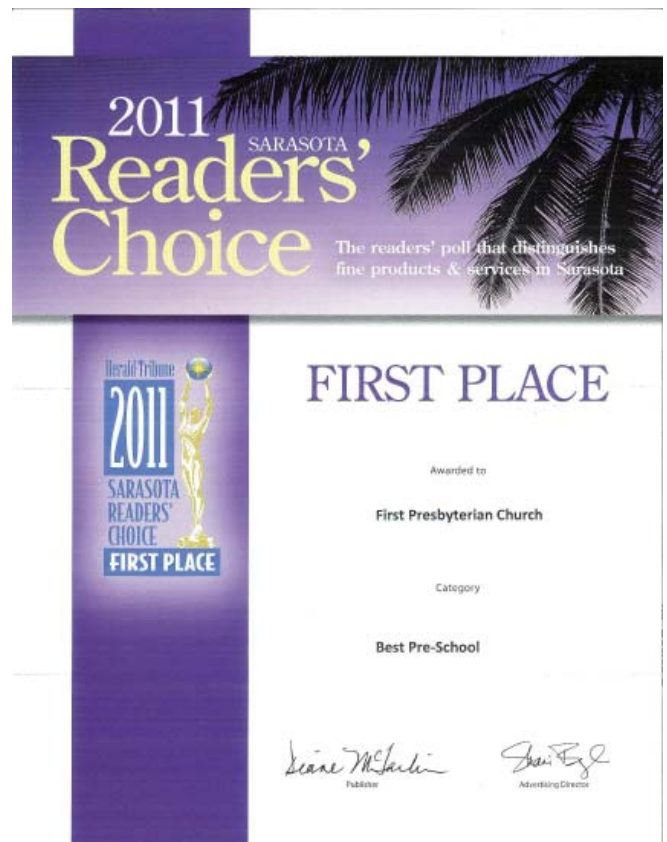
Preschool News

by Clare Carter, Director

As you may have heard, First Presbyterian Preschool has had a terrific year. We are fully enrolled and have a waiting list. Thanks to our Annual Fund, which raised close to \$4,000, we were able to add two new members to our fantastic staff. We have made improvements to our playground and classrooms (many thanks to Marvin Miller!). Finally, last week we learned that we've been voted "Best Preschool" by the readers of the Sarasota Herald Tribune in its Reader's Choice Poll. I am so glad that our amazing teachers have been recognized in such a public way. Thank you all for your votes and as always, for all you do to help make our preschool the success that it is today.

Please help us celebrate this honor at the Butterfly Ball. It will be held in the Fellowship Hall on Friday March 23rd, from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Our fantastic families and volunteers predict that this year's Ball will be the best ever! Please call or stop by the preschool office to purchase tickets, donate a new item or gift card to our silent auction or just say hello.

Happy Valentine's Day! 



February Gathering

Family Promise: Sarasota Communities Helping Children & Families

On Tuesday February 7, the Presbyterian Women will gather for their monthly meeting. Wendy Fitton, Network Manager of Family Promise, will be our guest speaker. She will share the many aspects of her work telling us what Family Promise does and how all that loving work is accomplished. Join us at 11:30 a.m. for punch while enjoying Dr. Tom Andrews' music. Bring a sandwich or salad for the lunch that begins at 12:00 p.m. Coffee tea, punch and dessert will be provided. The cost is \$2.00. The program will start at 1:00 p.m. Please make a reservation by calling the church office (955-8119) by noon on Monday, February 6. All members and guests are always welcome. ☎



March Gathering

Finding Success in Turmoil

Please set aside March 7 on your calendars. Our speaker is Nicole Martin, Non Profit Manager, for the Community of Sarasota. She will tell us about growing up in the Watts section of Los Angeles. After losing her mother while living in California, she moved to Nebraska and was a foster child for a period of time. Eventually Nicole was admitted to Boys Town, and she lived part of her life there. We invite you to come meet this fascinating young woman and hear her story. We will gather in Fellowship Hall for a social time beginning at 11:30 a.m. Bring a sandwich or salad for lunch that begins at noon. Dessert, punch and coffee will be provided. The cost is \$2.00. Please make a reservation by calling the church office (955-8119) before noon on Monday March 6. We always welcome guests and church members, both men and women! ☎

Announcing the 2012 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women!

Come experience enrichment, community, recreation and joy with women from across the country and the world!

The Theme: River of Hope (inspired by Psalm 46:4-5, NRSV)

When: July 18-22, 2012

Where: Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center, Orlando, FL

Check for Gathering updates on programs and costs at www.presbyterianwomen.org/gathering. Some scholarships are available. For more information, call the Church Office at 955-8119. ☎

Awesome, Stupendous, Colossal Yard Sale

March 16 & 17, 2012

(We've added another sale day!)

First Presbyterian Church


Please save items to donate. The good sellers are linens, glassware, pots and pans, dishes, kitchen appliances, furniture, lamps, toys, games, sporting goods, clocks, collectibles, books, jewelry and accessories, purses, costumes, holiday décor, pictures and artwork, tools, children's and teen clothing (no adult clothing, please). On March 12-15, we'll need LOTS of help sorting and pricing. ☎

Fun is Guaranteed!



Update from the PNC

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) wishes to thank everyone for their continued prayers. The Church Information Form (CIF) has been approved by Session and the Committee on Ministry and has been entered online with the Church Leadership Connection in Louisville, KY.

We have begun the second stage of the search process which involves receiving, reading and screening Pastor Information Forms (PIF) followed by reference checks, background checks and initial interviews. If you have a recommendation for a candidate, please request that they submit a PIF to Louisville and/or provide their name to us in writing. We will continue to keep the congregation informed regarding our progress in this exciting stage of the journey! 

Ellen Forbes

Marvin Miller

Jean Fulton

Carol Papa, Chair

Victor Garraus

Kay Steinman

Emilie Kimbrough

Cord Van Nostrand, Co-Chair

Adam Martin

Feasting or Fasting?

by Edith Phillips, Co-Chair FPC Family Promise

How are your New Year's Resolutions coming along? With all the Holiday feasting, most of us feel the need to fast, or at least try a new diet that severely restricts the intake of food. At this time of year, health clubs and gyms overflow with new memberships in an effort to follow through on our stellar intentions to get into shape. Or, perhaps you are fasting from too much time in front of the TV or computer. A New Year means we are given another chance to get it right, begin again to make better choices for a healthier lifestyle.

Even though fasting may be mostly relegated to the domain of Biblical times, it still can serve as a model for giving up something to honor God. Is there some time in your busy week you could give up doing something you enjoy in order to donate a meal, or an evening to Family Promise in honor of God's blessings to you? Wouldn't we all rather be on the giving end than the receiving?

The Israelites fasted and dutifully performed all the outward signs of worship, but their hearts weren't right. They demanded of God: "Why have we fasted and thou seest it not? Why have we humbled ourselves and thou takest no knowledge of it?" (Isaiah 58: 3) Isaiah relayed an answer from God that gets right to the point, having

nothing whatsoever to do with elaborate worship rituals. Instead, he tersely addressed the way they treated each other: self-serving, quarreling, oppressing the weak, and ignoring those who were in desperate need.


God indicated the approved fast involved hospitality-- "to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your home" (vs 7). God goes on to promise that if you "pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted" (vs10) that you will receive light and guidance and God will "satisfy your desire with good things" (vs11). Though we may not be able to literally house the homeless ourselves, our church can do so, through the careful screening of Family Promise and the help from many needed volunteers.

Look out for what you can do to lighten people's loads.


So many can barely walk under the strain of their lives.

Be His (God's) hands and back and carry some of their load through prayer and practical help.

(<http://pen-of-the-wayfarer.blogspot.com/2008/04/gods-chosen-fast-isaiah-58.html>)

This is a New Year, and a time for beginning again, a fast from our own selfish agendas. If you could lighten someone's load, it could lighten your heart. Family Promise week is scheduled February 12-19. If you could prepare a meal, spend a night, donate a Saturday morning or afternoon to stay at church, set up classrooms or dismantle, please sign the board or phone the church office (955-8119). Also, throughout the year the Family Promise Day Center/Offices could use items like copy paper, paper towels, trash bags, etc. There is an easy way to buy and ship from the computer: Enter Amazon.com, then Wish Lists, put in Family Promise of Sarasota for a more detailed list. Even if you are unable to help in the above ways, please pray for the families and volunteers. 

February 22, Ash Wednesday

There will be two services for Ash Wednesday. The first will be in the Chapel at 8:00 a.m. The second service will be in the Sanctuary at 6:30 p.m. There will be a Spanish Ash Wednesday service in the Chapel at 7:00 p.m. 

Flower Ministry Changes Hands

Wendy Miller has received so many wonderful compliments on the beautiful floral arrangements she created each Sunday for the past three years. Wendy decorated the chapel and sanctuary with fresh arrangements and greens each Sunday. The exuberantly decorated flower cross led the processional and recession on Easter morning. The changing of the 'flower guard' coincides with the ordination and installation of new deacons and elders. Victoria Guenther observed and trained with Wendy and has now assumed the flower ministry for the next three years. ☞

Your Opportunity to Glorify God with Flowers!

The 2012 sign-up board for flower dedications and memorials is now in the church office foyer (weekdays) and courtyard (Sundays). Please sign up for a floral memorial or dedication for a special occasion in honor of loved ones. Give glory to God by sharing your joys and sorrows with our church family through flowers. The price per arrangement is \$30. (up \$5.00/per to cover current and projected costs). You can sign up for one or two sanctuary arrangements for each Sunday available. (Chapel arrangement is included with the price for one or both sanctuary arrangements.) For further information, contact Victoria at 941.955.2868 or guenther@yaho.com. ☞

New Resources for Lent!

by Joan Keep, Moderator Spiritual Formation Ministry

Natalie Smith, our Church Librarian, announces that three new Lenten Books have arrived!

A Clearing Season: Reflections for Lent by Sarah Parsons
Parables and Passion: Jesus Stories for the Days of Lent by John Indermark

Shadows, Darkness and Dawn: A Lenten Journey With Jesus by Thomas R. Steagald

Ash Wednesday, February 22 heralds the beginning of Lent when we are invited to hear Jesus' words of grace, hope and challenge. Enrich your experience of Lent by exploring these new seasonal books! They are displayed on the shelves behind the desk in the Library. ☞

Note from Dan McCurdy Youth & Family Intern

Holy Cow... February already? Stepping boldly into the New Year, I will also be stepping boldly into the north, all the way up to Atlanta for a class for a couple of weeks. Do not despair/rejoice just yet... I'm just taking a class, and I am already back!

In the meantime, this is a good time to think about what we want our Youth and Family ministries to look like going forward. If you are interested in participating, either with the Youth Group, Youth Committee, Sunday School, etc., get a hold of me, because the folks I already have helping me are starting to get this look in their eyes that tells me that perhaps a break would be appreciated.

Special thanks to everyone who helped make the Christmas Eve Nativity service such a success... Emboldened by that success, I would like to present our new Wednesday children's program! Starting February the 1st, we will be holding practices for a Spring musical called "The Singing Bishop," which will be held on March 31st. Watch *Cross Connections* and bulletins for more information.

It's been a great first half of my year here... I am especially excited to see what 2012 will bring for all of us. ☞

Tackle Hunger With The "Souper Bowl Of Caring"

February 5 is Super Bowl Sunday. On that day after each service, our senior high youth will be stationed at the exits of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall to receive your donations towards the "Souper Bowl of Caring" effort. The "Souper Bowl" is a grassroots effort to help feed the hungry by collecting donations of canned goods and money to assist organizations that feed the hungry. Last year, our "Souper Bowl" efforts totaled over \$2000. ☞






Protecting Children Is Everyone's Job

by Cheryl Track, Parish Nurse

Child abuse and neglect crosses every socioeconomic, geographic, racial, and religious line. As hard as it is for each of us to accept the reality of child abuse, we must educate ourselves about this complex national problem so that we can begin to eradicate it.

The Child Protection Center reached over 30,000 children/families last year through their 5 centers in Florida. Did you know?

- There are 3+ million reports of child abuse & neglect annually in the U.S. (US Department of Health & Human Resources)
- 131,340 children were identified as victims of abuse &/or neglect in Florida between July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007. (FL Department of Children and Families HSN & Ad Hoc Reports)
- Florida is one of the three deadliest states for children. (US Department of Health and Human Services)
- 1 out of 4 girls & 1 out of 6 boys is sexually abused in the US before age 18. Keep in mind that over 90% of offenders are not “strangers” to their victim. 60% of children live in the same household as their sexual abuser. (US Department of Justice)
- 1 out of 5 children is sexually solicited on the internet. (US Department of Justice)
- The US spends \$103.8 billion annually as a direct or indirect result of the abuse & neglect of our nation's children. (Prevent Child Abuse America)
- The prevalence of child abuse is 10 times the rate of cancer. (National Call to Action—Sadler, Chadwick, & Hensler)
- In Sarasota County, on average 4 children are identified as new victims of maltreatment EVERY DAY.
- Florida Statutes Chapter 39 state that any person who has knowledge, or reasonable cause to suspect, that a child is being abused or neglected must report that information to the Florida Abuse Hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE). All Florida citizens are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect.
- Remember, “What is Mentionable is Mentionable.” Talk with your children and grandchildren about personal safety. Remind your child that they can talk with you about anything, and you can handle whatever they tell you. Personal Safety is a life-long conversation. Tailor messages according to age, development, and maturity. For questions or to request a free training, on talking with your child about personal safety, contact the Child Protection Center at (941) 365-1277.

By understanding our shared responsibility to report suspicions of abuse and provide opportunity for intervention and healing, we take the important first steps towards creating a community in which all children are safe and free to thrive. For any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Cheryl Track, Parish Nurse, 320-3828. 





Birthdays

1	Charlotte Chapdelain Spencer Chapdelain Kara Delaney Barbara Epperson Jeannetta Mouncey Robert Noble, III Ida Tidwell	7	Herb Booth, III Suzy Edwards Barbara Hostetler Lee Wieder		
2	Dwight Ferguson Leslie Furtick Judy Kelly Rogers Knopik Allison Lindell Sue Nurczyk Diana O'Neill Daniel West	8	Ryan Day Edna Feiler Jean-Fred Monod Leigh Armstrong Callie Forrest Emma John Jim Porteous Colton Berman Siena Cook Wesley Hord	15	Wes Burquest, Jr Betty Fee Alicia Fruehwald Dick Schlup Stephen Gifford-Bell Brooke Lounsberry Tristan O'Neill Eleanor Strait Al Washington Cy Wofsy
3	Kym Biggar, III Betsy Cairns Kathleen Harmon Betty Pritchard Stephie Safford Claire Steiner	9	Nikki Garraus Rob Harrison Jo Ann Heburn Julie Kerr Linda Parks Kaleigh Schaeffer Shelby Tatum George Woods	16	John Bice Jenn King-Rock Jack O'Neill Martin Sabin Tammy Taaffe Chad Anderson Annale Graven Frances Woods Charlie Zulauf Jeff Jones Susan Morrison David Soper Shelley Booth Paula Martin Susan Douglas
4	Robyn Fergeson Lauren Van Nostrand	10	Julia Boehm Barry Dunn Kevin Ronan Sally Scott Tyler Sunseri Amy Weeks Audria Cribbs Doris Stelzer	17	Dale Fruehwald Beth Knopik Linda McCausey Lydia Chapdelain Kevin Mathis Suzanne Messick Lynn Riechmann Jim Tschirgi Matthew Ulsh Erin Wnorowski Irene Halstead Mary Hershey Beverly Koach Avalon Martin Candice Martin Daniel Brown Jacqueline Galvis de Quintero Emily Rickloff Amy Walker Cindy Balistreri Sharon Oxley Bonnie Steinhoff Jeanne Baum Alicia Land Christopher Young Ray Hord
5	Jonathon Berman Robert Schwartzkopf	11		17	
6	Shawn Gantert-O'Malley Larry Guth Ernestine Harris Madeline Parr Elizabeth Wery	12		18	
		13		19	
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				29	

Anniversaries

1	Bill & Linda Wishart
3	David & Maryann Boehm
4	John & Elizabeth Allen
5	Bill & Judy Bosold Chuck & Carolyn Duddingston
6	Jay & Paula Berman
13	Jerry & Heather Blanton
14	Doug & Gee Dee Kerr Tony & Lisa Ciralo Bob & Carol Putnam
16	Denis & Julianne Romanenko
17	David & Karen Johnston
18	Bob & Diane Bittner
20	Bill & Sandy Young
21	Al & Beryl Wildenburg
25	Bill & Karen Lounsberry Harry & Kathie Dodge
26	Charlie & Dee Stottlemeyer Bill & Jo Ann Heburn
28	Ed & Alia Wilson


Cross Connections
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www.FirstPresSarasota.org

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Montreat for Senior High & Middle School

It's Montreat time! Okay, not quite yet, but we are now taking \$50 deposits for Montreat! This year it will be from July 14-22. The total cost of the trip is \$350. You can download the registration form from the FPC youth Facebook page or pick one up in the church office. 

***Cross Connections* is a monthly publication of First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota, Florida Volume 30 Issue #2. Please submit articles for the next issue by February 15, 2012.**