

This Week @ First

Budget & Finance Update

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On behalf of the First Presbyterian Budget and Finance Team, a special thanks to everyone who is supporting the important work of the church! Quarterly financial statements were emailed this week. Please take time to review your statement and if you have any questions, or if you would like a printed copy of this report, please reach out to Fran Owens, our Financial Administrator, Fran@OldFirstChurch.org, or leave a message on the office phone, (850)222-4504.

As we work to provide transparent stewardship of church resources, here are a few tips and lessons learned that may be helpful:

Breeze — If you are a registered Breeze user, you should be able to see your pledge and your record of giving on your Breeze account. This information is not visible to others. Please check periodically and see that your record is accurate. If you have made payments to the church that are not showing in your Breeze account, please contact Fran Owens.

Payments directly from financial institutions — Some payments come to the church directly from financial institutions and may not clearly identify the person whose account should be credited. For example, Qualified Charitable Distributions from tax deferred accounts often come with paperwork showing the person on whose behalf the payment is made, but this is not shown on the check itself. If your financial institution is sending a payment to the church, please let Fran know to be on the lookout, so we can make sure it is recorded properly.

Payments of stocks — If you pay your pledge by transferring stocks or other securities to the church, it goes into our Merrill-Lynch account, but may not identify the sender. If you transfer securities to the church, please let Fran know to be on the lookout.

Payments through the church website — Many people find it convenient to make an online contribution through the website. For these payments, there are several categories of payment:

- FPC General Fund (this is for pledge payments and other gifts)
- FPC Pre-School Scholarship Fund
- Special Giving
- Minister's Discretionary Fund

If you use the Special Giving category, please use the "notes" field to tell us the detail of the Special Giving. An example might be the purchase a book that was suggested through the Inquirer's Class and ordered in bulk by the church.

Thank you for helping us grow in our transparency of church resources!

Worship & Music

To watch our Sunday worship at 11 AM, connect with us on [YouTube](#) (find the bulletin [here](#))!

The Creation Care Service of Lessons and Carols will also be available on YouTube, and a bulletin will be uploaded to the website in advance of the service.



Compassion & Social Justice

Please consider signing up to help with a **Sunday meal at Grace Mission** over the summer months. We need volunteers from 4 to 6 PM on May 12, June 9, July 14th and August 11th. You can sign up [here](#).

Second Harvest bread boxing will be on Friday, May 3. Please sign up using [this link](#) so that the coordinator at Second Harvest will be able to set you up in the group.

We are considering offering **laundry services** during the summer. If you are interested in volunteering to help with that on Wednesday mornings, please contact Debbie Gibson.

For information about volunteering with the **Snack Pack ministry** or other activities of the Compassion & Social Justice team, please contact Debbie Gibson.

First Presbyterian Church

110 North Adams Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Phone: (850) 222-4504/Fax: (850) 222-2215

Email: office@oldfirstchurch.org

Website: www.oldfirstchurch.org

www.facebook.com/oldfirstchurch

Published on April 26, 2024

Care & Outreach

Save the Date: Sunday, June 2

Mark your calendars: On Sunday, June 2, following worship, we will say goodbye to Anne and Jim Apple and celebrate the time they have spent with us. A light lunch will be served in the Westminster Room and we will have a basket for cards and letters to be collected for Anne and Jim.

Spiritual Formation

The Inquirer's class will meet this Sunday in the Westminster Room and on Zoom to continue the Peaceful Practice series. This week, we tackle "Dialogue": *listening together for insights and deeper questions*.

Please remember to bring your notebooks, as we will continue to have some free journaling time.

The children's class will meet in Room 306 at 9:30 and will begin with a music lesson with Ms. Aide. Our scripture lesson is "Phillip the Evangelist." We will hear the story of Philip and the Ethiopian official and learn that everyone is included in God's plan (Acts 8: 26-40).

To submit an announcement for an upcoming issue of *This Week @ First*, please use [this updated link](#).

Volunteer Opportunity: Conversational English Class

Peggy Wright-Cleveland, Abbey Leier-Murphy, and Fred Kilgallin are starting a Sunday afternoon conversational English class to help those for whom English is a second language. If anyone is interested in working with the group, regularly or occasionally, please contact Peggy.



Please join us in the sanctuary on **Wednesday, May 1 at 5:00** for a **saxophone quartet recital**, featuring the senior FSU quartet and Elizabeth LaJeunesse, piano. The program will be about 40 minutes, and includes works by Shostakovich, Pierne, and Farrington.

Arranged for quartet and piano, Iain Farrington's "Animal Parade" was originally written for organ, and includes animals ranging from the alley cat to the blue whale!



Session Update

The Session met following worship on Sunday, April 21, and received the three new elders in the class of 2026. Dan Bruno will be ordained, and Greg Ricardi installed, on Sunday, May 2. Due to travel, Janet Fixel will be installed at a later date.

The ReKindle group led the spiritual formation and opening prayer time with a question around a line from the closing worship hymn, God Be With You till We Meet Again. Elders were asked to share a specific experience and action when "life's perils confound you" and "God's arms surround you."

The Session approved a plan for transitional ministry following the departure of Rev. Apple on June 2, 2024. This plan utilizes two part-time positions to provide pastoral and program leadership during the period between Rev. Apple's departure and when the work of the PNC concludes with a call by the congregation of a permanent pastor.

It is proposed that these two positions will be a designated part time pastor, and a part time Spiritual Formation director. Each position would be initially filled for up to a 12-month period with options for renewal if needed.

The part time spiritual formation position does not require oversight of the Presbytery and will be handled by the Personnel Ministry Team with the approval of the Session.

The position of designated part time pastor is a position that requires examination by the Ministry of Pastoral Transitions of Florida Presbytery. Discussions are underway with the Presbytery and the candidate.

The impact to the church's budget will be neutral as the combined compensation for these two part-time positions will not exceed the currently allocated compensation budgeted through the calendar year end for the Interim Pastor position.

Other action items:

- New members were received and will be welcomed in worship on Sunday, May 12th, including two baptisms.
- A Session meeting was called for 10:30 on Sunday, May 12, to receive a new member.
- The Session endorsed the Endowment Committee recommendation for use of up to \$2,500 to send a mixed middle-high school group to the Montreat Youth Conference.
- The Session endorsed supporting an action to sign a petition for Bread for the World. Compassion and Social Justice also reported about many ongoing projects.
- The Property Ministry team reported about sanctuary paint repairs to happen this summer and an ongoing leak in the steeple that could lead to a capital project.

Looking Ahead:

May 5: State of the Church, 9:30 AM

May 12: Second Sunday Fellowship and welcome of new members following worship

May 19: Pentecost Sunday

June 2: Pastor Anne's last Sunday at FPC

Pastor's Note



Small things, small changes can make a big difference. One step at a time is a good mantra. Once when we were down one associate pastor and the head of staff had been on sabbatical, my colleague, Margaret, and I, well, we got stuff done with that mantra. And, yes, I know better than to be puffed up, making statements like that. “We got things done.”

Proverbs teaches that learning to recognize that sort of arrogance can go a long way towards gentling the world, if only we'd commit our work to the Lord. “The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps.” There is no substitute for a good plan. And, as scripture teaches, “Those who are attentive to a matter will prosper, and happy are those who trust in the Lord.”

The pride of our arrogance was rooted in the fact that we got Advent “done” in the summer. We were bringing the bulletins to the full staff for review. And, we had a new associate pastor and this was to be her first staff meeting.

That particular summer we'd had a compliment of college and seminary interns who worked tirelessly on forming the words we would speak in Advent. The liturgy was shaped from the biblical texts. The hymns, prayers, and selections from the Book of Confessions were beautifully paired. This work would help our congregation be prepared for the hopeful anticipation of Christ's arrival — the already and the not yet.

After the bulletins were presented, that new associate pastor said, “These are beautiful. And, is it the regular practice of this church to not mention the name of Jesus in the season anticipating his birth? I am not comfortable with that choice. We are the church — the body of Christ. We need to use His name.” Talk about a gut punch and a teachable moment. Hers was a well asked and kind question and an expectation clearly expressed.

There is a line in 1 Peter that says, “Always be ready to make a defense for the hope that is within you.” What that new associate did at that staff table was to express that our hope is grounded in Jesus Christ in the already and the not yet.

Emily Dickinson described hope as “the thing with feathers that perches in the soul.” Christ is the center of our work together as the church — holding to that Center guards and guides us in hope. And, about that Advent liturgy. We went back to the drawing board and got it done in time for Christ the King Sunday — literally just in the nick of time. We adapted and yes, we were attentive to using the name of Christ. I believe the Lord was leading the way, redirecting our steps.

Hope is an artist's finest expression, a habit of thought, and most always held in tension with the reality of suffering. If you stop to think, could you name a time when the Lord was redirecting your steps? What does hope look like to you?

Jim and I had been in Tallahassee for a month and our friends came to visit for the week between Christmas and New Year's. Florida was all new to us. Ann Westall sent a text and suggested, “You might give Wakulla Springs a try. This time of year you might see a manatee.” I'm not sure I knew what a manatee was before that day. We were hopeful as we headed out the door. We went on an adventure that did not include seeing a manatee but it did include the unpalatable experience of mullet dip.

That first trip to the natural beauty around Tallahassee has made for many more. We have kayaked alongside a mother manatee and her calf. Jim has had the misfortune of unexpectedly and accidentally disturbing a manatee and having to work hard to stay in the boat. We have seen baby alligators wiggle around at the grassy muddy edge between land and water. We have seen their built up nest, like Moses' bitumen basket, and cracked eggshells, like the grave clothes left behind in Christ's tomb.

We have seen the sun gleam through the Spanish moss and taken a few glorious hours to drop a kayak to paddle, or walk along by the sinks in this pristine natural beauty.

Jim and I have been enriched by the encouragement to experience the beauty in the Big Bend and to pay attention to the care of creation. This Sunday is the 28th anniversary of the Session's creation of the endowment, and what we now call the Legacy and Gifts Plan. Our endowment is held by the New Covenant Trust and uses a targeted investment strategy that takes into consideration values related to climate change and fossil fuels. We have looked at our use of disposables and made small changes in our daily practices. As has the church. Small things, small changes, can make a big difference in the already, and not yet.

God's peace, God's presence. Anne