



# This Week @ First

Friday, May 23, 2025

## Worship & Music

To watch our worship services, connect with us on [YouTube](#) and find the weekly bulletin [here](#)!

## Spiritual Formation

**Sunday School – Youth:** *Classes will resume in the fall.*

**Adult Classes:** *Classes will resume in the fall.*

**Guided Meditation** continues on Sunday mornings at 10:30 in the Library.

## Congratulations, Graduate!

We are proud to celebrate our high school graduate, **Sebastian Bradley Neel** (son of Elizabeth Bradley, grandson of Carolyn Herrington, and nephew of Carolyn Bradley). Sebastian is graduating from Leon High School and will be attending Santa Fe College to study Statistics and Finance.

*Below left:* Sebastian's Leon High School Senior Photo

*Below right:* Sebastian with the Leon High School Fire Academy



## Compassion and Social Justice

Snack Pack and Laundry Love volunteers are invited from 10 AM to noon on Wednesdays. For information on volunteering, contact [Debbie Gibson](#).

## FPPreschool Scholarship

It's time for the annual Friends of the Preschool Scholarship!

First Presbyterian Preschool was opened in 1966 as a mission of First Presbyterian Church to provide an integrated, safe, nurturing environment for young children of diverse economic, racial, and religious backgrounds. It was the first integrated Preschool in the city of Tallahassee. The Preschool provides meals for all children who attend the preschool, enrolls children who are in the state subsidized childcare program, and gets funding for participating in the VPK program. FPP works to keep tuition rates for its three classes—T.C Bears (2-3 year olds), Busy Bees (3-4 year olds), and VPK (4-5 year olds)—accessible to all families.

Each year, generous contributions from First Presbyterian Church are used to provide reduced tuition rates for families in need. Our goal this year is \$10,000, which is the approximate cost of one year of tuition.

### Ways to give by June 9th:

- By check to First Presbyterian Preschool
  - Leave in the church office
- Online giving via the donation page on the church website
  - Choose "First Presbyterian Preschool Scholarship Fund"

Questions? Please send an email to the session liaison [Jane Atkinson](#).



To submit information to be included in the newsletter and/or the Sunday bulletin (as space permits), please use [this link](#), which will take you to an online form. Submissions are due by Thursday at noon each week. Thank you!

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*Click here for the*  
**[Weekly Schedule](#)**

**[Monthly Calendar](#)**

*More info available on [Breeze](#)*





# Pastoral Note

The Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, declared that all individuals enslaved in Confederate states were free. The executive order was a wartime measure, and it took time for the news to reach enslaved people, especially in areas distant from Union forces. The emancipation of enslaved people in Florida occurred on May 20, 1865, eleven days after the Civil War concluded and two years after President Lincoln issued the Proclamation.

The first worship service at First Presbyterian Church (FPC) took place on May 14, 1828, 35 years before the Emancipation Proclamation and nearly three years after the trustees filed the deed to purchase the land for the church. The deed was recorded by five men appointed as ruling elders: Robert Butler, William Waddell, David C. Wilson, Jabez Bull, and Benjamin Whitner. Their appointments were subject to specific conditions outlined in the deed: first, the church was dedicated to the public worship of Almighty God and reserved solely for that purpose; second, only those with a voice in church matters, per the church constitution, could call a pastor and appoint other officers. Third, the north gallery was designated for persons of color during public worship. Enslaved persons worshiped in the presence of enslavers in the north gallery at FPC.

Yet, despite slavery's role in FPC's early history, the question remains: How can the congregation build a bridge of reconciliation within our community today that heals past wounds and fosters mutual respect for everyone? According to Everett L. Worthington Jr., in "Forgiving and Reconciliation: Bridges To Wholeness And Hope," reconciliation involves four elements: decision, discussion, detoxification, and devotion. FPC has decided to initiate and engage in discussions about racism both internally and within the community. Members of the congregation have formed the Healing and Racism Task Force to confront and address (detoxify) the sin of racism within our church. Additionally, FPC is devoted to advocating for individuals who experience the injustice of racial mistreatment. Building a bridge of reconciliation requires all members of the faith community to unite in hope and love.

Rev. Glenn Hodges

Rhodes, Barbara 1994. *At First: The Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee, Florida, 1829-1938*. Tallahassee: Historical Society.

Worthington, Everett L. 2003. *Forgiving and Reconciling: Bridges to Wholeness and Hope*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

“He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.” (Ephesians 2:15-16)



## FPC and Emancipation Day

We were proud to celebrate Florida's Emancipation Day last Tuesday, May 20! At 11 AM some brave souls climbed the steeple to ring the bell, then many congregants joined to walk over to the Emancipation Day celebrations outside the Knott House.

You can read about the Emancipation Day celebrations [here](#) and watch the reenactment [here](#).

Experience the bell ringing for yourself on video!

- Watch the bell ring from the top of the steeple [here](#).
- Watch a 360 video of the bell ringers [here](#), with the bell superimposed and synced up!



Thanks to our bell ringers for their help!