

# This Week @ First

Friday, March 20, 2026

## Worship & Music

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

Choir rehearsals are Wednesdays from 7–8:15 PM. We meet on Sundays at 10:15 AM in the choir room. New singers are always welcome!

## Spiritual Formation

Sunday classes are 9:30–10:30 AM  
Nursery care available on request\*

### Youth Sunday School

K–5 in Room 306, Middle and High in Room 301

### Adult Bible Study

Calvin Room and via [Zoom](#)

This week we will continue our discussion of the letters of John at 2 John, verse 1.

### Inquirers' Class

Westminster Room and via [Zoom](#)

*Meeting Jesus on the Road: A Lenten Study*, a new devotional guide from Westminster John Knox Press, will be the framework for our class discussions over the next several weeks. It offers a simple, meaningful invitation to walk with Jesus through key Gospel encounters, encouraging reflection, spiritual attentiveness, and a renewed sense of discipleship. If you have time, read and reflect on Matthew 6:5-15 and Luke 9:1-6.

**Guided Meditation** meets at 10:30 in the Library.

**\*Nursery Staffing:** If members or guests are in need of childcare, there is a sign on the nursery door with numbers to call. Members who have completed the Safe Gatherings screening will always be available.

**Special request: Please help the Spiritual Formation Team prepare for a children's egg hunt to be held on Easter Sunday.** We will reuse plastic eggs saved from years past, but the congregation is asked to donate some additional eggs, wrapped candies and small toys which can be used to fill our eggs. There will be a box marked for that purpose on the table outside the church office. It would be most helpful if the candy and toys were to arrive on or before Wednesday, April 1. Thank you for your help!



## Compassion and Social Justice

### Snack Packs and Laundry Love:

Join us from 10 AM to noon on Wednesdays to provide snack packs, laundry, and showers for our unsheltered neighbors.

To volunteer, please contact [Jon Dodrill](#). You are welcome once, weekly, or monthly as you are able and interested. See page 3 for more information!

### Second Harvest Bread Boxing:

Join us on first Fridays from 9:45 AM–Noon.



### Serve Dinner at Grace Mission:

Join us on second Sundays from 4–6 PM.



### Interfaith Vigil for Immigrant Justice

Sunday, 4–5 PM, Old Florida Capitol



## Tomorrow: Annual Gathering of Presbyterian Women

All Presbyterian Women are cordially invited to attend the Annual Gathering of Presbyterian Women of the Florida Presbytery. This special event will take place on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at Dogwood Acres Camp and Retreat Center, located at 3320 Harmony Road, Chipley, Florida. Please contact Vicki Bell, [vabb1954@gmail.com](mailto:vabb1954@gmail.com), with any questions or to register. Registration and fellowship will begin at 9 AM Central Time, 10 AM Eastern Time.



## CAPITAL AREA JUSTICE MINISTRY

Justice is Love in Action



## Sunday: CAJM Catchup Potluck Lunch

Please plan to participate in the “CAJM Catchup Potluck” after Worship on Sunday, March 22, 2026 in the Westminster Room. Bring your favorite dish to share and receive an update on activities of our justice ministry with the [Capital Area Justice Ministry!](#)

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[Click here for the](#)

[Weekly Schedule](#)

[Monthly Calendar](#)

More info available on [Breeze](#)



# DOGWOOD ACRES

**Summer Camp 2026:** early bird discount for [registering](#) by April 15!

High School Week: June 21–26

Intro / Discovery / Adventure: July 5–10 & July 12–17

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

## An Update from Friends in Cuba

Conditions in Cuba, always challenging, are especially dire at the moment. National power outages have become regular occurrences. The churches there continue to do what they can to help people meet basic needs. This week we received the following letter from Tirisay Durán Martínez, the pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Nueva Paz.

*This message is to thank God and you for the regular assistance our church receives through Pastor Izett of the church in Los Palos. We are in the same parish, very close by, and it's easy to pick up food donations.*

*Our situation in Cuba is very difficult. There are many shortages, basic needs are unmet, and we don't know what will happen. While the country is collapsing, people are living without food, medicine, hygiene products, etc. Right now, there's an energy crisis, and we've been without electricity for days. The church faces a challenge. We continue to help and serve as best we can. We have a breakfast program three times a week. We prepare lunch. We also provide purified water and care for the elderly, vulnerable people, and children with very complex family situations.*

*We continue to pray with faith and hope. We will get through this, while helping those most in need. Thank God for people like you, sensitive to the needs of others. Our church is here in prayer, giving thanks to God for the donations received. Greetings in the love of Christ. God bless you!*

This year we have committed to providing food assistance to the congregations at Los Palos/Nueva Paz as well as to a meal program at First Havana, where Alison Infante is the pastor. The needs are enormous and our brothers and sisters in the Reformed Presbyterian Church are serving in an atmosphere of profound uncertainty. Please keep them in your prayers. To learn more about the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cuba and its relationship with the PC(USA), you can visit the website of the [Cuba Partners Network](#), which encourages and supports relationships between our churches.

## Mark your calendars:

### Presbyterian Women Mission Workshop April 19th following worship

Everyone is invited — men, women, youth and children. Join us on April 19th immediately after worship in the Westminster Room for lunch, fellowship and mission work. Bring a brown bag lunch; dessert and beverage will be provided.

Future newsletters will have more information about the specific opportunities which will be available to support mission projects. In the meantime, please consider beginning to collect needed items to be used at the workshop, including:

- children's T-shirts to make reading gift bags for First Pres Preschool students
- adult T-shirts — new or gently used in sizes (M,L,XL)
- men's or women's underwear (M,L,XL)
- new or lightly used books appropriate for preschoolers (not over-sized, please)

A collection box for donations is located on the table just outside the office in the Education Building.



The church at Nueva Paz, at left, in 2016; below, in 2026.



# Laundry Love, Snack Packs, and Much More

Have you wondered what a typical Wednesday looks like at First Presbyterian? Here is what's involved in our weekly Wednesday ministries.

9 AM: Setup for Laundry/Shower Program. The choir room is prepared with chairs, TV stands, folding tables, coffee and hot water, and donated food (typically bananas, protein bars, hardboiled eggs, oranges/tangerines, apples, and cookies). Four clients have already signed up to do laundry at 10 AM or 11 AM, with a substitute in case there is a no-show or the loads are light enough to accommodate an extra person. The showers are prepared with clean towels and bathmats, laundry baskets, shampoo, body wash, and bar soap. A bleach solution is prepared to spray down the shower stalls between clients.



9:45–10 AM: Courtyard gates are opened.

10 AM: Laundry begins; clients are limited to one load, and are responsible for inspecting their own clothing before laundering. They must remain on site while the laundry is being washed and dried. Showers begin, based on same-day signups in the choir room. Showers are time-limited to 15 minutes; between showers, each stall is sprayed with a bleach solution and new towels/washcloths/bathmats are set out. For the shower operations two volunteers are required to be present and for a woman showering, one volunteer must be a woman. Historically we have accommodated a maximum of 13 individuals showering on any given Wednesday with numbers typically ranging from 9-11.

Clothing distribution is coordinated by another volunteer who records the names of individuals receiving clothing and the items received. Winter/cooler weather clothing distribution began after Christmas and has wound down for the spring. Donations from congregation members were welcomed and used; despite limited storage graciously provided in the choir robe area, items moved sufficiently rapidly so that there was not a backlog of cooler weather items donated.

Not everyone visiting between 10 and 12 is there for either a shower or laundry. Some people come just for clothes; some for coffee or food; some are waiting to see Big Bend Continuum of Care social workers Torrie Stephenson and her assistant Mike Clary, who are usually set up in the John Knox Room between 11 AM and noon to help clients with specific needs such as bus passes, housing, IDs, or medical referrals.

11 AM: Snack Pack distribution begins in the courtyard with additional volunteers. Typically snack packs and hygiene products have been handed out to 20-30 individuals each Wednesday, with as many as 37 being handed out some days.



Top to bottom: Jon Dodrill; a client makes a selection from available clothing; "Bill," another client, cheerfully helping restack chairs; Robyn Stevenson

12–2:30 PM: Demobilization. When the regular assigned laundry/shower volunteers leave, everything in the choir room and showers must be put back in order to accommodate choir practice on Wednesday evening. Due to the recent increase in the number of clients occupying the choir room (up to 19 in the room at any one time), drinking coffee (up to 40 cups), and eating donated food before the 11-12 snack packs are available, a more thorough cleaning has been necessitated to better assist our custodian, Becky Brown. This includes wiping down all chairs and tables before storing them in the adjacent storeroom, bagging all the trash and carrying the bags to the dumpster, separating out recyclables, and relining all garbage cans. The two coffee pots are cleaned and stored along with all the condiments, coffee, and paper items. The entire choir room, choir robe room and two bathrooms are swept, then vacuumed, then mopped. Sinks and toilets are wiped down and the shower stall walls and floors are hand scrubbed. Choir chairs are placed back in their original rows. All doors and gates are locked with a target departure of between 2:30 and 3 PM. During the cleanup, two full (sometimes three) loads of towels, bathmats, and washcloths are running. Volunteers from the choir have been a great help in folding and stowing the laundered towels, mats, and wash clothes, so they are ready the following week.

From a report to Session submitted by Jon Dodrill, Chair, Compassion & Social Justice Team