This Week @ First

Friday, October 9, 2026

Worship & Music

To watch our worship services, connect with us on **YouTube** and find the weekly bulletin **here**!

Our choir rehearses at 7 PM on Wednesday evenings and meets at 10:15 AM on Sunday mornings to warm up. New singers are always welcome!

Spiritual Formation

Child care is available in the church nursery (Room 205) on Sundays beginning at 9:15 AM. Sunday programs for youth and adults begin at 9:30 AM.

- Sunday school for **Children and Youth** will meet monthly on the second Sunday of each month throughout the coming school year. ***The next date will be this Sunday, October 11.***
- The **Adult Bible Study** meets in the Calvin Room and by Zoom. We will continue our study of Genesis at chapter 42, verse 26.
- **The Inquirers Class** meets in the Westminster Room and by Zoom. This week we will discuss significant decisions from the most recent and upcoming terms of the US Supreme Court.
- **Guided Meditation** meets at 10:30 in the Library.

In addition, our **Wednesday Night series** on "The Parables of Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes" has begun and will continue on October 14, October 28, and November 4 in the Westminster Room or by Zoom. To join us for dinner at 5:30 PM, please call or email the church office; the study begins at 6 PM, and all are welcome.



Don't forget your 2-cents-a-meal collection this Sunday! We still take pennies, too!

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.

Second Harvest Bread Boxing:
Join us on first Fridays from 9:45 AM–Noon. Sign-ups are on the church calendar; you will need to register with Second Harvest using their "volunteer portal." For any questions, please contact Debbie Gibson.

Serve Dinner at Grace Mission:
Join us on second Sundays from 4–6 PM.
Next opportunity: Sunday, October 11.

Click to Sign Up

Interfaith Vigil for Immigrant Justice:
Sundays at 5 PM at the Historic Florida Capitol.

Congregational Meeting Called This Sunday, October 11

A congregational meeting will take place at the end of worship this Sunday, October 11, for the purpose of electing elders, trustees, and next year's nominating committee.

The proposed slate is below. Nominations can also be made from the floor.

Elders for the Class of 2029: Carol Grondzik, John Guthrie, Gail Hankinson, Peggy West, Ann Westall.

2026-2027 Nominating Committee: Miriam Gurniak, Pam McVety, Rod Westall, Robyn Stevenson.

Trustees: Barbara Busharis, Anna Cleveland, Chris Corzine, John Hightower, Ed Kutter, Norma Meier.

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

Church Office Hours
Monday: 1 PM–5 PM
Tuesday through Thursday: 10 AM–2 PM
Friday: 1 PM–5 PM

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Click here for the

Weekly Schedule

Monthly Calendar

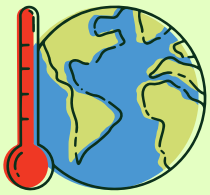
More info available on Breeze

Real Hope and Action in the Midst of the Climate Crisis

The Inquirer's Class will present a special series on November 1, 8, and 15, 2026.

We are at a crucial point in human history, when our future depends on the choices we make now—especially how quickly we are willing to transition to clean, renewable energy. The planet is heating rapidly, and the impacts are happening far too quickly for us to wait for our existing institutions to transition to renewable energy in the normal course of business. Even within the faith community, we have wasted decades with an inadequate response. This series is designed to inform and equip us to embrace the remarkable and rapidly growing transition to renewable energy and to inspire us to identify next steps for our local church and the wider church as we address the climate crisis.

More information and suggested background reading are posted on the church website.



We hope you will join us for this important presentation!

Volunteers Needed!

As our Wednesday ministries continue to grow, so does the need for volunteers. We have a very dedicated cadre of people who give generously of their time and energy, but we could always use more. There are many ways you can help including greeting, directing guests to the various services and places in the building, making/distributing snack packs, set up, clean and more! If you would like to learn more about how you can be part of this essential ministry, please speak with Jon Dodrill or Debbie Gibson.



An Evening of Mercy with Bryan Stevenson

Bryan Stevenson is the founder of the **Equal Justice Initiative** and the New York Times bestselling author of ***Just Mercy***.

Under his leadership, EJI created its acclaimed Legacy Sites, which chronicle the legacy of slavery, lynching, and racial segregation in America — and trace their connection to mass incarceration and contemporary issues of racial bias.

8th Annual Joseph House Fundraising Gala
OCTOBER 29, 2026 | 6:30 pm
Donald L. Tucker Civic Center

For more information visit the Joseph House website.

Special Choral Evensong

Sunday, October 11 at 5:30 PM
St. John's Episcopal Church



Entitled "Meet Me Here" after a musical piece from Craig Hella Johnson's "Considering Matthew Shepard," this service will feature music by LGBTQ+ composers, along with prayer and reflection around themes of connection, difference, and making room for one another.
The offering will benefit Equality Florida.
All are truly welcome.

An Invitation from the Healing Racism Task Force

The Healing Racism Task Force is dedicated to taking meaningful steps toward racial healing in our community. We need diverse perspectives, compassionate hearts, and willing hands to help guide our church forward. If you feel called to put faith into action and be a part of this vital ministry, we invite you to join us at 4 PM on Tuesday, October 13, at Sue Hightower's home, for an informal "getting to know you" meeting. Find out what we have done and how we are continuing our work. Let's walk this path together with open hearts, humility and hope.

Please contact Sue Hightower or Ann Westall if you would like to attend this meeting.

Personnel Update

The Personnel Team is pleased to announce the approval by the Session of a revised personnel manual. The manual has been provided to all staff and will be linked to the church website. If you have any questions about the manual or about our church policies regarding staff, please feel free to speak with Eleanor Cleveland, chair of the Personnel Team.

Execution Vigils

The warrant for the execution of William Lee Thompson, scheduled for Tuesday, October 13 at 6 PM, has been withdrawn. Three executions are still pending: the execution of James Robertson has been scheduled for noon on Tuesday, October 13. William Reaves is scheduled for execution on Tuesday, October 20 at 6 PM. Earlier this week Gov. DeSantis issued a warrant scheduling Jesse Guardado's execution for November 5. It is the 20th execution scheduled in Florida so far this year.

On the day of any execution a prayer service is held at Good Shepherd Catholic Church at 9:45 AM, and a vigil takes place outside the Governor's Mansion at the scheduled time of execution. On the day following an execution an interfaith service of remembrance for the executed and their victims is held at noon at the Great Seal in the Capitol Rotunda.