



FIRST NEWS

Building Faith, Changing Lives, Sharing Christ

2026

A New Year of Grace, Service, and Opportunity

As time turns and a new year begins, we give thanks to God who “is doing a new thing” (Isaiah 43:19). The New Year invites us not simply to make resolutions, but to renew our trust in the One who holds our past, present, and future in grace and ministry.

The year ahead is filled with promise. God continues to call us to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ – deepening our faith, strengthening our fellowship, broadening our service, and extending Christ’s love into our community. While the world often measures success by speed or scale or power, we are reminded that God works faithfully through prayer, patience, and people willing to say yes to the Spirit’s leading and to try a new thing in ministry to Christ.

In the coming months, we look forward to exciting opportunities for worship, study, service, and connection. With the addition of Rev. Andy Smothers and other leaders, we will initiate new Bible studies and small groups that will invite us to explore Scripture together. Outreach and mission efforts will offer tangible ways to serve our neighbors near and far. Fellowship gatherings will create space for laughter, listening, and belonging such as our scheduled “Tables of Eight” for March. We will strengthen even further our pastoral care ministry so that while we are in the midst of expansion and development, no one will lack the care of the church. Each ministry opportunity is an invitation to participate in what God is already doing among us.

As members of First Presbyterian, we step into the New Year grounded in hope – trusting in God’s sovereignty, guided by Scripture, and strengthened by the community of faith. Whatever joys or challenges this year may bring, we move forward together, confident that God’s steadfast love endures forever.

May this New Year be one in which we listen closely for God’s voice, walk faithfully in Christ’s way, and open our hearts to the exciting possibilities God has in store.

May God bless.

Sincerely,

Tim Womack

“Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.”

—Proverbs 16:3

First
Presbyterian



January 2026

520 Royal Palm Blvd.
Vero Beach, FL 32960
firstpresvero.org
772-562-9088

New Sanctuary Fund

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND WALDO SEXTON

Waldo Sexton, eccentric pioneer, cattleman, orange grove owner and real estate developer of Vero Beach, has a surprising association with First Presbyterian Church. In 1923, Waldo Sexton and Arthur McKee organized the Royal Park Development Company to build a large subdivision. The plans included 1,000 lots on about 400 acres of land north of today's 21st Street which now includes the Vero Beach Country Club and 8 acres of the First Presbyterian church property. The main thoroughfare, Royal Palm Boulevard, was originally lined with Royal Palm trees – some of which still stand on the western part of the development. Long time Vero Beach residents indicate that when route US 1 was laid out, the Army Corp of Engineers put a bend in the road to avoid bisecting these grand trees on Royal Palm Boulevard. Local lore also tells us this is why the bend in the east-west section of US 1 is called 'Miracle Mile' and from that name came the Miracle Mile shopping Plaza. In 1954, First Presbyterian founding families purchased the undeveloped eastern part of the planned subdivision to build a church. On the 'point' of this property was a collection of stately Royal Palm trees. One of them has survived and is temporarily transplanted near the Center for Christian Life building. It will be replanted, accompanied by a number of new Royal Palms, for the new Sanctuary. The memory of Waldo Sexton's Royal Palm Plantation will live on as part of the final landscaping design. Bells were an obsession with Waldo and he collected over two hundred and fifty of them from old churches, locomotives, schools, farmhouses and ships from the United States and Europe. Sexton decorated his business with the bells in McKee Jungle Gardens, The Patio, The Ocean Grill and The Driftwood Inn – where the bells would be rung to announce comings and goings of guests. As time passed and his business holding grew smaller, Waldo would give bells to any church in Indian River County that asked. Architectural plans from the old First Presbyterian Church Sanctuary showed three mismatched bells from McKee, and Oslo (where Sexton owned property). The three bells were ornamental and did not ring in the original church's Bell Tower. All three of these church bells were likely a gift from Waldo Sexton before his passing in 1967. The cast iron bell restored by Proctor Construction company lacks foundry markings and wheel. This diameter of iron bells was commonly used outside of one room school houses following the Civil War. (Ship and locomotive bells were usually made of brass, iron farm bells were smaller in diameter and church bells usually had more elegant castings.) The hard wear marks on the interior indicate this bell was heavily used – supporting the theory that it was a school bell. Unfortunately, the two other church bells were beyond repair. The restored bell will be on display at the church campus and saved for potential incorporation into the Phase III construction of a planned new Chapel building.

Written by: Mike Snyder and
Dr. Lucille Craig 12/2/2025

CONTACT Your New Sanctuary Awaits Capital Fund Committee Officers

**Co-Chair: Bill King cell: 917-375-7160
email: billking28@gmail.com**

**Co-Chair: Scott Westermann, cell: 719-649-1214
email: swestermann01@me.com**

**Financial Administrator, Kimberly Ball: tel: 772-562-9088, ext. 111
email: kimberlyb@firstpresvero.org**



Anderson Proctor and his team presenting the restored church bell to Dr. Timothy Womack and members of First Presbyterian Church.

Worship

Galleries at First Presbyterian Church Presents Women in Art

Works by: Bonnie Bolton & Kristin Moger



OPENING RECEPTION:
SUNDAY
JANUARY 11
1PM-3PM
Live Music by Dr. Jacob Craig
Refreshments will be served.
Exhibit runs until March 31



The Curators have scheduled this new time for the Opening of the Exhibition. It will allow the Congregation to attend after either Sunday service. The Artists on Display are providing refreshments for those attending. Come see the latest Exhibit, and find something you cannot resist hanging on your wall.

Gainesville Brass Quintet



Mark your Calenders!

Sunday, January 18, 2026
4:00 PM
Admission is Free
Donations Accepted

Fellowship



Wednesday Night Dinners



Sign up on realm or by calling Lisa in the Church Office

January 7

- Bacon Ranch Chopped Salad
- Sour Cream Beef & Noodles
- Cheesy Cauliflower
- Chocolate Raspberry Magic Bars

January 14

- Hawaiian Fruit Salad
- Hawaiian Sheet Pan Chicken
- Garlic Green Beans
- Hawaiian Bread & Butter
- Cheesecake Danish

January 21

Cuban Night
Menu TBD

January 28

- Salad
- Turkey Pot Pie
- Tater Tot Casserole
- Cranberry Bliss Bars



CHILDRENS MINISTRY:



We are expanding our Sunday School Children's Program and are in need of additional Sunday School teachers and volunteers. This program begins at 9:30am in the Sanctuary where the children are gathered at the steps to hear a bible story, given by the pastor, and then walk over to the Center for Christian Life Building for an application of the lesson. Lesson plans and supplies are provided and schedules are done a rotating monthly basis. So, if you have a heart for children and would like to help out, please contact Anne Adams in the Church office at ext. 115.

OLDER ADULT MINISTRY:

YOUR LATER YEARS CAN BE GREATER YEARS

Plan on joining us on January 30th at 10:30am in the Earnshaw Room, for a four-week study on setting up your later years for success. Based on the best-selling novel by Dr. David Faust, "Not Too Old: Turning Your Later Years Into Greater Years", these sessions will equip you with engaging stories, warm wisdom, practical ideas and meaningful discussion. For more information contact Anne Adams.

MEN'S GATHERING

As we begin the new year, we would like to gather informally with men from our Church Family who have gone through a season of grief, loss or lament. These emotions can be connected to death of a loved one, divorce, loss of friends or family members. We know that men grieve differently and feel this is an important first step in helping you start a new year. Led by Dr. Tim and Jonathan Miller, the group will meet in the Youth Room (2nd floor in the Center of Christian Life Building) on Thursday, February 5th at 10:30am. If you are interested in attending, please call the Church Office.

ACOLYTE MINISTRY

Acolytes begin the worship service by bringing forth the light of Christ to the Communion table. This year we have reinstated the Acolyte Ministry to include both adults and children. If you are interested in participating in this meaningful part of the worship service please contact Anne Adams for details.



COMMUNION AT HOME

Communion Sunday can now be enjoyed by all members whether you are in the Church Service or at home/hospital/rehab center. Each month members of your Church Family will bring Communion to you so that you can practice the Spiritual Habit of "Spending Time With God". If you are interested in participating please contact Anne Adams in the church Office (ext. 115).

Hospitality



FPC JOYFUL SINGALONG



Plan on joining the fun! Each second and third Thursday of each month our Church Family visits with the residents of Hidden Lakes and Garden View for a joyful singalong. These events bring our community together to praise God with our voices and prayers! For more information contact Anne Adams in the church office. All are invited!

Discipleship



There will be a Meeting for all youth (grades 6-12) and parents on January 7th after the Wednesday Night Dinner. We encourage parents and youth to attend Wednesday Night Dinner. Please register on Realm or contact the church office to sign up!



Rock the Universe is Florida's Biggest Christian Music Festival! Explore Universal Studios and listen to some of the best Christian Music performers of 2025!

Friday Jan 23 (3:30 pm) to
Saturday Jan 24 (2:00 am), 2026



Register Here!

First Presbyterian Preschool

Registration for Church Members
& Returning Families

FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027

Opens...

Monday, January 19th, 2026

Email completed application form to: helen@firstpresvero.org

Join our Preschool Family!
Taking applications for 2, 3, and 4 Year Olds.
Further information can be found on our website,
or Preschool Brochures are available in the Church office.
Spots are allocated on a first come/first serve basis.

Enrollment Fee: \$150

www.firstpresbyterianpreschool.org



Justice and Honor

Mark your calendar and Save the Date!

Art and Music Festival

Sunday, February 1, 2026, 2-4 pm

Event is co-sponsored by First Presbyterian Church Justice and Honor team along with the Gifford Historical Museum and Cultural Center.

Barbecue by Carol Campbell, local artists and musicians are participating and all are guaranteed to provide a most delightful Sunday afternoon!

Tickets will go on sale in early January at First Presbyterian Church

Event is held at Gifford Community Center

4855 43rd Ave

Vero Beach, Florida

Please note: Location is new this year at an indoor venue.



Our Justice and Honor Team collected \$2600 from the generous people of First Presbyterian Church to assist the Shop with a Cop program at the Indian River County Sheriff's Department. A check was delivered on December 8 to Officer Darrell Rivers and was gratefully received by him and his fellow officers.

The IRCSD also accepts donations of toys from many local stores, such as Walmart, Target, and others. The donated toys are collected and put into large brightly colored holiday bags, and given to specific children in need and personally delivered by the officers. The outreach between the IRCSD and children in need is heartwarming and beneficial to all.

We are indeed blessed to be a blessing!



Happy Birthday!

2. Kay Kenyon
 3. Douglas Case
 4. Terry Long
 5. Elaine Burkhardt, Deborah Winkler
 7. Teresa Miranda
 8. John Schumann Jr.
 9. Ana Gatzke
 10. Reita Byrket
 11. Dorothy Payne
 13. Diane Hawkins
 14. Jillian Barley, Blanca Capute,
 Laurie Peterson
 16. Charles Coxson, Margaret Fleming

18. Jan Mooney, Lisa Potochney, Liz Smith
 19. Grace Wagner
 20. Barbara Higgins, Rob Nelson, Jimmy Peirce
 21. Anne Adams
 22. Sue Broadhurst, Eileen Kennedy,
 Ann Ottaviano, Rick Tranquilli
 23. Tiffany Frazier, Makala Peirce
 24. Raleighine Hoppe, Barb Miller, John Taylor
 25. Rosalie Perry
 26. Bill Blankenship
 27. Phil LoGiudice
 28. Carol Freeman
 29. Carole Coe, Bill Fish
 31. Sandy Samson

What's Goin' On - January at FirstPresVero

Here are some recurring activities, meetings or classes that you might like to attend
 Everyone is welcome.

| Group/Class | Day | Weekly | Monthly | Time & Place | Chair/Contact details |
|--------------------------------|-----------|--------|---------------|-------------------------|---|
| Men's Discussion | Monday | Yes | | 3:00PM Youth Wing | Frank Iodice (772) 778-3437 email: lfrankbi@cs.com |
| Book Club | Monday | Yes | | 5:30PM Earnshaw Room | Rebecca Palmer (772) 538-0957 email: Beccapalm@gmail.com |
| Men's Fellowship Breakfast | Tuesday | Yes | | 7:30AM McAfee Hall | Glenn Conn (740) 803-3519 email: gconn@msn.com |
| Bible Study | Tuesday | Yes | | 10:30AM Schumann | Dr Tim 772-562-9088 |
| Fellowship Dinner | Wednesday | Yes | | 5:00PM McAfee Hall | Lisa Jeffra (for reservations) 772-562-9088 |
| PW Bible Study Grace Circle | | | 2nd Monday | 11:30-12:30 | Ann Faunce (303) 947-7984 email: bafaunce@gmail.com & Jane Millar (732) 600-5118, email: jvm75@aol.com |
| FPV PW social/luncheon | Friday | | 3rd Friday | 11:30AM Olive Garden | BJ Fisher 678-481-3835 email: harrysally11262@gmail.com |

Sunday Worship

January 2026

8:15 AM - Mighell Chapel

9:30 AM - McAfee Hall

11:00 AM - McAfee Hall

Childcare available at all services

January Sermons

January 4
John 1:(1-9), 10-18
"Shown Clearly"
Communion Sunday

January 11
1 Timothy 3:1-7
"Qualifications..."

January 18
Amos 5:21-24
"What Is Acceptable to
Give to God?"

January 25
Matthew 5:1-14
"Blessed Are the
Peacemakers"

Church Leadership & Staff

Rev. Dr. G. Timothy Womack, Senior Pastor

Dr. Sam Rutland, Theologian in Residence

Dr. Holly Adams, Theologian in Residence

Dr. Jacob Craig, Director of Music & Arts

Peter Mahtani, Associate Director of Music & Arts

Ginny Bauer, Senior Administrative Assistant to the Pastors

Kimberly Ball, Financial Administrator

Lisa Jeffra, Administrative Assistant

Anne Adams, Membership Coordinator

Roger Wagner, Facility Coordinator

Kayla Chaples, Communications Coordinator

Elders

Class of 2026 Anne Posey*, Judy Garrett*,
Jim Gambill*, Ted Miller

Class of 2027 Ann Faunce, Bill King*,
Jonathan Miller, Phil Schwin

Class of 2028 Cris Gillespie, Melissa Snyder,
Sumner Case, Robyn Thompson

Clerk of Session - Dr. Lucille Craig

Board of Trustees President - Lisa Barnes

Treasurer - Scott Westermann

Trustee at-Large - Bill Friesell

Board of Deacons

Moderator - Gayle Bruce

Class of 2026 Ginger Allen, Suzanne Breese,
Connie Derman, Carol Rhodes, Lee Tiebout,
Shirley Douglas

Class of 2027 B J Fisher, Susan Gordon,
Eileen Ganser, Frank Iodice, Ruth Thomas,
Marsha Brizzie

Class of 2028 Sue Appel, Nancy Edmiston,
Deb Fletcher, Nancy Morgan, Louise Tranquilli,
Rick Tranquilli

(*indicates Trustee)