



FIRST NEWS

Building Faith, Changing Lives, Sharing Christ



“Do Not Be Afraid”

A Christmas Reflection



One of the most repeated commands in all of Scripture is simple, compassionate, and timely: “Do not be afraid.” At Christmas, those words echo through every corner of the nativity story. When the angel appears to Mary, the first words are, “Do not be afraid.” When Joseph wrestles with uncertainty, the angel tells him, “Do not be afraid.” And when the shepherds tremble under the brilliance of heaven’s announcement, they hear, “Do not be afraid, for I bring you good news of great joy.”

Fear was woven through the first Christmas—fear of the unknown, fear of change, fear of what God might ask. And yet into that fear came God’s steady, reassuring presence. Christmas is God’s declaration that He has stepped into our fragile world not to frighten us, but to free us.

Today, we carry our own fears—about our families, our future, our world. They may not look like the fears of Mary or Joseph, but they weigh on the heart just the same. The message of Christmas speaks into our worries with the same gentle authority as it did two thousand years ago: Do not be afraid. God has come near. Christ is with us. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will not overcome it.

As we celebrate this season, may you hear the voice of God calming your anxious thoughts and strengthening your weary spirit. In the birth of Jesus, God has proven once and for all that we are not alone, not abandoned, and not without hope. Do not be afraid. Emmanuel has come. This Christmas, may the peace of Christ quiet every fear—and may God’s joy fill your heart with courage.

Merry Christmas and may God bless,
Tim Womack

New Sanctuary Fund



Why I'm IN (in 100 words or less)

A few years ago, God asked Moses and his people to contribute to "construct a sanctuary for me [God], that I may dwell among them." They could donate gold, silver, goat hair, porpoise skins and spices, among other treasures, to build that sanctuary. (Exodus 25) They were all in, and they built it.

Today, when I see two or more people gathered to pray, play and sing, when I hear youthful voices singing and harmonizing together, and when I learn that adults, many of whom are struggling today, are giving their most to build a sanctuary for their offspring of tomorrow, I'm all in. Let's build it!
Holly Adams, M. Div.

Sanctuary construction update:

During November, recycling of the old Church and ET Smith lounge was completed. After demolition in October, the materials of the buildings were sorted into different categories. Structural steel, concrete with rebar removed, and light metals will all be reused in other construction projects. A small remainder of glass, carpet, drywall and insulation headed for the landfill. Considering the storage of the faceted glass windows, reuse of the chancel furniture, summertime donations to other churches of the pews, electronics, furniture and our saving of interior lights - most of the two buildings will be reused! One of the bells was salvaged and is undergoing restoration. Before Thanksgiving, the large Royal Palm, twin MacArthur palms, and the Magnolia tree were relocated. Two of the remaining medium oak trees will stay in place, with a small redesign of the building to save them.

We have entered into a contract with Proctor Construction company for the new Sanctuary. To stretch our donations, we are self-managing the contracts for landscaping, audio, visual, specialty lighting, window shades, seating and a few other areas.

During the time of no activity on campus, plenty of effort is taking place in planning. A schedule is under development, and subcontractors are being lined up, shop drawings are being developed, and budget forecasts are being made.

- Mike Snyder



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**



Worship

Special Worship Services in December

Christmas Cantata "Appalachian Winter"

by Joseph M. Martin

December 21- 9:30 & 11:00 AM

Christmas Eve Services

3:00 PM - Traditional Christmas Eve Service

5:00 PM - Family Candlelight Service

7:00 PM - Traditional Candlelight Service

9:00 PM - Candlelight Communion Service

New Year's Eve Service

5:00 PM - Communion by Intinction- Mighell Chapel



THE
VEROBEACHCHORALSOCIETY
PRESENTS:

REJOICE!

ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

7550 26TH ST, VERO BEACH

DECEMBER 14, 2025
4:00PM

FREE ENTRY

DONATIONS GREATLY APPRECIATED



Worship

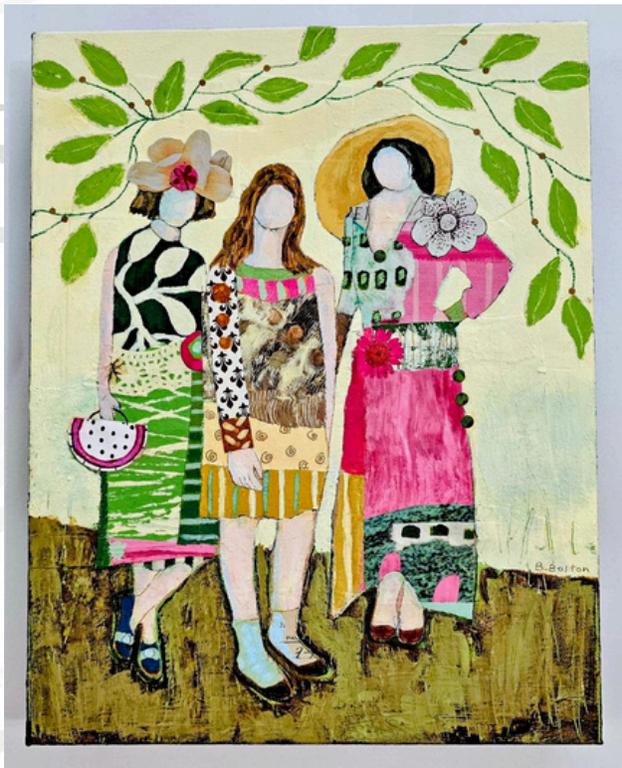
GALLERIES

AT

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
520 ROYAL PALM BLVD
VERO BEACH

OPENING RECEPTION:
SUNDAY
JANUARY 11
1PM-3PM

Live Music by Dr. Jacob Craig
Refreshments will be served.
Exhibit runs until March 31



Gainesville Brass Quintet

Sunday, January 18, 2026
4:00 PM

Admission is Free
Donations Accepted



Fellowship

Wednesday Night Dinner December 10

Italian Chopped Salad
Lasagna
Broccoli
Garlic Cheese Bread
Cannoli Cupcakes



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

Dinners will resume on January 7, 2026

Mission



This year's Angel Tree, is a response to the needs of children from the **Children's Home Society** and scholarship gifts for our **First Presbyterian Preschool**, to help provide opportunities for every child in need.

- Take an Angel from the tree
- Wrap and return your gift(s) with the angel attached **no later than Sunday, December 14**
- You may drop-off your gift at the tree in McAfee Hall on Sundays or in the church office during the week
- **Please be certain that the angel is attached to the gift(s)**

May you be a blessing to these friends in need, and may you be blessed with your giving. These gifts will express our church's love for those in need in our community

- Your Mission Team

Youth Music

Our Handbell Ringers Accepted to Prestigious Festival!

We are absolutely thrilled to announce that seven of our dedicated students, along with chaperone Melissa Snyder and Peter Mahtani, have been accepted to participate in the Global Bronze Productions' Renaissance 2025 Festival!

This incredible, large-scale performance event culminates in the creation of The Ringing Nativity Performance Ensemble, which will perform the Christmas Story with Handbells at the Coronado Springs Resort at Disney in Orlando, Florida, in December 2025. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our students to ring under the direction of renowned conductor Kevin McChesney and share their talents in a special way.

To help make this dream a reality, we are having a special fundraising effort to cover the significant costs of registration, travel, and lodging. We are selling beautiful, custom Christmas ornaments for just \$15 each! Any left over funds will be used to support our annual summer tour in June. Every purchase directly supports our students' as they travel and represent FPC Vero. Please consider buying an ornament to help us ring in the Christmas season at Disney! Contact petermahtani@firstpresvero.org or see Peter or youth after each church service to purchase your ornament!



Breakfast with the Angels

Sunday, December 17

9:30am & 10:30am



GINGERBREAD HOUSE CHALLENGE

FOR FAMILIES WITH SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN!

ASKING A \$5 DONATION TO OFFSET THE COST OF EACH KIT*



SCOOP UP YOUR GINGERBREAD HOUSE KIT AND GET BUILDING! CREATE WHATEVER SCENE YOU WANT...USE WHATEVER CANDIES OR FOOD YOU HAVE AT HOME TO CREATE SOMETHING UNIQUE!

ONCE YOU'VE BUILT YOUR ONE-OF-A-KIND GINGERBREAD HOUSE, SNAP A PIC AND SEND IT TO US. WE'LL INCLUDE YOUR CREATION IN OUR CHRISTMAS EVE SLIDESHOW!



PICK UP YOUR KIT ON SUNDAY, 11/30 OR 12/7 IN BETWEEN WORSHIP SERVICES!

Deadline to send in your gingerbread house pic is 12/18. Please text to Robyn Thompson at 772-321-3834 or email to rmthompson02@gmail.com

Limited number of kits available



Discipleship



Hello

My name is Kai-Leigh Pokorny

I have lived with my Grandma, Kate, since I was a newborn. It's just the two of us. I am now 17 and attend IRCHS.

In the past, I studied dance for 7 years at Artistry in Motion and Riverside Children's Theatre. It is at IRCHS that I found my true love...music.

I joined the chorus my freshman year.

During my sophomore year, I met Peter Mahtani our new Choir Director. It was through Peter Mahtani that I became aware of and joined the First Presbyterian's Youth Choir.

Singing and learning new vocal techniques not only became the highlight of my life but consumes most of my free time.

In addition to choir rehearsals, I have had the opportunity to perform at various First Presbyterian performances, both in and out of the sanctuary.

The annual March fundraiser dinner and performance is also an event I look forward to (my grandma is a caterer and donated her time, talents and crew in providing the dinner).

Although it requires many hours of dedication and time to rehearse, they are all productions we are very proud of and with profound results. My grandma is also donating the dinner, March 2026.

I am very proud to be amongst my peers as, together, we learn, grow and perform.

My peers are not only my friends, but now my "Ohana" as they say in Hawaiian. They are my family.

Discipleship

CONTINUED...

In December, it will be three years since my mother passed. She suffered from a life of addiction. She also lost custody of my two brothers. It has been a long and difficult process. Although my grandma is always there for me, I don't know where I would be without my Ohana at First Presbyterian Youth Choir. When needed, they listen and I feel heard.

When I'm not in Choir, you will find me working with our amazing younger children at First Presbyterian childcare, and Wednesday evenings at Quest.

My grandma and I also participated in the trunk or Treat at church. That was super fun!

Last summer, I had the opportunity to travel and take part in several performances in Pennsylvania with the First Presbyterian Youth Choir. Amongst many highlights, we had the privilege of singing the National Anthem at the Pirates baseball game. I am excited for this summer's 2026 tour!

We look forward to becoming members of this wonderful community!



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!

This is a possible overnight trip. We want to make sure we are being cost effective. If the cost to pay for hotels exceeds the amount for a coach bus, we will take a coach bus. This depends on the amount of sign ups.

Early bird registration is \$60. After December 31, the cost will increase to \$85. You must pay the \$60 before December 31 in order to keep the price. If you miss the payment deadline, you will be charged the \$85 This cost includes transportation, ticket to the park, and possible overnight accommodations.



Friday Jan 23 (3:30 pm) to Saturday Jan 24 (12:00 pm), 2026

Discipleship

We are delighted to announce details for our special 5:00 PM Christmas Eve Service, which will feature our children! The Wednesday Quest children will be performing, and we invite any child who wishes to participate to join them! This is a wonderful opportunity for your children to share in the Christmas story. Wednesday Quest children will be performing and any other child that wants to participate is invited to also join in.

Rehearsals are from 4-5:30 December 3rd, 10th and 17th.

Speaking parts are available if interested.

Quest Plus will rehearse until 6:30.

Please RSVP to janinejones@firstpresvero.org by December 1st if your son/ daughter will be participating in this service.



OPEN HOUSE!

First Presbyterian Preschool

We welcome new families to join us at one of our open houses to learn all about our Preschool for the 2026-2027 school year.

Meet our dedicated teachers, explore our facilities, and get a glimpse of the exciting curriculum we offer.

Tuesday, January 20, 2026
Tuesday, February 10, 2026
Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Drop-in between 5:45pm - 6:45pm

Registration required to attend:
helen@firstpresvero.org



Florida License # C19IR0111

SUNDAY BRUNCH

Join us when we gather for brunch at the Bonefish Grill. You'll enjoy meeting single seniors, excellent food and the ambiance of one of Vero's top restaurants! We will meet on Sunday, December 28th, at 11:00am. The address is 2075 Indian River Blvd., Vero Beach. To reserve your spot contact Anne Adams in the Church Office, Ext. 115.



HOLD THE DATE!

Mark your calendar for Sunday, March 8, 2026, when we will be celebrating Dr. Tim's 25th Anniversary as Senior Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Vero Beach. At 4:00pm, the doors will open to live music, surprises and delicious food! Although dinner is complementary, reservations will be needed. More details to come in January!

COMMUNION AT HOME

If you are unable to attend our monthly Communion Sunday Worship Service, we will bring communion to your home/hospital/rehab center. On the first Sunday of each month, members of your Church Family will bring communion to you in order to 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.



FIRST FRIENDS

If you enjoy meeting people and welcoming new members get settled into our Church Family, then this is the group for you! Beginning in January, we will begin First Friends a friendly group of members who will stand along side of our new members as they acclimate themselves to all the service and fellowship opportunities that FPC has to offer. If you are interested in this important ministry please contact Anne Adams, ext. 115 or Lisa Jeffra, ext. 122.



PASTRIES WITH THE PASTOR

This month, we will be meeting in the Adult Activity Room, on Sunday, December 14th at 10:30, to meet for Pastries with the Pastor. If you are thinking of joining our Church Family but still have a few questions, then this is the perfect time for you to speak with Dr. Tim. The Adult Activity Room is on the first floor of CCL - use the door right of the kitchen and the room will be straight ahead of you. If you have any questions regarding membership you can contact Anne Adams, ext. 115 or by email: anneadams@firstpresvero.org



Justice and Honor



The Justice and Honor Team is proud to co-sponsor in conjunction with the Indian River Sheriff's Department, the event **"Shop with a Cop"** once again. The event will take place on December 12, 2025. Gift Cards for Christmas shopping will be provided to 175 kids. Chosen students are each given \$100 gift card to either Walmart or Target, and they are paired with a uniformed officer to shop for Christmas.

Our team is accepting donations of cash, checks, or gift cards for these students in need and will deliver the donations to the IRCSD by December 9th. Donations may be dropped off in the church office until **Monday, December 8th**, with **Shop with a Cop** written in the byline or on the envelope.

Thank you to this generous congregation for supporting students in need in our own county. "We are Blessed to be a Blessing!"



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.



71st Annual
Christmas
Tree Lane

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6TH 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Homemade Cookies by-the-Pound

Mrs. Claus's Pantry (Everything but Cookies)

Handmade Treasures

Gift Card Tree Raffle

Unique Boutique

Bargain prices on kitchenware, decor, linens, jewelry, games, sports, and small furniture - even a handyman's corner!

FPC Youth Jazz Combo: 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Cash or checks preferred

Proceeds benefit the Presbyterian Women's Local Mission Projects



Christmas Tree Lane Raffle



Whimsical Two-Story Beach Bungalow Doll House Created by Elizabeth Stewart



Gift Card Tree with over 50 gift cards from local businesses



Custom poplar/brazilian cherry flag featuring honor stripes to the military and first responders created by mark johann

Presbyterian Women

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

DECEMBER 20, 2025
DOORS OPEN: 11:30 AM / LUNCH SERVED: 12:00 PM

Ticket: \$25 per person

**Tickets will be on sale in the courtyard
after all Sunday services on Nov. 30, Dec. 7, & 14**

Deadline to purchase tickets is Dec. 14

**For Information Contact: Maggie Fleming
margaret.fleming48@gmail.com / 732-575-2841**

Get ready to **BAKE, BAKE, BAKE!**

Cookies by the Pound Drop Off Times:

Thursday, December 4th from 9 AM - 12:00 PM

Friday, December 5th from 9 AM - 10:30 AM

Mrs. Claus's Pantry Drop Off Times:

Friday, December 5th from 9 AM - 10:30 AM

Get Ready, to **BAKE, BAKE, BAKE!** Christmas Tree Lane is held on Saturday 12/6 and FPC is blessed to have such creative bakers and cooks! Cookies-by-the-pound and Mrs. Claus's Pantry are the most popular areas at Christmas Tree Lane! We need your favorite Christmas cookies, delivered in disposable containers and labeled with the name of the cookie. For Mrs. Claus's Pantry, any specialties **EXCEPT** cookies: pies, cakes, cupcakes, breads, brownies, homemade pickles, relishes, jams, candy, etc. must be ready to travel. Please: Nothing that needs to be refrigerated and make a note if your goodies contain nuts. All baked goods may be dropped off, unbagged, at the Adult Activities Room in McAfee Hall. Please enter on the west end of building D. For more information, contact Cookie Chair, Barb Schwin, pschwin38@aol.com or Mrs. Claus' Pantry Chair, Beth Pritchett, ekpritchett@aol.com.

A Special Thank you



As always, heartfelt thanks for your loving contributions to our Thanksgiving bags.

Those receiving your gifts - Gifford Youth Activity Center, Dodgertown Elementary families, Safe Space, Samaritan Center, and Senior Resource Center - asked us to share their appreciation.

Blessings to you all,

–The Mission Committee



Dear Church family--these few words cannot adequately express our profound gratitude for you--your cards, food, offers to help, prayers. The reality of our new lives that now includes sudden loss of sight is OVERWHELMING but with your continued care and concern we will clear these hurdles. Thank you for loving us and holding us close in your hearts. Sandy especially wishes to thank you for stepping up to the plate and taking over her several church projects. God is good, all the time!

–Much love, Judith Taylor and Sandy Thiel



I am writing to announce a leadership transition for the FPC Newsletter. Effective immediately, Kayla Chaples will assume the role of Lead Editor.

Kayla will now manage the production and distribution of our communications going forward. I want to extend a sincere thank you to Kayla for taking ownership of this vital channel; her involvement ensures that our communication remains consistent and high-quality.

I will remain involved in the background as a supervising editor to ensure a smooth handover and to maintain strategic alignment, but the day-to-day operations are now in Kayla's capable hands. We look forward to the great work Kayla will produce.

**Sincerely,
Peter Mahtani**



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

- 2. Jonathan Miller
- 3. Marilyn Marion, Marilyn Case, Pam Schwartz
- 5. Nick Snyder
- 6. Carol Christiansen
- 7. Lisa Barnes, Jeff Austin, Jeff Davis
- 8. Robert McCullough, Bertie Centerbar, Bob Hill, Nancy Jones, Steve Harrison, Suzanne Breese
- 9. Ginny Bauer, Janie Divers, Betty Peachey
- 10. Jane Smith
- 11. Ricky Ray, Angel Schade
- 13. Richard Schroeder, Betty Ruth Williams, Cyndi Johann
- 14. Jack Gasche, Lisa Hanlin, Hannah Horowitz, Scott Westermann
- 15. Alan Hager, Paul Harmon
- 16. Barbara Andress, Nicole Barley
- 17. Bruce Hawley
- 18. Gracelyn Thompson, Phillip TenEyck
- 19. Helen Schroeder
- 22. Haileigh M. Diaz, Brian Robbins, Scott Davis
- 23. Esten Peirce, Merrick Figueroa
- 26. Laurie Iodice
- 27. Phyllis McKallip, Esther McAfee, Jack McAfee
- 29. Bruce Andress, Georgina DeLillo

What's Goin' On - December 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

December 2025

8:15 AM - Mighell Chapel

9:30 AM - McAfee Hall

11:00 AM - McAfee Hall

Childcare available at all services

December Sermons

December 7 - Matthew 3:1-12 - "The One Who Comes"

December 14 - Matthew 11:2-11 - "Only God"

December 21 - Matthew 1:18-25 - "Faithful to God"

December 24 - 3:00, 5:00, 7:00 & 9:00 PM

December 25 - 10:00 AM - Communion

December 28 - John 15:1-8 - "A New Covenant" - 10:00 AM

December 31 - 5:00 PM - Mighell Chapel

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 2025 Carol Campbell, Carol Marks*,
Susie Nystrom, Bob Satola

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

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

Clerk of Session - Dr. Lucille Craig

Board of Trustees President - Lisa Barnes

Treasurer - Scott Westermann

Board of Deacons

Moderator - Gayle Bruce

Class of 2025 Donna Blankenship, Gayle Bruce,
Nancy Bucklew, Cindy Judd, Bill Menzies,
Frank Smith

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

Class of 2027 B J Fisher, Susan Gordon,
Eileen Ganser, Frank Iodice, Ruth Thomas
(*indicates Trustee)