

OCTOBER/ NOVEMBER 2021



THURSDAY MEN'S
PRAYER BREAKFAST VOLUNTEERS



THE MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH PALM BEACH

FROM OUR SENIOR PASTOR

Coming to Jesus' Table

This fall, we've launched a series called *A Meal With Jesus*. We've been savoring the meals Jesus shares throughout the Gospel of Luke, and tasting what it means to share His company, participate in His community, and enter into His mission.

As we've done so, we've made a change in our worship I wanted to have a conversation with you about: *we've been celebrating Holy Communion weekly at all 3 of our Sunday services*. This change isn't wholly new: if you have been attending our 11AM service, or have attended The Way service in our pre-COVID past, you know that we had already been celebrating the Lord's Supper every week there. But, as we've started our fall series and have been sitting at Jesus' tables in Luke, we thought it was fitting to have our entire community begin coming to Jesus' Table in worship each week.

Why?

First, there's a ***spiritual reason***. One liturgy for Communion calls the Lord's Supper "a feast of remembrance, communion, and hope." In other words, when we come to the Table, there's past, present, and future-tense things happening: we remember what Jesus did for us in the past, we commune with the risen Lord in the present, and we taste a bit of our future hope. While we don't believe that the physical elements of bread and wine/juice somehow transform into human flesh and blood, we do believe that when we come to the Table in faith, there's a spiritual alchemy that transpires in which we really do experience the Gospel. As one of our faith statements, the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, puts it, when we commune together, we "really and indeed" feed "upon Christ crucified and all the benefits of His death."

Second, there's a ***historic reason***. Simply put, the Eucharist is the Christian family meal, and through most of our history, it's been the Church's practice to celebrate our family meal Sunday by Sunday when we gather together. Although no one can compile video footage of what life looked like in the earliest days of the church, the glimpses we have from the New Testament suggest that the Church, from its earliest days, celebrated a eucharistic meal each Sunday when they gathered to worship (i.e. Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17-22). Several writings from church leaders in Christianity's early centuries bear witness that this was the Church's common practice.

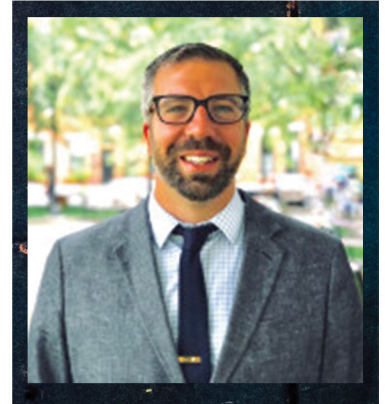
In our own particular tradition, the Reformer John Calvin, as he was organizing the church's worship and service in the Swiss city of Geneva, advocated for celebrating the Lord's Supper every week. He insisted that Jesus gave His Church the sacrament of Holy Communion "for a frequent exercise of our faith and charity, of which the congregation of Christians should make use as often as they be assembled..." And why should we celebrate the Lord's Supper frequently? Because, Calvin says, when we come to Jesus' Table, "*we are really made participants of the body and the blood of Jesus, of His death, of His life, of His Spirit and of all His benefits.*"

Finally, there's a **missional reason**. In the post-modern time in which we live, numerous communication experts have noted that left-brained, propositional communication is simply not effective in the way that it once was. Instead, the most powerful modes of communication center on image and story, symbol and narrative. The practice of Holy Communion dramatically portrays the Gospel story in just this way. This is why St. Augustine of Hippo was fond of calling the Eucharist "a visible word"- a dramatic, visual preaching of the Good News to all five of our senses!

I'm excited for the months ahead, to savor and taste the grace, community, and mission of Jesus together, and I can't wait to join you at His Table.

Grace and peace-

Rev. Jared Ayers



DEVELOPING A CARING CONGREGATION

This is a very caring congregation. I am constantly hearing stories about various folks in our congregation who are ministering in one way or another to others. There are men who pick up guys who don't drive for the Thursday prayer breakfast. There are women who shop for those who can't get out. There are couples and families who look after those who are lonely. It's not hard to find someone to bring food to someone who has just come home from the hospital.

The way I see First Pres folk caring for each other gives me joy and encourages me to think that we can do even more to care for the hurting. So many are willing to help, that I know we can care for even more who need it.

Next month we will host a webinar by The Caring Congregation, which we have called "**Be the Body**," that will help us grow in our capacity to care for those among us who are hurting. I hope you will consider joining us on Friday, October 22 and Saturday, October 23, from 10am – 5pm each day. You can come to church to participate or join from your home computer! For those coming to the church, we will be meeting in The Way building. Email me at enielsen@firstpresnpb.org for more info or to register. The cost will be \$15 for books.



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

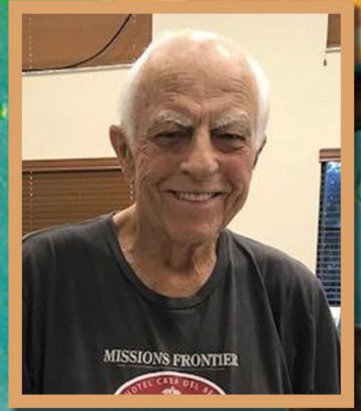
Our *Prayer Shawl group* has resumed meeting in the Library on the 1st Monday of the month at 2pm. Come and join the ladies who knit and crochet as they create lovely blankets and shawls for those who need a "hug from God."

They will teach willing hands to knit or crochet.

The Thursday Men's Prayer Breakfast

by Jake Swartout

The Thursday Men's Prayer Breakfast (TMPB) was a spinoff of the Wednesday Breakfast. The Wednesday Breakfast (1973) was started by Rev. Dr. Jim Stout and began at 7:00 AM at the North Palm Beach Country Club. A few of us, whose business didn't start until 9:00 AM, felt that 7:00 was too early so we began a new meeting at 7:30 AM. At first there were 6 regular members and an occasional visitor. We met in several places, including local restaurants, people's houses and at one time the closed down bar of the Holiday Inn (now Doubletree). We would share our highs and lows and usually have special prayer time. In the early stages we didn't have a lesson.



One of our regulars, who was a refrigerator repairman, suggested that he had a customer who was in need and thought it would be a nice gesture to provide her with a Thanksgiving feast. We went shopping and delivered Mrs. Sermons a turkey, the trimmings, and all kind of extra junk that guys would buy. We also delivered a Bible. We continued with that for a couple more years and then one day when we delivered, we were told that Mrs. Sermons had passed away, but her daughter said she would do like she had done in the past – that is to cook up the turkey and distribute it to the neighborhood. We hadn't realized that she was taking care of the entire neighborhood. At one of the later meetings that year, while we were sharing highs and lows, we were informed by Don Mason that he was leaving his accounting practice and going to Seminary. We pledged \$100 per month to his schooling, and it is there that we noticed that our group of prayer warriors was increasing in numbers. The next year we bought turkey dinners from Publix and distributed them. We did that project for over 15 years.

We also pledged \$100 to a member's son, Dave Sellers, who was an Intern at First Pres and was going to Seminary. In 1986 the new sanctuary had been completed and Dr. Bill Duke had some donated money, and he gave it to the breakfast group. John Bills had purchased the RCA building and gave the kitchen equipment to the men's group. The TMPB converted the old sanctuary into a Fellowship Hall where we met until 1998 when the current Fellowship Hall was built.

It was that time that Ken Coleman aka Coleman (Ad Color) Printing suggested that we pray for people and print special cards to mail to those in need of prayer. All those cards were signed by attendees. These cards have been one of the truly blessed part of the TMPB.

In 1995, Bob and Jimmy Felder attended the breakfast and told us of a concern on their heart. The attraction to drugs and crack cocaine was becoming rampant in Riviera Beach and they had a desire of go to the streets and fight it. It was then that Jesus and You Ministries was formed. J.A.Y. Ministries either was chaired by or attended by a member of the TMPB for over 20 years. True Fast Ministries was also founded through TMPB.

A couple of prominent Christian men have spoken at the breakfast: George Sweeting, author and former President of Moody Bible, and Billy Graham's son, Franklin Graham, of Samaritan's Purse. President Reagan sent us a personal note after receiving a prayer card when he had been shot.

The TMPB is approximately 46 years and is the oldest standing prayer group at First Pres. About 70% of the attendees are members of First Pres. Others come from many churches around Palm Beach County. We are a non-denominational Christian prayer meeting. TMPB meets every Thursday except on Thanksgiving or if Christmas or New Year's falls on Thursday. We also meet on Good Friday and invite the entire church to attend. Due to the pandemic, we also Zoom our meetings and had viewers from Peru and India. Our meetings start at 7:30 AM. We have breakfast and often sing a hymn. We will have a 20-minute lesson provided by one of the attendees, then we share highs and lows around the table. We send in prayer requests to the man who will pray, and he will read the supplications to the body. Throughout the morning each member who wishes to send a card will start one and pass it around for signatures of the attendees.

There have been times when attendance was low, but recently, we are averaging 30-35 attendees each week and we would love to have you come. After all, we are noted for having the "World's Most Famous Cheese Grits."

The Thursday Men's Prayer Breakfast



Here are the attendees of TMPB that have passed away and are greatly missed:

Fred Adams
Bob Allison
Phil Anderson
Don Angel
Bill Beebe
Gene Bennett
Jack Brolsma
Richard Bronszewski
Jim Calhoun
Ken Coleman, Sr.
Bill Doyle
Bill Edwards
Larry Foss
Jim Frevert
Wayne Gardner
Dick Gerlach
Bob Glemdenning
Tim Gooley

Curt Grothman
Dave Gunter
Stu Hancock
Jim Hannan
Duane Heiser
Curt Hofstad
Bill Horne
John Hughes
Bob Hundemann
Colin Johnson
Jim Kline
Don Lewis
Jim Lilly
Will Lott
Al May
Marty Millar
Claude Mullender
Elton Piersma

Harold Praeg
Larry Robinson
Ray Quiggin
Ted Reed
Dave Rice
Wiley Sanders
Herb Scott
Harry Shipley
Bill Shephard
Roger Shotwell
David Smith
Frank Stough
Bill Strathdee
Jon Stroup
Stan Thompson
Mitch Trimnel
Bob Trobe
Joe Wise

We are unsure if these former members passed: Bob Buurma, Dick Buurma, Bob Bush, Jim O'Bannon, Sam Owen and Hoby Delph. If you know anything about these men, let Jake Swartout know.

First Presbyterian Church

ADULT MINISTRY

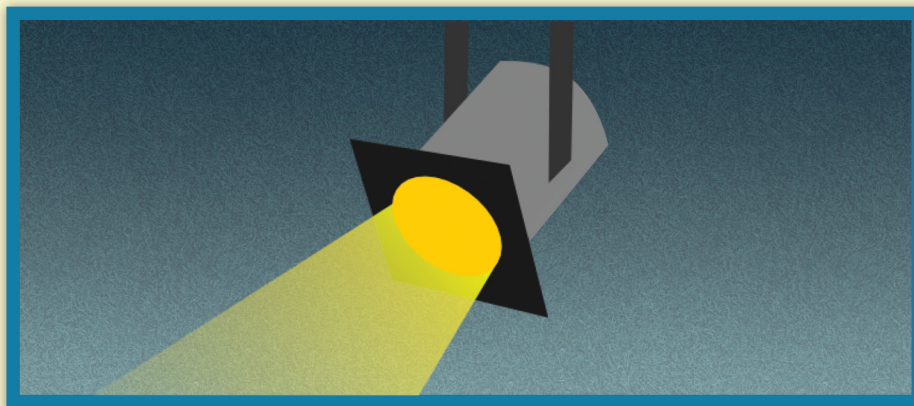
Ages 60 and up

Greetings! I hope you had a wonderful summer. My husband, Woody, and I did. Our vacation this year was to Traverse City, Michigan, for family reunions, cooler weather and a place to relax and enjoy being back to our home state.

Today, I felt Fall in the air. When I walked this morning, the humidity felt lower, I felt a breeze and the oak leaves are starting to fall in my driveway. That's a sure sign. Fall to me makes me look forward to cooler weather, schools starting, many programs at church starting back up and fall holidays.

Is there someone you haven't seen at church lately or heard from? Please reach out to them. They will love hearing from you. If you find out some information the church should know about, please let me know!

There are so many wonderful people in our church. I have the privilege of getting to know many of our Boomers and Older Adults through their volunteering and attendance at our ministry events. I'd like you to know them as well. Starting in this newsletter, we are going to "SPOTLIGHT" one of our families in the church with every newsletter.



This newsletter we are spotlighting BETTY BENNETT. Betty attends many of our adult ministry events. I really got to know her better when she joined the small group I was facilitating. She is a wonderful friend. I learned how much she loves God, her family and First Pres.

Betty & her family came to First Pres in 1984. She and her late husband, Gene, have 4 children, 14 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren. Many of them still attend church with her. Her favorite memories have to do with family: her son, Tom, and his wife Katie's wedding with Rev. Lucky marrying them, baptisms of their kids and listening to her late husband Gene (who was part of the choir for 25 plus years) when he sang solos. Betty has a servant's heart and has served faithfully in many places in our church: she has served as a deacon, been part of the prayer chain for almost 25 years, served on fellowship committee, helped with newsletter mailings, and has helped with St George's for many years. Her favorite Scriptures are Psalm 121 & Philippians 4:6 - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." Her hobbies are Bible studies, antique shopping and travel. Betty's advice to younger people- "Be involved with the church, find your niche and join in. You get out of church what you put in, and remember, there are no perfect churches or people."



Upcoming Events - SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for the following Friday dates and events

- October 8th: "Out to Lunch Bunch" – place to be announced
- October 22nd – Adult Dinner & Program at First Pres
- November 19: "Out to Lunch Bunch" – place to be announced
- November 26 – Adult Dinner & Program at First Pres

Here are pictures from our last "Out to Lunch Bunch."



Every church is unique with a path all its own. At First Pres, one of the reasons we are unique is because of you! As we move forward into the coming program year, I leave you with this thought: God gave you a fingerprint that no one else has, so you can leave an imprint that no one else can. What is the imprint that you will make at First Pres, in the community, and in your family?

Serving at church is a wonderful way to get to know people. There are many opportunities to serve at First Pres:

- Help make sandwiches for St. George's every Tuesday in the Fellowship Hall
- Be a Greeter on Sunday at any of our services
- Help with Coffee in the Courtyard on Sunday morning

Contact me at jhayes@firstpresnpb.org to sign up.



FIRST PRES KIDS



K'MOTION

We would like to welcome all of our new families and students to K'Motion. This year we will be discovering the Bible, from beginning to end, with our students. Through Bible stories, skits, games, and crafts, we plan to teach in chronological order so they can better understand God's plan for creation and God's love for His people.

We've had so much fun getting to know our students for the last three weeks. This is going to be a fabulous year, and we look forward to making wonderful memories with our students and their families.



Blessings to all,
Nicole Biltswitch and
Leslie Kant

SUNDAY SCHOOL IN THE GROVE

K'MOTION 2021-2022
SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS



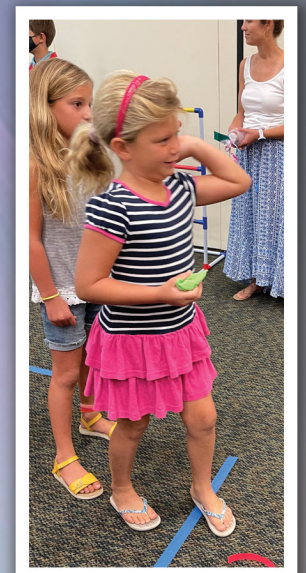
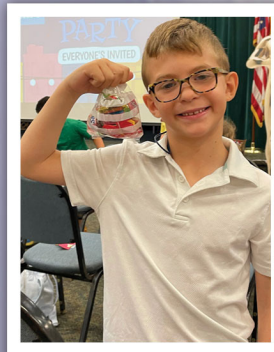
CONNECTION 2021-2022
SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS



CLUB 2021-2022
SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

This year's Sunday School kick off was a blast! Everyone was invited to play games, fill a bag of candy, and to add a "cherry on top" of that, they made their own ice cream sundaes. What a way to start the school year!



CLUB (4TH & 5TH GRADERS)

SHHHHHHHH!!! THE ANNUAL KICK OFF.....



CHILDREN'S UPCOMING EVENTS

Second Grade Communion Milestone Class: September 26 and October 3

Family Day in the Courtyard: October 3 @ noon
Come hang out and enjoy some cooking from the Sons of BBQ

Club (4th & 5th grade) Road Rally: October 9 from 2 - 4 pm

Children's Library Kick-off: October 10 @ 10:30 am

Children's Musical Auditions: October 31 @ 10:30 am

Connections (2nd & 3rd grade) Snowy Day: November 27 from 10 am - 10 pm

Christmas Pageant Auditions: December 5 @ 10:30 am

Family Camping: December 30 - January 2

NEW MEMBERS

IN THE FIRST PRES FAMILY

We welcome the following new Covenant Partners to our Church family:



Rebecca Bard



Sarah Peters



Michael South



Randy Rich



Ai-Ling Chen



Trena Wilkinson



Rev. Gay Robertson



Bernard & Elizabeth
Harrigan;Quill



Ryan & Crystal Sumairsingh,
Charlotte & Richard



John & Kathy Williams

STUDENT MINISTRIES

Summer Adventures

Our summer adventures in Student Ministry included a trip to Fun Depot, the Rapids, a game day, and a water day on campus to get to better connect with our students as well as allow them to invite new friends and build get to know more students in our church community. We ended the summer partnering with four local church youth groups for an Olympic Night, a volleyball tournament, and a night at the trampoline park in late July/early August.



CREW/TEAM

We kicked off our fall weekly Crew (grades 6-8) and Team (grades 9-12) meetings with games, worship, a message, and small groups. Our current attendance with our new tracking system shows 90 students have checked in and attended Sunday or Wednesday programs since the start of the 2021-2022 school year.



Duncan Breakfast Club

A breakfast club with students who attend Duncan Middle School meets weekly to eat together and study God's Word on Fridays before school, typically at Panera.



Intern Highlights

This past summer we had three amazing interns in student ministry. We met weekly for planning, training, and leader development. They led small groups, games, and lessons. We were so thankful to watch them grow in their walk with the Lord and grateful for their endless hours of serving students. They all did such a great job. Below are some reflections about their time this summer. Please pray for them as they pursue God's plans for them and are all back continuing their college experiences!

Intern Reflections

Looking back on my internship with the FPC Student Ministries Staff this summer, one of the most rewarding aspects was getting to pour back into a community that shaped me in so many significant ways growing up. Having leaders who were a positive influence on me and prayed for me through some truly difficult chapters in my life was such a blessing, and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to practice that same kind of leadership. I realized quickly how perfect God's timing is, as many of my recent life experiences allowed me to connect on a much deeper level with the students in my path. Between Wednesday nights, VBS, Thriller Thursdays, Sunday School lessons, and, of course, Student Life Camp, there were always more relationships in bloom. This, of course, reminded me to pursue more fervently my own relationship with Christ, as I needed His guidance to represent His love well. As a leader, both my strengths and weaknesses were highlighted on a number of occasions. There were many times where I could feel the Enemy trying to thwart all the beautiful ways God was moving in our hearts this summer. After all, we were witnessing dozens of children devote themselves to Jesus! But it was in these moments that I was able to rely on Him more vulnerably, and therefore was given a keener eye for spiritual warfare and a sharper ear for His voice. My prayer going into this journey was to be an effective servant, and it was in this vulnerability that I could feel my prayer being answered.

I was also able to connect with the rest of the Youth team on a new level this summer -- each of whom I already loved and admired so much -- which was also an answered prayer. Our worldly culture has frequently succeeded in making me feel very alone, yet the community I got to work with for just a few months rejuvenated and encouraged me in so many ways. I cannot express how grateful I am to Kim Sanders, who is one of the most talented and selfless people I know, for leading me so well through this experience. Per her vision, we read Emotionally Healthy Spirituality as a team, and while there are far too many great takeaways to summarize here, it's important to say that this layer of my personal spiritual growth enabled me to take many of my more painful experiences in stride, seeing new joy and new life in so many capacities. There really couldn't have been a better way to spend my last summer at home. I now find it hard to have any conversation without mentioning what a great experience this was! It truly was the catalyst for many new beginnings in my life, and I am excited to see the ways in which this chapter keeps unfurling!

Briley Crisafi - currently in Los Angeles studying in the Ascend by Unbound leadership program.



When I was first asked if I would be a Youth Intern this past summer at First Pres, I remember thinking it would be a good opportunity, but that I felt unqualified to be an intern. Growing up in the church, I had looked up to the interns' personalities and strong faith, and I had felt that I wasn't the right person. However, throughout the few months of bonding, physical work, game days, a lot of laughter, and encouraging words, I realized that God had me there for a reason. I also realized that it wasn't about how my job made me look, it was about the kids' experiences. Seeing the transformation of the middle schoolers' attitudes on the world and spiritual community is something that I will carry with me forever. This internship not only provided me with work experience, it provided both healthy relationships and a reminder of God's abilities to work in the corners I couldn't expect. Interning this summer helped me to find that I definitely have the strongest self-esteem through God.

Lindsey Murray-sophomore at Flagler College





Andrew Wikse-senior at Florida State University

This past summer I had the pleasure of being a student ministry intern for the third year in a row! After the past two summers being drastically different in circumstances, it was a question to me on how God was going to work and provide throughout the summer. Despite being scared of the obstacles we would have, God provided us all the opportunity to show our students His greatness and love, especially when we were at camp and witnessed many of our students begin their walk with God, excited to know Him more. Relating to my own walk with God, this summer felt like I had hit a wall, having one of the hardest summers in my life, and for once not knowing how to handle every situation I was presented with. I was scared of the uncertainty of the future and what would happen throughout the summer, so I turned to God and gave him complete control. Thankfully, and as He always does, God provided me with the opportunity to be part of amazing groups where God showed me different perspectives on how to handle the hardest situations in my life. Not only did I learn from our college group and student ministry staff, but also from our students. God used them all throughout the summer to show me what we all may forget sometimes. The enemy will use so many scenarios to push us down and turn away, but God gives us the strength to turn back to him, where he receives us with His loving arms. There is no situation that God does not see, even when we feel alone or abandoned, and Jesus calls us to take heart in the fact that He has overcome the world and will be by our side through everything.

FPC College Ministry

The FPC College Ministry met weekly throughout the summer for a bible study discussion time and several opportunities to connect with our college students' home for the summer and our local college students. Beach time, Escape rooms, game nights and s'mores over the fire were a part of summer adventures.





Fall Leadership Team

Our fall leadership team has been working hard starting small groups, getting to know returning and new students, following up with them during the week and praying for them as we seek to equip them to pursue and share gospel driven lives. Here are the names of our awesome leaders: Matt Brannon, Jess & Carlos Meneses, Kara & Omar Avila, Sam Zayas, Nichole Volstad, Aubrielle Kratz, Ben Corbin, Luke Bartolf, and Taylor Shore. Jess and Carlos are leading worship at CREW and TEAM which the students really enjoy. Please pray for them and seek out opportunities to meet and encourage them as they serve the Lord and the numerous students in our community.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Christmas Trees are for sale now through October 15th! This fundraiser helps students and leaders raise money for Student Life camp next summer. Trees can be ordered on our church website. They will be delivered December 3rd.

Midnight Mayhem - October 22nd for 6th-8th graders. Cost is \$60. Meet at church at 4:30pm; pick up at midnite. Register at www.firstpresnpb.org/students. Activities are the trampoline park, ice skating, Fun Depot, Chick Fil A and pizza!

High School Overnight Event - November 19 at 8 pm to November 20 at 8 am. More details coming soon.

"A Christmas Candle" by Max Lucado, a fall production that will be performed by Student Ministries department on December 4 and 5. Watch the church website and come visit us at the student ministry kiosk in the courtyard for show times and ticket information.

A quote from the play: "Whether you believe in miracles alone or good works to solve life's problems – come experience how God uses even the steps of stumblers to light the way!"

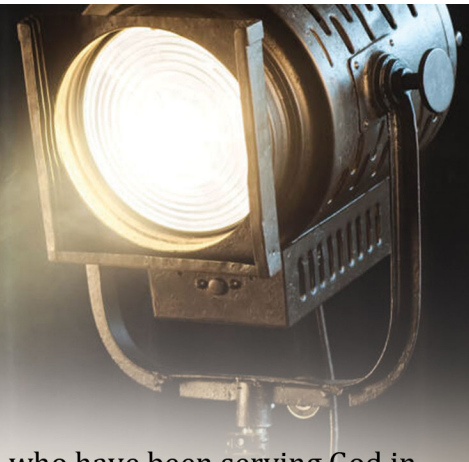
Serve Together Upcoming Opportunities:

October 9th- Real Life Children's Ranch –bus leaves church at 9 am; returns at 3 pm.

November 13th Gleaning corn with Cros Ministries in Clewiston. Meet at church at 7am; return around noon

December 3rd - Christmas Tree Truck Unload and Pick Up, times TBA

GLOBAL MISSIONS SPOTLIGHT THE LEHNS



THE LEHNS

Lynn and John Lehn are missionaries who have been serving God in the region of the former Yugoslavia since 1992, ministering first in Belgrade, Serbia, for over seven years, then in Zagreb, Croatia for over 13 years and now in Dubrovnik, Croatia since 2012. First Pres has partnered with the Lehns for 20 years. They are accountable to their mission board, Greater Europe Mission, whose mission is reaching Europe by multiplying disciples and growing Christ's Church.

John affiliates with churches in the Dubrovnik area in support of local ministers in planting and growing new churches. He spends much of his time sharing the preaching and mentoring while they work to bring their church to a sustainable position. At his own church his major challenge during the COVID period has been to continuously maintain worship together in person. John has also had a major role beyond his city by leading a regional conference for the 7 evangelical churches in Croatia with much success.

Lynn leads a church women's ministry with special outreach events during the year for those struggling with trauma and abuse. Her work has led to significant positive change in marriages and relationships within the church. Lynn has also had a major role beyond the local area. She led a country-wide conference for "Hope for the Wounded" where lay leaders are trained. The trainees are mentored and serve in their home churches through small groups with another trained leader. The impact of her work has been felt throughout the country.

We had the pleasure of John and Lynn visiting us and John speaking at the services at First Pres in September. They ask that we support them in prayer for the challenges they face and to continue to spread God's word throughout their area.

ANTONIO REYES

Our ministry partner in the Yucatan is Pastor Antonio Reyes who lives with his wife, Ruth, and their three children in Merida, Mexico. In the past year, the ministry of their church and presbytery has been concentrated on works of mercy. Flooding from tropical storms destroyed crops; Covid has resulted in many deaths and severe economic crises. Their Session has expressed deep gratitude for two financial gifts from First Pres which have helped them as they also use their own resources to provide food parcels and soup kitchens and meet their church's basic needs. A very small special gift from First Pres even provided the oxygen needed to keep one of Antonio's extended family members alive. They are so appreciative of our support.



Financial Focus

CHOOSE JOY

The joy of the Lord is your strength (Neh 8:10)

Nehemiah was born in exile in Persia. His name means "Yahweh has comforted," a name which reflected his parents' view of their lost heritage as Jews. He rose to the position of cupbearer to the Persian King, Antaxerxes, which gave him confidential access to this powerful king. Nehemiah heard that the Jews still living in Jerusalem, the land of his forefathers, were in distress and the walls of the city were demolished. Nehemiah's heart was greatly troubled by this news so he prayed for four months that God would make a way for him to rebuild the city walls. Miraculously, the King granted him a leave of absence, along with the resources necessary to complete the task. When God's people are given a mission, He provides everything for their work.

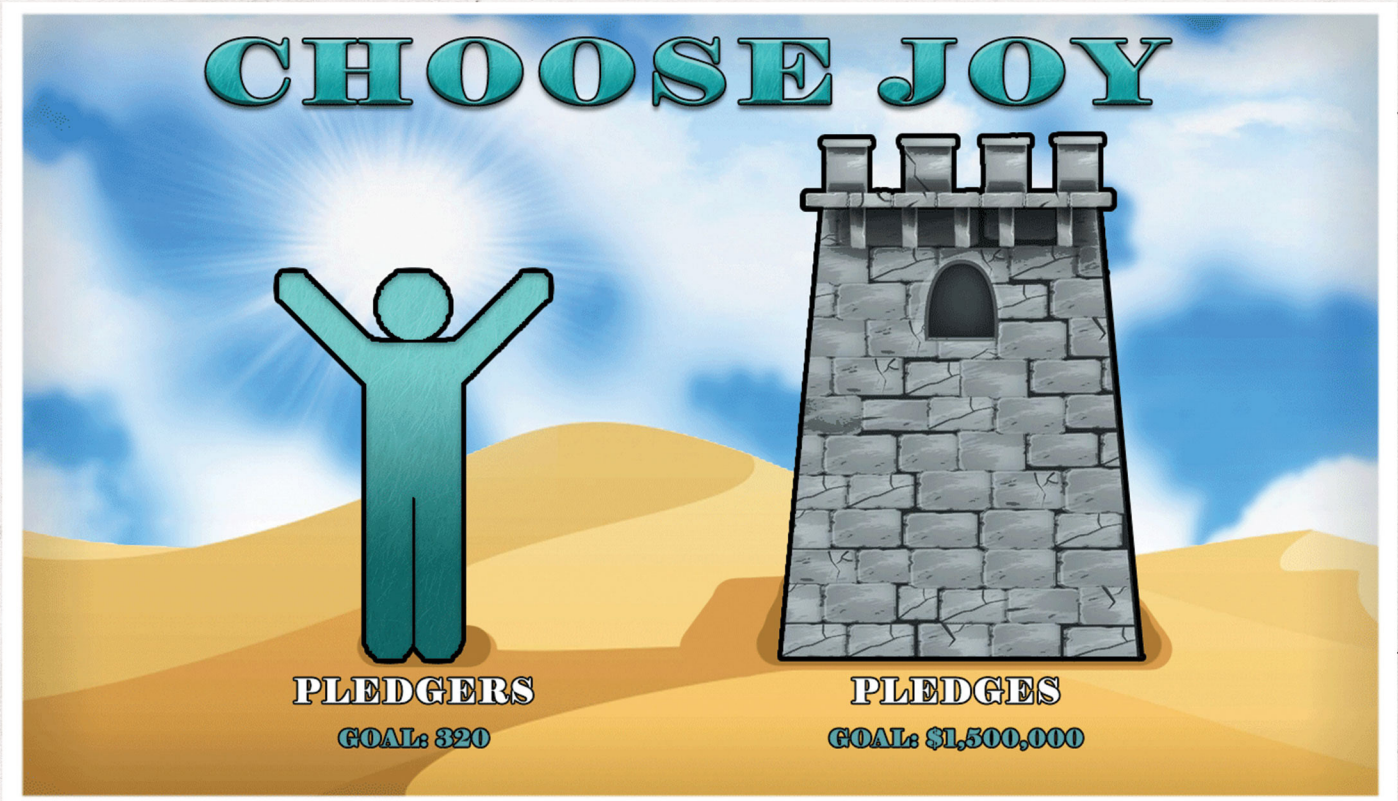
It would have taken about three months for Nehemiah to travel to Jerusalem, as it was almost 1000 miles away. When he arrived, he carefully planned out how to accomplish the work before him. Because of his great leadership skills in motivating everyone to help, it only took 52 days to rebuild the massive walls and gates. Nehemiah realized though, in working with these Jewish refugees, that they had lost their spiritual foundation. Nehemiah enlisted the help of Ezra the priest to rebuild the walls of faith and obedience of God's chosen remnant and renew their covenant with the living God. As a result of Nehemiah and Ezra helping the people understand how they had forgotten God, the people decided one day to gather together as one, coming with the right attitude – unified, attentive and responsive. Ezra stood on a platform so everyone could see and hear him, and he read from the Book of the Law of Moses and explained it from morning until midday. The results from reading and understanding God's Word were that the people worshipped and were spiritually renewed. They mourned because the Jews had been without the Word of God for so long and had remorse for having neglected it. Nehemiah and Ezra told the people not to weep because that very day was holy to the Lord, their God, because they renewed their covenant with Him. They told the people to go home to celebrate and rejoice by feasting and sharing with those who had less and reminded them that whatever difficulties came their way that "the joy of the Lord is your strength."

The theme of the 2022 Stewardship Campaign is "Choose Joy." The way that we find joy is summed up in John 15:10-11 where Jesus said, "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." The most visible expressions of an abiding relationship with Jesus are joy and love. Jesus says we will be filled with joy when we truly love Him by keeping His commandments. When it comes to stewardship, the Lord tells us He wants the first portion of all He has given us – our time, our talents and our treasures. This means we 1) make it a priority to spend time daily in the Word, praying and being still to hear from Him; 2) use the spiritual gifts He has given us to serve in His church and help other people; and 3) give a percentage of our income to the Lord before we pay for anything else. Doing these things expresses our gratitude for all He has given us and displays our love and trust in Him. When we obey God's commands, we CHOOSE JOY, because that is what He gives to us in abundance when we do so.

The 2022 Stewardship Campaign will begin in early October. You will receive a letter which details the campaign plan from Wentz Miller, who is the chair of the campaign. As is customary for this church, we will send to you a campaign brochure and a pledge card for you to complete, which shows your commitment to supporting the ministries of First Pres in 2022. Also, over the past few years, we have shown a graphic so you can see the progress we are making in our pledge goals over the 6 weeks of the campaign. This year we will track the dollar amount of our pledges as if we are going to build a wall, just as God laid on Nehemiah's heart to do. This will symbolize our commitment to God and His Church. A person will also be displayed (to track the number of pledges) which symbolizes our commitment to follow God and CHOOSE JOY.

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13).

Financial Focus



OFFERING ENVELOPES

For those of you who make your donations by using the OFFERING ENVELOPES, we have something new for you in 2022. Rather than having a box of offering envelopes for you to pick up in December, we will be mailing the envelopes to you bi-monthly. This will include an addition of Remittance envelopes to mail in your contribution!

If you already use the envelopes, you do not need to do anything. If you would like to get started using the envelopes in 2022, or no longer need offering envelopes, please contact laura@firstpresnpb.org before November 15th.

RECURRING GIVING

One of easiest ways to be sure to fulfill your pledge is through online giving and setting up scheduled recurring gifts. This allows you to be faithful and consistent in your generosity and allows the Church to plan and budget more consistently. It is easy to set up, either by clicking on GIVING on our website, www.firstpresnpb.org or you can text GIVE to 561-283-0061 and follow the prompt to set up a recurring gift. If this is your first time in giving digitally, a secure account will be created on your behalf. As always, we appreciate your faithful generosity.

SUPPORT FIRST PRES WITH AMAZON SMILE!

Since COVID, purchasing through Amazon has become more popular than ever. You can help First Pres while you shop on the Amazon app, and it doesn't cost you anything. When you set up First Pres as your charity, they will donate a portion of your purchases directly to us. Here is how it works:

- 1) Open the Amazon app on your phone (or download it from your app store)
- 2) Select the main menu (the 3 stacked lines on the bottom right side) and tap on "AmazonSmile" within Programs & Features
- 3) Select "First Presbyterian Church in North Palm Beach, Inc." as your charity
- 4) Follow the on-screen instructions to activate AmazonSmile in the mobile app.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN NORTH PALM BEACH
An ECO Congregation
717 Prosperity Farms Road
North Palm Beach, FL 33408

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WEST PALM BEACH, FL
PERMIT NO. 352

IN MEMORY OF

BETTY DEWITT – 6/2/21

KENNETH WEDA – 7/19/21

SUSAN SCHUPP – 7/24/21

WARREN BALES – 8/6/21

FRANCES BALDUCCI – 8/11/21

CONGRATULATIONS TO:

DREW & AMANDA BINNS, IN THE BIRTH OF THEIR SON, LUKE ROBERT
ON 8/19/21

JON & AMANDA GIRVAN, IN THE BIRTH OF THEIR DAUGHTER, ELINOR
ROSE ON 9/1/21



The First Presbyterian Church Preschool in North Palm Beach has openings for the 2021/2022 school year. We have classes for 2 year olds that meet twice a week; classes for 3 year olds that meet two and three times a week; and classes for 4 year olds that meet 5 days a week. Contact Diana Wise, Preschool Director at 561-622-8818, ext. 120 for more information.

NOW FAITH IS CONFIDENCE IN WHAT WE HOPE FOR
AND ASSURANCE ABOUT WHAT WE DO NOT SEE.

HEBREWS 11:1

**WOMEN'S MORNING CIRCLE
WILL MEET IN THE CHAPEL ON
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14TH AT 10:00 AM.
MONICA AYERS, OUR SENIOR PASTOR'S WIFE,
WILL BE THE SPEAKER. ALL LADIES ARE INVITED.**