

The First Presbyterian Church of Naples

In the Heart of Naples with the Love of God:

we worship, we love, we grow, we serve

Outreach

February 2026



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FROM THE PULPIT

February 1
Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake

February 8
Rev. Dr. Scott Rennie
St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh

February 15
Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake

February 18 (Ash Wednesday)
Rev. Rex Childs

February 22
Rev. Dr. Camille Cook Howe
Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago

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Welcome to February, the month of love! There is a lot happening here in the heart of Naples and we hope and pray we do everything with the love of God. May you experience God's love here at First Presbyterian every time you come.

Our Wednesdays at First series continues with some great speakers as well as fantastic food and fellowship. Dr. Suzanne McDonald, a theology professor at Western Theological Seminary, will be our presenter on Feb. 4. Dr. McDonald has been a presenter for us before on Zoom during the pandemic. She is a wonderfully gifted presenter and has a lovely Australian accent.

On Feb. 11, we will continue with our international presenters as the Rev. Dr. Scott Rennie will be with us. He serves as the Senior Minister at St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh, a historic church where John Knox worshipped during the Reformation.

We also have some excellent guest preachers this month that you won't want to miss! The aforementioned Rev. Dr. Scott Rennie will be in our pulpit on February 8. We will end the month with the Rev. Dr. Camille Cook Howe, who is the newly installed Senior Pastor/Head of Staff at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago. I know you will be enriched by having both of them bring God's Word to us.

We will also kick off the season of Lent this month. It begins with worship on Ash Wednesday where we receive the imposition of ashes on our forehead as a reminder that "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." While this may seem like a bit of a downer, it tells us that we are finite creatures in need of God's grace. It is also important to remember that unless we are willing to die to our old selves, we cannot be raised to new life with Christ.

Lent is a time of preparation for Easter. During Lent, we journey with Jesus as he goes into the wilderness, resists temptation, fasts, and makes his way to Jerusalem and the cross. In imitating Christ, many people choose to fast from something during the forty days. I hope you'll give prayerful consideration to either giving something up or taking on a spiritual practice. As a reminder, Sundays are not counted in the 40 days, so you get a break each week!

It's our busy time of year and there is so much going on at the church this month. I hope you'll look through all the articles to find an opportunity that piques your interest. There really is something for everyone and we hope you will find a way to be actively involved in the life of the church. We give thanks to God for you and for this community where we can support one another as beloved siblings in Christ.

Peace,

Rex

A Season of Music

Charles Lazarus, *trumpet*
David Cherwien, *organ*

Sunday, February 22
4 p.m.

Our second special concert is generously sponsored by **Concerts for Community Circle Rock** and features acclaimed Minnesota Orchestra and former Canadian Brass trumpeter, Charles Lazarus, with organist, David Cherwien, for an afternoon of exciting and virtuosic music making.

David Cherwien, former Artistic Director of the National Lutheran Choir, is a nationally known conductor, composer, and organist. Recognized for his contributions to the field of church music and liturgy, he is in demand as a clinician and hymn festival leader across the country.

David serves as Cantor at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, a parish known for its passion for traditional liturgy and creative, high-quality music.

Trumpeter Charles Lazarus is a multi-faceted performer who has charted a unique course over his career including tenures in several of the best-known brass ensembles in the world. As a soloist, composer and bandleader, Lazarus has created four original crossover orchestral shows featuring him as soloist with his jazz ensemble.

At the center of the genre-jumping performance will be *American Nomad*, a classical/jazz hybrid concerto for trumpet written by Emmy Award-winning composer, Steve Heitzeg. The program will include *Let the Bright Seraphim* with soprano, Michele Byrd, as well as selections from Lazarus's latest recording of modern takes on hymns and spirituals along with Cherwien/Lazarus originals and classical favorites.

Florida Gulf Coast University
Chamber Choir

Dr. Trent Brown, *conductor*
Abigail Allison, *accompanist*
Sunday, February 15
4 p.m.

Southwest Florida is fortunate to have Florida Gulf Coast University as part of our community. The arts have been enhanced by the infusion of students of the Bower School of Music. The FGCU Chamber Choir is an outstanding choral group at the university and is directed by the talented, Dr. Trent Brown. Many members of the Chamber Choir have been soloists at FPCN and we are excited to have the entire Chamber Choir in concert this season. They are preparing for a performance tour to Croatia, Italy, and Slovenia over their spring break in March. Over a ten-day period the choir will perform multiple concerts and participate in exchanges with local musicians. For many, this will be their first time outside the USA. This concert will help defray the cost of their European tour and help to support these aspiring young musicians.



There is no charge for the above concerts. A free will offering will be taken.

Lenten Organ Concerts

Wednesdays, February 25,
March 4, March 11, March 18,
March 25, and April 1, 2026
12:00 - 12:30 p.m.



The spectacular Ruffatti pipe organ is featured in six Lenten organ recitals offered by our Director of Music, Brice Gerlach. In these informal concerts Brice takes the time to explain some of the mechanical workings of the organ and offers some musical insights about the pieces on the program.

Each concert opens with a piece that highlights the magnificent horizontal trumpets protruding from the front of the organ case.

A work by J. S. Bach is always featured and arrangements of Lenten hymn tunes are presented, allowing for some of the diverse solo stops and softer sounds of the organ to be heard. The concerts will end with a rousing toccata, allowing the audience to hear the full power of the organ.

After the recital, the audience is invited up to the console, to ask questions and to see the beautiful woodwork and craftsmanship of the Ruffatti. Tours of the pipe chambers are also offered each week.

Come hear beautiful organ music during Lent. Don't miss these special opportunities for personal reflection, meditation, and celebration of this holy season.

We Welcome Rev. Dr. Camille Cook Howe Guest Preacher Sunday, February 22



Reverend Dr. Camille Cook Howe is a seasoned pastor with a rich background in both religious studies and psychology. She earned her Bachelor of Arts with honors from Vanderbilt University, majoring in religious studies and psychology, and competing on the university's rowing team.

Her theological education includes a Master of Theology in Applied Theology at Oxford University, where she began serving in congregational ministry abroad.

Camille's pastoral experience spans three countries and a wide range of settings, including Oxford and London, England; Johannesburg, South Africa; New York City; St. Paul, Minnesota; and Washington, D.C.

She has also served as Associate Pastor at St. Columba's Church of Scotland in London, where she found herself as Acting Pastor and Head of Staff at the age of twenty-six. She currently serves as Sr. Pastor at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago.

Camille's commitment to bridging tradition and innovation, parish ministry, and global engagement is evident in her diverse and impactful work.



Closing the door on 2025 and starting fresh for 2026!

Great news, we ended 2025 with a small surplus! We are always mindful that this was only possible through your generosity and support, so thank you! Prayers for a healthy, joyful and prosperous 2026.

YTD expenses are favorable to budget by \$124k, and although revenue is under budget YTD by (\$114k), it is favorable to 2024 by \$215k. We ended the year with a profit of \$89, small but mighty during this year of transition.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NAPLES

SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

December 31, 2025

	B			A	B - A
	YTD Actuals 2025	YTD Budget 2025	Annual Budget 2025	YTD Actuals 2024	YTD Actuals 2025 vs. 2024
Income					
Offerings	2,073,110	2,250,000	2,250,000	1,980,751	92,360
Preschool	597,501	537,300	537,300	572,565	24,936
Other	40,087	37,205	37,205	42,145	(2,057)
Budgeted Endowment Transfers*	400,000	400,000	400,000	300,000	100,000
Total Income	3,110,699	3,224,505	3,224,505	2,895,461	215,238
Total Expenses	3,110,610	3,234,202	3,234,202	2,877,151	233,459
Net Operating Income (Shortfall)	89	(9,697)	(9,697)	18,310	(18,221)



Grace of Giving 2026 Generosity Campaign

"Now as you excel in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you - so we want you to excel in this generous undertaking."

2 Corinthians 8:7

The ***Grace of Giving Campaign*** is still underway. With 203 pledges totaling \$1.34M, we are only at 77% of our committed goal of \$1.75M. If you have pledged, we thank you. If you would consider pledging additional dollars toward our goal, we will greatly appreciate any amount. If you haven't already pledged, please consider one. You can pledge online, with a pledge card in the pews, or by contacting Debbie Savage at Debbies@fpcnaples.org. This goal was used to calculate our 2026 Operating budget and we need your pledge to continue doing all the great things that happen at FPCN.



Pastor Nominating Committee

First Presbyterian Church of Naples

Update from the Pastor Nominating Committee

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) continues to meet weekly as we search for a new Senior Pastor/Head of Staff.

If you missed last month's update, we have completed one key and important step: posting of the Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP), which provides prospective candidates for the position

of pastor an overview of First Presbyterian Naples and of what we are looking for in our next pastor. For more information on the PNC and the MDP: www.fpcnaples.org/pnc

The PNC will now focus on identifying, reviewing and interviewing prospective candidates. This is a complicated and long process as we will ultimately review and evaluate well over 100 candidates.

Your continued prayers for our committee and for our work in discernment are important and appreciated.

Committee Members; Cindy Esler, Jacque Foust, Jack Marsh, Cindy McCarthy, Marc Miller (Chair), Dorrit Nelson, Janet Yanushefski

Linda Gadkowski, Palms Society Co-Chair, linda.gadkowski@gmail.com
Amy Manley, Palms Society Co-Chair, aa34@icloud.com

Palms Society

The Palms Society of FPCN proudly presents....

THE NEXT CHAPTER - a free, educational and informational 3-part 'financial planning' series, designed to help you prepare for the future with clarity and care. Mark your calendars for the following Sundays: February 15, February 22 and March 1 at 11:15 a.m., after the church service. These sessions will be held in the Parlor.

2/15/26

Getting your finance and estate planning in order, presented by Amy Manley, CFP and Linda Gadkowski, CFP

2/22/2026

Understanding Senior Living Options: Staying in your own home, Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Hospice presented by Renee Smith Gonzales of Lely Palms

3/1/2026

Funeral planning: Final Services by Jenny Reichard, Family Service Counselor for Advanced Planning at Dignity Memorial and Reverend Dr. Scott Kenefake of First Presbyterian Church of Naples

These informal sessions will prepare you and your loved ones for caring and sharing.

Please sign up on the Palms Society sheet in Spencer Hall or email Linda Gadkowski at linda.gadkowski@gmail.com.



Stephen Ministry



By David Witman

Have you ever wondered what it is like to be a missionary? Perhaps you may even have thought about trying your hand at being a missionary but thought it too daunting to move to a third-world country and live among people whose daily needs are just too overwhelming.

Well, consider this. Why not be a missionary in your own neighborhood? Peter White is an Anglican Priest, and part of his ministry is to run a blog entitled "The Sabbath life" which can be found at thesabbathlife.com. Several years ago, Mr. White ran a short article on his blog which he entitled, "Twelve ways to live like a missionary in your neighborhood." The general principles of neighborhood mission are worth considering. There is a lot of Stephen Ministry in these twelve articles. Let me know what you think about the concepts set out in the selected excerpts below.

All is prayer. Prayer is oxygen. This is so much more than daily devotions. **This is constant devotion to God, continually attending to God's presence around us.** Jesus says, "Remain in me, and I will remain in you." In mission work, prayer is the most necessary thing.

Get immersed in the stories in Scripture. **The power and punch of Scripture is the story.** God has acted - healing, saving, liberating, proclaiming light in darkness. Let these stories soak in your bones and shape your imagination of what God can and will do around you.

Take every means at your disposal to cultivate a **deep, genuine affection** for your neighbors, the people next door and across the street. Learn their names. Learn their stories. Know them as human beings, not evangelism projects.

As Eugene Peterson puts in the Message John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and blood, and **moved into the neighborhood.**" The Incarnation—that Almighty God became a human being in Jesus—is the great model of mission. **God became a native in Adam's world.** God learned the language. God ate the food. God lived by the customs. This involves the deepest humility. I meet my neighbors on their terms. I enter the rhythms of the neighborhood.

Busyness is the great sickness of North American culture. Packing my schedule from sun up to sun down keeps me from participating in the lives of my neighbors. I can sit on the porch and do nothing. I can walk the streets. I can be seen. I can be available. But if I'm "too busy" I rob myself of those unplanned serendipities in the neighborhood.

It's crucial to be mindful that this is the Spirit's work and not my own.

Cultivate practices and disciplines that nurture the fruit of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control - make us human like Jesus. These are the qualities that make our neighborhood (and burgeoning churches) more human communities. One of the earliest mission mandates God gives is to Abram: "*I will bless you... and you will be a blessing to others... Simply being good and kind and a blessing to our neighbors is a sign of the kingdom, of God's renewal of all things.*" In all the bad news we find ourselves surrounded by, we get to be agents of good news.

Pay attention. Listen. Watch. Spend time being with others. What issues matter to the neighborhood? How did those become the issues that matter?

Be a host. Open up spaces in your life for your neighbors. Invite them to your table to share a meal. Extend hospitality. Some of my favorite memories from that first neighborhood church experience come from the meals where my wife and I invited our neighbors to share Sunday lunch with us in our tiny kitchen. These were people from very different places of life with very different life experiences. **When we make space for others, we make space for Jesus to meet us.** As Jesus says, "I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home." Walls break down when we invite others to see how we live.

Even better, be a guest. While I was on staff at a church, I did a web development bootcamp in the community. At the church, I had a place of power and privilege. I was expected to have answers. At the bootcamp, I had no idea what was going on. I asked my neighbor if he could show me how he made his webpage do that because I was so lost. And I suddenly discovered that made me someone he wanted to be around. A theology professor once told me his greatest evangelism tip was to ask his neighbor for help. **Being willing to receive the hospitality of those around us is every bit as significant as extending it.** To be a guest at someone else's table extends to them the dignity of hospitality.

Charles Spurgeon has said, "Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter." You don't have to live in a foreign country to be a missionary. **You can be a missionary in your own neighborhood.**

Deacon Sunday

February 15, 2026

Calling all members and regular visitors! Have you met your Parish Deacon? Your Deacon is your personal point of contact for support, prayer, and staying connected to our church family. If you haven't met them yet, **this is the perfect opportunity!**

What is Deacon Sunday?

It's a very special day to meet and thank your Parish Deacons for saying YES to serving First Presbyterian Church of Naples.

Look for your Parish number at a table where your Deacon will welcome you and update your contact information, if needed.

Not sure which Parish you're in? You can find your Parish Number by **simply consulting the Deacon Map** available at the event!

As always, there will be refreshments and surprises!

What are the responsibilities of a Deacon?

With joy and love, Deacons provide outreach to church members within an established geographic area, defined as a "Parish." There are 30 Parishes.

They keep both members and regular visitors connected to the church.

Deacons provide leadership for many projects that touch the lives of all church members. From hand-delivering flowers and holiday remembrances to leading the Blood Bank and hosting our favorite brunches, our Deacons are the hands and feet of our church.

For more information regarding Deacon activities, please contact Janet Yanushefski, Deacon Moderator.

2026 Deacon and Parish List

Parish #1	Walter Gadkowski	Parish #17	Cari Rieder
Parish #2	Pam & Bob Karl	Parish #18	Heather Carelock
Parish #3	Kitty Wildman	Parish #19	Kathi Webber
Parish #4	Barbarann Budd	Parish #20	Gary Tincu
Parish #5	Melissa McClayton	Parish #21a	Kathi Webber
Parish #6&7	Cindy Esler	Parish #21b	Gary Tincu
Parish #8	Linda Johnson	Parish #22	Gay Stover
Parish #9	Betty Mangos	Parish #23	Pam & Bob Karl
Parish #10	Nancy Walkenhorst	Parish #24	Cheryl Myers
Parish #11	Stephanie Hayes	Parish #25	Janet Yanushefski
Parish #12	Carolyn & Michael Bennett	Parish #26	Sylvia & Jack Marsh
Parish #13	Sarah Nichols	Parish #27	Deb Streamer
Parish #14	Marti Beard	Parish #28	Sarah Miller
Parish #15	Brenda Lilly	Parish #29	Cindy & Mike McCarthy
Parish #16	Doug Gibbons & Audrey Smith	Parish #30	Sharon Newman



FEED THE 5000

On the first Sunday of the month, ushers will have a list available as you leave the sanctuary. Food donations will be collected at the 6th Street church entrance on the second Sunday of the month, February 8. If you prefer, monetary donations may be made online at www.fpcnaples.org/give. Checks may be made payable to First Presbyterian Church. Please indicate "Feed the 5,000" for the fund, or in the memo.

Suggested items include:

Granola bars
Rice
Pasta & sauce

Canned meat
Oatmeal
Peanut butter/jelly

Macaroni & cheese
Dried beans
Canned soup

Canned vegetables
Powdered milk
Children's cereal
Child friendly snacks

Friday, February 6—Mision Peniel Work Day

The Mission Committee has scheduled a work day at Misión Peniel in Immokalee on Friday, February 6. We need 8-12 volunteers! We will travel by church bus, leaving at 12:30 p.m., and first visit the Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance, so you can get a glimpse at the progress of the housing. Next we will travel to Misión Peniel and prepare food and diaper bags and then distribute the goods to the people of Immokalee. Please wear comfortable shoes. The bus will return at approximately 7:30 p.m. Please sign up in Spencer Hall.



Saturday, February 28 - Meals of Hope 100 volunteers needed!

We hope to pack 40,000 meals! You can measure dry ingredients, fill the bags, weigh the bags, seal them up and box them in preparation for distribution. You'll even get to wear an attractive hair net as you work together cooperatively to pack as many meals as possible. Sign up in Spencer Hall or contact Cindy McCarthy at cmccarthy0726@gmail.com.

Immokalee Fair Housing Alliance update

We were able to furnish a few more apartments!

Thank you for all your generous donations which made this possible.



Volunteer helpers included: Barbara Beach, Liz Speake, Betty Plum, Nancy Smythe, Jan Gammons, Gail Clark, Saralene Oldham, Sarah Nichols, Gay Stover



By Mark Speake

I wanted to make sure that I gave you an update on our trip and to thank you personally for your support. We left Naples at 5:30 a.m. on a Saturday and travelled to Camotan uneventfully that afternoon from Guatemala City.

We had 3 trucks with a driver carrying 3 dentists from Guatemala City with all of the Christmas presents and food in the back. In addition, there were 2 trucks carrying all of our suitcases and medications with the remaining team members, including Jack Korbey from First Pres, my friends Mike and Gretchen Nash from Marco Island, Pediatric ED PA Jessica Myers and her 13-year-old son Ben Myers, Emanuel Ortiz MD and Brian Rodriguez MD, second and third year Internal Medicine residents from NCH and myself.

Sunday after breakfast we set up and made all of the sandwiches with chicken spread or Nutella. Three of the medical students from the local medical school in Chiquimula joined us. We travelled up the mountains to Pinolito pueblo where we previously had a clinic in April, and got busy packing the lunch bags with the sandwiches, a nutritious drink and fruit. After some opening remarks, I presented the gospel. We were able to distribute presents to 325 children, some who received a Christmas present for the very first time in their lives,



along with the lunches. In addition, we then fed more than 100 parents. I enjoyed watching the local young adults play soccer. It was here that I was

able to connect with the grandmother of a newborn we saw in April who ultimately had successful corrective anal surgery in Guatemala City. He is now 9 months old and thriving. The next 2 days found us in the pueblo of La Lima with clinics in separate aldeas. We saw 97 and 139 patients respectively. We made home visits to two of the

patients on Tuesday. One was a 77-year-old woman who had a traumatic accident decades ago resulting in significant deformities of her lower legs and feet. Six months prior she required an amputation of the lower right leg which healed well but left her almost immobile. She lives with her 9-year-old granddaughter who cares for her by preparing meals, taking care of the laundry and selling corn and beans given to them by their neighbors at a local market in order to buy food. The girl's mother ran off and her father is an alcoholic, drinking away all of the money he earns. There were no acute medical needs so we left them with some money to be able to buy food for a little while. We also provided some financial assistance to a single mother struggling to raise her daughter. I am often handed money to take along with the advice 'you will know what to do with it' and, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I do. On Wednesday we only saw 52 patients in the aldea of Nearar so we had some free time that the residents and medical students used to grab some flavored ices and were able to share, compare and discuss their experiences in medical education. On Thursday we saw 197 patients in the aldea of Tesipe. Delmy, the critically ill 12-year-old we were able to get to the hospital a year ago was there to greet us with her mother and younger brothers. She is doing well with some occasional pain in her left knee which was so badly infected a year ago.



Three of the communities we visited clearly expressed the need and desire for wells for clean water. I will be working on this next to arrange for follow-up and further evaluation with an NGO called Hydrologica that drills wells throughout Central America. After caring for the people of Camotan for 20 years now, I can definitely attest to the need for a source of clean water for everyone in the mountains, something that we so easily take for granted here in the States. I was also able to plant seeds with the community leaders that we are looking for a bright young woman to become a Madrona (midwife) with formal education and training to serve the people and support the Comadromas (midwives) of Camotan. I wept when I learned that a mother died in childbirth only 6 months ago and her child soon afterwards. The indigenous regions of Guatemala have a 3-4 times higher materno-fetal death rate than the cities and more developed areas.

With thanks to our congregation for paying for all of the medications and vitamins we dispensed and to those who made additional monetary donations, our trip was very successful. Most importantly, with thanks and all praise and glory to God!

My cup runneth over,
Mark

Kathleen Law, Dir of Publications and Social Media

Kathleen was born and raised in Atlantic Highlands, a small shore town in New Jersey. She enjoyed spending summers at the beach either in New Jersey or at her family's home on Martha's Vineyard, where her mother was born and raised.

She worked in New York City on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange and vividly remembers "Black Monday" in 1987. At the end of the day, the floor was covered in trading tickets, she lost her voice, and was shocked to see the ambulances lined up outside taking away brokers and clerks who suffered heart attacks, anxiety and overall exhaustion. The two weeks that followed, she never saw sunlight. She arrived at work before dawn and left after the sun had set. She soon realized that this was not the life she wanted.

She then went to work for Waterford-Wedgwood as an Inventory Manager and loved traveling to trade shows, the factory in Manchester, England and local stores to assess product needs and help decide upcoming order needs for Macy's, Bloomingdales, and other large department stores.

After going through too many cold winters with ice and snow, paying too much for car insurance, and pot hole ridden roads, she decided she needed a change.

She first came to Naples in the mid-1980's when her parents were seasonal residents and she loved the beaches and how clean and new everything was.

So...in June 1992 she packed up a U-Haul and towed her car down with the help of a friend. It was hard to leave family and friends behind but she had one dear friend here who helped her get settled and here she remains. And then in August, Hurricane Andrew hit. She immediately found work processing claims for an insurance company. And there were a lot of claims. Then, in the summer of 1994 she came to work at First Presbyterian Church



under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Russell Mase.

Later that year she was out with a friend, at the now gone *Witches Brew* bar and restaurant, and she met Bill Law. He asked her to dance and four years later they were married here in the old sanctuary by Rev. Don Sherman. Bill's two children, Billy and Renée, quickly embraced Kathleen and she feels truly blessed to have such a good relationship with them and their children, who lovingly call her Nana.

In 2001 Kathleen and Bill moved to Greenville, SC and, although they only stayed there a year before returning to Naples, they hope to return sometime in the future. What they love most about that area is the change of seasons. There are long springs and long falls with a nice, short winter where it doesn't get too cold.

In 2002 Bill returned to work at Florida Power and Light. In reading the newspaper one day, he spotted a help wanted ad for "a large downtown church" who was searching for a Church Secretary. Kathleen recognized the fax number and immediately sent in her resume. She then began her second stint working at FPCN.

What started as a Church Secretary's position quickly turned into an Administrative Assistant position working for two people, our Associate Pastor at the time, and Brice Gerlach, Director of Music Ministries. During that time it was exciting as we awaited the arrival and installation of the Ruffatti Pipe Organ. Then the Christian Education Department

spoke up and requested Kathleen transfer to their area. So she moved her office space, once again, and had a fun time working with the Children's Director and the Youth Director on the Fall Festival, Vacation Bible School, Mexico Mission Trips and retreats.

When the CE Department downsized, Kathleen assumed the role of Publications Coordinator, which has since grown into Director of Publications and Social Media.

What she's loved most about her time here is the friendships she's made, the camaraderie amongst the staff, the relationships she's formed with our members and day to day busyness of her position.

She says the hardest part of working here is "when someone you've known and loved for so long moves or passes away. But you also get to experience the joys as well...seeing youth group kids grow up and get married, have children, their parents becoming grandparents." That's when it hits her as to how long she's worked here...3 years in the late 90's and then an additional 24 years!



With retirement right around the corner, Kathleen looks forward to spending

time with Bill and her Mom, Lorraine, who lives locally. Kathleen and Bill love to travel and have logged nearly 30 cruises, with their favorite destination, so far, being St. Maarten.

She enjoys spending time in her backyard butterfly garden which is visited by at least a dozen varieties of butterflies and she even has several host plants for the caterpillars.

She plans to fill her time with gardening, quilting, reading, joining Bill on his morning walks with their dog, Autumn, and volunteering.

January, a time for a reset...

February, a time for love

Ms. Claudia's class is learning all about birds, including how they collect natural materials to build their nests. As an experiment, the children took a walk around the church to gather their own natural materials in



order to build their own interpretation of a bird nest as only a three-year-old can. This is a great tool to teach about science, including varieties and characteristics or animals!

"Make a joyful noise!" Ms. Madi's toddler class loves to play musical instruments throughout the day! This kind of experience offers the children a way to creatively express their love for music as they form a little band of their own.



Mrs. Kennedy's class rang in the New Year after we returned to preschool in January with confetti and party hats! This is a fun and interesting activity to learn more about math, calendars, and community building through shared experiences.



January always feels like a gentle fresh start here at our preschool. After the joy and excitement of Christmas, we returned to familiar routines that bring comfort and confidence to our children. Classrooms are once again filled with laughter, busy hands, and curious minds as we settle back into learning through play.

During the month of January, we spoke with the children about new beginnings and God's faithfulness in each season. Through stories, songs, prayer, and everyday moments of kindness, we reminded them that God is with us as we grow, try new things, and care for one another. January was a beautiful time to practice patience, build friendships, and strengthen independence as children rediscover the rhythm of our days together.

As we enter February, we start to focus on love – the love that God has for us and the love we can have for each other. Love can be evident in the way we speak to and about each other and even in the way we care for classroom and school materials. We are excited at the preschool to learn more about the concept of love and put it into action. During the month of February, we will also learn about President's Day and a variety of other topics as the children and teachers are interested.

We are so grateful for our families and church community who partner with us in nurturing these young hearts. As we step into the New Year, we do so with thankful hearts, trusting God to guide our days and bless the growth happening in each child.

Amy Agnew
Preschool Director,



An Unplugged Retreat: Finding Peace, Balance, and Connection



Between January 9 - 12, 16 individuals, including Rex, Susan Pratt, and myself, joined 13 young adults for an unforgettable unplugged weekend. This experience provided a rare chance to pause, reflect, and reconnect with ourselves, each other and God. Using the book "Finding Flow" by Brian Plachta—an accomplished writer, lay minister, spiritual director, and attorney—the young adults embarked on a journey of inner discovery. Brian known for writing about "street-level spirituality", shared his wisdom and practices with the group on Zoom prior to our time away, laying down the framework for the weekend.

Upon arrival, a significant ritual set the tone for the retreat: the young adults relinquished their phones, stepping away from the constant buzz of modern life. This intentional act of letting go symbolized the

beginning of their journey. Throughout the weekend, participants explored spiritual practices designed to cultivate inner peace, balance, and wholeness. Brian's approach blended authenticity, relatability, and depth, allowing participants to find meaningful ways to reconnect with themselves and their faith.

Each day, Rex led the group in either a morning, midday, or evening prayer service, grounding the retreat in moments of shared worship and reflection. Between these services, our young adults engaged in time reflecting on the book, and shared personal stories from the heart—a practice that deepened their connections with one another. They also enjoyed moments of collective silence. These pauses encouraged them to process their experiences, appreciate the present, and open their hearts to God's presence.

The retreat fostered closeness among the participants. They enjoyed laughter, open-hearted conversations, and opportunities to share their personal journeys. Time spent together—in both structured meetings and free moments—created bonds that will undoubtedly continue beyond the retreat. Participants also took time to connect with nature, embracing the beauty of God's creation as a backdrop for this weekend of renewal.

At the conclusion of the retreat, attendees were given a "retreat exit survey." They praised the serene accommodations, the heartfelt fellowship, and the delicious, soothing meals prepared daily by Susan Pratt. Many expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to step back from the demands of their busy lives and focus on relationships—with themselves, with one another, with nature, and with God.

Several participants noted that they wished for more time to fully absorb all that the retreat offered. As we said our goodbyes, it was clear this retreat was more than a weekend getaway; it was a life-giving experience. Sponsored by the church, it created a window of peace in the busyness of life, offering participants the tools and community to nurture their spirits moving forward.

Through this unplugged weekend, we were reminded of the power of stepping back, letting go, and reconnecting—with ourselves and with God. The retreat is sure to remain a cherished memory in the hearts of those who attended.

Thank you for holding us in your hearts and prayers. We felt them!

Blessings, peace and every good,

Nancy Van Fleet
Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries



WEDNESDAYS at FIRST

CHRISTIAN AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Wednesday, February 4

Dr. Suzanne McDonald is professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Western Theological Seminary (WTS) in Holland, Michigan. She is from Australia. She studied 16th and 17th century literature and did postgraduate literature studies at Oxford where she began training for ordained ministry at Cambridge.

Suzanne has a Ph.D. from St. Andrews, taught at Cambridge, and then came to the U.S. - first to Calvin College and then to WTS. She spoke to us by Zoom during Covid on "Creation Care: Why Should Creations Care?"

Dr. McDonald will speak to us this time on "In the End...What? Thinking well about Eschatology." There is much confusion and fear over how Christians think about "the end of times." We will explore some aspects

of what the Bible teaches us about eschatology - our hope for the time when Jesus Christ will come again in glory to set all things right and make all things new.

Wednesday, February 11

Rev. Dr. Scott Rennie was born in Bucksburn, Aberdeen. He studied Geography at St. Mary's and then Divinity at Christ's College, both at the University of Aberdeen. After serving as Assistant Minister at Queen's Cross Church, Aberdeen, he was awarded the Scots Fellowship at Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York. Scott has served congregations in Angus, Aberdeen, and London before coming to the St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh.

St. Giles' Cathedral, founded in 1124 by King David I, has been a working church for over 900 years. A backdrop to Scotland's turbulent religious history, it has seen the seeds of civil war sown and been John Knox's parish church during the Reformation to its current standing as a modern Presbyterian church. It is still an important center for civic services such as the Kirking of the Parliament and services for Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle.

Scott will also be our guest preacher on Sunday, February 8. His sermon title is: "*Revealed Wisdom?*" based on Isaiah 58:1-9a and Matthew 5:13-20.

Dinner (\$15) is held in Spencer Hall. The programs are free of charge and will be held in the Sanctuary at 6 p.m.

Reservations for dinner must be made by the Monday prior to the event. Registration for the program is appreciated.

Scan the QR code
to register or visit
www.fpcnaples.org



Adult Sunday School:



Preparing the Way

Every Sunday, we meet at 9 a.m. in the Chapel to discuss the New Testament Bible reading on which that day's sermon is based.

Rev. Rex Childs facilitates these insightful sessions which are designed to give a preview and better understanding of the sermon passage.

Please let Rev. Rex Childs know if you wish to receive advance email notification of which passages will be discussed, or you can obtain the readings from our Thursday e-blast.

HUDDLE

A Men's Bible Discussion Group

All men are invited and encouraged to gather with us each Thursday at noon. We are studying the book of Nehemiah.

Bring a Bible and your lunch!

If unable to attend in person, please join the meeting via Zoom.

Please contact the church office for the Zoom link to the meeting.

Wednesday Morning Men: Faith and Fellowship

We gather on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 8 a.m. with coffee and pastry in the Youth Room.

For more information please contact group leader, Bill Kearney.

Women's Ministry Bible Study

All women are invited to join us for a weekly Bible Study, held on Mondays at 1 p.m. in the Parlor.

We look to covenant with each other week by week as we delve into God's word.

For more information contact Janeen McClure.



CHURCH TOUR

The Deacons invite you to a "Behind the Scenes" church tour on Sunday, February 8 following the service.

We will assemble at the front of the Sanctuary for a 30 minute tour of the campus.

Sign up in Spencer Hall or contact Sarah Nichols at sarahnichols@gmail.com



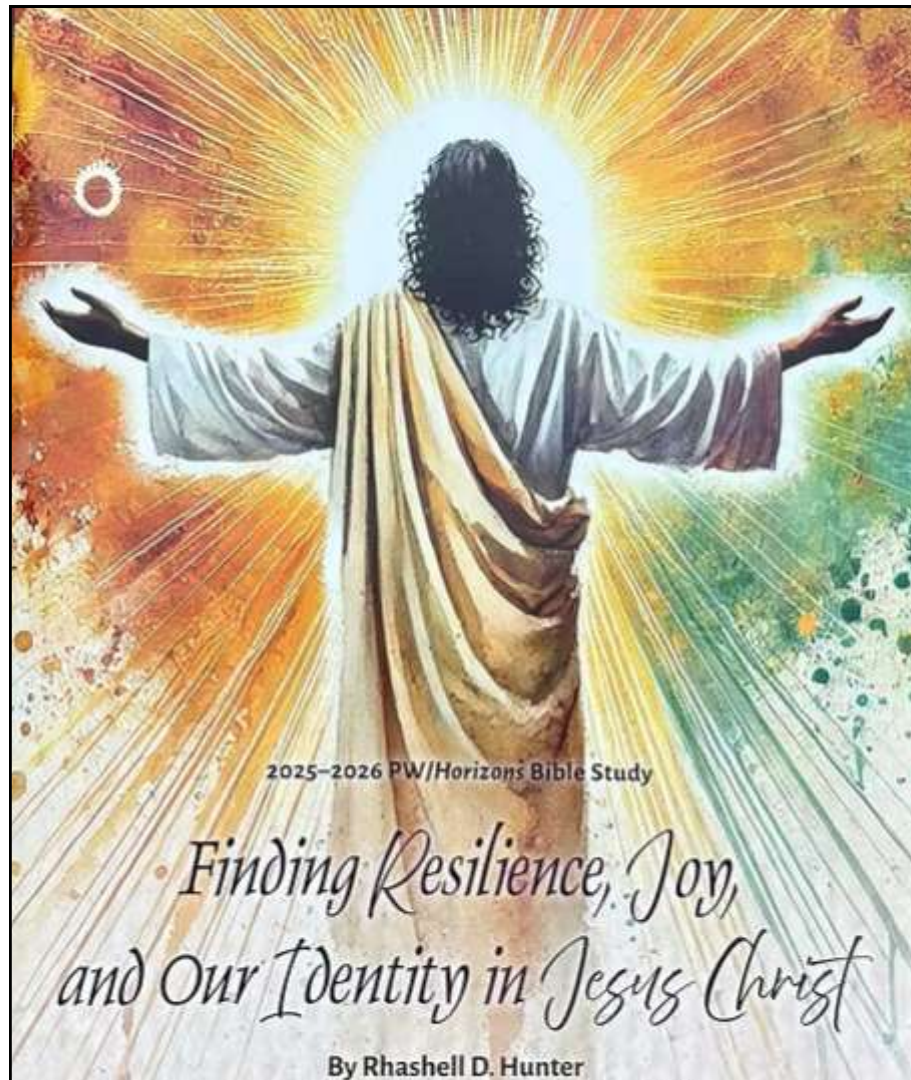
Circles: We are studying "Finding Resilience, Joy, and our Identity in Jesus Christ." Books may be purchased in Spencer Hall (\$10) or you can purchase one at a Circle meeting. All Circle meetings take place in the Parlor.

Grace Circle: Third Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m.

Sunshine Circle: Third Wednesday of each month at 10:30 a.m.

Lydia Circle: Third Wednesday of each month at 1 p.m.

At our March luncheon we will be collecting our Birthday Offering. It is used to help others in need, fund missions or support specific causes like women's and children's ministries. It's an offering that can be related to age (like a penny or other denomination per year) or any desired amount. Please consider this worthy cause.





Join us in wishing "Happy Retirement" to our long time employee Kathleen Law.

Sunday, March 1
Spencer Hall
following the
worship service

Please come and share your gratitude for all Kathleen has done for FPCN.



SEEKERS AND JOINERS CLASS

Do you want to know more about our faith, this friendly congregation and how to become a member of our church? We want to encourage you in your journey of faith.

A Seekers and Joiners class will be held in the Chapel on **Sunday, February 15** immediately following worship.

Contact Susan Pratt, Coordinator of Membership and Caring Ministries to register.



Happy Birthday

February 1
Charlie Jessopp

February 2
Dan TenCate
Phyllis Harris

February 3
Bob Gibson
Liz Speake
Deborah Meeson

February 4
Anne Crowl
Bill Dunlap

February 5
Gail Clark
Carole Sissel

February 7
Suzanne Chickering

February 8
Jodi Nunno
Gary Root
Kathleen St. James Taylor

February 11
Barbara Simons
Mary Ann Spencer

February 12
Ned Camuti

February 13
Martha Waddell-Gill

February 14
Alicia Mick

February 15
Linda Ferrario

February 17
Marilyn Groel
Colleen Sicard

February 18
Nina Howard
David Weigel
Jim Weigel
Lu Hoogenboom
Doug Borland

February 19
Cynthia Anderson
Audrey Brewin
Sarah Nichols

February 21
Jeanne Perkins
Bud Crowl
Al Lubrano

February 22
Don Barry

February 23
Mark Speake

February 24
Joanie Banko
Don Grandi
Mary Jo Bovich
Scott Houk

February 25
Polly Wilder
Mac Willett
Laurie Hillebrand
Hugh Montgomery

February 27
Mitch Norgart
Bob Karl

February 28
Rex Storter

February 29
Rog Kempers



First Presbyterian Church of Naples

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www.fpcnaples.org

239.262.1311



*Join us on Wednesday, February 18 at noon
for the imposition of ashes to begin the
Lenten season.*