

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

January 2026



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| <u>Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake</u> | <u>3</u> |
| <u>Worship and Music</u> | <u>4</u> |
| <u>Pastor Nominating Committee</u> | <u>5</u> |
| <u>Finance</u> | <u>6</u> |
| <u>Deacons</u> | <u>7</u> |
| <u>Stephen Ministry</u> | <u>8</u> |
| <u>Preschool</u> | <u>9</u> |
| <u>Missions</u> | <u>10</u> |
| <u>Caring Ministries</u> | <u>12</u> |
| <u>Intergenerational CE</u> | <u>14</u> |
| <u>Presbyterian Women</u> | <u>17</u> |
| <u>Church News</u> | <u>18</u> |
| <u>Membership</u> | <u>19</u> |

FROM THE PULPIT

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| January 4 | |
| Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake | |
| January 11 | |
| Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake | |
| January 18 | |
| Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake | |
| January 25 | |
| Rev. Rex Childs | |

STAFF LISTING

239.262.1311 Phone Extensions

Minister

Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake, Interim Sr. Pastor 2035
scottk@fpcnaples.org

Rev. Rex Childs, Associate Pastor 2027
rexc@fpcnaples.org

Worship & Music

Dr. Brice Gerlach, Director of Music Ministries 2039
briceg@fpcnaples.org

Taylor Irvan, Sound and Video Operator

Barry Krikke, AV and Technology Coordinator 2044
barryk@fpcnaples.org

Christian Education

Jack Fogelman, Kidz Lab Teacher

Ashley Henning, 2012
Assistant for Children, Youth and Family Ministries
ashley.henning@fpcnaples.org

Samantha Sacristan, Nursery Care

Nancy Van Fleet, 2029
Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries
nancyv@fpcnaples.org

Office

Joan Congine, Finance Administrator 2041
joanc@fpcnaples.org

Sandy Knight, Office Assistant/Receptionist 2000
sandyk@fpcnaples.org

Kathleen Law, 2013
Director of Publications and Social Media
kathleenl@fpcnaples.org

Sharman Pfaus, Executive Assistant 2036
sharmanp@fpcnaples.org

Susan Pratt,
Coordinator of Membership and Caring Ministries 2037
susanp@fpcnaples.org

Debbie Savage, Executive Director 2042
debbies@fpcnaples.org

Facilities

Eduardo Martinez, Maintenance 2014
eduardom@fpcnaples.org

Jeff Newman, Director of Facilities 2028
jeffn@fpcnaples.org

Nick Zamagni, Custodian 2016
nickz@fpcnaples.org

Preschool

Amy Agnew, Preschool Director 2009
amya@fpcnaples.org

Paige Buck, Assistant Preschool Director 2038
paigeb@fpcnaples.org

Epiphany Season “Festival of Light”

“Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you” (Isaiah 60:1).



We will soon be in the liturgical season of **Epiphany**, which some call *the season of light*. It is both a day (January 6) and a season (that runs through Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent).

What does it mean?
Epiphany means
“*appearance or*

manifestation.” Throughout the world, Christians celebrate it on January 6 - twelve days after Christmas Day. Many countries refer to it as *“Three Kings Day.”* On this day, Western Christianity recognizes Christ’s manifestation to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were represented when The Magi visited the child Jesus and showed how God’s gift of the Good News is for everyone. Eastern Orthodox Christians called it the *“Feast of Lights”* to reflect their belief that baptism happens because of spiritual illumination.

In any event, Epiphany is celebrated in many different ways around the world including eating a *“Kings Cake”* with a trinket baked inside. Whoever finds the trinket, is King or Queen for the day. *Timkat*, the Ethiopian Orthodox celebration of Epiphany, is a festival which commemorates *the baptism of Jesus* in the Jordan River. Streets are adorned with colorful banners, and the air is filled with the sounds of traditional music and laughter. People don their finest attire, often showcasing beautifully embroidered garments that reflect their cultural pride.

This year we will be commemorating Epiphany on Sunday, January 4, (the closest Sunday to January 6), but we will also be celebrating the season of Epiphany through a special inter-generational event called the *“Festival of Light”* on **Wednesday evening, January 21.** The Festival of Light will be a fun, joyous event for people of all ages where the Sanctuary and other parts of the building will be lit in **brilliant light** with LED votive candles and Moravian Stars.



The schedule is as follows (see dinner reservation information elsewhere in this issue of the Outreach):

- 5:00 p.m., **Dinner** in Spencer Hall, catered by Chick-fil-A. Crafts for all ages in the Courtyard.
- 5:30 p.m., **Candlelight Twilight Organ Concert** featuring our Director of Music, Brice Gerlach, in the Sanctuary. Childcare begins.
- 6:00 p.m., New York Times bestselling author, **Barbara Brown Taylor**, speaking on *The Coming of the Light*, in the Sanctuary
- 6:45 p.m., Audience **Q&A**, in the Sanctuary
- 7:00 p.m., **Book signing**, provided by *Books on Third*, in the Narthex

Childcare will be provided. Our friends from Naples United Church of Christ and Trinity Episcopal Church, as well as folks from the larger community will also be joining us. **Invite your friends, neighbors and family members.** I look forward to seeing you there!

Blessings,

A Season of Music

J. Mark McVey, *tenor*
Brice Gerlach, *piano*

Friday, January 30, 2026

7:30 p.m.

\$35 general seating — \$50 premium seating



This season, we are thrilled to present a special concert event, **Broadway and Beyond** with Broadway legend and star of *Les Misérables*, J. Mark McVey. The Friday evening concert will include stories and anecdotes of the artist's life woven through a thrilling collection of time-honored favorites featuring Sondheim, Bernstein, Rodgers, Styne, Gershwin, and more.

J. Mark McVey made his Broadway debut as Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* after having won the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Actor while in Washington D.C. The first American to perform Valjean in London's West End, he also reprised the role with the Los Angeles Philharmonic to sold-out crowds at the Hollywood Bowl and once again in the 25th Anniversary Tour of *Les Misérables* where he won

the Ovation Award and the Broadway.com Award on his way to eclipsing more than 3,200 performances in the world's favorite musical, *Les Misérables*. J. Mark McVey made his Carnegie Hall debut with Marvin Hamlisch and continues to perform with numerous symphonies around the country and the world.

This special evening ticketed event is sure to thrill the audience. Please plan on attending and bring your friends! Tickets are available for purchase with credit card, online at www.fpcnaples.org/music or with cash or check at the church office. General admission tickets are \$35 and VIP tickets are \$50 which include premium seating and the opportunity to meet Mark in person following the concert.

Scan the QR code to purchase tickets





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

Contacting the PNC

The PNC will now focus on identifying, reviewing and interviewing prospective candidates. **If you would like to submit the name of a possible candidate to serve as our next pastor or if you have names of individuals you would like to recommend to the PNC, please email the PNC via: MarcMiller2650@gmail.com.**

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

Pastor Nominating Committee

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



Happy New Year! Now that the Christmas season celebrations have subsided, we wanted to take a moment to let you know how truly grateful we are for YOU!

God has blessed First Presbyterian Church of Naples not only with a fabulous climate, but also with a congregation who gives so generously of their time, talent and treasures. A sincere thank you for all you do to keep this church alive and active in this community. Your contributions, in whatever form they take, truly make a difference! May God guide your decision to continue to give freely, and may He

continue to help you see the good that you are doing.

As a reminder, if you have pledged already, a BIG thank you! There is still time to submit your 2026 pledge by completing and submitting your 2026 *The Grace of Giving* Commitment Card, which can be found in the pews and on the Giving page of our website, fpcnaples.org/give, or by contacting Debbie Savage at 239.262.1311 or debbies@fpcnaples.org.

Below you will find a summary of our November, 2025 financial position to review. We hope to have year-end numbers available soon as well.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NAPLES
SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

November 30, 2025

| | B | | | A | |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| | YTD Actuals 2025 | YTD Budget 2025 | Annual Budget 2025 | YTD Actuals 2024 | YTD Actuals 2025 vs. 2024 |
| Total Income | 2,654,818 | 2,955,796 | 3,224,505 | 2,567,716 | 87,102 |
| Total Expenses | 2,732,154 | 2,963,998 | 3,234,202 | 2,554,697 | 177,457 |
| Net Operating Income (Shortfall) | (77,336) | (8,202) | (9,697) | 13,019 | (90,355) |

Planning Your Future: You and Your Spouse: Know the “what ifs” when one passes

Sunday, January 11, 2026 in the Conference Room
located in the main office.

Learn how to be prepared to handle the hurdles of the first year as a widow or widower and the resources available to you. This free informal session will be led by Amy Manley and Linda Gadkowski, Certified Financial Planners.

Please sign up in Spencer Hall at the Palms Society table or email: linda.gadkowski@gmail.com.

Deacon's Benevolence Fund...a gift to our community

Thank you to all of you who contributed to the Deacon's Benevolence Fund in 2025.

This fund is separate from our church's regular budget, relying entirely on your generosity and love in Christ. Disbursements are made twice yearly to Collier County charities, supporting those in desperate need of temporary financial, counseling and nutritional assistance.

Due to your generosity and kindness, in 2025, a total of \$20,000 was distributed evenly from the **Deacon's Benevolence Fund**, to Youth Haven and Neighborhood Health Clinic. These organizations provide essential services in our community.

The following are segments from thank you letters our church received:

"Thank you for supporting our life saving work with your generous donation. 94% of every dollar goes directly to patient care. The Neighborhood Health Clinic delivers quality medical and dental care to low income working, uninsured Collier County adults using a volunteer professional staff."

*Sincerely,
Keith Maples, CEO*

"On behalf of Youth Haven, I sincerely thank you for your generous donation. As Southwest Florida's only emergency shelter for abused, neglected and homeless children and teens, Youth Haven holds a unique position in our community. For over 52 years, we have provided a lifeline for children and teens ages 6-21 who have suffered unfortunate trauma, giving them safety when they have nowhere else to turn."

*Yours Truly,
Linda Goldfield, CEO*

Note: The pink envelopes you see in the pews are your opportunity to contribute to this fund.

For more information, please contact Gary Tincu, Deacon at gatman07@comcast.net or 239.775.4806.



CHURCH TOUR

The Deacons invite you to a "Behind the Scenes" church tour on Sunday, January 11 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

Stephen Ministry

- David Witman



The Christmas season is often a whirlwind of activity, both in church and outside church, and many of us have our days filled with family and holiday activities. And yet, all this activity gives us precious little time to think about much else.

Then it happens. We wake up after all the relatives have gone home, all the decorations are stored away for yet another year, and a temporary lull (albeit short-lived) seems to fall upon our homes. All of a sudden we are faced with a brand new calendar year, and we will need to think about which activities will stay with us in the new year and what we might begin anew.

At First Pres, we still have the same opportunities to become involved in serving God and his congregation, and the beginning of the new year is a great time to consider accepting a new call to serve. Some deacons' and elders' terms are expiring; some committees and groups within the church are reorganizing with new leadership; others who may not have been active in the church, or those who think it might be time to start contributing in a different way, could consider the start of 2026 to mark a fresh commitment to serve.

There are many good reasons to commit to serving others, and I have asked Artificial Intelligence ("AI") on-line to help us consider the benefits of serving. Here is the response:

"Helping others offers rich rewards, including a "helper's high" from endorphins, reduced stress, better mood, stronger social connections, increased purpose, and even potential health benefits like lower inflammation and a longer life, creating a cycle of *fulfillment* and *well-being* for both the giver and receiver, with rewards ranging from *intrinsic* joy to tangible recognition.

PSYCHOLOGICAL & EMOTIONAL REWARDS

Helper's High: Your brain releases endorphins and dopamine, creating feelings of euphoria, calm, and pleasure.

- **Reduced Stress & Anxiety:** Acts of kindness can act as a stress reliever and improve overall mental health.
- **Increased Self-Esteem & Purpose:** Making a positive impact boosts self-worth, gives life meaning, and fosters a sense of connection.
- **Greater Gratitude:** Helping others can make you more thankful for your own blessings.

PHYSICAL & HEALTH REWARDS

- **Lower Inflammation:** Studies show helping others can reduce inflammation markers in the body.
- **Improved Relationships:** Showing you care strengthens bonds with others.
- **Longevity:** Volunteering and helping can be linked to a lower risk of early death.

SOCIAL & PRACTICAL REWARDS

- **New Opportunities:** Helping can lead to new friendships, career opportunities, and community integration.
- **Building a Legacy:** Your positive impact can inspire others and continue long-term.
- **Empowerment:** Taking action to help builds confidence.

TANGIBLE & FORMAL REWARDS (FOR VOLUNTEERS/EMPLOYEES)

- **Recognition:** Appreciation letters, social media shout-outs, awards, public forums.
- **Perks:** Gift cards, merchandise, exclusive event access, donations in their honor.
- **Growth:** Educational opportunities, career development, job offers.

Of course, the best reason of all is that it is God's will and plan for us to love others as Jesus loves us. This is our call to serve. Consider what you might do to answer God's call, and make a commitment to serve. Incidentally, we are always looking for Stephen Ministers. Why not talk to us and learn what it's about? You can find us at our Stephen Ministers table in Spencer Hall after service on Sundays.



December and January are special months in our preschool, filled with moments of wonder, reflection, and joyful discovery. As part of our church family, we are grateful to share these meaningful seasons with our children and the congregation that supports them so lovingly.

In December, our classrooms were alive with the beauty of the Christmas season! Children explored the story of Jesus' birth through gentle storytelling, music, and art, all in ways that are developmentally appropriate and centered on joy. We focus on themes of love, giving, light, and gratitude as children create handmade gifts, sing familiar and new songs, and learn that Christmas is a celebration of God's greatest gift to us. The preschool is filled with warmth as children practice kindness, generosity, and the simple joy of being together. The VPK children also enjoyed the adventure of our annual Polar Express event with the help of Santa and Mrs. Claus!

As we move into January, we welcome a new year with a sense of calm renewal. This month is a time of settling back into routines, strengthening friendships, and rediscovering the joy of learning through play. Children explore winter themes through hands-on activities, sensory experiences, movement, and curiosity-driven questions. January offers opportunities for reflection and growth as children gain confidence, independence, and a deeper sense of belonging in their classrooms. It is also a time of thinking ahead to the next school year as we begin our enrollment for 2026-2027. Church members receive first priority for enrollment, so please contact our preschool director.

Throughout both months, our focus remains on nurturing the whole child socially, emotionally, spiritually, and academically within a loving, play and relationship-based environment. We are thankful for the partnership of our church community and the continued prayers and support that allow our preschool to be a place where children feel safe, valued, and deeply loved.

Cheers to a new year!



Children in Ms. Claudia's classroom made pretend gingerbread houses in their very own cookie making station! They used their creativity and fine motor skills throughout the process.



Ms. Madi's class on our "famous around town" red buggies on a visit to see Santa on 5th Avenue! We enjoy seeing our community.



Mrs. Kennedy and Mrs. Casagrande's VPK classes had an exciting adventure as they took the Polar Express to the North Pole for a special literacy experience that included cookies and hot cocoa! Do you spy any familiar faces in this picture?



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, January 11. 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:

Fruit cups
Pancake mix
Granola bars
Rice
Boxed stuffing

Microwave popcorn
Pasta & sauce
Canned tuna, chicken
Oatmeal
Syrup

Cereal
Peanut butter/jelly
Animal Crackers
Macaroni & cheese
Dried beans

Canned soup
Canned vegetables
Dried fruit
Juice boxes



Save the Dates

Sunday, January 25—Mission Sunday

Our missions partners will be in Spencer Hall for you to visit and to ask questions about their community work.

Friday, February 6—Mission Peniel Work Day

We will prepare fresh food and then distribute packages to the residents of Immokalee. 2-6:30 p.m. If interested, we will leave the church at 12:30 p.m., enjoy lunch and drive through the IFHA site and see the progress of their campus.

Saturday, February 28—Meals of Hope 100 volunteers are needed!

Mission Finances

We always keep some money set aside in our Missions Outreach budget until after hurricane season. Thanks to our generous congregation whose contributions allow us to fully fund our Missions budget, we were able to give an extra \$2,000 to each of our Feed the 5,000 Missions partners just before Thanksgiving to be used strictly for food. We immediately received thank you notes from each of these Mission organizations.

We were also able to send \$5,000 to stricken Jamaica, which got severely damaged by Hurricane Melissa.



Merci! Merci! For your donations to the Immokalee Fair Housing Authority apartments. We are able to equip 3 more apartments. Our women decorated these apartments and added personal touches to each home for the new residents.

Once again, THANKS to all of you for supplying Christmas gifts and much needed shoes for the children in Immokalee through Mision Peniel. You put a lot of smiles on many children's faces with your kindness.

THANK YOU to all who participated with the Ringing of the Bells for the Salvation Army Red Kettle Fund Campaign. We appreciate your enthusiasm and your time especially at that time of year.

Thanks to Betty Plum and her helpers of the Power Pak program who supplied food for the month of December to Big Cypress Elementary School. Betty checks to make sure the children are receiving protein, vegetables, juice, breakfast items, fruit, snacks and a treat each week. Bert and Joe Patton, Susan Kogan and Jan Witman faithfully deliver the bags to Big Cypress Elementary School. The Power Paks are placed into the appropriate school bags every Friday.



Gracias for all your contributions to help support the medical mission trip with Dr. Mark Speake. The families received much needed medical supplies and the children were treated to Christmas presents!

The February Outreach will feature a story from Dr. Mark Speake about his recent trip.



The Gibbs Family

By Susan Pratt



The joy of storytelling doesn't come from the writer. The joy of storytelling is the joy coming through the writer from those whose stories are being told. Being able to write this story about a family here in our church community is an honor. Reading about the small and large miracles that take place in and out of our church walls are what make this congregation thrive. Meet the Gibbs family.

Peter L. Gibbs, Jr (PJ) was born in Manasquan, New Jersey and his wife Kristin was born in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Both of them were raised by strong family elders in the Catholic faith, but eventually discovered a home in Methodist church. They continued in their faith journey as Methodists as their family grew with the births of Payton and Logan.

Living in New Jersey was getting more difficult to afford, and after Payton had been diagnosed in the autism spectrum, she was going to need more therapy. Wanting a better quality of life, Naples, at the time, was a great opportunity for the whole family.

The Gibbs family moved to Naples in 2015 with PJ starting a position at Gulf Coast High School teaching history and coaching football, recently accepting the position of Director of Student Services at Kaiser University. He has been coaching football for 25 years and is now with the Community School of Naples and the Royal Palm Academy. Kristen works with the Galt Insurance Group in Naples and is deeply involved in her growing family: Payton, in eighth grade and Logan in fifth grade both attending Royal Palm Academy, and their two-year-old super mutt "Saint."

We often see Payton and Logan on Sundays taking on various roles in our worship services and our children's programs. They were narrators for World Communion Sunday; they write and pray in our "Children's Time" and are involved in our Christmas pageants and special events. They are leaders in our children's classes and Vacation Bible School, and candle lighters for Advent. If there is something to be done, they are the first to say yes. But the one thing they both love above all else is when they usher. When I asked why that is so, Logan said it gives him a sense of pride, helping and being utilized. Payton feels that she is accepted and trusted. These two amazing young people are making their own traditions by

being actively involved in our church life, and in doing so creating new traditions in our church community. Their parents are so grateful for their participation, learning new life skills in a loving accepting church.

They first learned about First Presbyterian Church through our Preschool, Ashley Henning and friends. When Nancy Van Fleet arrived, they remarked, "she changed our world. We are so grateful to have found a church where we genuinely feel we belong. Watching our kids grow in their faith and flourish in this



community melts our hearts. We couldn't be more proud of how far they've come." Finding a church that accepted them with open arms, and one that offers outreach and service to the community was what they were looking for. So many of our families who attend here all say the same: a church that believes in mission, in outreach to community, welcoming families, giving purpose to their lives in an active way, is where they want their children to learn the beauty of faith, purpose, honesty, and service. All these families nurture us in return in so many ways! Logan's response when I asked what his favorite activity/hobby was, he replied: "family closeness." How beautiful is that? His respect runs deep for



those he loves. And when Payton answered the same question, she lit up with joy and said, "coaching football." She has been following in her father's footsteps since she was 4 years old and has mastered the game. Payton has spent years on the field with her dad, and with the hearts of close friends, was invited as an honorary coach for Dave Doeren at North Carolina State. But the greatest surprise was a phone call from Holly Row, an American sportscaster for ESPN, inviting her to come to New York and be a guest at the Heisman Awards. Payton was over the top excited and spent four glorious days with her dad meeting and hanging out with the biggest names in football. Holly is the heart behind the foundation *Joy+US*, which "sparks joy in the lives of those who need it most." Holly has become a tireless advocate with her mission to bring hope and happiness to others. Payton's sites are on the NFL, and knowing her drive,



determination and dedication, it can certainly become a reality for her. Logan's heart-felt kindness, respect, and love of all that is good will lead him to be a beacon in this world and beyond.

As their church, we can all smile, knowing that through our doors come a generation of children and young adults who are aware of this world, and are learning what is good and what is not. And they will be the ones to make the difference. Our gratitude goes to the parents who are nurturing them to be the kind of people we all need in our lives and who give us hope. The following are two links about Payton's football story for you to enjoy, opening a broader vision of this amazing family.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2Kg6aQidqo>

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DCcat/RyUjZ/?hl=en>



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN SOUP MINISTRY



Our Caring Ministry enthusiastically embraces the concept of Soup Ministry! A mission statement for a "Soup Kitchen" might read: "...to feed people in need regardless of their circumstances ... to provide healthy and nutritious meals to all who come through our door."

A "Compassion Soup Ministry" would read: "to touch all of life by being mindful of God's compassion and extending it to others in tangible ways."

If your heart would like to be part of this ministry, come join us once a month for a few hours chopping vegetables and creating healing soups. We will need 3 angels for a couple of hours in the morning, and two more to container and freeze them at the end of the afternoon.

These soups will not only be available to our visitation team, but to all who may need a little extra TLC in their lives.

Our first pot is waiting, so let's begin on **Wednesday, January 14 at 9 a.m. in the kitchen.** Bring your favorite "vegetable based" soup recipes and your creative ideas!

Contact Susan Pratt to volunteer or for more information. Thank you in advance for your interest!

Happy 2026, everyone!

I love this quote by Albert Einstein: "Do not grow old, no matter how long you live; never cease to stand like curious children before the great mystery into which we were born." These words encourage us to maintain our sense of wonder and curiosity, regardless of the years that pass and it is a blessing to have our children in our midst to remind us of this truth.

I just wanted to take a moment to reflect on the past year and celebrate the memorable experiences we shared as a community. Our endeavors have focused on engaging our children, youth, and young adults while fostering deep intergenerational connections.

This year, we continued to offer our GenWE services, which provided a wonderful opportunity for our young members to engage in the life of the church in meaningful ways while engaging all generations. We have also celebrated several beautiful baptisms, during which our children had the special opportunity to bless the water with Pastor Rex. In addition, we've met with our vibrant youth group, creating spaces where dialogue, excitement, and community spirit thrive and even enjoyed a couple dinners with their families. We continued time-honored events such as our Easter Egg Hunt, the Milestone of Graduation, summer Montreat Youth Conference, Vacation Bible School, Fall Festival and Parents Night Out program. We continued with Funday School in the summer also, a time to provide a nurturing environment for children to learn and grow in the faith. Adding to the list of memorable events, we had our fourth interactive, intergenerational Family Christmas Eve service. This special service was led by our children and youth and we enjoyed a hot chocolate bar and the enchantment of falling snow after the service.

Each of these experiences has nourished our collective spirit and reminded us all of the youthful wonder and curiosity that lie at the heart of our faith. As we look forward to a new year, may we always hold onto the joy and mystery of life, continuing to grow together as a community. Thank you for your unwavering support, contributions, and participation that have made this ministry possible.

(As you read this article, 13 of our young adults are preparing to go to Blue Ridge, Georgia, for an Unplugged Retreat from January 9-12. Please hold us in your prayers as we enter into this completely different rhythm of life to connect to God, ourselves, and one another.)



Here's to a joyful, inspired, and blessed 2026!

Nancy





WEDNESDAYS at FIRST

CHRISTIAN AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION



Wednesday, January 21

Barbara Brown Taylor is the renowned and beloved New York Times bestselling author who considers herself a writer, speaker, and spiritual contrarian. She is the best selling author of fourteen books with another on the way in 2026. A limited number of copies of two of her books are available for purchase in the church office *Holy Envy* (\$12.50) and *Learning to Walk in the Dark* (\$9). A more complete selection of her books will be available for purchase at the book signing following this event.

The Coming of the Light

Communities of faith around the world mark earth's regular passage from dark to light (and from light to dark in due season) with everything from pop-up solstice celebrations in cow pastures to ancient vespers services in great cathedrals. What is it about twilight that speaks to the human soul, and what spiritual challenges are hidden in this earthly give-and-take of natural light? These questions and more will be on the table when we meet in January to celebrate the Christian season of Epiphany, the season of growing light.



Wednesday, January 28

Avery Davis Lamb is a co-executive director of Creation Justice Ministries. He works at the intersection of Christianity and environmental justice.

His research focuses on the role of religious communities in building climate resilience and adaptation, with emphasis on the virtues and practices of climate hospitality. He organizes faith communities across the country in support of action on environmental justice. He has worked for *Sojourners* and *Interfaith Power and Light*.

He is currently serving on the board for *The Center for Spirituality in Nature*.

Mr. Lamb will discuss with us the scriptural roots of “creative justice,” a concept deeply grounded in Christian theology and practice. It is intended to capture both the depth of our interconnectedness with everything and the necessity to partner with God in the healing and restoration of all. He will draw on scriptures to tell the story of creation justice in the Bible and how our communities can be partners with God in the work of healing the world.



Wednesday, February 4

Dr. Suzanne McDonald is professor of Systemic 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.fpcnnaples.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.

On January 11 join Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake for an *"Introduction to the Writings of Barbara Brown Taylor,"* our January 21, Wednesdays at First Speaker. A *New York Times* bestselling author, she is an elegant writer with the common touch and is always a wonderful guide to the spiritual world. We'll focus on two of her books, *Holy Envy* and *Learning to Walk in the Dark*, and preview her new book (to be released later this year), *Coming Down to Earth*. Each of these books will serve as the basis for her upcoming Wednesdays at First address, titled: *The Coming of the Light*. A limited number of copies of *Holy Envy* (\$12.50) and *Learning to Walk in the Dark* (\$9) are available for purchase through the church office. Additional copies (including a selection of her other books) will be available on January 21 via a book signing organized by *Books on Third* following her address.

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.

Embracing the Journey: Discover the Life-Giving Practice of Spiritual Direction

"The job of a spiritual director is to hold on to Spirit." Father Richard Rohr

This past December, I have become a certified spiritual director after completing my work and practicum at the San Francisco Theological Seminary. This enriching journey has deepened my understanding of faith and has inspired me to invite you to explore this transformative practice.

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. In January we begin the study of the book of Nehemiah.

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

For more information contact Janeen McClure.

Spiritual direction can take many forms—it might mean meeting once to clarify where God's voice is in your life or, if you feel distant from it, to help connect the invisible thread of love that guides us all. Whether you're at a crossroads or simply seeking tools to better listen to the divine whisper that is always with you, spiritual direction offers a space of reflection, support, and inspiration.

If you're interested in learning more about this practice, please feel free to reach out. Your journey is unique, and I would be honored to walk alongside you as you explore the presence and guidance of the Divine.

Nancy Van Fleet



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: First Tuesday of each month at 10 a.m.

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

Lydia Circle: Third Wednesday at 1 p.m.

Please bring your new or gently used blankets and sweatshirts on Sunday, January 11 and 18. Boxes will be available for your donations.

Thank you for your support of this important mission.

All donations will be given to Misión Peniel in Immokalee.



A PW update from Linda Ferrario

I recently returned from a trip to East Africa. It was an eye-opening experience to see the way the population struggles to obtain clean water. The Presbyterian Women have decided to financially support *Wine to Water*, an organization that helps people attain clean water. For \$50, a family of four receives a ceramic filter which supplies clean water for 5 years.

Wine to Water is headquartered in Tanzania, a country with diverse geography, including mountains in the North, rivers in the midlands, active volcanoes and the Great Rift Valley. Despite having abundant water resources, these resources are unevenly distributed across the country and some regions experience water shortages.

According to the United Nations, over 40% of the Tanzanian population lacks access to clean water. The daily water collection is usually done by women and girls who spend a total of 16 million hours per day, collectively, collecting water across the country. Moreover, the World Health Organization estimates that diarrhea, due to contaminated

water, is the fourth leading cause of death in Tanzania.

Wine to Water's Tanzania office is making a positive impact by working through multiple schools, collaborating with a ceramic filter factory, and engaging with local teams towards community water systems. Access to clean safe water has a significant impact on communities. It frees up time for women and children who would otherwise spend hours collecting water. With time freed up, women take more prominent roles in their communities, children focus on education, and families engage in agriculture and other income-generating activities. Additional, access to clean water reduces the incidence of waterborne illnesses, improving the overall health of communities.





The Women of the Way (WOW) fellowship invites ALL women of the church to participate in our Season 2026 study of Luke.

Have you been to Israel or have you dreamed of going? Well, fasten your seatbelts and join us on a tour of Israel as we walk where Jesus walked according to the gospel of Luke. We will study Jesus's life through biblical readings, historical context and video filmed "on location" where the events took place nearly 2,000 years ago. Each session will include a video lesson followed by facilitated small group discussion.

When Thursdays 9:30 to 11 a.m. January 15 to February 25

Where Spencer Hall and Zoom

Study resource *Luke in the Land* by Kristi McLelland. The book is available in Spencer Hall.

Sign up in Spencer Hall at the WOW table, by email at fpcwomen2017@gmail.com (Cathy Trampe) or call Gay Stover at 417.274.6619.

We hope you will join us for meaningful study and wonderful fellowship with other women of the church.

Your WOW LEADERS: Heather Carelock, Tanya Maxwell, Janeen McClure, Susan Pratt, Liz Speake, Gay Stover, Cathy Trampe, Nancy Van Fleet

Happy Retirement!



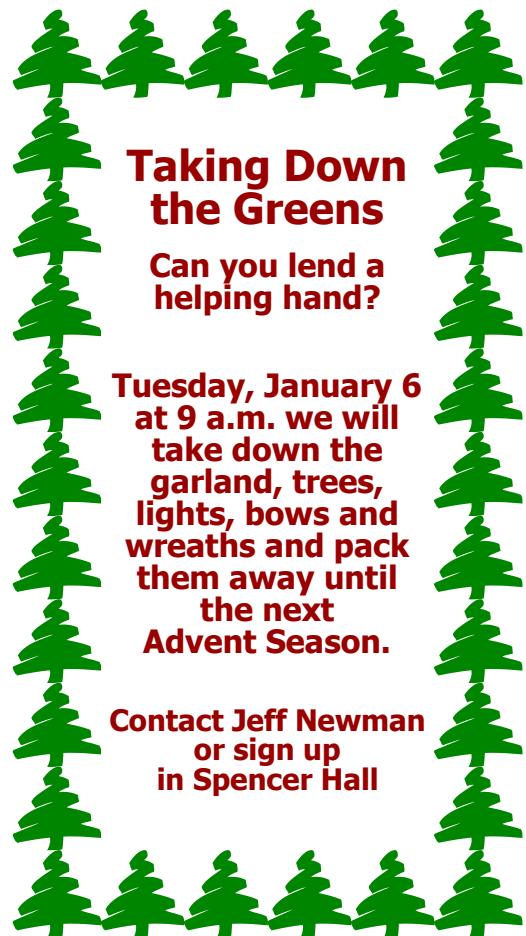
It is with mixed emotions that we announce the retirement of Kathleen Law. Kathleen has faithfully served on staff at First Presbyterian Church of Naples for almost 24 years, in a variety of positions. She has excelled in her current role as our Director of Publications & Social Media, a title which only scratches the surface of all the things she does.

Ultimately, we are very happy for her, as this next chapter will allow her more time with her family. We will miss her terribly, though.

Her last day in the office will be Friday, February 27.

Please mark your calendars for a celebration immediately following the worship service on Sunday, March 1.

(More details to come!)



Taking Down the Greens

Can you lend a helping hand?

Tuesday, January 6 at 9 a.m. we will take down the garland, trees, lights, bows and wreaths and pack them away until the next Advent Season.

Contact Jeff Newman or sign up in Spencer Hall



Church Office Hours

In the new year, the office will be closed on Thursday, January 1 and Friday, January 2.

The office will reopen on Monday, January 5.

It's a pleasure to serve this congregation and we look forward to 2026.

Happy New Year!

Happy Birthday

January 1
Roy Cashion

January 2
Cindy Edwards

January 3
Cindy Jones
*Barry Krikke

January 4
Jerry Lahey
Karen Ryan

January 6
Joan Adams

January 7
Dave Klementik

January 8
Sue Dotson
Ashley Houk
Ted Pierce

January 10
Bob Guyett

January 11
Mary Chesslo
Jay Wheeler

January 12
Barbara Heissner
Ted Rojahn

Ellen Weigel
Jon Wright

January 14
Donna Dardani

January 15
Harry Streamer

January 16
Tedi Fraley
Valerie Mulhere
Faith Tubergen

January 17
Jill Crawford
Ann Grady
Jayne Hilde
Jim Lee
Marc Miller
Jan Mueller

January 18
Betty Mangos
John Smallwood
JoAnn Van Dyke

January 19
Toni Galley

January 20
Marti Barwick
Ralph Dotson
Joan Lubrano

January 21
Gay Pepper

January 22
Maureen Dunlap
Neil Van Dyke

January 23
Pat Boyd
Russ Maier

January 24
*Paige Buck

January 25
Jim deGraffenreid
Mary Towers
Clayton Weigel

January 26
Dick Barton
Tray Batcher
Sherrie Mac Lea
Bob MacMinn
Kathi Webber

January 27
Fred Hertel
Louise Jensen
Harley Lappin
Roger Simons

January 30
Becky Lappin

January 31
Bill Kearney
Linda Miller
Laura Richards
Jim Robertson
Shar Saffold
Shelia Wall

*staff

In Memoriam

Ramona Winger

Former member
November 19, 2025

G. Sheldon Veil

December 28, 2025

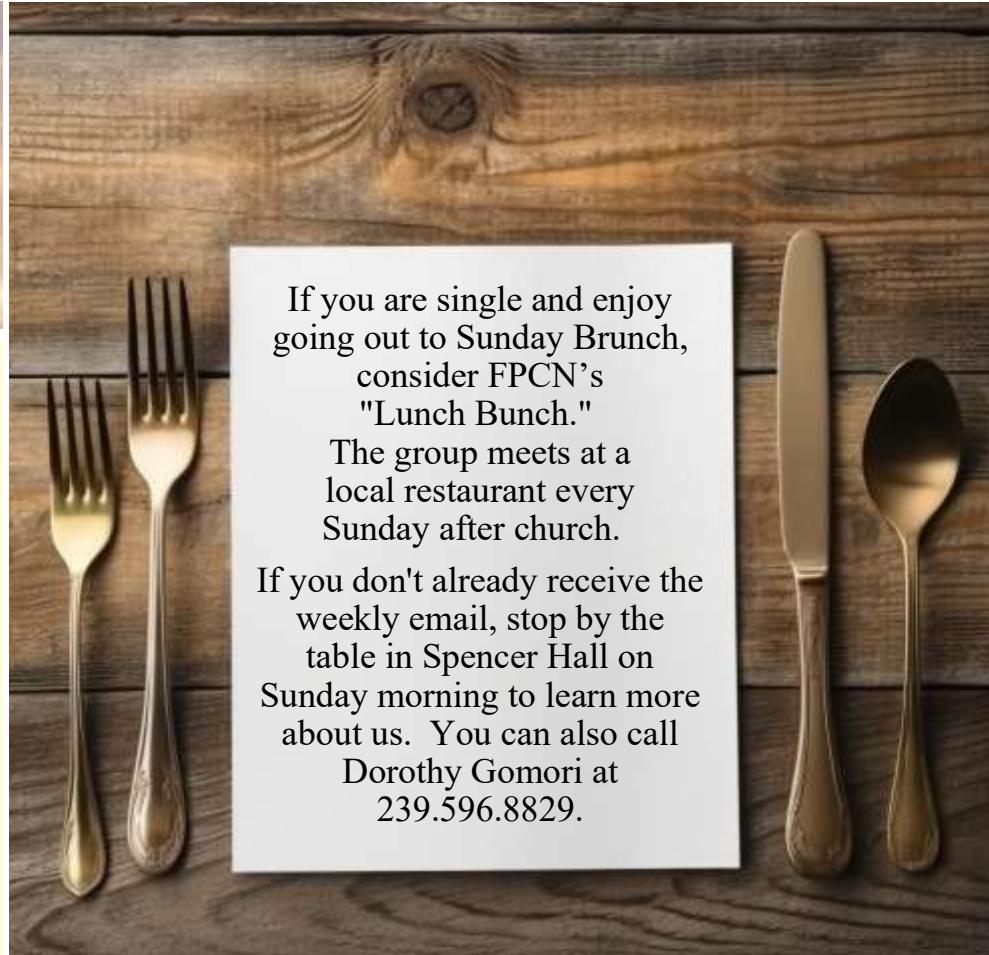
SEEKERS AND JOINERS CLASS

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 Parlor on Sunday, January 18 following worship.

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



First Presbyterian Church of Naples

250 Sixth Street South

Naples, FL 34102

www.fpcnaples.org

239.262.1311



We will kick off the next **Wednesdays at First** series with a **Festival of Light** on Wednesday, January 21.

Our celebration will be a fun, joyous event for people of all ages where the Sanctuary and other areas will be lit with brilliant light with LED votive candles and Moravian stars.

- 5 p.m. **Dinner** (\$15) Enjoy a Chick-fil-A dinner (nuggets for children, kids eat free) in Spencer Hall and crafts for all ages in the Courtyard
- 5:30 p.m. **Candlelight Twilight Organ Concert** featuring Dr. Brice Gerlach. Childcare begins.
- 6 p.m. New York Times bestselling author, **Barbara Brown Taylor**, speaking on *The Coming of the Light* in the Sanctuary
- 6:45 p.m. **Audience Q&A** in the Sanctuary
- 7 p.m. **Book signing**, provided by *Books on Third* in Narthex

January 28: Avery Davis Lamb co-executive director of Creation Justice Ministries

February 4: Dr. Suzanne McDonald, professor of Systemic and Historical Theology at Western Theology Seminary

February 11: Rev. Dr. Scott Rennie, from St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, Scotland

Please visit our [website](http://www.fpcnaples.org) for registration information.