The First Presbyterian Church of Naples

In the Heart of Naples with the Love of God: we worship, we love, we grow, we serve

Outre 2023



"Melody Merrymaker" - Jackie Nolder

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FROM THE PULPIT

November 2 All Saints Sunday Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake

November 9 Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake

November 16 Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake

November 23 Christ the King/Reign of Christ Rev. Rex Childs

> November 27 Thanksgiving Day Rev. Rex Childs

November 30 First Sunday of Advent Rev. Dr. Scott Kenefake

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"Reasons People Give"

I have been helping churches and nonprofits raise the financial resources they need to support their missions for almost 40 years. And in that time, I have learned there are three primary reasons people give:

belief in the mission of the institution
 a high regard for staff leadership (and)
 the fiscal responsibility of the institution.
 will comment on each briefly.

A Belief in the Mission

People want to make the world a better place to live. They want to believe that they can truly make a difference for the better. There is embedded in us, it seems, a desire to finish out our work on this earth with a sense that we amounted to something. To sum it up, people want to be a part of something that *changes lives*.

This is what churches and nonprofits offer to do. At their best, they help to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, give hope to the hopeless, bring peace to the troubled, and in general make the world a better place.

For example, a couple of years ago I went to my local Costco to renew my membership and the person assisting me recognized me as one of the pastors at the House of Hope Presbyterian Church. With tears in his eyes, he said: "Your church saved my life. I have been attending AA meetings there for seven years and I have been sober for the past five years. Thank you for the ministry of your church. Your support of AA has changed the lives of countless people in our community."

Needless to say, I was not expecting to hear such a story on a visit to Costco, but it is the kind of story that I have heard from people in all of the churches I have had the privilege to serve—and I have heard them here, too!

Regard for Staff Leadership

People seem to intuitively know that the church building or program is not what is changing lives; it is the people leading that church and those programs that make the difference. When they have confidence in those people to perform, gifts follow. When they see pastors, staff, and congregational leaders who have great vision and show excellence in leadership, people will invest in that vision and trust in the skills of those leaders to make the hopes of the donors come true.

As an Interim Pastor, I am at an inherent disadvantage because I have only been here a short time and many people do not yet know me well, so there is no track record for you to go on. However, when I look back on the recent history of FPCN it is clear that the congregation has enjoyed strong leadership from its pastors, staff, and governing boards and that they have been worthy of your trust. They have great vision. It is my job to provide the same kind of leadership for the short time I am here so that this same tradition can be handed to your next installed Senior Pastor. In fact, we all have that responsibility.

Fiscal Stability of the Institution

When people invest in churches and non-profits, they do not want to waste their investment. More than ever donors are holding the church accountable for wise use of funds already given. In one church I served the finance chairperson was worried that we were running a surplus and he did not want the congregation to know that things were going so well because some people might stop giving! Really? The theory is in some churches that if we say we are going broke, people will give us more than if we are telling them we are changing lives. In fact, the exact opposite is true. For instance, it is well known that the Salvation Army continues to get more donations each year than any other social service agency or group. Harvard University is also consistently near the top of universities in endowment-giving year after year. Do they send out the message that they are dying on the vine and must have more contributions to stay afloat? No, they say, "We took your money last year and we did great things with it. If you give us more, we will do more great things." And people give and give to them. People want results and these institutions give positive results.

Churches need to do the same thing. *Why?*Because we, too, are doing great things, but we are often not very good at telling people about it. That is why personal stories are so important. They convey real life experiences about positive changes in people's lives as a direct result of the work of the church.

Pro tip: Recruit someone from the church to find *fifty-two personal stories* for use each week of the year in either worship or in the newsletter, you will never have to convince anyone again that the church changes lives for the better *and* fundraising will become much easier!

Blessings, Scott Kenefake Interim Pastor



Welcome back to our Snowbirds!

We have officially rolled into the 4th quarter of 2025! Thank you for your pledges, contributions, and continued financial support of this wonderful church!

Our 2025 paid contributions with gifts through September are at 83% of pledged totals. Contribution Statements through September 2025 have been mailed and should anyone have questions while reviewing them, please contact Joan Congine.

YTD expenses are favorable to budget by \$170k, and although revenue is under budget YTD by (\$242k), it is favorable to 2024 by \$170k. There is a YTD shortfall of (\$77k). We hope to close that gap as people return to escape the cold weather.

As always, please reach out to <u>Debbie Savage</u>, Executive Director or <u>Joan Congine</u>, Finance Administrator, if you have any questions.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF NAPLES SUMMARY FINANCIAL INFORMATION

September 30, 2025

	Septen	1001 50, 2025			
	В			A	B-A
	YTD Actuals	YTD Budget	Annual Budget	YTD Actuals	YTD Actuals
	2025	2025	2025	2024	2025 vs. 2024
Income					
Offerings	1,416,428	1,687,500	2,250,000	1,267,677	148,750
Preschool	431,870	402,975	537,300	408,247	23,623
Other	28,233	27,904	37,205	30,879	(2,646)
Budgeted Endowment Transfers	300,000	300,000	400,000	300,000	0
Total Income	2,176,531	2,418,379	3,224,505	2,006,804	169,727
Total Expenses	2,253,775	2,423,590	3,234,202	2,099,774	154,001
Net Operating Income (Shortfall)	(77,244)	(5,211)	(9,697)	(92,970)	15,727



Update from the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC)

The Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) is meeting weekly, on Wednesday afternoons.

To date, we have spent time learning more about each other, been trained by the Presbytery, and collected and studied background materials on First Presbyterian Church of Naples. We are particularly grateful for the work that went into the 2025 Mission Study -- this work has enabled the PNC to begin our work in a very efficient manner.

We have begun the extremely important task of developing a Ministry Discernment Profile (MDP). The MDP helps prospective pastors understand the specific vision, mission, and needs of the congregation. It allows them to determine if their gifts and experience align with the church's needs.

As a guiding *Bible* passage to anchor our work we selected Proverbs 3:5-6:

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths."

In the days and months ahead, we invite you to help us by praying for the work we are doing and how the Lord is leading us on this journey.

First Presbyterian Church of Naples PNC:

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

Many thanks to our deacons for an amazing and delicious brunch on October 12.

















Stephen



- David Witman

Over the years, we have discussed in this column many topics relating to the work of Stephen Ministry and our efforts to help those in God's community of faith who need our help. Perhaps it is even more

important that God has not only created us to help others but also to need and accept help from God, sometimes through the works of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Many of His people find JOY in helping others but difficulty in accepting help to deal with our own weaknesses and vulnerability.



Daily Meditation, October 6, 2025

DO NOT RESIST WEAKNESS

Henri Nouwen addresses this issue head on with clarity and simplicity: Our weakness and old age call people to surround us and support us. By not resisting weakness and by gratefully receiving another's care we call forth community and provide our caregivers an opportunity to give their own gifts of compassion, care, love, and service. As we are given into their hands, others are blessed and enriched by caring for us. Our weakness bears fruit in their lives.

"Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the Lord delivers them in times of trouble." Psalm 41: 1

Hemi Y. M. Nouwer

Ministry

Eric Demeter, a Christian author and contributor to the *Boundless.org* blog/podcast website, wrote an insightful related article entitled *Freedom from Shame, Strength in Vulnerability.* If you would like to read the entire article, it can be found on Boundless.org of November 11, 2024.

Some key excerpts from Mr. Demeter's article:

Created by God

Our human nature is to resist vulnerability. We'd rather hide our weaknesses or pretend they're not there. Yet God calls us as Christians to relate to Him with our weaknesses fully acknowledged. As we admit our limitations as humans, we can trust that where our capabilities end, His begin. God designed us with weaknesses so we can rightfully *depend* on Him. Our built-in weaknesses become the very things that allow God to be God in our lives.

Practically Speaking

Because we are coworkers with Christ (1 Corinthians 3:9), it comes as no surprise that He asks us to partner with Him to overcome our weaknesses. To do this, we must share what we so desperately want to hide — to become vulnerable — the very thing shame screams at us not to do. Risk creates the opportunity for faith. I know my faith in Christ will never mitigate the possibility of others rejecting me, but my place as His child will never be shaken.

Fear often surrounds our deepest vulnerabilities. The reason Scripture states numerous times to "fear God" is because we inherently worship our greatest fear — we are *loyal* to it. In other words, regardless of what we fear the most, it becomes the hub in which we build our lives around. God, on the other hand, designed our vulnerability for His glory and for us to receive more of His grace through it. This is exactly why God tells Paul, "My power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Vulnerability becomes not a detriment, but the ultimate empowerment for us to allow God to reign in and through us.

In His wisdom, God created us to be inadequate beings who are complete only when we completely depend on Him. Then we find our freedom from shame and our strength in vulnerability through knowing all of our inabilities are solved by His abilities.



Suggested items include:

Fruit cups
Pancake Mix
Granola bars
Rice
Boxed stuffing
Microwave popcorn

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, November 9. 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.

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



Medical Mission Trip

The next medical mission trip to Guatemala will be December 6 - 14. Once again we will be providing a Christmas party for the children in one of the mountain villages who have never received a Christmas present before.

We will also be providing medical care/medications, as well as school supplies. The church is supplying medications for which we are always grateful. If you feel called to join our ministry, please contact Mark Speake at 570.490.3681 or markspeake58@gmail.com.



Our Angel Tree will soon be full of gift tags for the children of Misión Peniel in Immokalee.

This year we will have tags for children's toys and tags for much needed children's shoes.

The tags will be on the Angel Tree on Sunday, November 23 and gifts are due back by Sunday, December 7.

> Gift ideas include cars, dolls, Legos, Fisher Price toys and science projects.

Voices of Naples Songs of Peace and Hope

Dr. Brice Gerlach, *conductor*Aaron Powers, *accompanist*Sunday, November 23, 2025
4 p.m.

Tickets: \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door. To order, call 239.293.0645.

The opening concert will feature the Voices of Naples, a community chorus led by Dr. Brice Gerlach. It is their mission to present the gift of quality choral music to the community that is uplifting to the audience and the singers themselves. They are committed to providing scholarship opportunities to student vocalists and strive to bring the love of choral music to everyone.

The program has been crafted to bring *Peace* and *Hope* to the listener. Works will include *Let There be Peace on Earth, Dona Nobis Pacem, Abound in Hope*, some country favorites and rousing spirituals. We will also introduce our new accompanist, Aaron Powers, playing variations in duet with Brice based on *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands.* Get your tickets soon - **order by** calling the number above.



Chancel Choir Christmas Concert

Dr. Brice Gerlach, *conductor* Sunday, December 7, 2025 4 p.m.



Experience the hope and joy of rediscovering the miracle and wonder of Christmas as told through beautiful and cherished music of the season. Christmas-time is filled with great traditions and many of them center on the music of the season. Our annual concert showcases the incredible talent of First Presbyterian Church of Naples. The program will feature the soloists and choir singing Christmas favorites as well as an audience singa-long of well-known carols accompanied by a professional chamber orchestra. The Chancel Choir will sing several Christmas anthems including And the Glory of the Lord by Handel, My Lord Has Come by Will Todd, and a beautiful arrangement of Silent Night by Dan Forrest.

Sing some of your favorite traditional carols such as *O Come All Ye Faithful, God Rest You Merry Gentlemen* and *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing.* Come enjoy a beautiful concert with some of the most traditional and well-loved Christmas songs ever composed.



Whew – this school year is already flying by! We whizzed through October with children learning about make-believe and dressing up, nocturnal animals, leaves, apples, pumpkins, and so much more.

Now we are in November, which is a beautiful reminder

to slow down and reflect on all of God's blessings in our lives. This month, we are filled with gratitude for the laughter, curiosity, and kindness that fill our classrooms each day. The children remind us daily to see the world with wonder and to give thanks for even the smallest gifts.

Throughout the month, our classes will explore themes of **thankfulness**, **family**, **and community** through stories, songs, art, and play. We'll talk about what it means to have a thankful heart and how we can show God's love through friendship and helping others. Our outdoor explorations will continue as children notice the changes in nature and marvel at the beauty of God's creation.

We're also looking forward to our special **Thanksgiving Feast**, where our 3-year old and VPK families will share food and fellowship as we celebrate the joy of being part of a caring preschool community.



Mrs. Casagrande's VPK class recently celebrated "Pirates and Princesses Day" to reinforce learning about the letter P. They went on a treasure hunt throughout the school, ending in the office where they found a treasure box with fun gifts for each child!



Ms. Madi's toddler class with a fall sensory experience, painting pumpkins! Children are expressing their creativity and strengthening fine motor skills.



Mrs. Kennedy's VPK class, among others, investigated and experimented with apples by tasting a variety of different types of apples, making juice, and the longest apple peels we've ever seen, using a special apple peeling tool. STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) at work!

LABYRINTH, LUNCH AND LEARN:

A JOURNEY IN FAITH AND REFELCTION

November 14 9:30 am-12:30 pm

Join us for a labyrinth class where we'll delve into the history and applications of this ancient symbol of spiritual practice (youth room). Following the session, we will take the church bus to the Naples Botanical Garden for a reflective walk through the 11circuit labyrinth (admission included and lunch self-pay.)

RSVP to: Nancyv@fpcnaples.org by November 7th.

Nancy Van Fleet is a Veriditas Certified Advanced Labyrinth Facilitator having trained with the leader of the labyrinth movement, Rev. Dr. Lauren Artress. She works with people of all ages in classes, retreats and programs to present the labyrinth and walks with them in the mystery. Her work was recently featured in Lucy Tobias' book, Circle the Center - Labyrinths in Florida.



Fall Festival Fun!











































WEDNESDAYS at FIRST

CHRISTIAN AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Wednesday, November 5 Tri-Faith Initiative



On November 5, we will welcome **Deb McCollister**, a key player in the creation and development of the Tri-Faith Initiative in Omaha, NE.

The Initiative brought together a synagogue, church,

mosque and interfaith center in permanent residency on a single 38 acre campus in America's heartland. It is the only place of its kind anywhere in the world. Come hear how this amazing concept came into being and continues to develop as it brings diverse people of all faiths together from across the U.S. to study and interact.



Wednesday, November 12
A Beautiful Year: 52 Meditations on Faith,
Wisdom, and Perseverance.

Diana Butler Bass (Ph.D., Duke) is an award-winning author of eleven books, popular speaker, inspiring preacher, and one of America's most trusted commentators on

religion and contemporary spirituality, especially where faith intersects with politics and culture.

She will be speaking on her new book: "A Beautiful Year: 52 Meditations on Faith, Wisdom, and Perseverance." Release date: November 4, 2025.



Her bylines include The New York Times, the Washington Post, CNN.com, Atlantic.com, USA Today, Huffington Post, Christian Century, and Sojourners. She has commented in the media widely including on CBS, CNN, PBS, NPR, CBC, FOX, Sirius XM, TIME, Newsweek, Rolling Stone, Mother Jones, and in multiple global news outlets.

Her website is <u>dianabutlerbass.com</u> and she can be followed on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. She writes a twice-weekly newsletter - *The Cottage* - which can be found on Substack.

Dinner (\$15) begins at 5:30 p.m. in Spencer Hall. Program begins at 6 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Reservations must be made by the Monday prior to the event. Sign up in Spencer Hall, call the church office or email <u>Sandy Knight</u>, sandyk@fpcnaples.org or call 239.262.1311.

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.

Everyone is welcome to join these sessions, discuss the passages and enjoy good fellowship with other church members.

Please let <u>Rev. Rex Childs</u> 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.



All women are invited to join us for a weekly Bible Study, held on Mondays at 1 p.m. in the Parlor. We are currently studying the **Letters of Peter**,

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

For more information contact Janeen McClure at jrmc@airmcclure.com.

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 Exile,*Reconciliation and Return and are currently in the book of Ezra.

Bring a Bible and your lunch!

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

Please contact the <u>church office</u> 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.

Join us for our topic of Famous Religious Art and Artists.

November 5 Giotto, led by Roy Cashion

November 19 Fro Angelico, led by Richard Dryer

For more information please contact group leader, Bill Kearney at skearney239@comcast.net.



Come join the camaraderie and fun of light cooking and food decorating with other Presbyterian Women as we prepare lunches for our Gatherings. It's easy—some vegetables to chop, an assembly line for sandwiches or other entrees. We love getting great ideas from the volunteers who help. We have standing and sitting tasks. No heavy lifting required. AND, we have a brand new beautiful stove!

The dates are:

November 5—a casual tea; December 3; February 4; March 4 and April 8

If you are available for any of these dates, please call Betty Mangos 239.254.9883.

Presbyterian Women will host a book swap and tea so we can reconnect with friends after a season apart, discover new reads, and share our love of books. Come join us and share thoughtful conversations and laughter.

Here is how it works:

Make your reservation by signing up on November 2 in Spencer Hall. There is no charge for the event.

Find up to three of your books you want to pass along and bring them with you on November 5, at 12 p.m. to the Gathering.

A light lunch will be served along with sweets and tea! There is no charge for this Gathering.





Women of the Way

On Thursday December 4, Women of the Way (WOW) will be having their final gathering of 2025, embracing the Origin Series: Genesis. As a concluding project, we will embark on the adventure of creating seven cloth banners depicting the seven days of creation. No sewing or artistic skills required!

Images will be created and affixed to the background, and guilters from our Sew and Sews will sew it together, creating a beautiful tapestry.

Our inspiration will be from the beautiful illustration of Creation in The Saint John's Bible . We will also use this time to celebrate the Christmas season and the wonderful sisterhood we share. We welcome all women, even if you were not part of our Genesis series this fall.

To sign up, please email fpcwomen2017@gmail.com, or call Gay Stover at 417.274.6619.



Joan Congine Finance Administrator

One of the most important staff positions here at FPCN is performed by a woman most of you never see. She comes in at 8 a.m., and very rarely leaves her desk or computer, her eyes on the numbers, staying long after the rest of us leave at the end of the day. Her name is Joan Congine, and she is our

Finance Administrator, entering her fifth month with us.

Joan was born in Chicago, and at the age of two she and her mother moved to Jacksonville Beach, Florida. When she was thirteen, they moved back to Illinois, reuniting with family members and discovering the wonderful, supportive love of a "fantastic" grandfather. It was he who was her guiding light as she journeyed into the future. She and her younger sister were raised by their mother,



who showed by example the power of working hard and supporting a family. Her mother had a close friend, who had a son named Jeff and little did they know as friends in school that they would be lifelong partners. Following high school, Joan attended Carthage College in Kanosha, Wisconsin, graduating with a major in accounting and a minor in Spanish. She served several companies in

her long career of accounting, during which she married Jeff, with whom she has a wonderful son Jeffrey Jr., a stepdaughter Jennifer, and grandchildren Sophia and Joey.



Through recent years, many family members have moved to Florida, and in August of 2024 Jeff and Joan became permanent residents.



Joan has a balance to her many hours of working with numbers. She lights up with stories of their life on three acres in Golden Gate Estates. Gardens and vegetation give way to the rest of her "heart" family: two

dogs, one cat, eight chickens, one (feisty) rooster, one Amazon parrot (whom she had for over 40 years)

three soon to be ducks, and beehives. It isn't work for her. Watching growth, be it a newly hatched chick or a budding branch, is what makes her heart soar.





When asked Joan why she chose to be here with us, she said, "when I came to interview, I felt comfortable. But when I realized that the money being distributed by FPCN through missions makes such a difference in the lives of so many in our extended community, I knew this is where I wanted to give my time." Joan "loves being here" she said. "This job feeds my soul."

Don't be shy about visiting Joan in our church office upstairs, she loves to laugh and looks forward to meeting everyone.

written by Susan Pratt



Jeff, Jr. receiving a Naval award

CHURCH TOUR



The Deacons invite you to a "Behind the Scenes" church tour on Sunday, November 9 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.



Join us on Tuesday, December 2 at 8:30 a.m. to make our Sanctuary, Narthex and outdoors beautiful!

You can sit and fluff bows, fluff the Christmas trees, hang garland either inside or outside and so many other fun things to do.

Contact <u>Jeff Newman</u>, Facilities Director if you can help.

Many hands make light work!



Please fill out the following form and return it along with payment to the church office. Please note **Poinsettia Dedication** on the payment. All orders must be received no later than Sunday, December 7. Please use one form per dedication. Additional forms may be found online at www.fpcnaples.org. The cost is \$25 per poinsettia. Please PRINT CLEARLY the information you would like to appear in the dedication.

In memory of	
In honor of	
Given by	
Your name	Phone
Amount enclosed \$	



November 1

Larry Succop

November 2
Jeff Newman

November 3 Carol Ellis

November 4

Web Barron Robin Garber Scott Macdonough

November 6Michele Hunt

November 8

Carol Georgieff Nancy Jordan Pam Walker November 9

Elizabeth Harrington Polly Huston

Amy Manley Bob Price

November 10

Judy Meyniel Lois Miller

November 11

Ken Martin Sally Melcher

November 12

Mary Lou Garrity Marilyn Holt Bill McClayton

November 13

Pat Stevens Christine Voncanon

Christine volicano

November 14

Berne Barton

November 16

Bob Strohaver

November 18

Pat Gerding Ed Miller Kitty Wildman

November 19

Jack Myers Bob Rath

November 21

Barbara Davis Joan Norris Dorie Tichenor

November 22

Rex Childs Sherry Hoffman

November 23

Jimene Rinehart Toni Price Jane Rogers November 24

Brenda Brode Wendy Simpson Bob Wood

November 25

Judi Wood

November 26

Kristen Fox

November 27

Marie Brodmerkel Doug Gibbens Janet Scott

November 28

Eloise Ingram

November 29

Marti Beard Eve Jehle

CJ Cartwright Harold Stuckey

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**, **November 16** immediately following worship.

Contact <u>Susan Pratt</u>, Coordinator of Membership and Caring Ministries to register.

In Memoriam

Linda Arsenault October 11, 2025

Kenneth J. Wulfert, Jr. October 23, 2025



