



The Happenings

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

TO SHARE THE LOVE OF GOD BY SERVING WITHIN OUR CHURCH,

VOLUME 33 ISSUE 23

COMMUNITY AND BEYOND;

NOVEMBER #2 2009

AND TO DEVELOP AND EMPOWER

Advent Adventures

November 29 ↻ 12:00—2:30pm

Come join your church family to make crafts that will decorate your home for the Advent Season. Help decorate the church for the holidays. Bring a lunch dish to share and \$2.00 per person for crafts. Activities are appropriate for ages 3 through adult. Join in the "Decking of the Halls."

What A Wonderful Stewardship Celebration Event!

This congregation certainly knows how to party! What a great night we had Sunday evening, Nov 1st. Mauldin Hall was filled to capacity with almost 200 church friends and family enjoying a barbeque chicken dinner. We demonstrated our need for a bigger facility! My hear-felt thanks goes to Wendy lasher and our Stewardship Team for organizing, the church office for advertising, Member Care for decorating, our Elders for serving and our Youth for their wonderful support and singing. We all enjoyed a great night of First Presbyterian Fellowship and I thank you all for your participation.

Rebekah's message of *Simplicity and Generosity* was very moving and we concluded the evening with an opportunity to give your financial commitment for next ye4ar. Our church was blessed to receive 76 pledge cards, totaling \$273,000. There were four new pledges and 30 members increased their pledge, amounting to \$10,000 more than last year's gifts. Thank you very much for your generosity!

We do not anticipate making any large adjustments to our current budget, other than making it a more accurate reflection based on our expenses this year. We are creating a Communications Ministry, led by Elder Jim Yockey, and will fund that ministry by transferring administrative funds currently used for communication items, such as telephone internet usage. Please continue to pray for our church and Session as we meet November 19th to discuss next year's budget.

Thank you for all that you do for our church!

Yours In Christ, David Dale
Stewardship Ministry Team Leader



"But seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Matthew 6:33

Looking Ahead

- Advent Adventures: Nov 29—12pm
- Retiree's Luncheon Dec 4—11am
- Mostly Pops Concert: Dec 5—7pm
- Christmas Dinner: Dec 6 5:30pm
- Preschool Christmas Pageant: Dec 10 6:30pm
- Services of Advent Music: Dec 13 8:30 & 11:00am
- Youth go Caroling Dec 20, 6:30pm
- Christmas Eve Services Dec 24, 5 & 7:30pm

Elders

Judi Almand
Margaret Barlow
David Childs
David Dale
Shelby Dale
Nancy Donovan
Gil Evans
Michele Gates
Phoebe Drby
Christine Karow
Bonnie Laux
Mike McClelland
Jim McNeil
Everett Nolte
Peggy Nugent
Bill Ogden
Lori Lynen - Clerk
David Rogers
Jim Yockey

Rebekah's Remarks

Dear Fine People,

What happened to October??? Just as we begin to put away my ceramic pumpkins everything seems to refocus on the preparation for the upcoming feasting... and even the Christmas commercials are popping up. Anyway, in the middle of October, Derek and I flew up to Connecticut to see Naomi (our daughter) and her husband, Craig Campbell (our favorite son-in-law) for a quick visit. The leaves were at their peak, and were breath-taking. Derek's blog has this picture of a flaming, red Japanese Maple just around the corner from where they live. It gave me chilly bumps... that and the 45 degree weather. Just before we boarded the plane for the trip back to Tampa, Derek bought me a magazine, so that I'd have something fun to read on the way home.

Turns out that Derek didn't actually read the cover to see what the magazine had inside, so I smiled and told him that we would review all that young teenage girls are interested in... including how to tell if a boy likes you, and what to know before you ever take that first kiss.

We felt old... and were glad of it. So, I went back to the magazine stand, and I bought myself the November issue of Martha Stewart Living magazine... with that beautifully cooked turkey on the front cover.

Since last year's turkey was... well... dry, I thought I'd do more research this year and discover WWMD... What Would Martha Do. I was especially interested in the "Roast Turkey in 70 minutes: Learn our secret to a fast-cooking flavorful bird..." and I learned a new word: "spatchcocked". Even the spell-check on my computer doesn't recognize it. It involves cutting the backbone out of the bird, and then wrestling the bird flat, applying pressure (a lot of it) until you hear the "crack" of the sternum of the turkey breast, and then you squish it all out flat on a baking pan. She recommends that you stand on a stool for better leverage. You rub a bunch of spices and stuff into the flesh (I guess in order to disguise the brokenness and mayhem), so that it will taste really good, and help you forget how awful the process was. Wow! I can hardly wait!

Mayhem aside, Thanksgiving is truly my favorite celebration. It has been the tradition in my extended family to gather for this feast, over Christmas and Easter, because there are so many preachers and elders on my side of the family that those were two celebrations no one could get off work for. Traditions come out of the woodwork and include polishing silver;

cleaning that yucky film off the crystal glassware; putting together an Advent craft for all the nieces and nephews (and anyone else who shows up); creating a couple of wreaths for the front door; ironing the linen table clothes and fancy, "real" napkins;... and we'll even be setting up a naked Christmas Tree. We've invited the new neighbors to join us, and Tim and Kelly will show up with Micah and Liam. We'll light all the candles down the center of the table, set-up on the back porch, weather permitting. People will arrive and the noise level will build. The turkey cooking and the smell of fresh baking bread will fill the air. My father-in-law always brings me flowers. Then we'll join hands and we'll express thanks, taking turns around the table.

It happens every year. When I am with my family, my church family is also in my heart and mind. I like to quote that passage from Philippians, written during a time when Paul was in prison, and couldn't be with his loved ones for any kind of feast, and yet, thanksgiving defined his words. He said, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine, for you all making requests with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." (1:3-5).

We have such a great church family, and we have so much for which to be thankful. Our fellowship in the gospel is precious and inspiring.

As we give thanks, and as we move into a season of anticipation and expectation, let's deliberately prepare our hearts to give thanks to the One who brought us all together in our shared ministry and life.

Joyful and Happy Thanksgiving!!! I'll see you in worship on Sunday.

Read this Happenings carefully, because there is much to anticipate and expect in the coming weeks.

Love and gratitude, *Rebekah*

*Communion
and Candlelight
Christmas Eve Services
Dec 24
5:00pm & 7:30pm*

TOM'S TANGENTS

Dear Friends,

We are giving thanks in a big way this year. As Liam has successfully negotiated his way to becoming 6 months old, Micah is attending preschool here at the church, and we are finally getting a bit more rest at night. At the same time, having kids does start to pinch the bank account, and making the ends meet has taken a good bit of creativity. Regardless, I cannot think of anything that blesses us more than our boys. It has nothing to do with their behavior, or their challenging moments, or even their personalities (which we just so happen to enjoy). We feel blessed just to have them. They could be struggling with some kind of syndrome or birth defect. We would feel just as blessed. They could be tearing apart our furniture or ruining our possessions. I think we'd love them just as much. Being a parent has given me amazing perspective on God's love for all of us, and especially for me.

I recognize that this has been a hard year for many, many people. Our habits of overextending the limits of what we could truly afford have come back to bite us as a country, as individuals, and it has affected the entire world on many levels. The trickle-down effect has been downsizing and job loss, scrambling to make inflating mortgage payments, selling off things we no longer need. Those who already had much have survived, and those who had nothing to begin with find themselves further into 'nothingness'. I've been exploring new areas of opportunity, mostly through our mission ministry area. Interfaith Hospitality Network has again highlighted our area as a possible region for birthing a new network of churches that would support a small number of homeless families on a rotating basis. The organization has 150 of

have a proven track record. The ministry benefits no more than 14 people at a time, all of them family units. No one is split up, they must qualify to receive the benefits, and there are no substance abusers in the program. It has some very specific, but very effective aspects to it. We will continue to explore, along with our neighboring churches, how we might make something like this happen in Brandon.

As we have wrapped up a wonderful season of Stewardship, we've been reminded that we must be reaching out, we must be doing something to alleviate suffering around us, so that we don't become miserable ourselves (paraphrase of Rob Bell). Our church's work through the I Am Hope Café has changed lives—both of those being served and of those who have served. Our ALMA auction will strengthen the work of Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center, affecting the lives of many children and adults throughout the next year. Our ambitions toward the future of our facility and property will enable more great things to happen in the name of Jesus Christ. Though this has been a difficult year, we seem to be stronger for the challenge.

As you join with your families and friends to give thanks in a formal way this year, take time to thank God through your prayers, through your words of thanks to one another, through the gestures that will lift the spirits of those who have fallen down recently. Passing along the gratitude we have first received is our calling as disciples. It's easy to do, and it may just change a life around you. Celebrate your many blessings, and I'll be praying for each of you as we lift our grateful hearts to God in the coming days.

Peace, Love, Hope and Joy,

Tim

Mostly Pops Concert

"Celebrate the Season"

Saturday, December 5

7:00 pm

In the Sanctuary

With special guest singers John and Mary K. Wilson. Join us with your family and friends for an evening of holiday entertainment.



Notes from the Preschool:

We are pleased to announce that teacher Michelle Borland has completed her National CDA (Child Development Associate) credential. Michelle has put many hours into this achievement over the past year, and we celebrate her dedication. We are blessed to have Michelle's fine teaching talent in our school!

Also, a reminder to join us for our Christmas Pageant on December 10th at 6:30 pm. We guarantee that it will bring a smile to your face!



4th Quarter Retiree's Luncheon

Friday, December 4 - 11:00 am

“SUPPORT OUR TROOPS – HONOR OUR HERITAGE”

We invite all of our Retiree's and Seniors to join us for our 4th Quarter Luncheon on Fri, Dec 4th. Please note the earlier than usual start time --- 11:00 am.

Again this year we will honor our servicemen and women by packing holiday boxes that will be shipped overseas in support of the “anysoldier.com” program. We invite the entire congregation (even those who are not “seniors”) to join us in this effort by donating any of the following items for this worthy cause:

- Advil or Tylenol
- Magazines
- Black Socks
- DVD Movies
- Cash for mailing the boxes
- Playing Cards
- Hard wrapped candy
- Board Games
- Brown T-shirts (Army)
- Paperback Books
- International Phone Cards
- AA Batteries
- Green T-shirts (Marines)

A light lunch will be served (\$4 per person donation requested) followed by our featured speaker, Mr. Emanuel Leto, Program Outreach Coordinator from the Tampa Bay History Center. RSVP by calling the church office at 689-4597 by Dec 2. Donations for the soldiers' boxes may be brought to the luncheon or dropped off at the church office before Dec 4.

POINSETTIAS

The Worship Ministry Team will once again be adorning the sanctuary this Advent and Christmas with Poinsettias. To donate poinsettias, please submit a check for \$7.00 per plant to the church office, made payable to First Presbyterian Church, earmarked: Poinsettias. Include the following information:

Name of Family Contributing:

PH # _____

Circle one or more of the following

In Honor of: In Celebration of: In Memory of :

Complete this form, enclose \$7.00 per plant (make checks payable to the church earmarked “poinsettias”) and drop in the offering plate on Sun., leave at the church office during the week, sign up via our website or mail. The deadline to reserve your poinsettia is Dec 14th. You may pick up your plant after the 7:30pm worship service on Dec 24th.

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Sunday, Dec 6

5:30pm

Please join us for our Annual Christmas Dinner on Sun, Dec 6th, at 5:30pm. Member Care will be providing the ham, turkey, rolls and cranberry sauce. You may sign up by using the tear off below, the sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the west narthex, the weekly bulletin or the website. Please bring 1 to 2 side dishes or one side and a dessert, depending on the size of your group. If you have any questions, please contact a Member Care Elder: Michele Gates, Christine Karow, Peggy Nugent or Margaret Barlow. The special service, “A Midnight Clear”, will follow the dinner. A nursery will be provided for children 2 years and under during the service.

Name _____ # Attending _____

I will bring #__ side dishes _____

Dessert _____

Please specify type of side dish: vegeta-
ble, potatoes, casseroles, salads, etc.



MINISTRY OF PRAYER

Friends of the Congregation

Tom & Chris LeFevre (Tom LeFevre's parents)	Marie Platts (Stowers' friend)
Michael Beddow (Gregos' grandson)	Bob Saunders (Joyce Allen's friend)
Dick & Jane Wood (Jane Owens' friends)	Michael Chenoweth (Don Zegel's brother-in-law)
Jeff & Donna Dixon (Mary Ellen Dixon)	Judy Brown (Ogden's friend)
Jeff Crompton (Winnie Wilk's son)	Gene Waters (Fran Gregos' father)
Gladys Spakes (Janice Poindexter's sister)	Smith Family (McClellan's friends)
Charlene Canady (Suzanne Odomisi's friend)	Jill Jordan Ernst (Gil & Marianne Evans' niece)
Kathy Bingham (Ronda Baer's friend)	Roy Strohl (previous custodian)
Virginia Whitlatch (Friend of the congregation)	Anna Fouts (Erika Witt's grandmother)
Spring Smiley (Merle Wooten's daughter)	Robin (Heather McClellan's sister)
Rosa Boeres (Merle Wooten's sister-in-law)	Bob Hutton (Laura Hogg's father)
Billy Vinson (Darrell Vinson's father)	Douglas Masterton (Lillian DelVecchio's son)
Bonnie Moore (Randy Poindexter's sister)	Mitchell Dryer (Alicia Braddock's relative)
Wesley Henry (Crenshaw's grandson)	Betty Cromwick (Dan & Ruth Craft's friend)
Sharalyn Hogan (Laura Hogg's sister)	Karyn Miles (Mike & Linda Miles' daughter)
Bill Robinson (Carol Coopriider's brother-in-law)	Kelly Izzard (Sondra Cone's niece)
Amanda Hawkes (Garrison's granddaughter)	Linda Monk (Lil DelVecchio's daughter-in-law)
Brenda Chapman (Friend of the Congregation)	Dennis Streng (Bj Herig's nephew)
Shane Long (Shelley Grable's cousin)	Herb Haws (Lil DelVecchio's friend)
Cathy LaRussa (Elena LaRussa's sister)	Jesse Heath (Dave & Sondra Cone's grandson)
Dianne, Doug & Sara Seelbach (Sofarelli's relatives)	Keven Hamlet (Jackie William's friend)
Lucy Sahr (Sondra Cone's sister)	Marci Smith (Earl & Judy Smith's daughter-in-law)
Peter Giamanco (Lillian DelVecchio's son-in-law)	Jason Conley (Sherry Skovgaard's nephew)
Margaret Miles (Mike Miles' mother)	Tim Slinkosky (Jean Emery's friend)
Edna Davies (Henrietta Zahrobsky's sister)	Marguerite Barnes (Marge Hubbard's friend)
Janice Bishop (David Bishop's stepmother)	Cali Moody (Priscilla Babas' friend)
Leonard Schregardus (Orthea VanVoorst's brother-in-law)	Keith Browning (Marcia Wiles' friend)
Gregory Johnston (Darwin & Pat Johnston's son)	Corey Robinson (Jackie Williams' grandson)
Kathy Welch (Sherry Skovgaard's cousin)	Charles Masterton (Lil DelVecchio's son)
Anitra Ruth (Suzanne Odomisi's friend)	Mike Roberts Family (Rick & Charlayne Penrose)
Sarah Hart (Amanda Trauger's grandmother)	Mary Anne Hill (Amanda Trauger's cousin)
Carol Jaegar (Suzanne Odomisi's daughter)	Ruth McElwee (Orthea VanVoorst's friend)
John & Peggy Nugent's grandsons in Iraq	Tyler Kemp (Coldwell's grandson)
Laura Almand (Almand's niece)	Bob & Deb Hanson (Christine Orlosky's friend)
Savannah Parris (Piche's granddaughter)	Jesse Scott (Jane Scott's grandson)
Sharon Walker (Jean Hayhurst's friend)	Katy Enloe (Orthea VanVoorst's niece)
Sherry Daugherty (Lisa Paterson's mother)	

Please remove this page and incorporate it with your daily prayers. If you have a special request for family and friends to be added to this prayer list, contact the church office. We also look forward to hearing from you regarding your joys from answered prayer. The Covenant of Prayer list for church members can be found in the weekly bulletin.

Christmas JOY Offering



Presbyterians have traditionally responded to the good news of Christmas by sharing our own gifts through the Christmas Joy Offering. For many years this Offering has supported racial ethnic education helping students develop their gifts and find their calling. It also helps to support unmet needs of current and retired church workers by providing funds to help them through difficult times. As we celebrate the good news of great joy that the angel announces—God's love in human form is now among us—may our gifts bear joyful witness to that uncontainable love.

The JOY Offering will be received at both services on December 24.

First Presbyterian Church of Brandon
121 Carver Avenue
Brandon, FL 33510
Ph: 813-689-4597
Fax: 813-685-8419
Email: church@fpcbrandon.org
Web: fpcbrandon.org

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THANK YOU

❖... to our church family for your generous response of love and prayer at the unexpected homecoming of my mom last month.

Peggie Roy & Family

❖... for your financial support. Last year the clinic provided over 1800 medical visits, and provided over 4800 prescriptions. Our clinic serves as a safety net for these individuals who would fall through the cracks.

Kay Weaver, Brandon Outreach Clinic

❖... to those who helped with the last edition of *The Happenings*: Allison Elrod, Suzanne Odomisi, Jane Scott, and Rose Stolarcek.

Preschool Christmas Pageant

Thursday, Dec 10 @ 6:30pm
In the Sanctuary

You are invited to celebrate our
Lord's birth with us

Come and rejoice!



Heirs to the Kingdom



The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs... heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory."

Madeline Elizabeth Brown was born October 20 to parents Andrea & Patrick. She weighed 7 lb 3 oz and measured 19 1/2 inches. Her joyful grandparents are Erv & Sherry Skovgaard.

WORSHIP:

9:45am - Sunday School for all ages
8:30 & 11:00am - Worship Services

Church Office Hours:

Mon-Fri: 8:30am - 4:30pm

Pastor
Rebekah A. Maul
Associate Pastor
Timothy J. Black
Director of Music and Organist
Mark A. Prater
Director of Praise Service
Bradley S. Turner
Director of Youth Ministries
Lynn Pabst
Director of the Preschool
Kathy Kranendonk
Facilities Manager
Brad Turner
Financial Manager
Marianne Evans
Administrative Assistant
Joyce Allen
Church Secretary
Kathy Kranendonk
Bookkeeper
Sue Scott
Custodian/Kitchen Coordinator
Debbie Billmaier
Nursery Coordinator
Brandi Hooper