

2023 DECEMBER / 2024 JANUARY

THE MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH PALM BEACH



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FINANCIAL FOCUS

By Gayle Coughanour

Money Mindsets

In a book called *God and Money*, authors John Cortines and Gregory Baumer have categorized peoples' mindsets towards money as being a Spender, a Saver, or a Servant. Two factors drive our money mindset – our temporal focus and our view on the highest purpose of money. Temporally, Spenders maximize value today, Savers maximize value in the future and Servants maximize value in eternity. These attitudes are driven by our view of money's purpose. A Spender views money as a way to experience life to the fullest here and now; a Saver views money as a tool for security, stability and freedom in the future. Servants view their money as a means to bless the world in Christ's name.

Which of these are you? Suppose that your income began dramatically increasing over time. Where would you focus your thoughts and efforts?

1. You would spend much more to enjoy all the world has to offer (Spender)
2. You would seek to pay off your mortgage early, retire early, or build a family dynasty of wealth (Saver)
3. You would begin thinking about how to give your excess money to Christian organizations around the world (Servant)

The overwhelming majority of people in the United States would fall into the Spender category, even if they recognize the need to save some. A Saver has learned to limit consumption to some extent as they focus on increased wealth accumulation. The highest purpose of wealth and our lives should be (as the Westminster Catechism states) to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Servants will necessarily spend money on themselves and save for future needs, but only to the extent in doing so brings honor and glory to God.

A Spender mindset, with its focus on material things, is demonstrated in the Parable of the Sower as found in Matthew 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8. A sower throws seeds across the ground, with some of it falling by the wayside where birds ate it; others fell on stony places where plants quickly grew but had no roots so they withered in the sun. Some seeds fell among the thorns which sprung up and choked them, and others fell on good

ground, yielding a crop up to a hundredfold. In this parable, the sower is the Lord, the seed is the Word of God, and the soils represent four categories of hearers, each with a different response. The first type don't understand His Words, the second type fall away when tested by trials. The third type hears the Word but "the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful." (Mark 4:19) When we have a Spender mindset, we become distracted and focus on what the world has to offer, rather than on Jesus. The fourth type of hearer are those who receive Him with joy and bear much fruit, despite the seduction of riches and the difficulties of life.

The parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21) demonstrates the insufficiency of the Saver mindset. Jesus warns that our lives are not to be about gathering wealth. Jesus tells the crowd of a person who was materially blessed by God. One day he was worried about what he should do because he had no more room to store his crops. So he said aloud that he would build a larger barn and would retire early. God heard him and called him a fool and told him he would die that night. What the man did wrong was he was only interested in managing his increase and accumulating his growing wealth rather than using his increase to further the will of God. The rich fool committed the sin of covetousness (the 10th commandment). Jesus said in Luke 12:15, "Take heed and beware of covetousness for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

2 Corinthians 9:8 states that God blesses you so you can be a blessing to others. That is the mindset of a Servant, and it is what we all, as faithful Christians, should strive to be in order to live a life that is consistent with God's will for us as expressed in the Scriptures.

Year End Information

December is the month when the Church tends to receive the most stock donations. Here are the details for your financial advisor if you choose to donate stock. Stock should be transferred for the account of First Presbyterian Church in North Palm Beach, held at Morgan Stanley, account number 501-049930,

DTC number 0015. If you plan on transferring stock, please let Gayle at the church know what stock you are donating. We have had instances in the past where we do not know who the donation is from, and we want to make sure the donation is credited to you.

Remember that mailed contributions to the Church must be postmarked by December 31st. Online contributions must be made by 11:59 pm on December 31st. Thank you for considering the Church in your year-end giving.

As we have previously announced to our congregation, we change our giving platform in mid-September. We sent contribution statements for the year to you in late September for all gifts processed through the old giving platform, Shelby Systems, and requested that you retain them for tax purposes. I did print a copy of all of them in case anyone misplaced theirs. Email gcoughanour@firstpresnpb.org if you need another one. Contribution statements under the new giving platform, called Church Center, will be emailed to you in January. If we do not have an email for you, we will mail it. If you have given stock or a gift through your I.R.A. or charitable gift fund since September 2023, these no longer show on your year end contribution statement but you will receive an acknowledgement letter from the church of your gift when we receive it. The Church Center system only processes cash, checks and online gifts.

Offering Envelopes

For those who used offering envelopes in 2023, the new boxes for 2024 will be available in the lobby during the month of December. If you would like to begin using envelopes or want to discontinue using them, please let our Financial Secretary, Laura, know by calling the church office or emailing her at laura@firstpresnpb.org. Please do not use the 2024 envelopes until January as your envelope number may have changed since less people are using envelopes and switching to online giving through our church website or phone app.

Vision 60 Stewardship Campaign

Stewardship Commitment Sunday was on November 19th, but it is not too late to submit your pledge either online or by completing the pledge card mailed to you or found in the pews and lobby. It is our prayer that if you consider First Pres to be your church home, that you will complete a pledge card.



- Planting Day -

On November 4th, a group of adults and students gathered to plant flowers and lay mulch all around the campus. Days before we arrived, Bob Johnson and our facilities elder Jack Baldwin drilled the holes for the plants – over 500 of them. Thank you to everyone who came out to serve our church in this way.



LOCAL MISSIONS

Crossroads Prison Ministries

We have an opportunity to serve at First Pres that takes very little time, is done at home and is very rewarding. Please consider this small contribution of time that can bring encouragement to someone every week.

Crossroads Prison Ministries is a Bible correspondence course for men and women who are in jail or prison. One lesson a week is sent from the Crossroads office in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to your home. The lessons are very simple and the answers are provided, so you do not need to have any special education or background. You are asked to write a one-page letter of encouragement and to pray for the student. Then mail the lesson and letter to the student with the Crossroads return address. Students do not have your address. At the first levels, you hear from a different student each week.

This is the only mail many inmates receive for years, so it means a great deal to them. Many have said that they save every letter they receive from a mentor. Quite a few of the students were raised in a Christian home but got off on the wrong track. They have now chosen to follow the Lord as a result of re-evaluating their lives.

The lessons take between an hour and an hour and a half. All the information is available both online and as a hard copy. It is very easy to put a hold on the mail when you go on vacation or take the summer off or to change your address temporarily. We have a few people in our church who have been serving in this way at least 17 years.

Here are some comments by Crossroads students:

“All my mentors gave me hope and that’s the big reason I kept working hard on all my lessons. It not only got me closer to GOD, it helped me realize there’s hope in life. Thank you, mentors.”

“It touched my heart to know someone took their time to care for me. I don’t get mail from anyone. No family. No friends. So this means a lot to me. And encourages me to keep moving on.”

“I am so thankful for Crossroads Ministry and for all I have learned. The lessons are always a challenge and a great blessing for me. I know that I am growing closer in my relationship with the Lord by doing this study.”

Jesus said that when we visit those in prison, we visit Him. This has been made very easy for us—being able to reach those in prison with such little effort on our part.

Everything can be done online. You can send in your application, take the training, send in lesson results, ask questions and print letterhead. Questions are answered promptly by Crossroads staff and volunteers. Please don’t hesitate to contact me or anyone who is or has been a mentor.

Carolyn Weda | ckweda@icloud.com | 561-459-6454

We are abundantly blessed to be a part of First Pres, and we have many opportunities to grow in our faith and have fellowship. Offering encouragement to an inmate takes little time but can mean the world to those confined behind bars. Please prayerfully consider serving in this way.

“Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” Hebrews 13:3.

Hannah’s Home Volunteer Opportunity

Hannah’s Home serves pregnant women aged 18-25, offering prenatal care, mental health counseling,

transportation, childcare, life skills training, educational support, mentoring and spiritual development. The organization fields over 200 calls annually from women of all ages, family members, and case managers in search of housing and wraparound services. Residents are eligible to stay until their baby is two years old. Since its doors opened in South Florida in 2011, Hannah's Home has served more than 80 young women and their babies. With a maximum capacity of eight women and their children, the home is currently serving six mothers and their babies.

On Thursday, February 15, 2024, Hannah's Home will host its 5th Annual Gala at the Pelican Club in Jupiter to raise funds for their expansion project. They need a lot of volunteers that could spare a few hours in the morning to help with set up or time to help in various capacities during the evening event. No experience necessary. To help, see Mary Arden Carroll at church or contact her at maryarden@hannahshomesf.org or 561-277-9823.

First Pres Mission Fair

The First Pres mission fair was held at the same time as our 60th anniversary celebration on November 12th. 16 of our 17 local mission partners were able to fellowship with us and share about their ministries.



GLOBAL MISSIONS

Travel to Merida, Mexico

Join us as a group from First Pres travels to visit pastor Antonio Reyes, his family, and his church community in Merida, Mexico. Antonio and his wife, Ruth, are great friends of First Pres and are faithfully serving in Merida, which is located in the center of the Yucatan peninsula. Not only does Antonio pastor a Presbyterian Church in the city, but he also works with four mission churches in the surrounding villages. On this trip, you will get to know Antonio and his family, experience worship in several churches, build friendships with people who are followers of Jesus, eat some amazing homemade food, visit Mayan ruins, and learn about the history of this part of Mexico.

Here are the details of the trip:

Dates: February 2-7, 2024

Cost: \$750 and includes airfare, ground transportation, housing, and most food.

For more information, or to reserve a spot for this trip, please email Ron Hilliard, rhilliard@firstpresnpb.org.

Building Relationships in Athens, Greece

Athens is a city that is rich in history. The acropolis sits high above the city and can be viewed from almost everywhere in the city. We are told in the Bible that



the apostle Paul taught nearby, engaging in debate about the Christian faith. Greek islands are a short taxi ride away. The city of Corinth, where the apostle Paul stayed during his missionary journeys is an hour away. In the neighborhood of Exarcheia, known as a hotspot for anarchists, is a church that is impacting this neighborhood and reaching throughout the city of Athens. First Pres partners with this church in the Exarcheia neighborhood, and we are a part of what God has been doing in this city for centuries!

Recently a group of four people from First Pres traveled to Athens to visit with the Exarcheia church. Ryan and Lilly Fink, Lauren Stiteler, and Ron Hilliard were a part of Exarcheia's leadership retreat that took place in the city of Corinth. First Pres helped sponsor this retreat which was the first of such retreats that the Exarcheia church has hosted for its leaders. This was a much needed time away for church members as they ate meals together, planned for the upcoming year, enjoyed time to play and rest, and considered their life together as followers of Jesus. Ron Hilliard led several sessions on building deeper community as they practice forgiveness and communicate more effectively around issues they are dealing with. The four of us from First Pres began new friendships and deepened existing ones and had the opportunity to encourage our sisters and brothers in their faith. During an afternoon break, the four of us had the chance to walk through the ancient ruins of Corinth. It was special to consider the long history of the followers of Jesus in this city, and to experience the ongoing growth of God's people in this city. Ryan and Lilly had the chance to visit with Alex Pipilios and learn about how he launched the church in Exarcheia. Lauren helped care for the children during the group sessions. During our time in Athens after the retreat, we had dinner with an Iranian couple doing ministry in Athens, toured a school for unaccompanied refugee children, and connected with our new friends over coffee and meals together. And we spent time with Pastor George and his wife, Danae, who will be starting a new church in the nearby neighborhood of Petralena.

God is at work in Athens, and you are a part of what God is doing! Thank you to those who have contributed to First Pres' Global Mission focus and are a part of this movement in Greece!

God is on the Move in the Persian-Speaking World!



The fastest-growing church in the world is the Persian-speaking church! God is moving in the lives of Persian-speaking people in dreams and visions. Jesus is coming to people in their dreams and calling them to follow Him. Many are discouraged and hopeless, and when hearing the good news of God's love, they are filled with hope. Men and women are willing to take the risk of prison, or death, to faithfully follow Jesus. Many have had to leave their home country of Iran and live as refugees in places throughout Europe, West Asia, and Canada. This is an unprecedented time of spiritual growth among Persian-speaking people, and we as a church have been blessed to be a part of what God is doing.

Through several global mission partnerships, we are supporting this work that is happening. One of those partners is PARS. They are focused on training leaders for the Persian-speaking church. Through online classes, formation conferences, mentoring, and counseling they are growing leaders who make a difference wherever God has planted them. First Pres has supported the ministry of PARS for four years. We have provided scholarships for students to study with PARS, sent folks to see a formation conference, and built relationships with the leadership of PARS and students around the world.

Recently, I (Rev. Hilliard) was invited to teach at one of the formation conferences taking place in Turkey. These

conferences are week-long events that feature daily classes, worship, testimonies, and building relationships of encouragement. The students at this particular conference are refugees in Turkey. There were two teachers, myself, and one of the PARS staff. We each taught classes to the students in the morning and then again in the afternoon. My focus was on forgiveness. Given the difficulties that many of the students have gone through (being arrested and spending time in prison, being forced to leave their country, persecution, etc.) the topic was an important one. A Persian-speaking translator and I worked together to teach, answer questions, and visit over meals. The time at this conference was such a special time as I heard stories of God's pursuit of people and witnessed what God is doing in their lives. Worshipping together, sharing meals, playing backgammon in the evenings, hearing about their hopes for the future, had a great impact on me and I am grateful for God's goodness in allowing me, and First Pres, to be a part of what He is doing in the Persian-speaking world!

Nyanam International



Mama Leah is one of eight million widows in Kenya who belongs to our global mission partner, Nyanam International. Their mission is to support women like Mama Leah by sharing the gospel, providing education, and building community. By partnering with First Pres and OnSite ICF, Nyanam has built four homes (with a target of completing ten by the end of the year) to provide safety and security to widows in need. In an answer to prayer, Mama Leah now has a safe and dignified home to raise her family.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

- Upcoming Events -

December 3: Auditions for Christmas Eve Pageant. Sign-ups will be in Fellowship Hall after Sunday School at 10:30am

December 6: All Wednesday Night Club Christmas parties from 6-7:30pm

December 9: Snowy Day Trip for 2nd and 3rd graders. Meet at church at 9am and travel to the ice sculptures at the Gaylord Hotel followed by dinner at Medieval Times. Contact Cary Koepke for more information at 561-735-1750

December 10: Cantata Sunday at 9 and 11am; Sunday School begins at the same time

December 14: Christmas Pageant speaking part rehearsal at 6pm

December 20: Christmas Pageant rehearsal from 6-8pm; meet in the Sanctuary

December 24: Christmas Eve Family Service at 5pm; cast call at 4pm

December 29 - January 2: Family Camping Trip; we have a few spots left if you are interested. Please contact Cary Koepke at 561-735-1750

2nd Grade Milestone Communion Class



This year our church family received thirteen young ladies and gentlemen to receive communion on World Communion Sunday. Jack Dager, Charlotte Finch, Henry and Simon McQuown, Stafford Knieriemen, Audrey Gabler, Noah Girvan, Magnus Johnson, Carter, Ella and Olivia Coldwell, Breaker Johnson and Charlotte Sumairsingh participated in the two session class learning about the history of Passover and why Jesus was at the table with His disciples on the night he would be betrayed. They also learned why we take communion today as a reminder of Christ's sacrifice for us.

3rd Grade Milestone Scripture Reading Class

This milestone class, taught by Chris Southard, helps families and children discover why the Bible is an integral part of our relationship with God and how He



reveals Himself to us and guides us along our faith journey. The class culminates with parents presenting Bibles to their children during the 11:00 worship service.

The Grove Sunday School (for children Kindergarten - 5th grade)

Our elementary Sunday school, "The Grove," has a new look!! This new space allows students to interact with each other and participate in the lesson each Sunday. There are two opportunities to experience The Grove- at 9:30 and 11:00 am. For the 9:30 service, children may check in at 9:30 and attend the full hour. For the 11:00 service, children worship in the sanctuary with their family and then go to The Grove for their lesson. Children are then returned to their family for communion.



Here's what the children in The Grove will be learning:

December: Deck The Halls: Countdown to Christmas- Christmas is celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift.

January: Pet Project: See it Through- Responsibility is showing you can be trusted with what is expected of you

The Orchard Sunday School (for infants through PreK-4)

There are two services that families may check in their children for their Sunday school experience. Both 9:30 am and 11:00 am are available for families for the full hour. These children will learn in December that God gave us Jesus. In January, they will learn that Jesus teaches me important things.

Wednesday Night Kids' Clubs

Wednesday nights have been full of fun and excitement since the beginning of the school year! CHECK OUT THE FUN WE ARE HAVING!!!

Club 45 trip to Fun Depot





Club 45 Family Road Rally



Fall Halloween Party and Costume Contest



STUDENT MINISTRIES

Student Ministries Volunteer Leader Spotlight: Annabelle Macintosh

Our newest student ministries volunteer, Annabelle Macintosh, began leading in our middle school ministry this fall and we are so grateful for her! Annabelle was homeschooled and grew up in nearby Loxahatchee. She completed her undergraduate degree in ministry at Palm Beach Atlantic University and will graduate in May with a Masters in Divinity, also at PBA. As a pastoral apprentice and member of our global missions committee, she has also had the opportunity to travel to Greece with FPC the last two years. Some of her favorite activities outside of ministry include being in nature, spending time with friends, water color painting and reading novels.

We are so excited for Annabelle's upcoming wedding to FPC seminary intern Clay Gloetzner on December 16th!

She has a sweet, fun personality and is a gifted mentor as a small group leader to our middle school girls which is a blessing to our students and our team.



Student Ministries Leadership Team



Our student ministry leadership team enjoyed a night of worship together at the Chris Tomlin concert in October. Renee Goodson hosted our November monthly meeting at her lovely home! We prayed, processed, planned and were well fed! A huge thank you to Renee for an opportunity to laugh and share memories of the fall semester. Although all our volunteers were not able to attend, it was great to have our talented group of middle school and high school leaders meet together!

Students Serve our FPC Family

Several middle school, high school students and parents showed up early on a Saturday morning to show some love for our church and help plant flowers and mulch the grounds! Thanks to all who assisted in campus beautification and to Bob Johnson and Jack Baldwin for all the advance prep work (predrilling over 500 holes!)

Students from middle school, high school and college also served at our 60th FPC celebration! Popcorn, snow cones, cotton candy and bounce houses helped us all celebrate well!



Midnight Mayhem

Our middle school Midnight Mayhem event was a blast! Thirty five students and 6 leaders enjoyed a night of food and fun as we jumped, played laser tag, rode go carts, and played video games Defy Trampoline Park and Fun Depot!



It's a Wonderful Life

A cast of 30 actors, actresses and stage hands are working hard to prepare for FPC student ministries production of "It's A Wonderful Life" on December 2nd and 3rd! This will be an amazing production directed by the talented Piper Crisafi and is sure to be an addition to the Christmas season that you want to miss! Reservations are filling up fast so sign up online soon!



Save The Date & Sign Up Here For:

First Presbyterian
Church Student
Ministries
Drama Department
Presents...



*It's a
Wonderful
Life*

*Seats are limited! Reserve
your tickets today!*

Saturday December
2nd
2:00pm & 6:30pm
Sunday December 3rd
2:00pm

SCAN THE
QR CODE
FOR
TICKET
INFO!



Questions? Email
ksanders@firstpresnpb.org



ROCK THE
UNIVERSE
UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT

HIGH SCHOOL TEAM, JOIN US AT UNIVERSAL ON
Saturday, January 27th
AS WE ROCK THE UNIVERSE WITH CASTING CROWNS, PHIL WICKHAM,
BRANDON LAKE, CAIN AND MORE!

FLORIDA'S BIGGEST CHRISTIAN MUSIC FESTIVAL

BUS LEAVES AT NOON, AND WE
WILL BE BACK AT 4AM ON THE 28TH.

USE THIS CODE TO SIGN UP
BY JANUARY 15TH



\$99
INCLUDES BUS
RIDE, LUNCH,
PARK TICKET,
AND CONCERTS





REGISTER TODAY!

July 27 - August 1, 2024

Student Life Camp for middle school and high school students will be at
Ridgecrest Conference Center in Black Mountain, North Carolina!

The cost is \$695, which includes camp fees, bus transportation, lodging,
all meals (except bus stops), and zip lining!

Secure your space with \$150 nonrefundable deposit by December 31st,
or until space is full. Register on Church Center today!

For more information, connect with Kim Sanders
ksanders@firstpresnpb.org | (772) 263-1226

ADULT MINISTRIES (60+)

A Message From JoAnn Hayes

Senior Adult Ministry Director

Happy Thanksgiving everyone! When you read this, my husband Woody and I will be in North Carolina celebrating Thanksgiving with my sister who will be coming from Virginia, our oldest daughter coming from California and our youngest daughter and her family who live in North Carolina. Times are different now. I loved growing up where our grandparents lived walking distance from us and aunts and uncles lived on farms just around the corner from where we lived. However it is, I am grateful to God for each one of them.

HAPPY TO THE END OF THE NEW YEAR 2023

I hope you all have a great Christmas season with your family, friends, and neighbors! As much as I love the celebration and joy of Christmas, I must confess, I breathe a sigh of relief to put it all away for another year. I won't miss the crowded stores and hectic schedules. With the close of the Christmas season, we come to the part of the year that always inspires me, the week of New Year which follows closely. I am always inspired by the New Year. I love the time to reflect over the past year and see where the Lord has directed me. Some years, my memories are more positive and encouraging. It's easy to think over the year, smile, and remember. Other years, we are faced with more difficult situations and the memories create a bit of a struggle. Some years, my memories include that unexpected death of a loved one, some struggle with health, or even some situation that ended up shaping my year more than I would have wanted. But through the good and the bad, I remember and see God's hand through it all giving strength and guidance. New Year's is also a time for me to get a chance to look forward to the next year.

The Seniors have many events to look forward to:

SAVE THE DATE for the Suddenly Alone program

which will be held on Friday, February 2, 2024 at First Pres.

SENIOR DINNERS

There will be no Senior Dinner in December.

The program for January will be on Sunday, January 28th. This is a different date than previously announced. Dinner will be early, at 4:30 pm with a concert at 6:00 pm. Jay Arnn will be hosting a program presented by Wayne Hosford. Wayne is a very talented singer/actor/comedian, whose resume is extensive. The entire church is invited to the concert.

On Friday, February 23rd, the program for the Senior dinner will be our guests and speakers, Lucky and Penny Arnold.

OUT TO LUNCH BUNCH

Join us for a great time of fellowship:

- Friday, December 8th: Juno Beach Fish House
- Friday, January 12th: Paddy Macs



MUSICAL THEATER

The King's Academy will be presenting a musical called "The Best of Broadway" on Saturday, February

10th at 1 pm. Tickets range from \$30 - \$45 and can be purchased through First Pres. Contact JoAnn Hayes at jhayes@firstpresnpb.org or 561-308-9206

TRIPS BEING CONSIDERED

If people express an interest, we will consider going to Busch Wildlife Preserve and/or take a Manatee Sunset Cruise. Let me know what you think!

Friends, it is my prayer that in this busy holiday season that we would each find space to sit and ponder the hope, wonder, peace, joy, and love that is offered to us in the person of Jesus Christ. Although the message of Christmas never changes, I believe that God meets us at the point of our need each year and offers to fill our lives with a renewed sense of His presence and peace.

Wishing you a joyous Christmas & Happy New Year!

JoAnn Hayes

Coordinator of Senior Adult Ministry

Women Events

Women’s Bible Study

Thursdays from 9:30–11am in Fellowship Hall

Women of all ages are invited to join this wonderful group of women for refreshments and fellowship as we study the Word of God. We are presently studying a book written by Andy Stanley called *Follow*.

Ladies Circle

The next get-together will be on December 12th at 10 am in the chapel. After gathering, we will go to the sanctuary to watch the preschool children prepare for their music program. January’s Circle will held at its regularly scheduled date, the third Tuesday of the month, which is January 16th.

Kim Sanders’ Small Group



Kim Sanders’ small group served with our mission partner, Gator Fellowship, for the PBG Football team dinner on October 12.

Women’s 1st Friday Book Club

Join us in 2024 on the first Friday of the month starting in January, in the Fellowship Hall from 9:30 - 11am, as we discuss these books:

My Antonia
by Willa Cather
January 5

Small Things Like These
by Claire Keegan
February 2

A Girl Called Samson
by Amy Harmon
March 1

How the Penguins Saved Veronica
by Hazel Prior
April 5

LOVE LIKE BOB

By Piper Johnson Crisafi

Have you ever walked around our church grounds in the fall or the spring and noticed several perfect, intentionally laid-out holes in the ground? If you're wondering what kind of creature makes those holes, that would be a Bob! Bob Johnson designed and rigged up a special auger machine just for drilling these holes. For decades now, he has planted more than 500 flowers at the change of each season just to beautify this beloved church home. About 20 years ago, he started to officially invite others to join him in the planting, mulching, weeding, painting, and general upkeep of our campus, dubbing it "Love Your Church Day." He brought a continental breakfast, extra work gloves, and tools to share. With the idea that "many hands make light work," these days of love and labor have always led to new friendships and connections in our church body. Bob asks no prerequisites or hourly quota from those who serve alongside him. He just knows that people will take pride in the work of which they are a part.

He pays attention to the details. Potholes in the asphalt? Quick fix! Lack of lighting at night in the hallways or parking lots? Let's solve it! He aids the security watchmen who cruise the parking lot and even fixes sprinkler heads on a regular basis (as he designed and installed the irrigation system at our church years ago!) When God says, Whom shall I send?... Bob simply raises his hand.



The top of Bob's resume likely reads, "Proud Member of FPC NPB," and he's been serving here in a myriad of ways since 1969. From participating on the Building/Planning Committee to deaconing for multiple seasons and serving on Session five times, Bob is often cajoled for spending more hours at church than at his actual home by those who love him. Throughout the years, he corralled straggling teens in the parking lot for Young Life Club, trained interns, drove church buses, broke down in church buses, and fixed church buses over and over again in order to bring students on various trips, all so they could encounter the heart and love of Jesus.

Bob has enjoyed teaching his peers in Sunday school, leading Bible studies out of his home, and actively participating in the Thursday Morning Men's Breakfast for roughly 40 years. He has been involved in so many ways with FPC, from our missions ministry - both local and international, in so many ways, from Guatemala to many local programs in Riviera beach such as Ivy Green, Jay Ministries, and Urban Youth Impact. He has served on two pastor nominating committees and two officer nominating committees. He has been a mentor to younger men and communicants and has sponsored countless souls for camp trips and Emmaus walks. He taught kids how to use tools and create meaningful projects for 10 years in the Fun Arts Camp wood shop classes.

His focus on the youth is not a thing of the past. Just last year, it was heavy on Bob's heart to start up a Wednesday night class for parents in an effort to connect parents with their adolescent kids in real conversations and combat some of the devastation we see in today's youth. He even spoke at the Palm Beach County school board meeting last month and received a round of applause for gracefully sharing an unpopular opinion when many others were too busy or shy to speak out. He has been teaching Sunday school here for middle school, high school (and currently,

4th and 5th graders) for 40 years! This would probably be his favorite role as he loves to use cool science experiments and machines to demonstrate God's character and remind students of who they are as children of God. The Student Ministry's drama department would be lost without Bob as he single-handedly built the curtain for the Way Building stage – not to mention countless set pieces, props, and practical effects.

This humble man has performed the weddings and funerals of close family friends, the baptism of all eleven of his grandchildren, and is often the one to remind everyone else about a birthday, anniversary, or just to check in on someone we haven't heard from in a while. He stays in touch with many friends, old and new, via texts, emails, and calls with equal doses of wisdom and humor, reminding others to thank Jesus for everything and that we are all doing "better than we deserve!"



While he does enjoy his coffee, you still have to wonder, "How does one man have so much energy and desire to serve?"

Love.

Bob loves people and he believes everyone has a gift. He seems to especially appreciate those who may not agree with him - he takes genuine interest in everyone. He will calmly confront people in truth if God asks him to do it because he already cares for them and wishes them well. A favorite passage of his is 1 Corinthians 13: "Love Never Fails." He often says, "Do all things in love, and you will never go wrong." He demonstrates this love in quiet acts of service; maybe not always perfectly or tied up with a bow, but the sincerity and utter lack of grumbling rings loud and clear to me as I have watched this man in action for almost 47 years. For me, and many others, he is the single most selfless example of being and doing (next to Jesus), and my siblings and I have always been very proud to call him "Dad!"

"More is caught than taught," my dad always says. So be intentional about what you do. FPC is not just the buildings or the denomination, the pastors or the steeple - the church is the people, the family beyond the one you were given. Bob loves First Presbyterian Church in North Palm Beach... and love is contagious.



This outlook is even more admirable when you realize that starting with the loss of his father when he was just 17, Bob continued to experience tragic losses in his immediate family all of his life, including two adult sons and more recently his wife of 54 years. He has always dealt with all of it head-on, sincerely trusting God with each difficult new step. In his early 80's, Bob is still working full time as an engineer and enjoys walking about 3 miles a day with his precious dog, Maggie! He spends lots of time visiting people in need, delivering food and flowers to church members, and carpooling with his neighbors!

CONGREGATIONAL CARE & FAMILY NEWS

By Rev. Elizabeth Nielsen

Caring For Our Members

The Congregational Care team prepared 50 gift boxes for delivery to those who are not able to attend services in person. We pray that as people visit, they will get to know each other and encourage each other.

Paul encourages us that: "If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it." (1 Cor. 12:26) We are not just individual followers of Jesus, but we belong to one another. May God equip each of us to serve others and knit our hearts together as we do.



Caring For Our Jewish Neighbors

Palm Beach County has the highest population of Jewish residents anywhere in the US except for New York City. Each one of us, whether we know it or not, has Jewish neighbors. As our neighbors are discouraged by the war in Israel and shocked by recent eruptions of Anti Semitism across our country, we pray that Christians will remember the debt we owe our Jewish neighbors. We pray we will let them know we care for them.

One simple way to do that is to greet your Jewish neighbors with a cheerful "Shalom," especially on Fridays when you can say "Shabbat Shalom!" Be sure to ask if you get a chance if they have family or friends in Israel. Whether they do or not, they will be touched that you thought to ask.

Praying For The Middle East

As we keep up with news about the Middle East, we can pray for Israel and for the people of Gaza. Let's remember that many Christians live in Israel as well as the Palestinian territories. We can pray for the protection of civilians, especially children and the elderly, and for God to send both justice and peace.

Baptisms

On October 8th we had the privilege of witnessing the baptism of **Jackson Robert Staffieri**, son of Nic and Amanda Staffieri and **Lillian Kathryn Carolina Podulka**, daughter of Michael & Natalie Podulka. We rejoice with these couples who have dedicated themselves to raising their children to love Jesus.

Loved Ones Who Have Gone To Heaven

May 28 – **Harrison Nichols**, son of Mike & Brenda Nichols
September 10 – **(David) Ed Campbell**
September 17 – **John Poncy**, son of George & Susan Poncy
September 19 – **Shannon Ginn**, husband of Diane Ginn, a former church trustee
September 28 – **Hank Copeland**, a former church elder
October 6 – **David Raymond**
October 27 – **Drew Adams**
October 28 – **E.J. (Ellen) Crittenden**

New Covenant Partners

Welcome to the family these new covenant partners who have completed the New Members Class and

met with our Session: **Mary Arden Carroll, Barbara Harris, Trudie Houghton, Zachary Johnston, Stephan & Jennifer McQuown, Robert & Racquel Slawinski, and Nicholas & Amanda Staffieri.**

New Members Class

If you are interested in becoming a covenant partner of First Pres, or learning more about us, come to the next new member classes. They begin on January 14th for three weeks and are held in the chapel at 9:30 and 11:00 am. Registration will begin in December or let Rev. Southard know about your interest in attending.

Upcoming Musical Dates

Christmas Service of Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 10, 2023, 9am & 11am
First Presbyterian Church Sanctuary Choir and Orchestra

We will be singing Joseph Martin's "Tidings of Joy." Much of the music will have a Celtic or Irish sound. It will be a mix of well-known Christmas Carols along with Christmas texts set to Irish or Celtic folk songs. Bring friends and family to hear the God's Word through the scriptures and songs.

Joy of Christmas - Musical Concert at First Pres

Friday, December 1, 2023 at 7:30pm
Palm Beach Atlantic University Choirs and Orchestra

Sonia Santiago, Conductor

Tickets - \$15.00

Scan the QR code to purchase:



Liana Branscome, violin, with The Rose String Quartet from Montclair State University

Friday, January 12, 2024, at 7:00 pm in the First Pres sanctuary

Music of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Villa Lobos
Free Concert - Free-Will Offering will be taken.

An Evening with Wayne Hosford (Musician, Entertainer)

Sunday, January 28, 2024, at 6 pm

Free Concert - Free-Will Offering will be taken.

A Few Photos From Our 60th Celebration





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- Please Join Us For These Special Sunday Services In December -

December 10

Lessons & Carols

9am and 11am - 2 Identical Services
(All Sunday School classes will be held)

December 24

Morning Service

10am - Contemporary Music, Holy Communion
(Childcare available)

December 24

Evening Services

5pm - Contemporary Music, FPC Kids' Christmas Pageant
7pm and 9pm - Traditional Carol Services
(Childcare available at the 5pm and 7pm services)

December 31

Morning Services

9:30am and 11am
(No 8:15am service)