



December/2024 E-GRAM

Dear, **Pamela.**

Grace and Peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

Our new liturgical year began with an inspiring quote from the Apostle Paul, who wrote to his community in Thessalonica: "How we thank God for you! Because of you, we have great joy as we enter God's presence" (1 Thessalonians 3:9, NLT). Betania and I share this same sentiment. We are truly grateful to you, First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte! You have been a constant source of joy for us, and we thank God for each of you. Because of you, our walk with Christ has been a truly joyous journey. We feel incredibly blessed.

As we approach the end of 2024, I am also grateful for the many blessings God has bestowed upon us throughout this year. I am especially thankful for all the chances to grow, the strength to overcome challenges, the calming of the storms here in Florida, the opportunities for fellowship, and the abundant love that surrounds us. I hope God will still give us Grace to be able to face each new day with hope and perseverance. Lastly, I hope you are still committed to being the best church a church can be.

I could not write my last message for this year, without thanking the staff, leadership, and dedicated volunteers of our church and food pantry. We couldn't do this without you. As Christians, we are called to serve, and all of you have embraced that call, for which I am truly grateful. If anyone wishes they could

contribute more, I encourage you to reach out to me. Even by volunteering just a few hours of your time, you can have a direct impact on the lives of others and create positive change. Let this serve as a word of encouragement for you.

Finally, I am excited about the three special events our Music Director Sue Brems, have planned for this month with the support of the Worship Arts and the Special Events committees. In the first event, Organist Cary Price will be joining us again to perform Christmas songs. In addition, we will have a Christmas Cantata and a Candlelight Service. There will be plenty of music to enjoy, so please invite your family and friends to come and celebrate with us!

Happy holidays... yours in Christ,

Pastor Syl

Throwback November Events

Rev. Dr. MacDonald

We are deeply saddened by the loss of Rev. Dr. Myles W. MacDonald, Pastor Emeritus of our church, who passed away last November. The building where we now meet was once named in his wife's honor and is affectionately referred to as Mac-Hall. Dr. MacDonald's legacy is cherished by all who knew him, and I make our collective prayer that his love and impact continue to shine through us. We extend our deepest condolences to his family and commend his soul to our Lord Jesus Christ.



Dr. Myles W. MacDonald, Pastor

Beautiful Duet by Sue Brembs and Heather DeGroot



Sue Brembs and Heather DeGroot came together on the piano for a beautiful duet. Together, they played the hymn “Great Is Thy Faithfulness.”

We are so blessed with their amazing talent. Thank you ladies for sharing with us. By the way, Pr. Syl is always on the lookout for any untapped potential in our congregation. If God gave you a talent, it should also be used at church.

Joy FM & H.E.L.P. Charlotte County donate gift cards for the Community

JOY FM and H.E.L.P. Charlotte County gave gift cards to the Food banks and pantries of Charlotte County that feed local, hurting families. Our pantry distributed gift cards on Friday, November 15th, on a first come first serve basis. Thank you to all the Food Pantry volunteers as well as Joy FM, H.E.L.P., and Chick-fil-A, for providing the location to collect donations.



Honor Flight without the Flight!



What a special celebration we had honoring Charlie on what would have been the day of his Honor Flight. As many of you know different health events prevented him from going two years in a row, so we brought the celebration to him!

Charlie was a trooper coming out of South Port's door to be surprisingly greeted by a group of us wearing our red, white and blue and waving signs of support for Charlie. People from our church family, a few of the residents, and even two of his daughters were there.

Thanks, Carolyn for working out the connections with South Port and thanks Sue McConochie for the beautiful idea to do this!

There were a couple of bloopers before Charlie saw us lolol....Sue meeting at South Port who worked on her crossword puzzle for like an hour, and quickly hid behind it when she encountered Charlie. 😊

Then the group of us got ready to stage in front of the door and saw Charlie in the lobby with a...Quick, let's hide behind the trees!! 😊

All before we got in our places (thanks Donna!) around the circular driveway without being seen for a hero's welcome with the Army Song playing in the background. We love you and salute you Charlie.♥☐

Below are some pictures from the event.

Elder Sandy Asaro



Pastor Syl and Pastor Scott swapped pulpits for a day.

On Sunday, November 17, Pr. Syl and Pr. Scott (from Community Presbyterian Church in Englewood) preached at each other's churches.



Pr. Scott with his wife Lisa are welcomed by the congregation and receive a first-time visitor gift.



Pr. Scott preaching his sermon. Pr. Syl said that he swapped with Pr. Scott, so our church could finally hear a good sermon. 😊



Rev. Deb Phelps stands by Rev. Scott Andrews as his liturgist for the day.



Joan Barry and Kathy Alexander were the acolytes for the service.

A generous donation to our Food Pantry.

Ms. Claudette McLennon and Mr. Donovan McLennon, on behalf of the McLennon family and of United Districts of Islington Inc., handed a donation for our Food Pantry, to Elder Nancy Sharpless. The total amount was \$700, \$500 being from the UDI and \$200 from the McLennon family.



The UDI became a partner of our Food Pantry this year. Their goal is to address some of the special needs of the communities they hail from. What a blessing it is to continue the mission of feeding the families of our community, and what a blessing it is to have people who care!

Thanksgiving Praise Service

A Thanksgiving Praise Service was held on Wednesday, November 27, 2024 at 3 p.m. followed by a beautiful reception. Many thanks to Elder Donna Young, who volunteered to head up this gathering of refreshments and fellowship and for all her faithful helpers. We are also thankful for Mr. Douglas Coventry who led us in worship during this service.





In this picture, we see Doug leading worship and Courtney Mason sharing some of the reasons he is thankful for.

Our Sanctuary was decorated for Christmas

On Saturday, November 30, 2024. Thank you to all the volunteers who showed up to brighten our Sanctuary with the Christmas Spirit.



PEP (People Enjoying People) TBA

Postponed until
Next Year

November Birthdays



On Sunday, November 24th, we celebrated our November birthdays with these amazing people: Courtenay Mason, Steve Vallillo, Kathy Bruyere, Patricia and Angela Faulk. Happy Birthday everyone!



December Pets of the Month



**Our Pets of the Month are rescue kitties Minnie,
on the left and Vinnie, on the right.**

These cuties were rescued by our very own Kathy Bruyere who is also our December Member of Focus. Be sure to check it out!

Do you want to see your pet here? Send Pam a picture of your pet to pastorsecretary@fpcpc.com, and your little friend could be one of our Pets of the Month.

Join us online on Zoom



Sundays at 8:05 AM.

To connect, go to www.zoom.us

Click "Join" on the right-hand upper corner

Meeting ID: 9678044713

Passcode: X9b77j



Mondays at 8:00 AM.

To connect, go to www.zoom.us

Click "Join" on the right-hand upper corner

Meeting ID: 87832080869

Passcode: 396015



Sunday, December 1

- Continental Breakfast - from 7:45 to 9 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM. On Zoom at 8:05 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- Sunday Worship Service with Lord's Supper - 9 AM.

Monday, December 2

- Lectio-Divina with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom - 8 AM.

Tuesday, December 3

- Food Pantry - from 8 to 11 AM.

Wednesday, December 4

- Board of Deacon's Meeting - 1:30 PM

Thursday, December 5

- **South Port Square showing of The Chosen - Season 1 - Episode 7, at the Town Hall - 1:30 PM.**

Saturday, December 7

- Southport Square Independent Living Worship Service - from 10:00 to 11:00 AM.

Sunday, December 8



- Continental Breakfast - from 7:45 -to 9 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM. On Zoom at 8:05 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- Sunday Ordinary Service - 9 AM.
- Finance Committee Meeting - 10:30 AM.
- **Cary Price Christmas Concert - 3 PM.**

Monday, December 9

- Lectio-Divina with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom - 8 AM.

Tuesday, December 10



- South Port Square Assisted Living Communion Service - 2:30 PM.
- **Poinsettias and/or ornament forms are due in the office no later than today.**

Wednesday, December 11

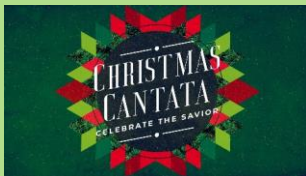
- Worship Committee Meeting - 11 AM.
- Food Pantry - from 4 - 6:30 PM.

Thursday, December 12



- **South Port Square showing of The Chosen** - Season 1 - Episode 8, at the Town Hall - 1:30 PM.
- Last day to bring the gifts to the Mission Peniel giving tree.

Sunday, December 15



- Continental Breakfast - from 7:45 to 9 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM. On Zoom at 8:05 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- Sunday Ordinary Service - 9 AM.
- **Christmas Cantata** - 9:00 AM.
- **Session Meeting** - 10:30 AM.

Monday, December 16

- Lectio-Divina with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom - 8 AM.

Tuesday, December 17

- Food Pantry - from 8 - 11 AM.

Thursday, December 19



- **South Port Square showing of The Chosen** - Season 2 - Episode 1, at the Town Hall - 1:30 PM.

Sunday, December 22

- Continental Breakfast - from 7:45 to 9 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM. On Zoom at 8:05 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- Sunday Ordinary Service - 9 AM.

Monday, December 23

- Lectio-Divina with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom - 8 AM.

Tuesday, December 24



- Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - 6 PM.

Wednesday, December 25



- MERRY CHRISTMAS AND BLESSINGS TO ALL!
- Office Closed.
- No worship service.

Sunday, December 29



- Continental Breakfast from 7:45 to 9 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM. On Zoom at 8:05 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- Sunday Ordinary Service - 9 AM.
- Celebration of December Birthdays & Anniversaries!

Order your poinsettias or the FPCPC Christmas tree ornament.

They can be bought in honor or memory of someone, or even to the Glory of God. The form will be in the bulletin and on the back table. \$15 each. Place it in the offering plate or bring it by the office. All forms must be turned in by December 10, 2024. Items will be ready for pick up by Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24, 2024.



Misión Peniel Giving Tree

We will be collecting donations for Misión Peniel in Immokalee, Florida. Please donate items listed on the tags that will be hung on the Giving tree. Items can be brought to the church and placed under the Christmas tree.

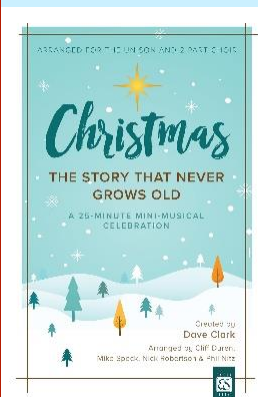


Donations may include clothing for adults and seniors: jeans, shirts, socks, shoes and sweaters. These items help the Farmworkers in Immokalee, FL. Thank you to those who donated last Christmas.

Cary Price Christmas Concert



Organist Cary Price will be performing his Christmas Concert for us on Sunday, **December 8th**, at **3 PM**. Admission will be free, with a love offering. Following this concert, we will have a reception with cookies, punch & a few surprises!



The Christmas Cantata will be held on Sunday, December 15, 2024, during the service. Thanks to all for supporting our concerts and inviting friends and family to these events. We plan for more concerts in the coming new year.

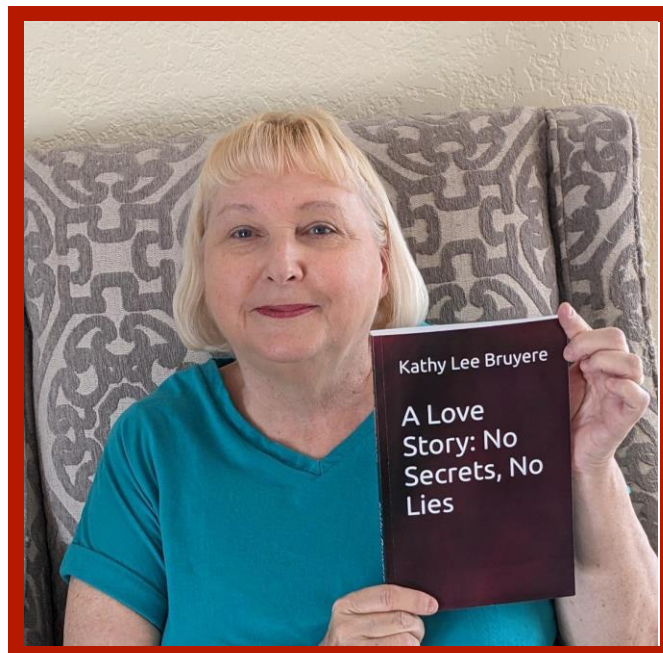
The Cantata "Christmas, A Story That Never Grows Old" by Dave Clark will be presented by the choir at our regular church service, on Sunday, December 15th. Please invite a friend.

Please join us as we celebrate our savior with a
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Tuesday,
December 24, 2024, at 6 PM.



MEMBER ON FOCUS

Have you met?



Kathy Bruyere

Kathy Lee Bruyere was born and raised in Bemidji, Minnesota. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in English and Journalism from Bemidji State University. Kathy and her husband Harold, both worked for the University of Wyoming. He is a professor and she was the Director of the Upward Bound program. Throughout her career, Kathy has engaged in various exciting roles, including teacher, journalist, grant writer, and author.

Kathy has four adult children, nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. Additionally, in this newsletter, you'll find two rescue kitties featured as our December Pets of the Month. Minnie and Vinnie have joined their family nine years ago.

In 2014, while living in Nebraska, Kathy and her husband decided to find a warmer place to live. After flying into Tampa one day, they were so captivated by the blue skies and beautiful weather that six weeks later, they returned and bought a house in Port Charlotte. Although Kathy enjoyed a vacation to the Grand Canyon, she considers Florida her favorite vacation destination and is glad they decided to permanently plant their roots here.

One of Kathy's hobbies is Genealogy on Ancestor.com. She belongs to the Charlotte County Genealogical Society. She serves on the board and writes articles about genealogy for their monthly newsletter. Since 2012, she has traced her ancestors back 400 years. She found that three of her ancestors came over on the Mayflower, and eight were witches from the Salem witch trials, the most famous being Rebecca Nurse, her six-times great-grandmother. There is a play about Rebecca Nurse called "The Crucible". Later, it was turned into a movie and a book. Sadly, she was unjustly hung as a witch.

In August 2023, Kathy joined a writer's group at the Port Charlotte library. Although she had never written fiction before, she started her first project in December. Remarkably, she completed a book in just three weeks. She then spent another six weeks refining it. The book, titled *A Love Story: No Secrets, No Lies*, is a heartwarming romantic comedy. In the picture above, Kathy proudly showcases her accomplishment. The book is available at the Port Charlotte and Punta Gorda libraries or at Amazon.com.

Currently, Kathy is writing a second book with the title, *Call Me Maetu* which is about teaching English and reading to Southeast Asian refugee youths from 1979

to 1985 who were displaced by the Vietnamese War. They called her Maetu when she was 32 years old which means grandma in Laotian. It was not an insult but a title of respect. The students were part of a federal education project she worked in. The students were from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand.

Kathy was baptized in a Methodist church. As an adult, she joined Lutheran churches. She tried new churches when they (she/Harold) moved to Port Charlotte and found our church when Reverend Teri Jo Crego was pastoring here. She liked Pastor Teri Jo and found her place here among us. She began attending in 2014 and became a member in 2016. She is sad that, since Covid arrived in 2020, the church activities diminished, as well, as the membership.

In the past, Kathy volunteered for several activities at First Pres. She interviewed church members for the newsletter and took pictures. She worked with Sandy Asaro with the Drum Circle. She currently volunteers at the Food Pantry when she can. She likes our quaint church and Pastor Syl's jokes during his sermons. She also likes the church members. She especially admires Elaine and Ambrose Woods, for their dedication at the First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Nancy Sharpless - Dec. 2
Christine Dutkiewicz - Dec. 5
Jean Heim - Dec. 5
Susan Thompson - Dec. 8
Syl Estevez - Dec. 20
Cathy Asaro - Dec. 21
Beatrice Mitchell - Dec. 23
Jim Casselberry - Dec. 27
Toni Madej - Dec. 29



DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Betania & Pr. Syl - Dec. 1
Alzie & Senior Lee - Dec. 20
Marjorie & Bob Hill - Dec. 21
Susan & Mark Thompson - Dec. 29

Do not see your name here, call the church office and let us know (941) 625-5045

New activities beginning in 2025



The Chosen Season 4 will resume on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. We will supply the popcorn and soda. Pastor Syl continues seasons 2-3 at the South Port Square retirement community.

Coming in January 2025



Join us for our mid-week Worship Service every Thursday at 7 PM, from January to March.

CHURCH OFFICIALS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS



- **The Board of Deacons** meets on the first Wednesday of the month, at 1:30 PM. Next meeting: **Thursday, December 4, 2024.**

- **The Worship Arts Committee** meets on the second Wednesday of the month, at **11 AM**. Next meeting: **December 11, 2024**.
- **The Finance Committee** meets on the second Sunday of each month, at **10:30 AM**. Next meeting: **December 8, 2024**.
- **The Session** meets on the third Sunday of each month, immediately following worship. Next meeting: **December 15, 2024, at 10:30 AM**
- **Praise Service** begins Thursday, January 2, 2025, at 7 PM.
- **The Chosen Bible TV series Season 4 begins Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 6:30 PM.**
- **The Chosen Bible TV series** Every Thursday, at **1:30 PM**, at the South Port Square Town Hall, except for the Thursday after Christmas.
- **Adult Sunday School** meets every Sunday, at **8 AM**, including by Zoom now.
- **Children's Sunday School** meets every Sunday, during worship after the Children's Blessing.
- **No PEP Events until next year. Stay tuned.**



I ♥ MY
CHURCH

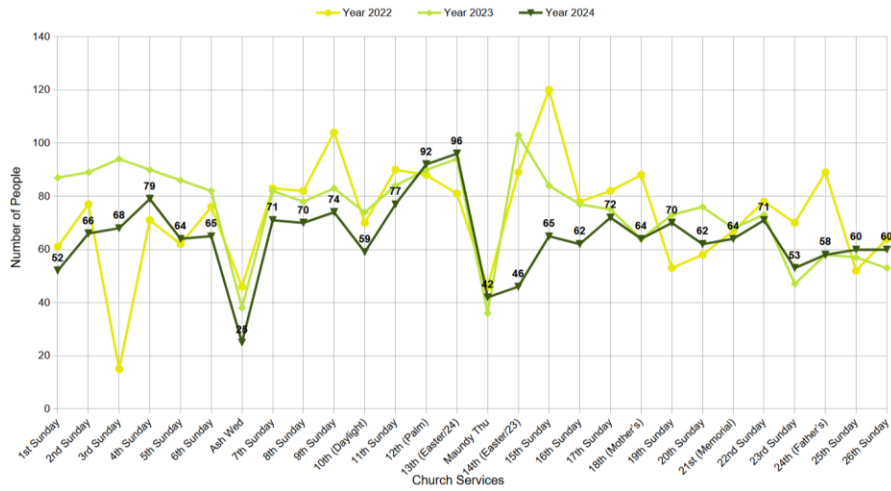
FEELING CALLED TO SERVE THIS CHURCH IN ANY CAPACITY?

We are in desperate need of people to help us draw our vision for the future of our church and our websites. No experience is necessary. Click below to e-mail pastor Syl at pastor@fpcpc.com.

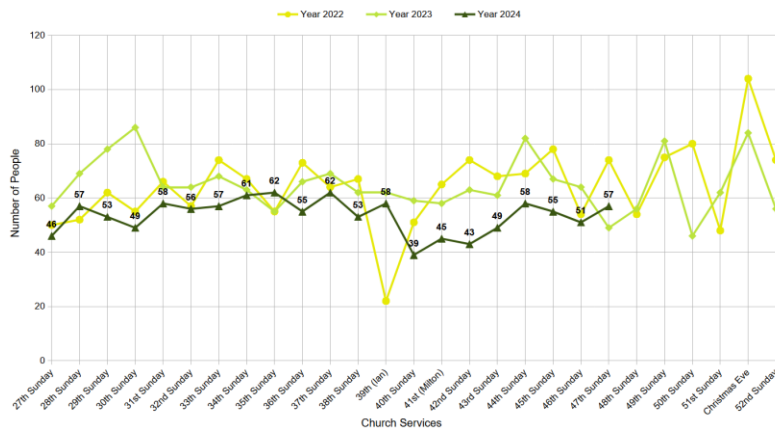
[Yes, I am here Lord!](#)

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

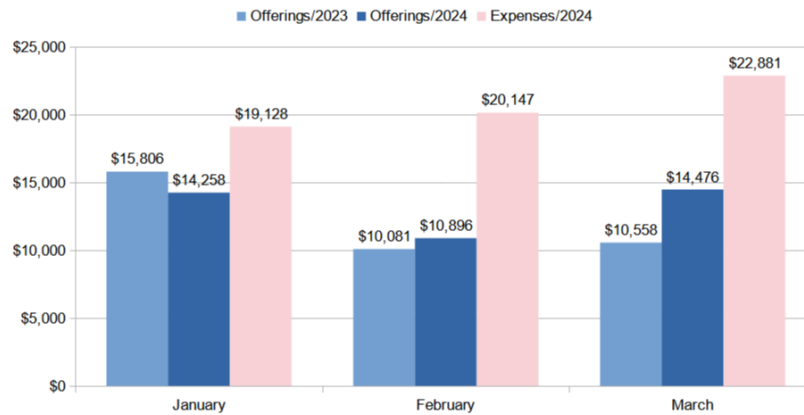
Worship Attendance Comparison Chart
2022 - 2023 - 2024 1st Semester

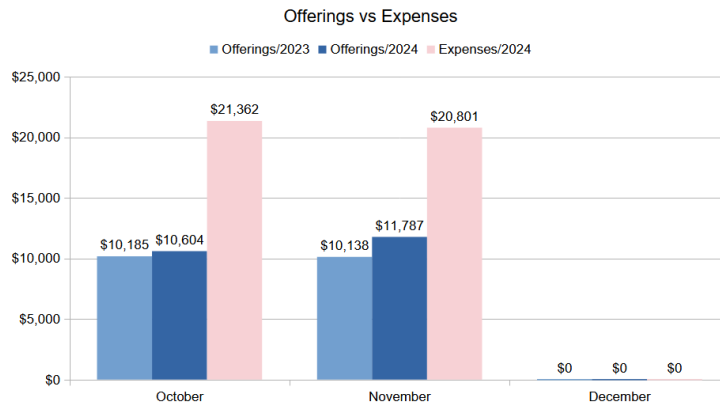
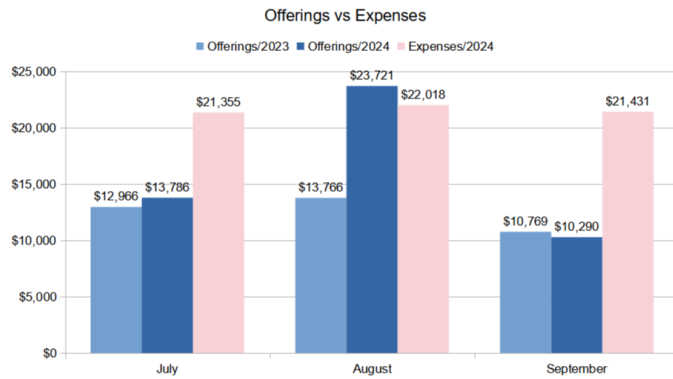
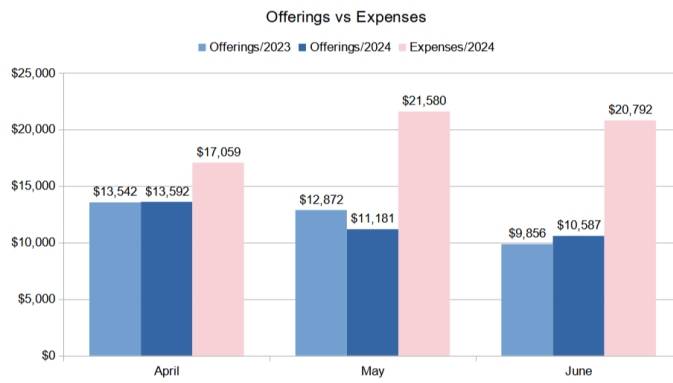


Worship Attendance Comparison Chart
2022 - 2023 - 2024 2nd Semester



Offerings vs Expenses





Average 2023 Attendance YTD - **72.06** each Sunday

Average 2024 Attendance YTD - **60.93** each Sunday

Average 2023 Giving per Person YTD - **\$165.79** per month

Average 2024 Giving per Person YTD - **\$204.22** per month

*As usual, the number shows that, although we are fewer on average by 11 people this year, we have been more generous in 2024. Thank God, for you generous and faithful people.



Did you know you can add First Pres on your will or living trust, as your beneficiary? For example, one of the most advantageous ways to contribute to First Presbyterian Church is through a gift of stock.

Making a gift of securities is simple and offers a number of valuable financial benefits. You can give appreciated stocks to the church simply by transferring them into our account. The total value of the stock upon transfer is tax-deductible, and you will not be obligated to pay any capital gains taxes on the appreciation. For gifts of stock or gifts-in-kind, please contact the finance office for details or speak with our church treasurer, Elder Ambrose Woods.



Please pray for ...

Adams Family - strength & comfort

Kathy Alexander - health needs

Susan Baivey - health needs

Bernadine & Tom Allesee family - safety & health

Barbara Edwards - health needs

Jean Heim - health needs

Ruth Hester - health needs

Alzie & Senior Lee Family - strength & comfort

Sue Littrell - health needs

Violet Logan/Green - strength & comfort

Donna & Loren Livengood - health needs

Marjorie Hill - health needs

Courtenay Mason - health needs

Brad Messick - health needs

Louis Miceli - health needs

Olin Scott - housing needs

Mavis Powell - health needs

Danny Webb - strength needs

Elaine & Ambrose Woods - health needs

FPCPC FAMILY - If you know of anyone else who may need our prayers, please call the church office at 941-625-5045.

Names will be removed after 3 months. If you wish to keep them on the list, please call the church office.

The First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte is part of the **Presbyterian Church USA**, under the **Peace River Presbytery** in Florida.



