

# 2025



## January/2025 E-GRAM

Hello, **Everyone,**

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

As we approach the end of another year, my heart overflows with gratitude for each of you and the incredible journey we have shared in 2024. This past year has brought its share of challenges, but through it all, we have experienced God's unwavering presence and the abundant love that overflows within our small church family.

As I look into 2025 and reflect on the recent passing of Margie Hansen, I am reminded of a Bible verse. Psalm 90:12 says, "Teach me to number my days, so that we may develop wisdom in our hearts." Tradition has this verse as one of the oldest Psalms in the Bible, written by Moses as a prayer. Essentially, his prayer is a plea to God to help him live purposefully and not waste his days. That means we should actively consider the brevity of our lives and use that awareness to live with wisdom, making the most of each day and prioritizing what truly matters. And make no mistake... for Christians, what matters most is to love God and love our neighbors.

With that in mind, our goals for 2025 will remain the same. Through sermons, Bible studies, and worship services, we will continue to deepen our understanding of God's Word and the strengthening of our faith. We will seek God's wisdom and strive to abide by it. Additionally, we are also planning a casual mid-week service, focused on prayer and adoration, from January to the end of March. Also, throughout 2025, our sermons will focus on the parables of Jesus. We will look at each of them, studying them each verse by verse. As you possibly know, parables are succinct and didactic stories that illustrate one or more instructive lessons or principles. As followers of Jesus Christ, it is essential for us to understand the lessons and principles they convey.

Finally, I cannot finish this short letter without acknowledging the support and participation of our faithful helpers throughout the year. Together, we achieved a great deal, which gives me hope for the coming year. May God bless you and your loved ones with abundant joy and peace throughout the coming year.

Happy New Year, FPCPC!

Pastor Syl

## Throwback December Events

### Cary Price Organ Christmas Concert



Organist Cary Price performed a Christmas concert on Sunday, December 8, at 3 PM, followed by a reception with cookies, punch, and a few surprises! Once again, Cary did a great job and brought much joy to us.

# Christmas Cantata



From left to right, music director Sue Brembs, Betania Esteves, Norma Campbell, Veronica Walker, Carol “Jazz” McLennon, Amy Rupert, Nicole Christian, Alzie Lee, Heather and Weldon DeGroot.

The Christmas Cantata “The Story That Never Grows Old” by Dave Clark was presented on Sunday, December 15, 2024. The beautiful sound of music and the powerful message filled the room with the majestic presence of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who was born into a broken world to save us all. Thank you to all who participated, especially to our music director, Mrs. Susan Brembs, and the choir. You did a fantastic job.

# Church Staff & Volunteers Luncheon



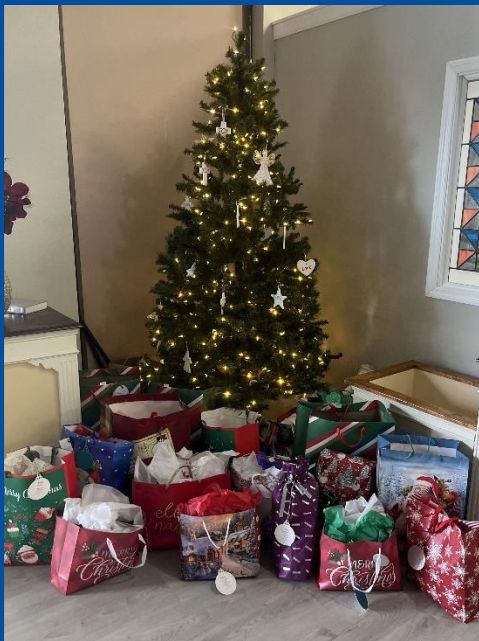
FPCPC Staff & Volunteers had a well-deserved end-of-year lunch and exchanged thoughtful gifts. Pictured from the top left are Ms. Jeanne Fell (Financial Secretary), Pastor Syl (our Minister), Mrs. Pam Omar (Office Administrative Secretary), Elder Cathy Asaro (Screen Producer). The top right side is Elder Nancy Sharpless (Food Pantry Coordinator), Elder Ambrose Woods (Church Treasurer), and Elder Elaine Woods (Clerk of Session). Mrs. Sue Brembs (our musical director) and Elder Sandy Asaro (Adult Bible School Coordinator) could not participate.



These beautiful tokens, FPCPC ornaments, and poinsettias were shared to honor and remember loved ones. Thank you to all who bought poinsettias or ornaments this year.



A generous amount of donations was collected under the Giving Trees for Misión Peniel in Immokalee, Florida. These gifts were distributed to the farm workers in that area. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Giving Tree. Just look at all the gifts gathered under the two Giving Trees!



## Candlelight Christmas Eve Service



This is a picture of our Candlelight service. The church was packed. People sang their hearts out of love for the coming of the Savior.

# December Birthdays & Anniversaries



On Sunday, December 29th, we celebrated our December birthdays & anniversaries, with these amazing people: Alzie Lee, Nancy Sharpless, Toni Madej, Pr. Syl, Jean Heim, and Cathy Asaro. Happy Birthday everyone!

## First Pres & Salvation Army



December 31, 2024

I would like to thank the people who gave their time this year to "ring" for the Salvation Army as representatives from First Presbyterian Church Port Charlotte. We voted to ring once a week which translated to 40 two-hour shifts. Fifteen people stepped up and filled those shifts and greeted customers cheerfully in all kinds of weather. We had ladies who entertained with singing and one who played her guitar. Our kettles were full. We listened to people who had been in the service overseas and were helped by the Salvation Army. Some adults confessed they wouldn't have had a Christmas as children had it not been for the Salvation Army. We were made aware of how far-reaching this charity is.

One of my favorite quotes is from Mitch Albom who wrote:

"The most precious thing you can give someone is time... because you can never get it back. When you don't think about getting it back, you've given it in love."

Thank you, Kathy Alexander, Cathy Asaro, Sandy Asaro, Joan Barry, Patty Bevens, Norma Campbell, Nicole Christian, Carol Dunkak-Dunekirchen, Joan Hawkins, Richard Lund, Hazel Mason, Claudette McLennon, Holly Parkin and Nancy Sharpless.

I love you all.

Elder Donna Young

## Rest in Peace, Margie!



On December 26th, at 12:14 AM, Marjorie Hansen went to be with our Savior. Margie was 96 years old and a constant source of joy to our congregation. Margie was accompanied to the end by her daughter Charmaine Devereaux. Please pray for Charmaine and Dottie (Margie's roommate) during this difficult time.



## January Pet of the Month



Meet our unusual Pet of the Month "Spike." His "mamma" is none other than our Member of Focus Norma Campbell. Check out her story below. Spike calls Norma, "Mamma," and when you call Norma's home, you can hear Spike "talking" on the background.

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

## Join us online on Zoom



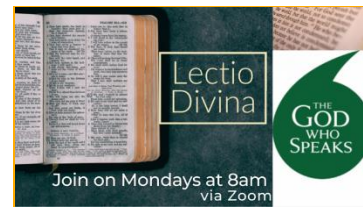
**Sundays at 8:05 AM.**

To connect, go to [www.zoom.us](http://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](http://www.zoom.us)

Click "Join" on the right-hand upper corner

Meeting ID: 87832080869

Passcode: 396015



# JANUARY EVENTS CALENDAR

**Wednesday, January 1**

*HAPPY  
New Year*

- New Year's Day
- Office Closed from January 1st to the 3rd.

**Thursday, January 2**

- Deacon's Meeting - 1:30 PM.

**Saturday, January 4**

- Southport Square Independent Living Worship Service - 9:30 AM.

**Sunday, January 5**



- 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, January 6

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

## Tuesday, January 7



- Food Pantry - from 8 to 11 AM.
- The Chosen - Season 4 - Episode 1 - 6:30 PM.

## Wednesday, January 8

- Worship Arts Meeting - 11 AM.
- Food Pantry - from 4 to 6:30 PM.
- Bells rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir rehearsal - 6:30 PM.

## Thursday, January 9



- South Port Square showing of The Chosen - Season 1 - Episode 6, at the Town Hall - 1:30 PM.
- **NEW Praise & Worship Service - 6:30 PM.**

## Sunday, January 12

- 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.

## Monday, January 13

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

## Tuesday, January 14

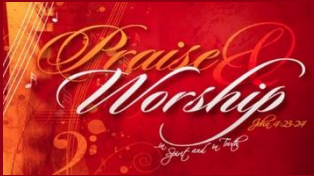


- South Port Square Assisted Living Communion Service - 2:30 PM.
- The Chosen - Season 4 - Episode 2 - 6:30 PM.

## Wednesday, January 15

- Bells rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir rehearsal - 6:30 PM.

## Thursday, January 16



- South Port Square showing of The Chosen - Season 1 - Episode 7, at the Town Hall - 1:30 PM.
- **NEW Praise & Worship Service - 6:30 PM.**

## Sunday, January 19



- 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.
- **Session Meeting - 10:30 AM.**

**Monday, January 20**



- Lectio-Divina with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom - 8 AM.
- **Presidential Inauguration Day**
- **Martin Luther King Jr.**
- **Office Closed**

**Tuesday, January 21**

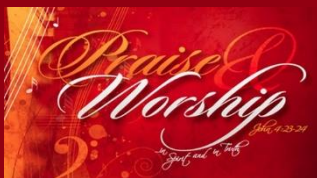


- Food Pantry - from 8 - 11 AM.
- **The Chosen** - Season 4 - Episode 3 - 6:30 PM.

**Wednesday, January 22**

- PEP (People Enjoying People) Lunch Gathering - 12:30 PM at Skilletts.
- Bells rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir rehearsal - 6:30 PM.

**Thursday, January 23**



- South Port Square showing of The Chosen - Season 1 - Episode 8, at the Town Hall - 1:30 PM.
- **NEW Praise & Worship Service - 6:30 PM.**

## Sunday, January 26



- 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 January Birthdays & Anniversaries!**

## Monday, January 27

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

## Tuesday, January 28



- **The Chosen** - Season 4 - Episode 4 - 6:30 PM.

## Wednesday, January 29

- Bells rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir rehearsal - 6:30 PM.

## Thursday, January 30



- **NEW Praise & Worship Service - 6:30 PM.**

# MEMBER ON FOCUS

## Have you met?



## Norma Campbell

Deacon Norma Campbell was born in Jamaica. She graduated on April 30, 1966, with a nursing degree from Kingston Public Hospital School. She met her late husband Howard while in school. Howard was in the Army. Norma agreed to go on a blind date with someone in the Army but it was not Howard. She called to break the date with the gentleman she was supposed to meet and Howard just happened to answer the phone that day. After that conversation, she began dating Howard and was engaged a year later, and finally married a year and a half after that. Howard passed in 1996.

Norma worked at Port Antonio Hospital in Jamaica for a few years before moving to New York. In total, she worked 46 years as a Registered Nurse in Critical Care and ICU retiring in 2013. After retirement, she moved to Florida in 2015 to stay near her sister Alzie Lee.

Norma has 3 adopted children: Rochelle, 52, Jason, 35 (who passed away tragically and would have been 47 this month), and her youngest daughter Yanique. She has a total of 7 grandchildren, 3 by Rochelle, 3 by Jason and one by Yanique.

Norma began coming to First Presbyterian Church with her sister Alzie while visiting Florida. After moving down in September 2015 she began attending regularly and became a member in 2016. She became involved and is a Choir and Bell Choir member today. She has also served 2 terms as a Deacon and is now in her third-year term. Norma also volunteers at the food pantry. No doubt, she is a dedicated member of First Pres.

Norma's favorite food is... drum rolls... Jamaican, of course. But she confessed she also loves American, especially cheeseburgers and fries. Jamaica is also her favorite vacation spot. She loves the beaches and enjoys the fresh fried fish bought directly from the fishermen at the beach.

Norma enjoys First Presbyterian Church. She recalls a warm greeting from Elder Sandy Asaro in her earlier days coming here and appreciates the people who are so welcoming. She loves the Peace the church brings her and loves how calm and quiet it is here which she attributes in part to the pastors past and present.



## **Birthdays & Anniversaries**

**Barbara Danylak - Jan. 3**

**Lisa Testatore - Jan. 10**

**Bernadine and Tom Allesee - Jan. 14**

**Amy Rupert - Jan. 14**

**Sandy Asaro - Jan. 15**

**Barbara Edwards - Jan. 21**

**Deborah Phelps - Jan. 22**

**Jerry Martel - Jan. 23**

**Hazel Brown - Jan. 26**

**Veronica Betts- Jan. 31**

## PEP (People Enjoying People)

Join us for brunch at **SKILLETS**  
24123 Peachland Blvd., Unit A10  
Port Charlotte, FL 33980

**Wednesday, January 22, 2025**  
**12:30 p.m.** RSVP by contacting Carol  
at 941-624-5402.



**The Chosen Season 4 will begin on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 6:30 p.m., in the Sanctuary. We will supply the popcorn and soda.**

**Pastor Syl continues season 1 at the South Port Square retirement community.**



Join us on Thursday nights for Prayer & Worship, beginning January 9, 2025 through March.



**Walt Sanders is coming back to First Pres, this time, dressed as Elvis Presley.**



Join us Sunday, **February 23, 2025** for a concert to remember featuring Walt Sanders dressed as Elvis Presley. He will be performing Gospel as well as traditional Elvis hits. Tickets are on sale now! Only \$20.00 per ticket. See Sue Brems or call her at 941-241-6480.

# CHURCH OFFICIALS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS



- **The Board of Deacons** meets on the first Wednesday of the month, at **1:30 PM**. However, the next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, January 2**, due to New Year's holiday.
- **The New Chosen Bible TV series, Season 4**, meets every **Tuesday at 6:30 PM**, beginning on **January 7, 2025**.
- **The Worship Arts Committee** meets on the second Wednesday of the month, at **11 AM**. The next meeting is scheduled for **January 8, 2025**.
- **The New Weekly Praise & Worship Service** meets every **Thursday at 6:30 PM**, beginning on **January 9, 2025**.
- **The Finance Committee** meets on the second Sunday of each month, at **10:30 AM**. The next meeting is scheduled for **January 12, 2025**.
- **The Session** meets on the third Sunday of each month, at **10:30 AM**. The next meeting is scheduled for **January 19, 2025**.
- **The Chosen Bible TV series Season 1**, every **Thursday until January 24**, at **1:30 PM**, at the South Port Square Town Hall.
- **Adult Sunday School** meets every Sunday, at **8 AM**, including by Zoom now.
- **Children's Sunday School** meets every Sunday, during worship and after the Children's Blessing.
- **The PEP (People Enjoying People) Luncheon** meets once every month. The next luncheon is scheduled for **Wednesday, January 22**, at **12:30 PM**, this time at Skilllets.

I ♥ MY  
CHURCH

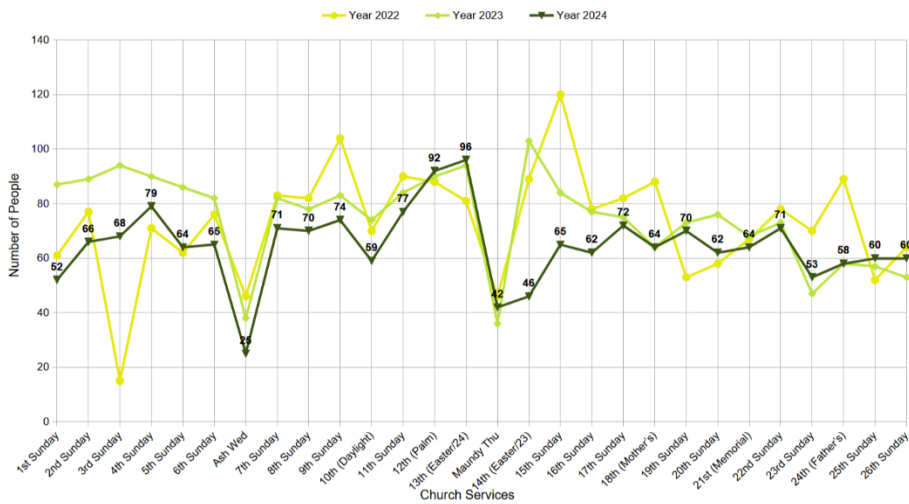
# FEELING CALLED TO SERVE THIS CHURCH IN ANY CAPACITY?

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](mailto:pastor@fpcpc.com).

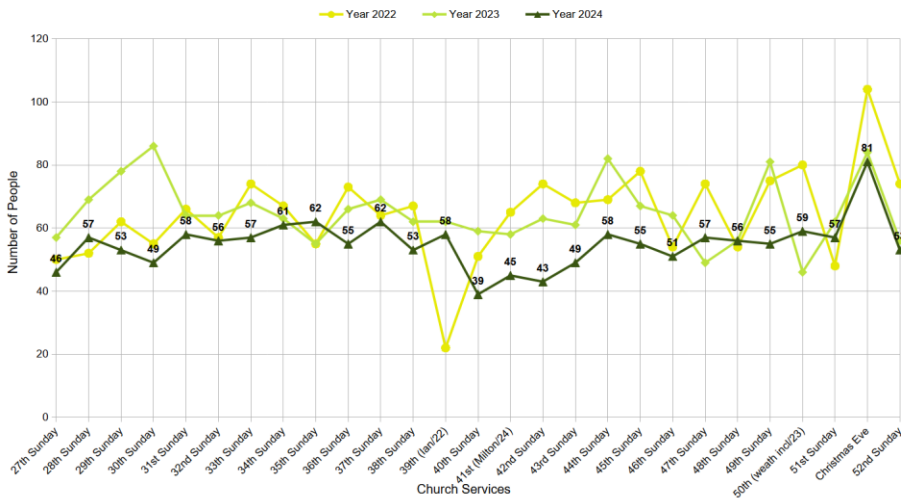
Yes, I am here Lord!

# FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

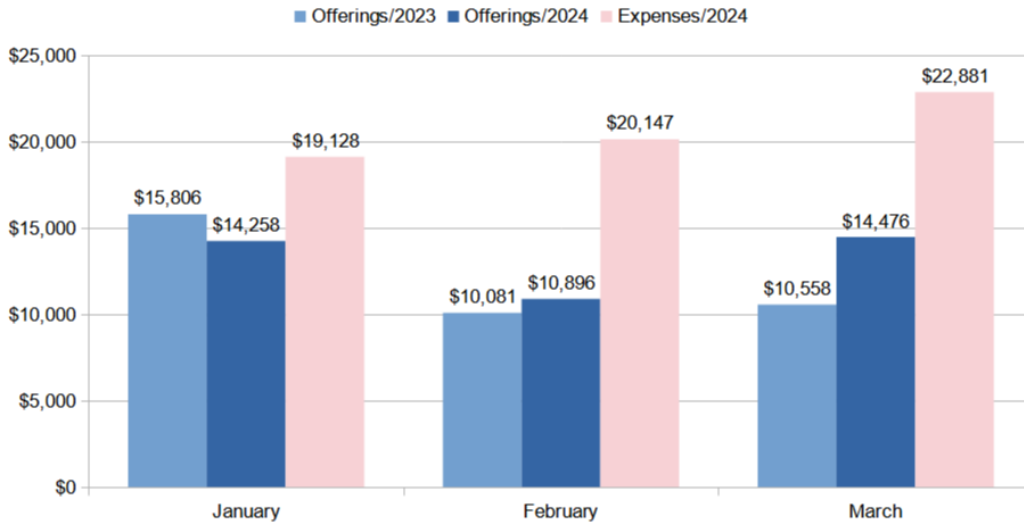
Worship Attendance Comparison Chart  
2022 - 2023 - 2024 1st Semester



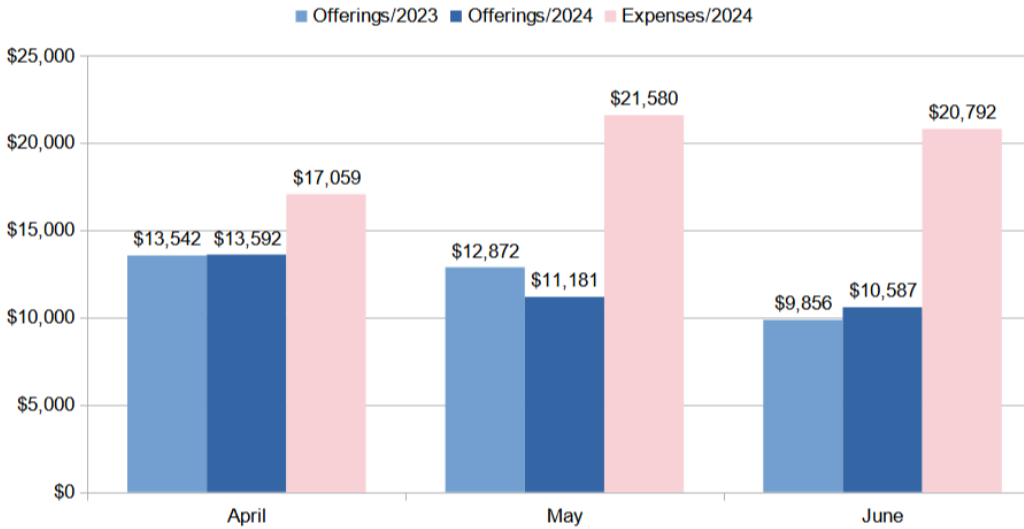
Worship Attendance Comparison Chart  
2022 - 2023 - 2024 2nd Semester



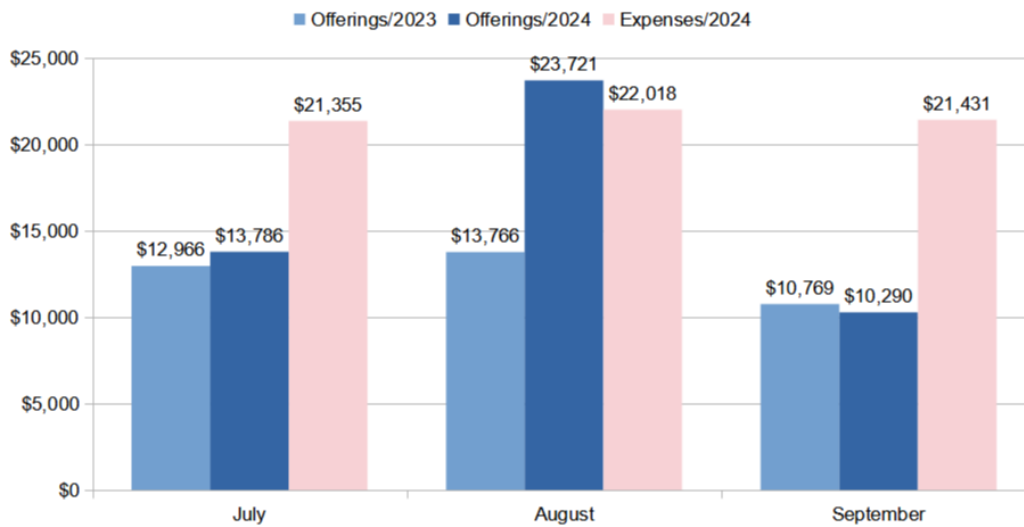
### Offerings vs Expenses



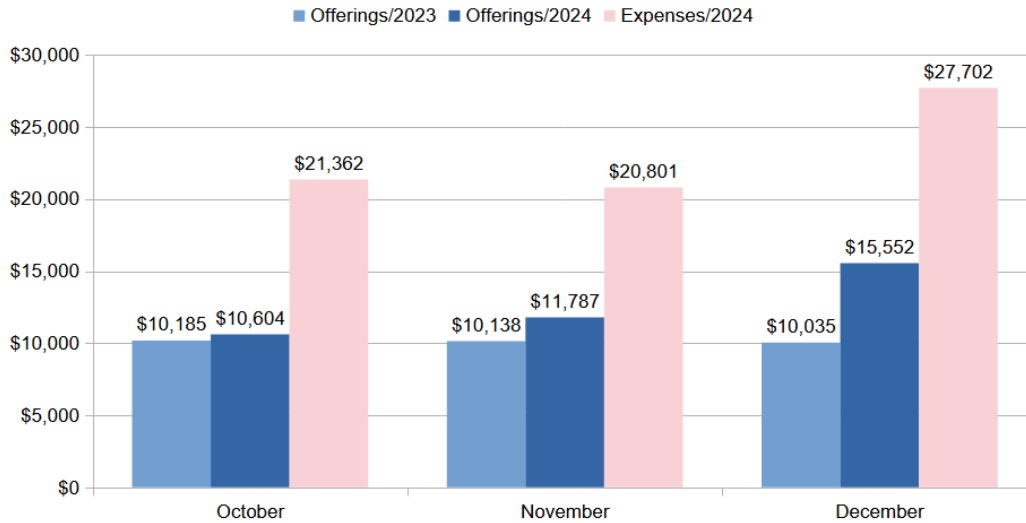
### Offerings vs Expenses



### Offerings vs Expenses



### Offerings vs Expenses



Average 2023 Attendance YTD - **71.63** each Sunday

Average 2024 Attendance YTD - **60.56** each Sunday

Average 2023 Monthly Giving per Person/Family YTD - **\$165.00** per month

Average 2024 Monthly Giving per Person/Family YTD - **\$208.73** per month

As usual, the number shows that, although we have been 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 the 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  
Bernadine & Tom Allesee family - safety & health  
Susan Baivey - health needs  
Charlie Brox - health needs  
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  
Samantha & Derrick Reams & Family - strength & comfort  
Olin Scott - housing needs  
Mavis Powell - health needs  
Danny Webb - strength needs  
Elaine & Ambrose Woods - health needs  
Charmaine Deveraux - strength & comfort

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.**

