

# This Week @ First

## Lunch and Learn about Our Unhoused Neighbors

First Pres has joined with Trinity United Methodist and First Baptist Churches to sponsor three Lunch and Learn sessions involving our unhoused neighbors during Advent. They are:

**Wednesday, December 6, noon-1 PM:** Encountering Those Who are Unhoused. Host: First Baptist Church. Speaker: Pastor Rachel Hill, Grace Mission.

**Wednesday, December 13, noon-1 PM:** Experiences of Those Who are Unhoused. Host: First Presbyterian Church. Speakers: Selected Neighbors.

**Wednesday, December 20, noon-1 PM:** Taking Action for Those Who Are Unhoused. Host: Trinity United Methodist Church. Participants will help fill backpacks with food and necessities and then go into the community to distribute them.

Please put these on your calendars and join us for this downtown church experience. ALSO, if you can help with the lunch on December 13 at First Pres please let Debbie Gibson know at gibsond1207@gmail.com.

## Winter Items for Youth Needed

Capital City Youth Services serves unhoused and at-risk youth in Tallahassee and surrounding counties. CCYS is the **only** youth shelter in the area for ages 11-17. Please consider providing new or gently used winter items or clothing for local youths aged 11-23.

CCYS has requested the following items in a range of sizes: mens/boys long-sleeved shirts, sweaters/sweat shirts, T-shirts, jeans and pants, jackets/hoodies, shoes, socks, and underwear. Also needed are winter hats, gloves, sleeping bags, blankets and small tents. Tarps, blankets, flashlights, batteries, backpacks, camping pillows, Straight Talk (pay-as-you-go) phones, hand/body warmers, bicycles and individual hygiene items such as shampoo, soap and deodorant will also be accepted.

You can bring the items to the **November 26 Advent Crafts and Mission Fair** in the Westminster Room or to the sanctuary during Sundays in Advent.

### First Presbyterian Church

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*Published on November 17, 2023*

## Worship & Music

To watch our Sunday worship at 11 AM, connect with us on [YouTube](#) (find the bulletin [here](#)!) Click the bolded words to follow the links each week.

A week from Sunday — **September 26** — we will welcome guest preacher Reverend Dr. James T. Murphy, Jr., the pastor at Greater Little Zion Baptist Church in Fairfax, Virginia, and father of Choir Director Ethan Murphy. We will also be celebrating a baptism and welcoming new members.

## Compassionate Witnessing

Please mark these important dates:

**Sunday, November 26, 5:00 PM** — Service of Wholeness and Healing. Please prepare to join us at this service with a written statement, “This is what I am letting go of...” A selection of these statements will be used in worship and read aloud. You can email your “letting go” to [restoration@OldFirstChurch.org](mailto:restoration@OldFirstChurch.org), place it in a box in the Narthex before the service, or complete it during the service.

**Monday, December 4 and Monday, December 11, 6:00 PM** — final Compassionate Witnessing sessions. Please reach out to the church office to sign up as a storyteller or compassionate witness for one of these sessions.

## Spiritual Formation

**Adult Church School:** The class will meet in the Westminster Room with a [Zoom](#) option. Bible Study will resume in 2024.

Our **Caring for Creation: Seeking Faithful Justice in a Climate Crisis** series concludes this Sunday, November 19, with a panel discussion on “Next Steps” moderated by Debbie Gibson. Panelists will be Dr. Bruce Strouble, Executive Director, Citizens for a Sustainable Future; Steve Urse, founding member of Sustainable Tallahassee; Emily Bruno; and Steven Specht. The first three presentations of the series are now available to view [online](#).

**Children’s Church School** will meet in room 306 for the lesson “Bold Acts.” **Confirmation Class** meets in room 204 (the Library).

All classes begin at 9:30 AM.

## Pastor's Note

The hymn *For the Beauty of the Earth* contains the following verse:

*For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight, for the mystic harmony linking sense to sound and sight: Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.*

Some truths about the mysteries of a trinitarian God are beyond human intellect and evoke that deep sense of mystic harmony.

When I sat with Sister Edith two weeks ago in Spiritual Direction, she led me to explore a possibility. She said, "What if you prayed, 'God I will be fully present in what you crack open right in front of me. I will be fully present and use the gifts you give to me.'" In 1 Corinthians 12, we read that "to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." There are gifts of wisdom, knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discernment of spirits, and the speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues.

Don't worry, my "fully present" will not be breaking out into the speaking of tongues — that is not a gift I have been given. But her question has led me to a deeper exploration of presence. There is a certain sense of celebration to trust that God cracks open what needs to be revealed, and the invitation is for each of us to be present with the gifts that we have been given, for the living of these days.

What gift have you been given that evokes in you the wonder and mystery of God?

God's peace,  
God's presence.  
Anne

## Worship Team — Communion Preparation

Members of the Worship Team will be in the sanctuary at 10 AM on Sunday, December 3 for "How to Prepare Communion" training. No previous experience is required and signing up is not necessary. Members of all ages are welcome!

## Care and Outreach

Mark your calendars for **Christmas caroling** after worship on **Sunday, December 10!** This will be a time for spreading holiday cheer and enjoying family-friendly fellowship. Lunch will be provided; more details to come.



## Compassion & Social Justice

We will be helping to serve Sunday Dinner at Grace Mission on Sunday, December 10. We meet at 4 PM and are finished by 6 PM. If you are interested in helping, please contact Carol Weissert or sign up [here](#).

## Budget & Finance Stewardship



We have 85 giving units for a total of \$438,130. It's not too late to submit a pledge if you have not done so yet!

**On Sunday, November 26, all are invited to the Advent Crafts and Mission Fair in the Westminster Room during the Sunday School hour.**

## Capital Area Justice Ministry

Participating in CAJM assemblies strengthens our own justice ministry and gives us an opportunity to answer the larger call to do justice! Clergy, team leaders, and network members who want to drive our issue campaigns should attend the next CAJM event: an "Action" Kick-off on **Tuesday, December 12, 2023 @ 6:00 PM** at Saint Paul's UMC, 1700 N. Meridian Rd. (please bring a cash donation for food to be provided).

## Happy Thanksgiving!

The next issue of *This Week @ First* will be published on Friday, December 1st. Please submit any announcements by Wednesday, November 29 using this [link](#) or by calling the church office.

