

This Week @ First

Worship & Music

To watch our Sunday worship at 11 AM, connect with us on [YouTube](#) (find the bulletin [here](#))!

Compassion and Social Justice

To assist with our ongoing Snack Pack and Laundry ministries on Wednesdays, please contact Debbie Gibson.

Looking ahead, **December 1st** (the first Sunday after Thanksgiving) will be both the beginning of Advent and our next **First Sunday Food Collection**.

Save the Date for Caroling!

Care and Outreach will host our annual caroling event on Sunday, December 15, immediately after worship. We will have a quick chili lunch and proceed to Westminster Oaks and other locations. Please mark your calendars and watch for more information!



Candlelight Concert Series



The Candlelight Concert Series taking place in our sanctuary will continue this weekend with two separate performances: *A Tribute to Coldplay*, and *Vivaldi's Four Seasons and More*. Tickets are still available on the Candlelight [website](#).

Office Volunteers

We are in need of office volunteers to check mail, relay messages, and assist with other routine office tasks. If you can help for two to four hours on a weekday, fill out this [form](#) or email Glenn Hodges, glenn@oldfirstchurch.org, and indicate what day(s) you would like to volunteer.

To submit information to be included in the newsletter and/or the Sunday bulletin (as space permits), please use [this link](#), which will take you to an online form. Thank you!

Presbyterian Women “Elder Elf” Gifts

November begins the season for our Presbyterian Women’s Circles to provide holiday gifts to some Seniors served by Elder Care Services (ECS) through their program called **Elder Elf**. Funds are donated by PW members who shop for needed items from each Senior’s Wish List, such as bedding, towels, clothing, lotions or kitchen items. The presents are all wrapped and gift labeled before being presented to the Seniors through the ECS program. Wrapped and labeled gifts may be brought to Room 206 before December 8th for delivery to ECS. Donations may be made through any of the PW Circles this month.



Spiritual Formation

Sunday School—Youth

All youth are invited at 9:30 AM each week! Grades K–5 in room 306. Middle and High School Students in room 301. A nursery will be available starting at 9:15 AM.

The Spiritual Formation Team is in need of volunteers to assist our teachers in the Elementary and Middle/High School classes, and to assist in our nursery. You can volunteer to help weekly, monthly or occasionally. Please contact Mary Kutter at mykutter@gmail.com to find out more.

“Feasting on the Word” Lectionary-Based Bible Study

Calvin Room and via [Zoom](#), 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM.

Each week this class will gather to engage and discuss selected texts from our Lectionary readings.

Adult Inquirer’s Class

Westminster Room and via [Zoom](#), 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM.

The Inquirers will finish watching the documentary, *God and Country*, and discuss how Christian Nationalism is distorting not only our Constitution, but Christianity itself. Prominent Christian thought leaders ask the question: What happens when a faith built on love, sacrifice, and forgiveness grows political tentacles, conflating power, money, and belief into hyper-nationalism?

“Finding Joy” Stewardship Campaign

Stewardship/pledge packets were mailed this week. Pledges will be collected on Sunday, December 1st. Pledges can also be made [online](#). If you have any questions about the stewardship campaign, please contact Norma Meier.

First Presbyterian Church

110 North Adams Street

Tallahassee, Florida 32301

Phone: (850) 222-4504/Fax: (850) 222-2215

Email: Office@oldfirstchurch.org

Website: www.oldfirstchurch.org

www.facebook.com/oldfirstchurch

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Pastoral Note

Stewardship involves nearly every aspect of the church's life and work and is particularly evident in the church's leadership. The roles of elders and trustees are essential to this outward expression of stewardship. In the coming weeks, this congregation will elect a new class of ruling elders and trustees for the class of 2027 to serve a three-year term.

Presbyterian theology defines the elder (Gr. *Presbyteros*: "presbyter") as an ordained office in the church. Elders are ordained to preach, teach, administer the sacraments, and oversee the church's government. A distinction is made between "teaching" elders (pastors/teachers) and "ruling" elders (laity). The pastor and elders make up the session in a congregation, which directs the church's ministries and programs.

The word "elder" is rooted in the Old and New Testaments, where elders served as leaders of God's people. In the Presbyterian Church U.S.A., women and men are elected as elders. "Ruling elders are named not because they 'lord it over' the congregation (Matthew 20:25) but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life." (G-2.0301).

A trustee is a person who serves as an accountable party for a church's legal and financial obligations. Trustees act on behalf of the congregation to manage its business and carry out its orders. The duties of a trustee include receiving, holding, encumbering, managing, and transferring property. They function under the oversight and control of the session.

As we enter the season of Advent, let us prepare to welcome the new class of elders and trustees. Their time and effort will yield rich rewards in this church's ministry and life in the coming months. Stewardship, for us, is a personal response to God's love and gratitude and flows outward to enable a worldwide witness in God's name.

Rev. Glenn Hodges

“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.” (1 Corinthians 4:2)

Sources:

Book of Order 2023-2025: The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Part II. 2023. Louisville: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation

Gray, Joan S. and Joyce C. Tucker 2021. *Presbyterian Polity for Church Leaders*. 3rd ed. Louisville: Geneva Press.

Wilton, Carlos E. 2016. *The Principles Of Presbyterian Polity*. Louisville: Geneva Press.

Wright, Paul S. 2014. *The Presbyterian Ruling Elder: An Essential Guide*. Louisville: Geneva Press.