



Pastor's Thoughts



As children, many of us learned that dessert comes last. First we ate meat, vegetables, or whatever else was considered “good for us.” Dessert was the reward at the end of the meal. It was something to “save room” for.

This year, our stewardship theme invites us to turn that idea upside down: Dessert First: Celebrating God's Blessings.

Giving first to God can feel a little like eating dessert first. Reason tells us to take care of everything else and then give from whatever remains. Faith invites us to begin somewhere different—to recognize God first, to give thanks first, and to offer back to God from what we have received.

Deuteronomy 8 reminds us that when we have eaten and are satisfied, we are to praise the Lord for the good things he has given us, or risk neglecting to give thanks and forgetting the origin of our blessings lies in God. That reminder is important because it is easy to lose sight of God, in the midst of troubles and blessings. In difficult seasons, our busy schedules, grief, illness,

worries, and the ordinary demands of daily life can crowd out our awareness of God's goodness. In joyful seasons, our relief and enjoyment of the moment can get in the way of reflecting on the faithfulness of God, who was with us every step.

And so it is important to give thanks, in every moment, and to count our blessings, as individuals and as a church community.

There is the gift of people who love and support us. There are moments of grace that arrive unexpectedly. There are opportunities to serve, to worship, to learn, to encourage one another, and to participate in God's work in the world. There is the gift of this congregation and the ministry we share together, particularly as we make plans to sell the CE building and incorporate new outreach ministries into our life together.

“Dessert First” is an invitation to notice those blessings and celebrate them—not only by looking backward at what God has done, but also by looking forward with faith to what God will do, knowing that he is going before us to create the path we will follow in 2027.

This year, we will begin our stewardship celebration with dessert before lunch at our fellowship luncheon on October 4. As we share dessert first, we'll have an opportunity to share stories and reflect on the blessings we have experienced during the past year and share our hopes for what comes next.

Then, on Sunday, October 11, our worship will focus on stewardship and on our response to God's generosity. Those who wish to make a pledge for 2027 will be invited to bring their Estimate of Giving forms forward as an offering.

“Dessert First” is more than a clever theme. It is an invitation to practice gratitude, generosity, faith, and joy.

So let's celebrate what God has given us. Let's give thanks for what God is doing among us. And let's look forward with confidence and hope to what God will accomplish through us.

“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” — 2 Corinthians 9:15

Looking for Paper Bags

We are soon coming upon our Thanksgiving and Christmas Basket season for the Mission Committee, and we are in need of paper bags to help hold all of the items we will be purchasing for the families assigned to us from the Sharing Center. If you can help, please ask for paper bags when getting groceries and bring them into the church office or sanctuary. We appreciate your partnership in this wonderful program!

Road Runner Adventures

John and Monia battled the heat the first part of September and took an air-conditioned trip to Buffalo River in the Ozark Mountains. They were kept busy at the Hatchery with a car show next door and the Big Kids Fishing Derby. They did get to visit a local museum in West Plain about halfway through the month and celebrated Ginger's 6th birthday on the 22nd. John and Monia expect their last day will be around October 10th.



MISSION INFORMATION

We have just started the process of putting the shoe mission into work for 2026! Packets will be going out to schools in early October asking counselors to identify students whose families may need some extra help to get them new shoes, and gift cards going out at the end of the month. We're asking for your prayers as this work begins: for Ronnie Dayton as she coordinates our efforts, for the families to feel seen, blessed, and encouraged, and for the students to feel excited and proud of their new shoes.

Thank You for Supporting September's Special Offering: Children's Hunger Project



Thank you to all those who supported September's special offering, the Children's Hunger Program. This organization partners with United Way to ensure that children that rely on

school breakfasts and lunches for the bulk of their meals have sufficient food to get through the weekends and when school is not in session. Your contributions help vulnerable children with more than food – you give them the assurance that someone cares about their needs. Thank you!

October Special Offering: ECHO

On October 4th, we will be taking up a special offering in support of ECHO. Located in Ft. Myers, ECHO exists to reduce hunger and improve the lives of small-scale farmers worldwide. They have provided agricultural, livestock, and appropriate technology training and resources for nearly four decades to development workers in more than 190 countries. They also create opportunities for community leaders to network with one another to share experiences, ideas and solutions.



If you would be interested in learning more about ECHO go to www.echonet.org.

World Dignity Day Breakfast



On Thursday, October 22nd, Providence Connects (formerly Daily Bread and South Brevard Sharing Center) will once again be hosting their World Dignity Day Breakfast to increase awareness of what drives homelessness and how we can make a difference in our community. It will be held from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. at the Melbourne Hilton. Visit www.providenceconnects.org for more information.

Pumpkin Patch and Fall Fun at Good Shepherd

Presbyterian Church of the Good Shepherd, our neighbor to the North, is having a pumpkin patch again this year, as well as two special events to celebrate Fall. The Pumpkin Patch will be open October 4–31, with pumpkins available for purchase throughout the month. Patch hours are Monday–Friday from 1:00–7:00 PM and Saturday–Sunday from 11:00 AM–7:00 PM.



The Pumpkins and Police event will be held Friday, October 9, from 2:00–4:00 PM, with local police officers joining from 2:00–3:00 PM.

Families can meet and get to know local officers while enjoying crafts, storytime, and sweet treats from an ice cream truck and cake pop cart. Preschools, daycares, and families are especially welcome.

Then, on Saturday, October 24, from 2:00–5:00 PM, Good Shepherd Fall Festival will take place. The afternoon will feature face painting, balloon animals, pumpkin painting, a family photo area, storytime, cornhole, the Taco Maniac food truck, Trunk or Treat, and more. Local firefighters and fire truck will also be visiting from 3:00–4:00 PM.

The Nominating Committee Needs Your Help!

We are beginning the Nominating season, looking through the congregation for who would make an excellent Deacon or Elder. To help you discern who you might recommend for these positions, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- As you think of the church community here at First Presbyterian, who stands out to you as person of faith, dedication and humility?
- If they are also a person of compassion, prayer and service—this person would be a wonderful Deacon.
- If they are a person of thoughtful consideration, responsibility, yet open to trying new ideas, they would be a wonderful Elder.

Please pray over who you might nominate, and contact Jack Dayton, Anna Wood or Judy Rutter.



Word from the Herd

Please be in prayer for Marylynn and Clyde Yust, as well as their family.



Marylynn's nephew, Paul, passed away at 53. They plan to have a private

memorial service at their home for him.

Reformation Day

Did you know that October 31st is not just Halloween, it is Reformation Day! According to longstanding tradition, on this day in 1517, Martin Luther posted his “95 theses” to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, inviting a discussion about the church’s teaching and practice that he believed moved away from Biblical truth. Though he lost the subsequent debate, his ideas sparked a renewal movement that fed and helped shape the Protestant Reformation in Europe and eventually influenced churches around the world.

At the heart of the Reformation was a renewed emphasis on salvation by grace through faith, the authority of Scripture, and the centrality of Christ as our redeemer, whom we can approach without the necessity of a mediator.

On this day, we give thanks for God’s faithfulness, Luther’s stubbornness, and other theologians’ questions that helped to shape the faith that we practice today!

Sunday School Class

The Sunday School class is currently studying the book of Job in the Bible. The study, written by Eric Ortlund, is an honest look at the agony and pain experienced by Job and examines the questions of the sovereignty and trustworthiness of God in the midst of them. All are welcome to participate in the class, which meets every Sunday morning expect the second Sunday of the month at 8:45 a.m. in the CE building library.

Wednesday in the Word Bible Study

Our Wednesday in the Word Bible Study is meeting regularly! The class meets at 12:00 each Wednesday. Pastor Debra leads a study and discussion, which is currently centered on the Gospel of Luke with discussions of the contents as well as application to our lives today. All are welcome to attend, and participants may bring a bag lunch or snacks to enjoy while we delve into scripture together. We hope you will join us!

All Saints

Please help us collect names to remember those we have lost in the last year. On November 1st this year we will celebrate All Saint's Day and we would like to commemorate those who joined the Church Triumphant at both the worship service on that day and in the Chimes. A sheet will be posted on the bulletin board to write in names or you can submit names to the church office by Friday, October 24th to be included.



Dalip & Angela Singh
October 22

Ernie & Emmy Wohlenberg
October 26

Senior Luncheon

Senior Luncheon for October will be held Thursday, October 29th at 11:30 a.m. at Outback Steakhouse, 1600 W. New Haven Ave, Melbourne. Please contact Marsha Corton at macarter1950@yahoo.com for more information. Last day to sign up will be October 25th.



Thank You to Those Who Blessed Us in Worship in September

Elder of Month: **Judy Irvine**

Ushers: **Jim & Marsha Corton, Mike & Susan Allison, Marylynn Yust, Penny Slechta, Nancy & Evelyn Cox, Karola DeLuca, Mike Nardelli**

Flowers Donated By: **Brian Young & Carolyn Teal, Donna Aguilera, Tom Glew, Marsha Corton**



Marsha Corton
October 10

Won Park
October 13

Judith Fairman
October 17

Cindi Cundari
October 19

Joanne Ritter
October 22

Grady Evans
October 27



Session Summary

Session met on Tuesday, September 15th. Topics addressed included the following:

- Session approved inviting David Lindemer to be the guest preacher on Sunday, September 27th.
- Session approved funds up to \$2,000 for expenses related to the sale of the CE building, such as the application fee to the city to divide the property back into 2 lots.
- Session heard reports from all committees with updates on Property plans to do routine maintenance on the Air Conditioning systems, upcoming worship plans, and discussion of hosting a handbell concert in the next couple of years.
- Treasurer's Report: We saw a slight increase in August due to consistent, generous giving and careful monitoring of expenditures. We saw a slight decrease in the deficit, which exists mainly due to repairs and Property Insurance costs.
 - o Average Monthly Expenses: \$18,541.17
 - o Actual Expenses in August: \$14,821.83
 - o Contributions in August: \$15,047.46
 - o Income year-to-date: \$132,033.01
 - o Expenses year-to-date: \$147,101.33
 - o Deficit year-to-date: \$14,943.32

Operation Hope Outreach Crosses County Line

An article from Hometown News by Brenda Sposato, September 15, 2026



MELBOURNE — Operation Hope of Greater Florida is expanding its outreach beyond Indian River County, bringing food assistance to families in Brevard County after discovering a significant need just minutes from the home of founder Jesse Zermeño.

Zermeño said he first learned about families struggling at The Meadows mobile home community in Melbourne through a neighbor.

“He took me five minutes from my house to see the need,” Zermeño said. “There I met a man who said he hadn’t eaten in three days. It was heartbreaking.”

Operation Hope first visited the community in August, providing backpacks and school supplies to approximately 100 children. The organization promised residents it would return Sept. 12 — this time with groceries.

Nearly 300 people came out for the first Brevard County food distribution, receiving bread, pastries, produce, eggs, drinks, canned goods and other groceries.

Volunteer Linda G. Howard said residents quickly became part of the effort, helping carry groceries, providing boxes and translating for neighbors.

“It became a time of fun, fellowship, cooperation and joy,” Howard said.

For volunteer Bonnie Ida, seeing the level of need so close to home was eye-opening.

“I saw a child with no shoes,” Ida said. “It is mind-boggling to see how needy our community is.”

The outreach brought together Operation Hope volunteers from Fellsmere, Melbourne-area residents, local churches and other community members. Pastor Gabriel Aguilar and members of his congregation also volunteered.

Zermeño said holding the distribution during the weekend commemorating Sept. 11 added special meaning, recalling the way communities came together to help one another following the attacks.

Operation Hope hopes to continue serving The Meadows and eventually offer a food distribution in the Brevard County area each month. The organization is seeking food donations, volunteers and a local location where donated food can be stored and sorted.

Those wishing to donate can visit operationhopefl.org or mail contributions to Operation Hope, P.O. Box 1152, Fellsmere, FL 32948. To volunteer, contact Jesse Zermeño at 321-403-2604.

Residents can also follow Operation Hope on Facebook for upcoming food distribution dates and times.

OCTOBER 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6:15 pm NA	2	3
4 8:45 am SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00 am WORSHIP SPECIAL OFFERING— E.C.H.O. FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON	5 12:00 noon AA 6:00 pm AA—LADIES ONLY	6 6:00 pm CUB SCOUTS 7:00 pm BOY SCOUTS	7 12 p.m. BIBLE STUDY	8 6:15 pm NA	9	10
11 10:00 am WORSHIP WORSHIP COMMITTEE	12 12:00 noon AA 6:00 pm AA—LADIES ONLY	13 6:00 pm CUB SCOUTS 7:00 pm BOY SCOUTS	14 12 p.m. BIBLE STUDY 5:00 p.m. ADMIN. MEETING	15 6:15 pm NA	16	17
18 8:45 am SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00 am WORSHIP DEACONS MEETING	19 12:00 noon AA 6:00 pm AA—LADIES ONLY	20 6:00 pm CUB SCOUTS 7:00 pm BOY SCOUTS 7:00 p.m. SESSION MEETING	21 12 p.m. BIBLE STUDY	22 6:15 pm NA	23	24
25 8:45 am SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:00 am WORSHIP 5¢ A MEAL	26 12:00 noon AA 6:00 pm AA—LADIES ONLY	27 6:00 pm CUB SCOUTS 7:00 pm BOY SCOUTS	28 12 p.m. BIBLE STUDY	29 11:30 am SENIOR LUNCHEON 6:15 pm NA	30	31 HAPPY HALLOWEEN

IN THE WORD

Daily Devotion

September 27th through October 3rd - Read Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

There is a major shift in theology presented in this passage from Ezekiel: If one person commits sin, who will bear the consequence? That person only, or their children, grandchildren, and so on? Similarly, who will bear the blessings of faithfulness? God's people were accustomed to assuming multiple generations of blessings or curses, but in this passage, God says he will deal with each person and each generation individually.

October 1: The people of God were upset that God didn't offer "partial credit" for goodness that became sin. Do you think that was fair?

October 2: Is it "fair" of God to offer forgiveness for sin committed before someone turns their life over to him? Why or why not?

October 3: The final message of this passage is "Turn, then, and live." God wants to offer blessing, but can only do so if we first obey.

October 4th through 10th - Read Matthew 21:33-46

Jesus tells the parable of the wicked tenants during his final days in Jerusalem, shortly after his triumphal entry and confrontation with the religious authorities. He uses the imagery of the vineyard, the master, and the tenants to depict what is happening within Israel regarding himself, and the implications for how this is a rejection of God's authority. It is not just Jesus being rejected, but God, as he is the one who sent Jesus into the world.

October 4: Why does Jesus use a vineyard as the setting for this story? What does the vineyard communicate about God's relationship with his people?

October 5: The landowner carefully prepares the vineyard before entrusting it to the tenants. What does this suggest about what God has already provided for us?

October 6: The servants are repeatedly rejected and mistreated. Why do you think people sometimes resist the messengers God sends them?

October 7: The tenants want the vineyard for themselves rather than for the one who owns it. What are some ways we can confuse stewardship with ownership?

October 8: The tenants kill the son because they believe they can take his inheritance. How does this part of the story point toward Jesus' death?

October 9: Jesus quotes the image of the rejected stone becoming the cornerstone. What does it mean for Jesus to become the foundation of our lives?

October 10: The vineyard is ultimately entrusted to people who will produce fruit. What kind of "fruit" should God expect from a life entrusted to him?

October 11th through 17th - Read Exodus 32:1-14

Exodus 32 takes place during and immediately after Moses is on Mount Sinai receiving the covenant instructions from God, including the 10 Commandments. The people become impatient and ask Aaron to make them a god, and he fashions the golden calf.

The golden calf represents a return to the kind of visible, manageable deity the Israelites knew in the ancient world. They want something they can see and control rather than trusting the invisible God who has led them into the wilderness.

October 11: Israel had just witnessed God's power in the Exodus. Why do you think they became impatient when Moses was gone?

October 12: The people ask for something they can see and worship. What kinds of things do we use to make God feel more manageable or controllable?

October 13: Aaron creates the golden calf, even though the people already know who rescued them from Egypt. Why is remembering important to faith?

October 14: The people celebrate around something they created themselves. What is the difference between worshiping God and worshiping something that serves our own desires?

October 15: God tells Moses what the people have done and speaks of destroying them. Moses responds by interceding for them. Who has prayed faithfully for you when you were struggling?

October 16: Moses appeals to God's promises to Abraham and Israel. What does it mean to pray by holding on to what God has already promised?

October 17: God relents from the announced disaster. What does this passage teach you about prayer, mercy, and God's relationship with his people? expectation of Christ's return shape the way we live today?

October 18th through 24th

Read 1 Thessalonians 1

Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians was written to a young Christian community where he, Silas, and Timothy had preached for a time before their ministry was cut short by opposition. The letter Paul writes gives a glimpse of a very early Christian community learning how to live faithfully in the midst of a non-Christian culture.

Paul begins not with correction but with gratitude. He remembers the Thessalonians' "work of faith," "labor of love," and "steadfastness of hope," three themes that will remain important throughout the letter, as Paul encourages them to keep going, answers their questions and doubts, and assures them their faith has also become an example to believers beyond their own city.

October 18: Paul begins by giving thanks for the Thessalonians. What would someone who knows you well thank God for in your life?

October 19: Paul connects faith with work, love with labor, and hope with endurance. Why might genuine faith naturally produce action?

October 20: The Thessalonians turned "from idols to serve the living and true God." What are some things that compete for our attention, loyalty, or trust?

October 21: Their faith became known beyond their own community. How can one person's faithfulness influence people they may never have intended to reach?

October 22: The Thessalonians received the gospel despite opposition. What helps a person remain faithful when following Christ becomes difficult?

October 23: Paul describes them as imitators of him and of the Lord. Who has modeled Christian faith for you in a way you could imitate?

October 24: The chapter ends with the hope of Jesus' return. How should the expectation of Christ's return shape the way we live today?

October 25th through 31st

Read Romans 3:19–28

Even though Paul wrote this letter to Christians in Rome this passage became the centerpiece of Reformation movements 1500 years later, and the message he wrote still forms the bedrock of Protestant theology today.

The heart of his message is this: God's righteousness has been revealed apart from the law, through faith in Jesus Christ. This does not mean that God's law was bad or irrelevant. Rather, the law points toward the problem that the gospel answers. All people have sinned, and righteousness is received as a gift through God's grace, because of Christ's redemptive work. Paul's argument radically shifts the focus from what people can achieve for God to what God has done for them in Christ.

October 25: Paul says that the law makes people conscious of sin. Why is recognizing a problem an important first step toward addressing it?

October 26: Paul insists that no one can establish a right standing with God simply by keeping the law. What does this reveal about the limits of human effort?

October 27: "All have sinned" leaves no room for spiritual superiority. Why is it important for Christians to remember that everyone stands in need of grace?

October 28: Paul describes righteousness as something God gives rather than something we earn. How does that change the way we understand our relationship with God?

October 29: Faith in Jesus is central to Paul's explanation of salvation. What does trusting Christ look like in everyday life?

October 30: Paul says that boasting is excluded because justification is by faith. What kinds of things are we tempted to use as evidence that we are "better" Christians than someone else?

October 31: Grace means that our relationship with God ultimately rests on what God has done for us in Christ. How might living from grace rather than striving for approval change the way you live?

November 1st through 3rd

Read Revelation 7:9-17

Revelation 7 gives us a vision of a great multitude gathered before God's throne and the Lamb. They come from every nation, people, tribe, and language, united in worship. They have endured suffering, yet now stand in God's presence, where hunger, thirst, grief, and pain are no more. The Lamb who was slain becomes their shepherd, leading them to the springs of the water of life, while God wipes away every tear.

This is a fitting passage for All Saints' Day because it reminds us that the church is larger than what we can see. We remember the saints who have gone before us while also looking toward the great company of God's people gathered before the throne. All Saints' Day is both remembrance and hope: we give thanks for those who shaped our faith, grieve those we miss, and trust that God's story ends not in death but in life and worship in God's presence.

November 1: John sees a multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language standing before God. How does this expand your understanding of who belongs to God's family?

November 2: The multitude has come through suffering and now stands before the throne. What does their perseverance teach you about faithfulness when life is difficult?

November 3: The people worship the Lamb who was slain for them. What does it mean to center our worship on what Christ has done rather than what we have accomplished?