



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PERRY

DECEMBER 2024 CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Craft & Fellowship 1:00 pm</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10:00 am</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Prayer meeting 9:30 Soup for the Soul 11:30 am Potluck Supper 5:45 pm Choir 7pm</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Elder Training</p>
<p>8</p> <p>Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Craft & Fellowship 1:00 pm</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10:00 am Administration meeting 4 pm Worship Meeting 6 pm</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Prayer meeting 9:30 am Fellowship Supper 5:45pm Choir 7pm</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Christian Education Meeting 10:30am Finance Meeting 11:30 am</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Retreat 9 am—3pm</p>
<p>15</p> <p>Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am Ordination/Installation</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Craft & Fellowship 1:00pm</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10:00 am Session Meeting 5:30 pm</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Prayer meeting 9:30 Soup for the Soul 11:30 am Fellowship Christmas Supper 5:45 pm Choir 7pm</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Sunday School 9:30 am Worship 11 am Christmas Program 5:00 pm</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Craft & Fellowship 1:00 pm</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10:00 am Christmas Eve Service</p>	<p>25</p> <p>No Fellowship Supper Church office closed</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>No Sunday School Worship 11 am</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Craft & Fellowship 1:00 pm</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Beach Bible Study 9:30 am FPC Bible Study 10 am</p>				

A letter from our Pastor

From hurricane damage to insurance claims, from election results to holiday planning, there's no denying it. For some, the future feels bleaker than it did a month ago. For others, that future seems brighter. But wherever we are within our feelings, here's our newsflash: no one knows what the future holds. And this business of not knowing rapidly breeds anxiety.

Anxiety often comes from living more in possible futures than living in our real present. People crave certainty, which possible futures do not offer us, so we get caught in cycles of trying to determine what will happen. Our anxious brains live out possible futures rather than simply living in our real present. When our brains try to live out multiple possible futures at once, anxiety can magnify itself into a panic attack.

I'm describing anxiety, and the future, because I wrote this article on Super Tuesday, working from home while feeling quite cruddy. And since Tuesday is also my sermon drafting day, while listening to The Grass Roots' *Let's Live for Today*, I was considering the alternate Old Testament option for Stewardship Sunday: [Ruth 3:1-5; 4:13-17](#).

Ruth perennially lives into an uncertain future, just like us. And just like us, God walks with her into the future that *will* happen, no matter how many possible futures strain her anxious mind. Ruth's future opened when Israelites Elimelech and Naomi move to Moab to escape a famine. Their sons marry Moabites, Orpah and Ruth. Then, kerplow, all three men die, leaving women 'manless.' Naomi decides to return to Israel, releasing her sons' wives from familial obligations. Orpah returns to her parents, but Ruth chooses to stay with Naomi. Though Naomi tells her to go, Ruth clings to her, saying:

"Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; Where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God..."

Do we really think Ruth knew what she was getting herself into? She was following Naomi to a foreign land, as an immigrant; alone, save for Naomi; few prospects due to marriage customs. And yet, Ruth binds herself to Naomi, stepping into an uncertain future, beyond what she has known. Coming to faith in the Israelites' God, Ruth trusts that God is already present in the future she will inhabit.

Still, yet, uncertainty exists. Back in Israel, Ruth gleanes fields with other women. Because she's a hard worker, she catches Boaz's eye. All would be well for Ruth and Naomi if Boaz were to marry Ruth. Again, come the possible futures. There's a relative closer to Elimelech than Boaz, who has first claim on Naomi's dead husband's land. But when the relative learns the land comes with Ruth the Moabite, he refuses, opening the way for Boaz to marry Ruth.

The present continues to flow into the future, where Ruth has a son, whom they name Obed. Obed becomes the father of Jesse, who becomes the father of David, who becomes the second king of Israel. And so, David's ancestry includes a brave immigrant woman, who would not abandon her mother-in-law when faced with an uncertain future.

This is a great story to carry in our hearts, during days of uncertainty. As we try, with God's help, to remain in the present rather than inventing a thousand anxious futures, we remember Ruth and Naomi. We remember the depth of their relationship. We remember Ruth's determination and Boaz's kindness. We remember God's promise to the family of David, that they would be kings forever, a promise fulfilled in the reign of Jesus Christ. We remember all of this, a story that intertwines with our stories, sinking us more deeply into the sure foundation of God.

Whatever the future holds, God holds the future. And the only future that will come to pass is the one in which God is there walking with us.

We pray: O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Peace,
JDB+

Notes and Reminders

First Presbyterian Church
Presents
A Musical Reflection on the Birth of Christ
310 Plantation Rd. Perry, FL
12/22/24 at 5pm



And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us John 1:14

FPC Website:

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December Birthdays

Melissa Everett—December 3

Stan Whiddon—December 6

Denise Kepler—December 12

Chuck Eckel—December 16

Jeanne Raulerson—December 21

Edwin Williams—December 24

Kim Torres—December 25

Kristie Harper—December 27

Marissa Ratliff—December 28

December Anniversaries

Charles & Tuckie Maultsby—December 2

Scott & Sally MacNeill—December 14

Stan & Shona Whiddon—December 20