



First Presbyterian Church of Bradenton, Florida

Mission Study

May 2026

Cultivating Hearts for
Jesus from the Heart
of Downtown





Christ is the Foundation of the Church

“In Christ all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Christ God reconciles all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross” (Col. 1:19–20). In Christ’s name, therefore, the Church is sent out to bear witness to the good news of reconciliation with God, with others, and with all creation. In Christ, the Church receives its truth and appeal, its holiness, and its unity.



Introduction

May 2026

First Presbyterian Church of Bradenton is at a crossroads during an exciting time in our church history. We as Presbyterians go through the process of Mission Study when we are seeking to replace a pastor. Yet, even in this time of transition, our church is growing and we can truly feel the presence of our Lord guiding us. It is a time to reevaluate where we have been, who we are and what we want to accomplish. We truly feel blessed and appreciate all who have helped in this process. Many thanks to the Peace River Presbytery, our interim pastor, Rev. Dr. Pam Masten, our Session, Mission Study Team and our congregation.



Kathy Flynn

Chair of Mission Study Team



Purpose of the Mission Study

- Discern God's call for the next pastor and mission direction
- Clarify the church's identity and calling
- Understand the surrounding community
- Identify ministry opportunities
- Inform the pastoral search process





Mission Study Process

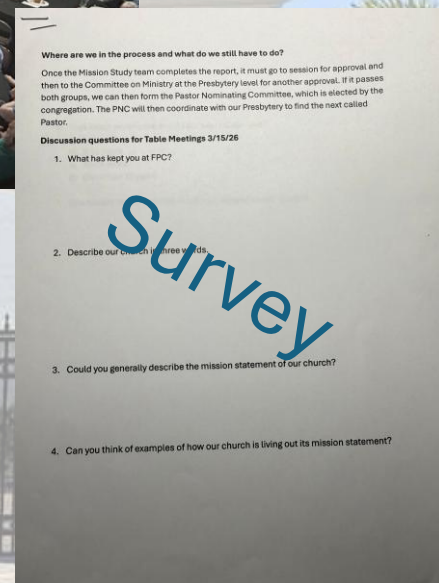
The Mission Study Team was selected and approved by the Session at FPC. The team was guided by our interim pastor, Rev. Dr. Pam Masten. We reviewed mission study reports from other churches and laid out a plan to accomplish our own study. We were led by a guiding scripture passage; “Behold, I will do a new thing”, Isaiah 43:19. Our plan addressed our history, our status financially, our demographics, who we are and what we hope and dream we will be.

Continued next page.

Mission Study Process (Continued)

The Mission Study Team conducted two surveys of our congregation to get input on what we are doing well, where we need improvement and the hopes and dreams for our church in the future. The first survey was sent to all congregants of which we received 59 completed surveys back. Additionally, we hosted a combined church service, followed by a brunch on March 15th, 2026, that was attended by over 120 congregants.

Church elders and mission study team members led table discussions at the brunch to further engage our congregation in the process to select our new pastor.





Mission Study Findings

What Our Congregation Said

What We Do Well

- Welcoming atmosphere
- Music and worship programs
- Biblical, inspirational sermons
- Fellowship & Friendship
- Sense of Christian Family

Where We Want to Grow

- More youth and young families
- Expanded outreach to downtown
- More fellowship opportunities
- Stronger community engagement
- Intergenerational connection

What We Dream Of

- A growing, vibrant congregation
- A pastor who truly knows us
- Deeper discipleship programs
- Impact beyond our walls
- A thriving future for FPC

Mission Study Findings

What We Need in Our Next Pastor



A Biblical Preacher

Delivers sound, inspiring sermons rooted in scripture that speak to all generations.



A Pastoral Caregiver

Knows and loves the congregation personally - present in joys and trials.



A Growth Catalyst

Able to attract and grow youth, young adults, and new families to FPC.



A Community Connector

Leads the church outward into Manatee County with presence and purpose.



A Collaborative Leader

Partners with Elders, staff and congregation to discern and pursue God's call.



Mission Study Findings

The Moment We Are In

Honest Realities

- Avg. weekly attendance has remained flat averaging 197 over the past four years
- 49% of our membership is 75+
- Youth and young family presence is limited
- We are in pastoral transition – interim leadership currently

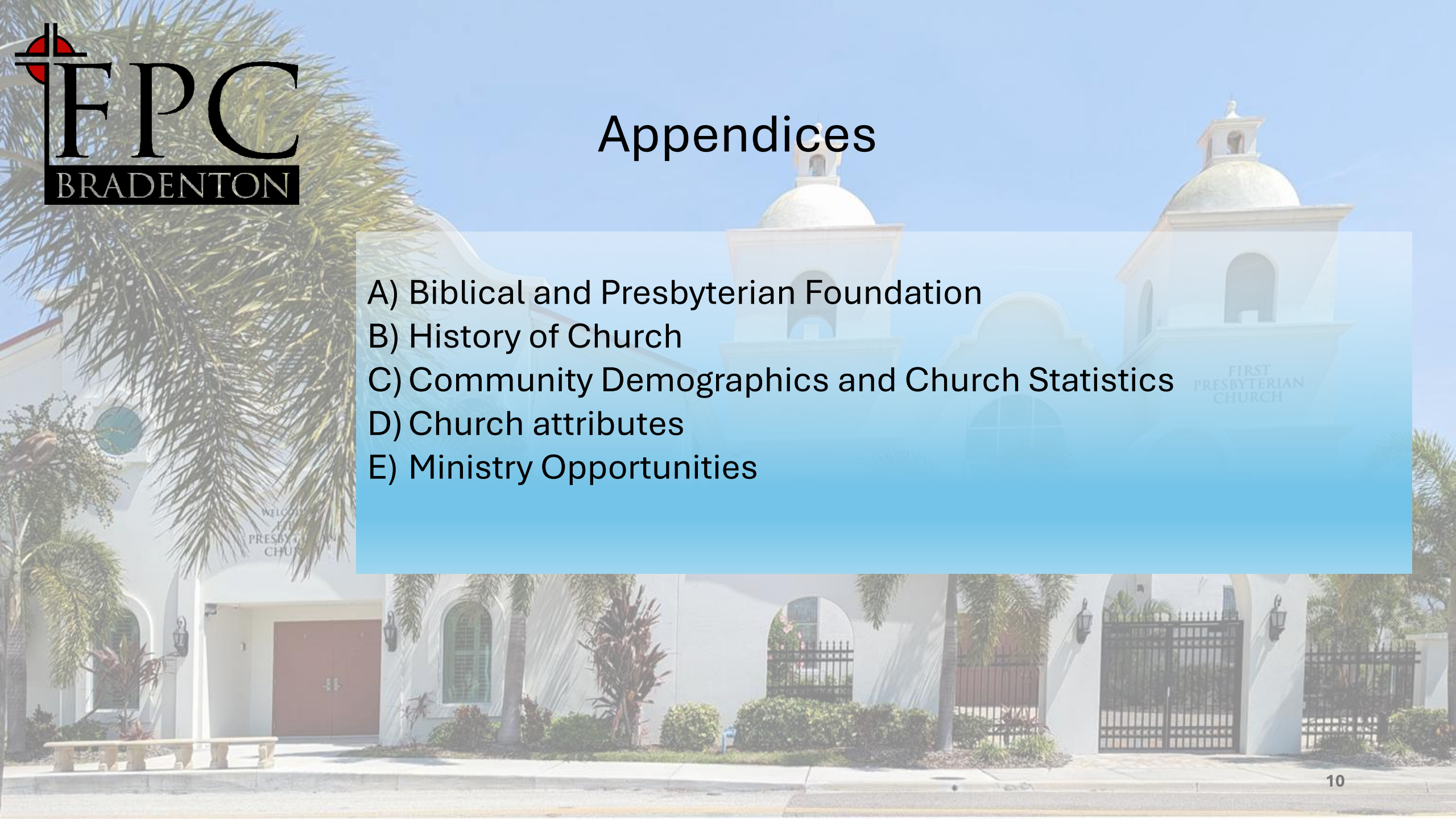
Our Opportunities

- Manatee County expected to grow by 6% by 2030 to 497,000
- Prime downtown location for outreach and visibility
- Strong congregational engagement – 120+ at March brunch
- Expansion of social media presence in the community to tell the church story



Appendices

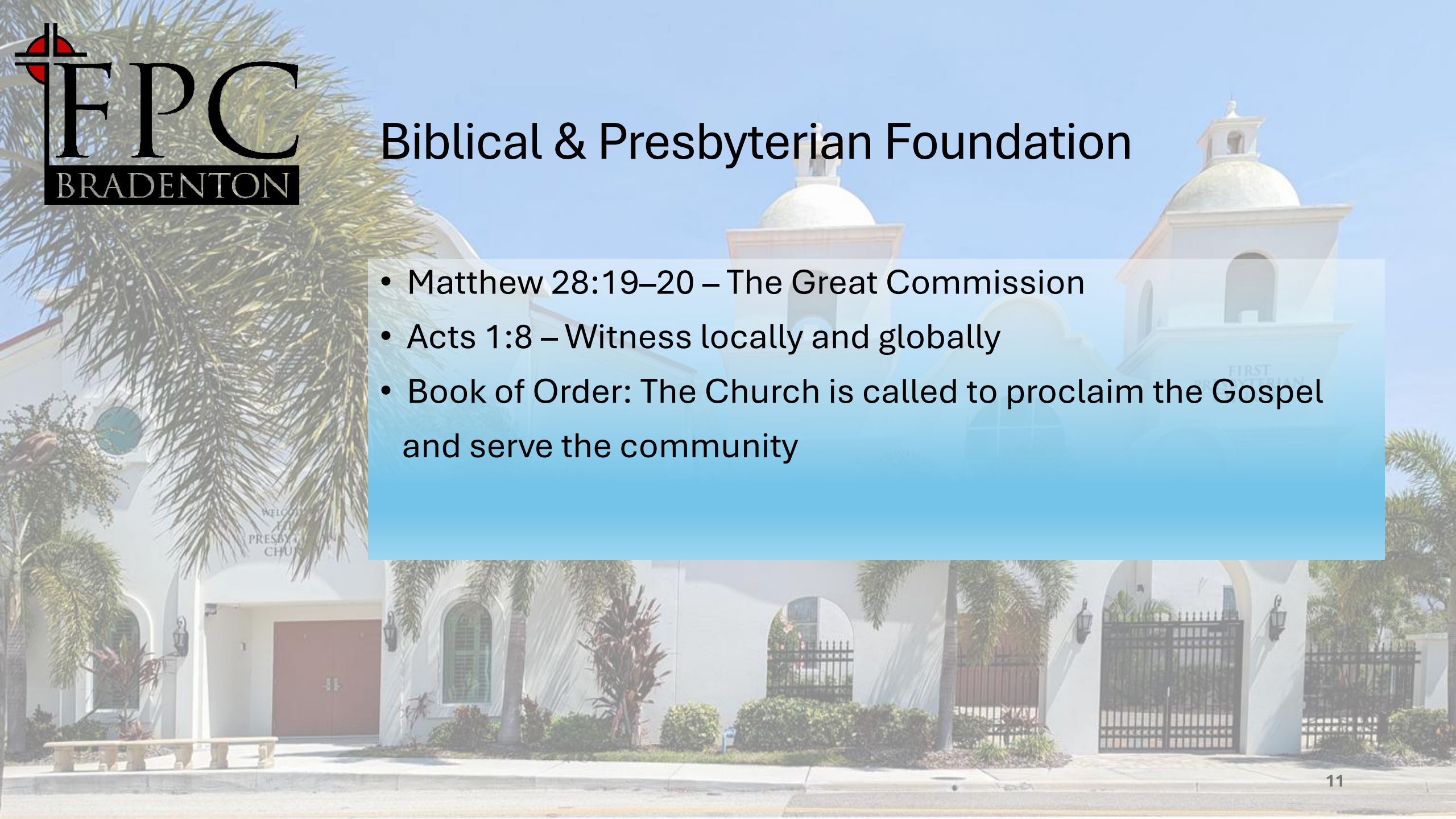
- A) Biblical and Presbyterian Foundation
- B) History of Church
- C) Community Demographics and Church Statistics
- D) Church attributes
- E) Ministry Opportunities





Biblical & Presbyterian Foundation

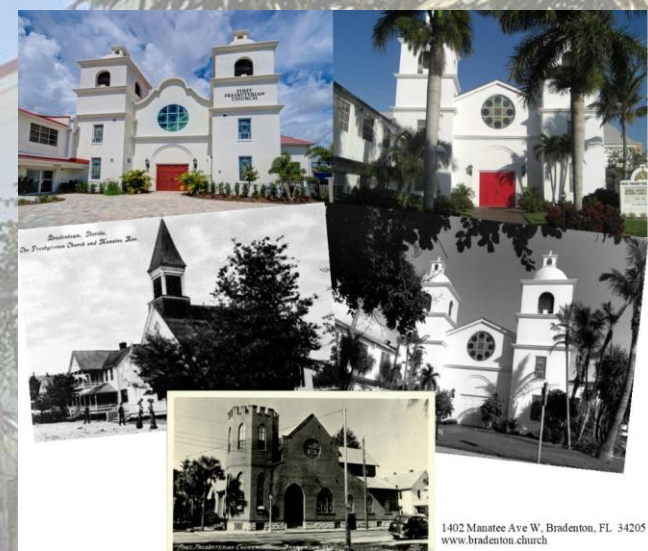
- Matthew 28:19–20 – The Great Commission
- Acts 1:8 – Witness locally and globally
- Book of Order: The Church is called to proclaim the Gospel and serve the community





History of First Presbyterian Church

Established in 1886, we are proud to be the longest standing church in Bradenton. First Presbyterian Church of Bradenton was founded by a group of Bible study attendees who wanted a church of their own. After originally meeting at a local dock, and at times at different buildings throughout downtown Bradenton, we settled at our current location in 1907 in the heart of the city. In 2021, we completed major improvements to the church building through a capital campaign which included a new Welcome Center, renovated Sanctuary and restrooms, new church offices and much more. This campaign spanned five years from inception to completion. The passion we had for this project was evident in the \$1,454,690 raised against a goal of \$1,300,000 with 93% of our congregation participating.

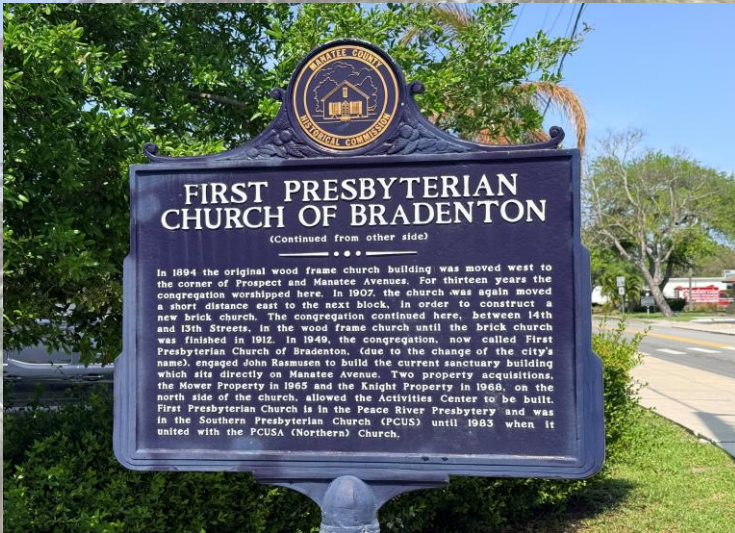




History (Continued)

While our long history is noteworthy, the most remarkable times come from worship, music, camps and studies that have unified the church. We recall the vibrant youth group, Vacation Bible School, weeknight gatherings, and Sunday school. To quote one of our longtime members, Tina Crawford, member since 1947, when asked what kept you at FPC all these years; she said, “The people and the relationships, they are like family”.

These times were joyous and fulfilling for the congregation. We knew the importance of the Gospel being preached and felt the support from our pastors and church family. The church has offered us all an opportunity to learn, serve, worship, and ***Cultivate Hearts for Jesus from the Heart of Downtown.***



Community Demographics

MissionInsite

Manatee County, Florida

Population – 469,104

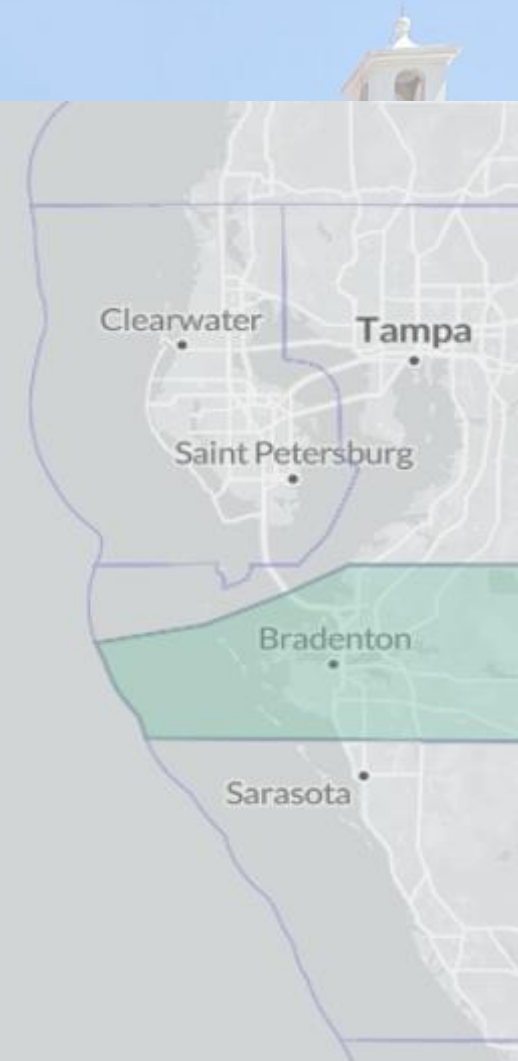
Average age – 47

Average Income - \$122,538

Median Income - \$85,138

Generations

Name	S & H Type	Initial Birth	Final Birth	2020	2020 %	2025	2025 %
Homeland (Z)	Artist	2005	2025	64,089	16.03%	95,556	20.37%
Millennial (Y)	Hero	1982	2004	92,486	23.14%	108,550	23.14%
Gen X (13th)	Nomad	1961	1981	100,244	25.08%	117,252	24.99%
Boom	Prophet	1946	1960	94,706	23.69%	101,249	21.58%
Silent	Artist	1925	1945	41,003	10.26%	39,588	8.44%
GI	Hero	1901	1924	7,183	1.80%	6,909	1.47%
Total				399,711		469,104	



Extensive Demographic data from MissionInsite can be reviewed at www.Bradenton.Church/keydata (Ctrl + Click on Link)



Church At a Glance – Key Statistics

Average Weekly Attendance (In-Person + Online)

Year	1 st Service	1 st Service On-line	2nd Service	2nd Service On-line
2025	66	7	97	21
2024	66	6	107	22
2023	56	10	103	22
2022	47	27	99	33

Membership Age Breakdown

Age 1-16	20	7.8%
Age 17-25	3	1.2%
Age 26-40	17	6.6%
Age 41-50	13	5.0%
Age 51-74	78	30.4%
Age 75+	126	49%
Total	257	100%

Includes members, affiliates, non-member spouses and children



Church At a Glance – Key Statistics

Year	Revenue	Expenses	Net
2025	\$736,387	\$704,153	\$32,234
2024	\$666,363	\$679,754	(\$13,391)
2023	\$688,142	\$599,525	\$88,617
2022	\$686,422	\$680,340	\$6,081
2021	\$684,000	681,610	\$2,390

Staffing

Staff members



Rev. Dr. Pamela Masten

Interim Pastor



Dwayne Smith

Operations and Technology Dir.



Doreen Hawkins

Financial Admin / Connections Dir.



Ted Hayes

Director of Music / Organist



Diane Varnadore

Pianist



Doug Mulhollen

Director of Emerging Worship



Sherry Doles

Nursery Worker



Denise Baez

Nursery Worker

Session

Session members



Mike Asher

Finance



Stacy White

First Impressions



Maggie Rieniets

Worship & Music



Mary Jean Edwards

Family Ministries



Kathy Flynn

Personnel and
Congregational Care



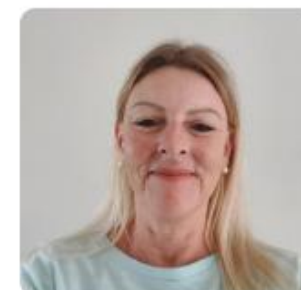
Theresa Dahlquist

Clerk of Session



Paul Marziani

Facilities



Carole McKay

Missions



Church Attributes

- Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall Worship
- Bible Study Offerings
- Community Engagement
- Congregational Care
- Fellowship Events
- Technology
- Youth & Family
- Presbyterian Women

Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall Worship

First Presbyterian Church of Bradenton offers two services every Sunday. The contemporary service meets at 9:30 AM in Fellowship Hall. This service features the Worship Band playing current and nostalgic praise music. The vibe is casual with coffee and donuts.





Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall Worship

The traditional service meets at 11:00 AM in the Sanctuary. This service features a full chancel choir, a chancel bell choir, including various visiting musicians. The music is a mixture of classical, beloved hymns and anthems, and gospel songs as well.

Several times a year, there is a "Worship Together" combined service in the Sanctuary, featuring both traditional and contemporary music with the band, choir, bells, organ, and piano.



Bible Study Offerings

Breakfast & Bible Study

Current Study:

“Delivered Out of Empire”

Meeting: Weekly (Saturdays on Zoom)

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Presbyterian Women Bible Study

Current Study:

Various Scripture Studies

Meeting: Monthly (3rd Monday)

Time: 1:00 p.m.

Women’s Evening Bible Study

Current Study:

“Breathe” (Pricilla Shirer)

Meeting: Weekly (Tuesdays)

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Adult Bible Study

Current Study:

“The Living Word of God: Part 1”

Meeting: Weekly (Sunday mornings)

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Women’s Connection Group

Current Study:

“Christian” (Andy Stanley)

Meeting: Weekly (Fridays)

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Men’s Monday Night Fellowship

Current Study:

Selections from Our Daily Bread

Meeting: Weekly (Mondays)

Time: 6:00 p.m.



Community Engagement

FPC members generously donate their time and resources to support our local community. Our primary community engagements include our church food pantry; Piecemakers; Vacation Bible School and direct cash donations to local agencies.



Community Engagement Impact

FPC Pantry Mission

Our church Pantry is open to the public Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Church members volunteer over 2,000 hours annually and provide food distributions to over 31,700 food insecure families, Adults and Children annually (many repeat clients monthly). This is a mission that greatly depends on our church volunteers, generous donations and church funding.

Piecemakers

A group of members and some non-members who are gifted quilters that meet weekly. Collectively they volunteer over 1,750 hours annually and make as many as 150 quilts and 30-40 pieces of children's clothes that are donated to local to organizations like: North River Pregnancy Center; Hospice; retirement centers; and youth programs. All costs associated with fabric and materials are supplied by donations.

VBS

20 children from the community attended our four-day Vacation Bible School in June. VBS provided Bible-based learnings with games and snacks giving parents back some precious time during the week. Fifteen members of the church volunteered over the four days.

Mission Contributions

The Church supported the following local agencies with cash donations totaling \$12,000 during the past year:

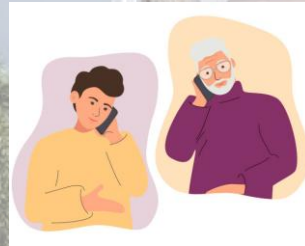
- The Food Bank of Manatee County
- Better Together
- One More Child
- Youth for Christ
- FPC Pantry

Congregational Care

The Congregational Care Ministry Team is composed of one elder and eight deacons.

Elder, Kathy Flynn, coordinates and documents the actions of the team, and reports the information back to the session. Our deacons, Judy Ernest, Deb Johnson, Trish Litton, Lee and Suzanne Richmond, and Nevin and Karen Seus, lovingly serve our congregation in the following capacity:

Congregants who can no longer attend Worship or church functions are cared for through home visitation, serving of communion, prayers, phone calls and sent cards and notes to help them feel connected to our church family.



Congregants who are experiencing medical procedures, illness or loss of loved ones are offered visitations and meals, along with prayer, phone calls and cards to help bridge the gap of their time away from our church.



Congregants who need services beyond the scope of our church's capabilities are connected to community resources that can provide the additional help, such as Meals on Wheels.



Fellowship Events

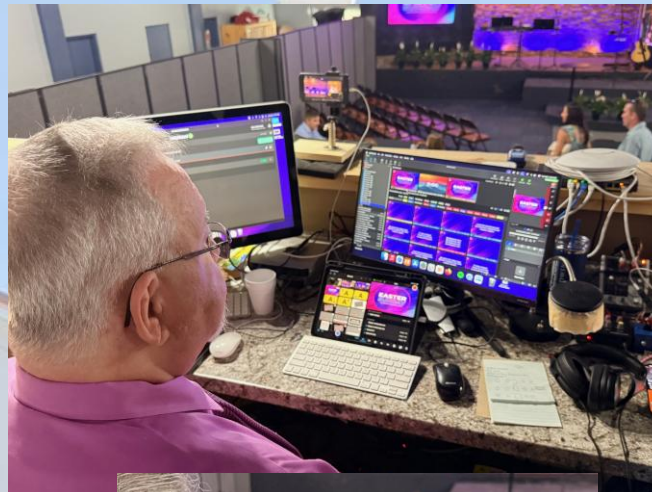
Fellowship at FPC includes a coffee and snack time between our two services, family game nights, brunch after combined worship services, occasional Wednesday evening dinners throughout the year, Bible studies, Piecemakers (our sewing group), Card Ministry, Choir, Band, Bell Choir, Greeters and Table Talks (groups of members and non-members who meet for dinner at each other's homes to get to know one another and have a time of fellowship).



Technology

Our technology team oversees the streaming of our church services, making them available to church members and to people in our community who want to hear the Word of God. Each week, both services are streamed live and are also available on demand at later times.

The team also manages our website, www.Bradenton.Church, as well as the church's computer network, hardware, and other key technical systems that support the church's ministries.



Youth & Families

Children meet at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays for Bible lessons while their families attend the contemporary worship service. Paid caregivers lead an age-appropriate class for birth through pre-K, and the Family Ministry Elder with volunteers teaches grades K–5. Families receive lesson information to encourage discussion at home, and children participate in worship through activities such as singing and Palm Sunday processions. The church aims to provide Christian education for all youth and is currently seeking to hire a Children’s Ministry Director.





Presbyterian Women

The Presbyterian Women (PW) at First Presbyterian Church of Bradenton are part of the global Presbyterian Women organization within the PCUSA and are active in the Synod of the South Atlantic and Peace River Presbytery. They support national and international mission projects such as the Birthday Offering, Thanks Offering, and Mission Haven, while also serving their local community through events like Autumnfest at Westminster Manor and the annual Mother's Day luncheon prepared by the men of the church. Fundraisers such as poinsettia and Easter lily sales help support these ministries and other church needs. PW's central focus is a monthly Bible study held from September through May.



Search Committee Considerations

- Preaching the Gospel
- Strong communication skills
- Outreach to retirees and seasonal residents
- Family and youth ministry development
- Experience with community outreach
- Ability to lead multi-generational ministry
- Commitment to Presbyterian theology and governance
- Managerial Skills



Prayer & Discernment

- Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit
- Pray for continued unity in the congregation
- Discern God's call for the church's future mission



Resources & Mission Study Team

Resources

Demographic and Religious Insights from MissionInsite
Congressional Feedback
Church Historic Archives

Mission Study Team

Kathy Flynn – Chair
Dave Hall

Barbara Dittmann
Shelby Mills

Nathaniel Edwards
Maggie Rieniets

Rev. Dr. Pam Masten – Team Advisor