

OUR MISSION

We, the members of First Presbyterian Church, believe: that our mission is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever; that Jesus Christ is our personal Lord and Savior; and that the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures are our constant guide and test. We believe we are called, as a part of the body of Christ, to provide refuge for those in need, an atmosphere of Christian love and fellowship, and a place where we will grow in faith and Spirit. We believe we are called to be faithful disciples in prayer, in study of the scripture, in church attendance; and to participate actively in the life of this congregation with our time, our talents and our resources. We believe we are called by grace to be ministers of Christ, to follow Him, to reach and serve our church family, our community and the world, to spread the Gospel and to lead others into fellowship and salvation in Jesus Christ.

OUR PURPOSE

In searching for a concise purpose statement for our congregation, The Great Ends of the Church statement, (crafted over 100 years ago), has been restated in a little more modern language:

As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA),
First Presbyterian Church of Winter Haven
exists to show God's kingdom to the world as we —

- Share the good news of what God has done in Jesus Christ
 - Develop and nurture God's children into disciples
 - Provide a place and a program for praising God
- Live our lives according to the Word, guided by the Spirit
 - Commit to justice for all God's people

FULLFILLING OUR MISSION

First Presbyterian Church of Winter Haven is an intergenerational congregation with a rich history of 124 years. We offer enriching experiences for members in all age groups. We strive to be a family of Christian servants, whose motivation is to serve Christ by serving others. Our strengths as a congregation are numerous. We have been blessed with abundant leadership, a tremendous volunteer base, and a superb facility located in the center of Winter Haven. We have a dynamic music ministry, special children's programs, and a wealth of treasure within our membership in terms of time, talent, and material resources. Even though we are a large congregation, we continue to be knit together as a family of faith, dependent on each other for support in our spiritual lives.

PROGRAMMING

Sunday morning services are the mainstay of our congregation's worship life. We adhere to the traditional Presbyterian understanding of worship and practice with services at 8:30, 11:00 and Sunday School at 9:45 for ages two and up. During the summer months we have one worship service at 10:00. A nursery is provided for smaller children during Sunday School, worship services and other church events. Weekly opportunities include: Morning Out Mom for children under age four, Christ's Kids for elementary school children; children's choirs, a men's luncheon group, and youth groups and Bible study for our middle and high school students. Wednesday night fellowship and other study opportunities are offered at various times throughout the year. Monthly opportunities include Prime Timers, - an over 55 group, Presbyterian Women, and "Saturday Nite Live"-a program for developmentally disabled adults. Annual events include Vacation Bible School, a Fall Festival, an Advent Workshop, a Madrigal Feast, an all-church retreat, and special Lenten studies. Trips to Montreat for the high school group, a middle school conference - usually either Great Escape or Montreat Middle School Conference, and participation in Presbytery sponsored camps and conferences are a tradition for our youth.

OUR CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Our church exists to serve Christ in our community. As a congregation we have felt called to participate in many local ministries. "Saturday Nite Live" provides an evening of fun and fellowship for developmentally disabled adults. Families, care givers and community volunteers benefit in this program by building support networks and enjoying a night out. We have renovated our Boy Scout house and added facilities for Girl Scout troops. An adjacent property is used as a recreation facility and location for community ministries. Our church provides meeting space for numerous community organizations including Alcoholics Anonymous and ALANON. Every Saturday our church hosts a soup kitchen that provides hot meals for approximately 150 needy people in our community. We also distribute bag

lunches daily to anyone in need who comes to our door. At Christmas, our youth work with the community and congregation to organize a traditional holiday meal that is provided for the homeless. Other ministries of our congregation include a Stephen Ministry Program, support of Presbytery missions such as Bethel Farm Workers Mission and Mission Honduras, and collection of special offerings for Medical Benevolence, One Great Hour of Sharing, and Souper Bowl of Caring. Every other summer a group of youth and adults travel to Honduras to help spread the Word and share God's love through service.

OUR FACILITY

First Presbyterian is a downtown church of approximately 1000 members, located on a main traffic artery of Winter Haven. Most members live in the greater Winter Haven area. The church was established in 1886 and the current three-story building was constructed in 1925. The main sanctuary has a seating capacity of 650 and the chapel on the lower level has a capacity of 100. The church offices, meeting rooms, a fellowship hall and kitchen are also found in the main building. A large Christian Education building was constructed in 1966. Included on the grounds are a playground, a Boy Scout and Girl Scout house, a building used for recreation and community ministries, and an adjacent youth house.

Learn more about our church and its ministry at www.firstpreswh.org.

WINTER HAVEN AND THE AREA

Winter Haven and the metropolitan area have a population in excess of 170,000. It is located in Central Florida, midway between the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean. Residents appreciate the quality of life characteristic of smaller cities while enjoying easy access to the amenities of larger metropolitan areas. Tampa and Orlando area attractions are within an hour's drive and it is less than 75 miles to Kennedy Space Center and Florida's beaches. Neighboring Winter Haven to the west is the city of Lakeland, with a population of 89,000.

Lifestyles, housing patterns, etc. generally conform to those of a suburban community, with the membership of our church generally being upper middle class. Living costs in Winter Haven are generally lower than those in northern states. No matter where in Winter Haven you live, you're but a few steps from at least one of 23 freshwater lakes. Fourteen are connected by a series of canals and all are wonderful for water sports and fishing.

Polk State College is located in Winter Haven, not far from First Presbyterian Church. A branch of the University of South Florida (Tampa) in conjunction with Polk Community College is located 10 miles west in Lakeland, as is Florida Southern College (Methodist). Tampa is also host to the University of Tampa while Orlando offers the University of Central Florida and Rollins College. Eckerd College (Presbyterian) is located in St. Petersburg, 75 miles to the west. Two vocational technical centers, Ridge Technical School and Travis Vo-Tech, are part of the school system in Polk County.

Winter Haven Hospital is a fully accredited 579 bed hospital, staffed by doctors from two major clinics as well as by independent physicians. Lakeland Regional Medical Center is located 16 miles away and is staffed by another large clinic and independent physicians. Some of the cultural offerings include the Bach Festival of Central Florida, Polk State College and Florida Southern College programs, Polk Museum of Art, Ridge Art Association, award winning Theatre Winter Haven, Winter Haven Public Library, Winter Haven Messiah Association, and The Imperial Symphony Orchestra. Other events that residents enjoy are arts festivals, a Christmas Boat Parade, and many events sponsored by the Winter Haven Chamber of Commerce. Winter Haven is currently enjoying a revitalization of its downtown.