

First Church Women

August 10, 2026, Minutes

Attendees: Mary Anne Arico, Rose Adams, Pam Balow, Donna Caruso, Libby Goens, Allison Hayden, Hollie Hastings, Bella Evans, Lisa Hightower, Kelly Huddleston, Valerie McColm, Karen O'Reilly, Gwen Robbins, Jody Valente, Judy West, Linda Wilson.

Opening prayer by our leader Mary Anne Arico.

Thank you to Hollie Hastings and Kelly Huddleston for providing a lovely refreshment spread.

Refreshments were enjoyed as our guest speakers: **Judy West and Valerie McColm presented information about this month's focus mission: The Hungry Children's Program.** Thank you to all who brought donations for this great program.

- The Hungry Children Program was developed 10 years ago by two kind caring people, Judy West and Mrs. Crane who saw a need to provide nutritional food for the weekends for students in need (grades K-5). Judy, who was volunteering in her grandson's classroom, discussed with Mrs. Crane the different school programs that provided backpacks of food and how to implement the program at their school. With the support of teachers, administrators, counselors, and volunteers, the Hungry Children Program began.
- Volunteers pack bags of food for the needy students at Freedom Elementary School to provide food for the weekend.
- Funding comes from the congregation on the 4th Sunday with brown bag donations as well as financial contributions.
- Valerie noted that there are lots of volunteers who make this all happen. There is only a small space in building 2, which limits the number of people who can help bag the food. The food for the children with food allergies are packaged in different colored bags, so the teachers can identify and distribute them with care.
- Over the years the program has provided food bags for between 35 and 55 children.
- Counselors, teachers or administrators make recommendations of who may be in need. Parents must register and fill out an application for the program each year.
- Before school begins Valerie and volunteers go shopping for food to supplement the donations and to fill up the pantry with needed supplies.
- The bags of food are labeled, delivered to the school, and handed out by their classroom teachers on Friday afternoon.

Mary Anne led the group in reciting the FCW mission statement:

"Our Women's ministry exists to promote spiritual growth! We seek to serve the church, our community, and support women and children locally and internationally, as God leads us in love and grace."

Business:

- Sign in sheet passed around.
- First Church Women directory copies were distributed.
- Text Chain List (*2 lists due to # of recipient restrictions*) was distributed. Noted corrections will be made for next month.
- Last month's minutes were available for anyone who did not receive them by text/email.

Financial report:

- July 13, 2026, balance was \$1,292.84
- Current balance was not available but will be discussed at the September meeting.
- To make donations to First Church Deland Women's group.
 - Can make donations either via the collection plate or on-line.
 - Reference financial code 166 for First Church Women group.

Communication:

- Thank you to all who donated to Back-to-School Backpacks School Supply drive.
 - The church received 46 backpacks filled with school supplies.
 - Additional supplies were donated to help local schools
- There was a MOOOOVING on up Back to School Bash in the LEC after the 9:30 service.
 - Jessica dressed up in a cute cow costume. 10 kids played games, enjoyed ice cream and made crafts. They all received a goodie bag to take home.
- Childcare during worship hours question was raised followed by an open discussion:
 - Kelly Huddleson provides nursery /childcare.
 - Presently there is childcare during 9:30 service.
 - There were questions about childcare for 11:00 service.
 - Kelly said perhaps there could be if there was a need
 - Kelly and Hollie said there used to be more kids, but not too many lately.
 - Childcare provided for Recovery Church service on Thursday night has more kids (typically 14)
 - Kelly and Hollie provide childcare. Recovery Church Service kids have seen so much. They are sorely in need of learning about God through Christian education.
- **Robed in Love: Friday August 7th in the LEC**
 - This was a community event fundraiser and celebration to recognize those who support the Neighborhood Center of West Volusia in their mission to feed the hungry, house the homeless, and prevent homelessness in our community.
 - Hollie Hastings and her team of volunteers prepared breakfast for our community sponsors that support this worthy cause.
 - Attendees donned cozy robes (over casual business attire)

First Church Youth's participation in PASSION CAMP at the Ocean Center in Daytona Beach

Speaker: Bella Evans (Hollie Hastings' granddaughter)

- Bella shared her awesome experience with us. Her enthusiasm and joy were contagious! Thank you, Bella, for your great presentation.
- 7,000 teens participated in this wonderful Christian event.
- Bella met many new friends from all over the US and many different countries.
- **It was a wonderful event full of fun, worship and Christian sharing.**
- 32 high schoolers from our church attended the week-long event July 13th-17th
 - Our youth traveled back and forth in the church van
 - They had one overnight
 - Meals were provided for our youth, by church member donations
 - Teens met at church and traveled to Daytona Beach via the First Church bus.
 - Typical day included: Breakfast, Worship, Sermon or sharing, Lunch, more singing and Worship.
 - Days were filled with fun: Squad Wars Competitions (i.e. basketball, and inflatable suits bouncing off each other) people dressed up in costumes, they enjoyed free time at their own pool and going to the beach. Some kids started on the beach with sunrise worship.
 - Volunteers supplied dinner.
 - After dinner there were small groups
 - They did have one overnight.
- There were Christian bands playing throughout the event. One was **Crowder** – a popular Christian Rock band.
- Bella's favorite part of worship was praying and hearing different people giving witness/sermons.

Future events – Opportunities to help/ volunteer, participate:

- **Empty Bowls of West Volusia – Wednesday November 4th, 2026**
 - 8th annual fundraiser
 - 5:30 – 7:30 pm
 - DeLand High School Cafeteria, 800 N Hill Ave, DeLand FL
 - Help fight hunger and join us for this family-friendly event
 - Enjoy delicious soups donated by local restaurants
 - Each ticket includes:
 - Handcrafted souvenir bowl
 - Soup, bread, dessert, and water/tea
 - A raffle ticket for exciting prizes
 - *Bring non-perishable food donations to get one extra raffle ticket.
 - All proceeds support the mission to Feed the hungry, House the Homeless and Prevent Hopelessness in our community.

- Sign-up sheet, passed around
 - Please indicate if you wish to carpool to this event.
- *Note: this Wednesday event will conflict with planned Impact Dinner which resumes in September*
- **Lunch Bunch - September 3, 2026 at noon** (first Thursday of the month)
 - Lisa Hightower's daughter will be speaking about How Seniors can use AI
 - 15-20 minutes question and answer
 - Sign up on Connect card (in pews) or on-line, or call the office
- **Impact Dinners will be starting again in September: Wednesdays 5:30 in LEC gym:**
 - ALPHA
 - Hollie gave a brief explanation of the new program.
 - Alpha is a series of group conversations that explore the basics of the Christian faith in a friendly environment.
 - There will be no charge to participants due to the Church's participation in the Alpha program.
 - There was some talk of providing childcare – Jessica is looking into this.
- **FALL FESTIVAL: Saturday, October 24, 2026: 10 am – 2 pm**
 - Volunteers are needed.
 - Donations are appreciated. Look for the request forms printed on orange paper to be circulated in church.
 - Bake Goods donations will be coordinated by Judy West.
 - **Planning Meeting SUNDAY, AUGUST 16TH**
 - Noon (after 11:00 service)
 - In the LEC
 - Volunteers are welcome!

COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER: April 10, 2027: Hollie provided update “getting ready”

- It is never too early to start hunting and gathering in prep of April Community baby-shower.
- Hollie has already been finding bargains and collecting clothing and items to get ready for the big event.
- Everyone is encouraged to keep an eye out for collecting donations. Yard sales with baby items could be an opportunity to tell people about our community baby shower and ask if would like to donate any leftover items.
- Cribs, mattresses and car seats must be new. Gently used clothing and other items are always appreciated.
- New and expectant mothers get a chance to “shop” for free.
- There will be many opportunities to volunteer and participate in this fun event.

DEVOTIONAL: Lisa Hightower “TIME”

- A word kept popping into Lisa’s mind over the past few weeks.
- As she prepared to find a devotional reading to share this word kept coming into her mind repeatedly.
- One word: Time
 - Where does the time go?
 - At a recent Bob Seger concert the music flooded in memories, this song I was doing this, and that song that....
 - Where does the time go?
 - Time is like a roll of toilet paper, the closer to the end, the faster it goes.
- Thinking about time – there has got to be a purpose.
- ECCLESIASTES, Chapter 3 “To every *thing* there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven....”
- Time is a **gift**: everybody gets the same 24 hours a day to decide what we do with it!
 - Yesterday is history.
 - Tomorrow is a mystery.
 - Today is a gift, that is why we call it the present.
- Time is also an **asset**! We don’t usually think of time as an asset like money is an asset.
 - Each of us gets to decide how we spend our money.
 - We each also get to decide how we spend our time.
 - God has a purpose in how we spend our time.
 - Of course, we need to take time to recharge and to take care of our bodies, but we need to use our time for God’s purpose.
 - Time is short, to learn about God and share his love with others
 - We are stewards of those funds! We are stewards of our Time!
 - People need an example of Christian living.
 - Be careful how you spend your time.
 - Be mindful how you live your life – think, ‘is that something I would want God to read in the newspaper?’
 - Each new Day is a gift from God, do not waste it.

Benediction:

This is the beginning of a new day.

God has given me this day to use as I will.

I can waste it or use it for good, but what I do today is important

Because I am exchanging a day of my life for it.

When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever,

Leaving in its place something that I have traded for it.

I want it to be a gain and not a loss; good and not evil;

success and not failure; in order that I shall not

regret the price I have paid for it.

Prayer Concerns and closing prayers:

Teeter Mauldin, Sue Watson, Denise Gilman, Mary Anne Arico, Jaclyn (Rhodella's daughter) baby Ryleigh, baby Castle, Students, Teachers, Administrators, Support Staff, Crossing guards, Parents, volunteers, and bus drivers, our church, military, Valerie, Bonnie Stam, all families with college bound students, and other spontaneously shared petitions.

- **Next FIRST CHURCH WOMEN meeting September 14, 2026: 6:30 pm in the LEC parlor:**
 - Hostess: Kathy Hunter and Libby Goens
 - Opening and closing prayers: Lisa Hightower
 - Devotions: Libby Goens

Closing time: 8:50 pm

Respectfully submitted: Donna Caruso

(Need individually packaged items)

BREAKFAST

Cereal Variety Pack
Instant Oatmeal
Pop Tarts
Nutri-Grain Bars
Granola Bars

LUNCH

Applesauce (Individual size cups)
 Snack size Raisin or Craisin boxes
 Peanut butter or cheese-filled crackers
 Individual Peanut Butter in small size (ex.: Jif-to-Go)
 Ritz Crackers (snack packs)
 Fruit (individual size cups)
 Cup of Soup (individual size packets)
 Ramen Noodles

DINNER

Chef Boyardee Variety Cups
Tuna (individual size in pouch or small can)
Chicken (individual size in pouch or small can)
Chicken salad with crackers
Macaroni and Cheese cups
Beanie Weenies (small cans)
Vienna Sausage (small cans)

SNACKS

Microwave Popcorn
Goldfish (individual packs)
Snacks in individual size packages: potato chips, rice crispy squares,
fruit packs, cookies, etc.
Long-Shelf-Life Milk in pint-size boxes – Chocolate or White
Capri Sun drinks in small boxes or packets
Pudding (individual size cups)



FREEDOM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
BACKPACK WEEKEND FOOD ITEMS
PACKED EVERY WEEK