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The Messenger

A PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PUNTA GORDA
FLORIDA — ECO: A COVENANT ORDER OF EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIANS

MARCH 2017



OUR MISSION AND PURPOSE LOVING...GROWING...GOING...in JESUS!

*Loving...God and others through worship and fellowship.
Growing...in our understanding Jesus' and God's purposes for us through
Bible study, and developing our ministries to serve God and others.
Going...into God's world with His message of love and salvation through
Jesus Christ, and with His ministries of compassion and mercy.*

Stay connected when you're away. Watch our worship service LIVE! Go to our website at:
www.fpcpunta.org and click on the link "Watch services LIVE here" on our homepage.

LENT Lent LENT Lent

SEASON OF LENT

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 1st this year. Christians have observed this season of the church year since the fourth century. It's traditionally a time of reflection, penitence and spiritual renewal before Easter.

During Lent, some Christians give up something that hinders their relationship with God. Others do something extra for their spiritual growth — a time that can set the tone for the rest of the year.

An Ash Wednesday Prayer

Dear Righteous Lord, we enter the holy season of Lent confessing our many sins that separate us from you. We're sincerely sorry for offending you repeatedly through our thoughts, our words and our actions — and often through our inactions, too.

Forgive us, Lord, and show us your tender mercy. Restore and strengthen us to become your faithful and faith-filled servants. During our Lenten journey, remind us to show mercy to other people, just as you've shown mercy to us. In Jesus' name, Amen.



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A STEPHEN MINISTRY CHURCH



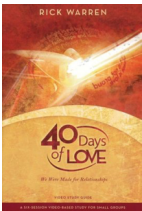
A PURPOSE-DRIVEN CHURCH

PASTOR LARRY'S WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY



Resumes Wednesday, March 15th! We will continue our study of various books in the Bible. Our group welcomes everyone - regardless of your current state of Biblical knowledge - and we all hope to see you there...every Wednesday morning at 10:00am in Fellowship Hall.

“40 Days of Love” Celebration – Sunday, March 5th



Join the celebration on **Sunday, March 5th** in Fellowship Hall immediately following the 10:30am service. We will celebrate the completion of *40 Days of Love*. More than 50 congregants took part in our six-week study. We learned that **Love** is patient, kind, speaks the truth, is forgiving, and is not selfish. Praise God for the **love** He showers on each of us. Cake and refreshments will be served.

C.L.A.S.S. 301 – S.H.A.P.E. – March 20th, 27th, and April 3rd

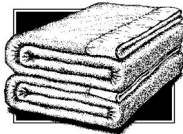


What is your **SHAPE**? Have you discovered the unique purpose God has for your life? This study is designed to take you to the next level of purpose, to reveal how God has designed you, and help see how that fits the intention for which you were created. In three sessions we'll unpack for you the five elements of God's blueprints for S.H.A.P.E.ing you.

Spiritual Gifts Heart/Passions Abilities Personality Experiences

Join us on **Mondays, March 20th, March 27th and April 3rd at 10am** at our church to discover your **SHAPE**. Each session is about 1 1/2 hours long. Please use the sign up sheet in the church foyer so that we can be sure to have the correct number of study guides available.

“SOUPER BOWL” SUNDAY and BLANKET SUNDAY



Thanks to your donations on “Souper Bowl” Sunday and Blanket Sunday, we were able to deliver checks to St. Vincent de Paul for \$145.00 and Church World Service for \$287.00. Thanks FPC for your generosity!

SINGLES MINISTRY



SINGLES
Watch the bulletin and sign-up table in the foyer for upcoming events!

MEET OUR OFFICERS

ELDERS



DEACONS

Jay Aldridge — Administration	625-3480
Nancy Beasom — Fellowship	505-9383
Joe Brooks — Administration	231-360-5727
Joan Hoffman — Ministry	639-4907
Marguerite O'Brien — Administration	639-7226
Dianne Sizemore — Mission	676-7086
Gail Thornton — Clerk of Session	916-1726
Diane Culver-Truby — Worship	637-7407
Don Washabaugh — Worship	255-8616

Laurel Aumend — Flowers	625-5238
Margie Smith — Prayer Shawls	833-0185
Georgia Cherny — Communion	456-7468
Phyllis Ehrhardt — Visitation	863-884-7489
Helmut Ehrhardt — Helping Hands	863-884-7489
Kay Callahan — Loaves and Fishes	916-9252
Phyllis Richardson — Communication	575-9344
Jean Cleffi - Kitchen	639-6395

MEET THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN STAFF



Pastor
Steve Mock
steve@fpcpunta.org



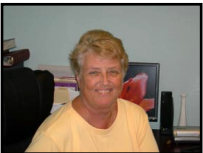
Assistant Pastor
Larry Yerger
revyerger@yahoo.com



Music Director
Randall Curtis
randy@fpcpunta.org



Office Manager
Debbie Rostad
debbie@fpcpunta.org



Volunteer Office Assistant
Gail Thornton
gail@fpcpunta.org



Volunteer Office Assistant
Dianne Sizemore
dgsizemore@comcast.net



Treasurer
Joe Cherny
cjchern321@yahoo.com

THIS 'N THAT

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE



We welcome material for our church newsletter. All contributions are subject to editing with regard to the subject matter and space requirements. Articles for the April issue of The Messenger are due in the church office by **Monday, March 13th**.

WEEKLY PRAYER SERVICE



Please join your church family in the Conference Room **Sundays at 6pm**. Come and share in this experience of God's people praying together.

LOAVES AND FISHES MINISTRY



Are you interested in making a meal when there is a short term need in the congregation due to an illness or loss?

Are you willing to deliver a meal that someone else has fixed? If you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please speak to Kay Callahan, our Deacon of this ministry, or call the church office.

R.O.M.E.O.S. & J.U.L.I.E.T.S. BREAKFAST



R.O.M.E.O.S. (Retired Old Men Eating Out Someplace) and J.U.L.I.E.T.S. (Joyful Understanding Ladies Inconspicuously Eating Together Someplace) will meet for breakfast at the **Sky View Café, Punta Gorda Airport**. Meet us at **8 am Thursdays, March 9th & 23rd**. Come and enjoy the food and fellowship.

THE SECOND CUP (OF COFFEE)



The Second Cup Bible Study discussion group will meet at the church at **9:30am on Thursdays, March 9th & 23rd**.

GAME MORNING



Join us for Game Mornings on **Thursday, March 2nd and Tuesdays, March 7th, 14th, and 28th from 10am to Noon** in Fellowship Hall.

ADDRESS & EMAIL UPDATE



Please advise the church office when you change your mailing and/or email address. Thank you.

COMPUTER AVAILABLE FOR YOUR USE



We've set up a computer in the Conference Room for those of you who need the use of one. It has high-speed internet access and is available during office hours. We suggest that you call ahead to reserve time.

CHURCH LIBRARY



Need a good book to read? We have a wide variety of books including a large assortment of Christian Fiction. Please stop by, take a look, and check one out!

SPONSOR SUNDAY FLOWERS



The cost to sponsor flowers is **\$37.50**. To make a donation, please sign up on the sheets in the church foyer. You may list the flowers in honor and/or in memory of something or someone.

When you sponsor flowers for a Sunday and would like to take them with you after the service, please stop in the kitchen after the last service and see the deacon in charge that day.

FURRY FRIENDS



Please remember our furry friends! In the church foyer there is a green tub where you can put dog and cat food, animal toys, and gently used blankets and towels. For questions, ask Randy or Diane Curtis.

ECO SHIRTS



First Presbyterian ECO shirts are available for a \$20 donation that will go to Missions. See Pastor Steve if you would like one.

WORSHIP MINISTRY

FIRST

Sunday in Lent



March 5, 2017

SECOND

Sunday in Lent



March 12, 2017

THIRD

Sunday in Lent



March 19, 2017

FOURTH

Sunday in Lent



March 26, 2017



Session Highlights—February 2017



Session Meeting

- 1) Membership: 113
- 2) Meeting on February 28th with the Trustees of Peace River Presbytery to discuss the purchase of the church property.
- 3) Session Retreat on Saturday, March 11th, 9am to 1pm at the church.
- 4) Approved changing the May Session meeting to Monday, May 22nd.
- 5) Approved recommendation from the Worship Team to begin the summer worship schedule of one service at 10am starting on May 21st and continuing through October 15th.



AFTERNOON HIGH TEA

All ladies are invited to an Afternoon High Tea on Saturday, March 25th, at 2:30pm Fellowship Hall

Tea and Refreshments will be served

Please wear a Hat, Gloves are optional

(Should you not have a hat, there will be one there for you)

Donations accepted

Sign up by Sunday, March 19th

Hosted by Phyllis Ehrhardt, Nancy Smith, Bonnie Brown, Joan Hoffman, Glee Miller, Rachel Pfaender, and Diane Truby

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



Our women's Bible study will reconvene on **Tuesday, March 21st** at the home of Sharon Cuzner, 2615 Rio Grande, PGI. We will do a six week study titled *Everything is Possible with God - Understanding the Six Phases of Faith*. The study combines a video presentation with a study guide and discussion. Topics include "How God Builds Your Faith", "How to Deal with Difficulties" and "How to Make Wise Decisions" among others. The study will run through the first Tuesday in June. As usual, we will meet at 10am for about 1 1/2 hours per study.

TREASURES TABLE



Visit the *Priceless Treasures table* in Fellowship Hall. You may place your "treasures" there (no clothing, please); or if you find a "treasure" that you like, put a donation in the container. Proceeds are for outreach projects.

PRAYER SHAWL GATHERINGS



The Prayer Shawl meets the second Monday of each month at 10am in Fellowship Hall. Our next meeting is **Monday, March 13th**. Please join us when you can. If you don't knit or crochet, perhaps you'd like to make a donation to support this ministry.



NEW SPRING

I THOUGHT I SAW SPRING TODAY
YET IT FLUTTERED BY IN DROPS OF RAIN
AND MARCH WINDS THAT TOSSED TREES TO AND FRO
AND FLOWER SHOOTS THAT START TO GROW.

I HEARD IT ALL AROUND ME CLOSE
AND SAW IT IN THE FLIGHT OF BIRDS
THEIR SONGS SO BRIGHT
IN EARLY MORNING TO THE NIGHT.

I FELT IT IN MY HEART AT PLAY
AND INSIDE ME SO STRONG AND CLEAR
AS GOD SENDS HIS MESSAGE DOWN
TO SHOW US HE IS ALL AROUND.

Nancy Beasom with the Holy Spirit



MARCH 2017 CHURCH PRAYER CALENDAR

Prayer is the place where burdens change shoulders - We pray for....

*The elderly, the infirm, the hospitalized, those in nursing homes, the homebound and lonely,
and all those who have requested our prayerful support.*

Each month we remember church members and friends on a rotating basis...



1	David Osweiler	11	David & Milanne Richards	21	Barbara Shinn
2	David & Jane Otoupal	12	Ed & Phyllis Richardson	22	Dave & Ella Sifferd
3	Jim & Marge Parks	13	Tom Richey	23	Lorraine Sisson
4	Pat & Mary Ann Patterson	14	Fred & Gayle Rosa	24	Ron & Billie Sixt
5	Bruce Peters	15	Jack & Patty Rothley	25	Dianne Sizemore
6	Dick & Donna Peterson	16	Sharon Russell	26	Andy & Nancy Smith
7	Rachel Pfaender	17	Barbara Ryan	27	Jerry & Margie Smith
8	Linda Potthoff	18	Charles Sampsel	28	Mae Snyder
9	Bill & Pauli Purcell	19	Elaine Schultz	29	Craig Stephens
10	Don & Joyce Rebholz	20	Jene Shafer	30	Mary Stones
				31	Sarah Stones

MEMBER CARE



Congratulations to:

Nancy Murphy for **great-grandson**, Bryce Anthony Meyers, born February 8th.
Shirley Berg for **great-granddaughter** Nora Elaine Hill, born February 8th.



Our prayers and sympathy are shared with:
Veralou Scott and family on the loss of her husband, Walter, on February 9th.



We Need Your Picture!

*A new picture directory is being put together in March.
Please sign up in the church foyer to have your picture taken on
Sundays in March, following each service, in Fellowship Hall.*



8—Sue Mesler

10—Don Washabaugh

19—Marjorie Tisdale



6—Robert & Sharon Cuzner 46 yrs.

8—Larry & Andrea Yerger 37 yrs.

15—Roy & Kathy Belville 48 yrs.

21—Ron & Joyce Sixt 53 yrs.

26—Jerry & Margie Smith 51 yrs.



Christians are Like Potatoes

Those just watching - Spec - "taters"

Those who could but don't - Hesi - "taters"

Those finding fault - Commen - "taters"

Those pretending - Ima - "taters"

Those causing problems - Agi - "taters"

The "Real Deal" - Speak the truth in Love - Sweet - "Taters"

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; Keep the doors of my lips."

Psalm 141:3 (KJV)



POTATO

Submitted by Georgia Cherny

FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES



St. Patrick's Day Dinner



**St. Patrick Day's Dinner
Corned Beef & Cabbage**

Movie - "Lord of the Dance"

Wednesday, March 15th

5:30pm

\$5.00



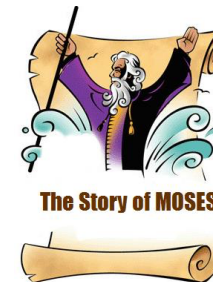
Pot
Luck
Supper

POTLUCK & MOVIE NIGHT

Movie - "Risen"

Wednesday, April 5th

5:30pm



UPCOMING EVENT

"The Story of MOSES" Excursion

Saturday, April 22nd

7:00pm

Meet at church to carpool at 5:30pm

Sign up by April 16th



Photos by Joanie Mock

MISSION MINISTRY



HELPING MISIÓN PENIEL (IMMOKALEE, FLORIDA)



Christmas Shoeboxes delivered to Misión Peniel

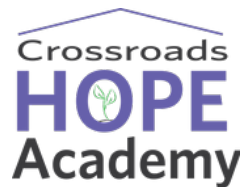
Our mission outreach to Misión Peniel in Immokalee with **Pastor Miguel Estrada** continues through the collection of food, clothing and other items as well as our monthly trips to serve at the mission. Misión Peniel needs donations of RICE and PINTO BEANS (collected the second Sunday of every month), clothing, and gently used blankets and towels. They may be placed in the plastic bin and wicker chest that are in the church foyer.

The next trip to Misión Peniel is **Friday, March 24th.**

We carpool from the church at **12:15pm.**

Please volunteer to help by contacting Dianne Sizemore or the church office.

CROSSROADS HOPE ACADEMY (PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA)



Crossroads Hope Academy, formerly AMIkids Crossroads, is a non-profit 501(c)3 home and charter school for foster boys who have had multiple failed placements in the Florida foster care system. One of our own, Ron Beasom, heads up a weekly outreach ministry to Crossroads.

To learn more about this next big chapter in the life of Crossroads, visit their website at www.amikidscrossroads.org or talk to Ron Beasom.

THE STONE FAMILY (ZACAPA, GUATEMALA)



Eric and Debbie Stone are one of our missionary partners through Antioch Partners. Part of their **Vision** is "Our family dreams of being an encouraging force to the local church in eastern Guatemala by equipping it through education and training to fully participate in its integral missions call within the Guatemalan society. We envision a community of churches with whom we share close bonds of trust and fellowship. We desire that relationships develop based on a common goal of providing church leadership with diverse training opportunities relevant to the specific needs of each local context." To learn more about the Stones, please visit their website at www.theantiochpartners.org.

LISA ALFONSI (LIMA, PERU)



Lisa Alfonsi was called to participate in God's mission in Peru and she is also one of our missionary partners through Antioch Partners. Lisa lives in Lima where she is partnering with Camino de Vida Church, a fellowship passionately committed to demonstrating and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. With experience as an occupational therapist, Lisa is serving under their leadership in a ministry that provides a more comprehensive approach, including therapy, for the individuals and their families being served through use of wheelchairs. You can also learn more about Lisa online at www.theantiochpartners.org.

MINISTRY OUTREACH

CROSSROADS TRIP



Join us for a tour of Crossroads Hope Academy in Punta Gorda on **Tuesday, March 7th.** We have arranged to tour the facilities as well as view the Pottery Room in action!

If you would like to participate in this tour, we will be leaving the church at 2:30pm and return around 6:00pm.

Please sign up in the church foyer.



Our **"Welcome Bag" Ministry** to new neighborhoods is growing! **We now have three teams:** Phyllis Richardson and Pat Ihrle for *Waterford*; Nancy Smith and Suzie Lorenz for *Creekside*; and Phyllis Ehrhardt and Nancy Murphy for *Tuscany Isles*. We also thank Lynn Lang for her time on our team. In February we visited over 35 homes with many appreciative folks!

If you have a new neighbor, take a Welcome Bag over, introduce yourself and invite them to our church if they don't have a church home. We are here to help you if you would like!

Please contact Phyllis Ehrhardt at 863-884-7489 or Phyllis Richardson at 575-9344.

We are planting "seeds". Help us to be good neighbors!

PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

Prayer

O Prince of Peace, we humbly ask Your protection for all our men and women in military service. Give them unflinching courage to defend with honor, dignity and devotion the rights of all who are imperiled by injustice and evil. Guard our churches, our homes, our schools, our hospitals, our factories, our buildings, and all those within from harm and peril. Protect our land and its people from enemies within and without. Grant an early peace with victory founded upon justice. Instill in the hearts and minds of men and women everywhere a firm purpose to live forever in peace and good will towards all. Amen.

- * Lt. Alex Treadwell, Army, grandson-in-law of Diane Culver-Truby, stationed at Fort Bragg, NC..
- * Capt. John McPherson, Air Force, grandnephew of Marguerite O'Brien, stationed at McChord Air Force Base in Washington State.
- * Capt. Ryan Swisher, Army Ranger, grandson of Rachel Pfaender, attending MIT to pursue a Master's Degree and a teaching career at West Point.
- * Capt. John Mock, Army, nephew of Steve & Joanie Mock, stationed at Fort Irwin, CA.
- * PFC Caleb Driggers, Army, step-grandson of Diane Tabert, stationed in Hawaii.
- * Capt. Eric Engstrom, Army Intel., son of Alan Engstrom, stationed in Colorado Springs.
- * PV2 Mitchell Salicki, Army, grandson of Rex & Helen Anderson, stationed at Camp Drum in New York.
- * Sgt. Joshua Rowell, US Marine Corps, boyfriend of Dianne Sizemore's granddaughter Kylie, stationed at Navy Base Kitsap in Silverdale, WA.

Do you have a family member serving in the military?

If so, we'd like to add them to the newsletter prayer list. Fill out the form that's on the sign-up table in the church foyer and place it in the HELMUT or let the church office know.