

First Presbyterian Church
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The Messenger

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

DECEMBER 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.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Christmas Worship Schedule	2
Session / Congregational Meeting Highlights	2
Presbyterian Women	3
Christmas Poetry - "A Babe Was Born"	4
Wednesday Morning Bible Study	4
Fellowship Activities	5
Mission Ministry & Ministry Outreach	6-7
Military Prayer List	7
Capital Fund	8
Member Care & Singles Ministry	8
Prayer Calendar & Celebrations	9
This 'N That	10
Church Officers & Staff	11
Monthly Calendar - see insert	



A STEPHEN MINISTRY CHURCH



A PURPOSE-DRIVEN CHURCH



CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SCHEDULE



We will be decorating the church with poinsettias for Christmas. If you would like to give one in memory of, or in honor of a loved one; or to the Glory of God, please use a poinsettia envelope on the back table in the Sanctuary. Suggested donation is \$7 per poinsettia. *Return your envelope to the church by December 12th* in order to be listed in a special bulletin insert.



Sunday, December 17th
"The Winter Rose"
A Christmas Cantata by Joseph M. Martin
 Presented at the 10:30am Worship Service

Sunday, December 24th, Christmas Eve
 Worship Services at 9:00am and 10:30am



Sunday, December 24th, Christmas Eve
 7:00pm Candlelight Communion Service

Sunday, December 31st, New Year's Eve
 Worship Services at 9:00am and 10:30am

Session Highlights—Congregational Meeting

- 1) Membership: 113
- 2) Approved three new Covenant Partners - Frances Frost and Myron & Geri Paris. Bobby & Joan Taylor will be approved at a separate meeting.
- 3) Gail Thornton nominated Joan Hoffman to take Jay Aldridge's place at the annual Synod meeting in Houston, Texas in January 2018.
- 4) Joan Hoffman was elected as Commissioner in place of Jay Aldridge to the meeting of the Presbytery of Florida, also meeting in Houston in January 2018.
- 5) Discussed security issues during Worship Services. The current front doors will be replaced by doors with panic bars so doors can be locked during Worship Services.
- 6) Approved Neighborhood Watch for Waterford Estates to hold monthly meetings at our church led by Mr. Dale Phillips, who is the Crime Prevention Officer from Charlotte County Sheriff's Department.
- 7) Concluded "Becoming a Flourishing Church" Study. Appointed Joe Brooks, Gail Thornton and Steve Mock to develop a plan to implement "Becoming Flourishing Disciples" at our church.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING - November 12, 2017, 11:40am

The Purpose of the Congregational Meeting was to elect officers and the 2018 nominating committee.

CLASS OF 2020 ELDERS

Gail Thornton
 Dianne Sizemore
 Bruce Peters

NOMINATING COMMITTEE 2018

Joan Hoffman - At Large
 Ron Beasom - At Large
 Georgia Cherny - Deacon
 Art Koon - Alternate

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
Sheila Dabney — Communication	281-0615
Jean Cleffi - Kitchen	639-6395

MEET THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN STAFF



Pastor
 Steve Mock
 steve@fpcpunta.org



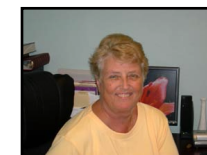
Assistant Pastor
 Larry Yerger
 revyerger@yahoo.com



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 **January issue** of The Messenger are due by **Monday, December 11th**.

WEEKLY PRAYER SERVICE



Please join your church family in the Conference Room **Sundays at 10:10am and 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 **8am on Thursdays, December 14th and 28th**. Come and enjoy the food and fellowship.

THE SECOND CUP (OF COFFEE)



The Second Cup Bible Study discussion group, led by Pastor Steve Mock, meets at **9:30am** in the Conference Room on **December 14th and 28th**.

GAME MORNING



Game Mornings are held **Tuesdays from 10am to Noon** in **Fellowship Hall**. Our December dates are **December 12th and 26th**.

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.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN BIBLE STUDY



PRISCILLA SHIRER



Presbyterian Women's Bible Study continues through December with the study of Patricia Shirer's *The Armor Of God*. Our December meetings are **Tuesdays, December 5th and 19th at 10am**.

We will meet at the home of Sharon and Robert Cuzner, 2615 Rio Grande Dr., PGI. The study meets for 1 1/2 hours with time for fellowship and refreshment. For additional information, call Sharon at 941-637-1792. **All women are welcome!**

This winter and spring we are blessed with two studies from nationally recognized leaders in women's faith. On **February 2nd and 3rd**, Jennifer Rothschild and Liz Curtis Higgs are giving a two day study at Murdock Baptist Church in Port Charlotte. Tickets are in short supply and are \$44 if purchased in advance. If you would like additional information, call 1-800-859-7992 or visit www.FreshGroundedFaith.com. You may also contact Andrea Yerger or Sharon Cuzner.

On **April 28th** Priscilla Shirer and Anthony Evans are coming to the Tampa area. We plan to simulcast this event in our church. The cost for the simulcast is \$20 per person. See Sharon Cuzner or Gail Thornton to sign up. Particulars are available at www.LifeWay.com/PriscillaShirerlive.

Don't miss these opportunities to hear nationally known women's leaders joining in worship of our God!



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

Monday, December 11th

The Prayer Shawl group meets the second Monday of each month at **10am in Fellowship Hall**. 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.



CHRISTMAS LUNCH



The Presbyterian Women will meet **Saturday, December 16th at 11am in Fellowship Hall** for a Christmas lunch. **All women are invited**. Please bring finger sandwiches or desserts to share.

For an outreach opportunity, **please bring cookies and cookie tins** for us to pack and deliver to shut-ins and veterans. This year we would like to remember the Punta Gorda Police as well, for their service to us.



A BABE WAS BORN

A BABE WAS BORN
SO LONG AGO
THE SKY ABOVE
WAS ALL AGLOW.

AN ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED
TO TELL THE SHEPHERDS
THE GREAT NEWS
A SAVIOR BORN TO THOSE THAT CHOOSE.

THE STAR SHOWN DOWN
TO THOSE AFAR
WHO CAME TO SEE
WHAT IS THIS STAR.

A MIRACLE WAS FOUND
ON THIS VAST EARTH
A BABY BOY
TO SAVE US WITH HIS BIRTH.

A WONDROUS CHILD
TO SAVE US ALL
A GIFT FROM GOD
SO WE WILL NOT FALL.

THIS BLESSED CHILD
OF HUMBLE BIRTH
WAS TRULY CHRIST
THE SAVIOR OF THE EARTH.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND NANCY BEASOM

PASTOR LARRY'S WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY



Have you avoided participating in a Bible Study because of **FEAR**? Do you think "I don't know enough – I might have to pray – I might have to talk – {and the worst} I might have to share something! Have you {in the past} been 'called on' [without warning or permission] to 'do something' in a small group that makes you uncomfortable? If this is **YOU**, a Bible-Study-Fraidy-Cat, lose your fear! Come and be a part of a group that will accept you "where you are at" in your knowledge and level of participation. We will immerse you in the Bible - you will learn what it means for you as a Christian and how it applies today; the range of your participation is entirely **UP TO YOU!** But regardless of how much, or how little, you 'contribute' to the discussion, you will acquire Biblical Knowledge and you will receive instruction/direction as to its application in your life. C'mon. Check us out. It'll be fun – and enlightening - I guarantee it...I hope to see you Wednesday Morning.

Blessings and Peace...

DECEMBER 2017 CHURCH PRAYER CALENDAR AND CELEBRATIONS

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	Jerry & Margie Smith	11	Gail Thornton	21	Carol Zutter
2	Mae Snyder	12	Larrie & Marjorie Tisdale	22	Jay Aldridge
3	Bo & Karen Sostar	13	Verna Wargo	23	Becky Anderson
4	Craig Stephens	14	Don & Mary Anne Washabaugh	24	Rex & Helen Anderson
5	Mary Stones	15	Doug & Esther Wheeler	25	Laurel Aumend
6	Sarah Stones	16	Dave & Barb Woods	26	Ron & Nancy Beasom
7	John Stremming	17	Joseph Yerger	27	Roy & Kathy Belville
8	Larry & Betty Strong	18	Larry & Andrea Yerger	28	Shirley Berg
9	Anne Swift	19	James & Teri York	29	Rick & Kay Berner
10	Diane Tabert	20	Charles & Evelyn Zietsma	30	Joe & Betty Brooks
				31	Bonnie Brown



8—Michael Curtis

8—Rob Frank

17—Dave Sifferd

20—Randy Curtis

20—Dave Osweiler

21—Anna Belle DeBlauw

21—Larrie Tisdale

22—Craig Stephens

23—Barb Woods

23—Steve Mock

24—Bob Humphreys

25—Cheri Foley

29—Diane Tabert

29—Jim Parks

29—John Stremming



19—John & Gail Evans 37 yrs.

19—David & Jane Otoupal 58 yrs.

30—David & Debbie Carney 46 yrs.

CAPITAL FUND



The recent acquisition of our church physical property was a wonderful event. After 4 1/2 years of negotiations we were finally awarded ownership. Accepting this ownership is a blessing, but also places the responsibility of maintaining the property on our congregation.

The creation of the Capital Fund was specifically a means whereby we could build a fund over time that would be useful in the event of equipment replacement, et al. For example, to replace one of our 5 ton air conditioners would cost about \$20,000.

The Capital Fund has no financial goal or time frame, but will provide the opportunity for members of the church to contribute any amount of money at any time. The advantage of this fund will be that we can be financially prepared to deal with needed repairs and maintenance.

Our hope is that your support of the Capital Fund will be above and beyond your regular giving to the church.

Thank you! Jay Aldridge, Elder

MEMBER CARE

If you would like to send a Christmas card to **Cara Coletti**, one of our prayer recipients, please address the envelope

Homestead Correctional Institution
Cara N. Coletti Y49443
19000 SW 377 Street Suite 200
Florida City, FL 33034

Both Cara's and the Return Addresses must be handwritten!
NO glitter is allowed on the card!

SINGLES MINISTRY



SOCIABLE SINGLES

DINNER - 1st Friday of each month

LUNCH - 3rd Friday of each month

Friday, December 15th, 12:00pm

Christmas Dinner Party

Home of Nancy Murphy
24101 Green Heron Drive
Port Charlotte

Ham provided, bring a dish to pass

Carpool from Church at 4:30pm



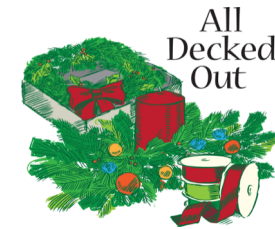
Friday, December 1st, 5:00pm

LongHorn Steakhouse
Port Charlotte

Carpool from Church at 4:30pm



FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES



DECORATE THE CHURCH!

Join in decorating the church for the holidays

Friday, December 1st, 10am

Assemble Decorations
 Set up the Christmas Trees
 Coffee and Donuts will be served

Saturday, December 2nd, 10am

Decorate the Church
 A Light Lunch will be served

Sign up in the Church Foyer

CHRISTMAS GATHERING DINNER

Saturday, December 9th
5:30pm

The Fellowship team invites you to a Christmas Gathering Dinner in Fellowship Hall. Meat, beverages and cake will be provided. Please bring your favorite dish for the buffet table.

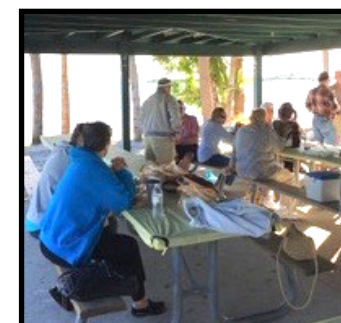
Cary Price, Organist
Fletcher Music

Sign up in the Church Foyer

Save the Date - January 17th - Fellowship Dinner & Program



October 25th
Port Charlotte Beach Park



Pictures by Joanie Mock



MISSION MINISTRY & OUTREACH

HELPING MISIÓN PENIEL (*IMMOKALEE, FLORIDA*)

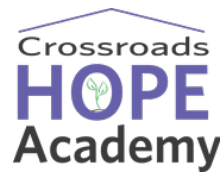
Our mission outreach to Misión Peniel in Immokalee with **Pastor Miguel Estrada** continues through the collection of food, clothing and other items as well as our trips to serve at the mission. Misión Peniel needs donations of RICE and PINTO BEANS (collected the second Sunday of every month), clothing,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



The Mission Team's next trip to Misión Peniel is **Friday, December 22nd**. We carpool from the church at **12:15pm**.

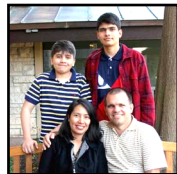
Please volunteer to help by contacting **Dianne Sizemore at 941-676-7086** or the church office by **December 11th**.

CROSSROADS HOPE ACADEMY (*PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA*)



Crossroads Hope Academy is a boarding school for foster boys ages 12-18, who have difficulty with placement in traditional foster families. To learn about volunteer opportunities at Crossroads, visit their website at www.Crossroadspg.org or talk to First Presbyterian Church member Ron Beasom.

ANTIOCH PARTNERS MISSIONARIES



Eric and Debbie Stone are missionaries in Zacapa, Guatemala. As a family their mission is to promote Kingdom growth by serving the local church in rural areas of northeastern Guatemala by offering its leadership Biblical/Theological training and by promoting children's ministry. You can learn more about the Stones ministry at www.theantiochpartners.org.



Lisa Alfonsi was called to participate in God's mission in Lima, Peru. She uses her experience as an occupational therapist to serve the disability community and their families in a variety of ways under the leadership of a local church. Lisa is also working with Free Wheelchair Mission, assembling and distributing wheelchairs to people in need. Learn more about Lisa at www.theantiochpartners.org.

WELCOME MINISTRY / VETERANS VILLAGE

Neighborhood visits have resumed. This year's Visitation Teams are:

Waterford - Pat Ihrle & Mary Anne Washabaugh Verandas - Lynn Lang
Tuscany Isles - Nancy Smith & DeAnn Lehman Creekside - Susie Lorenz & Kathy Belville
Oak Harbor - Phyllis Ehrhardt & Sharon Russell

If you should greet someone at Church that is new to the area, please give them one of our newcomer Welcome Bags, located in the church foyer.

We are helping Veterans Village by providing needed items and food. Dollar donations are also accepted. As a way to thank our Veterans, we have "Thank You" notecards that you can take and write on.



MINISTRY OUTREACH

THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS GIFTING

Thank you for your Thanksgiving donations. We delivered a check to St. Vincent de Paul to use for the benefit of Charlotte County families.

Our Christmas Eve offering will be given to Crossroads Hope Academy.



CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX GIFTING

Collection of shoebox gifts for the children of Misión Peniel continues through **December 17th**. Christmas gifts will be delivered on **Friday, December 22nd**. Please fill a box, mark it "boy" or "girl" and put the age on it, secure the box with an elastic band, and bring it to church. **Do not wrap it**, as we will be adding items to each box so all are filled tight. A list of suggested gifts is available on the shoebox collection table in the church foyer.

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.
- * Major John McPherson, Air Force, grandnephew of Marguerite O'Brien, stationed at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois.
- * Capt. Ryan Swisher, Army Ranger, grandson of Rachel Pfaender, teaching at West Point Academy.
- * Capt. John Mock, Army, nephew of Steve & Joanie Mock, stationed at Fort Benning, GA.
- * PFC Caleb Driggers, Army, step-grandson of Diane Tabert, stationed in upper New York State.
- * SA Timothy Laux, Navy, grandson of Diane Tabert, stationed in Groton, CT.
- * Capt. Eric Engstrom, Army Intel., son of Alan Engstrom, stationed in Colorado Springs, CO.
- * Pvt. Mitchell Salicki, Army, grandson of Rex & Helen Anderson, stationed in Illesheim, Germany.
- * Sgt. Joshua Rowell, US Marine Corps, boyfriend of Dianne Sizemore's granddaughter Kylie, stationed at Navy Base Kitsap in Silverdale, WA.
- * PFC Harrison Raymond Klipstine, Army, great nephew of Dianne Sizemore, stationed in Honolulu, HI.
- * 2nd Lt. Paul Corbitt Geuy, Army, great nephew of Dianne Sizemore, attending the Ohio State University Dental School Program in Columbus, OH.
- * 2nd Lt. Zadick Self, Marines, grandson-in-law of Ron & Nancy Beasom, transferring from Kansas City to MCB Quantico in Virginia later this year.
- * PFC Brian K. Hulshoff, Army, grandson of David & Lynn Lang, stationed at Fort Benning, GA.
- * Lt. Col. Robert C. Prijatelj, US Marine Corps, son of Bob and Dona Prijatelj and nephew of Laurel Aumend, stationed in Washington D.C.

*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.*