



# The Messenger

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

FEBRUARY 2017



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

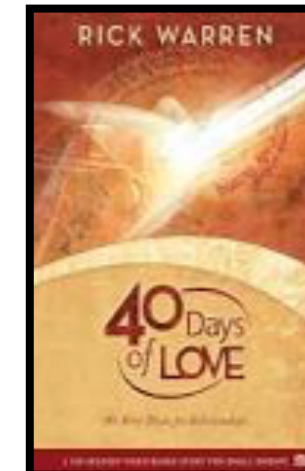
*Loving...God and others through worship and fellowship.  
Growing...in our understanding Jesus' and God's purposes for us through  
Bible study, and developing our ministries to serve God and others.  
Going...into God's world with His message of love and salvation through  
Jesus Christ, and with His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

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

FEBRUARY

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On Sunday, January 22, 2017, we began an all church study - **40 Days of Love**. This study by Rick Warren is based on 1 Corinthians 13 and is all about building healthy relationships and learning to love as Jesus loved. We are learning how to value our relationships, communicate from the heart, and love even when it is difficult. This six week small group study continues to March 4th. We will conclude the study with a celebration on Sunday, March 5th. If you would like to join this study, please contact the church office and we will connect you with a group that meets at a convenient time and place for you. We urge everyone to participate!



A STEPHEN MINISTRY CHURCH



A PURPOSE-DRIVEN CHURCH

MINISTRY / MISSION FAIR – Sunday, February 19th



What activities does our church sponsor, who is the responsible elder, how often does the committee meet and how can I help? These are all questions you may have. On **February 19th** following the 10:30am service, we will hold a Ministry Fair to highlight our service to our covenant partners and the community. The elders and deacons will be there to answer questions and a review of each ministry will be covered. Do not miss this opportunity to learn more about your church!

C.L.A.S.S. 101 – “BECOMING A COVENANT PARTNER”



Pastor Steve Mock will be holding the **C.L.A.S.S. 101** *Becoming a Covenant Partner* on **Sunday, February 26th, at 3pm**. Anyone interested in becoming a member/covenant partner of First Presbyterian Church is invited to attend this two-hour seminar. Topics to be covered are: our purpose for existing; our process for spiritual growth; God’s plan for reaching the world; and our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. **Sign up in the church foyer.**

PASTOR LARRY’S WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY



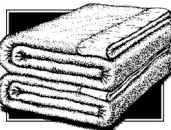
This study is on hiatus until the conclusion of the *40 Days of Love* all church study. Pastor Larry’s Bible Study will resume on Wednesday, March 8th.

“SOUPER BOWL” SUNDAY – February 5th



On Sunday, **February 5th**, come prepared to put your cans of soup in the food bin and/or \$\$\$\$\$ in the empty soup pots, which will be used for food for the hungry of Charlotte County.

BLANKET SUNDAY – February 12th



Your donations on Sunday, **February 12th**, will help provide warmth for victims of disasters, plus seeds & tools for struggling farmers, and water & health to impoverished communities worldwide through Church World Service. Make a gift of love that will keep on giving throughout the year.

SINGLES MINISTRY – February 27th



Singles, please join us for our first meeting on **Monday, February 27th, at 10:00am** for coffee and donuts and to discuss plans for our new club. *Please sign up on the sheet in the church foyer.*

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



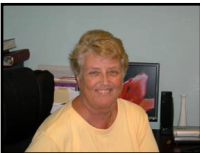
**Assistant Pastor**  
Larry Yerger  
revyerger@yahoo.com



**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 March issue of The Messenger are due in the church office by **Monday, February 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 on Thursdays, February 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, February 9th & 23rd**.

### GAME MORNING



Join us for Game Mornings **every Thursday in February 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



### USHERS - LITURGISTS - COMMUNION SERVERS - ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTERS

I should like to thank all those who so graciously agreed to be a part of the 2016 services: Jay Aldridge, Kathy & Roy Bellville, Betty & Joe Brooks, Kay Callahan, Georgia & Joe Cherny, Sharon & Robert Cuzner, Phyllis & Helmut Ehrhardt, Dick Fisher, Neta Gensemer, Jean & Bob Humphreys, Fran & Art Koon, Jean LaMantia, DeAnn & Ernie Lehman, Nancy Murphy and grandson Ben, Marguerite O'Brien, Pat Patterson, Bruce Peters, Rachel Pfaender, Linda Potthoff, Pauli & Bill Purcell, Phyllis Richardson, Sharon Russell, Dave Sifferd, Andy Smith, and Mary Anne & Don Washabaugh. Bless you all for making my job so pleasant. *Diane Culver-Truby*

## VALENTINE MEMORIAL SERVICE - February 12th



SERVICE OF Remembrance

Our Annual Valentine Memorial Service will be held

**Sunday, February 12th at 11:45am**  
in our Lowell Kvam Memorial Garden.

## Session Highlights—January 2017



- 1) Membership: 113
- 2) We had a time of prayer, praying for each committee.
- 3) Approved - Walter & Veralou Scott's association from Covenant Partner to Friend due to health issues. They have relocated to Canton, MI.
- 4) Valentine Memorial Service will be held February 12th and Ministry/Missions Fair is rescheduled for February 19th.
- 5) We are still awaiting a response to our counteroffer to Peace River Presbytery for the purchase of the church property.
- 6) Pictorial Directory - To begin taking pictures during February / March.
- 7) Approved - Use of Fellowship Hall on February 7th by Waterford Estates for their annual meeting.
- 8) Approved - Annual Congregational meeting for February 5th, at 11:30am.

## CATEGORIES OF CHARITABLE GIVING



Charitable Giving

**OUTRIGHT GIFT** - This is appropriate for donors who want to see their charitable dollars at work during their lifetime. You may do this by writing a check or transferring stock. The added benefit of transferring stock that has appreciated is that you do not pay capital gains taxes by transferring directly to the charity. If the stock has a loss, you benefit by selling the stock and donating the proceeds and claiming the loss on your Federal taxes.

**BEQUESTS** - The basic method for those who want to give at the end of their life.

**COMPLEX METHODS** - Life Income Gifts and Family Foundations. These methods are complicated and require financial advice.

*Submitted by Marguerite O'Brien*

## 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



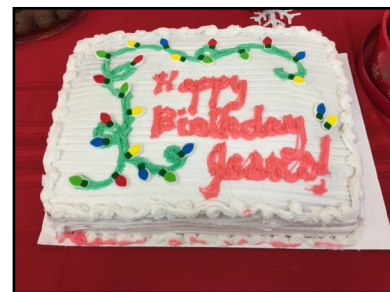
Visit the **Priceless Treasures table** in Fellowship Hall. You may place your "treasures" there (no clothing, please); or if you find a "treasure" that you like, put a donation in the container. Proceeds are for outreach projects.

### PRAYER SHAWL GATHERINGS



The Prayer Shawl Ministry really appreciates the generous gifts they've received from members recently. With your financial help we'll do our best to continue providing a prayer shawl to members facing difficulties. If you enjoy knitting or crocheting we would also welcome your help creating shawls. Most of our work is done at home, but we gather as a group the second Monday of each month at 10am in Fellowship Hall. Our next meetings are **Mondays, February 13th and March 14th**.  
*Thank you, Margie Smith*

### CHRISTMAS GATHERING DINNER - December 3rd



**The Dunnemans, Gospel Singers**



Photos by Joanie Mock

## FEBRUARY 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 Joan Hoffman	11 David & Lynn Lang	21 Steve & Joanie Mock
2 Bob & Jean Humphreys	12 Ernie & DeAnn Lehman	22 Edie Moody
3 Pat Ihrie	13 Marcia Ling	23 Nancy Murphy
4 Ronald & Marti Jex	14 Al & Suzie Lorenz	24 Kay Nay
5 Mary Kasbohm	15 Connie Luther	25 Bruce & Mary Nielsen
6 Mary Kimberly	16 Myles MacDonald	26 Alma Norment
7 Joyce Kiskaddon	17 Steve MacDonald	27 Edwina Norton
8 Art & Fran Koon	18 Larry & Sue Mesler	28 Marguerite O'Brien
9 Jean LaMantia	19 Glee Miller	
10 Ken & Lynda Lambert	20 John Milligan	



2—Debbie Rostad	20—Phyllis Richardson
3—Richard Hill	23—Bill Purcell
8—Doris Costa	25—Arlene Gebel
15—Jene Shafer	25—DeAnn Lehman
16—Sharon Russell	28—Roy Belville
17—Margie Smith	28—Marcia Ling
20—Joe Cherny	

## MEMBER CARE

THANKS  
from the  
HEART

Thank you "everyone" for all the prayers, the pounding, and especially the Keurig coffee machine. Thank you also for your prayers and support as I received good news regarding my health! I feel so blessed!!! Thank you again my dear "family".  
In Christian love, Dianne Sizemore

Dear Church Family, Thank you for the "pounding" gifts. They will be used and are greatly appreciated. God has opened doors to me that I never thought possible..a lovely new home, a new church family that walks with you during the good days as well as the bad. My heart is bursting with joy for all of these blessings.  
Love in Christ, Sheila Dabney



Congratulations to:

Donna and Richard Peterson for great-granddaughter, Kennedy Layne Shook, December 16th.  
Gail Thornton for her 22nd great-grandchild, Conner Ray Glaser, January 16th.



Our prayers and sympathy are shared with:  
Debbie and Pete Rostad on the sudden passing of Pete's sister in December.  
Donna Peterson and family on the loss of her sister, Bettye Michaels, in January.

*Thank you from the Taylor Family*



Friends,

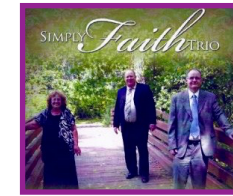
Let me start by expressing our deepest gratitude for your support of the Taylor family. Many of you have been following and praying for us for the better part of six years, starting with prayers of discernment whether the Lord was indeed calling us and if so, where. Looking back, it seems it was half a lifetime ago. One thing is for sure, whenever you began supporting us, we are thankful you did. Thank you for taking this journey with us, season by season. We hope that you have grown in your walk with the Lord as you have seen in our lives, the faithfulness of our Father. I speak for the entire Taylor family when I say that because of what He has led us through, we have a much more tangible, dependable, 'real-world' type of faith. We wish the same for you.

We have reached the end of this chapter of the Taylor family story and are starting the next. We came home in July, believing that we would only be here for six months and then return to Zambia. A short time later, we realized the Lord was bringing that season to an end. As we were still wavering between grief, disbelief and joy, he affirmed this decision by providing - through you - for our every need, calming our fears and apprehensions. We asked you to continue supporting us as we went through this unexpected transition and you did, some even made additional contributions! I cannot tell you how many times we saw a clearer view of a merciful father through your sacrificial gifts and thoughtful words.

It seems to us that this season has come to a close, but whether the Lord has placed a comma or a period, we do not know. One thing we do know however, is that you all have done a wonderful job at blurring the lines between family, friends and supporters. This is not the end of the road for us, it's just a continuation of the same journey...and we are excited to be traveling on this road with you.

Jennifer has been working as a Kindergarten teacher since late August and on February 13th I will return to the same fire department as before as a firefighter, and will be striving toward becoming re-certified as a paramedic. We have settled into a home a few miles from where we used to live in Gig Harbor and our children have settled into local schools. We would love to tell you the wonderful stories of our faithful God...and hear your stories as well. We welcome your thoughts so don't be shy. Be strong and courageous, Rob, Jen and the rest of the Taylor Tribe

## FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES



### VALENTINE YUMMY & SWEETS PARTY

Entertainment by "Simply Faith", a Southern Gospel Trio

**Tuesday, February 14th**

**5:30pm**

*Please bring your favorite appetizer  
or dessert to share*

*Sign up in the church foyer*



St. Patrick's Day Dinner



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

**Wednesday, March 15th**

**5:30pm**

**\$5.00**



### GOD'S SIMPLE LOVE

ON THE BORDER OF DAY AND NIGHT  
I STAND UNDER CALM SHADOWED TREES  
FASHIONED BY TINY GOBLET OF RAIN  
DRIPPING COOLNESS AS THE LAST RAYS OF SUN  
DRENCH MY EYES WITH SHADES OF HAZY HUE.

AND IT WAS WORTH THE WAIT  
THROUGH WINTER'S COOLNESS  
WORTH THE CHILL OF FEBRUARY FREEZE  
TO STAND IN THE UNIVERSE  
CRADLED IN GOD'S NEWBORN LIFE.

FOR I LOVE GOD'S SIMPLE THINGS.

A SOFT LOOK FROM A STRANGER PASSING  
WHOSE EYES SUDDENLY LIFT  
TO HOLD YOURS IN THEIR THOUGHT.

I LOVE THE WARMTH OF A STEADY GLOW  
PUT FORTH FROM A FIRE  
THAT SENDS ITS FLAME  
INSIDE MY BEING  
TO WARM THE CHILLS OF A WINTER DAY.

I LOVE TO WATCH AN OLD MAN  
WORKING AMONG NEW LIFE  
IN A GARDEN OF GREENS AND FLOWERS  
AS HIS WIZENED HANDS  
EVEN AT THEIR END BRING A NEW BEGINNING.

I LOVE THE SOUND  
OF UNCONTROLLED LAUGHTER  
THAT SPILLS ITS RELEASED JOY  
INTO THE AIR AND LIFE  
AND THE SWEET HONEST SMILE  
OF A CHILD WHOSE EYES  
SEARCH YOURS IN WONDERMENT  
OF GOD'S GREAT LOVE.

I LOVE THE SIMPLE THINGS  
THE THINGS WHICH CAPTURE LIFE  
AND MAKE US GREAT  
THROUGH GOD'S GREAT LOVE.

*By Nancy Beasom*

## MISSION MINISTRY



### 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 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.

### AMIKids CROSSROADS (PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA)



Crossroads is a non-profit 501(c)3 home and 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.

AMIKids Crossroads is actively seeking mentors for their boys. If you would like to consider being a mentor or serving in other ways in this ministry, visit Crossroads' website at [www.amikidscrossroads.org](http://www.amikidscrossroads.org) or talk to Ron Beasom.

### THE STONE FAMILY (ZACAPA, GUATEMALA)



Eric and Debbie Stone are our new missionary partners through Antioch Partners. Eric is from North Carolina and Debbie is a native Guatemalan. They met in Guatemala when Eric volunteered there with the Peace Corps. They have two sons, Eric and Danny. **Their Guiding Values are Service, the Local Church (in rural areas of northeastern Guatemala), Relations of Trust, Bible Training and Children.** To learn more about the Stones, please visit [www.theantiochpartners.org](http://www.theantiochpartners.org).

### LISA ALFONSI (LIMA, PERU)



Lisa Alfonsi was called to participate in God's mission in Peru and she is also a missionary partner through Antioch Partners. Lisa lives in Lima where she is partnering with Camino de Vida Church. This church is 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](http://www.theantiochpartners.org).

## MINISTRY OUTREACH



St. Vincent de Paul thanks FPC for our **Thanksgiving Offering** to them. They have served over 37,000 individuals in this last year with food, clothing, furniture and household goods with help from dedicated volunteers giving over 40,000 hours of their time. They are a 100% Volunteer Society!



Thank you for this year's collection of **Shoebbox Gifts** for the children of Misión Peniel. Thanks to all of you, we were able to deliver 119 boxes and bags of toys and gifts to very excited children in Immokalee. The gifts included 90 from our church and Alligator Park in Punta Gorda, and 50 from Community Presbyterian Church in Englewood.

Thank you for your **Christmas Offering** donations. We delivered a check to Rob and Jennfier Taylor through Antioch Partners. See page 8 for a thank you note from the Taylors!

Our **"Welcome Bag" Ministry** to our community continues to grow. In addition to welcoming newly developed residential areas, we are reaching out to you to help us welcome new neighbors in "older" neighborhoods.

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, recently returned from his third tour in Afghanistan and is stationed at MacDill Air Force Base near Tampa.
- \* 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.*