
WORSHIP SERVICE – THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC Christmas is Near

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE *Song of the Seraphim* Clarence Kohlman

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE Maria Greene
Third Candle symbolizes Joy and is called the “Shepherd’s Candle”

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP (based on Isaiah 49:13 and Psalm 30:11-12)

Pastor: Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth;
break forth, O mountains, into singing!

All: *For the Lord has comforted his people
and will have compassion on his afflicted.*

Pastor: You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;

All: *you have loosed my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,*

Pastor: that my glory may sing your praise and not be silent.

All: *O Lord my God, I will give thanks to you forever!*

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

INTROIT *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* arr. Lloyd Larson
Chancel Choir

***HYMN #259** *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH - The Apostles’ Creed (Unison)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

*GLORIA PATRI

ANTHEM *Love Came Down at Christmas* Joel Raney
Chancel Choir

Ileana Ciumac, Violin and Rachel Cox, Violin

PASTORAL PRAYER AND LORD’S PRAYER (debt/debtors)

OFFERTORY *Star of the East* Amanda Kennedy

*DOXOLOGY

*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

Dear Lord, here and now we bring our gifts to You and to the church. We ask You to receive our gifts for ministry and service. But more, Lord, receive our love, and with our love and Your divine love, may we keep on building Your kingdom here as it is in heaven. In our Master’s name, we pray. Amen.

***HYMN #251** *It Came upon the Midnight Clear*

SCRIPTURE Matthew 2:9-11

MESSAGE *Symbols of the Season: A Star* Pastor Barksdale Pullen

***HYMN #249** *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

*BENEDICTION

***RESPONSE #243** *Emmanuel*

POSTLUDE *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* Roger C. Wilson

*Please stand, if able

Hearing assist devices are available at the tech booth
CCLI #1140231 CVLI #5054293

MINISTRY OF PRAYER

Prayer Focus

- Pray for those who serve in the military and their families.
- Pray for First Responders and Healthcare Workers.
- Pray for our church as we seek to be a flourishing church that makes disciples of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for Lisa Alfonsi, Eric Stone family, and Chasen and Katie Brokaw, missionaries we support in Peru, Guatemala, and Nicaragua.
- Pray for Crossroads, the mission for foster boys in Punta Gorda.
- Pray for Jesus Loves You Ministry for the homeless in Charlotte County.
- Pray for Misión Peniel, the mission that we support in Immokalee.
- Pray for persecuted Christians throughout the world.

Those with Special Needs

Rachel Pfaender	Kay Callahan	Phyllis Ehrhardt
Lynn Lang	Ron Sixt	Rick Berner
Irene Csontos	Barb Harris	Dave Sifferd

Those who are in Assisted Living or Nursing Homes

Marion Brown, *Truewood by Merrill, Port Charlotte*

NOTES

NEW COVENANT PARTNERS – Today we welcome our new Covenant Partners – Lili Bush, Barbara Reynolds, and Sharon Weed.

FLOWERS – The flowers are given today by Bill and Pauli Purcell.

CELL PHONES – Please remember to silence or turn off your mobile devices.

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER – Available in the church foyer and on our website.

CHURCH DIRECTORIES – Available in the church office.

FLOWERS – May be sponsored for **\$37.50**. To make a donation, sign up in the church foyer, listing the flowers in honor and/or in memory of something or someone.

BULLETIN BOARD – Check out notes and messages of interest on the Bulletin Board in the church foyer.

PRAYER EMAIL LIST – If you would like to be on Pastor Barksdale’s prayer email list, email Pastor Barksdale at bmpullen3@fpcpunta.org.

OUR DAILY BREAD – This booklet of daily devotionals is on the table in the back of the Sanctuary.

STREAMING MINISTRY – Live stream our services on our website homepage (fpcpunta.org) by clicking the logo **YouTube**.

FELLOWSHIP TIME – Following the Worship Service, join us in Fellowship Hall for a time of fellowship and refreshments. You may bring cookies / treats to share!

Comparative Financial Operations / Performance

	<u>November 2023</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Tithes & Offerings	\$22,043.19	\$249,218.19
Cash Expenditures	<u>\$22,912.57</u>	<u>\$251,537.83</u>
Net	(\$869.38)	(\$2,319.64)

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

GATHER FOR PRAYER – A prayer meeting is held Sundays at 6pm online. Please submit any prayer requests to first@fpcpunta.org.

BIBLE READING PLAN -- Reading guides and Bibles are in the church foyer.

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS – We have Advent Devotionals available in the church foyer. Please take one for your family for daily reflections on the reason for the season.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING – This year’s Christmas Offering will be used for Gift Cards for the Veterans Village. Please use the Christmas Envelope in your Envelope Box or a Special Christmas Envelope on the table in the church foyer.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIA – Remember a loved one this Christmas by giving a poinsettia to help decorate the church. Suggested donation is \$7 per poinsettia. Special envelopes are available on the table in the church foyer. **Please return your envelope by tomorrow, December 18th** in order to be listed in a special bulletin insert.

DEACON’S FUND OFFERING TODAY – Our monthly collection supports our efforts to help congregation needs, emergency needs, Misión Peniel Spanish devotionals, and others.

STAND IN THE GAP FUND – The purpose of this fund is to assist supported missionaries and ministries of our church, when they face unexpected financial burdens. To donate to this fund, please mark your gift as SITG.

PLEDGE CARD – If you haven’t returned your pledge card for 2024, please do so as soon as possible. Pledge cards and Narrative Budgets are available on the table in the back of the Sanctuary or in the church foyer. Thank you.

YEAR-END GIVING – To make sure your giving for 2023 gets credited for 2023, please have your offering/gift to the church before December 31st. Donations received after that date will be applied to one’s 2024 giving. For gifts of stock, please call the church office.

2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES – Available on the table in the foyer. If you don’t see your name, let the office know. Thank you.

ACTIVITIES / EVENTS

ANNUAL CONCERT SERIES – THIS AFTERNOON at 3:00pm, featuring The Two Piano Group. A free will offering will be taken – suggested donation is \$15.00.

WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY – Tuesday, December 19th at 10:00am – “Moving from the Mundane to the Mysterious” – Esther 2:8-11. Join us for our study of “Esther”, based on “*Becoming a Woman of Beauty & Strength*” by Elizabeth George. We meet the first and third Tuesdays of each month in Fellowship Hall. Call Kathy Belville at 508-733-0546 for more information. **All women are invited for study, fellowship, and refreshments.**

DONUTS AND DOCTRINE BIBLE STUDY – Because of Bethlehem, by Max Lucado. Join us on Wednesday morning at 10:00am on **December 20th** as we complete our study on Advent. No one expected the Messiah to come the way he did. Yet the way he came was every bit as important as the coming itself. The manger is the message. Because of Bethlehem, God knows what it's like to be human. Because of Bethlehem, when we talk to him about tough times, he understands. He's been there. He's been here. Because of Bethlehem, we no longer have marks on our record...just grace.

LADIES LUNCH BUNCH – Friday, January 5th, 12:00pm – Please sign up and join us for lunch at St. Andrew’s Country Club in Punta Gorda. **All ladies are invited!**

PULLEN UP A CHAIR – Wednesday, January 10th at 5:00pm. Barksdale and Bo will be hosting get-together dinners at their home. This will be in groups of eight, and you can sign up in the church foyer, or call/email the church office to reserve a night. There is no agenda, lesson, or study; just a time to get together for fellowship and to learn more about one another.

MISIÓN PENIEL – Our next trip to Immokalee is **Friday, January 26th** – we will be helping at the Mission in the afternoon. Please meet at the church at 12:15pm. We will return about 8-9pm. *We need 12 people to go*, so please sign up in the church foyer.

MISSIONS SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

DISASTER RELIEF SUPPORT – A reminder that our trusted partners at World Renew are ECO’s go-to resource for long-term disaster relief.

<https://worldrenew.net/disaster-response-services-us/disaster-response-services>

JESUS LOVES YOU MINISTRY SPECIAL NEEDS – Shower Ministry (Wednesday mornings in our parking lot) – Please place “shower” items in the donation box in Fellowship Hall.

MISSIONS SUPPORT – If you would like to donate to the missionaries and organizations that we are supporting in 2022 in our church budget, please make checks payable to FPC and on the memo line write the name of the mission.

Antioch Partners – Stone Family (Guatemala) or Lisa Alfonsi (Peru)

Crossroads Hope Academy (Punta Gorda)

Jesus Loves You Ministry (Port Charlotte)

Misión Peniel (Immokalee)

Missionary Ventures (Chasen & Katie Brokaw – Nicaragua)

EVENTS FOR THE COMING WEEK

December 17th to December 24th

Sunday, December 17

Third Sunday in Advent

Deacon’s Fund Sunday

10:30am Worship Service (Also Online)
11:30am Fellowship Time
3:00pm Concert Series – The Two Piano Group
6:00pm Prayer Meeting (Facebook)

Monday, December 18

2:00pm Session

Tuesday, December 19

10:00am Women’s Bible Study

Wednesday, December 20

10:00am Donuts & Doctrine
10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry

Thursday, December 21

10:00am Game Fellowship
3:30pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, December 24

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Christmas Eve

10:30am Worship Service (Also Online)

Cantata Sunday

11:30am Fellowship Time

5:00pm **Christmas Eve Service**

First Presbyterian Church of Punta Gorda
25250 Airport Road Punta Gorda, FL 33950
941-639-1959 (phone) 941-637-3763 (fax)
Email: first@fpcpunta.org Website: fpcpunta.org
Office hours: 9:00am to 1:00pm Monday – Thursday

SERMON NOTES

Matthew 2:9-11

⁹ After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. ¹¹ And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

Bible Readings

December 17 2 Timothy 4:19-22
Hebrews 1:1-4:13
December 18 Hebrews 4:14-7:28
December 19 Hebrews 8:1-10:39
December 20 Hebrews 11:1-12:29
December 21 Hebrews 13:1-25
1 Peter 1:1-2:3
December 22 1 Peter 2:4-5:11
December 23 1 Peter 5:12-14
2 Peter 1:1-3:18



Loving...Growing...Going...in Jesus!

This morning as we join in worship, our hope is that each of us will find renewed life, health and strength in God.

We are glad to welcome each guest and friend, and that you have chosen to hear God’s call with this congregation.

December 17, 2023

10:30am

PASTOR

Dr. Barksdale Pullen

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Joan Byron

ORGANIST

Denny Ausman

OFFICE & WORSHIP ADMIN

Debbie Rostad

LITURGIST

John Evans

USHERS

Patti MacDonald, Sam Cessna, Katie Schulte, Andy Schulte