The Messenger

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN
Punta Gorda

Member of ECO (A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians)

25250 Airport Road Punta Gorda, FL 33950
941-639-1959
first@fpcpunta.org. www.fpcpunta.org
Office Hours - Monday - Thursday
9am - 1pm (and by appointment)

Worship Service in our Sanctuary at 10:30am or watch our worship service LIVE! at: www.fpcpunta.org and click on "YouTube"







"Come, Ye Thankful People" By Alistair Begg (Truth For Life)

"Give thanks in all circumstances ... May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it…" 1 Thessalonians 5:18, 23-24

Thanksgiving is not always easy, even when, as a nation, the US sets aside a holiday for the express purpose of doing so. During this holiday, many of us become keenly aware of life circumstances that don't stir up feelings of thankfulness. Some of us may be facing our loneliest days, while others are overwhelmed by the crushing burden of a loved one wandering from the gospel. Still others enter this season greatly disappointed as a result of various failures-a lost job, a broken relationship, another missed promotion. We sometimes find ourselves absolutely stuck, unable to pull ourselves out of despondency and feeling as far from gratitude as the east is from the west.

When we're facing such situations and we read "Give thanks in all circumstances," we often wonder how we're supposed to respond. Yet the Bible never offers exhortations without also offering aid. The answer for how we can show constant gratitude lies in God's sanctifying work in us. The word "sanctify" means "to set apart for God." When the Lord Jesus Christ comes to rule and reign in our lives, the Holy Spirit enters us in order to produce the ongoing cleansing necessary for spiritual growth. It is the work of God that enables us to be what Jesus desires for us to be, "for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). When we abide in Christ, "rooted and built up in him" (Colossians 2:7) - studying our Bibles, learning to pray, fellowshipping with God's people, telling others about Him - we are reminded of all that He is for us and all that He has done for us and in us. We learn to sing with the psalmist, "We give thanks to you, 0 God; we give thanks, for your name is near. We recount your wondrous deeds" (Psalm 75:1). Whatever our own regrets and disappointments, we are able to overflow with thankfulness as we remember His wondrous deeds - His cross, His resurrection, His ascension, and His work in us by His Spirit to bring us to faith and keep us in faith.

Our trials may be tough and gloomy. We may not *feel* thankful in every moment. That's ok, because that's not the point. God enables us to be grateful regardless. He provides the strength for us to fulfill Paul's instruction.

If you are experiencing an absence of thankfulness in your life right now, then you need to turn your attention away from your circumstances, at least for a moment, and reflect on God's gift of love for you. *As* you abide in Christ and allow God's Spirit to continue His sanctifying work, He will quicken you from within, so that even through tears, pain, and disappointment, you'll be able to respond when He bids us, "Come, ye thankful people, come." (Psalm 149)

WORSHIP SCHEDULE



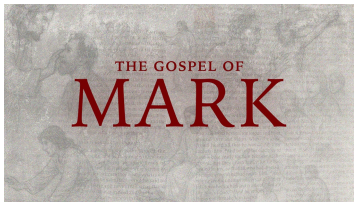


Sunday Mornings - 10:30am Worship Service (Also Online)

Sunday Evenings - 6:00pm Prayer Meeting (On Facebook)

Fellowship Time

Join us for beverages, cookies and treats after Sunday's Worship Service



SERMON SERIES - November - "MARK"

Join us as we continue our journey through the fast-paced Gospel of Mark, the earliest of the Gospels written. Mark looks at the life of Christ and documents the ministry and miracles of Jesus that firmly established Him as God's Son. He desired that Christians have a biographical story of Jesus Christ as Servant of the Lord, and Savior of the world, in order to strengthen their faith in the face of persecution and to teach them what it meant to be His disciple.



CHOIR NOTES

Fall is coming and so will be your opportunity to sing with others in an ensemble at First Presbyterian Church. Singing in worship will be on Sunday, November 15th. There will be one rehearsal on Thursday, November 12th at 4:30pm.

For November the song will be Leaning on the Everlasting Arms
Sign up in the foyer or let me know. Thank you, Denny



New Stained Glass Windows — Breakfast Dedication
Sunday, November 8th, 9:00am

Join us early this Sunday for a potluck breakfast as we celebrate the installation of our stained-glass windows in the Sanctuary. Crafted by church members Rick and Kay Berner. Sign up in the church foyer.

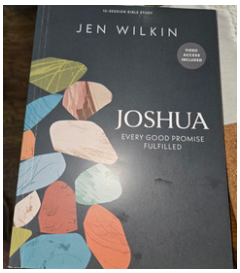
(If you would like to contribute to the cost of materials, just put "glass" on the check memo line, or online in the comment section. Thanks)



Congregational / Corporation Meeting
Sunday, November 15th, following the Service



Pledge Sunday — Sunday, November 22nd



Women's Bible Study

Tuesdays, November 3rd and 17th, at 10:00am

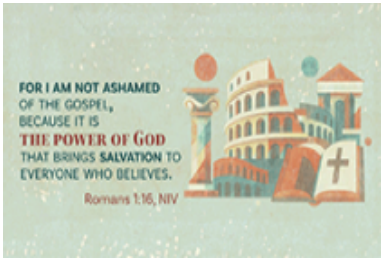
"Joshua"

Led by Kathy Belville

Donuts & Doctrine Bible Study

Wednesdays at 10:00am — November 4th, 11th, 18th

We continue our look at Paul's longest letter – Romans. His letter to the church in Rome can and should change us. We should walk away knowing Jesus more clearly, understanding the gospel more accurately, abandoning sin more thoroughly, feeling grace more deeply, and grasping more faithfully the large story of God's sovereign purposes for this world and his faithful achievement of those purposes in spite of evil and sin.
Everyone invited, led by Pastor Barksdale.



GRIEFSHARE — "Surviving the Holidays" Seminar

Monday, November 9th at FPC from 10:00am – 12:00pm

This seminar offers practical, actionable strategies for making it through the holiday season. You'll view a video featuring advice from people in grief who've faced the holidays after their loss. You'll hear insights from respected Christian counselors, pastors, and psychologists. You'll receive a Holiday Survival Guide with practical strategies, encouraging words, helpful exercises, Q/As, and journaling ideas for daily survival through the holiday season. Your holiday season won't be easy; your emotions may ambush you and suck you under at times. But you can choose to walk through this season in a way that honors your loved one and puts you on the path of health and healing.

Sign up in the church foyer





Make Disciples — The Life-Changing Ministry of Why

(By Marshall Segal, President & CEO, Desiring God)

Following Christ means making disciples. His words echo in the back of our minds, "Go therefore and make disciples . . . " (Matthew 28:19). Not first and foremost "have daily devotions" or "give to the poor," but *make disciples*. We don't become a Christian by making disciples, but once we are in Christ, few things come closer to capturing the heart of our calling while we're still here on earth.

The reality, though, is that we have always been involved in disciple-making, even from birth — just not always disciple-making for Jesus. You *are* a disciple. The question is: Who are you following? You *have* disciples. The question is: How are you influencing the people watching you?

Every one of us — young or old, American, African, or Asian, believer or unbeliever — is engaged in some form of discipleship. Every one of us follows someone, and every one of us carries significant influence over someone else. As Mark Dever writes in his book on disciple-making, "To be human is to be a disciple. God didn't present Adam and Eve with a choice between discipleship and independence, but between following him and following Satan. We are all disciples; the only question is, of whom?".

Christian disciple-making — or "discipling," as Dever refers to it — wields the universal human patterns of influence, modeling, and formation for the fame of Jesus.

Not All Teachers, But All Teach

What is discipling? Dever says, "At its core, discipling is teaching." He goes on, "Your discipling should help people *understand more*. . . . Through discipling, you want people to know why Christians pray, why we share the gospel, why we join the church, why knowledge of God's sovereignty impacts how we live, and more".

Discipling is a ministry of *how*, but it should be even more so a ministry of *why*. Discipling others absolutely involves modeling faith and godliness with our lives (Philippians 3:17), but effective discipling also imparts the reasons for believing in and living for Jesus (2 Timothy 2:2).

Anyone can imitate Christianity for a while without any real conviction, but that kind of "faith" won't last, and won't save. The younger men and women looking up to us need the truths we believe — the truths behind how we live — far more than they need a good example to follow.

You can never teach anyone all the how's, but when you teach them the why's, you prepare them to exercise wisdom and generate their own how's long into the future.

To be clear, it matters how our disciples live (Hebrews 12:14) and we should be training them to live rightly before God (Matthew 28:20), but it will not matter how they live if their lives are not shaped and motivated by the word of God and his gospel. All discipling should involve teaching — stopping to tell those over whom we have influence *why* we believe what we believe and why we live like we live. Discipling doesn't just walk them around the car; it pops the hood and shows them the engine.

Five Things Love Does

In discipling, we model and teach toward a deeper love for and obedience to Christ. The engine of our discipling, though, runs on love. Without love, all our effort, intentionality, and strategies are as nothing (1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Attempting to disciple others apart from growing and overflowing love may look virtuous, even heroic, but it will eventually wear thin and run out. If we try to disciple without love, we may help others *look* like Christians, but we'll lack what they need most: a new heart filled with real affection and devotion.

I'm not mainly thinking of our love for the various people in our lives. Dever warns, "Ultimately, our toil and labor cannot root in our love for them or their love for us. It must root in our love for Christ, his love for us, and his love for them"). We won't find the well we need in discipling somewhere deep inside ourselves. We must draw from a deeper, fuller, living well of grace, truth, and love.

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Make Disciples — The Life-Changing Ministry of Why
(By Marshall Segal, President & CEO, Desiring God)

Are your discipling relationships — with family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and so on — marked by real, genuine love? Dever offers five characteristics of true love in these relationships. I've added questions to help them serve as ways to test our own hearts in our efforts to disciple others.

1. "Love initiates a discipling relationship."

- Am I willing to initiate intentional time together with this person?
- Beyond starting the relationship, will I bring up the hard conversation we need to have?
- Am I bold enough to consistently move our conversation to spiritual things?

2. "Love perseveres in a discipling relationship."

- Am I ready to keep calling after months of seeing little fruit or progress?
- Will I give up if this person falls back into an old pattern of sin?
- How will I respond to the inconveniences in this relationship?

3. "Love humbly receives criticism that often comes in a discipling relationship."

- How do I respond to criticism or opposition in general — with humility or pride?
- Specifically, what will I feel or say when this person pushes back on what I'm teaching them?
- What healthy ways am I encouraging give-and-take in this relationship?

4. "Love humbly gives of itself in a discipling relationship."

- What sacrifices am I making to spend time discipling this person?
- Do I tend to feel bitter or prideful about the sacrifices I make for others?
- Jesus says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Can I say the same?

5. "Love allows us to end discipling relationships."

Dever helpfully unpacks this last statement about love, "We need a love that humbles us enough to recognize that what they need is not us, but God, and that God can use us for a while, and then use someone else".

- Do I think of myself as savior or as one instrument among many in the Savior's hands?
- How do I think about my role in this particular person's life — as essential and irreplaceable, or as complementary and temporary?
- Am I willing to help move this person on to other disciplers when their needs or circumstances suggest it's time? To that end, it may be wise to establish a clear time frame up front (e.g. a month, a year, two years), so that neither person assumes the disciplining relationship is indefinite.

What Will We Leave Behind?

You will follow, and you will lead and teach. What will be the legacy of your life and example among the people in your life who outlive you? Again, Dever writes, "The people around you will influence you, for better or worse. And for better or worse you in turn *will* affect the people around you. . . . None of us is an island."

A sea of seven billion people, and no islands. We may feel like we live on an island most days, like our decisions mainly affect us and only us. But the reality is that others will notice what we do and how we do it, what we say and how say it. What they notice will either inspire them to follow Jesus, or comfort their animosity or disinterest. We disciple in everything we do, so we should be intentional in everything we do to model joy in Jesus — and as often as we can, to teach them how to find that joy for themselves.

Dever asks, "When you step out of the hallway of this life into the room of eternity, what will you have left behind in the lives of others?". Will we leave behind a bright, but fading image of ourselves — our gifts, our interests, our successes — or a bold and lasting image of Christ leading to eternal life?

BURGERS FOR BADGES



















MILITARY PRAYER LIST

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.

* Major John McPherson, Air Force, great nephew of Marguerite O'Brien, stationed at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas
* Major Eric Engstrom, Army Intel., son of Alan Engstrom, stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
* Lt. Col. David Sifferd, Jr., Army Reserve, son of David Sifferd, stationed in Ft. Knox, KY
* Pvt. Michael Robert Wagner, U.S. Marine Corp., great-grandson of Robert and Jean Humphreys, stationed in Hawaii
* Second Lieutenant, JTAC, Alexander Kingsbury, Air Force, great-grandson of Tim Ronan, stationed in New York

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 HELMET or let the church office know.

First Presbyterian Church proudly supports Missions from our church budget.

If you would personally like to make additional donations, please make checks payable to FPC and indicate the mission on the memo line.

ST. VINCENT de PAUL (Punta Gorda, Florida)
SVdPsh01@gmail.com

CROSSROADS HOPE ACADEMY (Punta Gorda, Florida)
Crossroadspg.org

JESUS LOVES YOU MINISTRY (Port Charlotte, Florida)
Jesuslovesyouministryinc.com

GROUND UP MINISTRIES (Cape Coral, Florida)
groundupministries.org

MISION PENIEL (Immokalee, Florida)
Misionpeniel.com



ANTIOCH PARTNERS (Guatemala)
Eric and Debbie Stone - theantiochpartners.org



ANTIOCH PARTNERS (Lima, Peru)
Lisa and Clever Alfonsi - theantiochpartners.org



MISSIONARY VENTURES INTERNATIONAL (Nicaragua)
Chasen and Katie Brokaw - mvi.org / breakingborders.org

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

LADIES CARDS FELLOWSHIP

Thursday mornings from 10am - 12pm - All are Welcome!

LADIES LUNCH BUNCH

1st and 3rd Friday of each month at 11:30am - Sign up in the church foyer

Friday, November 6th at Lime Tequila in Port Charlotte

Friday, November 20th at Riviera Restaurant in Punta Gorda

PRAYER SHAWL GATHERING - Monday, November 16th, 10:00am

Our shawls are each created to offer comfort and God's love to any who are in need. We have provided them to many of our own covenant partners, all over the country and even internationally. We invite anyone who likes to knit or crochet to attend. All are welcome! We will have patterns on hand for those who desire them as well as samples of our shawls for you to see. Should you have your own pattern that would be gladly welcome as well! Please join us for a pleasant morning of fellowship and refreshments. Hope to see you there. In His Name, Susie Lorenz









GROUND UP MINISTRIES

The Ground Up ministry provides a safe home for girls. We have been going on Tuesday afternoons, and doing crafts and baking with the girls. Recently, we painted pumpkins.

Tuesday, November 10th, at 2:00pm

Please see Patti MacDonald for details and to sign up.



MISION PENIEL (Immokalee, Florida)

Join us on Friday, November 20th, afternoon session

We will meet at the church at 12:30pm

Sign up in the church foyer (we need 12 people)

THANKSGIVING SPECIAL GIFTING

St. Vincent de Paul - "Thanksgiving Meals Project"

Use the Special Gifting envelopes

Thank you for your generosity!

Collections through November 22nd



WELCOME BACK POTLUCK

Wednesday, November 18th at 5:00pm

Join us as we reconnect with our Seasonal Friends! - Sign up now



ANGEL / CARDINAL TREE

Sisters and Brothers,

It's that time of year again that we have the opportunity to share what God has given us with those less fortunate. We all can do that by stopping by the Angel/Cardinal Tree and take a tag and bag. Bring the tag back by November 22nd with your UNWRAPPED gift of $25.00 - $30.00 in the bag and place under the tree. All your help will be greatly appreciated!

Your sister in Christ, Kathy Belville



CHRISTMAS GIFTING

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

1 - Veterans Village - Gift Cards

2 - Missionaries

Eric and Debbie Stone (Guatemala)

Lisa and Clever Alfonsi (Peru)

Chasen and Katie Brokaw (Nicaragua)

Use your Christmas or Special Gifting envelopes

Thank you for your generosity!

Donations through December 24th



HANGING OF THE GREENS

Saturday, November 28th at 9:00am

Sign up to help decorate our Church for Christmas!



CHRISTMAS WALK AT PEACE RIVER GARDENS

Monday, December 7th



CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE @ PULLEN'S

Saturdays, December 12th and 19th — 12:00 - 2:00pm



Christmas Dinner

CHRISTMAS DINNER AND MOVIE

Wednesday, December 16th at 5:00pm





Prayer Requests
Hospital and Rehab Information
Address, Phone, Email
Birthdays and Anniversaries
Email to first@fpcpunta.org



First Pres is on Facebook
facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurch-Punta Gorda



To watch the current service:
1) Follow the link: https://www.youtube.com/@FPCPG
(This link is also on our website in the top right corner - simply press the YouTube button)
2) On the FPC YouTube page you will see a small screen with the word LIVE, click it and it will fill up your screen.
The Service begins at 10:30am (Pre-Service at 10:15am)





We are still in the 2026 hurricane season.
We want to remind everyone that if a storm is in the area, please don't travel if you are not comfortable, but you may still join us online.
Also, we have a text messaging sytem to notify folks if Services/Events are canceled.
If you do not want to receive a text message, please notify the church office.
Please note: You cannot reply to these text messages.



FPC Library Catalog is Online!

Looking for a good book, help with a theological question, Christian biography, or a devotional?

Just log on to the site https://www.librarycat.org/lib/FPCPG and enter your search. Then drop by the library and pick up your item. Browse our Library whenever you are at the church!

Please 'check out' our book display in the church foyer!

CHURCH PRAYER CALENDAR AND CELEBRATIONS - NOVEMBER

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	Andy & Katie Schulte	11	Don/Mary Anne Washabaugh	21	Roy & Kathy Belville
2	Elaine Schultz	12	Sharon Weed	22	Shirley Berg
3	Jene Shafer	13	Carolyn White	23	Rick & Kay Berner
4	Dave & Sharon Sifferd	14	Don & Susan Willecke	24	Duane/Wanda Boyles
5	Billie Sixt	15	Charlie & Evelyn Zietsma	25	Lili Bush
6	Andy & Nancy Smith	16	Steve & Nicole Zimmerman	26	Bonnie Carey
7	Bo & Karen Sostar	17	Rex Anderson	27	Sam & Patti MacDonald
8	Gail Thornton	18	Laurel Aumend	28	Judith Cornnell
9	Larrie & Marjorie Tisdale	19	Denny & Minty Ausman	29	Robert Cuzner
10	Linda Wagar	20	Linda Avallone	30	Peter & Donna DeBree



2—Larry Mesler

7—Peter DeBree

7—Alan Engstrom

13—Barbara McPherson

17—Barbie Eberhard

17—Barksdale Pullen

20—Tim Ronan

26—Sharon Sifferd

27—Maria Greene

30—John Evans

29—Bill & Pauli Purcell—17 yrs.



Congratulations to Barbara Floyd on the birth of her 5th great grandchild Gavin Hunter Harmon

Congratulations to Andy & Katie Schulte on the birth of their 1st great grandchild Stellen Wayne Dykstra



Please pray for Denny Ausman, whose wife Minty went home to the Lord on October 6th.



NOVEMBER 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Communion Sunday 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Fellowship Time 6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB	2	3 10:00am Women's Bible Study 1:00pm Fellowship Team	4 10:00am Donuts & Doctrine 10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry	5 10:00am Ladies Cards Fellowship	6 11:30am Ladies Lunch Bunch at Lime Tequila in Port Charlotte	7
8 Stained Glass Dedication 9:00am Breakfast Potluck 10:30am Worship Service 6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB	9 1:00pm Worship Team	10 10:00am Missions Team 2:00pm Ground Up Ministry	11 10:00am Donuts & Doctrine 10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry	12 10:00am Ladies Cards Fellowship 4:30pm Choir Rehearsal	13	14
15 Deacon's Sunday 10:30am Worship Service Choir Sings in Service 11:30 Congregational Meeting 11:30am Fellowship Time 6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB	16 10:00am Prayer Shawl 1:00pm Session	17 10:00am Women's Bible Study	18 10:00am Donuts & Doctrine 10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry 5:00pm Welcome Back Potluck	19 10:00am Ladies Cards Fellowship	20 11:30am Ladies Lunch Bunch at Riviera in Punta Gorda 12:30pm Misson Trip to Immokalee	21
22 10:15am Hymn Sing 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Fellowship Time 6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB	23	24	25 10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry	26	27	28 9:00am Hang the Greens
29 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Fellowship Time 6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB	30		FALL DINNER Wednesday, November 18		**Church Office Hours** Monday - Thursday 9:00am to 1:00pm and by appointment	





December 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	28	31	31		