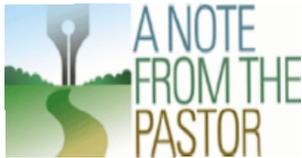


The Messenger



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)

Member of ECO (A Covenant Order
of Evangelical Presbyterians)



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

After Easter, Now What?



The celebration of Easter Sunday is almost over. In the stores the chocolate eggs will be on discounted sale, Easter Cards replaced by Graduation or Mother's Day cards. But here is the question: What do we do now? We just celebrated the event that makes us Christians, and because Jesus rose from the grave, He had victory over death, sin, and Satan; that means that everything changes! So now what?

We ask ourselves, what does Easter mean to me? Will the events of Easter Sunday have real life-changing implications in my life?

Well, what did Mary do when she saw the empty grave? She had to go and tell someone; she told the disciples! How about the disciples? Well, at first, they were skeptical, but upon seeing Jesus they believed and understood His words.

Jesus Himself gave them the task; we read about it in Matthew 28: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

So what did Peter do? This same Peter who had denied Christ three times. This same Peter who answered Jesus three times on the beach, "Of course I love you." That Peter, and the rest of us, were given a task – feed my sheep. So, what did Peter do? He shared the good news of the Gospel, and it records in Acts, *"Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all."*

So, what do we do after Easter Sunday? Take up that same mantle – share the good news of the Gospel and don't keep it to ourselves. We might not see 3000 people converted at one time, but that is not the point. There will be lots of opportunities in the coming months to invite friends to join us on activities at the church. These are opportunities for us to fellowship together, but also opportunities to expose people to the community of faith, and more importantly the One who make us a community – Jesus Christ. If you need resources to share the Good News, stop by our library, there are lots of great books on the Gospel, Easter, and the person of Jesus.

I want to simply challenge you to not let the celebration of Easter end on Easter Sunday. Take the good news of the Gospel into the world, which begins right outside your door. Let's look forward to celebrating next year with new members of the family.

In Christ, Pastor Barksdale

EASTER WEEK



MAUNDY THURSDAY

*April 2
5:00pm*



GOOD FRIDAY

*April 3
Noon*



EASTER SUNDAY

*April 5
10:30am*



Sanctuary Cross

The Colors of the Cross are a symbolic depiction of the Easter season. For the beginning of the Lenten Season the cross is draped in purple. The purple cloth remains on the cross from Ash Wednesday to Maundy Thursday - representing royalty - the King of kings has come. The black cloth remains on the cross from Good Friday through Saturday - representing His death. The white cloth is placed on the cross Easter Sunday - representing His resurrection - His victory over sin, death and Satan.



Living Cross for Easter Sunday

Please bring flowers and greenery for the "living cross" which will be presented on Easter morning. Please bring both flowers and greenery on Saturday, April 4th, at 9:00am. Also, please sign up in the foyer to help with the cross.

WORSHIP MINISTRY



*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*

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY



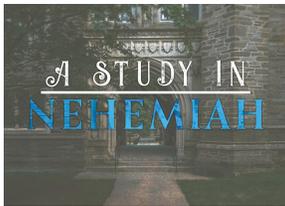
Women's Bible Study

April 7th and 21st at 10:00am

"Heaven - When Faith Becomes Sight"

by Jennifer Rothschild

*We meet the first and third Tuesdays each month at 10:00am in Fellowship Hall
See Kathy Belville for more information*



Donuts & Doctrine Bible Study

Wednesdays at 10:00am

Nehemiah was a layman, not a priest like Ezra nor a prophet like Malachi. He served the Persian king in a secular position before leading a group of Jews to Jerusalem in order to rebuild the city walls. Under Nehemiah's leadership, the Jews withstood opposition and came together to accomplish their goal. Nehemiah led by example, giving up a respected position in a palace for hard labor in a politically insignificant district. He partnered with Ezra. Nehemiah's humility before God provided an example for the people. He did not claim glory for himself but always gave God the credit for his successes. Join us on Wednesdays, beginning on April 8th. Everyone Welcome!

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 Ryan Swisher, Army Ranger, grandson of Rachel Pfaender, stationed in North Carolina
- * 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.*

Own the Mission (For King Jesus, by Bobby Harrington)

To *own the mission* is a phrase commonly heard in high-performance environments—startups, military special-operations units, elite sports teams, and organizations like SpaceX and Tesla. It means far more than simply doing your job or following orders. It means a person has so fully internalized the goal that it has become their own personal responsibility—something they will move heaven and earth to accomplish.

Here are the key characteristics of someone who truly *owns the mission*:

1. **Personal Accountability** They treat the outcome as if their own reputation, money, or life depends on it—even when the task technically belongs to someone else. Failure feels personal.
2. **Proactive Problem-Solving** They don't wait for instructions or permission. If something is broken and it affects the mission, they fix it (or escalate aggressively) without being asked.
3. **Extreme Ownership** (A principle made famous by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin in their book *Extreme Ownership*.) They take 100% responsibility for success or failure—no excuses, no finger-pointing, no “that’s not my department.”
4. **Bias Toward Action** They move fast, take calculated risks, and make decisions with incomplete information because delay would harm the mission.
5. **Alignment Over Ego** Personal credit, titles, and work-life balance take a distant second place. They’ll work 80-hour weeks or jump on a red-eye if that’s what the mission demands.
6. **Infectious Commitment** Their passion lifts everyone around them. People want to work alongside them because they know this person will never let the team fail if it’s humanly possible to prevent it.

You see this in the secular world all the time:

- SpaceX engineers sleeping on the factory floor to solve a problem before the next launch window—even when the issue is outside their specialty.
- Navy SEALs carrying an injured teammate miles to safety without being ordered, because mission success includes bringing everyone home.
- Early startup employees rewriting onboarding docs at 2 a.m. because a bad customer experience could kill the company.

But what happens when this same mindset is applied to the greatest mission on earth: reaching lost people and making disciples who obey everything Jesus commanded (Matthew 28:19–20; Luke 19:10)?

Far too often, that mission stalls—not because leaders don’t love Jesus or work hard, but because only a handful of paid staff and key leaders truly own it. They become the bottleneck. They personally disciple people (which is good and obedient), yet the moment their calendars fill up, Great Commission growth in that church grinds to a halt.

That is not owning the mission.

Owning the mission of making disciples means refusing to let disciple making remain a leadership program. It means building a culture where every believer sees themselves as a disciple who makes disciple makers. The mission only multiplies when disciple makers are multiplied.

Paul modeled and commanded exactly this in 2 Timothy 2:2: “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.” Four spiritual generations in a single verse:

1. Paul → 2. Timothy → 3. reliable people → 4. others

This is not addition; this is multiplication. This is the early church’s practical outworking of the Great Commission — and it must become ours.

Continued on Page 5

Own the Mission (continued from Page 4)

What It Looks Like to Own the Mission of Making Disciple Makers

- 1. Personal Accountability** Leaders never say, “I’m discipling three-five people; my part is done.” They constantly ask, “Who am I equipping to disciple three-five more—and who will each equip those disciples to make more disciples?” The lostness of their city and the creation of obedience-based disciples feels personal.
- 2. Proactive Multiplication** They don’t wait for people to self-identify as “gifted teachers.” They scout the faithful (not the flashy), pull them close, and intentionally entrust truth to them the way Paul did with Timothy. Every small group, class, and serving team is restructured around one question: “How does this raise up disciples who can disciple others?”
- 3. Extreme Ownership** When disciple-making plateaus, leaders don’t blame busy schedules or consumer Christianity. They look in the mirror: “Have I made multiplying disciple-makers the unmistakable win, or have I settled for being the hero disciple maker myself?” No excuses—just personal recalibration.
- 4. Bias Toward Action** They start a discipleship group with three busy people before the curriculum is perfect. They hand off their group of new believers to a less-experienced leader because the mission of multiplication requires release. They celebrate when someone they discipled baptizes their first convert—even if it wasn’t done “by the book.”
- 5. Alignment Over Ego** Their identity is no longer “the person everyone comes to for answers.” It becomes “the person who gives the answers away, so the mission outlives and outgrows me.” Stage time, titles, and being needed all bow to releasing an army of reproducers.
- 6. Infectious Commitment** Soon the everyday Christian stops saying, “Our church has great preaching, praise & worship, and programs” and starts declaring, “We raise up disciple makers!” Teenagers, baristas, accountants, and retirees all begin to see 2 Timothy 2:2 as their personal calling. The culture shifts from “come and see” to “go and multiply”.

How Leaders Build a Disciple Making Culture That Multiplies

Owning this mission as a leader demands ruthless clarity and intentional practice:

- 1. Be crystal clear in your role** – You are not primarily a preacher, counselor, or CEO—you are a reproducer of reproducers. Your win is a church full of Timothys who are actively looking for their own “reliable people.”
- 2. Fast and pray regularly for laborers** – Jesus modeled this before choosing the Twelve and before sending out the Seventy (Luke 6:12–13; Luke 10:2). Beg God to raise up and thrust out disciple makers from within your own congregation.
- 3. Pursue multiplication at every level** – Every class, group, strategy, and budget line must answer one question: “How does this raise up people who can disciple others?” If it doesn’t, reshape it or starve it of resources.

When leaders own the mission this way, the bottleneck shatters. Disciple making ceases to be a staff-led initiative and becomes the very DNA of the church. Lost people are saved by the dozens, then the hundreds. Spiritual infants mature quickly because they are needed in the mission. The hurting are loved as Jesus loved—by an ever-expanding family of disciple makers.

This is what Paul entrusted to Timothy. This is what Jesus has entrusted to us.

The mission is too urgent, the King too worthy, and the world too lost for anything less.

Own it. Multiply disciple-makers. It is the greatest mission on planet earth.

MISSIONS MINISTRY



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 FOOD DRIVE

March 29th - April 12th

Bring any non-perishable food item to Fellowship Hall



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.

FPC ACTIVITIES AND OUTREACH



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



LADIES LUNCH BUNCH
1st and 3rd Friday of each month - Sign up in the church foyer
Friday, April 3rd - (Good Friday Service at Noon)
Friday, April 17th at 11:30am - Wally's BBQ in PC



PRAYER SHAWL GATHERING -
Monday, April 13th at 10:00am



MISION PENIEL (Immokalee, Florida)
Join us on Friday, April 24th
for the afternoon session
We will meet at the church at 12:30pm
Sign up in the church foyer (we need 12 people)



PULLEN UP A CHAIR
Wednesday, April 15th, 5:00pm
Barksdale and Bo will host a get-together dinner for groups of eight at their home
Sign up in the church foyer or call/email the church office
There is no agenda, lesson, or study, just a time to get together for fellowship



PEACE RIVER BOTANICAL GARDENS "ORIGAMI IN THE GARDEN"
Monday, April 6th, 10:00am
Cost - \$18.00 — Sign up in the church foyer
Meet us at the Gardens!



BURGERS FOR BADGES — Monday, April 20th, 11:00am - 1:00pm
Help us show our appreciation to our local and retired First Responders
as we grill out hamburgers and hotdogs.
Sign up in the church foyer to bring cookies or desserts, and to help.
To make a donation, please designate as "B4B".



Church Picnic
Ponce de Leon Park
Wednesday, June 17th, 5:00pm



Christmas in July
Supper & Movie
Wednesday, July 15th, 5:00pm

MEMBER CARE



EVERY SHEEP COUNTS!
IS YOUR INFO UP TO DATE?



*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-PuntaGorda](https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurch-PuntaGorda)*



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)*

WAYS TO GIVE



 SEND BY MAIL 25250 Airport Rd Punta Gorda, FL 33950	 IN PERSON Office Hours: M-Th; 9AM-1PM & By Appointment	 IN SERVICE Worship Service 10:30 AM	 ONLINE www.fpcpunta.org
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*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
2 Corinthians 9:7*



*Here is a preview
of the stained-glass
coming in the fall.*

*Thanks to
Rick Berner,
stained-glass artisan!*


Church Library News

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.
Find a good book or two
to start out 2026!*

CHURCH PRAYER CALENDAR AND CELEBRATIONS - APRIL

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	Gene & Barbara McPherson	11	Bill & Pauli Purcell	21	Andy & Nancy Smith
2	Larry & Sue Mesler	12	Barbara Reynolds	22	Margie Smith
3	Steve & Joanie Mock	13	Tim Ronan	23	Bo & Karen Sostar
4	Steve & Valerie Neeley	14	Pete & Debbie Rostad	24	Gail Thornton
5	Jim & Patti Nuznoff	15	Barbara Ryan	25	Larrie & Marjorie Tisdale
6	Marguerite O'Brien	16	Andy & Katie Schulte	26	Linda Wagar
7	David Osweiler	17	Elaine Schultz	27	Don & MaryAnne Washabaugh
8	Bruce Peters	18	Jene Shafer	28	Sharon Weed
9	Rachel Pfaender	19	Dave & Sharon Sifferd	29	Donald & Susan Willecke
10	Barksdale & Bo Pullen	20	Ron & Billie Sixt	30	Charlie & Evelyn Zietsma



Pray for Linda Wagar and family, whose husband Richard went home to the Lord on March 16, 2026.



- 4—Phyllis Ehrhardt
- 9—Jean Humphreys
- 9—Barbara Reynolds
- 19—Sam Cessna
- 20—Andy Smith
- 21—Bo Sostar
- 23—Nancy Smith

- 24—Charles Zietsma
- 28—Katie Schulte
- 30—Linda Wagar

- 14—David & Sharon Sifferd - 3 years



St. Patrick's Day Dinner



APRIL 2026



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Fellowship Time	Church Office Hours Monday - Thursday 9:00am to 1:00pm and by appointment	10:00am Women's Bible Study 1:00pm Fellowship Team	10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry	 10:00am Ladies Cards Fellowship 5:00pm Maundy Thursday Service	 12:00pm Good Friday Service	 9:00am Living Cross
5 Communion Sunday 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Fellowship Time	6 OFFICE CLOSED 10:00am Peace River Botanical Gardens Tour	10:00am Women's Bible Study 1:00pm Fellowship Team	10:00am Donuts & Doctrine 10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry	10:00am Ladies Cards Fellowship 10:00am Ladies Cards Fellowship	11:30am Ladies Lunch Bunch at Wally's BBQ in Port Charlotte	11
10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Fellowship Time 6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB	10:00 Prayer Shawl Gathering	10:00am Mission Team	10:00am Donuts & Doctrine 10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry 5:00pm Pullen Up a Chair	10:00am Ladies Cards Fellowship	17	18
19 Deacon's Sunday 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Fellowship Time 6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB	11:00-1:00pm Burgers for Badges 2:00pm Session	10:00am Women's Bible Study	10:00am Donuts & Doctrine 10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry	10:00am Ladies Cards Fellowship	24	25
10:15am Hymn Sing 10:30am Worship Service 11:30am Fellowship Time 6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB	27	28	10:00am Donuts & Doctrine 10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry	10:00am Ladies Cards Fellowship	30	31

May 2026						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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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	29	30
						31