

# The Messenger



Member of ECO (A Covenant Order  
of Evangelical Presbyterians)



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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"

THE GOSPEL DISPLAYED



As we begin a new year, I want to encourage you to daily be in the Word. Maybe it is a Bible reading plan in a year, or a daily devotional such as Daily Bread (available at the back of the Sanctuary) or one of the devotionals from our library.

The following devotion was taken from a devotional book that I am using this year by Alistair Begg, entitled *Truth For Life*. I loved this particular one because it reminds us that as we go through our day, our interactions with others show what is really important to us – a heart directed toward God.

*"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." PHILIPPIANS 1:27*

The way we dress, the way we smile or scowl, the way we carry ourselves, the tone and content of our speech... Every day, we are always making statements to those around us about what really matters and what life truly consists of.

For Christians, such statements should be in harmony with the gospel.

So Paul called the Philippians to close the gap between their beliefs and their behavior-between the creed they professed and the conduct they displayed. Christ's call to us today is no different. Even so, however mature we are in our faith and however much we close the gap, there always remains more to do.

Paul's phrase "let your manner of life" comes from the Greek verb *politenesthe*, which the NIV translates as "conduct yourselves." The root of this word comes from *polis*, which means "city," and gives us other words like police and politics. In a very real sense, Paul is concerned with Christian citizenship and conduct. As we understand ourselves to be members of the city of God, we learn what it means to live as strangers and ambassadors in that other city, the city of man. When we close the gap between belief and behavior, others will get a foretaste of heaven through their interactions with us.

*Continued on Page 2*

## A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR - *continued from Page 2*

So what kind of statement should our actions make? Simply this: the gospel of Christ is a gospel of love. We see this in the words of John: "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:10-11). In other words, just as God loves us, so we should love those around us - even those whom we, or others, tend to see as unlovely or unlovable-and we should do it with hope and joy! This message of love is the challenge that Paul gives us.

Not merely in the words you say,  
Not only in the deeds confessed,  
But in the most unconscious way  
Is Christ expressed.

So pause to think about how you will dress today, when you will smile and when you will scowl today, how you will carry yourself today, and the tone and content of your speech today. What kind of statements are you making to the world? Let them be ones that are worthy of the gospel of love.

In Christ, Pastor Barksdale

## 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*



*Sermon on the SAND*  
*Every Sunday at 8:00am - 8:30am at Fishermen's Village*  
*Pastor Barksdale will deliver the Message on February 15th*

## DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY



### *Women's Bible Study*

*February 3rd and 17th 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*

Join us as we continue our journey through Paul's powerful letter to the Galatians!

This study will explore the heart of Christian freedom, the grace of God through faith, and what it means to live by the Spirit rather than the law.

Together, we'll unpack the historical context, key theological themes, and practical lessons that speak directly to our lives today. 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.*

## *7 Tips for Starting a Discipleship Relationship (Navigators Discipleship Tool)*

You're ready to begin a discipleship relationship and have settled on someone you believe God would like you to disciple.

Now what? Here are seven tips for starting a discipleship relationship that will help you take your next steps.

### 1. Begin by sharing the “whats” of a discipleship relationship.

What do you want to accomplish in your relationship? Try to avoid any Christianese terms that a young believer or non-Christian may be unfamiliar with, but lay out specifically what you would like to do with them.

“I’d like to read the Bible with you sometime.”

“I’d like to share some things that have been helpful for me in my walk with God.”

“I’d love to share what I have been learning about prayer lately.”

“I’d like to help you grow in your relationship with God.”

Sharing the specifics brings clarity to a potentially intimidating conversation, and, in a way, it’s a good reminder that discipling isn’t as complicated, mysterious, or daunting as it can seem.

### 2. Explain the “why” of a discipleship relationship.

Share some of what you’ve observed about this person and why you want to disciple them.

“I’ve appreciated the questions you’ve asked about Christianity and God over the past few months.”

“When I was a younger Christian, I found it so helpful when someone mentored me in how to walk with God. I’d love to do the same with you.”

“Reading the Bible has been so helpful and comforting for me when I’ve gone through hardship. I wonder if it might be helpful for you with what you’re going through right now.”

I’ve found that people are more likely to respond positively if you are specific about the why of discipleship and communicate with intentionality. When people sense your genuine care, concern, and appreciation for them, they know they aren’t just a project to you.

### 3. Name the time, place, and frequency for discipleship.

The more ambiguous a commitment seems to be, the more fearful people are of entering into it, and the more likely they are to say no. How long are you proposing to meet each week? How many times a week? When? Where? Clear is kind.

“We could read the Bible together once a week over our lunch break. How does that sound?”

“Could I share some practices that have been helpful to me in my walk with God while our kids play during our weekly playdates?”

Naming a specific time, place, and frequency can help you get something on the schedule. In discipling, try not to go more than two weeks without meeting.

### 4. Start with a trial period for discipleship.

Proposing a trial period will give both of you an out if the relationship isn’t the best fit or the timing doesn’t seem right.

“Would you like to meet up to pray together once a week after work for the next month?”

“Did you want to go on a hike together every Saturday morning for the next month and chat about your questions about Jesus?”

### 5. After the trial period, evaluate whether to continue the discipleship relationship.

Sometimes I find myself wondering whether the other person feels our times together and what I’m passing on are helpful. Then as I debrief with them, I find out they’re not only taking what I’ve shared to heart and putting new tools into practice, but they’re hungry for more! At other times, I have no such doubts, since it’s clear that both of us are energized and sharpened by the intentional time together. In either case, I may propose continuing the relationship: “You know, I’ve really enjoyed meeting together to talk about spiritual things these past few weeks. Would you want to continue meeting in this way?” Then we’ll set another timeframe after which we’ll reevaluate whether to continue. If you sense at the end of the trial period that the relationship may not be the best fit or the timing isn’t right to continue discipling the other person, thank them for setting aside the time to meet and debrief on what they’ve learned. Of course, ending a discipleship relationship doesn’t mean that the relationship itself needs to end or that you’ll never share any spiritual truths with that person in the future. It simply means that your capacity is freed up to intentionally invest in someone else.

### 6. Don’t let the fear of vulnerability hold you back from initiating a discipleship relationship.

More times than not, I find that fear of vulnerability holds me back from discipling more than another person’s lack of interest in being discipled. I’ve yet to ask someone about being discipled who hasn’t responded with interest.

### 7. Understand your limits for discipleship.

Maybe you’re thinking, I really don’t have a lot of time, but there are two people I’m interested in discipling together. Can I disciple more than one person at a time? Of course! I do it all the time, and so did Jesus. We can observe from the four Gospels that while Jesus often engaged with the masses, He spent more in-depth time with His 12 disciples, and even more in-depth time with His inner circle, Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17:1-13). I would caution against discipling too many people at one time if you want to do it well and adequately meet the individual needs of each person in the group. If Jesus limited himself to an inner circle of three really deep discipleship relationships, that’s probably a good limit to set for yourself.



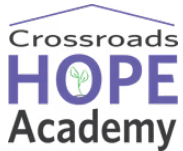
## MISSIONS MINISTRY



*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.*

### **JESUS LOVES YOU MINISTRY - SPECIAL COLLECTION**

Jesus Loves You Ministry is collecting Men's & Women's (New or good condition) tennis shoes, shoes, jeans or cargo pants, new underwear, also tarps, sleeping bags, bed rolls, and tents. So, here's an opportunity to clear out your closets. Just bring these items to church and our Missions Team will deliver them.



### **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, February 6th at 11:30am - Peter's Restaurant in PC*

*Friday, February 20th at 11:30am - Laishley Crab House in PG*



### PRAYER SHAWL GATHERING -

*Monday, February 9th at 10:00am*



### MISION PENIEL (Immokalee, Florida)

*Join us on Friday, February 20th  
for the morning session*

*We will meet at the church at 9:15am*

*Sign up in the church foyer (we need 6 people)*

### CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS

God's abundant blessings to all of you!!

Because of your generosity for our Christmas Offering,  
we were able to give generous gifts to the Veterans  
at Veterans Village and our three missionaries.

The Mission Team appreciates every year  
your willingness to help us to reach out to the world.

THANK YOU!!



*FPC Library Catalog is Online!*

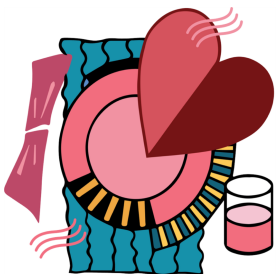
*Looking for a good book,  
help with a theological question,  
Christian biography,  
or a devotional?*

*Our library catalog is now online,  
thanks to the work of Sharon Fant.*

*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!*



VALENTINE  
POTLUCK

### VALENTINE POTLUCK SUPPER and MOVIE

*Wednesday, February 11th  
5:00pm*

*Sign up in the church foyer*

## FPC ACTIVITIES AND OUTREACH



### VALENTINE MEMORIAL SERVICE

*Sunday, February 15th, 11:30am*

*This is a short service of remembrance for those who passed away in 2025 from our church family and in memory of other loved ones. We will begin in the Sanctuary and move to the Lowell Kvam Memorial Garden.*



### CONGREGATIONAL ANNUAL MEETING

*Sunday, February 22nd, 11:30am*

*Please plan on attending. The purpose of the meeting is to review the Annual Report and elect elders for the Class of 2028.*



### PULLEN UP A CHAIR

*Wednesday, March 4th, 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.*



### ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER

*Wednesday, March 11th, 5:00pm*



### LUNCH 'N' LEARN

*Wednesday, March 25th, 12:00pm*

*"Latest Senior Scams" presented by Detective Chris Farley*



### ST. VINCENT FOOD DRIVE

*March 29th - April 12th*



*Ash Wednesday Service - February 18th - Noon*

*1st Sunday in Lent - February 22nd*

*Palm Sunday - March 29th - 10:30am*

*Maundy Thursday Service - April 2nd - 7:00pm*

*Good Friday Service - April 3rd - Noon*

*Easter Sunday - April 5th - 10:30am*



### PEACE RIVER BOTANICAL GARDENS "ORIGAMI IN THE GARDEN"

*Monday, April 6th*



### BURGERS FOR BADGES

*Monday, April 20th, 11:00am - 1:00pm*



## 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](mailto:first@fpcpunta.org)*



*First Pres is on Facebook  
[facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurch-PuntaGorda](https://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](http://www.fpcpunta.org)

*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*



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



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





# CHURCH PRAYER CALENDAR AND CELEBRATIONS - FEBRUARY

**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	Rachel Pfaender	11	Dave & Sharon Sifferd	21	Donald & Susan Willecke
2	Barksdale & Bo Pullen	12	Ron & Billie Sixt	22	Charlie & Evelyn Zietsma
3	Bill & Pauli Purcell	13	Andy & Nancy Smith	23	George Albright
4	Barbara Reynolds	14	Margie Smith	24	Rex Anderson
5	Tim Ronan	15	Bo & Karen Sostar	25	Laurel Aumend
6	Pete & Debbie Rostad	16	Gail Thornton	26	Denny & Minty Ausman
7	Barbara Ryan	17	Larrie & Marjorie Tisdale	27	Roy & Kathy Belville
8	Andy & Katie Schulte	18	Richard & Linda Wagar	28	Shirley Berg
9	Elaine Schultz	19	Don & Mary Anne Washabaugh		
10	Jene Shafer	20	Sharon Weed		



2—Debbie Rostad  
8—Gene McPherson  
15—Jene Shafer  
17—Margie Smith  
23—Bill Purcell  
28—Roy Belville



9—Denny & Minty Ausman - 19 years





# FEBRUARY 2026

**Church Office Hours**  
Monday - Thursday  
9:00am to 1:00pm  
and by appointment

**March 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
29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<div> <div>Comunion Sunday</div> <div> 10:30am Worship Service  11:30am Fellowship Time  6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB </div> </div>	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<div> <div>Deacon's Sunday</div> <div> 8:00am. Sermon on the Sand  10:30am Worship Service  11:30am Valentine Memorial Service  11:30am Fellowship Time  6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB </div> </div>	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
<div> <div>FIRST SUNDAY</div> <div> 10:15am Hymn Sing  10:30am Worship Service  11:30am Annual Meeting  11:30am Fellowship Time  6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB </div> </div>						