



The Messenger

OCTOBER 2020

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

History

On January 5, 2020, I stood before you as your new pastor and said that 2020 was a new decade, and a new beginning for FPC; that there was excitement in the air as we began a new era. But I also noted that new beginnings also come with some uncertainty. Okay, that was the understatement of the year! Who knew what was going to happen in 2020 – God knew.

This month FPC celebrates 125 years of ministry in the greater Punta Gorda area. That is a true testament to God's faithfulness. It is also a testament to the leaders and members of FPC that God has brought to this congregation. As on January 5th, I am reminded again this month of Hebrews 13:7-8, which reads: *Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*

As a history buff, I enjoyed reading the history of FPC. The pictures of previous church buildings; the men and women who gave sacrificially of their time, talent, and treasure to establish this congregation; the natural disasters that this congregation fought through; the switching of denominations as FPC stayed true to the Scriptures; the thirty-six ministers who answered God's call and served this congregation; the elders and deacons that served faithfully; the all new challenges that FPC faced this year with Covid-19; and God's providential hand over all 125 years of ministry.

This is a great month to stop and celebrate what God has done in this place. He has given FPC leaders that remained true to His Word, and their way of life was

worthy of imitating. As I look at the jar of dirt in my office -taken from the first building site of the church- we celebrate the past, but we also look to the future. God is not finished with FPC in the greater Punta Gorda area. This has been a different kind of year to say the least. Yet, we have been able to continue ministry and stay connected through it all, however different it may have looked. The year 2020 turned out to be a different kind of new beginning – a blank slate as it were – for our congregation to figure out how to do ministry in this new normal – for today and for tomorrow.

As we look to the future, I remember the past – God's faithfulness. But I also look out over our congregation and see the gifts of our people and dream about ministry in the coming years – God's future grace to FPC. John Piper talked about looking at the future grace of God, because we can look back at His faithfulness in the past. That is not being presumptuous of God, after all in His Word He has told us - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

To God be the glory in this place!!

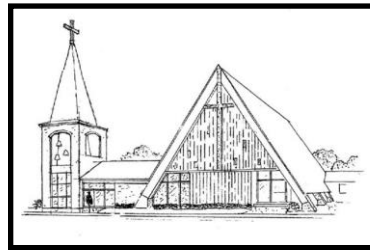
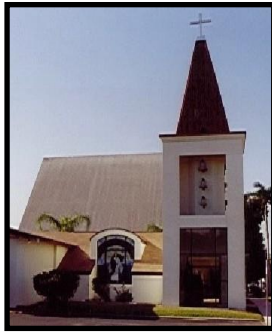
And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.

"God Knows" by Minnie Louise HaskinsIn

In Christ,

Pastor Barksdale

FPC'S 125th Anniversary 1895 - 2020



125th Anniversary Celebration

Sunday, October 18, 2020

Worship – 10:30 AM

*Reception following the service
Fellowship Hall*

FPC'S Church History Highlights 1895 - 2020

October 13, 1895	The Presbytery of South Florida of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America organizes this Church.
July 16, 1898	Reverend Clarence H. Ferran became the first full-time minister.
April 1901	The first Church building was completed on Harvey Street for \$5,000.
June 1912	The first manse was built across the street from the Church.
March 30, 1924	The Church becomes self-supporting after thirty years of financial support from the Board of Missions of the PCUSA.
May 6, 1956	The New Sunday School wing was dedicated.
September 10, 1960	Hurricane Donna extensively damages the Church with the bell tower collapsing onto the roof of the sanctuary.
October 1961	The last service held in the old, damaged Church.
March 4, 1962	The new Church, rebuilt on the same location for \$70,000, was dedicated.
March 1975	Re-construction of the Fellowship Hall and redesign of the kitchen began.
December 1981	The largest Congregation in the Church's history recorded at 277 members.
December 30, 1984	Reverend Reese Y. Henderson—the longest serving Pastor of the Church—retired at age 70 after serving 25 years.
October 13, 1995	The Church's Centennial Celebration was held.
1996	A new Steeple Tower and Cross including hallway extensions into the Narthex and Fellowship Hall were completed.
October 31, 2001	The Church votes to become a "Confessing Church".
July 1, 2003	Reverend Stephen Mock was called as Pastor—soon to lead his flock through a terrible disaster.
August 13, 2004	Hurricane Charley destroys the sanctuary and heavily damages the rest of the Church building in downtown Punta Gorda.
April 2, 2006	The newly remodeled building on Airport Road is dedicated to the Glory of God.
January 20, 2013	The Congregation requests dismissal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) denomination to join the Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians denomination (ECO).
February 28, 2013	Peace River Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) dismisses the Congregation as requested.
September 29, 2013	The Congregation votes to accept a four-year lease on the Church building from Peace River Presbytery (PC-USA) for \$1/year.
September 29, 2017	First Presbyterian Church purchases the Church building from Peace River Presbytery (PC-USA).
December 31, 2019	Pastor Stephen Mock retired at age 66 after serving 16 years.
January 12, 2020	Reverend Doctor Barksdale Pullen III was installed as Pastor—soon to lead his flock through the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic.

MEMBER CARE AND ACTIVITIES

Keep us informed on:

Prayer Requests and Hospital / Rehab Information

Address, Phone, Email changes

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Email to first@fpcpunta.org

First Pres is on Facebook!

You may now see posts about the life of our church.... Go to

[facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurch-Punta Gorda](https://facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurch-PuntaGorda)

Giving to FPC - Punta Gorda

Mail to the church office: 25250 Airport Rd; Punta Gorda, FL 33950

Online Giving through our website: fpcpunta.org, click Donate

PRAYER SHAWL GATHERINGS

The Prayer Shawl group resumes on Monday, October 12th, at 10:00am in Fellowship Hall to knit or crochet. Thank you for your prayers and support of this ministry to our members and community.



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

Presbyterian Women's Bible Study resumes on **Tuesday, October 6th**. We will renew our friendships and review our study of **Ruth**. We meet from 10:00am - 11:30am the first and third Tuesdays of each month at the home of Kathy Belville, 6400 Taylor Rd #211 Eagle, Punta Gorda. For additional information and directions to Kathy's home, please call Kathy at 508-733-0546 or the church office at 941-639-1959. **To carpool, meet at the church at 9:45am. All women are invited to join us for study, fellowship, and refreshments!**

Go Fish!

Join Pastor Barksdale on Wednesday evenings during the month of October from 4:30 PM - 5:30 PM for this series on sharing our faith. It will involve live teaching, a DVD segment, and discussion. Sign-up in the church lobby if you are interested.



Donuts & Doctrine

The Wednesday Morning Bible Study meets at 10:00 am at the church, or online. This semester we are looking at the Book of "Revelation". All welcome!

Game Fellowship

Thursday Mornings at 10:00am in Fellowship Hall, all welcome!

Continue to watch the weekly bulletin as more activities start back up.

OCTOBER 2020

CHURCH PRAYER CALENDAR AND CELEBRATIONS

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 Ray & Joan Byron	11 Bill & Sonja Dosse	21 Ron & Neta Gensemer
2 Kay Callahan	12 John & Ramona Douglas	22 Rich & Barb Harris
3 Bonnie Carey	13 Helmut & Phyllis Ehrhardt	23 Marjorie Haun
4 Joe & Georgia Cherny	14 Alan Engstrom	24 Jean Hinman
5 David & Cathy Coleman	15 John & Gail Evans	25 Joan Hoffman
6 Cara Coletti and Family	16 George & Beverly Fallenbeck	26 Bob & Jean Humphreys
7 Charlie & Doris Costa	17 Tim Farris	27 Bill & Ellen Hutt
8 Irene Csontos	18 Dick & Sandy Fisher	28 Pat Ihrie
9 Diane Culver-Truby	19 Ray & Cheri Foley	29 Bob & Beverly Ingalls
10 Robert Cuzner	20 Frances Frost	30 Tom & Carol Kerr
		31 Art & Fran Koon



1—Barbara Ryan	13—Kathy Belville
1—Teri York	13—Elaine Schultz
12—Carol Kerr	19—Helmut Ehrhardt
12—Jean LaMantia	21—Kay Callahan
	27—Ron Gensemer



3—Larrie & Marjorie Tisdale	60 yrs.
29—Tom & Carol Kerr	54 yrs.



25250 Airport Road
Punta Gorda, Florida 33950

OUR MISSION AND PURPOSE

LOVING...GROWING...GOING...in JESUS!