



## December 2017 Newsletter First Presbyterian Church Port Charlotte

### FEAR NOT

I am a *Peanuts* fan; I love everything about Snoopy, Charlie Brown, Linus and really, the whole *Peanuts* gang. I especially look forward to the airing of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* each year, which has been around almost as many years as I am old. Even though I may own about 10 copies on VHS and DVD, I still make sure to watch it “live” every year it comes on TV, as if keeping that tradition keeps it somehow more pure and meaningful to me. As much as I love Snoopy, he briefly takes a backseat to Linus who tells the true meaning of Christmas.

Charlie Brown, who is best known for his uniquely striped shirt, still to this day never seems to understand the true meaning of Christmas. You would think after 50 years, he would get it, *right?* But maybe Charles Schulz took a little bit of our own wonder and took a little bit of our own lack of ever really getting it, and wrote them all down into the character of Charlie Brown.

Lucy, the always present armchair psychiatrist, tries to help him out by finding the source of all his fears. While she never seems to succeed, perhaps she plays the part of an unconventional “angel” of sorts sent with a message of “*fear not!*” She was convinced that if Charlie Brown could just figure out of what he was afraid, he could then go about directing the school Christmas play. Lucy also tried desperately (crude as her approach may have been) to relieve her little brother Linus’ fear, he who faced the scary world clutching his blue security blanket. This time Linus insisted he needed it as he played the role of a shepherd. Not even Lucy could help her brother release his tight grip of the “*stupid blanket.*”

All falls apart as they begin practicing. With visible exasperation, Charlie Brown abruptly stops the rehearsal and cries out, “*Isn’t there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?!!!*” All goes silent.....then Linus quietly takes center stage. The lights dim and the spotlight falls on him, trusty blanket held tight in his hands, ready to help Charlie Brown and all of us too as he tells the “*real meaning of Christmas.*”

*Continued on page 3*

## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR MEMBERS



California born Carol Stacy recently became a member of FPCPC. “There are several things I like about the church. I feel at ease at this church. I don’t feel pressured. I really like Terri Jo and the people are so nice, fun and down to earth,” she explained.

Carol sings in the choir and along with Barbara Rowland hosted the Queen’s Tea on Reformation Sunday In October. “I’ll do about anything they ask me to do to help out at the church,” she said.

Carol’s husband passed away in 2007. She came to Port Charlotte in 2010 to visit family and friends and decided to stay because her three children no longer lived in California.

Carol was born in Santa Monica, CA and lived in several California cities. “My dad owned and operated eight grain warehouses and two packaging plants,” she said.

Carol attended public school and Catholic school in San Luis Rey and then graduated from public high school in San Luis Obispo. She attended Chico State College for a while then completed Business College in Chico. She learned clerical skills like bookkeeping, shorthand and typing. After college Carol had a varied career. She and a friend took up dancing at the Murray School of Dance. She was good at dancing so she and five others formed a dance group. “We did exhibition dancing. We didn’t get paid much but we sure had fun.”

Next, Carol took a job as a “Girl Friday” at the Examiner Newspaper in Los Angeles. “I was a gopher in the classified department. I used my clerical skills and even ran the switchboard,” she said.

After a few years at the newspaper, Carol decided to attend Beauty College in Santa Maria and San Luis Obispo. “I worked as a beautician for four to five years. But I continue to do hair for friends and family even today.”

Then Carol went on to work as a bookkeeper in a catalogue store. She served as a relief postmaster while she and her husband owned a horse training and breeding ranch. “We had 19 horses. We bred and trained quarter horses as well as appaloosas.”

Her active life changed in 1986 when Carol was seriously injured in a car accident. “I was in the hospital for eight weeks,” she said. Her injuries have continued to affect her mobility to this day. Today, Carol likes sketching and working with pastels as well as swimming. She has one dog and seven cats to keep her occupied on a daily basis.

Carol is the proud grandmother of six grandchildren. Three pieces of advice she would give young people is to get an education, use common sense, and treat others with love and kindness.

*By Kathy Bruyere*

*Continued from page 1*

Linus begins to tell the Christmas story from Luke 2:8-14. Moments earlier, he had complained to Lucy that there was no way he could memorize all his lines! But humbly and confidently, Linus tells the story as if it were his own.

Right in the middle of speaking, Linus simply drops the blanket. It is subtle. But it is dramatic, *if paying attention*. I can't help but believe it was Charles Schulz' strong faith that intentionally wove this climactic moment into the narrative, Linus dropping his false sense of security right in front of us as he utters "*fear not.*"

As we approach Christmas, filled with reminders of the news of all of which we should be afraid, I hope I will remember, I do not have to be afraid. I hope I will pay attention to all the subtle reminders of God's presence. I hope I will remember that the Christmas story is my story too, a story of perfect love that casts out (or releases) our fear, trusting God will address that which we can not. I hope I will drop my false sense of securities around me while trusting in the security I have in God's embrace, who comes to us embodied as the Christ child, separating us from all our fears.

May your Advent be one of quiet reminders of the *true meaning of Christmas* that empowers us to live our Christmas story, unafraid. *Peace. Rev. Terri Jo Crego*

# Follow The Star

Hope

Prepare

Follow

Believe

Rejoice

Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 24, 2017

7:00 p.m.

*Candlelight and Communion Worship Service  
with Special Music*

# CHILDREN AND YOUTH DECEMBER CALENDAR

## Tuesday Afternoons

### Youth Group

4:45 p.m.

### New Life Center

Join us on Tuesday afternoons for snacks, fellowship, games, service projects and drumming.

## Sunday Mornings

### Sunday School

9:00 a.m.

### Youth Room

### Worship

10:00 a.m.

### Sanctuary

Join us every Sunday morning for Sunday School in the Youth Room. Then come sit with us in the Sanctuary so we can worship together.

## Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>

9:00 a.m.

Help decorate the Sanctuary for Christmas. Meet in the New Life Center.

## Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship -help pass out the newsletter before worship

## Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>

4:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Terri Jo will lead us in drums and a service project.

## Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship

## Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>

4:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Kathy will lead us in drumming as we prepare for the Christmas Eve service.

## Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship

## Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>

4:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

We will go out in teams in the neighborhood delivering cookies and invitations to the Christmas Eve Service. Wear your youth t-shirt.

## Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>

9:00 a.m. Sunday School: Christmas Eve Drum Rehearsal in the Sanctuary

10:00 a.m. Worship

6:15 p.m. Christmas Eve Drum Rehearsal in the Sanctuary

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight and Communion Service

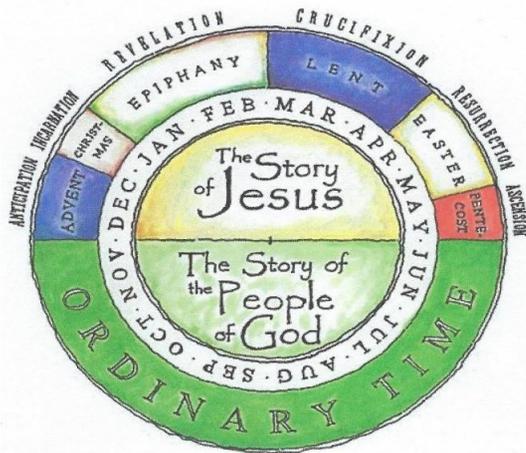
## Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup>

*not meeting*

## Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship



## WHAT'S IN A CALENDAR?

There isn't a day that goes by that I don't refer to my calendar to see what I have scheduled for the day. Birthdays, Anniversaries, doctor's appointments, home field football games, concerts, choir practice, vacations – the list goes on... We have become a society of scheduling, either the old fashioned way or with the new smart phones.

Our church has its calendar too. Eons ago the Christians established a way to mark time called the Christian Year or Church Calendar. It is an annual cycle of the four seasons that relates to the key events in the life of Jesus Christ. His conception is documented through Advent; his birth – Christmas; Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and Pentecost – commemorate his ministry, passion, death, resurrection and second coming.

The Church Calendar has aided our spiritual development through the ages; it imparts a sacred rhythm to our daily lives and helps us pattern our actions after Christ. It is not the end itself, but an instrument we can use to understand the story of Jesus and remind ourselves weekly, monthly and yearly of the precious gift God gave us – the gift of grace in Christ Jesus.

Every season of the Christian Year is a different chapter in the great salvation story of God. The Eucharist, is the cornerstone of the calendar, the hub on which all else turns. We are shaped inwardly. By keeping the Church Calendar, we join with fellow believers in declaring the wondrous deeds of God, bearing witness to His Kingdom until Christ's return. *by Barbara Rowland*

### 2017 ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

Members and friends of our church have written daily Advent devotionals which have been lovingly compiled and made into a book for you to read and enhance your time of preparing for Christ. Each family is encouraged to pick one up in the church office or in the Narthex. Many thanks to all the writers. And may your Advent season be blessed by the writings.



**SANTA RUN**  
**Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>**  
**2:00 p.m.**  
**Meet at MacDonald Hall**

We are collecting toys, books and donations for the upcoming "Santa Run" scheduled for December 16, 2017 at 2:00p.m. FPCPC's own Santa Claus delivers gifts to children who live in the Parkside neighborhood around the Church. Large wrapped boxes have been placed in Narthex to collect the items by December 12<sup>th</sup>.

Please contact Sandee Pellerin at: [sandeesgl@aol.com](mailto:sandeesgl@aol.com) if you have any questions or if you would like to be an "Elf," helping bag up gifts for the Santa Run.

**FROM THE CHOIR LOFT**

Christmas is coming and the choir is preparing for it now. As part of this special holiday celebration, we are hosting a pot luck dinner with chili (both mild and a little spicy) and cornbread. All we ask is that you bring a side dish or dessert. After dinner we will have a good old-fashioned Christmas carol sing along. So, mark your calendars for **Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>** and join us at **5:30 p.m.** for good food and fun! Christmas Eve Day we will have a special anthem which will have the children and bells joining the choir. On Christmas Eve our anthem will include carols for everyone to sing. We look forward to seeing you in the congregation, and remember, we can always use singers. *Peace, Joan Byron*

**BLUE CHRISTMAS**  
**Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**The Longest Night of the Year**  
**6:00 p.m.**  
**at**  
**Wintergarden Presbyterian Church**



*Blue Christmas* is a worship service which acknowledges that, for many people, Christmas is a time of loneliness, sorrow, alienation, and sadness. This service offers a way for people to claim those feelings and still feel surrounded by the compassionate love of God. In some churches it is also known as *The Longest Night of the Year Service*. You are invited to worship with us, joining our brothers and sisters at Wintergarden Presbyterian Church.

## FOOD PANTRY

**1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.  
and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

The Food Pantry always seems to be busy! In October, we served 114 households – 57 children, 166 adults and 82 seniors. Our Wednesday evenings have gotten busier; we generally serve 14 to 16 households. Brad, Sandee and Nancy did the Turkey Trot to the Charlotte Harbor Publix on November 16<sup>th</sup>, and thanks to the radio station JOY FM and H.E.L.P., we were able to provide turkeys for the 44 families who signed up with our agency. Thanks go to Sandee Pellerin who distributed the turkeys to the families on Friday, Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>.

Our annual Harry Chapin training session was held on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>. Twelve volunteers attended. Please remember that we can always use more volunteers; we need people on food pantry days but also on delivery day – the first and third Thursday morning of each month. The Tuesday evening Youth group sometimes helps the Food Pantry as a service project too.

As Christmas and the end of year approaches, people often consider making donations to worthy causes. Please consider the First Presbyterian Church Food Pantry. Some of you donate during the year which is much appreciated, but this year the Food Pantry has a real need for donations. Our commercial freezer went out just after our first November food pantry distribution. We cannot order meat from Harry Chapin if we don't have a working freezer. A member of the congregation donated a chest freezer several months ago, but that does not hold the amounts of meat we need for 100 plus families. Our commercial freezer is so old that it frequently breaks down and parts are hard to get. A good new commercial freezer costs \$3,600.00. Please consider making a monetary donation to the Food Pantry if you are able; it would be very much appreciated by the Parkside neighborhood as well as the Pantry volunteers. Thank you.

Blessings to all and Merry Christmas! Have a blessed holiday!



## VETERANS MEETING

**Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup>**

**4:00 p.m.**

**New Life Center**

The Veterans Group will have their December meeting and Christmas party on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The meeting will start at 4:00 p.m. in the New Life Center. The widows of Vets are invited too.

## ANGEL TREE

This year we will once again participate in the Salvation Army Angel Tree Program. We hope to provide 25 children in Charlotte County with new toys, clothing and gifts for Christmas.

A tree is in the Narthex with Angel Tags. The Angel Tags have a numerical code on them with the child's first name, age, gender, clothing sizes, one toy wish and one clothing need. Please choose one or more angels and shop for items described on the tag(s). You need not purchase all of the gifts on each tag.

All gifts should be unwrapped gifts and make sure the proper tag and code number are affixed to each item or bag with the gifts. Please return your gifts to the church by Dec. 10, 2017. You can leave your labeled unwrapped gifts under the tree.

Each angel represents a real child in our community who needs our help. Thank you for your generosity. If you have questions please call:

**Joan Barry 508-776-5277.**

ALL CHURCH

Fell  wship

BREAKFAST

BREAKFAST BUNCH

Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>

8:00 a.m.

MacDonald Hall

Join us on Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m. in Mac Hall for some delicious breakfast and fellowship. Pastor Terri Jo will be cooking breakfast (thankfully with some help from some friends, *but you still may want to bring your Tums*). After we eat, Debby Wendell, the Adventure Camp Coordinator at Pine Shores Presbyterian Church and longtime Christian Educator, will take us on a tour around the world, discovering the Christmas traditions as they are celebrated. Debby has not only traveled extensively globally, she has also researched Christmas traditions that will help make this a fun and meaningful morning in our own Christmas season. Bring \$2 to help cover costs and sign up in the New Life Center or Narthex to make a reservation so we know how much food to prepare.

*Calling All Bakers!*  
*Calling All Welcomers!*  
*Calling all Prayer Warriors!*  
**COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE INVITATIONS**  
**Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup>**  
**4:45 p.m.**  
**New Life Center/Neighborhood**

You are invited to participate in reaching out to our surrounding community with our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Christmas Cookie Invitations event. We will walk around our neighborhood once again in small groups to personally invite people to join us for our Christmas Eve Service. Along with an invitation, we will give each family a bag of homemade cookies. Last year, thanks to your generosity we had over 700 cookies to deliver!!

We will need your help once again this year please:

- We would appreciate any bakers who can make homemade cookies and put them in Ziploc bags (6 cookies per bag).
  - “Slice and bake” cookies are also welcome in the baggies =)
- We welcome all who are available to come on Tuesday, December 19<sup>th</sup> to go out into the neighborhood and extend our invitation to the Christmas Eve Service and deliver cookies.
- We are grateful for all who can pray about efforts being made in reaching our neighbors in a meaningful way that may lead some to attend.

If you are able to make cookies, please let Sandy Asaro know and turn them into the church office no later than Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>.



**CALLED CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**

**Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**11:15 a.m.**

**Sanctuary**

**A Congregational Meeting has been called for Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, following the Worship Service. The purpose of this meeting is to elect our next class of Elders, Deacons, and a Trustee.**



**SANCTUARY DECORATING GATHERING**  
**Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**9:00 a.m.**  
**Sanctuary**

We will gather to decorate the Sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season on Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>. We need folks who can hang Chrismon ornaments and some who can climb ladders; we need folks who can help set up Christmas trees and some who can hang greens. There will be coffee, hot chocolate and doughnuts to enjoy as we have fun decorating.



**CHURCH NIGHT SOCIAL AND**  
**CHRISTMAS CAROL SING ALONG**  
**Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**5:30 p.m.**  
**New Life Center**

As part of this special holiday celebration, the choir is hosting a pot luck dinner with chili (both mild and a little spicy) and cornbread. All we ask is that you bring a side dish or dessert. After dinner we will have a good old-fashioned Christmas carol sing along. So, mark your calendars for Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> and join us at 5:30 p.m. for good food and fun!



*Details to all events are on the bulletin board in the New Life Center*

**Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m.**

Cookie decorating and an ugly t-shirt or sweater contest at Anita Nagy's house.

**Thursday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 p.m.**

Cruise local canals and see Christmas lights. The cost is \$19.

**Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.**

Meeting in the Parlor to plan outings for 2018.

## **SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS**

### **NOVEMBER 2017**

- A Congregational Meeting has been called by the Session for Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, following the Worship Service. The purpose of this meeting is to elect the next class of Elders, Deacons, and Trustee.
- The October 2017 Income was \$24,120.03 and Expenses were \$29,005.76
- The September 2017 Income was \$23,320.70 and Expenses were \$30,663.33
- We have 157 Active Members and 8 Affiliate Members
- An Advent Devotional book is being created by people in our congregation.
- The offering from our Thanksgiving Eve Service was donated to the Homeless Coalition.
- Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, so we will have Worship at 10:00 a.m. and the 7:00 p.m. Service will include candlelight and Communion.
- Our Choir will be hosting a potluck dinner and Christmas carol sing along in December.
- The total costs of repair following Hurricane Irma are less than our \$30,000 deductible.
- Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cookie and Christmas Eve Invitation deliveries will take place in our surrounding neighborhood on the afternoon of Tues. 12/19.
- We will be participating in the Angel Tree Project with 25 angels this year.
- Member Lynn Webster presented information from her recent trip to the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship conference in Chicago, Illinois.
- 114 families were served through our Food Pantry in October. For the holidays, we are hoping to receive Thanksgiving turkeys from JOY FM and Publix Gift Cards for Christmas from Harry Chapin.

FPCPC

2230 Harriet St

Port Charlotte, FL 33952

**The Mission of First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte is:  
To be a beacon in the community by leading all people into a life changing,  
ever growing relationship with Jesus Christ.**

### **Ministry Staff**

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Rev. Terri Jo Crego, Pastor      | <a href="mailto:pastor@fpcpc.com">pastor@fpcpc.com</a>                   |
| Betty Smith, Financial Secretary | <a href="mailto:bsmith@fpcpc.com">bsmith@fpcpc.com</a>                   |
| Tanga Killian, Church Secretary  | <a href="mailto:tanga@fpcpc.com">tanga@fpcpc.com</a>                     |
| Scott Austin, Media/Grounds      | <a href="mailto:scottaustin0557@gmail.com">scottaustin0557@gmail.com</a> |
| Lamont "Butch" Rotert, Custodian | <a href="mailto:butchnjoyce@yahoo.com">butchnjoyce@yahoo.com</a>         |
| Judy Prier, Organist             | <a href="mailto:judyprier@comcast.net">judyprier@comcast.net</a>         |
| Joan Byron, Music Director       | <a href="mailto:Jfbyron@comcast.net">Jfbyron@comcast.net</a>             |

### **Session**

Class of 2017: Sandy Asaro, Rebekah Baird , Ambrose Woods

Class of 2018: Barbara Danylak, Nancy Sharpless, Ron Smith

Class of 2019: Joan Barry, Gail Gamble, Richard Lund

### **Deacons**

Class of 2017: Doris Coddington, Dottie Messick, Don Phillips, Elaine Woods

Class of 2018: Dottie Gamble, Pauline Paquin, Laverne Sinkia, Donald Whitmarsh

Class of 2019: Andy Buell, Clarence Diersing, Addie Schaad, Diane Schmidt

### **Trustees**

Richard Lund (President), Ambrose Woods (Treasurer)

Sandy Asaro (Secretary), Ron Smith (Finance Committee Elder)

Class of 2017: Bob Hull (Member at Large)

Class of 2018: Clarence Diersing (Member at Large)