



**FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**



Port Charlotte, FL

April/2024 E-GRAM

Grace and Peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

With Lent, Holy Week and Easter behind us, we look forward to April and the months ahead, although, not before saying how nice that Pr. Devon, and our brothers and sisters from Wintergarden Presbyterian Church, joined us for Maundy Thursday and we joined them for the Good Friday and Easter Sunrise services. As I look into the future, I hope Wintergarden and First Pres will work closer and closer together, every year, more and more.

Because of the recent passing of our dear Darlene Warth, for the first time in a long, long time, we are less than 100 in membership. Out of our 99 remaining members, 15 are over 90 years old, and 26 are between 80 and 89. Yes, we are an older congregation and we always have been one. Nevertheless, more than ever now, I am committed to making First Presbyterian the best church for the “old folks” in Port Charlotte, because our need for God never ends, despite our ages.

Also, out of our 99 members, 67 attend worship regularly. Sadly, 32 do not come to church anymore for various reasons. Some moved and never transferred membership, and some are sick and don't have the means or strength necessary to attend church. Thank God we have around 25 adherents, or as I like to call them, “dear friends of our church,” who are not members but are an intrinsic part of us, regularly attending our services. We count our faithful “snowbirds” among them, who are just as important to us.

We are also around 10 couples, 22 men and 77 women. Yes, like many other Presbyterian churches, women have been taking leadership roles here and elsewhere as Deacons, Elders, and even Ministers. I thank

God for them and for all the behind-the-scenes work they do. Although they do not get recognized enough, I want them to know that I see and that our Lord sees it even more.

Let me finish by saying this. Despite the fact we are less now than we were when I arrived, please know that I still have hopes for growing our numbers. But I am more concerned with us growing simultaneously in our prayer life, in charitable giving, in our Bible knowledge, and in our relationship with the Lord, than I am with just having people sitting in our pews. What I mean by that is, even though our membership number is important, it is not the only factor we should be looking into. For example, if our membership remains the same, but somehow, our food pantry feeds 10 more families than it feeds now, this is also growth. And we need all kinds of growth.

Blessings to you all. Yours in the Lamb,

Pastor Syl

Pr. Saul's visit to First Pres.



Last month, First Pres welcomed Pr. Saul de Melo and his wife Neuzinha, while they visited Pr. Syl and Betania in Port Charlotte. According to Pr. Syl, Pr. Saul is the man who, in 2005, officially made him a Presbyterian. During his stay, he played the accordion twice and preached at First Pres and once at South Port Square. In the picture below, we see them having lunch with Elder and Deacon Brox, just before the SPS service.



St. Patrick's Day celebrated in Style!

With Green everywhere, our church celebrated St. Patrick's Day in style. Thanks to chef Steve Vallillo and Richard Rohlerhr, who prepared and cooked breakfast for everyone, including some delicious Dr. Seuss style Green Eggs and Ham, minus the ham.





Pr. Syl went to Little Rock, AR, to meet with recently ordained PC-USA ministers, for a week of reflection and much discernment on their vocation. According to Pr. Syl, "it was a special time for all of us PC-USA pastors, since we are all facing basically the same issues everywhere, and, at events like this, we realize we are not alone." See below, some of the pictures of PC-USA Ferncliff Camp, a special place for Presbyterians to retreat and rest.

In the PC-USA, every year, around 500 ministers retire while only 150 are ordained. The Board of Pensions and the denomination are working hard to give the new ministers tools for them to thrive in ministry.



EASTER

CHOIR



Once again, under the leadership of our music director Sue Brems, Port Charlotte's Presbyterian Churches, Wintergarden and First Pres, joined voices for the most wonderful Easter Cantata. Thank you to all members and friends who made this event possible.



A Big Thank you to Mark Thompson.

Mark Thompson built a shelf to keep the Food Pantry bags off the floor and to keep them dry. A few weeks ago, it rained very hard, and water came into the food pantry and caused water damage to many bags. If water comes again, thanks to Mark, our bags will be safe. Our Food Pantry people are the best, aren't they?

A colorful poster for a music concert. The background is blue with musical instruments and a microphone. The text is centered and reads:

Sunday April 21st 2024
Admission Free!
**Come enjoy a music concert with
familiar songs from the 50's 60's
and 70's held at:**
**First Presbyterian
Church of Port Charlotte
2230 Harriet St. 33952**
3:00 PM
**Performance by Nick Miceli
Drummer-Guitarist & singer**

Don't miss Nick Miceli performing at our church. Be sure to invite everybody you

**know. Nick is an awesome performer,
and we know it will be soooo good!**



The Chosen series still going strong!
Come and join us for pop-corn, chips, sodas and all the interesting
history and Bible facts pastor Syl shares about each episode.



During each episode, Pastor Syl does a brief 5 to 10-minute commentary on the episode with some Bible & historical fun facts. We will continue watching the "The Chosen" episodes weekly, every Tuesday, at 6 PM. Rides can be arranged for persons that do not like to drive at night.



Continental Breakfast



A continental breakfast is served every Sunday in the Gathering Room from 7:45 to 8:45 AM. Come and enjoy fellowship over coffee, juice, and pastries, just before our worship service. Also, our deacons are looking for persons who would be willing to prepare our breakfast one Sunday of the month. That can be your own ministry here with us. Do you feel called to help? Talk with Deacon **Holly Parkin** or any other deacon for more info.

Join on Mondays at 8am
via Zoom

Lectio-Divina is a traditional Christian practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer, intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word.

Every Monday at 8 AM, we join the brothers and sister of Wintergarden for Lectio-Divina time.

This is a special event for those who are near and far, to see and pray with each other. At Wintergarden, most participants are snowbirds.

To access the meeting, there are 3 ways:

1. You can click on the picture above.
2. You may go to www.zoom.us. Then, click on "Join," which can be found on the right-hand corner of your computer screen. After that, type Meeting ID: 878 3208 0869. If asks you for a passcode, it is: 396015.
3. You can also access the meeting, by copying and pasting the link below on your web-browser.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87832080869?pwd=TUxCRThUcEdRbTNTWmJ6emZRamUyZz09>

Upcoming
EVENTS

April / 2024

Monday, April 1

- Lectio-Divina - 8 AM (Online on Zoom).
- **Church Office is closed.**

Tuesday, April 2

- Food Pantry - 8 to 11 AM.
- Southport Square Assisted Living with the celebration of the **Lord's Super** - 2:30 PM.
- The Chosen, Season 2, Episode 6 - 6 PM.

Wednesday, April 3

- Board of Deacons Meeting - 1:30 PM.
- Bell Rehearsal - 6 PM.

Thursday, April 4

- Choir Rehearsal - 6 PM.

Sunday, April 7

- Continental Breakfast - 7:45 to 8:45 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- Sunday Service with the celebration of the **Lord's Supper** - 9 AM.

Monday, April 8

- Lectio-Divina - 8 AM (Online on Zoom).
- Finance Committee Meeting - 11 AM.

Tuesday, April 9

- The Chosen, Season 2, Episode 7 - 6 PM.

Wednesday, April 10

- Worship Arts Committee - 11 AM.
- Food Pantry - 4 to 6:30 PM.
- Bell Rehearsal - 6 PM.

Thursday, April 11

- Choir Rehearsal - 6 PM.

Sunday, April 14

- Continental Breakfast - 7:45 to 8:45 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- Sunday Service - 9 AM.

Monday, April 15

- Lectio-Divina - 8 AM (Online on Zoom).

Tuesday, April 16

- Food Pantry - 8 to 11 AM.
- Southport Square Assisted Living Service - 2:30 PM.
- The Chosen, Season 2, Episode 8 - 6 PM.

Wednesday, April 17

- Bell Rehearsal - 6 PM.

Thursday, April 18

- Choir Rehearsal - 6 PM.

Sunday, April 21



- Continental Breakfast from 7:45 to 8:45 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- Sunday Service - 9 AM.
- Session Meeting - after worship.
- **Music Concert with Nick Miceli at 3 PM.**

Monday, April 22

- Lectio-Divina at 8 AM (Online on Zoom).

Tuesday, April 23

- The Chosen - Season 2, Episode 9 - 6 PM.

Wednesday, April 24

- Building & Grounds Committee - 10 AM.
- Bell Rehearsal - 6 PM.

Thursday, April 25

- Choir Rehearsal - 6 PM.

Sunday, April 28



- Continental Breakfast from 7:45 to 8:45 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM.
- Children's Sunday School after Children's Blessing.
- Service 9 AM - Celebration of birthdays for **February, March, and April.**

Monday, April 29

- Lectio-Divina at 8 AM (Online on Zoom).

Tuesday, April 30

- The Chosen - Season 2, Episode 10 - 6 PM.

MEMBERS ON FOCUS

Have you met?



Steve Vallillo

Steve was born in New Jersey and spent many years traveling back and forth from Jersey to Tennessee. As a young man, he worked for Nashville Sound and Recording Studios, where he met many famous country artists including Garth Brooks, Dolly Pardon, and many more. When Steve was 27 years old, he was in a tragic accident diving into a swimming pool and broke his neck. His Dad, Romeo "Ray" Vallillo said that he prayed so hard that he heard God speaking to him and saying, "Don't worry, Steve will walk again."

When Steve's grandparents passed away, Steve moved to Tennessee for about a year, taking care of the farm his grandparents left behind. He eventually went back to New Jersey, where he went to college, earning an associate degree in Culinary Arts. Just after finishing college, Steve was able to watch the 100th Anniversary of the Statue of Liberty at the edge of New Jersey.

It was his doctor that advised Steve to move to Florida. Steve developed arthritis and his physician recommended him to a warmer climate. So, he first moved to Orlando, in 1986. With this culinary degree, Steve began working at Marriott World Center (across from Disney World). Then he was offered a position at Holiday House as a carver and prep cook, and then on to Church Street Station in downtown Orlando, this time as an Executive Baker. Finally, as he gained lots of experience, Steve had the opportunity to work with renowned French Chef Paul François Pierre Bocuse; according to him, the only American among 17 French chefs. Chef Bocuse would eventually promote Steve to the position of Sous Chef at Epcot's Chefs de France restaurant.

In 1989, Steve felt it was time for him to leave the Food Industry, so he became a chauffeur for the Mickey Mouse Club, driving a stretch limousine. By doing this job, he had the pleasure of meeting Bob Hope, Mario Andretti, Dan Lather, Larry King, and many others. Steve also had a side hustle in marketing, dressing as "Frankenstein" and working alongside Franco Harris (retired Pitts Berg Stealer). By doing shows at Universal, he met Benny Hill and did video shorts with him. He also met many stars working at Universal Studios including, Sylvester Stallone, Michael Jackson, Chubby Checker, Britney Spears, Michael Eisner (CEO of Disney), and the whole Mickey Mouse Club.

Steve was married for 6 years and has no children, but has a sweet dog named "Bonnie" who loves to attend First Pres every chance she gets. Look for "Bonnie" in the next monthly Egram featured in Pet of the month.

Steve attended St. Paul's Presbyterian Church and was a Deacon before he moved to Florida. His parents moved to Florida in 1987 and invited him to attend First Pres with them. Steve began attending and became a member in 2000, when he moved to Port Charlotte. He enjoys First Pres and has enjoyed being in the choir, as well as cooking in church events. He also drove the church bus for 23 years.

Steve has always loved to cook. He enjoys anything BBQ as well as a good cake for dessert. His favorite vacation spot is Tennessee. He loves the mountains and loves the country.

Steve enjoys First Presbyterian Church for the friendliness of the people and enjoys the new Pastor and his messages. He also commented that Pastor Syl and his wife Betania are Bonnie's stepparents and are glad to call them his friends.

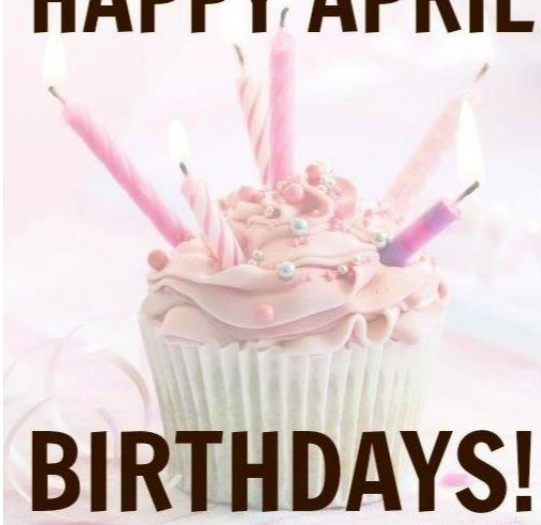


Meet our April Pets of the Month!

The one on the left is Darby and on the right is Owen. These two belong to proud owner, Elder Nancy Sharpless. As you can see, Darby is the calm one, and Owen... well, he is the feisty one who loves to get into the refrigerator as you can see in the picture above.

Send Pam a picture of your pet to pastorsecretary@fpcpc.com, and your little friend could be one of our Pets of the Month.

HAPPY APRIL



Upcoming Birthdays

Rebekah Baird - April 5
Amina Lee - April 9
Mary Kerr - April 16
Dolores Cummings - April 18
Sondra Kruse - April 18
Hazel Mason - April 24
Susan Brembs - April 25
Edith Edwards - April 30

Do not see your name here, call the church office and let us know (941) 625-5045

CHURCH OFFICIALS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS



- **Board of Deacons** meets on the first Wednesday of the month, at 1:30 PM. Next meeting: **April 3, 2024**.
- **Finance Committee** meets on the second Monday of each month, at 11 AM. Next meeting: **April 8, 2024**.
- **Worship Arts Committee** meets on the second Wednesday of the month, at 11 AM. Next meeting: **April 10, 2024**.
- **Session** meets on the third Sunday of each month, immediately following worship. Next regular meeting: Sunday, **April 21, 2024**.
- **Choir** meets every Thursday at 6 PM.
- **The Chosen Bible TV-Series**, every Tuesday at 6 PM. The Saturday viewings have been canceled.
- **Bell Rehearsals**, meet every Wednesday, at 6 PM.

- **Building & Grounds Committee**, meets on the last Wednesday of the month, at 10 AM. Next meeting: **April 24, 2024**.
 - **Adult Sunday School** meets every Sunday, at 8 AM.
 - **Children's Sunday school** meets every Sunday, during worship and after the Children's Blessing.
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I ♥ MY
CHURCH

FEELING CALLED TO SERVE THIS CHURCH IN ANY CAPACITY?

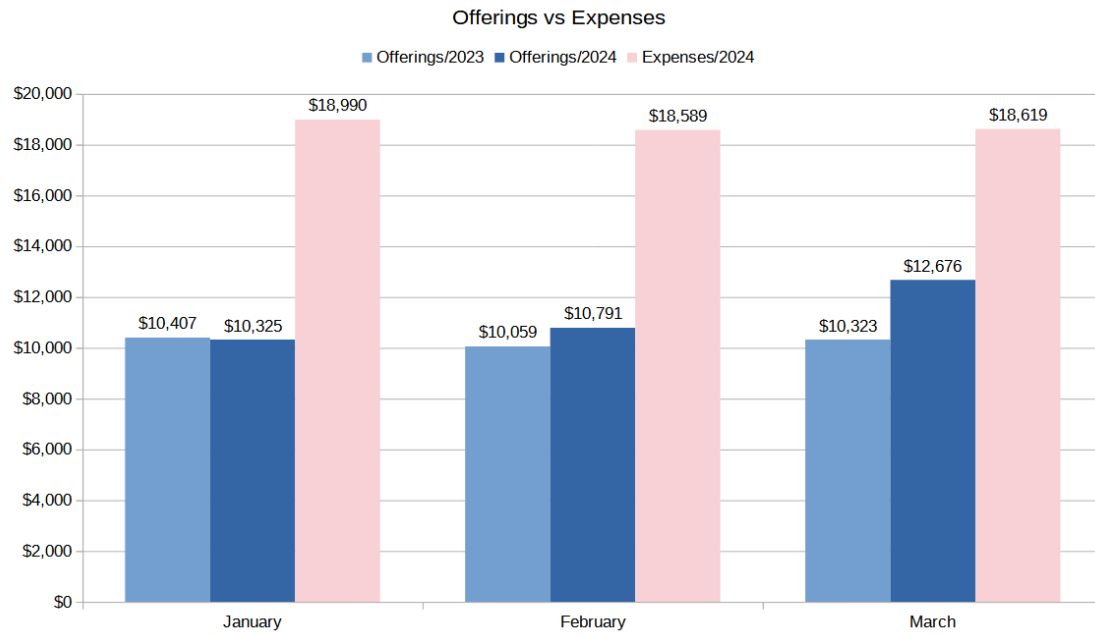
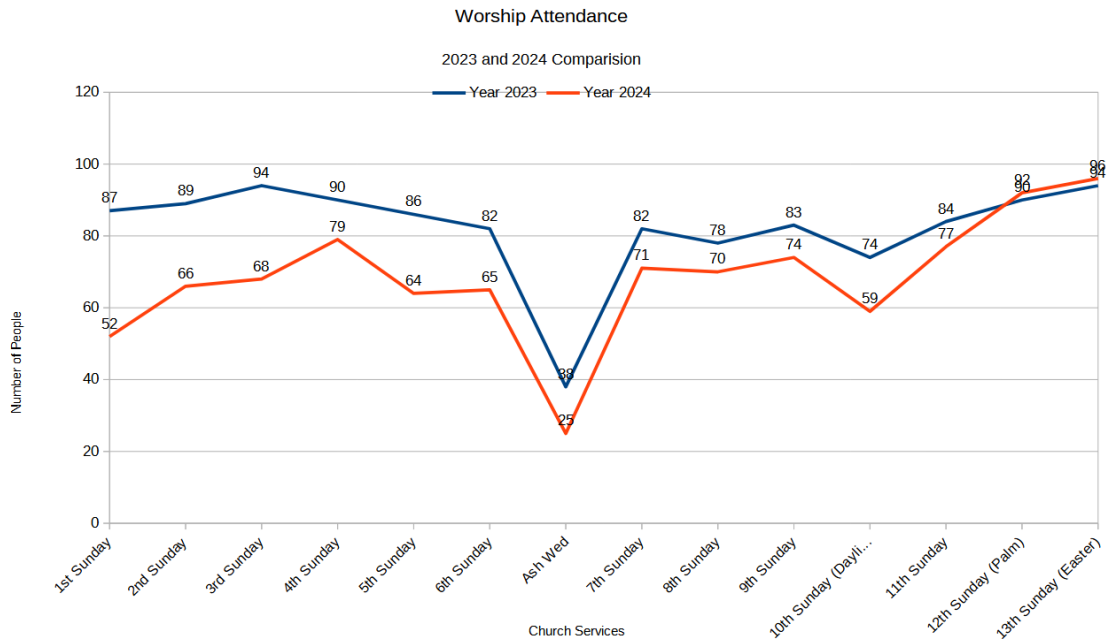
We are in desperate need of people to help us draw our vision for the future of our church and our websites. No experience necessary. Click below to e-mail pastor Syl or just e-mail him at pastor@fpcpc.com.

[Yes, I am here Lord!](#)

TRANSPARENCY



- The amounts are calculated by our treasurer Mr. Ambrose Woods, and it is based on the financial reports made by our financial secretary Mrs. Jeanne Fell.



PLEASE, FOLLOW US AND PASTOR SYL ON FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM AND YOUTUBE.



CLICK THE ICONS BELOW:



Please pray for ...

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Bernadine & Tom Allesee Family | - | <i>safety & health needs</i> |
| Barbara Edwards | - | <i>health needs</i> |
| Jean Heim | - | <i>health needs</i> |
| Ruth Hester | - | <i>health needs</i> |
| Sue Littrell | - | <i>health needs</i> |
| Donna & Loren Livengood | - | <i>health needs</i> |
| Margorie Lotz | - | <i>health needs</i> |
| Brad Messick | - | <i>health needs</i> |
| Mavis Powell | - | <i>health needs</i> |
| Donnie Webb | - | <i>health needs</i> |

FPCPC FAMILY - If you know of any shut-ins or anyone else who may need our prayers, please call the church office at 941-625-5045. Names will be removed after 3 months. If you wish to keep them on the list, please call the church office.

The First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte is part of the **Presbyterian Church USA**, and the **Peace River Presbytery** in Florida.



First Presbyterian Church
of Port Charlotte

