



February 2018 Newsletter

First Presbyterian Church

Port Charlotte

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Over the years of serving in the church, I have grown profoundly in my awareness of the reality of hunger in our community and the consequences of how it negatively impacts lives. I have also grown profoundly in my awareness of the reality that we as a community of faith can make a substantial difference, positively impacting lives through our response to hunger. The reality of seriously making a difference in the deep rooted and complex issues related to hunger seemed like a well-intentioned, but an all too lofty goal. But that has changed for me.

That has changed for me as I have witnessed the widespread impact this congregation has made as we have pulled our resources together to provide meals for our community through our food pantry. The goal of minimizing hunger has become a reality in people's lives of all ages. Making a significant difference in hunger is no longer a lofty goal as I've witnessed the impact of our special offering on *Souper Bowl of Caring* Sundays (Super Bowl Sunday). Our \$1 gifts, our \$20 gifts and our \$100 gifts combine to make a difference in our community with mothers and fathers, children and senior citizens. I have hope that we can make a difference when I witness how Harry Chapin Food Bank can take each \$1 gift and turn it into \$8 worth of food which gets distributed by our food pantry ministry at FPCPC, providing nourishment for a person like you and me, who can then be a productive student or worker.

Last year I watched as a 7 year old donated \$1 to the special offering, and imagined how that \$1 would become \$8 worth of food to feed someone a healthy meal because of his gift. I have learned that together we can be the change we want to see, where the obstacle of hunger does not have to be the reality in our community. We may not solve world hunger, but we are certainly making a significant difference in our community and it is part of FPCPC's story.

I've learned that "we have the capacity to make an impact in our community, not trapped by a myth of being powerless," as my friend and musician David LaMotte has described. I invite you to give generously to the "*Souper Bowl of Caring*" as you attach your financial gift to a soup can on February 4th to fight hunger here in Port Charlotte. I invite you to bring in lots of cans of soup on the 4th that will go directly to our food pantry then into the homes of all who need a little help putting food on the table. And I invite you to continue to be part of FPCPC's story where we profoundly impact the lives of those who are hungry.

Rev. Terri Jo Crego
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SPOTLIGHT ON OUR MEMBERS



Clarence lives in Port Charlotte with his parrot named Sassy. “I got Sassy 18 years ago when she was only 3 weeks old. She doesn’t talk much but she is cuddly. She is like a family member,” he said.

Clarence was born in Louisville, Kentucky in the midst of the Great Depression. His father held many jobs during that time but finally settled in during World War II as the head of plant protection at a distillery that made alcohol for gunpowder production for the war effort. Clarence says his father is one person who significantly influenced his life.

After graduating from the University of Louisville with Bachelor of Engineering and Master of Engineering degrees, he was employed for 20 years as a designer of communications and radar equipment by the Bendix Corporation in Towson, Maryland.

During the Korean conflict, he was called to active duty as a First Lieutenant. He served as an engineer working on classified programs at the Air Force Cambridge Research Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Next, he accepted a position with the City of Newport News, Virginia as the Department Director of the Building Department and worked there until his retirement in 1993.

Among Clarence’s accomplishments are: a Registered Professional Engineer in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and in the Commonwealth of Virginia; a member of two Honorary Engineering Societies, Sigma Tau and Tau Beta Pi; President and member of the Kiwanis Club of Timonium-Cockeysville, Maryland; President and member of the Virginia Building Officials, and member of the Board of Directors of The International Code Administrators.

Additionally, he taught evening industrial courses for The Tidewater University of Norfolk, Virginia and the Rappahannock Community College in Virginia during his full-time employment.

Clarence and his wife, Virginia, relocated to Florida in March 1993. He and Virginia were married for 55 years and have one son who lives in Key Largo, FL. Virginia died in 2007. After relocating here, Clarence served on the Charlotte County Board of Building Code Appeals for 20 years.

At FPCPC, Clarence served on the Congregational Care Committee for several years establishing the Home Communion Program for shut-ins. Clarence continues as a communion server and currently is a Church Trustee and a member of the Board of Deacons.

“The church has given me a greater visibility of living as to what one should do to be as caring to others as possible,” Clarence commented. His favorite Bible verse is I Corinthians 13: 4-8 on love. He also says the best thing about FPCPC is the “people.”

“One person I really admire at the church is Sandy Asaro. She became an elder at the age of 18. She is a very capable person,” he said. “I believe she is headed toward becoming a pastor.”

Clarence doesn’t travel much anymore at age 87 other than going to Key Largo to visit his son.

By Kathy Bruyere

*This is your ticket to the
Souper Bowl of Caring
on
February 4, 2018*

*This is your opportunity to
participate in
tackling hunger*

*Partner with
FPCPC Youth
and the
Outreach Committee
by raising
\$530
and
530 cans of soup,
all of which will be donated
to our
Food Pantry.*

Don't sit on the sidelines.

*Do your part to put hunger in
the end zone.*

*Attach a \$1 bill or more to
your cans of soup with a
rubber band and bring to
worship on February 4th*

*Help fight hunger in the
Souper Bowl of Caring*



FEBRUARY 4, 2018

Help put hunger in

SECTION ROW SEAT

END ZONE 0 0



VS.

HUNGER



**MORE THAN JUST A
FOOTBALL GAME**

WHAT IS LENT

The season of Lent is an important one for many Protestant denominations, including Presbyterians. “The season of Lent has served a variety of purposes in the history of the church and the life of Christian communities, specifically a period of preparation for baptism at the annual Easter Vigil; a time for the reconciliation of penitent persons; and an opportunity for spiritual discipline through prayer, fasting, service, and generosity,” says the Rev. Dr. David Gambrell, associate for worship in the Presbyterian Mission Agency’s office of Theology and Worship. “The common thread—whether one is new to the church, estranged from the community, or wanting to grow in faith and faithfulness—is deeper and more authentic relationship with God and one another through Christ. Lent points to the cross, where Jesus is lifted up with arms outstretched in compassion and welcome. And Lent points beyond the cross to the empty tomb, where Jesus offers new and abundant life to all.”

While many people find meaning through a spiritual practice of *giving something up for Lent*, many find a more valuable spiritual exercise in *taking something on* during Lent — a more Christ-like attitude toward others, a humble spirit at work, a special service project or a feeling of gratitude in the midst of scarcity.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday (February 14th this year) and ends with Easter, which is on April 1st this year. A baptismal font is often placed at the front of the church to remind the congregation of their birth in Christ. All fasts come to an end. Joyous songs are sung and praise is given for the resurrected Son of God.

ALL CHURCH

Fell  wship

BREAKFAST

Shrove Tuesday Breakfast Celebration

Tuesday, February 13th

8:00 a.m.

New Life Center

You invited to join us on Tuesday, February 13th at 8:00 a.m. for breakfast. Normally we meet on a Thursday morning, but this month we will celebrate Shrove Tuesday which is always the last day before Lent begins. Traditionally, people have celebrated by eating all of the things not allowed by the Lent fasting rules, and by making merry before the season of penitence. This is where the tradition of Mardi Gras comes from! We will observe Shrove Tuesday in the more traditional manner: with pancakes!

A graphic for Ash Wednesday featuring a small, light-colored ceramic dish filled with dark ash, with a small wooden cross resting in the center. The dish is set against a background of green palm fronds. The text "Ash Wednesday" is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

Ash
Wednesday

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH

LIGHT DINNER OF SOUP AND BREAD

5:00 P.M.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP SERVICE

6:00 P.M.

NEW LIFE CENTER

Why We Give to First Presbyterian By Christy and Ron Smith

We have been asked to explain - in spoken and written words – why we choose to give our time and our monetary offerings to First Presbyterian of Port Charlotte. We do so because we strongly believe in the mission of our church and we deeply love the members of our congregation.

Christy and her mother became members of this church many years ago, and they both brought Ron into the congregation. We all could see that this church is very community oriented. The food pantry serving the local community and the outreach to the children of the neighborhood are among the many outstanding acts of love done here every day. Christy also found that – not only did the church fondly embrace the “Shoes for Kids” project - the church continues to give from the heart to help the project reach more children.

The generosity of this church has fostered many more programs that can be mentioned, but space does not allow. However, they are all important and all generated through love. Which brings us to the second major reason we give. To a single soul, each member of this congregation surrounds us in Christian love. We are an extended, yet close-knit, family that truly cares about each other’s well-being.

Does not any family try to be there physically and financially for one another? Our church family certainly does. We derive spiritual strength and the warmth of comradery from our congregational kin. We choose to augment our love of this congregation with worldly gifts of time and money. Thanks to all.

FOOD PANTRY
1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month from 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
and the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Brrrr... It's cold outside! That's what a lot of our clients said for our first pantry in 2018 on January 2nd. The temperature was maybe 40 degrees even at midday, so at 6:00 a.m. when some of our clients arrived, it was just above 30 degrees. We served only 37 households that morning – quite a bit under our usual 60 to 70 households on Tuesday morning pantries. Our food pantry served 101 households in December – 285 people. We continue to get new registrations each time we are open.

Just a warning – on Sunday, February 4th you may be greeted in the parking lot by a member of the youth group. Their first words will probably be “Where’s your can of soup? I’ll take it for you!” Hopefully the youth will add a big “Thank you” and maybe even start with a “Good morning”. Yes, both Super Bowl Sunday and our “Souper Bowl” Sunday take place on February 4th. The Youth have challenged **you** to bring 530 cans of soup and to collect \$530.00 for our food pantry. You surpassed the challenge last year – can you do it again? The Youth Group is betting you can! Remember to look for those BOGOS on Campbell and Progresso soups at Publix and Winn Dixie. Start collecting early. If you ask for a case (12), you only pay for 6 cans. It's fun to see the savings at the bottom of the receipt.

Please think of the food pantry as you unpack your grocery bags. We are always in need of plastic grocery bags. If you are really thoughtful you'll remember to double bag them and put them in the Pantry box in the Narthex or in the pantry box in the New Life Center.

Blessings to all for your continued support of the Food Pantry.

Nancy Sharpless

VETERANS MEETING
Thursday, February 15th
4:00 p.m.
Conference Room

Please join us for our February meeting in the Conference room on Thursday, February 15th at 4:00 p.m. All widows of vets are also invited to attend. The veterans would like to ask all members of the church to keep our troops, our government and each other in your prayers.



FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

The choir is back and energized! We have plans throughout the year to include our quasi-established junior choir, the drummers and bells throughout the season. To do this we need a few more voices in the chancel choir and more bell ringers. There is some beautiful music planned with these groups. Palm Sunday will include the children's choir and Easter, of course, will have the bells. If you like to join our growing choir or would like to ring bells (some rhythm required), please see Joan Byron, Music Director or call 941-625-4945 for more information or to join.



BION CANTORUM

Bion Cantorum will be back at First Presbyterian to perform a thank you concert for the church on February 16th at 7:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Music will include a variety of pieces such as *Mirabile Mysterium* which will fill the sanctuary with beautiful sound, a great spiritual called *Home Over the Mountain* and music from more modern composers such as Gershwin and Bernstein. There will be a free will offering to benefit the church, so come, relax and enjoy some truly beautiful, memorable music.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Thank you so much to each and every individual for all of the gifts we received for over 300 children in Port Charlotte. This year we participated in two programs: The Salvation Army Angel Tree program and the Annual Santa Run. The Santa Run was sponsored by First Presbyterian Church along with our church neighbors in Zone 3 Area of Port Charlotte and local merchants.

This year Christian Ed held it's Second Annual Christmas Cookie Invitation Event. The group walked around the neighborhood in small groups and personally invited our neighbors to join us for our Christmas Eve Service. Thank you to all cookie "Elves" for helping out this year.

Mark your calendars for Souper Bowl Sunday February 4th, 2018. Our goal is to collect 530 cans of food and \$530 gifts of cash for donation to our food pantry this year. On February 4th, please bring cans of food to donate, and if you are able, wrap each one in a dollar bill, or more with an elastic band.

Joan Barry

Youth Sunday School
9:00 - 9:50 a.m.
Youth Room

Our children and youth Sunday School classes have returned to 2 different age-based classes. The youth class (6th grade and above) is led by Sandy Asaro, Veronica Betts, and the students taking on leadership roles in their learning too.

Since cleaning out the youth room, our focus has been on building things. First we worked in teams to build shelves and paralleled this to life scenarios and different talents that people offer. Next we planned and implemented the building of our food pantry through participation in the Souper Bowl Sunday project. In the upcoming weeks we will focus on building our relationships with God and one another through real life application studies that parallel church life and Biblical studies.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH
FEBRUARY CALENDAR

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

Then join us every Sunday morning for Sunday School and Worship.

Sunday, February 4th

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship – Souper Bowl of Caring

11:15 a.m. Souper Bowl Sunday Service Project and Pizza

Tuesday, February 6th

4:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Kathy will lead us in drumming.

Sunday, February 11th

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship

Tuesday, February 13th

4:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Terri Jo will lead us in making “heart pillows”

which will be given to a hospital to use with patients recovering from heart surgery.

We will have two special speakers with us.

Sunday, February 18th

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship

Tuesday, February 20th

4:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Kathy will lead us in drumming

Sunday, February 25th

9:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship

Tuesday, February 27th

4:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Darlene will lead us in a baking project.

Happy
Valentines

HAG is Now PEP!

What does that mean? The “Home Alone Group” (lovingly called HAG by Ms. Baker) has changed. The group met in January, 2018, and by popular request decided to change the living alone focus to one that includes all folks in the church, and even friends out of the church, who wish to enjoy an occasional day out in Christian fellowship with others.

To avoid confusion by continuing to use the Home Alone Group name, we chose to change the name to “People Enjoying People” (lovingly called PEP by Ms. Baker).

The group decided to dedicate the second Thursday of each month to a “field trip” and usually lunch, then the third Thursday of each month to lunch only or with a very local amusement. So, watch the bulletin board for news of the group and details of scheduled happenings, which will continue in February with...

Thursday, Feb. 8th at 10:00 a.m.

- Carpool to Octagon Wildlife Sanctuary (40-min ride) to tour the sanctuary (\$10).
- Then, cross the street to the new solar town of Babcock Ranch for lunch at its “Table and Tap Restaurant.” Sample menu is on NLC bulletin board.
- Back to the church or home by 4:00.

Thursday, Feb. 15th at 11:30 a.m.

- Meet at Olympia Restaurant – 3245 Tamiami Trail in Port Charlotte (on SB frontage road, just south of Olean Blvd.). Usual American and Greek cuisine.

A few housekeeping items... **Jan Baker** needs to hear from you to plan table space, transportation needs, and wheelchair needs should you wish to join an event. She has several ways to be contacted:

- Her cell phone is 386-972-3915 and email is JanetBaker44@Hotmail.com
- Meet her for coffee in the NLC after Sunday services.

In the future, we will use a small space in monthly Beacons to list that month’s activities, along with sending you notices via email providing you have an address. Remember, always check the New Life Center bulletin board for details.



SOUL KEEPING
6 Week Lenten Class Series
Wednesdays Evenings
February 21st - March 28th
5:30-6:30pm
Conference Room

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.” (Deuteronomy 6:5)

“Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and shield.” (Psalm 33:20)

Jesus said: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:29)

The church is the only place in our culture to ponder the mystery of the human soul. So come to FPCPC to consider profound questions:

What is the soul? What is a lost soul? What does the soul need? How is a soul restored?

For the first four classes, we will be immersed in author John Ortberg’s recent book,

“*Soul Keeping: Caring For The Most Important Part of You.*” The church office has ordered 12 copies which you can purchase for \$15 each.

Author Ortberg offers personal experience, scholarship, faithfulness, humility and humor in this important study. We will use the book and accompanying short videos to explore scripture, the ups and downs of the human condition and the wonder of God’s infinite outreach to us.

Schedule is as follows:

Date	Please come to class having read Ortberg
Wed. Feb. 21	pages 9-61
Wed. Feb. 28	pages 62-106
Wed. Mar. 7	pages 107-151
Wed. Mar. 14	pages 152- 194 (end of book)
Wed. Mar. 21	No homework. We will put soul keeping in action by focusing on centering prayer. Similar to but surpassing meditation, centering prayer is one of the Christian tradition’s most powerful soul-centering and soul-shaping spiritual practices.
Wed. Mar. 28	No homework. Centering prayer, continued.

You are welcome even if you’re unable to do the reading or can’t attend all the classes. You’ll still be able to follow and participate in the discussion.

Led by the guest teacher Reverend Victoria Millar who completely enjoys the seeking and open spirit of groups at FPCPC.

SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS JANUARY 2018

- Our Annual Congregational Meeting is rescheduled for Sunday, March 11 following the Worship Service.
- Janet Scott, Kailey Scott, and Kelsey Scott will be baptized on Sunday, February 4th.
- Elder Representatives on Committees for 2018:
 - Building & Grounds: Richard Lund (Chair)
 - Communications: Joan Barry (Chair)
 - Christian Education: Sandy Asaro (Chair), Becky Baird, Lynn Webster
 - Finance: Ron Smith (Chair), Barb Danylak
 - Missional/Food Pantry: Nancy Sharpless (Chair)
 - Worship Arts: Elaine Woods (Chair)
- Ambrose Woods will serve as our Treasurer for 2018, and Sandy Asaro will serve as our Clerk for 2018.
- Our membership for December 2017 was 158 Active Members and 8 Affiliate Members.
- The November 2017 Income was \$23,469.23 and Expenses were \$27,339.66
- The 2018 Budget has been approved by the Session and will be presented at our Annual Congregational Meeting.
- Laverne Sinkia will serve as the Moderator of the Deacons for 2018.
- The children and youth have challenged the congregation to bring 530 cans of soup and \$530 to worship on Souper Bowl of Caring Sunday, February 4th which will all be donated to our church's food pantry.
- Our food pantry served 101 families (300 people) in the month of December.
- Christmas outreaches were appreciated (Santa Run, Angel Tree, and Christmas Eve Invitation/Cookie Deliveries).

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

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Lamont “Butch” Rotert, Custodian	butchnjoyce@yahoo.com
Judy Prier, Organist	judyprier@comcast.net
Joan Byron, Music Director	Jfbyron@comcast.net

Session

Class of 2018: Barbara Danylak, Nancy Sharpless, Ron Smith
Class of 2019: Joan Barry, Rebekah Baird, Richard Lund
Class of 2020: Sandy Asaro, Lynn Webster, Elaine Woods

Deacons

Class of 2018: Dottie Gamble, Pauline Paquin, Laverne Sinkia, Donald Whitmarsh
Class of 2019: Andy Buell, Clarence Diersing, Diane Schmidt
Class of 2020: Norma Campbell

Trustees

Richard Lund (President), Ron Smith (Vice President)
Ambrose Woods (Treasurer) Sandy Asaro (Secretary),
Class of 2018: Clarence Diersing (Member at Large)
Class of 2019: Bob Hull (Member at Large)