



November 2017 Newsletter First Presbyterian Church Port Charlotte

Growing up, my favorite holiday was always Thanksgiving. Well, Thanksgiving was my next to favorite time; celebrating Christmas was and is probably still my favorite. Probably like most of you, we had our traditions.

Thanksgiving Day always began with watching the Macy's Parade all the way through, usually my brother Allan and I, still in our pajamas. We would watch, waiting for our favorite balloons to parade in front of us. We would watch in anticipation of Santa Claus coming at the end. Meanwhile, mom started the turkey in the oven. The sounds got louder in the kitchen as beaters started whirling and dishes clanked in the sink. The aromas of the familiar Thanksgiving dinner started wafting from the kitchen to the living room, making our tummies rumble (and now mine is rumbling just remembering). And we watched and waited.

When the parade was over, mom made us get dressed and cleaned up; probably a good thing as we still had "bed head" and we wouldn't want to look scruffy for the big meal together. *I'm sure my hair was fine, but not my brother's.* After a quick lunch, we went out to play in our neighborhood full of kids our age. We played football in the empty lot, laughed and argued a little about whether Brent or Scott was tagged down. Then one by one, our friends were called home by a bell as each home seemed to have one that had its own unique sound. We didn't have a bell, just a familiar sound of my mom yelling, "AllllllLLLLLannnnnnn! TerrrrRRRRRi Jooooooo! Dinnnnnnner!" And that was the one day we didn't drag our feet; we ran as fast as we could, ready for a delicious Thanksgiving dinner. "Wash your hands, kids!" *Ugh. We just wanted to sit down and begin munching on our favorite part of the meal!* I loved and still love the turkey while my brother dug into the mashed potatoes. Mom made us go around our small family's table and one by one, share what we were thankful for, before passing our plates to be filled with my favorite meal of the year.

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SPOTLIGHT ON OUR MEMBERS - BARBARA ROWLAND



Barbara Rowland joined FPCPC in October 2017 and says she likes the way it feels when she walks through the church doors. “I feel very blessed to have found the church. The congregation has made me feel so welcome,” she said.

Barbara believes in being active in her church so you will see her singing soprano in the choir. She belongs to Sarah/Abraham Circle and is a writer for Advent. She regularly attends the outings that Jan Baker offers and attends the meetings about what it means to be a Presbyterian. “This church has brought me back to my Christian roots. I am comfortable and feel like I belong here,” she said.

Barbara was born in Burbank, California. She attended school and raised her family there. She also had a 40 year business career there as well as being able to participate in and lead numerous community and social organizations locally and statewide. She has been an active volunteer for more than 25 years.

Today, Barbara continues as a co-owner of a pressure washer business here even in her retirement. “I am a firm believer that an active mind keeps you young,” she said. “I also have a partner in life, a teenage son to keep me occupied, seven adult children, 13 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.”

Barbara last attended college in California in 1964. She left at the beginning of her junior year as a Business Administration/Accounting major. Two years ago she enrolled at Colorado Technical University for online classes and received a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration and Management in March at the age of 72. She completed her studies Summa Cum Laude. “This is a feat for which I am very proud,” she said.

An influential person in Barbara’s life was her father. “He always told me that there wasn’t anything I couldn’t do if I applied myself. That has certainly held true all throughout my life,” she said.

Barbara moved to Port Charlotte in December 2012 after visiting her daughter and husband here for the past ten years. “They live on a canal and are avid sailors. Sailing is also a passion of mine,” she explained.

Barbara has several hobbies and interests. She likes to write when she can. She has written articles for the local newspaper and a magazine. Her latest writing endeavor was an historical reference novel entitled *Cemetery Heritage Tribute, Voices of the Millennium, 1999 - 2003*. The book references pioneers of Paso Robles, California and will be published soon.

Additionally, Barbara likes to read, go antiquing and attend plays and concerts. She enjoys painting, gardening and floral design as well as cooking and entertaining. Also, Barbara has been an announcer for the town’s annual parade.

Barbara is always interested in learning new things. She says she would like to learn how to ring bells in a bell choir.

By Kathy Bruyere

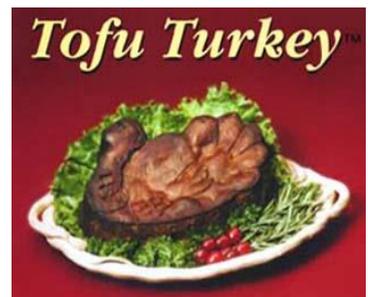
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After graduating from college, I went off to graduate school in Richmond, Virginia. It was my first time living away from home, really, as I went to undergraduate school in my hometown. I was homesick. When Thanksgiving began rolling around, Mom could tell I wanted to come home so she bought me a ticket. I flew home on Thanksgiving Day, anxious to spend time with my mom and brother and have mom's turkey with all the other delicious sides. What I didn't know, is that they had both decided to become vegetarians my first semester away and there was no turkey waiting for me when I got home! Instead, there was a Tofurky! *WhaaaaaatTTTT is a Tofurky?!* But we sat down together even as I pouted a little, shared what we were thankful for, and then ate the worst Thanksgiving meal. I flew back to school and decided to cook my own turkey for the first time and make mashed potatoes. Well, I burned the turkey and mashed the potatoes, but they went flying all over the dorm's kitchen. At the time, it seemed like the worst Thanksgiving ever.

As Mom and I think back on that Thanksgiving "event," we always end up laughing. What I thought was the worst Thanksgiving ever has now evolved into the best. It was the Thanksgiving where the blessing was being with people I love, people for whom I am deeply grateful. It was a Thanksgiving story that is told every year as we look in each other's eyes, and laugh and love.

To this day, I still watch the Macy's parade in my pajamas and won't let anything get in the way of that time. Meanwhile, I have learned how to properly cook a turkey and most of the time it turns out okay. I will do that again this Thanksgiving, and give thanks to God, for my biological family and the family of FPCPC. God has placed me in your family and you in mine. I am thankful for this life God has given us and the stories of faithfulness that are being lived together. I am full of gratitude to God who transforms our stories, even those that are painful or difficult, into something beautiful. May you all have a blessed Thanksgiving.

Rev. Terri Jo Crego



CHILDREN AND YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

Sundays at 9:00 – 9:45 a.m.

Youth Room

Children and youth have been learning more about Jesus' "I Am" Statements in class while we were also learning about them in the worship service. In looking towards November's lessons, we will continue paralleling the sermons in Sunday School by using our curriculum that offers Bible stories and activities that match the lectionary passages.

We are also excited for the children and youth who were recently commissioned in the worship service on Sunday October 22 to serve as acolytes. The following week, it was special to have our children and youth in 3rd grade and up receive a personalized Bible in worship on Sunday, October 29th. Our kids are excited to come to church, invite their friends, and find ways to become an active part of our church family. What a blessing of joy and hope these young people are in our congregation.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH PARTICIPATING IN WORSHIP



THANKSGIVING — EVE SERVICE —

Thanksgiving Eve Dinner and Worship Service

Wednesday, November 22nd

5:00 p.m.

MacDonald Hall

Join us on Wednesday evening for a Thanksgiving potluck dinner and worship service with Wintergarden Presbyterian Church and Holy Trinity Anglican Church. We will gather at 5:00 p.m. in MacDonald Hall for a potluck dinner. Bring a side dish or dessert. Drinks and turkey will be provided. After dinner, we will worship together, giving thanks to God for all our blessings.



SMART PHONE HELP

November 5th

11:15 a.m.

Conference Room

All are invited to bring their smart phones to the Conference Room on Sunday, November 1st. Children, youth, and adults will be available to answer your questions about the phones. This technology help will take place on the first Sunday of each month in October – December.

PLEDGE COMMITMENT SUNDAY

Sunday, November 19th

The theme for our stewardship season is:

“UPON THIS ROCK”

Every fall at First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte a Stewardship campaign is held to remind all church members of the responsibilities of Christian stewardship and to share what we have been given for God’s work. Our generous God calls us to embrace a life of joy and generosity. Each and every day we are given the opportunity to reflect the light of Christ by living lives of generosity towards God and one another. In a Christ centered life, we give of our time, talents, and treasures to further God’s work.

All giving at FPCPC funds every aspect of the church’s ministries, missions, and outreach. Beyond that, there are significant operational costs to sustain our facilities, campus, and staffing. We need your support as we budget for 2018.

Church members and friends are invited and encouraged to make a pledge of support to God’s work through the church. Pledging is the act of promising a monetary sum to God for his work and for the work of His Church over a specific period of time. During our stewardship campaign you are being asked to prayerfully consider making a commitment to FPCPC’s stewardship campaign by pledging whatever amount is appropriate for you as you are being inspired and guided by God.

Pledge cards and letters are being sent out late October and early November to begin our campaign which will end with Pledge Commitment Sunday on November 19th. After prayerful consideration, you would complete the pledge card specifying the amount of your pledge for the coming year.

On Pledge Commitment Sunday, all who have made the choice to pledge may bring their pledge card forward during the last hymn and place it in the pledge card box for dedication to God. You may also choose to place it in the pledge card box in the Narthex, place it in the offering plate, or mail it to the church office. At the end of the stewardship campaign, traditional offering envelopes will be ordered for everyone who has made a pledge.

God has blessed each one of us with time, talents, and treasures. God values the heart that overflows with gratitude and thanksgiving; the same God who saved us and who gives us all things. A grateful heart gives generously, willingly, and cheerfully in response to the love and grace that abounds in Christ. Make your giving a spiritually enriching experience, an expression of a worshipful and grateful heart.

Your pledge, no matter the size, is truly appreciated and we are grateful for your support as we thrive and grow as a congregation doing God’s work in our church, our community and in the world.

Elder Ambrose Woods
Chair, Finance Committee

I will tell you who you are. You are Peter, the rock. And upon this rock, I will build my church, and nothing shall prevail against it. Matthew 16:18



VETERANS MEETING
Thursday, November 16th
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room

The Veterans Group will have their November meeting on the 16th. The meeting will start at 10:00 am in the Conference Room. The widows of Vets are invited too. We will have Don Anderson as our guest speaker from the Veterans Affairs Office.

FROM THE CHOIR LOFT

Last month the choir had the pleasure of being accompanied by the youth drummers as we sang “Marching in the Light of God” (Siyahamba). What a great combination of acapella singers and drums! The following events are even more exciting as we celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. This month and next, we are looking forward to a combination Thanksgiving Eve service with Wintergarden Presbyterian Church, Holy Trinity Anglican and First Presbyterian Church, and then our Advent and Christmas Services. We need to add to our choir especially in the tenor and bass sections. Our Christmas anthem needs lots of singers, youth singers and bell ringers. If you fall into any of these categories, please call me at 941-661-1553 (leave a message if there is no answer) or send an email to jfbyron@comcast.net. Choir people are happy people and remember that singing helps you maintain good health.

Peace, Joan Byron Music Director



FROM BION TO BEYOND
Friday, November 17th
7:00 p.m.
Sanctuary

This summer’s eclipse inspired some of our selections for the fall concert of Bion Cantorum. The sky is full of wonder and so will be our concert. Travel with us beginning with J.S. Bach’s *Planets, Stars and Airs*, Ola Gjeilo’s *Northern Lights*, and *Over the Rainbow* from the Wizard of Oz. In between we will sing a piece called *O Notte* which will be accompanied by R. Paul Urbanick, violin and Ann Alton, Cello, both members of the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra. They will also perform with John Renfroe, our accompanist. Tickets are \$15.00 for general seating. Make this a truly memorable evening by ordering tickets on- line at www.bioncantorum.com or by calling 941-625-4945.

HOME ALONE

Friday, November 3rd

11:00 a.m.

Church parking lot

Please join us at the church on Friday, November 3rd at 11:00 a.m. to carpool to Laishley Crab House for lunch in Punta Gorda. After lunch we will visit the Vietnam Memorial Wall next door at Laishley Park. Please email or call Jan Baker ASAP for reservations.

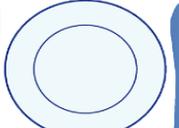
Thursday, November 16th

10:00 a.m.

Church Parking Lot

Everyone is invited to join us at the church at 10:00 a.m. to carpool to lunch at Snook Haven in Venice and a 1 hour pontoon boat tour of the Myakka River. Please email or call Jan Baker ASAP so we know how many we will have.

ALL CHURCH

Fell    **wship**

BREAKFAST

Thursday, November 2nd

8:00 a.m.

MacDonald Hall

All men and women are invited to join us on Thursday, November 2nd at 8:00 a.m. for breakfast. Meet in Mac Hall for some delicious breakfast and fellowship. Bring \$2 to help cover costs. See you there!

CHILDREN AND YOUTH ACTIVITES

**Tuesdays 4:45 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
New Life Center**

Children, youth, and adults from FPCPC and Wintergarden Presbyterian recently joined with the choir in worship with drums. We had fun playing the song “Marching in the Light of God.” Kathy Bruyere continues to lead this ministry every other Tuesday and we are grateful for her inspiration with the drums. On the opposite Tuesdays from drum class, we have a mini drum practice and also enjoy other activities together such as being creative with food, service projects in the food pantry, games, art projects, and more. Children in 3rd grade and above are invited to join us each Tuesday night for activities.

Tuesday, November 7th

4:45 – 6:00 p.m.

After snacks and some brief drumming, Lynn will lead us in art or games

Tuesday, November 14th

4:45 – 6:00 p.m.

After snacks, Kathy will lead us in drumming

Tuesday, November 21st

After snacks and some brief drumming, Amina will lead us in an activity

Tuesday, November 28th

4:45 – 6:00 p.m.

After snacks, Kathy will lead us in drumming

One Tuesday night when the children and youth were doing a service project in the Food Pantry, a child from Wintergarden was helping in the pantry for the first time. Her eyes grew as large as saucers and she exclaimed, “AMAZING!” when she saw the warehouse room at our church where donated goods are first brought in to be processed. We appreciate the ministry and leadership of the food pantry volunteers who make a difference in our community.

LOOKING AHEAD

Mark your calendars now and plan to join us



SANCTUARY DECORATING GATHERING

Saturday, December 2nd

9:00 a.m.

Sanctuary

We will gather to decorate the Sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season on Saturday, December 2nd. 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.

OCTOBER 2017 SESSION MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Session joyfully received into membership Barbara Rowland and Carol Stacy.

Rev. Victoria Millar continues to teach about Presbyterianism and it is well received.

A mailing was sent to members to remind them to consider including the church in their Will. Pledge cards will be going out in November this year.

A complete inventory of the Building and Grounds repair work needed was made. Staff and volunteers are prioritizing and repairing various projects accordingly, including the soffit damage from Hurricane Irma.

The Christian Education Committee will begin exploring various methods to engage more in spiritual growth through Adult Education opportunities.

Extra supplies from our school supply drive were donated to a school supply drive through our school district to be delivered to students in the Florida Keys who were impacted by Hurricane Irma.

274 unduplicated people were served by the Food Pantry in September.

The Session voted to renew Rev. Terri Jo Crego's Temporary Stated Supply 2018 contract.

Upcoming Special Services:

- 11/5 All Saints' Day with bell tolls in remembrance of those who have died in the last year.
- Thanksgiving Dinner and Service Wednesday, November 22nd beginning at 5:00 p.m. with combined congregations of FPCPC, Wintergarden and Trinity Anglican.
- 12/24 Christmas Eve Sunday will have services both at 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

DB Sound is working with us on our Sanctuary sound issues.

The church's Disaster Preparedness Committee did a great job checking on the congregation before and after Hurricane Irma along with preparing the building.

FPCPC

2230 Hariet 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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Scott Austin, Media/Grounds	scottaustin0557@gmail.com
Lamont "Butch" Rotert, Custodian	butchnjoyce@yahoo.com
Judy Prier, Organist	judyprier@comcast.net
Joan Byron, Music Director	Jfbyron@comcast.net

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)