

FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



Port Charlotte, FL

April/2025 E-GRAM

Hello, << **Everyone** >>.

Grace and Peace to you!

Spring is here, and Easter is coming!

As we transition from winter to spring, our church is preparing for one of the most important times in our church calendar. The season of Lent has been a meaningful time of reflection, and now we look ahead to the joyous celebration of Christ's resurrection. Through His death and resurrection, we've been given the hope of new life, forgiveness of sins, and a relationship with God. Therefore, we invite you to join us for a series of special services: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. Each service offers a unique opportunity to draw closer to the heart of our faith, and we hope you'll make time to be part of all of them as we honor and remember the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I'm particularly excited about our Maundy Thursday prayer and meal service, which will be thoughtfully prepared by our Deacons. It is a special evening of reflection, fellowship, and worship that you won't want to miss. The service will take us through the events of the Last Supper, offering a quiet space to pray and share a meal, just as Jesus did with His disciples. Our brothers and sisters from Wintergarden Presbyterian Church and some other neighboring churches were invited and may join us too. This will be an intimate time for our church family to reflect on Christ's love and sacrifice. I truly believe that, like in

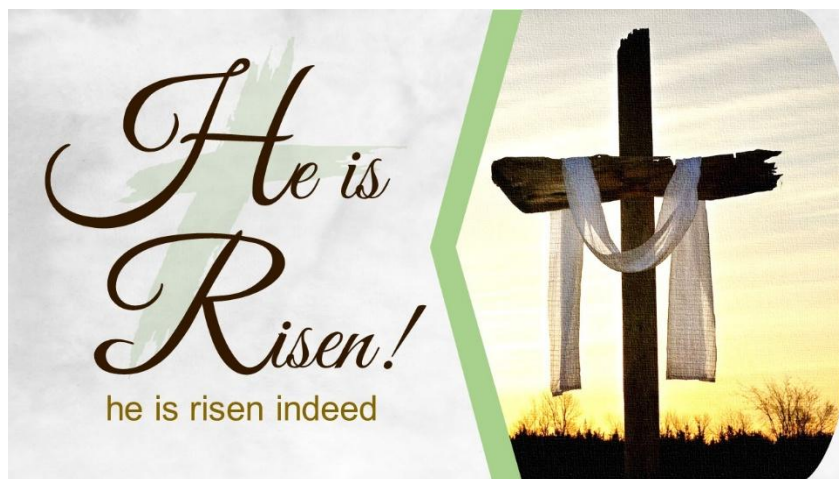
the years before, it will be a meaningful and memorable experience for all who attend.

In addition to the services, we're excited about some wonderful Spring events. On Sunday, April 6th, we'll have a musical celebration featuring "The Goldtones," a talented vocal harmony group renowned for being one of Florida's most requested musical acts. Their beautiful voices and dynamic performances are something that we cannot miss. Tickets are \$25. Then, on Tuesday evening, April 8th, we'll be hosting a movie & pizza night featuring the 2014 film "Son of God," which brings the story of Jesus to life in a powerful way. Please come and remember to invite a friend to both events.

Finally, as we approach the warmer months, we also want to take a moment to acknowledge our "snowbird" friends who are heading back north for the spring and summer. We will certainly miss you, but we know you'll be keeping us in your hearts and prayers as we will you. Remember, no matter where you go, you're always a part of our church family.

Blessings,

Pastor Syl



MONTH IN Review

PCUSA CREDO Conference



Pastor Syl attended the PCUSA CREDO Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas, from March 10th-17th. CREDO is an in-person, weeklong conference focused on pastors' wholeness & well-being. It is led by a team of experienced faculty, and they guide participants in a visioning and discernment process through four key areas: spiritual, vocational, physical and emotional health, as well as financial.







March 5 - Ash Wednesday Service

Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and God relents from sending calamity.

Joel 2:13

March's Guest Preachers



March 16, 2025 - Ruling Elder Sandy Asaro preached on Sunday, March 16, while Pr. Syl was away at the CREDO conference. Sandy is taking classes to become a Commissioned Lay Pastor for Peace River Presbytery, which will allow her to perform the sacraments in the churches within our bounds.

March 30, 2025 - The Reverend Vinod Gnanaraj, who recently became the minister of Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church in North Fort Myers, came and preached for us while Pastor Syl preached at his church. Pastor Vinod has been serving the Lord for over 24 years in various capacities and ministerial settings in the USA and India. We are so thankful for him and our brothers and sisters at HTPC.

Supporting our Guest Preachers



We must acknowledge our wonderful support team of liturgists and acolytes, represented in these pictures by Richard Rohler, Weldon DeGroot, and Kathy Alexander. We could not do without them. God bless all of God's faithful servants.

Ordination & Installation of Ruling Elders and Deacons



On Sunday, March 23, 2025, our church ordained, installed, and welcomed this year's class of Elders and Deacons. At this momentous occasion, Ruling Elder Sandy Asaro and Deacon Veronica Walters were reinstalled to Session and Board of Deacons, and now, Ruling Elders Toni Madej, Claudette McLennon, as well as Deacon Patty Bevins, were ordained and installed. Congratulations to all, and may God give you the wisdom to help lead our church.

Rebekah Mary Baird

April 5, 1931 - March 1, 2025



It is with a heavy heart that we communicate the passing of **Rebekah "Becky" Mary Smith (Baird)** on March 1, 2025. Becky was an active member of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Port Huron, Michigan, and later became an Elder for our church. Becky, a widow from her late husband Craig Kendall Baird, is survived by her four children: Faith, Kathleen, Kendall, and Julie, one sister, eight grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren. We will honor her memory on **Saturday, April 5, 2025, at 11 a.m.** The Rev. Terri Jo Crego will be leading the service. Becky will be greatly missed.



March Blessing Tree - C.A.R.E. - \$795.00 April Blessing Tree - United Way



During this month of March, our Blessing Tree collected items for C.A.R.E. to donate to victims of abuse. **Thank you to all who donated.** We were able to collect \$795 in cash and gift cards, plus many items, as you can see in the picture. This April, we will be collecting donations for the United Way of Charlotte County. More info below.

People Enjoying People

On **March 27th**, our PEP group enjoyed lunch at Pita & Puff. It was a time of friendly conversations and Greek delights. PEP will gather next month for a new outing. Join us for a time where People Enjoy People. Catch our next event on **Thursday, April 24th**, at **12:30 p.m.**, at **The Chef's Thai-Sushi-Bar & Grill** (2150 Tamiami Trail).





Here are some of our February and March birthday people, finally having their birthdays celebrated. On the left, Jackie, Alzie, and Carolyn (for February) and on the right, Ambrose and Claudette (our March folks) all together with Pastor Vinod.



The Goldtones are coming to FPCPC



The Goldtones is one of Florida's premier vocal harmony groups, singing songs ranging from the traditional doo-wop tunes of the 50s and 60s, to those melodies sung by later groups of the 70s and 80s.

Tickets cost \$25 each. Get yours today by calling Sue at 941-241-6480. Because of the popularity of this group, we suggest you purchase your tickets A.S.A.P., since our Sanctuary has a small seating capacity.



April Blessing Tree

We have partnered with the **United Way** to collect items for people who have lost everything due to hurricanes, fires, etc. Help us get our community what they need to move forward. Please place items in the box near our Blessing Tree. A list of items includes **laundry detergent, liquid dish soap, diapers, tissues, baby wipes, cleaning supplies - sponges, toilet brushes, toilet cleaner, shower gel, napkins, toilet paper, bar soap, tampons, and medium garbage bags, etc.**

Mission

Mobilizing the power of our community to break the cycle of poverty.

Vision

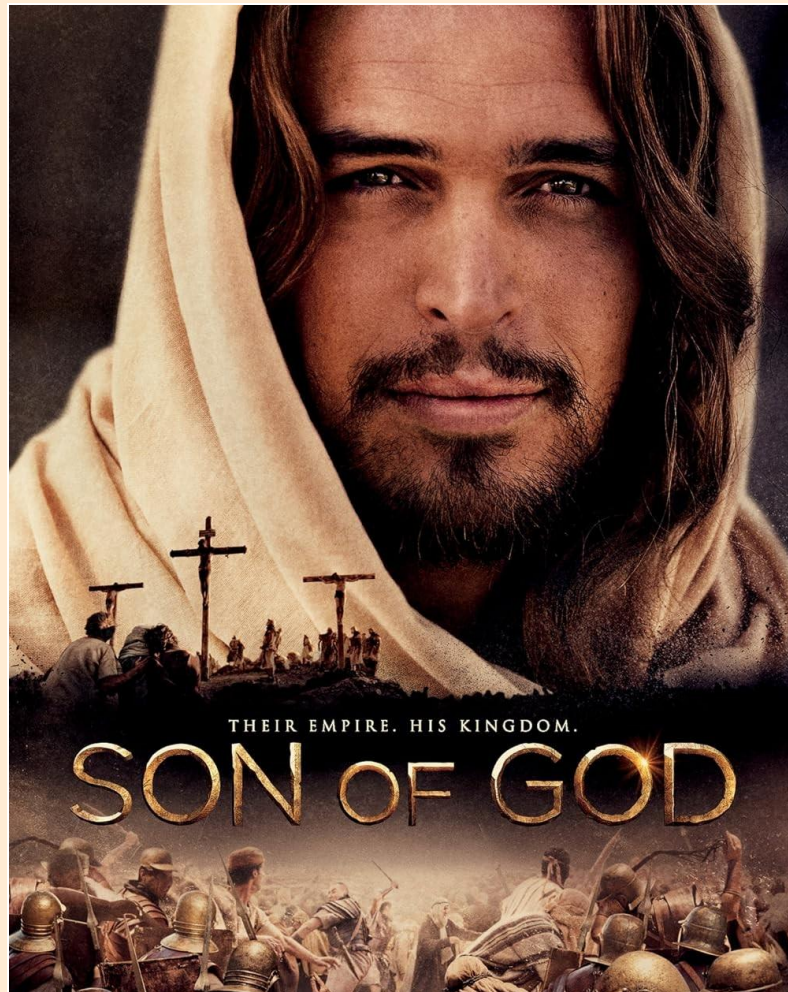
A community where all citizens achieve their potential through education, financial stability, and healthy lives.

Easter Lilies - In honor of or in memory of loved ones.



Easter Lily forms will be in the bulletin for a couple of weeks. Please fill out the form and return it in the offering plate or to the church office no later than Monday, April 14, 2025. They will be \$12 each.

Movie, Pizza & Jesus Night

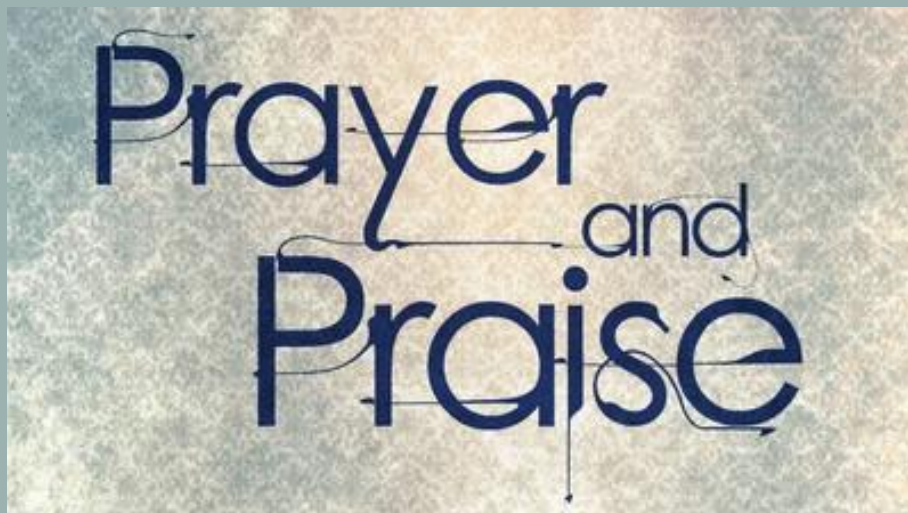


Join us on **Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 6:30 PM**, to watch a wonderful Passion movie and eat some delicious pizza.



Every **Wednesday** at **12-noon**, our Prayer group meets at First Pres. All are welcome. There is power in prayer and we know we can make a real difference in people's life if we just pray.

Thursday Nights



**Praise and Worship service every Thursday at 6:30 PM until April 10th.
Come and seek a blessing for you or someone else who needs it.**

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Pet of the Month



PRINCETON



Meet our April Pet of the Month, Princeton. He belongs to Amina Lee. He is all dressed up for Easter with his cute yellow bow.

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

Glory-Stained Glass Lessons are Coming

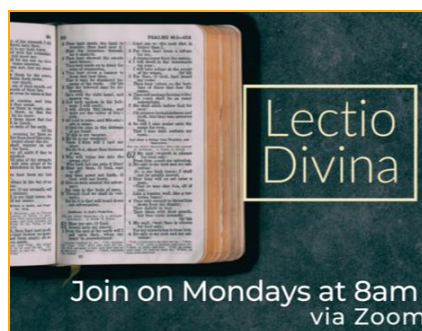
After last year's success with our church ornament, we decided to try our hand at making stained glass ornaments. Weldon DeGroot volunteered to hold classes in his garage for people who might be interested. We will have sign-up sheets for specific Saturdays from 10 a.m. until noon, starting in May. Each class will be limited to 5 people, and it should take 2 to 3 classes to complete an ornament. We will be asking \$15 to pay for the materials for each ornament.

We plan to run classes over the course of several months as needed. We will have a sign-up sheet with the dates selected for classes at the back of the church on each Sunday and it will also be available in the church office during the week. It is hoped that some people would like to make additional ornaments that we can offer to the congregation in December.



Above are the first attempts to create our church's logo Christmas ornaments. Don't they look great already? Can you help us make better ones?

Join us online on Zoom



Sundays at 8:05 AM.

To connect, go to
www.zoom.us
Click "Join" on the right-hand
upper corner
Meeting ID: 9678044713
Passcode: X9b77j

Mondays at 8:00 AM.

To connect, go to
www.zoom.us
Click "Join" on the right-hand
upper corner
Meeting ID: 87832080869
Passcode: 396015



Tuesday, April 1



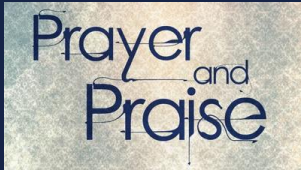
- Food Pantry - from 8 to 11 AM.
- April Fool's Day!

Wednesday, April 2



- **Prayer Group Meeting - noon.**
- **Board of Deacons Meeting - 1:30 PM.**
- Bells Rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir Rehearsal - 6:30 PM.

Thursday, April 3



- **Prayer & Praise Service - 6:30 PM.**

Saturday, April 5



- **Rebekah Baird's Celebration of Life Service - 11:00 AM.**

Sunday, April 6



- Continental Breakfast - from 7:45 to 9 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM. On Zoom at 8:05 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- **Sunday Worship Service with Lord's Supper - 9 AM.**
- **The Goldtones Concert - 3 PM.**

Monday, April 7

- *Lectio-Divina* with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom - 8 AM.

Tuesday, April 8



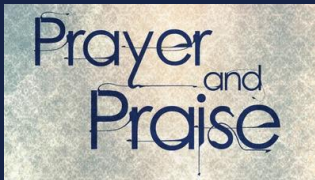
- **Southport Square Assisted Living Service - 2:30 PM.**
- **Movie & Pizza night featuring *Son of God* - 6:30 PM**

Wednesday, April 9



- **Prayer Group Meeting - noon.**
- **Worship Arts Meeting – 11AM.**
- Food Pantry - from 4 to 6:30 PM.
- Bells Rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir Rehearsal - 6:30 PM.

Thursday, April 10



- **Prayer & Praise Service - 6:30 PM.**

Saturday, April 12

- **Southport Square Independent Living Worship Service - 10:00 AM.**

Sunday, April 13



- Continental Breakfast - from 7:45 to 9 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM. On Zoom at 8:05 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- **Palm Sunday Service - 9 AM.**
- **Finance Committee Meeting - 10:30 AM.**

Monday, April 14

- *Lectio-Divina* with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom - 8 AM.

Tuesday, April 15

- Food Pantry - from 8 to 11 AM.

Wednesday, April 16



- **Prayer Group Meeting - noon.**
- Bells Rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir Rehearsal - 6:30 PM.

Thursday, April 17



- **Maundy Thursday Service - 6:30 PM.**

Friday, April 18



- **Good Friday Service - noon.**

Sunday, April 20



- Continental Breakfast - from 7:45 to 9 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM. On Zoom at 8:05 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- **Easter Sunrise Service – Wintergarden Presbyterian Church 7:00 AM.**
- **Easter Sunday Service - 9:00 AM.**

Monday, April 21

- **Office Closed**

Wednesday, April 23



- **Prayer Group Meeting - noon.**
- Bells Rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir Rehearsal - 6:30 PM

Thursday, April 24

PEP

- **PEP Group at The Chef's Thai-Sushi-Bar & Gril - 12:30 PM.**
(2150 Tamiami Trail)

Sunday, April 27



- Continental Breakfast - from 7:45 to 9 AM.
- Adult Sunday School - 8 AM. On Zoom at 8:05 AM.
- Children's Sunday School - after Children's Blessing.
- **Easter Sunday Service - 9 AM.**
- **Celebration of April's Birthdays & Anniversaries.**
- **Session Meeting - 10:30 AM.**

Monday, April 28

- *Lectio-Divina* with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom - 8 AM.

Wednesday, April 30



- **Prayer Group Meeting - noon.**
- Bells Rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir Rehearsal - 6:30 PM.

MEMBER ON FOCUS

Have you met?



Carol (Jasmine) McLennon

Carol McLennon, who we know as “Jas,” was born and raised in Saint Mary, Jamaica. After High school, Jas taught at Hillside Primary School. Jas moved to New Mexico with her sister Norma Campbell and attended the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, where she trained in the Department of Psychology for counseling intervention skills.

After that, both Norma and Jas relocated to New York on December 12, 1978, to be with their sisters. Jas attended the Board of Educational Services in Long Island, where she was certified as a Medical and Dental assistant. She later attended the Borough of Manhattan Community College, achieving an Associate’s in Liberal Arts and Science degree.

While working part-time in the home healthcare field, Jas had a renewed heart for music and decided to audition at St. Patrick’s Cathedral Church (at the Rockefeller Center) in Manhattan. After a successful audition, joined the choir. She says this was a highlight in her life. She loved singing with the choir and met many celebrities along the way, such as Placido Domingo, Jessye Norman, and Perry Cuomo. She was more than excited to receive an autographed copy of the music the choir did by Perry Cuomo himself.

Another musical adventure and highlight was when Jas was able to attend the 50th Anniversary of the tree lighting at Rockefeller Center with Bob Hope. Every Christmas Eve, the choir would do the Midnight Mass under

the direction of John Grady. Another great memorable highlight that made Jas so happy was when her mom was able to watch her at Midnight Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral Church. Her mother knew she was doing something that she loved, and having her there to witness and to have such an experience before her passing, meant so much to Jas.

Jas worked as an administrative assistant at Rusk Institute (NYU) of Langone Medical Center from 1994 until 2014. During her working years, she attended Cornell University and received a certificate in Management. After an injury in 2013, which led to her being on disability, she eventually retired in 2014. After retiring, she moved to Florida to be with her sisters. They had all agreed to move to Florida- to be together after retirement.

Before making the move to Florida, Jas would visit her sisters who had already made the move, and she would visit First Pres with them. So, it was only natural that when she permanently moved, she began attending and became a member soon after. Jas has done many things within the church. She was a member of the Secret Sister in Christ Club, she joined the choir and is still an active participant, she has volunteered with our Big Move and has joined the Bells Choir as well. Recently, she was ordained and installed on our Board of Deacons here at First Pres and, enjoys helping others.

Jas' favorite food is Curry goat with hard-dough bread alongside Mannish Water AKA, Goat soup. Her favorite vacation place was Puerto Vallarta, a city in Mexico.

Jas loves the people here at First Pres. She says she loves the warm feeling and the welcome you get from the people. She feels at home and loves her church family.



April 9 - Amina Lee
April 16 - Mary Kerr (100th)
April 18 - Dolores Cummings
April 18 - Sondra Kruse
April 24 - Hazel Mason
April 25 - Susan Brembs
April 26 - Ginny Fisher
April 30 - Edith Edwards

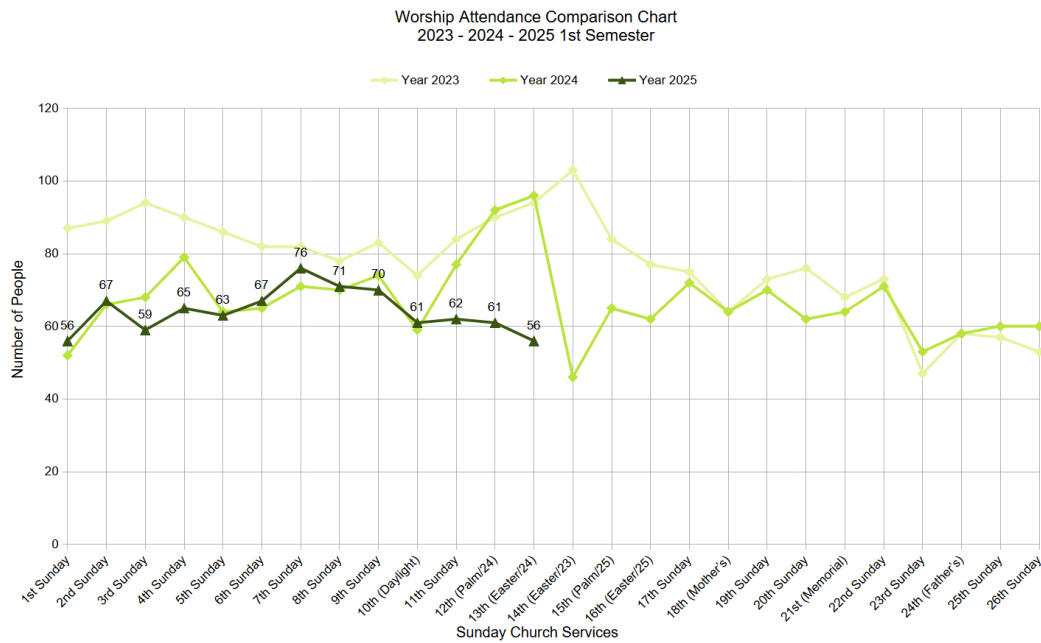
Do not see your name here? Call the church office and let us know (941) 625-5045.

CHURCH OFFICIALS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- **The Board of Deacons** meets on the first Wednesday of the month at **1:30 PM**. The next meeting is scheduled for **April 2, 2025**.
- Nursery/Asst Sunday School Teacher volunteer opportunity-learn more Sunday April 6, 2025 after service.
- **Prayer Group Wednesdays at 12 noon**
- **Movie & Pizza Night on Tuesday, April 8, at 6:30 PM.**
- **The Worship Arts Committee** meets on the second Wednesday of the month at **11 AM**. The next meeting is scheduled for **April 9, 2025**.
- **The Prayer & Praise Service** meets every **Thursday** at **6:30 PM**. **Last day, April 10, 2025**. It should resume again in November.
- **The Finance Committee** meets on the second Sunday of each month at **10:30 AM**. The next meeting is scheduled for **April 13, 2025**.
- **The Session** meets on the third Sunday of each month, at **10:30 AM**. Although, the next meeting is scheduled for **April 27, 2025**, due to Easter falling on April 20, 2025.
- **Adult Sunday School** meets every Sunday at **8 AM**, including by Zoom now.
- **Children's Sunday School** meets every Sunday during worship and after the Children's Blessing.
- **The PEP (People Enjoying People) Luncheon** meets once every month. The next luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, **April 24, 2025**, at **12:30 PM**, this time at **The Chef's Thai-Sushi-Bar & Grill**.



FPCPC Attendance Stats



Did you know you can add First Pres on your will or living trust, as your beneficiary? For example, one of the most advantageous ways to contribute to the First Presbyterian Church is through a gift of stock. Making a gift of securities is simple and offers a number of valuable financial benefits. You can give appreciated stocks to the church simply by transferring them into our account. The total value of the stock upon transfer is tax-deductible, and you will not be obligated to pay any capital gains taxes on the appreciation. For gifts of stock or gifts-in-kind, please contact the finance office for details or speak with our church treasurer, Elder Ambrose Woods.



Please pray for ...

Adams Family - strength & comfort
Cathy & Rick Armstrong - health needs
Bernadine & Tom Allesee family - safety & health
Susan Baivey - health needs
Charlie Brox - health needs
Barbara Edwards - health needs
Jean Heim - health needs
Senior Lee Family - health needs
Sue Littrell - health needs
Violet Logan/Green - strength & comfort
Donna & Loren Livengood - health needs
Marjorie Hill - health needs
Courtenay Mason - health needs
Brad Messick - health needs
Louis Miceli - health needs
Valciana Officer- health needs
Samantha & Derrick Reams Family - strength & comfort
Olin Scott – housing needs
Mavis Powell - health needs- strength & comfort
Danny Webb - strength needs

FPCPC FAMILY - If you know of 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**, under the care of the **Peace River Presbytery**.