



FIRST
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



Port Charlotte, FL

September/2025 E-GRAM

Dear, **Everyone,**

Grace and Peace!

This month, Brazilian citizens like me, Betania, Claudemir, Marilda, and the young Richard, will celebrate Brazil's Independence Day on September 7th. For us, it holds the same significance as the Fourth of July does for U.S. citizens.

If we look back at our history, we'll see that a shared desire for autonomy and political freedom drove both Brazil's and the United States' independence movements. Before, economic policies consistently favored the colonial powers and restricted the prosperity of the colonies, leading people to demand the right to govern themselves.

When it comes to our rights and freedoms, especially the right not to be exploited, we often believe that no price is too great. Although Brazil's separation from Portugal was relatively peaceful, the United States fought a revolutionary war to gain independence from Britain. Yet in both countries, lives were sacrificed for the cause of liberty, a reminder that freedom and dignity often come at a high cost.

Last month, I noticed that these principles (the value of human dignity and the rejection of exploitation) are deeply woven into Jesus' teachings. As we saw together, the Church Lectionary brought us passages from the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus tells parables that

uplift the marginalized, confront injustice, and call us to act with mercy and fairness. These stories remind us that God's kingdom is one where power is not used to oppress, but to serve; where every person, no matter their status, is treated with worth and compassion.

You may remember from my preaching last month, in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), Jesus shows that love is not shown through status or law, but through mercy, especially towards the overlooked. In the Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13–21), Jesus warns against greed and reminds us that life isn't about hoarding, but about living justly before God.

As your pastor, let me remind you that these parables are not just religious lessons. They are calls for Christians to live out the values of our faith in real and practical ways. They direct us to build communities rooted in human dignity, where power is used to serve rather than to dominate and, where justice, mercy, and compassion are lived out daily.

After all, what is a nation if not the all the people who live there? And how can we truly call ourselves a Christian nation if we turn a blind eye to those around us who are struggling, the overlooked, the overworked, and the underappreciated? If our faith means anything, it must move us to care not just in word, but indeed.

We may not all have the power to change national policies or rewrite economic systems, but we each have the responsibility to treat others with fairness, respect, and generosity. We are called to use whatever influence we have in our families, churches, workplaces, and communities to reflect the character of Christ.

Today, as we celebrate our nation's Labor Day, let us also remember the kind of freedom Jesus taught us to live out: a freedom that serves others, honors every person's worth, and resists any form of injustice or indifference. This is not about politics. It's about discipleship. It's about being the kind of people and building the type of society that reflects the heart of God.

God bless you all,

Pastor Syl

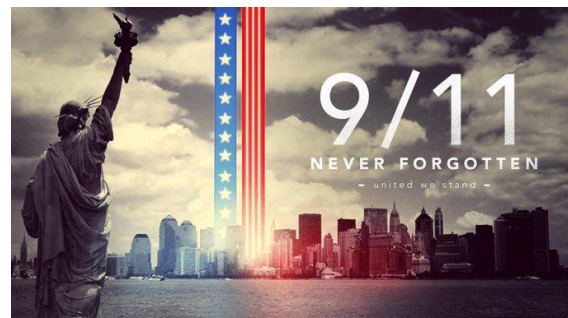
Test Your Knowledge About Brazil



1. Brazil is the fifth-largest country in the world. True or False?
2. The official language of Brazil is Spanish. True or False?
3. The capital of Brazil is “Brasilia”? True or False?
4. The world's largest tropical rainforest is located within Brazil. True or False?
5. Brazil shares its borders with France. True or False?
6. Brazil is named after a tree. True or False?
7. Brazil is a nation of soccer lovers. True or False?
8. Brazilians are very diverse, and it is the home of the largest Japanese diaspora. True or False?
9. Cars in Brazil run on a fuel made from the sugarcane plant. True or False?
10. Brazil was a US ally during the Second World War. True or False?

See the answers at the bottom of this newsletter

September in the U.S.





Special Music with Special Talents.

FPCPC was blessed with some special Soloists and Musicians this past month. On August 10, Desarae Omar sang during our Special Music and Offertory. On August 17, our FPCPC Bell Choir played our Special Music. On August 24, it was Ann Miceli's turn to show her talents. Finally, on August 31, violinist Lauralee Duncan played beautifully during our service.



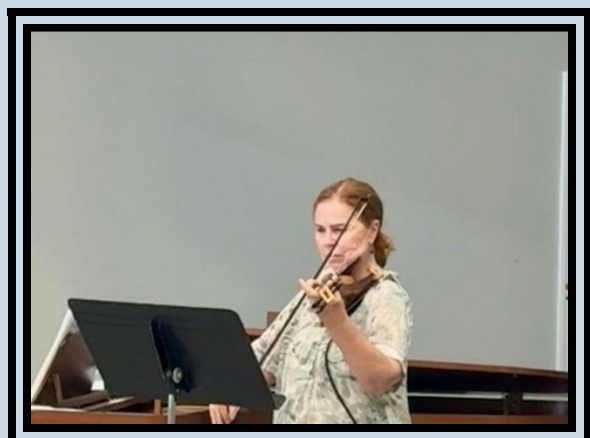
Desarae Omar



Ann Miceli



FPCPC Bell Choir



Lauralee Duncan

Our liturgist, Ruling Elder Sandy Asaro, and our Office Administrator, Pam Omar, stood proudly with Pam's daughter, Desarae Omar, after Desarae performed our Special Music at the Offertory.



**American
Red Cross**



During **August**, our **Blessing Tree** collected hurricane supplies for the **American Red Cross**. We also received monetary donations in the amount of \$535. Thank you to all who donated. We will be collecting Pet Supplies for the Animal Welfare League of Charlotte County. Please refer to the details later in the newsletter.

Duck hatching has begun!



Our Muscovy duck Mama has one baby duckling! We are waiting patiently for more babies to hatch. Mama and baby are doing well.

August Birthdays and Anniversaries



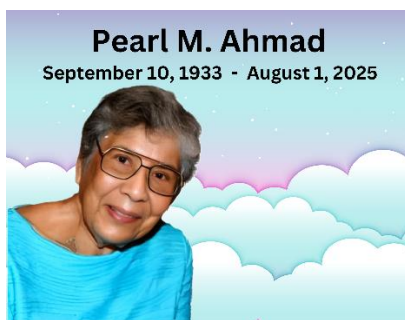
These are some of the awesome ladies who celebrated their birthdays last month. Like cheese and fine wine, they are only getting better with time!

And this is the wonderful couple who celebrated their anniversary. Happy Anniversary Courtney and Hazel.



And these are the wonderful volunteers who served the cake and ice cream at our celebration. Although Pr. Syl said he is not happy that none of them saved a piece of Norma's cake for him.

We Will Miss Them Dearly



Pearl Ahmad and Donna Livengood left us last month. They were First Pres superstars at one point and blessed the lives of many here. Please pray for their families for comfort and strength.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Are You Ready to Laugh?

Professional comedian, magician, and entertainer, **Blake Krabseth**, at the First Presbyterian Church in Port Charlotte.



The event will be on September 21 at 3 pm. Tickets cost \$10 for adults and are free for children 12 and under. Come ready to laugh hard and bring your grandchildren, neighbors and friends with you. You can't miss it!

September Blessing Tree

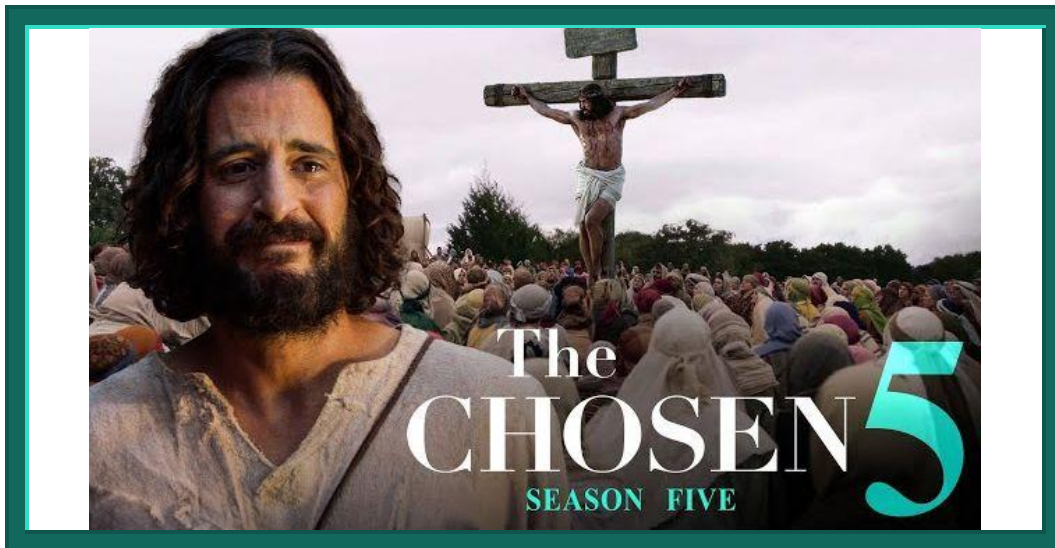


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Please help us collect pet supplies this month to help our local Animal Welfare League. Items include: Pet food, towels, blankets, pet treats, pet toys, etc.



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 lives if we just pray.



Join us every **Tuesday** for **Season 5** of **The Chosen** beginning **September 9, 2025**, at **6 PM**. We will enjoy popcorn and drinks.



Notes from the Music Director

A sincere thank you to all those who performed special music during the summer recess of our chancel choir: Vocalists, Nicole Christian, Desarae Omar, Ann Miceli, Violinist, Lauree Duncan, and our Bell Choir. Their musical selections surely enhanced our worship services.

I am also delighted and thankful that Heather Degroot has been playing the beautiful organ that was donated to our church this past year. We are so fortunate to have Heather share her musical talents with us, both as a singer in our chancel choir and as an outstanding organist. Before attending FPCPC, she had been a music director in many churches.

On Sunday, September 21, 2025, at 3 p.m., instead of a musical concert, we will have a performance by Blake Krabseth, a Magician and Comedian. Blake is sure to bring some joy and laughter to everyone! Tickets for this event are now available. It costs is \$10 for adults and free admission for children aged 12 and under. We encourage you to invite family and friends. We look forward to a fun time, and any profits made from this event will go to our church.

There are more concerts scheduled for the end of 2025 and the beginning of 2026. My thanks to our music committee, who assist with selecting concerts and help with publicity, flyers, tickets, and other tasks needed to provide these events. The members of this committee are Weldon and Heather Degroot, Ann Miceli, Sue McConochie, and Claudette McLennon.

In closing, may we all remember the words of Psalm 100: V1
"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before His presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord He is."

Sue Brembs, Music Director

Pickleball with Pr. Syl



Come and join pastor Syl and some of his pickleball friends for a game. He plays every Friday, from 4 to 6 pm, at the Centennial Park Recreation Center (1185 Centennial Blvd). The fee to access the courts is \$2, and it is open to anyone.

PEP (People Enjoying People)



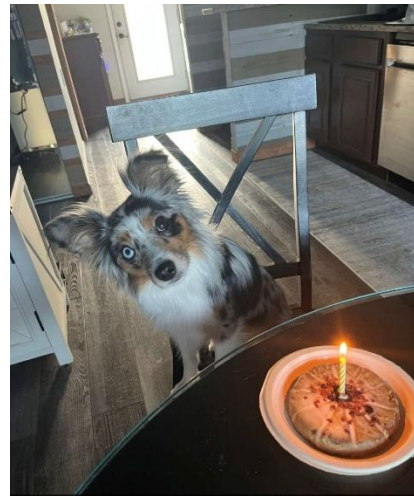
Join us for a BBQ lunch at Mission BBQ on Thursday, September 25, 2025, at 12:30 pm. The restaurant is located at 1340 Tamiami Trail in Port Charlotte. Mission BBQ is not only known for its great food but also for the support of our heroes, including military, police officers, firefighters, etc. Come, support, and enjoy great food.

RSVP with Carol Dunkak-DuneKirchen at 941-204-0758.

PET OF THE MONTH



Our **September Pet of the Month** belongs to Desarae Omar, who was our guest singer on Sunday, August 10th. Her dog's name is Bo Jackson and he just celebrated his 1st birthday with a special cake she made for him.

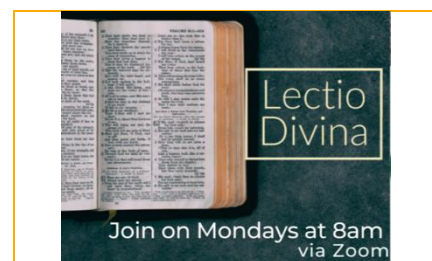


Do you want to see your pet here? Send Pam a picture of your pet to pastorsecretary@fpcpc.com, and your little friend could be one of our Pets of the Month.

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

Stay prepared this Hurricane Season



HURRICANE CHECKLIST

SUPPLY KIT LIST



Water

- ☐ One gallon of drinking water per person per day for at least three to seven days
- ☐ One gallon of water for each person per day for cooking and personal hygiene
- ☐ Don't forget water for your pets

Ice

- ☐ Freeze water in zip-type freezer bags and two-liter soda jugs
- ☐ Fill coolers with ice. Ice can be used to preserve food once the power goes out

Food

- ☐ Non-perishable packaged or canned food to last at least three to seven days
- ☐ Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables
- ☐ Canned or boxed juice
- ☐ Canned or boxed milk
- ☐ Cereal
- ☐ Soup
- ☐ Peanut butter and jelly, granola bars, trail mix
- ☐ Instant coffee or tea
- ☐ Dried fruits and nuts
- ☐ Bread, crackers and cookies
- ☐ Raw vegetables
- ☐ Fresh fruit
- ☐ Special food for babies and the elderly

For The Home

- ☐ Download the Max Mayfield Hurricane Tracker App
- ☐ Cooler for ice and food storage
- ☐ Flashlights with extra batteries or hand-crank flashlights
- ☐ Battery or solar powered lanterns
- ☐ Battery powered NOAA Weather radio with extra batteries or hand-crank radio
- ☐ Car charger for mobile phone
- ☐ Battery operated digital TV with car charger adaptor
- ☐ Grill with extra propane, charcoal, or sterno (Outdoor Use Only)
- ☐ Matches in waterproof container or butane starter for grill
- ☐ Paper plates/bowls/cups, plastic eating utensils, napkins, paper towels, moist towelettes
- ☐ Manual can opener and bottle opener
- ☐ Cleaning supplies
- ☐ Non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach or water purification tablets
- ☐ Work gloves
- ☐ Duct tape
- ☐ Heavy-duty outdoor extension cords
- ☐ Waterproof tarps
- ☐ Plastic sheeting
- ☐ Rope

- ☐ Basic tool kit
- ☐ Corded phone
- ☐ Smoke detectors
- ☐ Carbon-monoxide detectors
- ☐ Two-way radio if power, terrestrial telephone and cell towers fail
- ☐ Fire extinguisher
- ☐ Waterproof container or re-sealable plastic bag to store important papers like insurance, medical, bank, or Social Security documents/numbers
- ☐ Cash (without power, credit cards are unusable)

Health Essentials

- ☐ First Aid Kit
- ☐ Two weeks supply of prescription drugs
- ☐ Two weeks supply of vitamins
- ☐ Over the counter pain reliever
- ☐ Antibacterial hand soap
- ☐ Toilet paper
- ☐ Plastic garbage bags
- ☐ Mosquito repellant
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Toiletries/Hygiene items
- ☐ Face Masks
- ☐ Hand Sanitizer

For Your Pet

- ☐ Documentation, license
- ☐ Non-perishable food
- ☐ Medications
- ☐ Water







Monday, Sept. 1

- Labor Day Holiday (Office will be Closed).



Tuesday, Sept. 2

- Food Pantry - from 8 to 11 AM.

Wednesday, Sept. 3

**DEACONS
MEETING**

- Prayer Group Meeting - noon.
- Deacon's Meeting - 1:30 PM.
- Bells Rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir Rehearsal - 6:30 PM.

Sunday, Sept. 7

- 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.

Monday, Sept. 8



- *Lectio-Divina* with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom - 8 AM.
- Finance meeting - 11 AM.

Tuesday, Sept. 9

- The Chosen S5 - 6:00 PM



Wednesday, Sept. 10



- **Prayer Group Meeting - noon.**
- Food Pantry - from 4 to 6:30 PM
- Bell Rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir Rehearsal - 6:30 PM.

Thursday, Sept. 11



- **9/11 Never Forget**

Sunday, Sept. 14

- 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.

Monday, Sept. 15

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

Tuesday, Sept. 16

- Food Pantry - from 8 to 11 AM.
- **The Chosen S5 - 6:00 PM**



Wednesday, Sept. 17



- **Prayer Group Meeting - noon.**
- Session Meeting - 5 PM.
- Bells Rehearsal - 6 PM.
- Choir Rehearsal - 6:30 PM.



Sunday, Sept. 21



Blake Krabseth
Comedian Magician

- 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.
- **Magician & Comedian, Blake Krabseth- 3 PM.**

Monday, Sept. 22

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

Tuesday, Sept. 23

- **The Chosen S5 - 6:00 PM**



Wednesday, Sept. 24



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

Thursday, Sept. 25

- **PEP Luncheon - 12:30 PM.**



Sunday, Sept. 28



- 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.
- **Celebration of September Birthdays & Anniversaries.**

MEMBER ON FOCUS

Have you met?



Cathy Asaro

Cathy Asaro was born on Long Island, New York, but grew up in Glen Head, NY. Being the only child, Cathy had the privilege of traveling extensively with her parents. One time, when she was 12, they drove through the Northern States all the way to San Francisco. From SF, they flew to Hawaii and back. Then, on their return trip, they drove through the Southern States back to New York, allowing Cathy to experience the many wonders and beauties of the United States.

During her teenage years, Cathy's father developed a deep affection for Hawaii, and they began attending Hawaiian shows on the island, making it a family tradition. Inspired by these performances, Cathy wanted to learn the Samoan knife dance, which she did. As a result, she was able to perform alongside some of the knife dancers.

After graduating from high school, Cathy moved to Fort Lauderdale to attend Miami Dade Junior College. She began working at Howard Johnson's restaurant on Fort Lauderdale beach, where she met her soon-to-be husband, Robert. He later became the supervisor of

Howard Johnson's Miami division. Cathy and Robert got married in 1974 and relocated to Hollywood, FL.

When Cathy was eight months pregnant with their daughter Sandy, Robert was transferred to New York, and Cathy stayed with her parents in Fort Lauderdale. Sandy was born in January, and Cathy, along with Sandy, joined Robert in New York in February. Their second child, Frankie, was born in 1979.

In December 1980, Robert was transferred to Florida, and they built a house in Port Charlotte. Cathy and Robert separated in 1984. Cathy returned to work for Howard Johnson's in Punta Gorda while also taking a job with the tax collector in 1987. She found this role rewarding, especially in the delinquent tax department, where she helped distressed customers understand their options. Many left her office relieved and smiling, which brought her great comfort. She said, "Most people think what a terrible job it would be to work for the tax collector! But it was the most rewarding job I ever held."

Cathy was blessed with her third child, Tanner, in 1988, who now resides in Boca Raton. Cathy's parents eventually moved to Port Charlotte, and since Cathy grew up Presbyterian and her kids attended "Small World" (our church's old pre-k school), her family began attending First Pres. She has been attending ever since. Cathy retired in November of 2018 and felt blessed to be able to spend the last remaining months of her mom's life with her, before she passed in February 2019. Cathy has a 10-year-old grandson, Conner, born in Ft Myers, and is blessed with a loving family.

Cathy has done many things here at First Pres. She took over taking pictures of church functions, etc. She then worked closely with "The Trends" (news brochure) along with Susan Knowles. During the ministry of Rev. Terri Jo, Cathy began making slides for presentations for the church and has continued to make slides to this day. She is behind the scenes, making sure the slides for the service are up and ready on Sunday mornings.

Cathy became a Ruling Elder a few years ago and is currently serving on Session. Cathy loves First Presbyterian Church. She says she feels like part of the family and never feels like a number. She is thankful for the family and friends she has made and always feels welcome here.



Birthdays

September 6 - John Danylak
September 9 - Eric Bittinger
September 11 - Donna Young
September 16 - Gail Gamble
September 17 - Ernest Rose

Anniversaries

September 5 - Bernadine & Tom Allesee
September 29 - Joan & Chris Barry

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 **September 3, 2025**.
- **Prayer Group** meets on **Wednesdays at noon**.
- **The Finance Committee** meets on the second Monday of each month at **11 AM**. The next meeting is scheduled for **September 8, 2025**.
- **The Worship Arts Committee** meets on the second Wednesday of the month at **11 AM**. The next meeting is to be announced.
- A Rally meeting is scheduled for **August 13, 2025**.
- **The Session** meets on the third Wednesday of each month, at **5 PM**. The next meeting is scheduled for September 17, 2025.
- **Adult Sunday School** meets every Sunday at **8 AM**, including via Zoom.
- **Children's Sunday School** meets every Sunday during worship and after the Children's Blessing.

- The PEP (People Enjoying People) will meet at Mission BBQ on Thursday, September 25, 2025, at 12:30 PM.
- The Bell Choir will meet on Wednesdays at 6:00 PM.
- Choir will meet on Wednesdays at 6:30.
- **Chosen 5 will begin meeting every Tuesday, beginning September 9, 2025, at 6:00 PM.**
- The Prayer & Praise Service may resume in November.



Did you know you can add First Pres to 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 some 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
Eric & Ray Bittinger - health needs
Hazel & Jerry Brown - health needs
Carolyn & Charlie Brox - health needs
Heather DeGroot & family - strength & comfort
Barbara Edwards - health needs
Jean Heim - health needs
Marjorie Hill - health needs
Carolanne Hoehle - health needs
Senior Lee - health needs
Dottie Leege - health needs
Sue Littrell - health needs
Violet Logan/Green - strength & comfort
Loren Livengood - health needs
Richard Lund - health needs
Courtenay Mason - health needs
Brad Messick - health needs
Louis Miceli & Amy Rupert - health needs
George Mothershed - health needs
Julie Nunez - health needs
Valciana Officer - health needs
Ray Omar - health needs
Holly Parkin - health needs
Mavis Powell - health, strength & comfort
Samantha & Derrick Reams Family - strength & comfort
Olin Scott - housing needs
Danny Webb - strength needs
Donna Young - health 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.



Test Your Knowledge Quiz Answers

1. True. After Russia (1st), Canada (2nd), China (3rd), and the US (4th), Brazil is indeed the world's 5th largest country.
2. False. Unlike its Spanish-speaking neighbors, Brazil's official language is Portuguese.
3. True. Despite being more Brazil's most famous cities, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo are NOT the capital of Brazil. Brasilia is.
4. True. 60% of the Amazon rainforest is located in Brazil.
5. True. Brazil shares a border with French Guiana, which is not a country in itself, but a department (similar to a state or province) of France.
6. True. Brazil's name is derived from the brazilwood tree (Pau-Brasil), a valuable source of red dye that was historically abundant in the region.
7. True. Brazil's men's national football team has the most FIFA World Cup trophies, winning it 5 times.
8. True. The largest Japanese population outside of Japan is in Brazil.
9. True. Although gasoline and diesel are also used, Brazilian cars can run on only Ethanol.
10. True. The Brazilian Expeditionary Force was the only South American ground force to fight in Europe, participating in the Italian Campaign.

How many did you get right?

If you got all 10, you could be the next US ambassador to Brazil.



The First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte is part of the Presbyterian Church USA, under the care of the Peace River Presbytery.