

First Presbyterian Church

PORT CHARLOTTE, FL

2230 HARIET ST
PORT CHARLOTTE, FL 33952
941-625-5925
WWW.FPCPC.COM



January/2026 E-GRAM



From the
Pastor's Desk

Happy New Year, **Everyone,**

I've been thinking about the Book of Exodus lately, God's people standing there at the edge of the Red Sea, exhausted from slavery, terrified of what lay ahead, with Pharaoh's army closing in behind them. They had nowhere to go. Nothing but God's promise that He was with them. And we know what happened. In that impossible moment, God made a way. I come back to that story because it reminds me that God's faithfulness has never depended on how strong we are, how big we are, or how confident we feel. It depends on God alone. On God's steadfast love that goes before us.

Friends, I have real hope for us as we step into 2026. I know we're small. I know we don't always feel powerful or impressive by the world's standards. But we are known by God. We're held together by grace. We're bound to one another in Christ. Furthermore, these past 3 years we have been together, I've watched us show up for each other in prayer, in care, in worship, in doing things around the church and the food pantry, in just plain perseverance. Those aren't small things. They're signs that the Spirit is alive and moving among us.

Hope for the coming year does not mean pretending that challenges will disappear. After escaping Egypt, the Hebrews faced many challenges. It only means trusting that God will meet us within them. It means believing that faithfulness matters more than numbers, and that love practiced consistently can transform hearts, including our own. God has always done holy work through small communities willing to listen, serve, and remain rooted in hope.

So, I step into this new year confident not in what we can accomplish alone, but in what God can do among us and through us. May 2026 be a year when we walk forward together — sometimes unsure, but always trusting — knowing that the same God who opened the sea continues to lead us, sustain us, and call us onward in hope.

God bless us all in 2026!

Pastor Syl



What's Happening *at First Pres*

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS OF OPERATION FOR 2026

Mondays – 9 AM to 2 PM

Tuesday – 9 AM to 2 PM

Wednesday – Office Closed

Thursday – 9 AM to 2 PM

Friday – Office Closed

Thursday, Jan. 1

- **New Year's Day**
- **Office Closed**

Sunday, Jan. 4

- 7:45 AM – Continental Breakfast.
- 8:00 AM – Adult Sunday School (On Zoom at 8:05 AM).
- 9:00 AM – **Sunday Communion Service.**
- ~9:20 AM – Children's Sunday School (after Children's Blessing).

Monday, Jan. 5

- 8:00 AM – *Lectio-Divina* with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom.

Tuesday, Jan. 6

- 8:00 – 11:00 AM – Food Pantry.

Wednesday, Jan. 7

- 12:00 PM – Prayer Group Meeting.
- 1:30 PM – **Board of Deacons Meeting.**
- 6:00 PM – Bell Rehearsal.
- 6:30 PM – Choir Rehearsal.

Sunday, Jan. 11

- 7:45 AM – Continental Breakfast.
- 8:00 AM – Adult Sunday School (On Zoom at 8:05 AM).
- 9:00 AM – **Sunday Service.**
- 9:20 AM – Children's Sunday School (after Children's Blessing).

Monday, Jan. 12

- 8:00 AM – *Lectio-Divina* with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom.

Tuesday, Jan. 13

- 5:00 PM – **House of David Series (Season 1 – Episode 1).**

Wednesday, Jan. 14

- 11:00 AM – Worship Arts Meeting.
- 11:30 AM – “Women of Faith” luncheon at Cheddar’s – Ladies of FPC are all invited.
- 12:00 PM – Prayer Group Meeting.
- 4:00 – 6:30 PM – Food Pantry.
- 6:00 PM – Bell Rehearsal.
- 6:30 PM – Choir Rehearsal.

Thursday, Jan. 15

- 4:00 PM – Finance Meeting.
- 5:00 PM – Session Meeting.
- 7:00 PM – Praise & Prayer Midweek Service.

Sunday, Jan. 18

- 7:45 AM – Continental Breakfast.
- 8:00 AM – Adult Sunday School (On Zoom at 8:05 AM).
- 9:00 AM – Sunday Service.
- 9:20 AM – Children’s Sunday School (after Children’s Blessing).

Monday, Jan. 19

- 8:00 AM – *Lectio-Divina* with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom.

Tuesday, Jan. 20

- 8:00 – 11:00 AM – Food Pantry.
- 5:00 PM – House of David Series (Season 1 – Episode 2).

Wednesday, Jan. 21

- 12:00 PM – Prayer Group Meeting.
- 6:00 PM – Bell Rehearsal.
- 6:30 PM – Choir Rehearsal.

Thursday, Jan. 22

- 12:30 PM – PEP Group meets for lunch at Donato’s.
- 7:00 PM – Praise & Prayer Midweek Service.

Sunday, Jan. 25

- 7:45 AM – Continental Breakfast.
- 8:00 AM – Adult Sunday School (On Zoom at 8:05 AM).
- 9:00 AM – Sunday Service.
- 9:20 AM – Children's Sunday School – (after Children's Blessing).
- ~10:05 AM – Celebration of January's Birthdays & Anniversaries.

Monday, Jan. 26

- 8:00 AM – *Lectio-Divina* with Wintergarden Pres on Zoom.

Tuesday, Jan. 27

- 5:00 PM – House of David Series (Season 1 – Episode 3).

Wednesday, Jan. 28

- 12:00 PM – Prayer Group Meeting.
- 6:00 PM – Bell Rehearsal.
- 6:30 PM – Choir Rehearsal.

Thursday, Jan. 29

- 7:00 PM – Praise & Prayer Midweek Service.



Last Month's

Recap

Decorating the Sanctuary



Thank you to all who participated in making our Sanctuary beautiful for Christmas and possibly the most beautiful in our area. This is a beautiful church with very beautiful people in it.

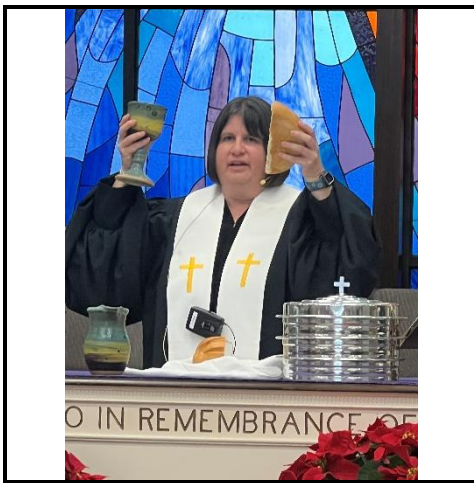
Poinsettias & Stained-Glass Gifts





Our sanctuary was transformed this season by the vibrant Poinsettias given in honor, memory, and dedication to loved ones. We are deeply grateful to everyone who purchased a plant or made a donation in exchange for a Stained-Glass gift. A special note of thanks goes to Weldon Degroot and his students, whose hard work and dedication made these beautiful stained-glass gifts possible.

Sandy Celebrates The Lord's Supper



We rejoice in another beautiful milestone for Ruling Elder Sandy Asaro, who recently led her first Lord's Supper service following her commissioning by the Peace River Presbytery. It is a joy to witness Sandy as she follows God's call deeper into ministry, and we look forward to seeing how the Spirit continues to move through her leadership.

FPCPC & FLCRW Joint Christmas Cantata



Our joint Christmas Cantata, “Sing A Song of Christmas,” was a resounding success! A combined choir of 19 voices from First Presbyterian Port Charlotte and Faith Lutheran Rotonda West came together for two beautiful performances on December 7th and 14th. We extend a heartfelt thank you to our talented singers and to everyone who attended to show their support.

Sing a Song of Christmas was composed by Joseph M. Martin and Michael Barrett. The cantata was directed by First Pres’ Music Director, Mrs. Sue Brembs, with the support of Mrs. Candace Montesi (Faith’s organist), Mrs. Heather DeGroot (piano), and Mrs. Lauralee Duncan (violin). Special thanks to Mrs. Nicole Christian (soloist) and Mr. John Schleede (narrator), and all the beautiful voices of the choirs of FPCPC and FLCRW.



Following a truly wonderful performance, John Schleede of Faith Lutheran presents Sue Brembs with flowers as a token of appreciation.



In talking about a wonderful performance, Heather Degroot was superb on the piano during both presentations.

Christmas Staff Luncheon and Luncheon with the staff of The Rock Calvary Chapel



Following our cherished annual tradition, Pastor Syl and Elders Elaine Woods and Nancy Sharpless recently gathered with Sue, Pam, and Jeanne for a festive Christmas Luncheon and gift exchange. While the food was delicious, the highlight of the afternoon was undoubtedly the fellowship.

During the meal, Pastor Syl shared his deep gratitude for our dedicated team, noting that their hard work is the backbone of our church's daily operations. He truly believes our ministry wouldn't be the same without them, and we are so blessed to have such a committed staff serving our congregation.



Then, and also continuing a wonderful tradition that began when they moved in next door, we recently invited the staff of The Rock Calvary Chapel (RCC) to join us for lunch. It is always a joy to spend time with Pastor Aaron and his team. They truly treat our church as an extension of their own ministry, consistently offering a helping hand whenever needed. We feel deeply blessed to have them as our neighbors and partners in faith.

Advent Candles Lighting



Richard Lund and his daughter Wendy lit the Candle of Hope. Our prayer is for our hope in Christ.



The Candle of Peace was lit by Heather and Weldon DeGroot. Our prayer is for peace on earth.



Jim Taylor, representing Faith Lutheran Church, lit the Candle of Joy. Our prayer is for joy in ministry among Christians.



The sisters Normal Campbell and Alzie Lee lit the candle of Love. Our prayer is for love among families.



Finally, Hazel and Courtney Mason lit the Christ Candle, representing our Lord Jesus, the Light to this world, who came to bring hope, peace, love and joy to the earth.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service was truly a beautiful experience. The sanctuary looked stunning, the music was moving, and there was a wonderful sense of peace and community that prevailed throughout the evening. We are so grateful to everyone who joined us for such a spirit-filled service.



December Birthdays and Anniversaries



These are 3 of our birthday people for December. Pastor Syl and elders Nancy Sharpless and Cathy Asaro celebrated their birthdays. The ages are top secret, but the joy of celebrating another birthday is visible.



Forever in

Our Hearts

Louis Miceli

Jun. 30, 1953 - Dec. 6, 2025



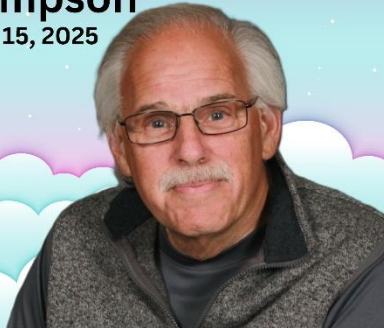
Nancy Newport

Aug. 1, 1942 - Dec. 9, 2025



Mark W. Thompson

July 3, 1952 - Dec. 15, 2025



Dorothy Ann Shibley Leege

August 18, 1934 - Dec. 23, 2025



We hold in our hearts and prayers those in our congregation who are navigating the journey of grief. We continue to pray for **Amy Rupert** and **Susan Thompson** following the loss of their lifelong partners. We also lift up **Paul Heins**, **Anne Boubant**, and their families as they mourn the passing of their mother, and we keep the family of **Dottie Leege** in our prayers. May God's peace and comfort surround each of you during this time.



Upcoming Events



A note from FPCPC Music Director

The new year is upon us and we have two excellent concerts scheduled as fundraisers for our church.

The first concert will take place on **Sunday, February 8, at 3 PM**. It will be performed by **Final Harvest**, a group of 3 women singers who proclaim the good news of our Savior, Jesus Christ, through their singing a variety of styles and unique harmonies. Final Harvest has been acknowledged as missionaries to the U.S., as they tour throughout our country, spreading the gospel through their music.

The second concert is scheduled for **Sunday, March 22, at 3 PM**. This concert will be performed by **Jack Dauner**, a Swiss-American concert pianist and composer who is currently studying in Austria. His program will feature a mix of Broadway classics by George Gershwin as well as Classical composers such as Ravel and Mussorgsky, with pictures and narration.

Tickets for these concerts are now available after our church service or by contacting **Sue Brembs at 941-241-6480**.

The price is \$15 per concert; however, if you decide to purchase a ticket for both concerts, the total price will be \$25.

Sue Brembs, Music Director



With a wide range of music styles, including southern gospel, contemporary, and original classical inspirational, Final Harvest seriously pursues communicating the gospel of Jesus through music.



Jack Dauner is a classical pianist, composer, and vocal accompanist. He often incorporates inspirations from nature and wildlife, which he enjoys capturing through the medium of photography, into his musical work.

January Blessing Tree



A powerful way
to bless someone

This month, we invite you to help us replenish our Benevolence Fund, which provides vital support to community members facing unexpected hardships, such as utility bills or sudden financial crises.

How can you help?

1. Take a Tag: Visit the Blessing Tree and select a tag with a suggested donation amount.
2. Make a Donation: Place your cash or check in a Blessing Tree envelope and drop it in the designated box.

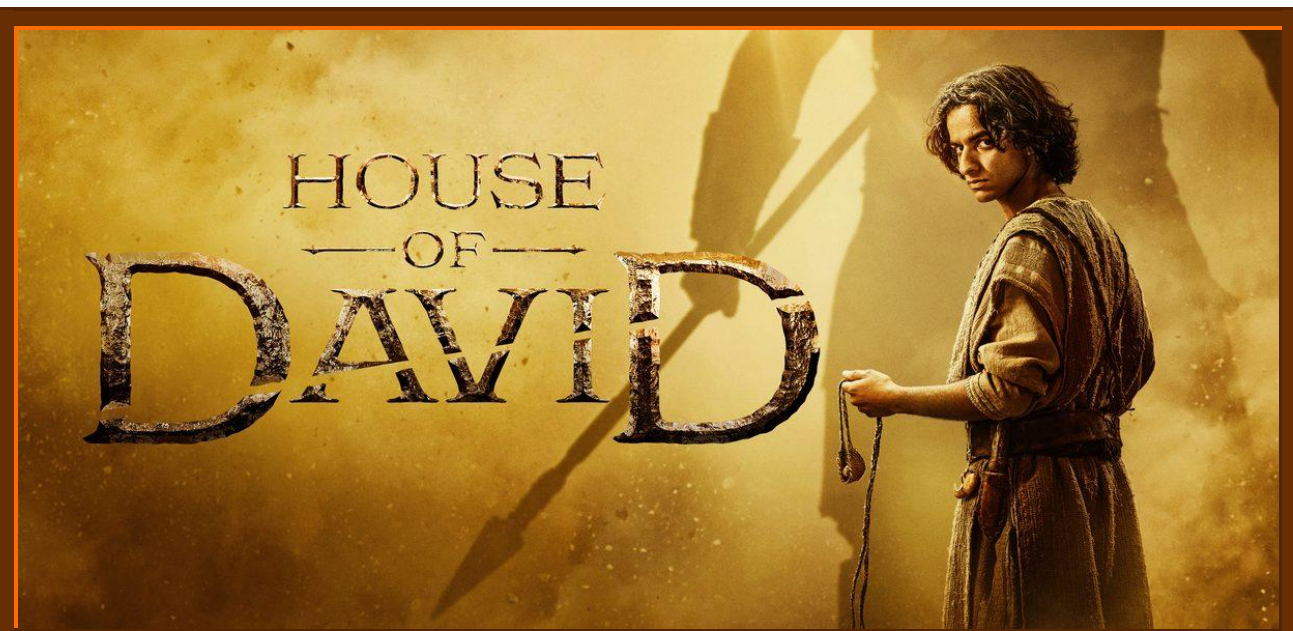
Your generosity ensures that when our neighbors face difficult times, we are able to offer them a helping hand and a sign of hope.

Start Your Year With Prayers



Every **Wednesday** at **12 noon**, beginning on **January 7**, our Prayer group will meet at First Pres' gathering room. All are encouraged to participate and welcome. There is power in prayer, and we know we can make a real difference in people's lives if we just pray.

Movie Nights



Every **Tuesday**, starting on **January 13, 2026**, we will meet to watch the new series **House of David – Season 1**. We will enjoy popcorn and drinks, and great fellowship.

PEP (People Enjoying People)

There will be **two opportunities** for **People to Enjoy People** this month of January. First, the ladies of **Faith Lutheran Church** will be meeting for lunch at Cheddar's (18600 Veterans Blvd) on **Wednesday, January 14**, at **11:30 AM**. They are inviting all the ladies of First Pres to join them. Please call Kathie Wiley at 941-662-5383 by January 11 to confirm it.

After that, we will meet again for lunch on **Thursday, January 22, 2026**. This time at Donato's (1900 S Tamiami Trl.) at **12:30 PM**. Please RSVP with Carol Dunkak-Dunekirchen.



Renew Your Spirit: Prayer & Praise is Back!



We are thrilled to announce the return of our Thursday evening Prayer and Praise Worship service, beginning **January 15, 2026**, at **7 PM**.

In the busyness of the New Year, it can be hard to find a moment of true peace. This service is designed to be your mid-week sanctuary. A sacred hour dedicated entirely to prayer and adoration.

Whether you are carrying a heavy burden, seeking guidance, or simply want to rest in God's presence, this is the place for you. This will be a quiet,

spirit-filled church service focused on worshiping through song and heartfelt prayer.

Come as you are, and let's lift our voices and hearts together. We invite you to make this a part of your weekly rhythm as we journey toward Maundy Thursday. We can't wait to see how the Spirit moves among us!

Healing Hearts: A Conversation About Grief



Mr. Christopher Parent from Empath Health will come again to our church to talk about grief and losing dear ones. The event is scheduled for **Saturday, January 31**, at **10:30 AM**. You cannot miss this event.

If you are grieving or know anyone who is, or just want to have an honest conversation about that, join us here at church. If you are not grieving but have a heart, join us as well.



Birthdays & *Anniversaries*

January 02 – Claudemir Sattler

January 03 – Barbara Danylak

January 14 – Amy Rupert

January 15 – Sandy Asaro

January 21 – Barbara Edwards

January 22 – Deb Phelps

January 26 – Hazel Brown

January 31 – Veronica Betts

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



FPCPC *Online*

On Zoom



Sundays at 8:05 AM.

To connect, go to
www.zoom.us

Click "Join" in the right-hand
upper corner

Meeting ID: 9678044713
Passcode: X9b77j



Mondays at 8:00 AM

To connect, go to
www.zoom.us

Click "Join" in the upper-right-
hand corner

Meeting ID: 87832080869
Passcode: 396015



We are *Praying for...*

Bernadine Allesee family – strength & comfort

Eric & Ray Bittinger – health needs

Hazel & Jerry Brown – health needs

Carolyn & Charlie Brox – health needs

Barbara Edwards – health needs

Jean Heim – health needs

Marjorie Hill – health needs

Carolanne Hoehle – health needs

Senior Lee – 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
Paul Heins & Ann Boubant – strength & comfort
Amy Rupert – strength & comfort
George Mothershed – health needs
Julie Nunez – health needs
Valciana Officer – health needs
Ray Omar – health needs
Holly Parkin – health needs
Deb Phelps' family – strength & comfort
Mavis Powell – health, strength & comfort
Sue Thompson – strength & comfort
Bernardo Vieira – health needs
Danny Webb – strength needs
Debbie Webb – 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.



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