



MAY 2024

Worship Service in our Sanctuary at 10:30am
or watch our worship service LIVE! at:
www.fpcpunta.org and click on the logo "YouTube"

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Punta Gorda, FL 33950
941-639-1959
first@fpcpunta.org
www.fpcpunta.org



Happy Mother's Day



May is the month that we celebrate mothers, and I know that this can be a day of great blessing, but for others a day of pain for various reasons. I'm not sure of where you are today, but for all of us it is important to remember that we are God's children, and He loves and cares for us. I found this devotion entitled - *The One Voice I'm Learning To Listen to as a Mom* by Ruth Schwenk – and I believe it has some great truths for moms and dads. Ruth Schwenk writes:

"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." Romans 8:16 (NIV)

Long gone are the diapers and sippy cups. No more onesies. Or high chairs. And as my children have outgrown one season and grown into another, becoming teens and young adults, I've been experiencing some "proud mom" moments — coupled with sighs of relief — as I see the fruit of my labor as a mom becoming a reality.

No, this relief isn't because my children are perfect or because I feel like I have "made it." The relief is that through 20 years of being a mom, I am learning who to listen to.

We all have those voices in our lives, often speaking with sincerity, that try to help us by telling us what we should or shouldn't do or be. Those voices can seem especially loud for us moms. Maybe it is even our own voice speaking words of insecurity, shame or inadequacy. Whatever voices seem the loudest, this new season of mine is marked not by becoming deaf to those voices but instead by becoming far more discerning. I still want to listen and learn. But when it comes to who I listen to and am shaped by, I'm more selective.

It's no surprise that as we turn to the pages of the Bible, we are often told to listen to voices of wisdom and truth. A good example is Romans 8:16: "The [Holy] Spirit himself," Paul writes, "testifies with our spirit that we are God's children." One of the primary jobs of the Holy Spirit is to speak to us. He reminds us who we are. His job is to testify to what is true. So the voice I am learning to listen to the most is God's voice.

Yes, we listen to the voices of others to learn and grow, but ultimately God's voice guides us and grounds us in this journey. Here are three reasons we listen to God's voice above all the rest:

1. God's voice reminds us that we are loved.

What really grounds us is not seeing the fruit of our labor, getting thanked for it, or feeling respected and fulfilled because of it. What steadies our souls is that our Father deeply loves us, and we are in Christ through faith. We are God's children, fully accepted and cherished, not because of our works as moms but because of the work of Christ.

2. God's voice leads us without driving us.

People's voices try to drive us as moms, telling us what we should be and do. Too often, we get caught up in the chorus and become driven by fear, pride or insecurity. In contrast, the voice of God is one that "will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13a, NIV, emphasis added). He reminds us that motherhood is not a race or a competition. Just as He is leading us, He is leading our children. We don't have to be anxious, fearful or envious.

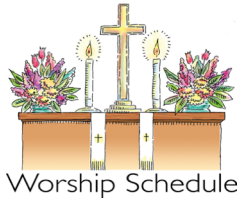
3. God's voice makes us more like Jesus.

Many times, the voices around us tell us what we're not. God's good and gracious voice reminds us of the hope of who we are becoming. Motherhood is not about perfection; motherhood is about God making us more like our perfect Savior, Jesus, every day. This process of being perfected is a lifelong journey of the Holy Spirit's work inside us that will one day be complete when Christ returns. We are to tune our ears to Him — the Author and Perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-2). He alone can truly help us when we are weak, and He humbles us when we rely too much on our own strength.

So today when you hear all those outside voices, or maybe even the ones inside, stop and listen. But listen first to the voice of love and truth — the voice that matters the most. The voice of a good and perfect Father who saves all who trust in His Son, Jesus. The voice of the One who calls you His own.

In Christ, Pastor Barksdale

WORSHIP MINISTRY



Sunday Mornings - 10:30am Worship Service (Also Online)
Sunday Evenings - 6:00pm Prayer Meeting (On Facebook)



Fellowship Time

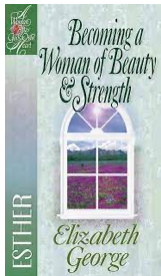
Join us for beverages, cookies and treats after Sunday's Worship Service



Sermon on the SAND

Every Sunday at 8:00am - 8:30am
at Fishermen's Village
Pastor Barksdale will deliver the Message
on May 12th

DISCIPLESHIP 2024



WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

We are studying the Bible book of "Esther"

We meet the first and third Tuesdays each month at 10:00am in Fellowship Hall

Tuesdays, May 7th and 21st

"Taking the High Road" - Esther 5:9-14 and "Spending a Sleepless Night" - Esther 6:1-9

Call Kathy Belville at 508-733-0546 for more information - All are welcome!



DONUTS & DOCTRINE Bible Study

Psalms - Prayers of the Heart

Wednesdays at 10:00am - Through May 29th

Join us on Wednesday mornings in May as we look at The Book of Psalms. This Bible book contains the collected prayers and songs of the Jewish people written from the time of Moses to the return from their exile in Babylon.

These songs and prayers reflect universal human experiences, they teach us how to pray by their example, and they ultimately point us to the answer to those prayers in Jesus Christ.



Church Membership CLASS

Next class will be in the Fall
Join us for a one-class introduction to FPC

DISCIPLESHIP WISDOM

Discipleship Comments by Anthony Walker

Anthony Walker has been a minister at the Highway 231 Church of Christ in Murfreesboro, Tennessee for 17 years. In our most recent Disciple Maker's Podcast, Anthony sheds light on the importance of shifting from merely making Christians to genuinely making disciples. Walker also shares the wisdom he has accumulated over the years about the importance of discipline in being and making disciples and the role of habits in sustaining a fruitful spiritual journey. This strategy encourages an understanding of discipleship as a constant journey of learning and following Christ. This paradigm shift emphasizes the need for continual growth in faith--a process of spiritual evolution in which we are always learning, always following, and yet never fully arriving.

From Making Christians to Making Disciples

So, what exactly is the difference between making Christians and making disciples? In a recent Disciple Makers Podcast episode, Anthony shared his journey toward this very understanding. He shared that early in his ministry, he was motivated by the idea of "making Christians," and his focus was primarily on baptizing more and more people in an attempt to increase the number of "Christians." However, a sermon on the Great Commission drastically shifted his perspective. He began to understand for the first time that Scripture emphasizes "making disciples," not just Christians. Anthony acknowledged his need to prioritize disciple making over merely baptizing people. Disciple making became his primary focus, which in turn influenced his ministry tactics and language.

Growing in Disciple Making

A crucial step in the journey toward understanding what it means to become a disciple maker is accepting that it is inherently a learning process. Anthony uses a phrase in his teachings, "A disciple learns to follow, follows to learn, but never arrives." This demonstrates the concept that being and making disciples is a continuous learning and following journey. It also reminds disciples that they never fully arrive at complete knowledge or perfection in their faith.

Moreover, this concept of "learning to follow" emphasizes the importance of obedience. When following Christ, we, as disciples, must be willing to put aside our personal ideas and be willing to follow Jesus' teachings. Then, as we continue to follow Christ, we begin to understand that "learning to follow" involves learning more about Jesus' ways, Jesus' teachings, and how we can and should deal with life circumstances in the same way that Jesus dealt with them.

Shifting to Disciple Making in Ministry

Anthony emphasized how a significant paradigm shift from making Christians to making disciples can impact an entire ministry. He stated that when we shift the focus to making disciples, rather than just making Christians we begin to see disciples who better understand the context and significance of their faith practices and that then results in a deepening in their commitment to becoming more like Jesus by embodying His behaviors and principles.

Ultimately, there is a need for continuous learning, regardless of whether someone has been a disciple of Jesus for 1 year or 50 years. This reinforces the concept that being a disciple of Jesus is a lifelong journey of learning and growing in faith. Focusing on making disciples requires humility, openness, and a willingness to learn, even in the most seasoned disciples. It's important to understand disciple making as a process rather than an endpoint. This not only has profound implications for individual faith journeys but also for the collective mission of making disciples within our churches, ultimately bringing us closer to the faith journey that Jesus Christ laid out for us.

FPC ACTIVITIES AND OUTREACH



PRAYER SHAWL GATHERING

*We will take the summer off and resume in November
See article on Page 7*



GAME FELLOWSHIP

Thursday mornings at 10:00am in Fellowship Hall All are welcome!



LADIES LUNCH BUNCH

1st and 3rd Friday of each month

Sign up in the church foyer

Friday, May 3rd

12:00pm

Kings Roadhouse

Port Charlotte

Friday, May 17th

12:00pm

Wally's BBQ

Port Charlotte

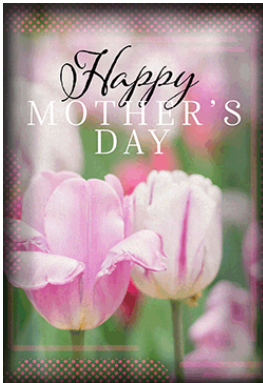


The Two Piano Group "Spring Concert"

The Two Piano Group will present a concert in our Sanctuary on

Sunday, May 5th, at 3:00pm

A Free Will Offering will be taken - suggested donation is \$15.00



MOTHER'S DAY BREAKFAST

Sunday, May 12th at 9:00am

Fellowship Hall

Sign up in the church foyer



MISIÓN PENIEL (IMMOKALEE, FLORIDA)

Join us on Friday, May 31st

for the morning session

We will leave the church at 9:15am

Sign up in the church foyer



DINNER & A MOVIE - *The Chosen*

Postponed due to technical difficulties

Stay tuned!

FELLOWSHIP - St. Patrick's Dinner



BURGERS FOR BADGES - April 15th



Burgers For Badges Attendance

Sheriff's Dept. - 49
 Fire Dept. - 19
 Our Church - 20
 Total - 88



MISSION COMMITTEE - Help Needed



The Mission Committee is planning to give Gift Certificates to the Vets in Veterans Village to say "Thank you" on Memorial Day. If you want to help, we are in need of an additional \$350.00. Any extra donations will be saved for our annual Christmas gift to them. Thanks and many Blessings. Gail Thornton

MILITARY PRAYER LIST

Prayer

O Prince of Peace, we humbly ask Your protection for all our men and women in military service. Give them unflinching courage to defend with honor, dignity and devotion the rights of all who are imperiled by injustice and evil. Guard our churches, our homes, our schools, our hospitals, our factories, our buildings, and all those within from harm and peril. Protect our land and its people from enemies within and without. Grant an early peace with victory founded upon justice. Instill in the hearts and minds of men and women everywhere a firm purpose to live forever in peace and good will towards all. Amen.

- * Major John McPherson, Air Force, great nephew of Marguerite O'Brien, stationed at Sheppard Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas
- * Major Ryan Swisher, Army Ranger, grandson of Rachel Pfaender, stationed in North Carolina
- * Major Eric Engstrom, Army Intel., son of Alan Engstrom, stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
- * Captain Zadick Self, Marines, grandson-in-law of Ron Beasom, stationed in Peoria, Illinois
- * Navy Seaman Tyler Beasom, Navy, grandson of Ron Beasom, stationed in San Diego, California
- * Lt. Col. David Sifferd, Jr., Army Reserve, son of David Sifferd, stationed in Ft. Knox, KY
- * Pvt. Michael Robert Wagner, U.S. Marine Corp., great-grandson of Robert and Jean Humphreys, stationed in Hawaii
- * Second Lieutenant, JTAC, Alexander Kingsbury, Air Force, great-grandson of Tim Ronan, stationed in New York
- * Major Christina West, Army, granddaughter of William Dosse, stationed at Fort Liberty (formerly Fort Bragg, NC) and her husband Major Matt Walter, Army, currently deployed in the Middle East

*Do you have a family member serving in the military?
If so, we'd like to add them to the newsletter prayer list. Fill out the form that's on the sign-up table
in the church foyer and place it in the HELMET or let the church office know.*

EASTER LILIES LIVING CROSS



MISSIONS MINISTRY



First Presbyterian Church proudly supports
Missions from our church budget.
If you would personally like to make additional
donations, please make checks payable to FPC
and indicate the mission on the memo line.



INFORMATION FROM YOUR MISSION COMMITTEE

It was brought to our attention that there are people with Medicare Advantage Plans which include OTC (over the counter) benefits; who do not use all of the provided funds that are offered each quarter or year. If this applies to you, we would like to suggest that you use your unused funds to purchase items for the homeless of Charlotte County who will benefit from them, such as antibiotic cream, band-aids, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hand sanitizer, insect repellent, etc. Because we work closely with Jesus Loves You Ministry, the items can be dropped off at church. Please contact Patti MacDonald or Gail Thornton with any questions.

Monthly Mission Support



CROSSROADS HOPE ACADEMY (PUNTA GORDA, FLORIDA)

Crossroadspg.org



JESUS LOVES YOU MINISTRY (PORT CHARLOTTE, FLORIDA)

Jesuslovesyouministryinc.com

**Shower & Lunch
Ministry**



MISIÓN PENIEL (IMMOKALEE, FLORIDA)

Misionpeniel.com

ANTIOCH PARTNERS MISSIONARIES

Eric and Debbie Stone, Guatemala

Lisa Alfonsi, Lima, Peru

theantiochpartners.org



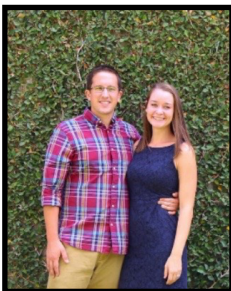
MISSIONARY VENTURES INTERNATIONAL

Chasen and Katie Brokaw

Nicaragua

mvi.org

breakingborders.org



MEMBER CARE



*Prayer Requests and Hospital / Rehab Information
Address, Phone, Email changes
Birthdays and Anniversaries
Email to first@fpcpunta.org*



First Pres is on Facebook!

Go to:

[facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurch-Punta Gorda](https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresbyterianChurch-PuntaGorda)



To watch the current Service:

1) Follow the link: <https://www.youtube.com/@FPCPG>
(This link is also on our website in the top right corner,
simply press the YouTube button.)

2) When you land on the FPC YouTube page you will see a small screen
with the word LIVE, click it and it will fill up your screen.
The Service will begin at approximately 10:30 AM.

(If you don't see a small screen with the word LIVE, we have not started streaming.)



Giving to FPC - In person

Mail to the church office: 25250 Airport Rd; PG, FL 33950

Online Giving through our website: [fpcpunta.org](https://www.fpcpunta.org), click Donate



Thank you to all of you who helped to make the winter season a success for the FPC Prayer Shawl Group. Your time, talent, prayers, and creativity yielded 10 prayer shawls for those in need among our church family and friends. Our hand crafted shawls offer comfort, support, healing and prayers. I know they are appreciated and treasured. Thank you again to all who participated. Your talents are a gift. See you in November! Love and peace in Jesus's name Susie Lorenz



Congratulations to Larrie and Marjorie Tisdale on the birth of their 9th and 10th great-grandchildren. Wylder Hazel Basham was born on February 6th to Meghan and Jake in Bowling Green, KY. Vivian Jane Powell was born on April 21st to Kelly and Bradley in Louisville, KY.

Pray for the family of Ron Beasom, who went home to the Lord on April 22nd. A Memorial Service will be held at FPC on Saturday, May 11th at 10:00am.



Pray for former member Art Koon and family, whose wife Fran went home to the Lord on March 28, 2024. A Memorial Service will be held at FPC on Friday, May 31st at 11:00am and at the National Cemetery in Sarasota at 2:30pm.

MAY 2024

CHURCH PRAYER CALENDAR AND CELEBRATIONS

Prayer is the place where burdens change shoulders - We pray for....
*The elderly, the infirm, the hospitalized, those in nursing homes, the homebound and lonely,
 and all those who have requested our prayerful support.*

Each month we remember church members and friends on a rotating basis...



1 Dick & Sandy Fisher	11 Tom & Carol Kerr	21 Larry & Sue Mesler
2 Barbara Floyd	12 Jean LaMantia	22 Steve & Joanie Mock
3 Frances Frost	13 David & Lynn Lang	23 Steve & Valerie Neeley
4 Neta Gensemer	14 DeAnn Lehman	24 Jim & Patti Nuznoff
5 Matthew & Maria Greene	15 Al & Susie Lorenz	25 Marguerite O'Brien
6 Marjorie Haun	16 Connie Luther	26 David Osweiler
7 Joan Hoffman	17 Myles MacDonald	27 David & Jane Otoupal
8 Bob & Jean Humphreys	18 Steve MacDonald	28 Bruce Peters
9 Pat Ihrle	19 Carolyn Ann Maupin	29 Rachel Pfaender
10 Bob & Lois Jornlin	20 Gene & Barbara McPherson	30 Linda Potthoff
		31 Barksdale & Bo Pullen



- 4—Connie Luther
- 6—Shirley Berg
- 12—Bonnie Carey
- 12—Gail Evans
- 13—Charles Sampsel
- 14—Duane Boyles

- 15—Rex Anderson
- 17—Jay Aldridge
- 17—Denny Ausman
- 19—Robert Cuzner
- 20—Richard Wagar
- 22—Charlie Costa
- 24—Joan Hoffman
- 28—Lili Bush



- 2—George & Beverly Fallenbeck 9 yrs.
- 2—Gene & Barbara McPherson 9 yrs.
- 3—Duane & Wanda Boyles 55 yrs.
- 6—Al & Susie Lorenz 52 yrs.
- 27—Rick & Kay Berner 57 yrs.



MAY 2024



Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Church Office Hours
Monday - Thursday
9:00am to 1:00pm

5 Communion Sunday
10:30am Worship Service
11:30am Fellowship Time
3:00pm Two Piano Group
6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB



12
8:00am Sermon on the Sand
9:00am Breakfast
10:30am Worship Service
11:30am Fellowship Time
6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB

19 Deacon's Fund
10:30am Worship Service
11:30am Fellowship Time
6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB

26
10:15am Hymn Sing
10:30am Worship Service
11:30am Fellowship Time
6:00pm Prayer Meeting-FB

6
1:00pm Worship Team

13
10:00am Prayer Shawl Gathering

20
2:00pm Session

27

OFFICE CLOSED

7
10:00am Women's Bible Study
1:00pm Fellowship Team

14
10:00am Mission Team

21
10:00am Women's Bible Study

28

1
10:00 Donuts & Doctrine
10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry

8
10:00 Donuts & Doctrine
10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry

15
10:00 Donuts & Doctrine
10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry

22
10:00 Donuts & Doctrine
10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry

29
10:00 Donuts & Doctrine
10:00am Jesus Loves You Shower Ministry

2

10:00am Game Fellowship
3:30pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

9
10:00am Game Fellowship
3:30pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

16
10:00am Game Fellowship
3:30pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

23
10:00am Game Fellowship
3:30pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

30
10:00am Game Fellowship
3:30pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal

3
12:00pm Ladies Lunch Bunch at Kings Roadhouse in Port Charlotte

10

17
12:00pm Ladies Lunch Bunch at Wally's BBQ in Port Charlotte

24

31
9:15am Mission Trip to Immokalee
11:00am Memorial Service for Fran Koon

4

11
10:00am Memorial Service for Ron Beasom

18

25

June 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
						30