

# KNOW GROW GO

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF  
PORT CHARLOTTE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## December 2017

Sunday Worship: 8am - 9:30am - 11am    [www.pcumc.info](http://www.pcumc.info)    941-625-4356 ph / 941-625-0144 fax

### A Month to Prepare

Another December is upon us already! Get the decorations down from the attic or out of the back closet! Find those Christmas cards you bought on clearance last year! Clean up the house for the company that's coming! Make out your gift list and get the shopping done! Get the guest room ready for the kids! Plan those pre-Christmas Christmas dinners and parties! Go out and shop again for the person that you forgot to put on the list earlier!

With Christmas so much in view, and with so many preparations that have become our December routine, we could easily forget what the season of *Advent* is principally about. As the Old Testament prophet Isaiah roars and the New Testament prophet John the Baptizer echoes, the call of Advent is to "Prepare the way of the Lord!" Yes, we focus in part during Advent on preparing ourselves once again to experience the mystery and the joy of Christ's making his way to us long ago as a baby in Bethlehem, starting his journey of sharing our flesh and blood so that he might redeem us. But Advent *also* calls us to prepare ourselves more fully for his coming *again* as Lord and Judge.

I want to recommend a spiritual formation exercise to you for this month. Jesus asks the pointed question: "Why do you call me 'Lord' when you don't do what I tell you to do?" (Luke 6:46). Choose either the Gospel according to Matthew or the Gospel according to Luke and spend some time *each and every day* reading and reflecting on a single passage, paragraph, or even just a single saying. Prayerfully seek guidance about these two questions: (1) What is Jesus really after when he says this or teaches that? (2) How closely have I been lining up in my thoughts, words, and actions with what Jesus seems to be looking for? Get yourself a little notebook for this exercise, and write down what God shows you each day. One of the most critical ways to prepare for Jesus' coming as *Lord* is to bring our thoughts, affections, and practices more and more fully under his lordship before he comes (or before we go to him!).

We also are called to "prepare the Lord's way" to those who aren't yet connected, or aren't connected anymore, to Christ and his Church. Advent gives us a powerful opportunity to connect or re-connect people. Our sanctuary never looks warmer and more inviting; our choir, our children, and praise team never work harder to bring their best to our services; our church calendar never has more special events to which to invite a friend, a relative, an associate, a neighbor. The invitations that you extend to them to come with you to any of our services this month might turn out to be a turning point

#### Join us on Sundays

**Traditional Worship** 8 & 11am  
**Contemporary** 9:30am

#### Wednesday Night Together

Dinner 5-6:00pm  
Bible Study 5:45pm  
Children/Youth 6-8:00pm  
Choir 6:25pm  
Nursery available 6-8pm

#### **Saturday, December 2**

Pancake Breakfast, 7am

#### **Saturday, December 2**

Eirinn Abu Concert, 7pm

#### **Sunday, December 3**

Town Hall Meeting, 4pm

#### **Wednesday, December 20**

Youth Spaghetti Fundraiser, 5pm

#### **Saturday, December 9**

ChoRUSS Concert, 7pm



#### **Sunday, December 24**

#### **Christmas Eve**

Services at: 6pm, 8pm & 11pm

#### **Monday, December 25**

#### **Merry Christmas!**

Community Christmas Dinner  
11:30am - 2:00pm

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in their relationship with God and their discovery of their purpose as part of Christ's Body. Please give God those opportunities *throughout* this month.

Prepare the way of the Lord!

*Pastor David*



- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Stacey Kern       | 16 Izaiyah Shirley  |
| 1 Brenda Ryan       | 17 Judy Brown       |
| 2 Carol Fisher      | 17 Paul Campbell    |
| 2 Aubrey Relats     | 19 Shari McNemar    |
| 4 Gary Mason        | 20 Gary Reeves      |
| 5 Sharon Bencivengo | 23 Jacob Bowers     |
| 6 Cheryl Terry      | 23 Serena LoTempio  |
| 6 Chantel Young     | 24 Janice Brown     |
| 7 Jessica Wilcek    | 26 Jayden Donaldson |
| 9 Charles Polk      | 28 Vicki Stricklin  |
| 11 Seanna Bailey    | 28 Sandra Walter    |
| 11 Merle McDonald   | 29 Joyce Gooden     |
| 11 Julie Scott      | 30 Bob Cates        |
| 11 Fern West        | 30 Bart McFarlane   |
| 13 Gina Brancheau   | 30 Arthur Miller    |
| 13 Lucy Leavitt     |                     |



- |                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| 10 J.C. and Margaret Spann      |
| 12 Kristian and Jessica Dunda   |
| 18 Ron and Patty Royer          |
| 19 G. Walford and Marlene Young |
| 21 Charles and Paige Polk       |
| 23 Steve and Phyllis Cox        |
| 26 Paul and Norma Campbell      |
| 26 Don and Esther Keirnan       |
| 27 John and Josephine Keating   |
| 29 Fred Wagner and Linda Layman |



**Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 pm**  
**Eirinn Abu, saxophone**  
 A program of Christmas music  
[www.eirinnabu.net](http://www.eirinnabu.net)



**Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm**  
**ChoRUSS – the Russian Choral Ensemble**  
 A program of Russian sacred, folk,  
 and Christmas music

**Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 8 am and 11 am**  
**Songs of the Nativity**  
 The Story of Jesus' Birth in Scripture and Song  
 The Chancel Choir of Port Charlotte UMC

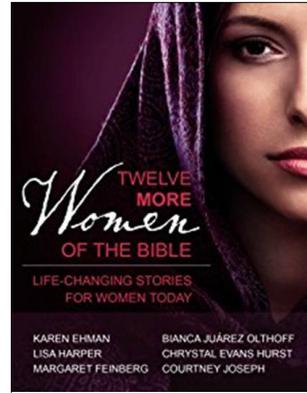
All events are held in the main sanctuary.  
 Admission is free; voluntary offerings are received  
 for the guest artists.

## Discover Your Testimony

God has been at work in your life, and the traces of his hand upon you become powerful testimonies to others concerning how God might intervene in their lives. You are warmly invited to a spiritual formation workshop to be held at our church on **Saturday, January 6**, from 9:30-11:00am. Pastor David will lead you in a time of reflection geared to help you discover and share your witness to the love and timely help of God.



Celebrate a special occasion or honor a loved one by sponsoring altar flowers. The 2018 calendar for flowers can be found at the Welcome Center, or just call the church office, 625-4356.



### NEW Women's Bible Study to begin January 9<sup>th</sup>

Tuesdays for 12 Weeks:  
1:30 or 6:30pm

Contact "D" Fletcher to sign up by December 20.

A new Woman's Bible study begins on Tuesday, January 9th. We will be doing the study entitled "12 More Women of the Bible" on 12 consecutive weeks. The cost will be \$10 (due on the first session). There will be sessions at 1:30p and 6:30p. Please contact "D" Fletcher by phone at 623-0642 or by email at [djfnrs@centurylink.net](mailto:djfnrs@centurylink.net) to sign up by 12/20/17. Looking forward to seeing all of you there as we discover how these women's lives impact ours today.



The church offices will be closed  
December 25 - January 2.



**Umm**  
UNITED METHODIST MEN  
with  
**Santa!**

**Pancake  
Breakfast**  
Saturday,  
December 2  
7-10:30am  
Kids Eat Free!

**United Methodist Men's Pancake Breakfast**  
Saturday December 2, 2017  
7:00 am to 10:30 am

All the pancakes you can eat, plus scrambled eggs, biscuits & gravy, sausage links orange juice, coffee and tea... only \$5.00!

**All kids and those over 90 eat free.**  
Come and let the men serve you!

### "MY MIND"

by *Pansey Kelly Wicker*  
(Edrel Coleman's sister)  
10/02/2017

Sometimes I wonder if my mind might be slipping away. Cause at times, I can't remember what happened yesterday, or even what has happened today. If it should slip on out, I would pray that my family and friends would understand my plight, and would continue being available for me both day and night. I do thank God for giving me, so far, 85 years of a wonderfully blessed life, giving me strength, and bring good out of every difficulty I've faced; therefore, I will continue trusting Him through this one, until I can meet Him face to face.  
**HALLELUJAH!!!**

PS.

Now if your mind starts to slip away, don't be blue, cause God will take care of you too!

## Wednesday Night Together

Dinner | Bible Study | Fellowship



WNT is off to a great start.  
***Come and join us!***

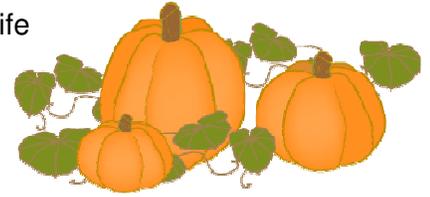
We are running low on cleaning towels, so if you clean out your linen closet... think of us and leave some towel donations at the Welcome Desk.

We are always looking for volunteers to help, a golf cart driver is especially needed.

Come and hear Bernie play all the oldies while dining on a hearty meal. Enjoy the fellowship, then join us at 5:45pm for Bible Study with Pastor David.

## Fall Extravaganza Recap

To say that "in to each life a little rain must fall" might be considered an understatement for Saturday, October 28, 2017. But, our Fall



Extravaganza was off to a good start as we could see by the numbers that we had for just a couple of hours. We had over 40 vendors in attendance 40% of which were non-profit organization here in Charlotte County. Our receipts for that time was almost \$2500 as we had parked over 140 cars and sold more than 65 wristbands. The rains did sort of chase all inside but that worked for the bake sale tables and our taco and nacho service. Each of those areas rounded out the day with over \$500 each.

I would like to speak my undying gratitude for the support and the work each and everyone put into that day. We certainly gave it all we had!!! It is my pleasure to serve with all of you and let us look forward to the new year and just see what comes next!

Blessings, Nancy



## Small Group Ministry Starting at PCUMC!

Beginning in January, we will inaugurate a new venue for intentional discipleship – small groups meeting in the homes of some of our members (generally members with larger living rooms). Groups of eight to ten persons will be invited to gather regularly in a home for a time of worship, study, prayer, and fellowship. This is a proven venue for building relationships, finding support, and nurturing our Christian faith and practice. Look for sign-up sheets in connection with our Sunday services, or e-mail Pastor David ([ddesilva@ashland.edu](mailto:ddesilva@ashland.edu)) to indicate your interest.



Tuesday, January 9  
10:00am

## Staff Parrish Update *Gary Graham*

Your Staff Parish Relations Committee continues to meet in order to develop the wishes for a PCUMC Pastor in order to fulfill our mission Know, Grow, Go. We are confident in our committee's progress to date. Please continue in praying for this search for our new Pastor and continue your prayers for Pastor David during the interim period. God bless you all.

## Life APP's *Ross Scheidecker, Lay Leader*

John 5:5 = **Hope**

Jesus asks a man who had been ill for 38 years,  
"Do you wish to get well?"

This is an awesome question, but on the surface it may not seem logical. Who would not want to get better?  
But after 38 years, would you still have hope of being cured?  
Why do we lose hope?

It is a hassle to hope. Some people may try to take away your hope.  
It is hard work to hope. Being critical is easy  
It hurts to hope. Hope does not mean a fast and easy resolve.  
God's timing is not our timing.  
Sometimes the waiting is painful.



No matter how trapped you feel in your current situation, God can minister to your deepest need. The man had been ill for 38 years, then Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk" and immediately the man became well. Jesus can do the same for you!

Other verses related to Hope:

PSA 42:5 : Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.

PSA 39:7 : And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You.

JER 29:11 : 'For I know the plans that I have for you, declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope'

ROM 5:5 'and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit'



### CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS FOR 2017

Checks or cash for 2017 contributions must be delivered to the church by December 31st in order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for this year on your tax return. Checks that are placed in the church offering during the first worship service in 2018 will not qualify for a 2017 deduction even if the check is dated in 2017 or was actually written in 2017. However, checks that are written, mailed, and postmarked in 2017 will be deductible in 2017 even though they may not be received by the church until 2018.

## More About Stephen Ministry *Dean Winston*

Grief... is a natural response to losing someone you love, or losing something important to you like your health, or your marriage, or your job. You may feel a variety of emotions like sadness, or loneliness, helplessness or even anger and resentment. The 5 stages of grief are; denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and finally acceptance. The acceptance occurs when the person grieving accepts GOD'S HEALING GRACE.

A Stephen Minister is a member of the congregation who has received 50 hours of training, over a period of 20 weeks. It is a Christ based confidential ministry. Confidentiality is the key to having a trusting relationship and a trusting relationship between the Stephen Minister and their care receiver is absolutely necessary to facilitate acceptance.



If I may, let me describe symbolically what a Stephen Minister does. Imagine you are in a thick forest and it is very dark, you can hardly see. In your right hand you have a 5 gallon bucket filled with 80lbs of anxiety, worry, and grief. As you stumble along over roots and bushes trying to follow a barely visible path, a Stephen Minister comes along side you. They grab the handle of the bucket next to your hand and help carry your burden as they turn on their flashlight to illuminate the path that leads you out of the woods. You continue on together until the dark forest is behind you.

Our church has about 500 members. We have 8 active Stephen Ministers. If only 10% of our members were experiencing grief, we would need 50 Stephen Ministers to care for them. A Stephen Minister is assigned one care receiver at a time. Women are only assigned to women, and men are only assigned to men. So we need both to be candidates.

Samuel Clemens, better known as Mark Twain wrote; "The two most important days in your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why." If you have discovered that the reason you were born is found in Luke 10:27, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.', I have a proposition for you.

If you would like to demonstrate your love for your neighbor by being a Stephen Minister, please call me at 941-661-8825, or contact the office. A new class is tentatively scheduled to begin in January, 2018. We need at least 6 candidates to have a class because of the role playing and interaction.

Please prayerfully consider the opportunity. The \$50 book fee has already been paid by the previous class. Thank you for your attention and remember, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few."



## Health Ministry *Jane Flanders*

We're starting the new year off right as our first Lunch and Learn of 2018 will be a visit from Coastal Chiropractic. Dr's Corey Girdwood and Matthew DeFilippis will offer a presentation on "Aerobic and Anaerobic Exercise" on Thursday, January 18 at 11:30 AM. A complimentary lunch will be served. Please sign up at the Welcome Center if you plan on attending.

Did you get your flu shot? The flu can cause significant illness particularly in older adults and those with a chronic illness. If you received a flu shot last year you need another one this year. You are protected two weeks after receiving the flu shot and you will be protected through the flu season. The local pharmacies offer the flu shot but please call first to be sure they have the vaccine on hand.

Foods that you can eat to help in lowering your cholesterol include sterol and stanol fortified foods. They are also called phytosterols and are found in the cell walls of plants. Phytosterols or stanols occur naturally in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds. Manufacturers have added phytosterols or stanols to foods such as margarine, cheese, orange juice, milk and bread due to their health benefits. Salmon and other fatty fish are great sources of protein and they are lower in saturated fat as well as good sources of omega-3 fatty acids. Berries are high in fiber and Vitamin C. They can also be useful in lowering your bad cholesterol (LDL).

Been diagnosed with Diabetes? Don't fret. You can take charge of your health by doing 5 simple things.

1. Make one diet change each week. Make protein, healthy fat and whole food fiber part of each meal and snack. Protein and fat will slow down the metabolism of starch which helps control your blood sugar. Swap your sugary cereal in the morning for a scrambled egg with avocado, tomatoes and onion. Try eating Greek yogurt with walnuts and berries.
2. Go for a daily walk increasing the number of steps daily. Walking will help your body use insulin more efficiently. Try to do a brisk walk.
3. Know what your blood sugar numbers are including your A1C levels (your average blood glucose over a 3 month period).
4. Check your feet! Diabetes can lower the amount of blood that circulates to your feet. This can cause nerve and blood vessel damage. Wash your feet daily with lukewarm water and a mild soap. Be sure to dry your feet and toes completely and gently. Be aware of any blisters and sores on your feet.

What can excess sugar do to our bodies?

1. Pack on the pounds. Foods that are full of sugar are empty calories and are simply calories that do not satisfy our hunger nor do they contain any nutritional value in regards to protein, essential fats, vitamins and minerals.
  2. Excess sugar decreases insulin sensitivity. Eating a candy bar will increase your blood glucose level. If you eat a candy bar each day the insulin levels remain high and your body becomes less sensitive. This can lead to an increased risk of Diabetes.
  3. Excess sugar increases your blood pressure.
  4. Excess sugar makes you want to eat more of it.
  5. Excess sugar increases your risk of dying from heart disease.
- Before eating that left-over Halloween candy, reach for a nutritious piece of fruit!

Abuse Hotline Phone Number: 1-800- 96-ABUSE. A person does not have to be abused; self-neglect is sufficient and can be reported.

Caregiver Support Group: The group meets every Wednesday at 1:00 PM in the conference room. Any caregiver may attend this group. For further information please contact Jane Trammell at 941 743-7336.

Save the Date - Bloodmobile: January 10th,2018 from 4-7pm.

Senior Care and Share Feeding Program: Offered by Harry Chapin monthly for low income seniors in Lee, Collier and Charlotte Counties. Foods are nutritious and easy to prepare. Foods offered consist of fruits, vegetables, proteins, grains and cereal. Forms may be obtained from Jane Trammell or Jane Flanders.

***Merry Christmas to you and your families. God Bless you!***

## Choral Advent Service and Ministry Fair



**Chancel Choir Presents:  
The Scripture & Songs of Christ's Nativity  
December 17<sup>th</sup> 8am and 11am**

At 8:00 and 11:00 am on Sunday, December 17, our Chancel Choir will present a Choral Advent Service. The framework for the service is a reading of the story of Christ's Nativity in the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel. The choir will sing anthems particularly highlighting the songs in this story (the Songs of Mary, Zechariah, the angels, and Simeon) alongside congregational singing of Advent and Christmas hymns.

Between the 8:00 and 11:00 services, our lobby and fellowship hall will be set up as a ministry fair, giving both our own members and visitors to take in at a glance all the amazing things happening at our church or happening in the community and world because of our church.

A special musical service gives you a wonderful opportunity (or excuse, if you prefer) to invite a neighbor, an associate, a friend, or a family member to come and see what PCUMC is all about!



**KNOW – GROW – GO**  
*Ministry Fair*  
**Sunday, December 17**  
between the 8:00 and 11:00 services  
See what is happening in the life of our church.  
*Find a place to serve!*



## What is the "Vision Team"?

The Vision Team was formed early in Pastor Craig's time as a group of the chairs of a number of committees came around him to help him keep abreast of the needs and concerns of the church and to brainstorm together about how to address those concerns and also to move our church forward in positive ways toward the accomplishment of our mission. The team has continued to function in the same capacity for Pastor David as he leads us through this time of transition. It is not a committee or part of the formal structure of the church holding any legislative power. Items deemed worthy of further review and implementation are given to the applicable committee or staff person.



## **SAVE THE DATE!** **United Methodist Men's Annual YARD SALE**

**Fellowship Hall**  
**Friday, March 16, 2018 8am to 2pm**  
**Saturday, March 17, 2018 8 am 'til noon**

Donations may be made anytime by calling:  
Rick McCullough (941) 766-7509, or  
Sid White (941) 625-8828, or  
The Church Office (941) 625-4356  
You may also bring them to the church on  
Wednesday Mar. 14, 2018 or Thurs. morning,  
Mar. 15, 2018



## Christmas Dinner

### 2017 PCUMC Community Christmas Dinner *Chris Burr*

Do you believe we will be serving Christmas Dinner at Port Charlotte United Methodist Church for the 32nd time?? YES, years do pass quickly! Dinner will be served in Fellowship Hall on Christmas Day from 11:30 AM – 2:00 PM. Dinner includes turkey, ham, mashed potatoes/gravy, stuffing, sweet potato casserole, green beans, cranberry sauce, rolls, desert and beverage. There is no charge for the meal and is open to all church and community families or anyone who might find themselves alone on Christmas.

The church will provide transportation for those with special needs who are unable to drive to the church. Please call the church office during the daytime, M-F before 3:30 PM, to request this service. (941-625-4356).

If you prefer to have a meal delivered to your home, please call (941-627-6602 or 941-6254356). We will need your name, number of meals, phone number, address, zip code, and any special instructions (gated community, apartment number, etc.)

Reservations for both transportation and shut-in's home delivery must be made by NOON on December 22nd. We work with Meals on Wheels staff and need to allow them processing time.

The dinner is prepared and served by our church members and community volunteers. If you would like to volunteer, please call Chris Burr (941-204-9974). If you attend Sunday services, please look for the detailed volunteer form in the Sunday bulletins following Thanksgiving.

Our Pastor, Rev. Dr. David deSilva and the 2017 dinner coordinators look forward to you being a part of our 32nd anniversary dinner's "love gift" to Port Charlotte.

## Student Ministries *Barbara Hald*

Thank you to everyone who made the Samaritans Purse (shoe boxes) and The Salvation Army "Angel tree" a success this Christmas. You made a lot of children smile.

Make sure you join us Wednesdays at 6pm and Sundays at 9:30am for Youth group as we learn about and celebrate Advent.

Our Youth Christmas Party will be on December 13th, 6-8 pm.

**YOUTH Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser**

Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Garlic Bread  
Salad, Brownie Sundaes, Drink

**Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> 5 to 6:30pm**

\$5/person  
Children under 5, \$3  
Families of 4+, \$20

Don't miss our Youth fundraiser on Wednesday, December 20th. We will be Serving Pasta with meat sauce and salad, rolls and butter and Brownie Sundaes for dessert. The proceeds go towards our Youth Group and their expenses.

If anyone wants to donate food to our Wednesday night Youth Group, They love to eat! Soda in cans are best or juice pouches and individually wrapped chips or crackers and of course any baked goods are greatly appreciated.

Friday the 22nd is Beach Night or (to be planned depending on the weather.)

Dec 27th Game Night: come hang out and play games.

Dec 28th is our youth Lock-In: 7 pm to 7am. Food ,Games Lesson and much more. Contact Barbara Hald if you want to attend or Help!

I want to thank you for your constant support, prayer and love of the Youth at PCUMC.

Merry Christmas and God Bless Everyone!  
Director of Student Ministry,  
Barbara Hald

## Frequently Heard Questions *Jonathan Carlsen email: theexhorter fla@yahoo.com*

**Question:** Why don't we sing Christmas carols during Advent?

**Answer:** This can be puzzling when the stores are offering Christmas goods in September. Actually, we do, but not at worship, except when they're requested at the hymn-sing moments before the formal beginning. During the four Sundays of Advent, there are, at most, a dozen hymns that can be fitted into the order of worship, plus the choir anthems. But in the nearly 14 years that I've been here, most of our pastors have followed the *Lectioary*. Only during the fourth Sunday do the Gospel passages address the preliminaries of the Christmas story: the angel's speaking to Joseph, to Mary, and Mary's visiting Elizabeth. Our Christmas carols seldom fit well with the other passages.

Advent means *coming or arrival*. The church has long put two different emphases on the season: one is focusing on the events leading to Jesus' first advent in Bethlehem, getting ready for Christmas; the other looks forward to His return, His second advent, promised in the last chapter of Revelation and elsewhere in the Bible. Unlike other churches, we United Methodists don't focus much on Jesus' return. We're more focused on serving Him in the here-and-now, following Matthew 24:45-46. But His return is also important, so many pastors use the Advent season to preach about it?

**Question:** Why is "Hail to the Lord's Anointed" (#203) included with the Advent hymns? Isn't this a Palm Sunday hymn?

**Answer:** We sing it at Palm Sunday and the four verses included in our hymnal (the 1940 Episcopal *Hymnal* has five verses) are appropriate for Palm Sunday, but I wish you could see all the original verses in their proper order. They are a complete rhymed and metered paraphrase of Psalm 72. In 1822, at a missionary meeting in England, the author, James Montgomery, read them. One hearer, British Methodist preacher and Bible commentator Adam Clarke, was so impressed that he reprinted them as part of his commentary on the psalm. The church has long understood Psalm 72:10 (verse 11 in Montgomery's version, omitted from most hymnals) to be a prophecy of the coming of the three Wise Men or Kings. So we sing it at Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.

**Question:** On November 12, we opened the 11 am service with the hymn, "Praise and Thanksgiving Be to God" (#604). At one point in verse 2, God is addressed as "prodigal creator." Since prodigal means *disobedient* or *wayward*, as in the parable of the Prodigal Son, how can this word be applied to God?

**Answer:** I'm afraid you haven't checked the definition of *prodigal* in the dictionary recently or even 60-plus years ago. *Webster's New World College Dictionary* (4th ed., 2000) defined the adjective *prodigal* as "recklessly wasteful" in spending or "lavish." As a noun, a prodigal is a spendthrift. The 1953 *Thorndike-Barnhart Comprehensive Desk Dictionary* says essentially the same thing. Our God is prodigal in that He lavishes His love on His creation and His creatures.

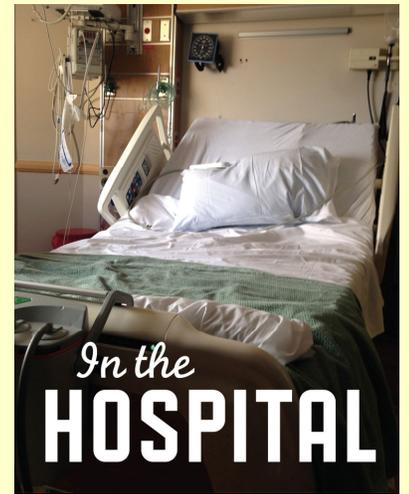
## Intentional Discipleship News *Linda Bailey*

Glenn White has just begun an exciting new Adult Sunday School Class entitled Mission Impossible. It is scheduled from 10:45 until 11:45 in the New Room, which makes it a great option for members and guests who attend the 8:00 or the 9:30 worship service. Glenn, and his wife, Sherry, are passionately committed to mission work in the church, and will be leading a mission trip to Haiti in March. Glenn's first course will be entitled "Unshared Love", and will cover a minimum of 12 weeks discussing what it means to love just as God loves us. As Glenn states, "Without knowing how to love God, and others, we cannot be successful as followers of Jesus." If this sounds like the spiritual "food" that you have been missing, or the kind of class you have been looking for, please plan to bring family or friends, and attend this class on Sunday at Port Charlotte United Methodist Church.



## “I was in the hospital and no one came to see me!”

Don't let this happen to you! Our visitation team wants to give you all the spiritual and emotional support you need during your difficult hospital stays. If you are going in for a scheduled procedure or operation and you want one of our visitation team to see you in the hospital, call our church office ahead of time with the date(s) of your hospital stay and the hospital site. If you make an unplanned visit to the hospital, make sure you identify yourself as a member of this congregation and ask the hospital staff to contact our office (941-625-4356). Take a few of our church's or interim pastor's business cards to give to the hospital during your intake to make this easier for you.



## Caregiver Support Group *Mike Boccia*

Every Wednesday from 1 PM-2:30 PM we meet to encourage interested caregivers to both seek support from, and offer support to, other caregivers. Any primary caregiver dealing with any debilitating disease in a loved one is welcome to join in this safe, confidential, supportive group. The group began several months ago with a combined format of instruction and discussion and the format is now discussion among members and sharing of valuable information, strategies for improved care for the care-receiver, strategies for the improved well-being of the caregivers, and important community resources available to the challenged caregivers. The previously used, marvelous Caregiver Helpbook, with powerful tools for caregivers, is also available for new members of the group.

Some common insights among worn-out caregivers include: “I waited too long to get help!” “I thought I could do this alone and that love and a sense of duty would carry me through the formidable challenge.” “I never anticipated the range of emotions that would limit my ability to cope and persevere through the care giving, no-end-in-sight process!” These perceptions are typically modified with the renewed hope, confidence and holistic well-being of caregivers who have embraced the support group process and the many helpful community resources available to them.



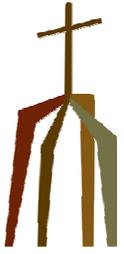
### Caregiver Support Group

Join us on Wednesdays at 1pm in the Conference Room

All are invited!

There is an interesting analogy to care giving in the business world which researchers discovered decades ago. They discovered that employees who survived, and even thrived, in turbulent economic times with threats of layoffs, job loss, business closures, etc. had a “hardiness” and resilience about them. The hardiness was found to consist of the “3 C’s”, total COMMITMENT to the tasks at hand, embracing the CHALLENGE of ups and downs with a view toward ultimate success, and CONTROL in that one’s continued, concerted efforts could positively impact the desired outcome of tireless efforts. Resilience, the ability to bounce back in the face of occasional adversity, was found to be a trait that is “more important than education, experience or training to determine who succeeds and who fails.”

It seems safe to assume that these strong coping traits are best strengthened and sustained in the context of others’ support for the caregiver, be it family, church affiliation, prayer, support groups, other community resources or all of the above. Interested caregivers please contact Jane Trammell at 941-743-7336 to join the caregivers support group, or simply come to the PCUMC on any Wednesday at 1 PM. We look forward to welcoming you.



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

# Christmas Joy

*Please join us to celebrate  
Christ's birth and all that his  
coming means for us.*

## **Sunday, December 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Services**

6pm: Children's Christmas Program  
8pm: A Traditional Christmas Service  
11pm: Carols, Candles, and Communion



*You're Invited*

## **CHRISTMAS DINNER**

December 25th, 11:30am - 2:00pm  
Fellowship Hall

All are invited to join us for Christmas Dinner. All guests will have a choice of a turkey or ham dinner with all of the trimmings. This year marks our 32nd anniversary of serving this free Christmas Dinner to our church family and community. *Please join us!*