

KNOW GROW GO

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
PORT CHARLOTTE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

February 2017

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

WHAT GOD IS DOING

I have always trusted that God will lead his people when we look to him for direction. When God lead his people from Egypt to the Promised Land, he provided a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

A letter and a pledge card were sent to every family in this congregation from the Trustees. On Sunday, January 22nd, everyone was asked to fill out their pledge cards and place them in the special collection. The reason for this was to measure the support of the congregation for Phase II of the long range building program at PCUMC. Phase II consisted of a new Welcome Center, water wall, doors to the sanctuary and repairs to the drainage system at the main church entrance.

We received 184 responses from the congregation. 102 were not supportive of going forward with the project. We have heard your voice and for now, the Welcome Center will be put on hold until other options are pursued. There is still a need to find a solution to the flooding at the church entrances and we are hoping to have this issue resolved before summer.

I would also like to report that our church finished the year in the black by approximately \$18,000. This is a wonderful blessing when so many congregations are struggling. I want to thank you for your support of the church and ministries that we offer. It is important to keep the Lord's work moving forward. I want to challenge all of you to exercise faith and support the Lord's church with your tithes and offerings.

Our financial report has shown that a small number of the PCUMC congregation gives a very large portion of our income. This is not healthy for the growth of our church and ministries and it is a sign of weakness in the church. We all need to participate and trust God. Remember, stewardship is the proper use of what God has provided for us. When God's people tithe their income, Malachi 3:10 states that God "will open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflow of blessings." God tells us to "put him to the test." Being a giver and tither is usually the last battle believer's fight, as they move forward to becoming disciples of Jesus.

Trust God and see for yourself,

Pastor Craig

Join us on Sundays

Traditional Worship 8 & 11am
Contemporary 9:30am

Wednesday Nights

"Wonderful Wednesdays"

Dinner 5-6:00pm
Bible Study 5:45-6:15pm
Children 6-7:30pm
Youth 6-8:00pm
Choir 6:25pm

Saturday, February 4

Pancake Breakfast, 7:30-10:30am

Friday, February 10

Valentine Dinner, 5:30pm

Thursday, February 16

Lunch & Learn, 11:30am

Saturday, February 18

Thrive Conference, 8:30am
Edgewater UMC

Tuesday, February 28

Membership Class, 5:30pm





Doris Adams
Donald Butler
Arthur Lagaveen
Joan Nash
Daphne Novak



WELCOME
NEW
MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members to our church family! If you are interested in church membership, please call the church office 625-4356.

 **Letters**

I would like to thank all of the people who supported my family through the death of my Father. You made food, sent cards, came to his service and most of all your kind words and hugs were so important at this very hard time. An extra special thanks to Gayla, Katherine and Carrie for your help with his service and Jim, Justin and Gayla, again, who shared their gifts to make the day special. It meant so much to my family and me.

God bless you.
Love always,
Barbara, Mike, Clarice and Alexis Hald



Edith Nelson



Judy and Phil Western

Thank you note to a good Christian Citizen,

A couple of Sundays ago my wife and I were coming out of the 11am worship service. As we approached my wife's car, a couple came over and said they saw a vehicle hit our car and drive away without stopping or leaving a note. The gentleman did chase the car and was able to get the license plate number. They said they were witnesses to the hit-and-run and shared their contact information.

With the license plate information they were able to obtain, my insurance company was able to retrieve the monies necessary for all of our vehicle repairs from the driver's insurance company.

Thank you for your willingness to do the right thing!!
Bill and Shirley Bishop




**Sunday
Morning
Bus Drivers
Needed**

Call Nancy in the Church Office 625-4356

Extravagant Generosity

(As of December 2016)
Total Income 2016: \$848,391.89
Total Expenses 2016 \$817,816.23

YOUR WORKOUT SHOULD BE A "GET TO," NOT A "HAVE TO"

JOIN A REVOLUTIONARY WAY OF FITNESS THAT
IS CENTERED ON CHRISTIAN FAITH & FREE FROM
THE WORLD'S STANDARDS.

REVELATION FITNESS®

CARDIO DRUMSTICKS

JOIN US IN THE PORT, TUES 5:30-6:30PM

CLASS IS DONATION BASED.
\$5 SUGGESTED DONATION (PER CLASS.)
DISCOUNTED PUNCH CARDS AVAILABLE.
DRUMSTICKS PROVIDED.



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Riant Photography©



revwellfaithinaction@gmail.com



More About Stephen Ministry *Dean Winston*

Stephen Ministry began in 1975. It is, what I consider, a providential creation by Kenneth Haugk, Ph.D. He was a newly appointed pastor of a large Lutheran Church in St. Louis when he realized that one man would have an impossible task of caring for the 500 members of his congregation if many were in some sort of crisis. He was only one man to give comfort and spiritual guidance to many. So, he designed the program as it is today, where lay volunteers receive 50 hours of training (primarily learning to really listen and encourage) while under the over-arching tenet of confidentiality. With this ministry, members of the congregation in crisis are never alone. There is a Stephen Minister to walk beside them as they move toward God's healing grace.

Stephen Ministry is now in more than 12,000 congregations from more than 170 Christian denominations in all 50 states, 10 Canadian provinces, and 29 other countries.

More than 70,000 pastors, church staff, and laypeople have trained as Stephen Leaders (those who oversee and direct Stephen Ministry in the congregation) at a Leader's Training Course.

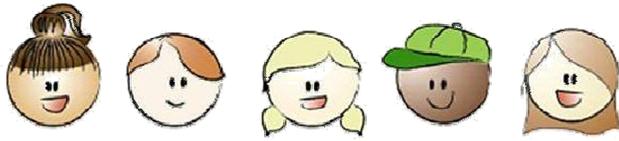
More than 600,000 people have trained as Stephen Ministers (laypeople who provide care to those who are hurting) in their congregations and communities.

More than one-and-a-half million people have received care from a Stephen Ministry in a formal one-to-one Stephen Ministry caring relationship and millions more have been touched by Stephen Ministry in informal ways.

How many Stephen Ministers does our church need? If only 10% of our congregation had a life crisis such as the loss of a loved one, divorce, job loss, health concerns, economic concerns, empty nest syndrome, loss of purpose, spiritual needs, loneliness, parenting crises, just being overwhelmed by day to day living, we would need 45 active Stephen Ministers. We currently have 12 active Stephen Ministers.

The class to train Stephen Ministers takes 20 weeks and 50 hours to complete. Therefore, I like to begin the classes in January. It is best to have at least six candidates because of the interaction and role playing. There is a lot of reading so classes generally are scheduled for one day a week lasting 2 ½ hours each. This January we had 3 candidates apply only to have their classes delayed for a year because three more candidates are needed.

If you would like more information on this ministry or would like an application to become a Stephen Minister, please call Pastor Craig at 941-625-4356 or Dean Winston 941-661-8825.



PCUMC Children's Weekday Ministry

A Ministry of Port Charlotte United Methodist Church

Director: Paula Mann

625-4356 phone / email: pcmcschool@gmail.com

Prayer

Lord, Thank you for our happy hearts
for rain and sunny weather.
Thank you for the food we eat
and that we're all together. Amen

Verse

Ecclesiastes 4:10

"If one falls down, his friend can help him up."

Special Dates

- February 14 Happy Valentine's Day
- February 20 3 day VPK ONLY has school
(Presidents Day)
- February 27 Walk In Day



United Methodist Women

FAITH · HOPE · LOVE IN ACTION

Port Charlotte United Methodist Women

Saturday, February 11, 2017

11am in the New Room

A Community in Action Against Human Trafficking with an objective to learn about United Methodist Women's role in preventing human trafficking as well as our responsibility to intercede on behalf of vulnerable people by studying the life of Ruth and Naomi.

All women over the age of 18 are invited - come and join us - bring a friend!



Student Ministries *Barbara Hald*

Student Ministries would like to thank everyone for a great year last year and we are looking forward to an even better year this year.

We will be having our Super Bowl Subs fundraiser on Sunday, February 5th. This fundraiser will go toward preparing for Warren Willis Summer Camp in July. The kids love camp and it is life changing for many of them. We sent 25 children to camp last year. I pray that every child that wishes to go will have the opportunity. The cost for camp is \$450.00 for the week and that includes everything: Bible study and worship, camp activities like sailing, roller skating, swimming, fishing and much, much more. If you would like to make a donation just put "Camp" in the memo of your check and Nancy knows what to do with these donations. Thank you so much for all you do.



Thank you everyone who helped us get to Haiti. It was an amazing trip. Thank you for your support. The Haiti mission Team



Saturday, February 25th the Youth will have a **"Work Party"** in the Youth Room. We have speakers to be hung and lots of other jobs to fix up our Youth area. Contact Barbara if you can help us 625-4356.



Haiti Mission Trip *Glenn & Sherry White, Short-term Missionaries*

We arrived at the **Missionary Flights International** hanger at 6:00 am. Twelve months of hard work fund raising, collecting and sorting shoes and clothes, gathering VBS materials, filing legal documents, countless emails, and re-writing medication formularies – all came to this – we were ready to return to Haiti with another team of short-term missionaries. Forty-three duffle bags were laid on the scale on the hanger floor. Bag number forty-four was still in the church bus – just in case of a miracle – “under allowed weight.” I know – that has never happened before. “Throw that last bag on,” I heard an MFI worker say. We were allowed 1,350 pounds for this flight – the scale read 1,353. I knew this was going to be a good trip!

Our flight was perfect, and our first stop in Haiti was the City of Cap Haitian on the northern coast. Our stop was to deliver a group of missionaries, so we all formally entered the country through customs at that point. Next, we were on to Pignon to the South, landing on a grass airfield where a second group of STM's were delivered. Here, we emptied the “cheap” seats – so called because they held boxes of little chicks destined for Pignon. Our third stop and final destination was Toussaint L’ouverture Internationale Aeroport, Port-au-Prince.

The seven of us had a very quick walk through customs (which is never the same twice it seems) and we soon found Pastor Yvon waiting for us in the baggage claim area. Did I mention 44 duffle bags? Pastor Yvon and Enoch each drove separate vehicles, and a “Tap-Tap” was needed to carry the remainder of the bags. In just over an hour we were at Pastor Yvon’s home on the northern fringe of the city.

Pastor Yvon is a very gracious host, and his home is very accommodating for visiting STM's. Christina, our cook for the week, was Claudie’s personal choice to prepare our meals, and she had a wonderful meal ready for us when we arrived. This would become a favorite time of day for us with Christina preparing daily Haitian cuisine. Christina! – “Ou se pi bon an!”

We arrived late afternoon on Thursday, taking time that evening to settle in and sort items needed for the week. Friday morning our labor of love began in Carrefour: Vacation Bible School in the morning, and medical clinic in the afternoon for the most needy. We continued the clinic on Saturday morning seeing 61 souls, and dispensing vital medications. Since it was New Years Eve, and expecting heavy traffic, we finished early to begin our way back to Pastor Yvon’s home, finally arriving after more than three and one-half hours in PAP traffic!

Sunday morning we attended church in Delmas 75, where I had an opportunity to share the Gospel with that wonderful congregation. The church members had sandwiches and Cokes for us after church, knowing that we would be traveling to Les Cayes that afternoon.

Arriving in Les Cayes just before dark, we stopped to check in at the Hotel Le Manguier, where Pastor Yvon had made reservations for us. But, they told us that they had given our reservations away! Later we learned that it was the President-Elect of Haiti, Jovenel Moïse, who needed our rooms. We gladly accepted lesser rooms, which were very comfortable, and had breakfast the next morning with those from the President’s entourage.

Monday we were off to Fonfrede and the GCMO – Christville Church. We brought VBS for the children, and held medical clinic seeing 86 souls that day. Once medications were put away, tablecloths came out and our clinic converted into a dining room. The dear people of Christville provided a wonderful Haitian dinner for us. The following day, Tuesday, we continued the medical clinic seeing 36 patients before needing to leave to travel back to PAP.

Our little group of missionaries was outstanding. Eight souls traveling in a single vehicle – with luggage! Our teenagers we called the “Gumbies” – I don’t know how they fit! - But never a complaint!

On our final day in Haiti we traveled north from PAP to the “Côte des Arcadins” and the modern resort Kaliko Beach, where the group could enjoy a little rest before flying home the following morning. Beautiful beach, great buffet lunch, warm swimming pools – quite a change from our busy week.



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Thursday morning was rather quiet: Breakfast, morning devotion, and good byes to our Haitian friends. Michaelle, Adam's one and a half year old daughter, received the most hugs. We had adopted her on this trip and she came looking for us each morning. She became our first patient the day that we arrived, and after a few days on antibiotics she was back to her "non-stop" self again.

Pastor Yvon rented a Tap Tap to carry our luggage to the airport and soon we were off. Good byes at the airport – short – tearful – filled with new memories. But this is not the end of our journey. This is the beginning of a new chapter awaiting each life that has found the opportunity to serve Jesus Christ with intensity, sincerity, and humility – and for Sherry and I, time to begin again.

"Bondye se bon!"

Children's Ministry *Elizabeth Ziegelbauer*

G.E.M.S. (Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior) girls club is ready to start their new year! The first meeting is on February 2, 2017 at 6:15 pm. G.E.M.S. is open to all girls ages, kindergarten – 12th grade. We meet weekly on Thursdays from 6:15 – 7:45 pm. Registration forms can be found in the lobby, or better yet, bring your child to a meeting and fill out the forms while you're there. Please contact Elizabeth Ziegelbauer in Children's Ministry at 941-625-4356 with any questions you may have.



Vacation Bible School will be June 12th – 16th from 9am – 12pm. Volunteers are needed in a number of areas. If you are interested please leave your name and contact information with Elizabeth Ziegelbauer in Children's Ministry at 941-625-4356.

Volunteers are needed for those who like to work with children in Kindergarten – 5th grade. Opportunities include: once a month on Sundays during the 11:00 service, working with the children on community service projects or leading in a game day, once or twice a month on Wednesday nights (PBnJ) from 6:00 – 7:30, or once a month for Sunday School from 9:30 – 10:30 (preK – 2nd grade or 3rd – 5th grade). Please leave your name and contact information with Elizabeth Ziegelbauer in Children's Ministry at 941-625-4356.

United Methodist Men's



Yard Sale

March 10-11, 2017

Storage space needed in preparation for the UMM Yard Sale in March.

Call Sid White or Rick McCullough for more information.



Yard Sale



United Methodist Men's

Valentine Dinner

Friday, February 10

5:30pm, Fellowship Hall

Frequently Heard Questions *Jonathan Carlsen*

Question: Why doesn't The United Methodist Church relax its sexual standards to make the church more compatible with the thinking of Millennials and, thus, more attractive to them?

Answer: I can think of several reasons. (1) Our standards are based on what the Bible teaches. If we relaxed them, we would abandon the conviction that the Bible is the Word of God. (2) Because 70% or more United Methodists hold that *what the Bible says God says*, such changes would go against their beliefs. (3) Our standards are laid out in our "established standards of doctrine." Changing them would violate the First and Second Restrictive Rules of the UMC Constitution (*Book of Discipline*, ¶¶17-18).

Moreover, it's not certain that such a move would make our church more attractive to Millennials. In 1972, National Council of Churches executive Dean M. Kelley, in *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing* (Harper & Row, 1972), challenged a prevailing conviction among his social-action-oriented colleagues: that if the church adopted more zealously the "liberal" social agenda of the secular social activists, these activists would find the church more attractive, and they would join and cause the church to grow. Kelley observed that the secularists had all their social action desires satisfied outside the church. The church had only one "product" that these groups didn't offer, namely, *salvation*, something the activists in the church downplayed, ignored, or disbelieved.

Those church social activists of the 1970s and their younger spiritual descendants are the very people who are pushing constantly to relax our standards. However, in a January 6 e-mail, *Good News* researcher Walter Fenton notes that the historical American Protestant churches that have gone the farthest in relaxing their sexual standards (the Presbyterian Church, USA; the Episcopal Church, and especially the United Church of Christ) have not attracted the secular unchurched. Instead, they have suffered the largest membership losses. To grow, we must stay faithful. Matthew 5:17-20 is still true.

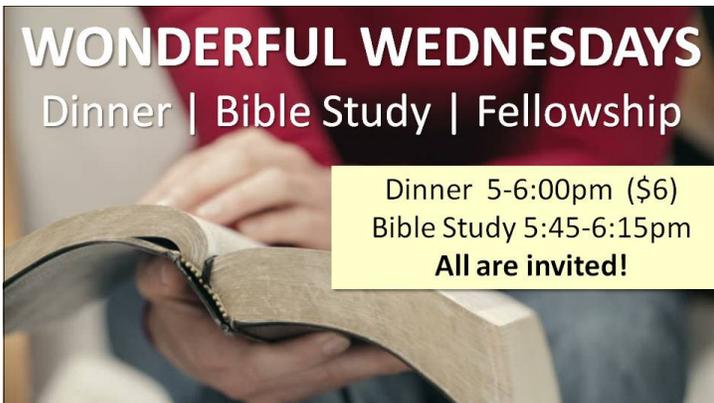
Question: Regarding questions of biblical authority, we hear the terms, *inerrant*, *infallible*, and *plenary inspiration*. What do these terms mean?

Answer: *Plenary inspiration* means "fully inspired" (see 2 Tim. 3:16-17). *Inerrant* and *infallible* both mean "error-free," but some believers say the Bible is "infallible, but not inerrant"; that is, it has mistakes in details, but infallibly teaches God's truth overall. I prefer to say the Bible is *fully authoritative*.

Question: What is your favorite Bible translation?

Answer: That's changed over the years. First, it was the *Revised Standard Version*, which I grew up on. Later, it was the *Good News Bible*, and then the *New Century Version* (written at a third-grade level). In 2000, I was shocked to realize that *New King James Version* had become my favorite, though I'd long disparaged it. Soon afterward, I came to like the *New Living Translation*, a revision of *The Living Bible* that transformed it into a true translation. My favorite since 2003 is the "essentially literal" *English Standard Version*, a revision of the *RSV*. I call it, "the classic *RSV* in a snazzy new wardrobe!"

Do you have a question about the Bible or United Methodist belief, organization, or practice? E-mail them to me at theexhorter_fl@yahoo.com or leave them with Katherine Warden at the church office and I'll try to answer as many as I can. — JAC



WONDERFUL WEDNESDAYS
Dinner | Bible Study | Fellowship

Dinner 5-6:00pm (\$6)
Bible Study 5:45-6:15pm
All are invited!



Pancake Breakfast
Saturday,
February 4
7:30-10:30am



Port Charlotte United Methodist Church
 21075 Quesada Avenue
 Port Charlotte, FL 33952-2546

Phone: (941) 625-4356
 E-mail: info@pcumc.info
 Website: www.pcumc.info
 facebook.com/portcharlotteumc

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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February Birthdays

- | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 01 Pat Winston | 09 Olga Sabo | 19 Sylvia Brooks | 24 "D" Fletcher |
| 01 Christopher Bode | 09 Robert Stevens | 19 Layla Taj | 25 Phyllis Collis |
| 02 David Glassburn | 10 Eloise Ness | 19 Yvette McIntosh | 25 Jerri Boyd |
| 02 Othniel Robinson | 10 Joan Mackey | 19 Tom Williams | 25 Savannah Welton |
| 02 Susan Putman | 10 Marsha Normoyle | 20 Evelyn Sturgis | 26 Carol J. McCullough |
| 02 Adalynn LoTiempo | 11 Hannelore Edgington | 21 Deborah Valler | 26 Skyla Cekuta-Bolyard |
| 03 Tiffany Roberts | 12 William Bryan | 21 Marie Simond | 27 Patty Royer |
| 04 Gene Middaugh | 12 Gayle Behnke | 22 Veronica Campbell | 27 Diane DePaul |
| 05 Thomas Volkmann | 14 Patrick Slike | 22 Nina Petro | 28 Addison Cates |
| 05 Sonjia Back | 15 David Cox, Jr. | 23 Robin Hart | 28 Ron Dobson |
| 08 Robin Ettinger | 17 Lorraine Vida | 23 Ryan Yanni | 28 Susan Ross |
| 08 Al Hilbert | 18 Sheila Armour | 24 Jean Pearl | |

February Anniversaries

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 03 Mike and Joan Sniecinski | 14 Mark and Jean Wyckoff |
| 13 Bill and Ellen Even | 15 Bertum and Veronica Campbell |
| 14 Terry and Doris Hixson | 19 Bruce and Nikki Foster |
| 14 Tom and Marcie Marshall | |



Health Ministry *Jane Flanders*

Our next Lunch and Learn will be held on Thursday, February 16 from 11:30am to 1:00pm. Our presenter will be Ms. Kim Spencer who will offer an informed topic "Educating the Community on Assisted Living, Nursing Homes and Financial Assistance." A complimentary lunch will be served. Please sign up at the Welcome Center. On March 16 we welcome Dr. Ramon Gill who will update us on Alzheimer's Disease. Please mark your calendars. Also, on March 21 and 22 the Alzheimer's Memory Mobile Unit will be at the church from 10:00am until 3:00pm for a 15 minute memory test. Sign up sheets will be available soon.

All of us need to stay strong and healthy. Foods that are delicious and keep our immune system in check are colorful vegetables and fruits. Most of these combos are in your frig or pantry right now. Try adding raisins and bananas to your morning oatmeal. Ordering pizza? Add veggies and more veggies! Using marinara sauce? Add mushrooms, peppers, onions and garlic. Meatloaf for supper tonight? Add celery, carrots and onions to the meatloaf mixture. Did you know that yogurt is an immune-boosting food? This food contains probiotics, microorganisms (live bacteria) that help our bodies to function properly. Yogurt can help keep the balance of good bacteria. When buying yogurt look for "live active cultures" on the label to be sure the yogurt you select has immune boosting probiotics. How can you use yogurt? Replace one-third cup of oil with one-fourth cup of plain non-fat Greek yogurt in your brownie and cake recipes. Making macaroni and cheese? Add yogurt instead of butter in your recipe. Breakfast idea: Top your pancakes or waffles with yogurt and your favorite berries.

Do you enjoy a cup of tea? Green, black and white teas happen to be high in an amino acid called L-theanine and an antioxidant known as catechins which have immune-modulating benefits. Why not make a jug of unsweetened ice tea and leave it on your desk or kitchen counter to drink throughout the day. Eating out? Order a cup of hot tea. Heading for that special recliner late afternoon? Make yourself a nice cup of hot tea to enjoy. If you are age 60 and live in Port Charlotte there is a great program called the "Senior Box Program." Every third Wednesday of the month you will receive two boxes filled with canned goods, fruits, vegetables, cereal, dry milk and cheeses. The boxes are distributed at the Edgewater United Methodist Church on Cochran Blvd. in Port Charlotte. Applications for this program are available in the Fish Bowl. Assistance will be provided if you need help in filling out the forms.

Do you have children or grandchildren? Add this date to your calendars - April 1 from 1:00pm until 4:00pm at South County Regional Park, Cooper St, Punta Gorda. There will be a Safe Kids Day and April Pools Day. It will be a day of family fun, music, games, activities, Battleship canoe contest, water polo, obstacle course, arts and crafts with free prizes and give aways. This is a beautiful facility with a warm, olympic pool and gorgeous grounds. If you need further information please contact Heather Boyd at 941 624-7273. Help make every kid a safe kid!

There is a senior resource guide available for you in the Fish Bowl. Services available in the Charlotte County area are listed in this guide book.

Blood pressures are taken in the Fish Bowl during Wonderful Wednesdays, Sunday mornings following the 8:00am service and during the Men's Breakfast the first Saturday of the month. A warm welcome to our returning snowbird nurse Cathy Derks. Come meet our other nurses Sonjia Back, Doris Barney and Jane Trammell.

Next Bloodmobile will be held March 8 during Wonderful Wednesdays from 4pm - 7pm.



LUNCH & LEARN Thursday, February 16 11:30am – 1pm

Presenter: Ms. Kim Spencer
"Educating the Community on Assisted Living, Nursing Homes and Financial Assistance"



Thrive

South West District Conference

LOCAL CHURCH LEADERSHIP TRAINING EVENT

Saturday, February 18, 2017

Edgewater UMC, 19190 Cochran Blvd, Port Charlotte FL 33948

An opportunity for all Local Church Laity... especially newly elected leaders and committee members for 2017. Training sessions target specific Church Leadership Roles.

Participants will have the opportunity to attend two sessions from various topics and leaders. Please register online.

A registration link can be found on our website: www.pcumc.info. Must register one person at a time. The cost of the event is \$10.00 cash or check payable to "South West District" at the door. Child care is available.

8:30am – 9:00am
Hospitality Gathering & Registration

9:00am – 10:30am
Welcome and Worship

10:45am – 12:15pm - Session I

12:15pm – 1:00pm
Lunch (lunch will be provided)

1:00pm – 2:30pm - Session II

2:30pm - Benediction
Rev. Dr. Rinaldo Hernandez

Breakfast snacks and coffee will be available beginning at 8:30am as participants arrive.

Music Ministry *Dr. David deSilva, Director of Traditional Worship*

If you were coming to our traditional services during the Advent and Christmas season, you heard a lot from our Chancel Choir, a group of about forty volunteer singers. December 18, the fourth Sunday of Advent, was an especially rich service in terms of musical proclamation as the choir presented the traditional "Festival of Lessons and Carols." They also sang several anthems, while individual choristers offered solos, at our Christmas Eve services and came back on Christmas morning so that the Sunday worship service would not be lacking in an anthem. The worship of God was also adorned with talented instrumentalists like Anne Bouhebant, who played the flute to accompany anthems at several services throughout the season, our newly formed brass quartet which made its debut on Christmas Eve, and our bell choir, the Wesley Ringers, who returned to active duty after taking a brief hiatus this fall.

I trust that the music offered by these musicians has blessed you throughout this season, as each group has put familiar carols into your ears afresh and presented you with new musical proclamations of the significance of our Lord's coming. These are members of the congregation who put a great deal of time, effort, and attention into preparing with a view to praising God's mighty acts and to enhancing your own encounter with God through that medium that has, for so many, the power to imprint words into our souls beyond the power of the spoken word alone. The Chancel Choir even gave up two Saturday mornings in November to make sure they were offering their best!

These are also ministries that continually welcome new participants. The Chancel Choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings starting at 6:25 p.m. (the ability to carry a tune is important, the ability to read music less so); the Wesley Ringers practice on Wednesday mornings starting at 10:00 a.m. (the ability to read music to some extent is particularly helpful here). If you play an instrument, please let me know and we can talk about how to work you into the music program either offering preludes or accompanying anthems. Those involved are amazingly dedicated and good-hearted people, and I know that you will be blessed by their fellowship.

