

FRESH Start

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE PORT CHARLOTTE SDA CHURCH



"The Lord's loyal kindness never ceases; his compassions never end. They are fresh every morning..." Lam. 3:22,23 NET

START YOUR SUMMER WITH A SPLASH

The dictionary defines "refresh" as a verb to give new strength or energy to; reinvigorate.

Doesn't it feel good to think about refreshing, giving new strength or energy to, and reinvigorating your body, soul and mind? In this issue, you are encouraged to be intentional about taking refreshing time with those who mean the most to you. If you can, travel to get away and make meaningful memories. But you can also creatively plan escapes from the demands of your normal life in other ways. We are all in need of reinvigoration, so plan to start your summer with a splash of refreshing time!

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AWESOME SUMMER AHEAD!

BY BEN SHURLIFF, SENIOR PASTOR

As I write this article, there are just a few school days left until Charlotte County students will be out for summer vacation. This includes our very own PCAS children -- two of which are mine! I have been thinking about how to maximize the enjoyment of the summer break for my family. It led to thinking about the church family at large. This last fall we all went through something that ate up a lot of our time and

attention. It likely still is, even now. There has been a flurry of activity getting the church and school campus back together. I imagine it is similar for you in your own homes. This summer vacation for the kids, as well as for the adults, might be a much-needed break.

Some of my very favorite memories are of my siblings and I going on summer vacations with our parents. I encourage

you to make more memories with the people in your life this summer. Even if you are past the age of having children in your home, no one is past the age of enjoying family, friends, and quality fellowship. A verse that is not often quoted in sermons is Ecclesiastes 8:15:

“So I commended enjoyment, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will remain with him in his labor all the days of his life which God gives him under the sun.”

Personally, I am more comfortable with the “labor all the days of his life” but God strikes a balance that is needed between working hard and enjoying time outside of work. “Eat, drink, and be merry” is not a slogan most churches would put on the platform. I wouldn’t either. However, God did not create us to labor in

perpetuity. He created the Sabbath for rest, and He gave us many wonderful things in creation to enjoy. I want God to help me balance the two and maybe you do as well.

My guess is you have had to work extra hard to recover from the storm, on top of all the other things that filled your life prior to it. This summer ask God to help you take some time away from the press of your labor and enjoy time with family and friends. It is, after all, God through Solomon, who inspired what is written in Ecclesiastes 3:1:

“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.”

Maybe it is time to take a break. Enjoy your summer!



This summer ask God to help you take some time away from the press of your labor and enjoy time with family and friends.





FAVORITE VACATIONS



Don Byard: My favorite vacation was a mission trip I took with my parents to Guyana where my eldest daughter and son-in-law were working with the Davis Indians. We went to the small village of Paurima to help with construction at an industrial school. It was such a beautiful, quiet, and serene place that we didn't want to leave. The young people would gather in their dorms as the sun set and sing beautifully in the darkness as there was no electricity. During the day they went about their activities quietly and with purpose. They were happy and content, as were we. Our souls were fed by being in their presence.



Gavin Forbes: Recently, my family saved up a little money this past spring break and we went to Universal. I love amusement parks, and this was no exception. It was my siblings' first time going and it was nice seeing their reactions and excitement at all the cool things. It felt like a nice "final" spring break vacation. I'm going to miss those.

Laura Dancsek: My favorite vacation was my first trip to Hawaii when I was 13 years old. It was my first flight. Growing up in Ohio, I was totally in awe of this gorgeous, tropical state. I loved absolutely everything about it. I fell in love with the water, the food, Diamond Head, the lush greenery and everything Hawaiian. No other vacation has remained so etched in memory as that one, even though I've returned three other times. I never would have guessed that one day we would have a son-in-law who was born and raised right on Oahu!

Troy and Candace Peterson: Our favorite vacation is our Greek trip in the year 2000. The first week was a cruise of the Aegean Islands. A few of the islands we visited were Mykonos, Crete, Rhodes, Santorini, and Patmos. What made this cruise so enjoyable was learning the island cultures and visiting the archaeological sites. The second week of our vacation was spent with Troy's Greek family – his aunts, uncles, and cousins. The time together was us all getting acquainted, the blending of different cultures (Greek, German and American) and the eating of good food. We had an enjoyable time and have many remembrances of the trip. We have a large photo album filled with photographs we flip through to relive the wonderful moments we had on this vacation.



Mark Miller: Chris and I have been privileged to travel to many places. With her father being a retired airline captain, we enjoy what is known as "free standby family passes." So we have traveled the world, so to speak.

We have wandered through the castles of the Black Forest and stood on top of the majestic Swiss Alps. We've held Koalas "down under" and been in the Glo Worm caves of New Zealand. Chris has visited the tulips of Amsterdam and the temples of Japan. We've admired the Crown Jewels of London and the fjords of Norway. We've dog mushed in Alaska and walked with reindeer, snorkeled in Hawaii and helicoptered over lava beds. We have witnessed the beauty and grandeur of the Pacific Northwest, the fall colors on a New England/Canadian cruise, the majesty of the Grand Canyon and the power of "Old Faithful". In fact, Chris has visited 48 of our 50 states and plans to check off the final two this year.

So as far as a "favorite" vacation, there is no way to pick just one. But we can't wait to take the "GREATEST" vacation ever from the New Earth. Winging our way to worlds unknown. What a glorious trip that will be!



Photo submitted by Mark Miller

La Donna Blom-Antonio: The Alaska cruise and land trip that Resty and my mother took together was my first mental response to favorite vacations. In particular, we loved the observation deck on the cruise boat where we spent nearly all of our awake hours watching the wildlife in the sky and water along the Inside Passage.

In Juneau, we left our ship and took off for the sky in a helicopter. The destination was to meet the Juneau Icefield. After putting on special boots and warm gear we were ready for the up front, close and personal encounter. Sapphire blue rivers and waterfalls enveloped us as we climbed out of the helicopter. The light reflecting off of the ice world intensified the color. Our expectations were exceeded way beyond what we thought or ever imagined. It is an entire ecosystem of sapphire ice & blue water, waterfalls and vistas of magnificence as you gazed over the ocean and other peaks. Views were enhanced by the elevation, but there was ethereal light. The colors were intensified by the light that shimmered off of every crystal of ice. You felt heaven's embrace. My heart's response was pure awe for our Creator and Sustainer. There was a freeing sense of every day life and we were taking a giant step closer to what our Creator intended our planet to be. Heaven's embrace was real to us. We did not want to leave our vista that brought heaven closer. I lifted my arms to fly to my real HOME!



Pre-K to Kindergarten Graduation

May 16 at 6:30

Our young people will be hosting a vesper program on Sabbath, May 20. You may never have experienced Jesus in a profound way.



8th Grade Graduation

May 18 at 6:00

Our young people will be hosting a vesper program on Sabbath, May 20. You may never have experienced Jesus in a profound way.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Youth Vespers

May 20

Our young people will be hosting a vesper program on Sabbath, May 20. You may never have experienced Jesus like this, so you don't want to miss it. There will be music, drama, and a surprise part in the program where you will see the youth and learn of their mission for Christ.

Please come out and encourage them as they strengthen their walk with Jesus. We promise that you, too, will experience Jesus in a profound way.

Stay after and fellowship at the Strawberry Shortcake Social and mingle with our youth. It will be a fundraiser for a big event which will be a blessing to you. Thank you, in advance, for your support.



Photo credits: Resty Antonio

UPCOMING EVENTS



Welcome Pastor Gavin

June 17

Our new associate pastor, Gavin Forbes, will officially be installed and will preach his first sermon at our church.

A fellowship dinner to welcome Pastor Gavin will follow.



VBS

July 17-21 from 6:00 – 8:30 pm

Get ready for a STELLAR VBS, at the church. This is open to children from K-5th grade. Contact Donna Judy or Crystal Salyer. You may also register online at FunVBS@gmail.com.

Don't Miss Out!

MARCIA KNIGHTS

Welcome to the Family

BY LAURA DANCEK

Marcia Knights has been a familiar face for several months, and officially became a member in April. She moved to Florida to help her daughter, Sarah St. Cloud, with her new, precious granddaughter. In her previous church, Harbor of Hope in Benton Harbor, Michigan, Marcia said she "assisted in any and every way" she could help -- which is music to our ears!

Marcia is a retired registered nurse, and is taking classes with Wildwood Health.

She loves gardening, and is eager to learn how to grow things in Florida, instead of Michigan. She is also an avid reader, reading several books at a time. Currently, she is reading *The Great Controversy*.

The next time you see her, please let Marcia know how happy you are that she is part of our family.



Photo credit: Laura Dancek

Welcome to the Family

HEIDI FRANKS

BY LAURA DANCEK

Heidi Franks moved to our area last summer to teach third and fourth grades at our school. You may have seen her in one of our praise teams or enjoyed her children's stories. She became an official member of our church in February.

Heidi moved all the way across the country, from Lincoln City, Oregon. She is pictured here with her daughter, Grace, who will soon be a senior at Classical Christian Academy in North Fort Myers.

In addition to being an elementary educator, Heidi is a social worker and has experience in a variety of social work settings.

Heidi enjoys crafts, but especially loves glass and ceramic projects. If you haven't already done so, please welcome Heidi to our church.



Photo submitted by Heidi Frankst

Construction Update

Photo credits: Laura Dancek



Left: the green carpet tiles were installed in the sanctuary and now we can kneel for prayer again!

Above: beautiful tile covers the foyer and Sabbath School hallways.

Next page on left: a loaner organ was delivered and the sanctuary is filled with beautiful music.

The kitchen was set back up and the light fixture replaced and is usable once more.



Below: The Grande Hall has been painted and the carpet has been replaced by vinyl planking, making cleanup after events much easier.

The Beginner Sabbath School class has new light LED light fixtures and vinyl plank floors with fresh paint creating an outdoor feel.



Children's Sabbath School classes have new flooring and light fixtures. Donna Judy points out the reconfigured and remodeled bathroom in the Sabbath School wing. This one is accessible from the Beginners and Kindergarten Sabbath School classes. The other is still accessible from outside.



Coming Out Ministries

At the end of April, Michael Carducci, co-founder and senior presenter of Coming Out Ministries, and his colleague Yaneesha Wanchope spent a week on our campus. They presented to three different grade ranges every morning for our school. They also conducted three evening meetings for adults prior to speaking for Sabbath School, worship service and two afternoon programs.

Photo Credits: Laura Dancek



The Coming Out presentations for the school and church are available now on our church YouTube channel.

Go to our [YouTube channel](#), click on playlists, click on the picture for "Coming Out Ministries." There are a total of 14 presentations to view.

OR [click here](#)



Larry Ford

On April 8 Larry Ford returned to bless our church with his music. Larry, his wife and daughter, brought tears to many eyes with their strong message in song. You can hear it again by clicking [here](#).



Photo credits: Laura Dancek



Kids' J.A.M.

The outdoor event, on May 6, was well-attended. Children were encouraged to reflect Jesus through a brief presentation by Delia Mercado, and two fun activities.



Photo credits: Laura Dancek





And the Award

Goes to...

little **Amy** (pictured below) for being the youngest worker at the May 7 work bee. "She pitched in and helped a lot," shared Don Byard. Others also said that her two older brothers were a big help, too. Way to go, kids!



Photo by Don Byard



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Sermon Schedule

May 13

Pastor Ben

May 20

Pastor Ben

May 27

Pastor Ben

June 3

Pastor Ben

June 10

Pastor Ben

June 17

Pastor Gavin Forbes,
Associate Pastor

FRESH Start Editor

Laura Dancek

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Fellowship Dinners are Back!

The Grande Hall and kitchen renovation is completed and we are able to enjoy delicious meals together again!

Our next dinner will be a special welcome dinner for Pastor Gavin on **June 17**. Please bring enough to feed your family, and one other family, so that we have plenty to share with visitors. If you would like ideas of what to bring, contact Andrea Williams at (941) 916-8508.



Photo by Laura Dancek