

OCTOBER 2023, ISSUE 9

# FRESH Start

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE PORT CHARLOTTE SDA CHURCH

*Service*

PORT CHARLOTTE SDA CHURCH  
FRESH START



*Photo of VBS volunteers by Wave Williams*

# BE A SERVANT

BY BEN SHURLIFF, SENIOR PASTOR

Are you a believer? Yes. Is that all?

Are you a church member? Yes. Is that all?

Jesus refers to his disciples as friends, but does that sum it up? Consider Matthew 25:23, "His Lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord.'" Notice how Jesus describes the people who enter into the joy of the Lord.

He refers to them as "servants." This stands out to me. He could have called them friends. He could have called them church members. He could have called them believers. Instead, He called them servants.

Would Jesus refer to someone as a servant if that person didn't actually serve? Do you think Jesus is using it just as an honorary title for a church member or believer? Does the term "servant" indicate the person is somehow engaged in meaningful service to God's

kingdom? I hope you agree when Jesus refers to these faithful individuals as servants it means they have been engaged, in some capacity, in serving God's kingdom and investing the talents and advantages God gave them. It is the result of their service Jesus recognizes and rewards when He invites them into the "joy" or in other passages "rest" of the Lord.

Considering this truth, in realizing there is still time to serve the Lord and His purpose for our lives, I encourage you to serve. I encourage you to place yourself in the service of God's kingdom locally within our church and within the wider community.

The parable states, this side of heaven, God gives His servants a few things to be responsible for. I don't believe service to God is meant to overwhelm or discourage you. The parable doesn't state what the servants were doing to serve. It only states they were faithful in their service.

I pray that each servant in the Port Charlotte SDA Church family finds a place to serve and make a difference for God's kingdom. I believe God will bless you if you step out in faith and join a ministry team and make yourself available for the Lord's service. More than anything this world can offer, one day I want to hear "Well done My good and faithful servant." I want you to hear it, too!

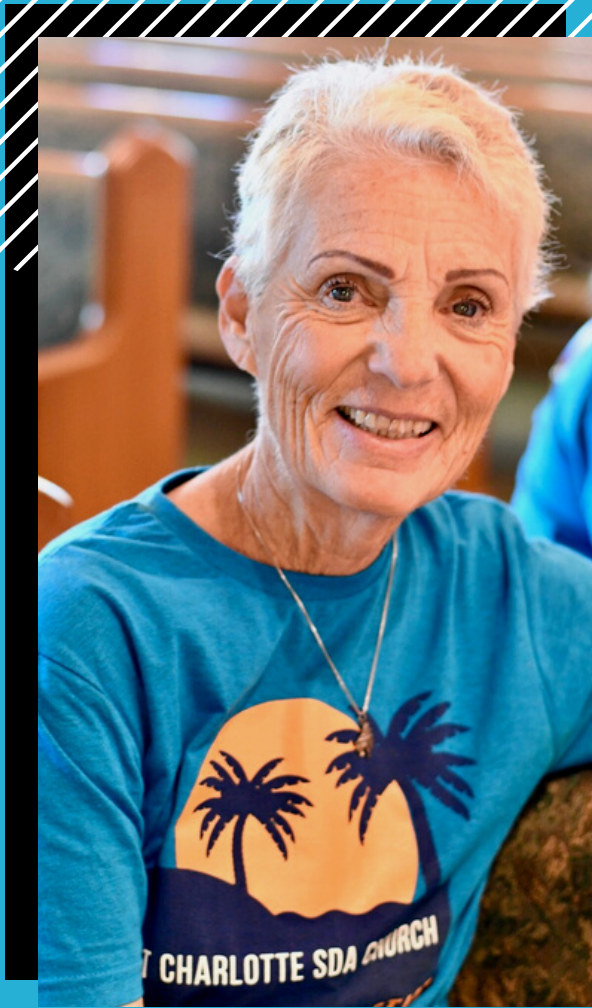
Whether the nominating committee asks you to serve, or you sign up at the ministry fair, the point is – serve. Don't let anything prevent you from playing your part. You are a special servant of God, and there is no one else just like you. No one else is capable of rendering service to God in just the same way you can. I invite you to recognize that God's job description of you is not just church member or believer. It is servant. Servants serve, and servants of God are appreciated and generously rewarded by Him in this life and in the life to come!



**Faithful  
servants never  
retire. You can  
retire from your  
career, but you  
will never retire  
from serving  
God.**



Rick Warren



*Photos by Laura Dancek*

# SERVICE SABBATH

BY LAURA DANCEK

September 23, 2023 marks the date of the first Service Sabbath, a tradition that Pastor Ben plans to institute at our church.

Following the fellowship dinner, approximately 70 people, wearing their church t-shirts, gathered together for a brief training by Pastor Ben, prior to being sent out to our neighborhood, two by two. We went to homes within a few blocks of our church to knock on doors and ask "Is there anything we can help you with?" Afterwards we gathered to share our varied experiences. Future Service Sabbaths will also be going out into our community, following Jesus' command to "Go."



Photo by Ted Stringer

# REFLECTING ON GOD'S SHEPHERDS

## Pastor Appreciation Month

BY DIANE SEDGWICK

The dictionary's definition of the word appreciation is "the recognition and enjoyment of the good qualities of someone or something". The month of October is a wonderful time to reflect on the team of Shepherds that God has blessed our Port Charlotte Church family with.

**Pastor Arturo Grayman** has been a spiritual mentor and friend to all of us for many years and has faithfully visited, prayed, and led his "flocks" day after day, year after year. His gentle and wise demeanor has graced each of us and his beautiful heart and smile welcome friends and strangers alike. In his humble and loving way, he ministers quietly – almost secretly, taking food to neighbors and shut-ins, praying with a hurting family, visiting in the early hours before a surgery. You are so loved, Pastor Art, and we thank you for loving us so well!

**Pastor Gavin Forbes** is our newest Shepherd, but already he has found a way into the hearts of young and old alike! He chose us right out of college, and we are so delighted that the Florida Conference gifted us with this young man. His sincere manner of loving people of all ages has been apparent from the day he came onto our campus. His office is brimming with communication cards, phone numbers, books, and .... LEGOS (he is a master builder)! Pastor Gavin, your smile and willingness to help in any way you can brighten our days, and we love your simple, straight-from-the-heart sermons. Thank you so much for caring so deeply!

**Pastor Benjamin Shurtliff** is celebrating his one-year anniversary as our Senior Shepherd! He blew into our lives right after Hurricane Ian blew apart our campus, and he and his wife Tria and children have been working tirelessly ever since to show us God's love in every possible way. His energy and compassion have delighted us all and we are so very grateful for the way he sincerely lifts Jesus up so all of us can see the light of His love and leading. Somehow, he manages every day to be with any person who is hurting, or who has a need for transportation or of friendship, or who is seeking a closer walk with their Savior. Pastor Ben, your example of Christ-likeness shines like a light on our church's pathway, and you have brought thoughtful stability, kindness, and unity by your selfless life. Thank you for shepherding us to Heaven!



Photo credits: Laura Dancek and Wave Williams



*Fall*

IN LOVE WITH

*Ministry*

SABBATH, NOVEMBER 11

Visit 30 booths to learn more about their ministries. Find out how you can be part of a team. Learn about your Spiritual Gifts.

Come to the Grand Hall right after the church service on November 11.

Light food will be available so you won't have to rush home for lunch.

**UPCOMING  
EVENTS**

## **Kids' J.A.M.**

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**Sabbath, October 28**  
**9:30-10:45**

"Harvesting the Fruits of the Spirit."

Bring blankets or chairs to sit on. There will be music, teaching, interactive learning, games and snacks.

## **Single Moms' Diaper Drive**

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**November**

During the month of November, please donate baby wipes and diapers (size 1-5) for the Single Moms' ministry, serving single mom's in our community.

Bring your donations to the church lobby.





**UPCOMING  
EVENTS**

## Evenings on Prophecy

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**6:30 p.m. Tuesdays**

Prophecy is a vital part of the Bible and the SDA church. Come to learn more about it every Tuesday night in the sanctuary. We are following along with the video series "In the Days of Noah" that covers end time prophecy, using study guides from the creators of the video.

## Pray with Elders

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**10 a.m. Wednesdays**

Please join the elders every Wednesday at 10 a.m. for a special prayer time.

We intend to pray for approximately 30 minutes for the church family and community.

Join the Zoom Meeting at:  
<https://zoom.us/j/96643095756>



# PCAS Week of Prayer

BY BEVERLEY MONROE

*Photo credits: Rodney Brydson-Ocean*

Five...Four...Three...Two... One... and we were off to a great start at Port Charlotte Adventist School (PCAS) for our first Week of Prayer of this school year, held from September 18 - 22, 2023. The week's activities were led by Go There4 Ministries, a faith-based group that seeks opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus. The Armor of God was the theme for the week of spiritual emphasis, and each day through scriptures, stories and testimonies, students learned more about God's divine love and protection.

In order to cater to the varied age groups of our students, two sessions were held daily: PreK to 4th Grade, followed by 5th Grade to 10th Grade. As the days went by, it was evident that students were enjoying the meaningful, succinct messages that Tanner Maasdorp and Kani Washington shared with them. They also were blessed with





accompaniment on the piano by Rodney Brydson-Ocean. Together they made a stellar team that won the hearts of our students.

Throughout the week, we prayed, sang, listened and answered questions posed about each day's presentation. By Friday, the students had gained a wealth of knowledge and were able to verbalize and write about what they had learned. In addition to the presentations, students derived pleasure from interacting with the members of the Go There4 Ministries in their various classes during the group's impromptu lunch-time visits.



On Sabbath, September 23, our school body led out in the church program. There were many excited parents and well-wishers present. Church members, and visitors alike were favored with special items of music from the PCAS Chimes and PCAS Marimbas groups. Pastor Tim Roosenberg then provided an insightful message entitled "Time of the End Alliances." The service ended on a high note as the PCAS school choir serenaded all present with two inspiring songs. We look forward to the next Week of Prayer session.









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