



The Courtyard Chatter

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GRAY MATTERS

Completing the Incomplete — Rev. Barry Gray

The Church in Sardis was not what either the pagan world or the other churches would call a dead church. They were well organized, had lots of activities, sound doctrine, and it was a large and wealthy church.

But listen to the charge Jesus brings against them: "I know your deeds/works" intimating that something was going on that wasn't what it appeared to be. The church enjoyed a good reputation because of the good deeds they were doing. And people, both inside the church and outside in the community thought well of them. In all respects it looked like they were thriving. But the truth is, according to Jesus, they were dead!

Jesus, who knew and saw everything, looked at all they were doing and didn't find their deeds complete in the sight of God. While the world looked on and saw how busy they were and assumed they were thriving, God looked at them and saw that their deeds were incomplete.

As I thought about this indictment, I wondered what it meant that their

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**Saturday,
May 3rd**

9 AM - 12 Noon

We will be cleaning out closets, getting rid of broken and un-needed items to better organize our church.

We hope you can join us!



Our Pastor

Rev. Barry Gray

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355 S. Florida Ave.
Bartow, FL 33830
Office: 863-533-5005
Cell: 443-350-0698

Our Elders

Class of 2026

Mandy Craven
Matt Heidel
Linda Munroe
Jim Nunnallee

Class of 2027

Kris Chancey
Deena Fussell
John Laurent
Howe Wallace

Class of 2028

Melanie Chancey
Jason Hamer
Lloyd Harris
Ann Stansel

PRAYER NEEDS

LET'S PRAY

Pray One For Another —James 5:16

Mica Barrington, Jesse Beeles, Laurie Benton, John Bianco, Sonja Bianco,
Drew & Priscilla Boren, Dr. Bill Brown in China, Kathi Colvin,
Tina Colvin, Marsha Dalley, David Delph, Tracy Eades, Fred Egli,
Becky Falcone, Saylor Falletta, Ariel Forker, Janey Fox, Karin Gray,
Sarah Hallock, Dot Harris, Doug Hartsaw, June Hollingsworth,
Travis Hoover, Paul Johnson, Robert Jones, Johnathan Kimble,
Fred & Sheila Lepley, Kelli Heidel Losh, Alice Martin, David McClintock,
Monette Monroe, Charlie Morgan, Ezra Myers, Becky Arnold Pate,
David Patt, Willene Pawley, Angie Reese, Benjamin Sanchez,
Luke Shaver, Lisa Shenson, John Stansel, Marsha Stephenson,
David Stewart, Toni Strickland, Catherine & Mike Sudlow, David Tanner,
Grey Thompson, Vicki Tillis, David Tindell, Debbie & Ted Turbe,
Cathy Whistin, Glenda Wiggins, Our Pastor & family, Our Elders & Staff,
Our Children & Youth, Our Military & their families, Our Nation,
Leaders, Community & Our Church.



Congratulations to our 2025 High School Graduates!

Bryce Aliff	Brady Bedenbaugh	Ella Lannon
Savannah Macias	Benjamin Porter	Paiten Whitaker


The Congregation is cordially invited to take a moment to
bless our 2025 Graduates on Sunday Morning, May 18th. Drop
your note or gift of congratulations into their Personalized
Grad Bags which will be in the narthex of our sanctuary.

MAY CALENDAR

First Presbyterian Church of Bartow
Rev. Barry Gray, Pastor—barrymg@live.com
355 S. Florida Ave; Bartow, FL 33830
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May 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 Church Cleanup Day 9 AM - 12 Noon
4	5 6:00 PM; Men's Meat Night; 1031 S. Gaskins Rd. Bartow; Meat provided	6	7	8 Ministry Team Reports Due Today Feeding Bartow at CSC; 1-2:30 PM 6:30 PM; Young Adult Group Gathering; Text Olivia for more details:863-440-6894	9	10
11 	12 6 PM; Women's Monday Night Bible Study & Fellowship; Place TBA	13	14	15	16	17
18 Communion Sunday High School Senior Recognition Sunday during morning worship	19 6:00 PM; Women of the Cloth; Evening Group; East Room <i>NOTE: Day group will not meet today</i>	20	21	22 Feeding Bartow at CSC; 1-2:30 PM	23	24
25 End of Year Youth Celebration 4:30 PM - Fellowship Hall	26 Memorial Day Church Office Closed	27	28 Last Growth Wednesday until August 20th	29	30	31

Schedule of Weekly Events

Summer Break for Growth Wednesday Activities begins May 28th. Activities resume August 20th

Sundays:

- 9:00 AM — Sunday School
- 9:35 AM — Pre-Service Prayer; meet in Sanctuary
- 10:15 AM — Worship
- 4:00 PM — Intercessory Prayer; Office Conference Room

Mondays:

- 9:30 AM - 1:00 PM — Women of the Cloth Sewing Group;
Meet in East Room; *NOTE: Group will not meet during the
day on the 3rd Monday of the month; join us in the evening
every 3rd Monday at 6 PM in East Room.*

Growth Wednesday: (Childcare provided for all activities)

- 5:15 PM — Handbell Choir Rehearsal; Choir Room
- 5:30 - 6 PM — Dinner in Fellowship Hall

Growth Wednesday: (Childcare provided for all activities)

- 6:15 - 7:30 PM — Growth Wednesdays
 - ⇒ Wednesday Warriors; Rooms 3 & 5; Downstairs
 - ⇒ Pursuit Youth; Room West 6; Upstairs
 - ⇒ *The Chosen* film & discussion; East Room
 - ⇒ Abide Women's Bible Study; Church Library
 - ⇒ Adult Choir Rehearsal; Choir Room

Thursday:

- 7:15 AM — Men's Bible Study at PalletOne;
6001 Foxtrot Avenue; Bartow
- 9:30 AM — Ladies Bible Study; East Room (Sep — May)
- 2:30 - 4:30 PM — Grace Diner Meal Ministry; Meals Served in
the Fellowship Hall; Doors open at 3:15 PM

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Birthday Calendar

05/05 Ann Longboy
05/06 Brenda Guice
05/08 Hannah Royer
05/09 Chris Pawley
05/10 Savannah Jackson
05/11 Savannah Macias
Sharon Stinson
05/13 Kristie Hamer
05/15 Tina Colvin
05/17 Charissa Kesler
05/18 Olivia Chancey
Karin Gray
05/20 Valerie Kirkland
05/21 Dottie Walters
05/29 Howe Wallace

**Happy
Birthday!**

*Did we forget your
birthday?*

*Please let us know so
we can add you to
our birthday calendar!*

*Email us at:
Office@fpcbartow.org*

GRAY MATTERS

Completing the Incomplete — Rev. Barry Gray

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deeds were incomplete, and I came up with three possibilities:

It could mean that they never finish what they start. They get all excited about a project or program but soon lose interest and fail to follow through – they get distracted by their daily living and just stop participating.

It could mean that while they're engaged in a lot of activity, the things they're doing are not the things God wants them to do. We can be very busy, and most of us are, but are we busy doing what God wants, or simply busy with our own stuff? Too often the church gets bogged down with programs that used to work, that are no longer helpful. We've relegated the leading of the Spirit to past generations and have failed to understand that the Holy Spirit is leading us into new ventures for a new age, to reach a new culture that has grown up around us.

It could mean that for all the great things they were doing, they just were not doing the main thing that they had been commissioned to do – to make disciples!

Sardis was apparently on the cutting edge of church growth, but they were also on the brink of destruction because they were already dead. They were attracting people to a church experience, but they weren't sharing the gospel and making disciples for Jesus.

I don't know if any of these three speculations are true, or if all of them are true. All we know is that they had a reputation for being alive, but when Jesus looked at them, all he saw were animated corpses walking around and doing their own thing.

Jesus gives them the solution for their deadness: Remember all that you initially heard and received that first brought you to faith and loyalty to Christ. And remember the one main thing Jesus commissioned you to do. Keep those things as precious; while repenting of all the accommodations you've made to the current culture and your own weaknesses.

If you do this you will experience new life, walking daily with your Lord in a joyful purity, a super-charged faith, and a renewed, ever-expanding vision as faithful disciples, because by doing this we will complete what may be incomplete in God's sight for us!

— Pastor Barry



It's hard to find your way in a world gone wild.
But we have Jesus — our true north!
At True North VBS 2025 kids pre-K - 5th grade
are invited to an Alaskan adventure where
northern lights glow over majestic mountains,
racing rivers, and glistening glaciers.
They will get a rock-solid foundation and learn
to look to Jesus, their unmovable, unshakable
friend forever. He's our True North!

Registration opens May 12th!
Fpcbartow.org/vbs