

A Publication of First Presbyterian Church of Bartow

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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

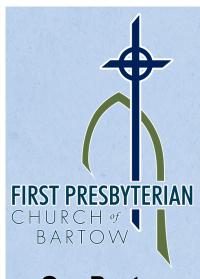
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Saturday, May 3rd 9 AM - 12 Noon

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

barrymg@live.com 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

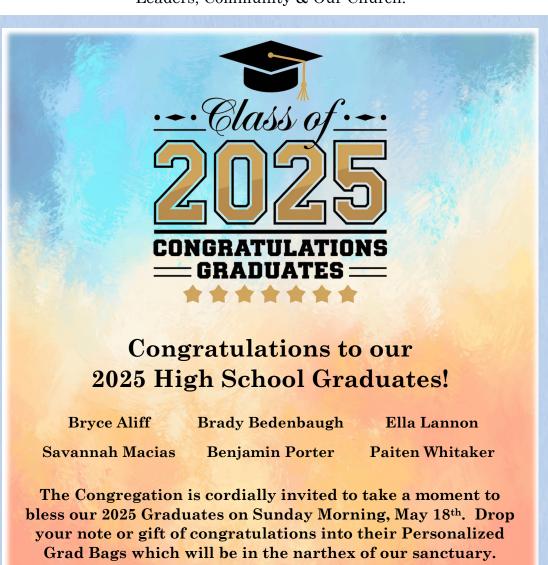
Melanie Chancey Jason Hamer Lloyd Harris Ann Stansel



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.



MAY CALENDAR

First Presbyterian Church of Bartow Rev. Barry Gray, Pastor—barrymg@live.com 355 S. Florida Ave; Bartow, FL 33830 (863) 533-5005 — fpcbartow.org



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	Church Cleanup Day 9 AM - 12 Noon
4	6:00 PM; Men's Meat Night; 1031 S. Gaskins Rd. Bartow; Meat provided	6	7	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
Mother's Day	6 PM; Women's Monday Night Bible Study & Fellowship; Place TBA	13	14	15	16	17
Communion Sunday High School Senior Recognition Sunday during morning worship	6:00 PM; Women of the Cloth; Evening Group; East Room NOTE: Day group will not meet today		21	Feeding Bartow at CSC; 1-2:30 PM	23	24
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