



# Gulf Breezes

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April, 2018

Your picture of God determines how you perceive yourself and others. Many of us have a picture of God other than the merciful Father who “demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) Bad theology through the millennia has created images of cultural deities that support humanity’s worst characteristics.

## **A God of wrath and vengeance**

Some picture a God of wrath and vengeance who demands “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” Jesus challenged misrepresentations of God’s character found in some of the culturally bound images in the Old Testament. The books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, for example, talk about marriage violations. If a woman did not satisfy her husband that she was by proof a virgin on the night of their marriage, she was to be stoned to death. (Deuteronomy 22:21)

How radically different was the love that Jesus showed the woman caught in the act of adultery when the men of her village were ready to commit the same murderous act. Jesus intervened, saying, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” (John 8:7)

Jesus reveals God as a loving father who comes into the world not to condemn but to save sinners!

## **An ancient white male**

Other people view God as an ancient white male, as portrayed in medieval European paintings. All kinds of atrocities have emerged from this distortion: racism and the injustices committed in the name of ethnic superiority, as well as sexist discrimination, continuing in some religious circles, that excludes women from leadership. By contrast, early first-century Jesus followers discovered the miraculous, unifying love of God in which “there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28)

## **A tribal God**

The current rabid division in U.S. politics, as well as in much of the Christian church, can result from a picture of a God who is tribal, a god who is “for us and against the people we are against.” As author Anne Lamott says, “You can safely assume that you created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you hate.”

## **God of the nation-state**

Closely related to the god of the tribe is the god of the nation-state. Constantine, who ruled the Roman Empire in A.D. 306–337, saw how the strength of the early Christian movement could unify and legitimize Rome’s dominance as the global power. It’s pretty safe to assume that Constantine’s legalization of Christianity had a deep, underlying political motive, uniting the flag of Rome with the symbol of Christ.

The god of the nation-state holds one nation favored above all others. Millennia of wars have been fought in the name of God. Even Israel forgot that its chosen status, described in Exodus 19:6, was not for privilege but for priesthood. “Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.” We must never forget “that God so loved the world!”

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## FYII: For Your Information & Interest

### Why Jesus?

As we follow Jesus' life and teaching, we experience God's true identity. In Jesus, we experience God who values human relationships over legalistic doctrines and people over ideologies. The Bible is authoritative and inspired for faith and life practice. But, we must never idolize the Scriptures (written word) over Jesus' authority (Living Word).

The totality of God's revelation cannot be limited to the 1,113 pages in my Bible but can be fully discovered in the miraculous transforming love of God revealed in Jesus.

With Fish and Loaves, Mike

### LADIES' DAY OUT – LUNCH AT RUBY TUESDAY'S

We will be going to lunch on Sunday, April 8 at Ruby Tuesday's in the Town Center Mall. We can car pool from the church parking lot at 12:00pm, or you can just meet us at the restaurant at 12:15pm. Please RSVP to Deb Howell @ [debhowell3902@yahoo.com](mailto:debhowell3902@yahoo.com) so we know how to plan.

### MEN'S BREAKFAST

Gulf Cove United Methodist Men – join our men's group for prayer, fellowship and fun! We meet the first and third Tuesday each month, 8:00am at Perkins in North Port.

### LEAVING FOR THE SUMMER?



Please put an N (for North) beside your name on the pew pad the last Sunday you will be here. You will be missed. However you can keep up with what is happening at GCUMC on our website [gulfcovechurch.com](http://gulfcovechurch.com) and/or

have our Mid-Week News sent to your E-mail address. Just send your request to [gulfcoveumc@gmail.com](mailto:gulfcoveumc@gmail.com).

### CRAFT SALE APRIL 13 & 14

The Crafty Ladies will be at Oak's Cove Friday and Saturday 9am- 3pm selling many different craft items like kitchen towels, scrubbies, baked potato bags, plus much, much more.

### DONATIONS NEEDED FOR THE BARN



#### SALE APRIL 13 & 14

The GCUMMEN'S Group are having their annual April Barn Sale. If you have anything in your house or garage you would like to donate to this project, the men will be at the barn on Thursday from 8am to 11:30am to accept your donations. Sorry, they are not accepting sleeper sofas, appliances, or electronics. Tom Eisele @941-268-4933 or the church office @ 941-697-1747

## FINANCES

### FUNDING GOD'S MINISTRY for February

	YTD	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	\$35,526.40	\$84,238.49
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$6,251.99	\$12,442.71
EDUCATION/NURTURE	\$1,064.28	\$1,592.30
APPORTIONMENTS	\$4,505.00	\$9,009.80
STAFF SUPPORT	\$23,541.57	\$49,585.91
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<u>\$35,362.84</u>	<u>\$72,630.72</u>
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	\$163.56	\$11,607.77
<b>RESERVE FUND</b>	<b>\$23,456.22</b>	

### WHY WE NEED EASTER

No one is exempt from tragedy or disappointment — even God was not exempt. Jesus offered no immunity, no way *out* of the unfairness, but rather a way *through* it to the other side. Just as Good Friday demolished the instinctive belief that this life is supposed to be fair, Easter Sunday followed with its startling clue to the riddle of the universe. Out of the darkness, a bright light shone. ...

The cross of Christ may have overcome evil, but it did not overcome unfairness. For that, Easter is required, a bright clue that someday God will restore all physical reality to its proper place.

—Philip Yancey, *Disappointment With God*



**Scriptures April 2018**

April 1

Do We Really Need Easter?  
John 20: 11-18

April 8

SEE TOUCH FEEL  
John 20:19-31

April 15

Pastor Tabitha Jordan

April 22

The Voice of the Shepherd  
John 10:1-10

April 29

Same Table Different Chairs.  
John 15:11-17

**"FOOD FOR THE SOUL"**



Please join us on Wednesday nights for a chance to grow closer to God and others in our church family. Dinner is served from 5:30-6:00pm. The weekly cost is: \$4/per

Adult; \$2.50/per Child under 12; \$12/Family maximum. This month's menu includes  
April 4-Beef & Potato Casserole  
April 11-Stuffed Cabbage  
April 18-Meat Loaf  
April 25-Sloppy Joes  
Reservation deadline is the previous Sunday--you can list your reservation on the pew attendance pad on Sunday mornings: Mark "Food" & the number of people.

Clean-up is at 6pm, then there are various activities for ALL ages. Children have Jesus Rocks in #109/110; Youth, gr. 6-12, meet in P #206; the After Dinner Group, meets in #102, and a Women's Bible study "Ever After" meets in P#201. At 6:15pm, Genesis Small Group, another adult Bible Study, meets in the Sanctuary.

For those who prefer an earlier evening, Pastor Mike leads a Bible study at 4:30pm in P#201 where they study the scripture text he will be using for the following Sunday's sermon. You can join a study group without having dinner; likewise eat dinner without joining a study group. Please make Wednesday nights a time you spend with your church family so you can feed your body...and soul!

**CHANGE AGENTS**

A cartoon depicts a man at a podium firing up a crowd. "Who wants change?" he shouts. You can almost hear the excitement and urgency. "We do!" the listeners cry, all raising their hands.

But the next frame features a follow-up question: "Who wants to change?" The audience is silent and somber, with their hands down.

The gospel Jesus announced and lived out promises monumental change: life instead of death, healing from sickness, hope to replace despair, peace and justice instead of war and oppression. Although God could wave his hand and make the world perfect, he chooses to work through humans. That means we must be willing to change too.

Change can be scary, but God's newness will so transform the world — and us — that we'll never miss our old, broken reality.  
—Heidi Mann



4/01	Phill Kolbe	4/01	Terry Ten Brink
4/02	Pat Meyer	4/02	JennyMyers
4/02	Caitlyn Flaherty	4/02	Mac Kenzie Flaherty
4/03	Sandra Stull	4/03	Ken Priest
4/04	JulieWhitford	4/04	Nancy Gebauer
4/05	Janet Chimento	4/05	Steve Beimer
4/07	Kelly Sexton	4/08	April Chattinger
4/11	JonnieWebber	4/12	Bre Carter
4/14	Bob Knorr	4/14	Tina Phillips
4/14	John Zink	4/14	DeAnna Crandall
4/17	Eleanor Kotula	4/19	Edna Duer
4/20	PennyWolfe	4/20	Johnny Roy Jr.
4/22	Donna Palmer	4/23	Sandra Sullivan
4/24	Lynne Gill	4/25	Mary Beimer
4/27	Bobbie Indermaur	4/27	Connie Shatzer
4/30	Lester Miller		



4/03	Pat & Betty Hansell
4/04	Don & Marilyn Baker
4/15	Steve & Kathy Wohlleb
4/20	Jim & Jessie Choate
4/24	Jim & Elaine Inman

## Calendar Highlights

April 1		<b>Easter Sunday</b>	7:00pm	Trustee Meeting #103
	6:45	Sunday Sunrise Service	April 13	9-3pm Friday Barn & Craft Sale
	8 & 11am	Traditional Easter Service	April 14	9-3pm Saturday Barn & Craft Sale
	9:30am	Contemporary Easter Service		10am Youth Car Wash & Bake Sale
		Scholarship Deadline	April 16	7pm Monday Finance Meeting #103
April 2	7pm	Monday Team Cuba #103	April 17	8am Tuesday Men's Breakfast
April 3	8am	Tuesday Men's Breakfast	April 18	2:30pm Wednesday Inglenook Visitation
April 7	9:30	Saturday Closet of Hope P#204	April 21	9:30am Closet of Hope P#204
April 8	8:30am	Sunday Bloodmobile	April 30	7pm Monday Church Council
	12'ish	Ladies Lunch Out		
<b>April 9</b>	<b>12pm</b>	<b>Monday Newsletter Deadline</b>		

**Sundays:**

8am	Traditional Service	
9:30am	Contemporary Service	
	Seekers II Sunday School	P#201
	Kids' Church/Sunday School	#109/110
10:45am	Sermon Discussion	P#201
11am	Traditional Service	
	Adult Sunday School	#109/110
6:30pm	Family Bowling	
5-8pm	ECHO Youth Group Gr. 9-12	P#206

**Mondays:**

7pm	Boy Scouts	P#201
7:30pm	AA Support Group	#109/110

**Tuesdays:**

1pm	Friend to Friend	#109/110
	Health Dept. 1 <sup>st</sup> &3 <sup>rd</sup>	#101
2pm	SM P.S. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	#102
5:30pm	Praise Team	Sanctuary
7pm	Al-Anon	#109-110

**Wednesdays:**

12pm	Weekly Bulletin Deadline	
	Mid-Week Boost Bible Study	#102
4:30pm	Pastor's Bible Study	P#201
5:30pm	Food for the Soul Dinner	
6pm	Jesus Rocks	#109/110
	ECHO Youth Group	P#206
	After Dinner Group	#102
6pm	Ever After Women's Study	P#201
6:15pm	Genesis Adult Bible Study	Sanctuary

**Thursdays:**

8am	Grounds Main't Crew @ Barn	
9am	Crafty Ladies	Oak's Cove
5pm	Handbell Practice	P#203
5:30pm	Praise Team	Sanctuary
6:30pm	Choir Practice	P#203
	Girl Scouts 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup>	#109/110

