

Gulf Breezes

Monthly Newsletter of Gulf Cove United Methodist Church

Helping Everyone

EXPERIENCE EMBRACE ENGAGE

Jesus & Community

From the Pastor

“From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.”

— John 1:16 (CEB)

January in Florida is a strange season. Friends up north are shoveling snow, and we’re debating whether we need a light jacket... because it dipped into the low 60s. Somewhere between Christmas cookies and sunscreen, a new year begins.

Before we jump into resolutions, diets, and gym memberships we’ll definitely start on Monday (which Monday is still up for discussion), let’s pause and give thanks.

This past year was a really good year for our church. We didn’t just serve our community—we walked beside them. We showed up with hope, grace, and open hearts. And while we were doing that, God had a way of working on us, too. Funny how that happens.

A Christmas Season Worth Celebrating

This Christmas season was something special. Worship was joyful, meaningful, and filled with the kind of holy moments that remind us why we gather. There was music, candlelight, laughter, kids doing their very best to sit still, and that familiar Christmas feeling that somehow shows up every year—right on time.

Thank you to everyone who made Christmas what it was. This church showed once again that we know

how to celebrate Jesus—with love, generosity, and just enough organized chaos to keep it interesting.

Resolutions... with Grace (and Flexibility)

Ah yes—New Year’s resolutions. The time of year when we promise ourselves we’ll eat better, move more, stress less, and maybe stop yelling at traffic on Tamiami Trail.

My hope for this year is simple: those whatever resolutions we make, we leave room for grace upon grace. Grace for the days we nail it. Grace for the days we forget what our resolution even was. Grace for ourselves and for each other.

God isn’t looking for perfection—just hearts that are open and willing. And good news: grace works even if you’re still holding a donut.

Reading the Bible—All Year Long (Yes, Even Leviticus)

One of the things I’m most excited about for 2026 is our church-wide “Reading the Bible in a Year” journey. This is an invitation for everyone—whether you’ve read the Bible cover to cover or are still figuring out where Habakkuk lives.

We’ll read together, learn together, and occasionally scratch our heads together. And that’s exactly how it’s supposed to work. We can’t wait to see how God uses Scripture to deepen our faith and strengthen our connections as a church family.

A Personal Word of Thanks

On a personal note, thank you to this church for the cards, notes, gifts, and kindness shared with my

family over the Christmas season. Your generosity truly humbled us.

We are incredibly grateful to be part of this community. It is a joy to serve alongside you, to laugh with you, and to walk into another year together—trusting that God is already at work.

Here's to a new year filled with grace, hope, and faith... and maybe a little less humidity. (We can pray.)

With gratitude and joy,

Pastor Mike

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

8am	Traditional Worship Service
9:30am	Contemporary Worship Service AND Kids Church (PK-5) #109
9:30am	Adult Sunday School #D
11am	Traditional Worship Service
4-6pm	Youth Group (gr 6-12) #D

WEDNESDAYS AT GULF COVE

Midweek Boost ~ meets with Pastor Mike at 12pm.

Pastor's Bible Study ~ meets at 4:30pm.

Jesus Rocks ~ Grades K-5 meet from 6-7:30pm.

Youth ~ Grades 6-12 meet from 6-7:30pm.

Praise Band Rehearsal ~ 6pm.



**The office is
closed until
Monday,
January 5, 2026**



THE EARP MEMORIAL HANDBELL CHOIR PRESENTS

A poster for "OCEAN VIBES Cruisin' with Ring Sarasota". It features a blue and white cruise ship sailing on blue waves. The text "OCEAN VIBES" is in large blue letters, and "Cruisin' with Ring Sarasota" is in orange and blue. Below that, it says "The area's premier handbell ensemble". To the right, it says "Ring Sarasota Season 16". At the bottom, it says "MARCH 8 - 4:00PM" and "Learn More" with a link to "https://www.RingSarasota.org".

GULF COVE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
1100 S MCCALL RD
PORT CHARLOTTE, FL 33981
TICKETS: \$10

Tickets are now available during the 8:00 and 11:00 services. Please see Sue Betz or any members of Bell Choir or Chancel Choir if you would like to buy tickets for this wonderful performance! Call or text Sue at 860.608.3686. PROCEEDS SUPPORT OUR CHOIRS.





What CAN you do?

Help Wanted in and around Gulf Cove Church

Liturgy Coordinator – We need a person who is able to assign scripture to liturgists for Sunday readings. If you are organized and can use a computer, this might be the job for you. We have many readers willing to volunteer, they just need to be put into a schedule. Thanks for considering this opportunity. Call the office if you would like to help.

Nurture Team – We are seeking individuals that feel called to check in on members of our congregation when they have been missing worship. A simple phone call will let us know if they are well or if they need some extra help or prayers. This is a weekly task and can be distributed to more than one person. If this sounds like a need you can fill, please contact the office or talk with Joyce Furtado at 941.830.0387.

Greeters/Ushers – sign-up at the back of the sanctuary for 8am and 9:30am services. Talk with Nancy Spaulding at 386.868.8604 for 11am service.

Hospitality – Help when you can- one week or one month. It's up to you! Make beverages first thing, set out goodies before and after 8am service, or clean up at the end of the morning. Sign-up in the back of the sanctuary or call the church office at 941.697.1747.

Barn Boys – Mowing and trimming – contact John Furtado at 941.830.0121.

First Impressions – Weeding and pruning – contact Ken Priest at 941.769.0581.



Englewood Helping Hand needs the following: bar soap, toilet paper, shelf stable or powdered milk, condiments, instant mashed potatoes, ramen noodles, rice, tuna, canned chicken, canned beans (kidney, black, refried, baked), canned pasta, canned chili, soups, peanut butter, cereal, or any shelf stable foods. Donations can be placed in the EHH bin in the Narthex entry. Please be sure items have not expired.



The Closet of Hope at Gulf Cove United Methodist Church offers free clothing for children and adults of all ages.

The Closet is open the first and third Saturdays of the month (except holidays), from

9:30am until 12pm. Donations can be brought to the Closet on Thursday mornings at 9:30am or when they are open on Saturdays. Anyone interested in helping with this outreach ministry should contact Sandy Palmer at 941.204.3322.



STEPHEN MINISTERS ~ If you or someone you know needs one-on-one, confidential, Christ-centered care due to grief, illness, caregiving stress, job loss, transitions, and more, contact Andy Frick, our Stephen Minister Leader at 520.309.0098 or andrewfrick30@gmail.com.

Stewardship

is heart work



"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

(Matthew 6:19-21)

NOVEMBER		2025 YTD
Spendable Income Received	38,313.72	394,274.21
Expenses	44,399.70	462,552.42
Surplus/Deficit	(6,085.98)	(68,277.21)
Reserve Funds Used	0	31,000
Designated Funds Received	9,477.72	223,190.57

2026 GIVING ENVELOPES ~ If you have not received your 2026 giving envelopes, please contact the office. The counting team appreciates your using them!

COMMUNION OFFERING ENVELOPES

Each month a different fund is chosen by our church leadership to receive these special gifts. If you wish to give above and beyond your usual tithe for January, the Communion Offering will be designated for Gulf Cove Ministries, as we are all invited to renew our commitment to God, our church and its ministries.

SECOND SUNDAY ~ SECOND MILE

GIVING is another opportunity to go above and beyond your normal giving to support the church. This collection always goes to our reserve fund, so that we may pay our bills when gifts and tithes will not cover our regular monthly expenses.



THANKSGIVING 2025 ~ We are pleased to report that our Thanksgiving Community Dinner was a huge success. Over three days, 128 volunteers prepared, delivered, and served over 450 meals, and donated over 150 meals to Englewood Meals on Wheels. We received many thank you cards from people on your behalf. Thank you to all. Your efforts were very much appreciated. This was a true testament to how our church and community serves as the hands and feet of Jesus.



THE BIG RED BUS Was Here!

Thank You, Gulf Cove UMC!

We are pleased to share with you that the recent blood drive resulted in 14 units of blood. Remember, each donation can save up to three lives so that means 42 patients could benefit from the lifesaving efforts of blood donors at Gulf Cove United Methodist Church. Please pass along our gratitude for their lifesaving efforts.



Charlotte Hallett	1/01
Jim Vanderford	1/04
Beth Leone	1/09
Samantha McVety	1/09
Heather Johnson	1/11
Zinnia Gray	1/13
Janice Botelho	1/13
Linda Thatcher	1/13
Patricia MacKenzie	1/16
Kari Sue Telles	1/18
Caleb Waterman	1/19
Gerri McGee	1/20
Dawna Stewart	1/21
Lorna Ryan	1/21
Dan Taylor	1/21
Cleo Grayden	1/23
Kathy Mortensen	1/24
Wayne Devens	1/24
Suzanne Ludwig	1/24
Al Crosby	1/24
Sandy Doty	1/24
Kelly Weaver	1/27
Cris Peterson	1/30
Pat Hitchcock	1/30
Jan Hahn	1/30
Ron Wolfe	1/31
Julie Thoman	1/31
Myra Ehnert	1/31



Dick & Susie Morrow	1/19
Joseph & Linda Coffey	1/28



JANUARY SERMON SERIES

January 4	<i>The Ultimate Fresh Start</i> Old Testament: Isaiah 43:1, 18-19 New Testament: 2 Corinthians 5:17-19 Rev. Patty Frick
January 11	<i>Right Under Their Nose</i> Matthew 2:1-3, 10-12; Matthew 3:13-17
January 18	<i>Behold The Lamb</i> John 1:29-42
January 25	<i>Caught Up in a Dream</i> Matthew 4:12-17