



Gulf Breezes

Monthly Newsletter of Gulf Cove United Methodist Church

Helping Everyone

EXPERIENCE EMBRACE ENGAGE

Jesus & Community

From the Pastor

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. — 1 John 4:7 (CEB)

February is a fascinating month in the life of the church. We move quickly from hearts and flowers to ashes and prayer, from Valentine's Day to Ash Wednesday. At first glance, those moments could not feel more different. One celebrates love with cards, candy, and flowers. The other invites us forward to receive ashes on our foreheads and hear the words, "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Yet when we look through the lens of Christ, these moments are not opposites at all. Instead, they speak to one another in powerful and meaningful ways.

Valentine's Day, for all its chocolate and charm, reminds us that love matters. Even with its strange history and imperfect symbols, it points to a deep human longing to be known, cherished, and connected. Ash Wednesday, which begins the season of Lent, reminds us what kind of love truly lasts. Lent is the forty-day season leading us toward Easter, a time when the church slows down to reflect, repent, and return to God. It is not about punishment or perfection, but about honesty—honesty about who we are, who God is, and how much we need grace. The ashes we receive are shaped like a cross, marking us not with shame but with hope. They remind us that we are fragile and finite, yet deeply loved by a God who meets us exactly where we are.

Seen together, Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday offer a meaningful invitation. One asks us to consider love; the other invites us to let that love be shaped by Christ. In Jesus, love is more than a feeling or a fleeting moment. It is patient and sacrificial. It tells the truth. It forgives. It shows up when things are hard. It lasts longer than candy, flowers, or even our best intentions. Lent gives us space to release what distracts us from that kind of love and to lean more fully into lives shaped by humility, compassion, and grace.

That Christ-shaped love is not meant to stay abstract or theoretical—it takes real form in the life of our community. On February 1, we will gather for a New Members Lunch with Pastor, a relaxed and welcoming opportunity to share a meal, ask questions, and learn more about the mission and ministry of Gulf Cove UMC. Whether you are new to the church or simply exploring your next step, this is a chance to connect, belong, and discover how God may be calling you to grow with us.

We also see this love lived out through our youth as they prepare for their summer mission trip. Our youth are stepping beyond comfort and convenience to serve others in Christ's name, and as they do, they are inviting the whole church to walk alongside them. This month, they will be hosting both a Youth Trivia Night and a Youth Group Car Wash—two fun, practical ways to support their mission while building community together. Whether you're answering trivia questions, getting your car cleaned, or simply offering encouragement, your participation helps form our youth as disciples who understand that faith is lived through service, generosity, and love in

action. When you support these efforts, you are investing in the next generation and the work God is already doing through them.

As we walk through February together, we are reminded that joy and humility belong side by side. Whether your days are filled with celebration or quiet reflection, laughter or weariness, know that you do not walk alone. Even when we are marked with ashes, we are also marked by grace. May this season draw us closer to Christ, deepen our love for one another, and prepare our hearts for the hope of Easter.

Blessings,

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 on Monday, February 16, 2026 for President's Day.



THE EARP MEMORIAL HANDBELL CHOIR PRESENTS



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 member of the Bell Choir if you would like to buy tickets for this wonderful performance! Call or text Sue at 860.608.3686.

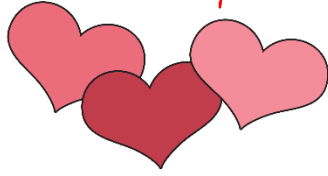
PROCEEDS SUPPORT OUR CHOIRS.





Scout Troop 776 Presents:

*A Valentine's Day
Breakfast*



Saturday, February 14

8-11am

**Gulf Cove United Methodist Church
1100 S McCall Rd, Port Charlotte**



Menu Includes:

- Pancakes
- Scrambled Eggs
- Bacon & Sausage
- Grits
- Fresh Fruit
- One Time Trip to the Omelet Bar
- Coffee, Tea & Milk
- Orange Juice & Apple Juice

Tickets: Available Sunday, February 8 or at the door.

- **\$15** - Adults
- **\$7** - Ages 5-11
- **FREE** - Children under 5

Bring your family and friends and enjoy a warm, hearty breakfast made with love. ❤️

**ASH WEDNESDAY
Wednesday, February 18**

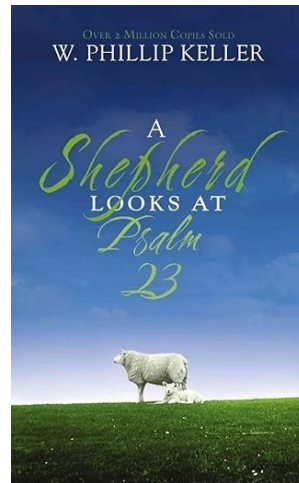


Drive-through imposition of ashes from 7am – 9am with free coffee. Evening worship service and imposition of ashes, 5pm in the sanctuary.

LENTEN STUDIES

SUNDAY MORNINGS - 11am –

12pm – Book Study



March 1, March 8, March 15, March 22 Facilitators: Steve and Pat Langford

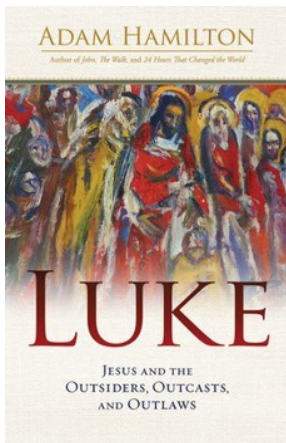
This 4-week book study includes weekly handouts and readings. The class will meet from 11am – 12pm in Room #109 on Sundays in March.

Please sign up at the back of the sanctuary by Sunday, February 15.

Books are available near the signup sheet for \$3.00. Please use the envelope provided. If we run out of books, we will order more.

(Continued on next page)

SUNDAY EVENINGS - 4:30PM – 6PM



Soup Supper and Video Study

February 22 – March 29,
excluding March 8.

Facilitators: Steve Langford,
Andy Frick, Patty Frick

Based on the Adam Hamilton
book *Luke: Jesus and the
Outsiders, Outcasts and
Outlaws*, this study will meet
on Sunday evenings during

Lent. We will begin with a light supper of soup and
bread, followed by our video and discussion time.
We will be done by 6pm and it should still be light
out! Please sign up so we know how many people to
expect.

It is not necessary to purchase the book, but if you
want to purchase one for yourself, it is available on
Amazon.



***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.

***Highest need**

UPDATE:

Liturgy Coordinator – Thank you to Barbara
Garafolo for taking over the traditional services
and Charlotte Halbert for continuing to cover the
contemporary service. We appreciate you and all
the liturgists.



**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
MINISTRY**

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

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

2025 ANNUAL GIVING STATEMENTS ~

Your annual giving statement for donations you made during 2025 were emailed on January 12. If you did not receive a copy but would like one, contact the church office to request one.

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 February, the Communion Offering will be designated for Englewood Helping Hand.**

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.

DECEMBER		2025 YTD
Spendable Income Received	61,988.01	456,262.22
Expenses	45,581.55	508,133.97
Surplus/Deficit	16,406.46	(51,871.75)
Reserve Funds Used	0.00	31,000.00
Other Funds Used to Cover Deficit		22,9904.68
Deficit after Reserves & Other Funds	16,406.46	2,032.93
Designated Funds Rec'd	5,761.52	228,952.09

February

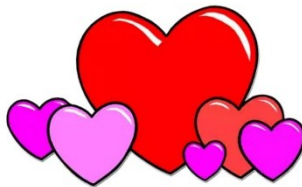
BIRTHDAYS

Judy Tomlin	2/4
Bob Ehnert	2/6
Randy Clarke	2/7
Dallis Walchle II	2/10
Jess Hollenbeck	2/12
Renee McVety	2/16
River Gray	2/17
Ralph Butts	2/19
Deb Crandall	2/19
Bill Bart	2/20
Cindy Freer	2/20
Mike Thonnerieux	2/24
Sue Pickell	2/24
Doug Corns	2/26
Sara Anne Reese	2/27
Mark Porter	2/28

February

ANNIVERSARIES

C.T. & Patty Twardzik	2/4
Randy & Beth Clarke	2/7
Derek & Sherry Hughes	2/14
Terry & Doris Hixson	2/14
Barbara Crosby & John Purdy	2/14
Sam & Becky Walters	2/21
Bill & Mary Ann Bart	2/25



FEBRUARY SERMON SERIES

February 1	<i>Getting Under Your Neighbor's Skin</i> Matthew 5:1-12
February 8	<i>Turn On The Lights!</i> Matthew 5:13-16
February 15	<i>Thin Spaces</i> Matthew 17:1-13
February 22	<i>Don't Settle for Half a Glass</i> Matthew 4:1-11