

Gulf Breezes

Monthly Newsletter of Gulf Cove United Methodist Church

Helping Everyone

EXPERIENCE EMBRACE ENGAGE

Jesus & Community

From the Pastor

Every year about this time I'm reminded of something interesting about how our culture celebrates Christian holidays.

Christmas gets the spotlight. The decorations are bigger, the music starts earlier, and the stores seem to glow for weeks. By the time Christmas finally arrives, most of us have heard Jingle Bell Rock enough times that we could probably perform it ourselves.

Then Easter rolls around.

You'll see a few pastel decorations, some chocolate bunnies, and maybe a display of plastic eggs. Compared to Christmas, Easter can almost feel like the quieter holiday.

But in the life of the church, the story is really the other way around.

Christmas tells us that Christ was born.

Easter tells us that Christ is alive.

The resurrection is the moment when everything Jesus taught and promised suddenly becomes real. The empty tomb reminds us that fear doesn't get

the final word. Brokenness doesn't get the final word. Even death itself doesn't get the final word.

That's why Easter has always been the great celebration of the church.

And every year we get to celebrate that hope in ways both meaningful and joyful. Sometimes that looks like worship and prayer. Sometimes it looks like a field full of kids racing after plastic eggs.

If you've ever helped with our Easter egg hunt, you know the scene: baskets bouncing, kids sprinting like Olympic athletes, and volunteers wondering how so many eggs managed to disappear so quickly. But those moments matter, because they create simple connection points with our neighbors and families in the community.

We see those connections happening in other ways too. Recently our building was filled with the beautiful music of the Sarasota Bell Ensemble, reminding us that even our space can be a gift when it becomes a place where people gather and experience something meaningful together.

And we're looking forward to another connection point this year with BBQ for a Purpose.

Now let's be honest—barbecue has always been one of the church's unofficial spiritual gifts. But the heart behind this event is bigger than great

food. It's about expanding the reach of our church and creating another place where neighbors can connect, conversations can begin, and people can experience the kind of welcome that reflects the love of Christ.

Not because we want to look polished or impressive.

Not because we have shiny eggs to show off.

But because the table of Christ has always been a place where everyone is welcome.

And in many ways, that's exactly what Easter reminds us.

God bringing life where there once was none.

God gathering people who may never have expected to belong.

God reminding the world that hope is alive.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Mike

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

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

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.



OFFICE CLOSED

Friday, April 3 &

Monday, April 6.

HOLY WEEK

Thursday, April 2 – Maundy Thursday

Simple “Last Supper” Service & Potluck at 5pm in the sanctuary.

Friday, April 3 – Good Friday

Tenebrae Service in the sanctuary at 6pm.



Saturday, April 4 – Easter Festival -

11am – 1pm.

Egg Hunt, Activities, Food for kids and their families. Volunteers arrive at 9:30am.

Sunday, April 5 – Easter Sunday

6:45 am - Easter Sunrise Services

Bring your lawn chair and bug spray.

8am & 11am Traditional Easter Service

9:30am Contemporary Easter Service

Continental Breakfast will be available between services.



Photo Op ~ Bring real or artificial flowers to decorate our cross out front. Take pictures in your Easter finest!



THANK YOU FROM

Sue Betz, Traditional Music Director:



God is good. We came together to share in his joy with music. I am thankful for His guidance and blessings. I am grateful and thankful for our church for coming together for a wonderful afternoon of bell music performed brilliantly by members of Ring Sarasota. With gratitude, I thank all the people who worked tirelessly to create advertisements, make the 350 tickets, to sell the tickets, to get the sanctuary ready, parking, food preparation, hospitality during the performance, and the members of Ring Sarasota. This was a true testament to GCUMC’s commitment to bringing the community together to share God’s grace and glory. Thank You, Jesus.

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.

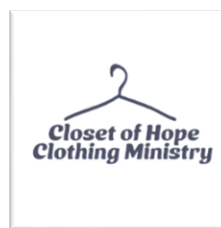
HELP WANTED!



What CAN you do?

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.



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.

United Methodist South West Florida District

Lay Servant Ministries upcoming classes for all UMC Laity. Sign up NOW!

For more information CONTACT:

Rev. Ken DeWalt, Co-Chair kendewalt1@gmail.com;
Bobbi Ballardene, Co-Chair tumcnorthport@gmail.com;
Dr. Pamela Craig, Manatee County church contact and Instructor pamelascraig@gmail.com; OR
Barbara Patton, Lee County Instructor
Barbara-patton@comcast.net.

All classes 10 hours long, \$5 registration fee, purchase the text before class, three tracks of certification after the basic introductory class: Lay Servant, Lay Speaker, Lay Minister.

Each One A Minister: Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts, 10 Hours

Required Book: Each One A Minister, William J. Carter

Mondays, 6:00 – 8:00 VIA ZOOM, Course Dates: April 13, 20, 27; May 4, 11

Register before April 12, 2026, by emailing Pamela Craig at pamelascraig@gmail.com. Include your name, email, and telephone/text number, along with any questions you might have. Registration fee - \$5.00. Send check made out to Pamela Craig (instructor) and mailed to 6507 Drewrey's Bluff, Bradenton, FL 34203

Living Our United Methodist Beliefs, 10 Hours

Required Book: The United Methodist Way: Living Our Beliefs By Kenneth L. Carder
Mondays, 6:00 – 8:00 pm VIA ZOOM, Course Dates: June 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29.

Register before May 31, 2026, by emailing Pamela Craig at pamelascraig@gmail.com. Include your name, email, and telephone/text number, along with any questions you might have. Registration fee - \$5.00. Send check made out to Pamela Craig and mailed to 6507 Drewrey's Bluff, Bradenton, FL 34203

TEAM CUBA REPORT ~ Funds were provided to Dan Christopherson for the Southwest District Mission Program. The money covers both our semi-annual support for each of our sister churches, and building a new roof on the Nicaro church. As of the end of February, the Team Cuba account had \$14,653, but after these recent transfers for semi-annual support and the roof, only \$5,854 remains. It needs to be remembered that what we do helps not only the church, but also their entire community.

Several times during March, Cuba's electrical power infrastructure completely failed, and the entire island of 11 million people has been in a blackout. Their government continues to warn of additional power failures.

Joan Priest said that her friends from Cuba are telling her that all their refrigerated items are spoiled. John McGuire noted that our Frank Pais and Nicaro sister churches have generators, so they are able to keep their food from spoiling. It costs about \$5,000 to provide a church with a whole-building solar system. Our sister church in Nicaro still needs a whole-building solar system as well as a cistern (\$1,500).



FLOOR BY THE FOOT

This drive to help pay for our new flooring throughout the church is going strong. Pledges taken through April 12. Additional cards are available in the back of the sanctuary.



PIG PICKIN' FUNDRAISER
 Friday, April 10,
 11:30am – 6:30pm.
 Tickets \$20/plate available
 at church, online, and at the
 door. Volunteers needed.



Friday & Saurday
April 24-25,
8am-2pm.
 Donations can be brought to
 the barn on Thursdays 8-
 10am. Please, no electronics,
 furniture or clothing.

CRAFTY LADIES CLOSED ~ Thank you,
 Ladies, for your many years of service! Although
 they are technically disbanded, they still have
 some inventory. They will be open for final sales
 at the same time the men have their Barn Sale –
 Friday and Saturday, April 24-25, 8am-2pm.

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

*All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is
 reaching more and more people may cause
 thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.*

-2 Corinthians 4:15.

FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ~

THANK YOU

This congregation – YOU – have been so faithful
 in your giving and in your response to our
 fundraising. Thank you!

Because of you, we are able to reach out and
 support our community through events like
 feeding families at the Myakka River Elementary
 STEAM night, where over 350 people were fed,
 with extra food going to Englewood Meals on
 Wheels to feed even more people in our
 community.

As we look forward, we expect many hundreds of
 children and their families to join us at the Easter
 Festival. These types of outreach events are made
 possible by your giving, so again, thank you so
 much. You are loved!

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 April, the Communion Offering is
 designated for the Conference Special.**

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.

	FEBRUARY	2026 YTD
Spendable		
Income		
Received	33,493.40	74,686.72
Expenses	45,084.93	90,168.29
Surplus/Deficit	(11,591.53)	(15,481.57)
Reserve Funds		
Used	0.00	0.00
Designated		
Funds Rec'd	26,414.57	33,559.73



Phyllis Roushar	4/2
Pat Meyer	4/2
Ken Priest	4/3
Julie Whitford	4/4
Hilary Chaffee	4/5
Patty Twardzik	4/7
Jeremy Johnson	4/7
Allan Ahonen	4/12
DeAnna Crandall	4/14
John Zink	4/14
Quinn Gray	4/18
Julie Anne Kern	4/20
Penny Wolfe	4/20
Donna Palmer	4/22
Lynne Gill	4/24
Steve Langford	4/24
John Kaiser	4/24
Roran Egan	4/26
Dawn Eckbreth	4/26
Barbara Indermaur	4/27
Mark Lyon	4/27

Dick & Theresa Peterson	4/4
Samuel & Jackie Carter	4/24
Seth & Dawna Stewart	4/27

APRIL SERMON SERIES	
April 5	<i>He's Not Dead Anymore</i> Matthew 28:1-10
April 12	<i>Sunday Dinner</i> Luke 24:13-35
April 19	<i>Last Words</i> Luke 24:36-49
April 26	<i>The Blame Game</i> John 9:1-12



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