

1st Methodist Church Weekly Update

March 12, 2021



If you haven't seen this special message from Mike, please take a moment to watch this important video message and then share it with your family and friends by copying the link and pasting it to the social media channel of your choice. We continue to encourage you to light your candles and share them with us. Please remember to send us a picture at mediaministry@whatis1st.com.



Friendship Ministry Callers

We are looking for volunteers to be a part of 1st Church's "Friendship Ministry Callers," an important component of ConneXions.
ConneXions is the new faith initiative which Pastor Mike announced in early 2021. He challenged us all with the question "How do we become the Church of Jesus Christ, as Jesus intended us to be?" Surely, outreach and kindness play a large role. Mainly because of Covid, there is an urgent need to stay in touch with members of our spiritual



family. Many of these folks are not able to attend weekly services yet yearn for fellowship and spiritual nourishment. Would you be willing to make check-in calls again for the Church? We are beginning a telephone ministry, hoping to get commitments for callers who can make 10 - 15 calls at least every six months, if not every quarter, so no one slips through the 1st Church cracks. Please consider if you are able to serve the faith community in this action. If so, please contact Gail Sexton at gail.sexton@whatis1st.com or 941-639-3842.

Introducing Today Matters...



A new ministry is coming to 1st Church! It is "Today Matters Mental Health Ministries". We are all living in a different time in our world and so many people have been impacted by the pandemic with isolation, the loss of loved ones, reduced earnings, etc. Our mission statement starts with being "the voice for the silent" and we know that mental health does not discriminate against age or gender.

Our program is open to those who might live with various mental health illnesses, caretakers, friends and family. Our hope is that you will reach out to anyone that you think would find this ministry beneficial and ask them to attend.

We have special guest speakers planned on various topics who will discuss their personal trauma that brought them to their knees before rising to make a difference. We all share the same passion and that is to break down the stigma and have open conversations about mental health and how it affects so many.

Our program will begin on Saturday, March 20th at 4:00 p.m. in the Life Center. The program will be every month on the 3rd Saturday of the month.

We look forward to sharing this time with everyone in an uplifting way to say "YES we are all in this together" and "no one is alone in their struggles".

We ask that you pray for the success of this ministry and our ability to reach so

many who are in need and hurting. We hope to you will join us for our kickoff event on March 20th! Visit our website, whatis1st.com/todaymatters to learn more about this amazing ministry!

Blessings,

Briyin Butgereit Program Pastor

Bring on the Sweets!

Easter candy donations are being collected for our Resurrection Day services. Bins will be available in the Fellowship for your donations. We greatly appreciate your support and participation of this outreach!

Community Outreach Opportunity

1st Church Family would you like to be the voice of a child who greatly needs your help? Rick Sloan, the Charlotte County Recruiter for Guardian Ad Litem is looking for volunteers who are willing to advocate for children who are abandoned, abused and neglected by no fault of their own and end up in the child welfare system. All volunteers are trained free of charge and the training is currently done online. One only needs to have a heart for these children, an ability to learn and 10-12 hours per month to volunteer.

If you would like to help in this worthy cause, please contact Rick Sloan at **Rick.Sloan@gal.fl.gov** or by phone at 941-467-4663.

United Methodist Children's Home Virtual Open House March 27th

With Covid restrictions in place, the Florida United Methodist Children's Home (FUMCH) had to cancel all in person "Open Campus" events scheduled since March 2020. These events would give guests the opportunity to tour the campus, meet the residents and see the mission they support firsthand. This year, the Children's Home will be going virtual, offering a live tour via live stream to all their supporters. The event will feature an update from their President/CEO, testimonials, music from the children and a virtual tour of the home. We encourage you to tune in on March 27, as the FUMCH Open House will premiere at 10 a.m. on their Facebook page, facebook.com/fumch. It will also be available on their YouTube channel and website, https://www.fumch.org, following the event. To access the feed, please click the bold links provided in this article.

Purple Passion Project

For the past two decades, you have supported our youth's mission program each Lenten season. From purple ribbons and quarters to purple envelopes, your faithfulness has helped to send our students on trips to help spread the love of Christ by helping to rebuild homes, business and small communities across our country. This year, the goal is to reach out to those affected by the riots last summer in Kenosha,



Wisconsin. The Purple Passion Project allows you, their church family, to not only show prayerful support, but financial as well. This Sunday, you will see special purple contribution envelopes at our giving stations in the Life Center. Please stop and pick one up before you leave service, pray for this mission and give generously out of love for Christ and our students during this Lenten season. Online giving is also available for this project by going to **whatis1st.com** and clicking our online giving button or using the "giving" option in our Church app. Your gifts are an investment in the spiritual lives of our teens, and we greatly appreciate your generosity.

Word from Worship

Hey 1st Church friends;

Have you noticed how many cars have been filling the parking lot lately? Activities and events have been increasing on our campus. New and returning groups and Bible studies both in our buildings and "under the trees" are filling the church calendar. We are blessed! Other new events are in final planning stages - like our new mental health worship service, **Today Matters**. This meaningful, and very important, service kicks off on Saturday, March 20 at 4 pm in the Life Center. All are welcome to this first service, so please check it out to to experience this much needed ministry under the direction of Briyin Butgereit, who will share his story with us this Saturday. I'm sure we've all had loved ones who have dealt with emotional situations during times of life stresses, like worldwide Pandemics maybe!? Please be in prayer for this amazing ministry opportunity.

As you may know, we have a new prayer ministry every Thursday at noon in our sanctuary. During our time together we share experiences and stories about our prayer life, though you don't need to talk if you don't want to. We pray for others who need prayer as well as share favorite scripture or prayers we love and depend on. Please stop by and check us out! Remember - we need to pray hardest when it's hardest to pray. Pray like Jesus, brutally honest and completely vulnerable. And, pray for God's will to be done.

Please ask me if you have questions.

Praying for you!

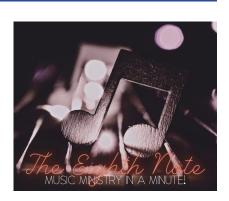
Rosie Young

Worship Coordinator

The Eighth Note – Music Ministry in a Minute!

Greetings Everyone,

This week I would like to express our deep appreciation for our church musician and accompanist Dolly Smith who has decided to take a step back from playing the piano weekly. She instead will be blessing us from time to time with her gift of music on Sunday mornings. So please take a moment to email Dolly a note of appreciation for her many years of faithful service to First United Methodist Church.



Dolly's Email:

dolly@whatis1st.com

Soli Deo Gloria! David Bellows Director of Music Ministries

This Sunday's Music – March 14, 2021 – 11:00AM Service

Prelude: Largo – G. F. Handel

Offertory: I Lift Up Mine Eyes – A. Pote

Barbara Cotner, Flute and Jerri Marsee, Solo

Postlude: Prelude and Fugue in B flat Major, BWV 560 – J. S. Bach

Scroll down for more of *The Bridge*

Homebuilders Small Group to Return

Homebuilders is starting back up in March, and will be on Tuesday evenings from 6-8pm in fellowship hall. This program is geared towards young couples or families with kids. Childcare will be provided. We'll be diving into ALPHA's Marriage Course starting on March 20. For any questions or to register for the group, reach out to jordan@whatis1st.com

1st Church RV'ers Outing

Nine couples from our church will be RV camping (tents are also welcome) in March at Hardee Lakes County Park, Bowling Green, FL. We will arrive on March 22nd and depart on March 26th. If you would like to join us, contact Peter Gillen at **gooddecision@msn.com** or call him at 941.661.8367 by March 8.

Media Deadlines

As we continue to move back to in-person for our Bible studies, small groups and church events, we want to encourage you to promote your events and outreach programs in our weekly newsletter, *The Bridge*. All articles and media submissions must be received by 5 pm on Wednesday. Recording times are limited and must be scheduled **no less** than two weeks prior to your desired promo date. To schedule a recording or submit an article for *The Bridge*, please email **christa@whatis1st.com**.

Habitat for Humanity Apostles' Build Project

We are one of 9 churches working with Habitat for Humanity to build a home in Port Charlotte for Eugene Rihl, a single dad and his two year old son Carson. Eugene is a marine mechanic and is very excited about realizing his dream as the Apostles Build homeowner for 2021. Our commitment is to provide volunteers and to raise \$4,200 to help with costs. On January 10th and 17th many of us were able to write a blessing on 2x4s which will be used



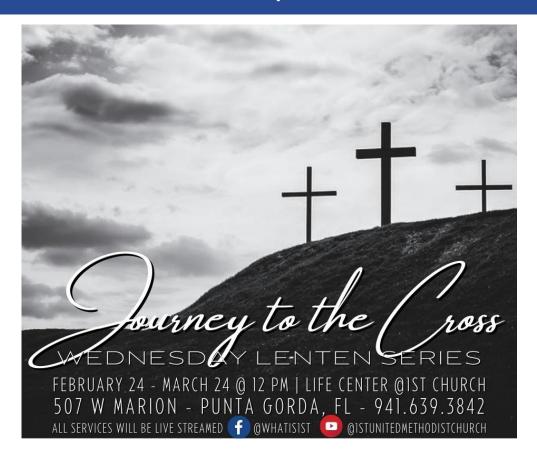
for the interior walls. Twelve 1st Church volunteers worked on the home Saturday, January 30th. Donations are welcome. Please indicate 'Apostles Build' on your offering. For more information, call Wayne Sharp at 612-867-3017or **sharpww@me.com**.

Higher Education Scholarship Birthday Box

The Scholarship Committee would like for our Bridge readers to remember the "Birthday Box" donation program with an opportunity to contribute to the higher education scholarship fund for our future recipients. During the month of your birthday, consider donating one dollar for every year old that you are. For example, if you are 50 years old, you would donate \$50. If you desire to financially support this program, you can drop off your donation to the Birthday Box located in the church office foyer. Also, there are Birthday Box envelopes located in the Life Center on the information table. Just place your donation in the Birthday Box envelope and place in the collection basket. May you have a happy birthday by donating a blessing to a future recipient!

FOLLOW US & JOIN US THIS SUNDAY LIVE AT 9:15 & 11 AM ONLINE ON FACEBOOK, YOUTUBE AND WHATIS1ST.COM

Scroll down for Worship Service information



Praise in the Park

Join us this Sunday at 8 am for Praise in the Park! Open to everyone, this is your opportunity to join us



for "in person" worship as we enjoy God's scenery from the lawn of the beautiful Gilchrist Park Pavilion, weather permitting of course. Please plan to bring your lawn chairs and/or blankets, and, yes, we will be asking you to practice social distancing. Don't forget to join our "Praise in the Park" group on our Church App! Please make sure you are connected with us through the app or through social media, as we will

be keeping you posted for any changes to our worship schedule in case of stormy weather!

See you Sunday for Praise in the Park!

Join us for Worship In-Person This Sunday!

If you are planning on attending our services please remember the following:

- Masks are required at all times.
- Temperatures will be taken at check-in.
- Social distancing is being enforced per CDC recommendations.
- Families may sit together, but please leave three seats between you and others not in your family.
- If you are feverish or not feeling well, we ask that you stay home and join us online on our Facebook and YouTube channels.

At this time, you may only enter the Life Center through themain entrance facing the Fellowship Hall courtyard. All other exterior doors will be locked, with the Life Center opening at 9 am. Please refrain from entering the Life Center building if you have not been fully checked in by one of our hosts.

Please note, both of our services will be broadcast LIVE to our members and guests at home through our website, whatis1st.com, as well as our Facebook and Youtube channels. With time constraints and necessary lighting changes for our live feed, we do ask everyone to take a seat directly after you check in for your safety.

As a reminder, all 11 am attendees, please remain in your vehicles until we are given the all clear after sanitization has been completed.

We'll see you Sunday!

Opportunities

Media Volunteers Needed!

Our Media Team is need of several individuals to help in the media booth with slides and cameras on a rotating schedule. No experience is required,



and full training will be provided. We also need two to three people to serve as hosts for our online services. Hosts are responsible to greet our answer questions and provide viewers, information about our church app, online giving and prayer team in the chat area on both our Facebook broadcast YouTube and channel. Training will be provided as well. If you are interested in any of these positions, please email Christa, christa@ whatis1st.com.



Crafters Group

Do you crochet, knit or draw? Crafters needed for our weekly crafting sessions every Wednesday 1:30-3:30 in Room 9. Some projects we have created in the past:

- Cards for our own CARE MINISTRY to use to encourage others in our church and community
- · Crochet Octopus toys Donated to Galisano Children's Hospital, Fort Myers
- Baby Blankets Donated to Careline Pregnancy Center in Port Charlotte
- · Christmas Cards Donated to the Veterans Home, Port Charlotte We look forward to seeing you there! We are always looking for new ideas, so feel free to share your favorite patterns with us!

For more information, please contact Diane Houston, 941-740-1016, houstonfla04@yahoo.com or Rosalie Wilford, (941) 639-6198.

Get Connected!



Pastor Mike recently introduced the new accountability small group ministry, "Connexions." This is your opportunity to connect with other Christ followers, to hold each other accountable in your daily walks with Christ and implement some of the same practices and worship habits developed by Methodist founder. Connexions will challenge you and help build stronger relationships with

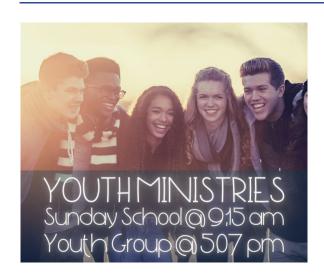
other believers. If you haven't signed up to be a part of this next step at 1st Church, we encourage you to do so today. Please send an email to Gail Sexton, **gail@whatis1st.com** or call 941.239.3842, ext. 207.

2021 Bible Reading Schedules



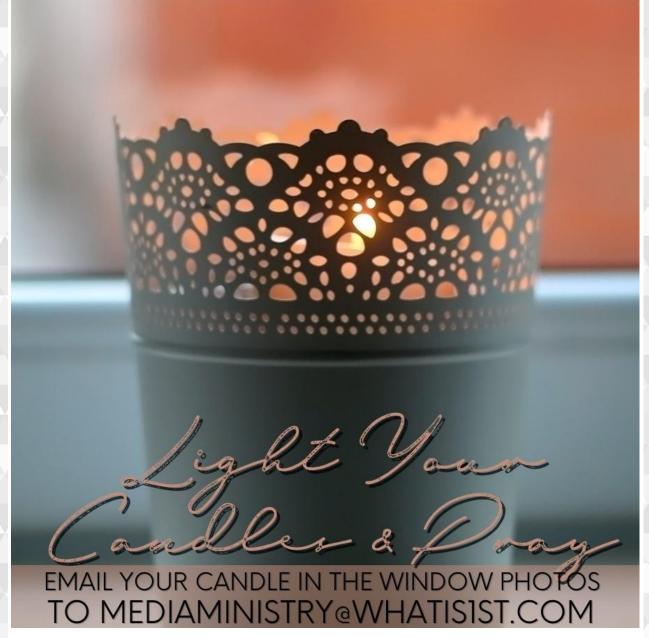
We want to encourage you to join us as we once again read through the Bible. **Reading calendars** are available for download and printing on our website, whatis1st.com/bible2021, and hard copies are available in the Life Center. Start your new year

off right by committing to read God's Word!

















Our Office Hours are Monday - Thursday from 9 am to 4 pm 507 W Marion Avenue, Punta Gorda 33950 941.639.3842 - whatis1st.com

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