

1st Methodist Church Weekly Update

March 19, 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.



Today Matters Mental Health Ministries

Saturday, March 20 4:00 pm in the Life Center 1st United Methodist Church 507 West Marion Avenue, Punta Gorda

Connecting the mind, body and soul embraced through faith, empathy and dignity by removing the stigma of mental health.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

LTHUMENETARES Visit whatis1st.com/todaymatters for more information or call 863.244.6289



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.

Bring on the Sweets!

Easter candy donations are being collected for our Resurrection Day services. Bins will be available in the Fellowship for your bags of individually wrapped 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

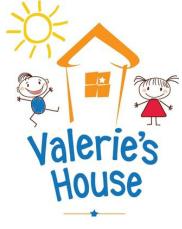
For the past two decades, you have supported our youth's mission program each Lenten season. From purple ribbons and quarters to purple envelopes, your faithfulness has helped to send our students on trips to help spread the love of Christ by helping to rebuild homes, business and small communities across 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.

Valerie's House Update

On the 1st and 3rd Monday night of each month our church hosts Valerie's House. This is a unique Grief Program for kids ages 4 - 18 who have recently lost a parent. Currently we have 6 small groups meeting serving approximately 21 Charlotte County families. Any given week we will have 30 or more children and often their caregiver(s) attendance at the meetings. This is such a blessing for these children and their caregivers to be able to learn more about their



grief and share with others who have also experienced this type of loss.

We want to thank the dozen so facilitators and mentors who regularly help us run this program. We want to thank you, the members of 1st church, for partnering with Valerie's House to use 6 classrooms for small groups, along with the gym and playground for this vital program. We also want to thank all of you who have donated teddy bears for these children, they love them!! We are now asking for journals to be donated. We want each of our grieving children to be

able to use journals as a way to express their grief and record some of the daily struggles. This tool will help them immensely as they begin to process these new and challenging emotions they face on a daily basis. Consider purchasing a journal of any kind and placing it in the Valerie's House Teddy Bear box located in Lenox Hall by the missions bulletin board. Thanks again for your support and continued prayers for the Valerie's House Children.

Word from Worship

Greetings 1st Church --

Hard to believe that Easter Sunday is about 2 weeks away! Even though it's a very busy time at church, I am happy with all the planning, setting up, scheduling volunteer help, etc etc, when I remember the situation during last year's Lenten and Easter season. Do you remember? No services! No Easter Sunrise, or formal in-church worship of any kind. Only a world wide pandemic could do that! It was however, the beginning of our online worship-- which has grown tremendously in the past year. We have been blessed in spite of the roadblocks we've had to overcome. God is so good!

Things have had to change somewhat; no services in the sanctuary, no sitting close to each other, no hugs, and no doughnuts in Fellowship Hall. We no longer take attendance by signing in the "black attendance books". As you've experienced, we have volunteers signing you in when you arrive, on laptops. I realize that sometimes the computer is "slow " - or there is a lineup of people - though we try very hard to keep things moving as quickly as possible so you can be seated. You can help this process by preregistering before you arrive. Then it's a quick temperature check and no delay. Name tags also help us to get the correct spelling of names. We thank you for your patience and cooperation.

We've all been uplifted by Pastor Mike and Bob's messages about prayer. Our RPM prayer team has been sharing ideas on effective prayer. Everyone has different situations, but today we discussed setting up a special place to pray, like a closet, small room or a large living area if you have it. More importantly, we've talked about things that can keep us from prayer time. Sometimes it's physical problems/pain, or even busyness. Maybe we think God might not be listening. But God is waiting for us. Whether we're in a small closet, walking in the woods, or sitting in a chair in your living room, God is waiting. Let His love wash over you. You can come as you are. No matter what's happening in your life, pray with humility, asking God for His mercy. Colossians 4:2 : Devote yourself to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.

Have a blessed week. I'm praying for you! Rosie Young, Worship Coordinator

The Eighth Note – Music Ministry in a Minute!

Greetings Everyone,

Happy St. Patrick's Day!

St. Patrick was a fifth century Christian Missionary and Bishop in Ireland who is credited with bring Christianity to the Irish. At the age of sixteen, he was captured by Irish pirates and forced into to slavery in Ireland for six years before he was able



to escape. After arriving home, he was educated and ordained into the priesthood. He felt called to return to Ireland as a Christian Missionary, where he established over 300 churches and converted many to the Christian Faith. St. Patrick is credited with using the three leafed shamrock to teach the Irish the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

Here is a hymn attributed to St. Patrick:

I Bind Unto Myself Today

I bind unto myself today the strong name of the Trinity by invocation of the same, the Three in One and One in Three.

I bind this day to me forever, by power of faith, Christ's incarnation, his baptism in the Jordan river, his death on the cross for my salvation, his bursting from the spiced tomb, his riding up the heavenly way, his coming at the day of doom, I bind unto myself today.

I bind unto myself today the power of God to hold and lead, God's eye to watch, God's might to stay, God's ear to hearken to my need, the wisdom of my God to teach, God's hand to guide, God's shield to ward, the word of God to give me speech, God's heavenly host to be my guard.

Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me, Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me. Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger, Christ in hearts of all that love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

I bind unto myself the name, The strong name of the Trinity By invocation of the same, The Three in One and One in Three. Of whom all nature has creation, Eternal Father, Spirit, Word. Praise to the Lord of my salvation; Salvation is of Christ the Lord! AMEN.

Soli Deo Gloria! David Bellows Director of Music Ministries

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 23. 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

FEBRUARY 24 - MARCH 24 @ 12 PM | LIFE CENTER @1ST CHURCH 507 W MARION - PUNTA GORDA, FL - 941.639.3842 ALL SERVICES WILL BE LIVE STREAMED F @WHATISIST O @1STUNITEDMETHODISTCHURCH

ourney to the

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 the**main 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 viewers, answer questions and provide information about our church app, online giving and prayer team in the chat area on both our broadcast Facebook and YouTube 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!



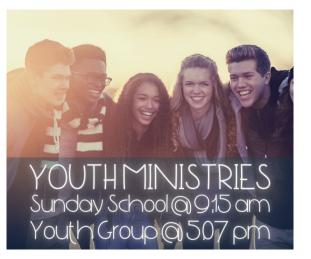
Pastor Mike recently introduced the new accountability small group ministry, "Connexions." This is your opportunity to connect with other Christ followers, to hold each other accountable in your daily walks with Christ and implement some of the same practices and worship habits developed by Methodist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

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		2021 Day		
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a Epokiel 1-3: John 1				
a Ezak 4-4; Paalm 62; John 2				
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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!







EMAIL YOUR CANDLE IN THE WINDOW PHOTOS TO MEDIAMINISTRY@WHATISIST.COM

Woeship with us live Every Sunda MENIAM 8 am Praise in the Park (1) the Gilchrist Park Pavilion CAMERA OPERATORS. VISUAL TECHS 9:15 am Contemporary F VIRTUAL GREET 11 am Traditional EMAIL CHRISTA@WHATIS1ST.COM FOR INFO Live in the Life Center & Online whatisIst.com 🗧 @whatisIst 🕞 @lstunitedmethodistchurch Children's & Youth Sunday School at 9:15 am +++ Ways To **...**0 WEBSITE ACH WITHDRAWAL WHATISIST.COM CALL 941.639.3842 TO SET UP **TUESDAYS AT 9 AM** EMAIL PRAYERTEAM@WHATISIST.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION BY MAIL IST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH BILL PAY CONTACT YOUR FINANCIAL 07 W MARION AVENUE INSTITUTION FOR INSTRUCTIONS PUNTA GORDA, FL 33950 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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