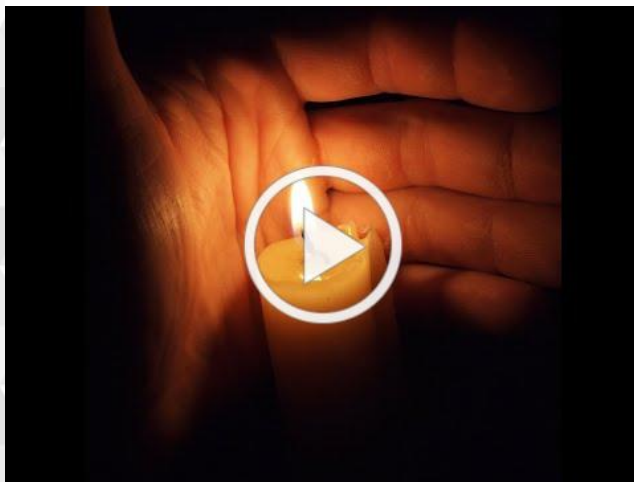




April 16, 2021



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@what1st.com.



**TODAY
MATTERS
MENTAL
HEALTH
MINISTRIES
ANNOUNCES**

**THE OPERATION 22 TO ZERO HERO MOBILE
TO ARRIVE IN PUNTA GORDA APRIL 17TH**
{Offers Hope to Service Members, Veterans and First Responders}

"Today Matters Mental Health Ministries," a new program, whose mission is to help remove the stigma about mental health by connecting the mind,

spirit, body and to be the voice for the silent, has invited Michele Ladd and the Operation 22 to Zero Hero Mobile to participate in the Today Matters Ministry on April 17th.

“We are very excited Ms. Ladd and the National Veteran Resources organization will take part in our ministry,” said Briyin Butgereit. The Hero Mobile will be parked in front of the Life Center on the church’s campus.

Since September 11, 2018, the Hero Mobile has traveled to more than 30 States and more than 85,000 miles reaching thousands of heroes. Their mission is to offer hope and help for Service Members, Veterans and First Responders. They do this by traveling the country in the Operation 22 to ZERO Hero Mobile meeting America's heroes face to face, sharing their stories and finding local resources if they need help. Their goal is to reduce suicide by letting them know they care and that they are not alone!

Please come and support the Veterans and First Responders and invite anyone that you feel would find this event beneficial to them.

The service will be held on April 17th at 4:00 on the campus of the 1st United Methodist Church/Life Center, Punta Gorda. For information call 863-244-6289/ visit **www.whatis1st.com** and click on the Today Matters logo.

24/7 Prayer
MAY 13 - 23
SIGN UP AT WHATIS1ST.COM/PRAY247
KICKS OFF FOLLOWING OUR PRAYER MEETING
MAY 13 AT 6 PM IN THE SANCTUARY

Word from Worship

Greetings 1st Church friends-

I pray everyone has had a wonderful week. We have been blessed with beautiful weather with sunshine and even a little rain this week. The past Sunday worship service in the Park was canceled because of the weather forecast, so please check the website or online messages in the future for those situations.

Thank you to everyone who is checking in online for their attendance. And don't forget name tags, either the magnetic ones or hand written options. Our 10 day , 24-7 Prayer journey will begin on May 13th. Please pray about this incredible opportunity to be part of this amazing experience. Sign up sheets will be available this Sunday at worship, or you can sign up online for one or more hours of prayer. More info will be available and I will share my prayer experiences in upcoming Bridge articles. Prayer has changed my life and prayer has saved my life! I realize this is a huge effort, but I know the results will be even greater. And by the way, everything I've read about 24-7 prayer rooms say that the overnight hours are the very best! Just saying! Please sign up for your favorite times and help pray for a successful prayer campaign. If you have questions, feel free to call me.

I'm praying for you!

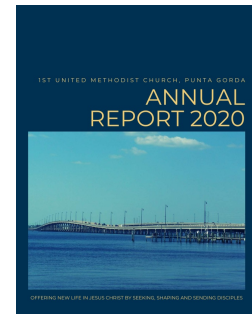
Rosie Young

Worship Coordinator

rosie.young@whatis1st.com

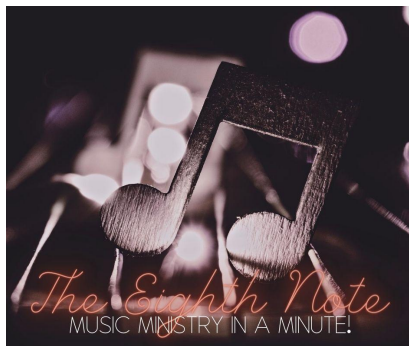
2020 Annual Report is Now Available!

The 2020 Annual Report is now available online. Click the link below to access your copy. Thank you for your faithfulness and support throughout the past year. We look forward to even greater things in the year to come!



[Click Here for our 2020 Annual Report](#)

The Eighth Note – Music Ministry in a Minute!



Greetings Everyone,

Do you know the famous hymn written by Charles Wesley in 1739 that didn't make it into our Methodist hymnals in a form we would recognize until 1935?!?!?

The hymn is "Christ The Lord Is Risen Today", which was first published under the title "Hymn for Easterday" in Charles Wesley's *Hymns and Sacred Poems, 1739*. It originally had eleven stanzas (this is back when people went to church all day) and no Alleluias (church could be very serious business back then). The British Methodist Hymnal adopted the hymn in 1831 with "Hallelujahs" added to the text. The American Methodist Hymnal adopted the hymn in 1849. It was not until 1935 that the American Methodist Hymnal changed the "Hallelujahs" to "Alleluias" and paired the text to the tune we know today, "Easter Hymn".

Soli Deo Gloria!

David Bellows

Director of Music Ministries

This Sunday's Music – April 18, 2021 – 11:00AM Service

Prelude: Air For The G String

J.S. Bach



Join us to Celebrate & Be Heard ! Mental Health Awareness Walk



Saturday, May 1, 2021

9 - 11 a.m.

@

Laishley Park



*Guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs
Pet friendly/kid friendly event • Please follow social distancing guidelines*

There will be a brief program where community members share their inspiring stories.
Then, we'll embark on a scenic 1/2 mile walk through our beautiful
Harbor Walk in effort to raise awareness for mental health.

**FREE T-shirts to first 100 walkers
FREE refreshments & snacks • Community information tables
Honor Beads • Raffle Prizes • #AntiStigma rocks • And more...**

No registration necessary; we hope to see you there!

Alpha Moves Forward

The Alpha series has just concluded its spring session. The program ran from February through April on campus. Due to the pandemic and having to adhere to safety measures, the ministry selected only nine from the many who had

signed up to attend. Hosting this first series was Walt and Beth Howell with hospitality for the group being led by Kathy Kresge.

It is the hope of Alpha to open up to all who desire to attend in September through November on Wednesday evenings for the next series. Many ask what Alpha is. There isn't a simple answer except to say it's an opportunity for you to bring that friend, neighbor, or relative who is an unbeliever or just unchurched to explore life, faith, and meaning in a comfortable, relaxed environment.



So keep your eyes and ears open for our next Alpha ministry outreach coming this fall. If you're interested in participating with the Alpha team, just contact Myrt Creigh at fumcpgmc@gmail.com or call/text 941-661-8059.

Bargain Boutique Update

The Bargain Boutique would like to thank you for your continued support during this season, and make you aware of their new phone number, 239.264.6533. Operating hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 am until 2 pm. The Bargain Boutique is located on the corner of McGregor and West Marion Avenue.

Attention all cookie bakers!



The "Thank You" (aka Cupcake) ministry needs you. Our next "Thank You" target for July will be the Hospice workers who do such a fabulous job with the end of life process both as a comfort to families and for those that are passing on. Please, if you love to bake and would like to participate in this fun and rewarding ministry, call me, Kathy Kresge at 941-661-1175 or Gail in the church office.

Harmony Class to Offer New Andy Stanley Bible Study

The Harmony Class will begin a new 6-session Bible study on Sunday, April 25th at 10:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. This video-based study is, 'better decisions, fewer regrets' - 5 Questions to Help You Determine Your Next Move - by Andy Stanley. In this Bible study, Andy teaches us five catalytic questions to ask every time we make a decision. Stop regretting bad decisions! Learn how to ask more questions first! Moderator Debbie Harrington invites everyone to attend. RSVP requested but not required to debbie2u@comcast.net or text 941.380.0213.

Harmony Class to Host "Evolution vs God" Video

The Harmony Class will be presenting the DVD "Evolution vs God - Shaking the Foundations of Faith," a Living Waters/Ray Comfort Film on Sunday, April 18th at 10:30 in Lennox Hall. All are welcome to attend, but if you are not a regular

attendee of The Harmony Class, please RSVP to Debbie Harrington 941.380.0213 or debbie2u@comcast.net to ensure everyone has a seat.

Scroll down for more of *The Bridge*

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.

**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!

As a reminder, our outside services are always subject to change due to the weather. Please make sure you are connected with us through the app, our email list or social media to receive our updates concerning schedule changes.

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



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

Service Opportunity

We are looking for a couple of volunteers to water our flowers on campus through the remainder of the dry season. Unfortunately, we do not have a sprinkler system, and the job can be a bit overwhelming for the small maintenance staff we have on hand. If you are interested, please call the church office, 941.639.3842 and Gail will direct you to Joey DePetro for further information. Thank you and have a great day!

Church Website Update Coming!

We are currently finalizing our new website. We are looking for a volunteer who is available to assist our Director of Media Ministries with updates as needed. Experience with the newer version of WordPress templates is helpful. For more information, please contact Christa by email at christa@whatis1st.com or you may call Kathy in the church office.

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.

Media Volunteers Needed!

Our Media Team is in 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 Facebook broadcast and YouTube channel. Training will be provided as well. If you are interested in any of these positions, please email Christa, christa@whatis1st.com.



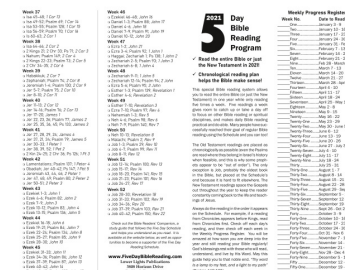
Get Connected!



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!



YOUTH MINISTRIES
Sunday School @ 9:15 am
Youth Group @ 5:07 pm



KIDS MINISTRY
SUNDAY SCHOOL @ 9:15 AM
KIDS CONNECT SUNDAYS @ 5 PM

Church Center

- DOWNLOAD THE APP FROM YOUR PHONE OR TABLET'S APP STORE.
- OPEN THE APP AND SEARCH FOR 1ST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH.
- FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS TO SET UP AND CONFIRM YOUR ACCOUNT.
- NOW YOU MAY CHECK IN, GIVE YOUR TITHES & OFFERINGS AND WATCH OUR SERVICE ALL FROM YOUR PHONE OR TABLET.

*Worship with us
Live Every Sunday*

8 am Praise in the Park
@ the Gilchrist Park Pavilion

9:15 am Contemporary
11 am Traditional
Live in the Life Center & Online

whatis1st.com @whatis1st @1stunitedmethodistchurch
Children's & Youth Sunday School at 9:15 am

MEDIA MINISTRY
IMMEDIATE POSITIONS NEEDED:
CAMERA OPERATORS, VISUAL TECHS,
& **VIRTUAL GREETERS**
EMAIL CHRISTA@WHATIS1ST.COM FOR INFO

+++

Ways To *Give*



WEBSITE
WHATIS1ST.COM



ACH WITHDRAWAL
CALL 941.639.3842 TO SET UP



BY MAIL
1ST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
507 W. MARION AVENUE
PUNTA GORDA, FL 33950



BILL PAY
CONTACT YOUR FINANCIAL
INSTITUTION FOR INSTRUCTIONS.

PRAYER *team*

TUESDAYS AT 9 AM

EMAIL PRAYERTEAM@WHATIS1ST.COM
FOR MORE INFORMATION



Today Matters Mental Health Ministries Service

Saturday, April 17 - 4 pm - Life Center

Our Guests:

Michele Ladd

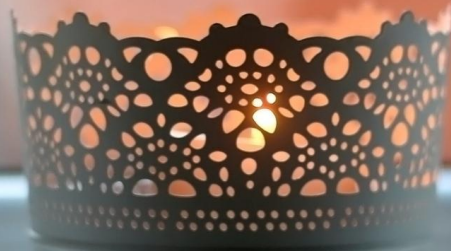
National Veteran Resources



Melissa Hall

Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Bay Pines VA Medical Center



*Light Your
Candles & Pray*

EMAIL YOUR CANDLE IN THE WINDOW PHOTOS
TO MEDIAMINISTRY@WHATIS1ST.COM

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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1ST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

507 W MARION AVENUE, PUNTA GORDA, FL 33950

941.639.3842 | WHATIS1ST.COM | 1STCHURCH@WHATIS1ST.COM

OFFERING NEW LIFE IN JESUS CHRIST BY SEEKING, SHAPING & SENDING DISCIPLES