

A P R I L 2 0 1 7

The Open Door



Faith United Church of Christ
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*“I, the fiery life of divine essence, I am aflame beyond the beauty of the meadows,
I gleam in the waters, and I burn in the sun, moon and stars.... I awaken
everything to life.” Hildegard of Bingen*

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2017 Leadership

Ivan Liss
Moderator

Beth Ann vom Eigen
Congregational Life Leader

LizBeth Cone
Visioning & Planning Leader

Ron Hughes
Financial Development Leader

Rev. Mike MacMillan
Pastor

Wendy Brand
Clerk

Fran Mitchell
Financial Secretary

Greetings Faith Friends,

As part of my Lenten spiritual practice, I have been reading through some of the great mystics of the world's religious traditions and immersing myself in their connections to nature – to the awe and wonder generated by the incredible natural world that surrounds us. I have sat for long periods, after reading something like what the mystic Hildegard of Bingen wrote above, and just watched the sun move across a field of sparkling green trees, their needles and palms and leaves animated by an invisible wind that makes them seem to shout out for joy in their gentle rustling. I have watched the monarchs dance effortlessly like whirling dervishes in the breeze as it moves through our garden. The butterflies seem to defy every law of physics as their delicate, fragile bodies defy the winds at every turn. I sat in a nature preserve in Palm Harbor, closed my eyes and tuned into my listening senses and heard the wild come alive in new ways through the sounds of the natural world – some familiar, some not so. If you do this long enough – practice tuning into the natural world around you – its easy to become convinced that the mystics have had it right all along. There is a divine essence moving in and through all facets of our breathtaking earth and its beauty and diversity. And all we have to do is tune in to it and see ourselves again as an intricate part of it, and we will be changed, and the mystic that lies in each of us can indeed be freed. Go ahead... try it out – tune in.

April is about tuning into life – the new life of resurrection that we celebrate on Easter, and the new life that our natural world is constantly creating. They are both full of beauty and hope and they are related in ways only the mystics seem to have grasped. Easter and Earth Day then are beautiful companions, and we should celebrate them both to the fullest this month. May it be a lavish month of mystical experiences for you all. Have a Blessed Easter and have powerful Earth Month.

Peace, Pastor Mike



Live and Experience Holy Week This Year

It is our hope that your journey thus far into the Season of Lent has been a transformative journey, full of Sabbath time, needed stillness and rest. The Season of Lent invites us out of old rhythms and into new ones – of peace and ultimately the transformative joy of Easter!

Next week we will journey into Holy Week. Beginning on **Palm Sunday** (April 9th) we will wave palms and remember Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and his challenge to the 'Empire of Caesar' with his vision of the 'Kingdom of God.' Let this day be an invitation to journey into the depths of holy week.

We will then continue the story on **Maundy Thursday**, April 13th. Our service will begin at 6:30pm 'in the garden' (*weather permitting*). We will then move inside to share a meal and break bread together around tables, before experiencing the story of Jesus' final night. This is one of most moving services of the year. Join us to remember and live the story yet again...

On **Good Friday**, April 14th, the doors of the church will be open to allow for silent prayer, stillness, and meditation from Noon to Three. You are welcome to just come and 'be' in stillness and prayer.

And then on **Easter Sunday**, April 16th, let us celebrate! Gather @ Faith at 10:30am for a service that celebrates the breakthrough of new life and explore the meaning of resurrection as we reflect on the Christ that centers us and calls us to new life! We will sing and celebrate joyfully together!

Following the service on Easter this year, please plan to stay around for some celebratory fellowship time. We will have fun for the kids with an Easter Egg Hunt, craft table and bounce house and we will have fun for the adults with mimosas and sparkling juice in the front! Come and celebrate Easter @ Faith!

"National Healthcare Decisions Month"

April is Healthcare Decisions month - a good time for each of us to make sure that we have thought about our wishes regarding end-of-life care and, most importantly have made those wishes clearly known. After many years as a Hospice nurse I have witnessed numerous families facing the dilemma of not knowing what a loved one wanted done for them and to them at the end of their lives and after death. In the hospital setting (and even at the time of an EMT response to a home) if your wishes are not in writing, and you are unable to express them, certain life-saving procedures must be performed. Rather than placing your loved ones in a position of guessing or presuming about these important decisions -put your wishes in writing.

Throughout the month of April I will have Healthcare Surrogate and Living Will forms with me each Sunday. I will be happy to discuss them with you either at church or at your home. Less than 30% of the population has any form of written Advanced Directives. We can do better than that!!

It's not an issue to put aside "until I'm older." It's for all of us to give serious consideration and put into writing.

Sincerely, Pat Sargent – Parish Nurse - 727-501-6304



Theology on Tap -

On Thursday, April 6th, we will hold our second Theology on Tap (TOT). TOT is a way to bring folks together for conversations around theology, spirituality and religion in a casual and fun setting. Our second TOT session will be at 6:30pm, at 'de Bine Brewery' (993 Florida Ave. in Palm Harbor – right by Nebraska and Alt 19). Each night will feature a topic for discussion, and will officially conclude by 8:00pm, but folks can stay as long as they wish. Pizza will be provided and a donation accepted to help cover the costs. See you there!



Building Our Future Together!

We are off to a great start in our Capital Campaign geared toward expanding and renovating our space here @ Faith UCC! To date, we have raised roughly \$230,000 of our goal towards \$300,000. If you have not had a chance to consider a pledge, or if you would like to extend a pledge already made, please consider doing so to help us reach our overall goal. Your giving to this essential project will help us enjoy more space for worship (*we are increasingly having people sitting in the Gathering Space*)! It will give us a new community room for our hospitality and other events, as well as more bathroom space, a nursery, a youth room, revamped kids space and so much more. This is really an exciting and critical time for us as a church. In a day and age where churches are struggling, we are thriving and growing and attracting attention. Now we just need the space to meet our needs. Let's make this happen together!



Life is Life

Brain Injury

The weather is getting warmer, and we will soon be playing in the sun and at the beach, visiting and exploring new areas, and performing maintenance activities in our homes. All activities sound wonderful, but each activity carries an inherent danger for a brain injury.

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is defined as an alteration in brain function, or other evidence of brain pathology, caused by an external force. Some causes of TBI include falls, vehicle accidents, or sports injuries.

An acquired brain injury (ABI) is an injury to the brain, which is not hereditary, congenital, degenerative, or induced by birth trauma. An ABI is an injury to the brain that has occurred after birth. Events that might cause an ABI include stroke, substance abuse, near drowning, infectious disease, seizure disorders, tumor, electric shock, toxic exposure, lightning strike, or oxygen deprivation.

Sometimes we look at a person's behavior and wonder. "Why is he or she demonstrating this behavior?" We might not be aware that they have sustained a TBI or an ABI. Some symptoms might include: Physical changes in speech, vision, or hearing, motor coordination, muscle spasticity, paresis or paralysis, seizure disorders, balance, and fatigue levels. Headaches are also common.

Cognitive changes might include short-term memory deficits, impaired concentration, slowness of thinking, limited attention span, perception and/or communication skills may be affected. Planning, writing, reading, and judgment issues often occur. Sometimes the most challenging issues are the emotional changes such as mood swings, self-centeredness, anxiety, depression, lowered self-esteem, sexual dysfunction, restlessness, lack of motivation, and difficulty controlling emotions.

If you suspect a brain injury, immediately seek medical attention. Get lots of rest. Don't rush back to daily activities such as work or school. Avoid doing anything that could cause another blow or jolt to the head. Ask your doctor when it's safe to drive a car, ride a bike, or use heavy equipment because your ability to react may be slower after a brain injury. Take only the medications your doctor has approved, and don't drink alcohol until your doctor says it's okay. Write things down if you have a hard time remembering them. You may need help to re-learn skills that were lost such as speech, walking, reading, or interpersonal relationship behaviors. Contact the Brain Injury Association in your state to learn more about the programs, supports, and services available to people with brain injuries and their families. Visit www.biausa.org for resources and support.

BIA of Florida, 1637 Metropolitan Boulevard, Suite B, Tallahassee, FL 32308

Info Line: 800 444 6443 (in state only)

Toll-Free: 800-992-3442

Phone: 850-410-0103

Fax: 850-410-0105

Website: <http://www.biaf.org>

This subject is dear to me! The results of brain injuries are difficult for both the victim and their friends and family. This is where open and affirming in mental wellness is key. I wrote a brochure as part of my Master's program, and I'm proud to report the Colorado State Patrol continues to distribute my work at accident scenes.

Sincerely, LizBeth Cone

Life is Life Facilitator

From Your Faith UCC Green Team! *Let's Make All of April Earth Month!*



Earth Day is an annual event celebrated April 22nd worldwide, when various events are held to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First celebrated in 1970, Earth Day events in more than 193 countries are now coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network. Here at Faith UCC the Green Team will be celebrating the entire month of April.

Aside from a very special hospitality offering on Easter Sunday the Green team will be hosting hospitality throughout the month with emphasis on organic and locally produced goodies, served with fair trade coffee. You will also notice a new bulletin board in the gathering space dedicated to information about congregational and community events that highlight environmental justice and action.

You will also notice that during worship we are “bulletin free”. There will be a few large print bulletin available for those with low vision but we hope to reduce the use and cost of ink and paper by providing all information on the large screens in the sanctuary.

Through Debbie and John Dunbar’s efforts we will now be offering reusable drinking straws to the congregation. We further plan to bring forth a battery-recycling drop box.

We hope everyone will join us the end of the month gathering for a beach cleanup at Honeymoon Island April 29th. More details are in a separate article in this Open Door.

Reduce, reuse, recycle!

Straw Challenge!

Your Faith UCC green team will be providing stainless steel straws, covers and cleaning brushes for a modest donation on and after April 2nd on the table in the lobby. Help us help the ocean one straw at a time!

**U.S. CONSUMPTION = ENOUGH STRAWS
TO WRAP AROUND THE
EARTH'S CIRCUMFERENCE
2.5 TIMES A DAY!**



Our Mission - The Last Plastic Straw

strives to educate the public about the absurdity of single use plastic, its effects on our health, our environment, and our oceans. We aim to eliminate from the source, the use of single use plastic.

How You Can Help - Join us in a global movement to eliminate plastic drinking straws from our landfills, our streams, our oceans, and our beaches. Simply request “no straw” at bars & restaurants and share your commitment with others. Encourage your favorite restaurant or bar to only provide straws on request from the customer and to use compostable or reusable options to the plastic straw. Basically what we are asking you to do is DO LESS: less consumption, less waste, less straws. It’s a win-win!

Why We Need Your Help - 500 million straws are used and discarded every day in the United States alone. That’s 175 Billion a year filtering into landfills and littering the oceans.

Continued on next page....

Straw Challenge Continued....

The Last Plastic Straw Challenge - This is an invitation to all bars and restaurants, to be part of the movement to eliminate plastic pollution from the source. By simply stating on menus “Straws available upon request”, bars and restaurants can be part of the solution.

Here's How:

- Provide a straw only when requested by a customer
- Provide either compostable or reusable straws
- Or get rid of straws completely

When we go to restaurants in our community they will notice a growing number of "NO STRAW CUSTOMERS". If you feel you can communicate with the owners and managers make it a fun challenge. I asked for the manager at Clear sky when I was given a new straw with each of the 3 ice teas I was given. (*I love iced tea!*) Stainless steel straws make your drink seem colder and easily fit in your purse. Let's have fun and save our oceans one straw at a time! Talk to Debbie or John Dunbar, or any member of the Green Team, with questions about the straw challenge.

Honeymoon Island Cleanup - From LizBeth Cone

I was thrilled to hear from, Brooke Freeberg, our Park Services Specialist from Honeymoon Island State Park with an update regarding our Earth Day activity on April 29, 2017. On that day we will visit the park in caravan with the intent of cleaning up along the five miles of beach. There will be no charge for our vehicles entering the park

We will park in Oasis and North parking lots. Apparently those beach areas are receiving more traffic and require more care. Brooke suggested we arrive between 8:00 and 9:00 AM to avoid the crowd and the heat.

We received sign-up sheets that will be on the back table. Brooke offered to supply garbage bags, but I would love it if bags and tools were part of our contribution to our Earth Month celebration at Honeymoon Island. Remember to bring sunscreen and water. Snack would be great for the kids—big or small!

The piece de résistance will be our Earth Month celebration after church on March 30, 2017. Let's make this a fun, learning, teaching experience for our Faith UCC family of children and adults. Updates will follow as they are received.



Brewing Justice! Pick Up Your Coffee @ Church! Decaf Is Here!

Justice comes to Faith UCC in the form of serving Equal Exchange coffee at our Fellowship Hour and other congregational gatherings. On recommendation of the Green Team, we will be brewing coffee from Equal Exchange. Equal Exchange trades with coffee, tea and cacao farmer co-operatives in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Through Fair Trade, these farmers are better able to support their families; build their own businesses; improve their communities; and protect the forests, land and water where they farm. This program also cuts out the middlemen, brokers and coffee companies so that more of the profit is returned to the farmers—bringing the coffee grower and the coffee drinker closer together. Justice never tasted so good!

Also, we will be offering a variety of coffee blends (Mind, Body & Soul; Love Buzz; Breakfast Blend and Decaf) for purchase, so that you can enjoy this wonderful (just) coffee in your home. Pick up a bag or two from the display in the Gathering Space - **Drink Up, Make a difference.**



People Serving People – Serving Our Neighbor - 2017 Dates

Please note these 2017 HEP serving dates. Serving food at HEP is a meaningful experience of connecting with wonderful people. HEP is located at 1120 N. Betty Lane, in Clearwater, and volunteers are needed from 4:15pm-5:45pm each time we serve:

2017 – April 28th, May 26th, June 23rd, July 28th, August 25th, September 22nd, October 27th, November 24th & December 22nd

Contact Kathy Glenn at 727-945-1064 with questions on any of these dates or how to sign up!

Important FAST Dates! April is a Big Month for Justice!

The Nehemiah Action at Tropicana Field is coming up! Please mark the following FAST dates on your calendars and let’s see how many people we can turn out at The Trop to advocate for justice with over 40 other churches, synagogues and mosques this year! Our Nehemiah Action goal for Faith UCC is 100! As our attendance increases year by year it appears we have a realistic chance of hitting that magic number of 100 this year!



- **TONIGHT! Monday, April 3rd 7:00pm– Rally** - a festive gathering where we gear up for the Nehemiah Action by hearing testimonials and learning more about the issues affecting those in our communities (*Housing, Education, Criminal Justice, Healthcare and more*). The Rally will be held at St, Catherine of Siena (1955 S. Belcher Road in Clearwater).
- **Monday, April 24th - Nehemiah Action** – a night where we gather @ Tropicana Field with over 3000 other people of faith, elected officials and other community decision makers and leaders to discuss issues important to us and work to acquire some promises from our elected leaders. This is a great night of inspiration! Watch for more information to come.
- **Monday, June 15th – Celebration** – a night where we reflect on and celebrate the work we did together at the Nehemiah action and all year! Watch for details on time and location.

Greeters NEEDED!

The Readers, Greeters and Communion Server sign up sheets are now available for April, May and June. Please take a look at the dates, sign up for a slot or two, and then write those dates on your calendar. *We especially are in need of greeters for ALL Sunday’s.* If you have any questions about any of these opportunities to become involved in worship, please see Pastor Mike about Reading and Serving Communion, or Kathy Doucette about Greeting.

Worship Leadership for April

Readers

Greeters

- April 2nd - Amy Valetino
- April 9th – Peg LeFebvre
- April 16th – Bob Sargent
- April 23rd – Ginni Pressgrove
- April 30th – Bill Bingham

- April 2nd – Bill Bergmann, *needed, needed*
- April 9th – Mary & Carl Alexander, *needed*
- April 16th – John Zaun, *needed, needed*
- April 23rd – Kathy Doucette, Donna Lund, *needed*
- April 30th – Gary Hart, *needed, needed*

Ongoing Events @ Faith UCC

Worship @ Faith

Sundays – 10:30am *(Sermon Talk Follows)*

Communion Service/Lenten Study Group

Wednesday's – 9:30am

'Life is Life' Group

2nd & 4th Tuesday's – 7:00pm

Eckhart Tolle Reading Group

Wednesday's – 5:00pm

Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday's – 6:30pm

Faith Stickers *(At Peg LeFebvre's Studio)*

Thursday's - 10:00am

Spiritual Study

Thursday's – 10:30am

PFLAG

Fourth Thursday's – 7:00pm

12 Steps For Everyone

Fridays – 10:00am

HEP Food Service

Fourth Friday's – 4:15pm - @ HEP

Faith United Church of Christ Mission Statement

The Mission of Faith United Church of Christ is to be a progressive spiritual voice rooted in the mystery of God. Through intentionally inclusive fellowship, challenging spiritual education and lively advocacy around issues of justice, we seek to inspire spiritual journeys as we follow the Jesus way of love and peace in the world.

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*Remember to follow us on Facebook and
Twitter – search FaithUCCDunedin*

Faith United Church of Christ

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