

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 1 8

The Open Door



Faith United Church of Christ
1650 Pinehurst Rd. Dunedin, FL 34698
727-799-4602 – www.faithucc.org

2018 ANNUAL MEETING

Please note the 2018 Annual Meeting, where we vote to approve our budget for the year, will be held on Sunday, February 25th.

Plan to stick around following worship, discuss and vote on the budget, and hear details about the building project!

Core Team Leaders – Please see the note on page 2 about Annual Reports!

2018 LEADERSHIP

Ivan Liss
Moderator

LizBeth Cone
Visioning & Planning Leader

Ron Hughes
Financial Development Leader

Molly Hancock
Congregational Life Leader

Rev. Mike MacMillan
Pastor

Wendy Brand
Clerk

Fran Mitchell
Financial Secretary

Dear Faith UCC Friends,

Spiritual Writer Thomas Merton wrote that when it comes to our lives “*we have what we seek, it’s there all the time, and if we give it time, it will make itself known to us.*” I can’t think of more fitting words as we begin the journey into the season of Lent next week on Ash Wednesday. The season of Lent, if we allow the time for it, is built for just what Merton is talking about – tuning into the presence of God that is already burning inside of us and all around us in our world – but only if we can accept its invitation and slow down, or put aside our fears, our worries and stresses and just give the time to catch a glimpse of it. Lent – that 40 day journey that is traditionally known for fasting, almsgiving, prayer and repentance can be a transformative time for us in our lives as simply a time to pause and center ourselves in the presence of God in which we truly live and move and share our being. Lent stands as a call to stop; rest; look; pray; and ultimately be transformed, a perfect time to take notice of the ‘lilies of the fields, or the birds of the air,’ and to experience the realm of God blossoming like a field of poppies in our very own midst. Lent can be a season that changes us ontologically – at our core - if we will only give the time and practice necessary to enter into its depth. We need Lent...

I encourage you to take that time this year. See Lent with ‘New Paradigm’ eyes as a time to engage your spirit and seek out that divine spark that is a part of you. Engage in times of centering prayer; do some spiritual reading and writing; try meditating; sit in the garden or anywhere outdoors and be grasped and awed by the natural world around you. There is a reason why the season of Lent and Easter come upon us always in the spring – because at the heart of the season is the reminder that new life, and new ways of being are always possible and calling to us to take notice. We just need to give the time to open our spiritual eyes! I hope you have a transformative Lenten Season! Live it fully!

Peace, Pastor Mike

Faith Stitchers Update

After a month off, the Faith Stitchers have started back to work – making Christmas Stockings. We have at least 60 to make, so we decided to start early. When we get done with them, we can start on our secondary project of dresses for the girls in Haiti.

IF you have any shirts with worn cuffs and/or collars, send them our way – bring them to church, marked for Faith Stitchers. We will make them into cute dresses for the girls in Haiti. We hope to be able to make all of them from donated shirts. Otherwise, we will have to go out and buy fabric.

If you enjoy sewing, and would like to give some of your time to making children happy, then join the Faith Stitchers. We always more than welcome newcomers! We meet on the first and third Wednesday of every month – from 10:00am to 3:00pm. Come when you can, and leave when you have to...bring a bag lunch if you will be there during the lunch hour. On pleasant days, we enjoy the sea breezes while eating on the balcony overlooking the Intracoastal.

For further information, contact Peg LeFebvre, Deb in the office or Pastor Mike.

Annual ‘Core Team’ Reports

Part of our Annual Meeting involves passing out Annual Reports that details the work of our church’s various Core Teams. If you are a Core Team Leader, please write a brief summary of your Core Team’s activities for the year 2017. These reports are important for communicating the many wonderful outreach opportunities of Faith Church. Please send these brief reports to Debbie in the Church Office at office@faithucc.org by February 19th. Please see Cong. Life Leader Molly Hancock or Pastor Mike with questions. Thank You!

Still Time to Pledge for 2018!

The Annual Meeting, where we vote to approve the budget, is only a few weeks away, but you can still make a pledge to support the church in 2018! Pledging is so important to us as a church as it helps the Finance Team put together the budget for the coming year to funding particular ministries and staff salaries, as well as projecting the covering of ongoing bills and expenses. Knowing what the church can expect to receive in giving for the calendar year is extremely helpful in this vital process. Please, if you have not already done so, make a pledge for 2018! Thank you!

Kick off Lent with a Mardi Gras/Fat Sunday Celebration!

Stick around following worship this Sunday - February 11th - for a Mardi Gras celebration right here at Faith UCC! Mardi Gras, or Fat Tuesday, is traditionally celebrated the day before Ash Wednesday as people feast and celebrate before the Lenten season begins. We will celebrate Mardi Gras on a Sunday instead with a Mardi Gras-themed worship service and fellowship afterwards with hamburgers fresh off the grill and all sorts of other goodies and beverages! Let’s make this yet another wonderful day @ Faith UCC!



The Journey of Lent – 2018

It’s hard to believe that the Season of Lent will soon be upon us and Easter is around the corner. You are invited to journey into Lent at Faith UCC beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 14th, with a Soup/Bread Supper and Service of Ashes and Prayer to follow. Please mark your calendars also for Palm Sunday (March 25th), Maundy Thursday (March 29th), Good Friday (March 30th), and of course Easter on April 1st! Watch for more information regarding service details and times in the near future.

For now, start your Lenten Season by joining us on Wednesday, February 14th:

ASH WEDNESDAY

5:45pm FEAST Supper with Homemade Soups and Breads
(Please sign up if you plan to attend)

6:30pm Service of Prayer and Ashes



Sync Our Church Directory to Your Mobile Device

Now you can sync our church directory directly to your Apple, Android or Kindle Fire device with a FREE app!

Search for other members, and then email, call or text – right from the directory app.

It's Easy!

1. Go to your device's App Store.
2. Search for Instant Church Directory.
3. Enter your email as it's listed in our church directory.
4. Enter the assigned password into the app to begin synching.



Instant Church Directory Pictures

Do you know you can have the entire church directory at your fingertips on your phone, tablet or computer? Instant Church Directory is now available for Android devices, as well as all Apple/MAC devices. Please talk to Pastor Mike or call Debbie in the church office for details on how you can begin to use the program or if you have any issues with, or questions about the electronic directory.

With so many new members joining us since we last updated photos within the directory, and with several photos still missing, we have scheduled two 'photo days' in March. Lew Donald will be taking pictures for the directory on March 4th and 11th, following worship. This is also an excellent time to update any phone, address or email changes. This is such a helpful tool to use!

Hands On Service @ HEP -

Twice each month (3rd Tuesday and 4th Friday), members of Faith UCC serve food at HEP - Homeless Emergency Project Inc. - located in Clearwater. We need about 5-6 servers each time we serve. HEP is located at 1120 N. Betty Lane, in Clearwater. On Tuesday's, please plan to arrive no later than 11:30am. On Friday's, plan to arrive no later than 4:15pm. Each service time last approximately an hour and a half. It's a great experience and a wonderful way to serve in our community.



Here are the dates for 2018:

Third Tuesday Dates for 2018 – February 20th; March 20th; April 17th; May 15th; June 19th; July 17th; August 21st; September 18th; October 16th; November 20th; December 18th.

Fourth Friday Dates for 2018 – February 23rd; March 23rd; April 27th; May 25th; June 22nd; July 27th; August 24th; September 28th; October 26th; November 23rd; December 28th.

Watch for sign up sheets in the table in the back of the sanctuary each month and simply add your name, write the date on your calendar, and head on over to HEP for a transformative experience when the service day arrives! If you have any questions, please contact HEP Coordinator LizBeth Cone.

Save These FAST Dates! Let's Go For Big Turnouts!

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 the magic number of 100 this year!



Dates and Descriptions - The **Rally**, which is a festive gathering where we gear up for the Nehemiah Action by hearing testimonials and learning more about the justice issues affecting those in our communities (*Housing, Education, Criminal Justice, Healthcare and more*) will be held on Monday, **February 26th**, at 7:00pm, at Skycrest United Methodist Church (2045 Drew St., Clearwater). The **Nehemiah Action**, where we gather @ Tropicana Field with over 3000 other people of faith, elected officials and other community decision makers and leaders to discuss those issues will be on Monday, **March 18th**. Finally the **Celebration**, where we reflect on and celebrate the work we did together will be held on **April 30th**. Watch for more information on all of these dates to come!

LIFE IS LIFE - *The Relationship between Loneliness, Physical and Mental Health*

The holidays are over! We made it through Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. Next on our calendar is Valentine's Day (known to some as Singles Awareness Day). Some people love the holidays while others that experience loneliness dread them. We are a social species that requires safe and secure social surroundings to thrive. Satisfying social relationships are essential for mental and physical well-being. Impaired social relationship can lead to loneliness.

Loneliness is perceived as a global human phenomenon and can lead to various psychiatric disorders like depression, alcohol abuse, child abuse, sleep problems, personality disorders and Alzheimer's disease.

Physical illness and Loneliness: Loneliness-related chronic stress can cause low- grade peripheral inflammation. This inflammation has been linked to inflammatory diseases such as diabetes, autoimmune disorders like rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and cardiovascular diseases (coronary heart disease, hypertension and atherosclerosis). There have been various studies, showing relationship of loneliness with obesity, physiological aging, and cancer.

The sense of isolation can have a similar effect on the brain that is noted when an individual experiences physical pain. The brains of lonely individuals register feelings of threat and pain signals that are similar to real physical pain and danger. The level of the stress hormone cortisol shoots up abnormally high in the morning and is never at normal levels all through the day.

What causes loneliness? Being alone and being lonely are not synonymous. Some people 'prefer their own company, enjoy solitary activities (such as reading) and are content to live alone, rarely interacting with others. Life events can create an environment of loneliness.

Death or divorce: The shock of suddenly living alone when previously part of a couple can be traumatic.

Inability to fit in: Certain physical disability or excessive introvert nature can promote an individual to think that s/he does not fit into a group or is a misfit in the rest of the crowd.

Social media: With the advancement of social media, people have become more engrossed in virtual communities and online friendships than maintaining real life social ties with family and friends.

Rejection by others: A sense of isolation can develop when one has been rejected by family or friends.

Aging: Historically, elders held a vital position of preserving and propagating community customs and history. The scenario has changed, pushing some elders into feeling marginalized and rejected.

How do we help ourselves and others deal with loneliness? Getting involved is the key. Consider some of the following activities: • *exercise classes* • *Writing/painting groups* • *sports groups/clubs* • *book clubs* • *political groups* • *LGBT groups* • *meditation classes* • *volunteer work* • *music* • *travel clubs* • *game clubs* • *outdoor groups* • *community garden* • *sewing clubs* • *adopt a pet* • *contact friends* • *Words with Friends*.

So, take control of your life and make it worthwhile by getting out of loneliness. If you know someone who is lonesome, try to connect! We can all do our part to bring ourselves and others back to a normal, healthy life.

Let's have lunch! LizBeth Cone

WORSHIP LEADERSHIP FOR FEBRUARY

Readers

- February 4th – Linda Royer
- February 11th – Peg LeFebvre
- February 18th – Amy Valentino
- February 25th – Pam Stiers

Greeters

- February 4th – Gary Hart, John & Debbie Dunbar
- February 11th – Kathy Doucette, Lynn Chapman, Roger Acker
- February 18th – John Zahn, Carol Kriebel, Will Kriebel
- February 25th – Kathy DeHainaut, *Needed, Needed*



Be Like Brit Haiti Trip
Enjoy these pictures of the FL Conference trip to Haiti and the Be Like Brit Orphanage last week! Pastor Mike and Faith UCC member and Regional Conference Minister Rev. Leslie Etheridge were a part of this trip. Watch for more details and sharing to come!



Ongoing Events @ Faith UCC

Worship @ Faith

Sunday's – 10:30am *(Communion is on the first Sunday of each month)*

Centering & Communion Service

Tuesday's – 9:30am

'Life is Life' Group

2nd & 4th Tuesday's – 7:00pm

'Faithfully Aging' Group

4th Wednesday's – Noon

Books & Meditation Group

Wednesday's – 5:00pm

Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday's – 6:30pm

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

1st & 3rd Wednesday's - 10:00am

Theology on Tap

1st Thursday's – 6:30pm *(Offsite)*

Spiritual Study

Thursday's – 10:30am

PFLAG

4th Thursday's – 7:00pm

12 Steps For Everyone

Friday's – 10:00am

HEP Food Service

3rd Tuesday's – 11:45am @ HEP

4th 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.



Remember to follow us on Facebook and Twitter – search FaithUCCDunedin

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