

Beacon

December 2019



... guiding our walk

Greeting, Church!

We are now well into the “most wonderful time of the year” for many folks – the Christmas Season – or more accurately, the Advent Season leading to Christmas. It is indeed a wonderful time of year, filled with joy and mirth and blessings.

But for many of us, it is also a bitter-sweet time of year – even a depressing season. While Christmas brings many precious memories of years gone by, it may also conger up painful feelings and emotions – the reminder that a loved one is no longer with us – the realization that a divorce has separated us from those we have loved (and may still love) – the loneliness of being apart from family who live too far away to make a visit possible – even the realization that the number of Christmases left in your life are fewer and fewer. We may find that, while we are being told we should “be merry” and “of good cheer,” we are anxious or depressed.

What do we do when, for us, Christmas is not a time for “making merry?” Well, recognizing WHY you feel depressed is a good first step and is therapeutic. To bring to awareness why we feel as we do can help us begin to move beyond those feelings. Don’t deny them. They are real feelings. But don’t wallow in them, either.

So, what can you do?

- You can worship! Don’t stay away from your church family during the holidays – lean on them. You are not the only person for whom Christmas may be a challenge. **Participate in the worship service, concerts, caroling, and bible studies.** This will help you realize that Christmas is more than a time to be with your literal “family” – its meaning is far bigger than Christmas gifts, holiday parties, and Santa Clause. Use this season as an opportunity to draw closer to God and to your church family.
- Another worship opportunity: A new trend among churches is to recognize that, for many people, the Christmas Season is particularly stressful. Many churches are offering “Blue Christmas” or “Longest Night” services during the holidays – quiet contemplative services that don’t force you to “put on a happy face,” but give you space to process your feelings, and to reach out to God to help you move beyond them. In fact, our sister congregation, **Roseland UMC, will offer a “Longest Night” service on Saturday, December 21 (probably 4:00 p.m.), and our congregation has been invited to attend.**
- Finally, find ways to serve others. There are many opportunities to focus your attention on blessing others during this season. You could ring bells for Salvation Army (our church is doing it on December 12 – contact Donna Osborne for details). You can give or volunteer in our effort to provide Christmas gifts for needy children (contact Donna Osborne for details), or gift cards for the young people at our UM Children’s Home (contact Phil Molina for details). You can go Christmas Caroling with the church to shut ins (several dates – contact Megan Mash for details). Of course, you may call the church office also.

Bringing smiles to the faces of others may put a smile on your face as well. And the, if not “merry,” you will have a “happy” Christmas this year!

By the way, we hope you will be invited friends and neighbors to worship with us on Sunday and at our two Christmas Eve service (4 and 7 p.m.). Let’s fill the church!

Terri and I hope you have a wonderful and blessed Christmas!

Pastor John



Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

*Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming
From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
As men of old have sung.
It came, a flower bright,
Amid the cold of winter
When half-gone was the night.*

As many of you know, I love a hymn that has a long history! “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming” is one of those. The earliest copy of this hymn text dates from the 1580s. It comes from a manuscript of a prayer book belonging to a Conrad of Mainz, a Carthusian brother in the St. Alban’s monastery in Trier. This manuscript contains nineteen stanzas but later manuscripts include up to twenty-three.

Who is this text about? There is some discussion about this. It seems as though the original intent of this hymn was to praise Mary. It draws on the image of the “Rose of Sharon” from Song of Solomon 2:1. There is also an apocryphal legend that states a monk in Trier found a rose blooming while walking through the woods on Christmas Eve. He took the rose and placed in in a vase on an altar to the Virgin Mary. There is also a passage from Isaiah 7 that suggests this hymn could be about Mary. It reads, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.”



Later in history, Protestants altered the focus of the hymn from Mary to Jesus. Part of this comes from the first line of text. It is unclear if it reads “ein Ros” (a rose) or “ein Reis” (a branch). Reading the first line as a brand strengthens the link between the hymn and Isaiah 1:1 which reads “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.”

The final passage from Isaiah that is linked to this hymn comes from chapter 35 verse 1. It is a stronger biblical basis for the images. It reads, “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” This shows the strong link this hymn has to the old testament and as the second stanza states, “Isaiah ‘twas foretold it.” The many other stanzas in the original and that were later added tell the story of Jesus’s birth from the annunciation through the arrival of the Magi. As we enter this Advent season, we must remember to prepare for the birth of Jesus. Isaiah foretells this event to prepare history for the arrival of the Savior. We must too use this time to prepare our hearts for the Savior to be born again in our lives so we may see the places we are being called to grow and change.

Happy Anniversary December

Don & Lisa Davis December 9
Tom & Joanne Ashley December 10

Happy Birthday December

Ed Ortner December 12
John Gill December 15
Margit Hollifield December 17
George Schulze December 17
Judy Gallagher December 25
Enid Wible December 27
Bob Kier December 28

Welcome New Members



Laura Bast

Linda Ballard

Terri Gil

Will & Connie Finnin
250 Key Deer Blvd.
Big Pine Key, FL 33043

NEW ADDRESS FOR Will & Connie



Salvation Army Bell Ringers Needed

Volunteer **bell ringers** are the difference between an empty kettle and one that raises the funds that sustain the help we give all year long. The **Salvation Army** relies on money raised in red kettles to serve more than 25 million people in need each year.

Become a Volunteer **Bell Ringer**

SUMC and RUMC are having a ring off on Thursday December 12 at Wal-Mart. Each church will ring at each door. Please see the sign up sheet to schedule your time to help ring the bells.

See Donna Osborne or John Gill

Upcoming Events – December

- December 6, 5:30 p.m. Light Up Night Community Event in the Fellowship Hall
- December 15, 4 p.m. Christmas Concert followed by the Christmas Potato Bar in the Fellowship Hall
- December 22 10 a.m. Service, Christmas Cantata
- December 24 Christmas Eve Services
 - 4:00 p.m. with communion & music
 - 7:00 p.m. traditional service with candle lighting , communion and music
- December 25 Merry Christmas Office Closed

Small Groups and Bible Studies, check with your facilitator if unsure of date or time,

BIBLE STUDY & SMALL GROUPS

Monday— Bible Study 10 am “Bad Girls of the Bible” SGR will not meet 16,23, 30th of December
Snow Birds Small Group will have it’s first meeting Tuesday January 14 in the Small Group Room at 7:00 p.m.
Pastor's Bible Study Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. in the large class room
& 6:30 in Church office

Wednesday Adult Bible Study 10:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall



***United Methodist Women
Christmas Luncheon
December 6, 11:30 am
CJ Cannons in Vero
No regular meeting in December***

Non- Communion Sundays

Every non-“Communion Sunday,” communion will be offered for all those wishing to receive. Elements for Holy Communion will be on the altar, and the pastor will include a prayer of consecration as a part of the prayer time near the end of the service. Then, immediately following the conclusion of the service, you may move forward to the altar, and the liturgist or a Lay Servant will be happy to serve you communion. (Gluten free bread)

Altar Flowers

Fresh flowers placed on our altar on Sunday beautify the sacred spaces in our church to honor God and are a gift to those who attend our services. Arrangements can be picked up after worship or can be donated to be given to members & friends who are hospitalized. The altar flowers can be dedicated to commemorate a special event, such as birthday or anniversary, or to remember a loved one or simply to honor God. Thank you so much for your dedication to the church and your church family. Flowers are done by Amazing Creations and the cost is \$30.

Staff Christmas Bonus

It's time for our annual show our staff appreciation. If you would like to make a contribution toward staff bonuses, please place your check or cash in an envelope and mark it "staff bonuses." Place the envelope in the collection plate or bring it to the church office..

Our staff works hard all year. Let's show our appreciation!

Staff Parish Relations Committee



**SUMC Annual Christmas Concert & Potato Bar Supper
Sunday, December 15**

**“Songs of The Season”
Christmas Concert
Sunday, December 15, 4pm**

Featuring SUMC Ensembles
Adult Choir
Joyful Ringers
Handbell Choir
Brass Ensemble
Flute Choir

Free Will Offering for
Ecumenical Food Pantry

Bring a friend, sing along
and listen to Christmas favorites

**The festivities continue with the
Christmas Potato Bar Supper
After the Concert In the Fellowship Hall**



Sunday Coffee Hour

Good Coffee and Good Fellowship

The coffee hour has always been a very important part of the 10:00 AM service SUMC. . It is an integral part of our Church's Fellowship. At the Coffee Hour, we renew old friendships and meet and greet new members to our family. It is here that the family of SUMC is nourished, not just with food, but with warmth that only the laughter and conversation of friends can bring.

Everyone is welcome. Join us for Coffee Hour every Sunday after the 10 am service.

Would You Like to Help Coffee Hour?

Won't you please consider bringing a favorite baked item to a coffee hour. Since this is a church function each Sun-

day, we would like to see new families and members participate in this special ministry.

If we just went to the Service and then went home, we would never get to know each other. We would never grow as a Church family. We would like to thank all those who have donated goodies for coffee hours in the past. Everyone appreciates your effort.

If you would like to bring a favorite recipe, speak to the Coffee Hour Crew to choose your Sunday, or call Sharon in the church office to let us know how you would like to help. Church office 772-589-5230

Good News

Sebastian UMC is going "green"

The Administrative Council by consensus has decided to start the process of going "green".

So
there will
be a
Tomorrow

The following is an excerpt from the *Social Principles: The Natural World*:

"All creation is the Lord's, and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it. Water, air, soil, minerals, energy resources, plants, animal life, and space are to be valued and conserved because they are God's creation and not solely because they are useful to human beings. God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet these stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect."

Starting small, SUMC will use "real" coffee cups, drinking cups and silverware when the present supply of disposable ones runs out. We will continue to use the small paper cups on water cooler because they are . recyclable (water only) and a small recycle container will be next to the water cooler for your convenience.

Christmas Day Dinner

Marsh Landing Restaurant, 4:30 p.m.

Last year members and friends of Sebastian United Methodist Church met for dinner at Marsh Landing. Continuing this festive gathering, the Christmas Day Dinner Group will meet at Marsh Landing and have dinner together.

If you would like to attend please call Lisa Davis 317-850-4966



A Service of Lessons & Carols

Sunday, December 29, 2019

Worship 10:AM

MISSIONS

DONNA OBOURNE, CHAIR

How does “Soul Café” sound? Read On.....

I am so very excited to bring news of a new mission we are about to embark on; but 1st a little back story.

Several years ago myself and a few other people got together and hoped to partner with The Salvation Army and St Sebastian Church as they were feeding local people in need. At that time our hope was to feed impoverished people in our Fellowship Hall and possibly help them with basic life skills such as writing resumes, budgeting, food prep with limited funds, reading with children, helping with their homework, really finding ways to be the hands & feet of Jesus.

There were changes in both organizations and it soon became apparent we were not going to be able to do what we hoped. From that effort, the Welcome Table was born.

The Welcome table has been a wonderful mission for those receiving the meal and our folks who shop, prepare & serve. I pray it will continue forever. However, lately I have been feeling like it is time we do more. I didn't know what more looked like, just that we needed to help more, share God's love more, because more is needed. There was also the knowledge that I wasn't physically up to doing more. I brought some of my concerns to Megan & again she came through for me.

She suggested that I do more praying and see where that leads. So I did, not really expecting much. I really think I am not one of the people who get messages from God in quiet moments of listening. But I think what does happen is God reaches me through people.

I got a message from Pastor John a few weeks ago telling me the Salvation Army reached out to him about using our kitchen & Fellowship Hall. They want to do exactly what we wanted to do 5 years ago. I guess 5 years ago it wasn't the right time. But now it seems, is the right time!

They are asking us to be the host for a hot meal one day a week for those in need. The Salvation Army would be in our kitchen for a total of approximately three hours to cook, serve & clean up, 11:00 – 2:00. They would provide food, cooks, servers, clean-up crew & all din-

nerware. This month the Admin Council voted unanimously to move ahead with this mission!!

The best part is we have a way to be the hands & feet of Jesus, bringing his love to his people in our community, in our church. Once again we will join with our sister church RUMC in feeding folks in need. RUMC is interested in volunteering alongside us with the Salvation Army. Anyone wanting to cook and or serve with the Salvations Army volunteers will be welcome. You may want to deliver meals for those who can't get out, or perhaps come and have lunch with someone and share some conversation. Just as with the Welcome Table there will be many ways to get involved.

This truly was an answer to my prayer, a mission to help others without an overwhelming workload and without the new mission taking anything away from The Welcome Table.

I feel certain that many in our congregation will want to engage in this ministry. You will be able to do as much or as little as you are able. Every job is an important part of the whole, no matter how small. Nothing is insignificant. We hope to be up and running by February.

A small group of us went to the Salvation Army location in Vero last week and saw a truly amazing event. Very grateful, thankful, folks joined in a prayer and a meal. I personally could feel the spirit of God amongst us.

If you have questions, if you want to find out how you can participate, or just want to know more; reach out to Pastor John, Ginger Horner, Leigh Standley or me. More info will be shared as things progress. Until then please pray for the success of this mission & for all whose hearts are touched by it.

I have a vision of SUMC being known as that little church on Main Street that helps people in so many ways. This could be just a beginning, who knows what other possibilities there are?

We think “Soul Café – More than just food” sounds Great. What about you?

Blessings, Peace & Joy
Donna Osborne , Mission Chair



December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>1</p> <p>10 am Worship 11 am Coffee 11:30 U o L 1 pm Brass 3 pm LOL</p>	<p>2</p> <p>4 pm Ecumenical Council LCR 7 pm SPR CO</p>	<p>3</p> <p>10 am Aphasia FH 10 am Pastor Bible Study LCR 12 pm Gator Rug FH 1 pm Computers CO 4:30 Children's Choir 6:30 Pastor Bible S CO</p>	<p>4</p> <p>10 am Bible Study FH 3 pm Joyful Ringers 6:30 pm Girl Scouts CCR 7 pm Handbells</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7 pm Choir</p>	<p>6</p> <p>5:30 Light Up Night FH</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8</p> <p>10 am Worship 11 am Coffee 11:30 U o L 1 pm Brass 3 pm LOL</p>	<p>9</p> <p>7 pm Trustee CO</p>	<p>10</p> <p>9:30 am Stroke of Hope FH 10 am Pastor Bible Study LCR 12 pm Gator Rug FH 1 pm Computers CO 6:30 Pastor Bible S CO</p>	<p>11</p> <p>10 am Bible Study FH 3 pm Joyful Ringers 7 pm Handbells</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7 pm Choir</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>10 am Worship 11 am Coffee 11:30 U o L 1 pm Brass 4 pm Christmas Concert followed by Potato Bar Supper</p>  	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>10 am Aphasia FH 10 am Pastor Bible Study LCR 12 pm Gator Rug FH 1 pm Computers CO 6:30 Pastor Bible S CO</p>	<p>18</p> <p>10 am Bible Study FH 3 pm Joyful Ringers 6:30 pm Girl Scouts CCR 7 pm Handbells</p>	<p>19</p> <p>7 pm Choir</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22</p> <p>10 am Christmas Cantata 11 am Coffee 11:30 U o L 3 pm LOL</p> 	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve 4 pm Service 7 pm Service</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>Happy Christmas Office Closed</p> 	<p>26</p> <p>7 pm Choir</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> <p>10 am Lessons & Carols 11 am Coffee 11:30 U o L 3 pm LOL</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>January 1, 2020 Happy New Year Office Closed</p> 	<div> <p><i>Weekly Room Use Groups</i></p> <p>Alanon meets Tue & Thurs 7:30 pm LCR</p> <p>AA Closed Session Tue 6:30 FH</p> </div>		
				<div> <p>Men's Out to Lunch Bunch meets at 12:pm</p> <p>Tuesdays at the Roadside Restaurant</p> </div>		



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Pastor John Gill
Pastor's cell 321-794-0010
johngillumc@bellsouth.net
Church Office: 772-589-5230
Thrift Shop Direct Line: 772-388-0405
sebastianumc@bellsouth.net

GIFTS

Gifts...what gifts can we give to honor Jesus' Birth? In the Bible it becomes clear...the Gift of Love to spread throughout the whole year...the Gift of Kindness and hope and cheer...Help this weary world rejoice every year....spread the Gift of Love...!!



Nancy L. Fox
November 14, 2014

the gift of *love*