

The Happening

April 2025

MISSION OF THE MONTH Breakaway Respite Ministry

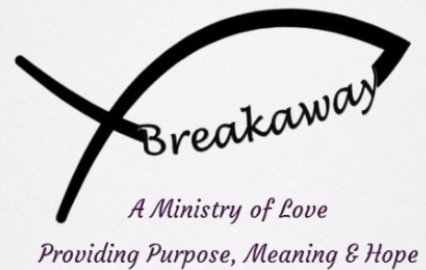
Respite: Noun, a short period of rest or relief from something difficult or unpleasant.

Breakaway Respite Ministry has been an integral part of our church since September 2019. We gather on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 AM to 2 PM in Creason Hall. Care Partners of individuals living with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia bring their loved ones to us allowing them to take a break from their often demanding responsibilities. For many, the eight hours of care we provide each week is their only respite.

Our tuition remains at \$40.00 per day, which covers all supplies for our activities, as well as lunch and dessert. Currently, we have 17 friends enrolled and a waiting list of 24 individuals. Thanks to generous donations from you, we have never had to turn anyone away due to an inability to pay the tuition. We are grateful for your thoughtful support!

Each session is filled with engaging activities designed to stimulate and entertain our friends, ensuring they have a joyful and fulfilling time while in our care. Our dedicated volunteers are passionate about creating a warm and welcoming environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

Your continued support and generosity are vital to our mission. Whether through donations, volunteering, or spreading the word about our ministry, every contribution makes a difference in the lives of those we serve. Thank you for being an essential part of our ministry and helping us provide a much-needed sanctuary for caregivers and their loved ones. Together, we make a meaningful impact.



A Word From Our Pastor

Dear Friends,

We are halfway through the season of Lent and will quickly move toward Holy Week in the coming days. I hope everyone will plan to attend the special services we have planned for Palm Sunday (choir cantata), Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Holy Week is April 13-20.

The church has experienced an incredibly busy season over the last several months. I am thoroughly initiated into “Florida winter” by now and it has been delightful to see so many of you in and around the church. As I come to know you better, I am increasingly aware of how important your life of faith is to your daily lives. Many of you reach out to Pastor Travis and me to ask deeper questions about our Sunday sermons. You attend Bible studies and small groups and have given us helpful information about other groups you would like to see initiated. You have attended our “Visits & Visions” sessions to share with us your hopes and dreams for the church and ideas you have for how to make our church stronger. And you consistently come to worship each week with open hearts, ears and eyes to experience what God might bring to each of us.

All of these things are incredibly gratifying as your pastor. I find myself dreaming of ways to engage you more deeply in your faith. I hope you will find that in the coming months there will be continued opportunities to learn, serve, pray, worship and fellowship together. All of these things, as well as your personal devotional practices, make an impact in your growing relationship with Jesus. I invite each of us to continue to prioritize that relationship in all that we do.

Grace and peace to each of you,

Pastor Cynthia



Welcome
New Members!

Please welcome those who joined our church family this past Sunday! When you see them, give a warm welcome and take the time to get to know

them. It is always a blessing to receive new members into our church family!

Mike & Chris Mekaru

Brian O’Connell

Wayne & Christine Borkowski

Mike & Karen Czachor

Kathy Hanlon

Dan Mueller

Denise Watts

Bill Sparks

Penny Boyne

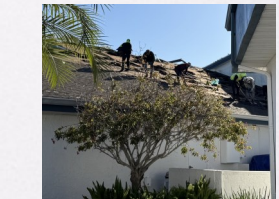
Chuck & Barbara McCain

Carmen Olmeda

Patricia Whiddon

Creason Hall has a Brand New Roof

Our church has been incredibly fortunate to receive a generous donation for the replacement of the roof on Creason Hall. Over the years, the roof has deteriorated leading to leaks. Originally serving as our Church Sanctuary, Creason Hall is now primarily functioning as a Children and Youth Hall as well as the home for our Breakaway Respite Ministry. A new roof was essential. The installation of the roof went smoothly; the crew was amazing, and the final result looks absolutely fantastic! Now with the project complete, the new roof ensures the building remains safe and dry but also enhances its longevity, allowing it to continue serving as a vibrant center for our



church’s activities. We are incredibly grateful to the donors who made this possible!





Center 4Life Learning Come Learn and Be Entertained

2025 Spring & Summer Classes

iPhone Tips and Features

Instructor: Joanie Frantz

Wednesday, April 9 | 10:00AM - 11:30PM

Sign Language

Instructor: Bonnie DeVagno

Mondays, 4/14-5/19 | 10:30AM - 12:00PM

Vitality Though Our Ages!

Instructor: Jeannie Weiss

Saturday, May 10 | 11:00AM - 2:00PM

Sign Language

Instructor: Bonnie DeVagno

Mondays, 7/21-8/25 | 10:30AM - 12:00PM

Cut the Cord and Stream

Instructor: Phil Sorrentino

Wednesday, August 13 | 10:00AM-11:30AM

For class descriptions and instructors' bios, visit our website or Center office.

Center 4Life Learning's upcoming trips and tours!



Tarpon Springs, Tour of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and explore Sponge Docks

May 13, 2025



StarLite Luncheon Cruise with Entertainment, South Pasadena

May 22, 2025



Jesus Christ Superstar, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Sarasota

June 4, 2025



Visit Downtown Mt. Dora

October 1, 2025

Reservations Fill Up Fast – Register Today!

Contact the Center 4Life Learning office at
813-634-8607

email at center4life@sccumc.com,
or visit our website at www.sccumc.com/4lifelearning

Meet Our New Custodial Specialist!



Please welcome Dennis Stroud as he joins our staff as the new Custodial Specialist. Dennis and his wife, Amy, moved to Florida from Indianapolis, Indiana. Together, they share five children. They have been members of our church for three years and

have volunteered in many areas. Dennis is accustomed to hard work. He served 10 years with the United States Navy and was a general manager for U-Haul. When not working, his interests are travel and sharing days with Amy.

He and Amy like the projected direction of our church and look to the future with great anticipation. A quote, "I'm very excited about being the church Custodial Specialist, and I'm looking forward to many years to come."

Shrove Tuesday & Ash Wednesday

Celebration and Fellowship

200 people gathered in the LEC to celebrate Shrove Tuesday! Great food and wonderful fellowship!

This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it! Psalm 118:24.

Thank you, Victoria and the Hospitality Team.



As The Holy Season Begins



Ash Wednesday is a holy day of reflection and repentance in the Christian faith. Believers observe the day by receiving ashes in the shape of the cross. This day marks the first day of the season of Lent, a 40 day period

of prayer, fasting and offerings leading to Easter, the day of Christ's resurrection. Lent will continue until April 17, the Thursday which commemorates the Last Supper.



Vivacious Ministries - with Victoria

“April is the sweetest month of the year, the mellow season of rebirth and renewal.”
— Mary Sojourner

Welcome to April! Wow! It is hard to believe that we are in the Lenten Season and soon it will be Palm Sunday, Holy Week and then Easter. I cannot believe how fast this year is going. Before you know it, it will be Summer again here in Sun City Center. March was such a great month here on the campus with Moffitt Cancer Center SouthShore coming to provide an update on the services they are providing at the newest facility located in Ruskin. Thank you to everyone who attended to learn more about these services, they are a great addition to our community.

Our 2nd Annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner was also a wonderful event where we served over 200 people. Next year, we are definitely printing more than 150 tickets for this event. Thanks to your donations, we were able to provide this wonderful meal to everyone and made some new friends made along the way. A “BIG THANK YOU” to Mary and Gary Taylor who cooked all of the wonderful pancakes and sausage, and to the team who helped make this event possible; without Lucille Kogut, Dennis Stroud, Glenn Carlson, Bob Carter, Leslie Cummings, Val Bartosh, Gary Wessel, Will Duncan, Mike Schoonover, Karen Ransbury, Karen Koszoru, Ellie and Fred Weir, Karen Sellers, Larry and Penny Schafer, Bill Fleck, Doug Moore, Eileen and Charles Smith, and Joanie Frantz this event could not have happened.

We are so happy to have Rick Norwood back from his mission trip to Cuba. If you have not spoken to Rick about his experience, reach out to him to hear how this trip impacted his life and the lives of our brothers and sisters in Cuba. Be on the lookout for more information about the Cuba Mission of the Month Activities coming up in June where you can hear about our Sister Cuba Church and how we continue to support them from afar.

Ladies’ Brunch is BACK! And what a time it was with 96 ladies in attendance! A “BIG” Thank you to the Pelican players for coming to the brunch and sharing “The Giving Side of Elvis.” Thank you to Shirley Walker for arranging this entertainment for us, and a “BIG” Thank you to Pastor Debbie for ordering all the delicious food from Fred’s for our first 2025 Ladies’ Brunch.

A couple more things before I close. The Friendship Circle is currently working on a Little Blessings Diaper & Wipes Drive for Abundant Life, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization located in Apollo Beach that serves single mothers who are faced with an unplanned pregnancy. We will be collecting diapers and baby wipes to help single mothers take care of their infants, so please start collecting diapers and baby wipes to donate on Mother’s Day, May 11th. I would like to bring to your attention our 3rd Annual Community Back-to-School Event which is scheduled for Saturday, July 26th to help our local community schools prepare for the 2025-2026 School Year. We will start collecting new school supplies and monetary donations. If you are interested in donating supplies, making a financial donation, and/or volunteering for this event, please contact me to find out more details.

In closing, I am so grateful for each of you and what you do to help on the church campus through our different ministries and with our continued outreach into our local community. We truly are the hands and feet of Jesus to so many in our community and it is because of your generosity by giving of your time, using your talents and of course your unconditional love that we are able to accomplish so much. Thank you for answering God’s call to love each other fully.

Much Love and Many Blessings to each of You! Victoria

Update from the Volunteer Response Team (VRT)

He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can provide comfort to others in need.
(2 Corinthians 1:4).

We are a compassionate group of Christian volunteers dedicated to various community projects, including His Helpers, church maintenance, disaster response, and recycling. (Remember, you can contribute even if you're not a VRT member.)

The Volunteer Response Team (VRT) is seeking volunteers for the Team Recorder and Youth Volunteer positions. For more information, please reach out to Linda McGovern at lwmcgovern@gmail.com.

Meetings take place on the third Wednesday of each month in room 19 from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for April 16, 2025.

The VRT of Sun City Center is always in search of individuals with diverse skills to join our team. In addition to those with tool skills, we also need cooks, organizers, administrators, and individuals who can provide a caring Christian presence. If you are interested in becoming an active member of our VRT, we encourage you to attend our monthly meeting and register on our VRT email database at <http://eepurl.com/gew3MD>.



VRT helping with a move.

The Spirit of Holy Week: Pastor Travis Taylor



In 2022, when I first started working in St. Petersburg, I was completely awestruck by the artwork of the city. My first week on the job, I remember walking down Central Avenue on my lunch break, eating a Cuban sandwich and marveling at all the amazing murals on the alleys and storefronts. I remember the feeling of being downtown and wondering how I never knew about St. Petersburg's reputation as a city of artists.



Beginning April 14th, one of those artists, Laura Thomas, will begin creating an original chalk mural for Holy Week outside our sanctuary, on our patio. The mural will take

several days to complete, and our Sun City Center community is invited to come and watch the artist at work!

Laura Thomas is an award-winning professional artist born and raised in the mountains of Colorado. Please visit these websites to view some of Laura's artwork:

www.ichalkarted.com or
www.LauraThomasStudios.com

Resurrection Cross

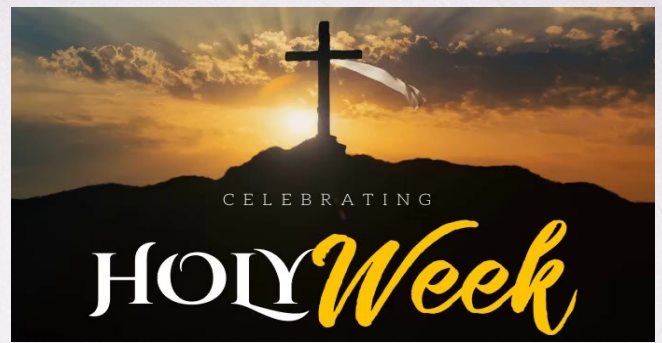


The Flowering of the Easter Cross takes place on Easter Sunday. We ask you to bring fresh flowers to place on the cross. Eventually the cross will be covered in a beautiful array of color and fragrance.

The Flowering of the Easter Cross transforms a symbol of death, darkness, pain and hopelessness. The

Cross becomes beautiful, new and alive in celebration of the Resurrection of Christ.

It is a truly special and awe-inspiring visual. Slowly but surely, the cross begins to transform into a vibrant tapestry of petals and leaves symbolizing the triumph of life over death. It is a powerful reminder of the hope and renewal that Easter brings. Through this act, we not only honor the sacrifice of Jesus but also rejoice in the promise of new beginnings and everlasting life. In this moment of beauty and symbolism, the Flowering of the Easter Cross serves as a poignant visual representation of the resurrection and the eternal love that Christ offers to all. It is a time to reflect on the transformative power of faith and the endless possibilities of redemption.



PALM SUNDAY:

This year, our Chancel Choir is presenting the Easter Cantata titled "Covenant of Grace" by Joseph Martin. Please join us for a moving musical experience on Saturday, April 12th at 4PM or Sunday, April 13th at 8:30AM or 11AM, featuring uplifting songs. The Choir is joined by a string ensemble, talented percussionists, and our very skilled organist. Come and immerse yourself in the spirit of renewal and rebirth as we commemorate the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. This event is open to all, and we welcome you to join us in this special celebration of faith. Mark your calendars and spread the word - we can't wait to share this meaningful experience with you!

MAUNDY THURSDAY & GOOD FRIDAY:

Join us for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services at 7:00 p.m.

These deeply meaningful services offer a time for reflection, prayer, and community as we journey through the somber yet hopeful events of Holy Week. On Maundy Thursday, remember the profound teachings of love and service. The serene setting of Gethsemane will provide a backdrop for contemplation and connection.

Then, on Good Friday, we will come together to remember the sacrifice and solemnity of that day. Through readings, hymns and the observance of light and darkness we will reflect the magnitude of the cross. All are welcome to join us for these sacred observances as we prepare our hearts for the joy of Easter Sunday.

EASTER:

Celebrate the joy and renewal of Easter with us as we come together for a special Worship Experience on Easter Sunday. Our day will begin with a beautiful Sunrise service at 6:30 a.m. in our parking lot, where we will witness the sun rising as a symbol of new beginnings and hope. Following this, we will continue the celebration with our Traditional and Contemporary Services. Traditional services will be enhanced by a brass ensemble. It will be a day filled with music, prayer, and reflection as we come together to honor this special time of year. We invite you to join us and be a part of this meaningful and uplifting Easter celebration, including photos at our flower cross!

Well, it's finally arrived, my favorite season – EASTER – the day, some would say the THREE days or WEEK, that define(s) us as Christians.

*The day of resurrection! Earth, tell it out abroad; The passover of gladness, the passover of God.
From death to life eternal, from earth unto the sky, Our Christ hath brought us over, with hymns of victory.*
[#303 UMH]

And while I LOVE that hymn, the one that I remember looking forward to each year, even as a small child, was this one sung to the tune *Lyra Davidica*:

*Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia! Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia! Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia*
[#302 UMH verse 4]

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today remains to this day my all-time favorite hymn (with *Praise to the Lord, the Almighty* a very close second!), and that fourth verse always brings me to tears. Why? I think I felt the power and truth of those words in my six-year-old mind so many years ago.

Until confirmation (which I experienced in a Methodist church, by the way), my family attended an Episcopal church in the town next to the one in which I grew up. It was a beautiful, smallish older stone structure with a large social hall in which I remember gathering with a big group of children each Sunday morning. At the age of seven or so, I, of course, was the kid who played the piano for this children's Sunday school after they dismissed us from the 'big people's' service. Both my parents were involved in teaching classes or helping with fellowship every Sunday. I can honestly say that I was truly blessed by those ten or twelve years at All Saints Episcopal in Leonia, NJ, and Easter was always special, even if our Mom made my sister and me dress in our brand new Easter outfits and pose for pictures in front of the blooming azalea bushes! Since that time, Easter has remained special to me beyond its spiritual significance. While it remains a somewhat 'commercialized' holiday, it's nothing like Christmas with all the pressure of buying and exchanging presents and the other 'stuff' that accompanies it. In my family, which thanks to my Mom, we actually observed a Sabbath day of rest each week, Easter Sunday was especially restful and beautiful. After church, we enjoyed a Thanksgiving-worthy meal and played games together. The playing of Easter games (including a children's as well as an adult Easter Egg hunt) has become a tradition for me, my friends, and my family.

It is my prayer that this Holy Week and Easter season is as special for each and every one of you, my family of faith.

He is risen! He is risen indeed!!

Soli Deo Gloria

'Break Away' with Breakaway – Renee Tisdale

St Patrick's Day was a festive occasion, starting with a sing-along led by Nancy S. in the morning, followed by a performance from the Orange Blossom Ukles in the afternoon! We created colorful sun catchers to decorate our space, learned about Ireland and the life of St. Patrick, and enjoyed a delicious corned beef and cabbage lunch.

We also recognized National Cheese Curl Day with a fun game where our friends tossed cheese balls at select heads covered in shaving cream! Additionally, a few of our dedicated volunteers attended the "Respite for All" conference in Birmingham, returning filled with enthusiasm and inspiration for making our ministry even better!

Renee Bray treated us to an afternoon filled with laughter, singing, and dancing courtesy of the Sun City Senior Men's Review! Channel 10 was here to interview them, and the story aired on March 20th if you're interested in watching it. We welcomed several interns from Gannon University who led our group in some fun activities and spent the day with us. They are great fun and we look forward to their return!

Since the start of the year, several volunteers have stepped up to handle all the shopping, cooking, and serving of our weekly lunches, and we could not be more grateful! While we still need lunch on Wednesday each week, starting in April, Freedom Plaza will be providing our lunches on Mondays!

If you're on Facebook and haven't yet checked us out, please visit the Breakaway Respite Ministry page and have a look! If you'd like to join our amazing Breakaway family, please consider attending our training event on April 8th, 2025, in Creason Hall. Robin Dill, one of the original founders of the volunteer-based respite care model, will be leading the training!

Thank God It's Variety (T.G.I.V.) -Larry Hirschak

It's that time of the year when the Thank God It's Variety Concert Series begins to slow down throughout the Spring and Summer months. However, there are still plenty of great concert events coming up.

Beginning on Tuesday April 1st at 7:00PM, the Kings Point Mixed Chorus will be presenting their Spring concert entitled "Play A Simple Melody" under the direction of Faye Nepon with accompanist Ines Hertz. This will be an evening of songs from the Great American Songbook, bringing back memories and many favorite songs of yesteryear! No "fooling", this April fool's Day will be a fun night of fun songs!

On Friday April 4th, the Nashville Hall of Fame Tour will be returning once again. This very popular group of entertainers has always been a fan favorite. This trio of outstanding musicians include Charlie McCoy of "Hee Haw" fame and a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, Richard Kiser, a Chet Atkins style guitarist and member of the Country Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame, and pianist Jason Coleman, the grandson of Floyd Cramer, who plays the "slip-note" style of his grandfather. In addition, Richard's wife Denise, a cousin of the legendary Patsy Cline, will perform some of Patsy's famous songs. You won't want to miss this fun-filled evening where they will have you tapping your toes, clapping to the music, and laughing at their side-splitting humor.

The South Shore Concert Band will present their spring concert on Monday April 7th at 7:00PM with their program entitled "American Way". The 40-member band under the direction of Gene Bohland will be presenting selections from John Williams, Leonard Bernstein, Glenn Miller, Broadway musicals by Rogers and Hammerstein, Disney favorites and a special guest saxophonist, Tim Hoffman, performing in Sammy Nestico's *Persuasion*. This is a program you really won't want to miss!!

Lastly, the Chancel Choir will be presenting Joseph Martin's Easter Cantata "Covenant of Grace" on Saturday April 12th at 4:00PM and again on Palm Sunday April 13th at the 8:30AM and 11:00AM Traditional worship services.

Keep an eye out for some exciting concerts coming up in May!

"For God richly provides us with everything to enjoy". 1 Timothy 6:17

Larry Hirschak, Concert Series Coordinator

'Happenings' with Next Gen -Faniel Pradel

Mission of the Month:

Thank you so much Sun City Center UMC! Your prayers, concerns, uplifting words and especially your contributions mean so much to us! It warms our hearts knowing that this congregation is always thinking of us and ready to go to bat for us. With your generous gifts, we are confident that we can send as many students as possible to Summer Camp, which is just around the corner. Thank you once again!

Bowling Night:

UTC Youth had such a fun time bowling over at The Alley! We had 13 youth and 4 volunteers. The skill level was definitely a wide range, and there were a ton of sore arms the next day, but how great is it that something as simple as bowling and pizza could display the love of God to these students! We can't wait to go back again!

Bag and Jewelry Sale:

We extend our gratitude to all of those who donated their beautiful treasures for this fantastic fundraiser! A huge thank you to those who came out and purchased these items, the ladies of the church led by the volunteers of the bookstore, and Robin Weber for taking lead and making this event such an amazing one! We were able to raise over a whopping \$8,600 to send students to camp! Thank you all so much. We know that none of this is possible without you! And please be on the lookout for details for another sale in the future!



Celebrate the

Easter

Season With Us

12
APR

Easter Cantata
| 4:00PM

13
APR

Palm Sunday
Easter Cantata during
our Traditional Services.
| 8:30 & 11AM

17
APR

Maundy Thursday
| 7:00PM

18
APR

Good Friday
| 7:00PM

Easter Worship

6:30AM - Sunrise

8:30AM & 11:00AM - Traditional

9:45AM - Contemporary



The United Methodist
Church of SCC

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