

# The Messenger



**FIRST METHODIST CHURCH  
— OF ZEPHYRHILLS —**

a Global Methodist Family

*The Beauty of Change*



**October 2025**

*In this issue: It's Pastor Appreciation Month ~ See the Back Cover*

38635 5th Avenue, Zephyrhills, FL 33542

Church Office: (813) 782-5645

[www.fmcz.org](http://www.fmcz.org) / [info@fmcz.org](mailto:info@fmcz.org)

## Join us for Live, In-Person Sunday Worship

Contemporary Service 9:30am

Traditional Service 11:00 am

**Children's Church** dismissal at both services

**Adult Sunday School:** 9:30-10:30am Crusaders room;  
11:00am-12:00pm Truthseekers room

## New to FMCZ? Welcome!

### First-Time Guests

Welcome! We hope you'll have a wonderful, Spirit-filled experience worshiping God with us. We have a gift for you. Just ask one of the ushers for a first time guest gift bag after the worship service.

### Children's Nursery

We offer a Nursery for children aged 8 weeks through 5 years. It opens at 9:15am each Sunday morning and is open for the full hour of each worship service. It is a safe and nurturing place with screened and trained leaders located in the Education Building through the door to Cooper Hall.

### Children's Church

Kindergarten through fifth graders are invited to Children's Church! They are dismissed halfway through each worship service. One of our screened and trained team members will lead them to the Children's Church room in the **Education Building** for a fun, Christ-centered learning experience. All parents/guardians please pick up your children immediately following the service.

### Sanctuary Mothers' Room

Read about our accommodations just for new mothers. See page 4 of this publication.

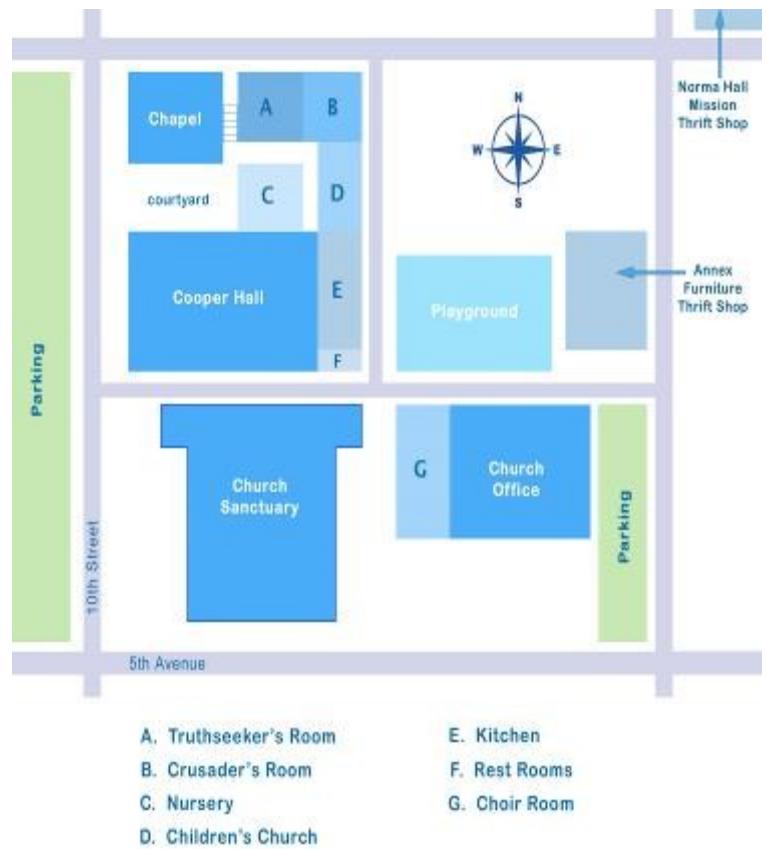
### Restrooms

Restrooms are located in the sanctuary lobby, in Cooper Hall by the kitchen, and at the end of the hallway in the Education Building. Changing tables are available in most restrooms.

### Sunday Café

Drop in for light refreshments in Cooper Hall before or between worship services 9:00-11:00am. Grab a cup of coffee and a treat on your way to worship or Sunday School class, and meet some of the other friendly people in our church family!

### Campus Map



## September 2025 Worship Services

### Worship Themes

October continues with a 10 part series reflecting on what it means to build a strong, God-centered family by the principles set down in the Ten Commandments, while navigating the pressures of a modern, rapidly-changing world. This series will be using the **New Living Translation** each Sunday for its accessibility and clarity of language.

### Sunday, October 5: Communion Sunday

God's Blueprint for Strong Families - "Restoring the Rhythm", The Fourth Commandment: Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15 (NIV)  
*"Creating a rhythm of rest, worship, and togetherness promotes healthy living."*

### Sunday, October 12: Missions Celebration

God's Blueprint for Strong Families - "Building a Family Legacy", The Fifth Commandment: Exodus 20:2 and Deuteronomy 5:16 (NIV)  
*"Respect for one's parents lays the foundation for long-lasting family strength."*

### Sunday, October 19:

God's Blueprint for Strong Families - "Protecting Life", The Sixth Commandment: Exodus 20:13 and Deuteronomy 5:17 (NIV)  
*"Valuing life cultivates the home free of violence and filled with peace and affirmation."*

### Sunday, October 26:

God's Blueprint for Strong Families - "Fidelity in Marriage", The Seventh Commandment: Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5:18 (NIV)  
*"The foundations of marriages and relationships are faithfulness, honesty, & covenant."*

## WORSHIP: Witnessing Boldly

**Music Ministry** Our Music Ministry groups are always open to welcoming new members! If you are interested in serving through music, talk to a group member!

**Salvation's Rock** [Contemporary Service 9:30am]

**Music Worship Leader:** Eric Gale

**Practice Schedule:** Thursdays -7:30—9:30pm, Sundays - 8:00am

**Chancel Choir** [Traditional Service 11:00am]

**Music Worship Leader for both choirs:** Miriam Ezra

**Hand Bell Choir** [Periodically at Traditional Service 11:00am]

**Practice Schedule:** Mondays - Bells 6:00—7:00pm; Choir 7:00—8:00pm

**Men Of God** [Periodically at Traditional Service and other functions]

**Practice Schedule:** Varies

## Sanctuary Mothers' Room

Mothers of very young children, don't forget our Sanctuary Mothers' Room, especially furnished to provide a quiet, comfortable and practical environment for private on-the-spot childcare needs through all Sanctuary services and events. We offer live streaming of our services in the Mothers' Room via a large wall-mounted flat screen television for easy viewing around the space. Stay connected to the service and the day's message even if you need to be away from the main sanctuary.



## Sunday Study and Discussion Groups

Weekly study groups offer adult Bible study each Sunday morning in the Education Building Classrooms through Cooper Hall East.

**Crusaders from 9:30 - 10:30am      Truthseekers from 11:00am - 12:00pm.**

**Crusaders Class:** Facilitated by Jeanne Narum, this class uses material developed by Cokesbury Methodist publishing house. Structured with quarterly subject packets, ("Struggle, Perseverance, and Hope"; themes for September, October, and November), October will explore 'Urgent Messages from God' using scripture from the Book of Jeremiah as well as continuing with the devotional supplement "Women in the Bible".

**Truthseekers Class: The World of the End....How Jesus' Prophecy Shapes Our Priorities.** This nine week video based study of the end times comes from Matthew:24. Begun in September, the study is planned to continue through October.

## Technical Support Services [Team Leader ~ Todd Kramer]

Ministry Focus: Operating audio equipment and video presentation equipment to help form and present worship services and engage our audiences. Both Sunday services have their own unique sound and projection needs each week along with livestreaming to the web. For more details, contact the Technical Director at [tkramer@fmcz.org](mailto:tkramer@fmcz.org)



## Sanctuary Support [Team Leader ~ Karen Harwell]

Everyone is welcome at the Big White Church on 5th Avenue! Our greeters and ushers create the first impressions of welcome to all visitors at worship services and events. Team members also help to maintain and set worship elements and collect tithes and gifts during services. Engaging all visitors is the first step in building our congregation. Fill out a [Ministry Interest Form](#) or speak to an usher if you would like to be a part of this vital team.



## Sunday Café ~ Cooper Hall East [Team Leader ~ Michelle Hill]

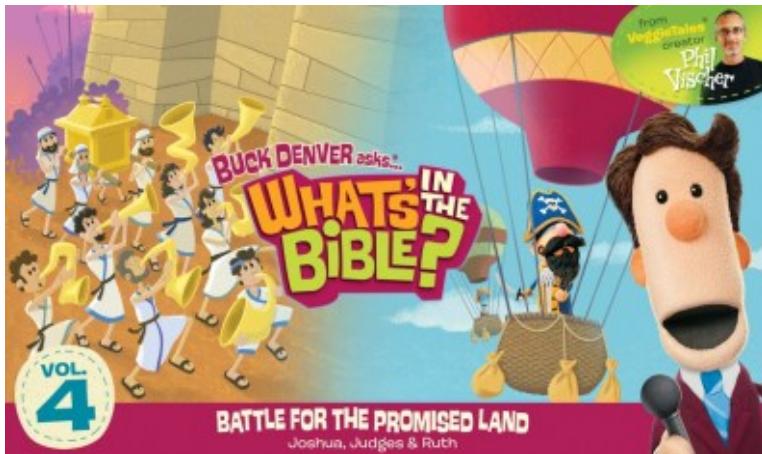
The Sunday Morning Café is located in Cooper Hall East from 9:00 - 11:00 am every Sunday before and between worship services. Join us as we greet the day with coffee and fellowship!



## MINISTRIES: Making Disciples of Christ

### Children's Ministry [Team Leaders ~ Carol Runyon and Polly Adwell]

Children's Church (grades K - 5) returns to the kids' Bible series, "What's in the Bible?" Moving out of Genesis, the Sunday sessions will be exploring more early Old Testament narratives about the Israelites in Canaan.



#### October Theme Sunday

October 19 -- Fall In Love with Jesus

Matthew 22:37 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

On each special Sunday planned for our children we will focus on a Bible verse and include crafts & games associated with the theme. Questions? Contact Carol Runyon at: [crunyon@fmcz.org](mailto:crunyon@fmcz.org)

Bring your children and youth to Sunday Service from where they will be dismissed to the Cooper Hall Education Building for their own prayerful fun and Bible-based activities with Next Waves Kids and Youth Ministries. Children meet in the Children's Ministry Room down the main hallway of the Education wing and Youth meet in the Chapel Classroom.

### Youth and Family Ministries [Team Leader ~ Karen Ezra]

Youth Sunday School curriculum continues to explore themes from Genesis with tie-ins to other key passages in both the Old and New Testaments, using material from "Answers in Genesis".

#### October Youth Lesson Plan

##### Unit 5 continues

Oct. 05 ~ Lesson 59: Topic - God Dwells Among His People

Subsequent lesson plans will be listed in the October eBlasts as the information becomes available.



### OTHER YOUTH AND CHILDREN NEWS FOR OCTOBER

#### Youth Escape Room Trip, Sunday, October 5th 11:00am

Members of New Waves Youth can sign up for a trip to an off-campus Escape Room Outing and lunch. Prices and details are in development. Please email Karen for more information at [kezra@fmcz.org](mailto:kezra@fmcz.org)

#### Chili Cook-Off and Pumpkin Carving: Saturday, October 18th 6:00 - 8:00pm in Cooper Hall East

For all church members and guests. Serving begins at 6:00pm with chili cooks gathering at 5:30 for set up. Watch eBlasts in October for more details. Coordinated by Karen Ezra at [kezra@fmcz.org](mailto:kezra@fmcz.org)

#### Halloween Howl: Saturday, October 25th in conjunction with the Main Street Zephyrhills event.

FMCZ Next Waves Youth will participate in the city's Halloween event with a food booth on our property to raise money for the 2026 Youth trip to Rock the Universe and a Family Ministry booth to hand out seasonal sweets and information about our church. Please stop by!

## Prayer and Praise [Team Leader ~ Connie Norton]

Every Tuesday Morning 9:00am, Truthseekers Room, Education Building

PRAYER WORKS! Send prayer requests to [c Norton40@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:c Norton40@tampabay.rr.com). Confirm the approval of the person or persons being lifted in prayer. Provide complete contact information in order for a group member to follow up with phone calls or cards. All information given to us is kept strictly confidential.



**FAITHFUL SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT REQUIRES A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO A PRACTICE OF PRAYER.**

## FMCZ Outreach Devotional Services

This past year, an Assisted Living Outreach program was formed by several members of our church. In this outreach our volunteers provide spiritual support to residents who reside in area Assisted Living facilities. Currently we provide a worship service at the American House of Zephyrhills on a monthly basis. Our worship service includes prayer, scripture reading, music and a short sermon. Before and after each service, we offer fellowship to those in attendance and share our faith with those residents unable to attend services outside their facility. Worship services and group activities offer a sense of community and connection for residents who may be isolated. This ministry helps residents feel valued and included in our congregation, strengthening their faith and providing comfort during challenging times.

Assisted Living ministry offers opportunities for volunteers to use their gifts and experience God's grace while serving others. If you're interested in being a part of this unique ministry, please contact Roz Hill at 443-834-8621 for more information.

## Walk to Emmaus [Team Leaders ~ Dave and Roz Hill]

*"Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us? Luke 24:32.*

When I first heard of the Walk to Emmaus, I thought my fellow church members were referring to the Pre-Easter walk our church had participated in carrying a large cross through the neighborhood streets. What I found was that it's a Christian retreat; an intense 72 hours of spiritual growth within a facility with other believers of Jesus Christ. There are separate sessions for adult women and adult men. I had the privilege of being an Emmaus pilgrim at one of the yearly walks, which are associated with the Upper Room publication organization (you may have read their monthly devotional material). During your 72 hour retreat you are pampered by a staff of "angels", enjoy 3 meals a day, never have to make your bed and, most attractive for me, you experience a spiritual unity with other Christians as they blossom in their faith, learning how to be the hands and feet of Jesus in your local church and community. The Emmaus experience continues after the Walk with small group sessions to keep us accountable and growing as well as monthly Gatherings – pot luck meals and worship.

Are you a card-carrying member of AAA? No, not the auto club, but the anger, apathy and anxiety club. Well, if you'd like to cancel that membership – try the next Walk to Emmaus Retreat #43.

**Men's Walk – September 10-13, 2026 ~ Women's Walk – September 17-20, 2026**

Please join us! Call Roz or Dave Hill at 443-834-8621 to be referred to an Emmaus sponsor for details.

On September 13th, members from all over Central Florida came to our church for worship and to share a potluck meal. One member shared his testimony and we celebrated our Lord's supper. Pastor Steve Ezra explained the solemnness of coming to the Lord's table and our hearts were prepared before partaking of the elements.

*At right is our Emmaus team that set up and decorated Cooper Hall for the Gathering. DeColores, submitted by Nancy Swartz*



## United Women in Faith [Team Leader ~ Phyllis Blanchard]

### Updates From Phyllis Blanchard:

Thursday, September 11th, Zephyrhills United Women in Faith met after a three month summer break. Twenty ladies met, shared lunch, voted to support the Smile Train and the children for which they perform life changing surgeries. UWF are planning a Meals Around the World fundraising dinner on November 22nd, from 4:00 - 7:00pm in Cooper Hall; a festive Christmas Dinner where everyone's invited (for the price of a \$12 ticket) on December 11th from 5:00 - 8:00pm; and a jolly Christmas Cookie Sale on Sunday, December 14th where you can fill a \$5 or \$10 box with cookies baked by our members (or their daughters or sisters)!

So much is on our calendar in the months ahead! Keep a lookout for more information, be a part of our special events, or come join us when we meet on the second Thursday of each month in Cooper Hall.



## Project Others [Team Leader ~ Deann Harrington]

### Collecting Items and Materials for Health Kits and Holiday Cheer Projects

October is a busy month at Project Others as we count our inventory and see how many items we have made in the past year. This is a good time for new members to check out our group and see our many hand crafted projects. We need the participation of people who like to sew, cut blocks, knit, crochet, or are willing to learn any of these crafts. Stop in Friday mornings from 8 - 11am when we meet in Cooper Hall West. We will be happy to show you, as a guest, what we do and invite you to stay as a member!

Our project collection box is in Cooper Hall. We are still looking for help in collecting items to assemble health kits for the homeless which will include WASH CLOTHS, HAND TOWELS, SMALL BARS OF SOAP, SMALL BOTTLES OF SHAMPOO AND CONDITIONER.

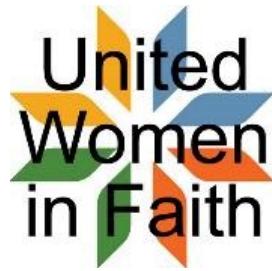
Our homemade stockings will be stuffed and offered to Food Pantry children from baby to age 10. ITEMS NEEDED: COLORING BOOKS, CRAYONS, SMALL TOYS TO FIT IN THE STOCKING, MATCH BOX SIZE CARS, SMALL STUFFED ANIMALS, JUMP ROPES, YOYO'S & SIMILAR ITEMS.

Thanks to all who help us with these holiday projects each year. If you cannot help, we understand, but please offer a prayer for the success of these projects.

Questions may be directed to Team Leader, Deann Harrington (813) 713- 4119.

THE PROJECT OTHERS TEAM (813)713 - 4119

Meeting faithfully for hand crafts, fellowship, and prayer  
Every Friday morning, 8:00 - 11:00am in Cooper Hall West



## MISSIONS: Community Outreach

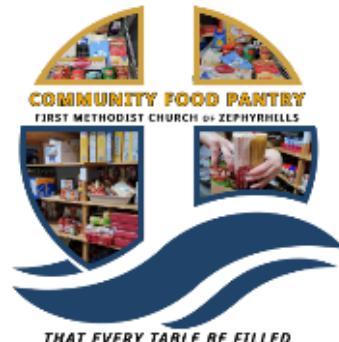
### Food Pantry [Team Leader ~ Tana Day]

#### Fall Holiday Harvest Collection

Help our Food Pantry fill a plate this upcoming holiday season.

As we gather with loved ones and share warm meals,  
many in our community will be facing empty cupboards.  
Your donation—big or small—can bring comfort, nourishment,  
and hope to a neighbor in need.

Please give today and make this season brighter for everyone.



During the months of October and November, please take some extra time to consider those meal ingredients that are the foundations of many happy holiday tables. The Pantry staff is asking our food donors to focus on providing those holiday staples that will help make Thanksgiving and Christmas meals extra bright with as many traditional elements and flairs as possible. A list of the common holiday meal components is below, but it is certainly not exclusive. Think about what meal items brighten a holiday table and please consider donating those! Thank you and HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

#### SUGGESTED DONATION LIST

CANNED VEGETABLES (low sodium): Green Beans, Wax Beans, Corn, Collards, Sweet Potatoes, Whole Potatoes, Yams, Cranberries, Peas and Carrots, Mixed Vegetables

CANNED MEAT: Chicken, Turkey, Ham

DRY GOODS: Stuffing, Instant Potatoes, Bread Crumbs,

Dried Fruit, Healthy Nuts,

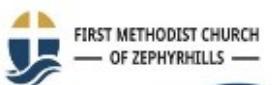
INGREDIENTS: Herbs and Spices, Canned Pumpkin, Gravy Mix, Brown Sugar, Applesauce, Powdered Milk, Chicken Broth, Bone Broth, Cream of Celery Soup



**Food Pantry Distribution Days are October 13, 14, 15**

**THIS MONTH'S DONATION COLLECTION SUNDAY IS October 19**

### Thrift Shops [Team Leaders ~ Lyn Sears, Main Shop; Terry Dutkiewicz, Annex]



- NORMA HALL -  
**THRIFT SHOP**  
**ANNEX**  
FURNITURE SEASONAL ITEMS MEDICAL

Regularly Featured In the Annex

Furniture and a wide variety of larger home goods

Regularly Featured In the Main Shop

Clothing, books, and smaller home goods  
and décor

Mondays 8am–12pm  
Donations only

Wednesdays & Saturdays 8am–12pm



- NORMA HALL -  
**THRIFT**  
**SHOP**  
CLOTHING BOOKS HOME GOODS  
A Thrifter's Haven to Find One-of-a-Kind Treasures

## Spotlight < Salvation's Rock ~ Praise Song Playlist



Welcome to Praise Playlist, a monthly feature where one of the Salvation's Rock members will suggest a song that they think should be added to your own Worship Playlist. The band's service song sets for each Sunday are announced in the weekly eBlasts, but this list is for additional Contemporary Christian tunes that band members feel especially drawn to as they choose weekly music, even if the track is not in our music library or available to play at worship service.

This month's song is suggested by Wanda Rakocy, one of the band's principal vocalists who is also a member of the Traditional service's Choir. Wanda's choice for October is "How Good it Is", a recent release by popular Christian artist, Chris Tomlin.

Wanda writes, *"I like the songs Chris Tomlin writes and sings because they are mostly based on scriptures and his style of song is easy to learn and sing. I chose one of his newest songs, because the tune and the words make me want to lift praise up the Lord. This is an upbeat song that gets stuck in my head and makes me feel like praising the Lord all day long."*

Listen to it here: [\*\*"How Good It Is" performed by Chris Tomlin\*\*](#)

## Long Term Prayer List [For October 2025]

Along with the weekly list of those connected to our congregation in need of prayer support, our team of prayer warriors maintains a special focus on those who are in need over a long period of time; prolonged illness, lengthy recoveries, uncertain circumstances, or protracted personal challenges. The team asks all church family members to keep these individuals in your own prayers as well throughout the month ahead. **As Jesus reminded us, "Ask, using my name, and you will receive."**

Gary Bridges, Chloe Budge, Michele Devine, Richard Dreyer, Jim Elliot, Larry Gower, Randy Hall, Gary McLean, Steven Noh, Terri Stanley, Trisha Stevens, Roxanne Young. [updated 9-18-2025]

## Commission on Missions Committee [Team Leader ~ Kay Milligan]

Farm Workers Self-Help, Inc. of Dade City is our mission focus for October. The agency formed in 1982 and has had our church as a strong supporter since the mid 80's as part of our local missions' focus.

The agency seeks to empower individuals and the community. They facilitate education programs, advocacy, legal assistance and domestic violence prevention, as well as providing a food pantry, thrift shop and programs for children and youth in education and the arts. They even have a youth dance program that has entertained in our own Cooper Hall.

Please remember them in prayer and in your mission giving this month! This is a vital outreach to some of the "least of these" in our own local community. Mark your donations to either "October Missions" or to "Farm Workers Self-Help".

Thank you!  
Missions Committee



## Spotlight < Farm Workers Self-Help, Inc.

Often, local resource and advocacy groups focus on a narrow range of services for the communities they serve. But Farm Workers Self-Help has a history of providing a long list of resources and activities to both its members and as outreach to surrounding communities. The group offers the opportunity and means for its members, particularly children and young adults, to explore, express, and celebrate their culture. One such example is the "Dreamers Teatro Crew".



DTC is a theatre troupe based out of Dade City, FL, organized under the auspices of the "Farmworker's Self-Help Organization," and comprised primarily of the "Dreamer" high school/college students living in the Lock Street area. Together, original, theatrical works of art are created that are improvised, workshopped, rehearsed, written, and performed for the Spanish-speaking community surrounding them, as well as the English-speaking community at large.

Here are some of the ways DTC serves as a vital resource within the Farm Workers Self-Help group:

- provide a vehicle to analyze, learn, and recognize human behavior on a level familiar to our members
- artistic medium/vehicle to constructively voice thoughts, views, opinions, frustrations, and curiosities about the world surrounding us
- serve an underrepresented, underserved community/demographic culture/population/people
- participate in the construction of an art representing a culture written for, by, and about those of that culture, and in both Spanish and English
- serve as social ambassadors to the community at large, interested in learning more about their community's struggles, stories, and culture

To learn more about the many resources that FSH provides to its members and the vital role it plays in the East Pasco community you can explore its website here:

<https://fshflorida.wixsite.com/farmworkers-self-hel/>

## Spotlight < Campus Repairs and Upgrades [FMCZ Trustees]

While our Trustees are responsible for coordinating an impressively long list of small replacement and repair projects around the campus, larger, more complicated renovation and upgrade projects are greenlit for active work whenever the schedule and financing become available. One such project is the renovation of the second floor office (empty and unused for a long time) into the new Technology office. Extensive plumbing work has just been completed while new window treatments and a new air conditioning unit has been installed to make the space functional. Next step - furniture!

An even larger renovation project is underway, started in late September. The three front rooms in the church office building, which include offices for the Pastor and the Office Manager, and the main Reception area, are finally getting a well-deserved modernization. The old paneling is being removed, new drywall installed, new electrical runs, décor upgrades, and of course a new paint scheme are all in the works. The goal is to present a contemporary and professional atmosphere to those who do business with our staff or who are visiting our offices for the first time.

Members can donate to projects like these by simply designating some donations as "PROPERTY PRESERVATION"



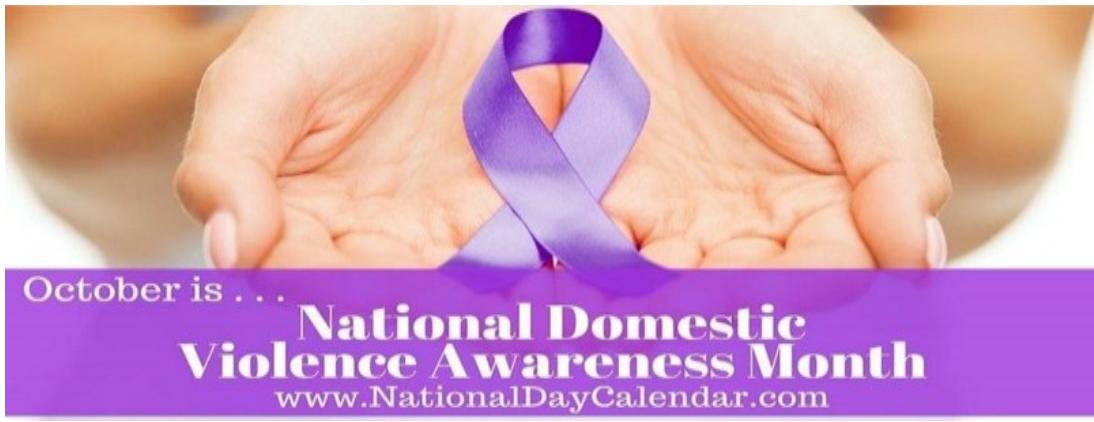
## SERVICE TEAMS: Community Self-Care

### Faith Community Nursing [Team Leader ~ Druann Briggs, RN 813-420-7919]

Next Blood Pressure Checks ~ October 5th ~ 10:30 - 11:00am in Cooper Hall

Next Big Red Bus Blood Drive ~ November 9th ~ 9:00 - 11:00am in front of Sanctuary

PLEASE CHECK THE BULLETIN BOARD IN COOPER HALL FOR OTHER UPDATES



**Domestic Violence** affects everyone. It knows no boundaries, it affects all races, all ethnicities, all economic classes, all ages, all religions – all communities. Domestic violence can be defined as a pattern of abusive behavior used to establish power and control within the context of an intimate relationship. It can include:

**Physical Abuse:** Hitting, Slapping, Kicking, Choking, Pushing, Punching, Burning, Using a Weapon or Other Object to Cause Injury

**Sexual Abuse:** Forcing a Partner to Engage in Unwanted Sexual Acts, Refusing to Practice Safe Sex, Degrading Treatment

**Verbal Abuse:** Constant Criticism, Making Humiliating Comments, Name-calling, Mocking, Yelling, Swearing

**Emotional Abuse:** Denying/Shifting Blame, Treating a Partner as an Inferior, Making Up Impossible “Rules” and Punishing the Victim for Breaking Them, Isolation, Monitoring Correspondence and Whereabouts, Abusing Children or Pets, Destruction of Property, Stalking, Using Threatening Actions or Gestures, Making the Victim Feel Guilty, Being Overly Jealous

**Financial Abuse:** Preventing a Partner from Getting or Keeping a Job or Attending School, Denying Access to Financial Information and/or Family Income, Damaging or Ruining a Partner’s Credit

Domestic violence isolates a survivor, reduces their options to leave the relationship, has a negative impact on the children in the household, affects their ability to work, can lead to a perpetrator stalking the survivor and has a high risk of ending in life-threatening violence or death. A safety plan is an important first step if you are in or have been in a violent relationship.

Sunrise of Pasco County is a multi-faceted domestic violence and sexual assault center providing a safe place for survivors to heal and plan their future. It offers a 24-hour/7 day a week hotline for persons affected by domestic and sexual violence that provides information on how to get help for a loved one, options and services available for survivors, community referrals or someone to just listen. The hotline is **CONFIDENTIAL**. If you are in immediate danger you should call 911 or your local emergency number immediately. **Sunrise's 24-hour hotline (321) 521-3120**

## Stephen Ministry [Team Leader ~ Dave Hill]

Stephen Ministry is a lay-led program in Christian congregations that trains and organizes church members to provide high-quality, one-on-one care to individuals experiencing difficult times. Founded in 1975, this ministry provides emotional and spiritual support to people in the congregation and the community.



### What Stephen Ministers do:

- Provide Christ-centered care: Ministers are trained to listen, care, encourage, and offer prayer, connecting the hurting person with God's love.
- Offer one-on-one support: A Stephen Minister meets regularly, typically once a week, with an assigned "care receiver" for as long as the need for care exists.
- Walk with, not fix: They are trained to walk alongside someone in need, rather than trying to solve their problems for them.
- Maintain confidentiality: The caring relationship is built on trust, confidentiality, and respect.
- Address life crises: This support is for individuals going through a variety of crises, including grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or relocation.

Stephen Ministry is intended to supplement, not replace, pastoral care. It is based on the idea that pastors cannot meet all the care needs of their congregation alone. By equipping qualified laypeople to assist when possible, it empowers the entire congregation to provide meaningful, Christ-centered care.

If you would like to talk with a Stephen Minister, please call the church office at 813-782-5645

If you would like more information about becoming a Stephen Minister, contact Dave Hill at: [dhill1944@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:dhill1944@tampabay.rr.com) or call 410-409-9132.

## Faith Responders [Local Church Liaisons ~ Lorne Becker and Tanna Day]

We're thrilled to share some exciting news that's been in the works behind the scenes. **Faith Responders has been awarded a \$250,000 grant from Volunteer Florida to expand our work across the region!!**

Our disaster relief, response, and recovery work has touched so many lives, it's hard to imagine this work without **you**. This grant will help us spread God's love so that more people will find comfort in the knowledge that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." (Psalm 46:1, NKJV)

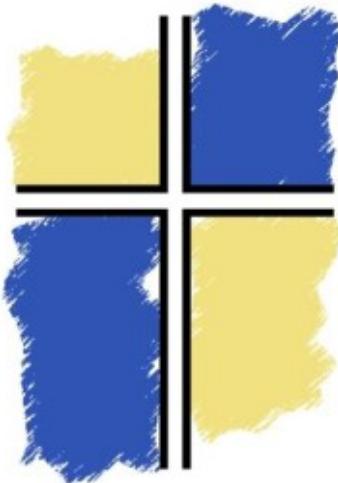
In addition, this funding will allow us to serve more communities recovering from Hurricanes Helene and Milton while enhancing our readiness for future response. **Long after the headlines fade, we remain on the ground, repairing homes, restoring hope, and walking with survivors through the rebuilding process offering both practical help and the love of Christ wherever it's needed most.**

The Faith Responders journey began following Hurricane Ian. In partnership with Wesleyan Covenant Association and the Global Methodist Church, pastors and laity in Florida organized volunteers and resources for survivors. God has continued to provide resources and opportunities to assist those in need following Hurricane Idalia, Tallahassee tornadoes, wildfires, severe Hurricanes Debby, Helene, Milton and most recently the spring storms of 2025 and Texas flooding.

To everyone who has **prayed, donated, deployed, or simply followed our journey, THANK YOU!** This win is yours too. It's an honor to serve alongside you as the Body of Christ, shining light into some of the hardest places.

Let's keep showing up together to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

We see Jesus in YOU!



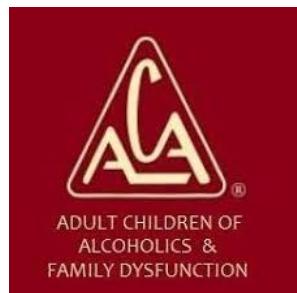
# Support Groups On Our Campus

## Adult Children of Alcoholics and Family Dysfunction

Wednesdays from 12:00 - 1:00pm in the Chapel Parlor.

From 10th Street, enter through the white gate into the courtyard, and go to the double doors.

ACA is a 12-step international fellowship of healing from past traumas as a child and growing through the pain to become a happy and content adult! The program focuses on emotional sobriety for those affected by dysfunctional families, whether alcohol is involved or not.



## TOPS Meetings

Every Thursday morning 10:00am - 12:00pm

Truthseekers Classroom, Education Building of Cooper Hall  
For more information contact the Church Office, 813-782-5645.

*Founded in 1948, TOPS is the first of its kind, noncommercial weight-loss support group, with ties to the medical community and thousands of chapters in the U.S. and Canada.*



## Al-Anon meets regularly here on the FMCZ campus.

Fridays, 6:30 - 8:00pm, in the Truthseekers Room.

*Please enter through the back door of Cooper Hall, on 6th Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets (a sign will be there).  
For more information contact the Church Office, 813-782-5645.*



## Meeting Information:

Wednesdays, 4:00 - 5:30pm

September 3rd through December 10th, 2025  
Crusaders Classroom - Education Building



For information, contact Gaynell Jeffries at: [eldis.jeffries@gmail.com](mailto:eldis.jeffries@gmail.com) or pick up a flyer in the sanctuary lobby. You can register directly at <https://www.griefshare.org/findagroup>

This 13 - 14 week session features a video seminar, group discussion, and personal workbook, all designed to create a safe and comforting place where anyone recovering from significant loss can find support, direction, and guidance on how to make it through the challenges inherent in the grieving process.



## Alcoholics Anonymous

AA Meets on Fridays at 4:00 p.m. in the Truthseekers Room.

*Please enter through the back door of Cooper Hall, on 6th Avenue between 10th and 11th Streets (a sign will be there).  
For more information contact the Church Office, 813-782-5645.*

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who utilize the 12-step program to achieve sobriety and support others who share that path.

## SPECIAL EVENTS: Information, Fellowship, Music

### Young At Heart Presentations [Team Leads ~ Harry Kehr & Gary Hartman]



Speaker:  
Rev. Brian Carr

#### YOUNG AT HEART SENIOR LUNCHEON

**Thursday, October 16th**  
**11:30am—1:00pm**  
**Cooper Hall**

**Presentation:**  
**RESIDING HOPE: formerly**  
**Florida UM Children's Home**

Q and A segment  
after presentation



**ADMISSION: BRING  
ONE COVERED DISH  
OF YOUR CHOICE TO  
SHARE.**

### Yard Crosses [Rich Vogel and Gary Hartman]

**The Story Behind the Crosses:** Two years ago, an atheist living in Frankenmuth, MI, complained about crosses on a bridge in town. He requested that they be removed, and the town removed them. He then decided that since he was so successful with that, the city shield be changed as it had a heart symbol with a cross inside, signifying the city's Lutheran beginning. The residents decided they had enough. Hundreds of residents made known their opinion by placing small crosses in their front yards. This quiet but powerful statement from a community made the atheist withdraw his complaint. Those simple crosses remain in those front yards today. Those crosses after two years are still there. This is a powerful and inspiring message for all Americans passing them every day. It is time to take this idea across America.

**The Local Response:** Begun originally by then FUMCZ members Frank Cahill and Roy Burnside, the goal was simply to provide simple white crosses to all who want to make this small but powerful public statement of faith at their own home. Acknowledging how richly God has blessed our country, each cross outwardly gives thanks for these blessings and signifies to all of faith that they are not alone. According to current team leader, Rich Vogel, after Frank and Roy had both passed away, he was given the remaining stock of crosses by Frank's wife, and put them at his home for anyone who wanted one. Just as the stock was running low, church member, Jess Harmon saw the need and said simply, "I can make these." This led to a collaboration lasting several years until a car accident left Jess unable to continue the work. It wasn't long before another member, Gary Hartman, stepped up to take over building the crosses while Rich still paints.

Crosses are available either in the Narthex or Cooper Hall. Crosses are free but donations to purchase materials are always most welcome!

Story submitted by Rich Vogel



## Spotlight <Residing Hope ~ [Enterprise, FL and Madison Youth Ranch]

The Reverend Brian Carr should be very familiar to many of us at First Methodist of Zephyrhills. As Director of Church Relations for Residing Hope (formerly known as Florida United Methodist Children's Home), Rev. Carr was the guest speaker at our worship services on July 6th of this year, where he presented a certificate for our congregation's outstanding donation level, accepted by our local mission representative, Sandy Coon. Serving the children of Florida since 1908, this charitable organization has been a fundamental part of this state's faith-based social resources for many years, and perhaps one can be forgiven for thinking that there is little more to say about this crucial care group.

Those who attend the upcoming Young at Heart Senior Luncheon on Thursday, October 16th in Cooper Hall will quickly discover that Residing Hope is an organization that never rests on its many past achievements, but constantly searches for new and better ways to serve the needs of the youngest, most vulnerable parts of our population. The recent name change is far more than a cosmetic rebrand, it's a rewriting of their path forward to better and more comprehensive care where it's needed most.

More than just temporary housing for children in need, Residing Hope provides a complete array of services connected to their two existing campuses in North and Central Florida and beyond throughout the state. Offering Residential Care, Independent Living programs, Foster Care in several counties, Outpatient Counseling, Faith-based Holistic Spiritual and Emotional Care Programs, and a fully licensed Education Program, Residing Hope works to provide comprehensive support to children and young adults who may not have the benefits of a traditional, Christian family.

You are invited to attend this informative Young at Heart Presentation and discover how far Residing Hope reaches beyond just its time-honored name. Bring a luncheon dish to share and enjoy a time of fellowship and discovery with your fellow FMC members.



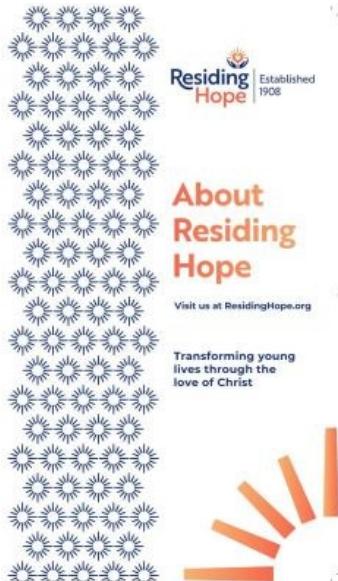
Residing Hope Montessori School



Maultsby Cottage at Madison, FL



Horticulture Program



New Climbing Wall

## SPECIAL NOTES: Information and Fellowship

### Wednesday Refuel Dinner Menus [Judy and Greg Peavey]



## **WEDNESDAY NIGHT REFUEL**

**OCTOBER MENUS \$5 individual; \$10 family**

**Oct 1st**  
Chicken tortilla soup, homemade rolls, oatmeal raisin cookies & drink

**Oct 8th**  
BBQ Pork, potato wedges, coleslaw, homemade rolls, cupcakes & drink

**Oct 15th**  
Tomato soup, grilled cheese sandwich, salad, rolls, dessert & drink

**Oct 22nd**  
Taco Salad, homemade rolls, chocolate pudding & drink

**Oct 29th**  
Chicken pot pie, salad, chocolate chip cookies & drink

### Pumpkin Carving and Chili Cookoff [Karen Ezra]



## **Pumpkin Carving Contest and Chili Cook Off**

**DINNER AND A PUMPKIN**  
sample homemade chilis while you  
test your squash carving skills

**Watch for fliers with details  
appearing soon in  
the Narthex and Cooper Hall**

**First Methodist Church of Zephyrhills**

### Did You Know? [Helpful Hints for Staying Connected]

- Live links to special web pages for current events and time sensitive information are located just below our WELCOME banner on the church website. Click on the link bar and you will be taken to the appropriate page. Try it out with our links to a PDF COPY OF THE GOOD AND CHEAP COOKBOOK or SUNDAY MINISTRIES AND ACTIVITIES. Stop back for regularly changing links!
- To keep everyone in our church family connected with our many events, we try to post photo galleries of as many events as possible. If you have a cell phone camera that you love to use, please consider being a volunteer church photographer. All you have to do is snap candid shots of events you attend and drop them off after at the Communications Desk! We'll do the rest.
- Coordination of all events, meetings, and room usage throughout the campus is facilitated by our Office Manager. Need a room? See Teresia to reserve your space and time! Thanks!

## MEMBER HAPPENINGS: Monthly News

Budurka, Michael, Drill SGT, US Army, Ft. Moore, GA, grandson of Bob & Barb Stankiewicz  
Clark, Matthew, 1ST LT, US Army, Ft. Drum, NY, grandson of Jack & Louise Smith  
Cotton, Collin J., YNSSA, US Navy, son of Richard & Julie Cotton  
Daniels, Clay, Major, US Army, Ft. Bragg, NC, grandson of Ed Fisher  
Hill, Nathaniel, Colorado National Guard, son of David Hill  
Hunter, Hollaway, Army National Guard, great nephew of Lori Hollaway  
Hurley, Luka, MSGT, grandson of Gordon & Norma Hurley (Omaha, NE)  
Kramer, Hunter, LT, US Army MP, Ft. Lewis-McChord, WA  
Lenz, Alexander, MM3, US Navy, Norfolk, VA., grandson of Richard & Linda Bice  
Monteira, Jared, U.S. Coast Guard, grandson of Debbie Huffert  
Mueller, Hannah, US Army, Fort Sill, OK, daughter of Lorraine & Tom Mueller  
Noel, Tim, MSSGT, Air National Guard, Japan, son-in-Law of Ann Crawford  
Parks, Andrew, Staff SGT, US Air Force, Shaw AFB, SC, grandson of Bob & Barb Stankiewicz  
Shoup, Justin, Deployed  
Tindall, Tyler, US Army Specialist, TX, grandson of Ed Fisher  
White, Darrel, 1<sup>ST</sup> SGT, US Army, TX, nephew of Gerald & Virginia Swank  
Williams, Andrew, LT COL, US Air Force, grandson of Bob & Barbara Williams

**REMEMBER THEM ALWAYS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS**

### OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

10/02 Elisabeth Ezra Jenkins  
10/02 Cricket Linn  
10/03 Charles Flanagan  
10/04 Shirley Carlson  
10/04 Donald Iwaniec  
10/04 John Gaines  
10/04 Lin Weitzel  
10/05 Nichelle Anouar  
10/05 Lynn Jeffries  
10/05 Karen Laukat  
10/07 Trudy Adams  
10/07 Henry (Bud) Sykes  
10/07 Johanna Theel  
10/07 Jim Wencel  
10/09 Jerry Wymore  
10/11 Nancy Bowers  
10/12 Tom Burgmeier  
10/13 John Kennard  
10/15 Eddie Gionet  
10/15 James Rich  
10/17 Kathleen Coyne

### OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

10/03 Tresea and Jerry Wymore  
10/06 Eric and Sarah Gale  
10/09 Bill and Sally Bair  
10/17 Dave Houghtalen and Debbie Williams  
10/17 Wendy and Kenny Leslie  
10/23 Irl and Mary Crook  
10/24 Connie and Kenneth Stuby  
10/26 Carol and David Freiermuth  
10/30 Wanda and Joe Rakocy  
10/31 Jim and Joanne Martin

*"We reflect on the past  
and look forward  
to the future,  
but the best life is  
always lived in today."*



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## This Month's Cover [October - "The Beauty of Change"]

The bright colors of autumn leaves are always a popular subject for landscape photographers and painters. Even in Florida, not known climatically for an especially colorful transition from summer into winter, the brilliant reds, oranges, and yellows appear everywhere this time of year, even if it takes going to the Hobby Lobby seasonal aisles to find them. Autumn is a curious disconnect when you really think about it, for the beauty of the season that we celebrate in our art and décor is the product of nature dying; shedding all that was once green and vibrant to wither away and crumble on the ground. Ah, but what wondrous beauty and majesty there is in that death, for we know with certainty that it leads to new life and an awakening come spring. That faith in eventual renewal allows us all to focus our attention on the beauty of the change rather than on the loss it signifies, on the magnificent effect of color and not the crumbling vitality of its cause.

For those of faith, Autumn brings into sharp focus how fundamental the notion of change is in our physical world. In Ecclesiastes 3 we are reminded that "*There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens . . . [that] He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*" So while we see change, loss, and the turmoil of transition all around us, our hearts hold fast to the peace that comes from knowing that beyond comes renewal, growth, and new life. It is this awareness of eternity in our hearts that allows us to celebrate change rather than be daunted by it. This promise, at the very root of our faith, gives us the perspective to understand that seasons are God's way to keep moving us all forward, casting off the old, making way for the new, and always moving toward Him.

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## Nursing Homes and Assisted Living

For all our friends, family, and church members who are in long-term care facilities we keep them in our prayers and our hearts that they always remain a vital part of who we are as a church family and are never far away from our thoughts.

### **AMERICAN HOUSE ~ 38130 Pretty Pond Rd., Zephyrhills 318-400-2291**

Lyden and Sue Green Apt. 333  
Neal Slingerland Apt. 207

### **EDWINOLA ~ 14235 Edwinola Way, Dade City 352-567-6500**

Peggy Fetch Room 703  
Beulah Zeller

### **ZEPHYR HAVEN MEMORY UNIT ~ 38250 A Ave., Zephyrhills, FL**

Shirley Griffin

### **COMPASS ROSE OF ZEPHYRHILLS ~ 37411 Eiland Blvd., Zephyrhills 813-783-8100**

Roberta Hubbard

### **SOLARIS NORTH ~ 7350 Dairy Rd., Zephyrhills 813-788-4300**

Shirley Force Washington Unit  
Richard Mortimer

### **SOLARIS SOUTH ~ Zephyr Park, 38250 A Ave., Zephyrhills 813-782-5508**

Ira Crook Room 207

### **HILLSIDE HEALTH ~ 38220 Henry Dr., Zephyrhills 813-788-7114**

Joan Donaldson

### **COMMUNITY CARE CENTER~ 2202 W Oak Ave, Plant City, FL 33563 813-754-3761**

Fay Kingery

### **AT HOME ~ 37326 Rutledge St., Zephyrhills 813-783-6608**

Terri Stanley with *Comfort Keepers of Pasco* in-home services  
Allan Scheckler

# Staff and Organizational Contacts

## ***Church Web Address***

[www.fmcz.org](http://www.fmcz.org)

## ***Staff Team Email Addresses***

*(for staff with church emails)*

Church Office  
[info@fmcz.org](mailto:info@fmcz.org)

Karen Ezra, Director of Family Ministries  
[kezra@fmcz.org](mailto:kezra@fmcz.org)

Carol Runyon, Assistant Director of Family Ministries  
[crunyon@fmcz.org](mailto:crunyon@fmcz.org)

Polly Adwell, Nursery Coordinator  
[padwell@fmcz.org](mailto:padwell@fmcz.org)

Miriam Ezra, Choir Director  
[mezra@fmcz.org](mailto:mezra@fmcz.org)

Steve Ezra, Senior Pastor  
[sezra@fmcz.org](mailto:sezra@fmcz.org)

Carol Freiermuth, Financial Secretary  
[cfreiermuth@fmcz.org](mailto:cfreiermuth@fmcz.org)

Eric Gale, Contemporary Worship Leader  
[egale@fmcz.org](mailto:egale@fmcz.org)

Teresia Gale, Office Manager  
[tgale@fmcz.org](mailto:tgale@fmcz.org)

Tom Gale, Communications Director  
[tjgale@fmcz.org](mailto:tjgale@fmcz.org)

Peter Jordan, Treasurer  
[pjordan@fmcz.org](mailto:pjordan@fmcz.org)

Todd Kramer, Technical Director  
[tkramer@fmcz.org](mailto:tkramer@fmcz.org)

## Giving Back



“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Matthew 6:19-21

## Giving Back

We are blessed to have Pastor Steve here on our staff and in light of Pastor Appreciation Month we would like to give back a “love offering” in recognition of his commitment and dedication to our church and each member of our church family.

If you would like to show your appreciation, here's how:

**Cash or Check payable to FMCZ** - Memo Line - “Pastor Apprec”

**Online at: [fmcz.org/online-giving](http://fmcz.org/online-giving)** Choose: Other Designated Funds Note: “Pastor Apprec”

*Please have your love offering in by October 19th, as the presentation to Pastor Steve will take place on Sunday, October 26th.*



**FIRST METHODIST CHURCH  
— OF ZEPHYRHILLS —  
PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH  
OCTOBER**

*Submitted by Staff Parish Relations Committee*