

The Messenger



FIRST METHODIST CHURCH
— OF ZEPHYRHILLS —
a Global Methodist Family

Coming Attractions



January 2026

In this issue: Wednesday Night Refuel returns! See page 9

38635 5th Avenue, Zephyrhills, FL 33542
Church Office: (813) 782-5645
www.fmcz.org / 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

Three Adult Sunday School Classes: 9:30-10:30am Crusaders

9:30 -10:30am Spirit and Truth and 11:00am-12:00pm Truthseekers

New to FMCZ? Welcome!

First-Time Guests

Welcome! We hope you'll have a wonderful, Spirit-filled experience worshipping 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

Mothers' Room offers live streaming of each service and a quiet place for mothers to attend to the needs of their small children. Located through the door to the right of the altar platform.

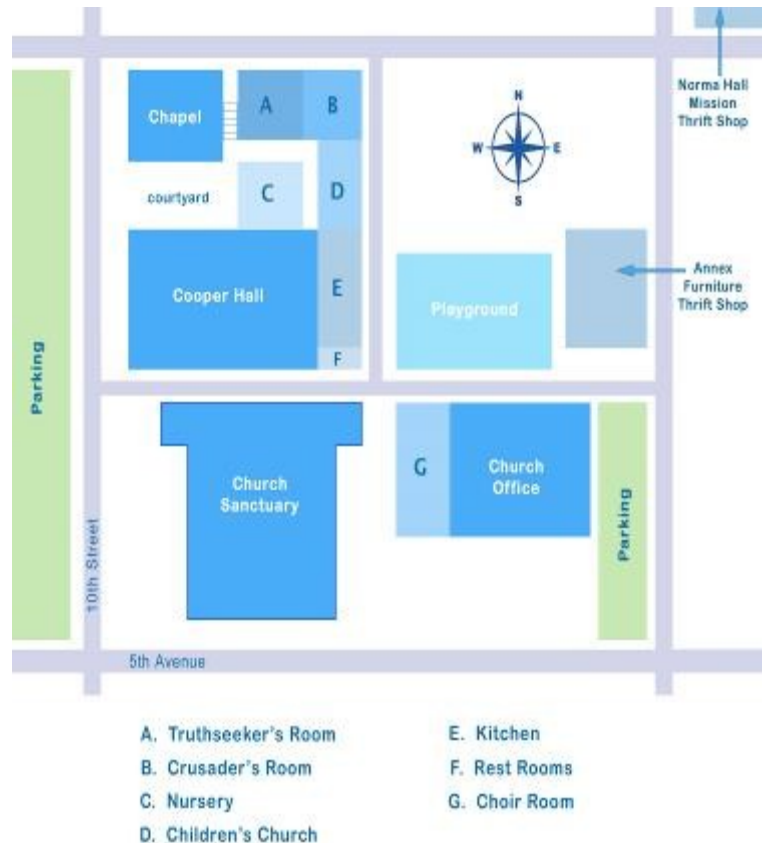
Restrooms

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



January 2026 Worship Services

Worship Themes

January is often a time for reflection, not just on the year just past, but also on the larger path of our lives which is why this is often a time of setting resolutions for change or a recommitment to a path less traveled. Based on encounters by internal medicine physician, Dr. Shoshana Ungerleider with severely ill patients and the regrets they felt about their lives. Like the instruction in Psalm 90:12 *"Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom,"* we look for ways to lead a life without regret for the choices we have made and consider other paths still ahead of us.

Sunday, January 04: Communion Sunday

No Regrets ~ "Prioritizing Loved Ones", Psalm 39:4-7 (NIV)

"Show me, Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you."

Sunday, January 11: Missions Celebration

No Regrets ~ "Working to Live",

Common regret: "I worked too much and missed out on life."

Sunday, January 18:

No Regrets - "Acting Despite Fear",

Common regret: ." *"I let fear control my decisions and didn't take risks."*

Sunday, January 25:

No Regrets - "Embracing the Unknown",

Common regret: "I wish I'd been braver in the face of uncertainty or opportunity."

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

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

Spirit and Truth from 9:30 - 10:30am

Truthseekers from 11:00am - 12:00pm.

Crusaders Class: Facilitated by Jeanne Narum, The Crusaders Class will turn their study to the book of Thessalonians where we will consider who we are as First Methodist Church and how we ought to be living our lives in community. Paul wrote to his brothers and sisters in Christ at the church in Thessalonica in response to a crisis there when the apostles had been thrown out of town. The class will feature recent photos taken of the city and area to provide additional background.

Spirit and Truth Class: Facilitated by Greg Peavey. Continuing working verse by verse through the Book of Luke, examining Jesus's ministry, this class focuses on learning how we can be the men and women God calls us to be. Ideal for those new to a close reading of the Bible as well as long-time deep-divers into Scripture.

Truthseekers Class: Truthseekers class continues to explore the book of Acts, guided by the insightful study materials of Max Lucado. What to expect from this class:

- In-depth Exploration: Dive deep into the book of Acts, discovering its lessons and relevance for our lives today.
- Community Fellowship: Share insights and encouragement with fellow seekers as we grow together in faith. All are welcome to join us in discovery and discussion.

Class mission statement: "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

Technical Support Services [Team Leader ~ Todd Kramer]

To meet modern needs, our A/V support services are constantly expanding. Activities include live audio and video projection control, streaming video control, and audio/video preparations. The quality of live services and online streams impacts how much and how well we engage those who may be looking for a church home, especially in this day and age of electronic media. **This team is actively looking for several new volunteer members to help run the audio board and slide presentations. No experience needed!** Training can be provided. Contact our Technical Director at tkramer@fmcz.org



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

The Sunday Morning Café is located in Cooper Hall east from 9:00 am until 11:00 am every Sunday, before and between services. Enter through the side door facing the sanctuary which also leads to the Education Building. Join us as we greet the day with coffee and fellowship! It's a great time to meet or make friends, share our viewpoints, or prepare to join in a Sunday Bible Study class.



MINISTRIES: Making Disciples of Christ

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

Children's Church (grades K - 5)



January Class Activities

In Children's Church, the new years starts off with a planned return to the Buck Denver series by the man who brought the immensely popular Veggie Tales to television. Along with engaging bible lessons comes fun themed activities. Questions? Contact Carol Runyon at: 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".

January Youth Lesson Plan

Unit 5 continues

Jan. 04 ~ Lesson 72:	Topic - Samson Receives Strength
Jan. 11 ~ Lesson 73:	Topic - God Blesses Ruth
Jan. 18 ~ Lesson 74:	Topic - God Calls Samuel
Jan. 25 ~ Lesson 75:	Topic - Isreal's First King

Youth Sunday School is held in the Chapel Classroom and conducted by Karen Ezra and other members of the Ministry Team. Connect with Karen at kezra@fmcz.org for more information.



OTHER YOUTH AND CHILDREN NEWS FOR JANUARY

Youth Taco and Tie Dye Lock-in: Friday, January 2 starting at 7:00pm to Saturday, January 3 ending at 8:00am. Coordinated by Karen Ezra at kezra@fmcz.org. Eating tacos, crafting tie-dye tee shirts, making donuts, singing karaoke, and lots of supervised youth fellowship through the night.

Super Soup Extravaganza: Sunday, January 11, 11:30am - 1:00pm. See the write-up on page 16!

Rock The Universe Christian Concert Trip: January 23 thru January 25th. We will leave early on Friday and spend all day Friday, Saturday and Sunday at Universal Studios. We will be back at church early evening on Sunday. For information connect with Karen Ezra at kezra@fmcz.org

Prayer and Praise [Team Leader ~ Connie Norton]

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

Succulent plants depend on water for nourishment; they serve as reminders of our dependence on God! It depends on the water given to succulent plants and how they store it in their stems and use it as needed. THIS is exactly what we do with scripture. As we read scripture we are sustained by the WORD Of GOD. If we are wise, we store up God's word to cling to in any circumstance. God is ALWAYS ready to quench our spiritual thirst. When we cling to God's Word, we are able to rely on God in our challenging times and to Praise God in our good times!

Be sure to thank God for quenching out spiritual thirst and HIS love!!



submitted by Connie Norton

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

It's impossible to describe what happens during your three-day Walk to Emmaus. In the early Christian community, people met to hear the apostles teach, share a common life, to break bread together and to pray. The Walk to Emmaus is not much different than what happened in the early Christian community.

In the three days of the Walk to Emmaus, the Emmaus community will provide you a loving community of people trying to be like the early church. A sponsor will bring you to the weekend as a matter of love. Most people have a certain amount of uneasiness about a new venture; some careful preparation on the sponsor's part can greatly reduce anxiety about this new venture of Emmaus. Consider the Walk to Emmaus as your journey of faith. You will have an opportunity to discover where being a faithful servant to God's claim on your life fits into your list of priorities. During the weekend you will be asked to consider the following question: "What has your interaction been with the man Jesus? In your faith journey you will receive some idea about the place of faithful service to God in your priorities.



If you feel that it's time to experience a faith journey, consider a Walk to Emmaus. The next three-day retreat will be held in September 2026. Speak to an Emmaus member from our church to find out how to start your journey. Sponsors are available and ready to help you through the process. After becoming part of the Emmaus Community, once a month, there's a group of pilgrims who gather to remind each other how blessed we all are. God the Father sent his Son to pay our debts so we could join him in Eternity when our time here is over. When we meet each month, we share first with fellowship at the table, then with fellowship at the altar.

On the Walk to Emmaus, disciples shared their fears and their tears. A stranger who joined them on the way listened, understood, and explained what they didn't understand. Is that stranger in our midst today? Is he listening? Can you hear him?

DeColores!

Phyllis Blanchard

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

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

Our next Emmaus function will be a Spaghetti Dinner on Tuesday, January 13th from 5:00 - 8:00 pm This will be a fundraising opportunity to raise money for scholarships for the next Emmaus Weekend scheduled for September 2026. If you're ready to share in the Emmaus experience, please contact Roz Hill at 443-834-8621 or via email at: rozzie1944@gmail.com.

United Women in Faith [Team Leader ~ Phyllis Blanchard]

ATTENTION ALL LADIES

United Women in Faith
Presents

BOLDLY GOING FORWARD

Celebration and Party
THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026
COOPER HALL
12:00 – 2:00pm



Join us as we celebrate all that was done in 2025 to encourage and strengthen women, youth and children in our church, community and beyond. Learn what is scheduled for 2026 and give us your ideas on how we can reach more women, children and youth.

We will have lunch and then games, music and prizes. Just bring a sandwich or salad and we will furnish drinks, chips and dessert. Renew friendships and meet new friends.

Hope to see you there!

Project Others [Team Leader ~ Deann Harrington]



As always, thank you for your support and your donations throughout the year. Our projects are made possible by the generous donations of raw materials that are then made, by hand, into caring comfort items. Every year in December, Project Others collects, organizes, and distributes the hand crafted fruits of the year's labors. A wide variety of much needed items such as lap throws, wheelchair arm covers, nap quilts, ditty bags, walker bags, and of course, Christmas stockings are created by hand throughout the year, then gathered and bagged for distribution to community organizations, each of which passes on these gifts of comfort and caring to those in need and want in our neighborhoods.

Pictured to the left are the people who came to Cooper Hall on December 12th to pack orders and deliver our numerous projects made during 2025. Shown in the photo are nap quilts and ditty bags made for the Early Childhood Education program and Headstart program at our local elementary schools. Some of those pictured are holding ditty bags and clothing protectors used in numerous local nursing homes. These are just three of the items we make on our Friday mornings in Cooper Hall. If you enjoy crafting meaningful items for the care and comfort of others, please join us!

THE PROJECT OTHERS TEAM

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]

Our total bags distributed for the year 2025 was nearly 1500. In December's distribution we gave out nearly 30 Christmas stockings made by the Project Others group. A reminder that even though the holidays are over, the need still exists for feeding our community. We thank everyone for your continued support and look forward to serving the needs of our community in 2026. The food pantry staff requests egg cartons. Instead of throwing them away, recycle them by donating clean cartons to the Pantry. Thank you.



January Distribution Days are January 12, 13, and 14

THIS MONTH'S DONATION COLLECTION SUNDAY IS January 18



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

We had a banner year at the Thrift Shop in 2025. A record number of people came into the Main building and Annex to drop off donations and many, many new people bought our goods. We don't have the official financial figures yet, but we're confident that the numbers will be GREAT!

We were closed for 2 weeks in November for renovations and our porch was enclosed with lights, fans and an air conditioner/heater. What a relief not having to move racks back and forth anymore! All our customers love it.

We lost our Children's and Ladies Clothes Coordinators this year. They have moved and we are having a hard time replacing them. We could really use 2 people to fill these positions. Just 2 days a week would really help.

All our volunteers are working very hard to make the Norma Hall Thrift Shop the premier place to buy good quality merchandise at a fair price. If you haven't visited us yet, come by on Wednesdays and Saturdays 8am - noon and see for yourselves!

Regularly Featured In the Annex

Furniture ~ larger home goods ~ Christmas decor

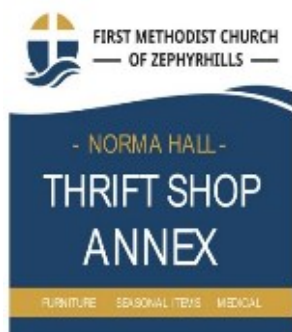
Regularly Featured In the Main Shop

Clothing, books, and smaller home goods
and general home décor

Mondays 8am-12pm

Donations only

Wednesdays & Saturdays 8am-12pm



Spotlight < Wednesday Night Refuel Returns >

Wednesday Nights January 14th to March 25th

This popular study and group series is back with new classes, new groups, and new opportunities to GROW, CONNECT, AND LEARN.

10 SESSIONS ONE EACH WEEK
~ Except February 18th,
Ash Wednesday ~

FELLOWSHIP AND FOOD SERVED
BEFORE CLASSES
FILL UP HERE EVERY WEEK

Use the registration link on our homepage

<https://fmcz.org/>



Infants through 5-year-olds ~ In Nursery (parent/guardian must be on campus for both infant and children's programs).

Kindergarteners through 5th graders ~ In Children's Ministry classroom. *Led by Carol Runyon*

Middle and high schoolers ~ In youth wing upstairs in Education Building. *Led by Karen Ezra.*

Adult study "You Can Understand Revelation", video and book study series by Jen Wilkins. Led by Virginia Gray. ***This class is open to all adults but enrollment is limited to 15.***

Adult study on the Book of Joshua, called "Living in the Word". *Led by Eugene Williams* and meeting in the Chapel. ***This class is open to all adults.***

Adult study on the Book of Amos. *Led by Miriam Ezra* and designed for adults in their 20's, 30's, and 40's. ***This class is open to all adults.***

Adult study called "Practicing The Way", led by Lorne Becker. This course will use resources available on-line to download. ***This class is open to all adults***

Adult group to watch **SEASON 4** of the television series **The Chosen**, the most successful crowd-funded media project in history. This series focuses on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and his earliest followers. ***This group is open to all adults.***

Adult women's group on the **Gospel of Mark**, with material by Francis Chan. Led by Karen Laukat. Study guide and materials are available online to download and print. ***This class is open to all women.***

Adult men's group to be announced soon, led by Tom Sharp. ***This class is open to all men.***

GriefShare, *led by Gaynell Jeffries*, will begin a 14 week spring session alongside Refuel classes beginning a week earlier on Wednesday, January 07, at 4:00 - 5:30pm.

Groups and Classes meet 6:45 - 8:00pm in Education Building rooms, Chapel, and Choir rooms.

Refuel Dinners served 5:45 - 6:30pm in Cooper Hall East; \$5.00 per person or \$10 per family.

Read the weekly eBlast for Refuel dinner menus starting in January.

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. This list is for 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 Thelma Diekfuss, one of the band's talented singers. Along with harmonizing often with Salvation's Rock this past month, Thelma kept very busy hand-crafting the beautiful Christmas Ornaments offered as the Christmas Fundraiser.

Thelma's song choice for January is simply called "Be", sung by Al Denson. Thelma writes, *"This is not just a song to me, it's a personal prayer. I want to be a light that shines with the love of Christ. To show others the same love, and to tell them about Christ's love. In this New Year, write this song in the front of your Bibles or prayer journals or anywhere you would see it everyday and see what God does through you."*

"...for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit in the Lord is found in all that is good and right and true)." Ephesians 5:8-9 ESV

Listen to it here: ["Be" performed by Al Denson](#)

Long Term Prayer List [For December 2025] updated 11-18-2025

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."**

Chloe Budge, Michele Devine, Richard Dreyer, Jim Elliot, Randy Hall, Bristol Loftis, Gary McLean, Suzanne Morgan, Roxanna Young.

Commission on Missions Committee [Team Leader ~ Kay Milligan]

Missions of the Month for the first six months of 2026

January	Amancio Rodriguez Church in Las Tunas, Cuba
February	Loving Hands Ministry in Dade City
March	Sunrise of Pasco Women's Abuse Shelter
April	FMCZ Food Pantry
May	Pregnancy Care Center of Zephyrhills
June	FMCZ Food Pantry

Last month we reported that Pastor Osmar is restarting a feeding program for the area children. The commission recently sent \$400.00 dollars to help get this started.

Also, they are looking to add a cover between the church and parsonage. The church is overflowing every service and people stand outside the open windows to listen to the service. A permanent cover would provide shelter from the weather so the area could be used to hold activities and meals for the congregation. Hear more about these projects in our Second Sunday mission presentations at each service.



SERVICE TEAMS: Community Self-Care

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

Next Blood Pressure Checks, Sunday January 11, 10:30 - 11:00am in Cooper Hall

Next One Blood Drive ~ January 4, 2026 in front of the Sanctuary



PLEASE CHECK THE BULLETIN BOARD IN COOPER HALL FOR OTHER UPDATES

Healthy Living Checklist for 2026

- Regular exercise; keep healthy a weight
- Use face coverings when necessary
- Don't smoke or use tobacco products
- Eat a healthy diet and limit fast foods
- Drink alcohol only in moderation
- Protect yourself from the sun
- Protect yourself from STD's
- See your doctor regularly
- Get regular screening tests
- Pray - Join a church group or class



4 SPIRITUAL REASONS TO KEEP HEALTHY, WELL, AND FIT

It Glorifies God

The Bible says in **1 Corinthians 10:31** that whatever we do we're to do it to the glory of God. It also tells us in Isaiah that we were created and formed by God to glorify Him. This is our primary purpose in life - to glorify God. We do that when we care for our body and live a healthy lifestyle.

Our Body is God's Temple and for Us to Care For

One scripture that reminds us that our body is God's temple is **1 Corinthians 19-20**. God's Holy Spirit lives inside a believer. After we accept Jesus into our hearts, God gives us His Spirit to help us live the kind of life He wants us to live. Since God actually lives in us, Paul tells us in this verse that our body is His temple. Since God "bought" us with a high price, Jesus' death, then we are obligated to care for our body which is His temple.

Being Healthy is Being a Good Witness

Acts 1:8 reminds us that we are to be witnesses for other people. People look for us to be models of the Christian faith. We ought to desire to live our lives in a way that represents our faith well. Taking care of our health is one way that we can be a good witness.

You'll Have More Energy to Do God's Work

Ephesians 2:10 helps us see that we are God's masterpiece, created to do the good things that He had planned a long time ago for us to do. We all know that the more fit and healthy we are the more energy we will have. The more energy that we have, the more we can put into whatever task we are doing. We'll also be better able to sustain ourselves for the long haul.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP WITH ANY OF THE ABOVE , CALL OR TEXT THE FAITH COMMUNITY NURSE COORDINATOR OR THE CHURCH OFFICE.

Stephen Ministry [Team Leader ~ Dave Hill]

I'M SO GRATEFUL FOR STEPHEN MINISTRY!

Written by a man who received care from a Stephen Minister



Fourteen months ago, I was at a point where I needed someone to talk to about the struggles in my life. My pastor recommended I consider meeting with a Stephen Minister—another man, trained as a caregiver, who would walk with me during this difficult time. Trusting someone with personal information about my life was something I feared at first, but my pastor reassured me that everything was confidential, so I agreed to give it a try. I'm so glad I did! Soon after meeting my Stephen Minister, I quickly sensed I could trust him. Part of that trust came from knowing he was trained to help people through their problems. He made me feel comfortable by not prying for information, but instead just letting me share what was on my mind. Any questions he did ask fit our conversation appropriately.

Probably the best thing he did for me was not judging me for my past decisions; rather, he was there to help me move forward. I think another significant trust-building factor was being able to talk with someone who was not in my regular circle of friends. My friends certainly continued to have a very important place in my life, but I also needed someone who could see me objectively. That helped make it easier to share personal parts of my life. Also, knowing my Stephen Minister would be there for me "next week" (we usually met for an hour each week) gave me confidence. I see now how WHAT IS STEPHEN MINISTRY? Stephen Ministry is a way congregations can provide high-quality care and outreach to hurting people in the congregation and community.

Stephen Ministers are congregation members who have gone through 50 hours of training to provide one-to-one, Christ-centered care. Each Stephen Minister is matched with a hurting person—men are paired with men, women with women—and meets weekly with that person to listen, care, pray, and encourage. Stephen Ministers care for those dealing with grief, divorce, job loss, hospitalization, financial struggles, loneliness, convalescence, terminal illness, and many other life difficulties.

I needed regular encouragement as I rode the roller coaster of emotions that came during this period of instability in my life. I really appreciated our times together. Our weekly visits were more than just meeting to talk. They also helped keep me accountable between times, to carry through with the changes I said I wanted to make. My Stephen Minister often went out of his way to help me in my struggle. My life experience during the 10 months I met with my Stephen Minister was not always one of progress. It took courage for me to honestly share when I had my failures and setbacks too. Even then my Stephen Minister was there for me. He encouraged me not to give up, but to pick up and keep going forward.

That genuine acceptance spoke to me the most; not to accept failure, but to confess, turn, and receive forgiveness. Having someone assure me of that biblical truth was really encouraging and was exactly what I needed. My Stephen Minister walked with me through a really dark part of my life, pointing me to the truth and love that is in Christ. I thank the Lord for my Stephen Minister who did not try to solve all my problems but lovingly, as a Christian brother, walked along with me through this valley in my life.

If you are dealing with some type of crisis or difficulty in life, I encourage you to meet with a Stephen Minister. First Methodist Church is a Stephen Ministry Church. For more information, contact 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 or call 410-409-9132.

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.



Al-Anon is a mutual support program for people whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. By sharing common experiences and applying the Al-Anon principles, families and friends of alcoholics can bring positive changes to their individual situations.

Meeting Information:

Wednesdays, 4:00 - 5:30pm

January 7th to April 8th, 2026

Crusaders Classroom - Education Building



For information, contact Gaynell Jeffries at: eldis.jeffries@gmail.com or call or text at this number: 813-838-3319. You can register directly at <https://www.griefshare.org/findagroup>

This 14 week session features a video seminar, group discussion, and personal workbook (cost: \$25.00), 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]

What is YOUNG AT HEART? Our mission is to honor and celebrate the lives, wisdom, and enduring spirit of our senior community through the Young At Heart Luncheon. The gathering serves as a formal expression of gratitude and respect, providing a dignified space where seniors are recognized for their contributions, cherished for their presence, and uplifted by fellowship. We are committed to fostering an atmosphere of joy, appreciation, and connection that reflects the value of every individual, thereby ensuring that each guest feels celebrated as an integral part of our shared story.



Ronda Buffington, RN,
Oncology Certified Nurse

SENIOR LUNCHEON Thursday, January 15th

11:30am—1:00pm
Cooper Hall East

**Oncology and
Cancer Resources**

Good Food ~ Good Fellowship ~
Good Times



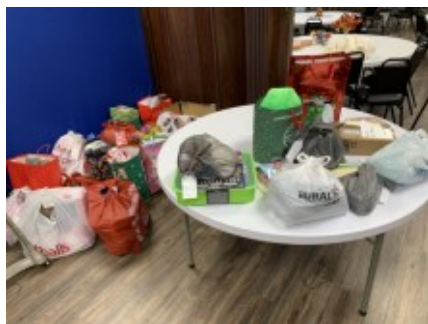
**ADMISSION: BRING
ONE COVERED SIDE
DISH OF YOUR
CHOICE TO SHARE.**

Spotlight – January’s YAH Speaker

Ronda Buffington, RN, OCN (Oncology Certified Nurse). I’ve worked in oncology since 1986 and at BayCare since 1991. Recently retired from St. Joseph’s Cancer Institute as the Lung Navigator and Cancer Healthline Resource Nurse in 2023 and started part-time as the Faith Community Nurse Coordinator helping our Tampa Bay community and underserved population. I really love my new role helping others. I’m also a 33 year survivor of Acute Myeloid Leukemia diagnosed at age 26 when I was pregnant with my 1st and only child and working at St. Joseph’s Hospital chemo infusion center. I went on to have a bone marrow transplant from my sister in Seattle Washington at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. I’ve been in charge of many outreach screenings and support programs for cancer. I’ve been married to my husband Gary for 38 years and we are members of Idlewild Baptist Church. I recently helped start a cancer support group at my church for all members and the community, men & women of all cancer types. My son Gary III and his wife live in Pittsburgh, PA. Please join us, January 15th for this important and interesting presentation. We hope to see you there.

Angel Tree 2025 [Sponsored by FMCZ Commission on Missions]

This year’s Angel Tree presents were collected through early December and delivered to Woodland EL, R.B.Stewart MS, and Zephyrhills HS. Thank you to all our members who participated in this program.



GMC ~ Certified Lay Ministry Training

Certified Lay Ministers (CLMs) in the Global Methodist Church differ from lay ministers in our previous denomination. CLMs are Christian lay leaders who serve in the church, the workplace, and the community. We envision CLMs not only providing leadership within the church but also serving as “missionaries/evangelists” of the Gospel in the wider community.

One of the purposes of our conference is: *“Equipping churches and leaders includes increasing vitality and effectiveness to make disciples of Jesus Christ.”*

CLM training follows a two-year cycle, and all classes are offered via Zoom. The first class, “GMC Doctrine, Polity, and History,” begins on January 12 and is a five-week course taught by Rev. Mike Toluba. The class meets from 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. via Zoom and costs \$35 plus books.

Register here: <https://forms.gle/FwiWKqWkEZPSumJXA>

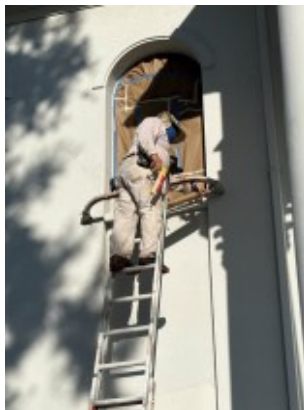
Spotlight < New Playground Assembly [Team Leader – Greg Brooks]

With the old wooden playground consigned to the trash heap, Family Ministries shopped for and purchased a new and safe playground set. But when it arrived, it was in numerous boxes, a life-sized puzzle needing assembly before use. Current Trustee Chairperson, Greg Brooks, stepped up even in the busy holiday time, and with a small band of helpers, raised the new wooden play structure from the ground up in record time though with a fair amount of sweat and persistence. Thank you, Greg and volunteers for a splendid job.

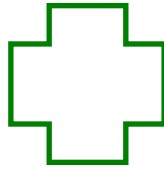


Spotlight < Sanctuary Exterior Painting [Richard Briggs and company]

Property Preservation at work! Special thanks go out to long-time trustee, Richard Briggs, for coordinating an exterior facelift for the sanctuary just in time for December's Open House. Richard and his crew swarmed around the sanctuary with ladders and lifts, pressure-washing and painting to give the sanctuary a fresh, new face to the public eye. Thank you Richard and thanks to all who give regularly to the Property Preservation fund!



Emmaus Winter Fundraiser [Roz and Dave Hill]



ANNUAL EMMAUS SPAGHETTI DINNER

The popular annual Emmaus Spaghetti Dinner will be held on **Tuesday, January 13, 2026** in Cooper Hall from 5:00 - 7:00pm. Tickets will be \$10 each and meals can be purchased as dine in or take out.

Proceeds from the dinner will be used for Emmaus Walk scholarships

After the dinner, at **7:00pm**, **The Gulf Ridge Quartet** will be on-hand **for a musical concert in Cooper Hall**. There will be a love offering for the concert. All are cordially invited for an evening of good food and marvelous musical entertainment in support of the Emmaus experience.

Super Soup Extravaganza [Team Leader - Karen Ezra] Jan 11

*"Baby, it's COLD outside!" But even if it's
NOT it's always a great day for SOUP!
Sunday, January 11th 11:30am - 1:00pm*

This will be our biggest Soup Luncheon of the year as the youth complete our fundraising for Rock the Universe. We plan on having over 20 soups and will have 2 separate serving lines with 10 soups in each line for faster service. We are doubling the food and the way to get food. It is going to be a great opportunity to have fellowship and raise some money for the youth to take their Rock the Universe trip. Donations appreciated and all money will go directly to the youth's trip.



COME HUNGRY; LEAVE HAPPY

Did You Know? [Helpful Hints for Staying Connected]

We continue to work diligently to update and upgrade our church website in order to make it as informational and useful as possible. The easiest way to use the website is to stop first at the HOME PAGE, the very first page of the site. This page has active links to other sub-pages like our web-based calendar, our on-line giving page, and pages dedicated to ministries and current church events. There's even a link that takes you to a page where you can watch the livestream video of past Sunday services and listen to past sermons. Our homepage is at <https://www.fmcz.org> or just use the QR code at right with your cell phone.



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
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, 1ST 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

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

01/05 Ann Crawford
01/05 Debbie Nonnemaker
01/09 Robyne Nelson
01/10 Michelle Hill
01/11 Robert Stankiewicz
01/12 Clint Hawk
01/12 Rose Turner
01/14 Tammy Towle
01/20 Patryna Branham
01/20 Greg Peavey
01/21 Lena Phillips
01/21 Pam Spencer
01/23 John Sheldon
01/24 Terri Hensley
01/27 Kevin Smith
01/30 Carol Freiermuth
01/31 Robert Lawrence

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

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

01/14 Wes and Kati Lonnquist
01/19 Kay and Rex Milligan
01/19 Sandy and Monty Theus
01/22 Tana and Gerald Day



This Month's Cover [January - "Coming Attractions"]

January has traditionally been a time of dual focus, reflection on the year past and on proposed change going forward. The month, in fact, gets its name from the ancient Roman god Janus, the two faced pagan deity of doorways, transitions, and time passages. Its two faces pointed equally to both the past and the future, an ancient symbol of our perception of time as a line stretching both ahead and behind. But Christianity brought a new sense to time, emphasizing the path ahead rather than the one already trod. Voiced in Isaiah 43: 18-19, the path forward is given prominence, *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."*

Focusing on the path ahead doesn't deny the past, for reflection is the starting point of perspective. But living in the past can be dangerous, and carrying the past within always makes the way ahead harder to reconcile. A central message of the Christian view of time is to cast off the past and move boldly forward, trusting in God's plans for each of us, that they are made for our ultimate good. The future isn't unknown to those of faith. The coming attraction then is Christ himself and the life with him that was promised so long ago. In faith, we head confidently in the only direction that leads to salvation, and give thanks now for blessings we already know are ahead.

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

Beulah Zeller

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

Shirley Griffin

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

Geneva Dunford

Barbara Kehr

ADVENT HEALTH ZEPHYRHILLS ~ 7050 Gall Blvd, Zephyrhills, FL (813) 788-0411

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

Shirley Force Washington Unit

ROYAL OAK NURSING CENTER ~ 37300 Royal Oak Ln, Dade City, FL 352-567-3122

Joan Donaldson

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

Fay Kingery

AT HOME ~ Personal Addresses and Phone Numbers

Luci Knepper

Terri Stanley

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

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

Staff and Organizational Contacts

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(for staff with church emails)

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Todd Kramer, Technical Director

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The Greatest Gift Ever Given

This Christmas, as we pause to reflect on the wonder of Jesus' birth, we are reminded of God's unwavering love for all of humanity. Over two thousand years ago our Savior entered the world, a perfect example of love, humility, and hope in a broken world.

Through His life, Jesus showed us what it means to serve with compassion, to walk in obedience, and to love without condition. His birth was the beginning of a story that would change the world, a story that continues to inspire us to live with purpose and to serve others through faith.

At Faith Responders, we strive to follow that example every day. Whether it's rebuilding homes, comforting families after disaster, or training volunteers to step forward in times of need, we do it all in His name. Our desire is to serve as His hands and feet here on earth and be a path for others to do the same.

As we celebrate this sacred season, we invite you to reflect on the ways God has worked through your life this year. We invite you to listen to his guidance, however that may come. If you feel a tug on your heart to give and be of service to others, follow that nudge and know that you are part of something far greater than any one of us.

Because just as Christ's light entered the world that first Christmas night, it still shines so bright through every act of love and service we give in His name.

From all of us at Faith Responders, we wish you a blessed and peaceful Christmas filled with the joy of His presence.

Merry Christmas, and may His light continue to guide your path.

*We See Jesus in You,
The Faith Responders Team*

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him."

John 3:16-17

