

# The Messenger



**FIRST METHODIST CHURCH**  
**— OF ZEPHYRHILLS —**  
a Global Methodist Family

## *Holding Fast*

*May 2026*

*In this issue: Exploring Planned Legacy Giving - See 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

**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**



- |                       |               |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| A. Truthseeker's Room | E. Kitchen    |
| B. Crusader's Room    | F. Rest Rooms |
| C. Nursery            | G. Choir Room |
| D. Children's Church  |               |



## May 2026 Worship Services

### Worship Themes

May continues with a worship series based on material from LifeChurch in Edmond, Oklahoma and titled, "Good Decisions". This series asks the question, "what if becoming the person you want to be starts long before the moment you make a decision?" Before you click "buy," before you take one more bite, or before you lash out at the people you love; can the decisions you make today help you live the life you really want tomorrow? The quality of your decisions determines the quality of your life.

### Sunday, May 03: Communion Sunday

Good Decisions ~ "I Am Devoted", Matthew 6:33; Acts 2:42-43 (NIV)

"Devotion is a conscious choice, not an accident. We must decide to live with Him."

### Sunday, May 10: Missions Celebration/Mothers' Day

Good Decisions ~ "I Am Generous", Luke 10:35, 12:18-19, 19; Proverbs 21:26 (NIV)

"To be more generous when you have more, learn to be generous when you have less."

### Sunday, May 17:

Good Decisions ~ "I Am Faithful", Luke 10:35, Isaiah 32:8 (NIV)

"We are called to be faith-filled risk takers when we follow God's plan for our lives."

### Sunday, May 24: Pentecost Sunday/Memorial Day Weekend

Good Decisions ~ "I Am a Finisher", 2 Timothy 4:5-7, Acts 20:24 (NIV)

"Like Paul, our life's aim should be to finish the race set out before us by God."

Note: Pasco Schools students' last day is Friday, May 29.

### Sunday, May 31: Fifth Sunday

This Sunday will begin a new sermon series. For details see upcoming weekly eBlasts and Sunday pre-service announcements.

## 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**

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## 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, this class uses material developed by Cokesbury Methodist publishing house. This spring quarter: "Lament, Confession, and Rebirth," studying Psalms and Acts, examining the moving of the Holy Spirit in and through believers of Jesus.

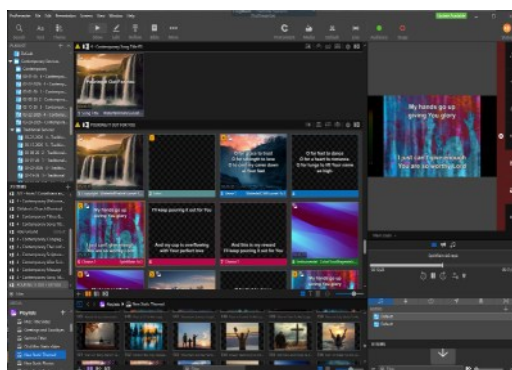
**Spirit and Truth Class:** Facilitated by Greg Peavey. The Spirit and Truth Sunday class focuses on a close line by line analysis of books of the Bible.

**Truthseekers Class:** Truthseekers class is facilitated by team, with various members taking lead roles in turn. In May, the class will be studying the Lord's Prayer and after, Psalm 23, using a variety of resources from scripture, along with resource books and videos.

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

Contact our Technical Director at [tkramer@fmcz.org](mailto:tkramer@fmcz.org) if you are interested in joining the A/V Team.



### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO

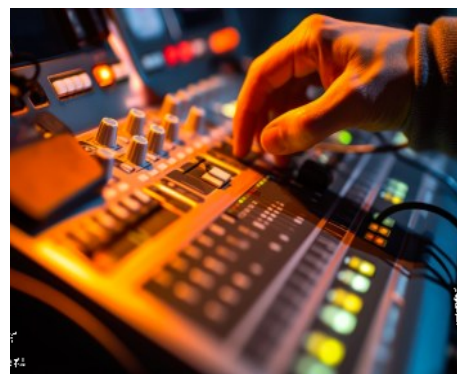
*Operate audio console*

*Run presentation software*

*Control livestreaming*

*Set up microphones and equipment*

*Mix in-house sound*



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## Sanctuary Support [Team Leaders ~ Karen Harwell, Bonnie Hazelett]

Perhaps the second most important location within our sanctuary after the altar platform is the front lobby, called the Narthex, because that is where visitors form their first impressions of our church family and activities. Our support team offers warm welcomes, answers questions, hands out programs, and acts as our front line ambassadors to all who enter the space on Sunday mornings. In addition, team members coordinate offerings and help with communion on first Sundays of each month. A friendly greeting before and a sincere thank you after each service let people know that everyone is welcome at the Big White Church on 5th Ave.



If you are interested in joining this ministry team, call the church office at 813-782-5645.

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## 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. Join us as we greet the day with coffee and fellowship!

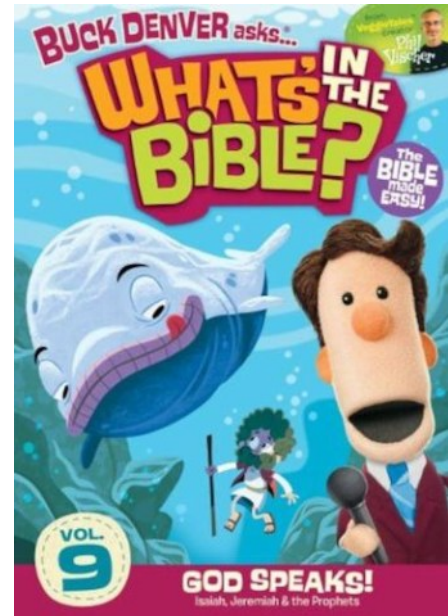


## MINISTRIES: Making Disciples of Christ

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

**Children's Church** (grades K - 5)

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 which is down the 1st floor 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".

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](mailto:kezra@fmcz.org) for more information.

May 03 ~ Lesson 87: Topic - Solomon Builds God's Temple

May 10 ~ Lesson 88: Topic - Wisdom from God

May 17 ~ Lesson 89: Topic - Israel is Divided

May 24 ~ Lesson 91: Topic - Kings of Israel and Judah

May 31 ~ Lesson 92: Topic - Elijah Stands For God



### YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S SPRING NEWS

The big Children's Ministry news this time of year is always our exciting **June VBS program**. Registration for both students and volunteers is currently open and it is suggested that you register early to ensure a good spot! Information on this year's theme and registration links can be found on **page 14**.

Sign up is also open for this summer's **GMC Youth Summer Camp** at Lake Yale Conference Center. The camp is still under development and the camp coordinators are recommending churches provide their numbers by April's end, or latest by middle of May so their plans can be tailored to attendance size. Information on this camp can be found on **page 15**.

Also in May is our annual **Promotion and Graduation Sunday** where young elementary and graduating high school students are recognized at these important educational milestones. The recognition ceremony will take place on Sunday, May 17. See the information on **page 15**.

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

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

Although prayer for healing of the body is our main focus, we also pray that God will heal the “inner man” of the heart. We want souls to be born again and know the love of Christ in a personal way. We pray with the apostle John, “I pray above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.” (3 John 1:2)

*Please join us in prayer every Tuesday morning as we ask for help doing what we cannot do ourselves.*



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

The Walk to Emmaus is a spiritual renewal program intended to strengthen the local church through the development of Christian disciples and leaders.

**Next Men’s Walk – September 10-13, 2026**  
**Next Women’s Walk – September 17-20, 2026**

Masterpiece Gardens, 3900 Great Masterpiece Rd., Lake Wales, FL.  
Please join us! Call Roz or Dave Hill at 443-834-8621 to be referred to a sponsor for details.



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## FMCZ Outreach Devotional Services [Team Leader ~ Roz Hill]



Several members of our church family regularly provide on site Sunday devotional services at American House Assisted Living Community for FMCZ members and other interested residents on the **2nd Sunday of each month at 2:30pm**. Each service includes praise and prayers, hymns, scripture readings, and a spiritual message. For those of our congregation who would like to join in these devotionals, you are asked to arrive at the facility by 2:00pm that Sunday. Carpooling with other team members can be arranged beforehand by speaking directly to a team member. *Contact Roz Hill for more information at the following number [443-834-8621].*

*Looking to join a ministry but are not sure of the best fit for your skills and talents? Service ministries like this one are perfect vehicles for church members to begin or expand their volunteerism with smaller groups that don't require a lot of time or commitment, just a heart-felt desire to share your blessings with others and be a close partner in the good works of your church community.*

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## Did You Know? [Helpful Hints for Connecting With Ministries]

Pastor Steve and the church staff team actively support the work and recruitment efforts of all our ministry and mission groups by sharing your stories of Christ working through your hands in our local community and beyond. Features in our eBlast and newsletter highlight projects, provide contact information, and announce groups' schedules. Our website has a master calendar of all campus activities. If you want to serve but are unsure how to get involved, go to our website home page where you'll find a link to a page dedicated to Ministry that lists the five groups currently most in need of more volunteers right now. Our homepage is at <https://www.fmcz.org> or just use the QR code at right with your cell phone. Explore, connect, and get involved!



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

We want to thank all the men and women who helped our April Salad Luncheon and Fashion Show succeed. Thank you for coming to eat, selling tickets, donating your salads and recipes, decorating tables, and for showing off the outfits for us to ooh and aah over. We served over 90 and split the proceeds with our sisters in P.E.O. Chapter EU. To view some fun photos from the event, go to the FMCZ website. There is a gallery of recent event photos below the main church calendar of events.



We're celebrating Mother's Day a few days early next month. On May 7th, we're having a potluck picnic at Hercules Park at noon. If you'd like to attend, bring a picnic side to share. And join us. We'll have fun counting steps for the Cornerstone Ministries WonderWalk and maybe test our balloon tossing skills!

Our Annual Christmas Dinner is December 12th from 4-6pm in Cooper Hall and will be a Dinner of Ham, Scalloped Potatoes, Peas and Carrots, a pretty Green Salad, Yeast Rolls, Beverage, and a Fancy and Festive Dessert for \$12.50. We'll have tickets for sale beginning November 15th.



We will continue to meet on 2nd Thursdays at noon through the summer, although not in our usual spot in Cooper Hall. In June we'll meet at The Highlands at Scotland Yard . In July, Beef O'Brady's in Zephyrhills on 301, and in August, we'll take a field trip to Tampa to visit Cornerstone Ministries and the Rosa Valdez Center. Lunch that day will be at The Columbia in Ybor City.

*Phyllis Blanchard, President, Zephyrhills United Women In Faith, 712-830-5196 pb5152@yahoo.com*

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## Project Others [Team Leader ~ Deann Harrington]

Project Others meets every Friday from 8:00 to 11:00 in Cooper Hall. Once a month after we meet; we go out for lunch here in town. You are always welcome to come see what we do and perhaps decide that you too would like to participate regularly.

We look forward to making quilts every Friday. We sew clothes protectors, walker bags, wheelchair arm covers and more. Some ladies crochet or knit slippers. Join us any time. You can make what you like and know you are making many children and adults, mainly in Zephyrhills, a gift from our church.

We invite you to stop by! Take a look at our bulletin board in Cooper Hall during coffee hour. We are there and will gladly answer your questions and talk about what we do every week.

Questions may be phoned to our Team Leader: Deann Harrington @ (813) 713- 4119





**FIRST METHODIST CHURCH  
— OF ZEPHYRHILLS —**

Prayer Shawl Ministry

"This shawl was crafted with prayers for your healing - Mind, Body, and Spirit. As you wear this shawl, may you feel the warm embrace of our Heavenly Father."



Hand Made by Members of the Prayer Shawl Ministry  
and Blessed by the Senior Pastor

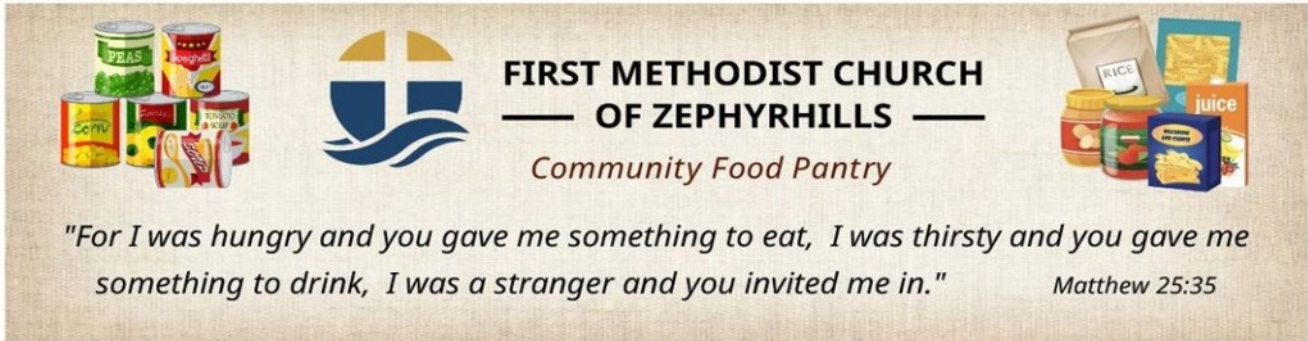
### THE PROJECT OTHERS TEAM

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

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# MISSIONS: Community Outreach

**Distribution Days are May 11, 12, 13 ~ DONATION COLLECTION SUNDAY IS May 17**



**FIRST METHODIST CHURCH  
OF ZEPHYRHILLS**  
*Community Food Pantry*

*"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."* *Matthew 25:35*

The FMCZ Food Pantry distributes non-perishable foods and non-food necessities to those in need in our community each second full week of the month with the following Sunday for restock donations. Each month, the pantry provides over 120 bags of meal components while team members purposefully engage with community members and share the abundant blessings found in our church community.

*Thank you for your continued support of this essential community outreach. Please check with team members for specific food items that are needed each month and remember: the best food items to donate are the ones you would put on your own table!*



Find your next favorite outfit or home furnishing at the Norma Hall Thrift Shops and support the mission and ministry work of our church and numerous charitable organizations in our area.

## Regularly Featured In the Annex

Furniture ~ larger home goods ~ Christmas decor

## Regularly Featured In the Main Shop

Clothing, books, smaller home goods  
and general home décor

**Mondays 8am–12pm**  
**Donations only**

**Wednesdays & Saturdays 8am–12pm**



FIRST METHODIST CHURCH  
OF ZEPHYRHILLS

- NORMA HALL -  
**THRIFT SHOP**

CLOTHING BOOKS HOME GOODS

All Purchases Help to Fund Our Mission Partnerships



FIRST METHODIST CHURCH  
OF ZEPHYRHILLS

- NORMA HALL -  
**THRIFT SHOP ANNEX**

FURNITURE SEASONAL ITEMS MEDICAL

## Spotlight <Mission of the Month – May>



Our church's Mission focus for the month of May is the **Zephyrhills Pregnancy Care Center**. It has been actively assisting families in our area for 20 years. They provide many services such as:

- Free pregnancy testing
- Limited ultrasound services
- Educational services
- Medical referrals
- Empowerment programs for expected mothers for support and advice



Bright course video programs on pregnancy and birth, the first year, toddlers, parenting, being a father, healthy relationships, divided households, coparenting, and life skills. Parents can earn baby bucks to spend on items from baby care supplies to clothing to cribs and strollers. They offer car seat, safety, mentoring programs, and Bible studies.

One of our own church members, Loren Becker, is involved with the program to mentor fathers. The center is located on North Avenue in Zephyrhills. They rely heavily on volunteer involvement and donations.

Please remember this very special program to help strengthen families this month with your prayers and your donations of time and money.



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



Since the July 2025 issue of our newsletter, we have featured Christian music suggested by members of Salvation's Rock Praise Band as ones for our congregation to listen to and perhaps add to their own praise playlist. While these were songs not normally heard in the Contemporary service, band members felt particularly inspired by these songs and renderings and hoped that they would inspire our church family as well. Below are some of the tunes that we featured here since then. Be sure to go to our Messenger page on the FMCZ website to read each of the original song features in its entirety.

"Home" by Forrest Frank <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTpgQpTrYYI>

Suggested by Eric Gale, July 2025

"Hide Myself In You" by Loop Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrSicTSBaPU>

Suggested by Sarah Gale, August 2025

"Praise You In This Storm" by Casting Crowns <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YUGwUgBvTU>

Suggested by Tamela Davis, September 2025

"How Good It Is" by Chris Tomlin [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a\\_H4bNsmQvc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_H4bNsmQvc)

Suggested by Wanda Rakocy, October 2025

"Good Plans" by Red Rocks Worship <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-3lMrhm8HQ>

Suggested by Quintin Smith, November 2025

"Let The Wind Blow" by The Imperials <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUr5GD8VRvA>

Suggested by Tom Sharp, December 2026

"Be" by Al Denson <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DJufnUnx-M>

Suggested by Thelma Diekfuss, January 2026

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## Long Term Prayer List [For April 2026] updated 03-17-26

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, Jim Elliot, Randy Hall, Bristol Loftis,  
Gary McLean, Suzanne Morgan, Mike Sonnenberg, Roxanna Young

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## Commission on Missions Committee [Team Leader ~ Karen Laukat]

### May Mission of the Month ~ Pregnancy Care Center of Zephyrhills

The FMCZ Commission on Missions is a dedicated group of church members who meet each month to provide direct support to a list of local charities and service organizations. Highlighting different local groups each month, the Commission calls attention to ongoing good work being accomplished across our region and attracts both financial and volunteer support from within our church community.

Regular support through the Commission is provided to recipients like our Sister Church in Cuba, our own Food Pantry, The Pregnancy Care Center of Zephyrhills, Agape Flights in Venice, Florida's Faith Responders, and many more.



## SERVICE TEAMS: Community Self-Care

Parish Nurses [Team Leader ~ Druann Briggs, RN 813-420-7919]

Next Blood Pressure Checks ~ May 17 ~ 10:30 - 11:00am in Cooper Hall

One-Blood Blood Drive ~ Check our eBlasts and announcements for the next drive.



**PLEASE CHECK THE BULLETIN BOARD IN COOPER HALL FOR OTHER UPDATES**



**Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States . Not surprisingly, Florida has the second highest rate of melanoma in the nation.**

- It is estimated that one American dies every hour from skin cancer. Each year there are more new cases of skin cancer than the combined incidences of cancers of the breast, prostate, lung and colon.
- One in five Americans will develop skin cancer in the course of a lifetime. Melanoma is the second most common form of cancer in young adults 15-29 years old.
- Whether from the sun or an artificial source (tanning beds), ultraviolet radiation is a proven human carcinogen.

Why is it important to avoid sunburn? Sunburns are painful, and should be avoided for that reason. Sunburns represent skin damage. Mutations that are not repaired can lead to the development of skin cancer. This is why we should all avoid sunburn, especially for children. But wait, there's more: sun's skin-damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays also produce free radicals in skin cells, which can lead not only to cancer but also to wrinkles, blotches, and premature aging.

If it is cloudy, I don't need to take any precautions, right? In fact, some of the worst sunburns happen on hazy days. Many people mistakenly assume that if it's cool or cloudy outdoors they won't get burned. They don't realize that while clouds block the heat (infrared) energy, UV rays can still penetrate through quite strongly.

I won't get sunburned, because I already have my 'base tan' to protect my skin from the sun throughout the summer. A suntan is the skin's way of trying to protect itself from additional sun damage. Because DNA or cellular damage is the prerequisite for pigment production, a suntan is a sure sign that the skin has been harmed. This is why it can be said that "there is no safe tan."

I have already had a bad sunburn - what can I do now to reduce my risk of skin cancer? Unfortunately, we do not yet have an effective treatment to reverse all the damage and mutations caused by a sunburn.

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SKIN CANCER AND ITS PREVENTION**

AIM at Melanoma Foundation: <https://www.aimatmelanoma.org/melanoma-state-florida/>

SKIN CANCER FOUNDATION: <https://www.skincancer.org/early-detection/the-big-see/>

*Submitted by: Druann Briggs RN Parish Nurse Ministry Coordinator 813-420-7919*

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## Stephen Ministry [Team Leader ~ Dave Hill]

Stephen Ministers are laypeople, Christian men and women, trained to provide one-to-one care to people experiencing a difficult time in life, such as divorce, grief, terminal or chronic illness, relocation, separation due to military deployment, or job loss. If you find yourself in a difficult time of life, please know we have trained Stephen Ministers who are here to walk with you through any place or time of need.

*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.*



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## Faith Responders [Rev. Laura Lambert] *FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF ZEPHYRHILLS IS A FAITH RESPONDERS HOST CAMPUS*



**faithresponders**  
a ministry partner of the Global Methodist Church

Faith Responders, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, was established by laity and Global Methodist pastors following Hurricanes Ian and Idalia. Our mission is to empower, equip and engage congregations to share the restorative love of God and offer Christ in tangible ways through disaster response and recovery. We collaborate with congregations, communities and other organizations to provide crucial relief and restoration in disaster-stricken areas. We invite all to share your unique skills and gifts in times of need by being a part of volunteer workforce teams.

See our regular updates posted on the FMCZ website! Go to [www.fmcz.org](http://www.fmcz.org) and click the link button to the Faith Responders update page. There we share current stories, information on area trainings, and links to support and donation pages that keep our aid and comfort reaching out wherever it is needed.

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## Easter Service at Amancio Church



Easter Sunday service at our Sister Church in Amancio, Las Tunas Province, Cuba was a special occasion of praise and joyous celebration, well attended by the devoted congregation. As part of the service, a seder meal was reenacted on the altar platform. Young women of the congregation performed an interpretive dance at the end of which they removed the black cloth from the cross replacing it with a white drape while the celebrant proclaimed, "El vive!" which means, He lives!"



## Support Groups On Our Campus

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### 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.



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### 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.*



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### 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.

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### Meeting Information:

Wednesdays, 4:00 - 5:30pm

Spring 2026 - January 7th to April 8th, 2026

Crusaders Classroom - Education Building



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

The 14 week spring session of GriefShare concluded on April 8th. Please watch this space this summer for information on upcoming sessions of this ministry group for the fall of 2026 and beyond. We will post updated information as soon as it is announced.



### 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 Leader ~ Gary Hartman]

Young at Heart Presentations provide Good Food, Good Times, and Good Fellowship for all our seniors who are truly young at heart! Offering informative and entertaining presentations with always tasty, cooperative lunches, this long-running member favorite is a perfect chance to get out and enjoy the community blessings of our very active congregation.

#### SENIOR LUNCHEON

**Thursday, May 21st**

**11:30am—1:00pm**

**Cooper Hall East**

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



Come and join us at Young at Heart on May 21. Our presenters for May will be Dale and Beth Smock from our church family.

We will have 16-20 questions similar to playing **Common Knowledge**. Each table will be a team with a designated team leader who will record their team's answers. We can add more questions, but trying to keep within the time frame. We will put questions on a screen as well as read them. The topics will range from Bible to early television. There will be 3 choices to choose from. There will be prizes for winners.

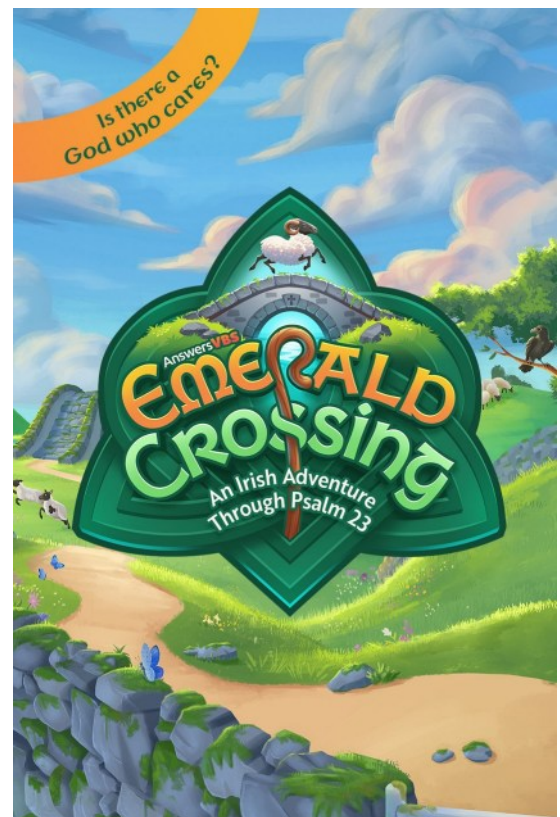
Come and join us at **Young at Heart on May 21**. There will be fun for all,

### Vacation Bible School 2026 [Team Leader ~ Karen Ezra]

Join FMCZ Family Ministries on June 8, 2026 for a fun and meaningful journey through the lush landscapes of Ireland as children discover the truths behind Psalm 23 through drama, song, crafts, science, and directed play. This immersive Bible based adventure weaves its teaching moments into five days of fun and fellowship, guided by our team of “shepherds”.

The adventure begins with Grandpa Fitz, a life-long Irish sheep farmer, who has never lived anywhere but the family farm. But now the farm is getting to be too much for him. Reluctantly, he puts the farm up for sale, but then his son—and only heir—surprises him by moving back to Ireland after quitting his long-time law practice in New York City. The joy doesn't last long, however. A greedy, corrupt county official has other ideas and almost forces the sale until his evil plan is discovered. In the ups and downs of it all, Grandpa Fitz draws strength from God, the Good Shepherd, and his well intentioned, wayward son finds faith, all through Psalm 23.

Both student and volunteer registration is now open and work is well underway to transform our campus into the green hills of Ireland. Follow the link below to the dedicated FMCZ VBS webpage where you can take the next step to register!



<https://fmcz.org/children/vbs-summer-2026/>

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## Promotion and Graduation Sunday ~ [Karen Ezra – Family Ministries]

Sunday, May 17th will be our annual recognition of those young members of our congregation in early elementary school and those who have made the journey through school to graduation from either high school or college.

We are blessed to have several young scholars who will be receiving bibles and certificates from the Family Ministry program, and those who, this year have completed secondary school and are embarking on the next steps in their young adult lives.

We recognize the hard work and dedication that goes into reaching these milestones while navigating life courses that incorporates both practical knowledge and the goal of following Christ in today's world. For more information please contact either Karen Ezra or Carol Runyon (emails on page 19)



### **GMC Youth Summer Camp** **Sign-up now open**

For all kids in Middle and High School  
*including those who have just graduated*

**June 29th - July 3rd, 2026**  
**at Lake Yale Conference Center**

Contact Karen Ezra for additional information.  
if interested, please sign up by the end of this month  
so we can determine how many will be attending.

**phone: 813-482-3138**

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## GMC News ~ [Tent Makers' Scholarships]

At the end of 2025, the Florida GMC received a generous donation of \$250,000 from an anonymous donor with the intent to establish a permanent scholarship to help Florida Conference family members attend trade school. The generous donor has signaled his intent to continue to fund this scholarship significantly over the next several years. The sole intent of this scholarship is to recognize and assist those members of the Florida Conference family who wish to pursue their skills in a trade school environment, in hopes they will become disciple makers in their vocations.

The Tent Makers Scholarship application is now open, and the link to the application is below. To apply, you must submit an application by 5pm on Friday, May 15, 2026, to the Rev. Nako Kellum, Conference Administrator, at [nkellum@floridagmc.org](mailto:nkellum@floridagmc.org). Along with the application, you must include a signed letter from your pastor recommending you for the scholarship. Applicants do not need to be a member of the Florida GMC, but they must actively attend a Florida Global Methodist Church. These scholarships will be awarded twice a year in the late spring and early fall. At present, five scholarships will be awarded for half of a student's tuition, up to \$2,500.00.

<https://fmcz.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/Tent-Makers-Scholarship-Application.pdf>



**GLOBAL**  
METHODIST CHURCH



### ***3 Fold Ministry Group***

A new ministry group is forming this spring on the FMCZ campus. It's name, "3 Fold" is rooted in the power of the Holy Trinity and the image of hands folded in prayer.

Facilitated by Gaynell Jeffries, who leads the FMCZ GriefShare group each spring and fall, this group will meet regularly during the summer for devotional and study time, after which will be time for hands-on service work. Currently, the group is assisting the Norma Hall Thrift Shop by sorting and folding clothing donations for sale in the shop. If you are interested in joining this group, please contact Gaynell at: [eldis.jeffries@gmail.com](mailto:eldis.jeffries@gmail.com)

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

- Past issues of the Messenger newsletter are always available on-line on our special Messenger collection page. You can find the page here: <https://fmcz.org/messenger/> and download many of our recently past newsletters to read electronically or print out.
- Our website [fmcz.org] offers many sub-pages that highlight the diverse groups and ministries active here on our campus. Go to our home page and look to the upper right-hand corner where you will see what's humorously known as the "hamburger" menu. Put your cursor on that and click, and a drop down menu will appear with a map showing all the pages you can travel to with just a click. Try it! We are adding to our site regularly!
- In addition to the above mentioned dropdown menu, our home page features a list of colorful link buttons that will take you to dynamically updated pages with a single click. We update these dynamic pages as often as possible to keep the information relevant to all our church family members.
- Want to know how to contact your church staff members? Go to the staff contact page here: <https://fmcz.org/staff/> and click on the envelope under the staff member you would like to contact. You will also regularly find the staff contact list on the back of the prayer list in the Sunday morning bulletin and in the Messenger on page 19.

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### So Many Ways to Serve [Volunteers come in all shapes, sizes, and talents]

Regardless of your skill set, talents, or interests, there is always a way for you (and perhaps a friend or a family member) to become involved directly supporting the many ministries of the church in helping to make disciples for Christ. Whether it's swinging a hammer, painting a wall, patching a hole, giving another church member your undivided attention, or lending a supportive arm, your actions help to move forward the very human business of our church.

If you are uncertain how to serve, click on the form below, fill it out, and return it to the church office. A team leader will contact you to help you activate!

[MINISTRY AND GROUP INTEREST FORM](#)





## **Document Shredding Service**

Two secured shredding bins are now available in the Church office for the FMCZ congregation.

Members are able to come to the Church office and place their documents in the bins

**Monday - Thursday from 9:30am - 1:30pm.**

Please limit two small boxes per member.  
Limited space and first come served.

**The bins will be available until May 14th.**

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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**  
Neal Slingerland Apt. 207

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

**SOLARIS SOUTH ~ Zephyr Park, 38250 A Ave., Zephyrhills 813-782-5508**  
Shirley Griffin, Memory Unit  
Pat Fletcher

**COMPASS ROSE OF ZEPHYRHILLS ~ 37411 Eiland Blvd., Zephyrhills, FL 813-783-8100**  
Geneva Dunford  
Barbara Kehr

**SOLARIS NORTH ~ 7350 Dairy Rd., Zephyrhills, FL 813-788-4300**  
Shirley Force Washington Unit  
Dorothy Lundeen

**ROYAL OAKS NURSING CENTER ~ 37300 Royal Oak Ln, Dade City, FL 352-567-3122**  
Joan Donaldson

**AT HOME ~ Personal Addresses and Phone Numbers**  
Luci Knepper  
Terri Stanley

*HILLSIDE HEALTH ~ 38220 Henry Dr., Zephyrhills 813-715-1749*

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

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

*GARDEN OF WESTBROOK ~ 6701 Dairy Rd., Zephyrhills, FL 813-782-4417*

## 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  
Wells, Jarrett, US Marine Corps, recently deployed, grandson of Dee Treanor  
White, Darrel, 1<sup>ST</sup> SGT, US Army, TX, nephew of Gerald & Virginia Swank

**REMEMBER THEM ALWAYS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS**

### MAY BIRTHDAYS

05/02 Wendy Leslie	05/24 Teresa McDougall
05/03 Bill Bair	05/25 Deann Harrington
05/03 Jamie LeVasseur	05/26 Floyd Otto
05/03 Verena Ruddnick	05/26 Teresa Proctor
05/05 Amanda Hawk	05/27 Travis Eldridge
05/08 Bob Wilson	05/27 James Treanor
05/09 Donna Sager	05/28 Jean Allen
05/10 Donna Ciukat	05/28 Alice Perry
05/10 Lorraine Hall	05/29 Frank McCafferty
05/18 Timothy Saylor	05/29 Sandra Montgomery
05/21 Robert Kowroski	
05/22 Barb Burgmeier	

### MAY ANNIVERSARIES

05/12 Robin and Charles Williams
05/22 Jim and Rita Wencil
05/27 Becky and John Adwell



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

## 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)

Teresa 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)

## This Month's Cover [May "Holding Fast"]

Rope as a necessary and efficient tool of human civilization building goes back thousands of years and equals in importance the use of fire and stone implements in changing the world around us and making things happen that would not happen by themselves. Its importance to civilization and culture can be seen in how often and how early rope appears as metaphor or poetic imagery in the earliest narratives. Despite how ingrained it is in our history, rope did not appear as a single, ready to use tool but had to be carefully engineered and manufactured in order to accomplish its many tasks effectively. The typical three-strand rope we most know and use even today is made of much shorter lengths of smaller fibers that are twisted together in a precise configuration that allow them to act as one binding or pulling mechanism, many strands combining to create a single force of change.

The bible uses the three strand rope as a metaphor for shared purpose and strength in Ecclesiastes 4:12, "And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken." To a people of shepherds, farmers, and fishermen, the central theme of many parts weaving together into an essential tool of survival would be an integral part of every day; the care with which the core fibers must be woven together known to every working hand. As in ancient days there remain strength in numbers, not aimless, chaotic numbers, but purposeful strands laid out to create a world changing force. Aligned together we are all not quickly broken.

## GIVING BACK [Planned and Legacy Giving]

We make many investments in our lives, perhaps one of the most significant is the investment we make in our spiritual life and community. Whether we give of our talents, our energies, our time, or our financial resources, when we give back, we invest in the practical application of our faith. Investment is particularly important as our FMCZ church family and its ministries continue to grow and expand.

Unlike our weekly plate offerings or our regular tithes, Planned Gifts are those that involve setting up methods of donating assets to the church and its ministries and missions over a longer time, often resulting in significantly larger donations that can create a Giving Legacy for the future without significantly impacting your present finances. Such donations can provide tax benefits in the short term while building a sizable contribution over time.

The following are just a few ways that incorporating charitable giving into your current financial plans can create a practical way to be both present and future stewards of your faith in action.

### BENEFICIARY DESIGNATIONS:

Any member of our congregation who wishes to support the continued growth of First Methodist of Zephyrhills can designate all or part of the following common assets to the church either all or in part. Setting up this personal stewardship plan often only requires the donor to sign a simple beneficiary designation form and to specify the gift in either fixed amounts or percentages.

Personal assets that can be designated in this way include retirement plans, savings accounts, insurance policies, or stocks. Anyone, at any financial level, can make these designations, from retired business people to stay-at-home moms; you do not have to be wealthy to create a meaningful stewardship gift that can be made at any age or stage of your life or career.

### BEQUESTS

Bequests allow church members to make meaningful legacy gifts without incurring any costs during their lifetime. These gifts are revocable in the event that financial circumstances might change so that gifts made today do not permanently lock donors into a single giving path, but do set up one's legacy plans in the now. Existing wills or living trusts can be amended to include such a bequest with a simple codicil. While these documents need to follow state guidelines, and should be reviewed by legal counsel, bequests are easy to create and designate to grow already existing FMCZ endowments.

### QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS

Donors who are aged 73+ are required to take a percentage of their IRA total each year according to law. These distributions are subject to significant tax liability which can impact your yearly financial plans. For those who do not need these distributions to pay bills or make a specific purchase, the funds can be donated to an FMCZ endowment and avoid the tax liability entirely. Your financial advisor can easily set this up with a simple form, signed by you, designating the specific endowment you wish to contribute to.