

# The Happening

April 2026

## Mission of the Month *Breakaway Respite Ministry*

Breakaway Respite Ministry has been serving people living with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia and their caregivers since September 2019. Every Monday and Wednesday you can find us in Creason Hall from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Our ministry serves by bringing a sense of purpose, joy and love to our friends through fellowship, art projects, service projects, and many other activities.

While we're with our friends, having *all the fun*, our caregivers can attend to their own needs. They go shopping, medical appointments and some have told me that they just went home and sat. For many, we are the only respite/break they receive in a week. We currently have 17 registered friends with hopes of increasing that number and shrinking our waiting list, which is currently at ten people.

Thanks to your generous donations, grants received, and through the sale of some of our projects, we are now a self-sustaining ministry of our church. Our tuition has remained \$40.00 per day and with your continued generosity it won't have to be raised. Other ways to help are volunteering at Breakaway, providing lunch on Wednesdays, providing entertainment or leading an activity. Every contribution makes a difference to those we serve. Thank you for being an essential part of our ministry!!



## A New Chalk Artist in Town



In the spring of 2025, the United Methodist Church of Sun City Center started a new tradition of commissioning various local chalk artists to create large religious masterpieces under the protection of the sanctuary portico. For Holy Week, Laura Thomas from Saint Petersburg created a montage marking the biblical events that occurred from Palm Sunday to Easter. During the Advent season, Holland King of Tampa pieced together scenes from the Annunciation to Mary to the Wise Men and the



Nativity of Christ.

This year, beginning the afternoon of March 29<sup>th</sup>, Hilary Frambes of Parrish Florida, will be recreating a scene from Jesus' Last Supper. Hilary is an award-winning muralist and portrait artist known for her vibrant, hyper realistic, and often surreal large-scale chalk murals. She will be working on the United Methodist Church campus from Palm Sunday to Maundy Thursday, and the Sun City Center community is invited to come and observe the artist at work.

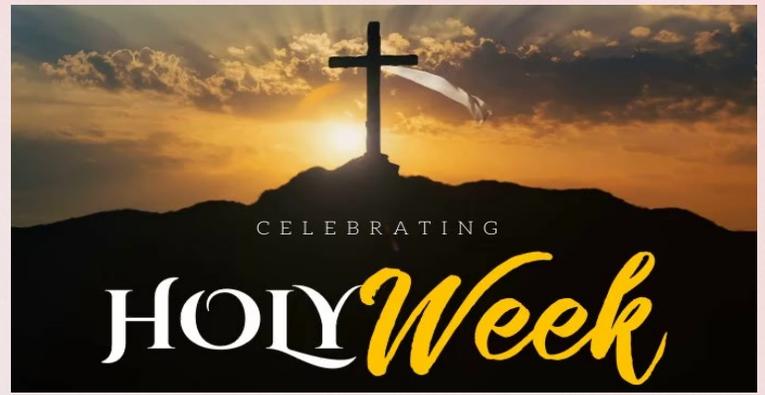
## Resurrection Cross



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

The Flowering of the Easter Cross transforms a symbol of death, darkness, pain and hopelessness. The Cross becomes beautiful, new and alive in celebration of the Resurrection of Christ.

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



### MAUNDY THURSDAY & GOOD FRIDAY:

Join us for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services at 7:00 p.m. These two deeply meaningful services offer a time of reflection, prayer, and community as we journey through the events of Holy Week.

*Maundy Thursday:* Youth members of our student ministry will be performing *Transformation*, a fanciful and energetic rendition of Leonardo DaVinci's inspiration for his famous fresco, *The Last Supper*.

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

### EASTER:

Celebrate the joy and renewal of Easter with us as we come together for a special Worship Experience on Easter Sunday as we reflect on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our day will begin with a beautiful Sunrise service at 6:45 a.m. in our back parking lot, where we will witness the sun rising as a symbol of new beginnings and hope. Following this, we will continue the celebration with our Traditional and Contemporary Services. Traditional services will be enhanced by a brass ensemble adding to the celebration and joy of honoring Jesus. It will be a day filled with music, prayer, and reflection as we come together to honor this special time of year and the life of Jesus Christ. We invite you to join us and be a part of this meaningful and uplifting Easter celebration, including taking photos at our flower cross!

## Pastor's Corner - Dr. Cynthia Weems

Dear Friends,

There are so many wonderful things happening in the life of our church right now. Worship is full of powerful music, prayer, fellowship and reflection on scripture. Studies that challenge us to go deeper in our faith are being offered. Young people are preparing a drama to be presented this week on Maundy Thursday. Our capital campaign toward Becoming a Debt-Free Church is on track to amazing success. You are a part of all of this and I couldn't be more excited to walk with you as your pastor.

BUT, these things are not what I want to focus on right now. You are receiving this newsletter at the beginning of Holy Week. This week we will focus not on the daily goings-on at our church or the plans for the future. This week we will focus on the cross and the journey Jesus made to that cross for you and for me. I want to invite you to read the story of the last days of Jesus found in Matthew's gospel. They are found in [Matthew 26-28 which you can read here](#). Perhaps you could read a little each day this week. I want to invite you to attend worship services on Thursday and Friday evenings (7 p.m.) as we focus more closely on the final days of Jesus' life. I believe the events of those days will cause each of us to **remember, reflect, repent and rejoice**. All of these are powerful responses to the work of God in our lives. Will you walk this journey with me?

Grace and peace

### Becoming a Debt-Free Church Each Gift Spreads the **Light**.

We are preparing for the culmination of our Debt-Free Church campaign with **Pledge Sunday on April 12**. Pledge packets were mailed last week and we invite you to pray over the pledge you would offer to this effort. If you did not receive a pledge packet, please stop by or call the church office to receive one.

On February 15 we announced that we had initial leadership pledges totaling \$501,000. This gave us tremendous momentum for the campaign. To date, several other early pledges have been made to grow that amount to almost \$700,000. We need everyone's involvement to make it to our goal of \$1,000,000 to pay off our mortgage.

Bring your pledge card to worship on April 12 (or drop it off early if you will be out of town). You may also pledge online at [lovethelight.org/debtfree](http://lovethelight.org/debtfree).

There will be a gift for each household that pledges to the campaign and we look forward to celebrating together on **Pledge Sunday, April 12**.

**NEW  
MEMBER  
FELLOWSHIP**

*Find Out More About  
Our Church!*

**TUESDAY  
APRIL 21  
4:00PM**

Life  
Enrichment  
Center (LEC)

**Zoom  
7:00PM**

**Newcomers and those  
interested in church  
membership are invited to  
meet the Pastors and learn  
about United Methodism,  
and serving opportunities.**

**New members will be  
welcomed during all  
three services on  
Sunday, April 26th.**

**\*If you are unable to attend in  
person and would still like to join  
the church, or need a Zoom invite  
please call the church office at  
813-634-2539 or email  
Aisling Turner at  
[aturner@sccumc.com](mailto:aturner@sccumc.com)**

# Center 4Life Learning

## Spring & Summer Classes Available

### Mondays

- **Sign Language**

Led by: Bonnie DeVagno

3/23 - 4/27 | 10:30AM-12:00PM

- **Sing Language**

Led by: Bonnie DeVagno

7/6 - 8/10 | 10:30AM-12:00PM

### Mondays & Thursdays

- **Beginners Conversation Spanish Level II**

Led by: Albert Villanuava-Reyes

3/30 - 4/16 | 8:30AM-10:00AM

### Thursdays

- **Make Your Mark With No Rules!**

Led by: Sharon Carothers

4/9 - 4/30 | 10:30AM-12:00PM

### Fridays

- **Android Smartphone: Pictures - How to Take, Store & Text Them**

Led by: Phil Sorrentino

4/3 | 10:00AM-11:30AM

- **Cut The Cord and Stream Entertainment**

Led by: Phil Sorrentino

4/10 | 10:00AM - 11:30AM

- **Beginning Modern Dot Art**

Led by: Sharon Carothers

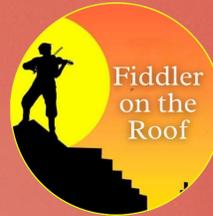
4/17 - 5/22 | 10:30AM-12:00PM

**Classes have limited space and fill up quickly!! Register today at [lovethelight.org/4lifelearning](http://lovethelight.org/4lifelearning)**

## Center 4Life Learning Trips and Tours

**Rays vs. Cubs, Tropicana Field, Section 124**

*April 7, 2026*



**Fiddler on the Roof**

**Fiddler on the Roof Musical**  
Asolo Repertory Theatre

*May 13, 2026*

**Becky's New Car**  
Early Bird Dinner Theater

*May 28, 2026*



**Rays vs. Yankees, Tropicana Field, Section 124**

*July 9, 2026*

**Forever Plaid**  
Suncoast Broadway Theater

*August 8, 2026*



**A Christmas Carol**  
Suncoast Broadway Theater

*December 23, 2026*

**Reservations Fill Up Fast – Register Today!**

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

email at [center4life@sccumc.com](mailto:center4life@sccumc.com), or  
visit our website at [lovethelight.org/4lifelearning](http://lovethelight.org/4lifelearning)

It's here... it's finally here... EASTER which is, for lots of reasons, my favorite holiday of the year! Most importantly it is the day of the world-changing event that defines who and whose we are. We're reminded that we are children of God that joyfully follow His Son, Jesus. I know you feel it - the pure, unadulterated love that surrounds us on Easter Sunday. No gifts to fret about or parties to attend – just the love of the Lord as we come together to express and embrace it.

There are, of course, other things that I love about Easter, one of which is certainly the music. What's better than #44 from the oratorio *Messiah* known as *Hallelujah*? And Easter is the day we always begin worship with my favorite hymn; *Christ the Lord Is Risen Today* [sung to *Lyra Davidica*]!

Easter, for me and my family, has always been a day of sharing one or more great meals, sort of like Thanksgiving and Christmas combined. Most years the food is accompanied by outdoor games like bocci, and there is often an Easter Egg hunt for both kids AND adults.

Finally, and least important, it is the day I can once again indulge in whatever I 'gave up for Lent' [usually chocolate]. Yay!

What else do you need to know about what's happening in April? First, I'd like to invite you to attend one of the Women's Chorus Spring Concerts on April 9<sup>th</sup> at 3PM or on April 10<sup>th</sup> at 7PM [or both!]. This season's theme is the last 50 years of Broadway with memorable tunes from the following musicals: *Hair*, *Evita*, *Les Misérables*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Rent*, *Chicago*, *Wicked*, *Hairspray*, *Dear Evan Hansen*, *Frozen*, *Hamilton*, and *The Greatest Showman*.

As you may already know, our church has become the annual host for the Holocaust Remembrance Service known as *Yom HaShoah*. Don't miss this special inter-faith community service on Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup> at 7PM in the sanctuary. It's a powerful and memorable experience, and it's not too late to join the *Yom HaShoah* choir that is rehearsing on Monday mornings at 9AM in the choir room!

Finally, I'd like to share that Larry and I have decided it's high time we had an old-fashioned Hymn Sing some Sunday afternoon, so look for that in upcoming announcements!

As always, I want to thank all of you for your constant love and support!

*Soli Deo Gloria*

## **'Break Away' with Breakaway - Renee Tisdale**

What a month we have had at Breakaway! Thanks to an incredibly generous donation, six of us attended the *Respite for All Whirlwind 2026* conference in Birmingham, Alabama March 1-3. We were introduced to several new products in dementia care and caregiver support along with the ability to meet with directors and volunteers of other respite homes from all over the United States.

Did Breakaway need to close just because we were gone? No, not with Jennilyn Crawford to take charge! They had a wonderful day with a reading circle to observe National Read Aloud day along with a sing along thanks to Jeff Jordan!

We got to work decorating for St Patrick's Day with shamrocks and rainbows. Next we turned our attention to the bulletin board which is now covered with beautiful flowers and butterflies that we created! Stop by Creason Hall to check them out! We also had a blast creating rainbows using fruit loops and marshmallows, eating some and delivering rainbows of joy around campus!

We have already begun on Easter projects thanks to the Sun City Center Women's Club for providing everything needed, and our wonderful volunteers to lead the activities! Easter pens are now for sale at Breakaway Creations in the LEC lobby or in the main office. There are also a couple bunny lights available! We began decorating our Resurrection Cross which will be on display in the LEC.

Coming up, we will continue with Easter activities, and move on with many other exciting projects. Please check out the Breakaway Respite Ministry page on Facebook for the latest postings!



## THURSDAY, APRIL 16 | 8:00AM

Please plan to join this month's Men's Breakfast. It'll be a good time with good guys, so don't be afraid to bring a buddy with you. Whether you're a regular attendee or a first-timer, this event promises a warm welcome and lots of laughter. So mark your calendars, and don't miss out on this chance to connect and recharge. We can't wait to see you there!

Men's Breakfast is the third Thursday of each month. Cost is \$10.00. Please sign up by April 12th.

## Friday Night at the Movies April 17 6:00PM



**THE STRAY:** A young father takes his nine-year-old son, the family dog, and two of his son's friends backpacking in the mountains of Colorado only for all five of them to be struck by lightning. The story of how a stray dog, Pluto, comes out of nowhere and impacts the Davis family, who are struggling in many ways. In just a short time, Pluto the Wonderdog manages to save a toddler, bring comfort and companionship to a hurting 9-year-old boy, help restore a marriage, and repair a broken father-son relationship. Pluto is not only a guard dog - he is a guardian angel.



## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22 | 10:00AM

Come experience the "Colors of Spring" this April with our fashion show and food drive. Our models will be wearing styles from the Nearly New Shop of SCC and we are asking everyone to bring along a can of food for the food bank. The meal will be your choice from two specialty lunch salads with a side and desert. The cost is \$15. Sign up in the church office by April 19

## Update from the Volunteer Response Team (VRT)

It was a busy month for the VRT! Thank you to the volunteers who painted curb stops in the parking areas of the church campus, power washed the chairs from the LEC, and helped with campus cleanup.

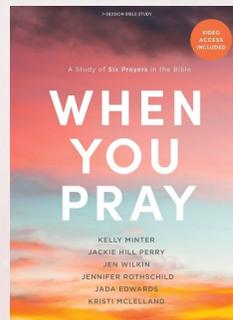
Our next meeting will be April 15, 2026 in room 19 from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. We meet the 3rd Monday of each month.

We are a group of caring Christian volunteers that help with community projects, His Helpers, church maintenance, disaster response, and recycling.

The Volunteer Response Team (VRT) of Sun City Center is always looking for people with different skills to join our team. In addition to those skilled with tools, we always need cooks, organizers, administrators, maintenance workers, and those who can provide a caring Christian presence.

If you're interested in becoming an active member of our VRT, please consider attending our monthly meeting or registering on our VRT email database at <http://eepurl.com/gew3MD>.

## New Women's Study Starting Soon



Beginning Sunday, April 12, from 5-7 PM in room 30, a new women's study will kick off, led by Sarah Taylor.

Do You Struggle with Prayer? Do you find it challenging to articulate your thoughts to God when you pray? Are there emotions you feel are too intense to share with Him? Do you sometimes end your day realizing you haven't prayed at all?

If so, you are not alone. Prayer is our means of connecting with God, yet it can often feel like a struggle. Throughout the Bible, we encounter various voices that guide us on how to pray.

In this 7-session study, you will explore prayers from Scripture that can inspire your own conversations with God. You'll discover that He welcomes your praise, lament, thanksgiving, and intercession. You'll also see examples of how to pray both alone and when you're gathered with others. Above all, you'll notice there's no one right way to pray. As you draw near to God through prayer, you'll find your faith strengthened and your heart united to Christ.

# Bag & Jewelry Sale

## FUNDRAISER



Friday,  
April 17th  
9AM - 1PM

&

Saturday,  
April 18th  
9AM - 1PM

The Pages of Life Bookstore has been accepting gently used handbags and jewelry that could be the perfect addition to your collection. Not only will you find unique treasures, but you'll also be supporting a wonderful cause. Every purchase and donation helps send our youth to summer camp. Whether you're on the hunt for a statement piece to elevate your wardrobe or a sentimental gift for a loved one, the selection is sure to surprise and delight. As you browse through the carefully curated items, you'll feel the warm sense of community that comes from knowing each piece has a story and purpose.

Happy Shopping!!



The United  
Methodist Church  
of Sun City Center



lovethelight.org | 813-634-2539 | 1971 Haverford Ave. SCC, FL 33753

## Church Representative Needed

As members of the Interfaith Social Action Council of Sun City Center, we are proud to support the Nearly New Shop. We are currently seeking volunteers to represent our church.

### Volunteer Opportunities

- **Council Membership:** Represent our church and its interests within the faith community at monthly meetings.
- **Shop Volunteering:** Commit to at least four hours weekly on Wed. or Sat. from 8AM to 12PM, or help on donation days (Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri)
- **Sign Placement:** Place signs on Saturday mornings to advertise that the shop is open, once or twice a month.

If you are interested in any of these roles, please reach out to Patty Gelsey via email at [just4pat3@gmail.com](mailto:just4pat3@gmail.com) or by phone at 315-447-7135

## We Need Your Support!

The Nearly New Shop in Sun City Center is seeking donations for our Housewares Department.

### We are in search of:

- Small appliances
- Pots and pans
- Dishes, glasses, and bowls
- Flatware and knives
- Various kitchen items
- Water bottles and cups

Your gently used items can create a significant impact!

### Drop-off Days & Times:

- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday
- 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM

### Where to Drop Off:

Behind Sav-A-Lot — just look for the tents

Thank you for supporting our community; your contributions are truly appreciated!

## Vivacious Ministries -with Victoria

“Life is not about waiting for the perfect moment; it is about creating it.” — Unknown

Welcome to April! Before you know it, our snowbirds will be leaving, and the hot weather will be upon us.

So many wonderful things are happening on our campus. Our Food Pantry is serving over forty-four families each Thursday, in addition to helping to support the Lord's Lighthouse and Inspira of Tampa Bay with food. Through our sharing food with the Lord's Lighthouse, they are in return providing fresh produce for our pantry guests. We are grateful for this partnership and the ability to provide fresh fruit from our pantry.

As our homeless population continues to grow in the area, our backpack program also continues to grow. We have been so blessed to have people donate their gently used yoga mats so we can provide those to our homeless brothers and sisters. We are doing some amazing work because of your continued support. Each of you are blessing so many lives in our community and I am grateful.

With Easter just around the corner (April 5<sup>th</sup>) please remember to bring your fresh cut flowers to church that morning to help us transform the cross and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus the Christ. Flowers may be brought to the patio starting with the Sunrise Service at 6:45 through the 11:00 service. I invite you to join us in making our cross bloom with color.

I would like to bring to your attention that school is almost out and we will again be hosting our 4th Annual Community Back-to-School event, which is scheduled for Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup> this year,. We need your help as well as help from our local community to collect new school supplies for our local students to help them prepare for the 2026-2027 School Year. I am already working with BayCare Kids, Mission Smiles, and Preserve Vision to provide medical screenings and examinations for students to be ready to attend school in the Fall. We will start collecting new school supplies and monetary donations at the end of April to ensure we are prepared for the event.

As you know, this is one of the largest events in the community to help students who attend the elementary, middle, and high schools in our area. Last year, we were able to support 1,200 students preparing for school, and we need your help to make this event great again this year. If you are interested in donating, making a financial donation, and/or volunteering for this event, please contact me to find out more details.

I know I say it to all of you so much, but it is worth saying it a thousand times, I am so grateful for each of you and what you do to help on the church through our different ministries and missions, in addition to our continued outreach into our local community, helping to change people's lives every day. I am so grateful and blessed to work beside you serving our congregation and community. It is because each of you are sharing your generosity by giving of your time, using your talents and of course your unconditional love that we are able to accomplish so much. Thank you for answering God's call to love each other fully.

Much Love and Many Blessings to each of You! Victoria

## Thank God It's Variety -Larry Hirschak

Spring is upon us and the busy winter concert season is winding down. The month of April concerts will begin after Easter with the Women's Chorus presenting their spring choral events titled *Broadway Dreams 1966-2026*. They will be presented on Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at 3:00PM and Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM. The concerts feature 50 years of Broadway musical hits from *Hair*, which opened in 1966 to *The Greatest Showman*, which is opening this year! Some of the other shows represented include *And All that Jazz*, *Wicked*, *Hairspray*, *Frozen*, and *Hamilton*. As usual, the Women's Chorus presents an exceptional program.

On Sunday April 19<sup>th</sup>, the very popular Goldtones will be returning to present a benefit concert for the Kiwanis International organization. The Goldtones are considered "Florida's Hottest Vocal Harmony Group" singing songs ranging from the traditional doo-wop tunes of the 50s and 60s to those melodies sung by later groups of the 70s and 80s.

The Goldtones have been performing in Florida for over 10 years and have earned a reputation for tight harmonies and performing the classics just like you remember them. Where were you when you first heard, *In the Still of the Night*? When you hear it again at a concert, you'll be brought right back to that place, that date.... That reputation was recognized by Elliott Lurie of *Looking Glass* (best known for their number one hit, *Brandy*) who requested that The Goldtones back him up when performing an original doo-wop song that he wrote.

With a repertoire that includes *Blue Moon*, *Run Around Sue* and *Teenager in Love*, they also sing the big harmony songs like *Have you Heard?* and *Turn Around*. Some of the most memorable songs are those recorded by The Duprees, Dion and the Belmonts, The Beach Boys, The Four Seasons and The Bee Gees.

The Goldtones have become the most requested harmony group in Florida and have developed a consistent performance schedule of 80-100 gigs/year in a variety of venues including cruise ships, restaurants, dinner clubs, theaters, casinos, residential communities and private venues. Audiences love them not only for their vocal talents but for their humor and their audience interaction. There's never a dull moment with entertainment by The Goldtones!

Keep watching for new additions to our Spring and Summer schedule. And again, I would like to thank you for your great support of this very special and successful outreach ministry!! Remember "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!!" Ps.150:6

## GRIEF SHARE

WEDNESDAYS MAY 6 – JULY 29, 2026 | 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm

Healing from loss is a journey: *Everyone experiences grief differently.*

A new Grief Share session will begin on Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM in Room 19. This 13-week grief support group will be led by Pastor Debbie Marion, Minister of Pastoral Care, and focuses on important grief topics associated with the death of a loved one.

Weekly videos feature nationally respected grief experts and real-life stories of people, followed by our group discussion where confidentiality is key to the success of this program.

Many grieving people find they are only beginning the work of healing while friends or family members have returned to their daily routines. Too often people tend to repress their grief and allow fear of what others may think keeping them from what could be helping them. Your bereavement experience may be recent, or not so recent. The hope is that you will find encouragement, comfort, and help in grieving the death of a spouse, child, sibling, other family members, or friend. No matter what the cause of your loved one's death, this is an opportunity to be around people who understand what you are feeling. You will learn how to recognize the symptoms of being stuck in your grief and that you do not need to stay there. You will learn valuable information about dealing with the changes in your life and renewing your hope for the future.

I hope you will consider being part of this valuable ministry. To register for this group, please go online to [griefshare.org/findagroup](http://griefshare.org/findagroup) and search for our church's group. You will also find additional information and resources there.

Should you have any questions, please call me at the church, 813-634-2539, ext. 1016. I look forward to walking with you on your journey. Pastor Debbie.