

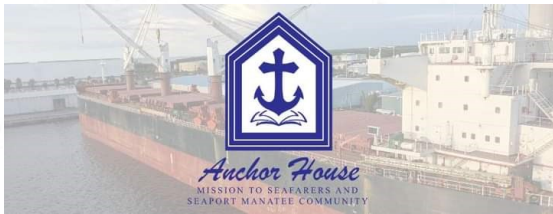
# *The* Happening

DECEMBER 2024



## Mission of the Month

### *Anchor House*



Anchor House was founded in 1991 and incorporated in 1993 to address the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of all seafarers arriving at Port Manatee, along with the surrounding Sea Port Manatee Community. As a gospel-centered mission, Anchor House reaches out to serve international seafarers, truckers, and the local community in Port Manatee, Florida. Our motivation stems from the

words of Jesus Christ who commands us to “go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). We take this mission to heart, striving to meet the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of the Port community, regardless of race, gender, country of origin, or religious belief.

We fulfill this mission by providing spiritual and physical nourishment to seafarers and the port community. Our activities include ship visitation, conducting worship services on board vessels, distributing “ditty bags,” transporting seafarers to town for supplies, hospital visits, and much more. Our mission is supported through ongoing personal discipleship with local dock workers and online engagement with international seafarers via Zoom and social media, along with personal visits to Port Manatee. Currently, we are sharing the gospel online with seafarers from Russia, India, and the Philippines. Worship services are available upon request onboard ships, and personal “ditty bags” are given to all seafarers, along with land transportation. We also distribute Bibles in over 40 languages, and personal spiritual counseling is available upon request.

We sincerely thank you for your support over the years. Your generosity enables us to continue God's work locally at SeaPort Manatee and internationally among seafarers. We are grateful for a remarkable last year and eagerly anticipate an incredible 2025.



# DONATE BLOOD

**Sun City Center United  
Methodist Church  
Sunday, November 24  
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM**

All donors receive\*:

- **\$20 eGift Card**
- **OneBlood Six Reusable Cups**
- **Wellness Checkup** including blood pressure, pulse, temperature, iron count, and cholesterol screening.

*Fact: Only 3% of those who are eligible actually donate blood.*

Donors  
Receive



- PLUS -



- PLUS -



Appointments are encouraged, please visit [oneblood.org/donate-now](http://oneblood.org/donate-now) and use **sponsor code 15721**

## ID REQUIRED

\*One offer per donor, per donation. No cash value. Not-transferable. Gifts may vary. For more information please visit [oneblood.org/details](http://oneblood.org/details).

**oneblood**   
Share your power.



## Pastor's Corner – Travis Taylor



“The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy, he goes and sells all he has and buys that field.” – Matthew 13:44

Jesus talked a lot about the Kingdom of God. He compares it to a treasure, seed, wheat, a net, leaven, and a superior pearl of great price. All in all, Jesus told 13 parables about what God's Kingdom was like, and yet throughout the ages faithful disciples have often failed to fully grasp exactly what Jesus was talking about.

Ancient Israel believed God's Kingdom would come with the arrival of the Messiah and that it would take the form of political and national sovereignty. This is why (even after his resurrection) some of Jesus' disciples were still asking, "... are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" Their question was valid, and yet Jesus' response (in light of his previous parables) is incomplete. He says, "It's not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority."

So, what is the Kingdom of God?

Is the Kingdom of God a *nation* as ancient Israel believed it would be? Is the Kingdom of God *the Church*, as many expect it should be? Or does the Kingdom of God exist simply as a spiritual Kingdom... a state of mind, and a way of experiencing the world in light of Jesus?

I presented these questions in a sermon a few years ago, and afterwards a retired college professor approached me and offered me this bit of insight: He said, "The Kingdom of God exists wherever Christ is King. Therefore, if Christ is King of our hearts, then His Kingdom exists within us. If Christ is Lord of our thoughts, then the Kingdom of Heaven exists in our minds. If Christ is glorified among His people, then God's Kingdom manifests among them."

While I can't argue with his logic, the practical applications of such a broad understanding still left me fumbling and frustrated. I wanted something solid! Then, in 2017 I attended a Missions conference in Minneapolis where one of the main speakers stated that "the Kingdom of God is *not* the Church, but the Church is an *outpost* of the Kingdom of God." He said, "The Church is where Kingdom people live out Kingdom values under the authority of the King."

Being a Missions conference, his metaphor made sense and has since provided me with a fuller illustration of not only how God's Kingdom exists, but also advances, and comes into being. The Kingdom of God exists both in the *now* and the *not yet* and, as citizens of the Kingdom, we feel the tension of being far from home. Like missionaries on the frontier, the Church advances in hostile territory, but is forever anchored to and supplied by the Kingdom it stands for.

As the season of Advent approaches, we again await the arrival of the Messiah... the King who *was* and *is* and *is to come*. And my hope and prayer for the United Methodist outpost of Sun City Center is that we continue to hold the King's banner high in the face of lesser kingdoms and own our citizenship inside and out.

## New Member Fellowship

Tuesday, December 10th at 6:30PM in Creason

All are invited who are new to the church or have interest in joining the church in membership. We are excited to welcome you and look forward to sharing this journey with you. This will be a time to meet and hear from our pastors as well as learn about opportunities to serve in our church and about the foundational principles of United Methodism. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with others and deepen your understanding of our

mission and vision. Remember, the church is not just a building, but a family of believers coming together to support one another and grow in faith. We hope you will join us and become a part of our vibrant and caring congregation. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to reach out. We are here to help you every step of the way.

**If you wish to become a member of the church, we will be welcoming new members during all three services on Sunday, December 15th.**

If you are interested in joining but unable to attend the New Member Fellowship with the Pastors, please contact Aisling at [aturner@sccumc.com](mailto:aturner@sccumc.com).

Welcome  
New Members!



## Stewardship Corner



The 2025 Stewardship campaign has been a great success and culminates in **Consecration Sunday** this weekend, November 24, in all three worship services. Pledge cards will be available in worship or you can pledge online at: [www.sccumc.com/pledge](http://www.sccumc.com/pledge)

Your gifts make possible the incredible IMPACT our church has on hearts, lives and the world. We will report back to you during the month of December how we are doing on our pledge campaign to increase our giving and our IMPACT in the year to come.

Mike Schoonover, Stewardship chair &  
Cynthia Weems, Senior Pastor

## Operating Budget Update

### Financial Status Report, Year to Date (9/30/24)

General Budget 2024:

Expenses: \$1,718,760.00

Income: \$1,406,375.00

Deficit: \$-312,385.00

For those wanting to contribute to our year-end goal of minimizing our 2024 budget deficit, you may contribute now at [www.sccumc.com/giving](http://www.sccumc.com/giving) or bring your contribution to worship or the church office. Looking ahead to 2025, our budget goals are the following:

### Balance the 2025 budget by:

- A reduction in spending in the areas of facilities, contracts, office operations, and personnel.
- An increase in income through congregational giving and additional revenue streams such as programming and facility use by outside groups.

Total goals for income/expense need to equal a roughly 20% reduction in our current spending, moving from a \$2.4M budget to a \$1.9M budget.

Thank you for your support, your 2025 giving pledge, and your prayers!

## Giving Envelopes

This year the church will not be issuing pre-printed giving envelopes to all parishioners. We encourage you to use the pew envelopes that are available. If you would like envelopes with labels, please contact the church office to make your request.



# South Bay Genealogy

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17TH**  
**10:30 AM**

Beginning at 10:30 AM there is an optional Round Table Discussion followed by a sit down luncheon at noon.

**Guest Speaker: Drew Smith**

**“Collaborative Trees: Making Them Work for You”**

The cost is \$18.00 per person for the meal and the presentations. For reservations and meal choice contact Vicki at 360-608-1647. Make your check payable to SBGS, and mail it to South Bay Genealogical Society, PO Box 5202, Sun City Center, FL 33571

***Your check must be received by  
December 5th.***

## VRT Updates

The name has been changed from DRT to VRT! We are now the Volunteer Response Team (VRT). We are a group of caring, Christian volunteers that help with community projects, His Helpers, church maintenance, disaster response and recycling.

Our VRT has been extremely busy the past month with back-to-back hurricanes. Many members have volunteered many hours in disaster response. We cleared storm debris from the Church; mucked out flooded buildings, loaned generators, removed drywall and removed the outside portico at Ruskin Methodist Church; tarped roofs; put up shutters; and repaired doors.

NOTE: Meeting times are the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the Month in room 19 from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. Next meeting will be December 18th. It will include the Christmas party and light refreshments.

The Volunteer Response Team (VRT) of Sun City Center is always looking for people with different skills to join our team. Besides workers with tool skills, we always need cooks, organizers, administrators, and people to lend a caring Christian presence.

If you are interested in becoming an active member of our VRT, please consider attending our monthly meeting and register on our VRT email database at <http://ecpurl.com/gew3MD>



*Join us for Our*

COMMUNITY

THANKS

GIVING

*Service + Meal*

November 28th  
10:00AM

Following the service you are invited to join us for a Thanksgiving meal. Meals are available for dine in or take out. FREE tickets for the meal are available in the church office. A ticket will be required for the meal and are dispersed on a first come first served basis.



*Come Shop For*

- Handmade Crafts
- Original Artwork
- One of a Kind Gifts
- Holiday Decorations

*Bake Sale!!*

**75+  
Vendors  
to Shop**

# Arts & Crafts Fair

**Saturday  
Nov. 30th  
2024  
9am – 2pm**

*Avoid  
crowded  
malls and  
support local  
artists!*



**Presented by:  
TIMELY  
TREASURES**

United Methodist Church  
Sun City Center  
1971 Haverford Ave  
Sun City Center FL. 33573  
[www.sccumc.com](http://www.sccumc.com)



## 'Break Away' with Breakaway - Renee Tisdale

Hello from Breakaway! We've been busy experiencing as much joy as possible each Monday and Wednesday over in Creason Hall between 10AM and 2PM, and here are a few ways in which we do it! Lately we've been making the centerpieces for both the community Thanksgiving meal and for our 'Friendsgiving' celebration with our caregivers. The angels for the church's angel tree are almost complete, our inventory for the upcoming craft fair is almost full, and we're currently working on a fall tree project to decorate the windows in Creason. In between the arts and crafts, we have so much fun playing volleyball and dancing each day, and are incredibly blessed to have so many people volunteer to come and play for us! Coming this month, we have some great Christmas projects lined up and again some amazing folks lined up to sing and perform for us! We'll have a Christmas party for our friends and thanks to donations from our volunteers, a chance for them to go "shopping" for Christmas presents for their caregivers.

If you're looking for a volunteer opportunity, please consider us! Our waiting list has increased to 16 people, we have room for a couple more friends if only we had a few more volunteers! If you're considering joining us, come check us out anytime that we're in session. Be sure to check out our Breakaway Respite Ministry Facebook page for the latest pictures and videos of all of our happenings!

## Thank God It's Variety - Larry Hirschak

*Are you ready to get into the Christmas spirit??* The Thank God It's Variety concert series has a December line-up that is sure to bring the Joy and Peace of the Christmas season into your hearts.

**On December 1<sup>st</sup> at 3:00PM** and again on **December 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM**, the Sun City Center Men's Chorus will be presenting "It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas" featuring holiday favorites like *Silent Night*, *Do You Hear What I Hear?*, *Beautiful Star of Bethlehem*, *White Christmas*, *Sleigh ride*, and *Let There be Peace on Earth*.

**On December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 3:00PM** and again on **December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM**, the Women's Chorus will present their holiday program titled "Christmas Peace" featuring *We Need a Little Christmas*, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*, *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, *O Holy Night*, *The Little Drummer Boy*, and *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas*.

**On December 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM**, the Kings Point Chorus will present "Joy To The World". This will be an evening of wonderful Holiday music, both old and new and will include a carol sing-along!

**On December 15<sup>th</sup> at 3:00PM**, The Toast of Tampa and Heralds of Harmony a capella groups will present their annual Christmas program in their magnificent barbershop harmony style! Both groups are nationally and internationally acclaimed and are a Florida holiday tradition.

**On December 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM**, the 50-member South Shore Concert Band celebrates the holiday season with an entertaining and impressive performance of music you are sure to enjoy! The concert will feature some traditional Yuletide favorites from *Feliz Navidad* to *The First Noel* and includes a Suite of Israeli Folk Songs.

**On December 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM**, Contemporary Christian Singer/Songwriter Vickie Truett will be presenting "It's Christmas" to finish out the month right before Christmas Day. Vickie's smooth alto voice brings a refreshing sound as she sings many of her own compositions and some beautiful arrangements of some well-known tunes in this heartwarming Christmas concert. She has performed with Point of Grace, David Meece, Phil Keaggy, Bruce Carroll and Wayne Watson.

With a little peek ahead, on January 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00PM, the 2024 Country Gospel Group of the Year, Small Town Sunday will be bringing their exceptional style of Country and Country Gospel here to kick off the 2025 year.

Please join us for one or more of these wonderful programs and I'm sure you will leave feeling blessed!! Finally, I want to wish everyone a very safe, healthy, joyful and blessed Christmas season!!

Larry Hirschak, TGIV Concert Series Coordinator



# Blue Christmas

**Sunday,  
December 15th  
7:00 PM**

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1:5*

Advent and Christmas are seasons of light for many, but there are those who do not experience the Advent/Christmas season as a period of joy and light. Many have experienced feelings of grief, pain, brokenness, loss, struggle, despair, and/or loneliness. Through these realities, however, the Blue Christmas Worship Service might convey a deep sense of God's grace and presence, and the hope that Christ offers us through his advent into our lives and our world.

If you are feeling lonely, depressed, or not quite ready to celebrate yet, consider joining us for this service of scripture, reflection, music, and prayers, as we navigate together this time of inexpressible yearnings that we cannot fully name. We may discover the fullest hope of the season by casting our gaze through the darkness to see the approaching light, even if from a distance.

## Center 4Life Learning

### Come Learn and Be Entertained

The 2025 Winter Semester will begin January 27, 2025. Class registration will be announced in late December.

If you have suggestion for future classes or can recommend potential instructors, we would love to hear from you.

### Trips and Tours



**My Fair Lady, Suncoast Broadway  
Dinner Theater,  
Hudson**

**StarLite Sapphire Dining Cruise with  
Live Entertainment**  
May 22, 2025



### Register for Trips 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 [www.sccumc/4lifelifelearning](http://www.sccumc/4lifelifelearning)

## Feeling Grateful!!

Recently our church was the recipient of a \$5,000 grant from ISAC (Interfaith Social Action Committee). Each House of Worship in Sun City Center was offered the grant and asked to submit a plan for using it for outreach efforts in our community. Our church will use this grant for outreach with youth, young adults and young families in our area as we seek to share the love and hope of Christ with all people.





# Vivacious Ministries with Victoria Sorensen

Welcome to December, the end of a remarkably busy and productive year! As we enter into the last month of 2024, there are so many things that I would like to reflect on. As a church, we have been able to bless many individuals and families in our community this year in one way or another. Through grants and your donations, we have helped not only our ministries on the campus, but we have been able to reach out and show the love of Jesus to many in our local community.



We were blessed to receive a \$7,500 grant from the Interfaith Social Action Council (IASC) this year for our Bare Necessities for All outreach ministry enabling us to help our low-income seniors, low-income families, the homeless population, and our local elementary, middle, and high schools. We were able to provide clothing (t-shirts, joggers, leggings, bras, underwear, pull-ups, diapers, etc.) and hygiene products (toothbrushes, toothpaste, hairbrushes, bathing wipes, deodorant, mouthwash, disposable underwear, etc.) to help with the basic necessities for day-to-day living.



Our pantry has been the source of food for many this year including those who suffered losses due to Hurricanes Helene and Milton. We have emptied our pantry of all food items several times to support families and seniors who suffer food insecurity. I thank all of you who continue to provide food for those who need it the most. I am so grateful to those of you who made very generous donations to our pantry, and again A “BIG Thank You” to Mary Klopp, Joanie Frantz, Nicole Huard, Diane Cantwell, and many others who keep our shelves looking great and serve families who came to the Back-to-School event as well as those who cannot come to the church to receive food items.



Community Outreach continues to be one of our most important ministries again this year. We were able to help several in our community through our Boost Your Communications 6-week course with our partner, Gannon University and their Speech and Language Program. We also supported Inspira Tampa Bay by providing food items for their clients, along with games, coloring books, crayons, puzzles, and a variety of other resources to assist those caring for neurodivergent children and youth. Your generous contributions allowed us to help Inspira provide support to their community with opportunities to be successful in learning life skills, provide resources and education, and to create a nurturing environment where every child and youth can thrive to reach their full potential. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Back-to-School event is another success story this year. Our campus was filled with over 1,000 people and, because of your generous donations of school supplies, the generosity of Bay Care Kids Mobile Clinic providing school physicals, Preserve Vision providing eye examinations, Mission Smiles providing dental checks and dental hygiene kits, our hair stylists and many volunteers, children from pre-school to elementary school, middle school, and high school were able to start their school year off on the right foot with the supplies and care they needed to be ready to start school.

Our community outreach did not just stop there. FALLtoberfest was a wonderful time. Even with the rain, the community was able to come together to enjoy music, fun, and food. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner is also expected to be a great success. We will provide a warm and loving atmosphere for our community members, sharing the love of Jesus with all who attend. Thank you to everyone who volunteered to help make this event a success again this year!

Now that we are headed into the month of December, we will focus on Christmas. Even though the Christmas decorations are not up yet, we are busy collecting items for children and our senior community to help make Christmas merry and bright.

We are starting to collect board games for children of all ages, and our Angels for adoption for our Angel Tree are being created as I am writing this article by our friends in Breakaway! If you would like to know what games we are asking for, please stop by the office for a list by age group, and you can drop them off in my office if you would like to start your shopping early.

We have started collecting items for our seniors living in the assisted living facilities who do not have family in our area. We have begun collecting items such as socks, lotions, combs, brushes, books, and mugs with lids, so if you would like to donate any of these items for our seniors, bring them by my office Monday through Thursday from 8:30am until 4:00pm.

In closing, I am so grateful to everyone who helps our community through all of our different community outreach programs. Each of you **ARE** making a difference in the lives of our children, youth, young families, and our seniors who are in need. I am always filled with gladness when we deliver these items to those who need them in our community and see the smiles on their faces. Thank you for sharing the love of Jesus in our Community.

As always, I look forward to seeing you on the patio on Sunday mornings, and especially through this Christmas season!

Blessings, Victoria





# Join Us For *Christmas*

## Christmas Cantata

**Saturday, December 7th - 4:00PM**

**Sunday, December 8th**

**8:30AM & 11:00AM Traditional Services**

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## Blue Christmas Service

**Sunday December 15th - 7:00PM**

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## *Christmas Eve Services*

**Contemporary Candlelight**

**Services 4:00PM & 7:00PM**

**Traditional Candlelight Services**

**5:30PM & 8:30PM**



**United Methodist Church of Sun City Center**

**1971 Haverford Ave. SCC FL 3357**

**813-634-2539 [www.sccumc.com](http://www.sccumc.com)**



# WORSHIP ARTS - Jeff Jordan

You notice how early the “Holiday Season” seems to start in our culture? I went into a store in early November, loooong before Thanksgiving mind you, to pick up a gift and a gift bag (am I too lazy to wrap this gift or what?), and I could not find one gift bag that wasn’t Christmas or holiday adorned. Well, I thought to myself, this is just plain wrong. Thanksgiving, maybe my favorite holiday, next to Easter of course, was still more than three weeks away. But then I had to check myself because, as a music director, I’ve been immersed in the Advent and Christmas seasons SINCE LATE AUGUST. And I was also reminded that folks in the music ministries here have had the JOY of Christmas on their lips and in their hearts for months as we have been rehearsing for the season ahead. So, I felt a little guilty for, well, for judging as well as blessed for my role in this church and in the Kingdom!

Our worship during the four Sundays in Advent this year will be focusing on each of the four traditional themes of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. We look forward to some beautiful and meaningful worship during this time of preparation for the coming of our Lord and Savior. And our beautiful Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship is right around the corner. It’s not too soon to plant the ‘seeds of invitation’ in those who might need or be searching for a church home. This is often the best time of year for an extra measure of evangelism!

So what else is going on in December? Got an hour or so to listen?? If not, here’s a summary of worship and arts events that are happening this month:

- December 1** – SCC Women’s Chorus *Christmas Peace Concert* (3PM)
- December 2** – SCC Men’s Chorus *It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas* (3PM)
- December 3** – District Clergy Gathering and Worship (morning)
- December 5** – SWCC Men’s Chorus *It’s Beginning to Look A lot Like Christmas Concert* 7PM)
- December 6** – SCC Women’s Chorus *Christmas Peace Concert* (7PM)
- December 7** – *Canticle of Christmas Choral Cantata for community* (4PM)
- December 8** – *Canticle of Christmas Choral Cantata* (8:30 & 11AM worship services)
- December 11** – King’s Point Chorus Holiday Concert (7PM)
- December 13** – *Christmas Madrigal Dinner III* (6:30PM – advance tickets only)
- December 15** – Toast of Tampa & Heralds of Harmony Barbershop Concert (3PM)
- December 15** – Blue Christmas Worship Service (7PM)
- December 16** – South Shore Concert Band Holiday Concert (7PM)
- December 18** – *The Sights & Sounds of Christmas* (6:30PM)
- December 20** – Vicki Truett Holiday Concert *It’s Christmas* (7PM)
- December 23** – Caroling at Plaza West (meet at 4:30PM at church or at 5PM at Plaza West)
- Christmas Eve** – Candlelight Worship (4 & 7PM Contemporary/5:30 & 8:30PM Traditional)

Sorry to have ‘calendared’ these out, but it will help me to be reminded of what’s happening each day in this beautifully busy month. What a blessing to be at a church that embraces this awe-inspiring season with such passion!

Finally, and once again, I love this church and this family of faith. Thank you for your never-ending love and heartfelt encouragement!

*Soli Deo Gloria*

## HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSURE

Wednesday, December 25th, 2024

Thursday, December 26th, 2024

Friday, December 27th, 2024

Wednesday, January 1st, 2025