

The Happening

August 2026

Mission of the Month

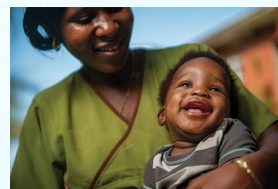
Watoto

Watoto brings hope and healing to vulnerable women and children in Uganda and South Sudan. In Watoto villages, children find mothers to love them, education to inspire them, healthcare to strengthen them, and their value and identity in Christ. In short, they have everything they need to grow up happy, healthy and full of purpose.

A Watoto village is a safe place where a child can truly experience the love of a family. Watoto has three villages that have classrooms, medical clinics, churches, playgrounds, and most of all homes for our children and mothers. Each Watoto house is comprised of a house mother who is raising eight orphaned and vulnerable children. Together, they're a family, and she's raising them with love.

Watoto is a family made of people from all over the world who are working together to ensure that the forgotten have a place to belong. In 1984, during a time of civil war, we planted a local church in Kampala, Uganda to speak hope and life to the nation. Since then, we've rescued orphaned and abandoned children placing them in loving families. And we've come alongside vulnerable women equipping them with skills and empowering them to be the mothers and leaders God has called them to be. To help our hurting neighbors, we also expanded our reach into South Sudan—embracing our sisters and brothers with the love of Jesus and helping meet their most critical needs.

Since 2011, Sun City Center United Methodist Church has financially supported a house mother and seven youth. In 2026, we have added another child to support the equivalent of a Watoto family. In addition to the increase in support, this congregation has contributed specifically to programs supporting classroom renovations, global support, neighboring communities' mothers, assistance to girls to help meet their maturing needs, a semester of University for one student, preventative medicinal costs, and self-sustainability in the Watoto villages.



Pastor's Corner - Travis Taylor

This year we took 19 students to Warren Willis United Methodist Camp and Conference Center. And one of the things I always enjoy about camp is our small group time. The kids have really full days at camp. They stay up late at night doing God-knows what in their cabins, and then they wake up early, go to breakfast, go to worship, hear a devotion, and then go to their first skill of the day, which might be sailing or canoeing or archery or basketball or ultimate frisbee or crafts or bracelet-making.

But twice a day the students gather in small groups of 10-12 kids who are divided by age and gender, and we initiate discussion. We go over the theme for the day and share a Bible lesson. And being an adult volunteer, I got to lead these daily groups and give the counselor, who is with them 24-hours every day, a much-deserved hour break.

When the boys finally calm down and we get into discussion, it really is my favorite hour of the day, because you learn things about them. When their defenses come down, they share what they're going through.

For example, two days in, I noticed a middle school boy in my group struggling emotionally, which is common. Young middle schoolers often experience some degree of home sickness the first few days, so we have a protocol we work through before immediately contacting the parents to see if we can redirect their focus. So, after the group, I took this young man over to the rocking chairs overlooking the lake. He had a really unique name, and when I asked him how he got his name, he said his dad gave it to him. He said he was named after a golfer who won the US Open on Father's Day the year he was born. I responded, "Wow, that's a cool story!" And then he said "Yeah... my dad died 3 months ago and that's why I'm here. My mom thought it would be good for me and my brother."

Our Camp theme for the summer was **By Name**. Day One was *Known By Name*, day two was *Invited By Name*, day three, *Called By Name*, day four, *Raised By Name*, and then, finally, *Sent By Name*.

On the first night, our main speaker was talking about how God *knows* your name, and his message was something to the effect that it doesn't matter how others see you because God sees you, and knows you, and loves you. I was sitting in the back with some of the students from my small group who go to other churches. The student sitting next to me leaned over to me and said, "That's not true." After the service I privately asked him what he meant, and he said, "It totally matters how others see you." He said, "Every day I go to school and nobody talks to me." He said every day I sit at a table full of kids and nobody really even notices I'm there."

Needless to say, I spent the rest of the week encouraging both of these young boys and making sure they knew that I *saw* them.

A key component of our Christian witness is having the spiritual eyes to see people. One of my favorite Bible passages comes from Genesis 16, after Sarai mistreats her maidservant, Hagar, who then flees into the wilderness, away from her abuser. The Lord's angel finds her there, comforts her, and Hagar's response is praise to *El Roi*... "The God who sees me..." (Gen 16:13).

Whatever ministry you're serving in right now, always remember that the Lord sees you and wants to give you the spiritual eyes to see others.



Welcome New Staff

Janine Hulland, Director of Engagement



Janine has assumed the responsibilities of **Volunteer Coordination, Welcome & Connection** and **Community Engagement** beginning July 27.

Janine has a background in Disability

Management with companies like MetLife where she worked for over twenty years and was the point person for setting up their offices in India. Her gifts include team building, case management, strong communication and prayer. Janine is an 8:30 worship service usher and has volunteered in the church office. She is a life-long United Methodist and brings years of volunteer experience with her to this role. She and her husband, Mike, have been married forty years and have a daughter, son-in-law and two granddaughters who live in Sarasota. Welcome, Janine!

Adrienne Lisko, Director of Family & Event Ministries



Adrienne will assume the responsibilities of **Events, Special Projects** and **Family Ministries**. She will be working with our hospitality ministries, special projects around the campus and new ministry development with nursery-5th graders and their families. Adrienne is currently the Project Manager for Global Implementation Services with Cartus Relocation, with whom she has worked for almost thirty years. She will conclude her projects with them and come on board with us on October 1. Adrienne has a background in project management and speech communication. She has also led her own non-profit for 8-12 year olds focusing on life skills development. Adrienne attends the 9:45 worship service and lives in Sun City Center with her partner, John. She is a member of the Pelican Players and has one daughter who is a rising Senior at the University of Tampa. Welcome, Adrienne!

Grief Share

**Wednesday Evenings
Beginning September 16**

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

A new Grief Share session will begin on Wednesday, September 16th, from 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM in Room 19. This 13-week grief support group will be led by Pastor Debbie Marion, Minister of Congregational 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 a 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. **Please register for this group online at 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.

Lost Something? Check our Lost & Found

Have you misplaced a sweater, water bottle, Bible, umbrella, pair of glasses, or another personal item while at church? Be sure to stop by the Lost & Found located in the Life Enrichment Center (LEC) Lobby to see if it has been turned in.

All unclaimed items will be donated on Friday, August 15, so we encourage you to check the Lost & Found before then.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office. We hope to reunite you with your missing belongings!

Center 4Life Learning Classes & Trips

Come Learn and Be Entertained!!

2026 Summer Class

Register Today!

- **Sign Language:** Beginning August 10 | 6-weeks Monday mornings. Led by Bonnie DeVagno

**2026 Fall Semester Begins the Week of
October 5. Registration will begin on August 24.**

SPECIAL EVENT: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH

Center 4Life Learning with The Pelican Players Community Theater will host registration day and comedy production *Love Or Best Offer* in the Life Enrichment Center (LEC).

There will be two shows: 1:30PM. and 6:30PM.

Fall class registration will be held 1:00-3:30PM and 6:00-8:30PM in the LEC Lobby.



Arsenic and Old Lace, dark comedy
Manatee Performing Arts Center

September 3, 2026

Halfway There, comedy and buffet lunch
Early Bird Dinner Theater

September 17, 2026



Visit Mt. Dora

Tour the city and lunch on your own

October 1, 2026

The Cottage, comedy and buffet lunch
Early Bird Dinner Theater

November 19, 2026



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

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

email at center4life@sccumc.com, or
visit our website at lovethelight.org/4lifelifelearning



DONATE BLOOD

**Sun City Center United
Methodist Church**
Sunday, August 2
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM

All donors receive*:

- **\$25 eGift Card**
- **Big Red Bus T-shirt**
- **Wellness Checkup** including blood pressure, pulse, temperature, iron count, and cholesterol screening.

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



Appointments are encouraged, please **scan the QR code** or visit oneblood.org/donate-now and use sponsor code 15721.

Donors
Receive



- PLUS -



- PLUS -



ID REQUIRED

*One offer per donor, per donation. No cash value. Not-transferable. Gifts may vary. For more information please visit oneblood.org/details.

oneblood
Share your power.

WORSHIP ARTS

-Jeff Jordan

I'm writing this on a Monday morning, the day that many who work jobs they don't particularly like find, shall we say, somewhat challenging. After all, there's another WHOLE week of work ahead of them, and the weekend seems 'miles' away. But, for those of us who LOVE what we do, Monday is another day of new beginnings, new challenges, new relationships, and most importantly new ways to see God all around us and to grow closer in our walk with His Son.

In the four excellent 250th Birthday videos we've been seeing during worship in the month of July, the speakers were asked what they would share with young people about life and their pursuit of happiness. All said nearly the same thing; find something that you love to do, pursue it with a passion, and you're bound to be happy. I, among others, have been blessed with that opportunity and I thank God every day that I'm where I am doing what I love.

So, Mondays are exciting, energizing, and maybe just a bit enigmatic. That is to say, I'm not sure what this week is going to bring, but I KNOW that it'll be a gift from God. We sang a song at the contemporary service that, musically and lyrically, captures this feeling. Here's the chorus:

*Darkness bow down to the day,
mountains get up out my way
Breaking out of yesterday,
I got a new thing coming*

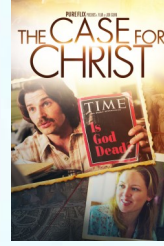
*Tell this giant in my face,
you're not greater than my faith
Best believe me when I say,
I got a new thing coming...*

What a joy it is to know, to feel that newness, that freshness. Is every day or every start to every day for me just 'perfect'? Nope. When I got to church this morning, I looked into my saddle bag to see that I hadn't fully closed the top to my coffee container. Yup, you guessed it – I had a saddle bag full of coffee, sugary creamer and all! But I knew that my next task, after trying to get the smell out of the saddle bag, was to write a newsletter to my wonderful church family followed by a Congregational Care meeting at which a small group of us get together to share our church family's health issues, to read through prayer cards, and to pray for those in need. And, even better, then we get to call and visit those who most need calls and visits. In short, Mondays, for me, are a beautiful way to start a new week of ministry, and it's my prayer that all of you have the same feeling as you begin a NEW week or a NEW month, even in these 'dog days' of summer! Rabbit, rabbit!!

May the rest of your summer be joyful and AWESOME!

Soli Deo Gloria

Friday Night at the Movies August 14th | 6:00PM



The Case for Christ: In 1980, atheist and investigative journalist Lee Strobel applies his journalistic and legal skills to attempt to disprove his wife Leslie's newfound Christian faith, which creates a rift within his marriage. After completing a thorough investigation for almost two years, he finds the historical evidence for Jesus, and then finds a new faith in Christ. Doors open at 5:30PM.



Thursday, August 20th at 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. Enjoy a hearty meal and engaging conversations, all in the spirit of fellowship. It's a fantastic opportunity to meet like-minded individuals in a relaxed and friendly environment, united by faith. Come hungry and leave inspired! We can't wait to see you there, and may God bless our gathering!

Men's Breakfast is the third Thursday of each Month.
Cost is \$10.00. Sign up by August 16th.

Mission of the Month Applications

Thank you for your interest in becoming a **Mission of the Month** at our church. Our Mission Team is excited to learn more about your ministry and the work God is doing through your organization.

Each year we receive many applications and prayerfully consider each one. Special consideration is given to missions that are dedicated to making disciples of Jesus Christ, demonstrate a proven history of effective ministry, and align with the mission and vision of our church. Because of the number of applications we receive, not every mission that applies can be selected.

As part of our review, we consider your mission's goals, the percentage of your budget that directly supports your ministry, and your plans for accountability and measuring impact. Organizations selected as a Mission of the Month will be asked to provide a brief year-end report describing how the funds were used and the difference they made.

All 2027 submissions must be received by September 30, 2026. You can submit your application online at www.lovetheLight.org

Thank you for your faithful service and for making a difference in our community and throughout God's world. Blessings to you as you continue your ministry.

‘Break Away’ with Breakaway - Renee Tisdale

Breakaway's Fourth of July celebration included a bit of unexpected excitement when the power went out—and one of our volunteers failed to stay vertical! Thankfully, she's okay. A special thank you to Jennilyn Crawford who lead that day and to everyone else who assisted. At least the power outage waited until after the amazing lunch provided by Ray and Grace Bibisi!

The summer heat didn't stop us from celebrating Christmas in July, complete with a visit from Santa - thank you, David Childs. Our performers that week also treated us to Christmas carols that everyone enjoyed singing along with. Thank you to Greg Rabelo and Rick Koen for sharing your talents with us.

We've recently changed up our window displays with some spectacular fish, feathers, and flowers. Our bulletin board now features our own version of Tinga-Tinga art from Tanzania. Stop by Creason Hall and take a look! *Breakaway Creations* has been restocked with beautiful plant stakes and pens assembled by our friends and volunteers. You'll also find Christmas ornaments, tote bags, pocket hugs, and many other unique items that make great gifts. Be sure to stop by the LEC Lobby and check it out!

July 15 brought us an amazing performance by the Driveway Dudes, and since it was National Hot Dog Day, we enjoyed a delicious hot dog lunch thanks to Ron Guidry.

If you're interested in helping provide lunch for this amazing ministry, we are currently in need of volunteers for **Wednesday, August 12 and August 19**, as well as future Wednesdays. Please let me know if you'd like to help.

We've welcomed several new volunteers to our family recently, but there's always room for more! If you've been looking for a meaningful place to serve, we invite you to stop by on any Monday or Wednesday to see the ministry in action, or visit us on Facebook at **Breakaway Respite Ministry**. We'd love to have you join us!



Thank God It's Variety - Steve Krogh

At the time of this writing, Larry and Gwen are in Italy. They will both be missed tremendously. Larry was an outstanding Concert Series Coordinator and a wonderful mentor. I am doing my best to replace the irreplaceable, and I truly appreciate the grace and encouragement you have all shown me.

I felt our recent comedy concert was a great success. MaryEllen was hilarious and related to everyone in the audience. I had a lot of fun being part of the opening act, The Pickers and Grinners, alongside fellow church members Jan Ring, the "Queen of One-Liners," whose dry humor and quick wit kept everyone laughing; Larry Whitehead, a gifted storyteller with great comedic timing; and Steven Spurling, whose backwoods, Tommy Smothers-style persona had us all in stitches.

You were a fantastic audience, and your generous laughter and applause inspired me to book another comedy event! On November 6, we'll welcome Comedy Magician Elliott Smith, recommended by MaryEllen. Advance tickets are just \$15 (\$20 at the door)—a small investment for amusement and laughter. By the time you read this, I hope many of you will have enjoyed the incredible talent of Alan Curtis Tripp, a virtuoso pianist and entertainer whose performance was truly inspiring.

Coming up, on **Friday, August 28**, you'll have the opportunity to enjoy the unforgettable music of Barry Manilow, Billy Joel and Elton John—all in one concert! Featuring talented pianist and vocalist Jonathan Elgart and internationally acclaimed saxophonist Joe Menendez. You would think you were listening to all the original artists. It's like attending three iconic pop concerts in one! Advance tickets are \$20 (\$25 at the door), so don't miss it.

On **Friday, September 11, at 7:00 p.m.**, we invite you to join us for **25 Years Later: Remembering ~ Healing ~ Hope**, a moving community tribute honoring the heroes, mourning the victims and embracing the hope and healing of time. This special event is free and open to everyone.

Be watching for more information in future newsletters and our weekly trifolds about these upcoming events:

October 2 – Beatles Tribute, **October 16** – Salute to Glen Campbell, **October 23** – Tribute to Elvis (Alzheimer's Benefit), **November 6** – Comedy Magician Elliott Smith, **November 20** – Sounds of Soul

Then we will enter our Christmas season with more than 10 concerts featuring both local and visiting performers. Stay tuned for these wonderful opportunities to celebrate the holidays, invite friends and family, and experience the joy and spirit of Christmas through music. We look forward to seeing you at the concerts!