



Mission of the Month

Friendship Circle

The Friendship Circle has been a vital part of our church community for many years. Through bake sales and donations collected during our meetings, we have made significant contributions to both local and international causes.

Our support has reached organizations such as the Matthew 25 Food Bank, Diapers, Operation Smile, Ukraine relief efforts, UTC Graduation Students, school supplies for India, Good Samaritan Services, and many others! Additionally, we create teacher baskets to express our gratitude for their commitment to the students.

The Friendship Circle gathers on the first Monday of each month from October to June at 1:00 p.m. in Room 19 featuring programs that resonate with our church and community. We invite you to join us!

On Sunday, May 4th, The Friendship Circle will be present on our church patio to share their impactful work and its effect on our community. They are also organizing a “Little Blessings Diaper & Wipes Drive” in support of Abundant Life, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Apollo Beach that assists single mothers facing unplanned pregnancies. Abundant Life offers mentorship, support groups, baby showers, and various resources to aid these mothers on their journey.

Please remember to bring new packages of diapers and baby wipes to support these new moms by Mother’s Day, May 11th.

Through your generous donations, we aim to demonstrate the love of Jesus through compassion, kindness, and grace, fostering joy in motherhood and a sense of support from our community.



A Word From Our Pastor

Staying Tender:

Twenty-one years ago, Mel Gibson released his award-winning film, *The Passion of the Christ*. The film grossed a whopping 612 million dollars and gained worldwide notoriety for its intense storyline and horrific portrayal of Jesus' flogging and crucifixion. I remember several churches in our area rented out whole movie theatres for several weeks in a row as a mass evangelism effort, and I remember going with our church's Youth Group to see it for the first time.

I'll never forget the raw sensation of hatred building up in my gut as I watched the Roman soldiers mock and beat Jesus so violently. I remember being disgusted by their laughter and sickened by their ignorance. Several minutes into the flogging scene, I couldn't take it anymore and began to sob in my seat. Even though I think I have a pretty strong constitution, I had to shut my eyes against the cruelty I was witnessing on the screen in front of me. It made me ashamed, and by the end of the film I was an emotional trainwreck, as were many others in the theatre.

We drove back to the church in silence and to this day, no cinematic experience since has even come close to moving me to that level of disturbance. My heart was completely shredded.

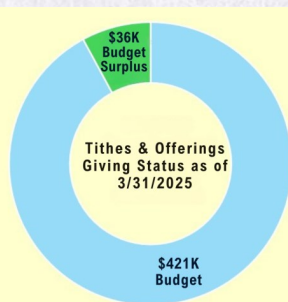
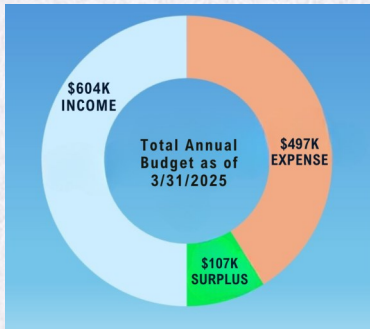
And yet, I'm thankful for the shredding.

Every Holy Week since, I have made a point to watch *The Passion of the Christ* before Easter, and this year I watched it with my children for the first time. I explained to them that I don't watch it because I enjoy violence and bloodshed; I watch it because it helps keep my heart tender to the Gospel and deepens my affection for Jesus.

As one of your pastors, my hope is that the Gospel never loses its luster in our congregation, and that the many ministries we engage in are indeed the overflow of our passion for Christ.

In His Service,
Pastor Travis

Finance Update



As promised, the Finance committee is offering regular updates on our budget progress in 2025. As seen above, we are currently running a surplus of over \$100,000 after the first quarter. This is due to managing expenses, exceptional concert revenue, and faithful offerings by our congregation. In terms of tithes and offerings only, we are currently running just over \$35,000 ahead. This is due, in part, to pre-payment of pledges and consistent giving. **We want to thank everyone for your generosity and your interest in the financial health of our congregation!**

Meet Our Summer Intern!!



Hello! My name is Zoe Lawless, and I am a student at Asbury Theological Seminary where I am pursuing a Master of Divinity degree. I graduated from Indiana University – Columbus in December 2023 with a bachelor's degree in English literature and a minor in psychology.

God called me into ministry when I was 15 years old. I understand my calling as one to pastoral ministry, potentially with an emphasis in counseling. I have a passion for learning and for helping others learn (especially about God), and I hope to help disciple groups and individuals of all ages.

Some things about me: I love my parents, our two cats, reading, writing poetry, knitting, hiking, camping, and worshipping our merciful and Almighty God! My favorite TV show is *Frasier*, and I enjoy a good movie (especially a rom-com, but anything other than horror or thriller will do).

Some of my favorite foods are Icelandic and Greek yogurts, a good burger, proper southern American BBQ, Italian food, and Mexican food.

A more recent passion of mine has become boxing! I attended one boxing fitness class at ATS last fall and I was hooked (pun intended).

I look forward to meeting all of you in-person and getting to know you this summer!

Friday *Night* at the Movies

FRIDAY, MAY 2ND AT 6:00PM



SIGHT, starring Greg Kinnear and Terry Chen, follows the true story of Dr. Ming Wang, a Chinese immigrant who defies all odds to become a world renowned eye surgeon. Drawing upon the grit and determination he gained from a turbulent uprising in his upbringing, Dr. Wang sets out to restore the sight of a blind orphan. Writer/Director Andrew Hyatt has said of the film: “I am humbled

and thrilled to be a part of bringing Dr. Wang's incredible true-life story to the screen. The universal themes of hope and endurance will undoubtedly resonate with audiences around the world. My grandmother grew up in Shanghai, and to be able to honor her in some way by telling a story that echoes her own experience is a very special opportunity.” *SIGHT* will encourage viewers to see their lives from a new perspective and leave them with a renewed sense of purpose to accomplish anything they set their mind to.

This is a free event for our community and church.
Doors open at 5:30PM .



THURSDAY, MAY 15TH 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. This is a great opportunity to make new friends and meet some new brothers.

Men's Breakfast is the 3rd Thursday each month.
Cost is \$10.00. Please sign up by May 11th.

WORSHIP ARTS

-Jeff Jordan

As I sit here trying to make the newsletter deadline (tomorrow!), it's the day after Easter and it's really hard to forget what a great day that was at our church this year. Special thanks to all the musical, technical, and welcoming volunteers that make a celebration like we had yesterday 'come to life' so vividly and with such excitement! On the traditional side, special thanks to Teo who put together the two excellent and professional instrumental ensembles for the Easter Cantata (strings & percussion) and for Easter Sunday (brass and timpani). She also accompanied some very challenging choral pieces and played such beautiful organ music including the ever-popular Widor "Toccatà"! Special thanks to Nancy Harris who 'kept an eye' on the handbells for the Easter choral anthem. Along with Pastor Debbie and Linda Whitt, Nancy also helped as a page turner [as I always say... "That's the most important person on the platform"]. On the contemporary side, special thanks to Maria Leasure who continues to help by choosing, editing, and performing so many of the songs that make our *Broken Together* praise team the uniquely powerful ensemble that it is. Also, special thanks to Bob & Val Bartosh who create the video openers each month for all services as well as running slides and managing sound in the contemporary service. In fact, Bill ("Bull") Turner and the whole AVLC Team deserves a big shout out for their excellent work 'in house' as well as 'online'! And finally, a big 'thank you' to our pastors who have done an outstanding job 'piloting' this new ship that we continue to call the United Methodist Church. They have wholeheartedly been encouraging and supportive of our Worship Arts Ministries!

So, what's up in May? Well, the Chancel Choir has been invited to lead the music for the annual Memorial Day Service held in Veteran's Theater. This year Memorial Day is Monday, May 26th, and the service over in Kings Point is at 10AM. We will be rehearsing this music at the end of choir rehearsals on Thursday afternoons at about 1:45PM if you'd like to participate. At the same time, the Chancel Choir will be gearing up for the Patriotic Cantata that will be presented in our sanctuary on Saturday, June 28th at 4PM and again at traditional services on Sunday, June 29th. Again, if you love singing good patriotic music, it's not too late for you (and anyone in the community as well) to join us just for the cantata portion of our weekly Choir rehearsals. Just join us (and invite others to join us) in the choir loft about 1:45PM on Thursday afternoons. We have plenty of music as well as rehearsal CDs and links to performances of the pieces in the program.

Soli Deo Gloria

Thank God It's Variety (T.G.I.V.) -Larry Hirchak

What a wonderful and special concert series season we have had this past Fall and Winter!! A big THANK YOU and debt of appreciation goes out to all of the people that have attended concerts to make this outreach ministry so successful! But...there is still more to come in the month of May.

Beginning on Sunday May 4th at 3:00PM, our Rasmussen Artist Series will resume for the next several months. This first concert will be presented by some of our local talent and is titled "The Great American Songbook-Music From The Heart". Performing will be pianist Haig Yaghoobian, soprano Paula Spangler-Klein, tenor Ashley Lobo and baritone Wayne Booker. They will be taking you on a very special trip down memory lane featuring your favorite songs from the greatest era of Ballads, Upbeat and Romantic Standards of the twentieth century. Selections will include *Stardust, Unforgettable, I Remember You, The Impossible Dream, Walkin' My Baby Back Home, Don't Get Around Much Any More, Misty, Smoke Gets In Your Eyes, Ain't Misbehavin', and Sweet Lorraine.*

The Goldtones will be returning again this year on Friday May 9th at 7:00PM to once again sing their great Doo-Wop tunes plus many favorites from the 50's thru the 80's. They have been performing for over 10 years and are considered "Florida's Hottest Vocal Harmony Group"! This concert will also be a benefit for Rotary International and all the good work they do in our and surrounding communities and around the world!

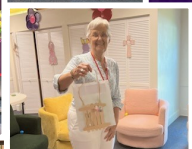
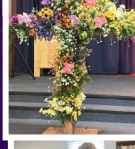
A real "Fan Favorite", Kenny Evans, will be returning for his "Golden Oldies Show" that he has been performing for several years in the Red Skelton Tribute Theatre in Pigeon Forge. The concert will occur on Friday May 16th at 7:00PM. Kenny has been a studio musician and vocalist for the last 18 years, and sang as a child in his family's quartet. Kenny is also known for his impressive four octave vocal range!

The last event for the month will occur on Sunday May 18th at 3:00PM with another Rasmussen Artist Series recital titled "An Afternoon of Art Songs and Arias". This recital will feature mezzo-soprano Kimberly Draiblate, soprano Christine Honein, pianist and organist Wesley Ducote and cellist Yoni Draiblate. There will be vocal solos and duets accompanied by organ, piano and cello and will include works by Bach, Schubert, Fauré and Weill. This promises to be a very special afternoon of great music!

Larry Hirchak,
Thank God It's Variety Concert Coordinator

'Break Away' with Breakaway - Renee Tisdale

We've done it once again! Breakaway had an incredible month! We kicked off the month with a new project, and we discovered our passion for working with clay! Our friends are crafting beautiful flowers that will soon be transformed into bouquets for sale!



We had the opportunity to train both current and prospective volunteers with Robin Dill, a trailblazer in the respite community. After observing us in action, she provided valuable insights for improved practices and shared several innovative project and activity ideas.

Our friends excelled in decorating our Resurrection Cross and enhancing our space with festive Easter decorations. We also created bags to hold our treasures as we couldn't resist having an Easter Egg Hunt! Additionally, we took a few friends around campus to spread joy and deliver door hangers to the staff. Watching the chalk mural come to life was a delight during our field trips to see the artist at work.

We are thrilled to welcome two new friends and a few new volunteers, but we are still seeking more! Our waiting list has grown to nineteen people, and I hope to invite a few more friends to join us soon. If you're interested, please drop by Creason Hall on Tuesday, May 20th, from 10 AM to 12 PM for an open house, or visit us any Monday or Wednesday.

Our patio sale was a success, and we appreciate everyone who supported us through their purchases! Many items are available for purchase at any time, so there's no need to wait for the next patio sale.

Just stop by Breakaway or my office most Tuesdays. We also want to express our gratitude to everyone who contributed during our Mission of the Month; your generosity ensures that no one will be turned away due to inability to pay.

We are thankful to Freedom Plaza for providing us with meals on Mondays! However, we are still in need of lunch for every Wednesday in June. If you'd like to help, please reach out by calling 813-634-2539 x 1011 or emailing breakawaymin@sccumc.com



Center 4Life Learning Come Learn and Be Entertained

2025 Spring & Summer Classes

Vitality Though Our Ages!

Instructor: Jeannie Weiss

Saturday, May 10 | 11:00AM - 2:00PM

Sign Language

Instructor: Bonnie DeVagno

Mondays, 7/21-8/25 | 10:30AM - 12:00PM

Cut the Cord and Stream

Instructor: Phil Sorrentino

Wednesday, August 13 | 10:00AM-11:30AM

For class descriptions and instructors' bios, visit our website or Center office.

Center 4Life Learning's upcoming trips and tours!



Tarpon Springs, Tour of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and explore Sponge Docks

May 13, 2025

Jesus Christ Superstar, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Sarasota

June 4, 2025



Summer Circus Spectacular, Tour of Circus Museum, Buffet Lunch

July 9 2025

Grease Musical, Buffet Lunch
Suncoast Broadway Dinner Theatre

September 25, 2025



Visit Downtown Mt. Dora

October 1, 2025

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 www.sccumc/4lifelearning

Update from the Volunteer Response Team (VRT)

Philippians 2:4 "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others".

We are a group of caring, Christian volunteers that help with community projects, His Helpers, church maintenance, disaster response and recycling. (Please note that you can help even if you are not a VRT member.)



Mulching Crew

This past month the VRT has spent over 60 hours helping with church projects. The VRT has mulched the church grounds, cleaned Creason Hall, worked on irrigation, performed church maintenance, and recycled materials.

Call out for volunteers on May 2nd. We will be having a volunteer day where anybody can help clean up the church campus.

Next meeting will be May 21, 2025 in room 19 at 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Meeting times are the 3rd Wednesday of the Month.

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://eepurl.com/gew3MD>

Our Food Pantry is in Need!!

We sincerely appreciate your generous contributions to our food pantry. Each week, our church supports numerous families within our community, and it is your kindness that enables us to continue this vital assistance.

- Cereal
 - Canned Meats/Tuna
 - Pasta
 - Spaghetti Sauce
 - Canned Spaghetti
 - Ramen Noodles
 - Kid Treats
 - Kid Fruit Cups
 - Pancake Mix
 - Canned Sausages
 - Syrup
 - Powder Milk
 - Box Milk
- Hispanic Items:**
- Dry Black Beans
 - Dry Pinto Beans
 - Corn
 - White Rice (not instant)
 - Maseca Flour
 - Vegetable Oil
- Diet Restricted Items:**
- Gluten Free Items
 - No Salt/Sugar Items
- Donations can be dropped off:
Mon-Thur 8AM-3PM

'Happenings' with Next Gen -Faniel Pradel

Square Tournament:



The 9 Square tournament turned out to be a blast! Lots of action, excitement, and a couple of bursts of intensity all added up to a super fun event! Congratulations to Aiden for being our first 9 Square champion! We missed you all, that weren't able to make it and hope that you'll be able to make it to the next one! For those who were able to make it out, as well as our volunteers, Thank you! Can't wait for our next one!

Friday Fun Night at Cypress Mill:

On April 11th we had a Camp Night with our friends over at Cypress Mill! We had the Leadership team from Warren Willis come lead some fun group games, give out awesome prizes for some raffles, and share a message about the impact of camp in their lives and why it would be important to go! We had around 60 students come by throughout the night! We are so grateful for that community and can't wait to see all the things we get to do together in the future!

Lent/Holy Week:

Our UTC Youth had a lot of things that they got to experience this Lenten season as well as being a part of holy week. Many students gave up sweets, electronics, and "negative thinking," but they also took on daily prayers and daily scriptures to read throughout the season. Our students also took part in communion during youth group! Pastor Cynthia and Travis stopped by and taught us the importance as well as the history of Passover and the Last Supper. They blessed the bread and juice, and we shared communion by way of intinction. It was a very powerful experience that they were all grateful to be a part of.

During Maundy Thursday we had a number of our students who were participants in the service. From reading scripture to serving communion at a serving station, they were really impacted by being involved. This is something we look forward to doing more and more in the future.

Unity Small Groups:



Our Unity Young Adult Group has begun gathering on Thursday evenings for our small group time! We've mapped out our topics of discussion as well as scheduling to ensure we get the most of our get togetherd. This month we are talking about our Christian Roots: Lent/Holy week/Easter, Pentecost & Fruits of the Spirit! If you know of any Young Adults who might be looking for a place to plug in and dive a bit deeper into scripture or just people to hang out with, please email me and I'd love to get them plugged in (faniel@sccumc.com)

Parents Night:

On the evening of May 4th, we are having our first Parents Night of the year! We will be inviting the parents of our youth to share in a meal, discuss summer scheduling, and fill out some very important forms for camp, all while playing 9 square and going head-to-head in some fun Parents vs. Kids games!

Grad Sunday:

On May 25th we will be recognizing our graduates of the 2025 class during our services. If you have any graduates that you'd like us to recognize that we may not be aware of, please email me (faniel@sccumc.com) by May 10th so we can properly celebrate them!

Audio, Visual, Lighting, & Camera (AVLC)

Have you ever wondered what goes on behind the scenes to make Sunday morning worship, our Thank God It's Variety Concert series, or other church events successful? You can discover the ins and outs by joining our team—no prior experience required! Whether you're passionate about technology or just eager to learn something new, our AVLC team is a welcoming environment for everyone. As part of the team, you'll get hands-on experience. Not only will you play a vital role in enhancing the worship experience, but you'll be joining a supportive team that shares your enthusiasm for creativity. So why not take the leap and be part of something truly impactful? We can't wait to welcome you aboard! Come check us out Tuesday evenings at 6:30PM in the LEC for Praise team practice or reach out to Bill Turner at bturner@sccumc.com

Vivacious Ministries - with Victoria

“Real strength comes from helping others”
— Fred Rogers

Welcome to the very merry month of May!

Everything is in bloom and beautiful in the month of May. Let us take time to admire God’s work in creation as we begin this new month together.

I am looking forward to this new month and all it has to offer after such a wonderful Lenten Season culminating with our Easter Cantata and Easter Sunday services. Thank you to everyone who brought flowers to create our beautiful cross again this year. It takes all of us to create such a beautiful memory on Easter morning, and it looked wonderful with the chalk mural that Laura Thomas created for us during Holy Week. What a special addition. Thanks to Pastor Travis for finding and inviting this talented artist to our campus.

Our Food Pantry was such a blessing to families in our local community in April. We continue to serve those in our community who suffer from food insecurities all thanks to your donations. I am pleased to say that we provided several boxes and bags of food to families in our community helping them provide for their families. A special “Thank You” to Joanie Frantz, Nicole Huard, Diane Cantwell, and Mary Klopp for helping make this happen.

As we move into May, there are lots of things happening that I would like to share with you. Movie Night is BACK! Come join us on Friday, May 2nd at 6pm in the Life Enrichment Center (LEC) as we once again come together and enjoy the movie “Sight” presented by Angel Studios starring Greg Kinnear and Terry Chen, follows the inspiring true story of Ming Wang, an impoverished Chinese prodigy who flees Communist China to become a pioneering eye surgeon in America. Doors open at 5:30pm, so, invite a friend and come and grab some popcorn and lemonade to see this fascinating film. Movie schedules are available in the church office with dates, times, and movie titles, so stop by and pick one up today.

I would also like to thank everyone who signed up to participate in the CPR-AED Training scheduled for May 29th at the SCC EMS Training Center. What a blessing it is to have people who are willing to help prepare for medical emergencies. For all who signed up, please make sure to mark your calendars; training is from 1pm to 3pm. If you have any questions, please reach out to me for assistance.

As I mentioned in our April newsletter, we are busy planning is our 3rd Annual Community Back-to-School Event which is scheduled for Saturday, July 26th to help our local schools prepare for the 2025-26 School Year. We are starting to collect new school supplies and monetary donations, so we are prepared for the event. If you are interested in donating, making a financial donation and/or volunteering for this event, please contact me to find out more details.

In closing, I am so grateful for each of you and what you do to help on the church campus through our different ministries and with our continued outreach into our community. We truly are the hands and feet of Jesus to so many in our community, and it is because of your generous 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

Happy Mothers Day

to ALL the MOTHERS out there whether you are a
Past, Present or
Soon To be Moms.
May your day be filled
with love,
joy and laughter..

