

July 2021 Edition

Screech... goes my bicycle, as I had to slam on both handbrakes, balance myself from flipping over the handlebars, and shout a prayer-HELP! Perhaps this is what I deserved for tailgating my four-year-old driving her Fisher Price *Frozen* Jeep. Reflecting back, exactly one year ago, when we were navigating the stormy seas of the pandemic, we had high expectations of returning and even decided to return to worship with a concrete plan last July. However, all of a sudden, our church and hundreds of others had to slam on the brakes. Despite our hopes and best made plans, due to the unanticipated spike of COVID-19 during the summer, we continued with online worship until we reconvened in November. Even then, to some it might have seem like we were still driving too much like great, great granny-slow and overly cautious.



The wise teacher of the Book of Ecclesiastes writes the famous words beginning in Chapter 3: “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven...” Friends, we certainly know what it’s like to “refrain from embracing” as we had to pause many aspects of worship and church life even as we began to gather back in community. Just as there is a time to be born, and a time to die; it wouldn’t be a stretch to add that there is also a time to pause and there is a time to go. Or, my daughter would say “Hit the gas!”

Let me share some noticeable changes in worship that the church board has agreed to *hit the gas* on as we move forward as well as acknowledge a few ways we are keeping the cruise on at this time:

- The first obvious change you will notice is that bulletins will be handed out to everyone.
- Upon entering the sanctuary, you will quickly notice that we are more fully utilizing our project system/screens to enhance worship from announcements, Scripture, Lord’s Prayer, and etc.
- Perhaps the most exciting news is that the FGCU students will direct and invite the entire congregation to join with them in singing the classic and beloved hymns from the *Chalice Hymnal*.
- I would argue the most meaningful change is we will return to taking communion together during worship. At this time, we will not pass out any plates but the prepackaged communion kits will be located in the pews. After the words of institution worshippers will be invited to pick up a communion kit, take both the bread and juice together, and then place the empty cup back in the pew rack. After worship the deacons will pick up used kits and replace them.
- Hymnals and communion kits will be the only items in the pew racks. The offering plates will remain in the narthex and envelopes will be available for tithes and offerings.
- Feel free to use any door now, including the side doors, to enter/exit the sanctuary.
- At this time, we will not have an official greeting time at the beginning of worship but have plans to resume this important element of worship in the future.
- We *encourage* all non-vaccinated worshippers to wear a mask.
- Finally, if you are still unable to attend worship or a seasonal member trying to stay better connected, the board agreed to continue streaming worship.

While we are not fully where we left off before the pandemic, I hope you feel even more “back at home” when you arrive this Sunday or participate online. Additionally, let us continue to be thankful for new additions to worship from stellar recorded preludes of Lauryn K., other talented vocalists leading special music, and the online stream. Faithful Art N. raised his hand during the board meeting on Sunday and sincerely stated “I just miss singing.” Well, my friend, we are back, moving forward and pressing down on the pedal!

-Zach

### Prayers and Praise to God from the Past Month

**Paulette Idol**, continued prayers for Paulette in her recovery from multiple strokes as well as her move to North Carolina. Paulette's new address is the following:

3073 Short Rd. Apt .102 Hickory, NC 28602

**Rev. Dr. Jim Carpenter**, back home and recovering from a heart attack, Church Family

**Kate Seitz**, upcoming bronchoscopy in the beginning of July, Church Family

**Linda Schneider**, prayers for anxiety and God grants a calmness, Church Family

**Rosie Langley**, radiation treatment for the next couple weeks, Church Family

**Dr. Asya Teruni and her family**, Church Family

**John Blasi Sr.**, received another MRI on his back this past week and continues to have dizziness, Church Family

**Tyler**, currently at Tampa General and awaiting to go to Gainesville for a lung transplant, Peggy Roley (grandson)

**Sam Blasi**, fell and has two fractures and two broken ribs, John Blasi Sr. (brother)

**Laura DiGiacomo (update)**, still in critical shape battling COVID, John Blasi Sr. (daughter's best friend)

**Grace Anderson**, prayers as she rests her voice, Church Family

**Bonnie Solorio and her family**, lost husband due to cancer and is now fighting breast cancer and her grandson has cancer, Shirley Fizer (friend)

**John Battazzo**, praise to God for a good health report, Church Family



**Sophia Condit** is a rising high school senior and aspiring actress. She has been singing since the age of 9 under the instruction of Carolann Sanita. She has been lucky enough to work with many theaters all over Southwest Florida, onstage and off. Outside of her life in the theater, Sophia can be found writing murder mystery parties, tap dancing, or singing way too loudly (according to her sister). Sophia is excited about being our lead vocalist on **Sunday, July 4.**



### **OUTREACH FUN**

Join us for ice cream, celebration and fellowship on Sunday, July 4. Immediately following worship we will meet in Fellowship Hall for ice cream sundaes or floats. This is a fundraiser for Gladiolus Food Pantry. A minimum \$5 donation is requested.

Don't forget our back-to-school drive for Tanglewood. Backpacks, school supplies, socks and underwear can be placed in the bin in the narthex. If you wish to make a monetary donation, Chana Weaver will do the shopping for you. Last day to donate is **Sunday, July 25.**

### **July Birthdays**

Michelle Cooper	July 9
Denny Floore	July 17
George Briggs	July 18
Bob Coates	July 18
Sherry Floore	July 24
Johnny Blasi	July 26

### **Anniversaries**

Leon and Mary Ann Beaty	July 18
Ray and Linda Schneider	July 27
John and Sharla Davidison	July 28
Ron and Mary Jane Ginter	July 30