



## February Edition 2022

Just imagine that you are one of new generation of Israelites standing at the banks of the chilly, Jordan River. You know your parents' story by heart, the amazing legend of how God led them out of Egypt and wanted to lead them into the Promised Land. You heard countless times how this new territory was full of possibility, potential, and God wanted to empower them to do incredible things through them. Indeed, over campfires and long hikes you heard over and over that this wild adventure would had cost them something with much uncertainty and risk. Unfortunately, you know how their story ended with them wandering in the desert for forty years because they did not have the courage to cross over to the land of milk and honey.

As you find yourself on the base of the Jordan River, which literally separates the wilderness from the Promised Land, you can now see across to the land that God promised. There is a decision you ultimately must make. On the other side are all the things that God wants for you ranging from establishing a nation, to be a light to the nations, and being a blessing to other people. However, it still comes with the same uncertainty, risk, and fear. And in a silent, yet powerful whisper, God subtly speaks these inspirational words: "I hereby command you to be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). This is a beautiful story because afterwards, the Israelites do what their ancestors could never do. They go into the Promised Land and they discover it's everything that God said it would be: blessing, abundance, possibilities as well as challenges and hardships. Although there were certainly episodes that they would sway from God's ideal plan or simply miss the mark, at the end, they would eventually become the people God wanted them to become. However, first they and us, have to make the decision to cross the river.

While this is one of my favorite passages in the Hebrew Bible and a go-to story when I'm making a big decision in life, I also believe this Biblical scene is powerful for our church this year. In many ways we are standing at a river bank, and the future is wide open full of both possibilities and opportunities to be a blessing in our community and in the lives of others. Without a doubt, just like anything that is worth something, taking a step forward will come with its own weighty challenges, risk, and uncertainty. As you fill out and return your pledge cards on **Commitment Sunday, February 6**, this is a concrete way that together we step out in faith and cross the river bank allowing God to continue using our church to faithfully and fruitfully shine in new ways! Just as others before us at Fort Myers Christian Church had multiple river bank moments and faithfully moved forward, it's our turn to step out as we get through to the other side of the pandemic and continue to be a church that values outreach and inviting new people a church to call home.

As we cross over to this new fiscal year, we are going to bring everyone with us, in-particularly being intentional about placing special priority to our homebound and elderly so that they always feel connected and loved. One unique and kind way we will expand this ministry is by creating visiting bags to be given to our homebound members. Items in the bag will range from a candle, toiletries, devotional book, and more. Our outreach chair, Chana W., along with Sharla D., and one our newest members Judy H., are teaming together in this caring ministry. To fund this ministry, on February 13, worshippers will be given a mini M&M candy tube, which you can enjoy your chocolate and then you will be asked to return them filled with donations. For instance, if you fill the tube entirely with quarters this would equal \$14 or you are always welcome to place cash or checks in the tube. Whether you worship with us in-person week after week, homebound, or currently unable to attend due to COVID and other health concerns, we want to keep everyone connected and know they are part of our church family.

"...for the LORD your God is with [us] wherever [we] go" so let us cross over the river bank together (v.9)!

Zach

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

**David Weaver**, having more and more difficulty with MS, Steve Weaver, (brother)  
**Vicky Maier**, Karen Burns (friend in Hidden Harbor)  
**Edward Sarkissian**, lung cancer, Asya (father-in-law)  
**Naomi Kratzer**, in the loss of her dog of 15 years, Church Family  
**Steve Summers**, recovering from a stroke last week, Lori Summers (ex-husband)  
**Jamie Edwards**, struggles with addiction, Pam Williams (dear friend's son)  
**(update) Mike Burns**, doing well after myeloma surgery last week , Karen Burns (husband)  
**Vicky and Doug Evans**, Doug has terminal liver cancer, Chana Weaver (stepsister)  
**Chris Harris**, successful skin cancer removal, Church Family  
**Carlene Griggs**, back home from rehab and recovering well from fall, Church Family  
**Ernest Sarkissian**, continues to get retreatment for his right eye, Asya Teruni (husband)  
**Scott Fizer**, Shirley (son)

### Members, Family and Friends with COVID this past month:

**Kate Seitz and Colton Seitz**, both with COVID, Church Family  
**John Battazzo**, COVID, Church Family  
**Reign McDaniel**, COVID and she is pregnant full term, Zach (cousin's wife)  
**Danny and Dagmar**, COVID, Shirley Fizer (brother and sister-in-law)  
**Meghan Cusack**, COVID, Susan Cusack (daughter)  
**Kim**, COVID, John Blasi Sr. (daughter)

### Special Congratulations

**Rev. John Vickers and Carol**, in their engagement to be married this Spring, Church Family  
**Wally and Sherry Swartz**, in their marriage on January 12, Church Family



This past week we recorded Lauryn Kay with Dr. Asya Teruni for some fresh songs. Next month, we will have a special edition of the newsletter as we celebrate two years since these two talented musicians have been regularly coming together making exceptional music and blessing our church!



### Upcoming Important Meetings

2.20.22- Board Meeting  
3.20.22- Annual Congregational Meeting

### **February Birthdays and Anniversaries**

*(Email the office if your name is missing)*

Linda Schneider	4 <sup>th</sup>
Bob Herbst	5 <sup>th</sup>
Rev. John Vickers	12 <sup>th</sup>
John Davidson	18 <sup>th</sup>
Butch Griggs	17 <sup>th</sup>
Pam Williams	20 <sup>th</sup>
Judy Hessee	25 <sup>th</sup>
Diane Bodanske	28 <sup>th</sup>

February is a month to show others that you care. As part of our annual "Souper" Bowl efforts, we are collecting for the Gladiolus Food Pantry through February 13. Don't forget to drop off your non-perishables in the narthex.

Also, on 2/13 for those who attend in person worship, we will be sharing a "sweet" way to show care and concern for our church family members and friends who are not able to worship with us in person.

Finally, if you would like to become a member of the Caring Circle and send cards to our homebound members, please contact Chana Weaver.