

Just around the corner, the liturgical church calendar will once again begin with not only a peculiar voice shouting out in the wilderness, but also one with a peculiar diet and nothing short of a peculiar fashion statement. Yet, this is how the church has traditionally begun a “new year” because it’s in this peculiar way there is a powerful message for us still today. This year let us not just read and hear about John the Baptist’s diet of “eating locusts and wild honey” nor just visualize and imagine this man with “camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist”, but let us faithfully respond to John’s call of making room in our lives for the One who is even more greater and powerful than John himself. (Mark 1:7-8). As we dive closer in Scripture, might we have the courage to touch John’s camel’s hair or feel his leather belt. Or, might we even dare to taste the wild honey or eat the locusts (Okay, maybe too much of a stretch and I’ll pass on that one). However, as we get closer to God and the Holy Spirit speaks to us through Scripture, we cannot help but taste, feel, and experience the Living Christ! As we do, we cannot help ourselves from making space in our hearts and lives.

I’m convinced John the Baptist appeared on the scene a bit early this year. Instead of being found out in the wilderness, [she] was found in a little green building off of Gladiolus Drive. Instead of loud shouting from the wilderness, it came from a compassionate voice from a local pantry down the road. Instead of having camel’s hair or wearing a leather belt, this person’s known fashion statement is a bright green shirt with the printed words “Gladiolus Food Pantry.” Throughout the past month Miriam Ortiz, founder and director of the pantry, has asked our church to be a blessing by being a storage site at this time.

While this might not appear as a significant service and definitely not a glamorous ministry, making space in our fellowship hall is what the executive team believes God has called us to do. Plus, it’s fulfilling a practical, necessary need during this unexpected disaster in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. Between the pantry having to replace their drywall due to flooding and the abundance of new donations they regularly and unexpectedly receive, there is a need for additional

storage for the pantry. For instance, one hour there might be five cases of water and the next five pallets of water (might I add “thanks be to God”). You can say this about other items from baby diapers, peanut butter, and much more. Perhaps storing nonperishable food items and even baby diapers in your church’s fellowship hall sounds awfully peculiar and I certainly missed my seminary’s



graduate class called “diapers in the church.” Nevertheless, I’ve seen and heard many more peculiar things in my lifetime and I bet you could admit the same. What about the one who came before Jesus, and called us to repentance of sins for forgiveness and to make space for the Christ child? If we do so, we remember who we are, what we are about, and what we are called to do and be. To state the obvious again, it’s not a big and flashy ministry to be a place of storage, yet think about where our Lord and Savior was born. And, yet each year we are called to make space. Might we make space as a church, and new life and ministry be born!

Special thanks to the “Week of Compassion”, a ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) for their assistance and funds due to Hurricane Ian. This helps with cleanup within our church and allows Fort Myers Christian Church to bless the community.

***Mark Your Calendar for Sunday, November 20th, Board Meeting**

Prayers and Praise to God from the Past Month

Prayers for all of us who were affected by Hurricane Ian, and especially those who might have lost their jobs, cars, homes, and even lives. Specifically, prayers for the following:

- **Johnny and Michelle Blasi, Joanne, Shirley Fizer and the many families in Hidden Harbor, Denny and Sherry Floore, Warner and Treasure Beldo,**
- **Praise for all the men and women who are working around the clock providing electricity, health care services, insurance claims, and much more.**

Dean Brown, praise for officially becoming a great-grandfather, Church Family

Roman, major heart surgery last Tuesday, Linda Lee (grandson)

Treasure Beldo, hysterectomy scheduled for 11.21 regarding multiple masses, Church Family

Lori Summers, in the death of her father, Church Family and Church Bookkeeper

Steve Larson, in the death of Mike Stegeman, Church Family (childhood best friend)

John Blasi Sr., still in pain and back surgery is postpone due to new concerns, Church Family

Ricardo Rivera, grandpa is back in the hospital, Church Family and Vocalist

Betty and Ron Johnston, in the death of Ron's brother, Church Family

Naomi Kratzer, in death of her son Greg, Church Family

Judee Buhlinger, praise she is back home after being hospitalized and diagnosed with congestive heart failure, Church Family

(update) Kate Seitz, is in physical therapy for her hand, Church Family

Shirley Runyon, prayers for her daughter who lost their job, Church Family

Mackenzie Lee, praise for a good report from the Mayo Clinic, Linda Lee (granddaughter)

Outreach Corner

The last day to donate for Gladiolus Food Pantry Thanksgiving baskets is **November 6**. Place your Stuffing, Canned Yams, Gravy, Instant Mashed Potatoes, Canned Corn, Canned Green Beans, Cranberry Sauce, Aluminum Foil and Turkey Pans in the tote in the Narthex.

In the remainder of November, we will be collecting toiletry items for Gladiolus Food Pantry. Let's focus on soap, deodorant, toothpaste and shampoo. If you have hotel size shampoos and soaps, please donate these as well. A tote will be in the narthex for your donations beginning 11/13.

Hold the dates:

12/1 Bags of Hope 6:00pm


12/17 Salvation Army Bell-ringing 9:00am Walmart Neighborhood

November Birthdays & Anniversaries

(Name Missing? Email the office.)

Joey Lee	1 st
Mary Ann Beaty	2 nd
Chana Weaver	8 th
Sandy Shomper	19 th
Sharla Davidson	21 st
Johnny and Michelle Blasi	22 nd
Kate Seitz	23 rd
Chris Harris	26 th

Two upcoming, amazing concerts!
Hurricane Relief Concert, **Nov.6, at 4pm**



Calm After the Storm
A Hurricane Ian Benefit Concert

FREE

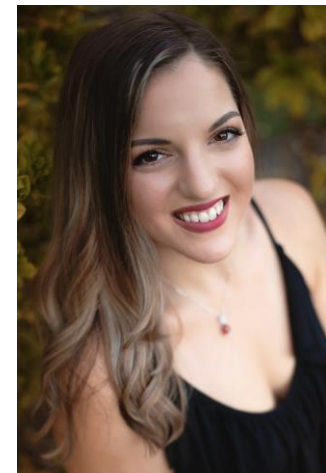
Vocalists:
Kate Lucander - Soprano
Ricardo Rivera - Baritone
Sebastian Plymette - Tenor

Abigail Allison - Collaborative Pianist

November 6, 2022 - 4:00PM
5916 Winkler Rd, Fort Myers, FL 33919

Donate online: <https://donorbox.org/calm-after-the-storm-benefit-concert>

Proceeds raised will support Lee County educators and families affected by Hurricane Ian



Join us Friday, **November 18th**, 4pm, for Lauryn's farewell concert with us at Fort Myers Christian Church! Lauryn is moving back home to Charleston, South Carolina. We invite you to stay after for light refreshments, and to wish Lauryn the very best as the past several years she has been an incredible blessing!