



January 2023

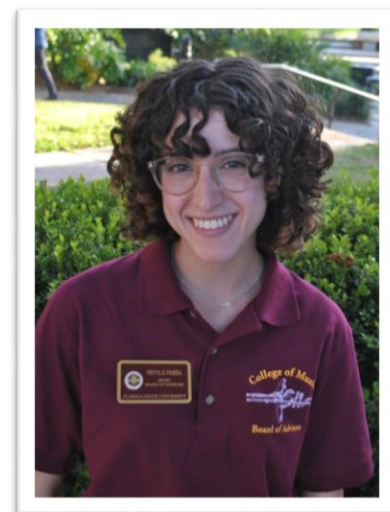
During this time of the year, like most clergy, I find myself worn down and typically surviving off Vitamin C, NyQuil, hot tea, and smiles on my children's faces to keep intact. However, no matter the amount of time, hard-work, or bottles of NyQuil clergy go through during the month of December, on Christmas Eve it's all worth it to raise a candle in the air and to sing "Silent Night." Perhaps the only thing better is from my view in the sanctuary, as I once again, had the privilege to see the faces of old and young, strong and weak lifting candles high in the air!

I want to thank everyone for their prayers, attendance in worship rather in-person or online, and for making this season worth it! However, do not let clergy fool you because I know this season couldn't have been a success without God's Spirit moving through the incredible women and men who serve and make it so joyful on the way. Thank you to those who attended our Advent Bible Study allowing us to have a decent size with rich dialogue and spiritual growth. Thank you everyone who decorated our beautiful church and already thank you to those who are planning to stay after Sunday to take down the decorations. Thank you Chana and Steve as we had multiple opportunities to serve throughout this season. Thank you Dean for being so faithful serving in the sound room. Thank you Don for streaming all the services so everyone unable to make in person worship had an opportunity to worship in their home church. Thank you Dr. Asya who not only played multiple songs, but also accompanied multiple vocalists the past several weeks. Thank you to those who helped with the luminaries. Thank you to everyone who has been giving generously throughout the year and continued to do so faithfully despite difficult circumstances. On behalf of the staff, we thank you for the Christmas staff gifts.

Most importantly, I give thanks to God! Thanks to God for stopping at no limits to open our hearts and minds to His love. Especially, we give thanks to God for Jesus, and in just the holy name alone we are reminded we are never alone. Immanuel-God is with us. In 2023, we do not need to fear as the old Irish blessing by Saint Patrick goes "Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me."

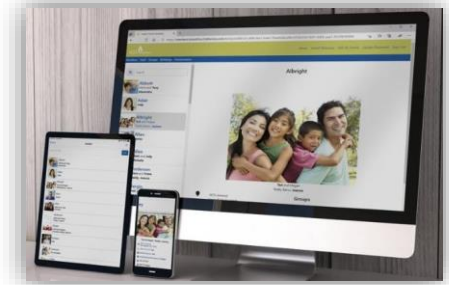
Welcome onboard Nicole Parra

"Pastor Zach, you really enjoy the music at the church and put much thought in the song selection," said a dear parishioner leaving Bible study. Coming from someone who doesn't particularly care to sing or maybe I just know that I cannot carry a tune if my life depended on it, I love our music department because I love seeing young and talented students to be given a terrific opportunity to succeed. It's a win/win for everyone! The opportunity to have a kind and gentle space to use their gifts singing while also gaining more confidence, developing stage presence, etc. Let's not forget the opportunity to work one on one with our amazing pianist, Dr. Asya is truly a gift in itself. Also, I pray each student can grow in their faith and relationship with Christ. While we will always have congregational singing as well as times for our own members to lead singing, it's a blessing to have students. With that said, let me share a little about our newest vocalist who will be with us this semester. Nicole Parra is a senior Choral Music Education Major from Florida State University. She recently moved to South Florida, as she is about to begin her internship at Cypress Lake High School and is thrilled to be working with the students. During her time at FSU, she was a member of Levana, Choral Union, University Singers, Chamber Choir, as well as several other ensembles. Nicole shared with me that she is very excited to be part of such a beautiful community at Fort Myers Christian Church. Nicole's first Sunday will be **January 15**.



Prayers and Praise to God from the Past Month

Family of Judee Buhlinger, in the death of Judee on Dec.24, Church Family
 Cards can be sent to Judee's daughter at the following address: Jane Leach 1988 Pondview Court
 Rochester Hills, MI 48309
Family of Deloris Bokmuller, in the death of Deloris on Dec.15, Church Family
 Cards can be sent to the following: Tim Bokmuller Home 2 Suites by Hilton, 10400 Aircraft Court,
 Fort Myers Fl 33913 Room #101
Naomi Kratzer, Gulfcoast Hospital, Church Family
Skaggs, Bob has heart problems and Hildur is recovering from a small stroke, Church Family
Pam Williams, receiving more tests/treatment at Moffitt regarding lung cancer, Church Family
Carol Krueger, COVID, Church Family
Treasure Beldo, praise to God for a good report after her surgery, Church Family
Family of Charlie, in the death of Charlie, Dean Brown (brother-in-law)
Ed and Diane Bodanske, facing additional cancer complications, Church Family
Don Krueger, had major eye surgery regarding glaucoma, Carol Krueger (son)
Mya Seitz, successful outpatient surgery regarding face scaring, Church Family
Coates Family, in the death of Kathy's sister, Sylvia, Church Family
Anne, back home from the hospital from heart complications, Church Family (guest pianist)
John Blasi Sr., continuous back pain, Church Family
Phil and Roxanne Birge, both have cancer (bladder and lung/thyroid), Finks (friends)
Max Rodkey, heart failure, Finks (son-in-law's father)
Tyler Norris and Family, in the death of his father, Don Norris, Peggy Roley
Sally Saberton, open heart surgery on Jan. 3, Shirley Fizer (friend)
Kim Dickerson, was in the ICU with COVID, Shirley Fizer (niece)



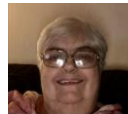
Need a printed church directory or assistance with the online directly? **Sunday, January 15**, printed copies will be available to pickup. Also, on the same day, after the board meeting, Zach will be happy to stay after to help anyone download the church directory on their smartphone. Or, email Zach to make an appointment to bring your smart device in the office throughout the week.



Outreach Corner

Happy New Year! Unfortunately, 11.2% of our Lee County neighbors in 2023 will be met with continued food insecurity. We can help again this year by donating nonperishable foods to our Souper Bowl of Caring food drive for Gladiolus Food Pantry. Recommended items: peanut butter, pancake mix, pasta, rice and canned: soup, fruit, vegetables, meat and fish. A tote will be placed in the narthex for your donations. Remember Publix has BOGOs every week. You can Buy One-Donate One.

Pre-Covid, Covid, and beyond Chana has been coordinating the outreach at Fort Myers Christian Church. It has been an honor serving with Chana as she has done an outstanding job each month bringing awareness of the community's needs as well as concrete ways our church might make a difference. Chana has asked to stepdown at this time, and Linda Lee will take over leadership for outreach.



Linda Lee, New Outreach Chair

January Birthdays & Anniversaries

(Name Missing? Email the office.)

Kenneth Runyon	7 th
Bob Skaggs	11 th
Steve Weaver	13 th
Scott Hamm	17 th
Steve Larson	20 th
Millie Dalrymple	21 th
Roy Dalrymple	23 rd
Roy and Millie Dalrymple	24 th
Bob and Hildur Skaggs	31 th