

November 2023 Edition

Although not everyone celebrates Halloween, I have always enjoyed the holiday from a child to very much still today. What is there not to absolutely love about being in a crowd of proud parents and grandparents gathering around the school's campus watching the character parade-especially when your son and his best friend were a hot dog and pizza. And your daughter was supposedly "Happy" from Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* but even a bias dad was not at all convinced. Without saying names, perhaps there was another dwarf that might had been a better fit at least that morning...



Each year when I hear the classic children's song *Halloween is Coming*, I cannot help but think this means the rush of the holidays. Bring on Thanksgiving or Friendsgiving, and all the Christmas celebrations! This season is offers much joy for many of us- time with loved ones, fun traditions, an opportunity to connect with friends, and just a little break from our regular schedules or mundane tasks in life. At the same time, if we are honest with ourselves, this time of the year also comes with a mix bag of struggle for many of us and for a variety of reasons. Not everyone is so *happy*. Or, maybe it's a year that some folks struggle to even put a hot dog or pizza on the table.

Ranging from grief, over packed schedules, strained relationships, and let's not forget seasonal depression can all complicate the holiday season. Many of us will be anticipating Thanksgiving tables looking different and experiencing Christmas from a different perspective to say the least.

At Fort Myers Christmas Church (Disciples of Christ) I want us to always acknowledge grief and loss, but also for our community to be a place that celebrates and always gives a glimmer of hope. This leads me to two upcoming worship services around the corner. First, this coming Sunday, November 5, we will celebrate *All Saints Day*. In particular, during the service, we will light a candle and say the name of parishioners and other loved ones, friends, and neighbors who have died this past year. We will offer God thanks and praise for their lives as we remember them. And despite many of our favorite country artists who claim "that hope is something that springs up within us," we will recall that hope requires other people, others encouraging us, believing in us, and hope begets hope. On Sunday, there will be a sheet with a list of names that are planned to be read. If you want to add a name or if you're unsure if you sent your loved one's name(s), please view the sheet before worship begins.

Not only will we begin the month of November with a meaningful service, but also we will conclude the month with a big splash. In what might be confusing to most of us, the last Sunday of the liturgical church year is prior to Advent and it is traditionally called *Christ the King Sunday*. We remember that Christ is the King of the World and Jesus is the Lord of our lives. Pam Williams will be baptized this Sunday, and we will make this open for anyone else to come forward and to remember their baptism on Sunday, November 26. I know many people will be out of town or traveling during the Thanksgiving weekend. However, if you are in worship, you are welcome to come forward and to be marked by the sign of the cross with water as you remember your baptism. That is, you will have a chance to confirm your faith and remember that Christ is the Lord of your life in this life and the life to come.

Finally, I want to reiterate one more time that if you or someone else struggles throughout the holiday season there are plenty of beneficial resources. Please do not feel like you have to walk this journey alone nor feel awkward on receiving help. For instance, one fantastic resource is finding a grief care group. Numerous churches offer this and other helpful programs. Just visit griefshare.org to find a group.

With Thanksgiving,
Pastor Zach

Prayers and Praise to God from September

Prayers to end the violence in Israel and Palestine

The family of Pat Watts, in Pat's death on October 16, Church Family

Pam Williams, upcoming meeting with doctor to discuss possible options/next steps, Church Family

Kate Seitz, lung surgery in New Jersey, Church Family

Betty Johnston, recovering from a recent heart attack, Church Family

Diane Bodanske, eye surgery, Church Family

Ron Johnston, Ron is facing an extremely aggressive cancer that is spreading, Church Family

Linda Schneider, shoulder complications and possible surgery, Church Family

Anne Chisholm, Church Family

Elaine Maley, in her move to New York, Church Family



Thank you to two generous donors for the purchases of AEDs. We now have one in the fellowship hall as well as one in the sanctuary.

On behalf of all the members of Fort Myers Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) I wish Elaine Maley the very best as she moves back to New York to be near her family. Let us keep Elaine in our prayers as she continues her battle with cancer.

Outreach Corner

First of all, I would like to thank everyone who came out, helped, and participated in the soup and sloppy Joe luncheon last Sunday. Now on to bigger and better things. Miriam at the Gladiolus Food Pantry is in need of canned corn, green beans and frozen turkeys. We need these brought to the church by November 12th. We also will be helping the Gladiolus Food Pantry with Christmas gift supplies for December. This year they are asking for pajamas for children age five on up, short socks (not tube socks). Miriam has also requested to bring sports balls, for example, football, basketball, and soccer balls for December. Pastor Zach said you can give him a baseball 😊

We are in the process of preparing our Thanksgiving dinner. We will be providing turkey, mashed potatoes, and dressing. If you plan to attend, we are asking you to bring a favorite side dish to share. Dinner will be at 4pm, Thursday, November 23.

Thank you for everything you do to help our church make a difference in the community. I appreciate it very much!

-Linda Lee (Outreach)

November Birthdays & Anniversaries

(Name Missing? Email the office.)

Joey Lee 1st

Mary Ann Beaty 2nd

Chana Weaver 8th

Sandy Shomper 19th

Sharla Davidson 21st

Johnny and Michelle Blasi 22nd

Kate Seitz 23rd

Chris Harris 26th

Gail Baumgarten 30th