

## February Edition 2024

“You will see greater things than these!” This powerful phrase seems like it was coined from a *Rocky* or *Top Gun* movie! I’m sure clever politicians from both parties have used this slogan whether seeking election or reelection. And, yes, as good, loving parents and grandparents, who does not want their children or grandchildren to experience greater things, better quality of life, and more opportunities? As a church it’s our optimistic and prophetic prayer “to see greater things” still today! Nevertheless, this powerful line was originally recorded over 2,000 years ago by Jesus who was calling Nathanael, “[a] genuine Israelite in whom there is no deceit” (John 1:47). It’s quite easy and tempting to merely stay in the short-sighted and complacent “Nathanael Thinking” mindset expecting not much from God and life. Thank goodness for our stewardship chair, Gail Baumgarten, who believes we should expect great things and greater things are in store at Fort Myers Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).



Seeing five gorgeous palm trees being planted around the property as I walked out from our Bible Study reminded me, indeed, greater things are in store! The triple Christmas palm tree located by my office door is in honor and memory of Mr. Robert “Bob” Skaggs. Throughout this week I have smiled recalling great memories of Bob walking through this door checking on the finances and managing the budget. In doing so, in reality he was expressing how much he cared about the church and all the people. Sure, Bob would always genuinely inquire about my family, and without missing a beat and with a big smile Bob would conclude that he and his beautiful wife, Hildur, were doing just “superb.” While I am incredibly grateful for the time to know Bob and many other faithful men and women who have gone before us, all the new palms remind me about the endless possibilities of a church that is grounded. As we fill out pledge cards, elect new officers, elders/deacons, and create a new budget, let us have high expectations that this will be a fresh, exciting, and superb new year! As I have shared in the past, yes, we honor the past! Yes, we fully live in the present. But, we cannot forget we follow a crucified, yet risen Savior who we can expect to see greater things in the future!

Let’s continue to be faithful stewards in investing and maintaining our beautiful property so that future snowbirds as well as born and raised Floridians have a place to connect with God and others in their faith journey. While I still haven’t found anyone who either enthusiastically enjoys nor most prized spiritual gift from God is in cold calling contractors for hours at a time, Steve Weaver has been dedicated and persistent in calling, finding, and scheduling property projects: painting the cross and exterior buildings, fixing broken glass door and window, plumbers, and the list continues. If you are new or just wondering why it seems we are occurring so many building issues at once, please know the church was built 1997-98 and from the best of my knowledge there have not been major updates and some might have gone unintentionally overlooked due to more important issues at the time. Like anything else, depreciation occurs, ac units begin to leak and act up, doors get rusty, paint fades, and I’ve been told more than once this dad even gets older and might need a tune-up or at least a more intense gym workout.



Thank you to those who have reached out in the past regarding building concerns and ideas, and please know there will always be a space for your voices to be heard. In the meantime, let’s continue to support and work together, and be thankful for and trust our leadership team to make wise choices. As so many contractors have shared with Bob and I over the past several months upon arriving on campus “You have a beautiful church.” While we definitely agree with them, I often feel like saying “you haven’t seen anything yet” because it’s actually the people- all of you who make it so amazing!

## Prayers and Praise to God from January

**Rev. Dr. Jim Carpenter**, melanoma removal on face, Church Family  
**Rev. John Vickers**, melanoma removal on ear, Church Family  
**Charlie Fink**, A-fib, Church Family  
**Dennis McDonald**, colon cancer and now has brain cancer, Charlie and Sue Fink (friends).  
**Sherry**, lots of pain, Shirley Runyon (daughter)  
**Sydney**, daughter-in-law brain surgery, Shirley Runyon (daughter-in-law)  
**Bill Garlow**, stomach surgery, Church Family  
**Roy Dalrymple**, recent surgery, Church Family  
**Donna**, praise for good scan reports, Gail Baumgarten (friend)  
**Rev. Wendy Miles**, heart catheterization, Church Family  
**Bentley**, nine month old baby with cancer throughout their body, Linda (neighbor)  
**Linda Lee**, hand surgery, Church Family  
**Mackenzie**, Botox treatment for headaches, Linda (granddaughter)  
**Bobby and Kathy**, Bobby is in his late stages of Alzheimer, Joyce Turney (cousin)  
**Dean Brown**, slowly recovering and feeling better, Church Family  
**Miriam Ortiz**, Church Family/director of the Gladiolus Food Pantry  
**Tony Ricciardi**, heart issues and recovering from pneumonia, Blasi Family (friend)  
**Martha Furrow**, Church Family  
**Carol Vickers**, Church Family  
**Gene Taylor**, physical rehab, Church Family  
**Ray Schneider and Ron Johnston**, hospice at home, Church Family

### **Outreach Corner**

I hope everyone's new year is starting out well, and we have lots in store for you at FMCC! Remember we are still gathering food items for the food pantry for Super Bowl Sunday. Bring non-perishable items to help support your Super Bowl team. February 4, we will be highlighting a new campaign with M&M's.

Saturday, February 10, we are going to have a fun evening with a cookout from 4 to 7pm. There will be a campfire (no pressure on Zach and Colton), and we will be cooking hotdogs and hamburgers as well as roasting marshmallows over the fire. Bring your best singing voice, because we plan to sing songs around the campfire. You are welcome to bring a side dish or a love offering. There is a signup sheet in the narthex so we can get an idea of how many people will be coming. While aluminum chairs will be provided, you are welcome to BYOC (Optional) if you prefer a more comfortable seat. More importantly, bring a friend or neighbor!

If you have any ideas or suggestions, please let me know. Thank you.

## **Ash Wednesday**

There is no need to decide between taking your sweetie out for Valentine's Day or come to the church on Ash Wednesday. Instead of a formal service, this year we are offering two different times you can swing by the sanctuary for a personal time of prayer, reflection, and to receive ashes. Drop in the sanctuary between 8-10am or between 5-7pm, and you can pick up a bulletin which will contain prayers and reflective questions for a moment of solitude as we officially enter the season of Lent. Subsequently, I will be present at both times to smear ashes not roses on you. I am looking forward to beginning the season of Lent as we dive into the "Signs" in John's Gospel during worship!



## **February Birthdays & Anniversaries**

*(Name Missing? Email the office.)*

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>
Judy Hesse	25 <sup>th</sup>
Diane Bodanske	28 <sup>th</sup>



Campfire Sing-along  
Bring a Friend  
Saturday, Feb. 10, 4-7pm