



# The Sanibel LIGHT

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**Let's Connect**



## For Your Consideration

Hi...

At the end of May, the Easter season will officially end with the arrival of Pentecost Sunday – the commemoration of God's Holy Spirit emerging in and through Jesus' disciples, inspiring and empowering them to carry on his work in the world. Which means that there are no more “big” holy days for us in the Christian tradition until Thanksgiving and Advent roll around again at the end of November.

So what now?

“The plodding durability of devotion.”

That's the phrase the late writer William Rivers Pitt used a few years ago to describe the life and work of a man named Michael Ratner. Ratner was an attorney who had dedicated his life to, as Pitt put it, “*good causes*”. He had been President of the Center for Constitutional Rights, and throughout his career served those who were the least powerful and least cared about in our society. The vast majority of people, Pitt pointed out, will never know who Ratner was. But, he also added, there is *rarely* glory in what Ratner did, little fame in fighting the fights that are right, but far too often losing ones.

It is something Jesus' disciples understood long ago. Yes, many of those disciples names are well known now, and have been for centuries. But in their lifetime, like Michael Ratner, almost no one ever heard of them either. The work they did on behalf of the least powerful and least cared about in that day, when it was not being criticized or treated suspiciously, went largely unnoticed. The fights they fought were also often losing ones in the larger context and in the eyes of the world.

But just as with Ratner, personal glory and fame were never the point for the disciples either. For them, as it is meant to be for us, what mattered was “*the plodding durability of devotion*” – step by step, moment by moment, living as well as possible – as much in union with God's ways of compassion, mercy, justice, forgiveness and love as possible. Because of that, the disciples **believed they were on the right side of history, the right side of God's story in the world.** And because of that, they also knew that the fights they fought for those ideals were never – *could never* – be losing ones regardless of what anyone else thought or believed about them or their cause.

“*The plodding durability of devotion*” is far more the reality of what our spiritual lives are meant to be grounded in than the “big” holy days and seasons. It is the heart of a life well lived in God's eyes.

And that, as Pitts says about Michael Ratner's life, “ain't nothing”.

No, it ain't.

Blessings,  
Mark  
Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea  
Senior Minister

## Worship Notes

In this time of continued displacement, it was a particularly meaningful Holy Week and Easter for our spiritual community.

We commemorated Palm Sunday on April 2, including the Sacrament of Communion, and music from the SCUCC Choir and guest trumpet players Byron Black and Don Schneff.

We then continued our Holy Week observance with a "modified Tenebrae" service at noon on Good Friday, April 7, including the reading of the passages from Luke's Gospel recounting the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus, a brief Reflection from Mark, and music meditations from Dr. Albert. Following that, the Refuge sanctuary was open from 1-3pm for silent reflection and meditation for all who wished.

Finally, on Sunday, April 9, we celebrated the triumph of God's ways over the ways of death with an Easter Worship at Refuge featuring spirit-lifting music from Dr. Albert, the SCUCC Choir and, once again, Byron Black and Don Schneff...

After Easter, Sunday, April 16, featured our second "*Ask the Minister*" segment of the year. On that day, rather than a Message, Mark fielded as many of your biblical, theological and spiritual questions as time allowed. It was once again a meaningful, insightful and enjoyable change of pace.

Sunday, April 23 was "*Creation Justice Sunday*". In recognition of both Earth Day on April 22 and our designation as a "Creation Justice" congregation of the UCC, our Green Team helped develop and lead that morning's Worship. Following Worship, Green Team Chair Jean Chandler offered a deeply informative presentation on the work of that group and the importance of Creation Justice in general.

Sunday, April 30 was designated "*Bring a Friend to Church Sunday*". Several members of SCUCC brought guests to, as Jesus says to Andrew and an unnamed second person early in John's Gospel, "*come and see*" who and what we are about. In addition, we were blessed to welcome Jan MaGirl into SCUCC Membership that day.

Lastly, we ended our time together on April 30 by offering our deep gratitude and saying farewell to our Church Administrator, Sandy Simmons, on her retirement.

Sandy has served our spiritual community for over 13 years with an incredible amount of dedication, energy and commitment. If there was any question about that, while Sandy is moving out of state to be closer to her son, she has agreed to continue to serve us remotely as we transition to our new Administrator, Jenny Chacon, in the midst of our continuing time of rebuilding. (More on Jenny elsewhere in this edition of *The Light*).

In the month of May, we will celebrate the Sacrament of Communion together on Sunday, May 7 and recognize all the Moms in our spiritual community on Sunday, May 14.

Throughout the month, we will also, in conjunction with the United Church of Christ, observe Mental Health Awareness Month.

# Biblical and Exploration Opportunities

## BIBLE STUDY IN MAY

Bible Study with Mark take place on Thursdays at 11am, on Zoom only for now.

Each week, we explore the Scripture passage(s) being used in Worship that coming Sunday. These sessions are largely “guided discussion” in approach, focusing on your questions and insights from reading the texts ahead of time, with Mark adding relevant context, detail and explanation as needed or wanted.

This approach allows for participants to engage with the Bible creatively, and with an eye toward how the texts speak to us in our time and lives. In addition, they are great prep for getting more out of the Sunday Messages!

We hope you will take the time to join in.

In May, we will meet on the following Thursdays:

May 4, 11 and 25

## OUR CURRENT SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION UNIT CONTINUES IN MAY

### ***“What’s the Least I Can Believe and Still Be Christian?”***

Tuesdays: May 2, 9, 23 (also May 30 if needed or desired)

Based on the book of the same name by long-time minister and author Martin Thielen, this unit explores the question of “what really matters” when it comes to our beliefs about God, Jesus, the Bible and the Church. We will examine Thielen’s – and our – thoughts about what we most need, or may not need, to believe from our tradition, as well as any other theological, biblical and spiritual areas of interest and concern to participants.

As always, you will receive reminders and details regarding dates and times for participating in all our offerings from the Church Office on the day before each gathering.



## More Staffing News

We are extremely pleased to announce the naming of our new Church Administrator.

Jenny Chacon will officially succeed Sandy Simmons on Monday, May 1. As mentioned previously, in light of our continued displacement, Sandy will continue to train Jenny and serve us from her new home in Virginia for a time to insure the most effective transition possible.

Jenny – the unanimous choice of the Search Team - comes to us with extensive and successful experience with facilities oversight, financial management and customer relations, having served as a restaurant manager, office manager, real estate agent and airline supervisor.

She has been described as “highly efficient, patient, enormously trustworthy and charismatic.

Jenny, per the suggestion of Sandy Simmons, was also with us for our April 30 Worship time, providing many of us with an opportunity to meet her and her husband Alan.

Jenny's significant experience hiring and training others will immediately be called on, as we also sadly announce that Jordan Jones, our current Assistant Church Administrator, will be moving on from SCUCC on May 19.

Jordan has served us faithfully for several years now, but a combination of the loss of her home in Ian and reaching a time in her life which for so many is marked by the need to explore one's future life path has led her to decide to pursue other educational and career possibilities.

We are extremely grateful to Jordan and wish her nothing but the best in her journey.

## Hurricane Ian Recovery at SCUCC

Yes, it has been 7 months since we were struck with Ian. It took the first few months to deal with red tape, regulations and infrastructure delays (like the causeway, utilities, etc). The last 12-15 weeks have felt more fruitful - with quotations, clean-up, negotiations, preliminary decisions, and many, many hours of meetings.

Here are some of the recent rebuild highlights, most of which have been presented by Tom Lisle and John McBroom during regular updates on many Sundays. Once again, we can't express enough appreciation for the dedication of our rebuild team.

\* An elevator replacement contract has been executed, and we hope to have elevators in 12-15 weeks. The hope is that one can be completed sooner to accelerate church activities on the main (elevated) floor.

\* Pews and chairs are still scheduled for Fall arrival; however we have a large number of chairs that can be used in Fellowship Hall when we are ready.

\* Primary Contractor selection is complete - Stevens Construction of Ft. Myers will begin permitting and initial work in the near term. Their early analysis of the roof structure and clerestory windows will be an important item in determining our overall damage cost. We still anticipate the basic roof repair to be covered by wind insurance. We are going to upgrade the roof to increase hurricane resistance, and we also believe it will improve the appearance.

\* Work has begun with an Architect to help with the modifications to the Sanctuary, improving accessibility, technology, and sight lines.

\* There are still tree stumps in the front, and much vegetation debris behind the Memorial Garden which needs to be removed before they become a hazard. The first photo, below, shows a smaller stump, but with colorful blooms to brighten the grounds.

\* Our Deacons and Trustees sponsored a clean-up event to clear and sort items scattered around Fellowship Hall, and also to start cleaning the kitchen. Great progress was made which will allow Fellowship Hall reconstruction to be unencumbered. Another kitchen project will be planned as we get closer to opening. Pictures below show some of the re-storing of salvaged items, some of the work crew, and the much clearer hall.

Enormous gratitude to the following who gave their time and effort on that day:

Joe and Joan Burns

Linda Convertine

Buzz and Mary Jo Griffin

Neal and Sherry Halleran

John and Judy McBroom

Frank and Judy Palaia

Jane Saghir

Dave Simmons

Barry Tice

Jan VanBuskirk

George Witte

## Hurricane Ian Recovery at SCUCC



## Church Finances

It is difficult to summarize the current financial condition of our congregation. While we do not anticipate that we will achieve our approved budget pledge goal, we also know we will not be spending the operating funds we had planned. Many items such as utilities and maintenance are minimal.

We can report that our operating income for the First quarter was more than the expenses, and we generally receive more income in the Fourth quarter. This makes us hopeful that we will continue to support our spiritual and service activities in spite of the difficult year. Reserve and endowment funds are being made available as needed to finance our rebuilding until we receive insurance and FEMA funds. We have also received generous gifts from churches near and far who wish to assist in our rebuild.



## Healthy Happenings

### Biotoxin Illness

I recently toured Christian Medical Ministries in Ft. Myers, where one of my fellow parish nurses is the director. She had told me about the ministry and I wanted to see what it was all about. In response to Hurricane Ian they have changed their focus from Pain Treatment Clinics to Mold Illness Treatment Centers. Their mission is to restore hope for low income, underinsured patients suffering from Biotoxin illness through evidence based evaluations and treatment protocols.

Due to Hurricane Ian it is estimated there will be up to 45,600 new cases of Biotoxin illness in Lee County in the next few years. These patients may not get ill right away. It may take several years to develop the symptoms. Many individuals with low and moderate incomes remain living in water damaged buildings. This is a serious problem.

So what is Biotoxin illness? Biotoxin illness is a medical condition that is very serious and often misdiagnosed. When an individual is exposed to toxic mold spores in an environment such as a water-damaged building, an inflammatory cascade occurs due to the body's inability to remove the mycotoxins. This could result in a complex multi-system illness, also known as Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome, (CIRS). Common symptoms of CIRS may include fatigue, weakness, headaches, sinus issues, muscle pain, headaches, dizziness, abdominal pain, joint pain, difficulty concentrating, and insomnia. CIRS represents a constellation of symptoms that collectively encompasses Biotoxin Illness. Originally thought to be caused only by mold exposure, it has been found that exposure to other fat-soluble toxins as well as numerous bacteria, fungal and viral infections can lead to Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome.

What about COVID? The Coronavirus can act as a biotoxin and increase cytokine production in response to water damaged buildings. Ten percent of US adults have long Covid or post Covid syndrome symptoms. These symptoms are exactly the same as CIRS and resolve with standard CIRS care protocols.

What is the treatment? Treatment for CIRS requires an individualized, multi-faceted approach aimed at removing mold and biotoxins from the body, quieting inflammation, and assisting the body with cellular and tissue repair.

Removing or remediating biotoxins from your environment is the number one priority. With mold issues and mycotoxin sensitivity, the most important aspect of management is mitigating your exposure.

Binding agents such as Cholestyramine or Welchol (for sensitive individuals) have proven effective for serious cases. Though Cholestyramine and Welchol are cholesterol-lowering medications, they have a unique structure that binds to biotoxins and removes them via the digestive tract.

A nutritious diet is also a mainstay of the recovery plan, but knowing what to eat can be a challenge. One simple rule of thumb: The majority of your diet should be plant-based foods, especially vegetables. Vegetables contain nutrients and antioxidants to feed the beneficial flora of your gut and reduce inflammation, as well as crucial fiber to aid in toxin removal. To combat runaway inflammation, eliminate sugar, gluten, processed carbohydrates, or foods you have a known allergy to. At the treatment center I visited I saw dietary supplements as well.

Adjunct treatments such as heat therapy use infra red sauna which increases circulation, quiets inflammation, and oxygenates tissues. Time outdoors offers breaks from continuous exposure to indoor mold and access to fresh air. Mind-body exercises such as yoga, Pilates, and tai chi can also dial down an overactive sympathetic nervous system.

Healing from CIRS takes time because there are many layers to peel away. The good news is that this comprehensive approach to recovery helps most people begin to notice an increase in energy, clearer thinking, less pain, and a reduction in other debilitating symptoms and with time and patience, most people reach a state of better health. At the treatment center I was told it typically takes six months.

Leviticus 14:33-53 discusses mold and how the Israelites were to deal with it.

Caring for you and your health, Linda Convertine, Parish Nurse

## Farewell to Rabbi Stephen Fuchs

On Friday, April 28, many SCUCC members were present for the retirement Shabbat service and reception for "our Rabbi" Steven Fuchs, held at Peace Lutheran Church. Presenters included our own Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea and Rev. Dr. John Danner. We were also able to meet the new Bat Yam's new spiritual leader, Rabbi Sonny Schnitzer. On behalf of us all, Moderator Diana Day presented Rabbi Fuchs with retirement gifts, including a contribution to custom Bat Yam / Sanibel medallions (lapel pin and pendant) for Rabbi and Vicky Fuchs. The Fuchs plan to continue to reside on Sanibel.



## Bits & Bobs

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Men's Group will have its monthly luncheon meeting on Tuesday, May 9th, at noon at the Palm Grill in the Woodlands Commons. Please make reservations by May 5<sup>th</sup> to Jim Atchison at [jimatch@aol.com](mailto:jimatch@aol.com) or by phone at 561-714-4346.

The Sanibel UCC Singles and Friends Mother's Day Celebration will take place on Sunday, May 14th, at Noon for a Brunch Buffet at the Crystal Dining Room at Shell Point. The cost is \$32.00 for Shell Point residents, and \$42.00 for non residents. Join us for lively conversation, connection and delicious food.

For further info, email, text or phone Eleanor Miller at [eleheamiller@gmail.com](mailto:eleheamiller@gmail.com) or 860-318-1557 .

### INTERESTED IN JOINING SCUCC???

Despite our ongoing displacement, energy, enthusiasm and participation on Sundays remains high, including the regular presence of visitors. In that regard, if you are considering becoming a member of SCUCC, please let Rev. Mark know. After you and he discuss the expectations and, as the old commercial says, "the benefits of membership", you and he can schedule a Sunday that works best for you to become an official part of the SCUCC community.

The Church Staff is working from home. Please use their email addresses to reach them:

Mark Boyea

[mark@sanibelucc.org](mailto:mark@sanibelucc.org)

Jenny Chacon

[jenny@sanibelucc.org](mailto:jenny@sanibelucc.org)

Jordan Jones

[office@sanibelucc.org](mailto:office@sanibelucc.org)

Sandra Simmons

[sandy@sanibelucc.org](mailto:sandy@sanibelucc.org)

### Church Campus Access

Currently, the campus is open only to authorized personnel and commercial vendors. For the safety of all, please do not walk, ride or drive on the church campus.

### Giving is Easy:

1. PayPal link is available from the church's homepage ([www.sanibelucc.org](http://www.sanibelucc.org))

2. Automatic Payment Program (ACH) is available. To sign up email [sandy@sanibelucc.org](mailto:sandy@sanibelucc.org) to receive the authorization form.

3. Checks payable to SCUCC can be mailed to:

Sanibel Congregational UCC 2050 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957.

\*Our mail is currently being held & picked up at the Sanibel Post Office.

Need a ride to Worship Celebrations? If you would like a ride from Shell Point or Cypress Cove, please contact the office by emailing:

[office@sanibelucc.org](mailto:office@sanibelucc.org)

In order to get on the list we must receive your reservation by noon on Thursdays.