



The Sanibel LIGHT

Volume 52 Issue 14

February 2023

Let's Connect



For Your Consideration

Hi...

This will be my first February living in Southwest Florida. And I have a question for the many of you who have either lived in this part of the country a long time or spent many of your winters and beyond here:

What do you do with Groundhog Day???

Seriously, I have lived almost my entire life in the Northeast, so Groundhog Day made sense there. In the Northeast, the possibility of six more weeks of winter if the groundhog sees its shadow *matters*. But here? It would mean six more weeks of what exactly – mostly 75-80 degrees and sunny? And besides, are there even groundhogs *in* Florida? (My research tells me no). Even if there were though, why bother?

While that might make sense for the life of a hypothetical groundhog in Southwest Florida, it doesn't make sense for our lives, especially our spiritual lives. In fact, when it comes to our spiritual lives, it's the exact *opposite* of what we are called to do. What we need to do...

Theologians, psychologists and spiritual leaders for centuries have referred to it directly or in a related way as "*the shadow*" – a symbol for our less admirable tendencies and characteristics. But unlike the groundhog's choice to retreat back into the ground in the face of seeing its shadow, the Bible, Jesus and the Christian spiritual tradition (as well as many other spiritual traditions) call us to instead stand and face ours.

To become as emotionally and spiritually healthy as we can, we need to first be willing to acknowledge the existence of our shadow. Then we need to be able to see it clearly, and even embrace it, because it is that kind of spiritual honesty, courage and humility which creates the opening God needs to give us the strength and perseverance we need to then tell our shadow, "I see you. I understand you and what you want. But I choose to live "above ground" – choose the "higher self" that God sees in me.

Toward the end of this month, we will enter the sacred season of Lent together. And part of the Lenten journey has always consisted of the call to face our *shadow* - individually and collectively. It's not an easy thing to do. It's not a fun thing to do – not exactly 75-80 degree, sunny spiritual weather. But that is only one aspect of the journey. The rest is God's assurance that when we do embrace *the shadow*, God will give us what we need to stay above ground.

Blessings,
Mark
Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea
Senior Minister

Notes From Our New Moderator

Wishing all of you in our SCUCC family peace and good health from Sanibel.

I have been back on island for 2 days, after a trip North for a couple months. I have found the island so much better than I expected, but still years away from its garden-like reputation.

I have been honored to be your Moderator for 1 day now, so I have completed 0.3% of that journey... working on rebuilding, ever-improving, and learning. My calendar has many new events, including newsletters, classes, meetings, and phone calls.

My heart is full of gratitude for the talented and dedicated folks who have formed, supported, repaired, funded, led, fed, and otherwise made our congregation a family. I am overwhelmed by the efforts of those who have led our hurricane Ian recovery.

On Sunday, I mentioned a goal to pursue several key areas in my leadership journey:

Hope - making the wishes for our SCUCC family and its domain a reality by our actions.

Teamwork - welcoming the talents of all who offer support

Respect - for each other, ourselves, and our environment

Outreach, sharing, and compassion - which are hallmarks of our church family

Prayer - private, and together

Communication – Well... you may have or will become fatigued with all of the emails, zoom events, letters, phone calls, and other messages from your lay leaders and church staff, but rest assured that all of us want you to know what is going on, and want to know how we can support you in your life and your faith journey.

I am praying for all of us: for Mark, our Council and Trustees, Staff, Deacons and everyone who touches our people, Sanibel campus, and our "Refuge".

As always, you can email, text message or call me with questions, comments, and suggestions.

Diana L Day, Moderator

Dlday13@gmail.com

814-873-8575

Worship Notes

In January, we had the infrequent opportunity to spiritually “ring in the New Year” with Worship on New Year’s Day, Sunday, January 1.

Then, on Sunday, January 8, we continued to welcome in the New Year by sharing together in the Sacrament of Communion for the first time in 2023.

On Sunday, January 15 we recalled, honored and gave thanks for the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Martina Luther King, Jr.

And finally, on Sunday, January 29, Annual Meeting Sunday, we both remembered and recommitted to our congregational call and form of governance, as well as engaged in a “Congregational Music Choice” Worship celebration. After soliciting your favorite hymns, six of the most frequently mentioned were used during Worship in sung or instrumental form.

This format, suggested by Dr. Albert, will surely be repeated in the future...

For February, we will begin on Sunday, February 5 with another new feature:

“Ask the Minister Sunday”

On that morning, rather than delivering his usual Message, Mark will spend this part of Worship answering as many of your biblical, theological and spiritual questions as time permits.

So get those questions ready! Either come that Sunday ready to ask them, or email them to Mark ahead of time if you wish.

Over the years, this has proven to be an enjoyable, insightful and popular event at the church’s Mark has served, and hopefully will be here too!

On February 5, we will also celebrate the Sacrament of Communion together. After exploration of the idea by our Deacons, lay leaders and Mark, it was determined that Communion will now be shared monthly – a symbol and reminder of our covenant with God and each other – especially in this time of transition for our spiritual community. While in most months it will be celebrated on the first Sunday, there will also likely be times when it makes more sense for it to take place on a different Sunday.

Then, on Wednesday, February 22, we enter the sacred season of Lent with a contemplative Ash Wednesday time of Scripture, readings, prayer, music, a Reflection from Mark, and the distribution of ashes.

The time for this Ash Wednesday commemoration is still being worked out with Refuge Church’s schedule, and will be announced as soon as it becomes available.

Following this official beginning to the season, the First Sunday of Lent, February 26, will mark the start of our Lenten theme, “*Questioning Jesus*”.

Worship Theme for Lent in 2023

Our theme for the sacred season of Lent this year is ***“Questioning Jesus”***.

For this unit, the *“Questioning”* in the title is both verb and adjective.

It has been calculated by various biblical scholars that throughout the Gospels Jesus asks about three hundred questions, while directly answering only a handful. It is one of the reasons why Jesus' disciples call him “Rabbi”, a Hebrew word which basically means “Teacher”. And the core of teaching in that time and place, as well as Jesus' Jewish tradition, was to ask questions.

In keeping with that tradition, on most of the Sundays in Lent this year, we will engage with some of Jesus' most important questions, and consider how they still can and do matter for us in our time.

Education and Exploration Opportunities

OUR CURRENT SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION UNIT CONCLUDES IN FEBRUARY

"You Mean That's NOT in the Bible?"

Tuesday: February 14 (please note this schedule change)
7:00-8:15pm on Zoom only

You know them - the sayings and aphorisms so many Christians and non- Christians alike have learned, passed on and trust in. Ones like:

"God helps those who help themselves."
"Everything happens for a reason."

Many Christians and non-Christians are certain those sayings come directly from the Bible.

But they, and other commonly shared ones, *don't*.

During this unit, we are exploring some of those common sayings and aphorisms which people of faith are often strongly invested in, but are only partly or minimally rooted in the biblical literature. We will also be examining both the elements of spiritual truth to be found in them, as well as the ways they might inhibit our spiritual growth.

Each session is self-contained, so you do not need to be concerned if you are unable to attend them all.

Join us for what has been a series of lively and insightful conversations.

OUR NEXT SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION UNIT BEGINS ON FEBRUARY 21!

"Wait! What?! : Finding Meaning For Today In Jesus' Parables

Tuesdays: February 21 and 28; March 21 and 28; April 4

In Luke's Gospel, Jesus tells the disciples that he speaks to the people in parables "so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand"

You've got that right, Jesus.

During this five-week unit in the season of Lent, we will explore several of the complex, counterintuitive, provocative, and just plain confusing parables – spiritual stories - Jesus tells in the Gospels, with an emphasis on engaging with each others' own, and likely varied, interpretations, as well as how the parables might speak to us or be reframed for our time.

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.

Education and Exploration Opportunities

BIBLE STUDY IN FEBRUARY

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

Each week, we will explore the Scripture passage(s) being used in Worship that coming Sunday. These sessions will be largely “guided discussion” in approach, focusing on your questions and insights from reading the texts ahead of time, with Mark guiding and adding relevant context and detail 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 February, we will meet on the following Thursdays:

February 9, 16, and 23

Healthy Happenings

Immune Defense, Part I

The recent Covid-19 pandemic has shaken up almost everything in our world, including shifting our thinking about the immune system. Most of us, until recently, haven't thought much about the system that quietly and mostly invisibly protects us against disease, infection, and invaders, from pathogens to parasites, and helps us recover from injuries. As the toll of the virus mounted, maintaining a healthy immune system moved to the top of everyone's mind.

The food and supplement industry responded predictably, rushing to deliver immune boosting supplements and to fortify foods with ingredients to "support a healthy immune system."

Tuning up the immune system by swallowing pills is not quite that simple. The truth is, the immune system functions like an exquisitely choreographed dance with many moving parts all working in synchrony. Add or subtract a single ingredient in the mix and you could upset the balance or even cause harm.

Look at what happened several decades ago with the CARET trial, when researchers tested the hypothesis that taking a daily dose of vitamin A and Beta-carotene would help prevent lung cancer in people at high risk of the disease. The premise seemed sound, since studies had shown that people who ate a diet rich in those nutrients were much less likely to develop the disease. The trial was halted early when it became clear that not only were the supplements failing to prevent lung cancer, but they were causing an increased risk of the disease in smokers. (Today the American Cancer Society cautions smokers and former smokers to avoid beta-carotene supplements.)

Consider, instead, the importance of choosing nourishing foods over supplements in order to keep the immune system functioning optimally. For years now, studies have shown the correlation between a well-balanced, nutrient-rich diet and a healthy immune system, as evidenced by lower risk of chronic diseases in people who eat that way.

As we get older, the immune system tends to become less efficient and less able to ward off infections. This fact renders us more susceptible to illnesses and often increases the recovery time from those illnesses. This is why it is recommended that those 65 and older receive the high-dose flu vaccine which contains 4 times the antigen of the regular one. This higher dose is intended to provide a better immune response and therefore better protection.

The good news is that there are other tools, within our power, that will boost our immune systems without causing harm. I will address these tools in the next issue of "The Light."

Here are some hints to get you started: Three key factors which negatively affect a properly functioning immune system are stress, obesity, and a poor-quality diet. Diets, not supplements, rich in foods containing Vitamin C, Vitamin A, Vitamin D, and probiotic and prebiotic foods help give "immune support."

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

Proverbs 4:20-22 My child, be attentive to my words: incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them escape from your sight: keep them within your heart. For they are life to those who find them and healing to all their flesh.

Music Notes

The SCUCC Choir Is Growing

We are pleased that several new members have joined the choir over the last two months, and look forward to some beautiful choral singing this winter and spring. If you have ever thought about singing, or wanted to sing but weren't quite sure, please contact Mackenzie by email or text and ask about joining our growing ensemble. It's fun and uplifting and a great way to serve God!

Mackenzie Albert can be reached at:

Maestramackenzie@aol.com

Or by text: 203-517-5427

From the Green Team

The Inflation Reduction Act Can Help Make Rebuilding Efforts More Energy Efficient

As our region cleans up debris and begins the process of repairing homes and replacing damaged appliances, rebates and incentives related to the Inflation Reduction Act passed in August kicked in on January 1. The Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit is worth 30% of the total cost of the project, up to \$600 for exterior windows and skylights, \$250 for a single exterior door, and \$500 for all exterior doors. The Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit also provides a credit of 30% of the total cost of heat pump water heaters and heat pump air conditioning systems up to \$2000, and \$1,200 for weatherization projects like insulation and air sealing. The tax credit is capped at \$2000 per year per family, but can only be claimed on federal taxes owed. So if you have no tax liability, you can't benefit.

For households earning less than 150% of Area Median Income (AMI) in the region, the High-Efficiency Electric Home Rebate program (HEEHR) will provide a direct point-of-sale rebate on qualifying purchases and installation of appliances including electric stoves, cooktops, ovens, water heaters.

In the Cape Coral/Ft Myers area, the AMI for a four-person household was \$64,300 (\$51,450 for a two-person household). This means that families earning less than 80% of these limits, \$51,440 for a similar household in Lee County, would be entitled to a 100% rebate for the purchase of the item up to a maximum, which varies by item. Those earning between 80% and 150% of AMI would be entitled to 50% of the total purchase and installation cost up to the item limit, and a cap of \$14,000 per household for all electrification projects. A list of upfront discounts by item and a handy calculator that estimates benefits can be found at:

Rewiring America <https://www.rewiringamerica.org/app/ira-calculator>.

The HEEHR program will be run by the State Energy Office, so specifics will be established by each state, and the process of implementing the program may take 12 to 24 months. Given the need for rebuilding and financial assistance in many Florida communities impacted by Hurricane Ian, the state should expedite the program and implementation guidelines. It could also allow qualified households to receive the rebate after purchases, in order not to slow down rebuilding efforts.

Improving residential energy efficiency will lower energy costs for households and is critical to advancing climate mitigation goals. Housing accounts for approximately 20% of all US greenhouse gas emissions. According to Energy Innovation, a non-partisan energy and climate think tank, and the Rhodium Group, a private research firm, the Inflation Reduction Act's suite of incentives for home improvement and electric car purchases could reduce emissions by approximately 40% from 2005 levels by 2030. Adoption of measures built into the legislation, along with actions in other sectors, such as agriculture and technology, could allow the US to attain the 2030 GHG [greenhouse gas] targets agreed to in the Paris Accords.

<https://www.solar.com/learn/home-energy-efficiency-rebates-and-tax-credits/>

<https://www.cnbc.com/2022/09/03/inflation-reduction-act-when-to-claim-climate-tax-breaks-rebates.html>

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Florida.pdf>

<https://www.consumerreports.org/appliances/heat-pumps/heat-pump-federal-tax-credits-and-state-rebates-a5223992000/>

<https://growingclimatesolutions.org/the-inflation-reduction-act-can-help-make-rebuilding-efforts-more-energy-efficient/>

Battery components: At least half of the vehicle's battery components (like battery cells and modules) must be manufactured or assembled in North America starting in 2023. That share increases to 60% in 2024 and 2025, and grows gradually to 100% in 2029.

Cars that meet one of these requirements get half the credit (\$3,750). Cars that meet both get the full value. It's likely that few, if any, new clean vehicles will be eligible for the full \$7,500 when these two requirements take effect.

https://www.cnbc.com/2023/01/25/inflation-reduction-act-7500-ev-tax-credit-may-soon-be-tough-to-get.html?__source=sharebar|email&par=sharebar

If you're considering buying a new electric vehicle soon, you could get an extra \$3500 tax credit by buying the EV before March. For details, contact jeanchandler2@gmail.com

Bits & Bobs

The SCUCC Shell Point Men's Club will meet, as always, on the second Tuesday of the month, February 14th. We will again meet at The Crystal Restaurant at noon.

Reservations should be made to Jim Atchison: jimatch@aol.com

The Shell Point Women's Luncheon will meet February 10th. We will again meet at The Crystal Restaurant at noon. Please contact Emily Kletzien at (239)432-9185, for more information or to RSVP.

BE MY VALENTINE! On Tuesday February 14th, 5pm SCUCC Singles and Friends gather for refreshments at Gail Creager's home at the Woodlands, Shell Point. At 6pm we will dine at the Palm Grill at Shell Point. A three course dinner, with a choice of 3 entrees will be served for \$42.00 plus tip. To reserve your place contact Eleanor Miller (in a green Sanibel baseball cap), after church, or call 860-318-1557 or email, eleheamiller@gmail.com.

Giving is Easy:

1. PayPal link is available from the church's homepage (www.sanibelucc.org)
2. Automatic Payment Program (ACH) is available. To sign up email 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 being forwarded to and picked up on a regular basis from a USPS annex in Fort Myers.

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

Mark Boyea

mark@sanibelucc.org

Sandra Simmons

sandy@sanibelucc.org

Jordan Jones

office@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.

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

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