

The Sanibel



Light

SANIBEL
CONGREGATIONAL
**UNITED
CHURCH
OF
CHRIST**

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*Seeking to love all people ... growing
in faith ...
working toward God's vision of justice,
healing and joy.*

*Sanibel Congregational United Church
of Christ*

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

As we've been mentioning for the last few weeks, our theme for Advent this year is, ***What ARE We Waiting For?*** During these weeks leading to Christmas, we will explore ***waiting***, a central concept in not just Advent, but the Christian spiritual tradition, from a variety of perspectives and biblical texts.

But along with considering ***what*** we are waiting for – what it is that Christmas means to us and who and what we see in the coming of the embodiment of God and God's ways into the world through Jesus, I invite you to also consider ***how*** we are waiting...

Brandi Reissenweber, an instructor at the ***Gotham Writer's Workshop***, says that good writing "is not something we can rush, as those who have tried quickly learn." Instead, she says, "it is like baking bread, in that it takes its own time."

Since good writing will always demand a certain amount of ***waiting***, the question then, as Reissenweber sees it, is ***how*** we choose to wait - whether our waiting will detract from our writing process or facilitate it. For the latter to be the case, we have to engage in what she calls ***productive waiting***.

For us Christians, the sacred season of Advent is predicated on ***spiritual waiting***. Christmas is not here yet. First, we must wait. So will we wait productively – in ways that facilitate Advent being the spiritually uplifting, faith-inspiring time it is meant to be, or wait in ways which will detract from that?

If what we really want is to wait productively during Advent, perhaps we can adapt some of Reissenweber's suggestions for *productive waiting* during the writing process to help us in this time of *spiritual waiting* - a time of year our culture has turned into a "too much to do in too little time, no waiting zone."

1. **Imagine**

When things get too hectic, find a comfortable place, close your eyes, and **imagine**. Picture in your mind's eye a scene which truly captures the joy, peace, and hope this season is meant to bring us. Maybe it's the glow of tree lights in the dark; a random act of kindness you either gave or received; the sound of our Choir blessing us on Sundays.

2. **Move**

Find time to go somewhere that's not "necessary". Go where people are playing and laughing; to a quiet, secluded area, where it's just you and God; or to someplace that has special meaning for you. Linger. Take your time and take it all in.

3. **Rituals**

Rituals are often misinterpreted as *superstitions*, especially as they pertain to religious practice. In truth, they're just the opposite. Rituals allow us to direct our attention away from distractions, and move us into an appropriate state of preparation for what really matters. This Advent, block out a specific time each day when you will pray or read from the Bible, even if it's for no more than five minutes; pick one person each week to send an unexpected email or note of appreciation or support to; or join in in one of the many opportunities for fellowship or study available to you at SCUCC or another spiritual community.

Imagine. Move. Rituals. Ways in which we can all make Advent a time of productive spiritual waiting, rather than just a time of waiting for Christmas to get here. Or worse, a time of just trying to *survive, endure, or get through* the season.

**Blessings,
Mark
Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea
Senior Minister**



Worship Notes

In November, we celebrated the Sacrament of Communion as a spiritual community on Sunday, November 2.

On Sunday, November 9, we commemorated Veterans' Day by, as is our tradition on that Sunday, once again being blessed musically by our friends The Suncoast Brass Quintet. In addition, we were reminded of the service of our veterans through the display of The Missing Man Table on the Chancel, and then finished the day with a Fellowship Time dedicated to veterans.

On that same Sunday, November 9, also began our annual weeks of Stewardship Reflection. Our theme for this year is ***What Shall We Bring?***, inspired by the many and varied contributions God asked the Israelites to make for the purpose of building God a sanctuary – and a community in which to be embodied - in the Book of Exodus. That Sunday, as well as the two following (11/16 and 11/23), members of our spiritual community offered personal reflections on their faith and the importance of SCUCC to it.

Enormous gratitude to Renny and Barb Challoner, Gail Hanny, and Jack and Inky Meng for their heartfelt and inspiring messages to us.

And lastly, on Sunday, November 9, we also welcomed Dianne Higgins and Vicki Morrison into official SCUCC membership

Then, on Sunday, November 23, we celebrated our annual Thanksgiving Sunday, which included our now traditional ***Gathering of Thanks*** during Worship, where all who wished were invited to write down one or two things they were particularly grateful for since last Thanksgiving. Those were then collected and shared with our community by Mark.

The Sunday after Thanksgiving, Sunday, November 30 marked the start of the sacred season of Advent, the time when we once again prepare to commemorate the coming of Jesus – the embodiment of God and God’s ways – into the world at Christmas.

Our theme for this year is ***What Are We Waiting For?***

On each Sunday in Advent, except for the special ***Advent Music Festival on Sunday, December 14*** (more on that elsewhere), we will explore ***waiting***, a central concept in not just Advent, but the Christian spiritual tradition, from a variety of perspectives and biblical texts.

Then, on Christmas Eve, as previously announced, the ***Christmas Eve Beach Celebration*** returns at ***5pm on Lighthouse Beach*** (more on that elsewhere as well)!

Following that, we will celebrate Christmas Eve as a SCUCC spiritual community at ***9 PM in the Sanctuary***. We will join together for a time of readings from Luke’s Christmas story, inspiring music, the Sharing of Light, and a “Dramatic Reflection” from Mark.

Finally in December, we will have our annual ***Carol Sing Sunday*** on Sunday, December 30. Interspersed throughout Worship will be one final opportunity to sing a couple of verses from several Christmas Carols until next year.

We will be lead in Worship that day by our good friend and frequent guest preacher, Rev. Dr. Sally Haynes.



ADVENT DEVOTIONALS AVAILABLE!

In conjunction with the start of Advent on Sunday, November 30, hard copies of the Advent Daily Devotional, *A Calendar of Devotions by Jan Turrentine*, are available in the Narthex.

A number of digital copies are also available. If you would like one of those, please contact Mark and provide your preferred email address so he can send you one.

MUSIC



NEXT SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7th – Advent Music Festival “Preview”

Next Sunday, December 7, the Choir will be singing two excerpts from The Christmas Oratorio by Camille Saint-Saens that they will be performing in full the following Sunday, December 14.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14th – ADVENT MUSIC FESTIVAL

The SCUCC Choir and guests, under the direction of Mackenzie Albert, will present the full Christmas Oratorio by Camille Saint-Saens during Worship. The Oratorio is Luke’s story of shepherds, angels, cattle, a manger, and the birth of Jesus. The Choir will be joined by soloists, a guest organist, and a string orchestra.

This will be the centerpiece of our Worship time that morning. There will be no Message, and most of our regular Worship parts will be in abbreviated form.



RETURN OF THE CHRISTMAS EVE BEACH SERVICE!



After a three-year pause, Lighthouse Beach Park has fully recovered — and with it, the amazing Christmas Eve sunset celebration from Sanibel United Church of Christ returns!

PARKING: LIGHTHOUSE BEACH OR SANIBEL PIER

**SHUTTLES: 4 PM – 6.45 PM FROM AND TO
SAN-CAP CHAMBER AND CHURCH (2050 Periwinkle)**

CHAIRS, CARPOOLING, BIKES ENCOURAGED

SANIBEL
CONGREGATIONAL
**UNITED
CHURCH
OF
CHRIST**

2050 Periwinkle Way

CHRISTMAS EVE AT SCUCC!

With the return of the Christmas Eve Beach Service, we will go back to having our SCUCC Christmas Eve celebration **at 9 pm in the SCUCC Sanctuary.** This will be an evening of candlelight, Scripture, spirit-filled music, carol singing, and a dramatic reflection from Mark.

Church Office Hours

The Church Office is regularly from 9 am to 3 pm, Monday through Friday.

Mackenzie Albert, our Director of Music, is normally on campus each Wednesday and some Fridays. Please make an appointment by phone or text at 203-517-5427.

The Church Office will be closed on Thursday, December 25th and Friday, December 26th, for the Christmas holiday.



Spiritual Growth Opportunities

BIBLE STUDY

In December, Bible Study will meet on the following dates from 10:30 am-11:45 am on Zoom:

Thursday, December 4

Thursday, December 18

Each week, we explore the Scripture passage(s) being used in Worship that coming Sunday. The sessions are largely “guided discussion” in approach, focusing on your questions and insights from reading the text ahead of time, with Mark facilitating 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 preparation for getting more out of the Sunday Messages!

**Our Next SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION Unit Begins
Tuesday, December 2**

“Letters From the Edge of the World: Part 2”

Tuesdays: December 2, 9 and 16

7:00-8:15 pm on Zoom

Back by popular demand!



After the success of Part One of this unit last Advent, we continue with more from Ruth Boling’s book, ***Season’s Greetings***.

During our time together, we will explore more letters Boling imagined having been written by characters associated with the Christmas stories in the Gospels. Each week, we will review and discuss the content, context and spiritual concerns expressed in one or two of those letters, with an eye on gaining new insights regarding the meaning of Christmas for us in the Christian community and for the world.

The information needed for you to join in, as well as any advance reading or other preparation, will be sent by email each Monday afternoon.

SANIBEL *Music* FESTIVAL

Chamber Music, Piano Recital, and Vocal Ensemble of the Highest Caliber

Celebrating Our 39th Season... An Island Tradition

At Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ

2050 Periwinkle Way on Sanibel Island

December 5, 4:00PM – 5:30PM

Celebrate Luminary 2025

with our annual concert

All is Bright

featuring

Songs of the Season

Sparkling solos and joyful sing-a-longs

followed by

The FGCU Bower School of Music Cello Ensemble and Chamber Strings

Bach, Shostakovich, Pablo Casals,

Vivaldi, Haydn, and More

FREE WILL OFFERING AT THE DOOR

**Check our March 2026 Season
Tickets at SanibelMusicFestival.org
or call 239-344-7025**

**In person tickets
on Sanibel at Bank of the Islands
1669 Periwinkle Way
(cash or check) or at the venue
open 1 hr prior to concerts**

**2026 Venue:
Sanibel Congregational
United Church of Christ
2050 Periwinkle Way,
Sanibel, FL 33957**



**Excellent Acoustics, Plentiful Parking,
Easy Accessibility, Everyone is Welcome!**

Healthy Happenings

Immune Defense, Part I

The 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. To this day we are still dealing with an increase in viruses which are affecting our health and lifestyles.

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. Adding or subtracting a single ingredient to the mix 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 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 for those 65 and older to receive the high-dose flu vaccine which contains 4 times the antigen of the regular vaccine. This higher dose is intended to give them 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.”

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.

Caring for you and your health and always thanking God for you,

**Linda Convertine
Parish Nurse**



A Note from Our Moderator

Holiday Greetings!

It is amazing how quickly we have entered into this time of the year! However, I am most grateful we did so without the occurrence of a hurricane.

The Council has been busy with reconstruction and other building and grounds concerns, as well as ensuring that SCUCC is operating efficiently.

We not only have a new Financial Manager, Terri Czeczotka, but Tammy Flatley has been promoted to Church Administrator! In addition, there have been subtle changes made to a couple of our committees, bringing them more into alignment with our by-laws and the Florida Conference UCC.

It also gives me great pleasure to announce that Rev. Dr. John Danner is joining Rev. Dr. Ran Niehoff, as being a SCUCC Pastor Emeritus. A special occasion for that will take place in the spring, hopefully before many of you return up north.

An awesome “Welcome Back “reception was held last month. Now, we have the continuation of Advent, sensational music and two Christmas services to look forward to this month, as we celebrate a very special birthday!

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

Joy and Peace,

Kathy



From the Deacons

I want to thank all of the folks who helped out with our Welcome Back Luncheon on November 16th. We were so pleased with the attendance and with the spirit of community that kicked off this church season. It is so inspiring to have the help of so many of our deacons and friends. Our helpers are the lifeblood of this church and we will not forget all of their efforts.

If you are interested in participating in the Dinners for 6, 7, 8, please sign up before December 21st. We need your names, email addresses and phone numbers on the sign-up sheet, which can be found in Fellowship Hall. We would like to have all of the groups formed in very early January.

We always need volunteers to help with our Fellowship time. We welcome workers, treats, or both, so that we can enjoy our special time after Worship.

Shirley Akins
Chair, Board of Deacons



Pastoral Support Committee (formerly Pastoral Relations Committee)

As the name implies, this committee's responsibility is to care, support and advocate for the pastor, and to help build and enhance the relationship between the pastor and the congregation. Its work is confidential, and this relationship must be maintained in all discussions. The committee meets periodically with the pastor. Minutes are not published, and discussions do not occur outside meetings. This is crucial.

Why is this committee necessary?

While we are not aware of any unresolved issues at this time, being a pastor can be isolating, and sometimes confidential discussions are necessary. The committee then can help facilitate solutions or approaches. Most churches find this is essential for the health of the pastor and the congregation. The committee listens, but does not make judgements, nor does the committee write a performance evaluation.

How are members of this committee chosen?

The committee members are individuals selected for their ability to maintain confidentiality, and the congregation is expected to rely on the committee's trustworthiness, and is encouraged to bring questions, concerns or issues pertaining to our worship to any of the committee members with the assurance that their concerns will be treated confidentially

At present, your committee members are Linda Winn, Susan Schmitt,
Tom Ware, Carl Smigiel, and Paul Roth, chair

Special Invitation for the New Year

Don't miss the opportunity to join the Council of All Beings on Monday, January 12, 1-4:30 in the Fellowship Hall of the Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ, 2050 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel. The afternoon will include guided meditation, simple mask-making, and a creative ritual in which participants will take on the point of view of a non-human being. It will be facilitated by Anne Goodwin of the Boston Area Work that Reconnects.

Joanna Macy, root teacher of the Work That Reconnects, describes the Council of All Beings this way: "The Council of All Beings is a communal ritual in which participants step aside from their human identity and speak on behalf of another life-form. A simple structure for spontaneous expression, it aims to heighten awareness of our interdependence in the living body of Earth, and to strengthen our commitment to defend it. The ritual serves to help us acknowledge and give voice to the suffering of our world. It also serves, in equal measure, to help us experience the beauty and power of our interconnectedness with all life."

During the Council, beings of all kinds come forth to speak of their concerns, describe the challenges they face, and offer their gifts to the humans. Through this sharing, all beings begin to experience a deep empathy for each other and a broader awareness of our inner-connectedness and interdependence grows.

The Work That Reconnects is a world-renowned and respected body of experiential work designed to help people discover and experience their innate connections with each other and the self-healing powers of the web of life, transforming despair and overwhelm into inspired, collaborative action. Through practices that expand our awareness to the vibrancy of life around us, such as the Council of All Beings, we can build those relationships with the natural world that support our wholeness.

Peter Blaze Corcoran, Professor Emeritus and founder-director of the Center for Environmental and Sustainability Education of Florida Gulf Coast University, which has had a sustainability course graduation requirement since the university opened in 1996, called the Council of All Beings “one of the most powerful pedagogies in environmental education.”

Donations are on a sliding scale from \$10-35. After paying for snacks and the materials we need, we will donate the rest to buy native plants for our butterfly garden. We will have online registration and also a sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall. You may also call Linda Graf at 708-415-7020 to sign up.

To learn more about our facilitator, Anne Goodwin, visit her website:
<https://www.annegoodwin.com/>

Planning Committee:

Jean Chandler, Linda Graf, Cheryl Tice, and Janice Van Buskirk





Meet Our Church Leaders

Mackenzie Albert, Music Director

MacKenzie Albert moved to Florida relatively recently, with an original goal of adopting two children. This was delayed due to a return of Covid, a visit from Hurricane Ian, and other events which have caused her to rethink the adoption process and choose to take in a dog instead!

Before moving to Florida, she worked as an opera/orchestra conductor, and was on the staff of Chautauqua Opera, the Spoleto Festival USA, and the San Francisco Opera.

Among the singers with whom she has had the pleasure of collaborating are Leontyne Price, Renata Scotto, and Luciano Pavarotti.



Meet Our Church Leaders

Renée Rawe, Multimedia Director



I was born in Buffalo, NY in December 1958. My parents created a scandal in their community and my grandfather's church by starting their family while in high school. They retreated to Ft. Lauderdale, FL when I was three months old (March 1959). I am in the middle of two brothers and two stepbrothers. I loved living in Ft. Lauderdale as I learned to fish, dive and garden. Since I was the only female child I had to take care of the household chores while my parents went to school and work. I married my high school sweetheart of four years immediately upon turning 18. We had three children together, also two boys and a girl in the middle!

In my years of marriage, I spent my time at my husband's side helping to start and grow three successful businesses in Ft. Lauderdale: Classic Auto Refinishing, Classic Auto Sales and Collectormania. Our marriage ended sadly and abusively after 16 years.

Being a single mom without a formal education I was able to make all my own choices for my future. I chose to go to flight school and college. Then, I began flying medical patients in and around Florida and the Caribbean. I not so quickly learned this is not the career for a single parent. Sounds funny as God is everywhere, but I really felt close to God when I was flying, and I still love to fly.

I then began teaching at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, my neighborhood high school at the time. Then, with money my grandfather left me, I bought a used truck and went back to school to earn a master's degree in computer science. After three years teaching teenagers, God again looked after me. I was able to sell my home and move to Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, where I found a teaching job at Broward College in the Computer Science Dept. I worked as an adjunct one summer term then was hired full time to teach and be Program Manager of the Computer Science and Office Systems Technology Dept at their South Campus. I stayed there until I was 45 years old and my children had graduated from high school.

Since my family had left Ft. Lauderdale due to its growth and with the children leaving home to start their adult lives, I moved to Jacksonville FL. I quickly got a job teaching at Florida State College at Jacksonville and learned how to keep warm in the north! Never having seen the change of seasons, I felt like I was living in a storybook! It was very uplifting. With more time on my hands and children out of the house I went back to school to earn a doctoral degree in instructional technology and distance education. All my degrees are from Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale.

My mother is still alive (87 years old) in Gainesville, FL. I travel there often to help take care of her.

While my life hasn't always been easy, God has ALWAYS brought me through my struggles. I have stayed faithful in my relationship with God, Jesus Christ and the church throughout my life. I truly believe God's grace and mercy has carried me through. I have received many miracles and have experienced many rainbows, including being allowed to work at SCUCC.

A couple of my favorite Bible verses are:

Philippians 4:7-And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Jeremiah 29:11-"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

My favorite children:





&



**Save the Date:
Potluck Dinner
on Sunday, Dec. 7,
at 5pm
in Fellowship Hall
Supporting Each Other!**



Bat Yam will be providing Latkas with all the fixins', and other treats to share with SCUCC chefs and cooks to celebrate the holiday season.

Come and join the celebration.

Sign-up sheets are available in Fellowship Hall, and you can list your choice of dish to bring – or not, if you haven't decided!

You can also register by going to the advertisement on our website and clicking on the link.

TICKETS
\$40

Shell Point Presents a Special Holiday Event



ANTHEM LIGHTS

LIVE IN CONCERT



December 8

Monday, December 8 • 7 p.m.
The Village Church at Shell Point

SHELL  POINT

TribbyArtsCenter.com
BOX OFFICE (239) 415-5667

From the Green Team

How to keep junk snail mail out of your mailbox forever

With the holidays upon us, along with the traditional holiday greetings from friends and family, mailboxes are flooded daily with marketing junk mail. Everything from vacation travel brochures and new pre-approved credit card offers to furniture and clothing catalogues from companies we've never even heard of clog our mailboxes.

Each year, roughly 63 billion catalogues, postcards, credit card offers and coupon booklets arrived in America's mailboxes. That's 62 percent of all U.S. household mail, **reports the U.S. Postal Service.**

This takes a heavy environmental toll. The typical American receives about 41 pounds of junk mail each year, according to the Center for Development of Recycling at San José State University, and much of it **ends up in landfills.** While recent numbers are hard to come by, the Sierra Club estimates that 80 million to 100 million trees are cut down each year to print junk mail, while cities and counties spend \$1 billion a year to collect and dispose of it. So why is this happening and what can be done about it?

Why Americans get so much junk mail

The story of direct mail begins in 1835. Attempting to sway religious and civic leaders in the South, the American Anti-Slavery Society mailed out numerous anti-slavery newspapers and pamphlets in what is thought to be the first direct-mail campaign, according to the Smithsonian National Postal Museum. The reaction to it, not unlike today's unsolicited mail, was "swift, widespread, and hostile."

But it took decades for businesses to figure out how to use direct mail profitably. The advent of the typewriter finally allowed retailers to send out cheap blasts of advertisements. Americans were soon flooded with fliers, postcards and catalogues. The Postal Service estimates these “third-class” mailings swelled from 301 million pieces in 1880 to more than 6 billion pieces by 1930. In 2005, marketing mail eclipsed first-class mail (what people tend to use for letters) for the first time.

Today, junk mail is a lifeline for the post office. In 1970, Congress withdrew taxpayer dollars for the agency, passing a law directing it to act like a business by covering its costs. But Congress still required the Postal Service to cover inherently unprofitable parts of running a nationwide system delivering to far-flung, often rural parts of the country without taxpayer dollars. Desperate for money, the Postal Service opened the floodgates by granting marketers preferential access to your mailbox at one-third the cost of standard mail. Today, marketing mail generates \$16 billion — 20 percent of the agency’s revenue — and represents the majority of mail sent in the United States. This diminishes any chance the United States, unlike the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Canada, will move to restrict junk mail anytime soon.

The second reason your mailbox is stuffed with advertisements? They work. People have little choice but to sort through their mail. The Postal Service estimates two-thirds of households read or scan their junk mail, while 11 percent say they respond to mailers. “Given the large increase in advertising mail volumes since 1987,” states the post office in its 2020 household diary study, “it seems clear that U.S. households read more advertising mail now than in the past.”

That has prompted businesses to spend about \$225 per person in the United States on direct-mail advertising a year, according to a 2023 analysis of direct-mail advertising by an industry research firm. Junk mail earns a better return than email, social media or digital display ads, estimates the Association of National Advertisers.

The good news is you can now choose to opt out of all this paper waste. New technology and do-not-mail registries have made it easier than ever.

Three ways to stop junk mail

Ultimately, stopping most junk mail takes less than half an hour. Here are the three steps to do it.

Stop most advertisements: Check out the Association of National Advertisers' DMAchoice tool. This service lets you stop delivery of catalogues, magazine offers and other junk items from charities, banks and national brands. DMAchoice says this will stop 80 percent of promotional offers since marketers would rather contact people willing to receive their mail. You can register online for \$4, or by mail for \$5, to stop deliveries for 10 years. There are options to stop mail for a deceased relative and even electronic spam. The process takes less than five minutes.

Stop credit card and insurance offers: Never want to see another prescreened credit or insurance offer in the mail? Such solicitations can put you at risk for fraud — but you can opt out. The 1996 Fair Credit Reporting Act led to the creation of OptOutPrescreen.com. The website allows you to opt out for five years online or by calling 888-567-8688.

To stop offers forever, you'll need to sign and return the Permanent Opt-Out Election form. The entire process takes a few weeks to complete, but it only took a few minutes to fill out the form.

Stop mail from specific businesses: For that, I turned to services able to take my name off mailing lists of individual retailers, marketers and charities. Companies you've done business with in the past few years may still be allowed to contact you. Charities may sell your name, and some just slip through the cracks.

CatalogChoice.org is a nonprofit organization that has a list of 10,000 businesses and charities. It lets you automatically send an opt-out request to specific companies. Just search the website's pre-populated company list, and a seamless click of the mouse sends a request on your behalf. Best of all, it's free.

For convenience, there is also a smartphone app. The annual subscription to PaperKarma is \$24.99. You can also buy a monthly plan for \$3.99. You take a photo of the mailed item, then algorithms try to identify the sender based on the brand or logo on the envelope. You can manually correct any errors, and you can instantly send the advertiser an opt-out request via the app.

The 15-person company says it has 100,000 businesses in its database so far. "PaperKarma is more like a concierge service," says Jeff Treichel, the company's CEO. "We're adding thousands of new mailers to our database every month. If you've got a problem, we're phoning or emailing these people directly on your behalf."

Does it work?

Not all junk mail will be immediately stopped. Rather than junk mail every day or so, it's may be closer to once or twice a week. It will be a few months before all the various opt-out requests take hold.

And some junk mail will continue: Local mailings such as coupons and grocery fliers addressed to "Current Resident," as well as political candidates' campaign materials (protected by the First Amendment), are not blockable.

Reducing the waste of paper is easier than you think. It'll never stop the junk mail altogether, but you'll be glad you did it and our environment will thank you!

Adapted from an article in the Washington Post by Michael J. Coren:

[Here are 3 ways to stop junk mail and opt out of all this paper waste - The Washington Post](#)

Linda Graf
Green Team Committee



The Green Team is Growing!

Are you interested in the stewardship of our natural world? Want to meet new friends? The Green Team invites you to join us! Simply put, the Green Team seeks to fulfill our SCUCC mission in nurturing God's Creation. We share resources and help sponsor programs and speakers to raise awareness on how we are all intimately connected with our environment. Periodic planning meetings are online. For more information contact Linda Graf at 708-415-7020 or [**lgrafcnm@aol.com**](mailto:lgrafcnm@aol.com).

“Knowing what's right doesn't mean much unless you **do** what's right”

~ Theodore Roosevelt



Fellowship Time Volunteers

Please consider volunteering your time to serve during our Fellowship Time after our Worship Celebration.

It's a wonderful way to contribute to our community, connect with others, and give back to our spiritual home.

Your time, talents, or donations will be deeply appreciated, making our gatherings warm and welcoming for everyone. Sign-up sheets can be found by the tech booth in Fellowship Hall.

Thank you for considering this opportunity to serve and strengthen our community!



Request from the Health Ministry Calling all Knitters

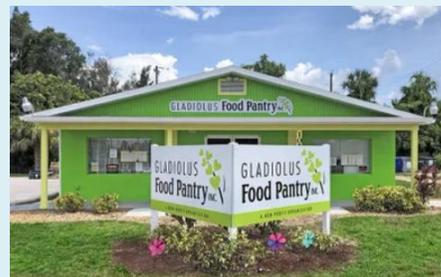
The Health Committee needs your help in giving one of our programs a new start. We have a Prayer Shawl program that needs knitters to make the shawls. We hope the knitter will say a prayer while they work. Linda Convertine will then give a shawl to our ill members and those who are unable to leave home.

The shawls are approximately 4 ft. by 2 ft. using soft and thick yarn. No pattern is needed. If you are not a knitter, please consider donating yarn. Any questions, please contact Linda at linda@sanibelucc.org.

Request from the Mission & Benevolence Committee

Just a reminder that donations of any non-perishable food items and bath and kitchen paper products can be dropped off at the Church or left in the Sanctuary entrance after Worship. Collected donations will benefit local neighbors in need through F.I.S.H. and the Gladiolus Food Pantry.

If you prefer making a monetary donation to the Food Pantry, please address your check to SCUCC and include Food Pantry on the memo line. It may be placed in with the collection during Worship, or dropped off in the office.



Sanibel Congregational UCC & Bat Yam Temple of the Islands Monthly Food Drive

When: Every Third Wednesday, 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Where: Church Parking Driveway



From November 19th, our first food drive of the season!

Birthdays for the Month of December



December 1: Daniel Eidem, Phil Gainer

December 3: Henry Whitman

December 9: Barbara Hermann

December 10: Judy Baran

December 11: Ginny Bowen, Gloria Waterhouse, George Witte

December 13: Henry Crater, Amy Lou Waters

December 14: Addison Sprecher

December 16: Gilbert Warren

December 20: Carl Smigiel

December 21: Jonathan Helmreich

December 23: Linda Friedebach, Robert Healey

December 25: Charles Whitman

December 26: Amber Evans

December 29: Robert Van Tassel

December 31: Jane Jacobson



Floral Invitation

We invite you to contribute to the Floral Fund.

This fund is dedicated to preserving the memory of a loved one through the vibrant and uplifting presence of flowers. If you would like to honor a loved one by dedicating flowers to a Worship Celebration, please fill out a Flower Donation Form.

There is no suggested donation amount. The donation towards the Floral Fund is at your discretion. The forms can be found in the Narthex, along with a basket where requests can be placed.

Please remember, if writing a check, address the check to SCUCC and include Christmas Flowers or Floral Donation on the memo line.

If you prefer, you may call, visit or email the office to make a request.

Your dedication will be included in the bulletin for the Worship Celebration in which the flowers are displayed.



Get Involved

Be An Artist

Please join Carol and friends in **Fellowship Hall**

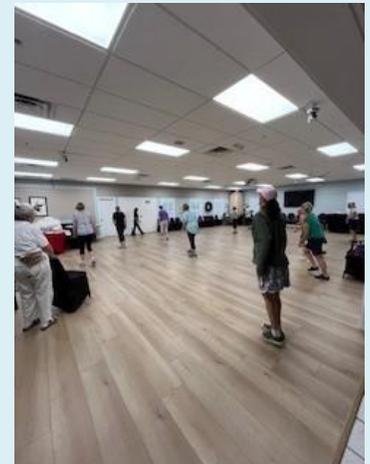
on Tuesdays at 11:00 am for painting, conversation and fun.



Get Healthy

Join Mahnaz Bassiri and the Santiva Islanders for cardio & strength on **Monday, Wednesday & Friday**.

Class starts at 9:30 AM in Fellowship Hall.





Shell Point Men's Group Luncheon - DECEMBER

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Men's Group will have its next monthly luncheon meeting on **Tuesday, December 9 at noon at the Palm Grill in the Woodlands Common**. Please make reservations with Bruce Findley at bruce.findley@gmail.com.

Shell Point Women's Group Luncheon - DECEMBER

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Women's Group will have its next monthly luncheon on **Friday, December 12 at 11:30 am at the Palm Grill in the Woodlands Common**. Please make reservations with Susan Schmitt at sudischmitt@gmail.com.

Dinners for 6, 7 or 8

One of our most loved offerings are the social gatherings known as "Dinner for 6, 7 or 8", will be resuming in January. If you would like to participate, or find out more, please contact Shirley Akins at akinsteach@gmail.com.

Sign-up sheets for this offering can be found in Fellowship Hall.



Ushers Wanted

Please reach out to Inky Meng if you would like to be added to the contact list to serve as an usher for our Sunday Worship. He can be reached at inkymeng@hotmail.com.

Liturgists Wanted

Please reach out to Sharon Hannon if you would like to be added to the contact list to serve as a liturgist during Sunday Worship. Send an email to skbhannon@aol.com and include any and all dates you are available to participate.

Interested in Joining SCUCC???

If you are considering becoming a member of SCUCC, or would simply like to find out more about us, 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.



Artists of the Month

We are blessed to have two artists share their talents with us this December in Fellowship Hall. Make sure you stop in to see them, you may find your next favorite work of art.

Kathleen Taylor
“Old Postoffice”
(watercolor)



Dorothy McDowell
“Flamingo Gathering”
(6x6” – oil)



Like A Ride To Worship?

If you would like a ride to Sunday Worship from Shell Point or Cypress Cove, please contact the Church Office at office@sanibelucc.org by Noon on Thursdays.

JANUARY 2026 SANIBEL LIGHT DEADLINE

Please note that the deadline for submissions to the January edition of the *Sanibel Light* is
Friday, December 19, 2025.

Please send all submissions as a Word document to:

Tammy Flatley, Church Administrator
at tammy@sanibelucc.org



YOU'VE GOT PLANS: SANIBEL & CAPTIVA



SANTIVA ISLANDERS

Please visit their website for a detailed list of their activities:
<https://santivaislanders.org>

December 2025

SU	MO	TU	WE	TH	FR	SA
	1 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz 11:00 AM Potluck Lunch at SIP	2 10:00 AM Walking Group 1:00 PM Euchre	3 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz 4:00 PM Social Hour at The American Legion	4 9:00 AM Breakfast Club 1:00 PM Social Mahjong 1:00 PM Social Bridge	5 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz 2:00 PM Holiday Crafts, Cookies, & Decorating	6
7	8 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz 11:00 AM Brown Bag Lunch	9 10:00 AM Walking Group At Lakes Park 1:00 PM Euchre 1:00 PM Page Turners Book Club	10 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz 4:00 PM Social Hour at The American Legion	11 9:00 AM Breakfast Club 1:00 PM Social Mahjong 1:00 PM Social Bridge	12 11:00 AM Santiva Islanders Annual Members Meeting	13
14	15 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz 11:00 AM Hot Dogs and Bingo	16 10:00 AM Walking Group 1:00 PM Euchre	17 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz 12:00 PM Leisure Lunch at Blue Giraffe 4:00 PM Social Hour at The American Legion	18 9:00 AM Breakfast Club 1:00 PM Social Bridge 1:00 PM Social Mahjong	19 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz	20
21	22 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz 11:00 AM Brown Bag Lunch	23 10:00 AM Walking Group 1:00 PM Euchre	24 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz	25	26 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz	27
28	29 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz 11:00 AM Brown Bag Lunch	30 10:00 AM Walking Group 1:00 PM Euchre	31 9:30 AM Cardio & Strength with Mahnaz			



For any events hosted by SCCF, please go to their website:
<https://sccf.org>



Please go to the Big Arts website for more information. The website will provide details for each event, as well as how to register and/or buy tickets.

WED
3

GLASS-FUSED ART
Artist-Instructor: Petra Kaiser
December 3 - December 17

Event Category: Glass Fusing

Wednesdays, December 3, 10, 17, 2025, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Petra will provide students with guidance and assistance, demonstrating procedures and basic glass fusing techniques, and will include compatibility and testing, annealing, and slumping.

THU
11

**BIG ARTS Community Chorus
& BIG ARTS Concert Band**
Holiday Performance

December 11 @ 7:00 pm

Community Engagement

Event Categories: Holiday Magic

Celebrate the season with festive favorites and joyful harmonies performed by the talented voices and musicians of the BIG ARTS Community Chorus and BIG ARTS Concert Band.

Support the Big Arts Community Band! They hold their rehearsals in Fellowship Hall throughout the season.

BITS & BOBS

Giving is Easy:

1. PayPal link is available on the church's homepage: [**www.sanibelucc.org**](http://www.sanibelucc.org).
2. Automatic Payment Program (ACH) is available. To receive an authorization form, please send a request by email to [**office@sanibelucc.org**](mailto:office@sanibelucc.org).
3. Checks payable to **SCUCC** can be mailed to:
Sanibel Congregational UCC, 2050 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL, 33957

Mark Boyea

mark@sanibelucc.org

239-312-8673

Tammy Flatley

tammy@sanibelucc.org

Terri Czeczotka

terri@sanibelucc.org

239-472-0497

office@sanibelucc.org

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday

9:00-3:00pm



Scan QR Code
to donate
through
PayPal.

