

The Sanibel



Light

SANIBEL
CONGREGATIONAL
**UNITED
CHURCH
CHRIST**

JANUARY

2026

VOLUME 58

ISSUE 1

IN THIS ISSUE

**For Your
Consideration**

Worship Notes

Healthy Happenings

A Note from Our Moderator

Notice of Annual Meeting

Meet Our Leaders

Ministry Request

Green Team

Birthday Greetings



News From Our Community



*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

A few years ago, Kristin van OgTrop, former long-time editor of *Real Simple* magazine, expressed the mixed feelings she often experienced after the Christmas and New Year's season. While she admitted to loving giving gifts, she also acknowledged the dread she felt in regard to the accumulation of stuff that often occurs that time of year - something you hope the editor of a publication called *Real Simple* would be concerned with, right?

That concern, one van OgTrop claimed was shared by many, had resulted in numerous articles and books dedicated to what she referred to as “*stuff control*”. However, van OgTrop had also found most of the suggestions in those publications “unworkable”. For example, with her characteristic pragmatic wit, she pointed out that one of the most commonly offered solutions – to institute a “*one gift limit*” – had to have been devised by people who had never heard of grandparents.

There was one form of “*stuff control*” that van OgTrop *did* find both sensible and possible. It's called “*one in, one out*”. For every new thing a person gets, they have to let go of something they already have.

Not a bad rule for the holiday season. Not a bad rule for the New Year. Not a bad rule for our spiritual lives...

One of the most frequent expressions of life stress and dissatisfaction I have heard throughout my life in ministry and counseling has been some variation of “*too much to do and too little time*”. That concern, more often than not, has been grounded in people feeling that they have to add new commitments, projects and goals - often worthy ones - while at the same time, rarely giving up older ones that may no longer be workable or even needed.

But the Jesus who we once again celebrated the coming of a few days ago called us to “let go” of so many of the things the world insists we be concerned - even primarily concerned - with. That doesn’t mean being apathetic or turning away from the *important* stuff – the things in the world that are not as God would have them. But it does mean that it’s OK to let go of things that do not serve us in becoming who and what God created us to be. In fact, it’s necessary.

Perhaps in this New Year then, and especially in this time of heightened social, political and other stressors, we might consider honestly examining our “*life stuff control*” and put into practice a “*spiritual one in, one out*” rule, even if it means just adding *one* thing which will enhance our spiritual lives while letting go of *one* thing which doesn’t. Because as people of faith, we were created by God to experience “*abundant life*” – growth, meaning, peace and joy, and not lives of stress and dissatisfaction, in this and every year.

Blessings,

Mark

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



WORSHIP NOTES

In **December**, we continued our Advent preparations and our theme of **What Are We Waiting For?**

Except for the special Advent Music Festival on **Sunday, December 14**, we explored ***waiting***, a central concept in not just Advent, but the Christian spiritual tradition, from a variety of perspectives and biblical texts.

And as for that **Advent Music Festival? WOW!**

On that Sunday, our Worship time featured Saint-Saens ***Christmas Oratorio***, lead by Mackenzie Albert and performed by the SCUCC Choir, guest soloists and guest musicians. What an inspiring gift to all it was.

Then, on Christmas Eve, the **Christmas Eve Beach Celebration** returned at 5pm on Lighthouse Beach. It was a spectacular late afternoon weather-wise, and we were blessed to be able to offer the community several carols to sing, the Christmas story from Luke's Gospel, two wonderful solos from our own Henry Crater, some Christmas quiz questions for children of all ages, and a "surprise" letter from Santa reminding all what the sacred season is truly about. Estimates are that upwards of 700-800 or more attended.

Following that, we then celebrated Christmas Eve as a spiritual community at 9 PM in the Sanctuary, joining 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 had our now annual ***Carol Sing Sunday on Sunday, December 30.*** Interspersed throughout Worship were a couple of verses from several Christmas Carols – one last chance to sing these until next year. On that day, we were also lead in Worship by our good friend and frequent guest preacher, **Rev. Dr. Sally Haynes...**

In **January**, we usher in the New Year by celebrating the **Sacrament of Communion** as a spiritual community on **Sunday, January 4.**

On Sunday, January 11, we welcome back **Rev. Dr. Sally Haynes** as Worship leader and preacher as Mark is away.

Then, on Sunday, January 18, we remember the life and work of **Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** and the vital place of justice and equality in our spiritual tradition.

Finally, **Sunday, January 25,** will feature our next ***Ask the Minister*** segment during Worship. On that day, instead of offering a Message, Mark will attempt to address as many of your biblical, theological, spiritual and personal questions as time allows.

So get those questions in ahead of time to Mark by email at mark@sanibelucc.org, text or phone them to 908-477-5426, or just come ready to ask them that morning.

Then, after Worship that same morning, we will come together for our **Annual Meeting**, during which time we will review our spiritual community's efforts during 2025, as well as discuss and approve the 2026 budget and slate of lay leaders.

ADVENT and CHRISTMAS GRATITUDE

From the lighting of the first Advent candle to the last strains of *Silent Night* at the conclusion of the Christmas Eve candlelight celebration in our Sanctuary, I would like to express my enormous gratitude to so many for helping make Advent and Christmas of 2025 so blessed for all of us:

- The consistently strong Worship attendance and enthusiasm demonstrated by our spiritual community
- All those who lead us in the lighting of the Advent and Christ candles at the beginning our Worship times
- The SCUCC Choir, our guest musicians and soloists, and our Director of Music, Mackenzie Albert for blessing us so greatly with the Advent Music Festival performance of the *Christmas Oratorio*
- The SCUCC Choir for the inspiring music they blessed us with throughout Advent, including the *Christmas Ensemble* which provided special music at the 9 pm Christmas Eve celebration in our Sanctuary
- The exceptional leadership of Dana Crater, along with the many who helped carry out all that needed to be done to make the return of the Lighthouse Beach Christmas Eve celebration so special for the Sanibel community and guests
- Henry Crater for his two beautiful solos during that Christmas Eve Beach Celebration
- John Sprecher for all of his efforts in promoting that celebration
- SCUCC's Deacons for their efforts and steady hand throughout all that needed to be attended to during Advent

- Our Parish Nurse, Linda Convertine, for her regular visits to members, coordinating this year's Christmas flower deliveries, and her participation in this year's annual Shell Point Christmas Communion celebration
- And, of course, our Church Administrator, Tammy Flatley, who, along with preparing multiple – and sometimes complex – bulletins for our sake, in her usual selfless way kept things running around here so that we could do all the things mentioned above...

Lastly, as I once read in an author's book Preface: "My apologies for any errors or omissions. The responsibility for them is solely mine."

Mark

Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea

Senior Minister

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

The Church Office is open Monday-Friday, from 9:00 am-3:00 pm.

PLEASE NOTE: The office will be closed on Thursday, January 1st for New Year's Day and on Monday, January 19th, in remembrance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Mark is normally on the campus Tuesday-Thursday pending pastoral visits or offsite meetings. Please feel free to just “drop by” or make an appointment directly with him by email: mark@sanibelucc.org or text/phone call: 908-477-5426. 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.



SPIRITUAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

BIBLE STUDY

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

Thursday, January 15
Thursday, January 29

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, the sessions are great preparation for getting more out of the Sunday Messages!

SPIRITUAL EXPLORATION

Our next Spiritual Exploration Unit begins in mid-January.

The topic and schedule will be announced soon.



NOTE FROM THE MODERATOR

Happy New Year!

Hopefully, this will be a safe, healthy and enjoyable 2026 for our SCUCC family!

My term as Moderator comes to a close at the end of this month. It has been an interesting, educational and fulfilling experience. It was an amazing opportunity to get a more intimate view of our membership through a very different lens. The implementation, continuation and progression of several significant projects is ongoing. I am not only looking forward to the completion of them in the very near future, but also the observation of the impact they will have on our church family and community at-large.

We have so much to be grateful for. There are such dedicated volunteers in our church.

During 2025 a historical committee was formed, SCUCC entered information into the City of Sanibel's time capsule, we received a technology grant from the Florida Conference of UCC for improvements in our security, coordinated plans for a redesign of our Memorial Garden, completed the landscaping of our grounds and updated the outside lighting. A decision was also made to confer the status of Pastor Emeritus to former retired pastor, John Danner.

Our annual church meeting is being held Sunday, January 25, 2026 and we are looking forward to strong attendance. At that time, the current Vice Moderator, Frank Palaia will become Moderator and will keep moving things forward as we get ready to embrace SCUCC's 40th anniversary in April.

Thank you so much for having the faith in me to serve in this position. It is a privilege to be among others who did the same in the past.

Always be ready to answer your call! Service to others is the reason we have been placed on this earth.

Many Blessings to you!

In His Service,

Kathy

“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”. Matthew 25:40.



A NOTE FROM OUR TRUSTEES

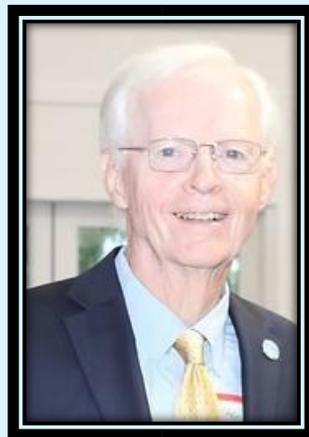
2026 Annual Pledge Drive!

In December, our Annual Pledge Drive was introduced to us with three inspiring statements and stories by members of our congregation. We are now nearing the end of the 2026 Campaign and finalizing our Operating Budget to be presented for approval at our Annual Meeting, January 25th.

So, if you haven't had a chance to send in your pledge yet, please help us finalize our 2026 budget as soon as possible. Pledge Forms are available in the Office, in the Narthex, and on our website, sanibelucc.org.

Thank you for your continued support.

Neal Halleran
Chair



SANIBEL CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the congregation of SCUCC will be conducted at approximately 11:15 AM on Sunday, January 25, 2026 in the Sanctuary and on Zoom.

Please make every effort to attend this time when we carry out our sacred covenant with each other in regard to the finances and governance of our spiritual community.

The Agenda, the Report of the Nominating Committee and Slate of Officers, Boards and Committees, as well as a Budget Summary for 2026 will be sent out to all members in advance of the meeting.



HEALTHY HAPPENINGS



Immune Defense Part II

Season has arrived, bringing our wonderful friends and neighbors who we have missed during the summer months. Unfortunately, along with season there is always an increase in flus, colds, respiratory infections, etc. The immune system is your body's network of organs, tissues, and cells that work together to keep you healthy by fighting off harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites, and fungi. It acts as a barrier between your body and the things that make you sick. Your immune system can become compromised by dietary, environmental, and lifestyle insults. A compromised immune system can lead to frequent illness, such as the common cold and flu, as well as more serious infections and diseases, including cancer. So what can we do to boost our immune system?

Proper rest, exercise, good nutrition, frequent hand washing, stress reduction techniques, avoiding crowds if immunocompromised, and some vaccines are all good ways to boost the immune system and to help it fight off illness.

In this article, I would like to address diet as a factor in immune defense. A poor quality diet can impact the proper functioning of our immune system by suppressing the production of and hampering the activity of some immune cells and antibodies. The remedy for this is easy and delicious: a well-rounded diet that is rich in immune supporting nutrients. Using whole, unprocessed foods rather than supplements ensures you're getting a full package of nutrients in the balance that nature intended.

Here is a quick roundup of a few key nutrients that research suggests can help the immune system flourish when they are supplied by a well-rounded diet. Knowing the foods that best supply these nutrients will help you on your way to optimal immune support.

Vitamin C plays a major role in our immune system. The body can't produce this nutrient and thus it must be obtained from food. This powerful antioxidant helps quench free radicals (highly reactive compounds that can damage cells and lower their defenses against infection). It can also help regenerate other antioxidant nutrients, further helping to quell inflammatory processes. Foods rich in Vitamin C include citrus fruits, peppers, kiwi fruit, and cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cabbage. Many fruits and vegetables contain Vitamin C.

Vitamin D also promotes anti-inflammatory activity and is involved in the production of antibodies. Preliminary studies suggest Vitamin D might also help protect against some auto immune diseases, since low levels are associated with a higher risk of multiple sclerosis, diabetes and other autoimmune-related disorders. Some studies on levels of vitamin D show a direct link to T-cell production, which is an important part of your body's defense mechanism. Our bodies produce Vitamin D when we expose our skin to sunlight, but it's tough to get enough that way if you use sunscreen and/or live in a northern climate. I strongly suggest that a Vitamin D level be drawn with your labs during your yearly physical exam. It's challenging to get enough of the vitamin from foods alone, so you may need to take a supplement. You'll find Vitamin D in fatty fish, liver, and egg yolks and in fortified foods, including dairy products and plant-based dairy foods, cereals and juices.

Vitamin A (retinol) and plant-based provitamin A compounds called carotenoids have strong anti-oxidant activity that keeps the immune system functioning smoothly; both help support the growth and activity of immune cells. Adequate Vitamin A also helps maintain a healthy skin barrier— a key part of your immune defenses. While animal products like liver, fish oils and egg yolks are good sources of Vitamin A, it's a good idea to focus more on carotenoid-rich fruits and vegetables, which your body can convert as needed to Vitamin A with no risk of getting too much. Good sources are leafy green vegetables, orange and red fruits and vegetables, such as peppers, tomatoes, carrots, apples and cantaloupe.

Vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant known to reduce the risk of inflammation related diseases, protect your body from cell damage, and fight oxidative stress that can lead to illness. Vitamin E is found in many nuts, seeds, vegetables, and oils. Sunflower seeds are full of Vitamin E, containing 82% of the daily value in just one quarter cup.

Zinc is an essential nutrient for everyone. It is also a powerful antioxidant known to support the immune system. Meat, shellfish and dairy are good sources of zinc. Some plant-based sources include the avocado, hemp seeds, green peas, lima beans, lentils and the whole grain kamut.



Probiotic and prebiotic foods also have anti-inflammatory actions, and they fortify the immune defenses of the microbiome—the complex system of microorganisms that populate our GI tract. Probiotic foods contain beneficial bacteria that help strengthen the lining of the GI tract while producing compounds that protect it from pathogenic organisms. Also important are prebiotic foods, rich in the materials those beneficial organisms feed on: fiber and compounds called oligosaccharides. The probiotic bacteria in the GI tract break down those prebiotic products turning them into fatty acids that boost the activity of certain immune cells. Probiotic bacteria are found in fermented foods such as yogurt, kefir, kombucha, kimchi, miso and sauerkraut. Prebiotic rich foods include fiber-rich fruits, vegetables and beans, particularly onions, leeks, asparagus and bananas.

It is clear that a well-nourished body is a strong defense against disease. As it turns out some of the best immune supporters are found in the produce aisle, so stock up and enjoy good food while boosting your health.

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



Now may God, the fountain of hope, fill you to overflowing with uncontainable joy and perfect peace as you trust in Him. And may the power of the Holy Spirit continually surround your life with His superabundance until you radiate with hope. Romans 15:13 (The Passion Translation)



Don't Miss This! A Council of All Beings

In this afternoon workshop **1-4:30 pm on Monday, January 12, 2026, in Fellowship Hall**, participants will co-create a Council of All Beings, a creative ritual that is sometimes playful, sometimes deeply moving, and always powerful. In a Council of All Beings, participants temporarily step aside from their human identity and speak on behalf of another life-form. Sitting in council together, the beings speak of their concerns, describe the challenges they face, and offer their unique gifts to the humans. Through this sharing, all beings begin to experience a deep empathy for each other. A broader awareness of our interdependence can then take hold. In the Council of All Beings, we experience the beauty and power of the interconnectedness of all life and strengthen our commitment to defend the living Earth.

The experience will be enhanced by a guided meditation, songs, easy mask-making with natural objects and simple craft supplies, and teachings from the Work That Reconnects. The Work That Reconnects is a world-renowned and respected body of experiential work designed to help people discover and experience the self-healing powers of the web of life, transforming despair and overwhelm into inspired, collaborative action.

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.”

Invite your friends to join in this rare opportunity to experience one of the most beloved practices of the deep ecology movement. Your awareness of the natural world will be forever expanded in a wonderful way as a result.

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 the church's butterfly garden. To register, go to the website of our facilitator

<https://www.annegoodwin.com/events> before **Friday, January 9**.

Payment can be made by Venmo, PayPal, or by check to Anne.

Planning Committee:

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



FROM THE GREEN TEAM

New Year-New Practice: Green Sabbath

Feeling overwhelmed by the world? You may need a sabbath. Preserving a day of rest is a tradition dating back thousands of years, seen as a spiritual necessity according to multiple religions. But the practice, even in a secular context, may also help us stop destructive practices that are fueling climate change. The following is taken from the NY Times Climate author, Michael J. Coren.

Every Friday around sunset, I close my laptop. For 24 hours, my work is done. No email. No news. No social media. If it's work-related, it waits.

What I try to do is — nothing at all. Or, rather, I spend time with people I love, usually outdoors. I swim or surf. I share a meal with friends and family. Sometimes, I just lie on my back in the park enjoying the sun. It rekindles a sense of joy I felt when I was a kid with nothing to do, and gratitude for whatever miraculous series of events led me here to this moment. For years, this one-day pause seemed untenable. For many, it's virtually impossible to set aside an entire day for rest free from responsibilities to work and family. But on the verge of burnout a few years ago, I began to practice a Sabbath. Giving myself permission to stop doing was hard. My brain betrayed my intentions, unconsciously leading me to flick open my phone, check work emails or scurry ahead to a Monday that hadn't yet begun. Disconnecting took practice, and still does. But as the weeks rolled on, I discovered a freedom I hadn't known I'd lost. My Sabbath jolted me out of a daze.

For millennia, religions have regarded this ritual rest as a spiritual necessity. Yet clergy are now arguing that this practice, whether in a secular or religious context, can help redirect the world's societies away from catastrophic climate change. In their view, it's as essential to the future as any clean-energy technology or electric vehicle.

A shared day of rest, at a minimum, might slow the pace of consumption, curb emissions or ease the burden of so many people working weary weekends. But slowing down, even for a day, may also be at the heart of a cultural change convincing society that a more sustainable way of life is not only good for the planet, but also good for them. Here's how a green Sabbath may be the right idea for one's soul, and the world.

What is a day of rest?

The modern weekend is a recent invention. Established in the 1930's, it was the armistice between unions fighting for more time off and employers, who finally recognized that enshrining a two-day rest was better than enduring mass absenteeism during "St. Monday," workers' unofficial holiday after Sunday's excesses. But the human yearning for a weekly respite dates back at least 2,600 years.

The concept appears in Christianity and Islam, both of which set aside weekly days for ritual, as well as Buddhism's uposatha days and Japan's roku sainichi, among others. The first reference to mandated rest, however, probably appears in the Torah, where ancient Israelites were commanded to cease their toil from Friday evening until Saturday at sunset, a period known as Shabbat in the Jewish calendar, according to Jonathan Schorsch, a professor of Jewish religious and intellectual history at Germany's University of Potsdam. This commandment led to interpretations banning no less than 39 types of work, among them sowing, baking, lighting a fire, sewing two stitches — and tearing to sew two stitches.

The ancient Israelites' prohibitions were not a random assortment of activities, or a call for asceticism. It was the embodiment of a simple commandment holy enough to earn its place among the Top 10: Leave the world as you find it by keeping the Sabbath. This period, says Abraham Joshua Heschel in his classic 1951 book, "The Sabbath," is the "great cathedral" of Judaism, a temple built in time. "Technical civilization is the product of labor, of man's exertion of power for the sake of gain, for the sake of producing goods," Heschel writes. "... The Sabbath is the day on which we learn the art of surpassing civilization."

Pope Francis argued much the same about Christianity's Sunday in his 2015 "Laudato Si'," an encyclical about caring for the natural world. Not resting is not just bad for the soul, he says, but it's also bad for the Earth. The constant drive to produce and consume more is squandering natural resources, and it prevents us from treating the living world, and one another, with dignity and respect. The Sabbath forces us to consider how we spend all our days. "Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world," Francis writes. "... We tend to demean contemplative rest as something unproductive and unnecessary, but this is to do away with the very thing which is most important about work: its meaning."

For Rabbi Laura Bellows of Dayenu, an organization mobilizing the United States' Jewish community to confront the climate crisis, the Sabbath has been essential to doing this work for the past 20 years. From Friday night until Saturday, she says she deliberately shuts off phones, email and screens, and avoids driving. Then she dedicates herself to connecting with things that give her and her community joy or pleasure in some way: being outdoors, singing, sharing a meal, attending synagogue and simply gathering with those she loves.

"Shabbat is one of the most radical things you could do," says Bellows, who credits the ritual for avoiding burnout. "One of the reasons we have a climate crisis right now is a product of disconnection, the result of undervaluing life, especially nonhuman life. Shabbat is a time of remembering we're not machines; we get to be human with all other life. That kind of connection is what powers environmental and climate movements."



The decline of a day of rest

This kind of rest from work was once the law. Sunday restrictions were once common across the United States. Sometimes known as “blue laws,” they prohibited things such as selling liquor, hunting and opening shops. Intended in part to encourage Sunday church attendance, the U.S. Supreme Court declared in 1884 that these also served a vital social mission to “protect all persons from the physical and moral debasement which comes from uninterrupted labor, ... especially to the poor and dependent, to the laborers in our factories and workshops and in the heated rooms of our cities.”

The decision was reaffirmed by the court in decisions during the 1960’s: “Sunday is a day apart from all others,” wrote Chief Justice Earl Warren in one.

Over time, however, this rationale has fallen out of favor. Although some counties still mandate some businesses stay closed on Sunday, and 28 U.S. states still restrict some alcohol sales that day, many of these “obsolete and nonsensical” laws, as one American University legal scholar put it in 2022, have been repealed or struck down.

That is not just because of the decline of religiosity in America. “The primary motivation has been economic,” writes political scientist Sara Zeigler. “With increased competition and people on the move around the clock, many businesses cannot afford to lose a full day’s revenues by remaining closed on Sunday.”

The concept has always been a demanding “time experiment,” argues Schorsch, even for the ancient Israelites. The practice was ridiculed from the start: Prominent Romans mocked Jews for “shameful sloth” on their Sabbath. And it demanded precious time away from fields and labor. One day was set aside each week for rest, and a sabbatical year every seven years meant sowing was forbidden and the fields lay fallow. After 49 years, a Jubilee year, as described in the Torah, meant all enslaved people to be freed, debts forgiven and lands returned to ancestral owners, a societal reset leveling out socioeconomic inequalities. (Historians question whether the Jubilee year was fully practiced, but evidence exists of kings issuing similar proclamations around 2,000 years ago.)

A universal period of rest and reset has reemerged again and again as a way to deliver a more just world. “It is a hard ask, but that doesn’t mean it isn’t a worthy ask,” says Schorsch, who is advocating to bring it back.

A Green Sabbath

In 2019, Schorsch founded the Green Sabbath Project to incite a “mass movement to observe a weekly day of rest” for the secular and religious alike. This is not a spa day, but a modern version of what the ancients practiced: avoiding work in factories and offices, or even in front of our laptops; opting out of driving or flying, or using engines of any kind for the day; putting off shopping; preparing food in advance; and ceasing incessant doing.

The immediate effect among millions of people, he calculates, could dial back emissions for at least one day a week with no new technology or spending. But the practice of doing nothing, he argues, can make people change the way they live year-round, by appealing to an ancient human ritual, rather than reason or even religion. Schorsch, of course, is asking a lot, more than most might appear willing to do. It’s far from assured that emissions will fall as he predicts. But spiritual practices can explode into mainstream culture with profound consequences. Look at yoga. In the 1950’s, the meditative practice from India was virtually unknown among Americans. By 2017, roughly 33 million adults were practicing it in the United States, or about 14 percent of that population, becoming firmly embedded in American medical, fitness and spiritual practices.

Nor is a day of rest an all-or-nothing proposition. Many are taking incremental steps toward an ancient wisdom, by observing a technology Shabbat, eschewing screens for 24 hours. Mexico City and Bogotá, Colombia, are handing over their streets to bicyclists and pedestrians every Sunday. In Bergen County, N.J., a Zip code boasting more retail sales than any other in the United States thanks to its four massive malls, residents have reaffirmed Sunday laws banning many retail sales, on the grounds of a healthier community.

Schorsch is now hoping to find more communities willing to undertake this radical experiment in time together. “Ultimately, as a society, we’re going to need to have ecological practices,” he says. “It’s not enough to impose laws. Do we solve [climate change] through technocratic solutions and policy, or do we solve it through new cultural, even spiritual approaches? One without the other is not going to be enough.”



How to do nothing

There’s no right way to practice a day of rest. Mine is by no means perfect. My to-do list sneaks up on me. I fight the gravitational pull of notifications and alerts. I sometimes miss my deadline of Friday at sunset. But I find the rewards keep growing. Along the way, I’ve learned a few tricks to keep responsibilities and demands at bay, if only for a day.

- Pick something you love just for the pleasure of it. If something brings you unadulterated joy, no matter how small or silly, this is the time to do it. The key is to find things that let you connect with, not disconnect from, the people and places around you.
- Find a community to share it with. You can join a congregation, but even a friend or a spouse can be enough. Keeping a Sabbath, at its heart, is a communal act. “It helps to have other people,” Bellows says. “I couldn’t do it without them. Those are accountability tools that help me keep the practice.”
- Any amount of time can be a Sabbath. Rest is a privilege. Many of us can’t set aside an entire day free from the responsibilities of work or family. A weekend at home with your kids is hard to call rest. Even Shabbat moments can help. But carve out as many as you can, brief as they may be, and see where it leads.

I've found keeping a day of rest surprisingly difficult to do. But, for me, it seems to help make everything else possible, including writing a weekly column about what to do about our overheating planet.

Climate Coach from The Washington Post



Linda Graf

Green Team Committee

MUSIC



Music at SCUCC is having an exciting year. Our choir continues to grow, and will be singing new and exciting music for many Sunday Worship celebrations this coming winter and spring.

On Sunday morning, December 14, we presented a complete performance of the Christmas Oratorio by Camille Saint-Saens. Guest soloists and orchestra filled the church with joyful sounds and our choir sang beautifully. Many thanks to all our dedicated choir members, who rehearsed for 2 1/2 months to make this performance special.

We also thank those who did so much to contribute in other vital ways, including Charlene Gulbrandsen, who assisted with musical preparation, Gloria Garrett, who provided publicity and flyers, and Jean and Ric Walker who hosted one of several string players who drove in from Miami to play this performance. Both Charlene and Kelly Johnson, one of our newer choir members, sang with the professional soloists in ensembles and enhanced our performance even more.

On January 4, we will enjoy special music from Ruth Kahn, a guest violist who has performed in prestigious venues in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

Choir begins to rehearse again on January 7, and will next sing on Sunday morning, January 11. For anyone interested in joining the Choir, please contact MacKenzie after any service or by texting her at 203-517-5427.

And then, on February 8 at 3 PM, we will present a concert by one of the world's preeminent organists, Hector Olivera. People will be coming in from considerable distances to hear this genius play and talk, so be sure to be early for this special event. You will finally hear our organ played as it was meant to be heard!

For complete information on all of our exciting upcoming events, please take a look at the next two pages.

Mackenzie Albert
Music Director and the Music Committee

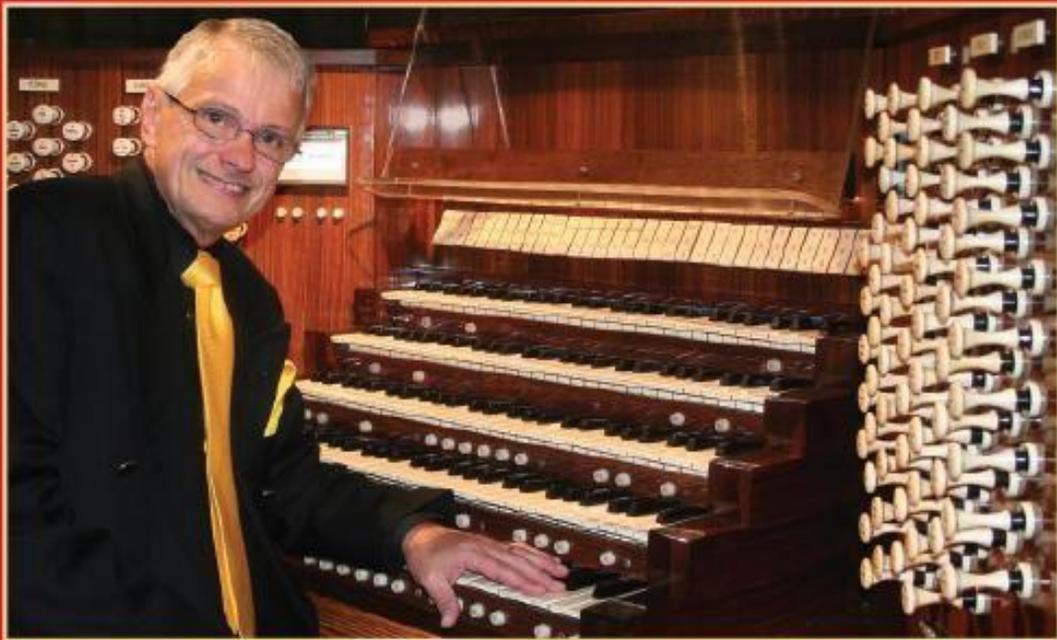


MUSIC@SCUCC

presents

February 8 at 3:00pm

An Organ Celebration Concert with **Hector Olivera**



Cited as “one of the greatest organists in the world today,” Hector Olivera brings prodigious technical proficiency and charismatic personality to Music@SCUCC.

Learn more about Advent Music Festival Sunday and
The 2025-2026 Music@SCUCC Concert Series at SanibelUCC.org

SANIBEL
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED
CHURCH
CHRIST

2050 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, FL 33957
239-472-0497 Free will offering

MUSIC@SCUCC

Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 AT 3:00 PM

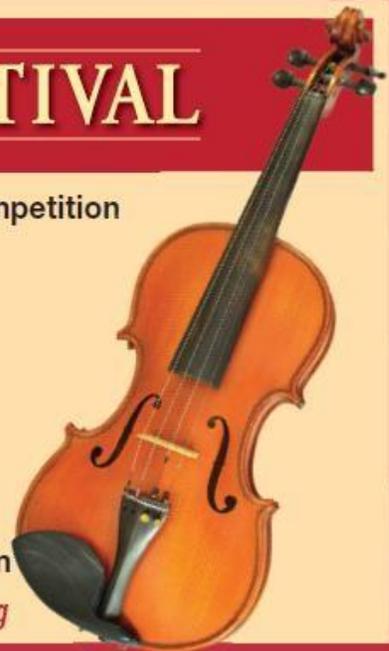
**Organ Celebration Concert with
Hector Olivera, world renowned organist**



SANIBEL *Music* FESTIVAL

- Tues, March 3 2025 Cliburn International Piano Competition
Gold Medalist Aristo Sham 7:30pm
- Sat, March 7 Calidore String Quartet 7:30pm
- Tues, March 10 Viano String Quartet 7:30pm
- Sat, March 14 Boston Trio 7:30pm
- Sat, March 21 Opera Theater of Connecticut
Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber
2:00pm Matinee and 7:30pm
- Tues, March 24 Polonsky • Shifrin • Wiley Trio 7:30pm

For tickets and details visit our website at SanibelMusicFestival.org



SUNDAY, MARCH 29 AT 10:00 AM

**Lenten Music Festival Sunday with orchestra,
guest soloists, guest organist, and chorus**



SUNDAY, APRIL 19 AT 3:00 PM

**American Opera Scenes and Arias
featuring Menotti, Gershwin, and Bernstein**



**SANIBEL
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITED
CHURCH
CHRIST**

The Music@SCUCC Series
2050 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel, FL 33957
239-472-0497 • Free will offering



Meet Our Church Leaders

Paul is a long-time resident of Sanibel and Ft. Myers, and first joined SCUCC in 1993.

He has held a variety of positions in this church from Treasurer to Moderator, along with serving on various committees, and currently serves as Chair of the Pastoral Support Committee, as well as a member of the Nominating Committee and Music committees. In addition, Paul is a member of the Choir.

Originally from Southeast Missouri, he earned his engineering degree from the University of Missouri and pursued further studies at Washington University and the University of Illinois.

He married Lucy at Westminster Presbyterian Church in St. Louis in 1957; their marriage lasted over 67 years until her passing in 2024. They have three children, two who are still living. Paul's family now numbers 18, including four generations.

Paul had a 35-year career with AT&T, during which he held various management positions and relocated multiple times before retiring in 1991 as President of the company's Texas Division. He was interim President of the Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce, then joined the main New Mexico power utility's board, which led him and Lucy to live in Santa Fe for five years before returning to Sanibel in 2002. He and Lucy enjoyed years of travel –especially to Europe.

Paul has served on various corporate and nonprofit boards, including the Boy Scouts of America, United Way, Chambers of Commerce, Arkansas Symphony, and Texas Business Education Coalition. Locally, he spent years on the SCCF board and was president twice.

He loves the outdoors and enjoys hiking mountain trails. Last June, at age 92 he hiked a trail above 10,000 feet. He also pursued studies in forestry years ago and gave serious consideration to establishing a career in this field. And now, Paul has rediscovered the joy of singing in the Church Choir and with the Shell Point Singers.

He cares about our church greatly and is eager to support the future of our congregation in any way he can.





Meet Our Church Leaders

My name is Shirley Akins, and I want to share my story as an enthusiastic member of SCUCC and the Church Council.

My introduction to SCUCC began about 20 years ago after a long hiatus from any church attendance. When my husband and I moved to Sanibel in 2004, I thought that I should get back to my church-going roots which started when I was growing up in Maysville, Kentucky, commonly known as the center of the universe. At least, that's what I believed and still do. So does everyone in Maysville. I attended the First Christian Church which was the choice of my parents, thus was my choice, too. Beautiful music, serious sermons, and a sense of tradition made me search out something that resembled the church of my youth.

As background for our eventual move to Sanibel, I should tell you that during my church attendance hiatus, I graduated from Indiana University and started my teaching career in the Indianapolis Public Schools. I stayed in that same school system for 33 years and loved almost every minute of my time there. Any teacher will tell you that there are certain times in teaching which will try even the best of us, but I felt that the experience was probably the most rewarding I could have had. I met and married Larry Akins during that time. He was the most adventurous and active guy I could have met. We sailed, skied, traveled, and met the most wonderful friends in all our adventures. Life was never dull. I inherited the most wonderful children, Brian and Kristi, who have been in my life for 45 years. Larry sold his business in Indianapolis in 1999 and bought a business in Grand Rapids, Michigan close to where we had spent our summers on our sailboat. In 2004, we moved to Saugatuck, Michigan where we now reside in the summers and to Sanibel where we enjoy our winters.

This brings me back to the church that I now call home. I spent many years going to the very early service enjoying the serenity and peace of that service. I was asked to be a Deacon by Sharon Hannon in 2019 and my SCUCC education began. When Ian struck, I started attending our Refuge services which I enjoyed immensely and have kept up steady attendance since then. I became the Chair of the Board of Deacons in 2023, and I love serving with the other wonderful Deacons. I enjoy being in a church that is very accepting of all people, and I love the fellowship of our members. I am sure that I chose the best church for me. I look forward to hearing Rev. Boyea's Message every Sunday, and I love seeing all the people in Fellowship. It was a long hiatus from attending church, but it turned out beautifully.



Fellowship Time, Please Consider Volunteering

Please consider volunteering your time to serve during our Fellowship Time after Worship. It's a wonderful way to contribute to our community, connect with others, and give back to our spiritual home. If you have any questions concerning volunteering, please reach out to Shirley Akins at akinsteach@gmail.com.

Here's how you can help:

1. **Sign Up to Serve** – Select a Sunday and mark it on your calendar! You'll find a sign-up sheet on the table at the back of Fellowship Hall. Serving is easy, and help will be available if needed.
2. **Bring a Treat** – If you love to bake or have a favorite snack to share, consider bringing it along to make our Fellowship Time even more special. Beverages are also welcome.
3. **Contribute to Fellowship Time** – If serving isn't for you, a donation is a meaningful way to support this cherished time together.

Your time, treats, or donations will be deeply appreciated, making our gatherings warm and welcoming for everyone. Thank you for considering this opportunity to serve and strengthen our community!



Participation At SCUCC

Be An Artist

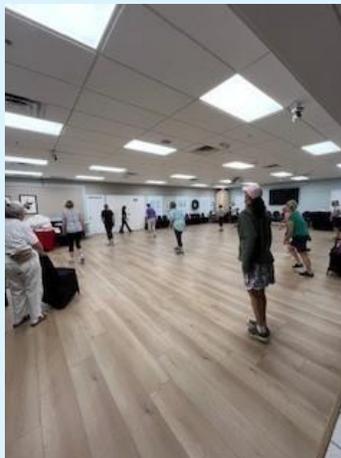


Join Carol and Friends on Tuesdays in Fellowship Hall for painting, pointers and conversation. Whether you are a skilled artist, or just starting out, come join the fun from 11:00 am – 2:00 pm.



Get Healthy

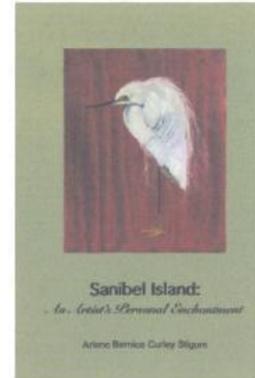
Santiva Islanders with Mahnaz Bassir for cardio & strength on Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 9:30 am – 10:30 am. Stay tuned to find out when an additional class will be added to the schedule.



Artist of the Month



Arlene Stigum



Arlene's interest are the worlds revealed through the guidance of God's good Spirit.

This new world began in 1988 when Arlene started writing which resulted in many works with one recently published. Spiritually delivered visual vignettes prompted her to begin painting in 1993 which she did privately. Words followed the paintings opening spiritual doors.

In 1996, Arlene went full time in the spiritual painting which led to words revealing spiritual understandings. She had numerous shows in Boston, New York City, Pebble Beach, Carmel and Sanibel, in particular Big Arts. A member of SCAL Sanibel Captiva Art League and a lifetime member of FMBAA Fort Myers Beach Art Association.

Once the painting was completed, words flowed, one door opening to another, bridging two worlds. For a period of time, Arlene assisted some by meditating on scripture and sharing what rested upon her, to help them to welcome back what was temporarily misplaced.

Arlene's book "Sanibel Island: An Artist's Personal Enchantment", is a compilation of some of her paintings, photographs and intuitive writings, and is available for sale at Big Arts. Uniting words and images.

Arlene lives year round on Sanibel Island with her pup, Precious, where she is a contemporary visual artist and Precious her gentle critic and companion.

Phone/Text (831) 293-4300



21 Beacon Street



Rounding Choices



Grey Lady



Winthrop Square

Pictures from our December Fellowship

Sanibel Congregational UCC & Bat Yam Temple of the Islands Potluck Dinner, December 7th, 2025



Christmas Oratorio December 14, 2025



Pictures from Christmas Eve





From the Mission & Benevolence Committee

Our next SCUCC & Bat Yam Food Drive will be Wednesday, January 21st, running from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM in the Church Parking Driveway.

Please stop by and hand off your donation to one of the representatives from SCUCC or Bat Yam.



1. Non-perishable food items
2. Bath and kitchen paper products

Collected donations will benefit local neighbors in need through F.I.S.H. and the Gladiolus Food Pantry.

If you are interested in assisting with this effort, please contact:
Ed Hannon, Mission and Benevolence Committee Member: (239) 240-7524

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 visit or contact the office.



*Floral dedications will be featured
in the weekly bulletin.*

BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

January 3: Ann Humphrey, Mary Perkins

January 4: Dennis Elsberry

January 7: Sue Prather

January 8: Fred Gobel

January 11: Rick Paulson

January 12: Carol Good

January 13: Kitten Nickoley

January 14: Linda Convertine

January 16: Carolee Fogg

January 17: Donald Hunter

January 18: Elizabeth Hayes

January 21: James Miller, Nancy Strayer

January 22: Ed Hannon

January 25: Marilyn Hooper, Ric Walker

January 26: Jane Ramseth

January 28: Paul Roth

January 29: Catrina Drotleff

January 30: Eric Weise

January 31: Robert Eidem, Jim Irwin, Thomas Juedes

Happy Birthday Everyone!



Shell Point Women's Group January Luncheon

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Women's Group will have its next monthly luncheon meeting on **January 9th at 11:30 am at the Palm Grill in the Woodlands Common**. Please make reservations with Susan Schmitt at sudischmitt@gmail.com.



Shell Point Men's Group January Luncheon

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Men's Group will have its next monthly luncheon meeting on **January 14th at noon at the Palm Grill in the Woodlands Common**. Please make reservations with Bruce Findley at bruce.findley@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". If you would like to participate, please send your names, email addresses and phone numbers to Shirley Akins at akinsteach@gmail.com.



Interested in being a Liturgist?

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.

Ushers Wanted

If you would like to be added to the contact list to serve as an usher for our Sunday Worship, please reach out to Inky Meng at inkymeng@hotmail.com.

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.



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.

FEBRUARY 2026 SANIBEL LIGHT DEADLINE

Please note that the deadline for submissions to the February edition of the *Sanibel Light* is **Friday, January 23, 2026.**

Please send all submissions as a Word document to:

Tammy Flatley
Church Administrator at
tammy@sanibelucc.org



YOU'VE GOT PLANS: SANIBEL & CAPTIVA



Sanibel and Captiva have so much to offer, please check out the events calendar at:

<https://sanibel-island.sanibel-captiva.org/events/>



**Wednesdays, January 7, 14, 21, 28, 2026
from 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM**

**4-session class fee: \$168 / \$135 annual donors
Beginning Student Kit: \$125**

Call the box office to register: 239-395-0900



Glass Fused Art – Thurs, Jan

January 8, 2026 -January 29, 2026

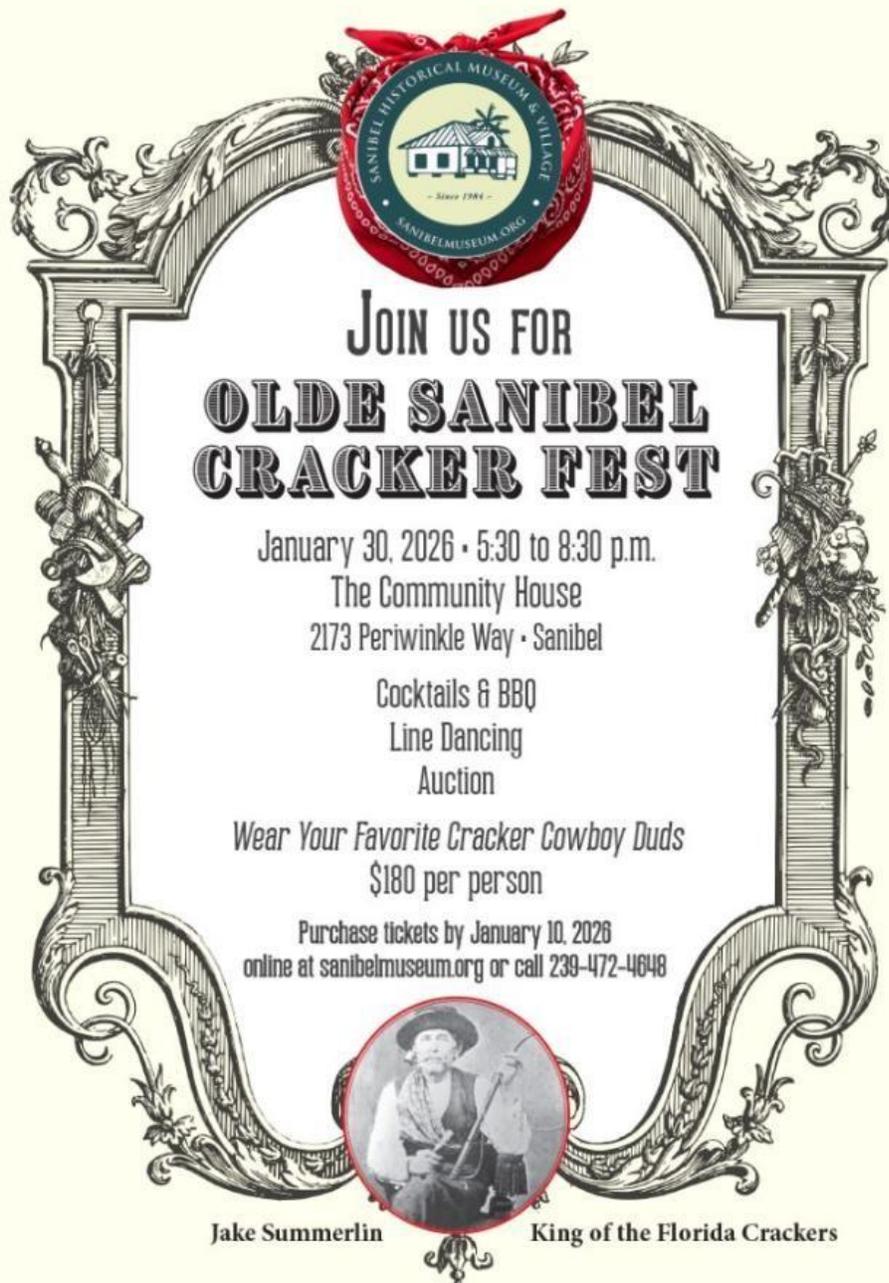


SANIBEL HISTORICAL
MUSEUM & VILLAGE

Preserve, share, and celebrate Sanibel's history.

Visit this website for more information:

<https://sanibelmuseum.org>





**JOIN US FOR
OLDE SANIBEL
CRACKER FEST**

January 30, 2026 • 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
The Community House
2173 Periwinkle Way • Sanibel

Cocktails & BBQ
Line Dancing
Auction

Wear Your Favorite Cracker Cowboy Duds
\$180 per person

Purchase tickets by January 10, 2026
online at sanibelmuseum.org or call 239-472-4648



Jake Summerlin **King of the Florida Crackers**

BITS & BOBS

Giving is Easy:

- 1. There are links to PayPal and Venmo on the church's homepage (www.sanibelucc.org).**
- 2. Automatic Payment Program (ACH) is available. To sign up, please send a request by email to terri@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**

Mark Boyea

mark@sanibelucc.org

239-312-8673

Tammy Flatley

tammy@sanibelucc.org

239-472-0497

office@sanibelucc.org

Office Hours

Monday – Friday

9:00-3:00pm