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| The Sanibel Light | | |  | October 2023 Volume 55 Isue 9 |
|  | | |  | In this issue  Worship returns to Sanibel  Welcome to Fellowship Hall  Hurricane Ian Recovery update  Healthy Happenings  Mental Health |
| NewsFrom 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**

**FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION**

In early August, several members of our spiritual community completed a week’s long exploration of the Book of Job. I’m not sure they’ve recovered yet. Or me.

To say that the Book of Job is challenging is like saying the past summer here was “warm”. The book presents a constant and lingering set of questions, quandaries, and curiosities in regard to its central theme of the nature of suffering, God’s role in it, and God’s and our response to it. It is, as one commentator puts it, perhaps the most familiar and, at the same time, least understood book in the Bible.

For example, the book has given rise to the popular expression, “*the patience of Job”.*

Not exactly. Throughout the narrative, Job is anything but patient. He constant argues with and rails at the three friends who at first come to comfort him but then quickly, as we can so often fall into, turn to blaming Job for his suffering. And Job also continually argues with and rails at *God.*

Then, of course there’s God. Despite Job’s constant pleas and demands for God to explain *why* he has lost everything, and his life turned to ashes, when God does finally show up at the end of the book, God offers nothing in the way of anything resembling a specific “this is the why of your suffering” answer.

But as understandably unsatisfying as that is to so many who have read and studied and tried to make sense of this story over the centuries, perhaps that is one of the most vital things the book may be suggesting to us. Perhaps one of the ways we might see this portrayal of God in a helpful – though probably not *completely* helpful manner – is that what matters more than *“Why?”* to God when it comes to suffering and tragedy is the response, the *“What now?”*

That certainly was in clear evidence a year ago in the aftermath of Ian. Of course, the *Why?* matters. It matters how buildings are constructed. It matters how land is developed. It matters how we treat and care for – or don’t care for - God’s creation. That matters and matters greatly going forward. But first and foremost, the *“What now?”* mattered. What mattered most was saving people; offering them shelter and food and water; helping them clear and clean up; giving them comfort and support. And over and over again, that’s what we saw people do. Over and over again, that’s what *you* did.

That was what mattered most at that time, and still matters most in this continued time of suffering and struggle for so many. It was what Job’s friends did for a brief time before they turned to blame and condemnation. And in the end, while God does not provide a specific answer to the *Why?* of Job’s suffering, God does call his friends to task for making blame and condemnation of Job their priority over offering him shelter, food and water; helping him to clear and clean up; giving him comfort and support.

The Book of Job then, suggests, among many other things, that we are called to be the *“What now?”* people of a *“What now?”* God. As we were during Ian and its aftermath. As we have been in the year since. As we will continue to be.

Blessings,

Mark

Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea

Senior Minister

**Worship Notes**

**WORSHIP RETURNS TO SANIBEL THIS SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8!**

**As previously announced, we are set to return to SUCC for Worship in Fellowship Hall at 10 AM this Sunday, October 8.**

**The space will be ready, we will have the front elevator operating, and chairs will be set up and waiting for you.**

**In addition, on this day when we celebrate our return, there will be a second celebration as we commemorate Fred Nordstrom’s 95th birthday. Lunch, cake and ice cream will be served courtesy of Fred’s family immediately following Worship.**

**What a day it will be after our long year of displacement! …**

On the first Sunday of August and second Sunday of September, we celebrated the Sacrament of Communion together as a spiritual community.

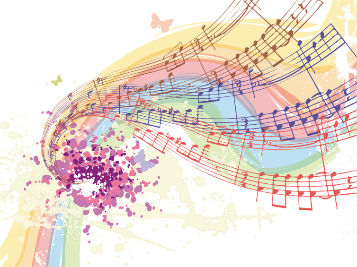
Also, in August and September, we were blessed with guest preachers Brian Culbertson, Pastor of our host Refuge Church on August 27 and Rev. Dr. Sally Haynes on September 3 as Mark took his traditional end of summer two-week break.

For October, we celebrated the Sacrament of Communion on Sunday, October 1.

Lastly, our next ***“Ask the Minister Sunday”*** will take place **Sunday, October 22.** Instead of a Message that morning, Mark will instead address as many of your biblical, theological and spiritual questions as time allows.

Please email your questions to Mark ahead of time at [mark@sanibelucc.org](mailto:mark@sanibelucc.org), text them to 908-477-5426, or simply come ready to ask them.

These Sundays continue to be thought-provoking, insightful, and enjoyable.

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**Spiritual Growth Opportunities**

**Our Spiritual** **Exploration programming resumed Tuesday, October 3 at 7pm**, **with a new unit focused on discipleship:**

***“Pillars of Strength: Foundations of Lifelong Spiritual Growth”***

Tuesdays: October 10, 17, 24 (and 31 if needed)

7:00-8:15pm on Zoom only.

During this unit, we will look at a framework for lifelong discipleship built upon four “pillars”: Worship; Study; Service and Community. Each week we will examine one of the pillars in depth, discussing its roots in the biblical text and Christian tradition, while also exploring various aspects of each and different ways it can be practiced.

We look forward to beginning a new series of units that will go from now until next August.

**Bible Study resumes THIS Thursday, October 5 at 11am.**

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

**We hope you will take the time to join in.**



**Deacons Corner**

Things have run smoothly for the deacons this summer although many church members were still up north or other places.   We have continued to support our senior minister and worship services liturgically and afterwards with fellowship time filled with delicious goodies!

Only one dinner for six group continued during the summer but we are hopeful the others will begin shortly after November or the holidays.

We are looking forward to Sunday services at our own location soon.

Many, many thanks to the dedicated deacons who continue to give their time so unselfishly:

Shirley Aikens, Joan Burns, Gail Creager, Nancy Deffenbaugh, Sherry Halleran, Judy Palaia, Jane Ramseth and Linda Winn.  Also, a hearty thanks to the spouses who supported us, as well:  Joe Burns, Neal Halleran, Frank Palaia and Chuck Ramseth.

Jill Bugby hung in there with us, too!

Always in His service,

Kathy Y. Carter, Chair

Deacon Board

**A Word from our Moderator**

**Dear SCUCC Community**

**Greetings from Erie Pa. I chose not to be on Island last week- I don’t think being there in the anniversary of Ian would have worked for me. However, I am looking forward to traveling this week to Sanibel to celebrate the relocation of our worship services on our island, in our own building.**

**We will not yet be in our Sanctuary, but we will be in our newly restored Fellowship Hall.**

**The elevators are functioning but will need an attendant, which will be supplied by the elevator company starting at 9:00 am.**

**The grounds are being cleaned and prepared for replanting.**

**Plans are being considered for lower-level redesign.**

**What a blessing.**

**Diana Day, Moderator**

A room with tables and chairs

Description automatically generatedA room with stairs and a ladder

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**Healthy Happenings**

Mental Health

The first week in October is National Mental Illness Awareness Week and October 3 is a Day of Prayer for those affected by neurotransmitter brain disorders- the individual affected, the family and friends who provide care, professionals in the field of mental health, and advocates for policy change/improvement in mental health care.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic practically every American either has personally grappled with mental health problems or knows someone who has. The pandemic did not cause the mental health crisis, but it did exacerbate the crisis that was already there.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act, and helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Mental illnesses are disorders, ranging from mild to severe, that affect a person’s thinking, mood, and/or behavior. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, nearly one-in-five adults live with a mental illness.

Not sure if you or someone you know is living with mental health problems? Experiencing one or more of the following feelings or behaviors can be an early warning sign of a problem:

• Eating or sleeping too much or too little

• Pulling away from people and usual activities

• Having low or no energy

• Feeling numb or like nothing matters

• Having unexplained aches and pains

• Feeling helpless or hopeless

• Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual

• Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared

• Yelling or fighting with family and friends

• Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships

• Having persistent thoughts and memories you can't get out of your head

• Hearing voices or believing things that are not true

• Thinking of harming yourself or others

• Inability to perform daily tasks like taking care of your kids, getting to work or school, attending social activities you use to enjoy, or even attending to basic hygiene.

Do you think someone you know may have a mental health problem? As individuals and as a faith community, we have a mission to love our neighbor, help the poor, the hungry, the needy and lonely, to bring comfort and cheer to the weary. That mission certainly includes those with a mental illness. It is not so easy to recognize those with a mental illness. Sometimes we don’t even recognize it in ourselves. We need to be alert to each other, to really listen and observe, and have the courage to step up and help in any way we can. Many times just being a friend or including someone who seems alone can help. A smile and a caring, listening presence can be a powerful encouragement. As always, our help should begin with prayer asking God to guide us and be with us as we encounter one another, remembering that He is the great Healer and the lover of our souls.

Joanne Halt from the National Alliance on Mental Illness sent a beautiful prayer that I would like to share with you.

O God of Light and Knowledge, -- we pray that darkness, fear and ignorance about serious mental illnesses might be dispelled by the light of knowledge.

            We pray for Peace and Wholeness – for those with troubled minds and hearts, that broken lives and relationships might be mended.

            We ask for Understanding -- that the walls of stigma, labels, exclusion and marginalization might be broken down through education and advocacy

            We pray for Healing -- for men, women and children living with mental illness, for better treatment, for steadier recovery, for greater opportunity to work and serve.

            We ask for Faith and Hope – for those who feel no one cares.  Dispel their despair through our care- an outstretched arm, a listening ear, a committed advocate.

            We offer our Thanks - for new discoveries in medical research, for faithful caregivers, for dedicated mental health professionals and persistent researchers.

            Most of all, O God of Steadfast Love, we thank you for your Love -- that sustains the weary, that defends the weak, that strengthens families, that inspires courage to hope, to watch, to work for a new and brighter day.

Caring for you and your health,

Linda Convertine, Parish Nurse

**Mission and Benevolence Committee**

**Neighbors in Need (NIN)**

**Neighbors in Need is one of the United Church of Christ’s special offerings. It supports the ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.**

**One-third of the offering supports the Council for American Indian ministry (CAIM). Forebearers of the UCC established churches and worked with Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Mandan. Hidatsa, Arickara, and Hocak in North and South Dakota, Wisconsin and northern Nebraska. Today there are 20 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These church and their pastors are supported by CAIM. CAIM is also a resource for more than 1,000 individuals from other tribes and nations who are members of UCC congregations throughout the U.S.**

**Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches to support justice initiatives, advocacy efforts and direct service projects. Justice and Witness Ministries continues strong policy advocacy work on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties and environmental justice.**

**The theme for this year is “BEHOLD, “taken from Genesis 1:31, “God saw everything God made and behold, it was very good.” The focus is on environmental justice and God’s creation. Plastics, electronics and non-compostable wastes are being disposed of in our waterways and landfills. We, as members of the United Church of Christ, stand against this with the belief that we must become better stewards of our planet.**

**The NIN offering will be received on October 15th. Special offering envelopes will be available, or you may designate NIN on your check.**

**We can make a difference. Please give generously!**

**Candy Atchison (for the Mission and Benevolence Committee)**



[This Photo](https://www.flickr.com/photos/kullez/14757363609/) by Unknown Author is licensed und[CC BY](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/)

**The Green Team**

**Why are trees so important to our ecosystem and how could we protect them?**

**First, trees keep wildlife healthy**

As you know, trees help wildlife by [providing materials for them to eat and build a home](https://citizensclimatelobby.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5bbb8e41445e981521eed8f2a&id=a9338632f0&e=76b96a575a). Some animals, such as birds and deer, eat foliage or nuts and berries produced by trees. Trees provide a home for many animals, such as birds and squirrels. Beavers are well known for cutting down trees to build dams and other important structures. These structures create a safe environment for animals to reproduce and hide from predators.

**Second, trees clean up air pollution**

As you know, c[limate change is the trapping of greenhouses gases in the atmosphere](https://citizensclimatelobby.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5bbb8e41445e981521eed8f2a&id=e1994b62fa&e=76b96a575a), causing lots of negative effects on the health of the planet and all living things on it.  Fortunately, trees and healthy forests help reduce air pollution caused by climate change. When dirty atmospheric particles land on the surface of a tree or leaf, [they are removed from the atmosphere and absorbed by the plant](https://citizensclimatelobby.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5bbb8e41445e981521eed8f2a&id=75b121e160&e=76b96a575a). This is also the case for the removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. [Through photosynthesis](https://citizensclimatelobby.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5bbb8e41445e981521eed8f2a&id=ac95a1bda0&e=76b96a575a), leaves absorb carbon dioxide to feed cells, in turn producing oxygen. Each year, American forests pull the equivalent of 12% of America’s carbon pollution out of the air.

**Third, trees reduce heat**

Climate change has caused excessive heat to get trapped in our atmosphere, severely elevating temperatures. In some American cities, trees are often sparse in neighborhoods with more low-income families and people of color. On a hot day, these neighborhoods can experience temperatures more than 15°F hotter than wealthier neighborhoods in the same city. Planting trees is [the cheapest, fastest, and most effective way](https://citizensclimatelobby.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5bbb8e41445e981521eed8f2a&id=47550f44ad&e=76b96a575a) to directly lower temperatures and save lives in cities. Adequate tree coverage can [reduce temperatures as much as 10°F](https://citizensclimatelobby.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5bbb8e41445e981521eed8f2a&id=20d1d3b1db&e=76b96a575a).

For this same reason, trees help lower the strain on electrical grids. A heat-triggered power outage in a major city could leave millions at risk of heat stroke and heat exhaustion. Because trees help keep things cooler, they reduce air conditioning usage and the risk of a major power failure.

**How could we support trees and their impact?**

We could support the following policies currently in Congress:

* [The FOREST Act](https://citizensclimatelobby.us9.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5bbb8e41445e981521eed8f2a&id=649ba9305c&e=76b96a575a) which fights deforestation worldwide by restricting the importation of products made of commodities produced on land undergoing illegal deforestation.
* The Growing Climate Solutions Act, which facilitates the participation of farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners in voluntary environmental credit markets.

**Other individual actions**

“Every year, Americans flush the equivalent of millions of trees down the toilet.Much of it comes from trees[logged in Canada’s species-rich boreal forests](https://s2.washingtonpost.com/399c9b2/642c58aef19a510b04355fae/5d38f8c49bbc0f59fa538b4c/23/40/642c58aef19a510b04355fae), which store about the same amount of carbon as three decades’ worth of[fossil fuel emissions](https://s2.washingtonpost.com/399c9b3/642c58aef19a510b04355fae/5d38f8c49bbc0f59fa538b4c/24/40/642c58aef19a510b04355fae).” Since most toilet paper is made from virgin trees (what a bummer!), it is worthwhile seeking out toilet paper from recycled paper.

Additionally, we could install inexpensive bidets under our toilet seats. “Bidets require about[one-eighth of a gallon](https://s2.washingtonpost.com/399c9b4/642c58aef19a510b04355fae/5d38f8c49bbc0f59fa538b4c/25/40/642c58aef19a510b04355fae) of water per use**.** That’s a fraction of what’s required to make the amount of toilet paper needed for the same purpose.

Climate Coach, The Washington Post, April 4. 2023

https://www.monstertreeservice.com/monster-tips/general-tips/trees-support-wildlife/#:~:text=Trees%20provide%20habitats%20for%20birds,and%20stay%20protected%20from%20predators.

**Bat Yam**

**Simchat Torah With Bat Yam and Peace Lutheran**

All members and friends of SCUCC are invited to celebrate Simchat Torah, the celebration marking the end of one annual cycle of public Torah readings and the beginning of another, with the Temple Bat Yam and Peace Lutheran communities **this coming Friday from 6:30-8:30 at Peace Lutheran Church, 15840 McGregor Boulevard, Fort Myers.**

Following a brief Shabbat service, Rabbi Sunny Schnitzer of Bat Yam will lead us on a journey through the Torah, the first five books of the Bible for us in the Christian tradition. Rabbi Schnitzer, Rev. Andreas Stein of Peace Lutheran, and our Rev. Mark will offer commentary along the way.

Please join us for this special interfaith event.

**Announcements**

**INTERESTED IN JOINING SCUCC???**

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

**Shell Point Men’s Group October Luncheon**

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Men's Group will have its next monthly luncheon meeting on **Tuesday, October 10 at noon at the Palm Grill in the Woodlands Common**. Please make reservations with Candy Atchison at [JimAtch@aol.com](mailto:JimAtch@aol.com) or 561-714-4655.

**Shell Point Women’s Group October Luncheon**

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Women’s Group will have its next monthly luncheon meeting on **Friday, October 13 at Noon at the Palm Grill in Woodlands Common**. Please make reservations with Emily Kletzien at [emily.kletzien@gmail.com](mailto:emily.kletzien@gmail.com).

**Current Office Schedule**

As we move closer to a full return to the church campus, things have moved far enough along that **the Church Office is now open Monday-Thursday, from 9am-3pm**. Then later this fall, we expect the office to return to being open Monday-Friday during those same hours.

**NOVEMBER 2023 SANIBEL LIGHT DEADLINE**

Please note that the deadline for submissions to the November 2023 edition of the *Sanibel Light* is **Friday, October 20.**

Please send all submissions in **Microsoft** **Word Format** to Jenny Chacon, Church Administrator at [jenny@sanibelucc.org](mailto:jenny@sanibelucc.org)

**You’ve Got Plans**

**Sanibel & Captiva Events**

**SCBWA October 17, Luncheon**

**Sanibel Captiva Business Women’s Association**

**Join us for the SCBWA October Luncheon, a fun-filled in-person gathering featuring guest speaker Alison Hussey of C.R.O.W.**

**Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille - Sanibel Island, Island Inn Road, Sanibel, FL, USA**

Join us for an exciting in-person luncheon at **Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille** on beautiful Sanibel Island, Florida. Get ready for a delightful gathering filled with great food, networking opportunities, and engaging conversations. Our October Luncheon is the perfect chance to connect with fellow professionals in a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. Don't miss out on this fantastic event!

**Location:** Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille - Sanibel Island, Island Inn Road, Sanibel, FL, USA

**October 26**

Pink Out Picnic 11:30AM -1:30PM

Sanibel Fire Station 2351 Palm Ridge Rd

All Survivors Free & Others by Donation

RSVP Online at PinkOutPicnic.com

**Novemeber 7**

PINK TEA PARTY 11:30AM-1:30PM

Cielo Restautant 1244 Periwinkle Way Sanibel

Tickets $50 per person

PinkOutTea.com

**Bits & Bobs**

**Like A Ride To Worship??**

If you would like a ride from Shell Point or Cypress Cove, please contact the Church Office at [office@sanibelucc.org](mailto:office@sanibelucc.org) **by Noon on Thursdays.**

**Giving is Easy:**

**1. PayPal link is available from the church’s homepage (www.sanibelucc.org)**

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

**3. Checks payable to SCUCC can be mailed to:**

**Sanibel Congregational UCC 2050 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel FL 33957.**

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

**Mark Boyea**

**mark@sanibelucc.org**

**Jenny Chacon**

**jenny@sanibelucc.org**

**office@sanibelucc.org**

**Office Hours**

**Monday – Thursday**

**9:00-3:00pm**

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