SANIBEL CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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ISSUE 2

The Sanibel Light

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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

There's knowing. And there's ***knowing.***

In our culture, the word *knowing is* most often used to refer to the acquisition of information. One *knows* the names of the countries in South America. One *knows* how many feet there are in a mile. One *knows* the formula for carbon dioxide or the area of a triangle.

However, in the Bible and Christian spiritual tradition (as well as most spiritual traditions I am aware of), *knowing* more often refers to something else. It refers to *understanding; grasping;* and even more so, making something *a part of us* – body, mind, heart and spirit.

Recently, I experienced *that* kind of *knowing*…

On a morning about three weeks ago, Cindy and I had occasion to be on the east coast of Florida. As it was a near perfect morning, we decided to walk around and look for a coffee shop to try. After about 15 minutes, we came across one that looked inviting and, as Cindy quickly determined, had solid reviews online. So in we went.

What that quick review of online reviews didn't indicate was that this particular coffee shop was clearly owned and operated by Jewish people. What gave it away? Everyone behind the counter was speaking Hebrew, and all the signs just inside the front door were written in that same language. In addition, by the number of men inside wearing kippahs, it seemed that almost all of the patrons were also Jewish.

My first thought was "Cool". It was going to be like being around our friends from Bat Yam at one of our joint gatherings. But then, I had a moment – one of those moments in which something you know becomes something you ***know.***

Without any conscious thought at all, I immediately began to scan the place for any signs that something might be out of place, for any sign that it might not be safe in there, any sign that someone might want to do harm to those inside.

And in that act, I ***knew***. As I was scanning that coffee shop, it came to me:

"This is what it must be like to be Jewish every day, or at least a whole lot more than it is for me. What it's like to be Jewish in so many parts of the world, including our own. What it's been like for so much of history."

And yes, it's not like I didn't know that before. I have been well aware of that information – that fact - for almost all of my adult life. But there's knowing. And there's ***knowing. Knowing*** as in grasping something viscerally; at a gut level; in body, mind, heart and spirit.

But it wasn't just a moment of *knowing* in reference to our Jewish sisters and brothers. It was also a moment of that same *knowing* in regard to *all* those who, unlike me, have to constantly be aware of and vigilant in terms of their being perceived by others as "less than"; as unequal; as unworthy of being seen as fully human for whatever reason.

"This is what it must be like to be them too" I also thought…

That *knowing* is at the heart of what is identified in both psychological and spiritual language as the practice of *empathy*.

And while there are those in our time who denigrate that idea – some in our tradition who in this time insist that it's even s*inful*, it is no such thing. In truth, it is one of the most consistent – and highest - calls of the God, the prophets and the Jesus of the Bible. Throughout the Bible, we are called to identify with those not like us, especially those who are not seen and treated as the equally loved and valued people of God they are.

Called to see; to understand; to *know* - as best as we can – what it is like to be them. *Know* in our bodies, minds, hearts and spirits. Make that *knowing* – and therefore them – a part of us.

Because in God's eyes, there's knowing. And there's ***knowing.***

Blessings,

Mark
Rev. Dr. Mark Boyea, Senior Minister

WORSHIP NOTES

In **January**, we ushered in the New Year by celebrating the Sacrament of Communion on Sunday, January 4.

On Sunday, January 11, we welcomed back Rev. Dr. Sally Haynes as Worship leader and preacher while Mark was away.

On Sunday, January 18, we remembered the life and work of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the vital place of justice and equality in the Christian spiritual tradition.

Then, on Sunday, January 25, Mark offered his latest *Ask the Minister* time during Worship, which was followed by our 2025 Annual Meeting…

In **February,** we will celebrate the **Sacrament of Communion on Sunday, February 1.**

On **Sunday, February 8,** we will formally dedicate and bless our new organ, to be followed that afternoon by a dedication concert featuring world renowned organist **Hector Olivera** *(see more on this later in this edition of The Light).

On **Sunday, February 15,** our friends **The Suncoast Brass** will be with us on for Presidents' Day weekend.

Then, on **Wednesday, February 18,** we enter the sacred season of **Lent with an Ash Wednesday** commemoration at **Noon in the Sanctuary.** In addition, **Mark will be available in the Sanctuary to distribute ashes to all who wish to receive them from 10am-11:30am and again from 1pm-3pm.**

Finally, **Sunday, February 22** is the **First Sunday in Lent.** Our theme for this year is ***He Said What???!!!***, which will focus on some of the more puzzling and "hard" things which Jesus says in the Gospels.

In addition, that Sunday is also **Choir Appreciation Sunday,** on which we will honor our Choir for its vital contributions to our Worship experience.

ASH WEDNESDAY COMMEMORATION, Wednesday, February 18 at NOON

The sacred season of Lent begins on **Wednesday, February 18 at noon in the SCUCC Sanctuary** with a contemplative time of prayer, Scripture, music, readings, a Reflection from Mark, and the Distribution of Ashes.

In addition, Mark will be available in the Sanctuary that day to distribute ashes to all who wish from 10 AM - 11:30 AM and again from 1 PM - 3 PM.

Lenten Theme 2026 – *He Said What???!!!*

Beginning **Sunday, February 22**, our theme for Lent this year will be ***He Said What???!!!***

Each Sunday in Lent, with the exception of **Sunday, March 8**, which will be our annual **Pulpit Exchange Sunday,** and **Palm Sunday, March 29,** which will be **Lenten Music Festival Sunday,** we will explore some of the more puzzling and "hard" things Jesus says in the Gospels.

Pulpit Exchange Weekend: March 6-8

Our annual **Pulpit Exchange Weekend** in collaboration with our sisters and brothers from Bat Yam, will take place on March 6-8.

On Friday, March 6, at 7 PM in Fellowship Hall, Mark will offer a Message to the Bat Yam community. Then, on Sunday, March 8 at 10 AM in the Sanctuary, Rabbi Sunny will bless the SCUCC community with a Teaching.

SANIBEL CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH CHRIST

Bat Yam Temple of the Islands

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 Monday, February 16th in observance of President's 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 February, Bible Study will meet on the following dates from 10:30 am-11:45 am on Zoom:

Friday, February 6 - Please Note change of day for that week
Week of February 9 - TBA
Thursday, February 19
Thursday, February 26

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 unit begins on Tuesday evening, February 10!

An Unlikely Lent

Dates: Tuesdays, February 10, 17 and 24; March 3, 10 and 24
Times: 7:00-8:15 pm on Zoom * (Procedures are being put in place to allow us to offer this unit both on Zoom and in person as soon after it starts as possible.)

During this six-week unit which begins shortly before the start of Lent and ends shortly before Holy Week, we will explore, as author and Methodist pastor Rachel Billups describes them, "unlikely" characters who appear near and at the end of Jesus' earthly story in the Gospels. We will discuss the role these characters - who we usually do not spend significant time with - play in that story, with an eye toward illuminating and deepening our own Lenten journey and spiritual life in general.

NOTE FROM OUR NEW MODERATOR – Frank Palaia

"How can I help?" is a mantra that began early in my life, starting in a Catholic school second grade play at Our Lady Star of the Sea Academy in New Jersey. I then spent 30 years working for patient and health care improvements in the medical device industry, and another 30 years educating high-school and college students about the wonders and challenges of science (I still teach three classes at FSW today).

As Moderator, I will look to continue to assist our church in the many projects and activities we have already planned and those we hope will emerge in 2026.

First, I want to focus upon the Memorial Garden, our church's 40th Anniversary celebration, first floor reconstruction, our building and grounds security upgrade, and our wonderful music programs. We are blessed to have smart and hard-working committees to accomplish these and other important goals this year! And I look forward to assisting them in finding additional members to help in carrying out these objectives.

Rejoicing in God's gift of today,
Frank Palaia, Moderator 2026

FROM THE DEACONS

Events to Remember

Choir Appreciation Sunday
February 22nd
Special Fellowship honoring our Choir

SCUCC 40th Anniversary Celebration
April 19th
We will have a celebratory luncheon after
our special Worship that day

Our thanks to our very loyal volunteers who serve
every Sunday as ushers or as Fellowship servers.

Our thanks to Barry and Cheryl Tice, who arrange flowers
for our members who cannot come to Worship.

Special thanks to Betty and Dennis Hayes,
who adopted Fellowship for Sunday, January 18th

Shirley Akins
Chair, Board of Deacons

HEALTHY HAPPENINGS

Medicare GUIDE Model

Recently, while researching Home Health options for a parishioner, I discovered an interesting eight-year pilot program initiated by Medicare in 2024. I believe it may be of interest to you, a family member, a friend, or an acquaintance.

GUIDE (Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience) Model is a voluntary, nationwide model testing the impact of providing comprehensive services and support for people with dementia and their caregivers. The model began on July 1, 2024 and will run for 8 years.

The GUIDE Model advances coordinated dementia care to support both people with dementia and their caregivers by providing evidence-based services including care navigation, 24/7 access to a support line, caregiver training and education, respite services up to $2,500 annually and connections to community resources. The respite services are in 4-hour blocks of time (units) and the units can be added together if you need more than 4 hours of respite at a given time. They are renewed every year in July, and the amount has increased from 2024 to 2025 because of the success of the program.

This Model is hoping to enable people with dementia to remain safely in their homes and communities longer, preventing or delaying nursing home placement and improving the quality of life for both patients and caregivers. This is also a strategy to reduce Medicare and Medicaid expenditures.

Eligibility for the program:

Diagnosis: You must have a confirmed diagnosis of Alzheimer's or another dementia.

Medicare: You need to be enrolled in Original Medicare (Parts A & B)

Exclusions: You cannot be in a long-term nursing home, on hospice, or enrolled in Medicare Advantage/Pace.

Who to Contact for More Information:

You can go to the Medicare website or try to call CMS but that could be a bit difficult and frustrating. I called the Dubin Center located on New Brittany Blvd. in Ft. Myers and was happy to find out that the Dubin Center is the Care Network for the GUIDE Model in this area. I spoke to Kelsie who was very pleasant and helpful. She stated that they have about 70 people enrolled in this area and that the program is going very well. It has proven to be very helpful for both the caregivers and those living with dementia. You just have to give them a call, and they will do the verification of eligibility and assign you a Care Navigator who will help you navigate the program and all that it offers. Their telephone number is 239-437-3007.

Please let me know if this has been helpful to you or to a friend. If anyone enrolls in the program I would be interested in any comments you might have.

Caring for you and your health,

Linda Convertine,
Parish Nurse

John 15:12

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

FROM THE GREEN TEAM

In an age where environmental sustainability is at the forefront of many people's minds, the way we clean our dishes comes under scrutiny. Are we making the best choices for our planet? Are dishwashers the eco-friendly ally they are touted to be, or is old-school hand washing still the champion of water conservation?

Dishwashing often inspires more strife than most any other household chore. Family debates on the proper way to clean and load dinner dishes are legion. But such arguments are often short on evidence. So, here's what researchers and manufacturers say about data-based advice on how to properly clean dishes while saving both water and energy.

First: Do dishwashers use less water? Yes, the new efficiency-rated dishwashers actually use less water than hand washing dishes. On average, modern dishwashers use about 3 to 5 gallons of water per cycle, while washing dishes by hand can consume anywhere from 8 to 27 gallons, depending on the method and technique employed. This significant difference highlights the efficiency of dishwashers in terms of water consumption. Moreover, dishwashers are specifically designed to optimize water usage. They utilize pressurized spray arms and advanced cleaning technologies to ensure thorough cleaning with minimal water, whereas hand washing often results in more wasteful water use due to continuous running taps or inefficient soaking methods.

To ensure your dishwasher operates efficiently in terms of water usage, it's important to run it with full loads. Most dishwashers are designed to be most efficient when fully loaded, as this maximizes water use per dish washed. Additionally, modern dishwashers often have eco-mode settings that consume less water and energy for lighter loads. In addition, Energy Star appliances are designed to use less energy, further contributing to savings.

Next, don't prerinse your dishes: Really. Scraping is enough in most cases. Today's machines actually rely on leftover food particles to do the job properly! "Pre-cleaning dishes hinders the effectiveness of the detergent and wastes precious water," according to Bree Lemmen of Whirlpool Kitchen.

Never overcrowd: This may sound obvious, but if spray and detergents can't reach every surface, dishes or silverware may come out dirty — necessitating a second, wasteful wash. Worse, if a sprayer arm gets stuck, says Lemmen, concentrate sprays can damage dishware.

Dishware should face the center and angle downward: This ensures the rotating spray arm, which shoots water upward, rinses adequately. This helps with cleaning and drying by preventing pooling.

Larger items in the back and small items in between: Add mixing bowls, pans and trays in the back or sides of the bottom rack. You can efficiently intersperse small plates to fill any gaps. Don't nest forks and spoons together.

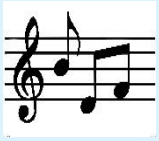
Place cups and delicate items on the top rack: Those little protrusions on the upper and lower racks? They hold cups and other items in place, preventing them from shifting and possibly chipping. Any plastic items should go on the upper rack to avoid the hottest water that can cause cracking.

What NOT to put in a dishwasher: Hand-wash Teflon, copper, aluminum, cast-iron pans, wooden utensils, sharp knives and insulated mugs.

Finally: Dishwashers actually don't like it too hot! Turn your water heater from 140 to 120 degrees, as the Energy Department recommends. This not only avoids the risk of serious burns, it *saves as much as $400 annually!* Manufacturers note that your automatic dishwasher soap doesn't work as well above temperatures of 120 to 125 degrees.

So, here's to the good news that modern dishwashers not only save water and energy, but give us back time as well! Dishwashers clean and sanitize our dishes while leaving us time for other activities.

Linda Graf
Green Team Committee

MUSIC 

The month of February promises to be exciting for our music program.

First of all, on February 8 at 3:00 PM we will host one of the world's most renowned organists, Hector Oliveira, who will bring our organ to life and also tell informative and amusing stories about his life as he has traveled the world, playing all of the most famous organs in both Europe and the United States.

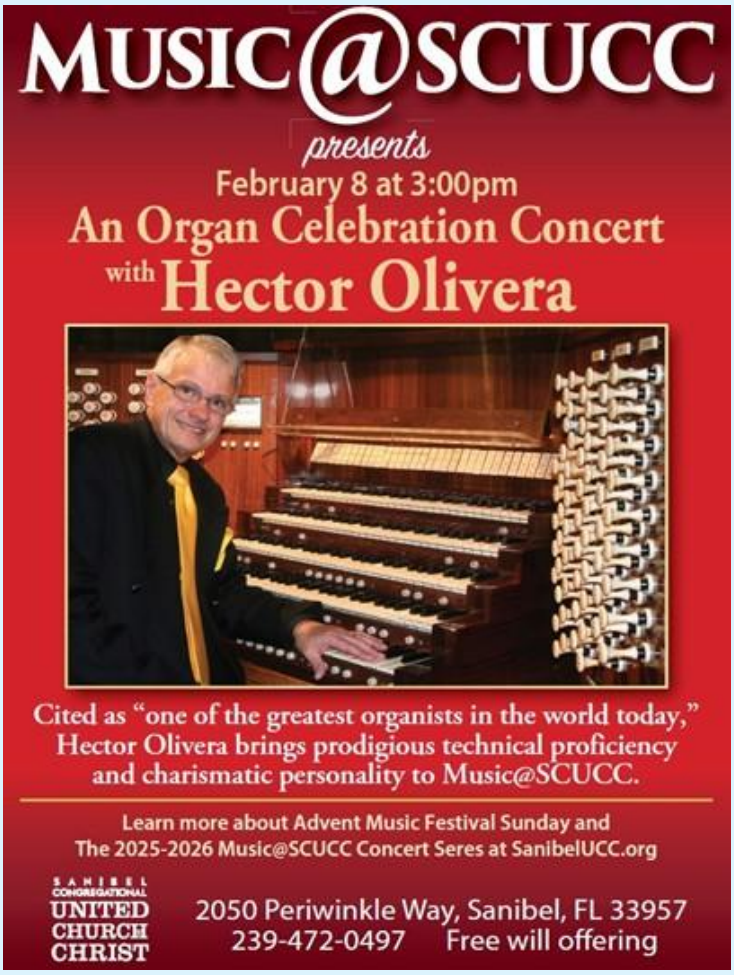
The next week, on Sunday, February 15, we will be joined by the Suncoast Brass Quintet to celebrate Presidents' Day. We are always happy to have this talented group of musicians join us and to hear them play their own pieces as well as collaborate with our choir.

Then, the following Sunday, February 22, is Choir Appreciation Sunday, and our Choir will treat you to some specially beautiful choral music. Be sure to be present in the sanctuary for this occasion.

Please stay tuned for news about the month of March, when, on Palm Sunday, our Choir will present two of the most beautiful and well-loved pieces of choral music ever composed!

Mackenzie Albert, Director of Music
for our Choir and Music Committee

The Church is very proud of the music programs we are able to present which are always free and open to all. However, many of these programs do involve expense to pay guest soloists and musicians. If you would be interested in sponsoring any or part of these programs and providing underwriting for them, please contact Music Director, Mackenzie Albert at 203-517-5427 about programs and costs.



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

STAY HEALTHY!

Join the Santiva Islanders with Mahnaz Bassir,
for cardio & strength, Monday, Wednesday & Friday.

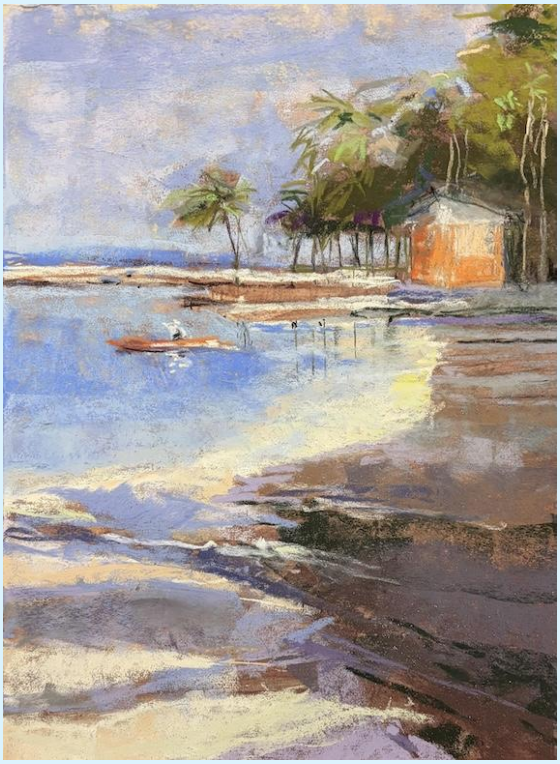
Please note that there are two classes being offered:
9:30 am – 10:30 am
11:00 am - 12:00 pm

<u>Artist of the Month</u>

SCUCC Member Suzanne G. Bennett

Suzanne's art will be available for viewing starting

On Tuesday, February 3rd, 2026 in Fellowship Hall.



From the Mission & Benevolence Committee

Our next SCUCC & Bat Yam Food Drive will be Wednesday, February 18th, 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.

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.

BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

February 1: Barbara Cavanaugh

February 5: Antonia Warren

February 6: Nan Sprague

February 12: Betsy Foreman, Caryn Podlesak

February 13: John Ake, Nancy Blaze

February 14: Michael Grabill

February 16: Dennis Hayes

February 17: Joe Burns

February 18: Cynthia Timm

February 19: Sandy Bordiuk, Susan McCallion

February 20: Beth Miller

February 22: Virginia Eby

February 23: Ran Niehoff

February 27: Barb Cutler, Gary McKnight, Guy Tober

And a very Happy Birthday to our Music Director,

Mackenzie Albert (2/22)

Happy Birthday Everyone!

Shell Point Men's Group February Luncheon

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Men's Group will have its next monthly luncheon meeting on **February 10th 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 February Luncheon

The Sanibel Congregational UCC Shell Point Women's Group will have its next monthly luncheon meeting on **February 13th at 11:30 am at the Palm Grill in the Woodlands Common**. Please make reservations with Susan Schmitt at **sudischmitt@gmail.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.

MARCH 2026 SANIBEL LIGHT DEADLINE

Please note that the deadline for submissions to the March edition of the *Sanibel Light* is **Friday, February 20, 2026.**

Please send all submissions as a Word document to:

Tammy Flatley
Church Administrator at
tammy@sanibelucc.org

YOU'VE GOT PLANS: SANIBEL & CAPTIVA

SANCAP CHAMBER
EAT | SHOP | STAY | PLAY

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

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

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN

MOBILEPACK

JOIN US AT: SANIBEL COMMUNITY CHURCH
1740 PERIWINKLE WAY, SANIBEL, FL 33957

MOBILEPACK SESSIONS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6 ,2026
10 AM – 12 PM, 1 – 3 PM, OR 3:30 – 5:30 PM

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7 ,2026
9 – 11 AM, 12 – 2 PM, OR 2:30 – 4:30 PM

VOLUNTEER ONLINE REGISTRATION BEGINS DECEMBER 15, 2025

REGISTER TO VOLUNTEER AT:

GIVE.FMSC.ORG/SANIBEL

USE CODE: 2602-203EA

OR FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL DAVE TRUELSEN (847) 305-9175

REGISTER NOW

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

VOLUNTEER

IN JUST TWO HOURS YOU CAN HELP PACK THOUSANDS OF MEALS FOR GOD'S STARVING CHILDREN WITH A 226,000 MEAL GOAL

DONATE

EACH **FMSC** MEAL COSTS JUST 29 CENTS TO PRODUCE, SO YOUR DONATION GOES A LONG WAY TO REACH OUR $100,000 GOAL.

THE DUBIN CENTER

Where no one faces dementia alone.

A Light to Remember

Saturday, February 21st, 2026
7:00 PM – 10:00 PM
Fort Myers River District

Sponsored by Ellie Fox

VIEW 2026 LUMINARY GALLERY

Join us for this year's **A Light to Remember** event, featured as a float in the **Edison Festival of Lights Grand Parade**!

Honor Someone Special

Purchase a luminary for $25 to honor, remember, or support someone affected by dementia. The names of all honorees will be displayed on luminaries on the float, on a commemorative T-Shirt, and our online gallery.

Participate in the Parade

Luminary purchasers are invited to: Walk the 2-mile parade route with us. Or ride on the float (limited space available).

****Luminaires must be purchased before Feb 1st to be included on t-shirts & float**

Reserve your luminary today and join us in lighting the way for those impacted by dementia.

Donation

- $25.00 - One Luminary
- $50.00 - Two Luminaries
- $75.00 - Three Luminaries
- $100.00 - Five Luminaries
- $50.00 - One Luminary + One T-Shirt
- $75.00 - Two Luminaries + One T-Shirt
- $100.00 - Three Luminaries + One T-Shirt
- $125.00 - Five Luminaries + One T-Shirt
- $25.00 - One T-Shirt

Please go to the Dubin Center's Website for information regarding their fund raising events

https://dubincenter.com/a-light-to-remember/

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