

Faithful Follower

FAITH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

OPEN & AFFIRMING



Faith United Church of Christ 4850 SR 64 E, Bradenton, FL 34208

| 941-746-8890

| faithchurchucc.com

A P R I L 2 0 2 3

FROM YOUR MODERATOR

Please allow me to announce to Faith United Church of Christ that your Council has approved Pastor Todd Weber to be our interim pastor for the next six months. We believe that Pastor Todd is the right choice for our congregation at this point in time to shepherd us.

So, what are the plans for the next six months? We want to look toward our church renewal because not doing anything is just unacceptable. Besides, what a better time for this but during this season of Lent which is also a time of renewal?

To guide us, we have approved **two goals** that will direct our congregation.

In no particular order these goals are:

Believing we are all children of God, Faith UCC will develop and implement an outreach program serving

our surrounding community.

Faith UCC will embark on a program of spiritual growth and renewal as we move to increase membership, attendance at church events including worship, and giving resulting in our sustainability.

From this point forward all activities will be directed to moving this congregation toward these goals. In reality we are trying to renew our faith-filled, love of Christ, open and accepting congregation. Your council wants each of you to be part of this renewal process. So, please volunteer to be part of these two goal oriented work groups.

Thank you and God Bless.

Walt Hull, Moderator

A Mission that Matters

Why are you here on this earth?
Do you know your mission?
Do you know our church's mission?

Knowing it and doing it are two different things, of course. But we must start somewhere. We can't do it if we don't know it.

Here it is: "Our mission is to affirm all people as we grow together in the light and love of Christ." A group of dedicated and loyal members came up with that statement years ago. I'm glad they did because it gives us some direction. My purpose is not to critique their efforts but to clarify their intent.

How will we know if we are accomplishing it? What does that look like?

What if we made it clearer? We can't do it if we don't remember it or know what it means.

According to Laurie Beth Jones in her excellent book, [The Path: Creating Your Mission Statement for Work and Life](#), a good mission statement has three elements. It is no more than a sentence long, is easily understood by a twelve-year-old and can be recited by memory at gunpoint.

In other words, simple, clear statements motivate action. Fuzzy, unclear statements promote inertia.

Try this on for size: "Our mission is to help people experience God's love." Simple. Clear. Memorable.

How do we do that? We accomplish that mission when we affirm all people regardless of who they are, grow together in loving relationships with God and each other and represent Christ's light to our community.

What does that look like? People of all races, genders, economic status, sexual orientations, etc. are not just tolerated but affirmed with radical welcome and hospitality. Our church is a place where we grow to love the people we "do church" with every week. And we as a church, "let our light shine" by doing good works that reach out to serve our surrounding neighborhood and community. When all of this happens, people will experience God's love for them.

To me, that's why we are here. I welcome your feedback as we work together to renew our church.

After Easter, we will be examining the Old Testament book of Nehemiah for clues to help us renew our church so that we will move into the future with hope and confidence.

See you in church!

Todd

CHURCH HAPPENINGS

THANK YOU!

Carly wants to thank the congregation and the church council for the card, the gift and all of their well wishes for her wedding day!



Lenten Season:

April 2- Palm Sunday
April 6- Maundy Thursday (7pm service)
April 7- Good Friday
April 9- Easter Sunday (10:30am service)



FLOWER CROSS

It's time to bring back our beautiful flower cross this Easter. You start by picking a flower from your garden, or wherever you get your foliage (hopefully not someone else's yard) and bring it to church on Easter Sunday. We then, one by one, tuck our flowers into the cross which will collectively create a beautiful display to represent that Christ is risen and symbolize our new life we have in Jesus. Also the flower cross makes a great background for the perfect Easter snapshot, so bring your cameras and take advantage of this photo op!

BREAKFAST CLUB- APRIL 20

Let's gather for morning fun, fellowship, and food this month! Men, women, children, and guests are all invited! Join us at 9:30am on Thursday, April 20, at Skillet's Restaurant located four miles east of the church at 9722 SR -64, in School House Plaza (just across from Haile Middle School). The menu offers a variety of options.

We have reserved the Pioneer Room, which can serve as many as 25, so feel free to bring guests. Be sure to sign up and include all members of your group. We are hoping to keep this event happening at various locations throughout the year.

BOOK STUDY- APRIL 25

The Glass Castle by Jeanette Walls is the memoir we will be discussing at 7pm on Tuesday, April 25. As a memoir, this book is something different that truly provides a variety of issues to discuss. A movie version is available. Don't forget to sign up for this one.

STREAM UPDATE

As we approach the Nehemiah Action YOU+3 meeting on May 8, at 6:30 pm it is time for an update. Tonight the leaders of the Stream Action group of each of the 15 participating churches meet. Tonight the leaders do the final planning for the April 24, STREAM Rally, where all committee members of all churches meet, to finalize the big event, the Nehemiah Action You+3 meeting on May 8 at 6:30 pm. At the Nehemiah Auction You+3 Rally, we all attend and each of us brings three friends, all to pray for, encourage and applaud all public officials present at the Rally in their commitment to our goals of Justice Reform and Affordable Housing. Mark those two dates. Scott Brownell, co-chair.

WORSHIP VOLUNTEERS for APRIL

APR 2, 2023

Scripture: Janis Groth

APR 9, 2023

Scripture: Judy Cramer

APR 16, 2023

Scripture: Pat Crowell

APR 23, 2023

Scripture: Joan Sheehan

APR 30, 2023

Scripture: Available

If you would like to read scripture, please let us know! You can sign up by emailing: faithchurchucc@verizon.net

2023 PER CAPITA

Per Capita is \$15 per person donation for members which is sent to support the National and State Conference. It is a new year and we are committed to 100% paid membership. Thank you for your prompt attention to this conference responsibility.

SAM (Social Action and Missions):

SAM GRANTS

SAM Community Grant cycle ends March 31! The grants committee (Sylvia Hull, Vickie Followell, Mary West, Sue Card and Babs Brownell) will meet on April 10th and review them and make the awards recommendations. These recommendations will then be presented to Church council for its approval at the April meeting. In the past we have awarded the grants to agencies in Manatee County that have provided basic needs to their clients; housing, respite, food, etc. We have approximately \$8,000 to award. We will announce the awards in next month's Follower.

FOOD BANK

APRIL is: Macaroni and Cheese- Our local food pantries are critically low on food, and we still want to be a help in any way.



FAITH PRESCHOOL

Wendi Steinbach-McKeithen, Director

We had a successful Art Show and Silent Auction on Thursday, March 30. Thank you to everyone for their support. We wanted to wish everyone a Happy Easter!



**FAITH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES MARCH 20, 2023**

Present: Barbara Brownell, Sharon Cohoon, Janis Groth, Sylvia Hull, Walt Hull, Matt Lepinski, Faith Quici, Todd Weber, PJ Widerman.

Absent: Donna Blakey, Dorothy Gallo

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Walt Hull.

Opening Prayer: Todd Weber gave the opening prayer.

Approval of February Minutes: February Minutes are attached to these minutes.

Approval of Financial Report: Dorothy Gallo was not available to present the report. A discussion was held on who has check signing privileges, and whether or not the council could hire a bookkeeper. The council will think about alternatives and there will be further discussion at the April meeting.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Review of Calendar: Tuesday, March 28 at 7:00 is the book discussion group on "The Secret Life of Bees". Tuesday April 25 the book discussion will be "The Glass Castle" a memoir by Jeanette Walls. The book for May has not yet been decided. The date will be May 23th.

Moderator report: A discussion was held on giving a financial gift to Carly and Charles for their wedding. A motion was made by Janis Groth and seconded by Barbara Brownell to present them with a financial gift. Motion passed. Discussion followed and an amended motion was made by Janis Groth and seconded by Barbara Brownell to provide a gift of \$250. Motion passed. The decision was made to take the money from the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

Walt Hull stated that previously the council had approved a part time secretary for 12 hours - 3 hours per day, 4 days a week. After a discussion the decision was made to post the job.

Walt Hull restated the goals for the church: First is the outreach program for the local community surrounding the church. Several questions were asked: How does the church provide services for the community and will there be enough peoplepower to provide services? Barbara Brownell asked what market are we trying to reach? An older or younger generation? Walt will speak with Todd Weber for

ideas on how to proceed.

The second goal is the spiritual growth/renewal of the church. Judy Cramer has been asked to prepare wording for 2 flyers and then Ron Serfass will be asked to prepare the graphics. These flyers will be used for Palm and Easter Services as well as regular services.

Pastors report: Pastor Todd Weber presented his report for the time period February 24th to March 20th, 2023. (22 working days) He divided the list into 10 different categories as well as the Leadership priorities for the next 5 ½ months. (Please see report below.)

Committee Reports:

AV: Matt Lepinski reported that a new lapel microphone was needed. The question was asked about costs. Matt stated that if just a lapel microphone is needed then the cost will be around \$60. If a new receiver is needed then the receiver could cost several hundred dollars. A new bulb for the left screen is also needed. Matt will get two new bulbs to keep on hand.

SAM's Barbara Brownell stated that collecting for One Great Hour of Sharing is now going on. Donations should be given to this fund currently rather than to the Ukraine and Quake relief. All funds go to the same address. Barbara will have a meeting at 7:30 pm on April 10th to review the grants. The meeting will be at her house and will include Vicky Followell, Mary West and Sue Card (via Zoom).

Property: PJ Widerman stated that she rehired Jan Pro Janitorial Services. She had been informed that the Apostolic church was not able to help as Faith Church's needs exceed what the Apostolic church could provide. A discussion was held on the fact that the Apostolic church has been using the building more than in the past. A suggestion was made that if they go over the usual usage perhaps they should pay special user fee.

PJ reported on the fire inspection done by Babe's Plumbing, Inc. She stated that two valves were frozen in place. The main valve had a red tag and other valve has a yellow tag. She was informed by the inspector that the yellow tag is operable, not critical but is deficient. A time line is needed for when the valves are to be fixed. She was informed that if the company breaks the red tagged valve, then it would be \$8,400 to be replaced. If the other valve is broken, then it would be approximately \$1,000 to be replaced. PJ made a motion and seconded by Barbara Brownell to approve

scheduling a time line to make the necessary repairs as per the fire department inspector and approval to pay a deposit of up to 50% if required. The motion carried.

Faith Care Team. Sharon Cohoon reported that Donna Blakey emailed the dates for the months of April through June to pick up those needing rides to church.

Christian Education: Janis Groth stated that there is one bag available if children were to come to a service. It will be kept in a cabinet in the church office. Janis asked about having a breakfast club, what dates should it be held and should it continue during the summer. A general discussion followed as to possible locations.

Worship: Sylvia Hull stated that she continues to prepare the altar as well as the communion table. She stated that new candles will be needed soon as well as asked the question if people wanted to donate flowers. That not been done in the past few years. Permission was granted to purchase new candles.

The next meeting will be on April 17th.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10.

Closing prayer: Todd Weber gave the closing prayer.

Monthly Pastoral Report ~ Todd Weber

February 24 – March 20, 2023 (22 working days)

Sermon & Worship Preparation

- Prepared and led 4 worship services
- Prepared and preached 4 sermons
- Started planning Maundy Thursday service, met with UCC of Sarasota
- Started preparing Palm Sunday and Easter sermons
- Started planning sermon series on church renewal starting after Easter & ending on Pentecost Sunday.

Leadership

- General reading, listening to podcasts and webinars
- Meetings with Moderator

- Discussions regarding church property with PJ
- Attended Council meetings

Church renewal activities

- Reading on church renewal
- Calls to Associate Conference minister
- Calls to colleagues

Church administration

- Responding to email and sending email
- Staff supervision
- Meetings with church secretary
- Newsletter article
- Proofing worship services and slides
- Recording time logs
- Preparing reports
- General secretarial tasks

Bible Study/discussion groups

- Prepped and led 4 Lent study sessions
- Setup and took down equipment

Community meetings & outreach

- Attended New College Protest
- Attended Manatee Pride Day
- Attended STREAM Prayer Vigil

Pastoral Care

- Attended Prayer and Care meeting
- Calls and visits with members (10)

Florida UCC Conference activities

- Lunch with clergy colleagues and UCC President
- Keeping up with Conference activities

Funerals

- Calls and meeting with Marge Hooie family
- Began preparing Marge's memorial service

Miscellaneous

- Picked up trash around property
- Cleaned up after Apostolic Services

Leadership priorities for next 5 ½ months:

- Work with Renewal Group to come up with a practical, viable strategy to move church forward.
- Prepare and deliver sermons that focus on church renewal and mission.
- Work with Profile Committee to complete profile and post ASAP.

*In Loving
Memory*



Please keep Sue Card in your immediate prayers after the passing of her husband Dick Card. They have been a part of Faith Church for many years and he will be greatly missed. We support Sue and the family with our prayers at this time and our deepest condolences. A service will be held in Maine.

Link to Obituary:

<https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/27610031/richard-howard-card/casco/maine/hall-funeral-home>

Richard "Dick" Howard Card

September 20, 1948 - March 27, 2023

APRIL 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
BAC= Bradenton Apostolic Church						1 10:15am NA- in multipurpose room
2 10:30am Service Communion Palm Sunday 2:30pm BAC	3	4 Preschool Picture Day 6pm HOA mtg San Casciano	5 Easter Lilies arriving - AM 7pm Lenten Study 7pm BAC service	6 Maundy Thursday 7pm 6:30pm-8:15pm NarAnon- in Sunday School Classroom 7:30pm NA- in multipurpose room	7 Good Friday 7-9pm Prayer Mtg BAC	8 10:15am NA- in multipurpose room
9 10:30am Service Easter Cross Easter Sunday 2:30pm BAC	10 11am Prayer and Care Team Mtg 7:30pm SAM meeting	11	12 6pm Spirits and Spirituality 7pm BAC service	13 6:30pm-8:15pm NarAnon- in Sunday School Classroom 7:30pm NA- in multipurpose room	14 7-9pm Prayer Mtg BAC	15 10:15am NA- in multipurpose room
16 10:30am Service 2:30pm BAC	17 6:30pm Council Meeting	18	19 7pm BAC service	20 Breakfast Bunch Skillets at 9:30am 6:30pm-8:15pm NarAnon- in Sunday School Classroom 7:30pm NA- in multipurpose room	21 7-9pm Prayer Mtg BAC Follower Deadline	22 10:15am NA- in multipurpose room
23 10:30am Service 2:30pm BAC	24	25 7pm Book Discussion Group - <i>The Glass Castle</i>	26 7pm BAC service	27 6:30pm-8:15pm NarAnon- in Sunday School Classroom 7:30pm NA- in multipurpose room	28 7-9pm Prayer Mtg BAC	29 10:15am NA- in multipurpose room
30 10:30am Service 2:30pm BAC	HAPPY BIRTHDAY					