

The Encourager

February 2017

First United Methodist Church of Seffner

Open Hearts Open Minds Open Doors

Our mission at First Seffner is to GO into
the world to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

Potpourri of Happenings

February 5: Souper Bowl Sunday: Please plan to bring in cans of soup to be donated to ECHO, a local food pantry. A challenge from Pastor Terry: He will match each donation of soup, can for can.

February 5: Cuban Sandwich Sale on Super Bowl Sunday: Sunday, 11:30 a.m. Don't forget to pick up your delicious homemade Cuban sandwiches after the Worship Service if you placed an order.

February 5, 12, 19 & 26: Youth Group Meetings: Sundays, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall and Youth Room.

February 7: Legend Dairy 4H Group Meeting: Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. in the Good News Room.

February 7, 14, 21 & 28: Country Western Music Group: 6:30 p.m. Every Tuesday in the Fellowship Hall.

February 8: Wednesday Night Dinner: 6:00 p.m. Join us for fellowship and a delicious dinner in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome. Advance Sign Up - \$6.00 for adults, \$3.00 for children under 12.

February 8 & 22: Family Support Group: 6:00 p.m. Every other Wednesday in the Fellowship Hall or Good News Room.

February 9: New Ministry Teams Meeting: Thursday, 6:30 p.m. at Joan Sampere's home. Everyone is invited to be a part of our new teams, Nurture, Outreach and Witness.

February 13: Irene Circle Meeting: 7:00 p.m. Meets the 2nd Monday every month in the Good News Room.

February 18: Breakfast Club: Saturday, 8:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome.

February 19: Boy Scout Sunday: Join us at our regular 10:30 a.m. Worship Service as we recognize and honor the Scouting Ministries.

February 19: All Church Birthday Party: Sunday, 12:00 noon. Join us in the Fellowship Hall following the Worship Service as we celebrate everyone's birthday with lunch, a birthday table and cake for each month of the year! Sign up in the Narthex.

February 21: Trustees Committee Meeting: Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. in the Good News Room.



Dear Friends in Christ....

It's February and the month of love!!! Everywhere you look in the stores there are rows and rows of cards and candies in the traditional color of the month...red! As I was thinking about what to write for this month's "Encourager" Pastor's letter, it became a "no brain-er" to write about LOVE!

I headed for the internet to see how many love quotes I could find. Needless to say, there were WAY TOO MANY to even read through! There were literally hundreds! It seems like just about everybody you can think of had/has something to say about love. Here are just a very few of the quotes that jumped out at me that I'd like to share:

"You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams." -Dr. Seuss

"The art of love... is largely the art of persistence." -Albert Ellis

"A life without love is like a year without summer." -Swedish Proverb

"Love is a promise, love is a souvenir, once given never forgotten, never let it disappear." -John Lennon

"Life's greatest happiness is to be convinced we are loved." -Victor Hugo

I came upon a few that in my opinion have a hint of spirituality being expressed, that love has a God-connection. Here's just a few:

"Love is a symbol of eternity. It wipes out all sense of time, destroying all memory of a beginning and all fear of an end." -Author Unknown

"Love is just a word until someone comes along and gives it meaning." -Author Unknown

"To love is to receive a glimpse of heaven." -Karen Sunde

"The very fact that a holy, eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, merciful, fair, and just God loves you and me is nothing short of astonishing." -Francis Chan

These then led me to see what God's Word has to say about love. Once again the internet took me to hundreds of scriptures that spoke about God's Love! There's no way I could list them all here, but here are a very few verses that spoke to me:

1 Corinthians 13: 4-8, 13

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

1 Peter 4:8

8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

1 John 4:8

8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

But the one verse that speaks most profoundly to me no matter what my day might be like, no matter what I might be dealing with, no matter how many times I let Him down or disappoint Him, no matter...., this is the one verse that always comes to mind and reminds me how much God loves me. It's a verse that people hold up on signs at sporting events. Churches put it on billboards. You can find it on tee shirts. And even if you're not good at quoting scripture, this is that one verse that nearly every Christian can easily quote. It's undoubtedly the most widely known scripture verse:

John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

This one verse speaks of the indescribable love of God for you and me and all of humanity. It's a love that compelled God to give the life of His only Son, Jesus, for our salvation "...while we were still sinners,..."(Romans 5:8). It's hard to describe God's Love! Francis Chan calls it "crazy love"! Others just say: WOW!!!

God's Love for us in Jesus Christ is indeed a WOW kind of love! I pray that I/we never take God's amazingly crazy Love for granted, but that we allow his amazingly crazy Love to encourage us, bless us, and inspire us to live each day with gratitude in all that we say and do! "God So Loves" -Winkle Thanks be to God that He loves you and me. So may we be bearers of His love into the world!

Blessings,
Pastor Terry

PASTOR TERRY AWAY....

Pastor Terry will be out of town from Wednesday, February 8th, through Tuesday, February 13th. While away Pastor Brian Brink will be on call for pastoral call emergencies (813-765-7108), and preaching Sunday, February 12th, will be Rev. Ken Green.



SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY....

Sunday, February 5th



The challenge is on again! For EVERY can of soup brought in to church on Souper Bowl Sunday (which falls on Super Bowl Sunday) Pastor Terry will match with a donation of another can of soup!

Once again the donated soup will be given to ECHO (Emergency Care Help Organization), a local food pantry that helps our neighbors who find it challenging to put food on their tables.

By the way....Pastor Terry has upped the ante! Last year he donated a can of soup for every two cans brought to church. This year he's matching each donation of soup...can for can!!!

STATS....Last year more than \$9.8 million in dollars and food for local hunger-relief charities was collected. That's a total of more than \$90 million collected since the movement began in 1990 by a church youth group in California. More than 260,000 youth have participated in Souper Bowl of Caring events across the nation and have joined together to tackle hunger in America!



Cuban Sandwich Sale On Super Bowl Sunday, February 5th

Don't forget to pick up your delicious homemade Cuban sandwiches Sunday, February 5th following the Worship Service if you placed an order.

As We Lift Others Up

*“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other,
as indeed you are doing”. 1 Thessalonians 5:11*

The New Nurture Team would like to share with you what is happening in this ministry area. Join us on **Thursday, February 9**, at **6:30 pm** at my house for more information, light refreshments and a good time.

Invite someone to join you. **RSVP by February 5** at 763-3633 or jsampere@lazydays.com.

Can't wait to see you and hear your ideas.

Blessings, Joan Sampere

Wednesday Night Dinner

February 8, 2017 @ 6pm

Please join us for fellowship and a delicious dinner on Wednesday,
February 8th at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Dine in or Take Out

Menu: Pasta, Salad, Rolls, Dessert

Advance Sign Up: \$6.00 - Adult ~ \$3.00 - Children under 12

At Door: \$7.00 - Adult ~ \$4.00 - Children under 12

*Please sign up in the Narthex to reserve your seat.

Volunteers for Youth Group Lunches



Please sign up in the Narthex if you would like to bring lunch for the Youth Group after church on Sundays for their Youth Group Meetings, for 8-10 kids. February 12 and 26 are still open. Please call Denise Short-Nieves at 813-618-1268 if you have any questions.





Breakfast Club Saturday - February 18th

Please join us Saturday, February 18th at 8:30 a.m. for fellowship and a delicious breakfast.

*Please sign up in the Narthex to let us know how many will be coming to help us plan for food purchasing.

ALL CHURCH BIRTHDAY PARTY

**Sunday, February 19th
After Worship (Noon)**

We're going to celebrate EVERYBODY'S birthday at one time with an amazing lunch, a birthday table decorated for every month of the year, and a birthday cake for each month of the year!



Meats and beverages provided.

Everyone is asked to bring a side dish/salad to share!

Be sure to sign up in the Narthex so we know how many chairs to put at each birthday month table.



**BE SURE TO JOIN US FOR THIS AMAZINGLY FUN TIME
TO EAT AND CELEBRATE OUR BIRTHDAYS WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY!!!!**

Boy Scout Sunday Sunday, February 19th

Boy Scout Sunday recognizes and honors Scouting Ministries annually. Once again we are blessed to recognize our chartered Cub Scout Pack and Boy Scout Troop 797 scouts and their leaders. The Scouts will be participating in our worship celebration as ushers, readers, and will share a summary of their work, ministry, and training this past year since last year's Boy Scout Sunday here at Seffner Church.

As the Executive Officer of the Troop and Pack, Pastor Terry will deliver the morning message: "Living With A Radical Love" based on Matthew 5:38-48 (The Sermon on the Mount).

Join us for this very special Sunday at Seffner First Church!

Ash Wednesday Wednesday, March 1st

The beginning of the Season of Lent 2017 and the journey to the Cross of Good Friday and ultimately the celebration of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday!

Watch for service details in the church bulletin!

United Methodist Children's Home Day On Campus - Saturday - April 1st

This year, on Saturday, April 1st, the South Central District churches are especially invited to attend an exciting Day on Campus at The United Methodist Children's Home. This includes First Seffner UMC! The Day on Campus will feature the Children's Home Chapel singers and sacred dancers, informative campus tours, delicious refreshments and a hearty picnic lunch under the Big Top. Gates open at 9:00 a.m., tours begin at 9:30 a.m., program in gymnasium at 11:00 a.m., and a Big Top Tent picnic lunch at 12:00 noon. Tours then resume with the afternoon free to enjoy the campus. In short, this is a magnificent day to be on the campus of the Children's Home.

We will have sign up sheets in the Narthex the beginning of March so you can let us know if you would like to go or if you are able to carpool. There will be a donation box in the Narthex in March for donations of clothing or health and beauty items for the children. For more information please call Nancy Gonzalez at 684-8702 or Nancy Facenda at 689-2057 or the Children's Home at 386-668-5088 or visit www.fumch.org.

Welcome..... To Our Newly Hired Music Director and Pianist

On Sunday, January 1st, we welcomed Sidney (Sid) Fortner as our newly hired Music Director and Pianist. Sid comes to us with an amazing resume and an enthusiastic love for the music ministry of the church. Sid faithfully served 14 years as a church music director and musician in a variety of United Methodist Churches as well as other denominations. He is a seasoned director, instructor, and coordinator of church worship music as well as secular music performances. Sid honorably served twenty-one years in the United States Army Music Program where among many duties he played trombone in the concert band, marching band, ceremonial band and other ensembles in the United States and around the world. In addition to his service to the music ministry of the church in a variety of settings, Sid has served as Band Director for After-School Band Programs, Tampa, and the Instruments of Change Band Program, Plant City, which provides instruments, lessons, and etc., at not cost to the students. He also serves as trombonist for Tampa Bay area orchestras, concert bands, jazz bands, musical theater show bands and brass ensembles as well as serving in a variety of other community musical entities. This is just a brief snapshot of who Sid is and all that he brings to the position and ministry of Music Director and Pianist for our church. Already we have been blessed by Sid's experience, his gifts and talents, and love for music in the context of the church in particular. And...it's so good to have the choir back leading us in worship through music under Sid's direction!

If you haven't met Sid yet, please take the time to meet and greet him!

Congratulations....

---to Dot and Ken Conklin who were honored as the 19th “Lightning Community Heroes” of the Tampa Bay Lightning hockey team’s 2016-2017 season during the game with the Winnipeg Jets on January 3rd. Dot and Ken have spent 19 and 14 years, respectively, protecting the rights of and advocating to children in Tampa through their work with the Guardian ad Litem Program of Hillsborough County. They are the “go-to” guardians for the most difficult cases for children who might otherwise end up in untenable situations of abuse or neglect. The Conklin’s are on the job 24/7, often handling 7-8 cases at a time. They never hesitate to accept a case and work nonstop to make certain no child assigned to them is left without appropriate help. They have touched the lives of over 80 children during their tenure as guardians and have spent tens of thousands of hours volunteering. Their work has reunited families, protected children, and likely saved lives along the way. They have assured so many children across Tampa Bay are surrounded by a balanced, healthy, and nurturing environment. A monetary award made possible through the Lightning Foundation of \$50,000 was made in their name to benefit the Guardian ad Litem Program and the Sertoma Youth Camp. Dot and Ken Are The Thunder!!!

---to Micah Allen for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of American through our chartered Troop 797. Micah is a courteous and friendly young man who takes his role as a Boy Scout and his duty to his church and community very seriously. When asked to help with special projects around the church, Micah is eager to help and takes each task seriously and follows through to its completion and in many cases take the initiative to do more than expected. Micah has been Senior Patrol Leader and Junior Assistant Scout Master and has provided leadership for the troop both at troop meetings and during the planning and execution of a special worship service for Boy Scout Sunday. This year Micah planned his Eagle Scout project to enhance the facility at the RVR Horse Ranch. It was an extensive project whereby he installed three hundred linear feet of fencing, built a 52 feet by 16 feet lean-to building over a feed stall, and built a 16 feet by 22 feet run-under for hay in the pasture. Not only did he design and build all of this, Micah also raised a significant amount of money to fund the project to its completion. Congrats to Micah on his advancement to Eagle Scout and on his dedication to obeying the Scout Law, helping those in need, and continuing to strive to improve his strength, thought, and morality in order to do his duty to be the very best possible!

Trees

The removal of dead trees all around our church campus continues and is almost complete! The trees in the front of the church have been trimmed to the point that the church can actually be seen now when driving by on Kingsway Road! Many thanks to everyone who has helped to make this important project a reality not only from a visual point of view but more importantly from a safety point of view.

(Please note: The follow up part of the tree removal is the grinding/removal of tree stumps. Donations for this phase of the tree removals are appreciated....thank you!)

Opening Soon....



Our newly renovated nursery (Wiggle Room) for toddlers through age 5 will open the first week of February and will be staffed by trained volunteers on an as needed basis each Sunday during our worship celebration. The Wiggle Room is located in the former Pastor's Office and **MUST** be accessed through the hall leading from the Narthex to the door to the Wiggle Room adjacent to the sanctuary. All other entrances to the church office

suite will be locked and not accessible during the time children are in the Wiggle Room. Children will be signed in by parents when leaving their toddler/s for child care during worship. Each child will be identified with an adhesive tag on their back which will match the number on the "parents claim stub" which must be presented when picking up their toddler/s.

Many thanks to the nursery task force for their dedication to making the Wiggle Room "toddler friendly" in every way....including....amazing Noah's Ark wall decals, age appropriate furniture, equipment, and toys! ALL of this has been made possible through a number of generous donations of time, money, and new toys and equipment. **THANK YOU TO EVERYONE** for their support in providing this important ministry to families with toddler-age children who join us for worship!

BUY FROM AMAZON **AND EARN REBATES FOR OUR CHURCH**

If you purchase anything from Amazon you can now have 1/2 percent of your purchase price rebated to our Church.

Just follow these easy steps:

1. Open Amazon as **Smile.Amazon.com**
2. If you have an account with Amazon go to "my account".
3. Go to "Settings"
4. Go to "Change your Charity"
5. Type in "First United Methodist Church of Seffner"

Then when you wish to make a purchase from Amazon open in **Smile.Amazon.com**. Everything will be the same. But now you will be earning rebates to our Church. If you have questions see Jim Blaney.



Raise Money For First UMC of Seffner When You Use *H&R Block* To Do Your Taxes

H&R Block will donate \$20 for every new client we refer. Pam Hill, who works for H&R Block preparing tax returns, signs our church up for the Referral program every year, which has brought in \$3,070.00 for our church over the past seven years.

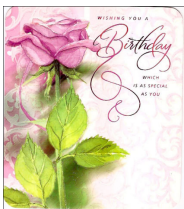
Just pick up a referral form in the Narthex for yourself, a friend, relative or co-worker and take it to any participating H&R Block office through April 15. If you, or someone you refer, qualify as a new client, FUMC will receive \$20 (via one check at the end of the tax season).

- You qualify as a new client if you did not file with H&R Block last year.
 - You can email a Referral form to friends and relatives in or out of state.
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Altar Guild



Volunteers are needed for Altar Guild for March through December. We usually work in teams of two and it usually takes about an hour each week. This includes dusting Chancel area, replacing offering envelopes and pencils, checking hymnals and Bibles in the racks, changing paraments when needed, water plants, clean water fountains, etc. There is a complete list in the Sacristy. If you can spare an hour a week for this, please contact Deborah at the Church Office at 813-689-3513 or at deborahgendreau@fumcseffner.org.



Need To Send a Card?

There is a basket of free cards in the Narthex for church members who are unable to make a trip to pick one up. We have an assortment of cards, including Birthday, Get Well and Sympathy. Sherry Salamone will have stamps to purchase if needed.

Altar Flowers



Once again we have the opportunity to provide flowers for our church altar for Sunday worship! The 2017 Flower Calendar is located in the church Narthex where you can pick your special Sunday to sign up for altar flowers in memory or honor of your loved ones. Flower orders are still a reasonable \$25/Sunday. You make take your flowers following worship on the Sunday signed up for. (Please note your payment is for altar flowers.)



Prayer Requests

Carl Brill: Continued healing prayers for health issues.

Betty Herbert: Continued healing prayers for Gary Wilson, Betty's son-in-law, for pancreatitis and health issues.

Bobbie Hawkins: Continued healing prayers for friend, Thomas Gentry, for heart problems and for recovering his health and strength.

Renee Lebron: Healing prayers for friends mom, Gina Homa, recovering from a heart attack and for high diabetes.

Edna Barker: Continued healing prayers for recovery from surgery for a fractured hip and for therapy at Hawthorne Village Rehab, Room 613.

Debbie Billmaier: Healing prayers for her father, Don Heminger, one step from dialysis. Healing prayers for her uncle, John Diebly, for cancer that has returned.

Peggy Moore: Continued healing prayers for Peggy for recovery of health and strength.

Inge Davis: Continued healing prayers for issues with her legs.

Nancy Gonzalez: Healing prayers for Nancy's friend, Anne, for recovery from mastectomy surgery.

Carmen Smith: Continued healing prayers for Carmen for health issues, back at home now from the hospital.

Nancy Montgomery: Continued healing prayers for Brandi Fouche, Nancy's daughter, for further testing to determine health issues. She is home from the hospital.

Denise Short-Nieves: Healing prayers for the Short-Nieves family in the loss of Denise's brother, Daniel Dawley, on February 1. Condolences may be sent to Denise Short-Nieves at 612 Highview Circle S, Brandon, FL 33510.

Thank You

Thank you for all the cards, calls and visits during my recent hospitalization and recovery. But most of all, thank you for your prayers. It is so comforting to have my church family offering intercessory prayers of healing on my behalf.

Thank You



Thank you for all the prayers and support, the cards sent to my Mom, Ruth Weidert, for her 100th birthday and for the healing powers through prayer sent up for my Mom. OUR GOD IS GOOD. Before I flew to Illinois I didn't think this day would come that we would be seeing my mom so full of life. By the grace of God we are all rejoicing.

Weekly Events:	10:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship	9:30 a.m.
Sunday Small Groups	Morning (FH)
Monday Meals on Wheels	7:30 p.m.
Boy Scouts	7:00 p.m.
Tuesday Cub Scouts	

FEBRUARY 2017

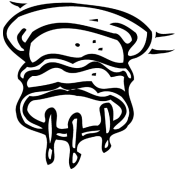
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 7 p Choir Practice	2	3	4
5 *Souper Bowl Sunday 9:30 a Sunday School Class 10:30 a Worship 11:30 a Cuban Sandwich Sale 12 p Youth Group Meeting	6 10 a Prayer Group 5:45 p TOPS Club Meeting 6:30 p Aerobics 7 p Irene Circle Meeting	7 6:30 p Country Western Music 7 p Legend Dairy 4H Group Mtg.	8 7 p Choir Practice 6 p Wednesday Night Dinner 6 p Family Support Group	9 6:30 p New Ministry Teams Meeting Joan Sampere's Home	10	11 9 a CPR Training Class
12 9:30 a Sunday School Classes 10:30 a Worship 12 p Youth Group Meeting	13 10 a Prayer Group 5:45 p TOPS Club Meeting 6:30 p Aerobics	14 6:30 p Country Western Music	15 7 p Choir Practice	16	17	18 8:30 a Breakfast Club
19 9:30 a Sunday School Classes 10:30 a Worship - Boy Scout Sunday 12 p All Church Birthday Party 12 p Youth Group Meeting	20 10 a Prayer Group 5:45 p TOPS Club Meeting 6:30 p Aerobics	21 6:30 p Country Western Music 7 p Trustees Meeting	22 6 p Family Support Group 7 p Choir Practice	23	24	25
26 9:30 a Sunday School Class 10:30 a Worship 12 p Youth Group Meeting	27 10 a Prayer Group 5:45 p TOPS Club Meeting 6:30 p Aerobics	28 6:30 p Country Western Music				

February 11 Francis Smith	February 1 Kayla Allen
February 18 Bethany Allen	February 4 Bobbie Hawkins
February 22 Ken Conklin	February 8 Ed Hoyos
February 23 Felix Lebron	February 9 Michael Ashby
February 23 Micah Allen	February 11 Les Hanna

February 8 Larry & Susan White

Anniversaries

Birthday's



Please let the office know if your special date is not listed!!

The Encourager

February 2017

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CURRENT RESIDENT OR