



Sunday, Dec 3  
**Night in Bethlehem**  
 5:30pm

Sunday, Dec 10  
**Christmas Cantata &**



**3rd Annual Christmas Cookie Contest**  
 6:00pm

Sunday, Dec 17  
**Blue Christmas**  
 6:00pm



Sunday, Dec 24  
**Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship**  
 6:00pm, 8:00pm & 11:00pm

**December 2017**

**Pathways**  
 of Christ United Methodist Church

**1475 Center Road, Venice, FL 34292**  
 941-493-7504 / 888-833-9408  
 Website: [www.christvenice.com](http://www.christvenice.com)  
 Email: [Michele@christvenice.com](mailto:Michele@christvenice.com)

Or Current Resident

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 MANASOTA, FL  
 PERMIT # 808

You know it is Christmas when you hear the Christmas music. Some radio stations do nothing but play Christmas music for the entire month of December. Actually, Christmas is the only holiday with its own genre of music. What's on your Christmas playlist? Do you have any favorites that you must hear or it's not Christmas? Can you imagine if we didn't sing Silent Night on Christmas Eve? Christmas would be ruined!! (Not to fear, we will sing it!) Whether it is the classic Christmas Carols being sung by a choir, the holiday fun stuff, or even new twists on old favorites, we love our Christmas Playlist.



It seems singing about the birth of Jesus has been happening since, well, Jesus was born. There are four songs found in the Gospels centered around the birth of Christ. They are the original Christmas Playlist. During Advent we are going to put them on our playlist and allow them to lead our celebrating. We will hear Mary's upbeat anthem, Zechariah's hymn of promise, the angels' cantata, and Simeon's ballad of hope and heartbreak.

Of course, there will be plenty of other singing this season as well and I hope you will join us for all of it. You'll find a complete schedule inside the newsletter. And please share the invitation to sing along with us with your friends and neighbors.

Warming up the vocal chords,

**Pastor Mike**

**Sunday Worship Schedule**

7:30 & 11:00am  
 Traditional  
 9:00am  
 Contemporary

**Christ UMC STAFF**

- LEAD PASTOR**  
Rev. Michael Hudson
- ASSOCIATE PASTOR**  
Rev. Denvil Farley
- ASSISTANT PASTOR**  
Robert Haley
- MULTI-SITE PASTOR**  
Missy Carfield
- MUSIC MINISTRY**  
Cheryl Smith
- CONNECTIONAL MINISTRIES**  
Rev. Val Garron
- FAMILY MINISTRY**  
Jeff Dunn-Rankin
- YOUTH MINISTRY**  
Jonetta Halpin  
Marcia Schaberg
- CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**  
Becky Diefenbach
- MEDIA MANAGER & CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP**  
Will Sledge
- TREASURER**  
JoEllen Whipple
- OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR**  
Michele Morley
- CHILD DEVELOPMENT CTR**  
Anita Burton



“Glory sightings” continue to abound at Christ UMC! That’s because as folks come together in small groups, Bible studies, choir, staff meeting, or wherever we gather, we’re talking about where we’ve seen God at work. The terminology “glory sighting” is new for some of us, but it’s catching on quickly. It’s as simple as talking about sensing the Lord’s presence in the morning breeze as you walk and pray, to experiencing God’s healing work in someone’s life. It’s watching for God to show up and then telling others about it-- “Glory sightings!”

The month of December could easily be called the “glory sighting” month since we celebrate the greatest glory sighting in the birth of our blessed Savior. It is a time of hope, peace, joy and love as we focus again on the coming of our King. Luke 2:10 reminds us, “But the angel said to them, Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people.”

Baby Jesus came as the Great Connector between God and humanity. We in turn become “connectors” when we share our glory sightings not just with our church friends, but with neighbors and others that we meet. As we draw closer to the incredible celebration of Christmas, why not tell your neighbor, your doctor, your hairdresser, your manicurist, your barber, your gym trainer, everyone you meet, where you’ve seen God at work. It could change their lives!

**Coming Events.... Mark Your Calendars!**

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Starting Point                          | Jan. 10                       |
| New Member Small Group                  | Jan. 17 thru Feb. 7 (4 weeks) |
| Small Group & Sunday School Fair        | Jan. 14, 2018                 |
| New Semester for Classes & Small Groups | Jan. 21 thru April 15         |
| Basics of the Bible                     | Jan. 24 thru Feb. 28          |
| Lay Academy                             | Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22             |
| Saturday Seminary                       | Feb. 17                       |

**May the spirit of the season be one of “connecting” others to Jesus!  
Happy Glory Sightings!**

**STEPHEN MINISTRY:**

The holiday season is upon us which can be a very stressful time for those who are grieving. When we lose someone life can become so confusing that we don't know where to turn, or, life becomes meaningless and depression sets in. What a comfort it can be to have a concerned person willing to be with you when there is a loss of a loved one. A Stephen Minister can be that concerned person to comfort and encourage you as God's healing takes place. To learn more of what we do, and how we may be able to help you or someone you know, call a Stephen Leader Don Paul 497-5597 or Jane Watkins 989 859-0712. Our Stephen Ministers are willing to serve Holy Communion to those who are unable to attend church. To request a visit call the church office at 493-7504.

**BIRTHDAYS**

|                       |       |                    |       |
|-----------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| Glass-Marshall, Gerry | 12/2  | Findley, Doug      | 12/15 |
| Austin, Connie        | 12/3  | Grant, Jan         | 12/16 |
| Brower, John          | 12/3  | Rysdyk, David      | 12/16 |
| Henderson, Mary Lee   | 12/4  | Modica, Barbara    | 12/17 |
| Shinkle, Charles      | 12/4  | DesJardins, Kim    | 12/18 |
| Smith, Leo            | 12/4  | Eaton, Chris       | 12/18 |
| Grandfield, Barbara   | 12/5  | Hong, Beverly      | 12/18 |
| Vis, Alicia           | 12/5  | Robinson, Jennie   | 12/18 |
| Craver, Frank         | 12/6  | Downing, Ron       | 12/19 |
| Groves, Mary Ellen    | 12/6  | Hoffman, Karrie    | 12/20 |
| Hudson, Mac           | 12/6  | Keebler, Lois      | 12/20 |
| Bauer, Judie          | 12/7  | Lewis, Allison     | 12/20 |
| Pfleeger, Gary        | 12/7  | Marsee, Zenna      | 12/20 |
| Shockey, Madison      | 12/7  | Rysdyk, Lisa       | 12/20 |
| Booth, Russ           | 12/8  | Stenz, Chris       | 12/21 |
| Lopez, Lulu           | 12/8  | Strahlman, Richard | 12/21 |
| Pierce, Max           | 12/8  | Byers, Dory        | 12/22 |
| Shelton, Dean         | 12/8  | Stenz, Anna        | 12/22 |
| Westlake, Charlee     | 12/8  | Boyd, Megan        | 12/24 |
| Barrett, Lake         | 12/9  | Boyd, Sarah        | 12/24 |
| Hahn, Patricia        | 12/9  | Glover, Harlan     | 12/24 |
| Hinckley, David       | 12/9  | Wonnell, Susan     | 12/24 |
| Kisner, Logan         | 12/9  | Cypher, Bonnie     | 12/25 |
| Mitchell, Lindsay     | 12/9  | Lovett, Joe        | 12/25 |
| Quinn, Leighton       | 12/9  | Noll, Ethel        | 12/25 |
| Rogers, Richard       | 12/9  | Smith, Wil         | 12/25 |
| Moudy, Tom            | 12/10 | Eidelbus, Kate     | 12/26 |
| Grubb, Wayne          | 12/11 | Evans, Grace       | 12/26 |
| Keegan, Barbara       | 12/11 | Janeczko, Barbara  | 12/26 |
| Keyes, Anne           | 12/11 | Coleman, Miranda   | 12/27 |
| Wetherill, Madison    | 12/11 | Marsh, Holly       | 12/27 |
| Whipple, Frank        | 12/11 | Coleman, Ben       | 12/28 |
| Petty, Ann            | 12/12 | Lysner, Pat        | 12/28 |
| Saeli, Guido          | 12/12 | Weldon, Paul       | 12/28 |
| Smith, Lyne           | 12/12 | Wright, Becky      | 12/28 |
| Thorne, Michael       | 12/12 | Bergl, Dallas      | 12/29 |
| Price, Carol          | 12/13 | Farley, Denvil     | 12/29 |
| Hoffman, Mark         | 12/14 | Jeffers, Cindy     | 12/29 |
| Kotkiewicz, John      | 12/14 | Richards, Susan    | 12/29 |
| Thuleweit, Kenny      | 12/14 | Wheat, Bill        | 12/29 |
|                       |       | Claessens, Melissa | 12/30 |
|                       |       | Helvie, Lyne       | 12/31 |

**ANNIVERSARIES**

|                           |       |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Wooster, Tim & Carol      | 12/1  |
| Myers, Dave & Joann       | 12/2  |
| Barrett, Scott & Chris    | 12/4  |
| Burns, Darel & Sheryl     | 12/6  |
| Fisher, John & Pat        | 12/8  |
| Findley, Doug & Sue Ellen | 12/12 |
| Glover, Harlan & Paula    | 12/20 |
| Spence, Luther & Jean     | 12/20 |
| Paull, Don & Pat          | 12/21 |
| Berg, Skip & Debbie       | 12/22 |
| Haman, Roger & Marlene    | 12/23 |
| Harris, Norman & Sally    | 12/24 |
| Klock, Tom & Dori         | 12/24 |
| Jackson, Charles & Kari   | 12/27 |
| Myers, Charles & Sandra   | 12/27 |
| Gatto, Al & Joanne        | 12/28 |
| Shockey, Chris & Lisa     | 12/28 |
| Coleman, Jacob & Ashley   | 12/29 |
| Dieringer, Henry & Char   | 12/29 |
| Hahn, Jim & Pat           | 12/30 |
| Gop, Joe & Myrna          | 12/31 |
| Manningham, Dan & Fran    | 12/31 |



**Please consider celebrating a birthday or anniversary by "gifting" the Christ UMC Scholarship Fund with a \$2.00 or more donation!**

## 2018 Emmaus Walk Dates:

### SPRING

Men's #85: April 12 to 15;

Women's #86: April 19 to 22

### FALL

Men's #87: Sept 27 to 30;

Women's #88: Oct. 11 to 14

Applications: Val Garron in the church office.

Information: John Brower 941-223-7130 or Gary Pfleeger 941-493-7781.



## Salty Service Cards

Have you been remembering to alert us to your "salty service"? When you have served the Lord with gladness in kindness to others, doing your best to be an effective witness to His love and forgiveness, please remember to drop one of our Salty Service cards in the offering plate. You will find them in the pew racks by the pink special giving envelopes. This is not to brag about what you have done. It is to anonymously let your Church family know that you are seeking to be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. God bless you for serving. From Your Missions Committee

## UMM Announcement

Presently the United Methodist Men's group is under restructuring and looking for new members. Needed are members to help re-organize the look and mission of the group and consider being an officer. Everyone interested please contact Blair Post at [blair823@yahoo.com](mailto:blair823@yahoo.com) or 941-286-4970.

*Kick-start the Christmas season right with your kids!  
We have lots of great opportunities all month long.*

## Night in Bethlehem - Sunday, Dec 3, 5:30-7:30PM

Join us for a family centered night and invite your friends. At a Night in Bethlehem, kids and their families will explore the city at the time of Jesus' birth. Through hands-on experiences they will find out about the most important baby ever - and learn that Jesus came to save us! We will end the night with **Worship Under the Stars**. Bring a blanket or chairs and worship Jesus with us out on the field behind Memorial Hall.

We are also looking for decorations and supply items that we can borrow for the event. If you have any of these, please contact Becky Diefenbach at 941-493-7504 or [becky@christvenice.com](mailto:becky@christvenice.com)

- Baskets
- floral foam blocks
- lightweight wooden mallets
- E-Z Up canopy or pop-up tents

## Christmas Cantata & 3rd Annual Christmas Cookie Contest - Sunday, Dec 10, 6:00-8:00PM

Christ Kids will be performing a short skit and song at the beginning of the Cantata. Then we will be hosting our 3rd Annual Christmas Cookie Contest and Social following the Cantata in Memorial Hall.

**If you are interested in baking cookies for the contest, please make at least 3 dozen and drop them off by 5:30 pm the night of the Cantata & Cookie Contest in Memorial Hall.** You will register your cookies at that time. Our judges are very experienced in the area of cookie tasting and will be awarding prizes in the following categories:

- **Best Tasting** - cookies will be judged on appearance, aroma, texture and flavor
- **Most Festive** - cookies will be judged according to how Christmas-y they are decorated
- **Most Unique** - cookies will be judged for creative, "outside-the-box" thinking as well as taste
- **People's Choice** - anyone attending the cookie social may cast their vote for the best cookie of the night

If you have any questions, please contact Becky Diefenbach. We look forward to seeing you there!



## “The Greatest Story Ever Told” is coming to Christ Venice!!!

On Sunday evening, December 10, 2017, at 6:00PM, the Music Ministries at Christ Church will combine to do our annual Christmas program. This free, intergenerational concert will include our Praise Orchestra, Children’s Ministry, Youth Ministry, Praise Band, and Chancel Choir. This year’s choir cantata is called “The Greatest Story Ever Told”, written and arranged by Dennis and Nan Allen. Light refreshments will be served after the program in Memorial Hall.

## “Third Annual Christmas Cookie Contest!!!”

Immediately following the cantata on December 10 will be our annual Christmas Cookie Contest. This church wide event will take place in Memorial Hall. There will be several different categories for the cookie contest. Please watch for more details to enter this fun-filled and delicious event!

## Calling all Early Birds! JOYFUL SOUND NEEDS YOU!

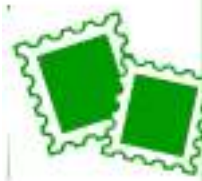
Joyful Sound, our 7:30 Service ensemble, is now singing at the 7:30AM service. We really need singers in all voice parts to participate. Please report to the sanctuary at 7:00AM to run through the anthem for the day. The ensemble does not sing on the first Sunday of each month. Please let Cheryl Smith know if you are interested in singing with us.

Contact Cheryl by email at [cheryl@christvenice.com](mailto:cheryl@christvenice.com) or (941)493-7504 for information on any of our music ministries.



## Keep Saving Cancelled Stamps

**Be sure to save the stamps from all of the Christmas cards that you receive.** Used stamps are collected, processed and resold creating funds that are then channeled to the support of overseas missions by Alliance Women’s Stamp Ministry. Stamps of every kind are needed, foreign as well as domestic, old issue or current. Please ladies, keep collecting. Neatly trim around each stamp about 1/4 to 1/3 inch, bring to church and drop in the collection boxes in either the Family Life or Memorial Hall Kitchen.



## Poinsettias

Help beautify our Sanctuary for Christmas by purchasing a poinsettia in honor or in memory of a loved one for \$9 each. Please use a pink pew envelope and clearly write your dedication on the back.



## Blue Christmas Service: “In the Bleak Midwinter” Sunday, December 17, 6:00pm

The Christmas season is supposed to be a time of joy and hope. As Andy Williams first sang in 1963, “It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year.” Yet many of us find the Christmas season difficult. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, or living with cancer or some other disease that puts a question mark over the future, can make the Christmas season a struggle.

Our Blue Christmas service acknowledges the pain that is still there during the Christmas season and helps us to meet Jesus in the midst of our pain so that we can find healing and hope. Come and invite someone you know who may be facing a difficult Christmas season.

## Senior Friendship Center needs Medical Volunteers

*Do Unto Others.* The Senior Friendship Center of Venice is a non-profit organization located at 2350 Scenic Drive on the Intracoastal Waterway. The Health Clinic at the Friendship Center services low income residents of Sarasota County who are 509 years of age or older by providing medical and/or dental care. It is staffed primarily by volunteer physicians, dentists, nurses, and other health professionals. The dental part of the clinic is presently in dire need of volunteer dentists, hygienists and dental assistants. The patient wait list is extremely long for dental care.

Are you one of these professionals who could volunteer one morning or afternoon a week to this “People Helping People” center? If so, please consider doing so as helping others truly adds meaning and purpose to life. For more information, contact Dr. Charles Myers (941-493-5065) who is a member of Christ UMC and a volunteer dentist at the Senior Friendship Center.

## Ladies Vintage Christmas Party, Thursday, Dec 7

The holiday season is upon us, and our new ministry Women With Purpose is eager and ready to celebrate the reason for the season – our Savior Jesus Christ! Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Vintage Christmas is Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> 6pm-8pm. Tickets are \$5. Please contact Alyson Hudson with any questions! Get ready to eat some delicious food and make some joy-filled memories!



## January 19-20, 2018 Soul Satisfaction



We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of Dr. Tammy Smith, January 19-20, 2018. She will be speaking at the Soul Satisfaction conference for women in our church and our community – invite your friends, neighbors, and coworkers! The conference will focus on the peace that can only come from God as we go about our daily lives in this broken world. Registration is \$39 (\$49 after January 12) and includes the Soul Satisfaction book, the conference notebook, and lunch.

Do you want your life to proclaim the beauty of God's redemption? Join us as we welcome Dr. Tammy Smith, author of Soul Healing, for a weekend conference. Dr. Smith will be speaking to women at Christ United Methodist Church about how to find true fulfillment in Christ and how to rid ourselves of barriers to peace. Let's gather together and refocus our lives on our God who is the giver of true hope and joy. Registration online at <https://drtammysmith.com/soul-satisfaction-registration-venice>.

## Ladies Winter Bible Study begins January 25

Our winter Bible study *Lessons From Luke* runs from January 25 – February 15. The class will meet Thursdays from 10am – noon. Linda Braun and Alyson Hudson will be leading the class. Please contact Linda or Alyson with any questions.

## New Director of Family Ministries

We are happy to announce that Amy Wilson-Moghina will be coming on board in January to lead this dynamic ministry. Amy is currently a member of the planning team for the Family Ministry and sings in our Praise Band. She has a passion for Jesus, a love for others, and terrific gifts for ministry. She also has many years of experience in the hospitality industry. We are very excited to have Amy join us as part of the staff. Please welcome her in her new role!



## IMPORTANT YEAR END FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Checks that are placed in the church offering on the first Sunday of 2018 (Jan 7) will NOT qualify for a charitable deduction in 2017, even if the check is predated or actually written in 2017. However, checks that are WRITTEN, MAILED, and POST-MARKED in 2017 will be credited in 2017 even if they are not received by the church until 2018.

To ensure the deductibility of your contribution, please do not file your 2017 tax return until you have received your contribution statement from the church. Some of your contributions may not be tax deductible if you file your tax return before receiving your written acknowledgement.

Christ United Methodist Church is pleased to announce the introduction of an electronic option for making regular offerings. Contributions can be debited automatically from your checking account or processed using your credit or debit card. We even accept rewards cards to help achieve your rewards' goal.



Our electronic giving program offers convenience for you and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. And, when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your weekly offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis. Visit our website at [www.ChristVenice.com](http://www.ChristVenice.com) and click on the 'Give Online' button to get started.

Partners in electronic giving since 2002



# What are we doing about MISSIONS?

At a recent TMS Global workshop on missions, we were asked an important question: Are we called to be “fishers of men” or are we led to be “keepers of the aquarium“?

We learned that God has given the church a two-fold mission: THE GREAT COMMANDMENT (“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Mt. 22:37) and THE GREAT COMMISSION (“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...” Mt. 28:19-20) It was a time to really examine what our church stands for -- where our focus is. When we ask people to “Say YES to Jesus!”, what are we anticipating? Is Christ UMC directed toward MAINTENANCE -- with a focus inward, on ourselves, our own needs, our own property, our own programs, our own resources? Or are we more MISSIONAL -- focused more outward, on others’ needs, on people who may look different from us, examining how we can use the resources God has give to us to be used to glorify Him outside of our own fellowship?

In truth, as we listened and learned about encouraging a missions mindset in our churches, those of us there were very thankful that most of the pieces for a productive missions program are already in place in Christ UMC. We DO love and support a number of missionaries -- some local and others across the globe. We DO celebrate our missionaries with a festival every February. And we ARE sending out short term missions teams. Where we have fallen short is in communicating this program with EVERY member of our church. Your interest is desired; your prayers are essential!

Please be watching the “Coming Attractions” for information on the coming

## Missions Festival -- IGNITE! -- February 7-10, 2018

And please pray for the preparation involved as the plans for this program proceed.

### Haiti Kids Christmas

Again this year we will be filling Christmas baggies with small gifts for the 500 children at our two Christian Schools, of Pastor Fan Fan and Pastor Julio's in Haiti. The children come from very poor homes, and our gifts may be their only gifts they receive at Christmas. You may help with this needy project by contributing through our pink pew envelopes and mark "Haiti Kids Christmas."



### What is a Holding Cross?

People have asked us many times where we get the holding crosses that we take on our mission trips and we thought we will share with you the unique ministry of the gentleman whose ministry is making these holding crosses.

First of all what is a holding cross.? It is a small cross made from plain, rough wood with uneven surface to fit your fingers comfortably than a “correctly shaped” cross would do. It is made to fit right than to look right. It is not decorated. It is a reminder of the harsh wood of the cross of Jesus. It is also a reminder of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for our sins. . You can hold it while praying by yourself or with others. You can give it to anyone who is ill at home or in the hospital.

Dr. Gary and Marcia Pfeeger, who are faithful and long standing members of our church have a good friend in northern Michigan who wanted to do something with his woodworking gift to the Lord’s work.. He channeled this gift into making holding crosses in addition to other things he does. . He has made over 12,000 holding crosses for our church. We take a good number of them on our mission trips. . His name is Dennis Rusiecki and we are grateful to him for making these holding crosses. We are also very grateful to Gary and Marcia for making these crosses available to us. Gary and Marcia are very supportive of the mission work of our church and also our medical ministry.



It is a powerful witnessing tool in sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in the mission field . We give them to patients before surgery when we pray for them and also to patients in the wards. We also include a holding cross when we give a prayer shawl from the Prayer Shawl Ministry in our church.. Patients have wept when they receive these holding crosses and some have accepted the Lord as their Lord and Savior through the holding cross.

*Pete & Judy Obregon*

### Christmas Gifts for the Needy and Homeless

Once again Christ UMC is collecting **new unwrapped** Christmas gifts for needy children, teens, men, and women, of our community. Please place new unwrapped gift items in the decorated Christmas Center of Hope box located in the Memorial Hall foyer. Possible gift suggestions include: socks, underwear, toiletry items, throws, detergent, hand sanitizer, soft soap, wash cloths, hand towels, ponchos, food treats, new clothing items. *Any new item that provides a need or enjoyment is welcome!* **Gifts will be collected through Sunday, December 10 which is only three weeks away.** Gift bags will be given out at The Center of Hope. Wouldn't it be great if every needy person received at least a pair of socks as a gift? Thank you for helping!

