



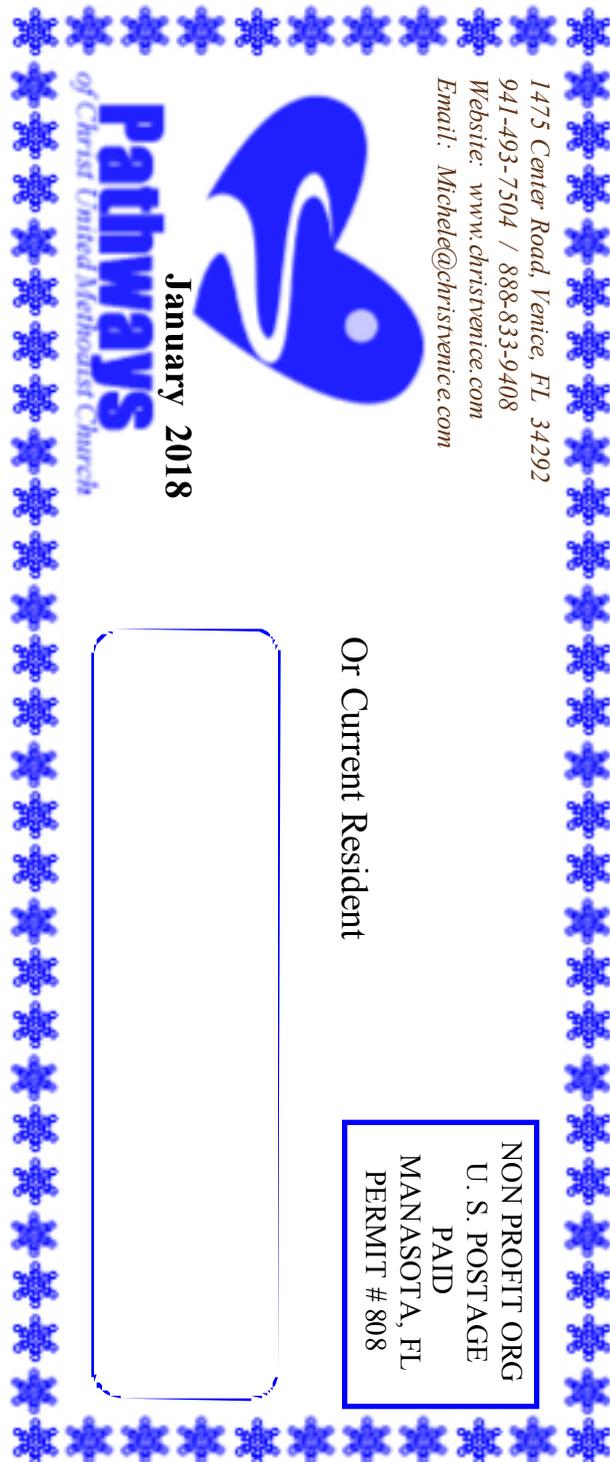
Lifelong Learning Presents....

Saturday Seminary February 17

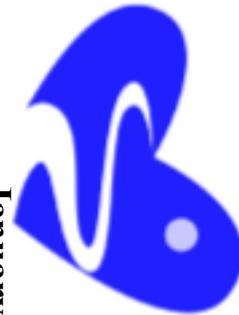
Dr. Brian Russell, Professor of Biblical Studies and Dean of the School of Urban Ministries, Asbury Theological Seminary is the featured presenter at our next Saturday Seminary on February 17.

His topic is *The Inspiration and Ongoing Authority of Scripture*. Dr. Russell is the author of "Invitation" a 10 week, well-crafted introductory approach to studying the most important book in the history of the world that will follow his presentation in February.

Watch for more details in January.



of Christ United Methodist Church
Pathways
January 2018



1475 Center Road, Venice, FL 34292
941-493-7504 / 888-833-9408
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Email: Michele@christivenice.com

Or Current Resident

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2018: The Year of the Bible

We believe that Scripture is our authority for both faith and practice. God's Word is what directs our beliefs and actions. This is counter to a culture that determines belief and practice by inner feelings or subjective experience. Our source of truth is the Bible, so we had better know what is in it!

That's why I am excited about our plans as a church to read through the Bible in a year. That's right, the whole Bible in one year. We have selected a wonderful reading plan to use that is 5 days a week. This gives you some extra time to catch up each week if you need it. We are also going to reinforce what you are reading by preaching from a passage that was in the reading plan the previous week. And to have even more fun, the Wednesday Night Bible Studies will do the same thing.

But wait, there's more! We have asked Dr. Brian Russell, from Asbury Seminary, to come back for another Saturday Seminary on February 17th to discuss how the Bible was put together. Mark your calendars for that special event.

The Bible reading plans will be available at the Connection Desk in the lobby of the Sanctuary. We want everyone to be part of this incredible journey through the Scriptures. In the next few weeks, you will have an opportunity to sign on to the journey. Don't worry about falling behind. If you do, I encourage you to just pick up on the current day and keep going.

It is my hope that each of us will take the challenge to read it each day, hear it each Sunday, and share it with at least one other person each week. I have no doubt that if you read through the Scriptures in the coming year, you will be transformed in ways you cannot possibly imagine today. Jesus said, "*Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.*" 2018 is the year we are going to feast on His Word! I'm looking forward to the journey with you.

In Christ,

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

MISSIONS FESTIVAL FEVER IS GROWING!

What?
You've Never Attended a Mission Festival?
Now is the Time
to get On Board
February 7, 10 & 11, 2018



Those of you with hearts for Missions will be very excited to be a part of the Mission Festival in February. The first meeting is on **Wednesday, February 7**. Come hear from local mission representatives that our church supports. **Saturday, February 10** will be a time when you can join with the church people for dinner (this year a small fee will be charged). You will be able to hear from, and meet some of the missionaries that our church supports. Included that night will be the Youth's Dessert Auction with all proceeds going to support their summer mission trip. This year our youth will be going to serve and minister in Guatemala.



On **Sunday, February 11**, we are excited that our speaker will be the Rev. Max Wilkins, president of TMS Global. TMS Global recruits, trains and sends missionaries around the world to communicate--through word and deed--the message of the gospel. It is in dozens of countries around the globe. More than 200 missionaries currently serve through the organization.

"TMS Global has been at the forefront of creative cross-cultural witness for over 30 years," Wilkins said. "With its innovative vision and mission and entrepreneurial emphasis on reaching the least reached people, this is a cause worth giving my life to."

"I truly believe missions is the reason the Church exists."

Missions Festival Desserts Too!



On Saturday evening, February 10, Missions Festival activities will include our legendary **Dessert Auction** for youth missions. This silent auction helps the youth pay for their mission trip, while providing desserts for Festival guests.

We hope you'll join in on the fun by making and donating a favorite dessert, or by bidding on desserts as you mingle with missionaries.

If you'd like to participate or have any questions, please call or email Marcia Schaberg (marcia@christvenice.com) or call the church office (941-493-7504). Youth missionaries will be grateful for your support!

BIRTHDAYS

Beaman, Joan	1/1	Oakley, Melva	1/15
Daluz, Joseph	1/1	Stenz, Natalie	1/15
Thoennissen, Marge	1/1	Evans, David	1/16
Whidden, Cheryl	1/1	Thompson, Harriet	1/16
Boyce, Lucy	1/2	Usher, Caleb	1/16
Mersman, Jan	1/2	Buettner, Jack	1/17
Breitwieser, Doris	1/3	Daluz, Anabela	1/17
Craver, Darlene	1/3	Ritchie, Richard	1/17
Daku, Joe	1/4	MacKay, Jim	1/19
Disler, Jackie	1/4	Boyd, Denise	1/20
Eichert, Bert	1/4	Chapman, Pete	1/20
Micciche, Andrew	1/4	Hoffman, Rae Ann	1/20
Thompson, Jerry	1/4	Dismer, Jerry	1/21
Austin, Lyle	1/5	DeBauche, Susan	1/22
Myers, Charles	1/5	Bryan, Heather	1/23
Scalisi, Paul	1/5	Haley, Susan	1/23
Gould, Betty	1/6	Huber, Mary Jo	1/23
Kotkiewicz, Thomas	1/6	Minio, Judi	1/23
Morley, Michele	1/6	Myers, Dave	1/23
Dowdy, Shannon	1/7	Schoenfelder, Barb	1/23
Meringer, Jewell	1/7	Crabbe, Marcia	1/24
Humes, Carol	1/8	Kampman, Sherry	1/24
Barrett, Wayne	1/9	Clark, Joyce	1/25
Paull, Don	1/9	Perez, Mason Ryon	1/25
Cooper, Susan	1/10	Wray, Jim	1/25
Dashiell, Bob	1/10	Schaberg, Marcia	1/26
Kern, Julie	1/10	Barrett, Carol	1/27
Hazelrigg, Ed	1/11	Drobisch, Deanna	1/27
Braun, Linda	1/12	Ralls, Nancy	1/27
Robson, George	1/12	Fierce, Shirley	1/28
Smith, Jane	1/12	Guarino, Gabrielle	1/29
Henderson, Charles	1/13	Ranly, Jean	1/31
Honn, Vicki	1/13		
Miller, Betty	1/13		
Kresse, Elizabeth	1/14		
Samuels, Richard	1/14		
Blakeslee, Bob	1/15		
Brooks, Emily	1/15		
Disler, Tim	1/15		
Halpin, Jonetta	1/15		



ANNIVERSARIES

Hurst, Reed & Barbara	1/1
Blakeslee, Bob & Gertrude	1/1
Geremia, Joe & Jenny	1/7
Hutter, Rich & Elaine	1/7
Stanley, Philip & Lois	1/8
McCain, Vollie & Sharon	1/9
Panther, Johnnie & Patricia	1/14
Laubisch, David & Beth	1/20
Bruns, Harry & Shirley	1/21
Marsh, Frank & Holly	1/25
Watkins, Jeff & Jane	1/27
Weerasooriya, Shanaka & Rana	1/27
Kampman, Don & Sherry	1/29
Chapman, Pete & Judie	1/30

**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



These are wonderful 3 day retreats experiencing Christian renewal. An opportunity to really sense and know Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in a new way, as God's Grace and Love is revealed to you through the sharing and witnessing of 10 lay person talks. Singing, learning, worshiping, reflecting, praying and maybe even some tears of forgiveness or a blessing received. Four to five weeks prior to each weekend there will be sign up tables in the breeze way after each Sunday service.

Saturday, Jan 20th , Grace UMC, in Venice, will be hosting their annual fund raising Emmaus Spaghetti Dinner at 5.30 pm. \$10 per person at the door. Prior to dinner from 4pm to 5pm there will be a silent auction of various contributed items. Music during dinner, followed by special entertainment of the Crosby Lane, three piece Christian group from Nashville, Tenn. A 4th Day sharing, closing with communion. A nice evening of 100 plus form the Suncoast Emmaus community.

Tuesday, Jan 23rd , 7 to 8:30 pm, The Christ UMC Emmaus Community will be hosting an ice cream social gathering in Memorial Hall. An opportunity for our Christ UMC Emmaus members to renew relationships, sing some songs, meet the six new members who took their walks in 2017, and hear several share their experiences and especially comment on the Dayspring facilities. Several talks covering 2017 and of course the new year 2018some worth while service projects to get involved in. A special invitation to non Emmaus Walkers who might have interest in experiencing a weekend, have questions or just want to learn more about what goes on and might want to get involved, We will close with communion and all the ice cream you want.

A special guest will be our own Karen Post, who took her Walk a year ago. Karen had interest in joining the Suncoast Emmaus Governing board. She put her name in and was just notified of her election to the board for a two year term. Congratulations Karen! One of the common effects of a weekend experience is coming back wanting to take a more active role in your church, family, community or place of work. Not a bad result!

For information, call John Brower 941-223-7130 or Gary Pfleeger 941-493-7781.

The holiday season has been full in the life of the Children's Ministry!

In December, we hosted a Night in Bethlehem, where kids and their families could experience sights, sounds, activities, and stories from the time that Jesus was born. We transformed Memorial Hall into the streets of Bethlehem with shops, a bakery and the stable where Jesus was born. They learned that Jesus' name means "He saves us" and wrote it in Hebrew. They learned that Jesus grew up to be a carpenter like Joseph, his earthly father. And most importantly, they heard Mary and Joseph tell the story of Jesus' birth.

We finished the evening with Worship Under the Stars. We gathered out on the field with blankets and lawn chairs and sang songs of praise to welcome in the Christmas season. The families had a great time so thank you all for your support and donations of **time and materials to help us accomplish this wonderful experience!**



We wrapped up our Christmas festivities by singing at the Christmas Cantata and hosting the 3rd annual cookie contest afterward. The kids did a great job performing and we hope they were able to share the light of Jesus with those who attended. The cookie contest was a fun time to fellowship after the Cantata and we had an abundance of delicious cookies for tasting! Thank you to all who contributed to the amazing spread!!!

The winners of this year's contest are:

Best Tasting Cookie – Christmas Tree Peanut Butter Kisses by Natalie & Ana Stenz,

Most Unique Cookie – Chocolate Chip Cookies with Jalapenos by Bill Orlando,

Most Festive Cookie – Florida Snowmen by Melissa Leisenring.

And the **People's Choice Awards** went to Sebastian Lopez and Melissa Leisenring. Both did a variation of Florida Snowmen. Great work everyone!

We look forward to the new year and our spring activities. Wishing you and your family a very blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Becky Diefenbach
Children's Ministry Director





Chili Cook-off

Our first ever Chili Cook-off was a joint event with Childrens' & Youth Ministries and was a huge success. There were about 15 entries into the cook-off competing for first place in three different categories: red chili, vegetarian chili, and freestyle chili. From the chili, to the rock wall, to the tailgate party, it was a fun time for everyone. We want to take this time to say thank you to everyone who volunteered, participated in the competition, and all who came to the event. We can't wait for next years!

*Thanks,
Becky Diefenbach and Jonetta Halpin*



Christ Youth-Winter Retreat Coming Soon

The youth winter retreat, Refuel, is coming up, January 19th-21st. We will be meeting other UMC youth groups in our district at Riverside Camp & Retreat Center in LaBelle, FL. This is going to be a great time of worship, fun, and engaging faith. The students will learn the importance of going to God to refuel when they feel empty. The price of the retreat is \$100 per student. For more details or register for the retreat, please visit this link: <https://christvenice.wufoo.com/forms/winter-retreat-2018/>.

*In Christ,
Jonetta Halpin, Youth Ministry Director*

Phone Shepherds Needed

Is God calling you? Do you have a little time to give to the Lord each month to make a few friendly calls to members of our church? if you do, and are feeling a nudge to do this, we need you to be a Shepherd. It only takes a few short calls to check on the well-being of 8-10 people each month. Our church is a growing church with a constant need to find ways to keep in contact with each other and our church. If you are interested, please contact, Margie Wilson @ 493-3112, or Barb Hurst @496-8497.

Thanks to our Christ Venice family for all the love, prayers and support during 2017. We were able to participate in 4 missions projects (two from Christ Venice and two with MMI). We do so appreciate the help of the Christ United Methodist Women. We had enough health kits for all our projects and a special Christmas gift of 70 kits were sent to Panama for the children of the feeding program. The Elizabeth Circle has been providing the kits for many years.

So many donated coloring books, colored pencils, pencil sharpeners, and of course the beautiful felt boards. Thanks for all the work that went to cutting out the figures and the organization of the whole project was led by Shirley Fierce. It was a great way to share the word of our Lord with the children and some adults in the villages.

Also thanks to the prayer shawl ministry and the holding cross ministry. The recipients were so happy to receive them. Blessings to all in the coming year.
Dr. Pete and Judy Obregon

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to all the Pastors and Christian friends at Christ UMC who have aided and supported us even from afar. Jim still has a long way back and our life consists of going to dialysis and doctors on a daily basis—he just added his 14th doctor. He is a medical miracle and is on the road to recovery, but it is progressing very slowly. He wants to come to church but hasn't had the stamina yet. He does go out to eat, and was actually able to go to the Venice Christmas Parade and enjoy the grandchildren. I do want to send a special mention to Alicia Vis, a special friend and a great organizer. She enabled me to attend my 50th Class Reunion last year and she started the ball rolling for us again in another recent incident. There are so many others I can't even begin to name names. God bless you as you bless our lives. In Christian love,

Jim & June Woodburn

STEPHEN MINISTRY

We know the holidays can be particularly difficult for those who are grieving, and recently there have been several programs to address this. While grief may be more intense during the holidays it does not go away in January. This is where Stephen Ministry can take over. Our people are there for you throughout the year, ready to listen, encourage and support you. Our motto is "We care, God cures". If you are facing any difficulties at this time you can learn more about our program by speaking with any Stephen Minister with a blue name badge, or call Don Paull at 497-5597.

Home Communion is available to those who are unable to attend church. You may request a visit by calling the church office, 493-7504, or asking any Stephen Minister.

Special Thanks



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.

2018 RENEWAL RETREATS FOR WOMEN (BLS Ministries)

Many of you have been involved in these special retreats for women, and you enjoy them so much that you keep coming back. That is wonderful! Some of you have been thinking about the need for a get-away with other women to draw closer to the Lord, and spend time recharging your spiritual batteries. These retreats are for you.

There are four retreats scheduled for 2018:

- February 4 – 8 in Orlando (This one is full but there is a waiting list.)
- February 28 – March 3 (This is a three-day retreat geared for women who work and cannot attend the longer ones.)
- October 15 – 19 in Orlando
- November 5 – 9 at Daytona Beach

These dates fill very fast, so get your reservation in soon. You will be blessed and refreshed. Come join us. For more information, call Lenee Schroeder at 497-1088, or pick up a brochure in the church office.

***A HUGE "THANK YOU" TO ALL OUR MUSIC MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS!
I APPRECIATE YOUR COMMITMENT TO JESUS CHRIST AND HIS
CHURCH! I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU IN 2018!
BLESSINGS, CHERYL!***

CALLING ALL SINGERS! IT'S A BRAND NEW YEAR!

Did you sing in choir in high school or college? Do you love singing to praise the Lord? Why not come out and sing with our chancel choir this season! We always need new singers, especially alto, tenor and bass parts. Choir rehearsals begin again on Wednesday, January 3 at 6:45PM in the choir room, which is located in the sanctuary building. The chancel choir sings each Sunday morning at the 11:00AM service. We meet in the choir room on Sunday mornings at 10:30AM robed and ready to sing.

PRAISE ORCHESTRA REHEARSALS BEGIN ON JANUARY 4, AT 11:15AM IN THE SANCTUARY!

Did you play an instrument in high school or college? Do you love playing to praise the Lord? The praise orchestra rehearses each week on Thursday mornings at 11:15AM in the sanctuary. We play for the 11:00AM service each Sunday and play prelude and/or special music, at least once a month. We welcome any orchestral instruments and are in need of some string players. Please let Cheryl Smith know if you are interested in playing with us, so music will be prepared in advance for you.

ATTN: EARLY BIRDS! JOYFUL SOUND NEEDS YOU!

Joyful Sound, our 7:30 Service ensemble, sings 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 or (941)493-7504 for information on any of our music ministries.

GriefShare - From Mourning to Joy

The GriefShare program provides help and encouragement after the death of a loved one. Often friends and family want to help you, but don't know how. That's the reason for GriefShare. The 13 week program consists of videos prepared by professionals, support groups facilitated by caring, trained facilitators, and a helpful workbook. Our next program begins on January 18 with registration at 12:30pm in Memorial Hall Room 22. Classes will run from 1:00-3:00pm. Cost of the book is \$15. Please pre-register by calling the church office (941-493-7504) or for more information call Eleanor Montano (941-408-0239) or visit www.GriefShare.org. We were greatly encouraged by the positive feedback from those who took our previous session, and if you are grieving, we hope and pray that you will be helped, too!

New Year, new opportunities to get connected! With the New Year before us, there will be plenty of opportunities to **Worship, Connect, Grow** and **Go**. I'm excited to announce our Lay Academy course offerings for February 2018. But first I've heard that some of you aren't sure what Lay Academy is.

Lay Academy is a four night opportunity to indulge in learning something new while gathering with friends in a casual environment over a four week period. It is offered to anyone interested, so invite your neighbors! We ask that you register, so beginning the Sundays of January, there will be representatives of the Lay Academy team in the Narthex and Memorial Hall to answer your questions and take your registrations. If you need any further help, please call the church office.

Lay Academy - February 2018 Course Offerings

“BIBLE BASICS”

This interactive class is for folks who have little familiarity with the Bible and will answer the questions, What is it? Who wrote it? What does it say? Why should I believe it? How does it apply to my life? Where can I learn more? It's also a great “refresher” course for anyone interested in re-engaging in Bible study.

Instructor: Bob Blakeslee

“ JUST WALK ACROSS THE ROOM”

What if you knew that by taking 10 steps across a room and saying hello to another person, you could impact his or her eternity? It has nothing to do with methods and everything to do with taking a genuine interest in another human being. This dynamic study will equip and inspire you to follow Jesus' lead by simply walking across the room to extend care, compassion and inclusiveness to people who might need a touch of God's love today. YOU can make a difference of an eternity for someone standing near you!

Leader: Val Garron

“WHAT ON EARTH AM I HERE FOR?”

The most basic question everyone faces in life is Why am I here? What is my purpose? Self-help books suggest that people should look within, at their own desires and dreams, but Rick Warren says the starting place must be with God and his eternal purposes for each life. Real meaning and significance comes from understanding and fulfilling God's purposes for putting us on earth.

The Purpose-Driven Life helps readers understand God's incredible plan for their lives, enables them to see the big picture of what life is all about and begin to live the life God created them to live. It is a manifesto for Christian living in the 21st century...a lifestyle based on eternal purposes, not cultural values. Using biblical stories and letting the Bible speak for itself, Warren clearly explains God's five purposes for each of us.

Leader: Henry Pugh

“MAKE A DIFFERENCE”

Every day we see things that are not right in our world, and as followers of Christ, we long to connect our passions and gifts with the needs around us. In this class we will learn together how we can use our God-given gifts in ministry and mission to be a part of God's healing work in this world.

Instructor: Rev. Denvil Farley

“LITTLE HATS...LOTS OF LOVE”

Using a 5” (BOYE) ROUND KNITTING LOOM, each participant will learn how to make small, warm hats for newborn babies...and, these will be given to Sarasota Memorial Hospital. Join the fun and fellowship while you SPREAD THE GIFT OF WARMTH! *Supplies provided. If, however, you already have the 5” round loom, please bring it with you or give it to share. Yarn provided.*

Leader: Mary Geekie and “Shawl Sistas”

“GET HEALTHY, STAY HEALTHY, AT ANY AGE”

Gain knowledge of lifestyle and spiritual disciplines that help us to lead healthy, productive lives. Exploring memory/brain health; the Five Brain Health Factors, which includes spirituality (prayer, meditation and worship). Feeding our bodies and souls through nutrition and scripture. Oils of Ancient Scripture and how they can support a healthier, happier life. Living a balanced life.

Instructors: Richard Rogers & Dr. Lulu Lopez

“FROM HERE TO ETERNITY”

Many of us think we are prepared when a loved one dies. Are you and your family prepared? Join the conversation of preparing for **end of life** issues, covering not just the personal side, but the business aspect of death as well. This course will guide you through the loss of a loved one, as well as funeral and estate issues.

Instructor: Marsha Weaver, author of “Through the Valley.” *Please Note: Marsha will teach Feb. 1, 8, then Suzanne Barksdale, Community Relations Representative for Tidewell Hospice will share the services and benefits available through Tidewell Feb. 15, 22.

“LEGACY 31”

Legacy 31 is a great way to pass on your Christian faith to future generations. This devotional is a powerful tool to give seniors a way to express their faith. May God use your Legacy to draw you closer to him? This is a “hands on” workshop for you to create your OWN PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL.

Instructor: James Foubister Sr. Author “Legacy 31.”

That's not all Connection News continued

Sunday School/Small Group Fair -- **Sunday, January 14th** in the breezeway of the Sanctuary. There you will find new Bible studies being offered as well as other small groups and Sunday School classes. This is a great way to meet the teachers/leaders ahead of time and choose an area that interests you.