



APRIL 2026

The Messenger

The monthly newsletter of First United Methodist Church of Pinellas Park

BRITTANY'S BITS



April invites us into the sacred tension at the heart of our faith.

The space where grief and hope sit side by side, where endings and beginnings coexist. As we enter Holy Week and celebrate Easter, we remember that resurrection does not come without disruption and new life often emerges in seasons of uncertainty, transition, and courage.

This year, that truth feels especially close to home.

As many of you know, our church has been actively discerning the potential sale of all but approximately 1.3 acres of our property as an opportunity for redevelopment, right sizing, and dreaming of a sustainable future for our community. This is not simply about buildings, it is about how we steward what God has entrusted to us for the sake of the community beyond our walls. It is about asking: *What might need to change or die for resurrection to be possible at First UMC Pinellas Park?*

We know this process brings a wide range of emotions: hope, curiosity, grief, concern, even excitement. All of these are welcome here.

To that end, we will host a **second Town Hall on Sunday, April 12th, immediately following worship**. This gathering will provide updated information and create space to respond to the questions and concerns raised during our

December Town Hall. Your voice matters in this process, and we hope you will join us as we continue to discern together.

As we begin Holy Week, we hope you will take this time to attend some or all of our Holy Week offerings and maybe even invite someone along with you! Please see the schedule on page 3 of this issue.

Holy Week reminds us that God is not afraid of endings. The cross is not the final word. The tomb is not the end of the story. Resurrection is always on the horizon, even when we cannot yet see it clearly.

So we move forward together rooted in faith, grounded in love, and open to the surprising ways God brings new life and continues to make a way even when it feels like there is no way!

He is Risen! He has Risen, indeed!
Pastor Brittany

First United Methodist Church of Pinellas Park
& Beyond the Wings Theater present

EASTER CELEBRATION
Easter Egg Hunt, Crafts,
Photos with Easter Bunny

Patti Johnson Farm
6199 94th Ave, Pinellas Park, FL 33782

April 4th, 2026 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

FREE EVENT - All are welcome!

Bring your baskets and
come make some memories with us!

*Includes visits with the farm
animals, games, and lots of fun!*

Easter Sunrise
Crescent Lake Park

At 7 AM on Easter Sunday,
we celebrate Jesus's
resurrection as we greet
the dawn in nature.

We will be at Crescent Lake Park
near 7th St N & 20th Ave N.
Map: allendaleumc.org/sunrise

Street Parking is Available.
Bring your own chair or blanket.



FINANCIAL STATUS

Hello Church Family,

With any church issue such as our deepening financial troubles, a

common refrain is “You need to make sure people know what is going on.” Here’s a brief history gleaned from Messenger articles since I became (again) Finance Chair.

February 2023 – “For 2022, our church operating income was \$243,305.74 while our church expenses were \$270,629.77 resulting in a shortfall of \$27,324.03.”

April 2023 – “Yes, I know you’re reading this in April, but here’s the bad news about our January income and expenses. For the first month of this fiscal year our expenses exceeded our income by a little over \$5,000.00.”

October 2023 – “I have been reporting to you that we are running a shortfall in our donations versus our operating budget. Here is where we stand through July, 2023:

Actual Sunday Giving = \$111,849 year-to-date

Actual Operating Expenses = \$172,114 year-to-date

Operating Shortfall = \$60,265 year-to-date”

April 2024 – “If you were present or caught the March 3rd worship online, you heard me explain that our contributions are not sufficient to cover our operating expenses. I’ve mentioned this fact in my Messenger articles before so I don’t want to bore those that heard me speak.”

August 2024 – “Over the years our church has seen a steady decline in the number of worshippers which has only grown worse each year for some time. This has precipitated a steep drop in our contributions. Our church has faced financial difficulties before and we have always managed to pull through, but the situation now is not good!”

November 2024 – “(W)e continue to overspend our operating income by about \$10,000 per month. We have cash resources to cover this shortfall for a few months before we are down to the cash that is restricted by the United Methodist Church Discipline for use on capital items (buildings, land, and non-recurring maintenance). The Discipline does give us permission to use those funds for operating

expenses if we develop a plan for reaching our goal of once again being self-sustaining.

To that end, we have had conversations with the Assistant to the Bishop and the District Superintendent and now our church leadership has begun talks with Foundry Commercial, a property consultant paid for by the Florida United Methodist Conference. They will be analyzing our properties to determine best uses for them to help us financially and to benefit the community in the process.”

February 2025 – “Bottom line, we ended up \$64,345.96 in the **red** at the end of December.”

August 2025 – “We will soon be learning of the proposals related to redeveloping all or part(s) of our campus. We do not know what the outcome will be, but we all need to look upon this period of change as an opportunity to leave behind anything that is weighing us down and let God open new doors for us.”

December 2025 – “If you’ve been reading previous articles, you should be aware that our contributions continue to significantly underfund our operating expenses. (Our average weekly contributions are not half of our average weekly expenses.) We have been living on “extra” funds in our investment account, but **those are now depleted.**”

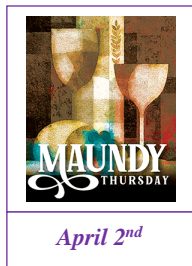
February 2026 – “So, how did we do in 2025? Our operating income was \$166,633.00 while our operating expenses were \$325,110.00; a net operating loss of \$158,477.00. Even after accounting for Gains on Previous Property Sales and Investments our net loss is \$79,478.00.”

*Blessed to serve,
Mark Linneman*

Thrift Store: The Thrift Store has had a good month. We had a “Fill-A-Bag” sale on two Saturdays and saw a lot of new faces. Our customers are even bringing in donations.

We really need more volunteers to welcome and check out customers, price items, and sort donations. The store will be open on April 11th and 18th during the Rummage Sale and we look forward to meeting the new customers who will be drawn in by the extra exposure. *Thank you to all of our volunteers who have been faithful and welcoming to our customers.*

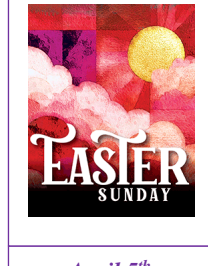
- Loretta Wilcox



April 2nd



April 3rd



April 5th



April 22nd



04/10	Jordana Clark
04/14	Joel Putnam
04/17	Katie Wilcox
04/24	Cullen Clark
04/27	Kevin Carney Garrett Carney

APRIL MEETINGS, Activities, & Events

First Monday Group: 6 pm, March 3rd, Village Inn, 9107 – 4th St. N., St. Petersburg

Free Meals: Wed., 11:00 am, FH: April 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th

Deborah Circle: Tues., April 14th, 2 pm, FH

Third-Sunday Potluck: Sun., April 19th, after worship

Holy Week at First UMC Pinellas Park

- **Palm Sunday – April 29th- Worship at 11:00 am:** Join us as we wave palms and enter the story of Jesus’ final days.
- **Maundy Thursday – April 2nd: Seder Meal & Fellowship – 6:30–7:30pm (Fellowship Hall)**
We are honored to cohost a meaningful Seder meal with The Progressive Jewish Coalition, followed by a potluck. This sacred gathering connects us to the roots of our faith and deepens our understanding of the story Jesus was living into and how we live that out today.
- **Good Friday Prayer Stations – April 3rd, 4:00–7:00pm (Fellowship Hall):** Come and go as you are able for a reflective, interactive prayer experience for all ages.
- **Saturday – April 4th**
3rd Annual Easter Egg Hunt at Patti Johnson Farm – 10:00am–1:00pm
“Pride in the Park” – 2:00–7:00pm (5663 Park Blvd, Studio 5663): We’ll have a church tent set up—volunteers are needed to take shifts, welcome neighbors, and connect with our community!
- **Easter Sunday – April 5th**
Sunrise Service – 6:45am: Blended Gulf Central District UMC Churches & Community Easter Sunrise Service), Crescent Lake Park (1900 7th St. N., St. Petersburg); Bring a chair, blanket, jacket, and a friend!
Easter Breakfast – 10:00am (Fellowship Hall at FUMCPP)
Easter Worship – 11:00am (Sanctuary)

CHURCH-WIDE RUMMAGE SALE APRIL 11th AND 15th

Set-up will begin after lunch on Wednesday, April 11th and work will continue until about 3 pm. Thursday’s setup will be from 11 am – 3 pm and Friday’s will also be 11 am – 3 pm. Other times will be available as well - just check with me.

Donations are being collected in the back storage building and can be dropped off on Wednesdays from 9 am-1 pm; Saturdays 9 am-2 pm; Sunday after church; or at any time during setup.

Pastries and lunch will be available for purchase with the proceeds from lunch going to summer camp for the children. Volunteers will be needed for baked goods to sell, setup, price, and work on the day of the sale.

- Loretta Wilcox, 637-3534



APRIL 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 8:30am Mulligan Food Pantry (E1, E2) 9am – 3pm Victory High School 11:00am Wednesday Free Meal (FH/Kit) 6:30pm Choir Practice (PAR)	2 <i>Maundy Thursday</i> 9am – 3pm Victory High School 6:30 PM Maundy Thursday Seder and Covered Dish	3 <i>Good Friday</i> Victory School Staff Training Day 4 – 7pm Good Friday Stations of the Cross	4 <i>Holy Saturday</i> Theater Exceptional (FH) 8:30am Mr. Bubbles Shower Ministry 9:00am Thrift Store (TS) <i>10am – 1pm, Easter Egg Hunt, Patti Johnson Farm</i> 2–7pm Market at Studio 5663
5 <i>Easter</i> 6:45am Combined Sunrise Services Crescent Lake PArk 9:30am Sunday School - Adult (E3, E4) 10:00 am Breakfast 11:00am Worship in Person & FB (Sanc) 5:00pm Friends of Jimmy K	6 9am – 3pm Victory High School 6:30 p.m. First Monday Group, Village Inn, St. Petersburg	7 9am – 3pm Victory High School 10:00am Ladies Prayer & Study - by Uber Conf.	8 8:30am Mulligan Food Pantry (E1, E2) 9am – 3pm Victory High School 11:00am Wednesday Free Meal (FH/Kit) 6:30pm Choir Practice (PAR) 6:30pm Youth Meeting (FH)	9 9am – 3pm Victory High School 6:30pm Bible Study	10 9am – 3pm Victory High School	11 <i>8am – 2pm, Rummage Sale, FH</i> 9:00am Thrift Store (TS)
12 9:30am Sunday School - Adult (E3, E4) 11:00am Worship in Person and FB (Sanc) <i>Town Hall</i> after service 5:30pm Friends of Jimmy K	13 9am – 3pm Victory High School	14 9am – 3pm Victory High School 10:00am Ladies Prayer & Study - by Uber Conf. 2:00pm Deborah Circle (E4)	15 8:30am Mulligan Food Pantry (E1, E2) 9am – 3pm Victory High School 11:00am Wednesday Free Meal (FH/Kit) 6:30pm Choir Practice (PAR) 6:30pm Youth Meeting (FH)	16 9am – 3pm Victory High School 6:30pm Bible Study	17 9am – 3pm Victory High School	18 <i>8am – 2pm, Rummage Sale, FH</i> 9:00am Thrift Store (TS)
19 9:30am Sunday School - Adult (E3, E4) Big Red Bus, 10 am, Front Lawn 11:00am Worship in Person & FB (Sanc) 12:15pm Potluck Luncheon (FH) 5:30pm Friends of Jimmy K	20 9am – 3pm Victory High School	21 9am – 3pm Victory High School 10:00am Ladies Prayer & Study - by Uber Conf.	22 8:30am Mulligan Food Pantry (E1, E2) 9am – 3pm Victory High School 11:00am Wednesday Free Meal (FH/Kit) 6:30pm Choir Practice (PAR) 6:30pm Beyond the Wings - Room E4 6:30pm Youth Meeting (FH)	23 9am – 3pm Victory High School 6:30pm Bible Study	24 9am – 3pm Victory High School	25 9:00am Thrift Store (TS)
26 9:30am Sunday School - Adult (E3, E4) 11:00am Worship in Person & FB (Sanc) 5:30pm Friends of Jimmy K	27 9am – 3pm Victory High School	28 9am – 3pm Victory High School 10:00am Ladies Prayer & Study - by Uber Conf.	29 8:30am Mulligan Food Pantry (E1, E2) 9am – 3pm Victory High School 11:00am Wednesday Free Meal (FH/Kit) 6:30pm Choir Practice (PAR) 6:30pm Youth Meeting (FH)	30	31	

ADULT MUSIC MINISTRY

Easter Sunday is the most joyous day in the Christian year. It's no wonder then that we have so many favorite hymns about the risen Savior. Easter hymns rejoice in Christ's resurrection, and they also speak to why his conquest of death is so important to be celebrated: our salvation!

The quintessential Easter Sunday hymn is *Christ the Lord Is Risen Today* (#302 in our hymnal). It has six verses, so we don't typically sing all of them. Some of my favorite lyrics are "Love's redeeming work is done", "Death in vain forbids Him rise, Christ has opened paradise", "Lives again our glorious King, where, O death, is now thy sting?", and "Made like him, like him, we rise, ours the cross, the grave, the skies." Such powerful words of rejoicing, salvation, and victory.

Thine Be the Glory (# 308) is another familiar Easter Sunday song. The primary theme is victory over death with phrases such as "Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son; endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won", "Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing, for our Lord now liveth; death hath last its sting." and "Lo! Jesus meets thee, risen from the tomb; lovingly he greets thee, scatters fear and gloom".

Crown Him with Many Crowns (# 327) reminds us of the multiple crowns Jesus wears. Verse two reads, "Crown him the Lord of life, who triumphed o'er the grave and rose victorious in the strife for those he came to save". Verse three says, "Crown him the Lord of peace, whose power a scepter sways from pole to pole, that wars may cease, and all be prayer and praise. Finally, verse four is "Crown him the Lord of love; behold his hands and side, those wounds yet visible above, in beauty glorified."

In addition to the more classical melodies, there are Easter hymns that are just fun to sing! *He Lives* (#310) is one of those. Who can resist smiling while singing the refrain: "He lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way. He lives, he lives salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives? He lives (hold on to that high F!) within my heart".

Another one is *Up from the Grave He Arose*" (#322). Again, the chorus is sung with vigor, and conviction, "Up from the grave He arose with a mighty triumph o'er his foes; he arose a victor from the dark domain, and he lives forever, with his saints to reign. He arose! He arose! (there's that high F again) Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

Alleluia! He is risen! He is risen, indeed!

- In His Service, **Betsy Larson**
Adult Music Director

STAFF PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Staff Parish Committee met on March 1, 2026 and elected Leslie Weaver as the Vice Chair and Andrea Halko as the Secretary.

According to the Book of Discipline the **purpose** of this committee is to be "*the administrative unit in the local church where staff and congregational interests are integrated to focus on the mission of the church.*"

The SPRC serves as the "governing board" in an advisory capacity related to personnel administration.

Duties

- Encourage, strengthen nurture, support and respect the pastor, staff and their families.
- Promote unity in the church
- Confer with and counsel the Pastor and staff on effectiveness of ministry, relationships with the congregation; their health and self-care, priorities in use of gifts, skills, and time, continuing education, work-life balance and spiritual renewal.
- Conduct annual evaluations
- Communicate and interpret to the congregation the nature and function of ministry in the United Methodist Church.
- Develop and approve job descriptions for staff

Staff Parish Committee Members:

Susan Houston – Chair

Leslie Weaver – Vice Chair

Shirley Roberts

Bill Vannatta

Andrea Halko

Cheyne Casa

Joan Berriault

Mark Linneman

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, any member of the committee would be happy to talk to you. Please pray for us as we do this work, as we will pray for you.

Blessings,

Susan Houston

Chair of Staff Parish Relations Committee



**First United Methodist Church of Pinellas Park
9025 49th Street N., Pinellas Park, FL 33782**

Phone: (727) 546-5741

office@fumcpp.org

<http://www.fumcpp.org>

<http://www.facebook.com/fumc.pinellaspark>

https://twitter.com/#!/FUMC_PPark

Church Office Hours:

Tuesday through Thursday 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Sunday, Monday, Friday, and Saturday: Closed

Pastor Brittany Leclair

386-314-3224
pastorbleclair@gmail.com

Church Office 546-5741

Admin. Ass't: Jerry Seay
office@fumcpp.org

Financial Secretary:
Bob Lawrence
accounting@fumcpp.org

The Messenger: Joyce Bernotas
messenger9025@gmail.com

Member Care
Betsy Larson 415-1274
Betsy.larson11@gmail.com

Ministry Council Chair
Dudley Wilcox
Cell phone: 685-6435
Dudley.wilcox.sr@icloud.com

Trustees
Michael Coate 432-2078
trustees.fumcpp@gmail.com

Staff/Pastor Parish Relations
Susan Houston 573-999-9446
Smhouston51@mail.com

Finance

Mark Linneman 225-0262
mlinneman@tampabay.rr.com

Lay Leader

Joan Berriault 460-5786
JStewart1713@yahoo.com

Prayer Ministries

Prayer Chain: Bev Mixson 573-3743
Prayer Chapel Angels Coordinator:
Bobbi Stockslager 409-6765

Adult Music Director/Organist

Betsy Larson 415-1274
Betsy.larson11@gmail.com

**Children and Youth Music
Director**

Jordana Clark 546-5741
wdngsngr03@yahoo.com

Youth Ministry

Loretta Wilcox 637-3534
lorettacwilcox@gmail.com

Facebook

Jordana Clark 546-5741
wdngsngr03@yahoo.com
Mike Coate (Website) 432-2078
trustees.fumcpp@gmail.com

Deborah Circle

Contact June Anderson 544-4558

Outreach Missionary Support

Thomasina Stewart 727-546-5741

Food Pantry

Joan Berriault 460-5786
JStewart1713@yahoo.com

Thrift Store

Loretta Wilcox 637-3534
lorettacwilcox@gmail.com
Joan Berriault 460-5786
JStewart1713@yahoo.com

Nominations

Chair: Pastor Brittany 546-5741