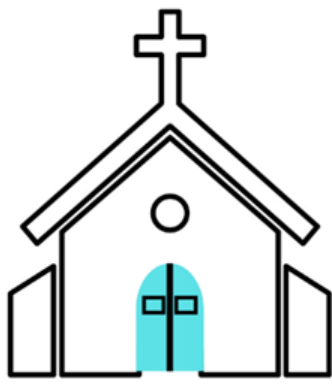
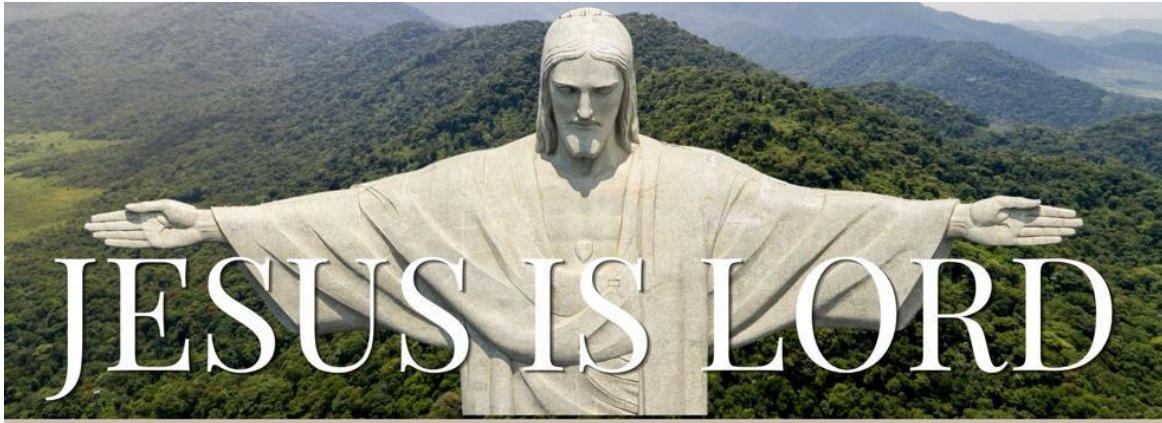




FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
GULFPORT
- the church with the teal doors -



Living in the Lordship of Christ

September 6th, 2026
11:15 am • Sanctuary & Online

CHURCH OFFICE

2728 53rd St S • Gulfport, FL 33707
(727) 321-3620 • fumcgulfport.org

Monday 9 am – 1 pm & Wednesday 1 pm – 5 pm
The pastors are available by appointment

Your Pastoral Team

Rev. Erick Ashley – erick@spconnection.org
Rev. Tracie Ashley – tracie@spconnection.org
Rev. Sue Garcia – sue@spconnection.org

Administrative Assistant – Patti Marshall – patti@spconnection.org
Director of Music – Celinda Bailey – baileyc1@mac.com
Sophie's Attic Manager – Patti Borland | Streaming Tech – Max Turner

Bishop of the Florida Annual Conference – Rev. Tom Berlin
Gulf Central District Superintendent – Rev. Emily Hotho

WELCOME

Welcome to First United Methodist Church of Gulfport. Each and every week we look forward to this time to gather as a community. We are glad YOU are here today with us!

You can use this bulletin to help lead through worship and throughout the week. We truly hope you enjoy your time here this morning and hope you return soon.

Some logistics you may find helpful:

- Worship runs about an hour, sometimes a bit shorter & sometimes a bit longer.
- Grab a nametag from the tables at the entrances. If you are a guest, our Connect Team will happily make one for you.
- Restrooms are in the courtyard, near the Fellowship Hall entrance.
- Prayer Cards are available in the pew in front of you.
- Please place your prayer card in the offering plate. It is our joy and privilege to be praying with and for you.
- We have several ways you can give financially to support the mission of FUMC Gulfport.
 1. Place cash/check in the offering plate/boxes or mail to the church.
 2. Text any amount to (727) 604-7325.
 3. Visit fumcgulfport.org/pages/give.
 4. Use your bank's bill payer system.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

UMH: United Methodist Hymnal • TFWS: The Faith We Sing

**Please stand as you are able*

WE GATHER

Welcome & Announcements

Prelude

Call to Worship*

Hymn* | *For The Beauty Of The Earth* – UMH 92 (vv. 1,2,5 & 6)

WE PROCLAIM

Affirmation of Faith* | *The Apostles' Creed* – UMH 881

Gloria Patri* | *Glory Be To The Father* – UMH 70

Invitation, Confession, & Pardon – UMH 12

Passing of the Peace*

Hymn* | *Come, Sinners, To The Gospel Feast* – UMH 339 (vv. 1, 2, 4 & 5)

Prayer For Illumination

Scripture Reading | | *Romans 6: 6-11* NSRVUE

Choral Response | *He Is Lord* – UMH 177

Message | *What Happens When Jesus Becomes Your Lord* – Rev. Tracie Ashley

WE RESPOND

Sacrament of Holy Communion – UMH 13-15

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Music

Doxology* | *Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow* – UMH 95

Offertory Prayer*

WE GO OUT

Hymn* | *I Surrender All* – UMH 354 (vv. 1, 4 & 5)

Benediction*

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Leadership Summit Postponed - The South Pinellas Connection Leadership Summit, originally scheduled for Sep 19, has been postponed until November. We're still looking forward to this important time to connect, grow, and dream

together about where God is leading us! We'll share the new November date as soon as possible. Stay tuned!

Called to Lead? Our Nominations & Leadership Development Committee is beginning its prayerful work of identifying leaders for 2027. If you have been thinking about becoming more involved in our church's leadership and would like to be considered, we would love to hear from you!

Please let one of the pastors know of your interest as we prayerfully discern together how God may be calling you to serve.

2nd Sunday Celebration! Next Sunday, stay after worship as we celebrate our birthdays and anniversaries together! Join us for a little food, fellowship, and celebration of the special people in our church family.

Inviting Can Be Simple! Inviting someone to church doesn't have to feel awkward. Simply say, "Would you like to come with me?" Invite a friend to worship, dinner, a GROW Group, or another church event, and offer to meet them or save them a seat. Here are a few more ideas:

- "I really enjoy my church. Would you like to come with me Sunday? I'll save you a seat."
- "Our church has a Community Dinner Wednesday night. Want to come eat with me?"
- "I'm doing this group at church that's been really interesting. You'd be welcome to come with me."
- "My church is doing something this weekend that I think you'd really enjoy. Want to go together?"
- "Have you found a church yet? You're always welcome to come with me."
- "Our church has been a really supportive community for me. If you ever want to come, I'd be glad to go with you."
- "We've got a really welcoming group of people at our church. I think you'd fit right in."
- "What are you doing Sunday morning? Come to church with me, and we can grab lunch afterward."
- "I know church may or may not be your thing, but you're always welcome to come with me sometime."

Still Time to Share Your Feedback! There's still time to turn in your Town Hall Feedback Sheet! Your input is valuable as we seek to strengthen and grow our church and its ministries. Return your completed form in the baskets at either sanctuary door. Need a form? Extras are available at the doors. Thank you for sharing your thoughts with us!

Wednesday Nights Are Back—with a New Name! Wednesday Night Dinner is now COMMUNITY DINNER! Join us Wednesdays at 6 pm for Dinner, Devotion, & Community. Enjoy good food, reconnect with friends, meet someone new, and grow together in faith. There's a place for you at the table!

Yard Sale Market - Come shop the Yard Sale Market on Saturday, Sep 19, from 9 am–12 pm! You never know what treasures you might find, so come browse,

shop, and enjoy the morning. Want to be a vendor? Text 352-263-9890 for more information.

GULFPORT WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

- Jesus is Lord Grow Group with The Blackmans, 10 am – Room 7
- Traditional Worship, 11:15 am – Sanctuary & Online

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

- Church Office Closed – Labor Day Holiday

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

- Sophie’s Attic, 9 am – 12 pm

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

- Church Office Open, 1-5 pm
- Community Dinner, 6 pm – Fellowship Hall

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

- Narcotics Anonymous, 8 pm – Room 7

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

- Sophie’s Attic, 9 am - 12 pm
- Alcoholics Anonymous (The Sisterhood), 6 pm – FH

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

- Sophie’s Attic, 9 am – 12 pm

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

- Jesus is Lord Grow Group with The Blackmans, 10 am – Room 7
- Traditional Worship, 11:15 am – Sanctuary & Online
- Birthday & Anniversary Celebration, 12:15 pm – Fellowship Hall

SOUTH PINELLAS CONNECTION UPCOMING DATES

Sept 8	United Women in Faith Meeting & Study	10 am	SL
Sept 9	Weekly Community Dinner (every Wednesday)	6 pm	FG
Sept 13	Campus Ministry Sunday	-	ALL
Sept 16	United Women in Faith Luncheon	12 pm	FG
Sept 23-29	Ashleys on Vacation in Vermont	-	-
Sept 27	FREE Community Dinner	5-6:30 pm	CV
Sept 30-Oct 2	Ashleys at Emotionally Healthy Leadership Conference In New York City	-	-

KEY

Clearview (CV)	First Gulfport (FG)	Lakewood (LW)	St. Luke's (SL)
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STEWARDSHIP OF PRESENCE & GIFTS

Week of August 30

Worship	39
Online Worship	13
Giving Received	\$307.80
Giving Needed	\$1,230.77
Surplus/Loss	-\$922.97

2026 Year To Date

Worship (avg)	38
Online (avg)	15
Giving Received	\$25,013.28
Giving Needed	\$43,076.95
Surplus/Loss	-\$15,063.67

THIS WEEK'S PRAYER LIST

COMPLETE A PRAYER CARD FROM THE PEW AND PLACE IT IN THE OFFERING PLATE

Gulfport: No requests received

Gulfport Ongoing: Alice Johnson, Allison (Cindy & Per Lee's granddaughter), Willie, Pastor Erick

Clearview: My mother's upcoming surgery to restore her hearing. She lost it in March, and we are praying for a full restoration and healing (Unknown name); I got a job! (Linda Stanley)

Clearview Ongoing: Pamela Arnold, Cassie Berg, Eileen Clark, Carol Comerford, Kathy Davis, Stephen Davis, Trevor Davis, Tim Deacon, Genevieve DeHoog, Pastor Erick, John Goude, Theresa Goude, Amy Gordon, Mary Grau, Carl Gunn, Robert "Skip" Hanshe, Ruth Hockersmith, DeeDee Hornby, Marc Jones, Ruth Katzen, Nelson Kimber, Charlotte Klotzbach, Ian Kolaczyk, Carolyn McGovern, Sabrina Mull, Kirstin Owens, Jim Patterson, Scott Pierce, Tiffany R, Tammi Radcliff, George Roth, Sr., Anver Suleman, Logan Sullivan, Crystal, Hilary, Kelly, Lydi, Max, Blayne, Amber, George, Steve & Alba, Diana, Theresa & Scott

Lakewood: No requests received

Lakewood Ongoing: Joan and family, Otha Hudson (Josephine's husband), Family of Brian L. , Pastor Erick

St. Luke's: Marian Galloway, who fell and is very sore; Judith Fain, who has the flu; a young lady named Ellie, who has brain cancer (Carolyn Rogers); prayers for my daughter, Lisa, my 3 granddaughters, & my great granddaughter (Bev Becker)

St. Luke's Ongoing: Bev Becker, Christine Brockway, Madison Brown, Fred Bunnell, Jr., Melissa Celurale, Pastor Erick, Judith Fain, Cheryl Fennell, Cliff Flowers, Larry Frye, Eric Harvey, Trudy James, The Leonard Family, Geraldine Parsons, Buck & Sunny Roberts, Harriett Swartzmiller, Joelle Wells, Justin Wells, Annalise, Jennifer, JJ

South Pinellas Active-Duty Military: Matthew Burdewick, Seth Crist, Will Dudley, Casey Linde-Powers

THIS WEEK'S "AT HOME" DEVOTIONAL

Connected to Christ: John 15:1–11

GATHERING

Light a candle to remind yourselves that Jesus is present with us and invites us to remain connected to him, the true vine.

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the true vine and the source of our life. Draw us close to you in Scripture, prayer, worship, and Christian community. Prune away the habits and distractions that keep us from your love. By your Spirit, help us remain in you so that our lives bear the fruit of grace, compassion, courage, and joy. Amen.

CARING CONVERSATION - Take a few moments to check in with one another. Highs & Lows

- What is one thing that brought you joy this week?
- When have you felt especially close to God—or distant from God—this week?

THINKING ABOUT THE UPCOMING WEEK’S SCRIPTURE

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can’t do anything. — John 15:5 (CEB)

A branch cannot produce fruit by trying harder; it bears fruit by staying connected to the vine. In the same way, Christlike living grows from an ongoing relationship with Jesus. Spiritual practices create space for us to receive his grace, hear his guidance, and share his love.

- What practices help you feel connected to Christ?
- What distractions or habits sometimes crowd out your attention to God?
- What fruit do you see Christ producing in your life right now?
- Which spiritual practice would you like to strengthen this week?

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - As you read this week, ask: **How do we remain connected to Christ and bear the fruit of his love?**

DAY	READING	THEME
Sunday	Romans 6:6–11	<i>Alive to God in Christ</i>
Monday	Psalms 1:1–6	<i>Rooted by Streams</i>
Tuesday	Mark 1:35–39	<i>Jesus Makes Time to Pray</i>
Wednesday	Luke 10:38–42	<i>One Thing Is Needed</i>
Thursday	Colossians 3:12–17	<i>Let Christ’s Word Dwell</i>
Friday	Galatians 5:16–26	<i>The Fruit of the Spirit</i>
Saturday	Hebrews 10:19–25	<i>Encourage One Another</i>
Sunday	John 15:1–11	<i>Connected to Christ</i>

If your household includes children, feel free to use a children’s Bible or summarize the readings in simple language.

DEVOTIONAL

Jesus gives his disciples a simple image: he is the vine, and we are the branches. A branch does not create life for itself. It receives life by staying connected to the vine. In the same way, our growth as followers of Jesus begins not with trying harder, but with abiding in him.

Abiding means making an ongoing home in Christ's love. It is more than a decision made once or a Sunday activity. It is a daily relationship in which we listen for his voice, receive his grace, and allow his presence to shape our words, choices, priorities, and relationships.

Spiritual practices help us stay connected. Reading Scripture teaches us the story and way of Jesus. Prayer creates space for honest conversation and attentive silence. Worship, Communion, and Christian community remind us that faith is never a solo journey. Retreat and fasting help us step away from noise, while noticing and daily review help us recognize where God has already been present.

These practices do not earn God's love. They place us where grace can reach and reshape us. Like pruning a healthy branch, Christ may remove habits, distractions, or attitudes that keep us from flourishing. Pruning can be uncomfortable, but its purpose is deeper life and more abundant fruit.

The fruit Jesus desires is visible: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The closer we remain to Christ, the more his character can take root in us and flow through us for the sake of others.

Connection grows through small, faithful choices. Open the Bible. Sit quietly with God. Share honestly with another Christian. Notice grace in an ordinary moment. At the end of the day, give thanks, review your choices, ask forgiveness, and begin again. Jesus is the source; our invitation is to remain.

PRAY TOGETHER

Invite each person to name one practice that helps them feel close to Jesus and one practice they would like to try this week. Then pray together:

Loving Jesus, you are the true vine and the source of our life. Help us remain in your love. Meet us as we read Scripture, pray, worship, rest, serve, and gather with others. Prune away what keeps us from flourishing and grow in us the fruit of your Spirit. May our connection with you become visible in the way we love our neighbors. Amen.

MEALTIME PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you for this food and for everyone gathered here. As this meal nourishes our bodies, nourish our spirits with your grace and keep us connected to you and to one another. Amen.

SERVICE CHALLENGE - *This is one way we share God's love with the world.*

Choose one practice that helps you abide in Christ—Scripture, prayer, silence, worship, Christian conversation, or a daily review—and give it ten intentional minutes each day. Then let that connection bear fruit through one concrete act of love, encouragement, or service.

CLOSING & BLESSING

Extinguish your candle as a reminder that Christ's presence remains with you, nourishing your life and helping you bear good fruit.

With permission, make the sign of the cross on one another's hands or foreheads and say: **'Remain in Christ's love. Receive his grace. And let your life bear the fruit of his presence.'**