

**CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF  
CHRIST  
OF PUNTA GORDA**  
*An Open and Affirming Congregation*



January 2020

**FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK**

A while ago, I was thinking of folk songs for some reason. Growing up in the sixties, I remember Peter, Paul, and Mary, Simon and Garfunkle, the Smothers Brothers, Jimmy Hendrix, Woody Guthrie, Joan Baez, and many others sing strong songs of Justice. I heard them coming from places like the Mall in Washington D.C., Kent State, Berkley, Woodstock, Detroit. They spoke a message to me of being attentive to the world around us and not necessarily accepting without question how the society ran things. We were in the middle of Viet Nam, race riots, hippies, turning on and tuning out. It was chaos in many ways. It seemed as though nothing that I had for expectations was possible any longer.

In many ways, we are back in that place today. So, I was thinking about the great music that gave me hope that someone was paying attention and cared enough to do something worthwhile in the midst of that Chaos. I also had a phrase running through my head, "If you can keep your head when all those around are losing theirs..." So, I did the thing I knew to do, I Googled it! Up pops Rudyard Kipling's poem, If. When I read it I was taken back to the folk songs of the sixties that talked about meaning and sanity. I want to share it with you. You decide if it would make a great modern folk song.

**If**

By Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

The language may be outdated, but the concept is not. What I wish for us all my friends, in this turbulent time, is that we can keep our heads and in Kipling's words,

“ If you can dream—and not make dreams your master; If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim; If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster And treat those two impostors just the same; If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools, Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken, And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

“If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew To serve your turn long after they are gone, And so hold on when there is nothing in you Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'”

Hold onto your faith that God is paying attention and even now equipping servants to bring this world back to sanity, peace, and civility. God bless you all in the New Year that is coming to us!

## **FROM YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM**

### **HAPPY NEW YEAR**



#### **MODERATOR'S REPORT- Bill Colson**

Bill is away spending time with his daughter following her surgery. He will be back next week.

#### **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

We are fast approaching the end of 2019, and our target date of having all Capital Campaign pledge cards tallied. **Building our Legacy** will provide updates and improvements to our facilities that will allow us to embrace God's mission, faith and justice. This is an exciting time that unites us in a common goal, and we look forward to the success that we will enjoy.

The \$200,000 goal may seem to be a challenge, but we are very close to accomplishing this and confident the goal can be reached with your participation and commitment. Every gift is important and greatly appreciated.

Thank you to all that have contributed to this campaign, and please consider sending in your pledges if you have not yet done so.

*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7*

God be with you,

Kathy Frantish, Chair  
Melissa Brown  
Elden Wick  
Kathy Reed  
Bill Klossner, Advisor  
Pastor Mike Ford, Ex Officio

## **ENDOWMENT TEAM – Bill Ringelstein, Chair**

Recent distributions were approved for Drug Free Punta Gorda, our own UCC Giving tree, our Social Justice Ministry for their new banner and educational conference attendance, and the Botanical & Sculpture Gardens. Your Endowment Fund year-end balance will be used to supplement the Capital Campaign. 2019 distributions totaled \$14,700; 2019 earnings reports will be available mid February and used to determine 2020 distributions.



## **TREASURER – Melissa Brown**

January 2020 Treasurer's Report

Actual Operating Income/Expenses	19-NOV	2019 Y-T-D	Budget
Donations and Other Income	\$9,774.37	\$135,787.40	\$138,875.00
Expenses	\$12,385.21	\$141,472.60	\$148,101.74
Net Income	-\$2,610.84	-\$5,685.20	-\$9,226.24

Estimated Operating Income/Expenses	19-DEC	2019 Total	Budget
Donations and Other Income	\$17,000.00	\$152,787.40	\$151,500.00
Expenses	\$13,800.00	\$155,272.60	\$161,565.00
Net Income	\$3,200.00	-\$2,485.20	-\$10,065.00

Although November 2019 showed a loss, our income in December was slightly over \$17,000. I am estimating that our December expenses will be slightly higher than usual: around \$13,800. If so, we will finish the year with a slight loss of around **\$2,500**.

As we look toward 2020, I expect that presenting a balanced budget to the congregation at the annual meeting is going to be difficult. Our expenses ***will be higher*** next year. I am still waiting to hear from the Insurance Board but anticipate seeing an increase in our multiperil insurance. The premium for 2019 was \$17,500. Increases in employee compensation will also impact the budget. My estimate is that budgeted expenses for 2020 will come in at about \$175,000, which is an increase of approximately \$15,000 over 2019. Revenue for 2020 must increase approximately \$22,000 (from \$152,787.40 to \$175,000) in order to have a balanced budget. That is an increase of approximately 15%. As you consider your operating income pledge for 2020, please keep these numbers in mind. A balanced budget is our goal!

If you would like an easy and cost-free way to contribute to the church, you can set up an automatic payment through your bank by using electronic banking. Payments are mailed from your bank to the church. If you would like to pursue this form of payment, please be advised that the address that should

be used for mailing the check is Congregational United Church of Christ, Punta Gorda, PO Box 510838, Punta Gorda, FL 33951-0838. Most banks do not charge for this service—not even for the postage to mail the payment.



### ***MUSIC DIRECTOR – Isaac James***

Christmas has passed and now we are in the season of Epiphany. The Christmas Season for me was different, being my first here in Florida it took some getting used to without snow on the way to Christmas Eve Mass...or waking up to a fresh blanket of it on Christmas morning. I moved here to Florida, a year ago, December 26<sup>th</sup>. How God has blessed me, I cannot put it into words. First and foremost, He gave me all of you, not just a job, but a church family made up of friends and loved ones. A choir that has not only grown but also in ability and talent. I must thank each one of them, they have come such a long way, I thank them for rising to the challenge and doing so well with it.

This month's hymn story is fitting for the Epiphany season...We Three Kings.

The author and composer, John Henry Hopkins, Jr. (1820-1891), was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He received his education at the University of Vermont and at General Theological Seminary in New York City, graduating in 1850. Hopkins then became the first church music instructor at General Theological Seminary and was the founding editor of the Church Journal (1853-1868).

Through these positions he became recognized as a leading Episcopal church musician. Following his ordination in 1872, Hopkins served as rector of two parishes: Trinity Church in Plattsburg, New York (1872-1876) and Christ Church in Williamsport, Pennsylvania (1876-1887).

Hopkins wrote the carol around 1857, based on the narrative of the journey of the magi in Matthew 2:1-12. It was first published in the author's Carols, Hymns, and Songs. United Methodist Hymnal editor Carlton R. Young makes an interesting observation: "Because the wealth of USA Appalachian and other folk carols was yet to be discovered, this carol for almost a century was regarded by hymnal editors as the sole USA contribution to the repertory of English language carols."

Indeed, "We three kings" has many features associated with Christmas carols including a refrain, a narrative-ballad style, and a lilting tune in triple meter. Compared to some of the other classic Epiphany hymns of this era, such as "As with gladness men of old" by William Chatterton Dix, and "Brightest and best of the sons of the morning" by Reginald Heber, few would claim that "We three kings" is better poetry. Yet this carol makes a distinctive contribution.

With simple naïveté, "We three kings" outlines its narrative in a manner with which children might identify. Though in triple rhythm, this is not a dancing tune like many of the more traditional carols, such as "Good Christian friends, rejoice." "We three kings" is usually performed in a more plodding three, giving the feel of the long journey of the magi.

While the traditional number of magi is usually set at three, probably because of the three gifts that the biblical narrative discusses, it is unusual for Epiphany hymns to identify the number of magi as three. Stanzas two, three, and four describe in detail the symbolic nature of each of the three gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

From its inception, the composer encouraged the song's dramatic possibilities: "Each of verses, 2, 3, and 4, is sung as a solo [Kings Gaspard, Melchior, and Balthazar]."

The famous Oxford Book of Carols not only encouraged this dramatic presentation of the carol, but its editor Martin Shaw provided an arrangement suitable for three voices and labels them by the names Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar.

The imagery of the star is central to the Epiphany season and the narrative. The refrain focuses on the star and invites us to join the magi in following its light— "guide us to thy perfect light."

### ***DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY TEAM* – Linda Greenfield and Linda Weaver, Chairs**

#### **Communion Set-Up Schedule:**

Jan. 5- MaryAnn Farnquist and Lou Stayner

Feb. 2- Sandy and Keith Weber

\*\*\*Please note that the small loaf of bread for the Communion Table has been made by Linda Greenfield and is in the freezer. Also, please check for any remaining gluten-free bread in the freezer before buying more.

A huge thanks to those who set up and served Communion in 2019 and to those who have committed for 2020! Also, a huge thank you to Sandy James-Nogaj for her excellent organization in directing the Christmas decorating of our church...everything went so smoothly. Bunches of thanks to Kathy & Kevin Rivadeneira for another successful Christmas Pageant, Susann Luckenbach for handling the sound, all our wonderful actors and actresses and Pastor Mike and Guy Greenfield for setting up and taking down the scenery! Bravo!

**Education:** Please mark your calendars now for the annual Martin Luther King, Jr, breakfast on Saturday, Jan.18, 8:00am-10:30am at the Punta Gorda Middle School. Tickets can be obtained online at: [www.blanchardhousemuseum.org](http://www.blanchardhousemuseum.org) . Let's join our neighbors in honoring a great man in the history of our nation.

Harriet, a very informative movie about the life of *Harriet Tubman* , is now showing in local theaters. If you want to compare it to the history you learned as a child, it is an excellent depiction of her life. Another very eye-opening movie currently showing in theaters is *Just Mercy* , a movie based on the real-life experiences of Bryan Stevenson. Bryan is a defense lawyer who defends people on death row who have been wrongly accused of a crime- usually based on the color of their skin! Bryan is the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, a non-profit organization that is "committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society". Check it out online or better yet, see the movie!

As we enter a new year, may we resolve to follow the words of the prophet Micah: "to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God!" Micah 6:8

**MINISTRY FELLOWSHIP TEAM – Jan Tulk**



I would like to thank the December hosts:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| December 1  | Lori and Jerry Larson, Carol Nickerson, Connie Beverly, Evie Swinamer                       |
| December 8  | The Klossner Family   |
| December 15 | Annie Robertson, Susan Blaisdell, Mary Farnquist  |
| December 22 | Judy Minier, Bil Tucker, Melissa Brown  |
| December 29 | Barb Smith, Deb Grenzow, Jerry Oscarson, Dave Cramer, Jon Casey<br>Val Cramer and Ron Logel |

We appreciate your willingness to host a coffee hour. Just a reminder that we are always in need of coffee hosts. Please sign up for a week at the table in the back of the church.

**LADIES' LUNCH OUT – Neoma Remiger**

Our January ladies' luncheon will be at 12:00 noon on January 24<sup>th</sup> at Carmelo's Italian Restaurant, 321 W. Retta Esplande, Punta Gorda.. Please join us, we have a great time of conversation and fellowship! A sign-up sheet is available on the table in the back of the church.



## **LIBRARIAN – Sandy James-Nogai**



January's Book Talk Tea will be on January 10 at 12 noon in the church library.

Thanks to Elden and Diane Wick for their donation to the Social Justice Book Ministry. The book is on display in the library.

Happy New Year!!

## **GREAT DECISIONS – Jerry and Lori Larson**

The Great Decisions discussion group will be meeting again in February and March. Meeting on Tuesdays, 1:30-3:00pm. Topics for discussion this year include: Climate Change and the Global Order India and Pakistan Red Sea Security Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking U.S. Relations with the Northern Triangle China's Road into Latin America The Philippines and the U.S. Artificial Intelligence and Data These topics, as in previous years, will be timely, well-informed, and thought provoking. We invite you to add your perspectives to our discussions. Further information regarding the Foreign Policy Association, the secular, non-partisan group sponsoring Great Decisions, can be found at [fpa.org](http://fpa.org). Sign-up sheets will appear in January in the kiosk at the rear of the church. Please sign up by January 19 so that materials can be ordered. For questions, call Jerry and Lori Larson at 715- 781-0657.

## **LIVING THE QUESTION**

LIVING THE QUESTION Class- LTQ will be every Monday beginning the first Monday in February...Feb.3 through the fourth Monday, March 23 and a potluck on Mon, March 30. Upon high demand, it will be from 3:30-5pm and we will then go out for dinner. The class will be watching video segments concerning "Creation Care" followed by discussion sessions. We are asking for volunteers to help facilitate the classes. Carol Schmuhl and Louise Jankowski have already volunteered and we need four (4) more volunteers(all materials are provided). The Weavers will lead the first class and Jim DeGood will lead the last class. Jim will also let us know how much we all need to chip in to pay for the videos. More announcements to follow during Sundays in January. A sign-up sheet will be in the kiosk at the rear of the church. Please sign up no later than January 19 so materials may be ordered.



## ***SOCIAL JUSTICE – Carol Schmuhl***

The two banners you read about in September finally will be hung this month on the north wall of the sanctuary. They broadcast the mission statement of our social justice committee as we respond to the familiar Micah chapter 6 verse 8: “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” We profess that “Recognizing the interconnectedness of all Creation, we seek to act for God’s justice and encourage our congregation to participate in justice ministries.” To that end, we encourage you this month to participate in the following ways:

Join the protest at the Jones Loop Wendy’s on January 16 11:00-1:00.

Attend the January 18 Martin Luther King Community Breakfast 8:00-10:30.

Listen to Terry Root’s Jan. 25 update on our climate crisis at 2:00 in our sanctuary.

Check out a book from the social justice shelf in our library.

## ***THE CHURCH SCRIBE – Joyce Schenk***



**Another of Joyce Schenk’s articles from past Beacons.**

### **Memories of the old Clothesline**

Last week, I received an e-mail that opened a floodgate of sweet memories. The message, from my sister-in-law, Vera, focused on that family staple of yesterday, the clothesline.

Looking at the pictures included in the e-mail took me back to those long-ago washdays in the Texas of my childhood. Like every other house on Carleton Street, our place boasted a well-used line for drying the family wash. Our clothesline was stretched from the “T” shaped post next to the back porch, across the old swing set to the “T” post beside the garage, then back again.

Our family of six.... Mom and Dad, two sons and two daughters.... required plenty of hanging room for the Monday morning wash. Since wash day was a tradition with most of the families on the block, there was always plenty of neighborly conversation as mothers and daughters dealt with the clean contents of the wash baskets.

The process of hanging the wash, taking it down and folding it into the basket took most of the day. The next day, Tuesday, was reserved for ironing.... but that was another story.

As the youngest member of the family, I was sometimes able to prevail on mom to hang the clean sheets across the two parallel lines, giving me something of a play tent area as the items dried. I’d often take my lunch out into the yard and eat under the breezy shade of the drying linens.

There was nothing to equal the smell of those air-dried sheets as we took them off the line and folded them. When the beds were remade with the fresh linens, it was like bringing the outdoors inside.

In those clothesline days, family life was readily displayed for anyone willing to decipher the signs. Week after week, the clothesline contents would change as life inside the home went through transitions. Maternity clothes gave way to tiny baby garments and lines full of freshly washed diapers. Rompers and dresses progressed from small to ever larger sizes. Eventually, these were replaced by blue jeans and tee shirts. Finally, the lines held only the clothing and other items used by the mother and father, now empty nesters.

When I left the clothesline of my childhood and established one for my own family, I devised a game my children all enjoyed. On washdays, my little ones would join me in the back yard. As I got ready to hang various clothing items, I'd give each of them "clothes pin math" to calculate.

"Becky, I need two pins for Dad's sox and two more for your blouse."

With that, little Becky would proudly bring me four pins.

Sherri and Tim happily joined the game, filling their "pin" assignments and learning their addition at the same time.

For those living in rural areas of our state, family clotheslines are often still parts of the landscape. But generally, in most suburbs' clotheslines are as rare as the milk man, the neighborhood butcher and doctors who make house calls

I don't think any of us want to give up our trusty clothes dryers and go back to the old labor-intensive washdays. But you can't deny the feel-good nostalgia that comes from sleeping in beds fresh-made with sun-dried sheets.



**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:** The office will be open Monday through Thursday from 8:30 am – 12:30 pm. We will be closed on Fridays. Phone # 941-637-8443.

**Please note:** To have an event listed on the Sunday bulletin, please have the information in to the church office by Tuesday at 12:00 PM.

## Updating Your Information

We are always trying to keep our information on members and visitors up to date. We need your help! If you have had a change of address, new email address, home phone or cell phone change, please let us know so we can keep our records current which will help us to keep good communication with all of you. If you are not receiving emails or the Beacon newsletter, please let us also know that. Thank you so much. Your help is very much appreciated.

**Send Changes To:** [office@puntagorda-ucc.com](mailto:office@puntagorda-ucc.com) OR you can drop them off in the church office.

**Name Tags:** Just a reminder, if you would like a magnet on the back of your name tag instead of the pin, just leave your name tag in the blue bin on the name tag rack and it will be changed and ready for the next week.

**Birthdays and Anniversaries:** Is your birthday or anniversary missing from the bulletin or screen on Sunday morning? Please let us know. It probably is missing because we do not have that information for you.



## BIRTHDAYS

January 3	Jane Provencher
3	Marjorie Bruns
9	Wyona Crosley
11	Clifford Trudeau
12	Polly Engebrecht
17	Judy Minier
23	Tim Schenk
25	Duane Belseth
27	Lucille Begin
28	Mary Barnt
29	Lynn Stayner

## **ANNIVERSARIES**

January 3	Herb Henry & Joanne Stoughton
10	Bill & Cathy Ann Colson
22	Dick & Mary Tulip
24	William & Jean Ringelstein

Did we miss a birthday or anniversary? Please email the office, and we will try to make sure it doesn't happen again: [office@puntagorda-ucc.com](mailto:office@puntagorda-ucc.com)