

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



February 2020

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Which Is Right?

There are lots of layers to church traditions. Some we do and don't consider where they came from or why we do them. Others we hold as unchangeable. Communion is one of those traditions. In the UCC. It is one of the sacraments, one of the few we have, baptism being the other. But it is practiced many different ways even within our own denomination.

The biblical roots of the practice come from the description of what we call "The Last Supper". It is found in all three of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke). The narratives are nearly identical. They were at the Passover Meal in the Upper Room. The meal changes when Jesus, explicitly in Matthew and Mark, more obscurely in Luke, reveals that he is to be betrayed by one sitting at the table. It is revealed, only in Matthew, that Judas is the one who will carry out the betrayal.

What follows are the roots of tradition for all Communion practices. Jesus takes a loaf, blesses and breaks it, and gives it to them proclaiming, in Matthew and Mark, that it is his body. In Mark, Jesus claims it is his body, given for them, and they are to do this in remembrance of him. He then takes a cup, proclaims it is his blood poured out for many (in Luke, for the forgiveness of sins is added). He finishes this portion of the story telling them that he will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until he does so in God's kingdom. We assume that to mean in heaven. I'm not so certain of that, but that is for a different article.

Where traditions begin to diverge is in how these verses are interpreted. The story simply says loaf and cup. When later Jesus mentions the "fruit of the vine" interpretations become really interesting. It is also where cultural and geographic differences show up. Because of that one phrase, "fruit of the vine", it is assumed Jesus was offering wine. Was he?

The variations of interpretations across different traditions is staggering. In the New England area where I grew up, the elements ALWAYS had to be white bread and grape juice. Interestingly, the grape juice substitute for wine was begun by the United Methodist tradition. It seems there were some wealthy members of the Methodist church by the name of Welsh. They convinced the leadership of the church that it was a sin to use alcoholic wine and that a holy substitute could be unfermented grape juice. So, for a couple hundred years grape juice became the norm for “proper” Christian Communion churches to use. To me, this is similar to our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters eating fish on Fridays to support the fishermen of the church.

The bread only being white bread has another interesting source. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, grains were not as heavily processed. Only the whole grains were used for cooking, but they were a little hard on the digestive track (though now we know far more healthy, unless you suffer from celiac disease). The Congregationalists loved uniformity and equity. Thus, we ended up with the inch by inch cubes of white bread made from processed flour. I’ve not seen a source, but perhaps there was influence from rich millers in the church for this choice of bread. In Jesus’ day, and the fact it was Passover they celebrated, it would have been unleavened bread.

Some traditions have a doctrine that the consecrated elements physically become the body and blood of Christ. Some believe them to be symbolic of the presence of Jesus physically at the meal. Some practices hold that Christ is present symbolically in the meal. Which one is right? My answer is YES.

Some traditions insist that the cup can only be wine. That becomes problematic for those in recovery, just as the bread which includes Gluten does for celiac. In some traditions a thin wafer is used in place of white bread and only the wafer is given to the congregation. Some traditions only serve Communion once a year for fear it will be diminished in a more frequent version. Some traditions have the Eucharist as a daily practice thinking that frequency increases reverence for the Eucharist. You can see where this can get confusing when asking what is the right tradition to follow. Really it depends on where you are. When I took a class on worship practices in Seminary my head was left spinning. So, to answer the question of which is the right tradition and practice, my answer is YES!

I am more concerned with the meaning of the tradition than finding the “right” practice. I believe Jesus offered the first meal as a way to influence us in our thinking about remembering his life, death, and resurrection, not if we were doing it the “right” way. He used what was at hand. What if he had chosen cheese and bread? Or fish and bread? Or mutton and cheese? We would have ended up with those choices as our only true reflection of the meal Jesus introduced.

Frankly, I love experiencing different Eucharist practices. In some traditions, I am not allowed at the table. In others only those who believe Jesus is the Christ can receive Communion. In yet others the invitation is to all who wish to receive (the UCC being one). I find them all “right”. It is not so much how we do it as it is why we do it.

In January, without this long explanation, we explored all of these possibilities by using some non-traditional elements in our celebration of Holy Communion. We added alongside our “traditional” offerings of bread (including Gluten free), grape juice, and wine (can you see our blending of many

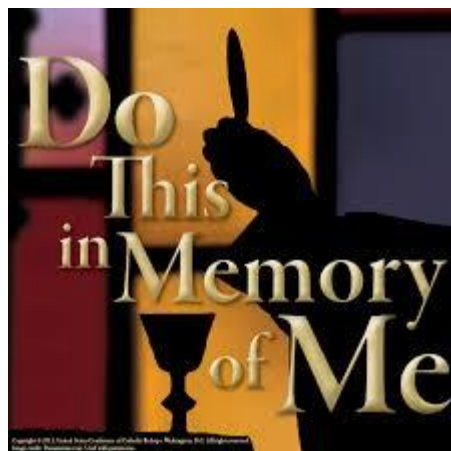
other practices in this offering), ice cream rather than wine and carrot cake with cream cheese frosting rather than bread.

As will always be the case, reactions were mixed. First, the logistics always prove to be challenging. We were asked to come forward rather than being served in our chairs. Some found that refreshing as it reminded them of their childhood or first church family experience. Next, we were asked to form a single line down the center isle and to choose which form to take once we arrived up front. No matter how well or poorly I explain this part, we ALWAYS end up with two lines and someone ALWAYS ends up in the wrong one. It can prove upsetting to end up in the wrong line. And then there are innovators who want to receive BOTH and bounce between lines. And some simply refused to partake. Perhaps the feeling of sacrilege was too great to take either.

I am sensitive to all the reactions. Personally, I took a scoop of ice cream and a cube of bread. My intent was to show that both offerings have significant meaning to me. My secondary meaning is to show us all that whatever form we offer for Eucharist ONLY has meaning because of our presence with Christ at the meal and that we are offering it to God.

Over the years, I have been forced to substitute alternative, non-traditional, elements out of necessity. One time, the Deacon forgot to bring the traditional elements. We huddled up and decided to scrounge the food pantry for suitable elements. Thankfully we passed up the sardines and pickle juice, not that they wouldn't be suitable, but because I can't stand sardines and I didn't want to smell like that the rest of the service. However, we found two suitable items, Animal Crackers and Soymilk. Honestly, there were a few furrowed brows when I informed the congregation of what we were using, but they took it and even some were moved by the experience. They had never been offered a different choice. By intent, other times I've used coffee and donuts. This was challenging too for many, but we made it through and were thankful for the Meal.

Thankfully, we survived, again, using cake and ice cream. It was about a fifty-fifty split on people's choices for what they took, some by accident. But for many, it was an offering of unusual content that added value to the experience. Bottom line for me, God can use anything we offer as our meal as long as it is offered in love and faith. Did we do it the right way? YES! Thanks for bearing this change. It isn't permanent. But then again.....?



FROM YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM



MODERATOR'S REPORT- Bill Colson

Whew! A lot going on in January. Church attendance has jumped, now that seasonal residents have returned. Usage of the church facilities for outside events has also risen. But first let me report on activities of the Leadership Team and our monthly meeting held January 14th, 2020.

- The Leadership Team received the report of the 2019 Pastoral Review. The review was conducted by the Review Team members Bil Tucker, Linda Greenfield, and Lori Larsen. The Team was commended on their work, as this is the last review they will conduct with Pastor Mike. A new Pastoral Review team is in place, starting with 2020. The members are Stacy Scarrow, Lee Swift, and Susann Luckenbach. The report of the 2019 Pastoral Review was printed in the Annual Report for the Congregation's information. The report's recommendations about salary increase, unused paid time off reimbursement, and professional development have been used to develop portions of the 2020 church budget.
- The LT discussed the cleaning of the church interior and stripping and rewaxing of the Faith Hall floor. Not being satisfied with current and past results, a panel of three people were appointed to meet with Excaliber Services about their work.
- After Isaac James indicated his desire to develop a long term contract for employment, the LT appointed the Treasurer and two additional LT members to meet with Isaac about compensation over a longer term.
- The Capital Campaign representative Kathy Frantish presented a proposal to proceed with the replacement of the roof covering for the entire building. The proposal by Boyette-Miller Contracting and Harriman Solar was approved, as well as a Notice to Proceed. The next day, written contracts were sent to all parties, and Punta Gorda construction permeants issued. As I write this, the back half of the roof is complete, the front half is dried in, and shingles are being put in place for installation. It looks like a new roof will be in place by the first full week in February. The solar panels will be installed by Harriman about 2-3 weeks after the shingles go down, allowing time for the shingles to seal to the underlayment.
- The Treasurer's report for January was received and approved. The 2020 proposed budget was discussed, and changes were noted and approved. The LT meeting was running long, so the amended proposed budget was to be voted on by round robin e-mail vote of the LT

members. The amended proposed budget was approved and incorporated into the 2019 Annual meeting materials.

- Bill Ringelstein reported for the Endowment Team that a total of \$49,000 was available for distribution in 2020. More news about distributions of Endowment Funds in the following news about current events in the Church's Life.
- Jan Tulk has resigned as head of the Fellowship Team. Due to Jan's broken bones and long recovery, she is stepping down from the Leadership Team. Let me thank Jan for her able leadership in recruiting and scheduling the providers of all the goodies enjoyed each Sunday morning. We already miss her.

Now about some of the recent events in the Life of the Church in January.

- The 14th Martin Luther King Community Breakfast was held Saturday, January 18th.
- Also on the 18th, the film Resilance was shown in the church sanctuary.
- On January 19th, Rev. Leslie Etheridge, the Western Regional Minister for the Florida Conference was in attendance at our Worship service.
- Also during Worship on the 19th, the Endowment Team gave a \$2,000 distribution to Crossroads Hope Academy. The following is an excerpt from Bill Ringelstein's background explanation about Crossroads Hope Academy.

Crossroads HOPE Academy: Their director is John Davidson and our congregation member Lee Swift is a long time Board member. HOPE is a home for foster boys ages 12 to 18; their resident facility is located on Bermont Road. These boys are cared for here as they transition from family life - even dysfunctional family life - to being a foster child. As you can imagine, it is very difficult to place a teen aged foster child and, in many cases, they are moved from failed placement to failed placement. HOPE offers stability and in many cases is the first stable environment they have ever known.

The majority of their financial support comes from state agencies but is not sufficient to cover expenses. Many of their boys suffer from medical issues due to improper diet and care. Transporting them to medical facilities is a large part of their care and they need funding to provide safer and better transportation.

I have toured their facility, interviewed several residents and am impressed with the love and nurturing atmosphere at HOPE. Their director is a unique individual and leads a dedicated staff plus volunteers. HOPE also provides training for the boys so that they can leave (mandatory at age 18) with an entry level skill in several fields. He has asked for \$2,000 to improve their transportation. This is a program that needs our support; it is local and provides a necessary and compassionate service. Their web site is www.crossroadspg.org.

Additional recent events:

- Dr. Terry Root, who has spoken about climate change in our sanctuary previously, presented an illustrated talk about the increasing local effects of climate change. The talk was well attended, there being few empty seats in the sanctuary.
- Pledge Dedication Sunday, January 26th, was the culmination of the annual Stewardship Campaign. The Stewardship Pledges were Presented and collected at the front of the Sanctuary by the congregation's members, during the Worship Service.

- The 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting was also on the 26th, after the Worship Service. This meeting allows members to receive information about the Congregation's activities during the preceeding year, the financial health of the Congregation, and to plan for the coming year by adopting the 2020 Budget.
- In the midafternoon of the 26th, a fund-raising concert to benefit the Homeless Coalition and the Humane Society, was presented by Deb Grenzow and Jerry Oscarson.
- To round out the packed schedule of activities during the last half of January, on the evening of the 27th, students from the North Fort Myers Academy for the Arts, presented a one act play. The performance of "I Never Saw Another Butterfly" under the direction of Kathy Rivendiera, and featuring the dancing of Lucia Rivendiera, played before a very full house.

I'll end this month's article with the reminder that the Leadership Team and the Congregation are here to support our Pastor, our church's ministries/ responsibilities, the church's general operations, and one another. We welcome your input.

ENDOWMENT TEAM – Bill Ringelstein, Chair

As anticipated, your Endowment Fund did very well in 2019 and the combination of capital gains and dividends has positioned us very well; the framers of our Endowment Fund charted a course on investments that continue to serve us very well.

On Sunday, January 19, a \$2,000 distribution was presented to Crossroads HOPE academy to be used for transportation improvements for their students. HOPE provides a stable living and learning environment for boys age 12 - 18 that have been moved from one failed foster home to another. It is a loving and nurturing environment truly in keeping with our mission.

We are also working with our own Social Justice Ministry to improve the funding for their mission by making a distribution that will flow through the church books. This will provide a better money management system and provide a necessary paper trail for this important ministry.

If you are connected with or volunteer at an organization that might be in line for Endowment Fund consideration, please let me or any team member know.

TREASURER – Melissa Brown

February 2020 Treasurer's Report

We do not have January financial results yet, although we do know that, based on giving reports, operating account contributions in January 2020 were approximately **20% higher than last year!** Way to go! Our budget is projecting a need to increase our giving by 14%, so this is very good news. Thank you all! We are in the midst of tallying our pledges for next year, and Elden will share those results with you in his stewardship report.



Since we don't have financial results yet, I am going to close my report with a few "housekeeping" items:

- We have a several boxes of 2020 donation envelopes left over. If anyone has not received envelopes for 2020 and would like to have a set, please contact the church office, and we will get a set to you.
- Please note that you may have been assigned a different envelope number as of 1/1/2020. When writing your envelope number in the memo section of your check, please be sure to use your 2020 envelope number.
- Please refrain from mailing checks to the church's street address. For security purposes, it is best to mail your check to our post office box address: PO 510838, Punta Gorda, FL 33950-0838. If your check is being mailed by your bank, please check that you have given the bank the post office address rather than the street address and, if the latter, we'd appreciate your instructing your bank to change the mailing address.

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

This month's hymn story is based on one of my favorites, Crown Him with Many Crowns...one of the most popular and most sung hymns in churches today.

Mathew Bridges , like several others of his era, started in the Anglican Church and then, following the lead of John Henry Newman, became a

Roman Catholic.

This was the time of the Oxford Movement in England. The Oxford Movement centered on, according to hymnologist Albert Bailey, "claiming for their Anglican Church lineal descent from the original Apostolic Church." In pursuit of this, adherents to the movement studied the ancient history of the church, its doctrine, and especially its liturgy. In doing so they discovered a wealth of Greek and Latin hymnody from the earliest centuries of the Christian church.

Dated from 1833 with a sermon by John Keble, the movement gained steam under John Henry Newman. The earliest years of the movement were given to translations of Greek and Latin hymns by such important figures as Edward Caswall and John Mason Neale. Wanting to share in the rich hymnic tradition of the Protestant Church, former Anglican poets now converted to Roman Catholicism such as Frederick Faber and Matthew Bridges began writing original hymns.

Bridges was born in Essex, England and left the Church of England to become Roman Catholic in 1848, just three years after John Henry Newman had taken that course. He lived his latter years in Quebec, Canada, returning to England before his death.

He published two small volumes of hymns, Hymns of the Heart and The Passion of Jesus. Crown Him was published in the second edition of Hymns of the Heart in 1851 in six, eight-line stanzas.

Once the hymn appeared in the Appendix to the first edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern (1868), the monumental hymnal of the Oxford Movement, its future was assured.

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY TEAM – Linda Greenfield and Linda Weaver, Chairs

Communion Schedule: Feb.2-Sandy & Keith Weber
Mar.1-Sandy James-Nogaj & Sue James
Apr.5-Linda & Glenn Weaver

ASH WEDNESDAY-Feb.26

Education: Living The Questions (LTQ) class begins Mon., Feb.3 from 3:30-5PM. The theme this year is "Creation Justice/Care". LTQ will be meeting 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 called "Earth-bound", focusing on "Creation Care" followed by discussion sessions. A huge thank you to those who volunteered to facilitate the video sessions!

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. For questions, call Jerry and Lori Larson at 715- 781-0657.

Mission-Looking ahead: Every March our church family collects short sets for girls at the Baker Street Center. We are in the process of obtaining the sizes needed. Listen for more announcements from the pulpit and look in the bulletin. At the beginning of March, sign-up sheets will be on the tables at the back of the church. (Last year we collected 121 sets!!)

STEWARSHIP – Elden Wick, Chair

During January, CUCC has conducted the stewardship initiative titled BUILDING AN ALTAR TO GOD. This "altar" involves congregants' financial commitments allowing investment in the various

ministries lined in the church's 2020 budget. This budget was approved by congregants on January 26.

Additionally, congregant's commitments toward building this 2020 'altar' focuses on active congregant work, requiring donation of God-given TIME and applying their God-given SKILLS/TALENTS FOR achieving success of ministries identified by the budget and church planning.

Three areas for ministry were discussed in January worship service announcements: 1) CUCC Global (worldwide) ministries, example Bahama Hurricane Recovery Work; 2) Punta Gorda CUCC local ministry work, example Music and Choir ministry; 3) Personal Engagement in CUCC ministry work, example Endowment Fund support of ministry works.

Thank you to Kathy Reed, Deb Grenzow, Jerry Oscarson, and Don Nagel for inspirational ministry presentations!

MINISTRY FELLOWSHIP TEAM – Ann Barker

Greetings from Your Kirke Køkken Nisse



Hello friends at Punta Gorda Congregational UCC! I am your new kirke køkken Nisse and I would like to introduce myself. We Nisse are Scandinavian magical beings of very short stature who serve humans in many ways. There are woodland Nisse, farm Nisse, household Nisse, even Christmas Nisse. Stealth is our way of moving in the world of mortals, so we are rarely seen. I have included a picture for identification should you spot me.

My specialty is church kitchens and food activities in Christian Community. I am delighted to be among you to foster your community living and a warm welcome to visitors. Please help me fulfill my role by willingly volunteering for coffee fellowship by signing up at the table in the back of the sanctuary or when asked. You will hear from me from time to time. But for now, thank you for entrusting this important task to me.

LADIES' LUNCH OUT – Neoma Remiger

Our January ladies' luncheon will be at 12:00 noon on February 28th at Phil's 41 in Punta Gord. 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



Thanks to Neoma Remiger and Diane Wick for co-hosting January's Book Talk Tea. Our group continues to grow! We discussed so many wonderful books. Here are some recommendations: "Nickel Boys" by Colson Whitehead; "Shade" by Pete Souza; "Irresistible Revolution" by Shane Claiborne and "The Water Dancer" by Ta-Nehisi Coates.


February's Book Talk Tea is on Friday February 14 at 12 noon in the church library. Please sign up at the kiosk in the back of the sanctuary. All are welcome.

I have made a few changes in the library. There is a bookcase under the TV that has some periodicals and DVD's. The Social Justice bookshelf has been moved to the other side of the library where the children books were. Please check out the Social Justice books. We have a nice collection started and it continues to grow thanks to generous donations from our congregation.

The UCC Book Talk Tea group visited the mosque in Port Charlotte on January 29. The Muslim women provided lunch. They cooked dishes from their respective countries. The food was delicious. There was a presentation on Islam and a question and answer period. The Imam also gave us a tour of the mosque. It was a wonderful day of interfaith fellowship.



Below is a text message from Samara Musallet.

Omg thank you for arranging this peaceful gathering. we all had a great time together I feel like this is a good way to get to know one another we are sisters thank God. And please you are all welcome to come anytime just let me know and especially during the month of Ramadan you also can bring your family husband children or a friend and break fast with us. All the ladies from our mosque were very Happy, they kept saying you are all so sweet and understanding we really appreciate your kindness. I hope to see you all soon 

We will be arranging a visit during Ramadan. Once the date is selected we will have a sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary.

SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY TEAM – Linda Weaver and M.E. Steele-Pierce

The 2020 Martin Luther King breakfast was a wonderful celebration of a great man dedicated to a peaceful resolution to the racism in this country. Thank you to all our members who attended to help our sisters and brothers honor Dr. King. We doubled our CUCC representation from last year! Retired educator Eunice Wiley narrated a video presentation of two of Dr. King's lesser known speeches that still hold a strong message for today, including "A Time to Break Silence." You can listen to it at <http://bit.ly/ATimeToBreakSilence>. Students from Punta Gorda schools read their winning essays about how Dr. King influences their lives today. Dr. Martha Bireda gave an update about the Blanchard House's current exhibit, "African Origins of Modern Healthcare," running this season Tuesdays to Fridays, 9 to 4 PM at 406 Martin Luther King Drive. Learn about the exhibit here: <http://bit.ly/BlanchardHouse2020>.

The Social Justice Ministry team co-sponsored an informative and frightening yet uplifting presentation on "Our Climate Is Changing: New Findings and Old" given by Nobel Laureate Dr. Terry Root. It was attended by 152 people in CUCC's sanctuary, both members and community residents. Evidence supports that climate change is very real and it is happening faster than was originally predicted. The good news: We can do something about it! Read Charlotte Sun's article about her presentation at <http://bit.ly/DrRootJan2020>. February's Sojourners magazine is available in the church library—the cover story is Plastic and the State of our Souls.

Looking ahead: CUCC's Endowment Team and Leadership Team approved a \$5000 grant for Social Justice Ministry activities for the 2020 season and beyond, primarily in our current four focus areas: economic, environmental, immigration, and racial justice. Our work will align with three Endowment Fund tenets: education, community service and outreach, and the wider mission of the United Church of Christ. We thank our leadership teams for this opportunity to continue the work of justice in Southwest Florida and the Punta Gorda community.

Our mission statement: Recognizing the Interconnectedness of all Creation, we seek to act for God's justice and encourage our congregation to participate in justice ministries. You're invited to join us as

we plan for 2020 and beyond. Speak with any of CUCC's Social Justice Ministry team: co-facilitators Glenn Weaver or M.E. Steele-Pierce, Jim DeGood, Lori Larson, Jerry Larson, Elizabeth Pitcher, Carol Schmul, Linda Weaver, and Elden Wick. Join us!

THE CHURCH SCRIBE – Joyce Schenk



In Loving memory of our dear friend, Joyce, we are putting one more of her articles in for your reading pleasure.

Labor's Rewards Come in All Shapes

When I was eleven, a hopeless case of summer boredom along with a need to supplement my quarter-a-week allowance, put me in the job market.

I decided to hire myself out as a helper to one of the neighborhood ladies, so I started knocking on doors. At each stop I got a smile and a polite turn down.

But, when I reached Mrs. Haley's house, my luck changed...

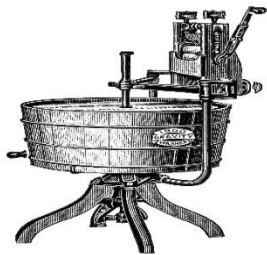
I had heard Mom discussing Mrs. Haley with a neighbor. They spoke sympathetically of Mrs. Haley's recent recovery from tuberculosis. I heard Mom say, "She still seems so weak."

The Haley's place was the smallest house on the block. It sat at the back edge of the lot, almost hidden behind a buffer of trees and bushes, as if trying to escape the stares of well-meaning neighbors.

When I knocked, she answered the door immediately. She was so tiny; we stood there almost eye to eye...a small, pale lady and a nervous eleven-year-old.

Trying to hide my jitters with a rapid-fire sales pitch, I told her quickly how I routinely helped my Mom with all kinds of chores.... washing, cooking, cleaning, gardening, and painting. The list was impressive, and at least half of it was true.

Mrs. Haley's tired eyes looked me over for a long minute. Finally, she said, "Well, I could use some help on wash day."



The next Saturday morning, I was at her house at 8 o'clock. I was ready, I thought, for the simple task of helping this small lady with her laundry. But with Mrs. Haley, wash day was anything but simple.

Since the house was so little, the ancient washing machine and tubs were kept in the shed in the side yard. On wash day, we moved everything into the yard. Then I carried bucket after bucket of near-boiling water from the house. I poured the bluing into one tub, rigged the hand wringer on another and stretched the clothesline.

That Saturday was my first lesson in the real meaning of the word “work.”

When we were finished, Mrs. Haley thanked me and slipped the agreed-upon dollar into my hand.

At home, I studied the bill. It was unlike any I'd ever seen. Mrs. Haley had carefully folded the bill in an intricate pattern until it was only a tiny sliver of green. As I undid the folds, I found it hard to believe a dollar could be reduced to such a small slice of currency. And I quickly learned that once un-folded, the method of creasing couldn't be duplicated. It was like trying to put a road map back into its original form.

For the rest of that summer, I spent every Saturday with Mrs. Haley. Our wash days, at first quiet and serious, became filled with conversation and laughter. By the time the season drew to a close, we had formed an unexpected friendship: a recovering TB patient and a pre-teen entrepreneur.

I developed a deep respect for this pale, quiet woman who tried so valiantly to keep up with the demands of her home. She taught me about commitment, responsibility and the value of work.

By summer's end, I had collected a small pile of Mrs. Haley's carefully folded bills. In fact, it was a long time before I could bring myself to use any of those hard-earned dollars. It didn't seem right to unfold the tiny strips of currency that Mrs. Haley had presented to me with such pride.

I've had many different jobs since that summer of my eleventh year. But none have stayed so close in my memory and no paycheck has ever been as treasured as those slender slivers of green.



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 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

| | | |
|----------|----|-----------------|
| February | 1 | Mary Farnquist |
| | 4 | Gerry Blandford |
| | 15 | Brook March |
| | 16 | Debra Grenzow |
| | 23 | Ron Jankowski |
| | 24 | Judy Wood |
| | 26 | Joanne Arvid |

ANNIVERSARIES

| | | |
|----------|----|------------------------|
| February | 2 | Mike and Kelly Ford |
| | 11 | Linda and Glenn Weaver |
| | 24 | Denny and Kathy Reed |

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