



FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

GULFPORT

- the church with the teal doors -



3rd Sunday of Easter

April 19, 2026

11 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

Co-Pastor – Rev. Erick Ashley – erick@spconnection.org

Co-Pastor – Rev. Tracie Ashley – tracie@spconnection.org

Associate Pastor – Rev. Ellie Fox – ellie@spconnection.org

Administrative Assistant – Patti Marshall – patti@spconnection.org

Director of Music – Celinda Bailey

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

Call to Worship*

Worship Music* | *Easter People, Raise Your Voices* – UMH 304

WE PROCLAIM

Affirmation of Faith* | *Adapted Version of the Apostle's Creed*

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

Pastoral Prayer

Passing of the Peace*

Worship Music* | *O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing* – UMH 57 vs 1-5

Children's Moment

Prayer For Illumination

Scripture Reading | *Acts 9: 1-19a* - CEB

Message | *When Grace Interrupts* - Rev. Tracie Ashley

WE RESPOND

Presentation of Tithes and Offerings

Offertory Music |

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

Offertory Prayer*

WE GO OUT

Worship Music* | *Grace Greater than Our Sin* – UMH 365

Benediction*

~Restrooms are in the courtyard, near the Fellowship Hall entrance~

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

New Worship Series Begins - Alive in Christ: A People Being Transformed is a worship series that explores how God's grace moves in and through our lives—meeting us where we are, transforming who we are, and sending us into the world as people of love. Rooted in the movement of scripture and shaped by a Wesleyan understanding of grace, this series invites us to not only learn about grace, but to live inside of it together. As we journey from encounter to transformation, from community to witness, we will grow as a people who are more aware of God's presence (Connect), more intentionally shaped in Christ (Grow), and more outwardly focused in love (Serve). Together, we proclaim: We are a people being made alive in Christ—connecting, growing, and serving in grace.

Each week, the bulletin will include a Weekly Practice to help us Connect with God, Grow in grace, and Serve in love in our daily lives.

Alive in Christ – Weekly Practice

Sunday, April 19: The Pause Prayer - CONNECT

- **Set a timer 3 times a day**
- **When it goes off, stop and pray: “Jesus, open my eyes to where you are already at work.”**
- **Notice interruptions—not as annoyances, but invitations**
- **Why: Trains awareness of prevenient grace**

A Joy-Filled Weekend of Laughter and Resurrection Hope - What a gift this past weekend was for our church family! From Friday night's Night of Comedy to our combined Holy Humor Sunday worship, we experienced the deep joy of being together in Christ.

On Friday, we gathered for an evening full of laughter and connection, and it was clear that joy is one of God's good gifts meant to be shared. Thank you to everyone who helped host, welcome, serve refreshments, and create such a warm and inviting space—it truly made the night special.

Then on Sunday, we came together as the South Pinellas Connection for Holy Humor Sunday, celebrating the resurrection not just with our words, but with our joy. Through laughter, music, and shared moments of

lightheartedness, we were reminded that Easter is not just something we believe—it's something we live. The risen Christ brings life, freedom, and yes... even laughter.

Thank you to all who made this weekend possible—those who planned, served, invited, and showed up ready to celebrate. Your presence and participation made it a truly joy-filled experience.

We give thanks to God for a church that can laugh together, worship together, and live as people made alive in Christ.

Considering Membership? - If you've been worshipping with us and feel ready to take the next step, we'd love to talk with you about becoming a member. Membership is a meaningful way to grow in faith and share in the mission of our church. Interested? Contact Patti at patti@spconnection.org.

Leadership Board Meeting Update - The April Leadership Meeting has been postponed. We will now gather on **May 14**. Thank you for your flexibility—we look forward to being together then!

WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAY, APR 19 – 3rd Sunday of Easter

- Adult Sunday School, 9:45 am – Room 7
- Traditional Worship, 11 am – Sanctuary & Online
- Fellowship & Coffee, 12 pm – Fellowship Hall

MONDAY, APR 20

- Church Office Open, 9 am – 1 pm

TUESDAY, APR 21

- Sophie's Attic, 9 am – 12 pm

WEDNESDAY, APR 22

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

THURSDAY, APR 23

- Narcotics Anonymous, 8 pm – Fellowship Hall

FRIDAY, APR 24

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

SATURDAY, APR 25

- Sophie’s Attic, 9 am – 12 pm

SUNDAY, APR 26 – 4th Sunday of Easter

- Adult Sunday School, 9:45 am – Room 7
- Traditional Worship, 11 am – Sanctuary
- Fellowship & Coffee, 12 pm – Fellowship Hall

SOUTH PINELLAS CONNECTION UPCOMING DATES

Apr 25	CPR Training	10 am – 2 pm	LW
Apr 26	FREE Community Dinner	5-6:30 pm	CV
May 2	United Methodist Men’s Breakfast	8 am	SL
May 4-6	The Pastoral Team at The Pulpit Project	-	-
May 23	Lay Servant Ministry – Basic Course Oakhurst UMC	9am - 4 pm	CV
Jun 4-6	Annual Conference Florida Southern College	-	-

KEY

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

Week of Apr 12

Worship	36
Online Worship	29
Giving Received	\$415.00
Giving Needed	\$1,634.62
Surplus/Loss	-\$1,219.62

2026 Year To Date

Worship (avg weekly)	47
Online (avg weekly)	15
Giving Received	\$16,248.45
Giving Needed	\$24,519.30
Surplus/Loss	-\$8,270.85

PRAYER LIST

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

Ongoing: Stan Zent and his family; Alice Johnson



Sharing GOD'S STORY @ home

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

[Saul] asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."

—Acts 9:5

MEALTIME PRAYER

Be present at the tables of those who need you, Lord. Be present at the tables of those who are persecuted, Lord. Be present at our table now and evermore. Amen.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

A couple of questions to ask as you read: What happens to Saul (Paul) in each of these stories? Where do you see yourself in these stories?

Sunday	Acts 9:1-19a	Saul's Conversion
Monday	Acts 9:19b-25	Saul Begins to Preach
Tuesday	Acts 9:26-31	Saul Comes to Jerusalem
Wednesday	Acts 13:1-12	Barnabas and Saul Commissioned
Thursday	Acts 15:1-21	The Council of Jerusalem
Friday	Acts 15:36–16:5	Timothy Joins Paul
Saturday	Acts 16:11-15	Conversion of Lydia
Sunday	Acts 16:16-34	Paul and Silas in Prison

If your household includes younger children, use a child-friendly Bible. You might find that the children's Bible you are using may not include the very story assigned for the DAILY BIBLE READINGS. Read to your kids anyway. Just pick a story!

SERVICE CHALLENGE

SERVICE is how we enact God's great love for the entire world.

Call your local services for people with visual impairments, and ask what kind of donations they need. Donate one item (clothing, reading glasses, food) or some money.

DEVOTIONS

Think about devotions as a continuation of our community's worship. The following basic pattern could be one way of forming your household's devotions. Adapt as necessary!

GATHERING

✚ Light a candle to help you focus this time as "God time."

✚ Prayer of the Week

You changed the heart of one who persecuted your followers, God. Be in our hearts; change and guide our hearts to help us follow your way. We need your love in our lives. Amen.

CARING CONVERSATION

Take a moment to check in with each other or to use the questions below.

- ❓ **Highs & Lows:** Name one thing that surprised you today. Name one thing that bothered you.
- ❓ **Thinking about This Week's Story:** Saul persecuted those who followed Jesus. But Jesus appeared to him and asked him to stop. Jesus changed Saul's heart from hate to love. When did you glimpse hate today? When did you see love?
- ❓ **Getting Ready for Next Week's Story:** Paul and Silas are imprisoned for sharing about Jesus. But even in prison, they sing praises to God and tell the jailer about Jesus. What was a difficult or unpleasant time today? How did you handle it?

DAILY BIBLE READING

Read aloud from the DAILY BIBLE READING from the front. What do you want to remember from this reading?

PRAY TOGETHER

✚ Stand or sit in a circle and pray for the person on your left. Pray silently for the person by name, lifting up their unique gifts, and give praise to God for them.

CLOSING

✚ If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotion time.

✚ Rituals & Traditions: A Blessing to Share

With permission, place your hands over a set of eyes and say, "Bless these eyes so that they may see you."

The "Four Key Faith Practices"—Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals & Traditions—are a framework developed by the Rev. Dr. David Anderson of Milestones Ministry and used by permission from Vibrant Faith Ministries, Bloomington, MN (www.vibrantfaith.org). For more information about the Four Keys, go to <http://milestonesministry.org/>.