

COMMITMENT SUNDAY  
Consider your pledge for 2022

SPRING OF REVIVAL  
Support youth in Belarus

# GOSPEL

## *Gazette*

NOV 2021



*Simple  
Gifts*

How we can multiply the power of small kindnesses with a joyful heart.

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Communications Coordinator**SERVICE TIMES****Early Traditional** 8:00am**Contemporary** 9:30am**Late Traditional** 11:00am**CONTACT**


352-383-2005

**URGENT AFTER-HOURS: DIAL 2**  
office@mtdorafumc.org**OFFICE HOURS****Mon–Thu** 8:00am–4:30pm**Fri** 8:00am–12:00pm**Sat–Sun** Closed**ADDRESS**

439 E. Fifth Ave.

440 E. Sixth Ave. (*mailing*)

Mount Dora, FL 32757

**SOCIAL MEDIA** @FirstUMCMountDora @FirstUMCMtDora @FirstUMCMtDora FUMC MtDora**STAY IN TOUCH!**

If you have new contact information, if you have become hospitalized or ill, if there is something you need prayer for, or if you have any questions, please contact us at any time.

# *I thank God for you and what you do for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

Your generous offerings of time, talent, and treasure make a difference in sharing the Kingdom visibly in Mount Dora and around the world. It is extraordinary what God does through ordinary people like you and me.

However, sometimes we can wonder if our gifts are really making a difference. We can become cynical and feel others may be “gaming the system.” I remember volunteering at a food pantry in Sebring, Florida where I was serving as a student minister during seminary. We gave out bags of food to over 100 people every Friday. I commented to the pantry’s director that it looked like some people didn’t need these food donations. I was passing judgment because one couple would drive up to the pantry in a Cadillac to pick up their food bag. He responded with something profound that has stuck with me to this day: “You’ve got to get past the greed to get to the need.”

Indeed, I would say it was only 4 or 5 people out of the 100 who worked the system at that food pantry. The director wasn’t going to let a few dishonest folks dictate how he was going to treat others who were hungry and had a great need. Looking back, I realize he wasn’t just talking about the greed of those who take advantage of others, but also the greed you or I use to justify withholding our best from God.

When I examine my heart, I realize that sometimes I have a distorted view of why I give to God. Maybe you can relate. I like to feel appreciated, to please others, and to help those who “really” need it. When I look deeply at my motivations, I realize, at times, I have actually traded material greed for emotional greed, full of self-righteousness, self-actualization, and appreciation. I have placed secondary personal concerns over the primary purpose of offering myself and my gifts to God.

I love the story of the widow’s mite Mark 12 and Luke 21. She gave all she had. She did not tip God with the leftovers. We can also tell her heart was in the right place. Jesus compares her giving to that of the Pharisees who give out of a sense of duty and self-righteousness. The Pharisees had that emotional greed too. Do we give for superficial reasons like the Pharisees or for supernatural reasons like the widow?

At our November 7 services, we will have an opportunity to consider our commitments to Christ through the work of First United Methodist Church in 2022. We can commit through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. In fulfilling these five vows of commitment, we can offer what God wants most: our giving hearts. It is not the quantity of what we offer that matters most to God, it is the quality. May we offer God our best through a giving heart. May we get past the greed to get to the need.

With a Grateful Heart,  
*Pastor David Averill*



*When I look deeply at my motivations, I realize, at times, I have actually traded material greed for emotional greed.... I have placed secondary personal concerns over the primary purpose of offering myself and my gifts to God.*





# Upcoming Christmas Festivities

Advent season is on its way! Here are three ways you can be a part of what makes this Christmas special:

- 1. The Hanging of the Greens /** Plan to join us on Monday, November 22 at 9am to help decorate the church campus for Christmas.
- 2. Pick up a Poinsettia /** 30 Poinsettias will be ordered to decorate the Sanctuary from December 12 through Christmas Eve. If you would like to donate \$8 toward a poinsettia that you may pick up after Christmas Eve, please mail or drop off the \$8 at the church office. *(Note: a printed list of memorials and honorees will not be prepared this year.)*
- 3. Lighting the Advent Wreath /** If your group or family is interested in lighting one of the Advent Candles during your service on November 28, December 5, 12, or 19, please call the church office.
- 4. Watch our Christmas Program /** Join us December 12 at 9am and 11am (note the two service times!) for our Christmas program, "The Music Box."



The Fifth Avenue Thrift Shoppe is off to a great start. It is open Thursdays and Fridays, from 10am–2pm, and Saturdays, from 10am–3pm. We will be accepting donations during business hours.

We accept donations of furniture, women's clothing and accessories, home decor, kitchenware, pet items, books, and puzzles during normal business hours.

In addition to your donations, here are ways to support the Thrift Shoppe.

- Volunteer to help. Working at the Thrift Shoppe is a great way to meet new friends and have fun! Contact Bob Simmons for more info.
- Follow us on Facebook: @5aveThriftShoppe
- Tell your friends and neighbors about us!



## *Widowed Support Group*

Our support group for widows and widowers, led by Rev. Carl Greene and Ruth Ault, will meet at **9:30am on Thursdays, Nov. 18, and Dec. 16.** If you have lost a spouse, you are welcome to be a part of this ministry.

## **JOIN OUR TECH TEAM**

Do you love tech, online engagement, or worship ministry? We're looking for you! We would like to recruit a team of 5 to 7 individuals to research and implement upgrades to our audiovisual worship presentation and streaming in the Sanctuary and the Chapel. Contact Pastor David if you are interested.

## **Step 1 Exploration Session**

Every journey begins with the first step. Your journey of faith in partnership with First UMC begins with our Step 1 class. It seeks to connect you with opportunities for worship, study, and service both in our congregation and in the community. Step 1 will meet in the chapel on Sunday, November 7 from 4:00 to 5:30 pm.

## Commitment Sunday

Hopefully, you have received a letter from Pastor David in reference to the Stewardship Campaign for 2022, which included a Budget Estimate of Giving Card and a 2022 Commitments Brochure. Prayerfully consider a financial and/or service commitment. Return them on **November 7** during worship or mail them to the church office in the enclosed envelope.



## THE POWER OF A SHOEBOX

Since 1993, Operation: Christmas Child, run by Samaritan's Purse, has delivered shoebox gifts to more than 188 million children in over 170 countries. Last year, our congregation filled 74 shoeboxes for low-income children around the world. You can help a child this year by filling any plastic shoebox with toys, gifts and hygiene items, labeling it with a suggested age and gender, and returning it to the Fifth Avenue entrance by **November 14**. Official Operation: Christmas Child shoeboxes are available in the church office if you prefer.

Learn more about the initiative at [samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child](https://samaritanspurse.org/operation-christmas-child)

### Holiday Closures

The church office will be closed on the 11th, the 25th, and the 26th for Veterans' Day and Thanksgiving.

### Wonderful Wednesdays

Children and youth are welcome to join us starting at 6:30pm for worship and fun!

### 2022 Flower Calendar

Add your name to the new Calendar in the Sanctuary to reserve your space.

### Exercise Classes

MON, WED, FRI / 8AM

Our free exercise class has been moved to Friendship Hall. See you there!



# Spring of Revival Ministry in Belarus

For over 20 years, Spring of Revival has provided material help and spiritual growth to social orphans, families, orphanage graduates and individuals with special needs. This includes running camps, weekly events, and Night to Shine. The average age is 5-15 along with a group of orphaned teenagers ages 16-20. Many go on to become leaders in the ministry.

Be a witness to God's love by writing a card or letter to a young person in Belarus and placing it in the mailbox in the Fifth Avenue entrance by **Dec. 5**. These will be mailed to Belarus, translated, and distributed among participants in the ministry. To help financially, write "Belarus" on the memo line of your check or give online to "Missions."



## Gift Cards for the Children's Home

The United Methodist Women are collecting gift cards for Christmas for the residents at the United Methodist Children's Home. Gifts cards valued at \$25 or \$50 from any major retailer are needed by **November 28**. Gift cards can be placed in the sanctuary offering boxes or brought to the church office. Our congregation has always been very generous and the UMW thanks you!

## Student Leadership

If you are interested in serving as a small group leader, please contact Dylan. We have openings for multiple male and female leadership.



# *4 Simple Ways to Give*

## *1 Online*

Visit [mtdorafumc.org/donate](http://mtdorafumc.org/donate) to access our quick and easy-to-use giving portal

## *2 In Person*

Drop your envelope in our offering box at the front of the sanctuary on Sunday morning or mail/deliver your offering to the church office.

## *3 Vanco Mobile App*

Download the Vanco Mobile app on the App Store or Google Play

## *4 Giving Your Time*

We value volunteers in our community, those who use their gifts and resources toward the glory of God. Contact Janet Westlake to learn how to volunteer with us.