

The Treasure Chest

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL

United Church of Christ
Fort Pierce

APRIL 2025



3601 Kirby Loop Rd

Fort Pierce, Florida 34981

(772) 465-2082

No matter who you are,
No matter where you are on life's journey,
You are welcome here!

Come Worship With Us ...
Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.
Coffee & Fellowship 11:30 a.m.

Pastor: Rev. Joel Reif



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
a just world for all

PASTOR'S REPORT

Since we will celebrate Easter on April 20th I asked AI about some interesting Easter facts.

Easter, a celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is rich with traditions, some rooted in ancient pagan beliefs. Here are some interesting facts about Easter: the Easter Bunny originated in Germany, egg decorating has Ukrainian roots, and pretzels were once associated with the holiday.



Here's a deeper dive into some interesting Easter facts:

Origins and Traditions:

- **Easter's Name:**

The name "Easter" is believed to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre, a deity associated with spring and fertility.

- **The Easter Bunny:**

The Easter Bunny, a symbol of fertility, has its roots in German folklore, where rabbits were seen as symbols of spring and rebirth.

- **Egg Decorating:**

The tradition of decorating eggs, known as pysanky in Ukraine, dates back to ancient times and symbolizes new life and spring.

- **Pretzels and Easter:**

In the past, pretzels were associated with Easter, with the two twists in a pretzel representing arms crossed in prayer.

- **White House Easter Egg Roll:**

The White House Easter Egg Roll tradition started in 1878, when children approached President Rutherford B. Hayes asking about an Easter egg roll.

- **Greeks Crack Red Eggs:**

In Greece, cracking red eggs is a tradition that symbolizes the blood of Christ and the renewal of life.

- **Easter is the oldest Christian holiday:**

Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, which is the foundation of the Christian faith.

- **Eggs symbolize new life:**

Eggs are linked to Easter as symbols of rebirth and the new life created as the seasons change from winter into spring.

We will also have communion as a part of our Easter worship.

See You in Church.

Rev. Joel Reif

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP



Patricia is preparing an Easter themed raffle basket. Tickets will be available starting Sunday, March 30. She will be getting Easter lilies again this year as well. After the Lenten Offering concludes on Easter Sunday, the Fellowship will decide how to distribute those funds as well as others collected during the year, and will share that information with the congregation. Thank you to everyone who is contributing to that offering!! Below is information on our last meeting of the year.

Annual End of the Year Fellowship Luncheon
Manatee Island Restaurant,
1640 Seaway Drive on Hutchinson Island
Tuesday, April 22, at 11:30
All are welcome!

There's a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

“Every dollar in a church budget is a dollar that someone has given freely, under no compulsion, driven by a wish for the church to exist. Every dollar in a church budget represents one person’s generosity and good will. The church budget is not a necessary evil or a mere tool; it is a celebration of organized generosity.”

Have you returned your annual pledge card to the church? If you have, thank you! Remember it can be placed in the collection plate at church or dropped in the mail – thank you in advance!

And, if you didn't receive a letter and pledge card and would like one, please see Elaine Souza or Dickie Brooks.

LET ME KNOW

Just a reminder to be sure to contact me **IMMEDIATELY** if someone is in the hospital, there has been a death, or in need of a call or visit from me. I would rather have 10 people contact me than miss someone.

Rev. Joel A. Reif

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

March 23, 2025

Attendance: Joel Reif, Pastor; Carol Sinotte, Moderator; Dickie Brooks, Clerk; Mary Keller, Treasurer; Dick Sinotte, Property; Jeff Bourassa, Deacons; Janis Gonzalez, Music; Patricia Bryant, Church Fellowship; Rachel Spence, Evangelism/IT; and Judy Jones, Member at Large.

Carol called the meeting to order and Joel opened the meeting with a prayer.

Clerk's Report – The minutes of the February 23, 2025, meeting were approved as submitted.

Treasurer's Report – Mary presented the Treasurer's report which was approved as submitted. The Church Fellowship separate checking account has been closed. The balance has been incorporated into the main church checking account but Fellowship income and expenses will continue to be accounted for and the balance reported separately on the monthly financial reports to the Council.

Pastor's Report – Joel will be holding a new member meeting after church next Sunday, March 30. He would like to celebrate communion on Easter Sunday in addition to the regular first Sunday of the month so asked that the Deacons prepare for that. He also reported that he'll be on vacation on Sunday, May 18; Mary Keller volunteered to serve as Worship Leader on that date. Joel notified the Council that he's interested in renewing his contract as Designated Term Pastor for our church for another two years beginning December 1, 2025. Dickie made a motion for Council approval of that extension, Mary seconded, and a unanimous approval followed. This will be presented at the Annual Meeting of the church on April 13 for congregational approval.

Property – Dick reported the garden has been re-mulched and new carriage lamps have been installed at the church's front entrance. Brian Lammers' assistance with property maintenance is much appreciated.

Music – Janis reports that special Lenten music will be featured during worship on Sunday, March 30.

Stewardship – Dickie submitted a draft of a stewardship campaign letter for input and discussion. No changes were suggested. These will be available for distribution to church family and friends this coming week.

IT/Evangelism – Rachel says on-line giving seems to be picking up

Memorial – Dickie reported for Elaine that memorial board plaques for Sandra Starkey have been received.

Church Fellowship – Patricia reported the St. Patrick's Day basket raffle was a success and she's finalizing the Easter basket. She's also working on getting lilies for Easter decoration and donations. There will be a meeting this coming Tuesday, March 25, where a primary topic will be deciding which local charitable organizations will be receiving our annual donations.

Nominating – Dickie presented a proposed slate of officers and committee members for the 2025-2026 church year. Following some discussion, a slate was approved by Council and will be submitted to the congregation at the April 13th Annual Meeting.

Deacons, Trustees, Missions – No reports

Old Business – Reminder that reports for the Annual Meeting should be provided to Kim Sinotte no later than Sunday, March 30.

New Business – Janis recognized and thanked Patricia for her efforts in organizing a very successful St. Patrick's Day pot luck lunch after church on Sunday, March 16.

The next Council Meeting will be May 4, 2025.

Joel adjourned the meeting with prayer.

*Respectfully submitted,
Dickie Brooks*

REMINDER
PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES DURING WORSHIP
THANK YOU!

ANNUAL MEETING

All members of the First Congregational United Church of Christ, Fort Pierce, are requested to be present for the Annual Meeting of the Church on Sunday, April 13, 2025, immediately following our worship service.



The purpose of this meeting is to:

- Hear and accept all reports
 - Receive and act upon the proposed budget
 - Elect officers and board members
 - Receive, discuss, and act upon changes in the bylaws, if proposed, and
- Conduct any other business which shall come appropriately before it.

TERRY FRITZ CONTACT INFO

As many of you know, Terry is out of state receiving medical treatment. We are all holding her up in our prayers and her family sends thanks to everyone who has been reaching out to her! However, at this point, she's not taking phone calls or using email or texting very much, so her family is asking that you communicate with her by sending cards (especially funny cards) or letters. Her address is c/o Tina Fritz-Pizzi, 3788 Augusta Hwy., Dearing GA 30808.



IN OUR PRAYERS

Jennifer Gray, Doug MacWilliam, Bob Evans, Marv Lammers, Greg and Linda Garneau, Charlotte Fritz, Danny Fanning, Joyce Maybury, Tyler Prince, Anita Tuccillo, Bob Charpentir, Scott Burgoyne, Karen Casavant, Justin Archambault, Patty Hills, Becky Miller, Mike and Jody, Jay White, Donna Mariarski, Sandy Maybury, Ed Galpen, Ann Marie Colonnese, Susanne Colombo, Sandy Martyn, Bob Therrien, Katie Rogers, Razel Cramer, Janis & John Gonzales, Ronald Powell, Patricia Allen, Terry Fritz, Rus Dunbar, Diane Ware, Chelsy Lawton, Judy Jones, Jamie, Gabriel, Leone Bater, Bob Schwartfeger, Tomm Mountz, Dick Keller, the family of Paul Pieterofere, Steve Murphy, Beau Mayfield, Josh Lewis, Shirley Borella, family of Margaret Trocki, Petr Cudoba



BIRTHDAYS

1st Roberta Saart
 15th Samantha Jones
 20th Jim Saart
 23rd Ben Gray
 27th Kim Sinotte

ANNIVERSARIES

1st Joshua & Elizabeth Silvestri
 8th Jim & Charlotte Fritz

PASSOVER SEDER

I am excited to announce we will be having a Passover Celebration Seder this year on Saturday, April 26, 2025, from 1:00 p.m. until about 4:00 p.m. All are invited. Our Passover Seder will be from a Christian perspective. A meal will be included in the service and there is no cost for this experience. Just like with most family gatherings, people will be asked to bring a dish or juice or something If you know someone who would like to attend, they are welcome! Please sign up by Sunday, April 13.

Retelling the Passover Story is an Ordinance from God. Exodus 12:14 – “This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord – a lasting ordinance.”

COMMUNITY OUTREACH TARGETED DONATIONS

In April, our Community Outreach to our homeless neighbors and others in similar difficult circumstances will focus on toilet paper and paper towels. These are ongoing needs of the Treasure Coast Homeless Services Council for their shelters and temporary residential apartments. Looking ahead, in May (in recognition of Mother’s Day) we’ll focus on women’s hygiene products and disposable diapers and wipes.

SPECIAL LENTEN OFFERING

We’ll continue to collect this offering through Easter Sunday. The funds will be used by the Fellowship Group to provide for local missions right here in Fort Pierce. There is a special container on the stand by the bulletins for you to place your offerings and there is also a link on the church website to make donations to this fund if you wish to do that. This is a very special opportunity to help those in need right in our own backyard. Please prayerfully consider participating in the special mission project and if you’ve already contributed, thank you very, very much!

Website
www.firstcongrp.org

Email
churchoffice@firstcongrp.org

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Communion is served
the first Sunday of
each month, and all
are welcome!

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