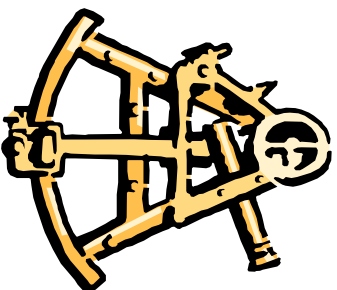


North Port Community
United Church of Christ
3450 S. Biscayne Drive
North Port, FL 34287



THE NAVIGATOR

December, 2016





December, 2016

Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! (Psalm 106:1)

Dear Church Family,

Already as we look around we will see outer signs of the Christmas Season all around us. Our homes, the stores and not least our Sanctuaries will carry decorations, often very colorful proclamations of the Season. We can't help but feel excitement when we see it!

Christians here in America and around the world know something special is happening. Together with the Global Church, the Universal Body of Christ, we will celebrate the birth of the Savior Jesus Christ. Important as all the trimmings, fun and glitter of Christmas is, it will remain only one more holiday on the calendar if we do not realize the deeper meaning. Christmas is really an 'INNER EVENT'.

It is God's great gift to us, when we receive a gift we express our thanks. Christmas is a Season of Worship. Max Lucado, one of the great Christian Authors of our time, put it so poignantly when he wrote:

"Worship is when you are aware that what you have been given is far greater than what you can give. Worship is the awareness that were it not for His touch, you'd still be

hobbling and hurting, bitter and broken. Worship is the half-glazed expression on the parched face of a desert Pilgrim as he discovers that the oasis is not a mirage. Worship is the THANK YOU that refuses to be silenced.”

May our Christmas be filled with joy, happiness and a satisfied heart. May our families have peace that comes from knowing Christ. When we look around and see the colorful displays and array of lights may we be reminded that Christmas is first of all an ‘INNER EVENT’. It would remain void of real meaning without real Worship. Together with the Psalmist we too can proclaim “Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!” Yes, continues indeed Christmas to Christmas, from continent to continent, from generation to generation.

We look forward to having you celebrate Christmas with us in God’s house.

Our very first NPCUCC German Christmas Service will take place on Saturday, December 10th 3:00 p.m. with Coffee and German Christmas cookies right after the service. Please help us spread the news about this NEW service.

Please join us and invite others to our Festival of Carols (Sing We Now of Christmas) here at our NPCUCC candlelight service on Christmas Eve, December 24th @ 7:00 pm. With a light reception following the service.

Here are a couple of photos taken at a recent visit with:

Mrs. Agnes Bushey



And Mrs. Joan Peters



**Together in Mission:
Pastor *Attila Szemesi*/NPCUCC**

Pastoral Relations Committee

Thank you to everyone for their support of finalizing our full time pastorate of Rev. Attila Szemesi at the November 20, 2016 worship service. Catch the service on You-Tube and share in the congregation's celebration, if you were unable to attend in person.

It is our personal prayer that each day we pray for our church to follow God's calling. Pastor Attila, as we all know, believes in God's strength above all else. We thank him for what he has brought to us through his Biblically based spiritual messages, his excellence in pastoral care and his leadership in mission outreach.

Since November, 2012, when the Search Committee first met Pastor Attila on a Skype call, God knew. He is on the throne guiding us each step of the way!

Blessings to each of you!

Dave DeRonde, Kristin Padalik, Mary Maples, Cindy Minich, Jack Rabito and Donna Swanson



**Large enough to serve you;
small enough to know you.**





A 10 Day Tour to GERMANY

In the Footsteps of Martin Luther

Please join Rev. Attila Szemesi and North Port Community United Church of Christ on a fantastic journey to Germany. The Luther decade from 2008 to 2017 invites you to take part in various events and tours in order to search for traces of the original scenes of the Reformation. It will commemorate the 500th anniversary of the nailing of the theses, with which Luther set the Reformation in motion in Wittenberg on 31 October 1517. Exhibitions, concerts, church services, festivals and theatre productions will highlight the importance of the Reformation and the role Martin Luther played in the places he lived and worked.

10 days / 8 nights – October 2017

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Day 1: | Departure to Berlin, Germany |
| Day 2: | Berlin |
| Day 3: | Berlin – Pragamon Museum |
| Day 4: | Juteborg & Wittenberg - Castle Church & Luther House |
| Day 5: | Torgau & Leipzig - St. Thomas Church & Bach Museum |
| Day 6: | Eisleben - Luther's Birthplace |
| Day 7: | Erfurt – Augustinian Monastery |
| Day 8: | Eisenach – Wartburg Castle & Luther House |
| Day 9: | Mainz & Worms – Gutenberg Museum & Reformation Monument |
| Day 10: | Return Home |

Please contact the church office at 426-5580 if you would like a brochure for this adventure!

Join us for Breakfast with Santa



December 3, 2016
8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

North Port Community UCC
3450 S. Biscayne Drive
North Port, FL 34287
941-426-5580
Email: northportucc@juno.com



Breakfast:
\$5 for adults; Children 5-12 \$3.00
Children under 5 free

Bring your camera and have
your picture taken with Santa!

Children may also shop for
affordable gifts in our
Santa's Workshop.



New this year: Free craft area for children.



**Saturday, December 10th
3:00 p.m.**

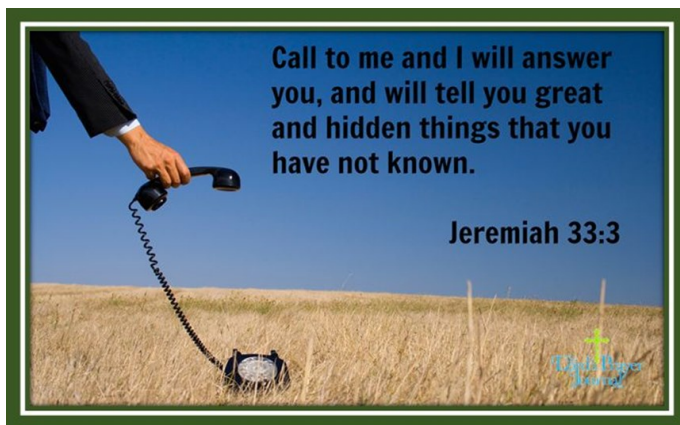
**Christmas Service in German language here at
North Port Community UCC!
This is a new Ministry here—help spread the word.**



**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
Festival of Carols
7:00 p.m.**

**CHRISTMAS DAY
SERVICE
10:00 a.m.**





Call to me and I will answer
you, and will tell you great
and hidden things that you
have not known.

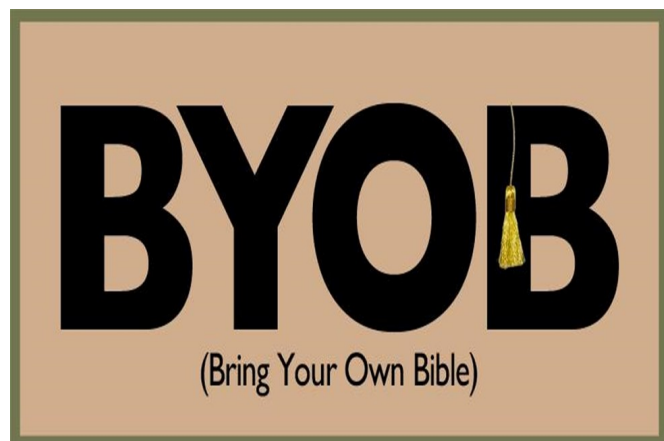
Jeremiah 33:3

**Prayer Line:
941-426-5580**

**(If you get the answering
machine, please call back)**

(*This is not a counseling line but a prayer line).

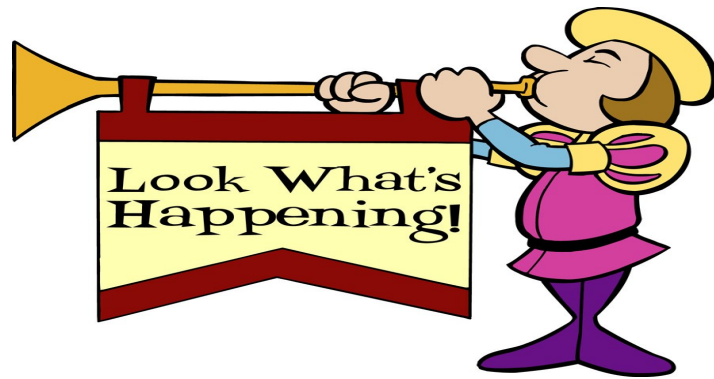
**Bible Study
Every Tuesday
11:00 a.m.
Bring a lunch
If you wish.**



**The church Office will
be closed:**

**Monday,
December 26
In Celebration of Christmas**





UPCOMING EVENTS TO WATCH FOR!

December 3	Breakfast With Santa
December 10	German Christmas Service
December 12	Back Pack Angels Fundraiser
December 14	UCC Women's Christmas Party
December 24	Christmas Eve Service 7:00 p.m.
December 25	Christmas Day Service 10:00 a.m.
January 1	New Year's Day Service 10:00 a.m.
January 7	Celebration of Life Service for Dawn Bush 11:00 a.m.
January 14	Annual Grief Seminar
January 21	Southwest Regional UCC meeting In Naples
January 31 & Feb. 1	Church Directory Photos



“Turning Point” Youth Group

**“Life is always at some turning point!”
Irwin Edman**

Turning Point is a place where teens can learn and grow through God’s word. In life we will always cross turning points, we will work together to help guide each other through the different turning points in life.

Turning point has been a little quiet this past month as we reflect on this past year, our goals for the future and what we are thankful for.

One thing we are extremely thankful for is all of you. This church is so wonderful, loving, and supportive. Thank you so much. God bless.

In December we will be helping out at Breakfast with Santa and celebrating with a Christmas party.

We wish you all a Blessed Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to everyone!

**God Bless!
Miss Ally & Turning Point!**



FOOD FOR THE NEEDY



**Remember the 2nd Sunday is our
Collection of Food for those who are
hungry. We alternate months, going
to Salvation Army and Face of Hope.**

**Looking for a
Couple of volunteers**

**We would like to have a reception
this year following the
Christmas Eve Service.**

**Cookies will be provided,
coffee will be made.**

**We need a few folks to
volunteer to put them out
and tidy up afterwards.**

**Please call the church
Office to volunteer.
Many thanks.**



**Sold here!
See Doug Minich or
stop in the church
office during the
week.**

Did you know?

A note from The Trustees.....

Are you 70 1/2?



You may contact your investment firm/counselor and have your yearly required minimum distribution or any portion of it sent directly to the church. This satisfies the minimum required distribution and is non taxable to you. It is a benefit to you and the church and an easy way to fulfill your annual “estimate of giving” to the church. Thank you.



**MEN'S GROUP
BREAKFAST & MEETING**

**Monday, December 5th
8:00 a.m.
Fellowship Hall**

Speaker: to be determined

**Join us for breakfast.
Questions—see Doug Minich**



UCC WOMEN TO MEET

Join us for some Christmas Cheer as we celebrate this time of year!

The UCCW will hold the December meeting on December 14th at Becky Rooney's home. Please be sure to check your orange church directory for her address and phone number. Call Becky if you have not signed up or if you would like a ride.

Each attendee is asked to bring a dish to share, \$5 gift for the exchange game, and 3 dozen cookies. All are welcome. There will be no women's breakfast out in December.



**Hats off to Kindness
Winners announced!**

**Congratulations to
Sheryll Norris and
Maryjane Schaeferle**

**For knitting the most
Hats for the Homeless!
Well done.**





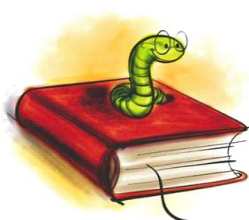
Library Committee

Holidays are here and the church library has a large variety of selections. Rick Warren's "*The Purpose of Christmas*" explains how God designed Christmas to meet your three deepest needs and how understanding and receiving God's Christmas gifts to you will transform your life forever.

"We Hear the Christmas Angels: True Stories of their Presence" published by Guideposts asks "Does God dispatch angels to earth in this season more than any other?" The book presents inspiring, personal stories of angels still delivering tidings and comfort, protection, and joy.

"A Treasury of Christmas Miracles: True Stories of God's Presence Today" by Karen Kingsbury is also a book to bring out the spirit of the season.

Check the list of Christmas books at the library. Happy reading and Merry Christmas from the Library Committee.



2nd Annual Grief Seminar
Saturday, January 14, 2017

8:30—3:30 p.m.

Breakfast and lunch provided.

Call to register now—426-5580

A love offering will be accepted to offset expenses.

Theme: Finding your way through the maze of loss and the loneliness that follows.

Guest Speaker: Ty Morgan, Cornerstone of Hope



**New Address for
Ken and Carol Pratt:**

**16 Harbor View Road, Apt. 202
South Burlington, VT 05403**

Their phone number is available through the church office.

**Sunday Morning Announcements
We're trying something new....**

**Please help us keep our Sunday morning
announcement time running efficiently.**

**If you will have an announcement that you'll want to
make on Sunday morning—Please call the church
office by Friday morning to be added to the list. This
will allow us to plan the announcement time better so
we can begin the worship portion of our service
promptly at 10:00 a.m.**

Thanks for your cooperation.



Christmas Poinsettias

**\$10.00 per plant
Please be sure to order
your plants no later than
December 11th.
Forms are available at church.**



I would like to thank all who have helped with our Missions throughout the year. We have been very busy supporting both local, national and overseas missions.

Our December mission is our Christmas for the Homeless. Gifts of socks, underwear, shampoos, etc. will be packaged up and shared with the Homeless of North Port.

We will also receive our Annual UCC Christmas Fund Offering to support retired ministers on Sunday December 18th. Informational inserts and a special envelope will be in your Sunday Bulletins during December.

We know we can count on your generosity for both of these mission programs.

Norma Beach, Missions Chair



**Coming up:
Last chance for
Church Directory Photos
January 31
February 1**



FYI about ECHO's Intern Program

The purpose of the ECHO Intern Program is to train college graduates in sustainable agricultural techniques for reducing hunger and improving the lives of the poor. Interns live and work at ECHO's 55-acre Global Farm in North Fort Myers for 14 months where they gain hands-on training in sustainable gardening techniques, tropical and subtropical plants, plant propagation, and farm management. The program trains 8 interns per year.

Among ECHO's 227 Intern alumni: 30% have served long-term doing international service work and 75% have done service-oriented assignments either domestically or internationally.

Current support for the Intern Program comes primarily from ECHO's committed donor base of individuals and churches. Thank you North Port for choosing to help equip a Christian young person with the skills needed to serve in agriculture related ministries. Thank you NPCUCC for being a blessing and provision to young people, like Meg, with a heart to serve Christ and reduce hunger.

On the next page of our Newsletter is a note from Meg with an update on what she is doing.

An Update From Meg

"Things are very busy, but good, in the Urban Garden! We're busier than usual right now preparing for ECHO's



big conference in November! Lots of plants are going into the ground all at once! It's exciting, now that the cooler weather is here, we have entered a new planting season. We're getting to experiment with different kinds of crops than we had all summer."

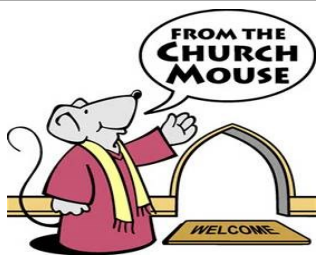
"Several weeks ago I also had the exciting opportunity to travel with ECHO staff and a few other interns to ECHO's conference in Nicaragua. That was an incredible experience getting to see firsthand the impact that ECHO has overseas. I even got to visit a farm that had planted a bunch of the seeds I had personally packaged here in Florida!"

"Looking forward to seeing you again!"

**Blessings,
Meg**

**Our total giving for ECHO's Intern Program so far is \$475. We're aiming for \$649 by the end of April.
Thank you!**

Sharon Miller, Mission Committee



From the Church Mouse

December Greetings from Ye Olde Church Mouse and Pip. The church elves have been very busy with trees, banners, lights, garlands and all sorts of pretty things. It looks beautiful! I hear that it's getting pretty close to the time when Santa is going to come and eat breakfast prepared by Chef Ed and his crew. Pip and I can't wait to try the yummy food. Heard them talking about some sort of fingers to eat. Not sure we'll like eating fingers, but will give it a try. Also heard that the kids will be feeding birds and reindeer. Will have to check that out too. Pip and I will see you there.

Merry Christmas to everyone!

Ye Olde Church Mouse & Pip



Read "Celebrate Florida"!

Follow the United Church of Christ churches in Florida!

On the internet go to uccflorida.org.

Look at the links on the left hand side of the screen.

Click on "Celebrate Florida".

Read all about our church and UCC churches around Florida on or about December 1st. It is published every three months.

Or read the hard copy while visiting our church library. Patti has copied the newsletter in beautiful color and Becky has it posted in the library.

Our NPCUCC Vision:
“NPCUCC is a welcoming congregation that celebrates the diversity of our members but focuses on what we as Christians have in common in order to nurture growth and healing.”

Lay Readers:

Dec. 4	Esther Sanborn
Dec. 11	Jeanie Doll
Dec. 18	Neville Miles
Dec. 25	Rev. Bill Palmer

Average monthly attendance:

October 2015—103
October 2016—114



HAVE YOU MADE A WILL?
DID YOU REMEMBER
YOUR CHURCH?

RESPITE TIME NEWS



Are you a 24 hour a day care giver for a loved one? Would you like a break or someone to talk to? If so, contact “A Special Time” at (941) 268-4976.

NPCUCC Dates for Respite Time

**We’re waiting for the new 2017 schedule
To be received.**



***No Matter who you are,
or where you are on life’s journey,
you are always welcome here!***

December Birthdays:

Dec. 1	Angela Stolting
Dec. 3	Jeanie Doll
Dec. 3	Landon Livingston
Dec. 4	Hannah Padalik
Dec. 5	Connie Szemesi
Dec. 5	Gary Tallman
Dec. 10	Brooke Fisher
Dec. 13	Dave Sanford
Dec. 15	Boo Vance
Dec. 22	Grace Johnson
Dec. 25	Sophia Bonsky
Dec. 25	DJ Covert
Dec. 25	Carol Pratt
Dec. 28	Alex Szemesi
Dec. 29	Marian Holsinger
Dec. 30	Louise Hall-Duvall
Dec. 31	Anne Smith



**Has a month passed and you
did not see your name? Let us know, we'll be happy to add
you to the list. Call the church office and let Patti know.**



**The following members and friends will
be celebrating a Wedding Anniversary
during December:**

Dec. 6	Jim and Barbara Mills
Dec. 7	Gary and Nadyne Tallman
Dec. 17	Bob and Nancy Case
Dec. 21	Larry and Jeanie Doll

DECEMBER:

ALTAR FLOWERS:

Dec. 4	Karen and Phil Knudsen
Dec. 11	Marilyn Miller
Dec. 18	Arline Hughes
Dec. 25	Barbara Mervine



**Thank you to: North Port Natural Florist
Your "Green" Florist
13632 Tamiami Trail
North Port, FL 34287
426-1197**

For providing us with our flowers every Sunday.



**Join us on Wednesday morning for
Morning Prayer
7:00 a.m.—9:00 a.m.**

*Prayer Shawl
Ministry*



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

**Attention knitters
and those who crochet!**

**Join us for prayer, knitting and fellowship. Tuesday,
December 6 and & 20 at 2:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall.
Questions? Contact Nancy Case 423-5618.**



NORTH PORT COMMUNITY U.C.C.

Rev. Attila Szemesi, Pastor

3450 S. Biscayne Drive

North Port, FL 34287

Phone: (941) 426-5580

Fax: (941) 426-7370

E-mail: northportucc@juno.com

******CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE******

www.northportucc.org

Visit us on Facebook

Check us out on You Tube:

<http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZOJIYvzmRjXqkRjYki-Gpw>

Sunday Worship Service: 10:00 am

Office Hours: 8:00 am to 12:00 pm Monday-Friday

Patti Bourque, Office Manager