

A PUBLICATION OF CHURCH ON THE HILL IN BOCA RATON, FLORIDA

VANTAGE



September 2023

Pastor's Page



For several months, our Vision Ministry or the Council has talked with Lifepoint International Church about sharing our church's facility. About seven years ago, Lifepoint integrated into our facility for a year and a half or so and then moved out, eventually to purchase their own property in Deerfield Beach. Around May, Pastors Pedro and Sandra Corra contacted us to see if we could talk about doing something similar again. They said their church was undergoing extensive rehabilitation, and they needed to find another location for worship. The current conversation and negotiation started with talks about Sunday morning only but later included four weekday nights, an office space, and the Upper Room.

Some of this was the same as last time when the Upper Room was dedicated to Lifepoint as their office and counseling space. Last time, they also used fellowship hall but for at least five nights a week and many weeks six times. Lifepoint's prior sharing with us went very smoothly, without incident, and we were sad to see them go.

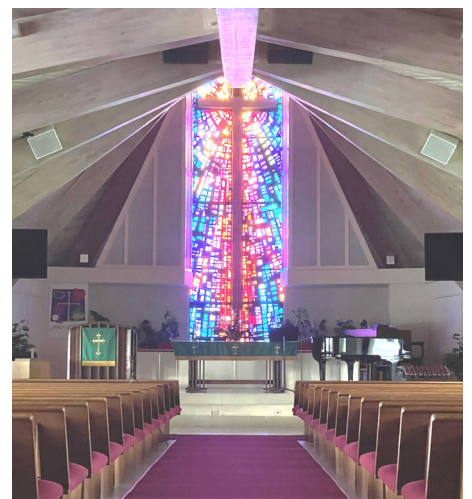
One of the differences between this time and last time would be Sunday morning. Before, Lifepoint worshiped Sunday night in fellowship hall. Now, they would worship Sunday morning immediately following our service. This means that as we depart from the sanctuary, the worship team, including pastors and musicians, will enter. While we gather in the Rosser room for fellowship time, Sunday school teachers and folks putting together their fellowship time will be downstairs and in the kitchen. Their worship service time would start at 11:30 a.m., so they would need that half hour at the end of our service at 11:00 a.m. to be ready by 11:30 a.m. Since Lifepoint church has a contemporary styled worship service, they use significantly enlarged sound and visual systems, including larger speakers than we have, and a number of video screens connected together to form a single rectangle video "wall." This screen would stand behind the choir loft chairs and in front of the stained-glass window about eight feet off the floor at its height, blocking view of the window to that height. Of course, the window is something like sixty feet high in its entirety. Their large speakers would also sit to the side on the chancel floor.

As of now, an agreement, if finalized, would run for seven months. I want you to know that we are very close to this coming to pass, and we expect it to do so. If this happens, Lifepoint would start worshipping at Church on the Hill in September. To answer a reasonable question: An agreement with Lifepoint International Church would provide a dramatic increase in our church's income, canceling our projected annual deficit in about four months' time, and giving Church on the Hill a significant financial surplus for as long as we share our church.

We are a special church, a one-of-a-kind church, but we are also a church that needs some help. Everybody needs help at some point or another, including Lifepoint Church. While we are different in important ways, in this we are the same.

Peace and joy,

Pastor Tom



Cover Photo:

Michelle and Jennifer Sternecker with children: big brother Grayson and baby Adelaide Harper who was baptized on August 13th by Pastor Tom Lacey.

If you are interested in participating in worship service by being a lay reader, please speak with Pastor Tom

September Teachings

September 3
Genesis 44:18-34

Ecce Homo—Here's the man (or woman)
For so many people hearing someone say something negative about us causes us to react in kind. We give as we're given to. We aren't free from the situation. We aren't our own person. We let our standards fall on the first onslaught. But that's no way to be. Be your own person. Don't react. Instead keep your standards. Hold on to your vision of who you are. Don't give in or give it away just because of someone else's actions or words.

September 10 (Pastor on vacation)

Reverend Renwick Bell, Guest Preacher

September 17
Judges 6:36-40

Where There's Another Will...It May Be a Better Way

One of the best prayers we can ever pray is "God, not my will, but your will be done." We pray this not because we believe it's easy to know God's will, but we pray this to open us to the possibility of another will, another perspective, and another voice getting past our own. I've seen people jump into a relationship or a job they didn't feel particularly good about, but one they wanted so badly. They refused to listen to that other voice. They don't deny themselves in order to develop themselves. The Lord can't show them a better choice if they've already made up their minds to make the one they're locked in on. Stay open to God's direction. Follow your heart and God will watch over you.

September 24 (Pastor on vacation)

Lectio Divina

Thomas Brown, guest speaker

Thomas will lead us in an exploration of an ancient spiritual discipline. He will present the practice and provide everyone with a chance to practice. Hopefully, like the Friday morning Bible Study group, congregants will find it useful and adopt the practice .



Team Updates

News from the Vision Ministry by Sarah Hugus, Acting Church Moderator

Jeff Newcomb

At beginning of worship on 7/16/23 I made the following announcement: I, Sarah Hugus, Vice Moderator of Church on the Hill, inform the church of the resignation of Jeff Newcomb, our Church Moderator. I do so with a heavy heart. Jeff's resignation was effective last Sunday July 9, from both his office as Moderator and his church membership. He will be sorely missed by many, perhaps for some of you mostly because of his amazing sense of humor! It is in this spirit and out of a sense of respect that I remind us now of some his many accomplishments and interests:

When our former Moderator, Steve, resigned early and moved back to Massachusetts due to the pandemic, Jeff agreed to step in as Interim Moderator, and was officially elected as Moderator five months later. Early in his 10 years at COTH, Jeff supported Women's Fellowship and Eleanor's 'Care Doll' project. In late 2017, Jeff led our sub-team in the process to become a United Church of Christ Open and Affirming Congregation, publicly welcoming and affirming members of the LGBT community. He organized, researched, and led the ONA team's monthly and often weekly meetings leading to the educational seminars, communications, surveys, and finally the 92% affirming vote in January 2019. And that was all before he retired! He continued leading our ONA ministry up to the present time.

Jeff tirelessly shared his hands-on talents, often doing money-saving projects. Jeff's vision led to the creation of "Heroes Sunday and celebratory outside lunch 1.0" in Spring 2021 - when we resumed gathering in-person after the pandemic. His idea was to recognize and thank members who worked the most to keep us ministering during that strange time. Jeff coordinated outside groups using our spaces, was irrigation well pump engineer and mechanic, sprinkler repair person, upgraded, with some help, the Memorial Garden and other outside areas. He oversaw and engineered our Gazebo installation, lighted the roof eave edge for Christmas on the Hill 2022, replaced all types of inside light bulbs, painted, was plumber-on-call, Sunday morning greeter, and beverage prep, host, and cleanup for every Sunday morning fellowship time.

Further, as our talented lay leader, Jeff led Vision Ministry leadership meetings, holding most to 2 hours - a major feat. He called and led several Church-wide annual and other meetings, shared amazing computer skills to create a more user-friendly annual report and other documents. Jeff initiated a revolutionary idea in the Vision Ministry. That was to hold small and large group meetings and discussions whose ideas helped mitigate financial issues. He worked with Doug - and recently Bob - to sell a section of our land at the west end of our property. He updated the weekly prayer warrior email blast for 3 years, at the request of the late John Bird, led a weekly Bible study for 2.5 years, again at John's request. Jeff taught me new computer skills so I can now blast by email our weekly bulletins and newsletter.

I respect Jeff's selfless efforts and am immensely grateful and proud of all he accomplished within our church family, our building, and as our capable and courageous lay leader. I wish Jeff Godspeed in his continuing faith journey. I will greatly miss him and his inspiration. He is definitely the most fun-to-work-with person.

Please direct your questions to Jeff personally.

Nest Wynn Jones-Teixeira

As the Acting Moderator of Church on the Hill, it is important that I keep you updated on changes in the lay leadership of our church. I also made this announcement in July. Nest recently resigned her Missions and Community Outreach Team Leader position. She has not withdrawn her church membership. Nest leaves big shoes to fill, due to her guiding our older youth into various ways of doing mission work. She offered several opportunities for our teens and slightly older youth to have hands-on experiences, most recently volunteering for the Saturday morning preparations to help people in our area who are food insecure at Boca Helping Hands.

A few weeks before that, most of the same youth brought the Alex's Lemonade Stand fund-raising event to our church, serving lemonade, special treats that Nest baked, and thereby raised funds for child cancer research. For years COTH has supported this organization after learning more about childhood cancer tumors. We have continued those efforts in memory of the short life of our friend, Randall Rose Garland Grenadier.

(continued pg. 5)

Team Updates

Continued from pg. 4...

Last winter, Nest organized four youth to pull weeds and put down many bags of mulch that Peter and Jeff delivered by pickup truck around our grounds. This activity brought new youth to our church, who continued to be part of our congregation. Nest organized youth to pick of vegetables on a warm Saturday, through CROS (Christians Reaching Out to Society), which in turn donates the produce gleaned to various food banks in Palm Beach County.

In March younger and older youth gathered at the beach to pick up trash and litter. Some had never been to the beach and ocean before, so special memories were made. Nest captured many happy faces in great photos, which were posted in a prior Vantage newsletter. Last February, Nest led COTH to participate in the nationwide Souper Bowl of Caring. Nest invited Boca Helping Hands spokesperson, Bill Harper, to speak during worship about their programs, stay for lunch, and sign up any interested volunteers. Youth made soup, set up tables, served soup, hosted the numerous guests, cleaned up, and broke down the tables and chairs. This was another wonderful opportunity for youth to gather, socialize, and connect with their church-peers.

Nest was excellent at reaching out to the parents of our youth to encourage participation. This is such an important ministry for our youth, and I invite others to please step up to fill this need. A few months before that, Nest was the right hand of our Christmas on the Hill Leader, Leanne, in planning, organizing youth volunteers, and working the event. Nest and Leanne served for about three years together as co-team leaders of the Missions Team.

Nest also engaged with the adults in our congregation who provided the funds to make various mission projects successful, and publicized various ways individuals could get involved in local mission service.

Most of you also recall with joy hearing Nest voluntarily share her beautiful vocal talents during worship services for a number of years.

Over the last couple of months, Nest and her son cleaned up many overgrown plants at the lower entrance to our church. Then they added bags of mulch, several butterfly-friendly plantings, as well as other drought-resistant plantings.

Thank you Nest for all your abilities as a church leader. I personally treasure our enduring friendship as well as your care and dedication.

Missions & Community Outreach

By Nancy Clarke-Fenner, Pack Team Lead

Join The Pack!

Join The Pack is Food For The Poor's annual food packing event in partnership with Feed My Starving Children. **Church on the Hill** plans to send a team again this year. We hope you will join us!

Mark your calendars for October 7th at noon. We will attend the 2nd session, 12 - 2:00 p.m. at Advent Lutheran Church, 300 E. Yamato Rd., in Boca Raton.

COTH's fundraising goal is \$500. If you are unable to join us, please consider sponsoring a team member.

This year, your support will provide essential food and restore hope to those who are suffering from extreme poverty in Honduras. Your hands-on support and generosity will help alleviate their hunger and nourish their spirits!

Register on line at:

<https://champions.foodforthe poor.org/team/520987>.

Thank you!

Questions? I can be reached at: 954-261-4816

Finance Update

by Sarah Hugus

Over the past several months, we have had a shortfall of nearly \$9000 with expenses exceeding income. Income includes Sunday offerings plus fees from outside organizations to use our facilities. Facility use income was less early in the summer, due to the preschool paying over 10-months; in our new 3-year agreement they pay all 12 months, with increased fees now paid up-to-date.

Offerings have declined but the same and sometimes higher expenses continue. We took \$7000 from our savings investment account in July to meet costs. With an additional church potentially providing fees in the near future for using our facilities all week, our operating costs may be manageable. With these possible new funds, we also intend to set aside money for ministries and for those rainy days of AC repairs and other capital needs of our aging infrastructure.

I encourage any of us who have enjoyed recent pay raises, Social Security or pension plan cost of living increases, or fortunate investment growth to prayerfully consider happily sharing a portion or tithe of your good fortune with Church on the Hill.

Giving statements year-to-date for all those who identify their contributions, rather than those who give anonymously, will be mailed to you in September. We can also change our pledged giving amount at any time during the calendar year.

Member & Friend Activities



Above, Georgene, member and accompanist, bids fond farewell to Roddley as he moves to up-state New York to pursue his studies in the medical field of external blood circulation, called Cardiovascular Perfusion. Our best wishes to him!

Members Frances Bell and Eileen Maass have regular visits at John Knox Village where Eileen resides. They say "hi" to everyone.
Photo by friend, Dennis



Blessing the backpacks.



Sarah and Scott Hugus celebrated 43 blissful married years in July - posing at the Ft. Lauderdale courthouse then, and at Yard House now!



Member & Friend Activities

Chris and Tammy in Alaska!



Curious about joining COTH? It is easy!
Talk to Pastor Tom.
Meet with him.
Membership offers additional opportunities within church leadership and decision-making.
Oh, and you get a free name badge.



Thomas Brown and grandson Antonio are enjoying a summer visit. Here they are at Circus World Museum ready to watch the one ring circus presentation at the former winter home of the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Grayce's birthday was well celebrated with her granddaughter, daughter, and a friend.



Sarah and Bob celebrating Nora's birthday. Anyone know which restaurant they were patronizing?



Events & Notes

BCEO

All are invited to eat out, dutch treat, almost every Thursday evening. This group has been active, except during the pandemic, for about 20 years. We all make suggestions and decide where we would like to eat. We try to change up the location to suit everyone.

When YOU would like to attend, please RSVP to Bob Murphy: murphyrobewrtf@gmail.com

Here is the September line-up.

September 7
La Condesa Mexican Restaurant
3320 Airport Road
Boca Raton 33431
561-931-4008
lacondesamexican.com

September 14
Los Olivos Bistro
Argentinian Restaurant
5030 Champions Blvd G8
Boca Raton 33496
561-756-8928
losolivosbistro.com

September 21
The Cuban Cafe
3350 NW Boca Raton Blvd (Plumtree Center)
Boca Raton 33431
561-750-8860
cubancafe.com

September 28
Ichiyami Buffet & Sushi
145 SE Mizner Blvd (Royal Palm Place)
Boca Raton 33432
561-395-7977
ichiyamisushi.com
Bon Appetit!

Book Buzz

Book Buzz participants enjoyed a great discussion of Someone Knows My Name by Lawrence Hill this past month. The discussion was lively. All agreed that this was a fantastic and compelling read.

The next book that we discuss will be The Perfect Predator by Steffanie Strathdee. We will meet on Friday the 8th of September at 11:00. Bobbie has sent a link for a Zoom lecture by the author. If you are interested in attending



that lecture on Zoom, the information is included below.

All Church on the Hill congregants are welcome to join us in reading these books, even if you don't attend the monthly conversations. Enjoy and happy reading! If you have any questions, please contact Thomas at 954-695-7573 or at marrom33@gmail.com.

When: Sept. 22, 2023 12:00 PM Eastern Time
Topic: Stetson Lecture in Technological Advances in Medicine

THE PERFECT PREDATOR—Zoom Webinar
Author: Stephanie Strathdee, Phd

Please click the link below to join the webinar:
<https://uvmcom.zoom.us/j/93360596502>

By phone:
+1 646 876 9923 US
Webinar ID: 933 6059
International numbers available: <https://uvmcom.zoom.us/j/93360596502>

Join The Pack Pack a Meal, Feed a Child Saturday, October 7, 2023

Advent Church

300 E. Yamato Road (FL-794) Boca Raton 33431

Help Spread Hope in Honduras

In Honduras, over half of the population lives below the poverty line, facing challenges such as inadequate food production, high unemployment and vulnerability to natural disasters.

We invite individuals, community groups, churches, businesses and families to take part in a community food-packing event to provide MannaPack rice fortified meals to support vulnerable families in Honduras and spread hope to those most in need.

For additional information, to register or to donate, call 888-404-4248 or visit foodforthe poor.org/jointhepack.

ALSO see page 5 for directions to sign up online, provided by our Join The Pack Team Leader, Nancy Clerk-Fenner.

Events & Notes

Thoughts From My Heart and Mind

by Thomas Brown, Church Clerk

You are the light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden, Matthew 5:14

I'm reading a memoir by a relative of Alcita whose parents were missionaries in Brazil and were a big influence in her life. This man, the missionary couple's son, is not a Christian now and most of his memoir is his telling of the stories of the damage that was done to him by well-meaning evangelical Christian parents and teachers. It is a fascinating peek into the life of someone who didn't hear The Good News when his pastor father and other religious teachers told him he was going to hell because he was doubting that Christianity was a "true religion."

I recalled a comment by one of our members that our two most likely populations for attendance and ministry were recovering evangelicals and folks harmed by intolerance because of their beliefs, gender or sexual preference. I think I speak for everyone in this church when I celebrate the openness that informs our desire to reach out to all those who have been spiritually pushed around.

Matthew's words seem fitting and carry the heart of my thinking. Church on the Hill has a special ministry to our community. It may, in fact, be unique. I also believe that, as Matthew continues to point out, when one carries a light that can shed light on some worrisome aspect of the world, it should not be hidden.

I am reminding us all to celebrate the special charisma we have at Church on the Hill. I challenge all of us to think deeply about the people we know and let our light shine by inviting them to Church on the Hill. Furthermore, shine that light through your various social media contacts. Pick one example of how we have ministered well to someone whose church experience was less than welcoming. Share it far and wide. Demonstrate the openness and love that we believe God intends for all of creation. Tell that story as often and as widely as you can.

Shout it from the mountain tops. "COTH will fulfill your spiritual hunger and thirst." Amen

In Sympathy

In Memory of Susan Hepp Moser

Long-time member, Sue Moser, died in Ft. Pierce on July 3, 2023, following a 4-month health decline that included kidney disease. She was surrounded by her loving family: her adult daughter, Debbie, four grown grandsons, and five great-grandchildren. Her daughter, Lisa, preceded her in death.

Sue was born and raised in Cleveland area of Ohio, and moved to Florida in the early 1970's. She served COTH as a Deacon for many years, was an At-Large Council member, and was active in Adult Fellowship and BCEO. Almost 5 years ago Sue moved to Ft. Pierce to be near her family. She kept in touch via Lunch Bunch ZOOM calls that started during the COVID Pandemic. We will miss you, Sue. Sarah H. and husband attended Sue's Celebration of Life service, which was held in Port St. Lucie. Sue's sister from Georgia and brother and nephew from Columbus, Ohio, also attended. Sue always enjoyed traveling to see them and their visits to see her in Florida.

Neighbors in Need Offering – October 1

In 2023, the Neighbors in Need "BEHOLD!" theme continues. This year's focus is on environmental justice. Plastics, electronics, and other non-compostable wastes are being shipped across, and even tossed into, our waterways, launched into space, as well as buried in landfills. As people of faith, we believe these egregious acts are sinful and unholy. We must be better stewards of our planet!



Although we will take up this offering on October 1, checks toward this or any other UCC general mission offering can be gifted at anytime. Just indicate in the memo the special offering your donations is intended to and Sarah will make sure the Florida Conference receives it to forward to the national UCC office.

Information and Reminders

Offering / Donation / Contribution Options

Zelle: mobile pay using our COTH email address:
No Fee!! office@churchofboca.org

Cash: offering plate on Sundays

Check: offering plate on Sundays
OR send via U.S.Mail

Credit/Debit Card: COTH Website:
churchofboca.org
-under the "Give" tab.
-the "Donate" button allows you to give using PayPal and/or Credit/Debit card

PayPal: search for :
Church on the Hill Boca Raton

Bank e-check: send an e-check directly from your bank

Special donations/offerings may also be made using all these methods.

Please indicate in the 'note' field if your donation is for a special offering.

Upper Room Devotionals

These periodicals are released every other month.

September/October is available now!

<https://www.upperroom.org/devotionals>

Prayer Requests

Please contact Pastor Tom with needed prayers.

Text him at 561-306-5208 or email him at

TOMLACEY@CHURCHOFBOCA.ORG or to

COTHPRAYERS@GMAIL.COM

Email Communications

Please let us know if you would like to receive electronic copies of the weekly worship bulletin and Vantage newsletter by sending us a note at office@churchofboca.org

Stay in touch for the latest news/photos!

- **Facebook:** Church on the Hill - Congregational Church of Boca Raton
- **Twitter:** @UCCchurchboca
- **Instagram:** @ChurchontheHill_
- **Website:** www.churchofboca.org

September ANNIVERSARIES

09/28 Eric & Andrea Alter
09/29 Wendy & Jeremy Hinshaw

September BIRTHDAYS

09/01 Eric Alter
09/04 Larry Lacey
09/05 Patty Jourdan
09/07 Winston Christian
09/07 Samantha Martin
09/09 Dean Halsey
09/09 Lynne Holloway
09/09 Brandon Triche
09/17 Maria Collins
09/17 Wendy Harris
09/17 Jack Stetson
09/19 Jeremy Hinshaw
09/20 Naomi Borchers
09/29 Frances Bell
09/30 Kathryn Barlow



PUBLICATION DEADLINES

Vantage Newsletter Deadline

Wednesday September 16 at noon

All articles, pictures, or announcements for the next Vantage are due.

Sunday Bulletin Deadline

Every Wednesday at noon

Sunday Bulletin announcements are due on Wednesday each week.

Email items to:

marrom33@gmail.com



CHURCH ON THE HILL

September 2023

Weekly Calendar of Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>10:00 am Worship Service*</p> <p>Communion (1st Sunday of the month)</p> <p>Elementary Sunday School: Every week</p> <p>Upper School Classes: 2nd and 4th week of month</p> <p>11:15am Sermon Discussion w Pastor</p>	<p>7:30 pm NA</p>	<p>12:00 noon AA</p> <p>6:30 pm AA</p>	<p>12:00 noon Lunch Bunch (In-Person & Zoom)</p> <p>6:30-9 pm FAA</p>	<p>12:00 noon AA</p> <p>5:30 pm/ B.C.E.O.</p> <p>7:00 pm NA</p>	<p>11:00am Book Buzz (1st Friday of the month except for September)</p> <p>12:00 noon AA</p> <p>7:00 pm NA</p>	

Special Events: September 8, Book Buzz @ 11

- ❖ September 10 - Ice Cream Social, following worship - celebrating Grandparents Day!

ONA Covenant Statement

ONA Covenant adopted January 13, 2019
 At Church on the Hill, we affirm that every person has worth as a unique creation made in the image of God. We recognize, value and give thanks for the many diverse gifts of God among us. We believe that through diversity, all can worship together and grow in a faith that transcends our differences. Accordingly, we declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming congregation, inviting and welcoming lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons into the full life and ministry of Church on the Hill, as well as persons of every race, culture, age, ability, gender and economic status.

Sunday School Class Schedule

Watch the weekly bulletins for details

Fall Elementary teachers: Kathy Alvarez & Sarah Hugus (Check the weekly bulletin for dates.)



Church on the Hill

Address: 251 SW 4th Avenue
Boca Raton, Florida 33432

Office Phone: (561) 395-9255
E-mail: office@churchofboca.org
Web site: www.churchofboca.org

Pastor:

Tom Lacey

Cell/work phone: 561-306-5208 email: tomlaceypastor@gmail.com

Acting Church Moderator:

sarahhugus@outlook.com

Prayer Requests:

cothprayers@gmail.com

Sunday Worship Service

In-Person & on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bocaucc/

Staff

TV Monitor & LiveStream Administrator:

Marit Hasmats-Lacey

Accounting Manager / IT Consultant

Markus Asch

Worship Song Leaders:

Guest Musicians

Accompanist:

Georgene Barger

Sexton:

(Jan-Pro Co.)

Volunteers

Office Helpers:

Sarah H, Kathy B, Bob M, Thomas B, Lois F, Dan S,
Hinshaw family, Donna M, Faye F.

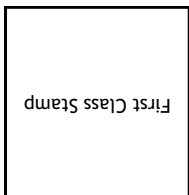
Children's Christian Education Team:

Sunday School Teachers:

Kathy A., Sarah H., Thomas B., Pastor Tom

Property:

Doug B., Bob M.



CHURCH ON THE HILL
251 SW FOURTH AVE
BOCA RATON FL 33432