

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

# VANTAGE

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We are celebrating 27 years with the Lacey's in January.

# January 2024

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# Pastor's Page

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A new year's greetings to you!

It's something to straddle two years. Marking one time and recognizing a new time is something we want to do. If we don't, the downside then is that all days are the same, time and again. We want to put up a marker. We don't want days, experiences, and our lives just to run unceasingly. So, we pause between the prior year and the coming year, internally pause, to take stock, to collect ourselves a bit and then set out once again on another year. At least this is what slightly reflective people do.

I wonder if Jesus did this. Did he do New Year's Resolutions? Did he and the guys get together the first day of the year and share what they hoped to improve on this year? Can you imagine that. Peter starts off with, "Well, I'm going to be a little more relaxed and think before I say things." Everyone nods their heads in approval and appreciation. John and James' turn is next and after some hesitation they tell everyone, "We're going to be less competitive and envious of the rest of you guys. We're going to stop trying to put ourselves first." Finishing with a couple of nervous laughs, everyone else joins in with the brothers on this well-received resolution, laughing along.

Now it's Jesus' turn. What would he have said? "I resolve to send my mom more letters from the road?" Not that this wouldn't have been anything, but I guess he didn't have much on his list for the new year. Must have been nice. We're not Jesus. We've got a couple of minor tweaks we could put into circulation; don't you think?

So, while I can't tell you what that is or those are, what I would like to share with you is something simple. It's this: Whatever is on your mind or in your heart about a new year's resolution, about the results of a bit of reflecting you engaged in and resolutions you may be considering, it's worth it to do it. It's worth it to go for it. To follow your best advice, to listen to what you really want for yourself/others, is the way to go. We should make that happen. We should make it happen because we're right. We know what we're talking about. Our instinct, our hope, our vision for ourselves and what it would mean for another or others is right on. You're spot on. It would change things. It would make a difference. Your life would have a different shape to it and you would go off in a new direction and you would have those things you think are so close to coming to fruition manifest in your life. You would feel much better about yourself. You would be the change you want to see. Whatever it is, it would be worth it.

You know who the better you is that you're hoping to become. She's not a pipe dream or a figment of imagination. He's a promise. She's the potential you. He's the difference you've been seeking, wanting, and needing. Get resolved and get this done—this year!

Pastor Tom



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

# January Teachings

January 7  
Matthew 5:14-16

## Got a Light?

To represent God and goodness you don't have to be tough, you don't have to be bossy, or mean, willing to take people down who are doing wrong. The opposite is true. Don't be a fire hose, be a sprinkler. Let people see your good works. Let them save face. Show them by example rather than demand them to become better. It doesn't really work anyway. The truth is most people already know what they're doing wrong. Our job is to love people. Be a light.

January 14  
Matthew 11:29-30

## Pack Mule Patty

The Lord wants you to ask for help. You need to when you're being buried. The Spirit will try to get you to say it, but you've got to be the one to declare it. Your child's wrong attitude is too much, "God, I need your help." We don't have enough money to continue in our home, "O Lord, I don't think I can handle moving." Your spouse's illness has been going on for too long, "Please, God, give me strength." The Bible says God doesn't give us more than we can handle but it never meant you had to handle all on your own.

January 21  
Matthew 5:1-12

## The Real Deal

If you've ever traveled to another country, you know there can be big differences in language and food. Another big difference is the money. Put their money in your hand and it looks fake. But it isn't. It's real. The sooner you realize this the sooner you'll stop acting like you're playing with monopoly money and waste it. God doesn't always give to us in our customary denomination. The Lord won't limit blessings so they will fit into our shortcomings, ignorance, or misinformation. It's up to us to get our minds in synch with God's. When we do then we can see what God is touching and transforming.

January 28  
Ephesians 1:3-10

## Less Control the Better

So many are no closer to freedom from their sin and consequences of shame than when they first did whatever they believe they're responsible for—and this is true no matter how many Sunday mornings we've spent at church, how long we've asked forgiveness for this or that thought, word, or action, how much we've grown in wisdom and maturity at jobs, at home, or in the community. Self-condemnation and shame are a struggle that endures until we can take hold of God's grace in forgiveness.

# Team Updates

## News from the Vision Ministry

by Sarah Hugus, Acting Church Moderator

### Financial Reports:

In late December we were able to invest \$5000 back into our Fidelity “savings” or investment account. This was due to a generous bequest in the Fall. And the memorial plaque has been received and installed on our monument. Earlier in the year we had to liquidate funds several times to pay our expenses. Having new building use fees from the visiting church has also been a great help since mid-October.

### Report of the 23 pledged gifts received as of December 27, 2023:

% of pledge given and number of households in each category:

Over 100% = 7  
100% = 9  
75-85% = 5  
50% = 1  
0% = 1

A total of 95% of pledges have been received, with the final Sunday of the year still to be tabulated. The amount of funds received is \$56,000 out of \$59,000 pledged, or a shortfall of \$3,000. We have a few days in the year to close this gap. A large part of our expenses are covered by building use fees received.

As of this print date for 2024 pledging, 14 giving units or households have made pledges of financial support in the amount of \$54,000, or about 34% of our last year’s budget needs. Creation of the new 2024 budget has begun. Thank you to all of you who have pledged already. Each member or friend is encouraged to continue to prayerfully consider the opportunity to pledge your support. Your pledge of financial support, as well as sharing time and talents in volunteering, are all crucial to our church. We need to meet our expenses of course. Perhaps more importantly we want to pursue additional ways we can continue being a very special church in our community. Help us do that with your loyal support. Pledge cards are in the Rosser Room year-round.

### Giving for 2023

Your 2023 year-end giving statement were mailed to 80 families, aka “giving units” who identify their COTH contributions. Anonymous

gifts are certainly always appreciated as well.

### Repeated (unsolicited) advice:

*Newsworthy from Fidelity investment company*

“A required minimum distribution (RMD) refers to mandatory withdrawals from qualified retirement plans like traditional IRAs that kick in once a saver reaches age 73. Your first RMD deadline is April 1 in the year after you turn 73. All subsequent RMDs must be taken by December 31. Missing those deadlines can be costly with a 50% penalty on withdrawals not taken.

Note that if you delay your first RMD until April, you'll have to take 2 RMDs in your first year— and pay taxes on them. The first will still have to be taken by April 1; the second, by December 31.”

Check with your accountant, but you should be able to transfer all or part of RMD funds directly as a gift to a charitable organization - such as Church on the Hill - which prevents your being taxed on that income when it is paid directly to you as an individual taxpayer. Sounds like a win-win!

### Survey results

from our 2-questions about the visiting church: About a month ago, Sarah gave to most worshipers a brief opinion survey, about ½ our worshipers answered below.

#### THINGS I LIKE:

The screens make for diverse elements in the service.

The energy the new worshipers bring with them.

The way cool A/V system.

All of the kids running around are great.

The energy and Joy the people share.

Nothing except the increased income.

Their fees are helping COTH’s coffers but their presence is killing COTH.

More smiling, happy Christian faces.

Broader age diversity

The contribution Funds.

The ability to have everything on the screens.

The ability to have all words on screens.

If funds are helping, then all is well.

Joyful energy.

Courteous Brazilians

COTH financial viability

It is wonderful to see so many people looking forward to their service and seeing friends.

I love the energy of more people in the building.

I like meeting new people. The new folks I’ve met are very nice.

# Team Updates

They have not been disappointing or disruptive in my view. All good and positive.

## **THINGS I DISLIKE:**

Too much loud music before their service begins and too loud in COTH coffee area.

The 30 minutes from 11-11:30 needs more coordination so it is not chaos, separate rooms? With the energy they bring the noise is higher. Because COTH is having the new church meet at COTH, we have LOST a number of wonderful people. Did the congregation get to vote on that? We never heard about it.

The altar looks like a rock concert ready to start.

This other church has totally taken over. I don't like their equipment blocking the stained-glass window, their sound system, or their schedule affecting our service.

Too crowded after church; they are rushing us out; should have at least 30 minutes after to get together.

Mostly they take up our fellowship area chairs and are loud. They are disrespectful when I go home and can't leave my parking space because they are standing talking in the parking lot.

I feel rushed to leave.

Need to be willing to clean up their own mess.

I know the "big screens and drums" are needed; it seems to take away from COTH service.

There is nothing I dislike about sharing the church.

## **OTHER COMMENTS**

I hope the relationship can continue in a mutually beneficial way.

It is a good part of COTH Ministry.

Maybe start COTH at 9:30 to have more time and not feel rushed out.

I like our relationship. They have added positive vibes.

I will be going to another church.

Nix the words on that obtrusive big screen. Why are we singing 2 praise songs? No one knows them!

It seems to be going great.

## **DID YOU KNOW?**

Church on the Hill hosts 8 recovery meetings every week! Let's celebrate this outreach to those in our community who need such a resource.

## **Remember Your 2024 Florida Conference UCC Dues!**

Church on the Hill is a member of the Florida Conference of the United Church of Christ. Yearly dues are \$15.00 per person in your family who is a member of this church through joining or Confirmation. Our church must pay this amount for all members, so your contribution will definitely help keep our budget on track.

## **Deacon Update**

Bob Murphy, Team Lead with Rocky assisting Mark your calendars - This is an invitation from the Deacon Team for a Progressive Dinner on Sunday, January 28. We'll enjoy appetizers and salad hosted by Lois in Pompano Beach, main courses in COTH's Fellowship Hall, and desserts hosted by Faye at St Andrews Estates in Boca. The festivities will begin at 5:00 P.M. See sign up sheets in the Rosser Room for attendance and food donations.

Bob

## **Publicity and Promotions Update**

Jerry Clinton, Team Lead

I hope everyone has had the chance to visit our newly "renovated" website. If not, stop by and check it out at [www.churchofboc.org](http://www.churchofboc.org). To keep it fresh and current, we want to regularly update our content. The Church would welcome anyone with video editing and/or web design experience to volunteer some time for a worthy cause. Contact Jerry Clinton at [jerryclinton1@gmail.com](mailto:jerryclinton1@gmail.com).

## **Member Care Update**

Jeannie Clinton, Team Lead

The Member Care Committee has been busy calling and sending notes to Church on the Hill members who may be in need of prayers, a visit, a ride to church, or just a friendly check-in. She also writes to our visitors. If you or someone you know needs help from the Member Care Committee, please contact Jeannie Clinton at 561-901-5935 or [jeannieclinton1@gmail.com](mailto:jeannieclinton1@gmail.com).



a just  
world  
for all  
[ucc.org](http://ucc.org)

# 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: 610-996-7827 or [murphyrobertf@gmail.com](mailto:murphyrobertf@gmail.com)

Here is the January line-up

January 4

Casimir French Bistro 416 Via De Palmas (In Royal Palm Place) Boca Raton 561-955-6001

[www.casimирbistro.com](http://www.casimирbistro.com)

January 11

J. Mark's Restaurant 1490 NE 23rd Street (Pompano Citi Centre) Pompano Beach 954-782-7000

[www.jmarksrestaurant.com](http://www.jmarksrestaurant.com)

January 18

Luigi di Roma Italian Restaurant 718 S. Federal Highway Deerfield Beach 954-531-6151

[www.luigidiroma.com](http://www.luigidiroma.com)

January 25

Fish Shack Seafood Restaurant 2460 N Federal Highway (Beacon Light Shopping Mall) Lighthouse Point 954-586-4105

[www.fishshacklhp.com](http://www.fishshacklhp.com)

**Bom Appetite!**



## Equal Exchange Fund Raiser

Thomas Brown has been selling coffee and chocolate as a fundraiser for the church. He will be ordering olive oil from Palestine. It was a hit in December. Perhaps you've wanted more information about this organization. Here is their mission statement.

Equal Exchange's mission is to build long-term trade partnerships that are economically just and environmentally sound, to foster mutually beneficial relationships between farmers and consumers and to demonstrate, through our success, the contribution of worker co-operatives and Fair Trade to a more equitable, democratic and sustainable world.

For more information go to:

<https://shop.equalexchange.coop> or talk to Thomas. He will have coffee and chocolate for sale after Sunday worship.

## Book Buzz

Book Buzz participants enjoyed a great discussion of The Girl With the Louding Voice by Abi Dare. Many of us especially enjoyed her unique voice. We were delighted with this author's first fiction title and hope she writes more!

Here are some of the books recommended by the Book Buzz members in attendance.

The Dictionary of Lost Words by Pip Williams

The Vaster Wilds by Lauren Groef

A Year of Biblical Womanhood by Rachel Held Evans

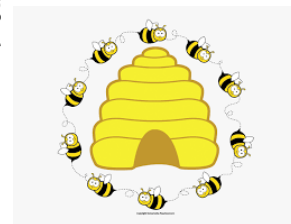
Revelation by Mary Sharratt

The Covenant of Water by Abraham Vergazy

Permacrisis: A Plan to Fix A Fractured World by Reid Lidow, Gordon Brown, Mohamed El Erian, Michael Spence

One Small Candle: The Pilgrims' First Year in America by Thomas Fleming

The next book that we discuss will be: The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Society by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows. We will meet on Friday the 5th of January at 11:00. Thomas Brown will convene the group. All Church on the Hill members & friends 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 book suggestions or any questions, please contact Thomas at 954-695-7573 or at: [marrom33@gmail.com](mailto:marrom33@gmail.com).



## Celebrate Florida Newsletter

Want to know what is happening around our Florida Conference and our National UCC? Both have comprehensive web sites, with links to many topics and resources. The "Celebrate Florida" newsletter is very interesting! You can find the link to sign up for the email newsletter on either of the UCC sites.

[uccfla.org](http://uccfla.org) and [ucc.org](http://ucc.org).

## Lenten Study Interest

There have been Lenten Study groups in the past. If you would be interested in a study that includes scriptural reflection and guidance in a form of Christian meditation, please reply to: Thomas B. at [marrom33@gmail.com](mailto:marrom33@gmail.com) or by text to: 954-695-7573. Indicate your best evening. Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday with preferred time.

# Events & Notes



Thomas, Dan and Sarah begin the process of cleaning out the “junk” from our storage area.



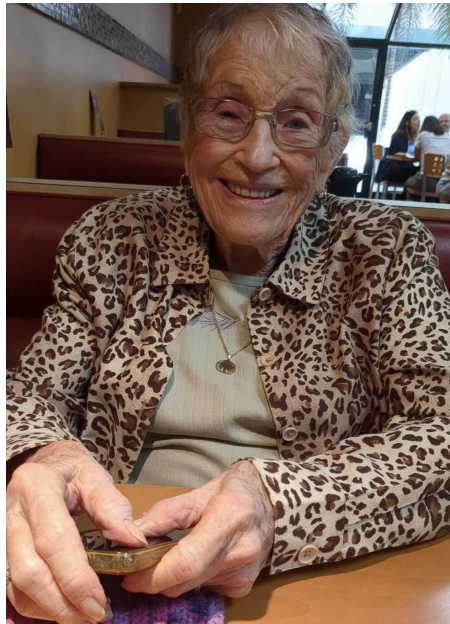
This is our Deacon Team. Thomas, Vic, Sarah, Dan, Bob, Faye, Lois, and, of course, Rocky!



Bob enjoying some fun with his grandkids.



It’s always a fun part of the holidays to welcome home children. Kevin, Jerry, Jeannie and Li Clinton family represent this in style.



Grayce out with her daughter for a holiday lunch.

# Events & Notes



We celebrated our first worship of the New Year in style.



Special thanks to Marit for the photos of our New Year's celebration.





# Events & Notes



Christmas Eve at COTH



Thanks to Grace and Kathy Alvarez for greening help.



Majority of the loyal post-worship discussion group. Not pictured: Pastor Tom Lacey, who took our picture.

## Call for Articles

Every month there is space for other material in this publication. I would like to invite members and friends of Church on the Hill to send me article links, your own creations, events that you believe would be of interest to all, and any other informative and/or entertaining material to make this publication more appealing to our readers.

Please reply to: [marrom33@gmail.com](mailto:marrom33@gmail.com) with your ideas and/or material. Your attention to this appeal is greatly appreciated.

Thomas Brown, Vantage acting editor

# Information and Reminders

## Offering / Donation / Contribution Options

Zelle: mobile pay using our COTH email  
*No Fee!!* address:  
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 2024

These periodicals are released every other month.  
January/February 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](http://www.churchofboca.org)  
(Same address; new look and content plus  
many of the usual items still available.)

## JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

01/30 Jeannie and Jerry Clinton

## JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

01/01 Daisy Bingham 102

01/01 Kenderlly Previlus

01/02 Gemma Holland

01/03 Scott Hugus

01/07 Eileen Maass

01/09 Gina Denney

01/09 Julie Savino

01/16 Dan Smith

01/23 Darlene Holland

01/25 Nancy Rance

01/27 Julia Guilfu



## Special Events:

- ❖ January 28 - 5:00 P.M. Progressive Dinner

## PUBLICATION DEADLINES

### Vantage Newsletter Deadline

Wednesday January 15th 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](mailto:marrom33@gmail.com)



# CHURCH ON THE HILL

## November 2023

### Weekly Calendar of Events

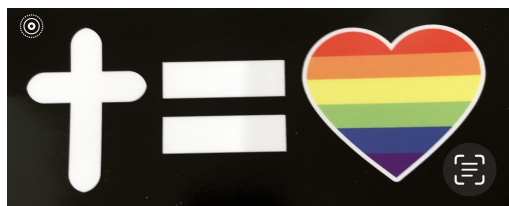
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
10:00 am Worship Service*  Communion (1st Sunday of the month)  11:15am Sermon Discussion w Pastor	7:30 pm NA	12:00 noon AA  6:30 pm AA	6:30 pm FA	12:00 noon AA  5:30 pm/ B.C.E.O.  7:00 pm NA	11:00am Book Buzz (2nd Friday of the month)  12:00 noon AA  7:00 pm NA	

#### 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.



#### The Moderator is here for YOU!

Any and all questions regarding the church inner workings, services, happenings, volunteering, concerns, praises, etc... can be directed to the Acting Church Moderator at: sarahhugus@aol.com

#### Boca Helping Hands receives your donations

Over the past several months, our worshipers have donated many pounds of food to help local residents. Thank you to all who regularly help with this ministry and mission work.



# 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

**Church Moderator:**

cothmoderator@gmail.com

**Prayer Requests:**

cothprayers@gmail.com

**Sunday Worship Service**

In-Person & on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/bocaucc/](http://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:**

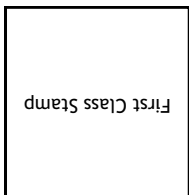
(Jan-Pro Co.)

***Volunteers***

Sarah H, Kathy B, Bob M, Thomas B, Lois F, Dan S,  
Faye F., The Hinshaws, Barbara & Larry L.

**Property:**

Bob Murphy



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