

Despite my grandpa being an only child and an accountant (Yes, my grandmother let him know that all the time), he never met a stranger, knew people's stories by truly listening, talking, and really getting to know them. Additionally, grandpa loved to joke around and enjoyed watching magic shows. Well, I recall one evening when I was still in seminary arriving back late to notice my grandma half asleep on the bed and grandpa on the edge of the bed with his eyes wide-open saying "Zach, this famous magician is going to do one of the greatest magic tricks ever!" I was quite happy to put down my systematic theology book and comparative world religion book to have our eyes glued to the television for the next hour watching the "Statue of Liberty" disappear by the famous David Copperfield. In fact, grandpa and I watched this known television magician do what seemed like the impossible at other times such as fly across the Grand Canyon, walked through the Great Wall of China, and much more. And, yes, eventually I had to get up and remember it was an illusion as this would not fit quite well in anyone's systematic theology or fly with any professor.



A pure JOY to have young children in worship and actively participating in the church!

As much as I have cherished memories drinking root beer floats watching these illusions, we do ourselves a great disservice when these creep into our lives. Instead, it's important to see things as they truly are. And perhaps the primary illusion in our lives is that we go most weeks telling everyone from the grocery stores to even in the church "I'm just fine." As we begin the season of Lent around the corner, it's an invitation to say at times "we are not fine" and it's quite okay. Lent reminds us to put away the multiple illusions we trick our brains to thinking we are just dandy even though we might be going through a tough season or feel broken inside. Thomas Merton, Henri Nouwen, and other spiritual giants might claim this is the false self. The False Self has to be exposed in order to die. Subsequently, it's our True Self that can believe Jesus who said "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25-26). Got to love that Jesus goes on to say to the woman and to all of us "Do you believe this?" Lent can be transformative when we do! Indeed, we need a Savior. We might not be okay, but God's got this!

While it's healthy to be honest admitting that at times we are *not okay* or as the former 6'5 and 300 pound Rosey Grier's song: "It's All Right to Cry", we also have the responsibility to take care of ourselves, including our bodies. In fact, Apostle Paul says our bodies are like a temple where God's Spirit resides (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). With that said, Life-Line Screening will be using our fellowship hall on Ash Wednesday, February 18, for their clinic. Feel free to take advantage of this screening event, and you can find out more by visiting their website.

Life-Line Screening is the nation's leader in Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk Screenings. Trusted by over 10 million customers. Screenings are simple and painless. Get peace of mind or early detection. Who should attend: Anyone over the age of 40. Special Member Pricing for \$159. Carotid Artery Disease Screening, Atrial Fibrillation Screening, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening, Peripheral Artery Disease Screening, Plus a FREE Hypertension Screening. 4 ways to book your appointment: Call 888-814-0466 and use promo code HSCA001, Visit LLSA.SOCIAL/HSCA, Scan here, Text the word "circle" to 216-279-1607. These tests cannot detect all risk factors for all conditions, such as and including the presence of coronary artery disease. Those with abnormal results should discuss possible next steps with their family healthcare provider and ensure they

You're invited to a Life Line Screening event!

Fort Myers Christian Church
5916 Winkler Road, Fort Myers, FL 33919
Wednesday, February 18, 2026

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Trusted by over 10 million customers.

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- Atrial Fibrillation Screening
- Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening
- Peripheral Artery Disease Screening
- Plus a FREE Hypertension Screening

4 ways to book your appointment:

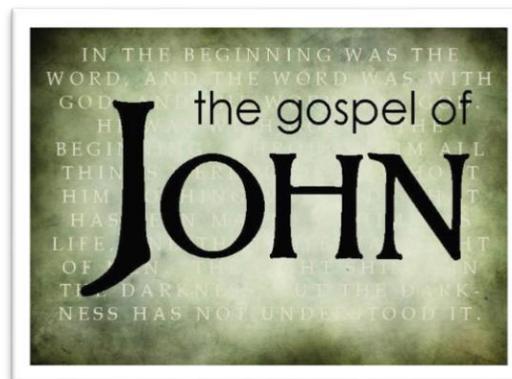
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Recent Prayer Request

(The "FMCC Cross Connection" email contains the ongoing prayer list)

Rev. John Vickers, surgery on fracture leg, Church Family
(update) John Burns, redid foot surgery this past Friday Jan.30, Mary Burns (husband)
Rev. Dr. Jim Carpenter, recovering from a fall, Church Family
Lori, cancer has returned, Doreen (friend)
John Blasi Sr., sciatica back pain, Church Family
Pauline Levine, recovering from bronchiolitis, Church Family
Rev. John Miles, broken hip surgery, (clergy friend from Brookdale Independent Living)
(update) Barbara Synder, rehab from broken hip in LaBelle, Church Family
Ric Lameck, is not doing well, Judy Hesse (brother)
Stacy, recovering well from broken hip, Dean (friend's daughter)
Donald Hamilton, foot amputated, Linda Lee (cousin)
Bill, major procedure Feb.2, Rev. John Vickers (son-in-law)
Steve Larson, in the death of his mom, Charlotte Larson , Church Family
(update) Megan Beaty, continue prayers after her recent brain surgery, Leon Beaty (granddaughter)
Joyce Turney, prayers of recovery, Church Family
(update) Mary Rubin, praise she is back home from the hospital from pneumonia, Church Family
Bill Garlow, back procedure scheduled for Feb. 5, Church Family
(update) Maggie Johnston, praise God Maggie is in remission from lymphoma, Betty Johnston (daughter-in-law)
Roy McClory, had tumor removed from head, Ingee Stuart. (son-in-law)
Sue Fink, MS causing more complications, Church Family
Baby Lilli, baby born very premature, Shirley Fizer (Friend's granddaughter)
Phi Bodner, 43 years-old with a massive stroke, Michael and Pauline Levin (dear friend)
Katie, Dean Brown (friend)
Vicki Iorio, COPD, Church Family
Pam Johnson, hip pain, Church Family



Upcoming Lenten Study

Rev. Ed Bodanske will be leading a 6-week Bible study on Mondays, from 10-11:30am. Bring a Bible and join us beginning on February 23.



Sunday, January 25, FMCC's Four Linda Quartet:
Linda Garlow, Linda Schneider, Linda Widmen, and Linda Lee

February Birthdays & Anniversaries

(Name Missing? Email the office.)

Linda Schneider	4 th
Bill and Linda Garlow	11 th
Rev. John Vickers	12 th
John Davidson	18 th
Judy Hesse	25 th
Lynne Morgan	27 th
Diane Bodanske	28 th

Mark it Down!

Daughters of the American Revolution Ceremony and Potluck
Sunday, Feb. 15

Ash Wednesday
Come and Go Ashes from 8-10am & 4-6:30pm

February Board Meeting
Sunday, Feb.22

Outreach Corner

Since the Christmas play was not only a successful and fun, we will begin working on another play during Holy Week composed of both children and adults. This week take place on Maundy Thursday. During Sunday School the children are learning the Books of the Bible each week. -Linda Lee