

April 16, 2024



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*Love God. Love People. Make Disciples of Jesus Christ.*

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## Weekly News

(Be sure to scroll all the way down.)

### The Wright Stuff



#### Mixed Emotions

*My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)*

On Sunday Terry Neeley, chair of Staff Parish Relations committee, announced that Pastor Woody will become the new senior pastor of Manatee United Methodist Church and Rev. Brett DeHart will become the new senior pastor of First United Methodist Church, Sarasota, on July 1. People left the sanctuary and chapel, expressing their sorrow at Pastor Woody's and my leaving. People were also excited about Rev. DeHart's coming to lead FUMC. They were happy for Pastor Woody that he will lead his own church and for me that I get to retire, but they will miss us both.

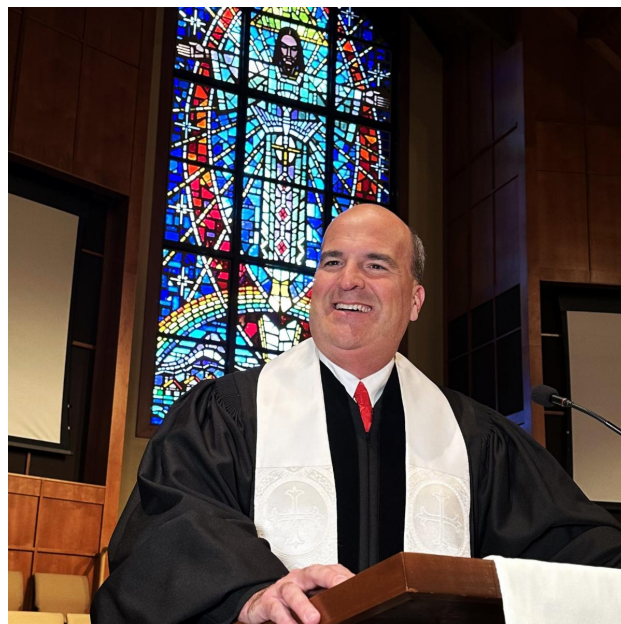
I have those same mixed emotions. I am sad to leave. I will miss everyone. However, I am excited and joyful about Rev. DeHart coming to FUMC. Although it may feel uncomfortable and strange, we can simultaneously feel sadness and joy.

James encouraged Christians experiencing sorrow, fear, and pain to move toward joy. He prompted them to reframe their losses as producing endurance in them—to be joyful by looking at the long term.

I would encourage us all to move toward joy and to focus on the positive prospect of having someone with Rev. DeHart's gifts, experiences, and accomplishments coming to lead this congregation. May God move us from sorrow to joy over what God is doing among us.

Dr. Sam

## **New Senior Pastor at First UMC Arrives July 1**



**Rev. Brett DeHart**

Terry Neeley, chair of Staff Parish Relations Committee, announced Sunday that Rev. Brett DeHart will be the new senior pastor of First United Methodist Church, Sarasota, as Dr. Sam Wright retires. The son of two Floridians and a graduate of Florida State University, Rev. DeHart is thrilled to return to Florida to serve FUMC starting July 1.

He has been a pastor in the North Georgia Conference for 21 years and a national leader in Fresh Expressions. Churches he has pastored have successfully launched and sustained Messy Church, Recovery Church, and Dinner Church. Rev. DeHart was recognized with the Harry Denman Evangelism Award in 2023.

Before entering the ministry, he was a sportscaster for six years and in business for ten years. He has a Bachelor of Science in Communications and a Master of Divinity from Emory's Candler School of Theology.

Brett and wife Cindy (sweethearts since high school) have been married for 32 years and have two children in their 20s, Samantha (clinical dietician) and Spencer (pilot).

Pray for a smooth transition as Rev. DeHart begins his journey as FUMC's senior pastor.

Click [HERE](#) for a video message from Rev. DeHart

## Pastor Woody Appointed to Bradenton Church

Also announced on Sunday was that starting July 1 Pastor Woody Woodward has been appointed as senior pastor of Manatee LIFE Church (a United Methodist Church) in Bradenton. Pastor Woody began as Assistant Pastor for Outreach at FUMC, Sarasota, in 2019, not long before COVID made outreach moot. He was appointed Associate Pastor in 2022.

As he prepares for his new role, he needs volunteers to take over the **Ukrainian Support** activities, **GriefShare**, and the new partnership with **Gocio Elementary School**. In addition, his wife Dee needs someone to take photographs at services and special events for FUMC's Facebook page. Those interested in any of these can contact Pastor Woody at [wwoodward@firstsrq.com](mailto:wwoodward@firstsrq.com).

## Kids' Earth Day Celebration This Sunday!

**EARTH DAY**  
**SUNDAY APRIL 21**  
**10:45 AM - NOON**  
in Youth Hall!

**Kids Celebration!**

**CREATION STORY • EARTH DAY GAMES & REFRESHMENTS PLUS GIFTS!**

**WEAR GREEN OR BLUE!**

104 S. Pineapple Ave. Sarasota  
For more info call Yvonne (941) 955-0935

FIRST United Methodist CHURCH of Sarasota

Invite Friends!

**Sunday, April 21 ~ 10:45 a.m. - Noon**  
Youth Hall

Wear **GREEN** or **BLUE** and Invite Your Friends!  
For more info call Yvonne at 941-955-0935.

## Photos Needed to Help Us Honor Mothers



We would like to feature you and your mother in a slideshow with beautiful music during our worship services on Mother's Day, May 12. **Send your photo by Tuesday, May 7, to [techcoord@firstsrq.com](mailto:techcoord@firstsrq.com).** We will do the same for June 16 Father's Day if you would like to send a photo of you and your father at the same time.

### Music Fine Arts ~ Piano Dedication Concert

The April 26 and 27 Piano Dedication has been postponed to a summer date. We will announce that soon.

### Upcoming Sunday Events

#### April 21 – Children's Home Sunday

Rev. Brian Carr, Florida UM Children's Home, will give the message.

#### May 12 – Mother's Day

Celebrate in the Narthex with Refreshments by Joy. Early Care Center Song Squad will sing at 11 a.m. service. Children's Moment, Baptism.

#### May 19 – PENTECOST SUNDAY

All invited to wear RED as we celebrate the birth of the church.  
Baptism.

### General Conference to Convene April 23 - May 3



# General Conference FAQ



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

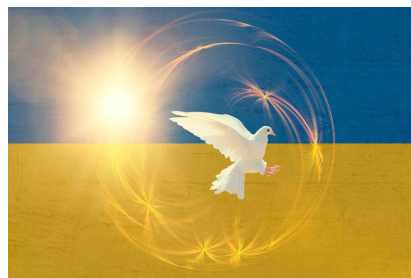
The General Conference of the United Methodist Church brings together lay and clergy delegates from four continents whose decisions will affect how millions of United Methodists do church for years to come. Because of the pandemic, the last General Conference was 8 years ago and much has happened since then, including the disaffiliation of almost a quarter of UM churches due to concerns over what might be decided at this conference.

**To learn more about what this is and why it affects our own local church as well as United Methodist churches around the world, click [HERE](#).**

## Upper Room Devotional Guides Available

The UPPER ROOM Daily Devotional Guide for May-June is available at the Entrance Tables on Sundays. If you would like one mailed to you, contact the church office (941-955-0935; [office@firstsrq.com](mailto:office@firstsrq.com)).

## Mission Moments



### Ukrainian Support Group

Saturday afternoon gatherings where Ukrainian immigrants and refugees learn English and the skills needed for life in the United States and the southwest Florida area. Volunteers tutor at many grade levels and speak on various topics. We also help with needs of new arrivals and occasional cultural events. This is all coordinated through [NicerFl.org](http://NicerFl.org).

## Memorial Services



### **Dave Tucker**

Saturday, May 4 ~ 1 p.m.  
Sanctuary

### **Ken Vallrugo**

Friday, May 17 ~ 10 a.m.  
Sanctuary

First United Methodist Church | 104 S. Pineapple Avenue, Sarasota, FL 34236

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