



## First United Church of Christ, Orlando

PO Box 720625, Orlando 32872-0625

firstuccorlando@gmail.com

Rev. Lynn Blevins 740-815-2329

August 1, 2022

### “The Heart of the Matter”

#### A Message from Rev. Lynn Blevins



Yesterday’s gospel lesson was a parable told in Luke 12:13-21. It is the familiar story of the “rich fool”. The main character is a wealthy landowner who has experienced an abundant harvest. His inclination is to hoard this grain but his barns are not adequate to store the bumper crop. So, he decides to tear down those barns and build bigger ones. It doesn’t matter that those barns are well-built and have served him well. They’re not big enough and they have to

be replaced with something bigger. Throughout the story, he thinks only of himself and his possessions. When it comes time to consult on the matter of the proposed new building project, he consults only with himself. It is obvious that the man’s treasure lies in his amassing more, more, more. The more he has, the more he wants. He is addicted to wealth. Greed has overtaken his life. His heart has been beset by the original sin of self-centeredness.

Parables are meant to make a point and the details may seem far-fetched. Could someone really be that greedy? Would someone really knock down perfectly sturdy barns just to build new ones to store more stuff? Yes, they would and people do this every day, although we probably don’t personally know anyone who would do this. Yet, it makes us think.

In our own ways, in our own lives, we make choices every day that challenge us to consider where our own treasure lies - what we should be thankful for and to whom should we be thankful... The man in the story saw only himself - as if he singlehandedly produced those crops and built those barns. He even thought that he had control over his soul – that is until God intervened and reminded him that he would die that night and he wasn’t going to take all those possessions with him. They would be left to his family members who were probably just as greedy as he was. That’s the example he had set for them. His legacy was greed.

The story reminds us that all those possessions were “earthly” and could be lost and what would we be left with? As I write this, news of the flood in Kentucky is being reported. It’s a stark reminder that earthly possessions are just that: earthly. There’s nothing wrong with possessions and even with wealth – but becoming too attached to these things can lead to a meaningless and empty life. 1 Timothy 6:10 is often misquoted as “money is the root of all evil” when the accurate quote is, “the love of money is the root of all evil”. Money (and the power it brings) can too easily become an idol.

We are not nearly as self-centered as the man in the story. But it is good to review our preferences and priorities and see if any need to be directed more fully toward God and following the teachings of Jesus. Jesus presents these teachings and then expects us to ponder them and look deeply into our own hearts.

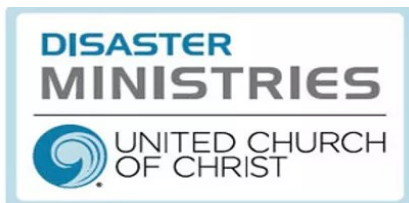
One thing that we can consider is not so much our financial generosity but our spiritual generosity. Do we have generosity of spirit? Are we willing to go the second mile with our fellow human beings – to put ourselves in the shoes of others? Do we treat others as we would like to be treated?

## **“The Heart of the Matter”**

Sometimes we are weighed down by our own challenges and this make us appear to be judgmental and resentful. Sometimes our words and actions do not project a spirit of gentleness and a willingness to “bear with” one another. It’s so easy to become distracted by the storms of life – not always literal weather occurrences, but those life storms that creep into our days. These life storms can begin with financial worries, health scares and family disfunction – those things that afflict us as humans. Then we take this frustration out on those around us by being resentful and judgmental – ungracious – even self-centered.

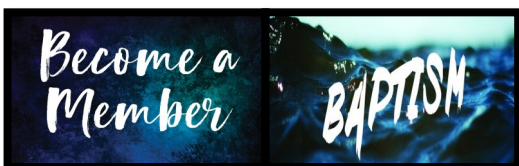
That which is unailing – that which is permanent – is first of all the love and providence of God which is the foundation of who we are and what we have. Loving God is the first and greatest commandment according to Jesus. And when we follow that one, we are led to the second which is like it, loving neighbor (see Matt. 24:34-40). As Luke 12 continues, Jesus points out that God watches over the creation – the birds and flowers. Therefore, it follows that God watches over humanity with the same care.

When we consider this great gift – this reality – in our lives, it reminds us to be thankful. It reminds us to give credit where credit is due and that is to God. The heart of the matter is just that: heart. When God looks into our hearts, what does God see?



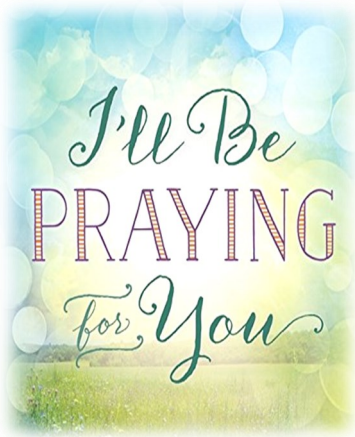
### **Communion Sunday offering in August will go to UCC Disaster Ministries Fund**

We provide assistance in natural disasters through financial assistance and, more importantly, with volunteers who assist to facilitate rebuilding efforts. The ministry provides financial assistance through participation in the work of the long-term recovery committees that exist at the county level.



### **Ready for the next step?**

**Please give Pastor Lynn a call if you are interested. 740-815-2329**



*Join us on Sundays,  
as we lift prayers up during worship.*

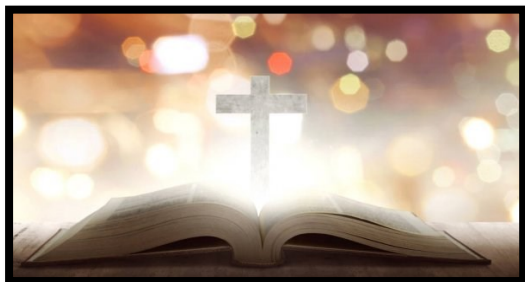
**Would you like a prayer for yourself, or for someone else,  
or maybe for some place or issue in the world?**

**If so, please submit your requests via our website at  
[firstuccorlando.org](http://firstuccorlando.org) or email to [firstuccorlando@gmail.com](mailto:firstuccorlando@gmail.com).**

*We thank you all for your continued prayers for:*

**Bernie, Rich, Marliss, Edna, Memory of Jim, Trudi, Jodi, John, Rose,  
Clara & Charlotte & Family, Pat Coles, Luis, Bonnie, Michele, Claudia, Lee, Patti,  
Bryan, Dorothy, Carlos & Nita, Jackie & Family, Miss Esther, Lorene & Family,  
Archer Family, Shirley, Jean, Quincee, Robert, Marie, Iris, April, Prestine, Tanya,  
Carl, Dolores & Family, Shani, Tammie, Alan, Hannah, Karmen, Seth, Naomi,  
Tito, Freddie, Louann, Ron, Joe, People affected by War, Fire, and Floods.**

*Prayer*  
♥ *Changes things*  
*Let us pray for you with Faith*  
*Believing*  
**HE WILL LIFT YOU UP**



**Join us this week for Bible Study  
Wednesday, August 3 at 6pm  
Ephesians 4**

# Support First UCC's Community Outreach Ministries!



## REBECCA'S PANTRY

Tuesday 9:30am - 11:30am

### Items Especially Needed:

Peanut Butter, Soup, Veggies  
(no corn), & plastic bags



### Items Especially Needed:

Pots & Pans, Baking Pans, Dishes,  
Silverware, Small Appliances  
(good working condition)

The clothing area will once again be receiving  
your donations of gently used, clean,  
stain-free clothing.



Wednesday 10am - 1pm



### Volunteers needed for Sunday Worship

Maybe you are interested in lighting the candle  
at the beginning of worship, or reading scripture  
for us, maybe your talent is in greeting or helping  
to usher for the service. We would love to have  
you participate. Please see the sign up sheet  
on the table in the Quiet Room.

**OPT OUT:** If you wish to no longer  
receive Monday Musings please email  
the church at [firstuccorlando@gmail.com](mailto:firstuccorlando@gmail.com).

## ATTENDANCE

7/31/22 — 18