



336 South Halifax Drive
 386-677-3581 • firstunited.org
 @firstumcormond

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In our faith journey, we often seek ways to draw closer to God and deepen our spiritual connection. The sermon series

through October, "There's an App for That," looks at deepening our spiritual connection through spiritual disciplines. These intentional habits can transform our lives and bring us closer to the heart of God.

What are Spiritual Disciplines?

Spiritual disciplines are practices and habits that help us align our lives with God's will, enabling us to grow spiritually and draw nearer to Him. They are not mere routines but deliberate acts of devotion that require intentionality and commitment. Just as physical exercises strengthen our bodies, spiritual disciplines strengthen our souls.

There are many spiritual disciplines, but here are the basic ones we will cover:

- **Prayer:** Prayer is our direct line of communication with God. Through regular and earnest prayer, we can deepen our relationship with Him, seek His guidance, and find solace in His presence.
- **Bible Study:** The Bible is God's Word, a source of wisdom, comfort, and guidance. Regularly studying Scripture helps us understand God's will and His character.

- **Fasting** is intentionally abstaining from food or certain activities for a specified period. It helps us focus on God, enhances our self-discipline, and often leads to spiritual breakthroughs.
- **Worship:** Corporate and personal worship allow us to express our love and adoration for God. It also reminds us of His greatness and our dependence on Him.
- **Meditation:** Meditation involves reflecting on God's Word and His works. It deepens our understanding of His truths and fosters a spirit of gratitude.
- **Service:** Serving others in love, whether through acts of kindness, volunteering, or other forms of service, reflects Christ's love in our lives.
- **Silence and Solitude:** In our busy lives, being still and listening for God's voice is essential. It can provide clarity, peace, and a renewed sense of purpose.
- **Community:** Sharing our faith journey with other believers in a supportive community is vital for encouragement, accountability, and spiritual growth.

In the coming weeks, we'll explore each of these disciplines in more detail and provide practical tips on how to incorporate them into your life. May we all be inspired to embark on this journey of spiritual growth together.

Grace and Peace,
Scott



**Pastor Scott is on a
 Tenth Anniversary Tour**



Rev, Scott Smith is celebrating ten years of service to the First United Methodist Church in Ormond Beach. In the next few weeks, he will be sitting down with 18 different study groups to share his experiences and to provide a vision for the future church. A special Worship Service is scheduled for November 5th to see the early plans for the new construction at this campus.

THANK YOU, SCOTT, FOR ALL YOU ARE DOING FOR OUR CHURCH !



Reading Aloud With Partners

The Gathering Place has been partnering with Westside Elementary School to help students to improve their reading skills. Becky Pittard heads up this program and is seeking more volunteers to help her.

One day a week (or every other week), a volunteer meets with a second or third-grade student at Westside Elementary

School who brings a bag of books with them. For the next 45 minutes, they read together one or more of these books, hoping to help that student to get their read-

ing level up to the class average.

The new reading program is coming at a crucial time. Many students fell behind as the pandemic disrupted their education. Schools today are looking for ways to expedite their learning to catch up before falling further behind. Usually,



this takes individual attention from the teacher, and when you have 20 or 30 students in a classroom, teachers don't have the time to do

this.

This program, provides one-on-one reading time with a trained adult to help the third-grade students get back to average reading levels.

Third grade is a critical moment for young students, primarily when students transition from learning to read to reading to learn.

Though this program is helping, more volunteers would make a more significant difference. Just imagine how difficult learning is without the ability to read? You can join this group by sending an email to:

beckypittman@gmail.com

Please sign up even though you can't be there every week. Or, you can sign up to be that occasional substitute when one of the regulars



THE EIGHT DECADES CLUB

We are highlighting those wonderful seniors in our church that have reached that young age of 80 or over. Send them a card, or if you see them, wish them a Happy Birthday.

Sep 23—Dottie Black—550 Wilmette St #112, Ormond Beach FL 32174

Sep 23—Joan Kelly—89 S Atlantic Ave, Apt 1004, Ormond Beach FL 32176

Sep 26—Gil Ward—1212 Regents St, Ormond Beach FL 32174-0690

Sep 28—Will McLaughlin—200 N Yonge St, Ormond Beach FL 32174

Sep 28—Karol Wunk—27 Gale Ln, Ormond Beach FL 32174-9224-9224

Sep 28—Kay Banner—4119 Osage Ln, Ormond Beach FL 32174-9331

Oct 3—Clay Ott—10 Oak Brook Drive, Ormond Beach FL 32174

Oct 5—JoAnn Stump—403 Ocean Shore Blvd, Ormond Beach FL 32176

Oct 5—Judy Stillion—11 Kings Grant Rd., apt. 202, Holly Hill FL 32117

Oct 12—Dave Trumbauer—1429 Sunningdale Ln, Ormond Beach FL 32174

Oct 12—Toni Strachan—827 Westlake Dr, Ormond Beach FL 32174

Oct 14—Jack Arrants—127 Windward Cir, Ormond Beach FL 32176

Oct 14—Terry Town—202 Bear Foot Trail, Ormond Beach FL 32174

Oct 15—Pat Davis—106 Peninsula Winds Dr, Ormond Beach FL 32176

Oct 15—Martha Timm—23 Linden Falls Dr, Ormond Beach FL 32174

Oct 15—Bill Rohm—3 Sunwood Tri, Ormond Beach FL 32174-4320

Oct 17—Barbara Lewis—1437 N. Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach FL 32118

Oct 21—Frank Johnston, Jr.—1436 Sunningdale Ln, Ormond Beach FL 32174-2494

Oct 26—Jack Bergman—2100 Ocean Shore Blvd Apt 107, Ormond Beach FL 32176-3162

Oct 26—Ruth Westwood—277 Greenbriar Cir, Daytona Beach FL 32114

Oct 27—Barbara Tumbelson—1 John Anderson Dr #610, Ormond Beach FL 32176

Oct 29—Lewis Slaughter—53 N St. Andrews Dr, Ormond Beach FL 32174

If you know of a name that should be on the list, or if a correction is needed, please let Frank Johnston know at :

fjohnston@firstunited.org

Staff Profile . . . Macon Armistead

Gathering Place Worship Leader & Ministry Coordinator

When it comes to passion for music, Macon, the new Worship Leader at The Gathering Place, stands as a prime example. Whether strumming a guitar, composing melodies, or belting out tunes, his life has been a symphony of devotion to the world of music.

If you've had the chance to witness his musical talents, it might have been alongside his wife, Amy, in the heartwarming production of "Hello Dolly" at the Little Theater in New Smyrna Beach. Macon is a versatile artist who can be found center stage, behind the scenes, or even in the director's chair, with his upcoming project directing the musical "9 to 5" at the Little Theater in the coming Spring.

Macon's journey began in northern Alabama, his birthplace and the backdrop for the formative years of his life. Here, he pursued his academic pursuits, earning a Bachelor's degree in Ministry from Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Alabama. But the pursuit of knowledge didn't end there; he continued to move further in ministry by graduating from Duke Seminary with a Master's in Divinity.

Interestingly, it was at Duke Seminary that Macon's life took a wonderful turn as he met his future life partner, Amy. The two tied the knot in 2019, solidifying a partnership ex-



tending into their shared mission at The Gathering Place.

Returning to his college alma mater, Macon accepted the role of Director of the Huntingdon Leadership Academy. This program, designed to help high school and college students discern their ministry calls and faith-based paths in life, aligns perfectly with Macon's own spiritual journey.

Upon relocating to Florida, Macon served as the Associate Pastor of the Coronado Community United Methodist Church in New Smyrna Beach, where his dedication to the community and faith shone brightly.

Excitement fills the air as Macon assumes the role of Worship Leader at The Gathering Place, a position where his love for music and his faith harmoniously converge. Beyond this, he also takes on the role of Ministry Coordinator, reflecting his penchant for organization, systems, and team building. To him, this role feels like a glove that fits perfectly.

In addition to his roles at The Gathering Place, Macon wears the hat of a provisional deacon in the Florida Conference and serves as a spiritual director. These additional roles reflect his unwavering commitment to his faith and the spiritual well-being of those he encounters.

Outside of his professional life, you can often find Macon at the beach, where he unwinds and draws inspiration from the beauty of nature. He is equally at home performing on the local theater stage or directing productions, adding yet another layer to his artistic portfolio. He also plays tennis and tries to see every superhero movie that comes out.

Amidst Florida's frequent thunderstorms, he also takes on the role of comforting his anxious dog, Nora, a shepherd mix.

To get to know him better, Macon responded to the following questions:

What was your favorite trip? I went

to London and Ireland this past May with Amy.

What was the worst trouble you ever got into as a child? I locked the stall door in the school bathroom, crawled out from under it, and then lied to the teacher when she asked if I had done it. My mother worked at the school, and the teacher brought her to the room, and then I definitely couldn't lie.

Who or what influenced you to choose a life of ministry? At age 17, I felt a calling from God to go into ministry. Since then, I have been praying and listening to the Spirit's leading and having steadfast conversations with my family, friends, and mentors. They have helped to shape me into the person I am and support my calling, whatever it may be.



What is your favorite sound? A river or brook in the mountains.

As Macon steps into his new roles at The Gathering Place, it's clear that his life has been a symphony of passion, faith, and music. With his wife, Amy, by his side, this dynamic duo is set to create a harmonious and spiritually enriching experience for their community.



New Bible Study Groups Starting this Fall

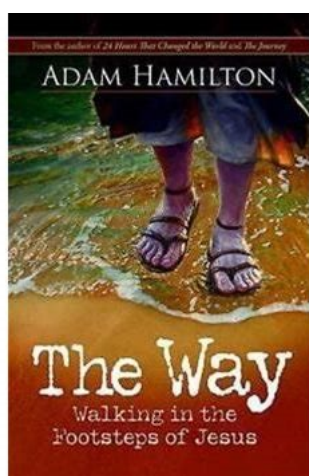
Fresh Start on Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

Come join us every Wednesday at 10 a.m. in Classrooms 1 and 2 as we embark on a journey through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ with a book by United Methodist pastor and author Adam Hamilton.

Our exploration begins with the momentous occasion of Jesus' baptism and his early en-

counters with temptation, leading us to the core of his ministry.

During these sessions, we will delve into the individuals Jesus held dear, the profound parables he shared, the adversaries he encountered, and the remarkable healing he bestowed upon others.



Throughout our study, we'll investigate a wealth of historical insights, archaeological findings, and faith narratives that provide valuable context for comprehending the incredible journey of His life.

There are many more Bible studies available to you. Just visit the church website and look under Next Steps for a full listing of these groups.

Zoom Bible Study on Mondays at 7 p.m.

Are you considering joining a Bible Study? This one on the Book of Romans might be a good one to try out.

You will find that participating in a Bible Study is a terrific way to get closer to Christ and benefit from the experience and knowledge of others in the group.

Even if you've never opened the Bible to study it, God needs you to be in this group.

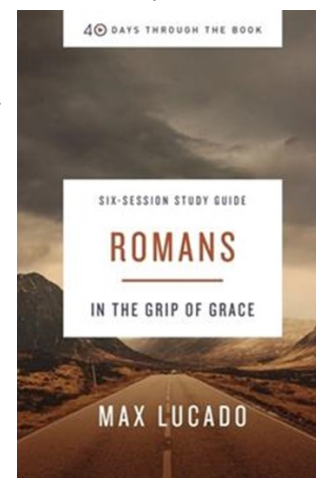
It will be on Monday nights from 7 to 8:30 p.m., on Zoom, for 6 to 8 weeks. A Zoom account is free, and we can help you set it up.

It will start on September 25th but you can join in anytime. You can even be in the Colorado mountains, relaxing with a hot cup of cocoa, and participate just as well as someone in Ormond Beach.

The author, Max Lucado, boasts a rich history of writing numerous books and Bible studies over the past 40 years.

The core idea of Romans is that we are saved from sin by the grace of Christ. The apostle Paul unpacks the power of grace in a way that can completely change your life. When we truly understand the power of grace, it sets us free from having to do good, so that we can do good.

All you will need is a Bible. A study guide is available from Amazon for about \$14 if you are interested. If you sign up, I will send you a copy of the first chapter of this guide. Contact me, Will McLaughlin, at willmcla@gmail.com or cellphone 321/314-4317.



Scott Smith, Senior Pastor

First United Methodist Church
336 S Halifax Drive
Ormond Beach FL 32176

Phone 386/677-3581

firstunited.org

We need your help in providing suggestions for our newsletter. We will be publishing it each month and we need your help in writing articles and news stories. Contact Will McLaughlin, <willmcla@gmail.com>