



Covenant Presbyterian Church
2439 McGregor Blvd.
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Together We Grow: Community Garden Update

The field has been cleared of major debris, thanks to the work of many! Our next follow up clearing in our “field of dreams” (much lighter work, by the way) will be Saturday, Dec. 2nd, 9-12. Please join us! Planting begins in 2018!!!



The Clarion

December 2017

The Newsletter of Covenant Presbyterian Church

Greetings,

For the season I would like you to ponder a couple of the traditional Isaiah passages that are hallmarks of our Advent observation.

The first is Isaiah 9:2-7. You know it well. It begins with the words: *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined... For the yoke of their burden and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian...* (look it up and keep reading).

The second is Isaiah 61:1-11. You also know this one. Jesus repeated it in the synagogue at the beginning of his public ministry: *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn...* (ditto).

For us, even while these are inspiring words and we can imagine the impact this would have for people in bondage, too often the immediacy of such words is far removed from our personal experience. When I go to Palestine and try to plant olive trees for Palestinians on their own land, getting harassed by extremist Israeli settlers or thrown off the fields by Israeli military with fierce-looking firepower in hand, in addition to other troubling experiences we have, I get a feeling for these passages. But yet again, the experience is a world away and you have to literally be there and experience these things to relate.

But we do not have to go that far away. Since Ruth became the Peace River Presbytery's Mission Coordinator for Mision Peniel (literally meaning: *The Face of God Mission*) in Immokalee, under the direction of Pastor Miguel Estrada, I have been learning a great deal about the struggles of the migrant workers. I went over and helped following Hurricane Irma, distributing goods in the trailer camps, seeing the conditions in which migrant workers exist. They are living in what I can only describe as “the crappiest trailers I have ever seen” and have to pay up to \$1500 a month (they are charged by the “head”—how many actually live in the trailer) for the privilege--the “underprivilege”, if you ask me. They are

Continued on the next page...

Continued from front page...

also people who are afraid to complain because under present immigration law, it is complicated to be a migrant worker in America. We want them to do the jobs average Americans will not take, and the farmers *need* them or they are out of business, but these migrants keep their mouths shut because stirring the pot by standing up for oneself might get you grabbed by immigration officials. Remember that when Wendy's puts a tomato on your burger or you buy tomatoes in Publix—neither business sees fit to join the fair food coalition, even after being told by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers what's at stake: Human rights.

When you tour the museum at the Coalition office across the street from Mision Peniel, you get an eyeful—you walk through a God-awful history about how migrant workers have been treated (but also the small victories won by the Coalition). You see pictures of the actual cases in which slave labor has existed in Immokalee—with migrant "slaves" shackled and living in the back of semi-tractor trailers. It has really happened as late as 2006. Hopefully it doesn't anymore, but there is no way to tell.

Friends, these are the people and conditions, and these are the struggles that Isaiah was writing about. In Advent we want to jump to Christmas so badly that we start working the message of Bethlehem and the manger in as quickly as we can. But there is an Advent we have to go through to fully understand why Christ's coming was so important and vital to the world. And, we do not have to look back on ancient history or a world away to relate. Just look down Highway 82 about 40 miles.

Peace and Grace, *Jeff*

Sunday morning classes for adults meet upstairs from 9 - 9:45 am

The Work of the People: Faith Engaging the World meets in room F207

Dec. 3 & 10: This class will meet the first two Sundays in December for Advent Themed Devotional conversations.

Dec. 17—We will be joining the rest of the classes and church for the annual intergenerational "Birthday Party for Jesus" in the Fellowship Hall.

Dec. 24 & 31: No classes

Adult Bible Fellowship—The Book of Mark meets in room F201

There will be NO SUNDAY SCHOOL 12/17, 12/24 and 12/31 for all ages levels.



DECEMBER 17th at 9 a.m. "BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS" in Fellowship Hall

ALL CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS are invited to celebrate together the reason for the season, in a festive fun atmosphere! Please bring canned goods for donation those in need.

Following morning services on **Sunday, December 3**, the annual Alternative Christmas Market will be in the courtyard for shopping pleasure. As you leave the sanctuary, you will be given an order form to take to the tables to purchase your gifts. Representatives from Covenant Missions will be available to talk to you about their activities, and you will be able to purchase that special gift for that special someone. A card will be available for you to take home to send to the person for whom your gift was given. You will be able to pay with one check to Covenant Presbyterian Church. **Cash and Credit Cards will be accepted.** Covenant will then distribute the gifts to specific missions.



Tables represented at the Market will be:

- TOGETHER WE GROW: A Mission Garden of Covenant Presbyterian Church
- Mision Peniel
- Foster Child Program with INASMUCH
- Heifer
- Soup Kitchen
- Salvation Army Angel Tree
- Palestine Olive Oil
- Palestine Thyme Spice Mix
- Pal Craftaid

SEE YOU AT THE MARKET!

October 2017 Financial Report

Income for October	\$57,022
Income Year-to-date	\$529,444
Expenses for October	\$54,436
Expenses Year-to-date	\$538,655
Year-to-date deficit	\$9,211
Current Balance on Loan	\$391,131
Principal & Interest Paid in October	\$4,094

A complete finance report is available in the church office.

Please pray for our friends who are unable to attend service:

Nancy Albright, Lloyd Balsley, Maureen Bashaw, Don Fjellin, Doris Flaitz, Tish Kendall, Sue Loman, Jean Miller, Catherine Shackelford, Pat Schmidt, Pete Sommer, Anne Wills

God Bless You!



Join the Compassion Revolution!

- Feed the Machines - save your quarters - the Battle of the Home States begins January 28!
- Mulch City Parks
- Visit Nursing Homes
- Sort clothes and toiletries for Foster Children
- Help at Harry Chapin
- Paint
- Clean at the Salvation Army
- Do minor repairs and improvements
- Sew Baby Blankets
- Donate - Children's clothes and toiletries, no-sew throws, scrapbook materials, kids glue and stickers, painting supplies ...
- And much more!

Saturday, March 3, 2017

"Inasmuch as you did it for the least of these, you did it for me."

Jesus

Covenant's Leisure Time Book Club meets on the third Thursday of each month at 11AM in F205. Bring your lunch or snack and join us at our next book club meeting on **Thursday, December 21, 2017** *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult (published Oct 2016).

Thursday, January 18, 2018 *All Summer Long* by Dorothea Benton Frank

Thursday, February 15, 2018 *Manhattan Beach* by Jennifer Egan

Upcoming books are available for lending in Covenant Library. For more information about books we are reading or books we have read, stop by our CPC library or email Beverly Campbell campbell.beverly@gmail.com

Thank you to local award-winning author, Robert N. Macomber, for joining us at our October meeting. We were captivated with the journey he has shared over the years with his *Honor Series* character, Captain Peter Wake, and we cannot wait for book #14 in the series! Mr. Macomber's research experiences in Cuba were especially fascinating since our pastors had just returned from a Presbytery trip to Cuba.

Our November book was *Learning to Walk in the Dark* by Barbara Brown Taylor. This must be the favorite author of our book club, since we realized that we have read three of her books over the years.



Presbyterian Women are studying "Cloud of Witnesses" The Community of Christ in Hebrews by Melissa Bane Sevier. Pastor DeYoe will conduct a study on December 4th at 10:45 a.m. in room F205. Everyone is welcome to attend.

We invite you to come and visit one of the circles which meet at the following times:

Naomi Circle - 2nd Monday at 6:30 p.m.

Deborah Circle and Ruth Circle - 2nd Tuesday at 10 a.m.

Elizabeth Circle - 2nd Thursday at 9:30 a.m.

For more information about Circles or PW, please call Nora Harmon at 645-1125.



Covenant Presbyterian Church hosts a full calendar of events for all youth in 6th through 12th grade! Youth Bible Study is held Sunday mornings at 9:00 a.m. before worship. Youth fellowships take place every month on Sunday at various times and include meals, games, activities, music and discussions. A variety of trips, retreats, mission and outreach opportunities are available as well. Youth do not need to be members of Covenant to participate in activities and are always welcome to invite friends! For specific information regarding dates and times of youth activities please contact Eric Nanz at nanzet@gmail.com.

Youth Activities for December:

12/3	Sunday School & Hanging of the Greens Service (6pm)
12/10	Sunday School, Lunch & Christmas Caroling (9am – 3:30pm)
12/12	Tuesday Night Fundraiser at the DQ on US-41 (5pm – 8pm)
12/13	Wednesday Youth Band Rehearsal (7pm – 8pm)
12/17	Birthday for Jesus (Youth Band will play) & Christmas Party (5-8pm)
12/20	Wednesday Youth Band Rehearsal (7pm – 8pm)
12/24	Christmas Eve (Youth Band will play)
12/31	New Year's Eve (No YG/Sunday school)



L.I.F.E. to Focus on Services for Families and Youth as 2018 "Ask" Issue

Covenant is a member of the L.I.F.E. (Lee Interfaith for Empowerment) justice coalition consisting of 13 Lee County church congregations working for justice within the County.

At it's Annual Assembly in October, LIFE voted to focus on Services for Families & Youth as their issue for the 2018 Nehemiah Action "ask".

LIFE will also continue to work on a previous year's "ask", the use of civil citations in lieu of arrests for misdemeanor offense, by 1) continuing to support the statewide collaborative effort on civil citations legislation and 2) working with local law enforcement agencies for broader use of civil citations.

Session Highlights for November

The Session met on Tuesday, November 21, 2017 with Rev. Jeff DeYoe moderating the meeting and nine elders in attendance. Others present: Pat Arner, Deacon; Gary Brothers, Facilities Manager and Barbara Heflin, Clerk of Session. Guest: Nancy Woodington, 1st Presbyterian Church, New Haven CT, friend of Teddy Hogle.

- Approved a Congregational meeting for Sunday, December 17, 2017, immediately following the worship service, for the purpose of electing 4 Elders and 4 Deacons for Class of 2020 and 1 Deacon, Class of 2019 and 3 members-at-large for the 2018 Nominating Committee.
- Approved Officers Training for Saturday, January 6, 2018, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm, in F207.
- Approved the Annual Meeting for Sunday, January 21, 2018 immediately following the worship service.
- Approved a request from the choir officers to use memorial funds to purchase replacement music folders.
- Approved the Revised Scholarship Procedures.
- Rev. DeYoe has been elected a commissioner to the General Assembly which will be held in St. Louis, MO, June 16-23, 2018.
- The Alternative Giving Market will be held on Sunday, December 3rd, following the worship service. Come, prepared to shop.
- Pastor Jeff will be vacationing with his family, November 22 - November 29, in New Mexico. Rev. Lawson will be preaching on November 26th.
- Forty-nine families enjoyed the family weekend, November 3-5, at Cedarkirk.



We need your current email address for our NEW email service. Please email cpcpublications@gmail.com to request to be put on our email blast list. We use this tool to get important information out to you concerning Covenant and upcoming events, so make sure you get on the list so you are "in-the-know"!

Hanging of the Greens

Sunday, December 3



Join us for this annual tradition in the sanctuary at 6 p.m. with cookies and wassail in the Fellowship Hall after the service.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS ...

- The Christmas Reception is December 10th after worship.
- Covenant Christmas Concert is December 15th at 7:30 p.m.
- Congregational Meeting on December 17th after worship.
- The church office will be CLOSED on December 25th & January 1st.

The "Wednesday Morning Live" community lecture series 2018 has a great lineup for you. Each session opens with coffee and continental breakfast starting at 9:30 a.m. Speakers begin their lectures at 10:00, allow time for a brief question-and-answer session, and end at 11:00. Authors will also have books available for purchase. There is no charge for attending; donations are accepted for breakfast. This could become your favorite hour-and-a-half of the week!

This lecture series is possible because of the vision of its founder and leader, Dr. David Robinson, to bring informative programs to our church and community. Other members of the planning committee this year are Barbara Griffith, Tom Koester, Shirley Koester, Teddy Hogle, and Don Berglund.

Jan 3	Jeff DeYoe	Feb 7	Amy Bennett Williams
Jan 10	Jack Mutzebaugh	Feb 14	Dorothy Dodson
Jan 17	Jerry Frost	Feb 21	Pastor Miguel Estrada
Jan 24	John Sheppard	Feb 28	Warren Apple
Jan 31	Rick Burnett		

Life Line Screening, a leading provider of community-based preventive health screenings, will host screenings on Monday, January 29, 2018. Register for a Wellness Package which includes 4 vascular tests and osteoporosis screening from \$149 (\$139 with our member discount). **All five screenings take 60-90 minutes to complete. In order to register for this event and to receive a \$10 discount off any package priced above \$129, please call 1-888-653-6450 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com/community-partners.**



Peacemaking Commitment

Let us enter Advent in hope, even hope against hope. Let us see visions of love and peace and justice. Let us affirm with humility, with joy, with faith, with courage: Jesus Christ- the life of the world.

From: *Testimony: Word Made Flesh* by Fr. Daniel Berrigan, S.J.

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Recently a neighbor queried why I make the sign of the cross when I head off for a walk. I told him it's my prayer time. I do a Hail Mary to thank her for carrying Jesus into the world for us, an Our Father to remind me who's really in charge of us, then an Apostle's Creed. After that I offer prayers for family, friends, acquaintances, strangers, world situations. Then I talk to God sometimes like the Lord he is, sometimes like a father, sometimes like a friend. We were meant to be in communion with God because He knew we weren't to carry life's burdens alone. Here on Earth you also have Stephen Ministers to offer Caring, Compassion, Confidentially, in a Christ centered listening ministry. God didn't mean for us to walk alone. Contact a Stephen Minister today!

Pat Arner: 997-9108 * Sarah Jane Essebaggers: 616-502-7086 * Barb Sheets: 995-8881
Lyn Sisti-Sommer: 823-8534 * Rev. Dr. Jeff DeYoe: 334-8937

Advent Journey Coloring Posters

This year we are introducing a new Advent activity that will allow Covenant, as a community, to journey through Advent together, reflecting on the following primary themes from Advent scripture passages:

- Keep Awake!
- Prepare!
- Do Not Be Afraid!
- My Soul Magnifies the Lord!
- The Christmas Story
- Reflecting on Your Journey



Thousands of churches around the world have used Illustrated Children's Ministries coloring posters and we are so excited to bring them to Covenant this year. With these six posters, we can journey together, color and do art together, and have a chance to create meaningful intergenerational relationships. The posters will be in the courtyard each Sunday; in Sunday school classrooms; and available at other fellowship activities during the Advent season. We encourage everyone to pick up a marker and color until their hearts content. Also available is the corresponding devotional that has a weekly reflection for adults, as well as children. Our hope is that the Advent Journey Devotional is a meaningful addition for you this year. Please pick up your devotional in the courtyard on Sundays.

Christmas Eve Services

5:00 p.m. Family Service
7:30 p.m. Candlelight Service