

The Peaceful News

The Peace Presbyterian Church of Lakewood Ranch, Florida Newsletter

Summer, 2022

What a beautiful Holy Week

we had together! What a joy that we could be together in the sanctuary again for Thursday, Friday, and Sunday after two years. We are all so thankful for the devotional labor that our ministry teams and staff put into preparing us to celebrate the good news of the life-giving Christ and to welcome and provide hospitality to all who wished to be part of the celebration. It was also meaningful to acknowledge our exhaustion over the many griefs of these last couple of years, as we visited the memorial garden.

As Easter season reaches the month of May, we will focus our attention on the Marks of Vital Congregations. Our Session voted to commit Peace to this renewal process as we come out of the pandemic. This initiative is nationwide in the PCUSA and we are in conversation with the churches in our presbytery who are engaging the process with us.

Starting May 1, we will have themes introduced in worship that are discussed in the Peace Center after worship. These themes are paired up below with our 5 Core Values at Peace:

1. Lifelong Discipleship Formation – Nurturing Discipleship

2. Intentional Authentic Evangelism – Compassionate Outreach

3. Outward Incarnational Focus – Compassionate Outreach

4. Empowering Servant Leadership – Authentic Relationships

5. Caring Relationships – Authentic Relationships

6. Spirit-Inspired Worship – Inspiring Worship

7. Ecclesial Health – Responsive Stewardship

Just as it is wise for you to have regular health check-ups with doctors, dentists, and therapists, so we as a congregation need to spend some time in self-examination about our health as a church. How could we nurture greater wholeness and strength in our church community and beyond? I look forward to exploring this with you.

Prayerfully yours,

Elizabeth

Rev. Elizabeth M. Deibert

Pastor, Peace Presbyterian Church



The Seven Marks of Vital Congregations - Sunday following Worship

May 1 to June 12, 2022



Why Pride — Amy Cerniglia, Peace Music Director

Christians often talk about the importance of planting seeds without knowing or expecting any particular result, and I can honestly say I'm at Peace today because of a seed that Joanne Klement planted years before we ever knew each other.

After completing my degrees in music, I applied around the country for a full-time position. In the process, I prayed and discerned carefully for churches that could provide not only a stable career, but a spiritual family in Christ. This journey was often discouraging, as multiple mainline churches proclaiming an all-inclusive welcome on their signs and websites only disclosed later in the search that I shouldn't really bring my wife to worship services with me.

As one search committee chair said of my attending his church with Leslie, "All are welcome, but it would be awkward."

Assuring me that they'd never discriminate in the hiring process, and even extending me job offers, these churches in apparently progressive denominations seemed to think that I would be content in a situation where I couldn't worship with my family. While I'm grateful for the advances in recent years that have opened up employment possibilities for gay people at all, I was daring to ask for even more. I wanted a place where I could wear my wedding ring.

Recently, a death in my wife's family prompted many of you to send kind cards and prayers. That is the kind of spiritual support I sought more than a paycheck. Some Christians, even well-intentioned, warned me that I might never find it.

When I saw the open position at Peace Presbyterian Church, I searched the website far and wide for any sign of LGBTQ affirmation. I didn't want to waste Peace's time or my own, but couldn't find any signs on the church website indicating one way or another. In our interviews, I had unmistakably felt the Spirit of God moving in a way I had not felt anywhere else, but I needed reassurance. I needed a sign.

Deep in the archives of church newsletters just like this one, I discovered a profile that Joanne Klement had written on a lesbian member of this church. I can remember exactly where I was, and how I was sitting, as I read with baited breath. The article didn't just mention the member's identity in passing, but explored her process of self-discovery. An unwelcoming church would never have published such an article, I was certain. There was such compassion in Joanne's tone that, although I'd never met her, I could feel this church's compassion toward gay and lesbian people. After reading that article, I answered "yes" to Peace.

Of course, I couldn't be sure how individuals would actually treat my wife and me on our first Sunday. Thankfully, we received the same compassion and understanding Joanne

communicated in this newsletter years ago, before she knew our names. In a prayer that day, Youth Sunday, one of the church youth prayed for all types of people groups including "gay and straight." Again, this eased my nerves and let me know I hadn't made a huge mistake.

That year, I attended my first Pride festival, and it was nothing like I expected. At the Riverwalk in downtown Bradenton, the festival resembled any other craft or music fair you'd see in town. There was no raucous drinking or rowdy activity unsuitable for kids. In fact, the general crowd at the festival skewed much younger than many others in town. My wife and I were surrounded mostly by kids, really excited kids, and their parents.

Run by a local youth nonprofit (ALSO Youth), Manatee Pride is small, and attended mostly with kids with their parents. Unlike many of the local food or music festivals, it is also filled with church vendors. From the main stage, a Sarasota pastor shared a message of God's love.

Not everyone has the time or the technical know-how to navigate a church website like I did in order to figure out whether or not Peace would welcome me. Some people need a face-to-face interaction outside of church walls before they'd risk stepping inside. Those are the people I spoke to at Pride when Peace sponsored a booth for the first time this March.

With the pandemic preventing the festivals for years, I didn't expect the relief of finally attending one again. In every photo from that day, I'm beaming, even when exhausted from seven hours mostly standing on a hot Florida day. Dancing with Eirinn and surrounded by happy kids, I was ecstatic. I could talk for days about the love of God, my favorite subject. People were so incredibly open to receiving it because they trusted that any church willing to show up at Pride must mean what we preach. Words are cheap, but actions speak volumes. When Jesus told us to welcome the outcast, he went straight to the house of Zaccheus, and spoke to the woman at the well in broad daylight.

The seed planted by a church newsletter article so many years ago bloomed into a sign for me and Leslie. It called on Joanne's thoughtful care with words, Pastor Elizabeth's bravery in their publication, and the honesty of the lesbian congregant who offered her faith journey. Inclusive love can continue touching the community and reaching beyond the church walls to "Jerusalem, and Judea, and Samaria and even to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). In a landscape of churches uncertain about their messages toward gay people, Peace's clear stance and compassionate outreach lets people know that God so loved the world and Christ came to save all of it. That is good news I am proud to share.



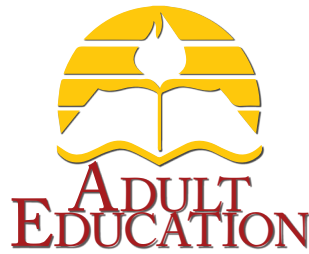
These small groups for adults are meeting currently at Peace.

A small group on **Discernment of Spiritual Friendship & Listening** to God is meeting. The hope is that relationships will develop and lead to the gathering of small groups. The breaking of bread is an important part of the process that serves as a central pledge to one another in life and in faith.

On Sundays after worship, starting in May is a class on the **Seven Marks of Building Congregational Vitality**. It will be taught by Pastor Elizabeth and Peter Miller and will run through Pentecost until Trinity Sunday, June 12.



**The Seven Marks
of
Vital Congregations**
a discussion led by
**Rev. Elizabeth Deibert
with Peter Miller**
· Sundays following worship May 1 to June 12 ·



On May 22 at 4:00 pm, we'll have a Panel Discussion on the **Normal Stages of Aging**. It is coordinated through Bernice Pelea, the Program Manager of Support at the Alzheimer's Association.



The Normal Stages of Aging:
Expectations of Brain Health & Dementia
a presentation & discussion by
Bernice Pelea, MPH, MS, RN
Program Manager, Support-Alzheimer's Association
Sunday, May 22, 2022, 4PM

We will have the summer off and new classes will begin on Sept. 11 for the fall session.



FAITH AND FILM

Second Fridays at 6:30 p.m.

For now, we will meet on Zoom to watch and discuss the films. Check the weekly Zoom notifications for the URLs, meeting IDs and passcodes.

May 13, 2022

Two of Us (2019, 1:39)

Amy Cerniglia, Discussion Leader

Barbara Sukowa, Martine Chevallier
Pensioners Nina and Madeleine have hidden their deep and passionate love for many decades, but their bond is put to the test when they are suddenly unable to move freely between each other's apartments. May 17 is Mobilization for International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia.



The Faith and Film team will be meeting this summer to decide the films and schedule for the 2022-23 viewing season. If you have suggestions for films, or would like to be part of the decision making for the team, please contact David Thomas.

Holy Week



Child at a Station of the Cross on Good Friday



Children's sermon on Palm Sunday



Easter Bells—both chimes by the Wonderful Wednesday children and handbells by the Ringers of Peace.



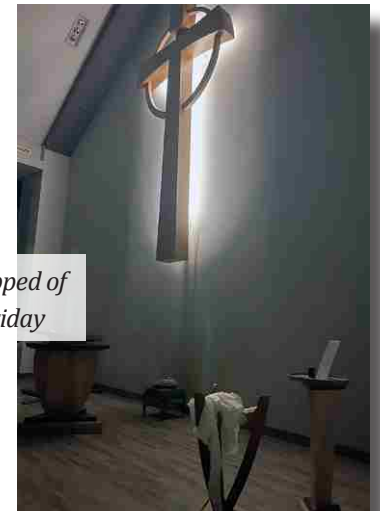
Pride table runner in the Sanctuary

The children of Peace marching on Palm Sunday



Good Friday Stations of the Cross

The Sanctuary stripped of décor for Good Friday



Hallelujah Chorus by the Peace Singers on Easter.



Worship Events



The Team meets monthly on the first Thursday of each month at 7 PM by Zoom. The Team assists Pastor Elizabeth, Amy Cerniglia, Director of Music and Outreach, Eirinn Camphire, Director of Ministries to Children, Youth and Families, the Session, and the Congregation in the planning and preparation of meaningful worship experiences.

With the lifting of many of the pandemic restrictions it has been certainly uplifting to be able to assist with in-person services, especially during Lent and Holy Week. For those yet unable to attend, the AV sub-team continues to transmit the service by live stream to those at home and by recording for YouTube. The Team trains and schedules volunteer liturgists and sets up elements for Communion as served by Pastor Elizabeth.

On February 26, the Team Elder and Team Leader met with clergy and all other Ministry Team Elders and Leaders for "Vision Day". Team members assisted clergy with Ash Wednesday Service with seven interactive Lenten stations prior to dedication of the Memorial Garden.

The Bell Ringers have continued playing and the Voices of Peace have rehearsed weekly and sung for Palm Sunday and Easter services. The Drama Ministry has participated in several services, culminating on Maundy Thursday with enactment of a moving drama written by Amy Cerniglia, remembering Jesus washing the feet of his followers and His new Commandment to love one another. On Good Friday the Team assisted our clergy in the creation of "The Experiential Stations of the Cross."

On Easter the children and Ringers played handbells and chimes. And the children presented their video of the Passion Play and danced through the Sanctuary to the "Lord of the Dance" accompanied by flute, guitars, piano, organ and percussion.

The Choir sang two Easter selections and then the Congregation joined to sing "The Hallelujah Chorus" with trumpet and the service closed with Amy playing "Toccatà" on the organ.

The Worship and Music Team will continue to help with worshipful experiences throughout the year and invite others in the Congregation to join this Team.



The 2021-22 Peace Concert Series continued with a memorable performance by the Lakewood Ranch Wind Ensemble on March 27 in the Sanctuary. The concert series concluded with an inspirational performance by Ring Sarasota on April 10.

The Lakewood Ranch Wind Ensemble performed at Peace on March. 27



Were you aware that Peace Presbyterian Church of Lakewood Ranch, Inc. has an endowment?

Certain members of Peace have contributed seed money of \$7,400 to Peace's "Legacy Fund" to kick off the fund which will be used to build a lasting legacy for the stability and viability of our church into the future!

The Legacy Fund is money that will not be spent in a budgeted manner. Legacy Fund money will be accumulated in an investment account and will grow in perpetuity. Once established, up to 5% of the money in the fund will be distributed yearly to one or more of three areas—the Mission and Benevolence fund, the Capital Facilities fund, and the General Operating fund. This will allow Peace to be more generous in our charitable giving, enhance our church campus, and supplement areas of our operations to serve the members of our congregation better.



Beside the seed money already given, many members of our congregation have already included future giving to Peace by making Peace a beneficiary in their final wills. These members wish to help ensure that all of the hard work that we have accomplished over the past ten years allows Peace to be an even brighter beacon of light for our community in the years to come.

Proposed giving is in two forms—restricted giving where money is specifically given to one or more of the three fund areas and unrestricted giving where money is distributed evenly among the three fund areas. Of course, other non-legacy fund gifts will still be accepted for both purposes and will be put to immediate use and not invested for the long term.

The Gratitude Team will focus this year on making sure everyone's questions about the Legacy Fund are answered. If you are interested in learning more about The Legacy Fund, please contact Beth Walch, Sue Seiter, Pastor Elizabeth or any member of the Gratitude Team.



FLORIDA PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE NETWORK

In Partnership with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PCUSA)



OUR MISSION

To support Florida communities through disaster preparedness, response and recovery working in partnership with community, government and faith-based organizations.

The Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network (FLAPDAN) was created following the hurricanes of 2004 for the purpose of connecting each presbytery disaster response effort with other efforts occurring throughout the state. A network agreement was established outlining the goals and structure of FLAPDAN.

The purpose of FLAPDAN is to address the needs of the Body of Christ during times of disaster. The goals of the Network are:

- To provide a communication link between the presbyteries, Synod and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA).
- To address common issues of preparation, response and long term recovery following a disaster event.
- To advocate for specific needs in affected presbyteries.
- To identify and develop resources.
- To develop and recommend protocols to be used by presbyteries in times of disaster.
- To support training for disaster preparedness and response for presbyteries and their congregations.

Peace COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

People from Peace attended the Manatee County meeting to advocate for STREAM.



The first-ever Nehemiah Action was a historic AND successful event. Nearly 600 community members (about 100 from Peace) attended and the elected officials agreed to the presented proposals! Law enforcement said YES to supporting a pre-arrest adult diversion program for nonviolent misdemeanor offenses. County Commissioner Kruse said YES to developing an ongoing affordable housing plan for those most in need. STREAM is energized to continue their work and mobilize for our Joshua Assembly on Monday, May 16th, where they will celebrate their success and look forward to the work ahead.

Turning Points provides a remarkable variety of free services designed to assist individuals and families on their path to financial stability and independence. Turning Points is the one stop shop for preventing and reducing homelessness in our community. We provide day resource services (such as hot showers, laundry services, clothing, food), employment services, rental and utility assistance, veteran's services (employment & housing), and free medical and dental care for the uninsured. 7,073 people received assistance last year with critical services targeted to the essential needs of people in crisis. Turning Points can only provide this high standard of service because of our caring, compassionate volunteers and strong community support.

Peace volunteers at the Turning Points volunteer appreciation celebration



Peace booth at Manatee Pride Festival

Manatee Pride is a fund raiser, and all proceeds benefit ALSO YOUTH a 501(c)(3) non-profit Florida corporation, providing Advocacy, Leadership, Support and outreach for LGBTQ youth in Sarasota and Manatee Counties and dedicated to supporting, affirming, encouraging, enabling and empowering all LGBTQ youth.

The 7th annual Festival, Manatee Pride 2022 had live performers and renowned bands, great food, beer, refreshments (and other favorites), health checks and more.

On Feb. 17 the Adventure Seekers went to the Gamble Plantation, a former sugar plantation. The event was attended by 18, followed by lunch at Popi's Place IV in Ellenton. The tour was very interesting and informative. A good time was had by all.

The Peace Adventurers group of 28 people traveled to the Southeastern Guide Dog Center on March 29 to view their program of "Beyond the Dark." While waiting in the foyer, we enjoyed petting several dogs and asked questions of the volunteer handlers. The program started with each of us putting on blindfolds to simulate a visually impaired situation and the hour presentation gave us an insight to life with trained service dogs. We then traveled to Whiskey Joe's in Ellenton for lunch on the outdoor patio overlooking the Manatee River.



Next Up

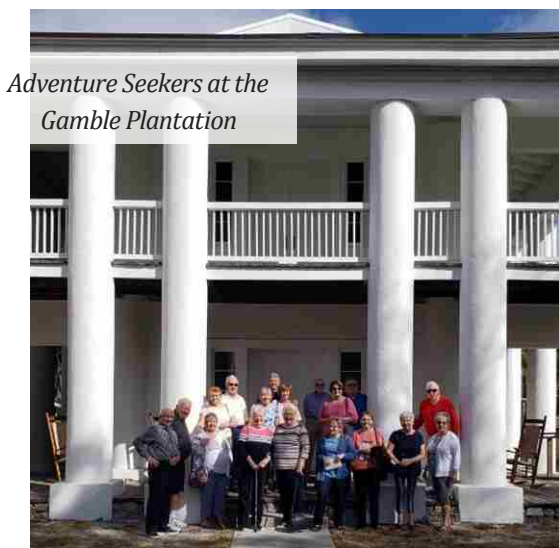
Florida Railroad Museum and Train Ride
Saturday, May 14, 2022 at 11 AM
12210 83rd Street East, (off US 301) Parrish

Peace Adventure Seekers welcomes families, folks who work during the week, and all who are looking for a fun spring event to join us on a 1-1/2 hour excursion from Parrish to Willow and back in rural Manatee County. You can choose to ride in a completely open-air railroad passenger car, one with open windows, or an enclosed air-conditioned coach.

The original Florida Gulf Coast Railroad was founded to preserve Florida's railroad history, acquiring and restoring equipment to operate for the public's enjoyment to see railroading as it existed in the 1940s and 1950s. It is a non-profit organization operated by volunteer train enthusiasts.

Cost is \$16 for adults; children \$12. Make checks payable to Peace with "train" in the memo line. We will carpool from Peace church at 9:45 AM; contact Cora Lee & Wayne Cain if interested. Please arrive by 10:30 at the train depot in Parrish.

Lunch following the return at 1:00 at Hickory Hollow, 4705 US 301, Ellenton, 8.8 miles from train depot. Sign up now by email or at church on Sunday with payment to reserve your place!-



*Adventure Seekers at the
Gamble Plantation*



*Louise with one of the Guide Dogs
at an Adventure Seekers outing*



Peace Church has been recertified as an Earth Care Congregation! Each year we must meet criteria that we are creating more sustainability in our facilities, that we include earth care concerns in worship planning and that we advocate for the earth through education and outreach to our community. The next clean-up of Upper Manatee River Road will be on Saturday, May 7th from 9am-11am. We provide supplies, please join us!

MISSION

We are collecting items for Family Promise of Sarasota/Manatee. Donations may be placed in the tub found in the kitchenette of the Peace Center. There is a list of needs for infants and the food pantry on the tub.

Turning Points is in need of men's shorts and pants/jeans in sizes 30-34 waist, and backpacks. Clothing bin is in the kitchenette.



The 2022 On-Line Giving Challenge is Tuesday, April 26–Wednesday, April 27, noon to noon. The following Peace Mission Partners are participating:

Books for Kids, Turning Points, Family Promise of Sarasota-Manatee, Agape Flights, Inc., Manatee County Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels Plus of Manatee, Inc

Our team continues to provide snacks for Fellowship time on Sundays and refreshments for several memorial services. Upcoming special Fellowship events include Graduation Celebration, Mother's Day and Father's Day.

Musical Movies the last Fridays of the month continue. Recent showings were Come From Away, Hamilton and Encanto. Upcoming shows are Fiddler on the Roof, Beauty and the Beast, 1776 and many more through the end of the year.



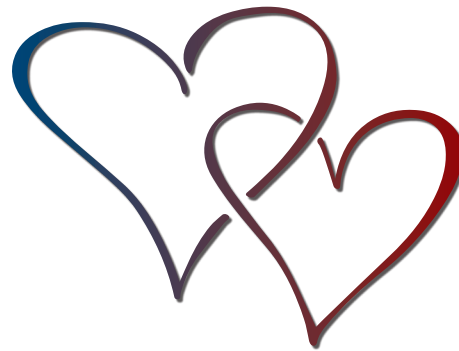
Crafters started back up on Friday, April 22 at 10am. All are invited to join, even if you just want to come to socialize. The next meeting is at 10am, May 20. For more information, contact Ellen Walch.

Congregational Care

The Congregational Care Team sends out a warm welcome to our newest members who joined Peace in March. In order to help you become involved in the life of Peace (and a refresh for all members) we'd like to acquaint you with our Ministry's purpose and how we accomplish that.

Our purpose: To nurture authentic relationships and pray for the congregation, with special attention to those in great need and through Stephen Ministry to provide one-on-one confidential care to people following a divorce, a death or other life crisis.

The team is comprised of 3 groups: Care Cluster Leaders, Pray-ers, and Stephen Ministers. Care Cluster Leaders shepherd small groups within the congregation—9 or 10 families in a Cluster—through frequent communication via email, cards, phone calls, and chats during Sunday worship. New members will receive a welcome note or call from your Cluster Leader shortly after you join. We are available to share prayer joys and concerns, provide meals as necessary for families experiencing illness or death, act as resource as folks come into the congregation and continue that nurturing as you settle in and share your own talents as members. Currently 16 Care Cluster Leaders fill these responsibilities but we are



always on the lookout for those who might want to join this part of Congregational Care. We meet just 4 times a year and all of our “work” is done conveniently in our homes.

The Pray-ers group prays daily for each member, by name, of the congregation. Seven devoted folks (1 for each day of the week) also accomplish their tasks at home or, in some instances, as they travel! Care

Cluster Leaders compliment this group as they pray, also daily, for the Sunday bulletin prayer concerns and concerns that come into the church office during the week.

The Stephen Ministry group is available to help with needs as mentioned above as well as for grief support. Pastor Elizabeth is the contact for anyone feeling the need for this type of care as well as for information concerning SM training.

The Congregational Care Team involves caring hearts and encouragement to become involved. We look forward to meeting you and getting to know you.

Contact Info.:

Team Elder: Sally Schoeffel: sallyschoeRN@gmail.com

Team Leader: Anne Warburton: warburtonanne@icloud.com



New members joining the church on March 20



There was an abundance of Easter Joy with the children and youth of Peace in April! We had a great time creating the Easter play, did you notice that our number of actors has been growing? We look forward to summer fun, especially with the upcoming VBS Day Camp “Jump into the Bible” which will run June 13-17th. We have over two dozen children, rising K through

6th signed up so far! We would love to have some adult helpers, even if just for a few hours: to help with Bible stories, crafts or fun and games. Contact cyf@peacepcusa.com if you can assist us.



Ellie at the Easter Egg hunt on the Peaceful Path.

The Peace Youth recently tackled TreeUmph with our friends from Beth-El’s Nuevo Camino. Learning to push ourselves to new heights and to encourage one another was a great lesson for all. Our Peace families will be celebrating the end of the school year with a BBQ at Peace on May 27th from 5pm-7pm.



Youth and adult volunteers cleaning up the grounds of the church building



The youth of Peace and Beth-El at TreeUmph

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