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A SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT THIS ISSUE
This Summer issue of Connect includes clickable links that are designated with the icon: 

We invite you to click on the area anytime you see and you will be redirected to an online segment that compliments this issue of the Connect.

Should you experience any difficulties in accessing the online content, please contact Jackie Gomez: jgomez@churchofthepalms.org

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Church of the Palms is an oasis in an otherwise chaotic world. We believe, quite simply, that to follow Jesus means to love one another.

• To celebrate and employ one another’s gifts, experience, and knowledge.
• To empower each other in creating a meaningful impact...a lasting legacy.
• To support one another’s growth and wellness. We’re all about connection and intentional community, facilitating the development of deep, abiding friendships.

That’s it, and we’re excited that you’re here.
Dear friends,

Many of us have been reading these days the third volume of The Good and Beautiful series by James Bryan Smith – entitled The Good and Beautiful Community. It is a wonderful reflection on the life of the Church and the community that Christ intends for us in being the Body of Christ. Dr. Smith challenges us to consider the depths of what it means to be in relationship with one another and the hard work that goes into remaining connected to each other. He exhorts us to take on the spirit of servanthood and encouragement and grace and forgiveness – all the necessary elements in keeping us together.

I am struck in reading Dr. Smith’s book how much he assumes, and we assumed, that to live out the community of Christ is to be physically present with each other as often as possible. A big part of following Jesus is to find occasion to be together. The word “together,” in fact, is used over and over again when Luke describes in the Acts of the Apostles how the early Church came into being. They were always gathering together to incarnate the body of Christ.

But what happens when you can’t be together? Well, that’s what we’ve been learning over these last several weeks! We are taking a crash course on how to be the Body of Christ when we cannot exercise physical presence with each other. It is difficult!! It goes against the grain of being Christ-like. In fact, it goes against the grain of being human. We need each other!

But as with most things there is great opportunity to be found in a change of plans and a shift of paradigm. Strangely, our inability to be together in the flesh has led to a much more intentional effort to be “with” our entire congregation by the great tools we have at our disposal – phone, text, email, TV, YouTube, Facebook, etc. So we are deploying every means to find ways to be “together” without being “together”! We are grateful for your feedback and are thankful that so many of you feel connected and loved through the efforts of so many of our congregation to be “in touch.”

It’s made me think of something we say in the Apostles’ Creed every Sunday – that we believe in the “the Holy Catholic Church.” It’s an old way of saying that we believe in the Holy Universal Church. To believe in the Universal Church is to believe that through God’s Holy Spirit we are connected across the globe. We may never see our friends on the other side of the planet but the Holy Spirit connects us! We are drawn together by an invisible force – the Spirit and Love of God!

Sometimes when I get a bit lonely and missing my fellow brothers and sisters here at Church of the Palms, what I will often do is imagine in my prayers the connecting presence of the Spirit. And then I begin to picture all my friends and all the people in the pews and all my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ around the world and even the communion of the saints and realize that the Holy Spirit is bringing them into my room and into my heart. And I am surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses and I am not alone. The “Good and Beautiful Community” has arrived and will never leave. We need never feel alone. Praise be to God.

Grace and peace,

[Signature]

A MESSAGE from Dr. Stephen D. McConnell
One of the great struggles that has accompanied this time of COVID-19 is the empty space in our lives that this virus has created. If we are doing our best to stay at home and away from people, it has created gaps in our calendar that we are wondering how to fill. It’s hard for us to sit still! And so we are tempted to find whatever we can to pass the time and while away the hours. And like any vacuum, lots of things can rush in to fill it – chores, yardwork, music, Netflix, movies, books, etc. None of it bad, necessarily. But maybe there is an opportunity that awaits us in the struggle to use our time. Blaise Pascal, the 17th century philosopher and mystic, posited that “there is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man (or woman) which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ.” We all have an empty hole in our souls that only God can fill.

So perhaps this strange time gives us the chance of thinking how we might develop a routine that would invite God to fill this empty space only God can fill. Some traditions of the Church call this a Rule of Life. Our friends at Sacred Ordinary Days podcast describe it this way: “A rule of life is a commitment to live your life in a particular way. It is meant to be crafted with prayer and discernment, in partnership with God, as you consider the way God made you and the values God has inscribed upon your heart. Once written, it serves as a tool that can help you make decisions for your life and determine how best to order your days.

“The first example of a Christian rule of life came from the Desert Fathers, a monastic community of mystics living in Egypt around the third century AD. The most well-known rule is the rule of St. Benedict, written fifteen hundred years ago, which was created to help his community of monks translate their faith into the habits and rhythms of their shared daily life. His famous rule has inspired many communities and individuals to develop their own rules with a similar intention.”

Perhaps you already have the start of a rule of life in the little spiritual routines that make up your days – grace before meals, Bible reading, prayers before bedtime and before rising, journaling, etc. Or maybe this is something you’ve always wanted to start and never thought you had the time and attention to do so. Maybe now is the time.

In these days and weeks to come we hope to provide you opportunities to fill that God-shaped vacuum within you with practices that would invite the presence of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit into your life. Be looking for resources on all our communication channels – Bible reading, prayers, study guides, guided meditation, yoga, etc. – that you might choose to make for yourself your own daily practice or rule of life. Who knows, this could be the start of a very beautiful thing!
To the Food Pantry Angels,

When I got my food and left, I started to cry, not only because now I will have some chicken with my potatoes but also because I see what a huge effort each of you are making so that I, and others, can have food. The flowers that were given out will add some cheer to my home.

Each of you are truly angels and Jesus’ hands and feet.

God bless y’all,
A grateful heart.

Church of the Palms
FOOD PANTRY
If you are lucky enough to get Kathy Robinett, our Food Ministry Coordinator, to slow down for just a few minutes, she can tell you story after story about the challenges and blessings of running the second largest food pantry in Sarasota County. But in the throes of a worldwide pandemic, the stories become even more heartbreaking. In March, the Church of the Palms Food Pantry had to adapt and do so quickly when first the schools shut down, then people lost their jobs, and then everything else stopped in order to control the spread of COVID-19.

Since that time, the food pantry has changed to a drive-through environment where as many as three times the normal need is met on a daily basis. Before the coronavirus, our pantry served 80 to 120 clients per day. Now peak days have brought as many as 350 people to our doors. Tapping into resources beyond the food banks has enabled Kathy and her volunteers to keep the food coming. Local restaurants and food shops have given unused products. Organic farmers have provided produce grown but not harvested. Independent truckers have been able to donate undeliverable perishables. Others have provided hygiene kits. And people from across the community have donated their government stimulus check, in the form of a cash or food donation. Even our youth have helped, creating drawings printed on small cards to be included in each of the grocery bags that are distributed by masked and gloved volunteers directly into people’s cars. It is the message written on these colorful missives that best demonstrates the purpose of our food pantry and perhaps its very mission: You Are Loved!

Whether this message is delivered to the single mother of two who arrives at the pantry shaken and emotional because she has lost her job, has no resources available to help, and hasn’t eaten in two days, or to the vulnerable homeless man who bangs on the door at 4 in the afternoon begging for something to eat, Kathy and her volunteers provide the help, support, and strength that is required to demonstrate that love. In the case of the man from the homeless camp, Kathy spent almost an hour with him and has tears in her eyes as she recounts his emotion at receiving that child’s drawing and message of love. As she shared with him the church’s goal to LOVE NEIGHBOR, his tearful comment that he came for food but was leaving with so much more tells all of us we are achieving what Jesus has asked of us in 1 John 3:18 “let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.”

The Church of the Palms Food Pantry will remain in its drive-through configuration until at least the end of June. To help supplement the loss of pantry volunteers because of new age restrictions, Kathy is receiving help from Team Rubicon USA, a group of veteran and first responder volunteers who serve as disaster response teams in our community to help with needs that arise out of the coronavirus outbreak. If you would like to help the Food Pantry in some way, contact Kathy Robinett.
The present moment is where we find peace in stressful times.

The present moment is where we find gratitude.

GOD IS WAITING FOR US IN THE PRESENT MOMENT
I hope everyone is staying safe and strong and healthy during this incredibly challenging time. As we all try to adjust to our new “normal,” I’m curious about what you’ve been doing to keep yourself calm and balanced.

Are you reading any good books, going for walks, doing puzzles, trying new recipes, watching the daily devotionals? These are all great opportunities to take a break from the abundant (sometimes overwhelming) information coming from tv and social media.

How about exercise? Any movement, whether it’s walking, running or yoga, is the perfect place to find the grounding we need to get out of our heads and into the present moment. I recently found these encouraging words in an article called Finding God in the Present Moment, “In truth the only time we can be fully happy is in the present moment, where the Lord finds us. He lives eternally in the present and is there waiting for us to meet him. The Lord finds us in the here and now, in every circumstance that we live in our daily lives, in every encounter with our neighbor. The Lord is present for us and alive in the reality of each day and that is where we will find him.”

So much of what’s going on is completely out of our control, yet we forget sometimes who is in control – God. We have the assurance of Isaiah 41:10, “Don’t be afraid, for I am with you. Don’t be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.”

Many of us look forward to the days when the Palms Center is back open again and thriving with pickleball, basketball, yoga and various other activities that we all know and love. Until that time, we encourage you to keep on doing what you’re doing to keep the peace in your head and in your heart.

If you need a little encouragement or are looking to try something new, allow me to make a few suggestions. First is a simple breathing exercise intended to ground you in the present moment. The second is simple and fun exercises that can be done in a chair.

**BREATHEING EXERCISE**

Recently Pastor Laurie shared this exercise with us. Find a comfortable seated position or lie down. As you inhale slowly say the words in your head “Be Still” and as you exhale slowly say to yourself “And Know.” Repeat for as long as you need. Use any words that seem appropriate to your needs.

**CHAIR STRETCHES**

It is important to remember never to push your body to the point that causes pain. You will still get the benefit of the stretch even if you are not very flexible. The best part is, if you do these on a regular basis (once a day or just 3x per week), your flexibility and strength will increase.

CHAIR STRETCHES

- **Forward Bend**
  *Eases tension in upper back and neck.*
  Breathe in and as you bend forward breathe out and let your head and arms hang over your knees. Relax into the position and hold for a few seconds while breathing normally. Breathe in as you slowly come back up to seated position.

- **Spinal Twist**
  *Increases circulation and flexibility in the spine.*
  Sit facing forward, place your left hand on the outside of your right knee. Place your right arm over the back of the chair. Breathe in and breathe out as you twist to the right. Turn your head as well. Push against your right knee to create more leverage. Breathe normally and hold the position. Release slowly and come back to facing forward and repeat on the opposite side.

- **Side Stretch**
  *Increases flexibility of the spinal column, improves respiration, and reduces waistline.*
  Sit facing forward with feet slightly apart, breathe in, and raise your arms out to the sides. Breathe out and bend to the left, reaching toward the floor with your left hand and your right hand pointing toward the ceiling. Breathe in come back to starting position. Repeat with your right side.

- **Knee Squeeze**
  *Relaxes lower back, improves digestion and respiration.*
  Breathe out completely, then breathe in and with both hands around the front of your knee, pull your knee to your chest, while holding the in breath. Lower your head to your knee, hold for a few seconds, and release slowly while breathing out. Repeat with your right side.

- **Leg Lifts**
  *Strengthen legs and lower back and improves circulation to your legs and feet.*
  Sit and hold each side of the chair for balance. Breathe out and breathe in as you lift your straightened left leg and flex your foot. Hold for a few seconds and then slowly breathe out while lowering your leg. Repeat with your right leg.
Congregational Life Ministries continues to be busy caring for and nurturing the members of the church in various ways. Unlike the previous years, we plan to continue the following ministries throughout the summer months.

**Ministry Actions**

- All who have no email, and some over 80 who welcome calls, are being called by 51 phone callers - 8 are staff, the rest are Deacons, Shepherding Deacons, Stephen Ministers and leaders;
- Stephen Ministers give one-on-one Christian care to those in need by phone calls;
- Deacons continue their ministries over the phone;
- Shepherding Deacons are communicating with their flocks more often;
- We checked in with all singles 60 years and older by sending cards;
- We continue ministries of prayer including the prayer list;
- We supply note cards via the mail to the Shepherding Deacons as in-person meetings are not being held;
- We listen to and talk with people over the phone;
- Most Life Together small groups continue with Zoom meetings on the book *The Good and Beautiful Community* by James Bryan Smith;
- The Memorial Garden Board continues to be busy and we have continued internment of ashes;
- Weekly Watercolor class also continues via Zoom;
- Several Bible study, book discussion and prayer groups continue meeting on Zoom; and
- We have received 5 full new members and one affiliate member into the church since March.

We are ever more connected as a community of faith despite the pandemic. Members and visitors alike have expressed their appreciation. God is good to us and we continue to love God and we love one another (John 13:34). We love our neighbors from God (Mark 12:31).
Over the last few months, youth ministry has taken on a look that I never would have expected. With the beginning of quarantine came the challenge of continuing to be a part of the lives of the middle and high schoolers, while staying at a distance, something not easily done. I have tried a few different ideas, and the meetings have changed to try and best support the youth. One of the best ideas in terms of turnout and for how long it lasted was when I hosted lunches for an hour every day. I started that pretty quickly into the quarantine, and it lasted for a good 4 weeks. Each day I would log on to Zoom around noon, and be available for anyone to come join and eat and chat with me. We had middle schoolers and high schoolers all join at some point, and the conversation was always great. It allowed the kids to stay connected and feel like they were hanging out, even though they were on their computers at home. At times the conversation was purely about having fun, and other times it became more serious than that, discussing how God could continue to be at work in our lives, and how even as times are frustrating, confusing, or scary, we can continue to trust in God’s love and peace. I also recently had a Family Feud game night with the middle schoolers. It was a ton of fun, and the kids who showed up really enjoyed it. At this point, many of the youth are getting tired of ZOOM, so I am constantly trying to think up new ideas and offerings to help keep everyone tied in and connected with Church of the Palms. It is a challenge, but it has been so incredible to see how the youth have continued not only to love God, but to love each other as well. Each meeting we have taken time to talk about how we have all seen God at work in our daily lives, and some of the answers have been fantastic. They have ranged from seeing a beautiful sunset and enjoying God’s creation, to spending more time with family, and deepening a bond and a love that had gotten a little lost in the business of life. We even had some families and youth take time out of their days to help sew masks for local organizations.

All in all, this time of quarantine has made youth group look hugely different. However, it has been fantastic to be able to zoom and see the faces of these kids, and hear about their lives, as we all do our part to try to lessen the impact of this pandemic.
Quarantine Connecting with Kids

THROUGH LETTERS!

During this strange time away from our familiar way of doing things at church, and not being together with one another, Kids ministry has been such a blessing for my soul!

How could I possibly get little kids to come to church and hear a message of the Hope, Love, and Joy of Jesus? Kids don’t look at Facebook, open emails, or even know what they may be missing.

But I can write them a letter, I thought. So I went “old school.” I started with hope of simply cheering kids up with some love, jokes and laughter through the fun of getting something in the actual mailbox.

Since that first letter, it has been my joy to keep on going. I have now sent over 450 letters with a message of love, jokes, encouraging monsters and friendly FROGS. And almost every day I get a letter back in my mailbox with a wonderful greeting, hand drawn picture, or a funny joke to share from kids. Some of the kids mentioned they have never sent a letter before!

On Sunday mornings elementary kids are linking into Zoom for a Sunday Kids Chat. This has been a great way for kids to see each other as we share stories of our week, pray together, learn about Jesus, and share a few jokes. I am so lucky to have had this opportunity to connect in this special way with so many kids that I don’t always see on Sundays. Our time together is fun, and filling and yes, funny! Thank you to all those awesome kids who choose to love God, love others, do their best, and have fun. I’m so proud of you!

Love from Your friend,
Miss Carol
Dear Ms. Carol,

I’ll miss you! I’ll miss coming to church on Sundays, but even if we can’t meet up, we can always write notes or zoom!

Stay home stay safe.

love, Lily

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1. LOVE GOD!
   2. LOVE PEOPLE!
   3. DO YOUR BEST!
   4. HAVE FUN!

Because God gives us joy and wants us to live in His glory! He has great plans for us! Have a

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Fully rely on God

Love,

Chart

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You are loved!
9 WAYS TO STAY POSITIVE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC
When the news is all doom and gloom - as it has been since the outbreak of the coronavirus— it’s hard for even the most optimistic among us to stay positive. It’s true that we need to take this virus seriously. It’s capable of causing severe illness, death, and drastic long-term changes to how we live and work. It could even cripple the economy. It’s easy to stay focused on those calamities: they seem to be the only topics covered on local and national news.

But those thoughts would be counterproductive. Obviously, there are things you need to know about the coronavirus outbreak to protect yourself and those around you, but you do not need to become a COVID-19 expert, nor do you need to hear about every unpleasant detail from dawn until bedtime. Instead, focus on the positive so that you have the energy and resolve needed to weather this storm. Here are nine things you can do:

1. Limit your intake. You could watch 24-hour news channels, listen to dire warnings on the radio, or visit countless websites and be bombarded with the angst of the moment. Instead, choose a single news source and decide how much limited time you’ll spend with it each day. Then stick to your plan.

2. Look to the past. Get hope from your past resilience. You have likely endured other unforeseen major life disrupters like 9/11, major hurricanes, or the financial meltdown of 2008. You made it through! And you are stronger because of it. Know that you will get through this. Remind yourself of your resilience on a regular basis.

3. Watch a funny video. Thanks to the huge popularity of YouTube, there are thousands of videos that can help you take your mind off current events, if only for three minutes at a time. Start to bookmark the funniest among them so you can return for a repeat viewing whenever things feel gloomy.

4. Look after your neighbors. You may be at low risk of severe consequences from the virus, but it may not be the same for your neighbors whose immune systems are compromised. The act of checking in on them (keeping six feet apart, of course) will not only make them feel good, it will make you feel good and remind you that there are others for whom this predicament is even more stressful.

5. Support your favorite local business. Maybe you’re heeding the social distancing advice and aren’t eager to sit in a crowded restaurant right now. And others feel the same way. Those empty seats aren’t helping that restaurant owner to pay her staff or keep the restaurant in business. Buy a gift card to help the business owner now, and prepay for a wonderful meal you can have to celebrate when this pandemic is behind us.

6. Send gifts in the mail. It may not be wise to drop in on your loved ones with some fresh-baked goodies, so send them a card or gift in the mail. Unexpected treats can be a huge pick-me-up in times of stress. This is especially valuable to the elderly who are living in nursing homes. Many facilities have closed their doors to all visitors, making residents feel even more isolated and vulnerable.

7. Take advantage of found time. I’m a public speaker and my speaking gigs are canceling left and right. It’s stressful. I could wallow in that for days. But that wouldn’t be productive. These cancellations give me an opportunity to focus on some things I’ve had no time for and to accelerate my progress on other product offerings. It’s liberating, and that’s what I’ve decided to focus on. If your company has implemented a Work From Home (WFH) policy, how will you use the time you previously spent on commuting?

8. Practice random acts of kindness. Leave an envelope with a little gift for the delivery person who drops off your supplies outside your door. Or have a coffee delivered to your doorman. Your kindness doesn’t require a monetary outlay. Write an unsolicited book review for a friend of yours who is an author. Comment on a colleague’s LinkedIn post. Send a snail-mail note of appreciation to a friend or colleague. Many in the entire country of Italy broke out in song and applause to honor their healthcare workers. Thank the custodians in your building or workplace for their efforts to keep things safe. Think of those who could benefit from your thoughtfulness and generosity. Then act.

9. Take a daily inventory. Close your day, every day, with a positive acknowledgement of something you accomplished, learned or are grateful for. It will help dilute some of the negativity you’ve absorbed and remind you that not everything that’s happening right now is bad or depressing.

In times of constant negative messaging, you need an antidote so that you can keep your positive attitude and march forward with determination and hope. Be deliberate in activities that are positive, heartwarming, stress reducing and laughter inducing! Together, we’ll get through this.

Here are ideas to show you are still there in spirit and still care.

1. **Send snail mail**
   Handwritten cards and letters are more special than ever, perhaps because electronic communication is increasingly supplanting them. Recipients can display the cards and re-read correspondence to remind themselves that you care.

2. **Share a virtual meal**
   Plan a long-distance date. Order what your loved one likes — and pay for it — via a meal delivery service and make sure the meal gets there at the appropriate time. Then call to talk during the meal, making sure that your resident knows how to use a speakerphone feature on her cellphone or landline phone.

3. **Use other delivery services**
   You know the snacks your loved one likes. Since you can’t bring a few packages of treats during a visit, arrange for a bulk delivery.

   For those in assisted living or independent living who still like to cook, you can get their grocery lists and do the shopping for them or use a shopping service such as Instacart. Deliver the food as close in as you’re allowed and make sure to put the name and address or room number of the recipient on the boxes or bags.
4. Create your own FaceTime book club

If your kids are at an age where they love being read to, make sure Grandma or Grandpa has some kids’ books they can read aloud — if they don’t, order some online — using the video-calling feature on their digital device.

Among the most popular video calling apps is Apple’s FaceTime, but that’s for iPhones, iPads and Macintosh computers only. Amazon Alexa, Facebook Messenger, Google Duo, IMO, Skype, Viber and WhatsApp also work on Google Android, Microsoft Windows and other devices.

Be sure to coordinate so that everybody is on the same platform. This way, grandkids of different siblings can be on the same story time call.

Older kids can make the call more like adults’ book clubs. Both grandparent and grandchild can read a couple of chapters of the same book and talk about their impressions or what they learned.

Watching the same TV show, such as a documentary on Netflix or Amazon Prime, also can help spark discussion that spans generations.

And if reading a book or watching a documentary isn’t an option, perhaps because of your loved one’s memory loss, help the kids in a sing-along. Singing old, familiar songs — “Happy Birthday,” classic hymns if they’re religious — can bring back memories and is a skill that often remains even if speech is difficult.

5. Order a jigsaw puzzle — of your family

Mail-order companies specialize in custom puzzles from photographs or perhaps your child’s artwork. If your care recipient is a puzzle lover, you can have a puzzle delivered that contains 2,000 or more pieces. But also available are those with as few as 15 pieces, which might work well for people with dementia or less dexterity. While you’re at it, order a coffee mug with the favorite family photo, too.

6. Play a board game

Think about the games your family loved growing up, such as Clue, Monopoly, Life, Scrabble or Sorry, or if you have young kids, children’s classics such as Candyland or Chutes and Ladders. Familiarity with the rules is important.

Backgammon, bingo and chess also will work if you’ve played those in the past and both sides know the lingo of the game. Make sure identical game boards are set up at your house and your loved one’s home. You and your family then can play the game over the telephone, talking about how the dice landed and what moves your game piece is making.

A cellphone set on speaker will work well for this because games sometimes take hours. A video call also will add dimension but isn’t necessary if everyone commits to narrating their actions.

7. Assemble a hobby box

This is the time to find a nice box at a craft store, perhaps decorate it and fill it with items that your loved ones can come back to again and again.

Put in items that will work with their existing hobbies or ask what they’ve always wanted to try. Think crossword puzzle books for those who like a brain challenge, paints and suitable paper for those who have been artistic in the craft room, squishy balls and miniature Slinkys or other toys for those with a silly streak, yarn and hooks for crocheters.

Many communities have suspended group activities including crafts, so your loved ones have a lot more free time on their hands.

COVID-19 has altered the way we experience life, including for some increased anxiety, depression, and addictive behavior. It has also impacted the way we interact with others including our family members. Daily we face a variety of stressors related to our new circumstances including any of the following:

• Fear and worry about our own health and/or that of loved ones
• Sleep or concentration issues
• Worsening of chronic health problems due to healthcare uncertainties
• Deteriorating mental health conditions
• Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other mood-altering substances

There are, however, ways to deal with stress caused by COVID-19.

• Limit watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. The more we read or hear about the pandemic the more stressed we get.
• Take time to read or listen to scripture/devotionals.
• Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
• Eat healthy, well-balanced meals.
• Exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep.
• Avoid alcohol and drugs.
• Make time to unwind. Find time to play. Do activities you enjoy.
• Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
• If you are still feeling stressed or are starting to become depressed, reach out and ask for help.

While we are experiencing isolation, it is important to remember we are not alone during these times. We have a strong community to help each other. If you find the need for additional support, Samaritan continues to provide counseling services either virtually or in person. Finally, God is with us in all circumstances, even this good and unexpected journey.
An Update on

EXTRA MILE PROJECTS

by Pam Gillespie, Executive Director of Operations

Even though most of our buildings have been officially closed over the past couple of months, we have made considerable progress on our planned Extra Mile Projects. As a result of our congregation’s generosity, we received our original contribution goal of $700,000, and as these are designated funds, they can be used only for the specified purposes. Several of our projects will be completed by the time we reopen our campus. In addition to the items listed below, other improvements include the replacement of the remaining old HVAC units in the Educational Building. Planning and permitting is in process for the Chapel Renovation, the Sanctuary Chancel renovation (in addition to the lift replacement) and the Children’s Worship Space. Thank you so much for your generosity which has made all of these improvements possible.

Palms Preschool

The Preschool Wing will be ready to go by the time some of our children return in mid-June. These improvements include finishing the floor replacement and painting of all the classrooms and office area as well as updating the two large restrooms.

Campus Center

The kitchen is being updated as well as the two main restrooms and electrical and AV is also being updated.

Sanctuary Lift

The new lift in the Sanctuary will be installed and ready to use before we return to in-person worship.
Back to Basics Tutoring program was in full swing from September to March. Then we had the dangerous virus which suspended our on-campus tutoring. Thank you to all the tutors who continued to assist their students online. We did miss a very important Sunday on April 26 which was Back To Basics Volunteer Appreciation Day where we honor and thank the wonderfully dedicated volunteers who supervise and tutor our over 170 students. A special thank you to Babe Baptist who will be retiring from tutoring after 28 years of dedicated service who tutored algebra, geometry and other advanced math subjects. Babe tutored 6 hours a week and always had a positive attitude and a passion for young minds.

Please register for next school year by going online to www.churchofthepalms.org, then click the FAMILIES tab to find the Tutoring link. Read the short paragraph and click the “Learn More” button to find the online registration form. We need you and would love for you to return!
Below is the list of all the awesome volunteers who contributed to the HUGE success of the 2019-20 tutoring season.

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR PASSION AND CARE FOR THESE STUDENTS.

ANNETTE ALCANTAR
EVELYN ALCANTAR
BASIA AMBROZICH
DAYNA ANDERSON
JUDY ARMITAGE
BOB BAARSON
DOUG BALK
BABE BAPTIST
BENNIE BAPTIST
DAVID BATTEY
GENEVIEVE BEAUCHAMP
KAREN BEHNISCH
ROBERTA BENNINGHOFF
JACQUELINE BILLING
KATHY BISS-BARBERA
BARBARA BOUGOIN
DICK BOWDEN
CHARLIES BROOKS
JACK BROWN
LINDA BUDDE
RAQUEL BURNHAM
MAYA BUSIUOC
TYLER BUSUIOC
CAROL BUZILOW
JANET CELLA
GRACE CESPEDES
MARY COBLENTZ
DALE CONNER
MARY BETH CORDIER
JAMES CORSO
Marilyn COUNEN
JACKIE COWLES
KRISTI CRUWYS
DIANE CURTIS
DON CURTIS
JOE CYR
JENNY DECELLE
BAILEY DEMPSEY
JACQUELYN DIX
JIM ENGSTROM
RHODA ENGSTROM
AIDEN FARRELL
KAREN FEINBERG
SHERMAN FINGER
PAT FRAZIER
HENRY FRIEDL
AMY FRIEDRICH
NANCY FRITON
CHUCK FULTON
JUDY FULTON
TOM FULTON
HARVEY GARVER
CAROLINE GAST
LEE GAST
CANDY GIBBONS
GARY GIESCHE
KATY GOODWIN
KATHLEEN GOUGH
SUSAN GUICE
LINDA HALDERMAN
ANN HAMMAN
TED HEBERLING
MARILEE HEIDER
MELISSA HERNANDEZ
LEN HIGLEY
JOE HOCHADEL
PEGGY HOFFMAN
ARTHUR HOLDEN
JON CALEB HOUGHTON
RANDALL HOUSE
GEN HULL
JANET HUNT
CANDICE HUNTER
JIM HUNTER
CAROLE ISTOCK
Gwynn JACKSON
KIRK JEFFREY
ANNE JONES
EDWARD JONES
SUNSHINE KASSICEH
MELISSA KELLEY
DEE KENNEDY
GAYLE KING
DEBBIE KLINGER
MARGE KNOBLOCK
JOHN KOLSTAD
DAVID KOVALY
MARGO KRUISING
MICHAEL KURTZ
GRACE LAMPHERE
NANCY LANDT
LISA LANGHOUT
SUSAN J. LARSON
SUSAN M. LARSON
BEN LAWSON
TRU LAWTON
ROGER LEE
GALE LEW
LOIS LEWIS
MERNIE LONGMAN
ROBERT LUEDEKA
JUDY LUTES
KEITH MADDOX
DEBBY MAHONY
ROBERTA MALONEY
CHRISTINE MASON
PENNY MATHEWS
CAROLE MAZZOLA
CHARLENE MCCLAIN
JACKIE MCDOWELL
BILL MCDOWELL
JENNIFER MEINERT
MERRILL MELNICK
ANN MENZIE
TERRY MESLOH
EDWIN MEYER
VICKI MEYER
ROBERT MYERS
CHARLENE NOWAK
PETER NOWAK
SALLY NUNEMAKER
JEAN O'GILVIE
CATHERINE PALMORE
GREGG PEMBER
MAXINE PERRY
BRUCE PORTER
CAROL PUTNAM
ROBERT PUTNAM
JO-ANN PRYOR
MARSHA QUATTLEBAUM
MARCIA RAMLO
CINDY RAY
GARY REINMUTH
KATHLEEN REINMUTH
JOANNE ROBBINS
VAHOI ROBETOR
DELILAH ROGERS
SALLY ROWND
CINDY SARGENT
ALICE SCHERBERL
ROBERT SCHMITZ
KATHY SCHOENHALS
SUZY SCHOLL
ROGER SCOTT
ROBIN SHERIDAN
CHUCK SMITH
KIM SOURDEN
MARY ANN SPAYD
MARY BETH SPEAKER
DIANE SPENCER
ANDREW STAROSTECKI
MIKE STEPHENS
SARAH STERN
PATTY TASSONE
ANDY TUGENDHUT
TONY TULLY
MARGARETE VAN ANTWERPEN
CAROLYN VON SEELEN
JEAN WALKER
DEBORAH WATERMAN
LINDA WELCH
BARBARA WILLIAMS
CAROL WILLIAMS
JUDY WILLIAMS
THA SHEIN WIN
GEORGE ZUBULAKE
PHYLLIS ZUBULAKE
The photos show one of our little ones trying out an art activity sent to families by staff. Also, “driveway story time.”

And finally, a note inviting the children to take their teacher on adventures throughout the day.

PALMS PRESCHOOL
By Sandy Shockley

Our amazing preschool staff has done everything possible to keep the preschool ministry alive during this crazy time. We had to say goodbye to children and families we have grown to love, not knowing when we would see each other again. Children we have watched grow and learn since August, with no chance to see how much our hard work had paid off by May. This staff has gone above and beyond by sending small gifts to their little ones, through the mail. They have driven to each of their students’ homes to read them stories from the end of their driveway. They have had Zoom meetings, so that the children would have the opportunity to see their teacher and their friends. The teachers have taken the time to virtually celebrate birthdays and share in the joy of families welcoming new babies. All through emails, text messages and telephone calls. They have sent devotions to families and links to our chapel songs and messages. They have prayed for and checked in on each family. It has been quite a journey.

The incredible leadership of our church has monitored data of the virus in our area. With that, there is a decision to reopen the preschool on June 15th. There are extensive protocols in place as we look forward to welcoming our families back. We ask for your prayers as we transition into our summer program with obstacles we have never faced before.
CONGRATS SENIORS! • Front Lawn Signs Delivered
Presenting
The Graduating Class of 2020

JULIA BLOM
Florida State University
Favorite Memory: Summer camps and Cedarkirk.

BROOKE COLLINS
University of Florida
Favorite Memory: All the amazing friendships I have made at Church of the Palms.

JACK DEBERNARDO
State College of Florida
Favorite Memory: Helping at Go Fish Ministries (before arriving at Montreat).

LAUREN EGAN
Florida State University
Favorite Memory: Youth group trips, Confirmation and weekly youth group meetings.

KAYLA FALBO
Santa Fe College
Favorite Memory: Youth group trips - Rock the Universe and Montreat!

ALEXANDER GARDNER
Princeton University

ANDREW LEAVER
University of Florida
Favorite Memory: Montreat

KENDALL LIGON
Florida State University
Favorite Memory: Homeless Sleepover

ALLISON LINDELL
University of Central Florida
Favorite Memory: Attending youth group - I have found people who will be in my life forever.

CONNOR MCKEEEHAN
Virginia Tech

ADAM RENTZ
University of Florida
Favorite Memory: Attending Montreat every summer for the past 3 years.

JARED ROMINE
Florida State University
Favorite Memory: Summer trips and knowing that all of my favorite people are at Church of the Palms.

Become a Palms Angel
A Palms Angel connects with a student from time to time so they know their church family is cheering for them in ways such as by prayer, sending an encouraging note, text, occasional gift card or care package. Contact Lisa Baughman: lbaughman@churchofthepalms.org

CLICK HERE to view a video from our graduates.
More Good News

The Gospel of Mark

Join us for our daily devotions as we read through the Gospel of Mark during June and July.
## Reading Schedule

| JUNE 1 | JUNE 2 | JUNE 3 | JUNE 4 | JUNE 5 | JUNE 6 | JUNE 7 | JUNE 8 | JUNE 9 | JUNE 10 | JUNE 11 | JUNE 12 | JUNE 13 | JUNE 14 | JUNE 15 | JUNE 16 | JUNE 17 | JUNE 18 | JUNE 19 | JUNE 20 | JUNE 21 | JUNE 22 | JUNE 23 | JUNE 24 | JUNE 25 | JUNE 26 | JUNE 27 | JUNE 28 | JUNE 29 | JUNE 30 | JUNE 31 |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|

## More Good News - Bible Art Journaling Group on Zoom

Participants will follow the daily scriptures, devotions and questions from the *More Good News* series. Class will meet weekly on Wednesday afternoons via Zoom for discussion and to show-and-tell our art. For more info/sign up, contact Faith Reynolds: faithreynolds@me.com

Visit our Facebook page daily and engage with us as we explore questions connected to the daily readings.

Click Here to be taken to our Facebook page.

Click Here to view a special message from Dr. McConnell.
Many people face a crisis every day in their lives.

Whether they are caring for a sick family member, going through a long period of unemployment, or experiencing incurable pain, they may benefit from the support and care of a Stephen Minister. Contact Dr. Hmingi Browne: hbrowne@churchofthepalms.org

Hospital Visits

If you are in the hospital or are going to be admitted into a hospital and would like a visit from the pastors and Visitation Ministry Team, please contact Pastor Hmingi Browne (941.924.1323). Because of privacy reasons, hospitals will not provide us with the information that we need unless they have your consent to do so. We want to ensure that we are aware of your visitation needs.
Church of the Palms is preparing to serve 250 children at this important local mission here on Saturday, July 18, 2020.

The need of these children in our community is even greater than ever before. Backpacks filled with school supplies, personal care items, gift cards, and food will be distributed at this Drive-Thru event. How can you help?

- **Monetary Donations.** These ensure that we are able to purchase all our supplies for the students. Make your checks payable to Church of the Palms with Day of Hope listed on the memo line. $100 sponsors one child.

- **Volunteers.** Volunteers will load cars, help with registration, and help direct parking lot traffic.

- **Children and Adult-sized toothbrushes and travel-size tubes of toothpaste**

- **New Children’s Coloring Books and Crayons, Sticker books, Activity books/workbooks.** Christian themes are preferred. Dollar Tree is a good source.

All non-monetary donations can be left in the plastic bin outside the Admin Building Monday through Friday from 9 am-4 pm.

Our 9th Day of Hope is an important continuing mission at Church of the Palms, helping children and families right here in our community! Thank you for your help!

[CLICK HERE to Serve as a DOH volunteer.](#)

[CLICK HERE to Give Online to DOH. Select fund “Day of Hope”](#)
CELEBRATING PENTECOST

CLICK HERE to view the Pentecost Sunday video.
STAY CONNECTED WITH US

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE PALMS
DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Gentle Grace Yoga

Watercolor Wednesday

Facebook.com/COPSarasota
Stay connected and engage with us via our Facebook page. Be sure to check daily for questions and prompts regarding our Daily Devotionals.

Youtube.com/ChurchofthePalms
Sanctuary Worship:
Sundays, 9 & 11 am

Contemporary Worship:
Sundays, 10 am • Campus Center

Livestream (Online Worship):
Sundays, 9 am
www.churchofthepalms.org/watch.html

Our Pastors, staff and Session invite you to share not only in our worship, but also in the exciting opportunities that Church of the Palms offers to learn, serve and grow in your faith.

www.churchofthepalms.org