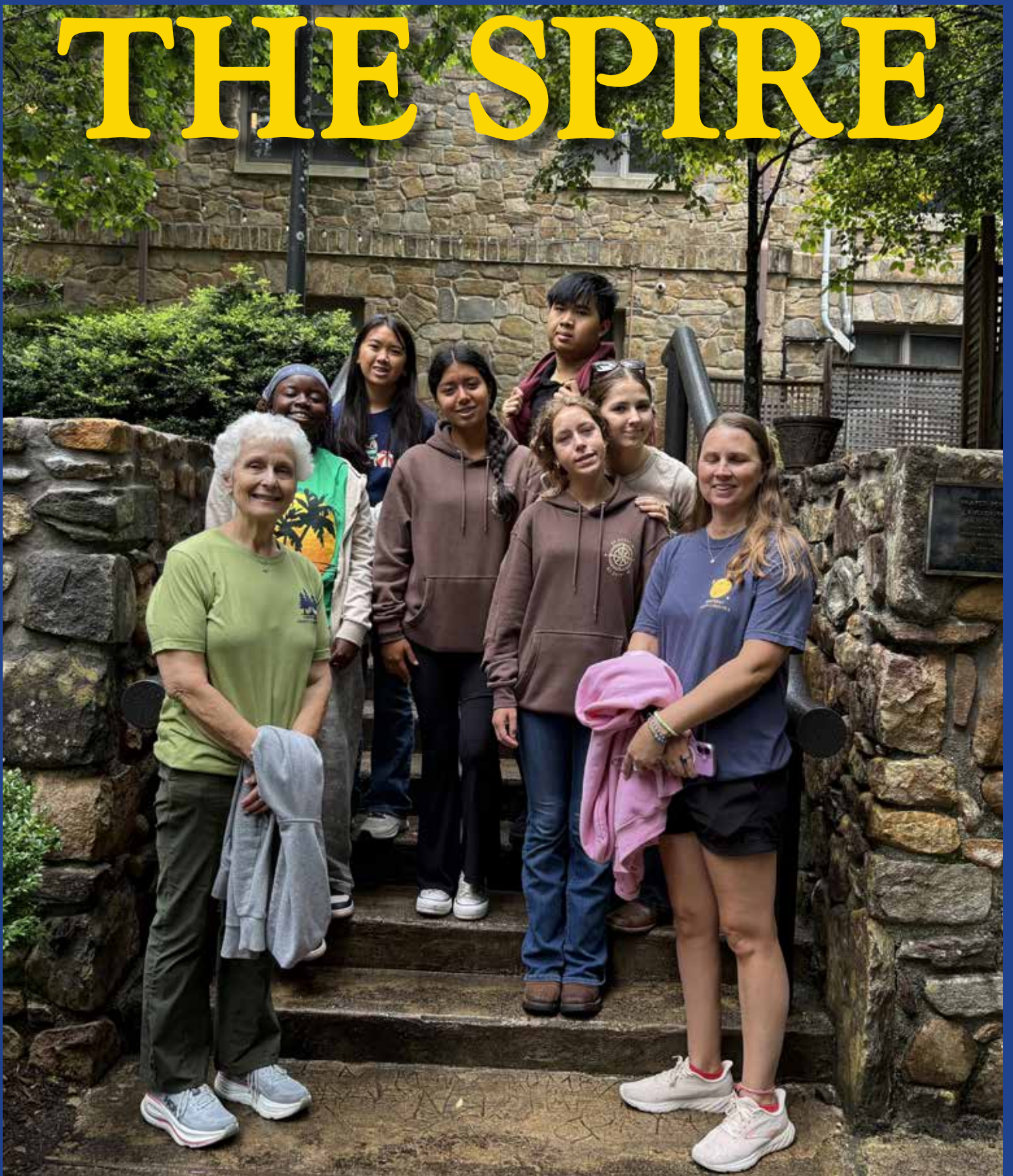


THE SPIRE



Your Church Magazine

September /October 2026



NURTURE FAITH

by Dr. Doug Hood

Pastor

MOVING ON FROM PAST MISTAKES

"I do this one thing: I forget about the things behind me and reach out for the things ahead of me."

Philippians 3:13b (Common English Bible)

How do you view the past? That is a good question for any of us. Or consider another question—Does the past have power over you? Are there regrets that interfere with your well-being and, consequently, the well-being of those who know you and love you? Perhaps thoughts of hurting someone or betraying someone continue to bobble up into the present with the unfortunate result of self-recrimination. Have you taken all your mistakes and failures of the past and carefully preserved them in a time capsule that you open far too often? Each time the time capsule is opened, you hand power to the past to beat yourself up and interfere with your ability to be your best self. Dwelling on the past offers one thing—self-condemnation.

Self-condemnation influences the way we think and how we live in the present. Self-condemnation gift-wraps and hands us a “loser-limp”—a term I learned from Zig Ziglar, which simply means that we limp through life as though we have an injury from the past. Those with a loser-limp conclude that the past is responsible for a miserable present, and there is nothing that can be done. A limp is a limp, and we must learn to adapt. What many fail to grasp is that punishing yourself for the past does not change the past. And the only thing worse than a mistake or failure in the past is to live poorly into the future. An example would be a young person who once tried a dating website only to experience failure in finding a meaningful relationship. They now choose self-pity rather than, as the apostle Paul puts it, “reach out for the things ahead of me.”

Paul does not indulge in self-loathing, self-pity, or self-recrimination. Remember, it was Paul that held the coats of men while they stoned Stephen, an early Christian, to death simply because of his faith in Christ. Those who stoned Stephen asked Paul to hold their coats so they would have maximum range of arm movement in throwing the stones at Stephen. Paul is now a great evangelist for Jesus Christ. What Paul is teaching the church in Philippi is that he refuses to give power to his past. Paul refuses the “loser-limp” mentality because the work ahead of him is too important to be hindered by baggage from past failures, mistakes, and

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THE SPIRE MAGAZINE

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**If you or a family member
are hospitalized, please
notify the church office.
Even if you give the
name of the church upon
admission, the hospital
will NOT notify us.**

disappointments. The past cannot be changed. And punishing himself for the past only enables self-destructive behavior. Paul will permit nothing from interfering with him from being his best self for Jesus.

When one sets their eyes upon what is ahead of them—not what is behind them—hope flourishes. That is because we do not heal the past, says Marianne Williamson, by dwelling there. We heal the past by living fully in the present.¹ The past may hold lessons for the present and the future. Wisdom instructs that we visit the past only for what we can learn and then turn our attention immediately to the present. That is when our thinking shifts and our behavior changes. Thomas Edison was found one morning standing before the charred ruins of his laboratory in Princeton, New Jersey after a fire. When condolences were offered, he responded that he was grateful for the fire. Edison continued that a good many of his past failures were destroyed. Now they would not be around to tease him as he continued his pursuits of ideas that would improve life for everyone. Or, as Paul teaches, “I forget about the things behind me and reach out for the things ahead of me.”

¹Marianne Williamson, *13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do*. (New York, NY: William Morrow: An Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers, 2014) p. 129. ●

by Nancy Fine

Business Administrator

PRAYING ON BEHALF OF OTHERS

Prayer is something we do in worship. It is something we do when we or someone we love is sick, when we are facing a difficult decision, or when we simply need to feel God's presence. But prayer is much more than bringing our own needs and concerns to God. Prayer also calls us to look beyond ourselves and pray on behalf of others. When we pray for someone else, we are offering an act of love, placing that person in God's care and trusting that God is present in their life.

The word **PRAYER** itself can give us a helpful guide. **P—Praise:** We praise God for who God is. **R—Reflect:** We reflect on God's goodness and faithfulness. **A—Ask:** We bring our needs and the needs of others before God. **Y—Yield:** We surrender to God's will and listen for God's guidance. **E—Encourage:** We ask God to encourage and strengthen ourselves and others. **R—Receive:** We receive God's grace and allow God's presence to shape our lives. Each of these reminds us that prayer is not simply about asking God to fix something; it is about deepening our relationship with God.

When we pray on behalf of others, we become part of their journey in a special way. We may pray for someone who is grieving, someone who is ill, someone facing a difficult decision, or someone who simply needs to know that they are not alone. We may not be able to change their circumstances, but we can bring their names and needs before God. Sometimes, we may never know how God answered our prayer. Yet we can trust that our prayers are an expression of love and that God hears us when we pray for one another.

Prayer on behalf of others also changes us. As we pray, we may find our own hearts becoming more compassionate, patient, and willing to help. We are reminded that we are part of a community of faith in which we carry one another's joys and burdens. To pray for someone is to say, “You are not alone. I am carrying you to God.” And perhaps that is one of the greatest gifts we can give another person—not an answer or a solution, but the assurance that they are remembered, loved, and held in prayer.

If you have a prayer concern, or would like to join the prayer team, contact Nancy Fine in the church office. ●

by Maria Graham

MONDAY MORNING WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

After completing a Bible Project study on the Sermon on the Mount, and then a short summer break, the Monday Morning Women's Bible Study resumes on September 14th with season two of **Jesus the Game Changer**. Entitled 'To the Ends of the Earth', this video study investigates what happened after Jesus' Resurrection. It unveils the inspiring, sometimes forgotten or rarely told stories of game changers of the faith who risked danger and death to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Host Karl Faase takes us on a journey from the backwaters of the Roman Empire to the ends of the earth in the 21st Century, telling some of the great stories of faith and sacrifice. We meet at 10 a.m. on Monday mornings via Zoom. Newcomers are always welcome to join us as we learn, laugh, and pray together. Contact Maria Graham at mmg2352@gmail.com for the link to access our meetings. ●

by Fred McNaboe

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Welcome to The Men's Breakfast Gathering
Most Thursdays at 8:30 a.m.

Every Thursday morning at 8:30, the men's group of First Delray gathers at the Original Pancake House (1840 S. Federal Hwy) for a warm meal and a time of connection. Our meetings are well attended, sharing stories, faith, and practical advice. The group offers a safe place for men to grow in camaraderie and purpose. We welcome all men in our community to join us. Contact Fred John McNaboe (561-350-4294 or mcnaboe@aol.com) for more information. ●

by Dolores McNaboe

WOMEN'S LUNCH BY THE SEA

On the second Tuesday of the month, all women of the church are invited to attend the Women's Lunch by the Sea. Hosted by Dolores McNaboe and Kathy Wilsher, this casual, no-pressure gathering is designed for women seeking a warm, inclusive lunch environment. Join them at noon at Boheme Bistro on Atlantic Ave, just a short walk from the church. Separate checks are provided, and no reservations are needed. For more information, contact Dolores (561-702-4142) or Kathy (561-252-0709). ●



NEW MEMBER

Marianne Barone

WELCOME

ETERNAL LIVES

Our Deepest Sympathies as a congregation are extended to the families of the following member upon the death of their loved one:

– Mary (Bette) Wolfe –
June 15, 2026

– Edward Van Horne –
August 5, 2026



SESSION REPORT

In June and July, the Session approved one baptism and received one new member.. ●



First Delray *Through the Generations*

Compiled by
Carolyn Kettle and Jen Buce

The original Sanctuary on the First Presbyterian campus was built in 1924 and was the only church on the barrier island. According to the 1930 census, Delray Beach had a population of 1,800. For many years, the town was quiet in the summer and came to life in the winter as older residents returned and families visited their parents and grandparents. Sundays were for dressing in your Sunday best for church, followed by a large family lunch or supper. With its warm tropical climate, graceful palm trees, and welcoming residents, Delray Beach has long been a beautiful place to visit and a place many now call home.

First Delray is home to many multigenerational families, both long-standing and newly joined. I believe this reflects the church's tradition of keeping its doors open and welcoming new members with warmth, kindness, and God's love. Several of these families are highlighted below with their stories.

1924



POTTS

In 1972, John and Sherry moved from Mobile, Alabama, where they had been members of Spring Hill Presbyterian. Sherry's parents, Roy and Ruth Morris, were already members of First Delray, and John and Sherry were seeking a church home where they could raise their two children, Penny and John. Both children were baptized, confirmed, and married at our church. Penny's children, Harper and Kole Hawk, were also baptized and raised here, and Harper recently transferred her membership to Westminster Presbyterian in Nashville. Sherry, John, and Penny have all served as Deacons, and Penny also taught Sunday School and Confirmation classes. Doris Rinker Potts, William Kole Brown Potts, and Deborah Potts Quanaime, all of whom died in 1986, are interred in the memorial garden.

COOK

Jim and Kay Cook joined the church in 1997 with their youngest daughter, Kimberly. Jim's parents, Ralph and Gladys Cook, joined at the same time. Jim later served as an Elder, Trustee, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees, while Kay taught Sunday School and Children's Church. The Cooks' oldest daughter, Kristen Cook Oliver, joined in 2000 and taught Sunday School. Her children, Christopher, William, and Elizabeth, were active in youth activities and the children's choir. William and Elizabeth were baptized at the church. In 2002, Kimberly married Aaron Anglemeyer, and their daughter, Hannah, was confirmed in 2024, has participated in Youth Group, delivered sermons on Youth Sundays, and attended Montreat. Kathryn, Kimberly's youngest daughter, plans to join the next confirmation class. The Cooks' middle daughter, Karyn Cook Milhous, regularly watches the livestream from California with her husband and two sons. The Cook family is inspired by the preaching, the music, the beauty of the Sanctuary, the leadership, and the warm friendliness of the congregation.

DUANE

Marshall and Susan Daune joined the church in 1955 with their parents and raised their three children in the church. Marshall was a Deacon, Member of Session, the Chair for one of our Capital Campaigns, Stewardship Chair, Endowment Chair, taught Sunday School, and helped with the renovation of Fellowship Hall and the memorial garden.

BUCE

Irene Way, originally from the Chicago area, settled in Delray Beach and joined First Delray on December 18, 1955. After moving from the Chicago area, Irene's daughter, Peg, and son-in-law, Pete, joined in 1961 with their young daughters, Jamie and Penny. Both Pete and Peg served as Elders for multiple years. Pete and Peg served the church in many roles and were instrumental in establishing the Achievement Center for Children & Families. Peg served on the membership team, prayer chain, and volunteered in the office. In 2005, She was recognized for 50 years of service to First Delray. Jamie Whalen, Peg's daughter, served as a Deacon.

Trudi Pagan (Buce) was confirmed in 1985 and later married in the church in 1999; her daughters, Cameron and Jordan, were baptized and attended Sunday School. Although Jordan, Jennifer's niece, does not live locally, she attends First Presbyterian whenever she is home and considers it her home church. Jennifer Buce became an active member in 2009. For several years, Jennifer led the children's programming and was very involved with the youth group. Jennifer was a Deacon and now serves as an Elder and is a member of the Mission Outreach Committee. Her true passion is mission work, and she participates in as many church mission trips as possible. Irene Way was interred in the memorial garden in 1986, Pete in 1993, and Peg in 2016.

THERRELL

In 2023, Rachel Therrell began looking for a church like the Presbyterian church where she grew up—traditional, yet active with opportunities for families and children. On her first visit to First Delray, she noticed a children's moment during worship. After a few more visits, she learned about the Christmas Pageant and youth group and began bringing her daughters, Victoria, Alana, and Quinn, along with her mother, Kathy Merritt, who teaches Sunday School.

After speaking with then-youth pastor Greg Rapier, Rachel learned that the youth often travel to Montreat, North Carolina. Having attended the Montreat Music and Worship Conference every summer from sixth through twelfth grade, she had long hoped her daughters would one day experience its beauty and uniqueness. After worshiping faithfully for more than a year, the family transferred their membership from First Presbyterian Church of Pompano—the Pink Church—to First Delray. Since joining, Rachel has been hired as the Family Ministry Associate, and the whole family has returned to Montreat for middle school and high school programs. Quinn attends Ms. Sandy's Sunday School class and sings in the choir; Alana participates in God Squad, youth group, and the children's choir, where she wrote and sang two songs; and Victoria works in the nursery, attends youth group when possible, and completed confirmation in 2025. The family also attends or volunteers at church events such as Youth Sunday, fellowship hour, trivia night, and Vacation Bible School.

VAN HORN

The Van Horn family attended Doylestown Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania for 20 years, where Ashley and her older sister, Sarah, began singing in the choirs at age three. John V.H. and Ashley served as ushers, and Donna played in the bell choir and taught Vacation Bible School. First Delray felt like "home" from the moment they attended their first Christmas Eve service. In 2020, just before COVID, John Van Horn, daughter Ashley Van Horn Harper, son-in-law John Harper, and grandson Mason Harper joined First Delray. The Van Horns and Harpers have served as Deacons, with Donna serving one year as moderator. Donna also helped create the Deacon Sunday service and is active in Holly House and the First Delray Ringers. Ashley sings in the choir, and the family has helped with greeting and collecting the offering. Mason is active in Sunday School and has participated in the Children's Choir, Youth Sunday, and the Easter and Christmas pageants. They were warmly welcomed by Doug and Grace Hood, and Nancy Fine made them feel that they belonged. The children's programs and music closely reflected what they valued at Doylestown Presbyterian, and their family finds great joy in sitting together most Sundays.

continued on page 10



by **Grace Cameron Hood**

Director of Children and Family Ministry

Our bowling trip

on August 2nd was so much fun.

The rain did not keep us away!!





You are invited to a fun afternoon on November 8 , 2026, from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m. at PopStroke in Delray Beach. The afternoon includes lunch, games, equipment, and unlimited soft drinks. There is a charge of \$20 per person and a \$40 family cap. Lunch includes smashburgers, chicken tenders, fries, and a fruit platter. Reservations will be required. You can sign up at church or on our website under Upcoming Events.



Sunday School + News +

**DO NOT FORGET THE WONDERFUL
PROGRAMMING FOR CHILDREN.**

- Nursery for birth through 3 years
- Bible Bunch for 3 through Kindergarten led by Alice Barrett and Ali Potter
- Primary Sunday School for First Grade through Fourth Grade led by Sandy McGilvray and Marianne Darby
- God Squad for Fifth grade on up led by Grace Hood
- High School Class led by Rachel Therrell

Special Note to Parents of Children

Each year we ask parents to fill out new permission forms so that we can keep our records up to date and keep everyone safe. Please pick up your form at the entrance to the Primary Sunday School Class. ●

It's beginning to look like ... well, no, it isn't looking like anything but summer. However, at Holly House, the calendar is telling us that it is time to begin preparing for the upcoming holiday season. While several of our members are still away, those who remain are creating items to make your homes more festive for the fall and the holidays.

Our annual Holiday Gift Shoppe will open for church members on Sunday, October 11th, after the church service. Light refreshments will be served. Shopping opportunities will continue until the weekend before Christmas.

While you are waiting for the Gift Shoppe, don't forget that we are open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 10 a.m. to noon. You never know when you may find exactly the item you wanted. ●



Holly House is a mission of our church, and all proceeds go to the support of the church.

SIMMEL

In 1997, just after college, Shelly Simmel first came to First Delray for several reasons: it was the faith tradition in which she had been raised, she lived across the street, and the church was convenient. Most of all, she was drawn to Dr. Bush's sermons, which were both inspiring and practical. Today, Shelly is drawn to Dr. Hood for many of the same reasons.

Ten years later, Shelly's son enjoyed Parents' Morning Out, especially Ms. Alice, as well as several years of Vacation Bible School.

Nearly two decades later, Meghan and Brian Simmel attended a service and were inspired by Dr. Hood's sermon. Meghan felt as though he was speaking directly to her. It was her first time inside a Presbyterian church, and she had many questions. Soon after, Dr. Hood met her for coffee and graciously answered each one. Meghan was searching for a church where her family would hear about the goodness of God's love and see that love reflected in the people around them—and she found it at First Presbyterian. Judy, her mother-in-law, was drawn to the church for many of the same reasons. As the family continued to grow in faith, they felt First Delray was where they belonged and decided to become members together.

ANDERSON

Stephanie and Joaquin Negrón joined the church in 2013 with their young children, Lydia and Tomás. Lydia and Tomás have been active in Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Youth Sunday, and the Christmas and Easter pageants. Lydia has performed several solo songs in the pageants, and Tomás helps on Sunday mornings in the video booth. Two years later, Steve and Holly Anderson joined First Delray and quickly became deeply involved. Holly participates in Holly House and First Delray Ringers and has served as a Deacon, chairing the Deacons' Christmas Tree. Both Steve and Holly are active with the Rummage Sale and Vacation Bible School, with Steve staffing the grill for hot dog sales during the Rummage Sale. Steve has served as a Trustee, Elder, and Deacon. As a Deacon, he worked diligently to raise funds for the youth scholarship fund. He also serves on the Mission Outreach Committee and the Board of Directors for CROS Ministries. Steve has also led the congregation in worship, offering insight into his gifts as an educator.

There are many generational families within First Presbyterian, which is a testimony to how strong we are. If we missed your family, please contact Nancy Fine. We will include you in the next Spire. ●

continued from page 7



If you attended worship services in the Sanctuary this summer, you may have noticed some changes. Our failing air-conditioning system was no longer able to adequately cool the space. It became so warm that Dr. Hood made the decision that he and the choir would not wear robes, knowing that a new system would soon be installed.

After finally receiving the permit for the new air-conditioning system from the city, temporary cooling units were installed. You may have noticed their hum during worship, but they brought the temperature back to a more comfortable level. Most importantly, they reduced the humidity from 78% to 48%—a significant improvement that made a real difference in the Sanctuary.

Hill York, our air-conditioning vendor, has now removed the old equipment and is in the process of installing new units. The new system will not only keep our Sanctuary and Education Building cool, but will also maintain a much more comfortable humidity level.

This important improvement, made possible through your generosity to our Renew & Rejoice Capital Campaign, is the first step toward the next phase of work in the Sanctuary: new paint and flooring. As of August 18, 2026, we have received pledges totaling \$3,902,761 toward our campaign. Because we are undertaking these projects on a cash basis, your continued support is essential to maintaining our momentum and allowing us to move forward with these improvements.

A huge thank you goes to Bill Bathurst and Jen Buce, who worked with the city to help expedite the stalled air-conditioning permit. Their efforts helped us reach this important milestone.

If you have not yet pledged to the Renew & Rejoice Capital Campaign, we invite you to complete a pledge form on our website or pick up a form in the church lobby. Every gift and every pledge helps us care for this place we love.

Together, we are renewing our facilities and rejoicing in all that God is accomplishing in this place. ●

October FOOD DRIVE

FEED HOPE • SHARE LOVE • MAKE A DIFFERENCE



This October, we have an opportunity to help our neighbors who are facing hunger and food insecurity through our annual food drive benefiting CROS Ministries. Hunger is a very real concern in Palm Beach County, affecting individuals and families who may be struggling to make ends meet. CROS Ministries works throughout Palm Beach County and Martin County to provide food to people in need through food pantries, mobile distributions, and other programs. In 2025 alone, CROS food pantries provided bags of food to 121,561 individuals.



When you shop for the October Food Drive, please look for **unopened, unexpired, non-perishable foods**. These items are especially helpful because they can be safely stored and distributed to families through the food pantry. Consider adding a few extra items to your grocery cart each week. Some suggestions include **canned vegetables, canned fruit, canned beans, canned tuna or chicken, peanut butter, pasta, pasta sauce, rice, dried beans, cereal, oatmeal, macaroni and cheese, canned soups, canned pasta, shelf-stable milk, and other nutritious pantry staples**. Every bag makes a difference.



Our food drive is a simple way to put our faith into action. When we give food, we are doing more than filling a pantry shelf—we are helping a neighbor put a meal on the table. CROS Ministries' mission is to provide food for hungry and food-insecure neighbors in partnership with the community, and their network includes a food pantry in Delray Beach. Our donations become part of a larger effort to ensure that people in our community have access to food with dignity and compassion.



**PLEASE BRING YOUR BAGS OF FOOD
TO CHURCH ON SUNDAY MORNINGS
THROUGHOUT OCTOBER.**



If you would prefer to make a monetary donation, you may make your check payable to **"CROS Ministries."** Whether you give a bag of groceries or a financial gift, your generosity helps make a tangible difference in the lives of our neighbors. This October, let us remember that sharing what we have is one way we can live out Christ's call to love and care for one another.



**CROS
MINISTRIES**

Together, we can end hunger. ♥

World COMMUNION Sunday



For we are
one body in Christ,
and individually
members one
of another.

ROMANS 12:5

OCTOBER 4TH



On **Sunday, October 4th**, Christians around the world will gather around the Lord's Table to celebrate World Communion Sunday. Although we worship in different languages, traditions, and cultures, we share one faith and one table. **World Communion Sunday** reminds us that the church is much larger than any one congregation or denomination. At the communion table, we are connected with sisters and brothers in Christ across our community, our country, and throughout the world.



World Communion Sunday is also an opportunity to remember that our unity does not mean that we are all the same. God's family is wonderfully diverse. We come from different backgrounds, have different experiences, and worship in different ways, yet we are united by the love of Christ. As we receive the bread and cup, we are reminded that Christ calls us to live not only for ourselves but also for one another—to welcome, serve, forgive, and care for our neighbors near and far.

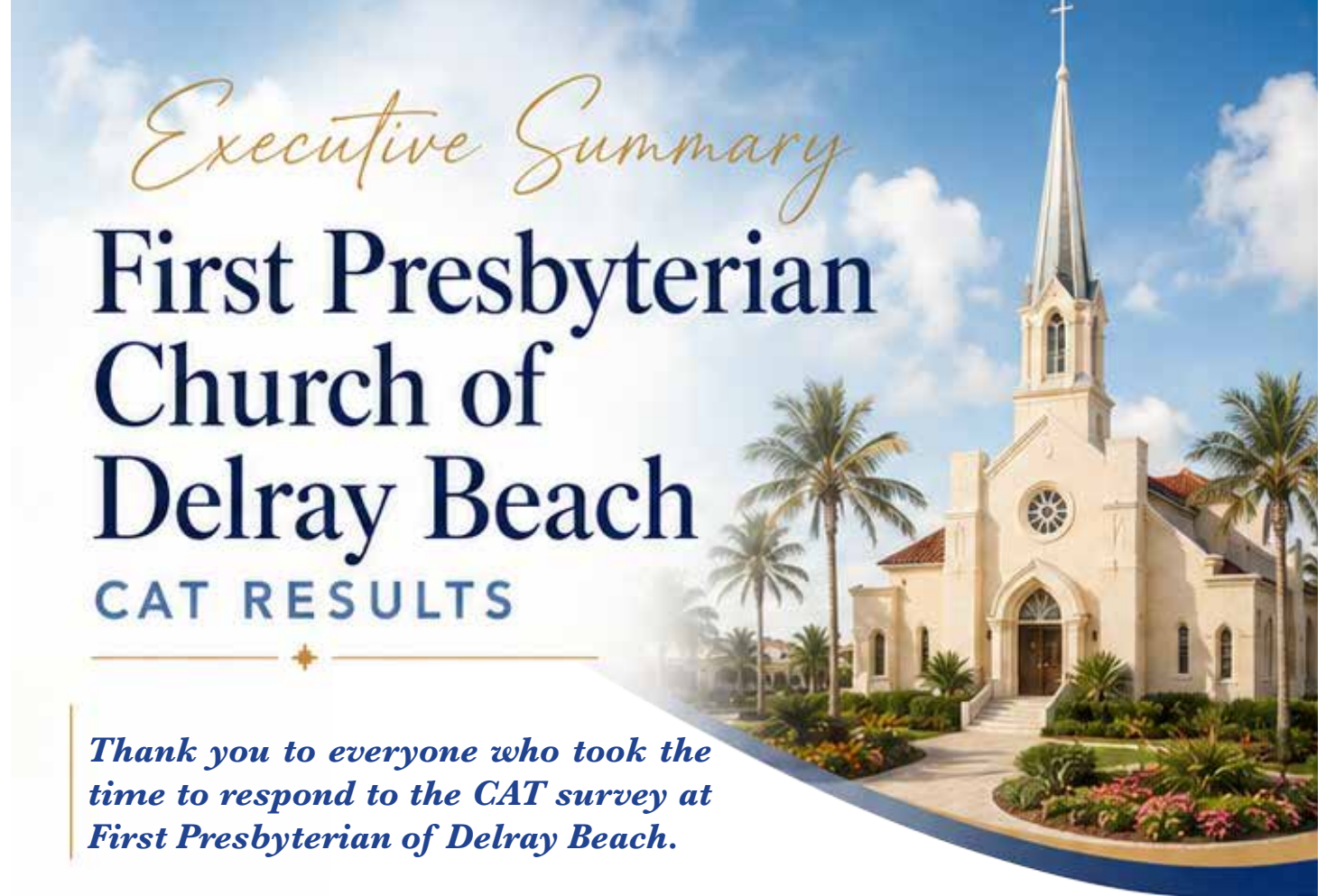


As we celebrate World Communion Sunday on October 4, may the table remind us of both our **unity and our responsibility**. We are nourished by God's grace so that we can carry that grace into the world. May we leave the table with hearts open to those who are different from us, hands ready to serve, and a renewed commitment to be Christ's people in the world. One table. One body. One faith. One hope in Christ.



ONE TABLE. ONE BODY. ONE FAITH. ONE HOPE
in Christ.





Executive Summary

First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach

CAT RESULTS

Thank you to everyone who took the time to respond to the CAT survey at First Presbyterian of Delray Beach.

In Spring 2026, members of First Presbyterian Church of Delray received a survey, the Congregation Assessment Tool, prepared by Holy Cow Consulting. This survey is utilized by First Presbyterian's Presbytery, the Presbytery of Tropical Florida, to provide church leaders with information about the health of their faith community, a sense of the direction that the members feel the church should be heading, and a description of the church as a unique body of parishioners. We are pleased with a very high participation rate. Of those asked to participate, 73% responded.

One of the most encouraging findings is that our congregation ranks in the High Energy/High Satisfaction area. This means members are not only highly satisfied with the life of the church but are also actively engaged in its ministry and mission.

Key Performance Indicators show exceptional congregational health across multiple metrics. During the upcoming pastoral transition 80% of respondents indicate they intend to maintain their current participation level with the rest indicating they are willing to have a higher level of involvement. The congregation also indicated, at a rate of 97%, that they anticipate maintaining or increasing their financial contribution levels. These results indicate profound stability.

The assessment indicates that First Presbyterian enjoys high levels of congregational vitality. Across multiple categories, members expressed both strong commitment to the church and confidence in its future. Worship and Music are ranked exceptionally high, followed closely by Morale, Spiritual Vitality, and Hospitality.

The exciting and challenging news for us at First Presbyterian is that while we are currently a healthy, vibrant congregation as we prepare for a pastoral transition, we have also made our aspirations for our future known through the CAT. The breakdown of the various responses in the Performance Indices provides our church leaders with areas of opportunity for reflection and potential actions to move us to the achievement of our expressed priorities/aspirations.

Members identified the following areas of priority/opportunity.

1. Develop a comprehensive strategy to reach and incorporate new people.
 2. Execute changes to attract families with children and youth.
 3. Expand Christian education and spiritual formation opportunities and build relationships.
-



Your Pastor Nominating Committee will use these results as one of many tools to guide the search for our next pastor. Your thoughtful responses will help shape **this important process** as well as guide the **future of the church**.

Thank you to everyone who participated.

As we move forward, these results can only make us optimistic about the road ahead.

This is the last installment of this series, celebrating First Delray's 100 years of ministry and the impact that the church has had on agencies supported through the Mission Outreach Budget.



On behalf of the families we serve and our entire organization, Family Promise of Southeast Florida extends heartfelt congratulations to First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach on your 100th anniversary. We are deeply grateful for the church's unwavering support throughout our history.

As one of our original host sites during the rotational shelter model, your congregation opened its doors and hearts to families in crisis. Over the years, you have continued to walk alongside us—providing holiday gifts, running essential drives, offering hot meals and groceries, and contributing generous financial support. These gifts have helped us provide emergency shelter, grocery gift cards, and comprehensive family services that bring stability and hope to patients and children during their most difficult times.

With your enduring support, we have been able to assist thousands of families on their journey to sustainable independence, advancing our mission of transforming the lives of parents and children in crisis. Your partnership has truly made a lasting and meaningful impact—not only on Family Promise of Southeast Florida, but on the entire community we serve. We are honored to be part of your legacy of compassion, outreach, and service.

With gratitude,

Jennifer Raymond

Executive Director



Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse

Dear members of First Presbyterian Church in Delray Beach,

Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse, Inc. (AVDA) is so grateful to the congregation of First Presbyterian Church in Delray Beach for its long-term support of our organization. First Presbyterian Church in Delray Beach has provided much-needed support dating back to the days when AVDA was a newly formed organization.

AVDA's mission is to offer life-saving services while promoting violence-free, equitable relationships and creating the social changes necessary to end domestic and dating violence.

In 1986, AVDA started off as a shelter for victims of domestic violence, with room for 12 people at a time. Initially relying on many volunteers to operate, AVDA grew substantially over the years. Today, in October 2025, AVDA's residential programs can house up to 94 people (and their pets) at any one time, in emergency shelter or longer-term transitional housing, at AVDA's Casa Vegso. For survivors of domestic violence who do not seek residential services, all the supportive services are available through AVDA's Outreach Services. A 24-hour emergency hotline is available to assist callers (or through texting) with assistance with their safety concerns. Access to a language line 24/7 provides immediate assistance with translation so that there are no barriers to accessing help at the most critical time in one's life.

In the late 1990's, AVDA started its domestic violence prevention education program, which today is known as Commit to Change—A Violence Prevention Initiative. Through this program, AVDA strives to create the social changes necessary to end domestic and dating violence. A significant part of this work involves engaging men and boys in the prevention of violence against women and girls. Last year, through all services, over 11,000 people in Palm Beach County were affected by AVDA.

In today's world, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 7 men report having been the victim of intimate partner violence at some point in their lives. It is our hope that when members of your congregation reflect on this in the future that you will be so shocked by these reported numbers because you live in a world that has no tolerance for violence—one that uplifts one another and offers unconditional support for fellow human beings.

On behalf of the many people we serve in our community, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for you.

Respectfully,
Pam O'Brien, MSW, JD
President & CEO ●

by Lori Hackenberg
Moderator

DEACONS' CORNER

This year is flying by! I can't believe I'm already writing about the upcoming Deacons' Christmas Tree, which will pop up in our lobby in November. It seems like just yesterday we were gathering for our July 26 church picnic!

We recently finished cleaning up from the picnic, where we partnered with the Fellowship Team to enjoy a wonderful summer fellowship event. It was a special time to sit down with old friends, make new ones, and enjoy being together as a church family.

And now, with fall just around the corner, it's time to start thinking about the Deacons' Christmas Tree and the gifts we will provide to children in our community through five local agencies. This annual project is a wonderful way for our congregation to share the joy of Christmas with children who might otherwise have a very different holiday. Be on the lookout for more information about how you can support this special ministry! ●



First Delray Concert Series

Music by the Sea

WE ARE A CONGREGATION THAT CLAPS!

“Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!” Psalm 47:1

When I first experienced the fact that First Delray worship attendees clap for music and for messages from lay worship contributors, I think I was a bit surprised. Presbyterians do NOT have a reputation for showing much emotion in their worship, and probably most of you have heard the edict that says we must do everything “decently and in order” (see 1 Corinthians 14:40 and Calvinist teachings). Not everyone may agree, but I think it’s a great thing (and I have been known to also shout an “Amen” now and then, certainly making Calvin roll over in his grave!)

As a member of the Concert Series Team, I’m so glad that we are a congregation that knows how to physically show joy and appreciation, especially for heartfelt and beautifully delivered music—it guarantees you have those muscles well developed for use at our “Music by the Sea” concerts! I don’t know if you have been counting, but our Concert Series, in addition to offering one more concert in October 2026, is preparing for its FOURTH season. Soon (if not already), you will have the brochure for 2027, and it’s going to be a season to clap for!

But wait ... first let’s put our hands together for our upcoming October 25 concert, “Lights, Camera, Music!”—featuring the movie melodies from across the decades that we all carry in our hearts. Drawing on the incredible talents of our own Don Cannarozzi and Mijin Choi at the piano, with the First Delray singers you know and love, and joined by a string quartet, October’s concert will truly have something for everyone. Think of Casablanca to The Wizard of Oz to A Star is Born and The Jungle Book. Not to reveal too much, but ... there will also be a sing-along (and humming along is allowed throughout!). If you haven’t bought tickets already, there are still some available. You can reserve them on the church website, call the church office, or simply reserve or purchase them on any Sunday morning at the Welcome Center.

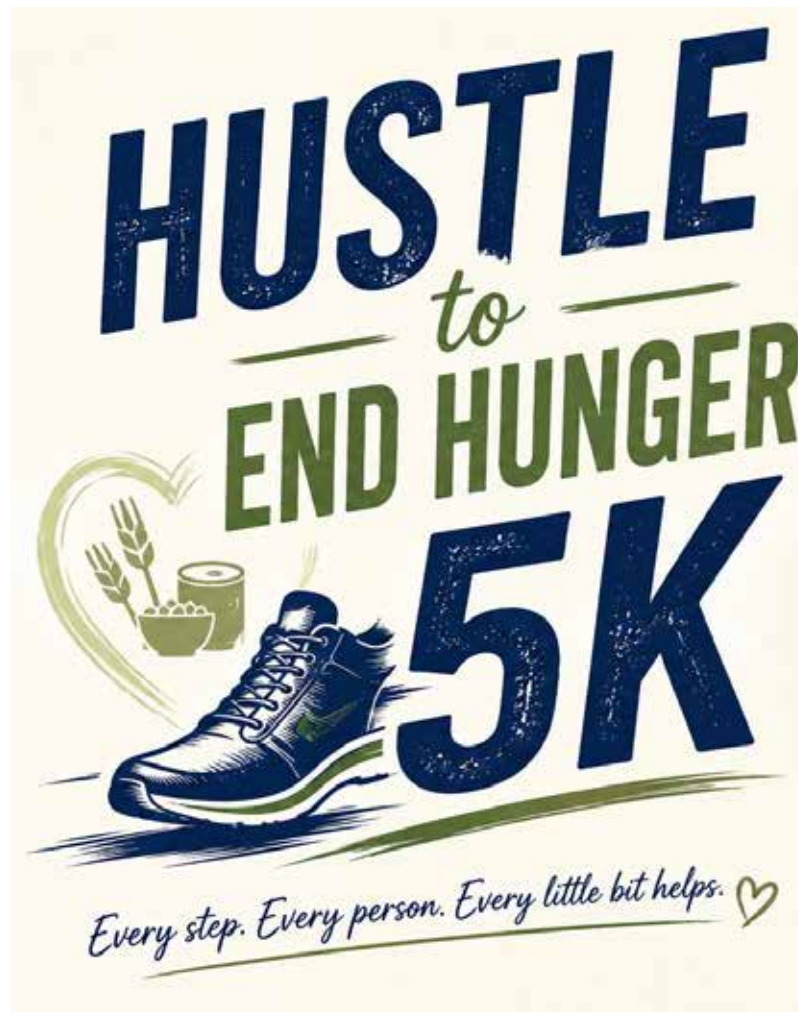
So on to 2027! This coming season will be an excitingly different one from any we have offered before, featuring new performers as well as our own First Delray talent. Since the brochure will give you all the details, let me just hit a few highlights here. We know how much you love show tunes and the American Songbook, so our February 21 show, “My Favorite Things,” will be devoted to celebrating the music of Richard Rodgers, truly an icon in American music. This concert will warm you up for the return of the Matt Calderin Big Band on April 11, and like they were last year, they will be “hot, hot, hot” at this concert titled, “Having a Good Time”!

Also in April, on the 25th, we will host the much-acclaimed Master Chorale of South Florida with one of their

most-loved programs, “Animal Tales & Peter and the Wolf.” This is a concert aimed at ALL generations, with a special nod to families, and will be followed by a ... pizza party! If you are a snowbird, you will want to fly back in time for our SPOOKY final concert, “Wicked Good Music,” on October 24. In honor of Halloween, we have invited the Classern Quartet (that’s a mash-up of “Classical” and “Modern”) to bring their eclectic repertoire of “creepy” music to our series, partnering with the First Delray singers to raise your musical goosebumps. You will likely hear pieces from Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” to “Night on Bald Mountain” by Mussorgsky.

You can get your tickets for 2027 in the usual ways (buy the whole season now!): reserve them on the church website, call the church office, or simply reserve or purchase them on any Sunday morning at the Welcome Center.

There is still time to become a 2027 sponsor—to become part of a musical mission to share the blessing of our ever-stronger music program, and the compassion and love that lives at First Delray, with those in our congregation and way beyond our doorstep. We, the Concert Team, applaud all those who have been ardent supporters and concert goers over our first three seasons, and we look forward to making new musical friends in the year to come. Our plan is, as always, to make you clap, cry, and celebrate the joy of living in Christ’s love. ●



As the saying goes, “Every little bit helps”. And, in this case, every step you take during CROS Ministries’ Hustle to End Hunger 5K will help them to make a difference in the lives of those who need it most.



The Mission Outreach Team invites you to join them on

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3RD

— at —

JOHN PRINCE PARK

AT 7 A.M.

Register on the RunSignUp website (<https://runsignup.com/Race/FL/LakeWorth/Hustle2EndHunger5K>) and sign up with the First Delray team. The cost is \$45 per person.



All proceeds go to CROS Ministries’ hunger relief programs in our community.

WEDNESDAY MORNING WORKSHOP

My wife Gail paints, and I am the guy who makes her picture frames. Another member of our church, Bill Amme, is also an artist, and before long, the framing business began to increase. This was no problem, as other church members were recruited to help keep up with the demand.

Around that same time, an acquaintance from our social group happened to see a wood-turning demonstration at the local mall. He was hooked. He purchased a small wood lathe, brought it to my garage, and on that Wednesday morning the workshop was born.

One of our most memorable characters in the early days of the workshop was Bob Moss. Bob never really came to build anything or help with the projects. In fact, he complained about the noise from the saws all the time. But we enjoyed his company, and he enjoyed ours. When his health forced him to stop driving, that did not keep him away. He just arranged for a driver to drop him off at 9 each Wednesday morning and pick him up at 11. When business was slow at the shop, the group would sometimes go over to Bob's house and visit him.

We must also remember our church and the Holly House, which became the workshop's primary focus. One of our first church projects was to build a custom-made cabinet on wheels with partitions to store the nativity set. Later, the nativity figures were moved to under the altar, which required us to build a higher platform for them.

Another unique project was a collapsible manger structure that was built using three vertical 4 x 8 sheets of plywood with a roof and some miscellaneous wood for the fence. We had to ask a church member, Bob Antal, to use his truck to take it down to the church.

Supporting the Holly House and helping with Vacation Bible School projects became our primary focus, though we also worked on projects for one another.

The workshop's most recent project came at the request of Nancy Fine: a time capsule built with one essential requirement—it had to last for one hundred years.

To choose the best approach, the group gathered in my family



Custom-made Cabinet



Nativity under the altar



Tall manger

room and discussed every material imaginable. After weighing the options, we decided that PVC plastic would provide the durability needed for the job.

Of course, none of the workshop participants are expected to be present when the capsule is opened—but we enjoyed building something meant to carry the workshop’s story far into the future.



Strategy Meeting



Completed Time Capsule



Fabrication

The membership of the workshop has changed over the years, but today six dedicated members continue to meet regularly: John Barnett, Bill Colarusso, Frank Cook, Ed Jessell, Charlie Jones, Bob Weedling, and Tait McSparran, who does not attend the workshop itself but faithfully joins everyone for lunch on Wednesdays at Sande’s Restaurant.

A few pictures are included below to help tell the story of the workshop and the people who made it special. They do not capture every project completed over the years, but they do show the friendships, fellowship, and shared purpose that grew along the way. ●



Folding Display Cabinet



Holly House Painting Party



Wooden Christmas Trees



Space Ship Stand



Glue gun holder



Lunch at Sande’s Restaurant
in Delray Beach



Montreat 2026 was amazing. The middle school group learned they were CRAFTED by God, and the high school group was able to WONDER and WANDER in the relationships with God, Jesus, and their youth group family.

The trip began with Rachel Therrell, Laura Joella, and Kelly Roach escorting Maddie, Alana, Neo, and Grace to Maryville College in TN. We enjoyed 3 days of Worship, Keynote, Small Groups, Recreation, and meals together. We even had time to appreciate nature during a group walk in the Maryville Woods. Half the group flew home or on to summer vacations, while Rachel and Alana continued on to the High school trip. There they met Grace Hood and Kathy Merritt along with Nathan, Nilla, Jubilee, Alexia, Helena, Elle, and Quinn.

The fun continued at the fabulous Montreat Conference Center. The high schoolers engaged in 5 days of Worship, Small Groups, Keynote, Energizers, and Recreation with youth from many different churches and states. This year our group stayed in a house. We got to work as a team as each person took a turn cooking, baking, or cleaning. For our free afternoon, the group experienced a zip line course. It was an exciting time!

Both groups grew in their faith and friendships. I love returning to Youth Group in the fall and seeing the camaraderie between the youth. We discussed some new ideas for our weekly youth group and Sunday Bible study. ●



If you are interested

in joining our group, we love to welcome new friends! On Sunday morning during worship, middle school students can join God Squad, and High School students can participate in our Bible study. All students in 6th-12th grade come together for Youth Group after the service.

Hope to see you there! ♥

WALKS WITH THOUGHTS

Late summer in Delray Beach. Today remnants of blazing red poinciana flowers line driveways and sidewalks. Frangipanni and southern wisteria trees, teeming in late June and early July with pink and purple flowers, now sport only the occasional droopy, brown-tipped blossom. Traffic has eased. There is a seasonal rhythm to much that happens here in South Florida.

Unfortunately, construction and landscape crews know no season. Drills whine and hammers pound as the walls and floors of condominiums in our building yield to remodeling. Add to that landscape noise: droning leaf blowers, buzzing electric pole saws in the palms and mahogany trees, clanking aluminum extension ladders, and whirring mowers. I long for peace and quiet.

Today Daggerwing Nature Center is my synonym for that peace and quiet. Located inside Burt Aaronson South Regional Park at the end of Glades Road in West Boca, this gem contains both an exhibit hall and 40 acres of restored swamp land. I grab a water bottle and head west.

Following signposts within the park, I eventually arrive at an ample parking lot adjacent to the nature center's butterfly garden. The area brims with butterflies: rare blue atalas, ruddy daggerwings, swallowtails, zebras, and fritillaries. I enjoy a few moments of quiet among their fluttering wings before joining the Y-shaped Cathy Burdett Trail to my right. After a few steps along the boardwalk, I pause to watch several pointy-jawed pickerel swim under the bridge. A turtle on the bank below stretches its head and limbs in and out, in and out.

On the far side of the bridge, I continue along a shady tree-lined

path over wetlands. Presently, I spot a sea grape tree. Heavy with clusters of unripened green fruit, it rises above the boardwalk to my right. Curious why the sea grape trees on our property bear no fruit, while this sea grape is so laden with it, I consult my iPhone.

Voila! The answer is that these trees are dioecious: the species contains male and female trees. Two individual trees as opposed to one monoecious tree which self-pollinates its own flowers. I read that pollen and flowers and fruit both have their up and down sides. Pollen-producing male trees don't produce the ground litter of petals and decaying fruit. However, they do cause headaches, runny noses, and sneezing. Female trees contain fewer allergens, are beautiful, smell heavenly when flowering, and provide food, but drop their fruit, which decays and attracts rodents and other pests. Pollen and flowers with fruit both appear to have their upsides and downsides. Like people.

Jesus' disciple Peter springs to mind. He followed Jesus' call immediately, then after the resurrection, he took Jesus's gospel message to thousands. To me, he is so likeable not only because of his faith, but also because of his faults—his downside. He sank in the water, cut off someone's ear, and denied he knew Jesus. Did Jesus call him to discipleship and commission him to start the church in spite of his faults, or because of them? Whichever it was, it has always comforted me, given me hope on my own imperfect life's journey. And, perhaps, the answer to my question is less important than the grace that Jesus continually showed him. Jesus pulled him from the water, replaced the ear, and heard his denial, yet returned to him in love and commissioned his ministry work.

Those thoughts lead me to say a quick prayer for understanding and forgiveness of my own moments of doubt, unreasoning resentments, and cowardice. A prayer for grace. Then, eyeing my surroundings, I praise the God of Peter. The God who sent Jesus to walk beside me. The God who created and maintains this beautiful refuge.

Armed with God's answering grace, I proceed along the boardwalk. Ripening pond apples hang from trees on either side of me. Ahead, a strangler fig plant works its magic: transforming a slender palm into a mighty banyan. Below, the curious, knobby knees of cypress push up through the marshy ground, joining shade-loving ferns. The diversity of God's wondrous creation in this peaceful, quiet place brings its own joy.

The boardwalk is too short, not quite a mile, and soon comes to an end. Unlike the trail, however, God's grace and love for me and for you does not. It is unceasing, just as was Jesus' love for Peter. So, today, I leave you with Peter's blessing (2 Peter 1:2): *Grace and peace be with you in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.* ●



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Sunday Morning Worship Services

10 a.m.

