

# The Peaceful News

The Peace Presbyterian Church of Lakewood Ranch, Florida Newsletter

Spring 2023

Our daughter Rebecca is working on a doctorate in clinical psychology, but before she started that degree, she introduced me to the concept of narrative medicine. This is the commitment to understanding patients' lives, caring for the caregivers, and giving voice to suffering. When I heard about it, I was tempted to say, "Duh, isn't that what all medicine, all ministry, and all relationships should be focused on—listening to people's lives, hearing their struggles?"

At Peace we have a large group of adults working on their listening skills as we discuss the many ways one can be fully present to another person's narrative. Our personal stories and the ability to share them are fundamental to human wellbeing. In his book *Between the Listening and the Telling*, Mark Yaconelli, says that storytelling can save us.

Here's the irony, Yaconelli says: we consume more narratives than any generation before us, but we are more isolated. We watch many stories on screens, tell our stories on social media, and then still feel alone. We need the nourishment of human community, but we get the fast food of screen-time glances at one another's lives, without really taking face-to-face time to build nourishing relationships.

I challenge you to find some small group or at least some individual person at Peace to whom you can listen well and with whom you can entrust your own

narrative. (Let me know if you want help doing this.) I hope you are moving beyond small talk in fellowship at Peace. I hope you will consider being in a Lenten small group, if you are not already in a group of two or three or eight or ten gathered in the name of Jesus, where you can build strong bonds of relationship through storytelling. If you need to zoom these face-to-face times, we have groups for you too.



Here's the challenge—listening to one another's narratives is a big investment. Think of Jesus with Mary and Martha—Mary listening, Martha needing to slow down. Think of Jesus with the woman at the well, one of the longest recorded conversations he had with anyone. Remember the late-night conversation of Jesus and Nicodemus. Authentic relationships take time and energy, but they are worth it.

Prayerfully yours,

*Elizabeth*

Rev. Elizabeth M. Deibert  
Pastor, Peace Presbyterian Church



**Opportunities for Small Group  
involvement are available during Lent.  
See page 6 for details.**

## Love and Peace at Manatee Pride

The Presbyterian (USA) Church in Jackson was one of the few places in Mississippi where Leslie and I always found respect, friendship, and affirmation of our marriage. This transformative experience of God's love and grace solidified my desire to pursue ordained ministry.

When Leslie and I moved to Florida, we desperately hoped to find a more tolerant place to live. Unfortunately, discrimination has gradually arisen against sexual and gender minorities in Florida. We're gaining a national reputation as USA Today reports families leaving the state to find a safer place to raise their kids.

There is so much wonderful inclusivity at Peace Presbyterian Church, yet the broader PC(USA) has also struggled with its promises of welcoming all God's children.

The Covenant Network of Presbyterians is an LGBTQ advocacy ministry within the PC(USA) where I work part-time. Last year, we received a record number of requests from PC(USA) churches seeking resources, educational programs, and other support for sexual and gender minorities.

For example, one session elder reached out in despair over the loss of a faithful gay congregant driven away by other members who "just don't get it." A pastor called with genuine fear about what would happen if their gender identity was ever discovered by their church. From small churches to large



presbyteries, in Mississippi and in Florida, people are not yet living at peace with the diversity of sexuality and gender.

My prayer is that Peace's attendance at Manatee Pride at the Bradenton Riverwalk on March 11 will bring some small measure of peace to someone in need—like last year, when one Peace member spoke with an elderly gay woman who was happily surprised to learn that LGBTQ people can become members here.

Long ago, a teacher gave me a card where she had written Matthew 5:16 — *"...Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."* Under the verse, she wrote, *"Always let your light shine."*

This message was a light in my own life as I came to terms with my orientation. On the Sundays leading up to Manatee Pride, the Outreach Team will have cards and pens available at a table in the narthex where you can write encouraging notes. These will be handed out at Pride, and sample messages (like "God loves you" and "you are beloved by God") will be provided so you don't have to think on the spot!

Whether or not you can attend Manatee Pride, you can bless the community with messages of God's love and let Peace's light shine.

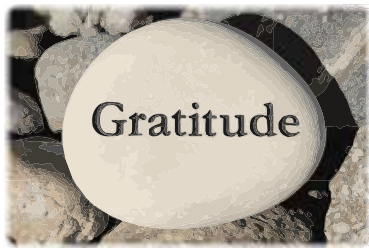
Amy Cerniglia, Music Director

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2023**

**PEACE PRESBYTERIAN**  
**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**  
FOLLOWING WORSHIP, STAY FOR  
**FUN • FELLOWSHIP • FESTIVITIES • FACTS • FABLES**

**ELIZABETH DEIBERT, EMCEE**

## Gratitude Team



The Gratitude team is happy to announce Zach Ribble as our new Team Leader. Serving alongside Dirk Brinkmeyer as Gratitude Elder, the team is set for a generous year of giving

thanks through time, talents and treasures.

We have plans underway to share updated tax tips for some tax-free methods of making financial pledge payments or Building Fund 4 payments. More information regarding Peace's Legacy Fund will be shared early this year.

It is always a perfect time to express your thanks...

*Expressing gratitude is a lot more than saying thank you. Emerging research has recently started to draw attention to its multiple benefits. People who are consistently grateful have been found to be relatively happier, more energetic, and more hopeful and to report experiencing more frequent positive emotions. They also tend to be more helpful and empathic, more spiritual and religious, more forgiving, and less materialistic than others who are less predisposed to gratefulness. Furthermore, the more a person is inclined to gratitude, the less likely he or she is to be depressed, anxious, lonely, envious, or neurotic.*

—Sonja Lyubomyrski



The Outreach Team hosted the Lakewood Ranch Wind Ensemble concert at Peace on Sunday, Nov. 27. Approximately 200 people attended the concert. In December, the Outreach Team organized a decorate-a-wreath project for the Carols and Live Nativity event on the Peaceful Path. Ten wreaths were on display during the well-attended event on Dec. 18.

There will be several outreach events in February, including Night of Worship and Praise on Friday, Feb. 3 at 7 p.m., Lakewood Ranch Wind Ensemble Concert on Sunday, Feb. 5 at 2 p.m., and Blessing of the Animals on Sunday, Feb. 26 at 3 p.m. The Lakewood Ranch Wind Ensemble closes out its concert series at Peace on Sunday, March 5 with a performance at 2 p.m. followed by a reception for all concert attendees in Fellowship Hall. On Saturday, March 11, the Outreach Team will host a booth for Peace at the Manatee Pride Festival from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the Bradenton Riverwalk (see updated handout to the right).

Peace decals will be available for the congregation in early February. This will be a solution to all who own vehicles that contain no magnetic surfaces. What will they think of next, people who don't eat meat?

**Spring 2023  
Community  
Events**

- **Worship Every Sunday @ 10AM** •
- Friday, February 3, 2023**  
Night of Worship and Praise, 7PM-8PM, FREE
- Sunday, February 5, 2023**  
Lakewood Ranch Wind Ensemble, 2PM—TICKETS AT THE DOOR
- Sunday, February 26, 2023**  
Blessing of the Animals, 3PM
- Sunday, March 5, 2023**  
Lakewood Ranch Wind Ensemble, 2PM—TICKETS AT THE DOOR  
RECEPTION TO FOLLOW
- Saturday, March 11, 2023**  
Peace at Manatee Pride, 11AM-5PM  
Bradenton Riverwalk, 452 3rd Ave W, Bradenton, FL 34205

**Peace Presbyterian Church**  
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[www.facebook.com/peacepcusa](http://www.facebook.com/peacepcusa)



Lakewood Ranch Wind Ensemble concert





*Singing Christmas Tree and  
Herrmann's Royal Lipizzan Stallions outings  
by Adventure Seekers*



In December, the Peace Adventure Seekers saw The Singing Christmas Tree at Sarasota First Baptist church. There was a 25 ft. Singing Christmas Tree choir and orchestra and a living nativity with live animals, a sheep, goat, donkey, llamas and 2 camels. After the event we ate at Demetrios Pizza and Grill.

We visited Herrmann's Royal Lipizzans in Myakka City on January 26. The Herrmann Family has owned and operated Herrmann's Royal Lipizzans since 1962, training and showing horses. The Lipizzan is one of the most famous, yet endangered, breeds in the world. During World War II, the horses, nearly exclusively owned by the Austrian government, were seized and held by Russian forces. Hearing of their plight and threat of extinction for these beautiful white horses, General George Patton implemented "Operation Cowboy" where he sent forces into Russia to evacuate close to 300 mares, stallions and foals from behind enemy lines. In appreciation for their efforts, the Spanish Riding School of Vienna gave the American forces a private performance after the horses were rescued. In 1962, the Herrmann family brought their Lipizzans to the US and are now in the sixth generation of Herrmann riders at their winter training facility. The group also ate lunch before the performance at Silver Star East Restaurant.

For more information on future activities,  
or to be added to the group list, contact:  
Cora Lee Cain: [wlcain@gmail.com](mailto:wlcain@gmail.com)



*Pastor Elizabeth Deibert baptizing  
her grandson, Walter*

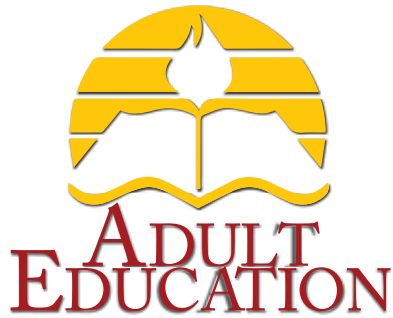
After two weeks off, Fellowship started up strong again on January 8th. The baptism of Walter Harris, Elizabeth & Richard Deibert's grandson, was on Jan 15 and Fellowship had a cake and a rose for him.

The last Friday of each month we present musical movies. January was ***Sound of Music***; February is ***Annie***; March is ***Mamma Mia***.

Peace crafters will start new season on third Friday of February, 10-noon. All are welcome.

If anyone would like to contribute baked goods (homemade or store bought), it is always appreciated. You can bring them to the kitchen on Sunday morning before church. If you have any questions, see Ellen Walch.

Looking forward to having a special Valentines Fellowship time on February 12.







# Spring 2023 Calendar

Undergoing a change in leadership, and welcoming several new member. the Adult Education Team is looking forward to its class offerings for January–May 2023.

Peter Miller has stepped aside from his team Elder role, and is assuming the team leadership, as he attempts to replicate the great job done by Bill Clough. Tom Philips will serve as the team Elder for the next three years.

The class offerings for Sundays and weekdays along with Lenten dates through May are:

	Sunday	Weekday
JANUARY	15	
	22	
	29	
FEBRUARY	5	
	12	
	19	22
	26	1
MARCH	5	8
	12	15
	19	22
	26	29
	2	
APRIL	9	
	16	
	23	
	30	
MAY	7	
	14	
	21	
	28	

-  A "Gift of Listening" class, facilitated by Robin Miller, began January 15 and will merge with a study of spirituality based on *Always We Begin Again: The Benedictine Way of Living* with direction by Lori Pesciotta.
-  Congregational Meeting, no class
-  Ash Wednesday
-  *Living Fully, Dying Well* will run again during Lent. It will begin February 26 and end March 26, and be taught by Richard Deibert. Books will be available at first class.
-  A Small Group opportunity during Lent based upon the book, *Sharing Food: Christian Practices for Enjoyment* by Shannon Jung. Participants will choose meeting days and times. Organized and led by Steve Kersten and Jeff Muckefuse.
-  Palm Sunday
-  Easter
-  Sunday, April 16 will be opportunities for all Ministry Teams to have meetings for people to attend following Fellowship time.
-  Bill Clough will teach a Bible study on *Ezra and Nehemiah*, using "Bible Project" videos for a brief introduction.
-  Pentecost

# Small Groups for Lent

## Don't miss the Small Group Lenten campaign!

The month of March will be very important for our Peace community as we grow and celebrate the love of Jesus Christ in our lives through small groups.

Jesus said, **“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I will be with them.”** (Matthew 18.20). As his followers, we need the support and encouragement from other believers. In small groups, we can more easily experience the presence of Jesus in our lives. We can share our struggles and our dreams, our needs and our gifts. The Spirit is alive and active where people come together to listen and grow. This is an opportunity you should not miss!

Each small group will meet for five weeks during Lent. After this initial experience, each group may decide if they want to continue to meet, when they will meet, and how often.

Small groups have been a very important part of my life and helped me to explore my gifts and have helped me to make many life-long friends. It takes time for relationships to grow, so I hope each group will seriously pray about continuing to meet in some way.

These five small group sessions will focus on reading selected chapters from the book, **SHARING FOOD**, a book about hospitality and food, written by L. Shannon Jung. The



five sessions will be about *“Enjoying Food,” “Hospitality,” “Fasting and Feasting,” “Preparing Food”* and *“The Lords Supper.”* While we read about sharing food, we also hope to share some small meals or snacks together.

There will be five or six groups, meeting on different days of the week, including one on Sunday morning. You can sign up for a group and pick the time and the leader you choose. Groups will start meeting the week after Ash Wednesday, February 26 to March 4.

If you have questions, please contact Pastor Steve Kersten at [kerstenstephen@gmail.com](mailto:kerstenstephen@gmail.com).

The book is available on Amazon, including used books and is published by Fortress Press. We won't be using all the chapters.

I am praying that you will take a small leap of faith by joining a group, so you can experience the joy of new relationships. God promises us that if we step out in faith, God will be with us in a very meaningful way. We know that going to church changes us for the better. Being in a small group will enhance your worship experience, and enrich your life at Peace church.

In Christ's love, Pastor Steve Kersten.



<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

### Life among the Believers

<sup>43</sup> Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All who believed were together and had all things in common; <sup>45</sup> they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. <sup>46</sup> Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.





## FAITH AND FILM

Second Fridays at 2:30 p.m.  
Peace Mask Policy will apply

All movies will begin at 2:30 pm in  
Trinity Square at Peace

### February 10, 2023

**North Country** (2005, 2:06 R)

Lori Pesciotta and Jane Morris, Co-Discussion Leaders

**Charlize Theron, Frances McDormand, Sissy Spacek**

A compelling drama set in a 1989 Minnesota mining community where the misogyny and chauvinism in the workplace will make your blood boil. Based on actual events.



### April 14, 2023 (Earth Care Month)

**A Walk in the Woods** (2015, 1:44 R)

Eirinn Camphire, Discussion Leader

**Robert Redford, Nick Nolte**

After spending two decades in England, Bill Bryson returns to the U.S., where he decides the best way to connect with his homeland is to hike the Appalachian Trail with one of his oldest friends, Stephen Katz.



### March 10, 2023

**Nomadland** (2020, 1:47 R)

Patti Jung, Discussion Leader

**Frances Mc Dormand** (Oscar Winner)

The remarkable odyssey of a feisty woman who finds community and her true self on the road.



### May 12, 2023

**The Most Dangerous Year** (2018, 1:30 NR)

Amy Cerniglia, Discussion Leader

Documentary. In 2016 a small group of families with transgender kids joined the fight against a wave of discriminatory anti-transgender legislation that swept the nation and their home state. With the help of a coalition of civil rights activists and ally lawmakers, these families embarked on an uncharted journey of fighting for their children's lives and futures in this present-day civil rights story.



## Giving Hearts at Peace



The generosity of the Peace congregation is obvious with the three barrels of food donated to the food bank (l) and two cars-full of shoeboxes of gifts donated to Meals on Wheels (r).



## New Peaceful Pursuit in Nature and Art

Do you crave time to gather with friends, time to center down and the chance create something beautiful, lasting, and fun?



Come take a walk on the Peaceful Path, then create your Junk Journal in the company of like-minded people. Have fun learning a new craft form that can build and preserve your daily journey while building friendships at the same time.

What is a Junk Journal? It's a scrapbook which is often made through found and recycled materials as a way to collect and record memories, thoughts, ideas, and inspiration. Create fun pages that reflect your hopes, dreams, and memories using colorful papers, cards, notes, words and pictures from magazines, brochures, etc. Glue, scissors, watercolor paints and brushes, magazines and colored paper provided. Bring a mixed media craft book and your personal mementos. Let's gather and create together. For more information or to register contact Toni Muirhead at [tonimuirhead@aol.com](mailto:tonimuirhead@aol.com).



*Collage of photos created by a group learning about nature and art*

## Mission News

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

1 Peter 4:10.

God uniquely gives to all of us and these gifts are meant to be shared! The Mission Team helps us put our gifts to meaningful use by providing opportunities for all of us to give and serve. Our team has big hearts and a passion for helping others. Everyone is invited to join us—whether for a specific event, a recurring volunteer opportunity, or as a team member.

The Mission team continues to be very busy! Peace volunteers provided ~ 4500 volunteers hours (equivalent to ~ \$134,000) to our mission partners in 2022. We also contributed \$90,576 (16% of Peace's operating budget) to our missions and partners. The Spirit of Giving event on December 4th was very successful, generating ~ \$5000 for our mission partners and increasing awareness of the wonderful work they do in our community. We are very grateful for our generous congregation, which also donated 45 Christmas shoeboxes for homebound clients of Meals on Wheels Plus,



Angel Trees (including bikes) for several happy Beth-El families, and several barrels of food to the Manatee Food Bank.

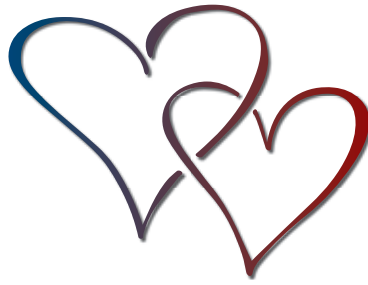
We continue to be very active at Beth-El and Turning Points while exploring new opportunities. Our Beth-El team has transitioned to the new operating schedule and is back in business (now on Thursday mornings). In addition to our ongoing volunteering, a Peace team helped Turning Points conduct the 2023 Point in Time homelessness census during the last week of January and enjoyed many engaging conversations along the way. We also served in the Our Daily Bread soup kitchen on Nov 14th—a potential ongoing weekend opportunity that we are evaluating.

We are excited about several upcoming events and a combination of familiar and new opportunities in 2023. We will pull out our toolboxes again on Feb 18th to assist Manatee Habitat for Humanity with the interfaith build project for Yvette and Jose's new home. We also look forward to another great Crop Walk on the Peaceful Path on Feb 26th. Please join us!



## Congregational Care

While the purpose of the Congregational Care Team is “to nurture authentic relationships and pray for the congregation...,” some may wonder what else the team does “in the spotlight” or “behind the scenes.” Trained Stephen Ministers provide one-on-one confidential care to people after a divorce, death, or other life crisis. Other visible ways you might see this team of 17 smaller Care Group Leaders at work include: being the recipient of cards for joyful or sorrowful occasions; the occasional hospital or home visit; the provision of a meal or ride to an appointment; receiving a caring phone call, e-mail or text; transporting members to Sunday worship; attending funerals; sending prayer requests and praying daily for every Peace member by name! In fact, 380 prayer requests were received in 2022.



On December 11, three team members, along with church staff, and Eirinn with her faithful, friendly CYF group spread Christmas cheer by visiting and caroling with several of our homebound. This joyful caravan also included a stop at Westminster where several Peace folks reside. Just 13 days after bringing the Christmas message and singing with Sue McClurg, she would be called home on Christmas Eve to her eternal rest. On December 23, Pastor Elizabeth, the Team’s Elder, and Amy Cerniglia celebrated a meaningful communion service and carols with Bill Kemp, a retired minister, and his family at PAM Rehabilitation Hospital.

While serving others in these various ways, the Congregational Care Team is living out part of Peace’s Mission in “...caring for the needs of others.”



*Congregational Care members caroling prior to Christmas*



*The Mission team set up an Angel Tree for Beth-El*

# Worship Events



During the recent Team Leader and Elder planning meeting, our team summarized the top three accomplishments in 2022. With the pandemic in mind, Peace successfully transitioned to larger in-person congregation with adjustments in how Communion is served in the Congregation and in choir. We developed our AV Group, with a new livestream leader and teen to make improvements in our virtual worship and recruited two new members to the team and many new members to Voices of Peace, Bell Choir, and Drama Ministry.

The Worship team also planned for the 2023 top three goals. They are to build upon this past year's growth and training with new liturgists, acolytes, and musicians, to increase the number of team members working closely with the staff and to provide worship that is uplifting, including Communion preparation, music and drama, and special services.

Among recent accomplishments, the Carols, Candles and Live Nativity on the Peaceful Path on December 18 drew a large crowd of those from nearby neighborhoods as well as

Peace members. There were also numerous people who came into the sanctuary to light a candle or sit quietly and to meet Santa and sample cookies in the Peace Center. Christmas Eve Service was well-attended with many youth participating in readings and music

Recent audio-visual report: there are typically 12-14 families watching on our Livestream. At their last A/V meeting, the sub-team discussed working on a process for the Livestream and sound people. They will also be hanging the microphones in the choir loft to make it safer and more effective. The team hopes to use only one laptop in the future instead of two to simplify the process. They also hope to purchase one more camera. The Worship and Music Team hopes to create a more welcoming experience on-line and in-person.

In addition to increasing opportunities for kids, the Team will provide more support to the Pastor, with Communion preparation, and flowers.



*Lighting the Advent candles was done each week by Peace families, such as the Martinez's*



*The Live Nativity on the Peaceful Path Dec.18*



*On December 18, children could visit Santa and some Angels*



*Several new members joined Peace in January*



*Sanctuary decorated for Christmas*





The Peaceful Path was in beautiful display during the Carols, Candles and Live Nativity event. Thank you to Jamie, Toni and helpers for your dedicated work all year round! There is a new path on the north side of the wooded area that has plant identification markers! Check

this out next time you explore the path.

Peace is holding a clean up on our adopted portion of Upper Manatee River Road on Saturday, February 4th from 9-11am. Join us!



*Peaceful Path in December*



*STREAM leaders at Peace*

**STREAM** held the Community Action Assembly in December and voted to continue pursuing the issues of Affordable Housing / Homelessness and an Adult Pre Arrest Diversion Program in Manatee County. The research stage is underway and a dozen Peace folks are volunteering their time to meet with elected officials to keep moving forward on these issues. Mark your calendars for May 8th at 6:30pm. This is the very important moment when our elected officials are present and we can show them how many of us care about these issues.





It was a joy to film and present the 2022 Nativity Play! This video is available on our website and You Tube page if you want to watch it again or share with friends.

We hosted an Advent Dinner for all ages at Peace, with food and games. The Advent and Christmas season was extra meaningful with families and

children involved in worship each week. Thank you to all who serve as acolytes, you bring us great joy.

In January our Youth Group met up with the youth of Nuevo Camino at Beth El Farmworker Ministry for an afternoon of ice skating. We enjoy our connection with this great group and plan to hold joint activities on a regular basis, including going to Montreat.

Coming up February 12th is the Souper Bowl of Caring collection to benefit the Manatee Food Bank. Donate cash or checks into the soup pot for your favorite team in the game!

March 5th we are hosting a CAR WASH after worship to benefit one of our mission partners.

For those who like to plan ahead, our VBS Day Camp will run July 24-28. Thank you to all of our dedicated teachers, because every week you are ready to share Bible stories with our wonderful children. These stories have the power to keep their faith strong in all the ups and downs of life.



*Peace families enjoy the Advent dinner*



*Children and Youth caroling*



*Silent Night on Christmas Eve*

TING • PARENTING • PARENTING • PAREN

**The Peaceful Parents**  
class meets throughout January and February and is studying the ***Intervarsity Press Bible Study on Parenting*** (<https://www.amazon.com/Parenting-Loving-Children-Lifeguide-Studies/dp/0830831312>).

We meet every Sunday after worship, which corresponds with the Lively Learning hour. We invite all young adults to join us for good conversation and a chance to stop and reflect on how we can be faithful amidst the chaos of our demanding life stages.

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