

# The Peaceful News

The Peace Presbyterian Church of Lakewood Ranch, Florida Newsletter

Winter, 2020–21

**Advent & Lent** are our anticipatory seasons of waiting and longing. In Advent we await good news of the birth of Christ and in Lent, we await good news of his resurrection, knowing that new life does not come without weakness, suffering, and death. These two **purple** seasons are times of self-examination and greater sacrifice. These four and seven weeks in the church year are penitent weeks, times to consider our own weaknesses and our participation in the imperfection of the world. We await the unfolding of God's good news

**“...as we listen prayerfully to one another and to the Holy Spirit,...”**

with greater anticipation in this year of 2020. The pandemic began in Lent and has kept us in the waiting room all the way to Advent.

We have lived through every stage of grief in this waiting room—disbelief, anger, despair, but perhaps, we are still discovering the pathway to a new life of hope and peace. We have learned the value of slowing down and appreciating small daily pleasures. We have recognized that we are not in control or able to predict the future. We have seen that life itself is a gift and that time with family and close friends is precious beyond measure. We have a deeper sense of our interdependence and of our need to live by communal rules that are fair, especially to those pushed to the margins of life by economics, race, or other limiting factors. I cannot be well if my neighbor is not well.

In the church, living in the **purple** means more than political perspective-mixing.

**Purple** is the color of perspective-gaining, as we listen prayerfully to one another and to the Holy Spirit, and as we respond openly like Mary, “let it be with me according to your word.” God breaks through the ordinary of our lives to bring extraordinary

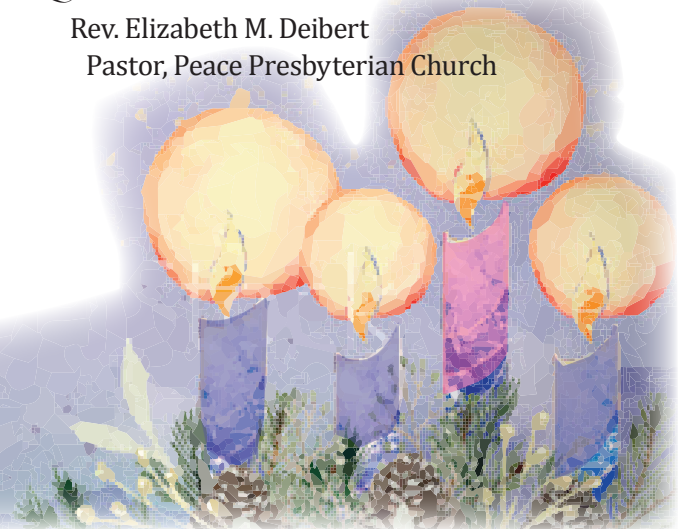


blessings, even turning our distracted and destructive pathways into potential for goodness as we seek the divine way. **Purple** is the color of prayer and listening to prophets, who tell us to practice our faith, not just preach it. Prophets teach us to prepare the way for a royal in **purple**, who is unlike any other sovereign we have known. This One arrives in weakness and dies in weakness, but in that embrace of weakness, shows us the true power of love!

In the **purple** power of that love,

*Elizabeth*

Rev. Elizabeth M. Deibert  
Pastor, Peace Presbyterian Church



# Peace Music Department

For months now, the singers of Peace have recorded half a dozen individual videos each to create a Virtual Carol Choir.

These exciting virtual choir videos will be a main part of Christmas Eve virtual worship. Our kids, youth, and their families will be providing the rest of our music. For those who chose to join us in person, several wonderful instrumentalists will provide music from a safe distance.

You may have also noticed kids singing more and more in virtual worship. For Christmas Eve virtual worship, they will also be playing tone chimes! It's such a joy to see all ages engaging in music for worship at Peace. You may have also seen a virtual and in-person collaboration last month with kids at Peace singing "Peace Like a River," plus the Hardesty kids joining from their own homes via video.

Don't miss the Service of Hope on December 6, available anytime on the Peace website at [www.peacepcusa.com/hope](http://www.peacepcusa.com/hope) or on our Facebook page. This service is fully online and shareable with anyone who may need a little extra hope during the holiday season. Not just a service for those who have experienced a loss, you can also benefit from the service even if you're just disappointed about missing out on seeing family due to safety concerns. Beautiful music by Jenni, Cynthia, Deb, and others will highlight the prayers and stories shared by our Stephen Ministers and Samaritan Counselor at Peace.

If you have not yet recorded music for virtual worship and would like to participate, feel free to contact me anytime. New faces are always very welcome and you will be a blessing to the whole congregation!

*Amy Cerniglia*



*Peggy leading virtual worship singing*



*Adam and Dave singing "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"*



*Barbara preparing for her portion of the Carol Choir*



*The Virtual Carol Choir*



# Worship Events



*Camryn and Sydney anticipating the manger scene on Christmas Eve*

Worship and Music team have been supporting Elizabeth and Amy in their efforts to provide inspiring worship over the past few months. We will be meeting soon to assist more as we inch toward a more expansive live worship service. The outside live service has been well received during the past 2 months.



*A pandemic style of baptism for Cliff in October*



*Pastor Elizabeth performing a wedding for Kyra Whitehead and Brandon Lunde*

Communion is being served at every live service. We have individual bread and juice portions set up on the communion table. Everyone files into the sanctuary, while personal distancing, at the end of the live service. They take their portion, remove their mask to take communion away from the communion table, and then proceed to their seats for the final blessing.



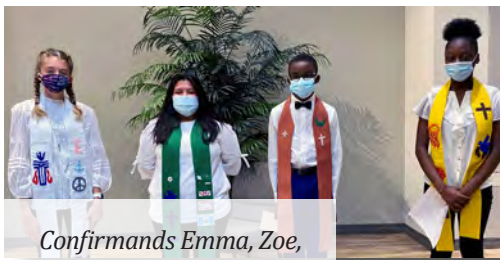
*Melissa Carlson, Samaritan Counselor, speaking at the Service of Hope*

Music director, Amy, and Youth director, Eirinn, have successfully created technologically seamless virtual worship services. Jenni has perfected the beautiful weekly bulletins. Amy, Eirinn, and several Steven Ministers, have created a virtual Service of Hope for those who have difficulty with the holidays and dealing with the pandemic blues which can be viewed on December 6<sup>th</sup>.



*Another unexpected blessing from the virtual worship service—MaryBeth's sons intently watching Mom*

The choir is also involved in a virtual Christmas Carol presentation that will be available as part of the Christmas celebration. The Sanctuary has been decorated for Christmas with the help of Jo-Anne, Dirk, and four very helpful high schoolers. Also, Jamie Reagan has created beautiful holiday topiaries that you will see in the virtual Advent services.



*Confirmands Emma, Zoe, Wally and Marilyn*

Thank you to those whose comfort level allowed them to participate in these outside services and all who continue to enjoy the virtual services. God bless you all for your faithfulness during this stressful time.



*October Worship in phase 2 of the Pandemic*

# Property Team



The Property Team continues to work slowly and steadily, upgrading the landscaping, maintaining the buildings and being the “honey do’s” on property. There isn’t a project too big or small that we won’t tackle. We welcome back to the team Dick Giberti and John Martin. Thank you Junie and Gary Miller for donating a wonderful work table. By the time you read this, we will have already put it to good use. In this



*The Property Team replaced the flagpole and planted a flowerbed around it*

time of unexpected blessings, we are very thankful to have received monetary donations for landscape and property improvement items (new flagpole, flags and flower garden, large boulders at the monument, plants and flowers, mulch and other supplies). These projects could not have happened without the generosity of the donors. Our goals for the end of 2020 include completion of a new hardscape and flower installation around the new flagpole, installation of a new flower bed on the east side of the Peace Center and continued work on landscaping the north side of the Peace Center (at the main entrance to the Montessori school). We are in the beginning stages of planning improvements to the playground area with addition of playground



*Unloading the debris that recent storms brought down on the Peaceful Path*

mulch. As we prepare to close-out 2020, we have our eyes set on 2021 with more property improvement projects on the horizon. From our hearts to yours, we wish you a joyous Christmas season and a blessed New Year!



*Another trip down the Peaceful Path*



*Youth gather for a photo before cleaning the Peaceful Path.*





## FAITH AND FILM

The Faith and Film meetings have moved from in-person to zoom activities. As of this writing the following movies are scheduled for the 2nd Fridays in December and 2021 beginning at 6:30pm.

**Dec 11, 2020**

***The Biggest Little Farm*** (2018, PG, 1:31)

Discussion Leader TBA

Documentarian John Chester and his wife Molly work to develop a sustainable farm on 200 acres outside of Los Angeles. The hopeful story of a natural farm built on biodiversity and a recognition of interconnections, impermanence, and transformation.



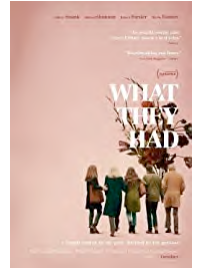
**Mar 12, 2021**

***What They Had*** (2018, R, 1:41)

Discussion Leader TBA

**Hilary Swank, Michael Shannon, Robert Forster**

Bridget returns home at her brother's urging to deal with her ailing mother and her father's reluctance to let go of their life together.



**Jan 8, 2021**

***Parasite*** (2019, R, 2:13)

Discussion Leader TBA

Greed and class discrimination threaten the newly formed symbiotic relationship between the wealthy Park family and the destitute Kim clan. Won the Best Film Oscar last year.



**Apr 9, 2021**

***The Last Picture Show*** (1971, R, 1:58)

Discussion Leader David Klement

**Timothy Bottoms, Jeff Bridges, Cybill Shepherd**

In 1951, a group of high schoolers come of age in a bleak, isolated, atrophied North Texas town that is slowly dying, both culturally and economically.



**Feb 12, 2021**

***Harriet*** (2019, PG-13, 2:05)

Discussion Leader TBA

**Cynthia Erivo, Janelle Monáe, Leslie Odom Jr.**

The extraordinary tale of Harriet Tubman's escape from slavery and transformation into one of America's greatest heroes, whose courage, ingenuity, and tenacity freed hundreds of slaves and changed the course of history. (Related to Matthew 25 systemic Racism Themes)



**May 14, 2021**

***BlackKkKlansman*** (2018, R, 2:15)

Discussion Leader TBA

**John David Washington, Adam Driver, Topher Grace**

Ron Stallworth, an African American police officer from Colorado Springs, CO, successfully manages to infiltrate the local Ku Klux Klan branch with the help of a Jewish surrogate who eventually becomes its leader. Based on actual events. Directed by Spike Lee.



**THE CROSS**



**THE PULPIT**



**THE DOVE**



**THE FISH**



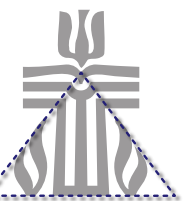
**THE CUP**



**THE FIRE**



**THE BOOK**



**THE TRINITY**

The symbol of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a registered trademark, the basic components of which are cross, scripture, a descending dove at the upper part of the

cross, and flames on either side of the lower part of the cross. It was designed by Malcolm Gear and Associates.

# Report of Outreach Team, August-November, 2020

As I write this, Thanksgiving is just a few days away; and most of us are planning to celebrate in a very different style this year. Because Peace people are loving and creative, I know you will find a way to give thanks in your home and in your heart, and connect with loved ones in a safe way.

Next up, my favorite season of the year, Advent! The Outreach Ministry has an opportunity for you. We are sponsoring a time of **“Advent Appreciation”** for the health care professionals in our community. We’re asking each member to write a note of thanks—or two or three or more—to someone who is working tirelessly to end COVID-19 and keep all of us safe. We will make it EASY for you. All through Advent, there will be a box outside the Peace Center door. In the box you’ll find stationery (or use your own if you wish), a handout with directions and suggested wording, and a box in which to leave your note, addressed to “A Medical Professional.” Kids are encouraged to participate as well; younger ones might just want to draw a picture. Twice during December, one or more Peace members who are professional nurses will distribute the notes at their workplace.

Another Advent event to look forward to: Our choir has partnered with other choirs to record some carols for a virtual Zoom concert. (As you might guess, Amy is doing most of the work.) Watch our virtual services to find those familiar faces and sing along.

There are other ways that Peace folks are doing “outreach” these days, even though they represent other teams. Surely you are aware of the “masked baggers” who bag meals of beans and rice for Beth-El, and those who take donations to Turning Points. Others volunteer at Tidewell. We had an ice cream social recently, and the scheduled Black Friday hot cider and cookies will be over by the time you read this. The Property Team works hard to keep our campus looking terrific, even if some days, the only ones who see it are cranes

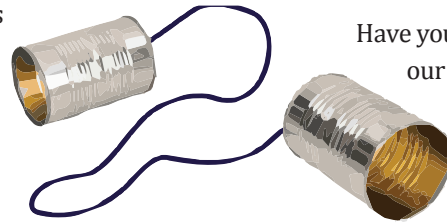
and deer. And what about all those faces that show up on our virtual worship videos? And let’s not forget our faithful staff members: Elizabeth, Jenni, Eirinn and Amy.

Have you taken time to look us up on Google maps to see our 360-degree tour of Peace? Have you driven by to see the roadside sign welcoming everyone to Peace, no matter who they are? And please continue to check us out on Facebook, and use Medlineplus.gov as a reliable source for factual, non-political medical information.

We are now hearing encouraging news about a vaccine. Keep praying, and *“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope*

*by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*  
(Romans 15:13)

*Lynda Harman,  
Outreach Chair*



*The new Outreach sign inviting neighbors to Peace Church*



*Youth Group packing rice at Beth El*



*Youth Group at Turning Points sorting coats to be given to the homeless*



# Congregational Care

During this season of Advent and Christmas the Congregational Care Team would like to extend Christmas greetings to our Peace family here in Florida as well as to our snowbirds elsewhere.

As we prepare for and celebrate the birth of the Christ child might we be reminded of the message found in Galatians 5:22-23 *“the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”* And might we also think of these fruits as gifts in abundance that we can give to all those we love—family, old friends and new, members and staff of our



Peace community, neighbors, those who care for our health and safety, teachers, grocery store workers, our mail carriers, and any others who are daily supporting us during this time of the Covid-19 pandemic.

These gifts don't need to be wrapped or mailed—just given from our hearts as we go about our daily lives.

Christmas blessings.

## MISSION TEAM HOSTS PEACEFUL GIVING PARTY



“Peaceful Giving” Party was held in the Fellowship Hall and Courtyard on Friday, Nov. 27. It featured the following:

- The Angel Tree
- Alternative Gift table
- Turning Points warm clothing drop-off box
- A table containing info on the Advent food drive
- A table with Christmas Joy and Blood drive info.



Mission Team Giving Party Alternative Gifts



Aubrey and the Angel Tree at the Mission Giving Party



Sally teaching how to use the defibrillator Peace donated to Beth El.



## Children, Family and Youth

The Children, Youth and Families Team has had a wonderful fall. We celebrated the confirmation of five youth in October and the baptism of two of our Peace children in

November. Our zoom lively learning for Pre-K to 5th grade continues on Saturdays and Take A Break Wednesdays has a steady group of wonderful children coming each week. You've seen them participating in the virtual worship!

The Youth Group meets on Sundays and over Thanksgiving Break they did local mission work: beautifying Peace's grounds, helping at Turning Points and working alongside the Beth El youth group to help the migrant farmworkers.

CYF is planning an Advent Celebration in early December and the Nativity Play will be a virtual event this year—don't miss it!

In early 2021 we are planning an outdoor afternoon dance party in the Peace parking lot, all are welcome to dance outside and enjoy being together, safely! Thanks for all of your support for all of the programs that benefit our children and youth at Peace!



*The Rigney boys at the Cedarkirk family day.*



*Courageously attempting the zip line, Wally at Cedarkirk.*



*Mission Day Camp for the youth at Beth El*

### Mission Day Camp

**Mission Day Camp, Day 1:** Beautifying Peace's property with 12 youth volunteers!

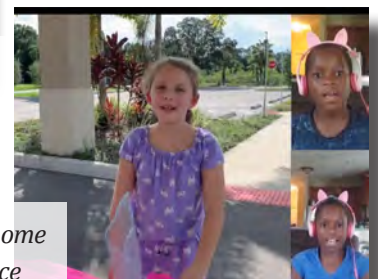
**Mission Day Camp, Day 2:** the youth sorted hundreds of donated coats at Turning Points, to be given to the homeless next week. Then a trip to Riverwalk where they spread loving messages with chalk art.

**Mission Day Camp, Day 3:** Started the day with a devotional and hike at Little Manatee River State Park. The rest of the day we worked at Beth-El; packing face masks (4,900 masks, to be exact!) playing kickball with the Beth-El Youth and then packing food for distribution. We were even able to hand out the bags in person! How meaningful.

We were so glad to help our community in a small way this week and we realize our many, many blessings. Our Peace Youth sure are hard workers with big hearts for service.



*The Giving Party display for the food bank*



*Kids singing virtually from home with kids in person at Peace*



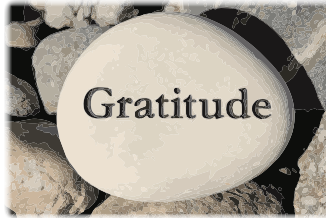
*Kaitlyn and Savana at Wednesday's Take a Break*



# Gratitude Team

For seven weeks, various members of the congregation have told us about the unexpected blessings that they have experienced during this difficult 2020 year. While enduring the COVID-19 crisis, Peace members have given us all hope by telling us that even in this year of turmoil, God has continued to bless us in unusual and unforeseen ways. His grace abounds!

Fast forward to the Gratitude Team and their annual pledge drive. Quite frankly, we were a bit more than apprehensive about this year's pledge drive. So many people had been affected with the loss of jobs, loss of loved ones, and the loss of being "normal." But as one member of the team pointed out, we need to accentuate the positive and trust that this "one-of-a-kind" congregation hears our call.



Well, you certainly heard the call. As of the most recent update, we have received 101 pledges totaling over \$405,000! This compares to a final pledge amount last year of 105 pledges totaling \$392,698. And we are still expecting up to 15 additional pledges to be made before the end of the year.

Most encouraging was that there were only 9 decreased pledges, 33 pledges that remained the same and an amazing 43 increased pledges. In addition, we received 16 new pledges from our congregation. Talk about more unexpected blessings! The spirit of generosity has certainly swept through the people of Peace like a mighty wind.

We sincerely thank everyone who has made a pledge, everyone who is yet to make their pledge, and those who have not pledged, but have told us that they plan to give as they are able. After a difficult year, we look forward to 2021 with hope and optimism and we owe it all to you. Thank you for all you do—whether what it is that you do includes your time, talents, or treasures.

In sincere appreciation,  
The Gratitude Team



*Outdoors at the Gratitude  
Ice Cream Social*

## Fellowship Team

We have had several small fellowship times after the outdoor services. We were able to make them safe with social distancing and individually packaged snacks. We also had one member, Jenni, be responsible for pouring lemonade so that multiple people weren't touching the pitcher. All that have attended seemed to enjoy, especially the kids.

The Sunday after Thanksgiving, we had homemade cookies and mini cherry and pumpkin pies for those who wished to partake after the outdoor service. All items are homemade and individually packaged. We are also encouraging those members who don't want to come to service to feel free to drive by between 10:30 and 11:15 to pick up and take home.

We helped Gratitude team with the very successful ice cream social.

We hope to do another fellowship in a few months.

Fellowship and Property Teams are looking for new fridge for the kitchen. The old one, which was donated to Peace, has died after many years of service. If anyone knows of someone who is getting rid of their fridge and it is still in working order, please let us know. While we have a few other fridges, as you know, when we have our big events we need all of the fridges. We certainly hope 2021 will allow us to gather like we did before.



# To Wear or Not to Wear (the mask):

That is the Question

My life depends on it; That is the answer

By JoAnne Klement

As the lovebugs drifted in the air during a recent walk along Sarasota bayfront, my husband mentioned there was a storm in the works south of Florida. That is typical Florida chatter, except we were sporting face masks as if we were surgeons heading into the OR. The masks recommended for our journey into this health hurricane called COVID-19.

Covid-19, however, unlike our typical tropical hurricanes, is astronomically more devious and terrifying. No one is safe, and there are no weather predictors guiding us hour by hour when on its course. Or shelters to escape to.

The big event of this day under consideration was going out to lunch. For the past few weeks, about once a week, we ordered take out from local restaurants, savoring every bite as we delighted in relief from preparing, cooking and cleaning up.

One week it was my favorite, Alice Springs Chicken, from Outback, then the Italian sandwich (a Sarasota legend for decades) from the Main Bar Sandwich Shop in Sarasota. We enjoyed salmon from Lakewood Ranch's Grove and this week, we took a plunge and ate inside The Old Salty Dog, overlooking Sarasota Bay.

My husband, who traditionally is the least germaphobic person in the world, is passionate about his face mask. He is 80 with a history of sensitive lungs and considers his face mask a necessary accessory. As all the health officials admonish.

I, however, have always been a health care geek, reading the gamut of health stories ranging from aging gracefully to the health value of kombucha. Recently, I was fascinated about the scientific explanation of how COVID trashes our bodies.

The COVID virus affects the lungs causing the tiny microscopic sacs called alveoli to fill with a gummy yellow fluid preventing the free flow of oxygen. Think of the honey at the bottom of a well used jar.

Basically, the body is starving for oxygen. That is why the ventilators are life-saving.

And, it explains why folks whose lungs are weakened by decades of bronchitis or smoking might not make it. So, no wonder my husband is apprehensive.

During our stroll, as we encountered several walkers without masks, we wondered if they were enlisted in the viral

battle or were oblivious. We were outside with a strong breeze, which provided some comfort. But, we puzzled, "Why haven't the fellow walkers internalized the message about wearing face masks when out mixing with the public?"

Inside on the outdoor patio, I emphasize, next to the water's edge overlooking four bands of water with stunning shades of azure and turquoise.



The servers wearing masks stood a good distance from our table as they jotted our orders. I did not have a tape measure, but it felt like a comfortable distance from our table. And, the tables appeared spaced apart six feet or more. The server clarified the utensils, plates, cups were disposable.

I overheard a fellow diner request a Margarita; the server explained they could prepare the tequila beverage, but could not use the typical Margarita glass. He accepted the disposable glass.

I am embarrassed we both ordered the deep-fried-foot-long hot dog. The server inquired how many teensy cups of condiments we required. No bottles of ketchup, mustard or relish on this table. The hot dog, a first for me prepared in this style, was delectable and something I recommend. Similar experience to food at the County Fair; throw diet caution to the wind and consider it part of the experience.

As we left, we sanitized our hands, and I noticed my husband avoided touching the arms of the chair as he rose from the table. A real treat to get out, but not going to be a habit for a while.

My overriding concern is the need for testing the folks walking around with no symptoms who have been exposed to the COVID patient. It is NOT simply testing those who think they might have the virus. And, contact testing, which means the labor intensive process of interviewing the COVID patient asking for a list of his/her encounters for the past five/six days. Think of all those interviews!

That is a big mountain to climb, but I think if we Americans stick together and commit to beating this, we can do it. We have to for our country to survive, I think.

*JoAnne Klement is a retired journalist and certified public relations professional.*



## Food Boxes Help Refugees in Cairo

Many refugees seek assistance for food and other life-saving resources at the St. Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS), one of CWS' (CROP Walk's) partner in Cairo. One such experience comes from Aisha, who is a single mother of a 5-year-old and a 7-year-old. An Eritrean refugee, she came to Cairo to find safety and work so that she could support her children. Then the Covid-19 pandemic hit. Like many refugee women, Aisha lost her job as a cleaner. Rent was still due. Her children still needed to eat. Without her income, Aisha started to get desperate.

When she came to StARS, Aisha's rent was two months overdue. Her family was out of food. She was seeking any kind of help. After assessing her situation, StARS stepped in to help. They provided her with cash support to pay her rent, and three months of food boxes. "Your assistance helped me to stabilize my life. I am very thankful for StARS' help! I felt safe and supported at this phase of my life," she told her caseworker.



This was exactly the support Aisha needed to make it through a rough period. She found work in late September.

Sadly, thousands of refugees in Cairo are in similarly dark times. Before the pandemic, more than 80% of Egypt's refugees were already living in poverty. Now, wages are drying up. So many refugees who were barely scraping by are slipping into homelessness, hunger and extreme poverty.

With support from CWS, StARS is providing cash that refugees can use to buy food or pay bills, plus boxes of food and hygiene supplies. Refugees will use this assistance to survive until they are able to get back on their feet.

During this unprecedented global emergency, StARS, CWS and all of our partners are working hard to meet changing and escalating needs. These food boxes are a critical part of helping refugees survive and stay on a path that will eventually lead to brighter days.

Read more details and learn of other experiences from refugees at StARS –

<https://cwsglobal.org/stories/food-boxes-help-refugees-in-cairo-put-meals-on-the-table-during-the-pandemic/>

### CROP Walk 2021

Each church is hosting their own walk due to the pandemic; there will be no public gatherings. The walk for hunger week-end for Manatee County is the last week-end of February. More information about Peace's CROP Walk will be coming in the New Year.

We have one goal:  
**Building a world where there is enough for all.**

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Peace Presbyterian Church  
12705 State Road 64 East  
Lakewood Ranch, Florida 34212  
941-753-7778

[www.PEACEpcusa.com](http://www.PEACEpcusa.com)

Pastor: *Elizabeth Deibert*

Editor: *Diane Brinkmeyer*

Graphic Design: *Peter Miller*

Photos: *Eirrin Camphire, Amy Cerniglia, Elizabeth Deibert, Marybeth McSwain, Aubrey Sammons*

