

The Peaceful News

The Peace Presbyterian Church of Lakewood Ranch, Florida Newsletter

Winter, 2022–23

As we complete our Gratitude Season by celebrating the Reign of Christ, I want to name the glory of Jesus Christ and the goodness of his church called Peace as we live into our core values as a congregation, led by a faithful Session of Elders.

Inspiring Worship—We rejoice in the revitalization of choirs after COVID and the joy that our youthful musicians, acolytes, and confirmands bring us. The staff, the Worship Team, and others bring beautiful music and art, meaningful liturgy, and lively engagement in Word and Sacrament. Further, the AV group, dedicated to all the smooth technologies of sound and video make worship available to all of us.

Authentic Relationships—Peace pays attention to people and prays daily by name for every participant. When you walk in the door and consider getting connected, the Involvement Team is welcoming you. When you are needing the sustenance of friendship and food, Fellowship is always providing bountifully. When you are struggling with life, Congregational Care and Stephen Ministers are ready to listen and support.

Nurturing Discipleship—Whether you are 8 or 88, growing in faith is valuable, so CYF and Adult Ed, who never stopped zooming, invite you to lively learning on Sundays, youth group, Bible studies, film discussions, small groups and book studies to explore what it means to follow Jesus in a fearful and increasingly secular world. A library of resources for children at the entrance of the sanctuary and a renovated library for adults in the Peace Center.

Compassionate Outreach—We are reaching out in compassion to change the world (The Bible calls that justice) and to help those the world has rejected

(The Bible calls that mercy). As a Matthew 25 church, we are engaging in multiple missions of mercy, with Turning Points and Beth-El in the forefront. We are also engaging a ministry cooperative of justice via STREAM. Our outreach to the local community includes concerts, and special activities and events on the Peaceful Path, as we encourage appreciative care of God's good earth.



Responsive Stewardship—None of the above ministries and missions can take place without your generous giving, and the good management of physical, financial, and human resources by Property, Admin, and Gratitude Teams. We prepared for and recovered from Hurricane Ian, counting our blessings by giving over \$9000 in disaster assistance. New flooring and flowers are bringing comfort and joy, along with many new families and individuals, promising to give their time, talent, and treasure to help Peace grow in grace, strength, and wisdom.

Life may continue to bring disasters and diseases of every kind, but we are Advent people of hope, peace, joy, and love, trusting in our Savior and caring for each other, so that we might be as Christ was, a blessing to our suffering world.

Prayerfully yours,

Elizabeth

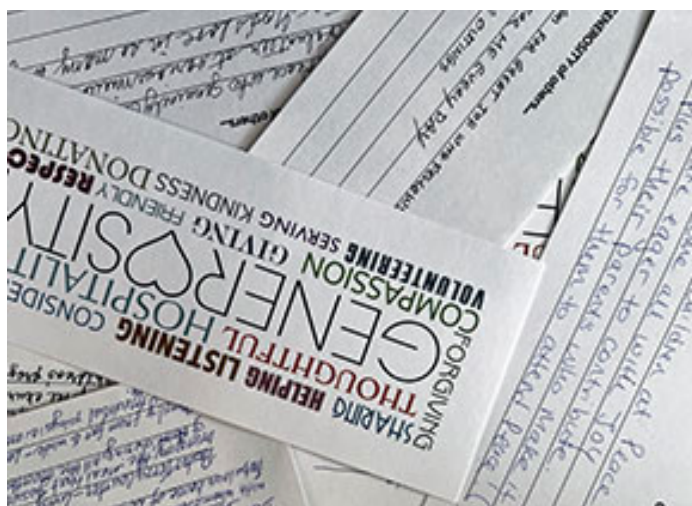
Rev. Elizabeth M. Deibert
Pastor, Peace Presbyterian Church

FORGIVING SHARING HELPING LISTENING CONSIDERATE
 THOUGHTFUL HOSPITALITY
GENEROSITY
 COMPASSION GIVING FRIENDLY RESPECT
 VOLUNTEERING SERVING KINDNESS DONATING

Generosity of time, talent and treasures is abundant at Peace Presbyterian Church! The Gratitude Team's Time and Talent Fair was a huge success with great attendance and ministry teams reporting new members to their teams greater than in previous years. Well done!

The gratitude financial season kicked off with the congregation acknowledging the **GENEROSITY** of others. You were enthusiastic about appreciation for hospitality, compassion, serving, donating, sharing, listening, forgiveness and more. Our **GENEROSITY CARDS** are a basket of goodness available to read at the welcome desk in the Peace Center.

The generosity of sharing treasures, a hallmark of the Peace congregation kicked off in October and included 16 new pledges, and more than 30 pledges that were increased over the previous year. Thank you to each of you for your dedication to the word and to the ministry of Peace Church. Each gift is important and appreciated. The gratitude team will continue the theme of **GENEROSITY** as it is always gratitude season!



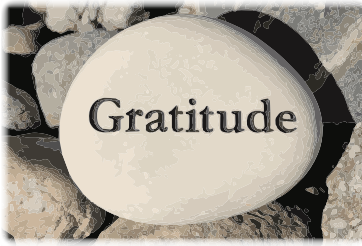
Peace Presbyterian Church, Lakewood Ranch is part of the Peace River Presbytery, which covers the southwestern part of Florida. The Presbytery consists of 37 congregations ranging geographically from Palmetto on the north

to Naples on the south, from the barrier islands to Arcadia on the east. In our early development Peace benefited from the generosity of many sister congregations, who supported us financially until we could sustain ourselves and be chartered in 2009. Because we know the blessing of others' **GENEROSITY**, we have been intentional about giving back to the presbytery so that we might be a blessing.

This **GENEROSITY**, was shown when the Peace River Presbytery released the most recent giving figures from their August 2022 Giving Report. In congregation size Peace is in the middle of the pack ranking 16th of the 37 congregations. Where Peace demonstrates its **GENEROSITY**, is in its support to the Presbytery, we are the 3rd most generous congregation in total contributions.

In making these contributions, Peace is reinforcing the presbytery's mission of *"...assisting and supporting congregations, connecting disciples in mission, and being the body of Christ together."* This support was never so obvious than with the arrival of hurricanes Ian and Nicole when so many churches within the presbytery suffered damage and loss. We can take pride in being such a generous congregation and finding ways to lift those we may not know who have experienced tragedy in their lives.

Pledge Update



Last year the 100 'families' of Peace pledged \$422,701.20 in gratitude for the blessings that God had bestowed upon them. This year (as of 11/20/22) 94 'families' have pledged a total of \$444,692.84—an average of \$4,730.77 per family. This includes 16 new pledges and 32 increased pledges from the previous year. In addition, there are still 19

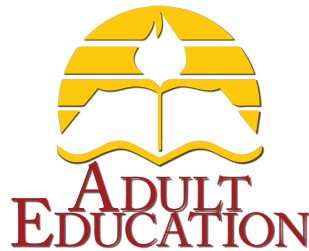
'families' who pledged last year who have not yet responded to us this year. This includes many snowbirds who will join us before the end of the year.

In addition, new building fund pledges for Building Fund #4 total \$13,600. This will further ensure our ability to pay off the sanctuary by the end of 2024.

The Gratitude Team is humbled by our congregation's response to the giving of your time, talents, and treasures.

Thank you very much.

We are happy to welcome Tom Philips as our new elder, thank Peter Miller for his service as Elder and celebrate that Peter will become the new leader of The Adult Education Team. We also thank Bill Clough for his leadership this past year and welcome him back into his role in the future as a class instructor. His knowledge and experience have been gifts to the congregation for many years.



Jan. 15–Feb. 19, Robin Miller and Lori Pesciotta will lead a class based on the book *Always We Begin Again: The Benedictine Way of Living*, emphasizing attentive vital part of spirituality.

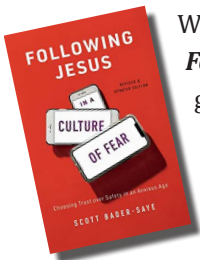
Listening as a

And Richard Deibert will run *Living Fully, Dying Well* again during Lent.

Anybody interested in leading or participating in a Sunday morning book study of How to Be a Patriotic Christian: Love of Country as Love of Neighbor or What Do We Do When Nobody Is Listening? or Love your enemies: How decent people can save America from the culture of contempt? How about a class on Ezra-Nemiah, The Bible and #metoo, or Nooma videos (remember those?) Ideas for classes are always welcomed by the team.

Be sure to keep up with other adult Education opportunities available at Peace through the Faith and Film series, in person on the second Friday in the afternoon, and Bookworms that continues through Zoom.

As for the things that you have learned and received and heard and noticed in me, do them, and the God of peace will be with you.
Philippians 4:9



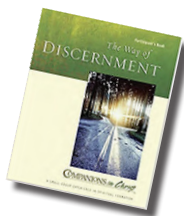
We have one class in progress. Peter Miler's *Following Jesus in a Culture of Fear* class is going very well and nicely attended (20–28). It continues until December 11. On Dec. 18 will have an informal class

Exploring Traditions

with participants sharing favorite Christmas and Advent memories and traditions.

Upcoming opportunities:

Jeff Muckefuse has offered a Tuesday night Dinner & Discussion small group using *The Way of Discernment: Companions in Christ* for six weekly sessions. We need 10 people to sign up for a good time of learning and fellowship.





A large group from Peace headed to the Historic Cortez Fishing Village in west Bradenton on Oct. 27. They went to A.P. Bell Fish Company and met with owner Karen Bell right on the dock to learn about commercial fishing, see the fishing boats and what they haul in, and tour the processing and freezer area where the catch is cleaned, flash frozen and shipped all over the world or sold locally.

Following the tour, they ate a lunch at Star Fish Restaurant adjacent to A.P. Bell of delicious fresh seafood.

December—**THE SINGING CHRISTMAS TREE** at the First Baptist Church in Sarasota is Saturday, December 3, 2022 at 3:00 PM. The allotment of tickets for Peace is currently filled, but there is a waiting list for people at the last minute.

This concert features a 25-foot-tall singing Christmas tree of 130 voices performing seasonal favorites, complete with orchestra and live animals.

Cost: Adults - \$15; Children 12 and under - \$10 Location: First Baptist Church, 1661 Main Street, Sarasota; free parking behind the church. Carpool will leave Peace at 1:45 PM; please advise if you need a ride.

You may also join us for dinner after the concert (order and pay on your own) at Demetrios Pizza & Grill, 3180 University Parkway at Lockwood Ridge, Sarasota. For more information or to add to the waiting list, contact:

Cora Lee Cain: wlcain@gmail.com



Adventure Seekers checking out frozen fish and lunch at AP Bell Fish Co.



We had special treats for Halloween and Thanksgiving and a Celebration of the Confirmands with cake.

Upcoming events:

December 2nd - Musical Movie presents **The Star**-a movie for the whole family for the beginning of Advent season.



December 18th—2nd Annual Cookie Stroll at Fellowship Time. Anyone who wants to bring cookies (either store bought or homemade), please feel free to do so.

December 18th—From 5-7, during Candles, Candlelight and Live Nativity event, Fellowship Team will provide cookies, cocoa and cider in the Fellowship Hall. Santa may make an appearance too!

There will be no Fellowship time on 12/25/22 and 1/1/23.

*Merry Christmas
from the Fellowship Team.*

FRIDAY

Fellowship's Musical
Movie Presents: *The
Star*—A small
but brave donkey &
his animal friends
become the unsung
heroes of the first
Christmas. (PG 13; 1:25)
6:30p

SATURDAY

Fellowship's
Adventure Seekers
Trip to The Singing
Christmas Tree at First
Baptist Church
3:00p

SUNDAY

Angel Tree Gift Cards
returned at
Worship Service

Mission Team's Spirit
of Giving event
11:30a to 1:00p



Lively Learning—
Exploring Traditions

Fellowship Team needs you
for The 2nd annual Cookie
Stroll. Contributions contact
Ellen—
ewhallrays@verizon.net

The Candles of Hope will take
place in the Sanctuary

Living Nativity and Carols on
the Peaceful Path

5:00–7:00p

Christmas Eve
Service
7:00p

*..."Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people:
to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord!"*



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

January 13, 2023

Little Women (2019, 2:15 R)

Kim Schoeffel, Discussion Leader

Meryl Streep, Emma Watson, Laura Dern

The classic novel creatively recast as an exploration of sisterhood and the family as a school of love. Directed by Greta Gerwig Updated women's empowerment theme.



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.



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.



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.



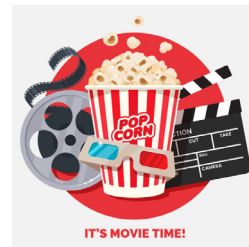
March 10, 2023

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.



Faith and Film movie watchers

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/drive, a recurring volunteer opportunity, or as a team member.

The Mission team has been quite busy! In October, Peace teams helped others recover from Hurricane Ian by assisting with relief efforts. **Beth-El** teams from Peace prepared 200 hot meals on Oct 3rd and 5th for families who were still lacking power and have also contributed \$1500 of gift cards for impacted Beth-El families. A **Presbyterian Disaster Assistance** (PDA) team from PEACE assisted elderly/infirm friends in Sarasota, Englewood, and Arcadia with several cleanup/repair projects on Oct 22nd. We thank you for your generous Ian donations! We pulled out our toolboxes again on Nov 19th to assist **Manatee Habitat for Humanity** (and our local interfaith community) with the build project for Yvette and Jose's new home.

Peace has also been working hard at **Turning Points** (TP) Beyond our ongoing volunteering and clothing donations, Peace teams served homeless and at-risk veterans (and others) at **Stand Down** on Nov 5th. We're also assisting with the **One Warm Coat** donation drive and giveaway on Dec 3rd. Peace raised \$2600 (with match) for TP via a Flanzer Trust campaign



and captained a table at the Nov 29th **Be the Key** fundraiser. We're looking forward to the **Point in Time** homelessness census later in Jan! We were also excited to support **Meals on Wheels Plus** on their **Stuff the Bus** food drive, **Empty Bowls** fundraiser, and Christmas **Shoebox** gifts. Did you know they have a **matching donation** drive thru Dec 31st and that Peace has collected **6 barrels of food** so far this year? Thanks for your generous gifts of time and treasure! **Reminder:** Food donations can be left in Yellow Barrels in the Peace Center or Sanctuary Narthex. Clothing/other items can be left in the Mission closet (in parlor room of the Peace Center).

Don't miss two very popular events that will be back (and better than ever) this holiday season!



The popular **Angel Trees** for the Beth-El families will be up in the Narthex of the sanctuary through Dec 4th. Help Peace provide Christmas gifts to needy families/children! (See Aubrey Sammons for details). And we'll have Angel Trees this year for some Mission Partners at the Spirit of Giving Event (see below).

We will host **The Spirit of Giving** (former Alternative Gift Fair) event on Dec 4th (after worship from 11am-1pm in the courtyard and Fellowship Hall). Stop by after worship, fellowship, or Lively Learning.



Beth-El volunteers served up 200 hot meals following Hurricane Ian



Habitat Interfaith Build volunteers from the Mission Team



Mission workers at Turning Points Stand-In



Mission Team workers rebuilding fences



Mission Team volunteers working after Hurricane Ian

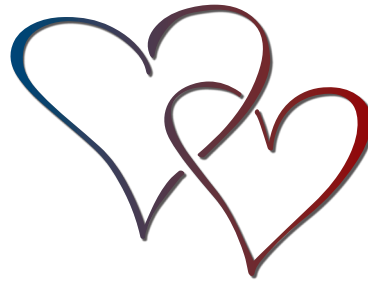
Congregational Care

Change can be a good thing so with that in mind our Clusters are now known as Care Groups and those are led by Care Group Leaders. And change has also come within our Care Leaders Group. After several years of service Joy Kottra has stepped down as Leader of Care Group #5 and will serve in other areas of Peace. We thank Joy and her husband Pete for their time spent connecting with and supporting their Group members. Deidre Anderson will now be leading this Group. Deidre has been a member of Peace for some time and brings to our team her deep Christian faith, a desire to serve others, and an enthusiastic spirit. Welcome Deidre and thank you for your commitment to Congregational Care.

In September, 15 adult new members and 2 children were welcomed into Peace membership. Welcome! To acquaint our newcomers with Congregational Care it seems a good idea to review the 3 teams within this ministry.

Stephen Ministry: These well-trained Christian listeners offer one-on-one confidential care for folks who may be experiencing a life crisis.

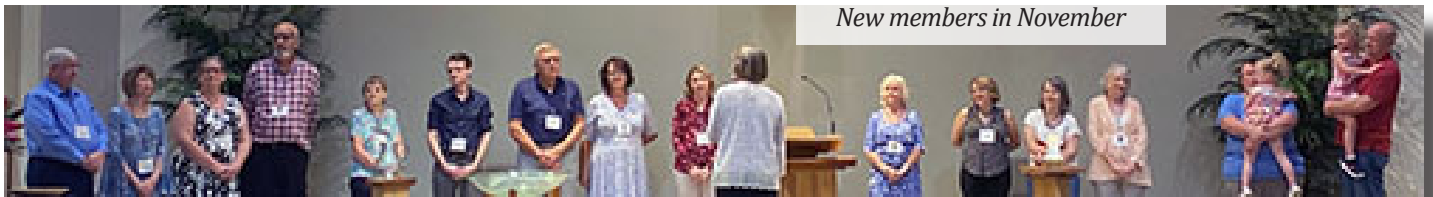
Prayers Team: Prayers are offered daily for every member of the congregation by a team of 7. Also, concerns listed



in the Sunday bulletin, known as Prayers of Peace, are prayed for everyday by another small team. Prayer needs can be emailed to our Office Manager Jenni Holt at jenni.r.holt@gmail.com, to our Congregational Care Elder Sally Schoeffel at sallyschoeRN@gmail.com, to Pastor Elizabeth at deibertem@gmail.com and of course to your individual Care Group Leader.

Care Groups: Our congregation is divided into small Care Groups shepherded by Care Group Leaders. Within each group are families with children, couples, and adults in all stages of their lives. As new members join the congregation they are welcomed into one of these 17 groups and are contacted by the Group Leader. Our goal is to nurture ongoing relationships with these new friends through contacts via email, phone calls, cards/welcome notes. And the greatest contact- visiting with each other during worship. Folks not able to join live worship will be contacted just as everyone else is. What a joy it is to watch new members blossom and feel comfortable within the congregation.

As we enter these seasons of Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas the Congregational Care Team wishes each of you peace and joy.



New members in November

The Outreach Team bought a new banner sign for SR 64 since Hurricane Ian played with the old one.

Peter Miller created a 5.5" x 8.5" page flyer for church members to give to friends and neighbors showcasing Outreach Events inviting the community to partake.

We are planning the Christmas walk on the Peaceful Path which includes participation team work from Fellowship, Music and Drama, Stephen Ministers and the Involvement Team.

A Blessing of the Animals ceremony that was to take place on November 20 will be rescheduled at a later date.

The Lakewood Ranch Wind Ensemble commenced their concert series season on Sunday November 27 and will return for February and March concerts.



Worship Events



September found the Worship and Music Team getting back into the swing of all our Fall activities. The Voices of Peace and the Handbell Choir met at Migi Sushi on August 31 to kick off their activities, starting practice the following Wednesday.

It was a wonderful time of celebration to have the wedding of Kathleen Germano and Larry Forrester on August 27. It was the first wedding with a luncheon reception included we have ever had on the Peace Campus. It was made even more special by the participation of both Richard and Elizabeth Deibert as well as Amy Cerniglia and Luke Giaccone who sang three songs during the wedding ceremony.

The Time and Talent Fair was held on August 28, with the Worship and Music Team participating. There have been several new people join our Team as well as the Voices of Peace and the Handbell Choir.

Eirinn Camphire trained the acolytes while Pastor Elizabeth did the annual training on sacraments for the children and youth on September 11 after the Fall Kick-Off Brunch. The acolytes are now back in full force bringing in the Bible, Water Pitcher and other duties assigned to them weekly.

cubes of bread to be picked up from the plates and platters. Each person then will go to one of the two chalice bearers to dip the bread into the juice and receive a blessing. This new process seems to be meaningful to those receiving Communion.

Luke Giaccone and Gigi Sammons have been hired to share the audio-visual duties for Sunday morning, making sure the live streaming runs smoothly. Many in the congregation, who cannot get out to church in person, have been blessed by being able to view the service this way. Luke and Gigi will also live stream any other church activity, such as weddings or memorial services. We are very grateful that they are part of the church staff.

Sunday, November 13, was Confirmation Sunday. There were six Confirmands who went through the classes and participated in the service by reading a Scripture chosen by him/her and sharing how it has been meaningful to them personally. The service was truly inspirational and filled us all with hope.

The Worship and Music Team looks forward to preparing for the Advent Season which will begin soon with decorating the Sanctuary. The Candles of Hope will take place in the Sanctuary on December 18th from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. The Christmas Eve service will begin at 7:00 p.m.

May we all continue to be blessed by the moving worship services we experience each week.

The serving of Communion was changed slightly starting in October. We are cutting up



Jason reaffirming his baptism



The recent confirmand class celebration



Laying-on of hands for the confirmands

The Peaceful Path hosted a clean-up day 9/24 to help clear the way for new additions: an inspirational path and a plant identification path. Unfortunately, Hurricane Ian arrived



shortly afterward and damaged some musical flowers and brought down several trees. Dedicated volunteers helped to remove debris and make the path safe for visitors again. Two generous people paid for professionals to remove several fallen trees. Thank you everyone! We are looking

forward to showcasing the path for December 18th at the Carols and Live Nativity on the Path from 5:00-7:00 pm. Our next road cleanup will happen in mid-January, join us!

One of the goals of being a Matthew 25 congregation is congregational vitality and Peace is in the first year of the Vital Congregation Initiative. We have encouraged all who come to



Peace volunteers cleaning up the Peaceful Path after the hurricane

Peace to participate in a survey. Stay tuned for these results and the next objectives for VCI.

Our local social justice Ministry, **STREAM** (Stronger Together Reaching Equality Across Manatee) has received information from dozens of house meetings that were held across the 15 congregations. We are excited that so far 37 people at Peace have become **STREAM** network members! It's not too late to become one. We continue to work on Criminal Justice and Affordable Housing concerns and in December we will learn what other issues were raised in our area. In late October we held a prayer vigil & press conference, thanking our State Attorney and urging our Sheriff to implement the Adult Pre-Arrest Diversion program. We continue to advocate for affordable housing in Manatee, and have recently met with county staff to learn more about options that the county can pursue. All are welcome to join us on December 5th for our Community Action Assembly. See Eirinn or Elizabeth for more information.



STREAM leaders at Peace



Youth volunteers at the Peaceful Path



Property Team Highlights

1. Clean-up of the Peace Center is complete.
2. Library remodel/downsizing is complete.
3. Most of the minor damage from the hurricanes has been addressed.
4. New flooring in the Peace Center is complete. Now about 80% of the carpet has been replaced throughout the building.

I would like to extend a huge "thank you" to everyone who has helped with the weeding, gardening, pond & fountain maintenance, hurricane preparations and hurricane shutter installation/removal, and assistance with the many other smaller projects & repairs not mentioned above.

Our next big project will likely be addressing the asphalt on the entry road. We are currently pursuing quotes for that. Craig Hardesty



Peace families welcomed fall with a wonderful overnight retreat at Cedarkirk in September. We enjoyed the zipline, swimming, canoeing and many delicious meals. We also planned the 9/25 worship service where the children and youth were involved in reading scripture, leading the word

with children and the prayers. What a joy and a blessing these children are to us all! Confirmation and Baptism for six youth took place on November 13th. We know you'll all agree that their mini-sermons were meaningful, inspiring and personal. Thank you to the teachers and mentors who helped these youth on their journey. If you missed either of these services, you can find them on the Peace YouTube page.

Our youth group has been busy, both with activities at Peace (the lock-in and CHOPPED) and outside trips to see the Marauders and to an escape room. To show our gratitude, we held a mission camp during Thanksgiving break, serving at Turning Points, Westminster Manor and Beth-El.

We look forward to creating our annual Nativity Play and celebrating the beauty and joy of the Christmas season with all of you. If you are interested in volunteering with the youth programs, we would love it!



Emmalyn on the zipline at Cedarkirk



Family weekend at Cedarkirk



Youth lock-in drum circle



Lexi and Zoe inspecting millipedes



Sabrina, Jaxson and Maci with a CHOPPED dinner

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