

JUNE/ JULY 2021



THE MESSENGER

A PUBLICATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH PALM BEACH

FROM OUR SENIOR PASTOR

"Living On The Way: The Psalms of Ascent"

"You boys going to get somewhere, or just going?" We didn't understand his question, and it was a good question.

-Jack Kerouac, from his novel *On the Road*

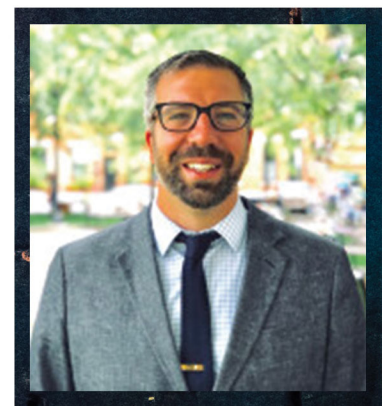
In 1957, Jack Kerouac published a now-iconic novel based on his and his friends' travels across the United States entitled *On the Road*. In this definitive "Beat Generation" work, the character, Sal Paradise, chronicles his travels with his friend, Dean Moriarty. Sal at one point articulates that the roads they're traveling are a metaphor for their wanderings through life: "the road is life." For countless people in the decades since, the image of being on the road, on a journey, has been a vital one for the experience of modern life.

This image of being a traveler, a pilgrim- someone on the way- is actually a central metaphor in Christian faith for a genuine life with the living God. The earliest nickname of the Christian Church was that they were "followers of the way" (Acts 9:2). The Latin word for "believer" is "viator"- literally, "wayfarer" or "traveler." This summer, we're going to travel through one of the prime texts in Scripture that show us how to live the journey of life with God: the Psalms of Ascent.

The Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120-134) are a collection of prayers tucked discreetly into the "dog-eared song-book" that is the book of Psalms, set at the center of Scripture. Ancient Jewish pilgrims likely prayed these psalms as they would journey from towns, countryside, and other cities to make their way up to Jerusalem three times a year for the major Jewish festivals of worship. Jesus of Nazareth, the Way Himself, would have prayed these prayers throughout His childhood while journeying with His family to Jerusalem. And these are the prayers He likely prayed en route to His cross and empty tomb.

So, this summer, we're going to journey through these old prayers, prayed by millennia of people on the way, and I want you to join me for the trip. The Psalms of Ascent express all of our lives to God- repentance and trust and hope and grief and trouble and joy and more- and they show us what it looks like to live on the way with the One who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

-Jared Ayers



FIRST PRES

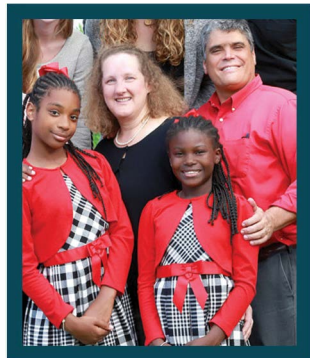


FAMILY NEWS

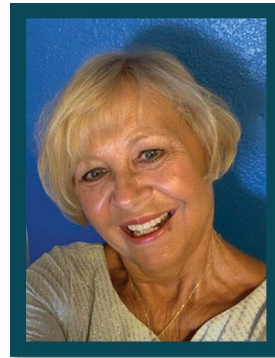
We welcome the following New Members to our Church family:



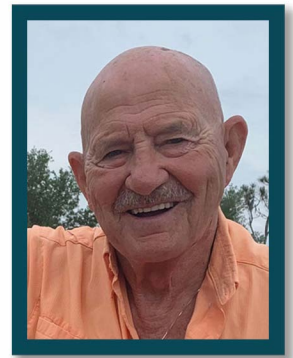
Dave & Michelle Trecki



**Anne & Seth Cohen
Deborah & Eliyanah**



Pamela Jacobson



Sid Stastny



**Monica Ayers
with Jared Ayers**



**Eric & Stacie Blythe,
Bear, Indy & Finley**



Robert & Karen Kiss



Christian Horn

The following communicants joined recently. See the group picture of the communicants in the Student Ministries article.

Brennan Ayers
Kuyper Ayers
Jessie Baxter
Bailey Bennett
Ava Biltswitch
Avery Biltswitch
Deborah Cohen
Eliyanah Cohen

Jacen Crisafi
Daniel Goodwin
Ryan Haffey
Jameson Henry
Bradey Herold
Liam Herold
Wylie Inman

Carter Johnson
Claire Keith
Jack Nelson
Olivia Rykse
Justine Sciacca
Luke Shelhamer
Jaden Southard
Madelyn Trout

First Presbyterian Church ADULT MINISTRY

Ages 60 and up

Written by JoAnn Hayes

HAPPY SUMMER EVERYONE

I hope you are looking forward to the summer months as much as I am. We usually have relatives and friends visit us during the winter months every year but since the Covid pandemic hit, we've had very few. Woody and I look forward to going north and visiting in person with our family and friends. We've missed seeing them as much as we've missed seeing you.

HAPPY "OUT TO LUNCH BUNCH"

I've missed having lunch with all of you. Usually we meet every month in different restaurants, have great meals and wonderful fellowship. On June 11th we will meet for lunch in the Fellowship Hall with our chef Ken Coleman preparing our lunch. Cost is \$10/person. Time is noon. Email JoAnn at jhayes@firstpresnpb.org to make a reservation by June 8th.

HAPPY SERVING TOGETHER

Rev. Ron Hilliard has been sharing opportunities for our Church family to volunteer to help in ministries around the church or in our community. Why is volunteering so important? We use our individual and collective gifts to serve our Church and community. When you serve and give of your time and energy for something or someone else, you get emotionally and spiritually recharged. It gives more meaning to your life as a servant of Christ.

The Bible in 1 Peter 4:10-11 says, *"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ."*

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT FPC



HOST A NEIGHBORHOOD OPEN HOUSE-contact Ron Hilliard at rhilliard@firstpresnpb.org

- Host a one-time gathering at your home for First Pres members who live in your neighborhood. This gathering will be to get to know other church members who live near each other. We will assist in planning and getting the word out. Some of the church staff will attend each gathering. You set the date!

HOSPITALITY ON SUNDAY MORNINGS-contact JoAnn Hayes at JHayes@firstpresnpb.org

- Sunday morning GREETERS before worship services-welcome people to worship as they enter the sanctuary or come from the parking lot
- Information Booth on Sunday mornings-answer questions and assist people in knowing where to go; booth located in church lobby
- Host the "Coffee in the Courtyard" on Sundays after either the 8:15 a.m. or 9:30 a.m. services.
- Volunteer to provide refreshments (cookies, brownies, etc.) for "Coffee in the Courtyard."

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY-if you love children and want to volunteer, contact Cary Koepke at ckoepke@firstpresnpb.org

- Children's teacher on Sunday mornings in a classroom. Two teachers work together and typically it is every other month. 9:30 a.m. Curriculum provided. Elementary age.
- Assist with preschool class on Sunday mornings. 9:30 a.m.
- Greeter for children's ministry on Sunday mornings. Provide hospitality for children as they arrive for The Grove and assist visitors in finding children's classrooms. 9:20-9:40 a.m.
- Children's programming during the 11:00 a.m. worship service-Cary Koepke will assist in planning activities for children during worship

VOLUNTEER IN THE FRONT OFFICE-contact Cindy Medlin at cmedlin@firstpresnpb.org

- Join a team of volunteers who serve in the front office answering phones. We have a need on Wednesday afternoon and Friday morning.

MEMORIAL RECEPTION COMMITTEE-contact Nancy Keeler at Nancy.ann@comcast.net

- We will be starting up our memorial receptions again in July. We are looking for volunteers to help prepare food for receptions after funerals or serve at a reception.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

God, bless all the fathers in the world. Father, we ask that You guide them to be good role models and loving to their children. We also ask that you help them to be a father like you are. Give them grace and patience to handle situations in a loving way.

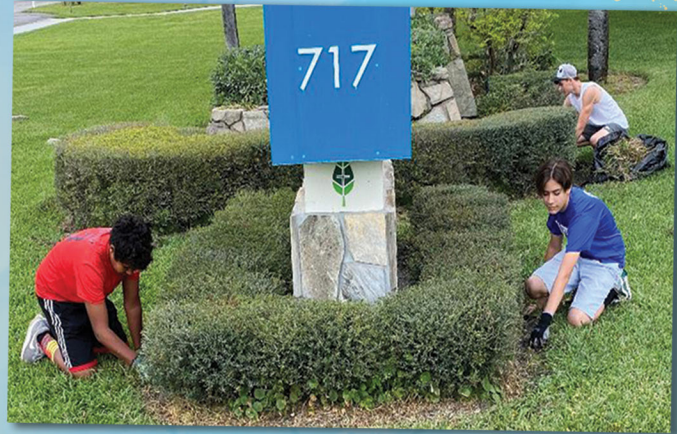


"Life is an opportunity, benefit from it. Life is beauty, admire it. Life is a dream, realize it. Life is a challenge, meet it. Life is a duty, complete it. Life is a game, play it. Life is a promise, fulfill it. Life is sorrow, overcome it. Life is a song, sing it. Life is a struggle, accept it. Life is a tragedy, confront it. Life is an adventure, dare it. Life is luck, make it. Life is life, fight for it." Mother Teresa

STUDENT MINISTRIES

SPRING INTO ACTION!

Some students volunteered as “church planters” (ha ha) to help get our grounds looking beautiful for Easter.



A great new fundraiser was hatched this year in the absence of lily sales! Our middle school and high school students stuffed treats into hundreds of Easter eggs and then hid all of the eggs in the yards of participating church families! Thank you to everyone involved! We hope it was an all-around blessing and that we can continue the fun for years to come!



Our student volunteers helped to make the Easter Carnival a huge success by running the games, chaperoning the bounce houses, serving food items and face painting! This community event is one of our favorites and we are grateful to God we were able to hold it this year!



Our year-long Communicants class culminated in 23 young people joining the Church on May 2nd. Our Good Friday retreat included the studying of the tabernacle, a meeting with the Session, Scripture reading, some time spent in self-reflection, group games and lunch at the park! It was a remarkable group of mature students and they enjoyed a pool party hosted by the Cohen family to celebrate the occasion as well! We appreciate all our mentors and hope that you will continue to pray for one another and reach out along the long journey of life in faith!



Our leaders (Kim, Luke, Taylor and Aubrielle) attended the Youth Pastor Summit in Orlando last month.



Prom 2021

A spirited bunch of students attended our first ever FPC prom on Saturday, May 15th, in a beautifully decorated Way building! The Gatsby-themed evening offered students from last year's graduating class as well as this year's upperclassmen to have a safe and special event to properly celebrate a very significant season of life! Great music, delicious food and a gorgeous setting exceeded all expectations and was so appreciated that we hope to make it an event to look forward to year after year!

Special thanks to those who made it happen: Taylor Shore, Luke Bartolf, Andrew Wikse, Lindsey Murray, Cade Crisafi, Evan Schultz, Bob Sticken, Juan Jaramillo, Wendy Shelhamer, Amy Avdellas, Jack and Karen Baldwin, Bob Johnson and Suzie Inman!



Financial Focus

Richard Barsalou was a financial planner and served First Pres as the Finance Committee elder from 2007 – 2009. I recently came across an article he wrote for First Pres in August 2008 that is so compelling that it bears repeating. Richard wrote:

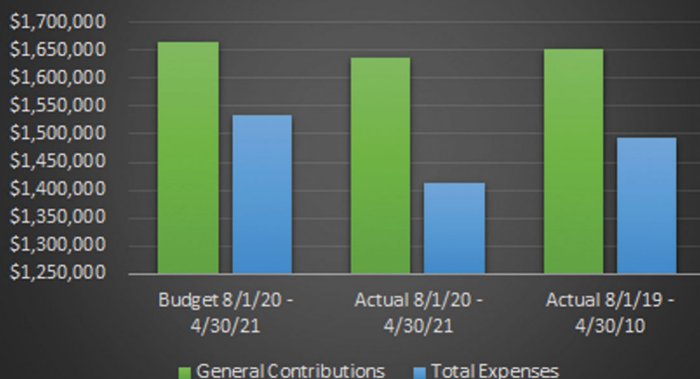
“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6

In 1978, my friend, who is now my wife, led me to Christ. Since that time, I have experienced many manifestations of God’s mercy and grace in my life. In the beginning of my Christian life, I had difficulty dealing with the “financial giving” component of discipleship. Each week as I wrote my check for the Sunday service, I first thought of the many financial needs my family faced in the coming week. I found myself struggling to write the check for the amount I believed appropriate. In most cases, I was able to justify issuing it for less than I knew it should be. As I studied the Bible, my spiritual maturity increased. Soon, I became more and more convinced of the relationship between my attitude about money and giving and the level of trust I placed in the Lord. I became concerned about the obvious inconsistency between my insecurity about finances and my ability to rely solely on Jesus Christ for my salvation and eternal life. How could I trust so blindly in where I would spend eternity yet not believe that my Savior was capable of sustaining my physical existence? This question bothered my conscience until my error in thinking became clear to me.

In 1999, many years after my struggle with giving to the Lord, I lay in a hospital bed scheduled for open heart surgery. If there was ever a moment to require the security of a loving Savior, it was then. That night, I did not lay awake thinking about what might happen to me, my wife or my three children. Instead, I was able to read Scripture and go to sleep, confident that God’s will for my life and for my family would be carried out no matter what the current circumstances.

You might ask what one has to do with the other. In my opinion, the two issues are closely related. The moment I was able to shed the concern about giving, God blessed me with the removal of all distractions which surrounded my finances and allowed me to experience the assurance of His love, mercy, and care. When I allowed Jesus to be the Lord of my finances, He did indeed become Lord of my life. If you cannot trust God with your money, how do you trust Him with your wife, children and your eternal life? (Richard passed away from a heart attack on March 20, 2010, at the age of 63, and is living in his eternal home in heaven.)

General Fund Contributions & Expenses for 9 months



JUST LIKE IN THE GAME OF MONOPOLY, IT ALL GOES BACK IN THE BOX. JOB 1:21 STATES, “NAKED, I CAME FROM MY MOTHER’S WOMB AND NAKED I WILL DEPART.”

REALIZE THAT EVERYTHING YOU HAVE MUST GO BACK IN THE BOX. YOU HAVE TO LEAVE EVERYTHING TO SOMEONE. ISN’T IT WISE TO GIVE GENEROUSLY DURING YOUR LIFETIME TO GOD WHO GAVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU HAVE?

FIRST PRES KIDS



K'MOTION

Jen and I have had a wonderful year getting to know our students in K'Motion. They are a wonderful group of children full of love and laughter.

Last month, our students focused on Peace- proving that they care more about each other and working hard to build up one another. This month, we're focusing on commitment and in June will wrap up the year focusing on Confidence and learning to see yourself the way God sees you.

To our first grade students and families being promoted to Kingdom Connection, we will miss you. Make sure to stop by and say hello; hugs are welcomed!

Wishing all of our students and families a wonderful summer. We can't wait to see everyone in the fall when clubs resume.

Blessings,
Mrs. Jen and Mrs. Nicole



EASTER FESTIVAL

The Easter Festival is the first event Children's Ministries has hosted in over a year. You could feel the excitement in the air as people gathered to celebrate the season and exchange stories, share the sunshine and watch children run for eggs. The day was filled with animals, popcorn and fun games. Even the Easter Bunny found a bench to take pictures with our young children.



CHILDREN'S MUSICAL FIRED UP

On Sunday, May 16, the children of our church were finally able to deliver the Sunday message to our congregation about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. This production was scheduled for last year but, weeks before the show, we had to shut down due to covid. They have been anxiously awaiting and preparing for this day and boy did they deliver. What an amazing day! So proud to be a part of such an amazing team beginning with all the children who came each week to learn the songs and dialogue and the moms who organized all the details of costuming, nourishing our children and encouraging them. A special thank you to Jay and Kristina Arnn for their incredible talents of teaching our children about music and how to sing; to Piper Crisafi choreographing all the lyrics and teaching our children about stage presence; and to Kath Doerr working with our actors to deliver a powerful message.

Here are responses from some of the children when asked what the play meant to them:

What was your favorite part of the musical?

Emme Furman: The ending was exciting and fun.

Trent Grimmett: When the king said: "I am bored!"

Evrynn Crisafi: My favorite song is "Who Do Those People Think They Are?"

What did you learn?

Cora Scroggins: "I learned that the King apologized to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego."

Cici Cox: "Never lose faith in God"

Sienna Johnson: "God is always there"

Trent Grimmett said: "I didn't know these guys existed!"



How COVID HAS AFFECTED OUR MISSION PARTNERS - Part 1



East Berlin church planter **Alex Deuscher** indicates **Germany** experienced a much harder hit this fall / winter season than the spring, going from "lockdown light" to full lockdown. Church planting, building a launch team and growing excitement in a group is almost impossible right now. Still, their pastoral intern, Markus has found ways to connect with people in his neighborhood. Alex writes, "God knows what He is doing and the timing of the pandemic is no surprise to Him. So we keep looking for the doors God is opening right now and the preparing work He is doing on us or the people He wants to reach."



Los Pinos Nuevos – Cienfuegos Cuba - Pachy and his family were stuck in the Dominican Republic for six weeks and couldn't get back to Cuba. There has been much suffering from the country's poor, and the pandemic has made it worse.

Gethsemane (Getsemani) Church, San Jose de los Ramos, Cuba, our sister church in the Presbytery, reports: Due to Covid, the churches are not permitted to meet in person. Pastor Josue Montejo was installed on January 3rd when they last met. They provide clothing and food donations. The church's water purification system allows anyone in the community to fill containers with clean water. The church is growing with over 60 members. The pastor serves another church in Mangito, where they meet in homes. They hope to plant two worship communities in Jigue and Colon. While both are on hold, they are praying and training a team of young people for these plants.

Matanza Presbytery – Cuba

Most churches have been shut down and people can't travel outside of their provinces due to the pandemic. Most of their ministry, therefore, has shifted to humanitarian aid and providing food and care for those who don't have the resources.



South America Mission (SAM) churches in **Lima, Peru**, have been prohibited from meeting in person for over a year. Despite this, the Iglesia de la Ciudad (IDC) La Molina congregation remains engaged and local giving is sustained under **Pastor Julio Chang**. Planting a church in the Miraflores district of Lima is part of the original Lima Initiative vision. The launch was delayed by the pandemic, but they hope to move forward boldly with the re-opening. Establishment of a "community center" for cultural engagement, as society returns to in-person interaction, will be a centerpiece for witness and city transformation.



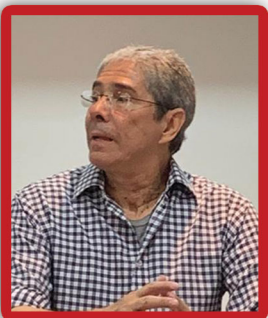
Alex Piplios and Tim Coomer have planted 7 churches in Athens, Greece. Exarcheia Church has the biggest growth in conversions and impact on a neighborhood, as the Holy Spirit moves among the anarchist groups. **Urban Chapel**, anticipated as most fruitful, addresses mainstream Athens. The pandemic stopped progress and services 10 months before launch. Leteris Kalligeris is pastoring members with a vibrant presence on the internet through podcasts, videos and internet-based events. The core group is eager to return and its future is encouraging. The **co-working** space has not opened due to the pandemic. The space is now ready to launch in May. They anticipate a high demand after the pandemic ends.



The First Pres Missions Committee was recently informed that one of our church plants, **West Berlin Bruke Church, pastored by Hannah Valere**, is actually thinking of shutting down, due to the consequences of COVID-19. The final decision on this should be made by the end of May, but it appears as though it will not continue.



Antonio Reyes, Pastor of El Verbo de Dios – Merida, Mexico, saw the Yucatan face a triple hit last year. Coronavirus led to many illnesses, deaths (including pastors) and an enormous economic impact on poorer people. Tropical Storm Christobal stalled over Yucatan and dumped huge amounts of rain, wiping out crops. After replanting, massive flooding came from another storm system. The church provided food for the destitute and shelter for those losing homes. Two special gifts from First Pres helped them send food to more families in their presbytery and the neighboring ones. They are better financially with more people allowed (30% occupancy) in church and older people returning after immunization.



Igeja Dos Jardins – Sao Paulo, Brazil – Pastor Mauro thanks God that on Sunday, May 2, they returned to face-to-face services at Hotel Intercity Jardins. Throughout the pandemic, he preached on Tuesdays via YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. He offers words of comfort and hope by social media, email and phone. Some members have not responded. Others, facing difficulty of work, moved to another city. Giving is down. He writes, “Thankfully, First Pres’ annual offerings support us, complementing our financial needs in these difficult days. God continues to support us, giving us strength, courage and determination from the Holy Spirit, for His honor and glory.”

PARS trains biblically rooted, theologically informed, and spiritually mature servant-leaders, committed to shepherd the Iranian church in loving God and neighbor. Despite COVID-19, they had had major success and growth in 2020. Nine of the twelve underground house church networks, whose leaders PARS trains, reported 30-35% growth due to new believers and multiplication of their house churches. Travel restrictions caused hardships as over fifteen of their planned training leader conferences were canceled. Some staff members were hospitalized battling COVID-19. Even with pandemic challenges for PARS in traveling and ministering to the Iranian church, they continue to adapt and adjust their methods in sharing the Gospel.



The Covid crisis has not shut down the work of our partner organization **Women in the Window**. Executive Director **Kim Kerr** reports that the women leaders they work with around the world are using WiW training to help women cope and survive. Through micro business training in West Africa, women produced hand sanitizers, creating businesses that provided for their families and protected their communities. The trauma healing training offered has been especially helpful in many ministries, including for partners in India, who now report it isn’t unusual for a woman to know 100-125 people who have been lost to Covid.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN NORTH PALM BEACH
An ECO Congregation
717 Prosperity Farms Road
North Palm Beach, FL 33408

**NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
WEST PALM BEACH, FL
PERMIT NO. 352**

IN MEMORY OF

BILL SHEPHERD — MARCH 18

ANN LAHM — MARCH 19

RAY ALFINI - MARCH 29

GLENN SAUNDERS — APRIL 1

JOHN WIKSE — APRIL 18

BILL MYERS — APRIL 18

HAROLD PRAEG — MAY 10

NEW WORSHIP SERVICE TIMES

BEGINNING MAY 23, 2021

8:15 am 9:30 am 11:00 am



The First Presbyterian Church Preschool in North Palm Beach has openings for the 2021/2022 school year. We have classes for 2 year olds that meet twice a week; classes for 3 year olds that meet two and three times a week; and classes for 4 year olds that meet 5 days a week. Contact Diana Wise, Preschool Director at 561-622-8818, ext. 120 for more information.

SUMMER MUSIC CAMP

**at First Presbyterian Church
in North Palm Beach**

Register at www.firstpresnpb.org

Conservatory - Completed 7th Grade - 10th Grade

Intermediate - Completed 4th Grade - 6th Grade

Elementary - Completed 1st Grade - 3rd Grade

July 19 - 23, 2021

Final Program - Virtual Release Friday, July 23