



PCPC LIFE

PALMA CEIA Presbyterian Church

3501 San Jose • Tampa, Florida 33629 • 813.253.6047 • www.palmaceia.org

Advent 2021

ADVENT CALENDAR

Sunday, November 28: 1st Sunday of Advent

8:30 & 11am: Traditional Services in Sanctuary

9am: Connection Service in Gym

6pm: Vespers Service

Wednesday, December 1

5-5:30pm: Music & Movement

5-5:45pm: Children's Choir Rehearsals

5:15-6:15pm: Wednesday Night Dinner

6-7pm: Adult Handbell Choir Rehearsal

7-8:30pm: Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, December 5: 2nd Sunday of Advent;

Communion Sunday

8:30 & 11am: Traditional Services in Sanctuary

9am: Connection Service in Gym

6-6:45pm: Living Nativity. *This will serve as the Vespers Service this evening.*

Wednesday, December 8

5-5:30pm: Music & Movement

5-5:45pm: Children's Choir Rehearsals

5:15-6:15pm: Wednesday Night Dinner

6-6:30pm: Christmas Carols in the Fellowship Hall

6-7pm: Adult Handbell Choir Rehearsal

7-8:30pm: Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, December 12: 3rd Sunday of Advent

8:30 & 11am: Traditional Services in Sanctuary

9am: Connection Service in Gym

1-3pm: Rise Against Hunger in Fellowship Hall

5pm: New Member Class in the Hospitality Room

6pm: Vespers Service

Monday, December 13

7pm: Tampa Oratorio Singers and members of the PCPC Chancel Choir present the Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah.

Tuesday, December 14

7pm: Tampa Oratorio Singers and members of the PCPC Chancel Choir present the Christmas portion of Handel's Messiah.

Wednesday, December 15

4:30-7:30pm: Jolley Trolley! Rides depart PCPC every half hour.

5-5:30pm: Music & Movement

5-5:45pm: Children's Choir Rehearsals

5:15-6:15pm: Wednesday Night Dinner

6-7pm: Adult Handbell Choir Rehearsal

7-8:30pm: Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, December 19: 4th Sunday of Advent

8:30 & 11am: Traditional Services in Sanctuary with special music from brass quintet

9am: Connection Service in Gym

4pm: Tampa Oratorio Singers presents a Carols of the Season concert.

6pm: Longest Night Candlelight Service in the Courtyard at the Nativity Manger- *A Short Service Remembering The Lives and Needs of The Homeless*

Wednesday, December 22

No Wednesday Night Dinner or children's activities

7pm: A Christmas Concert In The Courtyard, with Candlelight and Carols. Featuring the Florida Orchestra Brass and the PCPC Handbell choir

Continued on page two

**Websites, email addresses & words in red are linked*

ADVENT CALENDAR CONT.

Friday, December 24

3pm: Lessons & Carols Christmas Eve

Service in the Sanctuary

6pm: 30-minute Christmas Eve Service in the Courtyard with "Nativity in a Bag" and stable animals

7pm: Connection Christmas Eve Service in the Gym

8pm: Candlelight Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary

8:30pm: Christmas Eve Zoom Service with Rev. Will Wellman

11pm: Candlelight Christmas Eve Service in the Sanctuary

Saturday, December 25

Christmas Day

Sunday, December 26

Different worship pattern this morning!

9am & 11am: Worship Services in the Sanctuary, with Christmas music at both

6pm: Vespers Service

Monday, December 27

Church Office closed

Wednesday, December 29

No Wednesday Night Dinner or children's activities

Friday, December 31

6pm: New Year's Eve Service. Come casual OR dressed up! Followed by Steeple Bell Ringing, Sparkling Grape Juice & Fireworks in the Courtyard

Saturday, January 1

New Year's Day

Sunday, January 2: Epiphany Sunday; Communion Sunday

8:30 & 11am: Traditional Services in Sanctuary

9am: Connection Service in Gym

6pm: Vespers Service

Monday, January 3

Church Office closed

From the Pastor's Desk

NURTURE FAITH, DISCERN HOPE, PRACTICE LOVE

Frederick Buechner wrote, "In the silence of a winter dusk, there is a sound so faint that for all you can tell it may be only the sound of the silence itself. You hold your breath to listen. You are aware of the beating of your heart. The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment."

This issue of the PCPC newsletter shares information about the program activities and worship services PCPC has planned for our journey through Advent to Christmas this year. Our intention is to provide for you opportunities to nurture faith, discern hope, and practice love. We build up to Christmas Day with such intensity that it's easy to miss the moments of the journey through Advent along the way. I encourage you to intentionally seek to join some of these activities as a way of being aware of and cherishing the Advent moments in the journey. Some of the activities involve fellowship, carols and joy; some involve contemplation, prayer, and silence. You will know best which ones will bless your Advent journey.

The truth about faith is it can be nurtured. Using intentionality, faith can be cultivated and strengthened. A truth about hope is that it can be missed. We can be distracted from discerning it. A truth about love is that it is better when it is practiced. Its power glows with practice.

Here is an Advent scripture that I believe guides us well in this Advent journey: Jesus said, "***Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly***" (Luke 21:34). I see a lot of familiarity with drunkenness and worry, but expect you might have to look up "dissipation." It refers to self-indulgence that leads to wastefulness.

It would be a shame to waste the beautiful moments of the Advent journey. They are meant to be a gift to us. Participating in them, being present for them, even in silence, is a means for the Christian pilgrim to nurture faith, discern hope, and practice love.

A Blessed Advent journey to you,



Pastor John

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined.

-Isaiah 9:2

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people."

-Luke 2:10

Music Notes....

MESSIAH (The Christmas portion)
at PCPC Monday, December 13 at 7pm and
Tuesday, December 14 at 7pm

Join The Tampa Oratorio Singers and the Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church Chancel Choir for this much beloved annual tradition; with orchestra and professional soloists. No tickets required; a free will offering will be collected.

CAROLS OF THE SEASON

at PCPC by the Tampa Oratorio Singers
Sunday, December 19 at 4pm

A much anticipated annual event! Ring in the holidays as we perform sacred and secular seasonal favorites such as "Ave Maria", "Sleigh Bells Ring" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas." Free tickets are available in the Church Office for PCPC members.

CHOIRS

Children's Choirs for ages 4 through 5th grade meet on Wednesdays from 5-5:45. Please email Nancy Callahan, Callahan@palmaceia.org with any questions

Trinity Bells is open to high schoolers and adults, and meets 6-6:55pm on Wednesdays. Director is Tian Sanchez: robertchristiansanchez@gmail.com.

The PCPC Chancel Choir rehearses on Wednesdays from 7-8:30pm, and participates in both the 8:30 and 11:00 Traditional Sunday services. New, experienced singers are welcome. Email Nancy Callahan, Callahan@palmaceia.org.

There will be no Wednesday Night Dinner, Children's Choirs/ Music, or Adult Choirs Dec. 22nd or Dec. 29th.



Advent and Christmas are a time for lots of music! The choir at PCPC is now preparing music for both of these seasons.

We would love to have new singers come and join with us in the joy of the carols, hymns and anthems. Rehearsals are in the sanctuary at 7pm on Wednesdays.

You don't need to be a veteran, first timers are welcome, and you are welcome to bring a friend!

Nancy Callahan is the Music Director. For more information or inquiry please email Callahan@palmaceia.org .

NEW YEAR'S EVE SERVICE DECEMBER 31ST AT 6:00 PM IN THE SANCTUARY

Come casual OR dressed up! Followed by Steeple Bell Ringing, Sparkling Grape Juice & Fireworks in the Courtyard.

WEDNESDAY DINNERS

All are invited to join in the fellowship and good food every Wednesday*. The meal is served in the Fellowship Hall from 5:15-6:15pm, with an outdoor seating option. No reservations are needed. The cost is \$5.00 a person, \$3.00 a child, or \$15.00 for a family.

**No Wednesday Night Dinner, Children's Choirs, or Adult Choirs Dec. 22nd or Dec. 29th.*

Scan the Flow Code with your phone's camera to see upcoming dinner menus!

Scan me!



NEXT NEW MEMBER CLASS: SUNDAY, DEC. 12TH AT 5PM

PCPC's New Member Class is for anyone who has an interest in learning more about Palma Ceia Presbyterian, its ministries, and membership. Some people who attend this new member's class have a desire to become members of PCPC, and decide to join at the end of the class. Others attend the class simply as part of their exploration toward learning more about the ministries that PCPC has to offer individuals and families.

All are welcome in the Hospitality Room next to the chapel, and we look forward to seeing you. Email receptionist@palmaceia.org if you have any questions or to let us know you plan to attend.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY

Children's Advent Library Opens Nov. 28th

The Children's Advent Library is available in the Fellowship Hall starting Nov. 28th and running through December. The books are appropriate for ages 2 through 5th grade — and up! The Fellowship Hall is open Sunday-Friday 8:30am-6pm. Families can check out any of our curated books which you might choose to read on the spot or use at home during the season. **You won't want to miss reading *Wombat Divine!***

Music and Movement for ages 0-3 continues on Dec 1, Dec 8, Dec 15, then breaks for Christmas. It resumes for 2022 on January 5. We meet on the Playground, weather permitting, or the Godly Play Room (CH101).

Living Nativity: Sunday, December 5th, 6-6:45pm

Drive-Thru: 6-6:10pm

Walk-Through: 6:15-6:45pm

Live Stream Version: 6:30pm

(www.palmaceia.org/videos and YouTube)

The Living Nativity will be held outdoors at PCPC with 8 different stations around the perimeter of the church. Vehicles can drive through from 6-6:10pm, with the walk-through option beginning at 6:15. Please park in the Plant High School parking lot, and begin your walking journey on Himes Ave. At the conclusion of the journey, you may enjoy decorating Christmas cookies, hot cocoa, lattes, and live animals in the stable.

If you would like to be a costumed character — Angel, Shepherd, Wise Person, or Star, sign up on www.palmaceia.org or by emailing Allison Kelly: allison@palmaceia.org.

Youth readers & adult supervising volunteers are also needed. There will be a rehearsal for *readers only* Wed., Dec. 1 from 5-7pm.

Rise Against Hunger

Sun., Dec 12th, 1-3pm in Fellowship Hall

Join us as we pack 10,000+ meals in two hours! You have to see it to believe it! There are ways for all ages to participate. Last year, thanks to this event, we sent 10,152 meals to *Hands for Haiti*.

The signup link to participate is at www.palmaceia.org/events/rise-against-hunger and has a maximum **capacity of 40 this year.**

Christmas Eve Service for Children & Families — “Nativity in a Bag”

December 24th, 6pm

Join us for this 30-minute participatory service in the church courtyard where everyone may play all the parts of the story of Christ's birth from their seats. Live animals in the stable help immerse us in the story.

GIVING TREE



Please support this year's Giving Tree by selecting a tag from one of the Christmas trees in the Fellowship Hall, the Narthex, or the Gym, or by selecting a gift from **SignUpGenius**.

You can also mail or drop off monetary donations/gift cards at the church office. Guardian ad Litem, FED, Created, and Beth-El will be the recipients of your generosity this year. We are also

in need of large gift bags and tissue paper. Please return gifts unwrapped, with tag or SignUpGenius details attached, to the church office by Sunday, December 5. Please contact Shannon Pierson at spierson22@yahoo.com or 813-731-1910 if you have any questions.

POINSETTIA DEDICATIONS

Remember your loved ones and/or honor your family and/or friends with a poinsettia dedication that will decorate the sanctuary this holiday season.

Dedications are \$8 each and orders may be placed by emailing Diane King at diane@palmaceia.org or by calling her at home at 813-254-9595, giving her the name of the person being remembered or honored, and telling her how many plants you wish to dedicate. (If the dedication is for someone deceased, it will be “In Memory Of.” If the dedication is for someone living, it will be “In Honor Of.”)

The dedication list will be printed and available on campus during Advent and will be online as well.



ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Advent Among Us

Sundays, November 28th through December 19th, at 10:05am in EM307/308 & on Zoom

Led by Rev. Will Wellman. Advent is a time when the church looks backward to celebrate the birth of Christ and forward to anticipate Christ's return. Yet it is also a time when the church looks for signs of Christ in the here and now. In this four-week class we'll explore Advent in the present tense, studying the Advent scriptures and discussing where we see the work of the Spirit and Christ today and how we can participate in that redemptive and liberating work. Email will@palmaceia.org to get on the email list.

Advent Among Us Podcast

Sundays, November 28th through December 19th

PCPC has a new podcast! This 4-episode podcast is a chance to gather and explore what Advent means in the present tense — that is, signs of Advent we can see around us in the world today. Each week Rev. Will Wellman will have a conversation with a different staff member around Advent and a look at one of the lectionary texts for that week. Available on [Apple Podcasts](#). Email will@palmaceia.org with any questions.

Christmas Eve Zoom Service

December 24th at 8:30pm on Zoom

PCPC will be hosting a live Zoom service on Christmas Eve for those wanting to share in fellowship and worship from a distance. This service will include music, prayer, the reading of Scripture, and a virtual lighting of the Christmas Candles. Come join us live on Zoom as we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Email Will Wellman will@palmaceia.org for the Zoom information.

Wednesday Theology Book Group

Meets Wednesdays, 12pm -1pm on Zoom

This weekly discussion group reads through a variety of theological and religious books picked out by the members. For more information about the current book and to get the Zoom link, email will@palmaceia.org

The Bel-Mar Class: Loving One Another in a Complicated World

Ongoing, Sundays at 10 on Zoom

The class is continuing to examine the issue of what it means to follow the admonition of Jesus to love one another in a complicated world. The issue is examined based upon Scripture in the context of the modern world. Drop-ins to this online class are always welcome. To join the class email list, email Rev. Mike Peacock at mpeacock@peacocklawfirm.com.

Be on the Lookout — Coming in 2022! Gathering Together Around God's Word

PCPC will be reading through the entire Bible in 2022 as a congregation! Over the course of 12 months we will read each book of the Old and New Testament and gain a better understanding of God's continuing relationship with humanity. Reading plans and programming for all ages will be announced soon!

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JUSTICE SEEKERS FOR 4TH-5TH GRADERS

Justice Seekers is on hiatus for December. We'll be back January 9th. In the meantime, feel free to visit our Advent Lending Library in the Fellowship Hall!

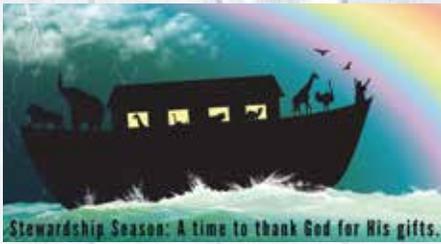
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YOUTH AT PCPC

A Note from PCPC's Youth Ministry Intern

This semester, our middle school and high school students have been overflowing with energy and spirit at all our weekly meetings. Together we have journeyed through two series at youth group, 'The Disciples of Jesus' and 'The Stories of Genesis'. At our version of bible study, called Talking Pts., our high schoolers have engaged in conversation surrounding the topics of philosophy, theology, and scripture (pts). You might have seen us running through the halls during our middle school scavenger hunt and youth group Halloween party. We are excited to continue this semester with more fun and learning, including lessons about the importance of gratitude and several other special events. Follow us on instagram [@pcpc.youth](#) for all our updates and meeting times!

-Kate Donaldson



We are thrilled to celebrate the gifts this congregation has committed to PCPC's mission and ministry during this Stewardship Season, especially during this challenging year. We are excited to announce we have received over 70% of our \$1.7M pledge commitments goal for 2022! **THANK YOU** to those who have generously pledged your financial gifts and to all for sharing as you are able.

There is still time to help us meet our goal! If you have not sent in your pledge commitment yet, please visit www.palmaceia.org/pledge to learn more about how you can participate in our Stewardship season. We need your prayers and support to meet our pledge goal to allow us to continue to worship, learn, grow, care, and act for Christ.



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TIPS FROM FINANCE FOR YEAR-END CONTRIBUTIONS

Question? Contact Angie Montes in the Finance Office: finance@palmaceia.org

PLEDGE PAYMENTS

If you elect to prepay some or all of your 2022 pledge before the end of this 2021 year, PLEASE memo the check "2022 Pledge" or use "2022 General Fund" for online giving to ensure that your gift is applied correctly.

GIFTS OF STOCK

If you plan to donate stock towards your 2021 or 2022 pledge and you want it applied during this 2021 year, PLEASE begin the process before December 15, 2021.

Contact Angie Montes in the Finance Office for stock transfer information.

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To Our Faithful Pledgers! Recurring Online Gifts

Now that we are into the 2022 pledge season, a tip to those of you who have set up recurring online payments for your 2021 pledge. Please make sure your current setup frequency is not "ongoing" but has an end date or total amount or total number of payments. There is a new box appearing on the online giving form to set up your 2022 payments, but your gifts to the 2021 General Fund will not stop if they are "ongoing." You can see your setup and make any changes by clicking the link in your emailed receipt.

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING 2021 COLLECTED DECEMBER 5-31

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor this gift by providing resources to Beth-El Ministry, serving migrant farm workers and the working poor right here in Hillsborough County.

Beth-El has several projects on their Christmas wish list this year. At the top is a series of IT infrastructure upgrades to provide a reliable network for their Computer Lab, hopefully operational in the Spring of 2022.

This lab will provide more families access to reliable internet, opportunities for learning computer and literacy skills, learning English while using online platforms, as well as the ability to apply for jobs, services, and educational opportunities.

In addition, their 23 "Step Up for Success" scholars will have a quiet space to do research and do their academic work!

Beth-El will receive our "Joy Gift" offering this Christmas, so please consider your support! You may give online at www.palmaceia.org/giving, or scan the QR code to the left.

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CHRISTMAS IN AFRICA

Christmas is a time of sharing the most precious gift you can give — the gift of your love. This gift is priceless.

One way you can do that, once again, is through Christmas in Africa. By giving a gift in honor of one you love, you are sharing hope with another far away. You can give a goat, a cow, a garden, school supplies, medical care, the assurance of safe delivery of one's child, and so much more.



Tables will be set up in the courtyard on Sundays, Nov. 28 - Dec. 19, for purchase of your life-giving gifts. Or you can order a gift online at www.villagepartnersinternational.org/shop.

Won't you consider a gift that continues to give to another, long after the gift is given? Thank you!

Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation.

-Isaiah 12:2

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

FROM THE WITNESS & SERVICE COMMITTEE

Thanks for keeping FED going!

Even though processes have changed, your faithful generosity has provided monthly supplemental groceries to seven local families (with 22 children!) through our Feeding Every Disciple (FED) program. These staples help prevent food insecurity from impacting these families during the month, and are very much appreciated!

These children face tremendous obstacles in overcoming the poverty into which they were born. The FED Ministry continues to provide food and occasional emergency support for these families to give them a better chance to succeed. Your blessings are at work — thank you!

Wonderful RIP Medical Benefits!

You've prepared a very special Christmas gift for about 1,850 Hillsborough County families struggling with medical debt! Your fabulous response to the Peacemaking Offering raised \$40,286, which PCPC's partner, RIP Medical Debt, will use to relieve approximately \$4 million in dormant, uncollectible, and damaging bad medical debts for the working poor.

This month, letters are being mailed to let these families know that their debt has been paid with a donation from PCPC – a gift that they'll never forget!

Thank you for your consistent, loving faithfulness in sharing your blessings with others in need.

“And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

-Luke 1:45

INTRODUCING MEG PABST



With great pleasure, PCPC welcomes the Rev. Meg Pabst as Director for the Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool (PCPP). Meg comes with fifteen years of experience working with children and a deep love and commitment to the Church; combine this with her work at the preschool for the past six years and she is uniquely qualified to build on the strong legacy of the preschool and lead it into the future which God has in store. The Session is grateful to Lucy Bowers, Lauren Dicks, Jenna Lee Hughes, and Todd Reid for serving on the Search Team for this position. They prayerfully and diligently set about this work, enthusiastically and unanimously arriving at their decision. We hope you will join them in welcoming Meg into this position!

A Word from Members of the Search Team...

Meg's experience as both an educator and as an ordained Presbyterian minister makes her uniquely qualified for this position, and her leadership during her time as Acting Director has exceeded all expectations- Lauren Dicks

Meg is an inspired leader with the ability to balance a wide-ranging set of responsibilities for the school. I look forward to seeing the school continue to provide a safe, happy, and healthy environment for children and staff alike. -Todd Reid

I am so excited for Meg to take on the role as the new director of Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool! One thing that stands out to me most about Meg is her love for the children. She knows each child of the preschool by name and never misses an opportunity to make them feel recognized and important. Welcome, Meg! -Lucy Bowers

My family and I are filled with excitement to have Meg Pabst continue to lead the preschool in a permanent role! She has so much passion for the children with an appreciation for the tradition of the school, as well as foresight into the future. It truly is a special calling to have an ordained minister, with a degree in education, guiding our children's early development. -Jenna Lee Hughes

A Word from Meg...

Just this weekend, a friend and I were having a heart-to-heart and they asked me specifically about my faith, as they were wondering where I saw the Holy Spirit moving in my life. I started to share a bit of how I see God working in my life, and I shared with them the story of how I ended up at Palma Ceia Presbyterian Preschool. Perhaps someday I will share it with you all, too, but for today just know how thrilled and grateful I am that God has called me to this position and this place (and that the search team, along with the session, has affirmed that call!). I look forward to the new things that God is bringing forth with deep gratitude for all who have nurtured this school and the people within it.

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PALMA CEIA

Presbyterian Church

3501 San Jose • Tampa, FL 33629
Phone: (813) 253-6047
Fax: (813) 254-5274
www.palmaceia.org

ADVENT 2021

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ADVENT BIDDING PRAYER

*Holy One, be the light in our darkness tonight.
As we light the candle of hope,
we pray for those who feel hopeless . . .*

*As we light the candle of peace,
we pray for all victims of violence . . .*

*As we light the candle of joy,
we pray for those whose hearts are weighed down
by sorrow . . .*

*As we wait to light the candle of love,
we pray for those who do not feel loved,
for those who struggle to love others . . .*

*Holy One, be the light in our darkness this Advent,
that we might reflect your light into the dark corners
of our world. Amen.*

