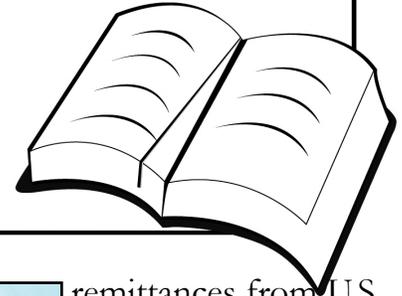


# GR



# CE notes

GRACE COVENANT  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



June / July 2019 — Volume 62, Issue 6

## Presbyterians in CUBA

Central Florida Presbytery has had a partnership with El Centro Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Cuba since 2013.

In 2015, representatives from El Centro visited Grace Covenant and we were moved by their stories of the obstacles they face. El Centro has 13 churches and 8 missions in 3 provinces in central Cuba. There are 7 pastors to minister to all those congregations, and distances between them are 40-50 kilometers. In addition to the upkeep on buildings that are nearly 100 years old (and were under the control of the government for more than 40 years), in a country where obtaining a car is very difficult, they struggle to provide transportation for the pastors.

Eight churches in Central Florida Presbytery have partnerships with churches in El Centro Presbytery and every year a group from central Florida visits Cuba to increase the relationship with sister churches and explore how to form more partnerships.

The vice-moderator of El Centro, Rev. Liudmila Hernandez says, "The Cuban church is alive, even after all the rough stages our society has lived through."

Recently, the U.S. Administration has closed the visa section of the U.S. Embassy in Cuba, and is proposing to re-impose some economic sanctions, such as limiting cruise ship tourism and



remittances from U.S. citizens to their relatives in Cuba. Many of our fellow Presbyterians in central Florida believe that increased sanctions will harm our fellow Christians while having minimal effect on the Cuban government.

If you feel led to contact your elected senators and representatives, you can find a copy of the letter PCUSA leaders recently sent to Congress at:

[https://gallery.mailchimp.com/03e83bcc4f1402fe056664cc8/files/d1c6f83f-8e09-4c81-96b9-805610fe2d3f/HoC\\_Cuba\\_US\\_Embassy.docx.pdf](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/03e83bcc4f1402fe056664cc8/files/d1c6f83f-8e09-4c81-96b9-805610fe2d3f/HoC_Cuba_US_Embassy.docx.pdf)

### From the Youth Group

Please be in prayer for our students and chaperones as we travel to our High School Montreat Youth Conference on June 8-15, Triennium on July 16-20, and Middle School Montreat Youth Conference on July 17-20.

The youth group is once again asking for your help in collecting school supplies as part of a **Back-to-School back-pack fill project** for students in need in our community. During the month of July, there will be a collection box in the narthex and items may be turned in until August 4th. Backpacks are needed for all ages. Suggested items needed include: pencils, notebook paper, crayons, markers, rulers, scissors, glue, etc.



This church family means everything to me. Your support through the last three months has kept me peaceful and appreciative of being in Grace Covenant's family. They won't let me list everyone who has prayed, sent cards and lifted me up. Please know that God knows who you are. Thank you so much especially Candy and Lilly.

Barbara Baker



Reuben and I would like to thank the staff and members of GCP Church for their love bestowed on us in the form of calls, cards, sympathy and most of all their prayers during the death of Reuben's sister Adel Mullings-Edwards and my brother Barrington Pindling. You made our hard times much easier by being their for us.

Love In Christ,  
Reuben & Minnette Mullings

To the GCPC family – thank you all SO much for opening your hearts and arms this past year as I've served as your interim. Your support has come in various ways and is truthfully appreciated by the Youth Department. Our students and their families are ahead of the curve on transitioning from the great work that Jimmy Steele did in their lives as Christ directed him, to whomever He has called to take over as the new Director of Youth and Family Ministry. Great and exciting things are ahead for us, and thank you again for making this journey possible.

Mike Beam  
Acting Dir. of Youth and Family Ministry

On behalf of the Deacons, I would like to thank the congregation for its generous donations for the College Care Packages in March. We received an abundance of supplies and food. I am sure you made a student's day brighter when they opened their package.

God Bless,  
Kathy Roberts

The Outreach Committee received a heartfelt thank you note from Dover Shores Elementary School. The check given to them before Easter allowed Carmen to purchase socks and underwear for 6 students, groceries for 3 families in urgent need, and with the funds left over, buy items for the very sparse food pantry at the school. They are so thankful for our help and for being a voice for families in need at their school.

The Presbyterian Women's Council would like to thank every one one of the ladies who contributed and participated in the Handbag Bingo event. Because of your generosity, over **\$850.00** was raised in support of the GCPC Scholarship Fund. And some lucky ladies went home with new handbags!



**Inside this issue:**

**Small Blessings**.....4  
**Training Opportunities**.....6  
**Book Club**.....7

See the church calendar online:  
<http://www.grace.to/announcements/weekly-calendar/>

**REMINDER:**

When you make a purchase on Amazon, go to <https://smile.amazon.com/> and you can designate GCPC as the non-profit group you choose to support.



# CAN YOU HELP?



- Worship is gearing up to do Usher training. Is this something you would like to do on a rotating basis? You can choose to help at the service you usually attend.
- At the time of a funeral, there are groups of people who arrange for a reception that takes place after the service in Conway Hall. Would you like to be on a team to support the family in this way? The groups rotate as the need arises. Or if you can't be there, would you be willing to supply food for one of these receptions (like cookies or sandwiches)?
- Like to make scrapbooks? Organize and display memorabilia? Our history books need to be brought up to date. Would you like to take on that task?

If any of these opportunities appeal to you, or if you would like more information about them, email [candy@grace.to](mailto:candy@grace.to) or call Candy at 407-898-6571.

## Vacation Bible School donation list:

Because some have asked what they could bring in to help with VBS supplies, here is a list:

Plain M&M's, pretzels, sugar pops, frosted flakes, cheerios, froot loops, popcorn, cheese balls, Cheezits, cookies or brownies, sandwich size and quart size baggies - Also, empty, clean soup, vegetable or fruit cans **IF the edge is smooth and will not cut.**

There will be a basket in the Narthex to receive these items.



*We extend our Christian love and sympathy to~*

Jim and Gail Evans and family.  
Gail's sister-in-law, Carol Reynolds, passed away in New York.

Dottie Wood and family.  
Dottie's husband, Bob, died Sunday, May 12, 2019

The family of Karl Kesler,  
who died Monday, May 13, 2019.

## Pentecost - the birth of the Church!

When fire from Heaven came-  
it fell on young believers.

The Church began.

And the world was never the same.

On **June 9th** we celebrate Pentecost as the global Church. On that day, we as the Church here at Grace Covenant have the opportunity to empower and light some fires in the young believers from our church and around the world. On June 9th we have the opportunity to give to the Pentecost Offering. This offering is an international offering taken up by the Presbyterian Church world wide. And it's target group is young people!!

The money you give will go towards helping at risk children through education and providing safe havens. It supports ministries with young people, and empowers young leaders. Also, it goes to support Young Adult Volunteers (YAV) as they serve in communities around the world. And 40% of what you give will stay at GCPC to support and develop our youth.

So, please pray and dare to ask the Holy Fire Holder to release again His Fire on His Church! And won't you join Him by coming prepared to give on June 9th.

Send Grace Notes items  
to Jane Heppner at

[jane.gracenotes@gmail.com](mailto:jane.gracenotes@gmail.com)

Please submit articles for **the August issue**  
by **July 15th.**



## Welcome to Bonnie Keller!

Bonnie recently joined the Grace Covenant family! She has joined Ruth Circle, the Outreach Committee and has already volunteered to teach Vacation Bible School!

She loves the Lord and enjoys learning all she can about Him, serving to the best of her ability in her little corner of the world, and sharing His blessings large and small.

The summer program is going extremely well. The children will attend a special SBCC VBS, have visits from special interest programs and attend field trips. Next time you walk by the church fountain, notice the red periwinkles that the four years old classes planted for Earth Day.

Connor Umpierre will be installing Speed Bumps on the north drive going by SBCC for his Eagle Scout Project. The bumps are necessary to insure the safety of the children going in and out of the school. Many cars disregard the Stop sign and 10 mile speed limit. If you would like to help Connor physically or financially, please talk with him and offer your assistance.



Starting in August, we will be re-visiting a Conway Presbyterian tradition of serving coffee once a month to the SBCC parents as they drop their children off at school. This is a wonderful opportunity for our congregation to enhance communication with this mission of GCPC. Please consider being among the two or three offering coffee and grace to these parents, who support so many of GCPC's church projects.

### Family Promise---HOSTING WEEK AUGUST 4 --11, 2019

Grace Covenant partners with Conway United Methodist to provide suppers and fellowship with the families. Conway Methodist provides the classrooms (aka bedrooms), gym, and kitchen facilities. Grace Covenant shares the ministry by preparing food and extra hosts to keep the facility open for the families.

In the typical homeless shelters, many families have to be split up (men's dorms/women's dorms). Family Promise keeps families together in a safe place with privacy and security. We have had a dad with a 22-month old daughter, a family who lost everything in an apartment fire, a mom with 2 sons over 14, and parents who fell into deep debt due to medical emergencies and job losses. The program can handle 4 families or 14 guests total.

We, as a congregation, help prepare meals and give them a place to stay until they can get a job and/or earn enough for 1st/last month's rent. Family Promise also provides case managers who work directly with the families for job training, resume assistance, child care and school placement. As hosts, we have the opportunity to welcome the families with

Christ's grace, love and hope.

When Stephanie and her daughter, Nashlynn, came into the Family Promise program in 2017, they had nowhere else to turn. Stephanie's mother, father, and stepfather had passed away several years before, so she did not have a safety net when her family experienced homelessness.

While in our program Stephanie once said, **"Family Promise has renewed my faith. It's been beautiful to watch so many people live out their faith on a day-to-day basis."** Today Stephanie has built a new life for herself and has a job she enjoys. Nashlynn is thriving and enjoys having a place to call home.

If you have questions or want to help by:

- **Cooking a supper meal** for the guests, (8-14 people; official count provided prior week)
- being an **Evening Host** (6:30-9:00 pm),
- being an **Overnight Host** (8:30 pm to 7:30 a.m.), or
- **Saturday day hosts** (2-hr blocks; 8-10 a.m., etc.),

Please contact Diana Ibarra.



Many thanks to everyone who signed up to place flowers in the sanctuary on Sundays. There are still a few dates available.

September 8 and 29, October 13, November 3

Please call the church office or place a note in the offering basket if you would like one of the dates. You will receive a reminder close to the date.

### SUMMER FUN NITES

Join us on the **third Tuesday of each month** in Conway Hall at **6:29** for Fun Nite.

Friends and family gather around a table to eat together and then play some fun “nonsense” games together. All are invited to come for the fun and fellowship!

**JUNE 18:** Covered Dish dinner...bring a dish of something to share (drinks, bread and dessert provided)

**JULY 16:** Annual picnic nite....hot dogs, sloppy joes, drinks and dessert provided. You bring a picnic side dish to share.

Hope to see you there!



### FOURTH THURSDAY AT THE GARDEN

Come to the **NEW Olive Garden on East Colonial** to eat and fellowship with members and friends of Grace Covenant. The time for gathering is **6:30 pm**.

The dates are: **JUNE 27** and **JULY 25**.

Bring friends and family and come share together!

## ROOTED Student Ministry Schedule

### June 1

Saturday - Cost and time to be announced  
**Godzilla movie event** at Fashion Square Mall

### June 2

Sunday  
3:45 - 10:00 pm  
**Give Kids the World**

### June 8 - 15

**High School Montreat Youth Conference**

### June 19

Saturday - Cost and time to be announced.  
**Men in Black movie event**  
at Fashion Square Mall

### June 21 - 23

Friday - Sunday - Watch for details.  
**PYC Ichetucknee Retreat**

### June 26

Saturday - Cost and time to be announced  
**Toy Story 4 movie event**  
at Fashion Square Mall

### June 30

Sunday 5:15 - 7:00 pm  
**ROOTED** - with free pizza, games, music, prayers, and our lesson

### July 6

Saturday - Cost and time to be announced  
**Spiderman movie event** at Fashion Square Mall

### July 7 - 14 - 21

Sundays 5:15 - 7:00 pm  
**ROOTED** - with free pizza, games, music, prayers, and our lesson

### July 16 - 20

**Triennium**

### July 17- 20

**Middle School Montreat Youth Conference**

### July 24

Saturday - Cost and time to be announced  
**Lion King movie event** at Fashion Square Mall

**Sunday School** meets every Sunday, 9:30 - 10:30am, in the Youth Room.

For more details on our events and other news....  
**you can friend us on Facebook at: Grace Covenant PC Youth,**  
**and on Instagram at: rootedgpc.**

## **Financial Assistance Available for Training Opportunities**

Due to the beneficence of saints gone before us and your fellow members, we have funds set aside to assist individuals, couples, and families that desire to attend denominational and other summer conferences and training programs. Check out these opportunities and let the church office know if you would like to attend.

### **Central Florida Presbytery**

#### **Exploring Missional Leadership Training**

Wednesday, June 5<sup>th</sup> at GCPC, 9:00am - 3 pm. Through presentations, active learning, and group conversations, you will be introduced to the nature of missional church planning and the competencies needed to do that work. \$15

**Fresh Ideas Start Here (FISH)** - Saturday, Aug 24<sup>th</sup> in central Florida. Sixteen workshops offered by outstanding educators, pastors, elders, and lay leaders from churches in CFP with emphasis on intergenerational ministry, technology, person devotions, worship, and age specific workshops for those in ministry with children, youth, and adults.

**PW 2019 Bible Study** - Saturday, August 3 at Oakland Presbyterian Church, 9am-3pm. Cost \$10 before July 25; \$15 after July 25. *Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments*

### **Montreat**

**Montreat Youth Conferences** - June 2-Aug. 3. Montreat Youth Conference is a unique gathering of young people from all over the country for a week of study, worship, and recreation. Check schedule at <https://montreat/events/myc>

**Women's Connection** - August 9-11. Women coming together in an open and welcoming community to be challenged and inspired, to rest and be renewed, and discover who God wants us to be. Check details at <https://montreat/events/>

### **Montreat con't**

**2019 Road Scholar Program** - Mar 24 - Dec 13. Participants come to Montreat from every walk of life to learn together, to exchange ideas, and to explore the world. Check schedule and details at <https://montreat/events/road-scholar-2019>

**Worship and Music** - Part 1 June 16-22; Part 2 June 23-29. Sponsored by the Presbyterian Association of Musicians (PAM) in cooperation with the MTC. Details at <https://montreat/events/music1> and <https://montreat/events/music2>

**Well Being Retreat:** - August 19-21, 2019

The Well Being Retreat offers a unique opportunity to explore wholeness through spiritual, health, financial and vocational lens.

See <https://montreat/events/bop> for details.

**Presbyterian Youth Triennium, Middle School Conference, and Youth Programs:** - There are many youth programs at Montreat over the summer, contact Michael Beam for further information.

### **Office of the General Assembly**

**Big Tent** - August 1-3, 2019 in Baltimore, MD. A three Day conference on the theme--Movement Beyond Institution. This will emphasize the hope of the Gospel and its power to challenge institutional conventions. The goal is to come together and live in this moment, immersed in our current cultural context of racial division, gender inequality, and economic disparity to be renewed, refreshed, and reformed, so we may be sent out to effect change in our own communities. Through worship, Bible study, leaning opportunities, and active engagement with one another, to proclaim the Gospel of Christ in action and answer the call to discern the Will of God together.

See details at <http://www.pcusa.org/events/>.

## Session Summary

Stated Session Meeting - May 16, 2019



Income exceeded expenses in April which will give the church a modest positive balance in the operating account as we head into the summer months. The Finance Committee and staff continue to monitor finances on a weekly basis as Session addresses the shortfalls carried forward from 2018 and early 2019.

The Interim Pastor reflected on her first 60 days at Grace Covenant and recommended changes to the committee structure to emphasize outreach and future development.

Session approved a Care Committee to supplement the work of the deacons and develop new initiatives for community care as well as congregational care. Elder Jane Heppner agreed to lead the new committee.

The Finance and Stewardship Committee is putting more emphasis on Stewardship as a year-round program. Elder Jim Pate will be leading this initiative.

Reports were received from standing committees. Admin/Personnel conducted staff reviews in May. Building & Grounds is pricing new AC equipment for Conway Hall. CE is planning for VBS and hosting a Book Club. Outreach has several new initiatives planned. Worship received a donation that paid for new lights, sheet music and other upgrades. The Youth are preparing to go to Montreat and the PCUSA Youth Triennium.

Small Blessings is planning to install speed bumps on the north side of Conway Hall. And Session appointed a small group of elders to begin the process of re-negotiating the ministry partnership with Share the Care before the existing contract expires in August.

Session noted with regret the passing of members Bob Wood and Karl Kesler. A number of members who have not attended for several years were removed from the rolls.

## Table Talks Return in August

Table Talk is a chance to gather around a table of 8 – 10 to eat together while spending time in study together. The meal is provided; there will be a donation basket to cover expenses.



**Classes will meet on Wednesdays,  
August 7, 14, 21 and 28 from 6 – 7:15 pm.**

Registration forms will be in the bulletin beginning July 7 and will be due back to the office by July 29.

**There will be four class choices:**

1. The English Reformation led by Mike Woods
2. Soul Keeping led by Kristen Stieffel
3. Confessions are Roadmaps for Daily Living of Biblical Truths led by Rev. Harvey Oster
4. A Study of the Book of Jude led by Jim Pate.

Further descriptions of the studies will be on the registration form.

Don't miss out.

This is a great opportunity for a midweek study.

## Book Club News

Join us for a relaxing evening of discussion!

Monday, **July 1, 7:00 pm** - Library

**The First Phone Call From Heaven: A Novel**  
By: **Mitch Albom**

A small town on Lake Michigan gets worldwide attention when its citizens start receiving phone calls from the afterlife. Is it the greatest miracle ever or a massive hoax?



Monday, **August 5, 7:00 pm**

**Pearl in the Sand: A Novel**

By: **Tessa Afshar**

The story of Rahab: Can a Canaanite harlot who has made her livelihood by looking desirable to men make a fitting wife for one of the leaders of Israel? Shockingly, the Bible's answer is yes.

JUNE/JULY 2019



**GRACE COVENANT  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**Sunday Worship:** 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.

**Office Hours:**

Monday–Thursday: 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

Friday: 8:30 a.m.–noon

1655 Peel Ave., Orlando, FL 32806

Phone: 407.898.6571

E-mail: [churchoffice@grace.to](mailto:churchoffice@grace.to)

[WWW.GRACE.TO](http://WWW.GRACE.TO)

Rev. Melanie Ruta  
Interim Pastor

Candy Vander Weide  
Commissioned Lay Pastor

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Permit No. 3597  
Orlando, FL

Return Service Requested

To:

## Summer Opportunities For Fun



### **Vacation Bible School 2019 "To Mars and Beyond"**

Vacation Bible School will take place  
**June 10 - 13** from 9:00 am - Noon.

ALSO..... Small Blessings Bible School will  
be held June 18, 19 and 20 from 9 - 11:30 am

For more information or to volunteer  
to help contact Candy at  
407-898-6571 or [candy@grace.to](mailto:candy@grace.to)



### **Music Camp**

June 24 - 27  
Mon. thru Thurs.

**Sunday, June 30**

The children from the Music Camp will bless us  
with what they have learned as they share in the  
leadership of the Worship services. **Following  
the 10:45 service** members, visitors, music  
camp participants and their families are all invited  
to the Courtyard and Conway Hall for a  
**Fourth of July celebration**  
presented by the Deacons.

**Hot dogs and chips** and fellowship together ...  
Make plans to be there!