



Community of Christ

# Florida Mission Center New & Noteworthy

July 2023

## Summer Camp Success Stories



We had two great camps this summer with 24 campers at Jr. High/Sr. High camp and 21 at Junior Camp. The theme for the Jr. High/Sr. High camp was “Under Construction” and the theme for the Junior Camp was “Jesus Is My Superhero”. All the campers had a good experience and many left saying they were coming back next year and inviting all their friends. We have 18 campers and staff excited to be attending SPEC at Graceland University this week. They join the Southeast of America (SEA delegation) for a week of sports, friendly competition, classes, worship, crafts, concerts, campfires, a dance, and more. The summer camp program is growing again and we’re excited for what 2024 holds. We have set the date for the Junior High/Senior High Winter Retreat for the weekend of January 19-21. We look forward to seeing our youth in 7-12<sup>th</sup> grades at that event.

Serena Tankersley, Youth Ministries  
Leader

*Rocket Class (above) and Pastor’s Class (below) at Sr. High/Jr. High camp!*



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Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Campership Fund as this has made a difference in our youth attendance this year. Lives have been impacted in a very positive way and we look forward to the return of many campers next year!

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## A Word From Our President's Team

Welcome to the first quarterly Florida Mission Center newsletter of 2023. Our plan is to send out a newsletter every January, April, July and October. This is the Mission Center's newsletter, and since you are all part of the Mission Center we want your news. We will ask congregations to let us know the good news that is happening there and you'll hear about activities happening around the Mission Center.



It's hard to believe it has been 6 months since Lisa Houk, Heather Dixon and I came on board as part of the Mission Center presidency team. I have to admit, it has been a time of learning on all of our parts (think drinking from a fire hose). But we are excited about all the possibilities the future holds. We have also been joined by Seventy Jacob Blakesley (from Tallahassee) as our Mission Center Invitational Support Minister (more from him later). And we already had the great team of Debbie Bartlett as MC Administrative Ministries, Serena Tankersley as MC Youth Ministries Leader, and Chuck Petz as the MC Financial Officer. They have been indispensable in helping us get started.

So far this year we have experienced Winter Reunion, World Conference and Memorial Day Reunion. Summer youth camps have been a success, including the Junior High / Senior High camp, Junior camp, and Spec at Graceland. Celebración is coming to Deerhaven Labor Day weekend (hosted by the South Miami congregation), Women's Retreat over Columbus Day weekend (hosted at Deerhaven by the Orlando congregation) and Mission Center conference will be in Clearwater this November. Visit [cofchristfmc.org/register-online.html](https://cofchristfmc.org/register-online.html) to register for any of these events. Whew! And Heather, Lisa and I are working on getting to the congregations we support as soon as we can.

If you have suggestions for us, or want to volunteer for something, please contact us. As I said earlier, this is your Mission Center – and we rely on everyone to make it great.

Paul Houk, MC President of Record  
[fmcphouk@gmail.com](mailto:fmcphouk@gmail.com)

**Memorial Day Family Reunion was hosted by the Clearwater congregation this year. Over forty people registered for the event, and additional people attended the special activities on Saturday or Sunday. On Saturday, there was a baptism service that was held in the pool. And on Sunday, there was a Special Mission Center Conference followed by an ordination service. There were a lot of fun games for all ages, and a very competitive scavenger hunt! As always, there was good food and fellowship. Plan to attend next year!** - Heather Dixon

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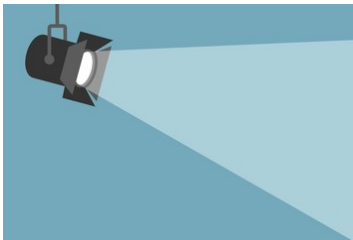
# Seeking Missional Minded

## Greetings Florida Mission Center!!

My name is Jacob Blakesley and I am your newly appointed Invitational Support Minister. I am a Seventy originally from Lamoni, Iowa, formerly serving in Detroit, Michigan as a church planter, and currently working as an art teacher in the Tallahassee area.

The Florida Mission Center would like to invite missionary minded individuals to serve on an Invitational Support Network. We would like to find folks of every spiritual type, all ages (the perspective and energy of youth is welcome!), and in all areas of Florida to meet and discuss missionary opportunities. The Invitational Support Network will advise, train, follow up, and offer outside perspective and energy for congregations that request help. Sometimes a group just needs another set of eyes, heart, hands and feet in a situation. My hope is to grow the network throughout the mission center, finding people in every location so congregations can get support in their area. I also plan to consult, speak and teach as I lead and grow the network.

If you are interested or just want to know more, please contact me at [jblakesley50140@gmail.com](mailto:jblakesley50140@gmail.com) or (313) 515-8955. I look forward to getting to know you more in the months ahead.



## Congregation Spotlight

**The Clearwater congregation** recently hosted a family day. The day included food, games, and small pools for the kids. The kids enjoyed splashing each other as well as unsuspecting adults that walked by. Over 30 people attended, including at least 10 kids. A great time was had by all! - *Heather Dixon*

**The Orlando congregation** has celebrated 3 baptism/confirmations, a baby blessing, and 2 ordinations this year. Seven members were able to attend World Conference and share their experience with the congregation. Orlando is celebrating its 40th year as part of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida, with a member serving on the Board of Directors as well as financial

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and physical contributions to the work of the food bank. The congregation remains connected to Family Promise, an organization that supports homeless families and helps them regain independence. One member is a full-time employee, Lead Pastor Polly Petz serves on the Board, the Activity Building is rented for office space and a day center, and members volunteer at fundraising events, feeding families in the program, and just spending time with residents. During these times “we” become the receivers. The congregation has also raised money this year to help send our youth to camp and for our College Scholarship program. Both youth and adults from the congregation attended the various youth events this summer as campers and staff. We celebrated Mother’s and Father’s Days with potluck and look forward to another one when Apostle Nii visits on August 20th. The Orlando women are now working hard to plan the annual Women’s Retreat at Deerhaven, October 6-8 and we hope all the ladies in the mission center will join the fun. Blessings from Orlando Community of Christ! - *Denise Jurgens*

**The Tarpon Springs congregation** had 66 attend Easter services and a luncheon served after the service. The group is growing and is a testimony to the love of Christ and the love of its members. Breakfast continues to be served before each regular Sunday service. The church building has been undergoing repairs and maintenance including roof leak and gutter repairs, new windows in the assembly hall doors, wooden doors to the chapel repaired and refinished, two external doors repaired and sealed, church pressure-washed and painted, sprinkler system repaired, new shrubs and mulch installed, security cameras installed, thirty foot cross rebuilt and repainted, new sign out front, sound/av system upgraded, driveway patched and resealed, plumbing fixed and new commodes. All of the items were accomplished with donated time from many hard workers. Contractors who helped with their skillset and fair pricing included Pasco Door & Window, Veterans Air Conditioning, Kielty Plumbing, Aqua Sprinkler Systems, Global Sign, Gutters & Roofing, and several others. One member said it well, “It takes a village and family to raise a church!”

The church in Tarpon Springs is comprised of a loving family of believers in Jesus Christ. We all see that through belief in Christ all things are possible. For now the seemingly closed church on Rainville Road is now alive and OPEN FOR THE LORD’S WORK!

People from other churches have asked “What is your secret?” We maintain the approach “all are welcome” and treat everyone as family. They know we will listen. Their adversity has become our cornerstone trait that bodes us well. Through the eyes of our family we see Christ’s view of the world. All are worthy and need the opportunity to be loved and be human.

The Florida Mission Center staff has been an invaluable resource to us in our growth. Their resources, including time, talent, and visits, have helped. The insight to world church has helped a lot. We are still an emerging congregation and donations of time and talent help a lot. - *Jim Brougher*

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# Discernment Corner

by Lisa Houk

We as a church have been invited to share in a discernment process as we prepare to consider a new prophet-president of the church. Beginning in March, we are asked to spend one month in prayer over a particular question individually or as a group. Then, the following month we are asked to share in our homes, small groups, congregations or with the worldwide church our thoughts, insights and leadings of the Spirit, and to listen to what others have to share.

More information and a sharing link can be found at: [cofchrist.org/discerning-future-leadership/](http://cofchrist.org/discerning-future-leadership/).

Here are the questions for the discerning cycle through the end of the year. Even if you have not participated up to this point, you can reflect and pray on the questions that have already been considered and see where the Spirit is leading you.

## **March & April (Awaken to New Possibilities)**

**God, where is your Spirit leading us next, as a worldwide church?** Alternative Question: God, what do you want us to do next to make the world a better place?

## **May & June (Ask & Dream)**

**What are the most significant situations, opportunities, or challenges that a prophetic leader will need to address?** Alternative Question: What are some important things that a leader needs to do to help the church make the world a better place?

## **July & August (Pay Attention)**

**What is God's call for the worldwide church in this time?** Alternative Question: What does God want our church to do right now to help people and make the world a better place?

## **September & October (Listen & Pray)**

**What kind of leadership (qualities, style, competencies, gifts, skills) is needed to respond to God's call for the worldwide church at this time and into the future?** Alternative Question: What are some important qualities that leaders need to have to be good helpers and make the world a better place?

*(continued p. 7)*

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# Apostle to Visit Mission Center

Apostle David Nii, President of Seventy Larry McGuire, and Field Assistant Moana Faana will be traveling through the mission center to visit congregations from August 12-20. Here are some events they will be attending if you are in the area and would like to meet them. Contact Debbie in the mission center office for more information, [fmcbartlett@gmail.com](mailto:fmcbartlett@gmail.com).

Saturday, August 12

- 3:00 p.m. Meet-n-Greet at the Zephyrhills church
- 6:30 p.m. Pizza/Games at the Dixon home in Clearwater

Sunday, August 13

- 9:30 a.m. Breakfast and Worship at the Clearwater church (and via Zoom for FMC Worship)
- 1:00 p.m. Lunch at the Tarpon Springs church
- 5:00 p.m. Dinner Social at the Bradenton/Sarasota church

Monday, August 14

- 12 noon Lunch at the Ft. Myers church

Tuesday, August 15

- 7:00 p.m. Evening Social at the South Miami church

Wednesday, August 16

- 12 noon Lunch at the West Palm Beach church
- 5:00 p.m. Dinner and Worship at the Palm Bay church

Thursday, August 17

- 12:30 p.m. Lunch in Gainesville
- 5:00 p.m. Dinner and Worship at the Ocala church

Friday, August 18

- 9:30 a.m. Breakfast at the Tavares church

Sunday, August 20

- 10:30 a.m. Worship and Lunch at the Orlando church

*\*They will visit north Florida as part of their journey through the rest of the Southeast Field.*

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*(Discernment Corner continued from p. 5)*

### **November & December (Act)**

**What words of blessing and hope do you share for the worldwide church in this important time of discernment for our future?** Alternative Question: What is your prayer (or hope) for the future of our church community and the world?

For more information on Discerning Future Leadership for the church and resources in Spanish and French, visit <https://cofchrist.org/discerning-future-leadership/>.

## **Upcoming Events**

### August

13 FMC Zoom Worship - Apostle David Nii (Clearwater service via Zoom)  
(see page 6 of this newsletter for more opportunities to hear or see Apostle Nii)

### September

1-4 Celebracion at Deerhaven hosted by the South Miami congregation  
10 FMC Zoom Worship - Bishop Don Robb of Ontario

### October

6-8 Women's Retreat at Deerhaven hosted by the women of Orlando  
8 FMC Zoom Worship - speaker TBA

*For more information or to register for an event, visit [www.cofchristfmc.org](http://www.cofchristfmc.org).*

*Find event updates and other weekly news at [fmc.churchupdates.org](http://fmc.churchupdates.org).*

*Thank you to all contributors in this issue. Congregations are invited to send a short paragraph about what is happening for inclusion in a future Congregation Spotlight. Send your ideas or article submissions to [fmcbartlett@gmail.com](mailto:fmcbartlett@gmail.com).*