

# **Connect, Grow & Go**

To Glorify God as a Disciple-Making Outpost of Kingdom Life

*Love One Another*

*Here's What's Going on at VPC in September 2021*



**Scholarship  
Recipient**



**Saying  
Goodbye**

# Our Vision in Action

To Glorify God As A Disciple-Making Outpost Of Kingdom Life

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Carolyn Wilson

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## Church Information

### OFFICE HOURS

Mon through Thurs  
9 am - 4 pm  
Friday, 9 am - 12 pm

### WORSHIP SERVICE

Sunday, 10 am

### ONLINE SERVICES

[www.venicepres.org](http://www.venicepres.org)  
[Facebook](#)  
[Youtube](#)  
[Podcast](#)

### STEPHEN MINISTRY OFFICE

Mon through Thurs  
10 am - 1 pm, Room 11

## Easy Ways to Give

**GIVE ONLINE:** Click the "Give Now" option on the top right corner of our website.

### GIVE FROM THE APP:

download the REALMCONNECT App from your phone's App store and give easily on your phone.

### ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER (EFT):

Automatically withdraw your gift from your checking account each month. Contact church office.

**GIVING BOXES** are mounted on the wall by exit doors in the church to receive your gifts.

**CASH AND CHECK:** We gratefully accept cash and checks in the mail or dropped off at the office.



The Safety Team is looking out for you while you're on VPC campus, but we still want you to be prepared for anything off campus also.

As you know, we are in the middle of hurricane season with the most active time ahead of us.

Here are some tips from Sarasota County's COAD (Community Organization Active in Disaster):

Build an Emergency Supply Kit – new guidelines say you need to be prepared with 7 days worth of supplies.

To stay safe and ready for any disaster strike, it is important to prepare your family disaster kit by gathering some of the basic supplies. It is also important to place them in a portable container so that you can comfortably carry them in case disaster

strikes. Some items that you will want to include are listed below.

- Water—At least 1 gallon daily per person for 7 days.
- Food for 7 days.
- Non perishable & canned foods
- High energy foods like protein bars
- Non electric can opener
- Cooking tools including fuel like Sterno for heating foods
- Plates and utensils
- Pet food & care items
- First Aid Kit
- Medicine/Prescriptions
- Toiletries
- Suitable Clothing—seasonal, rain gear, proper shoes like boots
- Flashlights—with batteries or able to be charged by hand crank

- Radio with batteries or charged by hand crank and include NOAA weather radio

- Disaster Supply Tools—utility knife, whistle, pencil, map compass, thread, needles, signal flare, tape, shut-off wrench, eyewear, thermal blankets

Important Items stored in a waterproof container. Medical records, bank account numbers, social security card, insurance information, telephone with important numbers, cash in case bank ATMs are down, cell phone charger

Your family disaster kit should be placed in an easily accessible place where each family member can reach it and all foodstuffs should be replaced on a regular basis according to it's shelf-life.



## *Desk of Executive Director*

The only thing sure about life is change. In this month's Connect Grow and Go, you will read about a significant change for Venice Presbyterian Church, the departure of Genna and Jamal Sarikoki. They both made their mark on VPC the 4+ years we were blessed to have them. We will surely miss them!

You will read their story and what God has called them to later in this publication. We are excited for them yet sad for us. We certainly will miss Jamal and Genna, the boisterous laugh, Genna's sweet countenance, and their teamwork to help VPC be the best it can be. However, God is calling Genna and Jamal to a new assignment, and VPC is excited about the new season of ministry God is calling us to.

The Human Resource Committee is busy working on options and how to move forward with staffing. Please pray for this process and that God brings us the perfect people to be part of the VPC team. Also, please pray for Jamal, Genna, and Jeremiah as they begin this new chapter in their lives.

We thank you for continuing to give of your gifts so faithfully. It is humbling. The enhancements we said we were going to do are almost done

with funds to spare. To update, the Administration Building was painted in August. The work stopped the leaks in the office area when we have heavy rain. The painting and sealing of the Administration Building are some of our last projects. We will now move onto signage for the campus to better identify buildings.

We see a need to provide shade over the patio area outside of the Glasshouse Café. We've engaged a landscape architect to help us find a way to provide that shade. Communion on the Lawn has been a wonderful experience, and we plan to continue providing that opportunity. Updating the patio area will be a great help. We will place new pavers in the patio area the week of September 6th. Work in the Memorial Garden will start soon as well.

We are starting spiritual gifts classes in September. These classes will help you learn about how God wired you. We will give you a Biblical overview of what the Bible defines as Spiritual Gifts, where to find them in the Biblical text, and what that means for you.

I will begin teaching these classes in September. I am so excited to travel this journey with you and help you understand where God might be leading you. We will use the curriculum called *Serving from the HEART*. We will talk about your STRIDE (Spiritual Gifts, Talents, Resources, Individuality, Dreams, Experiences). You will better understand your top three gifts and how you can use them to glorify God and celebrate how you may already be using them.

Enjoy this publication. I leave you with a prayer that struck my heart.

*"May God bless you with the discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that you may instead uncover depth and richness in your life.*

*May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and to turn their pain into joy.*

*May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.*

*And may the blessing of God Almighty, be upon you, and remain with you always. Amen"*

**Every Day Faith -  
Redemption**



*Christine Bruin*

## *What's Happening in the Library*



If you have stepped into the church library lately, you may have been shocked to find it in transition! After some time of sitting largely untouched, a team has been working to revitalize the Library space and create a space that continues to help our members know Christ and make Christ known. There is a vision for moving the stacks around and creating more open space for study, meeting, and fellowship. We are working to continue putting quality resources in your hands to continue your walk with Christ.

We look forward to some fresh transitions. You may find fewer titles on the shelves as we are working toward stations where people can come in to access digital resources. You may find that the archives move location as we are working to present the history of the church in a way that honors our past and future. You may find that the book store doesn't carry as many items, but we are dedicated to making sure there are quality Bibles in stock so anyone who needs a copy of the Word of God has access. Lots of prayer and research is going into making this space a welcoming, Christ-centered refuge for it's visitors.

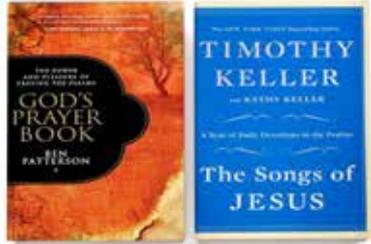
During this growth process the Library is not open for its normal hours, but soon we will need a full roster of volunteer staff. If you have ideas for the rearrangement, want to be contacted for Library work days, or if you would like to volunteer to be part of the Library staff once it is finished, please reach out to Jane Clemmer at [grandysj@yahoo.com](mailto:grandysj@yahoo.com).

*-Former bookstore items are available in the Glass House for donations to the Library Fund. Be sure to stop in and check them out!*

# Worship Ministry

## Resources for Praying the Psalms

Pastor Chris recommends two resources for going deeper in the Psalms. Both of these books are devotionals, guiding us to pray along with the prayerbook of the Bible (the Psalms). There are many excellent books on the Psalms, but these two are particularly geared towards life-application.



### *God's Prayer Book: The Power and Pleasure of Praying the Psalms, by Ben Patterson*

Patterson (campus pastor of Westmost College in Santa Barbara, CA) gives an excellent introduction to the subject of praying the Psalms, and then offers brief reflections on 62 of the Psalms.

### *The Songs of Jesus: A Year of Daily Devotions in the Psalms by Timothy and Kathy Keller*

This devotional book walks through the entire book of Psalms in one year, with short daily reflections and a prayer.

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## Praying the Psalms Sermon Series

September concludes the summer of Praying the Psalms Sermon Series.

The Psalms are prayers, expressing a wide range of feelings, longings, hopes, and praises.

To prepare for September's weekly sermons, please pray the following:

September 5 – Psalm 27  
September 12 – Psalm 63  
September 19 – Psalm 146  
September 26 – Psalm 150

## Foundations: A Study of the Book of Genesis

Beginning in October, Pastor Chris will lead us through an in-depth, life application study of the first book in the Scriptures. Genesis is not just the first book of the Bible; Genesis is a foundational book for the rest of the Bible – as it lays the foundations for everything that follows.

Pastor Chris will lead us through the opening chapters of Genesis – both in the Sunday morning messages and a Wednesday night Bible study. The Sunday messages will begin on October 3, and the Bible Study will begin on October 6 (each Wednesday evening at 6 pm). All the teachings will be live-streamed and posted on the VPC YouTube channel.

You're encouraged to take notes in your own Bible – and for those who would like them Genesis Scripture Journals (like ones we've used for recent studies of Luke, Acts, and Philippians) will be available for purchase in late-September.

## Interested in being a part of the A/V Booth? Join Us!

### Live Stream Monitor



Another position volunteers may play in the booth is that of 'Live Stream Monitor'. This person has a computer that has a reading of the audio board so they can make adjustments in the live stream. The mix of audio in the sanctuary is different than the mix that is needed in YouTube and on Facebook. Using a set of headphones, the person monitoring the live stream audio

changes the levels to make the perfect mix to send out. Every time a new speaker, singer, or instrumentalist starts they turn the volume up or down so that there is a consistent level coming through to your device. During a hymn, they have to adjust the piano, lead singer, and congregation. The more players involved, the more intricate the work becomes. Just imagine how many channels there are to adjust on mornings with a chancel full of instrumentalists! There are up to 20 channels when we're at full capacity.

This person also keeps an eye on how our output is flowing to our online audience. Sometimes, there are fluctuations in

our internet service that cause our live stream to pause, get choppy, or separates the audio from the video. From time to time this person replies to YouTube or Facebook comments - especially if someone is having a problem that we can solve in the moment.

Every volunteer in the booth plays an important part, but this one entails slightly less pressure because the tweaks that they have to make are never going to cause a disruption to the service. This is a great spot for someone who is detail oriented and enjoys listening to music so they can create a beautiful mix of sounds for our online audience.

Alec Ronald  
[aronald@venicepres.org](mailto:aronald@venicepres.org)

## Missed Sunday's Sermon? Go here...

We are so blessed at VPC to have such dynamic, well-spoken and engaging speakers as Pastor Chris Romig and our preaching team. With so many opportunities for spiritual insight in just one sermon, it can be difficult to remember and reflect on them throughout the week. For those who feel they could benefit from revisiting the sermons or have missed the Sunday service, we offer audio sermons **on-the-go** through the Kingdom Life Podcast. The VPC sermons are now available on your phone with any podcast APP such as Spotify or Apple Podcast.



Sermons are also available on our YouTube Channel at [www.youtube.com/venicepresbyterianchurch](http://www.youtube.com/venicepresbyterianchurch)

## ABC's of Faith

*"When I can't sleep, instead of counting sheep, I say my ABC's...of Faith."*

I first heard of the ABC's of Faith from Pastor Fred Marsh many years ago in a sermon he preached one August Sunday morning. The idea was so intriguing that I took copious notes, although I missed some of the verses he quoted at the time. Since that day I've made my own modifications to the verses that go with some of the letters of the alphabet, but am forever grateful to Pastor Fred for this idea. What a great way to memorize Scripture and store it in our hearts! ~Pastor Carolyn



**A**nd we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. -Romans 8:28

**B**e kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. -Ephesians 4:32

**C**ome to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. -Matthew 11:28

**D**o to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets. -Matthew 7:12

**E**very good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. -James 1:17

**F**or God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. -John 3:16

**G**ive, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.

**F**or with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. -Luke 6:38

**H**ave I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go. -Joshua 1:9

**I**f we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. -1 John 1:9

**J**esus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. -John 14:6

**K**eept me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings. -Psalm 17:8

**L**ove is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

**I**t always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. -1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

**M**an shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. -Matthew 4:4

**N**othing can separate us from the love of Christ. -Romans 8:35

**O**vercome evil with good.  
-Romans 12:21

**P**eace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. -John 14:27

**Q**uench not the Spirit.  
-1 Thessalonians 5:19

**R**ejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice!  
-Philippians 4:4

**S**eek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.  
-Matthew 6:33

**T**rust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths. -Proverbs 3:8-9

**U**nto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. -Isaiah 9:6

**V**erily, verily I say unto you, He that believes on me has everlasting life. -John 6:47

**W**ithout faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. -Hebrews 11:6

**X**cept a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.  
-John 3:3

**Y**our word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.  
-Psalm 119:105

**Z**acchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must come to your house. -Luke 19:5

## *Thank you for subscribing!*

*Our YouTube channel hit 1000 subscribers in August!*

**Why does that matter?** Because in a time where people are unable or uncomfortable to attend church in person, we can still reach them with God's word.

*This is in line with our vision, "to Glorify God as a Disciple-making Outpost of Kingdom Life".* The church is not just inside the walls of the sanctuary but in each and every person and ministry that spreads the word of God.

## *Save the Dates*

Beginning in October, we will resume **Communion on the Lawn** and **Pastor Chris's Wednesday Night Bible Study**. We will update you on the starting dates and times in our weekly eblast, the website and October's Connect, Grow & Go.

# Music Ministry

## VCCS: Making All Things New

*Dear friends and patrons,  
Welcome to another season of the Venice  
Community Concert Series.*



We have been through a lot this last year and if you're like me you're ready for things to return to normal. As I pondered what to call this season, I was reminded of Revelation 21:5, "Behold, I make all things new." This statement that is being made is not in the past tense but in the present tense. We are reminded that God's work of renewal and redemption is not past, but is present and continuous. If there is anything we need to be reminded of it is that God's work on earth, His work in society, and His work in us is not over.

This season we chose not to focus on finding brand new artists but rather bringing back beloved artists who mean much to our community. These artists have been staples in our concert series for the last 13 years. While many of these artists are familiar, behold, they are making new concerts just for us.

We begin with the first concert of the year, Jamal and Friends. This concert is our chance to celebrate the last four years of ministry together. While there will be familiar faces, this will be a time of great music and some fun gospel hymn singing.

Our 2nd concert of the year is with Tim Zimmerman and King's Brass. King's Brass, who will be with us **for one night only**, will be offering a fun and interactive Christmas concert.

In January we welcome back for the first time in a long time, Ken Medema. Ken, who has been blind since birth, offers some of the best music and story-telling concerts you could imagine. Part of the charm of this concert is his ability to compose songs on the spot with just a few words from the audience.

In February, we finally get to welcome the DePue Brothers Band. Because of Covid we missed out on their concert last year, but we are excited to welcome this Grammy Award Winning group. They are famous for taking famous classical works and evolving them into blue grass music.

Finally, we welcome the Romig family and their niece to offer a concert with 2 flutes, piano, percussion, and bass. The Romigs are a household name in Venice and never disappoint with their virtuosic flair.

Friends, I wish I could be here to enjoy this full season with you but it has been a joy to lead the music and worship programs of the church. May you enjoy this year of great music and may you feel God's sense of continual renewal in your life.

With Love,

**Jamal Sarikoki**

*Minister of Music and Worship*

## Venice Community Concert Series, 2021-2022

### **Jamal & Friends**

**November 19, 7pm**

As we bid farewell to our Minister of Music and Worship, join us for a night of celebration and great music. Not only will Jamal sing solos, but will perform, with friends, some of his favorites from gospel music to piano and organ duets, music for brass and organ, and even a southern gospel hymn sing to end the night. While we might be sad to see him go, we are excited to have this night of celebration and music to send him and Genna off as they prepare for new ministry in Colorado Springs.

### **Tim Zimmerman & The King's Brass**

**December 4, 3 pm & 7 pm**

Tim Zimmerman and the King's Brass provide innovative worship for young and old alike through the "best in sacred brass music." By teaming together, these Christian professionals from around the United States perform their original arrangements as heard on their fifteen recordings. For forty years, The King's Brass have performed over one hundred concerts each season with three

trumpets, three trombones, a tuba, keyboards, and percussion. Playing a wide variety of music from Gabrieli to hymn classics, from Handel to jazz spirituals, from Christmas carols to patriotic marches, The King's Brass uses all corners of the concert hall to lift hearts and spirits in praise.

### **Ken Medema**

**January 22, 7 pm**

For four decades, Ken Medema has inspired people through storytelling and music. Though blind from birth, Ken sees and hears with heart and mind. His ability to capture spirit in word and song is unparalleled. Part of the experience of Ken's concerts is the moment he asks the audience for words or sentences, and he composes a song on the spot. Truly, this is not a concert you will want to miss.

### **The DePue Brothers**

**February 18, 7 pm**

The DePue Brothers Band encompasses a vivid blend of bluegrass, classical, and rock genres. Hailing from Bowling Green, Ohio, the brothers are the founders of the term "grassical music", pioneering

this style in the early 1990's. Each of the four DePue brothers is a classical violin virtuoso in his own right, and brings rich and diverse talents to their sound. Though performing with the band is a family affair they joyfully fit in amongst their individual music careers — Each band member brings impressive credentials to the band, with drummer/manager, and nucleus.

### **The Romig Family**

**March 5, 7 pm**

Concluding the season of the Venice Community Concert Series is one of the most talented families in our community. Chris, Karen, William, and Nicholas Romig will delight us with favorites for flute, piano, bass, and percussion. This couple and their two sons have spent many years entertaining audiences with their virtuosity, musicality, and engaging stage presence. We couldn't think of anything more inspiring to end the season than having the Romig's give a little piece of their family heart to us all. Joining the Romig family, will be Karen's niece, Lauren Asimakoupoulos, a professional flutist from Seattle, Washington.



Christ Known. This summer was also the first time I truly learned what it meant to have a pastor who deeply loved and cared for his people. As I sat in the airport on my way home, I still to this day remember the clear and palpable way the Holy Spirit let me know that my ministry at VPC was not over.

When I (Genna) started at the church part time working with the kid's events, I had no idea

what God had in store for me! Over these past few years I have learned to plug into whatever ministry endeavor God leads me toward and that each of them has value. While there is a lot of growth to be done in the area of kids and families, I have been blessed to be part of this ministry. I pray that as Jamal and I move on to our next step that God is preparing just the right leader to step in and step up the ministry to young families at VPC. There are so many opportunities to impact the Venice community if we, as a church family, whole-heartedly engage.

### *Dear Family,*

It is with excitement but also sadness and grief that I announce to you Genna and I will be ending our full-time ministry here at Venice Presbyterian Church on November 21st, 2021. It has been the greatest joy of our lives to serve you, to live among you, and to preach Christ and Christ Crucified to a hurting world and a community that lives among us.

My history goes back to the summer of 2014 when I, Jamal, served as summer music intern. During this time, I forged beautiful relationships, sat under solid biblical preaching, and had a chance to fall in love with Jesus Christ in a deep, meaningful way. During my summer here, I finally began to understand what it means to have fellowship with God. I saw how fellowship with God translates into being a disciple who constantly seeks to To Know Christ and To make



As we reflect on our time at VPC and recall the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, it is clearer than ever before there is a season for everything under heaven. Our season at VPC helped to lay the foundation for the rest of our lives! Not only have we found meaningful community, but we were married here, Jamal walked into his calling for ministry here, and last but certainly not least, our son, Jeremiah Knox Sarikoki, will be born and baptized here at Venice Presbyterian Church. You, VPC, have been the building block of our life and there are no words that can express our gratitude and love for you.

We now prepare for new ministry. On November 28th, I (Jamal) will begin as the Sanctuary Worship Lead at First Presbyterian Church of Colorado Springs. I will be doing much of what I do now, but in addition I will be leading a department of staff and hundreds of volunteers. As a couple, we are thankful that Genna will have the opportunity to have a few months of staying home and loving and raising Jeremiah before seeking the next step in her career.

Finally, many of you are asking, what about Jamal's preaching and pastoring? I will certainly have opportunities to preach in my new ministry but will be prioritizing seminary studies over other opportunities that arise in our new community. I will endeavor to focus on work and seminary as well as get acclimated to a new community and being a father. This has been a goal and calling of mine for a long time. This new season seems to be when I will be able to step more fully into my seminary studies.

Beloved, I know it is hard to rejoice when we are watching the end of a

season. However, we trust the Lord will provide the next person who will shepherd the worship and family ministries and seek to provide worship

services that point you all closer to Jesus Christ. We ask that you pray for us as we will certainly be praying for you. We look forward to these next few months of ministry at VPC. Let us not look at them with sadness and grief, but let us live into them with excitement and joy for all the new things God is leading us to.

Finally, we leave you with this. While it seems that we will no longer be family, know that because of our bond in Jesus Christ, we will be together for all eternity. In Pastor Chris' sermon before his sabbatical, he reminded us of what the church is. The church is made up of men and women who have Koininia(fellowship) with God. As a result of that true fellowship with God we have an everlasting Koinina with each other. You are our family. We love you and will miss being with you every day and every week, but what sweet fellowship we have and what bond we have because we are in Christ Jesus.

That grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all,

*Jamal and Genna Sarikoki*





The Center of Hope is concerned for our children. Every year we hand out school supplies, school clothing and Christmas Toys for our families who demonstrate a need.



We've managed to serve outside during the entire COVID season through the help of generous volunteers and our community at large. This fall, we will be offering expanded hours to reach a population of people who work, but still need services.

We are open Tuesday-Friday 8:00-11:00 am. The Center of Hope Community Outreach Services will be moving its offices to the little house on our property 2355 Shamrock effective August 1, 2021.

There are many opportunities to serve and volunteer at The Center of Hope. Please ask for a volunteer application and or call (941) 412-9044 and ask to speak to Pastor Lynette. God Bless and thank-you Venice Presbyterian Church for your partnership, prayer, love and support over a very long-standing relationship.

The **Center of Hope** is a 501 (C) (3) non-profit organization located In Venice, Florida. The Center of Hope has been a beacon of light serving those who demonstrate a need since 2003. Through donations, grants and partnerships we help those who are experiencing a difficult season in their lives.

The Center of Hope assists -the homeless, veterans, single-parent families the elderly, and the working-class poor by providing a variety of services to help improve the health and economic conditions in our community. The Center of Hope is one of six entry points throughout Sarasota and Manatee counties to provide clothing, housing and fellowship to our local homeless community.

We are able to offer services to the clientele daily based on funding be it a need for non-perishable and perishable food, assistance with rent and utilities, food stamps/Medicaid, legal IDs and referrals, prayer and a host of other things.

We work and partner with many local churches to better serve the people who are living in poverty or experiencing emergency or crisis intervention.



**Misión Peniel** began as a pastoral ministry of charity and service, providing food, clothing, fellowship and emergency support to farm-workers in Immokalee, Florida in September of 2006. Beginning in 2013, Misión Peniel became a ministry of Peace River Presbytery while continuing to be a vehicle for people of faith to respond to a call for compassionate service to complement the focus on social justice provided so aptly through the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. Under the leadership of Pastor Miguel Estrada, Misión Peniel addresses the isolation and injustice among migrant workers in Immokalee and provides support to them through spiritual and material care. They bring together people of faith and compassion to act with farm workers to achieve fundamental change in their living and working conditions.

Mision Peniel is resuming scheduling of volunteers from churches such as ours beginning in July. Our first trip is planned for Friday, October 15, and

at present only 6 people at a time are needed to help with distribution of food and other items. Everything is being done on a "walk-by" basis, so mission coordinator Ruth DeYoe has asked that any donations of clothing that we collect be pre-sorted and bagged according to size, with 3 tops and 3 bottoms per bag, and labeled—for example: "women's small", with a total of 6 such items inside. Right now there's no room at the mission for storing items in bulk, so everything must be "ready-to-go" as it arrives. Thanks to all of you who are helping out with this mission to serve God's people in greatest need!

For more info, contact Jim Sager, 941-484-5659, [jharosager@gmail.com](mailto:jharosager@gmail.com)

### Fall Back in Buddy Break

Our first FULL Buddy Break will resume September 18, 2021 from 10am-1pm

Families with children with special needs contact Bobbie Gilbert at [richbobbiegil@comcast.net](mailto:richbobbiegil@comcast.net).

Volunteers contact Flora Hughes at [hugjf@yahoo.com](mailto:hugjf@yahoo.com)

### '21-'22 Buddy Break Season Dates:

Sept. 18	Feb. 19
Oct. 16	Mar. 19
Nov. 20	Apr. 16
Dec. 18	May 21
Jan. 15	June 18

Buddies who missed the August meeting, please pick up a handbook from the Welcome Center.

### Feed the Hungry

We are still collecting for **3 Cents-a-Meal**. Simply drop off your donation at the church using any container you choose anytime during office hours. Or you can

also give online using the GIVE NOW button on the website or send a check to the church office. Thank you for continuing to feed the needy in our area during the pandemic.



## THANK YOU: 2021 Day 4 Hope at VPC



**Day 4 Hope's** mission, working with Hope 4 Communities, is to prepare homeless and under-privileged children to return to school on an equal basis with their peers by giving them a positive attitude and the school supplies needed for a successful school year.

We had a wonderful Day 4 Hope event, serving 184 children in 91 happy families! Colorful balloons, music, friendly waves and smiles welcomed the families as they drove in, and prayers were offered throughout the day, even though we were all masked when interacting with the families to keep all volunteers and families safe from Covid-19. As each family arrived, they received a letter of concern from

VPC and a prayer request card.

Each child received a backpack full of school supplies, a bag of personal care products, 20 pounds of groceries (provided by All Faiths Food Bank) and a bag of fresh fruit (donated by Detwiler's). With the trunk of the vehicle piled full of these items, the next stop was at the Stephen Ministry table where each family received a packet including a Bible, a children's/family devotional book and other helpful

information. The final stop was at the gift card table where each child received \$100 worth of gift cards to buy clothes and shoes. After the gift card table families had an opportunity to meet with Stephen Ministers for a personal time of prayer. Approximately half of the families received prayer. We were blessed with many smiles and thank-yous from family members – even a few tears.

THANK YOU to everyone at Venice Presbyterian Church for hosting this event again this year. Thanks to all of you who volunteered your time and energy. Through your financial generosity, we served 184 children in this area. Also, thank you to Grace United Methodist Church and New Life Church, who supported us with financial gifts and volunteers. It costs about \$24,000 to host this event. We also





thank One Christ Won City for the use of tents, and Publix for donating grocery bags and the use of grocery carts.

VPC planned for 200 children this year, whose names we received from the local elementary schools. We placed our order for supplies and gift cards on June 1st. Items must be ordered early because of the timing to receive all the supplies. Invitation letters to families are sent out in mid-June, responses received, then final registration forms are sent out early July. From June 1st to mid-July our total number of children continued to increase. The extra families' names were sent on to Hope 4 Communities so they could be served at another location. Since we had already ordered our supplies including gift cards for 200 children and only 184 attended, we had supplies, groceries, fruit, and

gift cards left over. Our remaining backpacks and care bags went to Buddy Break, Center of Hope, and Immokalee Mision Peniel. The extra groceries and fruit went to Community Assistance Ministries (CAM) for distribution to the homeless. The remaining gift cards will be utilized next year.

We cannot host this event every year without a team of dedicated volunteers who give of their time and talents. Bobbie and Richard Gilbert coordinated the processing of children and sending out invitations; Robin Maher-Frost coordinated with the schools in reaching children and families and operated registration; and Bob Jelenchick and Sheryl Morford successfully obtained the supplies and led a team preparing all the backpacks, care bags, groceries and fruit

for the event. These five members of the leadership team went above and beyond in giving of their time and energies. These major areas were supported by the remaining leadership team members and about 60 volunteers, including several teenagers.

As we look forward to Day 4 Hope 2022 (hopefully a normal full event), we realize we have a few vacancies in our leadership staff. If you have an interest in helping these less fortunate children, please contact Cindy or myself.

VPC truly blessed these children this year in difficult and unusual circumstances. We are grateful for every person who worked to make this day a Hopeful one for many less fortunate families.

Fred & Cindy Gossman  
*Event Coordinators*



# Family Ministry

## MOPs is restarting at VPC!

**Date:** Meet 1st & 3rd Thursday beginning September 16

**Time:** 9:15 am

**Place:** Fellowship Hall

**Contact:** Genna Sarikoki @ [gsarikoki@venicepres.org](mailto:gsarikoki@venicepres.org)



You can get involved with MOPs (*Mothers of Preschoolers*) in the following ways:

1. **Attending as a mom!** Just bring your kiddo and be prepared to laugh, cry, and pray with other moms!
2. **Being a mentor mom.** Bring your years of mom-ing experience to help encourage and pray with moms in the trenches. Open to moms of all ages - whether your kids are 12, 21, or 60! (*Talk to Genna to get connected*)
3. **Help with 'Moppets'** (childcare) Bobbie Gilbert at [richbobbiegil@comcast.net](mailto:richbobbiegil@comcast.net)

### 2021-22 SCHEDULE

September 16  
October 7  
October 21  
November 4  
November 18



December 2  
December 16  
January 20  
February 3  
February 17



April 7  
April 21  
May 5  
May 19

## Get to know our Scholarship Recipients

My name Gael Jennie Fleurant. I am an international student from Haiti. I have been living in the US since 2016. In my senior year of high school, I got a scholarship sponsored by Broomfield United Methodist Church in Colorado, Venice Presbyterian Church in Florida, United Methodist women, and some other generous friends to come study in the United States. I decided to study water quality management so I can use the knowledge I get in the US to help Haiti, and other countries with their water issues. Water is life, and I believe that every human being should have access to safe and clean water. I spent my first year in the US studying ESL (English as a Second Language), then I got my associate of applied science in Water Quality Management. After my associate, I decided that I needed to know more about the environment,

and everything that affects water. I decided to do my bachelor's in Environmental Science, with a Water quality and Hydraulic concentration at Metropolitan State University in Denver. I am now entering my senior year and can't wait to graduate. One of my many goals is to open a wastewater and a drinking water plant in Haiti to make sure that our water is being reused, and that everyone has access to clean water. I am very thankful to VPC for supporting me since the beginning of my journey. Your help and support mean a lot to me, and I will be forever grateful. Thank you, Gael Jennie Fleurant



## Grandparents Corner

### Find Your Greatest Life Purpose

Life's greatest purpose is simple: to see our descendants in heaven. There is no greater focus for the second half of life than that!

Psalm 78:5,6 gives us a guide for thinking this through. It says, "...he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children.

We are to think four generations, as this verse mentions: (1) ancestors (God's command was directed to them); (2) children, (3) next generation (not born), and (4) their children. In other words, we are to have a vision for perpetuating our faith to two generations who are not yet born.

If heaven is really eternal as we believe it is, then having children, grandchildren, and the generations that are not yet born join us there ought to be life's greatest purpose. Yet grandparents often fill their days with work, hobbies, trips, recreation—good things, but not the best thing.

### You Play a Vital Part in God's Plan

A friend has been a senior pastor of a large church for over 30 years. He is a recent "convert" to the importance of grandparenting, and now loves to say, "I find such satisfaction in the title, 'Senior Pastor.' But there is a title that is much more important to me. It is 'grandpa.'"

There simply is no greater focus for the grandparenting years than that of doing all you can to see your descendants join you in heaven. C. S. Lewis said, "Children are not a distraction from the most important work; they are the most important work." Might I modify that and say grandchildren are the most important work? Do you agree? Do your intentional actions show it?

Grandparents, take heart. Never forget: you play a vital part in God's plan to reach emerging generations with the gospel. As you become more purposeful, your grandkids—and the generations beyond them—will benefit greatly!

*Adapted from 7 Essentials for Grandparenting by Larry Fowler*



### Save the Date

**VPC Operation Christmas  
Shoobox Collection Sunday**

November 14th, 2021

Shooboxes and information flyers will be available in the Narthex beginning October 24. If you have any questions contact Valerie Fullerton at [valbf18@gmail.com](mailto:valbf18@gmail.com).

# Care & Compassion Ministry



## Shepherd Ministry Workshop

**Date:** September 9, 2021

**Time:** 10:00 am – Noon

**Place:** Chapel

Our wonderful Shepherd Ministry helps keep us in touch with members of our church family who are homebound or isolated or just needing someone with whom to have a friendly conversation.

To our current Shepherds: We appreciate you so much and want to support you in your ministry. So please join Pastor Carolyn and some of our Stephen Leaders at our Shepherd Ministry Workshop.

To anyone who would like to become a Shepherd, we encourage you to come, as well.

At the workshop, we will provide some training and tools to help you, and also a time to share stories with other Shepherds. Here is what we're planning:

- Learn about **Congregational Care** at VPC – what do we do and who does what
- Stephen Ministry and Shepherd Ministry – **what's the difference** and signs that someone might need something more
- **Shepherd Learning and Tools** – active listening, how to be an encourager, helpful Scripture passages and prayers
- **Sharing** – share experiences with our care receivers and learn from each other
- **Fellowship and fun** – coffee and cookies

We hope you will come! Please RSVP Pastor Carolyn, [cwilson@venicepres.org](mailto:cwilson@venicepres.org) or 941- 488-2258.

## Agape Aids in Haiti Relief

At 8:30am on Saturday, August 14, 2021 a magnitude 7.2 earthquake struck Haiti. Southwest Haiti suffered the most damage with loss of life, structures, and power being reported, along with many injuries. As one Jeremie missionary put it, "It's chaos." Just after the earthquake, tropical storm Grace hit the island.

Assist Agape Flights by donating to our disaster relief on [www.venicepres.org](http://www.venicepres.org) and click "**GIVE NOW**".

Supplies go directly to the Haitian people in who are in desperate need. Agape's planes are met at the airports by missionaries who distribute the emergency supplies and food to medical clinics, hospitals, children's homes, and feeding programs.

If you find yourself in need of a Stephen Minister, please call the Stephen Ministry office at 941-488-2258 ext. 126.

# Connection Ministry

## Women's Monday Bible Study

**Date:** September 20

**Time:** 6 - 7:15 pm

*(same time as  
Monday Night  
Men's Group)*

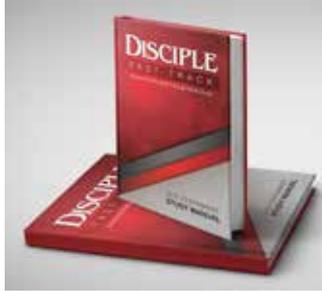
**Place:** Room 8

**Led by:** Pastor Carolyn

Studying the Bible can change your life in a wonderful way! Please join Pastor Carolyn as we dig into the Bible together at our new Monday Women's Bible Study.

We will devote the first 12 weeks to the Old Testament and then the following 12 weeks to the New Testament using the Disciple Fast Track studies.

You don't have to know anything about the Bible to join this group because this is the place to learn, ask questions, and discuss together what we are learning. Participants will read a manageable 3-5 chapters of the Bible daily in preparation for the weekly meetings. But don't worry if you can't get all the reading done – come anyway and learn! Cost will be \$16.00 for the Old Testament participant book. Same cost for the New Testament book when we get to that point.



## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (PW)

PW Gatherings will resume in Oct., 2021. Bible Study resumes the first Tues. in Oct., 2021, meeting monthly.

On Tues., Oct. 19, 2021 we will see a Surprise Chick Flick in our Fellowship Hall at 2:00pm. This Chick Flick will warm your hearts! We will also have our THANK OFFERING (*one of our Mission Givings which benefit the lives of Women and Children locally as well as abroad*).

Our next gathering will be Tues., Jan. 18, 2022 welcoming Bob Sloboda from MEALS ON WHEELS (MOW)

Tues., Feb. 15, 2022 we will have one of our very own presenting Woman of The Bible (Chris Dowden) We will also have our Birthday Offering.

Tues., April 19, 2022 will be our final Gathering of the season

Anyone interested in joining a Bible Study, please contact Niki Steitz at [nsteitz33@comcast.net](mailto:nsteitz33@comcast.net) or call (941) 493-7628.

### Save the Dates

**PW Christmas Tea**  
Dec. 4, 2021 @ 2pm

**PW Garage Sale**  
March 4 & 5, 2022

An advertisement for 'The Glass House' featuring a white coffee cup on a saucer, a bag of coffee beans, and the text 'The Glass House' in a stylized font. A black box contains the text 'Volunteers Needed Contact Cherie Loomis at cloomis@venicepres.org'. A yellow banner at the bottom says 'Open Sundays 10 am - 12 pm'.

## Remember to Love One Another



Today I would like to talk to about living in harmony and loving one another, especially when we don't agree.

But first of all, I wanted to mention that we need to be praying for the people of Haiti who have suffered a devastating 7.2 earthquake this week. You can also make donations for Haiti by giving online and selecting our disaster relief fund or writing a check and put Haiti earthquake on the memo line. This is a concrete way that we can demonstrate the love of Christ. Thank you for your generosity.

We are coming up on the 20th anniversary of 9/11. Can you believe that it's been that long? One of things that sticks in my memory about 9/11 is how unified our country was in the aftermath. We didn't identify ourselves by our political party or whether we were liberal or conservative. We were all just Americans.

Not so anymore. We live in a fractured, fragmented culture that is increasingly polarized. Everything is divided along partisan lines – democrat, republican; liberal, conservative. We find it impossible to have civil conversations about the problems that plague us and politicize everything, even issues of morality that come straight from the Word of God. We don't even try to understand each other, but instead, we demonize and vilify anyone who does not agree with us.

It almost seems as if it's something in the air we breathe or the water we

drink – there is so much fear and anxiety, so much hostility and hatred. In fact it is the enemy of our souls seeking to devour us by inciting us to turn on each other.

The controversy du jour is to be vaccinated or not, to wear masks or not. And all the variations on what we should or should not do with regard to the corona virus.

Most people want to do the right thing. Most have legitimate reasons for their decisions on vaccinating or not, masking or not.

Let's understand that there are people with expert credentials who point out scientific evidence to support their particular views on both sides of the fence.

And everyone also has his/her particular set of health variables that must be considered in our decisions.

Each of us must do what we need to do to stay as healthy as we can given our particular life and health situation.

We also need to respect and love others who do not make the same choices we would.

Of course, some express their hostility in passive aggressive ways. One husband said to his wife, "Whenever I get mad at you, you never seem to get upset...How do you manage to control your temper?" The wife responded, "I just go and clean the toilet." With a puzzled look on his face, the husband said, "How does that help?" The wife clears up his confusion saying, "I use your toothbrush."

Seriously, as Christians, we have a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate the light and love of Christ in this world by respecting one another, even, and especially, in discussions about difficult and potentially divisive issues.

But so far, we've not been very good at it, and church history, with the proliferation of denominations provides ample evidence of this, in spite of Jesus' prayer for us to be brought to complete unity.

Nowadays, prominent Christian leaders slay each other publicly in social media, on television and in print. This is profoundly troubling, and certainly detrimental to the witness of Christ in the world. Who would want to be part of a group of people who rip each other to shreds?

My brothers and sisters, this ought not be so!

Jesus Christ only has ONE church and all believers will spend eternity together – with Him AND with each other, regardless of our differences here on earth.

And, here on earth, as the hands and feet and mouth of Christ in reconciling the world to himself, we should be the first to lay our weapons down. The first to set aside the destructive weapons of this world and challenge the principalities and powers of evil using spiritual weapons of righteousness. And the greatest of these is love.

Love truly is the answer. This is not just a trite saying. It is the very truth of God. It is the very character of God. It is the very heart of God.

The Apostle John records that at the Last Supper, Jesus said, (*John 13:34-35*)<sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment,

that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.<sup>35</sup> By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

So, let's each do three things:

Do what you need to do to be vigilant about caring for your health and that of your family given your life situation.

Always trust our Sovereign God & Father, knowing He is in control regardless of how things may appear. We walk by faith and not by sight. The delta variant did not take God by surprise. He didn't go, "Man, I didn't see that coming!"

Let's Love one another. Love offers grace and mercy, protects the other's good name, trusts the other's intentions, hopes for the other's good will, and always perseveres in bridging the gap of understanding. Love never gives up trying.

St. Francis of Assisi captures it so beautifully:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon;  
Where there is doubt, faith;  
Where there is despair, hope;  
Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy;*

*O Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand;  
To be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive;  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.*

2021  
2022

# VCCS EVERYTHING IS NEW AGAIN

VENICE COMMUNITY CONCERT SERIES

## JAMAL & FRIENDS

November 19, 7 pm



## TIM ZIMMERMAN & THE KING'S BRASS

December 4, 3 pm & 7 pm



## THE DEPUE BROTHERS

February 18, 7 pm



## KEN MEDEMA

January 2  
7 pm



## ROMIG FAMILY

March 5  
7 pm



*Save the Dates*

TO READ MORE ABOUT  
THE PERFORMERS AND  
PURCHASE TICKETS GO TO

[www.VeniceCommunityConcertSeries.com](http://www.VeniceCommunityConcertSeries.com)

\*A ministry of Venice Presbyterian Church