

PALMS PRESBYTERIAN MISSION STUDY



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INTRODUCTION



Palms Presbyterian Church (Palms) is searching for a Pastor-Head of Staff to replace our recently retired pastor of 17 years. Palms views this work seriously, thoughtfully and hopefully as we lean on God's guidance in this journey of seeking a senior pastor who will feel at home in our transformative and welcoming community as Palms embodies the grace of Christ. Palms has a rich history of 63 years in the beautiful and vibrant Jacksonville Beaches community. Palms describes itself as traditional, yet progressive; spiritually

vital; hospitable; generous; embodied with a variety of skills and talents and largely satisfied with many aspects of our Christ community. Palms is diverse in our theological foundations and world views but sees this as a strength, enabling us to embrace differences and stretch our acceptance and understanding of others. Palms is known in the community for our inspirational and uplifting music program. Palms highly values strong, Biblically-based preaching; education and Sunday School programs; and missions locally and globally. Palms is an exceptional church for seniors, as 65% of our congregation is older but welcome those of all ages who are seeking a place of worship. In fact, Palms believes our Preschool of 100 children is a great source from where we can attract more young families. Palms' core values include these:

- Compassion and Love
- Spiritual Growth
- Service and Connection
- Creative Spirit
- Honesty
- Integrity

As Palms embraces these core values, our mission and vision, we also strive for continuous improvement and evolution. Palms values a strong organizational structure with all of us working effectively together to build upon our solid foundation. Palms disciples are there for each other in community as we grow in our faith, strive to discern our gifts and serve God through engagement and volunteerism. Palms is excited to be in this place – a place of transition, contemplation, research and many prayers. Palms is confident God will lead us to just the right pastor who will live with us in our commitment to be rooted in Christ as we reach out in His love.



Matthew 25:31–46 calls all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities. Convicted by this passage, both the 222nd and 223rd General Assemblies (2016 and 2018) exhorted the PC(USA) to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor.

By accepting the Matthew 25 invitation, Palms accepted the invitation to become a more relevant presence in the world. As a Matthew 25 Church, Palms recognizes Christ's urgent call to be a church of action, where God's love, justice and mercy shine forth and are contagious. And Palms rejoices how our re-energized faith can unite all Presbyterians for a common and holy purpose: our common identity to do mission.

PALMS HISTORY TIMELINE

1956

In 1956, Jacksonville Beach was a little seaside village. It had a small population and was rural in nature. Third Street South, which was a section of A1A, was a two-lane street with wide ditches on each side of the road. The south end of Jacksonville Beach was sparsely populated with permanent residents. During the summer tourist season, the population of the beach communities would greatly increase, but after Labor Day the beaches were "dead." One day a gentleman came to see Oliver Patten around noon. He saw a five-year-old girl riding her tricycle and asked if her dad was at home. She replied that he would be home soon for lunch. The gentleman looked at his watch and decided to wait. This gentleman was John "Jack" Hess, a retired AAA employee and a former elder in the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. Mr. Hess began a conversation with Sylvia Jean Patton, now known as Jeannie Fisher. He asked her if she went to Sunday School. As a child would do, she explained there was no church near the house. Mr. Hess replied he would have to see about getting a Presbyterian church at the south end of Jacksonville Beach where the family could worship closer to home.



1956 NOVEMBER 16

Mr. Hess subsequently canvassed the beach towns asking people if they would be interested in a church on the south end of Jacksonville Beach. He placed a notice in the local newspaper of a public meeting to discuss the organization of a new Presbyterian church. The organizational meeting was held at the Community Center, Jacksonville Beach with Rev. Dr. Dan Braby a retired Presbyterian minister from Battle Creek, MI guiding the meeting. Rev. Dr. Dan Braby, organizing pastor, remained for six months.



1956 DECEMBER 2

First worship service in Women's Club, 2nd Ave N. and 5th Street located on the same street as the Baptist Church and St. Paul's Catholic Church.

PALMS HISTORY TIMELINE

1957 APRIL 28

Charter granted by Synod of Florida Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Named "The Atlantic Shores Presbyterian Church." Membership 31 – elders, deacons and trustees elected.



1957 OCTOBER 28

First communion held on World Communion Day.

1958 SEPTEMBER 18

Name changed to "The United Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville Beach" to avoid confusion with Community Presbyterian in Atlantic Beach.

1958 EARLY FALL

Church moved to Mr. Bonnie I. Smith's building at 33rd Ave. S. and 3rd Street South. Mr. Smith had formerly operated a riding stable from this location.



1959 JULY

The congregation called Rev. James W. Tinsley as the first installed Senior Pastor.

1960 JANUARY 14

Membership 45.

Name changed to "The Palms Presbyterian Church."

1960 MAY

Five acres of land purchased between 34th and 35th Ave S. & 3rd Street.

1961 JULY 23

Dedication of first permanent building unit (hands laid on unfinished walls as part of the ceremony).



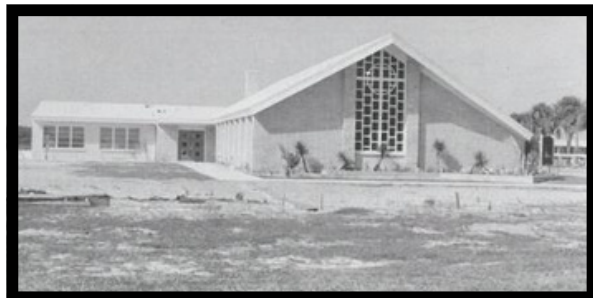
1961 OCTOBER 8

First service in new permanent building; building cost \$67,000.

PALMS HISTORY TIMELINE

1969 JANUARY

The Beaches Christian Services Corps, Inc. accepts recommendation of Rev. W. Chester Keller, pastor of Community Presbyterian Church; and Dr. Tinsley to pursue a federally financed high-rise apartment building for the elderly, now known as Pablo Towers.



1969 SEPTEMBER 14

Groundbreaking ceremony for new sanctuary and administrative buildings.

1970 JUNE 21

Dedication and first worship service held in new sanctuary; building cost \$230,000.



1972 APRIL

Groundbreaking ceremony for Pablo Towers.

1976 FEBRUARY 13

Dr. M.J. Palmer becomes Director of Music.

1980 MAY 4

Congregation called Dr. John H. "Jack" Swann as the second installed Senior Pastor.

1983

Merger of United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. and Presbyterian Church, U.S.

1985 APRIL

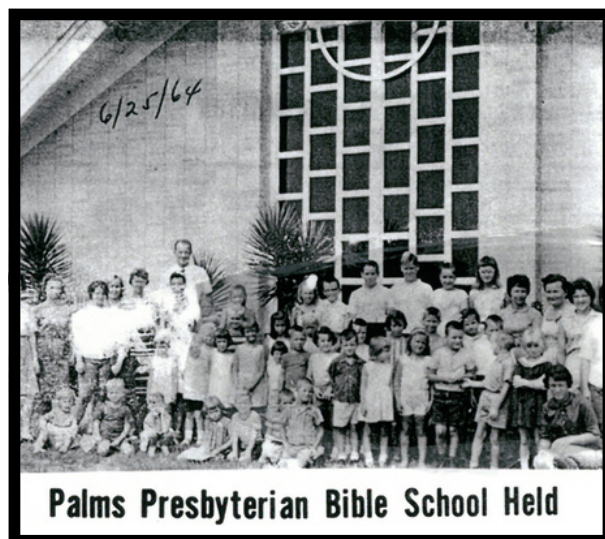
The Presbytery of St. Augustine is formed. Palms becomes one of its churches.

1985 SEPTEMBER 8

Dedication of west building with Fellowship Hall, childcare center, kitchen and multiple use classrooms. Cost: \$1,036,907.

1985 SEPTEMBER 12

Palms supports creation of B.E.A.M.- Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry



PALMS HISTORY TIMELINE

1985 SEPTEMBER 16

Palms Preschool and Child Care Center opens.

1991 DECEMBER 6

Dedication of last faceted stained-glass windows in the sanctuary.

1996

Organ/Building Committee purchased a Casavant pipe organ at an estimated cost of \$252,430 and renovated the chancel by moving east wall far enough to accommodate console, choir and additional pews.

1997 JANUARY 26

Mortgage burning ceremony for Fellowship Hall.

1998 MAY 31

First church service with new pipe organ and completed renovation work. Final cost of pipe organ and completed renovation work - \$1.2 million.

2001

Pastor Leon Dorleans of Haiti preached at Palms on World Communion Sunday. His visit sparked the decades long partnership between Palms and the Haiti Outreach Ministry.

2002

The Rev. Tom Walker is called as Palm Presbyterian Church's third installed senior pastor.

2003

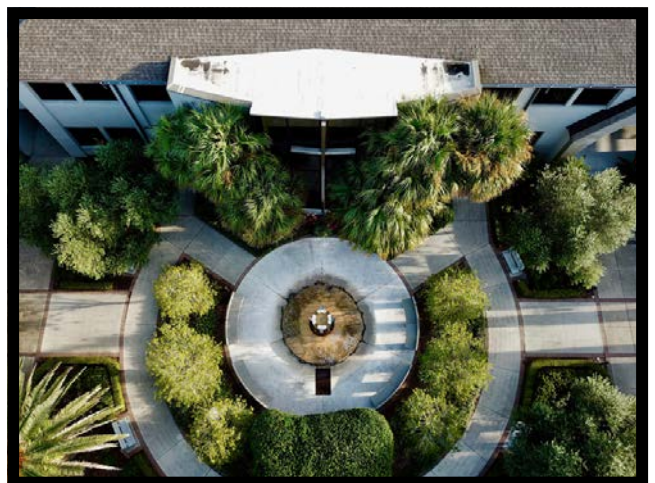
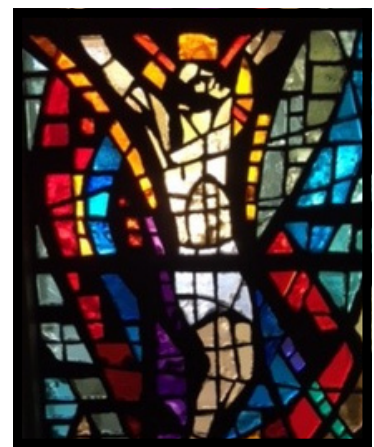
Palms first mission trip to Haiti.

2004

Dr. Ronn Cummings joins the staff as Director of Music Ministries.

2004

"The Oasis Campaign" was initiated to build the new educational/administrative building complex. The buildings were built surrounding the Oasis Garden and designed to be a sacred gathering space.



PALMS HISTORY TIMELINE

2007

Completion of "The Oasis Campaign" after raising \$6,380,000. In the fall of 2007, another campaign was started with a "Burn The Mortgage" theme raising an additional \$2,870,000 for a total of \$9,250,00 for the new educational and administrative buildings, a refurbished Patten Hall and Hess Chapel, as well as all the furnishings.

2010

Celebrated the official "burning of the mortgage."

2015

Barye Fe, a Haiti Outreach Ministry School sponsored by Palms, opened its doors for the first time.

2016

Launch of "The Embrace the Promise Campaign" to build an endowment for maintenance of the church's buildings. The campaign raised more than \$1,800,000.

2019

The Sanctuary was refurbished with paint, new hardwood floors and pew cushions. Cost: \$200,000.

2019 AUGUST

Rev. Dr. Tom Walker retires.

2020 AUGUST

Became a Matthew 25 church.



PALMS MISSION/VISION/ VALUES

Mission Statement

By the grace of Jesus Christ, we are called to worship God: to connect in community, to nurture in love, and to serve in the world.

Vision Statement

Palms is a diverse and transformative community of believers embodying the grace of Christ by

- Serving as bridge builders for a divided world
- Working as ambassadors for compassion and reconciliation
- Growing servant leaders for God's work in a rapidly changing world.

Core Values

- Compassion and Love - We nurture an open and inclusive environment that respects differences and welcomes everyone.
- Spiritual Growth - We teach and practice lifelong spiritual growth.
- Service and Connection - We are the body of Christ as we respond to the needs of others.
- Creative Spirit - We joyfully embrace innovative approaches to God's work.
- Honest and Integrity - We are open, trusting, and direct in our relationships.

Ministries

- Worship
- Nurture
- Connect
- Serve



MINISTRIES/WORSHIP

Our worship life draws upon the full Biblical tradition of gathering God's people in to assemble for praise, proclamation, prayer, instruction and inspiration. The worship ministry is also intentional about sending God's people out to share the joys and responsibilities of an informed discipleship. Our worship life combines ancient liturgies with newer, more casual and imaginative forms, but the goal remains the same: proclamation of the good news of salvation through Christ and an invitation to hear and to serve God as bridge builders in a divided world; ambassadors of compassion and reconciliation; and servant leaders. The worship ministry is more than Sunday morning. It permeates the endeavors of the entire household of faith. It is incorporated into our mid-week ministries, small groups, our Wednesday evening service of healing, services of Witness to the Resurrection, weddings, celebrating the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion, regular Chapel time with the Palms Preschool and more. It intentionally cultivates a life of devotion, dedication and faithful discipleship.

Two worship services follow a traditional format. Currently there is one service at 8:30AM followed by fellowship and education time. The second service is at 11AM. The Sacrament of Communion is celebrated the first Sunday of every month. There is an annual Youth Sunday, VBS Sunday, Lessons and Carols Sunday during Advent and a Music Sunday every June as a part of the Palms Fine Arts Series. A visiting Theologian Program features the guest as worship leader, traditionally in the winter season. The Haitian partnership brings annually brings one of our Haitian clergy partners to our worship during World Communion Sunday. A weekly evening prayer service takes place each Wednesday evening in the Chapel. There are four worship experiences currently offered on Christmas Eve – a children's pageant and three candlelight services.



Worship was suspended in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic but resumed in June with a limited seating service at 11AM. The church was fortunate to have the technology to provide quality live streaming of the service. The virtual congregation quickly adapted to the online service using Boxcast to livestream worship services to YouTube, Facebook, the Boxcast App and the Palms website. Attendance on all four platforms is often in excess of 1,400 people. A few senior members are without the technology to worship and special efforts are made to reach out to them, including mailing out a copy of sermons.

MINISTRIES/WORSHIP

Children are included in the first portion of the worship service before adjourning to a portion of the sanctuary dedicated for them to enter into the PrayGround. This is a small, carpeted space for children to participate in quiet activities during the sermon. Children remain with their parents for the rest of worship. Sunday School takes place between services. Patten Hall is an extension of the sanctuary. There are several large screens and LED monitors that can provide closed circuit broadcast of the worship service.



***"Palms has made the worship experience one where
I know without doubt that God IS."***



MINISTRIES / WORSHIP / MUSIC

The role of music in our church is to deepen and enhance our sense of worship together and to provide an indescribable means of communicating with God. The worship experience - with its power, and mystery, and beauty, and grace - is made richer and more profound when we come into a sacred space and worship together supported by excellent music. Music is an integral part of our church's culture. Our outstanding Ministry of Music - under the direction of Dr. Ronn Cummings - provides a meaningful way to worship God. Palms Presbyterian Church is known throughout our community - and throughout the region - for its excellence in musical expression.

The Ministries of Music are broad and include: The Children's Choir, The Camp Choir, The Chancel Bell Choir, The Chancel Choir and our Choral Intern Program. Choral interns are music students from local universities whose presence in our Chancel Choir adds a diverse array of talent to the ministry of music. It is common for Palms to invite highly regarded instrumental musicians from this musically gifted community. Members of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra participate in special worship Sundays. The newly-refurbished sanctuary is a regular venue for a variety of concerts open to the community free of charge featuring artists from the area and from all over the country as part of the annual Palms Fine Arts Series.

The Fine Arts Series is a very highly regarded music and choral programs. The sanctuary is always full and is often standing room available. Dr. Cummings brings in nationally recognized performers, such as the St. Olaf Choir, the Concordia Choir, as well as local musicians, namely the First Coast Wind Symphony and the Festival Singers of Florida.

Dr. Ronn Cummings was hired as Director of Music and Fine Arts in 2004. Cathy Fortson has been the organist and accompanist since 2009.

The church organ built by Casavant Freres in St. Hyacinthe (near Montreal), Quebec was installed in 1998. The Palms organ is Opus 3773 and includes 23 stops, 29 ranks and 1,648 pipes.



MINISTRIES/CONNECTION

The heart of Palms is deepened and strengthened through the connections made in Christian community. The goal of the Connection Ministry at Palms is to welcome and invite all people to find a place to belong, to serve, and to grow in their Christian faith and to experience the fellowship of Jesus Christ in community. The Connection Ministry is made of the following teams: Greeters, Hospitality, Fellowship Events, Parking Lot Hosts, and Connectors. Hospitality is central to the Connection Ministry (Greeters, Welcome Center, Fellowship Hour Snacks). First-time visitors receive an email, phone call or letter from a member of the staff. Visitors who indicate interest in a particular ministry are connected with a member of that ministry and invited to share their gifts and talents with the community. "I never felt like a newcomer; always felt like I belonged in the group."



The Palms community takes seriously our commitment to journey together in Christian discipleship. Those who are interested in covenanting with this community are invited to participate in a New Member class, which meets four times each year. The purpose of this class is to allow those who have been engaged in the life and ministry of Palms and/or who are new to Palms to form connections with others who are also new to Palms, to share individual faith journeys, and to discern new avenues for spiritual growth and service in the Palms community. Central to the covenant we make with God and with one another is mutual affirmation and accountability, supporting and encouraging one another as we share God's love and serve God's mission.



The members of Palms value the fellowship they share in Christ, from the weekly coffee hour after worship to organized fellowship events. The Connection Ministry provides opportunities for intergenerational fellowship through events (Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and Pancake Races and Friendsgiving Potluck), special activities (Palm Sunday Easter Egg Hunt, Blessing of the Animals, Ice Cream Sundae Sunday, Golf Outings, Palms Night at the Jumbo Shrimp, dinner theater and symphony) and regular gatherings (Wisdom's Table). All-church events such as potluck dinners and retreats deepen the connections.

Connection Ministry works to not only build bridges within the community of Palms but also to strengthen the connection between Palms and our local community by participating in community events (Deck the Chairs Christmas Eve Service, Easter Sunrise Service, dedication prayers for Beaches City Council meetings), organizations (Beaches Ministerial Association, Beaches Hospitality Network), and extending hospitality to community groups that use Palms' facility for their meetings and gatherings (Parkinson's Caregiver Support group, youth basketball leagues, men's basketball leagues, 12-step groups, local HOA groups). The Connection Ministry seeks to guide disciple members, guests and friends to engage with one another through fellowship, study, service, and worship, demonstrating a different way of life to the world; a way of life that supports and cares for one another and for the wider community. By connecting and engaging in the life and ministry of Palms, we become active participants in God's work.

MINISTRIES/NURTURE

In order to join in God's work at Palms and throughout the world, we intentionally nurture ourselves in and through the love of God. This nurture results in a deepening of our relationship with God which leads to transformation into more Christ-like individuals. When we live and love as Christ did, we have a passion for working in the world to bring God's kingdom. This means that as a congregation we are called to nurture Palm's disciples through opportunities for spiritual growth for all ages.

The Nurture Ministry helps people of all ages learn, live, love and serve in the way of Jesus. Our Nurture Ministry provides opportunities as varied as mission trips for middle and high school students, to Vacation Bible School, to meditation spaces for every person who comes to Palms. All of these opportunities are to deepen and strengthen our relationship with God.

True faith formation is holistic- it involves Christian education, worship, connecting with others and service. Consequently, the Nurture Ministry provides opportunities for people to engage in meaningful experiences that incorporate all of these in a variety of ways. In addition to Sunday School and VBS, we have Bible studies, book studies, centering prayer, Lectio Divina, seasonal labyrinth walks and annual visiting theologians.

We also recognize that faith formation occurs at home and in daily life, as much as it does on Sunday morning and at church, so we have developed an Intentional Faith@Home program to nurture and equip parents to lead faith development at home. These include the Faithful Family Library, The Faithful Family Facebook Page and seasonal take-home bags with devotions and activities. We also bring all generations together for activities, fellowship and worship on Faithful Family Sundays (the first Sunday of each month).

"Palms appealed to my family because it felt like family. There was a sense of welcoming and love that was present. I greatly value the open discussions that can occur due to the welcoming of intellectual thought and development of faith through an allowance for questions that might be discouraged in other churches."



MINISTRIES/NURTURE/YOUTH

Palms Youth Ministry provides opportunities for 6th through 12th graders to find their place at Palms through fellowship, study, worship and service. Our youth connect through many fellowship outings throughout the year. On any given weekend you might find our youth growing relationships through fellowship at places like Adventure Landing, the local bowling alley, local restaurants, the beach, someone's swimming pool, or with movie/game nights in our own newly renovated youth room. Our youth are provided with small group discussions in Sunday School and during youth group where they seek to grow closer to God and to one another in all they do.

Recently, our Youth leadership team worked on a three-year plan focusing on growing leaders through service and outreach. Over the course of three years, youth group members and advisors (along with intergenerational partners) will experience local, national, and international mission work. Serving in our community is a vital part of our call as members of the body of Christ, but it does not stop here in our own back yard. Our goal would be for our group to study and learn about the injustices related to hunger, homelessness, poverty, and the peacemaking process on a local, national, and international level.

Learning more about the facts related to these important issues that are vital to our Christian journey and then experiencing them firsthand have the potential to change lives forever. As a part of our youth's faith journey, we feel like it is important for students to be aware of what it means to be the hands and feet of Christ and to put the Great Commission into action, all while remembering the words found in Matthew 25 related to the least of these around us. Working first with local partners, then with partners around the United States, followed by global partners, students will have a well-rounded and global perspective related to the injustices we are studying. Through hands-on servant leadership, interactive and participatory worship, and purposeful learning sessions, our students will learn ways that they can become bridge builders through their service and interactions, thereby truly making a difference in the world around them by living out the scriptures.



Throughout the school year and in the summer, our youth group typically goes on weekend retreats, attends conferences, and participates in mission trips locally and beyond. These retreats and trips focus on growing spiritually as a community and on serving others, led by the example Christ set for us. We participate in Presbytery retreats locally at Camp Montgomery, our own group retreats, the Montreat Summer Youth Conference, alongside others at the Appalachian Service Project (ASP), in the CROSS mission program at Myers Park Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, and through mission trips in the United States and Ireland that are planned for the upcoming years.

Palms Youth Ministry is a place to love and be loved by God and one another. Transformed and growing into Christ, we are intentionally prepared to be bridge builders, ambassadors and servant leaders in God's world.

"Palms is my family. Palms and its pastors and leaders have given me the opportunity to grow and cherish my faith in Christ. The most important thing is seeing other men and myself come to know the saving grace of Jesus and what that can mean in our daily lives and our relationships with others."

MINISTRIES/NURTURE/SENIORS

In January 2018, a designated older adult ministry was established with Palms Presbyterian Church. Initially, studying and surveying was completed to determine a direction that would meet the needs of the 65+ disciples at Palms. A Senior Council was formed to work with a program coordinator. In the first year, successful programs were held with approximately 60 people in attendance. The first program year included workshops on forgiveness, mindfulness and hospice.

in 2019, at the group's direction, it was decided to call the 65+ group "Seasoned Saints." In 2019, United Church of Christ (UCC) minister Bill Wildey took over the coordinator position at Palms.

During 2019 and early 2020, Seasoned Saints sponsored four major events. These featured a workshop on storytelling, a luncheon with the Head Curator at the Cummer Museum of Art, workshops on the health of brain and body, and a luncheon titled "Love Abounds" that featured music by the Palms choral interns. The average attendance at each event was between 80-90. In early 2020, a trip to the Mayo Clinic Simulation Lab was offered. Additional classes, focusing on how cinematic moments say something about faith, have been offered.

In addition, the Seasoned Saints coordinator works with the Youth Ministry Coordinator to create opportunities for intergenerational interaction. Several events, such as a game night, have been successful.

PALMS PRESCHOOL

Palms Preschool first opened in September 1985 and is home to 105 children ages 1 - 5 years old operating from 7AM - 6PM daily, Monday-Friday. The program operates year-round beginning in August. There is also an extended day program for school age children 1st-6th grades. The preschool is proudly accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and promotes high-quality learning through relationship building and intentional teaching strategies. The church and preschool collaborate by offering a bi-weekly preschool chapel which incorporates Bible stories, music and movement. Palms Preschool, while a ministry of the church, is self-sustaining with tuition and fundraising activities.



MINISTRIES/SERVE/OUTREACH

Disciples of God connected in community and nurtured in love serve God's work in the world. All of Palms' ministries are interconnected, woven together and lead us to make a difference in the lives of those in and around Palms and throughout the world.

Our Serve Ministry enables us to live out our faith directly through the work of justice, compassion, and service. Serve ministries both care for our home-bound disciples and also build homes for those in need through our support of Habitat for Humanity. This ministry also provides meals for those in need and feeds hungry children at local schools.

The ministry ensures that disciples care for the Palms' community and work with our larger community. Palms works with community partners to enhance access for neighbors to have basic human needs met. Our Haiti partnerships work to provide access to clean water, education and health care for our brothers and sisters in Haiti. At Palms, Serve Ministry is an umbrella ministry which focuses on the foundations of a life in Christ: reaching out through service (Outreach) in our community and reaching out in compassion to our fellow disciples (Board of Deacons). Our understanding is that service is not so much about something we do but who we are as servant leaders.

"Someone wanted me to help and I felt good - I had something to offer."

Outreach at Palms is rooted in relational ministry with local and international mission partners. We walk with others in ministry, rather than merely "funding" initiatives. A few of our local partners are BEAM, Mission House, serving the homeless at the beach and five beach elementary schools.

Our Board of Deacons focuses on care of our congregation, serving our disciples day in and day out. Serve Ministry lives into the requirement for action in Jesus' command, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39) Loving God compels us to love and serve others. It is fundamentally who we are.



MINISTRIES/SERVE/DEACONS

The Palms Presbyterian Deacon Ministry and their teams serve disciples, their families and others through home and hospital visitation, prayers, calls, emails, notes, cards, delivery of cooked meals and baked goodies, home repairs or maintenance, transportation, educational programs, seminars and health screenings.

- Has 21 active deacons
- Serves and leads 12 ministry teams
- Conducts monthly meetings
- Has approximately 310 volunteers serving nearly 2,300 hours during the year
- Serves nearly 2,400 Palms Presbyterian disciples & non-disciples.
- Assists after worship each week as Pastoral Partners
- Leads a beautiful and meaningful Maundy Thursday service attended by more than 100 Palms disciples
- Participates in leadership retreats with clergy, session and other church leadership

Under the direction of the Associate Pastor for Serve, the ministry meets on a monthly basis with an average of 16 deacons in attendance. Guest speakers join the group to share information about their area in the church. Deacons share moments of impact their particular ministry has had on disciples of Palms or in the community at large and upcoming events are discussed.

The Ministry of Deacons provides care for our members and extended family. Deacon ministries include Shepherd Ministry, Stephen Ministry, Pastoral Visitors, Love Callers, Congregational Care Callers, Flower Ministry, Health Ministry, Prayer Links Ministry, Loaves & Fishes and Food for the Soul.

Doing mission together is often what unites members who have diverse theological and cultural beliefs. New members mention that they are attracted by these mission opportunities



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Presbyterian Women at Palms Presbyterian Church (Palms PW or PW) is a part of an independent organization of women within the Presbyterian Church (USA) with more than 300,000 members worldwide. The program and resource options offer a variety of ways for women to live out their faith within an inclusive, caring community.

Palms PW is a group of 70+ women committed to the PW Purpose:

- Nurturing our faith through prayer and Bible study
- Supporting the mission of the church worldwide
- Working for justice and peace (in our immediate community and globally)
- Building an inclusive, caring community of women to strengthen the Presbyterian Church (USA) and witness to the promise of God's Kingdom.

Palms PW currently includes several circles and study activities including two morning circles, two afternoon circles and one evening circle. Palms PW primarily uses the Horizons Bible study materials, published by the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation.

Circle members pledge financially to a variety of programs and missions including several connections with Haiti Outreach Ministries (HOM), sponsoring children, and sewing clothes and uniforms for HOM schools. PW Crafters' proceeds from the craft sales are sent to local missions and also to Cuba, Africa and Haiti. They also make donations to community groups, such as BEAM and the PW Sarah Breakfield Scholarship. Dorcas Memorial Receptions are a ministry offered to the Palms congregation through PW. Members of PW plan, host, and serve a reception following a Palms memorial service. Food, flowers, and table settings are donated by PW members.

A long-time PW community outreach activity occurs once a year at Pablo Hamlet and Pablo Towers two affordable housing community for seniors in Jacksonville Beach. PW prepares a meal and activities to celebrate the birthdays for residents in these two communities.

PRESBYTERIAN MEN

Two dedicated men's Bible study groups have been meeting for 15 -20 years. In addition, for more than ten years the men of the church gather once a month for lunch and fellowship. For the past five years, Palms has been host to an active men's basketball group involving some Palms members as well as other men from the community who are 40+. As an expression of love and hospitality, the men of the church arrange for photos of each family at Easter time in the Oasis Garden by a cross adorned with fresh flowers.



CHURCH GOVERNANCE

Church Board Functions

Session

The session is the governing body of Palms Presbyterian Church and is responsible for the policies, personnel, finances and membership of the church. Through its own actions and those delegated to the ministries or other designated committees, the session provides programs for worship, Christian education, mission and outreach. The session receives new members (referred to as disciples at Palms), conducts the stewardship campaign and oversees the financial health of the congregation.

The session is composed of nine ruling elders and all called and installed teaching elders. Session members are elected for three-year terms, three people for each term. An elder completing his/her term may not be eligible for re-election for at least one year. Ruling elders elected to fill a vacancy for less than two years may be elected for a full three-year term.

The clerk is an elder not normally sitting on the session and elected to the session for a term of no more than six years.

The session elects a treasurer for a term not to exceed three years.

The session has the following committees: Finance, Human Resources, and Strategic Planning.

The session may designate other committees and has designated the following: Generosity Team and Building & Property.

Deacons

Palms has the Ministry of Deacons that is a ministry of compassion, witness and service. The deacons will have at least 12 members elected by the congregation for a three-year term. The number of deacons may exceed twelve based upon the number of programs of compassion adopted by the deacons. In 2020, 21 deacons served.

Current programs include: Shepherd ministry, Pastoral Visitors, Love Callers, Congregational Care Callers, Flower Ministry, Health Ministry, Prayer Links Ministry, Loaves & Fishes and Food for the Soul.



COMMITTEES

Finance

A financial health assessment, Road to Financial Health, was conducted through the services of the Presbyterian Foundation. Strategies continue to be developed based on the results of that assessment. Palms has no debt thanks to the three successful capital campaigns of 2007-10. The church expenses are being met, with a small cash reserve. However, there is ample room for growth with the per capita giving rate at approximately 2.5% of income. The Presbyterian Foundation's report also expressed a need to pay attention to leadership giving and expressed a critical need for Palms to increase bequests and planned giving. There is an endowed fund to handle any emergency or deferred maintenance that needs to be carried out on the sprawling campus and buildings. Engaging the entire congregation in the spiritual discipline of expressing generosity in gratitude to God will continue to be a challenge and opportunity.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Committee works in a supportive and counseling relationship with the Head of Staff and meets monthly to address agenda items such as employee policies, compensation, staffing, job descriptions, the annual review process, preschool employee-related matters and any other topics related to the church and preschool staff. Budget-related recommendations are made after a review of the current budget and in collaboration with the Finance Committee. Recently, the entirety of the Palms Presbyterian Church Employee Handbook was reviewed and revised.

Recommendations requiring session approval are forwarded for their review. The HR Committee views each staff member as a valued partner in ministry.

Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning strives to be the hub for all ministry areas to communicate, plan and assess all aspects of ministry at Palms. It is represented by all staff ministry area directors and members from the Session. Strategic Planning reviews and approves all Baldwin Grant proposals.

COMMITTEES

Generosity

The Generosity Team is responsible for and oversees plans and programs for “planned congregational giving” that can be relied on for budgeting purposes. The annual campaign for support historically has taken place in the fall when the congregants are invited to indicate their plans for supporting the church financially in the coming year. Members are invited to return a ‘pledge’ card as an indication of participation. One campaign included a tree being planted in Haiti as part of the Haiti Reforestation Project. The process is completed by mail with ample promotion by way of bulletins, newsletter and testimonials included during the worship service. The history of pledges has reflected a gradual decline, yet there is continued support from giving. Recently, the Generosity Team has partnered with the Presbyterian Foundation to incorporate the best practices in stewardship funding, education and cultivation. A year round calendar for interpretation, gratitude and cultivation has been implemented.

Property Committee

The Property Committee is a standing committee of Palms Presbyterian Church under the Stewardship Ministry and responsible to the Session of the management of the property which includes the appropriate use of church and preschool buildings and facilities, maintenance of the buildings and grounds and enhancement to the property. The committee is also responsible for the property and liability insurance for the facilities, programs and staff of the church and preschool.

Staff support for the committee is headed by Lori Vaughn, Church Business Director and includes Alex Crawford, Facilities Manager, JP Schexnayder, Sexton and Assistant Facilities Manager and Trey Demus, Sexton.

BUILDING/PROPERTY

Buildings and Grounds of Palms Presbyterian Church and Preschool



Palms is blessed with a 5-acre campus that blends beautifully with the ambiance of the beach located just two blocks away.



The sanctuary was updated in 2019 and is a place of worship for up to 500 people. Not only is it elegant in its beauty and simplicity, it is handicap accessible. The sanctuary and narthex are 11,992 square feet of stained glass and wood, spacious enough for the Cassavant pipe organ. Members that are unable to worship in person can see and hear the beautiful organ and will feel they are a part of the worship experience by joining through Boxcast live streaming service.

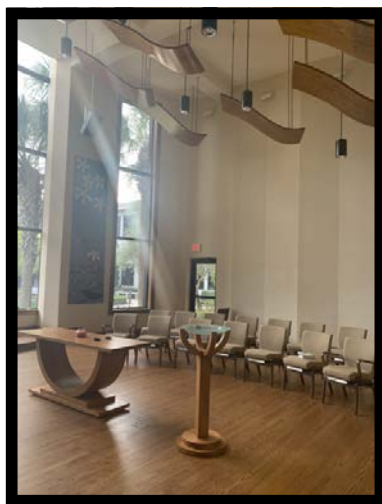


Connected to the sanctuary is a place for fellowship and for an overflow of attendees for worship services and Fine Arts Concerts. This 1,800 square foot area is known as Patten Hall and is a large room that will seat up to 180 with a fully functional kitchen and has audio/video capabilities for great flexibility. Round tables are routinely set up allowing for functions of up to 112 people.

A few steps away from Patten Hall is the two-story L-shaped wing known as the education building. Energy-saving lighting, efficient windows, and Wi-Fi incorporate elements to enhance form and function throughout this building. The grand staircase with an elevator nearby welcomes families bringing loved ones for nursery and Sunday School. This 28,410 square foot building contains a large choir room, drama room, movie room, adult and children classrooms, a library, as well as two coffee stations and a small kitchen. Not only does the first floor have 8,000 square feet of office space and a conference room easily accessible to visitors, but there is a beautifully updated 1,400 square foot chapel where evening services and small memorial services take place.

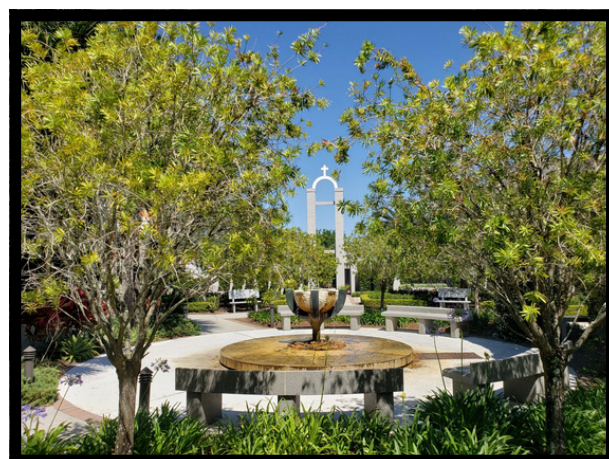
BUILDING/PROPERTY

Buildings and Grounds of Palms Presbyterian Church and Preschool



Hess Chapel, a beautiful worship space, allows for flexible seating for up to 80 chairs. The chapel, as well as many of the rooms, look out over a courtyard known as the Oasis Garden. The garden was designed by a former pastor for a setting of respite, calm, and mediation. Benches are scattered throughout the garden to offer the visitor a visual and auditory invitation to pause and absorb the attractive fountains, trees, and plantings. At one end of the Oasis Garden is a well-secured outdoor Columbarium and memorial garden where cremains of beloved are interred. This area also include seating areas and a flowing hydro-garden.

The covered walkway from the Oasis Garden leads to the Fellowship Hall, youth room, and preschool building. Fellowship Hall with its 9,000 square feet of space accommodates up to 300 people with a stage and a large commercial kitchen that provides a place of many types of activities.



Just off the Fellowship Hall, which can also be used for gym activities, is the recently renovated 2,300 square foot youth room. This room with its own kitchenette is the central hub of middle and high school activities.

The preschool office and classrooms measure 7,000 square feet and welcome 140 children plus staff year-round. Three outdoor fenced play areas for children complement the campus.

Completing this total enclosed facility of 64,529 square feet are two paved parking lots. The facility is fastidiously cared for and well maintained, and have all roofs have recently been replaced.

The Palms buildings are also host to many outside groups: 17 that meet weekly; five groups that use the facility monthly; and another eight groups use them yearly or occasionally.



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Palms Presbyterian Church
Balance Sheet
June 2020

Accounts

Assets

Current Assets

Checking Accounts

Ameris Bank Checking Account

\$94,140.59

Ameris Bank Money Market Acct

\$800,620.47

Total Checking Accounts

\$894,761.06

Petty Cash

\$400.00

Total Current Assets

\$895,161.06

Investments

Fidelity

\$5,400,090.26

Total Investments

\$5,400,090.26

Fixed Assets

\$6,054,973.27

Total Assets

\$12,350,224.59

Liabilities, Fund Principal, & Restricted Funds

Liabilities

Other PR Deductions-Preschool

(\$703.82)

PPP Loan

\$365,000.00

Total Liabilities

\$364,296.18

Fund Principal

Beginning Balance - Baldwin

\$361,424.21

Beginning Balance - Choral Interns

\$69,395.42

Beginning Balance - Fine Arts

\$250,382.57

Beginning Balance - Operating Fund

\$218,967.44

Beginning Balance - Organ Fund

\$161,794.59

Beginning Balance - Preschool

\$149,263.08

Beginning Balance - Property Endow

\$4,661,638.48

Beginning Balance - Sharkey

\$30,000.00

Beginning Balance - Walker Lecture

\$75,840.39

Fixed Assets

\$5,979,739.27

Excess Cash Received

(\$127,970.13)

Total Fund Principal and Excess Cash Received

\$11,830,475.32

Restricted Funds

Total Temporary Restricted

\$155,453.09

Total Restricted Funds

\$155,453.09

Total Liabilities, Fund Principal, & Restricted Funds

\$12,350,224.59

PALMS STAFF



REV. DR. JEFFREY
WEENINK
INTERIM PASTOR



REV. DR. LAURIE
FURR-VANCINI
ASSOCIATE PASTOR



REV. DR. HOLLY
INGLIS
ASSOCIATE PASTOR



REV. JENN GREEN
DIRECTOR, FAITH
FORMATION &
NURTURE



BILL WILDEY
SENIOR SAINTS
COORDINATOR*



DR. RONN CUMMINGS
DIRECTOR, FINE ARTS



LORI VAUGHN
CHURCH BUSINESS
DIRECTOR



JIMMY STEEELE
YOUTH MINISTRY
COORDINATOR



SALLIE GIPSON
ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT



MELISSA CLAPP
ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT



LESLEY HUNTER
ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT

PALMS STAFF



ALEX CRAWFORD
FACILITIES
SUPERVISOR



JP SCHEXNAYDER
FACILITIES
ASSISTANT



TREY DUMAS
FACILITIES
ASSISTANT



KATIE BYRD
NURSERY
COORDINATOR



MELISSA ANCELIN
ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT*



CATHY FORTSON
ORGANIST

PRESCHOOL STAFF



KADESHA BAKER
PRESCHOOL
DIRECTOR



PAM TITLOW
ADMINISTRATIVE
ASSISTANT

*FUNDED BY THE BALDWIN GRANT

PALMS MEMBERS/DISCIPLES- WHO WE ARE

Age	65% older
Education	88% with college degree; almost 40% with graduate degree
Ethnicity	1% minority
Family Size	82% live in a household of 1 or 2 people
Gender	70% female
Income	60% with incomes > \$100K annually
Residents	66% live within the beach community 34% live within Jacksonville and beyond
Theology	slightly more progressive than conservative with high theological diversity
Giving	annual contribution \$3,229 per household



PALMS MEMBERS/DISCIPLES- MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

Membership - attendance Overview draft of 8/14	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	
Prior Active	1394	1421	1411	1239	1214	1243	1102	
GAINS								
Certificate	19	17	22	36	15	14	2	
Youth professions	13	10	7	6	9	6	0	
Professions/reaffirmations	46	23	12	26	52	26	2	
Other		3						
TOTAL GAINS	78	53	41	68	76	46	4	as of 7/2020
LOSSES								
Certificate	15	15	7	7	3	2	4	
Deaths	27	25	26	31	18	33	17	
Other	9	23	180*	55	26	152*	4	
TOTAL LOSSES	51	63	213	93	47	203	24	as of 7/2020
NET(adjusted)	1421	1411	1239	1214	1243	1102		
AGE								
<25	92	102	92	90	96	75		
26-40	331	286	249	247	270	135		
41-55	142	172	153	150	244	172		
56-70	243	206	205	204	290	272		
>70	613	645	540	523	343	448		
People with disabilities - hearing/sight	80	103	97	57	70	88		
Christian Education	589	477	507	498	559	389		
Baptisms	16	15	11	13	15	12		
Worship Attendance	544	469	500	471	498	464	421	as of 3/8/20
Virtual Attendance							1400	as of 8/2/20
							1200	as of 9/30/20
Note: Age categories changed after 2017 so consideration should be given when making comparisons.								
*"Other losses" in 2016/2019 reflect a removal of inactive members (no activity in 2 plus years).								

PALMS COMMUNITY

Our Partners

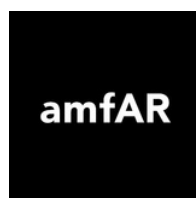
As a community, Palms has always looked beyond itself into God's world and has been instrumental in the formation of local mission organizations. Palms was part of the collaboration among beach churches that established Pablo Towers, a senior subsidized housing facility. Palms was a founding partner of Mission House, offering comprehensive services to individuals who are homeless, and Beaches Emergency Assistance Ministry (BEAM), offering comprehensive services to the underemployed or underserved communities at the beaches and beyond. Palms remains an active partner with Mission House, BEAM, and Beaches Habitat for Humanity.

In addition, Palms has multi-denominational and multi-faith connections in the wider Jacksonville community through our participation in the Beaches Ministerial Association and OneJax. Our association with Temple Beth-El Synagogue developed into a small group study of the Hebrew scriptures and an annual Thanksgiving service, which alternated between Palms and Temple Beth-El. Due to leadership changes in both congregations, this relationship is on hold for the near future.

The Deliberative Dialogue conversations, which have been facilitated by the Common Grounds ministry of Palms, are one of our most vital connections with our community. Conversations on Gun Violence, Racism, Sea Level Rise, Health Care and other relevant topics bring in a variety of individuals from the beaches area to share perspectives and listen to one another in an effort to build bridges of reconciliation in a divided world and to address concerns of our community.

The mayors of the three beaches communities – Jacksonville Beach, Neptune Beach, and Atlantic Beach – have been active participants in the Deliberative Dialogue process and, have shared their reflections on the role Palms plays in our community.

Our community extends internationally to include these partners: Haiti Reforestation Partnership, Haiti Outreach Ministries, AMFA (Affordable Medicines for All), The Sanneh Institute, and The Someone Silk Project.



THE PALMS COMMUNITY- WHERE WE LIVE & WORSHIP

Palms Presbyterian Church is located a block from the Atlantic Ocean on a barrier island that is home to seven north Florida beach communities. Just a quick drive over the Intracoastal Waterway is the City of Jacksonville, Florida. Jacksonville became the largest city in land mass in the contiguous 48 United States after the city and county governments consolidated in 1968. The larger metropolitan area is more than 1.5 million people with an ethnic breakdown of 52% white, 31% African American, 10% Hispanic or Latino, 5% Asian, and two or more races 3%.

Jacksonville and its beaches are fortunate to have a “sub-tropical” climate with a mean January temperature of 53 and a mean July temperature of 83. The beaches weather is often warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer due to the mitigating effects of the ocean.

Jacksonville Beach is the largest of the beaches’ communities with population in 2019 at 23,628, with 18% above the age of 65, 92% white, 2% African American, 2% Asian and 4.9% Hispanic or Latino. Jacksonville Beach has the largest commercial district of the beaches cities and is home to a large fishing pier, as well as the location of the majority of hotels. With its many restaurants and bars, it also has a lively nightlife. The median value of owner-occupied houses is \$384,000.



Neptune Beach, located north of Jacksonville Beach, is a largely residential community with a population of 7,259 people, with 15% above 65 years of age, 94% white, 1.3% African American, 1.4% Asian and 3.9% Hispanic or Latino. The median value of owner-occupied houses is \$381,400.

Atlantic Beach, further north, is another largely residential community of 13,872, with 22.5% over 65 years of age, 86.3% white, 6.1% African America, 2.8% Asian, 4.4% Hispanic or Latino. The median value of owner-occupied houses is \$353,500. The area west and north of Atlantic Beach is populated by a large number of Navy families who work at the nearby Naval Station Mayport.

Between Atlantic and Neptune Beach where Atlantic Blvd ends at the Atlantic Ocean is the **Beaches Town Center**, a lively several block area that is home to twenty restaurants, many shops, two hotels and more. Affectionately known as “The Corner” by locals, the area is often overflowing with people, bicycles, and dog walkers. Mayport, as mentioned, is even further north. It is a small city that is an active fishing port and home to the Safe Harbour Seafood Market and Restaurant. Naval Station Mayport is located north of Atlantic Beach and is home to the Navy’s 4th Fleet and third largest Naval Surface Fleet in the United States.

THE PALMS COMMUNITY- WHERE WE LIVE & WORSHIP

St. Johns County Located to the immediate south of Jacksonville Beach is the St. Johns County beach community of Ponte Vedra Beach, a largely residential community with a population of 29,946, with 31% above 65 years of age 89% white, 2% African American, 3% Asian, and 5% Hispanic or Latino. The median value of owner-occupied house is \$477,900. Ponte Vedra is home to the nationally recognized Ponte Vedra Inn and Club with two golf courses, as well as the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall. Further south into St. Johns County is the community known as Sawgrass. It is largely residential with a population of 4,894 with 38% above the age of 65, 92% white, 1% African American, 1% Asian, and 7% Hispanic or Latino. The median value of an owner-occupied house is \$442,400. Sawgrass is the headquarters of the highly regarded TPC Sawgrass and home of the annual The Players Golf Tournament. Additionally, St. Johns County consistently has the highest performance ratings for public schools in the state of Florida.

Jacksonville/Duval County Downtown Jacksonville is approximately a 22-mile drive to the west from the church. Jacksonville has the magnificent St. Johns River flowing through the middle of the city from the county line to the south, north to the city and port of Mayport where it empties into the Atlantic Ocean. Downtown Jacksonville is the headquarters of CSX, FIS, Ameris, TIAA Bank, Florida Blue, and Black Knight, as well as numerous other companies. The downtown area has the large regional hub for the Baptist Health Center/MD Anderson Hospital, as well as the government center. A large concentration of businesses and corporate offices are located to the east in large office parks along Southside Blvd and the Gate Parkway, which is also home to the Town Center, a large regional restaurant/shopping destination with stores ranging from Target to Nordstrom. Jacksonville has a thriving arts community with outstanding performance facilities including the Times-Union Performing Arts Center and the art deco Florida Theater. The city has the very highly regarded Jacksonville Symphony and the Florida Ballet and is home to the Jacksonville Jazz Festival. The Cummer Art Museum and Gardens and the Museum of Modern Art located in the near/heart of downtown. The city is very proud to be the home of the NFL team, the Jacksonville Jaguars, as well as the minor league baseball team, The Jumbo Shrimp. In addition to the previously mentioned Baptist Health System and related MD Anderson Hospital are the nationally recognized Wolfson Children's Hospital, the Nemours Children Clinic, the University of Florida Hospital, as well as the Jacksonville site of the Mayo Clinic, located just minutes from Palms Presbyterian Church. Lastly, the Jacksonville area is home to the University of North Florida with 16,000 students located within five miles of the church. The area is also home to four campuses of the Florida State College of Jacksonville, Edward Waters College (an historically black college founded in 1866 by members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church), and Jacksonville University a private school of 3,000 students located on the St. Johns River in the Arlington neighborhood. Right over the Intracoastal Waterway, a quick drive from Palms Presbyterian Church, are many relatively new subdivisions with young, diverse populations, as well as several exclusive gated communities with private golf courses.

THE PALMS COMMUNITY- WHERE WE LIVE & WORSHIP

Where Palms Members Live - A Truly Regional Church

Palms' families live in neighborhoods from the north in Atlantic Beach, south to Sawgrass and St. Augustine, and west into the City of Jacksonville.

As the population report reflects, Palms is an older age congregation. There are many lovely communities for older adults, especially Vicar's Landing in Ponte Vedra, Cypress Village in the west beach area, and Fleet Landing in Atlantic Beach. All three of these adult living communities have housing of various levels of independence and support. All three provide transportation to Palms for Sunday services. In the past, Palms' pastors have led Bible studies at these locations.

The distribution of members by zip codes is:

41% in Ponte Vedra Beach, Ponte Vedra/Nocatee
26% at the three Jacksonville Beach communities
24% in the "West Beaches" or eastern part of Jacksonville
9% in St Augustine and throughout Jacksonville



COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS

Interview with the Hon. Elaine Brown, Mayor of Neptune Beach

Elaine was very enthusiastic about Palms.

- * She is very familiar with our Outreach Programs - "gets a lot of info."
- * She thinks "Palms has taken community interaction to a whole new level regarding."
- * She has been to Palms and finds it "welcoming, warm and beautiful."
- * She says, "She gets a good feeling when she drives by. It is a great part of the community."
- * She says, "Palms is doing more than most by outreach, dialogue and awareness."
- * When asked if there is anything more we can do, she responds, "Nothing specific, just use every resource to get info and keep doing good."

Interview with the Hon. Ellen Glasser, Mayor of Atlantic Beach

* Ellen loves Palms because "we don't have boundaries." That is, other churches in her area do not make the effort to extend beyond their own congregational needs.

* She is impressed by our "works" in her community, e.g., food for camps, Black History sponsor, Common Grounds, workforce housing; appreciates that the pastors are involved in her community.

* She wishes that the Beaches Faith Community would collaborate more on the "larger issues."

The example she gave was that, although the dialogues (e.g., Common Grounds) are great, they mostly involve "like-minded people." She would like to find ways to bring more political, philosophical diversity to the conversations.



THE LARGER FAITH COMMUNITY

Palms Presbyterian serves the religious needs and desires of people in the beach area along with these other religious organizations:

Church of Christ Jax Beach
Beach Church (United Methodist)
Ocean City Church
Unity of Jacksonville Beach
Ocean Park Baptist Church
St. Paul's by the Sea Episcopal
St. Paul's Catholic Church
Church of Our Savior (Episcopal)
First Assembly of God
The Church of Eleven22 (non-denomination)
Beth El Synagogue
Hodges Boulevard Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)
Ponte Vedra Presbyterian Church (PCA)
Church of the Redeemer (Angelican)
Beaches Chapel Church
Community Presbyterian (PCUSA)
St Andrews Lutheran (ELCA)
St Andrew AME Church
Christ Episcopal
Our Lady of the Star (Catholic)
Oak Harbor Baptist Church
Mayport Presbyterian Church (PCUSA)
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church



PALMS' APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY AND THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT TOOL (CAT) SURVEY

Appreciative Inquiry emerged more than 30 years ago as an alternative to problem-based approaches for organizational transformation. Appreciative Inquiry is about the search for the best in people, their organizations and the relevant world around them. It is a process that is future-oriented and focuses on congregational assets, core competencies and strengths.

Major positive themes from the Appreciative Inquiry process

Based upon 150 answers from in-person conversations as well as virtual submissions of March – May, 2020.



- A strong sense of community, first and foremost in being a welcoming hospitable community
- Worship based in Reformed theology, a traditional worship service through a shared liturgy of Word and Sacrament and rich with outstanding music
- Community outreach serving the broader community and the world
- Quality, multiple Christian education opportunities for all ages
- Comfort with how things were but a genuine openness to improvement
- A realization of deep differences of opinion, but a desire for reconciliation and to learn from various points of view
- Appreciation for giving that has been steady, generous and reliable, enabling the church to be without debt and with a growing endowment
- A facility that is well maintained, well utilized, and serves the congregation and the community
- Caring community with a sense of family, welcome and loving kindness
- A desire to engage more young families
- Appreciation for the staff, but an underlying concern about the staffing level and unclear understanding of various duties and responsibilities

The major findings from Holy Cow! Consulting/Comprehensive Assessment Tool (CAT)

A thirty-two page report, entitled Vital Signs for Palms Presbyterian Church, was received on May 11, 2020. Holy Cow! Consulting received 344 responses, a response rate of 76% based upon average attendance.

Major positive themes from the Comprehensive Assessment Tool (CAT) process

Key Indicators

- Overall satisfaction with 58% strongly agreeing with how things are; an average score among churches
- Overall “energy” was 43%; an average score among churches (although Palms did score in the high energy/high satisfaction quadrant)
- Overall value of activity beyond worship was rated 67%; an average score among churches

Critical Success Factors

1. Leaders are representative (rated important)
2. Different decision approaches (rated significant)
3. Leaders seek input (rated significant)

Priorities

- One rated “very high” as compared to other churches: strengthen pastoral response of the church in serving people with special needs
- One rated “high” in relation to other churches: Create more opportunities for people to form meaningful relationships, for example, small groups, shared meals



Top five priorities shared by all age groups with exceptions noted

- Make necessary changes to attract families with children
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people
- Provide more opportunities for Christian education and spiritual formation at every age level
- Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances
- Strengthen the process by which members are called and equipped for ministry and leadership

For those of age 65 and older add

- Develop the spiritual generosity of the people to financially support the ministry of the church

For those under 35 years of age add

- Work as an advocate for social and institutional change so that society might better reflect the values of the kingdom of God

Descriptive Map

- Palms identifies as slightly "progressive and adaptive" vs. "settled and conservative." It is a very theologically diverse church
- The church is slightly rated "high energy/high satisfaction" vs "low energy/low satisfaction"

Performance Dashboard

- Palms views as high performing: morale, readiness for ministry, engagement in education, worship and music
- Palms views as poorly performing: conflict management, governance
- Palms views as in the middle range: spiritual vitality

Critical Abilities for the Next Pastor

- Preaching
- Strategic leadership
- Administration
- Pastoral care
- Teaching and training
- Change management
- Conflict negotiation



ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Giving – There was not overwhelming sentiment gathered in regards to giving, but there was enough to reveal appreciation for the fact that the congregation has been able to fund ministry and mission. The fact that the congregation has been a steady, generous, reliable source of funding is a noted strength. Going forward, concern has been registered regarding meeting our true giving potential.

Facility – Space is well utilized, functions well, and serves the needs of the congregation and larger community. Some indication for continuing the journey forward for energy conservation and becoming more “green” was expressed.

Caring – The sense of family, welcome, genuine care, prayerful support and loving kindness in the life of the congregation were re-occurring themes. Appreciation was expressed for solid pastoral care and surrounding care extended by members in times of crisis.

Staff/Leadership - Staff and Leadership – There is high regard for the services provided by staff. There is an underlying restiveness that struggles with the question of whether our ‘payroll is too disproportionate to our budget’ and there are questions about whether Palms is over staffed. The membership craves interaction, communication and visibility with its governing bodies.

Growth - Like every church and organization there is a keen interest in member growth, particularly for attracting young families, as well as outreach to the surrounding retirement community.

Change - A large representation of those sampled stated a high comfort with how things stand with the life of the church. This is not to suggest any element of resistance to change. It reflects contentment and satisfaction. There is a genuine openness to improvement. Changes that are well reasoned, practical, completely thought through, and clearly presented with a defined rationale are readily accepted.

Communication - Good communication and clarity in definition of roles and responsibilities will be critical. All efforts to keep all disciples in-sync and working for common goals need continued attention. Mechanisms for communication will constantly need to be evaluated and refined to maximize effectiveness.

Conflict - Areas of differences exist as evidenced by an almost 50/50 split among progressives and conservatives. This is an area in which Palms wants to grow and improve through effective communication and intentional dialogue.

PALMS' SEARCH PROCESS

The Pastoral Nominating Committee (PNC) is grateful for the strong leadership of Interim Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Weenink who, upon arrival at Palms, moved quickly to begin a congregational assessment so critical to the search process. Rev. Weenink and the Session engaged the services of Holy Cow! Consulting. Holy Cow! customized a congregational assessment tool (CAT) for the purpose of analyzing the health of the congregation with both qualitative and quantitative information on the health of the congregation.

Rev. Weenink, with the Session's support, began an Appreciative Inquiry approach to engaging the congregation by the sharing of members' stories of their lives at Palms. A series of small group gatherings involved members in discussions about the congregation's core values, finest successes and greatest dreams. Appreciative Inquiry allowed the congregation to focus on assets rather than deficits and look to the future rather than the past. The small group gatherings were complemented with a sermon series focusing on "Questions Jesus Asked...or Answered." Unfortunately, many of the small group discussions were planned for the Lenten and Eastertide season which was cut short by the COVID-19 restrictions.

Committee Members were elected to the PNC by the congregation through a virtual congregational meeting in April 2020. The committee began working at the beginning of July 2020, starting with prayer and study as the PNC sought God's guidance for Palms Presbyterian Church's future. The committee is fortunate to have Rev. Craig Davies as the liaison from the Presbytery of St. Augustine's Call Commission. As the search process moves forward in the search process, prayers are for the church, its mission and for its future leadership.

Committee Members

Michelle Copenhaver

Carolyn Ettlinger

Dave Hammers

Jim Hoener

Elaine Mann

David Taylor

Jeremy Thien

Melody Toma