

SUMMER/FALL 2021

The Red Thread Edition

THE HEART OF PALMS



Lines from Laurie

by Rev. Dr. Laurie Furr-Vancini

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There is a Chinese Proverb that goes like this: An invisible red thread connects those who are destined to meet, regardless of time, place, or circumstance. The thread may stretch or tangle, but will never break. I first learned of this proverb through the Chinese adoption community, of which our family is connected. In that context, although it seems inconceivable that there is a child across the world who will become a part of your family, it happens nonetheless, in a miraculous way. We are connected by a red thread.

Fate, Providence, Destiny, and Serendipity are all words that come to my mind and imagination as I consider this concept. In the book of Romans we hear, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to God's purpose." That statement is a little different than God causes all things to happen, rather that God is at work to create good out of all circumstances. Whatever the case, I like the vision of being held together by a red thread that weaves in and out of our lives and the lives of others, tying us, wrapping us, weaving us, sometimes tangling us.... a thread that is never broken. I believe that God is at work in all of us, connecting us, one to another, often in surprising ways!

In this Red Thread Edition of The Heart of Palms, you will find information from the summer and a look ahead to the fall. You will see plans for welcoming Pastor Bryant Anderson and his family and you will get a preview of our fall stewardship campaign. We are tied, one to another, and woven together in and through the love of Jesus!

Worship Welcome

by Rev. Dr. Laurie Furr-Vancini

Palms worship is a highlight of the week! All through COVID, Palms worship has been strong, anchored by our choral interns (and now our choir), the Word read and proclaimed, fabulous music, and the warm fellowship of our worship leaders. With masks on, with masks off (for a bit), virtually in your living room, worship has been a constant. And an anchor for many during the turbulent time of this pandemic. We give thanks to the staff and worship volunteers who offer of themselves. (How about a special shout out to Donna Beitel who each week has been lovingly checking in our in-person worshippers?!)

This summer, we have focused on BASIC QUESTIONS in worship. And now, we are to our final question, which is also a first question: What Now? **Mark your calendar for August 15** and join us (both in-person and virtually) **as we welcome Pastor Bryant and the Anderson family**. Our worship celebration will include special music from our Chancel Bells, Chancel Choir, and Timpani. We will be gifting the Anderson Family with the basket of goodies we have collected and the scrapbook of activity ideas. Pastor Bryant will be preaching for the first time in the Palms' pulpit and we will join with him in a Litany of Beginning.

Sunday, August 22, join together with the Nurture Ministry, Pastor Bryant, Jimmy Steele and others for **Neighborhood Sunday**. Due to COVID, some of the activities have been postponed until a later date, but worship will still focus on "Won't You Be My Neighbor" and introducing us to the Nurture focus for the fall.

Stay tuned for information about fall worship after Pastor Bryant arrives!



Welcome Pastor Bryant & Family

by Carolyn Ettlinger

As you know, Pastor Bryant's first day is just about here ... **it's THIS SUNDAY, August 15!**

Palms is ready to extend hospitality and a warm welcome to Pastor Bryant, his wife Kristin, and their children Owen, Ellery, Emmi and Reid!

A huge **THANK YOU** to all who gave cards, gifts, suggestions and signed up for meals for the Anderson Family to enjoy upon their arrival. We are all going to continue to welcome them in the weeks and months to come and we hope each of you have the opportunity to welcome them in your way.



Generosity Preview

Our Next Step

by Chuck Dunn and Jeremy Thien

The scriptures tell us of Paul's walk, in faith, throughout the world. Like Paul, we all step into our faith. The steps we choose to take determine how we live our lives, how we embrace our faith, and how we allocate our funds. These steps form the basis of how we understand ourselves and how we are defined, both individually and as a community.



*"...stepping together
alongside our new
pastoral leader..."*

As we soon begin our 2022 pledge campaign, we will ask you to take your next steps in generosity. Pledge Sunday will be held October 10, 2021.

The theme this year is, **OUR NEXT STEP**, as portrayed by stepping-stones progressing through a stream. Some of these next steps which we, as a community of faith, will be taking this coming year include stepping into a world with less coronavirus concerns, stepping together alongside our new pastoral leader, stepping into a time of increased number and magnitude of pledges, stepping-in faith-into a new future, with all the possibilities it brings.

Join us in our next steps. Watch for additional information about this campaign.

Fall Programs

Nurture Updates

by Jimmy Steele

The Palms Nurture Team met on Sunday, July 25 and overwhelmingly agreed that due to the current COVID trends and CDC guidance, we are delaying the beginning of our fall in-person Sunday School and Wednesday programming.

In the meantime, we are excited to share plans with you on our Intergenerational "Won't You Be My Neighbor" curriculum based on the ministry Mr. (Fred) Rogers shared through many years. To be a good neighbor and care for all of God's children, the Nurture Team agreed we would wait until it was deemed safe for vaccinated and non-vaccinated people (which includes many of our children) to be together again without worry.

Sunday, August 22 we will have a preview of what is to come, an activity for individuals and families of all ages to work on at home (similar to the Cross Project), and continue to welcome Pastor Bryant to our Palms neighborhood. To encourage community, we will have Mr. Rogers-themed masks for everyone in our congregation. We look forward to sharing more about the "Won't You Be My Neighbor" curriculum with you in the coming weeks.



Youth Group

by Jimmy Steele

Middle School Youth Group (grades 6-8) will resume on Wednesday, August 18 from 5-7 p.m. in the Youth Room. Our format will be similar to last year - we will have COVID safe games, Bible study/reflection, and a meal. All youth and volunteers will need to be masked during Youth Group events. Dinners will consist of pre-ordered take-out or delivery from our favorite local restaurants. Youth are encouraged to bring \$5 each week to help offset the cost of meals and snacks.

High School Youth Group (grades 9-12) will resume meeting from 5-7 p.m. on Sunday, August 22 in the Youth Room and will meet on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month unless otherwise noted. During our time together, we will dive in deeper and explore the meaning behind some of the words we read, sing, or say aloud in our favorite Bible verses, creeds, songs, and prayers. We will also enjoy a meal together from a favorite local restaurant. Youth are encouraged to bring \$5 each week to help offset the cost of meals and snacks.

On the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month, all youth are invited to bring money for lunch and join together for food and fellowship immediately following the 11 a.m. worship service. We will meet in Patten Hall for a brief check-in, then head to lunch somewhere in the community.

In Our Music, God is Glorified...

An Update from Dr. C.

The Chancel Choir and The Chancel Bells have been up-and-running for months and months! Choir rehearses Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. Bells rehearse Tuesday evenings at 5:30 p.m.

CAMP (Christian Afterschool Music Program) will resume in early September – we will do a lot of singing outdoors – and learning indoors (with masks) too. The regular meeting day of CAMP is being discussed now – we should have a day and time decided soon. CAMP is for children grades 2 – 5. Children do not need to be members of Palms to participate. Invite your friends to join you!

We are beginning a Middle School/High School Choir for youth grades 6 - 12! This fall we will sing outside – and explore the world of music indoors (masked) as well. The weekly meeting day and time are being discussed now – we hope to begin in early September.

Stay tuned for updates coming soon!

“

*Where words fail,
music speaks.*

”

Hans Christian Andersen



PW Fall Gathering

by Carol Farr and Janet Langley

The Presbyterian Women will hold their fall event, "Gathering Together, Rejoicing in Hope," on August 28 at the Montgomery Conference Center from 8:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Early registration (\$20) for this event ends August 15. Registrations postmarked after August 15 will be \$25.

Online registration is available at www.staugpres.org/pwfallgathering. For more information, contact Kathy Kleist at kmkleist616@gmail.com.



Seasoned Saints

by Bill Wildey

It has been challenging to plan older adult events as we have moved through the pandemic. However, fall 2021 plans are now in the works and will begin when it is deemed safe by the Palms Health Ministry. Consider joining us for Intergenerational Sunday School on Sunday mornings once it begins. The first 8 weeks will be focused on "Won't You Be My Neighbor", a PCUSA curriculum for all ages.

A forum on men's health is being planned for September 13 at 10 a.m. The topic will be "Lifestyles for a Healthy Heart." This forum will be led by Dr. Clarence Watridge. You may pre-register for this event at <https://bit.ly/HealthyHeart2021>.

Watch Palms eNews or Weekly for future events.



Visiting Theologian



Amy Julia Becker will visit Palms October 23-24 to talk about her book, *White Picket Fences*. She will also lead workshops and preach on Sunday, October 24.

Amy Julia Becker is a writer and speaker on faith, family, disability, and privilege. Her writing has been published in *USA Today*, *Christianity Today*, *The Washington Post*, and *The New York Times*.

She has spoken at conferences including The Festival of Faith and Writing, the Q Conference, and the Summer Institute for Theology and Disability, as well as many churches and schools.

A graduate of Princeton University and Princeton Theological Seminary, Becker lives with her husband and three children in western Connecticut.

She blogs about the intersection of family, faith, disability, Down syndrome, culture and parenting at www.amyjuliabecker.com.

Book Read and Study

by Dana Riley

You are invited to participate in a congregational book read and study!

Join us this fall as we engage together over *White Picket Fences: Turning Toward Love in a World Divided by Privilege*, by Amy Julia Becker.

There will be several opportunities to join a book group. Book groups will begin the week after Labor Day in person at Palms and via Zoom. Sign up in the church office during the week, or in Patten Hall before or after worship on Sundays.

This book read and study is part of the Matthew 25 Collaborative at Palms. Matthew 25 exists to build congregational vitality by strengthening relationships within, as well as between people and congregations in the community. Congregational vitality seeks to welcome and include those who've been made to feel excluded, while growing together toward God. This Matthew 25 vision also addresses economic, social, and systematic oppression, and seeks to be a part of the solution.



World Communion Sunday

by Don and Gwyn Boothe

In celebration of World Communion Weekend, Palms Outreach Ministry is pleased to announce our Annual Haiti Dinner & Conversation with returning Guest Speaker, Nadege Gay on October 1. Nadege is the Assistant Superintendent of Schools for our mission partner, Haiti Outreach Ministry/MICECC* in Port Au Prince, Haiti, and the daughter of HOM Founder, Pastor Leon Dorleans, and his wife Jacky. While enrolled in college in Jacksonville, Nadege attended Palms and sang in the Chancel Choir. On Friday, October 1 at 6:30 p.m. there will be a dinner catered by Palms member, Barry Adeeb, in Patten Hall, followed by conversation. Stay tuned for more information on how you can register in advance for this event.

World Communion Sunday is October 3. Nadege will be our guest speaker at the worship service. The experience of worshipping with one of our Outreach Global Mission partners as she shares her message and breaks bread with us in communion, ensures this will be a truly memorable World Communion Sunday. Save the date for this special weekend.

*MICECC is Haitian Creole for Mission Communautaire de l'Église Chrétienne des Cités which translates to Community Mission of the Christian Church of the Cities. Haiti Outreach Ministry (HOM) exists to support the leadership of MICECC in Haiti. The programs supported by HOM are led by MICECC and the Haitian people through the Head Pastor of Cite Soleil Church, Profaité Medeus.



New People Connection Gathering

by Dana Riley

Calling Visitors and New Members

Do you want to learn more about Palms and how to engage? Are you looking for where you fit? What are you curious about?

Join us in Patten Hall on September 19 from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. for an informative gathering and discussion. A light breakfast will be served (if we can figure out a safe way to do so)!

Contact Dana Riley at dana.riley@palmschurch.org or by calling the church office.





Palms Legacy Disciples


by Chip Tousey

Bo Bohannon was a faithful member of Palms for many years. A retired Air Force Lt. Colonel, Bo was a quiet and humble man. He was a very good listener and never pushed his views on others. He could be seen almost every Sunday sitting in the same seat in the narthex of the sanctuary. Due to medical issues, his loving wife, Sylvia, was rarely able to attend with him.

Bo and Sylvia were very troubled by the worldwide problem of hungry children. They realized they did not have the resources to make an impact on the problem worldwide, but they were enthused at the thought of helping others eliminate hungry children at the Beaches. They were both very impressed at the efforts of Palms to be part of the solution, for example Kid's Kitchen Summer Feeding Program and Blessings in a Backpack.

Bo died in 2016. Upon Sylvia's death earlier this year, they left over \$1 million in their estate plan to Palms, designated to feed hungry children. The Palms Serve ministry proceeded to create the Feeding Hungry Children fund and have already put the gift to work.

Have you thought of including Palms in your estate plan? Do you have a passion for a ministry that you want to support? Palms has a group of Legacy Disciples, who have also included Palms in their planning. **Please contact Chip Tousey if you would like to meet with a Palms Legacy Disciple to discuss your passion.** If you have already included Palms in your planning, please let us know, so that we can make you a Palms Legacy Disciple.



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*Have you thought
of including Palms
in your estate plan?*
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The Palms Feeding Hungry Children Fund

by Leslie Deal

The Palms Feeding Hungry Children Fund (FHCF) began with the generous 1.1-million-dollar gift from Bo and Sylvia Bohannon. In less than two months, this fund has already begun to make a significant impact assisting hungry children in our local community and assisting children in areas of need across the globe. FHCF is focused on the idea that providing food directly to children in their school setting is the most beneficial and expeditious route to reach children in need and therefore, is working with organizations to meet that goal.

“
*...providing food
directly to children
in their school
setting ...*
”



Locally, FHCF helped to care for our community children who do not have school-provided lunches in the summer via Palms Kids Kitchen program. FHCF provided funding to support the national non-profit organization, Blessings in a Backpack. The Blessing in a Backpack organization packs food into backpacks for children to take home over the weekend. FHCF provided funding for 271 children who had been on the waiting list for backpacks. FHCF provided monies to children in need in South Africa via the Grace Feeding Scheme and to children in Haiti through our partners at the Haiti Outreach Ministry. In addition to improving the health and nutrition of children, food also assists children perform better in school. All involved with FHCF are grateful for the opportunity to help make this happen.

Equally exciting is the fact that Palms' disciples are empowered to continue to provide support for this FHCF for many years to come. The Feeding Hungry Children Fund has been set up as an endowment. Anyone who would like to donate to FHCF may designate "Feeding Hungry Children Fund" on their offering envelope or check. If giving online is preferable, please go to <https://www.palmschurch.org> under "GIVE" and select the Feeding Hungry Children Fund tab.

We are humbled and grateful for this generous gift graciously entrusted to Palms by Bo and Sylvia Bohannon. We all share in the joy that this amazing opportunity provides Palms, a gift which makes strides in the local and global effort to Feeding Hungry Children.

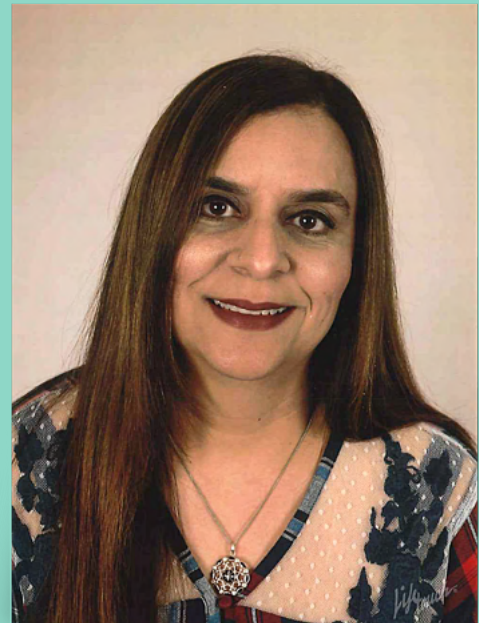
Welcome to Our Director of Palms Preschool

Mahreen Mian is the new Director of Palms Preschool! She has over 20 years of experience working in various roles in the early childhood industry, be it as a lead teacher, assistant director or director. Mahreen is well respected in the industry and enjoys close relations with the Early Learning Coalition of Duval and Duval Early Learning Director's Network (DELDN), for which she serves as the leadership committee co-chair. She also serves as the chair person for Frank Peterson High School Early Childhood Academy advisory board. Mahreen has received formal training in mentorship from Early Learning Coalition; she mentors University of North Florida (UNF) students and has mentored many directors in town.

Mahreen is often sought by directors for advice on NAEYC and Guiding Stars of Duval accreditation. She has experience working with special needs children having served as an Infant/toddler intervention specialist (ITDS). Mahreen serves as a professional development specialist for Child Development Associate (CDA) for CDA Council and has worked closely with Early Childhood faculty at UNF to implement latest philosophy and early childhood pedagogy at her previous job. In addition, Mahreen has assisted UNF faculty and staff in research related to curriculum and has also had the opportunity to present on various topics in Early childhood classes at UNF, DELDN trainings and at various organizations such as CSX.

Mahreen has a master's degree in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Early Childhood Education and a second master's degree in Health Administration. Her bachelor's degree is in business administration from the University of North Florida. Mahreen holds a second bachelor's degree in English Literature and Geography from Kinnaird College in Pakistan. Mahreen is an Infant/Toddler as well as Pre-K certified observer in CLASS, the assessment tool used by School Readiness and Guiding Star of Duval accreditation. She has a national Child Development Associate (CDA). Mahreen holds an Advanced Director's Credential with a VPK endorsement along with a multitude of certificates and trainings in early childhood education and leadership. Mahreen has received formal training in "Conscious Discipline" which trains teachers to provide choices to children and to redirect children in a positive manner. In 2010 Mahreen received the Spot Award from UNF for her extraordinary leadership skills.

Mahreen lives in Jacksonville with her husband and son. Her daughter is married and lives in Calgary, Canada. Mahreen has two beautiful grandsons who are the apple of her eyes. In her free time Mahreen loves to travel, embroider, garden, and sew.



Summer Recap



Kid's Kitchen Summer Feeding Program

by Don and Gwyn Boothe

In 2005, a group of school guidance counselors affirmed an increasing issue of hunger among Beaches children, especially during the summer months. In response, Palms members established Kid's Kitchen, a unique summer food program for children living in this community. A nutritious, easily prepared menu was created providing six meals per child for a weekend. In the last several years, Kid's Kitchen has expanded to serve the summer after-school programs at The Carver Center in Jacksonville Beach and the Gail Baker & Jordan Centers in Atlantic Beach.

Kid's Kitchen Summer Feeding Program for 2021 was held for eight consecutive weeks beginning June 7 through the last delivery on July 29. Palms disciples packed and delivered a total of **560 bags** filled with easy to prepare, kid-friendly meals to provide additional nutrition during the summer months. The managers and staff at the Publix Store at Intracoastal Plaza supplied the orders and were very cooperative. This allowed Palms to purchase BOGO items in advance, resulting in significant savings overall. A total of **25 Palms disciples** provided pickup, inventory, packing, and delivery services during the program.

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What better way to spend part of your summer than feeding God's children?

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Mayport Market

by Carol Barbour

Palms Mission partner, Mayport Market, along with partners BEAM and Oak Harbor Baptist Church, have worked tirelessly this year to address the losses which have come due to COVID 19. Shutdowns, the loss of jobs, and foreclosures are just some of the added stresses placed on local families this past year. Simply putting food on tables has become tremendously difficult for far too many in our community.

During the first 7 months of 2021, Mayport Market distributed **85,619 pounds of food**. There has been **an average of 17 volunteers** per distribution date. Together they have worked approximately **712 volunteer hours** to share God's gifts with our neighbors. This is the equivalent of working 89 8-hour shifts. Palms' Mission, carried out through Mayport Market, has **aided 7154 of our neighbors** in putting nutritious food on their tables.

New volunteers are always welcome and needed. If this mission is calling out to you, please **contact Carol Barbour at 904-599-2920 or jcbarbour161@gmail.com**. Every distribution day we hear how grateful our clients are for your help. Thank you for your support of this Palms Outreach Mission!



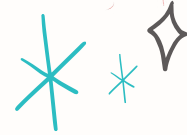
Vacation Bible School

by Lesley Hunter

Did you know that children can lead the way as stewards of the earth? That is exactly what the children explored this summer in VBS (Vacation Bible School). VBS used a program called ReNew: The Green VBS. ReNew was about hope, opportunity, and service. Throughout the summer, kids learned how to serve their community and demonstrate how being green can be easy, faithful, and fun. As part of the program, the participants planted a seed to remind them of God's love. Each of the seeds were different, but together they made a complete "pizza" garden. When the children look at the garden, they can be reminded that God's love is a place where everyone is welcome. Other activities included playing games and singing songs. This year VBS included field trips to Top Golf and the Jumbo Shrimp baseball game. Overall, kids learned to live together in God's love.

Summer Mission Trips

by Jimmy Steele



This summer saw the return of Palms' youth trips. Each trip had outstanding programming.

The summer began with the Middle School Mission Trip to Cedarkirk. This program was titled "Challenge to Change." It was designed to combine a hands-on mission trip with fact-finding opportunities to increase awareness of issues related to poverty and social justice. In cooperation with Beth-El Farmworker ministry, based in Wimauma, Florida, students worked with the farm-working community distributing and organizing food, pressure washing, and mowing. Cedarkirk provided a place for spiritual renewal and growth in a natural environment.



Next, the high school students had an opportunity to travel to Montreat. The high school theme was "Called to Connect," centered on numerous selected scriptures and texts. In addition to powerful worship and keynote sessions, the Palms Youth enjoyed time together, climbing Lookout Mountain, the beauty of God's creation with an afternoon boating trip on Lake Lure, and met many new friends. Here are a few reflections from some of the people who attended these youth trips:

Today I learned how to pressure wash a wooden deck. It was very hot outside, but everybody continued to help serve God and the less fortunate. -Jonas Boyd (rising 8th grader)

God has shown himself in the youth on this trip. They have not complained and have done everything asked of them, usually with a smile. -Jay Lawing (adult chaperone)

The part that sticks out the most to me from yesterday's lesson is when they talked about how we're all connected through the initial creation of people because we're all made of stars. I've felt God the most whenever it's quiet and I'm outside because I can look around and take in the atmosphere. -Reed Mann (rising 12th grader)

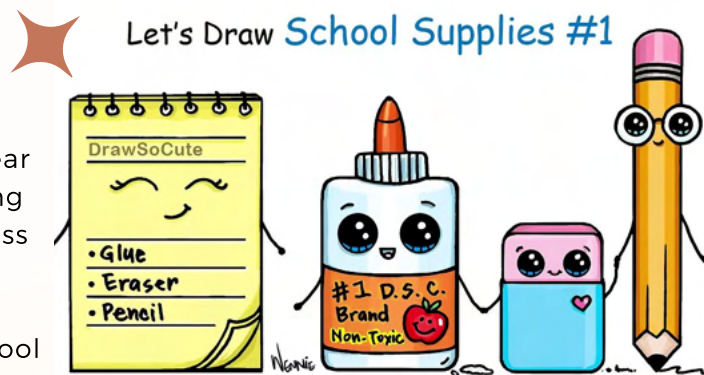
We are grateful to each of you for the support and prayers you have given the Youth this summer. Please visit the Palms Facebook page where you can review the experiences our youth had this summer.



Back-to-School Drive

by Gary and Leslie Deal

For many years, Palms has continuously supported our local elementary schools. Palms' efforts over the past year have made a significant impact during these challenging times. Obviously, the pandemic placed unexpected stress and needs on our students, teachers, and school staff members. Thankfully, Palms' Back-to-School Drive was able to address many of these needs. In addition to school supplies and healthy snacks for the students, we expanded our support with essential sanitization and cleaning supplies. The 2021 drive was completed on August 11 with tremendous support from Palms' disciples. We applaud our volunteers who assisted with storing, sorting, packing, and delivering the supplies to our schools. The leaders of our partner schools were exceedingly grateful for Palms' continued and flexible support. We look forward to another opportunity to make a difference in our community next year.



Solar Panel Installation

by Melissa Clapp

Did you know that one of the 2021 Baldwin Grant Projects was a Solar Energy Project that included the installation of solar panels and an electricity generation system on our Education Building? Palms' Green Team, chaired by Rick Mann, proposed this project with the goal of supporting Palms' ministries long into the future by reducing our energy costs. The clean generation of electricity reduces the amount of electricity required to be purchased from Beaches Energy and saves **\$10,788/year or \$269,703 over 25 years**, and the savings will be even higher if energy costs increase, which is likely to happen.

In addition, the 2020 Introspection Study which was performed as part of the process to call our next Pastor/Head of Staff, revealed that there were aspirations for Palms to demonstrate a "green" sustainable example to our disciples and beyond. This solar energy system accomplishes this purpose!

The Green Team, a sub-team of the Property Committee, oversaw the project and in June, the installation was complete. We can monitor in real time the power and energy that is produced by our panels and the environmental benefits. As of August 9, we have saved **5,516.11 lbs of CO2 emission**, which is the **equivalent to 41.68 trees planted** and this is just since the system became operational in June!

If you would like to monitor the power and energy produced by our solar electricity generation system and the corresponding green benefits, visit <https://bit.ly/palmssolaredge>

