

## FMC Leadership Team Conference 2021 Report

### **Greetings**

Good morning and welcome from the Florida Mission Center Leadership Team. I hope you and your families are well and thank you for joining in today.

It has been nearly 2 years, now, since COVID changed all our lives and the world. We moved from our buildings to the internet to fellowship, worship, participate in business conferences and leadership training, and share together in scripture study. Your willingness to explore new technologies for the sake of continuing Christ's mission has blessed us!

Recently, many congregations have returned to in-person gatherings with care and safety and continue to provide virtual connection as needed. We have experienced Blessings of Community in new and unique ways!

### **Online Connectedness**

During the past year many of you have honed your Zooming and online skills. Through our regular online gatherings, MC leaders have become aware of an emerging new sense of connectedness. When our worships include folks from 4 or 5 different congregations, possibly a few extended family members or a college student from out of state, and maybe a member or two from the larger world church, there is added richness and excitement! And, on occasion, seekers have found our gatherings. This gives us great hope and we want these blessings to continue.

As a result, the MC has assembled a worship team to coordinate quality monthly worship experiences. Services are now taking place the second Sunday of each month. Our 2022 focus will be an online experience during our traditional 11 o'clock worship time. To mimic in-person worship, attendees can connect at 10:30 a.m. to visit and listen to meditation music before the service begins at 11 a.m. We are asking that each congregation add these worships to your schedule and plan to participate! This coming year's theme will be, "Moving Toward Jesus, the Peaceful One."

We are excited this form of outreach ministry will reach even more seeking Christ. We have much gratitude for those who have planned, participated, supported, and hosted online gatherings.

In other news, FMC's Coffee and Conversation celebrated and completed a full year this April. Coffee and Conversation was hosted by our MC Invitation Support Minister, Peter Smith. This was a successful time of laughter, sharing memories and life stories. Peter will be completing his ministry at the end of the year and this appointed position will remain open for the time being.

### **Mission Center Activities and Outreach**

Outreach programs have been needed more than ever throughout the pandemic and have continued with adjustments made for safety. These include the South Miami and Tarpon Springs food distribution, and Orlando Family Promise. Deerhaven rental groups are returning, and the campground is beginning to get busy again. Leadership training through our virtual Nuts & Bolts (March 13<sup>th</sup>) was successful. And congregations continue to support the mission center and campground financially with generous donations helping greatly through the pandemic.

### **Highlight Council Members: Rick Jones, Tracy Miller, Phil Wisely, Janice Lotz, Jim Brougher, Rachel Blakesley**

Our newly formed MC Council meets regularly and provides the leadership with helpful insights. Made up of members from around the MC, the council has reminded us that: real ministry is occurring online as a recent seeker inquires about baptism; that the church is not buildings but people, and we are alive and well; that when we live the Gospel through our passions, we become alive in Christ; and that we should not be fearful of partnering with other organizations doing good works. We are excited and have been blessed by drawing the circle of leadership wider.

And lastly, the MC is calling for your stories! We are interested in new ways of connectedness or experiences of outreach that have occurred in the past year as a result of our current situation with the pandemic. Share your or your congregation's story of how has the Holy Spirit nudged or prompted you to live out Christ's Mission in this unique time. Please send your inspirational experiences in a one or two paragraph form to Debbie Bartlett so they may be included in our Thursday Church Updates. We trust you all receive and are fully engaged in Church Updates. It is our central hub for communication and the lifeblood of all that is the Florida Mission Center. If not, go to the chat below and message me now.

## **The Hands and Feet of Christ**

Our love and caring blesses and is life-giving to others! May we continue to work together as the hands and feet of Christ in this time and place.

In Christ, Your Mission Center Leadership Team: Ken, Chuck, Mark, Serena, Peter, and Debbie.