



The Covenanter

August 2026



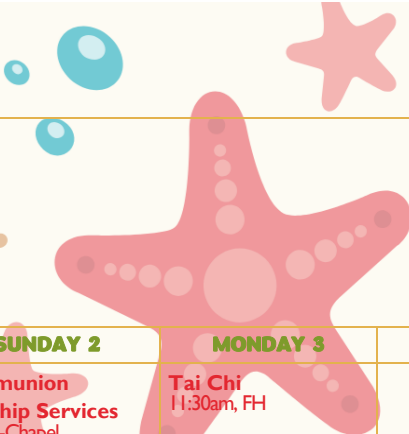
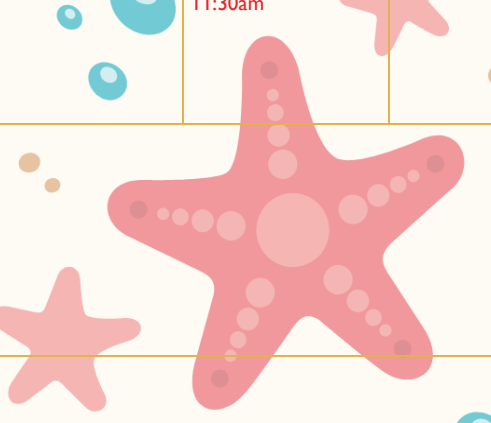
Winter Park
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Worship Services: 8:15 & 10:30 AM | Sunday School: 9:15 AM

Newsletter Submissions: cindym@winppc.org

Watch us online at <https://www.youtube.com/@audio-visualministryatwppc5595/streams>
400 S. Lakemont Avenue | Winter Park, FL 32792 | 407-647-1467 | www.winppc.org

 AUGUST 						SATURDAY 1
SUNDAY 2	MONDAY 3	TUESDAY 4	WEDNESDAY 5	THURSDAY 6	FRIDAY 7	SATURDAY 8
Communion Worship Services 8:15am-Chapel 10:30am-Sanctuary Sunday School 9:15-10:15am Children's Church 10:30am Exploring Membership 11:30am, FH	Tai Chi 11:30am, FH		Summer Study 5:30pm, Rm 301		Office Closed Tai Chi 11:30am, FH	Terry Irwin Memorial Svc 10:30am, Sanctuary
SUNDAY 9	MONDAY 10	TUESDAY 11	WEDNESDAY 12	THURSDAY 13	FRIDAY 14	SATURDAY 15
Worship Services 8:15am-Chapel 10:30am-Sanctuary Sunday School 9:15-10:15am Children's Church 10:30am Personnel Mtg 11:45am, Rm 315 CLOC Mtg 11:45am CE Mtg 11:45am, Rm 303	Tai Chi 11:30am		PS Board Mtg 10am, Rm 301	Budg/Finance Mtg 4pm, Rm 303 Worship Mtg. 6pm, Library	Office Closed Tai Chi 11:30am	
SUNDAY 16	MONDAY 17	TUESDAY 18	WEDNESDAY 19	THURSDAY 20	FRIDAY 21	SATURDAY 22
Worship Services 8:15am-Chapel 10:30am-Sanctuary Sunday School 9:15-10:15am Children's Church 10:30am Deacon Mtg 11:45am, Rm 301	Tai Chi 11:30am, FH				Office Closed	
SUNDAY 23	MONDAY 24	TUESDAY 25	WEDNESDAY 26	THURSDAY 27	FRIDAY 28	SATURDAY 29
Worship Services 8:15am-Chapel 10:30am-Sanctuary Sunday School 9:15-10:15am Children's Church 10:30am	Tai Chi 11:30am, FH		Fall Study 5:45pm, FH WPPC Handbells 6pm, Rm 102 Chancel Choir 7:15pm, Sanctuary	Session Mtg 7pm, Rm 301	Office Closed Tai Chi 11:30am	
SUNDAY 30	MONDAY 31					
Worship Services 8:15am-Chapel 10:30am-Sanctuary Sunday School 9:15-10:15am Children's Church 10:30am	Tai Chi 11:30am, FH					

COMING INTO FOCUS - A SUMMARY OF MISSION STUDY FOCUS GROUP RESPONSES

The congregation embraced the opportunity to have a say in the future of the church and its ministry. The conversations were lively and the ideas were thoughtful and creative. Thank you to everyone who took the time to attend one of the six focus groups in June and July. The coordination of the Sunday school classes around their summer studies so class members could attend helped keep the energy and excitement high throughout the summer!

In the end, some trends began to emerge which are summarized below. How do your personal views match those of the congregation as a whole?

Focus Group Discussion Topic One: Share what you think the best ministry use for the CE Building would be for the next 3-5 years.

Most frequent response: rent/offer space to local charities or non-profits for conference or office space, or general rental

Second most frequent: Adult day care/senior respite center

Third most frequent: Youth group/programs (for church) or afterschool tutoring programs

Many members commented that any use of the CE Building is going to require refurbishing the building; and several members invited a cost-benefit analysis of a “tear-down” option

Focus Group Discussion Topic Two: How can the church take steps to minister to the youth/families of young children and do better reaching out to next generations?

Most frequent responses (tie): develop a service-oriented, hands-on ministry program OR offer after-school tutoring, mentoring

Other responses clustered around doing better follow up with existing youth/families and visitors, and bringing back a [traditional] youth group

Focus Group Discussion Topic Three: Give your recommendation for what Session should do with a hypothetical unrestricted \$100,000 gift from a generous donor.

Most frequent response: refurbish or fix the CE building

Next most frequent: apply the funds to property upgrades and projects, with the parking lot and heat/HVAC leading the list

Four: What one thing would you tell the next installed pastor about WPPC?

Most frequent theme: We are a welcoming and friendly congregation

Second most frequent theme: We are caring, compassionate, and supportive of each other and the church

Third most frequent theme: We have a lot of potential—so take a look at us

What a great message to share with possible candidates considering the call to serve as the church’s next installed pastor!



COALITION
FOR THE HOMELESS
OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

PROUDLY PRESENTED TO:

Winter Park Presbyterian Church

In recognition of over three decades of consistent, dedicated volunteer service and a true reflection of what it means to be a resource for your community.

Brad Butterstein
President & CEO

On July 12th the Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida presented Winter Park Presbyterian Church with a Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of our dedication to volunteering to their organization. The picture above includes WPPC members who've volunteered over the past 35 years, Pastor Melanie, and staff members from the Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida.

Thank you to everyone who has helped over the years. You are all truly appreciated!

WPPC NEWS

Wednesday Night Study

Pastor Melanie will lead a new small group topical study on Wednesday nights. After wrapping up the summer class on the "Context" of the Bible, we'll take a break until Wednesday, August 26 and start a new conversation on the "Text" itself. As always, each night is a stand-alone topic. Come as your schedule allows.

Where: Fellowship Hall

Time: 5:45 p.m. Bring a side or salad to share with those coming from work or continuing on to choir practice.

Topics: Creation, Blessing, Release, Relationship, Land, Kings, Prophets, Wisdom.

Changes in Special Offerings

As we move forward to simplify and modernize, we will no longer collect Special Offerings nine times a year.

These Special Offerings will now be consolidated into three collections; each for only one time per year.

- One Great Hour of Sharing—Easter Sunday (March/April)
- 5 Cents a Meal—October
- Christmas Joy Offering (one week before Christmas)

We will begin this transition with our 5 Cents a Meal collection on October 25, 2026. This will be your contribution for half of 2026; if you have not given yet in 2026, for all of this year. Next, will be Christmas Joy Offering on December 20, 2026. This will finish Special Offerings for 2026.

The 2027 Special Offerings dates will be published in the January, 2027 Covenanter and in Sunday bulletins.

The Compassion Committee thanks you for your understanding and cooperation.

Welcome New Staff Members!

- ✦ Mark Greenleaf joined us in April as our Property Manager. He works Monday-Friday and can be reached at property@winppc.org.
- ✦ Jessica Grablewski started working for us in May as our Children's Ministry Coordinator. She works on Sunday mornings and can be reached at kidsministry@winppc.org.
- ✦ Pattie Lavelle began working with us in May as our Bookkeeper. She is part-time and works Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. She can be reached at accounting@winppc.org.

We are very glad to have them onboard. If you're in the office during the week, stop by and introduce yourself to Mark & Pattie, and if you see Jessica on Sunday mornings, say Hi!



Our sympathies are extended to the family and friends of those who have recently passed.

Letha Corbett

5/4/1924 - 6/4/2026

Terry Irwin

12/8/1937 - 7/7/2026

Norlin Ham

5/8/1931 - 7/11/2026

Porter Spangler

4/3/1941—7/28/26

Deacons' Den



The NRSV Bible has over 788,000 words of biblical text in it. There have been millions upon millions of Sermons, Sunday School Classes, Study Groups and even a few Deacon Den articles that use the Bible as a source. The Bible is an incredible document of history and guidance. It can also be quite an intimidating read. Whether it be your 1st journey or your 100th, your first step into scripture can be overwhelming and daunting. However, approaching with a simple context makes the journey much easier. The simple and beautiful context to use is that JESUS WINS!!!

JESUS WINS OVER DEATH

Jesus rising from the dead not only affirms His divinity but also establishes that He holds power over life and death. His victory assures us that death is not the end but rather a passage to eternal life through Him. We can revel in knowing that our faith is grounded in a risen Savior who defeated the grave.

John 11:25-26 - Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die."

JESUS WINS OVER SIN

Because Jesus took our sins upon Himself, He provides a pathway for us to be cleansed and made new. His victory over sin empowers us to let go of our past and remind us that we are not defined by our failings but by His forgiving grace. His life was the perfect embodiment of obedience to God, demonstrating what it means to live free from sin's grasp.

Titus 2:14 - Who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own.

JESUS EVEN WINS IN LIFE

The victory of Jesus isn't just a one-time event; it's ongoing and impacts our lives every day. Jesus brings healing and forgiveness. His victory touches our bodies and daily hurts. Scripture links his suffering and triumph with our healing and freedom. Daily we can pray for healing, care for one another, and celebrate the ways God restores life.

John 14:27 - Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Much like a first step in approaching the bible, a first step in life can be a just as much of a challenge. There are times one may feel weary and want to give up, but we are taught our struggles are part of the journey. Jesus encourages us to keep pushing forward, pressing toward the goal. The pages of Scripture are filled with reminders of His triumph, urging us to live in that victory every single day. The Bible reminds us that Jesus is our champion, and in Him, we see a reflection of what true victory looks like.

Blessings as pure as a child's faith to you all.

- Robert Nevill, WPPC Deacon



A tale of talents—told to “T” was written by Phyllis Woods (a WPPC member for over 43 years). It’s based on a parable told by Jesus in Matthew 25:14-30. The parable tells the story of a master who goes on a journey and leaves his property in the care of three servants. The basic premise of the parable is that the Lord expects people to use the talents He has entrusted to them in a way that will result in good things. He does not want them to be hidden or wasted. (The talent was also a form of money at the time, but its main meaning refers to abilities that the Lord has given people.)

She got the idea of re-telling the story with maximum use of the letter “T” and sent it to *Presbyterians Today* to see if they could use it. They liked it and printed it in their October 2023 issue!

We thank Phyllis for sharing the article with us!

LaughLines



A tale of talents—told to a “T”

The trainee who had taken the five talents trucked out with tenacity, and with trading and transacting, triumphantly turned that treasure into five more.

The second trainee tried the same tango and translated his two talents into two more.

But the third trainee, who had been trusted with only one talent, trapped his talent in the turf and trembled with trepidation.

After a time, the Top Tycoon traveled home to tabulate what had transpired. The trainee who had been trusted with the five talents trekked in triumphantly toting a total of ten talents. “You trusted me with five talents, Top Tycoon,” he touted, “and take heed, I have trumped up five more.”

“Tremendously done, you true and tenacious trainee,” trumpeted the Top Tycoon. “You have turned out trustworthy over trivial transactions. I will trust you now over titanic treasures. Trek on over and take part in my triumphant joy!”

Then the trainee who had been trusted with the two talents trekked in

triumphantly toting a total of four talents. “You trusted me with two talents, Top Tycoon,” he touted, “and take heed, I have trumped up two more.”

“Terrifically done, you true and tenacious trainee,” thundered the Top Tycoon, as he also transferred to him top-notch trophies.

Then the trainee who had one talent trembled before the Top Tycoon. “I was traumatized because

you are a tough and tricky tightwad. You take in tribute where you did not distribute. I thought about your track record. I was terrified, so I took off and trapped your talent in the turf. Take back your traumatic talent.”

“You troublesome and timid turkey!” the Top Tycoon tiraded. “You think that my trademark is to take in tribute where I did not distribute? Then you should have taken my talent to the tellers.

“Now take the talent from this turkey and transfer it to the trainee with the ten talents. And toss this turkey out into the total terror where there is travail and trashing of teeth.”

“For every trainee who tries will have more talents transferred to him. But the trainee who trembles in terror, even the tiny tidbit he has will be taken away.—Phyllis Woods, Winter Park, Fla.

YUM-YUM VEGGIES!

-Article submitted by Wendy Stafford

Ranch dressing has emerged as an unlikely breakout star of the 2026 World Cup, with international soccer fans flooding social media with their sudden obsession for the condiment.

The craze became so widespread that the TSA issued a viral advisory reminding fans that ranch counts as a liquid and must be checked in bags or kept under 3.4 ounces. In response, Kraft has launched a travel kit filled with TSA-approved ranch dressing packets.

Tasty. However, the savory souvenir may not be the healthiest option to dress your greens but it's not the worst. Ranch is not a superfood, but it's not a nutritional disaster.

Commercial ranch dressing is usually made from oil, water, buttermilk, vinegar, egg yolks, salt, sugar, garlic, onion, herbs, spices, and stabilizers that keep it creamy and shelf stable. A 2-tablespoon serving of bottled Hidden Valley Ranch Dressing contains 130 calories, 13 grams of fat and 260 mg of sodium.

While traditional ranch dressing is high in calories, fat and sodium, it is a great way to enjoy healthy vegetables.

If you would like to make your own healthier and fresher version, you can swap out the traditional sour cream, buttermilk, and mayonnaise base with Greek yogurt. With Greek yogurt, you get more protein, less saturated fat, fewer calories and a creamier texture. You can also add your own spices or a store-bought package of ranch seasoning mix.

There is no reason that the World Cup favorite should not be part of a healthy diet. Pair ranch dressing with raw vegetables like carrots, celery, and bell peppers to improve eating habits. When you eat thoughtfully, it can definitely be a part of a healthy eating pattern!





ORPHAN
ASSISTANCE
FOUNDATION
www.transitionsoaf.org

Below Audrey Santiago shares her newsletter from
Transitions Orphan Assistance Foundation in Odesa, Ukraine.

July 19, 2026

Dear Friends,

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, all of our summer camps are fully funded and in full swing. Three camps were held in June, two so far in July, and more will continue through July and August. The very first camp was postponed due to strong rain, but it has been rescheduled so that no one will be left out. Our camps are being held in the Odesa Region of Ukraine, in villages surrounding the Village of Pishana. They are largely accessed by dirt roads which flood and mud and become impassable in heavy rain. The camps themselves are held outside in fields, playgrounds, and yards and are highly subjective to the weather. Fortunately, we have been blessed with fair weather on most of the camp days.

Months of preparation have gone into these camps, and a lot of energy is expended in each one. Travel days are long and exhausting as the roads leading to these villages are extremely narrow and bumpy, and traversing them is painfully slow. It is easy to understand why visitors rarely make the trek, and consequently, why the villagers so look forward to these events. The very exuberant children waiting at the end of the road require our teammates to be "on and tuned in" to them for the entire time. However, it is not only a joyous time for the children and the villagers. Our team is blessed by these trips also. While a seemingly endless black cloud of war hangs over the entire country, spending these hours with excited, laughing children and grateful families is a distraction from the darkness and a reward in itself. This illustrates perfectly what it means to be blessed to be a blessing.

And now, a close up look at some of our campers:





Another note, and a sad reality of war, is the news that Sasha, an orphan graduate that I met at the Pishana Orphanage many years ago, recently passed away. He was 25 years old.

Sasha was orphaned at birth and spent his life in orphanage after orphanage. He was kind and helpful, and what I remember most, and will always remember about him, was the almost constant smile he wore on his face. He had been drafted into the army last fall, and was seriously injured on the front lines several months ago. Sasha kept in touch with one of our teammates, Oksana, who was like a mother to him. They spoke frequently when he was in the army and when he was wounded and in the hospital. It seemed that he was recovering and looking forward to being transferred to a hospital in Odesa where Oksana could visit him. Suddenly, his communications stopped. News followed that Sasha had passed away.



Me with Sasha (R)
at Pishana



Sasha with Oksana

Because he was an orphan and had no next of kin, we may never know what happened. We do know that when he was laid to rest in the village, our teammates gathered there along with many of the villagers who knew him. I feel certain that Sasha knew that, despite not having his biological family, he was well-loved by us and, through your thoughts and prayers, by you.

Across the years, I have had the privilege of watching young orphans grow, mature and succeed in life against daunting odds. I've also experienced the sadness of learning that some of them, too many of them, have died needlessly along the way of disease, drugs, exposure, and suicide. Now, war is taking its toll on young lives, even the lives of those we love and hold dear. My hope is that all of those with whom I have crossed paths will understand that they have worth and that they are loved. I thank all of you who make this happen on a much larger scale than I could ever do on my own. May we all feel blessed to be a blessing to our orphans and vulnerable families in Ukraine.

With gratitude and love,
Audrey

Donation Information

Checks may be written to:

Transitions Orphan Assistance Foundation, Inc.

541 Evening Sky Drive, Oviedo, FL 32765 OR 3530 Diamond Leaf Lane, Oviedo, FL 32765

Online options to donate can be found on our website: www.transitionsoaf.org



Bible Quiz

Jesus said that his followers are the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). It wouldn't do much good to hide a light under a bushel, he said. It should be put on a lamp-stand to give light in the house. Then Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see ..."



- Choose the ending of Jesus' sentence:
- A. their way and not stumble.
 - B. how good and faithful you are as my servants.
 - C. your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
 - D. in their darkness.

Answer: C (Matthew 5:16, NIV)

CHRISTIAN SYMBOL



Sunflower — The sunflower, a symbol of faithfulness and devotion, represents a life turned toward God. Just as the flower follows the sun, believers are called to seek the light of Christ and remain focused on Him.

Its bright bloom reflects the joy and glory of God's presence, while its steady growth points to a life rooted in faith. The many seeds of the sunflower can also symbolize spiritual fruitfulness.

In Christian symbolism, the sunflower reminds us to remain steadfast, to seek God daily and to reflect His light in all we do.

Puzzle!



Use the Scripture verses below to locate the places in the puzzle. (If a verse mentions more than one place, only one appears in the puzzle, so choose carefully.) Circle each place as you find it.

Answers go: → ↓ ↘

Genesis 2:15	Isaiah 23:1	Luke 24:13
Genesis 11:9	Isaiah 23:2	John 2:1
Genesis 35:1	Isaiah 23:3	Acts 8:5
Exodus 13:18	Jonah 1:2	Acts 11:22
Ruth 1:1	Matthew 3:6	Acts 17:16
1 Kings 18:19	Matthew 4:18	Romans 1:15
1 Chronicles 11:4	Matthew 26:36	

S	I	D	O	N	G	N	I	L	E	S	O
J	J	O	R	D	A	N	R	I	V	E	R
E	S	G	A	A	R	C	A	N	A	A	M
R	A	E	T	B	D	C	D	B	E	O	O
U	M	T	H	B	E	T	H	E	L	F	U
S	A	H	E	T	N	E	A	T	N	G	N
A	R	S	N	Y	O	M	N	H	I	A	T
L	I	E	S	R	F	M	T	L	N	L	C
E	A	M	D	E	E	A	I	E	E	I	A
M	F	A	R	S	D	U	O	H	V	L	R
G	H	N	O	A	E	S	C	E	E	E	M
I	J	E	M	B	N	A	H	M	H	E	E
T	O	W	E	R	O	F	B	A	B	E	L

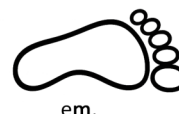
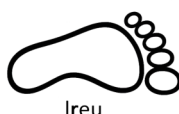
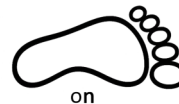
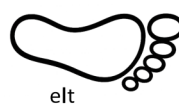
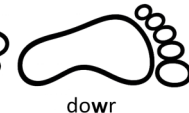
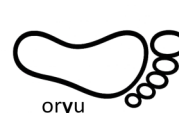
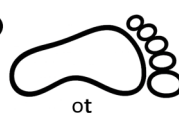
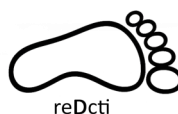
Answers: Garden of Eden, Tower of Babel, Bethel, Red Sea, Bethlehem, Mount Carmel, Jerusalem, Tyre, Sidon, Nile, Nineveh, Jordan River, Sea of Galilee, Gethsemane, Emmaus, Cana, Samaria, Antioch, Athens, Rome



Footsteps with God

Have you ever walked along the shore and noticed footprints in the sand? The poem *Footprints in the Sand* reminds us that God is always with us.

Unscramble each word and write it inside the footprints to see what Psalm 119:133 (NIV) says about our steps. (Hint: the bold letters show the first letter of each word.)



Psalm 119:133 (NIV)

Answer: "Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me."



8/2

Rich Vinci

8/3

Ernestine Beattie

8/5

Marilyn Kieffner

8/8

**Laurie Grizzard
Emily Elizabeth Kent
Carol Pickler**

8/11

Robbie Dreasher

8/13

Steve Bryant

8/14

**Cheryl Darcy
Malcom MacDiarmid**

8/22

Sandy Matrick

8/24

Nancy Hamlin

8/26

**Larry Seel
Ann Tebbetts**

8/28

Susan Price

8/29

Robert Nevill

8/30

**Donna Ettinger
Ward Walker**



9/2

**Rachel Myers
Victoria Snyder**

9/13

**Ray Schieber
Elaine Young**

9/14

**Andrew Boyle
Janet Hope**

9/16

Myrna Ham

9/21

**David Robinson
Dona Stepp**

9/22

Wendy Jamison

9/23

**Keith Naylor
Barbara Halterman**

9/25

Debby Roberts

9/28

Jim Esch

9/30

**Mike Galyean
DeLores Mamone
Nancy Ocque
Andy Riccio
Paula Smathers
Jim Spivey**



Rev. Melanie Ruta, Interim Pastor
 Justin Chase, Director of Music
 Penny Walsh, Organist
 Sandra Shafer, Pianist
 Scott Beck, Director of Handbells
 Cindy Mitchum, Executive Assistant
 Pattie Lavelle, Bookkeeper
 Mark Greenleaf, Property Manager
 Jessica Grablewski, Children's Ministry Coordinator
 Nicole Fye, Director of Preschool Programs
 Rosaura Velazques, Assistant Director of Preschool Programs
 Katie Daniels, Preschool Administrative Assistant

SESSION

2026

Syd Davis
 Betty Johnston
 Shaheed Mohammed
 Nelson Roe

2027

Maria Garton
 Lil Rea
 Phyllis Woods

2028

Rusty Baldwin
 Steve House
 Jayne Leach
 Ron Thompson

DIACONATE

2026

Meg Baldwin
 Ernestine Beattie
 Debby Roberts
 Jeanne Vinci

2027

Marilyn Bryant
 Cynthia Nants
 Robert Nevill
 Paula Smathers

2028

Sue Howard
 Lynne McKnight
 Debbie Pauzar
 Frances Swope

MISSIONARIES

Mark Hare & Jenny Bent - Costa Rica
 Dr. Dan & Elizabeth Turk - Madagascar

For Covenant or Sunday bulletin submissions, please fill out a publicity request online at <http://winppc.org/publicity-request/> or contact Cindy Mitchum at cindym@winppc.org or 407-647-1467.