



This Week at FPC June 25—July 1, 2020

Thoughts from the Interim Associate Pastor by Walk Jones

Driving around Ocala this week I've seen the first blooms of the crape myrtle trees. These summer-bloomers started my thinking about pruning and bible stories about vineyards that did not produce and walls that fell from neglect. (see Isaiah 5) I thought about Jesus using a parable or figure of speech to talk vines and grapes when he said "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit." (John 15:1-2) God prunes the fruitful to make us stronger and better! God cuts the faithful.

I wonder if these difficult times in our nation and world are a pruning from God. It is painful and awful and seems like nothing good can come from anything happening. Yet, plants that have been pruned come back strong, fruitful, and beautiful.

I have endured pain in my life, and I have known suffering. Life is difficult and it is even harder for many folks than the struggles I have known. Yet through sadness and struggle I've grown up, matured, and become a stronger Christian. Could God be doing something for America through this virus and a reckoning with our past? My prayer is that God will guide us and show us the way God has planned for us. If this is a time for pruning and growth, may it be quick so we can start healing and growing stronger. Yet I remember to pray 'Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'

We continue to worship in person at 9am on Sundays, visit the website or call the church by noon each Friday to make a reservation for in-person worship. We continue to provide a YouTube version of worship. Folks we know are ill with the COVID-19, and other illnesses, so pray for them and for our country.

The outreach committee has scheduled an Interfaith food drive!

You can bring food or monetary donations to service with you next week June 28th, or can drop them off during the Drive By Food Drive Monday June 29th between 1:00pm and 5:00pm. CDC Guidelines will be followed and we will have volunteers available so you don't even need to get out of your car!

We are also looking for more youth volunteers to help with the food drive on Monday,
if interested please call the church office.

Griefshare, a program for those who are grieving, will begin a new cycle on **Friday, July 10** in person and by

zoom app or phone if someone is interested in that option.

Please contact Rev. Jones at 352-629-7561 or email: wjones@fpcocala.org

PRAYER LIST

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| David Arango and family (on the death of his father) | Lois Lance |
| Jim Bennett (brother of John Bennett) | Grietje Lewis |
| Pam Butcher | Renate Lipp (friend of Nita William) |
| Andy Carlisle | Kevin Lloyd (cousin of Lee Ann Drake) |
| Jimmy Cazin (Covid 19) | Celine Mack |
| Shirley Cochran | Ellen Matthews (pacemaker surgery recovery) |
| Martin Cook | Skip McDonald |
| Stewart and Diane Edwards | Jessie Moseley |
| Hank and Maranell Fleming | Christian Myers (friend of Julia Wirono) |
| Norma Giles (on the death of her husband, Jim) | Raul Nieves (brother of Mina DiGeronimo) |
| Bill Green (friend of Richard Grosso) | Greg Robinson (brother of Carolyn Varner) |
| Barbara Gowie | Michael Rou (cousin of Dr. David Albright) |
| Dick Hancock | Deloris Shotwell (hospice) |
| Johnie Johnson (son of Tommy Johnson) | Steve and Keith Shotwell |
| Brenda Jones and family | Baldwin Switzer (on deployment with the Navy) |
| Ken Kramer (brother-in-law of Evelyn Longo) | Nancy Wells (daughter of Shirley Wells) |
| Kathy Lance (daughter-in-law of Lois Lance) | Nancy Wollett |

This Week's Daily Bible Readings

| Sustained by God's Life-Giving Word of Spiritual Renewal | | | Sunday | June 28 | Ezekiel 37:15-28 |
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| Thursday | June 25 | Ezekiel 36:1-15 | Monday | June 29 | Ezekiel 39:21-29 |
| Friday | June 26 | Ezekiel 36:16-38 | Tuesday | June 30 | Ezekiel 43:1-12 |
| Saturday | June 27 | Ezekiel 37:1-14 | Wednesday | July 1 | Genesis 12:1-20 |