



THE LIGHT



Pastor's Page with Rev. Dr. Valdir Franca

Building Community: Opening Ourselves to One Another

"...that they may all be one. ...so that the world may believe..." John 17:20



As we move into the long green season of Ordinary Time, the Church invites us into something both simple and profound: to practice the daily work of discipleship. After the great celebrations of Easter and Pentecost, we are reminded that faith is not only formed in moments of spiritual intensity, but also in the ordinary rhythms of being together—praying, listening, serving, and sharing life in community.

At Miami Shores Presbyterian Church, this invitation is beautifully reflected in our mission, particularly in our call to build community. This is not merely about gathering in the same physical space or attending the same worship service. It is about opening ourselves to one another, allowing God to knit us together into something deeper than acquaintance—into true Christian fellowship.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his beloved book *Life Together*, offers a compelling vision of what this means. Writing from the experience of the Christian community, he reminds us that Christian fellowship is not something we create by our own efforts, but a gift we receive in Christ.

"Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ," he writes. In other words, the bond we share is not based on preference, similarity, or convenience—it is grounded in God's grace.

That can be both comforting and challenging.

It is comforting because it means we do not have to earn belonging. We are welcomed into the body of Christ as we are, each carrying our joys and burdens, our questions and hopes. Community becomes a place where we can be known, supported, and reminded that we do not walk this journey alone.

But it is also challenging because true community asks something of us. Bonhoeffer warns against what he calls “wish-dreams” of community—the idealized expectations we carry that can prevent us from loving the real people God has placed beside us. Christian community is built not through perfection, but through grace. It requires humility, patience, forgiveness, and a willingness to encounter one another honestly.

To build community, we must first open ourselves.

We open ourselves to conversation, even when it feels easier to remain anonymous.
We open ourselves to hospitality, making room at our tables and in our schedules.
We open ourselves to vulnerability, trusting others enough to share our true selves.
We open ourselves to listening, especially to voices and experiences different from our own.
And perhaps most importantly, we open ourselves to being changed by the relationships God places in our lives.

Ordinary Time is the perfect season for this sacred practice. There may be no grand liturgical spectacle, but there is the steady, holy work of becoming a church family. Every handshake after worship, every shared prayer request, every meal, every moment of service together—these are the places where community is formed.

At Miami Shores Presbyterian Church, building community is not an abstract mission statement. It is something we live each time we choose presence over isolation and relationship over busyness. It happens in our worship and fellowship gatherings, in Bible studies and outreach ministries, in quiet conversations in the hallway, and in spontaneous moments of care.

The invitation before us is simple: **be with one another.**

Not perfectly. Not with all the answers. But with open hearts.
Bonhoeffer reminds us that when we gather in Christ’s name, Christ himself is present among us. What a gift—to discover that in opening ourselves to one another, we are also opening ourselves more fully to God.

As this season unfolds, may we embrace the call to build community with intention and joy. May we reach out to someone new. May we deepen old friendships. May we allow ourselves to be seen, known, and loved. And may our life together become a witness to the transforming grace of Christ, who gathers strangers and makes them family.

Let us continue building community, one conversation, one prayer, one act of welcome at a time.

MSPC SUMMER MUSIC SERIES

THE SUMMER MUSIC SERIES IS HERE!

The Summer Music Series is an opportunity to welcome friends and neighbors into our church to hear talented musicians fill the space with the power of music. We encourage everyone to spread the word, buy tickets and invite your community. Tickets are just \$20 and available on Eventbrite (search MSPC) or at the door.

June 14th - Bop Shop Brass

July 19th - Nicole Henry

August 16th - Wendy Pedersen & Jim Gasior

SUNDAYS 4:00 PM



**SCAN FOR TICKETS OR
PURCHASE AT THE DOOR**



602 NE 96th St, Miami Shores, FL 33138 | www.MSPC.net

Mission Corner

by Marta Lavandier

School Supply Drive

MSPC will have a School Supply Drive starting Sunday, May 31, and continuing through Sunday, August 2!

Our goal is to fill 150 backpacks to benefit our three local elementary schools, the children at Pass It On, Safespace, the Nora Sandigo Children Foundation, and, for the first time, House of Hope.

You are welcome to donate the following supplies:

- 1 backpack • 2 wide-ruled composition books • 1 pack of wide-ruled paper
- 2 folders with pockets • Crayons (24 count) • 1 small pack of #2 pencils
- Colored pencils • Erasers • 1 covered pencil sharpener • 1 pencil pouch
- 1 blunt-end scissors • 1 glue stick • 1 highlighter
- 1 special item (small notebook, cute pencil or pen, etc.)

Or, for \$30, you can sponsor a backpack filled with supplies! Please add "BACKPACK DRIVE" to your check or online payment memo.

We also invite everyone to join us on Sunday, August 2, in Fellowship Hall as we come together to fill the backpacks.

Food Collection

Every gift makes a difference.

Food donations are accepted on the 1st & 3rd Sundays at the table in the breezeway. All contributions support the Pass It On Ministry, helping provide for those in need in our community.

Thank you for sharing generously!

2026 MSPC MEMBERS GRADUATES

EMILY REICH

- Parents: **William and Laura Reich**
- High School: **Saint Thomas Aquinas High School**
- College: **Florida International University**
- Major: **Architecture**
- **Favorite MSPC Memory:** *"I have so many wonderful memories, but a specific moment that stands out is playing an angel in the Living Nativity."*



ANDREW WEAVER

- Parents: **Jay Weaver and Marta Lavandier**
- University: **Columbia University**
- Major: **Political Science (Honors), Phi Beta Kappa**
- Future Role: **Junior Fellow at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace**
- **Favorite MSPC Memory:** *"The weekly MSPC youth group allowed me to build friendships that endure to this day. Under Pastor Kim Robles' leadership, we delved into biblical stories, played innumerable rounds of 'man hunt' on the church grounds, and helped each other process our successes and failures as we navigated middle and high school. I will be forever grateful for Pastor Kim's dedication week after week to build a community for young people at MSPC."*

JOAQUIN ORTIZ DE LA RENTA JUENGLING

- Parents: *Raul Ortiz de la Renta and Renate Juengling*
- High School: Miami Country Day School
- University: Northwestern University – McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Sciences
- Major: **Mechanical Engineering**
- **Favorite MSPC Memory:** *“Having attended MPCS from Pre-K through 5th grade and continuing his spiritual education at MSPC ever since, Joaquin has been fortunate to make great friends, share life milestones, and learn the meaning of community through his church family. One of his defining moments at MSPC was when he self-elected to become baptized in 8th grade, prior to becoming confirmed. This decision was significant to him as he chose to become a child of God on his own volition — not a decision by his parents. He and Pastor Kim had various discussions on the topic, and the consciousness of that choice laid a strong foundation of faith on which he will continue to build.”*



JOHANE DUQUE



- Parents: **Avicène Bléhus and Yvone B. Bléhus**
- University: St. Thomas University
- Degree: Master of Science in Nursing
- Specialization: **Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP)**
- Future Plans: Continuing education by pursuing a second master’s degree as a Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)
- **Favorite MSPC Memory:** *“The reason I joined the church is because after losing my aunt in January and my father in February 2023, I was deeply heartbroken. I felt lost and wanted a place where I could pray, cry out to God, and find peace. One day, while passing by the church, I decided to go inside. I saw someone at the front and asked if I could come in, and he kindly said yes. I entered, prayed, and reconciled with God. Since that day, I have continued coming to the church.”*

SABRINA MORATA

- Parents: **Mari Mejia and Jose Morata**
- University: Boston University – College of Communication
- Majors: **B.S. in Journalism and Film Studies**
- Achievements: Sabrina played Water Polo for Boston University throughout all four years.
- Future Plans: Sabrina has applied to several internships in South Florida.
- **Favorite MSPC Memory:** *Volunteering in the Living Nativity.*



OLIVIA COMPO

- Parents: **Michael and Nadja Compo**
- High School: Miami Arts Charter School
- University: Florida International University
- Major: **Pre-med**
- Favorite MSPC Memory: Setting up for and helping sell at the Annual Pumpkin Patch.

We are so proud of our graduates and honored to witness their growth through every season of life.

As a church family, we celebrate not only their accomplishments but also the faith, strength, and purpose that continue to guide their journey. May God bless each new step ahead, and may they always know they have a loving community cheering them on, praying for them, and walking beside them.

Congratulations, graduates! Your MSPC family is so proud of you!

MSPC - 2026 FIRST QUARTER INCOME & EXPENSES

By Terry Rodriguez

Hello MSPC Community. This month's FAITH & FINANCES is dedicated to the first quarter 2026 income and expenses. See notes for clarifications and feel free to reach out with any questions.

INCOME	
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$59,459.33
OFFERINGS	\$0.00
Subtotal CONTRIBUTIONS	\$59,459.33
OTHER INCOME	\$204,231.30
INCOME	\$0.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$263,690.63
EXPENSES	
PROGRAM EXPENSES	
FAMILY MINISTRY & YOUTH	\$109.82
ADULT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	\$0.00
SCHOOLS	\$0.00
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE	\$2,874.65
MUSIC	\$11,011.13
MISSIONS	\$603.69
PASTORAL CARE	\$0.00
WORSHIP	\$2,704.28
FACILITY USE EXPENSES	\$0.00
LIVING NATIVITY	\$0.00
COMMUNICATIONS	\$4,580.48
Subtotal PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$21,884.05
OPERATING EXPENSES	
FINANCE/ADMIN/STEWARDSHIP	\$49,989.67
OPERATIONS	\$43,747.68
PERSONNEL	\$128,912.36
ADDITION TO RESERVE	\$0.00
REVITALIZATION/RENOVATION	\$0.00
Total OPERATING EXPENSES	\$222,649.71
	\$0.00
CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	\$0.00
EXPENSES	\$244,533.76
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$19,156.87

PLEDGED, NON-PLEDGED, LOOSE PLATE

*TOWER INCOME
MSPCS FACILITY USE FEE*

*INCLUDES PROPERTY & WORKERS
COMP INSURANCE / PER CAPITA PYMT TO
PRESBYTERY*

*MAINTENANCE/REPAIRS
BUILDINGS, GROUNDS
CHURCH, SCHOOL & CHAPEL*



MSPCS NEWS

By Maday Celedon & Satrina Chargualaf



Dear MSPC Church Community

The school year may be coming to an end, but the work and excitement at MSPCS continues. There is still so much we hope to accomplish for our students, teachers, and families as we finish this year strong together.

This month, we had the privilege of celebrating our incredible teachers and staff and recognizing the dedication they pour into our school each day. Our staff truly have a calling, and we are deeply grateful that God has brought them to MSPCS to share their gifts with our students, families, and community. The love, patience, and guidance they demonstrate daily make an impact that reaches far beyond the classroom walls.

We also proudly hosted our MSPCS Math Olympiad, where students had the opportunity to challenge themselves and compete for the title of Math Champion. It was inspiring to watch them apply their knowledge, think critically, and shine with confidence. We are so proud of the hard work, perseverance, and enthusiasm our students continue to show in their academic growth.

Our “Waves Got Talent” event was another huge success! It brought us so much joy to see our students step onto the stage and confidently share their unique talents and creativity. From performances to presentations, each student reminded us that every child has special gifts worth celebrating. Events like these help build confidence, encourage self-expression, and strengthen our school community.



A huge Waves shout-out goes to all the MSPCS families and friends who supported our Boosterthon fundraiser. We deeply appreciate every donation and every act of support invested in the future of our students. Your generosity helps us continue creating meaningful opportunities and experiences for our school community, and we are incredibly thankful for your partnership.

With great joy, we also celebrated the graduation of our kindergarten class. Our rising first graders have certainly come a long way, building the foundational skills, confidence, and friendships that will guide them into the next chapter of their educational journey. Thank you, Ms. Silva and Ms. Laura, for the love, dedication, patience, and care you have invested in these students throughout the year. Your impact will continue to follow them for years to come.

We also celebrated and congratulated our PK4 on their Graduation. A beautiful celebration of our students who shared their dreams to be ballerinas, bus drivers, and veterinarians. Thank you, Ms. Irene, Ms. Maria SD, Ms. Briana, and Ms. Maday U., for all the love and care you put into our students. Thank you also to Ms. Daisy, Ms. Vanessa, and our Preschool Staff for all their love and care and preparation for the graduation.

To our parents, thank you for your constant support, encouragement, and trust. None of this would be possible without you. Thank you as well to every community member who has made a positive impact on our students' lives this year.

Although there is still much to do in such a short amount of time, our hearts are full as we reflect on how much our students have grown academically, socially, and spiritually. We are grateful for every moment, every accomplishment, and every memory made this school year. Thank you to all our parents for all their support!

Upcoming Dates & Events

First Sunday of the Month: Pass It On Collection,
Chapman Partnership & Safespace Donation

Sundays: 10 AM Adult Bible Study - Library

Sundays: 10:30 AM Nursery (Up to 4 Years)

Sundays: 11 AM Worship Service

Sundays: 11:15 AM Children's Church - Library

Sundays: 12:15 PM Fellowship Hour

Saturdays: 9:00 AM Anti-Racism Book Club

Wednesdays: 9:00 AM Soft Dolls - Room 135

Sunday, May 31st to August 2nd: School Supply Drive

Sunday, June 14th : 4:00 PM

MSPC Summer Music Series - Bop Shop Brass

(Tickets available online)

✨ **Share Your Light!** ✨

*Have a story, reflection, or
idea you'd love to share?
Interested in being featured
in The Light?*

We'd love to hear from you!

*Send your questions or
article submissions to
mrodriguez@mspc.net for a
chance to be published in an
upcoming edition.*

Let your voice shine! 🧡

The Light Staff -June 2026

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