



THE LIGHT



Pastor's Page with Rev. Dr. Valdir Franca

A Busy and Ordinary Time of Grace

There is something about this time of year that makes our days feel a little fuller, our calendars a little tighter, and our church life a little busier than usual. We are in the middle of what might seem like an ordinary season, but when we pause to look around, we realize just how much is happening in the life of our community. At our school, the pumpkin patch brings color, joy, and the promise of fall to our campus. The Fall Festival gathers families and neighbors for a time of celebration and fellowship. Our children's choir fills our hearts with music and reminds us of the beautiful gift of nurturing faith in the next generation.



Meanwhile, our stewardship campaign invites us to reflect on the blessings we have received and the ways we can share them. We are also preparing for the election of church officers, looking ahead to Thanksgiving, and beginning to see Advent just around the corner. So much is happening, and yet, in the middle of all this activity, we are reminded that the life of the church is about something much deeper than a calendar full of events.

Our church family moves in ways that may sometimes seem slow, but we move steadily, grounded in our commitment to serve our community faithfully. The work of building a church is rarely accomplished through grand gestures alone. More often, it happens through small acts of kindness, quiet acts of service, familiar faces, welcoming smiles, and the willingness to show up when someone needs a hand. It happens when someone volunteers at a school event, helps prepare for worship, shares a meal, welcomes a visitor, or takes the time to listen to someone who needs encouragement. These moments may seem ordinary, but they are the very things through which God's love becomes visible among us.

Of course, we cannot do this work alone. We need volunteers, your commitment, your talents, your gifts, and your time. We need your smile to greet someone who walks through our doors for the first time. We need your willingness to walk alongside someone who may be struggling to find their way. We need people who are ready to lend a hand, offer a word of encouragement, share their gifts, and help others discover that they have a place in this community. Sometimes, the most meaningful ministry begins with something as simple as saying hello, inviting someone to sit beside you, or asking, "How are you doing?" and taking the time to listen to the answer.

As we approach Thanksgiving and prepare our hearts for Advent, perhaps this is a good moment to remember that the church is not simply a place we attend; it is a community to which we belong. The Apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 12:27, "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." We belong to one another. Our gifts are different, our schedules are different, and the ways we serve may look different, but each of us has a part to play in the life of this community. God has called us together not merely to share a building or participate in Sunday worship, but to become a people who care for one another and extend that care beyond our walls.

So, amid the pumpkin patch, the Fall Festival, the children's songs, the stewardship conversations, the election of officers, and all the preparations for the seasons ahead, let us not lose sight of what matters most. These activities are more than items on a calendar; they are opportunities to practice our faith, strengthen our relationships, and make God's presence known in our neighborhood. Every act of service, every generous gift, every welcoming gesture, and every moment of genuine connection helps build the community God has called us to be.

May we continue moving forward together, even when the steps seem small. May we offer not only our resources but also our presence, our compassion, and our willingness to serve. And may we remember that the light of our church shines brightest when each of us brings our own light to the life we share.

After all, the most beautiful thing about this busy, ordinary time is that God continues to do extraordinary things through ordinary people who are willing to walk together in faith. We belong to God, and we belong to one another. Let us keep building that community, one faithful step at a time.

Rev. Dr. Valdir Franca

STEWARDSHIP 2027

By Terry Rodriguez

WHAT DOES MIAMI SHORES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MEAN TO YOU?

It's a simple question, but one that may have a different answer for every person who walks through our doors.

For some of us, it may be the place where we come each Sunday to worship, pray, sing, listen and reconnect with God. For others, it may be the people—the friends who have become like family, the familiar faces who greet us, or the congregation that has stood beside us through both joyful and difficult seasons of life.

Giving begins with gratitude.

We give because we have received something of value here. We give because we believe in what happens when people gather in faith and community. We give because we want worship to continue, children and families to have a place to grow, our ministries to reach beyond our walls, and MSPC to remain a place of welcome and care for generations to come.

There is no single answer, and there is no single amount that is right for every household. Stewardship is personal. What matters is that each of us takes the time to reflect, pray and participate as we are able.

So, as you consider your pledge for the coming year, start with the question:

What does Miami Shores Presbyterian Church mean to you?

Think about the people. The missions. The memories. The worship. The laughter. The prayers. The meals. The music. The moments of celebration and the moments when this community carried you through.

Then consider what you can do to help make sure those experiences continue—not only for you, but for the people who have not yet found their way through our doors.

This is our church. Its future belongs to all of us.

MISSION CORNER

by Marta Lavandier

GIVE MIAMI DAY 2026



Miami Shores Presbyterian Church is proud to participate once again in Give Miami Day, a county-wide day of giving that supports local nonprofits and the important work they do in our community.

This year, your generosity will help support three important areas of our church: special music during the holiday services, church kitchen improvements, and campus beautification. Donations will be divided equally among these three priorities.

Your gift will help bring the joy of music to our holiday worship services, clean, repair, or replace appliances in our church kitchen, and keep our campus beautiful, welcoming, and ready to serve our congregation and the wider community.

Every contribution, big or small, makes a difference. We invite you to join us on Thursday, November 19, and help us continue creating a place where everyone feels welcome and connected.

Thank you for being part of the MSPC community and for helping us continue our mission of worshipping God, welcoming all, and building community.



October 4th - 30th

PUMPKIN PATCH

Open
7 days
a week
Except last week

Monday - Friday
3:30 - 6 PM

Saturday | Sunday
10 AM - 6 PM | 12 - 6 PM



602 NE 96th St, Miami Shores, FL 33138



For more information contact 305 759 2548





MIAMI SHORES PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SCHOOL

602 NE 96th St, Miami Shores, FL 33138

FALL FESTIVAL

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18TH
12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Join us for a fun-filled afternoon
for the whole family!



HAYRIDES



CORN MAZE



PUMPKIN
PAINTING



FALL GAMES
& ACTIVITIES



BAKE SALE
& SWEET TREATS



FRESH
POPCORN



FOOD TRUCKS



ARTISANAL
VENDORS



LIVE MUSIC
& ENTERTAINMENT

A community event for families, friends and neighbors
to come together and celebrate fall!

Bring the kids and enjoy an afternoon filled with
fun, food and community spirit!



PURCHASE TICKETS
SCAN HERE

FOOD

FAMILY

FUN

COMMUNITY

FRONTERA DE CRISTO

By Jay Weaver



When the national Presbyterian Church shut down its foreign missionaries last year due to financial problems, the jolt reverberated from the U.S.-Mexico border all the way to Miami Shores.

The couple who operated the Frontera de Cristo ministry, which has had ties to the Miami Shores Presbyterian Church for years, lost their jobs along with more than 50 other missionary "co-workers" around the globe.

Mark Adams and his wife, Miriam Maldonado Escobar, had devoted their lives to working with churches on the Southwest border to help migrants.

They didn't see the end coming.

"It was pretty stunning to realize that a 41-year old relationship ended in such a unilateral way without any consultation," Adams said, referring to the national Presbyterian Church's closing of the World Mission agency and its defunding of Frontera de Cristo in March 2025.

Adams, the U.S. coordinator for Frontera de Cristo, visited the Miami Shores Presbyterian Church over the weekend of Sept. 26-27 to share how the border ministry not only survived the shock of the World Mission's closure but was recreated through a partnership with two Presbyterian congregations along the U.S.-Mexico border.

The Rev. Valdir Franca, bridge pastor of the Miami Shores Presbyterian Church, described Adams as a "tremendous spiritual force who has had an extraordinary impact on the lives of thousands of people at the border."

In May, the Presbytery de Cristo and Presbytery Grand Canyon commissioned Adams and his wife as co-workers of the Frontera de Cristo ministry, allowing them to resume nearly 30 years of service together in Douglas, Arizona, and Agua Prieta, Sonora.

Adams said the Presbyterian Church's decision to close its foreign missions that led to layoffs of 54 co-workers including him and his wife seemed like a death knell at the time.

"Being thrown into this uncertainty made us wonder: Is this where we're supposed to be? Is this what God wants us to be?"

Adams credited his wife with uplifting his spirits and seeing a way forward for Frontera de Cristo.

She told him: "This was an opportunity for faith to flourish."

Adams said he was grateful for the grassroots support of Presbyterian congregations at the border and around the country, along with lay supporters, noting their financial backing has enabled Frontera de Cristo to continue providing social and spiritual services to migrants. (Miami Shores Presbyterian Church donates \$1,000 a year to Frontera de Cristo as well as the proceeds of its online sales of the ministry's Mexican-grown Cafe Justo/Just Coffee.)

"It was absolutely amazing to see how the congregations responded," Adams said. "This ministry on the U.S.-Mexico border was too important to let go."

Adams, 55, grew up in South Carolina as a member of the Presbyterian Church and thought he would become a teacher after graduating from college. He admitted that he struggled with his faith in God while living in the segregated South. But after doing some missionary work on the Southwestern border, he found his calling and enrolled in a seminary school in Georgia.

After he graduated and was ordained in 1998, Adams returned to the border and became a co-worker for Frontera de Cristo. There, he met Maldonado, 50. After working alongside her husband for several years, she became a mission co-worker in 2011. They have three children, ages 18, 22 and 30.

Adams has visited the Miami Shores Presbyterian Church in the past and preached at other congregations during his long tenure with Frontera de Cristo.

He said he sees the ministry as a bridge rather than the wall that continues to rise along the border between Mexico and the United States. His abiding goal is to "cultivate cross-border relationships."

"One of the things I love about this ministry is that we work with people of faith backgrounds or no faith backgrounds at all," he said. "I enjoy that this is a ministry that works with a wide variety of folks."

SOFT ANIMALS & DOLL WORKSHOP



Every Wednesday morning, a special group of MSPC volunteers gathers in Room 135, behind the Library, to create something truly meaningful; handmade dolls and soft animals for children in our community.

From 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM, volunteers sew, stuff, and put together these special gifts, each one made with care and love. While the finished animals and dolls may be small, they can bring comfort, joy, and a smile to a child during a difficult time.

Around Christmas, these handmade gifts are shared with children through organizations including:

- Miami-Dade Fire Rescue
- Holtz Children's Hospital
- Ronald McDonald House
- Miami Rescue Mission
- Pass It On Ministry
- Migrant children through Nora Sandigo

There are many ways to be part of this ministry. Volunteers are always welcome to help stuff dolls and hand-sew, and donations of cotton fabric and sewing supplies are greatly appreciated.

Come spend a Wednesday morning with us, meet fellow volunteers, and use your hands to create something that can make a difference in a child's life.

Wednesdays | 9:00 AM–12:00 PM
Room 135, behind the Library

Everyone is welcome!

MSPC Connects with the Miami Shores Community Alliance



Pastor Valdir Franca, Barbara Biggart, and Marta Lavandier recently represented MPSC and MSPCS at the Miami Shores Community Alliance Open House. The event brought together several dozen local nonprofit organizations, creating an opportunity to connect with community partners, learn about local initiatives, and explore resources available to support organizations throughout the Village of Miami Shores.

During the event, the MSPC representatives learned about the Miami Shores Arts and Culture Board and the grants available to support organizations and cultural programming in the village. These resources offer valuable opportunities to strengthen community connections and expand programs that bring people together through the arts, music, and shared experiences.

MSPC is grateful to the Miami Shores Community Alliance for its support through a grant that helped fund our Summer Music Series. This partnership has helped make our music programming possible, bringing performers and community members together for afternoons of music, fellowship, and connection.

We look forward to continuing to build relationships with local organizations and exploring new opportunities to serve our community. Through partnerships like these, MSPC remains committed to worshipping God, welcoming all, and building community.

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✨ **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.

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

SEPTEMBER 13 TO NOVEMBER 1:

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18TH: MSPCS FALL FESTIVAL



The Light Staff - October 2026

Maria A Rodriguez, Editor

Rev. Dr. Valdir França, Contributor

Marta Lavandier, Photographer &
Contributor

Jay Weaver, Contributor

Terry Rodriguez, Contributor

Carol Wilde, Contributor

Miami Shores Presbyterian Church

Miami Shores Presbyterian Church
602 NE 96th Street, Miami Shores, FL 33138
305-754-9541 | www.mspsc.net

