

# Legacy Society

CREATING AN ESTATE PLAN IS GOOD STEWARDSHIP.  
HAVE YOU CONSIDERED A PLANNED GIFT FOR CEDARKIRK?

Legacy giving is a faithful way of living on. Countless legacies weave their way into our lives and serve as foundations for our faith and character development. There are so many legacies from which we draw. Parents often leave us with a powerful set of values and a strong legacy of service and acceptance of others. Teachers and mentors strengthen our faith with a legacy of discipleship, biblical knowledge, and service.

For so many, Cedarkirk has provided legacies of affirmation and opportunity, of love and friendships that stand the test of time, of nurtured faith and growing stewardship. As we focus on all the blessings left us by others, our church, and our life experiences, we must ask: What legacy will I leave?

Hopefully your legacy will include the hope of a strong faith, the enduring power of nonjudgmental love, and perhaps even the desire to make a difference in the world. We invite you to consider how including Cedarkirk in your end-of-life giving plans will provide a legacy to future generations seeking to grow in faith, hope, and love.

By creating a legal will or living trust, you can provide your next-of-kin with peace of mind, knowing that the affairs of your estate have been determined. A will also provides an excellent opportunity to honor Cedarkirk's role in your life. It provides you with one last opportunity to exemplify what it means to be a good steward, providing for others as God has provided for you during your lifetime. What a blessing you can be to future generations!

Planning is easy - Meet with your professional advisor to learn how estate planning can increase the overall value of your estate with a gift of tax-burdened assets (like IRAs, 401(k), or savings bonds) to the camp. To learn more about the Legacy Society at Cedarkirk, contact (813) 685-4224 or [campaign@cedarkirk.org](mailto:campaign@cedarkirk.org).



Presbyterian Camp and Conference Ministries of SW FL  
1920 Streetman Drive  
Lithia, FL 33547  
(813) 685-4224



Winter 2016/2017

## Upcoming Events:

- **Christmas Retreat**  
December 16—18, 2016
- **Creative Writing As A Spiritual Practice**  
Jan. 30—Feb. 1, 2017
- **Open House**  
February 4, 2017  
May 13, 2017
- **Confirmation Retreat**  
March 31—April 2, 2017
- **Spring Bash**  
April 21—22, 2017  
April 28—29, 2017  
May 5—6, 2017

Visit our website for more information on these and other programs that Cedarkirk offers.

## Cedarkirk Staff:

- Rev. John Reiter**  
Executive Director
- Mark Orendorf**  
Assistant Director
- Matt Shick**  
Program Director
- Kevin Taylor**  
Facilities Director
- Jackie Butler**  
Food Service Director
- Karin Dale**  
Event Coordinator
- Patricia Holloway**  
Office Manager
- Rebecca Franca**  
Associate Program Director

# S'mores & More

The Newsletter of the Presbyterian Camp & Conference Ministries of SW FL

## A Look Back and A Look Ahead

At the end of our 45th year of ministry, it seems appropriate to take a look back over all that has happened at Cedarkirk in 2016. It has been a year with some exciting developments. We offered two new programs focused on spiritual development for adults: Creative Writing as a Spiritual Practice and a Silent Retreat. Both of these events were incredibly positive and we will be looking to offer them again in 2017. We also launched our new Traveling Day Camp program in which Cedarkirk partners with churches to provide exciting and engaging faith-based day camps for the children in the congregation and surrounding community. The overwhelming response to this initiative resulted in the hiring of Rebeca Franca as our Associate Program Director with the responsibility of the growth and expansion of this new outreach program.

This year, we began a three year campaign to raise 4 million dollars to expand and improve our existing facilities. With an eye towards sustainability in the future, this capital campaign focuses on improving the accessibility of our buildings and expanding our facilities so that we may better minister to those we serve. This effort will include the construction of a new dining hall, the addition of a new Retreat Cottage, and renovations to Cedar Lodge.

It is only natural to be excited about new programs and possibilities, but this year also reflected the continuation of ministry that has been going on for 45 years. It is thrilling to think about how Cedarkirk continues to be a place

apart for God to transform, love, refine, call, build, bring together, and to send. It has always been and continues to be a place where God's love is experienced in new and powerful ways. More and more of our summer campers are unchurched or only loosely connected to a church family, which has allowed our summer camp program to become a tremendous instrument of evangelism. Through our Challenge to Change mission program, youth groups answer God's call to love their neighbor in concrete ways by serving folks at Beth-El Farmworker Ministry and Metropolitan Ministries in Tampa. Our year-round Discernment Through Service program offers several young adults a chance to explore God's call to Christian vocation. We continue to offer overnight retreats and day events for children, youth, young adults, families, senior adults, and church professionals.

The ministry at Cedarkirk makes a difference in the lives of God's children of all ages. We are so grateful for the privilege of being a blessing in the lives of so many children, youth, and adults. For your prayers, financial gifts, support, sending campers, serving on summer staff, volunteering, and coming on retreat, the Cedarkirk Staff and Board of Directors thank you for your incredible generosity and partnership in serving God. Your support makes a tremendous impact in enabling Cedarkirk to bring about the Kingdom of God. We look forward to God's work at Cedarkirk in the years to come and to partnering with you to share in that ministry.



Still looking for that perfect gift for Christmas? Consider giving the gift of summer camp! Cedarkirk gift certificates are available for a summer camp experience. Looking for something different? There are lots of new items in the camp store; shirts, water bottles, mugs, stickers, magnets, and even Christmas tree ornaments can be ordered and shipped. Learn more by contacting the camp office ([camps@cedarkirk.org](mailto:camps@cedarkirk.org) or (813) 685-4224).



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Check Facebook for frequent updates  
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## The Value of Camp

Because the numbers have been increasing at an alarming rate since 2012, the cover article of Time magazine's November issue is on teen anxiety and depression. Within the article, Janis Whitlock of Cornell University states "if you wanted to create an environment to churn out really angry people, we've done it". The author doesn't pretend that we know the exact causes of this increase in anxiety and depression. Instead, the article gives a laundry list of challenges that could be factors. This list included school shootings, the genesis of social media with all its cyber bullying, kids photo-shopping photos of themselves and creating a life on Instagram that is in no way a reflection of reality, family financial struggles since the 2008 recession, and the fact that this generation hasn't known a world without terrorism on our homeland (though Native or African Americans may disagree with this being the first era of terrorism). Yet, we here at camp ignore all this and just play silly games. Or is it because of this that we do so? We consider all the silliness and fun of camp to be very serious business. Our children and adolescents spend a week away from phones and social media, as well as the stress of being perfect. This is replaced with things that may seem nonsensical from the outside but once the barriers fall away the value of this "nonsense" becomes apparent. Campers spend a week talking to one another in an environment

where no one knows what kind of car their family owns and where there is little time for make-up and primping. This is a week filled with simple acceptance and time to have conversations with God and about God, and our responsibility to care and love one another. As our teens articulate the positive impact of camp their comments really boil down to one overarching theme. That they have value not for what they do but for who they are. At camp they are accepted by their peers, counselors, and God which gives them the space to consider who they are, whose they are, and who they want to be. Of course a full week at summer is invaluable but there are many other opportunities for all ages throughout the year. We encourage you to go to our website and find an offering for you. For those children in your life, make sure you give them the gift of camp. They can join the thousands who have found greater self-confidence, purpose, God, and worth.



**December 16–18**  
**Open to anyone currently in**  
**grades 1-12.**  
**Register online TODAY!**

## French Toast Casserole

*A great twist on a classic recipe. Fantastic for taking places because the syrup is built-in.*

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons corn syrup
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 (1 pound) loaf French bread, sliced
- 5 eggs
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

### Directions

1. Combine the corn syrup, butter, and brown sugar in a small saucepan and simmer until the sugar has melted. Pour this mixture over the bottom of a greased 9x13 inch casserole dish.
2. Place the bread slices over the sugar-butter mixture in the dish. In a bowl, beat together the eggs, milk, vanilla, and salt; pour this mixture over the bread. Cover the dish and let it stand in the refrigerator overnight.
3. The next morning, preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
4. Uncover the pan and bake for 45 minutes. Serve while hot or warm or the French toast will harden in the pan. It can be reheated.

**OPEN HOUSE**  
**@CEDARKIRK**  
**February 4, 2017**  
**1:00 PM—5:00 PM**

## Stop, Cease, Look

Halfway through a book of prayers, I recently came across a quote by Leo Tolstoy. He writes:

**“In the name of God,  
 stop a moment,  
 cease your work,  
 look around you.”**

At first, the tone seemed a bit perturbed, even peevis, but I admired the sentiment and was interested enough to do a bit of research. It turns out the quote is only the second half of a much lengthier sentence buried in an essay bemoaning the decline of religion and uptick in industry at the turn of the 20th century. The part preceding the quote above is where Tolstoy establishes he is about to lay out the “most important” and “most useful” advice he would give to people of the next century – in one concise sentence.

Those lines were penned over a century ago, but his contention holds true – truer, I think – for us today. As a group, we 21st century humans work more and go outside less than any who have come before us. We would be wise to heed Tolstoy's advice and are blessed to have a place like Cedarkirk to do just that: to stop a moment, to cease our work, to look around, and to do it all “in the name of God.” Plenty of people come to Cedarkirk to stop for a moment and let go of their routines. Having worked here for a while, this “letting go” is evident in the countenances of those who arrive for retreats and events. There is a palpable serenity and ease amidst the groups who gather here, regardless of whether their purpose is business, recreation, or worship. We all understand the value and

importance of stopping every so often to look around and ponder creation and our relationship with a loving God. We understand it, but routinely fail to do it. Even at camp we are not immune to this: most of what I do on a daily basis is done from a computer in an office. Though I have a lovely vista outside my window, too often I let the busyness of my work obscure that view. The excuse I tell myself: I am simply too busy to stop and look around. I know the wisdom in this quote is not revelatory, but I do hope it serves as encouragement or a reminder to find moments of peace amidst your work. For me, it has been a wonderful reminder. Tolstoy's quote has taken a prominent position on the wall next to my computer screen. And now... I think it's time to cease my work and look around.

## PCCM/Cedarkirk Board Member Corner—Aubrey Sammons

Growing up I could not wait for school to end and summer to begin so I could attend “church camp”. Church camp for me was at Camp Wesley near Bellefontaine, Ohio. I still remember the excitement of arriving at camp and meeting old friends I hadn't seen since camp a year ago. Sharing my years' stories with Sue and Tom who ran the camp every year, as well as Kim, one of the counselors I loved hanging out with. I remember canoeing on the lake and getting stuck out on the water with my friend Ginger, because we had no idea what we were doing. We

laughed for a long time about that. But most of all I remember the feeling of being at home surrounded by other kids like myself raised by Christian parents and I never felt like I had to pretend to be someone I wasn't. I continue this summer tradition with my own girls Julia, 13 and Genevieve who is 8. Each summer, they'll head off to Cedarkirk where they may see friends from the year before and catch up on what's happened during that time. I really enjoy the stories they share about campfires, canoeing, rock climbing and zip lining during their

weeklong stay. But most of all, I love that they are hanging out with other kids that believe in the Lord and they can talk about their faith with everyone there. I want them to be able to take a break from me and have some fun while still exploring their faith. This is why I am such a strong supporter of Cedarkirk. Having spent time there myself with some of my church family, I can see why the kids love it as much as they do. I hope that Cedarkirk can continue to be that home away from home for other kids for many years to come.