

## Apple Danish Braid

### INGREDIENTS

#### Ingredients for Apple Danish Braid:

- 3 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 lb 2 large Granny Smith Apples, peeled, cored and sliced into 1/2" thick slices
- 1/2 cup cranberries fresh or frozen
- 1 sheet store-bought puff pastry (1/2 lb) thawed by package instructions
- 1 egg + 1 Tbsp water for egg wash beaten together with a fork

#### Ingredients for the Pastry Glaze:

- 1/3 cup powdered sugar
- 1/2 Tbsp milk

### DIRECTIONS

- Place a large pot or deep skillet over high heat. Melt 3 Tbsp butter and stir in 1/4 cup sugar. Add sliced apples and stir until evenly coated. Add cranberries and let the mixture sit 3 min to caramelize before stirring. Cook apples and cranberries a total of 6-7 min, stirring 3 times or until apples are lightly caramelized. Transfer apples to a plate and let cool until just warm (not hot).
- Unfold thawed pastry over a lightly floured work surface and roll it in one direction to make it a total of 2 inches longer. The natural folds in the pastry will guide your process.
- Place the cranberry apple filling down the center of the pastry, keeping it in the middle third and leaving 1" of space at the top and bottom of the pastry.
- Cut away the top corners from the left and right thirds of the. Cut 8 equal 1" strips along each side, leaving 1/2" of space from the apples. Cut away excess dough at the bottom corners.
- Fold down top flap of dough and pinch the corners down to seal. Fold in the side strips, alternating from left to right. Fold up the bottom flap, pinching the corners to seal then finish folding in the last 2 side strips, pinching the corners to seal. Transfer to a baking sheet lined with silicone or parchment, brush with egg wash, sprinkle with coarse sugar, and bake at 400°F for 18-22 minutes (mine was perfect at 20 min) or until top is golden brown.
- To make the glaze, stir together 1/3 cup powdered sugar with 1/2 Tbsp milk. Once the braided apple danish is at room temperature or just warm, drizzle with glaze, slice, and enjoy!

### Quilt Raffle

Kathy Petrus has made and donated a beautiful, king-sized quilt for our raffle. Only 250 tickets will be sold. The drawing will be held on Friday, December 20th.

Ticket pricing and other information at: [www.cedarkirk.org/campaign](http://www.cedarkirk.org/campaign). Contact the Cedarkirk office to purchase tickets. All proceeds benefit the Capital Campaign.



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



### WINTER 2019

#### Upcoming Events:

- **Christmas Retreat**  
December 20—22, 2019
- **Creative Writing Retreat**  
January 26—28, 2020
- **Open House**  
February 1, 2020
- **Confirmation Retreat**  
March 13—15, 2020
- **Spring Bash**  
March 20-21, 2020 and  
March 27-28, 2020
- **Shepherd's Sabbath**  
April 13—15, 2020

Visit our website for more information on Cedarkirk's programs.

#### Cedarkirk Staff:

- Matt Shick**  
Acting Executive Director
- Mark Orendorf**  
Assistant Director
- Rebeca Franca**  
Program Director
- Kevin Taylor**  
Facilities Director
- Jackie Butler**  
Food Service Director
- Karin Dale**  
Event Coordinator
- Sue Williams**  
Office Manager

# S'mores & More

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

## FAREWELL FROM A FRIEND



As many of you have heard, I am resigning as the Executive Director of Cedarkirk. I am a firm believer in call. Just as I felt called by God to come to Cedarkirk in 2006, I now feel that I am being called to explore ministry in the church setting. It has been an incredible joy to serve this special place for the past 13 years. Cedarkirk has meant so much to me in my own personal and spiritual journeys, as well as the lives of my entire family. This place has been one of deep friendships, happiness, and love. The staff that I have had the pleasure of serving with are true servants for Christ who approach each day with energy and dedication. As I look back over my time at Cedarkirk, I am proud of all that we have accomplished in God's name together. The program, facilities, staff, and scope of this unique ministry have grown in remarkable ways. We have

weathered a variety of changes and challenges and have remained strong and focused on our mission to be a place apart. Cedarkirk is healthy, stable, and poised for continued growth and an exciting future.

The camp's vision for the future is clear and meaningful. Enclosed in this newsletter, you will find a letter of appeal for the end of the year. I sincerely hope that you and your family will consider making a gift. Your prayers, financial support, and partnership in ministry have helped to carry out God's work in this special place for nearly 50 years. Thank you! There are a number of efforts to support including capital campaign, summer camp scholarships, and the Friends of Cedarkirk. Please join us in sharing Christ's love with so many of God's children of all ages.

It has been my honor to serve at Cedarkirk and I am excited to pass that privilege on to the next Executive Director of this special place. Matt Shick will soon be serving as Acting Executive Director and our Board of Directors has a search team that has already begun its work. Thank you for the opportunity you have given me to serve in this place that is so special to me. May God bless you all and fill our journeys with joy and peace.



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# This Christmas, Take Your Eyes Off the Star

*"Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand new. It's bursting out! Don't you see it? There it is!" -Isaiah 43:18-19*

I've lived through a lot of Christmases and every year I fight the feeling that Christmas has become routine. No matter what goal or mindset I pledge to live into each Advent, I often feel disappointed after Christmas, like I didn't quite achieve what it was I was reaching for spiritually. It feels like I've let God down, by not honoring the birth of Jesus in a manner befitting the Son of God. That changed a few years ago when I came across the following parable about a group of people struggling with the same problem.

*There was a village in the far east where astronomers, mystics, and magi gathered to study and live. When a large and unusual star began to shine far away, the magi knew they must follow it, and the townspeople who served them immediately began preparations for the journey. Most of the city's inhabitants joined the magi to follow the star, but after months of travel, doubt began to plague the travelers and some decided to return home. As time passed, more and more travelers dropped off as the sojourners splintered into groups and argued about their futile search for the star. After a decade of following the star, only three magi remained. Trudging on, these final three found themselves traveling through a wretched mountain village when the star abruptly vanished. Dejected, they resolved to spend the night in the town. As they disembarked from their camels, the poor villagers came out from their hovels to greet the strangers with eager smiles. Moved by the villagers' deep poverty, the magi hastily unpacked their belongings and began handing out food and supplies. They got so caught up in giving away their possessions, laughing, and playing with the village children they failed to notice the star had reappeared – directly above them. The magi never found Christmas; they became*

*Christmas.*

These magi sought the star so singularly that they allowed the pursuit itself to divide and distract them. It reminded me that the most amazing instances of the Spirit at work are entirely beyond our ability to plan or to chase. The magi had to take their eyes off the star and focus on the humanity around them to figure that out. I did too.

That's the beauty of God's Spirit – and of Christmas. Jesus came to bring love into this world – to be love unto the world. As the prophet Isaiah reminds us, God is always doing new things. Living out the meaning of Christmas means I need to be alert to the people around me who need the love I can bring. God's Spirit will work through me if I allow myself the time and the space to do so.

So be present. Be ready. Wait for Christmas with joyous expectation. God is doing new things! Take your eyes off the star and look into this world: it is waiting, aching for the kind of love Jesus brought – the kind of love you can and will bring. Merry Christmas!

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**CAMPFIRE MOSQUITO CHALLENGE ARCHERY CANOE  
GOPHER TORTOISE SHARKS TEETH ROCK WALL CEDAR  
SMORES POOL LINEDANCING PAVILION ALAFIA NATURE**

# PCCM Board Member Corner—Aubrey Sammons

Cedarkirk.... when I hear Cedarkirk's name it takes me back to Camp Wesley in central Ohio. It reminds me of canoeing on the lake, fishing, chasing my friends around and enjoying Bible study before we headed to dinner and campfire. Those were summer days that I looked forward to every year. When I was given the chance to serve on the board for Cedarkirk I had no idea what to expect. I'd only visited the camp when my daughter went for her first week the summer before. Something told me I needed to go and see what it was all about. What I've found is a board and staff that are dedicated to making Cedarkirk a place for anyone, young or old, to come

escape their daily lives and find God again. They strive to make the camp friendly, peaceful, filled with Gods light and a place to look forward to returning to year after year. The board is still working hard on the Capital Campaign to give the camp a new dining hall and facilities to make gathering together an even better experience. This pulls at my heart and makes me want to see this accomplished. If you've ever been to camp then you know that being together with other Christians and those seeking Christ is incredible. Having one big Dining Hall would be amazing, so we can gather together at meal times, and also allow more space for more guests

to experience camp. Cedarkirk is a place for Gods light to shine through for families, church groups, campers and even traveling day campers. It's my families home away from home. ♥

### Nuts and Bolts



If you have an interest in volunteering as a individual or as someone who leads a group, give us a call and we will be happy to find the right project for your talents. Fall/winter is a great time to get outdoors and be a part of Cedarkirk' ministry.

## Christmas International House

**"The foreigner has not lodged outside. For I have opened my doors to the traveler."**  
Job 31:32

**Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you.**  
3 John 1:5

Few stories are more heartwarming than that of Operation Yellow Ribbon, where the nation of Canada allowed international flights on 9/11/2001 to be diverted to airports throughout many Canadian provinces. Those who may have been pregnant, mourning the loss of a loved one, and just plain scared, were given respite and hospitality in its truest sense. Though not under as dramatic of circumstances, every other year we bring that hospitality to international college students over the Christmas holiday through the Christmas International House Program. This year we will be hosting students from Japan, China, Hong Kong, and Botswana. From different cultures, faiths, and belief systems, we all care for one another and live in community for just over two weeks.

For sure, they are looking forward to visiting Disney and Universal theme parks but, by the end of their stay, as in years past, they will be so grateful for the chance to be shown hospitality by both Cedarkirk and volunteer hosts as well as the new friendships they will make with other CIH students. Part of this program is hosted at Cedarkirk while the other time, Dec. 22-27, is spent in various host homes. Volunteer Host Families are needed. If you would like information about hosting, please contact Mark Orendorf at mark@cedarkirk or at 813.685.4224.