



August 2021

Dear PCPC Congregation Members and Visitors,

In April 2020, Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church's Witness & Service Committee partnered with the Hillsborough Organization for Progress and Equality (HOPE). HOPE is a multi-issue, grassroots, community organization consisting of 23 multicultural and interfaith member congregations throughout Hillsborough County. HOPE's mission is to promote justice, fairness, and the dignity of people by engaging and training people to responsibly and successfully act together to hold officials accountable to improve the systems affecting the quality of life in our communities. You can learn more by visiting the [website](#).

It's been an amazing year! Many PCPC members and friends of PCPC were involved in HOPE's annual process of identifying pressing issues in our community in need of HOPE's advocacy, researching those issues and, finally, bringing them before community leaders in HOPE's culminating event – the Nehemiah Action. There is also an investment drive to conclude the year that provides financial support for HOPE's continuing justice work.

HOPE has worked on a variety of issues in Hillsborough County for over 30 years. A recent and notable success was convincing the Hillsborough County Commissioners to create a \$10M Affordable Housing Fund for Hillsborough County's annual budget starting in 2030. The HOPE Affordable Housing Act (as it is named by the County) resulted in \$10M in affordable housing for 2020 and an additional \$12M set aside for affordable housing in 2021. HOPE's diligence also contributed to youth civil citations become mandatory for most juvenile misdemeanor offenses, which ultimately will divert a number of youth from incarceration. You can learn more about past issues and the impact HOPE has on our community on its [website](#).

During this year's Nehemiah Action, HOPE united over 2,000 members virtually from across Hillsborough County to address Criminal Justice Reform and Mental Health Reform. HOPE obtained commitments from local officials to reduce the arrest of children and adults for misdemeanor offenses and to increase access to mental health services in our community. PCPC had over 100 individuals participate via Zoom during the event. It was an exciting night for HOPE and for PCPC's participants!

We are now at the stage in HOPE's annual cycle where the Listening Process will take place and house meetings will occur to discuss issues of concerns in the community. We were blessed with five leaders last year who helped PCPC navigate the first year of its partnership with HOPE and hosted these listening meetings. In order to grow our partnership with HOPE and expand our justice ministry at PCPC, the Witness and Service Committee is seeking additional leaders to serve as Team Members and shepherd small groups of network members. Primarily,

Team Members build relationships with their group and oversee their group's participation in the key HOPE meetings throughout the year. Training is provided and last year's Team Members can provide information about the process as well.

If you are interested in learning more about HOPE and the opportunities to get involved, please reach out to any of the current Team Member leaders, Richard Jewell from the PCPC Witness & Service Committee, or PCPC's Business Administrator, Erin McKenney. All contact information is below.

Sincerely,



Michael Maddux

Chair, PCPC Witness & Service Committee

Contact information:

Bob Coates, current PCPC HOPE Team Member leader –

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Maggie McClintock, current PCPC HOPE Team Member leaders –

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Rev. Mike Peacock, current PCPC HOPE Team Member leader –

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Courtney Rice, current PCPC HOPE Team Member leader –

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Richard Jewell, W&S Committee Member and HOPE Network member –

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Erin McKenney, PCPC Business Administrator and HOPE Staff Liaison –

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