



## 2023 End of Year Report Looking to the Future with Hope

*“Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. “ —Philippians 3:12-14*

With a new year well underway, Misión Peniel finds itself embracing the future with renewed energy, vitality, and hope for the path that God will illuminate as we continue our ministry to the farmworker community in Immokalee, Florida. Despite times of uncertainty and unforeseen challenges, we move forward with faithfulness, trusting that God is guiding both our presbytery and this mission towards innovative ways of serving Christ's Church in southwest Florida.

As integral members of this body, we express gratitude for the accomplishments of our ministry in 2023 and eagerly anticipate what will unfold in 2024. The ensuing highlights and accompanying photos bear witness to the ministry's dedication to answering God's call by serving the hungry, the lost, the lonely, and the oppressed. We strive to meet the most fundamental human needs, both physical and emotional, as well as spiritual, within a welcoming environment infused with compassion, dignity, and love.

### Pastoral Care

Over the course of the year, Pastor Miguel dedicated numerous hours to offering spiritual guidance, resourcefulness, and compassionate solidarity during times of crisis. He actively participated in community celebrations and visited various churches across Southwest Florida. In his capacity as the mission director, Pastor Miguel's impactful contributions persistently touch the lives of numerous individuals and families within the farmworker community of Immokalee and beyond.





### **Pan de Vida**

#### **Marifrans Castillo de Estrada, Coordinator**

In 2023, 22 homebound clients were supported with three meals delivered each Monday. Approximately 3,432 meals were delivered throughout the year, along with basic groceries, hygiene products, kitchen items, bedding, and housewares. There were occasional times some clients received assistance with rent and/or utility bills. Marifrans's weekly visits provide important spiritual and emotional connections for these clients.

It is important to note that in 2024, this ministry will be fully funded through the mission budget versus previous years' grant support.

### **Misión Peniel's Music Academy**

#### **Juan Pablo Oliva, Director**

This will be the 3<sup>rd</sup> year for the music academy and of the 10 students, most have been with the academy since its inception! In addition to instrumental instruction, each student participates in an online group music theory class. Their skills are developing nicely! Juan Pablo offered a local recital in June and will continue to do so in 2024.



### **Out of State Service Groups**

The mission welcomed a service team from 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church in Rochester, MN in March. In addition to assisting with Misión Peniel's weekly ministries, they worked with Cultivate Abundance and the Immokalee Soccer School and Academy (mission partners). Building improvements included renovating the men's bathroom, improving the air conditioning/ventilation over the walk-in cooler/freezer, and

repairs to the kitchen faucets. Other service groups that came to work with Cultivate Abundance also helped with the mission's weekly ministries. What a blessing!





### **Annual Back to School/Backpack Event**

This annual event continues to grow! Thanks to generous donors and all the amazing volunteers who sorted, packed, and distributed the backpacks, 550 children comprising 182 families received new backpacks and supplies in August, just prior to the start of a new school year! It was a festive time for all!

### **Christmas Joy Campaign**

Every year, the kindness of community friends and donors inspires us at Misión Peniel to continue brightening children's Christmas with a gift. Thanks to donor and volunteer generosity, our Christmas Joy event was full of laughter, excitement, and joy!

This year, more than 275 families and 738 children walked away with a special holiday gift and a bag full of goodies to enjoy. The kids even received a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. Once again, it made a big difference in the lives of these children and their families. The spirit of the season was shining bright!



### **Friday Food Distribution**

This year's food distribution saw an increase in both numbers of people in need, and in volunteers wanting to serve and share "Peniel" with the farmworker community. The average number of people receiving nutritious food was between 450-550 every Friday. Approximately 14 churches in the presbytery are actively involved in coming to volunteer. 4 churches outside the presbytery also

participate regularly on Fridays (Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship). There are also non church organizations expressing a desire to get more active with Friday distribution: College groups and the local high school. The mission continues to be extremely thankful for all who participate by coming to serve and those who contribute in other ways throughout the year!

## **Integral Partnership with Cultivate Abundance**

Misión Peniel acknowledges the significance of fostering partnerships with churches and diverse organizations and nonprofits. Among these noteworthy collaborations, one organization stands out for its crucial role in our ongoing weekly ministries: Cultivate Abundance. Since 2018, they have been instrumental in creating, nurturing, and maintaining the garden located directly behind our mission building. Through their collaborative efforts with other community-based gardens, Cultivate Abundance has facilitated the provision of 38,404 pounds/141,304 servings of fresh, responsibly sourced, and culturally appropriate produce for our Friday distributions in 2023!

This culturally tailored selection of produce uniquely positions Misión Peniel as the sole local mission consistently meeting the specific needs of our culturally diverse farmworker community. The impact of God's blessings through this partnership is evident each week as we witness the abundance that unfolds.



## **Challenges**

One enduring challenge for the mission revolves around our ongoing quest to secure a permanent home and ownership of our space, rather than relying on rental arrangements. Despite our previous efforts, opportunities to purchase property have been elusive, often disrupted by unforeseen changes of heart from sellers. Nevertheless, we maintain our trust in God's providence as we remain open to exploring alternative possibilities in 2024.

## **Mission Status**

Misión Peniel continues to operate as a ministry of Peace River Presbytery (since 2013). It is not its own independent 501c(3) and therefore relies on support from Peace River Presbytery churches. We are thankful for those Peace River Presbytery churches that are able to provide support. We also hope that we can visit additional churches of the presbytery and explore partnership opportunities in 2024!

As a growing mission, the annual budget continues to grow:

Misión Peniel 2023 Budget: \$361,435.19

Misión Peniel 2024 Budget: \$400,661.45

*A detailed financial report will be presented as part of the presbytery's report.*

**There are currently 4 staff members; 2 full time, 2 quarter time:**

--Rev. Miguel Estrada, Presbytery Evangelist and Misión Peniel Director  
--Marifrans Castillo de Estrada, Mission and Pan de Vida Coordinator  
--Ruth DeYoe, Communications and Grant Coordinator  
--Juan Pablo Oliva, Music Academy Director

**Mision Peniel Coordinating Team, 2024:**

Moderator: Rev. Bill Sitterly, Interim Pastor at Pine Shores PC  
Joyce Botchford, Cypress Lake PC  
Karen Chappler, Vanderbilt PC  
Ellen Burnette, Covenant PC  
Mark King, Faith PC  
Chris Larson, Covenant PC  
Rev. Scott Andrews, Pastor at Community PC  
Alice Thomas, Community PC  
Mary Will, Burnt Store PC

**May 2024 be a year in which we continue to affirm with certain hope:**

*"The steadfast love of the lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him. The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him." --Lamentations 3:21-25*

***On behalf of all who are served through the ministry of Misión Peniel, we give thanks for all your ongoing support and look forward to where God leads us in 2024 and beyond!***