



Donate to help FLM with a critical need today

Like in much of the world, COVID-19 has come to Haiti. As we prepare this newsletter, the latest government reports put the number of confirmed infections at 7,649.

Combine COVID-19 with the enormous challenges of poverty and inadequate health care, and many are left vulnerable in Haiti. FLM's clinic, the House of David, has stepped up to meet the challenge. It is educating the public on safety measures and staying open to treat non-COVID cases. The clinic needs your help to continue to support our staff, providing them with the personal protective equipment – gloves, masks, and scrubs – to safeguard their health as they continue to care for others. We ask also for your help in supporting salaries so that FLM can maintain staffing to address community health needs.

Also, students in Haiti have started to return to school. Classes will be smaller and there will be other measures to physically distance students in the learning environment. For the teachers who are returning to FLM's K-13 school, we need your help supporting their salaries and equipping them with safety material such as gloves and masks, also.

The children will also be receiving a hot meal at school. Our canteen, which provides many of the students with their only meal of the day, is asking for your support as well.

You can save lives...

If you can spare a **\$100, \$50, or \$30** donation today it will enable us

to support our clinic staff, our teachers, and provide a critical meal for our students. **Thank you.**

Please send your donation to **FLM Haiti, 1064 Premier Street, Pittsburgh, Pa 15201** or donate at flmhaiti.org ●

"I have been attending the clinic since November 2010. I come regularly every first Monday of the month to have my blood pressure tested. The drugs always give good results. When I am sick, I find good treatment at the Maison de David clinic. I thank the teams who are coming from time to time to help us in the community. When my children are sick, I always find care in the clinic. I am glad [the FLM clinic is] working every day now. We were expecting it a long time ago. I say a big 'thank you' to FLM. I pray for all of you."

– **Madeleine Augustin**
Resident of Thomassin, Haiti

**THANK YOU TO ALL DONORS.
YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!**

Celebration speaker to reflect on the gift of giving

By **Ervin Dyer**

Twenty years ago, on one of his first mission visits to Haiti, the Rev. Dr. Ronald Peters was awed by the country's natural beauty. But the Christian teacher and pastor saw something else that also moved him.

As he served with FLM Haiti, Peters saw selfless giving, and a people of incredible ingenuity, creativity, and determined resilience.



The Rev. Dr. Ron Peters

Peters, who lives in Pittsburgh, is the former president of Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta. And, as this year's keynote speaker for FLM Haiti's annual banquet on Oct. 24, he will reflect on his journeys to the mountainous rural communities and how faith and giving are manifest in the work FLM does on the island nation. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the banquet celebration will be virtual.

On a mission trip in 2008, as Peters carried boxes of bandages and medicines up a mountain to a rural clinic, he stumbled and injured his leg. Very quickly, the U.S. nurses and physicians, who were a part of the trip took him to the clinic, assessed the leg and diagnosed no broken bones. Just as quickly, the Haitians also came to his aid. One patient, who was waiting to be examined, saw Peters being helped into the clinic. She left her place in line and exited the clinic. When that patient returned, she brought with her leaves and other natural remedies. She used them to wrap Peters' leg with the herbal, healing therapy. Peters, now the patient, noticed the intensity of the pain was relieved immediately.

In that woman's action, Peters saw the essence of the spirit of Haiti.

In visit after visit in support of FLM, the charity of the Haitian people was a characteristic he fondly remembers because it was always on display. No matter the hardship they suffered, Peters says, the poor of Haiti were constantly using their meager resources to educate their children, keep a clinic open, or call for freedom.

"They always heard the voice of God, moving them forward," he says.

The Bishop Leon Pamphile is executive director of FLM Haiti and a graduate of the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, where Peters,

in the 1990s, began his service as the Henry L. Hillman Professor of Urban Ministry and became founding director of its Metro-Urban Institute.

The Institute had a mission of cross-cultural service, particularly in trans-Atlantic regions, and Pamphile approached Peters and the Institute about a partnership to benefit FLM's work in Haiti. The Institute soon began to host fund-raising concerts and other events to raise awareness of FLM's mission. Peters served for several years on FLM's board. And for many years, he traveled to Haiti, teaching, preaching, and aiding FLM to empower the Haitian people to help themselves.

Peters saw the evolution of FLM's ministry. He saw the campus in Thomassin, Haiti, grow from just being a stake in the ground to now being site that has a clinic that serves thousands of Haitians a month, a comfortable guesthouse that hosts both public forums and visiting missionaries, and a school that nurtures 600 young hearts and minds.

While what Peters has witnessed over the years has been inspirational, the nation of Haiti, he says, is not without strife. "The challenges of poverty can be crushing. But the Haitian people are finding a way to service, educate their children, provide medical care and health resources."

"They are a testament to what is the best of faith," he says. ●

Excel in the Grace of Giving!

FLM Haiti's Virtual Celebration of Thanks and Hope

Featuring:

- Update of the work in Haiti
- Testimony by those we serve!
- The State of Haiti in the midst of COVID-19 by Bishop Leon D. Pamphile
- Inspirational message by the Rev. Dr. Ronald E. Peters
- Haitian art, music and more

2 Corinthians 8:7

"But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving."

Date: October 24, 2020

Time: 5:45 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Donation: \$60 (tax deductible)

For more information and to get your virtual ticket, call **(412)-784-0342**
Email: info@flmhaiti.org or visit: <https://www.flmhaiti.org/newsevents>

For more information, please visit flmhaiti.org or call **412-784-0342**

Reflections on the 2020 education mission

By Joanne Hollenbeck

When the nine of us left for Haiti on March 4, 2020, the novel coronavirus pandemic was in its initial stages. Our plans had been set for months, and we all felt that it was safe to go. And we spent an amazing eight days there, teaching, learning and sharing in fellowship.



Teaching stretching as way to de-stress.

There were four of us from HPC (Hamburg Presbyterian Church, from outside of Buffalo, N.Y.) – Linda Ryder, Wendy Zimmerman, Dudley, my husband, and myself; and two former HPCers – Sue Robinson and Molly Golando. Rounding out our team was my daughter, Laura Bond, a social worker in the Rochester area; Robin McGuire, an OBGYN from Pittsburgh; and a mental health counselor from Boston, Gina Dessources.

I teamed up with Linda, Wendy, and Laura to present a seminar each morning and afternoon to 20 adults on how to manage stress and fear. Linda taught the participants how to stretch to relax muscles, how to use different breathing techniques as tools to calm down. Wendy taught them the art of “tapping” on the face to relieve pressure, and she also talked about massage and prayer as very effective means to calm oneself. Laura, a licensed social worker, was able to facilitate their talking about their fears.

In every single session, the two issues our Haitian participants always wanted to talk about were the “virus” and kidnapping. The virus had not yet arrived in Haiti, but there were worries about it. We shared everything we knew about how to avoid the virus and the participants listened intently. The kidnappings were happening often as people were walking/driving and our Haitian friends were fearful for themselves and their children or family.

I also led a class in making lava bracelets. The lava stones are porous, so they absorb scented oil very easily. We used lavender oil, a very relaxing scent. Their bracelets were beautiful, and they wore them with pride. Each person also received a bottle of lavender oil that I had made at home. We all felt like we had helped these special people, and they could now have something positive to take back to their families.

Four of us worked at MIPAEP school run by our partnering organization, FLM (Functional Literacy Ministry) Haiti. Gina worked with the preschool, Sue with the elementary grades, Molly with the middle school and Dudley with the high school. Like with the adults, the emphasis was on dealing with stress.

The education team and Dr. Robin McGuire were able to purchase and transport vitamins for the students from money raised through FLM’s Classroom Sponsorship Program. In addition, McGuire was able to distribute more than 50 birthing kits in underserved areas. The kits were donated by the Zonta Club of Pittsburgh and they came with instructions and educational materials. ●

Addressing mental health challenges in Haiti

Understanding Haitian mental health and the challenges that exist in addressing it in Haiti are quite complex. In this season, with the COVID-19 global pandemic and kidnapping as very present realities in Haiti, I am mindful of the toll that living in persistent fear, complied with repeated traumatic experiences, has taken on the mental health of the Haitian people.

A major challenge that I identify is the limitation of culturally specific language to capture experiences. The devastating earthquake of just over a decade ago created opportunities for Haitian people to recognize and put into words the remarkable impact that traumatic experiences have on mental health.

It is critical to empower Haitian people to define this impact in a way that is culturally specific as opposed to having others from outside of the culture label experiences based on cultural norms that are different. Another challenge that I identify is the limited access to resources and programming that support mental health and wellness in Haiti. Since the needs are vast, needs can only be met in a sustainable way with true capacity building in Haiti.

Through partnerships and community engagement efforts, FLM Haiti can and will be on the forefront of promoting mental health literacy as defined by Haitian people and serving to bridge the gap in accessing mental health support. ●

Dessources, a new board member with FLM Haiti, is a Licensed and Independent Clinical Social Worker. She lives in Boston.)

Enjoying Well-Being Through Well-Doing in the Age of Covid-19

By Bishop Leon Pamphile

This book is the fruit of a lifetime of walking with God. I find it relevant to adjust it to this critical period of COVID-19, which threatens our well-being. It seeks to remind us that well-being is a quality of life aligned with our commitment to well-doing. *The fact is, God destines us for well-being.*

The problem with many of us is that we suffer from the illusion that well-being is automatically given. This book, *Enjoying Well-Being Through Well-Doing in the Age of Covid-19*, helps one to acquire the skills to reach and enjoy that blessed state.



This book challenges readers to build their well-being on five indicators. The first one is holiness, or a lifestyle reflecting God’s character: “Be holy because, I, the Lord your God, am holy.” (Lev.19:1). The second one is health: Beloved, I pray that you may enjoy good health, and all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.” (3 John 2). The third indicator is happiness: “Rejoice in the Lord always.” (Phil.4:4). The fourth indicator is prosperity: “The Lord your God will make you most prosperous in

the work of your hands” Det. 30:9). The fifth one is altruism. Let your well-being flow in the lives of others: “Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Gal. 6:9). ●

Order a copy of *Enjoying Well-Being Through Well-Doing in the Age of Covid-19* for \$12 plus \$3 for shipping. Send your check to: **FLM Haiti, 1064 Premier St, PGH, PA 15201**



In Brief

- **Sewing grant:** FLM has received a \$2,500 grant from the Upper New York United Methodist Women. The grant supports a cottage-industry sewing ministry, “Bel Famn K’ap Koud.” (Beautiful Women who are Sewing), in the making of protective facemasks for the Haitian people. There are eight women with the ministry and the grant will pay the women \$1 per mask, which will bring money to their own households for items such as food and education. More than 1,000 masks will be made and distributed in areas of need.
- **Generator assistance:** Board member Robin McGuire launched a GoFundMe account to help raise funding to purchase a new electricity generator for FLM’s House of David Clinic. The generator will help protect FLM’s supply of medicines that need to be refrigerated at the clinic. In donations ranging from \$10 to \$3,000, by the end of July, \$6,052 had been raised for the generator project. According to board member Sue Robinson, another \$2,500 is expected from an anonymous donor.
- **H-O-P-E Walk:** In late spring, more than 60 people took roughly 360,000 steps to support the Pittsburgh-based Functional Literacy Ministry of Haiti (FLM Haiti), which for three decades has been working in partnership with the Haitian people. Because of the pandemic, FLM Haiti hosted its annual H-O-P-E for Haiti 5K walk virtually, with participants walking along via ZOOM and Facebook Live. The warm-up was led by fitness coach Roland Ford, who modeled exercise and dance steps, as participants worked to achieve their 5K walk (equivalent to about 6,000 steps). More than 100 people made donations and there were walkers from Pittsburgh, Florida, Texas, New York, Ohio and Maryland. The H-O-P-E walk benefits Haitians through health care, opportunity, partnership and education. The sponsors were Roland Ford and Cornerstone TV Network. ●



(On the left), women with FLM’s sewing ministry received a grant to support their production of face coverings to help keep Haitians protected from coronavirus.