

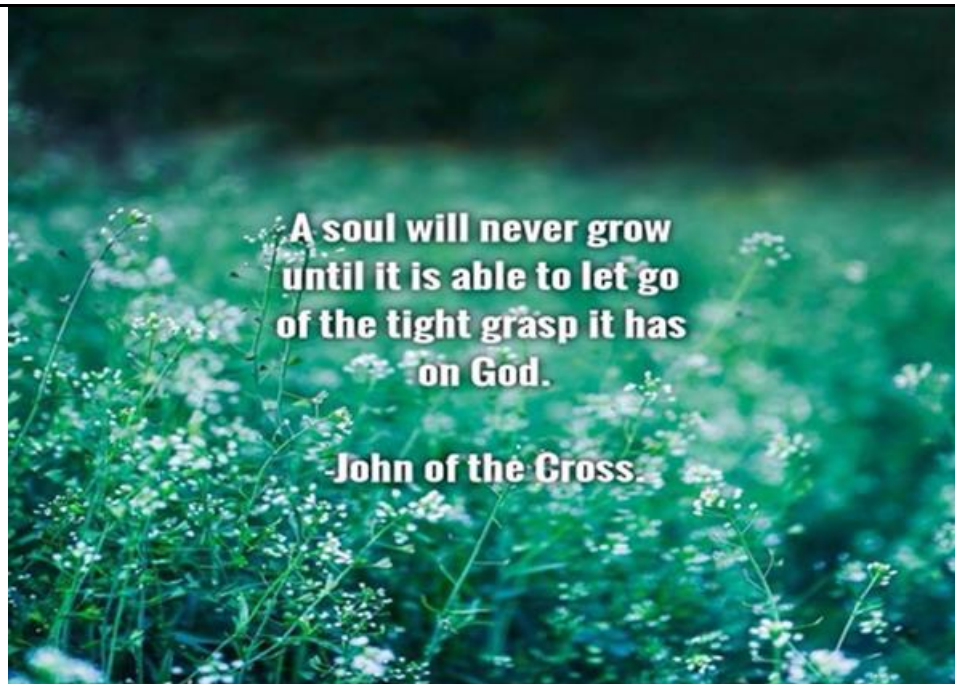


PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ August 11, 2016

Rev. Dr. Kathleen Weller, Moderator of the Steering Committee



Dear Peace River Presbytery,

One of my alma maters offered the above quote this week from John of the Cross' classic work: "Dark Night of the Soul." I find it to be like so many of Jesus' sayings—it sneaks up on you—or at least it did me!

The Church (and we who lead it) has often spent its life teaching people those things from which they should loosen their grasp. All of them, most of the time, much punier than God. As a child of the sixties I might wrap up these shed-ables in the rubric sex, drugs and rock 'n roll. We all have our lists, don't we, of what is acceptable or not. Useful or not. Clean or not. Pure or not. Godly, God-like or not.

What are those things you preach, or teach, or hear, or believe for yourself and others that must be let go of...for the soul to thrive?

If asked from what we must loosen our grip for the sake of our soul 'God' would not be our first answer. And that's precisely why John of the Cross got it so right. Because it is our nature to serve our small image of God, even though it has long since ceased been serving God. We tightly grasp truths that are convenient or that mirror us, while having lost sight of the Truth which mirrors God. We're actually only a breath away from claiming equality with God when we believe our thoughts are God's thoughts and our ways are God's ways.

And so John's pronouncement is both startling and hopeful as it leaves open the opportunity for us to humble ourselves, to release what is false, to receive fresh grace, to live again. It's an invitation to make room for the Spirit to do a new work in us and to lift the heavy burden of being so right so much of the time. When our soul lets go of the tight grasp it has on our carved-in-stone version of God then God is able to be God again in us. Only however when I relinquish my place on the throne.

Don't misunderstand. I'm not saying it's easy. Believing we're in the know and while in the know also somehow in control, no matter how delusional, is quite comforting. But it is in our willingness to do a trust fall into the arms of God that we truly live. That our souls cease to be dormant but alive. Alive. When's the last time you had the inkling that your soul was really alive?

Actually, it seems like a crackpot idea telling Christians to let go of their grasp on God. And yet it is only through the cracks that the Bright Light of God's Spirit can enter in and do its work. Softening our death-grip makes room for re-birth, for Life. So, grace and peace to all the crackpots of Peace River Presbytery...our Church and our world desperately need you.

In the Light of God's Love Shining Through,
Kathleen

Rev. Dr. Kathleen Weller
Moderator of the Steering Committee

SEPTEMBER REGIONAL GATHERINGS

THEME: DISCIPLESHIP

All are invited to attend any of the following gatherings. These are not Presbytery Stated Meetings, but rather a chance to gather with other PRP churches in your region and share, encourage, and be encouraged.

The Fall Regional Gatherings held last year (2015) were well received and the attendees were excited and encouraged to have had the opportunity to gather with others from their area.

Thursday, September 1: South Region

Location: Hope United Presbyterian Church
7470 Hickory Rd SE, Fort Myers, 33912
Time: 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Reservation: Yes ... by Thursday, August 25. Contact church office at 239-267-3331.
Meal: Breakfast - \$5.00 per person

Wednesday, September 7: Central Region

Location: St. Paul's Presbyterian Church
5550 Sumter Blvd., North Port, 34287
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Reservation: Yes ... by Wednesday, August 31. Contact church office at 941-426-2552.
Meal: Breakfast - \$5.00 per person

Thursday, September 8: North Region

Location: Oak Pointe Church (*formerly Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church*)
7045 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, 34243 (the address of Whitfield Estates)
Time: 8:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Reservation: Yes ... by Thursday, September 1. Contact church office at 941-355-0440.

Meals: Light morning refreshments & light lunch - \$10.00 per person

Mark your calendars and save the dates! Remember to call the church office with your reservation by the deadline listed for that location.

Special Called Meeting of Peace River Presbytery

Thursday, September 8, 2016

1:00 p.m.

Oak Pointe Church, Sarasota (same location as Regional Gathering)

Purpose:

Examining Candidates for Ordination
Approving Pastoral Relationships/Validated Ministries

[View announcement of meeting.](#)

Education Advocates Needed for Faith Place Safety

The Committee on Ministry is creating an initiative for promoting safe worship places and spaces, healthy relationship boundaries, healing, hope and welcome through education awareness, prevention and resources.

Two members of COM are providing leadership to the effort but need to add specific skills to the work team. Those skills are:

- *someone who is involved with children or youth and has an interest in evaluating the educational/training resources available in this field
- *someone who is media savvy and could assist with videography, DVD production, or web site links

The time commitment will be limited to 90 days and primarily consisting of teleconference meetings, working/evaluating/planning in the convenience of your 'home' office.

If you feel called to serve, please contact Cynthia Brasher at cynthia.brasher@leememorial.org

BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma

Job Opportunity: Mission Outreach Resource Coordinator ([click for job description](#)).

*Beth-El has numerous mission opportunities for adults and youth. From leading Vacation Bible School, to work groups helping out in our community, to scholarships for kids to go to camp at Cedarkirk, there are many ways your church can help support this valuable mission. Call Javier today at 813-633-1548 ext. 228, or email him at Javier@beth-el.org to learn more.

*Beth-El Farmworker Ministry is planning its 40th anniversary celebration for the week of November 5th-6th. In preparation, we are seeking individuals willing to donate their air miles to help support national speakers who will be traveling to Beth-El to speak at the event. For more information, or to donate, please contact Kathy Dain at 813-633-1548.

Kathy

Kathleen Dain
Executive Director

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[www.beth-el.org](http://www.beth-el.org)  
[August Newsletter](#)

## CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER

*A place apart to build up the body of Christ in love.*

[www.cedarkirk.org](http://www.cedarkirk.org)

**Summer is here!** This summer's theme, FEARLESS FAITH, will help campers focus on how they become part of, gain support from, and build their own Christ-centered communities. By looking at leaders from the Bible who used communities given to them by God, campers will be empowered to draw courage from friends, family, and community, stand up to injustice and help change attitudes, forgive others, and connect to and welcome all people. Please help Cedarkirk by letting the children and youth of your church or community know about the unique opportunities available this summer. We are also looking for volunteer nurses and worship leaders for the week-long sessions.

If you have any questions, please contact the camp office at (813) 685-4224 or visit [www.cedarkirk.org](http://www.cedarkirk.org).

### MISION PENIEL

*A Ministry of Peace River Presbytery to the Farmworkers in Immokalee*

The Mision Peniel Team continues to meet and build the support and structure for continuing this vital ministry. If you want to make a donation to support this recovery effort you may send the check (marked *Mision Peniel*) to:  
Peace River Presbytery | 5600 Peace River Rd. | North Port, FL. 34287

- Collection Centers for Mision Peniel Supplies ([click for information](#))
- Critical Needs List ([click for information](#))

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- [Pastoral Intern – Overview](#) – [Position Description](#) – Siesta Key Chapel

### PRAYER NEEDS

**Please continue to pray for:**

- Rev. Ruth Schaaff's Family – loss of her son-in-law, and of Chip's sister.
- Rev. David King – recovery from an aortic valve replacement.
- Phil Kuehl (husband of Rev. Elizabeth Kuehl, Faith, Cape Coral) – recovering from injuries sustained (and subsequent surgeries) when he was hit while bicycle riding. Also, pray for Phil and Elizabeth's niece and husband, Priscilla and Ron Kosedner, through the loss of their 2 ½ year old son, Elias.
- Rev. Dr. Paul Eckel - health
- Amy Dunn (daughter of Joyce Dunn, Administrator of St. Paul's Presbyterian) – 38 years old; in Hospice care in Port Charlotte with stage 4 cancer; 3 children. Please pray for Joyce and the family also.
- Jim & Becky Beckwith - health
- Robert Dennis, Son of Rev. India Dennis – mental health issues
- Greg Beckwith (son of Jim and Becky Beckwith) – on kidney transplant list
- Grandson of Tim and Martha Halverson - suffering from a rare autoimmune disease
- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry

- Misión Peniel
- Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center
- Dan and Elizabeth Turk, PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Madagascar
- Les and Cindy Morgan, PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Bangladesh

**CHURCH PRAYER GUIDE: AUGUST 2016:**

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|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| August 7  | <u>Trinity Presbyterian Church, Venice</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Chuck Wiggins<br>email: <a href="mailto:cjw049@gmail.com">cjw049@gmail.com</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| August 14 | <u>Venice Presbyterian Church, Venice</u><br>Senior Pastor: Rev. Chris Romig<br>email: <a href="mailto:cromig@venicepres.org">cromig@venicepres.org</a><br>Associate Pastor: Rev. Lyn Olson<br>email: <a href="mailto:lolson@venicepres.org">lolson@venicepres.org</a><br>Associate Pastor: Rev. Todd Reinschmidt<br>email: <a href="mailto:treinschmidt@venicepres.org">treinschmidt@venicepres.org</a> |
| August 21 | <u>First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Bill Teng<br>email: <a href="mailto:pastor@FirstPC.church">pastor@FirstPC.church</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| August 28 | <u>First Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs</u><br>Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Doug Pratt<br>email: <a href="mailto:dpratt@fpcbonita.org">dpratt@fpcbonita.org</a><br>Associate Pastor: Rev. Steven Grant<br>email: <a href="mailto:sgrant@fpcbonita.org">sgrant@fpcbonita.org</a><br>Associate Pastor: Rev. Bradley Rogers<br>email: <a href="mailto:brogers@fpcbonita.org">brogers@fpcbonita.org</a>      |

**PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: AUGUST 2016**

You may view the entire calendar on the Presbytery web site: [www.peaceriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peaceriverpresbytery.org)

**August 11**

Finance Team/Board of Trustees (9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)

Mision Peniel Team @ Covenant Presbyterian, Fort Myers (9:30-11:30 a.m.)

**August 15**

Nominations and Representation Committee (10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.)

**August 17**

Board of Trustees Sub-Committee (9:00 a.m.-11:30 p.m.)

**August 18**

Steering Committee (9:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.)

Personnel Team (1:00-3:00 p.m.)

**August 25**

Congregational Vitality and Growth Task Force (1:00-3:00 p.m.)



### CHURCHES OF PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

(click on church name to link to its web site)

|                                                                    |                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Braden River Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Bradenton     | <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Bradenton                                            |
| <a href="#">Kirkwood Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Bradenton         | <a href="#">Palma Sola Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Bradenton                                       |
| <a href="#">Westminster Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Bradenton      | Palmetto Presbyterian Church,<br>Palmetto – <a href="mailto:office@ppcfl.org">office@ppcfl.org</a> |
| <a href="#">Christ Church of Longboat Key</a><br>Longboat Key      | <a href="#">Peace Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Lakewood Ranch                                       |
| <a href="#">Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Sarasota         | <a href="#">Church of the Palms,</a><br>Sarasota                                                   |
| <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Sarasota             | <a href="#">Northminster Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Sarasota                                      |
| <a href="#">Pine Shores Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Sarasota       | <a href="#">Presbyterian Church of the<br/>Covenant,</a> Sarasota                                  |
| <a href="#">Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Sarasota | <a href="#">Siesta Key Chapel,</a><br>Sarasota                                                     |
| <a href="#">Trinity Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Venice             | <a href="#">Venice Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Venice                                              |

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="#"><u>Community Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Englewood                                                                     | <a href="#"><u>First Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Arcadia           |
| <a href="#"><u>St. Paul's Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>North Port                                                                   | <a href="#"><u>Burnt Store Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Punta Gorda |
| Wintergarden Presbyterian Church,<br>Port Charlotte<br><a href="mailto:devon.ducheneau@gmail.com"><u>devon.ducheneau@gmail.com</u></a> | <a href="#"><u>First Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Port Charlotte    |
| <a href="#"><u>Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>North Fort Myers                                                           |                                                                        |
| <a href="#"><u>Faith Presbyterian Church</u></a><br>Cape Coral                                                                         | <a href="#"><u>First Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Lehigh Acres      |
| <a href="#"><u>Buckingham Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Fort Myers                                                                   | <a href="#"><u>Covenant Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Fort Myers     |
| <a href="#"><u>Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Fort Myers                                                                 |                                                                        |
| <a href="#"><u>Hope United Church (PCUSA),</u></a><br>Fort Myers                                                                       | <a href="#"><u>Chapel by the Sea,</u></a><br>Fort Myers Beach          |
| <a href="#"><u>First Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Bonita Springs                                                                    |                                                                        |
| <a href="#"><u>First Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Naples                                                                            | <a href="#"><u>Lely Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Naples             |
| <a href="#"><u>Moorings Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Naples                                                                         | <a href="#"><u>Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Naples       |

