



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ August 18, 2016
Rev. Graham P. Hart, General Presbyter

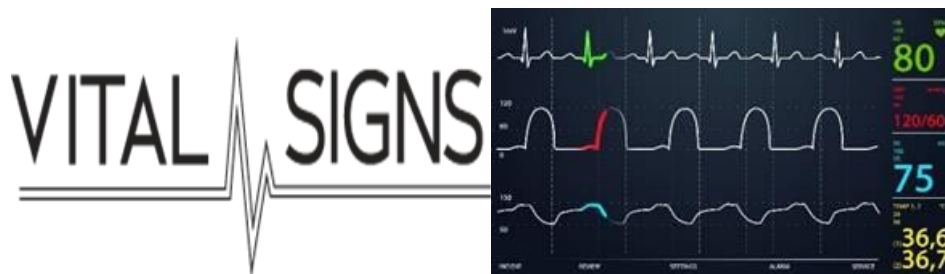
Congregational Vitality and Growth: Re-Starting an Important Congregation

Congregational Vitality: What is it? Why is it important? How do we get it?

The dictionary says that vitality is:

- the state of being strong and active;
- energy;
- the power giving continuance of life that is present in all living things;
- capacity to live and develop;
- *the* power of enduring.

When we go to the doctor's office, every visit begins with an assessment of vital signs. Why? Measuring and seeking to improve vital signs is essential to our health, as it is for congregations!



Over the past several months the Steering Committee has been having an ongoing conversation on how we can support and encourage vital and growing congregations in Peace River. One step was just to have the conversation and begin talking about the issues. A next step is that the Steering Committee will be recommending to the Presbytery that Peace River create a new team within our organizational structure called Congregational Vitality and Growth.

As a way of continuing this conversation, we have three requests:

1. If you have resources or ideas that you would like to share with this new team, please email me or Elizabeth Deibert ([click here](#)), the Pastor of Peace Presbyterian Church, who will be the moderator of this new work group. Also, if you would like to serve on this team, please let Elizabeth or me know.
2. In your own congregation, if you have stories or examples of how you have begun that conversation, or started a new initiative around the theme of congregational vitality, please send those stories to us.

3. Conduct an informal audit with the following grid. This grid is not meant to be a scientific measure, but a way of starting a conversation about identifying some signs of congregational vitality, as well as talking about things we may be doing that are getting in the way? If so what are they?

As we look at congregational vitality, using the following criteria /grid (which are all synonymous for vitality), how would we evaluate the current program, ministry, mission, initiative, and culture of our congregation.

	Current Programs	New Initiatives	Congregational Culture	Current Mission	Other
Crucial					
Important					
Indispensable					
Integral					
Meaningful					
Necessary					
Needed					
Significant					
Urgent					

In the columns next to these antonyms - or opposite of all things vital – evaluate whether these programs, activities, ways of being church, initiatives, or aspects of one’s congregational culture are getting in the way of congregational vitality and growth.

	Current Programs	New Initiatives	Congregational culture	Current mission	other
Inessential					
Insignificant					
Meaningless					
Minor					
Needless					
Nonessential					
Trivial					
Unimportant					
Unnecessary					
Useless					

If you have developed your own evaluative tool, the Congregational Vitality and Growth Team would love to see it! Most importantly, if you have identified ways in which your congregation’s vitality and growth is an essential and on-going conversation within the session and leadership of the church, it would be helpful for this new team to have a case study from you as to how that happened.

Below are some things others are doing, including the PCUSA. I would love to hear from you as to your thoughts, as well as the resources you have used to address this important subject.

I am grateful for the vitality that is among us, as well as the desire of all us to continue to nurture vital and growing congregations! Thanks be to God!

Graham

Graham Hart
General Presbyter

RESOURCES AND WHAT OTHERS ARE DOING IN THE AREA OF CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY:

[ECC | Congregational Vitality | The Evangelical Covenant Church](#)

Congregational vitality is a journey of life, energy, passion, discovery, and hope. ... you the practical tools to pursue a pathway of vitality in your congregations.

[Congregational Vitality Pathway](#) vitalitypathway.org/

[Pathways to Congregational Vitality - Discipleship Ministries ...](#)

By walking the congregational vitality pathway positions a congregation to listen to God and to hear what the Spirit is saying. Prayer pervades the entire journey.

[Congregational Vitality - Episcopal Church](#)

The Life Cycle in Congregations A Process Of Natural Creation And An Opportunity for New Creation. Parallel Development a Pathway for Exploring Change ...

[For Congregations - Vital Churches Institute](#)

Acts 16:5 Initiative offers a plethora of ways to address the topic of developing vital congregations. Our passion is to grow congregations that connect you with God, challenge you.

[It's About Discipleship: Two Consultants Say Vitality is ... - Alban Institute](#) - Ed White, a Presbyterian pastor, say: "One key mark of congregational vitality is the level of discipleship of members," he says. ... and White much about what is required for a church to be vital, recent research.

[General Assembly backgrounder: congregational vitality](#)

<https://www.pcusa.org/.../general-assembly-backgrounder-...> The Assembly Committee on Congregational Vitality will hear a progress ... To keep the momentum going, the Presbyterian Mission Agency ...

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 pray for:**

- Rev. Dr. Lou Thompson – upcoming neck surgery on August 26 in Naples.
- Alesia Sharpe and Family – loss of 23-year old cousin, Kaleb, on August 15.

### **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
- Joyce Dunn (Administrator of St. Paul's Presbyterian) and family – loss of 38 year old daughter, Aimee, on August 7.

- 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:**

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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.peacerverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacerverpresbytery.org)*

**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, Sarasota</a>                                  |
| <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       |



