



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

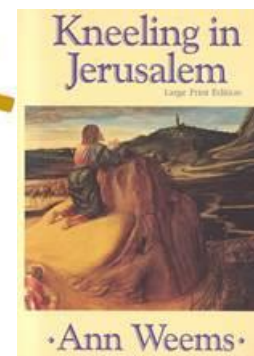
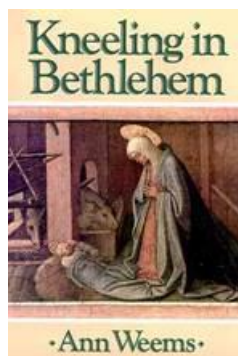


Weekly Presbytery Letter – March 23, 2016
Rev. Graham Hart, General Presbyter

HOLY WEEK 2016

Ann Weems, whose poetry has touched me and found its way into many a sermon, died last week. She was a Presbyterian elder, lecturer, popular poet, and author ([click here](#)) of "Family Faith Stories", "Reaching for Rainbows", "Searching for Shalom", "Kneeling in Bethlehem", "Kneeling in Jerusalem", "Psalms of Lament", and "Putting the Amazing Back in Grace." Some have called her our Presbyterian "poet laureate"

In remembrance of one whose words helped us remember, here are two of her poems: The Holy in the Ordinary and Holy Week by Ann Weems.



The Holy in the Ordinary, by Ann Weems

*Holy is the time and holy is this place
and there are holy things that must be said.*

Let us say to one another what our souls whisper...

*O Holy One, cast your tent among us;
come into our ordinary lives and bless the living!*

*Forty days stretch before us,
forty days of hungering after faithfulness,
forty days of trying to understand the story,
and then, Holy Week...*

O God, if every week were holy...

*These forty days stretch before us,
and those of us who believe
yearn to feel Your presence,
yearn to be Your people;
and yet, the days fill with ordinary things
with no time left
for seeking the holy.*

*Spiritual contemplation is all right
for those who have the time,
but most of us have to make a living.*

*Most of us have to live in the real world
where profanity splashes and blots out
anything holy.*

Where, O Holy One, can we find You in this unholy mess?



Holy Week, by Ann Weems

Holy is the week...

Holy, consecrated, belonging to God...

*We move from hosannas to horror
with the predictable ease
of those who know not what they do.*

*Our hosannas sung,
our palms waved,*

let us go with passion into this week.

It is a time to curse fig trees that do not yield fruit.

It is a time to cleanse our temples of any blasphemy.

It is a time to greet Jesus as the Lord's Anointed One,

to lavishly break our alabaster

and pour perfume out for him

without counting the cost.

It is a time for preparation...

The time to give thanks and break bread is upon us.

The time to give thanks and drink of the cup is imminent.

Eat, drink, remember:

On this night of nights, each one must ask,

as we dip our bread in the wine,

"Is it I?"

And on that darkest of days, each of us must stand

beneath the tree

and watch the dying

if we are to be there

when the stone is rolled away.

The only road to Easter morning

is through the unrelenting shadows of that Friday.

Only then will the alleluias be sung;

only then will the dancing begin.

Wishing you a meaningful Holy Week and joyous Easter!

Graham

Graham Hart
General Presbyter
Peace River Presbytery

graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma

Summer will be here before you know it! 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.

Open House:

April 17th 2-5pm

The mission of Beth-El is committed to supporting the farm working community and our neighbors in need through opportunities for hunger relief, education, healthcare, and spiritual growth.

During the open house, guests will have an opportunity to learn more about these initiatives as well as see many of the new renovations around our campus. There will also be bus tours of the local community so that visitors can gain a first hand glimpse of the challenges many of our farmworkers face. For more information, please call us at 813-633-1548.

Summer Employment Opportunity:

Beth-El is looking for an older teen or adult to lead the summer youth activities.

The position will lead all youth activities; serve as a liaison with Cedarkirk for our scholarship program, and assist the operations manager in coordinating incoming mission teams. A valid driver's license is required. For more information, or to apply, please contact Beth-El at info@beth-el.org.

Kathy

Kathleen Dain
Executive Director

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[www.beth-el.org](http://www.beth-el.org)  
[March 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 coming soon!** It is hard to believe, but summer camp preparations are already underway. 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 Task Force 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](#))

## **RELIGION IN THE NEWS – ARTICLES THAT HAVE COME ACROSS MY DESK OR BEEN SENT TO ME (Graham):**

[Monica A. Coleman: Jesus is here, even for those silenced by depression](#)

In Holy Week, a favorite gospel song reminds the author that God loves even those who cannot cry out in praise, those whom depression has left as silent as stones. [> Read more](#)

[Nathan Kirkpatrick: Tell it again](#)

Some stories need to be told again and again. So it is with the story of Easter, a story that reminds us that we belong to God and that Jesus is out ahead of us, calling us to God's future, writes a managing director at Leadership Education at Duke Divinity. [> Read more](#)

[Jesper Ertmann Oehlenschläger: What it means to lead in post-Christian Europe](#)

The pastor of a thriving Lutheran church near Copenhagen encourages Christians to engage their current culture without being afraid. [> Read more](#)

[How to renew your spirit during Holy Week: A Q&A with James Martin](#)

Religion News Service: The Rev. James Martin offers some advice as we come down the homestretch before Easter.

[The strange, short career of Judeo-Christianity](#)

Aeon: Defenders of Judeo-Christianity believe that they are invoking timeless principles. In fact, Judeo-Christianity is a very recent invention.

[Lifegiving bread](#)

America: The inexplicable genius of Christianity is that it is nonsensical and unreasonable and impossible: A guy. A nobody. One of us. Us.

[Overcoming the small church Easter Sunday blues](#)

Christianity Today: The resurrection of Jesus is the greatest event in history. But Easter has an unseen downside for many small churches.

## **EVENTS AROUND THE PRESBYTERY**

The following are hosted by Peace River churches and are open to all:

[Intensive Journal Workshop at Pine Shores Presbyterian](#)

April 8-11, 2016

## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The following are position openings in PRP churches.  
Click on the title for more information.

[Part-Time Employment Positions](#) – Chapel By The Sea, Fort Myers Beach

[Part-Time Bookkeeper / Accounting Clerk](#) – Northminster Presbyterian Church, Sarasota

### **PRAYER NEEDS:**

#### **Please continue to pray for:**

- Rev. Craig and Mrs. Liz Countiss – Craig has been transferred to Hope Hospice in Cape Coral. Liz's health is failing.
- The family and other loved ones of Ruling Elder Phyllis Maisel, of Northminster P.C., who passed away on March 16. Phyllis was very active in the Presbytery.
- Jim Beckwith - health
- Rev. Dr. Kathleen Weller – healing of broken arm
- Rev. Dr. Margaret Towner – recovery from hip revision surgery
- 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: MARCH 2016:**

|          |                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 6  | <u>Chapel By The Sea, Fort Myers Beach</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Stephen Adkison<br>Email: <a href="mailto:skypilot_mdiv@hotmail.com">skypilot_mdiv@hotmail.com</a>                 |
| March 13 | <u>Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, North Fort Myers</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Valerie Bell<br>Email: <a href="mailto:pastorvaleriebell@gmail.com">pastorvaleriebell@gmail.com</a> |

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|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 20 | <u>Peace Presbyterian Church, Lakewood Ranch</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Elizabeth Deibert<br>email: <a href="mailto:edeibert@mindspring.com">edeibert@mindspring.com</a>                 |
| March 27 | <u>First Presbyterian Church, Lehigh Acres</u><br>Temporary Supply Pastor: Rev. Winston Lawson<br>email: <a href="mailto:churchoffice@fpclhigh.org">churchoffice@fpclhigh.org</a> |

**PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: MARCH 2016**

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

**March 24**

Maundy Thursday  
 Mision Peniel Task Force @ Covenant P.C., Ft. Myers (9:30 a.m.)

**March 25**

Good Friday  
 Peace River Presbytery Office Closed

**March 27**

Easter

**March 28-30**

Cedarkirk: Shepherds' Sabbath



**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="#"><u>Westminster Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Bradenton                                                            | Palmetto Presbyterian Church,<br>Palmetto – <a href="mailto:office@ppcfl.org">office@ppcfl.org</a> |
| <a href="#"><u>Christ Church of Longboat Key</u></a><br>Longboat Key                                                            | <a href="#"><u>Peace Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Lakewood Ranch                                |
| <a href="#"><u>Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Sarasota                                                               | <a href="#"><u>Church of the Palms,</u></a><br>Sarasota                                            |
| <a href="#"><u>First Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Sarasota                                                                   | <a href="#"><u>Northminster Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Sarasota                               |
| <a href="#"><u>Pine Shores Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Sarasota                                                             | <a href="#"><u>Presbyterian Church of the</u></a><br><a href="#"><u>Covenant,</u></a> Sarasota     |
| <a href="#"><u>Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Sarasota                                                       | <a href="#"><u>Siesta Key Chapel,</u></a><br>Sarasota                                              |
| <a href="#"><u>Trinity Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Venice                                                                   | <a href="#"><u>Venice Presbyterian Church,</u></a><br>Venice                                       |
| <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">devon.ducheneau@gmail.com</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                                      |

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <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 |