



# PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



## Weekly Presbytery Letter – May 3, 2016 Graham Hart, General Presbyter

### Highlights of the Stated Meeting of Presbytery

**Presbytery Meeting – Northminster Presbyterian Church – April 28 - See below for:**

*Highlights of Kim Long's presentation,*

*Summary of Meeting Business,*

*and a Deeper Look at 3 Issues*

### **Highlights of Worship and Dr. Kim Long's Presentation**

Dr. Kimberley Long, Associate Professor of Worship at Columbia Seminary, led us in a time of reflection and worship around the theme: *Living Wet: What difference does it make to be baptized? What difference does it make to go through life "walking wet?"* Kim spoke of baptism as: A Gift, A Call (our first ordination to ministry), and Promised Hope for the World. Using some wonderful stories and helpful images, Kim addressed the question: How does our baptism shape our life of discipleship?

Some quotes from her presentation:

- Baptism is not a singular event, it is an entire way of life, a life-long journey that is only complete in our death.
- Baptism is the gift we receive that shapes us for the story we are to live.
- We are called to live in light of the coming Kingdom of God; so the world looks like God intended it to ... so we wait, watch, and are ready, day by day as baptized Christians, living wet, to live that out now.

So how do we do that? In one example she shared the following story that appeared first in the [Memphis Flyer](#) (magazine) on August 27, 2015 ([click here](#)). Kim shared the following story and Pastor Steve Montgomery's reply that appeared the following week in the letters to the editor.

**Fly on the Wall 1382** Nude sweep *by* [CHRIS DAVIS](#)

**Clean Sweep** Traffic slowed to a near halt on Union this weekend when a Midtown woman decided to sweep the stairs of Idlewild Presbyterian Church. It wasn't the broom that caught motorists' attention. It was the woman's choice of attire, which, in this case, was no attire at all. According to reports, Memphis police took the woman to the Regional Medical Center before taking her to jail. Nobody has satisfactorily explained what she was doing with the milk crate or the bag of Kingsford Charcoal pictured below.



**Pastor Steve Montgomery's reply - [About Chris Davis' Fly on the Wall story "Clean Sweep" ...](#)**

In the article "Clean Sweep", featured in "The Fly on the Wall," a woman sweeping the steps of Idlewild Presbyterian Church was highlighted, along with the fact that she was wearing no clothes.

I will explain it quite simply: mental illness, alcoholism, homelessness. And she has a name. Her name is Marilyn.

At Idlewild, we have loved her, fed her, counseled with her, tried to refer her for some help, cautioned her, and have even had to use "tough love" at times. For we dare to believe that beneath all that brokenness is a beloved child of God.

It was disheartening, even shameful at times, to hear the ridicule and the laughter that this evoked, for it is not funny. The homeless and the mentally ill are the lepers of our day, and they are ignored at best, scapegoated, and abused by a narcissistic culture at worst.

Jesus was as clear as day toward the end of his life when he told a parable about what was truly important. "When did we see you hungry ... or naked?" Today I hear him asking: "When did we see you mentally ill and homeless? As you did it unto the least of these, our brothers and sisters, you did it to me."

For we are all broken in one way or the other. Some are able, with our privilege, to hide it better than others.

**Stephen R. Montgomery**  
**Pastor, Idlewild Presbyterian Church**

As a presbytery we were blessed by Kim's presence and presentation; and Kim was delighted that her mother, who recently moved to Englewood was able to come to the meeting and hear her daughter.

**Summary of the Presbytery Meeting and Business**

At the meeting:

We were grateful for the wonderful hospitality of the Northminster Church;

In worship, we were invited to remember our baptisms, Communion was celebrated, the word was preached, and the Northminster choirs and music lifted our hearts and spirit;

Presentations were given by Beth El, Ceaderkirk, Westminster Presbyterian Homes, Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network, and Mision Peniel;

On a sad note, it was announced that Rev. Dr. Don Harris, Vice President of Church Relations for Westminster Homes, died that morning after a relatively short illness;





We received the Stated Clerk's Report, and voted on an Omnibus Motion that included a report from the Nominations and Representation Committee;

We heard a summary of how the Presbytery's 2013 reorganization plan, and vision and values have affected and shaped the life of the Presbytery in the past 3 years;

We commissioned the 2016 Commissioners for the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (Teaching Elders - Hmingi Brown, Chris Carlson, India Dennis, and Ruling Elders - Claudia George, Jerry Fox, Lil Rea);

We voted on changes in the Standing Rules affecting the Steering Committee's voting members, as well as adding Mission Peniel as a standing team of the Steering Committee.;

We heard an update on the Church Redevelopment Fund, which is tentatively being called the *Church and Community Blessing Grants Initiative*;

We received the report from Clint Cottrell and Winston Lawson on our recent Cuba trip and possible partnership with one of the presbyteries of the IPCR (our sister church) in Cuba;

We received as a Candidate under care: Lynne Peters from Venice Presbyterian, who is attending Dubuque Seminary's distant learning program, and received Christian Faux of First, Bonita Springs, and Jordan Goodwin of Church of the Palms as Inquirers;

We welcomed Kevin Morris as Pastor of Hope United;

We approved the call of Faith, Cape Coral to Elizabeth Kuehl as Associate Pastor;

We approved the Terms of Call for 2016 for all teaching elders serving congregations;

WE heard a report on the changes coming from the Board of Pensions related to the Pension and Health Care benefits affecting church staffs (more options are being giving rather than one size fits all);



A first draft of an Adaptive (flexible) Model for Pastoral Transitions was shared;

We approved the relocation of Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church, and their name change, better suited for their new location, to *Oak Pointe Church* (it was noted that on the sign and church information there will be the PCUSA logo as well as "Oak Point is a member congregation of the PCUSA");

The topic for the regional gatherings was announced (i.e. how we are growing, making, and equipping disciples in our congregations – sharing stories, examples and best practices);

Preliminary details were presented for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Peace River Presbytery on November 10, 2016;

Alan Penick, Treasurer of Peace River, reviewed PRP finances, and commented on how the *Three Streams* funding design is working;

We were grateful for Moderator Lil Rea's leadership of the meeting;

and we were dismissed, to meet again in the late summer regional gatherings and the November 10<sup>th</sup> Presbytery Meeting.

### Deeper look at 3 issues

**Mision Peniel** - The work of Mision Peniel has captured the imaginations and hearts of the congregations in Peace River since its inception. The work there is vital, and we have been well served by the Mision Peniel Task Force which, since Peace River assumed responsibility for Mision Peniel in 2012, has given oversight to this work.

The original vision was to create Mision Peniel as a separate 501c3 non-profit corporation, like Beth El and Cedarkirk, who are Covenant Partners, but are separate from the Presbytery. The Steering Committee, upon the recommendation of the Mision Peniel Task Force, brought forward a recommendation that Mision Peniel function directly as a ministry of Peace River and the Standing Rules be changed accordingly. This relationship could be changed in the future, but strategically, at this point, the Task Force and Steering Committee believe this is the best next step. The Presbytery concurred.

The Committee on Ministry introduced what is being called: **An Adaptive Approach to Church Leadership and Pastoral Transitions**. In this time of rapid cultural, spiritual, and economic change, when congregational vulnerabilities get easily accentuated (especially in times of transition), is there another model for dealing with pastoral transitions that will help Peace River Presbytery better serve our congregations? Is there a way to accept that transitions are a part of life, and healthy pastors and congregations have ways to deal with them? The Committee on Ministry has spent the past two years in conversations around these topics, and introduced what they are calling “clinical trials,” or experiments, to see if there may be some better ways to face pastoral transitions.

**New Location and Name for Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church** – Whitfield Estates was established just north of the Sarasota-Bradenton airport and developed as the first drive-in church in the country in the early 50's. Robert Schuller came to visit it prior to his beginning his ministry in California. At one point 500-1000 cars were parked in an 8 acre, grassy lot behind a sanctuary designed to incorporate the worshipers in cars, by having a large 20' by 60' glass window facing the parking lot. Times have changed, and the building has become an albatross to this congregation, too costly to maintain, and not suited for present ministry needs. The Trustees of the Presbytery gave Whitfield Estates permission to sell their existing building, and seek a new facility. We are thrilled for them that their building has sold, and they have purchased a new facility that is located in the center of their ministry area, and will be much more suited to their current ministry focus and needs. Their new site is ½ mile north of their present location, next to Presbyterian Villas, just off Tamiami Trail. Their new name is Oak Pointe Church.

God is at work! Good things are happening in our congregations and presbytery. Challenges are being named and faced. The question before us - as always - is: How is God calling, inviting, and sending us to work with God in what God is already doing?

To that end I am grateful to be on this journey with you!

Grace and Peace,

*Graham*

Graham Hart – [graham@peacriverpesbytery.org](mailto:graham@peacriverpesbytery.org)

General Presbyter - Peace River Presbytery

## **Thank You, Northminster Presbyterian!**

You were gracious and welcoming hosts for our Stated Meeting of Presbytery last Thursday.  
To your staff, volunteers, and supportive congregational members ...  
we appreciate all that you did to make the day enjoyable for all!

### **Memorial Service for The Rev. Dr. Donald Harris**

Saturday, May 7, 2016, 11:00 a.m.

Park Lake Presbyterian Church, Orlando, FL

<http://baldwincremation.com/obituaries/donald-lee-harris/>

Don was the Vice President for Church Relations, Westminster Communities.

### **Articles that have come across my desk or been sent to me (Graham):**

#### [Daniel Berrigan, anti-war priest, dies at 94](#)

Religion News Service: The Rev. Daniel Berrigan, a Jesuit priest and herald of the Catholic social justice movement whose name - along with his late brother, Philip, also a priest - became synonymous with anti-war activism in the Vietnam era, has died.

#### [Megachurches: photographing America's drab new cathedrals](#)

The (London) Guardian: Lisa Anne Auerbach created a "megazine" of structures reminiscent of shopping malls or warehouses, hidden away from the center of cities, where thousands of people go to worship every week.

#### [Five things the United Methodist Church is doing right](#)

United Methodist Reporter: As a dedicated, often conflicted, sometimes frustrated, United Methodist, Marty Cauley wants to point out five things the United Methodist Church is doing right.

#### [Can America's largest Protestant denomination stop Trump?](#)

Slate: The Southern Baptist Convention takes on the GOP front-runner -- and itself.

#### [How male theologians ruined parenting](#)

The Atlantic: A pastor and a rabbi talk about kids, poop, and tearing down the patriarchy in institutional religion.

#### [China reveals what it wants to do with Christianity](#)

Christianity Today: The death of a pastor's wife who was buried alive by a bulldozer trying to protect their church has shocked Christians worldwide. But the president's long-awaited speech on religion will impact Chinese Christians much more.

TIME: [China's leader Xi Jinping reminds party members to be 'unyielding Marxist atheists'](#)

#### [Why you just helped that stranger](#)

Wall St. Journal: Belief in a "moralizing god" may help to explain some of the human capacity for pro-social cooperation among strangers, new research indicates.

#### [Women want to be deacons, want clergy to speak up about it](#)

National Catholic Reporter: Catholic women who feel called to the diaconate are speaking out and sharing their stories of call, writes Christine Schenk.



# **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](mailto:Javier@beth-el.org) to learn more.

## 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](mailto:info@beth-el.org).

*Kathy*

Kathleen Dain  
Executive Director

~~~~~  
[www.beth-el.org](http://www.beth-el.org)  
[May 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](#))

## **PRAYER NEEDS:**

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

- The family and loved ones of The Rev. Dr. Don Harris, of Westminster Communities, following his passing on Thursday, April 28. Details of his memorial service are listed above.
- The people of Ecuador following the earthquake
- Rev. Dr. Lou Thompson – recovering from neck surgery
- 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: MAY 2016:**

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 1  | <u>Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church, Naples</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jack Haberer<br>Email: <a href="mailto:jhaberer@vpcnaples.org">jhaberer@vpcnaples.org</a><br>Associate Pastor: Rev. Tammy Letts<br>Email: <a href="mailto:tletts@vpcnaples.org">tletts@vpcnaples.org</a> |
| May 8  | <u>St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Rafael (Ray) Quiles<br>Email: <a href="mailto:stpaulspres1@comcast.net">stpaulspres1@comcast.net</a>                                                                                                 |
| May 15 | <u>Palmetto Presbyterian Church, Palmetto</u><br>Pastor: Rev. John Foulkrod<br>email: <a href="mailto:jfoulkrod@ppcfl.org">jfoulkrod@ppcfl.org</a>                                                                                                                         |
| May 22 | <u>First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte</u><br>Temporary Supply Pastor: Rev. Terri Jo Crego<br>email: <a href="mailto:pastor@fpcpc.com">pastor@fpcpc.com</a>                                                                                                          |

May 29

Wintergarden Church, Port Charlotte  
Temporary Supply Pastor: Rev. Devon Beisser Andrews  
email: [revdev08@gmail.com](mailto:revdev08@gmail.com)

**PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: MAY 2016**

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

**May 2**

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

**May 5**

Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team (10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.)

**May 10**

Committee on Ministry (9:00 a.m.)

**May 12**

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

**May 16**

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

**May 18**

General Assembly Commissioners Training (1:30-3:30 p.m.)

**May 19**

Steering Committee (10:00 a.m.)

Personnel Team (1:00 p.m.)

**May 30**

Memorial Day Observed – PRP Offices Closed



**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                                              |
| <a href="#">Community Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Englewood                                                                     | <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Arcadia                                              |
| <a href="#">St. Paul's Presbyterian Church,</a><br>North Port                                                                   | <a href="#">Burnt Store Presbyterian Church,</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="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Port Charlotte                                       |
| <a href="#">Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church,</a><br>North Fort Myers                                                           |                                                                                                    |
| <a href="#">Faith Presbyterian Church</a><br>Cape Coral                                                                         | <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Lehigh Acres                                         |
| <a href="#">Buckingham Presbyterian Church,</a><br>Fort Myers                                                                   | <a href="#">Covenant Presbyterian Church,</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 |