



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter – April 6, 2017
Rev. Graham P. Hart, General Presbyter

Life in Peace River ... Conversations about Congregational Vitality

Over the next 2 years our Presbytery meetings will be focusing on congregational vitality. Ray Jones, in February, gave a broad overview of the topic. With his permission, I have attached the 7 Key Indicators that the PCUSA's Evangelism/Congregational Vitality ministry area has identified. Peace River's Steering Committee, Planning Team, and Congregational Vitality Team have adapted that and are lifting 5 key areas for our Presbytery's study and reflection. They are encouraging every session and congregation to engage in some self-assessment related to the each of the following areas, which are all essential for growing, vital, and alive congregations:

- Inspiring & Engaging Worship – May 2017
- Radical Generosity – September 2017
- Welcoming Relationships & Nurturing Discipleship – November 2017
- Organizational Health – February 2018
- Compassionate & Inclusive Outreach – May 2018

Before each meeting, the Clerk of Session and Pastor will be emailed a set of questions for the congregation's and session's reflections. Following each Presbytery meeting, the Planning Team and Congregational Vitality Team will send a set of follow-up questions.

The hope is to encourage the Presbytery and every congregation to have some intentional conversation about congregational vitality. One of the three core values of Peace River Presbytery is to be a "learning community." There is not so much a right answer, or a perfect way to address each of these themes, but we will have conversations, pray, share best practices, and learn together over the next 2 years.



When we visit a doctor, the very first thing the medical team does is to take our vital signs. If something is off, the doctor and patient together engage in a conversation. The doctor may even order some tests. Why? The doctor knows that ignoring them is not an option. The path to health is to:

- address, sooner rather than later, those issues which are important to our well-being,

- correct any deficit,
- and promote habits, activities, and a life-style that enhances our well-being.

Regarding congregational health and vitality - think of this 2-year presbytery emphasis as an extended visit and conversation to a doctor. However, our focus is not on our personal health; rather, it will be on the spiritual health of our congregation. One of the desired outcomes of this focus is to do what we can to learn together and encourage each of our congregations to be alive, vital and growing. Our topic for the May 18th Presbytery meeting in Arcadia is: Inspiring and Engaging Worship. Hope to see you all there!

If you have suggestions, ideas, or resources you would like to share about one of our topics/themes, let me know ([click here](#)) and I will pass it on. Look for the questions that will be coming to your session prior to each presbytery meeting.

Signs of Connection and Hope



This past Sunday, the youth group of Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, came to First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte and gave a check for \$3,000.00 to the food pantry of First, Port Charlotte. This is what Teri Jo Crego wrote about it on Facebook:

*“A wonderful day in worship today: Pine Shores Youth presented our food pantry at First Pres Port Charlotte \$3000 to make a difference in reducing food insecurity in our community; we had a beautiful cellist play with our choir and organist; 3 kids from our neighborhood who are becoming very involved helped read the Gospel lesson; [Graham Hart](#) was present and brought greetings from Peace River Presbytery; and I got to lead Communion with [Cori Rigney](#). A lot of healing has taken place at our church and I'm grateful for a presbytery that walks with congregations and is the best of the connectional church doing ministry together. Afterwards the youth helped our congregation learn how to use their smart phones-coaching them on a *variety of questions they had*. A good day.”*

Often, we talk about being a connectional church, or as we say in one aspect of our Presbytery's Mission/Vision Statement: connecting disciples in mission. That happened this past Sunday, and we thank the youth at Pine Shores for signs of connection and hope; even as we affirm the important ministry that First, Port Charlotte has with its food pantry.

Thanks be to God!

Graham

Graham Hart

General Presbyter

graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

FAITH PLACE SAFETY WORKSHOP

To honor the policy that all ministers and ministerial inquirers and candidates shall be required to attend a seminar offered by the Presbytery **biennially** on the issues of sexual misconduct, a ***Faith Place Safety Workshop*** will be offered on **Tuesday, May 2nd** at First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte (2230 Harriet Street, Port Charlotte.)

Schedule:

Registration – 8:30 a.m.

Workshop – 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (lunch included)

Cost - \$10.00 payable at Registration

Who should attend?

All Pastors, Staff, and Elders with roles in Christian Education and Personnel, Inquirers, and Candidates.

Reservations are necessary. Email: alesia@peacriverpresbytery.org, call the Presbytery Office: 941-426-8421, or fax the Presbytery Office: 941-423-9412. Include the names and titles of those who will be attending.

If unable to participate in the Presbytery-offered training, the minister shall work with Presbytery to find a suitable alternative. Failure to comply may result in investigation and discipline.

We are fortunate that Patti Jung, Visiting Professor of Christian Ethics, St. Paul School of Theology, and author of “Professional Sexual Ethics”, has agreed to facilitate the workshop. This year’s offering will discuss: Child Protection to include such topics as mandatory reporting, confidentiality, two-deep adult leadership rule, screening of volunteers; background checks, and specific Florida law considerations.

Note: A notice and flyer for this important event were sent to all Churches, Members of Presbytery, Candidates, and Inquirers last month.

ARTICLES of INTEREST

(chosen by Graham Hart)

[Crisis for Church of England as older female churchgoers pass away](#)

Christian Today: Research finds that volunteer work by 70,000 older women effectively keeps the Church of England from collapse. There is no evidence that younger people are coming up to replace them.

[The other Billy Graham rules](#)

Christianity Today: There's not just one Billy Graham rule. There are four. They deal with money, sex, power, and lies and were part of something known as the Modesto Manifesto.

[How taxpayers pay for religious education](#)

Indianapolis Star: Indiana's GOP-driven voucher program allows religious schools to receive public funds, while also rejecting students who don't affirm certain religious precepts - and impose religious requirements on those who are accepted.

[Where evangelicals came from](#)

The New York Review of Books: In "The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America, Frances FitzGerald answers the recurrent question, "Where did these people come from?"

[Why a Methodist chaplain is hiking the Appalachian Trail](#)

The (Nashville) Tennessean: When Matt Hall - this year's Appalachian Trail chaplain for the United Methodist Church - travels the mammoth foot path that slices through the eastern part of the United States, fellow thru-hikers will call him "Trigger."

[Sinners R Us? We do it God's way? Help this clergyman find a new slogan for the Church of England](#)

Christian Today: Here's some of the best and most amusing suggestions for a corporate slogan for the Church of England.

[A sanctuary politics: being the church in the time of Trump](#)

Australian Broadcasting Corporation: Stanley Hauerwas & Jonathan Tran on how we can prepare for the next four years by understanding how Christian mistakes got us here and how Christians can do better.

[Survey: Evangelical leaders really don't want to endorse politicians](#)

Religion News Service: A new survey of evangelical leaders -- mainly pastors whose flocks were crucial to Trump's victory in November -- shows that close to 90 percent of those asked opposed the idea of clergy endorsing politicians from the pulpit.

[Selling Judaism, religion not included](#)

Bloomberg Businessweek: A new take on the culture is light on the Bible, heavy on the Bubbies. Think Goop, but Jewish.

[Stuffing shoe boxes for the world's poor? Maybe you should reconsider](#)

Baptist News Global: As congregations explore and understand the fundamental flaws in even the most big-hearted giving of time and resources, they increasingly arrive at nuanced questions and conflicts about the nature of mission in the local church.

[Vatican and U.S. church leaders urge Trump to reconsider environmental rollback](#)

America: Catholic leaders from the United States and Rome are calling on the Trump administration to reconsider rollbacks of Obama-era environmental protections, warning that time may be running out to protect the planet from damage caused by pollution and carbon emissions.

[When does life begin? It's not so simple.](#)

Slate: Fetal personhood bills are gaining steam -- but many religious and scientific ethicists, as well as women, see the path to personhood as a gradual one.

BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma

POSITION OPENING:

Beth-El Farmworker Ministry supports farmworkers and our neighbors in need through Hunger Relief, Education, Health Care, and Spiritual Development. The mission currently has an immediate opening for a Youth Leader to oversee the youth programs at the mission. Responsibilities include leading Tuesday night youth group, occasional weekend field trips, and summer child and youth programs. Ideal candidate should have some theological training, work well, and enjoying working with, children and teens from various backgrounds. Average number of hours per week will vary from 20 to 35 hours per week. Candidate must have a clean driving record and submit to a background check. Please submit resume and three references to info@beth-el.org. No Phone Calls Please. Beth-El Farmworker Ministry is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



PO Box 860 | Wimauma, FL 33598

Phone: 813-633-1548 ext. 223

Web: www.beth-el.org

www.beth-el.org

[April Newsletter](#)

MISION PENIEL

A Ministry of Peace River Presbytery to the Farmworkers in Immokalee

Please be sure to contact us to schedule your next visit and reserve a date to volunteer at Misión Peniel! Thank you for your ongoing partnership with this mission!

UPDATE:

We are planning an Open House at the new location after Easter. In the meantime, please make note of the following updated contact and address information:

Staff Contacts:

- Rev. Miguel Estrada, Pastor, P: 239-633-2181, E: miguestrada@hotmail.com
- Ruth DeYoe, Mission Coordinator, P: 386-793-6151, E: ruthdeyoe@gmail.com
- General Email: misionpenielpeaceriver@gmail.com

Addresses:

- Facility Address: 208 Boston Ave., Immokalee, FL 34142 (not for mailing)
- Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1204, Immokalee, FL 34153
- Mailing Address for Contributions*: Peace River Presbytery, 5600 Peace River Road, North Port, FL 34287

***Contributions to Mision Peniel:**

- Mail to: Peace River Presbytery, 5600 Peace River Road, North Port, FL 34287
- Checks can be made payable to Peace River Presbytery or to Mision Peniel.
- Please note *Mision Peniel* in the memo section.
- Contributor information is provided to Mision Peniel each month.

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**Other Information:**

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

**POSITION OPENING**

[Director of Worship Arts – Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda](#)

**PRAYER NEEDS**

**Please pray for:**

- The family and friends of Rev. Frank Hutchison, who passed away April 1. A Memorial Service will be held on Monday, April 17, 2:00 p.m., at Roser Memorial Community Church, 512 Pine Avenue, Anna Maria Island, FL 34216.

**Please continue to pray for:**

- Kathryn Pendergrass (wife of Rev. Dr. Daniel Pendergrass) - diagnosed with a rare form of lung cancer
- Robert Berger – Rev. Dr. Jim Berger’s 96-year old father. Hospitalized in PA from an apparent stroke
- Jim & Becky Beckwith – health
- Rev. Dr. Clint Cottrell (Pastor of Cypress Lake P.C.) - health
- Nathan Hart (Graham’s son) and his family – health
- Rev. Dr. Lou Thompson – continued recovery from extensive neck surgery

- Phil Kuehl (husband of Rev. Elizabeth Kuehl, Faith, Cape Coral) – continued recovery
- Rev. Dr. Paul Eckel - 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

**PRESBYTERY PRAYER GUIDE: APRIL 2017:**

|          |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| April 2  | <u>Cedarkirk Camp &amp; Conference Center</u><br>Executive Director: Rev. John Reiter<br>Email: <a href="mailto:john@cedarkirk.com">john@cedarkirk.com</a>             |
| April 9  | <u>Buckingham Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Randy Moody<br>Email: <a href="mailto:bpcpastor@comcast.net">bpcpastor@comcast.net</a>           |
| April 16 | <u>Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jeff DeYoe<br>Email: <a href="mailto:jdeyoe@covpcf.com">jdeyoe@covpcf.com</a>                      |
| April 23 | <u>Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Clinton Cottrell<br>Email: <a href="mailto:clint@clpc.us">clint@clpc.us</a>                    |
| April 30 | <u>Hope United Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Kevin Morris<br>Email: <a href="mailto:pastor@hopeunitedchurch.net">pastor@hopeunitedchurch.net</a> |

**PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: APRIL 2017**

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

**Thursday, April 6**

Mision Peniel Team (9:30 a.m. at Covenant P.C., Ft. Myers)

**Tuesday, April 11**

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

**Wednesday, April 12**

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (10:00 a.m.)

**Thursday, April 13**

Maundy Thursday

**Friday, April 14**

Good Friday – PRP Offices Closed

**Sunday, April 16**

Easter

**Wednesday, April 19**

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

**Thursday, April 20**

Steering Committee (9:30 a.m.)

**Thursday, April 27**

Congregational Vitality Team at Babcock Ranch (12:30 p.m.)



**CHURCHES of PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY**

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

|                                                  |                                                |                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Arcadia</b>                                   | <b>Bonita Springs</b>                          |                                                 |
| <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church</a>        | <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church</a>      |                                                 |
|                                                  |                                                |                                                 |
| <b>Bradenton</b>                                 | <b>Bradenton</b>                               | <b>Bradenton</b>                                |
| <a href="#">Braden River Presbyterian Church</a> | <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church</a>      | <a href="#">Kirkwood Presbyterian Church</a>    |
| <a href="#">Oak Pointe Church</a>                | <a href="#">Palma Sola Presbyterian Church</a> | <a href="#">Westminster Presbyterian Church</a> |
|                                                  |                                                |                                                 |
| <b>Cape Coral</b>                                | <b>Englewood</b>                               | <b>Fort Myers Beach</b>                         |
| <a href="#">Faith Presbyterian Church</a>        | <a href="#">Community Presbyterian Church</a>  | <a href="#">Chapel by the Sea</a>               |

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|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|                                                   |                                                  |                                                  |
| <b>Fort Myers</b>                                 | <b>Fort Myers</b>                                | <b>Fort Myers</b>                                |
| <a href="#">Buckingham Presbyterian Church</a>    | <a href="#">Covenant Presbyterian Church</a>     | <a href="#">Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church</a> |
| <a href="#">Hope United Presbyterian Church</a>   |                                                  |                                                  |
|                                                   |                                                  |                                                  |
| <b>Lakewood Ranch</b>                             | <b>Lehigh Acres</b>                              | <b>Longboat Key</b>                              |
| <a href="#">Peace Presbyterian Church</a>         | <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church</a>        | <a href="#">Christ Church of Longboat Key</a>    |
|                                                   |                                                  |                                                  |
| <b>Naples</b>                                     | <b>Naples</b>                                    | <b>Naples</b>                                    |
| <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church</a>         | <a href="#">Lely Presbyterian Church</a>         | <a href="#">Moorings Presbyterian Church</a>     |
| <a href="#">Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church</a>    |                                                  |                                                  |
|                                                   |                                                  |                                                  |
| <b>North Fort Myers</b>                           | <b>North Port</b>                                | <b>Palmetto</b>                                  |
| <a href="#">Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church,</a> | <a href="#">St. Paul's Presbyterian Church</a>   | <a href="#">Palmetto Presbyterian Church</a>     |
|                                                   |                                                  |                                                  |
| <b>Port Charlotte</b>                             | <b>Port Charlotte</b>                            | <b>Punta Gorda</b>                               |
| <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church</a>         | <a href="#">Wintergarden Presbyterian Church</a> | <a href="#">Burnt Store Presbyterian Church</a>  |
|                                                   |                                                  |                                                  |
| <b>Sarasota</b>                                   | <b>Sarasota</b>                                  | <b>Sarasota</b>                                  |
| <a href="#">Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church</a>     | <a href="#">Church of the Palms</a>              | <a href="#">First Presbyterian Church</a>        |
| <a href="#">Northminster Presbyterian Church</a>  | <a href="#">Pine Shores Presbyterian Church</a>  | <a href="#">Presby. Church of the Covenant</a>   |
| <a href="#">Siesta Key Chapel</a>                 |                                                  |                                                  |
|                                                   |                                                  |                                                  |
| <b>Venice</b>                                     | <b>Venice</b>                                    |                                                  |
| <a href="#">Trinity Presbyterian Church</a>       | <a href="#">Venice Presbyterian Church</a>       |                                                  |