PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

Weekly Presbytery Letter – February 9, 2017
Rev. Graham P. Hart, General Presbyter

AN OVERVIEW AND INVITATION

In 2016 Peace River looked back and with gratitude and celebrated 25 years of our life together as a Presbytery (click here for the 25th Anniversary Brochure that was handed out at our November 10th Presbytery Meeting). We have much for which to be thankful, but we also have much to anticipate.

In 2017 the Presbytery begins a 2-year focus on "congregational vitality." Our new Congregational Vitality team has this working definition of "Vital and Growing Church."

A vital and growing church is one that celebrates the Great Commandment through inspiring and life-transforming worship, nurturing discipleship, compassionate and inclusive outreach, and radical, grace-filled generosity.

At each of our meetings we will focus on one aspect of a vital and growing congregation. Themes and dates of Presbytery Meetings:

- February 23, 2017 (Faith Presbyterian, Cape Coral) - Kick-Off for 2017/18 emphasis - Theme: Congregational Vitality (Ray Jones - Keynote Speaker)
- May 18, 2017 (First Presbyterian, Arcadia) - Theme: Inspiring and Engaging Worship
- September, 2017 (Regional Gatherings) - Radical Generosity
- November 16, 2017 (Kirkwood Presbyterian, Bradenton) - Theme: Welcoming Relationships and Nurturing Discipleship
- February 22, 2018 (First Presbyterian, Sarasota) - Theme: Organizational Health
- May 17, 2018 (St. Paul's Presbyterian, North Port) - Theme: Compassionate and Inclusive Outreach

As we move into this new year, giving intentional focus on congregational vitality and growth, I wonder:

What exciting thing is God going to do next?

What congregations will catch the vision to develop an outreach to the unchurched in their area and maybe begin a 1001 Worshipping Community to reach them?

What might the relationship with Matanzas Presbytery in Cuba teach us about congregational vitality when times are tough?

How we can be creative, imaginative and change the culture of congregations being institutionally centered (i.e. *come meet Christ at our church – which the next generation is not inclined to do*) and become missional (i.e. *asking what God is already doing in our community, and join with God in that, even if it means going outside the church to do it*).

What new program or initiative will emerge in our presbytery and in each congregation that our Blessing Grants Initiative for congregational growth and vitality will encourage (*note- more details of this will be shared at the February 2017 Presbytery meeting*)?

How we will respond to the challenges of this year, which always come as an opportunity to grow as well.

If you would like to jump start your thinking, and have some informal conversations on the challenges of congregational vitality and growth, there will be opportunities in north and south areas, on February 20th and 22nd, to sit at the table with Ray Jones, our Stated Meeting Keynote Speaker. The dates, times, and locations of those opportunities are:

North Region:
Monday, February 20, 6:00 p.m.
Location: Carmel Kitchen in Sarasota (address: 8433 Cooper Creek Blvd., Sarasota, 34201)
Contact: Elizabeth Deibert for reservations, P: 941-779-4900

Central & South Region:
Wednesday, February 22, 6:00 p.m.
Location: El Gaucho Inca in Fort Myers (address: 4383 Colonial Blvd., Fort Myers, 33966)
Contact: Devon Beisser Andrews for reservations, P: 941-525-6671

As congregations, a denomination, and the Presbytery, we have significant challenges to face as we move deeper into the 21st Century! Nevertheless, I stand with you in the assurance and hope that while the past will not be our future, I believe God is not finished with God's church … God is not finished with us … there is another chapter yet to be written.

With gratitude and hope:

Graham

graham@peaceriverpresbytery.org

STATED MEETING OF PRESBYTERY

Thursday, February 23, 2017
Faith Presbyterian Church, Cape Coral
4544 Coronado Parkway | Cape Coral, 33904

8:00 a.m. ~ Registration Begins
9:00 a.m. ~ Financial Forum with Board of Trustees
9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. ~ Stated Meeting

Lunch Details will be published soon. Cost: Approximately $10.00
**** Lunch Reservations are required no later than Thursday, February 16. ****
Contact Lori Doyal at the Presbytery Office to make lunch reservations:
E: lori@peaceriverpresbytery.org or P: 941-426-8421
Include name, church, and contact information.

(Reservations are not required to attend the meeting.)

EXCITING NEWS FROM MISION PENIEL!

The Misión Peniel Team is grateful to be able to announce that Ruth DeYoe, member of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers, has been hired to serve as the Mission Coordinator for Misión Peniel beginning at the end of February. Ruth will be working with Pastor Miguel Estrada, Director of Misión Peniel, to help with the volunteers, advance the mission's visibility through social media and other communications and provide support to Miguel and the mission. This is a part time position.

Ruth is no stranger to the PCUSA. Her father was a Presbyterian minister and mother a church educator in the Presbyterian church. Ruth has an undergraduate degree in Family Life Studies from Montana State University and a Masters in Christian Education from Princeton Theological Seminary. While at Princeton, Ruth met her husband, Jeff DeYoe, who is the pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church. They have two adult children, Tina, in New Mexico, and Aaron, in Minnesota.

Work experience includes:
— 27 years as Director of Christian Education in Presbyterian churches in Kansas, Minnesota, Florida and Ohio;
— 8 1/2 years as Service Team Director for an Ohio based mission to children affected by HIV/AIDS in Honduras.

With a heart for mission, the immigrant community and desire to work with peoples of different economic and cultural back grounds, Ruth is excited to begin her work with Misión Peniel!

Also, Misión Peniel is moving! The new location of the mission facility will be 208 Boston Avenue, Immokalee, beginning February 15. They are excited to have more space and more visibility to the farmworker community!

ARTICLES OF INTEREST
(chosen by Graham Hart)

5 faith facts on Trump's Supreme Court pick, Neil Gorsuch
Religion News Service: Here are five faith facts about Neil Gorsuch, President Trump's Supreme Court nominee to replace the late Justice Antonin Scalia, who died last February.
National Catholic Reporter: Trump's Supreme Court nominee may pose a future challenge to the president

Neil Gorsuch wrote the book on assisted suicide. Here's what he said.
The Washington Post: Aside from his bona fides as a lawyer and a jurist, Gorsuch has cultivated something of an expertise in assisted suicide and euthanasia in his legal career.

5 spiritual survival strategies in the Trump era
Sojourner's: Wes Granberg-Michaelson says when they go low, we go deep. Here are five key dimensions central to how we are to live and practice our Christian calling, especially during the presidency of Donald Trump.

An evangelical Christian defends Trump's first week in office
The Atlantic: The radio-show host Eric Metaxas believes protesters and the media are overreacting to the president's executive order on refugees and immigration.

Christian leaders denounce Trump's plan to favor Christian refugees
The New York Times: If Trump had hoped for Christian leaders to break out in cheers, that is, for the most part, not what he has heard so far.
Boston Globe: Christian leaders call for equal treatment of refugees

What the Bible says about welcoming refugees
The Conversation: A scholar quotes Biblical passages to show how the text affirms -- strongly and unequivocally -- the obligation to treat strangers with dignity and hospitality.

Henri Nouwen's weakness was his strength
Christianity Today: How a gifted, high-achieving spiritual guide learned to share his wounds with others.

Why evangelicals are speaking out against Betsy DeVos
Politico: The conservative Christian education secretary nominee would seem like an evangelical favorite. But some from within her own faith say she's not right for the job.

Religion & Politics: Advancing God's kingdom: Calvinism, Calvin College, and Betsy DeVos

Religious leaders condemn Trump's immigration order. But who's listening?
CNN: Few issues unite American religious leaders across the spiritual and political spectrum. Condemning President Donald Trump's new executive order on immigration is now one of them. But will the people in the pews heed their calls to action?

A psalm for the refugee crisis in America
Christianity Today: When our government is wrong, the church responds by doing what is right.

Texas mosque gutted by mysterious blaze raises more than $900,000 to rebuild
The New York Times: A Texas mosque that was gutted by fire over the weekend has raised about $900,000 in donations since Saturday to go toward rebuilding, a mosque official said on Monday.

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 Hariet 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@peaceriverpresbytery.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 week.

BETH~EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma

Beth-El Farmworker Ministry

Drive Fore Kids

Legacy Golf Course
Saturday, March 11, 2017

Beth-El Farmworker Ministry's first annual golf tournament is almost here! Here is a fun way you can help support the ministry of Beth-El while enjoying one of our beautiful Florida golf courses. Annually, the mission sends 40 to 50 children of farmworkers to Cedarkirk Christian Camp for a summertime, week-long, adventure. Your foursome pays the way to send one child to camp. All of the proceeds from the tournament will go toward sending farmworking kids to camp this summer. For more information call Kathy at 813-633-1548 ext. 223.

Golf Tournament Flyer

PO Box 860
Wimauma, FL 33598
Phone: 813-633-1548 ext. 223
Web: www.beth-el.org

www.beth-el.org
February Newsletter

CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER

A place apart to build up the body of Christ in love.
www.cedarkirk.org

Thank you for supporting Cedarkirk and holding this ministry in your prayers for the last 45 years.
We look forward to witnessing God's handiwork here in the years to come!

For additional information, please contact the camp office at (813) 685-4224 or visit 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)

PRAYER NEEDS

Please continue to pray for:

- Rev. Dr. Clint Cottrell (Pastor of Cypress Lake P.C.) - recovery from surgery
- Walter Chuquimia (Pastor of Beth-El) - health
- Nathan Hart (Graham's son) and his family - health
- Rev. Dr. Lou Thompson – continued recovery
- Phil Kuehl (husband of Rev. Elizabeth Kuehl, Faith, Cape Coral) – continued recovery
- Rev. Dr. Paul Eckel - health
- Jim 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

PRESBYTERY PRAYER GUIDE: FEBRUARY 2017:

February 5	First Presbyterian Church, Bradenton Senior Pastor: Rev. Dino Rustin Email: dino@firstpresbradenton.com Associate Pastor: Mary Beth McSwain Email: marybeth@firstpresbradenton.com
February 12	Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, Bradenton Pastor: Rev. Dr. Hope Lee email: hope@kpcbradenton.org
February 19	Oak Pointe Church, Bradenton Pastor: Rev. Jane Jones-Norris email: jjn7416@gmail.com
February 26	Stated Meeting of Peace River Presbytery at Faith Presbyterian Church, Cape Coral

	Keynote Speaker: Ray Jones, PCUSA Director of Evangelism and Congregational Vitality	

PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: FEBRUARY 2017

You may view the entire calendar on the Presbytery web site: www.peaceriverpresbytery.org

Tuesday, February 14
Committee on Ministry (9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.)
Finance Team / Board of Trustees (12:00-4:00 p.m.)

Thursday, February 16
Personnel Team (8:30-9:20 a.m.)
Steering Committee (9:30 a.m.)

Monday, February 20
Dinner Gathering with Ray Jones – 6:00 p.m. at Carmel Kitchen, Sarasota
(reservations to Elizabeth Deibert, P: 941-779-4900)

Wednesday, February 22
Dinner Gathering with Ray Jones – 6:00 p.m. at El Gaucho Inca, Fort Myers
(reservations to Devon Andrews, P: 941-525-6671)

Thursday, February 23
Stated Meeting of Presbytery at Faith Presbyterian, Cape Coral

CHURCHES of PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

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

Braden River Presbyterian Church, Bradenton	First Presbyterian Church, Bradenton
Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, Bradenton	Palma Sola Presbyterian Church, Bradenton

Westminster Presbyterian Church, Bradenton	Palmetto Presbyterian Church, Palmetto – office@ppcfl.org
Christ Church of Longboat Key Longboat Key	Peace Presbyterian Church, Lakewood Ranch
Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church, Sarasota	Church of the Palms, Sarasota
First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota	Northminster Presbyterian Church, Sarasota
Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Sarasota	Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Sarasota
Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church, Sarasota	Siesta Key Chapel, Sarasota
Trinity Presbyterian Church, Venice	Venice Presbyterian Church, Venice
Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood	First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port	Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda
Wintergarden Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte devon.ducheneau@gmail.com	First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte
Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, North Fort Myers	
Faith Presbyterian Church Cape Coral	First Presbyterian Church, Lehigh Acres
Buckingham Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers	Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers
Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers	
Hope United Church (PCUSA), Fort Myers	Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach

First Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs	
First Presbyterian Church, Naples	Lely Presbyterian Church, Naples
Moorings Presbyterian Church, Naples	Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church, Naples