



# PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter – January 5, 2017  
Rev. Graham P. Hart, General Presbyter

## 2017 – Something New... Building on the Old

January 1<sup>st</sup> - for many - means a fresh start. It brings with it the sense of anticipation – something or someone we hope, plan, and pray will be “coming soon.” January 1<sup>st</sup>, with all of our New Year’s resolutions, has us facing forward, living in anticipation of what we hope will be “coming soon.” However, as represented in Roman mythology by the god Janus, from which comes the name January, we are - at the same time - held captive and responsive by what was.

Statues of Janus portray him looking in two directions at once. In Roman myth Janus is ever watchful over all life’s transitions, whether going through a gate or door, entering in a new season or time, or beginning a new year.



COMING SOON

So, what might all that mean for Peace River, as we look back and ahead. What do we hope is “coming soon?” The Steering Committee for several months has been developing a “2017 Work Plan” that seeks to focus our efforts as a presbytery in three broad areas: Relational/Missional; Congregational/Transformational, and Organization Structures. The following is a draft of some of the hopes/goals on which the Steering Committee is wanting to focus time, energy and resources.

*Note: this is a preliminary draft, but in talking with Lil Rea and Kathleen Weller, Co-Moderators of the PRP Steering Committee, we thought it was timely to share this with you at the beginning of this year. If you have suggestions of feedback, please let Lil, Kathleen or me know.*

### **Coming Soon – The Steering Committee’s 2017 Work Plan (draft)**

#### **RELATIONAL/MISSIONAL:**

1. Increase sense of collegiality among pastors and congregations; focus on areas which bring us together, help us stay together, and launch us out in mission together.
2. Support the development of the partnership with the IPCR in Cuba (Presbytery of Matanzas).
3. Improve communication tools.

## CONGREGATIONAL/TRANSFORMATIONAL

1. Develop an over-all strategy related to church re-development, congregational vitality and transformation, and new church development.
2. Allocate, cultivate, and raise monies to be made available (i.e. grants) for congregational vitality, re-development, new church development, or the formation of new worshipping communities; and develop policies for the oversight of these funds.
3. Increase age (younger) and racial-ethnic diversity.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

1. Re-evaluate the responsibilities of the Missional and Vision Teams.
2. Develop a matrix that measures the overall progress in being missional, relational and a learning community.
3. For 2018 - Initiate a process to review the re-organization design and how it continues to guide the Presbytery in mission, ministry and work.

**Joyce Rupp, in her book, "Fragments of Your Ancient Name",** has a poem entitled "Gate-Keeper". While the tense is singular, we could easily make this our Presbytery's prayer for the years as well.

*Divine Gate-Keeper, ever present to my (our) soul,  
I (we) approach the open gate of the new year  
Aware of my (our) vulnerability and mortality,  
Recognizing my (our) dependence on your vigilance.  
Your wisdom will direct my (our) inner footsteps  
As I (we) face the future's unmarked terrain.  
Your rapt attentiveness assures me (us)  
That you will guide my (our) comings and goings.  
This day I (we) join my heart with all living things  
As we walk together toward what lies ahead.*

*Today: I (we) walk with hope into the new year.*

Coming Soon...

Thanks be to God!

*Graham*

Graham Hart

General Presbyter

[graham@peaceriverpresbytery.org](mailto:graham@peaceriverpresbytery.org)

## **With Gratitude and Hope!**

Nathan (and his family) received the very best Christmas/New Year's present he could have. The most recent PET scan showed that the grapefruit size tumor has effectively disappeared. That is the best news possible at this point. The chemotherapy regimen he received was brutal, but appears to have been effective. The PET scan, unlike a biopsy, does not show if there is still cancer present, but it does show that the chemotherapy and prayer have been at work. He spent

this past week at Rush Medical center for what will be his 6<sup>th</sup> and now last chemotherapy cycle. Yesterday he received his last out-patient infusion always which follows his in-hospital treatments.

However, last night (Wednesday) he ended up being admitted back at Rush with Pneumonia and a high fever due to his low blood counts, which makes him susceptible to infections. They will give him a blood transfusion and antibodies today to get him over this hurdle.

He meets with his doctor on January 18 to determine what's next, which probably will include radiation to destroy any possible residual cancer. So, we keep praying.

Thanks for all your prayers, Graham and Linda Hart

### Articles of Interest (from Graham)

#### [A case for good-enough parenting and pastoring by Ken Evers-Hood:](#)

Mary and Joseph lost Jesus amidst the Passover crowds. They tried their best but weren't perfect, and I don't have to be either, writes a pastor.

#### [High noon for the religious left](#)

Bloomberg: If ever there were a moment for the left to seize the mantle of religion from conservatives, surely it arrives Jan. 20 at noon.

#### [Rev. Barber: a "moral center," not a "religious left," will save us in 2017](#)

Religion Dispatches: In Watch Night service at D.C.'s Metropolitan AME Church, the Rev. William Barber called for a new Poor People's Campaign, 50 years after Dr. Martin Luther King announced plans for the original.

#### [Swastika defaces oldest rabbinical seminary in US](#)

Religion News Service: To see a swastika defacing an institution that gave refuge to students and scholars escaping Nazi Germany is not only an act of defacement. It is a desecration of Jewish history, says Jeffrey Salkin. This time, it is personal.

#### **Can't keep your New Year's resolutions -- try being kind to yourself**

Why is it so hard to stick to resolutions that require us to make effective or lasting changes? At The Conversation, Kristin Neff says the problem isn't that we try and we fail -- the problem is [how we treat ourselves when we fail](#).

#### [Why Christians are disproportionately powerful in Congress](#)

The Atlantic: The U.S. is becoming more diverse in terms of faith, but its legislature isn't. A major reason? Non-religious Americans' voting rates.

#### [One of the last Shakers dies](#)

NPR: Sister Frances Carr, one of three remaining members of the religious group commonly known as the Shakers, died Monday at the age of 89.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

To honor the policy that all ministers and ministerial inquirers and candidates shall be required to attend a seminar offered by the Presbytery on the issues of sexual misconduct **biennially**, a Faith Place Safety Workshop will be offered on **Tuesday, May 2, from 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.**, at First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte (2230 Harriet St. Port Charlotte.)

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, 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.

More details to follow ...

## **PART TIME HELP WANTED ~ MISSION COORDINATOR at Mision Peniel, Immokalee, FL**

Working a set schedule of at least 24 hours/week, this person will assist Pastor Estrada with routine office communication, purchasing, volunteer recruitment and management, food distribution, communications with donors, and other duties. The applicant needs to be bi-lingual in English and Spanish (trilingual with Creole or French is a plus), proficient in Office or its Mac equivalent, able to perform basic web site management, possess a current driver's license, is able to work with culturally diverse guests, and be able to lift up to 50 pounds. Position is anticipated to be filled shortly after the start of 2017. Salary will be a minimum of \$15.00/hour. For a full description of the position or to apply for the position please contact (via email) either DeAnne Sawyer with [dsa1546@aol.com](mailto:dsa1546@aol.com) or Pastor Clint Cottrell with [Clint@clpc.us](mailto:Clint@clpc.us)

## **BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.**

*A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma*

### **Beth-El Celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on November 5<sup>th</sup>!**

\*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.



PO Box 860  
Wimauma, FL 33598  
Phone: 813-633-1548 ext. 223  
Web: [www.beth-el.org](http://www.beth-el.org)

[www.beth-el.org](http://www.beth-el.org)  
[December Newsletter](#)

## **CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER**

*A place apart to build up the body of Christ in love.*

[www.cedarkirk.org](http://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](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](#))

## PRAYER NEEDS

### Please continue to pray for:

- Nathan Hart (Graham's son) and his family – Nathan is undergoing treatment for a rare and aggressive form of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma.
- 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: JANUARY 2017:

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| January 1 | <u>Peace River Presbytery</u><br>37 Congregations / 131 Ministers<br>Moderator: Rev. Dr. Doug Pratt<br>Vice Moderator: Ms. Charmaine Ponkratz            |
| January 8 | <u>First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia</u><br>Pastor: Rev. William (Bill) Teng<br>email: <a href="mailto:pastor@FirstPC.church">pastor@FirstPC.church</a> |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| January 15 | <p><u>First Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs</u><br/> Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Douglas (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></p> |
| January 22 | <p><u>Braden River Presbyterian Church, Bradenton</u><br/> Pastor: Rev. Glenn Buzbee, Jr.<br/> email: <a href="mailto:revglennb@gmail.com">revglennb@gmail.com</a></p>   |
| January 29 | <p><u>Mision Peniel – Ministry of Peace River Presbytery</u><br/> Pastor: Rev. Miguel Estrada<br/> email: <a href="mailto:migustrada@hotmail.com">migustrada@hotmail.com</a></p>   |

### **PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: JANUARY 2017**

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

**Monday, January 9**

Nominations and Representation Committee (10:00 a.m.) – *Change of date from 1<sup>st</sup> Monday*  
Planning Team (1:00 p.m.) – *Change of date from 1<sup>st</sup> Monday*

**Tuesday, January 10**

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

**Wednesday, January 11**

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

**Thursday, January 12**

Mision Peniel Team (9:30 a.m. at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers)  
Cuba Partnership Task Force (12:00 p.m. at Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers)

**Monday, January 16**

Rev. Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Day – PRP Offices Closed

**Thursday, January 19**

Steering Committee (9:30 a.m.)

**Tuesday, January 24**

Finance Team / Board of Trustees (9:30 a.m.) – *Change of date from 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday*

**Wednesday, January 25**

Pastoral Care Team (2:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port)

**Thursday, January 26**

Congregational Vitality & Growth Task Force (1:00 p.m.)  
Personnel Team (2:30 p.m.) – *Change of date from 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday*



## 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  |
| <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                                    |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>Wintergarden Presbyterian Church,<br/> Port Charlotte<br/> <a href="mailto:devon.ducheneau@gmail.com">devon.ducheneau@gmail.com</a></p> | <p><a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a><br/> Port Charlotte</p> |
| <p><a href="#">Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church,</a><br/> North Fort Myers</p>   |   |
| <p><a href="#">Faith Presbyterian Church</a><br/> Cape Coral</p>   | <p><a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a><br/> Lehigh Acres</p>   |
| <p><a href="#">Buckingham Presbyterian Church,</a><br/> Fort Myers</p>   | <p><a href="#">Covenant Presbyterian Church,</a><br/> Fort Myers</p>  |
| <p><a href="#">Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church,</a><br/> Fort Myers</p>   |   |
| <p><a href="#">Hope United Church (PCUSA),</a><br/> Fort Myers</p>   | <p><a href="#">Chapel by the Sea,</a><br/> Fort Myers Beach</p>       |
| <p><a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a><br/> Bonita Springs</p>  |   |
| <p><a href="#">First Presbyterian Church,</a><br/> Naples</p>  | <p><a href="#">Lely Presbyterian Church,</a><br/> Naples</p>          |
| <p><a href="#">Moorings Presbyterian Church,</a><br/> Naples</p>   | <p><a href="#">Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church,</a><br/> Naples</p>    |