



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ November 9, 2017

Embracing Both Past and Future

Our churches celebrated recently the milestone 500th anniversary of the launching of the Reformation. We of the great Reformed tradition obviously wouldn't exist, and our Christian experiences would be unrecognizable, had not Luther and Calvin and Knox and the other courageous men and women of five centuries ago been willing to embrace and advocate change.

As we explore deeper into the foundations of the Reformation, we discover that it was actually a movement that had its focus not only on the future but on the past. The true breakthrough paradigm-shifts of five centuries ago involved returning to our origins in the New Testament and the teachings of Paul and Jesus.

We claim today the motto (credited to writings of a Dutch Reformed pastor who had been influenced by Calvin) that we are a "Reformed Church always reforming according to the Word of God." It is a challenge in every generation of Christians to decide what to change and what to preserve; it is a challenge to keep ourselves in a mode of constantly being willing to be reformed and reshaped by the Holy Spirit in a way that keep us spiritually rooted in timeless truth.

Sometimes, when we have lost our way, the only way forward is to go backward. That was true for the church in the 16th century: Luther and Calvin issued the clarion call to return to our roots (salvation by faith alone, scriptural authority over popes and traditions, the priesthood of all believers, etc.).

If I turn onto a wrong road when I'm driving, it is foolish to keep going in that wrong direction in hopes that it will ultimately lead to my destination. I need to humbly turn around and go backward. The Reformation reminds us that there are times when an individual, a marriage, a church, an organization, and even a culture have gotten lost and need to return to their origins, the things that once made them great but have been forgotten or neglected or lost.

Along with a reminder of the importance of the past to our church, I have been stimulated recently by reading a book by a Presbyterian pastor named Tod Bolsinger entitled "Canoeing the Mountains". Tod takes as his metaphor the discovery corps led by Lewis and Clark over two centuries ago. Their original plan was to find a water route across North America, and thus they prepared and outfitted and trained their team to use canoes. But when they encountered the massive obstacle of the Rocky Mountains, they realized that they had to change from being canoers to being mountain climbers. Perhaps that is where the church in the American 21st century is finding ourselves: what worked for us in the past may not work in the future. "Adaptive" rather than "technical" change is required to face our changing times. Tod appeals to all of us who are pastors, elders and church leaders to be willing to learn new skills and prepare ourselves for new challenges.

May God grant us the wisdom and courage to know when and how to return to our past, and when to move into our future!

Rev. Doug Pratt
First Presbyterian Bonita Springs
2017 Presbytery Moderator

STATED MEETING of PRESBYTERY

Thursday, November 16, 2017

Kirkwood Presbyterian Church

6101 Cortez Road West | Bradenton, 34210

8:00 a.m. ~ Registration Begins

9:00 a.m. ~ Q & A Forum with the Presbytery's Finance Team and Treasurer

9:30 a.m. ~ Meeting Begins

**** Reservations are required for lunch. ****

**** PLEASE get your reservations in to Lori by noon, Friday, November 10. ****

Contact Lori Doyal at the Presbytery Office for reservations:

lori@peacriverpresbytery.org / 941-426-8421, ext. 401

Group reservations must include the individual names.

Lunch Menu:

Mission BBQ: Pork or Chicken

Macaroni and Cheese, Green Beans, Baked Beans

Cost: \$12.00 per person

(cost covers lunch and morning refreshments).

Reminder: Members of Presbytery who will not be attending the Stated Meeting are required to request an excusal from the Stated Clerk, Rev. Dr. Randy Moody,

prpstatedclerk@peacriverpresbytery.org

The [Meeting Packet and Letter to Sessions](#) are downloadable from the Presbytery's web site.

PRE-PRESBYTERY FINANCE FORUM

The Presbytery's Finance Team / Board of Trustees and Treasurer will be available the morning of the Stated Meeting, 9:00-9:25 a.m.

to answer questions about the Presbytery's Budget, Three Streams of Giving, and more.

Come to Room 115 in the Fellowship Hall.

Presbytery Meeting - Welcome Rodger Nishioka

We are thrilled that at our November 16th Presbytery meeting - at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church in Bradenton - Rodger Nishioka will be leading us in our continuing conversation on essential ingredients that make for vital congregations. He will be focusing on: **Belonging and Believing: Welcoming Relationships and Nurturing Discipleship.**



In his keynote address he will address: What makes persons know they belong to a congregation; and what helps persons grow as disciples of Jesus Christ.

In order to prepare for our time with Rodger, the following are Pre-meeting questions Rodger is asking us to consider:

- When venturing into a new situation, when did you feel particularly welcomed?
- When did you not feel welcomed?
- What does it mean to you to be a “welcoming congregation?”
- How have you grown in your faith in the past few years?
- What would you say are the key characteristics of a “mature Christian?”

At the end of the day we hope that leaders of Peace River Presbytery will be able to:

- Name the key characteristics of a healthy group.
- Identify the steps it takes to form a healthy group.
- Understand how we are called by the Holy Spirit to offer hospitality.
- Explain the steps of growth as a disciple.
- Identify one way our congregation can be more hospitable and help persons of all ages grow in their faith in Jesus Christ.

Rodger is one of the most dynamic speakers in our denomination. He is a preacher, Seminary professor, and Christian educator.^[1] He currently serves as director of Adult Educational Ministries at Village Church in [Prairie Village, Kansas](#).^[2] He was previously the Benton Family Associate Professor of Christian Education at [Columbia Theological Seminary](#).^[3] Nishioka is noted for his work with young people and his reputation as a popular "keynoter" at Christian youth conferences.^[3]

ARTICLES of INTEREST

(selected by Graham Hart)

[Last peaceful Sunday before a congregation is consumed by violence](#)

USA Today: Online for all to see is the last Sunday service before calamity befell First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs.

[The truth about church shootings](#)

CNN: Even with the steady rise of shootings and hate crimes, spiritual sanctuaries remain among the more secure spots to spend a Sunday morning.

The Washington Post: [After Texas church massacre, a push for armed guards and gun-packing parishioners](#)

[After Sutherland Springs, pray . . . and do something](#)

Religion News Service: "Just praying" is not enough, Richard Mouw says.

Vox: [9 faith leaders on "thoughts and prayers" -- and action -- after tragedy](#)

[Tingles of the transcendent don't always prompt people to go to church](#)

The Economist: The number of people who acknowledge no formal religious label is surging, but that doesn't mean that these free-ranging folk have lost interest in the transcendent.

[Is the celibacy of Catholic priests coming to an end?](#)

The (London) Guardian: Pope Francis has long considered allowing married clergy, but it has always been resisted by the church hierarchy. Now bishops in Brazil are in favor.

CONFERENCE: “CONFRONTING OUR RACISM”

[Click here](#) for a flier about Eckerd College’s upcoming conference, “Confronting Our Racism” with Paul Roberts,

President of Johnson C. Smith Seminary on Monday, November 20th. Whether you are just thinking about this issue for the first time or have been doing this work all of your life, you are invited to join us for a day long conversation about opposing racism. This will be an opportunity for us to listen, learn, ask questions, and talk about next steps in dealing with racism in our own local communities.
The conference is made possible by funding from the John and Phyllis Ogden Fund of the Synod of the South Atlantic, so there is no cost to you (except for lunch and travel).

[WALK with the BIBLE TOUR of ISRAEL and JORDAN](#)

(click above for information on this 2018 trip)

BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma

www.beth-el.org

**** [Open House: November 12, 2017](#) ****



PO Box 860 | Wimauma, FL 33598

Phone: 813-633-1548 ext. 223

Web: www.beth-el.org

[November Newsletter](#)

*Beth-El is looking for donations of furniture for its office and dental clinic.
Please contact their office if you have desks, tables, or bookcases.*

CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER

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

www.cedarkirk.org

2017 Events:

- Challenge to Change - *A unique mission-trip program designed for a variety of groups.* Year-round
- Silent Retreat – *A new retreat designed for folks who are seeking space to listen to God.* TBA
- Fusion - *A Cedarkirk event for middle and high school youth!* Nov. 10-12 & 17-19
- Christmas Retreat – *A little bit of summer camp at Christmas time!* Dec. 22-23

*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

www.misionpeniel.com

Please be in prayer for the mission, which sustained considerable damage from Hurricane Irma. The mission office has damage from the roof falling in on the office area, and the farmworkers have a lot of damage to their residences, most of which are mobile homes.

Staff Contacts:

- Rev. Miguel Estrada, Pastor, P: 239-633-2181, E: migustrada@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.

Other Information:

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

CHOIR ROBES

We have 60 robes in a wide range of sizes, including four that have closed sleeves suitable for a director or organist. Some need repair of zippers or hems. The robes were made by Collegiate(now Murphy) Robes. They are a pale grey/blue with front pleats and a sapphire blue yoke. The PCUSA cross is embroidered in the center of the yoke.

If anyone is interested, please call Rachel Martin at First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, 941-955-8119.

Any reasonable offer will be accepted.



PRAYER NEEDS

Please continue to pray for:

- The families, church, and community of Sutherland Springs, Texas
- The families and community of Las Vegas, NV & New York City, NY
- The communities and responders affected by the fires in California
- All who are still recovering from the hurricanes
- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry
- Marge Gowen (wife of Dave Gowen, Parish Associate at Faith, Cape Coral) - under Hospice care
- Kathryn Pendergrass (wife of Rev. Dr. Daniel Pendergrass) - lung cancer, under Hospice care
- Robert Berger – Rev. Dr. Jim Berger’s 96-year old father
- Jim & Becky Beckwith – health

- Rev. Dr. Lou Thompson – health
- Phil Kuehl (husband of Rev. Elizabeth Kuehl, Faith, Cape Coral) – going through chemotherapy
- Robert Dennis, son of Rev. India Dennis – mental health issues
- Greg Beckwith (son of Jim and Becky Beckwith) – on kidney transplant list
- 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: NOVEMBER 2017:

November 5	<u>Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Sarasota</u> Pastor: Rev. Michael Mansperger Email: covenant.presbyterian@comcast.net
November 12	<u>Stated Meeting of Presbytery on Thursday, November 16</u> at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, Bradenton
November 19	<u>Drs. Les and Cynthia Morgan</u> Covenant Partners of Peace River Presbytery
November 26	<u>Siesta Key Chapel</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Kathi Wiggins Email: pastork@comcast.net

CHURCH SUPPORT STAFF OPENINGS

[Administrative Assistant \(PT\) – First Presbyterian Church of Lehigh Acres](#)

[Financial Secretary \(PT\) – First Presbyterian Church of Lehigh Acres](#)

[Church Sexton – First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota](#)

[Director of Christian Education – Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers](#)

[Administrative Secretary \(Part Time\) – Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, N. Fort Myers](#)

PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2017

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

All meetings are at the Presbytery Center location in North Port, unless otherwise posted.

Thursday, November 9

Finance Team / Board of Trustees (10:00 a.m.)

Friday, November 10

Deadline for Stated Meeting Lunch Reservations (12:00 noon)

Saturday, November 11

VETERANS' DAY

Tuesday, November 14

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

Thursday, November 16

Stated Meeting of Presbytery at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, Bradenton
Presbytery Offices Closed

Friday, November 17

Presbytery Offices Closed

Thursday, November 23

THANKSGIVING

Thursday, November 23 – Friday, November 24

Presbytery Offices Closed

Thursday, November 30

Steering Committee (9:30 a.m.)

CHURCHES of PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

Please visit our web site, www.peaceriverpresbytery.org/churches

Click on the city, then the church, to visit their web site.



