



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ November 21, 2017

Update from the Cuba Partnership Task Force

On October 5-10, a total of 18 pastors and spouses traveled from Peace River Presbytery to visit pastors, their spouses, churches and church members from Matanzas Presbytery in Cuba.

The group included: Clint and Amy Cottrell, Winston and Verona Lawson, Kevin Morris and Kimberly Carr, Brad and Lauren Rogers, Elizabeth Kuehl, Sam and Kathleen Weller, Bill and Karen Teng, Jeffrey and Ruth DeYoe, Wally and Joyce Johnson, and Graham Hart.



We discovered the *Cuban-Reformed Presbyterian Church in*



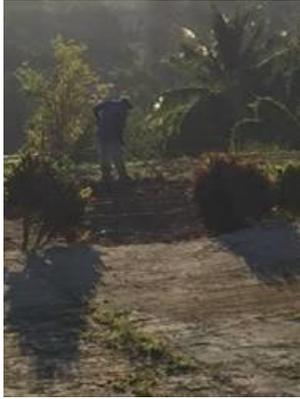
Cuba has thrived, despite many historical challenges and continued shortages (for the history of the Presbyterian church in Cuba, explore

www.cubapartnersnetwork.org). Each of the Peace River travelers had different experiences as we tried to experience and relate to the ministry and life of our Presbyterian brothers and sisters. All of us were moved in various ways.

Our hope is to build a partnership with the Presbyterian church there ... only 175 miles between the Southern end of our Presbytery and the city of Matanzas! While we have things to bring to the partnership, they have a LOT to teach us. One pastor from our group remarked that the church of Cuba has, "Learned contentment and can teach that to all of us here." But there is more; they have truly learned to trust and hope in God.

Challenges between the language, politics and governmental structures are quite real and cannot be ignored. As one of our colleagues in Cuba is so quick to say, "It is complicated." But there is one overriding factor that draws us together: Jesus Christ. And a potential partnership brings the opportunity not just for cross cultural experience, although exciting in itself, but for Christians from Peace River to see how the church has flourished as a distinct minority and even under persecution. There are also incredible future opportunities with everything from sharing seminary students to joint missions in our presbytery or with churches in Cuba to simply worshipping with each other. And this





is to be a partnership, not a mission. The emphasis is people to people, with the Holy Spirit. Cuba is not set up for hammer and nail teams from the U.S.

Next Steps ...

After discussions with our Cuban hosts, we propose that:

1. Peace River Presbytery begin to finalize a partnership agreement with the goal of having an agreement ready by the February 22nd Presbytery meeting. This will begin by looking at how other U.S. presbyteries have partnered with the Cuban church.
2. We organize another group to travel to Cuba in late Spring (April or May time frame). It is felt that it is essential that the bulk of this group be members/ruling elders that are looking to develop a congregation(s)-to-congregation(s) partnership. Various Peace River congregations in the U.S. may team up to form joint partnerships. Our congregations working together is a nice fringe benefit. Please email [Kevin Morris](#) or [Graham Hart](#) if you want to have your name or church be on a contact list, so we can send you information when we have more details.
3. We continue to work to build a deeper relationship base. It was felt that it is essential for this to be a congregation supported partnership to ensure continuity of the ongoing partnership.



With Thanksgiving and Gratitude,

Kevin Morris, Ruth DeMoe, Clint Cottrell, Winston Lawson, Graham Hart, and Ofelia Uribe (current members of the Presbytery's Cuba Partnership Task Force)

THANK YOU!

KIRKWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BRADENTON

for hosting the Presbytery for the Stated Meeting
last Thursday, November 16!

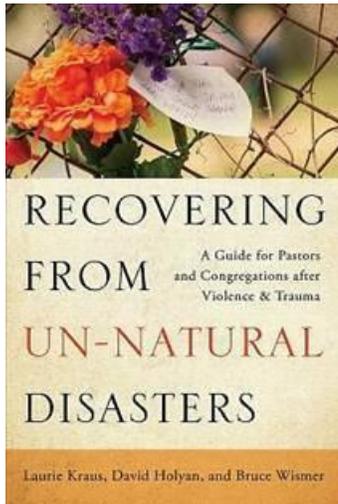
Thanks to your gracious and hospitable staff and volunteers,
the day was a wonderful experience for all!

Un-Natural Disasters Workshop

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

9:30-11:30 a.m.

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port, FL



"As news stories about gun violence, suicides and sexual abuse seem far too common, it's important for pastors and faith leaders to learn how to handle un-natural disasters that could or perhaps already have occurred within their communities."
(from the back cover of the *Recovering from Un-Natural Disaster*)

On Wednesday, December 6, 2017 from 9:30-11:30, we are pleased that the leadership of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance will be with us to lead a conversation on this tragic, timely, and now all too familiar topic. The workshop will be at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in North Port.

Given the tragic events of the past month, the book RECOVERING FROM UN-NATURAL DISASTERS: A Guide for Pastors and Congregations after Violence and Trauma, will be a helpful resource for us all. If you would like a **FREE** copy of this book, please let Alesia at the Presbytery Office know (alesia@peacriverpresbytery.org).

The book was authored by Laurie Kraus, Director of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Bruce Wismer, Co-pastor of Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, and David Holyan. The authors have led in the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network, and often been our denominations first responders to some of the worst un-natural tragedies that have occurred in our country over the past decade. They are also certified compassion fatigue professionals through the International Association of Trauma Professionals.

Please join Laurie Kraus, Director in PDA, Jim Kirk, the Associate Director of PDA for National Disasters, and Bruce Wismer on Wednesday, December 6th from 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in North Port, for a conversation on this timely book and subject, given recent events.

Please email your reservations to alesia@peacriverpresbytery.org **by Monday, November 27th** if you would like to attend this workshop and let her know also if you would like a **FREE** copy of the book, **Recovering from Un-Natural Disasters**.

ARTICLES of INTEREST

(selected by Graham Hart)

[Some Alabama evangelicals see Roy Moore as a man of Christian values. Others are torn.](#)

The Washington Post: Some point to Moore's past actions, which suggest an unrelenting devotion to the Bible: Moore's belief in the supremacy of a Christian God over the Constitution, his rebellion while a judge against same-sex marriages, his lamenting of the removal of God from schools and public life. Other evangelicals, though, feel the allegations force them to make an uncomfortable decision.

The Washington Post: [Roy Moore allegations prompt reflections on fundamentalist culture in which some Christian men date teens.](#)

[In guidance to teachers, Church of England targets anti-LGBT bullying](#)

NPR: The Church of England is advising teachers to allow and encourage children to explore their gender identity.

[Executives fail to execute strategy because they're too internally focused](#)

Harvard Business Review: A full 61% of executives said they were not prepared for the strategic challenges they faced upon being appointed to senior leadership roles. It's no surprise, then, that 50%-60% of executives fail within the first 18 months of being promoted or hired.

[Retirement is 'the real world' for me](#)

National Catholic Reporter: Life outside of a rectory is much more like the lives of the average lay person than life inside the protective cocoon of church institutions.

[How to escape from Roy Moore's evangelicalism](#)

The New York Times: If you don't think right-wing politics should dominate Christian life, where can you find the right congregation?

The Atlantic: [Christian support for Roy Moore 'looks like hypocrisy to the outside world'](#)

[Can scripture "speak for itself"? A look inside the Museum of the Bible](#)

Religion & Politics: The Green family has increasingly tried to present the museum as a neutral enterprise, one that will not privilege their own point of view, even as evidence to the contrary has overshadowed those claims.

The Washington Post: [The Ark vs. the Covenant: The dramatic contrast between the Creation Museum and the Museum of the Bible](#)

[Advent has been taken over by consumerism, clergy warn, as sales of luxury calendars soar](#)

The (London) Telegraph: Where once opening an advent calendar window each day in December to find a festive image was enough to inspire Christmas spirit, versions with a gift behind each door are the new must have.

BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma

www.beth-el.org



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
- 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: miguestrada@hotmail.com
- Ruth DeYoe, Mission Coordinator, P: 386-793-6151, E: ruthdeyoe@gmail.com
- General Email: misionpenielpeacriver@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 pray for:

- Dave Gowen and Family, in the loss of his wife, Marjorie Ann, on November 19. Dave is a Parish Associate at Faith Presbyterian, Cape Coral.

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
- 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

PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: 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 23

THANKSGIVING

Wednesday, November 22 – 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.

