



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ October 4, 2017

Rev. Graham P. Hart, General Presbyter

~ Updates ~

(See below for – Irma, Immokalee, Cuba, tragedy in Las Vegas, Covenant Partners, Presbytery Gatherings on Recovery and Radical Generosity and more.)

Update on Hurricane Recovery - Immokalee:

One of the many tragedies of Hurricane Irma is those most vulnerable are now even more vulnerable.

After Hurricane Irma, in conversations with Miguel Estrada of Mision Peniel and Greg Asbed of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), when asked what is the most important issue for the long-term recovery of the farm worker community, both identified the deplorable housing conditions in Immokalee. Why?

The Problem: the current housing stock in Immokalee for the migrant farm worker and his/her family consists of dilapidated trailers which landlords rent for \$60 per person per week. This translates for a family of 5 into a monthly rental of \$1200 per month. Often 2 or 3 families share a trailer which means landlords are making over \$1200- \$2000 a month for a rental property that in most other places would likely be condemned as unsafe or unlivable. What some would have called deplorable before the storm, the hurricane has just made more deplorable.



Miguel and Greg agreed that the urgent need right now is water and food. But long-term - the most impactful and life-transforming issue that we as Presbyterians could do relates to housing.

This is a hard conversation to have, and it is complicated by the many local, county, state, and even national political, economic, racial-ethnic, and agricultural under-currents and long-standing practices.

The “challenge” is developing a sustainable housing alternative for the migrant farm worker in Immokalee that provides decent, affordable, and appropriate housing (i.e. based on the unique work patterns of the migrant farm worker). Maybe one positive, redemptive outcome of Hurricane Irma will be that it will create a “tipping point” in our corporate/community awareness of the deplorable housing conditions in Immokalee, so that a “new will and way” to affect change can emerge.

At the September 21th meeting of the Steering Committee, in our conversation about Irma’s impact on our congregations and our Presbytery, we also made a commitment to continue conversations about the migrant housing issues, and to talk with others who are committed to addressing this long-standing concern within the bounds of Peace River. More to follow. If you have a passion for this issue and down the road would like to be involved, let me know ([click here to send me an e-mail](#)). Thanks.

Also, Miguel has shared with us that because the tomato seedlings and crop were destroyed by Irma, many of the farmworkers will not have work in the near term, and maybe not at all, depending on the crop. Currently, the emergency assistance has been great, but the needs may continue to increase due to lack of work.

We are Grateful to PDA:

On behalf of the following congregations most impacted by Hurricane Irma, we applied to PDA for a grant to help in their ministry and recovery, and are pleased to announce, and grateful to PDA that grants of \$5000 each have been issued to:

Buckingham

Hope United

Lely

First, Lehigh Acres

First, Arcadia (will be receiving a \$2500 grant)

The Presbytery applied for a \$7500 grant to use for immediate emergency assistance, and the Steering Committee voted to forward that money to Cedarkirk, Beth-El and Mison Peniel for their immediate needs that have arisen because of this storm.

We are going to Cuba:

18 Peace River pastors and spouses will be joining with 15 pastors/spouses from Matanzas Presbytery October 5-10. Please keep us in your prayers as we engage in 2 ½ days of Bible study, fellowship, mutual learning, singing, celebration, and some play. We will be preaching in their churches on October 8, and then going to Havana for a quick tour of Old Havana, staying at a Catholic Retreat Center overnight before flying home. More details and pictures to follow.

Post Hurricane Irma De-briefing and Gathering – November 2nd – 1:30-3:30 p.m.:

Several of our pastors suggested that it would be helpful if we gathered as pastors and congregational leaders for conversation, mutual support, sharing our experience and learnings, and prayer. On November 2, 2017 from 1:30 – 3:30 at Hope United Church in Fort Myers we will gather with a facilitator provided by PDA.



Who is this for:

- Maybe you were not impacted, but you need to talk, come.
- Maybe you found yourself as a new pastor in Peace River, never having been through a hurricane before and you were not sure what you were supposed to do, come.
- Maybe as a church leader, you had concerns for the most vulnerable in your congregation and community, and now wonder if your hurricane preparedness plan was adequate, come.
- Maybe you are finding that since the storm you are not sleeping well, come.
- Or maybe you want to get involved in doing something and helping in recovery efforts, come.

Pat Ashley from Tropical Florida Presbytery, a member of the PDA response team since 2010, will be the facilitator for this conversation. Other information on Pat:

She is 1992 Hurricane Andrew survivor and at the time was a pastor where nearly 100% of church members had damage to their homes, and the church had damage.

She shares that she did experience compassion fatigue, and has learned from experience that there are ways to live much more healthfully in the midst of disaster and post-disaster reality.

Prayer for our Nation:

We grieve again at the senseless loss of life. In this 24-hour news cycle in which we live, watching sons and daughters, who could have been ours, hearing the repeated rapid fire of a machine gun going off, seeing innocent concert goers run for their lives in a scene that we expect from a war, not a country music concert, gives all of us a deep pause.



We offer prayers for victims and their families. I am grateful to know that PDA, through members of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Team who have been trained in responding to human caused disasters, will be there helping that community grieve and heal. I pray that as a nation, in which most Americans have long wanted a conversation on this issue, will be able to have that conversation. Until then, as God's people we pray, seek to find the lost and lonely and distraught in our own communities, seek to encourage civil conversations that help us as a nation address this growing blight, and we, as the church, despite what happens yesterday, today or tomorrow, will let our faith guide us so that we will be – for the sake of the world God so loves – a place of “faith, hope, and love.”

Grateful to all of you who continue to be people of faith, hope and love in a world that is so desperate to know and experience those realities! Journeying with you....

Graham

Graham Hart – General Presbyter
graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

**[THE NOMINATIONS and REPRESENTATION COMMITTEE'S GUIDELINES
for Selecting Commissioners to the General Assembly](#)**

FALL GATHERINGS

Due to the unwelcomed visit of Hurricane Irma, the **2017 Fall Gatherings had to be rescheduled.**

The **NEW** dates are:

Tuesday, October 24, 2017

First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte

2230 Harriet Street | Port Charlotte, 33952

Gathering #1: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. for Medium Sized Congregations

Lunch: 12:00 -1:00 p.m. (Note: **NEW lunch reservations are required**)

Note: Representatives of the Large Size Congregations are welcome to join in for lunch.

Lunch Reservations to Tanga: Phone: 941- 625-5045 or Email: tanga@fpcpc.com

Gathering #2: 1:00-4:00 p.m. for Large Sized Congregations

AND ...

Wednesday, October 25, 2017

Wintergarden Presbyterian Church

18305 Wintergarden Avenue | Port Charlotte, 33948

Gathering #3: 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. for *Small Sized Congregations*

Lunch: 12:00 -1:00 p.m. (Note: **NEW lunch reservations are required**)

Lunch Reservations to church office: Phone: 941- 743-5335 or Email: office@wintergardenpres.org

Beginning at 1:00 an Invitation for Conversation with Pastors and Elders concerning the unique challenges facing smaller congregations.

ATTENTION: CLERKS of SESSION

Upcoming Records Review Workshops:

Saturday, October 14 – Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers

9:00-10:00 a.m. – Records Review

Saturday, October 21 – Northminster Presbyterian Church, Sarasota

9:00-10:00 a.m. – Clerk of Session Training with the Stated Clerk of Peace River Presbytery

10:00-11:00 a.m. – Records Review

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
- Senior Adults Retreat - *A day-event designed just for our senior friends.* Oct. 11
- 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.

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

[October Newsletter](#)

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](#))

PRAYER NEEDS

Please continue to pray for:

- The families and community of Las Vegas, NV
- The people of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, all devastated by Hurricane Maria
- All who are affected by Hurricane Maria
- All who are affected by Hurricane Irma
- All who are affected by Hurricane Harvey
- The Cuba Partnership Team from Peace River, traveling October 5-10 to/from Cuba
- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry
- Kathryn Pendergrass (wife of Rev. Dr. Daniel Pendergrass) - diagnosed with a rare form of lung cancer; awaiting insurance approval for a new drug that is the most likely to help her type of 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. Lou Thompson – health
- Phil Kuehl (husband of Rev. Elizabeth Kuehl, Faith, Cape Coral) – going through chemotherapy
- 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
- 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: OCTOBER 2017:

October 1	<u>First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Glen Bell Email: gbell@firstpressarasota.org Associate Pastor: Rev. Kelly Fitzgerald Email: kfitzgerald@firstpressarasota.org
October 8	<u>Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Tim Stewart Email: sunburn1320@mac.com
October 15	<u>PRP Elected Staff</u> General Presbyter: Rev. Graham Hart Email: graham@peacriverpresbytery.org Stated Clerk: Rev. Dr. Randy Moody Email: statedclerk@peacriverpresbytery.org Treasurer: Elder Alan Penick Email: adpenick@comcast.net
October 22	<u>PRP Support Staff</u> Office Manager: Alesia Sharpe Email: alesia@peacriverpresbytery.org Financial Secretary, Administrative Assistant, Web Site Mgr. Email: lori@peacriverpresbytery.org
October 29	<u>Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Sarasota</u> Co-Pastor: Rev. Dr. Bruce Wismer Email: bruce@pineshorespres.org Co-Pastor: Rev. Karen Wismer

Email: karen@pineshorespres.org
Associate Pastor: Rev. Cori Rigney
Email: cori@pineshorespres.org

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](#)

UPCOMING RETIREMENT

Darlene Rayhart, Office Manager for First Presbyterian Church of Lehigh Acres,
will retire on October 26, 2017, after 22 years of service.

PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: OCTOBER 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, October 5

Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team (10:00 a.m.)

Tuesday, October 10

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

Wednesday, October 11

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

Thursday, October 12

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

Mision Peniel Team (10:00 a.m. in Immokalee)

Saturday, October 14

Records Review Workshop (9:00 a.m. at Covenant, Ft. Myers)

Thursday, October 19

Steering Committee (9:30 a.m.)

Saturday, October 21

Clerks of Session Training Workshop with the Stated Clerk (9:00 a.m. at Northminster, Sarasota)

Records Review Workshop (10:00 a.m. at Northminster, Sarasota)

Monday, October 23

Nominations and Representation Committee (10:00 a.m.)

Tuesday, October 24

Fall Gatherings at First, Port Charlotte (Medium & Large Congregations)

Wednesday, October 25

Fall Gathering at Wintergarden, Port Charlotte (Small Congregations)

Thursday, October 26

Congregational Vitality Team (12:30 p.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.

