

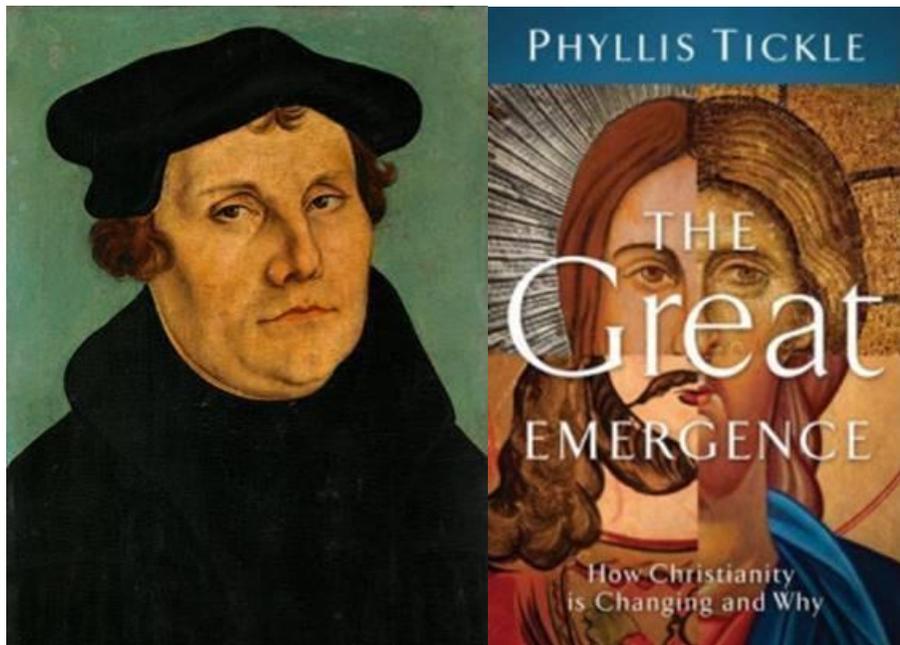


# PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ November 1, 2017

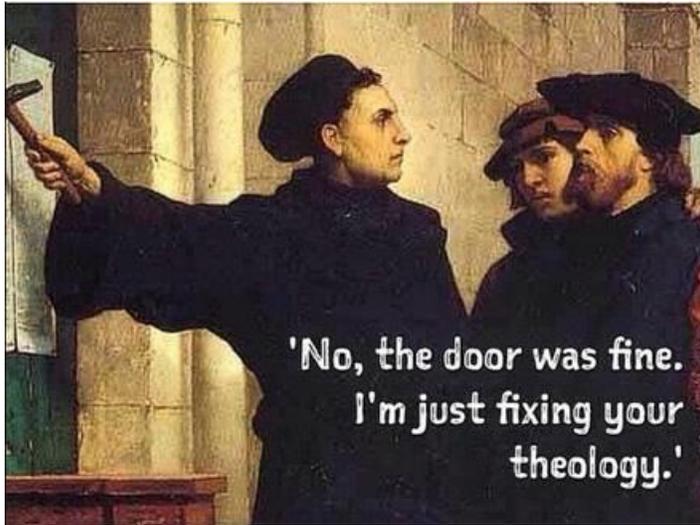
Speaking from the Hart  
October 31<sup>st</sup> - Happy Reformation Day - and Halloween



Yesterday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, as I greeted all the trick or treaters with “Happy Halloween” and a piece of candy, I wondered what their response would have been if instead I said, “Happy Reformation Day.” After all, 500 years ago on October 31<sup>st</sup> Luther began a conversation that reshaped history. I couldn’t quite see my front porch, with a bunch of costumed Halloweeners, as the place to have that theological conversation, but according to Phyllis Tickle we are entering another reformation and need to talk.

In Tickle’s book, *The Great Emergence*, she sees that massive transitions in the church happen about every 500 years, and she shows readers that we live in such a time right now. She compares the Great Emergence to other “greats” in the history of Christianity, including the Great Transformation (when God walked among us), the time of Gregory the Great and Constantine, and the Great Reformation. Combining history, a look at the causes of social upheaval, and current events, *The Great Emergence* shows readers what the Great Emergence in church and culture is, how it came to be, and where it is going (from the book cover).

So, 500 years after Luther began a conversation on the door of a church, which according to many scholars, is how debates and academic discourse were conducted back then, what is the conversation we need to have today?



## The Five Solas

1. Sola Scriptura (by scripture alone)
2. Sola Fide (by faith alone)
3. Sola Gratia (by grace alone)
4. Solus Christus (Christ alone)
5. Soli Deo Gloria (glory to God alone)



As a way to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, the Theology and Worship department/team of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (PCUSA), in the fall of 2016, began [12 part series with the release of a monthly theological reflection paper](#). I encourage you to get a group together, adapt the series and readings or read them on your own, and begin the conversation. Each author in the 12-part series explores what the Reformed tradition in the Presbyterian Church has to offer the church and the world in the next 500 years. [Click here for the 12-part series](#).

Catholics and Lutherans, the heirs to the original players in this great debate, are talking. Bishop Denis Madden of Baltimore, who heads the [Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs](#) at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said: "Catholics should do penance for setting the stage for the [division]. It was not out of the blue that [Luther's protest] happened. The society, the church, the way things were being done at that time, called for reform, and there were very few courts of appeal where that reform could begin."

For their part, Lutheran leaders are approaching the Reformation anniversary with comparable humility. "We've had to say that breaking up the western church was not a gift to the church," says the Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, presiding bishop of the [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#), the largest of the Lutheran denominations

Note: If you want to read an article on what may have really happened and what Luther's intent was, [click here for a recent Time magazine article](#).

Or if you want to view a short video to understand why the Reformation happened, who its leaders were, how it changed the world and still affects us today, watch this [Presbyterian Foundation](#) video: "[The Reformation: A 500 Year Perspective](#)."

Article: [Three Surprising Ways the Protestant Reformation changed the world](#) (i.e. Inquiry, Democracy, and Limited Government) – [click here](#)

**Some personal Reflections and Hopes** – At this point in my life, as I look at the church ecumenical with all its divisions and differences - which from my perspective mutes our witness to the world - I would hope that as we go through this once every 500-year garage sale, we would have some deep, and not door-step conversations on:

1. **Finding a more robust Eschatology.** During all our recent fighting as a denomination, I think sometimes we forgot what is at the heart of the gospel and what we say every time we come around the Lord's Table. In the end... "Man and women will come from east and west, north and south and sit at table in the kingdom of God." If in eternity we are supposed to sit together, and if one day the lion and lamb will be together, and the child will lead them, then how can that be instructive to us now. Every Sunday we pray - Thy Kingdom come," but do we really believe and live that, and do we have images of what that may mean to guide us as we seek to be faithful disciples in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

2. **Discovering a more missional Ecclesiology.** The church is not about us. We are the body of Christ for the sake of the world. We are sent out to proclaim, like Jesus, the good news that the kingdom of God has come into our world and God's kingdom transforms everything and everyone. This is not just about some future reality in some "sweet by and by," but in the here and now. I believe that when we face the world that God in Christ so loves, and when we love that world that God loves, it gets us out of ourselves. We need an Ecclesiology that is rooted in God's mission in the world.
3. **Living with a more passionate Christology.** So, some 40,000 to 50,000 Protestant denominations later, which is how many there are today, who got it right? If we make things other than Christ the center, we will continue to splinter. It seems, looking back at our Protestant history, including the wars we have had (i.e. Northern Ireland and the war of Roses and our denominational divisions, etc.) we sometime have a stronger passion about all that divides us rather than Christ who loves us and our neighbor too.

So, if any of this interest you too, I hope you will begin a conversation with others, and let me know as well; and if within the next month you say to me "Happy Reformation," I'll have a treat (chocolate candy) to give you.

Happy Reformation!

*Graham*

Graham Hart

General Presbyter

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

## 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. \*\***

The **absolute deadline** is 10:00 a.m. Monday, November 13, but don't wait!

Contact Lori Doyal at the Presbytery Office for reservations:

[lori@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:lori@peacriverpresbytery.org) / 941-426-8421, ext. 401

*Group reservations* must include the individual names.

Lunch will be prepared by the church:

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,

[statedclerk@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:statedclerk@peacriverpresbytery.org)

## POST HURRICANE IRMA DEBRIEFING & GATHERING

Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

at

Hope United Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers

7470 Hickory Road SE | Fort Myers, FL 33967

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, learnings and prayers. **On November 2, 2017 from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. at Hope United Church in Fort Myers** we will gather with a facilitator provided by Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA). [Click here for details.](#)

### ARTICLES of INTEREST

(selected by Graham Hart)

#### [Why can't Christians get along, 500 years after the Reformation?](#)

The Atlantic: Martin Luther left behind a rich legacy of protest and reform. But the global church still isn't over the fractures he helped create.

#### [My rise, their fall: A theologian's burden in response to the reality of sexual abuse](#)

Baptist News Global: Amy Chilton asks, Who must the church hear in order to be the church? Does the octave of one's preaching voice determine one's belonging?

#### [How the Protestant Reformation led to Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)

The Washington Post: Few people know the story of the connection between the two reformers. What they share in common is far greater than a name.

#### [Martin Luther's children: the top 10 Protestants in fiction](#)

The (London) Guardian: On 31 October 1517, Luther kickstarted a revolution in Christianity that can still be felt in novels by authors from Daniel Defoe to John Updike.

#### [Faith leaders raise their voices in opposing rights of Christian baker in Supreme Court case](#)

The Deseret News: Major religious groups, as well as nearly 1,300 individual Christian, Muslim and Jewish leaders, signed on to briefs filed Monday with the Supreme Court, arguing that religious business owners should be required to serve same-sex couples.

#### [The war against Pope Francis](#)

The (London) Guardian: His modesty and humility have made him a popular figure around the world. But inside the church, his reforms have infuriated conservatives and sparked a revolt.

#### [A look inside the nation's first residential hospice for dying homeless folks](#)

Deseret News: The INN Between residential hospice in Salt Lake City opened in 2015 to provide shelter, comfort and dignity to those who lack almost everything else.

#### [Farewell my lonely: Science reveals how faith can help meet social needs](#)

ARDA: The social networks provided by religious communities and the intrinsic belief of being cared for by a loving divinity appear to protect against loneliness and related mental health dangers.

[The Six Commandments? Christians feel four of the ten are no longer important](#)

The (London) Telegraph: The Ten Commandments are a central tenet of the Christian faith. But research has revealed that just six of them are still important to British Christians.

[Review: 'Novitiate' shares a young nun's emotional story](#)

The New York Times: "What do you seek? What do you desire?" New film takes seriously the questions that are part of a centuries-old ritual for nuns taking their vows.

**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](http://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](http://www.beth-el.org)

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

## **MISION PENIEL**

*A Ministry of Peace River Presbytery to the Farmworkers in Immokalee*

[www.misionpeniel.com](http://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](mailto:miguestrada@hotmail.com)
- Ruth DeYoe, Mission Coordinator, P: 386-793-6151, E: [ruthdeyoe@gmail.com](mailto:ruthdeyoe@gmail.com)
- General Email: [misionpenielpeaceriver@gmail.com](mailto: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](#))

## **PRAYER NEEDS**

### **Please continue to pray for:**

- The families and victims of the community of New York City and those cities/countries represented by the visitors
- The communities and responders affected by the fires in California
- The families and community of Las Vegas, NV
- All who are still recovering from the hurricanes
- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry
- Kathryn Pendergrass (wife of Rev. Dr. Daniel Pendergrass) - lung 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
- 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: <a href="mailto:covenant.presbyterian@comcast.net">covenant.presbyterian@comcast.net</a>
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: <a href="mailto:pastork@comcast.net">pastork@comcast.net</a>

**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](http://www.peaceriverpresbytery.org)

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

**Wednesday, November 1**

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

**Thursday, November 2**

Finance Team Conference Call Meeting (2:00 p.m.)

Post Hurricane Irma Debriefing and Gathering at Hope United Church, Fort Myers (1:30-3:30 p.m.)

**Friday, November 3**

Deadline for Reports from Committees, Teams, Task Forces, Boards for Stated Meeting

**Monday, November 6**

Planning Team (1:00 p.m.)

**Wednesday, November 8**

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

**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

**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](http://www.peaceriverpresbytery.org/churches)

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

