



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ April 18, 2018

The Season of Easter

by Steering Committee Co-Moderator, Rev. Craig Goodrich

As the “Season” is winding down here in Southwest Florida and many friends are heading north, it is good to remember that we are just now in the middle of another season. Despite what our culture may think, Easter is not over. It is not just one Sunday but a season of seven Sundays in which we celebrate and proclaim the centrality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For without the resurrection there would be no church and no Presbytery.

I suppose we each have our favorite Easter texts. Though different, they all contain the same themes: the confusion and suspense of Jesus appearing, “Is it really him?” Sorrow, fear, despair and anxiety giving way to overwhelming joy.

What really happened? The actual physical resurrection itself is nowhere described, but I love how Presbyterian writer Frederick Beuchner puts it: “[A]s to what happened there can be no certainty, that something unimaginable happened there can be no doubt.”

My favorite this year is the account in the *Gospel of Luke* of those two disciples on the road to Emmaus, deep in conversation, perplexity and thought. They have turned their backs on Jerusalem and then a stranger joins their conversation and walks with them on the road. They tell him that Jesus the prophet has been killed but “some of the women of our group” have been to the tomb and his body was not there. And then Jesus, whom their eyes are kept from recognizing, expounds to them the Scriptures about himself. As evening comes they ask him to stay with them, “abide with us” the old *Kings James* says, and there at table in the breaking of the bread, their eyes are open and they know him. He vanishes and they immediately hightail it back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples that they have seen the Lord, that their hearts were burning as he talked to them on the road and that he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

I love this story for many reasons. Among them is the wonderful suspense. We as readers are in on the secret. We know the identity of the stranger. I love the gentle strength of Jesus. I love the fact that Jesus opens the Scripture to them (sounds like what preaching should be) and that he was known in breaking of bread (sounds like the Lord’s Supper).

I love the fact that those two disciples invite this stranger in to a meal and that in looking back they realize that their hearts were burning within them as they walked along the road. I love the fact that when they recognized Jesus, they change course and return immediately to Jerusalem to proclaim the good news.

In this Easter Season, there is of course much business to be done in our congregations and within our Presbytery, (though hopefully it is slowing down a bit for all of us!). But let’s not be so busy and preoccupied that we miss Jesus.

My hope is that in this Season we will all become members of the fellowship of the burning heart, that we will all invite the stranger to our tables, and when by God’s grace we recognize Jesus, we will, like those disciples, drop our own plans and start telling the great Good News that Christ is risen.

Thanks be to God,
Craig Goodrich



**FLORIDA
PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE
NETWORK**
In Partnership with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PCUSA)



Wednesday, May 2, 2018

1:30-3:30 p.m.

Hurricane Preparedness Workshop with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

Location: First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte

Last year Hurricane Irma rudely reminded us that hurricanes still happen, even though we had gone ten years without one affecting us here in Southwest Florida.

Several congregations have asked the Presbytery to host a hurricane preparedness workshop, just so that in 2018 we are ready. Many congregations found themselves, as Irma was approaching, dusting off old preparedness plans, which were found to be outdated. Kathy Broyard, Director of Florida Presbytery's Disaster Preparedness Network will be leading the workshop. She will share best practices and learnings from other congregations. Please send members of your Disaster Preparedness team, or a designated team, to this workshop so we all can be ready. As they say, it is better to have an umbrella and not need it than to be caught in a rain storm without one.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars and pass the following on, so that the right folks in your congregation will have this information and be able to attend:

THE PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY AND CHURCH OF THE PALMS
invites you to the



*Service
of
Ordination and Installation*
Laurie Ganz Haas

TO THE MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

Sunday, May 6, 2018

4:00 pm

CHURCH OF THE PALMS
3224 BEE RIDGE ROAD, SARASOTA FL. 34239

Reception will follow in the Palms Center.

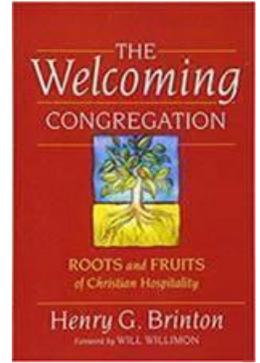


Please RSVP to Pastor Hmingi Browne
hbrowne@churchofthepalms.org

Thursday, May 17, 2018
Stated Meeting of Presbytery
The Welcoming Congregation: Roots and Fruits of Christian Hospitality
Location: St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port
8:00 a.m. – Registration Begins / 9:00 a.m. – Stated Meeting Begins
8:30 a.m. – Financial Forum for anyone interested in learning more about the
Presbytery's budget and finances, or with questions for your own church.



At our regular stated meeting, we will continue in our series on: Things that make for Vital Congregations focusing on Compassionate and Inclusive Outreach. We are pleased that the Rev. Henry Brinton, author of the new book, *The Welcoming Congregation: Roots and Fruits of Christian Hospitality*, will be our keynote speaker. Henry is Senior Pastor of Fairfax Presbyterian Church in Fairfax, Virginia. He is a regular contributor to



USA Today and the Washington Post, as well as the author of several books, including *Balancing Acts: Obligation, Liberation, and Contemporary Christian Conflicts*. This will be a great meeting to bring several members from your mission, fellowship, and outreach committees of your congregation.

Lunch Reservations are REQUIRED BEFORE noon, Friday, May 11th

Email or call Lori Doyal at the Presbytery Office:

lori@peacriverpresbytery.org / 941.426.8421, ext. 401

Include the names of each person in the reservation, the church name, and your contact information.

Additional lunch details will be posted when we receive them.



Thursday, May 31, 2018

10:00 a.m.- 1:30 p.m. (lunch included)

The Transition to Retirement:

A Seminar on Shifting from an Acting Working Life to the Gift of Retirement

Location: Presbytery Office – North Port

Speaker: Paul T. Reiter, Spiritual Director

Three years ago, COM hosted a workshop entitled: *Ending Well and Finishing Strong* for those within 10 years of retirement, which was very well received. This is being offered as a Part II on that theme.



June 16-23, 2018

General Assembly of the PC(USA)

Location: St. Louis, Missouri



Our 2018 General Assembly Commissioners:

- Wayne Largent, Ruling Elder – Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood
- Charmaine Ponkratz, Ruling Elder - Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda
- Jeff DeYoe, Teaching Elder – Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers
- Ray Quiles, Teaching Elder – St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church, North Port, and
- Mariah Martin, Young Adult Advisory Delegate (YAAD) – First Presbyterian, Sarasota,

will join with other commissioners and advisory delegates from all 170 PC(USA) presbyteries, and other delegates and observers from around the world. All will converge on the America’s Convention Center in downtown St. Louis for celebrations, deliberations, and inspirations in support of the denomination’s biennial gathering.

[Click here to link to the 223rd home page.](#)

[The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy](#) will serve as host to the 223rd General Assembly, united under the theme, **“Renewing the Vision: Kindom Building for the 21st Century,”** from Matthew 6:25-33. The meetings will include rich worship services, the election of the Moderator and Vice Moderator or Co-Moderators, action on a plethora of overtures, and much more. View the [proposed docket](#).

CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER

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

www.cedarkirk.org



Mark your calendars for a FREE afternoon of fun at your camp and conference center. Cedarkirk opens its doors on Saturday, May 12 from 1-5pm and all are welcome. We invite new campers to have a glimpse at what summer camp looks like as well as old friends who just want to spend some time in this special place apart. The zip line, climbing wall, and pool will be open, and there will be camp tours, hayrides, s’mores, and prizes. No reservation is needed – just show up for an afternoon of fun! More information is available at www.cedarkirk.org/program/open-house.

Matthew Shick
Program Director
Cedarkirk Camp & Conference Center
A place apart to build up the body of Christ in love.

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*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).

## BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

*A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma*



PO Box 860 | Wimauma, FL 33598

Phone: 813-633-1548 ext. 223

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

### [April Newsletter](#)

Beth-El Farmworker Ministry has the following employment opportunities:

- Part-time Worship Music Leader - Must be bi-lingual with good teaching and musical skills to lead newly formed music group for Sunday Worship.
- Summer Programming Assistant - Part time position working Beth-El staff in coordinating summer youth programming.

For more information, or to apply, [email info@beth-el.org](mailto:email_info@beth-el.org)

### **COMMISSIONING SERVICE at BETH-EL**

You are cordially invited to join the members of Beth-El Farmworker Ministry as we commission

**The Reverend Tamara Leonard-Lara**

as Pastor of Nuevo Camino at Beth-El

**Sunday, April 22, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.**

Beth-El Farmworker Ministry

18420 Highway 301 South | Wimauma, FL 33598

### **MISION PENIEL**

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

[www.misionpeniel.com](http://www.misionpeniel.com)

#### **Staff Contacts:**

- Rev. Miguel Estrada, Pastor, P: 239-633-2181, E: [migustrada@hotmail.com](mailto:migustrada@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 (checks or online):**

- 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.
- Click on the "Donate" button on the Mision Peniel web site.
- Contributor information is provided to Mision Peniel each month.

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**September 26 - October 3**  
**PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY IS RETURNING TO CUBA**  
**To Engage in the Next Steps of our Peace River - Matanzas Partnership**

**Who:** Up to 24 Members with/without Clergy from churches interested in establishing partnerships with area churches or the seminary in the Matanzas Presbytery. Each church is limited to four reservations.

**What:** Establishing Partnerships within the Matanzas Presbytery, including the seminary and local churches. Visiting local churches, engaging in ministry practices with that church and beginning the process of partnerships.

**When:** Wednesday, September 26 - Wednesday, October 3, 2018

**Where:** Varadero, Cuba

**Expenses:** Will include airfare (from either Tampa or Miami), visa, seminary lodging (dormitory style), meals, transportation during the week, and home stays at local church communities.

**How:**

1. Reply to Lori at the Presbytery Office ([lori@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:lori@peacriverpresbytery.org)) by **April 15th** with initial interest.
2. Return registration form\* indicating a firm commitment with \$100 deposit per person by **May 15<sup>th</sup>** (to begin the visa process which requires at least 90 days) to Peace River Presbytery, 5600 Peace River Presbytery, North Port, FL 34287, Attention: Lori Doyal.
3. Direct questions to Cuba Partnership Task Force Co-Moderators:  
Kevin Morris: 813-713-5117 | [pastor@hopeunitedchurch.net](mailto:pastor@hopeunitedchurch.net) or Ruth DeYoe: 386-793-6151 | [ruthdeyoe@gmail.com](mailto:ruthdeyoe@gmail.com)

\* **Registration Forms were emailed to churches by Ruth DeYoe two weeks ago.**

**WALK with the BIBLE**

Pastor Bill Teng of First Presbyterian Church in Arcadia, FL is organizing and leading a group in a *Walk with the Bible* tour of Israel and Jordan on October 5-18, this fall. The total cost is only \$4,945 from Tampa. More detail is available here: <http://bit.ly/2Fc2RiA>. If interested, please contact him at [TengPresby@aol.com](mailto:TengPresby@aol.com) or 703.899.0725.

**ARTICLES of INTEREST**  
*(selected by Graham Hart)*

['Is my dad in heaven?' little boy asks pope](#)

Catholic News Service: Question-and-answer sessions with youngsters are a standard part of Francis' parish visits. And, at St. Paul of the Cross parish on Monday it was Emanuele's turn.

[On the 75th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising](#)

Religion News Service: For most people April 19 is just another springtime day on the calendar. But it is deeply embedded within Rabbi A. James Rudin's personal memory bank.

### [Where the Amish go on vacation](#)

The New Yorker: Pinecraft, a small, sunny neighborhood in Sarasota, is a place of brief leisure for people who consider work to be sacred.

### ['I have made serious mistakes,' says pope. 'I ask forgiveness.'](#)

Religion News Service: Francis from the beginning of his papacy has admitted that he is a sinner like every other Christian. He made a mistake, corrected it, asked for forgiveness. That is what it means to be a Christian, Thomas Reese says.

### ['That is a start': Indiana church collects semi-automatic weapons, bump stocks to be melted](#)

Indianapolis Star: Members of a Crawfordsville church who felt compelled to act in the wake of the Parkland school shooting are asking gun owners to give up their weapons in exchange for gift cards.

### [Going to church with Jimmy Carter](#)

The New York Times: Jimmy Carter still has faith in this country, and Margaret Renkl hoped his Sunday school lesson might restore her faith, too.

### [How the new estate tax rules could reduce charitable giving by billions](#)

The Conversation: Philanthropists give for many different reasons, but bequests could decline by about \$7 billion a year.

### [A megachurch pastor resigns after sexual misconduct allegations. The larger problem remains.](#)

Vox: (Usually male) megachurch pastors have a large influence over their flock. And that influence makes it more difficult to pursue allegations against those leaders.

### [Religious belief linked to suicidal thoughts for LGBT people](#)

Reuters: Although religiosity is generally tied to reduced suicide risk, the opposite may be true for some young lesbian, gay and questioning adults, researchers say.

### [For many, Christianity and Trumpism are synonymous. These evangelicals are pushing back.](#)

Vox: Lynchburg's Red Letter Revival brought "pro-testifiers" to Jerry Falwell Jr.'s door.

### [What's Auschwitz? 2/3 of millennials don't know it was a Nazi death camp, survey reports](#)

Religion News Service: Most American millennials don't know what Auschwitz was, a survey finds.

## **PRAYER NEEDS**

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

- Jim and Becky Beckwith, in the passing of their son, Greg
- Rev. Susan Rice – health and treatment for cancer
- Robert Dennis (son of Rev. India Dennis) – mental health issues
- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry (in Wimauma)
- Misión Peniel Farmworker Ministry (in Immokalee)

- 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: APRIL 2018:**

|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| April 1  | <u>Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dawn Mayes<br>Email: <a href="mailto:revdawnmayes@gmail.com">revdawnmayes@gmail.com</a>                                                                                                   |
| April 8  | <u>Beth-El Farmworker Ministry</u><br>Executive Director: Rev. Dr. Kathy Dain<br>Email: <a href="mailto:kathy@beth-el.org">kathy@beth-el.org</a><br>Pastor: Rev. Tamara Leonard-Lara<br>Email: <a href="mailto:pastor@beth-el.org">pastor@beth-el.org</a> |
| April 15 | <u>Buckingham Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Randy Moody<br>Email: <a href="mailto:bpcpastor@comcast.net">bpcpastor@comcast.net</a>                                                                                              |
| April 22 | <u>Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jeff DeYoe<br>Email: <a href="mailto:jdeyoe@covpcf.com">jdeyoe@covpcf.com</a>                                                                                                         |
| April 29 | <u>Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Clint Cottrell<br>Email: <a href="mailto:clint@clpc.us">clint@clpc.us</a>                                                                                                         |

**CHURCH SUPPORT STAFF OPENINGS**

Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda:  
[Organist/Primary Accompanist](#)

**PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: APRIL-MAY 2018**

*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.*

**Thursday, April 19**

Congregational Vitality Team (12:30 p.m.) \*Please note date change.

**Sunday, April 22**

Commissioning Service for The Reverend Tamara Leonard-Lara at Beth-El Farmworker Ministry (3:00 p.m.)

**Thursday, April 26**

Pastors' Meeting – Sponsored by the Congregational Vitality Team (1:00 p.m. at First, Port Charlotte)

**Wednesday, May 2**

Hurricane Preparedness Workshop with PDA (1:30-3:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte)

**Thursday, May 3**

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

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

Steering Committee (1:30 p.m.)

**Sunday, May 6**

Laurie Haas Ordination and Installation Service (4:00 p.m. at Church of the Palms)

**Monday, May 7**

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

Planning Team (1:30 p.m.)

**Tuesday, May 8**

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

**Wednesday, May 9**

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

**Thursday, May 10**

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

**Thursday, May 17**

Stated Meeting of Presbytery (at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port)

**Thursday, May 24**

Records Review Planning Meeting (10:00 a.m.-12:00 n.)

Congregational Vitality Team (12:30 p.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.



