



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

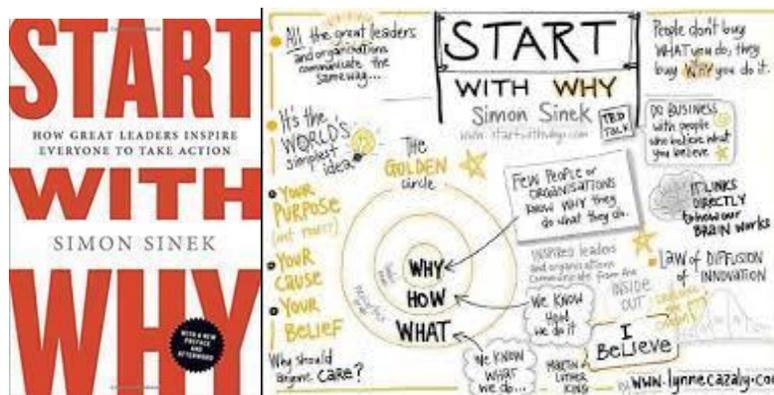


Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ May 3, 2018

Three Essential Questions As We look Ahead By: Graham Hart - General Presbyter

Why does Peace River Presbytery exist? What is God calling us to do? How will we accomplish our goals?

Call them the **Why – What – How** questions. Every organization including churches and presbyteries do well to periodically pause and reflect on those questions. (Note: Simon Sinek is one of the most watched TED talks and speaks about these questions as the Golden Circle – [click here to watch](#)).



Peace River has asked these “Golden Circle” questions over the years and is in a planning/discernment process again.

It was 17 years ago this month at the May meeting of Presbytery that I was called to be your General Presbyter. What initially captivated my attention about this place called Peace River was some lively conversation with your search committee about the Presbytery’s vision and its recent mission study/strategic planning process. At the time it was not framed around the “Why, What, and How” questions, but those three questions were at the heart of my subsequent “call” to this place.

Since then we have taken time to pause and discern, again and again, as to what God is calling us to be and do. In 2006 the Presbytery took time to look at its goals, in 2011/12 the Presbytery did a major re-thinking of our purpose and organizational structure, which was launched and adopted in 2013. At the time, the Guide Team (strategic planning) produced a 20-minute video overview of the hopes and dreams they had. It is still instructive and informative for our life together. I would encourage you to take 20 minutes to look at that. [Click here](#) to Watch: [A New Design for Peace River Presbytery](#).



In 2013, we said that in 5 years we would review the benchmarks we created at the time to see if we had accomplished what we set out to do. At the February 2018 meeting, the Strategic Review and Planning Task Force of the Presbytery shared with you their observations of what we have done well and where we still need some work. They provided a questionnaire at the meeting for additional feedback.

At the May 17th meeting of Peace River at St. Pauls' in North Port, the Strategic Review and Planning Team will be presenting their map.

The “Why” (our Mission/Vision Statement that was well crafted 5 years ago) continues to shape our life together, but there are some changes in our goals (the “What”). The “How” will be created later, meaning how we will accomplish these goals and programmatic emphasis. Your input, as always, will be invited, and as we have done over the past 20 years, taking the time to listen, dream, pray, and discern how God is calling us and sending us to do His work here and now is an essential and necessary responsibility of each council of the church.

Note: The General Assembly of the PCUSA is also going through a process asking the same “Why”, “What”, and “How” questions. There were 2 commissions created at the last General Assembly, The Way Forward Commission ([summary article on their recommendation in Presbyterian Outlook](#), or [click here](#) for the full report going to the 223rd General Assembly) and The Vision 2020 Commission ([click here for summary of report](#)), which are focused at a national level on those questions.

I commend the work of the Strategic Review and Planning Task Force, and want to thank Lil Rea, Craig Goodrich, Kelly Fitzgerald, Doug Pratt, and Charmaine Ponkratz for all the time and energy they are giving to this task. [Click here](#) to see a copy of their evaluation, which was shared at the February meeting, and make sure you read their report, which will be presented at the May meeting.

As we look back, we can always wish we had done some things differently, but all in all, as I look around at other presbyteries, I am so grateful for Peace River and the wise and thoughtful people and processes you have put in place over the past 28 years and in my time with you (note: we were created out of “Southwest Florida Presbytery” in 1990 with our sister Presbytery – Tampa Bay).

God is at work... we have much to celebrate... even as there is much we have learned. So, in our rapidly changing times and culture, I firmly believe God is not finished with us yet.

Thanks be to God,

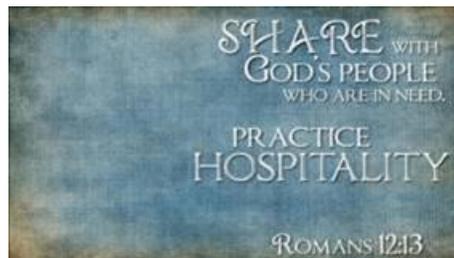
Graham

Graham Hart - General Presbyter
graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

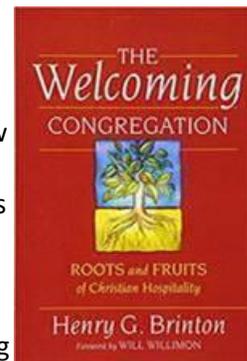
Thursday, May 17, 2018
Stated Meeting of Presbytery
The Welcoming Congregation: Roots and Fruits of Christian Hospitality

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.

The boxed lunch is \$10.00, payable at registration (no credit cards).

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
- Bill Teng, Teaching Elder – First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia, 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](#).

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

CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER

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

www.cedarkirk.org



OPEN HOUSE
MAY 12, 2018
1:00-5:00 PM

ZIP LINE | CLIMBING WALL | S'MORES
HAYRIDES | CAMP TOURS | PRIZES

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:emailinfo@beth-el.org)

## 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: [miguelstrada@hotmail.com](mailto:miguelstrada@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)

**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)*

**[How does Congress have chaplains without violating the separation of church and state?](#)**

The Conversation: The present controversy over the resignation of Father Patrick Conroy, a Jesuit priest and longtime House chaplain, offers a unique opportunity to ask broader questions about why the U.S. Congress employs chaplains and what they do.

### [Theologians and white supremacy: An interview with James H. Cone](#)

America: In this 2006 interview, James H. Cone, who died Saturday, urged white theologians to speak out forcefully against racism, saying, "I speak out against white supremacy not because I have lost hope, but rather because I too have found it."

Religion Dispatches: [James H. Cone: In memorium](#)

America: ["Writing is the way I fight": Remembering James H. Cone](#)

### [North Korea's secret Christians](#)

The Atlantic: South Koreans are proselytizing in the adamantly atheist country using thousands of illicit radios smuggled over the border.

### ['God and the IRS' stakes out controversial positions on religion and taxes](#)

Forbes: A new book argues that accommodations to religious individuals have been implemented in a random, haphazard manner without any sort of overarching system.

### [Christians in Jerusalem's Old City 'under threat' from settlers](#)

The Guardian: Church leaders claim priests are being verbally abused and spat at while property is being vandalized in the ancient walled city.

### [James H. Cone, a founder of black liberation theology, dies at 79](#)

The New York Times: The Rev. Dr. James H. Cone, a central figure in the development of black liberation theology in the 1960s and '70s who argued for racial justice and an interpretation of the Christian Gospel that elevated the voices of the oppressed, died on Saturday. He was 79.

The Root: [Father of black liberation theology, Dr. James Cone, dies at 79](#)

### [A welcoming church no more](#)

Los Angeles Review of Books: Sam Washington has divorced himself from the evangelical church because the 2016 election highlighted the fact that the people he considered his brothers and sisters in Christ truly never saw him as such.

### [Gifts from God](#)

The Washington Post: How religion is coming to terms with modern fertility methods.

### [How a spirituality startup is solving Silicon Valley's religious apathy](#)

Forbes: Where other religious folks see despondency, Tara-Nicholle Nelson sees opportunity, with launch of SoulTour, a hybrid social network, app, and offline community that provides religion-agnostic uplifting content.

### [The pious presidency of Jimmy Carter](#)

The New York Times: Garry Wills reviews Jimmy Carter's new book, Faith: A Journey for All.

The Conversation: [Why this conservative bastion chose a liberal evangelical icon for its commencement speech](#)

### [At a private meeting in Illinois, a group of evangelicals tried to save their movement from Trumpism](#)

The New Yorker: A recent meeting of evangelicals at Wheaton left Katelyn Beaty feeling deeply unsettled about the moral and political fortitude of her spiritual community in the era of Trump and beyond.

[Scholarship is necessary part of seminary formation](#)

National Catholic Reporter: Without a rigorous course of study, newly ordained priests will be ill equipped to operate effectively, whether they be of a conservative, liberal or moderate bent.

[Faith no more: Are Scotland's churches facing a crisis of Christianity?](#)

The (Dundee, Scotland) Courier: As churchgoer numbers continue to fall in Scotland, is Christianity in crisis?

**PRAYER NEEDS**

**Please continue to pray for:**

- The family of the Rev. Susan Rice-Waller, who passed away on April 21, 2018. Please note Memorial Service arrangements in Susan's [obituary](#).
- The Rev. Daniel Herlein - health
- Jim and Becky Beckwith, in the passing of their son, Greg
- 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: MAY 2018:**

|        |                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| May 6  | <u>Hope United Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Kevin Morris<br>Email: <a href="mailto:pastor@hopeunitedchurch.net">pastor@hopeunitedchurch.net</a> |
| May 13 | <u>PRP Stated Meeting at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church</u><br>May 17, 2018                                                                                            |
| May 20 | <u>Chapel By The Sea, Fort Myers Beach</u><br>Pastor: Rev. Dr. Stephen Adkison<br>Email: <a href="mailto:skypilot_mddiv@hotmail.com">skypilot_mddiv@hotmail.com</a>    |
| May 27 | <u>Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, N. Fort Myers</u><br>Interim Pastor: Rev. R.C. Smith<br>Email: <a href="mailto:revrcsmith5@aol.com">revrcsmith5@aol.com</a>       |

## CHURCH SUPPORT STAFF OPENINGS

First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia:  
[Part-Time Children and Youth Director](#)

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, May 3**

Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team (10:00 a.m.)  
Steering Committee (1:30 p.m.)

### **Saturday, May 5**

Memorial Service for The Reverend Susan Rice-Waller (1:00 p.m. at Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church, Naples)

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

### **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.

