



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ September 7, 2018

Regional Gatherings Conclude Focus On: *VITAL CONGREGATIONS*

In February 2017, the Presbytery embarked on an 18-month journey asking the question: What are things that make for vital congregations? The Congregational Vitality Team at each Presbytery meeting lifted one of the following themes for our consideration:

- **Inspiring & Engaging Worship,**
- **Radical Generosity,**
- **Welcoming Relationships & Nurturing Discipleship,**
- **Organizational Health,**
- **Compassionate & Inclusive Outreach**

We have had some great speakers since Ray Jones began our focus at Faith, Capel Coral in February 2017. Also, we thank the Congregational Vitality Team who, prior to each Presbytery meeting, sent a series of questions for the sessions to consider related to the topic. Our focus on Vital Congregations concluded yesterday with the regional meetings.



At each of the three regional Presbytery Gatherings, we shared best practices, new learnings, and programs related to one of the themes that we have tried. Also, we lifted questions that arose as we reflected on each of those 5 areas. The conversations have been rich, elders who have come shared the value and importance of having the leaders of congregations sitting together discussing these questions and hearing from one another.

For those unable to make one of the 3 regional meetings, the focus questions for each theme and our “Table Talk” discussions were:

1. **What does your congregation find especially energizing, inspiring, or nourishing in your worship services? How does the service stay with you during the week and motivate your Christian living?**

2. **What steps has your church taken to increase or deepen faithful generosity of time, talent and treasure?**
3. **What is your church doing to encourage spiritual growth and discipleship (deepening commitment to Christ) for all ages?**
4. **In what aspects of organizational health (vision, values, mission, structure, emotional health) is your church strong? And how can you address your weaknesses?**
5. **How does your congregation welcome and build relationships with newcomers? And how does your congregation reach out to the un-churched and de-churched in the community?**

Attached is the background material that was shared at the regional meetings and went with each of the five questions. We suggest that you consider using the discussion guide and focus questions at some congregational gatherings, session meeting, or retreat.

Just because our thematic focus ended yesterday, that does not mean the importance of asking questions related to “what makes for vital, alive, and growing congregations” ends. We will continue to do so in new ways. If you have insights or new programs that came out of this emphasis, the Congregational Vitality Team would love to hear from you (contact [Elizabeth Deibert](#) or [me](#)). Also, if you have suggested follow up themes, activities, or suggested speakers for future Presbytery meetings, let me know and I will share that with the leadership of our Planning Team.



I am a firm believer in the principle that we grow in the direction of the questions we ask. If we are not asking questions related to congregational vitality, we will not be growing in those areas.

Again, our thanks to the Steering Committee, the Congregational Vitality Team, the Planning Team, and our speakers for each of our meetings, and for you and all the sessions who committed to focus on these important topics and questions!

With gratitude and excitement,

Graham

Graham Hart

General Presbyter

graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

CORRECTION ...

The Reverend Dr. Glen Bell, First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota
celebrated the 30th (not 40th) Anniversary of his ordination.

RECORDS REVIEW WORKSHOPS

Wednesday, September 5th | 4:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church, Naples

Thursday, September 6th | 11:45 a.m.

Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood

Thursday, September 6th | 12:15 p.m.
Oak Pointe Church, Bradenton

Saturday, September 22nd | 9:00 a.m.*
Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, N. Fort Myers
*9:00 a.m. – Training by Stated Clerk, Rev. Dr. Randy Moody
10:00 a.m. – Records Review

Saturday, October 6th | 9:00 a.m.
Northminster Presbyterian Church, Sarasota

A letter was previously sent out to Clerks of Session for the workshops. Please refer to that letter for additional, important information. Advance Registration is required through the contact person listed in the letter.

**PCUSA MISSION CO-WORKERS &
COVENANT PARTNERS OF PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY:**

Daniell & Elizabeth Turk

Serving the people of Madagascar

Read their latest [newsletter](#).

CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER

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

www.cedarkirk.org

*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.

Please Note ...

It is with great sadness that we share of the passing of Doris Brown. Founding Director A.T. and Doris Brown together ministered at Cedarkirk for over 20 years. Doris is fondly remembered at camp for her warm welcome, listening ear, and loving spirit. She impacted the lives of countless campers, summer staff, and retreat guests. We celebrate her amazing 89 years of life lived in service to our Lord and rejoice in her legacy at Cedarkirk and throughout the church.

Doris and A.T.'s family requests that memorial gifts be given to Cedarkirk in her honor for the new dining hall (designated towards the [Brown Initiative](#)). Please pray for A.T. and the entire Brown family as they grieve this loss.

If you would like to learn more about Cedarkirk's capital campaign, please visit www.cedarkirk.org/campaign and check out the new update video. Cedarkirk also has a wide variety of programs and events planned this fall and winter. You can learn more about those at www.cedarkirk.org/programs. Thank you for your support for this life-changing ministry.

BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma

Be^h-El
Farmworker Ministry, Inc.

PO Box 860 | Wimauma, FL 33598

Phone: 813-633-1548 ext. 223

Web: www.beth-el.org

[September Newsletter](#)

Beth-El Farmworker Ministry has the following employment opportunity:

- Part-time Worship Music Leader - Must be bi-lingual with good teaching and musical skills to lead newly formed music group for Sunday Worship.

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

MISION PENIEL

A Ministry of Peace River Presbytery to the Farmworkers in Immokalee

www.misionpeniel.com

Staff Contacts:

- Rev. Miguel Estrada, Pastor, P: 239-633-2181, E: migustrada@hotmail.com
- Ruth DeYoe, Mission Coordinator, P: 386-793-6151, E: ruthdeyoe@gmail.com
- General Email: 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.

ARTICLES of INTEREST

(selected by Graham Hart)

[California pastor's death points to need for mental health care](#)

Tampa Bay Times: The recent suicide of Andrew Stoecklein, pastor of the California megachurch Inland Hills, illustrates the pressures on pastors suffering from mental illness. "We're so ashamed of our stories and, even more than the mental illness, the shame is what is killing us," says Steve Austin, author of "From Pastor to Psych Ward."

The Tennessean: [Clergy not prepared to meet congregations' mental health needs](#)

[How would Brett Kavanaugh rule in Supreme Court religion cases?](#)

Religion News Service: Based on his record as a lower judge in the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, where he has sat since 2006, Kavanaugh appears to be a relatively nuanced interpreter of the law, writes Mark Silk.

[Has Catholic canon law aggravated the clergy abuse crisis?](#)

NPR: The Roman Catholic church has long had its own legal system, incorporating a judicial framework and a complex set of laws, or canons, regulating church organization. Critics, however, say canon laws assign excessive importance to the protection of church institutions.

[The movie bogeyman of the year? Fundamentalist religion](#)

The Guardian: For a whole generation of young directors - and at least one renowned veteran in Paul Schrader - the biggest movie bogeyman of 2018 is the power of fundamentalist religion.

[When science and religion were connected](#)

JSTOR Daily: During the Second Great Awakening of 1830, science and religion were seen as "two aspects of the same universal truth." And that truth was not based in pure logic. Emotions were a key to human behavior, and controlling and channeling emotions was a job for scientifically- and morally-grounded experts.

PRAYER NEEDS

Please continue to pray for:

- Jim and Becky Beckwith - health
- Rev. Miguel Estrada's Father-In-Law, Mr. Castillo Fernandez - health
- The Rev. Daniel Herlein - health
- 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: SEPTEMBER 2018

September 2	<u>PRP Seminary Students (Candidates and Inquirers)</u>
September 9	<u>Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Tim Stewart Email: sunburn1320@mac.com
September 16	<u>Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church, Sarasota</u> Transitional Interim Pastor: Rev. Dr. Kathleen Weller Email: thecelticmonk@att.net
September 23	<u>Mision Peniel – A Ministry of Peace River Presbytery</u> Presbytery Evangelist: Rev. Miguel Estrada Email: migustrada@hotmail.com
September 30	<u>Northminster Presbyterian Church, Sarasota</u> Pastor: Rev. Wally Johnson Email: revwallyjohnson@gmail.com

CHURCH SUPPORT STAFF OPENINGS

Palma Sola Presbyterian Church, Bradenton

[Part Time Accompanist](#)
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Braden River Presbyterian Church, Bradenton

[Part Time Administrative Assistant](#)  
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St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port

[Music Director for the Traditional Service](#)

PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: SEPTEMBER 2018

You may view the entire calendar on the Presbytery web site: www.peaceriverpresbytery.org

Please email corrections or additions to lori@peaceriverpresbytery.org

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

Thursday, September 6

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

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

Regional Gathering – Northern Region (9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at Oak Pointe Church, Bradenton)

Records Review Workshop (12:15-1:15 p.m. at Oak Point Church, Bradenton)

Records Review Workshop (11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. at Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood)

Regional Gathering – Central Region (1:00-4:00 p.m. at Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood)

Monday, September 10

Nominations and Representation Committee (10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.)

Tuesday, September 11

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

Wednesday, September 12

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.)

Thursday, September 13

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

Monday, September 17

Planning Team (12:30-2:30 p.m.)

Thursday, September 20

Steering Committee (9:30 a.m.)

Congregational Vitality Team (12:30 p.m.)

Saturday, September 22

Clerk of Session Training (9:00-10:00 a.m. at Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, N. Fort Myers)

Records Review Workshop (10:00-11:00 a.m. at Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, N. Fort Myers)

Wednesday, September 26-Wednesday, October 3

Cuba Partnership Trip

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.

