



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ November 15, 2018

Some Thanksgiving Thoughts: Gratitude ~ Partnership ~ Hope

Graham Hart – General Presbyter

graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

*(Note - this was adapted from my sermon at the November 15, 2018 Presbytery Meeting.
For the whole sermon, click at the end of this article.)*

Life is book-ended by saying hello ... and saying good-bye. Sometimes the good-bye is only for a day or a season, and sometimes it is forever. While this is not my final good-bye, in a few months, even with its challenges, as your General Presbyter I will be saying good-bye to a work and calling that I have loved.

The Apostle Paul, in the last chapter of his ministry, wrote this beautiful note to the church at Philippi. The epistle called Philippians was his good-bye message to them. The beginning verses of Chapter 1 are a helpful segue for us here in Peace River, as I get ready to say a good-bye, and you get ready to say hello to the person you will be calling to continue this work.

I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴ constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵ because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

There are three words that come out of these verses that capture what I am feeling: deep gratitude, the importance of partnership, and hope that pulls us forward. On this week before Thanksgiving, in this pastoral letter, I want to focus on **gratitude**.

I love the way the late Eugene Peterson, the great Bible Scholar and Presbyterian pastor, who just passed away last month, translated this verse in the Message:

³⁻⁶ Every time you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God.



I am grateful to my pastoral colleagues in ministry here (our pastors) in whose hearts are a deep calling, whose passions are in sharing a message of faith, hope and love, and whose service is shaped by our ordination vows, one of which asks: "Will you serve the people with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love?"

I am grateful to the ruling elders here and in every congregation who, in our Presbyterian polity, are the spiritual leaders, with the pastor, of a congregation. For time and energy and wisdom shared, for figuring out how the church

can make a budget, but more importantly how the church can continue to make difference in your community meeting deep needs, as well as attend to the spiritual yearnings of members, I say thank you.

I am especially grateful to the staff and elected leadership and committee and team members with whom I have worked these 17, going on 18 years. And for my family who has been supportive and given me the time and space to do this work, I break out in exclamation of thanks. And the list can go on.

So, this Thanksgiving Season I offer my deepest appreciation, gratitude and hope,

Graham

graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

([click here](#) for the full sermon and some reflections on partnership and hope)

THANK YOU!
Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers,
for hosting the Stated Meeting of Presbytery today!
Your staff and volunteers were so welcoming and gracious,
and contributed to a wonderful meeting for all of the attendees!



Peace River Presbytery and
First Presbyterian Church
invite you to

The Service of Installation
for
The Reverend Terri Jo Crego

December 2, 2018
4:00 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church
2230 Mariet Street
Port Charlotte, Florida 33952
(941) 625-5045

Reception to Follow

THANK YOU!

On behalf of Peace River Presbytery, we wish to thank all those who made contributions to the *Pastor Assistance Fund*. Total contributions of \$29,378 were received from within PRP and \$5,000 from a matching grant request to the Presbyterian Board of Pensions, bringing the total to \$34,378. From these funds, a check for \$30,000 was provided to Pastor Bill Teng, who experienced a disastrous backup of sewage into his home earlier this year, to help with costs to restore a livable home. With repairs nearly complete, Pastor Bill and Karen have now been able to return to their home. For the generosity of the people of Peace River Presbytery for helping to meet this emergency need, we give thanks.

Any additional contributions will be deposited in the *Pastor Assistance Fund*. Guidelines for use of the funds in the future are being established by the Committee on Ministry, who will administer the Fund.

EVENTS AROUND the PRESBYTERY:

[Annual Community Interfaith Service at First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota](#)

Sunday, November 11th

HURRICANE MICHAEL RESPONSE

The following information is from the
Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network (FLAPDAN):

HURRICANE MICHAEL: HOW YOU CAN HELP ...

DONATIONS:

To donate, please go to <http://pda.pcusa.org/situation/hurricane-michael/>

Donate Responsibly! Watch this short video to see how powerful a cash donation can be.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12cNBNKIXv8>

VOLUNTEERS:

If you would like to volunteer during the response phase, please register at www.volunteerflorida.org

Once needs are determined by the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, Volunteer Florida will help organize and connect volunteers where the help is most needed.

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Kathy Broyard

Executive Director / Emergency Management Specialist

Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network (FLAPDAN)

Phone: 941-483-0675

Email: fla.pdan@pcusa.org

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 491279, Leesburg, FL 34749-1279

In partnership with

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

PC(USA) <http://pda.pcusa.org/>

ARTICLES of INTEREST

(selected by Graham Hart)

[Bishops' meeting bombshell: Vatican says no voting on abuse crisis](#)

National Catholic Reporter: What is going on? What is really at work here? Were proposals too narrowly focused on procedures and policies without getting to the root of the problem, the clerical culture?

Cruz: [Making sense of Vatican's no-fly order to US bishops on abuse crisis](#)

[Notre Dame students cite faith as they kneel during national anthem to protest racism](#)

Religion News Service: Dozens of students at the University of Notre Dame took a knee during the national anthem at the Catholic school's football game, saying their faith compels them to protest racism.

[American Jews face a choice: create meaning or fade away](#)

The New York Times: Five new books touch on American Jewish identity and what will sustain it into the future.

[A place for death in the life of the church](#)

Christianity Today: What does faithful ministry look like in a church that sees more funerals than baptisms?

[Fastest growing religion is 'none'](#)

The (Minneapolis) Star-Tribune: One in four Americans now belong to no religion, a trend fueling church closings, mergings. They reveal a major force behind the empty pews in churches across Minnesota and the nation.

[Faith leaders describe the 'inner conflict and turmoil' they've experienced since Trump took office](#)

Deseret News: Amid increasing political polarization, faith leaders are searching for a way to proclaim religious values without tearing people apart.

[WWI ended 100 years ago; Here's how Christianity, religion played a role in The Great War](#)

Lancaster Online: Although World War I was a geopolitical conflict, one aspect that has gained traction in recent years is the role Christianity played.

Commonweal: [Lessons after long wars](#)

[Synagogue shooting prompts Muslims to act charitably -- and humbly](#)

Religion News Service: El-Messidi, a Muslim author and activist, talks about balancing the need to publicize fundraising efforts and other charitable acts with the Muslim teaching that they should be as discreet and quiet as possible.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: [Clergy shows solidarity with Jewish community at 'We Have To Talk' event](#)

[The day of fate](#)

The Atlantic: Kristallnacht, on its 80th anniversary today, still offers a potent lesson: We all face the choice between right and wrong, responsibility and recklessness, conscience and complicity.

Haaretz: [The heartbreaking suicide notes Jews left their loved ones after Kristallnacht](#)

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.

BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

A ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma

Beth-El
Farmworker Ministry, Inc.

PO Box 860 | Wimauma, FL 33598

Phone: 813-633-1548 ext. 223

Web: www.beth-el.org

[November Newsletter](#)

MISIÓN PENIEL

A Ministry of Peace River Presbytery to the Farmworker Community in Immokalee

208 Boston Ave., PO Box 1204, Immokalee, FL 34143

www.misionpeniel.com

Facebook: "Misión Peniel"

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

Contributions to Misión 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 Misión Peniel.
- Please note *Misión Peniel* in the memo section.
- Click on the "Donate" button on the Misión Peniel web site.
- Contributor information is provided to Misión Peniel each month.

PRAYER NEEDS

Please continue to pray for:

- The brave firefighters in California and the communities of California dealing with the devastation of the fires
- Cori (daughter of Rev. Dr. Russ and Bobbie Hickman) – surgery for thyroid cancer
- Ruth DeYoe (Mission Coordinator for Misión Peniel) – recovery from knee replacement surgery
- Community of Thousand Oaks, CA
- Worshipping Community and Families affected by the Tree of Life Synagogue tragedy in Pittsburgh, PA
- Communities affected by Hurricane Michael
- Rev. Dr. Daniel Pendergrass – health
- 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: NOVEMBER 2018

November 4	<u>Siesta Key Chapel, Sarasota</u> Interim Pastor: Rev. Dr. Thomas (Tom) Cook Email: tcook1127@gmail.com
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November 11	<u>PRP Stated Meeting on November 15</u> Location: Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers
November 18	<u>Drs. Les and Cynthia Morgan</u> – Covenant Partners of PRP and PCUSA Mission Co-Workers Web: www.pcusa.org/les-and-cindy-morgan
November 25	<u>Venice Presbyterian Church, Venice</u> Senior Pastor: Rev. Christopher (Chris) Romig Email: cromig@venicepres.org Associate Pastor: Rev. Carolyn Wilson Email: cwilson@venicepres.org

SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, March 3, 2019

Peace Presbyterian Church - Dedication Service

CHURCH SUPPORT STAFF OPENINGS

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: NOVEMBER 2018**

You may view the entire calendar on the Presbytery web site: [www.peaceriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peaceriverpresbytery.org)

Please email corrections or additions to [lori@peaceriverpresbytery.org](mailto:lori@peaceriverpresbytery.org)

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

**Wednesday, November 21**

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

Presbytery Offices Close at 12:00 noon

**Thursday, November 22**

Happy Thanksgiving!

Presbytery Offices Closed

**Friday, November 23**

Presbytery Offices Closed

**Thursday, November 29**

Steering Committee (9:00 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.

