



# PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



## Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ November 29, 2018

### Advent Reflections and Peace River's Future

**"All is well"** by Michael W. Smith is one of my favorite contemporary Christmas songs, and if you have never heard it – [click here](#). For Peace River Presbytery, as we look to the future, I have every confidence that "all will be well."

The Apostle Paul in writing to the Philippians said: "the one who began a good work in you will bring it to completion..." and I believe that! I trust the people on and the work of the General Presbyter Nominating Committee. I believe that with the Spirit's guidance, we can be confident that they will bring the right candidate, who will have the right gifts and the right spirit, to give leadership to Peace River as you move into the new and next chapter in your life. In the coming years, I can't wait to see how God will work in and through you, each of our 37 congregations, and the covenant partnership of Peace River in new ways. Some things will change, some things will die, and new things will be born. All is well!

**At the November Presbytery meeting, we heard the final report of the Strategic Planning Task Force.** We thank Craig Goodrich, Lil Rea, Charmaine Ponkratz, Doug Pratt, and Kelly Fitzgerald for their good work. Over the past year, they have led us in a process that reviewed where we have been (i.e. how did we do against the benchmarks we set for ourselves in 2013) and where God is calling us to go in the future. At the Presbytery meeting, they offered us a revised Mission/Vision and values statement, which the Presbytery adopted. Also, we heard wonderful testimonies and stories from 7 people about how we are already moving into these new strategic directions. ([click here for their report](#)).

Also, at the November meeting, we had a conversation about how we can best do the work of Peace River Presbytery. The heart of Peace River is our congregations. The way we support pastors, congregations, and our common mission, as a presbytery, is through 150 volunteers who serve on the teams and committees of Peace River and our Covenant Partners. The challenge, as always, is to get the right people on the bus and have enough people on the bus to do the work of the Presbytery, as we live out our mission and vision.

The challenge in recent years is that, for some committees and teams, we find teaching elders willing to serve, but not ruling elders, and vice versa. We need to keep the balance "*as equal as possible*," per the Book of Order and our historic polity. We are a church not just of clergy, but of ruling elders and teaching elders together, who are called into service and leadership in the church.

At the meeting, the Presbytery asked the Steering Committee to look into our structure and volunteer needs and come back to the May meeting of the Presbytery with some recommendations.

The Nominations Committee has worked long and hard, and we thank them! They have contacted every church, reached out to pastors and clerks of session, and at presbytery meetings talked about the needs. In 2013 we cut back on the number of committees, so as to be more focused and efficient in our work.

Do we need to streamline farther? If so, how?

Cutting back on the committee structure will mean some work may not be done, or we will need to figure out how to do that work in new ways. Also, there will be less opportunity for people to be involved in our life together as a presbytery. The other question is: Once the Presbytery, as a body, knows of our challenge, will each congregation


and member of Presbytery offer the names of able and gifted folks who can serve the Presbytery, as the Presbytery seeks to fulfill its vision?

At the November Steering Committee, a task force was convened to begin addressing this important issue as you get ready to welcome a new General Presbyter. If you are willing and wanting to serve in the life of the presbytery, [click here](#) to send an email to the Nominations and Representation Committee. Or, if you have suggestions on how we might structure ourselves differently to do our work, click here to contact [Lil Rea](#), convener of the Task Force.

These are small challenges compared to the mission in front of us, and you will figure it out, as you always do! It has been a joy to serve here, and I know with folks like you, and the new leadership to come, Peace River will continue to be a special presbytery. All is well!

With Advent Hope and deep Gratitude,  
Graham

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



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 Harriet Street  
Port Charlotte, Florida 33952  
(941) 625-5045

Reception to Follow

**Clergy are invited to process in robe and red stole.  
Meet in the Narthex at 3:45 p.m.**

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

[America's epidemic of empty churches](#)

The Atlantic: Religious communities often face a choice -- sell off the buildings they can no longer afford, or find a way to fill them with new uses.

### [Where Americans find meaning in life](#)

Pew Forum: Economic, religious and political divides shape where Americans find meaning -- but family, career and friendship emerge as common themes.

### [How faith leaders respond to tragedies like the California wildfires](#)

Vox: "You have two ears and one mouth, so you've got to be listening twice as much as you're talking."

### [What progressives need to defeat Trump: populism and religion](#)

The (London) Guardian: Together the two have generated some of the most vital moments of democratic change in the modern era, say Luke Bretherton and Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins.

Slate: [Trump's Christian apologists are unchristian](#)

### [A call to modernize American philanthropy](#)

The New York Times: The giving practices of rich magnates and foundations still suggest a colonial mind-set, the author of a new book argues, as he offers ideas for change.

### [Crystal Cathedral, home to the 'Hour of Power,' transforms into Catholic seat](#)

Religion News Service: The restoration of the former home of televangelist Robert Schuller as the seat of the Roman Catholic bishop of Orange will accommodate California's latest religious boom.

### [Q&A: This Christian activist says believers need more faith, not more politics](#)

Deseret News: Jim Wallis spoke with the Deseret News about his commitment to social justice and the complex relationship between religion and politics.

## 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)

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

Facebook: "Misión Peniel"

**Critical needs for December and January** include blankets of any size and men's and women's jackets. The mornings are very cold for the farmworkers and many of the trailers and camps they live in do not have sufficient heat. Contact us if you'd like these items to be picked up. Thank you for any donations you are able to make at this time.

### **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)

**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.

**CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER**

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

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

**PRAYER NEEDS**

**Please continue to pray for:**

- Rev. Joyce Lieberman (Synod Executive and Stated Clerk) and Family in the loss of her younger brother
- 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) – recovery from 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: DECEMBER 2018**

December 2	<u>Presbyterian Women - Covenant Partner of PRP</u>
December 9	<u>Trinity Presbyterian Church, Venice</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Chuck Wiggins Email: <a href="mailto:cjw049@gmail.com">cjw049@gmail.com</a>
December 16	<u>Church of the Palms</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Stephen McConnell Email: <a href="mailto:smcconnell@churchofthepalms.org">smcconnell@churchofthepalms.org</a> Associate Pastor: Rev. Dr. Hmingi Browne Email: <a href="mailto:hbrowne@churchofthepalms.org">hbrowne@churchofthepalms.org</a>
December 23	<u>First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Glen Bell Email: <a href="mailto:gbell@FirstPresSarasota.org">gbell@FirstPresSarasota.org</a> Associate Pastor: Rev. Kelly Fitzgerald Email: <a href="mailto:kfitzgerald@FirstPresSarasota.org">kfitzgerald@FirstPresSarasota.org</a>
December 30	<u>Presbytery Team and Committee Moderators and Members</u>

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

[Board of Pensions Retirement Planning Seminar](#)  
Tuesday & Wednesday, January 29-30, 2019  
Faith Presbyterian Church, Cape Coral

**SAVE the DATE:**

**Thursday, February 28, 2019**  
**Stated Meeting of Presbytery**

*(including the honoring of The Reverend Graham Hart,  
General Presbyter, on the occasion of his retirement.)*

**Location: First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota**

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**Sunday, March 3, 2019**

Peace Presbyterian Church - Dedication Service

**ALTAR CLOTH NEEDED**

The Rev. Dr. Marg Towner, a member of PRP, is seeking the donation of a communion table cloth (called an *Altar Cloth*) with the Christian symbol on it, but not Presbyterian.

If you have one that you would be willing to donate,  
please contact Marg at: [margtet@comcast.net](mailto:margtet@comcast.net)

**PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: DECEMBER 2018**

You may view the entire calendar on the Presbytery web site: [www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org)  
Please email corrections or additions to [lori@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:lori@peacriverpresbytery.org)

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

**Sunday, December 2**

Installation Service for Rev. Terri Jo Crego (4:00 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte)

**Monday, December 3**

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

Planning Team (12:30 p.m.)

**Thursday, December 6**

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

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

**Tuesday, December 11**

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

**Thursday, December 13**

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

**Monday, December 24-Friday, December 28**

Presbytery Offices Closed

**Tuesday, December 25**

Merry Christmas!

**Monday, December 31**

New Year's Eve

Presbytery Offices Close at Noon

**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.



