



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ January 23, 2018

BLUE CHRISTMAS

Thank you, again, for the privilege of serving this Presbytery as your moderator this year. Our Book of Order describes that responsibility pretty simply as convening and adjourning the body in accordance with its own action, and in the process preserving order and conducting efficiently the business of the body. There are many people in the circle of Presbytery leadership that will play instrumental roles in helping to make that happen. May I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you, in advance!

Since I draw my Presbytery roots from the Committee on Ministry it is only natural that I view the work of the Presbytery through the lens of supporting and strengthening our churches. Through the hands and feet of the churches we proclaim the good news of our Savior, we show the face of Christ in our communities and we serve as strong collaborators with our mission partners.

The last time I was invited to offer a reflection in the weekly newsletter I went “on the road” to put a spotlight on the special ways that our churches are doing God’s work in our communities. This time I didn’t have to travel far from my home base in Punta Gorda. On the longest night of the year, December 21, our two churches in Port Charlotte combined to present a Blue Christmas worship service. There may be some reading this who are not familiar, so let me offer how Pastor Terri Jo ([First Presbyterian Port Charlotte](#)) and Pastor Devon ([Wintergarden Presbyterian](#)) described it as they invited their congregations to the joint worship service.

Blue Christmas is a worship service which acknowledges that, for many people, Christmas is a time of loneliness, sorrow, alienation, and sadness. This service offers a way for people to claim those feelings and still feel surrounded by the compassionate love of God. In some churches it is also known as The Longest Night of the Year Service.



This kind of church-to-church collaboration is exactly what was envisioned by the Mission, Vision Guide Team that helped shape the direction of the Presbytery for the last five years. So, here’s to our sister churches in Port Charlotte. I sure would like to put the spotlight on more of these examples...let me hear from you at ponkratz@comcast.net

I’ll be back on the road, either in cyberspace or on your campus, watching for the wonderful ways in which you are being the hands and feet of Christ all across Peace River Presbytery.

Charmaine Ponkratz
Your fellow servant and humble moderator

A Special Invitation to a Special Presbytery Meeting ~ February 22nd ~ First, Sarasota

At the February 2013 Presbytery Meeting, Debbie Rundlett (pastor, author, seminary professor, coach, presbytery leader) was our key note speaker as we formally launched our presbytery's new organizational design. Many still remember her skit which related to what/who was driving our congregation's organizational bus ... who/what was in the driver's seat (i.e Vision, Relationships, Structure, or Goals/plans). Also at the meeting, Debbie shared with us material that many sessions used over the next year called: The Journey (note - that eventually became a book many congregations and church leaders have used).

Five years later, as we continue in our Presbytery's focus on "things that make for vital, alive, and growing congregations", we have invited Debbie back to be with us at the February 22nd Presbytery Meeting at First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota. We are encouraging every session to have at least 2-4 current ruling elders who are on the session, in addition to the regular elder commissioners, to come and be part of the workshop Debbie will be doing as a part of our meeting. Also, for worship, we will have a mass choir as well as the group *First Brass* in worship leadership. More details to follow.

... FROM the PRESBYTERY OFFICE ...

1. Clerks of Session or Church Offices, please send your updated list of Ruling Elders to Lori (lori@peacriverpresbytery.org), to be included in the Presbytery's newsletter email distribution list. Include name, email address, and class. *Thank you to those of you who so far who have been able to do this!*
2. Clerks of Session and Church Offices, the deadline for lunch reservations for the Stated Meeting of Presbytery will be Thursday, February 15th. Please remind your Elder Commissioners, other Elders, and Staff of this reservation deadline. Lunch details will be published soon.
3. The next Stated Meeting of Presbytery will be held on Thursday, February 22nd, at First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota. A mass, combined choir will be featured! Watch for an invitation to your choir and details from Rev. Bill Teng, PRP Planning Team Moderator.
4. The *Presbytery Directory* (formerly *Handbook*) is being updated for 2018. As soon as it is completed, Lori will send notification to you with the link to the Directory on the web site.

BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma

www.beth-el.org



PO Box 860 | Wimauma, FL 33598

Phone: 813-633-1548 ext. 223

Web: www.beth-el.org

[January Newsletter](#)

Beth-El is looking for donations of furniture for its office and dental clinic.

Please contact their office if you have desks, tables, or bookcases.

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.

MISION PENIEL

A Ministry of Peace River Presbytery to the Farmworkers in Immokalee

www.misionpeniel.com

OPEN HOUSE 2018 (click for details)

Sunday, February 11, 2018

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:**

- 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.
- Contributor information is provided to Mision Peniel each month.

PRAYER NEEDS

Please continue to pray for:

- Rev. Don Sherman and Family, in the loss of his wife, Joan, on January 4th.
- Rev. Dr. Jim Berger and Family, in the loss of his father, Robert Berger.
- The communities affected by the winter storms.
- Jim and Becky Beckwith, and their son, Greg – health
- Rev. Dr. Lou Thompson – health
- Phil Kuehl (husband of Rev. Elizabeth Kuehl, Faith, Cape Coral) – health
- Robert Dennis (son of Rev. India Dennis) – mental health issues
- The communities, across the U.S. and Puerto Rico, recovering from the hurricanes and fires
- 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: JANUARY 2018:

January 7	<u>Peace River Presbytery</u> 37 Congregations and 131 Ministers
January 14	<u>First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia</u> Pastor: Rev. Bill Teng Email: pastor@FirstPC.church
January 21	<u>First Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Doug Pratt Email: dpratt@fpcbonita.org Associate Pastor: Rev. Steven Grant Email: sgrant@fpcbonita.org Associate Pastor: Rev. Bradley Rogers Email: brogers@fpcbonita.org
January 28	<u>Braden River Presbyterian Church, Bradenton</u> Pastor: Rev. Glenn Buzbee, Jr. Email: revglennb@gmail.com

CHURCH SUPPORT STAFF OPENINGS

Faith Presbyterian Church, Cape Coral:
[Graphic Designer and Marketing Coordinator](#)

PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2018

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

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

Thursday, January 25

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

Thursday, February 1

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

Monday, February 5

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

Planning Team (1:00 p.m.)

Thursday, February 8

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

Sunday, February 11

**Open House – Mision Peniel (2:00-4:30 p.m. in Immokalee)

Tuesday, February 13

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

Wednesday, February 14

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

Thursday, February 15

Steering Committee (9:30 a.m.)

Deadline: Lunch Reservations for Stated Meeting of PRP

Thursday, February 22

Stated Meeting of Presbytery at First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota

CHURCHES of PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

Please visit our web site, www.peacriverpresbytery.org/churches

Click on the city, then the church, to visit their web site.

