



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Presbytery Newsletter ~ March 13, 2020

From the General Presbyter ...

Dear Friends,

The news cycle around the coronavirus has many people in our congregations feeling afraid and unsure of what is best to do. The church is always called to be the bearer of the message of hope and trust. In the midst of that calling, we also have to consider what is prudent for the people in our congregations and community groups that use our buildings. I know that many pastors and sessions have met and continue to pray and discern how to balance safety, care for others, and our call to share the gospel.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has sent out a statement that talks about options for churches, particularly options if the choice is to continue have public worship and to allow groups to use the building. Here is the [link](#) to that statement. I have heard that some sessions are considering asking people to bring offerings forward rather than passing plates, changing the way communion is set up and shared, extra cleaning of surfaces, and doing a litany of welcome rather than passing the peace.

The denominational website has some ideas and guidelines for churches as they consider how to move forward. You can [link](#) to that page here. The Board of Pensions put out a statement for covered persons regarding the virus. You can [link](#) to that page here.

If you decide to suspend public worship, there are some creative ways to continue to proclaim the gospel. Several churches already use Facebook Live and others might consider that. Here is a [link](#) to Marcia McFee's YouTube channel that has directions on how to live stream using Facebook and make it a more enriching experience. Other churches might consider using Zoom to have a more corporate worship experience in which people could actually see one another. With Zoom it is also possible to place people in breakout groups so that participants could share prayers, concerns, ideas, etc. One of the concerns about stopping public worship is the isolation of people. Using Zoom to provide small group discussion or Bible studies could mitigate that concern somewhat.

As of the evening of March 12, I have been told that the following churches have made decisions about public worship: First Naples is suspending public worship for the next two weeks and all activities have been postponed; First Sarasota is suspending worship beginning March 15 and has no end date, and will close the buildings to the public beginning March 20; Christ Church of Longboat Key is moving to live streaming. Church of the Palms has suspended in-person worship until the end of March and will have their service at 9:00 am through their TV and live streaming ministries. Please share with me as you make decisions about how your church will respond. You can email me directly at melana@peacriverpresbytery.org.

Churches that decide to move to virtual worship in some form might consider tapping some members who would be willing to help people figure out how to connect to technology they may not have used previously.

A phone call to walk someone through the steps of getting connected to a virtual worship experience could very well be pastoral care as well as tech support.

Please know that I am in prayer for each church and all the leadership within the presbytery. If I can be of support or help during this time, please do not hesitate to call or email. Please let me know if you decide to close your buildings and cancel public worship because others may be looking for guidance from churches that have made such decisions. This will be in the newsletter tomorrow and I invite you to share that with leadership within the church.

I leave you with the words from Matthew 6:34, from The Message: "Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes." That is God's promise to us.

Blessings,
Melana

Dr. Tod Bolsinger

Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory

Dr. Bolsinger was our Keynote Speaker
at the February 27th Stated Meeting of Presbytery.

To access his PowerPoint presentation, [click here](#).
You may also access it from the PRP web site, [here](#).

From Melana ... If you were not able to stay for the presentation, or want to engage the material more, you can sign up for a free 30 days to the Fuller Formation and see Tod's material, as well as material from other courses.

One resource we have to offer is access to a free online training resource based on Tod Bolsinger's [Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory](#) click [here](#).

Users will need to sign up for a free trial to FULLER Formation but no credit card is required and will have free access for 30 days. By signing up you'll also have access to the other outstanding formation resource materials that are available at FULLER Formation during your 30-day free trial. A subscription for all FULLER Formation material is \$10 month, bulk subscriptions (25 or more people) are available for churches and organizations.

Once you have signed up and clicked on Tod's course, you need to go to Your Library in order to view the course. There is much material there that will help you reflect on what you heard at the meeting. If you would have any interest in being part of a group that works through some of this material and does some coaching around it, please let me know.

~ Melana

melana@peaceriverpresbytery.org

CONGRATULATIONS to the NEW
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR of BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY:
Rev. Teresita Matos-Post



Around the Presbytery



Installation Service for the Reverend Terri Jo Crego: Sunday, March 15, 4:00 p.m., at Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church, Sarasota. All are invited. [View invitation.](#)

Clergy are invited to process; please wear robes and red stoles, and arrive by 3:30 p.m. at the Albritton Center Conference Room.

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**Science vs Faith?** Is mainstream science incompatible with genuine Christian faith? Pastors, Elders, and Church Professionals are invited to Trinity Presbyterian, Venice for a Luncheon on **Tuesday, March 17**, 12:30-2:00 pm. **Dr. Greg Cootsona, Theologian in Residence** will address this issue. RSVP to the church by Friday, March 13.

[Click for Information Flyer.](#)

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Fish Fry and Bake – All You Can Eat *and a Show* at Faith Presbyterian, Cape Coral ...
Friday, March 27. [Click for Information Flyer](#).

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**Attention Music Directors!** Cantata Books available, free, first come basis. Check the [list](#).

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Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center is seeking a new Executive Director. The Executive Director Search Committee has posted information on the search. [Information](#).

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If you have information you would like to share about your pastor or your church, please contact Lori Doyal, [lori@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:lori@peacriverpresbytery.org) or 941-426-8421, ext. 401.

## **Presbytery Calendar: March 2020**

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 noted.*

### **Sunday, March 15**

Installation Service for Rev. Terri Jo Crego (4:00 pm at Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church, Sarasota)

### **Thursday, March 19**

Steering Committee (9:00 am – GoToMeeting)

## **Misión Peniel: a Ministry of Peace River Presbytery**

Please note the following email and web site updates:

Rev. Miguel Estrada, Pastor: [miguel@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:miguel@peacriverpresbytery.org)  
Ruth DeYoe, Mission Coordinator: [ruth@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:ruth@peacriverpresbytery.org)  
Web Site: [www.misionpeniel.org](http://www.misionpeniel.org)

## **Covenant Partners of Peace River Presbytery**

Click on the links to visit each ministry's web site:

- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry – Wimauma: [www.beth-el.org](http://www.beth-el.org)
- Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center: [www.cedarkirk.org](http://www.cedarkirk.org)
- Presbyterian Homes & Housing Foundation of FL: [www.phhf.com](http://www.phhf.com)

## **Prayer Needs**

### **Please pray for:**

- Fernando Castillo (father of Miguel Estrada's wife, Marifrans) – serious health problems.
- 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

## 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.



The Presbytery Newsletter is a weekly publication of Peace River Presbytery. If you wish to be unsubscribed from the distribution, or if you know someone who would like to receive the newsletter, please contact Lori Doyal at the Presbytery Office: [lori@peaceriverpresbytery.org](mailto:lori@peaceriverpresbytery.org) or 941-426-8421, ext. 401.