



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Presbytery Newsletter ~ April 3, 2020

Dear Friends,

Who knew that staying at home and social distancing would require more work than usual? There is also a sense of grief for most people over the things we are missing, the cancellations, the families separated. Decisions are more difficult to make and there are so many. People in essential businesses, particularly first responders and medical personnel, have to decide whether to stay away from home so that they don't inadvertently infect someone in their homes. Teachers are learning new ways to teach, often while trying to help their own children learn at home. Loved ones in care facilities, or even at home, cannot be visited for fear of inadvertently sharing the virus. Pastors are working frantically to provide care, worship, connection to congregations that are separated. Everyone is affected in some way.

What this means is that all of us need to find some ways to take care of ourselves, mind, body, spirit. The church understands how to do the spiritual part, but sometimes we forget the other pieces. Let me encourage you to find ways to get outside and take a walk or a bike ride. Find ways to talk to friends, on the phone or via Skype or Zoom. Read or learn about something that has always interested you. Find time to relax and slow down and enjoy God's good creation.

When I preach, I am usually preaching to myself and inviting others to hear what they need to hear. This newsletter article is exactly that. I talked with my coach on Tuesday and decided out of that conversation to make some changes that I want to share with you. These are ways of taking care of myself so that I can do my best work for the presbytery. I have recommitted to getting outside for a walk or run every day to clear my mind and keep my body strong. My husband and I have started reading together after supper as we used to do when we were younger. This is a time of relaxation and enjoyment together. I have committed to taking Friday as a Sabbath, on which I will not do work. If there is an emergency on a Friday, you can contact Alesia and she will let me know. The most difficult thing I decided was to leave my phone in my home office in the evenings when I am finished working. I am very bad about looking at emails all evening if my phone is with me. I have done this the last two evenings and while it has been a strange thing, it has helped me clear my mind before going to bed.

I wanted to share these things with you as a model and reminder that we all need to find ways to care for ourselves in these times. It is so easy to think that we need to do one more thing or call one more person. I invite you to find a way to open yourself to God's grace in these days. If I can help you work out those commitments for yourself, please let me know.

I continue to add resources to the resource page and ideas on the blog page at <http://prpresources.weebly.com>. If you find things that would be helpful for others, please share them with me. You are in my prayers.

Blessings as we approach this holy week.

Melana

The **Board of Pensions** is offering a deferment of dues to churches with fewer than 300 members and one pastor enrolled. Other churches may qualify too. For information go to <http://prpresources.weebly.com>, look under denominational resources and click on Board of Pensions Deferment Info. The information is also on the Peace River Presbytery Facebook page.

Here are some thoughts on this time in the lives of our churches from Frank Miller, Clerk of Session at Siesta Key Chapel, with thanks to Tom Cook, Pastor of SKC for the seeds for the idea:

“I understand that churches in the PRP are starting to shrink their Mission budgets in response to this virus. People are scared. Churches closed = no offerings = cut staff = cut missions. Get it. Been there, done that in the past. But this is NOT the past with its relatively little anomalies. This is a once in a lifetime, perhaps a once in a millennium event. Is it not time the Church (universal) stand up and show that we can create a PCC, a Pandemic of Contagious Christianity? Is it not time to loosen the constraints of fiscal responsibility for a change. Is this not the time we lay politics, nationalism, international unions, and so forth aside for a moment. Is this the moment the church finally says, ‘Let Go, Let God!’?”

While we do not seek death in this gruesome manner, we do not fear it. We know in our hearts that FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST OVERCOMES FEAR. Fear will not prevail, Death will not prevail. The Cross stands strong! HE, and His church, will RISE AGAIN each Easter morning!”



Around the Presbytery



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: April 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)

#### **Monday, April 6, 2020**

Mision Peniel Team (10:00 am – Zoom Conference Meeting)

#### **Wednesday, April 8, 2020**

Cuba Partnership Task Force (3:00 pm – Conference Call Meeting)

#### **Thursday, April 9, 2020**

Finance Team / BOT (9:30 am – Zoom Conference Meeting)

**Tuesday, April 14, 2020**

Committee on Ministry (9:00 – Zoom Conference Meeting)

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

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:**

- Marifrans Estrada (wife of Miguel) and family in the passing of her father. Also, because Guatemala's borders are closed, she cannot go to be with her family.
- Rev. Dr. George Chorba (HR Member of PRP) – recovering from Covid-19
- Our nation and the other countries of the world
- Front Line Health Care Workers and other First Responders
- 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.