



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Presbytery Weekly E-Newsletter ~ March 19, 2021

From the General Presbyter

Dear Friends,

We continue to think about the seven marks of Vital Congregations as we begin to open more fully as people are vaccinated. The fifth mark is Spirit-inspired worship, which is the kind of worship we hope to have, but do not always achieve. There has been a great deal of creativity in the last year as buildings were closed but worship continued. As in-person worship began again there have been many limitations on music and responsive liturgy in order to keep people safe. The Holy Spirit has been at work inspiring musicians, pastors, worship committees to find ways to make worship inclusive and inspiring despite the limitations. I applaud all the work that has been done to continue praising God and sharing the gospel during these unusual times.

This mark is an important reminder that worship is one of the ways we connect to the presence of God. Worship is not about making worshipers feel good or comfortable or even prepared for the week. Worship is the way we give thanks and praise to God for the blessings freely bestowed on us. It is the way we learn more about who we are and whose we are and about who we could be, as individuals and as a diverse community. It is also the way we are changed and empowered to go into the world to share the gospel with others.

Please share with me how worship impacts you and your church community. What are the creative worship experiences during COVID restrictions that have inspired you? What are the things you hope to return to in worship and what are the new things you want to continue? The next year will continue to be an adventure as we learn how to be the church in a post-COVID world.

I thank God for all our churches, pastors, and leaders who live into the gospel call.

Blessings,
Melana

News from the Cuba Partnership Network

The Presbyterian Cuba Partnership Network has had a relationship with the Cuban Presbyterian Church for over 50 years. Our own presbytery has had a partnership with the Matanzas Cuba Presbytery since 2018, and several Peace River Presbytery congregations have church to church partnerships as well.

Through direct contact with Cuban Church leaders via the Cuba Partnership Network this past week, we are aware that the situation in Cuba is dire. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are experiencing severe food shortages, unprecedented inflation due to a major change in Cuban currency, and no commensurate raises in salary for non-government workers.

Cuban pastors are struggling to serve their congregations due to pandemic restrictions. The country is still in lockdown and unable to have in person services. They do not have the kind of access to an online worship presence as we do, and rely primarily on neighborhood outdoor visits and communications by phone and WhatsApp, for those members who actually have similar capabilities. They are struggling to access much needed food, medicine, and resources for their church members, and are struggling to meet their personal needs at severely reduced incomes.

The Cuban Synod leadership and the pastors have met these challenges for months, creatively and cooperatively. As difficult as it is for them, they are at a point where they have come to us for help. Partnerships are mutual, and it is very difficult for our Cuban Presbyterian colleagues to present this request for financial help, which is more confirmation of how dire their circumstances have become. They think that \$75,000 will meet the most pressing needs of the synod, the churches, and the people they serve.

On the US side, the Cuba Partnership Network leadership team has found an avenue to get these funds to Cuba at a reasonable rate. The attitude is "WE CAN DO THIS!"

Attached below is the Cuba Partners Network of the PCUSA's letter written for our review as a presbytery and for individual consideration. We, as this presbytery's Cuba Partnership Team, ask that pastors, sessions and mission committees share this communication and prayerfully consider if you might be able to join in voluntary support of their request. **If this IS something you would like to consider, it is crucial to have all funds received by the network's treasurer (listed in attached letter) no later than April 4th and that no where on the check does it say Cuba, designate on separate paper. You can also send a check to the presbytery office, again no designation on the check. Checks to the presbytery must be received by March 30.** A check sent directly to the Network will not be tax deductible. A check sent to the presbytery will be tax deductible.

Direct Address:
Bryan Beck, CPN Treasurer
6400 Zapateco NW
Los Ranchos, NM 87107

Presbytery address:
5600 Peace River Rd.
North Port, FL 34287

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of their request.

Cuba Partnership Team of Peace River Presbytery
Kevin Morris and Ruth DeYoe, Co-Moderators
Pat Nordbrock, Karen Chappler, Winston Lawson, Molly Godley

[Leading the Church into the Post COVID World](#)

Tuesday, April 27, 2021, Eastern time, 3:00 - 4:30 pm via ZOOM

Rev. Dr. Tod Bolsinger

Click on title above for information flyer.

Registration is Now Open ... Click on the following link to register:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6H2HXmPaQQ-mhJLfv154RA

FEMA Announces \$140 Million for Emergency Food and Shelter Program

By FEMA External Affairs

FEMA announced \$140 million in funding will be available to communities across the country to assist with feeding and sheltering.

Congress made \$125 million available for Fiscal Year 2020, and this year the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) National Board is including an additional \$15 million from funds that have not been used from prior grant years. FEMA awarded the \$125 million to the National Board, which is now allocating the funds, combined with the additional \$15 million, to qualifying jurisdictions (counties and cities).

Program funding assists local organizations dedicated to feeding, sheltering and providing critical resources to people with economic emergencies, including our nation's hungry and homeless populations. These funds are designed to help people with non-disaster related emergencies and can be used for a broad range of services, including mass shelter, mass feeding, food pantries and food banks, utility bill payments to prevent cut-offs, rent/mortgage payments to prevent evictions/foreclosures and transition assistance from shelters to stable living conditions.

Eight percent of this year's allocation will be made available to states that will make funding determinations to aid people in jurisdictions with needs that may not be reflected in the National Board's qualifying formula.

The National Board is chaired by FEMA with representatives from American Red Cross, Catholic Charities USA, The Jewish Federations of North America, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, The Salvation Army and United Way Worldwide. United Way Worldwide, selected by the National Board as its Secretariat and Fiscal Agent, is also responsible for the daily administration of the EFSP.

EFSP funding is allocated to qualifying local jurisdictions based on a formula using the most recent national population, unemployment, and poverty data.

A state-by-state list of the eligible jurisdictions and award amounts is available at the [United Way website](#).

Misión Peniel: a Ministry of Peace River Presbytery

Web Site: www.misionpeniel.org

As a mission of the Presbytery, we rely on the churches of Peace River Presbytery for 100% of our budget. Thank you for your faithful support of this presbytery ministry.

For the latest updates, visit us on Facebook (Mision Peniel), Instagram (misionpenielimmokalee) and subscribe to our quarterly newsletter via our website.

Contacts:

Rev. Miguel Estrada, Pastor – miguel@peacriverpresbytery.org
Ruth DeYoe, Mission Coordinator – ruth@peacriverpresbytery.org

Job Opportunity

First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte is seeking a part-time, 8-10 hours per week, Financial Secretary. Must have experience in accounting procedures and practices, handling payroll, and financial record keeping. Contact the church office at 941-625-5045 for additional information.

Presbytery Calendar: March 2021

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

Please email corrections or additions to lori@peacriverpresbytery.org

Thursday, March 4

Mision Peniel Team (10:30 am by Zoom Conference)

Monday, March 8

Presbyterian Women Spring Retreat

Virtual World Digital Task Force (2:30 pm by Zoom Conference)

Tuesday, March 9

Committee on Ministry (9:00 am by Zoom Conference)

CCC Team (2:00 pm by Zoom Conference)

Wednesday, March 10

Committee on Preparation for Ministry (10:00 am by Zoom Conference)

Stewardship Work Group (2:00 pm by Zoom Conference)

Human Resources Team (3:00 pm by Zoom Conference)

Monday, March 15

Outreach and Nurture Team (10:00 am by Zoom Conference)

Thursday, March 18

Finance Team/Board of Trustees (9:30 am by Zoom Conference)

Team, Committee, and other meetings are being conducted via Zoom Video Conference until further notice.
Please check the web site calendar regularly for additions or changes.

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
- Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center: www.cedarkirk.org
- Presbyterian Homes & Housing Foundation of FL: www.phhf.com

Prayer Needs

Please pray for:

- Rev. Dr. Harry Schill – “...for God’s mercy to shrink the bile duct tumor so that surgery can be done.”
- Rev. Dr. Kathi Wiggins and Family – loss of her younger brother
- Becky Beckwith and Family – loss of husband, Jim Beckwith (past Moderator of Presbytery and Committee on Ministry member). Address for Becky Beckwith: 617 Woodlawn Drive, Bradenton, FL 34210
- The Congregations and Pastors of Peace River Presbytery

- Our Nation
- The Congregations and Pastors of Peace River Presbytery
- 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

Go to [Peace River Presbytery Churches](#)

to visit each of the church's web sites.



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@peacriverpresbytery.org or 941-426-8421, ext. 401.