

Peace River Presbytery

Stated Meeting Minutes

February 20, 2025

**Community Presbyterian Church
Englewood, FL**

Attendance

Teaching Elder Members Present

Scott Andrews	Miguel Estrada	Randy Moody
Steve Aguzzi	Alex Evangelista	Kevin Morris
Genevieve Beauchamp	Aimee Goldmeyer	Jay Mumper
Jaco Bester	Craig Goodrich	Alexander Regets
Timothy Boggess	Laurie Haas	Brad Rogers
K. Edward Brandt	Paul Kirbas	Christopher Romig
Terri Jo Crego	Jennifer Kirbas	Dino Rustin
Edward Dawkins	Winston Lawson	Rebecca Schwandt
Elizabeth Deibert	Mike Mansperger	Melana Scruggs
Richard Deibert	Robert Marrow	Ruth Smalt
Courtney Ducharme	Charles Moffett	Gillian Weighton
Edward Dunn	Lynne Moffett	Carolyn Wilson

Temporary Members Present

Silvio Esteves

Ruling Elder Commissioners

Bill Kraft (COM)	Betty Robertson (Holy Trinity)
Jim O'Harrow (CCC)	Jack C. Taylor (Estero Community)
Mary Lynn Myers (Finance)	Roy Cashion (First Naples)
Mitzi McGavic (1 st Arcadia)	Nancy Copeland (Lely)
Paul Spinka (1 st Bonita Springs)	Bonnie Hartley (Lely)
Rick Wilkins (1 st Bonita Springs)	Janet Olschewsky (First Sarasota)
Dave Nichols (1 st Bonita Springs)	John Matta (First Sarasota)
Tim Cordes (1 st Bonita Springs)	Sandra M. Stiles (Northminster)
Virginia O'Harrow	Sally H. Kirby (Northminster)
(Community/Englewood)	Claudia George (Pine Shores)
Linda Davison (Community/Englewood)	George Lavigne (Pine Shores)
Alan Belch (Palmetto)	Diane V Steiger (P. Church of the Covenant)
Judith Shunk (Faith)	Alice Sherwin (P. Church of the Covenant)
Rusty Shunk (Faith)	Pat Chandler-Smith (Siesta Key Chapel)
Lois McGill (Braden River)	Sally Schoeffel (Peace)
Sharri Kramer (United)	Jason Bonafede (Peace)
Ronald Dickerson (United)	Bob White (St. Paul's)
Linda Frizzell (Bee Ridge)	Dennis Sullivan (St. Paul's)
Sandy Oswalt (Bee Ridge)	Joe Doggett (Vanderbilt)
Linda Getzen (Church of the Palms)	Price Lindsay (Vanderbilt)
Marlene Petro (Church of the Palms)	Carlene Painter (Venice)
Fee Mercer (Church of the Palms)	Tom Saye (Venice)
Kurt Wagner (Buckingham)	Lorraine Fenton (Burnt Store)
Patti Kay Warthen (Buckingham)	Walter Van Beers (Burnt Store)
Mary Lee Mann (Covenant/Fort Myers)	Ambrose E. Woods (First Port Charlotte)
Verona Lawson (Covenant/Fort Myers)	Elaine Woods (First Port Charlotte)
Bill Stevens (Cypress Lake)	Wendy E Rainey (Wintergarden)
Janet Daly (Holy Trinity)	

Corresponding Members Present

Vinod Gananaraj (Genesee Valley)
Anthony Larson (New Harmony)
Charmaine Ponkratz (Treasurer)

Clark Simmons (Board of Pensions)
Dana Waters (Presbyterian Foundation)

Visitors Present

David English, New Covenant Trust Company
Teresita Matos-Post, Beth-El Mission
21 Additional visitors

Teaching Elders Excused

Bill Sitterly
Floyd Churn
Sarah Soboleski

Julia Wharff Piermont
Paul Reiter
Ron Miller

Holly Wildhack
Hmingi Lal Browne
Will Browne

Voting Teaching Elders Present: 37
Voting Ruling Elders Present: 55
Voting Members Present: 92

Corresponding Members Present: 5
Visitors Present: 23

Total Attendance: 115

Total Excuses Approved: 11

Stated Meeting Minutes
February 20, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Moderator TE Ed Brandt at 9:05 am in the sanctuary of Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood, FL. He offered the opening prayer. Moderator Brandt announced that TE Margaret E. Towner, a member of Peace River Presbytery and the first woman ordained a minister of the Word and Sacrament in the PCUSA, will celebrate her 100th birthday on March 19 and encouraged everyone to send her birthday greetings.

The Moderator introduced Pastor Host TE Scott Andrews who brought greetings and offered important information related to the meeting.

The Moderator called on Stated Clerk TE Randy Moody to present his first report.

Motion by the Stated Clerk: Approve the published docket, subject to necessary changes. Adopted.

Motion by the Stated Clerk: the appointment of Temporary Clerks:

RE Jim O'Harrow

RE Kathy Baillargeon

Tom Zick, C.P.A.

Adopted.

Motion by the Stated Clerk: Seat the following people as Corresponding Members with voice:

TE Tony Larson, Co-Moderator of the 226th General Assembly

RE Charmaine Ponkratz, Treasurer

RE Clark Simmons, Board of Pensions

TE Dana Waters, Presbyterian Foundation

Adopted.

Motion by the Stated Clerk: to excuse the following members at their request:

Bill Sitterly

Ron Miller

Floyd Churn

Holly Wildhack

Sarah Soboleski

Hmingi Lal Browne

Julia Wharff Piermont

Will Browne

Paul Reiter

Christ Church LBK ruling elders

Motion by the Stated Clerk: Presbytery authorize the Moderator and Stated Clerk to read and approve the minutes of this meeting. Adopted.

The Moderator invited the General Presbyter TE Melana Scruggs to present her report. The General Presbyter concluded her report with the introduction of the Co-Moderator of the 226th General Assembly, TE Tony Larson who spoke to the Presbytery.

The Moderator called for the second report from the Stated Clerk.

Motion by the Stated Clerk: Seat Rev. Vinod Gnanaraj (UCC), serving Holy Trinity North Fort Myers as a Corresponding Member with voice. Adopted.

A ballot was distributed for the proposed amendments to the Book of Order and the Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries from the 226th General Assembly for Presbytery vote. Moderator Brandt offered a prayer for discernment through the discussion.

The body was informed that 3 of the 4 Peace River Presbytery Commissioners to the 226th General Assembly as well as the Co-Moderator were available as resource people, if needed, during discussion of the proposals. Each was discussed, then ballots were collected with the following results:

24-A — F-1.0403 OPENESS TO THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
F-1.0403 UNITY IN DIVERSITY (POL-01 1)

63 Yes **27 No**

24-B – G-1.0104 THE CONGREGATION
G-1.0104 OTHER FORMS OF CORPORATE WITNESS (POL-03)

85 Yes **4 No**

24-C — G-2.0104b ORDERED MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH
G-2.0104b GIFTS AND QUALIFICATIONS (POL-01 2)

63 Yes **27 No**

24-D — G-2.0504b PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS
G-2.0504b TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS (POL-05)

89 Yes **1 No**

24-E — G-2.0504b PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS
G-2.0504b TEMPORARY PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS (POL-08 2)

86 Yes **4 No**

24-F — G-2.0610 PREPARATION FOR MINISTRY
G-2.0610 ACCOMODATIONS TO PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES (ORD-05)

76 Yes **14 No**

24-G — 2.0901 DISSOLUTION OF PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS
G-2.0901 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING (POL-08 1)

83 Yes **7 No**

24-H — G-3.0106 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF COUNCILS
G-3.0106 ADMINISTRATION OF MISSION (POL-11)

89 Yes **1 No**

24-I — G-3.0302d THE PRESBYTERY
G-3.0302d RELATIONSHIPS WITH SYNOD AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GAP-05)

85 Yes **5 No**

24-J — G-3.0501 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
G-3.0501 COMPOSITION AND RESPONSIBILITY (GAP-04)

82 Yes **8 No**

24-K — D-7.0501 INVESTIGATION
D-7.0501 REFERRAL TO INVESTIGATING COMMITTEE (POL-02)

84 Yes **6 No**

**24-L — D-7.0902b ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL ABUSE
D-7.0902b ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE (POL-04)**

84 Yes

6 No

24-M Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries

82 Yes

8 No

The report from the Administrative Commission for Chapel By the Sea included a celebration of the life of the now dissolved congregation. The PowerPoint will be sent to the Presbyterian Historical Society.

Motion from the CBTS AC: Peace River Presbytery place the remainder of the insurance monies and other financial assets in a new Insurance and Small Church Sustainability Fund, an account the Presbytery will use to help support churches dealing with rising property insurance costs and their very viability. Adopted.

Motion by the Stated Clerk: The Moderator, in consultation with the General Presbyter, be authorized to appoint a special committee to develop policies and procedures to implement the new Insurance and Small Church Sustainability Fund, then report back to the Presbytery for final approval. Adopted.

Motion from the CBTS AC: Peace River Presbytery create a new fund from the sale of CBTS property entitled the Ministry of Church Development and Revitalization; that a portion of the earnings be used to refuel the Insurance and Small Church Sustainability Fund; and finally, that embedded within this fund is held in trust the initial funding for a Presbyterian presence on the Beach in the future if feasible. Adopted.

Motion by the Stated Clerk: The Moderator, in consultation with the General Presbyter, be authorized to appoint a special committee to develop policies and procedures to implement the new Ministry of Church Development and Revitalization Fund, then report back to the Presbytery for final approval. Adopted.

Motion from the CBTS AC: Peace River Presbytery dissolve the Chapel by the Sea Administrative Commission as of February 20, 2025. Adopted.

The report from the Administrative Commission for Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church was presented.

Motion from the CLPC AC: That Peace River Presbytery dissolve/decommission the Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church Administrative Commission as of February 20, 2025. Adopted

The Stated Clerk requested the Moderator to recognize General Presbyter TE Melana Scruggs to address the Presbytery during which time she expressed gratitude for the dedication and grace displayed by members of the administrative commissions. Stated Clerk TE Randy Moody concluded his second report noting that Peace River Presbytery had 5 administrative commissions working with congregations concurrently shortly after Hurricane Ian and that all had performed admirably and with the last motion all have completed their work.

Moderator Brandt called on Carolyn Wilson, co-moderator of the Committee on Ministry to present their report.

Clark Simmons, Board of Pensions Senior Consultant, was recognized to share information regarding Board of Pensions benefits for clergy and church employees.

The Moderator called upon TE Terri Jo Crego, moderator of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, to present their report.

Motion from the Committee on Preparation for Ministry: Carson Brown be approved as a Candidate under care of the Presbytery. Examination ensued.

Motion by TE Terri Jo Crego: Arrest the examination. Adopted.

Motion to advance Carson Brown to candidate status adopted.

TE Crego proposed the candidate questions which were answered in the affirmative. RE Mickey Miller offered a prayer.

Moderator Brandt called for the report from the Human Resources Committee. In the absence of their moderator, General Presbyter TE Melana Scruggs recognized the retirement of long-term Office Administrator Alesia R. Sharpe by reading a resolution.

Motion by TE Melana Scruggs: Spread the resolution honoring the service of Alesia Sharpe in the minutes of the Presbytery. Adopted with a standing ovation.

Resolution Honoring Alesia Sharpe

The members of the Presbytery of Peace River, for the purpose of taking such action as is deemed appropriate in honor of Alesia Sharpe, do hereby adopt the following Resolution, to-wit:

WHEREAS, Alesia joined the staff of Peace River Presbytery on May 1, 2001, and

WHEREAS, Alesia quickly learned the complexities of Presbyterian polity and how to plan and implement the needs Presbytery meetings, including how to work with three different Stated Clerks and prepare the minutes of the meetings so that they could pass the Synod's review, and

WHEREAS, she answered questions from pastors, elders, committee members, church administrators, or anyone else who called, and

WHEREAS, she created the agenda for Committee on Ministry meetings and made sure all the necessary paperwork was available for each meeting and that everyone knew what time their interview was happening, and

WHEREAS, when the presbytery still owned a building, she did all the work to rent space and make sure all regulations were followed, and usually cleaned the building as well, and

WHEREAS, Alesia, with the help of her husband, Ron, moved the presbytery offices twice in less than two years, and

WHEREAS, she made sure people were celebrated for their birthdays, anniversaries, or special events, and

WHEREAS, she holds the corporate memory of the presbytery and is irreplaceable, so we are not going to try to replace her,

NOW, THEREFORE, as a token of our esteem for her and as a tribute to her commitment to the work of the church through Peace River Presbytery, we take this means of expression of our thankfulness for almost 24 years of dedicated and loving service to churches and pastors by Alesia Sharpe.

Moderator TE Ed Brandt declared the Presbytery in recess at 11:03 am for the purpose of Worship and lunch.

Recess

Moderator TE Ed Brandt called the meeting back to order at 1:20 pm.

Finance Committee Moderator RE Mary Lynn Myers was invited to introduce TE Dana Waters, Ministry Relations Officer with the Presbyterian Foundation, and David English, Assistant Vice-President of the New Covenant Trust Company, who addressed the Presbytery regarding services offered to councils of the church.

Moderator Brandt recognized Vice Moderator RE Janice Croley to speak on behalf of the Human Resources Committee. General Presbyter TE Melana Scruggs was recognized for 5 years of service to Peace River Presbytery.

Steering Committee Moderator TE Rob Marrow was called forward to present their report.

Motion by the Steering Committee: Peace River Presbytery ratify its action on January 23, 2025 to appoint RE Jef Farlow (Covenant, Fort Myers) to the Human Resources Committee, Class of 2027. Adopted.

Motion by the Steering Committee: Delete the phrase “nominated by the Human Resources Committee unless otherwise specified in the Standing Rules.” in Standing Rule 8.3 (**Article VIII. Presbytery Committees and Commissions**). Adopted.

Motion by the Steering Committee: Insert “The Moderator, Vice-Moderator, General Presbyter, and Stated Clerk shall develop and plan the themes, locations, and speakers for meetings.” in Standing Rule 4.1 (**Article IV. Meetings of Presbytery**). Adopted.

Motion by the Steering Committee: Merge 8.5.6.1 with 8.5.6.2 in the Communication, Connection and Community Committee; delete “In consultation with, the General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, the Steering Committee and Presbytery Committees, developing and planning the themes, locations and speakers for our Stated Presbytery meetings” (8.5.6.3); and insert “To promote, receive, and act upon all applications for Presbytery grant programs (Blessing, Disaster, etc.) according to each program’s requirements, then evaluate outcomes related to grants awarded.” (8.5.6.2) and “To coordinate New Worshipping Communities.” (8.5.6.3) (**Article VIII. Presbytery Committees and Commissions**). Adopted.

Motion by the Steering Committee: Delete all Mision Peniel Committee information from the Standing Rules. (**Article VIII. Presbytery Committees and Commissions**) delete all Mision Peniel Committee information from the Standing Rules. (**Article VIII. Presbytery Committees and Commissions**) Adopted.

Motion by the Steering Committee: Insert Mision Peniel paragraph 9.6 below into **Article IX Other Organizations and Boards:**

9.6 Mision Peniel, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation founded by Peace River Presbytery to benefit and support ministry to and with farmworkers. The corporation is structured as defined in the Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of Florida and the Bylaws. The corporation may report annually and as needed to the Presbytery through its President or designee.
Adopted.

Moderator Brandt asked Finance Committee Moderator RE Mary Lynn Myers to return to present the committee report.

Motion by the Finance Committee: The Finance Committee moves to approve the Peace River Presbytery Financial Policies. Adopted.

TE Miguel Estrada, Pastor and Executive Director of mission partner Misión Peniel, was invited to present a report.

Moderator TE Ed Brandt recognized Beth-El Mission Executive Rev. Teresita Matos-Post (UMC) to present their mission partner report.

Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center did not have a representative available but prior to the meeting delivered cookies and summer camp information for distribution.

Stated Clerk TE Randy Moody announced the offering collected during worship for the Beth-El Mission totaled \$1,119.00.

TE Tony Larson, Co-Moderator of the 226th General Assembly, was invited to present News You Can Use followed by a time for questions and answers.

The docket completed, the meeting was adjourned with prayer by Moderator TE Ed Brandt at 2:09 pm.

Randy Moody, D.Min.
Stated Clerk



**PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY
STATED MEETING DOCKET
COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
ENGLEWOOD, FL
FEBRUARY 20, 2025**



9:00 am	Opening Prayer	Moderator, Ed Brandt
	Greetings from Host Church	Scott Andrews
	Report #1 of the Stated Clerk	Randy Moody
	Report of the General Presbyter	Melana Scruggs
	Moderator of the 226 th General Assembly	Tony Larson
	Report #2 of the Stated Clerk (Amendments Vote)	Randy Moody
	Committee on Ministry Report	Carolyn Wilson
	Board of Pensions	Clark Simmons
	Committee on Preparation for Ministry Report	Terri Jo Crego
	Steering Committee Report	Rob Marrow
	Human Resource Committee Report	
	Finance Committee Report	Mary Lynn Myers
	Report of the Treasurer	Charmaine Ponkratz
	Presbyterian Foundation	Dana Waters
	New Covenant Trust Company	David English
	Misión Peniel Report	Miguel Estrada
	Beth-El Mission Report	Teresita Matos-Post
	Cedarkirk Camp & Conference Center Report	Matt Schick
	Closing Prayer for Business	Moderator, Ed Brandt
	News You Can Use	Tony Larson
11:00 am	Worship including Sacrament of the Lord's Supper & 2024 Necrology Roll	
	Preacher: Tony Larson, Moderator of the 226 th General Assembly	
	Scripture & Sermon Title:	
	Offering Recipient: Beth-El Mission (checks payable to Community Presbyterian Church; 2025 Pledge Forms Presented)	
12:00 pm	Lunch and Fellowship	
12:45 pm	Continuation of Business, if required	

Peace River Presbytery Stated Meeting, Feb. 20, 2025
Stated Clerk's Report #1

1. Confirmation of Quorum
2. Approval of Docket
3. Appointment of Temporary Clerks
4. Enrollment of Corresponding Members
5. Members of Presbytery who requested to be excused
6. **Motion:** Presbytery authorize the Moderator and Stated Clerk to read and approve the minutes of this meeting.

General Presbyter's Report – February 20, 2025

Work of 2024

The following is from the Position Description for the General Presbyter:

Relationships: The General Presbyter is the head of staff for the presbytery staff and works with pastors, elders, and church members to facilitate the mission and ministry of congregations in their communities. The General Presbyter collaborates with the Stated Clerk in the ministry of the Presbytery and maintains relationships with other mid-council leaders in the Synod and the PC(USA).

Position Summary: The General Presbyter of Peace River Presbytery shall provide leadership, support and care as needed by the congregations, pastors, presbytery committees/teams and presbytery staff as they carry out the ministry of Jesus Christ. The General Presbyter will work to empower and unite congregations as a presbytery, while equipping and celebrating the ministries of individual congregations. The General Presbyter will encourage a culture of permission-giving that energizes our connectional commitment to mission in an ever-changing community and world.

Position Qualifications: The General Presbyter shall be a ruling elder or minister of the Word and Sacrament. The individual must possess comprehensive knowledge of the Book of Order and Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised plus demonstrate the ability to apply that knowledge in a practical manner to support the ministry of the presbytery and resource congregations. The General Presbyter will have a strong understanding of systems theory and be able to relate that to congregations in crisis. Ideally the GP would have some training in conflict mediation.

Character Expectations: The General Presbyter must be a person of integrity who collaborates with colleagues, honors confidentiality, is calm in conflict, and has the ability to cast vision.

Work of 2024

This job description and my conviction that the presbytery exists for the mission and ministry of its congregations drive the work I prioritize. My focus is on building trust and collegiality as we work together to answer God's call in this part of the world.

One of the great joys of my call is preaching and teaching. In 2024 I was invited to preach 34 times, including Maundy Thursday and Christmas Eve. I had the opportunity to teach for 5 weeks at Siesta Key Chapel, sharing information on the history of the church and our creedal statements. The women of Burnt Store allowed me to lead two of their Bible studies on Mary and Martha of Bethany.

Meeting the administrative requirements of our polity is also part of my calling. In 2024 I led four boundaries trainings for sessions and provided officer training for four congregations.

With the Stated Clerk, I facilitated five boundary training options for pastors. Boundaries training is now required of every council and of any pastor serving a congregation in any capacity. I have moderated 25 session meetings and 3 congregational meetings this year as we navigate pastoral vacancies in congregations.

It is said that if we are not changing, we are dying. We certainly have seen a good deal of transition in the presbytery in 2024. Committee on Ministry liaisons meet with Pastor Nominating Committees as they search for their next leader. It is a time intensive task that volunteers do with dedication and commitment for the presbytery. We continue to discern how best to find the leadership needed to serve the church of today. It is always a gift to attend an installation or ordination. This year I attended three of those.

We also are looking to the future of the church. In the years I have been here we have had conversations with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America about the church they have started in Babcock Ranch and how we might partner as reformed churches. That conversation has gained new life. Please pray for what God might be doing in a new place.

Hurricanes are part of life in Florida. I have decided I will never again take a vacation in September. We had three storms this fall that had impacts in the presbytery. My goal after a storm is to be supportive of the needs of each congregation. We had two visits from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance teams after Milton. Grants for mitigation work from PDA comes through the presbytery. I have worked with folks to provide four grants from Irma and Ian. We also received an initial response grant of \$7500 for each storm and another grant of \$25,000 to support five churches who had significant damage. We are grateful for churches and individuals who give directly to the presbytery following a disaster because we can respond more quickly with those gifts.

General Assembly met in 2024 in Salt Lake City. Randy and I attended the committee meetings online and the plenary in person. We support the work of our commissioners, learn about the work of the broader church, and prepare to interpret what the Assembly has done when we return home. It is my great desire to support a presbytery that provides a big tent where we can share, learn, and support one another beyond any theological or sociological differences.

The role of pastor to pastors is one I take very seriously. Pastors work tirelessly and with great commitment to the church and the gospel. It is my desire to support that work, with a listening ear, a shared meal, a phone call in a moment of angst, or an opportunity to celebrate a win. Please know that I am available as your pastor to walk with you and to pray for you.

It has been over five years since I said “yes” to this call. I continue to be thankful that God called us to work together.

**Peace River Presbytery
Stated Meeting, Feb. 20, 2025
Stated Clerk's Report #2**

For Presbytery Action:

7. Proposed Amendments to the Book of Order (see Proposed Book of Order Amendments document), vote by ballot
8. Proposed Episcopal-Presbyterian Agreement on Local Sharing of Ministries (see Proposed Book of Order Amendments document), vote by ballot
9. Administrative Commissions
 - Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach, report on following pages, including motions
 - Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers, report on following pages, including a motion

Report to Peace River Presbytery from Chapel by the Sea Administrative Commission

February 20, 2025

On September 28, 2022 Hurricane Ian destroyed the Sanctuary and Silver Hall of Chapel by the Sea Presbyterian Church on Fort Myers Beach, and its members were scattered around the nation. In March 2023 Peace River Presbytery appointed an Administrative Commission to “walk alongside” them to assist as they looked toward the future. The AC attended eight Session meetings from March until October 2023 when the Commission decided to take original jurisdiction, as authorized by the Presbytery. After much discussion and prayer, four months later in February 2024 the AC/Session voted to dissolve the Congregation, and the Peace River Presbytery affirmed that decision on May 16. Since then the Commission has been at work with the many details inherent in-so-doing, in particular the distribution of assets—funds and artifacts plus consideration of real property recommendations.

The AC/Session’s guideline for distribution of assets is **to honor and preserve God’s legacy of service by Chapel by the Sea**. Following is the listing of donations:

- Chimes, bells, and \$6000 to refurbish the bells to Faith Presbyterian Church,
- Ship’s bell, clamshell baptismal font, mahogany cross, and two bronze memorial plaques to Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, the latter two to be installed in their memorial garden,
- Framed shadow box with the center window of the original 1985 stained glass window destroyed by Hurricane Charley in 2004 to Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church,
- \$35,000 to Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church for inviting CBTS members to worship with them immediately after Ian struck, for welcoming and integrating CBTS members into church activities, for providing administrative space and support for Chapel staff, and for installation costs for the cross and plaques CLPS’s memorial garden.
- Dolphin window and \$15,000 to cover installation to Covenant Presbyterian Church,
- \$50,000 to continue the CBTS legacy of feeding the hungry for a refrigeration unit to the South Fort Myers Food Pantry Coalition housed at Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church and an additional \$25,000 to stock it with food; CBTS was an affiliate member of the coalition,
- \$1,500,000 to Mision Peniel, which was an important ministry to CBTS—a truly transformational gift for land acquisition and development of a permanent home,
- \$25,000 to the Florida-Bahamas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a gesture of ecumenical goodwill designated in trust to St. Peter ELC on Fort Myers Beach to offset rising insurance costs and fees,

An attorney was retained to legally merge the remaining CBTS assets into Peace River Presbytery effective September 30, 2024.

Sadly, like so many things at Chapel, all of the older historical records of the church were destroyed by Ian. The good news is that the Session minutes from 2018 forward as well as the membership rolls and some other historical information were saved by Diane Means, then Clerk of Session, before the hurricane and have been sent to the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia for safekeeping, preservation, and research purposes. Seven years of financial records have been sent to Peace River Presbytery. The CBTS website and Facebook accounts were shut down as of September 30.

The Congregation was informed of the process of transferring membership in our report letters of February 26, May 24, July 31, and August 30, 2024; individual letters were sent to all active members as of August 10. Motions in Session meetings held August 8, August 15, and September 5 removed all remaining members from the rolls. Members have been informed since February that the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery is the contact after this date should any person need a letter of transfer.

With this report, and after 29 AC and Session meetings over 18 months, our work is complete.

Therefore, the Chapel by the Sea Administrative Commission/Session unanimously **moves** the following motions for consideration by the Peace River Presbytery:

- that Peace River Presbytery place the remainder of the insurance monies and other financial assets in a new Insurance and Small Church Sustainability Fund, an account the Presbytery will use to help support churches dealing with rising property insurance costs and their very viability.
- that Peace River Presbytery create a new fund from the sale of CBTS property entitled the Ministry of Church Development and Revitalization; that a portion of the earnings be used to refuel the Insurance and Small Church Sustainability Fund; and finally, that embedded within this fund is held in trust the initial funding for a Presbyterian presence on the Beach in the future if feasible.
- that Peace River Presbytery dissolve the Chapel by the Sea Administrative Commission as of October 19, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jay Mumper, Moderator
Elder Janice Croley
Rev. Dr. Winston Lawson
Elder Diane Means
Elder Rusty Shunk

Report to Peace River Presbytery from Cypress Lake PC Administrative Commission January 31, 2025

The Administrative Commission (A/C) for Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church (CLPC) was Commissioned by this Presbytery on March 2, 2023 to “walk alongside” the CLPC Session and Congregation. A conflict between the previously installed pastor and the Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church Session developed over how to handle an application for employment by an individual on the Florida Sexual Offender and Predator Registry. The previously existing dysfunction of the Session led to the departure of the Pastor, further conflict within the Session and misinformation to the Congregation. It escalated to the point where an A/C was required.

The A/C met independently and with the Session from March through August, 2023, moderating Session meetings and learning the issues that the Session was facing. On September 15, 2023, the A/C voted to assume “Original Jurisdiction.” After administering the Worship and business of CLPC and making some changes, the A/C relinquished Original Jurisdiction on July 1, 2024 restoring Church operations to the duly elected “new” Session. The current Session has met regularly since July 1 and is administering the Worship and business life of CLPC.

Actions taken by the A/C:

- Adopted the Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church Sexual Misconduct and Minor/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy, modeled upon that of the Presbytery,
- Discontinued the “Hybrid,” or alternating traditional and contemporary services to a traditional only format,
- Changed the locks on the entire facility,
- Worked with the Committee for Preparation for Ministry to find appropriate placement of an “Inquirer” for that person’s pastoral development,
- Met with the Congregation several times to discuss interim education, status and plans,
- Proposed changes to By-Laws which were adopted by the Congregation to reduce the number of Ruling Elders and change the fiscal year to coincide with the calendar year in order to allow “snowbirds” a greater opportunity to participate,
- Worked with the Nominating Committee to inform them of qualifications for the rising Elder and Deacon candidates and provided Officer training for them which included: theological and historical background of our Polity; duties of the offices of Elders and Deacons; and Session ethics
- Made inquiries and interviewed potential Interim Pastors and established and filled the “Bridge Pastor” position and provided Pulpit Supply when necessary,
- Provided messages in the CLPC weekly communication “ECourier,”
- Worked with the Bridge Pastors for daily business of the Church, examined and installed new officers who had been north while their class was installed and accepted new members of the Congregation. Made staff personnel changes as appropriate,
- Educated the Session on the benefits/burdens of being a member of the PRP, reintroduced the procedure of “Per Capita” contributions to the Presbytery. And observed the Church re-learn the benefits of being a member of the Presbytery.

Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church is a truly amazing Church. They co-exist with a Spanish speaking Presbyterian Community that uses the CLPC facilities for Worship and have built in joint activities which occur on a regular basis. CLPC is Mission conscious and devote time and talent to their various ministries. Church members truly consider it their “Church home.” Social circles are deep and fundamental to their participation in and at the Church. Volunteerism is wide spread and help is given freely. CLPC is deeply connected to the local community, hosting a multi-denominational Food Pantry, 5 day a week after school care and activities for members occur almost every day of the week.

The A/C met with the Congregation on numerous occasions, specifically during four Interim Educational Interactive Events in June, 2023. General Presbyter Melana Scruggs attended each event and participated as a speaker. There were informational meetings between the A/C and the Congregation in early 2024. The A/C attended and moderated all the CLPC Session Meetings between February, 2023 and the present. There were periods prior to, and more often after the assumption of Original Jurisdiction that some contact was made on a daily basis.

The A/C recognizes and is thankful for the devoted participation in the process by General Presbyter Rev. Melana Scruggs and Stated Clerk Rev. Randy Moody in offering technical advice and lending their experiences throughout the process.

The current CLPC Session is in place and addressing the issues facing the Church and the A/C is continuing to “Walk alongside” the Session.

With this report, the work of the CLPC A/C is complete.

Therefore, the Cypress Lake Administrative Commission unanimously **MOVES** the following Motion for consideration by the Peace River Presbytery:

- That Peace River Presbytery dissolve/decommission the Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church Administrative Commission as of February 20, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter DeBaun, Moderator RE
Rev. Doug Pratt, Vice-Moderator TE
Rev. Scott Andrews TE
Beverly Grady RE
Louise Torkelson RE

Previously serving members of the CLPC/AC who contributed to our work:

Rev. Alan Adams, (Ret.) TE
Rev. Nancy Kahaian TE
Vicki McWhorter RE

Committee on Ministry Report

Stated Meeting, February 20, 2025

We welcome to the Presbytery:

- Rev. Dr. Steve Aguzzi, Pastor of Moorings Presbyterian Church, Naples.
- Rev. Becky Schwandt, Pastor of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers.
- Rev. Dr. Jonas Mark Hayes, Pastor of Lely Presbyterian Church, Naples, March 1.

We also Celebrate:

- Rev. Dr. Margaret Towner turns 100 on March 19, 2025.

For information, only:

November 12 Meeting

- Approved the transfer of TE Mary Ann Banning to Pittsburgh Presbytery.
- Approved Rev. Kate Buckley as a parish associate for Church of the Palms, Sarasota.
- Approved First Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs to develop a Ministry Discernment Profile for an Associate Pastor position.
- Approved Buckingham Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers and First Presbyterian Church, Lehigh Acres to develop a shared Ministry Discernment Profile for a Pastor.
- Received TE Rebbecca (Becky) Schwandt as member of Peace River Presbytery by transfer from John Calvin Presbytery.
- Approved Installed Pastoral Relationship between TE Becky Schwandt and Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers, effective January 15.
- Approved First Presbyterian Church, Naples to conduct a mission study prior to their current pastor's retirement.

December 10 Meeting

- Approved the transfer of TE Edward Bellis to Middle Tennessee Presbytery.
- Approved Wintergarden dissolution of installed relationship of Devon Andrews moving to a temporary pastoral relationship, effective January 1, 2025.
- Approved election of a Pastor Nominating Committee for Church of the Palms, Sarasota, ITWBC.
- Approved election of a Designated Pastor Nominating Committee for Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers.
- Received TE Jonas Mark Hayes as a member of Peace River Presbytery by transfer from Los Ranchos Presbytery.
- Approved Installed Pastoral Relationship between TE Jonas Mark Hayes and Lely Presbyterian Church, Naples, effective March 1.

**Peace River Presbytery
Committee on Preparation for Ministry
Stated Meeting: Thursday, February 20, 2025**

CURRENTLY UNDER CARE

Inquirers:

- Carson Brown, Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Ft. Myers

Candidates:

- John Frazee, Braden River Presbyterian Church, Bradenton
- Debra Graves, Faith Presbyterian, Cape Coral
- Conor Peters, Church of the Palms, Sarasota

Certified/Ready for a Call:

- Amy Cerniglia, Peace Presbyterian Church, Lakewood Ranch

MOTIONS:

- ☐ The Committee on Preparation for Ministry **moves** that **Carson Brown**, be approved as a Candidate under care of the Presbytery. (Statement of Faith attached).
- Carson was endorsed by the session of Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers.
 - CPM met with Carson and reviewed his progress and Statement of Faith.
 - After discussion among the committee and Carson, CPM presents this motion for the presbytery.

NOTE:

G-2.0103 Call to Ordered Ministry

The call to ordered ministry in the Church is the act of the triune God. This call is evidenced by the movement of the Holy Spirit in the individual conscience, the approval of a community of God's people, and the concurring judgment of a council of the Church.

G-2.0603 Purpose of Inquiry

The purpose of the inquiry phase is to provide an opportunity for the church and those who believe themselves called to ordered ministry as ministers of the Word and Sacrament to explore that call together so that the presbytery can make an informed decision about the inquirer's suitability for ordered ministry.

G-2.0604 Purpose of Candidacy

The purpose of the candidacy phase is to provide for the full preparation of persons to serve the church as ministers of the Word and Sacrament. This shall be accomplished through the presbytery's support, guidance, and evaluation of a candidate's fitness and readiness for a call to ministry requiring ordination.

Statement of Faith - Carson Brown

I believe in one triune God: The Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God always has been, and always will be. God is infinite, all-knowing, and sovereign in being, wisdom, power, justice, and goodness. God is love, and this love is expressed through God's creation of us as people made in God's image.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only son, both fully human and fully God. Born of a virgin, he lived among us, sharing in our joys and sorrows. He was crucified unjustly by human hands. In his death, he felt the depths of human pain and the weight of the sins of all humankind. For us, he died, taking upon himself the punishment we deserve. He rose from the dead by God's singular power, proving himself blameless, shattering sin and its hold over us, and allowing the restoration of humanity to God.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, God's gift to the church. The Spirit applies the saving work of Christ to us, guiding us into all truth through Scripture. This same Spirit which filled the apostles on Pentecost remains as active and powerful today, breathing life and unity into the church of Jesus Christ across the world and indwelling believers so we might grow in faith and service.

I believe that humanity was created for communion with God, but fell into sin through the disobedience of Adam and Eve. All human beings throughout all time have been, and are, sinners - except Jesus Christ. Our sin separates us from God, but God's grace restores us. I believe that salvation comes solely from belief in Jesus Christ, his death, and his resurrection. Even as we were sinners, Christ acted to save us from our sin. Salvation is a gift given of God's mercy, and is reserved for those who know themselves unworthy of it. In our faith, an unchanging truth shines: that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God. I believe in the visible, personal, and glorious return of Jesus Christ to judge the living and the dead. Those found righteous as a result of Christ's sacrifice will dwell forever in God's presence in a new heaven and a new earth, fulfilling the covenant of God's grace. Those who reject God will remain separated from God.

I believe that the Bible, composed of the Old and New Testaments, is the inspired Word of God. It is the supreme authority for Christians in all matters of faith and life. We are invited to experience God through prayer, and can be confident that God listens when we do. I believe that two sacraments - Baptism and the Lord's Supper - both instituted by Jesus, guide the life of the church and serve as tangible symbols of our faith. Baptism is a visible symbol and assurance of the covenant of grace, and the Lord's Supper offers us spiritual nourishment and communion with Christ.

I believe that the natural result of faith in Christ is a life anchored by joy and thanksgiving. Christ charges us to share this very good news through our words, actions, and our being with one another. I believe that Christians are called to spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth fearlessly and compassionately. I believe that Christians are called to live holy lives worthy of our callings, to work towards justice and renewal, and to walk humbly with our God. I believe that Christians are called to participate in the local and universal church, ordained by Christ as our corporate expression of worship and communion with all believers. Since God has demonstrated eternal love for us, we are invited and called to demonstrate love to others. This is the ultimate joy of space and time, of the vastness of the universe and the beating of each human heart: that in all things, we rejoice in the grace of God that transforms, sustains, and empowers God's people to live for God's glory and the redemption of all humankind.

Peace River Presbytery
Steering Committee Report
February 20, 2025

For Presbytery Action:

1. The Steering Committee **moves** that Peace River Presbytery ratify its action on January 23, 2025 to appoint RE Jef Farlow (Covenant, Fort Myers) to the Human Resources Committee, Class of 2027.
2. The Steering Committee **moves** to delete the phrase “nominated by the Human Resources Committee unless otherwise specified in the Standing Rules.” In Standing Rule 8.3 (**Article VIII. Presbytery Committees and Commissions**).

Rationale: The committees and commissions can determine their leadership needs and select the person with the experience needed.

If approved, strikethrough wording will be deleted:

8.3 Committees shall have a moderator and vice-moderator, or co-moderators, ~~nominated by the Human Resources Committee unless otherwise specified by the Standing Rules~~, elected annually and may not serve more than three (3) consecutive years in that capacity.

3. The Steering Committee **moves** to insert “The Moderator, Vice-Moderator, General Presbyter, and Stated Clerk shall develop and plan the themes, locations, and speakers for meetings.” in Standing Rule 4.1 (**Article IV. Meetings of Presbytery**).

Rationale: The current division of responsibilities among the Steering Committee, Moderator, General Presbyter, Stated Clerk, and CCC to plan Stated Meetings sometimes becomes confusing. The proposal shifts the planning responsibilities to the persons primarily responsible for conducting the meetings.

If approved, wording underlined will be inserted:

4.1 The Presbytery shall ordinarily hold at least three Stated Meetings per year, usually in February, May, and October. The schedule of meetings for the ensuing year will be set by the Steering Committee no later than the third quarter of the preceding year. The Steering Committee may change the date of a particular Stated Meeting upon notifying the members and sessions thirty (30) days in advance. The Steering Committee may direct that any meeting, stated or special, be electronic provided it meets the standard for electronic meetings in the current edition of **Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised**. The Moderator, Vice-Moderator, General Presbyter, and Stated Clerk shall develop and plan the themes, locations, and speakers for meetings.

4. The Steering Committee **moves** to merge 8.5.6.1 with 8.5.6.2 in the Communication, Connection and Community Committee; delete “In consultation with, the General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, the Steering Committee and Presbytery Committees, developing and planning the themes, locations and speakers for our Stated Presbytery meetings” (8.5.6.3); and insert “To promote, receive, and act upon all applications for Presbytery grant programs (Blessing, Disaster, etc.) according to each program’s requirements, then evaluate outcomes related to grants awarded.” (8.5.6.2) and “To coordinate New Worshipping Communities.” (8.5.6.3) (**Article VIII. Presbytery Committees and Commissions**).

Rationale: CCC was originally the Missional Team in the committees restructure of 2013. PRP currently needs a committee which focuses on New Worshipping Communities and strengthening current congregations, including managing the various grant programs available for new and existing worshipping communities. The proposed amendment recovers emphasis for missional ministry of the presbytery through existing and potential new communities/congregations.

If approved, underlined wording will be deleted and underlined wording inserted:

8.5.6 **Communication, Connection and Community Committee.** The responsibilities of this committee (9 members) shall be:

8.5.6.1 Nurturing the Presbytery’s understanding and functioning as a learning community: by

~~8.5.6.2 Encouraging, maintaining and supporting the development of meaningful and value-added relational connections, conversations and gatherings among congregations, sessions and both teaching and ruling elders.~~

8.5.6.2 To promote, receive, and act upon all applications for Presbytery grant programs (Blessing, Disaster, etc.) according to each program’s requirements, then evaluate outcomes related to grants awarded.

8.5.6.3 To coordinate New Worshipping Communities and congregational development.

~~In consultation with, the General Presbyter, the Stated Clerk, the Steering Committee and Presbytery Committees, developing and planning the themes, locations and speakers for our Stated Presbytery meetings.~~

8.5.6.4 To develop a communication strategy for the Presbytery, its philosophy and methodology for building community.

8.5.6.5 To provide communication linkage between Presbyterian Women and the Presbytery.

8.5.6.6 To coordinate the Peace River – Matanzas, Cuba partnership

5. The Steering Committee **moves** to delete all Mision Peniel Committee information from the Standing Rules. (**Article VIII. Presbytery Committees and Commissions**)

Rationale: At the November 2024 Stated Meeting, PRP approved Mision Peniel to become a stand-alone Mission Partner upon approval of its 501c3 application which is now approved.

If approved, the strikethrough wording will be deleted:

~~8.5.7 **Mision Peniel Committee.** The responsibilities of this committee (9 members) shall be to:~~

~~8.5.7.1 Maintain Mision Peniel's Vision of being "A Christ Centered and Compassionate Bridge——Connecting Migrant Farmworkers in Immokalee, Florida to Faith Communities and the World," and empowered to make future revisions to this vision upon prior approval of the Presbytery.~~

~~8.5.7.2 Develop Mision Peniel's core mission that addresses the isolation and injustice among the migrant farmworkers in Immokalee and provide support to them through spiritual and material care.~~

~~8.5.7.3 Develop structures to provide operational and management oversight of this ministry, including strategic planning and funds development.~~

~~8.5.7.4 Prepare in consultation with the Finance Committee and recommend to the Presbytery through the Steering Committee the operating budget for Mision Peniel.~~

~~8.5.7.5 Work with the congregations, sessions, and pastors of the Presbytery and others to cultivate the necessary support for this ministry.~~

~~——8.5.7.6 Support the work of the Presbytery Evangelist to Immokalee.~~

~~8.5.7.7 Participate in the annual Presbytery personnel review of the Presbytery Evangelist and all Mision Peniel staff.~~

~~8.5.7.8 Be an advocate for the farm work community in Immokalee, working with other organizations that address the physical, spiritual, emotional, relational, and economic challenges and needs of the farm work community.~~

~~8.5.7.9 Provide a report to Presbytery (in writing or verbally) at every Stated meeting of the Presbytery, and more often as requested.~~

6. The Steering Committee **moves** to Insert Mision Peniel paragraph 9.6 below into Article IX Other Organizations and Boards.

Rationale: At the November 2024 Stated Meeting, PRP approved Mision Peniel to become a stand-alone Mission Partner upon approval of its 501c3 application which is now approved.

If approved, underlined wording will be inserted:

9.6 Mision Peniel, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation founded by Peace River Presbytery to benefit and support ministry to and with farmworkers. The corporation is structured as defined in the Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of Florida and the Bylaws. The corporation may report annually and as needed to the Presbytery through its President or designee.

Human Resources Committee
February 20, 2025
Celebrating Presbyterian Melana Scruggs

In an era where leadership is often equated with assertiveness and command, few individuals embody the virtue of humility as profoundly as Presbyterian Melana Scruggs. Her leadership style, characterized by an unwavering dedication to listening and understanding, sets her apart as a true beacon of compassionate guidance.

In the Bible, Micah tells us in 6:8 that the Lord requires us to do what is good by being just, kind, and humble. Just, kind, and humble; three words that describe my thoughts of Melana when we first met 5 years ago on the HR Committee for the presbytery.

Humility is a rare and invaluable trait in any leader. It entails recognizing one's limitations, valuing the contributions of others, and fostering an environment where every voice is heard. Melana epitomizes this quality. She leads not with an iron fist but with a gentle hand, always ready to step back and let others shine. Her humility is a testament to her strength and confidence in her faith and in the PRP community.

One of the most remarkable aspects of Presbyterian Scruggs' leadership is her exceptional ability to listen. In meetings, she does not dominate the conversation but rather encourages others to share their thoughts and ideas. She understands that every individual has a unique perspective and that the best solutions often come from collaborative efforts. Her listening skills are not just about hearing words but about understanding the emotions and intentions behind them.

Melana's approach has had a profound impact on this Presbytery. Her willingness to listen has fostered a culture of openness and trust. People feel valued and respected, knowing that their voices matter. This inclusivity has led to stronger relationships and a more cohesive church. Under her guidance, initiatives are not merely top-down directives but collective endeavors that reflect the needs and aspirations of the Peace River Presbytery.

In celebrating Presbyterian Melana Scruggs, we honor a leader who transcends the traditional definitions of leadership. Her humility and unparalleled ability to listen make her a guiding light. She reminds us that true leadership is not about being the loudest voice in the room but about amplifying the voices of others. Melana's legacy is one of kindness, respect, and unwavering dedication to the well-being of those she serves. Her example inspires us all to lead with humility and to listen with our hearts. Thank you, Melana and May God bless us, all.

Peace River Presbytery
Finance Committee Report
Stated Meeting February 20, 2025
Community Presbyterian, Englewood



If you have any questions about this report, please contact
Moderator Mary Lynn Myers, mlm2817@aol.com or
Treasurer Charmaine Ponkratz, ponkratz@comcast.net

For Action: Approval of Financial Policies

The committee conducted its annual review of the Financial Policies and recommends changes highlighted in the document on the following pages. **MOTION:** The Finance Committee moves to approve the Peace River Presbytery Financial Policies.

Background: The primary changes reflect the re-allocation of duties due to the staff downsizing, the selection of New Covenant Trust Company as the investment manager, the reflection of the additional funds transferred from Chapel by the Sea and the adjustment of the General Assembly per capita to 50%

For Information Only:

Investment Transition: Consistent with action taken by the Presbytery at the October 2024 meeting, and referenced above in the policy document, the Presbytery's investment portfolio has been transferred from the New Covenant Balanced Growth Mutual Fund to the New Covenant Trust Company managed fund.

There are a number of advantages to this new approach, both to the PRP and to our churches. Those of you who are currently using New Covenant Trust Company as your Investment Managers will have already received a letter from them outlining a reduction in your advisory fees as a result of this new relationship at the Presbytery level.

For those of you who may want to consider NCTC for a future relationship, the brochure, in the important information folder for this meeting has information that describes the services and benefits this partnership provides.

Additionally, David English, Assistant Vice President, NCTC and Dana Waters, Ministry Relations Officer, Presbyterian Foundation, will be available for conversation over lunch at a designated table. Commissioners are invited to join in the conversation.

Review of September, October, November and December 2024 Financials: At each meeting the Finance Committee reviews the prior month financials, the church giving report and the funds/accounts summary.

The information is also shared with the Steering Committee members. Summary comments regarding year end 2024 financial condition appear under "Tidbits from the Treasurer" later in this report. Detailed year end 2024 financial summary reports appear in the important information folder for this meeting. Of interest may be an analysis report of church giving as it

puts a spotlight on the giving to support the presbytery operations stream and calculates per member giving for each church in the final pages of this report. We celebrate every gift of money and support for the work of the presbytery. More detail appears in the important information folder for this meeting.

A third-party review of the 2024 financials has been initiated. Financial procedures and record keeping have been updated.

Giving Reports and Stewardship The December giving reports were issued to the churches and we express grateful appreciation for the support expressed in the church giving. This year we can report that ALL churches have participated financially.

Property Updates: The committee will be considering plans for the sale of the Chapel by the Sea property. An update will be available at the Presbytery's Stated Meeting.

Peace River Presbytery

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Financial Policies

*Procedures have been placed in an expanded document of procedures and record keeping information,
were approved by the Finance Committee on January 15, 2025
and are available on request from the Treasurer*

Former Version of Financial Policies Approved by Peace River Presbytery February 22, 2024

Revision (Draft #5)

**Revisions Considered by Finance Committee on November 20, 2024 for first reading
Recommended to Presbytery during second reading on January 15, 2025
Policy to be Considered by Peace River Presbytery February 20, 2025**

Purpose

These Policies and the companion procedures and record keeping information are to ensure Peace River Presbytery's (Presbytery or Presbytery's) assets and financial operations are protected, managed and controlled using financial reports produced accurately and on a timely basis.

Organization

The Presbytery finance organization is comprised of the following areas:

Finance Committee is responsible for:

- Creating investment policies including investment goals and allocations
- Recommending an investment management firm(s)
- Reviewing the investment performance
- Developing, modifying and recommending the financial policies to the Presbytery
- Reviewing, recommending and presenting the Presbytery's annual budget to the Presbytery
- Reviewing, co-signing or denying church loans
- Ensuring, with the Treasurer, the Presbytery's finances are properly controlled and accurate
- Approving an independent public accounting firm for reviews/audits
- Reviewing and accepting the annual financial review or audit
- Assisting member churches with their financial matters, as requested

Treasurer is responsible for:

- Coordinating the financial operations of the Presbytery
- Providing guidance to the Finance Committee and the General Presbyter
- Insuring, with the Finance Committee, the Presbytery's finances are properly controlled and accurate
- Managing the annual budget process
- Retrieving all mail, including financial related items
- Receiving, recording and depositing all receipts
- Preparing non-recurring checks for signature by an authorized signor (s)
- Forwarding investment statements to Accounting Services

Accounting Services is responsible for:

- Updating the Presbytery's financial records
- Maintaining the financial systems
- Paying the Presbytery's invoices
- Reconciling bank statements monthly
- Recording and filing all investment statements, confirmations and reports
- Creating the monthly financial reports
- Responding to request for information, e.g. audit, insurance, etc.
- Maintaining log-in and password information
- Preparing Federal Payroll Tax reporting and Federal Tax Exempt Status filing

~~Office Administrator is responsible for:~~

- ~~• Developing a transition plan for year end 2024~~

- ~~Retrieving all mail, including financial related items (moved to treasurer)~~
- ~~Receiving, recording and depositing all receipts (moved to treasurer)~~
- ~~Forwarding all banking and investment statements to Accounting Services and Treasurer (moved to Treasurer)~~
- ~~Forwarding all invoices to Accounting Services (moved to General Presbyter)~~
- ~~Preparing non-recurring checks for signature by an authorized signor(s) (moved to treasurer)~~

General Presbyter who is responsible for:

- Overseeing the financial organization.
- Forwarding all invoices to Accounting Services
- Conducting background checks for those subject to the Financial Policy
- Making the Finance Committee aware of General Presbyter activities as they relate to financial matters.
- Coordinating activities between congregations, the Committee on Ministry, the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery, and the Finance Committee

If the Treasurer is not able to fulfill his or her responsibilities within the scope of these policies, the Steering Committee shall appoint a Treasurer Pro-Tem who shall serve until a new Treasurer, nominated by the Human Resources Committee, is approved by the Presbytery.

If the General Presbyter is unable to fulfill his or her responsibilities within the scope of these policies, the Stated Clerk may act on their behalf until the situation is resolved.

Responsibilities

The Finance Committee, Treasurer, and General Presbyter are responsible for reviewing and assuring compliance with these policies and procedures.

These policies and any changes shall be prepared for presentation to the Presbytery for approval after informing the Steering Committee.

The Finance Committee may select and contract for the services of an independent accounting firm to provide such financial accounting and services as deemed necessary.

Audits and Reviews: Finance Committee, working with the Treasurer, will contract with an independent Public Accounting firm to do a review each year for two (2) years and an audit on the third year, or whenever there is a change in financial management/oversight.

Insurance: Maintain the following insurance coverage: employee theft coverage, forgery and alterations coverage, outside theft coverage in the amount of \$1 million.

The Presbytery shall maintain adequate liability insurance for its officers and directors.

Background Checks: Conduct background checks for the General Presbyter, ~~Office Administrator, Accounting Services Principal and~~ Treasurer, and anyone else directly involved in handling funds, every three (3) years.

Gifts as Described Below

The Presbytery reserves the right to decline any gift. The disposition of securities, land or property described below, donated to the Presbytery shall come to the Presbytery as a recommendation from the Finance Committee.

Definition of Terms:

Restricted Funds – Any restricted fund contains donor-restricted money that is earmarked for specific stated purposes.

Designated Funds – Any designated funds contain money that has been designated by action of the Presbytery. All Presbytery-designated funds can be redirected at any time.

Receiving Donor-Restricted Funds. A permanent record shall be kept of funds received by the Presbytery that have a restriction on their use. The record should include the Fund Name, Date, Value, Donor Name, and any special instructions that might accompany it. If funds are not used for the restricted purpose within five years, the Presbytery will contact the donor (or heir) for permission to redirect the money. If the donor or heir is not available to be consulted, the Presbytery reserves the right to apply the principles of the cy pres doctrine. ('Cy pres,' a French term for 'as near as may be,' has been incorporated in the Florida Trust Code, in section 736.0413 Florida Statutes [2018]).

Any monies restricted for a named covenant partner will be forwarded in a timely manner, ordinarily within 60 days.

Presbytery-designated funds will be used in accordance with Presbytery action. In the case of a Presbytery-designated offering funds are to be forwarded to the designated covenant partner in a timely manner, ordinarily within 60 days.

Unrestricted Estate Gifts will be directed as follows:

10% to be distributed to current mission partners in proportion to their budgeted amount in the then current year's Presbytery budget.

90% to be added to the Presbytery's undesignated funds.

Publicly Traded Securities: Publicly-traded securities will be sold as soon as is reasonably practical. The gift value of securities is determined by the date the securities are "booked" into the investment account.

Gifts of Life Insurance: The Presbytery will accept gifts of life insurance as outright gifts or deferred gifts.

- 1) Gifts can be made by giving existing policies, by change of beneficiary, or by purchasing new insurance.
- 2) The Presbytery never recommends agents or agencies and never endorses insurance programs.

Gifts of Real Property: There are benefits to using real property as an expression of stewardship. However, real property is also the most difficult to liquidate. Therefore, certain steps and precautions are necessary to make such a gift transaction complete. The Finance Committee, in

consultation with the Steering Committee, will determine the timing of the property sale. The following steps are intended to make such a transaction as beneficial to all parties as possible.

- 1) All gifts of real property will require a title policy, a survey, and evidence that the property is free from environmental hazards. An Environmental (EPA) Level I Inspection is required. An Environmental Waiver is required at both the time of receipt and sale of the property. The Presbytery reserves the right to decline the gift of real property if an Environmental Waiver is not received.
- 2) The donor is responsible for establishing the value of property donated to the Presbytery. The Presbytery staff or officers will notify the donor and his/her counsel in writing about the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code for a qualified appraisal. The Presbytery will provide Form 8283 to the donor, upon request.

According to IRS guidelines, for the purpose of valuing the gift, an appraisal by a certified appraiser must be obtained no earlier than 60 days prior to the date of the gift, and no later than the due date of the return on which the contribution is first claimed as a deduction. Form 8283 will be provided to the donor upon request. Form 8282 will be filed with the IRS on a timely basis, if the property is sold within two years.

- 3) Gifts of real property will be sold as soon as practical, unless the property is determined to have significant potential increase in value and is producing income sufficient to pay taxes, insurance, and any other costs related to the property.
- 4) Gifts of real property must have a clear title, including current leaseholds, and evidence of marketability or adequate income to meet any expenses involved with receipt and/or disposition of same.
- 5) Donor must guarantee taxes, insurance, legal, and other expenses, until liquidation, unless the property has adequate income to support these expenses.
- 6) Donor will be informed that the value of the gift will be based on the sales price, reduced by sales commissions, taxes, legal, and other expenses at the time of sale of the property.

Gifts of Tangible Personal Property: Gifts of tangible personal property will be considered and received by Presbytery on an individual basis. The donor is responsible for establishing the value of tangible personal property donated to the Presbytery. Gifts of tangible personal property will be sold as soon as is reasonably practical.

Life Income Gifts: Life income gifts, such as Charitable Gift Annuities and Charitable Remainder Trusts, will be administered by one of the denominational foundations.

Procedures and Record Keeping

Procedures and record keeping matters related to specific accounting record keeping, financial management, annual budget, receipts, disbursements, payroll, banking, investment posting, distribution practices of designated memorial funds, allocation of undesignated mission and record retention are documented in a Financial Procedures and Record Keeping document, reviewed annually by the Finance Committee, and available from the Treasurer, Finance Committee moderator or General Presbyter.

Investment Policy

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to establish clear responsibility and authority with guidelines and goals for funds not being used for current expenditures of Peace River Presbytery. This investment policy may be revised and updated by Presbytery.

Goals:

- To preserve and grow Presbytery funds through approved investments and defined asset allocation.
- To provide conservative-to-moderate return on invested funds.
- To provide adequate liquidity to meet normal and extraordinary cash needs.
- To suggest ways the funds can be used to achieve the Presbytery's goals.

Responsibility and authority: The Finance Committee, with the support of the Treasurer, will research and recommend a qualified investment management firm(s). Periodically, generally every 4-6 years, the Finance Committee may conduct a Request For Proposal process to better understand market offerings and in doing so, recommend the best investment management firm to Peace River Presbytery. The selection will be approved by Presbytery. The investments shall be made by the Presbytery's Finance Committee within the constraints of this policy and shared with Steering Committee.

Guidelines: The Finance Committee shall share with the Steering Committee and provide to Presbytery at its stated meetings reports showing the receipts, disbursements and market adjustments for the Presbytery's investments.

- ~~The Finance Committee, in considering investment firms and specific investments, may consider investing in PC(USA) financial instruments and other commercial and government investment options.~~

The Presbytery shall be guided, but not bound, by investment recommendations of all agencies of the PC(USA), in consideration of the social impacts of particular investments and strategies, thus directing the investment advisors to use a socially responsible screen in selecting investments for the portfolio.

Risk Tolerance: The Finance Committee recognizes that, over the long term, the risk of owning equities has been, and is expected to continue to be, rewarded with a relatively greater return than what has been historically available from fixed income investments. The role of fixed income investments is to reduce the volatility of the overall portfolio, while providing a predictable stream of income or investment gains.

- Generally, the asset allocation shall be equities at 50-70% and fixed income at 30-50%, with the following targets: equities – 60%, fixed income – 38%, cash/money market account – 2%, affirming the importance of diversification across all asset classes and sectors to reduce risk. New Covenant Trust Company (NCTC) shall be responsible for managing the portfolio within the asset allocation ranges and ensure that no single investment or asset class holds an oversized percentage of the portfolio.
- Target allocation with a 7% rebalancing trigger to ensure that asset classes remain within policy and are not deviating from the targets.
- The investment performance will be measured against the following benchmarks:
US Equities: Russell 3000 Index

International Equities: MSCI ACWI except USA
Bonds: Bloomberg AGG Bond Index
Money Market: 90 Day T-Bill

Approved Investment Vehicles:

Short term vehicles (one year or less)

- Certificates of Deposit
- Insured Money Market Accounts
- U.S. Treasury Notes

Long Term Vehicles (more than one year)

- Presbyterian Foundation Funds
- Presbyterian Loan and Investment Funds
- Exchange Traded Funds for: S&P 500, Dow Jones Industrial Average, Nasdaq
- Publicly Traded Equities and Mutual Funds
- U.S. Treasury Notes and Bonds
- Bonds must be rated investment grade

The Finance Committee will propose new investment vehicles and shall have prior approval of the Presbytery

Governance Reporting and Communication:

The Finance Committee shall meet with NCTC representatives to review investment performance at least on a semi-annual basis, either in-person, or via ZOOM. On a quarterly basis NCTC will provide a written summary comparing investment performance to benchmarks. If the Finance Committee deems it appropriate to schedule NCTC representatives for a ZOOM meeting to review that performance, an order of the day will be scheduled during a stated meeting time of the Finance Committee.

Spending Formula: Peace River Presbytery manages two separate one investment account, one with several sub-accounts designated for distribution as:

- 1) Blessing Grant (Presbytery-designated)
- 2) Church Development – (Donor-restricted)
- 3) Chapel by the Sea Legacy – Presbytery-designated)
- 4) Undesignated/Unrestricted/General

~~and one account identified as the OTHER account that holds several sub-accounts for a variety of distribution purposes.~~

The spending formula shall be applied to both investment sub accounts for Blessing, Chapel and Undesignated/Unrestricted/General. There is no spending formula restriction for the Church Development Fund.

To calculate the Spending Formula, the average account market value as reported on quarterly account statements for the previous 12 quarters shall be multiplied by 4%. In the event there are not 12 quarters worth of account market value history, the average account market value for as many quarters possible should be used.

For ~~both the~~ accounts **limited by the spending formula** that calculation will be made after the first quarter investment account reports are available. The Finance Committee will review the calculations and declare the distribution.

The amount available for Blessing Grant distribution will be posted on the Presbytery's website as available for the next cycle of Blessing Grant applications.

The amount available from the ~~OTHER~~ **undesignated/unrestricted** account will be available to supplement revenues for ~~Mision Peniel~~ and any of the three streams of revenue for Peace River Presbytery as the budget is prepared for the upcoming year.

Whenever funds are drawn **from any of the sub-accounts it will not impact the balance of the other sub-accounts** ~~the OTHER account, the percentage of designation for either Mision Peniel or Peace River Presbytery's undesignated use is recalculated, so that~~ Future investment account gains or losses ~~can~~ **will be properly allocated to the sub-account by NCTC and reported by Accounting Services on the Presbytery's Funds and Accounts report..**

If the distribution amounts from ~~either~~ **any of the** sub-accounts are not needed for **their** designated purpose, the funds will be retained in the investment account.

Access to Investment Account Information: Only the Treasurer, General Presbyter, Accounting Services provider and ~~Office Administrator~~ **Finance Committee Moderator** will have online access to investment account information. The Treasurer is the only individual authorized to move money from the investment accounts within the parameters described in the banking section of the Financial Procedures and Record Keeping document. The President of Peace River Presbytery, Inc. will have authority to access these funds if the Treasurer is not available.

Sale of Assets Policy

Any and all assets resulting from the dissolution of any congregation within the Presbytery, including, but not limited to, the net proceeds of sale of real and/or tangible and intangible property, personal property, bank accounts, pledges received, securities and other investments, cash on hand, and notes and loans receivable, shall be used and distributed as determined by the Presbytery, upon recommendation from the Finance Committee, in keeping with the values and priorities of the Presbytery.

Official signatories for the sale of property will be the President of Peace River Presbytery, Inc. and the Treasurer.

The Finance Committee, in making its recommendation for the use of such assets, and the Presbytery, in acting on such recommendation, shall give priority to the Presbytery's current mission and ministry priorities.

Consideration should also be given to the wishes of the dissolving congregation.

The assets/funds shall be administered by the Finance Committee. The liquid funds shall be deposited in the Presbytery's investment accounts.

Responsible Committees: Finance Committee and Committee on Ministry.

Per Capita Policy and Administration

Background: *Per Capita is the means by which our denomination funds its “ecclesiastical” expenses. That is, all the expenses required to run the church, but not including “mission” expenditures. The Book of Order (BOO), in the last paragraph of Section G-3.0106, states, “Each council above the session shall prepare a budget for its operating expenses, including administrative personnel, and may fund it with a per capita apportionment among the particular congregations within its bounds. Presbyteries are responsible for raising their own funds and for raising and timely transmission of per capita funds to their respective synods and the General Assembly. Presbyteries may direct per capita apportionments to sessions within their bounds, but in no case shall the authority of the session to direct its benevolences be compromised.”*

Policy

Presbytery shall remit 75% of the Synod and 50% of the General Assembly per capita goal, OR, the actual amount collected from the churches, whichever is greater, in a timely fashion.

Before the start of the new budget year, the Finance Committee shall communicate the per capita request to each member church. It is suggested that member churches consider paying their full per capita amount.

The Presbytery operating budget will be funded separately from per capita. Each congregation will be asked to make a pledge to the operating budget so that the ecclesiastical work of the connectional church can be accomplished.

The Presbytery shall also have a separate Mission budget that is funded by pledges from congregations for the connectional mission work.

Peace River Presbytery
Tidbits from the Treasurer
 December 2024



If you have any questions about this report, please call Treasurer,
 Charmaine Ponkratz (941) 276.4013 or ponkratz@comcast.net

Category	December Actual	December Budget	YTD Actual – Dec.- 2024	YTD Budget – Dec.- 2024	YTD Actual Dec. - 2023
MISSION					
Revenue	\$ 46,448	\$ 29,024	\$ 254,967	\$ 348,292	\$ 524,885
Expense	\$ 50,727	\$ 28,940	\$ 263,537	\$ 347,279	\$ 590,761
NET (before transfers)	\$ (4,279)	\$ 84	\$ (8,570)	\$ 1,013	\$ (65,876)
NET Funds Transfers IN/OUT +/-	\$ (1,483)	\$ (333)	\$ (5,569)	\$ (4,000)	\$ 59,356
NET	\$ (5,762)	\$ (249)	\$ (14,139)	\$ (2,987)	\$ (6,520)
PER CAPITA					
Revenue	\$ 12,556	\$ 4,833	\$ 66,827	\$ 58,000	\$ 70,332
Expense	\$ 23,982	\$ 8,438	\$ 101,260	\$ 101,260	\$ 107,870
NET	\$ (11,426)	\$ (3,605)	\$ (34,433)	\$ (43,260)	\$ (37,538)
PRESBYTERY OPERATIONS					
Revenue	\$ 41,836	\$ 21,667	\$ 260,764	\$ 260,000	\$ 316,106
Expense	\$ 45,233	\$ 35,694	\$ 365,900	\$ 428,325	\$ 465,597
NET (before transfers)	\$ (3,396)	\$ (14,027)	\$ (105,136)	\$ (168,325)	\$ (149,491)
NET Funds Transfers IN/OUT +/-	\$ 0	\$ 6,667	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 115,854
NET	\$ (3,396)	\$ (7,360)	\$ (25,136)	\$ (88,325)	\$ (33,637)

Extraordinary revenue in 2023 mission stream has been removed for comparison purposes.

Headline: 2024 comes to a close with some promising signals for the future while still posting red ink across all three streams.

Mission Stream: Several churches have added to the hurricane relief fund; their generosity is celebrated. A task team of the former and current Presbytery moderator, one of the Committee on Ministry co-moderators and our General Presbyter will be considering additional applications for grants. On page 2 of the Mission Stream report you will see documentation for churches and other non-profits who have already received assistance. This is the denomination at work within our congregations and communities. The \$6K in YTD transfer of funds reflects monies collected at pastor installations and joyfully set that aside for scholarships. The other contributing factor to the Mission Stream deficit comes as a result of fulfilling the budgeted commitment to the covenant partners even though mission giving (restricted and unrestricted) did not cover the budgeted amount.

Per Capita Stream: Revenue is above budget, reflecting increased support from the churches, but the gap between the Presbytery's commitment at 75% of goal and the actual amount received from the churches ends the year at \$34K deficit. The reader is reminded that the 2023 expense numbers were calculated at 100% of goal and the 2025 budgeted expense is at 50%, to better match the giving from the churches. If church giving exceeds the 50% budget level, the additional monies will be upstreamed.

PRP Ministry Operations: The \$80K funds transfer to cover the operating deficit was planned. It is noted that the contingency request to approve an additional \$25K draw was not necessary. The reader will notice year-over-year expenses are down \$100K. In December a grant was approved by the Committee on Ministry to a pastor who faced a financial hardship from unexpected circumstances. There were no other unusual transactions in December.

Summary of Funds and Accounts Report: This report fully reflects the accounting for funds from the dissolution of Chapel by the Sea. All funds from Chapel are invested with other Presbytery funds in the New Covenant Trust Company managed fund account. \$100K of the \$500K transferred in cash is being held in a money market so that 2025 draws from the investment account will not require any sale of stock/bond holdings in an uncertain market. The same for \$40K being held in the Blessing Grant account. Memorial Funds 2680 and 2681 are one time distributions; Peace River Presbytery will receive no additional monies. These will be considered for award by the Finance Committee in mid-year 2025. The hurricane recovery fund is also of note with a remaining balance of \$50K

Church Giving Report: Church giving in 2023 was \$663K, in 2024 it was \$658K On a per member basis, year-over-year, giving is up from \$55 to \$60 per member. And, as noted in previous reports ALL churches have provided financial support in 2024. Please see detailed giving in the important information folder.

2024 Church Giving Summary

Church, City	2023 Members	Presbytery Operations Giving	Total Giving Per Member
Bee Ridge, Sarasota	88	\$ 2,200.00	\$ 36.02
Braden River, Bradenton	35	\$ 1,129.50	\$ 69.13
Buckingham, Fort Myers	81	\$ 4,400.00	\$ 258.85
Burnt Store, Punta Gorda	448	\$ 15,360.00	\$ 71.28
Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach	63	\$ 1,218.28	\$ 19.50
Christ Church, Longboat Key	170	\$ 15,850.00	\$ 211.18
PC of the Covenant, Sarasota	95	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 204.92
Church of the Palms, Sarasota	1,894	\$ 31,912.00	\$ 52.76
Community, Englewood	116	\$ 2,563.25	\$ 106.03
Community, Estero	43	\$ 850.00	\$ 72.16
Covenant, Fort Myers	256	\$ 10,120.00	\$ 102.64
Cypress Lake, Fort Myers	153	\$ 0.00	\$ 38.70
Faith, Cape Coral	729	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 29.52

First, Arcadia	91	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 60.38
First, Bonita Springs	2,076	\$ 41,250.00	\$ 27.58
First, Bradenton	242	\$ 1,125.00	\$ 6.60
First, Lehigh Acres	30	\$ 1,076.00	\$ 125.86
First, Naples	612	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 153.25
First, Port Charlotte	105	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 71.43
First, Sarasota	528	\$ 6,309.60	\$ 63.95
Holy Trinity, North Fort Myers	147	\$ 4,445.00	\$ 78.39
Kirkwood, Bradenton	196	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 18.93
Lely, Naples	119	\$ 3,657.00	\$ 58.40
Moorings, Naples	408	\$ 500.00	\$ 1.23
Northminster, Sarasota	161	\$ 0.00	\$ 1.18
Oak Pointe, Sarasota	25	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 236.24
Palmetto, Palmetto	40	\$ 1,469.90	\$ 78.72
Peace, Lakewood Ranch	254	\$ 12,051.00	\$ 125.00
Pine Shores, Sarasota	218	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 102.66
Siesta Key Chapel, Sarasota	142	\$ 5,091.00	\$ 107.05
St. Paul's, North Port	40	\$ 1,434.00	\$ 106.60
Trinity, Venice	157	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 89.17
United, Bradenton	143	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 114.53
Vanderbilt, Naples	462	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 27.18
Venice, Venice	602	\$ 4,500.00	\$ 35.65
Wintergarden, Port Charlotte	44	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 27.27
TOTAL	11,013	\$ 256,711.53	

Commentary: To meet 2024 budgeted commitments (all three streams: mission, per capita and presbytery operations) the per member giving goal was \$76.80. Please note that only the presbytery operations stream giving is reported above, but the per member calculation is based on ALL giving. The average giving per member in 2024 for all three streams was \$59.79, up from \$55.48 and the Presbytery is gracious for support from every corner of Peace River Presbytery.

Peace River Presbytery
Misión Peniel
February 20, 2025

“The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” -- 2 Corinthians 9:6

Misión Peniel has been steadfast in sowing seeds of hope, compassion, and community through its outreach programs in Immokalee, Florida, where farmworkers and their families face unique challenges. In keeping with the agricultural rhythm of planting and harvesting, the fruits of our labor have been bountiful! . Guided by God’s transforming love, the mission’s efforts continue to bear abundant fruit, touching the lives of many through our staff, volunteers, partnerships and most especially, in the hearts of all who participate in this ministry. Once again, we are blessed by a rich harvest this season.

Ministry Highlights Since the November 1st Presbytery Meeting:

- **Christmas Joy:** 629 children and 259 families received Christmas gifts that brought joy and love during the holiday season. We had an overwhelming response by churches again this year—thank you!
- **Community Outreach:** Every Friday, an average of 371 community members are served with pantry food, fresh produce, and various household staples.
- **Pan de Vida:** 22 homebound community members receive three nutritious meals, toiletries, and other essential items every Monday.
- **Music Academy:** 9 dedicated students are learning guitar and piano, fostering creativity and community. This ministry is enriching lives through music learning.
- **Farmworker Support Program:** The National Center for Farmworker Health/USDA Food and Farmworker Program has been extended into the new year. This program has provided one-time monetary supplements to farmworkers. Pastor Miguel continues to oversee it in alignment with the established guidelines.
- **Immigrant Rights Resources:** We continue to distribute proactive resources in Spanish, Creole, and English every Friday, ensuring our community has access to critical information on their rights.
- **Fresh Produce Distribution:** In partnership with Cultivate Abundance, the mission’s garden has contributed 42,435 pounds of fresh, culturally appropriate produce for distribution on Fridays and through Pan de Vida’s outreach. This amounts to approximately 157,589 servings of food (valued at over \$82,400), benefiting 350-500 clients each week—reaching more than 1,000 individuals weekly.
- **Church and Civic Engagement:** Both Pastor Miguel and Marifrans are actively visiting churches in the presbytery and other church and civic groups across Southwest Florida to share the mission’s work, raise awareness and foster deeper community connections.
- **Permanent Location:** We are still actively seeking a permanent location in Immokalee to continue and expand our ministry.
- **501(c)3 Transition:** The mission’s transition to becoming its own independent 501(c)3 nonprofit is ongoing, marking an exciting step for the future of Misión Peniel.

Gratitude and Partnership:

We are deeply grateful for the unwavering support Misión Peniel has received as a ministry of the Peace River Presbytery since 2013. Together in ministry, God continues to provide us with abundant seeds to plant, and through our collective efforts, God's transformative love and grace are flourishing in an abundant harvest.

Respectfully Submitted.

Ruth DeYoe

Communications and Grant Coordinator

Misión Peniel

Peace River Presbytery
Beth-El Farm Worker Ministry, Inc.

February 20, 2025

Vision: Our vision is a thriving and equitable community for farmworkers and their neighbors.

Mission: Feeding the Mind, Spirit, and Body of the farm-working community and our neighbors in need, through opportunities for hunger relief, education, healthcare, and spiritual growth.

Message from Executive Director: Here is the truth. We are deeply committed to the mission of Beth-El, and to tell you the truth, we are anxious. The political climate is affecting the families we serve, and we face a \$275,000 funding gap to meet by the end of 2025. We are stretched thin, seeking strong leadership for our board, and feeling the weight of sustaining this ministry. Yet, we are also doing great work at a high cost. We are grateful for Peace River Presbytery's continued commitment and prayers, knowing you, too, are supporting our sister mission partner, Misión Peniel, and navigating challenges in your churches. We are deeply grateful for how you share our story and engage in volunteer opportunities. Despite the strain, we remain hopeful, steadfast in our faith, and in solidarity. Click [this link](#) to see the 2024 Annual Report and rejoice in all we have accomplished together with God's help! In solidarity, Dr. Teresita Matos-Post

Message from Mission Pastor: Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Nuevo Camino @ Beth-El would like to express our gratitude to Peace River Presbytery, member churches and individuals for your prayers and expressions of support. Our faith provides "strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow". During these challenging times we place a high value on gathering for worship, fellowship, discipleship and evangelism/service. We invite you to consider participating with us in a bilingual worship service, joint ministry and mission projects or summer ministry programming with the children and youth of Nuevo Camino and the community at-large. Please pray for members facing health challenges, the death of loved ones, housing challenges following 3 hurricanes, unemployment and uncertainty. I look forward to talking with you about ideas for joint ministry: Tamara@Beth-El direct line: 813-773-7595

Simple Ways to Help Beth-El:

- **Update Your Church Mission Committee Contacts** – Fill out this [form](#) to stay connected and informed about partnership opportunities. You may also print and send us the form attached below.
- **Seasonal Wishlist** – Plan ahead with this [wishlist](#) of items by season.
- **Major Donor Referrals** – Help us connect with individuals willing to commit \$20,000 in 2025 who align with our mission.
- **Thrift Store Donations** – Accepting items Fridays, 10 AM – 1 PM. Check our website for accepted donation lists.
- **Special Collection:** Farmworker Awareness Week (March 25–31) – Collect long-sleeve shirts, hats, or take a special offering. Church resources available upon request.
- **Board Leadership** – We are seeking passionate leaders to serve on our board.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** Sign up!

- Food Pickups – Drivers needed Tuesday–Friday, 8 AM – 1 PM.
- Access to Education Advisory Network – Join to support farmworker education initiatives.
- Client-Choice Food Market Assistance – Help families “shop” by appointment Thursdays & Fridays, 10 AM – 1 PM.
- Thrift Store Support: Wed. 3PM – 5PM, Thu. 10AM – 1PM, and 2nd Saturday of the Month from 8AM -10AM
- Spread the Word – Follow us on [Facebook](#) and share our work with your network.

Beth-El Farm Worker Ministry, Inc.

2024 Annual Report

Website: <https://beth-el.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/befarmworker>

Email: info@beth-el.org

Phone: 813-633-1548

Physical Address: 18240 US HWY 301 S Wimauma, FL 33598

Postal Address: PO Box 960, Wimauma FL 33598

Donations Accepted: Fridays – 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

[Link to Safely Donate Now](#)

Peace River Presbytery
Cedarkirk Camp & Conference Center – Mission Partner
February 20, 2025 Meeting

It's the end of January and we are already in the midst of a busy year of ministry out here in the woods! Our calendar is chock full of church groups, schools, and non-profits and preparation is well underway for a full calendar of summer programs. A few items of note are below:

Event Bookings: We are almost fully booked through the end of July. If your church is considering hosting an event at Cedarkirk, we encourage you to reserve your dates soon. While fall dates are still available, interest is high, and we expect the most popular weeks and weekends (October & November) to fill quickly. Contact us at (813) 685-4224 x1 or events@cedarkirk.org to check availability.

Summer Camp Is Approaching: It's hard to believe, but summer camp season is right around the corner. We'll distribute promotional materials in our cookie bags, but if you need additional materials, just let us know—we'd be happy to send more! We're also available to visit your church for worship, a mission moment, or a presentation about Cedarkirk's ministry.

Shepherds' Sabbath – A Time of Rest: We invite your church staff to join us for Shepherds' Sabbath, held April 21-22, right after Easter. This free retreat is open to anyone on your church's payroll and their families. It's our privilege to host you after a busy Lent and Holy Week—come and enjoy a time of rest and renewal.

Upcoming Events & Programs (First Half of 2025):

- a. Writing Toward Wholeness Retreat | January 31 – February 2
- b. Winter Fun Day | February 9
- c. Shepherds' Sabbath | April 21-22
- d. Spring Volunteer Day | April 26
- e. Spring Fun Day | May 10
- f. Summer Camp Programs | June 8 – August 1

Looking Ahead: We value your partnership and welcome ideas on how Cedarkirk can better serve you and your congregations. No matter how far away you may be, we want to dream together about new ways congregational ministry and camp ministry can intersect. Cedarkirk is an extension of the church—your church—and we strive to be a vital connection for everyone in Peace River Presbytery.

On behalf of our staff and Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support as we do God's work together.

Respectfully submitted,
Matt Shick
Executive Director