



# PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

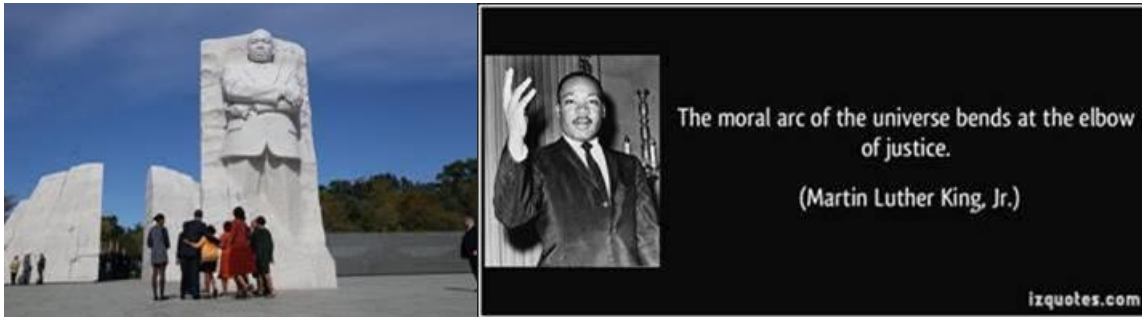


## Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ April 4, 2018

### From the Hart

It is Easter week. Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed. That is our hope, the new reality from which we are invited to see the world and be in the world.

Yet, we live in a world, and I live my life more often than I want to admit, echoing the Apostle Paul's words, who also after Easter said: *"I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate."* Romans 7:15



Some specifics: 50 years ago today, Martin Luther King was assassinated. Looking back, as a high school student I thought, naively, that we would have come farther - much farther - than we have. The roots of racism are deep, and for many of us, including myself, we don't understand and often are blind to how seeds sown long ago continue to affect us ([click here for a free e-mail book from Chalice Press - The Beloved Community Today: Voices of Justice and Hope Honor Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)) This book has essays and sermons related to the legacy of Dr. King and the fight for justice within the context of North Carolina.

Two weeks ago, I shared in the Weekly Newsletter that the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Fair Food Campaign, which our denomination helped start, went to the Wendy's headquarters in New York to invite them to join with many other giant food corporations and sign onto [the Fair Food Campaign \(click here\)](#). They went with 100,000 letters and asked to meet with the hedge fund president who now owns Wendy's. That did not happen, instead the communication director of Wendy's issued a statement that basically said that the farmworker community was just taking advantage of the publicity that the **#me too campaign** had generated and was trying to ride on the coattails of that movement. The irony is that 20 years ago CIW took the lead in addressing the issues of sexual violence which 20 years later has brought much change and a safer work environment to the agricultural communities in our own back yard. I, with so many, had thought we would have come farther by now. Note - Miguel Estrada shared a powerful Lenten devotional message on the fight for justice ([click here to read](#)).

So, whether it is my blindness and sin that I must daily confront, or our corporate blindness and greed and prejudice that gets played out in our national life, what are we to do?

The Apostle Paul points us to a path. For him and us, he proclaims: "Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Romans 7:25

That is our Easter hope. Despite me ... and you ... God is not finished with this human project. For God so loved the world ... and keeps on loving that world ... That is why I affirm what Dr. King said on many occasions: **The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice** ([click here for additional background on that phrase](#)).

Today I am thankful for our Easter hope, the legacy of Martin Luther King, and the work of CIW and the Fair Food Campaign. Also, I want to share a word of affirmation to pastors, chorus, church staff and church leaders who prepared long and hard to bring a clear, compelling word of hope, and the up-lifting and transforming message of Easter that "He is Risen."

I pray that the hundreds, if not thousands of guests, who attended our Easter services, will find their way back, even as we pray the Risen Christ will continue to work in all our hearts and this troubled work in which we live.

Finally, an update from the Strategic Review Task Force was in last week's Presbytery Newsletter. If you missed reading their report, [click here](#), so you can share your feed-back with them.

Easter Blessings,

*Graham*

Graham Hart  
General Presbyter  
[graham@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:graham@peacriverpresbytery.org)

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**Upcoming Events** - Mark your calendars and pass the following on, so that the right folks in your congregation will have this information and be able to attend:



**Wednesday, May 2, 2018**  
**1:30-3:30 p.m.**  
**Hurricane Preparedness Workshop with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance**  
**Location: First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte**

Last year Hurricane Irma rudely reminded us that hurricanes still happen, even though we had gone ten years without one affecting us here in Southwest Florida.

Several congregations have asked the Presbytery to host a hurricane preparedness workshop, just so that in 2018 we are ready. Many congregations found themselves, as Irma was approaching, dusting off old preparedness plans, which were found to be outdated. Kathy Broyard, Director of Florida Presbytery's Disaster Preparedness Network will be leading the workshop. She will share best practices and learnings from other congregations. Please send members of your Disaster Preparedness team, or a designated team, to this workshop so we all can be ready. As they say, it is better to have an umbrella and not need it then to be caught in a rain storm without one.

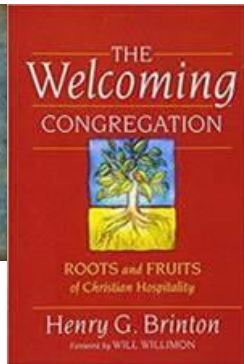
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**Thursday, May 17, 2018**  
**Stated Meeting of Presbytery**

**The Welcoming Congregation: Roots and Fruits of Christian Hospitality**

**Location: St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port**



Post, as well as the author  
*Liberation, and*  
meeting to bring several  
committees of your congregation.



At our regular stated meeting, we will continue in our series on: Things that make for Vital Congregations focusing on Compassionate and Inclusive Outreach. We are pleased that the Rev. Henry Brinton, author of the new book, *The Welcoming Congregation: Roots and Fruits of Christian Hospitality*, will be our keynote speaker. Henry is Senior Pastor of Fairfax Presbyterian Church in Fairfax, Virginia. He is a regular contributor to USA Today and the Washington of several books, including *Balancing Acts: Obligation, Contemporary Christian Conflicts*. This will be a great members from your mission, fellowship, and outreach



**Thursday, May 31, 2018**

**10:00 a.m.- 1:30 p.m. (lunch included)**

**The Transition to Retirement:**

**A Seminar on Shifting from an Acting Working Life to the Gift of Retirement**

**Location: Presbytery Office – North Port**

**Speaker: Paul T. Reiter, Spiritual Director**

Three years ago, COM hosted a workshop entitled: *Ending Well and Finishing Strong* for those within 10 years of retirement, which was very well received. This is being offered as a Part II on that theme.



**June 16-23, 2018**

**General Assembly of the PC(USA)**

**Location: St. Louis, Missouri**



Our 2018 General Assembly Commissioners:

- Wayne Largent, Ruling Elder – Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood
- Charmaine Ponkratz, Ruling Elder - Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda
- Jeff DeYoe, Teaching Elder – Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers
- Ray Quiles, Teaching Elder – St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port, and

- Mariah Martin, Young Adult Advisory Delegate (YAAD) – First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota,

will join with other commissioners and advisory delegates from all 170 PC(USA) presbyteries, and other delegates and observers from around the world. All will converge on the America's Convention Center in downtown St. Louis for celebrations, deliberations, and inspirations in support of the denomination's biennial gathering. [Click here to link to the 223<sup>rd</sup> home page.](#)

[The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy](#) will serve as host to the 223rd General Assembly, united under the theme, "Renewing the Vision: Kingdom Building for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," from Matthew 6:25-33. The meetings will include rich worship services, the election of the Moderator and Vice Moderator or Co-Moderators, action on a plethora of overtures, and much more. View the [proposed docket](#).

**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**September 26 - October 3**  
**PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY IS RETURNING TO CUBA**  
**To Engage in the Next Steps of our Peace River - Matanzas Partnership**

**Who:** Up to 24 Members with/without Clergy from churches interested in establishing partnerships with area churches or the seminary in the Matanzas Presbytery. Each church is limited to four reservations.

**What:** Establishing Partnerships within the Matanzas Presbytery, including the seminary and local churches. Visiting local churches, engaging in ministry practices with that church and beginning the process of partnerships.

**When:** Wednesday, September 26 - Wednesday, October 3, 2018

**Where:** Varadero, Cuba

**Expenses:** Will include airfare (from either Tampa or Miami), visa, seminary lodging (dormitory style), meals, transportation during the week, and home stays at local church communities.

**How:**

1. Reply to Lori at the Presbytery Office ([lori@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:lori@peacriverpresbytery.org)) by **April 15<sup>th</sup>** with initial interest.
2. Return registration form\* indicating a firm commitment with \$100 deposit per person by **May 15<sup>th</sup>** (to begin the visa process which requires at least 90 days) to Peace River Presbytery, 5600 Peace River Presbytery, North Port, FL 34287, Attention: Lori Doyal.
3. Direct questions to Cuba Partnership Task Force Co-Moderators:  
Kevin Morris: 813-713-5117 | [pastor@hopeunitedchurch.net](mailto:pastor@hopeunitedchurch.net) or Ruth DeYoe: 386-793-6151 | [ruthdeyoe@gmail.com](mailto:ruthdeyoe@gmail.com)

\* **Registration Forms were emailed to churches by Ruth DeYoe last week.**

**MISION PENIEL**

*A Ministry of Peace River Presbytery to the Farmworkers in Immokalee*

[www.misionpeniel.com](http://www.misionpeniel.com)

**Staff Contacts:**

- Rev. Miguel Estrada, Pastor, P: 239-633-2181, E: [miguelstrada@hotmail.com](mailto:miguelstrada@hotmail.com)
- Ruth DeYoe, Mission Coordinator, P: 386-793-6151, E: [ruthdeyoe@gmail.com](mailto:ruthdeyoe@gmail.com)
- General Email: [misionpenielpeacriver@gmail.com](mailto:misionpenielpeacriver@gmail.com)

**Addresses:**

- Facility Address: 208 Boston Ave., Immokalee, FL 34142 (not for mailing)

- Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1204, Immokalee, FL 34153
- Mailing Address for Contributions\*: Peace River Presbytery, 5600 Peace River Road, North Port, FL 34287

**\*Contributions to Mision Peniel (checks or online):**

- Mail to: Peace River Presbytery, 5600 Peace River Road, North Port, FL 34287
- Checks can be made payable to Peace River Presbytery or to Mision Peniel.
- Please note *Mision Peniel* in the memo section.
- Click on the "Donate" button on the Mision Peniel web site.
- Contributor information is provided to Mision Peniel each month.

**BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.**

*A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma*



PO Box 860 | Wimauma, FL 33598

Phone: 813-633-1548 ext. 223

Web: [www.beth-el.org](http://www.beth-el.org)

[April Newsletter](#)

Beth-El Farmworker Ministry has the following employment opportunities:

- Part-time Worship Music Leader - Must be bi-lingual with good teaching and musical skills to lead newly formed music group for Sunday Worship.
- Summer Programming Assistant - Part time position working Beth-El staff in coordinating summer youth programming.

For more information, or to apply, [email info@beth-el.org](mailto:emailinfo@beth-el.org)

**CEDARKIRK CAMP & CONFERENCE CENTER**

*A place apart to build up the body of Christ in love.*

[www.cedarkirk.org](http://www.cedarkirk.org)

*Thank you for supporting Cedarkirk and holding this ministry in your prayers for the last 45 years.  
We look forward to witnessing God's handiwork here in the years to come!*

For additional information, please contact the camp office at (813) 685-4224 or visit [www.cedarkirk.org](http://www.cedarkirk.org).

**COMMISSIONING SERVICE at BETH-EL**

You are cordially invited to join the members of Beth-El Farmworker Ministry as we commission

**The Reverend Tamara Leonard-Lara**

as Pastor of Nuevo Camino at Beth-El on Sunday, April 22, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.

Beth-El Farmworker Ministry

18420 Highway 301 South | Wimauma, FL 33598

**ORDINATION and INSTALLATION SERVICE  
for Laurie Haas**

Sunday, May 6, 2018 at 4:00 p.m.  
Church of the Palms, Sarasota  
All are invited!

### WALK with the BIBLE

Pastor Bill Teng of First Presbyterian Church in Arcadia, FL is organizing and leading a group in a *Walk with the Bible* tour of Israel and Jordan on October 5-18, this fall. The total cost is only \$4,945 from Tampa. More detail is available here: <http://bit.ly/2Fc2RiA>. If interested, please contact him at [TengPresby@aol.com](mailto:TengPresby@aol.com) or 703.899.0725.

### PRAYER NEEDS

#### Please pray for:

- Jim and Becky Beckwith, in the passing of their son, Greg, Tuesday morning.

#### Please continue to pray for:

- Rev. Susan Rice – health and treatment for cancer
- Robert Dennis (son of Rev. India Dennis) – mental health issues
- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry (in Wimauma)
- Misión Peniel Farmworker Ministry (in Immokalee)
- Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center
- Dan and Elizabeth Turk, PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Madagascar
- Les and Cindy Morgan, PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Bangladesh

### PRESBYTERY PRAYER GUIDE: APRIL 2018:

April 1	<u>Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood</u> Pastor: Rev. Dawn Mayes Email: <a href="mailto:revdawnmayes@gmail.com">revdawnmayes@gmail.com</a>
April 8	<u>Beth-El Farmworker Ministry</u> Executive Director: Rev. Dr. Kathy Dain Email: <a href="mailto:kathy@beth-el.org">kathy@beth-el.org</a> Pastor: Rev. Tamara Leonard-Lara Email: <a href="mailto:pastor@beth-el.org">pastor@beth-el.org</a>
April 15	<u>Buckingham Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Randy Moody Email: <a href="mailto:bpcpastor@comcast.net">bpcpastor@comcast.net</a>

April 22	<u>Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jeff DeYoe Email: <a href="mailto:jdeyoe@covpcf.com">jdeyoe@covpcf.com</a>
April 29	<u>Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Clint Cottrell Email: <a href="mailto:clint@clpc.us">clint@clpc.us</a>

### KENNETH BAILEY RESOURCES

Rev. Dr. Margaret Towner has a set of Kenneth Bailey's study lectures on "Jesus and Women" and "Presbyterian History", produced by Harvest Publishing, that she would like to give to a church or group who would use them. They are short, 20-30 minute lectures by Bailey, with time for discussion. If interested, please contact Dr. Margaret E. Towner, [margtet@comcast.net](mailto:margtet@comcast.net) or 941-924-4413.

### CHURCH SUPPORT STAFF OPENINGS

Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda:  
[Organist/Primary Accompanist](#)

### PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: APRIL 2018

You may view the entire calendar on the Presbytery web site: [www.peaceriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peaceriverpresbytery.org)

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

#### **Thursday, April 5**

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

#### **Tuesday, April 10**

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

#### **Wednesday, April 11**

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

#### **Thursday, April 12**

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

#### **Monday, April 16**

Planning Team (1:30 p.m.)

#### **Thursday, April 19**

Congregational Vitality Team (12:30 p.m.) \*Please note date change.

#### **Sunday, April 22**

Commissioning Service for The Reverend Tamara Leonard-Lara at Beth-El Farmworker Ministry (3:00 p.m.)

#### **Thursday, April 26**

Congregational Vitality Team Pastors' Meeting (1:00 p.m.)



## ARTICLES of INTEREST

*(selected by Graham Hart)*

### [Easter celebrations around the world - in pictures](#)

The (London) Guardian: Christians around the globe marked Easter Sunday, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus.

### [From the black church to India: The theology of Martin Luther King Jr.](#)

Religion News Service: Montgomery. Albany. Birmingham. Selma. Washington, D.C. In each of these places King demonstrated an evolving theology.

The Atlantic: [Revisiting King's final and most haunting sermon](#)

### [Church leaders who propelled civil rights movement look to rekindle King's activist spirit](#)

The New York Times: Fifty years after Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, black pastors are issuing a call to action and using different methods to achieve common goals.

Religion News Service: [Picture a King](#)

### [Martin Luther King's death tore America apart. We still can't reckon with African American demands for justice](#)

The Los Angeles Times: Now, as then, a segment of white America views all forms of black protest as unacceptable and unpatriotic, Jason Sokol says.

### [New documents reveal how the FBI deployed a televangelist to discredit Martin Luther King](#)

Religion & Politics: The FBI's efforts to destroy King's reputation are well known, but less known is how the bureau colluded with a widely successful black radio preacher and televangelist in their campaign against King.

### [The little-known theology behind white evangelical support of Donald Trump](#)

Texas Observer: Christian virtues like love, mercy and forgiveness apply to individuals, not government, according to Two Kingdoms theology deployed by evangelicals like Dallas pastor Robert Jeffress.

## CHURCHES of PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

Please visit our web site, [www.peaceriverpresbytery.org/churches](http://www.peaceriverpresbytery.org/churches)

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

