



# PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



## Weekly Presbytery Letter ~ June 14, 2018

### The 223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly ~ St. Louis, Missouri Overview

The [223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly](#) ([click here for the overview](#)) (or [click here for the Guidebook](#)) will meet from June 16-23, 2018. The theme of the General Assembly is: *Kingdom Building for the 21st Century (But strive first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Matthew 6:33)*

The 600 plus commissioners and advisory delegates from each of the 173 Presbyteries (as well as the several thousands of other participants and guests) will gather for 7 days in our biennial national family gathering to:

- worship and engage in Bible Study including worshipping in one of the churches in the St. Louis area on Sunday ([click here for worship bulletin, pages 78ff](#)),
- Elect a new moderator,
- hear of the work of the church around the world,
- review the work of each of the 6 agencies of the General Assembly,
- deliberate on overtures that have come from the presbyteries,
- receive and vote on the reports of commissions that were created at the 222<sup>nd</sup> GA and are reporting at this assembly,
- meet ecumenical delegates from our sister churches around the world, including Ary Fernandez, Moderator of the Synod of the Presbyterian Reformed Church in Cuba,
- meet in committees and plenary sessions to deliberate on and discern the will of Christ in these matters.

While serving as a commissioner is an honor, it is also a lot of work. Please pray for all the commissioners and especially those from Peace River. Randy Moody, our Stated Clerk, and I go to be of support to them, as well as to learn with them of what is going on within our church.

#### **Teaching Elders:**

Jeff DeYoe, Covenant, Fort Myers

Bill Teng, First, Arcadia

#### **Ruling Elders:**

Charmaine Ponkratz, Burnt Store, Punta Gorda

Wayne Largent, Community, Englewood

#### **Young Adult Advisory Delegate**

Mariah Martin, First, Sarasota

For more background on what a General Assembly is – [click here](#). To follow the business of the General Assembly, go to PC-biz ([click here](#)). Also, see the attached for an overview of the top 10 issues that Dan Williams, Stated Clerk and Executive Presbyter of Central Florida Presbytery, and a member of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC), has prepared.

Each commissioner, before the Assembly began, was assigned to a committee. For the past several months, commissioners have been at work reading up on the issues and overtures that have been assigned to their committee. In the first four days of the assembly, most of the work of the assembly is done in committee. On

Wednesday afternoon the Assembly will reconvene in Plenary session to begin their deliberations. If you want to get some of the news updates from the Assembly ([click here](#)).



GA223 WEBSITE  
GA223 FAQ

### [Get the Latest GA223 Information](#)

#### Other Helpful Links –

- Up to the minute news and Press Releases from the Assembly ([click here](#))
- PCbiz – follow the business of GA, docket and work of each committee – ([click here](#)).
- Social media – [follow GA on Facebook](#) - 

*As always, you and I may not agree with every action of this Assembly (or session or presbytery), but...*

- *I am grateful for the witness we, as Presbyterians, have had in our country since our nation's founding,*
- *I am thankful for our Presbyterian Polity and the deliberate - discerning process whereby ruling and teaching elders from our congregations and presbyteries across the country seek the will of Christ,*
- *I deeply appreciate all the commissioners and especially Jeff, Bill, Charmaine, Wayne, and Mariah.*

Graham Hart

General Presbyter

[graham@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:graham@peacriverpresbytery.org)

#### Top Ten List of Issues to be Considered by the 223rd General Assembly:

*by a Dan Williams, Stated Clerk and Executive Presbyter of Central Florida Presbytery, and a member of the Advisory Committee on the Constitution (ACC)*

10. Adopting the "Letter from Birmingham City Jail," written by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as a Contemporary Statement of Faith (But not with Constitutional Standing) – Item 14-05 (Committee 14, Item #5). This is a concept that does not exist in our polity. I suspect the GA will commend it to the church for study and use.

9. Proposal to create a new Presbyterian Mission Agency department for Small Church Ministry – Item 10-09. It is heartening to see this concern for small congregations, but is increasing our bureaucracy the most effective way to address this issue?

8. Item 09-09 asks the GA to encourage Presbyterians to commit to prayer and preparation for peace on the Korean peninsula. One issue that will have to be addressed moving forward is if peace is achieved, what becomes of Presbyterian property that was confiscated by North Korea?
7. Divestment issues, particularly involving companies that do business in fossil fuels, is back before the Assembly. (Items 08-01 and 08-02.) As a reminder, if the GA adopts a divestment recommendation, this sets policy for the GA, but is only an advisory word to rest of the church.
6. Five different items (06-13,06-14, 06-15, 06-17, 06-20) would require 12 weeks of paid parental leave for the GA and urge the same at all other levels of the denomination. Items 14 and 15 involve amendments to Book of Order to add this requirement to terms of call. (Previously, the GA has encouraged six weeks of paid leave.)
5. As has been the case in recent GAs, there are a number of items that deal with Israel – Palestine issues, including Items 12-01 through 12-08.
4. The 2020 Vision Team, created by the 222nd General Assembly, has released an interim report. The final report is due in 2020 at the 224th GA, meeting in Baltimore. Item 04-05 is the Team’s Guiding Statement on the mission of the PC(USA) moving forward, which has been referred to this GA for study and comment.
3. Another special working group is the Way Forward Commission. This commission submits its report (Item 04-03) which includes recommendations on the role of GA Stated Clerk, financial sustainability issues, and ...
2. The General Assembly, A Corporation (Item 04-03). What to do in regards to the corporate existence of the General Assembly? Should A Corp be divided into 2 corporations? Should something else be done? Should the status quo be maintained? There are differing proposals before the General Assembly from the Way Forward Commission and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board (Item 04-06).
1. General Assembly Per capita budgets, 2019-2020 (Item 03-01). The Committee on the Office of the General Assembly and Presbyterian Mission Agency Board propose a 38.55% increase in per capita for 2019 (\$2.98) and an additional \$0.74 for 2020.

A few issues that did not make the list are a request for an administrative commission to resolve difficulties in the Synod of the Covenant (Item 05-03 + Synod response (05-Info)); a proposal to allow ruling elders to be elected without having to serve on the session (so they can serve higher councils; 06-08), and an overture calling for “a Movement of the Spirit to Engage Presbyterian Congregations in Nation-Wide Action to Prevent Gun Violence” (Item 11-14). I think we can all say amen to that.

**\*\* REMINDER: DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, JUNE 15 \*\***

### **Seeking Servant Leaders for the General Presbyter Nominating Committee**

The Steering Committee and Nominating and Representation Committee depend upon your participation to recommend qualified candidates to serve on the General Presbyter Nominating Committee.

You may self- nominate. If you nominate someone else,  
it is important that you confirm their willingness to serve if asked.

The [application](#) is on the [website](#) under the new General Presbyter Search icon.

**Peace River Presbytery  
on May 17, 2018  
Endorsed this Plan of the  
Steering Committee**

**STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**General Presbyter Transition Report**

**At May 3, 2018 meeting of the Steering Committee the following motions were approved:**

1. The Personnel Committee recommends the use of the Adaptive Transition model for the succession process of the current General Presbyter.

**Rationale:**

- a. Review of the state of Peace River Presbytery indicates that it is healthy and stable.
- b. The Presbytery will be better served by a process of continuity.

2. Jointly the Personnel Committee and the Strategic Task Force recommend that the Strategic Task Force continue its work to include a draft of the Ministry Information Form (MIF).

3. Jointly the Personnel Committee and the Strategic Task Force recommend that the Personnel Committee update the General Presbyter's job description and competencies in accordance with the MIF.

4. Jointly the Steering Committee and the Nominating and Representation Committee will provide a slate of candidates to be elected by the Presbytery to the Search Committee (at a called meeting of Presbytery in August).

During the transition period the General Presbyter will not be involved in the process except as a resource when specifically asked. Input from outside resources may be requested.

**Next Steps:**

1. Strategic Task Force completes Ministry Information Form (MIF) in conjunction with Personnel's work on Job Description.

2. Steering Committee and Nominations Committee present a Search Committee slate (probably 5 to 7 people, with balanced representation between teaching and ruling elders. No more than one member from a church. (Nominations accepted from Presbytery by June 15).

3. August 9, 2018, a called meeting of Presbytery, that includes election of the Search Committee and review of MIF with opportunity for input.

4. Final MIF is approved by the Steering Committee and the search begins. (mid-September)

5. Plans are made for celebration activities.

6. February 2019, Presbytery meeting will be Graham's last Presbytery meeting with plans to retire at the end of March 2019.

**Contact the following moderators/co-moderators to provide your valuable input to the process:**

**For Recommendations to Search Committee (Deadline June 15<sup>th</sup>):**

- Craig Goodrich, co-moderator Steering Committee - [CraigG@fpcnaples.org](mailto:CraigG@fpcnaples.org)
- Lil Rea, co-moderator Steering Committee - [lrea@me.com](mailto:lrea@me.com)

- Donald Cady, co-moderator Nominations and Representation Committee - [donaldfcady@gmail.com](mailto:donaldfcady@gmail.com)
- Lou Thompson, co-moderator Nominations and Representation Committee - [1st58@comcast.net](mailto:1st58@comcast.net)

**For Input to Ministry Information Form and Job Description:**

- Will Browne, moderator Personnel Committee - [willbrowne@yahoo.com](mailto:willbrowne@yahoo.com)
- Lil Rea, moderator Strategic Task Force - [lrea@me.com](mailto:lrea@me.com)

**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).

**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)

[June 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)

**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: [miguestrada@hotmail.com](mailto:miguestrada@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.

**ARTICLES of INTEREST**

(selected by Graham Hart)

[Amid a #MeToo culture, Southern Baptists mull ways to increase women's roles](#)

Religion News Service: Delegates to the SBC annual meeting are having heart-to-heart discussions about future possibilities for women in a denomination that walks a "complementarian" line.

The Washington Post: [Southern Baptists adopt resolutions on abuse and affairs, in a season of grappling with gender](#)

[Sexual purity, #ChurchToo, and the crisis of male evangelical leadership](#)

Religion & Politics: The work of #ChurchToo cannot be undertaken within evangelical churches without first re-assessing, if not dismantling, the stringent purity culture which remains a prominent feature of youth ministries, Sara Moslener says.

[Supreme Court denies breakaway Episcopal group control of its churches](#)

Religion News Service: The Episcopal Church in South Carolina is preparing to reclaim control of more than two dozen properties worth an estimated \$500 million after the U.S. Supreme Court decided not to hear an appeal brought by a breakaway group of conservative Anglican congregations.

[This is the face of God, according to opinions from American Christians](#)

Newsweek: Liberals considered God more feminine and "loving," according to the study, and conservatives considered God more masculine and "powerful."

[Ireland will vote in a referendum on its blasphemy law](#)

Quartz: People in the Republic of Ireland will be able to vote in a referendum on whether the nation can speak sacrilegiously about God or sacred things without legal consequences.

[Many church services are now a sea of iPhones. And clergy members think that's great.](#)

Slate: Until recently, many churches were that rare 21st-century phenomenon: the organically analog space. But walk into most churches on Sunday morning now, and you'll quickly see how much that has changed.

[The history of Black Catholics in America](#)

Smithsonian: The Black Catholic Movement reinvigorated the church, with liturgical innovation, new preaching styles and activist scholarship.

[Why religions of the world condemn suicide](#)

The Conversation: Most religions have a fundamental belief that all human life belongs to God.

[Vatican stalls German bishops' plan to give Protestants Communion](#)

Religion News Service: Disagreements between Catholic bishops in Germany about plans to give Communion to Protestants have spilled out into the wider Roman Catholic Church.

[How to talk about God in Silicon Valley](#)

Quartz: Silicon Valley's Christians describe life as an uneasy negotiation between expressing their faith and integrating themselves into secular workplaces where religion is viewed, at best, as an anachronistic curiosity, and at worst, as a malevolent force.

[How women led to the dramatic rise and fall of Southern Baptist leader Paige Patterson](#)

The Washington Post: A Southern Baptist icon's views on women cemented his power -- and led to his downfall.  
Religion News Service: [Patterson won't address meeting as Southern Baptists gather amid scandals](#)

[Francis accepts resignation of Chilean bishop at center of abuse scandal](#)

National Catholic Reporter: Pope Francis has accepted the resignation of the Catholic bishop at the center of Chile's clergy sexual abuse crisis, in the first of what is expected to be a wave of firings to root out what the pontiff has termed a "culture of abuse and cover-up" in the country's church.

**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 continue to pray for:**

- The Rev. Daniel Herlein - health
- 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: JUNE 2018:**

June 3	<u>Peace Presbyterian Church, Lakewood Ranch</u> Pastor: Rev. Elizabeth Deibert Email: <a href="mailto:edeibert@mindspring.com">edeibert@mindspring.com</a>
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June 10	<u>First Presbyterian Church, Lehigh Acres</u> Interim Pastor: Rev. Dr. Jim Berger Email: <a href="mailto:drjimberger@gmail.com">drjimberger@gmail.com</a>
June 17	<u>Christ Church of Longboat Key</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Norman Pritchard Email: <a href="mailto:revnmp@comcast.net">revnmp@comcast.net</a>
June 24	<u>First Presbyterian Church, Naples</u> Pastor: Rev. Craig Goodrich Email: <a href="mailto:craigg@fpcnaples.org">craigg@fpcnaples.org</a>

### CHURCH SUPPORT STAFF OPENINGS

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port  
[Music Director for the Traditional Service](#)

First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia:  
[Part-Time Children and Youth Director](#)

### PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: JUNE 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.*

**Friday, June 15**

Deadline for Nominations to the GPNC (General Presbyter Nominating Committee)

**Saturday, June 16-Saturday, June 23**

223<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly in St. Louis, MO

**Tuesday, June 26**

Committee on Ministry (9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.)  
Information Gathering Meeting (2:30 p.m. at Hope United, Fort Myers)

**Wednesday, June 27**

Information Gathering Meeting (9:30 a.m. at Church of the Palms, Sarasota)  
Information Gathering Meeting (2:30 p.m. at Burnt Store, Punta Gorda)

### 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.

