



# PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



## Presbytery Newsletter ~ April 10, 2020

Dear Friends,

In these last days of Lent, we remember so much that is familiar, but in forms that are unfamiliar. Maybe the strangeness of the forms of Maundy Thursday, communion, the stations of the cross, the Easter vigil, will make us more aware of the power of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. So many years I have gone through the rituals, but this year with the suffering going on around the world, the story seems to take on a power that is new for me. The Via Dolorosa looks more real to me – it travels through all the countries of the world as we remember that Jesus walks the way for us. I hope these days draw you closer to the One who walks with you through all that we face.

Then on Sunday we will celebrate the truth that cannot be shut in by closed doors – Christ is risen! New life is ours because of God's love for us! We need that message today more than ever. I invite you to find ways to share that message with others who are living in fear and darkness. Christ is risen! Nothing can separate us from that – no pandemic, no politics, no separation from others, no closed church buildings, no fear of how long this will last – nothing! Claim that newness in your life and in your church this Sunday!

On other notes, just a few things to share. The Sarasota churches have a community stations of the cross that is available beginning Thursday evening for viewing. You can view it [here](#). There is a list of all the churches (that I know about) providing some form of online worship at our resource [page](#). The Office of General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency are hosting a national Easter worship service that can be found at this [link](#).

The Board of Pensions is providing waivers of dues for churches of less than 300 members and one pastor in the program. For information and to begin the process, call the Board of Pensions.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has recorded some webinars that provide help dealing with the stress of these days. There is a webinar for faith leaders and another for the general public. You can find the link to those webinars on our resource page and [here](#).

I look forward to sharing in worship with many of you in the next few days, even though we will not see each other. We are still connected because of our faith in the One who came to save us.

Blessings,  
Melana

### A COVID-19 Era Meditation

In these COVID-19 times, along with our masks, we are tempted to don an attitude of fear and of scarcity. When we face losses, the grief of our patients and their families ... indeed our grief and our families' grief...these are real. People are losing lives, jobs, freedom of movement and myriad in-person

interactions. At the same time, be encouraged to remember we are not alone! We execute our work each day using the gifts given to us by our Creator. Be encouraged that this same Creator remains intimately involved in our fear and our grief. Though we may feel we are in darkness, the darkness is like the noon-day sun to that Creator. Nothing is hidden, nothing is overlooked. So, while we seek wisdom from the data, the procedures, the equipment and the science, be encouraged that the Author of each of these is also involved in our striving. Be encouraged that the One Who Created is also the One Who Sees. Be encouraged we have fellowship with each other! It matters that we continue to “see” our teammates beyond the superficial to the deeply personal. In this way we bear witness to and commiserate with our colleagues stress and celebrate their joys.

I invite each of us to check in with ourselves each day. Perhaps use the metaphor of a small bouquet of long-stemmed roses to guide your meditation. Within the bouquet there is at least one open rose, beautiful in its full bloom. The blooming rose symbolizes one thing for which you are grateful this day. How beautiful it is to feel that gratitude! Let its sweetness color how you perceive your world today. Imagine now a thorn on one of the stems within the bouquet. This thorn symbolizes something painful or perhaps something that causes great sorrow. Acknowledge that pain and sorrow, accepting that it is now part of the fabric of your life. Be patient to feel how your experience of that pain and sorrow changes over time. Finally, imagine a rosebud within the bouquet. A rose, not yet having bloomed, is one whose promise is yet in the future. What is one hope or dream you hold that has yet to bloom and unfold? Imagine the sunshine and water that will nurture that bud to burst into its full regalia! What sunshine and water does your hope need to bloom in the future? Be encouraged that your meditation is witnessed by the One Who Provides for our needs and remains with us in our hour of need.



Rev. Courtney A. Ducharme  
Chaplain  
Golisano Children’s Hospital

*Courtney pictured on left, with her fellow chaplains.*

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

## Update on Mission Co-Workers: Dan and Elizabeth Turk

We celebrate with the Turks the completion and dedication of the Fruit Center at Mahatsinjo last month.



Please pray for Dan and Elizabeth as they are currently in the United States, since Elizabeth has been quite ill.

## Presbytery Calendar: April 2020

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

Please email corrections or additions to [lori@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:lori@peacriverpresbytery.org)

### Thursday, April 9, 2020

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

### Tuesday, April 14, 2020

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

## Misión Peniel: a Ministry of Peace River Presbytery

Web Site: [www.misionpeniel.org](http://www.misionpeniel.org)

## Covenant Partners of Peace River Presbytery

Click on the links to visit each ministry's web site:

- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry – Wimauma: [www.beth-el.org](http://www.beth-el.org)
- Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center: [www.cedarkirk.org](http://www.cedarkirk.org)
- Presbyterian Homes & Housing Foundation of FL: [www.phhf.com](http://www.phhf.com)

## Prayer Needs

### Please pray for:

- Marifrans Estrada (wife of Miguel) and family in the passing of her father.
- Rev. Dr. George Chorba (HR Member of PRP) – recovering from Covid-19
- Our nation and the other countries of the world
- Front Line Health Care Workers and other First Responders
- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry (in Wimauma)
- Misión Peniel Farmworker Ministry (in Immokalee)
- Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center
- Dan and Elizabeth Turk, PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Madagascar

## Churches of Peace River Presbytery

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

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



The Presbytery Newsletter is a weekly publication of Peace River Presbytery.

If you wish to be unsubscribed from the distribution, or if you know someone who would like to receive the newsletter, please contact Lori Doyal at the Presbytery Office:  
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