



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Presbytery Weekly E-Newsletter ~ April 24, 2020

FROM THE GENERAL PRESBYTER

Dear Friends,

The days seem to go by quickly and one melds into another. At the same time the weeks seem to creep by slowly and it feels as if we have been safer at home for months, not years. We have learned some things in this time that we might take with us into the future: meetings via video conference are not so bad and save on gasoline; cooking and eating together as a family is a joy (usually); there are many ways to stay connected and be the church. We have also learned some things that might help us change the future: clear evidence that the most vulnerable have the fewest resources when things like this happen; the environment heals if we slow down; everyone sharing a little makes a big difference. I hope you are discovering things during this time that make staying at home better and things that you will take with you when we go back into the world.

This past week during our pastors' conversation we began talking about how and when to return to in person worship. Every pastor and session will make those decisions in the near future. The Stated Clerk and I are willing to provide support and resources for any pastor or session who might want that. There is a new section created on the [resource page](#) that is marked "Reopening Resources." Included there is a video, some questions from various sources to consider as you discuss, and a very good resource from the Wisconsin Council of Churches on reopening.

The Presbytery Office will be closed until the end of May as we have decided to err on the side of caution and Zoom meetings are not so bad. General Assembly, slated to be held in Baltimore June 20-27, has been rescheduled as a two-day online meeting. Please be in prayer for the commissioners and GA staff who will have to find a whole new way to do business.

The next Pastors' Conversation will take place on Tuesday, April 28, at 1pm. Thank you to all those who have responded to my email about your opening date conversations. Knowing that information is helpful as I work to provide support to the congregations. As always, please let me know if there are ways I can support you and your church.

Blessings,
Melana

Stated Meeting of Presbytery

Date Change To:

Saturday, September 12, 2020 *

Location: Venice Presbyterian Church

**Original date was Thursday, May 28, 2020.*

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.

Presbytery Calendar: April-May 2020

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

Please email corrections or additions to lori@peaceriverpresbytery.org

Team, Committee, and other meetings are being conducted via video conferencing during this time of the stay-at-home guidelines. Please check the calendar regularly for additions or changes.

Steering Committee Report

Interim report between Stated Meetings

If you have any questions about this report, please contact Moderator, Charmaine Ponkratz: (941) 639-3736 or ponkratz@comcast.net

By now you know that on April 16, 2020 the Steering Committee met and acted to postpone the May 28, 2020 Stated Presbytery meeting out of an abundance of caution. We look forward to seeing you on September 12 at Venice Presbyterian Church, Venice. *Over the next few weeks, the Teams, Committees and Covenant Partners will be providing an update as part of the Presbytery's weekly e-newsletter. For those of you who like to read the updates in a more usual Presbytery Meeting packet format, the weekly reports will be aggregated into an 'in-between' meeting packet and will be posted on the Presbytery's website in the area where you would usually find a Presbytery Meeting packet.*

Action that will be recommended at the September Meeting:

Meetings for 2021:

February 25, 2021 at Venice Presbyterian, Venice

May 13, 2021 at Moorings Presbyterian, Naples

November 18, 2021 at Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center

For Information only:

The Steering Committee members gathered with short notice to approve three Presbyterian **Disaster Assistance Grant Requests** from: Misión Peniel, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and Wintergarden Presbyterian. Each requested \$7,500 and at the writing of this report both Misión Peniel and the Coalition of Immokalee Workers was approved for \$5,000 each. We await word on the Wintergarden Presbyterian request.

Here's a thumbnail for each request. If you are interested in more information you may click the link:

Misión Peniel: The relief funds requested would be used to provide assistance to those most affected by this crisis in the following ways through a designated mission benevolence fund by Misión Peniel to provide: rental assistance, medical assistance, food subsidies to families and basic services bill payments. These funds will be administered by the director, Pastor Miguel Estrada with oversight of the Misión Peniel Team. Misionpenielpeaceriver@gmail.com

Coalition of Immokalee Workers: Enable assistance to the community of farmworkers in Immokalee to provide multi-lingual, culturally appropriate, and accessible educational materials to farmworkers on the prevention of contracting COVID-19. The request covers expenses for project-specific staff time, radio transmission and a social media campaign. Marley Montecello: Marley@ciw-online.org

Wintergarden Presbyterian Church: To provide immediate assistance to those in need through the food pantry to include: expanding the community garden to encompass more people, including handicapped individuals, developing and expanding a food forest so people will be able to pick food from the trees and garden whenever in need. The garden expectations will incorporate educating future gardeners to grow food for themselves, their families and friends and to

share with the community. The food forest will provide sustainable, edible fruits on the trees to be communal and also provide produce to the food pantry, as the gardens do now. For more information contact Pastor Devon at: revdev08@gmail.com

Additionally, the Steering Committee encouraged the Finance Team to apply for the **Payroll Protection Program through the CARES Act** as soon as possible and to forward information about the program to our congregations (action taken on March 30). As of the writing of this report, we are informed that the application is approved and scheduled for closing.

Tribute to Thirty Celebration for Pastor Tim Stewart

Burnt Store Presbyterian Church is bidding farewell to Pastor Tim Stewart after 30 years of ministry in Punta Gorda. You're invited to join in a Tribute to Thirty Celebration on Saturday, May 16 at 4:00 p.m. Social distancing will be honored as guests are asked to spread themselves across the sanctuary. Pastor Tim will be conducting his final worship at Burnt Store Presbyterian Church on Sunday, May 31 at 10:00 a.m. Questions can be directed to Charmaine Ponkratz: ponkratz@comcast.net

Are You Registered for Summer Camp Yet?

June and July may seem a long way off, but Cedarkirk's summer programs are filling quickly and you don't want to miss out! Sign up today for your week of games, songs, worships, cookouts, and time to hang out with your new best friends. Try exciting activities like canoeing, archery, campfires, zip lining, and kayaking. Deepen your connection to God and learn new things about yourself as you spend time in the woods away from your usual routine. Visit www.cedarkirk.org to register online. For more information or to request a confidential scholarship, please contact the camp office at 813.685.4224 x2 or camps@cedarkirk.org.

Misión Peniel: a Ministry of Peace River Presbytery

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

Prayer Needs

Please pray for:

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