



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Presbytery Weekly E-Newsletter ~ May 22, 2020

From the General Presbyter

Dear Friends,

On Wednesday, the CDC pulled back their recommended guidelines on communities of faith gatherings (although for now they are still posted on our resource page). While this seems to be politically motivated, we can continue to make faithful decisions about reopening based on our understanding of who we are as people of God. We do not need to make decisions out of fear or coercion or a sense of following the crowd. We should not make judgments about other churches based on when they decide to begin worshipping in person. As I talk with pastors and other leaders in the presbytery, I see a commitment to continuing to be the church whether the building is open or closed. Sessions are talking at least monthly about what is best for their congregation. These are not easy decisions to make and are complicated by our various differences in space, demographics, and ability to find sanitizing products. Whether a session decides to open in May, June, July, or next fall, should be about how to be faithful to God's call in your community, not about what others might think. I continue to pray for all of you and will provide support as you need.

This coming week I am taking vacation to rest and rejuvenate and hope that many pastors will find time to do that soon. If Jesus needed to take time away, we certainly need to do so. As I enjoy some kayak time on the river, Randy Moody will host a pastors' conversation next week so that the sharing can continue. You will receive an email with a link for that conversation. If there is an emergency, contact Alesia or Lori and either will be able to reach me.

Blessings on your continued work for the kingdom,
Melana

Dear Peace River Presbytery Friends,

Please take a moment to read the heartwarming letter from our Cuban brothers and sisters in Matanzas Presbytery. Let us continue to remember them in our personal prayers as well as in the prayer concerns we share with our churches each week. May their witness and the partnership we share inspire us to explore new ways to stay connected across the miles in these isolated times.

We thank God for the blessing of partnership!

Together in Christ,
Ruth DeYoe and Kevin Morris, Co-Moderators
Cuban Partnership Task Force
Peace River Presbytery

The photos are of worship on Palm Sunday at the seminary in Matanzas, led by Pastor Carlos Ham, the seminary president and pastor at the Versailles church for those students and staff still living on campus.



IGLESIA PRESBITERIANA-REFORMADA EN CUBA Presbiterio de Matanzas

Matanzas, May 17, 2020

Dear sisters and brothers from churches and Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (USA) twinned with the Matanzas Presbytery of the IPRC (Iglesia Presbiteriana-Reformada en Cuba)



Grace and Peace be with you all, especially in this time of the pandemic crisis due to the COVID-19.

During these last months since the pandemic appeared, many Governments advised by health organizations, suggested physical isolation and the practice of hygienic measures, to avoid personal contacts and fight the contagion of this mortal virus, especially for the most aged people, therefore we have been in contact mainly through prayer precisely in this time.

It has been a unique, especial and beautiful time to re-state family, social and ecclesiastical relations within our homes. It has been wonderful to see how telephone communications have increased, reaching people with whom we had not related so frequently.

We have shared many motivations worries, orientations, articles to read and to increase our spirituality in this exclusive moment, etc. We have also felt the company of many of you, sharing your experiences and particular situations as well as ours. We are sorry for the loss of so many lives, even in our faith communities, family, or friends.

As Matanzas Presbytery we want to thank God for allowing us to feel his presence as the Father, Creator of all, as Redemptive Son, and as empowering Holy Spirit who, sending us to become channels of his Grace in the midst of this sick humankind who needs to be healed, so that we can jointly heal and recreate the planet towards fullness of life for all.

We want to convey to you our love and affection, our commitment to continue working together for a better world, more just, harmonious and solidarity, where we can especially build bridges for the interchange between our churches and peoples.

May God bless you all,

Elder Tania Petersson Roldán, moderator of the Presbytery
Pastor Francisco V. Marrero Gutiérrez, vice moderator
Pastor Ary Fernández Albán, presbyterial secretary
Pastor Beidy Casas Aragón, president of the Inter-presbytery Relations Committee

Presbytery Calendar: May-June 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 web site calendar regularly for additions or changes.

A Reminder

The staff of the Presbytery Office continues to work diligently for you, while doing so remotely and safely. Mail is being picked up daily.
Please check the web site for the staff's cell phone numbers, should you need to reach any of them by phone.

[Contact PRP Staff](#)

COVID-19 Wish List for Beth-El Farmworker Ministry

Diapers, Size 4 and 5	Gift Cards	All Purpose Flour	Peanut Butter
Sanitizer	Deodorant	Spaghetti Sauce	Pancake Mix
Face Masks	Toothpaste	Powdered Milk	Granola Bars
Gloves	Feminine Products	Evaporated Milk	Apple Sauce
Paper Products	Adult Diapers	Boxed Cereal	Macaroni and Cheese
Sanitizing Detergents	Baby Wipes	Canned Meats	Maseca Tortilla Mix
Disinfecting Wipes	Bread	Canned Fruits	Rice and Beans
Bar Soap	Coffee	Pasta	Crackers
Toilet Paper	Oats	Rice	Canned Vegetables

If you can help provide any of these items, please call Beth-El at 813-633-1548.

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

Misión Peniel: a Ministry of Peace River Presbytery

Web Site: www.misionpeniel.org

Prayer Needs

Ongoing Prayers for our brothers and sisters in Cuba:

- We have been asked to join them in prayer at 9:30 am each morning in solidarity during this difficult time.
- We also pray for their wellbeing and safety during this time of crisis, both physically and spiritually.

Please pray for:

- COVID-19 and Economic Recovery
- 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

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@peaceriverpresbytery.org or 941-426-8421, ext. 401.