



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Presbytery Weekly E-Newsletter ~ March 26, 2021

From the General Presbyter

Dear Friends,

As we move into Holy Week, we look at the sixth mark of Vital Congregations, caring relationships. It seems serendipitous that we hit this mark at the edge of the week in which we remember that God loved us so much that Jesus went to the cross so that we might be reconciled to God and begin to learn what true relationship is. Vital Congregations work on building relationships that are deep and loving, that go beyond race, political affiliation, or homogeneity. These are the relationships that could change the world! Relational congregations are aware of the Matthew 25 call to see Christ in all people, to lift those who have fallen, to help those who are marginalized, to care for the least, the last, and the lost. I would really love to hear the places where you are living into these relationships. I hope you will share with me some of what you are doing and learning as you see Christ in all people.

We should learn about our acceptance into the next cohort of Vital Congregations by mid-April. I would invite you to begin talking in session and in study groups about whether being part of this initiative is something that your congregation feels called to do. There will be an application process for churches to be accepted into the first round of our work. It is our hope that we would have at least 10 congregations who want to be part of learning how to be church in ways that can reach outside the doors and move the world toward God's kingdom. If you have questions, please reach out to me or to Terri Jo Crego. You can also find more information at this [link](#).

May your Holy Week be a time to encounter Christ as you move toward the promise of resurrection.

Blessings,
Melana

News from the Cuba Partnership Network

The Presbyterian Cuba Partnership Network has had a relationship with the Cuban Presbyterian Church for over 50 years. Our own presbytery has had a partnership with the Matanzas Cuba Presbytery since 2018, and several Peace River Presbytery congregations have church to church partnerships as well.

Through direct contact with Cuban Church leaders via the Cuba Partnership Network this past week, we are aware that the situation in Cuba is dire. Our brothers and sisters in Christ are experiencing severe food shortages, unprecedented inflation due to a major change in Cuban currency, and no commensurate raises in salary for non-government workers.

Cuban pastors are struggling to serve their congregations due to pandemic restrictions. The country is still in lockdown and unable to have in person services. They do not have the kind of access to an online worship presence as we do, and rely primarily on neighborhood outdoor visits and communications by phone and WhatsApp, for those members who actually have similar capabilities. They are struggling to access much needed food, medicine, and resources for their church members, and are struggling to meet their personal needs at severely reduced incomes.

The Cuban Synod leadership and the pastors have met these challenges for months, creatively and cooperatively. As difficult as it is for them, they are at a point where they have come to us for help. Partnerships are mutual, and it is very difficult for our Cuban Presbyterian colleagues to present this request for financial help, which is more confirmation of how dire their circumstances have become. They think that \$75,000 will meet the most pressing needs of the synod, the churches, and the people they serve.

On the US side, the Cuba Partnership Network leadership team has found an avenue to get these funds to Cuba at a reasonable rate. The attitude is "WE CAN DO THIS!"

Attached below is the Cuba Partners Network of the PCUSA's letter written for our review as a presbytery and for individual consideration. We, as this presbytery's Cuba Partnership Team, ask that pastors, sessions and mission committees share this communication and prayerfully consider if you might be able to join in voluntary support of their request. **If this IS something you would like to consider, it is crucial to have all funds received by the network's treasurer (listed in attached letter) no later than April 4th and that no where on the check does it say Cuba, designate on separate paper. You can also send a check to the presbytery office, again no designation on the check. Checks to the presbytery must be received by March 30.** A check sent directly to the Network will not be tax deductible. A check sent to the presbytery will be tax deductible.

Direct Address:

Bryan Beck, CPN Treasurer
6400 Zapateco NW
Los Ranchos, NM 87107

Presbytery address:

5600 Peace River Rd.
North Port, FL 34287

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of their request.

Cuba Partnership Team of Peace River Presbytery
Kevin Morris and Ruth DeYoe, Co-Moderators
Pat Nordbrock, Karen Chappler, Winston Lawson, Molly Godley

Holy Week Event – Faith Presbyterian Church

[Interactive Jesus' Passion Prayer Stations](#)

Thursday, April 1, 5:30-5:30 pm

Click on link above for more information.

[50 Days of Spiritual Practices: Easter Themed Calendar](#)

Rev. Leslie Latham and Rev. Dorothy Pearman of the Presbytery of Western New York have created this calendar and have graciously shared it with us.

Support Wintergarden Presbyterian Church

Wintergarden is collecting votes in the *Nature's Path Garden Grant*. If you would like to help them in this, visit this [link](#) on Facebook, and vote for them.

[Leading the Church into the Post COVID World](#)

Tuesday, April 27, 2021, Eastern time, 3:00 - 4:30 pm via ZOOM

Rev. Dr. Tod Bolsinger

Click on title above for information flyer.

Registration is Now Open ... Click on the following link to register:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6H2HXmPaQQ-mhJLfv154RA

FEMA Announces \$140 Million for Emergency Food and Shelter Program

By FEMA External Affairs

FEMA announced \$140 million in funding will be available to communities across the country to assist with feeding and sheltering.

Congress made \$125 million available for Fiscal Year 2020, and this year the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) National Board is including an additional \$15 million from funds that have not been used from prior grant years. FEMA awarded the \$125 million to the National Board, which is now allocating the funds, combined with the additional \$15 million, to qualifying jurisdictions (counties and cities).

Program funding assists local organizations dedicated to feeding, sheltering and providing critical resources to people with economic emergencies, including our nation's hungry and homeless populations. These funds are designed to help people with non-disaster related emergencies and can be used for a broad range of services, including mass shelter, mass feeding, food pantries and food banks, utility bill payments to prevent cut-offs, rent/mortgage payments to prevent evictions/foreclosures and transition assistance from shelters to stable living conditions.

Eight percent of this year's allocation will be made available to states that will make funding determinations to aid people in jurisdictions with needs that may not be reflected in the National Board's qualifying formula.

The National Board is chaired by FEMA with representatives from American Red Cross, Catholic Charities USA, The Jewish Federations of North America, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, The Salvation Army and United Way Worldwide. United Way Worldwide, selected by the National Board as its Secretariat and Fiscal Agent, is also responsible for the daily administration of the EFSP.

EFSP funding is allocated to qualifying local jurisdictions based on a formula using the most recent national population, unemployment, and poverty data.

A state-by-state list of the eligible jurisdictions and award amounts is available at the [United Way website](#).

Misión Peniel: a Ministry of Peace River Presbytery

Web Site: www.misionpeniel.org

As a mission of the Presbytery, we rely on the churches of Peace River Presbytery for 100% of our budget. Thank you for your faithful support of this presbytery ministry.

For the latest updates, visit us on Facebook (Mision Peniel), Instagram (misionpenielimmokalee) and subscribe to our quarterly newsletter via our website.

Contacts:

Rev. Miguel Estrada, Pastor – miguel@peaceriverpresbytery.org
Ruth DeYoe, Mission Coordinator – ruth@peaceriverpresbytery.org

Job Opportunity

First Presbyterian Church of Port Charlotte is seeking a part-time, 8-10 hours per week, Financial Secretary. Must have experience in accounting procedures and practices, handling payroll, and financial record keeping. Contact the church office at 941-625-5045 for additional information.

Presbytery Calendar: April 2021

*You may view the entire calendar on the Presbytery web site: www.peaceriverpresbytery.org
Please email corrections or additions to lori@peaceriverpresbytery.org*

Thursday, April 1

Mision Peniel Team (10:30 am by Zoom Conference)

Friday, April 2

Good Friday – Presbytery Offices Closed

Sunday, April 4

Easter

Thursday, April 8

Finance Team/Board of Trustees (9:30 am by Zoom Conference)

Monday, April 12

Outreach and Nurture Team (10:00 am by Zoom Conference)

Tuesday, April 13

Committee on Ministry (9:00 am by Zoom Conference)

Wednesday, April 14

Human Resources Team (3:00 pm by Zoom Conference)
Cuba Partnership Task Force (5:00 pm by Zoom Conference)

Thursday, April 29

Steering Committee (9:00 am by Zoom Conference)

Team, Committee, and other meetings are being conducted via Zoom Video Conference until further notice.

Please check the web site calendar regularly for additions or changes.

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:

- The people of Myanmar
- Rev. Dr. Harry Schill – “...for God’s mercy to shrink the bile duct tumor so that surgery can be done.”
- Rev. Dr. Kathi Wiggins and Family – loss of her younger brother
- Becky Beckwith and Family – loss of husband, Jim Beckwith (past Moderator of Presbytery and Committee on Ministry member). Address for Becky Beckwith: 617 Woodlawn Drive, Bradenton, FL 34210
- The Congregations and Pastors of Peace River Presbytery
- Our Nation
- The Congregations and Pastors of Peace River Presbytery
- 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

Go to [Peace River Presbytery Churches](#)

to visit each of the church's web sites.



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.