



THE INTERPRETER

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

JUNE/JULY 2006

SPEAKING FROM THE HART

Coming to a Computer Near You - June 15 – The 217th General Assembly

In 1706, Presbyterian pastors on horseback came to Philadelphia for the very first Presbytery meeting. That little band of clergy committed to a practice and theology that has at its center the notion that we are better and stronger together than we are apart. For 300 years Presbyterians have come together in deliberative councils to pray, make decisions, network, and do all we can to build up the Body of Christ.

That collaborative decision-making pattern was first practiced in the Book of Acts. Paul and Peter were on the road proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. However, in the early church concerns arose as to an effective and fair way to distribute mission dollars. Later in Acts a troubling and divisive issue was whether one has to be a good Jew to be a good Christian? The debates were heated, but Acts 6 and Acts 15 are the stories of how then, and now as Presbyterians, we believe God's will is best known in deliberative councils, where two or three gather in Jesus' name. The 217th General Assembly will meet in Birmingham from June 15-22. There will be issues, debates and passionate worship. When all is said and done, as Presbyterians we believe we are stronger together, and better able to reflect the depth of God's love when we have the benefit of many voices.

A special joy this year is that Tim Halverson, pastor of Faith, Cape Coral, chair of the Committee on Ministry for the past three years, has been nominated by Peace River Presbytery to stand for moderator of the 217th General Assembly. Please pray for Tim, as well as our other commissioners: Kathi Wiggins (Pastor, Siesta Key Chapel), Gail Thornton, Ray Angle, and Joe Davis (our youth advisory delegate). If you want to follow the actions of the General Assembly, please go to <http://www.pcusa.org> for live telecasts (see the election of the moderator on Thursday night, June 15) or get a daily summary of GA events.

I do not believe that God is finished with this band of Presbyterians who since 1706 have come together to network, partner in mission, support each other in prayer, and do what we can and must to advance Christ's Kingdom near and far. Thanks be to God!

Graham Hart
General Presbyter

Please Join Us in Prayer



For the following churches:

First, Fort Myers	June 4
Hope United, Fort Myers	June 11
Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach	June 18
First, Lehigh Acres	June 25
Christ Church of Longboat Key	July 2
Wintergarden, Port Charlotte	July 9
First, Naples	July 16
Lely, Naples	July 23
Moorings, Naples	July 30

Please remember our youth and their leaders who are on the following trips:

June 10-18	Sr. Highs to Montreat
June 10-25	Sr. Highs to Montreat & West Virginia
June 11-16	Middle School Urban Mission Trip
June 17-25	Sr. Highs to West Virginia

Also, please be in prayer for the upcoming General Assembly that meets from June 15 to June 22 in Birmingham, Alabama. For more information, go to <http://pcusa.org>.



IN MEMORIAM

Rev. Russell Buffaloe - May 13, 2006

NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES



First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte, has launched their new website - www.fpcpc.com. Congratulations!

Cypress Lake, Fort Myers, has changed their website address. It is now www.clpc.us.

[Hope United Church, Fort Myers](#), is looking for a college graduate for a full-time position as Director of Youth Programs and Publications.

For more information, please call 239-267-3331 or e-mail church@hopeunitedpcusa.org.

Highlights
May 25, 2006 Stated Meeting of
Peace River Presbytery
Venice Presbyterian Church, Venice, Florida



Presbytery was welcomed with warm hospitality, under the wonderful pine trees, by the members and staff of Venice Presbyterian Church. With warmth, intelligence, and a good sense of humor, Moderator Elaine Barnett led the Presbytery through a full agenda. Dr. Les Morgan, medical mission co-worker in Bangladesh, reported to the Presbytery on his exciting and important work.

Worship was begun with an inspiring procession of banners celebrating 15 years of ministry as Peace River Presbytery, 300 years since the first Presbytery was organized, 100 years since women were ordained as deacons, 75 years since women were ordained as elders, and 50 years since the ordination of the first woman in the PCUSA as Minister and Word and Sacraments. Margaret Towner (first woman ordained in the PCUSA) brought the message. She reminded the Presbytery, with intelligence and humor, of the long journey for women's full participation in the life of the church.

Debbie Bronkema, Moderator of the Vision Task Force, led the Presbytery through a process to begin gathering data for the Task Force's work. She indicated that members of the Task Force would be visiting each session between June and October of 2006.

Upon recommendation of Presbytery Council, a resolution regarding the report of the Task Force on Peace, Unity, and Purity was adopted. A part of this resolution was a recommendation that the General Assembly take no action on Recommendation No. 5 of the Task Force's report. A motion that this resolution be sent to all commissioners to the General Assembly was also adopted.

The Presbytery, through the recommendation of the Committee on Ministry, welcomed the following into its membership:

- Reverend Glenn Buzbee, as pastor/head of staff of Palma Sola Presbyterian Church, Bradenton;
- Reverend Edward Gray, as organizing pastor of Crossroads New Church Development;

- Reverend John A. Cairns, HR;
- Reverend Chuck Moffett, HR;
- Reverend Richard I. Deibert, member-at-large.

Elder Jinny Miller became a commissioned lay pastor for Spanish Ministry at First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota.

At the request of the sessions of two of the Presbytery's churches, and with much thoughtful debate and prayer, the Committee on Ministry recommended the organization of two administrative commissions, with the powers to dissolve and dismiss the pastoral relationships. The recommendations were approved.

Two recommendations from the Board of Trustees were approved: 1) a short-term loan to a person serving one of the churches of the presbytery; and 2) approval of a line of credit from the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program to one of the presbytery's congregations.

Gary Miller, Director of the Joining Hearts & Hands Capital Campaign brought the Presbytery up-to-date on the campaign's progress, including the exciting news of a \$1 million pledge from First Presbyterian Church, Naples.

General Assembly Commissioners Reverend Tim Halverson, Reverend Kathleen Wiggins, Elder Ray Angle, and Elder Gail Thornton, and Youth Advisory Delegate Joe Davis were commissioned in a service led by Moderator Elaine Barnett.

The Nominations Committee circulated a form seeking information on persons who would be willing to undertake the responsibility of serving on a committee of Presbytery. The committee urged commissioners and visitors to fill out the form, as well as to give it to others who might be interested in serving in this manner.

Peace River Presbytery Scholarships

Peace River Presbytery Scholarship applications for the college school year 2006-2007 will be received during the months of June and July 2006. Criteria and application forms can be obtained by calling Candy Reid at (800) 736-4488, or by writing or visiting the Peace River Presbyterian Center, 5600 Peace River Road, North Port, FL 34287.



Deadline for submission is July 31, 2006.

MISSION CORNER

The Duvall Home

Did you know that an important Mission of Florida Presbyterians since 1945 has been the Duvall Home in Glenwood, Florida? Located in a park-like setting, the home is like no other facility for the developmentally disabled. Duvall Home was established in 1945 by a young couple from Pennsylvania who were searching for a way to care for their child who was born with Down's Syndrome. Doctors back then recommended placing him in an institution. Instead, the parents moved to Florida and lived in an old residence with 17 children in their care.

The fundamental philosophy installed by the Duvalls continues today: *Love Is the Unbending Measure of Care*. Love remains the unbending measure of care among the more than 200 staff members and the active volunteer program. Residents under the age of 21 attend a public school for the handicapped. Those with enough aptitude may get a job after graduation. But the main goal of the Duvall Home is not to train the residents for productive employment but rather to enable each resident to have a happy life.

For more information, you may visit <http://www.duvallhome.org>.

A number of our churches in the Peace River family support the ministry of Duvall Home. If you would like to know how your church can participate, please contact Candy Reid at the Presbytery Office.


SISTER CHURCH MISSION TRIP PLANNED FOR AUGUST 10-14, 2006

What: A mission trip to visit some of our Sister Churches in Guatemala and do the groundwork for our young adult trip to Guatemala City in 2007.

For: Representatives from churches who currently have a Sister Church relationship OR folks who might be interested in having their church partner with a Sister Church in Central Presbytery, Guatemala City, Guatemala.



More Information can be obtained by calling Candy Reid, Program Coordinator for PRP, at 941-426-8421.

JUST A REMINDER: The **Choir from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** is scheduled to perform at General Assembly, Birmingham, Alabama on June 18, 2006. The choir is sponsored by Congo Mission Network, Partnership in Mission, Worldwide Ministries Division, PC (USA). 

Prior to General Assembly, the Congo Choir US Tour is to be launched at **Our Cultural Connections (OCC)** on June 17, 2006. OCC is a Sarasota multicultural festival June 16-18 with a goal of educating, understanding and celebrating our common humanity. **For a schedule of concerts in our area, please go to the following website: www.ourculturalconnections.org.**

If you would like to contribute to this project, please make checks payable to: **The Congo Choir Tour General Fund** and mail to: Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, 7950 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34231. Attention: Mrs. Dorothy Kirkpatrick.

For more information, call Muriel J. Maxwell, (941) 377-3588.

EXPANDING THE POSSIBILITIES: *Leader Training in Peace River Presbytery*

Beginning in the fall of 2006, *Leadership Training* in Peace River Presbytery will have a **new expanded format** with lots of local opportunities in the North, Central, and South part of our Presbytery, as well as one MAIN EVENT in February of 2007.

A ministry team of the Leadership and Congregational Development Committee of PRP held a mini-retreat at Church of the Palms in Sarasota at the beginning of the year. Our own Elaine Barnett, current Moderator of PRP and well-known Christian Educator, led us in a planning process for over three hours. Out of this retreat and subsequent meetings, a new design for leader training has emerged.

LEADERFEST and OFFICERS' INSTITUTE will now become a part what we will call the **MAIN EVENT**, with the first one to take place on Saturday, February 10, 2007. The MAIN EVENT will be held at Pine Shores Presbyterian Church in south Sarasota. Our keynote speaker will be Rodger Nishioka, Professor of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at Columbia Seminary and well-known speaker and trainer throughout our denomination. Our focus for 2007 will be ministry with and for youth and young adults.

A number of smaller area training events will be offered for the remainder of 2006 in the areas of children's ministry, officer training, care teams, and much more. Watch for complete details to follow.

Conference at Montreat a Potentially Pivotal Moment for PC (USA)

“The Hope of the Church: Celebrating Common Ground” takes place July 5-8 at Montreat Conference Center in the Blue Ridge mountains of western North Carolina. An



unprecedented gathering of church leaders and laity, the conference follows on the heels of the 217th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in Birmingham, AL, and is being promoted as a timely and important consultation about the future of the denomination. The conference will bring together 15 General Assembly moderators and 11 Presbyterian seminary presidents, as well as pastors, elders, deacons, seminarians, Christian educators, and concerned lay people from across the nation.

The conference format will include worship, panel presentations, and table discussions that will provide opportunities for informal dialogue with conference leaders. Four key questions will be addressed:

- How is the Church called to transform itself?
- How is the Church called to transform the world?
- What is God calling the next generation of pastors to do to faithfully serve the church in the future?
- What are the opportunities for ministering to a diverse and multicultural 21st century church?

“Our goal with *The Hope of the Church* is to quickly move beyond the ‘lightning rod issues’ of General Assembly,” explained Montreat’s Vice President for Program Development and Marketing, Merri Bass. “The Peace, Unity and Purity report will not be our focus, although I have no doubt that it will be a topic of discussion at this conference. By utilizing the experience and vision brought to the conversation by fifteen moderators, by tapping into the wisdom of seminary presidents who truly know the concerns and dreams of our future leaders, by hearing and acknowledging the voices of church members at every level, *The Hope of the Church* consultation has the potential to take us beyond divisive issues that drain our energy and stifle our true ministry in the world.”

All participants in *The Hope of the Church* conference will be asked to be in covenant with one another to:

- Serve Jesus Christ and be guided by the Holy Spirit;
- Actively listen to one another;
- Be in prayer for each other and the Presbyterian Church (USA);
- Energetically and faithfully engage with one another;
- Speak with openness and honesty; with love and humility;

- Be respectful of each other; and
- Worship, sing, and praise God together in community.

“Healthy debate has always been a part of being Presbyterian,” said George F. Barber, III, president of Montreat Conference Center. “This conference, however, is an opportunity for our denomination to take the conversation to a higher level, to set the tone for respectful dialogue and visionary discernment throughout the Presbyterian Church (USA). The environment here at Montreat Conference Center is one that will nurture that process.”

For more information about *The Hope of the Church* and to register online, visit www.montreat.org or call Montreat Conference Center at 800-572-2257, ext. 312.

HOW TO SPEND THE SUMMER

While you are on vacation, whether it is at the beach or in the mountains, why not take along some good Christian books. Our Resource Center is filled with great children’s books, books on spirituality and prayer, stories of great Christians, mission stories at home and abroad, and a whole host of other topics. Check out your Presbytery Resource Center today!

New Resources Coming in the Fall of 2006

Real Faith for Real Life



A redesigned format highly suitable for Bible Study in coffee shops, restaurants, even pubs where young adults gather. Especially relevant to the lives of young adults.

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

5600 Peace River Road
North Port, FL 34287

941-426-8421 or 800-736-4488

www.peacriverpresbytery.org

[Graham Hart](#), General Presbyter
[Bob Rea](#), Designated Associate Presbyter
[Candy Reid](#), Program Coordinator
[Craig Countiss](#), Stated Clerk
[Jim Barnett](#), Treasurer
[Alesia Sharpe](#), Office Manager
[Bill Setchel](#), Financial Secretary
[Joan Mock](#), Administrative Assistant
[Gary Miller](#), Capital Campaign Director
[Andrea Yerger](#), Administrative Assistant to CC Director