



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

JANUARY 2007

SPEAKING FROM THE HART

"In the beginning..." God had a choice, and of all possible choices *"God created the heavens and the earth... and man and woman in God's image."* I am always amazed and humbled at that gift which is you and me and this amazing creation.

Also, *"In the beginning"*, as we affirm during traditional Christmas Eve Services, *"was the word and the word was with God and the word was God... In him was life, and the life was the light of humankind. The light shines in darkness and the darkness has not overcome it."*

At the beginning of this New Year, in spite of the conflicts that terrorize and tear apart the world God created and loved, and the darkness within that when not acknowledged can tear apart us and those to whom we are closest, and the conflicts that tear the sacred fabric of the church... the light shines and the darkness has not and will not overcome it. To which I can only say, thanks be to God!

As a Presbytery this New Year we face challenges that are significant and opportunities that are incredible. I ask your prayers and commitment that together we would move ahead as people of the light... as people of the word... as people of faith, hope and love.

At a time like this I am mindful of the powerful words of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr written over 50 years ago, but still so true today:

Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our standpoint. Therefore we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness.

Wishing you a Blessed and Joyous New Year,

Graham

Please Join Us in Prayer for the Following Churches:



[Kirkwood, Bradenton](#)
[Palma Sola, Bradenton](#)
[Westminster, Bradenton](#)
[Faith, Cape Coral](#)

January 7
January 14
January 21
January 28



Rev. Walter Felgner entered the Church Triumphant on December 11, 2006.

BE STILL AND KNOW – Moderator Prayer Retreat

Cedarkirk Camp & Conference Center
January 22-24, 2007 (Dinner – Lunch)
Cost: \$100/person



Reverend Joan Gray, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the PCUSA, is coming to Florida, and she is inviting you to join her for a time of prayer. In her words, the purpose of this retreat is "to make time and space to receive what God wants to give us." You can find more information about this retreat at www.cedarkirk.com.

For registration information, call or email Helen at Cedarkirk, camps@cedarkirk.com or 813-685-4224 (ext. 1).

Another Retreat Opportunity at Cedarkirk

If you are 55 or over, Cedarkirk invites you to join others to look at your own spiritual journey during a 3 day retreat. Betty Walters will facilitate your faith journey as you tour the book [The Cup of Our Life](#) by Sister Joyce Rupp. It will be a time to reflect on the past to see where we are headed in the future.

This event will be held March 6-8, 2007. Please contact the office for a brochure, or contact Cedarkirk at 813-685-4224 or www.cedarkirk.com for more information.

P.R.I.M.E. Times

After a year of producing *P.R.I.M.E. Times* for church leaders, the staff of Peace River Presbytery has decided that it would be a better use of resources and time to use electronic press releases and put more information on our Web site. We will continue to send copies of the Parish Paper for pastors and session members.

Scholarship Awards

The 2006-2007 Peace River Presbytery Church & Campus Scholarship was awarded to the following students at Eckerd College:

- *Chrysostom Graves*, a senior history major from Saint Cloud, Florida
- *Mary Mathias*, a junior biology major from Sarasota.

SOUPER BOWL 2007

February 4, 2007

The Souper Bowl of Caring offering will be received by churches of all denominations, all sizes and ethnic backgrounds on Sunday February 4th prior to the Super Bowl event being held this year in Miami.



Last year, in *PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY*, donations of both money and canned goods were received by 34 of our 38 Churches. Over 30,000 cans of food and about \$20,000 was given to various food banks and helping agencies in our area. The beauty of this offering is that 100% is given to help fight the cause of hunger and EACH congregation can decide where the offering should go.

For helpful resources and complete information on this offering, go to <http://www.souperbowl.org/> to find background information, Bible studies for Junior and Senior Highs, call to worship suggestions, bulletin insert/announcement ideas, a children's sermon, and more.

Please remember to report your results from the offering to Candy at candy@peacriverpresbytery.org so we can celebrate with all in our Presbytery what God has done through His people.

DON'T FORGET VBS OPEN HOUSE!

Join your program director Candy Reid anytime between 2-4 p.m. on Sunday, January 14 to look at the 2007 VBS preview kits from Augsburg Fortress, Cokesbury and Group Publishing and pick up some helpful hints to make this year's VBS the best yet. Stop by anytime that afternoon; join us for a cold drink and take time to look at each of the kits.

If you can not make it to the Presbytery office on January 14, call your program coordinator Candy Reid and we will find another time when you can come to the Presbytery office OR we can come to you. Simply e-mail candy at candy@peacriverpresbytery.org to get the ball rolling.

BETH-EL NEWS

Be sure to go to the Beth-El web site at <http://www.beth-el.info/> and click on the winter newsletter to find the latest news about your Presbytery at work in Immokalee. You will also find information about how groups in your church can help and pictures of their rolling church



"Espiritu".

IT'S TIME TO REGISTER FOR THE MAIN EVENT!

Keynote Speaker Rodger Nishioka is Professor of Christian Education and Youth Ministry at Columbia Seminary in Atlanta. He is one of the leading experts on youth and young adult ministry within our denomination, and a sought after speaker, workshop leader, retreat and conference leader, and respected colleague.



Complete information about the EVENT and registration forms were mailed to each church the week after Christmas. Though our focus is on Youth and Young Adult Ministry this year, there are classes for everyone in the areas of officer training, leader development, spirituality, Christian education, music, contemporary worship, and more.

Brochures and registration forms can also be found on our web site: www.peacriverpresbytery.org.

COME HEAR TOM LONG!
PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF TIMES!!!



Thomas G. Long is the Bandy Professor of Preaching at Candler School of Theology at Emory University. A Presbyterian minister, Dr. Long has served churches in Georgia and New Jersey. He has taught preaching for over thirty years -- at Erskine Theological Seminary, Columbia Theological Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary, and, since 2000, at Candler. Dr. Long is the author of textbooks on preaching and worship, collections of sermons, and biblical commentaries on Matthew and Hebrews. His most recent books are *Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian* and *The Witness of Preaching, Second Edition*. He is married to Kimberly Long, who serves as an associate with the PCUSA Office of Theology and Worship and is the editor of *Call to Worship*.

Dr. Long will be leading an
Evangelism Workshop
on Saturday, March 3, 2007.

Registration: **8:30 a.m.**
Workshop: **9:00 to 1:30**

\$10 per person

For more information and a registration form, please go to www.peaceriverpresbytery.org on the Bulletin Board page.

YOUTH INFORMATION!!!

OUR PRESBYTERY SENIOR HIGH RETREAT

will be in the form of a lock-in this year on Friday, February 9 at the YMCA in Sarasota beginning around 8:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. the next morning. Rodger Nishioka will be on hand to challenge and charge the senior highs for ministry, and there will be loads of games, great food and a band.

Your PYC – Presbytery Youth Council - will meet on January 6th to finalize details, **so watch for complete information** about cost (very little) registration forms (we hope to make it simple) and chaperone information online (www.peaceriverpresbytery.org, Youth) and mailed to your church the week of January 8th.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



In the summer of 2007 Peace River Presbytery will offer a number of opportunities for youth to do hands-on mission adventures:

Middle School Urban Mission

Challenge to Change
June 3-8, 2007

Senior High West Virginia Mission Trip

for 9th-12th grade students
June 16-24, 2007

Young Adult/College Age (19-29) Mission Trip

To Amatillan, Guatemala
June 22 – 30, 2007

Complete information, along with registration forms, will be mailed to churches in January, and will be available online at www.peaceriverpresbytery.org, Leader Development.

PRESBYTERIAN YOUTH TRIENNIUM

July 17-22, 2007

The triennium is an event held every 3 years at Purdue University, Indiana. Over 5,000 Senior High Youth from across the United States, and a number of countries outside the U.S., gather for an incredible high energy event, complete with worship and Bible study, games, small group experiences and singing. Registration forms will be online in January at www.peaceriverpresbytery.org, Youth. Space is limited to 20 youth and the cost is \$450.00 per person plus spending money. For more information, contact your program coordinator, Candy Reid at candy@peaceriverpresbytery.org.

CHAPERONES NEEDED!

Your Peace River Presbytery youth ministry program offers fantastic, challenging, and faith building mission trips for youth of all ages. For these mission trips to be successful, we need adults to volunteer a week of their time to chaperone one or more of these trips. Without these adult volunteers, we cannot take these trips. Where else can you get a free vacation for a week, all meals included with such awesome rewards? For more information, contact Candy Reid at the Presbytery office candy@peaceriverpresbytery.org or one of our PYC adult volunteers: Rev. Jay Mumper at First Port Charlotte, Mrs. Mary Brown at First Sarasota, and Nick McKee at Whitfield Estates. It will be the best week of the summer!

GROUNDBREAKING



On Sunday afternoon, January 14, 2007, the [Coalition of Immokalee Workers](#) will hold a groundbreaking service for their new Community Center.

After months of negotiation with Collier County, all permits have been issued and work can begin on renovation of the building. When completed, the larger building will offer space for meetings, office work, and a radio station, which we will hope to use when our new pastor from Guatemala arrives (he is still having visa difficulties) as he begins to develop a Presbyterian congregation in Immokalee.

The groundbreaking service is scheduled to begin at 2:00 p.m. Please consider sending a small delegation to this event from your church. For directions to the Center, call Sarah Osmer at 239-657-8311.

MISSION NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

Vanderbilt Presbyterian donates \$150,000 to Habitat for Humanity



Three working families in Collier County will achieve their dream of owning a simple, decent home thanks to the generous congregation of [Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church](#) in Naples.

The congregation has collectively raised \$150,000 for Habitat for Humanity of Collier County, enough to build three affordable homes for local families in need.

One of those families will soon move into their Habitat home in Immokalee. Maria Harris and her two children live in one bedroom of a home in Immokalee. Harris pays \$200 a month to rent the small bedroom. She is excited for the stability her Habitat home will provide for her children. With their own beds to sleep in and a quiet place to study, she knows they will perform better in school. For the first time, they will have their own yard to play in and will be in a neighborhood that is safe enough to play outside.

Since 1998, Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church has raised more than \$500,000 for Habitat for Humanity of Collier County. On December 9, Habitat dedicated more than 70 homes in Immokalee, including the three funded this year by Vanderbilt Presbyterian.

Missions/Outreach Weekend

[Burnt Store Presbyterian Church](#) in Punta Gorda will be hosting a "Missions/Outreach" Weekend on February 17 and 18, 2007. Mission workers from many different local, domestic, and international areas will be present to share their work and their needs with us. It will give the members and friends of BSPC a chance to see many different outreach opportunities up close, being presented by folks whose hearts are deeply involved! Several of our visitors will speak during the regularly scheduled services (Saturday evening at 5:00 p.m., Sunday morning at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.), and all will have space to spread their story and talk to interested individuals after the worship. Please plan to come and "browse", and share this exciting opportunity with BSPC! For further information, please call 639-0001, or go to our website at www.BSPCOnline.org.

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

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941-426-8421 or 800-736-4488

www.peaceriverpresbytery.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
[Andrea Yerger](#), Mission Campaign Coordinator

This newsletter is available for viewing anytime at
www.peaceriverpresbytery.org
(follow link to "Presbytery Publications")