



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY FEBRUARY 2007

SPEAKING FROM THE HART

Executive Summary of the Annual Report

Peace River Presbytery is a relative newcomer to the organized way Presbyterians have been doing church and living the faith in America for the past 300 years. However, I believe that if those early Presbyterians came to a meeting of Peace River Presbytery in 2006 it would seem familiar to them. According to their understanding of the New Testament church, they believed congregations could be stronger, pastors could be more effective, and mission more strategic in the context of a web of relationships called a Presbytery. I believe those three desired outcomes and long-held Presbyterian values were in evidence in Peace River Presbytery, guiding what we did in 2006.

The Presbytery in 2006 attempted to **strengthen congregations.**

- The Presbytery sponsored 15 leadership training events attended by over 672 people.
- The Committee on Ministry worked with 15 congregations in pastoral transitions, and sought to bring healing to several congregations in conflict.

As in 1706, our mission can be more strategic when we do it together.

- As a Presbytery, in 2006 we organized our 38th congregation, Christ Church, and are currently supporting four new church developments, one racial ethnic congregation, and two fellowship groups meeting monthly for Bible study and NCD planning.
- Over the past 28 months since Charley, over 12,000 volunteers have come through Peace River Presbytery and our partnership with Desoto Disaster Recovery. 517 families have been assisted in the rebuilding of their homes, and 30 new replacement homes have been built. The last of our 8 churches that suffered damage from Charley is beginning reconstruction.

As a Presbytery and Staff, we have sought to support Pastors and educators.

- Presbytery conducted a clergy/educator retreat.
- Presbytery staff presented 25 workshops or retreats at the request of either pastors, educators, the session or COM.

As we begin 2007 I am mindful of the words of the Apostle Paul: *Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church (and in Peace River Presbytery) and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.* Eph. 3:20

Graham Hart, General Presbyter

Full report is online at www.peaceriverpresbytery.org/Committees.htm

Please Join Us in Prayer for the Following Churches:



Community, Englewood
[Buckingham, Fort Myers](#)
[Covenant, Fort Myers](#)
[Cypress Lake, Fort Myers](#)

February 4
February 11
February 18
February 25

STATED MEETING

February 22, 2007

Palma Sola Presbyterian Church, Bradenton

LAST CALL FOR THE MAIN EVENT

There is still time to sign up for this year's MAIN EVENT on Saturday, February 10. The event is to be held at Pine Shores Presbyterian Church in Sarasota. Keynote speaker is Rodger Nishioka, leading authority on youth and young adult ministry in the Presbyterian Church, USA. Complete information about course offerings and sign up procedures can be found at our web site:

<http://www.peaceriverpresbytery.org>

SOUPER BOWL 2007



Youth groups across the country collect \$1.00 for every person in worship who plans to watch the Super Bowl, and also collect canned goods to help restock food pantries

depleted from the holiday season, all to help alleviate hunger in your area. PLEASE REMEMBER to report your totals to Candy Reid at Peace River Presbytery so we can keep a record of how well we did. Our Presbytery is known at the Souper Bowl Headquarters in Columbia, SC as one of the most generous contributors of any area in the country. Last year we had 34 of our 38 churches receive this offering. We hope that participation will be 100% this year.

(941.426.8421 or e-mail

candy@peaceriverpresbytery.org)

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

Update on Beth-El Expansion into Immokalee



Dave Moore, Director of Beth-El, travels to Immokalee every Thursday, and sets up in a vacant parking lot across the street from the grocery store where workers gather in the predawn hours before they go out into the fields to work for about 10 hours each day. Dave serves a simple breakfast of hot coffee and tortillas on Friday and Saturday, and a simple meal on Friday evening when they return from the fields. On Saturday mornings he also leads a Bible study before returning home to Plant City where he lives.

Peace River Presbytery has called Rev. Miguel Estrada, Pastor of El Buen Pastor Presbyterian Church in Amatitlan, outside Guatemala City. Now recovered from his emergency surgery in early November, he is working to secure the necessary visas and work permits to come to the US. We eagerly await his arrival.

Evangelism Workshop with Tom Long Is Fast Approaching!



Dr. Tom Long will be leading an Evangelism Workshop at Church of the Palms 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 <http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org>

Have you visited our [Web site](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org) recently?

FROM OUR CHURCHES

When youth from **Palm Sola Presbyterian Church, Bradenton**, attended a conference last summer at Montreat, they met some youth from New Orleans who had been displaced by Hurricane Katrina. On the return trip home, the youth began to dream about bringing their new friends from New Orleans to the Bradenton area for a mid-winter vacation instead of taking their annual ski trip the week after Christmas. The youth began to spread the word that they needed to raise \$27,000 for this effort. Church members, members of the community and friends of the youth responded generously, and soon they had enough to bring 22 youth and chaperones to Bradenton for the week between Christmas and New Year's. Youth from surrounding churches (First Sarasota and the other Presbyterian Churches in the Bradenton area) helped to feed and entertain.

Church of the Palms, Sarasota, is celebrating its 50th Anniversary throughout the year 2007. In 1957, one hundred and sixty-eight members started this church which has grown to become the largest congregation in Peace River Presbytery.



Twelve celebratory events are planned throughout the year. As part of Church of the Palms' anniversary celebration, our quarterly Peace River Presbytery meeting will be held there on May 24th. What a wonderful opportunity for all of us to join in and help celebrate fifty years of God's work with this church! Peace River Presbytery congratulates Church of the Palms for its fifty years of service, as it honors its past and moves forward looking to its future.

Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda, plans to put the spotlight on its local and global mission work the weekend of February 17 and 18. Representatives from Friendship International, Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship and the Mission Aviation Fellowship will speak at the 5 p.m. "Come As You Are" worship service on February 17 and at the 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship services on February 18. The mission work from these organizations spreads from Mexico, Chile and Haiti to the Middle East, Romania and Hungary. In addition, a mission fair will showcase the organizations with which the church partners both locally and beyond.

Summer Missions

Information about our Middle School Urban Mission Camp on June 3-8, our Senior High Mission Trip to West Virginia on June 16th – 24, AND our new Young Adult Mission Trip (for ages 19-29) will soon be available online at <http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org> (see Youth page). Information will also be mailed to each church office in the near future.

Presbyterian Youth Triennium July 17-22

Once every three years Presbyterian youth gather at Purdue University in Indiana for an awesome youth event. Watch for information and registration forms at your church and online at www.peacriverpresbytery.org, Youth page.

For Your Information

There will be a Christian peace witness for Iraq on March 16th, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. at the Washington National Cathedral, Washington D.C. Rev. Clay Thomas, Associate Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, is coordinating a group who plan to attend from our area. For more information, contact him at 941-955-8119.