



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY MARCH 2007

SPEAKING FROM THE HART Lent - 2007

And he set his eyes toward Jerusalem.
Jesus knew where he was headed.

Having spent several days last month in prayer, study and conversation with colleagues and leaders from presbyteries across the country, it became clear to me, all over again, that the main job of a Presbytery (at least as I understand it) is to insure that:

- congregations are faithful, fruitful, healthy and growing,
- pastors and elders are effective,
- and disciples are being made.

We all lament our denomination's membership losses, but whether we like it or not, just as all politics is local, all losses are local as well.

As the Presbytery Council continues to be guided by our new vision and mission statements, I would love to hear from you how you think this network of elders and pastors from 38 congregations can be a catalyst for healthy, faithful, fruitful and growing congregations.

One idea is to have 6-8 churches partner as learning communities or communities of practice where elders and pastors come together for study, are accountable to each other and learn what in their particular context it means to be a faithful, fruitful, healthy and growing congregation. I do not believe there are quick fixes or easy answers. But I do believe that as we come together, are accountable to each other, ask the right questions, and learn from each other, the Holy Spirit can and will help us find our way.

At the May 24, 2007 Presbytery meeting, Stan Ott, nationally known authority on Church Transformation, will be our keynote speaker. In the afternoon, we are inviting every church to have at least one representative from their evangelism committee attend a workshop with Stan where we explore how we can create learning, growing, faithful and missional communities of faith here in Peace River Presbytery.

And Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem. Some Lenten Food for thought: At what and whom are we aiming?

Graham

P. S. I have included a link to my report at the recent Presbytery meeting that many have requested. It speaks to life in our Presbytery and denomination, as well as to concerns related to the directions some are suggesting.
www.peacriverpresbytery.org

Please Join Us in Prayer for:



The family of Rev. Dr. C. Edward Gammon, HR, who joined the Church Triumphant on February 14, 2007. Dr. Gammon was the founding pastor of Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church, Naples, and a member of Peace River Presbytery.

The family of Rev. M. Bolin Durway, HR, who joined the Church Triumphant on February 25, 2007. Rev. Durway was a former Associate of Faith Presbyterian Church, Cape Coral, and a member of Peace River Presbytery.

Church of the Week

First, Fort Myers	March 4
Hope United, Fort Myers	March 11
Chapel by the Sea, Ft. Myers Beach	March 18
First, Lehigh Acres	March 25

"PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW"

Finally, in God's time, Rev. Miguel Estrada (currently serving as Pastor at El Buen Pastor in Amatilan, Guatemala) will soon be coming to Immokalee with his family, wife Marifrans and 7-year-old son Andrés, to begin ministry, probably sometime in April.

In the meantime, Beth-El Immokalee is continuing to serve a simple breakfast at 4:00 a.m. each morning before the workers go into the fields on Friday and Saturday, and a hearty supper when they return on Friday evenings. They have served as many as 200 people from the travel home "Espiritu".



Here's how you can help:

- donate clothes and shoes
- come and help serve meals/feed the hungry
- come and help to spread the Word of Jesus Christ.

To inquire about having Espiritu at your Church and for more information on how to help, contact Dave Moore at 813-633-1548 or dave@beth-el.info.

SOUPER BOWL 2007

Once again we have had a great response on the part of Peace River Presbytery churches. We are still receiving information from churches, so watch for a full report in the April issue of *The Interpreter*.

CEDARKIRK NOTES

- Cedarkirk, your camp and conference center, has posted summer camp information online. Please go to their website, www.cedarkirk.com. Many camps fill quickly so you may want to register online before the printed brochures hit the mailboxes.
- There are still some late spring weekends available for your own program like a picnic or a retreat.



Is worship your strength in ministry?

Would you like to spend your summer in Montreat?

Montreat Conference Center is seeking a volunteer 2007 Summer Worship Coordinator to assist with the logistics of the summer worship service each week in Anderson Auditorium. Housing is provided as well as a limited stipend for food. The position requires that you be in Montreat beginning the week of May 21, through Sunday, August 5. For more information about this position, visit <http://www.montreat.org/volunteer.htm> and scroll down to "Worship Coordinator".

HELP WANTED!

DO YOU HAVE A PASSION FOR PHOTOGRAPHY?



We are searching for someone to take pictures of ministers, educators, youth ministers, etc. who serve in Peace River Presbytery. A pictorial directory that we produce in house will help us connect faces with names in our Peace River family. We hope to take as many pictures as possible at the May 24th meeting of Presbytery at Church of the Palms, and possibly have a second day at the August 25th meeting of Presbytery at Westminster in Bradenton.

If you are a professional photographer who would care to use your talents to help us with this effort, please contact Candy Reid at 941-426-8421 or e-mail candy@peaceriverpresbytery.org.

DO YOU HAVE A PASSION FOR BOOKS AND RESOURCES? Your Presbytery Resource Center is in need of some TLC.... folks who would be willing to give a couple hours a month to cataloging books, making attractive displays and other clerical work related to the Resource Center. If you would like to join a fun, caring group of staff members at PRP, engage your passions and interests, and make a difference, call Candy Reid today.



Have you considered using ECO-PALMS for your PALM SUNDAY CELEBRATION?

- Approximately 300 million palm fronds are used in the U.S. annually
- A congregation of 1250 members orders approximately 700 fronds for Palm Sunday services
- Eco-Palms are purchased directly from harvesters at 5 to 6 times the normal payment per frond
- Your purchase of eco-palms helps improve standards of living and protect forest.

Palm producing areas tend to be the home of poorer segments of the rural populations where people rely heavily on the palm harvest for income. Although purchases of palms in the U. S. may reach as high as \$4.5 million each year, the palm harvesters themselves earn very little of that money.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on how your congregation can partner with the poor to ensure that they are paid a fair wage for harvesting PALMS and to order some for your congregation to use, go to www.pcusa.org/palms. HURRY though; your order must be completed no later than March 12th to ensure delivery in time to use on April 1st.

Correction in GREAT NEWS bulletin insert



Peace River Presbytery has provided a bulletin insert called GREAT NEWS for your church to use on a Sunday before Easter. One of the pictures has a mistake in the caption. The people in the picture are (from left to right) Bob Rea, Ed Gray, Graham Hart and **DON SHERMAN**. We apologize for our error.



**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING:
Who is my neighbor?**

Since 1949, Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through the *One Great Hour of Sharing* to share God's love with people experiencing need. Our gifts support ministries of disaster response, refugee assistance and resettlement, and community development that help people find safe refuge, start new lives and work together to strengthen their families and communities.

Our own area experienced an outpouring of this love and help in the days and weeks following Hurricane Charley and the others that followed in 2004, and then again in 2005 with Hurricane Wilma. As bad as it was here, the devastation was so much worse on the gulf coast. And then recently in the middle of the night in Central Florida, lives were lost, homes destroyed and people left without hope when tornadoes ripped through the area.

NOW IT IS OUR TURN to help provide for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in 2007 and beyond with our gifts to *ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING* on Easter Sunday, April 8th. For more information and to order materials, go <http://pcusa.org/oghs/>. Let's have 100% participation this year.

RESOURCE CENTER NEWS

Vacation Bible School preview kits available for checkout:

- GROUP: "Avalanche Ranch"
- COKESBURY: "Lift High"
- PCUSA/AUGUSBURG: "Great Bible Reef"

TO GET YOU THINKING

"The God Bearing Life, The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry." Not another "how to book" with a never-ending list of things to do. Rather it pulls the reader towards a passionate embrace of God.

"Big Questions, Worthy Dreams" - Mentoring young adults in their search for meaning, purpose, and faith. A smart and compassionate look at the challenges young adults face in their search for a place of belonging, integrity and contribution as we seek to minister to and with young adults.

SUMMER MISSION TRIP REMINDERS

Information about ALL SUMMER MISSION TRIPS can be found online at www.peaceriverpresbytery.org, Youth page.

Your Peace River Presbytery is sponsoring the following:

- *"Challenge to Change" Middle School Mission experience at Cedarkirk
June 3-8, 2007
- **"Love Works" Senior High Mission trip to West Virginia
June 16-24, 2007
- **"Mission Guatemala" Mission trip to Guatemala City, Guatemala for young adult 19-29
June 22-30, 2007
- ** Presbyterian Youth Triennium at Purdue University in Indiana
July 18-22

IMPORTANT NOTE REGISTRATION FORMS must be completed and received at the Presbytery office **NO LATER THAN APRIL 23**.

For the Triennium we hope to be able to fly to Indianapolis as we did in 2004. We must have names and registration information for each participant no later than April 23 to give us a chance of securing a low airfare. If registrations come in AFTER April 23 they will be subject to higher transportation costs.

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR EFFORTS TO ADHERE TO THE REGISTRATION DEADLINE.

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 941-426-8421 or 800-736-4488
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[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")

Highlights
February 22, 2007 Stated Meeting of
Peace River Presbytery
Palma Sola Presbyterian Church, Bradenton



Presbytery Staff

The host congregation of Palma Sola welcomed Presbytery with a color-coordinated Presidents' Day theme. Remembrance of the recent hurricanes that swept Florida was the focus of the meeting. A Communion service, with Rev. Ann and Rev. Larry

Graham-Johnson as worship leaders, set the tone for the day. Rev. Dr. Jim Kirk and Rev. Dr. Bruce Wismer, who have given countless hours to disaster preparation and recovery, were honored, as was Rev. Dr. Ted Land for his work in DeSoto County. Susan Ryan and John Robinson, from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, assisted in worship and were keynote speakers.



Susan Ryan & John Robinson

Breakout groups were Presbyterian Disaster Preparedness, Records and Overtures (a dialogue about an overture from Palma Sola Presbyterian Church), Nominations, Camp and Conference Ministry (year round life at Cedarkirk), and Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking.

The Trustees recommended and Presbytery approved a request from Siesta Key Chapel to borrow up to \$900,000 for remodeling and refurbishment of the church.

Mr. Robin Doyle, Co-Moderator of the Hearts and Hands Campaign, indicated that although the campaign had gotten off to a slow start, the committee was hard at work and enthusiastic about the success of this effort.

Rev. Dr. Kathi Wiggins presented the Personnel Committee's motion that General Presbyter Rev. Graham Hart's plans for a three-month sabbatical be approved. It is the Committee's hope that this will be an encouragement to other members of Presbytery to use their sabbatical leaves, allowing them to return to their ministries renewed, reinvigorated, and refreshed.

Records and Overtures Chair Rev. Phil Bliss presented the proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). These amendments were approved by the 217th General Assembly (2006) and forwarded to the Presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes.

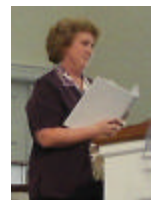
Rev. Dr. David Uhl, Committee on Ministry Chair, presented, among other recommendations, that:

- Rev. Dr. Robert Bohl be approved as Interim Pastor for First Presbyterian, Naples;
- the call between Palma Sola Presbyterian, Bradenton, and Rev. India Dennis be dissolved and that she be approved as a member-at-large;
- Rev. Jonathan Lange (HR) be received into membership;
- Rev. John Foulkrod be granted permission to serve as Minister of Visitation of Kirkwood Presbyterian, Bradenton;
- Rev. Samuel R. Holder (HR) be received into membership.

Rev. Dr. Tim Halverson, at the request of the Committee on Ministry, spoke concerning the possible withdrawal of Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers, from the denomination. Also, in a continuing effort by Presbytery to do everything possible to assure an orderly and informed process for its congregations when faced with this type of decision, the Presbytery adopted "Guidelines for Churches Considering a Request to Presbytery to be Dismissed."

During the Good News Break, Rev. Michael DeArruda of Thornwell Home and School for Children, announced that the school at Thornwell would soon cease to exist. Children from the Home would be attending local schools. He indicated that throughout its history, Thornwell has transformed itself to meet the changing needs of children and would continue to do so.

It was with sadness that Presbytery learned its Moderator Rev. Debbie Bronkema had accepted another call and would be moving. While it is this Presbytery's loss, we wish Debbie well in her new ministry.



Rev. Dennis Reid gave thanks to the host church and to the Presbytery for its work this day.