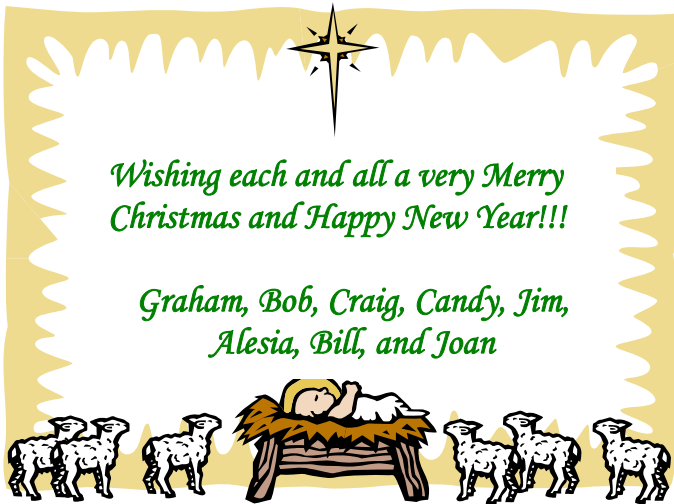




The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY DECEMBER 2007

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE STAFF



small retail center on 1st Street South, immediately behind the parking lot we have been utilizing since September 2006. Concerns had been raised that we might rent a facility from those that also charge high rents to the farmworkers. This concern was lifted to our Heavenly Father and soon thereafter a new empty location was revealed to us. Thanks be to God! Occupancy should occur in early December. In the famous words of that eloquent American, Monty Hall, "come on down" to the new location of Misión Peniel.

Thanks to all churches, groups, and individuals who so generously supported the request for clothes, toiletries, and food brought to the November Presbytery meeting. May our Lord shower you with His many blessings, as He has at Beth-El, during this Advent season.

Dave Moore, Director of Beth-El Farmworker Ministry

Please join us in prayer for:

- December 2 [First, Fort Myers](#)
- December 9 [Hope United, Fort Myers](#)
- December 16 [Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach](#)
- December 23 [First, Lehigh Acres](#)
- December 30 [Christ Church of Longboat Key](#)

**The Presbytery office will be closed
December 24, 25, 31, and January 1.**

Beth-El News

As some of you are aware, we have recently changed the name of our Immokalee expansion to Misión Peniel. Our Board of Directors were in concurrence with this staff recommendation as there is an existing Bethel Hispanic ministry church in Immokalee. Rather than continuing to confuse the community, Pastor Miguel Estrada recommended this name. The reference is from Genesis 32 and you may read this passage for yourself to see the significance of our new name. Misión Peniel will be an expansion ministry of Beth-El Farmworker Ministry, Inc.

Some more great news is that we have located a facility for Pastor Miguel to conduct services and where we can continue to offer outreach to the community. It is in a

CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

Each year Presbyterian congregations receive the JOY offering on the Sunday before Christmas. Fifty percent of the receipts to the Christmas Joy Offering are distributed to the [Board of Pensions](#) for assistance programs that provide support to retired and active church workers and their spouses and families. The other fifty percent supports [Presbyterian-related racial ethnic education](#) through the National Ministries Division of the General Assembly Council.



Each church should have received an information packet at the end of October. If you need additional materials, you can go to www.pcusa.org/cjoffering and order what is needed.

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

It's not too early to begin thinking about how your congregation will receive the Souper Bowl offering and perhaps have additional activities. For promotional materials and creative ideas for collection, go directly to the Souper Bowl website at www.souperbowl.org.



CONGRATULATIONS

On November 11th, **First Presbyterian Church of Sarasota** commissioned **Ellen Forbes and Cheryl Track** as **Parish Nurses and launched a Health and Wholeness Ministry** to provide the church and



community with education on wellness and disease prevention as well as spiritual care in time of illness and grief. Both are professional RNs serving as volunteers in ministry and are members of the

Association of Parish Nurses. Congratulations to Ellen and Cheryl for taking on this important mission.

Congratulations to **Silvana Franca**, lay pastor of our Brazilian Fellowship in Naples, on her election to serve as student representative on the Board of Trustees at Columbia Theological Seminary where she is enrolled in the doctor of ministry program.

Education and Fellowship for PC(USA) Lay Employees

On January 10, 2008, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota will host a day of learning, networking and fellowship for all administrative and support staff in Peace River Presbytery. The Administrative Personnel Association (APA), PC(USA)'s official organization of lay employees, will provide information about association resources and conferences, two optional classes on Presbyterian polity and theology, and lunch. To register, call Roberta French, 941-493-0018, or email trinityrmf@yahoo.com. Please consider a \$10 donation to cover lunch and materials. To learn more about APA, visit the national organization web site www.pcusa-apa.org and the Florida Region web site www.floridaapa.org.

MISSION SPEAKER AVAILABLE

The Rev. Kathleen Griffin is in Peace River Presbytery until late January to help interpret the long-term world mission commitments of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Katie is a mission co-worker serving in the area of theological education in Buenos Aires, Argentina. She is available to speak to mission committees, sessions, gatherings of Presbyterian Women, and other church groups. She can preach during Sunday worship services, address adult Sunday school classes, or give a mid-week program. Her job, while here in PRP, is to help achieve a goal established by the General Assembly Council: that every congregation within the PC(USA) be in some kind of relationship with at least one mission co-worker through prayer, awareness, visits, or financial support.

If interested, please contact Katie by e-mail at kathleen_m_griffin@yahoo.com.ar. Include a phone number so she can call you back.

JOINING HEARTS AND HANDS

On November 15, 2007 Peace River Presbytery voted to conclude our Joining Hearts and Hands campaign by the end of this calendar year as recommended by the Board of Trustees. The ambitious Joining Hearts and Hands campaign was attempted because of the urgent need for capital to expand facilities at Cedarkirk, building a permanent presence of the Beth-El Farmworker Ministry in Immokalee (now called Misión Peniel), building new churches throughout the Presbytery, and sending mission workers around the world.

The needs still exist and are still urgent. In ending our current campaign, all gifts that are received will be forwarded to their specified causes. (See below).

Cedarkirk. The current capacity, style and age of the facilities limits the ministries of spiritual formation, evangelism, community building and Christian education that can happen at Cedarkirk. Our hope is to provide funding for adult-friendly retreat cottages, each of which would accommodate six adults. In order to remove barriers that currently prevent some people from experiencing Cedarkirk, each climate-controlled cottage would provide accessible lodging with private bathrooms.



Beth-El/Immokalee Farmworker Ministry (now called Misión Peniel). With the arrival this year of the Rev. Miguel Estrada, the dream of this Presbytery to have a full-time Spanish speaking pastor and develop a worshipping community is now a reality. Our hope is to be able to provide the financial support to buy a permanent facility for this important work.



Church Growth. The rapid population expansion within the bounds of Peace River Presbytery has prompted us to engage in a strategic planning process. As a result of our planning, we have begun four New Church Developments in Peace River. New Life Presbyterian Fellowship of East Naples has secured property and is currently worshipping in a local school. Peace Presbyterian New Church Development of Lakewood Ranch meets at the local community college. We have raised \$250,000 toward an estimated cost of \$1,000,000 for the purchase of land for Peace NCD.



Global Mission Co-workers. It costs \$50,000 to \$75,000 to support a mission co-worker. There are more requests from our sister churches around the world than our denomination can fill. The problem is not lack of people ready to go, but lack of funds.



Please consider this opportunity as we close our campaign. Your gift before the end of the year can and

will make a difference. (Current tax law provides persons aged 70½ and older with the opportunity to contribute to these mission causes out of their individual retirement accounts without suffering adverse tax consequences. This provision is set to expire at the end of this year.)

Even as our campaign ends, we realize that the need continues. Our Board of Trustees, having learned from the JHH experience, has been asked to come back to the May 2008 meeting to explore how Peace River can support the four causes that were part of the Joining Hearts and Hands campaign.

MAIN EVENT

Saturday February 9, 2008
First Presbyterian, Port Charlotte
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Save the Date!

Peace River Presbytery leadership training for officers, pastors, educators, and church members

TOP 10 REASONS TO SAVE THIS DATE & ATTEND

10. Meet your friends from other churches.
9. Make new friends.
8. The lunch is awesome.
7. You will get lots of new ideas for effective ministry.
6. The mimeograph machine at the church broke and you need to find a new way to communicate with folks in 2008.
5. Kids, teenagers, even adults, no longer respond to your e-mails and you are wondering what's up.
4. You have a child or grandchild or you've adopted the neighborhood kids.
3. It's the week after the Super Bowl.... Nothing great on TV.
2. You want to learn new ways of sharing your faith.
1. You've said yes to becoming a Deacon or Elder, you've been ordained or installed, and now you are wondering what in the world do I do.

The Rev. Rich Melheim, creator of "Faith Inkubators", will be our keynote speaker. Rich has a passion to see faith education return to the home and to see parents and grandparents as the primary faith educators with the church supplementing what is done in the home.

Information, along with registration brochures, will be mailed to each church soon so that after Christmas you can begin recruiting and signing up folks from your church to attend.

Sponsored by the Leadership & Congregational Development Committee

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

If your church has committed to the two-year **Acts 16:5** program or is considering this decision, please save the following date for Gathering 1:

MAY 1, 2008
Watch for more details!

FROM YOUR RESOURCE CENTER

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL EXAM KITS AVAILABLE

- "Beach Party – Surfin' Through The Scriptures" from Abingdon Press
- "Power Lab – Discovering Jesus' Miraculous Power" from Group
- "Rainforest Adventure – A Tree Top Bible Blast!" from Augsburg Fortress Publishing

VBS OPEN HOUSE

January 13, 2008 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
at Peace River Presbytery

A chance to look at all VBS curriculums at one time, meet with friends, connect and network.

Check Out These Fantastic Opportunities For Hands-On Mission Trips in the Summer of 2008:

CHALLENGE TO CHANGE – MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION CAMP

at Cedarkirk June 15 to 20.
Mission work at Beth-El, Urban Ministries in Tampa and Cedarkirk, along with the great activities at Cedarkirk (canoeing, tubing, small groups, campfires, swimming, zip line, and much more).

LOVE WORKS! – Annual West Virginia Mission Trip for Senior High Youth and their advisors

from June 14- 22.
Meet youth and adults from all around the country as together you put your faith to work helping folks to stay safe, warm and dry.

INTERGENERATIONAL MISSION TRIP from July 12 to 19. This is an opportunity for families of all ages, children, grandparents, aunts/uncles/nieces/nephews to work together to bring hope to a Native American



reservation in Chinlé, Arizona. Our group will host a VBS for over 100 kids; repair, paint and help rededicate the Presbyterian manse; and hold youth meetings in the evening. For more information, contact Rev. Chris Adams at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 941-748-2848.

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

Highlights
November 15, 2007
Stated Meeting of Peace River Presbytery
Hope United Church (PCUSA), Fort Myers

Members of Hope United graciously, and efficiently, greeted commissioners and visitors. Host Pastor Jim Berger greeted the Presbytery and shared the church's exciting building plans.

Stated Clerk Craig Countiss presented his report, during which the presbytery approved an amendment regarding the makeup of the Board of Trustees for Thornwell Home for Children.

General Presbyter Graham Hart indicated that his recent eye surgery had gone well. His written report had been shared with the commissioners.

During the morning worship, Rev. Dr. Paul Hooker, Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of St. Augustine and a member of the Form of Government Task Force, gave a sermon based on Mark 1:14-15 and entitled "As If...? He challenged the presbytery to live as if the kingdom of God had drawn near, and to call the rest of the world to live that way, too.



Dr. Hooker also presented a keynote on the proposed *Book of Order*, walking the Presbytery through the committee's mandate and sharing some key changes: flexibility for mission; emphasis on the calling of all believers; recovery of the parity of presbyters; and less hierarchical structure. During the breakout time, there was an opportunity for questions and comments.

The other breakout group allowed those interested in continuing a conversation about our Guatemala Sister Church relationships to learn more about how to be involved in this exciting ministry.

Attending this meeting were four guests from Central Presbytery, Guatemala City, with Herbert Hernandez giving a greeting.

During the Council Report, Jim Kirk spoke about Immokalee Helping Our People in Emergencies (IHOPE). Following Hurricane Wilma, the need for housing was dramatic. In response to this need, IHOPE partnered with FEMA to make 63 trailers available as permanent homes for families impacted by Hurricane Wilma.

The Trustees' report included four recommendations which were approved: 1) 2008 presbytery budget (with the indications that modifications may have to be made at the February 2008 meeting); 2) the sale of 2,780

square feet of the Presbyterian Center property to the City of North Port for \$6,394; 3) termination of Peace River Presbytery's Joining Hearts and Hands capital campaign (JHH) on December 31, 2007; and 4) a letter of thanks be sent to the JHH Steering Committee and that the May 2008 Stated Meeting be used to initiate a conversation about how to best support mission projects to which the presbytery committed itself in the campaign.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry recommended that covenantal relationships be established with Dan Oedy (First, Bonita Springs) as a Candidate, Cynthia Franklin (Covenant, Fort Myers) as an Inquirer; and John Foulkrod (Kirkwood, Bradenton) as an Inquirer.

During the Nominations Committee's report, the presbytery elected Rev. Dan Hagmaier as 2008 Moderator.



Also elected:

Elder Mary Lee Mann as Moderator-in-Nomination
Elder Dr. Stephen Smith as 2008 Council Chair
Rev. Craig Countiss as Stated Clerk.

Presbytery voted on commissioners and a youth advisory delegate to the 218th General Assembly to be held in San Jose, California from June 21 to June 28, 2008. Elder commissioners representing Peace River Presbytery are Julia Williams from Bee Ridge, Sally Kirby from Northminster, and Lee Martin from Palma Sola. Clergy Commissioners are Valerie Bell from Burnt Store, Clint Cottrell from Cypress Lake, and Russell Hickman from Holy Trinity. The Youth Advisory Delegate will be Hannah Neeley from First Arcadia.

The presbytery was led in worship by Rev. Tim Halverson, Elder Elaine Barnett, and Rev. Graham Hart, in a service of recognition of the retirement of Rev. Dr. David Uhl.

The Committee on Ministry recommended that Rev. William Ruffin Stepp be approved as Associate Pastor, Venice Church, Venice; Rev. Dr. Jonathan Lange as Interim Pastor at Community, Englewood; and Rev. Dr. Kathleen Weller as Associate Pastor at Moorings, Naples. It was reported that the annual contract with Rev. Stephan Nagy as Stated Supply at Lely, Naples, and the annual contract with Rev. Dr. Bruce Porter as Stated Supply at Christ Church of Longboat Key were reaffirmed by Committee on Ministry. In addition, Rev. Helen Heffington is now Temporary Supply at First Lehigh Acres, and Craig Countiss is a Parish Associate at Cypress Lake, Fort Myers.

The next Stated Meeting will be Thursday, February 28, 2008, at First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte.