



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

DECEMBER 2008



**May you have a blessed Christmas
as you celebrate the birth
of our Lord and Savior.**

The staff of Peace River Presbytery

Please join us in prayer:

December 7 First, Port Charlotte
December 14 Wintergarden, Port Charlotte
December 21 Burnt Store, Punta Gorda
December 28 First, Punta Gorda



The staff of Peace River Presbytery would like to thank the many people who gave of their time and talent to serve on a Presbytery committee in 2008. Please pray for those who will continue to serve in 2009 and for the new committee members.

The proposed amendments to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Proposed Ecumenical Statements will be voted on at the February 26, 2009 Stated Meeting to be held at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Venice.

The amendments are available on our web site www.peacriverpresbytery.org, on the Presbytery meeting page.

Watch for information about discussion groups!

Growing Healthy Leaders and Congregations Workshops will be held on **January 8-10, 2009** at First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte. **There may still be openings!** Please call the Presbytery office at 941-426-8421.

Hope United Church, Fort Myers, has a new web site www.hopeunitedchurch.net and e-mail address hopechurch@hopeunitedchurch.net



The Christmas Joy Offering has been a Presbyterian tradition for almost 70 years. The Christmas Joy Offering provides congregations with a direct way of supporting specific causes that help those in need.

Fifty percent of the receipts to the Christmas Joy Offering are distributed to the Board of Pensions for programs that

provide assistance to retired and active church workers and their spouses and families. The other 50 percent helps fund Presbyterian-related racial ethnic education through the General Assembly Council.

The Main Event will be on **March 7, 2009** at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m.

This event is being offered by the Leadership and Congregational Development Committee in cooperation with the Acts 16:5 Initiative. Rev. Dale Patterson will speak on "With New Eyes, Taking Christ into the World in the 21st Century".



Some planned workshops include:

- What are the Challenges of Leading a Transformational Church in the 21st Century (for pastors and led by the keynote speaker)
- Leading for Transformation and Growth (nuts and bolts)
- When Folks Don't Want to Change: Strategies for Leading Change Related to Transformation and Growth
- Deacon and Elder Training
- Hurricane Preparedness and Disaster Response

A complete list of all workshops, along with registration form, will be available in the near future.

Come to the National Pastors' Sabbath! On April 17 through 20, 2009, Presbyterian pastors from all over the country will gather at the Sea Trail Resort at Sunset Beach, North Carolina for a time of rest and renewal – a time apart to break bread with those in common vocation. Walter Brueggeman will lead the Bible study and reflection on the book of Exodus. Frances Taylor Gench and J. Herbert Nelson will be the daily preachers. Register at www.pcusa.org/pastorsabbath.



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

November 20, 2008
Peace River Presbytery
Stated Meeting
Highlights



The autumn meeting of Peace River Presbytery was graciously hosted by **Moorings Presbyterian Church**, Naples.

Dr. Kenneth Bailey, a New Testament scholar ordained by the Presbyterian Church (USA) who lived and taught in seminaries and institutes in the Mideast for 40 years, set the stage with his remarks in the sermon, keynote address, and breakout group. He provided a Bible study lesson that enhanced the understanding of the birth story of Jesus as told through Christian eyes in a Middle Eastern culture.

Breakout sessions highlighted the news from Guatemala, the Presbyterian College (Clinton, South Carolina), a Board of Pensions discussion and an encore Bible study from Dr. Bailey.

Rev. Miguel Estrada expressed appreciation for being able to represent the Presbytery at the recent Guatemala Network Meeting in early November that brought together U.S. and Guatemalan partners as they discussed ways to strengthen the ministry and the association. Special thanks were extended to the congregations that continue to share the riches in the ministry with farmworkers in southwestern Florida.

Heartfelt appreciation was given to Designated Associate General Presbyter **Rev. Dr. Robert Rea**, thanking him for his faithful five years of service as he returns to retirement.

The commissioners and visitors enjoyed the musical talents of quartet Rev. Elizabeth Deibert, Rev. Silvana Franca, Rev. Ed Gray, and Rev. Jim Berger as they celebrated new church development.

The following documents were approved:

- Revisions to the Standing Rules (presented by Council),
- Revised budgets for 2008 and 2009, and
- "A Covenant Journey: The Process of Discernment for Ministry of Word and Sacrament" (presented by the Committee on Preparation for Ministry).

The following were approved to serve on the **2009 Nominating Committee**: Chair Rev. Steve Mock (First, Punta Gorda), Vice Chair Dick Fernstrum (First, Sarasota), Barbara Church (First, Naples), Rev. Russ Hickman (Holy Trinity), Dottie Kattell (Pine Shores), Bob LeSage (Cypress Lake), Mary Lee Mann (First, Fort

Myers), Reid Richmond (Vanderbilt), and Rev. Ruth Schaaff (Church of the Palms).

Dedicated leaders were elected as Peace River Presbytery officers for 2009: Rev. Dan Hagmaier (Covenant) as Chair of Council, Elder Mary Lee Mann (First, Fort Myers) as Moderator, and Rev. Tim Halverson (Faith) as Moderator-in-Nomination. Additionally, the Nominations Committee submitted the names of many people ready to share their spiritual gifts with the greater church community as they serve on the various Presbytery committees.

The Presbytery approved and celebrated the following pastoral calls: Rev. Dr. Stephen McConnell as Pastor of Church of the Palms (Sarasota), Rev. Scott Wilson as Pastor of Community Presbyterian Church (Englewood), Rev. Steven Grant as Associate Pastor of First Presbyterian Church (Bonita Springs), Rev. Dr. Wayne Blaser as Associate Pastor of First Presbyterian Church (Bradenton), Rev. Dr. Edward J. Thompson as Pastor of First Presbyterian Church (Naples), and Rev. Dr. Taylor Hill as part-time Interim Pastor of Palmetto Presbyterian Church. It was also noted that Rev. R. Craig Countiss will serve First Presbyterian Church, Lehigh Acres, as Stated Supply Pastor.

Churches were reminded of upcoming leadership development opportunities:

- **Growing Healthy Leaders and Congregations** workshops (January 8, 9, 10, 2009) will address topics of beliefs and relationships, healthy pastor-congregation relations, and spiritual practices to help people experience God's peace.
- The annual **Main Event** will be held on Saturday, March 7, 2009 at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers. It is sponsored by the Leadership and Congregational Development Committee in cooperation with the Acts 16:5 Initiative to address leading a transformational church in the 21st century. Training for elders and deacons plus other workshops will be offered.

In preparation for voting on the **General Assembly proposed amendments**, particularly overture (08-B), concerning standards for ordination, Presbytery requested that the Theology and Worship Committee prepare programs of "listening and discernment" to be held throughout the Presbytery. The Records and Overtures Committee will also prepare a report. **The amendments will be voted on at the next Presbytery meeting at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Venice on February 26, 2009.**

