



# The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY MARCH 2008

## Speaking From the Hart

### One Great Hour of Sharing and Peace River

Individuals in Peace River have been generous in support of One Great Hour of Sharing, giving \$412,617 over the past 5 years, but we have also been the beneficiary of the generosity of others. Presbyterians around the country through their offerings to OGHS have enabled us to receive grants for \$600,000 in our hurricane recovery work that helped rebuild over 600 homes and 8 churches. Over \$250,000 has come for recovery work in Immokalee (IHOPE).

Additionally, in 2007 the Self-Development of People committee awarded the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) \$21,200 to support their creation of a new Farmworker Community Center in Immokalee. The Community Center will provide a space for community meetings and activities, the CIW's anti-slavery office, and an educational radio station. The CIW is available to speak in area churches -- on Self-Development of People Sunday or throughout the Lenten season -- about how One Great Hour of Sharing has tangibly helped their work to improve conditions for farmworkers. Contact [jordan@interfaithact.org](mailto:jordan@interfaithact.org).

The money given to OGHS goes to the [Presbyterian Hunger Program](#), [Self-Development of People](#) and [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#).

Recently leaders from the five Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presbyteries, including Peace River, most impacted by the hurricanes in 2005 — Katrina, Rita and Wilma — issued an open letter to the denomination thanking the many Presbyterians who have supported them with prayers, finances and presence. The letter also thanks Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and the General Assembly Council for their partnership of trust and patience. The full text of the letter, which also has information about financial accountability, can be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08123.htm>

Since 1949, Presbyterians have joined with millions of other Christians through 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. Recognizing that the hope we have in Christ is lived out in our hope for one another, we respond with gifts that help our sisters and brothers around the world find the hope for a brighter future.

Thank you for your generosity.  
Graham Hart

## Please join us in prayer for:

- |          |                               |
|----------|-------------------------------|
| March 2  | Wintergarden, Port Charlotte  |
| March 9  | Burnt Store, Punta Gorda      |
| March 16 | First, Punta Gorda            |
| March 23 | Bee Ridge, Sarasota           |
| March 30 | Church of the Palms, Sarasota |



## New Staff at Cedarkirk



Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center has recently hired a new Office Manager and Event Coordinator. Helen Howard, who filled that position so well for about ten years, resigned at the end of 2007 to go back to school and help care for her ailing mother. She will be dearly missed. Please keep her

in your prayers as she ventures into this new chapter.

**Karin Dale**, an Elder from First Presbyterian Church in Brandon, officially began her new ministry at Cedarkirk on January 28. She and her husband, a pilot for Southwest Airlines, have been in the area for 7 years. They have two children, a son who is a freshman at the University of Tennessee and a daughter who is a sophomore at Bloomingdale High School. Both children have thoroughly enjoyed camping experiences at Cedarkirk, and the Dales' son worked there for 1½ years. Karin is excited about this new opportunity and looks forward to meeting everyone. Give her a call if you are considering having an event at Cedarkirk. She'll be glad to help with those arrangements!

## MISSION NEWS

**Misión Peniel**, the outreach farmworker ministry in Immokalee under the direction of Beth-El Farmworker Ministry, is thriving. Currently they are meeting every Sunday for worship in their own rented facility in Immokalee, holding a Bible study during the week and, of course, overseeing the ministry of food, personal care items and men's clothing for over 300 farmworkers as they return from the fields. Misión Peniel is grateful to those churches who have been to Immokalee and helped on Fridays and at other times. To schedule a time for your church group to help, contact Rev. Miguel Estrada at [miguel@beth-el.info](mailto:miguel@beth-el.info). (PLEASE NOTE NEW E-MAIL.)

## PCUSA International Mission Work

PCUSA missionaries are working around the world to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a hurting world. For information about our work in over 70 countries, go to [www.pcusa.org/witness](http://www.pcusa.org/witness) and find out how your mission dollars are at work spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Three New Mission Workers Appointed

... for the Dominican Republic, Lebanon, and the Mexico-U.S. border

Three PCUSA international mission workers completed orientation in January and have begun their assignments:

Carol Dolezal-Ng is a development associate for interpretation and support for the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut, Lebanon. Founded by the PCUSA in the 19th century, NEST trains ministers for Protestant churches in the Middle East and Africa. From her home base in Berkeley, Calif., Carol is assisting the president of NEST in interpreting the school's mission and strengthening its support in the United States and around the world. The wife of Bill Ng, a retired PCUSA minister, Carol is a member of First Presbyterian Church in Oakland, Calif. Her position has been funded through gifts to the Mission Initiative: Joining Hearts & Hands.



Kristin Hamner is serving as a partnership facilitator in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, working with the PCUSA Self-Development of People program and the economically poor, oppressed and disadvantaged groups with whom it partners in the Dominican Republic. Kristin has worked in the Dominican Republic as a missionary and assistant project coordinator for the Foundation for Peace since 2005 and will continue those duties. She is a member of First Presbyterian Church in Grand Island, Nebraska.



Elizabeth Toland is a U.S. coordinator with the Presbyterian Border Ministry (PBM) a joint mission of the PCUSA and the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico at seven sites in ministries of evangelism, new church development, community health and development, and mission education. Elizabeth works with



Companeros en Mision, based in Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Mexico. She served with the PBM as a Young Adult Volunteer in 2006-2007. Her home church is First Presbyterian Church, Iola, Kansas.

## THE MAIN EVENT

**THANK YOU** to all the members of the Leadership and Congregational Development Committee, to those who taught, and to the generous hospitality of the members of First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte, for a job well done. Our attendance exceeded last year's event but more importantly, leaders in 23 of our congregations came away from the event with a renewed spirit, and lots of creative and innovative ideas for ministry. To find out more about our keynote presenter, the Rev. Rich Melheim, and the work of Faith Inkubators go to [www.faithink.com](http://www.faithink.com).

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*Train up a child in the way he should go,  
Even when he is old he will not depart from it.  
Proverbs 22:6*

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS

I sometimes reflect on the fact I could be a great mom during this second half of my life. Why is it we are meant to raise children when we are learning about life? Surely God's plan is perfect! Praise God, He provides earthly mentors filled with wisdom! With this in mind, let me pass on information out of the Presbytery-sponsored MAIN EVENT last month from our keynote speaker Rich Melheim.

Rich is an ordained ELCA Lutheran Minister and the founder of Faith Inkubators. He believes the church should help parents become the primary teachers of the Bible, since Christian Education cannot be accomplished in one hour a week on Sunday morning. Through *Faith Stepping Stones*, parents and children develop nightly faith practices that include blessing, prayer, scripture reading, sharing of highs and lows, faith dialogue, and a nightly "I'm sorry" before going to sleep. Rich said we need to invest five minutes a night with each child. There was a study that showed on average, parents spend 38 minutes a week in quality one-on-one time with their children. His slogan is "Every night in every home, we are going to talk."



Rich's keynote address was titled "Teaching the Way the Brain Learns." Here are some highlights: Our brains need oxygen and glucose to learn. We can use our bodies as learning tools. When we use our muscles through dance or sign language, we are using muscle memory, which is the most powerful memory. Laughter also pumps oxygen and glucose through the brain, as does singing a song. If we teach a Bible verse and "sing

it, dance it, draw it, present it in worship, return to it seven nights a week in Home Huddle, a child will remember this verse for the rest of his/her life.


I love this part: tears are FREE DRUGS! Prayer releases endorphins to make us feel good. Touch releases healing chemicals, and we know newborn babies die without touch! A safe touch in a church, such as holding hands in prayer or a friendly handshake warms the heart and makes church a place we want to return to. Rich said, "If we suffer with people, they will be our friends." If teens can feel close to their church group, they will go out of their way to keep coming because, "they love me here."

For more information, go to the website [www.faithink.com](http://www.faithink.com). Click on **Bible Song Sunday School Ministry**. Under the section **Go Deeper** click on **Download a detailed whitepaper entitled "The Bible, Memory and The Brain."**

Because Jesus Lives!  
Debbie Carney, Parish Nurse  
941-456-6804, carneydeb@hotmail.com

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

### Montreat Christian Education Conference May 27-31, 2008

Join others from Peace River Presbytery this May at the Christian Education Conference,  where the keynote speaker will be the Rev. Stan Ott, leader of the Acts 16:5 renewal program and popular author of a number of books on how to transform your ministry. Classes will be offered in a variety of areas plus a certification course for those working in Christian Education. [www.montreat.org](http://www.montreat.org), Conferences. Housing can be secured through the APCE (Association of Presbyterian Church Educators) House. For more information, contact your program coordinator, Candy Reid.

### APCE-SOAP conference in Charleston, South Carolina on October 20-23

The Synod of South Atlantic APCE region – SOAP will offer a regional conference this Fall in the beautiful city of Charleston, SC. The cost is \$225.00. We will be taking a bus or van from Peace River presbytery. For more information on the event, log on to [www.APCESOAP.org](http://www.APCESOAP.org) website or call Candy Reid.

## NEW IN YOUR RESOURCE CENTER

**"Living the Questions" DVD series.** If you are looking for 'pat' answers to your theological questions, this series is not for you! If, however, you are looking for a forum to think, then this series might be of help to you in small group ministry, adult education classes or a retreat setting. The series includes 21 sessions, which run for about 20 minutes each, and a study guide.

## YOUTH MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS



### Middle School Youth – June 15 to 20

"Challenge to Change" Urban Mission Experience in downtown Tampa – PLUS time at Cedarkirk

### Senior High Youth – June 14 to 22

To West Virginia and the hills of Appalachia

### Chinlé mission trip- July 12 to 19

**Intergenerational** family experience to a Native American community in Chinlé, Arizona

For more information, go to [www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org), Youth page.

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

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[Craig Countiss](#), Stated Clerk  
[Jim Barnett](#), Treasurer  
[Alesia Sharpe](#), Office Manager  
[Bill Setchel](#), Financial Secretary  
[Joan Mock](#), Administrative Assistant

**Highlights**  
**February 28, 2008**  
**Stated Meeting of Peace River Presbytery**  
**First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte**

Those attending the Stated Meeting were appreciative of the great hospitality of First Presbyterian, Port Charlotte.

During the morning communion worship service, Rev. Dr. Bruce Porter, Christ Church of Longboat Key, gave a powerful sermon on the need to be grounded in Christ.



Linda Valentine, Executive Director of the General Assembly Council (GAC), presented a keynote address on the work of the PCUSA around the world and changes in GAC.

The breakout groups for this meeting were: General Assembly Council led by Linda Valentine, Habitat for Humanity led by Linda Fahnestock, Thornwell Home for Children led by Susan Sampson, and Misión Peniel led by Dave Moore.

During the Council Report, the following were elected to serve on the Nominations Committee: Elder Mary Lee Mann (First, Fort Myers), Rev. Steve Mock (First, Punta Gorda), and Elder Bob LeSage (Cypress Lake), with Dottie Kattell (Pine Shores) to serve as Vice Chair.

The Trustees' report included two recommendations which were approved: 1) Church of the Palms permitted to sell 2.1 acres of its property and 2) Christ Church of Longboat Key permitted to purchase property on Longboat Key as the site of a future church.

The Records and Overtures Committee recommended for approval an Overture from Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, regarding Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. The overture was approved.

During the Nominations Committee's report, the following were elected to serve on various committees and boards:

**Beth-El Board:** John Lawson, Moorings

**Camps & Conferences:** Dick Moore, First Bradenton

**Committee on Ministry:** Rev. Valerie Bell, Burnt Store and Robin Doyle, Moorings, with Jim Beckwith to serve as Vice Chair

**Evangelism & Church Development:** Rev. Karl Kling to serve as Vice Chair

**Mission & Justice:** Greg Minck, Vanderbilt, with Emilie Kimbrough to serve as Chair

**Representation:** Rev. Ted Land to serve as Vice Chair

**Theology & Worship:** Rev. Sally Bull, Faith; Rev. Randy Moody, Buckingham; and Rev. Mark Jernigan, First Bradenton.

**Board of Trustees:** Christine Larson, Buckingham  
**Preparation for Ministry:** Rev. Jane Jones-Norris, Validated Ministry, Bradenton

Also elected:

**Alternate commissioners to the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, June 21-28:**

Rev. Wayne Chaplin, St. Paul's, North Port

Rev. Margaret Towner, Honorably Retired

Rev. Graham Hart, General Presbyter

**Commissioners to the Synod of South Atlantic, March 6 and 7:** Rev. Dan Hagmaier, Westminster, Bradenton, and Elder Bill Witney, Cypress Lake, Fort Myers.

The Presbytery approved the following recommendations from the Committee on Ministry:

**Rev. Dr. Gerald Wise** as Designated Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers, effective January 16, 2008.

**Samantha Keller**, Candidate for Associate Pastor for Cypress Lake, Fort Myers, with her ordination/installation to take place April 5.

**Rev. Benjamin Keller** as member-at-large, transferring from the Presbytery of Denver.

**Rev. Ellis Graves**, HR, as member, transferring from the Presbytery of Tampa Bay.

Alan Penick, President of the Board of Trustees, reminded the Presbytery that church commitments to the 2008 Presbytery budget need to be sent to the Presbytery office as soon as possible. He also said that it would be helpful if mission (unified) gifts and Per Capita were sent to the Presbytery office on a monthly basis.

A report from the Administrative Commission for Covenant Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) was given. The Administrative Commission noted with thanksgiving the spirit of cooperation in evidence among all the people at Covenant and reported that a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed providing for an orderly transition between now and March 21. On that date the Administrative Commission will assume original jurisdiction, setting aside the current session of that church. Also on that date, the pastors and those members who have asked to leave the PCUSA will be dismissed to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. They will begin worshipping at another facility on Easter Sunday with the continuing Covenant (PCUSA) members celebrating Easter in the Covenant Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) sanctuary on McGregor Blvd.

The next Stated Meeting will be Thursday, May 22, 2008, at Kirkwood Presbyterian Church, Bradenton.