



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

AUGUST 2009

SPEAKING FROM THE HART

This is a tough time for folks who have lost their jobs, for members of congregations who are uncertain about their financial futures, for congregations, the Presbytery, and for our mission partners here in Peace River. In particular, what the Presbytery Council heard at their last meeting is that if Beth-El is unable to raise \$130,000, the operation of Misi3n Peniel will be suspended on December 31. That is of deep concern!!!

How did we/they get here? The Presbytery budget has been cut \$300,000 in the past two years. The cuts have come in staff (2 positions), mission, and programs.

The Presbytery is responding to the current fiscal problems with two task forces that are already meeting and working. The *Covenant Partner Emergency Funding Task Force*, which springs from the Mission and Justice Committee, is seeking immediate support for Beth-El Farmworker Ministry and Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center. The Presbytery has covenanted with these two ministries to support them in their mission efforts. Unfortunately, support from us and from Presbytery of Tampa Bay has been severely curtailed, leading to, among other things, a decision by the Beth-El Board of Directors to suspend operations at their Misi3n Peniel ministry in Immokalee at the end of this year. In early August, the Task Force hopes to present a plan to the Council that will call for a special Presbytery-wide appeal to restore funds to Cedarkirk and Beth-El.

The second task force, the *Mission and Funding Task Force* set up by Council, will take a broader view. Their job will be to shore up the Presbytery budget in this fiscal year, plan for a balanced budget in 2010, and look even farther into the future to examine better ways to fund the entire mission of the Presbytery. The task force will:

- In the short term, make recommendations to the Trustees related to the 2009 budget.
- In the mid-range, begin addressing how we can invite fuller participation in the support of the Presbytery's mission in 2010.
- In the long term, examine our focus, size, shape, and direction for the next five years.

These two task forces will be talking to you about money a lot in the near future. As a matter of fact, the first appeal for Beth-El and Cedarkirk will reach you in the next few weeks. Please pray with me for the members of these task forces, for wisdom and success in their efforts.

If you know of a family foundation, or an acquaintance, or if you yourself could help fill in the gap, please let us know. All funds raised through the Special Appeal will go directly to our Covenant Partners for use in their ministries.

In and with deep concern and prayer,
Graham Hart

Please join us in prayer:

August 2 – Lely, Naples
August 9 – Moorings, Naples
August 16 – Vanderbilt, Naples
August 23 – Holy Trinity, North Fort Myers
August 30 – St. Paul's, North Port



Mark Your Calendar

The next Stated Meeting will be held on Saturday, August 22, 2009 at Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers.

Highlight of the Month

Peace River Presbytery Board of Trustees

By Alan Penick, President

The Board of Trustees has the responsibility to conduct, manage, and direct the business affairs of the corporation, to advise and counsel the General Presbyter concerning administrative matters, and to prepare and oversee the annual budget; all subject to the direction of the Presbytery.



This has become a challenging task during the current financial situation in our country. Most of our member churches are experiencing lower income from their congregation as well as from their investments. Many have found it necessary to downsize their staff and cut back on the giving to missions.

And of course this has impacted the finances at the Presbytery as well. The trustees have been looking at ways that we can more efficiently and effectively accomplish the mission of our Presbytery to "Connect and support our congregations as partners to advance the mission of Jesus Christ". One of the ways that we have identified resulted in a 22% reduction in staff expense from 2008, and another is to be as clear as possible in identifying where we are spending the Per Capita and Unified Giving that comes from our member congregations so everyone understands where THEIR dollars are going.

Unfortunately we have also had to reduce mission giving by 37% from 2008, We see this as a major concern since we are not meeting our obligation to our mission partners

and not living up to our mission statement AT A TIME WHEN OUR MISSIONS NEED MORE TO MEET THE GROWING DEMANDS BEING PLACED ON THEM.



Two more of our churches now have web sites!

Community, Englewood – www.cpcenglewood.com

First, Lehigh Acres – www.lehighacrespresbyterians.com

2009 Walton Award winners announced!

Peace Presbyterian NCD, Lakewood Ranch, is one of eight Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) new church developments that have been named winners of the 2009 Sam & Helen R. Walton Awards. Each congregation was selected for its imaginative, skillful approach to new church ministry by the Mission Development Resources Committee (MDRC) and will receive \$50,000 for assistance in site acquisition and capital improvement. Two of the churches are in California and two in Florida. The other four are in Kansas, New Jersey, South Carolina and Texas. The NCDs are diverse — congregations are Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian-American, English-Swahili speaking and Multi-Cultural. The Walton Awards were established in 1991 as part of a \$6 million gift from the late Sam and Helen Walton — founders of Wal-Mart — through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. Half of the gift created an endowment, the interest on which funds the awards.

(<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/pressreleases/gac09018.htm>)

Congratulations to Elizabeth Deibert, Organizing Pastor, the Leadership Team of Peace, the Evangelism and Church Development Committee of Peace River, and to all the congregations of Peace River, especially First, Sarasota and Church of the Palms who have given in significant ways.

Update from Misión Peniel and Beth-El Farmworker Ministry for the Presbytery of Tampa Bay and Peace River Presbytery July 2009



As many of you are aware, the financial reductions of the covenant partners of the Presbytery have made this difficult year even more challenging. Beth-El and Misión Peniel has been reduced \$36,450 by the Presbytery of Tampa Bay and at least \$41,000 by Peace River Presbytery. This has obviously required some adjustments to our 2009 budget.

At the May and June Board of Directors meetings, the following decisions were made:

1. Elimination of the Mission Educator (Christian Educator) position.
2. Reduction in salary and wages of all personnel by 3%.
3. Suspension of Misión Peniel on December 31, 2009.
4. Reduction of summer programs for children.
5. Some sixty additional line items were reduced or eliminated.

Committees have been formed by both Presbyteries to address the reductions to both covenant partners (Cedarkirk and Beth-El).

Additionally, those churches that are sending volunteers to Misión Peniel for the Friday meal distribution are being asked to provide \$150 for those specific expenses. We are able to provide a simple warm meal to over 300 farmworkers with these funds. Without these funds we would need to suspend the meal distribution program.

We are blessed to be in covenant with you, and ask for your prayers during this difficult economic time. Should you have additional thoughts/recommendations/or concerns, please email dave@beth-el.info.



The PCUSA 2008 Peacemaking Offering will be taken on Sunday, October 4, World Communion Sunday.

Please note that one of the bulletin inserts you will receive in your promotional packet from General Assembly, "In Our Own Backyard", features Peace River Presbytery!

**Acts 16:5
Gathering 3
Tuesday, September 29, 2009
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church
9:00 am to 4:00 pm**



Registration forms have been e-mailed to the pastors of participating churches. Registrations and payment are due on Tuesday, September 15.

Presbyterian Hunger Program celebrates anniversary by looking back, looking forward

by **Bethany Furkin**
Presbyterian News Service

What began with a General Assembly action four decades ago has become a program that has raised more than \$125 million for hunger relief.

The Presbyterian Hunger Program celebrated its 40th anniversary with speakers, music and a raffle at the **Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women** July 14.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was the first denomination to state that hunger is a grave threat and moral imperative for the church, said PHP Coordinator Ruth Farrell, adding that the program was originally charged with five focus areas surrounding hunger: direct food relief, development assistance, influencing public policy, lifestyle integrity and education and interpretation.

Also at the celebration, the 10 presbyteries that contributed the most money through the 2008 Cents-ability offering were honored. They are West Virginia, Redstone, **PEACE RIVER**, Sheppards and Lapsley, Lake Michigan, Transylvania, Huntingdon, The James, Shenandoah and The Peaks.



For the complete article, go to:
<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2009/09607.htm>

Mission Challenge '09 Speakers will tell the mission story in more than 150 presbyteries

Underscoring the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s commitment to mission in partnership, mission personnel from around the globe will again be calling on congregations across the United States.

Similar to a highly successful event held in the fall of 2007, World Mission Challenge will send 40 PC(USA) mission personnel into more than 150 presbyteries to tell how God is at work around the world.

Peace River Presbytery will be participating in this special event. Members of our Mission and Justice Committee are working hard as they coordinate a schedule for our assigned mission worker (serving in Turkey) who will be in Peace River from October 2 to October 9. So far, eight of our churches have volunteered to provide speaking opportunities, housing, and transportation.



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World Mission Celebration

Hundreds of Presbyterians will gather in Cincinnati, Ohio, **October 22-24, 2009** for World Mission Celebration '09: Branches of the Same Vine.

It is time to celebrate what God is doing in the world and how Presbyterians are part of God's mission! Come to learn, share and make lifelong partners in mission. This mission conference and gathering is for *anyone* passionate about world mission, from those who want to network with others and learn how to get involved in mission, to those seasoned in mission work.



As *branches of the same vine*, Presbyterians will connect with one another, learn about God's mission through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and be sent forth as God's workers in the world.

Connect

Join with those involved in Presbyterian mission, including mission co-workers, passionate supporters of mission and mission partners of and within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Meet Presbyterians from the Validated Mission Support Groups, the Association of Mission Pastors, the Mission Networks and many other organizations that have signed the "Invitation to Expanding Partnership in God's Mission"

Learn

Learn from inspiring stories about God's mission throughout the world

Participate in workshops to share knowledge and gain tools for mission involvement

Visit region-focused learning areas and exhibits

Be sent forth

Celebrate and reflect on world mission through worship and Bible study

Be empowered to find your place in God's mission through the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Be commissioned to continue your world mission service

Register online at www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration or call (888) 728-7228 x5729 to receive registration materials through the mail.

Articles Requested

Did a group from your church go on a mission trip this summer? We would love to include a short summary of your experiences in an upcoming issue of *The Interpreter*!

FROM YOUR RESOURCE CENTER

The Resource Center of Peace River Presbytery exists to support the mission and ministry of the Presbytery and its member churches by offering theologically sound and faith-centered resources primarily from our Presbyterian and Reformed tradition.



We have many resources available for you to check out, including items for all age groups and topics. You may come to the Presbytery office and browse through the Resource Center, or you may look online (click on the link to "Resource Center" on the Presbytery's web site). Feel free to call or e-mail Lori Doyal, your contact person for the Resource Center, and she will be glad to pull materials for you and ship them to you. Lori is available Monday – Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Some of the new books in the Resource Center include:

Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century: An Inquiry Approach, by Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.;

Dimensions of Older Adult Ministry: A Handbook, edited by Richard L. Morgan;

A Ready Hope: Effective Disaster Ministry for Congregations, by Kathryn M. Haeisen and Carol H. Flores;

Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels, by Kenneth E. Bailey;

Holy Clarity: The Practice of Planning and Evaluation, by Sarah B. Drummond;

Synagogues in a Time of Change: Fragmentation and Diversity in Jewish Religious Movements, edited by Zachary I. Heller;

The Grief Recovery Handbook, by John W. James and Russell Friedman; and

The Jesus Creed, by Scot McNight.

PPC launches The Presbyterian Leader at Big Tent

In June the [Presbyterian Publishing Corporation](http://www.pcusa.org) (PPC) launched [The Presbyterian Leader](http://www.pcusa.org/pda), its new online resource center for PC(USA) leaders, at the [Big Tent](http://www.pcusa.org/pda) gathering in Atlanta. The new site offers materials for pastors, educators, musicians, elders, deacons and all other Presbyterian leaders. The price of an annual subscription is \$99.00 and renewals are \$75.00. Churches and individuals also have the option of ordering materials from the site for a per-item fee.

For the complete article, go to:

www.pcusa.org/pcnews/pressreleases/ppc09004.htm

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

Critical need for help in Hurricane Ike response

Although it is the third most destructive hurricane to hit the United States, Hurricane Ike has been named the

forgotten storm. When Hurricane Ike devastated the Texas coast, all of the major media and press outlets were focused on two items: the 2008 presidential election and the downward spiral of the U.S. financial crisis beginning with the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers and the sale of Merrill Lynch. Less than \$500,000 was received to respond to the massive needs in Texas. Give today to help Hurricane Ike survivors recover. Volunteer for a work team and help survivors rebuild their homes. Get information on how to give and how to register your team. Please prayerfully consider how you can be part of the Hurricane Ike recovery efforts.



Skilled volunteers needed to help with Iowa flood recovery

The Presbytery of East Iowa has several locations hosting volunteer work teams who want to help with reconstruction and recovery efforts caused by flooding in 2008. The primary need is for skilled workers such as licensed plumbers, electricians and general contractors and volunteers who are experienced with drywall or who can supervise others willing to do the work. Get information on how to volunteer.

Consider mission opportunities in the U.S. Gulf Coast

Volunteers are needed for a period of three months or more to help PDA minister to hurricane survivors through the Presbyterian Volunteer Villages. Volunteer expenses are covered, along with a per diem for food and incidentals.

VILLAGE MANAGERS oversee the management and function of a Presbyterian Volunteer Village, including hospitality, administration, logistics, leadership, and group facilitation.

WORKSITE ASSIGNMENT MANAGERS schedule the work for volunteer work teams at sites that are in need of rebuilding, mucking out or other reconstruction projects.

Get more information and apply today.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

www.pcusa.org/pda

A One Great Hour of Sharing Ministry

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

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