



# The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

FEBRUARY 2009

## Speaking from the Hart – What can we do?

As Washington struggles to come up with an economic recovery plan, some working families in our congregations are losing their jobs and others are hoping they're not next. Some retirees are grateful that their pensions and Social Security checks are still arriving the first week of the month, and others are deeply concerned because their nest egg has been cut up to 50% and they may not have enough income to last for their lifetime. **At a time like this, what should the church say and do?** Three thoughts.

First, we should offer a message of hope. The church's message does not change. The phrases that are repeated more times in the Bible than any other are: *Fear not... do not be afraid... do not be anxious*. I always find those words easier to believe when all is going well. When the doctors have just delivered the news that you have cancer, or when you get off the phone with one of your adult children who tells you their spouse has just left for another person, or when you read your end of the year financial statement, "Do not be anxious" is what you may really need to hear and believe. However, such advice may be hard to accept at that particular moment; yet that is the message of the gospel and the church.

Second, the church should still be the church, responding to the needs of our communities. I have seen several churches (in the language of the Acts 16:5 Initiative) begin "with me" ministries. They are offering classes on job seeking and financial planning, plus stepping up their support for families in need. Instead of the investment brokers being the only place in town for folks to go for financial advice, some churches are framing their own conversations financially as well as theologically.

Third, some churches may use this time as an opportunity to get back to the basics. Those who have done work with missional ecclesiology suggest there are five critical questions for every congregation (and Presbytery) to ask of itself, and then frame its mission and program around the answers.

1. **Whose are we?**
2. **Where are we?**
3. **What is God doing?**
4. **How is God calling us?**
5. **How is God sending us?**

I would love to have a conversation with pastors and sessions on their answers and thoughts as we all live through and pray for each other, at a time like this.

Graham Hart – [graham@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:graham@peacriverpresbytery.org)

## IT'S TIME TO REGISTER!!!

**The brochure and registration form are now available for THE MAIN EVENT!**

Go to [www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org), the Leader Development page.

- WHAT:** The Main Event  
**WHEN:** Saturday, March 7, 2009  
**WHERE:** Covenant, Fort Myers  
**TIME:** 8:30 Registration  
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.  
**COST:** \$15 a person

**"WITH NEW EYES: TAKING CHRIST INTO THE WORLD IN THE 21ST CENTURY"**

**Keynote Speaker:  
Dr. Rev. Dr. Dale Patterson**



Dale is the pastor of The Presbyterian Church at Hackberry Creek, Irving, Texas, and is a consultant with Vital Churches Institute. His heart is in bringing new vitality into the mainline church and the message of refreshment and the invigorating hope of Christ-centered living.

A.M. keynote: **Vision: Knowing Where We're Going**

P.M. keynote: **Leadership: A Team to "Live into" the Vision**

### Workshops:

- Follow-up to morning keynote address
- Follow-up to afternoon keynote address
- Dry? Boring? No Way! Being a Deacon or Elder Changes Lives!!
- Bringing You Up to Date for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Record Keeping (for Clerks of Session)
- Ten Things Every Treasurer Should Know
- Change Theory and Church Transformation: Why is change so hard if the goal is so good?
- What are we in the business for? Becoming a Missional Church
- Youth Ministry: Pulling Creative Ideas out of Frazzled Youth & Leaders
- Through the Roof: Tips and Tools for Including Families with Hidden Disabilities at Church
- Interfaith Listening Program from Pakistan
- Ready or Not: A Guide to Disaster Preparedness
- How to Respond Once the Wind Dies Down

*Sponsored by the Leadership and Congregational Development Committee in cooperation with the Evangelism and Church Development Committee.*

## Please join us in prayer:

February 1 Pine Shores, Sarasota  
February 8 Presbyterian Church of  
the Covenant, Sarasota  
February 15 Siesta Key Chapel,  
Sarasota  
February 22 Whitfield Estates, Sarasota



## In Memoriam

Rev. Dr. Donald Warth  
January 10, 2009



Rev. Homer Ogle  
January 31, 2009

## Presbytery Committee of the Month

The PRP Communications Ministry Action Team plans to highlight the work of each Presbytery committee by having each committee share what they do. **The Mission and Justice ("M&J") Committee** was selected to be the first.



My name is Wayne Kindt and I am the new Chair of the M&J Committee. I live in Sarasota with my wife Pat and we attend Church of the Palms. I am retired and my wife still works.

The Committee has twelve official members plus three vacancies and one member who volunteered to stay on to help. (If you would like to become a member, please contact the Presbytery office.)

We have a vast area of responsibilities and this year have organized them into seven areas. They are: Hunger Programs; Migrant Ministries; Caring for Generations; Campus Ministry; Sister Church Program; Global Mission Programs; and Peacemaking & Justice. Committee members are signing up for one or more of these areas according to the leading of the Holy Spirit and their interests. They will be responsible for communicating with agencies in those areas, and to bring information back to the Committee in brief reports so the Committee as a whole can communicate that information back to the local churches in our Presbytery. We are to be a connectional church and oftentimes we miss that connection because we don't know what each other is doing in the Mission field.

Last year the M&J Committee, led by chair Emilie Kimbrough, divided up the 38 churches and two new church developments among the Committee members and we visited each church, meeting with the Pastor or the Mission Chair of that church. We gave each church a packet of information that highlighted each of the areas of the M&J Committee. We also collected information about how each church was involved in mission. We plan to do

that again this year to share information. We are still formulating how we will do that but we, the Committee, look forward to these meetings. Following these meetings, we plan to present a report at the November Presbytery meeting so the delegates can take the consolidated information back to their own churches. You will be hearing more from this committee this year, but if you have questions about what we are doing, please contact me via email at [patwayne83@verizon.net](mailto:patwayne83@verizon.net) or by phone at 941-342-6494.

## Upcoming Stated Meeting

February 26, 2009  
at  
Trinity Presbyterian Church, Venice

**The Book of Order amendments proposed by the 218<sup>th</sup> General Assembly will be voted on at this meeting.**

## Congratulations to Rev. Sparks!



We celebrate with Jean Sparks who was ordained as Minister of the Word and Sacrament on Sunday, February 1. Jean, a charter member of Wintergarden Presbyterian Church and recent graduate of Columbia Theological Seminary, has received and accepted a Call as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Plymouth, Indiana.

## Burnt Store Presbyterian Church Heads to Haiti

On March 7, 2009, Burnt Store Presbyterian Church Haiti Mission Team will be bound for Port au Prince, transplanted for a time out of our safe cocoons to be BSPC's hands in outreach to God's children in need. We will spend a week working with Haiti Outreach Ministries' Pastor Leon, helping to rescue hurricane damaged homes, working in the clinics and HOM schools, and being present, shoulder to shoulder, to our brothers and sisters in Christ, in Cite Soleil – the worst slum and the poorest city in the Western hemisphere. And it is going to be awesome!



Over 70% of Haitians are illiterate; despite the government mandated 6 years of education, the average adult has had 2.8 years! The infant mortality rate is 10%, and 20% of the children (higher in Cite Soleil) die before the age of 5. Factory workers earn less than \$3/day, the per capita annual income is around \$350, and a box of cereal costs \$6.00 or more! Approximately 2/3 of the

work force does not have jobs. Abject poverty is the standard for 80% of the population, and malnutrition is rampant and horrifying.

And in all of this, the Lord is at work in Haiti! Pastor Leon Dorleans was raised in Haiti. He came to the United States to attend seminary, and returned to Haiti to spend his life among his people and introduce them to the Lord! His 1988 Bible study of 28 men has grown into 4 churches, 3 schools, and 2 medical clinics! Thousands of Haitians worship at HOM churches every week, grow up in their Christian schools, and receive nutritional and medical help.

In preparation for the trip, the team is doing a book study (**Compassion** by Henri Nouwen et al.), learning a little Creole, "Bondye bon!" (God is good!), and raising money to take medications for the clinics and learning tools for the schools. Anyone interested in supporting the effort or learning of other ways to support (as in sponsoring a child in the HOM school system), may contact Kathy Tardy, 637-0499, or at [tardyfamily@comcast.net](mailto:tardyfamily@comcast.net).

Soli Deo Gloria! (to God alone be the glory!)

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### Thank You!

Dear Members and Churches of Peace River Presbytery,

It is with grateful hearts that we announce to you that Peace Presbyterian NCD now has five acres of land on Lorraine Road, just north of Hwy 70. The Trustees worked diligently to make this happen, including overseeing the due diligence on the land and working out the financing. Special thanks to them, to the devoted staff of the presbytery, and to the Evangelism and Church Development Committee for being visionary on our behalf. To all who contributed to the Hearts and Hands Campaign, designating for Peace NCD, we deeply appreciate your generosity.

The congregation continues to grow numerically and spiritually. At this point, there are about ninety adults and twenty children committed to chartering the Peace congregation. In an effort to solidify a congregational generosity, even in times of financial uncertainty, Peace gave away \$55,000 (25% of budget) in 2008 to Presbytery's Unified Mission, to fulfilling our pledge to the Hearts and Hands Campaign, to Mission Beth-El, and other local and Presbyterian missions.

Thankful for the connectional Presbyterian Church, we pray God's blessings on your ministry.

Grace and peace,

Elizabeth Deibert  
Organizing Pastor  
Peace Presbyterian NCD

### New Contact Information

First Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers

[info@fpcforymyers.org](mailto:info@fpcforymyers.org)

[www.fpcforymyers.org](http://www.fpcforymyers.org)



### Save the Date

Gathering 2 for  
the **Acts 16:5** teams  
is

**APRIL 30, 2009.**

*Watch for more details!*

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### Resource Center

Your new Resource Center contact is Lori Doyal. Resource Center hours at the Presbytery Office are 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (4:00 p.m. Friday). Lori is available to help you Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. You are welcome to call her at 941-426-8421 or e-mail her at [lori@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:lori@peacriverpresbytery.org).

We have two preview kits in for Vacation Bible School: Camp E.D.G.E. by Cokesbury Press and Discovery Canyon by Augsburg Fortress. You are welcome to stop in and look at the materials in these kits (the kits cannot be checked out).

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

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY  
5600 Peace River Road  
North Port, FL 34287

941-426-8421 or 800-736-4488  
[www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org)

[Graham Hart](#), General Presbyter  
[Craig Countiss](#), Stated Clerk  
[Jim Barnett](#), Treasurer  
[Alesia Sharpe](#), Office Manager  
[Bill Setchel](#), Financial Secretary  
[Joan Mock](#), Administrative Assistant  
[Lori Doyal](#), Part-Time Administrative Assistant