



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

JUNE/JULY 2009

SPEAKING FROM THE HART

Statistics – So what do you want to do?

At the May Presbytery meeting I shared my belief that, more important than the current economic crisis, the singular and most critical issue facing the church in North America and Presbyterians in Southwest Florida is moving from an identity that is rooted in being “gathered” communities of faith to an understanding of our purpose as the “sent” people of God.

For several generations, Presbyterians have defined much of who we are and what we do around the rubric of delivering religious goods and services to the consumers of those goods and services. We have been more into member recruitment than making and equipping disciples. In the 50's and 60's, build a church, and folks would just show up. In 2009 just because a church building is new or attractive does not mean folks will seek us out. If you personally invite them, many will come, but that is easier said than done for us Presbyterian types.

The statistics of our 38 congregations suggest that we may be trying to live out of a 1950's model. Specifically, over the past 10 years in the 15 churches in Sarasota and Bradenton (the northern cluster) 3 experienced growth. Thanks be to God! But that means 12 have experienced a decline. In the 10 churches in the central part of the Presbytery, 2 churches have grown, but.... And in the area from Fort Myers south, 4 of the 13 have grown.

There are new folks moving to our area, but they are not churched. There is a new generation growing up here, and many of them are not churched. If folks were not going to a church when they lived up north, what makes us think that they will automatically seek out a church when they move here?

I invite you to begin praying with me about how we make disciples. Martha Grace Reese conducted a Lilly-funded study of 30,000 mainline congregations. The result of this study is the book, **Unbinding the Gospel**. I encourage every pastor, elder, deacon, and church member to read it over the summer. <http://www.gracenet.info/default.aspx> I hope you find yourself encouraged and inspired. Pray with me that we will learn to reach out in new ways, for there is a world out there in need of what we have!

With gratitude,
Graham Hart
General Presbyter

Please join us in prayer:

June 7 – Covenant, Fort Myers
June 14 – Cypress Lake, Fort Myers
June 21 – First, Fort Myers
June 28 – Hope United, Fort Myers



July 5 – Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach
July 12 – First, Lehigh Acres
July 19 – Christ Church, Longboat Key
July 26 – First, Naples

Let us also pray for the many Vacation Bible Schools being held by our churches this summer.

Presbytery Committee of the Month

Committee on Preparation for Ministry

“Nurturing Inquirers and Guiding Candidates
Through the Steps toward Ordination”

By Jo Ann Leasure, Chair

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) is charged with nurturing inquirers and candidates as well as acting as gatekeepers for the Presbyterian Church USA. This is not an easy task but one that is both challenging and rewarding. To fulfill this responsibility, your CPM prepared a document entitled, “A Covenant Journey: The Process of Discernment for Ministry of Word and Sacrament.” Peace River Presbytery adopted it in August 2008. This document is a road map for persons feeling a call to ministry, sessions, inquirers, candidates and members of the Presbytery. The CPM provides training on the process for each session contemplating taking a person under care. This training outlines the responsibilities of sessions, inquirers, and candidates, as well as that of the CPM and Presbytery.



It is very important for sessions to work with the CPM, especially in the beginning phase. Any session anticipating or having someone possibly feeling called to ministry should not hesitate to contact CPM at once. The more we all communicate and work together, the better we are able to nurture inquirers and candidates. This can be a daunting experience for them and they need our support, guidance, counsel, and prayers.

G14.0400 in the Book of Order addresses preparation for the Office of Minister of the Word and Sacrament.

Please feel free to contact any member of the CPM: Jo Ann Leasure, Chair, Chuck Cary, Wayne Chaplin,

George Chorba, Vice-Chair, Jane Jones-Norris, and Kathy Shannon.

"A Covenant Journey: The Process of Discernment for Ministry of Word and Sacrament" can be found on Peace River Presbytery's web site under Committees, Preparation for Ministry.

Post-Amendment Letter

The Moderator, the Stated Clerk, and the Director of the General Assembly Mission Council of PCUSA have requested that we share their letter with all of you.

April 28, 2009

To Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) presbyteries and their congregations

Grace and peace to you in the name of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ

Among the hundreds of actions taken by the 218th General Assembly (2008) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) last summer were ten amendments to the church's Constitution and four ecumenical statements that were then sent to all 173 presbyteries for ratification. Each of these items needed 87 votes, or a simple majority of the presbyteries, to be adopted or defeated.

While presbyteries have until June 28 to vote, the Office of the General Assembly has now received official notification from enough presbyteries to know the outcome of each item. With just a few dissenting votes, presbyteries approved historic covenants and agreements with the Roman Catholic Church, the Episcopal Church, the Korean Presbyterian Church in America, and Moravian Church. In addition, the General Assembly Council will have a new name – the General Assembly Mission Council – which will put the work "mission" front-and-center to reinforce the work of the council.

Slightly less unanimity but substantial support was shown by presbyteries as they approved amendments addressing the leadership of certified educators at presbytery meetings, as well as adding the vows of membership to the Book of Order. Also adopted was a change in the Rules of Discipline that expands the role of alternative forms of resolution.

The proposed amendment that would have replaced the current language of G-6.0106b with new language is the only amendment that did not receive approval by a majority of presbyteries. This item in its current form will continue to be part of the Book of Order.

We have witnessed and heard many different stories as the amendment on G-6.0106b was debated. In this and other deliberations, we as a church have learned better how to talk about difficult issues in a spirit of trust and faith. We may not always agree, but we have never forgotten that those with whom we disagree are still our brothers and sisters, as together we strive to reflect our common calling to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

By God's grace, the Holy Spirit is at work, strengthening our commitment to one another through

this denomination. We give thanks for a diverse and faithful church that challenges us all to serve with integrity and offer our gifts enthusiastically. Thanks be to God for our life Together.

**The Reverend Bruce Reyes-Chow, Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008);
The Reverend Grady Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly;
Elder Linda Bryant Valentine, Executive Director,
General Assembly Council**

For final voting results for the **Proposed Amendments from the 2008 General Assembly**, go to www.pcusa.org/generalassembly/vote08.htm.

NEWS ABOUT OUR MINISTERS

Two members of Peace River Presbytery received their Doctor of Ministry degrees on May 16, 2009:



Rev. Dr. Clint Cottrell,
Pastor of Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers



Rev. Dr. Silvana Franca,
Member-at-Large

Rev. Roger M. Kunkel, HR, received the 2009 Westminster Alumni Achievement Award in a special Alumni Honors Convocation Ceremony held April 25 during Alumni Weekend in the Church of St. Mary, Aldermanbury on the Westminster College campus in Fulton, MO. The Alumni Achievement Award has been presented annually since 1956 by the Westminster Board of Trustees as an official recognition of individual achievement in a chosen field of endeavor. The award is considered one of the highest honors Westminster can confer on an alumnus.



Westminster President Dr. George B. Forsythe (left) recognizes Rev. Roger Kunkel (right) for winning the Westminster Alumni Achievement Award.

Congratulations!

**Acts 16:5
Gathering 3
Tuesday, September 29, 2009
St. Paul's Presbyterian Church**

Please watch for more information!

May 28, 2009
Peace River Presbytery
Stated Meeting
Highlights



Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Sarasota, hosted the May meeting of Peace River Presbytery, sharing their spacious campus and great church volunteers.

General Presbyter Graham Hart introduced his daughter Laura and her baby Grace, Graham's first grandchild.

Rev. Hunter Farrell, a career missionary with the PCUSA and the director of the General Assembly Council's World Mission program area, preached during the worship service on "Mission: Redrawing the World". He also gave the keynote address plus led a breakout group. Rev. Farrell was very well received by those attending.



Other breakout sessions were led by Mr. Dave Moore for Beth-El, a multicultural mission, Susan Sampson for Thornwell Home for Children, and a visiting Arabic Presbyterian Pastor.

"**Good News Breaks**" were given by the Arabic Pastor and Ed McDowell, a representative from Duvall Home in Glenwood, Florida.

Kathy Broyard, Statewide Coordinator of the Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network (**FLAPDAN**) shared valuable information with the commissioners.

The Presbytery approved a change in the **Standing Rules** (recommended by the Theology and Worship Committee) that the celebration of the Lord's Supper will take place at all stated meetings of the presbytery.

The Board of Trustees President, Alan Penick, encouraged the churches to pledge their financial support (if they haven't already done so) and to fulfill their pledges.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry recommended, and the Presbytery voted, to receive the following inquirers:

- Donald Buck, Christ Church of Longboat Key
- Daniel Gonzales, First, Presbyterian Church, Sarasota
- Susan Wills, First, Presbyterian Church, Sarasota.

The Evangelism and Church Development Committee moved, and the Presbytery approved, that Peace New Church Development would become chartered as a church. An organizing and installing celebration of Peace

Presbyterian Church will be conducted on October 18, 2009. Congratulations!

Nominations Committee submitted the following names for election, and Presbytery approved:

Mission and Justice

- Ed Gray (New Life Fellowship, Naples) Class of 2011-1

Camps and Conferences

- Barbara Shafer (Covenant, Fort Myers) Class of 2011-1

Presbyterian Homes and Housing:

- Thomas McNutt (First, Lehigh Acres) Class of 2009
- JoAnn Beaumont (First, Fort Myers) Class of 2011 (This is to correct an error in electing Robert Bohl by mistake at the last Stated Meeting)

Florida Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Network:

- Rev. Graham Hart, Class of 2011

Information from the Records and Overtures Committee was submitted:

- "An Overture to Achieve Voting Parity among the Presbyteries Based on Church Membership" was presented for review, to be voted on at the next Presbytery meeting to be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly.
- The following churches have agreed to host upcoming Stated Meetings:
 - February 25, 2010 – Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Sarasota
 - May 27, 2010 – St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port
 - August 21, 2010 – Faith Presbyterian Church, Cape Coral

The Presbytery approved the following pastoral calls:

- Rev. Timothy Reynolds as Associate Pastor of Church of the Palms (Sarasota)
- Rev. Dr. Paul Eckel as Interim Pastor of Northminster Presbyterian Church (Sarasota)

Other actions by Committee on Ministry under authority granted:

- Approved Rev. India Dennis to labor outside the bounds of Peace River Presbytery in Foothills Presbytery, South Carolina.
- Sexual Misconduct Prevention Workshops will be held every other year for pastors and Directors of Christian Education serving churches in the Presbytery.

A special thanks goes to Clint Cottrell, Pastor of Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church in Fort Myers, who served as Clerk Pro-Tem in Craig Countiss' absence.

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

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

**“God Will Do Wonders Among You!”
2009 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women
July 11–15, 2009
Louisville, Kentucky**

The Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women gives you the opportunity to:

- nurture your faith in community with women from around the world;
- learn about mission opportunities and justice and peace issues;
- develop leadership skills;
- participate in workshops;
- hear from Bible study leaders and plenary speakers;
- meet new friends, including Global Partners from around the world;
- and much more!



For more information, go to: www.pcusa.org/pw/.

Find your place in God's mission



Celebrate what God is doing in the world and how Presbyterians are part of God's mission. Come to [World Mission Celebration 09](#) in Cincinnati October 22–24 to learn, share and make lifelong partners in mission. If you are passionate

about world mission, this gathering is for you – whether you're already seasoned in mission work or want to network with others and learn how to get involved in mission.

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. [Register early for the best workshop selection.](#)

FROM YOUR RESOURCE CENTER

The Resource Center of Peace River Presbytery exists to assist you, whether you are a Pastor or other Church Staff Person, Certified Christian Educator, Layperson, or Committee Member.

You are welcome to come in and browse at your leisure, or to browse through the online catalogue which is available on the Presbytery web site, www.peaceriverpresbytery.org (click on “Resource Center”, then “Online Catalogue”). Lori Doyal is your contact person and is happy to help you find the materials you need. Lori can be reached at the Presbytery office by phone (941-426-8421), and e-mail (lori@peaceriverpresbytery.org). She is available Monday – Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

If you have a topic you are interested in, but are not sure of titles, we can research our catalogue to find related resources. The resources can be picked up at the Presbytery office location, or shipped to you (at our expense) if you live farther away. The borrower assumes responsibility to pay for return postage.

The Resource Center carries a variety of materials, including Sunday School and Small Group curriculum for all age levels, lectionary aids, strategy helps (i.e. leader development, conflict resolution, administration and planning, church growth, stewardship), life journey helps (i.e. family, marriage, parenting, morals, ethics, aging), Bible and church history, interpretation helps, mission and witness information, and much more. In addition to book resources, we carry audio and visual resources.

Peace River Presbytery Resource Center has a membership with the Regional Resource Center of the Synod of South Atlantic (located in Atlanta, GA). The Regional Resource Center only carries audio-visual materials. If your church has less than 100 members, you may borrow audio-visual resources from the Synod under the Presbytery's membership. If your church has more than 100 members, you may have your own membership with the Regional Resource Center. You must contact the Regional Resource Center directly if you wish to borrow materials. Please go to the following website for information, www.regionalresource.org

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

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