



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

MARCH 2009

SPEAKING FROM THE HART

“It is enough”

The Children of Israel were out in the desert, wandering in “no man’s land” between Egypt and the land of God’s Promise. For 40 years they wandered. Along the way, when all seemed lost and they were going in circles without food and drink, they murmured and whined against Moses and God.

3000 plus years later the Dow is below 7000; the stimulus packet effect is yet to be seen; and folks are troubled, concerned, and murmuring. Back then what restored hope wasn’t a rise in their portfolio values, or even a 5-course meal, but it was Manna, translated: What is it? What the people of Israel found out, after they gathered the manna up each morning was: it was enough. It was enough for that day.

Like everyone I know, I am concerned about the tumbling stock market and economic crises. How will the important missions and ministries of our churches, Presbytery, and denomination that touch people’s lives, that are important to our hearts, find the support they need in such a time as this? How will our country pay for it all when we finally do recover? Will my kids be OK with their jobs? Will the churches in Peace River be OK? Will people who are hurting find some hope?

Some of you know that when Linda and I were just married, 5 months after our honeymoon, while I was a student at Princeton and Linda was finishing nursing school, I discovered I had cancer. It was not a good kind, if there is such a thing.

I remember, as if it was yesterday, after my second surgery walking out of the hospital on a January 1st cold Philadelphia day, and don’t remember the sky ever looking so blue. I was grateful ... grateful to be alive! Now 30 plus years later, I am still grateful to be alive, and grateful for a loving wife. I am grateful (although at the time I didn’t always feel so grateful) for the surgeries, radiation, and 2½ years of chemotherapy, and good doctors and a good God! I am grateful for:

- three children whom we weren’t supposed to have and a grandchild on the way;
- the 3 congregations I was blessed to serve,
- and now this time with you.

Manna comes in all kinds of sizes and shapes. That said, at the same time I, like so many of you, have lost much of my retirement savings. I am anxious, concerned, but I also can’t imagine what some hungry moms in Africa or Haiti feel every day as they watch and cry for their hungry children. For them I pray for Manna of a physical kind, and that a bad time will get no worse.

But for us the story of the children of Israel’s murmurings and the gift of “what is it” has me thinking about the manna we have.... the gifts we have been given... the daily bread that we eat... the pensions we still have... the children and friends with whom we are blessed. I trust that each of us will find that which, in spite of all our paper and real losses, will sustain, give hope, help us find a spirit of gratitude, and like the children of Israel discover that “it is enough”.

I would love to hear your Manna stories, even when, or maybe especially when we find ourselves in wilderness times.

With gratitude,
Graham Hart, General Presbyter
graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

Please join us in prayer:

- March 1 Trinity Presbyterian, Venice
- March 8 Venice Presbyterian, Venice
- March 15 New Life NCD, Naples
- March 22 Peace NCD, Lakewood Ranch
- March 29 First Presbyterian, Arcadia



THE MAIN EVENT

The **Main Event** is this coming **Saturday, March 7**, at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers. If you would still like to register, please call Joan at the Presbytery office, 941-426-8421.

Presbytery Committee of the Month

The **Council** of Peace River Presbytery began 2009 with a retreat at Covenant Presbyterian Church. During the retreat, we explored new ideas and goals in order to fulfill our mission. We discovered through conversations that we must find better ways to help congregations in transition and in times of need. Over the years, the only contact between a church and the presbytery existed when a church or its pastor had a conflict. We would like to identify retired Pastors or skilled Elders to maintain an ongoing relationship with a particular church in order to help them during times of transition. We believe this would bring the laity and the presbytery into a more unified relationship.

The Council will also continue to find excellent speakers to bring new ideas to Peace River Presbytery. We want



our meetings to be educational, vibrant and purposeful. We will work hard to ensure that "whatever we do, we do it to the glory of God."

Reverend Daniel L. Hagmaier
Chair, Peace River Presbytery Council

(Council is composed of the President of the Board of Trustees, the chair of each standing committee, the chair of Council, and Moderator of Presbyterian Women. The Moderator, Stated Clerk, Treasurer, General Presbyter, and Moderator-in-Nomination are ex officio members with voice, but no vote. Representatives from both Beth-El and Cedarkirk also have voice but not vote.)



The [Big Tent](#), a gathering of Presbyterians for ten national conferences and convocations under one roof, will take place in Atlanta, Georgia, from June 11-13.

[Ten Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\) ministries and groups will hold their conferences in conjunction with the Big Tent event:](#) the Healthy Ministry Conference, the Presbyterian Communicators' Network Conference, the National Multicultural Church Conference, the Stewardship and Investment Conference, the Evangelism and Church Growth Conference, the National Elders Conference, the Peacemaking Conference, the PHEWA Social Justice Biennial Conference, the Racial Ethnic Convocation and the New Immigrants Ministries Convocation.

To register, go to <http://www.pcusa.org/bigtent/>.

Phyllis Maisel, member of Northminster Presbyterian Church and Presbytery's Mission & Justice Committee, is going and has volunteered to coordinate the transportation of the Peace River Presbytery participants. Please call her at 941-377-9379 if you plan on going. It would be great if a delegation from our Presbytery could attend!



Sharing Resources, Changing Lives

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.

Where does the money go? The [Presbyterian Hunger Program](#) receives 36 percent of undesignated One Great Hour of Sharing gifts, while the [Self-Development of People](#) and [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#) each receive 32 percent.

When is the offering received? Most congregations receive the offering on Easter Sunday, Palm Sunday, or both, while many receive it throughout Lent.

Souper Bowl of Caring

Many Peace River Presbytery churches participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring. Below is a story shared by one of our churches.

The youth in Pine Shores Presbyterian Church participated in the nationwide Souper Bowl of Caring last week and raised \$19,444 and collected 1,637 cans of soup, all of which will be donated to the All Faiths Food Bank in Sarasota. Only 12 kids from 6th grade-12th participated and the congregation supported them and made it happen.



We had a "tailgate" party January 25, complete with canopy tents, food, and hunger facts and figures to raise the awareness of hunger in our world, country and community.

Then on Super Bowl Sunday we held a soup can drive and asked for financial contributions. Our goal was to raise 1000 cans of soup and \$13,000.

The youth put their whole hearts and energy and creativity into this and the congregation responded. They led the entire worship as well with integrity and depth. In a time where youth are pulled in so many directions, some positive and some not, these 12 youth had a vision to make a difference in reaching out to people who are hungry.....and they did.

Terri Jo Crego
Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Sarasota
Director of Children and Youth Ministries

Save the Date

Gathering 2 for the **Acts 16:5** teams, led by Stan Ott, will be held on **Thursday, April 30, 2009** at Wintergarden Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte. *Watch for more details!*



Guatemalan Sister Church Partnership
Annual Report 2008

A copy of this report is available on our web site, www.peaceriverpresbytery.org on the Mission and Justice page.

Shepherds' Sabbath
April 13-15, 2009
A Sabbath Retreat



Looking for a moment to rest and recharge after Holy Week and Easter? Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center has the event for you. They invite all church professionals and their families serving in Peace River or Tampa Bay Presbyteries to enjoy a time of Sabbath in the beauty of God's Creation.

Come be their guest for this two-night, three-day event designed to give you plenty of time for rest and relaxation. The schedule is flexible allowing you to hike, study, reflect and worship, with plenty of time for rocking on the porch and fellowshiping over great meals served at Cedar Lodge. Whether you can stay for the day or all three days, you won't want to miss this opportunity for Sabbath at Cedarkirk. Please contact Karin Dale at 813-685-4224 ext. 1 to make your reservations for this **free** event.

This event is co-sponsored by the Presbyteries of Tampa Bay and Peace River. Please visit www.cedarkirk.com for more information.

Presbyterian Historical Society Announces Spring
2009 Local Church History Seminar

The Presbyterian Historical Society is pleased to announce the dates for the annual Local Church History Seminar. **From April 30 through May 3, 2009**, the society will hold its seminar at William Black Lodge in Montreat, North Carolina. The event is designed for persons interested in the management and preservation of records and writing congregation history. The seminar features workshops on Presbyterian history, oral history, researching and writing a church history, managing and preserving congregation records, disaster planning, exhibits, and anniversary celebrations.

The society is pleased to offer a scholarship to a participant from a small church. For additional information about the seminar, scholarships, housing at the William Black Lodge, and for a seminar registration form, visit the society's website at: <http://www.history.pcusa.org/cong/lchs/index.html> or contact us at:

Presbyterian Historical Society
425 Lombard Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
215-627-1852
refdesk@history.pcusa.org

National Pastors' Sabbath

The National Pastors' Sabbath is scheduled for April 17-20, 2009 and will be held at the Sawgrass Marriott Resort and Spa located in Ponte Vedra Beach near Jacksonville, FL. For more information or to register, go to www.pcusa.org/pastorsabbath or contact GA Meeting Service at 888-728-7228, ext 2417.



FROM THORNWELL:
Excerpts from

"The President's Campus Update, Winter 2009"



Are you ready to hear a bit of good news? I hope so, because I'm ready to share it! If you've read the President's Update for January 2009, you are as painfully aware, as I am, that giving for the first quarter of this fiscal year was down by 50%. However, thanks to the hard work of the development staff and the gifts of our faithful donors over the past few weeks, this shortfall has been reduced to 18%. Many thanks to all of you who share the ministry and mission of [Thornwell](http://www.thornwell.org) with individuals and congregations in your area. Caring people are willing to help when they know there is a need, so please continue your "friend-raising" efforts on behalf of Thornwell.

Blessings,
Skip

For the complete report,
go to www.peaceriverpresbytery.org
on the Mission and Justice page.

This newsletter is available for viewing anytime at
www.peaceriverpresbytery.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.peaceriverpresbytery.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

February 26, 2009
Peace River Presbytery
Stated Meeting
Highlights



Peace River Presbytery was graciously hosted by **Trinity Presbyterian Church**, Venice. Elder Mary Lee Mann (First, Fort Myers) moderated the meeting.

Rev. Graham Hart, General Presbyter, led worship as he shared a meditation that focused on Jesus' prayer for his disciples then and now, that we may be one for the sake of God's mission to the world. Our oneness is not for our sake, but rather for the sake of the world that God so loves. When we are not one, our witness to the world is compromised and it becomes harder for the world to believe. All those gathered shared in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

As a preparation for voting on the Book of Order Amendments, the Theology and Worship Committee hosted a series of informational meetings particularly designed for the elder commissioners selected for this meeting.

After time of prayer, discernment, and discussion, the commissioners voted the following:

Amendment 08-A: Passed
Amendment 08-B: Failed
Amendment 08-C: Passed
Amendment 08-D: Passed
Amendment 08-E: Passed
Amendment 08-F: Failed
Amendment 08-G: Passed
Amendment 08-H: Passed
Amendment 08-I: Failed
Amendment 08-J: Passed



Ecumenical Statement 08-K: Passed
Ecumenical Statement 08-L: Passed
Ecumenical Statement 08-M: Passed
Ecumenical Statement 08-N: Passed

REMINDER: Peace River Presbytery is one of 173 Presbyteries that are voting. It takes a majority to make the decision final.

The Presbytery also approved a revision to the 2009 budget.

Leadership and Congregational Development Committee Chair Chris Adams promoted the upcoming **Main Event** to be held on Saturday, March 7, 2009 at Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers. Folks were urged to register as soon as possible since the deadline for guaranteed lunch is Friday, February 27.

Nominations Committee submitted the following and Presbytery approved:

Commissioners to the Synod of South Atlantic:

- Elder Bill Oehler (Vanderbilt, Naples) Class of 2011
- Rev. Maynard Pittendreigh (Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach) Class of 2011

Board of Trustees:

- Rev. Robert Bohl (HR/Naples) Class of 2009-1

Committee on Ministry:

- Ward Powers (Vanderbilt, Naples) Class of 2009-1
- Rev. Taylor Hill (HR/Bradenton) Class of 2010-1
- Rev. Wayne Blaser (First, Bradenton) Class of 2010-1
- Jon White (Vanderbilt, Naples) Class of 2011-1

Mission and Justice:

- DeAnne Sawyer (Covenant, Fort Myers) Class of 2011-1

Theology and Worship:

- Jim Smith (First, Sarasota) Class of 2009-1

Presbyterian Homes and Housing:

- Rev. Bob Hultz (HR/Sarasota) Class of 2011-1
- Rev. Robert Bohl (HR/Naples) Class of 2011-1.

In addition, the Presbytery approved Rev. Kathi Wiggins (Siesta Key Chapel, Sarasota) as **Chair of Personnel** and Jim Elder (First, Bonita Springs) as **Vice Chair of Personnel**.

Committee on Ministry recommended the following and the Presbytery approved:

- **Rev. Lyn Olson** as Associate Pastor of Venice Presbyterian Church, Venice, effective January 15, 2009 and her installation will take place on Sunday, March 22 at 4:00 p.m.
- **Rev. Steven Grant's** installation as Associate Pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs on Sunday, April 19 at 3:00 pm

Other actions by Committee on Ministry under authority granted:

- Approved the transfer of Rev. Thomas Atkins to New Covenant Presbytery effective February 1, 2009
- Approved the transfer of Rev. Dennis Reid to the Presbytery of Tampa Bay effective February 1, 2009
- Approved the transfer of Rev. Larry Yerger to Pal Duro Presbytery effective March 29, 2009
- Granted permission for Rev. Julio Travieso, member of Presbytery of Tampa Bay, to labor within the bounds of Peace River from January 1, 2009 through December 15, 2009 as Temporary Supply Pastor Evangelist at First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota

The next Presbytery meeting will be held on Thursday, May 28, 2009 at Pine Shores Presbyterian Church, Sarasota. The Rev. Hunter Farrell, Director of Worldwide Ministries, PCUSA, will be our keynote speaker.