



# The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

APRIL 2011

## SPEAKING FROM THE HART What leads: structure or vision?

Over the next 15 months the [General Assembly Commission on Middle Governing Bodies](#) will be at work and will report back to the next General Assembly. Recently members of the commission met with our Synod, and in February I was asked to speak to them about the challenges and opportunities we are facing in Peace River. Central to their task is a question of structure, specifically do we still need a 4-tiered system, i.e., GA, Synods, Presbyteries, and Sessions, to live faithfully in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a connectional reformed body, or are there other meaningful ways we can intentionally live our life together? In addition to their home page and blog, they have posted background information and articles the commission is reading at <http://oga.pcusa.org/mgbcommission/resources.htm>. On a personal note, I was honored that a paper I wrote for our vision task force and the GAMC/MGB Advisory Board was included in their recommended reading list.

It was interesting to see that the work and process of the MGB commission in some ways parallels the work of our Presbytery's Vision Task Force. One of the questions our vision task force asked early in our process was: **What leads - structure or vision?** Their answer was: unless we are clear who we are and why we are (mission), and where we are going (vision), it will be an exercise in futility to tinker with structures. Over the past 30 years, the General Assembly has gone through several major restructuring phases, but I am hopeful that with this special commission, the first questions they ask will be: *Why do we exist? What is our purpose?* And then and only then, ask: *What are the structures that can help us get to where we believe God is calling us?*

Here in Peace River, the Presbytery Council has taken the next steps related to our recently adopted mission/vision statement which expresses our Presbytery's purpose (raison d'être) and sense of call. We are invited to focus our energy, intelligence, imagination and love in these three areas:

- To affirm congregations
- To connect disciples in mission
- To be the Body of Christ together.

If you have thoughts and ideas of how we can live into that vision, or have questions that you feel the Council would do well to address, I would love to hear from you.

So for the mission in front of us, and a vision of what can be, I say...

Thanks be to God!

*Graham*

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## World Communion of Reformed Churches



Recently we were privileged to have a working group from the World Communion of Reformed Churches visit Immokalee and gather in Naples for one of their yearly work-planning meetings. The executive director of the WCRC, Rev. Dr. Setri Nyomi, gave us this brief description of how WCRC works and where the Immokalee/Naples consultation fits in.

*The WCRC is owned by its member churches, the 230 denominations spread in 108 countries throughout the world. They express their directions for the WCRC in the once-every-seven-years General Councils. The last one (actually first for the WCRC as a united body) was the Uniting General Council in Grand Rapids in June 2010. In between General Councils, the Executive Committee which meets every year oversees policies. The General Secretary leads a professional staff team in Geneva to carry out the programs and commitments of the WCRC as well as facilitate relationships among the member churches. This is further enhanced by the regional Councils of the WCRC. The Regional Council which is relevant to you is CANAAC - the Caribbean and North America Area Council.*

*Theological reflections, consultations, workshops, immersion programs, dialogue opportunities, publications, visits to member churches, working with ecumenical partners, etc., are some of the specific ways in which the WCRC carries out its programs. Task forces are also set up whenever necessary to carry out a particular project which will stimulate reflections and actions for the whole body or a region of the body.*

*Program development after each General Council begins with a process of strategic planning. We are actually in that period right now. Because of the WCRC's commitment to justice, we have singled out justice as a focus on which we need a special consultation to understand how the General Council in Grand Rapids informs us on the next steps in our justice commitments. This is what will be worked on during this gathering. For more information on WCRC's commitment to justice, please see <http://wcrc.ch/node/35>.*

## WORSHIP IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

On Saturday, March 12, 113 people gathered for **The Main Event** at First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte.



The response was overwhelmingly positive: "Lots of helpful ideas for worship", "Constance Cherry was great", "Great learning experience", "Really enjoyed the worship service", "The best Main Event I have attended".

Many thanks for all their hard work go to:

- Jay Mumper, Lyn Olson, and Jonathan Lange from the Leadership and Congregational Development Committee
- the workshop leaders: Constance Cherry, Elizabeth Deibert, Nancy Exline, Graham Hart, Jonathan Lange, Mickey Miller, Jay Mumper, and Lyn Olson; and
- First Presbyterian Church, their staff and volunteers, who did such a great job hosting.

## HE IS RISEN!



**Please pray for the church of the week:  
the congregation, mission, pastors,  
educators, and support staff.**

April 3 First, Port Charlotte  
April 10 Wintergarden, Port Charlotte  
April 17 Burnt Store, Punta Gorda  
April 24 First, Punta Gorda

## CEDARKIRK NEWS

### Shepherd's Sabbath Retreat

For the third year in a row, **Cedarkirk** is hosting a free retreat for church professionals and their families from April 25 through 27. Be their guest for this two-night, three-day free 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 time for rocking on the porch and fellowshiping over great meals served at Cedar Lodge. Whether you can stay for the day or for the entire event, you won't want to miss this opportunity for Sabbath at Cedarkirk. For more information, please contact Karin Dale at 813-685-4224, ext. 1 or [karin@cedarkirk.org](mailto:karin@cedarkirk.org).

### Open House

On **Saturday, May 7**, from 1:00-5:00 pm, all are invited to attend an **Open House** at Cedarkirk. This afternoon event offers fun for all ages and a taste of what a day of summer camp is like. You are free to enjoy a great day of swimming in the pool, archery, climbing on the rock wall, hiking, hayrides, camp tours, s'mores by a campfire, or just relaxing in a rocking chair on the porch of the lodge. If you want to make a day of it, **there is also a 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Benefit Concert** at a venue near camp after the Open House. Denver & the Mile High



Orchestra – a nationally-renowned, horn-driven band from Nashville – will be playing a show just for friends of Cedarkirk. For more information, contact the camp office at [camps@cedarkirk.org](mailto:camps@cedarkirk.org) or call 813-685-4224.

### **Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center Receives the 2011 Green Leaf Seal**

Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center has received the 2011 Green Leaf Seal from the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Environmental Ministries and the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association. This honor speaks to the great commitment that Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center has to environmental stewardship.

To receive the 2011 Green Leaf Seal, camp and conference centers must have completed a total of five projects or activities related to environmental stewardship in the areas of facilities, education/program, operations, and outreach.



The Green Leaf Seal is designed to recognize camp and conference centers that care for God's earth by practicing sustainability and educating guests about environmental stewardship.

"Presbyterian camp and conference centers are the perfect places to make connections between our faith and caring for God's earth. Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center has taken great strides in environmental stewardship, and it is exciting to recognize these accomplishments," says Katie Holmes, associate for Environmental Ministries.

The Green Leaf Seal is a program of PC(USA) Environmental Ministries in cooperation with the sites of the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association (PCCCA). Environmental Ministries works to inspire and equip Presbyterians to work for eco-justice for all of God's earth. PCCCA equips leaders for ministries of discipleship, community building and the care of Creation.

For more information on Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center's commitment to environmental stewardship contact John Reiter at [john@cedarkirk.org](mailto:john@cedarkirk.org).

For more information on the Green Leaf Seal, go to [www.pcusa.org/environment](http://www.pcusa.org/environment).

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## **ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING**

### **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.

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## **Plan now to attend the 2011 Big Tent!**

**June 30—July 2, 2011  
Indianapolis, Indiana**

This summer, thousands of Presbyterians will gather from across the country to celebrate the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Registration for the Big Tent Conference opened February 28 and already dozens have begun to respond.

- [Clergywomen's Leadership Institute/Young Women's Leadership Development](#)
- [Evangelism and Church Growth Conference](#)
- [Healthy Ministry Conference](#)
- [National Elders Conference](#)
- [National Multicultural Church Conference](#)
- [Peacemaking Conference](#)
- [Presbyterian Communicators Network National Conference](#)
- [Racial Ethnic and Immigrants Convocation](#)
- [World Mission Matters](#)

Children and youth are vital participants of Big Tent too! There will be [children and youth programs](#), and older youth will have the option to participate in a [Pathways](#) event that will run in tandem with the Big Tent.

The Big Tent conference is scheduled to take place in Indianapolis, Indiana. It is their hope that these plans can be maintained, due to the excellent accommodations and arrangements provided by the Convention & Visitors Association, the hospitality community and local Presbyterians. However, immigration legislation under consideration in Indiana's state government, may cause the event to be moved. In 2010, the General Assembly instructed its agencies to "refrain from holding national meetings at hotels in those states where travel by immigrant Presbyterians or Presbyterians of color or Hispanic ancestry might subject them to harassment due to legislation similar to Arizona Law SB 1070/HB2162." They are hopeful that Indiana legislators will reject this legislation quickly, so that their plans can continue, but this is uncertain. **Big Tent meeting planners will make a final decision regarding location by May 2, 2011. Until this time, participants are encouraged to register for the conference, but to delay making travel arrangements until the meeting location has been finally determined.**

Three spirit-filled days of Presbyterian celebration are planned for the Big Tent, including:

- Worship, led by Mark Labberton and J. Herbert Nelson
- Keynote speaker: [Serene Jones](#)
- Your choice of [nine partner conferences](#)
- An exhibit hall showcasing the newest ministry resources from the PC(USA)
- Time to reconnect with Presbyterians from across the country

## REMINDER

The **Caring for Generations** offering is received on the second Sunday of May. The proceeds benefit residents of Florida Presbyterian Homes and Presbyterian Retirement Communities of Florida.



## CENTS-ABILITY



**Cents-ability** is a strategy for raising awareness – and funds – for the fight against hunger. It is an opportunity to invite every member – young and old – to contribute a few cents at every meal. This simple act is an expression of thanks

for what we have each received. It is also a commitment to share our blessings with others. Collectively, it can make a difference. ¼ is kept by the local church for their local needs, ¼ goes to the Presbytery (*current recipients are Misión Peniel in Immokalee and St. Paul's Breakfast Program in North Port*), and ½ is sent to the Presbyterian Hunger Program.

Is your church involved?

For more information and promotional suggestions, go to <http://www.pcusa.org/hunger/centsability.htm>.



Each year, approximately 35,000 people visit [Montreat Conference Center](#) to reunite with family and friends, to attend [conferences](#) or [church retreats](#), and to enjoy the breathtaking beauty of God's creation.

**NEW in 2011!**

- [Montreat's Signature Conference](#)
- [Montreat Institute for Church Leadership](#)

For more information on these and other opportunities, go to [www.montreat.org](http://www.montreat.org).

### Mailing Address:

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