



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

JUNE/JULY 2011

SPEAKING FROM THE HART

Whose chair is this?

Chairs... who gets to sit in them and when says much about the person and the circumstances. At Buckingham Palace, there is a chair in which only the Queen may sit. It symbolizes her office, power and role in the nation. In the Anglican tradition, in every Episcopal Church there is a chair reserved for the Bishop. No one else can sit in that chair. Some of us played in our high school band. I played trumpet and by my senior year made it to First Part - Third Chair. John Appleton and Bob McNally always managed to beat me. That was OK because I was on the first team in varsity soccer. Unfortunately, there were no special reserved chairs in soccer, unless you were tired or did something that did not please the coach, and then you got to sit on the bench.

At the May Presbytery meeting, I placed a chair in the front and center of the chancel with a sign that said simply: **The Presbytery**. At the meeting I asked the question: *When we come to an assembly like this, whose chair is this? Who might be invited to sit in this chair? The Moderator? Stated Clerk? Host pastor?*

I suggested that in our Presbyterian form of government everyone at that Presbytery meeting gets to sit in that chair. As clergy and elder commissioners, we all symbolically sit in that chair. We know if that were literally the case it could get crowded, and in real life it is at times a bit unwieldy. In the middle of complex debates, difficult conflict, or trying to decide what to do, it would be far simpler and easier if we only had one person sitting in that chair. But what is unique about us as Presbyterians is that elders and clergy are invited to sit together.

Why? **The Presbytery is not them, it is us...**

In the Episcopal Church, we know where the authority and responsibility for making things work or deciding things resides – it is in the office of the Bishop.

How does that work for Presbyterians? On May 26 where was the Presbytery sitting? We were gathered as the corporate Bishop, sitting together in one chair for worship, celebration, learning, fellowship, prayer and doing the business of the Presbytery.

This past Sunday? Where was the Presbytery? We were gathered in 39 different locations and communities offering praise and worship to God.

When the Committee on Ministry meets with a congregation going through a time of transition, where is

the Presbytery? The Presbytery is present in the committee members from 20 different congregations, who, sitting in that chair, offer support, encouragement, direction and guidance to those churches.

In our form of government when important decisions get made, whether voting on amendments from General Assembly or voting on a new call and member of the Presbytery, who decides on such things? The Presbytery - everyone sitting in that chair.

We lost some Presbytery members last year. Who cares? I hope everyone sitting in that chair today cares.

In our Presbytery, some people are pleased and some are grieved that Amendment 10-A has passed in a majority of other presbyteries. Who cares? I hope everyone sitting in that chair recognizes that we may not always agree, but we are the body of Christ together. When one member suffers we all suffer. So on all sides of this issue people have struggled, and I trust that somehow all of us in that chair will honor and respect and pray for each other. Why? Because we are in this chair, this place, this calling together.

So what is the reason, the purpose we are sitting in this chair called Peace River Presbytery in the first place? As stated in our Mission/Vision statement, we are...

- **to affirm congregations**
- **to connect disciples in mission**
- **and to be the body of Christ together.**

That's why we have this chair in the first place. And unlike in the band, we are all first chair.

When all is said and done, I hope we know God didn't so love the chair; God so loves the **world** he sent his son. I pray that, as a Presbytery, wherever we are, after whatever we have done, we will get out of our chair, and, in ever deepening and expanding ways, love the world, touch the world, know the world, be sent into the world and discover all over again the world in our own backyards. For that is the world God so loves...

I know we have challenges ahead, but more and more I have come to appreciate each of you, our staff, pastors, elders, and presbytery leaders – all of us who are sitting in that chair together.

Living in the joy of Easter,

Graham

Graham Hart, General Presbyter

graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

Please pray for the church of the week:

June 5 Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Sarasota
June 12 Siesta Key Chapel, Sarasota
June 19 Whitfield Estates, Sarasota
June 26 Trinity, Venice
July 3 Venice, Venice
July 10 First, Arcadia
July 17 First, Bonita Springs
July 24 Braden River, Bradenton
July 31 First, Bradenton

Trauma in a congregation and its aftermath...

Clergy (or other trusted church staff) sexual misconduct is not an isolated incident but a precipitating event which sets in motion a fairly predictable set of consequences in the life of a congregation for weeks, months and years ahead.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) responds to natural, human cause and technological disasters, and National Response Team members are trained in helping congregations and communities address the impacts of trauma. Therefore, this year Rev. Bruce Wismer of Pine Shores Presbyterian Church with other members of the National Response Team of PDA will help us to understand what happens to our congregations after a traumatic event. While sexual misconduct can be the precipitating event, the pattern is similar to other traumas such as natural disasters, sudden death of a leader, or a violent act within a worshipping community.

Dates for this year's **required sexual misconduct prevention workshop** are:

- **June 23** from 1 to 3 p.m. at Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach
- **September 29** from 1 to 3 p.m. at Pine Shores, Sarasota.

All Pastors and Certified Christian Educators are required to attend ONE of these workshops.

Please register by either calling the Presbytery office (941-426-8421) or e-mailing alesia@peacriverpresbytery.org

A brochure on the Sexual Misconduct Prevention Workshops is available on the Presbytery's [web site](#).

2011 Pentecost Offering

The Pentecost Offering is traditionally received on the day of Pentecost (**June 12, 2011**). It provides a direct way to meet the needs of children at risk, youth, and young adults. Congregations are encouraged to keep 40 percent of the Offering to support ministry with children at risk in their communities.



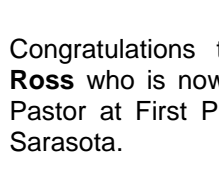
The General Assembly's portion (60 percent) provides leadership development opportunities for Presbyterian youth and young adults and supports children-at-risk programs at the national level. Since 1998, Presbyterians of all ages have raised over \$7 million for these ministries that benefit younger members of God's family.

Congratulations!

Pine Shores Presbyterian Church in Sarasota is celebrating their 60th anniversary!



Congratulations to **Rev. Dr. Christopher Carlson** who was installed as Pastor at Northminster Presbyterian Church, Sarasota on Sunday, May 15, 2011.



Congratulations to **Rev. Dr. John Ross** who is now serving as Interim Pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Sarasota.



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.

Some of the excellent books in the Resource Center include:

- "The Other Jesus: Rejecting a Religion of Fear for the God of Love", by Greg Garrett;
- "Worship Matters: A Study for Congregations", by Jane Rogers Vann;
- "Becoming the Pastor You Hope To Be: Four Practices for Improving Your Ministry", by Barbara J. Blodgett;
- "Helping Children Grieve", a DVD by Khris Ford and Paula D'Arcy;
- "Confronting Death: A Christian Approach to the End of Life", a DVD by Walter Wangerin, Jr.;
- "Suffering and the Courage of God: Exploring How Grace and Suffering Meet", by Robert Corin Morris;
- and three books by the Alban Institute, and edited by Larry A. Goleman: "Finding Our Story: Narrative Leadership and Congregational Change", "Teaching Our Story: Narrative Leadership and Pastoral Formation", and "Living Our Story: Narrative Leadership and Congregational Culture".

We also carry samples of curriculum materials, including “Wee Believe” for children, and “We Believe” for adults. Small group study samples include “The Present Word” and “Being Reformed”.

These and many other resources are available for you to check out. The only cost to you would be return shipping back to the Resource Center or you may drop them off. You may come to the Presbytery office and browse through the Resource Center, or you may look on line (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. – 2:00 p.m.

INVITATION FROM CEDARKIRK

Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center cordially invites you, your staff and your church family to a dedication service for the new retreat cottage at Cedarkirk on Tuesday, June 14, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.



This new building will be utilized this summer camp season and we look forward to its addition in our ministry throughout the year. A brief dessert reception will follow after the worship service. If you have any questions, please contact the camp office at (813) 685-4224 or info@cedarkirk.org

Columbia Theological Seminary Center for Lifelong Learning

Looking for learning events for the summer, the fall of 2011 or beyond? Click on one of these courses, or check out the full list of Lifelong Learning events for 2011-12. We hope you’ll find something that will feed your soul, stimulate your thinking, and encourage you in your life and ministry.

SUMMER EVENTS OF NOTE

[July 18-21 Columbia Theological Seminary at the Montreat Conference Center Presents A Presbyterian History and Reformed Theology Summer Series: “Ties that Bind—The Presbyterian Church and Race.”](#)

[July 18-21 ~ KNOWING Our Neighbors: A Purposeful Interfaith Encounter \(Summer Scholars 2011\)](#) – featuring Ben Campbell Johnson, David Fraccaro, field trips to a mosque and synagogue, and conversation partners from the Jewish, Muslim and Buddhist traditions.

[August 1-3 \(weekday\) AND August 12-13 \(weekend\) Confessing the Beatitudes \(Presbyterian Women Bible Study Training\)](#) – co-instructors Margaret Aymer

and Rita Boyer lead the weekday course, and Sharol Hayner leads the weekend course

FALL/WINTER EVENTS OF NOTE!!!!

[Oct. 31-Nov. 4 Living Into Sabbath](#)- featuring the leadership of Wayne Muller, author of *Sabbath* and *A Life of Being, Having and Doing Enough*, this event features three tracks – creative sabbatical planning, a certificate in spiritual formation course, and this year’s Guthrie Scholars.

[Jan. 24-26 \(January seminars\) –CHRISTIANITY AFTER RELIGION: The End of Church and the Birth of a New Spiritual Awakening](#) - Diana Butler Bass and other conversation partners explore how the Spirit might be leading God’s people to live into the future. The event includes discussions organized around existing denominations/faith traditions, allowing time for participants to explore what a vision for their future might entail.



The Montreat Conference Center, as a mission center of the Presbyterian Church (USA), seeks to glorify God by serving the whole Church of Jesus Christ by calling all God’s people to a place set apart, for spiritual commitment and renewal, to grow in discipleship, to build relationships, and to prepare one another for Christ’s ministry in the world. 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. It is Montreat Conference Center’s privilege and great honor to offer time and place for all these things. For more information, you may go to their web site at www.montreat.org or call toll free at 1-800-572-2257.

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[Graham Hart](#), General Presbyter
[Clint Cottrell](#), Stated Clerk
[Adam Martin](#), Treasurer
[Alesia Sharpe](#), Office Manager
[Bill Setchel](#), Financial Secretary
[Joan Mock](#), Part-Time Administrative Assistant
[Lori Doyal](#), Part-Time Administrative Assistant

Peace River Presbytery
Stated Meeting Highlights
May 26, 2011

Many thanks go to the wonderful staff and volunteers of **Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church, Naples**, as they hosted the May Stated Meeting of Peace River Presbytery.



Rev. Dr. Cynthia Rigby, W.C. Brown Professor of Theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, was the guest preacher and keynote speaker. Dr. Rigby's committed and passionate presentation was greatly enjoyed and appreciated by both clergy and elder commissioners.

Stated Clerk Clint Cottrell moved, and the Presbytery approved, that the official Mission/Vision Statement be as follows:

We believe Peace River Presbytery is called to affirm congregations, to connect disciples in mission, and to be the body of Christ together.

The commissioners voted on the Proposed Amendments to the Constitution that were approved by the 219th General Assembly and recommended to the presbyteries for their vote.

- Amendment 10-A was defeated (79 no, 65 yes, 2 abstentions).
- Amendments 10-B through 10-O were approved.

MOTIONS FROM COMMITTEES AND BOARDS

Council

Council nominated, and the Presbytery approved, Mr. **Lloyd Doerflinger**, First Presbyterian Church, Naples, to serve on the Nominations Committee in the Class of 2012. *It was also reported that a Guide Team Task Force has been created to shepherd the Mission/Vision Statement into the life of the Presbytery.*

Board of Trustees

The Board moved, and the Presbytery approved, authorizing Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood, to sell the house located on the southern edge of their property at a price determined by the market.

Nominations

The following were nominated and elected:

- **Rev. Dr. Gerald (Jerry) Wise (HR)** as Chair of the Evangelism & Church Development Committee for 2011

- **Elder Jim Beckwith** (Westminster, Bradenton) as Chair of Committee on Ministry for 2011
- **Rev. Dr. Kathleen Weller** (Validated Ministry) as Vice Chair of Committee on Ministry for 2011
- **Ms. Patty Li** (First, Bradenton) and **Rev. Ron Kruzel** (Validated Ministry) to the Evangelism & Church Development Committee, both Class of 2013
- **Rev. Ed Bellis** (Vanderbilt, Naples) to the Theology & Worship Committee, Class of 2013
- **Ms. Betsy Davis** (Vanderbilt, Naples) to the Theology & Worship Committee, Class of 2011
- **Rev. Helen Heffington** (Validated Ministry) to the Mission & Justice Committee, Class of 2011

Preparation for Ministry

Mr. Rex Childs (Vanderbilt, Naples) was received as an Inquirer by the Presbytery

Mr. Donald Buck (Christ Church of Longboat Key) was approved to be enrolled as a Candidate for Ordained Ministry under the care of Presbytery

The request from Inquirer **Mr. Daniel Gonzalez** (First, Sarasota) to withdraw from the list of Inquirers was approved.

Committee on Ministry

Motions approved by Presbytery:

- **Rev. Dr. John Ross** as Interim Pastor of First, Sarasota and member of Peace River Presbytery
- **Rev. Lawrence Yerger** as member of Peace River Presbytery as a Member-at-Large.

Information under authority granted:

- Contract between **Rev. Dr. Taylor Hill** and Covenant, Fort Myers as Interim Pastor for 6 months beginning January 2011
- Approved request of **Rev. Deva McQueen** to retire effective July 1, 2011
- Approved temporary pulpit supply contract between **Rev. Jane Jones-Norris** and Whitfield Estates for 12 months, part-time
- Approved **Rev. Julio Travieso** (Tampa Bay Presbytery) to labor within the bounds of Peace River Presbytery for 12 months, with a contract with First, Sarasota.
- Approved the dissolution of the call between Cypress Lake, Fort Myers, and **Rev. Samantha Keller** effective May 31, 2011 due to finances, and approved church's request to abolish the Associate Pastor position effective June 1, 2011
- Approved **Rev. Walter Griffith** to labor outside the bounds as Interim at First, Cleveland, MS
- Approved **Rev. Dr. Silvana Ferreira** for the status of Validated Ministry as part-time Associate Chaplain at Moorings Park in Naples

The next Presbytery meeting will be held at Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach, on Saturday, August 27, 2011.