



# The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

NOVEMBER 2011

## SPEAKING FROM THE HART

### FIGURING IT OUT:

The PRP Mission/Vision Guide Team/Standing Rules Revision Task Force

The first time I saw this 3-dimensional mechanical toy was sometime in the 80's at the church where I was the pastor at the time. I think one of the kids brought it with them to youth group, and try as we could, we could not get just one color on each side. The Rubik's cube has challenged more than youth groups, for there are literally



43 quintillion possible combinations. No wonder we had trouble, but there is a solution. Some folks are gifted and can figure it out relatively quickly.

This past summer, with the vote of a majority of Presbyteries, the new Form of Government (nFOG) passed. That, and the Presbytery's adoption in February 2011 of our new Mission/Vision Statement, presented the Presbytery with a theological and denominational version of Rubik's cube for 2012.

To help solve the puzzle, Presbytery's Council expanded the membership, as well as the charge, of the Mission/Vision Guide team. Originally, the choice of the name "Guide Team" was intentional to emphasize that this group was to **guide** us into living out our new Mission/Vision Statement rather than **tell** us, as in a traditional strategic planning model, what we are going to do and the goals and objectives we will set. The hope is to find ways to create space for us to have conversations and experiment with living out our mission/vision to:

- **Affirm congregations**
- **Connect disciples in mission**
- **Be the body of Christ together**

However, an extra sense of urgency arose because the new Form of Government necessitated changes in the standing rules. With that additional task, the Presbytery Council expanded the membership in the Guide Team and charged it with recommending revisions to our standing rules in response to nFOG. The question the Guide Team/Task Force will be

exploring is what do we want to be as a Presbytery, in light of our Mission/Vision Statement, and what structures are necessary to support the Book of Order mandated responsibilities of a Presbytery.

Those on the "Guide Team" include 6 members who previously served on the Mission/Vision Task Force, as well as 6 new members: Chris Adams, Don Cady, Karen Wismer, Kathleen Weller, Mary Lee Mann, Doug Pratt, Chris Romig, Sally Bull, Steve McConnell, Wayne Largent, Elizabeth Deibert, Jim Beckwith, (staff - Clint Cottrell and Graham Hart).



At the first meeting of the newly combined/appointed group, we used the image of a compass to facilitate discussion. Since we are exploring new and maybe unknown or unfamiliar terrain, a compass is helpful. So, using the poles of a compass as a metaphor, the group began listing:

The group identified some things in each of those areas that we need to look at.

- What is our true north... what guides us and grounds us?
- What is our east, meaning, like at sunrise, what new is emerging in our midst? What new direction do we need to go?
- What is our west, referring to the sun that sets in the west? What is setting? What do we need to let go of? What don't we need to do?

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I am grateful that God has given us some time and space to gather this group of folks. We hope to figure how to put together a theological version of a Rubik's cube that helps the Presbytery and each congregation be more faithful, missional, growing, healthy and thriving.

Thanks be to God who continues to be the wind in our sails and helps us steer into the future.

*Graham*

Graham Hart

[graham@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:graham@peacriverpresbytery.org)

**Please pray for the church of the week:**

- November 6 First, Lehigh Acres
- November 13 Christ Church, Longboat Key
- November 20 First, Naples
- November 27 Lely, Naples



**Next Stated Meeting**

Thursday, November 17, 2011  
First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia



**Roger Dermody**, GAMC Deputy Executive Director for Mission, **will be our keynote speaker and preacher**



- "I truly believe that our mission and message are compelling," said Dermody, "because they are Christ's mission and message. I like to envision the PC(USA) not merely as reversing the steady stream of membership loss, but one day truly becoming a turn-around denomination —

one that other denominations point to and learn from because somehow, by God's grace, we figured it out. We understood how to serve together. People got excited about the relevant and effective ways that our denomination brought the hope of the Gospel to a broken world."

**Food Drive to Benefit**

**Beth-El Farmworker Ministry, Inc.**

**November Meeting of Peace River Presbytery**

**PLEASE BRING YOUR CANNED FOOD, RICE,  
PINTO BEANS, OR  
PASTA ON  
THURSDAY NOVEMBER 17 TO THE  
PRESBYTERY MEETING  
AT FIRST, ARCADIA**

**Dan Turk**, PCUSA missionary to Madagascar, will be visiting Peace River Presbytery from November 16 through November 21. Dan and his wife Elizabeth, with their two children, serve in partnership with the PC(USA) and the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM) in development of health, environment, agriculture and safe drinking water.



**Dan will be speaking at the November Presbytery Meeting** and also traveling around the Presbytery. Wednesday evening he will be at Buckingham Presbyterian Church in Fort Myers, Thursday at Presbytery, Friday at Misi3n Peniel and Immokalee, Saturday at St. Paul's in North Port for breakfast, and Sunday at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Fort Myers during the Sunday School hour.

At this current time Dan is in Madagascar and will be home early November. We are excited to be able to have him with us and to learn of all the recent developments in Madagascar. We invite you to join us at any of the locations. Please watch the Presbytery website and Weekly Pastoral Letter for more specifics. If you have questions, please call DeAnne Sawyer, 239-728- 6550, Chair of the Mission and Justice Committee

**Invitation to St. Paul's**

*You are cordially invited to join us for Saturday Breakfast in St. Paul's Presbyterian Church's Garden Room, where **Dan Turk** will be presenting his interesting experiences at 10:00 a.m. on **Saturday, November 19, 2011**. The address is 5550 S. Sumter Blvd., North Port 34287 (north of the Sumter and US 41 intersection). Breakfast is served from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. We look forward to hosting you at this event. (Barbara Miles, Mission and Justice Committee, Peace River Presbytery)*

**CHURCH NEWS**

**Christ Church Presbyterian** celebrated the first Service of Worship in their new building at 6400 Gulf of Mexico Drive at ten o'clock on Sunday, October 23. The congregation gathered on the porch area outside the Church at 9:45 am, and Dr. Bruce Porter offered a prayer for entrance. After the prayer at their new Church home they were piped into the church narthex by elder, Bill Buckley with a rendition of "Highland Cathedral." As the congregation entered the sanctuary the organist, Kathleen Semisch, played "When the Saints Go Marching In," on the new three manual Rodgers digital organ. Christ Church has been a Presbyterian congregation for just five and one half years, and this day of celebration will be a culmination of many dreams and lots of sacrifice.



The Church is striking with gothic arches outlined in the windows and the structure, itself. The sanctuary is 15,000 square feet and has space for over 275 worshippers. In the center of the chancel area is a stained glass window, which shows the risen Christ offering in one hand a blessing and with the



other, a welcome. Above this window is a rose window, showing a descending dove representing the Holy Spirit. The Rodgers digital organ expresses the church's love of music and praise. The spacious fellowship hall and kitchen provide table dining for several hundred persons. In the event of emergency on Longboat Key this fellowship space meets FEMA standards and can become a community center.

Christ Church has come a long way in a short time. In the Spring of 2008 the Church brought the lots at 6400 Gulf of Mexico Drive, which included a building with six offices downstairs, and an upstairs apartment with three bedrooms and two baths, a full kitchen, a dining room and living room. The office building will house the administration offices and small meeting rooms. In the future, the apartment may serve as a manse or parsonage for a pastor.

In 2008 and 2009, the Church raised over four and one half million dollars for the purchase of land, and the construction of a new sanctuary, fellowship hall and kitchen, a gracious narthex, and renovation of the office space. Of special notice is that 96% of the members pledged to the campaign! A Ground-Breaking ceremony was held on August 2010, at which time the site was dedicated for a Christian Church by the Pastor, Dr. Porter. The Building Committee selected John S. Dickerson and Son, as architects, who have designed more than one hundred churches in Florida and the South East, and Dooley-Mack as General Contractors, Bill Dooley being a resident of the Island. William Burgelt was the Designer for the project. Burt Burgelt, chairman of the Building Committee, said, "God has surely blessed us." He is pleased that the campus complex is surrounded by pleasant landscaping, and the exterior colors are warm and friendly and fit perfectly with the island's tropical atmosphere.

The minister, Dr. Porter remarks, "We still have a long way to go as a congregation. This is another beginning for us as Christ Church, as we seek to grow in Jesus' name." We believe that our best years of service to God and our community are ahead of us.

Christ Church Presbyterian offers worship at 10 a.m. each Sunday, and Bible Study following, at 11:15, taught by scholar, Stuart Dalglish. The church participates in many ministries and mission activities throughout the year. The vision statement which guides their future says, "We Are Growing in Jesus' Name."

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**Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church of Naples** is privileged to host John Dominic Crossan on **November 11-12, 2011**. Crossan is Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at DePaul University. He is co-chairman of the Jesus Seminar and is considered a preeminent expert on the historical Jesus. We extend an invitation to you and to members of your congregation to join with us for this series of lectures. Attached please find a registration flyer and poster that you are most welcome to duplicate and distribute as you wish. We hope this will be an exciting

opportunity for Presbyterians to get together, to hear one of the great teachers of our day, and to celebrate the faith with each other.

This lecture series is hosted by the Education & Family Ministries and Christian Witness in Public Life Teams of Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church located at 1225 Piper Blvd., Naples, FL 34110-1252 | (239) 597-5410 | [www.vpcnaples.org](http://www.vpcnaples.org)

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**First Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs**, invites the Presbytery to Season 7 of their free Bonita Christian Forum.

**November 15, 2011**

Gary Haugen, President of International Justice Mission

**January 24, 2012**

Lee Strobel

**February 21, 2012**

Louis Zamperini

**March 20, 2012**

Dr. Gary Chapman

**April 10, 2012**

Wess Stafford, President of Compassion International

For more information, go to [www.bonitachristianforum.org](http://www.bonitachristianforum.org) or call 239-992-3233.

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### Thanksgiving Offering

Peace River Presbytery has designated the Sunday before Thanksgiving as a time to take a special offering for Thornwell Home for Children, located in Clinton, South Carolina. For more information about the school, go to [www.thornwell.org](http://www.thornwell.org).



**The Presbytery Office will be closed on November 24 and 25 for the Thanksgiving holiday.**

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### 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.

We have a number of small group studies. One to focus on for today's issues is *It Could Happen Tomorrow*, by Gary Frazier, and published by Sampson Resources. This 8-lesson DVD study is excellent for any Christian, and especially for those who are interested in the Bible prophecies that are being fulfilled in this generation. The

author does an amazing job of leading the student through the end-times prophecies, backing everything up with scripture, and making it interesting and enjoyable at the same time. This study brings it all together in a way that makes total sense, and finally puts all the scriptural support together in one place and in order!

Another excellent and current study is *Balanced and Blessed: Experiencing Marriage the Way It's Meant To Be*, by Charles Lowery, Ph.D, and published by Sampson Resources. This study includes six 30-minute DVD lessons, as well as the leader and participant guides.

Some of the excellent books in the Resource Center include: *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; We also carry samples of curriculum materials, including *We 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 will be return shipping (back to the Resource Center) if we ship the materials to you (you may also 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.

## What is the Christmas Joy Offering?

### Receive the Christmas Joy Offering on December 18, 2011, or anytime during the Advent season

A cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s, the Christmas Joy Offering is one of the four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Because Advent and Christmas shine a light not only on our world's greatest hope but also on our world's greatest need, the PC(USA) provides this timely opportunity for congregations to support causes specifically designed to bring *Good News of Great Joy* to the poor in circumstance or spirit.

Alongside the message of promise and fulfillment in Luke's Gospel, we hear the clear call to God's people to respond in faith as Christ calls us: "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded" (Luke 12:48).

Undesignated gifts to the Christmas Joy Offering will be distributed equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to support student scholarships at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.



Is Souper Bowl of Caring on your calendar?  
Please mark Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup> and register to participate!

Are you looking for a meaningful and simple way for your young people to serve their community and join thousands of youth across the nation in helping others? Souper Bowl of Caring is a national, non-profit organization that uses the energy around the Super Bowl game to mobilize youth to fight hunger in their community. It is so easy to participate. Souper Bowl of Caring provides you with the materials you need. All you have to do is follow these 4 steps:

- Step 1**  
**Register your church at [www.tacklehunger.org](http://www.tacklehunger.org)-NOW**
- Step 2**  
**Collect your donations on or near Super Bowl Sunday-February 5<sup>th</sup>**
- Step 3**  
**Report your collection at [www.tacklehunger.org](http://www.tacklehunger.org)**
- Step 4**  
**Donate the collection to the charity that your church chooses**

If you have questions, contact Emily Heeg, Florida Director, at [emilyheeg@yahoo.com](mailto:emilyheeg@yahoo.com) or 904-288-8414.

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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