



SPEAKING FROM THE HART

What time is it in the life of the PCUSA?

"For everything there is a season, a time for every matter under heaven." Question: what time is it in the life of the PCUSA? One thing for certain, it is a time of change, a time all kinds of folks are asking all kinds of questions, and sometimes we are not even sure what question to ask.

Folks on all sides of all the issues we face have had national gatherings. As I shared with the Presbytery at our August meeting, in July there was the "Big Tent", a learning community of several thousand elders and clergy who met in Indianapolis for worship and for the hundreds of practical worships that were offered. Last spring, there was a NEXT church gathering in Indianapolis. In late August, a group called the Fellowship of Presbyterians gathered in Minneapolis. An initial goal of the Fellowship was to have a conversation among folks concerned about Amendment 10-A, the change in the Book of Order regarding ordinations. Just as some of Peace River's members went to the NEXT gathering, so a number of folks went to Minneapolis.

The 219th General Assembly, responding in its own way to the question of what season is it in our life together, created three new groups to look at the question of how we do church:

- The GA Review Task Force charged with looking at how the General Assembly functions in their biannual meetings as a deliberative body with the question, "Can we do better?"
- The General Assembly Special Committee on the Nature of the Church in the 21st Century. For more information, go to www.ecclesio.com.
- The Special Commission on Middle Governing Bodies, which is looking at the role, forms, functions and mission of Presbyteries and Synods, asking the question, "Are there new and better ways for us to come together?" They will report back to the 220th General Assembly in 2012.

The Commission has gathered together some wonderful resource material, some of which our Vision Task Force used. To access the material, go to <http://oga.pcusa.org/mgbcommission/>. FYI, they included in their response section a paper I wrote several years ago.

Over the years, many of us who find ourselves sitting in a pew or pulpit or Presbytery have had concerns, as well as hopes that we can find better and more faithful ways to be the church (i.e., PCUSA). We live in a denomination

whose polity is shaped by a central theme of the reformation: "ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda," or "the church reformed and always reforming according to the Word of God." That means the possibility of change is part of our DNA.

With the issues we are facing today, some may readily embrace a different way of doing church, such as the need to find new musical languages and songs to worship God, or new ways to reach out in mission to those in our backyard. However, we may struggle with other issues and concerns such as:

- How can we meaningfully connect with each other as ruling and teaching elders and congregations, which is part of our Presbyterian distinctive as well as our ordination vows?
- How do we uphold the essential tenets of the reformed faith, which we promise in our ordination vows, when what one person considers essential another does not? How do we live with each other in that creative tension?
- How do we live with the new language (10-A) related to ordination standards?
- With our differences, how do we live together as a 'big tent church,' even as we focus on and attend to the mission of God, which has always been about the world (John 3:16)

I do not know what may unfold in all the conversations, including what the General Assembly Special Commission may recommend to the 220th General Assembly, but I am encouraged by how Peace River has talked about difficult issues in the past. I am grateful for the way colleagues, such as the 5 presenters at the May Presbytery meeting (Doug Pratt, Tim Halverson, Lyn Olson, Tom Harp, and Chris Romig), openly shared their differing perspectives on 10-A from both biblical and polity perspectives while still sharing a deep respect and love for each other as colleagues and for our life together as a Presbytery. So especially at a time like this I invite us as a Presbytery to:

- go deeper into what it means for us to be the body of Christ together;
- pray for ways we can actively affirm each congregation;
- connect disciples from 39 congregations in mission.

The sense of urgency for me is there is a generation out there that needs to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ; there is a mission field in our own back yard that we may not be seeing. How do we stay focused on that and, at the same time, have the kinds of conversations that connect us in our life together and send us out into the world to give witness to the transforming love, power, and grace of Jesus Christ?

Church history says this is not the first time we have faced deep challenge, nor will it be the last. The book of Acts and the story of the early church is one that reminds us that on this side of Heaven, we will disagree. However, I believe what will guide us is the example of the early church that:

- took seriously the prayer of Jesus that the church may be one, even as he and the Father are one (John 17),
- went about the business of being salt and light,
- made disciples, and
- always sought to follow Jesus.

These things are not easy to do given all the sides to all the issues on this side of Heaven. Not everyone will agree; nevertheless, that is our challenge and our call.

In order to help shepherd us through this season in the life of our Presbytery, the Presbytery Council created a Mission/Vision Guide Team, as well as a new Form of Government Task Force. I would invite your prayers for them, as they help the Presbytery have the kind of conversations we need to have together over the next couple of months as we move into the future to which God is calling us. If you have suggestions, questions, observations, please pass them on to me, and I will share them with those Task Forces.

I am grateful for the invitation that God has given us as congregations and a Presbytery to be faithful, missional, growing, healthy and thriving, even as we seek to name and address the challenge before us in this season of our life together as a church.

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

Graham

Graham Hart
General Presbyter

graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

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

Please pray for the church of the week:

September 4 Community, Englewood
September 11 Buckingham, Fort Myers
September 18 Covenant, Fort Myers
September 25 Cypress Lake, Fort Myers



Are You a Minister or Certified Educator?

All Pastors and Certified Christian Educators are required to attend an annual sexual misconduct prevention workshop.

If you were not able to attend the June 23rd workshop at Chapel by Sea, there is still one more opportunity:

September 29 from 1 - 3 p.m. at Pine Shores, Sarasota

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 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.

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 Peacemaking Offering

**World Communion Sunday,
October 2, 2011**



BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC OPEN HOUSE

**Sunday, October 16, 2011
2:00 to 5:00 p.m.
18240 Hwy 301S, Wimauma, FL**

Campus tours
Updates on Extension Ministry locations
Showcasing expanded Sanctuary
Yummy food and snacks all afternoon.

CEDARKIRK
SENIOR ADULT RETREAT
Tuesday, October 18, 2011
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

This day retreat is specially designed for adults 55 and older and will include a great lunch, a music program, and the leadership of an inspirational speaker. We will also have some time to enjoy the beauty of God's creation with options like a nature hike, games, or just relaxing on the back porch rocking chairs. The price is only \$12 and includes lunch and all activities. Space is limited. Come join us for a great day! To register as an individual or as a group for this event, please contact the camp office at Karin@cedarkirk.org or (831) 685-4224.



The Administrative Personnel Association

What valuable skills does your administrative staff possess? They are organized, good listeners, peacekeepers, negotiators, and generally set the "tone" of the office. But, they also are eager students, wanting to learn to be more effective in their job.

What is your organization doing to help your administrative staff? Do you provide time out of the office to replenish their spirit? Do you provide time and funds to help them learn additional skills to make them more effective in their job?

One way to be supportive of your administrative staff is to allocate time and funds to send them to conferences. And the best resource for them to learn is to have them attend an Administrative Personnel Association of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Conference.

The next national APA conference will be held from November 3rd through November 5th in Las Vegas, Nevada. There, your administrative staff will take classes from clergy and professionals on a variety of topics relevant to their duties in your office. Your staff will also network with others who share similar professional experiences. The benefits of a small investment in time and money (\$75 for membership fees and approximately \$500 for conference attendance) can make a big difference to your administrative staff and your organization. Remember that the deadline to register is September 30th.

Why don't you contact Barbara Prieto, the Florida Region President of the APA and find out how a small investment in your staff will benefit not only them, but also you and your organization? Barbara can be reached at 305-666-8586 or rivierachurch@bellsouth.net. You will be glad that you did.

Nancy Fine
Membership Chair, Florida Region of the Administrative Personnel Association of the Presbyterian Church (USA)
www.floridaapa.org

Church Historians...Here is the Announcement You've Been Waiting For!

You may qualify to apply for a microfilming grant from the Presbyterian Historical Society. Did you know that microfilm, with a life-expectancy of 500 years, is still the best method available for the long-term preservation of records? Brittle paper, deteriorating bindings, fire, flood, and rapidly changing technology all pose substantial threats to records. To qualify for a \$300 grant, a PC(USA) congregation **must** have 250 or fewer members; be at least 50 years old; be interested in the preservation of its history; be looking for financial assistance to microfilm its records. Deadline to Apply is October 31, 2011.

For more information and application instructions, go to <http://www.history.pcusa.org/preservation/pdfs/heritageMicro.pdf>

'What Are You Waiting For?'

Evangelism and Church Growth's 2012 Conference

July 29 – August 2, 2012
St. Pete Beach, Florida

Influence culture. Live out your mission. Develop disciples. Grow spiritually.

Plan now to join Evangelism and Church Growth for ECG 2012, an all area ministry conference, to discover how to become the church God intended us to be. Learning tracks will be available for Evangelism, New Church Development, Transformation, Collegiate Ministries and Youth Workers.

Location

[Tradewinds Resort](#)
5500 Gulf Blvd.
St. Pete Beach, Florida

Rates

Early Bird Registration \$250
Housing: Private Room \$115, Double \$56, Triple \$39

Featured speakers

[Len Sweet](#)

Highly influential in social media, best-selling author

[Linnea Nilsen Capshaw](#)

Empowering leaders discern and live out mission

[Jo Saxton](#)

Helping churches live into a discipling and missional way of being

[Mark Yaconelli](#)

Exploring ground breaking spiritual direction and practice in Youth Ministry

For more information, contact Sherry Britton at (800) 728-7228, x5247.

**Peace River Presbytery
Stated Meeting Highlights
Saturday, August 27, 2011**



The Presbytery is grateful to Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach, for hosting the August 2011 Stated Meeting. Their staff and volunteers were very gracious, friendly and helpful throughout the day, and the facilities were beautiful.

Rev. Dr. Maynard Pittendreigh, pastor of Chapel by the Sea, preached on "A Bag of Rice". The worship service was followed by mission stories from church members who spoke about "God's Table". This ministry is an ecumenical program, located at Chapel by the Sea, that offers Christian fellowship to all. Volunteers gather to welcome the needy and homeless to a safe place where food is shared, clothing is provided, assistance is offered, and where dignity and God's love are extended.

Stated Clerk Clint Cottrell moved, and the Presbytery approved, the following motion:

"Be it resolved that Peace River Presbytery adopts the 2009-2011 Book of Order – Form of Government (as amended by the 219th General Assembly and the constituent Presbyteries) as an addendum to the new Form of Government to serve as a transitional administrative manual and as an addendum to the Standing Rules of the Presbytery. This transitional document shall also apply as a transitional administrative manual/addendum for all 39 churches of the Presbytery. This transitional manual will expire on July 10, 2012, within a church of the Presbytery when that church adopts an administrative manual, OR when a permanent Presbytery administrative manual has been adopted."

**MOTIONS OR INFORMATION
FROM COMMITTEES AND BOARDS**

Council

It was reported that Council has approved as the theme for the 2012 Presbytery meetings, "Being the Body of Christ Together" based upon the new Mission/Vision Statement and Guiding Values.

Board of Trustees

The Board moved, and the Presbytery, by a vote of 62 to 31, voted to approve the revised 2011 budget.

Presbytery also approved a change in Presbytery funding effective with the 2012 budget. To clarify the way we will account for Presbytery income beginning 2012, Synod and General Assembly Per Capita will be one category of revenue. We will eliminate PRP Per Capita and replace it with a Presbytery Ministry Operations budget as a second category. We will replace Unified Giving with Missions as a third revenue category.

Nominations

The following were nominated and elected:

- **Mr. Lynn Rosser** (Vanderbilt, Naples) for Evangelism & Church Development Committee, Class of 2012-1
- **Ms. Gene Shannon** (First, Bradenton) for Committee on Ministry, Class of 2013-1
- **Ms. Nancy Shimandle** (First, Bradenton) for Committee on Ministry, Class of 2013-1
- **Ms. Marion Wayenberg** (Vanderbilt, Naples) for the Records & Overtures Committee, Class of 2012-1
- **The Honorable Robert Shafer** (Covenant, Fort Myers) and **Rev. Jerry Voye** (HR) for Presbyterian Homes and Housing, Class of 2013
- **Mr. Roy Kirkpatrick and Ms. Judy Kirkpatrick** (First, Arcadia) for Camps and Conferences, Class of 2011-1 and Class of 2013-1 respectively
- **Rev. Edward Thompson** (First, Naples) for Commissioner to the Synod of South Atlantic, Class of 2013 and on Board of Directors of Villa International

Committee on Ministry

Motions approved by Presbytery:

- **Rev. Dr. John Henry, HR**, as member of Peace River Presbytery upon receipt of his transfer from the Presbytery of Northern New England
- **Rev. Daniel Pendergrass** as a Member-at-Large of Peace River Presbytery from the Presbytery of Baltimore.
- The Guidelines for Compensation effective January 1, 2012

Information under authority granted:

- Approved the dissolution of call between Braden River Presbyterian Church and Rev. Caroline Wilson, effective July 30, 2011
- Approved the transfer of Rev. Caroline Wilson to National Capital Presbytery
- Approved the extension of Rev. Dr. Taylor Hill's contract with Covenant, Fort Myers through the end of the year
- Approved the extension of Rev. Richard Hill's contract with Moorings, Naples
- Approved the extension of Rev. Dr. Kathleen Weller's contract with First, Naples from June 21, 2011 to October 31, 2011
- Granted Rev. Jonathan Evans permission to labor within the bounds of Peace River Presbytery until the November 17, 2011 Stated Meeting

The offering of \$991.13 was designated for Presbyterian Youth Council's Nickels for Nails program.

The next Presbytery meeting will be held at First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia, on Thursday, November 17, 2011.