



## SPEAKING FROM THE HART

### Post General Assembly Thoughts and Next Steps

**Where do we go from here?** One of the things Presbyterians are known for within the ecumenical community, for better or worse, is our critical and reflective thinking. If we are not sure, we create a committee, because decisions by a council, rather than an individual, are at the heart of the representative democracy that our nation borrowed from us and from Calvin's 16<sup>th</sup> century Geneva experiment.

219<sup>TH</sup>  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2010)



The 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Commissioners considered over 300 items of business, 150 of which originally came from congregations, were refined and voted on by presbyteries, and came to the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly as overtures. The Assembly also considered the reports and recommendations from task forces or committees that had been created by past assemblies or by the six

permanent entities of the General Assembly. Sometimes the committee reports that the Assembly received included a majority and a minority report, as in the case of the Civil Union Task Force.

When our six commissioners and one young adult advisory delegate prepared for this GA, they were given 3 months to read all the overtures, reports and recommendations coming to the 219<sup>th</sup> GA. Each of the 712 commissioners and 200 advisory delegates was assigned to one of 18 Assembly-level committees, and it was the committees' job to review, change and recommend particular actions (approval or disapproval) to the whole Assembly.

Of the 300 items of business the Assembly considered, items that might directly affect or change our constitution must be sent to and approved by the presbyteries. A Book of Order change requires a majority vote of all presbyteries; an addition or change to our Book of Confessions requires a 2/3 vote of all presbyteries.

There are some other topics that the Assembly considers worthy of our attention like how we are doing in our denominational emphasis on **Growing the Church Deep and Wide**, or sending out mission co-workers at the request of our sister churches around the world. There are reports and studies that merit our careful scrutiny and can be helpful to us as we think deeply and theologically about issues of spiritual, moral, or societal concern in our

life together. And there are those that affect the constitutional shape of our church which must be addressed by each of the 173 presbyteries. So... in true Presbyterian fashion, members of Peace River Presbytery and future elder commissioners to the Stated Meetings will be asked to read, review, and prayerfully consider recommendations from the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

Peace River Presbytery's Council, at the recommendation of both the GA commissioners and the Theology and Worship Committee, has decided that each of these items is too important for them to be considered all at one meeting. Additionally, having separate conversations on these substantive issues and changes can be a time of learning for us all. So, over the course of the next year, a portion of each meeting will be dedicated to one aspect of the recommendations from the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

**August 28, 2010** – The 219<sup>th</sup> Commissioners will give their report as well as lead a breakout group.

**November 18, 2010** – We will consider the recommendation on adopting the Belhar Confession to be added to our *Book of Confessions*.

**February 24, 2011** – We will vote on the recommendation related to the new *Form of Government*. (This is the result of the work of two past General Assembly committees and a four-year process engaging the whole church.)

**May 26, 2011** – Several *Book of Order* changes, including voting to change G-6.0106b (ordination standards) that originally came to the 219<sup>th</sup> GA as overtures from several presbyteries, will be considered.

**August 27, 2011 and beyond** – We will consider the reports on the Mideast, Civil Union and other topics that the Assembly commends to each presbytery and congregation for their study and reflection.

So in summary, the work of the assembly starts in presbyteries and is sorted and assigned to committees made up of commissioners from each of the 173 presbyteries. Items that change the constitution in any way are sent back to presbyteries for our approval, and those reflective reports, that we are known for and that can be helpful in addressing complicated issues, are commended to presbyteries for our study. So it is fair to say we have our work cut out for us. In case you do not get the weekly pastoral letter, in which some of the specific items were addressed, e-mail me and I can send them to you as an Adobe file.

On a personal note, we were served by outstanding, dedicated commissioners who were well prepared,

engaged in all aspects of this assembly, and positively impacted the work of their committees and this Assembly, and as the whole church we are the better for that. Thanks to: Elder Cindy May (Kirkwood), Rev. Karl Kling (Bee Ridge), Elder Chris Larson (Buckingham), Rev. Elizabeth Deibert (Peace), Elder Jim Pratt (Presbyterian Church of the Covenant), and Young Adult Advisory Delegate Nic Monette (Moorings).



Grace and Peace,

*Graham*

Graham Hart  
General Presbyter

P.S. If you want to review more closely the actions of this GA, go to: <http://www.pcusa.org/ga219>. Information on the more than 300 Assembly actions [is available](#), as are answers to frequently asked questions about the items that have already garnered some media attention. The answers have been prepared by the Office of the General Assembly on the following topics:

- [Civil Union and Marriage FAQ](#)
- [Form of Government FAQ](#)
- [Middle East Peacemaking FAQ](#)
- [Middle Governing Body Commission FAQ](#)
- [Ordination Standards FAQ](#)

### Introduction to the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Moderator



Cynthia Bolbach  
(Photo by Danny Bolin)

Cynthia (Cindy) Bolbach, an elder from National Capital Presbytery, was elected as Moderator of the 219th General Assembly (2010) on the fourth ballot. She was the only elder in a field of six candidates.

Bolbach told the commissioners, "I love being a Presbyterian elder. I cherish the equality that the church gives to ministers and elders. In fact, elder commissioners have an advantage: Elders rule!" she said, referring to a recommendation from the Form of Government Task Force, which she has chaired for four years, that the church return to using the term "ruling elder." Bolbach likened the PC(USA) to the man who was paralyzed in Luke 5 whose friends lowered him

through a hole they knocked in the roof so he could be healed by Jesus. "Our denomination is that paralyzed man," she said, "paralyzed by fatigue, uncertainty, fear, grief over the loss of the kind of church some of us have known and loved all our lives."

"We are more than just commissioners," she told her colleagues in the hall. "We are the friends ... who have to figure out how to break through these roofs, to bring our paralyzed church to Jesus Christ, to give our paralyzed denomination to Jesus, so Jesus can start the healing."

Bolbach is a lawyer and legal publishing company executive in Washington D.C.

### CHURCHES TO PRAY FOR

- August 1 Bee Ridge, Sarasota
- August 8 Church of the Palms, Sarasota
- August 15 First, Sarasota
- August 22 Northminster, Sarasota
- August 29 Pine Shores, Sarasota



### Ministers who entered the Church Triumphant

- Rev. Dr. Dean Dobson – May 30*
- Rev. Samuel Holder – June 16*
- Rev. James Thomas Young, Jr. – June 18*

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### STATED MEETING

**Saturday, August 28, 2010**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Faith Presbyterian Church, Cape Coral**

Kevin Garvey, Chief Development Officer of The Board of Pensions PCUSA, has been invited to the **August 28, 2010 Stated Meeting** to talk about a year round, spiritually based culture of generosity program. Be prepared to be challenged about how things have been done in the past and walk away with a new excitement about generosity.

### CREATING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

Building on the presentation from the Presbytery meeting, Mr. Kevin Garvey will lead a **one day interactive seminar on generosity on Wednesday, September 22, 2010** which will include small group breakouts developing a generosity/stewardship program you can take back and implement in your church. You and the leadership from your church who attend will walk away with materials and ideas on how to increase the spiritual life of your church and members as it relates to generosity and stewardship.

Kevin Garvey began his work with The Board of Pensions PCUSA in 2008 as the Chief Development Officer working with the Assistance Program. Mr. Garvey brings

over 27 years of fundraising and marketing experience to the Presbyterian Church. He presently serves as an Elder of Zionsville Presbyterian Church, Indiana.

Watch for registration information!

### TRIENNIAL CLUSTER GATHERINGS

The Triennial Cluster Gatherings, sponsored by the Committee on Ministry, will unfold beginning in September, 2010. They are part of a 3-year cycle of visits. Briefly, this is what this cycle entails:

During the Fall 2010 Triennial Cluster Gatherings, Pastor(s), Certified Educators and 4 Elders from each church are asked to attend. (Please include elders with knowledge in the areas of worship, mission, church education, finances, and evangelism.) The goal is for every church to be represented.

#### The schedule is as follows:

Thursday, Sept. 23, 7:00 - 9:30 p.m., Vanderbilt, Naples  
Thursday, Sept. 30, 7:00 - 9:30 p.m., First, Port Charlotte  
Thursday, Oct. 7, 7:00 - 9:30 p.m., Kirkwood, Bradenton  
Thursday, Oct 14, 7:00 - 9:30 p.m., Bee Ridge, Sarasota  
Thursday, Oct. 28, 7:00 - 9:30 p.m., Cypress Lake, FM

For more information, please go to the front page of the Presbytery's web site, [www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org)

### ARMSS

**ARMSS (Association of Retired Ministers, Their Spouses or Survivors)** Convention is September 9-12, 2010 in Bloomington, Minnesota. The theme is *Called to a Lifetime of Service -- God's Plan OR Ours*. For more information, contact Ginny Nyhuis, [gnyhuis@verizon.net](mailto:gnyhuis@verizon.net).

### NEW AT CEDARKIRK!

*Connections: Faith and Practice* is a **retreat designed for young adults** in their 20's and 30's – married or single – with a special focus on connecting our faith with everyday life. The **October 1-3, 2010** retreat will feature time for fellowship, sharing, worship, and keynote experiences. The leadership is highlighted by Derek Thompson, Director of Student Ministry at Church of the Palms, Sarasota.



The retreat will begin at 6:00 pm on Friday and conclude at 11:00 am on Sunday morning. The cost of the event is \$110 and includes all meals, lodging, and activities.

For more information and to register online, please visit [www.cedarkirk.org](http://www.cedarkirk.org) or call 813-685-4224.

### POAMN

The annual conference of the **Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Network (POAMN)** is October 12-15, 2010 in Orlando, Florida. Online registration is available at [www.poamn.org](http://www.poamn.org).

### A.P.C.E.

Calling all educators! The **2011 Annual Event for the Association of Presbyterian Church Educators (APCE)** will be held February 2-5, 2011 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Early bird online registration will be accessible September 1, 2010 and conference books will be available to download in September (not mailed). For more information, go to [www.apcenet.org](http://www.apcenet.org)



### MAIN EVENT

Please mark your calendars for **Saturday, March 12, 2011** and plan to attend the next Main Event, sponsored by the Leadership and Congregational Development Committee. Watch for more details!

### Cabell-Lincoln County Work Camp



This past June, 35 high school youth and 6 adult leaders from our Presbytery traveled to West Virginia to participate in the Cabell-Lincoln County Work Camp. They spent a week repairing and upgrading homes with the goal to make them warm, safe and dry. The jobs included roofing, new flooring, painting, new bathrooms, new doors and window, decks and ramps for wheelchairs. Their work had a spiritual aspect, as all participants took time to minister to the homeowners and their families.

This was Peace River Presbytery's 20<sup>th</sup> year to participate in the Cabell-Lincoln Work Camp. The churches represented on the trip were Church of the Palms (Sarasota), Cypress Lake (Fort Myers), Faith (Cape Coral), First (Port Charlotte), First (Sarasota), Moorings (Naples), and Whitfield Estates (Sarasota). We thank Mike Bicknese of Faith for his leadership in organizing this trip so our youth can continue participating in this spirit-filled experience.

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