



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

OCTOBER 2010

SPEAKING FROM THE HART Triennial Visits and Presbyterian History

Since 1706 (the first Presbytery meeting), Presbyterians, in what were then the colonies, have sought to live together in covenantal, organic sometimes called “connectional” relationship with one another. At the heart of who we are is the notion that we are one church and “*the particular churches of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) wherever they are, taken collectively, constitute one church.*”(G-4.0301a), and that means a Presbytery has an important and unique relationship with her constituent congregations. The question always is: **how do we live that out?**



In the *Book of Order*, sections G-10.0102p, G-10.0103, G-11 and G-14 are a few of the places in our church’s constitution that go into what the shape and contour of that covenantal relationship is to look like. One of the obvious places that relationship gets lived out is in the way clergy are ordained and called. Another way the Book of Order says that “connection” is to be maintained is: COM “*shall visit with each session of the presbytery at least once every three years, discussing with them the mission and ministry of the particular church and encouraging the full participation of each session and congregation in the life and work of the presbytery and of the larger church.*” (G-11.0500c). Often this mandate has been carried out in a perfunctory and intrusive way, and has not been as helpful as it could be, that is if we really are living as the Body of Christ together.

In order to deepen the relationship and attempt to make it more meaningful, in 2007 Peace River began a new Triennial Visit process whereby every year the Committee on Ministry (COM) makes some contact with every church. One year COM meets with the pastor for encouragement, listening, and support. The next year the COM meets with the session. The third year the COM gathers all churches in a region together so they/we can have a conversation. The goal is for elders, pastors and the Presbytery to share with one another how God is at work, as well as learn from one another.

Starting September 23 and continuing through Thursday nights in October, Elders (4), Pastors and Certified Christian Educators are gathering together for conversation.

This year the focus of the triennial visits is: **Being the Body of Christ together in a time of rapid change.**

There are 4 focus questions to which the table groups (2 churches per table), along with a COM facilitator, are responding. The focus questions for each table group are:

- What program or ministry has generated the most excitement in your congregation in the last 3 years?
- What are some of the unique needs in our community and how might we as congregations respond together?
- As a local and particular expression of the Body of Christ, how have you as leaders been able to help your congregation face change, understand the need for change, make specific and concrete changes in your ministry focus, build excitement, interest, and support for the changes being made?
- How does your congregation offer opportunities for people to deepen their faith and become more intentional followers (disciples) of Jesus?

Based on the written evaluations from the first regional gathering, the most frequent comment from those that attended was: “*why we can’t do this more?*” So I am glad again that we as Presbyterians understand how the early church came together to make decisions and be of support to one another (see Acts 15), as well as the way we as Presbyterians continue in that tradition to the end that we all may be the stronger. We are better able to be of mutual encouragement to each other, and in small and large ways we are mutually accountable to one another (see Ephesians 4).

Thanks be to God!

Graham

Graham Hart
graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

P.S. It was great that we had teams from 26 congregations (almost 90 folks) at the September 22 workshop on: *Creating a Culture of Generosity* in our congregations. The feedback was so positive that the trustees are looking into inviting Kevin Garvey back next year for Part II.

CHURCHES TO PRAY FOR

October 3 Venice, Venice
October 10 First, Arcadia
October 17 First, Bonita Springs
October 24 Braden River, Bradenton
October 31 First, Bradenton



New web site information

- Presbyterian Church of the Covenant now has a web site! Please check it out at: www.presbyterianchurchofthecovenant.org
- Kirkwood has a new web site address: www.kpcbrenton.org

Congratulations!

Tricia and Clay Thomas welcomed a son to their family on September 8 at 8:18 am. Wellspring (Wells) Olson Thomas was 7 lb. 14 oz. and 20 inches long. He joins a brother Mason and sister Fields. Tricia is a pastor to youth and families for Peace Presbyterian Church, Lakewood Ranch, and Clay is associate pastor for First, Sarasota.

CHURCH NEWS

Peace is growing and moving!

Peace Presbyterian Church, the newest congregation of Peace River Presbytery, has moved to a new location in Lakewood Ranch. Sunday services at 9:30 a.m. and church offices and educational facilities will now be located at the Manatee Board of Realtors building, 10910 Technology Drive, Lakewood Ranch 34211 (southwest corner of Lakewood Ranch Boulevard between state routes 70 and 64). The church phone number (941-753-7778) and web address (www.peacepcusa.org) remain the same.



Reverend Elizabeth Deibert, pastor of Peace Presbyterian, is excited about the move to the new location near Lakewood Ranch High School and the YMCA. "Peace has outgrown its former Sunday quarters at State College of Florida. This new 24/7 church home will put us in the heart of Lakewood Ranch and will give Peace Church its first opportunity to offer programs for youth and adults on weekdays and evenings – as well as Sundays."

Five acres of land on Lorraine Road has been purchased for a permanent church building, which it expects to build by the end of 2013.

From its beginnings around a dining room table in 2004 to a congregation of 125 today, Peace Presbyterian is an active, intergenerational congregation with a mission to make God known, by growing as disciples of Jesus Christ, creating a community of peace and caring for the needs of others.

Peace River Presbytery Web Site

The new Presbytery web site was launched in September. We have received many favorable comments on the updated look!! Take a look at www.peacriverpresbytery.org.

As with any web site transition, there have been a few little issues to work through. We appreciate the kind patience and encouragement most of you have communicated. We are working diligently to make sure the new site will provide you with all of the information that you expect and need, in an easy to find manner.

Make use of the new search field option if you are not sure of which tab to check for what you are looking for. Just type in a key word and hit "enter". Then, you can choose the option that comes closest to what you are searching for. If you are not able to find the information you need, please feel free to call Lori at the Presbytery office for assistance.

In addition to the Presbytery staff, many of you have expressed excitement about the new web site. Besides the fresh, updated look, there are new technologies that can be incorporated once we get all of the content set. This web site is a valuable tool to the Presbytery members, not only for the information it provides, but also for the platform it provides for dialogue, video streaming, slide shows, real time calendaring, and much more.

Please take a moment to check out the new web site. Spread the word to others in your congregations, so that they too may take advantage of the information that is provided. Thank you!

TRIENNIAL CLUSTER GATHERINGS CONTINUE

The Triennial Cluster Gatherings, sponsored by the Committee on Ministry, are part of a 3-year cycle of visits from members of COM.

Pastor(s), Certified Educators and 4 Elders from each church are asked to attend the Fall 2010 Triennial Cluster Gatherings. The goal is for every church to be represented.

The remainder of the schedule is as follows:

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.peaceriverpresbytery.org or call the Presbytery office at 941-426-8421.

Older Adult Ministry Event

The Older Adult Ministry Team is sponsoring a onetime event in gathering representatives from each church in the Presbytery on **Thursday, October 7 from 10 - noon** at the Presbytery Office in North Port. Light refreshments will be available.

The Team has mailed an invitation to each church with background materials to be used at this meeting.

There will be time for sharing "what is happening" in each of our *churches for and with* older adult ministry. This enriching time can generate many good ideas to carry back to the church. Also, some time will be spent in listening to the needs of each church. The Older Adult Ministry Team will then wrestle with how it best can help each church meet the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of our seniors.

Please give Lou Thompson, Team Leader of Older Adult Ministries, a phone call, 239-597-5410, ext. 202, (or e-mail Joan Mock, joan@peaceriverpresbytery.org) and be ready to join others on October 7 from 10:00 a.m. to noon at the Presbytery office.

Learn about your Benefits Plan

Clark Simmons, our Regional Representative for The Board of Pensions, will be leading a Board of Pensions Benefits Plan Workshop within our Presbytery in early November. The workshop is for Plan members and their spouses but is also open to anyone who wants to attend such as treasurers, personnel committees and others.

What will be covered:

- The benefits that apply to you
- Optional benefits available to you
- Important information regarding the Medical Plan, the Pension Plan, the Assistance Program, and the Retirement Savings Plan
- And much more

Participants may choose from the following options:

November 2 - 11:00 am at First, Sarasota
1:00 pm at First, Sarasota

November 3 - 11:00 am at Venice, Venice
1:00 pm at Venice, Venice

November 4 - 11:00 am at Covenant, Fort Myers
1:00 pm at Covenant, Fort Myers

A FREE LUNCH AT NOON WILL BE PROVIDED
BETWEEN EACH MEETING.

Please R.S.V.P by October 28, 2010 to Joan Mock at the Presbytery office (joan@peaceriverpresbytery.org or 941-426-8421) with your name, church, phone number, and **choice of workshop**.

NOTE: *Space at each location is limited.*

ALL YOUTH RETREAT November 20-21, 2010

A new All Youth Retreat is taking the place of the Middle School and Senior High Retreats. Held at Cedarkirk, there will be activities for both groups. There is an earlier check-in time (8:00 am Saturday morning) so we are offering a Friday night lodging/Saturday breakfast option for those churches who don't want to drive up real early on Saturday. For registration material and more information, go to the Presbytery's web site and look under Events & News, Presbyterian Youth Connection.



Overtures from 219th General Assembly

Peace River Presbytery's Council, at the recommendation of both the GA commissioners and the Theology and Worship Committee, has decided that General Assembly overtures are too important 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 219th General Assembly.

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

Meeting location: First, Port Charlotte

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.)

Meeting location: Cedarkirk Camp & Conference Center

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

Meeting location: Vanderbilt, Naples

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.

Meeting location: First, Arcadia

**HARVESTING HOPE:
CULTIVATING JUSTICE IN THE FIELDS AND
BEYOND**

**An Interfaith Community Event • Free and Open
to the Public
November 12-14, 2010**

Harvesting Hope: Cultivating Justice in the Fields and Beyond is set for November 12-14, 2010 at Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church. To help us bring this interfaith community event message to members of your congregation, we ask that you include the following announcement in a bulletin or newsletter scheduled to be distributed to your members before October 15.

Harvesting Hope: Cultivating Justice in the Fields and Beyond examines the origins of poverty in Immokalee and in other Florida farming communities and explores how faith-based efforts for justice are helping to transform the lives of thousands of farm worker families by addressing the roots of the problem. Presented by faith and community groups, this event will be held **November 12-14, 2010** at Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church (1225 Piper Blvd., Naples, FL 34110 – at the intersection of Immokalee and Airport-Pulling roads). For more information please contact: Jackie Vanden Dorpel at (239) 947-8436 or Jordan Buckley at (239) 986-9101.

To schedule **Youth Group** tours of the *Modern Day Slavery Museum* at **Harvesting Hope** or to request **curriculum** related to this weekend event, contact Jackie at (239) 947-8436.

Sincerely,
Jackie Vanden Dorpel and Jordan Buckley

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

What: 2011 Main Event
When: Saturday, March 12
Where: Burnt Store PC, Punta Gorda
Theme: Worship in the 21st Century
Keynote: Dr. Constance Cherry

Watch for more details!

**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
2010 Birthday Offering**

Begun in 1922, the Birthday Offering celebrates Presbyterian Women's history of mission giving. For 2010 two projects were selected:

- Kindergarten and Childcare Center, Primary School Development in Kirkuk, Iraq
- Peace Presbyterian Church, R.I.S.E. (Reach-Improve-Strengthen-Empower) Project in Louisville, Kentucky.

As of the end of August, the Birthday Offering had received approximately \$600,000 and first payments to the recipients are being sent in October. The total goal for this offering is \$900,000 and donations may be made up to the end of December. Checks should be made out to Presbyterian Women and sent to:



PC/USA Birthday Offering 2010
PW Remittance Processing
PO Box 643652
Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3652

Thornwell Announces Interim President



Reverend Dr. Charles D. Elliott is the newly appointed Interim President for Thornwell Home for Children. Elliot has listed the two top administrative priorities as balancing the budget and preserving the Teaching-Family model of care, which has made

Thornwell's program one of the best in the country. He also stated that he was pleased with the board's "mandate that (Thornwell) be more open to the local community and its sister institutions. For more information on Thornwell, go to www.thornwell.org.

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY
5600 Peace River Road
North Port, FL 34287

941-426-8421 or 800-736-4488
www.peaceriverpresbytery.org
inbox@peaceriverpresbytery.org

[Graham Hart](#), General Presbyter
[Craig Countiss](#), Stated Clerk
[Jim Barnett](#), Treasurer
[Alesia Sharpe](#), Office Manager
[Bill Setchel](#), Financial Secretary
[Joan Mock](#), Part-Time Administrative Assistant
[Lori Doyal](#), Part-Time Administrative Assistant