



PEACE RIVER
PRESBYTERY



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Advent I –

Who is it that comes in the name of Lord into our lives? And how do they come?

In last week's pastoral letter I wrote about the Pilgrims, the First Thanksgiving, and an Indian the settlers called Squanto who taught the Pilgrims to fish, hunt, and plant new world crops like corn and squash. Rediscovering Squanto and that part of our American history got me thinking about who has been Squanto to and for us. Who, without regard to themselves or future consequences, has helped us thrive and do well?

Fast forward one week - that blog/pastoral letter found its way to the very opposite corner of our country to a retired pastor in Oregon who wrote me an encouraging and interesting letter. What prompted his e-mail? Yesterday, the whole church was praying for Peace River Presbytery through the [Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study](#), so Bud Frimoth, among many others, sent a note to say they were praying for us. But what was interesting was Bud follows the life in Peace River through our web site and reads the weekly pastoral letters.

He called himself an "85 year old geezer" (see his e-mail below), but in that moment - because of what he said and the fact that he took the time to say it - his words came as one who is helping me "prepare the way for the Lord", which is what this advent time is supposed to do. Bud's e-mail and the Advent lectionary scripture readings for this coming Sunday (Mark 1:1-8) got me thinking about:

- Who are we encouraging?
- Who are we, by what we say and do, helping to prepare the way of the Lord in their lives?
- How are we being of encouragement to one another?
- How are we helping one another grow in following Jesus?
- How are we preparing the way of the Lord by helping the churches in which we serve to become communities of "faith, hope, and love?"
- How, in the words of Roger Dermody in the sermon he preached at the Presbytery meeting, are we loving passionately, and encouraging one another to love passionately, which seems to be at the core of the gospel and message of Christ?
- How are we as congregations, ruling and teaching elders, and a Presbytery preparing the way for the Lord for those we meet in Jesus, who died not for the church, but for the world that God so loves, and invites us to be the very 'Body of Christ' for the world.

We live in interesting and challenging times, and in these times it is easy, as it was for the early church as well, to become distracted by our issues, conflicts, and internal debates and lose sight that our job is to announce the Good News of the gospel. One of our jobs is to invite people into the reality of a God who loves them and to be encouragers of one another as Bud was to me yesterday.

As always, I look forward to your comments, even as we as a Presbytery "prepare the way of the Lord" among us even here, even now, by growing in our ability, as our mission/vision states, to:

- Affirm congregations
- Connect disciples in mission
- And to be the body of Christ together.

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

Peace,

Graham

Graham Hart
General Presbyter
graham@peacriverpresbytery.org

Dear Rev. Hart:

It's that time of the year when Peace River is on the page of the Yearbook and a simple letter from the Pacific Northwest comes slipping into your inbox! Prayers arise from this now 85 year old geezer out of Cascades Presbytery and Portland, OR.

The challenges Peace River faced with the various facilities and ministries are similar to what's occurring throughout the country and churches are not exempt. Declining memberships, aging members like me and a wonderment about what lies ahead. But as I read about the ministries of your conference center and the work with farm workers there was an element of sustaining faith that allowed those ministries to continue...especially as I read the 2012 Yearbook which I also have.

Your Thanksgiving words were most helpful, even though I read them as Advent season begins! The "ministry" of Squanto with the first white folk coming to this country is certainly a message of acceptance we constantly need to recall. My late wife worked with Church World Service here in Portland and throughout Oregon. In her 13 years she was able to bring in over 6,500 refugees from all over the world into Oregon, Idaho and southern WA. Every time I drive by an ethnic cafe I give a little salute because I suspect they might have been one of the refugees she assisted. You know this kind of ministry as well.

So mine is a very simple prayer of encouragement for the various ways in which Peace River brings it's savior of Peace to your part of the world and beyond.

Grace sometimes almost tackles us for a loss which only allows us to get up, huddle for a new direction and then with his energy go forwards with another "play" - a ministry that may be old or something just cooked up through the enthusiasm and gifts of yet another player on the team.

E.R. "Bud" Frimoth

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I know all you need is yet another website, but there may be someone in the presbytery who might be interested in some other ideas of ministry, so I add this little one to the email.

Should you or any others be interested in where ministry has led this 85 year old geezer, my youngest computer literate son has fashioned a website for me. In it one video is of a non-verbal clown communion service at Westminster in Portland. Cascades Presbytery also had us share the experience. After the clowns left, the benediction was given and two clergy whose views on just about everything from theology to social action and politics were opposite, saw each other at opposite (would you believe) ends of the center aisle. Without a word the two of them rushed down that aisle and embraced. The love of Christ was more powerful than their differences. That experience is not on the video, but if you are interested in what my late wife and I shared as clowns you can find it at: <http://www.frimoth.com/clowning.html>
We recently updated it to include a second service we shared just this summer using four clowns. And yet a third short video is of my late wife and my hospital clown ministry.

[Churches in the News – please send a link if your church is in the news.](#)

[Holiday markets to help charities](#) (Kirkwood, Peace, and Westminster Churches)



The group picture is of Peace Presbyterian Church's Alternative Gifts Market (catalogue) which will be staffed at 11 a.m. Sunday December 4.

[Bradenton church \(Kirkwood\) adopts middle school for a special cause](#)

Please add these concerns to your personal prayer list.

Please continue to pray for:

Amy Cottrell, wife of our Stated Clerk, who is having foot surgery on Monday, December 5.

Rev. Rosemary Gremban

Rev. Dr. Ted Land

Rev. Dr. Bob Rea

Pastors and Educators in transition

Those affected by natural disasters in the United States

Nations in crisis

Please also keep in your prayers:

Beth-El Farmworker Ministry

Misión Peniel

Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE CONGREGATION OF THE WEEK – December 4

Moorings Presbyterian Church, Naples

Moorings Presbyterian Church has had an exciting year in the midst of an interim situation. We continue to attract a large segment of the community with our Hyacinth Concert series which featured two popular concerts already this November with the Seraphic Fire choir from Miami as well as two rising star pianists, Pricila Navarra and Mi-Song Yeo. Our children and youth ministries have also reached into the community and both programs have grown by 50% averaging 90 preschool/elementary children for our Wednesday Connections, 35 for Middle School, and 42 for High School fellowships. This year is our 28th year of serving 2500-4000 Thanksgiving meals in Immokalee to say thank you to those who provide our food. Overall, you can feel the sense of hope and optimism in worship. We will burn our mortgage in a celebration on January 22nd. We claim we have been focused on building buildings for 20 years. Now, we can recommit our efforts on building people. MPC is eager to see who will be called as the new permanent pastor sometime in 2012 who will help launch us into God's future.

Rev. Richard Hill (rhill@moorings-presby.org) is serving as Interim Pastor.

Rev. Dr. James J. Kirk (jkirk@moorings-presby.org) is the Associate Pastor.

For more information, please go to www.moorings-presby.org

LIST FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER:

December 4	Moorings Presbyterian Church, Naples Richard Hill, Interim Pastor rhill@moorings-presby.org Jim Kirk, Associate Pastor jkirk@moorings-presby.org
December 11	Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church, Naples Tom Harp, Pastor tharp@vpcnaples.org Ed Bellis, Associate Pastor ebellis@vpcnaples.org
December 18	St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, North Port Ray Quiles, Designated Pastor chaprafi@gmail.com
December 25	Palmetto Presbyterian Church, Palmetto John Foulkrod, Pastor jfoulkrod@tampabay.rr.com



click on [Christ Church of Longboat Key](#) above to see gallery of pictures of their new church.

The articles below may interest you. I have found some of them in my reading, and others have been passed on *to me*. ***Just click on the underlined phrases.***

[Some fear megachurch bubble may soon burst](#) -Aging pastors, big overheads may threaten

longevity...

[A preaching 'genius' faces his toughest convert](#)

CNN Belief blog: Fred Craddock never became a televangelist, built a megachurch or preached to a packed stadium. Yet he is a pulpit giant, a man who tilted the preaching world "on its axis."

[Christmas season of greed descends on us](#)

Brisbane (Australia) Courier Mail: In an increasingly secular society, one might ask: Did Jesus Christ die on the cross for a \$2 waffle machine?

Patheos: [Diana Butler Bass: Black Friday: A morality tale](#)

[Should philanthropies operate like businesses?](#)

Wall Street Journal: So what should you expect of your charities? Businesslike efficiency? Or something more intangible, less-easily defined?

[The lost "art" of being creatures among other creatures](#)

On Being blog: Ellen Davis finds an "odious comparison" between the way recent generations have lived and the Bible's insistence on responsibility for the land and all life that depends on it.

PRESBYTERY CALENDAR (for more details, go to www.peaceriverpresbytery.org)

DECEMBER, 2011

1st

Records and Overtures
Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team

6th

Mission, Vision, Standing Rules Guide Team

8th

Board of Trustees
Leadership and Congregational Development (conference call)
Personnel

13th

Committee on Ministry

15th

Theology and Worship

21st

Committee on Preparation for Ministry, at First, Sarasota

23rd

Presbytery office closed

26th

Presbytery office closed

One in the Spirit

A monthly email from Linda Valentine strengthening community between the General Assembly Mission Council and mid council executives



Presbyterian mission in Northern Ireland

[Meet Doug and Elaine Baker](#)—mission co-workers with a focus on peacemaking, reconciliation, and [Young Adult Volunteers](#) and read why they say they're in it "for the long haul."



Connect with mission every day!

In 2012--make a commitment to learn what Presbyterians are doing to engage in mission around the world. Order your [2012 Presbyterian Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study](#).



Ironman evangelism

New Worshiping Community connects athletes and fans to Presbyterian Mission. [Read more](#) →

Scholarships available for Presbyterian undergraduates

The [National Presbyterian College Scholarship Program](#) (NPCS) offers need-based scholarship assistance to full-time students entering their first year of college at one of the [colleges related to the Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#).

Learn more about this and other [undergraduate opportunities](#) for financial aid or [download an NPCS application](#).



