



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

FYI – As of yesterday, June 7, the new Form of Government had been passed by a majority of Presbyteries ([click here](#) to read a letter about the passage from the leadership of the PCUSA). But first, a story from our own Presbytery.

Last Sunday was Ascension Sunday. It was also, as was announced and voted on at the May Presbytery meeting, Samantha Keller's last Sunday as Associate Pastor at Cypress Lake, as well as Tim Reynold's last Sunday as Associate Pastor at Church of the Palms. Tim is moving on to Sinking Springs, Virginia to become the Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in that town, and Samantha is waiting for her next call. While Tim knows what is next, Samantha does not, but in a creative children's sermon she shared with the congregation and children a wonderful message of faith, hope and love.

She told the story of how her parents on occasion would announce the whole family was going on a trip. Where - she did not know, but that was the surprise. All she had to do was quickly pack her suitcase, be ready to go, and trust. Well, as her children's sermon prop, Samantha had with her a suitcase packed with special memories, mementos and pictures of her time at Cypress Lake. She told the children that they and those remembrances will be tucked in her heart, packed in her suitcase. She is ready to go, confident that God will make the way clear, even though she does not know yet where she is going, just like those surprise family trips.

I was invited, on behalf of the Presbytery, to participate in the service, celebrate her ministry and, with the congregation, bless her as she and her husband Ben are open to the next chapter in their life. Well, as is often the case, I was the one blessed, not only by a inspiring worship service, and a meaningful farewell, but by the witness of a packed suitcase ready to go, filled with memories and with those essential ingredients of faith, hope, and love.

So on this day when we are halfway between Ascension Sunday and Pentecost, between the Risen Christ taking leave and the Spirit of God coming to stay, I have found myself wondering, with what are we filling our suitcases? **Faith** or fear? **Hope** or despair? **Love** or a spirit of meanness and distrust? What's in my suitcase?

On a personal note, having our 2-year-old granddaughter Grace visit for two weeks while her parents have some major renovation work done on their house has been fun, if tiring on occasion, and has me thinking about what is important, I mean really important, in the big scheme of things. What's in my suitcase? I think Jesus once said the little children will lead them, so I am thankful for:

- this special time with Grace,
- a children's sermon that got me thinking,
- the good and faithful ministry of the elders and clergy in Peace River, especially Samantha and Tim,
- and an image of a suitcase packed with the really important stuff of life, for when all is said and done that is what we take with us.

Back to the [new form of Government](#). It is a tool and only a tool to help us keep focused on what is important in our life together as a church, namely Jesus Christ. As we read in the new Foundational

Section, *In the power of the Spirit, Jesus Christ draws worshiping communities and individual believers into the sovereign activity of the triune God at all times and places. As the Church seeks reform and fresh direction, it looks to Jesus Christ who goes ahead of us and calls us to follow him. (F-1.0401)*

Below is a news release from the General Assembly that links us to resources available as we live into this new guide book for our life together. Please take the time to read the [church wide letter](#) from the GA Moderator, PCUSA Stated Clerk, and GAMC Executive Director, and the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the Form of Government web page.

Our Stated Clerk, Clint Cottrell, as well as our Presbytery Council will be reviewing what we will need to do in both the short and long term as a Presbytery and as individual congregations, and they will keep us fully informed. If you have some immediate questions related to your congregation,

- please review the attached links and documents,
- [read the new Form of Government](#)
- or contact Clint.

I do encourage you to read the new Form of Government over the summer with this question in mind: How can this help me/us better focus on the mission to which God is calling us as teaching elders, ruling elders, congregations, sessions, Peace River Presbytery, and the PCUSA?

So will the new Form of Government help us focus better on getting the important stuff in our suitcase? I think it can and that is the hope.

Thanks be to God.

Graham

Graham Hart

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P.S. As always, I invite your comments and observations.

P.P.S There is a link below for PDA and for responding to the disaster in the mid-west.



... Click logo to go to The Presbytery web site:

... Click on logo below for the PCUSA Mission Yearbook of Prayer and Daily Office scripture reading:



Please add these concerns to your personal prayer list.

Please continue to pray for:

Becky Beckwith (wife of Committee on Ministry Chair Jim Beckwith) as she continues to receive treatment for cancer

Rev. 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

CONGREGATION OF THE WEEK:

June 5	Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Sarasota Mike Mansperger, Pastor covenant.presbyterian@comcast.net
June 12	Siesta Key Chapel, Sarasota Kathi Wiggins, Pastor pastork@comcast.net
June 19	Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church, Sarasota Jane Jones-Norris, Temporary Supply jonesnorris507@tampabay.rr.com
June 26	Trinity Presbyterian Church, Venice Chuck Wiggins, Pastor pastorcjw49@yahoo.com
July 3	Venice Presbyterian Church, Venice Chris Romig, Pastor cromig@venicepresbyterian.org Ruffin Stepp, Associate Pastor rstepp@venicepresbyterian.org Lyn Olson, Associate Pastor lolson@venicepresbyterian.org



News & Announcements

From the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have approved a new Form of Government

TRINITY PRESBYTERY BECAME THE 87TH PRESBYTERY TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENT

*Office of the General Assembly
by Sharon Youngs
Communications Coordinator*

LOUISVILLE – While the Office of the General Assembly awaits official tallies, it appears that a majority of the 173 presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) have approved a new Form of Government.

At its meeting on Tuesday, June 7, 2011, Trinity Presbytery became the 87th presbytery to approve an amendment that will replace the current 18-chapter Form of Government with a new version that is six chapters in length. The Form of Government is one section of the *Book of Order*, which is part of the PC(USA) *Constitution*.

Along with the new Form of Government will be a new section of the *Book of Order* entitled “Principles of Presbyterian Polity,” which contains a large majority of the content of the first four

chapters of the current Form of Government.

The proposed new Form of Government (FOG) was approved by the 219th General Assembly (2010) of the PC(USA). Two years earlier, a proposed revision had been presented to the 218th General Assembly (2008) by the FOG Task Force. That assembly reconstituted the task force and asked it to present a revised version to the 219th GA based on the feedback received at the 218th GA.

This is the first full revision of the Form of Government since the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America reunited to form the PC(USA). The current Form of Government had been amended over 300 times since reunion in 1983.

The new Form of Government will take effect July 10, 2011, one year after the adjournment of last summer's assembly. It is anticipated that the transition from the current to the new FOG will take time.

In response to the vote, denominational leaders issued a letter to all congregations of the PC(USA). In it, they write, "While the new Form of Government will help the PC(USA) to be a faithful and responsive church in the 21st century, it also has a dimension of bringing us back to a truly constitutional document that contains broad governing and theological principles and emphasizes function over structure."

The letter continues, "Many Presbyterians will see nothing suddenly or dramatically different with a new Form of Government. Worship services will go on as usual, and congregations will continue to teach the faith, serve their communities, reach out to those in need, and work to further God's realm on earth. However, what will be different is that congregations, presbyteries, and synods will have the opportunity to tailor mission and ministry to fit their own particular contexts and challenges."

Resources and guides about the new FOG, including "Frequently Asked Questions," are available at the [Form of Government webpage](#).

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance National Response Team members are in Missouri. [TO READ MORE, GO TO THIS LINK](#). All money sent to Peace River Presbytery will be forwarded directly to PDA.



Register for 2011 Big Tent - 'Growing Christ's Church Deep and Wide'

June 30-July 2, 2011

(Deadline to register has been extended to JUNE 15)

Indianapolis, Indiana

[Register today](#) →

Join thousands of Presbyterians for your choice of nine national conferences under one roof, including the [Presbyterian Communicators Network National Conference](#):

Learn best practices for communicating and sharing the mission and ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and your individual congregation through websites, blogs, newsletters, bulletin inserts, videos, podcasts and other media. [Learn about all nine partner conferences](#)→

[Apply for a Presbyterians Communicators Network Conference scholarship](#)→

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.**



Watercolor by Jessamyn Rubio

Article: Workplace

Staying afloat amid information overload

June 7, 2011 | Is it possible to serve the church's mission and still give your mind, body and soul a much-needed break in a world saturated with emails, texts and tweets? [Read more »](#)

Article: Workplace

How do you manage information overload?

We asked several Christian institutional leaders and scholars who study the impact of information overload to share their strategies for managing it all. Here are their responses. [Read more »](#)

[Don't be afraid](#)

A Peculiar Prophet: Bishop Will Willimon tells new clergy, "Don't be afraid. God knows what God is doing when God calls you for ministry."

[Why leaders lose their way](#)

Harvard Business, Working Knowledge: Very few people go into leadership roles to cheat or do evil, yet we all have the capacity for actions we deeply regret unless we stay grounded.

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

JUNE, 2011

8th
Committee on Preparation for Ministry

9th

Board of Trustees
Nominations – conference call

14th

Committee on Ministry

15th

Interim Lunch

16th

Mission and Justice at First, Port Charlotte
Personnel – conference call

21st

Evangelism and Church Development, at Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church, Sarasota

23rd

Council
Sexual Misconduct Prevention Workshop, at Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach

28th

Mission/Vision Guide Team
Leadership and Congregational Development