



PEACE RIVER
PRESBYTERY



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Thanksgiving Thoughts

Who helps you survive and thrive, and who are you helping in turn?

Such thoughts were not part of [the Thanksgiving](#) I remember as a child. What I remember is:

- wearing my Pilgrim hats,
- cutting various shapes out of colored paper to make a turkey and a Pilgrim, even though my take-home art never quite looked the part,
- and being told the Pilgrims' story of hard work and survival, gratitude and sharing a feast with their Indian friends.

Maybe I didn't get it because I was a kid, but it wasn't until years later that I really grasped the Pilgrims' story of courage, survival, surmounting tremendous odds, and facing and overcoming incredible losses. That first year almost half of the colonists died. However, and I don't remember learning this in school, a big reason why they made it was because the first Americans, meaning the Indians, shared with their guests how to survive and thrive in this land. The Wampanoag tribe, particularly an Indian the settlers called Squanto, taught the Pilgrims to fish, hunt, and plant new world crops like corn and squash.

So this Thanksgiving, who in your life has been Squanto, who has helped you thrive? My list includes people like Mrs. Ross, my 4th grade teacher, Dr. Growney who as I dealt with cancer as a 24 year old young man helped me find hope, my parents, friends who go far back and some who are recent, my wife Linda, and a God who has not given up on me. Thanks be to God!

This year, amidst turkey and stories that may or may not parallel the facts, I encourage us all to give thanks for those who in our life have taught us to fish and plow the soil of our lives, so we too had the opportunity to thrive. As a pastor of three different congregations over the years, I was always mindful and grateful for those who went before me in that place, who in their time tilled the soil, and left the legacy of a building, a place, a vision, and a congregation to serve.

Finally, even with the challenges we face as a Presbytery, I am grateful for all God has done and is yet to do. Even though the whole church is going through a time of uncertainty and change, and even though we are living in a time of ferment, even though the church, in the words of Phyllis Tickle in the book [The Great Emergence](#), is:



...going through the once every 500 years garage sale (the last being at the time of the reformation); I know that God is sovereign, God is Love, as Roger Dermody so powerfully reminded us at the Presbytery meeting, and we trust in God.

This Thanksgiving, there is much for which I give thanks, even as there are many to whom I owe my life, those who gave me love and support, and, in their own ways, taught me to fish and thrive. Thank you.

So we are here today in part because of an Indian chief who instead of protecting his territory and fighting off these new settlers, helped them survive and thrive. Who, then, has God placed in my life and yours for **us** to help **them** fish and thrive?

I think that is what Roger Dermody in his sermon at the Presbytery meeting was suggesting is a central aspect of who we are as a reformed people. We are a people who are invited to love and be loved passionately. The question is not just who loves **us**, but who are **we** called and invited to love.

More to come, but for now... Happy Thanksgiving.

As always, I would love to hear your thoughts..

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
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P.S. These are pictures of a cake from Ted Land's retirement celebration held last Sunday at First, Arcadia. It was a wonderful service and celebration. Please keep Ted in your prayers as he and the doctors map out a treatment course for his prostate cancer. Also, please pray for the congregation in this time of transition and the search for an interim pastor.



Please add these concerns to your personal prayer list.

Please continue to pray for:

Rev. Rosemary Gremban (HR) who is having medical issues

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 – NOVEMBER 27

Lely Presbyterian Church, Naples

MISSION STATEMENT:

We, the members of Lely Presbyterian Church, covenant with each other and with God to be a community of Christ's people, sharing His ministry and love. We are focusing on the Holy Scripture as the foundation, Jesus Christ as the Head of our church, and we will accept challenges which promote spiritual growth. We are serving God by reaching out to all generations of His people. We are committing our time, our talents and our resources, enabling our church to grow.

Under the Formula of Agreement between the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church (USA), Peace River Presbytery has been granting permission to Rev. Stephan Nagy to serve Lely Presbyterian Church since November 2005.

For more information, please e-mail lelychurch@embarqmail.com.

LIST FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER:

November 6	First Presbyterian Church, Lehigh Acres Craig Countiss, Stated Supply ccountiss@aol.com
November 13	Christ Church of Longboat Key (PCUSA), Longboat Key Bruce Porter, Stated Supply ginbru@hotmail.com
November 20	First Presbyterian Church, Naples Edward Thompson, Pastor edwardt@fpcnaples.org Jonathan Evans, Associate Pastor jonathane@fpcnaples.org
November 27	Lely Presbyterian Church, Naples Steve Nagy, Stated Supply lelychurch@embarqmail.com

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.***

[An article by a Chinese immigrant about the Alabama immigration law.](#)

[An article by Mark Bittman, the Food Writer, who highlights the work of the CIW as one of the agencies working for food policies and practices.](#)

[Amid ill and dying inmates, a search for redemption](#)

Los Angeles Times: Tending to the men in a prison hospice helped John Paul Madrona do penance for a terrible deed in his youth. But perhaps the work was not enough.

Los Angeles Times: [Part 2 -- In prison hospice, at a loss for the right words](#)

[Jason Byassee: Eventually you have to do something](#)

In the transition to a new place of leadership, it's difficult to sort through all the advice about starting something new. Change everything? Change nothing?

[On being spiritual but not religious](#)

National Catholic Reporter: The problem -- if there is one -- is not with the seekers, but the leaders of houses of worship. Why not welcome the search?

[Faith that sticks](#)

Christianity Today: Intergenerational connections and parental involvement give kids a faith that lasts beyond high school.

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

NOVEMBER, 2011

23rd

Presbytery Office closes at noon

24th and 25th

Presbytery Office is closed

DECEMBER, 2011

1st

Records and Overtures
Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team

5th

Representation (conference call)

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

Fair trade: going beyond charity

Can fair trade be more than a niche market? Learn why some Presbyterians believe the answer is yes.

[Read more](#) →

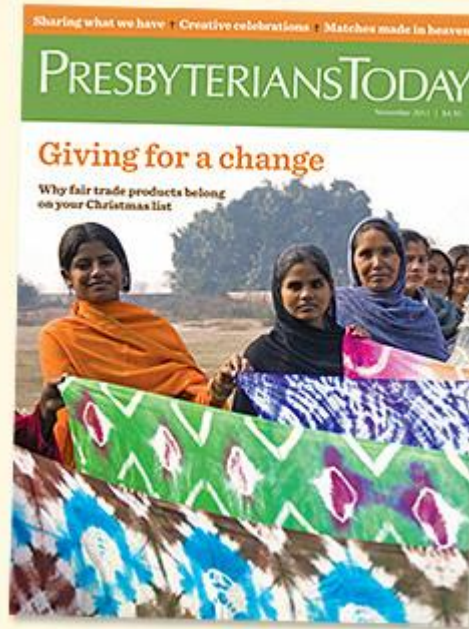
Behind the products

From Palestine to Haiti to Nepal, meet the people you are helping through Christ by practicing and supporting fair trade. [Read more](#) →

Timely gifts

Through the Christmas Joy Offering, Presbyterians assist people in their hour of greatest promise and in their hour of greatest need. [Read more](#) →

[Read more articles and subscribe to *Presbyterians Today*.](#)



“In despair, one can find hope...”

Following the 2010 earthquake, Presbyterians responded by donating millions to help Haitians in need. Now, [witness the incredible impact of your gifts](#) on the people in one devastated town.