



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Thoughts on: I-Phones, COM, Transitions and Congregations

As a kid, I thought all change was good and easy and to be embraced. One of my favorite pop songs was by [The Byrds -- Turn, Turn, Turn \(To everything there is a season\)](#) (hit Ctrl and click to listen). The Byrds took the familiar words of the Bible about a “time for every matter under heaven” and made it a top 40 hit. Being young and hopeful and a baby-boomer, change was a must.

Change? Without it we don’t grow; with it is not always easy.

Change? Some of it just is... it happens... we don’t think about it, and we often don’t remember what life was like before the change came upon us.

For instance, this is how my great-grandparents in 1907 received the news that their son was killed in a train accident in Wyoming.



The first picture below is of the change in communication that occurred in one short generation. For my Dad, instead of electronic news coming in letter form delivered by Western Union, it began to come on a wire into the house to a phone that looked like the phone on the left. The phone I remember is next; then the wireless remote phone would be the one my children remember. And now the I-Phone brings the world to my 2-year-old granddaughters. We can talk and see each other via live video conversations anytime they want, even from 1000 miles away.



So where would we be if things did not change. Is change good? Bad? Or just is? Yes.

These are pictures of the four churches in Peace River that will soon enter a season of change. They are all in the very beginning of a time of pastoral transition. Their pastors are either retiring or moving on. Is it good? Hard? Unfortunate? Hopeful? Sad? Challenging? Yes, yes, yes!



-----**Arcadia**-----**Port Charlotte**-----**Holy Trinity**-----**Westminster**-----

As Presbyterians, part of our uniqueness and one of our gifts to one another is that we (the 39 congregations working together as a Presbytery) are committed to help, guide, and stay connected with each of our congregations as they go through a season of change.

Pastors come and go, but that does not mean change is easy. It is not like going to the wireless store and picking up a new cell phone. There is the grief of letting go; we miss the person who was a constant and familiar part of our lives. There are regrets and dreams that will not happen, even as there is much to celebrate in what did occur and how God was at work. We know in our heads that for everything there is a season, but sometimes in our hearts it is different.

Including the four churches above, the following churches currently are in some stage of transition. Please pray for all of these congregations and their transitional pastoral leadership:

Arcadia

First Presbyterian Church – Rev. Dr. Ted Land retiring at the end of November

Bradenton:

Braden River Presbyterian Church – Rev. Glenn Buzbee, Temporary Supply

Palma Sola Presbyterian Church – Rev. Dr. Paul Eckel, Interim Pastor

Westminster Presbyterian Church – Head of Staff vacant/pending

Sarasota

First Presbyterian Church – Rev. Dr. John Ross, Interim Pastor

Whitfield Estates Presbyterian Church – Rev. Jane Jones-Norris, Temporary Supply

Longboat Key

Christ Church of Longboat Key – Rev. Dr. Bruce Porter, Stated Supply

North Port

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church – Rev. Ray Quiles, Designated Pastor

Port Charlotte

First Presbyterian Church – vacant/pending

Wintergarden Presbyterian Church – Rev. Ruth Schaaff, Temporary Supply

North Fort Myers

Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church – Rev. Dr. G. Russell Hickman, Temporary Supply, retiring at the end of December

Fort Myers

Covenant Presbyterian Church – Rev. Dr. Kathleen Weller, Temporary Supply (starting November 7)

Lehigh Acres

First Presbyterian Church – Rev. R. Craig Countiss, Stated Supply

Naples

Lely Presbyterian Church – Rev. Stephan Nagy, Stated Supply

Moorings Presbyterian Church – Rev. Richard Hill, Interim Pastor

I want to thank the following members of the Committee on Ministry who are volunteers and give countless hours working with each of the 39 congregations and all the pastors, especially during times of transition. Usually the COM liaison to a Pastor Nominating Committee, the COM chair, or I work in a weekly way with churches during the transition time.

Committee on Ministry

Elder Jim Beckwith, Westminster, Bradenton

Rev. Valerie Bell, Burnt Store, Punta Gorda

Rev. Wayne Blaser, First, Bradenton

Elder Judy Bremer, Presbyterian Church of the Covenant, Sarasota

Elder Trudy Cooke, Pine Shores, Sarasota

Elder Max Furbringer, First, Fort Myers

Rev. Taylor Hill, HR, Bradenton

Rev. Myles MacDonald, HR, Port Charlotte

Rev. Steve Mock, First, Punta Gorda

Elder Bruce Owens, Faith, Cape Coral

Rev. Maynard Pittendreigh, Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach

Elder Lil Rea, Hope United, Fort Myers

Rev. Ruth Schaaff, Wintergarden, Port Charlotte

Elder Gene Shannon, First, Bradenton

Elder Nancy Shimandle, Westminster, Bradenton

Elder Ruth Smith, Venice, Venice

Rev. Lou Thompson, HR, Naples

Rev. Kathleen Weller, Covenant, Fort Myers

Elder Jon White, Vanderbilt, Naples

Rev. Chuck Wiggins, Trinity, Venice

So for 39 congregations, for teaching and ruling elders that lead and pray and serve, for 11 congregations in some transition, for the 4 congregations that are facing new transition now or within the next month, I invite us to prayer together that each congregation will thrive and every pastor will be both faithful and successful in helping the church grow in every way.

And finally, to...

- Chris Adams – Westminster – going to Hillsboro PC, Nashville, TN
- Mark Knowles – First, Port Charlotte – waiting a new call
- Ted Land – First, Arcadia – Ted will be retiring at the end of November.
- Russ Hickman – Holy Trinity – Russ will be retiring at the end of December.

We wish you God's speed in this new and next chapter in your lives.

For everything there is a season, a time...

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

P.S. – Congratulations to Susan Wills, a Candidate for Ministry under care of Peace River and member of First, Sarasota, on an article she wrote in Presbyterian Outlook **on older adult ministry**. [Click here for the link.](#)

Please add these concerns to your personal prayer list.

Please continue to pray for:

Rev. Dr. Ted Land as he receives treatment for prostate cancer

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 6

First Presbyterian Church of Lehigh Acres was started under the guidance of the Home Mission Committee of Westminster Presbytery. In March 1963, a small group met in the offices of the Lehigh Corporation to discuss the formation of a Presbyterian Church in Lehigh Acres. Deciding to move ahead, services were first conducted in the Lehigh Auditorium. A petition bearing enough signatures was presented to the Presbytery for the organization of a Presbyterian church in Lehigh Acres.

On December 8, 1963, a meeting was held in the Lehigh Auditorium, at which time the First Presbyterian Church of Lehigh Acres was constituted, with sixty-one (61) members assuring membership. The Lehigh Corporation donated two acres of ground, and additional property was secured. Construction was started in May 1964. The first service in the "Church of the Praying Hands" was held on January 23, 1966. As the church grew, additional space was needed; so on July 25, 1988, construction was started on Faith Hall. On October 22, 1989, Faith Hall was dedicated.

Rev. R. Craig Countiss serves the church as Stated Supply. For more information, either call the church at 239-368-6800 or go to www.lehighacrespresbyterians.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
November 27	Lely Presbyterian Church, Naples Steve Nagy, Stated Supply lelychurch@embargmail.com

The November issue of *The Parish Paper* is attached.

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World Mission e-News

Presbyterians at work around the world

An example of a community of mission practice

A “community of mission practice” (CMP) is the common space at the center of three or more groups including U.S. Presbyterians, global partners and Presbyterian World Mission. These CMPs develop a body of shared mission knowledge and practice, share the core values of Presbyterian World Mission, and address the agreed-on critical global issues together. [This document](#) gives more information about CMPs and how they relate to World Mission's strategic direction.



This spring, [Rich and Marilyn Hansen](#), mission workers in Ethiopia, visited their home presbytery, Shenandoah Presbytery, in Virginia. In 2010 the presbytery had celebrated a 20-year partnership with the Illuhabor Bethel Synod of the Ethiopian [Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus \(EECMY\)](#), the PC(USA)'s partner church in Ethiopia. Marilyn says a community of mission practice has been formed—Shenandoah Presbytery in the United States, the EECMY in Ethiopia, and Rich Hansen's teaching at the [Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology in Addis Ababa](#), where one of his students, Wondimu, a leader in the Ethiopian synod, was known by several people they met in Virginia. They discovered that they and Shenandoah Presbytery shared connections with a number of EECMY church leaders.

Related: Read about [Iteffa Gobena Molte](#), EECMY president, and the “Gore Revival” that became the founding ground of the Illuhabor Bethel Synod, which now has over 300,000 members.

A new class of Young Adult Volunteers



Sixty-six young people are beginning a year of Christian service and learning as Young Adult Volunteers (YAVs) in eight U.S. cities and six countries around the world. Through the [Young Adult Volunteer program](#) the PC(USA) provides opportunities for young adults (ages 19 to 30) to engage in the church's mission in communities of need, to develop leadership within communities of faith, and to explore their relationship and future ministry to the church. The 2011-2012 YAVs come from churches and presbyteries across the country, from Wyoming to North Carolina and one from Ireland. Ten are non-Presbyterians.



Presbyterian Church of Colombia bids farewell to Alice Winters

On July 22 in the Chapel of the American College of Barranquilla a Thanksgiving Worship was held to recognize the [Rev. Alice Winters'](#) ministry of 36 years in Colombia. Alice began her ministry in 1977, preaching and forming leaders in one of the presbyteries of the [Presbyterian Church of Colombia](#) (IPC), the Northwest, where she was called Alicia Inviernos (Spanish for Winters). Later she joined the faculty of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary (predecessor to the School of Theology of the Reformed University of Colombia), where she taught in the area of Old Testament and contributed to the formation of several generations of pastors and leaders of the IPC.

In 1981 Alice was invited to join the Latin American Network of Biblical Scholars, where she contributed to biblical research from the critical approach, and from the perspectives of gender and the poor, providing important contributions to understanding the Bible in the Colombian context. For her special skills in interacting with the great diversity that exists in Latin American Protestant world, Winters was often invited by ecumenical organizations, such as evangelical organizations, to offer her contributions to biblical interpretation.



Guatemalan women are inspired by visitors

[Amanda Craft](#) writes in her blog: "Many who come only briefly to Guatemala may not immediately see the impact of their visit. However, I have the unique opportunity of working with those who receive groups. Again and again, I marvel at what the women of the Presbyterian Church of Guatemala take away from those visits. It renews them. It gives them energy to dream. It inspires and motivates them to continue in their specific ministries. And visits from PC(USA) women in ordained leadership roles transform the landscape of the leadership in Guatemala, too. The impact is huge, and it should be celebrated."



Witnessing for Christ on Thai TV

[Esther Wakeman](#) and her husband, Rob Collins, were featured on the national Thailand TV show "I Love Thailand." This program finds and highlights foreigners who speak Thai well and who love

things Thai. The producers were interested in Esther and Rob because of their involvement with the Christian Communications Institute (CCI) and traditional Thai drama. Esther is interim director of CCI, which uses traditional and modern dramatic and musical arts to present the gospel in schools and villages all over Thailand. Another attraction was their son Paul's tour business using the classic three-wheeled motorcycle taxi. In the program Esther had an opportunity to say that the Christian faith is not a foreigner's religion and that it is all about relationship—God's love for mankind. The show ended with a prayer by Rob for Thailand.

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 on older adult ministry](#) by Susan Wills, a Candidate under care of Peace River Presbytery.

[Seminary is not the problem -- the church is](#)

Patheos: What if seminaries became more like entrepreneurial boot camps than shop management schools?

[U.S. seminaries consider radical changes](#)

Religion News Service: Under a recent curriculum overhaul, Andover Newton Theological School students must prove competency in key skills for the 21st-century church, including high-tech communication and interfaith collaboration.

[South Korean pastor tends to flock of abused children](#)

Los Angeles Times: It is one of South Korea's little-known secrets: The society has a high rate of physical abuse against children, yet the problem has received limited public and professional attention.

[A new kind of urban ministry](#)

Christianity Today: Christians no longer want their communities fixed. They want them flourishing, writes Andy Crouch.

[Planning that final party](#)

Wall Street Journal: While religion and family tradition have dictated last rites for hundreds of years, funerals today are changing dramatically.

[5 Bucks churches try service instead of services](#)

Philadelphia Inquirer: For about 1,700 years, "going to church" has mostly meant warming the pews. On Sunday, however, five congregations in Lower Bucks County did not go to church at all.

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

NOVEMBER, 2011

3rd

Records and Overtures

5th

Presbyterian Women Leadership Training Help Shop at Church of the Palms

8th

Committee on Ministry

9th

Preparation for Ministry

10th

Board of Trustees

Nominations

Leadership and Congregational Development

15th

Evangelism and Church Development

17th

Stated Meeting at First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia

19th and 20th

All Youth Retreat at Cedarkirk

24th and 25th

Presbytery office is closed