



## PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

### **Reflections V:**

(A Continuing Conversation on the Church and Issues We Face Today)

Since last week's pastoral letter, I have at least six rich and fruitful conversations about what it means to be the church, what it means to be the Presbytery... and how we can celebrate in fuller ways what God is doing in our midst. Some of these thoughts came up in one to one conversations with pastors. Others came up during the discussions the trustees of the Presbytery are having with key leaders in the church regarding the new funding design the Presbytery adopted at the August Stated Meeting (i.e. three streams). The reflections, suggestions, and ideas shared include:

1. The mission of the Presbytery at its core is to support the mission of 39 congregations. The Presbytery's work and ministry is focused in: nurturing, encouraging, knowing about, and sharing with one another the work and mission that is going on in congregations in this part of the body of Christ called Peace River Presbytery.

The question then becomes - how can we do better at sharing that information with one another? How can we make it easier to know what is going on in the 39 congregations?

2. The Presbytery is not an office in North Port, it is not just a quarterly meeting, it is us:
  - It is all of us together – in 39 congregations
  - It is almost 500 ruling elders serving on sessions,
  - It is 134 teaching elders doing the work of ministry,
  - It is our mission together whether at Beth-El or Cedarkirk or Misión Peniel,
  - It is the work of the church around the world.

We have structures that formally support our congregational mission focus (i.e. Committee on Ministry and Committee on Preparation for Ministry, etc), but what are some new ways we can connect and pray for and know about what God is doing?

3. As a beginning step toward making the connections easier, the suggestion was made that we share a brief introduction about the congregation of the week with a link to their web site. We have always had the congregation of the week in the month's prayer calendar that is included in the pastoral letter. Hopefully, creating an internet link, as well as specifically lifting up the congregation we will pray for the next week, will make the connection easier, and be helpful as a reminder to pray for our sister congregations and their pastoral leadership in worship.
4. There is a second step in making connections, knowing how God is at work and what is

happening in our congregations. If your church is in the news, please send Joan Mock ([joan@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:joan@peacriverpresbytery.org)) and me ([graham@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:graham@peacriverpresbytery.org)) the internet hyperlink, as well as a brief explanation to go with the link (i.e. like we do with the news articles below). In this way we can celebrate with one another some of the good things that are happening, see how God is at work, be better connected and pray for one another. However, we can't share it unless we have the link.

5. I thank those colleagues and sessions for these ideas, and if there are other ways you think can be helpful in our making connections, offering support, and knowing how God is at work, let me know.

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](mailto:graham@peacriverpresbytery.org)

P.S. Next week I will continue writing on the marks of the church.

### **PLEASE PRAY FOR THE CONGREGATION OF THE WEEK - OCTOBER 9**

[Hope United Church \(PCUSA\)](#), Fort Myers, was organized in 2006 as the result of the merger of Grace Presbyterian Church and the Estero New Church Development. Over the years Hope United in its ministry has expressed a passion for the migrant farmer community, and has been a key participant in the Friday meal program at Misión Peniel. Another a key aspect of their life together is their weekly mid-week fellowship dinner.

Their pastor is Jim Berger ([dowberger@comcast.net](mailto:dowberger@comcast.net)) who has served this congregation for almost 6 years.

For more information, please go to [www.hopeunitedchurch.net](http://www.hopeunitedchurch.net).

**Again, an issue of *The Parish Paper* is attached. This week we are sending the October issue.**

### **Peace River Presbytery's purchase of a subscription to *The Parish Paper* INCLUDES**

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## Tell your audiences!

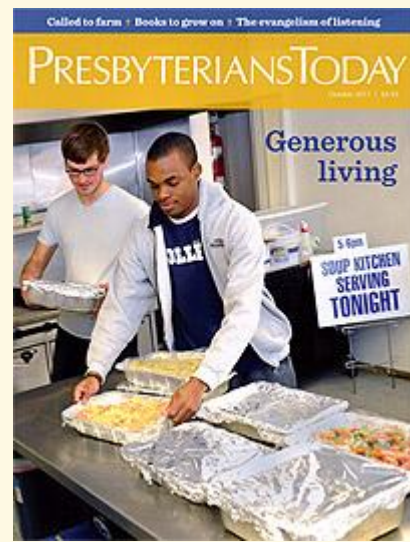
October's theme on the editorial calendar is "stewardship and giving as disciples." The following stories and resources are for your use in publications, websites, and e-newsletters:

### A Constant State of Thankfulness

While others are holding on tightly to what they have, one man is giving his money away. [Read why](#) he thinks it's the best way to live.

### How Young Adults Give

What does stewardship look like for today's young adults? In talking with two of them, key themes emerge. [Learn more](#) →



### Progress in Haiti

Meet Joseph - a young man who is caring for his siblings after the loss of their parents and brother. [See how Presbyterians are helping this family rebuild.](#)

*Please add these concerns to your personal prayer list.*

**Please continue to pray for:**

Alesia Sharpe (Presbytery's Office Manager) and her family on the loss of her father on September 21

Rev. Dr. David Uhl, HR, as he deals with health problems

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

**CONGREGATION OF THE WEEK:**

October 2	First Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers Paul deJong, Pastor <a href="mailto:pastor_paul@rocketmail.com">pastor_paul@rocketmail.com</a>
October 9	Hope United Church (PCUSA), Fort Myers Jim Berger, Pastor <a href="mailto:dowberger@comcast.net">dowberger@comcast.net</a>
October 16	Chapel by the Sea, Fort Myers Beach Maynard Pittendreigh, Pastor <a href="mailto:maynard@chapelbts.org">maynard@chapelbts.org</a>
October 23	Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church, North Fort Myers Russ Hickman, Temporary Supply Pastor <a href="mailto:hickman77@embarqmail.com">hickman77@embarqmail.com</a>
October 30	Peace Presbyterian Church, Lakewood Ranch Elizabeth Deibert, Pastor <a href="mailto:edeibert@mindspring.com">edeibert@mindspring.com</a>

**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.***

**[Innovation creates uncertainty](#)**

Leadership Now: If you want to change the world, get comfortable with the uncomfortable. [Mother cares for her son's Amish victims](#)

Religion News Service: Five years after the Nickel Mines shooting, the other side of the story is not well-known -- that of a grief-torn mother seeking the still, small voice of God in the aftermath of tragedy.

**[Lonely ministry in an Indian parish](#)**

Los Angeles Times: "This is where I find fulfillment. This is where I find happiness. This is where I want to be," priest says. "But it doesn't come easy."

**PRESBYTERY CALENDAR** (for more details, go to [www.peaceriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peaceriverpresbytery.org))

**OCTOBER, 2011**

6<sup>th</sup>

Records and Overtures

8<sup>th</sup>

Reading of the Minutes at Vanderbilt, Naples

10<sup>th</sup>

Mission/Vision Guide Team

Standing Rules Task Force

11<sup>th</sup>

Committee on Ministry

13<sup>th</sup>

Board of Trustees

Leadership and Congregational Development

15<sup>th</sup>

Reading of the Minutes at Kirkwood, Bradenton and Covenant, Fort Myers

18<sup>th</sup>

Evangelism and Church Development (at Presbytery office)

20<sup>th</sup>

Mission and Justice

Nominations (at Presbytery office)

22<sup>nd</sup>

Reading of the Minutes at First, Port Charlotte and Northminster, Sarasota

27<sup>th</sup>

Council