

WEEKLY PASTORAL LETTER – January 5, 2012



PEACE RIVER  
PRESBYTERY



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

PRESBYTERY APPS

*I trust that each and all of you had a meaningful and joyous Christmas and will have a Happy New Year! This was the year our whole Hart family, including our 2 little granddaughters - Grace and Genevieve - came to Florida for Christmas. Linda and I are grateful for so much, especially being able to stay connected with our family.*

As we begin 2012, those that deal with change theory tell us we will continue to face change at an unprecedented rate. The sheer amount of information in existence used to double every 1,000 years; now it doubles every 2 years. In the face of this huge increase, how do we adapt? What do we hold on to? How do we honor our roots, beliefs, and traditions and at the same time be open to the new thing that God is doing? Sometimes it leaves my head swirling. How about you? In the midst of this kind of change, we need roots. We also need wings. We need familiar paths to walk, and we also need a compass to guide us as we journey to new lands. The Mission, Vision, Standing Rules Guide Team continues to be the group helping us face and live into the future.

Earlier this week the Mission, Vision, Standing Rules Guide Team met to continue their work. After joining together in a lectio divina-style Bible Study, which is how the Guide Team consistently begins their meetings, they did a white board ( i.e., brain-storming) exercise around these questions:

If Steve Jobs was asked to think about re-inventing a Presbytery, what would he say, do, think? How would he approach the task? What would an iPhone version of a Presbytery look like? And what might be some of the essential “apps” that are required by the new Book of Order, needed by pastors, ruling elders, and congregations, and essential for us to fulfill our Mission/Vision as a Presbytery:

- ✓ to affirm congregations
- ✓ to connect disciples in mission
- ✓ and to be the body of Christ together.



As the Guide Team dreamed and talked, they realized there are some apps we don't need any more. There are new ways we can do things, and not everyone will need or use all the apps. Using the image of "apps" was an interesting and helpful way for the Guide Team to continue to think about what God is calling us to be as a Presbytery as we move into the future.

So, even as we continue to face an uncertain future, I am excited and grateful for this group of people who on your behalf are doing the hard, creative, and reflective work around the theme of "Being the body of Christ together".

I would be curious to hear some of your thoughts as to what apps (applications) are essential for us as a Presbytery to function well. What apps can we let go of? I'll pass on your thoughts to the Guide Team, or you are welcome to e-mail [Mary Lee Mann](mailto:MaryLeeMann@peaceriverpresbytery.org) with your ideas.

***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@peaceriverpresbytery.org](mailto:graham@peaceriverpresbytery.org)

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

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

**Please pray for:**

Rev. Curtiss and Catherine Brown on the loss of Catherine's father last week. Please also pray for Catherine's mother who has health problems.

Rev. Kathleen Weller's mother, LaVerne McDonough, who has health issues

**Please continue to pray for:**

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

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**PLEASE PRAY FOR THE CONGREGATION OF THE WEEK – January 8**

**Wintergarden Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte** celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012. From its beginning Wintergarden has been firmly rooted in the Christian faith. Today you will find a fresh sense of vitality and a renewed spirit here. Worship is central to our life together. We are small enough to be a friendly, caring community while encouraging personal discipleship and mission.

Ruth Schaaff ([pastor@wintergardenchurch.org](mailto:pastor@wintergardenchurch.org)) is serving as Temporary Supply.

For more information, go to [www.wintergardenchurch.org](http://www.wintergardenchurch.org).

**LIST FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY:**

January 1	First Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte
January 8	Wintergarden Presbyterian Church, Port Charlotte Ruth Schaaff, Temporary Supply <a href="mailto:pastor@wintergardenchurch.org">pastor@wintergardenchurch.org</a>
January 15	Burnt Store Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda Tim Stewart, Pastor <a href="mailto:sunburn1320@mac.com">sunburn1320@mac.com</a> Valerie Bell, Associate Pastor <a href="mailto:pastorval@embarqmail.com">pastorval@embarqmail.com</a>

January 22	First Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda Steve Mock, Pastor <a href="mailto:revmock@fpcpunta.org">revmock@fpcpunta.org</a>
January 29	Bee Ridge Presbyterian Church, Sarasota Karl Kling, Pastor <a href="mailto:karlklingadmin@aol.com">karlklingadmin@aol.com</a>

### **Justice and evangelism: a new convergence**

Read why some believe adopting the “lifestyle of Jesus” would renew society and its connection to God.

### **All God's people**

Read how an influx of people from Africa have revitalized one congregation.

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



**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.***

[Study: Christianity grows exponentially in Africa](#)

USA Today: Rapid growth in developing nations offset declines in Christianity's traditional strongholds, according to a report released Monday by the Pew Research Center.

Houston Chronicle: [Disorganized religion](#)

[The power of workplace DIY](#)

Harvard Business Review blog: We forget, sometimes, that adults in an office are not that different than children in a classroom.

[Egypt's Christians wary of too much foreign support](#)

Reuters: Christians in Egypt are wary about getting too much support from abroad, fearing a backlash from Muslims who could resent special attention to a minority at a time when all Egyptians are suffering economic hardship and political uncertainty.

[A plea to clergy](#)

Forbes: Another year, another liturgy. Another year, another tune. That's the way it goes at the house of worship, the one place that should be a refuge of predictability.

[The New Evangelicals: How Christians are rethinking abortion and gay marriage](#)

Australian Broadcasting Corp.: Where there was once a seemingly monovocal evangelicalism in the U.S., there is now robust polyphony, scholar finds.

CNN Belief blog: [Santorum's evangelical surge is about more than Christian Right](#)

[All things new](#)

Opportunities to start over are God's consistent promise in an imperfect world where change is the only visible constancy, writes Brian Volck. But is change something we can really prepare for?

[Don't give up on young people, urge church leaders](#)

The (London) Guardian: Archbishop of Canterbury and Pope Benedict counsel educating and supporting the young to avoid past tragedies.

Archbishop of Canterbury: [Archbishop's BBC New Year message](#)

Vatican News: [Papal Message for World Day of Peace 2012](#)

[The return to religion](#)

The (London) Telegraph: With the chill wind of austerity blowing through the UK, religion's warm embrace looks more and more inviting, with a resurgence of churchgoing.

The (London) Guardian: [Pope Benedict on Europe's crisis of faith](#)

[A lion of the pulpit, aging now, has a message for new generations](#)

The New York Times: At 93, the Rev. Gardner Taylor has been thinking a lot lately of the biblical

Jacob -- "old and weak, leaning on his staff," yet still worshiping God.

[Churches bring custom apps to their flocks](#)

Wall Street Journal: More than 150 churches across the U.S. have had customized smartphone and tablet apps created to connect with their members.

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

**JANUARY, 2011**

5<sup>th</sup>

Records and Overtures Committee

Brown Bag Luncheon – Interim, Designated, Stated Supply, and Temporary Supply Pastors

9<sup>th</sup>

Committee on Representation

10<sup>th</sup>

Committee on Ministry

11<sup>th</sup>

Committee on Preparation for Ministry

Personnel via conference call

12<sup>th</sup>

Board of Trustees

Leadership and Congregational Development Committee

Nominations Committee via conference call

16<sup>th</sup>

Presbytery office is closed

17<sup>th</sup>

Evangelism and Church Development Committee

19<sup>th</sup>

Mission and Justice Committee

Theology and Worship Committee

25<sup>th</sup>

Retired Clergy

26<sup>th</sup>

Council