



# PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY



## WEEKLY PRESBYTERY LETTER – MARCH 19, 2015 Rev. Graham Hart – General Presbyter

### Speaking from the Hart:

#### **A Moment of Personal Privilege (Part 1) and on Marriage in the PCUSA (see Part 2)**

**Part 1** - Some days are banner days ... ones so special that you take all the feelings, memories, and pictures and you tuck them away and cherish them for years to come. Saturday was one of those days for our family. Katie, our youngest daughter, married Matt McCausey. Linda and I are thrilled for Matt and Katie.



Personally, I want to thank the staff, Presbytery leadership and you for your support and encouragement, as well as the chance to experience, live out, and be reminded all over again of the importance of the learnings that came out of my sabbatical time, which in summary I have included here (note – if you want the paragraph description of each of these, let me know [click here](#)) and I will send that to you):

### Sabbatical Learnings: Values, Beliefs and Things to Remember

1. Life is a gift.
2. Life is about grace.
3. Life is best lived from a place of gratitude.
4. Life is best lived if I can be present, aware and mindful in this moment, and not distracted by external demands or internal what ifs, if only, and other internal distracting conversations.
5. Life is more about rhythm than it is keeping one's balance.
6. Life is about relationships before it is about anything else, and that is true for the Presbytery as well.
7. Life is more than work.
8. Life is about learning and ever growing and living with humility.

9. 'Building the new is distinctively different than fixing the old.'
10. When you don't know what to do, just put your foot in the river.
11. Listen to the voices silenced –
12. So faith, hope, love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love... so says Paul... so hopes every couple who is married. As Bishop Tutu said, "There's no question about the reality of evil, of injustice, of suffering, but at the center of this existence is a heart beating with love." As we have been about church business, sometimes we forget what is at the center. As a young pastor, when I was by myself in the sanctuary thinking and praying, I was profoundly moved by our belief that "God so loved the world..." Or as we read in 1 John: "God is love... "At the heart of creation is a heart beating with love. Wow!

## **Part 2: Marriage – Changes in the Directory of Worship**

As has been shared with you in an e-mail letter by Randy Moody, our Presbytery's Stated Clerk, as well as has been reported in the news, this past week, Amendment 14-F, often referred to as the marriage amendment, unofficially received the 86<sup>th</sup> affirmative vote of the presbyteries, the amount needed to be approved to become part of the Directory for Worship. As our Presbytery's vote last November, and those of the other presbyteries, shows - Presbyterians continue to be divided on this issue. Some will celebrate its passage, while others will be troubled by it. And whether you may agree or disagree with this change, remember that it doesn't force any teaching elder or session to do anything differently about marriage than it did under the current definition.

I have included links (click on the high-lighted area) to several documents which you may find helpful and come from different perspectives:

1. A [news release from Gradye Parsons](#), Stated Clerk of the PCUSA
2. A [pastoral letter from Moderator Heath Rada](#) and Vice Moderator Larissa Kwong Abazia of the General Assembly about the passage of Amendment 14-F.
3. A statement by the [Covenant Network](#).
4. A statement by the [Fellowship Community](#).
5. An [advisory opinion from the Office of the General Assembly](#) on the impact of the marriage amendment, in question and answer format. The full text of the marriage amendment is on page two of this document.

Amidst the all the feelings the passage of this amendment may evoke, as I have shared with you at the last presbytery meetings:

*"I pray we keep our eye on the mark... on the main thing. Amidst our denominational issues and conflicts, if we focus on the 2% in which we may differ among ourselves from one another on how we interpret and use scripture, the world loses... and we lose. The world loses because our focus is on ourselves... plain and simple, and we lose because we think that if we attempt to leave the PCUSA we will suddenly grow. The truth is studies of church who left thinking the grass is greener somewhere else have not grown...*

*As I have shared before... I am becoming more and more convinced that faith, hope love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love... and if I am wrong in that I am in good company.*

*So invite you to join me in a time of experimenting and learning about:*

- *How we can reach the next generation (i.e. Baby—Boomers) moving to southwest Florida in record numbers ...*
- *How we go deep... how we don't just fill up pews, but make disciples...*
- *And how we can, in everything we do, keep our eye on the main thing which is for God so loved the world. It's about love... it's about grace... it about God... it's about keeping Christ at the center.*

Grateful to God who is the Wind in our Sails  
and the Rudder to Guide is in the Way,

Graham  
Graham Hart  
General Presbyter  
[graham@peacriverpresbytery.org](mailto:graham@peacriverpresbytery.org)

### **MISION PENIEL**

*A Ministry of Peace River Presbytery to the Farmworkers in Immokalee*

The Mision Peniel Task Force continues to meet and build the support and structure for continuing this vital ministry. If you want to make a donation to support this recovery effort you may send the check (marked Mision Peniel) to Peace River Presbytery | 5600 Peace River Rd. | North Port, FL. 34287.

- Volunteer Position Opening: Publications Coordinator ([click for information](#))
- Meal Serving Schedule ([click for information](#))
- Collection Centers for Mision Peniel Supplies ([click for information](#))
- Critical Needs List ([click for information](#))

### **HAPPY 90<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY**

### **REV. DR. MARGARET TOWNER**



*Margaret was the first woman ordained in the PCUSA, 58 years ago!*

### **BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.**

*A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma*

[Position Opening: Executive Director](#)

[Winter 2015 Newsletter](#)

[Fall 2014 Newsletter](#)

### **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The following are position openings in PRP churches.

Click on the title for more information.

[Part-Time Choir Director](#) – Palma Sola Presbyterian Church, Bradenton

[Interim Choir Director](#) – Trinity Presbyterian Church, Venice

[Organist / Pianist / Accompanist](#) – Palma Sola Presbyterian Church, Bradenton

### **PRAYER NEEDS:**

#### **Please continue to pray for:**

- Rev. Dr. Tim Halverson, pastor of Faith, Cape Coral, in the recent loss of his mother.
- Anita Adkison, mother of Rev. Dr. Stephen Adkison, Pastor of Chapel By The Sea – recovery from breast cancer surgery and treatment to follow. Lives in Arkansas.
- Rev. Susan Rice, Associate Pastor of Faith, Cape Coral – health
- Greg Beckwith (son of Jim and Becky Beckwith) – kidney failure – is undergoing dialysis and is on a kidney transplant list. Greg is also diabetic and underwent quadruple bypass heart surgery in June 2013.
- Glenn Beisser (father of Rev. Devon Beisser Ducheneau, Stated Supply Pastor for Wintergarden P.C.) – lung cancer and heart issues
- Hmingi Browne's (A.P. of Church of the Palms) sister, Nutei – health
- Donna Blaser (wife of Wayne Blaser) – PRAISE REPORT – the lymphoma is in remission!
- Grandson of Tim and Martha Halverson - suffering from a rare autoimmune disease.
- Beth-El Farmworker Ministry
- Misión Peniel
- Cedarkirk Camp and Conference Center
- Dan and Elizabeth Turk, PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Madagascar
- Les and Cindy Morgan, PCUSA Mission Co-Workers in Bangladesh
- Pastors and Educators in transition
- Nations in crisis

## CHURCH PRAYER GUIDE: MARCH 2015:

March 1	<u>Trinity Presbyterian Church, Venice</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Chuck Wiggins email: <a href="mailto:cjw049@gmail.com">cjw049@gmail.com</a>
March 8	<u>Venice Presbyterian Church, Venice</u> Pastor: Rev. Chris Romig email: <a href="mailto:cromig@venicepresbyterian.org">cromig@venicepresbyterian.org</a> Associate Pastor: Rev. Lyn Olson email: <a href="mailto:lolson@venicepresbyterian.org">lolson@venicepresbyterian.org</a> Associate Pastor: Rev. Todd Reinschmidt email: <a href="mailto:treinschmidt@venicepresbyterian.org">treinschmidt@venicepresbyterian.org</a>
March 15	<u>First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia</u> Temporary Supply Pastor: Rev. Dr. John Henry email: <a href="mailto:irrev.rev.316@gmail.com">irrev.rev.316@gmail.com</a>
March 22	<u>First Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Doug Pratt email: <a href="mailto:dpratt@fpcbonita.org">dpratt@fpcbonita.org</a> Associate Pastor: Rev. Dr. Paul Fahnestock Email: <a href="mailto:pfahnestock@fpcbonita.org">pfahnestock@fpcbonita.org</a> Associate Pastor: Rev. Steven Grant Email: <a href="mailto:sgrant@fpcbonita.org">sgrant@fpcbonita.org</a>
March 29	<u>Braden River Presbyterian Church, Bradenton</u> Pastor: Rev. Glenn Buzbee, Jr. email: <a href="mailto:revglennb@gmail.com">revglennb@gmail.com</a>

## PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: MARCH 2015

You may view the entire calendar on the Presbytery web site: [www.peacriverpresbytery.org](http://www.peacriverpresbytery.org)

### March 19

Steering Committee

### March 29

Palm Sunday