



PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

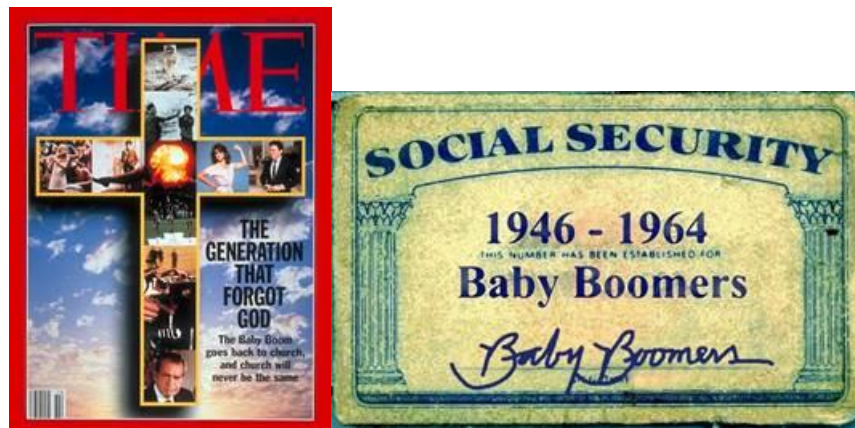


WEEKLY PRESBYTERY LETTER - MARCH 3, 2015

Rev. Graham Hart, General Presbyter

So now what? ~ Baby-Boomers, Peace River Presbytery and You (and FYI – being father of the bride)

As a presbytery and as congregations, we got used to the norm that when people retired to southwest Florida they sought out a church... and our congregation grew and grew. That was true for the silent and greatest generations. But something started happening with churches up north in the 70's and 80's. People weren't going to church like they used to, and as those same people began retiring here, they still aren't going to church.



At our Presbytery meeting and subsequent workshops last week, we began a conversation with Amy Hanson about what it would look like to think creatively, boldly, and missionally about how to reach the next generation of retirees. Between those who attended the Presbytery meeting on Thursday and the 210 people who came to the Friday workshops, we were able to have some robust and thoughtful conversations.

The snowbirds are coming. In droves they are coming but, as Amy said, unless we are bold and develop some new outreach strategies, they won't be coming to us.

However, a word of caution, the point of getting baby-boomers to church is not to just have full sanctuaries, or have impressive box-office numbers and revenues, which is the goal of the Hollywood. Rather, our purpose is to make disciples and help them grow. In the words of C.S. Lewis, our mission is to help them (us) become little Christs. We invite them to: **come and grow so as to go and serve** - in whatever way they are called. As we learned from Amy, we need to capture the imagination of this next generation of retirees and develop relationships with them. They still want to make a difference in our world.

I hope we throw caution to the wind as we strategize, experiment, and reach out to baby-boomers, inviting them back to church, not just to fill up our pews, but to come and grow so as to go and serve – which many of them want to do.



So where do we go from here?

One of the things I love about being your General Presbyter is being able to visit with pastors and churches, and see and hear what God is doing. There are some incredible things each of our congregations is doing in reaching out to the communities around them, and helping folks grow and go and serve. But we don't often have a chance to hear about that.

Yesterday the Planning Team met, and will go back to the Steering Committee with a recommendation that, in lieu of one central Presbytery meeting in August/September, we have 3-5 regional gatherings/meetings. The Planning Team, in conversation with the Steering Committee, is thinking about how to design a conversation whereby churches in a given area, or in the same town, can:

- learn from each other,
- share with each other the joys and struggles,
- talk about the needs of their communities,
- share how they see God at work in their community,
- and maybe even dream and imagine new ways of working together.

One of the things that we could do at the gatherings is to have some initial reporting back of what the "baby-boomer ministry dream teams" from each church have imagined related to reaching out to boomers. In short, the idea is that you (meaning your congregation) in some way will be the keynote speaker at this presbytery meeting/gathering.

The hope is that we will continue to deepen what, in our presbytery's guiding values, we said we want to be, namely, a missional, relational, and learning community together centered in Christ. If you have ideas of what that could look like, let Mary Lee Mann, Karl Kling, and Wayne Largent or myself know. It's an idea ... still incubating.

So, I invite you to join me in a time of experimenting with:

- how can we reach the next generation;
- how we can go deep... not just inviting people to fill up pews, but making disciples;
- how, in everything we do, – we keep our eye on the main thing which is that God so loved the world. It's about love... it's about grace... it about God... it's about creating a new culture in the presbytery that is relational and missional, and a learning community with Christ at the center.

*I am Grateful to God...
who is the Wind in our Sails...
and the Rudder to Guide us in the Way,*

Graham

Graham Hart
General Presbyter
graham@peaceriverpresbytery.org

PS - In case you were not at the presbytery meeting, attached is my annual report/reflection about our life together as a presbytery in 2014, and a peek at some hopes and dreams for 2015.

PSS – I may be a little pre-occupied over the next 2 weeks. Our youngest daughter Katie, who last year graduated from UF as an Occupational Therapist, will be getting married. Linda and I are thrilled! And this is an FYI - everything that goes with being the father of the bride I am feeling right now.

The following articles may be of interest to you:

[The Pope's Vatican cleanup is sending the clergy to management school](#)

Bloomberg Business: Vatican's pastoral management course covers topics such as strategic communication, business ethics and creative problem-solving.

[Our Lady of revenue: NYC churches on the market](#)

USA Today: There are worries that real estate values might undercut gospel ones.

[Poll: Most Americans see combating climate change as a moral duty](#)

Religion News Service: A significant majority of Americans say combating climate change is a moral issue that obligates them -- and world leaders -- to reduce carbon emissions.

[Afternoon church fits Orlando's 24/7 economy](#)

Orlando (Fla.) Sentinel: Sunday afternoon church is a hit.

[Why I make my kids go to church\(link is external\)](#)

Deseret News: Jenny Evans takes her kids to church because out of all the things she wants them to know, this is the most important.

[How do I become ... a priest \(link is external\)](#)

The (London) Guardian: More than faith, it also requires managerial skills, empathy and, sometimes, a strong stomach.

[In English town, Muslims lead effort to create interfaith haven \(link is external\)](#)

NPR: Ten years later, the transformation of All Souls Church provides a story of harmony and integration in one culturally diverse community.

[Pastor leaving Racine to launch farm-based ministry \(link is external\)](#)

Racine (Wisc.) Journal-Times: Presbyterian pastor leaves congregation to create Farm Church, a new type of ministry aimed at feeding people, both urban and rural.

Lessons on second chances from my brother, David Carr

In a recent column in America magazine, John Carr notes that when someone dies who reminds us of what is important and what is not, there are lessons for personal, public and religious life. "For me, and apparently many others, my youngest brother, [David Carr, was such a person.](#)"

SPECIAL EVENTS:

(Click on the links or download the attachments.)

[A Weekend to Remember with Jerry Lucas, "Dr. Memory"](#)

Famed basketball legend Jerry Lucas will be at Venice Presbyterian Church from Thursday, March 12 thru Monday, March 16.

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](#))

BETH-EL FARMWORKER MINISTRY, INC.

A Ministry to the Farmworkers in Wimauma

[Winter 2015 Newsletter](#)

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The following are position openings in PRP churches.

Click on the title for more information.

[Music Director](#) – Community Presbyterian Church, Englewood

[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 pray for:

- Rev. Dr. Tim Halverson, pastor of Faith, Cape Coral, in the recent loss of his mother.

Please continue to pray for:

- The family of Rev. Dr. Robert M. C. Ward, who recently passed away.
- 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: cjw049@gmail.com
March 8	<u>Venice Presbyterian Church, Venice</u> Pastor: Rev. Chris Romig email: cromig@venicepresbyterian.org Associate Pastor: Rev. Lyn Olson email: lolson@venicepresbyterian.org Associate Pastor: Rev. Todd Reinschmidt email: treinschmidt@venicepresbyterian.org
March 15	<u>First Presbyterian Church, Arcadia</u> Temporary Supply Pastor: Rev. Dr. John Henry email: irrev.rev.316@gmail.com
March 22	<u>First Presbyterian Church, Bonita Springs</u> Pastor: Rev. Dr. Doug Pratt email: dpratt@fpcbbonita.org Associate Pastor: Rev. Dr. Paul Fahnestock Email: pfahnestock@fpcbbonita.org Associate Pastor: Rev. Steven Grant Email: sgrant@fpcbbonita.org
March 29	<u>Braden River Presbyterian Church, Bradenton</u> Pastor: Rev. Glenn Buzbee, Jr. email: revglennb@gmail.com

PRESBYTERY CALENDAR: MARCH 2015

You may view the entire calendar on the Presbytery web site: www.peacriverpresbytery.org

March 5

Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team

March 10

Committee On Ministry

March 12

Finance Team / Board of Trustees

March 19

Steering Committee

March 26

Mision Peniel Task Force @ Vanderbilt P.C.

March 29

Palm Sunday