



The Interpreter

PEACE RIVER PRESBYTERY

AUGUST 2007

Speaking from the Hart Angels in our Midst

He was in his late 20's. I was in a hurry. It was Saturday morning and I was trying to leave the store, to get home and mow the lawn before the afternoon rains started. I don't know where he came from, but there he was.

"Can you help me with some gas money?" He must have seen my hurried look, and said, "I have a construction job 3 blocks from here, but they didn't pay me today. I am out of gas, and am trying to get home to my family."

Dilemma, what do I do? When I was a pastor of a local congregation I dealt with hundreds of folks in similar situations. Over the years I honed my radar skills to discern, as best I could: scam or need? Also, as a local pastor there was often a community coordinated protocol and program for assistance. Today, it was just he and I in the Publix parking lot.

Could I spare a couple bucks. Of course. But what if the need wasn't legit. I remembered that obscure verse from Hebrews 13:2 "that some have entertained angels unaware". So that July Saturday morning with unanswered questions that weren't going to be answered, either I was one of his angels to help him get home, or he was my angel in disguise.

Several weeks later I was in a gathering of about 35 people from 7 congregations who share the common vision of helping Peace New Church Development purchase an 11 acre parcel of land in Lakewood Ranch. At that meeting, I heard the testimony of several folks (angels I will call them) who believe in what is happening at Peace and are so committed to new church development that they gave \$150,000 toward the purchase. With a General Assembly grant of \$400,000 we need \$500,000 more for the purchase of this property, which happens to be right in the center of the target area for that growing congregation.

I know there are angels in our midst; I met some. I believe there are those whom God has so blessed that together we can make it happen. If you are such a person, or want to hear more of the story, or know of somebody who you believe would like to participate in the building of this new church, please call me (941-426-8421), Rev. Elizabeth Deibert, Don Muenzmay, or Todd Lord (PRP Board of Trustees).

I trust the young man in the red truck got home, and I continue to believe there are angels in our midst to help Peace NCD secure its new home.

Graham Hart, General Presbyter

IMMOKALEE UPDATE

Miguel and his family are busy getting settled in Immokalee and learning to live in the USA. Below is a thank you note from Miguel and family. The Peace River family did a wonderful job of making them feel welcome with the **many** gift cards. Thanks to all who participated.

Miguel has begun weekly church services on Sundays, and prayer services on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The feeding ministry on Friday evenings continues to draw about 200 people each week for a hot meal, fellowship and outreach.

June 20, 2007

Where is Miguel Estrada?

I remember that was the way that Graham used to keep all of you informed about our process to become the ones in charge of the expansion of Beth-El Farmworkers Ministry to Immokalee. Well, I can tell you that finally Miguel Estrada and his wife, Marifrans and boy Andres are just at Immokalee.



Now, we are in the process to become settle over here. Just learning and becoming familiar with everything and everybody. But we are being not alone among this process. Since the beginning we felt the

welcome and love of our brothers and sisters from Peace River. We want to thank you all of you for all your sympathy and support to us.

All of you have become a very important way God uses to confirm He wants us over here. The challenge is big, but we know that God is with us, and that all Peace River's Churches are supporting this new ministry and reach out to the Hispanic people, basically those who came over here to work as farmworkers. People that is not just living in a big material need but also experiencing a huge spiritual need.

As you continue hearing from us, we hope to have your prayers and support over here.

Blessings,

Estrada Family



Please Join Us in Prayer for:

Churches of the Week

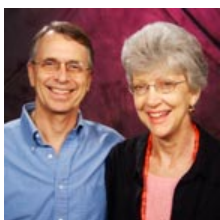
- August 5 [Siesta Key Chapel, Sarasota](#)
 August 12 [Whitfield Estates, Sarasota](#)
 August 19 [Trinity, Venice](#)
 August 26 [Venice Presbyterian, Venice](#)

MISSION CHALLENGE '07

ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT MISSION?
 Then we have some wonderful
 opportunities for you!



Rev. Tom Taylor, deputy executive director of mission for the General Assembly Council invites Presbyterians who are passionate about missions to attend a world mission celebration October 2-6th in Louisville, Ky. The **World Mission Conference** is to be a celebration of grace, and will include the commissioning of 30 plus missionaries who are participating in Mission Challenge '07, our Church's most expansive mission itineration effort in decades. Registration brochures for this conference are available through the Presbytery office or online at www.pcusa.org/missioncelebration. The deadline to register is August 20, 2007 so don't delay.



The Rev. David Wiseman, missionary to Guatemala since 2006, will be in our Presbytery from October 5 to October 12, 2007, speaking and preaching in some of our churches, helping us to ignite our passion for mission. Though

Rev. Wiseman is already preaching at First Presbyterian Naples on World Communion Sunday and at some of our other Churches, we still have times available, so give Candy Reid a call at the Presbytery office 941-426-8421 or e-mail her at candy@peacriverpresbytery.org if you would like to have Rev. Wiseman visit your church.



We will have the good fortune to have the **Rev. Katie Griffin** and her family spending their furlough time from early August to mid January within the bounds of our Presbytery. Katie serves as a PCUSA missionary in Argentina. Her parents live in Venice and she wanted to spend as much time in our area as possible. Through the generosity of a Presbyterian elder from the Chicago area, we have been able to secure a house in Englewood for the duration of her stay. Rev. Griffin will be available to speak in local Churches as time permits. She is also the mother of a one year old boy and a 4 year old girl, so as you are doing your fall planning you might want to consider inviting Katie to your church. After the 15th of August we expect to have a local telephone number where you can connect with Katie and schedule a visit.

CONGREGATION EXPERIENCES BERLIN MISSION TRIP THROUGH BLOG

Family and friends shared hugs and best wishes during the send-off party for the [Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church](#), summer mission trip team on Wednesday, June 13 at the church. The mission team worked with the Muslim community in Berlin and worked hand in hand with the American Church in Berlin.

You are welcome to experience the mission trip through a blog featuring trip updates and photos maintained by Associate Pastor Rev. Susan B. Rice at www.susanrice.blogspot.com.

FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS COME TO PEACE RIVER

In August of 2007 we will begin a year long emphasis on **Fair Trade products**: coffee, tea, nuts, dried cranberries and chocolate. These Fair Trade products from Equal Exchange offer small farmers the chance to secure a fair price for their growing efforts and thus enabling them to make a simple living and support their families.

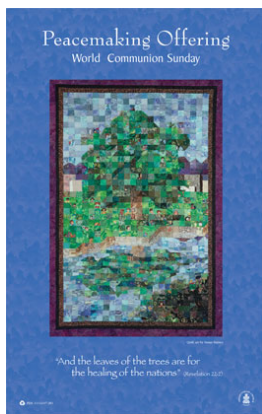


A limited amount of coffee, nuts, and cranberries will be for sale at the Presbytery office and at each Presbytery meeting. (Chocolate will be available around November.) We will also have information brochures on how your church can participate and make a difference in the lives of the working poor. Watch for more information.



In the hot and humid days of summer in Southwest Florida, it is difficult to even begin to think about Christmas, and yet it will be here before we know it. For over a decade now Operation Christmas Child has been providing shoeboxes filled with gifts in the name of Christ for children around the world, most of whom have never received a present in their lives. It is a simple, nondenominational way for Christians of all ages to share the gospel. Many of our churches in Peace River Presbytery already participate. If your church would like to begin this wonderful outreach program, go to <http://www.samaritanspurse.org> or call 1-800-353-5949. You may also contact Candy Reid, Program Coordinator, for more information.

PLAN NOW TO RECEIVE THE PEACEMAKING OFFERING



By now each church should have received their pack which is full of ideas for promoting and celebrating the 2007 Peacemaking Offering on October 7, World Communion Sunday. The pack includes ideas for the church family to promote peacemaking, worship suggestions, activity sheets for children, and adult bible study guides. If you have not received one, you can call

Presbyterian Distribution Service at 800-524-2612 or go to <http://www.pcusa.org/peacemakingoffering/>.

In 2006 more than \$2.2 million was received through the this offering to support a variety of peacemaking efforts: 25 percent is retained by congregations, 25 percent is retained by Presbyteries (our 2006 Peace River offering went to support the work of Dr. Les Morgan, Medical Missionary to Bangladesh) and 50% is used by General Assembly ministries such as the International Peacemaker program, developing Guidelines for Presbyterians During Times of Disagreement, and other works of peace in churches and communities.

UPCOMING EVENTS

PEACE RIVER PRESENTS:

Fall Stewardship Event "ASK, THANK, TELL"

Thursday, September 20, 2007

9:30 a.m. to 2:30 pm.

(Registration at 9:00)

[First Presbyterian Church, Punta Gorda](#)

\$5 per person

Special speakers:

Rev. Fred Milligan, PCUSA

Rev. Bob Bohl

Mr. Mark Shoemaker

For more information and to register, go to our website at www.peaceriverpresbytery.org on the Bulletin Board page, or call the Presbytery office (941-426-8421). Deadline is September 14.

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ACTS 16:5 INITIATIVE



Mark your calendars, set the date! On **October 29 & 30th** we will be gathering at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Venice to kick-off what could be the largest undertaking of Peace River Presbytery since the formation of our Presbytery 17 years ago. The Rev. Dr. Stan Ott will be leading us through a transformational process known as Acts 16:5. This 2-3 year process will help each of our churches AND our Presbytery discern the vision of God for our ministries right here in Southwest Florida, helping us reach out to our neighbors and become more missional in everything we do as a church and a Presbytery.

The cost for the 2-day event is only \$35 (thanks to an anonymous gift to the Presbytery). Mark your calendars and talk to your pastor about this incredibly important event in the life of our churches and our Presbytery!

Rev. Clint Cottrell

Moderator, Acts 16:5 Design Team

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The next Stated Meeting of Peace River Presbytery will be held on Saturday, August 25, 2007 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, Bradenton.

SEE WHAT IS NEW IN YOUR RESOURCE CENTER



Recently the Presbytery office staff took the opportunity to make some sorely needed changes in the Resource Center and updated some of our resources. We invite you to check us out

the next time you are in North Port or give Candy Reid a call to find out what is new. Candy is available to help you with program ideas for all ages in your church.

A few of our new books on leadership include:

“KNOW AND BE KNOWN: Small Groups that Nourish and Connect” by Brooke Collison.

People yearn for a sense of belonging. Congregations become places of belonging when people find ways to make connections, form relationships and share their personal stories. This may not be the only small group resource available but it is the only one you will need because it covers every aspect of small group life.

“Blue like Jazz: Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality” by Donald Miller

For anyone wondering if the Christian faith is still relevant in a post-modern culture, for anyone thirsting for a genuine encounter with a God who is real, for anyone yearning for a renewed sense of passion in life, *Blue like Jazz* is a fresh and original perspective on life, love and redemption.

“They Like Jesus But Not the Church: Insights from the Emerging Generations” by Dan Kimball

For anyone who wants helpful insights on how to bring Jesus to the world, this book will help!

YOUTH TOWN HALL MEETINGS

In an effort to evaluate our present youth ministry in Peace River Presbytery and to hear new ideas, needs and concerns from our local youth leaders, the *Leadership and Congregational Development Committee* of Peace River Presbytery is holding a series of “Town Hall Meetings” throughout the summer in various locations. The goal is also to get to know local youth leaders and see how we can channel our efforts in making disciples of all ages. Someone in each area of the Presbytery (North, South and Central) is contacting leaders in each church and inviting them to one of our gatherings BUT in case you missed out, you can call Candy Reid, Program Coordinator, to share your ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to those adults who took a week of their time to serve as chaperones for our youth events this summer: Mary Brown from First Sarasota; Mike Bicknese, David Pugh and Linda Ferguson from Faith, Cape Coral; Chris Geisecke and Greg Geisecke from Cypress Lake; Rev. Jay Mumper and Suzy Russell from First Port Charlotte; Sue Gooding and Greg Anthony from First Bradenton.

PICTURES FOR 2008 HANDBOOK

REMINDER: If you are a minister or educator in Peace River Presbytery and haven't had your picture taken yet for the 2008 Informational Handbook, there will be a make-up session at the August 25 meeting at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Bradenton.



This newsletter is available for viewing anytime at www.peaceriverpresbytery.org
(Follow link to “Presbytery Publications”)

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[Bob Rea](#), Designated Associate Presbyter
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