



Presbytery of Tampa Bay at 4704 Kelly Road in Tampa, Florida
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For the week of
November 7, 2013

Special items to read, pray for and share:

- The Presbytery Office is closed on Monday, November 11, for the observance of Veterans Day, AND the Presbytery office is closed on Friday, November 15, because of the all day extravaganza Presbytery meeting the day before.
- FPC, Bartow, is seeking a part-time Director of Children's and Youth Ministries. Inquiries should be made to: info@fpcbartowfl.org.
- Covenant Presbyterian Church, Fort Myers, has begun a search for Director of Youth Ministry. The application deadline is November 30, 2013. For more information, please send an email to jdeyoe@covpcf.com.
- The Presbytery will host a variety of Board of Pensions Seminars in January 2014. Watch the new website for more information!

BEST PRACTICES IN ACCOUNTABILITY

by Tom Ehrich

"The church," a wise old hand once told me, "is the one place where hard-charging people can get away with mediocrity."

Career-minded winners, he explained, can accept ministry assignments and then fail to follow through. They can show up late to meetings, step up unprepared to lead discussion or read lessons, and complain like adolescents expecting to be heard but not held accountable.

People whom God has gifted can hide their gifts, lest they be asked to use them. People who know better can bicker like children, bully like teenagers, and act out like randy collegians.

My friend was sympathetic. As he saw it, people who behave this way often are acting out a freedom they don't feel at work. They are allowing themselves to be taken care of, forgiven, indulged.

Problem is, this is self-destructive behavior. When grownups behave like irresponsible children, they lose touch with themselves and they become weak, self-serving and merciless.

When leaders cannot count on follow-through, their leadership zeal turns to resentment. When leaders describe their work as "herding cats" and "middle school all over again," they won't accept other assign-

ments.

It isn't the hard work and ambiguities of serving in a troubled world that drag down leaders. It's people, especially people living down a generation or two and fostering a system where no one is held accountable.

"I didn't mean to" -- becomes an evasion of personal responsibility. "I tried" -- becomes an avoidance of outcomes. "Don't blame me" -- shifts the burden elsewhere.

As a result, consequences vanish like the morning mist. And failure -- which should be a great teacher -- becomes "the one who shall not be named."

Nowhere is non-accountability more visible than in stewardship, when 50% of active constituents give nothing and the rest give far below their spiritual need to give and God's expectation of the tithe.

Unable to count on follow-through on low-level assignments, the church shrinks from the bold ministries that God wants and the world needs. Minimalist thinking -- inside the box, survival-only, don't rock the boat -- becomes normative.

Strategic planning degenerates into tweaking a few easy irritations. Mission degenerates into doing the least for others and expecting the most in applause. Worship becomes inoffensive entertain-

ment. Education becomes slogans and sweet stories. Christian community becomes polite nods.

There's no single answer to all of this. But here are a few practical suggestions.

Start and end all meetings on time. No late-comers allowed.

When someone reneges on a commitment, relieve them of duty.

When people gossip and bully, call them out.

When leaders don't exercise responsible stewardship, relieve them of leadership.

Set the bar high for strategic thinking. Don't waste time debating low-hanging fruit. Just do it.

Insist on normal business practices -- meetings with agendas, information distributed in advance, people's time honored, stay on topic, no sand-bagging.

Love the complainers and change-resisters, but don't appoint or elect them to office.

Teach and preach the tithe, and when people complain, preach it again.

In these and similar steps, help people give their best to God. In doing that, they will discover true grace, true mercy, true compassion -- not the sighing of a weary parent worn down by adolescent whining.

NOVEMBER 14 AT HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN WINTER HAVEN

The Presbytery of Tampa Bay gathers for its Stated Meeting on Thursday, November 14 at

Hope PC, 2110 Cypress Gardens Boulevard in Winter Haven. Papers for the meeting will be

posted today, Thursday, November 7 after 4:00PM. Thank you for your prayerful and careful attention!

E-news publication dates

The e-news will be published on the 15th (instead of 14th) next week due to the Presbytery meeting.

There will be no e-news on Thursday, November 28. Enjoy counting your blessings this Thanksgiving holiday!

Devotions and prayer

Here is the prayer from my devotion, adapted from Heidelberg Q&A 45

"Everlasting God, through Jesus Christ's resurrection you guarantee life restored, sharing your glory, victory, and righteousness. Inject everyday living with that bright hope, lifting my heart, giving fresh legs for weary days, and steadying a sometimes woozy and wobbly faith. In Jesus' name. Amen."

What timely beauty! May it speak to you as well.

APPRECIATION FOR LESLEE KIRKCONNELL

Let's all wish Leslee Kirkconnell Godspeed and blessings on her journey!

Leslee has served the Resource Center faithfully for over eight years, and now we must say our "good-byes" and "thank yous". In late 2012, Leslee was informed that the emerging mission design and staffing rationale for the Presbytery would not include a full-time Resource Center Director. The Presbytery promised her full compensation and benefits for all of 2013 as she listened for God's call and searched for full-time work.

Following the Stated Meeting on November 14th in Winter Haven, there will be a cake reception and card shower for Leslee. If you wish, please bring a card of appreciation to Leslee on the 14th. You are welcome to include an enclosure with the card (i.e. recipe, gift card, words of wisdom, lottery ticket, etc.). Or, you may send a card to the Presbytery Office addressed to Leslee Kirkconnell.

The Personnel Committee hopes that everyone will take a moment to share their appreciation of Leslee's considerable contribution to our Presbytery.

Barbara Kranendonk, Chair of the Personnel Committee

PRESBYTERIAN NEIGHBORS IN MINISTRY

What are your Presbyterian congregation neighbors doing as ministry to serve the gospel and their neighbors?

First, Dunedin, celebrates the 125th Anniversary of Andrews Memorial Chapel on November 10 at 2PM

St John, Tampa, hosts its Annual Christmas Boutique on Saturday, December 7, from 9AM to 2PM

St Mark, Hudson, has scheduled a Pancake breakfast and Furniture and Rummage Sale for Saturday, November 16, from 8AM-10AM

First, Brandon, welcomes

all to join them at the Grief Café on November 17, at 2PM

Temple Terrace celebrates Thanksgiving with their annual Thanksgiving Celebration Luncheon on Sunday, November 17

Village, Tampa, begins Advent with "Hanging of the Greens" on Sunday, December 1st, beginning at 5PM in the sanctuary

Keystone, Odessa, is planning a Healing Service for December 15

First, Inverness, the Widow/Widower Support Group meets the 1st and 3rd

Mondays in the Parlor from 10:45AM to 11:40AM

Bayshore, Tampa created a worshipful mission study small group experience during Sunday mornings this fall

Presbyterian Church in the Highlands, Lakeland hosts "Coffee with the Pastor" starting Sunday, November 10 from 9-10AM

Take just a few minutes to check out the websites of your neighboring churches to see the amazing stuff going on in other Presbyterian congregations!



There are always choices about which way to take in life. Each choice bears a consequence.

"The heart of a person plans the way, but the Lord establishes the steps."

Proverbs 16:9