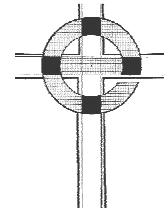




# The Presbyterian of The Presbytery of Elizabeth

Volume 1, Issue 3

April 2, 2010



## Message from Greg:

In my first article, I introduced myself. In the second one, I introduced the five-step interim process (entering the system, analyzing, planning for change, improving denominational connections, and exiting the system). In this article, I want to address a question that has been asked by several leaders: How long will this take or, how long will you be around or, when will we get our next EP? There are three answers to these questions.

The first answer is that my contract is for 12 months. In other words, even if the process is not complete, the Council of the Presbytery of Elizabeth may choose to not renew our covenant for another year. The second answer is that, sometimes, a presbytery interim process can be completed in two years. This is true when a presbytery is already well-organized, clear about where it wants to go, and at peace. In other words, not much needs to be changed other than getting ready for a new presbytery leader.

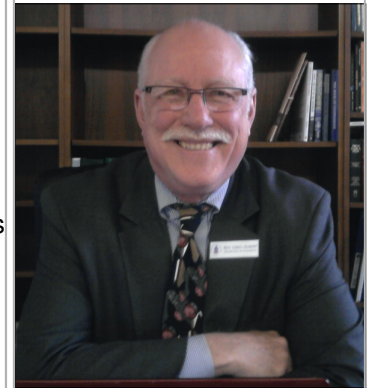
The third answer is that, on average, the presbytery interim process takes three years. I believe that this will be the case in Elizabeth Presbytery. Why? Because I'm hearing people ask fundamental questions such as:

1. Do we really need a presbytery executive and, if so, what should her/his title be?
2. Do we really need a presbytery?
3. Why should I serve on a presbytery committee or commission, or attend a meeting of Presbytery?

Suffice it to say, when people are asking such questions, it takes time to answer them. Not that I have the answers. Not that any one person or one group within the Presbytery has the answers. In fact, God is the one with the answers and our job is discern those answers together. Can it be done in one year? Probably not. Can it be done in two years? Maybe. Can it be done in three years? Hopefully. Please join me in praying:

"O God, creator of all that is, including the Presbytery of Elizabeth, be with us as we discern together the meaning and purpose of our "community." Grant us patience as we eagerly await your revelations. This we pray in the name of the One who revealed your meaning and purpose, Jesus the Christ. Amen."

The Rev. Greg Albert  
Interim Executive Presbyter  
908-755-3776, ext. 3



**Rev. Greg Albert**  
Interim Executive Presbyter

## Educational Event

**Saturday, April 17th**  
**8:30 AM - 12:30 PM**  
United Presbyterian Church  
525 E Front St.  
Plainfield, NJ 07060

**Breakfast**  
**WORSHIP**  
**& WORKSHOPS**

R.S.V.P. for Childcare  
908-755-3776

**Flyer on our website**  
[www.elizabethpresbytery.org](http://www.elizabethpresbytery.org)

## We Gather to Greet the Risen Lord — Sunday April 4



Holy One, at the first light of dawn  
on the first day of the week  
we gather to greet the risen Lord:  
firstborn of the dead.

Keep us faithful as your people,  
the first fruit of your Holy Spirit,  
until you gather us at last  
in your realm of endless light;  
through Jesus Christ, Alpha and Omega.

**Bring a neighbor to church**

## Coming Events from PC(USA) and beyond

- Holocaust Remembrance  
Sunday, April 11, 2010
- Health Awareness Day  
Sunday, April 18, 2010
- Earth Day—April 22, 2010
- Older Adult Week  
May 2—8, 2010  
see also PCUSA  
Planning Calendar

# Know When to Ask for Help

People often ask us, "Where did you go to school?"

We can name the institutions. But if they asked the better question - "Where did you learn the lessons that matter?" - the answer probably would be "the College of Hard Knocks."

No amount of schooling, reading or continuing education prepares a leader for the curve balls of reality. Not only can we never know enough, but our own unique presence in a situation changes it.

Wise leaders keep records of their experiences. They reflect on events as they happen. They listen to others talk about their experiences. This accumulation of analyzed experience can speed up our reaction times and help us to avoid repeating errors.

At some point, however, we need to ask for help. The curve balls are coming too fast. We get overwhelmed and start to panic or shut down. We need another pair of eyes, fresh insights, a listening ear, or space to catch our breath.

Whom do you ask? A wise colleague might be the quickest to respond. I remember a neighboring pastor who helped me to see my congregation as an alcoholic system, in which I had little experience.

Some clergy turn to their judicatory executives, where they likely encounter good hearts but full calendars.

Some church leaders go outside the religious realm and turn to therapists who are skilled in drawing people out, naming issues and helping people to formulate responses. In one conflict situation, a family therapist helped me enormously.

I am hearing more and more about "coaching," in which a leader facing a knotty church problem seeks out a coach to help them work it through. One colleague, for example, found herself dealing with a predecessor's sexual misconduct. It caught her off-guard and under-prepared. So she hired a coach with skills in this area, who explained the dynamics, told her what not to do, and gave her guidance on next steps.

Asking for help is never easy. We'd prefer to feel all-competent. If we ask for help too often, we will doubt our capabilities and form dependencies. But there are times in every lay and clergy ministry when seeking outside help is the best step. Asking for it can be a sign of our wisdom.

The above article was written by the Rev. Tom Ehrich, founder of the Church Wellness Project.  
For more information about the Project, go to [churchwellness.com](http://churchwellness.com).

## What's Happening in and around The Presbytery of Elizabeth

**Salem Roadhouse Café:**  
*The Torpedoes Unplugged*  
**Saturday, April 10 \* 7:30 PM**  
Townley Presbyterian Church  
829 Salem Rd., Union, NJ 07083  
For more information: (908) 686-1028

**Celebrating Church Leadership**  
**Presbytery Educational Event**  
**Saturday, April 17th \* 8:30 AM—12:30 PM**  
United Presbyterian Church  
525 East Front St., Plainfield, NJ

**Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery**  
**SPRING GATHERING**  
**Tuesday, April 20 \* 5:30 PM—9:00 PM**  
Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church  
716 Watchung Ave., Plainfield, NJ  
Contact Amy Aaroe 908-272-4643

**Session Minute Review II**  
**Tuesday, April 20 \* 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM**  
The Presbytery of Elizabeth  
525 E Front St., Plainfield, NJ

**Spruce Up J'Burg Day**  
**Saturday, April 24, 2010**  
Johnsonburg Presbyterian Center  
822 Rte 519, Johnsonburg, NJ 07846  
For more information call (908) 852-2349

**Session Minute Review III**  
**Tuesday, May 25 \* 12:30 PM - 3:00 PM**  
First Presbyterian Church  
45 Market St., Perth Amboy, NJ

**Session Minute Review IV**  
**Tuesday, June 29 \* 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM**  
The Presbytery of Elizabeth  
525 E Front St., Plainfield, NJ

**PLACE AN ORDER TODAY**  
**2009-2010 BOOK OF ORDER**  
**2010-2011 PLANNING CALENDAR**  
**2010 MISSION YEARBOOK**  
**Call 908-755-3776**

Visit [www.elizabethpresbytery.org](http://www.elizabethpresbytery.org) for Church Listings & Presbytery Calendar

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Dave Bomgaars <i>Treasurer</i>	Ext. 7
Bruce Pereyra <i>Bookkeeper</i>	Ext. 5
Sara Burke <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	Ext. 6
Elizabeth Quintero <i>Administrative Assistant</i>	Ext. 1
Resource Center	Ext. 9