



# THE NEWS

March  
2011

OF SAN FERNANDO PRESBYTERY

NEWS

## COMMISSIONERS REJECT MAJOR AMENDMENTS AT PRESBYTERY

Commissioners rejected three of the most controversial proposed amendments to the *Book of Order* at the meeting of Presbytery held on Saturday, February 26. For over an hour, attendees debated the merits of changing the church's form of government, revising ordination standards and adopting a new confession. But at the end of the day, commissioners voted against all three proposals. However, all but one of the less controversial amendments were approved by those in attendance. San Fernando Presbytery's decisions on all of these issues will be forwarded to General Assembly. The deadline for presbyteries nationwide to vote on the amendments is June 13, except in the case of the Belhar Confession where the deadline is July 10.

The Committee on Preparation for Ministry presented Sharon Barker, and commissioners voted to accept her as an Inquirer. Sharon had begun the process once before, but withdrew due to personal difficulties. Having recently retired, she returns to the process now with a renewed sense of call.

Rev. Gary Demarest preached a sermon entitled [The Peril of Certitude](#). Gary was at one time the pastor of La Canada Presbyterian Church, and is now honorably retired.

## FPCGH OFFERS MUSIC, ART AT THE BREATHING ROOM

*Below are excerpts from a report submitted by First Presbyterian Church, Granada Hills to the committee that awarded the Synod Stimulus Funds. Rev. Bill Sperry, the report's author, talks about The Breathing Room, a music and arts ministry, as well as some other programs that the congregation is working on.*



Live music at The Breathing Room.

Between October 2010 and the close of January 2011, The Breathing Room music and arts venue hosted three concert events, dated October 23, December 18, and January 22. Roughly 250 people in total attended the events, many of whom were first-time visitors to our church campus. The gospel is being shared at The Breathing Room, both in word and deed, and people are experiencing God's love in wonderful ways.

Our congregation continues to provide amazing support to The Breathing Room/Student Union. Our lighting and sound experts continue to donate technical support, installation time, and equipment. Members volunteer about 108 hours per event, in addition to donating food, beverages, glow bracelets, and souvenirs.

We are researching sound equipment to purchase that will improve our sound system for future concerts at The Breathing Room. We have begun to solicit congregational interest in helping with the proposed after-school program (e.g. folks to serve as tutors, study lab supervisors, and mentors). John Bowling, our Director of Youth Ministries, is working with members of the cheer squad from Granada Hills Charter High School to plan (and generate interest in) The 5<sup>th</sup> Quarter, our Fall outreach program offering high school students a safe, fun place to hang out after Friday night home football games. John has also been granted access to the Granada Hills Charter High School campus for the purpose of developing relationships with students and faculty that may provide support for both The 5<sup>th</sup> Quarter and Free Hot Dog Fridays.

That's our status for now. We are grateful to God and to all of you for your support of these ministries and your work in facilitating the stimulus funding. May God bless you as you continue to labor for the cause of Christ and the mission of the gospel.



Youth living it up at The Breathing Room.

## REPORT FROM COLOMBIA

*Rev. Sarah Henken is serving as the PCUSA's Regional Liaison for the Andean Region. In February she attended the meeting of the Colombia Mission Network in Colombia. Her report follows.*

I was blessed to participate in the Colombia Mission Network meeting February 5-15, which was held for the first time in Colombia, hosted by Central Presbytery of the Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia (IPC). The meeting began in Bogotá with representatives from each of the PC(USA) partner groups (four presbyteries and the Colombia Accompaniment Program) and each of the three IPC presbyteries, as well as the presence of Hunter Farrell, director of PC(USA) World Mission. The first four days included worship and group building, as well as meetings to share our local plans and realities and identify priorities for common efforts of the Mission Network.

The Colombia Mission Network first met in 2006, and mutuality between PC(USA) and IPC has been a key goal of this network since the beginning. The strong personal relationships developed through longstanding presbytery-to-presbytery partnerships have provided a solid foundation for our work together, but logistical issues of travel costs, language barriers, and visas for Colombian partners to visit the U.S. continue to make it difficult to achieve full and broad participation of the Colombian church in the Network. By meeting in Colombia this year, with the benefit of headsets for simultaneous translation and volunteers with the ability and willingness to offer that service for those who are not bilingual, the Mission Network was finally able to have a well-balanced meeting with strong participation from each participant. The group affirmed prayer and multifaceted advocacy for peace with justice in Colombia as its primary purpose, with several different areas of work to be done jointly, including:



Sarah presiding at the communion table with Pastor Bernardino in Chigorodó.

- improving communications within the group for sharing resources and mobilizing energy for emergency/disaster response when needed
- building our capacity to be educators and advocates for Colombia in our churches and society
- raising funds for a scholarship to allow internally displaced young adults to study at the Universidad Reformada in Barranquilla.



Meeting with Currulao church, in their new (not yet finished) sanctuary

After the planning days in Bogotá, the PC(USA) representatives divided in two groups to spend a few days visiting the ministries of the North Coast and Urabá presbyteries. I traveled to Urabá in northwestern Colombia with three other women representing the Accompaniment Program and the Urabá-Winnebago presbytery partnership. In our three and a half days in Urabá we visited eight different churches, most of which are composed primarily of people who have been displaced from their homes by the long-standing internal conflict among paramilitary groups, guerrillas, and the military. They shared with us about their lives and the way the church and their faith in God have helped get them through tremendously difficult situations, both the violence and losses suffered in the process of displacement, and most recently the effects of the devastating floods. We shared about our churches at home and the ways partnering with the IPC has helped to strengthen our personal faith and, in many cases, the mission commitment of our home congregations or presbyteries.

## **BAKER'S DOZEN**



*Some Thoughts from Interim Executive Presbyterian Rev. Ken Baker*

### **THE CHAPLAIN OF THE BAR**

Recently one of our pastors told me about a man in his congregation who had started a new ministry . . . in a bar. It wasn't on Sunday morning, it was in prime time when patrons were there at their favorite watering hole. Apparently this gentleman has credibility with people who frequent that establishment, and they've begun to see him as a source of trustworthy information about God! When he is there he seems to fit in with the other patrons. They come up and ask him questions about the meaning of life, the Creator, and their role in God's creation.

I'd like us to consider where you and I might be able to fill such a role. I'm not suggesting that we go out and try to hold court at the neighborhood tavern. That might bring its own set of complications! But all of us have somewhere that we belong which is separate from our churches. Someplace where "everybody knows our name." Maybe it's at the gym; maybe in a community improvement group; maybe in our workplace or in a school group. Is there some way that you and I could be ready when questions of meaning come up in the conversations around us? Where we could be so in tune with the needs and issues of those around us that they naturally turn to us for counsel and understanding? -

For years churches have offered programs to train folks to share our faith. But most times we don't need a technique, just a caring presence and the strength of our faith in Jesus Christ. We can't all be like the guy who transformed the bar into a chapel, but we can all be alert for those times and places where God provides an opportunity for us to offer the Good News in a world which needs it so much.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **FAMILY RESCUE CENTER**

**URGENTLY NEEDS MEN'S CLOTHING!!**

***Not extra large sizes.***

We especially need BELTS. Also SHOES for men, women and children!! Donations can be dropped off Monday-Friday, 9-1 or Saturday 9-11. St. James PC did a SHOE DRIVE that brought in hundreds of pairs of shoes!! Those are now gone, and we need other churches to do the same!

For more information, call Diane Whitmore at 818-887-2274.

[www.rescatefamilycenter.org](http://www.rescatefamilycenter.org)

# ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

**Where  
Does  
The  
Money  
Go  
?**



**Some  
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Back  
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Presbytery  
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Self-Development of People, which receives 32% of undesignated OGHS gifts, has supported the growth of the **Family Rescue Center (FRC)** with \$30,000 in grants over the last few years. These funds have enabled FRC to create and outfit a Health Office (very small clinic) onsite. Now the Family Rescue Center will be able to tend to some of the health needs of their clients. Look for the Grand Opening later this year!

The Presbyterian Hunger Program, which receives 36% of undesignated OGHS gifts, grants funds annually to our presbytery as salary support for the **Mission Advocate** position.

## **Some of it helps people who have experienced a disaster.**

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), which receives 32% of undesignated OGHS gifts, has worked hard recently in the Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Katrina, in Haiti after their devastating earthquake, in Pakistan after the terrible flooding, and in a number of other places in this country and around the world.

## **Very little of it goes to overhead!**

Recognizing that **the hope we have in Christ is lived out in our hope for one another**, let us respond with gifts that help our sisters and brothers in this country and around the world find the hope for a brighter future.

**Share God's love. Contribute to OGHS this year.**

## Presbyterian Youth Seeking Summer Mission Trip Site

Two Presbyterian churches in Oregon are partnering together for a youth mission project this summer and are looking for a work site.

Are you aware of a work project or a church or community program that might be in need of help from a group of youth – middle school, senior high, and college age – and their chaperones for a week this summer? They are scheduling their trip for late July, early August.

From Beth Keys, Director of Youth and Children's Ministry, Presbyterian Church of Laurelhurst in Portland: "We have served churches and communities throughout the West, from the Pacific coast to eastern Montana and Wyoming. In 2006 we took our group to the Katrina ravaged Mississippi Gulf Coast. This year we are interested in serving a church or community similarly in need of our help and the youth have selected Southern California to which to journey. The youth wish to do manual labor type work that might include painting projects, minor repair work or building projects, demolition, or yard work. We are used to sleeping on the floor at a church and preparing all our own meals. We would just need help in locating a resource for our daily showers. I make a number of contacts to gather project possibilities which are presented to the youth to choose the one for which they feel they are most needed and best suited. I hope to present the possibilities to them in March."

If you think you have a project for them, please contact Beth. She would appreciate any leads or referrals you might have. She can be reached at:

Email: [bethk@laurelpres.org](mailto:bethk@laurelpres.org)

Phone: 503-232-9129 (CH), 503-620-9308 (H), 503-351-7726 (Cell)

### ATTENTION PASTORS

Do you need to get away from your busy schedules  
for some quiet reflection and study?

Join us here at Rancho La Scherpa for a free day of personal refreshment.  
We will provide you with a private room to work and you are free to explore the grounds  
and enjoy the beautiful flora and fauna of Rancho La Scherpa.

Please contact Jack Drake to inquire about available times.  
(805) 448-5944

[JackD@RanchoLaScherpa.com](mailto:JackD@RanchoLaScherpa.com)

### Sherman Oaks Presbyterian Church **Accompanist & Contemporary Worship Leader**

The Sherman Oaks church is still looking for both an accompanist and a Contemporary Worship Leader. If you have any suggestions or know of individuals looking for a church, please contact Peggy Schmid as soon as possible. Peggy can provide detailed job descriptions and salary parameters.

[peggy.schmid@gmail.com](mailto:peggy.schmid@gmail.com)

The News of San Fernando Presbytery is published monthly by the Communication & Church Support Committee, Areta Crowell, Chair.

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