



THE NEWS

May
2011

OF SAN FERNANDO PRESBYTERY

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PLEASE VISIT WWW.SFPRESBY.ORG

NEWS

PDA AT WORK IN STATES RAVAGED BY TORNADOES

An unprecedented number of severe storms, including tornadoes and high winds, have battered parts of the United States, causing widespread damage. Especially hard hit were states in the South. Tornadoes in Alabama on April 27 caused more than 200 deaths in that state alone. Up to a million people were left without power and local officials said it could take days to restore electricity. Lives were also lost in Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia and Virginia, bringing the preliminary total to more than 300.



Volunteers dealing with damage in South.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) has already responded to many of the storms and stands ready to offer more help as needs continue to emerge. This was possible because of generous gifts to the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering. OGHS funds have already been sent, and 18 members of the PDA National Response Team (NRT) are working with Presbyterian leadership in affected areas. In addition, two pastors have been deployed to Alabama specifically to provide emotional and spiritual care.

If you would like to learn more about PDA's work, or make a donation, visit:

<http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/pda/>

UPDATE ON RECOVERY EFFORTS IN JAPAN

In the aftermath of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami catastrophe on March 11, the PCUSA's global partners and mission co-workers have been buoyed by the transformative power of prayer. Rev. Isamu Koshiishi, moderator of the National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ), is thankful for the prayers of so many in the United States. He says it will take time to assess damages and begin recovery, but also states, "We have been encouraged and strengthened by the many messages of support from our Christian brothers and sisters all over the world. Our immediate request is for you to continue to keep us in your prayers as we are coordinating a network of local support for those most severely affected. At this time of our great need, we want you to know how grateful we are for your expressions of support and solidarity."

One Great Hour of Sharing was able to provide \$100,000 for an immediate response. PDA, in cooperation with ecumenical partners Action by Churches Together (ACT) and Church World Service (CWS), is helping those affected by the quake receive basic relief and medical care in Miyagi and Iwate prefectures in northeastern Japan. Mobile medical services in three shelters are treating 700 patients a week for influenza, upper respiratory infections, stomach infections, vomiting, fever, skin diseases and wound infections. Yogodawa Christian Hospital (YCH), a long-term mission partner in Japan, received a solidarity grant of \$5,000 from funds designated for this disaster. Superintendent Masaaki Mukubo wrote, "Because of your faithful prayer support and partnership in Christ, God is moving us forward to be able to stand firm and provide relief work for people in Tohoku."

MAY PRESBYTERY MEETING

Immigration issues will be a topic at the next meeting of Presbytery, to be held on Tuesday, May 24 at 3:00 pm. Julia Thorne, Manager of Immigration Issues for the Office of the General Assembly, will preach during worship, and also speak at a luncheon to be held before the meeting. (See announcement below for more details.) Thorne, who received degree in law from the University of Kentucky, has held her position at OGA since 2005. She communicates with middle governing bodies, PCUSA entities and ecumenical agencies on immigration issues and policies.

Commissioners will also hear a presentation from Carl Kotheimer of the Insurance Board regarding the need for current abuse prevention policies to protect both individuals and the congregation as a whole. Some of the issues covered will include ethical relationships, sexual harassment, protection of vulnerable adults, and conduct in support of children, including the use of social media.

The meeting will take place at Panorama Presbyterian Church, 14225 Roscoe Blvd., in Panorama City.

FIRST, BURBANK RECEIVES KATHARINE HAWES AWARD FOR STUDENT MINISTRY PROGRAMS

First Presbyterian Church, Burbank has been chosen to receive the Katharine Hawes Award in recognition of the work it has been doing with its student ministries. Associate Pastor Andrew Kasberg received a letter from Union Presbyterian Seminary announcing the award, along with a check for \$1,000 to help with the church's ongoing efforts to reach out to youth in the community.



A group of teenagers from First, Burbank's student ministry program.

Since arriving at First, Burbank in 2008, Andrew has worked to develop dynamic student ministries along with Pastor Ross Purdy. The church feels it is a priority to reach out to youth, and makes that clear in this quote from its web site: "We believe that student ministry is a vital part of any vibrant church. It is our desire to love teenagers and share with them the good news of Jesus Christ.... We also believe that learning about God should be exciting, engaging, and absolutely life-changing."

STIMULUS FUNDS HELP WESTMINSTER, BURBANK HELP HOMELESS FAMILIES

The Synod Stimulus Funds Task Force awarded \$5,000 to Westminster Presbyterian Church, Burbank, to augment an existing ministry. Below is an excerpt from a letter sent by the Westminster congregation to report on how the funds were used.

In Matthew 25, Jesus says to those who have helped those who are in need, "I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty, you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

It is our great desire to be so immersed in the God-life that we hear Jesus' call to provide these simple needs with great joy. It was that desire that made us take on the task of housing homeless families in our building once every other month.

During our first housing experience one family particularly caught our attention: the Williams family which consisted of a mom, dad, two teenaged boys and an elementary school-aged girl. This family was trying so hard in the midst of homelessness to maintain a sense of normalcy for their family, partly realized by keeping their boys in their Jr. and Sr. high sports programs. During the day the Family Promise participants go to a family day center, where the families are able to wash and dry their clothes, take showers, look for work and receive training. Obviously with up to 14 people in the program, access to washing machines and showers is at a premium meaning that folks like the Williams family had to either go to bed dirty and sweaty or be late to school. . . until you stepped in.

Through your gift of the stimulus funds, Westminster Presbyterian was able to convert a bathroom in our office into a shower for our families.

Last week another family, a single mom with four children was running her kids through the shower on its maiden use, baptizing it if you will; as they lined up to get cleaned up, our bookkeeper heard the mom leading her children singing hymns.

Thank you for providing the means to this end.

GOD IS UP TO SOMETHING, AND IS CALLING US TO SHARE IN THIS NEW CREATION

The following article is by Wendy Gist, Mission Advocate for Hunger, Poverty, and Peacemaking Issues Presbytery of San Fernando and San Gabriel Presbytery.

God is constantly up to some kind of transformation of our broken world. When we tune in we can see evidence of God's hand shaping our world and surprising us in the midst of our uncertainty. In Jesus Christ, God was made flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus was God at work in history, as sins were forgiven, sight restored, and sickness healed (Matthew 15:30-31). As members of the body of Christ, we are a transformed people listening for God's invitation to create life-giving changes. As citizens of the United States and stewards of God's creation, we have a unique calling. The way the United States responds to those in need is God's concern and our responsibility.



Reforming U.S. foreign aid policies and programs is our chance to join God in creating something new. Making these changes can touch millions of lives and transform poverty and despair into life and dignity. Increasing the effectiveness and delivery of foreign assistance can move people from suffering to dignity—mothers can live through childbirth, infants can survive the clutches of parasitic illness, boys and girls can learn to read, and parents can earn enough to feed their families.

God is up to something and is calling us to share in this new creation.



Bread for the World's 2011 Offering of Letters urges Congress and the administration to press forward with reforms to make U.S. foreign assistance more effective in reducing poverty. These reforms will help millions of people move out of hunger and poverty. The main driver of poverty reduction in the world is the hard work of poor people themselves. Given the opportunity to improve their communities and provide a better life for their children, they will seize it.

Every year, thousands of Christians and other people of faith across the United States send handwritten letters to their members of Congress. Writing a heartfelt letter is a prayerful, reflective, and personal way to seek God's justice for hungry people. When we combine our letters, we raise a strong voice.

For more information and resources visit:

www.bread.org/ol/2011

Or contact Wendy Gist at the Presbytery office:

818-891-4781

MissionAdvocate@sfpresby.org

BAKER'S DOZEN

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



Recently I was visiting in worship at one of our churches. It is in a very challenging neighborhood for any kind of church, much less a denominational one. The title of the sermon was: "Death to the Zombies." Really, no kidding. The theme was transformation of our lives through Jesus Christ and, well, you had to be there to make sense of the title, but it was an excellent message. What was particularly noticeable was that, a little over a decade ago, this congregation had about half of the worship attendance over age 60, most of the rest between 40-60 and 60 and a small minority age 30 and under. Today, about two thirds of the worship attenders appear to be under 40 with many age 30 and under. Some of the "old timers" are still present and faithful in their ministries, but are in smaller percentages than before. Worship was vital and the Gospel was proclaimed. Depending on your taste in sermon titles, this is about as good as it gets!

It was a great reminder that, by the grace of God, our churches can defy the conventional wisdom about decline and death. Make no mistake: the turnaround in this congregation was a long, difficult process. It tested the faith of the members, the elders and the pastor. Some found the process of transformation too painful and left. Some important people had to step aside so the turnaround could take place, and that was difficult. But God brought it about through faithful people and their commitment to reach their community with the Good News, and that should be encouraging for all of us. In this season of Easter, we need to remember that the resurrection was not a one-time event, but is taking place around us all the time. Praise God!

And pastors: If you're looking for some attention-grabbing sermon titles, check with me and I'll tell you who to call.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii

SUMMER CONFERENCE

***Blessed Are You,
Rejoice!!!***

July 15-17, 2011

Chapman University, Orange, CA

The Reverend Magdalena Garcia

Keynote Speaker, Bible Study and Worship Leader

Marta Rodriguez

Moderator Presbyterian Women Churchwide

Christian Muslim Consultative Group

“Take It to the Congregation” Team

Workshops * Forums * Mercado

**To obtain a registration form,
follow the link below to Pacific Presbytery’s PW newsletter,
which also contains a complete schedule of events.**

<http://www.presbyteryofthepacific.org/pw/pdf/pw2011q2.pdf>

**You can also contact Carole Wheeler:
661 259-4615 or carolewheeler@pacbell.net**



SOCIAL MEDIA
PLAN, PREPARE, PROTECT

a webinar presented by
The Insurance Board

May 18
8:00 am (Pacific Time)
12:00 noon (Pacific Time)

Social media is "child's play" for children, but not for churches. A review of the many considerations around church use of social media, including management controls and oversight, copyright, libel, privacy and security.

For information on how to register, please visit:

http://www.insuranceboard.org/safety_solutions/webinar_information.aspx

FAMILY RESCUE CENTER UPDATE

Construction of the Health Office has been completed!

**Located inside our mobile unit facility,
medical consultations and screenings will be offered
to our registered families by volunteer doctors and nurses.**

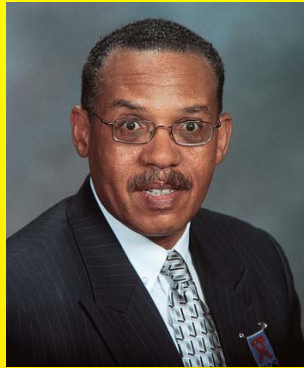
**DONATIONS FOR EQUIPPING
THE HEALTH OFFICE ARE NEEDED!**

**For more information, contact Marlene Naumann:
mnaumannpn@aol.com**

**PRESBYTERIAN MEN
OF THE
SYNOD OF SO. CAL. & HAWAII**

ANNUAL SPRING GATHERING

“A Gathering Place for Men”



The Rev. Dr. Harold E. Kidd
Pastor, First Presbyterian Church of Inglewood

Saturday, May 14, 2011

Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
11600 Los Alamitos Blvd., Los Alamitos, CA (www.gspc.org)

Breakfast* at 7:30 a.m. (Donation \$10.00)

*Registration & Exhibits 7:30 a.m.
Breakfast served at 8:00 & out by 10:00 a.m.
Reservations by Wednesday, May 12, 2011

Take advantage of our “Express Advance Registration” by prepaying.

Contact Don Travis: Pmdtrav@aol.com
Tel (714) 521-6891 • Fax (714) 521-9283
Mail to: 5842 Crestview Circle, La Palma, CA 90623-1819

Make checks payable to Presbyterian Men.

Rancho La Scherpa



Rancho La Scherpa still has good dates available throughout much of the summer. We are running a special for groups booking the camp during the first two weeks of June. If you book your June dates by May 10th, stay for three nights / eight meals or more, and have a minimum of 40 guests, you will receive an afternoon session on the high ropes course at no charge . . . a \$450 value!

Jack Drake, Director, Rancho La Scherpa
(805) 448-5944 or jackd@rancholascherpa.com

Internship

Shepherd of the Valley Presbyterian Church

If you are looking for a unique internship experience with a good mentor along the way, please consider the following internship available to Presbyterian students. Attached you will find the full details, however, the primary focus of this position is to focus on outreach to a younger generation than the current members of the congregation. Three language groups make up the membership; children and youth have not yet been a primary focus for any. They would like to investigate possible relationships with younger people and develop deeper connections with the community.

The seminary student who chooses this situation will learn ALL aspects of pastoral leadership if (s)he desires. Limits only to be imposed by the seminarian. For more information or to inquire to see if this unique opportunity fits for you, please contact them at:

Shepherd of the Valley Presbyterian Church

1723 Park Lawn Road, Hacienda Heights, CA 91745

PHONE: (626) 965-7056 FAX : (626) 965-3543 EMAIL : sotvinfo@gmail.com

Ask for Rev. Nancy Moore

The News of San Fernando Presbytery is published monthly by the Communication & Church Support Committee, Areta Crowell, Chair. Submissions and comments should be sent to Casey Maddren, Editor. E-Mail: cmaddren@sfpresby.org