

The News of San Fernando Presbytery

Every Church a Mission Center

November, 2007

Photo by Thomas Hawk

WORDS FROM WENDY



Thoughts from Mission
Advocate Wendy Gist

PRESBYTERIANS RESPOND TO WILDFIRES ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

The fires may be out, but the recovery will be long and difficult. The devastating blazes that burned from Santa Barbara County all the way down to the Mexican border charred thousands of acres, destroyed homes and took lives. The good news is that Presbyterians rose to the challenge, on a local and national level, to minister to those affected by the disaster.

San Diego County was hit hardest. On the San Diego Presbytery web site, Executive Presbyter Clark Cowden talked about the faith community's response to the fires.

"There's the story of the 21 people from the Fallbrook Presbyterian Church who were evacuated from their homes. They were looking for a place to go, so they drove up the freeway to Orange County, and just showed up on the doorstep of the San Clemente Presbyterian Church looking for a place to stay. The people in San Clemente immediately opened up their homes and welcomed them in with warm hospitality."

Cowden had just become San Diego's EP four weeks before the disaster hit. When the fires began he asked himself, "Why is this happening to me? I did not anticipate that I would be caught up in this story, but here I am. Probably most of us did not anticipate this, but here we are, so what will we do? We are called to be God's missional people, sent into the world God created and loves."

The destruction was not as severe in the Los Angeles area, but damage was still extensive. The Malibu Presbyterian Church was burned to the ground. The following is taken from their web site:

"Despite being overwhelmed the past few days, we are beginning to make strides towards restoring some of our daily functions. As you may have heard by now, the Sanctuary building was a total loss, but the lower house was spared. This leaves us some meeting space, as well as a couple of offices."

"This past Sunday, we held our first Sunday morning service at Malibu Performing Arts Center to a packed house. The outpouring of love was palpable. Today, the Salvation Army Camp at Tapia Park granted our University Ministries the ability to meet and worship there. We have been incredibly blessed by churches and organizations from around the city, who have offered space for us to gather

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I just returned from an event entitled "How to Make the World a Better Place." In the book put together for the event, Rick Ufford-Chase, former moderator of the PC(USA), is quoted saying, "For me, making the world a better place is an act of intentionally living my faith." Rick's words led me to reflect on the Sabbath Economics seminars, which have inspired me with concrete suggestions for how I can intentionally live my faith.

The basic concept of Sabbath Economics is that God has provided for us in abundance, so if we set limits on our household practices and live with enough instead of with more than we need, then there will be enough for all God's children. If we really take this concept to heart we'll find it has profound effects on many areas of our lives and it is counter to our culture. Advertisers, companies who have something to sell, even financial institutions work hard and spend lots of money to make us think our lives will be better with more or better things. And they make it possible to get those new things even if we can't really afford them.

During the Sabbath Economics seminar Ched Meyers introduced us to Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries' Seven-Fold Household Sabbath Economics Covenant. The Covenant includes surplus capital, green living, consumption, Sabbath, and more. This tool helps us reflect on our personal/household lifestyles and then has suggestions for creative, yet realistic and appropriate "next steps" we can take as we move towards more intentionally living our faith and the way God

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WHAT'S UP AT THE SYNOD?

by Don Imlay

Many of you know that the Synod of Southern California & Hawaii has been going through a period of transition. Don Imlay, a member of Panorama Presbyterian Church, now serving his first year on the Synod Budget Committee, gives us an outline of some of the issues the Synod is facing.

Over the years, many of us have visited the Synod offices at 1501 Wilshire Boulevard, near downtown Los Angeles. Of the 17 Synods of the United States, the Synod of Southern California & Hawaii has been the most outstanding. Take for example the recognition of the Mission/Stewardship fairs of recent years. What few knew is that there has been more to the Synod offices than the two story, windowless, building on the corner. The holdings included all of the apartments down to the TWA building on the other corner. We were landlords and property managers.

Many of the groups directly supported by Synod had offices in the building. For example, the Presbyterian Church Foundation and Camps & Conferences. Several programs have been outsourced or are now independently supported. The post of Synod Executive has become a half-time position. Over time the office has been slowly vacated and the need of the facility questioned.

The Book of Order (G12.0100) lists the responsibilities of Synod, broadly to support the Presbyteries and consolidate services that presbyteries can't handle economically. Over the years mission support from the presbyteries has fallen and will continue to fall. The property on Wilshire Blvd. has been sold, and committees are working on the future mission of the Synod.

The net sale proceeds were \$8,378,447, less \$1,297,643 for other costs borrowed from the New Covenant Funds for legal fees and relocation of tenants. Net-net, \$7,080,804. This princely sum has to support the "new mission" and facilities, wherever they may be. The last day of occupancy at 1501 Wilshire is December 31, 2007.

We good Presbyterians have committees working on the questions of where the new offices will be and how many staff members will be needed. The Synod Assembly is meeting to finalize the recommendations. At that point the budget committee will finalize the 2008 budget. The logistics of moving, relocating to a new site are mind boggling. Many, many little decisions are needed to pull it off.

Hey! Why does Synod need \$7 million dollars? Why not split it among the seven Presbyteries? First, we must have a Synod. The thought is that up to \$2 million may be needed for purchase of a building. The program will be supported from the earnings of the invested funds. Depending on investment returns, the pool of money may or may not be adequate. The Synod Assembly is meeting at press time to answer these questions. To learn of the "New Synod", stay tuned for up dates. Film at eleven.

DINNER WITH MARJ

by Carol Kasperson

A couple of weeks ago, I was the recipient of one of those voluptuous blessings God is wont to give his children: Marj Carpenter came to dinner. Some of you will be aware that Marj is a past Moderator of General Assembly and a ferocious supporter of Presbyterianism as a whole; but she is also an avid advocate for our missionaries and the ongoing ministry of Christ throughout the world.

Glendale Presbyterian Church was privileged to have her as a speaker for a luncheon on September 15th and again, in the pulpit, on September 16th. If you have never heard her, you have missed out on one of the great inspirational times in life. She raises your awareness of the activities of Presbyterians around the world. Wonderful stories of African doctors, Chinese preachers and Irish peacemakers make you proud to be a Presbyterian.

She is rather small, walks hesitantly with a walker, has one raised shoe and appears to be a fragile 81 year old grandmother. Do not be misled. This is NOT a reticent kindly old lady. This is a vibrant, active, tough woman who still travels to see our missionaries, who talks to Presidents and Cardinals, who speaks at General Assemblies (she was given voice for life), and still serves as an elder in her home church.

Dinner with Marj is a full-blown feast, both intellectually and spiritually. She calls the Lord by His first name and seems to be actively involved with Him at all times. She is politically very savvy and astute and knows where she is going. In spite of this, she takes time to mentor each person to whom she is talking and is honestly interested in your life and ministry. You are important to her. She was important to me. I felt as if I had been refreshed by one of those soft spring rains I remember from childhood, renewed in my inner being.

I'm sure that, God willing, Marj Carpenter will attend General Assembly in San Jose next year. It would be worth the travel just to meet her.

NEED WOMEN'S VESTMENTS?

A robe and stole are available for any female pastor who would like to come get them. Please give the Presbytery Office a call at 818 891-4781, or just drop by, Mon. thru Thu., 8:30 am to 5:00 pm.



*Homemade Food
Handmade Crafts
and much, much more!*

**SATURDAY
November 17**

**10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Grandview Presbyterian
1130 Ruberta Avenue
Glendale**

**COME BROWSE
AND PURCHASE SOME
REAL TREASURES!**

FAMILY RESCUE CENTER/RESCATE IN NEED OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING

The Family Rescue Center, aka Rescate, is currently facing a budget shortfall. Over \$8,000 are needed to keep this ministry to low-income families going.

Rescate serves about 225 families plus a growing number of homeless men and women, for a total of over 1,000 individuals per month. It provides emergency food and used clothing, periodic medical screening, school supplies, turkeys at Thanksgiving and toys at Christmas. With just one employee and numerous volunteers this ministry operates on an annual budget of less than \$50,000.

Diane Hernandez of the Canoga Park Presbyterian Church asks that churches consider providing support for Rescate in their budget. Donations from individuals are also welcome.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/OPPORTUNITIES

PROGRAM DIRECTOR AT WESTMINSTER WOODS

Westminster Woods is searching for a permanent Program Director for our summer ministry. This is a full-time, year-round, salaried position with a compensation package including salary, benefits and housing.

Ideally, we are seeking a candidate who:

Possesses a passionate and articulate faith in Jesus Christ

Develops spiritual leadership in youth and young adults

Desires to share a love for nature, God's created world

Has a Reformed theological background

Has taken some graduate level courses in theology and ministry

We hope to have this position filled by February 1, 2008. Resumes or PIFs may be sent to: Sheila Denton, Westminster Woods, 6510 Bohemian Hwy., Occidental, CA 954645

FAMILY RESCUE CENTER/RESCATE THANKSGIVING PROJECT

As part of its ministry to low-income families, Rescate (aka Family Rescue Center) will be distributing turkeys and other foodstuffs for the Thanksgiving holiday. Two hundred turkeys are needed, as well as rice, canned fruits/vegetables, vegetable oil and evaporated milk. Unwrapped new toys are also needed, as Rescate prepares for Christmas distribution. Please deliver your items to us in our mobile unit at Canoga Park Presbyterian Church. The phone number is 818 884-7587.

MEMBERS OF WOODLAND HILLS PC GATHER TOGETHER AS THEY DEDICATE THE CHURCH'S NEW SIGN



RESPONSE TO WILDFIRES

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together - as well as other resources.”

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance was on the scene soon after the fires began. Members of PDA’s National Response Team flew to the area to meet with staff in the affected presbyteries as well as local pastors to help in their disaster response plans. They have also participated in worship services and prayer vigils. OGHS funds have already been sent to San Diego Presbytery and are available for other presbyteries upon request.

On the local level, congregations within San Fernando Presbytery have been rising to the challenge by collecting special offerings both for PDA and for direct assistance to disaster victims.

In his post on the San Diego Presbytery web site, Clark Cowden sums it up this way:

“The motto of the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is ‘Out of chaos, hope’. That is part of the message of the gospel. That is part of our story. 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 says, ‘We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed.’”

WORDS FROM WENDY

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intended.

After the Israelites escaped from Egypt they began to complain. They were hungry. There was nothing to eat. Maybe they should have stayed in Egypt where they at least had food to eat. God heard them and responded by providing manna and quail. But, even with clear instructions from God, it took some of the Israelites awhile to learn to just take enough for each day

and double on the sixth day so that they could observe the Sabbath on the seventh. We may be a long way from the desert experience of the Israelites, but we can still practice manna economics or the “theology of enough.” It takes some work and our willingness to learn new or different ways sometimes, but the results can be very rewarding, help us intentionally live our faith,

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