

News and Information About Presbyterian Women and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)



General Assembly Updates

The 217th General Assembly took place in Birmingham, Alabama, June 15–22, marking the first biennial Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This first biennial Assembly was also the first time the PC(USA), the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America met concurrently. The three denominations worshipped together in the evenings, but maintained separate business meetings.

Rev. Joan S. Gray (Greater Atlanta Presbytery) was elected moderator of the 217th General Assembly, and the Assembly approved her choice of Elder Robert Wilson (North Alabama Presbytery) as vice moderator. Elder Linda Bryant Valentine accepted the position of executive director of the General Assembly Council, taking over for John Detterick who retired in July. Valentine, who is the first woman to serve as executive director, began her four-year term on July 1.

The PC(USA) commissioners faced several important issues in their business meeting, including overtures about ordination standards, divestment from Israeli companies and recommendations and a report from the Peace, Unity and Purity Task Force.

When an overture proposed rescinding the “phased selective divestment” from corporations that perpetuate violence in Israel/Palestine, an alternate resolution was proposed. That resolution called for changing the language to: “financial investments of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as they pertain to Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank, be invested in only peaceful pursuits, and affirm that the customary corporate engagement process of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) of our denomination—in conjunction with appropriate reinvestment of funds where necessary—is the proper vehicle for achieving this goal.” Divestment is a last resort.

The Theological Force on Peace, Unity and Purity of the Church created a report with several recommendations. One of the most anticipated recommendations, which passed 57 percent to 43 percent, called for an authoritative interpretation of G-6.0108b that gave ordaining bodies more room to apply the standards. Another key recommendation from the group that passed was an encouragement of Presbyterians “to avoid division into separate denominations.”



Photo by Joseph Williams

Elder Evelyn Kelsaw Bonner, Deacon Dawn Harvin, Deacon Betty Grunstra, the Rev. Carmen M. Rosario, Elder Grace S. Kim and the Rev. Betty Meadows received Woman of Faith Awards at the Women of Faith breakfast.

Commissioners also voted to close the Montreat, North Carolina branch of the Presbyterian Historical Society, and referred overtures to the Office of Theology and Worship about whether Christian educators should be ordained and what the possible new office would be called.

More stories and photos from the Assembly, including the free downloadable “Assembly in Brief,” can be found on this year’s General Assembly’s Web pages, www.pcusa.org/ga217.



Dig up Support for *Horizons*!

The 2006 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women was one for the PW history books. Wait a minute! Have you ever considered that the 2006

Gathering may find a mention in tomorrow’s *archaeology* textbooks?

The three *Horizons* skits, as performed at the Gathering, consider this definite possibility. Set in the year 2761, a troupe of PW archaeologists looks for artifacts and information about PW and *Horizons* magazine and Bible study. The artifacts reveal lots of information, including that Presbyterian women stay connected spiritually by using a common Bible study produced annually and included as part of their subscription to *Horizons* magazine.

These fun and imaginative skits are yours to enjoy or perform with your circle or congregation! Copies of the *Horizons* skits are available on the *Horizons* Web pages, www.pcusa.org/horizons, or by calling 888/728-7228, ext. 5322. Enjoy!



Peacemaking Offering

Join with Christians everywhere to celebrate unity in Christ on World Communion Sunday, October 1, 2006. Since 1936, Christians have celebrated this unity and God's desire for all creation to be united in God. For 25 years, the Presbyterian Church

has been receiving the Peacemaking Offering as one way of participating in God's healing the divisions in our world.

This year's offering theme, "Swords into Plowshares: Living the Ways of Peace," is taken from the great vision of peace found in both *Isaiah and Micah*, in which the peoples of the world stream to the mountain of the Lord and learn from God how to live in peace. What they learn causes them to act: they change swords and spears—instruments of war that are no longer needed—into plowshares and pruning hooks—instruments used for the peaceful work of harvesting food for the world's peoples.

The Peacemaking Offering invites PC(USA) churches to live the ways of peace in our communities. It is recommended that 25 percent of the offering stay in the congregation where it was collected for local peacemaking activities, 25 percent be given to the presbytery and synod, and the remaining 50 percent be given to the General Assembly for peacemaking initiatives throughout the world.

Your congregation should already have received the reproducible promotional packet, which includes a poster, minutes for mission, worship resources for World Communion Sunday, children's activities, bulletin inserts, reproducible art, a coin box, a placemat (new this year) and an offering envelope. To order additional copies of the packet, contact Presbyterian Distribution Service, 800/524-2612 or www.pcusa.org/marketplace, and request item 70-612-06-280. Individual items are also available for order. Visit www.pcusa.org/peacemakingoffering for additional program ideas and resources.

Mark Your Calendar!

Encuentro V, the fifth national gathering of Hispanic/Latin Presbyterian Women will take place in Dallas, Texas, July 27–29, 2007. The event will include time for sharing ideas, fellowship and Bible study. Watch *Horizons* for additional details!



Reconnect with Annie, the Kitchen Queen

For many years, Charlotte Johnstone has shared news from the fictitious Forbearance Presbyterian Church with readers of *Horizons*. In *Annie, the Kitchen Queen and Other Dispatches from Forbearance Presbyterian Church*, readers will find some of the most beloved tales from Forbearance. Both amusing and compassionate, Charlotte's portrayals of Presbyterians at their best (and worst!) ring true for us all. Order through Presbyterian Distribution Service, 800/524-2612 or www.pcusa.org/marketplace; \$10.00 plus shipping.

Fellowship of the Least Coin



The Fellowship of the Least Coin (FLC) links prayer and "least coins" in a very significant way, as the least coin becomes the symbol of prayers for peace and reconciliation. Shanti Solomon of India began this prayer movement in 1956, believing that women everywhere could have a sense of being part of a worldwide family by joining together for a common purpose. The FLC asks people of faith to pray for peace and reconciliation and set aside the least coin of their country as a symbol of that prayer. As coins are gathered from around the world, they become a sign of our oneness in a common quest for peace, justice and reconciliation.

October 2006 marks the 50th anniversary of the Fellowship of the Least Coin. Presbyterian Distribution Service (PDS) has several resources to help you celebrate this milestone; call 800/524-2612 or visit www.pcusa.org/marketplace to order the following items, while supplies last!*

- *Celebrating the Legacy, Visioning the Future, Living the Jubilee* is a history of the FLC, available in October (PWR-06-465; price to be determined)
- *Circle of Prayer, Volume 17* (PWR-05-099; free)
- *A Legend and a Legacy: An Autobiography of Shanti Solomon* (PWR-06-462; \$3.00)
- *Many Prayer, One Prayer: Reconciliation and Hope through the Fellowship of the Least Coin*, compiled by Lakshmi K. Daniel (PWR-06-461; \$10.00/pack of 5)
- FLC prayer cards (PWR-06-464; free)
- FLC coin boxes (PWR-06-460; \$5.00/pack of 10)
- FLC brochures (PWR-06-463; free)

* Both free and cost items are subject to shipping and handling charges (10% of order total, \$4.50 minimum, \$60.00 maximum).