



Volume 1: Issue 1

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THE HARVEST

Your Mission Dollars at Work

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."Galatians 6:9 (NIV)



Surely God's Bountiful Gifts are Enough to Serve All

What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? Psalm 116:12

Our response to God depends upon all of our resources. As member congregations of the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy, the mission and ministry of the Presbytery is also your mission and ministry. When you give to the mission of your congregation and in turn the Presbytery, the dollars are used to assist a congregation, a minister member and many other ministries, such as the ministry of Justice and Compassion Team which is featured in this first issue. You make it possible for our ministry teams to work the harvest. Through your gifts, we are able to share God's bounty. We ask that you give prayerful consideration to the size of the 2012 gift your congregation gives to the Presbytery. Your gift will be a blessing to us all.

The Ministry of Justice and Compassion

by Robert Thornberry, Moderator of J & C

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."

The Justice & Compassion Ministry Team is a volunteer initiative of the Presbytery and primarily represents the collective work of its six Action Teams. Members are passionate about mission and are engaged with feeding the hungry in our Presbytery, advocating justice for the most vulnerable in Missouri, responding to the shock and loss of those confronting natural and human caused disasters, and standing in solidarity with others around the world, particularly in Peru, Nicaragua, and Thailand. In 2011, the team had the opportunity to award \$10,000 in summer grants to ministries providing Christian education, personal growth, and recreation to children and young people in communities of need.

***IN BELIEVING WE CARE; IN CARING WE SHARE;
IN SHARING WE ARE A BLESSING TO ALL***

We Care

Justice and Compassion Action Teams

Nicaragua Community Partnership



Photo: Juan Luis Gomez, Harriet Hall (Webster Groves Pres), Andy Loth (First St. Louis), and Omar Luque Gonzales at the International Encounter in Managua, Nicaragua October 2010.

The Nicaragua Community Partnership (NCP) is the presbytery's mission in Nicaragua: a partnership with the small community of [Plan Grande 2 \(PL2\)](#) in the beautiful mountains of northern Nicaragua. According to the partnership's Mission, "We cultivate understanding and acceptance of our similarities and differences, working for justice, sharing joy, hope, and the message of the Gospel with our partnership. We do this following Christ's example to love and care for one another." Since 2000, over 60 individuals from different churches within the presbytery have participated in delegations to Plan Grande 2. We've raised approximately \$60,000 to support over 75 students through secondary school.

For more information about how you can be involved email pg2nicaragua@gmail.com or call Harriet Hall at 314-963-7112.

The mural they created reflects the "gifts we bring" to our partnership: affection, ideas, unity, peace, humor, love, brotherhood, and service. "

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

"It Takes Collaboration..."

by Rev. Paul T. Reiter, PDA National Response Team

Across the United States since the first of the year Presbyterians from the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance National Response Team have had more disasters to respond to than in all of 2010. Here within the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy there has been flooding in University City, major flooding in Poplar Bluff and near Sikeston and tornados that have destroyed homes both in St. Louis and in Sunset Hills. The tornado sirens have constantly reminded many regions of our vulnerability. These storms were followed by unbearable heat that plagued our region through much of July. In the midst of it all, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has been there.

Across our state in May a devastating tornado struck within the bounds of John Calvin Presbytery in Joplin, MO. Again, PDA and its National Response Team were present. In Joplin, according to [Jerry Van Marter, of the Presbyterian News Service](#); "More than 160 persons died. Nearly 1,000 were injured. Eighteen thousand cars were destroyed. Over 1,100 family pets were left wandering around the devastated landscape a month after the storm. The tornado wiped out fully one-third of the city and 40 percent of its housing. Five schools were destroyed, including Joplin's only high school."

Since May PDA has been back on the scene working with the Long Term Recovery Committee of Joplin. This is collaboration at its best. Every agency, church, and interested volunteer group is at the table along with local, state, and national government officials. The goal: To assist with the rebuilding of a community focused on meeting the unmet needs of a community. The road will be long - an estimated 8-10 years for rebuilding - but we Presbyterians have been there for the "long haul" before; in Hurricanes Andrew, Katrina, and Ike, as well as in flooding in South Dakota, Missouri, and even St. Louis. What is needed now is your support. Bring out of Chaos, Hope.

Presbyterians to date have only given a little over \$200,000 toward the Joplin tornado, compared to over 12 million for Hurricane Katrina. What can your congregation do? Plan now to provide a generous gift to PDA. You can give through your local congregation, [the Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy](#), or the [PCUSA PDA website](#).



The Faith Des Peres congregation was one of many congregations that collected food, money and cleanup supplies to aid individuals and families devastated by the tornadoes in Joplin.

Your Mission Dollars at Work

Joining Hands



LaOroya, Peru

Joining Hands is a network of 11 partnerships between international partners and presbyteries in the United States. Sponsored by the Hunger Program of the Presbyterian Church (USA), these partnerships address the root causes of poverty and hunger. The Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy is linked to **Red Uniendo Manos Peru (the Joining Hands Network of Peru)**. Taking the lead from their concerns, we work together in the following areas:

Environmental Justice. High in the Andes Mountains, there is a mining town, LaOroya, where 97% of the children have lead poisoning. The Blackwell Institute has declared it one of the 10 most polluted places in the world. Although this extensive pollution has

a long history, in recent years the smelter there has been operated by a US company, Doe Run. We work with our partners in Peru to make sure the Peruvian government and Doe Run fulfill their agreements to clean-up this town. We also encourage environmental activism, especially among the children who have created their own group called CAMBIALO.

Economic Development and Trade Justice. In this area, our first project resulted in the creation of Partners for Just Trade. Currently, Joining Hands continues to promote fair trade and to advocate for the people of Peru who have been negatively affected by recent “free” trade agreements.

Water Justice. The use and accessibility of water in Peru is a critical issue in Peru, especially as the glaciers in the mountains are melting and scarce water resources are being diverted to the coastal desert where agricultural products are being grown for export to the U.S. In partnership with our partners in Peru, we are developing educational and advocacy strategies to address this issue.

Here at home, Joining Hands meets regularly and encourages the members of our Presbytery to become engaged in these issues. One of our most important activities is partnership visits. Most recently in July 2011, a delegation of three Peruvians and our mission co-worker [Jed Koball](#) visited our Presbytery and shared their experiences. To give to Jed’s ministry, go to <http://gamc.pcusa.org/give/E200447>

We also send delegations to Peru to meet our partners and experience their work. Our next trip is scheduled for April 2012. For more information, contact mark.strothmann@att.net.

You can read about our current and past activities and see photos and videos at the on-line Joining Hands Newsletter. Go to www.relufa.org/partners/jhnewsletter.htm. On the left hand side, click on Peru or on archives.



Partners for Just Trade (PJT)

In November 2002, Joining Hands opened up a “fair trade corridor” between Peru and St. Louis. Artisans in Peru were able to export their products here for a “fair” price, learn marketing and business skills, and generally improve their lives. The majority of the artisans were women who have become respected and valued members of their communities because of this project. Within a few years, a separate non-profit organization, Partners for Justice Trade, was created to sell these products in the U.S. PJT works with Bridge of Hope, the artisan network in Peru, not only to import their products, but to improve their business and design skills.

PJT recently moved their offices and storage space to the first floor in the Presbytery Center.

They welcome volunteers to help stock shelves and staff sale events in the St. Louis area.

You may support them at www.PartnersForJustTrade.org.

Hunger Programs



**Rev. Pat Cleeland
Hunger Action
Enabler**

Matthew 25 Hunger Fund: Provides direct aid to bring relief to families and individuals who are in desperate trouble; often because of illness, death, loss of jobs, separation or divorce, families face losing utilities or shelter.

Funds are distributed to area agencies or by the presbytery through the ministry of the Hunger Action Enabler. This year's Pantry Partners are Isaiah 58 Ministries, Joint Neighborhood Ministries, Operation Tiff Food Basket, Community Food Pantry of Perry County and Crisis Food Center in Alton, IL. The Pantry Partners are chosen from among the many organizations that submit grants to the Hunger Action Team. Criteria for approval are regional need, affiliation with Presbyterian churches and track record of use of funds for the hungry.

Cents-Ability Fund (Two Cents A Meal): Two Cents a Meal is a program of the presbytery that provides funds for baby formula and food for our youngest and most vulnerable citizens. Contributions to centers for low income babies throughout the presbytery help mothers provide for their at-risk babies.

The Hunger Action Team invites all who feel called to ministry with the hungry to contact Rev. Pat Cleeland at hunger@glpby.org.

Social Witness Action Team

by Jesse Swanigan, Chair of SWAT

The Social Witness Action Team (SWAT) was established in 2003; in some circles the Action Team is referred to as "Do Justice Action Team" with reference to Micah 6:8 – "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

The SWAT partners with ecumenical and interfaith bodies, organizations, groups and action teams of the Presbytery working on justice and social issue policies and concerns. The Action Team has a primary focus on health care issues. The Action Team also works with the Interfaith Partnership.

Team members attended the **Health Action 2010** (sponsored by Families USA) in Washington DC and the Ecumenical Days/65th Anniversary Celebration of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Witness in Washington DC. The Action Team also sponsored a dinner with Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, director of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Policy. The Team is in alliance with four other presbyteries of the Synod of Mid-America in regard to common interest and goals regarding social witness policy issues.

The goals and objectives of the SWAT are to continue to discern the social witness and justice issues that confront us as a nation, as a Christian body of faith, and to serve the Presbytery by proposing actions, statements and policies along with informational venues as those needs arise out of faith in Jesus Christ and faithful discipleship.

Peacemaking Action Team

by Cathy Yost, PAT member

The Presbytery Peacemaking Action Team (PAT) seeks to support and recognize outstanding examples of social justice locally, regionally and globally. Funds from the annual Special Offering for Peacemaking are prayerfully distributed as grants to programs directly engaged in service to God's people.

Some examples in 2010-11 have included:

- Partners in Health, an exceptional worldwide relief organization which has been active in post-earthquake Haiti;
- Mae Tao Clinic, providing medical care and humanitarian outreach to thousands of refugees along the dangerous border between Thailand and Burma (Myanmar); &
- First Presbyterian Church of Joplin, which engaged in immediate action to offer shelter and aid to the victims of the life-altering May tornado.

The PAT also honors local individuals who set an example of peacemaking through their ministries and actions. The annual Peacemaking Award will be presented at the Stated Meeting of Presbytery at Woodlawn Chapel in August.

The 2011 Peacemaking Sunday is October 2.

St. Louis CROP Hunger Walk

North: Sunday, September 25, 2011

South: Sunday, October 2, 2011

Central: Sunday, October 30, 2011



CROP Hunger Walks help children and families worldwide – and right here in the U.S. – to have food for today, while building for a better tomorrow. Our local efforts are making a huge difference... and you are part of it! To sign up to walk

Go to [www.Church-](http://www.Church-WorldService.org)

[WorldService.org](http://www.Church-WorldService.org) (CROP Hunger Walk-St. Louis Met-

Now is the Time ...

- To pray about what God is calling you to share for the mission work of your church, the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly
- For your Stewardship Committee to be at work
- To look for helpful stewardship ideas on the Presbytery Stewardship Network Blog on the Presbytery website: www.glpby.org
- For planning for your 2012 Budget
- To promote Peacemaking Sunday, October 2, 2011