

Top presbyteries named for support of Presbyterian Hunger Program

West Virginia tops the list again

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (March 2, 2010) – The Presbytery of West Virginia once again tops the list for presbytery support of national and international hunger ministry in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), according to 2009 statistics released last week by the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP).

The Presbytery of West Virginia gave \$18,553 in 2009 and \$19,205 in 2008, and, has remained among the top three presbyteries in its financial support specifically for the hunger ministry during the past five years.

In 2009, the nine other top presbyteries on the list include – in order – Peace River, Redstone, Lake Erie, Chicago, National Capital, Mid-Kentucky, Sacramento, Peaks and Cascades. Participating presbyteries are recognized annually by PHP with a certificate.

Gifts to the “One Great Hour of Sharing” offering support 80 percent of PHP’s work. Additional gifts to PHP from presbyteries and congregations in 2009 totaled \$403,000 for national and international projects and grants. Churches and presbyteries may give to specific accounts or to the general hunger fund, which is then distributed strategically. Much of the money donated to these funds is raised through the Cents-Ability offerings and by Presbyterian Women.

“This year, giving to the hunger program went up a bit,” said PHP coordinator Ruth Farrell, a former longtime PC(USA) mission co-worker in Peru and the Democratic Republic of Congo. “Such gifts enable us to partner with presbyteries to fund valuable ministries, such as stockpiling grain banks in northern Cameroon during the lean months, and working with small farmers in India whose sustainable farming practices enable them to feed themselves and their communities.”

“And this year, there is Haiti, a longtime partner, but now more than ever,” Farrell continued. “Our hunger partner there, FONDAMA, will be developing strategies for Haitians to feed themselves in the midst of recovery from the earthquake.”

On March 10, PHP will send FONDAMA grant money to buy seeds; the planting season in Haiti begins in mid-March.

National grants for 2009 range from support of congregations, such as the Church of Gethsemane Food Pantry in New York City, to community support through First Presbyterian Church of Harlan, Ky., and grants for organizations such as Heifer Project International and Bread for the World.

Elder Carolyn Arbuckle is the longtime hunger action enabler in the Presbytery of West Virginia and a member of Clifton Presbyterian Church in Maxwelton, W.V., in the state’s southern sector. “West Virginia is very generous,” she said, adding that many of the gifts for hunger ministry in her presbytery come from small churches rather than large ones.

“There have been periods in West Virginia history where people have known hunger or seen it. And they remember that,” Arbuckle said.

Arbuckle said the presbytery’s gift was generated through the Cents-Ability offering, which is split between local ministries and the ministries of PHP.

Presbyterian Hunger Program is a ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which comprises more than 2 million members in more than 10,000 congregations, answering Christ’s call to mission and ministry throughout the United States and the world.

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