

Support for the Wider Church

Where does the money go?

Every congregation is asked to support the ministry of the whole church –General Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery—by making and fulfilling a pledge for our wider Church’s mission. **General Assembly mission and program dollars support ministries throughout this country and the world**—from funds for missionaries, to new church development grants. The General Assembly provides support services to presbyteries and congregations for pastoral search processes, Christian education resources, stewardship materials, and social justice endeavors. For more information about the work of the General Assembly check online at www.pcusa.org. **The Synod of the Covenant has four priorities at present: church development, racial ethnic ministries, campus ministry, and networking** of individuals and congregations that carry out particular ministry projects. Continuing programs include the Mobile Health Fair and the Mission to the U.S.A. (ecumenical visitor) program. More information about our Synod can be found at www.synodofthecovenant.org. While the General Assembly and Synod serve our regional, national, and international mission projects and ministry needs, **the Presbytery of the Western Reserve focuses on local ministry and service**. Our Presbytery serves 50 congregations, three new church developments, 14 mission partners, and various peace and justice initiatives.

What does your Presbytery do?

The primary work of the Presbytery of the Western Reserve is to strengthen congregations and witness to the love and justice of Jesus Christ in the world. Services for congregations include assistance with pastoral search processes; lay and clergy leadership development opportunities; church building needs; and grants for churches reaching out to new populations, such as First Presbyterian Church’s outreach in East Cleveland. Our Leadership Development Ministry sponsors nationally known authors to speak to the Presbytery; Beverly Tatum was here in 2007, and we have just learned that Graham Standish will be coming in 2008. We also work with individuals as they identify a call to pastoral ministry and prepare for ordination. Our staff includes a part-time Pastor to Clergy and Families to care for their spiritual and emotional needs. The Sacred Spaces Mission Group provides opportunities for lay and clergy spiritual growth. The Church Development and Redevelopment Ministry is actively studying the potential in our area for new church developments, while support for our current new church developments, Puerta de Salvación and New Life Fellowship, the Phoenix Project, continues.

Each year the Presbytery’s Outreach Ministry identifies projects from churches and agencies seeking to address community needs. Some programs are church-initiated such as North Church’s after school program or are cooperative church efforts like the Lorain Lutheran Presbyterian Food Co-op. Justice Ministry efforts include work on racial reconciliation, restorative justice, hunger advocacy and relief. They have introduced a five year emphasis on issues identified in Matthew 25 – “Just as you did it to the least of these...” The Presbytery website www.preswesres.org has more details and links to congregations and other church-related bodies.

Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly budgets are supported through congregational giving, per capita, grants, and investment income. Congregational pledge payments are distributed based on a formula between the General Assembly (35%), Synod (5%), and Presbytery (60%) unless otherwise designated by the Session on its pledge form. *A Session may choose to designate a portion of its Wider Church Pledge to particular projects within the budgets of the GA, Synod, or Presbytery as long as those designations are within the appropriate percentage of the total for each governing body.* If congregations choose to support some specific projects over and beyond their basic commitment to the wider church’s mission and ministry, then they may send additional funds designated for “Extra Commitment Giving.”