

## One Great Hour of Sharing



fulness. For both those people and those experiencing chronic poverty, hunger, or oppression, we learned that development ministries are an important component of our response and that to be done effectively, they must be carried out as a partnership with the people in need, not imposed from the outside. The Presbyterian Hunger Program and Self-Development of People were both created in the early 1970s to work in such partnerships with communities of people in need. Today each of these programs receives

For more than fifty years, Presbyterians have joined with Christians throughout the nation in supporting One Great Hour of Sharing, responding to Christ's love for all people by joyfully sharing that love with people in need. The refugee and the stranger have found food and safe shelter; those stunned by the aftermath of disasters have found relief and help rebuilding; and communities seeking to take control of their future have found partners in development. Presbyterians' gifts support the work of The Presbyterian Committee for the Self-Development of People, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, and the Presbyterian Hunger Program. The hundreds of millions of dollars Presbyterians have given over the last half century have enabled a powerful witness to the love of the One who came that all might have life more abundantly.

The PC(USA)'s One Great Hour of Sharing offering is divided among three programs as follows:

\$36% Presbyterian Hunger Program for ministries working to alleviate hunger and eliminate its causes, responding with compassion and justice to poor and hungry people in local communities, in the nation, and throughout the world, as well as ministries addressing homelessness and affordable housing.

\$32% Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for disaster response and ministries with refugees.

\$32% Self-Development of People for partnerships with groups of people who are oppressed by poverty or social systems, who want to take charge of their own lives, have organized to do something about their own condition, and have decided what they need to do to produce long-term benefits for themselves.

Within the PC(USA), programs supported by One Great Hour of Sharing have evolved over the last half century along with our understanding of how best to stand with people in their suffering and offer an authentic witness to God's healing love. Like our ecumenical partners, we focused our early efforts on those in acute need as a result of wars or natural disasters. Through the programs that have become Presbyterian Disaster Assistance we saw the importance of swift response with local grassroots partners who can get help quickly to the people who need it most; we also learned that staying with people as they begin to rebuild their lives is an important witness to God's faith-



...Offering will be received on Palm Sunday, April 1st.

approximately one-third of the offering, except for about four percent that is used, currently through Presbyterian Hunger Program, to address homelessness and affordable housing. All three programs help people address the results of past injustice or misfortune by looking to the future with hope and creativity. Together they witness to the love that Jesus Christ has shared with all and that he asks us to share with one another.

Contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing make a difference in the lives of people. Whether they take the form of immediate relief to people experiencing a time of crisis or of partnerships with communities, focused on long-term solutions to chronic problems, those gifts are a powerful, tangible witness to the healing love of Christ for all people.

Church of the Pilgrims will receive the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering on Palm Sunday, April 1st. ††

**D**oes the Bible have a sexual ethic appropriate for our time? How does it understand the relationship between men and women, love and marriage, sex and procreation? What about sex and single adults? Married couples

### ADULT EDUCATION IN MARCH

“Love, Sex and Marriage in the Bible”

March 18-April 1, in the Bird Room

who choose not to have children? Same sex couples who seek the blessing of the church? Together we will explore these and other issues as we seek to construct a Christian sexual ethic for the 21st century. †

**I**n preparation for Jeff's sabbatical

starting in mid-April, the Sabbatical Planning Group has been defining its goals and objectives for our own three month sabbatical period.

Carol Huls, Hannah Nutt, Gerry Hendershot, Jeanne Mayer and Anne Womeldorf comprise the Sabbatical Planning Group. Together, we have come up with the following definitions that we hope will guide our period of discernment and reflection. Throughout the three months that Jeff is gone, we hope to provide meaningful experiences for Pilgrims to reflect and gain clarity on who God is calling us to be, as individual disciples and as a community of disciples.

The group's vision statement (or definition of discernment): *As a sabbatical planning group, we will create a process for Pilgrims to recognize the Spirit's voice and to know and face the truth of God's will for us.*

From this vision statement, we came up with two themes: connec-

### SABBATICAL PLANNING GROUP

tion and clarity. These two words define our hopes and dreams for the sabbatical period. These two objectives are like “touchstones.” Connection and clarity will help us discover how it is we are responding to being a Pilgrim and, ultimately, disciples of Jesus Christ.

*Connection: By the time Jeff returns from sabbatical, we will have offered experiences that illuminate how as the body of Christ, both individually and in community, we are meaningfully connected, through our trust in God and Jesus Christ, to one another, to our city, and to the global village.*

*Clarity: By the time Jeff returns from sabbatical, we will be able to see, with a new perspective, the values and expressions of faith that matter the most to us, individually, and as a community.*

Our principle way of exploring “connections and clarity” will be Sunday morning worship. Ashley has been charged to preach 6-7

times throughout the sabbatical. Our hope is to

designate three other pastors who would be able to each preach twice and also engage us in an Adult Ed class prior to worship.

This is our hope for our Sunday morning worship experiences during the sabbatical:

*During Jeff's sabbatical, our worship will celebrate our already existing connections to each other, the city, and the world.*

*Led by the Spirit's voice, we will build on existing connections, planning new worship experiences that reveal an alternative vision of God's dream for humanity and call us to imaginative ways of being the body of Christ and recognizing God's truth for us.*

The Sabbatical Planning Group is starting to plan and create opportunities from mid-April until mid-July that will allow us to experience connections and clarity. Look for more information in the next few weeks as dates and opportunities are named. †

## Pilgrims Attend Anniversary Celebration of First Presbyterian Reformed Church of Havana

Submitted by Stan Lou with photos by Stacy Pervall

**T**he purpose of the trip to Cuba from December 4-11, 2006, was to strengthen ties with First Presbyterian Reformed Church of Havana. Stacey Pervall and I represented Church of the Pilgrims. We joined 20 others from New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and Westminster Presbyterian Church of Gainesville, Florida. It was Advent and on December 10 the church celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their building's con-

struction. It was a busy week to celebrate with the Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Hector Mendez, and his congregation.

Our group stayed in church dormitories and a local hotel, and shared meals together at the church. The accommodations were very comfortable. Dr. Mendez insisted that we



get out and see the Havana and environs to gain an appreciation of how the local population lives. My impression was that it is a daily struggle for survival that people just accept. The conditions are not particularly bad, but rather dreary [but not for tourists--see photo of Stan].

(Continued on next page)

## PILGRIMS' CORNER

### New Members Examined: "Cats or dogs?"

**D**uring worship on Sunday, February 11, five new members were received. They are (from left to right) Jeffrey Fox, Hannah Nutt, John Lloyd, Stacy Pervall, and David Krone. Before the service, the new members were examined by the Session; during the service they were examined by the Children's Circle. In Session they were asked "Who is your Lord and Savior;" in the Children's Circle they were asked if they liked cats or dogs--more about that below.



*Jeff Fox* is an event planner by profession and recently started his own business, Capital Decor and Events, with offices in Beltsville MD. He grew up in Lancaster PA where he was baptized into the Church of the Brethren. He has been in DC for more than 20 years, and currently lives in the Dupont Circle area. Jeff was introduced to the congregation by Jonathan Mertz.

*Hannah Nutt* is from Ohio and is the daughter of two Presbyterian ministers. Her father teaches at Muskingum College and her mother pastors a church in St. Louis. Both parents and her sister were present for Hannah's reception. Hannah is a VISTA volunteer with a literacy program in DC and plans to attend seminary next fall. She was introduced by Doris Hendershot.

*John Lloyd* lives in Alexandria with his partner Andrew Cheng. He heads the association that accredits education programs in health care management. A long time resident of the Chicago area, John joins Pilgrims by letter of transfer from Chicago's 4<sup>th</sup> Presbyterian Church, where his daughter will be married this summer. John was introduced by Gerry Hendershot.

*Stacy Pervall* lives near Pilgrims and often passed by when walking her dogs. She didn't pay much attention until the rainbow banner appeared over the door. Then she looked at Pilgrims' Web site and learned that Pilgrims is Presbyterian, which pleased her because she is a loyal Presbyterian. Stacy was introduced by Stan Lou—they went on a Cuba mission last year.

*David Krone* is studying international health at Georgetown University. David's early years were in St. Louis, but his family now lives in a Philadelphia suburb. He will keep his membership in his home Presbyterian church, but joins Pilgrims as an Associate Member, making Pilgrims his church home-away-from-home. David was introduced by Pat Goeldner.



Cats or Dogs? Hannah—cat; John—dog; David—cat; Stacy—dog; Jeff—cat and dog. Close †

### A Death in the Family

We are saddened to share the death of Carol Seppala. She died on February 22 after battling a long illness. A memorial service will be held on Tuesday, March 13 at 11:00 A.M. here at Church of the Pilgrims. Please keep Gregg, Michael and Daniel in your thoughts and prayers. Their contact information is:

669 S Illinois Street,  
Arlington VA 22204  
703-824-0993

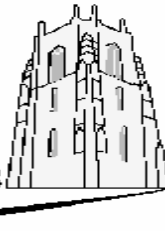
### Church of Havana....(Continued from page 2)

The church, however, is vibrant and was inspiring to all of us. We accompanied Dr. Mendez to one of the "home churches" spawned by First Church for a moving experience with about 30 worshippers in the patio of a family home. Another good interaction with about 20 members came in a shared Bible study. We also shared in a musical program at the church with a local Christian band, and observed how the church's library is reaching out to neighborhood families with children. We heard an account of the services provided by the psychologist on the staff of the church to people suffering from various psychological problems. (Incidentally, she was married in the church that week, so we attended a beautiful Cuban wedding.) We attended a baseball game of the team sponsored by the church, which won the game and the league championship [see photo]. The church's outreach to the community is effective and inspiring.



The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration was a major event in the life of 1<sup>st</sup> Havana. The church was packed with several hundred people, including many dignitaries, among them Clifton Kirkpatrick, Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (USA). It was an inspiring end to our experience with a dedicated group of Christians. †

# Church of the Pilgrims



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*"Where all are Pilgrims, but none is a stranger."*

[www.churchofthepilgrims.org](http://www.churchofthepilgrims.org)

*If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please e-mail,  
fax or call in your request to the church office.*

Join us  
on Sundays for  
Worship, 11:00 A.M.

Dear Jeff,

This is a short word of thanks and gratitude from two congregations, Bradley Hills Presbyterian and Bethesda Jewish Congregations. We call ourselves "spiritual siblings" sharing sacred space.

We have an Inter-congregational Partnership Committee (known as IPPIES) and we do mission projects together, worship together at Thanksgiving, etc. It is members of this committee who are most committed to ending the genocide in Darfur.

Both congregations have been represented at several of the vigils at the Sudanese Embassy and are aware of the generosity of the Church of the Pilgrims. You give the organizers of the vigils space to store posters, make your building available to vigil keepers for rest stops, etc. And there was a weekend you even served meals! We were glad to contribute some food for that purpose, but you offered the facilities and the folks to serve and prepare the meals.

Please let the people at your church who are responsible for these kindnesses know that we are grateful and thankful. We will be continuing to attend vigils and do what we can for the people of Darfur, and so sadly we will be seeing you on a regular basis it seems, as this problem will not be solved in a hurry.

Again, our thanks-

Jeanne Justin for IPPIES ☩

MARCH 2007



Dear Rev. Dr. Krehbiel:

Thank you for your congregation's generous gift of \$1,000, made on January 31, 2007, towards the National Capital Presbytery partnership. We recently welcomed four more families into their new DC Habitat for Humanity homes. I have enclosed some pictures

from the dedication ceremony. It was a day to celebrate and we look forward to a similar welcome for two more families this spring.

We create first-time homeownership opportunities for working families who are in need of decent shelter, have no other access to the credit or capital necessary to attain it, and are motivated to work in active partnership to achieve their dream of a decent home. Volunteers contribute many hours of labor to build Habitat homes and construction materials are purchased with donations like yours.

In our 19 years of working in the nation's capital, we have helped 92 families achieve homeownership through hard work. That's the Habitat way, and with your help, it's working!

Thank you again for this gift. Your church's generosity will help DC Habitat for Humanity start the new year with renewed energy and hope for a community in which safe, decent and affordable housing is available to all.

In partnership,

Carol A. Casperson, Executive Director ☩