

## **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN OUTREACH MINISTRY**

The Outreach Committee of First Presbyterian Church – Asheville, as part of the body of Christ and disciples of Christ, endeavors to share the boundary-breaking love of Christ in the heart of Asheville and in the whole world through the support and benevolence of our congregation. Prayerful discernment of requests and needs guide the process for helping those in need. In addition to financial support, members of our congregation continue to give many volunteer hours of time and talent to projects. Over 10% of the church budget (pledged income) goes to support benevolence giving. This percentage does not include special offerings or contributions in-kind, such as the use of our space for various groups.

## **SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Denominational Outreach**

**The Guatemala Partnership** is a covenant that First Presbyterian Church shares with Eben Ezer Church in La Blanca, Guatemala. The partnership is based on a ten year relationship between the Presbytery of Western North Carolina and two presbyteries in the Guatemalan Presbyterian Church. Recent highlights include:

- An intergenerational delegation from FPC visited our partner church to strengthen our relationship of friendship in Christ. (July, 2003)
- Evelyn Jarrett traveled with the presbytery's Women's Pilgrimage to learn more about women's issues in Guatemala (November, 2004)
- FPC renewed our 5 year covenant relationship with the Eben Ezer Church to share our love of Christ, foster understanding of the larger world in which we live, improve communication and focus on community development for our partner congregation. (January, 2005)

**Montreat Conference Center / Robert Lake Park.** This well-equipped park and playground suffered \$38,000 worth of damage in the devastating floods of September, 2004. First Presbyterian contributed to the rebuilding fund so that the playground can be enjoyed again by participants at Montreat events as well as anyone in our community.

**PC(USA) Missionaries in Madagascar,** Dr. Daniel (son of FPC members Bob and Naomi Turk) and Elizabeth Turk. Dan and Elizabeth work with the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, FJKM, as advisors in its environment and health departments. Dan specializes in reforestation and educating the Malagasy people on propagating both native trees and imported fruit trees in an island nation severely (90%) deforested. Elizabeth specializes in community health, educating the Malagasy on clean well water, family planning, AIDS and malaria prevention. We have supported them for a number of years.

**PC (USA) Missionaries to Malawi, Africa,** Dr. Frank and Nancy Dimmock. Frank has received increasingly broad responsibilities as PC (USA) health consultant for southern and eastern Africa "cross-pollinating" successful health programs from one country to another in an area devastated by AIDS and other health problems. Nancy, with a family of seven children, two biological and five African adoptees, in 2004 established a crisis nursery for abandoned, malnourished and sickly infants and has trained native women to administer and care for the infants in a new building.

**Presbytery of WNC** is the regional PC (USA) structure which provides denominational support for programs and missions in the ministry of Christ. The Presbytery's Unified Giving includes not only the Presbytery but also the Synod and General Assembly. Funds support programs such as missionary activity, disaster relief, theological education and local initiatives such as food for Hospitality House's AHOPE Day Shelter for homeless men and women in Asheville.

**The Presbyterian Home for Children** located in Black Mountain, NC celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> year in 2004. Long supported by First Presbyterian and many Presbyterian churches in WNC, it began as an orphanage but in recent years has served as a temporary home for up to 36 children, 5 to 18, who have experienced abuse, abandonment or neglect and are court-referred to the county Dept. of Social Services and then to the Presbyterian Home. While at the Presbyterian Home the children receive counseling, attend local schools, participate in the programs at Black Mountain Presbyterian Church while living in one of four cottages with house parents until they can safely be returned to a family member, adopted or placed in foster care. Volunteer possibilities include group outings, tutoring and other activities to support the children and the dedicated staff.

**Scholarship funding for seminary student(s)** is allocated in the Outreach budget to assist seminary or rising seminary students who are members of First Presbyterian Church. The funds are used to help with costs such as textbooks, tuition, and career counseling requirements. Currently we are sponsoring two students, Erin Keys and Allison McNeill.

**The Theological Education Fund** supports our eleven denominational institutions which provide training for pastors, educators, missionaries and chaplains for the work of Christ's church.

**Union-PSCE at Charlotte** is a new extension campus of Union Theological Seminary / Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia. First Presbyterian Church has pledged \$25,000 over a 7 year period. The first class of 69 students (86% Presbyterian) began in 2002, and this school meets the needs of working students by offering night and weekend classes. Our presbytery ranks #2 in the number of students currently enrolled in the Charlotte campus.

## Local Outreach

**American Red Cross Blood Drive** Members of First Presbyterian participate in two to three blood drives a year held at the church on Sunday mornings. For more information, contact FPC member Dave Stevenson (225-5665).

**Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity** is a nonprofit ministry dedicated to building simple, decent houses with community volunteers in partnership with qualified families currently living in inadequate housing. In partnership with the community, Habitat for Humanity strives to change lives by eliminating sub-standard housing. Members of First Presbyterian volunteer at the Habitat worksite on the second and fourth Fridays of each month – no house building skills are required. Periodically we join forces with other local churches to build a joint Presbyterian House. For more information, contact FPC member Bill Kantonen (254-5491).

**Black Mountain Correctional Center for Women Chaplaincy Program** is supported by area churches. The state does not fund prison chaplains unless a facility has 700 or more inmates. First Presbyterian Church contributes to the salary of a part-time chaplain (currently Rev. Lynn Michie) who ministers to the inmate's spiritual needs, sharing the uplifting assurance of God's love with those who feel sorrow, despair, and hopelessness. Church members also serve as volunteers at the Center.

**The Child Care Center of First Presbyterian Church** has provided quality and affordable child care in the downtown area for over 36 years. This mission would not have been successful without the continuing support from FPC. The Child Care Center provides a safe, loving and age appropriate child development curriculum for children from 6 weeks to 5 years. The center services approximately 75 children from varied faiths, races, and socio-economic groups. The center is supported by the church financially and with in-kind contributions such as space, cleaning services, office supplies, staff liaison, book-keeping, volunteers and board members. Volunteer opportunities abound at the center from rocking infants to reading stories to toddlers or performing puppet shows to the pre-K class. Please contact Mary Barnes, the new Executive Director of the center (254-1043 or fpccc@aol.com) to learn more about volunteering.

**Christians for a United Community (CUC)** is a multi-church, grassroots organization which is committed to carrying out Christ's witness to unity, justice, and reconciliation by addressing racism,

economic disparity and educational disparity in our community. Church volunteers participate in the activities of the organization. Our church became a mission partner with CUC in May of 2005. For more information, contact FPC member Jennifer Kantonen (254-5491).

**Hospitality House** is a local non-profit providing outreach, shelter, transitional housing and supportive services to homeless and low-income persons in our area. Hospitality House's AHOPE day shelter is open every day of the year, providing food, shelter, and other resources for people in need. Safe Haven is a unique shelter for the chronically homeless who struggle with mental illness and thus find regular shelters too difficult in which to live.

**Outreach Relief Fund** An emergency relief fund is provided to help individuals who are in crisis and have no where else to turn. Whether it's help with a utility bill, filling a prescription, or money for a bus ticket, this pastoral discretionary fund helps members of the community and the church in a confidential way.

**Save Our Students** Housed on the top floor of our educational wing at First Presbyterian, the SOS program run by the YWCA serves between 30 and 40 middle school students every weekday afternoon. As a volunteer in this program you will tutor, mentor and help young people with their homework. Contact the YWCA for more information about volunteering.

**Room in the Inn** (RITI) is an interfaith, rotating overnight shelter for homeless women. Begun in 2001, RITI provides a safety net for women who are often working but can not afford a place of their own. FPC depends heavily on volunteers to host up to twelve women for one week quarterly, providing a hot evening meal, a light breakfast, and safe and caring place to stay. Volunteer opportunities include transporting our guests to and from the AHOPE shelter, preparing dinner, hosting dinner, and staying overnight. Recently we have partnered with St. Mathias Episcopal Church to strengthen our volunteer base. Alana Zachary (631-5265) is our current RITI volunteer coordinator.

**WNC Pastoral Counseling Foundation** provides reduced cost counseling to low income or uninsured persons in partnership with area pastoral counselors in WNC, communities of faith and individuals to promote the well-being of our community.

## **Other Outreach Opportunities**

**ABCCM Food Collection** We regularly conduct canned food drives to help stock the shelves of the Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry's food pantry. Non-perishables are collected in bins located throughout the church.

**CROP Walk** Each October we participate in an ecumenical effort to support the world-wide ministry of Church World Service. Twenty-five percent of the CROP funds stay here in Asheville to support the ministry of ABCCM, Manna Food Bank, and Meals on Wheels. The rest of the funds support the disaster and hunger relief efforts of Church World Service. In 2004 our church was the lead sponsor for the Asheville-Buncombe walk, and a record amount of 35,000 was collected by walkers.

**Loaves and Fishes** is an alternative gift-giving opportunity in lieu of traditional Christmas gifts. In early December, a gift market is set up where outreach funded programs as well as other community services are present to answer questions and accept donations for their programs. Cards are available to send to friends and family informing them that a monetary gift has been given to a specified agency which serves as a Christmas gift to the friends/family. Church volunteers administer this program.

**Mission Endowment Fund** This fund was established to increase our congregation's support for, involvement with and understanding of people on the margins of society, in our own community and the world at large. Contributions are used to support one-time mission efforts initiated by members of First Presbyterian. Recent projects have included: an environmental conference for children, support to those participating in trips to Guatemala through our presbytery partnership, and additional support for our Child Care Center.

**Special Offerings** are held throughout the year to add extra support to our efforts. Traditional offerings include:

- Christmas Eve ***Room in the Inn Offering***
- ***Christmas Joy Offering*** to support 1) retired and active church workers and their spouses and families in times of need, and 2) Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges
- Mother's Day ***Child Care Center Offering***
- ***Presbyterian Home Thanksgiving Offering***
- ***Presbyterian Habitat Offering*** (late spring/summer)
- ***Witness Season Offering*** to benefit an international mission.
- ***One Great Hour of Sharing Offering*** is taken on Easter Sunday and provides aid in times of disaster, new opportunities for the hungry to feed themselves, hope and healing to people experiencing the hardship of war, promise to those who have found a new livelihood.
- ***Five-Cents / Meal*** hunger offering is received every second Sunday during worship and at our Wednesday evening fellowship dinners. The plan of 5 Cents a Meal is very simple: each person puts 5 cents (or more) in a special bank at home for each meal he/she eats. During worship our children receive the offering, as they are encouraged to participate in this offering with their families at home.

**Anyone desiring additional information on the programs described or volunteer opportunities may contact Associate Pastor Michael Poulos @ 828-253-1431 x 125 [mpoulos@fpcasheville.org](mailto:mpoulos@fpcasheville.org)**