



FAITHFUL SERVANT INITIATIVE: THRIVING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Shall the Synod Direct \$2.4 Million Over Eight Years Towards Church Development and Transformation?

Commissioners to October's Synod Assembly will be asked to consider redirecting the use of \$2.4 million of the synod's assets over the next eight years towards new church development and

church transformation, with a goal of starting no fewer than twelve new churches by 2010, and to fund up to thirty congregations committed to church transformation. The *Faithful Servant Initiative*, introduced to the Synod Council in the



spring of 2007, proposes redirecting a portion of the synod's assets, from guaranteeing loans to congregations, to making grants for new church development and church transformation projects. Alluding to Parable of the Talents in which faithful servants were willing to risk the gifts God gives rather than bury them in the Ground (Luke 19:11-16), *See Faithful on Page 2*

PROPOSAL TO SYNOD AIMS TO ENGAGE THE MISSION OF STATE COUNCILS OF CHURCHES MORE DIRECTLY



Affirming the purposes of States Councils of Churches, including a common witness among Chris-

tians, the education of church members, and advancing denominational positions on issues of justice and peace, forming networks among church leaders, providing forums for mutual enrichment for denominational leaders, promoting the reconciliation and mutual recognition among Christians, nurturing the growth of ecumenical conscious, assisting one another in the development of interfaith relationships, and fostering renewal and growth in unity and service, a new proposal that affirms the Synod's support of councils of churches throughout its region will be considered by commissioners meeting in Synod Assembly at Stony Point Conference Center on October 19-20, 2007.

The proposal is the product of ad hoc work group created by the Synod Council that includes the *Rev. Dana Lindsey* - Southern New England Presbytery, the *Rev. Doc*

Wyatt - Northern New England Presbytery, elder *Alice Olson* - New Brunswick Presbytery, the *Rev. Timothy Johnson* - Geneva Presbytery, the *Rev. David Moore* - Albany Presbytery, and Synod Executive for Partnerships *Clint McCoy*. For nearly a year that group has written and refined the document, having sought feedback from PPGs, to directors of state councils of churches, to Synod Council. Councils of Churches, it is recognized, help strengthen the ministry of the wider church, and towards that end the Synod is faithful in that wider regional ministry through its contribution of money, personnel volunteers and expertise to the larger church and its cooperative witness in 1) education, 2) public policy advocacy and 3) cooperation.

The initiative being presented for synod approval breaks new ground in that some Presbytery Partnership Groups (PPGs) are given some responsibility for synod representation in state ecumenical circles. It seeks to clarify how formal representation will be both encouraged and authorized by the synod, coordinating the synod's

nomination processes with the understandings about ecumenical participation identified in the constitutional documents of each ecumenical council. The proposal recommends a way to apportion funding for the work of the eight councils, and clarifies synod financial reimbursement to volunteers who officially represent the Synod of the Northeast in ecumenical circles. The councils included are the Christian Conference of Connecticut, the Massachusetts Council of Churches, the Maine Council of Churches, the New Hampshire Council of Churches, the New Jersey Council of Churches, the New York State Council of Churches, the Rhode Island Council of Churches, and the Vermont Ecumenical Council and Bible Society. In addition, the synod will work to publicize the important educational and advocacy work of the councils through an annual electronic edition of the *Nor-e-News*.

To see the whole proposal being presented to the Synod Assembly, go to www.synodne.org/mediagallery/album.php?aid=39&page=1

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NORTHEAST PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN REAFFIRM HISTORIC MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WITNESS



The Presbyterian Women in the Synod of the Northeast are women in the congregations in the bounds of the Synod—New England, New Jersey & New York. Sandra Grillo (Newark) is the Moderator.

They have recently submitted a Statement of Support for the United Nations to reaffirm

the historic declarations of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (1991 and 1958) regarding social witness as integral to Christian Life. On August 18th, Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women took action to adopt the statement and are in the process to send it to the requested entities and persons including Presbyterian Women throughout the denomination. To read the

statement, go to www.synodne.org/mediagallery/album.php?id=72&page=1

Visit their website at www.pwsne.org/ to download members of their Coordinating Team, Presbytery Moderators, or the PPG Trainers, Calendar of Opportunities and previous newsletters.

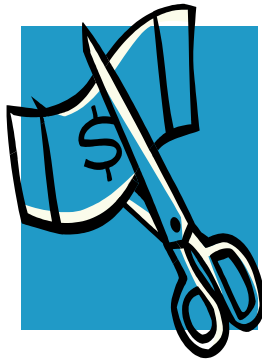
MID-COAST CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY



On October 28th Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church in Topsham,

ME will celebrate its 20th anniversary. In 1987, in its charter, this church committed itself to being a mission church, dedicating 20% of its fundraising to mission causes. These causes include Bright Start, a day care center; Habitat for Humanity; and the Sudanese Fellowship in Portland. See www.synodne.org.

SYNOD STAFF TRIMS COSTS



The Synod staff regularly reviews administrative expenses to make sure that we are being cost effective and good stewards of our resources. The most dramatic result came recently from changing our conference call service provider. This measure alone is expected to save nearly \$15,000 (a 90% decrease). Restructur-

ing bank accounts and renegotiating service agreements have also produced significant savings. One tangible and visible result is that no increase in synod per capita (\$3.70) will be requested for 2008.

NEW JERSEY PARTNERSHIP GROUP PROMOTING PEACE AND JUSTICE THROUGH DYNAMIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS



The New Jersey Presbytery Partnership Group (PPG) at a recent gathering approved a two-year proposal to provide NJ Presbyterians with educational opportunities and resources to help them have a positive impact on the growing tensions in inter-cultural and inter-religious relationships in New Jersey and throughout the world. Conflicts within and around Israel/Palestine are

increasingly being mirrored by conflicts in the United States; Israel/Palestine is the project's focus.

The goals of the Israel/Palestine initiative include 1) the sponsoring and staffing of Holy Land Pilgrimage Trips for NJ Presbyterians during 2007-08; 2) offering educational programs for cooperating presbyteries within New Jersey, providing expert resources on Middle East and intercultural concerns; 3) preparing and providing educational resources on the Middle East for use in congregations; 4) creating resources and providing consultants for congregations and

their communities or presbyteries related to inter-cultural and inter-religious problems.

They have set \$10,000 aside for subsidies to underwrite participant costs for the Middle East Pilgrimage Trips, and more than \$15,000 has been made available through the PPG towards other program expenses. Participant costs for the Israel/Palestine trips are estimated to be \$2700 per person for two weeks, including travel, most meals and accommodations. For more information on Israel/Palestine pilgrimage trips, go to the synod's web site at www.synodne.org.

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and to Jesus' feeding of the five thousand (Matthew 14:14-21), the proposal asks "Is it possible that Christ desires to multiply our fish and loaves, to take some of what we have in reserve and make it enough to multiply in ministry to hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people who are among us yearning for spiritual nourishment? Is it possible that the growth of new congregations may provide reserves for the future based on new disciples who welcome Christ to their tables, and into their homes, as they come to belong

to the Presbyterian family? Is it possible that a new initiative might bring to birth new congregations whose members will be a part of a trend reversing what four decades of decline taught us to believe is impossible? Shall we give Jesus the fish and loaves, or should we send the people home to fend for themselves?"

The plan calls for the allocation of up to \$100,000 per year for new church development, up to \$80,000 for church transformation projects, up to \$20,000 per year for new church development and transformation

coaching, and for scholarships to send teams to training events. One goal will be to begin no fewer than two new racial-ethnic or immigrant congregations for every Anglo-European congregations during the first three years of the project.

More information about the *Faithful Servant Initiative* may be found at www.synodne.org/mediagallery/album.php?id=39&page=1