

## Donegal Presbytery Hunger Program eNews 2009-01 January 2009

### Greetings and God's Blessing

As I write this eNews there is one item that weighs heavily on my mind. In case you are not aware, our presbytery has a new, presbytery wide mission project, the Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza. It is the only Christian Hospital in Gaza. As you all are aware from the news, many innocent people are caught up in the violence happening there at the moment, with some 1,000 killed and even more wounded to date.

I have produced an alternative brochure, which includes a way to support this gallant hospital and its staff, which is currently operating in indescribable circumstances. Here is how the brochure describes their work in "happier days."

*Al Ahli Arab Hospital is one of the leading healthcare ministries of the Diocese of Jerusalem. The hospital has a commitment to providing essential healthcare in the Palestinian territory that has been severely affected by Israel's blockade of Gaza. In addition to dispensing free medical treatment and services to everyone, the hospital also provides food and other necessities to those in need. The situation at the hospital is precarious because many patients are no longer in a position to pay their share of the costs for a hospital bed. As a result the hospital suffers from considerable loss of income. In the event of a disaster, medical staff must be provided and this is increasingly difficult for the hospital financially. In addition, operations on sick and wounded persons in the Gaza Strip are sometimes extremely dangerous. Many paramedics, doctors, ambulance drivers and nurses have been killed by Israeli troops. The hospital struggles without electricity for 10 hours a day and it relies on limited fuel supplies to operate its generator. The blockade has also caused difficulties in bringing medicines into Gaza, and some food items have increased in price by 500 percent.*

*But the Al Ahli Arab Hospital, along with its dedicated staff and inspirational director Suhaila Tarazi, brings hope to Gaza's traumatized community, including its 3,000 Christians.*

Both prayers and financial support are desperately needed. And I might add, even if the violence were stop tomorrow, will be needed for months, if not years to come.

If you or your church would like to help financially it's easy

Write a check to **Donegal Presbytery**. In the notes write: **for Al Ahli Arab Hospital**

Mail your check to:

**Al Ahli Arab Hospital Project**  
**Donegal Presbytery**  
**P. O. Box 10054**  
**Lancaster, PA 17605-0054**  
Attn: Susan Harner

I also suggest you check out the Alternative Gift Catalog on the topic. There is a link to the catalog on the Donegal Presbytery's Hunger Program webpage: [www.geocities.com/donegalpbyhunger](http://www.geocities.com/donegalpbyhunger)

### Souper Bowl of Caring Offering – February 1, 2009

This is really more of a reminder for the Souper Bowl of Caring – [www.souperbowl.org](http://www.souperbowl.org). You all should have received a packet from November Presbytery with all you will need to receive your Souper Bowl Offering. It includes

- A flyer explaining the A,B,C,Ds of receiving the Souper Bowl Offering
- An 8 ½" X 11" poster to put on a church bulletin board,
- two separate bulletin stuffers (one for the week before and one for the day of the offering).

If for some reason you did not receive the packet its not too late to do so. You can access all of these items by logging onto our Presbytery's Hunger Program website: [www.geocities.com/donegalpbyhunger](http://www.geocities.com/donegalpbyhunger). At the top of the page is all the info on the Souper Bowl Offering with links to these items.

The offering is geared to your church's youth group and I highly encourage you to get your youth involved. It so easy to organize and very effective.

### Enough for Everyone's – Eco-Palms Project

Easter is not too far down the road, which means I need to inform you of a project I first told you about last year named; Eco-Palms – [www.pcusa.org/palms](http://www.pcusa.org/palms). It is one of six projects from PHP's Enough for Everyone program [www.pcusa.org/enough](http://www.pcusa.org/enough)

Just as palms marked Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, these symbolic fronds also are waving in a new era for communities in Guatemala and Mexico that are taking part in a project sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).

The project is a joint effort by the PC(USA), Lutheran World Relief (LWR), Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and the University of Minnesota, which initiated work with rural farm cooperatives in Mexico and Guatemala to decrease over-harvesting and waste by selecting only the highest quality fronds. In turn, the farmers receive a better price for their quality palms, thereby improving their livelihoods.

Farmers typically are paid by volume, so ordinarily the push is to collect as many as possible despite the fronds' condition. Up to 50 percent, or more, of the palm branches get discarded because of poor quality. The farmers' yield – and pay – will now be based on quality versus quantity. By harvesting in this new manner, farmers' incomes are increased between five and six times over what they previously were, with the environment helped also, since only mature palm branches are harvested.

If this sounds like a good idea, pass this information on to you Worship Committee or whomever is responsible in your church for ordering your palms for Palm Sunday. To order simply log onto our denomination's Eco-Palm website [www.pcusa.org/palms](http://www.pcusa.org/palms). There on the right you will find a link on HOW TO ORDER. Or go directly by logging onto: [www.pcusa.org/palms/order.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/palms/order.htm). On this page you will find instructions on how to order in one of four ways: by phone, by fax, by email or by snail mail. Also found there is a link to the order form you can download and fill out. FYI the prices are as follows (note this is the same price as last year):

- **Small Case (200 Stems)** \$47.50 palms + \$12 shipping per case (Approx. \$.30/palm with shipping)
- **Medium Case (300 Stems)** \$69.00 palms + \$17 shipping per case (Approx. \$.29/palm with shipping)
- **Large Case (600 Stems)** \$133.50 palms + \$22 shipping per case (Approx. \$.26/palm with shipping)
- **Bunches (20 Stems)** \$6.00/bunch + \$10 shipping (total shipping cost for orders with multiple bundles )

**[NOTE: Last year there was a deadline for ordering. This year Easter is a little later and I see no deadline, but the site does suggest: Placing your order early ensures the best availability.]**

That covers it for the month. I realize that many of you I have identified as your church's mission contact may have, or will be changing. I will be getting a new list soon, but feel free to contact me to take you off the list and if possible include

- the new mission contact at your church,
- their email address
- the name of your church.

**Seeking Peace .... Always!**  
**Rick Schmidt**  
**Donegal Presbytery's Hunger Action Enabler**

**210 Locust Street**  
**Wrightsville, PA 17368**  
**cell: 717.880.6436 –**  
**email: [frederick\\_schmidt@yahoo.com](mailto:frederick_schmidt@yahoo.com)**

**Donegal Presbytery Hunger Program webpage: [www.geocities.com/donegalpbyhunger](http://www.geocities.com/donegalpbyhunger)**