

For Immediate Release – Please Post Prominently

From the Personnel & Administration Committee of the Presbytery of the Cascades

December 1, 2011

Beginning January 1, 2012, Presbytery staffing will be reduced and offices closed on Mondays

This is a difficult time for both congregations and the Presbytery of the Cascades. There is not enough money to do everything we would like to do. Twenty-five percent of the presbytery budget is funded by presbytery per capita revenues which are declining. The rest of the presbytery budget is funded by Presbyterian Partnership Giving from our congregations which is also declining.

Per capita provides funds for expenses mandated by the denomination: the Stated Clerk, office space and supplies for the regional offices, the Permanent Judicial Commission and presbytery meetings. Presbyterian Partnership Giving provides funds for ministry and mission to congregations and communities in Cascades Presbytery and our denomination: the three Co-executive presbyters, our support staff, the camping program, Media Resource Center, presbytery-wide youth events, Leadership Fair, and many other programs and mission opportunities.

No longer can we depend on reserves to cover current expenses. Program budgets have been reduced. Mission funding for our local congregations and communities, to the synod, and to the General Assembly has been reduced. Funding for Westminster Foundation is slowly being eliminated.

The biggest expense remaining is personnel costs. To be good stewards of our funds, the personnel budget for 2012 has been reduced by more than \$110,000 from the 2011 budget. This was accomplished by reducing the three full-time Presbytery Co-Executives to 80% time, the Business Manager to 80%, the four office administrative assistants to 80%, the full-time program and bookkeeper staff to 20 hours per week, and the part-time program staff hours have been reduced by 50% as well. The Stated Clerk remains at 75% time. The three presbytery offices in Portland, Eugene and Phoenix will now be closed each Monday, and only staffed Tuesdays through Fridays. To alleviate some of the impact on our former full-time staff, we will now provide medical and pension benefits to employees who work 20 hours or more per week.

How does this affect you and your congregation?

- While each call and e-mail is important, you may not receive the quick response you are used to receiving. Plan ahead; don't wait until the last minute to contact your Presbytery office with your questions.
- There is a wealth of information and guidance already available in the *Book of Order*, the *New Form of Government*, the presbytery website (www.cascadespresbytery.org), and the denomination's website (www.pcusa.org). Start by doing your own research, then call if you can't find the answer.
- Seek input from other PC(USA) congregations or your Committee on Ministry liaison.
- The Co-Executive Presbyters and Stated Clerk will not be able to attend all the committee meetings they have attended in the past.
- Special events and programs that are heavily dependent on staff coordination will need more volunteer leadership—or they might not happen.
- Presbytery committees are volunteer-led and staffed. These committees may find a longer lead time is needed when presbytery staff support is needed.
- Visits to local congregations will be less frequent.

There may be other implications for our congregations and committees as we "live into" this new staffing pattern beginning January 1, 2012. Presbytery staff members are no less committed to assisting congregations, but their reduced hours constrain what they can do. Your understanding, patience and willingness to volunteer will allow effective ministry to continue.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact either your regional presbytery office or Janet Wylie, chair of the presbytery's Personnel & Administration Committee, janet.wylie@comcast.net.