

# Peacemaking/ Social Concerns

**THE PEACEMAKING/SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE** appreciated so very much your generous response to the 2009 Peacemaking Offering. A total of **\$9,332** was contributed by Faith members and friends. 25% of the total stays here at Faith Church, with the remaining 75% going to Presbytery, Synod, and PC(USA) in Louisville. Receipts from the paper recycling program are added to our share of the offering funds. At their meeting on December 3, members of the Peacemaking Committee allocated funds to the following worthy programs:

- \$500 Mar Elias Educational Institutions in the Holy Land \*
- \$500 Mercy Corps \*
- \$400 Children's Action Alliance, an organization devoted to the well-being of Arizona's children.
- \$400 New Life Center in Goodyear, AZ. For aiding victims of domestic violence.
- \$400 International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH), headquartered in Scottsdale, Arizona. Work in Sub-Saharan Africa in addressing problems of poverty and illiteracy through self-help programs.

\* We want to tell you more about each of these programs through articles in the Mustard Seed in the next few months.



## **MAR ELIAS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE HOLY LAND.**

The Mar Elias Educational Institutions were started in 1982 by Archbishop Elias Chacour. Archbishop Chacour has worked tirelessly for reconciliation and peace in the Middle East, especially by building high-quality schools - preschool through

college - in the Galilean village of Ibillin, where the students and faculty include Christians, Muslims, Jews and Druze. More than 50% of the students are girls. The object is to bring together Christians, Muslims, Jews and Druze to study, to search, to question, to find answers and together to prepare a common future of life in harmony side by side.

Archbishop Chacour spoke at Valley Presbyterian Church last May. Several carloads of Faith members were privileged to hear his moving address. This will be the third year that part of the Peacemaking Offering is being sent to the Mar Elias Schools.

## **MERCY CORPS**



Mercy Corps has been committed for more than 25 years to helping whole communities affected by disaster - long after the headlines fade and the news reporters have moved on.

Mercy Corps stays for the long term to help communities rebuild and recover ... and give the local residents the tools they need to thrive on their own. Mercy Corps workers rebuild schools, provide health support, offer education and training programs, and help children and families cope through unimaginable trauma and loss. Mercy Corps sees that desperately needed medicine, hygiene kits, building materials and other critical supplies are provided to 28 of the poorest, most troubled countries in the world.

Ruth Allen, Barbara Allen's granddaughter, spoke at Faith Church last February about her work with Mercy Corps, and she will be speaking here again at the meeting of Presbyterian Women on February 18, 2010. This is the second year Peacemaking Offering funds have been sent to Mercy Corps.

*Submitted by: Ruth Mehl*

## CONFLICT IN COLUMBIA, S.A.



A recent issue of *Washington Report to Presbyterians* once again calls our attention to the tragic violent conflict in the country of Columbia, South America, involving armed groups, drug cartels and gross violations of human rights. The violence has forced millions from their homes. There are an estimated 4.7 million internally displaced people moving around within the country, living in terror and receiving no significant aid.

The Presbyterian Church in Columbia continues to suffer because of its work for human rights. The leaders of the church continually put their lives at risk in support of the people of Columbia who have been displaced by violence. These leaders have been helped by the accompaniment program of the PC(USA) and Presbyterian Peace Fellowship which we learned about from Philip Gates several years ago.

The 2008 General Assembly called on the Stated Clerk to write to the members of the US Congress, urging them not to ratify the Free Trade Agreement with Columbia, which would have grave consequences for workers, indigenous and Afro-Columbian populations, and the environment.

The 2008 General Assembly also called on the members and congregations of the PC(USA) to study the situation in Columbia, diligently pray for the work of the Presbyterian Church of Columbia, and advocate with Senators, Representatives, and the President of the United States to lay down the weapons of violence and support the nonviolent struggle of the churches and civil society of Columbia and those in the US who stand beside Columbians to end the violence.

Sadly our government has recently agreed to send military personnel to three bases in Columbia.



## FOOD BANKS

A big thank you to all who contributed to helping our Food Banks meet the heavy demands of the Thanksgiving-Christmas season! Faith Presbyterian members and friends responded with staple food and cash through our regular Food Bank Sundays. Many gave generously to the special Hams and Turkeys seasonal campaign. Thank you, too, to those who take part in packing food boxes every second Friday of the month at the St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance in Surprise.

In January, the staple foods and pink envelope gifts will go to the Valley View Food Bank in Youngtown.

*Submitted by: Ruth Mehl*



### **Food Bank Donations for January**

**Boxed Juices, Canned Vegetables**

**Please place your donations in the bins in Illingworth Hall. *Thank you!***