



May 2009

Presbytery of Plains & Peaks

Congregational Leadership Equipping Workgroup Information

Elder/Deacon Training

The Congregational Leadership and Equipping Working Group is once again sponsoring a series of training sessions for elders and deacons in three different areas of the Presbytery. Led by Doska Ross of the General Assembly Office of the Stated Clerk at the headquarters of the PCUSA in Louisville, she will be conducting identical workshops in three areas on the nuts and bolts of the duties of being an elder or deacon, and Dan Saperstein, Executive Presbyter, will present the Historical Foundations of our Polity or form of government. These will be held Thursday, September 10, at First Presbyterian Church in Sterling, Colorado, Friday, September 11 at First Presbyterian Church in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, and September 12 at Harmony Presbyterian Church in Ft. Collins, Colorado. September 10 and 11 will be from 6:30 to 9:00 PM. and Saturday's, September 12 will be from 9:00 until 11:30 AM. Elders, deacons, and pastors are URGED to attend. The subject will be officer polity, the historical and the why and wherefore of why we do what we do and how to do it! Plan to attend one of these events and be sure all your session members have the chance to be present. We will have more information at the August presbytery meeting on the training and information on how to register for these events.

Western National Leadership Training Jackson Hole, Wyoming

The Western National Leadership Training will be held October 7-9, 2009 in Jackson, Wyoming. This is a national training event for laity and clergy. This year's theme is Humor, Hope, Healing. The Reverend Brian Witherspoon has agreed to be the representative to the Western National Leadership Training for our Presbytery. Brian will administer the scholarship program of CLEW as well as planning and promotion of the event. Put this event on your calendars now, and plan to attend. Scholarships will be available.

May Presbytery Meeting Highlights

- ✦ All churches in the Presbytery completed the Session Records Review for 2008.
- ✦ The Nominating Committee still has a few openings for the Committee on Ministry. Please contact Deb Anthony, committee moderator.
- ✦ The Committee on Ministry welcomed and admitted the Reverend Ernest Freund into the Presbytery as a Honorably Retired minister.
- ✦ The Committee on Ministry dismissed the Reverend Barbara Wilkinson to the Presbytery of Redwoods.
- ✦ The Reverend Vickie Kintzel is now the Interim Pastor at Westview Presbyterian Church in Longmont, Colorado.

Presbytery of Plains & Peaks

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May Presbytery Meeting Highlights cont...

- ✦ The Reverend Jan Brooks is now the Interim Pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Yuma, Colorado. She was received from Wyoming Presbytery.
- ✦ The Reverend Chris Johnson is now the Associate Pastor at Presbyterian Community Church of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado beginning May 1, 2009.
- ✦ The Presbytery received the revised Standing Rules/Manual of Operations as a first reading.
- ✦ Council voted to approve the Acting Executive Presbyter job description and approved the Acting Executive Presbyter agreement with the Reverend Richard Craft.
- ✦ The Presbytery has been dismissed as a co-defendant in the case of Fowler v. Central Presbyterian Church. Legal fees in this case has been covered by GuideOne Insurance. The Reverend Glenn Perica and Central Presbyterian Church in Longmont, Colorado remain as co-defendants.

World Mission Challenge '09

The Presbytery of Plains and Peaks will be participating in World Mission Challenge '09. Similar to a highly successful event held in the fall of 2007. World Mission Challenge will send 40 PC(USA) mission personnel into 140 presbyteries to tell how God is at work around the world.

The goals of this program are to:

- Connect congregations with the work of PC(USA) mission workers
- Emphasize the church's commitment to partnership
- Thank the church for its support
- Let the church know that its support is still needed
- Give mission workers the chance to share their witness
- Give churches the chance to hear the stories of what God is doing in and through our mission workers and global partners
- Ask for the church's prayerful and financial support for PC(USA) mission workers

Speakers will be on the road from September 25 through October 18, 2009. Their audiences will range from hundreds gathered for a Sunday morning worship service to handfuls of mission-minded Presbyterians who come together for a brown bag lunch, a committee meeting, a Sunday school class, and any other opportunity to share interests in mission.

Mission workers need at least two kinds of support. They need to know that people in churches care about them and the ministries they're engaged in, and they need to have the financial support of the church. The CMPW is coordinating this visitation. If you would like to be involved in this opportunity, please call Dennis Hurianek at (303) 652-2468 or by email at dhuri221@msn.com OR your Mission Advocate, Lois Vermeer at (970) 352-4071 or by email at lvermeer@comcast.net. As soon as dates are known, those who have signed up will be the first to be called.

Upcoming Events at Highlands Presbyterian Camp and Retreat Center:

Mark your calendar now and plan to join us for the Spring Work Day. We'll be opening cabins and buildings that have been closed for winter and doing special projects to help us be ready for Summer Camp.

Spring Work Day
Saturday, May 16th
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Lunch Provided

Please call or email Laura (laura@highlandscamp.org) to let us know you'll be there!

Upcoming Event for Church Leaders . . . "Leading a Church to Spiritual Vibrancy" with Graham Standish

10 a.m. Friday, June 5 to 4 p.m. Saturday, June 6

We urge you to plan now for upcoming retreats!
The Senior High Retreat is scheduled for November 6 - 8, 2009
The Middle School Retreat is scheduled for March 5 - 7, 2010

Attention Artists! - Consider a donation to "Palettes & Pieces" - The 2009 Highlands Auction!

Thank you again to everyone who made our 2008 Quilt Auction a success! We raised over \$13,000 to reduce our mortgage! This year the title of the auction will be "Palettes and Pieces" and will feature all types of handcrafted items. We are currently looking for items such as paintings, woodworking pieces, pottery, and of course, quilts. The money raised will again be used to reduce the mortgage on the Highlands retreat center, helping to ensure a strong financial future for the camp. The auction will take place at the annual Christmas party at Highlands Camp on December 5, 2009.

If you or someone you know is interested in donating an item for the auction, please contact Chrissy Starcher at Chrissy.Starcher@gmail.com or 303-747-2339. All items must be received by Saturday, November 7, 2009.

You are cordially invited to join us for our "Seeing is Believing" Summer Celebrations

Join us for a Summer Camp Closing Celebration and see the difference that Summer Camp makes in the lives of young people!

Choose the date that works best for you. . .
Friday Evenings - June 19th, July 10th, 17th, 24th or 31st

4:00 p.m. Arrive and tour camp
5:00 p.m. Enjoy a picnic dinner with campers and their families
followed by the Summer Camp Closing Worship Service and Celebration

RSVP 303-747-2888 or laura@highlandscamp.org

Presbyterian Women Bible Study NOT FOR WOMEN ONLY

Joshua: A Journey of Faith invites us to explore the challenging, sometimes heartrending, book of Joshua. Pursuing such themes as leadership, the promise of land, the concept of "holy war," and outsiders becoming insiders, we learn ultimately to find rest in the justice and mercy of God. There are nine lessons suitable for women, men or mixed group Bible study groups either as a short term study or to spread out for several months. Included in the study are suggestions for leaders, bonus material that puts Joshua "In Context", charts, maps, time lines, discussion questions, definitions and prayers. The author, Mary Mikhael is an elder in the Presbyterian Church in Beirut, Lebanon. She holds a master of Christian education degree from the Presbyterian School of Christian Education and doctor of education degree from Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary. At present she is serving as the first female president of the Near East School of Theology and has directed the women's program of the Middle East Council of Churches. Also available are two supplementary items: Be Strong and Courageous: Praying with Joshua and Listening for God: Reflecting on the Book of Joshua. For information and how to order the Bible study and supplementary materials contact: Carol Heltenberg, 409 S. Ivy St., Yuma, CO, 970-848-5812 or e-mail: rch@plains.net.

CROP stands for Communities Responding to Overcome Poverty

Our partnership with you (the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks) has resulted in an increase from 40 to 47 CROP Hunger Walks this past year. As a participating and supporting denomination of Church World Service, thank you!

The volunteers who organized and planned the 47 walks in 2008 raised over \$340,000 for hunger needs, with over \$85,000 of that going directly to local food banks. In addition to the dollars, cases of food items were also donated directly to food banks by participating walkers.

It has been very encouraging to see such an increase in challenging economic times. As one volunteer coordinator said, "People struggling to feed themselves and their families need us more than ever, so we were grateful for the great response at our 2008 walk."

Another volunteer coordinator, when asked if they would be doing a walk this year, shortly after the tornado struck Windsor, CO : "Of course, we will." And they did, raising over \$4,000.

Lutherans walking with Presbyterians, Christians with Methodists, United Church of Christ members with people from the community and so it went in 2008. Walking together because they (the hungry) walk.

Thank you for lifting up the CROP Hunger Walk this past year as a way for your members to make a difference. It is our pleasure to share with you the summary for the 47 walks. With your continued support, we have already begun what we hope will be another successful year in 2009.

Does your church have . . .

Does your church have an overhead projector they'd like to get rid of? Weldon Valley Presbyterian Church in Goodrich, Colorado could sure use one. We're willing to pay for it of course. I just bet that some church(es) has converted to power point and have one just gathering dust somewhere.... If you are this church and would like to help out Weldon Valley Presbyterian Church, please contact CLP Mark Kenning at 800-701-8038 (work number).

Interesting Church News

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church - Boulder, CO

St. Andrew Presbyterian Church is planning two summer mission trips. The Youth Group will be working at Skyline Camp in Encampment, Wyoming, to prepare the facilities for their summer program; then they will attend the Highlands Youth Re-Creation. An intergenerational group will return to Alamosa, Colorado to work on individual's homes.

Lisco Presbyterian Church - Lisco, NE

The Lisco Presbyterian Church is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2009. The Church's minutes reflect that March 14th, 1909, the vote was to form a Presbyterian Church in Lisco. On Sunday, March 15, 2009, the Church will hold a special service featuring memoirs, music of the various eras, and a dinner following. On September 12th & 13th, during the village's 100th anniversary celebration, the church will dedicate a new sign being erected in honor of its centennial milestone. With a membership of only 40, the Lisco Presbyterian Church continues to hold services every Sunday, minister to the community through their annual chicken noodle dinner and bazaar, and participates in local and national mission projects. Rev. Duane Dunwoody is the pulpit supply.

Mtn. View Presbyterian Church - Loveland, CO

We had a very exciting and eventful Lent and Easter Season. Our church purchased pedometers (with the MVPC logo on them!), and began our walk to Jerusalem the first Sunday in Lent. We completed our journey by the fourth Sunday of Lent, and spent a week sightseeing in Jerusalem. We then continued our walk to Malawi, where we have a sister church in Engalaweni. We were there in time to celebrate Easter! With the walk, we had devotional booklets, "Seek God for the City 2009," which we used in our personal devotions during the week. Pastors Gary and Jim followed the same theme for Sunday worship services. This made our "Walk to Jerusalem" all the more meaningful.

Our children heralded in Holy Week by processing with palm fronds and singing and playing chimes as the introtit for combined worship on Palm Sunday. Maundy Thursday was celebrated in our East Sanctuary as we gathered around tables as family to partake of communion. Good Friday Tenebrae service was held in our West Sanctuary, and everyone left in quiet to await the coming of Easter morning and its celebration. Pastor Jim and Bink Smith gathered a large crew of volunteers together and prepared a wonderful breakfast of the congregation. Items for the breakfast were all donated by members of the congregation, with certain things brought each week during Lent.

Timnath Presbyterian Church - Timnath, CO

Main Street in Timnath will be under construction June 1-August 19, with road closures and/or detours.

The Timnath Dinner-Theater was a huge success. Thanks to all who attended.

Getting Ready for Zambia!

Saturday, May 9, the HIV/AIDS Task Force (at Central Presbyterian Church in Longmont, Colorado) will hold the fourth of five training sessions for Team Zambia members, as the team gets together to meet in prayer and preparation! The final preparatory get-together will happen June 20, and on July 11 the team will meet to pack the medical/school supply donations for Chawama, pray, and finalize personal and spiritual preparations for the trip which leaves July 14. These are exciting times indeed for Central Pres!

Since February team members have been engaged in monthly training sessions to learn about Zambian culture, to know each other, to know their individual gifts and limitations, and to discern God's purpose in our continuing effort in forming a true partnership with the people of Chawama Central Presbyterian Church in Lusaka, Zambia. We urgently solicit your prayers for the team!

One of the ways we've been making ourselves more familiar with practical methods in the effort against HIV/AIDS, is through tentative contact with the Boulder County AIDS Project (BCAP). BCAP is an active, local program already underway which is designed to alleviate the problems and suffering of AIDS victims (who live next door to us) and their families. Our Task Force has discussed how we might pattern our efforts after the services provided by our Stephen Ministry.

Getting Ready for Zambia! cont...

It's difficult to compare AIDS statistics between Zambia and Boulder County simply because they are compiled in different ways, but we are able to say with certainty that Colorado is relatively fortunate. That doesn't make the suffering of AIDS victims themselves any less here than in Zambia. According to BCAP, since records began in 1998, there have been 146 deaths from AIDS in Boulder County, and 4,808 deaths in the State of Colorado. In Zambia, according to the latest available figures, 98,000 deaths occurred in 2005, and there were a total of 710,000 AIDS orphans as a result. These are staggering numbers...in BOTH cases. Clearly the church should step up to the plate on this problem as it's able, both here and in Zambia.

Of course lots of resources are required. For example, Chawama Central's home care program needs health supplies which we can voluntarily provide. A simple list of items they most need can be found below. The list constitutes one health "kit." Each team member would each like to carry two kits, for a total of 24, to personally present on behalf of Central Presbyterian Church, to the Chawamans when we arrive in July. If you would like to help, please bring items to Central Presbyterian Church, 402 Kimbark St., Longmont, CO during office hours (8-5 Mon.-Thurs., 8-noon Friday.)

The Task Force is really fortunate to be guided in this effort by two of Central's couples who are well experienced in Mission work! Many thanks go to Frank and Gerry Starnes, and Bob and Bobbi Snyder for their hard work and valuable advice. Please join us in keeping them in our prayers!

The HIV/AIDS Task Force has adopted, as one of their statements, this verse from Isaiah. "To bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair." Isaiah 61:3

Care-Giver Kits for Chawama

Each care kit needs the following items:

1. 1 jar Vaseline (13 oz.) ~ The skin of chronically ill patients is often dry and prone to cracking increasing their chances of infection. Petroleum jelly keeps skin moisturized and protected.
2. 3 bars of anti-bacterial soap ~ Hands are major transmitters of infection. Soap helps prevent the spread of infection between patients or within households.
3. 4 colored washcloths ~ These are used to bathe and dry patients.
4. 1 flashlight (that uses D cells) and 4 batteries ~ Patients often need assistance at night; their homes have no electricity.
5. 1 tube antifungal cream (1 or 2 oz.) (Clotrimazole or Miconazole brands only. Note: these brands have proven most effective in caring for people living with AIDS; please don't substitute.) ~ The most common infections among patients are infections of the skin. This antifungal cream offers easy treatment.
6. 1 bag cotton balls (200-count) ~ Cotton balls are used to clean patients' mouths and any sores.
7. 1 notebook (80-100-sheet) and 4 pens ~ Family and community caregivers take notes on patients' health and keep them on hand in case further medical treatment is needed.
8. 1 bottle of Imodium, antidiarrheal medicine (24 tablets—Loperamide is the generic equivalent of Imodium and much cheaper.) ~ Patients frequently experience diarrhea, which can cause rapid dehydration.
9. 2 bottles acetaminophen 500mg (100 tablets) ~ This basic pain reliever helps patients who struggle with soreness, headaches, and other symptoms.
10. A handwritten note to encourage the caregiver receiving the kit ~ Your words have the power to offer hope and encouragement to a caregiver! Your prayers and support let them know they are not alone and give them strength in the battle to prolong lives and offer comfort to the sick.

Thank you for assembling this Caregiver Kit! Each item that goes into the kit helps empower caregivers from Chawama Presbyterian Church to provide safe and compassionate care for people living with AIDS in their community.

Witness in Washington Weekly The Washington Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

ACTION ALERT: Crisis in Madagascar

Madagascar remains one of the world's poorest countries, in spite of its unique biodiversity. The island's nine million Christians have played an important role in public life since the nation's independence from France in 1960. In the early 1990s, the Council of Churches convened a national consultation to draw up a new, democratic constitution. In 2001 and 2002, the Church led massive and peaceful demonstrations to uphold the constitution and ensure that presidential election results were respected.

Now, the principles of democracy and rule of law are again under siege. On 17 March, the mayor of the capital city, Antananarivo, staged an effective coup d'etat with the help of a group of mutinous army officers. He has since driven the elected President out of the country, dissolved parliament, packed the courts, and centralized state power in his own hands. Christian leaders who have dared to oppose the coup have been threatened and harassed.

The Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has issued a statement of the denomination's concerns regarding the current crisis situation in Madagascar (<http://www.pcusa.org/oga/letters-statements.htm>). He calls on U.S. public officials to:

- Condemn the 17 March coup d'etat in Madagascar;
- Withhold diplomatic recognition from individuals appointed by the illegal government to represent Madagascar abroad;
- Impose targeted sanctions on Madagascar;
- Condemn the pardoning or release of perpetrators of gross human rights violations;
- Support the restoration of the rule of law and respect for the Constitution of Madagascar and the will of the people as expressed at the last general election (December 2006);
- Encourage an inclusive national consultation process that is coordinated by the African Union or other appropriate impartial body.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) also has mission personnel based in Madagascar. See <http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/madagascar/advisory.htm> for more information on the mission impact of the current situation.

Presbyterians are encouraged to call or write their members of Congress to share these concerns and to invite appropriate action. Please go to our Legislative Action Center to send a message - <http://capwiz.com/pcusa/issues/alert/?alertid=13097541&type=CO>. In addition to contacting your own members, a letter to Acting Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Mr. Philip Carter is encouraged.

Talking Points Related to Specific Recommended Actions:

The talking points below may help you to share vital information about the current crisis and motivate the relevant actions. For more information on effective advocacy, see the Presbyterian Washington Office publication, "How to Be an Effective Advocate", available at <http://www.pcusa.org/washington/howtoadvocate.pdf>.

1. Condemn the 17 March coup d'etat

The US State Department has already condemned the unconstitutional takeover, saying on 20 March that "The United States condemns the process through which Marc Ravalomanana was forced to resign as President of the Republic of Madagascar and Andry Rajoelina subsequently was installed as the de facto head of state as undemocratic and contrary to the rule of law. This series of events is tantamount to a coup d'etat and the United States will not maintain our current assistance partnership with Madagascar." It is good however, to remind elected officials that it was a coup d'etat and that further action is necessary.

2. Withhold diplomatic recognition from individuals appointed by the illegal government to represent Madagascar abroad

The "minister" appointed by the coup leaders, Monja Roindefo, said that to get support he will see President Obama and French President Sarkozy. The U.S. government should indicate clearly that it will not give visas for self-styled "president" Andry Rajoelina or members of his government, nor will they recognize emissaries sent by him.

3. Impose targeted sanctions on Madagascar

On 20 March, the U.S. government said that "the United States is moving to suspend all non-humanitarian assistance to Madagascar." But five days later, the State Department said: "We have not yet determined what programs will be suspended in FY 2009 or how much humanitarian aid the U.S. will provide for Madagascar." It is important that the US define without delay what assistance will be cut and that it not simply classify all assistance to Madagascar as 'humanitarian'.

Witness in Washington Weekly - cont...

4. Condemn the pardoning or release of individuals convicted of gross human rights violations;

Mr. Rajoelina indicated that he plans to release 39 people that he calls "political prisoners". Most of these people were convicted of crimes committed in the political crisis of 2002. These crimes include murder, kidnapping, and other serious crimes. Twenty-eight of these prisoners have already been released. One of the worst offenders, Lt. Col. Coutiti, has been released from prison but is apparently under "house arrest" at a hotel on the edge of Antananarivo awaiting his freedom. The release of convicted criminals undermines the rule of law in Madagascar. It jeopardizes the many courageous people who testified against the criminals in court, and may dissuade others from giving testimony in the future.

5. Support the restoration of the rule of law and respect for the Constitution of Madagascar and the will of the people as expressed at the last general election (December 2006)

Madagascar has seen numerous instances of criminal action with apparent impunity in the past several months. These include the detention of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (FJKM), Pastor Lala Rasendrasahina, and the burning of the national television and radio stations.

The Malagasy constitution has been trampled in many ways in the past month or so. The High Constitutional Court gave the powers of the presidency to Andry Rajoelina, who, at 34, is 6 years too young to be president according to the Constitution. Mr. Rajoelina decided to suspend the National Assembly and the Senate in violation of the Constitution, and to raise the number of members of the High Constitutional Court to 11, 10 of whom are to be named by him or his government.

Mr. Rajoelina claims to have the support of "the people", but he turned down the referendum offered by President Ravalomanana. At present, the only reliable gauge of the people's will is the results of the last Presidential election in December 2006.

6. Encourage a national consultation process that is coordinated by the African Union or other appropriate impartial body and includes both President Ravalomanana and Mr. Rajoelina.

A national consultation is meaningless unless it is truly representative and unless the meetings are coordinated by a neutral party. If Mr. Rajoelina coordinates the meeting or if the party of President Ravalomanana is excluded, then it will not be representative.

Yes We Can Ban Nuclear Weapons Contact Your Senators

"Today, I state clearly and with conviction America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." - President Barack Obama, Prague, April 5, 2009

President Obama needs our support; he cannot do this alone. Please call your Senators and urge them to speak out in support of President Obama's call for a world free of nuclear weapons. Click <http://capwiz.com/pcusa/callalert/index.tt?alertid=13098026&type=CO>.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has long envisioned a world without nuclear weapons. From 1946 through 2003, the General Assembly, acting out of faith in Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace, has recognized that working for God's intended order and life abundant involves seeking international disarmament and arms control measures. In this effort, the General Assembly has opposed specific weapons programs and various measures that they believed stood in the way of disarmament and peace. At the same time, the General Assembly has advocated positive steps to control, reduce, and eliminate nuclear weapons. Always the General Assembly has understood that while eliminating nuclear weapons will not achieve the wholeness, well being, and justice of God's shalom, doing so is a crucial, necessary step in bringing God's shalom into being.

Speaking to Europe and the world, Barack Obama became the first U.S. president to declare that the U.S. will seek a world without nuclear weapons. The president, in his Palm Sunday speech, noted that the building blocks of nuclear disarmament will include a new national security strategy free of nuclear weapons, a new agreement with Russia to cut the size of U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, and ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Although many prominent analysts of both major political parties have embraced Obama's call for nuclear disarmament, some in Congress are saying that total nuclear disarmament is unrealistic. There is concern that some senators may seek to block ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and other components of the president's nuclear disarmament goal.

Click <http://capwiz.com/pcusa/callalert/index.tt?alertid=13098026&type=CO> to take action now for a world without nuclear weapons. Call your Senators and urge them to support President Obama's efforts.

Witness in Washington Weekly - cont...

General Assembly Guidance:

Since 1946, when the General Assembly of the PCUSA supported measures "...looking toward drastic cuts in national armaments through international agreement,{ Presbyterian Assemblies have pursued an unwavering course of seeking international disarmament and arms control measures (PCUSA, 1946, p. 197). The same Assembly also urged the government "...to exert its influence for international control of atomic energy," called for "...the immediate cessation of the manufacture of atomic bombs..." and urged the cancellation of further nuclear weapons testing. The PCUS went on record in 1957 urging the government "...to continue negotiations for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction... and to continue to make unremitting efforts to find a solution to the present deadlock over methods of disarmament..." (PCUS, 1957, p. 196).

The General Assembly has called for a comprehensive ban (1969) and an end to nuclear testing (1977). The General Assembly has also supported the Non-Proliferation Treaty (1971), the Comprehensive Test Ban (1984). In 1981, the General Assembly endorsed the "Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race" that sought a mutual freeze on the testing, production, and deployment of nuclear weapons and of missiles and new aircraft designed primarily to deliver nuclear weapons.

The most recent statement was made by the 215th General Assembly which called "all nations to fulfill their commitments under the Nonproliferation Treaty and move together with the other nuclear powers, step by carefully inspected and verified step, to the abolition of nuclear weapons." As steps toward this goal, the Assembly called on the United States to:

- Renounce the first use of nuclear weapons.
- Permanently end the development, testing, and production of nuclear warheads.
- Seek agreement with Russia on the mutual and verified destruction of nuclear weapons withdrawn under treaties, and increase the resources available here and in the former Soviet Union to secure nuclear warheads and material and implement destruction.
- Strengthen nonproliferation efforts by ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, finalizing a missile ban in North Korea, supporting UN inspections in Iraq, locating and reducing fissile material worldwide, and negotiating a ban on its production.
- Steadily decrease the number of nuclear weapons available for immediate deployment in concert with other nuclear powers in order to de-escalate global nuclear tensions.
- Initiate talks on further nuclear cuts, beginning with U.S. and Russian reductions to 1,000 warheads each.

Announcing the 2009 Churches for Middle East Peace Conference
Israeli-Palestinian Peace: Hope for Things Unseen
June 7-9, 2009

Please join us in Washington, D.C. on June 7-9, 2009 at the Kellogg Conference Center and Hotel at Gallaudet University in Washington, DC.

You will be informed and inspired by speakers including Danny Seidemann, Michael Kinnamon, Trita Parsi, Daniel Levy, and Amjad Attalah. You'll be empowered by learning how to be an effective advocate for peace in the Holy Land. And, you'll have an opportunity to impact policy directly on Capitol Hill by educating your elected officials about the need for a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. You will make a difference.

The recent Gaza crisis demonstrates the urgent need for U.S. engagement to bring about a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The 111th Congress and the Obama Administration provide a new opportunity to help Israelis and Palestinians stop the tragic cycles of spiraling violence and diplomatic stalemate and move forward on a path toward peace. Your elected officials need to hear from American Christians who care about the two peoples of the Holy Land and expect robust U.S. diplomatic action in 2009.

Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this year's Advocacy Conference.

For Conference Details Check: www.cmep.org
Online conference registration will be opening soon.
For questions contact CMEP at conference@cmep.org