

PEACE NOTES

*From the Presbytery of Long Island
Peace Justice and Hunger Work Group, January 28, 2012*

Glimmers of Hope at the Iowa Caucus

Looking ahead to 2012, a presidential election year, there are issues and attitudes that divide our country into partisan camps: free enterprise, equal opportunity, tax policies for the 1% and the 99%, job opportunities, unemployment benefits, educational policy, infrastructure repair, green technology, same sex marriage, immigration law, foreign policy, defense spending and more. At times, it seems that few issues unite us. But there were glimmers of hope at the Iowa Caucus.

The Rev. Russell Melby, regional director for Church World Service in Des Moines, IA and a member of Bread for the World since 1980, wrote the following comments after attending an Iowa caucus:

“Last Tuesday evening, January 3, I attended my precinct caucus in Ames, IA. I had earlier volunteered to attend a Republican caucus site, representing a newly-formed Bread for the World group, located at Bethesda Lutheran Church, Ames, Iowa. Other members of the eight-person Bread group attended the Democratic caucus in Ames. All of us agreed to present our concerns about forming a "circle of protection" around food programs that meet the essential needs of poor people at home and abroad.

There were 100 people in attendance at the caucus I attended: Ward 2, Precinct 3. I was able to present the circle of protection resolutions to the group. Our group's request pertaining to a “circle of protection” was approved by a strong margin and will be submitted to the County Republican Convention for approval at the "next level" with possible amendments.

I came away energized by the caucus system and quite aware that though the gap between Democrats and Republicans is wide indeed, on the question of providing support for a circle of protection, there was agreement at the caucus I attended. Though I do not know to what extent the majority of the people who voted for the hunger resolution would also agree on "specifics" related to a "circle of protection," the desire to end hunger was, in my opinion, the hopeful sign that human beings can rally around.”

Posted by [Bread](http://www.bread.org) on Jan 10, 2012 (www.bread.org).
Joan Marino, Setauket

L.I. Bread for the World Fellowship Dinner

On October 16th, 2011, Bread for the World churches on Long Island met to continue their advocacy efforts on behalf of 49

million poor and hungry Americans, including 16.7 million children, by forming a “circle of protection” around poverty and hunger relief programs such as SNAP/Food Stamps, WIC (Women and Infant Children), and EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit). Four L.I. Presbyterian; Baldwin, Malverne, Smithtown and Setauket, were recognized for their participation in BREAD’s 2011 Offering of Letters. These congregations were part of an ecumenical effort resulting in a collection of more than 2,000 letters to Congressional legislators.

A highlight of the dinner was a presentation of a \$1,000 grant from the Peace Justice and Hunger Workgroup to the Charlotte Cheatham Hunger Relief Fund. Until she passed away in March of 2009, Charlotte was a tireless advocate for the poor and hungry on Long Island and around the world. Many of her efforts were channeled through Bread for the World. Last June, Charlotte’s husband, Edward, and the Cheatham family established the hunger relief fund in her name as part of the First Presbyterian Church of Smithtown’s mission outreach program. Ken Graham, PJHW Chair

Presbytery recognizes Glen Cove Homeless Program

At the January 2012 Presbytery meeting in Brentwood, the Peace Justice and Hunger Workgroup recognized the First Presbyterian Church of Glen Cove for their many years of service and participation in a men's homeless/sheltering program during the winter months. In addition to providing shelter, the program provides important additional services that include a nutritious

meal, an available shower, and fresh sleeping bags and mats.

Counselors are available for referrals to Social Services and Mental Health programs. The congregation works in partnership with the North Shore Sheltering Program and other local area churches and community groups. In addition to recognizing this important church outreach ministry, the Peace, Justice and Hunger Workgroup awarded a \$1,000.00 grant to benefit this community program to the Rev. Betsy Simpson, pastor of the Glen Cove congregation. KG

Organizing for Economic Justice Workshop at the Presbytery Center

On November 8, 2011, Long Island Presbyterians met at the Presbytery Center to discuss what they could do as a people of faith to work for economic justice on Long Island. The workshop, led by Charlene Obernauer and Dr. Richard Koubek, explores how, as local congregations, we can advocate for public policies that support the poor and working poor.

Each workshop participant received an Advocacy Tool Kit for Churches which contained a variety of ready to use resources such as bulletin inserts, discussion guides and denominational statements on economic justice. An interesting discussion occurred when participants talked about the differences between *CHARITY*: helping poor people in crisis with their immediate needs and *JUSTICE*: removing the social, economic and political barriers that cause these needs and crises.

For those who could not attend the workshop, the Peace, Justice and Hunger Workgroup will make available a copy of the Advocacy Tool Kit for Churches. To obtain a copy, call Ken Graham at 516-868-5563 or email kengraham1599@gmail.com. KG

Workers Without Wheels

Like many churches on Long Island, the Patchogue Congregational Church has an aging, white congregation in a community with a growing diverse population. In 2008, the church hosted the funeral of Marcelo Lucero, an Ecuadorean immigrant who was fatally stabbed to death in Patchogue during an attack by a group of high school students. Since then, the church has expanded its ministry from helping the poor to advocating for economic opportunity for Latino immigrants.

Rev. Dwight Walter, pastor of the church, began a program called Workers Without Wheels, which provides bicycles for poor people who need a way to get to work. On May 24, 2011, the gymnasium of the church was filled with bikes. The church was giving them away, no questions asked, to workers who could not afford a car, or who couldn't get a driver's license because of their immigration status. As a team of volunteers and bike mechanics made last minute adjustments to the donated fleet, Pastor Wolter welcomed a line of people stretching out the door.

To help continue this program, the Peace, Justice and Hunger Workgroup voted to provide a \$1,000 grant to the Patchogue Workers Without Wheels project. In addition, on Sunday, January 8th at the

Congregational Church in Patchogue, Workers Without Wheels received a grant of \$6,580 from our Presbytery's Self Development of People Task Force to train workers to become bike mechanics. The trainees will be paid a training stipend, be issued repair tools, and be given one new bicycle to assemble and one used bicycle to repair. They may keep one bike and donate the other to another worker without wheels in need of transportation. KG

Rev. Daniel Izquierdo's Printing Shop

The week of Thanksgiving, 2011, Setauket Presbyterian church welcomed Rev. Daniel Izquierdo from San Antonio de los Banos, Cuba. During a three week period, Daniel visited several churches on Long Island and in the Chicago area, including the Clarendon Hills church. Both the Setauket and Clarendon Hills congregations are sister churches of Daniel's congregation.

Prior to his trip to the US Rev. Daniel Izquierdo shared his dream with the Setauket congregation of buying a printing press and, eventually, of initiating a small printing business in his church in San Antonio. He wrote, "Our church and many churches would like to have their devotional materials and booklets printed, but without a printer, it is not possible."

The full cost of the printing equipment was to be \$7,500. The Setauket church arranged to share the cost with the Clarendon Hills congregation. On the Sunday before Daniel returned to Cuba, Setauket presented him with a gift of \$5,500. This amount included a \$1,000 donation from the L.I. Presbytery's Cuba Workgroup and will be supplemented

by the Clarendon Hills congregation's donation. The total amount will allow the congregation in San Antonio to publish resources for worship and Christian education in their church and in the surrounding religious community.

Before Daniel left for Cuba, he asked Setauket to order some laser printing plates unavailable in Cuba. The company demanded a business address, so the package arrived addressed to "Daniel's Printing Shop". Needed also were USB memory sticks/flash drives to help congregants exchange information. A group of five from Setauket delivered the needed printing and computer equipment when they arrived in Cuba on December 29 for a visit with their sister church. Step by step, with God's help and the faithful perseverance of their sister churches and the Long Island Presbytery's Cuba Task Force, Daniel's dream will become a reality for his congregation. JM

Judy Lee Participates in *The Kairos for Global Justice in Bethlehem*

Accompanied by the Rev. Rick Ufford-Chase, Judy Lee, former peace advocate from the Presbytery of Long Island, left for Bethlehem, Palestine on December 4, 2011, and returned on December 10 to take part in the *Kairos for Global Justice* gathering there organized by the Palestinian Christian Kairos movement. Below is part of her summary of the trip:

“Since 2007, when I was last here, the illegal Israeli settlements have grown to nearly surround Bethlehem, hemming her in. There are already over 100,000 people in

the settlements, and they expand every day. Bethlehem is surrounded by walls and settlements. She is choking. Christians are leaving.

Over 60 of us gathered from 15 nations. We listened to the Christian leaders in Palestine interpret “Kairos Palestine”, published two years ago as a cry for justice to be heard by Christians around the world regarding human rights violations against their people by the Israeli government. We met in small, diverse groups from South Africa, Austria, Swaziland, Sweden, The Philippines, Scotland and other diverse countries. The USA group began meeting as well.

How would we respond? Where would it lead? Meanwhile a writing team began working on the “Bethlehem Call”, a call for forming a Kairos Movement for Justice around the world, not just in Palestine, but in South Africa, the Philippines, India, and other countries, including the US. They worked all night. “The Bethlehem Call” was born. You will find the Call on line at www:/communityoflivingtraditions.org.”

“A Kairos is both the recognition of God's will and the urgency of our response. It is the awareness of a God of Now, who is deeply involved in the human predicament. God keeps us steadfast in courage, hope and love as we continue to struggle and resist.”
The Bethlehem Call, Pg 3. JM

PEACE NOTES editors encourage others to submit articles from differing points of view in the spirit of justice, reconciliation and the peace of Christ that passes all understanding.

