

Dear Friends:

It's hard to believe that we are already coming up on the Thanksgiving/Advent/Christmas seasons. Do you remember how you felt at the beginning of the year? Were you excited for a fresh start? Were you anxious about the state of the economy? Was your faith in Christ being challenged or growing in new ways? All of us have had to learn and adapt as we have moved through this challenging year. I don't know that any of us could have predicted what has taken place this year, but it has once again reminded me of God's faithfulness in the midst of the storms. I don't know why God loves us so much, but He does, and Christ has walked beside us through all the ups and downs of this past year. The events of this year have reminded me how much we need each other, how God has created us to live together in a community that is following Christ, and how we can really benefit from the Christians and the churches around us.

As we do every year, we are asking each congregation to support the ministry of the Presbytery of San Diego in the coming year. What happens when you support the ministry of the presbytery? The presbytery's ministry is focused in three main areas: congregations, church leaders, and the community.

In terms of ministry with congregations, your giving helps lead churches through a mission-shaped 360 assessment process, provides resources and training, staff leadership in dealing with technical and adaptive issues, retreat and special event leadership, and encouragement and support on a daily basis in areas such as worship, evangelism, mission, education, tax matters, property issues, insurance matters, and personnel situations.

In terms of ministry with church leaders, your giving helps lead pastors through a mission-shaped pastor 360 assessment process, helps prepare and oversee the development of over 40 inquirers and candidates for ordained ministry, works with churches to call new pastors, offers training for lay leaders, sets up accountability for leaders when they step outside appropriate boundaries, and provides a website and weekly missives to help us stay connected.

In terms of ministry with the community, we are following the Savior into different areas of our community through the Iglesia Hispanic ministry, the Sudanese-American ministry, the Presbyterian Urban Ministry, and the Trinity Life new church plant in the south bay. These are important ministries that we encourage you to give to.

While we know that this year has been challenging for most of us, we also know that the need to minister alongside of Christ increases during times like these. We are always called to be generous stewards of what God has blessed us with, even when it is not easy to do, and especially in those times when it is not easy. Giving is an act of faith. It is an act of believing that God will take care of our church, even when we give some of His resources away to others.

So, in order for the presbytery to be good stewards, and to help us in our budgeting process, we need to hear from you. Each year, we ask churches to give per capita funds and mission funds to

the presbytery. The per capita rate remains the same as 2009, which is \$30.00 per member. This is divided up with \$21.36 going to the presbytery, \$2.60 going to the synod, and \$6.04 going to the General Assembly. The 2010 Estimate of Mission Giving Form is included here for your church to fill out and send back to us. We are encouraging each church to give a Shared Mission Estimate of Giving to the total ministry of the presbytery. This is similar to most church members who give to the entire budget of their local congregation, rather than just one particular ministry.

We also encourage each church to give a Designated Mission Estimate of Giving. This is money that will go completely to the mission that you choose. These are important missions that will continue as long as churches believe in their ministry and will prayerfully and financially and personally support what they do.

Like all congregations across our country, the Presbytery of San Diego is in transition. We are adapting and adjusting to daily changes in our culture and in our congregations. We are seeking to discern where and how God is at work in our communities, and how the Holy Spirit is inviting us to join in God's mission. We are in a perpetual state of motion. Each year, we are becoming more and more like a greenhouse that creates a positive, stimulating environment, where plants(churches) can grow in their missional calling in Jesus Christ. The presbytery is like a laboratory where churches are encouraged to experiment with new forms of Biblical ministry. We are a learning community, where people come together to learn and explore with one another what God is doing in our neighborhoods, and how we can participate in His mission.

We have a great history of ministry in the Presbytery of San Diego and we are working hard to keep building on that and moving forward in Jesus' footsteps. We invite your congregation to partner with us in the mission of God by filling out this 2010 Estimate of Mission Giving Form and sending it back to us. If you have any questions about it, please do not hesitate to contact us at 619-224-2490 or www.presbyterysd.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

God bless you,

Clark Cowden

Executive Presbyter

Presbytery of San Diego