

Kathy Sharp, Mission Center President

10648 NE 154th Place, Bothell, WA 98011

Phone: 425-488-8202 * Mobile: 206-369-0912 * FAX: 425-488-2012 * ksharp@cofchrist-gpnw.org

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Dear Pastors and Communications Coordinators:

Like your congregations' leadership teams, Mission Center team members are recruiting volunteers, planning for new ministries and thinking about the budget needed to support them in 2009. This preparation is necessary before fall business meetings occur so we can seek approval from the members we serve. The purpose of this letter is to remind and inform you of:

1. Election of your delegates to our annual Mission Center Conference
2. Mission Center Conference new business
3. Fall congregational business meetings to elect/sustain officers
4. Your 4th Quarter Visiting Ministry Schedule (always available first via email and Web site)
5. Other inspiring events across the Mission Center that you and your members will want to attend.

Mission Center Conference convenes Saturday morning, November 8 and ends Sunday noon, November 9, at Community of Christ - Portland Congregation, 4837 NE Couch Street, Portland, OR 97213.

Our conference theme is "Together We Can." We will embrace the gifts of all generations to our faith community. Mission Center Conference will include fun, fellowship and worship by and for all ages, including children, youth and young adults. (Pastors, please join us for our annual pastor's breakfast on Sunday morning, November 9.) **Now is the time to promote the dates and location of Mission Center Conference in your bulletins each week.** You will receive additional, more detailed promotional materials in September to share with your members closer to the dates of conference.

→ Elect Mission Center Conference Delegates by Sunday, October 5 *(submittal form and delegate allotment enclosed)*

Concurrent with your promotion of Mission Center Conference, please announce two weeks in advance your congregational business meeting to elect conference delegates and alternates. **This business meeting must occur no later than Sunday, October 5.** Any member "in good standing" is eligible to run for delegate. Solicit names of members who wish to run for delegate in advance of your business meeting. List them on a prepared ballot, which also notes the number of delegates to elect. Members may nominate others as "write-ins" during the business meeting. Those receiving the most votes— up to the number of delegates allotted to your congregation—are elected. Remaining nominees will serve as alternates, in descending order of votes received.

Please notify your elected delegates and alternates immediately. Send the names of your elected delegates and your alternates (prioritized by highest to lowest votes received) to Elva Eliason, Mission Center Recorder, by Monday, October 6. If you are unable to elect your full delegate allotment, inform Elva if you would like to extend your delegate openings to elected alternates from other congregations. Contact Elva at eeliason@cofchrist-gpnw.org or 360-574-2433 Monday-Thursday. *Please be sure to include all information on the enclosed form when submitting names.*

→ Share Mission Center Conference New Business with Elected Delegates and Congregation *(budget enclosed)*

Included with this letter is the **proposed 2009 Mission Center budget** to share and review with your delegates and congregation prior to Mission Center Conference. The Mission Center Council, Mission Center Finance Committee and Mission Center Officers endorse a **proposed budget with an eight percent (8%) increase over 2008.** This budget increase is more than offset because of gains in the Operating Investment Fund from recent property sales and other

income, which have increased our total assets by almost \$675,000. As a result, our congregational allocations will decrease, on average, by about 10 percent (10%). If approved, this budget increase will:

- Increase funding for training of the Youth Camping Team (camp counselors and camp directors)
- Increase funding for Youth Caravan (hard hit by rising gasoline prices)
- Add funding support for IYF 2009 (International Youth Forum), serving 9th graders-19 year olds, for both IYF Independence and IYF International experiences in Malawi, Africa and Bangkok, Thailand
- Add funding for ecumenical organizations on whose boards we serve. These organizations deliver education, worship, training and local opportunities for faith-based peace and justice efforts to multiple Community of Christ congregations in Oregon and Washington
- Sustain congregation and mission-center programming support (for example, covering higher technology costs and gasoline for travel).

If you have additional questions about the proposed budget or your congregation's allocation, contact Bill McFarlin, Mission Center Financial Officer at wmcfarlin@cofchrist-gpnw.org or 360-574-2758.

➔ **Schedule Congregational Business Meetings to Elect/Sustain Officers**

Coordinate now with your Congregational Support Minister to schedule pastor elections and sustain your recorder, congregational financial officer and counselors/assistant pastors. If you are stepping down for 2009, please notify your Congregational Support Minister and me as soon as possible to help identify your likely successor. Officer elections can occur after October 5, if necessary, but should occur before the Christmas Advent season to allow for sufficient 2009 planning, recruiting and budgeting. **Please notify Elva Eliason with your election results at eeliason@cofchrist-gpnw.org or 360-574-2433.**

➔ **Plan Hospitality for Visiting Ministry** (*4th quarter schedule enclosed*)

Special thanks to John Berger and Stan Corrington for continuing to coordinate the visiting ministry schedule for Washington and Oregon congregations. Identifying ministers who are available and can afford the cost to travel long distances is increasingly challenging. As a reminder, congregations should offer to assist with gas money and host a meal for visiting ministers. This works best if you build the cost of receiving visiting ministry into your congregational budget. Employees and Congregational Support Ministers (volunteer and paid) are free to your congregation, as their travel costs are offset already. (We still enjoy a good potluck, however!)

➔ **Register NOW: *Blessing Our Children and Future Generations, September 26-28*** (*poster enclosed*)

with Presiding Evangelist David Brock, Apostle Susan Skoor, Spirituality and Wholeness Ministries Specialist Carolyn Brock, and Young Adult Disciple Formation Specialist Erica Blevins Nye. I hope to see you at this very special gathering, September 26-28, at Portland Congregation. Many thanks to our evangelists and young adults (ages 15-40) for creating this opportunity to share our spiritual yearnings across generations to build a legacy for the future. To register, contact John Berger at johnb33@comcast.net or 360-576-1157. Registration fees are waived for all youth and young adults!

➔ **Promote Other Mission Center Fall Events to Members and Friends** (*posters and information enclosed*)

- **Young Adults Fall Retreat, with Erica Blevins Nye**, September 19-21, Samish Island Campgrounds
- **Shine 9: Mission Center Youth Retreat** for grades 7-2008 graduates, September 19-21, Lewis River Campground
- **Pastor and Congregational Leaders Meetings with Erica Blevins Nye**, focusing on Effective Young Adult Ministry: 7 p.m., Tuesday, September 23 (Rainier Valley Congregation, Seattle) and 7 p.m., Thursday, September 25 (Portland Congregation). Watch for more information by email.
- **NW First Peoples Council Nation-to-Nation**, October 31-November 2, Samish Island Campground.
- **Aaronic Ministries Gathering**, November 15, Eugene Congregation

Thank you for your continued, faithful ministry in the name of Jesus Christ!

Sincerely,



Kathy Sharp