



Mission Presbytery

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Mission Presbytery serves God as a unique expression of the body of Christ in South Texas. As faithful stewards of God's gifts, we proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ by

- Fulfilling the mandates of the Book of Order
- Encouraging and supporting congregations in mission and ministry
- Doing together what we cannot do alone.

January 4, 2010

Dear Friends,

May God be gracious to us and bless us in this New Year! I begin this year thanking God for the opportunity to journey with you into new beginnings in Mission Presbytery. Also I am thankful to experience another amazing opportunity: after prayerful consideration, and with the approval of General Council, I will travel to Egypt for three weeks participating in a class from McCormick Theological Seminary. I ask for prayers as I travel and learn about Egypt and the Bible and help build our relationship with Christians in Egypt through the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo. I will return January 27. Please know you will remain in my prayers every day while I am away. This class will fulfill my residential course requirement for McCormick, allowing me to take the remainder of my classes through Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary; and this course will cost Harry and me less than ½ of a round-trip air fare (a real deal!). Expect to hear from me when I return from, what I anticipate will be, another life-transforming experience.

As you know, after I arrived in Mission Presbytery, we found ourselves facing a financial crisis requiring a momentous change with respect to having to close our Resource Centers and eliminating five staff positions. While these changes caused pain, they offer an opportunity to streamline the staffing pattern required to fulfill the programmatic needs of Mission Presbytery. We are called to be the church in the 21st century, and we must acknowledge that we live in a world of limited resources. As your new Executive Presbyter, my leadership style is to encourage and empower appropriate persons and leaders to make necessary decisions. Your Council did this as they “stepped up to the plate” at a time of crisis. And I am impressed with many new faces, voices, and ideas being shared as the expanded Council has begun its process of interpreting envisioned changes to the structure of Mission Presbytery, which we will continue to “live and grow into” in this new year.

By the grace of God, we enter 2010 with meaningful purpose, with wonderful leadership, with awesome congregational resources, and with an extremely dedicated and gifted staff. Critical to the effectiveness of Mission Presbytery as we strive to support congregations in ministry and mission within our bounds will be ***your participation*** in the work of regions (clusters). Prayerfully I ask you and expect you to be as gracious as I know you are when you are invited by your Council representative to gather as a region to discuss the possibilities that are ahead of us. Remember the words from the prophet Isaiah, “See I am about to do a new thing, now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?”

With hope and joy,

Hilary

Elder Hilary Shuford
Executive Presbyter

Rev. Dr. Miles H. White
Stated Clerk

Elder Ruben P. Armendariz
Church Development Consultant

Elder Lita Simpson
Youth Ministries

Rev. Sam Riccobene
Camp Director