

# One in the Spirit

A monthly email from Linda Valentine strengthening community between the General Assembly Mission Council and Middle Governing Bodies

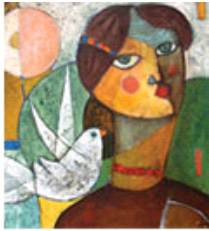
## What's coming up?



The [Evangelism & Church Growth](#) ministry area announces a new resource from Small Church & Community Ministry. [Stepping Out in Faith](#) tells the stories of nine small congregations in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on a journey of transformation from both the perspective of pastor and congregation. This resource provides spiritual discernment for leaders addressing changing demographics, pastoral leadership and church building issues. [Order now](#) and also consider using two other resource books in this series by Diana A. Stephen, [Spiritual Vitality through Cooperative Ministry](#) and [New Times New Call](#) [pdf]. You may also download our latest video story on congregations growing Christ's Church [Deep and Wide](#) in [Diversity](#).



The [Teaching of the Bible Grant](#) – offered through the PC(USA)'s [Financial Aid for Studies Office](#), a ministry of the [Office of Vocation](#) – provides funding for new programs or new aspects to existing programs for teaching the Bible. The Teaching of the Bible Grant is restricted to Presbyterian-related secondary schools, colleges and universities. For a complete list of criteria and to download an application form – due February 15, 2010 – visit the [Teaching of the Bible Grant site](#) or call Laura Bryan at (888) 728-7228, x 5735. [Read a related story](#) about how the [Menaul School](#) is using its grant.



[Planning](#) and [promotional](#) materials for **Celebrate Gifts of Women Sunday** are [now available](#) for free download or purchase from Presbyterian Distribution Service. Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday honors women who contribute their gifts to the church and community and lifts up issues of women's rights. **March 7, 2010**, the day before International Women's Day, is [Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday](#). This year's theme is "Women Keeping the Message Alive." Your congregation or women's groups may, however, use this resource on any date that you choose to celebrate women.

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PC(USA) mission workers [Larry Sthreshley](#) and [Jim McGill](#), along with Medi Kanda, a community development leader with the Presbyterian Community of Congo, and others are developing a water program in the [Democratic Republic of Congo](#). It involves cisterns, wells and spring-capping and includes organizing and training water committees to establish maintenance programs. In Congo about 30 percent of all illness is related to contaminated water. The goal is to have clean water available to at least 80 percent of the people living in health zones served by Congolese Presbyterians. [Read more](#) in a letter from Larry and Inge Sthreshley.

## *Lives Transformed*

Stories of how an individual's life has been impacted by the programs, initiatives and activities of the General Assembly Mission Council

### **Minh Phuong Towner**

*A tiny star shining brightly*



Louisville, Ky. (December 21, 2009) - When Minh Phuong Towner learned that her pastor, the Rev. Dr. Peter G. "Pete" James, head of staff at the [Vienna \(Va.\) Presbyterian Church](#), was planning to use her story to illustrate the topic of happiness in a book he is writing, she was deeply humbled and not just a little surprised.

For the Vietnam native – who in 1968 had witnessed the murder of her father and two of her siblings and later survived internment in a Communist prison camp along with her younger brother – seeing herself through “Pastor Pete’s” eyes as an embodiment of happiness would have at one time been unthinkable, but for the grace and mercy of God. “He told me, ‘The happiness in you is so contagious, that’s how we should be when we serve the Lord,’” Towner recalled. [[Read more](#)]