



PHP POST

Spring 2019 | Presbyterian Hunger Program | pcusa.org/hunger

Celebrating 50 years!

Hunger Program's Witness in the Wider Church

Sara Lisherness, Director for Compassion, Peace and Justice Ministries, Presbyterian Mission Agency

It is a privilege to be invited to briefly reflect upon the Hunger Program's witness in the wider church for the past 50 years. The words from a well-known prayer* came to mind.

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Some of the Presbyterian church's accomplishments through the Hunger Program in the past 50 years include:

- Raising over 260 million dollars to alleviate hunger and eliminate its causes
- Establishing the first denominationally focused Hunger program in U.S.
- Encouraging individuals, congregations and middle governing bodies to engage in advocacy that addresses the root causes of hunger while also encouraging them to provide food for hungry people
- Launching congregational certificate programs: Earth Care Congregations in 2010 and Hunger Action Congregations in 2017
- Beginning a new model of organizing, development, and solidarity through the Joining Hands networks, begun in 2000



The prayer goes on to say:

*We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.*

Some of the seeds planted:

- A network of hunger action advocates that engage in education, advocacy and direct support in their communities
- Helping to establish important ministries such as Agricultural Missions, Heifer International, Commission on Religion in Appalachia, Bread for the World, Jubilee USA Network, and the Souper Bowl of Caring

- Support for the Campaign for Fair Food Taco Bell Boycott, to provide migrant workers with a penny more for each pound of tomatoes they pick and prevent abuses in the fields
- In the concluding words, we are reminded:

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

Is there more to do? Indeed. Until we reach a time, God's time, when no child goes to bed hungry, and when all God's people can share in the abundance of God's creation, living with dignity and worth, there will still be a need for the Hunger Program.

Until that time, I give thanks to God for the Hunger Program and its continued witness and commitment to be prophets of a magnificent future that is God's, not ours.

*Often attributed to Bishop Oscar Romero, this prayer was composed by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, for a homily by Cardinal John Dearden.





PHP Post 50 Years Coordinator Reflection

50 years. A golden anniversary. Half a century. The Jubilee Year.

Rebecca Barnes, Coordinator for Presbyterian Hunger Program

Fifty is a significant number. Particularly for those of us whose holy scriptures include the book of Leviticus, fifty is a time to re-evaluate, celebrate, and free people, land, and even animals from systems that have bound them.

While biblical scholars aren't clear if the jubilee was ever observed, it is a message that calls God's people to justice and liberation. We are reminded to rely on God's grace and the earth's bounty—rather than extracting from and consuming the land.

For 50 years, Presbyterians have worked to alleviate hunger and to address its underlying causes. Having declared hunger a major mission priority of the church in 1969, Presbyterians continue to be engaged in fighting hunger. We take seriously the original charge that recognizes “the enormity of the task to which we are committing ourselves,” and we “have no easy illusion of easy success in this undertaking. But we dare to act because we dare to hope.” (Common Affirmation on Global Hunger)

We don't celebrate 50 because the task is any less enormous now than it was in 1969. We celebrate because we are called to mark the time's passing and to use it to reflect on how far we've come and how far we still have to go. We celebrate our roots and learn



from them. We celebrate because the jubilee reminds us to reclaim liberty for all.

We celebrate because we have tried to be faithful. We have listened for God's call and followed the best we can in caring for all God's people and creation. We have shaped our own individual lives with awareness and action. We have helped shape our denomination to be an outward, active agent in the larger world. We have created myriad organizations, partnerships, and networks that continue to alleviate hunger. We have funded amazing community work focused on food access, sustainable development, advocacy in the public square, personal lifestyle consumption choices, and economic and environmental justice.

Most of all, we are grateful that what was declared decades ago by Presbyterians continues to be true for us today:

- That God our Creator has made the world for everyone, and desires that all shall have daily bread.
- That God has been at work through history... to liberate the poor and oppressed that they may serve and glorify their Maker with their whole life.
- That Jesus Christ our Savior identified with the world's poor and came to announce good news to them.
- That the Holy Spirit is at work in the church, calling us to embody our Savior's compassion and struggle for justice on the earth.

(Common Affirmation on Hunger)

PHP Staff

Rebecca Barnes, Coordinator
Rebecca.barnes@pcusa.org

Andrew Kang Bartlett, National Hunger & CBCO
Andrew.kangbartlett@pcusa.org

Jennifer Evans,
Managing Editor, Mission Specialist
Jennifer.evans@pcusa.org

Jessica Maudlin,
Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns
Jessica.maudlin@pcusa.org

Valéry Nodem, International Hunger
Valery.nodem@pcusa.org

Jenny Oldham, Administrative Assistant
Jenny.oldham@pcusa.org

Eileen Schuhmann,
International Mission Specialist
Eileen.schuhmann@pcusa.org

God's Call to Hunger Ministry

Colleen Shannon, former Coordinator for Presbyterian Hunger Program

When I was a teenager growing up in Florida, a Presbyterian missionary from the Belgian Congo visited our congregation. Inspired by her and subsequent itinerating mission workers, I listened for God to call me to “go out into all the world.” That God's call never came dismayed me until the director of the Florida Christian Migrant Ministry said one day, “It's because you were needed here.” He was referring at the time to our work promoting the United Farm Workers (UFW) boycott of Gallo wine, grapes and head lettuce. It was 1974, and I was serving as the first Hunger Action Enabler for the former PCUS Synod of Florida.

From the vegetable fields of Florida, my journey took me to the piney woods of Mississippi where the Presbyterian Hunger Program was supporting the organizing efforts of what became the United Woodcutters Association. By that time I was sharing responsibility for national hunger concerns with Joe Keesecker, staff to the former UPCUSA's hunger program.

It was the joining of our two denominations' hunger programs in 1981 that served as a trial two years before reunion. Together we broadened the Hunger Action Enabler network and deepened partnerships at home and around the world. We helped win the Nestle Boycott against the unethical promotion of infant formula and provided leadership in ecumenical

organizations like Bread for the World.

Following my retirement as Coordinator of the PHP, threads of its programs still bind me fast. After Peru's Joining Hands initiative spawned Partners for Just Trade, I served on its board. In 2013 I traveled to Nicaragua with PHP and Equal Exchange to learn from small-scale coffee farmers. Today I represent Equal Exchange at national events and manage a fair trade Mission Market in my home church as a commitment to the Presbyterian Coffee Project. Supporting our local farmers market and Friends of Seymour Library, working with Justice Knox, and resettling Congolese refugees round out my volunteer commitments.

In 2014, I finally made it to Congo with a team from First Presbyterian Church, Knoxville to deepen our partnership with the Presbyterian Community of Congo (CPC) in the Kasai. Visiting PRODEK (Program for Development in Kasai) took me back over thirty years to when donations to the Presbyterian Hunger Fund from children in North Carolina's Orange Presbytery (now New Hope Presbytery and Salem Presbytery) helped found PRODEK's community organizing and agricultural training.

As I write this, we are planning for the annual gathering of the Congo Mission Network to be hosted by our congregation



Colleen Shannon

in Knoxville, October 17-19, 2019. With a new Congolese president and the 60th anniversary of Congo's independence from Belgium in 2020, the time is ripe to claim a new day as partners work together to achieve justice, peace and freedom from poverty for the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Looking back, I now see how God answered my teenage prayers and give thanks for the role of the Presbyterian Hunger Program in my life.

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Continue to learn more about PHP and more 50 Year Celebrations throughout the year! Sign up for one or all of our blogs:

- Eco-Journey
- Food and Faith
- Together for Justice

Go to:
www.presbyterianmission.org/hunger

50 Years of National Hunger Concerns: A Personal Perspective

Andrew Kang Bartlett, Associate for National Hunger Concerns

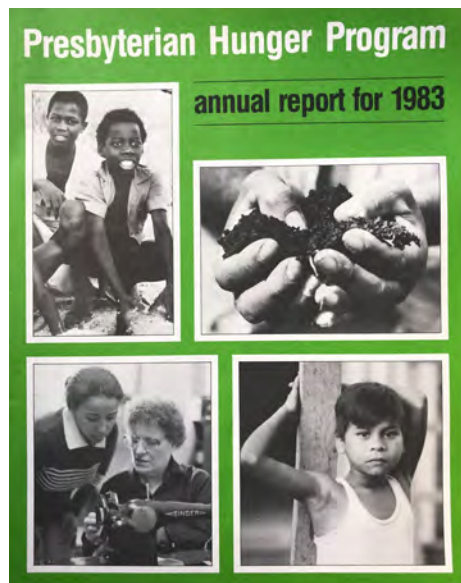
I entered 3rd grade the year the Presbyterian Hunger Program was born. It was 1969 and I was nine. We lived above my father's Presbyterian 'mission' church built into our double garage on Long Island. My fondest memories of church in that era were rice-only Wednesday evening simple meals, when we remembered those who were hungry. Then there were times when we weren't allowed to eat grapes, lettuce and my favorite tomato Campbells Soup during farmworker solidarity boycotts. All of these were promoted by our hunger program, though I knew it not.

In 1983, the Hunger Programs in Atlanta and New York merged, and I was 23 – just back from 18 months in Kyoto studying Japanese ink painting, traditional dance, and minority people's struggles. That year, a Hunger Program grant was given to the Asian Rural Institute in Japan. Little did I know that one year later I'd be back in Osaka working with Koreans in Japan through the PC(USA).

While in Japan, I visited the Asian Rural Institute with my friend and Korean drumming teacher, Haeja Kang. In 1989, Haeja and I were wed at the Korean Christian Center in Osaka, and this year celebrate our 30th anniversary.

1989 was PHP's 20th anniversary, and the annual report said \$93,750 was sent to the Heifer Project. We also funded eight farming projects in Sierra Leone, a country which would be a focus for PHP's West Africa Initiative in the 2000s.

Colleen Shannon was the coordinator and Lionel Derenoncourt was doing international relief and development. He'd be here when I landed in Louisville over a decade later. Prior to coming, I was working at the Berkeley, California-based Hesperian Foundation, publisher of *Where There Is*



Presbyterian Hunger Program Annual Report Cover from 1983.

No Doctor, a self-help community health manual, which Presbyterian missionaries carry overseas with them.

Also that year, PHP gave \$162,500 to the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA), which regranted funds to many small initiatives throughout the impoverished mountain region. Another \$1 million was spread throughout the U.S. for projects like the North American Farm Alliance in Ames, Iowa, the Philadelphia Unemployment Project, and the Cibao Food Processing Shop in San Sebastian, Puerto Rico.

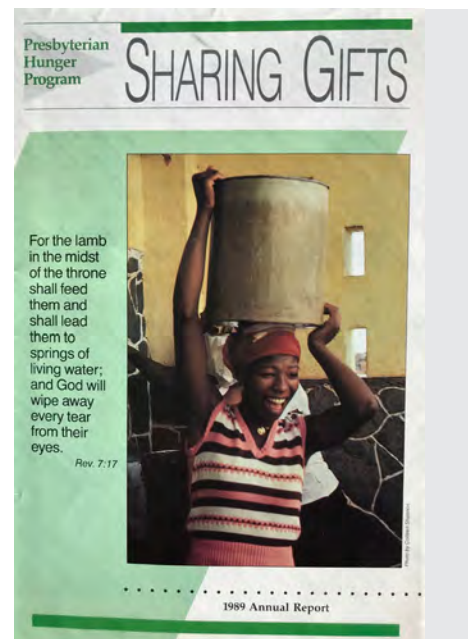
Leaping twelve years ahead to 2001, with Haeja, sons Elías (5) and Julian (2), we drove our old Ford Escort from our gentrifying neighborhood in San Francisco to Louisville, so I could fill a 6-to 12-month interim position with PHP.

When I started in 2001, the coordinator, Rev. Gary Cook, was shifting PHP's role

beyond giver of grants and producer of educational materials to an agent and collaborator in anti-poverty and justice initiatives, and corporate and public policy advocacy.

In 2001, Rev. Jean Kim, a deployed, part-time PHP staffer, was challenging churches to end homelessness. That year alone, she provided consultations and presentations to 62 groups and congregations in 20 states around the U.S. We were still a major supporter of grassroots anti-poverty initiatives in Appalachia with a \$177,000 block grant to CORA.

Soon after starting, we began accompanying the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) in their epic struggle to bring fairness and dignity to tomato pickers with Rev. Noelle Damico serving as staff liaison. And the Enough for Everyone Program was just beginning.



Presbyterian Hunger Program Annual Report Cover from 1989



Presbyterians in Louisville join the circle of farmworkers from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) and allies for a rally on the University of Louisville campus, which hosts a Wendy's franchise.

Almost eighteen years later, I am still in the saddle, and PHP continues to gallop along working with Presbyterians and partners to dismantle systems that perpetuate hunger, homelessness, poverty, exploitation, environmental racism, and climate chaos.

Reflecting back over 50 years, \$130 million in financial support given in the U.S., hundreds of partnerships and collaborations, and countless staff hours devoted to alleviating hunger and eliminating its causes, what have we learned and accomplished in the United States?

The tireless work of our grantee partners has undoubtedly made the country more just and sustainable than it would have been. That is certain. As for victories and substantial change? While chronic hunger has been reduced, the scope of food insecurity in the U.S. is roughly the same as when we started. And we have barely

touched the underlying structures and systems that create poverty and the hunger that comes with it. These systems continue, furthered by a relatively small network of people, institutions and corporations seeking power and profit.

Fifty years of experience has confirmed the value of focusing on practices, policies and systems through PHP's comprehensive approach. I am convicted also of the critical importance of looking to directly-affected peoples and communities on the frontlines of racism, poverty and oppression for leadership and direction. Groups like the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and ministries like Beloved Asheville illustrate the radical approaches that are needed to resist Empire and create the Beloved Community we all want to live in.

Grounded in the Bible's moral imperatives and inspired by the freedom and love of



Nely Rodrigues of CIW was among the 80 farmworkers and allies fasting for five days in winter weather on Park Avenue in Manhattan calling on Wendy's to join the Fair Food Program.

Christ, may the Presbyterian Hunger Program continue for the next 50 years to witness faithfully in an ever-more just and love-infused world!



Andrew Kang Bartlett sitting in a creek bed with son Julian on hike up to Minoo Waterfall near Osaka, Japan.

50 years of the Presbyterian Hunger Program

In 1983, the **UPCUSA** and the **PCUS**, the largest American Presbyterian denominations, reunited after 122 years, forming the **PC(USA)**. Journey through fifty years of Presbyterian Hunger Program ministry and highlights.



1969 PCUS launches hunger program



1975 UPCUSA launches hunger program



1981 PCUS and UPCUSA merge hunger programs



1987 PC(USA) adopts the Common Affirmation on Global Hunger



1995 PC(USA) passes "Hazardous Waste, Race, and the Environment" policy



2000 Joining Hands and Enough for Everyone initiatives launch



2002 PC(USA) votes to support Taco Bell boycott



2007 Eco-Palm project & West Africa Initiative launches



2017 Hunger Action Congregations initiative launches

1973 PCUS Women's Birthday Offering funds a Hunger Action Enabler (HAE) program and later commences work in 14 presbyteries



1976 Two Cents a Meal collection begun by Presbyterian Women



1984 PC(USA) sends millions in relief and development aid for the food crisis in Africa and influences Congress to allocate \$500 million in African famine relief



1990 PC(USA) passes "Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice" policy



1996 PC(USA) passes "Hope for a Global Future" policy



2001 Presbyterian Coffee Project launches



2006 PC(USA) passes "Resolution on Just Globalization" policy and passes resolution to continue partnership with Coalition of Immokalee Workers



2012 Environmental Ministries, including the Earth Care Congregations initiative, becomes part of PHP



Reflecting on Enough for Everyone and Environmental Ministries

Jessica Maudlin, Associate for Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns



The Café Justo cooperative in Mexico has been a long time participant in PHP's Global Marketplace which offers Fair Trade goods at PC(USA) events. Café Justo is helping keep farmers on their land and families together. This photograph taken on a Border to Border Delegation, sponsored by Café Justo, shows one of the members of Café Justo cooperative explaining the coffee picking process to a group of Presbyterians.

In 2002, I had just graduated high school and started my freshman year of college. My time at Hanover College, a Presbyterian affiliated college in southern Indiana, opened my eyes to a variety of social justice issues that really shook my world. Having recently come to a faith of my own, I began to question who that faith required me to be and what responsibility I had in living a life of action that responded to various issues of justice. At the time, it felt like I was alone in that struggle.

But I wasn't alone. Long before I was even born, the Confession of 1967 - "enslaving poverty in a world of abundance is an intolerable violation of God's creation" - was showing that Presbyterians were already wrestling with these questions of how social inequalities and our faith intersect.

When I decided to major in Theology as an undergrad, there were a lot of questions about what I would do with such a degree if I didn't want to go to seminary. Honestly, I wasn't sure what I would do, but I believed that the journey of questioning unjust

systems and inequality in the world would lead me to the work meant for me.

Unbeknownst to 18-year-old me, 2002 also happened to be the year that the Enough for Everyone took a concrete form and found a home in the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP). This was the culmination of work that began in 2000 when PHP invited the Peacemaking Program, Social Justice Ministries, the Women's Ministry Program area, and Presbyterian Women to create a program focusing on lifestyle integrity at the congregational level.

Enough for Everyone originally had four main project components: Presbyterian Coffee Project, Sweat Free Ts, Electric Stewardship and Investing in Hope. What began as a congregation-focused ministry has also caused individuals to question their own values and choices, much like I was doing.

I have the privilege of being the third associate to do the work of Enough for Everyone, following in the footsteps of Melanie Hardison and Bryce Wiebe. While the program has shifted from being project focused it has never stopped doing the important work of focusing on the big picture of our economic lives and moving beyond what our dollars do in the offering plate, to considering what our dollars do in the marketplace.

Over the years, educational resources, travel experiences, and direct outreach to congregations via projects have helped Presbyterians ask themselves important questions like: Does my coffee purchase provide good wages to small farmers or does it enrich CEOs at the expense of the producers? Are our Palm Sunday palms damaging God's Creation? Is my savings account supporting development and women's rights or fueling human rights abuses?

These questions are the first pull on a ball of yarn that unravels the way that so many issues intersect in the world.

Issues of economy often lead to environmental issues. Environmental work that had already been done by the church was amplified by the 202nd General Assembly (1990) policy, "Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice," which was the first major PC(USA) policy to address environmental concerns. The Environmental Justice office, the Restoring Creation Enabler presbytery network, and the grassroots group, Presbyterians for Earth Care, were all born in the years following. For a brief period, lack of funding did away with the Environmental Justice Office, but since 2009 there have been staff dedicated to this work.

As the work of PHP became more holistic and the understanding of the interconnectedness of issues deepened, the work of Environmental Ministries became a part of the Presbyterian Hunger Program in 2012. The environmental work of the Hunger Program focuses on inspiring and equipping congregations and presbyteries to work for eco-justice for all of God's earth. This includes creation of faith-based environmental resources for individuals, congregations and presbyteries. Also, the Earth Care Congregations program



Bryce Wiebe, former Associate for Enough for Everyone, and Jessica Maudlin, in 2015, during a meeting with Michal Roy, Director of Church of Bangladesh Self Development Program (CBSDP) (far left) and Bishop Paul Sarker of the Church of Bangladesh (COB) (second from the right) in Dhaka while they were there participating in delegation examining abuse and challenges in the garment industry.

encourages Presbyterian churches to care for God's earth and certifies those that have affirmed the Earth Care Pledge and taken holistic actions in the fields of worship, education, facilities and outreach.

Since 2017, Enough for Everyone and Environmental Ministries fall under an umbrella that we call Sustainable Living and Earth Care Concerns. The name change reflects how we now understand the connection between everyday choices, purchasing power, environmental impacts and the ways our faith calls us to serve and preserve the Earth.

An aspect of my work that amuses me is listening to my loved ones trying to explain to other people exactly what it is that I do in my role with the Hunger Program. Like most of the issues I work on, that description can be complex and confusing. Reduced to its simplest form, I am grateful for this work that allows me, in the words of Ram Dass, to accompany other people of faith who are in the same place I found myself all those years ago and be someone to just "walk them home" as they work through their own seasons of living out their faith.



Earth Care Congregations 2019

In spring 2019, the Presbyterian Hunger Program certified **232** Earth Care Congregations. This included **33** churches achieving their first year of certification and **14** churches achieving five years of certification.

The goal of the program is to inspire churches to care for God's earth in a holistic way, through integrating earth care into all of church life. The Earth Care Congregation certification honors churches that make the commitment to be stewards of God's earth and encourages others to follow their example. For more information visit: www.pcusa.org/earthcarecongregations

To become a certified Earth Care Congregation, churches affirm the Earth Care Pledge to integrate environmental practices and thinking into all facets of their church life and complete projects and activities in the fields of worship, education, facilities and outreach.

Celebrating global partnerships and transformation for 50 years

Valéry Nodem, Associate for International Hunger Concerns



RELUFA

Valéry Nodem visiting graneries in Cameroon.

Commitment to our Christian response to world hunger has permeated the life of our denomination.... concern about the world hunger crisis has significantly reshaped ... our church at home and abroad.

—PHP Annual Report, 1977

In May 1969, the world hunger situation was grave, and hunger was declared as a top priority for the church. Malnourishment was affecting 840 million people. Drought, war and famine would eventually lead to millions of deaths. This is the context in which the Task Force on World Hunger was born. Since the beginning, the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP) understood the need to respond to hunger crises through projects and programs but also to engage in advocacy to address the underlying policies

and conditions that create or maintain poverty. PHP’s work overseas responds to hunger through sustainable development and by addressing root causes of poverty through advocacy and campaigns.

The Joining Hands initiative was created in 2000 and connected Presbyteries in the United States with partners overseas so they could examine and address issues affecting people in both contexts. In order for PHP to address the challenges of complex issues such as global trade, corruption, and climate change, solidarity between these two was key.

In 2003, I was serving as the coordinator of the Joining Hands network in Cameroon, RELUFA. We sought to reduce corruption

and to empower everyday citizens through a campaign to demand that the government of Cameroon be transparent to the public about payments received from oil, gas and mining companies. RELUFA also advocated for better access to land with local farmers. RELUFA worked in solidarity with the presbyteries of Chicago and Twin Cities who visited Cameroon, learned about our work and made calls to their elected officials.

Mission co-workers accompany both country networks and presbyteries in their journey together. Jed Koball, a current mission co-worker with the Joining Hands network in Peru (Red Unidos Manos Peru), writes, “The Presbyterian Hunger Program’s Joining Hands initiative has

profoundly transformed how we, as North Americans, participate in God’s mission in the world. Through invaluable international partnerships fostered by PHP, the Church is better positioned to recognize the impacts of unjust global systems and structures in the world. And, with gratitude to PHP’s proficiency in building networks and strategies, we are all better equipped to take action for the caring of and equitable living in this one common home we share.”

Joining Hands networks currently exist in seven countries—Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Haiti, India, Peru, and Sri Lanka—and cover issues of food and land, trade, resource extraction, and the environment.

In 2007, the West Africa Initiative (WAI) was started by PHP, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Self Development for People. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, WAI strengthened the capacity of rural communities to develop self-reliant food production, marketing, and businesses. The resulting improvement of economic and social well-being decreased the impact of the food crisis in those places. It also assisted in the training of development personnel from the Councils of Churches in Liberia and Sierra Leone, and from their member denominations, in rural community and agricultural development. Implemented in 45 communities in Liberia and Sierra Leone, about 11,000 people were positively impacted.

By 2011, I moved from Cameroon with my family to Louisville, KY and became part of the PHP staff. Having known firsthand about Joining Hands in Cameroon, I decided that I needed to learn more about people’s movements around the world and share my experience from Cameroon and Africa. This job made me realize even more that the best response to global issues lies in



Valéry Nodem

Women farming in Sri Lanka.

global solidarity: We need to work together, in the U.S. and abroad, on issues that affect all of us.

We operate within these overarching strategies:

- Education and awareness on interlocking hunger issues, as well as supporting technical and issue-based training.
- Cultivating strong partnerships to establish trust, learn from partners, and take meaningful action.
- Lifting voices and growing people’s power so they become agents of change, lead their own development, and amplify their voices.
- Mutual transformation as we learn together. Ellie Stock, a life-long Presbyterian who has been associated since the beginning with Joining Hands with the Presbytery of Giddings Lovejoy, reflects: “PHP has challenged me to

listen, to learn, to partner, to network, and to advocate through face to face visits and meetings in Peru and the U.S. with our Peruvian partners.”

After 50 years of doing this work, PHP has made huge impacts and changed lives.

At the same time, global hunger continues to persist and causes much suffering. In 2017, famine was declared by the United Nations in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. In response, we are launching an educational, multi-faceted campaign on famine and extreme hunger.

We recognize the need to remain vigilant, continue this critical work, and bear in mind all we’ve learned over the years. We are confident that God will continue to show us the way forward.



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100 Witherspoon Street
Louisville, KY 40202-1396

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