

Be a Partner in Mission through the Pentecost Offering

When God poured out his Holy Spirit on the church at Pentecost, he created a new community—the church. There was an incredible unity among Christians at that time, according to Luke: “All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people” (Acts 2:44–47).

It is this unifying Spirit that reveals to us the transforming and creative love of God that makes the impossible possible. That’s why the Pentecost Offering, one of four annual churchwide special offerings of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is so special and meaningful. Through the unifying, empowering presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the Pentecost Offering provides a tangible way to bring God’s transforming love to children at risk, guide and nurture the faith of young people, and call forth a new generation of church leadership through the PC(USA) Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) program.

One of these new leaders is 24-year-old Robert Morrison, who was seeking sense and meaning for his life when he became a YAV. Following a car accident in college that led to serious burns and the amputation of his lower right leg, he felt life had cheated him. When it was time to graduate and apply for jobs, he couldn’t do it. “It didn’t feel like it was what I was supposed to do.”

Then Robert heard about the YAV program, which is funded in part by the Pentecost Offering. He became a YAV in the fall of 2010 and now spends his days reaching out to the homeless of Los Angeles.

In the evenings he, along with five roommates, operates La Casa de Comunidad, a community center for at-risk youth. Though the center sits in

the shadow of Hollywood’s Paramount studios, its neighborhood faces poverty, gangs, immigration concerns, and other major social issues. Morrison shared about his work in a blog entry:

These kids come to our La Casa de Comunidad four evenings a week and bring this reality with them. Sometimes there are three and sometimes there are twenty. They range in age from three years to sixteen and, many times, we don’t know what to do with them. But, we try. We play with them and help them with homework if they ask. We talk to them about their lives and about ours while answering questions about God and faith. We’re always trying to figure out better ways to connect and better ways to teach, not just academics but habits and lessons that might lead to a better life than these children believe they can have. Really, we just try to love them.

That love goes both ways, as Morrison has received a good deal of it back. He also has gotten a better understanding of himself through the relationships he has made. “I really like what I am doing now,” he says. “And I could very much see myself continuing.”

About his ministry at La Casa de Comunidad, Robert says, “It’s hard. It’s frustrating. It’s exhausting. It’s fun. We do the best we can, and, while we can probably do better, I think we’re doing a pretty good job. Pray for the community house, the kids, me, and my housemates. Pray that we can find God’s guidance, God’s love, and God’s energy.”

Ten percent of funds from the Pentecost Offering are used for child advocacy, 25 percent are used for youth ministry, 25 percent go to the YAV program, and each congregation keeps 40 percent for ministries benefiting children at risk. You can see a detailed breakdown of how these funds are spent at pcusa.org/pentecost.

Since 1998, Presbyterians of all ages have raised more than \$8 million for important ministries that

help younger members of God's family through the Pentecost Offering, and your congregation has probably done its part to contribute generously. This year, we encourage you and your congregation to prayerfully consider the stories of real people who benefit from your dollars. Between now and Sunday, June 12, take a few moments to celebrate the Holy Spirit's transforming power with the ministries and recipients of the Pentecost Offering. The Pentecost Offering Leaders' Guide is a great resource for ideas; download it from pcusa.org/resource/2011-pentecost-offering-leaders-guide/.



Pentecost Offering

for Children at Risk, Youth, and Young Adults

In addition, you can download resources from gamc.pcusa.org/browse/resources-resource/tag/pentecost%20offering/.

And remember, if you cannot be at worship on June 12, you can give online right now! Visit pcusa.org/give/pentecost.

Article written by Judson Taylor, Communications Associate, General Assembly Mission Council

TellMeMore

Download and share the 2011 Pentecost Offering video featuring Robert Morrison's story. Visit: pcusa.org/resource/2011-pentecost-offering-video/.

Some ideas from the Leaders' Guide:

- Share the stories of the recipients as minutes for mission.
- Involve children and youth by handing out Pentecost Offering coin boxes and the Countdown Calendars, make a "children at risk" bulletin board, cut "tongues of fire" shapes, learn hymns, and other ideas.
- Learn the Lord's Prayer in a different language.
- Use a special order of worship for Pentecost Sunday.

