

SAN GABRIEL PRESBYTERY
JUSTICE, PEACEMAKING AND MISSION COMMITTEE
September 16, 2025

The Justice, Peacemaking and Mission (JPM) Committee met via Zoom on July 16 and September 10, 2025. A quorum was present at the September 10 meeting.

The JPM Committee continues its work and advocacy in several areas: immigration, creation care, and housing. In addition, the JPM Committee has been tasked with helping to coordinate the Presbytery's efforts to provide assistance to those who have been affected by the recent Eaton and Palisades fires.

The principal issues on which the JPM Committee has focused its attention during the past few months may be summarized as follows:

EL MONTE INITIATIVE GRANTS - The El Monte Initiative grants are typically awarded by the JPM Committee in the fall of the year to organizations providing community services in the El Monte area. Last year grants in the amount of \$15,000 and \$31,000 were awarded to El Monte Community Church and to CaliCenter, respectively. Applications for the grants are currently being accepted for consideration when the JPM Committee meets on October 15 with awards to be announced at the Presbytery meeting on November 15.

FIRE RELIEF EFFORTS – The Presbytery has received funds through grants from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) and from private donations to provide assistance in the short term to those who have suffered losses as a result of the Eaton and Palisades fires in January. Efforts are ongoing to identify and address the specific needs of individuals and families throughout the Presbytery who have lost homes and/or otherwise been displaced as a result of the fires as well as to collaborate with outside organizations in efforts to assist others in the community who have experienced similar losses.

At the same time, there is a recognition that full recovery and rebuilding of affected communities will take place over the course of what will likely be several years. Among possible sources of available funds for investment in long term recovery efforts are PDA, the Presbyterian Foundation, and the Presbyterian Investment Loan Program (PILP). PDA has indicated that it may be able to provide approximately \$200,000 per year for up to three years to both the San Gabriel Presbytery and the Pacific Presbytery in direct assistance to those affected by the Eaton Fire and the Palisades Fire, respectively. Funds from the PILP and Presbyterian Foundation may be available in the form of low interest loans. The Presbytery, in coordination with the JPM Committee, will be working closely with these and other possible sources of funding to direct resources to those projects that will provide optimal benefit. Possible organizations with whom the Presbytery may cooperate in these efforts include the following:

Eaton Fire Collaborative: The Eaton Fire Collaborative (EFC) has been organized to establish a Long Term Recovery Group to assist in rebuilding the communities affected by the Eaton fire. The EFC has recently elected a Leadership Council and will adopt bylaws in order to qualify for assistance by Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), a national private sector disaster relief organization.

The EFC meets every Tuesday from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and is attended by a large number of people who are organized into committees that deal with various unmet needs of the community which include such issues as wellness, advocacy, rebuilding, children and education, housing, etc. The housing committee focuses on emergency housing needs, which include providing housing assistance to those displaced by the fire, as well as the replacement of affordable housing that was lost. The Presbytery has contributed funding to organizations providing rental assistance and other services to displaced families but has also been focused on development of affordable housing, with a particular emphasis on affordable housing on church properties.

Clergy Community Coalition: Meetings have been held under the auspices of the Clergy Community Coalition on July 10 and August 14 for the purpose of exploring the possibility of developing affordable housing in connection with the rebuilding of those churches that were destroyed in the Eaton fire. A possible option would be for the Presbytery to partner with those churches willing to consider the placement of temporary transitional affordable housing on their properties until they are in a position to begin rebuilding their facilities, and/or development of permanent affordable housing units to be constructed in conjunction with rebuilding. Potential funding could be made available through low interest loans provided by the PILP and Presbyterian Foundation. A further meeting has been scheduled on September 18 which representatives of the Presbytery will attend.

Temporary Housing on Church Properties: In addition to the properties of churches that were destroyed in the fire, it may be possible to place temporary housing in the form of trailers or RVs on church properties to provide emergency housing for those who are currently staying in motels or other temporary accommodations or who are facing displacement from short term rental housing when funding from other sources is no longer available. The challenge is to identify those churches that would be willing and able to accommodate emergency housing on otherwise underutilized portions of their properties and to pair them with organizations that are assisting underhoused individuals and families.

Neighborhood Housing Services: Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) is a Los Angeles based non-profit organization assisting families affected by the Eaton fire who were underinsured and are faced with the prospect of having to sell their properties because they are not in a position to afford to rebuild. In some cases, NHS has been able to purchase the lot and provide gap funding for the original homeowner to rebuild, after which NHS will recover its costs from the homeowner. Efforts are underway to obtain more information regarding the operation of NHS and possible ways for the Presbytery to cooperate with their efforts.

Habitat for Humanity: Habitat for Humanity has initiated efforts to identify landowners that lost their homes in the Eaton fire that could use help in rebuilding, with the goal of constructing 200 homes in the next two years. Habitat is proposing three standardized designs rendered by The Foothill Catalog Foundation and has already received grant funding and permits that will allow them to work on the first 25 homes. Habitat has established the first cohort of 25 families that have signed letters of intent and is actively seeking funding for the second cohort. Habitat is also seeking referrals for additional families

to participate. Habitat has also reached out to the Presbytery to solicit volunteers to participate in construction of the proposed homes, which is expected to commence in the coming months.

Based on this information, the Presbytery may be able to assist in the following ways:

- a. Notify churches that Habitat is currently accepting referrals for participation in the next cohort.
- b. Direct denominational funds toward assisting with addressing the funding gap for construction of the proposed homes.
- c. Help to organize teams from congregations in the Presbytery to partner with other churches at the home sites once construction begins in the coming months.

Partnering With Predominantly African American Congregations: The African American community in Altadena has been disproportionately affected by the Eaton fire due to the fact that many of the homes had been occupied for a significant period of time and were therefore underinsured or rented for amounts significantly below current market rates. The Presbyterian Foundation and could potentially provide funding for low interest loans to assist displaced homeowners and renters but would need to partner with an existing local financial institution to do so.

IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS – As previously reported, the current Administration has announced its intention to reverse the policy restricting federal authorities from entering locations such as churches, schools, and hospitals to apprehend those it identifies to be undocumented immigrants. The JPM Committee has distributed materials designed to provide guidance and resources to congregations throughout the Presbytery outlining their legal rights and responsibilities in the event of a possible action on the part of immigration officials to enter onto church property for the purpose of apprehending or detaining those it purports to be undocumented immigrants. Copies of these materials are available through a link in the Monday Morning Update along with instructions for ordering “Red Cards” which contain responses in multiple languages to be used in the event that an individual is approached or questioned by federal authorities regarding their immigration status. Copies of the responses may also be downloaded for free through a link in the Monday Morning Update.

The JPM Committee has also voted to allocate \$500 from its budget to purchase one or more gift cards for a food distribution program operated by a former member of the La Crescenta Presbyterian Church in North Hollywood that currently assists forty families, the breadwinner for some of which has been detained or deported.

CHURCH PROPERTY REPURPOSING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING This win-win opportunity continues to be kept on the radar of the JPM Committee by the Reparations / Repair Group, formed in 2021. Churches can benefit financially from repurposing areas of property that are underutilized, while communities can benefit from the availability of much-needed affordable housing. The passage of Senate Bill 4 has removed previous zoning restrictions, now making the path to repurposing much easier. The Korean Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church in Rowland Heights has initiated efforts to explore this possibility and scheduled a meeting on September 15 with a consultant who may be able to assist in this effort.

PRESBYTERY OFFERING –The offering at the September 16 meeting is designated for the Pacific Presbytery’s immigrant accompaniment fund, which has been operated by the Pacific Presbytery for a

number of years and offers financial assistance to immigrant families throughout the region both within and beyond the boundaries of the Pacific Presbytery. The offering for this purpose is intended not only to provide financial assistance to immigrant families facing financial hardship due to current anti-immigration policies but is also intended to make members of the San Gabriel Presbytery aware of the fund should they know of immigrants in their community who may be eligible for financial assistance. A copy of the application guidelines for assistance is attached to this report. Checks made payable to San Gabriel Presbytery may be mailed to the Presbytery office at 9723 Garibaldi Avenue, Temple City, CA 91780. Online donations may be made at <https://sangabpres.org/donate/> and choose "Give to Presbytery Offering."

The JPM Committee also wishes to lift up the Peace and Global Witness Offering to be collected on World Communion Sunday, October 5. A portion of the Peace and Global Witness Offering is available to individual congregations to support their efforts toward peace and reconciliation in their communities, and a portion is provided to the Presbyterian Mission Agency to promote peace and reconciliation efforts both nationally and globally.

Respectfully submitted,

Hagar Benitez, Matthew Colwell, Kevin Haah, Magdalene Njoroge, Vikki Randall, Mona Recalde, Harlan Redmond, Ron Schooler - Members
Wendy Tajima, Wendy Gist - Staff
Patrick Perry – Moderator

Guidelines for the Immigrant Support Fund

CONTEXT:

The Immigrant Support Fund was initially established in response to the rise in deportations in metropolitan Los Angeles in 2017, with guidance and consultation from PC(USA) Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's Refugee and Asylum Ministry (now called the PCUSA Migration Accompaniment Ministry). It is a financial expression of our religious practice to obey Jesus Christ's command to use our resources to care for the most vulnerable among us (Matthew 25). We remember the holy family's flight across a political border and seek to accompany others enduring similar situations.

The Immigrant Support Fund is a "designated fund" maintained and administered under the terms and designations stated herein. The fund is designated to receive and disburse funds consistent with the purposes as established by the Mission Interpretation and Promotion Committee. This document contains the formal documentation of the financial guidelines of this Fund.

Additional specific purposes and management of the Fund include the following:

- The Mission Interpretation and Promotion Committee of Pacific Presbytery has official oversight of the fund.
- This is a discretionary fund. All requests for disbursement must be made at the discretion of the Mission Interpretation and Promotion Committee of Pacific Presbytery, in response to requests from immigrant ministry partners*.
- Approved disbursements of funds occur by reimbursement. A proper receipt or voucher for reimbursement funds from this account must be provided. If reimbursement is untenable, direct payment to reputable organizations/institutions on behalf of the requestee may be considered at the discretion of the payee.
- If a request for funds is under \$500, the Mission Interpretation and Promotion Committee designates approval at the discretion of the Mission Catalyst and Mission Interpretation and Promotion Committee Chair; if the request exceeds \$500, approval requires the recommendation of the Mission Interpretation and Promotion Committee. Votes by email are acceptable.
- The Fund receives contributions from donors, including individuals, churches, outside organizations, and fund-raising activities for its designated purpose.
- The Fund's disbursement limits and guidelines are determined by the Mission Interpretation and Promotion Committee of Pacific Presbytery. They shall authorize funds for disbursement only as consistent with the principles contained herein, explicitly recognizing the wide range of what defines the emergency unmet needs of people in migration. By design, these funds are fundamentally human-centered and contextual to meet essential needs in times of vulnerability and crisis.
- The Fund's assets will be disbursed to provide support in the context of emergent unmet needs of people who are migrating, with a priority given to the most vulnerable people, specifically (but not exclusive to):
 - Newly-arrived migrants, low-income migrants and refugees, migrants in detention centers, and unaccompanied minors;
 - Immediate and near-term emotional, psychological, and spiritual care needs within the aforementioned migrant communities.

- If immediate expenses, including the emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs of the impacted communities, no longer require financial support and this Fund has remaining financial assets, the Mission Catalyst and Mission Interpretation and Promotion Committee Chair shall provide a written proposal to the Mission Interpretation and Promotion Committee for suggestions on how to use the remaining fund's assets in support of longer-term recovery needs related to the aforementioned migrant communities.

In addition:

The Director of Finance shall receive the contributions properly and explicitly designated for this Fund and deposit them into the Immigrant Support Fund on time. The Director of Finance shall disburse payments that have been appropriately requested and documented by an appropriate voucher/receipt and are formally justified and documented to be consistent with the above mentioned purposes.

The accounting records shall be maintained in accordance with denominational financial policies and shall be included in the denominational annual financial review process. The Director of Finance shall include the financial status of this fund within the normal financial reporting requirements.

Hwg 12/2/24, EGZ 12/13/24, MIP 4/11/25, further revision HWG on 7/7/25 per MIP meeting request on 4/11/25

**Trusted partners and pastors definition: pastors from presbyteries in the synod, denominational partners, partner immigrant ministry organizations, pastors from Matthew 25 SoCal network.*