

RURAL PARTNERSHIP OFFERING

A History

Since 1978, the Presbytery of Des Moines affirmed our partnership with rural neighbors by supporting some very exciting rural ministries in communities near and far. In the beginning, through the *Harvest Sunday Offering*, we helped to provide education opportunities to make available to ordinary rural people in less developed countries simple, basic agricultural knowledge special to their own type of agriculture.

In 1987, in response to the farm crisis here at home, the *Rural Harvest Offering* was born in the midst of very discouraging circumstances—farm foreclosures, business closings, population loss. People looked around them, saw a need and had an idea of how to meet the need. People became inspired and worked together on a shared mission.

In 1996, after five years of partnership with the Parish of San José in Berlín, El Salvador, a portion of the *Rural Harvest Offering* was designated for support of rural projects there. And in 2004, the presbytery's *Joining Hands - Egypt* partnership was included.

The name was changed to **Rural Partnership Offering** in 2003 to reflect our connection with rural neighbors at home and around the world—a solidarity that has been at the heart of our giving for thirty years.

The **Rural Partnership Offering** is our most hands-on special offering. We are able to share the love of Christ with many friends and neighbors:

- We have provided emergency assistance in the eleventh hour for families and communities on the brink of disaster.
- We have encouraged ordinary people who care about their community to develop ministries of sharing and development.
- We stand together with our brothers and sisters at home and afar, and our partnerships help to make a better life possible.

Your gifts to the **Rural Partnership Offering** make this ministry possible.

Rural Partnership Offering grants are administered by the Social Ministries Task Force of the Presbytery of Des Moines. The grants to our international partners are used to further the programs and projects we share.

Over the years, Iowa grants have gone to a wide variety of programs:

- Dexter Rural Neighbors for emergency assistance and self help activities
- PrairieFire's Renewing Rural Iowa, assisting with faith-based, ecumenical community organizing
- Food for Life for processing donated livestock and distributing meat to families in need in Union County
- Southern Iowa Ag Diversity Corporation to help diversify agricultural production in order to improve the income levels of the rural population
- Sharpsburg Presbyterian Church for preservation of the Spring General Store, the town's only main street business and community gathering place
- Comm-UNITY for the Common Good in Wayne County for training neighbors to assist neighbors, linking the rural poor to available services, and the following year, to create a used furniture warehouse
- First Presbyterian Church of Creston for their "backpack mission" providing new backpacks to students in four school districts
- WeLIFT program to provide individuals with the necessary skills to find employment and function well in the workplace, sponsored by Trinity United Presbyterian Church in Indianola
- Iowa Farm Disaster Relief Coalition for flood relief to farmers in eastern Iowa after the floods of 2008
- Leadership Development program for rural Iowans