

PARTNERSHIP GRANT APPLICATION TO THE LI PRESBYTERY COUNCIL ON MISSION

PROJECT TO BE FUNDED: A one-day event entitled, *Colorful Christian Values: Red, Blue, or Purple? -- What does it mean to be a Christian in America today?* is intended to provide an opportunity for dialog and discussion about what it means to be a faithful American Christian in the multicultural, secular world of today.

TO THE COUNCIL ON MISSION

AMOUNT OF REQUEST: \$2,000

CONTACT PERSONS:	Betsy N. Britton, Elder	The Rev. Rebecca Segers, Pastor
AFFILIATION	Setauket Presbyterian Church	The Presbyterian Church of Sweet Hollow
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LIST ALL PARTNERS AND OR GROUPS INVOLVED The sessions of the Presbyterian Churches of Center Moriches, East Moriches, Levittown, Melville (Sweet Hollow), Setauket, and Smithtown have approved partnership and pledged funds and participants. Approval is pending from Brookhaven (Old South Haven), Freeport, Glenwood Landing, Huntington (Old First), Merrick, Northport, Port Jefferson, Remsenburg and Westhampton.

MISSION GOAL SUPPORTED BY THIS PARTNERSHIP. This partnership project is intended to contribute significantly to lay leadership, mobilization and nurture. It has direct relevance to peacemaking and justice initiatives, to local and global mission, and to interfaith relations. It was intended to look beyond denominational or national policies to the very heart of what it means to be a Christian in America today.

The 2004 national, state and local elections revealed that our nation is deeply divided. Dissent, dialectic, and the word of God have been used, not as tools of discernment and healing, but as a means to exploit and deepen our divisions. Feelings of mistrust and betrayal are endemic across the socioeconomic and political spectrum. Discourse and debate have been replaced by misleading sound bytes and half-truths orchestrated for political ends. Likewise, our own denomination has fallen victim to attack by those who prefer denigration to discourse.

The most divisive issues in America have challenged the meaning and purpose of our historic principals: What does the separation of church and state mean in the 21st century? What is the role of government in identifying cultural or political evil? What role should the church play in civil legislation, education or social services? When do civil rights infringe on religious rights and vice versa? Just when we do we really render to Caesar, and when to God?

America's division has become symbolized by the stark contrast of red and blue states in the election results, yet we, as Long Island Presbyterians, know the complexity underlying these maps. Town-by-town, person-by-person, issue-by-issue, there is no red or blue, only shades of purple. Neither are American Christians bound by simplistic, color-coded ideology or doctrine.

This event was planned to look beyond the politics of religion to the very heart of what it means to be a Christian in America today. What does it mean to be the light of the world in a multicultural, secular world? How are we to be open and inclusive without losing boundaries, values and faith? Can we learn to live in detente with differences in Biblical interpretation and polity? What do we have in common as disciples of Christ? Can Christians really respect an alliance with people of other faiths and still be true to Christ?

The Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr. is uniquely qualified to lead us in this exploration. Dr. Forbes is Senior Minister of The Riverside Church in New York City, an interracial, interdenominational, and international church, with one of the largest multicultural congregations in the nation. He is also a recipient of the Walter Cronkite Faith & Freedom Award by the Interfaith Alliance Foundation, in recognition of his work promoting democratic values, defending religious liberty, and reinvigorating informed civic participation. He has been named to a number of academic positions in preaching at Union Theological Seminary in New York, and serves on the Core Teaching Staff at Auburn Theological Seminary. Dr. Forbes is widely acclaimed as the preacher's preacher, having been recognized by Newsweek and the

Baylor University Survey as among the most effective preachers in the English-speaking world, and as one of America's greatest Black preachers by Ebony magazine.

Following Dr. Forbes presentation, participants will further explore the complexity and urgency of these issues in an open Q&A discussion and in individual reflection groups led by pastors and elders from the partnership churches. The spirit of the conference theme will be enhanced by periods of song, fellowship, and prayer. At the conclusion of the day, we will unite in worship led by The Rev. Rebecca Segers, The Rev. Pamela Szurek, and the partnership congregations, focusing on what unites us in ministry and brings us together in Christ

**DESCRIPTION OF PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM:** The membership of the partner congregations will contribute time, money and effort to organize, prepare and run the event. There are many volunteers available to make this an exciting, and rewarding event for all. The First Presbyterian Church of Levittown has agreed to serve as host, and the speaker has agreed to participate.

**Expenses:**

\$2,500 Forbes Honorarium  
\$ 200 Car service  
\$ 150 Organist  
\$ 75 Sexton  
\$ 500 Printing  
\$ 150 Mailing  
\$ 600 Food and paper products  
\$ 25 Registration materials  
\$4,200 TOTAL

**Support:**

\$2,000 Presbytery Grant  
\$1,000 Partner Churches 8 @ 125  
\$ 480 Lunches 80 @ 6  
\$ 682 Balance forward  
\$4,162 TOTAL

**DESCRIPTION OF EVENT:** The program will begin with morning prayer and song. The Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Jr. will give the Keynote Address on our theme, followed by a Q&A period. Participants will then break up into reflection groups for continued discussion. Fellowship during the lunch break will provide the opportunity to continue the discussion informally. The closing service of worship is planned to be healing and hopeful as people of faith with differing views join in praising God and asking for discernment in their daily lives.

**EXPECTATIONS FOR THE EVENT:** We expect to provide an event for the members and leaders of the presbytery which will help participants to better understand our diversity as American Presbyterians, and the challenges we must face, both as people of faith and citizens of a complex, multicultural nation. We also will provide an opportunity to celebrate our faith and the diversity of thought and conscience that makes up the PC(USA).

**DATE OF EVENT:** Saturday, April 16, 2005, 9:00 am-2:30 pm **LOCATION:** First Presbyterian Church of Levittown

**WHEN, AND HOW, AND WHO WILL EVALUATE THIS PROGRAM?** We will distribute and collect questionnaires at the event. Each of the partner churches will also be responsible for submitting a summary statement from a meeting of their own attendees following the event.

**WHAT OTHER WAYS (IN ADDITION TO FUNDING) MAY THE PRESBYTERY BE SUPPORTIVE OF THE PROGRAM (I.E. PUBLICITY, PERSONS, MATERIALS, COMMUNICATIONS?)** It is hoped that presbytery will help publicize the event, in order to facilitate attendance by members and leaders of all congregations.

**IF THIS REQUEST IS GRANTED, TO WHOM, AND UNDER WHAT NAME AND ADDRESS SHALL THE GRANT BE SENT?** Send to Betsy Britton (see above); check payable to the First Presbyterian Church of Smithtown.

**SIGNATURE OF**

**APPLICANTS** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE SUBMITTED** \_\_\_\_\_

**HAVE YOU APPLIED TO ANOTHER COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE?** The Peace, Justice and Hunger Workgroup