

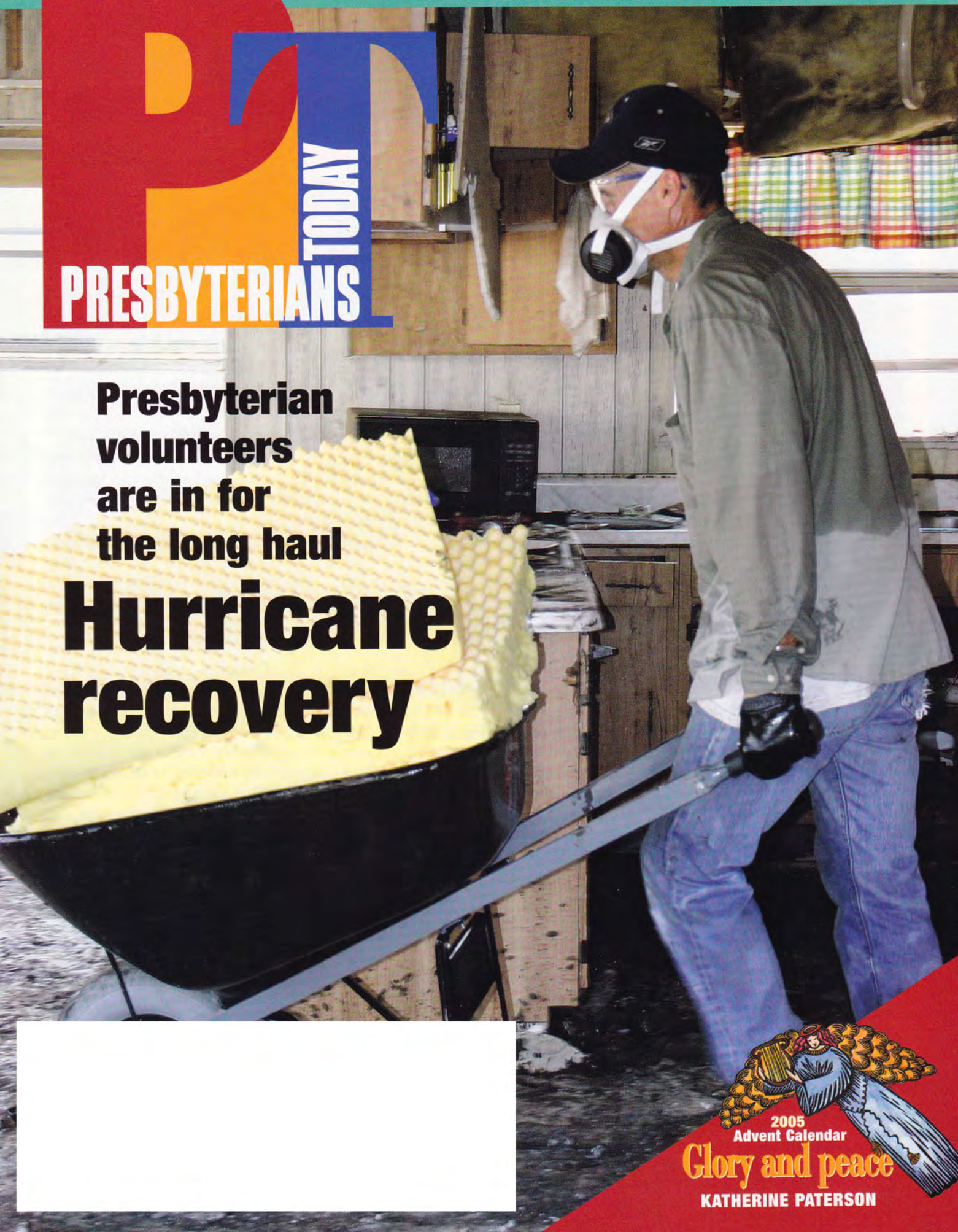
November 2005

Overseas mission—sometimes it's risky business

PAT TODAY PRESBYTERIANS

Presbyterian
volunteers
are in for
the long haul

Hurricane recovery



2005
Advent Calendar

Glory and peace

KATHERINE PATERSON

New Year's in November

It makes sense to have a "New Year's" party on the first Sunday of Advent; it is the beginning of the Christian calendar and the liturgical year.

A Christian New Year's party could be a small party or could be expanded to the one-hour format of Sunday school or even to adults and children together, perhaps with refreshments added.

Our first New Year's party went like this. I was responsible for activities outside the sanctuary for younger children during the sermon and decided to throw a mini-party. As they entered the room I gave them shiny blue (or purple) and pink (the colors of Advent) horns to blow.

When the children were seated, I shouted, "Happy New Year" and tooted my horn. Puzzled, they informed me that New Year's Day was January 1. But after I explained that the Christian year really begins on the first Sunday in Advent, they became interested—especially at the idea of having a party.

I led them in a song I had written, "It's Advent," in

which there were several places for them to toot their horns. After the song they were hooked.

We then talked about the Christian calendar and specifically about Advent. I gathered them around a table on which were placed the materials necessary to make miniature Advent wreaths they could take home to use with their families during the season.

For each child I had prepared a small Styrofoam circle wrapped with green garlands and supplied four small candles, either three blue or purple and one pink or four white utility candles. Holes for the candles had been pre-drilled into the Styrofoam circles in advance.

The children placed the candles in their wreaths as I talked about the candles' significance and other age-appropriate information about Advent. They left the party with a new perspective and, I hope, a better understanding of what and why they were celebrating.

The next time Advent arrives say, "Happy New Year!" to someone and see what kind of reaction you get.—*Xavia Arndt Sheffield of Market Street Presbyterian Church, Lima, Ohio, can be reached by e-mail at xaviasheffield@hotmail.com*



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