

Two denominations see more cuts ahead: PCUSA and UCC announce shortfalls

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Noting a trend with no immediate end, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the United Church of Christ have announced shortfalls in contributions, which are likely to mean cuts in national staffs.

The Presbyterians' General Assembly mission budgets must be cut for \$9.15 million between this year and 2008, officials said March 15. Staff cuts may be announced on May 1, according the Presbyterian News Service.

"This is clearly part of a longer trend in the church and probably most churches," said executive director John Dettrick of the General Assembly Council.

"Presbyterians are funding mission differently—they are giving to their churches in larger amounts," he said, but added that many of the reduced contributions are in unrestricted giving.

Year-end receipts to the UCC's headquarters in Cleveland were nearly \$500,000 short of its 2005 budget of \$10.5 million, chief financial officer William Morgan reported earlier last month. Morgan suggested that only about \$9.46 million should be expected in 2006.

"We're beyond the point of whittling away to reduce spending," UCC president John H. Thomas said to the church body's United Church News. "We're going to have to take a significant look at how we're structured and what our ministry will look like."

As was the case with the Presbyterian trend, Thomas said, "We were way up in designated giving, which tells us that people are willing to give to designated things that they support." Some of that giving probably came at the expense of "national basic support," he added.