

I (George) had a dream last night about loneliness in the pastorate. In the dream I was attending a small gathering expecting to see some of my friends, but only four people showed, and none of these were my close friends. The meeting was okay. I enjoyed the conversation with the others who attended, one of whom I knew tangentially. But I had to ask why I dreamed that dream. And apart from a Rocky Board committee meeting I drove to Billings yesterday to attend getting canceled on my way there, the other answer is some loneliness in my soul. This in turn made us wonder, "How are our pastors doing in soul?"

Questions like: "How are you really; and How is it with your soul; and How is your prayer life; and how is your relationship with God impacted by what is going on in your life and pastorate right now; and how are you experiencing God in this phase of life and ministry?" These questions are usually un-posed, even in helpful ways among pastors, possibly for many reasons...

But the question is, should they be? Benedict in his Rule holds that the Abbot has the responsibility for the guidance and nurture of the spiritual life, the soul, of each monk in his care. The Presbytery is the corporate bishop. Does or should the presbytery's responsibility extend beyond governance, discipline and cooperative mission to the spiritual care of its pastors and lay leaders? Why, or why not?

We would appreciate the Cabinet considering this question over the next few meetings for several reasons, but primarily because the state of the pastor's soul / spiritual life directly impacts the health, ministry, mission and witness of the congregation served and pastor's own personal and family quality of life.

The following report is framed on the 2018 Leadership Cabinet Goals:

1. Encourage and emphasize discipleship among the people of Yellowstone Presbytery.

Camping and Youth held a highly successful camping summer ministry season. Highlights: About 40 campers; a very mature counseling staff, including 4 Whitworth Fellows; the program direction Kara Kochner Todd; the craft hall again directed by Elder Cynthia Kessler; George and Katie Emery (Terry) and husband Will Johnson (ELCA pastor in Glendive) providing the spiritual input; Curt Kochner serving as overall director.

* **Camp Staff Reunion at the Goodriches, Sept 29 from 3:00 PM on.**

* **Fall Youth Retreat is Canceled for 2018**

* **Winter Ski Retreat will be February 22-24, 2019 at the invitation of the Butte Church.**

* **Curt Kochner chairs the camping and youth committee.** He is recovering from a bout with pneumonia. The Rep Nom is working to staff this committee for 2019 and beyond.

* **Camp rentals by outside groups was up this summer.**

Preaching/Teaching, Spiritual Formation Cohort, 2018-19: In partnership with Whitworth's Office of Church Engagement, and under the leadership of Susi Ennis, Jack Bell and Debbie Funke, the presbytery will be offering monthly meetings for preaching development. The cohort meets for the first time this coming Friday, Sept 14, at 6:00 PM at FPC-Billings. New people have indicated interest. Everyone is welcome.

The Whitworth Fellows, 2018. This was the fourth summer in which the presbytery has hosted and greatly benefitted by the ministry of Whitworth Fellows. Two Fellows, Joel Schroeder (second year) and David Hendricks, who are exploring God's call to pastoral ministry, were placed as student pastors in the Jordan Church. Joel, who graduated this past May, remains for the next three months in Jordan to student pastor. George will travel to Jordan once a month for supervision. Kathy, via phone and when he is in Bozeman.

- The Other Two Fellows, Luke Ekstrom (second year) and Daniel Roberts, traveled extensively through the presbytery, providing input and observations to the LC in June, helping churches explore how to better attract and serve young people, helping run VBS's, building relationships and discipling, preaching, as counselors at Camp, learning about the Presbyterian ministry and processes and all 4 attended Garrett's ordination/installation. Luke, also called to ministry, is exploring areas of his interest and call in which he can serve in Montana for a third summer of ministry.
- We hope this can be included in the 2019 budget towards 2-3 fellows for 2019.
- We will have a more indepth report with pictures before the October LC meeting incorporating input from us, the Fellows and congregations and leaders.

St Timothy's Chapel on Georgetown Lake reports another successful summer season. The Board met on Saturday, September 8. George can forward to you the summer-end report of Board Moderator Ron Hanson to those interested. No action required at this time by the LC.

2. **Support the spiritual nurture of pastors and leaders across the presbytery.**

- a. **1-1 pastoral interactions, conversations, prayer... with pastors/leaders** in a wide range of circumstances/challenges have been very numerous June – Sept so far.
- b. **Clusters are beginning again for the fall.** The Miles City Cluster is seeing some rejuvenation with the addition of Garrett Mostowski and his wife, Sarah Logemann, (Princeton seminary grad likely approved Oct 2 to seek a call); the Butte Cluster will welcome Daniel Triller (new pastor in Dillon) and Debby Schmidt (new UMC pastor in Philipsburg) when it meets later this month. Wenda Fry (ELCA) in White Sulphur will be invited to join that cluster.

The Butte Cluster has, for some years offered a hymn/worship song sing in September.

This year's event will be on Sunday, Sept 23 at 4:00 PM at the Melrose Church

- c. **Lay Leader training:** George begins a monthly training session on Sunday, Sept 9, for the Jordan church. First topic: equipping for lay pastoral care. Additional training events will feature prepared on-line courses in lay training from Whitworth. We both offered this training in the Lewistown Church in October 2017, and now they have a very active lay visitation ministry. George also presented the material in Colstrip in July.
- d. **Spiritual Direction/Companioning for pastors and lay leaders.** George is taking the month of September to discern whether God may be opening up a ministry of spiritual direction through him. In the past month four pastors, unsolicited, 3 from Yellowstone and one from Kendall presbyteries, have started/asked to explore spiritual direction with him. Ask him about this, and your input is appreciated.

- e. **Equipping, supporting the PMT and it's role here** has been very busy since May.
3. **Foster community in the presbytery.**
- a. **See Cluster developments above.**
 - b. **Updating clusters, leaders, whole presbytery and Susan Thomas** for *Currents*.
 - c. **Presbytery Meetings** The resourcing, worship and life together we are experiencing together as a presbytery are being favorably received. Kudos to the planning teams this year and note our debrief at our June LC meeting. A wide range of pastors, long-time elder commissioners, and ones there for their first or second time said how they were helped, challenged, equipped, better connected from the May meeting. That's the goal. Presbytery meetings: Resource-full, relevant, vision-giving, nurturing and equipping, collegial, inspirational, connecting with God and others.
 - d. **Presbytery Sunday, October 14. Since we can only do this with an active team,** We suggest canceling this year, or at least minimizing expectations. It is very important for interpretation of Yellowstone's mission, but others must lead it. (Sarah Logemann?)
4. **Support Presbytery staff by establishing and strengthening the Personnel sub-group.**
- a. **Jim and Melissa continue to learn and adjust** to the roles of Stated and Assistant Clerk. We met with them together in July and, when all are back in town mutually possible, to do so again. Helpful input?
 - b. **George and Kathy commit to pulling together an organizational meeting of the Personnel Sub-Group** before the October meeting of the LC.
5. **Examine staffing patterns and budget in light of the changes in synod support and determine if adjustments are needed.** *At the June Leadership Cabinet meeting be prepared to look at what our funding options and budget options look like and begin to formulate a plan for 2019.*
- a. **This has not happened yet** with so many on the LC and staff having very full lives and with unexpected health & family emergencies, camp, new pastors entering and also, perhaps because the presbytery financial condition continues to surprise. God provides - who'd have thunk it? Oh us of little faith!
 - b. **But the Administrative Fund, monies raised by George and Kathy towards their salary, benefits and expenses is low for this time of year. We have also sought to keep expenditures and expenses lower.** As of July 31, we have received \$8,404 towards a budget of \$35,000. Please ask if your congregation can be supportive from its mission budget, when the appeal circulates in October. And please pray for this effort and the time needed for it.
6. **Other Matters:**
- a. **Insurance:** The supplemental insurance suggested by our agent and requested by the LC has been obtained. George, aided by Debbie Blackburn, submitted all the forms. The requests were approved and the additional, pro-rated premium for 2018 has been paid. The total annual insurance premium will be \$10,059. George will have paper description of this coverage with him at the LC meeting. Please ask if interested.

- b. **Budget, 2019.** George has met with Budget point person Dan Holland. A tentative budget has been outlined, but if your committee would like to request adapted/additional budgeted funds, please contact Dan.
- c. **Pastoral Ministry Team (PMT):** We continue to heavily resource this ministry and are excited for the new pastors and spouses God is bringing into presbytery churches! A year ago we all were anxious about seven congregations searching at once for pastors. Of those seven five now have called or interim pastors. The remaining two, now three are being tended to and have pulpit coverage. God is *very* good!
- d. **Board of Trustees, Rocky Mountain College.** George has been the Representative from the Synod and Presbytery for about nine years. He is not finding this participation to be a good use of his time, although he believes in the mission of the Board. He would request that Yellowstone's representation be discussed at the October meeting.
- e. **Synod of the Rocky Mountains:** Kathy continues, with Jim Tarr, as a Synod commissioner from the presbytery. She is also on and chairing their Personnel Committee. The next synod meeting is September 23-25 in Denver. Both of us meet with the Executive Presbyters Staff Forum of the Synod 2-3 times a year. the next meeting being November 11 -13 in Denver.
- f. **Partner Presbytery with Whitworth University's Office of Church Engagement continues to provide Fellows and quality, regionally relevant, opportunities at reduced prices to our pastors, leaders, congregation and presbytery.** Both of us continue to help with the planning and leadership of the Whitworth Institute for Ministry in July in Spokane. George was one of the presenters this year of the topic of how pastors and leaders many help in the spiritual growth and formation of people in the church and what that looks like over the many seasons of life.

NOTE NEW 2019 dates June 24 - 28

- g. **Boundary Training:** George has notified other denominational judicatories of this presbytery's offering of Boundary training this month for pastors and leaders. Dave is handling this.
- h. **PCUSA Mid-Council events / General Assembly:** Primarily, because of the many needs and priorities of Yellowstone this year, plus time and increasing budget constraints, we have not attended PCUSA events above the synod level this year. This is not *generally* a good idea. (2 EP's confidentially quipped to Kathy, "You didn't miss much." Hmmm) We wish there was more time and money to do so, and that the national level of the church better listened to and understood the diverse & broad range of cultures geographically, congregations and needs and equipping for vital 21st century ministry in our rapidly changing world. Perhaps in future years. Kathy has been reading and looking into a few networks on rural and small town churches.

Our Holy Land Trip - Hardly a week goes by where we are not enriched and integrating insights, growth, and material from our amazing trip to the Holy Land. We would like to continue to explore ways this can enrich and equip many across our presbytery and its congregations and hope to do more thinking about possibilities before we meet again. We would love to here any ideas you might have.