

Yellowstone Currents
A Newsletter of Yellowstone Presbytery
August 2017



A Prayer

Dan Holland very kindly granted me permission to use the following prayer, which was printed in the First Presbyterian Bozeman PresbEnews. Dan regularly writes a column for the Bozeman newsletter. Thank you, Dan, for this prayer which echoes our heart cries in the midst of Montana fires.

Lord of the oasis,

It's hot, Lord, too hot. And dry. Parched. And now the folks to the east of us are struggling mightily. Day after day the thermometer hits ninety and a hundred and they haven't seen rain in so long they forget how it feels when those big summer raindrops fall on sunburned forearms, how it smells when the patina from the clouds stretches down to the ground in the distance and whispers, "I'm coming your way."

And now their country is on fire. Garfield County, Richland, Rosebud, Powder River. Insult added to injury. Barley fields that headed out when the plants were but three inches tall. "At least we can turn the cows out on it," they tell themselves, but when a quarter-section is charred in all of five minutes, they can't even do that now.

It's bad, Lord, Dust Bowl bad. We need your help. We beseech you. Bring relief for those poor souls. We pray that not another house will be lost, not another barn will be torched. We pray that no more haystacks will be reduced to smoldering heaps, that combines will be spared to work another day, and that fences will be saved to do their job.

We pray for rain, for the water of life to fall on our sisters and brothers and heal their brittle souls. We pray for rain to fill the shriveled crevasses in the fields that once filled our shelves with bread.

We pray for your gentle hand to bring relief. We are on our knees, Lord, begging for rain, and asking for you to guard and guide those brave folks sent to the front lines to battle the raging fires. Amen.

Good News and Continued Prayer Needed

Most of us are aware of the devastating Lodgepole Complex fires which have impacted Garfield and Petroleum counties and beyond. Please keep these counties and firefighters in your prayers! In response to our presbytery's request, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has awarded a grant to help us support the response and recovery efforts in the communities within the presbytery that have and continue to be impacted by the fires. We are grateful for this grant from PDA!

Westminster Spires Camp Report

Westminster Spires Camp had a successful season of worship, study, recreation, fellowship and fun. Staff training was held on July 6-8 with six returning counselors including Cynthia Kessler, Jon Dupuis, Megan Dupuis, Nichole Ferestad, Tamara Lucht and Kristin Kochner. Hunter Skov joined the staff for his first year as a counselor and the four Whitworth interns participated as well. George Goodrich led the staff training with Kara Kochner serving as program director and Curt Kochner providing logistical support.

Elementary Camp was held on July 9-13 with nine campers from Billings, Hysham, Butte, Bozeman, Dillon. One day with the moose around camp was quite exciting, and unfortunately we had the rescue efforts for a lost kayaker taking place on the bridge most of one day of camp. Outings included two days of swimming and a hike around Greenough Lake. Seven of our Elementary campers had been at camp in previous years at Westminster Spires. George Goodrich provided the teaching for Elementary Camp.

Junior High was our largest camp with seventeen campers from Dillon, Billings, Hysham, Butte, and Lynwood, Washington. George Goodrich led the teaching and worship for the week and special activities included a hike to Broadwater and Lost Lake, an afternoon on Beartooth Pass and a mission trip to help out with work at the Beartooth Nature Center in Red Lodge. Weather curtailed the day of swimming activity but a game of Clue around downtown Red Lodge was a hit. This camp included six first time and eleven returning campers. Luke Ekstrom and Kristen Elliott from Whitworth joined the staff for Junior High Camp.

The Senior High camp brought all four Whitworth interns to the staff and Katie Emery and Will Johnson from Terry provided the teaching and worship leadership. Thirteen campers with two joining us for the first time represented the cities of Dillon, Butte, Manhattan and Billings. Special events included a beautiful day on Beartooth Pass with sledding and hiking, hikes on the Lake Fork Trail and to Basin Lake, a mission trip to Red Lodge to sing to and visit with residents of Cedar Wood Villa and a raft trip on the Stillwater River. George Goodrich stayed for the last week of camp as a guest due to an overwhelming desire and request from the staff that he join them for the week. I can report and George was a model camper!

Thank you to churches in the presbytery! The Holy Spirit works in wondrous ways through outdoor ministry. Much spiritual growth takes place in the lives of campers, staff and adult leaders. First Presbyterian Church in Billings generously and graciously gave Westminster Spires the use of their two vans for the camp season and donated food. This year we awarded \$2,090 in Yellowstone Presbytery scholarships thanks to the generous gifts from the Presbytery offering and other friends of Westminster Spires. Many churches also provided scholarships for campers totaling \$2,100. Our deepest appreciation for the prayers and support for the ministry at Westminster Spires!

Thanks to Curt Kochner for this report!

Whitworth University Student Fellows/Interns Minister for Third Summer in Yellowstone Presbytery

Four Whitworth University students, Luke Ekstrom (sophomore from Southern California), Kristen Elliott (junior from Missoula), Britt Williams (junior from Seattle area), Joel Schroeder (senior from Spokane) are offering and experiencing various types of ministry in Yellowstone from June 1 to August 15.

Luke and Kristen are visiting and helping pastors, sessions, pastor nominating committees, and various groups in interested churches consider ways of "growing their churches young" by creating an environment, practices, and culture in the life of a congregation that is more empowering, warm, inviting, and impactful in the community, especially for youth, young adults and young families. Additionally, Luke and Kristen are helping lead Vacation Bible Schools in Terry and the Big Hole, and Luke has preached in Manhattan and the Big Hole.

Brit and Joel have been serving at FPC, Lewistown, through the summer. In addition to working with the church's "Growing Young" Ministry Team and session, they have led Vacation Bible School and experienced the breadth of pastoral ministry, including outreach, discipleship, prayer ministry, and preaching.

In July, all four joined the staff and campers at Westminster Spires Camp. At camp, they shared their faith and joined in the discipleship, community, and camp adventures.

Each of the four fellows is growing as a disciple of Christ, exploring how God is and might be calling them, and considering entering and engaging in some form of Christian ministry in the future. While they serve Christ by serving among us, they are also gaining the necessary experience to make their career decisions. Please welcome them warmly when you meet them.

Thank you, Kathy Goodrich, for this update on the Whitworth Fellows!

Special Meeting of Yellowstone Presbytery

A special meeting of Yellowstone Presbytery has been called by the Stated Clerk, Debbie Blackburn, for **Tuesday, August 8, 2017**.

The meeting will be held by conference call and will **convene at 2:00 p.m.**

The call-in number is 888-387-8686.

The room number is 406-586-7706 followed by the # sign.

The purpose of the meeting is to hear from the Administrative Commission for the Geyser Community Church and to take action on their recommendations. The only business to be transacted at this meeting will be concerning the Geyser Community Church.

Zambia Mission Co-Workers Charles & Melissa Johnson speaking in Yellowstone Presbytery August 7 - 11

FPC Dillon - August 7- 8
FPC Billings - August 9
FPC Butte - August 10
FPC Stanford - August 11

Charles and Melissa Johnson work with Zambia Synod, one of five synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. Charles teaches courses in sustainable agriculture at Chasefu Theological College, providing education to help the students feed their own families and providing training opportunities for these future pastors to teach others new agricultural techniques.

Melissa works with Zambia Synod's Health Department Coordinator and other church leaders, local stakeholders, and the community in research and in various aspects of health and nutrition education.

More complete information on their visit will be available on the presbytery website.

Rev. Dr. Jim McDonald to visit Billings

The Rev. Dr. Jim McDonald will be preaching at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Billings on August 27. On Saturday August 26, he will host a dinner for pastors, CREs, alums, and prospective students interested in the work of San Francisco Theological Seminary. If you would like to attend the dinner, please RSVP to revsusanbarnes@gmail.com.

A lifelong Presbyterian, Jim McDonald became San Francisco Theological Seminary's 11th president in July 2011. He is Professor of Faith and Public Life. Before coming to SFTS, Jim worked for thirteen years at Bread for the World, a faith-based grassroots advocacy organization in Washington, D.C. that urges policymakers to reduce hunger in this country and around the world.

Rev. McDonald will also be speaking at a retreat sponsored by Glacier Presbytery from August 28 – 30 at Glacier's Flathead Lake camp. This "San Francisco Theological Seminary Seminar" will focus on exploring the biblical and theological foundations of the Church's loving, hopeful engagement with the world. For more information contact Marsha at marsha.glacierpresbytery@gmail.com.

Prayer Request

Please continue to keep our dear Ted Williams and his family in prayer as they mourn the tragic death of his daughter Melissa Barnes. If you wish to write Ted a note, you can reach him at: 1757 Highland Blvd Unit 2, Bozeman, MT 59715 or tsquarew@aol.com

Yellowstone Presbytery Clusters

Miles City Cluster - Neva Rathbun, (msrev@midrivers.com)

Billings Cluster - Mary Davis, (mdavisrev@gmail.com)

Butte Cluster - Teresa Kendall, (teresakendall@mac.com)

White Sulphur Cluster - Debbie Funke, (funkepastor@yahoo.com)

Most clusters meet monthly. Contact the cluster coordinators listed for more information.

Presbytery Meetings for 2017:

August 8 2 pm Special Meeting of Yellowstone Presbytery by conference call

November 3-4 First Presbyterian Church, Bozeman

Upcoming Opportunities:

Sept. 8-10	Highland Holy Days	Westminster Spires Camp
Sept. 12	Leadership Cabinet	Billings
Sept. 14	PMT meeting	Bozeman

Remember our Round of Prayer as we keep our churches, ministries, and leaders in prayer:

Sunday August 6 Community Church, Jordan
Glacier Presbytery

Sunday, August 13 Rev. Freeman McCall, Honorably Retired, Dillon

Sunday, August 20 Community Presbyterian Church, Hysham and Pastor Paul Cannon

Sunday, August 27 Rev. Brent Long, Pastor At-Large, Billings

Sunday, Sept. 3 PresbyCats Higher Education Ministry, 1st Presbyterian Church, Bozeman
Federated Church of Harlowton and Pastor Vicki Waddington

Please send news and announcements to Susan Thomas at ckochner@mcn.net.