

Leadership Cabinet January 14, 2025

Yellowstone Presbytery Leadership Cabinet met via Zoom for its scheduled meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Cabinet members present:

RE Melissa Bell
MWS Ashley Birk
RE Julie Boksich
RE Charlie Brown
MWS Karolee Larson
MWS Jamie Schmeling
MWS Dave Thompson, Moderator

Members excused:

Others present:

General Presbyter Kathy Goodrich, Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming.

1. **Opening:** Moderator Dave Thompson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Members introduced themselves to Charlie Brown, a new member of the team, and Charlie introduced himself. A quorum was declared present.
2. **Dwelling in the Word & Spirit Sightings:** Members read and pondered on Ephesians 4: 14-16. Insight from the passage included that an immature faith is insecure and listens to anyone who sounds good. It was noted how divided the country and world is, and it would be best to put our faith in God's sovereignty, speak the truth in love, and to grow up in all things. Growing up is a transformative process. Dave closed the discussion and opened the meeting with prayer for one another, the victims of fires and those fighting the fires, for congregants and for the church.
3. **Spirit Sightings and Prayer Concerns:** A 12 Days of Christmas program was a highlight of the Sunday after Christmas in Miles City. Caroline learned she will have a 2nd great grandchild arriving in July. Karolee and church members delivered socks and clothing to the homeless shelter in Butte. Manhattan people ministered to a family mourning the death of their teenage son. Melissa led her 1st Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in Stanford.
4. **Vision Statement and LC Purpose: (Attachment A)** Karolee read the Presbytery vision statement. Members reviewed the team's purpose and responsibilities. We are asked to keep our eyes and hearts on what is important. Celebrating things we do at presbytery meetings is informative and enriching.
5. **Approval of Minutes:** Members reviewed the minutes from the November meeting.
 - **Action:** A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes as printed. The motion passed unanimously.
6. **General Presbyter's Report (Attachment B):** Kathy shared three specific goals she will work with presbytery to accomplish this year: practicing the way (spiritual formation), reimagining, exploring and experimenting with new ways of being Church, and cultivating

deeper relationships, communication, connections, partnerships between presbytery and churches, between leaders/pastors, and between churches. With only 5 full-time pastors installed in churches in Yellowstone Presbytery, she works to identify, train and disciple/mentor a wide range of lay leaders, particularly potential Lay Pastors enrolled in the CRE Synod cohort program and meet and work with sessions and churches without pastors. There is an idea to create a “book club” that will read and study Tod Bolsinger’s book How Not To Waste a Crisis. An idea to offer grief counseling to churches was suggested. Please read Kathy’s entire report attached to these minutes.

7. **Team Retreat:** Dates for a retreat to which all teams would be invited were discussed, but no decision was made. LC might look at offering a retreat in May.
8. **Dinner Church workshop:** Verlon Foster is willing to offer a workshop on dinner church in June.
9. **Presbytery meeting March 7 & 8:** Dave, Sarah Tunnal, Karolee, Melissa, Kathy and Caroline will serve as the planning team for the meeting. Business will include General Assembly Amendments, a presbytery policy against racism, possibly a CRE exam, and a retirement celebration for Dick and Mary Davis. Caroline will set up a Zoom meeting after polling people for a good date and time. Dave mentioned that LC should consider meeting at smaller churches again and not offer a zoom option. We will discuss this at a future meeting.
10. **Boundary Training video:** The boundary training video is done and available to any who want to watch it. Caroline sent it to the pastors who were not able to attend.
11. **Clerks Report:** It is time for annual reporting and with the new denominational website and the new presbytery website, there have been some challenges for people finding things. Progress is being made, and the clerks are getting things done. The boundary training video was sent to all pastors who were unable to attend either workshop in 2024. The clerk has continued to follow up with a few retired and at-large pastors who haven’t sent in their annual report for 2024 and is working to clean unnecessary papers out of files so what is left can be saved into the cloud.
12. **Treasurer’s Report:** Ric hasn’t received the year-end reports yet.

13. **Announcements:** **Next LC meeting February 11 at 1:00 p.m.**
 Presbytery meeting March 7 & 8 in Butte

14. **Closing:**

- **Action:** A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Dave Thompson closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Caroline Fleming, Stated Clerk

Leadership Cabinet Action Items		
Responsible Person(s)	Action Item	Due Date
Ongoing Action Items		
Personnel committee	Update Presbytery's Personnel Policy	Ongoing
Jamie, Dave, Caroline	Create a monthly presbytery newsletter to communicate regularly with our churches and pastors.	No date set
LC members	Seek people with a passion for earth care who would work with St. Andrew in bringing concerns/ideas to LC and presbytery	Ongoing
Caroline	Create and send information on mission pledges and where the money goes to churches	No timeline
LC members	Think about possible equipping topics including how to recognize gifts in others and help them share those gifts, doing evangelism that builds on Ron Pyle's storytelling workshop.	Ongoing
Ric	Work with Caroline Fleming, teaching them to post items on the website.	ASAP
Dave, Russ, Karolee	Discuss and plan ways to party at presbytery meetings	Ongoing
All Members	Send Kathy stories of spirit sightings	As they arise
New Action Items		
Dave, Karolee, Melissa, Sarah T. Caroline	Plan March 7 & 8 presbytery meeting	Before 3/1

ATTACHMENT A

Leadership Cabinet

Purpose — The primary purpose of the Leadership Cabinet (LC) is to guide the implementation of the Vision Statement and the mission of Yellowstone Presbytery. The LC also serves as the Trustees of the presbytery and oversees the presbytery's financial, personnel, and administrative processes.

Membership — The Leadership Cabinet is composed of 6-9 members. This includes a Moderator, the Immediate Past Moderator of presbytery, the Moderator and Vice-Moderator of the presbytery, a person skilled in financial practices, a person skilled in personnel practices and up to 3 At-Large Members elected by the presbytery. To the extent practical, representation shall be balanced between TE's, RE's, geography, and gender. The General Presbyter(s) and the Stated Clerk shall serve as *ex officio* members without vote.

Specific Responsibilities -

- I. Spiritual and Vision Implementation: To serve as the unit with the responsibility for implementing the Vision Statement of the presbytery.
 - a. To listen to the leadings of the Holy Spirit for and within the Presbytery.
 - b. To encourage new and emerging ministries prompted by the Spirit.
 - c. To develop spiritual practices for spiritual formation and equipping itself and the presbytery
 - d. To develop and engage in prayer for the presbytery in all aspects.
 - e. To encourage partnerships and to interface with other mission and councils of the PCUSA and other denominations.

- f. To annually review the '5th Strand' and make adjustments as needed
- II. Organizational Responsibilities:
- a. To oversee the Gathering, Equipping and Encouraging and Going Out of the Presbytery and to prepare the presbytery meeting Dockets emphasizing those elements.
 - b. To propose to the presbytery and oversee the budget(s) for the upcoming year that includes expenditures of Designated/Restricted Funds under the control of the Leadership Cabinet and to assist ministry teams in managing their budgets.
 - c. To oversee personnel, budget and finance functions of the presbytery.
 - d. To develop and maintain a Manual of Administrative Operations for the presbytery.
 - e. To serve as the Board of Trustees of the presbytery with responsibilities for an annual financial review and securing adequate insurance coverage.
 - f. To schedule at least one educational event/retreat for the presbytery annually.
 - g. To provide for a Mission Interpretation presentation at each presbytery meeting.
 - h. To maintain ecumenical relationships.

Attachment B

Report to Leadership Cabinet with overview of some GP goals for 2025, Rev. Kathy Goodrich 1-14-25 We continue in a time of both chaos and hope, of crisis and God's opportunities.

"Do whatever he tells you." As Mary told the servants at Cana in John 2:5

My WHY - I am passionately committed to growing in love for Jesus Christ, the 3 Great commandments. I believe in Christ's plan that God's redemptive, reconciling mission for the world was to be accomplished through Spirit-filled, transformed and empowered disciples/apprentices, families and churches =communities of disciples/apprentices. Just as Jesus was Immanuel, *God with us*, God with flesh on. In the age of the Holy Spirit, the church is to *incarnate* Jesus, to be Jesus with flesh on, with and for the world God loves. Hopeful GOOD NEWS.

In light of where we find ourselves as church, as Yellowstone Presbytery, where is the Spirit leading, where may be some of the TOP leverage points which can yield deep and lasting fruit and results?

Some specific goals I believe are important to make significant progress on in 2025, with actions or steps are you thinking will help me and other in the presbytery accomplish them. I shared these with Personnel the end of 2024.

- A. Practicing the Way, spiritual formation, rooting in Christ (Eph 3) and training/practicing to grow as disciples/apprentices in the spiritual practices that enable us to *be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do as he did*. [Spiritual training/practicing is required if we are to be a contrast community which looks, loves, thinks, acts like Jesus as we run the race of faith with perseverance (Heb 12).] [See Roxburgh's *The Missional leader*, pp.33-35

This would likely be done working with a small leadership group interested in it .

1.Offer spiritual training and growth opportunities that the presbytery will be offering and/or suggesting, including but not limited to John Mark Comer's *Practicing the Way*, with videos and free, downloadable materials available online.

Working with PMT, and hopefully LC, I and the small group will seek to include churches with no pastors.

2.Cultivate Prayer ... The formation of a group in the presbytery whose focus will be discerning the Spirit's leading and stirring up prayer in a variety of ways such as prayer

partners, healing prayer, in and for our presbytery, churches, ministries, communities. This was one of the top priorities emerging from the leadership Cabinet/PMT retreat in September.

3. I would like to offer at least 2 retreats open to any interested, related to 1 & 2 above, open to any in our presbytery. Perhaps first one during Lent.

B. Reimagining, exploring and experimenting with new ways of being Church embodying and sharing the Good News and Hope of Jesus with and for those in in the community, incorporating the 3 aspects of our vision statement, including, but not limited to fresh expressions such as dinner church, & new worshipping communities.

1. Identify 1-3 leaders for this ongoing initiative I will work with. We will hold a training for Dinner Church style of a fresh expression in YP (invite Synod). Hoped for outcomes including Equipping of a motivated, called, group of pastors and lay leaders in the why's, how's and what's who are or will prayerfully experiment/start one in the next 18 months. Conversations underway with Rev. Verlon Fosner, author of many dinner church books, who has agreed in principle.

a. Establish at least one cohort in 2025– likely partnering with Fresh Expressions US – fresh expressions/dinner church

2. Particular emphasis on listening to, serving, discipling children, youth, families/caregivers, and offering community and education, support for marriages/couples. Includes listening to, learning and collaboration with our churches and YP's Camping and Youth Ministry Team I hope this will include both:

a. prayerful listening to the lives and needs of Native American children, youth, families and communities

b. Exploring partnerships with and training from Intermountain

C. *With and For* - Weave and cultivate deeper relationships, communication, connections, partnerships between presbytery and churches, between leaders/pastors, and between churches, being *with and for*

a. In person opportunities such as visits by Kathy/GP, PMT liaison, regional/cluster events for journeying together, training, serving, worshipping, having fun....

b. Work with Deb to restart our *Yellowstone Currents* monthly newsletter, a simple start, seeking to draw in a few others interested. (I spoke with Deb about this last week and she is thinking. She and I needed to get some final decisions/work done on the presbytery office space in January before there is more bandwidth.)

Referring back to Personnel conversations December '23 and the ongoing work/conversations with LC/PMT, I am seeking to continue/build upon what is already underway with at least these goals or priorities below articulated in 2023 for 2024

1. Continue to identify, train and disciple/mentor a wide range of lay leaders and particularly potential Lay Pastors [through Dubuque-Synod partnership grant] to minister in wide range of ways according to gift, calling and needs, present & future, in communities and presbytery. (This is underway with PMT and under its oversight)

a. Meet and work with sessions and churches without pastors [or unlikely to ever have a fulltime pastor in next decade] to share God's call and this opportunity, the need, and enlisting their prayerful discernment to identify and approach certain people. This includes ongoing work with as well as training of our PMT to work with PNC's.

Kathy works with both PMT folks and a small group of 2-3 feeling called to help with this,

b. Pioneer a regional ministry team in both eastern and western regions of the presbytery (very few pastors, thus several congregations without out) made up of clergy, CRE's and lay leaders...? This done in concert with PMT and our leaders in each region. George and I have sought to plant seeds for this for several years, knowing of the impending clergy shortage.

c. Review and updating, by PMT, of YP's current CRE handbook and processes including expanding the variety of ways CRE's gifts may be used for this new season. (ie. Evangelist, spiritual director, as part of a team of CRE's working with one or more churches, starting a new church/fresh expression/new worshipping community, and what the Holy Spirit may yet birth)

2. Intentional identification, gift/passion/calling discernment and mentoring/development of potential new leaders, including younger ones feeder system for YP ministry teams or what may yet be birthed by the Holy Spirit - This done *with* PMT, LC, Camping & Youth, interactions with pastors/CRE's/sessions, with much prayer.

A few additional thoughts on assisting the Leadership Cabinet, PMT and Presbytery staff in this time of transition

A. Seek to nurture, fan the flames of the attitudes/ mindsets.... Of attentiveness (to the Holy Spirit, others and what is around us), curiosity, openness, and ongoing experimentation, reflection and discernment by the presbytery, it's ministry teams and leaders and as many congregations as possible.

(Most of the goals above provide tangible opportunities for practicing these.)

B. LC, PMT, pastors/CRE's moderator and elders becoming familiar with and using the participatory prayerful discernment process in the small, user friendly, illustrated handbook *How Not to Waste a Crisis: Quit Trying Harder* by Tod Bolsinger, taught by Shannon Kiser (both PCUSA pastors, church consultants...)

Why?

1. The Context and culture at large and in churches are in a state of flux, of fog. (See book *Life in Flux*) This is referred to by those leaders and consultants coaching high level corporate leaders around the globe as **VUCA – Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous** (see Arable Group).

2. Most pastors and church leaders were trained for and continue to think and operate according to ways, mindsets only effective for a stable, predictable environment of the mid-late 20th century. This is referred to as the Performative Zone and style of leadership in *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*, by Alan Roxburgh/F. Romanuk. Their diagram and of the stages/zones, lifecycle of a church/denomination contains valuable insights much of which still holds true post COVID. (See Ch 3 & pp. 40-41.)

3. Unless a process protects against those default mindsets and practices that are counterproductive and they are not only disrupted but replaced with those suited to a season of constant flux, the old, knee jerk, quick fixes and efforts leaders and churches default to will never bring about the hoped for, prayed for NEW results. Good intentional and how we have always done it pave the path in the wrong direction.

C. Late spring, Continue to research, listen and dialogue to learn from a wide range of different approaches to presbytery leadership/staffing and how that has played out IN REALITY. Great care must be taken that other's contextualized choices are not merely seen as 'best practices', the external quick fix temptation in anxious times of change, fear, loss.

Kathy write up and share the presentations, information and perspectives shared from Synod Staff Forum's planned retreat Nov. -24. I am pursuing getting the PPT and notes from this to integrate with mine.

Kathy share other inputs from what is being shared and will be summarized on the Mid Council email list.

While I am familiar with a wide range of how some PCUSA synods and presbyteries have handled this, other denominations are also in similar circumstances,

D.Explore funding possibilities for the future - Kathy and Ric Tieman continue to meet, include others as needed,

Grants, fundraising for this position as a mission, among other possibilities.

Enough for now! Other ideas to be shared in the future.