

**Special Meeting of Leadership Cabinet**  
**Yellowstone Presbytery**  
January 20, 2026

Yellowstone Presbytery Leadership Cabinet met via Zoom for a special meeting on Tuesday, January 20, 2025, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

**Cabinet members present:**

RE Melissa Bell  
RE Julie Boksich, Moderator  
RE Russ Kline  
RE Danny Pratt  
MWS Jamie Schmeling  
MWS Dave Thompson

**Members excused:**

MWS Karolee Larson

**Others present:** General Presbyter Kathy Goodrich, Treasurer Ric Tieman, Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming

- 1. Opening:** Moderator Julie Boksich called the meeting to order and opened the meeting with prayer.
- 2. Dwelling in the Word:** Members read and discussed Philippians 4: 4-9 which reminds us that God has the final say in all we do. We need not be anxious, especially when we keep our heads and remember that we have a big, big God. Let our gentleness show in calm conversation as we discern God's will. Julie closed the discussion with prayer.
- 3. Quorum and Agenda:** A quorum was declared present. A conversation about our June presbytery meeting was added to the agenda.  
\*Action: A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed.
- 4. June Presbytery Meeting:** With Kathy's retirement June 30, members discussed moving the June 12<sup>th</sup> meeting of Yellowstone Presbytery from a Zoom only meeting to an in-person meeting in Bozeman. Julie will contact Nicloe about meeting at the Bozeman church in June.  
\*Action: A motion was made and seconded to recommend Yellowstone Presbytery change the June 12 meeting from a Zoom meeting to an in-person meeting in Bozeman at which we celebrate Kathy's ministry with us and her retirement, meeting time to be determined. The motion passed unanimously.
- 5. Bozeman PILP Loan Application (Attachment A):** After having time to review the PILP loan application the Bozeman Church plans to submit, members raised a couple questions. On page 4, there was no check mark to indicate whether this was a consolidation loan or not. (It is not.) A checkmark was missing on page 5 indicating whether the requested loan amount was an estimate or firm contract price. (Firm price) Is a full replacement roof the only option? Could spots in the roof be repaired? (Spot repairs would only put off needed roof replacement and it would not be cost-effective.) Could some endowment funds be used to help pay for the planned costs? (Most endowment funds are earmarked for particular things and can't be used for this project.)  
\*Action: A motion was made and seconded to recommend approval of 1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church of Bozeman's submission of a PILP loan application. The motion passed.

**6. Sarah Tunall will resign:** Sarah Tunall will resign from the pastorate of Manhattan Presbyterian Church effective February 28. Jamie led the cabinet in prayer for Sarah, the Manhattan Church and the presbytery as we lose another pastor.

**7. Transition Team Report (Attachment A):** Kathy noted the importance of the Synod staff forum and that maintaining that contact will be important in the interim. Kathy hopes to take 2 weeks' vacation around Easter. Kathy left the meeting at this point for the visioning to continue.

Presbytery has \$21,500 to work with for the remainder of 2026 as we look at the task of the transition time.

The Transition Team report includes recommendations in three areas as we move forward following Kathy's retirement: *a. Relationships within Yellowstone Presbytery, b. Administrative tasks necessary to an interim period, and c. Visioning and Strategic Planning for the future of the Presbytery.*

**\*Action:** A motion was made and seconded to move forward with work on the three areas and that LC will implement them individually. The motion passed.

Team members discussed how to continue to address relationships within the presbytery. Should a person from within or outside of presbytery be hired to address relationship building? What are LC expectations here? A job description including the amount to be paid to this person is needed.

**\*Action:** A motion was made and seconded to appoint a committee of 2 to come up with a task list and recommend an amount to be spent on relationship building. The motion passed. Jamie and Danny were assigned to the task of addressing the issue of relationships in the presbytery.

Administrative tasks necessary for the interim period were discussed. A job description for the person chosen to handle administrative tasks is needed. Russ and Julie will address this issue and bring input back to the LC.

Discussion about visioning and strategic planning included the possibility of hiring a consultant firm like Holy Cow or Associated Employers. Cost of Holy Cow services starts at \$2,900 with a possible \$700 more. It was noted that we really only have 4 months to hire someone we expect to start July 1. Additional finances that could be made available from the budget include: \$17,748.00 awaiting presbytery action, \$35,000 and some additional reserves from the West Yellowstone church departure from presbytery. LC will appoint 2 people to investigate how either Associated Employers, Holy Cow or other such company could help us with visioning and strategic planning. Members are asked to think about who would be the best people to take on this task.

**\*Action:** A motion was made and seconded to adjourn with prayer. The motion passed.

At Julie's request, Danny Pratt closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline Fleming, Stated Clerk

## **Transition Team Report**

## **ATTACHMENT A**

Leadership Cabinet of Yellowstone Presbytery January 10, 2026

After several meetings, and numerous conversations with members of Yellowstone Presbytery, the Transition Team has identified three primary needs for the interim period immediately following the retirement of Kathy Goodrich.

1. Relationships within Yellowstone Presbytery
2. Administrative tasks necessary to an interim period
3. Visioning and Strategic Planning for the future of the Presbytery

According to the approved budget for 2026, the amount available for this work is \$43,000.

Based on these needs, the Transition Team presents the following three recommendations to the Leadership Cabinet for consideration.

### **For the task of relationship-building**

The Transition Team recommends that the Presbytery hire a part-time paid position, from within Yellowstone Presbytery, whose sole purpose is to facilitate relationships and connections within Yellowstone Presbytery. The Transition Team does not have a definitive plan for what this should look like but would suggest considering a regional model of support within the Presbytery. The details, including compensation, for this position will be determined by Leadership Cabinet.

### **For the administrative tasks**

The Transition Team recommends that Presbytery funds be spent to hire one of following:

- a) Interim / transitional EP
- b) an internal YP person for administrative tasks
- c) **OR** some combination of these two to accomplish the administrative aspects for the day-to-day functioning of the presbytery for a period of at least one-year, to walk alongside the committees of Yellowstone Presbytery to complete the following administrative tasks:
  - Update by-laws and standing rules of Yellowstone Presbytery to bring them in-line with current practices
  - Complete a Personnel Handbook for Yellowstone Presbytery
  - Bring Yellowstone Presbytery up-to-date on all policies required by the Book of Order
  - Create and/or finalize policies and procedures for all processes of the Presbytery including, but not limited to, church searches, inquiry/candidacy, and becoming a CRE.

While many of these policies will ultimately need to be approved by the whole of Yellowstone Presbytery, hiring an interim or transitional EP will ensure the timely completion of these necessary tasks. The completion of these tasks will strengthen the foundation of Yellowstone Presbytery, setting up a future Presbyter to focus on ministry and relationships upon arrival in the Presbytery.

### **For the forward movement & strategic planning of the YP**

The transition team recommends hiring a transitional / interim EP and / or a consulting group like “Holy Cow” (or other similar entity) to assist in strategic planning, including staffing strategies to address the changing landscape of ministry across Montana and within the denomination. The purpose is to look and work forward as Yellowstone Presbytery.

### **Other considerations for the Leadership Cabinet**

- Identify and ensure both parties (presbytery and retired presbyters) adhere to the published guidelines relative to leaving a church as set out in our Book of Order and our Presbytery policies. These appropriate boundaries following the retirement of the Executive Presbyter will apply to both George and Kathy upon her retirement and indicate our mutual love, support, and respect for one another going forward. Current guidelines indicate a pastor / presbyter leave his / her church for a

minimum of one year **after a new leadership person is in position.** This means that until whatever is in place next a year after that would be the boundary.

- Ensure Yellowstone Presbytery utilizes its full representation in the Synod, including appointing a “stand-in” representative for the Executive Presbyter from the Leadership Cabinet.
- Work to build a community of trust that allows the ongoing work of committees such as PMT and Camping/Youth to continue their work

Respectfully Submitted,  
The Transition Team

Janet Anderson (FPC - Billings)  
Rev. Kimmy Briggs (FPC - Lewistown)  
RE Debbie Blackburn (Manhattan)  
RE Danny Pratt (Forsyth)  
Rev. Dave Thompson (FPC - Billings)  
Rev. Jamie Schmeling (FPC - Miles City)