

General Presbyter Report to Yellowstone Presbytery Kathy Goodrich November 3-4, 2023

II Cor 4:7-11 has been one of the passages which seems to describe what I and many others around the presbytery, our family, the country, and the globe are living.

⁷ But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, ⁹ persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed, ¹⁰ always carrying around in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹ For we who are living are always being handed over to death for Jesus's sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death is at work in us but life in you. II Cor. 4:7-11

It's not about the jar/container, but ALL about the Treasure, about Jesus, light, love, the Good News - the main thing. It's about ALL God is and has done (for which we are witnesses, sharing the Good News), the new things which the Spirit is doing, and will yet do, culminating in his return and the new heaven and new earth! Isa. 43 & II Cor. 4

Question: What clay jar may you, your congregation be tempted to focus on instead of on Jesus, on the Treasure?

Despite experiences of overwhelm, obstacles, tragedy, and unimagined upheaval, opportunities abound, because the Holy Spirit is present, providing, protecting, em-powering and working providentially for God's purposes! Just as promised! Just as in Isa 43! As we focused on at our March presbytery meeting. Rom. 8

that how easily distracted we can be by decline, scarcity, fears, rapid change, _____ or tempted to seek to redouble the ways we used to do things, take things into our own hands on own timetable like Abram and Sarah, or be forceful, rigid. Instead, the Spirit invites and reminds us:

1. It's by my Spirit (and prayer) not these other means

"It is not by might or by power (i.e. or programs, budgets, force & control, our most intelligent efforts, ideas or ___) but by my Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts." Zechariah 4:6 NRSV

"You can't force these things. They only come about through my Spirit," says GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies. 'So, big mountain, who do you think you are? Next to Zerubbabel you're nothing but a molehill. He'll proceed to set the Cornerstone in place, accompanied by cheers: Yes! Yes! Do it!'" Zech.4: 6,7 *The Message*

Question: How can you be still, abide in Christ, pay attention to the Spirit's voice?

2. The Spirit's primary way, when trust and credibility and believability in God/Jesus is low, is through the spiritual formation and life of Christ-like disciples and disciple communities/churches who are different than the culture, embodying Jesus' message, ways and Christ-like character in authentic relationships and actions.

See presbytery vision statement.

Story of little kids trick or treating at a house with serious illness and an empty candy basket.

Leslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Culture* – "...the only answer, the only hermeneutic of the gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it...[the other important things] are all secondary, and ...they have power to accomplish their purpose only as they are rooted in and lead back to a believing community."

Or Dr. Andrew Root "really sharing in life together and testifying to our encounters with the presence of God. This definitely happens in big churches that are growing, but it also happens in little churches where 30 people are praying together.... don't... minimize the faithfulness of pastorally walking with people and testifying to the world and our lives together that there is deep meaning in a community that professes Jesus Christ." Prof. & author, *When Church Stops Working: A Future for Your Congregation Beyond More Money, Programs and Innovation*

From: https://outreachmagazine.com/features/77916-the-distraction-of-decline.html?utm_source=omag-om-daily-nl&utm_medium=email&utm_content=button&utm_campaign=omag-om-daily-nl-&maropost_id=742701295&mpweb=256-10127032-742701295

3. SENT/SCATTERED - We are loved and called, gifted, equipped and empowered, To Go Out and join Christ in Christ's mission, in our communities, Montana and the world. The church is GLOCAL
I believe it is overdue to prayerfully draw together those with a passion for Christ's mission – local and global, and to discern what ties, collaborations we might rekindle or start. Such as
Africa, Paul and Lydia Neshangwe in Zimbabwe FPC Billings, FPC Bozeman
In the Middle East , The seminary in Egypt , The Outreach Foundation [Presbyterian] with crucial work and partnerships there. Kimmy Briggs
Others?

Spirit Sightings and Surprises as we live/write Acts 29+

Questions: What are your Spirit sightings and surprises?

How might you and your congregation/ministry regularly engage in this practice of paying attention and sharing with others what you see the Spirit doing?

Ex. When I led worship in Deer Lodge, Caroline Fleming with the Miles City churches.

Living in the tension(s),

Various times, contexts, circumstances call for various places on continuums such as:

Gathered	Scattered/Sent
High, centralized control	Permission-giving, empowered, decentralized
Tradition, how we have done it	Adaptive, nimble
Institutional	Personalized, Organic
One way fits all	Contextual, responsive
Members	Christ-followers, Disciples/apprentices
Formal ways	Informal – 1-1, microgroups, with-me principle
Building is center	mission in/with & to “outside”, community focus
Programmatic	People formation - Relational and intentional

Leadership Cabinet –

I have conferred and worked with Russ and others, subgroups of the LC many times on a wide range of matters in the leadership, oversight and administration of the presbytery.

Leadership retreat – Focus on identifying and deploying the spiritual gifts for leadership from Eph 4:11,12 and

On engaging the 3 phase process of Anticipating, Reflecting and Innovating and implications and possibilities for our churches and presbytery and myself in these times.

I have prayed, prepared, researched, and conferred with others and met with the good joint Planning team for this. It's a joy to be a team as we share our gifts and seek to discern and follow the Spirit's lead.

I have worked with the Planning team for the November presbytery meeting –Tim Slemmons and Beth McCaw offering workshops . Each time I have experienced a beautiful work of the Holy Spirit in and through the group listening well to one another and the Spirit and coming to clarity. The respect and imagination and commitment are a gift! **“New Treasures Out of Broken Vessels Revealed by the Spirit”** It will be excellent.

Explored ways to collaborate, share in equipping and others opportunities with neighboring Glacier Presbytery.

Budget planning for 2024 – conferred with Ric several times as he has researched the most up to date proposal, given many factors are in flux in these times.

Opportunity to support the General Presbyter work through Administrative Support. Has made all the difference, but only to be given after giving to your local congregation, the front line of ministry and mission.

New Task Force starting: Uncovering Treasure and Sharing the Light: Evangelism and planting new churches/worshipping communities/fresh expressions of church

For several years, I, along with others from LC, PMT and Jack Bell, among others, have been responding to the Spirit's leading, the needs and opportunities in our areas, and faithful using of folk's spiritual gifts and calling. Conferring, conversations, research and prayer in prep for this. Joining God in the new things the Spirit is already preparing and doing in our communities. The presbytery recently received funds directed for this evangelism work from the Admin. Commission which handled the sale of the McAlister church. There are funds for this ministry whose time is now.

If you are interested, please talk with Russ Kline, Julie Boksich or Kathy Goodrich.

Presbytery-wide training on New Book of Church Discipline. I worked with Caroline engaging and meeting with Rev. Paige McRight to lead this training for our presbytery. Feedback was that its helpful and was well received. The video and materials, including her updated Powerpoint, are available for use with leaders in your church. We may not post the link publicly, so please contact us if you would like it.

I Confer and work regularly with my great colleague and friend, Caroline on the wide range of matters that all end up under LC or PMT and more.

Pastoral Ministry Team – continues to have a great deal of work related to most aspects of their overall responsibilities. Several on PMT are stretched very thin. Pray for our pastors and churches and the PMT. Debbie and Neva have done an amazing job as co-moderators. We owe them a huge debt of thanks.

There is a wide range of pastoral and/or "work" interactions with presbytery leaders, pastors/CRE's, sessions, PNC's. Please pray for all our churches as well as Important transitions, searches in several churches require a great deal of time and prayer from me, PMT, as well as their church. And several of you all who are sharing your gifts in the ministry and have no pastor at this time.

****CRE/CLP 2 year online training in a cohort (Jan. 2024-Dec. '25)** – see color flyer posted in packet. Please share!

a pioneering partnership for the presbyteries in our Synod with Dubuque Seminary, Rev. Dr. Beth McCaw, former Glacier GP, and heading this up. Dubuque faculty working in partnership with Synod presbyteries on this. (Several grants are a part of the funding for this experiment) . This opportunity is for both those who are interested in the full program as well as those who may want to take a course or 2. Those in the 2 year program will meet together 2x a year. A zoom planning meeting 6/15 was very impressive and encouraging for a host of reasons. Who may the Spirit be calling to explore Lay pastoring? Pray and ask! Please promote this opportunity in your churches

CLC – connecting, discerning, calling is rolling out and training for the NEW CLC (Church Leadership Connection, pastor church 'dating 'service!). After attending a National Webinar in May for presbytery staff & COM mod's, this has been and will continue to require a great deal of learning, adapting and interpretive time and energy for me, Caroline, our PMT leaders and any involved in search processes. There are some improvements and adaptations. Yet, the rollout has been bumpy as the new forms, instructions, manuals, FAQ's, have not been available or else not finalized to coincide with rollout and some trainings and the full operation of the new system. Many Presbytery staff, COM's and PNC's are very frustrated, not receiving responses to requests for the needed improvements or explanations much of the time. EP's are now needing to function as networkers to share pastoral

opening and locate pastors. The system is not providing many quality or sufficient candidates to PNC's and EP's are impeded in gaining information needed.

Deer Lodge – Teresa left Aug 31. George and I Attended her heartwarming and teary farewell dinner and 9/10 – I Preached, led worship, talked with session and met the clerk, provided pastoral care for a range of folks while there. Being present, listening, learning, coming alongside, offering hope, perspective, information and guidance. It so important all experience they are NOT alone but part of Christ's body.

Friends, from the pastoral aspect of my calling which I love, there are a great deal of challenges in MANY lives, families, relationships, health, churches, ...Life and happenings can be messy. Prayer, kindness, support & encouragement

Camping and Youth – Rejoicing in the many ways God's Spirit provided, guided and moved for a wonderful adapted camp @ Hyalite despite Westminster Spires not being available for the season. Do read that report. I conferred regularly with Daniel Triller through the summer/fall and look forward to the dreams and possibilities as this ministry team meets with wonderful addition of Nichole Ferestadt Bodalski, Youth director @ FPC, Billings.

Rep/Nom – I have been meeting with them since August as they are doing a great deal of good work. See both nominations and proposed updated selection process for GA clergy Commissioner, supported by both the LC & PMT.

Synod – I attended synod (virtually due to not feeling well the day of travel.) Some new ideas percolating. A more creative meeting than I have ever experienced. I wrote a 5 min. overview of YP and shared it's presentation with JP. I wrote a brief, 5 minutes intro and overview of Yellowstone Presbytery which Jp and I presented at the meeting. Thanks to commissioners, JP and Margee who were good contributors in one of the most generative meetings in a while. I am on a group formed reassessing who should be voting members of Synod.

I partnered with Chuck Colson in helping and hosting the Synod Staff forum in Montana for a meeting in August. Always good to partner with Chuck and be with these colleagues. Please pray for our fellow presbyterians across the region.

Personally – It has been a roller coaster of lovely blessings, and challenges with 3 other deaths in our extended family since both our moms' passing. A joyous family wedding, beautiful Madison Goodrich born Oct. 19, wonderful things with several of our kids, answers to prayers, and challenges – work and national church issues, many in our presbytery are stretched so thin they are unable to serve or do what they hoped, a lot going on and will be related to estate matters following my mother's death and then the state of the world and nation. Lord, hear our prayers. Continued prayers for George's and my health are welcomed. I and we are deeply grateful for each of you and the body of Christ in Yellowstone Presbytery.