

March 1 World Day of Prayer -

"I Beg You... Bear With One Another in Love" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

The Transformative power of lived love experienced in God's people is key to healing and to our witness and role as salt and light. And more crucial than ever in this surreal election year, chaos and time of hatred, factions, "take no prisoners".

In a divided contentious culture seeking to divide, discredit, demand "my way or the highway", how we need to "bear with one another in LOVE".

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" Eph 4:3

God's intent and high calling is for God's people to be UNITED in Christ, quite different than the demands and forceful tactics for UNIFORMITY we see today. Jesus disciples while SO different from John to Simon the Zealot, Matthew the tax collector to Andrew, were united in Christ and overflowing with the Spirit @ Pentecost and throughout Acts. In John 17 Jesus prays that we will be ONE, united with him and the Trinity.

Prayer - Commit to praying weekly for each other and the Spirit's love, power, protection, provision and work in and through each of us, the communities of disciples, this presbytery and region for Christ's life and hope giving mission.

1. Post and weekly use the Yellowstone Round of Prayer Calendar, found on our main page @ <https://yellowstonepcusa.org/>, listing the person/church/ministry in your bulletin and/or newsletter and including them in the Sunday pastoral prayer.
2. Prayer partner til we meet again in May
3. Pray Luke 10:2 Jesus told them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Growing in love and Christ-likeness and living/doing as Jesus did, joining in Christ's mission in the smallest to the largest things God may call us to for such a time as this.

NT Wright's insightful wisdom and exhortation and call to us to live Romans 8 Into the Heart of Romans: A Deep Dive into Paul's Greatest Letter. Verses 22 – end of chapter, see pp 162 & 3 178-181.

How we need to remember and live in light of this!

Leadership Cabinet –Is seeking to fulfill this important role in leadership and visioning amidst changes and challenging times with fewer people. Times dwelling in the Word and sharing Spirit Sightings and Surprises from our lives and across the presbytery are always lifegiving and encouraging. They continue to attend to a very wide range of work on behalf of the whole presbytery including property matters, work on the finances, I have met several times with Ric Tieman on our new website, mid April launch. DO check it out. See instructions in treasurer's report,

I work with the Presbytery Planning Team over several months, including the new task force, Uncovering Buried Treasure and Sharing the Light

Pastoral Ministry Team – These are extraordinarily busy times for this Team, with co-moderators Neva Rathbun and Debbie Ernst, RE, Bozeman, giving generously of their time, energies, wisdom, care and prayer as are the others. Grateful for the presence, wisdom and gifts of new members Julie Boksich, Cheryl Banks (FPC Billings) and Rev. Steve Hundley.

Pastor Searches, CLC – ¼ of the presbytery's congregations are in searches or may be soon with PNC's and sessions and PMT liaisons/moderators serving sacrificially. And that at a time of clergy shortages, fewer going into pastoral ministry, and difficulty retaining pastors. Certain PMT members, moderators, Caroline and I are working with them. All of us must continue to educate ourselves about various aspects of the new CLC system, seek help on various aspects, create some materials ourselves as the CLC still does not have all of what is needed for PNC's. We need to continue to find and use "work arounds" of many kinds. This is an ongoing concern at every EP gathering in the synod or nationally. No responses to correspondence/questions/requests from a wide range of EP's had been received as of mid February believe.

PLEASE put our congregations, our leaders and PMT, and Caroline and myself on your regular prayer lists.

I am looking into The Omaha Seminary Foundation's developing of a grant which could help subsidize a new pastor out of seminary in a church. More to follow as this develops.

Board of Pensions will be announcing some major changes for 2025+ starting in April. Every COM-PMT and presbytery are required to have a presentation /training. I have had quite a few interactions/conversations with Christine Long. She plans to be with us IN PERSON for the first time, for a training and Q & A session with all in the Plan and those in each congregation involved in personnel, who deal with these matters. Please hold May 16 late in the day before May 17 presbytery, or mid afternoon May 17. ALL in the Plan need to understand this information and be prepared AHEAD of Employer Agreement season (mid Aug. – early Oct.) and the members' Annual Enrollment (mid-Oct. – early Nov.) READ you BOP mail/email and make plans to attend in May.

YP's Required Boundary Training every 3 years will be offered this year. Details and the 2 dates should be out in the next month. Chuck, Glacier EP approached Caroline and me, exploring collaboration with us on this.

Camping & Youth - I have met with Daniel on and off over the last 4 months. Daniel, Nichole and team have been hard at work on listening, evaluating and adapting both the ski retreat (1 night, March 15-16 @ FPC Bozeman and Bridger Bowl) and the Westminster Spires Camping offerings this summer including trying a family camp as several families have asked for one. The continuity and wisdom of Kara Kochner Todd returning as Program Director is a wonderful answer to prayer. (She attended as a camper, and her kids now have.) Having 3 generations of folks has been SO rich with Freeman and George returning as well. See report.

New Task Force starting: Uncovering Buried Treasure and Sharing the Light: sharing and incarnating the good news and planting new churches/worshipping communities/fresh expressions of church. Spent time in prayer, reading, learning and reading, listening to God and others, observing where the Spirit was at work and opening doors... Shared their ideas with the LC, and worked on the Planning Team for presbytery. Are praying for others who might like to learn and join in discerning and following the Spirit. Contact Russ Kline or Julie Boksich.

Dubuque – Synod of Rocky Mountain CRE/CLP Cohort - One of Yellowstone's top priorities and a top one for my position is commitment to equipping present and future leaders and disciples and to the future vitality of our congregations in changing times. The Synod Staff forum, made up of the presbytery's GP/EP's and the synod St. Clerk, is the overseeing body for this in partnership with the presbyteries with Dubuque. It is a joy to work with Dubuque's new Dean, Beth McCaw. Pioneering and experimenting as the Holy Spirit opens doors is exciting and critical for all churches and organizations in today's world and, they take extra energy especially at the start with surprises he learning, quick adjustments.

The first class, preaching, has 19 students, which includes 2 current Stated Clerks and 1 former Stated Clerk and some session clerks. 12 are from Yellowstone! More students, mostly younger from New Worshipping Communities in Pueblo Presbytery, will be joining for the second class!

THERE IS ROOM for new students in the next class on Pastoral Care with Dr Beth McCaw, March – May, those wanting to explore becoming a CRE or those desiring to grow in this area, perhaps do more in their congregation.

The synod commissioners voted to pay \$1,000 towards the flat rate of \$3,500 per class.

I attended the special synod meeting January 29 and was asked by the St. Clerk to speak on behalf of the Synod Staff Forum about the program and the Forum's financial recommendation for cost sharing between the Synod and presbyteries. PMT has scholarships available for existing CRE's and has just appointed a subgroup of Debbie Blackburn and Linda Smith to work with me to handle other grant requests. See master flier sent in December for more details or talk with me or Debbie Blackburn.

Early observations -1. In the same way that planting a new church/Fresh Expression/New Worshipping Community has many life-giving impacts on the spiritual vitality of a church/presbytery involved with it, I am hearing from the congregations with CRE students about positive benefits such as other elders or members curious, open to equipping, and more. 2. I am hearing many good comments from students, Beth and Monica, the instructor, despite the adjustments some computer/tech challenges which are being addressed.

3. I have been asked what is the "secret" to Yellowstone having so many who are not just enrolled but who have been being prepared and encouraged and with such a sense of call. Yellowstone's vision and culture of training & equipping the saints in spiritual formation and ministry, exploring adaptations and experiments in changing times, listening and exploring partnerships and new possibilities for many years has made an enormous difference.

Synod – The collegial and connectional aspect of our presbyterian way to functioning has many benefits for our churches, leaders and ministries. The fellowship, shared wisdom and ideas, support, collaboration, partnering and networking... have become even more crucial as the size, staff and resources of all sorts of our national offices shrinks, fluctuates during this season of rapid upheavals and opportunities for innovation.

There are several additional opportunities for collaboration or joining in equipping with other presbyteries,

We are invited to join with Plains and Peaks Presbytery virtually the night of May 13 to listen to Dr. Andrew Root talk focused on his book *When Church Stops Working* materialize. I was still awaiting word at "press time" on an opportunity . PMT is working on another.

Presbyterian Foundation continues to provide resources, workshops, consulting on a wide range of areas pertaining to cultivating generosity and financial literacy along with investment options for churches/endowments which have a very good track record. READ and share the posted resources Rob Hagan has provided for you. We are blessed as it would cost your church a lot to hire a consultant or group to provide what we receive in the PCUSA from the Foundation.

226th General Assembly, meeting in Salt Lake City – in person June 29-July 4 with worship around the region Sunday and then long plenary meeting days. Committees meet virtually immediately ahead and then travel to Salt Lake. Format is condensed with OGA's decision not to have/invite the range of ministries and groups, seminaries, networks, presentations, or "reunion" gatherings of various sorts which have been a part of these gatherings for many decades. Desire for commissioners to be on the floor except for meals, cost cutting measures, and other reasons have led OGA not to provide for an exhibit hall or gathering space for general visitors, commissioner spouses, Presbyterian groups...

General Volunteers – Utah presbytery is prioritizing spots for Utah Presbyterians first, then those from our Synod, and finally others from around the country. Plans are to have an app to apply to be a volunteer. Registration fee is ~\$100 for the whole meeting for ALL observers wishing to enter the meeting hall. The fee will be waived for volunteers. Local housing in homes is being worked on for volunteers. As of 2/28 I had not received the latest updated information for volunteers including the app. I will update the presbytery as soon as I receive the information.

We will commission our GA team at our May 17 presbytery meeting.

In this position I have various levels of interaction or involvement with several of the institutions we support. As institutions of all sorts and their leadership at various levels are struggling deeply in these tumultuous times. Several we have long standing ties with are no exception. Various leaders associated with those have contacted me recently. Prayers all around are appreciated.

Presbyterian Women in YP– I have been in conversation over the last 2 months with key leaders. Since there are no long sufficient people to fulfill the offices and responsibilities for a presbytery level PW, they are in the process of dissolving at that level.

Personal – Our retreat/mini conference with our Covenant Group of pastors (meeting together and in covenant annually 38 years) was very needed, restorative along with excellent workshops on Dr. Andrew Root, AI for pastors and churches, Getting Unstuck, Soul Shaping and more. Focus included the most recent research and ideas from Dr. Andrew Root, Good ideas for us here. Prayers appreciated for the Lord to continue our healing and protect us from further loss and crises.