

**Presbytery of Yellowstone - Stated Meeting      November 1 & 2, 2024**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Presbyterian Church of Billings and via Zoom**

**Friday, November 1, 2024**

**24.031. Opening of the Meeting**

The Presbytery of Yellowstone met on Friday November 1, 2024 beginning at 1:10 p.m. Some attended in person, and some attended via Zoom. LC Moderator Russ Kline and host pastor Dave Thompson welcomed everyone. Russ opened the meeting with prayer. Presbytery Moderator Melissa Bell was running late. The theme for the meeting: ***“Carrying the Light: How Do We Live Out the Great Commission.”***

**24-032. Roll Call:** The Stated Clerk conducted roll call. Attendees were asked to register in person or by email to [caroline@yellowstonepcusa.org](mailto:caroline@yellowstonepcusa.org) noting their name, church, and position (minister member, member due to position, commissioner, corresponding member or guest).

**Ruling Elder Commissioners, CREs, Other RE's and visitors**

Anaconda	RE Cal Boyle, St. Timothy's Chapel
Billings First	RE Sandi Shoenberger, commissioner; RE Russ Kline, LC Moderator;
Billings St Andrew	RE James Tarr, commissioner
Big Hole	RE Julie Boksich, Commissioner
Bozeman	RE Suzanne Bratsky, commissioner; RE Ric Tieman, Treasurer; Deb Jackson, guest
Butte	RE Traci Ruschetti, commissioner
Colstrip	Absent
Deer Lodge	Absent
Dillon	Callie Triller, guest
Ennis	Absent
Forsyth	Vicki Waddington, guest
Hysham	Absent
Jordan	Absent
Lewistown	RE Melissa Bell, Moderator
Manhattan	RE Debbie Blackburn, commissioner
Miles City	RE Caroline Fleming, Stated Clerk;
Phillipsburg	Absent
Poplar	Absent
Stanford	Absent
Terry	RE Nancy Pehl, commissioner; RE Andy Pehl, guest
White Sulphur Sp.	Absent
Wolf Point	Absent

**Minister Members:**

David Andrew, absent; Jim Bell, absent; Priscilla Bell, absent; Ashley Birk, present; David Bierschwale, absent; Kimberly Briggs, present; J P Carlson, present; Warren (Rusty) Craig, present; Dick Davis, excused; Mary Davis, excused; John Dyce, absent; Wenda Fry, excused; Debbie Funke, present; George Goodrich, present; Kathy Goodrich, present; Steven A Hundley, present; Doug Johnson, present; Dan Krebill, excused; Karolee Larson, present; Brent Long, present; Freeman McCall, absent; Jody McDevitt, present; Sherwood McKay, absent; Marcia Muir, absent; David Murchie, absent; Sally Ralston, absent; Neva Rathbun, present; Mary Grace Reynolds, excused; Harlan (Lanny) Rounds, present; Jamie Schmeling, present; Deborah Schmidt, absent; Susan Thomas, excused; David Thompson, present; Daniel Triller, present; Kim Woeste, present.

**Commissioned Ruling Elder Members:**

CRE Veva Larson, excused; Margee Smith, excused;

**2022 RE Moderators and Leadership Cabinet Voting Members also listed with their churches above:**

RE Russ Kline, LC Moderator

**Corresponding Members:** Rene Myers, PC(USA) staff, Western Colorado

**Guests: 4 guests present**

**Staff with Voice:** RE Caroline Fleming (Stated Clerk), Ric Tieman, Treasurer

**Quorum/Balance check:** 10 voting RE's, 18 voting MWS. **A quorum** was declared present.

**24-033. Dwelling in the Word:** Dave Thompson led presbytery in Dwelling in the Word using Jeremiah 29:7. Presbyters spent time in personal reflection and in small groups discussing how we can best seek peace and prosperity in our individual and corporate lives.

**24-034. Equipping and Spirit Sighting:** A short, entertaining skit was presented about the need to use the correct battery so our (flash)light will shine followed with discussion on how sharing Jesus is the way we bear light into the world.

**24-035: Workshops:** Presbyters choose to attend one of two workshops:

1. "Partnering with New and Existing Childcare, Nonprofits, School Districts, Churches, Businesses, Families and Stakeholders" presented by Charisse Jennings and Jennifer Phau from the Central Montana Child Care Alliance
2. "Listen, Lean In, Let Go: Living Witness in the Communities (& Congregations) We're Found" presented by Dan Triller and Sarah Tunall

**24-036: Business Meeting Part I**

**A. Stated Clerk Report (Attachment A):** The Stated Clerk moved the following omnibus motion:

1. That the agenda for this meeting posted on [www.yellowstonepcusa.org](http://www.yellowstonepcusa.org) be approved.
2. That the roll for this meeting be established in two ways:
  - a. By email to [caroline@yellowstonepcusa.org](mailto:caroline@yellowstonepcusa.org) if you are attending via Zoom or

- b. By registration form provided at the meeting if you are attending in person.
- 3. That all requests for excused absences received by the Stated Clerk be approved.
- 4. That any Corresponding members at the meeting be seated and given voice.
- 5. That Presbytery grant the Moderator authority to give privilege of the floor to people, other than Members or Commissioners, for the purpose of reporting to this meeting.
- 6. That the Moderator and the Stated Clerk be empowered to suggest and adjust the agenda during the meeting, as may be necessary.
- 7. That the minutes of the Presbytery meeting of May 17, 2024 be approved as printed on the presbytery meeting website.
- 8. That the minutes of the Special Presbytery meeting of August 28, 2024 be approved as printed on the presbytery meeting website.
- 9. That the October 27, 2024 minutes of the Administrative Commission to install Rev. Sarah Tunall as pastor at Manhattan Presbyterian Church be approved.
- 10. That the minutes of this meeting shall report that there has been no call for a meeting of the Presbytery's PJC this year to date and that the following former members are still eligible to serve if needed: MWS Dan Krebill, RE Lloyd Mandeville, RE Sharla Helland, RE Gary Slagel, MWS Jody McDevitt and MWS Lanny Rounds.

The motion was seconded, and it passed.

The Stated Clerk requested that all retired ministers or ministers-at-large who have not returned their annual reports yet please do so as soon as possible.

- B. General Presbyter's Report (Attachment B):** Kathy reported on her recent study trip to Grece and Turkey and on other activities since the last presbytery meeting.
- C. Representation and Nomination Team Report (Attachment C):** Moderator Lanny Rounds gave the first reading of the nominated slate for upcoming terms as Moderator, Moderators of presbytery teams and people to serve on presbytery teams for the next term. The nominations will be read a second time tomorrow and voted upon.
- D. Special Offerings Presentations:** Rene Myers, Ministry Engagement Advisor with the PC (USA), shared a presentation about the Special Offerings of the PC (USA), currently OGHS, Pentecost Offering, Peace & Global Witness, and Christmas Joy. In 2026, there will only be three special offerings as the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly voted to restructure the offerings and reduce their number. Rene gave presentations to the churches in Yellowstone Presbytery that gave "4 for 4" to the special offerings in 2023: Hysham, Deer Lodge, Bozeman, and Anaconda. (It was discovered later that Billings St. Andrew was also a "4 for \$" church and they received their certificate at a later date. Terry Community Presbyterian Church was given a special award, a lovely banner, for having given to the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering for as long as the denomination has been keeping records of giving to OGHS. Kathy closed the celebration with prayer for Rene and her work.

**24-040 Review of Dinner Church/Table Worship:** Julie Boksich reviewed the Dinner Church concept and table worship process. She showed the books Dinner Church by Verlon Foster and Eating Your Way Through Luke by Karris and Karris. Presbyters watched a video about Dinner Church. Sarah Tunall shared her meeting with Verlon Foster who visits Red Lodge every year and is willing to consult with presbytery people about Dinner Church. Presbyters moved to Dinner Church and Table Worship after which the meeting was recessed until morning.

**24-041 Saturday Morning Opening:** Moderator Melissa Bell called the meeting to order, and presbyters sang "Be Thou My Vision."

**24-042 Dwelling in the Word:** Jamie Schmeling led presbyters in prayer and read James 2:14-17. Attendees broke into small groups to discuss the passage and its meaning for us as we attempt to live out the Great Commission then shared those ideas with the larger group.

**24-043 Equipping Part II:** It was noted that “snarkiness” and anger block light, and that people often sabotage the very thing they say they want. We want growth and change but are scared of it at the same time. The Observation/Interpretation/Intervention concept of evaluating and addressing issues was reviewed with note that why we do things is so important. Kathy shared the book How Not To Waste a Crisis by Tod Bolsinger. There is a book per church to be taken home and shared by presbyters.

#### **24-044 Business Meeting Part II:**

##### **A. Leadership Cabinet Report (Attachment D):**

The questions was raised about when presbyters would discuss and vote on the Policy Against Harassment and the Policy Against Racism that were included in the meeting packet. LC Moderator Russ Kline explained that, since very few people have read the policies, it was felt that discussion about them was unwise at this meeting.

- **Action:** A motion was made and seconded to hold a special meeting of Yellowstone Presbytery on Thursday, November 21 at noon to discuss and vote on the two policies and to handle any other business that needs to come before the presbytery. The motion passed.

***People are encouraged to read both policies by November 11 and share concerns and input for improvement with Russ Kline before the Leadership Cabinet meeting on November 12.***

Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming was dismissed from the meeting so presbyters could discuss issues of salary and proposed raises.

- **Action:** The Leadership Cabinet, at the recommendation of the Personnel Subcommittee, moved that the Presbytery elect current Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming to a second term as Stated Clerk of Yellowstone Presbytery with the ending date of her term being December 31, 2027. The motion passed.
- **Action:** The Leadership Cabinet, at the recommendation of the Personnel Subcommittee, moved that Yellowstone Presbytery set aside Standing Rule S4.05 for one year in order to allow Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming’s second term to expire December 31, 2027 instead of in June 2027. The motion passed.

*(S4.05 states: The stated clerk shall be elected by the presbytery at the last stated meeting at which the term of the incumbent expires, and shall assume office upon installation at the close of said meeting. The term of office shall be three years; the stated clerk shall not serve for consecutive terms, full or partial, for more than six years...)*

- **Action:** The Leadership Cabinet, at the recommendation of the Personnel Subcommittee, moved that the General Presbyter and Office Administrator receive a 3% COLA increase in salary. The motion passed.
- **Action:** The Leadership Cabinet at Caroline Fleming request, amended the Stated Clerk Terms of Call to create an education fund in the amount stated in the budget.
- **Action:** Leadership Cabinet moved that Presbytery approve the following Presbytery meeting dates and locations for 2025 meetings if the way be clear: March 7-8, Butte, May 30, Bozeman, October 3-4, Billings. The motion passed.

- **Action:** A motion was made and seconded to amend the agenda, interrupting the Leadership Cabinet report, to allow guests from the Center Pole program in Garryowen, Mt to talk with presbyters about the program. The motion passed.

**24-045 Report from the Center Pole Program:** Center Pole received a Self-Development Of People (SDOP) grant in the amount of \$23,750 earlier this year to be used for food, training, vehicle, warehouse and equipment repairs, supplies and community meetings and trainings. Peggy Wellknown Buffalo, Founder and Executive Director, shared that the program promotes youth development, food sovereignty, alternative energy possibilities, and more. The program serves people from both Crow and Northern Cheyenne reservations. SDOP receives funds through the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) offering, one of the PC (USA) special offerings. For more information about the program, the Center Pole website is [www.thecenterpole.org](http://www.thecenterpole.org) Rev. Jody McDevitt prayed for the program and its continued success.

**24-046 Leadership Cabinet Report continued: (Attachment E: Treasurer's Report)**

With the year 2024 75% complete, our Administrative budget income is at 77% and budget expenses are at 69%. Program budget income is at 77% and budget expenses are at 69%. Both budgets are on track. Treasurer Ric Tieman encouraged churches to send in their Peacemaking and/or Christmas Joy offerings by early 2025. A suggestion was made that churches consider sending the portion of the Peacemaking Offering that churches keep to the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance fund this year.

**(Attachment F)** Treasurer Ric Tieman reported that the proposed 2025 budget included 3% raises for staff and a per capita of \$59.00 per member.

- **Action:** Leadership Cabinet moved that Presbytery adopt the proposed budget of \$197,872.00 for 2025 and set the 2025 per capita at \$59.00. The motion passed.

The presbytery office will close December 31. Documents will be stored in the Cloud.

**24-047 Pastoral Ministry Team (PMT) report: (Attachment G)** MWS Sarah Tunall was welcomed as our newest member of Yellowstone Presbytery.

- **Action:** PMT recommended Yellowstone Presbytery approve the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between MWS Jamie Schmeling and the Terry Community Presbyterian Church, MT and Hope Lutheran Church, Fallon, MT with her ending date being Sunday, November 3, 2024. The motion passed.
- **Action:** PMT recommended Yellowstone Presbytery approve MWS Jamie Schmeling's call to First Presbyterian Church, Miles City, MT with starting date of December 1, 2024. The motion passed.
- **Action:** PMT recommended Yellowstone Presbytery authorize PMT to act on behalf of Presbytery of Yellowstone to elect an Administrative Commission to install MWS Jamie Schmeling as the pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Miles City, Montana. The motion passed.
- **Action:** A motion was made and seconded to extend the docket by 30 minutes. The motion passed.

PMT Moderator Neva Rathbun offered prayer for Jamie and her new call, reminded ministers to send their annual reports, and reminded people to sign up for boundary training.

**24-048 Rep/Nom report-Part 2 (Attachment C):** The slate of nominees for the coming year and terms were read for a second time. Moderator Melissa Bell called for nominations from the floor three times.

- **Action:** Moderator Melissa Bell called for nominations from the floor three times before calling for a vote on the slate presented by the Rep/Nom Team. The motion passed.

**24-049 Reports from General Assembly Commissioners (Attachment H)** All our Commissioners to General Assembly submitted written reports.

**24-050 Camping & Youth Ministry Team (Attachment K)** Moderator JP Carlson shared stories of the 2024 camping season, the first season back at Westminster Spires for several years. Fifty-six campers participated. More leadership help will be needed in 2025 and JP requested help with recruiting. There is no age limit when it comes to helpers. The team is considering seeking sponsorships for food and for counselors.

**24-051 LCM Campus Ministry Report:** LCM is seeking a new logo as the program becomes increasingly ecumenical. If churches would like to have JP Carlson come and preach or speak about the Bozeman campus ministry program, he would be happy to do so. The 2024-25 promotional video is almost done. When it is, JP will send it to the Stated Clerk to distribute to churches.

**24-052 Announcements and Closing:**

- A prayer was raised for shalom for churches and the nation.
- Neva was thanked for her service on the Permanent Judicial Commission.
- A thank you letter from Intermountain for the presbytery's \$1500 gift was read.
- Please register for the boundary training session to be held November 9 at 9 am.
- Information about the Town Pump "Adopt a Family" grant program was shared.
- Rus Kline was thanked for his 6 years of service on Leadership Cabinet and service as Moderator of that team for several years. Kathy presented him with the book Bake and Pray.
- **Action:** A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed.

Moderator Melissa Bell closed the meeting reading the Halverson Benediction and Presbyters sang "This Little Light of Mine."

Respectfully submitted,

Caroline Fleming, Stated Clerk

**Stated Clerk Report to Yellowstone Presbytery**

November 1, 2024

**Protocol Review** for all attending the Presbytery meeting by Zoom or in person:

1. **All attendees:** *Please say your name and the entity you represent when you speak.*
2. **All attendees:** *If not using a voice vote of “Yes” or “No,” please use either the “raise hand” feature on your Zoom screen or raise your hand.*
3. **Zoom attendees:** *Please keep your computer microphone muted until called upon or recognized to speak. This helps eliminate feedback, minimize background noise, and helps us to move through our time together more smoothly.*
4. **Zoom Attendees:** *Please rename your Zoom participant identification to include “RE” or “MWS” if applicable, your first and last name, the entity you represent, your position (i.e., member, commissioner, guest) and town. For example: RE Caroline Fleming, YP Stated Clerk, Miles City.*

**Omnibus motion.**

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**End of Motion.**

**Activities since our last stated presbytery meeting:**

1. Attended all meetings of the Leadership Cabinet and the Pastoral Ministry Team and recorded proceedings.
2. Attended the Synod minutes review of Presbytery minutes in Denver July 22.
3. Attended the boundary training session offered August 3, 2024.

4. Helped plan and participated in the Leadership Cabinet/Pastoral Ministry Team retreat September 12.
5. Served on the team to plan the November Presbytery meeting.
6. Conducted an email vote for PMT to elect the Commission to install Rev. Sarah Tunall as pastor at Manhattan Presbyterian Church and set October 27 at 3:30 p.m. as the date and time for the installation.
7. Conducted an email vote for Leadership Cabinet to propose changing the proposal of February 28-March 1 as the 1<sup>st</sup> stated meeting of Yellowstone Presbytery in 2025 to March 7-8, 2024 as that first meeting.
8. Continued research into ridding presbytery of the small plot of land in Vally County and am currently working on a Quit Claim deed to be filed with Valley County.
9. Worked with Kathy, Ric, Debra Jackson and Debbie Blackburn cleaning out the Presbytery office in Bozeman. There is still a bit more to do.
10. Attended Rocky Mountain Synod/Dubuque Seminary Introduction to the Old Testament class and am currently taking the Introduction to the New Testament Class.
11. Worked with Leadership Cabinet on drafts of two proposed policies, Anti-Harassment Policy and Anti-Racism Policy, that will be presented for discussion and vote at this meeting.
12. Updated presbytery directory as needed.
13. Attended three Zoom seminars:
  - a. *"The Church Leadership Connection: Basic Training on Mid Council Roles"* MCLO webinar
  - b. *"Crafting a Meaningful Anti-Racism Policy"* with Anna Kendig Flores and John Curtiss
  - c. *"How Missional Startups Engage Your Community and Reenergize Your Church"* by Fresh Expressions
  - d. *"OGA Webinar on Actions for Presbytery Votes"* with Laurie Griffith

## ATTACHMENT B

### **Gen. Presbyter Report to Yellowstone Presbytery Rev. Kathy Goodrich November 1, 2024**

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us,<sup>1 2 3 4</sup> looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy

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1 Prayer ministry. The formation of a group in the presbytery whose focus will be discerning the Spirit's leading and stirring up prayer in and for our presbytery and churches was one of the top priorities emerging from the leadership Cabinet/PMT retreat in September.

2 Spiritual training is required if we are **to run the race of faith with perseverance** (Heb 12). Please look for spiritual training and growth opportunities that the presbytery will be offering and suggesting, so that we sink our roots more deeply into Christ (Paul and Ephesians 3). Practicing the Way as apprentices of Jesus means we need to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do as he did (John Mark Comer's *Practicing the Way*).

3 Seeing with the eyes of Jesus (**People Eyes**), Listening, reflecting as to how to love, serve, partner as we join Christ in his mission in our communities, state, world. (A process)

4 Exploring and experimenting with new ways of being Church, including, but not limited to fresh expressions and dinner church.



that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.”

**Hebrews 12:1-2.**

**“I believe... in the Communion of Saints...” – Apostles Creed**

As we meet on All Saints Day, I am reflecting on and freshly inspired by some of the saints. As we recently walked the ancient roads, visited locations and places in Greece and Western Turkey from the book of Acts, day after day, I experienced an indescribable communion with some of the great cloud of witnesses. It was in Philippi that Paul, Silas, Luke, Lydia, the slave girl, the Roman jailer, were transformed and gave their all for Jesus and Jesus mission, the Holy Spirit’s remarkable transformation in and through their community of such **unity in Christ** that it defied all sociological categories and norms. There the Gospel broke out through their lives in such power that it would be said of them over in Thessaloniki that “the [people] who have turned the world upside down have come here also.” (Acts 17: 6)

I was struck not only by their passion and love, but their courage and persistence in affliction. Beaten brutally, bloodied and in torturing stocks at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns ! How can we nurture our spiritual lives in community with each other, in little groups, that God might work mightily in and through our lives in tough times?

The Holy Spirit has been stirring, pestering in my soul to ask, “Are we willing to allow the Holy Spirit to create that loving, radical, Christ-like community in our churches, presbytery... Now?

Are we, disparate, different and fallible individuals, willing to be so captured by the same Gospel that, united in Christ, the light and the love of Jesus radiate among and out from us?

Am I willing, might we be willing, to surrender to what the Holy Spirit may wish to do among us? So Jesus is seen in and among us?

Like those early saints, I, too, was convicted, transformed, and compelled by their whole-hearted, sacrificial love for Jesus, His mission, and for **all** the people they interacted with, even their jailors and enemies. I don’t ever want to be the same after my experiences with some of the great cloud of witnesses in places we visited including Berea, Corinth, Athens, Ephesus, Patmos, and others. It was the trip of a spiritual lifetime.

George and I look forward to sharing more with you of our transformative experiences and insights into the texts and stories of scripture, very pertinent to our contexts today. We hope this trip can bless and enrich everyone. Please be in touch with us that we might share with you and / or your congregation in some way.

I invite you to join me in curious listening and discovery to learn not only from the saints of Bible times and 2,000 of church history (endless adventure and inspiration) but also the living ones around the globe (house churches in Iran, in Zimbabwe, ...) or in our presbytery and in your church that you may be challenged and built up in your faith.

*For all the saints...*

*And when the strife is fierce, the warfare long,  
steals on the ear the distant triumph song,  
and hearts are brave again, and arms are strong.*

*Alleluia, alleluia!*

#### **Personal:**

This fall we are celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my ordination, and of George’s 46<sup>th</sup> ! The one who has called is faithful

We are grateful for the true gift of grace God knew we needed on this extraordinary Study leave trip. We were not able to get away for several years between Covid, and the decline and deaths of our moms before and during our sabbatical, which was followed by 5 more family deaths.

**REPRESENTATION/NOMINATION Team Roster of Nominees**

November 1-2, 2024

The Representation/Nominating Ministry Team met seven times by Zoom this fall. We are pleased to have excellent people to nominate for many positions in our presbytery, but our slate is not complete. WE NEED YOUR HELP IDENTIFYING PEOPLE WHO ARE ABLE AND WILLING TO SERVE IN SOME KEY ROLES, SO THAT WE CAN COMPLETE OUR WORK BY THE END OF 2024.

- Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery, who also serves on the Leadership Cabinet  
Because of a significant imbalance on the Leadership Cabinet, this person should be a male Ruling Elder

The Representation & Nomination Team places in nomination the following slate of candidates for open positions, beginning January 1, 2025:

**Moderator of Presbytery:** RE Melissa Bell (Lewistown)

**Vice-Moderator of Presbytery:** RE \_\_\_\_\_

**LEADERSHIP CABINET**

Class of 2026 MWS Dave Thompson (Billings 1<sup>st</sup>) (Moderator of LC 2025)

RE \_\_\_\_\_ (Vice Moderator of Presbytery)

Class of 2025 Male RE \_\_\_\_\_

Class of 2026 RE Julie Boksich  
RE Melissa Bell (Lewistown)

Class of 2027 MWS Karolee Larson (Butte)  
RE Charles Brown (Lewistown)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PASTORAL MINISTRY TEAM**

2025 Co-Moderators – RE Debbie Blackburn and MWS Neva Rathbun

Class of 2025 MWS Daniel Triller (Dillon)

Class of 2026 MWS George Goodrich (Bozeman)

Class of 2027 RE Debbie Blackburn (Manhattan)  
RE Debbie Ernst (Bozeman)  
MWS Freeman McCall (Dillon)  
RE Andy Pehl (Terry)

**CAMPING AND YOUTH MINISTRY TEAM**

2025 Moderator MWS Daniel Triller (Dillon)

Class of 2027 RE Patty Johnson  
RE Curt Kochner (Billings, St. Andrews)  
MWS Sarah Tunall (Manhattan)

## **PERMANENT JUDICIAL COMMISSION**

Class of 2030 MWS Karolee Larson (Butte)  
RE – Gayle Holland (Forsyth)  
RE – Sandy Schoenberger (Billings)

## **SYNOD COMMISSIONER**

**Class of 2026** RE – Jim Tarr

## **REPRESENTATION & NOMINATION TEAM**

(Leadership Cabinet will seek a nominee for the Class of 2027 and submit the name to Presbytery at a later date.

Class of 2027 MWS \_\_\_\_\_

## **ATTACHMENT D**

### **Leadership Cabinet Report**

Yellowstone Presbytery November 1-2 2024

FPC Billings/ Zoom

Leadership cabinet met in July and October. We started every meeting with Dwelling in the Word. This is to remind us that to be able to do the work of God we must first remember to be the people of God and to hopefully have our minds, dreaming and planning shaped and guided by the Spirit through the scriptures, and to listen to and learn from one another as we seek to learn God's leading. The vision statement directs us to gather together for God's glory and spiritual synergy. We have kept this in mind as we plan Presbytery meetings and work toward being disciple-making, disciple-sending leaders. A major vehicle since the time of Jesus and his early followers involves creating small groups in our churches, neighborhoods, and throughout our Presbytery. We desire to equip and encourage one another for living out our whole vision as Christ's disciples in the context in which we are sent.

### **EQUIP & ENCOURAGE**

- Reflect on feedback from May presbytery meeting.
- Received and discussed General Presbyter's report
- Shared where we have seen the Spirit at work recently, especially in and through our lives, small groups and churches. We are incorporating this practice of seeing and sharing about the Holy Spirit at work into our March Presbytery meeting.
- Shared feedback on September retreat with PMT.
- Received and approved higher education grants to United Campus Ministry MSU Billings \$1,500.00, Christian Campus Ministry at Rocky Mountain College \$1,200.00 and Living Christ's Mission at MSU Bozeman \$1,700.00.
- Assigned subgroup planning November Presbytery meeting.
- Received and discussed Clerks report.
- Received and approved for Presbytery consideration and vote at a later date an Anti-Racism Policy and an Anit-harassment Policy. Both proposed policies can be found on the presbytery meeting website at [www.yellowstonepcusa.org](http://www.yellowstonepcusa.org)
- Received a proposal that Yellowstone Presbytery contract with CCB Technology to set up long-term storage in the cloud and retention policies. This was approved at a cost of somewhere between \$3,000.00 and 5,000.00 depending on the amount of data.

- Approved receiving the offering at the November Presbytery meeting for the Presbyterian Disaster Relief Assistance fund.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

- Received regular reports from personnel sub-group as attached report will show.
- LC and PMT will be bring forward at a later date the amendments proposed by the 2024 General Assembly.

#### Action Items for Presbytery Meeting:

- The Leadership Cabinet, at the recommendation of the Personnel Subcommittee, moves that the Presbytery elect current Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming to a second term as Stated Clerk of Yellowstone Presbytery.
- The Leadership Cabinet, at the recommendation of the Personnel Subcommittee, moves that Yellowstone Presbytery set aside Standing Rule S4.05 for one year in order to allow Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming's second term to expire December 31, 2027 instead of in June 2027.  
*(S4.05 states: The stated clerk shall be elected by the presbytery at the last stated meeting at which the term of the incumbent expires, and shall assume office upon installation at the close of said meeting. The term of office shall be three years; the stated clerk shall not serve for consecutive terms, full or partial, for more than six years...)*
- The Leadership Cabinet, at the recommendation of the Personnel Subcommittee, moves that each of our three paid Presbytery Staff receive a 3% COLA for 2025, as presented in the proposed budget. In consultation with Caroline Fleming, the amount of the Stated Clerk's 3% COLA will be put toward the creation of a Continuing Education Fund for the Stated Clerk that may be rolled over for up to two years.
- Leadership Cabinet moves that Presbytery adopt the proposed budget of \$197,872.00 for 2025 and set the 2025 per capita at &59.00. \*See Treasurers Report
- Leadership Cabinet moves that Presbytery approve the following Presbytery meeting dates and locations for 2025 if the way be clear:  
*March 7-8, Butte                      May 30, Bozeman                      October 3-4, Billings*

Submitted by Russell Kline, LC Moderator

#### **Addendum to the Leadership Cabinet Report Yellowstone Presbytery November 2024 Personnel Subcommittee Report**

#### Information Items:

- The Personnel Subcommittee's efforts to rewrite the Personnel Handbook continue, although the work is coming along slowly due to other pressing demands on the subcommittee's members.
  - The Personnel Subcommittee conducted Presbytery Office Assistant Deb Jackson's Annual Personnel review on April 2, 2024.
  - The Personnel Subcommittee conducted Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming's Annual Personnel Review on September 24, 2024.
  - The Personnel Subcommittee has scheduled General Presbyter Kathy Goodrich's Annual Personnel Review for November 13, 2024.
  - Over the summer, it came to the Personnel Subcommittee's attention that Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming's first three-year term as Stated Clerk expired in June 2024. The Personnel Subcommittee brought the matter before the Leadership Cabinet in July, and the Leadership Cabinet acted to continue her employment as Stated Clerk until a vote could be brought before the whole Presbytery during this November 2024 Stated Meeting of Yellowstone Presbytery
- Submitted by Ashley Birk, Personnel Subcommittee Chair

## Treasurer's Report to Presbytery as of September 30, 2024

With the year 2024 75% complete, our Administrative budget income is at 77% and budget expenses are at 69%. Program budget income is at 77% and budget expenses are at 69%. Both budgets are on track.

\$4,400 will be transferred from Account 1051, Higher Education, to 1052, Other Designated Funds to cover the Higher Education Grants awarded in September.

Ric Tieman

Treasurer@yellowstonepcusa.org

406-595-1250

**Presbytery of Yellowstone PCUSA**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**As of September 30, 2024**

**Accrual Basis**

	Sep 30, 24	Aug 31, 24	\$ Change
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
<b>Checking/Savings</b>			
1000 · Checking and Savings			
1005 · Checking 3214	86,216.36	99,541.25	(13,324.89)
1010 · Money Market 3355	142,931.00	142,821.73	109.27
1015 · Partnership Fund MM 3793	45,770.54	45,753.04	17.50
1060 · Vanco Clearing Account	0.00	299.88	(299.88)
<b>Total 1000 · Checking and Savings</b>	274,917.90	288,415.90	(13,498.00)
1020 · St Timothy Checking 1961	100.00	100.00	0.00
1030 · St Timothy Checking 3686	100.00	100.00	0.00
1050 · New Covenant 5737			
1051 · Higher Education	10,646.87	10,646.87	0.00
1052 · Other Designated Funds	116,514.59	110,014.92	6,499.67
<b>Total 1050 · New Covenant 5737</b>	127,161.46	120,661.79	6,499.67
1100 · St Timothy Endowment Funds			
1110 · St Timothy Chapel #1 1085	398,322.14	376,510.66	21,811.48
1120 · St Timothy Chapel #2 6024	121,373.43	114,727.21	6,646.22
<b>Total 1100 · St Timothy Endowment Funds</b>	519,695.57	491,237.87	28,457.70
<b>Total Checking/Savings</b>	921,974.93	900,515.56	21,459.37
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	921,974.93	900,515.56	21,459.37
<b>Other Assets</b>			
1850 · Beartooth Electric Co-op	1,018.18	1,018.18	0.00
1900 · Char Rem Trust 0931	143,391.00	143,391.00	0.00
<b>Total Other Assets</b>	144,409.18	144,409.18	0.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>1,066,384.11</b>	<b>1,044,924.74</b>	<b>21,459.37</b>

**Presbytery of Yellowstone PCUSA**

**Statement of Financial Position**

**As of September 30, 2024**

**Accrual Basis**

	Sep 30, 24	Aug 31, 24	\$ Change
<b>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>			
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
<b>Accounts Payable</b>			
2000 · Accounts Payable	1,664.33	1,284.48	379.85
<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>	1,664.33	1,284.48	379.85
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>			
<b>2100 · Payroll Liabilities</b>			
2110 · Federal Liabilities	810.74	1,937.94	(1,127.20)
2120 · State Liabilities	61.96	93.70	(31.74)
2150 · Retirement Payable	313.02	313.02	0.00
2160 · Health Insurance Payable	1,205.14	1,205.14	0.00
<b>Total 2100 · Payroll Liabilities</b>	2,390.86	3,549.80	(1,158.94)
<b>2200 · Other Current Liabilities</b>			
2200.01 · GA Pentacost Offering PC999999	189.00	189.00	0.00
2200.02 · GA Mission Pledges	712.05	474.70	237.35
2200.03 · GA Peacemaking PM999999	121.00	121.00	0.00
2200.04 · GA One Great Hour OG999999	25.00	25.00	0.00
2200.05 · GA Christmas Joy CJ999999	848.62	848.62	0.00
2200.09 · GA Other Donation	1,400.00	875.00	525.00
<b>Total 2200 · Other Current Liabilities</b>	3,295.67	2,533.32	762.35
<b>Total Other Current Liabilities</b>	5,686.53	6,083.12	(396.59)
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	7,350.86	7,367.60	(16.74)
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	7,350.86	7,367.60	(16.74)
<b>Equity</b>			
<b>3100 · General Funds</b>			
3100.1 · Administrative	255.07	255.07	0.00
3100.2 · Admin Support	46,690.99	46,690.99	0.00
3100.3 · Program	45,709.22	45,709.22	0.00
3100.4 · West Yellowstone Funds	18,348.34	18,348.34	0.00
3100.9 · Unrestricted	28,984.34	28,984.34	0.00
<b>Total 3100 · General Funds</b>	139,987.96	139,987.96	0.00
<b>3200 · Designated Funds</b>			
3200.01 · Camp Scholarships	7,611.63	7,611.63	0.00
3200.02 · Clergy Emergency Fund	1,756.99	1,756.99	0.00
3200.03 · Equip & Encourage	39,746.16	39,746.16	0.00
3200.04 · Evangelism Grant	52,369.21	52,369.21	0.00
3200.05 · Higher Education Grant	6,246.87	10,646.87	(4,400.00)
3200.06 · Linda Hofer Education	19,495.65	19,495.65	0.00
3200.07 · Partnership Spendable Funds	2,390.00	2,390.00	0.00
3200.08 · Peace Making Offering to YP	6,436.70	6,436.70	0.00
3200.09 · Presbyter Discretionary Fund	3,331.54	3,331.54	0.00
3200.10 · Presbyter Study Leave	1,229.01	1,229.01	0.00
3200.11 · Presbytery Continuing Education	3,595.77	3,595.77	0.00
3200.12 · Revamp Camp	18,879.00	18,995.16	(116.16)
3200.13 · Rural Ministry Grant	1,070.28	1,070.28	0.00
3200.14 · Social Justice	6,469.45	6,469.45	0.00
3200.16 · St Timothy's MM #1	100.00	100.00	0.00
3200.17 · St Timothy's MM #2	100.00	100.00	0.00
3200.18 · Triennium Fund	6,793.52	6,793.52	0.00
3200.19 · Yell Pres Funds Await Cab Actio	17,478.27	17,478.27	0.00
3200.20 · Dubuque-Synod Of RM CRE cohort	2,759.00	2,759.00	0.00
<b>Total 3200 · Designated Funds</b>	197,859.05	202,375.21	(4,516.16)

<2>

These statements have not been audited, reviewed or compiled

**Presbytery of Yellowstone PCUSA**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**As of September 30, 2024**

**Accrual Basis**

	<u>Sep 30, 24</u>	<u>Aug 31, 24</u>	<u>\$ Change</u>
<b>3300 · Restricted Funds</b>			
<b>3300.1 · St Timothy Endowments</b>	485,012.49	485,012.49	0.00
<b>3300.2 · Char Rem Trust</b>	143,391.00	143,391.00	0.00
<b>3300.3 · Partnership Funds Principle Amt</b>	45,599.57	45,599.57	0.00
<b>Total 3300 · Restricted Funds</b>	674,003.06	674,003.06	0.00
<b>Net Income</b>	47,183.18	21,190.91	25,992.27
<b>Total Equity</b>	1,059,033.25	1,037,557.14	21,476.11
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b><u>1,066,384.11</u></b>	<b><u>1,044,924.74</u></b>	<b><u>21,459.37</u></b>

<3>

**These statements have not been audited, reviewed or compiled**



Monday, October 28, 2024

**Treasurer's Report of Proposed 2025 Budget to Presbytery of Yellowstone**

The 2025 Proposed Budgets have been prepared with a 3% raise for staff. General Presbyter's Total Effective Salary (TES) is comprised of Cash and Salary in the Administrative Budget plus allocations in the Program Budget and total \$45.217. Cash and housing will be balanced as necessary based upon the Goodrich's needs, which will not change the TES..

The Stated Clerk requested that salary not be increased but have the 3% designated for a continuing Education fund with unused balances rolled over to accumulate for up to two year.

Insurance costs will not be available until late December, but with a reduction for not needing coverage for a physical office, we might come out ahead. Again this year we can only obtain liability coverage for Westminster Spires due to the fire classification of the forest.

Reserves have been allocated in the budget to cover projected deficit. Admin Support Funds will be used up to the amount received below the budgeted income for account 4001, at the year end of each year. Program reserves are more than adequate to cover Program deficits.

Total Per-capita is recommended to increase by one dollar to \$59.00 and is based upon 1,374 members, down 6 members from previous. Note that the GA increase is \$1.04.

**Per-Capita**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>GA</b>	<b>9.80</b>	<b>10.84</b>
<b>Synod</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>3.00</b>
<b>Presbytery</b>	<b><u>45.20</u></b>	<b><u>45.16</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>58.00</b>	<b>59.00</b>

Presbytery of Yellowstone PCUSA

<b>Administrative Budget</b>	<b>2024 Annual Budget</b>	<b>2025 Proposed Budget</b>
<b>Income</b>		
4001 - Administrative Support	35,000	35,000
4004 - Per Capita Income	80,040	81,066
4005 - Interest Income	-	-
4006 - Dividend Income	-	-
4007 - Other Income	-	-
<b>Total RECEIPTS</b>	<b>115,040</b>	<b>116,066</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
<b>LEADERSHIP CABINET</b>		
6303 - Cabinet Meetings	1,500	1,500
6304 - Accounting Fees	5,200	6,300
6305 - Legal Fees	100	100
6306 - Task Force Meetings	500	500
6307 - Nom/St-Tim/Delegate Mtgs	500	100
<b>Total LEADERSHIP CABINET</b>	<b>7,800</b>	<b>8,500</b>
<b>PASTORAL MINISTRY TEAM</b>		
6506 - PMT Meeting Expense	2,500	2,500
<b>Total PASTORAL MINISTRY TEAM</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,500</b>
<b>PERSONNEL EXPENSES</b>		
<b>6601 - Admin Manager</b>		
6601.1 - Salary	2,500	2,575
<b>Total 6601 - Admin Manager</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,575</b>
<b>6602 - General Presbyter</b>		
6602.1 - Salary	7,060	7,272
6602.2 - Housing	27,879	28,715
6602.3 - Retirement	3,757	3,870
6602.4 - Insurance	13,478	18,964
6602.5 - Meals Reimb	1,200	1,200
6602.6 - Travel Reimb	4,000	4,000
6602.7 - Telephone	1,200	1,200

6602.8 · Discretionary Fund	1,250	1,250
6602.9 · Study Leave	700	700
<b>Total 6602 · General Presbyter</b>	<b>60,524</b>	<b>67,171</b>

6603 · Stated Clerk		
6603.1 · Salary	22,437	22,437
6603.4 · Travel Reimb	2,500	2,500
6603.5 · Discretionary Fund	500	500
6603.X · Continuing Education Fund		673
<b>Total 6603 · Stated Clerk</b>	<b>25,437</b>	<b>26,110</b>

6604 · Payroll Taxes	2,000	2,060
<b>Total PERSONNEL EXPENSES</b>	<b>90,461</b>	<b>95,856</b>

**PRESBYTERY EXPENSES**

6703 · Per Capita Expense	17,664	19,016
6704 · Presbytery Meetings	6,000	6,000
6705 · Presbytery Other Exp	800	2,400
<b>Total PRESBYTERY EXPENSES</b>	<b>24,464</b>	<b>27,416</b>

**PRESBYTERY OFFICE**

6801 · Copies & Postage	300	300
6802 · Insurance	400	420
6803 · Office Supplies	100	100
6804 · Rent	4,140	100
6805 · Computer & Telephone Expense	700	600
6806 · Bank Service Charges	250	250
<b>Total PRESBYTERY OFFICE</b>	<b>5,890</b>	<b>1,770</b>

<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>131,115</b>	<b>136,042</b>
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<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>(16,075)</b>	<b>(21,002)</b>
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**OTHER RECEIPTS**

Transfer from Admin Support		-
Transfers from Unrestricted	10,075	2,654
Transfers from W Yellowstone	6,000	18,348
<b>Total OTHER RECEIPTS</b>	<b>16,075</b>	<b>21,002</b>

<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(0)</b>
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## Presbytery of Yellowstone PCUSA

<b>Program Budget</b>	<b>2024 Annual Budget</b>	<b>2025 Proposed Budget</b>
<b>Income</b>		
4002 · Camp Income		
4002.1 · Summer Camp Fees	10,000	10,000
4002.2 · Event Fees	2,000	2,000
4002.3 · Rental of Camp Facilities	12,000	12,000
4002.5 · Other Camp Income	2,000	2,000
<b>Total 4002 · Camp Income</b>	<b>26,000</b>	<b>26,000</b>
4003 · General Mission Pledge	24,000	24,000
<b>Total RECEIPTS</b>	<b>50,000</b>	<b>50,000</b>
<b>Expense</b>		
<b>CAMPING &amp; YOUTH</b>		
6100 · Camping Expenses		
6101 · Activities	1,200	1,200
6102 · Food	3,500	3,500
6103 · Supplies	800	800
6104 · Transportation	1,000	1,500
6106 · Salaries & Wages	20,740	23,000
6107 Pastor Honorarium		1,500
<b>Total 6100 · Camping Expenses</b>	<b>27,240</b>	<b>31,500</b>
6110 · Triennium	1,500	-
6120 · Special Events	3,500	3,500
6200 · Admin Camping Expenses		
6201 · Advertising & Marketing	200	200
6202 · Copies & Postage	100	100
6203 · Liability Insurance	3,500	4,000
6206 · Utilities	3,000	3,000
<b>Total 6200 · Admin &amp; Camping Expenses</b>	<b>6,800</b>	<b>10,800</b>
<b>Total CAMPING &amp; YOUTH</b>	<b>39,040</b>	<b>42,300</b>

**LEADERSHIP CABINET**

6301 · Intermountain Childrens Home	1,500	1,500
6302 · Rocky Mountain College	1,500	1,500
<b>Total LEADERSHIP CABINET</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>3,000</b>

**PASTORAL MINISTRY TEAM**

6501 · Training	1,000	1,000
6502 · Congregation Ministry	1,000	1,000
6503 · Emergency Career Counseling	1,000	1,000
6504 · Vocations Expense	1,200	1,000
6507 · Dubuque-Synod of RM CRE cohort	-	500
<b>Total PASTORAL MINISTRY TEAM</b>	<b>4,200</b>	<b>4,500</b>

**PERSONNEL EXPENSES**

6602 · General Presbyter Allocate 45%		
6602.1 · Salary	9,252	9,530
<b>Total 6602 · General Presbyter</b>	<b>9,252</b>	<b>9,530</b>

6604 · Payroll Taxes	336	1,400
<b>Total PERSONNEL EXPENSES</b>	<b>9,588</b>	<b>10,930</b>

**PRESBYTERY EXPENSES**

6702 · Cluster Meetings	100	100
6705 · Presbytery Other Exp	1,000	1,000
<b>Total PRESBYTERY EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>1,100</b>

<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>56,928</b>	<b>61,830</b>
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<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>(6,928)</b>	<b>(11,830)</b>
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**OTHER RECEIPTS**

Transfers from Program Fund	6,928	11,830
<b>Total OTHER RECEIPTS</b>	<b>6,928</b>	<b>11,830</b>

<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>
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Presbytery of Yellowstone  
First Presbyterian Church  
Billings, Montana  
November 1-2, 2024

### PASTORAL MINISTRY TEAM REPORT

The PMT recommends the following for vote by the Presbytery:

- Approve the dissolution of the pastoral relationship between MWS Jamie Schmeling and the Terry Community Presbyterian Church, MT and Hope Lutheran Church, Fallon, MT with her ending date being Sunday, November 3, 2024.
- Approve MWS Jamie Schmeling's call to First Presbyterian Church, Miles City, MT with starting date of December 1, 2024. (See Attachment A Terms of Call)
- Authorize PMT to act on behalf of Presbytery of Yellowstone to elect an Administrative Commission to install MWS Jamie Schmeling as the pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Miles City, Montana

If you have not registered for the Boundary Training scheduled for Saturday, November 9, 2024, please do so. Ministers of Word and Sacrament are required along with anyone who works with children or serves in a leadership capacity. (e. g. Session members, Deacons.) The session begins at 9:00 A.M to 1:00 P.M. You may register at [www.glacierpresbytery.org](http://www.glacierpresbytery.org) or go online for the registration form, fill it in and email the form to [debra@fpczoeman.org](mailto:debra@fpczoeman.org) . Only 8 persons from the Presbytery of Yellowstone attended the August boundary training. More active Elders are needed to attend.

Retired, at-large and validated ministry pastors, please send your Annual Reports to Caroline Fleming, Stated Clerk, either by email to [caroline@yellowstonepcusa.org](mailto:caroline@yellowstonepcusa.org) or by snail mail to 315 Charles St. #28, Miles City, MT 59301. You will find the Annual Report form on the Presbytery website.

A question was asked of the PMT about who may preside over service at Holy Communion. According to the Book of Order and the Synod Stated Clerk, ministers from churches with whom the PC(U.S.A.) is in covenant agreement or those from denominations closely aligned with the Reformed Faith and theology of the PC(U.S.A.)(e.g., Methodist, Episcopalian) may preside. Ministers from denominations whose theology is very different and who do not understand Presbyterian polity may not.

The PMT have been and continue to be actively involved as liaisons with congregations seeking to call pastors to serve in their church communities. We have asked for Special called Presbytery Meetings in order to do the business in a timely manner.

Both RE Debbie Ernst and MWS Neva Rathbun give thanks for all the time and work that each team member has given to do the tasks needed. The PMT includes RE Cheryl Banks; RE Julie Boksich; RE Gail Beckham; RE Andy Pehl; RE Jim Tarr; MWS Steve Hundley; MWS Freeman McCall; and MWS Dan Tiller

Also we thank Stated Clerk Caroline Fleming and General Presbyter Kathy Goodrich for their advice and assistance.

## General Assembly Report

I was a part of the Polity committee. This was a stressful and interesting process. Much discussion was had on polity concerning LGBTQIA+ . There was one overture with two parts, which were considered separately. First part added verbiage without changing meaning of current polity. This was recommended by committee and passed by GA. The second part would have restricted the voice of those who did not fully embrace and support those in the LGBTQIA+ community. This went too far, in my opinion, and would have excluded those with an alternate voice. This portion of the overture was amended on GA floor to allow all parties to come to the table together, acknowledging the voice of all. This amendment to the original proposal was approved by GA. Much time, prayer, and thought went into the discussions and voting.

We were hosted to dinner one evening at a Japanese church. Several days later, Japanese ceremonial drummers closed a worship services. Another day, worship was introduced with a full bagpipe and drum corp. All worship services were powerful and thought-provoking. Sermons were exceptional, with one from the president of Columbia Seminary and another by the head of the World Council of Churches.

The new co-moderators, the Rev. Tony Larson and the Rev. CeCe Armstrong did a wonderful job of moderating and will continue to represent the PCUSA in a very powerful and positive way.

While stressful and a lot of hard work, this was a very meaningful experience for me. I would highly recommend the experience.

Russ Kline  
Elder Commissioner to 226<sup>th</sup> General Assembly



## GENERAL ASSEMBLY REPORT

JP Carlson, Minister Commissioner to the 226 General Assembly

I was a part of the ecumenical & interfaith committee. Our discernment was put to the test when weighing the desire to be in relationship with migrant Presbyterian communities with traditional views on sexuality while attending to the concerns of LGBTQIA+ advocates. The committee was able to find middle ground on most issues, honoring our sisters & brothers in Christ from other countries and providing clear advocacy for our friends in the LGBTQIA+ community. This matter will require ongoing intentional and respectful conversations as we nurture existing relationships with our friends from abroad and build new ones.

One of the votes that stuck out to me during the assembly pertained to divestment from fossil fuel companies. At first, the decision to divest seemed straightforward. The majority of the assembly and almost all of the youth delegates were for divestment. When it became clear that divestment meant losing our seat at the table and thus forfeiting our influence on decision making, the assembly reconsidered the initial vote & decided not to divest.

On a personal note, I thoroughly enjoyed worshiping at a nearby congregation on Sunday morning. The worship was Christ-centered and uplifting. We got a chance to hear about a community garden ministry over lunch and visit the garden afterward. It was fun to catch up with a classmate from my seminary days as well.

Finally, the recognition of several new PCUSA seminary presidents in the last several years gave the entire assembly reason to be hopeful for the next generation of clergy. The creativity & quality displayed by these presidents and the willingness to adapt to major cultural changes stood out. I am eager to see how their presidencies shape the future of our denomination.

Presbyterian Church (USA) 226th General Assembly in Salt Lake City  
Yellowstone Presbytery YAAD - Joelle Evans

As this year's Young Adult Advisory Delegate (or YAAD) for Yellowstone Presbytery, I can safely say that being part of the general assembly is an experience like no other. The days were long and there was much work to be done, but I'm so glad to have been a part of it. I had a pretty large learning curve ahead of me too, learning to use the meeting tools and procedures were new challenges for me but were especially important to make things run smoothly.

This year the GA was partially in-person and partially virtual. We met for 3 days on zoom to discuss committee business first and then we all met in Salt Lake for plenary. I was on the Environmental and Climate Justice Committee, which I really enjoyed. We discussed issues like the inhumane conditions of lithium miners, although the "main event" of our committee was a debate between two overtures that either called for the church to divest from fossil fuels or to continue our current course of action. I think that for the most part the church agrees fossil fuel usage needs to decline. However, conversation arose around whether we could do more good by divesting immediately or by continuing to invest so that our investment group can continue putting pressure on these companies to be more environmentally friendly. Both in committee meetings and in plenary this discussion took much longer than expected. The committee also voted to let the US Treasury Department speak at plenary about the Inflation Reduction Act. I bring this up because I think we should look into it. The act provides governmental support for churches to do things like install solar panels, which aligns with the church's mission to support and take care of God's creation.

On the note of plenary, being in Salt Lake was so much more than just meeting and discussing various topics. There was music, group dinners, dance breaks, and so many more things that made this trip a first for me. For anyone who doesn't know, I'm one of the piano accompanists at my church. You could safely say that music is my happy place, and being there and part of a choir of hundreds of people is one of, if not the, most spiritual experience I have ever had. Some hymns I liked more than others, but they came from a hymnal called *Glory to God* and both "Glory to God, Whose Goodness Shines on Me" and "Listen to the Word That God Has Spoken" I found especially powerful.

One of my favorite things to tell people about being at the GA is that yes, we did a lot of sitting, but we also had dance breaks! There were a couple times where the atmosphere was so intense that we all needed a break and the songs were right, so we had people dancing in the aisles or doing line dances up near the stage. I think that in a lot of cases it was just what we needed, I know I personally did. The dance breaks made it a lot easier to not be so somber, especially in the face of hard news. There was only one overture that passed with 100% support from commissioners and it was on the topic of gun violence, especially in schools. Those who spoke in support of the overture each told a heart-wrenching story of their own experiences and I wish I could share the feeling of powerlessness and pain and sorrow in that room because it was unlike anything I've known.

Most of the GA wasn't that intense, there was a lot of joy too. The YAADs got together on an almost daily basis to be a community and make sure we were all doing alright. This was often after plenary so it got to be really late at times, but having a way to all be on the same page and knowing that we had support if and when we needed it was invaluable. These

meetings as a group were greatly appreciated, as were the 3 presentations/meetings that I registered for before plenary. One was about racial equity and women's intercultural ministries, another on how working for the church can help you get governmental student loans forgiven, and the last on reproductive justice. I am absolutely thrilled to see such support for BIPOC and women's ministry in the church! I'm proud that the church supports so many demographics, especially when the popular image of the church seems to be one that isn't nearly so diverse. The reproductive justice luncheon also surprised me, but in a pleasant way. Rev Dr Peters presented and if you would like to learn more about it I would recommend visiting her website at [rebeccatoddpeters.com](http://rebeccatoddpeters.com). I know abortion is a hot topic so I won't discuss my views here, but I really enjoyed her presentation. Lastly, thank you to the Presbyterian Church for helping those with student loans to get them forgiven! There is a governmental program called Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) that says if you work for a non-profit for 10 years or more, then you qualify to get your student loans forgiven. However, this process can be long and confusing, so the church works with PeopleJoy to simplify this process for church employees. As a college student, I can't even begin to tell you how amazing it is to know that there are ways to relieve college debt and that I may not have to face it on my own so thank you.

Overall, the GA was a remarkable experience. Yes, there was a lot of waiting and listening with different overtures, but we also sang and danced together between them. It was hard to feel alone during that week, and I hope more people can experience that feeling of being connected and part of something bigger than themselves.

## Presbytery Report for Camping and Youth

October 2024

### Westminster Spires Camp Recap

**Elementary Camp** (incoming 3rd-5th graders) - **24 students**

**Middle School Camp** (incoming 6th-8th graders) - **18 students**

**High School Camp** (incoming 9-12th graders) - **14 students**

= **56 students total**

### Leaders/Volunteers

**Core Team:** Kara Todd, Nichole Bodalski, Taylor Lovaas, Evelyn Todd, Ella Todd, Emma Lovaas, George Goodrich, Freeman McCall, Jamie Rowe, Perrin Chavez

**Elementary Camp:** Jamie Schmeling (Speaker), John Davis (Counselor)

**Middle School Camp:** Daniel Triller (Speaker), Tayah Kovanda (Counselor)

**High School Camp:** Mary Grace Reynolds (Speaker), Jon Dupuis (Counselor & Worship Leader), Russ Kline (Cook)

### Ministry Highlights/Reflections

Overall, given the circumstances, I think camp went really well. The leadership team, although thinly staffed, was spectacular. They went above and beyond, cared for students deeply, and provided a Christ like example. Camp would not have happened without Kara Todd. Replacing her will be difficult. Camps were well planned and organized, each person wore multiple hats, speakers provided solid biblical teaching and the testimonies were powerful. The overall atmosphere of camp was sweet - that thin space between heaven and earth.

For being understaffed and our first summer back at Westminster Spires since 2021, things went pretty well. God was unbelievably faithful and kind to us, providing for us every step of the way.

### Things to Plan For / Consider for 2025

- In need of more volunteers/staff. In particular, male counselors, cook, nurse, and program director. Things to improve on here: posting positions earlier, higher stipends, utilizing broader networks.

- Each camp can reasonably hold 36 campers. I think those numbers are reachable in 2025 for Elementary and Middle School. I think the key would be increased advertising / recruiting more heavily in churches such as FPC Billings, Lewistown and all across the board.
- Future leadership. I think the camp is in need of a new and long term program/camp director. I wonder if Sarah Tunall could be that person. I'd like to see our Presbytery budget the position for 5-7K/year. It would be an investment, but I think it's worth it. Person would be responsible/accountable for executing camp as well as being at camp all three weeks + training. If not Sarah, I would explore some kind of hybrid ¾ time pastor position in the Presbytery + Camp Director.
- Increasing our scholarship fund. Anywhere between 25-50% of our campers request full scholarships. If this continues at this rate, we'll need to continue to bolster funds.
- Explore if we can rent out the facility even more than we already do. (This would help fund the above). Things to explore: online booking, photos (create an Airbnb / VRBO out of it)
- Family Camp sadly didn't happen. Some of this is due to poor planning and execution on my part. Also not sure if the need/want is there among families. Maybe we move towards a more open policy where families can stay over the weekend in between camps as they drop off and pick up their campers (especially for those in Dillon or those with 4+ hr drives)

Thanks,

Daniel Triller  
Pastor – FPC Dillon  
Camping and Youth Moderator