

“The Lord reigns...” (TNIV) Psalms 93, 97, and 99 all begin the same way. Other translations assert “God is king...” (NRSV, the Message, etc.) Reading Psalms 90-100 is a study in the character of God. These psalms thunder with praise of God’s power, God’s eternal nature, God’s provision, God’s justice and holiness, God’s sovereignty over everything and God’s faithful love.

Holy Spirit inspired in their writing, these psalms are inspiring to read. It would seem that the psalmist was either lifted to praiseful contemplation by the generous and powerful acts of God on behalf of the psalmist and God’s people – OR – by being terribly pressed and in need of God for God’s sovereign saving work.

Through psalms 90 – 100 God reveals much of God’s nature and God’s cherishing relationship with God’s people. God is inviting the faithful to deep, core faith in God’s Self in challenging times. Sometimes clearly known and at other times quiet and/or mysterious, this is our God, our God for our times, too.

Emerging Mission in the New Structure: The new structure presented that the mission and ministry of the presbytery would emerge in the clusters and in new task forces under the umbrella of the Leadership Cabinet, which was responsible for keeping us focused on our vision, sowing a vision for mission.

Mission and Ministry in the Clusters: We now have four strong clergy clusters – Butte, White Sulphur, Billings and Miles City. Each cluster is dwelling in the word, praying with and for one another, deepening relationships, and exploring God’s calling for their cluster or beyond. (Note particular focus on our vision & LC goals 2 & 3)

- 1) The White Sulphur Springs has become a locus for prayer ministry and spiritual formation ministry, and has both lay and clergy membership. Beginning to discuss future retreat offerings for the cluster churches and the presbytery. Debbie Funke is coordinator. Next meeting: May 22 in Bozeman.
- 2) The Billings Cluster had 11 clergy in attendance at the March meeting. Trustful sharing and support is occurring in this group, but there are growing pains. Next meeting: June 2; Mary Davis is coordinator.
- 3) The Miles City Cluster has yet to pick a theme to offer. But there is a clear need for pastor support in the isolation of eastern Montana. Pastors from other denominations are attending. Neva Rathbun is coordinator; met May 7.
- 4) The Butte Cluster: This group wrestles deeply with the issues of the day. They are concerned for the cohesion of the presbytery and for justice. Rusty Craig is coordinator; next meeting is May 21.
- 5) Positives of the clusters
 - a) Growing commitment, **beautifully deepening trust** in the groups, meetings and with each other.
 - b) **Spiritual Growth and formation** of those involved in this mutual discipleship.
 - c) The **emerging training retreat format** in partnership with the presbytery.
 - d) Regularly meeting now. **All seem to be going to a new level.**
 - e) **Some mentoring** is happening in a way that nips potential PMT problems in the bud.
 - f) **Increased connections, communications and hopefully collaborations between pastors in regions.**

Mission in Task Forces:

- 1) **Peacemaking Fellowship** – See last report for quick overview.
- 2) To further live into our vision, let’s be asking what needs we are discerning to help the presbytery develop discipling leaders, congregations, and ministries, who join in Christ’s mission. Areas in which people have already expressed need or interest:
 - a. College/Campus ministry – See updates in packet. Ukirk. Please spread the word about these. Presbycats celebrated grads & is looking to expand connections and recruiting in BOTH presbyteries.
 - b. 1001 – New Worshipping Communities. After 3-7-15 Presbytery vote to explore and moved towards starting at least 1 NWC in YP in the next year, Jack Bell has agreed to convene this new Task Force which is forming, established by the LC at our April 2015 meeting. This aspect of mission and equipping will be prominent in our June presbytery meeting. **Vera White, PCUSA staff for this**

ministry, will be our resource person and preacher for this June presbytery meeting. Please invite several from your congregation and others in the presbytery.

- c. Nurturing Young Disciples-Kathy continues to hear stories, receive requests from pastors & congregational leaders for resourcing and/or consulting for better, more fruitful ministry in this area.
- d. Strengthening, equipping rural congregations in discipling, missional ministry. See DREAM grant, preaching and spiritual formation grant.

PMT (formerly CoM) We continue to be involved in pastoring pastors and resourcing PMT & churches, particularly those in pastoral transition or some contention (See ongoing communications from PMT):

NOTE – request from Presbytery of Inland Northwest and Whitworth’s Office of Church Engagement to partner in support of in grant request in preaching and spiritual formation. This provides our pastors/CRE’s access to substantial grant monies in 2016 or 2017 to participate in the “Hearts and Minds Set on Christ: Spiritual Formation and Preaching Enrichment for Pastors”. See attachment.

- a) Tom Long is Coming July 25! Please see the flier included in this meeting’s packet!
- b) Churches searching for pastors – Terry is close to calling a new pastor; Jordan has a temporary Lutheran CRE, Jeff Bolstadt, to whom the session is considering extending a long-term contract.
- c) Churches wrestling with their relationship to the denomination: Stanford and Geyser. PMT is working closely with these churches. Pastoral Team of PMT met most recently with both sessions and Editha May 4. At present the Geyser church has indicated its desire to stay PCUSA; Stanford is still discerning and divided on the issue. The Stanford Church has not formally voted to enter the discernment process but it appears they are now acting like it. On PMT May 13 docket. Your prayers needed and appreciated for the Spirit’s work and wisdom. This is draining and delicate
- d) Following the presbytery’s vote not to concur with Amendment 14-F and the majority of presbyteries concurring, the reaction of presbytery churches has mostly been quiet. Some have or may lose some members. Some sessions are/have discussed their response and developed policies.
- e) Commissioned Ruling Elder training offered this summer in Spokane July 20-23 @ Whitworth University. CRE’s can receive free admission to Whitworth Institute for Ministry . See website for details.<https://www.whitworth.edu/FaithCenter/WIM/CommissionedRulingElderEquipping.html>
- f) Church closing this year: Roy. Some real estate details are still being hammered out.
- g) We have been confidentially pastoring pastors and their family members & preaching in congregations.
- h) Board of Pensions Regional Gathering in San Diego, CA, April 22-23. David Thompson and Ron Hanson represented us. We should ask them to report at the June Presbytery meeting in writing and brief verbal summary, coordinating with Kevin.

The REQUIRED Three-Year Boundary Training offered 10-2 p.m. , May 16 in Billings and 23 in Bozeman. Mark Bassingthwaighe, from FPC, Billings, is an attorney who travels extensively conducting trainings on ethics and misconduct around the nation. Every clergy and CRE in Yellowstone Presbytery is REQUIRED to have such training every 3 years so Yellowstone Presbytery, with a gift from a church or 2, is offering this FREE for Yellowstone pastors and CRE’s. **Since ALL congregations need to train their leaders and volunteers, especially with minors, NOTE NEW group rates for all non-clergy/CRE’s – groups of 2-4 : \$10 each, Group 5+: \$5 per person.** Brochure & reg. info is posted on our presbytery’s homepage. The registration as of April 9 is Billings 14 and Bozeman 7.

Camping and Youth: This continues to be a vibrant, discipling and outreach mission of the presbytery through this Ministry Team. We are planning and promoting camp for 2015. Please check the presbytery website for our July dates, **share info in congregations, pray and ask what kids outside the church you might send!**

1. Curt Kochner and Susan Thomas continue to give heavily to this ministry in countless ways. Many Thanks!
2. *Summer Camp Staff:* This year we have hired 9 college-aged staff, the most mature staff we have had in years. Very grateful and excited and we will be intentionally adding a component for leadership training for them.

3. Have you shown/shared with church leaders, a class, families, youth... the camp DVD's portraying the Westminster Spires camping ministry? Treat yourself as well as those in your church and community!

The Emerging Partnership with Whitworth University for Rural Ministry It was wonderful to have Terry McGonigal with us for informal conversations and to speak and preach at our March Presbytery meeting.

Phase 1 for research and development starting June 1, thanks to grants from Whitworth's Office of Church Engagement. **We met with our 2 Student fellows, Joel Silvinus (Idaho, would love to preach a few times!) and Mirra Mattheson (Washington) and their direct Supervisor, Sam Abbott and Terry McGonigal for much of a day in April. We look forward to welcoming them into the life of the presbytery for the summer. They will be joining us at the June presbytery meeting.**

They will be based out of Bozeman, as follows this summer focusing on multi-sector research of several of the communities/counties where our congregations are as well as conversations and learning about God's possibilities, missional dreams and calling of several potential congregations. At least 1 Whitworth Professor, Dr. Stacie Keogh, Sociology (her, Ph.D. is from University of Montana!) will be collaborating with us and some professors from MSU Bozeman are part of ongoing conversations. Kathy met with head of their Business School who will be part of the collaborators (Dr. Tim Wilkinson was @ MSU Billings previously) The fellows will be based out of Bozeman and travel out for research in communities and spend time at Westminster Spires. Their schedule is coming together. We have already made plans for them to get to know some of the Presbycats in Bozeman and Lewistown.

The research, networks and unfolding opportunities will then inform the Grant administrators (in YP and WU) in collaboration with the 2 bodies towards detailed planning for **phase 2** with more fellows for summer of 2016.

And so we join in Christ's mission through a new opportunity of pioneering ministry, discipleship and mission, in partnership with Whitworth University.

The Presbytery Transition: Transition continues for us and presbytery. We are grateful to all of you who are answering God's call, investing your gifts & time in this mission.

a) George is the staff resource for the Stated Clerk Search Committee for the Presbytery being chaired by Neva Rathbun. Target date is to have someone able to attend Stated Clerk's training in early October.

b) George is serving with Jody McDevitt and others on a task force interfacing with Glacier Presbytery to explore, map the possible coordination and collaboration of future ministries. The thought is to launch a shared website to inform of the resources and ministries available in both presbyteries.

c) Periodically we keep up with e-mail through the month. George's new work e-mail address: george@yellowstonepcusa.org.

Communication Susan Thomas sent out Yellowstone Currents in April! She and George continue to work together. Please submit news of ministry, mission developments, opportunities in your congregations and clusters to her: ckochner@mcn.net or us.

Rep/Nominating Ministry Team: George & Kathy both resourced this Team in April, seeking to cover the many responsibilities in our 2 short weeks. They have several names for vacancies, are working on processes, forms, RE commissioner and a youth advisory delegate for the 2016 GA.

Funding for 2015: several mission interpretation and fundraising emphases:

- a) The group met via phone to discuss both presbytery day and interpreting mission here and asking for support for it. See notes from this call. The program/mission budget for the presbytery has received little emphasis for some time.

- b) Our fundraising efforts for 2015 are going well – and we are VERY GRATEFUL to God and the friends and congregations of Yellowstone Presbytery who were able to contribute. The goal: \$40,000, is ambitious and we are already at a little over \$20,169. We would be most grateful if you would consider making our ministry a line item in your mission budget this year, or certainly in 2016, after the needs of your congregation.
- c) The Yellowstone-Whitworth Rural Ministry Initiative, will call for the presbytery to raise money in 2015 and in 2016. New DREAM initiatives such as this can sometimes be more attractive to those who have not previously given, for new monies or to those outside the church.

Service to the Larger Church includes:

- a) George has been asked to lead the morning Bible Study at WNLT again (September 30-October 2 – ESTES PARK, CO) See our website for brochure.
- b) Kathy is serving as the Yellowstone Commissioner to the Synod Assembly and its TF for reviewing WNLT. See Synod Minutes 3/15/15. Next meeting July 14-15 in Denver.
- c) **George has resigned from the Board of the Intermountain Children's Services** as of the end of term in June, 2015. I have served for 11 consecutive years and been greatly enriched by my participation. I will work with Jody McDevitt to come up with a new representative to nominate to the IMCH Board.
- d) George serves on the Board of Trustees for Rocky Mountain College, This Board needs and deserves more focused time than he has to give. Kim Woeste's and other's input has been that he has an important voice and influence at this pivotal time and he is needed and should remain.
- e) Kathy serves on the Board of Trustees for Whitworth University, its Academic Affairs Com.
- f) George and Kathy continue to serve on the Synod Staff Forum. Ask, if interested.

Our Developing Ministry:

- a) George: I am within two months of completing my spiritual direction certification program. Currently, I am working with six pastors in spiritual direction. I hope to develop this ministry in coming months. Anyone want to try spiritual direction/companioning or know someone who might benefit from it?
- b) We are also receiving invitations to speak on clergy/lay leadership retreats in the Synod.
- c) Kathy is partway through her formal training with the Barnabas Leadership Group to be a trainer and coach to work with presbyteries and groups of leaders in enhancing "your leadership capacity and caring for your soul." This integrated approach utilizes a cohort and coaching model. Ask her about this....

Further, several leaders and congregations have asked Kathy to come and work with them to equip and implement "Sticky Faith" approach in congregations. That includes spiritual formation for children, teens, parents and adults in congregations. Ask her about this....

Upcoming equipping events in the region include:

1. WNLT Sept 30 - Oct 2 Estes Park. See Presbytery and Synod websites. Creative worship, Marcia McFee.
2. Tom Long on funerals, July 25, FPC Bozeman, 9-1. See flier and Presbytery website.
3. Whitworth Institute for Ministry - July 20-24, 2015. CRE training concurrent. Programs for children as well. "Pursuing the Common Good: Engaging Culture with the Gospel". Walter Bruggemann, Anne Zaki from Protestant Seminary in Egypt, Any Crouch. www.whitworth.edu/WIM/
4. Commissioned Ruling Elder training offered this summer in Spokane July 20-23 @ Whitworth University. CRE's can receive free admission to Whitworth Institute for Ministry . See website for details. <https://www.whitworth.edu/FaithCenter/WIM/CommissionedRulingElderEquipping.htm>

5. We have invited any in Glacier to our June meeting. Glacier Presbytery meets in their retreat format **Presbytery Retreat June 27, 28 in Harlem**, Rev. Dr's Darrell Guder and Shane Berg, speaking, from Princeton Theological Seminary and will help us learn more about what it means to be missional in our communities. *What would a church look like that took seriously the fact that North America is now itself a mission field? * How can we begin to think of ourselves as missionaries to our communities? * How can we become people who see ourselves as sent into our communities to share Christ's love?

Other responsibilities to the Leadership Cabinet – and some odds and ends

George and Kathy met by phone with the presbytery meeting planning team to develop more details for the mission/ seeing with the eyes of Christ/1001 New Worshipping Communities theme for the June meeting.

I, Kathy, continue to work on aspects of our grants, in touch with the National offices, and Whitworth. Some aspects involve us both.

Family Life Updates - and please keep sharing yours.

Congratulations, joy and God's blessings Teresa on your wedding May 24 to Tom Gormola!!

Charlie Goodrich turned 1 April 29! His parents are doing well, chasing him as he crawls everywhere about to take off! Staci graduates from Whitworth weekend of May 16-17, doing student teaching in the fall.

The extended Goodrich family plans to gather in June for George's Dad's 90th birthday. But we are now concerned that he may not make it until then due to a fall and an increase in his declining health. As we complete this report, we are listening and think several of us may need to go to visit in the next 3 weeks.

Kathy's Dad's cancer is slowly spreading with more impairments which will require more consults and seeing if he wants to tolerate any new treatment. God is sustaining her mom in body, mind and spirit amazingly.

Gillian completed her first of 2 years of her Masters (with teaching assistantship) in Spanish/Spanish Lit. Some fun stories of risks and accomplishments. Peter has new, increased responsibilities with Chipotle.

Hearts and Mindset Set on Christ: Spiritual Formation and Preaching Enrichment for Pastors
Partnership in Grant
To Yellowstone Presbytery Leadership Cabinet, May 12, 2015

For Action:

To be a co-signer in partnership with the Presbytery of Inland Northwest, supporting the application for a GA Restricted Fund Grant, “Preaching In The West”:

The Presbytery of the Inland Northwest (PIN) is in formal covenant partnership with Whitworth University, a historically and pervasively Presbyterian institution of Higher Education. Through a grant from the Lilly Endowment, the University has established the Office of Church Engagement (OCE) in order to utilize its resources (facilities, finances, personnel, and relationships) in support of churches to deepen and expand the effectiveness of their ministries. Working together, PIN and OCE are soliciting partnerships with 15 Presbyteries in the Western United States to develop a project entitled “Hearts and Minds Set on Christ: Spiritual Formation and Preaching Enrichment for Pastors”. The project proposal envisions a three pronged approach to serving pastors:

- 1) Funding to support the establishment each of 2 years of Presbytery specific cohorts of pastors who desire to pursue intentional growth and integration of their own spiritual formation with the enrichment of their skills in preaching and teaching the Bible, including special attention to younger generations under 30;
- 2) Funding 8 pastors per Presbytery to attend the Whitworth Institute of Ministry (WIM) each summer 2016 and 2017 (up to 120 pastors total); and
- 3) Funding for the electronic delivery to each Presbytery of specific instruction in preaching skills and the application of scripture as a primary tool in spiritual transformation to be used by those who attend the preaching cohort at WIM as well as others who cannot.

The result of the “Hearts and Minds set of Christ” grant will be the establishment of the Preaching Academy, one of several Academies structured in partnership between PIN, OCE, Yellowstone and other western Presbyteries, working collaboratively to strengthen PCUSA pastors, ministries and mission in the Western United States.

This will provide for up to 8 pastors/CRE’s to receive substantial grant funding.