

Presbytery of Yellowstone Leadership Cabinet (LC) Meeting Minutes

April 13, 2021 Via Zoom

Moderator Teresa Kendall called meeting to order at 09:37am.

Present:

Teresa Kendall
Jamie Schmeling
Margee Smith
Suzanne Bratsky
Russ Kline
Julie Boksich
Dave Thompson
Susan Thomas
Chuck Carlson
Ric Tieman

Absent:

None

Also present:

George Goodrich, Co-General Presbyter
Kathy Goodrich, Co-General Presbyter
Jim Tarr, Stated
Melissa Bell, Asst. Stated Clerk

1. **Opening Prayer** – The opening prayer was given by Ric Tiemen
2. **Quorum** – Quorum was declared present.
3. **Docket** – The docket was accepted.
4. **Dwelling in the Word** – Luke 24: 13-34 Walk to Emmaus. Reflection and discussion, closed in prayer from Susan Thomas
5. **Prayer partners** – Praying for each other the next month with Philippians 1: 3-11 in mind: Julie & Dave, Russ & George, Kathy & Margee, Jim & Jamie, Susan & Ric, Suzanne & Teresa, Chuck & Melissa
6. **Co-Presbyters report** – See written report (Attachment A).
At the May meeting; discuss the Presbytery stance on guns in the sanctuary. What are our universities doing?
7. **Churches** – Stanford: having money issues
Deer Lodge: wanting to go back to “normal”. There is a wealthy investor buying up properties in area, what will it mean.
Butte: ministry in the community on going, especially with food and the local school. Involvement with the Rescue Mission including leading Sunday School, led to children at the Easter service and more collaboration
Billings FPC: continuing to navigate these times, 2 worship services offers space to safely worship. Some folks have Intense opinions about different practices, it is challenging.

- 8. Presbytery meeting in May** – See written report from committee.
Watched Video from Shannon Kaiser about small groups in community, listening, serving, fostering faith communities, was shared.
- 9. Higher Education Grant** – Request for grant applications being sent to Kim Woeste, Rocky Mountain College, Dan Krebill, FPC Presbycats/MSU, Dwight Welch, MSU-Billings Letter going out to other churches; Dillon, Miles City, Butte, inviting them to prayerfully ponder college/Univ. outreach/ministry and apply for seed grant \$.
- } Russ Kline to do follow up phone calls
 - } Emails to go to Jim Tarr with cc to Teresa Kendall and forwarding to LC members
- Deadline for applications May 15th.
Decision on allocations will happen in June.
- 10. Personnel** – See written report
Policies/ Job descriptions being reviewed by Assoc. Employ a non-profit company.
Budget reality presented itself with regards to the Stated Clerks salary.
Proposal that the salary be a range of \$18,000 – 21,000 dependent on experience.
>**Motion:** To recommend the proposed salary range to Presbytery. Approved unanimously.
- 11. Harlowton AC** – See written reports from Jim Tarr and George Goodrich.
On track with the sale in progress, good working relationship/communication with the Methodists.
Manse remains in question, research is being done on the title. A quick claim deed was done without authorization.
- 12. Stated Clerk Search Committee** – See written report.
Prayer was offered by Teresa Kendall for wisdom for the committee.
- 13. Treasurer** – See written report, it includes a new Summary Report. Things are going well.
Ric Tieman to set up financial review of books.
- 14. LC minutes** - > **Motion:** to approve the February 9th minutes as presented. Approved.
- 15. Stated Clerk report** – See written report.
YP membership for 2020 was 1427.
} Jim Tarr to ask Dan Krebill if he would be willing to work on the historical documents for the Presbytery boundaries.
} Jim Tarr to request information from Rep/Nom on representation
Child and Youth Protection Policy required by BOO, and asked for several years ago by YP: there are still several churches that have not sent in theirs.
- 16. Presbytery Meeting dates** – May 21-22, November 5-6
- 17. LC Meeting** – Next meeting May 11th, Julie Boksich will be moderating.
- 18. Adjournment** – Adjourned at 13:00 with prayer from Julie Boksich.

Approved May 11, 2021

CoGP Report to Leadership Cabinet for April 13, 2021, Zoom

A Blessed Easter season to All: **According to the Gospel accounts, the Resurrection of Jesus changed nothing – and everything! It changed *nothing*:** The Sanhedrin still held power; the same Roman governors still taxed, collaborated with the Jewish leaders and oppressed Israel; the disciples, themselves, were initially thinking of going back to the lives they had known before Jesus called them (Luke 24, John 21) ... **And yet *everything* had changed.** Jesus had fulfilled his earthly ministry, living, dying on the cross and rising to new life on the third day, “light and life to all he brings...” just as he had told them according to the prophecies, (Luke 24, John 20, I Cor. 15, Acts 2...) The seed of the New Christ Life had been planted in the earth and sprouted in Jesus’ resurrection. With the Advent of the Holy Spirit, the disciples and their disciple communities would be powerfully and uncontainably transformed and deployed into the world.

As Christ’s disciples we continue in their way, the Jesus Way – loved, called, commissioned, equipped, empowered, *transforming* and sent by the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God!

What does it look, walk, act and talk like to LIVE as Easter people, individually, and communally, daily ‘practicing resurrection’? Thoughts?

The full article can be found @ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/aprilweb-only/eugene-peterson-life-death-country.html>

“People who believe in the resurrection, in God making a whole new world in which everything will be set right at last, are unstoppably motivated to work for that new world *in the present*.”

N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2008), 214.

What are you seeing, hearing, thinking, feeling about our present? How are you discerning the signs of the times?

What is our present reality in our part of Montana, in a post-Christian, COVID – altered, 2021 and beyond?

The last page/appendix of our report contains summaries and links to 2 articles published **the last few days** with *strategic analysis, insights, implications for God’s people*, “for such a time as this”. [I, Kathy, found them better than my efforts!]

1. *5 Unsettling Cultural Predictions for the 2020’s and How you Can Prepare Starting Now* by Carey Nieuwhof, 4-9-21
2. *Rapidly Changing Contexts* – Rev. Brad Brisco, 4-12-21

Among Yellowstone Presbytery Blessings where we have seen, heard of the Spirit at work! You?:

1. A year into Covid-19, as far as we know, all the churches of the presbytery are surviving and some are thriving. Most are back in person or will be soon, with Covid precautions. Many have navigated to an on-line, virtual/hybrid presence, some learned & updated equipment and processes. We highly commend the pastors & lay leaders of every church for adapting methods to fulfil their mission!
2. Inspiring and faith-full stories of various new or adapted ways of nurturing faith of disciples and reaching out to make disciples in *newly* formed pods, online groups, small study groups such as in Dillon, Butte, Big Hole, both churches in Billings, Terry, Bozeman, Ennis, Deer Lodge, Lewistown... to name some. Keep sharing the stories!

3. New ways of listening, making connections, and serving in communities such as FPC Butte's visioning retreat, distanced & hybrid, out of which the Spirit sparked several things including conversations with community leaders, school principal, adopting the nearby school to build relationships and meet needs.
4. We can all be grateful for the general health of churches and members during the pandemic, precautions taken, although we deeply mourn the passing of Paul Krebill this spring and others.
5. Equipping the saints, Developing gifts - PMT, with George and JP Carlson leading, has just launched a monthly CRE-Lay elder support and equipping zoom fellowship with three current CRE's and seven other elders who want to develop their preaching and care skills, perhaps to go on to further CRE training.
6. George has been leading a Thursday afternoon zoom ecumenical gathering of about 18 pastors from around Montana for spiritual discernment and formation and support *for a year*. The group looks at a lectionary passage for the following Sunday and pertinent quotes that apply, most rarely miss.
7. Camp at Westminster Spires will be held again in July! The Camp Committee has decided that the conditions, the rate of vaccination and projected case drops are looking favorable to be able to safely hold camp.
8. Due to the generosity of so many, the presbytery financial condition allows the ministry to continue.
9. Pastors Kimmy Stokesbury Briggs (Lewistown), Charley Blom (Miles City) and David Murchie (Colstrip) have all launched into ministry in the last two months! Jed Cauffman has given about eight months of faithful and celebrated ministry in Jordan, for which we are hugely grateful! He plans to leave that post the end of May. Elder Ric Kern, with session, is doing a great job leading the pastorless Poplar Church, and Wayne Milmine and the session are shepherding a thriving Hysham Church and keeping contact with Forsyth as they jointly search for a pastor. Ennis PNC is hard at work as Interim Steve Hundley is tapering to the end of his service.
10. It has been 2 decades since Yellowstone has had this many candidates for the ordained ministry.
11. The Stated Clerk Search Committee has been hard at work and has a wide variety of applicants.
12. The Harlowton Church, which closed last July at its request, left the building to the presbytery and the United Methodist Conference. The building is now under contract to be sold to a team of Harlowton residents who hope to turn it into a low-income, hostel-type inn for travelers in the region. See AC's report.
13. Please share, send an email about what you see and the stories, dreams, possibilities where you are!

As Heb 11: 24, MSG says: "Let's see how inventive we can be in encouraging love and helping out..."

Truly, the Holy Spirit is blessing and working among us still and is positioning the presbytery and its churches for more creative, on-going ministry and mission, God's opportunities amidst the challenges!!

To Report Other Areas of activity & focus the last 2 months:

1. The Personnel Sub-group, Chuck Carlson, Moderator, is now actively stepping up to revise and update our personnel policies and practices in support of all of our presbytery employees. There have been many changes to state and federal policies with which we are working to move into compliance. The personnel sub-group will be bringing recommendations during 2021 for LC action.
2. Boundary Training is required every 3 years for ALL pastors and CRE's who are members of Yellowstone Presbytery and for congregational leaders and those working with children and youth. Overseen by PMT, it will be offered via zoom this year, the first week of June and again in Sept/October. At the request of several pastors and elders, we are working to make it: a. open to those in

congregations as well, b. see if we can record it to be utilized with lay leaders in congregations later. The tentative date is Saturday, June 5th, 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM via zoom. Glacier Presbytery's General Presbyter, Rev. Dr. Beth McCaw, who is trained/certified for such work, will lead both sessions. Watch for the promo flier.

3. The Family Leave Policy for the presbytery was adopted by YP at our March Presbytery meeting. It is part of the MINIMUM terms of call for each pastor/CRE that each congregation adopt a policy. We set a reminder deadline of the end of the year for ALL congregations. Kathy, JP Carlson, Debbie Blackburn, Gail Beckham consulting with others in the region, have worked diligently on this project for the presbytery. PMT church liaisons will be contacting and offering support for each church which does not have one. Having a generous Family Leave Policy, required in many western states already, not only advantages children and adults, but is becoming key to attracting and retaining pastors, especially younger ones.
4. Covid-19 restrictions have cut down on our travel throughout and beyond the presbytery... Although Zoom has provided a solid means of ministry and communication, we are looking forward to the day when we can travel unhindered among you. George and Kathy still preaches where asked, schedule permitting, and restrictions observing, so please continue to feel free to invite us. G
George: Hysham for Easter; Ennis May 2: Kathy, FPC, Bozeman, May 9.

5. ***Our May Presbytery Meeting - Planning Team has a separate handout***

Other Events: Transforming Congregations: A New Kind of Local Church for a New Mission Reality – 4 sessions, Monday late afternoons or replay over next several months. There's no going back to "church as normal." You need an approach to transformation that honors your congregation's rich history but is also ready for the challenges to ahead. Learn about the process of "re-missioning," where you will rediscover the calling that first got your church started and what God is calling you to today, stories & what it looks like for church's doing this. By 2 Methodist pastors *Offered by Fresh Expressions US, partnering with several Methodist districts, Wyoming and Pueblo Presbyteries, Episcopal Diocese of Wyoming, RCA, and more*

To learn more and sign up for this or ANY Resilient Church Academy Class -

<https://resilientchurchacademy.com> Note: You may still sign up for any class that has started, watch first class and join this week.

Not Going Back to the Old Normal, with Dubuque Seminary online events April 15 – 17, free Facebook link contains times, topics and professors. Seminars & small group discussions included.

https://www.facebook.com/events/1218360245285178?active_tab=about

What comes next for the church? Join all or what suits. Register here: <https://forms.gle/8QBZXTSDrTFwuowr8>

The Presbyterian Foundation's Stewardship webinars by Rob Hagan & Maggie Harmon,

April 21, 11am MDT

Best Stewardship Practices

May 19, 11 am MDT

DO'S AND DON'TS OF NARRATIVE BUDGETS

To Register for either: <https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/the-stewardship-series/>

Questions? Contact maggie.harmon@presbyterianfoundation.org rob.hagan@presbyterianfoundation.org If you missed the first one Leader self-care if part of stewardship, check out the article summary

<https://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/leaders-must-practice-self-care-as-part-of-stewardship/>

Whitworth Ministry Summit, For Such a Time as This: Faithful Witness in a Chaotic Culture June 22 – 24, in person and online, Speakers include: Rev. Esau McCaulley, Ph.D., priest, professor, author of *Reading While Black*;

Inés Velásquez-McBryde is a pastor, reconciler and speaker, currently co-lead pastor at multi-ethnic church plant, The Church We Hope For & chaplain at Fuller Seminary. Other seminars. Due to COVID, unable to offer usual on campus housing or children's program. <https://www.whitworth.edu/cms/administration/church-engagement/whitworth-ministry-summit/>

Reminder from our March Co-GP report that our New presbytery boundary adjustment with Glacier was finalized by the "GA Admin Commission elected to accomplish this and similar actions by **the 2020 GA** which met virtually. This moves the line slightly south in the region between Butte and Helena, placing the NWC at the radon mines NE of Butte within Glacier's bounds. Kathy has worked on/communicated about this with LC, Glacier Presbytery leaders, Synod Clerk & PCUSA Stated Clerk Staff."

New Life and new babies: Daniel and Callie Triller welcomed Caleb Jordan Triller April 9, 8 lbs. 12 oz. 19.5 "!" Parents are doing well and overjoyed and grateful for everyone's prayers for safe c-section, his arrival AFTER Easter and help from the church. Steve and Elaine Hundley are expecting their second grandchild any day.

Personal News:

George is having major dental surgery on Wednesday, April 14. Prayers appreciated....Kathy's mom is doing better than she has for a while! ...We are not sure when we will get to visit George's mom but she is in good spirits and enjoying zoom's with grandkids, great grandkids with 2 more due this year! ... Daughter Gillian and husband, Peter, are expecting their first child, a son, August 16.

Appendix – 2 articles on trends, analysis, insights for our present and future

5 Unsettling Cultural Predictions for the 2020's and How you Can Prepare Starting Now by Carey Nieuwhof, 4-9-21

<https://careynieuwhof.com/5-unsettling-cultural-predictions-for-the-2020s-and-how-you-can-prepare-starting-now/>
Excerpts below.

Pandemic or no pandemic, every leader has realized we're not in Kansas anymore. In fact, we're not quite sure *where* we are...

Most of us like to know the future because it gives us some semblance of control. ...As uncertain as things are (and they are), here are five things every leader should be watching and preparing for in the decade ahead.

1. The Current Instability Will Continue. As much as you long for a return to normal, that's unlikely to happen.

Politically, economically, socially and culturally, normal was dying long before COVID. The disruption of a global pandemic was the final nail in normal's coffin...

...George Friedman's *The Storm Before the Calm*, ...there have always been times of great disruption. Friedman argues we are heading into a decade of deep disruption as we move into a new era of economic and institutional (political) change that will stabilize in the 2030s. While I don't agree with everything he says, Friedman's analysis certainly makes sense of a lot of things that don't make sense, including this: The world is increasingly unstable and will likely be that way for a while...

Agility is the best antidote to instability. Because agile leaders aren't committed to a particular model, they're able to preserve their mission.

The world will always have a need for the basics: Food, water, housing, health, safety, meaning, connection, love dignity. **The methods may change, but leaders who stay focused on the mission will thrive.**

2. People Will Act More Selfishly.

...It's prudent to prepare for a season where most adults act like teenagers for a while...As you've probably already realized, self-centered people are often angry people. Which makes selfishness doubly tricky to deal with...

...it means that loyalty will continue to be fickle... The best way to combat this is not to try to change others but to focus on changing yourself.

As a leader, it's critical for you to get out of your own filter bubble to lead well (I write more on why and how here see page on blog site).

Leaders, if you see the world more broadly, you'll act less selfishly. You'll also lead far more capably. You can't helpfully address the selfishness of others if you yourself are selfish.

3. Culture Will Remain Deeply Divided.

...a selfish culture is a divided culture...

And our hyper-individualism (which a year of isolation during the pandemic only intensified) fuels division...

What does this mean for leaders? **Unity will be more needed than ever...**

... the real opportunity will be in leaders who can rise above the division and focus on what unites us, not on what divides us... That's your opportunity.

****The culture needs an alternative to itself, not an echo of itself. A divided culture needs a united church.**

4. The Moral, Theological and Philosophical Questions Will Become More Intense and Important.

Think, for a moment, about all the issues you're facing as a leader that didn't really exist a decade ago.

That's only going to get more intense. And... deeper. The next decade will require deeper and more thoughtful approaches than ever.

Something as fun sounding as autonomous cars requires an answer to deep philosophical questions.

Water Isaacson's new book, *The Code Breaker*, for example, is about Nobel Prize winner Jennifer Doudna gene editing (using CRISPR—short for clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeat) and the future of the human race. The advances in RNA-protein biochemistry, CRISPR biology and genome engineering that are happening right now are breathtaking.

I know very little about biology, gene editing and RNA-protein biochemistry,... raises profound theological and philosophical questions that are going to require deeply reasoned, highly nuanced philosophical and theological responses. So do autonomous vehicles (who do you hit, and who do you save?) and the rise of AI.

I long for the day Adam Grant and I imagined in a recent conversation where, **because of the quality of thinking, the openness of dialogue and maturity of dialogue inside the church the best thinkers sense get attracted into ministry and church-life rather than get pulled mostly into the professions or business.**

<https://careynieuwhof.com/episode405/> among many articles and podcasts

Interestingly enough, both Friedman and Isaacson point out that breakthroughs in science, politics and technology often happen through collaboration...

Maybe start here: Meet with someone outside your area of expertise. Invite a physician, mathematician, plumber or architect out to lunch and learn. Work on something together. You'll be better for it.

5. Deep Leadership Will Be Up to the Challenge. Shallow Leadership Won't. ...In fact, most leaders are perfectly prepared for a world that no longer exists... [Tod Bolsinger's *Tempered Resilience* important for us]

Leaders unite people when others divide people. Leaders bring meaning where others only bring confusion.

And leaders find a way forward when others stand still or long to go back.

The key for leaders who thrive will be to develop a deeper, more robust emotional, intellectual and spiritual life. [cue Bolsinger]

I'd suggest you open up your learning and understanding. Read more deeply than books published in the last 12 months. Read some history. Study art. Pick up some Kierkegaard or the desert fathers and mothers or someone like Teresa of Avila. Study outside your field and understand how others think, not just how you think.

...speak a little less and try to understand a little more. It helps.

EVERY LEADER IS A STUDENT LEADING A START-UP [See Andy Crouch in 2 articles posted on our website @ <http://www.yellowstonepcusa.org/Leadingbeingchurchintimesofchangeandcrisis.htm>]

The good news is that in this new era, **we're all students leading start-ups**. I am. You are. If it feels confusing, it's because it is confusing.

Just know this: **With great challenges come great hope and tremendous opportunity**. So start.

Don't go back, go forward. It will take great humility and great curiosity, but those are the qualities that make great leaders great.

Rapidly Changing Contexts – Rev. Brad Brisco, 4-12-21

https://www.missionalchurchnetwork.com/blog/rapidly-changing-contexts?fbclid=IwAR3QS-XtRAHy87Cj9g4ShuEB5BEHnHWwY5FRq3vd008TxeU6XOzr3xx_NsU

I have been processing a lot lately around how to help others in the church recognize and understand the necessity of rethinking church, mission, discipleship/evangelism, and church planting. One piece of the conversation I believe is highlighting *the changes that are taking place outside the church that should force us to reconsider how to move forward*.

Below are a few thoughts on some of those changes and *some possible "leverage points" for change*. What resonates with you? What missing? What additional thoughts do you have?

What is Changing?

1. The world is rapidly becoming globally networked. Views/perspectives are highly influenced by the world's mobility, diversity, and technology, including the internet. The incredible migration of people (and ideas) have very different views ...
2. The younger generation doesn't see any (or very little) relevance in the church. Further, they are very skeptical of institutions. ...

3. The church is seen by many as being on the wrong side of multiple issues like gender, race, science, LGBT and politics.
4. The vast majority of non-Christians have a very strong caricature of Christians and the church, one that is judgmental, homophobic, out of touch and sometimes illiterate.
5. Even if non-Christians are open to the church (and very few are), there are enormous cultural barriers to attending a church service or program, especially with the increasing number of people with zero Christian experience/background. The cultural barriers of language, beliefs, history, cultural background, family background, religious experience, geographical distance, etc. are just too great to cross over to come to a church gathering.

Leverage points?

1. We have to do life *with* people to have the opportunity to deconstruct the caricatures they have of Christians and the church. We need to help everyone, not just planters, create spaces to cultivate community where relational/social momentum can flourish. There is simply no other way to lower the cultural barriers and obstacles.
[This and all in the article is based on Christians and Christian communities being lovingly present, embodying, modeling Jesus and the ways of heaven, a la Phil 2, 3...]
2. We need to help [church/fellowship] planters start smaller, more creative, incarnational expressions of church. We have to take a missionary, long "runway" approach to the places we live, work and hangout. [relationships and opportunities there are possible launches to spiritual seeking, sharing, meeting... not only limited to what they now are]
3. We need to help existing churches empower and activate members to start new things outside the walls of the church.
4. We need to develop a "minimum ecclesiology" (or "essential ecclesiology") that involves giving clarity on what defines a "church" that includes mission, community, worship and leadership.
5. We need to help [church/fellowship] planters start non-profits that focus on restorative issues that birth churches. This will help church plants stay focused on mission to the city [community], allow fresh entry points for non-Christians and give the church respectability ("street-cred") in the city.