

What we are all doing here: At the beautiful Easter Service in Hysham, we were **about** to baptize a baby boy. His older sister (about 5 years old), spoke up to explain, "Mommy says, "M" is like a baby calf and we are putting God's brand on him!" To all of you pastors and leaders in Yellowstone Presbytery, who are teaching, preaching, living, leading and passing on the faith, what you are doing is so worthwhile. All of us, together in Christ, indwelt by the Spirit, are making a difference, generation to generation as we make disciples and disciple-making congregations and are sent out to join Christ in Christ's mission here and around the world.

Encouraging signs across the Presbytery:

1. **The Stated Clerk Transition: Grateful!** We are deeply grateful for God's provision of Debbie Blackburn and her two plus years of extraordinary service as stated clerk to the presbytery. Masterful job! And we are grateful for Jim Tarr (elder St. Andrew) willing to be nominated and to Melissa Perrault-Baumann (elder Lewistown) for being willing to assist him. LC appointed him as acting Stated Clerk as of April 1, standing for election at the presbytery meeting, Tuesday, April 3 (during a recess in LC meeting). Extensive training has taken place the past two weeks as Debbie, George, Kathy, Susan and Sheryl have been working on parts of this; Jim will attend training by the denominational leadership in May. We are very grateful for the work and wisdom of the Stated Clerk Search Committee and their unanimous decision regarding this team of Jim and Melissa going forward.
2. **PMT: Churches are receiving pastors.** God is providing! Big Hole, Miles City, Philipsburg, White Sulphur Springs, and Lewistown have received or will definitely be receiving new pastors in the near future. Dillon still has the wonderful interim with Steve Webber during their search; Jordan is speaking with a candidate; Hysham is the lone church with the quiet search at the moment, but report real joy in the gifted pulpit supplies they are receiving. And Colstrip will be without clergy after Robert Shy departs December 31. Please continue to pray.
3. **Whitworth Fellows and Growing Young:** The Fellows, Kristin and *Growing Young* equipping & conversations were well-received at the March Presbytery and two from last year have asked to return again (Luke Ekstrom and Joel Shroeder). Several churches have already signed up to have the fellows preach, share the "Growing Young" ideas and dream how that church is being called to implement this, and help in other ways, such as with VBS and counseling at camp. Joel and David, sensing they are called to ministry, will be placed as student pastors in one of two churches currently without a pastor to experience and do rural ministry for the summer. If your church is committed to: a. reading *Growing Young* and b. seriously exploring it's implications and would like to get on the fellows' schedule this summer, please contact us! The Fellows are here June 1 - August 15.
4. **St. Timothy's Chapel:** The presbytery's relationship with St. Timothy's Chapel on Georgetown Lake is being rekindled after strain due to misunderstandings. Jack Bell has joined the chapel board. George has attended and also been in closer contact with board members. St. Tim's is presenting by-law changes and its budget to the presbytery. We are back on track and grateful for your help.
5. **Presbytery Meetings:** The mini-conference model, content, resourcing and life together we are experiencing as a presbytery are being favorably received. Kudos to the planning teams. At least three churches had non-commissioner lay folks attending who commented excitedly on how helpful the meetings are for them! Years ago, a ruling elder commented, as presbytery was ending, "I feel like I have been on a retreat!" That's the goal. Presbytery meetings: Resource-full, Relevant, Vision-giving, Collegial, Inspirational, equipping, empowering and connecting. Yup. Separate update sheet for May meeting and theme of "Cultivating Jesus' People Eyes".

6. **The Budget:** God continues to provide, but the decrease in Synod funding in 2018 and 2019 must be creatively and proactively thought through and options explored. But again, God has a Loving Hand on this presbytery. We look forward to Dan Holland's report.
7. **Camp - Expecting an amazing summer:** Westminster Spires Camp is already fully staffed with many of the quality staff members from past summers returning for the 2018 season. All are college-age and dedicated in Christian faith. Curt Kochner continues to work tirelessly to make this ministry/mission possible and coordinates logistics. George will be the speaker and spiritual resource for the elementary and junior high weeks. Rev's Katie Emery (ELCA pastor in our Terry church) and her husband, Rev. Will Johnson, will again be the speakers for senior high week. Our four Whitworth fellows will also participate as staff for portions of the summer camping season.

Please encourage not only your campers and all children and families in your churches, but pray for "Jesus' people eyes". Seek out and invite other kids in your neighborhoods and communities to attend, ideally with some scholarship help! Brochures have gone to all attendees of the winter ski retreat and of camp last summer; and been mailed to all the congregations. Our May presbytery offering will go to our Westminster Spires camp mission.

Where we need some help:

1. **Lay Training.** Are about to implement lay training with the Whitworth Lay Training curriculum with leaders in Hysham, Jordan, and perhaps Colstrip. We will need some help from leaders who can model and lead discussions on material. Who can help shepherd folks toward CRE credentialing.
2. **Insurance:** Our current yearly insurance bill is about \$8,000 to insure the presbytery and the camp. We could increase our coverage of all entities to higher and recommended levels for up to another \$4,000 a year.
 - a. What coverage is wise, needed in 2018? What can we afford? Can we afford *not* to increase it somewhat? Are there portions of it we should apply for now? Portions to be put off to a future date?
 - b. Four different forms applying to four different areas of coverage need to be completed and submitted for us to be *considered* for increased coverage, depending on which amounts and types of coverage we would like to increase. This **MUST** be acted upon for at least some increased coverage before June 1.
 - c. Shall we go with the recommendations of our agent and apply across the board?
3. **Clusters:** it is spring and Easter Season. Some people seems to be feeling a little overwhelmed. And the weather has been uncooperative. Clusters could use a spiritual shot in the arm. Here's to Spring!
4. **Personnel:** LC has prioritized reconstituting this active sub-group for a host of important reasons. New Stated Clerk. George turned 65 in February (no plans to retire yet) Personnel Policy needs a review & update.
5. **Kathy and George Away:** We worked all of March with work required for the Stated Clerk training/transition and PMT/church needs, but will be out of state from April 17-27 on our "off time" to see Kathy's mother. We will be out of the presbytery from May 10 – June 8 for weddings, family visiting and study leave in Israel on a trip led by a NT scholar from Whitworth University (9 days of official study leave, our first ever trip).