

Clement of Rome (d. c. 99) prayed: *O God Almighty, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Grant us we pray, to be grounded and settled in your truth by the coming down of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. That which we know not, reveal; that which is wanting in us, fill up; that which we know, confirm; and keep us blameless in your service; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

We all seek to love and honor God through our various spiritual gifts, callings and personalities. We worship regularly, we pray frequently, we serve as faithfully as we know how. But, where is the deep, stirring, passionate love for God and for each other in Christ's body? Are we embodying and proclaiming Christ's Good News with Christ-like love and compassion for the poor, the hurting, the least and the lost, marks of the Christian and vibrant disciple communities? In Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church, Kenda Creasy Dean, Princeton Seminary associate professor of youth, church and culture's research delivers a prophetic and practical challenges and opportunities to us in the church today. The tepid faith and absence of teens in congregations is NOT mainly about *teens*. Rather, they are a "barometer of American churches." What children and teens hear, see and experience from us adults is "that Christianity is not a big deal, that God requires little, and that the church is a helpful social institution filled with nice people focused primarily on 'folks like us' " "What we have been less able to convey is faith." Ouch!

Do you long for the Holy Spirit to rekindle a vibrant, contagious, embodied love for God and neighbor in you? In the community of disciples where you worship? We are praying for this in our lives, in our presbytery. We would like to facilitate conversations and opportunities such as a half-day retreat regionally which enable our relationship with God to grow deeper, practices transforming our lives as disciples our teens can imitate!

Key Developments:

The Vision Team continues soliciting input in preparing its report. Ric Tieman and Debbie Blackburn continue to faithfully lead the Team. We are hearing from you that you agree with the general direction the presbytery is going towards the fulfillment of our Vision Statement. Your input at our August Council meeting was that you think the processes, practices and patterns of building interconnecting relationships are putting us on the right track. As to structure of the presbytery there is also general agreement that the current structure is not serving well and that implementing Option 2 in some form is desirable. The Vision Team is continuing according to your guidance, then, in these directions. However, it is also becoming clear that all 8 presbyteries are in the Synod of the Rocky Mountains are in various forms and levels of need, even crisis. Our ongoing adaptations and planning with regards to form/structure need to include conversations with them, take into account their needs and explore new partnerships and collaborations. This new development could affect their deadline of our February Presbytery Meeting.

Camping and Youth: Thanks to Cathy McLean for her dedicated past service to the programming of the Camp. Thanks to Brent Long and the Facilities Team for bird-dogging the well. Thanks to Curt Kochner and Susan Thomas for stepping into the leadership of this committee. New life is springing up here. Youth retreat this coming weekend at Rockhaven with over 40 registered! The teens asked Kathy and George to speak.

Committee on Ministry: Triennial Visits are beginning again according to the *Book of Order* mandates. Please welcome those who have come to listen to and support the work of God in your congregation. They will come

with a list of resources to help strengthen the mission and congregational life of each church. They will share the mission of the presbytery. They come to bring the love and connectivity of the Body of Christ.

Mission Committee: Our mission committee has not met much this year. Yet, mission is at the heart of our Triune God, our calling and our Vision Statement. As a small presbytery we cannot do everything at once. During our visioning process when we have gathered as a presbytery have researched, discussed, dreamed and prioritized how we believe the Holy Spirit is leading us in mission for the future. Thanks to Jim Moses who has led the committee these last two years. The Nominating Committee will be bringing a newly nominated moderator in its report. Who do you know with a passion for mission who can join in?

Synod in transition – Departure of Synod Executive & Office Administrator: Zane Buxton, Synod Executive, is leaving the position to take an interim pastorate in Boise, ID and the Synod eliminated the position of Rebecca Kennedy, Office Administrator. This throws a great deal of new responsibility and work to presbytery staff and the Synod Coordinating Council of which Ted and George are members. In the next two years all eight presbyteries face varying degrees of visionary, financial, and staffing crises. This is God's opportunity to work together with our sister presbyteries (and others) to explore partnerships and regional mission and ministry.

Coming Priorities:

1. Vision Team ongoing Implementation for planning and restructuring.
 - a. Plan, resources developed to help discipling congregations – an exciting offer from Evangelism & Church Growth staff in Louisville to spend time traveling and equipping across presbytery
 - b. Plan to help congregations move out in mission into communities.
 - c. Increase “anding” and partnering between churches and leaders.
 - d. Make the three focus groups at presbytery (gathering, equipping and encouraging and sending) even more helpful, more focus on implementing and integrating in each area..
 - e. Partner with CoM in visiting and resourcing willing congregations?
 - f. Adapting, restructuring, “anding” and partnering with other presbyteries, other entities.
 - g. Improved use of technology for communicating, connecting, resourcing.
 - h. This cannot be forced, *but offered* to the sessions and leaders.
2. Mission emphasis and Committee assessed, adapted for greater responsiveness and fruitfulness.
3. Camping & Youth Ministries revitalizations and working in consort with Campus Ministries, new options?
4. Stewardship and Financial Development for Christ's ministry and mission. The Administrative Budget has a large projected draw on General Funds to meet its budget with current information.
5. Resource all Committees towards developing goals and the fulfilling of the Vision Statement.
6. Prayerfully seek the deepening of the Spiritual Life and Passion of the Presbytery.

Hosea 12: 6: “So you, by the help of your God, return; observe justice and mercy [love], and wait on your God continually.”

Grateful to be in God's Service and Yours,

George and Kathy