

**[God] Will be a sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge. And the fear of the lord is the key to this treasure..." Isaiah 33:6.**

**This report is outlined by the goals adopted by the Leadership Cabinet for 2017**

**1. LC Goal 1: Emphasize disciple-making and disciple-sending among the congregations of our presbytery and at the presbytery level. This includes equipping people of all ages to know that they are Loved & Called, Gifted, Equipped, and Sent.\*\***

**Stan Ott:** Extremely well-received by the presbytery (pastors, elders, spouses attending, and across theological spectrum). Stan's biblically based, culturally and contextually informed and practical ideas and material for re-vitalizing congregations has now been distributed on DVD to every Yellowstone Church.

- I. **Intentional, systematic discussion and integration of this is a top priority for us, PMT and LC over the next year. The May Presbytery meeting resourcing time will feature and encourage sharing, discussion and ways pastors and congregations may integrate these and other discipleship materials.**
- II. Suggested usage:
  - a. Session devotions, min. teams, committees use Word-Share-Prayer/Dwelling in the Word
  - b. Equipping/training time...
  - c. Small group or evening study for church leaders AND any interested members...
  - d. Cluster presentations and discussions
  - e. Youth/college/young adults
  - f. Other...
- III. **Westminster Spires Summer Camp, 2017.** Please see Curt Kochner's excellent report on Camping and Youth. George will be training and leading staff with Curt again and speaking/discipling the staff and campers during the elementary and Junior High Camps this July.  
**How can this training integrate some of this content into staff training?**
- IV. **PresbyCats!** Dan Krebill led another successful year of collegian ministry at First, Pres. Bozeman and MSU, but graduating 5. Significant recruiting and connecting needed. Kathy hosted the semester-ending luncheon/party in our home on Sunday, April 30. Presbytery funds enable this ministry.
- V. **Clergy Clusters:** Three of the four are functioning well, and through dwelling in the word are deepening relationships with God and one another. Real mutual support and discipleship is occurring. The Billings Cluster, due to Mary Davis's ill health, may need new leadership.

**2. LC Goal 2: Focus on spiritual nurture of pastors, leaders and potential leaders across the presbytery by identifying, understanding and using spiritual gifts.**

- a. **The Preaching and Spiritual Direction Cohort** met in March and April. At the last meeting the group considered a paper George is writing on the role of preaching in Spiritual formation. Six members of the cohort have verbally committed to continuing for another year. **Anyone interested in joining the cohort in the fall is encouraged to attend the Whitworth Institute for Ministry (WIM) this summer in Spokane for the week of July 24-28.** \$250 scholarship and Details available from us. ***Reformation and Re-Formation: The Church as Witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ*** <https://www.whitworth.edu/FaithCenter/WIM/ProgramInformation.htm>

- b. **Emphasize the spiritual gifts inventory** offered at the November, 2016 Presbytery meeting. Without continued focus, suggestions and **specific strategy for ways to introduce and integrate this into congregation**, it is merely information, not Transformation.

3. **LC Goal 3:** Foster **community** in the presbytery, encouraging congregations and clusters to share stories of God's work in their midst as we **build and grow relationships and communication**, sharing in the fellowship and work of ministry and joint mission.

*"Saints cannot exist without a community, as they require, like all of us, nurturance by a people who, while often unfaithful, preserve the habits necessary to learn the story of God."*

- Stanley Hauerwas

- a. Clusters . the pastors/CRE's relationships as well as the congregations.
- b. Look toward Presbytery Sunday, October 9, 2017. New leadership needed for this event.
- c. Encourage and See Yellowstone Currents for contributions from churches on the work of the Holy Spirit in their midst.
- d. Encourage Churches to send their newsletters to Susan Thomas, editor of Yellowstone Currents.
- e. In coming months (and years) churches will have to adapt ways of working together in the face of the coming professional pastoral shortage and the inability of a good number of our smaller congregations to afford fulltime professional pastoral leadership.

4. **LC Goal 4:** Explore **partnership and collaboration with presbyteries and other organizations as we grow in disciple-making and disciple-sending.**

- a. **Whitworth Fellows Program, 2017:** Four Whitworth students, are placed in Yellowstone presbytery from June 1 – August 15. The primary focus of their work will be on helping Churches "grow young," based on the research in the book, **Growing Young**, along with other ministry.
- b. Joel Schroeder and Britt Williams, will be in the Lewistown congregation, where the leadership is actively studying the book and is committedly preparing for the student participation.
- c. Luke Ekstrom and Kristen Elliott, will be based in Bozeman, living with us. They will travel Montana, listening to, dialoging, working collaboratively with and offering workshops on ideas to help churches grow young. They will be especially assigned to meet and spend a few days with congregations who are already studying the book and have a leadership which embraces and is starting to take concrete steps . Please get a hold of a copy today. Ask Kathy and George if your congregation qualifies to discuss scheduling them for a few days this summer.
- d. Whitworth's grant funds for this are decreasing in year 3. Church partners must pick up more this last year. We receive \$6,000 less than we had hoped and need to authorize our payment of \$6,000 (2 installments) while we seek to share this opportunity and need with congregations, and individuals who wish to support this strategic opportunity.
- e. **The Third Way**, referring to a term used in the early church. Kathy just met with the leadership of Whitworth's Office of Church Engagement (OCE) who want us (and our interested congregations) to partner with them in a new Lilly grant whose focus is on equip disciples in congregations to learn about, go deeper, in the community of a cohort, learning about the faith, the practice of spiritual disciplines and then select from a track as they will seek to live intentionally as disciples in the vocations and callings God has given them. The details should be available shortly.
- f. **Wyoming Presbytery's Sabbath Center, June 22-24** in Casper. George will lead this leadership retreat on "All Who Are Thirsty; A Spiritual Retreat on the Practice of Using Scripture in Christian Discipleship." Clergy and Lay Leaders from Yellowstone Presbytery are welcome to attend – [presbyterywyo@gmail.com](mailto:presbyterywyo@gmail.com) [http://www.pbywy.org/\\_pdfs/2017/Apr/WyoConnect040117.pdf](http://www.pbywy.org/_pdfs/2017/Apr/WyoConnect040117.pdf)
- g. **Rocky Mountain College:** George Continues on the Board working with the Church Relations and Student Affairs committees. The Church Relations Committee, with Chaplain Kim Woeste, is quite active and interestedly pursuing some sort of Internship program modeled loosely on the Whitworth Fellows program beginning in the summer of 2018. The college would place interested

interns with Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and other mainline congregations. Training and mentoring would be offered.

## 5. Equipping leaders and congregations in **Growing Young**, per the research.

See # 1 above. Integrating the Ott practices, mindsets and shifts are foundational to and go along with Growing Young.

See Whitworth Fellows and Growing Young in #3 above.

### **Addition information**

**Very Important #1:** The Presbytery now **must** focus on helping congregations in pastoral transition:

- i. Discern new forms of pastoral ministry.
  - ii. Strengthen / Disciple lay leadership as in 1-5 above
  - iii. Search for quality new pastors who are equipped for, committed to the vision here.
  - iv. Be careful to preserve the presbytery vision, goals and culture of mutual discipleship and respectful, collegial ministry as pastors familiar with the culture depart and new and unfamiliar pastors enter. We need to develop a strategy and work with PMT and Stated Clerk and clusters to ensure this happens. George and Kathy write an article focusing on the Spirit's work and fruit of the process, vision and culture.
  - v. **Churches Pastoral Transition: Eight of our congregations**
    1. Jordan . search in process
    2. Big Hole (Three Congregations) . MIF completed, about to begin search
    3. Miles City . Brandon and Kristin leave June 1; PMT liaison/ George active.
    4. Lewistown . Jed just announced April 30 his departure in the fall
    5. Other Churches may be entering the search process in the not-to-distant- futureō .
- b. **Very Important #2:** The Funding from the Synod that has been steadily decreasing for the last 12 years will end this December, eliminating some \$27,000 from the Presbytery's annual budget for 2018 and beyond. Please look at the budget carefully. It is probably time for the LC to appoint a team to work with George and Kathy and Debbie Blackburn and Dan Holland to develop a plan for the presbytery staffing and ministry going forward.
- i. *The functioning of a personnel subgroup is essential and integral to this process, probably with 1-2 co-opted people with the needed gifts to work alongside 1-2 from LC.*

## 6. **Presbytery Life:**

- a. Brandon and Kristin Willett their daughter, Kennedy Willett, born last month!
  - b. Kathy led a vision retreat for the Butte congregation on Saturday and Sunday, February 25-26 and preached the Sunday Service. Quite a few expressed hope, and a sense of how they might live their vision in 2017.
  - c. John Dyce's mother, Lois, died in April. Her funeral was April 29 at First, Billings. George went.
  - d. Rev. Dick McNeeley, H. R. died. His funeral is May 6, 11 a.m. at Springhill, new Bozeman location. Gretchen requested that George be a part of the service.
  - e. For Pastoral changes, see above under "Very Important #1."
  - f. Ted Williams, former Stated Clerk celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. George, Kathy and Debbie were there, along with many from First Presbyterian
  - g. The Babcocks are now in Spring Meadows retirement facility in Bozeman, where Jim is on hospice. George saw them recently.
7. **Family:** our son, Chip, and Staci, his wife with their two children have moved from Spokane, WA to Paradise Valley south of Livingston. The small company that hired him, after 3 weeks restructured their staff, eliminating his position. He is seeking employment in the area. *Prayers appreciated.*