

CoGeneral Presbyters Report to Yellowstone Presbyter November 2-3, 2012 George & Kathy Goodrich

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you shall go. I will counsel you with my eye upon you." Psalm 32:8.

At a pastors' luncheon I attended recently, one pastor across the table told the story of a church in small-town Washington State with seven aged attendees which was about to close its doors. In a last meeting they asked themselves if they still had anything to give to the community. One person said, "We can listen." So they called the local high school and spoke with the principal, wondering if there might be some students who might just need to talk with someone who would listen to them. The principal invited them to attend the student assembly later that week. As the students filed into the assembly the aging church members wondered what they were doing there. Why would these students want to talk with them?

But when the time came for the church folks to pitch their offer, one of them got up to say something like, "Hi. We are from Such and Such Church, and we'd like you to know, if you'd ever like someone to talk with, we're good at listening...." When the assembly ended, the church folks filed out, wondering why they had bothered.

Later that day the principal called asking how many slots they had for students to come and speak with them. He had, the principle said, fifty students who wanted to talk to someone who would listen. Within a few weeks, when the students were talked out, the students began to ask their new listening friends questions like, "What's it like to be you?" Relationships grew.

A year later that congregation has over 100 people in worship, nearly all of the new growth is the students and the people the students have brought. *And what gifts does your congregation have that people in your community might need and God might use? Is it time to dream again?*

Current Foci:

1. Assisting The Leadership Council and Committees Move Forward 2012 *Thanks to all of you!!!!*
2. Leading and Adapting to Fruitfully live our Vision: It is the Leadership Cabinet's task, with the CoGeneral Presbyters, to do and oversee long-range planning, ensuring that all are being equipped as we seek to live out and fulfill our vision statement in all areas of the presbytery.
3. Disciplemaking – How is Yellowstone "Equipping, Disciplemaking Congregations and Leaders?" Recently, one of our pastors said to George, "I don't know how to disciple my congregation." Well we can help with that.
 - a. Visiting with and running retreats for sessions on the Presbytery Vision Statement and how churches can become disciplemaking congregations. The Presbytery vision statement has the power to inspire, to expand thinking, to induce dreaming.
 - b. "Journeying Together." I still wish to offer weekly, one-page, lectionary-grounded missive to the leaders in Yellowstone presbytery. Time constraints have made this difficult but the purposes:
 - i. More "personal" contact between churches and presbytery in this far-flung setting. Perhaps a blog with Paul Krebill.
 - ii. To interact with pastors creatively on the texts on discipleship themes.
 - iii. To show how the text may relate to our life together in Yellowstone Presbytery.
 - c. Convocation Planning Team (See George's complete report) – This year will be a good one. Planning team is on the ball.

- i. Plenary Speaker, 2012 – The Rev Dr. Tom Tewell, whom Ed Albright calls, “The best preacher in America.”
 - ii. Plenary Speaker, 2013 – The Rev Dr. Steve Hayner, President of Columbia Seminary and Professor of Evangelism.
 - d. WNLT, October 3-5 in Jackson Hole. George led the Bible Study Sessions with Dwelling in the Word for a second year in a row.
 - e. Cluster Fellowships: Billings is going beautifully; East Cluster, we understand, is re-emerging; Butte is meeting regularly.
4. The Dream Team - Glacier-Yellowstone Presbyteries. Possible presbytery configurations within the Synod / Region. This effort is being pulled together. Breakfasted this morning. This is a great opportunity to dream God’s dreams for new relationships and partnerships – or recommit to our current identity. This important committee needs to re-activate and be able to offer suggestions both to the presbytery and to the GA committee considering realigning of synods and presbyteries.
 5. Vision Structure Task Force – Ric Tieman, Chair, Dan Krebill, Ron Hanson. George and Kathy are resourcing this team as it works to reframe a structure for the presbytery that better serves and implements the presbytery vision and the mission of the churches. It hopes to make its final recommendation in May of 2013. In these times of accelerating downsizing and shifting of structure and transition (denominational, theological, cultural, financial, global, technological...) more responsibilities & costs are shifting to presbyteries and their staff and leadership providing both challenges and God’s opportunities. Yellowstone has been blessed and better equipped and positioned than many presbyteries as we continue on our journey of discerning, transforming and living into God’s Vision, joining *God’s* mission. For CoGeneral Presbyters & others in our position, in order to best resource and lead in such times, this involves a great deal of learning from, sharing ideas & possibilities, and collaborating more broadly with congregations, others in our Synod, across the PCUSA and with other Christians and groups. (See Yellowstone’s 4-strand document, guiding principles and strand #2 Relationships & Partnerships) It is an exciting time of both learning and UNlearning, of experimenting and adapting, as the Spirit of God leads that we may more creatively and faithfully proclaim and embody the Good News in this time and place, becoming all God has created us to be.
 6. The Task Force reshaping the presbytery’s standing rules to complement the New Form of Government. Dan Krebill ably leads this effort. George and Kathy are resourcing.
 7. The Fellowship of Presbyterians has launched initiatives which are stirring questions and dreams among several of our congregations. George is meeting with sessions and leaders upon request to answer questions, lay out options and encourage continued allegiance to the PCUSA.
 8. CoM Concerns – I(George) find any church without pastoral leadership receives my pastoral concern and assistance as well as Neva’s. Great job, Neva.
 - a. CPC, West Yellowstone is the main one presently. Assisting both the Pastoral & Resolution teams has been very time-consuming. CPC is making a formal request this year for dismissal from the PCUSA / presbytery.
 - b. Various policies refurbished with Personnel Committee, too.
 - c. The four of us should work up a full report for the presbytery, or ask Kevin Keith, our new BoP regional rep to offer an overview of Pension developments.
 - d. Welcome to the Willetts in Miles City! Ordination and Installation occurs October 28!

- e. A most important work... Prayerfully searching for and bringing in quality pastoral / CRE leadership to vacant pulpits: St. Andrew, Deer Lodge.
9. Mission – The Mission Committee of the Presbytery has the dual responsibility of 1) encouraging and assisting YP congregations in discerning and deploying into mission and to 2) discern and coordinate mission on behalf of the presbytery. Mary Davis, Paul Cannon and Lanny Rounds now co-moderate this committee, which is focused on the following:
- a. Researching what each Church is prioritizing and pursuing in mission.
 - b. Wrapping up the Zimbabwe Project.
 - c. WNLT, October 3-5; New Scholarship possibilities. Lucy Ennis Coordinated this effort.
 - d. Exploring Bakken Oilfield ministry in cooperation with other judicatories.
 - e. Responding to the Crow Res fire.
 - f. Church Mission Trips. Encouraging and supporting.
10. Youth and Camping Ministry continues to be blessed and to develop.
- a. The camping season was successful! George and Curt Kochner led Elementary and Senior High Camp; David Andrew and Curt led Junior High Camp.
 - b. George, Curt Kochner and Tracy Rurchetti led the Jr/Sr High Retreat in Oct. @ Rockhaven & we had to set up additional cots to accommodate all who registered! A wonderful time.
 - c. General Summer Camp Goals:
 - i. Supporting the childrens and youth ministries of the presbytery's churches.
 - ii. Developing deep relationship with and between the youth of the presbytery.
 - iii. Conducting basic discipleship appropriate to each youth level.
 - iv. Seeding and strengthening the college ministries of the presbytery.
 - v. Building WSC spiritually, programmatically, collegially and numerically.
 - vi. Approximate budgeted support.
 - d. The well project is completed. Thanks, Chuck Beck! Thanks, Curt Kochner!
 - e. Bible Study Topics were based on the PCCCC curriculum.
 - f. Now we are exploring new ways of being camp... The ten staff benefitted by the training they received and the relationships they forged. The campers benefitted from the abundance of dedicated and gifted staff... What is this teaching us? How do we adapt camp to develop in this leading of the Spirit?
11. Vision sharing, stewardship & finances
George resources Budget & Finance Committee. We both continue to pray, seek & cultivate financial support for the Presbytery. We have about 70% of 2012 Administrative Support given or pledged thus far. Kathy continues to research & explore possible grants to implement our Vision statement.
12. Service to the Larger Church
- a. George: Intermountain's Board and Ownership Linkage com.
 - b. George and Kathy: Synod of the Rocky Mountains, Staff Forum and George has now concluded his two one-year terms on the Coordinating Council.
 - c. George: Rocky Mountain College Board.
 - d. George: MAC Board and Judicatory Heads for ecumenical relationships across Montana
 - e. Kathy: Whitworth University Board of Trustees and is there this week.
 - f. Kathy attended the General Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA – June 30 – July 7, 2012
 - g. Kathy: asked to assist Evangelism Unit on new small Evangelism Network, PCUSA Oct. 2012 meeting.

- h. George was the Bible Study Leader at WNLT this year again.
- i. George was the all-church retreat speaker for the First Presbyterian Church of Sunnyvale, CA over Labor Day Weekend.

These are Good Days for Yellowstone Presbytery.

1. Most of our churches have dedicated and gifted pastoral leadership. Only two are in pastoral transition – Deer Lodge and St Andrew (has an interim).
2. Only one church, CPC, West Yellowstone, is currently seeking dismissal, and we have negotiated a fair agreement on good terms.
3. The Vision Structure Task Force is dreaming a vision-based structure for the presbytery on which to frame a dynamic future for ministry.
4. The Presbytery is working well collegially across lines of diversity. A good spirit among us.
5. The Mission Committee is gathering steam and all of our mission programs are well-funded.
 - a. Time to get prayerfully creative.
6. The CoM is currently “resting,” with no churches or pastors in obvious distress.
7. The LeaderCab is aware of the impinging administrative budget shortages in income.
 - a. The Budget/Finance committee is making reasonable assessments and projections.
 - b. If changes in staff positions are needed, i.e., Co-General Presbyters to half-time, or the position otherwise changed, there is time and funding to do so.
 - c. A Dream Team is in place to consider possible future partnerships with other presbyteries.
8. Yellowstone Presbytery has a very good rep in the Synod and at the General Assembly levels of the church as a visionary-thinking, disciple-making, supportive presbytery.
9. The Presbytery prayer ministry is operational again.
10. Exceptional WNLT and Convocation to come.
11. The Presbytery youth Camping program is growing again.
12. Other... What reasons to celebrate can you think of?

Let us give thanks to the Lord for God's hand of blessing upon us!

Time to Think About:

1. Nurturing ever-deepening levels of Spiritual Formation / Discipleship in pastors and congregations. Time for some retreats?
2. Planting three new expressions of Church in the next five/seven years within the presbytery.
3. Studying and implementing the coming recommendations of the Vision Structure Task Force.
 - a. Helping Churches and Covenant Orders (Clusters) identify local and regional mission.
 - b. Forge stronger and even more helpful partnerships between various.
4. Listening to what the presbytery can do to help resource congregations... Stewardship? Officer Training? Vision-nurturing?