

The Leadership Cabinet has chosen the making and forming of maturing followers of Christ/disciples who themselves are disciple-makers, and some of the Christian practices as an on-going emphasis for the year. A word about learning discipleship from the disciplines and practices in the early church:

*"It is striking that the [early church] catechumens [converts in the discipleship process being prepared for their baptism] were first asked not to master ideas, but rather to practice the faith. Their first lessons were not in the doctrines of the Trinity, the two natures of Christ or Jesus' atoning death. Instead, they learned how to pray, fast and give alms. Participating in worship was especially important, but even here what they received was not so much instruction in what they should believe, but rather in what they were called to do. The second century Christian philosopher Justin Martyr, in one of the earliest descriptions of Christian worship, tells us that a "presiding officer urges and invites us in a discourse to practice the example of virtue" based on the writings that would become the Old and New Testaments. A person learned the faith by living the faith." - Dr. John Burgess (Pittsburgh Seminary) March 16, 2016 article in Presbyterian Outlook from his excellent article, 'Putting Easter into Baptism' <http://pres-outlook.org/2016/03/putting-easter-baptism/>*

In *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*, Reformed philosopher, Dr. James K. A. Smith, demonstrates biblically, philosophically, liturgically, practically how we can recover the biblical and early church practices and process of a holistic way of making and forming disciples. Discipleship is as much or "more a matter of hungering and thirsting as knowing and believing. Jesus' command to follow him is a command to align our loves and longings with his- to want what God wants, to desire what God desires, to hunger and thirst after God and crave a world where [God] is all in all...

Discipleship is a kind of immigration, from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's beloved Son (Col. 1:13) In Christ we are given a heavenly passport; in his body we learn how live like 'locals' of the kingdom...we need to be acclimated to the new way of life, learn a new language; acquire new habits of that rival domain...(Phil 3.20)". Spiritual practices and habits, individually and corporately, are THE primary ways God transforms us into the likeness of Christ.

Is such discipleship development of the leaders and congregation a focus and practice for you, for your session?

What might effective Christian Discipleship look like in your congregation?

What is one practice in your personal discipleship in which you would like to grow?

Over the last 3 presbytery meetings we have talked about and engaged in the practices of dwelling in the Word, prayer, paying attention/seeking to notice and discern where the Holy Spirit may be at work and of sharing the story of God at work in your life/ your meeting and journeying with Jesus - Spiritual practices of disciples.

how are YOU AND I, the congregation where you worship:

A. sharing your stories of faith? one-on-one, in session, meetings, youth groups, worship services, VBS...?

B. equipping those in our congregations, including children and teens, to hear and share their stories, including in worship services regularly? See resources listed on handouts from presbytery March & June 2016

**The Clusters**, our structure for community, collegial discipleship and mission among our pastors/CRE's, are all four active and alive in Christ – and the pastors are alive to one another. They have reached a sustainable level that George or Kathy are no longer carrying the administration. Each cluster has its own administrative

leadership and is pretty much charting its own course with dwelling in the Word, sharing and support, prayer, possibilities for shared training equipping or mission... One has adopted a vision for a mission specific to the cluster that God is calling the cluster to pursue together. ***But we feel/consider the cluster model, which we voted to launch as a part of the new structure, to be a strengthening asset, success for the presbytery as we seek to BE the body of Christ for one another, being the instrument and demonstration of Christ. The Holy Spirit is at work among the participants of the clusters.***

### **The Clusters and their Administrative Leadership:**

- a. The Butte Cluster – Freeman McCall and Rusty Craig
- b. The White Sulphur Cluster – Debbie Funke - includes some lay leaders
- c. The Billings Cluster – Mary Davis
- d. The Miles City Cluster – Neva Rathbun and Kristin Willett- includes some pastors from other denominations.

**Questions re: cluster groups:** *The vision for the clusters has stabilized. Should the Leadership Cabinet suggest agenda to the clusters or let them continue to prayerfully self-determine? Should we be helping them explore, or prepare for next steps?*

### **Suggested Next Phase for Clusters:**

- a. Prayerfully consider in light of our vision statement: where the Holy Spirit is already at work? How is each pastor/session making disciples and disciple-making leaders in each congregation? How might they share spiritual gifts of leaders or groups to strengthen this work and the congregations in their cluster? The presbytery? What ministry they might offer to the larger presbytery? (See Leadership Cabinet goals below and in their report.)
- b. Prayerfully dream and seek to discern, in light of our vision statement: how God may be leading the cluster and the congregations they serve in mission together?

**PMT and Pastors/CRE's –** Ongoing prayer appreciated for all our congregations, leadership, their communities and the ministry and mission Christ is calling them to join in.

Many of our pastors/CRE's and their families are facing difficult challenges, some on many fronts simultaneously. Please continue to pray for them, and us as pastors to the presbytery.

### **Discipleship and Spiritual and professional enrichment opportunities:**

**Minds and Hearts Set on Christ: Spiritual Formation and Preaching grant opportunity for pastors & CRE's–** see separate sheet. 9 pastors thus far are participating. Whitworth applied for additional monies so CRE's and a few non PCUSA pastors serving PCUSA congregations can participate in 2016. Please talk to Kathy IMMEDIATELY if you are interested

Goals -

- a. Renewing our spirits - "Rekindling my love for the lover of my soul"
- b. Relating in our communities - Pastor cohorts and congregations
- c. Refining our craft - "Mind and Heart" preaching and teaching of God's Word

**Whitworth Institute for Ministry – July 18-22 *For Such a Time as This: Christian Discipleship in the 21st Century* includes focusing on building a culture in your church which builds disciples and emphasizes reconciliation. Grant scholarships available for Mind and Heart grant participants. Talk with George or Kathy.**

**<https://www.whitworth.edu/FaithCenter/WIM/ProgramInformation.htm>**

**No WNLT this year.** Each presbytery can request up to \$1,000 to be used only for continuing ed.

**Spiritual Direction in the Presbytery:** Continue to explore the training and eventual service of two more spiritual directors in the presbytery... Every pastor, leader, disciple encounters dryness of spirit, spiritual confusion and discouragement, a loss of meaning and perspective, and general questions about where is God in my life and work. Spiritual directors can help journey with our pastors and leaders through these issues, helping them maintain a fruitful spiritual life and ministry. George is open to offering spiritual direction to interested leaders.

### **A Whitworth – Yellowstone Partnership**

DREAM Grant, PCUSA and Whitworth grants towards Yellowstone Whitworth Rural Ministry Initiative: Supporting, strengthening our pastors, congregations and new ministry and mission possibilities and developing future leaders for Christ's Church in partnership. We have been working on this during the fall/winter/spring. This is the second year. After meeting in February, with the six students (down from the 10 hoped for due to *high* demand stretching WU grant funds) Kathy has been working with the pastors and some leaders in each of the 3 locations set up virtual meetings via Skype so they can get to know one another and be planning together for the ministry and mission God has in store.

We are impressed with and grateful for the quality students who have answered God's call to ministry and mission with and among us and to learn from us this summer. After an initial training retreat June 1-3 in Bozeman with us as the directors, they are on site.

Please meet our Fellows who are attending presbytery in Miles City. Anaconda/Big Hole – Katy Schlata & Samantha Cobb; Manhattan – Tyler Stitt & Hannah Beard; Lewistown – Jacob Gallegos & Annette Peppel.

Possible partnerships to explore include: WU fellows partner with several congregations on a service or mission project in MT this summer. Anaconda/Big Hole is praying about possibilities in August after relationships well established, the fellows know their communities and MT better and earlier events such as VBS and camps are over.

Needs include: to raise the final \$1,000 for required stipends for our contribution for our students; some of them are helping to raise money for scholarships for campers and needed VBS supplies.

**New Worshipping Communities** – Jack Bell, CRE, chair - *Starting New Worshipping Communities: A Process of Discernment* (2014) by the Presbyterian Mission Agency. This booklet was given to each person attending the last 2 presbytery meetings and is available for [Free download here](#).

**A MUST see** – excellent collection of free, downloadable resources and videos on [8 New Worshipping Communities](#) which have sprung to life in Northwest Coast Presbytery over the last several years.

Kathy hopes our LC and NWC team will consider a variety of ways these inspiring videos can be shared such as showing a few at a presbytery meeting, posting a link on our website, utilizing them as part of a class on faith sharing <http://www.northwestcoast.org/learning-community>

**Camping and Youth** – Curt Kochner, Missy Turner (FPV- Butte), Heather McLean (FPC-Billings), Jim Tarr (St Andrew – Billings) and George led the winter ski retreat, staying at FPC, Butte and skiing Discovery near Georgetown Lake. Hugely successful, nearly 40 kids and leaders. Thanks again to the Butte Church for hosting us! Next year Bozeman?

**Summer Camp, 2016** – Curt Kochner and George will co-lead again

The Camp Summer Staff has been hired. The Whitworth Fellows will be attending with campers from the respective churches.

July 6-9 - Staff training and group building ; Curt and George Lead

July 10-15 – Senior High Camp; Curt and George lead; George will be the Bible Study leader

July 17 – 22 – Junior High Camp; Curt leads; The Rev Will Johnson, the ELCA pastor in Glendive and married to the Rev. Katie Emery, the pastor of FPC, Terry will be the Bible Study leader.

July 24-28 – Elementary Camp; Curt and George lead; George will be the Bible Study leader

Brochures have been sent to all past campers and retreatants on our mailing list. The Brochure is also available on the Westminster Spires Camp website; pastors with campers who attended last year have received DVD's showing the camping ministry from last year. BUT we ask your help in recruiting campers again for the season... **Could you please consider a minute for mission presentation in your congregation's worship in June or July? Please speak with Curt or George.**

**Youth Triennium is this summer! July 19-23 at Purdue University.** Dave Thompson will be leading the trip again... please see him and link on Presbytery website for details.

Mission Co-worker, Ruth Brown, serving in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, spoke at the First Presbyterian Churches of Bozeman, Butte (George attended), Billings.

**General Assembly in Portland:** Kathy and Debbie Blackburn have met with our Youth Advisory Delegate, Tanner Robison and Elder Commissioner Pam Jackson (White Sulphur Springs) and Teaching Elder Commissioner Lanny Rounds (Butte) for training. All of the above will be ably representing the presbytery at GA, June 18-25.

**Other Reportable Items:** *Please consult the presbytery website:* [www.yellowstonepcusa.org](http://www.yellowstonepcusa.org) and the ***Yellowstone Currents*** edited by Susan Thomas with our sincere thanks!

**Board of Pensions is partnering with the presbytery to host three seminars** September 27-30 at FPC-Billings... all of which are recommended for clergy and church treasurers. Sign up will be through the Board of Pensions.

September 27-28 – ***The Clergy Pre-Retirement Seminar.*** ABSOLUTELY essential if are 50 + and have not attended one. Preplanning pays BIG dividends in lifestyle and \$\$ saved. Fun dinner out together.

September 29 – ***The Clergy Tax Seminar for treasurers, clerks, pastors*** and can yield significant savings

September 30 - ***Getting in Shape Fiscally Seminar for clergy in 30's & 40's,*** has saved clergy money now and later in life.

**Intermountain:** JP Carlson has been enthusiastically chosen by the Intermountain to serve as our representative from Yellowstone Presbytery.

**Rocky Mountain College Board.** George continues to represent the presbytery on the Board, and serves on the Church Relations and Student Affairs Committees.

**Whitworth University:** Kathy serves on the Board of Trustees and on its Academic Affairs Com. These are times of both challenge and opportunities, particularly for Christian colleges and universities on many fronts including emotional and mental health, racial tensions, costs,

**Synod of Rocky Mountains:** Kathy, along with Ron, serves as Yellowstone Commissioner and its TF for reviewing WNL. Meeting held in March again early August.

We have visited and preached in some congregations over the last several months.

**Personal Notes:** Thank you for your prayers and rejoicing with us at the arrival of **Thomas George Goodrich**, to Chip and Staci Goodrich, March 3. Our moms' health has been good lately and we are grateful. Peter and Gillian Goodrich Cleary are moving to Bozeman the end of July! We are grateful to God for answers to prayer on many fronts and consider it a privilege to pray for and journey with you all.☺

**Pictured below:**

1. Some of the senior high participants and adult advisors take a break from skiing on the February retreat at Discovery near Georgetown Lake, MT.
2. Jon Dupuis (Butte), Jon Severson (White Sulphur Springs) and George lead singing on the retreat.



