

Moderator of the 221 General Assembly, Heath Rada, gave his report on the state of the PCUSA to the 222 General Assembly in Portland, OR in June... His emphasis (please see his excerpted remarks included in packet): Across the church, **“Presbyterians are hungry for the renewal of faith formation and proclamation....”** And **“Congregational vitality is essential.”**

While his words may be understood and lived out differently in various contexts and cultures, these priorities have been on our screen in Yellowstone Presbytery for quite a few years. Seemingly, the Holy Spirit has us on the right track with our vision and priorities as a presbytery (see our Vision statement), the resourcing and equipping of at presbytery meetings, through grant opportunities, the emphasis on Dwelling in the Word, our pastor clusters BUT, please let us keep prayerfully listening to the Holy Spirit and exploring how to equip, encourage and the lives, faith, and mission of pastors/CREs, congregations, leaders God has called us to lead and serve as we share and embody the Good News, exploring NEW ways to join Christ in Christ's mission including NEW worshipping communities to better embody the gospel. These best reach those outside the church.

In January and February the Cabinet outlined **Four Goals for 2016**. These frame our report:

I. Emphasize Disciple-making in our congregations and in our presbytery

- a. Camping / Youth: George trained staff and lead bible studies for Sr and Elem camps.
 - i. The summer camping season at WSS Camp was successful. **See Curt's report.**
 1. Rockhaven Camp had a successful season. **Info: Jody McDevitt**
 - ii. Exploring Plans: a week of wilderness camp in for 2017. **Info: George/Curt**
 - iii. Jr-Sr High Presbytery Fall Retreat was held at Rockhaven, October 20-22, 2016.
- b. College-age ministry:
 - i. PresbyCats at FPC-Bozeman is off to a great start for 2016-2017 as well as ministries at Rocky Mountain College and MSU-Billings.
 - ii. Congregations, youth & Whitworth Fellows, Year 2... (See Sept. Yellowstone Currents)
 1. Six Fellows served in six Churches (Anaconda/Big Hole, Manhattan, Lewistown) and at Westminster Spires Camp. Recommendation: Plan to participate in Fellows program with Whitworth for next summer as part of Growing Rural Churches Young and DREAM grant we are praying for. We must contribute for \$\$ than last year. **Info: Kathy**
- c. Pastors and Leaders:
 - i. Minds and Heart Set on Christ Grant for pastors/CRE's for collegial discipleship, spiritual formation and to grow our preaching. Ten Yellowstone Clergy/CRE's are covenanted and are participating, meeting regularly in 2016-17. Started with Whitworth Institute for Ministry, July, 2016 and has met twice, including Dwelling in the Word, discussion of writings by Tom Long and Will Willimon. **For info: George**
 - ii. The Four Pastor Clusters are tuning up again now that fall is here. **Info: George**
 - iii. Resourcing of March and June Presbytery Meetings was “Telling our Stories...” Share how you are practicing this in your life, congregation. Positive feedback received from congregations, Whitworth Fellows who have been doing this...
 - iv. **Equipped and empowered disciples and churches - theme for our Nov & February meetings to equip EVERY session, congregation & ministry. What are spiritual gifts? What happens when EVERY disciple, young AND old, discovers, develops and is deployed to use their spiritual gifts?** See IV below and look for letter on training we will be offering and on the Spiritual Gifts Inventory to take BEFORE presbytery, if at all possible.
 - v. Training GA commissioners, YAAD, ahead and on the job! Kathy, assisted by Debbie B.
- d. **Equipping us all in “Growing Young”. Our PMT is hearing from MANY churches the urgent need for help/equipping to become more vital, to adapt in, grow deeper in**

faith/discipleship and to 'grow young, or their longterm future could be in question.
Therefore, our PMT and Leadership Cabinet have supported our application for a PCUSA DREAM grant for *Growing Rural Churches Young*. How can we in Yellowstone be effective and fruitful in: growing vital churches and members who love, understand, serve and attract youth/young adults and families in our communities; growing youth/young adults as *lifelong* disciples/followers of Christ; better equip, understand, retain and empower younger people? Kenda Creasy Dean, Princeton Seminary, praises this the research and practical help for churches. "What's irresistible about *Growing Young* is that it's not primarily about age--it's about hope. Through story after compelling story, the authors demonstrate how prioritizing the young is a *church-changing* strategy,...and how pursuing Jesus by 'growing young' fundamentally changes the ways congregations interact with their communities and their leaders, as well as with youth and adults. With refreshing candor, this book blows the sanctuary doors open thanks to its insistence on following Christ in a way that prioritizes listening, empathy, and care for *all* young people and families, not just the Christian ones...This book is for the church. At last."

II. Clarify the Covenant with Glacier and explore other partnerships for future collaboration.

- a. **Significant reduction by the Synod:** The Synod has voted to become a 'reduced functioning' synod as of Dec. 31, with no more Synod Executive. This means that presbyteries and their staff and leadership staff must assume much more responsibility and take more initiative. We are already working informally together to create new patterns of communication and partnerships in ministry. See motion on this in Packet. **Info: Kathy**
 - i. **No WNLT this year.**
- b. **Glacier** The Leadership Cabinets of both presbyteries are proposing concluding our formal ministry covenant with Glacier Presbytery, but continuing to inform and work collegially, inviting participation from the other presbytery at each other's events.
- c. **Active partnerships:**
 - i. *Whitworth University, Office of Church Engagement (2 grants – Minds and Hearts Set on Christ, Student Fellows & Growing Rural Churches Young/DREAM grants)*
 - ii. *Within Synod (most active) Wyoming, Denver, and Pueblo Presbyteries*
 1. *Kathy was asked to serve on planning team for this initiative for an equipping conf/initiative begin planting new worshipping communities.*
 - ii. *Board of Pensions – Seminars, call to health, etc.*
 - iii. *PDA – new grant for St. Andrew for hail damage to church & garden.*
 - iv. *United Methodists / Lutherans –on providing pastoral leadership*
 - v. *Suggestions?*

III. Build community in the presbytery, continuing to grow our communication.

- a. Communications Team – **Info: Kristin Willett**
- b. Yellowstone Currents – **Info: Susan Thomas**
- c. Facebook – **Kristin, Jack Bell, George**
- d. Presbytery Sunday, October 9...
- e. ****Dwellings in the Word for Session resourcing/devotions are now posted on the presbytery website. **Info: George**
- f. Pastor Clusters build community in regions.
- g. Please pray for the pastoral search in Jordan and pastoral needs in Anaconda/Big Hole churches as JP leaves to take a position in Bozeman (family needs) @ Christ the King ELCA.
- h. Suggestions?

IV. Focus on spiritual nurture of pastors, leaders and potential leaders by understanding and using spiritual gifts.

- a. **Equipped and empowered disciples and churches - theme for our Nov. & February meetings and for EVERY session, congregation & ministry. What are spiritual gifts? What happens when EVERY disciple, young AND old, discovers, develops and is deployed to use their spiritual gifts?**

Paul wrote that we are not to be ignorant about the spiritual gifts for they are given by the Holy Spirit to EVERY Christian, for the Spirit's fruitful, transformative work in each person and through the body of Christ. Research several inventories, processes that could be considered and used by leaders and congregations.

Bring a team of leaders for training at our Nov and Feb. meetings for in-depth training.

Look for an email in the next few days with further details on training we will be offering and for the link to a Spiritual Gifts Inventory to take BEFORE presbytery, if at all possible.

- b. Will be discussed In the Minds and Hearts Spiritual Formation-Predaching Cohort.
- c. George continues to offer spiritual direction to a few of the presbytery pastors. **Info: George**

Other Items to Report:

- A. We continue to be involved with supporting the work of the PMT in many areas: some significant needs in the lives and families of our pastors/CREs training for this crucial Ministry Team, BoP related matters, churches in transition Dillon (Steve Weber started in September), Geysler, Jordan in a pastoral search, Anaconda and Big Hole now vacant & other needs.
- B. George attended the joyful installation of the New UMC Bishop, Karen Oliveto, a dedicated, gifted and able leader for the Rocky Mountain / Yellowstone Conference region. Kathy and George joined other judicatory heads and some spouses to welcome Bishop Oliveto over dinner.
- C. Our 2016 Year-end campaign to complete the required funding our position. Your generous giving, *after* gifts to your congregation, has made all the difference. We would appreciate your prayers for our leadership and ministry here and God's provision for the remaining 55% we need to raise. Our ministry update and fundraising letter is arriving soon!
- D. Kathy continues to serve: Board of Trustees of Whitworth University, as one of the Yellowstone Presbytery commissioners to Synod. She trained our GA commissioners/YAAD and attended the General Assembly in June along with Debbie Blackburn, and a few observers from Yellowstone.
- E. George serves on the Board of Rocky Mountain College, member of two Board Committees; JP Carlson continues as our presbytery representative on the Board of Intermountain.
- F. Both of us meet three times a year with the other Synod Execs, a group that must assume significantly more leadership and importance as the Synod has voted to move to reduced function.

Personal Items to Report:

- A. Requesting a conversation with a personnel team from Leadership Cabinet regarding our job performance and possible future projections of our work, impacted by Synod change and more.
- B. George has received positive test results regarding some health developments. Prayers and patience have been much appreciated.
- C. Daughter Gillian and husband Peter have moved to Bozeman. She loves her calling as a fulltime faculty member at MSU teaching Spanish; he continues his work remotely in finance for Chipotle.
- D. Chip and Staci and boys are well in Spokane.

Moderator Heath Rada's Report to General Assembly – Excerpts

From: Presbyterian Outlook magazine – Leslie Scanlon, June 17, 2016

Denominational support. “Our church is hungry for renewal, faith formation and proclamation,” Rada said, especially in churches in need of support. For example, Rada lifted up smaller churches, many of which are rural, that comprise 80 percent of PC(USA) congregations. Similarly, racial-ethnic congregations are facing “inequity, threats and challenges” and are “asking to join together with one voice.”

What has Rada learned?

Rada gave the committee a preview of remarks he will make to the whole assembly June 18, describing some of what he’s learned through the listening conversations he organized around the country this spring. Among his points:



Heath Rada addresses The Way Forward committee

- 1) Presbyterians are hungry for the renewal of faith formation and proclamation.** Increasing numbers of Americans describe themselves as “nones” (not affiliated with any religion) or “dones” (“those who’ve had it with organized religion and don’t want to be part of it any more,” as Rada described it). Yet Presbyterians have a renewed sense of urgency about the importance of proclaiming God’s word and helping form and grow people’s faith. The religiously disenchanted also are watching the PC(USA) “to see if we are genuinely looking to be different,” Rada said.
- 2) Congregational vitality is essential.** However, about 80 percent of PC(USA) churches are small and many are rural, “and they’re saying they don’t feel supported adequately.” It’s not just a matter of giving money, Rada said, but also sharing resources and ideas to help small churches transform their ministry.