

**Leadership Cabinet Report
Yellowstone Presbytery
March 8-9, 2019
First Presbyterian Church, Billings MT**

The Leadership Cabinet met for their regularly scheduled meetings in January and February. We have done the following:

- Evaluated the 2018 Goals to determine which goals had not yet been met, which to keep working on or change, and new ones to add.
- Continue to plan our gatherings of the Presbytery so that they give hands and feet to our Vision and Goals.
- Created a general Child and Youth Protection Policy for tweaking and adoption by each congregation.
- Approved the Corporation Letter for the State of Montana naming the officers of the corporation.
- The Personnel sub-committee is strong and moving forward.
- Authorized moving monies from various funds and the reserve to balance our budget. There will be no monies from the Synod of the Rocky Mountains this year.
- Discussed the General Assembly Overtures assigned to Leadership Cabinet and are ready to make referrals to the Presbytery.
- We are collecting interpretive pieces for Per Capita - what it is and what it does - for churches to use in their bulletins, newsletters, and mailings.
- Future to-do: update the Administrative Manual.
- We are still in process regarding two Presbytery properties: Oswego and Geysers.
- We are in dialogue with Wyoming Presbytery on an educational event in Jackson, WY the weekend of June 2, 2019.

**Motion from the Leadership Cabinet (for Saturday)
To elect Caroline Fleming as Moderator of Representation/Nominating Ministry Team and
Lanny Rounds as Rep/Nom member, class of 2021.**

Draft GOALS for 2019

1. Encourage and Create a Disciple-Making Culture
 - a. Collecting and sharing stories of God at work
 - b. Enticing sessions to use Dwelling in the Word and/or Word-Share-Pray
 - c. Do more with "Growing Young" by activating a sub-group of new and experienced leaders to help guide the Leadership Cabinet and Presbytery to further explore and practice the principal tenets from "Growing Young"
 - d. Develop habits, practices, and mindsets of modeling discipleship in our leaders

- e. Examine the roles, calls, and communication of pastors, ruling elders, and lay leaders in today's environment
2. Support Spiritual Nurture of Pastors, CREs, and Lay Leaders
 - a. Continue using the Presbytery Prayer Calendar and integrate it into cluster meetings, session meetings, worship services....
 - b. Provide more resources to pastors
 - i. Free retreats (using online resources)
 - ii. Create supportive relationships among pastors
 - c. Create a healing ministry by identifying gifts and call of presbytery members---pastors, leaders, church members, and participants---everyone
 3. Foster Community in the Presbytery
 - a. Presbytery Sunday
 - i. Find an organizer for Presbytery Sunday
 - b. Collect Stories
 - i. Stories of God's work and mission stories
 - ii. Identify collector of stories
 - c. Explore mission opportunities
 - i. John 20:19-23
 1. Could this scripture be used as this year's theme for the Leadership Cabinet?
 - ii. Identify Mission facilitator
 4. Examine God's Provision for God's Mission
 - a. The 4 T's
 - i. Time
 - ii. Talent
 - iii. Tithe
 - iv. Treasure
 - b. Explore grants, new people, new worshipping communities
 5. Support Staff
 - a. Encourage Personnel sub-committee
 - b. Examine staffing models

Yellowstone Presbytery Leadership Cabinet recommendations for GA Amendments 18-A and 18-F

18-A

Shall G-2.0401 of the Form of Government be amended as follows?

[Text to be deleted is shown with strike through; text to be added or inserted is shown in italic.]

“G-2.0401 Election of Ruling Elders and Deacons

“Ruling elders and deacons are men and women elected by the congregation from among its members. The nomination and election of ruling elders and deacons shall express the rich diversity of the congregation’s membership and shall guarantee participation and inclusiveness (F-1.0403). Ruling elders and deacons shall be nominated by a committee elected by the congregation, drawn from and representative of its membership. ~~Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee, provided that the committee shall consist of at least three active members of the congregation, and shall include at least one ruling elder who is currently serving on the session.~~ *Congregations may provide by their own rule for a congregational nominating committee. The rule shall meet the following criteria: (1) the minimum size of the committee as specified in the rule shall be at least three persons; (2) at least one member of the committee shall be an elder currently serving on session; and (3) a majority of those persons on the committee who are eligible to vote shall consist of persons not currently serving on session.* The pastor shall serve ex officio and without vote. When elections are held, full opportunity shall always be given to the congregation for nomination from the floor of the congregational meeting by any active member of the congregation. A majority of all the active members present and voting shall be required to elect.”

The Leadership Cabinet of Yellowstone Presbytery thought these election requirements were reasonable for our many smaller churches and recommends the presbytery concur with this amendment.

18-F.

Shall W-4.0202 be amended as follows:

[Text to be deleted is shown with a strike-through; text to be added or inserted is shown as italic.]

“W-4.0202 Welcoming to the Table

“In cases where baptized children who have not yet begun to participate in the Lord’s Supper express a desire to receive the Sacrament, ~~the session should provide an occasion to welcome them~~ *they shall be welcomed* to the table ~~in public worship.~~ *Their introduction to the Lord’s Supper should include—and the session should ensure they receive* ongoing instruction or formation in the meaning and mystery of the Sacraments.”

The Leadership Cabinet of Yellowstone Presbytery recommends the presbytery concur with this amendment.

The Yellowstone Presbytery Leadership Cabinet recommends presbytery approval of GA Amendment 18-c.

“Shall G-3.0104 of the Form of Government be amended by adding the following statement as the last paragraph to read as follows?

[Text to be added is shown as italic.] ***“No congregation, session, presbytery, synod, or national office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), nor any individual acting on behalf of or in an official capacity for the above institutions, shall publicly endorse or oppose, or otherwise encourage or discourage others to vote for or against an individual running for public office.”***

Rationale for Approval by the majority of the Leadership Cabinet:

1. The taking of public, political stands specifically for or against a particular candidate is almost always divisive to a congregation, session, or presbytery and unnecessarily disrupts the “peace unity and purity of the church.” This is particularly true in our rural congregations in which a diversity of political opinions is present.
2. This amendment protects the session or presbytery from being manipulated by a pastor or cadre. It also protects the freedom of conscience of the pastor from being bullied into speaking for or against a particular candidate by governing bodies.
3. It protects churches from lawsuits which may result from a pastor or session speaking out against a candidate in an election, thus maintaining compliance the Johnson Amendment of 1954 to the U. S, Tax Code which prohibits tax-exempt institutions, such as churches, from speaking out for or against candidates to influence elections.
4. There is a movement to repeal the Johnson Amendment, which if it happens, would remove this protective provision from the church.

Rationale for Disapproval by the minority of the Leadership Cabinet:

1. This amendment limits the freedom of conscience and the speech of pastors and governing bodies, for we believe that “God alone is Lord of the conscience.”
2. To speak from the pulpit for or against a candidate will almost certainly be divisive to a congregation, and should never be done except in extreme circumstances and never without prayerful reflection and advice from other leaders in the church or community.
3. But there may be times when justice and conscience compel the taking of a stand in a way that is mindful of but regardless of consequences. John the Baptist spoke out against King Herod’s sin – and took the consequences. The German Church has often been criticized for not speaking out against the rising Adolf Hitler.
4. The minority would have preferred a proposed amendment to the overture suggested by the Committee for Social Witness Policy which read: “[No] *Except in cases of extreme danger to the common good, and even then with cautions against extreme partisanship, no* congregation, session, presbytery, synod, or national office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), nor any individual acting on behalf of or in an official capacity for the above institutions, shall publicly endorse or oppose, or otherwise encourage or discourage others to vote for or against an individual running for public office.” But it was not approved by the 2018 GA.

The Leadership Cabinet of Yellowstone Presbytery recommends, with a minority report, the presbytery concur with this amendment.