

Presbytery Theme for 2017 – As we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, recalling the **The Five ‘Solas’** : *Sola Scriptura* (“Scripture alone”): The Bible alone is our highest authority; *Sola Fide* (“faith alone”): We are saved through faith alone in Jesus Christ; *Sola Gratia* (“grace alone”): We are saved by the grace of God alone. *Solus Christus* (“Christ alone”): Jesus Christ alone is our Lord, Savior, and King; *Soli Deo Gloria* (“to the glory of God alone”): We live for the glory of God alone, the Leadership Cabinet also sought to emphasize the priesthood of all believers, expressed in **Eph. 4:11-12**: “The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”.

We Organize our Report Around the 2017 Action Goals Established by the Leadership Cabinet ...

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. **

- a. In every venue, we try to emphasize disciple-making principles and practices, particularly at the presbytery meetings: Dwelling in the Word; equipping and resourcing, such as Stan Ott in February and the provision of his sessions by video to every church.
- b. At the presbytery meeting in November in Bozeman, the theme will focus on this Goal including ... Hearing from how this is being implemented through a year of CALL at FPC, Bozeman; George’s workshop will focus on the “Pastor and Elder as Disciple-makers.”
- c. Integrating this into our conversations and times with pastors and churches - Asking and working with pastors, elders and sessions as to how they can integrate this theme and resources into their training and equipping of folks.
- d. Pastor Clusters focus on mutual and collegial discipleship with spiritual practices
- e. This is the foundation of our way of being, discipling the Whitworth summer Fellows
- f. We have both had conversations with young people re prayerfully considering God’s call to become pastors or CRE’s.
- g. The Camping and Youth focuses almost exclusively on disciple-making:
 - a. September 29- October 1 – Camp Staff reunion retreat at our home did this
 - b. Fall Junior / Senior High retreat with collegians in support, did not take place as scheduled on October 19-21 at Rockhaven Camp due to key leaders away for extended periods of time, various conflicts in scheduling for students, their families’ travel, and churches...
- h. **Sent** - Several of our churches did mission projects or trips or VBS’s this summer, come in their own communities or elsewhere: i.e.
 1. FPC Billings teamed up with the Whitworth Fellows in Lewistown and led VBS, partnering with FPC in Stanford for second year in a row – wonderful fruit;
 2. FPC Butte – Some adults did a service project at Intermountain while the youth pastor and youth teamed with the Bozeman Whitworth Fellows and led VBS for Intermountain resident children; touching stories
 3. FPC Bozeman adults had a mission team who went on a third trip to partner with some Dakota Presbyterian churches to serve, learn and build bonds of friendship and understanding. They were hosted by the Chelsea church, Dakota, and FPC Poplar, Yellowstone.
 4. Manhattan Presbyterian Church had a youth mission team from Dallas, TX come to join them in a large VBS for their community. Rich fruit, including a baptism in September.
 4. *Others? Please send us the info so we can continue to compile this list.*

We are praying for God to raise up some folks whose gift and calling this is!
Consider inviting some of these folks to come and fill the pulpit and share with other congregations.

Please pray and consider In YOUR congregation, who might be some new and/or younger people who are excited about, involved with your congregations’ being sent to join Christ in Christ’s mission in your

community, state, world...who would join with folks from other congregations to connect with, listen, and share what many congregations are doing and explore, discern ways they might join to partner together in Christ's mission?

1. Focus on spiritual nurture of pastors, leaders and potential leaders across the presbytery by identifying, understanding and using spiritual gifts.

- a. Training, equipping at presbytery meetings (2016, 2017 included this), follow up conversations with pastors, leaders regarding their own gifts and ways to share and equip in this area in congregations and with students.
- b. Yellowstone Presbytery partners with Whitworth Institute for Ministry (WIM) in the grant for Preaching/Teaching/Spiritual Formation Cohort through 2017 – May '18, with other western presbyteries. Seven YP pastors and leaders attended in July. Kathy taught a seminar at WIM.
- c. Day of fasting and prayer for country, state, churches, Monday, October 1st. George wrote a liturgy to be followed in groups or individually. Kathy, with Dan Holland, George, Debbie Funke, led the prayer conference call available to any who wished to join by phone.
- d. We continue to reiterate with all churches & leaders, especially with churches in transition or without a pastor, the powerful ongoing benefits, opportunities and fruitful mission and service which can occur for lay leaders, members, including teens, through making use of the content in Stan's videos sent to each congregation and the accompanying printed materials and video clips we have posted online. They can help motivate and equip for better understanding and identifying their spiritual gifts and to grasp & experience that as God's people we are

LOVE & CALLED, GIFTED & EQUIPPED → SENT

<http://www.yellowstonepcusa.org/StanOttMaterials.htm>

We have significant pastoral/leadership transitions underway now, and in the next 5 years, in the majority of our churches. Following the New Testament understanding and practice of the "3 Great Commandments" sharing the Good News, making, equipping and sending ALL disciples for the "work of ministry" in and with the love of Christ, will determine the health and future of congregations. Some of our churches can not presently afford full-time, or even half-time pastors. BUT God has given the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, abilities, experiences to ALL those God calls!!

Question - How might or are you offering this in your congregation in ways that suits your congregation and context?

Please share with us and others ideas, resources for how your church is doing the above with sessions, youth, ministry teams, education classes, studies or an interested group. Experience shows that sharing this with some leaders and starting a "holy experiment" on the margins and seeing what happens can be an effective start. Younger folks are often very intrigued and open.

- a. Prayer: George and Kathy pray through the week for the Yellowstone pastors, families and congregations.

2. 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.

a. See 2.c above LOVE & CALLED, GIFTED & EQUIPPED → SENT

b. Presbytery Sunday, October 9 encouraging and to offer guidance for pastors and leaders on how to share the vision of the presbytery. We would like to place more emphasis on this Sunday in future years, and expand the team working on this as some could not continue this year.

c. Clergy Clusters all are meeting. We both meet with the clusters when practicable.

- i. **Miles City Cluster** met Wednesday, October 4 at FPC Miles City, and will again on Wednesday, Nov. 25 Neva Rathbun coordinates: msrev@midrivers.com.
- ii. **White Sulphur Springs Cluster** met on October 16 by phone and will again on November 10 in person. Debbie Funke coordinates: funkepastor@yahoo.com.

- iii. **The Butte Cluster** met on October 16 and is projected to meet next on Nov. 20th at FPC Butte. Teresa Kendall coordinates: Teresakendall@mac.com.
 - iv. **The Billings Cluster** met October 17 at FPC-Billings and will again on Nov 8. Dave Thompson coordinates: pastordaver@fpcbillings.org.
 - b. **Yellowstone Currents** is the presbytery's communication tool, Susan Thomas, who is walking the Camino with husband Curt, is our contact person, ckochner@mcn.net.
 - c. **We seek to share the stories we hear** of what God is up to, to connect folks and want to see this sharing/interacting aspect of the presbytery meeting increased, and to better use various virtual means as well, including pictures and video clips. Jack, others interested, let's reignite this and pray for and seek out new and younger folks to join in.
 - d. **See summer mission and VBS above 1.h.**
 - e. **Prayer Concerns** expressed for leaders, some in general prayer e-mails:
 1. Sadly, Pastor Jim Kidd passed away in October in CO after August surgery complications. Bethan, his wife, and family are planning a memorial service in the White Sulphur Springs Church in January. Sympathy cards may be sent to Bethan at PO Box 494, White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645-0464. Pray for the church too.
 2. Leon Rathbun has a very serious cancer condition. We are holding Leon, Neva and their family in our earnest prayers .
3. **Explore partnership and collaboration with presbyteries and other organizations as we grow in disciple-making and disciple-sending.** *The presbytery is doing well in this, including...*
- a. **The Whitworth / YP preaching Cohort** began its second year at Whitworth Institute for Ministry with theme *Reformation and Re-Formation: The Church as Witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ*. Seven are committed to participate.
 - b. **The PMT / AC and George are working with Glacier Presbytery** to explore re-igniting of ministry in Geysers. At its request, the presbytery closed it at its June meeting.
 - c. **The Whitworth / YP Fellows Program** successfully finished its third summer. This is a period of evaluation & exploration for continuing the partnership in 2018.
 - d. **The ELCA Montana Synod and YP for the training of lay leaders in Eastern Montana.** The Lutherans will lead the program, and we will join in as potential lay pastors show interest. Katie Emery is integral to this work. The first training session was held on Saturday, October 21 in Shelby. Wayne and Sharon Milmine from Hysham attended. The next training retreat will be on a Friday–Saturday in April, 2018. There will be two retreats a year. Interested???
 - e. **Calling Initiative – YP & any churches invited to participate in the Whitworth/Lilly grant** committing to explore what it means to be "called" by God to kingdom work in a post-Christendom setting. Offered to us @ reduced cost of \$50 per person. Each church will receive further information on this opportunity. Please talk with Kathy Goodrich with questions, interest. Check out website - <http://www.whitworth.edu/cms/administration/church-engagement/the-calling-initiative/>
 - f. **The UCC and UMC and YP board members of Rocky Mountain College** exploring with chaplain Kim Woeste the training and placing of Fellows in Churches, on a similar plan as the Whitworth partnership. Details still sketchy.
4. **Equipping leaders and congregations in Growing Young, per the research**
- a. **Whitworth Fellows** were generally well received and we continue to hear a variety of ways the Holy Spirit has used them. They had our Goal 5 as their primary ministry this summer. We resourced, supervised, coached, prayed, supported, encouraged them watching the Holy Spirit work in a wide range of people and ways. They served as counselors at Westminster Spires Camp for a portion of the summer. Britt & Joel met with the Lewistown session and Growing Young Team and staff weekly, with youth and young adults in the church and some interested in the church, served as VBS staff in Lewistown and with FPC Billings team in Stanford, shared ideas/observations with a wide range of leaders and members, preached and did special things according to their gifts.

Luke and Kristen, based in Bozeman with us, traveled and stayed and served, spoke to youth sessions, congregational groups, preached, helped with VBS's and focused on Growing Young in various ways. See separate report for more details and their feedback.

b. We seek to include some equipping, conversation & model for of this @ each Presbytery meeting -

1. Kathy presented @ Dillon meeting in May.

2. November Meeting- Joel, '17 Whitworth Fellow, preaches, several college students will lead, speak and share about findings, ideas from the summer & have large & small group conversation with presbyters.

c. **Webinar on Leading Change in churches with a focus on Growing Young** and the many uses for the new assessment tool congregations can use. Kathy, Debbie Blackburn and Teresa Kendall attended.

d. Kathy has shared this research with some of the Westminster Spires Staff and Presbycats to begin to explore ways they can understand and perhaps be used by the Spirit in further ways in their home churches, with other churches and for the presbytery.

6. However, much of what has occurred in the last 12-18 months in the presbytery from pastor departures, staff change, pastor family or health crises, drought and devastating fires, administrative matters, has meant that some of what we are doing is more broadly under the presbytery's Vision and our job descriptions and not as neatly under one of these Leadership Cabinet's Goals:

- a. St. Timothy's Chapel has new leadership and they are not necessarily aware of the facts or the history and legal aspect and are raising new issues. George and Debbie, and Susan Seibert and Sheryl Hallin somewhat, have put in large amounts of time in the summer and fall this fall on many aspects, including financial, communication and establishing facts and the nature of the presbyteries legal responsibilities and liabilities for St. Tim's which is part of the Presbytery and also has our EIN. George and Debbie are working with Jack Bell and Dan Holland to re-establish communication and a supportive relationship.
- b. We are, with others on PMT, needing to work on the many aspects of educating, meeting with, supporting, encouraging, helping sessions and PNC's of our churches in pastoral transition: Dillon, Big Hole, Lewistown, Jordan, Hysham, Miles City, and White Sulphur Springs. Several other churches will likely have pastoral transitions in the next 2-4 years.
- c. Stated Clerk transition. We are deeply grateful for the calm, Christ-like competence which Debbie Blackburn has brought to this calling and our presbytery. This is a loss and she and her gifts and leadership will be sorely missed. Please pray for our Search Com. chaired by Jody McDevitt. They are advertising with a goal of hiring in February. Kathy serves as staff resource.
- d. George serves as staff resource to the RepNom Ministry team, which has worked hard and well. Neva was doing a good job chairing this committee, but with Leon's illness, has passed the leadership to Caroline Fleming to finish up the committee's work.
- e. We both, along with Debbie Blackburn, resource the LC and PMT, which both have had very large workloads this year.
- f. PDA & Emergencies and disasters – Kathy, with Jordan & Susi Ennis, LC mod. & mod. of Jordan session, wrote and received a PDA grant for the presbytery, working with the Jordan church, to respond to the devastating fires burning almost ½ million acres in NE Montana.

Personal – Thank you, as sisters and brothers, for sharing

We celebrated our 40th Anniversary in August and are deeply grateful for God's gifts of love, grace, and the love and support of family, friends, churches and colleagues across the decades, including you all.

We are pondering God's leading to offer a marriage enrichment event in the next year at very reduced cost, as gift and thank offering.

George's mom celebrates her 90th in November and all who are able are gathering to celebrate. She is downsizing again. Prayers for George's brother after a car accident with concussion. Kathy's mom has a few new health challenges. Prayers for them and our kids and grandkids always appreciated.

**** Continuing to explore New Worshipping Communities across our presbytery. And Equipping and sending the gifted into ministry.**