



**WE ARE THE PRESBYTERY
OF WESTERN COLORADO**

Pressing News

Spring 2016

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In the presbytery of Western Colorado, we have been spending time walking with Stan Wood on the path of the missional church. In our Southern Cluster we have been working alongside of him to steer our ministries toward a new understanding of what it means to be the church of Jesus in SW Colorado. As we have talked together and dreamed together about what that might look like for churches in this cluster, I have noticed something a bit unsuspected. Part of our missional nature is to get to know each other. Simple.

Now as one of the cluster leaders, I have already had the privilege of preaching in and worshipping with each of the 6 churches in our cluster from Rico to Allison and from Cortez to Bayfield and from Florida Mesa to Durango. The more time I have spent with each of these communities the closer we have drawn to one another. I have come to the unsurprising realization that this is a huge part of being missional. Being together.

We are blessed here in the south to host monthly luncheons among the pastors and this (usually) harmless gathering for a meal has also introduced us, one to the other, in a more intimate way which in turn has moved us forward together as a missional community.

None of this should come as any surprise to me, since Jesus set this pattern in scripture so long ago. His collection of the band of brothers we now call disciples and his subsequent travels, shared meals, teaching and sacrifice drew them together in the same way. They became a missional community in their shared experiences.

How slow and stiff-necked I can be sometimes to not recognize the simplest forms of missional community all around me. Sometimes I look deep and wide for a more complicated, difficult path toward a deeper missional experience.

Indeed, sometimes the path is complicated and deep.

Sometimes it's not.

Simple. Being together. Shared experiences. Missional.

Blake Blakesley
Southern Cluster

Presbytery Meeting



Highlights

Summary of our May Presbytery Meeting

The May meeting of the Presbytery of Western Colorado continued to follow the emerging emphasis on spending more of our time doing things that would be inspiring for attendees and helpful to our congregations. To that end there were six worshipful experiences interspersed throughout the meeting focused on the theme of how we can be missional congregations and the practical challenges to that in our local settings. The message for each of those experiences was presented by different pastors in our presbytery. The planning team and presenters are to be commended for adding a rich depth of

meaning and purpose to our Spring Meeting!

As Moderator of the Committee on Preparation for Ministry, Beau Smith led the Presbytery in a celebration of gratitude to Mary Hammond Atkinson for her decade of excellent leadership as the recent past moderator of CPM. We were then privileged to hear from Candidate, Josh Rodriguez who spoke about his ministry journey and his current experience in a non-ordained position as Director of Youth and Young Adults at the First Presbyterian Church in Nashville, TN.

Council reported the persons they had elected to the various remaining vacancies in the Presbytery. This was in accordance with the action taken by Presbytery at its September 2015 meeting. Among the positions that were filled, Chuck Jerome was elected as Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery for 2016.

Official actions of the Presbytery included:

- ♦ Approving our contract with Stan Wood for another year (Sept. 2016-Aug. 2017).
- ♦ Approving the "Action Resolution for Becoming a Missional Presbytery." In addition to being an expression of what we are working toward with Stan Wood, this resolution will assist in our efforts to secure a denominational grant to help us fund those efforts. A copy of that Resolution follows this report.
- ♦ At Council's recommendation, Presbytery approved setting aside \$50,000 for seed money grants to aid congregations in their missional efforts.
- ♦ Presbytery approved a change in our By-Laws that now gives each committee responsibility for selecting their own moderator. This is to be done at the last meeting of the year for each committee and is to be reported to the Stated Clerk.

Beth Gilleece, our Administrative Assistant, presented the 2015 year-end financial reports and the 2016 year-to-date financial report through March 31 of this year. As of that date, expenses exceeded receipts by \$1,856.

Celebrating the good things happening in our churches and the Presbytery,

Jeff Harmeling, Stated Clerk

Keep all who will be traveling to, attending, making decisions, voting and going back home from the General Assembly Meeting in Portland in your prayers the next few weeks.

Specifically our commissioners Rev. Pat Bailey, Alternate Bill Mangrum, and Elder Gary Skaggs.

Action Resolution

Western Colorado Presbytery

ON BECOMING A MISSIONAL PRESBYTERY

Spiritual renewal will only happen when “local congregations renounce an introverted concern for their own life, and recognize that they exist for the sake of those who are not members, as sign, instrument and foretaste of God’s redeeming grace for the whole life of society.”

Lesslie Newbigin

Whereas:

- Many congregations within the Presbytery are “at risk” for varieties of reasons:
 - o Membership is declining
 - o Limited funds
 - o Dissatisfaction with denominational policies
 - o Isolation (living in small communities and at great distance from other PCUSA churches)
 - o Inward focus: church exists to “keep the doors open and search for a pastor” – church lacks a focus on the God’s mission for the church and in their context
- There is an urgent need for spiritual discernment and transformation of congregations within the presbytery.
- Some congregations no longer reflect the culture and ethnicities of the neighborhoods where the church gathers for worship.
- Congregational Leaders need sustained training and coaching on becoming missional churches.
- The Committee on Ministry desires to re-shape the annual review process with ministers in order to encourage missional leadership outcomes and nurture “in-touch” relationships.
- Commissioned Ruling Elders need training for mission-shaped church development.
- Mission-shaped growing churches within the Presbytery need to collaborate and partner for God’s mission on the western slope of Colorado through sharing, prayer and strategically planting new churches.
- Presbytery needs to develop a unified and cohesive purpose of Mission and Kingdom focus, which will include:

- o Revisiting the purpose for “why be a Presbytery”,
- o Joining together in prayerful discernment and collaborative work in order to become a missional presbytery.

Therefore the Western Colorado Presbytery agrees to move toward becoming a missional Presbytery in the following ways:

- ✚ Engage a multiple year (up-to 4 years) consultation, and
- ✚ Assist congregations of the Presbytery in becoming missional churches by identifying, equipping and empowering the apostolic calling and missional vocation of the congregations, and therefore
- ✚ Directs the Consultation Committee of Presbytery, in collaboration with the Committee on Ministry and a consultant to:
 - Establish measurable goals for congregational transformation in order to equip congregational leaders for holistic church development of God’s mission.
 - Requests the Consultation Committee, on behalf of the Presbytery, submit a “Presbytery Grant for Congregational Transformation” to the General Assembly, Mission Development Resource Grant Committee [MDRC], as soon as possible.

Note: Presenting reasons for this resolution were developed in a COM meeting held in the summer of 2015 and by the Presbytery consultant, Dr. Stan Wood. Additionally, a missional church/missional Presbytery conference was held during the Fall 2015 Presbytery meeting in Delta.

Office Summer Hours and Traveling

Most days of the week Beth will be in the office from 10:00 am to 5:00pm Monday through Thursday.
June 25—30 office is closed and Beth will not be available—vacation with no cell service

Beth—ICE CREAM SELLING

July 4th the office is closed.

July 9-17 Beth will not be in the office but she will be working via laptop and Cell phone.

July 20-25 Beth will be available via laptop and Cell phone

August 29-September 6 Beth will be available via laptop and Cell phone

Beth’s email address is beth@wcopresbytery.org and the Cell phone is 970-497-6925

HOW DO NEW PEOPLE HEAR ABOUT YOUR CHURCH?

When asked, “How did you first find out about this congregation?” visitors give surprisingly diverse answers. Because not all visitors are seeking the same thing, their path to your church door reflects their specific needs and interests. Thus, congregations need multiple strategies to publicize and promote their presence in the community.

Types of Potential New Members

There are three major types of potential members in your community and they usually have a variety of methods for seeking you out.

Transplants are new community residents who tend to search for a congregation of the same denomination they were previously a part of. They generally use the narrowest search strategy, such as denominational lists or a recommendation by their previous pastor.

Neighbors are friends and relatives of people who already attend or who live close by. These visitors are more likely to respond to a personal invitation to attend.

Seekers are potential worshipers who have not attended church before, or at least not in a long time. They usually find a church in less direct ways and may be looking for an experience that addresses an emotional need.

Building Bridges

Many congregations excel at building bonds—personal connections among members—but it takes something more to build bridges to new members. Congregations build bridges to potential new members when worshipers want to share something that they find meaningful with those outside the church. Unfortunately, without planning and intentional efforts, these bridges never get built.

Congregational leaders and members assume that new people first engage by attending a worship service. However, growing numbers of people, especially younger people, have no church affiliation or previous exposure to faith communities. More than ever, congregations need different mechanisms to engage new generations and populations.¹

Ways to Build Bridges

There are multiple bridging approaches, and the effectiveness of each strategy depends on the type of visitor a church is attempting to reach.

Personal communication. Word of mouth remains the most frequent way new people find out about a church. Decades of research support this finding: current estimates range from at least half to two-thirds of surveyed adults find a church through personal invitations. People are infinitely more likely to trust information if they hear it from a person they know.

Virtual word of mouth. If current members use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Yelp, Foursquare, Meetup, or other platforms, your church already engages in digital evangelism. When members post photos of church experiences and friends, their side-door evangelism spreads information about what your church has to offer to their friends *and the friends of their friends*. Online avenues allows people to feel like they belong before they ever step foot on church property.²

Mass communication. An effective church website gives new people the chance to do in-depth research about



a church before they visit or engage in activities there. A high-quality website connects people to the church's ministry goals, including opportunities for volunteerism, social advocacy, and meeting spiritual needs.

Other communications still make a difference. Congregations can produce attractive brochures, postcards, and mailings. Others use signs and banners on church property and in the community. Radio ads tend to be inexpensive and can reach a wide audience.

Promoting and hosting events. Fairburn United Methodist Church, with many members more than eighty years old, recognized that new actions could strengthen their congregation's role in the community. The church created an "Open Doors Day" for the community, a carnival-type event that offered free rides, games, food, and tours. When more than 300 people attended, the church felt more connected to new residents in their changing community.³

Community service activities. Meaningful service and advocacy efforts grow out of church ministries. These activities both minister to struggling or hurting people and give potential new members an avenue for social activism as well. For some, service volunteering can lead to deeper involvement in a faith community.

Increasing visibility. A national study of new members found that one in five first found out about the congregation because they noticed the building.⁴ Thus, attractive grounds and facilities also advertise and can say, "Welcome." Notifications about preschools, after school programs, and service programs increase foot traffic as well as raise the visibility and use of church facilities.

Designing Bridges That Work

Before launching plans for reaching out to new people, gather some information about what is working now. Find out what current church efforts yield the best results. Above all, make only one or two changes at a time and continue monitoring the results.

Conduct a survey. Ask your last twenty new members: "Through whom, or by what means, did you first visit our church? What got you on the property the first time?" Share the findings with the appropriate committee or governing board and plan new strategies.

Assess the church's reputation. Ask ten nonmembers in the community to tell you what they know about the church. Which of your programs or services are you effectively communicating to the public? Do these assessments match your congregation's goals and mission? If not, where is the communication faltering?

Bolster your digital message. Try googling your church and see what comes up. Does the church website come up first? What else can a potential church visitor learn from an internet search? Is the address displayed and are service times easy to find? Consider completing a review of church website basics and making the necessary changes to enhance your site.⁵

To enable current members to electronically communicate with their friends about the church, learn about their usage patterns. Expect church members to fall all along the social media spectrum—from non-users to experts. An excellent Church Internet Usage Survey is available to get this critical information.⁶ Based on accurate information, a social ministry team can build a comprehensive plan for enhancing the church's ministry through this technology.

Plan big worship days. Churches see spikes in attendance at predictable times throughout each year—Christmas, Easter, and Mother's Day—and even larger numbers can be expected if people in the neighborhood receive personal or print invitations. Other promoted service times might be a Back-to-School Sunday in the fall, a day in February when people are less busy, or a Visitor or Bring-a-Friend Sunday. Each of these promoted services attract different types of people, such as inactives, families with children, and relatives or friends of members. However, given the planning and effort involved, carrying out more than three or four of these special Sundays a year is counterproductive.

The Bottom Line

What causes an increase in first-time worship visitors? Major causes are your congregation's meaningful ministry, visibility, and positive reputation in the community. When that is the case, members derive significant spiritual meaning from their church, more members spontaneously invite, and more people respond to those invitations.

1. F. Douglas Powe and Jasmine Smother, "Create New Entry Points," *Leading Ideas*, October 2014 (www.churchleadership.com).

2. Powe and Smother.

3. www.sacredplaces.org/reimagine-your-sacred-place/training/graduate-success-stories/2015/02/23/fairburn-united-methodist-church

4. U.S. Congregational Life Survey (www.USCongregations.org).

5. See Scott Thumma, "Review of Church Website," www.theparishpaper.com/review-church-website-basics-scott-thumma.

6. See Scott Thumma, "Church Internet Usage Survey" www.theparishpaper.com/church-internet-usage-survey-scott-thumma.

MAKING CONGREGATIONS GREENER

The celebration of Earth Day began in 1970 and has now spread to 192 countries. The early organizers could not imagine that almost fifty years later environmental issues would remain challenging, emotional, and controversial. However, for faith communities, the concept of caring for all creation fits with the Gospel message of assuming responsibility for what God has given us. How much have congregations embraced the practices of refuse, reduce, reuse, and recycle?

Beginning Steps

Making the decision to become a greener congregation can seem overwhelming. However, there are several small and cost-effective ways to shape church practices and policies to honor the stewardship of creation.

Start a conversation. If the congregation has never discussed ecological issues as a community, consider a study or discernment process devoted to the topic.¹ Ask: How do our theological and biblical commitments translate into spiritual practices of caring for the earth? Perhaps a church group could read and discuss the seven different biblical perspectives on creation and reflect on the connections between these traditions and the natural sciences.²

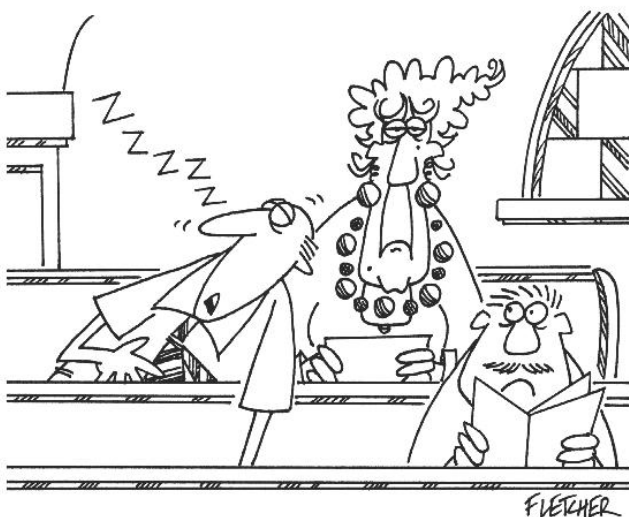
Another strategy would be to ask a group to review the congregation's vision or mission statement, website content, and other important documents. Does your congregation's vision reflect the care of creation? If it does not, how might some aspect of caring for creation that is authentic to your church be made more explicit?

Learn more about local environmental issues. Often members lack up-to-date information about local energy and food sources, water and wastewater treatment, forms of environmental damage, or potential hazards. Consider inviting guest speakers from community organizations involved in environmental health to inform church groups. Begin a study or discussion series on local environmental topics.

Identify people with passion and gifts to lead the church in stewardship practices. Almost every church has members involved in local efforts to address environmental concerns. But they may have never been asked to use their knowledge to help other church members move toward greater awareness and stewardship.

Reassess current consumption and waste patterns. An easy starting point is to use only recycled paper and other products for church materials. Most congregations could do a better job of providing more visible recycling receptacles for paper, glass, plastic, cans, and cardboard. Some churches even serve as recycling drop-off locations for their members and communities. Install bike racks to encourage worshipers to cycle to services and activities. Another overlooked area relates to the cleaning chemicals used around the building. Are these products safe for the people using them and for the environment? Are cleaning products stored safely?³

Laying Down Burdens. The author of *Less Clutter, More Life* says, "clutter represents postponed decisions."⁴



A STRONG PROponent OF EFFICIENT
ENERGY USE IN THE CHURCH,
EUGENE GOES INTO "SLEEP MODE" ON A REGULAR BASIS.

Experts estimate we never use 80 percent of what we keep. Does the same statistic apply to congregations? How much space is devoted to storing outdated props, equipment, curriculum, and seasonal material? One church cleared out two storage rooms, including old records and paperwork, to gain Sunday school rooms in return. Perhaps hanging on to objects reminds us of great periods in the church's past. However, giving away and recycling items from the past frees the congregation to move forward in ministry.

Bigger Steps

A congregation that is striving to manage church resources as caretakers of God's creation can take on even more ambitious projects.

Conduct an energy audit. A facilities committee should evaluate energy uses in its facilities every two years, including checking the heating and cooling equipment for efficiency. The committee can establish a baseline of heating, cooling, and lighting costs. About forty states have affiliates of Interfaith Power & Light (www.interfaithpowerandlight.org), a non-profit that aids congregations with energy conservation and efforts to shrink their carbon footprint. Their website provides valuable information about agencies who conduct energy usage for specific states. The U.S. Department of Energy (www.energy.gov) suggests some do-it-yourself versions of an energy audit.

Address underutilized buildings. The Garden Church in San Pedro, California, permanently solved this problem—they have no church building. The congregation meets at an outdoor central table surrounded by gardens—"a living sanctuary." Few congregations would find this a workable approach, yet other strategies could make a significant difference. For instance, too many church buildings remain empty for many hours during the week even though their facilities could be an important anchor for the wider community. Do the policies and fees that apply to outside groups encourage or discourage potential users? Seek out new partnerships and remove the barriers that prevent greater use of church facilities. One nonprofit organization, Partners for Sacred Places (www.sacredplaces.org), assists congregations in sustaining and actively using their structures. Leaders could learn about and consider some of their suggestions for maximizing buildings.

Replace equipment. Photocopiers, computers, and printers should have power saving features. If not, then consider replacing older equipment. Refrigerators and

freezers use large amounts of energy. If these units are older, the church might save money and energy by replacing them with equipment that is more efficient. A water heater should get special scrutiny if the unit keeps large amounts of water hot all the time. On-demand, tankless, or instant water heaters could be a good investment in a church where daily demand is not common. Light fixtures and bulbs should also be replaced with new technology that use less energy and cost less over the life of the bulb. Replacing poorly insulated windows and putting in more insulation also reduces energy use.⁵

Consider other sources of energy. Some churches install solar panels to generate renewable heat. Your region may offer the possibility of purchasing "green power" from wind and geothermal sources.

Become advocates. Most denominations offer opportunities for congregations to be a collective witness for environmental concerns. Other ecumenical efforts, such as Creation Justice Ministries (www.creationjustice.org), provide information on current legislation and policy initiatives to mobilize people around environmental justice issues.

When Abundance Leads to Resistance

Americans can easily take the beauty and abundance of our country for granted. When we live in a land of plenty, we are often blind to the erosion of natural resources and that leads us to resist any limits to our choices. Serving God by protecting God's creation conveys that we expect God's presence in all places.⁶

1. See the excellent Mennonite Creation Care Network curriculum (<http://www.mennocreationcare.org>).

2. William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

3. See Rebecca Barnes Davies, *50 Ways to Help Save the Earth, Revised Edition: How You and Your Church Can Make a Difference* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2016) for more ideas.

4. Barbara Hemphill, *Less Clutter, More Life* (Pasadena, CA: True Roses, 2014), 12.

5. See Creation Justice Ministries (www.creationjustice.org) for purchasing guides and Earth Day Sunday worship materials.

6. Mark Torgerson, *Greening Spaces for Worship and Ministry: Congregations, Their Building, and Creation Care* (New York: Rowland & Littlefield, 2012).

Dear Partners in Ministry,

For those of you who were not at the stated meeting of presbytery , Kim and I announced that after a dozen years we are leaving Cortez and the Montezuma Valley Presbyterian Church. I have received the call to be the interim pastor at First Presbyterian Church in North Platte, Nebraska beginning July 3. Kim will be devoting herself full-time to motherhood and our son, Matthew's archery endeavors and dreams.

We thank all for your walking with us during our time in this presbytery. We also thank you for the prayers and the laying on of hands at the meeting last week.

We ask for your continued prayer support and the strong support of our beloved church in Cortez as they experience this change and interim time themselves.

Again, thank you.
Grace and Peace,
Steve and Kim Nofel



Dear Friends,

I am once again humbled and so very appreciative of all the love and prayers we have been shown by the members of this presbytery. It has been a very emotional last 8 months with good news and bad news and no News!!

The Doctors told Jim (my Husband) that he will not ever be able to go back to his chosen profession. We are very thankful for the company he worked for providing disability insurance. So what is he doing? He is helping his cousin on the family ranch a couple days a week and otherwise puttering around the house. So yes we would love to have your continued prayers.

My son's girlfriend's surgery was a wonderful success and she is doing so much better health wise. We are going to be taking her to get wisdom teeth removed and probably her gallbladder but she is doing so much better.

Our Daughter has told us that she will be giving us our first grand child in September, and we are so very excited for this.

So as you can see things are not settling down; yet we are adjusting,. We believe and Thank all who have kept us in your prayers during these 8 months helping us to that. You ALL are a true Gift from our Lord Jesus.

Thank you,
Blessings,
Beth Gilleece
Administrator

Administrative professionals rule the world?

Maybe not - but they may rule the world of your Presbyterian office!

- Do you value your Administrative Professional?
- Do the words above describe your Administrative Professional?
- Do you provide your Administrative Professional with opportunities for continuing education?

Did you know a good, well-trained Administrative Professional can be one of your organization's greatest assets?

Whether your Administrative Professional is employed in a church, presbytery, synod, in Louisville or at the Board of Pensions, equip him or her to be of more value to your organization with membership in the Administrative Personnel Association of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

The Administrative Personnel Association (APA), established in 1976, is a professional organization created for the purpose of providing a supportive association that promotes continuing education, individual growth, communication and fellowship for its members. It is a group that strengthens both spiritually and professionally.

The core of APA is the Certification Program. It allows members to gain expertise in all fields associated with their position with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Course offerings cover a wide range of topics including: Administrative Skills, Leadership Development, Technology, Financial Management, Church History, Theology and Polity.

Support your Administrative Professional by providing them with a membership in APA. To join go to <http://pcusa-apa.org/> or contact [Annette Houtz](#), National Membership Chair for more information.

Rocky Mountain Region

The Rocky Mountain Region will have our meeting during the National Conference

October 6-9, 2016 in Las Vegas

We would love to have any Administrative professionals Join us.

For more information about this conference go to <http://pcusa-apa.org/>
Or Call Beth in the Presbytery office



Celebrating 40 Years
1976 - 2016



X Lazy F Ranch (Thursday evening, June 30, through Thursday morning, July 7)

Never been before?

Haven't been for a long time?

Want to try it out?

Covenant Presbyterian Church (Grand Junction) has already reserved the ranch for this week. However, we usually have several vacant cabins, and we would be thrilled to have you join us for some refreshment. You can sign up for a day trip, few days or the whole week.

Cost: The cost usually ranges from \$10 to \$20 per person per night, depending on how many people attend. (Kids 12 and under are free.) The more people we get, the cheaper it will be per person, so bring your friends! Campers and tents are also welcome. They are charged at a different rate.

Food: We have individual families taking turns to prepare meals for the whole group. Please contact Sue Jerome at sjerome19@yahoo.com for more information. If you decide to attend, please let Sue know by June 20th so she can discuss cabin assignments and meal detail with you.

~~ Join us!! You are all invited!! ~~



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Return Service Requested



Let mutual
love continue.

Do not neglect to
show hospitality to
strangers, for by
doing that some
have entertained
angels without
knowing it.

H e b r e w s 13:1-2