



**WE ARE THE PRESBYTERY
OF WESTERN COLORADO**

Pressing News

January—February 2016

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Living in the Presence of God

Perhaps you've had a prayer life for years that is rich and vital; or maybe you're not sure how to begin one. Maybe you've nurtured a relationship with Christ for a long time, yet find yourself at a spiritual plateau. Wherever you are in your journey, God always has a way of awakening us to new life, new growth, new ways of waiting, watching, and being filled with wonder at the Spirit's active presence in our midst. A retreat day is a perfect opportunity to open ourselves to God's life-giving work in our midst.

Join us on Saturday, February 27th for a time set apart to learn about and experience forms of contemplative and meditative prayer. Begin or continue to deepen your life in God's presence, making space for God to breathe freshness, power, and grace in and through your inner being (Ephesians 3:14-21).

Monument Presbyterian Church
10:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
2020 ½ South Broadway
Grand Junction, CO 81507
\$10 fee for the day (Includes Lunch)

The Rev. Melanie Hammond Clark is a Presbyterian minister presently serving as Co-Pastor of the Covenant Presbyterian Church in Racine, WI. She is a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary (1984) and has previously served churches in Wallingford, PA, and Libertyville, IL. Married to Richard Clark, a family physician, she is also the mother of two grown children, Kyle (27) and Kat (26). In addition to her congregational work, Melanie has led retreats regularly since 1996. She is passionate about teaching and facilitating individuals and groups into deepening discipleship, encouraging people to look for and experience the fresh ways God is stretching and summoning them to new life.



Event is Saturday, February 27th, 2016.

Deadline for Registration is February 20th.

Name _____
Church Affiliation (if any) _____
Address _____
Phone number _____
Childcare Needed? Names and ages of children: _____

If able, include \$10 (check made payable to Monument Presbyterian Church)

Send to Lisa Fenton Free
2775 Crossroads Blvd
Grand Junction, CO 81506

For questions: phone, text, or e-mail Lisa
(970) 985-5533
LFentonFree@outlook.com

Colorado Youth Ministry Opportunities **Summer Intern May 24 - August 9**

Come serve and hang out with us in Western Colorado!

You may be the special one who God is calling to our church! This is our 21st year of providing dynamic intern opportunities in youth ministry. We are a vibrant, mid-sized church located in Montrose, Colorado with access to exciting outdoor activities and adventure. Our intern program includes working with an intern team in relational ministry, learning from a great team of leaders and staff, and getting the opportunity to design and implement a variety of programs and events. This is hands-on learning in a great multi-generational church. The 2016 summer intern program runs from Tuesday, May 24 to Tuesday, August 9. We provide room and board with a host family, a weekly stipend, and a scholarship or payment at the end of the summer. Open to college students, 19 years or older, who have a dynamic and mature faith, and who are teachable, lovable, and fun!

We are seeking a team of energetic and happy interns for summer youth ministry (6th–12th grade). If interested, please go to the internship opportunities page on our website –or- click here [FPC Montrose Intern Opportunities](http://fpcmontrose.com/intern-opportunities), to download the job descriptions and application form. Or email for more information.



Karla Clader
Intern Committee
First Presbyterian Church
1840 E. Niagara Road
Montrose, CO 81401

fpcmontrose.com/intern-opportunities

interns@fpcmontrose.com

970-209-1467



NAVIGATING THE CURRENTS OF ENDOWMENTS AND RESERVE FUNDS

Donations to religious nonprofits climbed to historic levels, exceeding 115 billion dollars in the past year. Yet that rising tide hides small and turbulent undercurrents. Namely, charitable giving for religious institutions as a percentage of all nonprofit contributions continues on a thirty-year downward slide. Because people give to many worthwhile causes, including the church, leaders must make a case for how the congregation's mission advances God's will.

Permanent Endowment Fund Principles

First Church observed the 75th birthday of its endowment and celebrated the wonderful ministries it funded. However, for the past two years, leaders began dipping into the principle to pay staff salaries and subsidize the operating budget. The decision to go beyond an "interest-only" funding strategy generated conflict among members. Although some members preferred funding staff salaries through endowment principle monies rather than reducing staff, others felt it violated the trust of the endowment's donors. What is the best approach?

Start by obtaining the current guidelines for endowment funds from your denomination's regional or national offices. Most guidelines stipulate the appropriate uses of the endowment's interest income and principle funds. Further, endowment plans offer procedures for what happens if the congregation ceases to exist.¹

Every congregation should establish an endowment fund. Even if the beginning balance is modest, an endowment fund attracts contributions that people would not have given otherwise to the congregation. People give generously to an endowment if (a) church leaders publicize the endowment and its accomplishments twice a year, and (b) the endowment funds ministries that church members passionately support. Also, the process for making bequests should be accessible. A church that printed, "Remember the church in your will," in every worship service bulletin received bequests for decades. Additional information can be included on the church website.

Create two endowment funds—one for facilities and one for missions. Some members love to contribute to buildings and facilities because they receive joy from seeing holy spaces created for new generations. Sometimes people are motivated to give out of a sense of pride or attachment to a church that played a significant role in their family life or in the community's history. In contrast to these bricks-and-mortar types, another group of members love to make significant gifts to mission outreach—local, regional, and world. They know that their gifts will make a difference in these efforts and will continue to fund the causes they care deeply about far into the future.

Reserve Fund Principles

In addition to a facilities endowment, every congregation should create a maintenance reserve fund. Each year, church leaders place in an escrow fund a predetermined percentage of their total annual facilities-maintenance budget. A general rule is 10 to 15 percent of the total



"...AND TO THINK, DAD'S FINAL GIFT TO THE CHURCH CREATED THIS HOLY SPACE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME!"

facilities-maintenance budget. Other congregational leaders place a predetermined percentage of their total annual operations budget, about 1 percent or 2 percent, in a facilities-maintenance escrow fund. In both instances, these escrow funds provide for unexpected, expensive repairs—such as a new roof, a new heating or air conditioning system, or new technology upgrades.

One universal law is that the unexpected will happen sooner or later. A reserve fund prevents an event from becoming a crisis and protects church leaders from depleting the facility endowment's principle for ongoing maintenance.

Methods to Grow the Endowment

Several strategies boost endowment funds beyond just collecting the interest.

Make a case for the mission. After discussions and information meetings with church members, identify three or four mission priorities that speak to the congregation's core identity and commitments. For example, the congregation may take pride in its excellent music or arts ministry, community mission programs, or global mission partnerships. Committed current members are likely to feel strongly about these church strengths and want to insure their financial support during occasions when regular congregational income fluctuates. However, always communicate that the endowments provide for expanded ministry opportunities beyond the reach of the ongoing annual budget.

Know your congregation's giving patterns. Track pledges and giving habits from church records by age (members younger than 20, members in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s and above). Determine what portion of the annual budget is funded by each ten-year age group, and pay special attention to members over age 60. Members older than sixty are the most likely to see the church's endowments as good investments. One idea is to challenge older members to endow their pledges by making a gift that equals twice their annual pledge with a zero added. For example, a \$1,500 annual pledge by two equals \$3,000. When a zero is added, the suggested endowment gift is \$30,000.²

Rejuvenate or expand your current endowment programs. Some churches focus on the investment returns of current endowment funds and make few efforts to solicit new gifts. Churches that offer Wills and Estate Planning Seminars every few years provide a valuable service for their members because an estimated 51% of Americans age 55 to 64 do not have wills.³ The reason

is denial. Although the seminars are not designed to influence people to put the congregation in their wills, estate planning often leads people of faith to make bequests that strengthen their church's ministries. With renewed focus, congregations can increase the number of people who have included the church in their estate planning by 20 percent each year.⁴

How to Minimize Risks

Two common problems arise when congregations develop an endowment or reserve fund dependency.

The accumulation of money makes leaders lose sight of ministry. For example, in a congregation that declined by more than 50 percent, the endowment funded a staff twice as large as appropriate for a church of its size. The endowment generated enough interest to pay salaries and operating expenses indefinitely. With that trajectory, the congregation could continue to exist without any members! Their challenge is learning how to connect with the spiritual needs of people currently in the community.

The talk of money is always tied to the church's need to balance the budget. Reserve funds or endowments provide a convenient excuse for members that their financial gifts are not needed. Church leaders must connect every mention of giving to its spiritual foundation. Financial giving is essential in helping believers form, retain, and grow in their relationship with God. The spiritual need to give is far greater than the church's need to receive.

Looking for a Great Investment?

People yearn to make a difference and search for ways to fulfill that desire. Thirty-five years after his assassination, the prayer for Archbishop Oscar Romero speaks to this truth: "The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us."⁵

1. See *Creating an Endowment Fund Guide*, <http://www.presbyterianfoundation.org/Resources/Ministry-Resources/Church-Tool-Box.aspx>

2. "50 Ways to Improve Your Annual Stewardship Campaign," Lewis Center for Church Leadership (www.churchleadership.com).

3. Richard Eisenberg, "Americans' Ostrich Approach To Estate Planning," <http://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2014/04/09/americans-ostrich-approach-to-estate-planning/>

4. *Creating an Endowment Fund Guide*, 6.

5. Bishop Ken Untener, "A Future Not Our Own," (http://www.journeywithjesus.net/PoemsAndPrayers/Ken_Untener_A_Future_Not_Our_Own.shtml).

A Round of Prayer In the Presbytery of Western Colorado

For 2016 -2017

2016 marks the Sixteenth year we've been doing this: it's a simple, biblical, faithful idea that has great power. Many of our congregations have been joining in prayer each week, praying for other congregations, ministries, and people in the Presbytery of Western Colorado. It has been a source of great blessing.

You are invited to join in this "Round of Prayer." It includes each of our congregations and fellowships, pastors (both retired and active), Candidates and Inquirers, and Presbytery and Synod staff. Pray for spouses, too: their names are in parentheses.

There are too many entries to do in one year, but that's okay! You are encouraged to send cards, make phone calls, or send e-mail greetings to those for whom you pray. If you need more information please call Presbytery Office at 970-240-8455 or email at beth@wcopresbytery.org.

Sunday, January 3, 2016: Stephen Smith (Samantha), Honorably Retired Tulsa, OK

Sunday, January 10: Charlene Patton (widow of deceased Minister, Jim), Cortez

Sunday January 17: Richard Engdahl (Brenda), Honorably Retired, Ridgway

Sunday January 24: Sandy Newman (Clark Lagow), Honorably Retired, Durango

Sunday January 31: Harry Strong (Anna) Honorably Retired, Arizona

Sunday February 7: Rick Underwood (Faye), Minister at Large,

Sunday February 14: Sandy Cox (widow of deceased minister, Bill), Santa Barbara California

Sunday, February 21: Cluster Leaders Blake Blakesley (Lynn), Lou Ray Wright (Don DeWitt), Thelma Starnier, Alan Gibson (Teri), Brigitte Evenson (Larry), Mary Hammond Atkinson (Clark Atkinson)

Sunday, February 28: Montezuma Valley Presbyterian Church, Cortez, Pastors Kim and Steve Nofel

Sunday, March 6: Bill Forbes (Gloria), Honorably Retired, Whitewater

Sunday, March 13: Monument Presbyterian Church, Grand Junction, Interim Pastor Stephen Gutridge (Paula)

Sunday, March 20: William Postler (Jan), Honorably Retired, Durango

Sunday, March 28: EASTER: Celebrate our Lord's Resurrection! Christ is Risen Indeed!

Sunday, April 3: Presbyterian Church of Delta, Interim Pastor Cathy Hamrick (Don)

Sunday, April 10: Candidate: Joshua Rodriquez (Abby)

Sunday, April 17: First Presbyterian Church, Grand Junction, Pastor Tom Hansen (Shelly)

Sunday, April 24: Gary Hendrix (Dorothy) Presbytery Accountant

Sunday, May 1: Inquirers: Rebecca Branton, Garrett Mostowski (Paige)

Sunday, May 8: First Presbyterian Church, Glenwood Springs, Pastor Charis Caldwell (Mike Bucchun),

Sunday, May 15: PENTECOST: Rejoice in the Power of the Holy Spirit!

Sunday, May 22: Betty Kendrick (Max), Widow of deceased minister, Eckert

Sunday, May 29: First Presbyterian Church of Durango, Pastor Beau Smith (Kristin)

Sunday, June 5: Beth Gilleece (Jim), Communications and Office Administrator, Presbytery of Western Colorado

Sunday, June 12: William Mangrum (Valerie), Validated Ministry, Adjunct professor, Fort Lewis College, Durango

Sunday, June 19: Christ Presbyterian Church, Telluride, Pastor Pat Bailey (Debbie)

Sunday, June 26: Jennifer McKenzie (Andy) Validated Ministry, Hope West. Grand Junction

Sunday, July 3: Chuck Robison (Karen), Honorably Retired, Austin, Texas

Sunday, July 10: United Church of the San Juan's, Ridgway, Pastor Leslie Wood

Sunday, July 17: Mary Mayhew (widow of deceased minister, Glenn), Montrose

Sunday, July 24: Gary Hixson (Kathleen), missionary in Spain and other countries

Sunday, July 31: Lake City Community Presbyterian Church,

Sunday, August 7: Marilyn Ruth (widow of deceased minister, Al), Colorado Springs

Sunday, August 14: Jim Cory (Cappy), Honorably Retired, Montrose

Sunday, August 21: Florida Mesa Presbyterian Church, Pastor Dan Straw (Kathy)

Sunday, August 30: Jeff Harmeling (Mary), Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Western Colorado

Sunday, September 4: Eckert Presbyterian Church, Pastor Jo DeVinny (David)

Sunday, September 11: George Miller, Honorably Retired, Montrose

Sunday, September 18: Covenant Presbyterian Church, Grand Junction, Pastor Chuck Jerome (Sue)

Sunday, September 25: Jim Petersen (Janet), Honorably Retired, Ridgway

Sunday, October 2: First Presbyterian Church, Montrose, Pastor Alan Gibson (Teri)

Sunday, October 9: Synod of the Rocky Mountains David Ezekiel, Interim Synod Exec., Lynn A. Smit, Stated Clerk;
Bobbie Hoffman Administrative Assistant

Sunday, October 16: Fran Ferguson (widow of deceased minister, Bob), Knoxville, TN

Sunday, October 23: Rico Community Presbyterian Church, Suzy Meyer, Supply CLP

Sunday, October 30: Mary Hammond Atkinson (Clark) Minister at Large, Grand Junction

Sunday, November 6: Bill Young (Pat), Honorably Retired, Grand Junction

Sunday, November 13: Allison Community Presbyterian Church, Pastor Alan TeBrink (Brenda)

Sunday, November 20: X Lazy F Ranch, Justin Smith Manager

Sunday, November 27: Barbara Parker (widow of deceased minister, Harold), Florida

Sunday, December 4: Pine River Calvary Presbyterian Church, Bayfield; Pastor Brian Caselles (Sherry)

Sunday, December 11: Blake Blakesley (Lynn) Honorably Retired, Ignacio

Sunday, December 18: Andy Konigsmark (Dodie) Validated Ministry, Alpine Chapel, Telluride

Sunday, December 25: **CHRISTMAS! Celebrate the Lord's Birth!**

Sunday, January 1, 2017: Roger Knapp (Linda), Honorably Retired, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Sunday, January 8: Larry Zirschky (Sharon), validated ministry, Military Chaplain

Sunday, January 15: Edgell Pyles (Marti Pickett), Honorably Retired, Carbondale

Sunday, January 22: Julianne Fraley-Gilchrist (Jon), validated ministry, Chaplain, Kings College, Alberta, Canada

Sunday, January 29: Roy Altman (Kathy) Honorably Retired, Silt

Sunday, February 5: J. Cyrus Smith, Honorably Retired, Grand Junction

Sunday, February 12: Keri Shelton, Minister at Large, Montrose

Now, start at the top, make appropriate adjustments, and keep praying!

THIS CONVERSATION—AGAIN? IMPROVING CHURCH COMMUNICATION

As congregations face change and new challenges, conflict is part of the process. Too often, under stress, church leaders and members fall into bad communication habits that prevent the airing of concerns and objections. Healthy conversations help people manage conflict and move them toward acceptance of new initiatives. Productive communication speeds up the process from planning to action and keeps members on track to accurately assess new realities.

Communication Fashions to Avoid

Appropriate and effective actions by church leaders rest on good thinking. Do you recognize some of these communication and thinking mistakes?

1. *All or Nothing Thinking.* Painting reality as black and white is easy. Recognizing some shades of gray in any situation takes more time and thought. New ideas can be quickly judged as “terrible” or the “greatest ever.” Most new ideas fit in neither category. Nearly all ideas possess some merit and leaders can hone them into a better strategy. And even the best and greatest ideas need further development.¹

Beware of any proposal that only offers two alternatives. For example, “we must cut our staff salaries immediately or stop paying our utility bills.” There is always a third way, or fourth avenue, or fifth alternative.

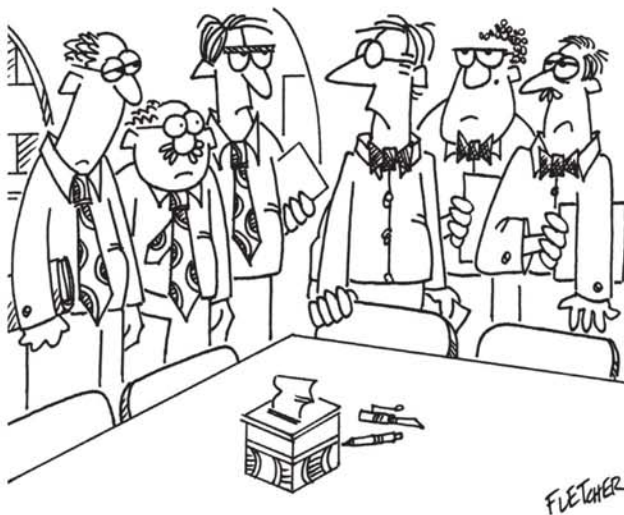
Polarized thinking can be used to describe members too (such as “we have good members and bad members”). Congregational efforts can be falsely judged as “successful” or “a complete failure.” Instead of putting all of reality into two baskets, creative people explore the positive and negative aspects of complex situations.

2. *Overgeneralizing.* After an unpleasant pastoral tenure with a recent seminary graduate, the congregation’s leaders vowed to never call another pastor without decades of pastoral experience. Unfortunately, those vows limit the number of gifted pastors

who could effectively serve with the church. And that view limits what the congregation could learn from the experience.

Taking one bad (or good) experience and using its specific outcome to make a general rule about how the universe works is more than a leap of faith. A specific situation is just that—unique to a particular event, time, and place. A healthy conversation recognizes the multitude of factors that produce any given outcome.

3. *Filtering Out the Positive.* After seventeen years of service, the pastor of First Church retired. He possessed many ministry strengths but some members expressed dissatisfaction with his administrative skills. As the search committee screened candidates, they made administrative experience a top priority. As a result, their next pastor was a phenomenal administrator with few other ministry gifts. His tenure was brief as the members realized they had focused too narrowly on the previous pastor’s weakness without appreciating all the leadership positives of their long-time pastor.



BY THE FIFTH COMMITTEE MEETING, IT WAS OBVIOUS
IT WOULD ALWAYS BE “US” VERSUS “THEM.”

A narrow focus on just the negatives or just the positives prohibits leaders from forming a realistic and balanced outlook. Identifying the positives and negatives of a situation is part of healthy communication.

4. *Assigning Motive.* We observe behavior and make guesses about why people are acting in ways that we deem irrational or counterproductive. Our inferences can be completely wrong because we can never be certain what someone else is thinking. Because we are not mind readers, healthy conversations include questions about what people believe, what they value, and why they wish to pursue one strategy vs. another. It is okay to ask: Why is this approach important to you?

5. *Catastrophizing.* Imminent disaster is rarely just around the corner and usually events do not explode into a crisis. Nostalgia about the past fuels some members to be doom-and-gloom prophets. Because their worldview is really a long-standing belief that all things are in decline, they see every event as the last shoe to drop. Healthy church conversations include discussions of many plausible outcomes, including positive ones.

6. *Emotional Reasoning.* Fear can inhibit effective discussions and prevent new ideas from being implemented. Leaders prone to elaborate explanations for why actions cannot be taken are often masking their fear of change. People often change their attitudes and feelings after they try something new, not before they do something new.

7. *Labeling.* Naming people or experiences puts them into hard categories based on an isolated incident. Hard categories block the reception of new information and make healthy communication much more difficult. Labeling tends to highlight the negative rather than illuminate the whole situation or person.

8. *Fortune-Telling.* Most people like to try their hand at predicting the future or like speculating about the future. However, none of us knows what will happen tomorrow. None of us knows what God has in store for the congregation and its mission. Negative predictions ignore all the possible outcomes and can be self-fulfilling congregational prophecies.

9. *Personalization.* When the pastor or lay leaders support a different strategy than some members, the focus can quickly shift away from the facts of a specific situation to a polarizing of people. The “us” vs. “them” type of thinking does not help people see the facts clearly because the focus shifts away from *what* to *who*.

10. *Looking for the Perfect Plan.* Churches can operate with the unrecognized conviction that discussing a problem equals solving the problem. They are convinced that lengthy discussion will eventually lead them to the perfect course of action, even if those discussions take many months or years. In general, only implementing a new idea reveals the required modifications to a strategy for use in a specific context. Successful new strategies more often occur when leaders use a “do-it-and-fix-it” method than when they wait for the perfect plan.

Clues to Improving Communication

Recognizing that our views are not always based on realistic thinking is hard to swallow. Sometimes our thinking is irrational or inaccurate. Acting on our faulty thinking leads to unnecessary conflict in a church setting. What steps can we take to improve our communication?

Let go of the past. Too much of the present conversation is actually attempts to rewrite history. Help yourself and others to make peace with the past.

Exercise forgiveness and patience. Everyone has made one or more thinking errors on the list. And the more important the decision, the more likely it is that our first response is not 100 percent rational. Managing our thoughts, taming our emotions, and behaving well is not easy.

Value the practical experiences of leaders and other congregations. Listen carefully to the observations of those who have tried and failed as well as those who tried and met success.

Uncover the theology, philosophy, and heart-felt passions that lead to change. When people marry their strategies with their deepest convictions, long-lasting change is more likely.

Remain hopeful about the future. A congregation's script should be positive and energize members for what lies ahead in ministry.

1. Material drawn from Amy Morin, *13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2014).

Thank You

Friends,

I wish to express my deep appreciation for the continued Prayers for my husband Jim, and our family. We have felt uplifted, and comforted these last several months.

Jim is doing well in his recovery from the detached retina. We are still uncertain if he will regain enough vision in his eye to be able to drive professionally so we are still in limbo as to our future.

At the end of November I personally had a major health scare. I have been diagnosed with hypertension and diabetes. Thankfully my situation can be controlled with diet and medication.

Then in the middle of December my Son's girlfriend had major surgery placing a stint into a vein in her brain to relive pressure. Thankfully the surgery was very successful and she is regaining her vision and minimal migraine or any headaches!!

So the last several months have been a time of change and continued blessings. So once again Thank you ALL for continuing to lift up my family in your prayers. God is Good ALL THE TIME!

Blessings to you all!!

Beth Gilleece



Dear Friends,

I am requesting once again that you consider receiving this newsletter via email.

The cost of printing the newsletter is going to increase due to the fact that the Presbytery's copier is old. Normally that would not be a problem except that no one can find the parts to fix it. The drum apparently has a scratch on it which shows in the copies. Due to this the Presbytery is going to have to start contracting out coping this newsletter.

I understand many do not enjoy reading off of the computer but if you would be willing to receive the Newsletter via email or off the website you can print it from your own computer.

I will still mail and make copies for any that would prefer to receive it in that manor. If you are willing to receive it via email please send me your email address at beth@wcopresbytery.org and let me know.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this matter.

Blessings,
Beth
Administrator



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