



**WE ARE THE PRESBYTERY
OF WESTERN COLORADO**

Pressing News

Holiday 2018

Inside this issue:

Presbytery Summary	2
Round of Prayer 2019-2020	3
Round of Prayer 2019-2020	4
Parish Paper: Checking up on Clergy Health	5
Parish Paper: Cont. Checking up	6
Parish Paper: How to Develop Habits for Well Being	7
Parish Paper: Cont. Well Being	8
Parish Paper:: Getting to know our Neighbors	9
Parish Paper: Cont. Neighbors	10
Year end reminders	11
Newly Elected Officers	11

The Lord's Light Within

Lord, we reflect with thankful hearts
On the wonder of your birth
The love you expressed when you left
Your glory to come to earth

For your life was like a beacon, Lord
Shining brightly in the night
Filling the world with the radiance of
The Father's glorious light

And we, too, long to have inside
Your light for others to see
The beautiful reflection of your grace
And the wonder of your majesty

For as your life indwells our hearts,
We can shine wherever we are
And arise to take hold of each new day
With your light ablaze in our hearts

So rekindle the flame within us, Lord
So it will not flicker nor dim
Ignite us with the light of your love,
So you will shine brightly within

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Summary of the Fall, 2018 Stated Meeting of the Presbytery

Presbytery Meeting



Highlights

Members of the Presbytery came together September 28-29 to enjoy another productive meeting, this time at the Montezuma Valley Presbyterian Church in Cortez. In the absence of moderator Thelma Starnier, vice-moderator Beau Smith called the meeting to order and the Rev. John Welton (Interim Pastor) welcomed us to the warm hospitality of the MVPC congregation. Council moderator, Bill Mangrum, introduced the theme for our meeting: *“More Gospel Conversations on the Western Slope.”*

Significant actions taken by the body included approval of the 2019 Consolidated Budget with a (first-ever) Congregational Covenant Commitment of \$75.21 per member. This new approach to unified budgeting and covenantal cost-sharing was approved at the May meeting of the Presbytery, but this was the body’s first exposure to what that looks like for congregations in dollars and cents. The Presbytery also approved lots of changes to the By-Laws and Standing Rules. Mostly the changes will affect the work of the stated clerk, Council and Presbytery’s Standing Committees. All of the changes will be incorporated in the 2019 version of Presbytery’s Manual of Administrative Operations.

One of the changes that will directly affect congregations is that they are no longer expected to pay for the cost (mostly mileage reimbursement) of session moderators and Pastor Nominating Committee liaisons who are appointed by the Committee on Ministry when congregations are in the midst of pastoral transitions. That cost will now be paid by the Presbytery from the Committee on Ministry’s line item budget, which is funded by Congregational Covenant Commitments. Congregations are still responsible for reimbursing “fill-in” pastors to moderate their session meetings when their pastor is not available to do so.

Presbytery also elected a slate of nominees to fill committee vacancies with terms beginning in January of 2019.

Our General Assembly Commissioners presented reports to the Presbytery. Teaching Elder Commissioner Bill Mangrum presented an oral report, indicating he was impressed with how efficiently the Assembly was organized and functioned. Ruling Elder Commissioner Carol Blatnik (Bayfield) was unable to be present but provided a thorough written report. Among the “Impressions” she shared was: *“We are truly a church committed to the welfare of others and causes which affect our world. We are inclusive, thoughtful, welcoming and dedicated to living our lives as we believe Christ has directed us to do...”* Our thanks to Bill and Carol for serving!

Though we dealt with a good deal of necessary and important *business*, the meat of the meeting was to be found in our extemporaneous and planned conversations. Hearty servings of sharing good news about congregational ministries were sprinkled about the meeting, along with moving testimonies about the inspiring Women’s Retreat at Sonlight Camp. Presbyters were divided into two groups for planned conversations. One group heard and responded to Bill Mangrum’s takeaways from the General Assembly meeting while the other group talked about the need to revisit Presbytery’s Mission Statement. Later in the meeting the groups traded places. The plan is to continue the conversation at the next Presbytery meeting.

One of the most significant conversations for the meeting had to do with deciding how the Presbytery would use the funds from the Shannel Lorange bequest that the Synod passed on to the presbyteries. The conversation that began on Friday carried over to Saturday and resulted in the passage of a motion which states, in part, ***“the Presbytery of Western Colorado designates the entirety of this generous gift to support and encourage ‘healthy clergy’ in the manner of, but not limited to, CREDO and other programs offered by Presbyterian entities and offices.”*** The Lorange bequest is in the amount of \$12,652.10.

Speaking of doing good things with the resources entrusted to us, Council announced that it had granted First Presbyterian Church of Grand Junction a Missional Grant in the amount of \$3,300 for its funding of “The Amazing Chemistry Show” as part of its VBS program in the summer of 2019. And Covenant Presbyterian Church was the excited recipient of the Al Ruth Award in recognition of the good work of its Media Team in its use of social media as a means for sharing Pastor Chuck’s Sunday morning messages. The congregations of our Presbytery are doing good work and God is doing good things with us and among us!

Joyfully and with Thanksgiving,

Jeff Harmeling, Stated Clerk

A Round of Prayer In the Presbytery of Western Colorado

For 2019-2020

2019 marks the Nineteenth 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 6, 2019: Larry Zirschky (Sharon), validated ministry, Military Chaplain

Sunday, January 13: Jo DeVinny (David), Honorably Retired, Eckert

Sunday, January 20: Cathy Hamrick (Don), Honorably Retired, Durango

Sunday, January 27: William Postler (Jan), Honorably Retired, Durango

Sunday, February 3: Bill Forbes (Gloria), Honorably Retired, Whitewater

Sunday, February 10: First Presbyterian Church, Grand Junction, Pastor Tom Hansen (Shelly), Assistant Pastor Jason Emberger (Tina)

Sunday, February 17: Roger Knapp (Linda), Honorably Retired, Santa Fe, New Mexico

Sunday, February 24: Cluster Leaders John Welton, Thelma Starnier, Keri Shelton (Kurtis), Jan Gammill, Mary Hammond Atkinson (Clark Atkinson)

Sunday, March 3: First Presbyterian Church, Glenwood Springs, Pastor Gary Bryant Temporary Supply

Sunday, March 10: Edgell Pyles (Marti Pickett), Honorably Retired, Carbondale

Sunday, March 17: Roy Altman (Kathy) Honorably Retired, Silt

Sunday, March 24: Presbyterian Church of Delta, Pastor Keri Shelton (Kurtis), Stated Supply

Sunday March 31: Julianne Fraley-Gilchrist (Jon), Member-at-large

Sunday, April 7: William Mangrum (Valerie), Member-at-large, Durango

Sunday, April 14: Allison Community Presbyterian Church, Pastor Alan TeBrink (Brenda)

Sunday, April 22: **EASTER: Celebrate our Lord's Resurrection! Christ is Risen Indeed!**

Sunday April 28: Melinda Veatch (Glenn), Member-at-large, Grand Junction

Sunday, May 5: Inquirers: Rebecca Branton, Ryan Fields (Brittany), Anthony Saturno

Sunday, May 12: Christ Presbyterian Church, Telluride, Pastor Pat Bailey (Debbie), Associate Pastor Andy Konigsmark (Dodie)

Sunday, May 19: Betty Kendrick (Max), Widow of deceased minister, Eckert

Sunday, May 26: Montezuma Valley Presbyterian Church, Cortez, Interim Pastor John Welton

Sunday, June 2: Jim Cory (Cappy), Honorably Retired, Montrose

Sunday, June 9: **PENTECOST: Rejoice in the Power of the Holy Spirit!**

Sunday, June 16: First Presbyterian Church of Durango, Pastor Beau Smith (Kristin)

Sunday, June 23: Charlene Patton (widow of deceased Minister, Jim), Washington

Sunday, June 30: Florida Mesa Presbyterian Church, Pastor Dan Straw (Kathy)

Sunday, July 7: Chuck Robison (Karen), Honorably Retired, Austin, Texas

Sunday, July 14: United Church of the San Juan's, Ridgway, Pastor Pamela Stofferahn (Lutheran)
Sunday, July 21: Mary Mayhew (widow of deceased minister, Glenn), Montrose
Sunday, July 28: Gary Hixson (Kathleen), Validated ministry - missionary in Spain
Sunday August 4: Lake City Community Presbyterian Church, Pastor Vacant
Sunday, August 11: Beth Gilleece (Jim), Communications and Office Administrator, Presbytery of Western Colorado
Sunday, August 18: Richard Engdahl (Brenda), Honorably Retired, Ridgway
Sunday, August 25: Monument Presbyterian Church, Grand Junction, Pastor Matt Royston (Holly)
Sunday, September 1: Jeff Harmeling (Mary), Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Western Colorado
Sunday, September 8: Jennifer McKenzie (Andy) Validated Ministry, Hope West. Grand Junction
Sunday, September 15: Covenant Presbyterian Church, Grand Junction, Pastor Chuck Jerome (Sue)
Sunday, September 22: George Miller, Honorably Retired, Montrose
Sunday, September 29: Jim Petersen (Janet), Honorably Retired, Ridgway
Sunday, October 6: First Presbyterian Church, Montrose, Interim Pastor Mike Motsko (Rhonda)
Sunday, October 13: Synod of the Rocky Mountains Lynn A. Smit, Stated Clerk; Bobbi Hoffman Administrative Assistant
Sunday, October 20: Fran Ferguson (widow of deceased minister, Bob), Knoxville, TN
Sunday, October 27: Rico Community Presbyterian Church, Suzy Meyer, Supply CLP
Sunday, November 3: Mary Hammond Atkinson (Clark) Member-at-large, Grand Junction
Sunday, November 10: Bill Young (Pat), Honorably Retired
Sunday, November 17: Eckert Presbyterian Church, Interim Pastor Nancy Howarth (Steven)
Sunday, November 24: X Lazy F Ranch, Justin Smith Manager
Sunday, December 1: Emrys Tyler (Sara) Validated Ministry, Sonlight Camp, Pagosa Springs
Sunday, December 8: Pine River Calvary Presbyterian Church, Bayfield; Pastor Brian Caselles (Sherry)
Sunday, December 15: Charis Caldwell (Mike Bucchun), Member-at-large, Glenwood Springs
Sunday, December 22: Sandy Newman (Clark Lagow), Honorably Retired, Durango
December 25: **CHRISTMAS! Celebrate the Lord's Birth!**
Sunday December 29: Sandy Cox (widow of deceased minister, Bill), Santa Barbara California
Sunday, January 5 2020: Sally Henry (Kim), Member-at-large, Grand Junction
Sunday, January 12: Rick Underwood (Faye), Member-at-large, Kansas
Sunday January 19: Harry Strong (Anna) Honorably Retired, Arizona
Sunday January 26 Dorothy Loyer (Widow of deceased minister, Robert) Eckert
Sunday February 2: Charlie Packard (Lynda) Honorably Retired, Durango
Sunday February 9: Marilyn Ruth (widow of deceased minister, Al) Colorado Springs
Sunday February 16: Elizabeth (B.L.) Jordan (Ray), Honorably Retired, Lake City
Sunday February 23: Steve Howarth (Nancy) Member-at-large, Eckert
Sunday, March 1: Alan Gibson (Teri), Member-at-large, Georgia

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

CHECKING UP ON CLERGY HEALTH ASSESSING THE COST OF SACRED WORK

Many people feel called to their work and respond to job demands in ways that reflect a sense of vocation. But do we expect clergy to perform their calling with even greater devotion and sacrifice? Because clergy define their work as sacred, taking care of themselves may always be a lower priority. One writer describes the high cost of sacred work in this way: “if your back-drop is burning bushes and having a child at age ninety, or if it’s bumping into an angel with premarital plans for you . . . who are you to turn down a relatively minor request like leaving vacation to perform a funeral?”¹

The Latest Numbers

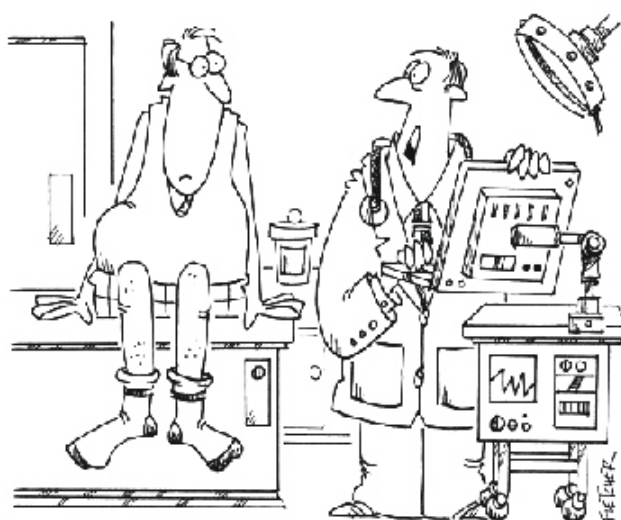
Findings from a ten-year, longitudinal study suggest that unraveling all the complexities of clergy health and well-being is not easy. Although the study drew from a large number of United Methodist clergy, the research results mirror findings from other Protestant clergy samples. This landmark study also carefully tracked intervention efforts and evaluated how individual clergy might change their health status and habits over time.²

Physical health. Just as health insurance costs for the general population continue to climb, the same holds true for clergy. In fact, these costs for clergy remain higher, partly because clergy submit more health care claims.³ National studies reveal clergy have higher rates of obesity than the general population, regardless of age. Obesity causes and complicates other health issues, especially chronic diseases, such as diabetes, arthritis, asthma, and heart disease.⁴ Lack of exercise and a damaging diet contribute to weight gain as well as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stress, and other health negatives.

Mental health. Levels of depression among clergy remain higher than the U.S. population as well. The study found 8.7% of clergy suffer from some depression (compared to 5.5% of the U.S. population). Both male and female clergy demonstrated these higher-than-average rates of depressive symptoms. This surprising finding runs counter to what appears in the general population, where

females typically present much higher depression rates than males. However, among clergy, the opposite pattern surfaces: twice as many male clergy report depressive symptoms compared to males in the U.S. (8.8% to 4.4%).⁵

What might be some of the causes behind these higher clergy depression rates? There are probably more reasons than can be explored here, but some possibilities include aging (the average age of clergy continues to scale upward), side effects of medications, long hours, presence of congregational conflict, unrealistic clergy expectations about ministry, excessive demands by congregants, and serving as the first line of support in difficult life circumstances (illness, death, divorce).⁶ Yet another factor could be self-selection. Some clergy who went through traumatic life events may seek out ministry as a healing experience. Their own life encounters could make them especially sympathetic to others’ suffering and form their approach to ministry. Henry Nouwen wrote about “the wounded healer,” who exemplifies how one’s own suffering can serve as a source of strength and hope for others.⁷



“WALKING THE WALK ISN’T ENOUGH...
IT’S TIME TO TRY SOME LIGHT JOGGING.”

The good news: More than two-thirds of the study's clergy qualified as "flourishing" compared to only about half of the U.S. population. Clergy are more likely to report being happy, satisfied with their life, filled with a sense of direction and meaning, and enjoying many warm and trusting relationships.⁸ What appears to be a contradictory finding, given the higher-than-average depression rates, confirms what other researchers discovered. Clergy consistently demonstrate remarkable resiliency and better-than-average psychological and social functioning. These measured positives simply do not lie on the same continuum as depression, anxiety, or stress.

Hope-Filled Implications

What do these recent results say to clergy, those who care about them, and those who wish to see congregations strengthened by healthy leadership?

For clergy. After hearing about the health initiative, large numbers of clergy wanted to participate in the health program—so many that new groups had to start in waves every six months. The protocol called for assessment on key components of physical health once they agreed to participate, including weight, waist circumference, blood pressure, HDL cholesterol, and triglycerides. Even before clergy began to participate fully in the program, they showed significant improvements in these metabolic syndrome indicators, which are linked to heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Awareness and frequent monitoring of physical health indicators resulted in improved outcomes and seeing improvements helped motivate pastors to stick to an exercise plan and continue healthy eating. Screening for potential risks and access to health care is essential for long-term outcomes.

Unfortunately, the program failed to decrease rates of depression or stress symptoms. Although pastors were encouraged to nurture their family and friendships, other components of mental and social health—financial and other context stressors—went largely unaddressed.⁹ These findings underscore that clergy cannot obtain better health alone without the support of congregations and their denominational leaders.

For congregations. Lay leaders play an important role in supporting healthy behaviors in clergy. Encourage the pastor to take a day off a week, pursue a relaxing hobby or interest, get regular exercise, and spend time with family and friends. Other ways to provide stress-reducing support include honoring the boundary between ministry and personal time, offering a

Sabbatical, providing funds for continuing education or personal study (books), or granting time for participation in clergy peer groups.¹⁰ Refrain from insisting that every ministry task is equally important and must be carried out by the pastor. When pastors find ways to spend more time on their joy-filled ministry tasks, they feel greater satisfaction in ministry.

For denominations. The most highly satisfied pastors cite their denomination as a critical partner in their ministry effectiveness. Judicatory leaders can advocate for adequate salaries, housing allowances, healthcare benefits, and pensions, even for clergy in part-time positions. And they can encourage pastors to seek help with physical, psychological, or family issues.

Too many denominations struggle to provide health care resources at the regional or judicatory level. Because the bargaining advantage of national-level organizations yields better and more cost-effective benefit plans, denominations should explore new, national strategies. Further, the obligation to ensure access to full benefits and equal compensation, regardless of age, gender, or race, rests with denominational bodies.

Assessing the Rewards

For clergy: What gives you joy? How does your passion for ministry best connect to your congregation's needs?

For congregations: Have people in the congregation made too many demands on the pastor during the past year? How often have people been critical of things the pastor has done? How does your congregation make the pastor feel loved and appreciated?

For denominations: Do we regularly check in with our clergy to listen to their concerns and needs? How are we planning to improve the ministry environment to promote better clergy health?

1. Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell and Jason Byassee, *Faithful and Fractured: Responding to the Clergy Health Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2018), 24.

2. *Ibid.*, xx-xxii.

3. *Ibid.*, xvi.

4. *Ibid.*, 84.

5. *Ibid.*, 37-38.

6. *Ibid.*, 3.

7. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society* (New York City: Doubleday, 1972).

8. Proeschold-Bell and Byassee, 114.

9. Cynthia Woolever, "Big Ministry Trends for 2014," *The Parish Paper*, January, 2014.

10. Cynthia Woolever, "How to Avoid Pastor Burnout," *The Parish Paper*, January, 2013.

HOW TO DEVELOP HABITS FOR WELL-BEING

Seminaries and social work programs often ask their students to create a self-care plan. Not only does this send a message about self-care while pursuing a degree, ordination, or certification, it also makes clear that self-care is a life-long commitment for those who serve the church and others. High demands and weak support systems can foster a toxic environment for clergy health. Therefore, some experts see a problem with the idea of *self-care*, which suggests that responsibility for clergy well-being falls entirely on the pastor. Clergy health and well-being involve three systems: the individual pastor's lifestyle, family and friends, and the congregation or denomination. Although all three systems share responsibility, this issue focuses primarily on the role of clergy.

Making Better Choices

Mounting research finds that genetic differences are less important for longevity and health than previously asserted. Twin studies reveal that genetics only account for 25% of the defining forces related to life span. What accounts for the rest? Lifestyle choices and habits. For example, Sanjay Gupta lists five habits that can extend a person's life by a decade or more: eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy body weight, consuming alcohol in moderation, and never smoking.¹

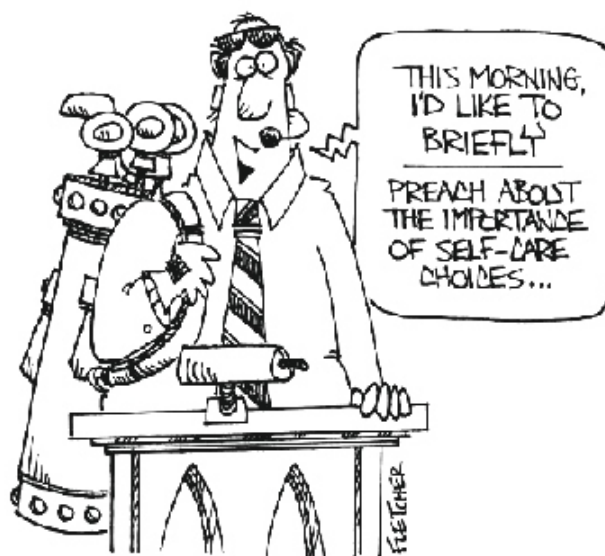
Models of well-being incorporate additional elements beyond physical health because studies find clear links between mental, social, and physical health. For instance, scientists are beginning to pay attention to a sixth healthy habit: maintaining a strong social network. Although positive emotions and moods relate to overall health, they only produce short-term impacts. Positive mental health combined with high psychological and social functioning delivers greater long-term health.²

Map Your Self-Care Plan

Before you can make deliberate changes to construct a personalized self-care plan, you must know where you

are already strong and where you need to focus to see improvement. The self-care wheel, available in multiple versions, is such a tool and illustrates the interaction between multiple dimensions of daily life.³ Imagine a pie cut into six equal parts with each section representing one area of your life: physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, personal, and professional. If you imagine the center as zero and the outer edge of the pie section as ten, you can rank your satisfaction level within each area by drawing a line to create your own outer edge for each area.

When the findings are graphed onto the pie, some sections are longer or shorter than others. The shorter areas reflect areas of life where functioning can be improved. For example, lower scores in the spiritual area might prompt someone to explore new spiritual practices, participate in a small spirituality group, or other actions aimed at creating greater levels of life satisfaction and balance. Ultimately, you see your full life balance picture and can begin to consider how to improve the whole.



Other approaches entail completing short questionnaires (see the Buffalo School of Social Work for an easy to complete example⁴). Or clergy can honestly answer questions like:

- How often in the past two years has poor physical health, emotional problems, or family demands interfered with your ministry effectiveness? How do you cope in such situations?
- What practices do you regularly engage in that sustain you physically, emotionally, and spiritually? Are additional efforts needed to support your well-being and reduce stress?
- How would a spouse or best friend answer these questions? Your coworkers?

The value of these approaches is that the agency for making better choices rests with the individual. A friend of the late Senator John McCain remarked that he was not very good at lying to himself. McCain would joke that his biggest accomplishment as a Navy pilot was crashing five jet planes, reflecting his belief that “We cannot forever hide the truth about ourselves, from ourselves.”⁵ Authenticity or self-integrity is a gift to be treasured.

Create and Enact Your Self-Care Plan

Just as there is no “right way” to experience God, there is no “right way” to find a greater sense of well-being. Once you have mapped what your current life balance looks like on the pie chart and honestly answered questions about your life habits, take time to make a solid plan. For the areas of your life where you are strong, write a few sentences about how to maintain or even enhance those areas. For areas that are closer to zero, write down goals to help you increase your satisfaction. You also want to periodically check in on how you’re doing with these goals to see if you need to revise any of them as your life changes. It is okay to begin with only one or two areas. Finally, find someone who cares about you to hold you accountable and who is willing to help you achieve these goals. It’s best to find someone in a similar situation as you, such as another clergy member. Share your self-care plans and meet regularly to check in with each other.

Remember that people will be motivated to form new habits by different incentives and identities. These differences mean that no two people will choose an identical path to a more satisfying life and that the goals you set must be tailored to work for you.

Congregational and Denominational Support

Every congregation should have a functioning personnel committee because a church cannot succeed unless the pastor succeeds. The regular interaction between the committee and the pastor contributes to the pastor’s overall ministry and life satisfaction, assists the pastor in establishing priorities and boundaries, and supports the pastor’s self-care choices. The pastor and the committee members must share a vision for ministry and a shared understanding of the pastor’s gifts.

Several denominations began to recognize that support for pastors needed to extend beyond seminary. For example, the Church Pension Group of the Episcopal Church started CREDO, a conference for pastors aimed at enhancing clergy wellness. Participants explore four areas—spiritual, vocational, financial, and physical/psychological health—in a week-long community experience. The Board of Pensions, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), launched a similar national clergy program to help pastors examine their health and replenish their spirit. Other judicatories and denominations invite their clergy to workshops and experiences that help pastors deal with stress, nurture spiritual vitality, and promote flourishing ministry. Congregational leaders should encourage the pastor to participate in such conferences.

Well-Being Is a Journey

The good news of the gospel says again and again, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5). People, who are made in the image of God, are free to make choices. And they are free to make new choices. Begin with one new self-care practice today. Begin with one new way of finding joy in life. Try it on and risk failure. Pastors and people of faith can count on the promise of John 10:10: “I have come that they might have life and have it abundantly.”

1. Dr. Sanjay Gupta, “Forget science (for now); living longer is in your hands,” <https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/27/health/living-longer-sanjay-gupta/index.html>.

2. R. J. Proschold-Bell and J. Byassee, *Faithful and Fractured: Responding to the Clergy Health Crisis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2018), 112-113.

3. <http://www.olgaphoenix.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Self-Care-Wheel-Final.pdf>

4. <https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/content/dam/socialwork/home/self-care-kit/self-care-assessment.pdf>

5. https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/john_mccain_135484

GETTING TO KNOW OUR NEIGHBORS ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS

Holding conversations with neighbors can provide church leaders with vital information about the community. A one-on-one interview takes the process a step further by structuring the conversation around a set of questions prepared in advance so that church leaders can focus on what matters most: tailoring ministry that is most appropriate for this neighborhood, these people, and this time.

Listening: An Essential First Step

Joy Skjegstad, who consults with churches on community ministry, finds that many churches prefer to skip the listening step and simply launch into a new project. "It is faster to plan programming without it, because listening takes time."¹ Church leaders also tell her that they find it intimidating to meet people they do not know, especially when people in the community come from different ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, or religious backgrounds than church members. Finally, Skjegstad suspects that some church leaders do not want new information to contradict their long-held assumptions, arguing that "community listening can be a humbling process. People in the community may tell you things you don't want to hear."²

Faith-based community organizers consider one-on-one interviews to be an essential tool in getting to know the neighborhood. The Reverend Dennis Jacobsen, an Evangelical Lutheran pastor and community organizer, observes that organizing efforts can falter without relationship building. The one-on-one interview is a primary way to achieve this goal. "Organizing misses its calling," Jacobsen writes, "when it becomes a swirl of frenetic activity, . . . running past and over human beings. One-on-ones slow things down, restore needed focus, and serve as a reminder of the human dimension of this work."³

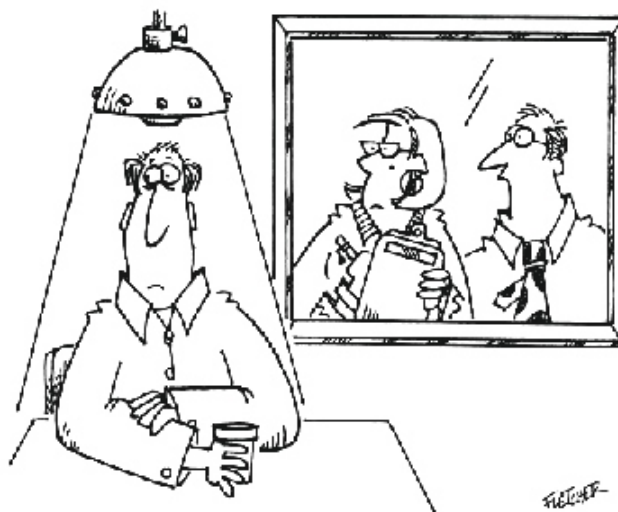
Interviewing Basics

Interviews come in three styles: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. If you want to get to know

the person or community, try an *unstructured interview*. Start with a broad question about your interviewee's experience and then let the conversation flow in whatever direction it will. However, if you want to assess a community's needs or analyze a particular problem, a *structured interview* may serve the purpose better. In this case, ask questions about specific issues. At the extreme end of the structured format, this interview may resemble a verbal questionnaire with answer options limited to yes or no answers. The *semi-structured interview* strikes a compromise between the two styles, utilizing predetermined questions while allowing respondents to use whatever language they are most comfortable with or allowing them to wander from the topic as it suits them.⁴

A basic unstructured interview may be the easiest type of interview to perform. Social scientists Andrea Fontana and James Frey offer the following seven steps for preparing for and carrying out an interview.

1. *Access the setting.* How do you "get in to" wherever the interview will take place? This question must be asked because interviews typically do not take place on your own



"I STILL THINK WE SHOULD HAVE GONE
WITH AN UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW."

turf but in the field. How you access the setting depends on the group you are studying. One researcher-author had to buy a motorcycle and hang out where Hell's Angels were known to gather in order to interview them for a book he was writing. While this may be an extreme case, it illustrates a point: in order to interview someone, you need to enter their setting, not invite them to yours.

2. *Understand the language and culture.* An interpreter may help you understand the person you interview, but that is no guarantee you will understand the culture. If you are non-Hispanic, it may feel puzzling to answer a volley of questions about whether you are married and other personal questions about familial relationships. Yet the family holds a key place in Hispanic culture. Ignoring this reality may result in "mis-translation" even if you have a great interpreter.

3. *Decide how to present yourself.* Whether you dress up or dress down may be subject to misunderstanding. Dressing up may create suspicion among some populations such as undocumented immigrants or blue-collar workers, who might misinterpret your intentions. On the other hand, if you are interviewing parishioners in a Sunday morning church setting at a Black church, dressing down might be seen as disrespectful to God. Best practice in many cases might be to try matching your dress to that of the person being interviewed.

4. *Locate an informant.* You may need someone who can act as a guide to the local culture and its distinctive idiom. In one low-income neighborhood in Syracuse, New York, a woman known as "the mayor" of the neighborhood regularly welcomes her neighbors for evening gatherings on her front porch. She would qualify as a good informant.

5. *Gain trust.* Gaining trust may serve as an important prelude to getting someone to talk about themselves. Trust may not be such an issue for someone known to be outspoken on public issues, but it may be more essential if the interview concerns sensitive matters.

6. *Establish rapport.* Developing a strong connection between you and the person you interview, can open the door to a deeper dive into important information. Establishing rapport might not be crucial in some cases. For example, if your goal is to survey as many people as possible on a given issue, establishing a strong connection might take too long. Neighborhood surveys do not typically require deep rapport with everyone you poll.

7. *Collect the data.* How will you record what you find out? The most thorough techniques (video or audio), may seem the best, yet they might be the most intrusive.

In some cases, note-taking may even have an off-putting effect, so you might try taking mental notes and writing it up in private soon afterward. Best practices for collecting data include (1) taking notes regularly and writing them down immediately; (2) writing everything down even if it seems unimportant; (3) trying to be inconspicuous in talking notes; and (4) analyzing your notes often.⁵

The Roving Listener Style

Broadway United Methodist Church in Indianapolis offers one example of how to conduct interviews in the neighborhood. The church hired a "roving listener" to wander through the neighborhood and spend time with people he encountered. This person focused not on neighbors' needs but on their gifts, passions, and hopes for the community. The interviewer asked these questions:

- What three things do you do well enough that you could teach others how to do?
- What three things would you like to learn?
- Who, besides God and me, is going with you along the way?⁶

Nothing beats a direct one-on-one interview for learning about the community and building relationships. Sometimes we may be surprised by the willingness of our neighbors to express their faith in personal, direct terms outside the worship setting. One researcher, who conducted one-on-one interviews for a faith-based community organization, tells about a neighbor who wanted to pray for her interviewer as the conversation concluded. "Lord Jesus," she said, "help us work together to change things here. Thank you for this new friend. Give us your Spirit and your power, and we will turn this city around."⁷

1. Joy F. Skjogstad, *Seven Models for Community Ministry* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2013), 12.

2. Ibid., 13.

3. Dennis Jacobsen, *Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 60.

4. Scott Thumma, "Methods for Studying Congregations," in *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*, ed. Nancy Ammerman et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 206.

5. Andrea Fontana and James Frey, "The Interview," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln, 2nd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000), 654–56.

6. Paul Nixon, *Fling Open the Doors: Giving the Church Away to the Community* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 22–23.

7. Richard Wood, *Faith in Action: Religion, Race, and Democratic Organizing in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 165.

Reminders for End of Year

- † The Trustee and Finance Committee is requesting all Church sessions return the Presbytery Covenant Commitment and Pledge form
- † All 2018 giving needs to be submitted by January 9, 2019 to be accounted for the 2018 Year. Any funds received after this date will be accounted for in 2019.
- † All Church offices please change the mailing address for all Payments to the Presbytery to the Presbytery office. Alpine tax service, Hendrix and Associates no longer are contracted employees of the Presbytery. ALL Payments, and vouchers need to be sent to Presbytery of Western Colorado 101 N. Uncompahgre ste. #9, Montrose, CO 81401

Newly Elected Committee Members

Presbytery Moderator---Beau Smith

Presbytery Vice-Moderator---Mary Hammond Atkinson (with the understanding she will not serve as Moderator in 2020.)

Council Members—Class of 2021

Teaching Elders: Bill Mangrum and Sandra Newman—second terms for both

Ruling Elders: Thelma Starnes—second term, (vacancy)

Committee on Ministry (COM)—Class of 2021

Teaching Elder: Cathy Hamrick—second term (Cathy has since informed the moderator of Human Resources Committee she will not be able to serve a second term. Consequently, there is a vacancy to be filled.)

Ruling Elders: Michael Rogers—second term
(Sherrie Blake was appointed by the Moderator of Presbytery subsequent to the Presbytery meeting. That appointment will be confirmed at the May, 2019 meeting.)

Committee on Preparation for Ministry—Class of 2021

Ruling Elder Heather Lundquist—second term

Teaching Elder Jennifer McKenzie—second term

Committee on Representation (newly reorganized)

Ruling Elder Katy Trimm—class of 2019

Ruling Elder Rosetta Bradfield—class of 2020

Ruling Elder John Thompson—class of 2021

Human Resources Committee—class of 2021

Ruling Elder John Thompson—second term

Teaching Elder Melinda Veatch

Trustees and Finance

Teaching Elder Melinda Veatch—class of 2020

Teaching Elder Matt Royston—class of 2021

Ruling Elder Gary Skaggs—second term—class of 2021

X-Lazy-F Ranch—class of 2021

Ruling Elder John Colvin—second term

Ruling Elder Lowell Clark—second term

Permanent Judicial Commission

Ruling Elder Helen Bledsoe—class of 2022 (filing a vacancy)

Al Ruth Award Committee—class of 2022

Ruling Elder Heather Lundquist

Ruling Elder Sherrie Blake

Synod Assembly Commissioners—class of 2020

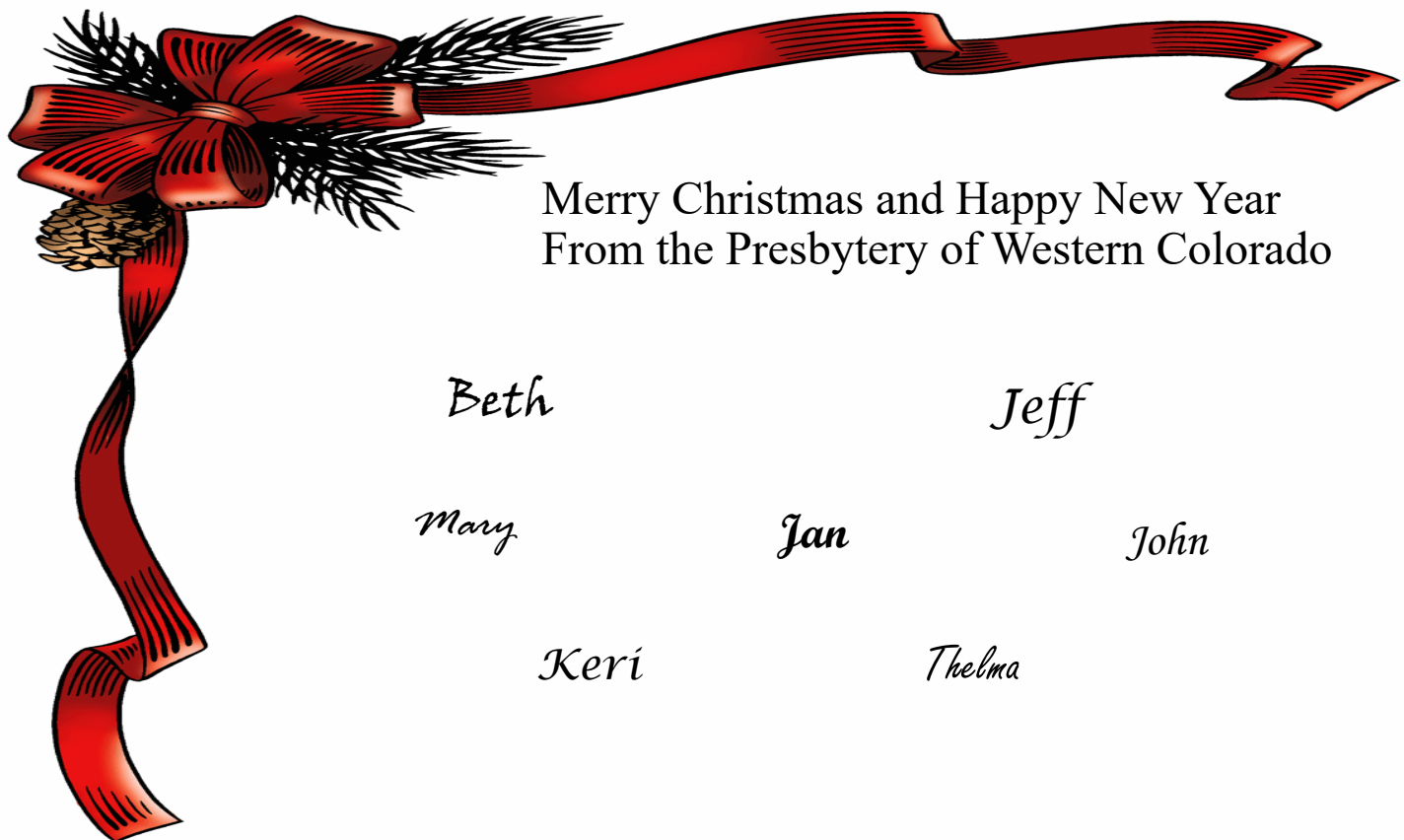
Ruling Elder Michael Rogers (third and final 2-yr. term)

Teaching Elder Jeff Harmeling (third and final 2-yr. term)

Presbytery of Western Colorado
101 N. Uncompahgre Ave. #9
Montrose, CO 81401-3763

970-240-8455
fax 240-1318

Return Service Requested



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
From the Presbytery of Western Colorado

Beth

Jeff

Mary

Jan

John

Keri

Thelma