

Yellowstone Currents
A Newsletter of Yellowstone Presbytery
November 2018

Presbytery gathers Nov. 2 – 3 in Bozeman at First Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Mark T. Frey, church consultant with the Board of Pensions, will lead a workshop at 10:30 am. Rev. Frey has titled his workshop “Serving the Servants of the Church: Caring for Your Church Employees.” This workshop will provide an opportunity to reflect on how we think theologically and practically about caring for church employees and is intended to assist the ministry and mission of congregations by helping strengthen practices of effectively caring for employees.

Our meeting together from Friday noon to Saturday noon will focus on living as citizens of God’s realm in our polarized and divisive time and ideas on how we can be used by God to “turn the world upside down”, following in the steps of the early Christians.

During our meeting, we will be inspired, challenged, and equipped by three scholar/pastors who have studied the early church. We will explore practices and ways of cooperating with the Holy Spirit to turn the world upside down in our communities today.

For more information, see Yellowstone Presbytery’s website:
<http://www.yellowstonepcusa.org/2018.11.02Presbymeeting.htm>

Pastoral Transitions

Rev. Katie Emery has accepted a call as an associate pastor in Longmont, Colorado. We are grateful for her ministry to the Terry Community Presbyterian and Fallon ELCA church and her summer camp leadership! Her husband, Rev. Will Johnson, has a call as an associate pastor in the greater Denver area as well.

Rev. Susan Barnes' journalist husband, Mike Ferguson, has accepted the position of Editor of the Presbyterian News Service in Louisville, KY. Mike has followed Susan's many calls and this time, she will follow his, saying goodbye to St. Andrew church and discerning God's call in the upcoming season. We thank Susan for her ministry in Billings!

Youth Ski Retreat 2019

Junior and Senior High youth will gather at First Presbyterian Church in Butte for the 2019 Ski Retreat. Many thanks to the folks in Butte for your wonderful hospitality!

Date: February 22-24, 2019
Location: First Presbyterian Church Butte
Arrive: Friday, February 22 after 6:00 p.m.
Ski: Saturday at Discovery Ski Area
Depart: Sunday, February 24 after worship
Brochures and registration forms will be available in January.

Have you ever wondered about Per Capita?

Your Per Capita at Work submitted by Dan Holland

It's been called 'dues', a 'head tax', a 'membership fee', and no doubt some words that we shouldn't print in this gentle publication. We in the PCUSA, and more specifically the Presbytery of Yellowstone, call it *per capita* which is a Latin term meaning pay up or you won't get into heaven. Okay, that last part was a lame attempt at ecclesiastical humor. Per capita is actually an assessment levied by the Presbytery based on each congregation's membership at the end of the previous year. Not all of this assessment stays in the Presbytery, as roughly one-quarter of the total amount is passed through to the regional governing body (The Synod of the Rocky Mountains) and the national governing body (the General Assembly.)

So, once the amount of the assessment that stays within the Presbytery is determined, you may be asking, what do those dollars pay for? Well, certainly there is some overhead, as in the lights over the heads of the hard working staff of our Presbytery, whose modest office can be found in the basement of First Presbyterian Church in Bozeman.

Most importantly, though, per capita pays for people — five people to be precise — none of whom are full-time employees.

If you have ever called the Presbytery office you have undoubtedly spoken with Susan Seibert, the Administrative Assistant, and if you have ever received an email from YellPres then Susan sent it. She is the engine room in our Presbytery and keeps everything running smoothly.

Sheryl Hallin is our Treasurer and she keeps track of a rather complicated set of books. She pays the bills, processes the payroll, and otherwise keeps our heads above water.

Our Stated Clerk is Jim Tarr, and he is capably assisted by Melissa Perrault-Baumann. It may be the case your only exposure to the Stated Clerk is at Presbytery meetings, however the Clerk's work never ends. They are expected to attend and document every meeting and official ceremony within our boundaries. In addition there is a host of other clerical, administrative, and correspondence related chores that fall under the Clerk's purview. The Stated Clerk's office is the only one required of a Presbytery in the Book of Order.

The last set of people your per capita dollars help pay for is our Co-General Presbyters. George and Kathy Goodrich have split this position (on a 90/10 basis) for the past thirteen years and about four years ago the position was reduced to half-time. Of course this is a laughable description, because they essentially do everything they were doing when working full-time, it's just that now they only get paid half as much. A General Presbyter's duties have been called being a Pastor to the Pastors, but there is much more involved. Much like the Clerk, their presence is expected at all official gatherings, but they must also assume the mantle of executive director and chief of staff. There are also denominational responsibilities in addition to the wear and tear of administering to a Presbytery that stretches from Wisdom to Wolf Point.

In 2018 the cost of employing these people was just shy of \$122,000, while the Presbytery's portion of your per capita payments is only a tad more than half that amount. A decade ago the Synod funded that shortfall, however their support has slowly been dwindling, and starting next year we will not receive any monies from them. Many of you reading this have taken it upon yourselves to help bridge that gap and we are deeply appreciative of your support. In our next column we will look at additional ways you can help finance this vital ministry, but in the meantime we thought this would be a timely discussion since we will be voting on the 2019 per capita amounts at our business meeting in Bozeman this week.

Thank you, Dan, for this article!

Remembering a great season of camp. .



Senior High Camp - Westminster Spires 2018

Upcoming Events:

- Nov. 2 Board of Pensions Seminar, First Presbyterian, Bozeman 10:30 am – 12:00 pm
Nov. 2 – 3 Presbyterian Meeting, First Presbyterian, Bozeman Fri. noon – Sat. noon
Nov. 8 Pastoral Ministry Team, First Presbyterian Bozeman
Nov. 10 MAC Connect First Christian Church, Helena 10am – 3pm

Yellowstone Presbytery Clusters

Our clusters typically meet each month. If you have not been a part of a cluster and would like to explore the idea of joining in, please contact one of the following coordinators.

- Miles City Cluster - Neva Rathbun (msrev@midrivers.com)
Billings Cluster – Dave Thompson (pastordave@fpcbillings.org)
Butte Cluster - Teresa Kendall (teresakendall@mac.com)
White Sulphur Cluster - Debbie Funke (funkepastor@yahoo.com)

Remember our Round of Prayer

as we keep our churches, ministries, and leaders in prayer:

- Sunday, Nov. 4:** Rev. Larry Vandecreek, Honorably Retired, Grand Rapids, Michigan
Sunday, Nov. 11: Rev. George Goodrich, Yellowstone Presbytery Co-Presbyter, Bozeman
Sunday, Nov. 18: First Presbyterian Church Stanford, Commissioned Ruling Elder, Jack Bell
Sunday, Nov. 25: Church of the Big Hole, Pastor Mary Davis

Please send news and announcements to Susan Thomas at ckochner@mcn.net.

