

PMRV Committee/Commission Reports to Presbytery For February 22, 2024 Presbytery of Missouri River Valley Stated Meeting

Social Justice and Peacemaking – Rev. Carolyn Grice, Chair

The meeting opened with prayer by Carolyn at 11:34am via Zoom. After reading the Administrative Covenant Carolyn walked through highlights of the PCUSA Inaugural Matthew 25 Conference held in Atlanta three weeks ago. A copy of the report to the presbytery is attached.

Kevin shared information about the Ceasefire press conference. After discussion the committee requested the opportunity to meet with presbytery leadership to take a stand along the lines of the national church regarding Palestinian issues.




Here is the latest statistical information regarding the war in Gaza:

- Over 27,500 Palestinians massacred, another +8,000 buried under the rubble.
- Over 67,200 people injured
- Over 2.2 million people starving
- Over 2 million people displaced from their homes
- At least 121 journalists killed
- Over 625,000 students without educational access due to the destruction of their schools
- Every single university in Gaza has been destroyed
- 22 of the 35 hospitals in Gaza have been bombed, damaged, and destroyed.
- 180 babies being born daily without adequate, clean medical facilities available
- Only 6 ambulances left to service the needs of the entire region
- Widespread infectious diseases due to the lack of basic medical supplies
- Over 110,000 casualties: 1 in 20 in Gaza have been killed, injured or is missing

The 17 years of Israel's siege on Gaza has left the population of 2.3 million people vulnerable to famine; without clean water for drinking or sanitation; without electricity or gas; and with an alarming lack of access to communication. This deliberate blockade has been a belligerent tactic used to deny the necessary medical supplies and urgent humanitarian assistance needed by the 2.3 million people of Gaza being held hostage.

A **Christ at the Checkpoint Conference** is to be held in Bethlehem at the end of May. Kevin is attending and will provide more information.

The website offers this information:

-  *The 7th "Christ at the Checkpoint" Conference, organized by Bethlehem Bible College, will focus on the theme "Do Justice, Love Mercy: Christian Witness in Contexts of Oppression." This conference has an evangelical spirit. Among the distinctives that make it unique are: 1) Quality speakers, 2) Giving voice to Palestinian Christians, 3) Openness to diverse perspectives, 4) Dialogue, and 5) Activism.*
-  *The aim of Christ at the Checkpoint is to provide an opportunity for Evangelical Christians to prayerfully seek a proper awareness of issues of peace, justice, and reconciliation. We seek to renew the biblical call for justice and mercy in contexts of oppression and compel a unified mission of the global Church.*
-  *We are a community of evangelical Christians who believe that following Jesus with integrity means that our lives are formed by our love for God, the teaching of the Bible and a fearless*

life of discipleship in the complexities of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We believe that one of the first hallmarks of discipleship is love for both our own community and for our enemies. We wish to find Jesus at the center of everything we do and to make his life our life. Which means finding courageous love for Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews alike.

Kevin provided an update on the Israel/Palestine Ministry Network that will be at the General Assembly. Kevin is teaching a class at the Synod School this year.

The committee supports the efforts of Church of the Cross to bring a peacemaker here. There was discussion about bringing another person in as well. Carolyn will see who is available. She will work with Church of the Cross about the person they want to bring in.

The committee would like to review the policies on racism that the presbytery approved last fall.

Next meeting will be March 5th at 11:30am.

Self-Development of People (SDOP) – Rev. Carolyn Grice, Chair

The committee will be undergoing the recertification process soon. We will join the session where the Synod SDOP will be recertified. Date to be determined.

Matthew 25 Conference

Synopsis to PMRV January 2024

The conference was held at New Life Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, GA. The church has a similar layout to Church of the Cross minus the lower level and new addition. There were 300 hundred in attendance and 80 that participated by Zoom. Nice mixture of race, gender, and clergy and elders, and other interested people.

Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis opened the first plenary session. She spoke about poverty and the work of the National Poor Peoples Campaign and how it related to Matthew 25. She got a three-minute standing ovation at the end of her remarks.

Session 1: Workshop Topics

- Introduction to Matthew 25
- What Does God Have to Do with Inclusion?
- Using Presbyterian Polity as a Decolonizing Practice
- Won't You Be My Neighbor?
- Migration And Militarism: Root Causes and Border Enforcement

I chose Using Polity and a Decolonizing Practice. This was led by Johnson C. Smith President, Paul Roberts. Standing room only. Don't be in a hurry to fix things without understanding history. Having to beat the drum to understand it may take a long time. When change comes it will become a roller coaster ride. Chaotic at times. Non-ending. Eventually polity will play out the way it is supposed to.

Session II Workshop Topics

- Where Does Jesus Stand? Five Spiritual Practices to End Poverty
- Matthew 25 Movement in a Rural Context-How much Traction?
- Resistance and Resilience
- Learning From the Fullness of Church history and Why "Churches Dreaded Abolitionism"
- Casting for Change: The Story of the Matthew 25 Overture
- Matthew 25 in Costa Rica

I chose Resistance and Resilience. The impact of dealing with stress from burnout and PTSD and the cost of caring. How church leadership responded to murder of George Floyd to burnout from compassion fatigue. Love mercy now. Do justice now. Walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work immediately, but neither are you free to abandon it. We were shown techniques to deal with stress.

Calvin Crest Camp, Conference and Retreat Center – Craig Huffman, Director

The Board of Directors at Calvin Crest is working hard to promote summer camp opportunities, provide new opportunities for adults to learn and grow and working into the new structure of ownership. As part of the board's process to accomplish this, we are part of a 9-month non-profit leadership program provided by the Fremont Area Community Foundation with sessions for the executive director each month with some meetings attended by board members. The intent is for the board members to take back their learning to the full board and implement best practices to increase capacity for the valuable work of the non-profit.

One of the outcomes of this training that the board is working on is fine-tuning the board policy manual as well as adding additional necessary policies to remain in compliance with federal and state regulations and continue improving the governance of the board. This will be a significant long-term process that will enhance the effectiveness of Calvin Crest.

Upcoming Events include:

- Men's Retreat (May 17-18)
- Summer Camp (June and July)
- Annual Family Fun Day (August 24)
- Instadium 3.0 (August 24-25)

Faith Education Leadership Development (FELD) – Shelli Dart, Chair

Administrative Team (AT & MT) – Sarah Dickinson, Sally Carlson, Gregg Miller, Pat Shipley

From: Admin Team (AT): Nancy Ross-Hullinger, Gregg Miller, Pat Shipley, Sarah Dickinson/notetaker

Moderator Team (MT): Marcia Cline, Matt Coplen, Regina Jean-Pierre Bryant

Here are some highlights from when Admin Team met jointly with the Moderator Team [2/5/24](#)

As usual: We have very full meetings and good discussion.

Discussion included:

Debriefing about:

January LT Mtg/Training It was so great to have so many involved in sharing leadership participation!

Other Discussion Items:

Prep for Feb. LT mtg Based on many of the deliberations today

Ukrainian visitor in our presbytery – Feb. 14 (Ash Wednesday); Matt/Plattsmouth host + maybe 1:00 Zoom

Energy, Intelligence, Imagination & Love – the 2024 Theme

Lifting up theme, thinking about how it's a part of LT & AT/MT deliberations

And encouraging & supporting other PMRV entities in incorporating the theme.

Nebraska Ecumenical Group :Sarah will go to an initial meeting (Zoom) to find out more 2/21/24

SJP/Palestine statement :SJP got the very tragic situation in Israel/Palestine on our AT/MT radar.

Two things surfaced in our very good initial group discussion:

1. Prayer is at the center of all our processes
2. 2 “Intelligence” is part of our ordination vows & 2024 theme

Recommendation:

At the February 2024 LT meeting share a process of prayer and learning.

Marcia will give us homework to do between the February and March meetings.

PC(USA) resources and for us to pay attention to reputable news sources & be in prayer.

Then at the March LT meeting we will prayerfully share learnings and seek God’s leading.

August Retreat/Presbytery meeting concept

The MT will take the lead on discerning if/how we run a pastor/education retreat play along with a presbytery time of learning rooted in our 2024 theme.

Midcouncil request for info on support for congregations of color Pat will follow up

AT worked on: Coordinating coverage so that each committee has a supporter on either AT or MT
On the radar:

Transition & SC Task Force Taking applications through Feb. 15

Board of Pensions Many updates coming. Earmark April 12-13- Ken Green in town, Bethany may host

Reference:

Gold Star

Item	Jan-Mar 2024	April ff	Detail
Send notice	SC Pat	LT Mod or Nicole	
Gather reports & format	SC Pat	LT Mod or Nicole	Note: 4x/yr = PMRV mtg report
Set LT docket	LT Mod Marcia	LT Mod	
Zoom link	SC Pat	Office/Nicole	Communications will set up

Prayers for churches seeking pastoral leadership: 2/10/24 (Sat.) Installation of Rev. Brian Long
Peace/Elkhorn

AT/MT meets next: 3/4/24 1:30 Zoom

Other Administrative Reference

Vision 2024 (approved by PMRV Nov. 2023 mtg) **OPSF/PLR** – FELD will discern PLR

2024 Presbytery meetings – 2/22/24 (Zoom) 4/13/24 (in person) 8-16&17/24 Calvin Crest 11/7/24 Zoom

Manual of Operations Suggested Revisions (toward 2024)

-How MAO is updated: Ordinarily not more than one time of year;

-LT: Add Worship and Spirituality -Policies: Add -Administrative Hub

Process for LT –As much as possible, anything that goes on the LT docket – especially things that require fruitful discussion, let items bounce into MT/AT first to tease out angles of what is being discussed and also include a “Read Ahead” for LT members. (so that we aren’t discussing important topics “cold”) ☺

Stewardship of Resources (SOR) – Rev. Michael Elliott, Chair

- **Treasurer’s report and review of 2023 year-end financials** – Total Net Assets on December 31, 2023 were \$1,533,262. Net Income for 2023 was \$242,659, heavily influenced by

unrealized and realized gains on investments. SOR accepted these financial statements and requests the Presbytery to accept them as well.

- The “PRESBYTERY OF MISSOURI RIVER VALLEY STATEMENT OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS For the Year Ended December 31, 2022”, prepared by Schwarz and Associates, CPAs, was received in December. Treasurer Dave Emry recommended we accept their report and send it to Presbytery for acceptance. SOR approved this motion unanimously. For 2023, we believe it is important to have an accounting firm do a cash-only audit with balance sheet as one has not been done for several years.
- SOR is requesting that the Leadership Team find a new way of doing financial reviews
 - Abbreviated review yearly with a full review every 3 to 4 years? Reviews can be conducted by members of Presbytery?

Personnel Committee – Kathy Moore, Elder, Chair

Personnel Committee has not met. They will convene in March.

Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) – Al Zimmerman, Moderator

The Commission met on February 8, 2024. The Commission met with Elder Regina Jeanpierre-Bryant, a potential Inquirer for Ministry.

Worship and Spirituality Committee – Rev. Becky Balestri, Chair

Mission and Evangelism – Rev. Matt Coplen, Chair

The committee met on Tuesday, February 6th. We greeted one another and welcomed a brand-new member to the committee, Sarah James. We read the covenant together and discussed Presbytery’s theme for the year, Energy, Intelligence, Imagination, and Love and the challenge and hope those four words offer us as the Mission Committee.

We reviewed the committee’s job description from the Manual of Operations. We heard an update on the Komarek grant. We reviewed the Mission Committee line items in the budget approved by the Presbytery in November 2023.

We reviewed the Mission Committee Snapshot that was worked on by representatives from the Leadership Team and the Mission Committee in late 2023. We would like to lift-up two particular pieces of this snapshot for our Presbytery to know:

Mission and Evangelism Committee Priorities

- 1 help “steward” the Presbytery’s current mission partnerships
- 2 create awareness of mission opportunities.
- 3 help congregations engage with one another for mission.
- 4 serve as a resource/cheerleader of Matthew 25 ministry

Mission and Evangelism Committee Criteria

- 1 Special location connection (within presbytery bounds)
- 2 Presbyterian
- 3 More than 1 congregation involved
- 4 Covenant (relationship, partnership, communication, accountability)
- 5 Matthew 25 connection