

# Jeff's Jottings

## *The shape of things to come*

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What do you do when your spouse is an hour later than you expected; when the dog, ever eager to play endless games, is content with the bone you brought him; when you decide the laundry and the dirty dishes and the steps that need vacuuming actually can wait; and you uncharacteristically give yourself the time and space just to sit and think.

What do you think about?

Last night, this happened to me. For 45 minutes, phone left inside, dog content at my feet, warm and heavy and quiet air broken by the occasional buzz of a mosquito or gnat, I simply sat and thought. And mostly, what I thought about was you. You, our congregations, and you, the leaders of our congregations. About the challenges in ministry you regularly report to me. About aging memberships and dwindling resources, and our crazy-upside-down world of injustice and meanness. About your insistence to bring good news, the Gospel, to the world. How hard that all is. And how fulfilling.

I thought about you, and I prayed for you.

I prayed and gave thanks for teaching elders open to dream, prepared to lead and willing to risk, and that you might continue to be emboldened and encouraged by the Spirit.

I prayed and gave thanks for sessions inspired in their own faith, attuned to their communities, and eager and equipped to serve, and that you might continue to be emboldened and encouraged by the Spirit.

I prayed for congregations, communities of nurture and vision; sustained by prayer, alive to the Spirit, locally oriented and globally connected. I prayed that, through their witness, hurts would be healed, the lost might be found, the hungry fed; peace would replace fear, hope replace despair; wholeness replace brokenness.

I prayed that we would be a presbytery where all are valued and cherished, and accountable to each other.

And then a siren blared in the distance, and the dog wanted to play, and the mosquitoes got bad, and Jen came home, and the dishes really did need to be done, and I found my phone.

You might wonder: did those 45 minutes make a difference in our life and witness as a Presbytery? Did those 45 minutes affect the shape of things to come? Did those 45 minutes really matter?

They did to me.