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Together in Christ

Dear Presbytery Family,

As promised, this week I am turning my attention to another question I am frequently asked when I visit our churches: “Why do we pay per capita?”

In the PC(USA) per capita is a way of sharing the cost of being a connectional church – that is, a denomination where congregations, presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly all share in governance and mission together.

Per capita is a set amount of money per church member that each congregation pays every year to help fund the work of the larger church. It’s not a “tax” but a shared covenant responsibility – a recognition that every member participates in the wider ministry of the denomination. It funds things like administrative support for presbyteries and synods, meetings of committees, commissions and governing bodies, training and resources for ministers, clerks, and elders, ecumenical and constitutional work (like maintaining the Book of Order), and the cost of representation and decision-making at the General Assembly. In short, it supports the infrastructure that allows the church to be Presbyterian, where decisions are made together through elected representatives.

Per capita, at its heart, expresses connectionalism: we’re not just local congregations doing our own thing but part of a larger body. It ensures equity: every congregation, large or small, helps sustain the shared mission and governance. And it keeps mission offerings and gifts free to go directly to programs and ministries, not administration.

While not every church may do this, it is customary to ask church members to contribute their own per capita dollars. In 2026 we are proposing a per capita rate of \$47/member. This would be \$3.92 a month. If every church member could set that aside, either by dropping it in the offering plate each month or saving it to pay in a lump sum of \$47, we would all cover the cost of our own per capita. I can’t think of much I get for only \$3.92/month! It seems like being a part of this connection church is worth that amount! I know I’m biased, but I would ask you to consider it. You might dig into the resources that are available to you from the denomination, at no additional charge. Maybe you will find a newsletter or podcast that feeds your soul. Maybe you’ll enjoy the free downloadable version of our Book of Order or Book of Confessions (if it doesn’t sound like a great read on its own you could try it as a cure for insomnia – ha!), you might find that joining one of our Lunch & Learns, or letting us send you to a cool event, like General Assembly or some other conference, makes it feel even more worth your while! I think that as you dig into the denomination and take advantage of more of what is there for you, you will be astonished that you get all of that for only \$3.92/month!

Here are some links you might check out to increase your bang for your buck from your per capita dollars.

For Spiritual Growth and Connection

- Daily Devotions: [d365 Daily Devotionals - devotions 365 days a year](#) These are simple, meditative and beautiful.
- Daily Lectionary Readings: [Daily Devotion | Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#)

For Understanding our Connectional Church

- Matthew 25 initiative resources: free videos, study guides and stories of congregations living out the gospel through building congregational vitality, eradicating poverty, and dismantling racism.
[Matthew 25 | Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#)
- Being Connected and Polity Resources: Free short videos and articles that explain how sessions, presbyteries, synods and GA work together – great for officer training.

[Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#)

[Churches and Church Leaders | Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#)

For Congregational Education and Communication

- Presbyterians Today Magazine: Most articles and special issues are online for free – topics on faith in daily life, social issues, and creative ministry ideas.

[Presbyterian Mission Agency Presbyterians Today Magazine | Presbyterian Mission Agency](#)

Book of Confessions and Book of Order (free online)

- [2025 0724 Book of Order Interactive 2025-2027.pdf](#)
- [Microsoft Word - File 01 Front Matter.doc](#)

Keep reading the Valley Bridge. We post information about resources you'll find helpful, announcements about things coming up here, and helpful links all the time. Being a part of a connectional church brings so much to each of our doorsteps, and each of our congregations! Thank you for your per capita dollars that make so much possible!
Together in Christ,

With courage, devotion and good spirit as a colleague,
Rev. Beth Buckwalter-Miller