March 2025

Dear Siblings in Christ in the Presbytery of the Miami Valley!

Thank you for giving me some space to share with you about the Synod of the Covenant's Cultivating the Gift of Preaching Initiative (CGPI)!

CGPI is a new ministry in the Synod (launched in 2024) focused on training lay preachers. It is funded by a $1.25m Lilly Compelling Preaching Grant. The goal of CGPI is to strengthen the witness of the Church to the good news of Jesus Christ, by identifying, training, and providing ongoing support to emerging preachers.

Something new that I am delighted to report is that we were able to adapt the terms of the grant, with the blessing of the Lilly Foundation, to open CGPI up to CREs!! So, if you are a CRE who wants to further develop your preaching skills, please apply!

There are lots more details about CGPI on the Synod webpage, as well as the application. But here are the basics:

- CGPI is an 18-month, cohort model program (we are currently recruiting for the second year which begins in June 2025 and runs to November 2026).
- Participants meet monthly online (for roughly two hours) with a cohort of 5-8 participants and a mentor (an experienced Teaching Elder from the Synod with extensive experience regularly preaching in a congregational setting).
- The program begins with a 5 day (Thursday evening – Monday morning) conference at Alma College in Alma, MI. **This year that conference is June 12-16.**
- There are four in-person meetings throughout the program, twice with everyone in CGPI at the Alma Conference each June, and twice with just your cohort.
- The cost of the program is $1,250; $250 to be paid by the individual and $1000 by your home church and/or presbytery. Scholarships are available as well as payment plans for the churches. The actual total cost is $11,000 per participant, the grant pays for the remainder. All travel and housing expenses, books, etc. are paid for by the grant.
- The emphasis of the program is on preaching. Participants will read and discuss various precaching styles and formats, principals of biblical interpretation, the basics of Reformed theology, as well as practice public speaking, reading scripture, and of course delivering sermons.
- **Applications are due by April 15th,** but we will continue to process applications on a rolling basis as long as there are open slots

If you have any questions, please do reach out to me via email, text, or phone:
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Thank you for all your work in service of Jesus Christ and his church! Please pray for the CGPI program and please encourage CREs and others called to preach from around the Presbytery of the Miami Valley to apply!

Grace and peace to you all,
Matt Bruce, CGPI Program Director