

## A Word from our General Presbyter

**Ed Thompson**

I have been reflecting on the goals I set for 2017 as I begin to set goals for this year. Here's what I said I would do:

1. Objective: Strengthen the relationship between congregations and the Presbytery  
Activity: Visit 35 different churches for worship, preaching 25 times, aiming to visit at least 25 churches I have not visited before
2. Objective: Provide pastoral care and support to the pastors of the Presbytery  
Activity: Meet with 40 different pastors, at least 20 of whom I did not visit/met with in 2016
3. Objective: Provide support for churches seeking pastors  
Activity: Meet with each active Pastor Nominating Committee at least once
4. Objective: Provide guidance and support to presbytery staff members  
Activity: Meet with each staff member individually twice a year, once for reflecting on the prior year's activities and for setting goals for the year ahead and once, mid-year, to reflect on where they are at in meeting those goals
5. Objective: Provide guidance and support to vital Presbytery committees  
Activity: Attend 100% of Leadership Team meetings and 75% of the meetings of the Ministry and Relations committees
6. Objective: Personal growth and renewal  
Activity: Attend two different continuing education events in 2017

In 2017, I visited 40 different churches, 29 of which I had not visited before, and I preached 31 times. So, on this one, I was an overachiever. I think I'll probably keep that goal at about the same level for 2018. I think it's important to visit churches and be visible out in the presbytery. It's going to be more difficult though to get to 25 churches that I haven't visited yet.

In 2017, I met with 31 different pastors, 25 of whom I had not visited with before. So I didn't meet this goal. In hindsight, meeting with 40 different pastors was probably an overly ambitious – and unrealistic – goal. In 2018, I think I'll aim for meeting with 35 different pastors, at least 15 who I had not visited/met with in the past two years.

In 2017, I meet with the Pastor Nominating Committees for Ripley/Ravenswood, Hinton, Morgantown, Arthurdale, St. Andrew and Bluefield, as well as the Associate PNC at Charleston First and the Interim PNC at Nitro. I didn't meet with the PNC at the Valley Parish, although I had good email contact with them. I also missed meeting with the PNC at Summersville, although I had several email exchanges with them and had offered several times to go up there to meet with them.

I didn't meet with the PNCs at Gilbert, Spencer or Upper Glade, although my sense is that none of them were particularly active this past year. I didn't personally meet with the Interim PNC at St. Albans First, although I did talk several times with Maureen who was working with them. Overall, I'd probably give myself a B or maybe even a B+ for this one because I did most of the important work, but I could have done more.

In 2017, I meet with all of our staff twice, except for Amy Robinson, who just started in January 2017, and Mark Miller. However, with Mark, I was at Bluestone every week during the summer camping season and twice stayed overnight, so I had regular conversations with him about how things were going. For this, I'd probably give myself an A-.

It's difficult to measure the work of the Ministry Committee precisely since there are lots of conference calls in addition to their regular monthly meetings. I was more intentional about meeting with the Ministry Committee last year, although I think I missed a meeting when my mother-in-law died, one in July when they decided to meet while both the Stated Clerk and I were on vacation rather than waiting a week, and maybe one in September, when there was a conflict with the Board Retreat for the West Virginia Council of Churches. I know I missed a meeting of the Relations Committee early in the year because of some conflict. However, I made every Leadership Team meeting last year. So, again, I'd probably give myself a B, maybe a B+ on this one.

I attended two good continuing education events in 2017: Metaphors of Movement in Boulder, CO in May and the Big Tent in St. Louis in July. I had planned to attend a conference on management and supervision in November, but, after working on average more than 60 hours a week for about a five-week stretch in October, I changed my mind. While what I did was good, I could have done better, so I'll give myself an A- here.

How did you do in 2017? What goals did you achieve? What goals did you miss? What do you want to do differently in 2018?