

Practicing (Continued)

Support for churches and their leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a priority for the staff and core committees of our Presbytery. (break and link to the rest) The Committee on Ministry continues to connect with ministers, clerks and CREs to ask, “How can Presbytery support you?” CPM continues to come alongside our students to make sure the pathway toward ministry continues. Our Committee on Shared Ministry is in partnership with the Worship Committee and our music peer group creating a virtual worship service that churches can utilize so that pastors and worship teams can take a break one Sunday. Our Finance and Stewardship committee is getting ready to introduce *Staying Connected Grants*, offering churches small grants to assist with cost of technology or fund new ways of doing mission in the local community.

The Seneca Presbyterian Work Crew, with members from the Townville Church, continues its long-term clean-up efforts from the April 2020 tornado storm damage. Thus far, over \$8,300 (PDA grant monies and donations from churches and individuals) has been sent for community relief efforts.

The Transition Think Tank continues its work with a focus on Presbytery's new model, the issues of our current culture and climate, and its effects on church life. They provided feedback on the survey sent in June and continue work on the two initiatives presented at the presbytery meeting last February.

Faithful Innovation: We know the challenges of “future” church are deeper than just institutional decline. We recognize that the pandemic will change the way we ministry, and recognize that we live in a culture where belief in God, let alone Jesus, is not assume - let alone church participation. How is the Holy Spirit calling us to communicate the gospel in such a context? We will invite pastors and church leaders to engage in peer-learning opportunities.

Legacy Partnership Project: In this new era, what gifts do we (our communities of faith) want to hand down to our children? How can Foothills Presbytery partner with our churches, offer ways to assess their strengths, challenges, and plan for their future? We are partnering with the Presbyterian Foundation to do this work.

We also hosted our second virtual Presbytery meeting on August 8th. The meeting was centered in response to two texts of scripture followed by an invitation to respond to a question:

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death” (Matthew 26:38)

Where have you seen souls overwhelmed?

“...we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.” (Romans 5: 3b-5)

Where have you seen God’s love being poured into the hearts of the suffering through the ministry of the church?

The list of responses (in the Zoom chat) reflected weariness, lament, hope, and celebration.

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
His mercies never come to an end;
They are new every morning;
Great is your faithfulness...*

*The LORD is good to those who wait for him,
To the soul that seeks him.
It is good that one should wait quietly
For the salvation of the LORD (Lam. 3:22-23, 25-26)*

¹ Eric Greitens, *Resilience: Hard-Won Wisdom for Living a Better Life*