

A moment to thank everyone who has dedicated so much time, energy and effort into arriving at this point in our Presbytery. Today, I am excited to report that we are officially moving from a transitional point to a place of stability, innovation and outreach. Your leadership has worked diligently to re-connect our congregations and to chart out a way forward after much prayerful listening to your thoughts, needs and ideas.

The Presbytery is all of us together, created to strengthen the Church in our geographical area by sharing our resources, talents and wisdom by connecting with one another to accomplish more in mission and ministry. You and your congregation no matter its size are essential. You have been called to this time and place to make a difference, to be a light on a hill and a reminder that "Christ still goes this way with us". Together we have decided to use all that we have as a Presbytery to reinvest into each church. The Presbytery will be focused on providing specific leadership and training that will help grow your congregation and financially so you can access exactly what is needed in a timely manner to help your ministry in your community.

It is important to note the Presbytery does not have a top down leadership model. This means in our shared leadership your specific gifts and help are needed to connect with other churches too. It might be that you like to teach or preach and could fill in for a class or church service. It may be that you are a "foodie" and you could help by attending fundraisers and snapping photos at great meals. You could be great with finances and share your investment knowledge. You could let other churches know about what is working in your community. You could be on a leadership team pod that meets working to problem solve or to find pastors for our churches. If you are a church cleaner or decorator, you could volunteer to help out an aging congregation to spiff up their building. The possibilities are endless.

God isn't finished with us, we are needed more than ever in this difficult, hateful world to be a place of solace, safety, and encouragement. The work before us is great but filled with the Holy Spirit, nothing is impossible with God. In Esther, we are reminded if not you then who has been called to do this? Jesus says if we remain silent, the rocks will cry out. I don't know about you but I don't want to be outdone by a box of rocks, I am smarter than that...I hope. Please partner with all of us regular folks who are in this Presbytery to make a real difference on the Northern Plains.

Today you have a chance to vote on two specific items. The first is to approve a grant proposal that will fund the future of individual congregations up to \$50,000/yr worth of grants presbytery wide. The second is to call a full-time executive presbyter who will continue to strengthen our connections with one another, provide spiritual leadership and direction to congregations, and to connect us with the larger church to help us find and bring more pastors and resources into our area. I hope you will be as excited as I am not just about the future of our Presbytery but about the fact that we have all we need to live in the now and be about making an incredible ministry Today. In doing so, we are making sure there will be a church tomorrow.

***Rev. Deanna Reikow***  
***Connectional Care Pastor***