



Image: Doing Ministry in a New Way! Mary and Mike Watts from Faith Yates City participating in social distancing approved visit with Pastor Marla Bauler, pastor of Elmwood and Yates City churches.

GOOD NEWS

from the
Presbytery of Great Rivers

*We are called to share Christ's love by partnering in service,
uniting in worship, and risking in ministry.*

May 15, 2020

As we battle this pandemic, at this time the governor has extended shelter-in-place orders through to the end of May. We continue to urge all presbyters to exercise all available protective measures to protect against contracting or transmitting the disease by staying at home as much as possible. If you or your congregation are experiencing any hardship, please let us know how we might be able to help. Please continue to check <https://www.pcusa.org/covid19/> for a list of most up-to-date resources!

[Let Us Pray](#)

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[Let Us Pray](#)



Every week during 2020, we offer up different church names so that we can pray for our entire Presbytery community. You are welcome to follow this calendar as you will! The full list can be found on our website under the Churches tab or by clicking [here](#).

This week on our prayer calendar. . .



Kirkwood - Westminster

Westminster Presbyterian Church
200 W Cedar St, Kirkwood, Kirkwood, IL 61447
Ms. Pam Moore Commissioned Lay Pastor
Janet Shauman, Clerk of Session
Sherry McDonald, Treasurer
[Facebook](#)



Knoxville - First

First United Presbyterian Church
105 W Main St, Knoxville, IL 61448
Rev. Kenneth Shedenhelm
Virginia Kasser, Clerk of Session
Barbara Ball, Treasurer
[Facebook](#)

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Forward to a Friend



(This will send this week's newsletter as an email to a friend!)

For Headline News Happening Around the PC(USA), [click here](#)



Mark Your Calendar

MAY

COM Meeting

Tuesday, May 19
10 am - 2 pm
ZOOM only

[Click here for the PGR Calendar](#)

Join Our List



WE CELEBRATE TIM AND KATHY!

Tomorrow we celebrate the wedding of Rev. Tim Doty (Geneseo, First) and Kathy Goranson! They look forward to a reception later when it is safer for friends and family to gather. Be sure to send your physically-distant congratulations to Tim and Kathy as they start this new venture of their lives together!



Assembly Notice



Presbytery of Great Rivers Assembly Notice

Tuesday, June 2, 2020 (Virtual Assembly via Zoom)
Call to Order 10:00 a.m, site opens at 9:30 a.m

*Optional Practice Virtual Assembly Date:
Tuesday May 26
9:30 a.m.*

In compliance with Robert's Rules of Order and our bylaws, our June 2 assembly will be conducted virtually, which means you will be able to access the meeting by internet device or telephone. Our time will be limited to core business items and discipleship building. A link to register for the assembly and practice assembly dates will be on our website and newsletter; you will need to pre-register to receive the access code to each meeting date. Please look for it in the next week's newsletter and on the website next Friday. We request that there be only one voting participant per device so that we may tally votes accurately.

Preliminary Highlights:

- Clerk's report - item requiring assembly notification
- Mid-pandemic spiritual reflection and discipleship time, led by Lead Presbyter Rev. Ryan Landino
- Nominations of new volunteer members to the work of the presbytery
- Approval of extending officer term limits for select churches
- Adding members to the Administrative Commission to finalize the ministry of Nauvoo-First
- Commissioning of General Assembly Commissioners and Delegates to the 224th Assembly, the first virtual PC(USA) General Assembly

Meeting will conclude by noon.

Visioning Conversations (Revisited Mid-Pandemic)

At our February 18th assembly, we went through a mutual learning/listening activity together that we called "important visioning conversations for our presbytery." In it, we talked about the theory behind adaptive and technical change, the importance of naming our unnamed values, shifting from the impulse to seeking the right answers to asking the right questions, and identifying the impact of our ministry together. The questions were drawn from the work found in the books *Practice of Adaptive Leadership* (mentioned below) and *Quietly Courageous* by Gil Rendle.



Image of our February 18th Discussions

Then something major happened.

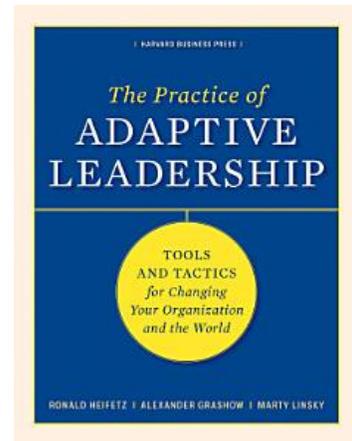
Everything we were discussing was yanked out of the theoretical and thrust into the practical. Because of the pandemic, we were no longer just *talking* about adaptive change and how to meet unknown challenges--*we were living it*.

How on target were those February conversations? Were we grappling with the wrong things? Or were we on the right track?

This Tuesday's meeting with the Visioning Team revisited that conversation. We quickly discovered that the pandemic has already given us new insight on what it means to adapt to changing cultures. So we re-explored the same selected texts from *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: tools and tactics for changing your organization and the world*, by Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, 2009 that we studied together in August of 2019 in order to ask if we had a different reading that we didn't have before the pandemic. You can see the specific quotations we studied together by clicking [HERE](#).

Here is the paragraph that most of us felt drawn to as being particularly relevant now.

"Adaptive leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive. The concept of thriving is drawn from evolutionary biology, in which a successful adaptation has three characteristics: "1) preserves the DNA essential for the species' continued survival, 2) it discards (reregulates or rearranges) the DNA that no longer serves the species' current needs, 3) it creates DNA arrangements that give the species' the ability to flourish in new ways and in more challenging environments. Successful adaptations enable a living system to take the best from its history into the future" (Heifetz, 14).



The Visioning Team discussed together: **how does your experience of ministry during a pandemic affect your reading of these texts?** How might we have felt the DNA of our work "reregulated" so that we could thrive in our current environment?

Then we revisited February's pre-pandemic questions again, this time with mid-pandemic wisdom.

CONVERSATION PIECE ONE: KNOWING OUR TASK

Of the most difficult challenges is knowing when our work is *technical* (we've been here before and we need the right answer) or where we need to be *adaptive* (this is all new and we need to learn along the way). Post-pandemic, we find ourselves asking: are we focusing our energies on the wrong thing such as the technical aspects of returning to our most recent model, instead of the adaptive work of exploring what we can be in our new reality?

On a May 11th Facebook post, Cindy Kohlmann, co-moderator of the PC(USA) and Resource Presbyter of New England Presbytery raised this challenge:



Image of Cindy Kohlmann, by Samson Tso, uploaded May 7th

"Do we want to use the resources of time, talent, and treasure available to us to figure out protocols and practicalities for opening buildings in a way that might help people stay safe but will not be guaranteed..."

Or...

Do we want to use the resources of time, talent, and treasure available to us to be the body of Christ dispersed and deployed until it is safe for all people to return to our buildings without restrictions?"

Part of what is behind this question is what kind of task are we seeking to undergo together, and is that technical or adaptive. This is a question of where we put our energy, towards going back towards something resembling a memory of normal, or fostering our own transformation.

Here are some questions the Visioning Team grappled with:

- *Are we taking advantage of the opportunity to (re)discover what it means to be the Church beyond our most recent model?*
- *What might it mean for us to shift from being a community "gathered and sent" to being "dispersed and deployed"?*
- *Part of the main elements of adaptive leadership is mutual learning. What did mutual learning look like for us these past two months? What might the role of mutual learning look like as a more regular part of our new normal together?*

CONVERSATION PIECE TWO: NAMING WHAT WE TAKE FOR GRANTED

Every system has implicit values that we just take for granted as part of our culture that we never realize are so powerful until they are threatened. Often these are the elephants in the room, and if we are not mindful of the operative values at play, they can undermine our desirable goals for ministry.

The Visioning Team explores:

- *What are the "shadow values" that emerged during this pandemic crisis that have a strong hold on us? Were there surprises of where our energy was demanded?*
- *Did we encounter any assumptions that "true ministry" requires that we be in the same room together? How did you navigate those assumptions?*
- *Might we have revealed an assumption that ministry requires a building?*
- *And, naturally, how are we building the church, without a church building?*

CONVERSATION PIECE THREE: ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

Technical mindsets that have ingrained in us the response to look for the proper expertise or right tool have lead us to seek the "right answer" regardless of whether we are asking the right questions. Statements that might not really be questions, like, "well, how do we do that?" can assume there is one, correct, way to achieve a solitary, correct outcome. Before we can get to the answer that is right for our situation, we might need to do some exploring first. Because the truth is, there is no available expertise on some of our new challenges today and we are finding that the tool we need isn't only unavailable, but it hasn't been invented yet! So what are the right questions?

The Visioning Team explored together:

- *What kinds of questions are you finding you are raising we never thought to ask "pre-Covid?"*
- *With everything stripped away and starting from scratch: what is emerging as "the most important thing?"*
- *Could we have coped as well or felt as resourced by going this alone, in isolation, and without doing this as a community of churches?*

- *How can we not just teach, and not just model, but actually embody practicing discipleship together in every way that we gather?*

CONVERSATION PIECE FOUR: KNOWING OUR IMPACT

Finally, for decades we have lost sense of the impact of our ministry, confusing attendance, income, and programs as the desirable outcome, when in fact, those are actually merely the vessels used to generate the truly desirable outcomes of ministry. This means we have come to measure success not by the impact of our ministry but by our ability to collect resources needed to do ministry.

The Visioning Team explored:

- *Throughout sheltering in place, what have we (re)discovered is the most valuable impact of our ministry together?*
- *What impact are we making in our ministry? How do we measure that impact?*
- *How do we (re)define what success in ministry looks like?*
- *How can we measure the impact of our work beyond view counts, shares, and comments?*

Because we felt Tuesday's conversation was a forward-looking, uplifting, and inspiring gathering with a strong spirit of optimism, with celebration that we spent more time on discipleship than on "business," I am sharing this conversation and its potential continuation points with you for your own reflection.

May you be blessed in your own conversations as we seek to co-create the kind of church that will emerge in the new normal ahead!

Rev. Ryan J. Landino, Lead Presbyter for Transformation, on behalf of the Visioning Team of Great Rivers Presbytery

Visioning Team Highlights, May 12, 2020

The regular meeting of the Visioning Team met virtually on May 12 at 9:30 am on Zoom. The Visioning Team *"leads and equips the Presbytery to live into its vision and mission...facilitates mission within the Presbytery and individual churches through grants, challenges, partnerships, trainings, and other support....identifies key areas of needed growth, education, and focus."* (Article IX.1.). The Visioning Team is chaired by Rev. Jonathan Warren of First Presbyterian Church of Jacksonville.



This month's highlights include:

- Facilitated a discussion together on what kinds of transformations we are seeing happening during this pandemic (see Ryan Landino's reflection on that discussion above)
- Approved the following grant applications for empowering the local mission of the local congregations:
 - \$5,000 - Mercer County Backpack Program, College Avenue, Aledo.
 - \$5,000 - Reading Rocks, Central Avenue, Petersburg.
 - \$3,300 - Rock Island Urban Farm Internship, Broadway, Rock Island (66% - 2nd year).
- We revisited a statement we made on March 19, at the earlier part of this pandemic, and decided to stand by it and reissue it today. Here it is below:

Visioning Statement 3/19/20, Reissued

We are in an unprecedented time. The challenges of the Coronavirus are impacting all aspects of our community life. As Christians and as leaders within our presbytery, we need to use our God-given "energy, intelligence, imagination, and love" to re-envision how to be the Church in this rapidly

changing context. So, what does that look like for your church and our presbytery?

- *How can we be responsive to the developing needs of our local communities and our world?*
- *How might God be using these challenging times to teach and refine us as followers of Christ?*

Your Presbytery of Great Rivers Visioning Team sees you, recognizes the work you're putting into serving your churches and communities, and wants to support you along the way.

Also, a note about Visioning Grants: If your community has received a grant through the Visioning Team, we want to encourage you to keep our new context in mind. We recognize that some of our churches' plans for in-person ministry initiatives just might not be possible at this moment. If you need to adapt your plans for your grant, in order to be safe and care for your community in this new situation, please know that you have the support of the Visioning Team.

If you have any questions please contact If you have any questions please contact Jonathan Warren at jwarren@firstpresjax.org or Carol Sleeth at cisleeth@comcast.net

Weekly Ministry-in-Place Photo Newsletter Contest!

Congrats to this weeks winner, Marla Bauler, for your submission, and thank you to everyone else who submitted (we may use your photo later!)

Do you have an image that captures what it is like to experience ministry during a pandemic? It could be participating in online worship, a spiritual practice, service to a neighbor, or something that makes you feel the presence of the divine. Share your image with the name of your church community as well a short sentence on "why this makes me feel close to God" to rlandino@greatriverspby.org or post it in the comments section of the Facebook post of this newsletter. Your image might be selected for the header of next week's newsletter! **Please send by end of day on Wednesday, May 20th to be considered for next week!**



Looking for Alternative, Online Worship?

Here are several possibilities for connecting to different worship spaces around the presbytery. This is a listing of the last Sunday's offerings of different churches providing worship. Please let us know if there have been any changes so we can keep our list updated!

- Alexis-Norwood Presbyterian Church, Commissioned Pastor Gary Denise Pullen, 10:30 am on [Facebook](#) live, on his personal page.
- Bloomington-Second Presbyterian Church, Rev. Trey Haddon, Rev. Elissa Bailey, 10 am, streaming "drive-in-worship service" online, secondpres.com.
- Bloomington-St Luke Union Church, Rev. Andy Gifford, 10:30 am on [Facebook](#) live. Buffalo Hart-Buffalo Hart Presbyterian Church, Rev. Sarah Iloff-McGill, 9:30 am, via www.buffalohartpc.com
- Chatham-Chatham Presbyterian Church, Rev. Jim Reitz, by newsletter and email, to access, email jareitz@chathampresbyterian.com
- Coal Valley-First Presbyterian Church, Coal Valley and Beulah, Rev. Tim Snart, worship posted on YouTube https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCiqgUcXCqN_ftk5EP8Odeg

- Delavan-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Jean Sparks, found on their webpage firstpresdelavan.org or directly at <http://firstpresdelavan.org/virtual-worship>.
- East Moline- Presbyterian Church is posting pre-recorded services on YouTube and can be found here www.youtube.com/channel/UCo0q4ViGTm1-qHYv02Ubbqw
- Elmwood-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Marla Bauler, worship led by Zoom (link can be obtained by pastor), then posted afterwards to [Facebook](#).
- Farmington-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Andy Sonneborn, 10:30 am by [Facebook](#) live.
- Galesburg-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Ann Elyse Van Winkle, 10 am by [Facebook](#) live
- Geneseo-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Tim Doty, 10:30 a.m. streaming brief worship service of Scripture, meditation and prayer to [Facebook](#) live
- Jacksonville-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Jonathan Warren, 10 am by [Facebook](#) live.
- Leroy-First United Presbyterian Church, Rev. Annie McMillan, recorded YouTube videos of their services posted later on their [Facebook](#) page.
- Lincoln-First Presbyterian Church of Lincoln, Rev. Adam Quine, 10:00 am by [Facebook](#) live (older recorded sermons also on church website)
- Monmouth-Sugar Tree Grove United Presbyterian Church, Faith United Presbyterian Church, Monmouth, and Monmouth College collaborating on joint 10:30 am Sunday worship service, posted to Youtube: <https://m.youtube.com/user/monmouthcollege>
- New Windsor-New Windsor Presbyterian Church, Rev. Mark Bedford, worship videos and links shared by [Facebook](#)
- Normal-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Matt Wilcox, 8:30 am and 11 am by livestream and saved upon ending: <https://livestream.com/firstpresnormal>
- Peoria-First Federated Church, Rev. Frosty Krummel, look for streaming and video on their [Facebook](#)
- Peoria-United Presbyterian Church, Rev. Debra Avery, 10 a.m.
 - their [Facebook](#) page
 - YouTube from any smartphone, computer, or tablet: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAf9XQ9MUHNGaXdQQRsk6yQ>
- Peoria-Westminster Presbyterian - Peoria Rev. Denise Clark-Jones, 10 am, streaming online <https://westminsterpeoria.org/>
- Petersburg-Central Presbyterian Church, Commissioned Pastor Stephanie McCullough, worship posted on website <https://www.central-pres.org/worship>
- Reynolds-Hamlet Perryton is posting pre-recorded services since Easter weekend. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJY95CjdOLr4Vs1bzK0SX3g>
- Rio-Rio Presbyterian Church, Rio (and Sunbeam Presbyterian Church of Aledo), Rev. Maura McGrath-Nagle, 9:00 am by [Facebook](#) live.
- Rock Island-Gloria Dei Presbyterian Church, Rev. Drew Nagle, 10:30 am, by [Facebook](#) live, and posted afterwards.
- Rock Island-Good Shepherd, Rev. James Benson, sermons posted on website on Sundays, www.goodshepherdpres.org
- Rock Island-South Park Presbyterian Church, Rev. Blake Severson, worship shared by YouTube, https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCWRIYrkt6ZkaejzWVAj_yDQ
- Springfield-First Presbyterian Church, Rev. Susan Phillips, www.LincolnsChurch.org has links for Sunday 10:30 live worship and Wednesday 5:30 service.
- Springfield-Hope Presbyterian Church, Rev. Chuck Goodman, 9:30 am by [Facebook](#) live
- Springfield-Korean United Presbyterian Church of Springfield Rev. Jaechul Kim, streaming by YouTube live (Korean language) [Facebook](#) page.

- Springfield-Third-Presbyterian Church, worship recorded and posted later on Sunday to [Facebook](#).
- Springfield-Westminster Presbyterian Church, Rev. Blythe Kieffer, Rev. Trajan McGill, Rev. Christian Choi, 10 am worship streamed online, www.wpcspi.org
- Woodhull-United Church, Rev. Cheyanna Losey, recorded YouTube videos of their services posted on [Facebook](#) page.

FRIENDLY REMINDER TO NOT FORGET TO MAKE SPACE FOR THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF GIVING OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS!

Get Connected!

There are three primary ways we as a presbytery are able to keep in touch with new resources and information during the pandemic: our weekly newsletter which goes out Thursday or Friday, our Facebook page, and our website. Please make sure you are connected!

Be sure to encourage your congregations, sessions, and even your church newsletter editorial staff and volunteers to be sure to sign up for our presbytery newsletter and follow our Facebook page so you don't miss out on what is going on in our community of churches!

Have you liked our "Presbytery of Great Rivers" Facebook page?



Have you signed up for our "Good News from Great Rivers" email newsletter?



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