

## LEAD PRESBYTER FOR TRANSFORMATION REPORT

This report is going to review work done from June 2nd until August 18th, 2020. While it's been only about two and a half short months, and time that pastors typically take off for vacation, it was an important time to both continue leading this presbytery through the pandemic while also devoting to service to the larger church. The difficult challenge has been balancing the maintenance of the day-to-day responsibilities of being a presbytery leader while at the same time leading the presbytery forward in transformation, both during a pandemic.

In that time, we celebrate having successfully called the first installed pastor from outside our presbytery during this pandemic, and I have conducted a number of background checks for ongoing pastoral searches. I also continued to facilitate a number of ongoing transformation conversations with our General Assembly commissioners, as well as with Visioning, Nominating, Committee on Ministry, and Personnel committees, including an in-depth analysis of data from the February 18th 2020 Visioning Conversations held at the presbytery assembly (conclusions will be shared as a part of my end of second year report on the floor of the upcoming assembly).

Timeline with links to work achieved:

**June 19-27, GENERAL ASSEMBLY:** This year, I followed the General Assembly remotely but engaged the gathering with my colleagues through the lens on my work as a member of the PCUSA Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation, on which I was elected in 2016. I documented, based on conversations within our special committee, observations around how racism and white supremacy functioned at this year's General Assembly in the widely distributed blog post: "Watching White Supremacy: On the 224th General Assembly, from a member of the Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation" Here is the link: <https://sixtysecondpreacher.wordpress.com/2020/06/28/watching-white-supremacy-reflections-on-the-224th-general-assembly-from-a-member-of-the-special-committee-on-racism-truth-and-reconciliation/>

**July 21, PRESBYTERY RESPONDS TO COVID-19:** I was a part of the Leadership Team discussion that decided that all committee and assembly gatherings of the presbytery will meet virtually for the remainder of 2020, and also commended our May 19th "Statement on COVID-19 from the Leadership Team" with the update to encourage contact-tracing in all congregations in case members need to be notified in the event of an outbreak, and also the invitation to contact Dr. Frank Lasala, Emergency Room physician treating Covid-19 patients, as a resource person for our presbytery regarding safety protocols.

**July 29,** reported by social media and newsletter on the coronavirus outbreak at Sangamon Valley Presbyterian Church, how it was effectively contained, and what messages they have to share from that experience.

**July 13 and 15, COVENANT GATHERING TEACHING:** I was the adult class teacher for the annual Covenant Gathering (a volunteer remnant of the old synod schools, for Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan) for a virtual offering on spiritual practices during the pandemic. I shared in the July 17th newsletter a reflection on those classes and how our spiritual practices can inform transformation efforts during a pandemic. Blog: [sixtysecondpreacher.wordpress.com/2020/07/16/what-are-we-going-back-to-questions-for-the-church-emergent/](https://sixtysecondpreacher.wordpress.com/2020/07/16/what-are-we-going-back-to-questions-for-the-church-emergent/)

Here are two videos I made for the class and then shared with the larger presbytery in the July 17 and 23 newsletters:

Spiritual Practices, Part 1: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8rx0jOc-nQ&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8rx0jOc-nQ&t=3s)

Prayer, Part 2: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1YBicGi7KA&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1YBicGi7KA&t=3s)

**On July 29, MATTHEW 25:** I was invited to speak on a national panel for the Presbyterian Mission Agency for the Dismantling Structural Racism component of the Matthew 25 panel. Video recording of that presentation:

[https://zoom.us/rec/play/uJ0rf7uoqmk3TtHEswSDAf8qW461ePms0HAYqPdfmk\\_jBnYFMVSvZ7ZAaraf-baeN7LEnhOES6X4vQOX?startTime=1596041595000&xzmrtaid=pwH8t16OQrSvIDqIVRLetQ.15966](https://zoom.us/rec/play/uJ0rf7uoqmk3TtHEswSDAf8qW461ePms0HAYqPdfmk_jBnYFMVSvZ7ZAaraf-baeN7LEnhOES6X4vQOX?startTime=1596041595000&xzmrtaid=pwH8t16OQrSvIDqIVRLetQ.15966)

Presbytery of Great Rivers

August 29, 2020

[67468337.ff1d2be5e28c37ffbdfaedcd595b77c4&x\\_zm\\_rhtaid=937&fbclid=IwAR2x0Q6efdkQ-AE8dBDDqUtunnq95D056XTawfkquNZpoz5jc8jfCsRB6IU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdKCnxs7bw)

August 14 NEW VIDEO: Made new Sixty Second Sermon-style video called “How to Love Your Neighbors During A Pandemic (According to Children), made in partnership with PCUSA Special Offerings as an amplification of Peace & Global Witness Special Offering. Video involved a number of families from the Presbytery of Great Rivers. Link: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdKCnxs7bw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdKCnxs7bw)

Because I am among our vulnerable population susceptible to health complications due to COVID-19, I will continue working safely from home, and I encourage everyone to care for the needs of the most vulnerable around them. If you have not signed up for the weekly newsletter, I highly recommend that you do—it’s the best way of keeping you up to date about what is going on around the presbytery and larger denomination.

This remains a challenging time for those of us responsible for keeping our communities and ourselves safe. The pandemic is revealing many things we may have always known, but are being cast in a starker light. It is an exhausting time—it is isolating, and stressful on both our professional and human selves, yet, it is also fertile ground for new life to emerge. For we are also building a new thing. While we may have named that “church” may never be the same again, we also need to recognize that we ourselves will never be the same again either.

I look forward to making my end of second year report with you about the amazing transformation work we have done, and are still doing in real time.

Safety, health, and wellness blessings to you all,

Ryan

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