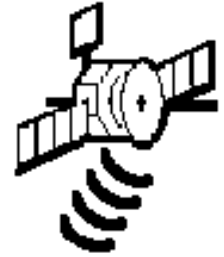


FIRST MONDAY



December 2019

First Monday is a monthly posting to Church Professionals and committee members in The Presbytery of the Miami Valley from the Presbytery Staff including information of events and news of interest as submitted by appropriate Presbytery entities. Publication of such information does not imply presbytery endorsement of the views and opinions expressed or implied. This month we have included:

1. **The Prayer List**
2. The **December Calendar**
3. **Presbytery News – *What’s Happening Around The Presbytery***. Job listings, articles, flyers and brochures – take a close look for news affecting you and your church community!

If there are any questions about the December committee meetings, please contact your committee chair.

Submissions must usually be emailed by the 25th of the month or the last working day prior in order to be placed in the packet. Email copy ready submissions to Tom Oxley at the Presbytery, tom.oxley@miamipresbytery.org.

MIAMI PRESBYTERY PRAYER LIST



December, 2019

- 1 December** **The Presbyterian Church**, located at 23 South Front Street, Hamilton. Pastor John Lewis.
- 8 December** **Northminster Presbyterian Church**, located at 400 Villa Road, Springfield. Pastor Dwight McCormick.
- 15 December** **Memorial Presbyterian Church** located at 1541 South Smithville Road, Dayton. Pastor David Foubert.
- 22 December** **Jamestown Presbyterian Church**, located at 61 West Washington Street, Jamestown. Pastor Michael Helling.
- 29 December** **Collinsville United Presbyterian Church**, located at 5091 Hamilton-Eaton Road. Pastor Mike Gabbard.
- 5 January** **First Presbyterian Church**, located at 20 South Walnut Street, Troy. Pastor Frank Rupnik.

The Presbytery committee or group we ask you to pray for: For the month of December please keep the Representation and Diversity Committee in your prayers.

Thank you.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 First Sunday of Please keep	2 6 pm - Network	3 1:30pm - Council	4	5 9:30am - Nominatin 12pm - Staff	6	7
8 Please keep	9	10	11	12 9 am - Leadership	13	14
15 Please keep Dayton	16	17	18	19 9:30am - CPM	20	21
22 Please keep	23 Office Closed	24 Christmas Eve Office closed	25 Christmas Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27 Office Closed	28
29 Please keep	30 Office Closed	31 New Year's Eve Office Closed	1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2	3	4

First Monday Job Corner: Drop us a line if there is a job opening you need to fill at your church (and please let us know if you want it continued in future months – we are only running ads month by month, so need to know if your church wants it continued).

Southminster Presbyterian Church, located in Centerville, is looking to hire a part-time Director of Children's Ministry to lead our small but vibrant children's programs. The Children's Director will oversee all Sunday programming, recruit and equip volunteers, and cast a vision and strategy for the future of faith formation of children at SPC. Send resumes to personnel@sminster.com. For more information, look at the website, www.sminster.com/careers.

Please note that the Presbytery website also lists some area job hunting assistance. If you know of somebody in your congregation that needs some help looking for their next job, please share that information with them.

Churches are invited to share programs, job openings, and news with other churches of the presbytery. Just email print ready information to tom.oxley@miamipresbytery.org.

It's a beautiful day in the Presbyterian neighborhood



The Rev. Dr. **Edward McNulty**, pastor of [Blue Ball Presbyterian Church](#), Franklin, has reviewed the recently released film, *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, for Presbyterian News Service. The film follows the story of the relationship between famed children's television host and ordained Presbyterian pastor Fred Rogers and the journalist who is to interview him for a magazine article.

"The new film is the story of a relationship and the healing power of friendship, as well as a father-son story," writes McNulty. *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* stars Tom Hanks as Fred Rogers and Matthew Rhys as the journalist.

Ed McNulty is the author of three books published by Westminster John Knox Press ("Praying the Movies," "Praying the Movies II" and "Faith & Film"). McNulty's latest book is "Jesus Christ: Movie Star." He has reviewed more than 2,200 films during his career.

To read Ed's review, go to <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/its-a-beautiful-day-in-the-presbyterian-neighborhood/>.

Christmas Joy Offering promotional resources



The Christmas Joy Offering has been a cherished Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. The Offering is traditionally received during the Advent Season, this year December 1-22. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor God's gift of Jesus Christ by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color.

The Offering distributes gifts equally to the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and to Presbyterian-related schools and colleges equipping communities of color. The Assistance Program provides critical financial support to church workers and their families. Presbyterian-related schools and colleges provide education and leadership development while nurturing racial and ethnic heritage. This has been a Presbyterian commitment for nearly 140 years.

There are a number of promotional resources available online that include minutes for mission, curriculum resources, worship resources, bulletin inserts, and a leader's guide.

To learn more and get the resources, go to <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/christmas-joy/>.

WRITING AS A TOOL FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Writing can help church leaders in their efforts to reach out to the community. Typically seen as a solitary activity, writing may seem like the opposite of active engagement. Yet writing creates a space for reflection that could benefit even the most hands-on activist. The journal, the mission statement, the memo of understanding, and the program history can help teams in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of outreach work. Beyond the team itself, writing can empower our neighbors as they tell stories about themselves in their own words.

After the Mission Trip

Ten years after the event, Dee Ann reflected back on her time as a student on a travel and study seminar to Central America sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). She described a feeling of “danger and cautiousness” in visiting Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua during the El Salvador civil war and recounted visits with business, church, and social justice leaders that gave her “new eyes, new heart, new view of life.” She remembered that “Through many of the people we met . . . we experienced a level of faith that before had been unimaginable.” Writing can be used not only to recollect but also to maintain a real-time record of events. Some mission teams keep a group journal, asking a different person each day to record the group’s experience from his or her perspective. The resulting account can be copied at the end of the trip and shared with everyone, or excerpts can be used for articles and presentations about the trip.¹

Keeping a Journal

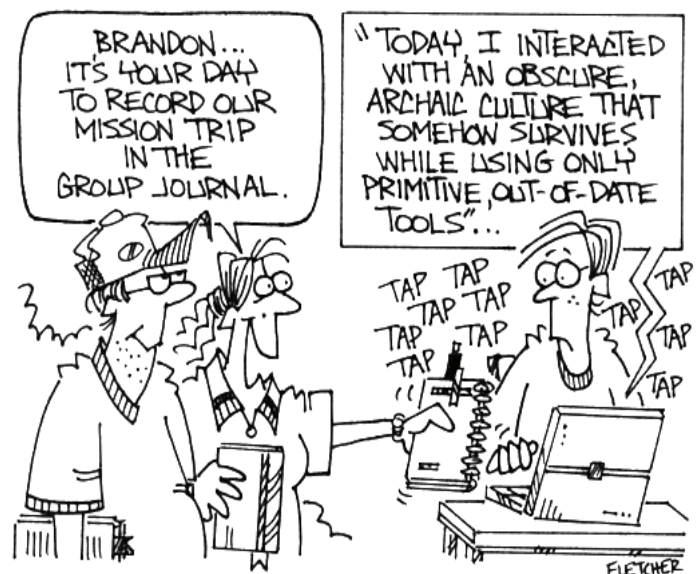
Church leaders can benefit from keeping a daily journal, or two journals: a spiritual journal and a management journal. The spiritual journal provides a way of listening to God and reflecting on feelings, prayers, readings, or critical incidents that lead to spiritual discernment within one’s life experiences. The management journal, while no less honest or personal, can be more focused on

the work of ministry (whether lay or ordained) in guiding the team or congregation. What key people, events, challenges or experiences does the leader or group face? Record in each journal at different times of the day, and review them every month to gain a broader perspective by reflecting on recurrent themes in the daily writing.²

When Clarifying Purpose

Some outreach teams find that a mission statement helps clarify purpose. Describing briefly why the team exists helps members focus on what’s really important and enables the group to achieve a shared understanding. For that reason, be sure to include time for discussion and debate before writing it down. Before beginning the process, instruct the group in this way: “When we craft a mission statement, the statement is more than words. It represents the debate and discussion we’ve gone through to write it. It gets pulled out and used regularly. It helps us make good decisions.”

The revision process helps to focus on the group’s broad intentions rather than on wordsmithing. The end result should be a brief, clear, inspiring statement describing why the group exists. Read it aloud



at meetings and spend a few minutes discussing key words or sharing stories about how you fulfilled it. A large Presbyterian women's group worked hard on a shared statement at a retreat. Three months later, the senior pastor approached the group with a request for them to take on a new task. After spending a minute to review their mission statement, the members decided the project was not in alignment with it. The pastor was impressed with their focus. The statement made it easy to decide what action to take.³

When Collaborating with Others

A memo of understanding (MOU) functions somewhat like a mission statement, though its focus is more external. The MOU serves to clarify how the team will collaborate with others, ensuring that its partners, including donors, expert advisors, social service agencies, and even the program's beneficiaries, are all on the same page. A typical MOU creates a blueprint for action that states the goal of the program, the activities to be carried out, and what is expected of each partner. How will differences be resolved? Will a pastor or wise elder be consulted, or will an arbitration team consisting of representatives of each partner group be appointed?

The final product could be brief, usually no more than one or two pages long. Not a legal document, the MOU simply ensures understanding by everyone involved. For example, a church mission team wants to develop a community garden in order to supply the neighborhood with fresh produce. Partners might include volunteers supplied by the church or community, expert gardeners from the local garden club, and city officials who give approval. A well-written MOU could ensure that the partners do not work at cross purposes due to misunderstanding.⁴

Keeping Track of Actions over Time

A program history, written to keep track of actions taken over time, offers another writing tool for ministry teams. Christ Lutheran Church in Whitefish, Montana, created a program history after it developed Shepherd's Hand Clinic, a free medical clinic for people unable to afford health care. As the ministry began to expand, its leaders felt compelled to keep track. They decided to document their steps in a simple record of what steps were taken when. This running history gave the leadership an idea of the amount of time needed for each step and allowed them to look back and evaluate how they met their initial goals or fell short.⁵

Empowering Low-Income Neighbors

Everyone should be invited to write, including the low-income residents that so many churches serve. Brown Memorial United Methodist Church in Syracuse, New York, offered writing exercises for customers at its food pantry. Located on the city's impoverished Near West Side, the church serves as a community center for the neighborhood. After shopping at the pantry, residents were invited to sit at a table in the corridor where people lined up to enter. Writers were offered printed sheets with a writing prompt at the top of a page, which was otherwise blank. One topic was sidewalks, with the prompt: "Do you use the sidewalk? What do you think of the sidewalks?" Spanish speakers were offered prompts in Spanish, with the account to be translated into English later. Those who could not write could draw a picture, and others chose to both write and draw pictures. Used initially as an organizing tool for resident groups to seek action from the city council, these writings were also published in a small, inexpensive paperback, *West Side Walks*. The program's director, Steve Parks, associate professor of writing at Syracuse University, got the idea from the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers in the United Kingdom, a thirty-year-old network of community writing groups. Parks notes that "Our mission is to provide opportunities for local communities to represent themselves by telling their stories in their own words."⁶ Church leaders wanting to empower the neighbors they serve should consider asking them to write.

It's for Everyone

Writing belongs to everyone. For some people, writing may seem to be a difficult, unpleasant, and nearly impossible task. For others, it can be exhilarating, satisfying, and self-revelatory. Everyone should have the opportunity to try it.

1. Debby Vial, *When God's People Travel Together* (Louisville, KY: Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, 1999), 46, 54.

2. Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser, *Managing the Congregation: Building Effective Systems to Serve People* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 34-36.

3. Susan Waechter and Deborah Kocsis, *How to Energize Your Volunteer Ministry* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2004), 37, 42-43, 104.

4. Sandra Swan, *The New Outreach* (New York: Church Publishing, 2010), 156-57.

5. Linda-Marie Delloff, *Public Offerings: Stories from the Front Lines of Community Ministry* (Bethesda, MD: Alban Institute, 2002), 73.

6. New City Community Press, www.newcitycommunitypress.com.