



September 10, 2020

Presbytery News

Don't forget to Nominate by October 1st!!

**THE ROBERT L. GILES
OUTSTANDING HOMESTEADER AWARD**



The award, in memory of the Rev. Robert Giles, former Stated Clerk of Homestead Presbytery, honors clergy and laity in the Presbytery who have made outstanding contributions to church and community life.

One Award is made each year, consisting of an appropriately framed certificate, the addition of the recipient's name to an on-going plaque in the Presbytery office, and the opportunity for the recipient to designate a gift of \$100.00 to a special mission or ministry within the bounds of the Presbytery.

Nomination Information

**New Worshipping Communities/Church Vitality Committee
Reflection on
The 4th Mark of a Vital Congregation
And Mark 1**

By Rev. Dr. John J. Duling, NWC/CVC

The New Worshipping Community/Church Vitality Committee (NWC/CVC) is continuing to provide regular reflections and communications about Church vitality and how we can continue the conversation with all the sister congregations of this Presbytery. |

would like to look at the 4th mark of a vital congregation:

Empower Servant Leadership vs. The pastor's job; monopolized leadership; hiring the young energetic pastor; burning out good volunteers.

I would also compare that mark with Mark 1. Generally, Mark's gospel is the shortest, most action packed with words of action and immediacy of the gospels. It is also one that shows Jesus as the "Son of man" or as more inclusive translations would say, "The Human One" or as my New Testament Professor would call Jesus, "The Human Being." It is a designation of a servant. Hence that is why I have been moved to refer to the 4th mark of a vital congregation of servant leadership.

This reflection is a means to empower – to call – to energize – to fortify the members of each congregation to be servant leaders. It is not just the pastor's calling alone, not just the elders or even those who feel that the congregation is their personal possession and they are the real leaders. No!!!! Let's find some power in God's word as shared in Mark 1.

A brief summary of the chapter includes: the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry to baptize people who are repentant and as the one who prepares for the way of the Messiah, Jesus. John's ministry is to make the path's straight for Jesus' coming. While baptizing, Jesus comes to John and seeks to be baptized. In this action – it is a fulfillment of God's design, but more so, an affirmation of the Spirit descending upon Jesus with the dove and a voice affirming and testifying that "this is my son with whom I am happy." (CEV). Jesus is so fortified by the Spirit's presence that he goes into the wilderness where he is tempted, but empowered by the Spirit. Jesus' next move is to begin his public ministry with a declaration that "now is the time!" The Kingdom is "at hand!" Hence, Jesus calls his disciples and immediately is faced with ministry – healing the demoniac in the Synagogue with his "new authority" which amazes everyone. Jesus' ministry continues with the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law; and the healing of one who quizzes Jesus if "he wants to" heal the man of a skin disease. Yes, Jesus wants to heal the man and gives proof of his action asking the man to show himself to the authorities and be declared clean – accepted – alive.

So, what are the take-aways of this chapter in light of servant leadership for the congregations of Homestead Presbytery?

- Be in a spirit of readiness and preparing – learning and growing in one's faith to be a voice for the congregation and community.
- Claim the voice that affirms, equips, and empowers one to be in service for Jesus and the church. It was started with the baptism of each disciple and continues to succeeding generations.
- Be so fortified to arise, go, and proclaim that 'now is the time – the Kingdom is at hand'
- Ministry opportunities are aplenty to which God is calling you and me as Jesus called his disciples to leave their nets and follow him.
- Ministry comes up when one least expects it, but the Spirit is so ready and present in Jesus – Emmanuel – God with us – to advocate, heal, and serve as "The Human Being" (Son of Man) serves us.
- Be ready to "want" to serve.

I pray that we are all able to respond to the call of God and be God's servant leaders as disciples of our Lord Jesus in whose name we serve.

In His Service with the New Worshipping Community/Church Vitality Committee.

Disaster Plan. Are you serious? What's in it for me?

Church Leaders – was that your reaction to this headline? We don't blame you – there is so much going on these days and likely you are saying, "Why, when I am slammed with figuring out new ways to worship, tight budgets, Covid-19 etc. etc. would I willingly say yes to another task?"

Well, allow us to tell you a too often forgotten secret! Completing the disaster plan for your church and the corresponding information sheet has the potential to save you more work than you ever imagined.

What if a disaster strikes - flood, tornado, fire? Instead of you figuring it all out on the fly and not being able to care for your flock, a Disaster Plan lets the you, the Pastor, do just that, provide Pastoral Care for the flock.

Let's say a severe thunderstorm with straight line winds hits the church and one-third of the town sustains damage. If you have a plan, a Calling Tree is mobilized, members are checked on, church property is secure, records are safe. Your congregation and the back up people of your plan are mobilized. You can make sure your family is safe and begin to care for your congregants.

You don't need to be the one finding tarps to minimize damage to the facility. That is a role for others who already know it is their job. Instead you are with the family of a critically injured person, you are leading your congregation in prayerful response and you can lead while others in your congregation take on important roles. If you are a nearby church, your congregation is ready to respond as the disaster team mobilizes resources. Instead of spending time securing resources, you are Pastoring your volunteers in response.

What is in it for you? Lots. Lots of peace of mind that you and your congregation can respond faithfully when called.

Please complete the **Congregational Preparedness Checklist** AND the **Church Information For disaster plan**. Both of these documents are found on the Homestead Presbytery website – directly under the blue rectangle Disaster Plan for your congregation. You can download the two documents – complete – and return one copy of each to the Presbytery and then share with those individuals in your congregation needing to have such information PLUS file a copy in a site away from the church (should it be necessary to retrieve from somewhere else were the church building to have been damaged by the disaster.)

What's in it for you? Peace of mind; the knowledge that should a disaster hit - the congregation you are serving is PREPARED; a plan that shows wisdom and compassion and the confidence that you and your congregation are being faithful to God in being good stewards of what God has blessed you with in great abundance.

ONE LAST SECRET TO SHARE – YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE THE ONLY ONE DOING THIS – DELEGATE AND MAKE THIS AN ALL CHURCH PROJECT.

The Disaster Team of Homestead Presbytery

**GRANTS & EMERGENCY FUNDS
FROM**

SPRING GRANT CYCLE BEGINS IN DECEMBER

Everyone has been forced to be more creative in their ministries since COVID began, so what opportunities has this pandemic created for your congregation? Does your congregation want to increase their impact in your neighborhood or community but lack the funds to get your big idea started? Are you facing challenges with an online presence with your current technology? Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation could be the answer to help you fund your project or program. We are offering annual grants to PCUSA churches and related organizations in Nebraska for new or ongoing outreach activities which enhance or expand some aspect of your ministry. The online application process begins in December and grants will be awarded in April.

KESSLER EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FUNDS AVAILABLE

The Nebraska Presbyterian Foundation offers financial assistance for PCUSA pastors, or a surviving spouse, who is experiencing an urgent financial crisis. Applicants must be an active or retired installed or commissioned pastor who has, or is currently serving, a Nebraska congregation and currently residing in Nebraska.

For more information on our grants or funds, please visit our website at www.nebpresby.org or contact Audrey Richert at arichert@nebpresby.org, or 402-420-9877.

Opportunities to Be Helped and to Help with Challenges Due to the Pandemic

Opportunity #1 --- Pastor Zac Wolfe of Beatrice First Presbyterian Church has announced that their Session will be donating \$500 for use by churches in Homestead Presbytery that have special ministry needs related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. An application for such funds follows and is due (postmarked or emailed) by October 31, 2020. At Beatrice Session's request, the Homestead Presbytery Disaster Response Team will review applications and make decisions regarding distribution of funds. If interested, please complete the application entitled "Application for Funds to Help Cover Pandemic-Related Ministry Expenses."

Opportunity #2 --- Beatrice First Presbyterian Church Session is also presenting a challenge to other churches and individuals in Homestead Presbytery inviting any that are interested and able to donate funds for the same purpose. They will match dollar for dollar up to another \$1000 to help churches with special ministry needs related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This opportunity to give and have gifts matched will extend through December 31, 2020 or until the \$1,000 is matched. If interested, please complete the form entitled "Donation of Matching Funds to Cover Pandemic-related Ministry Expenses in Homestead Presbytery."

Per Business and Finance Committee of Homestead Presbytery:

That the Business and Finance Committee endorses the matching gift program sponsored by the Beatrice church for churches facing financial struggles in the time of the pandemic (a \$500 gift with matching donation from the Beatrice church up to an additional \$1000) and that the assistance fund be managed and dispersed by the Disaster Response Committee in accordance

to guidelines and procedures developed by the Disaster Response Committee.

The funds should be sent to the Presbytery for accounting purposes, with immediate notification upon receipt of a donation being sent to the Pastor and Clerk of Session in addition to the chair of the Disaster Response Committee. Should, at the end of the pandemic, there be funds remaining, then the balance shall be designated for use by the Disaster Response Committee to respond to financial needs in the Presbytery due to disaster.

What an incredible blessing this is for both churches with needs and for churches and individuals who can step up to meet those needs. Thank you, Beatrice First Presbyterian Church, for your wonderful spirit of generosity!

[Download Application Here!](#)

The Art of Transitional Leadership: 2020 Virtual Training

Learning Ministry Skills for Today's and Tomorrow's Church Pastors, Staff, COMs and Congregational Leaders

October 12-15, 2020
Online



Whether it is a change in leadership or a changing community, leading a congregation through change is both challenging and rewarding. It takes knowledge, skill, resilience and spiritual strength to navigate the waters of change in a way that leaders and congregations thrive. This training is for individuals who are considering ministry in temporary settings (as an interim, transitional or designated pastor) or are experiencing ministry in these transitional times. It satisfies Week 1 requirements for those who wish to be Interim Pastors.

[Register Now](#)

[Event Flyer](#)

Weekly Prayer Requests

Clarkson New Zion

Hi from New Zion in Clarkson. Right now we need prayers as we search for a new minister. We are just starting the process and during these uncertain times

we are living in, we particularly need prayers that we would find a spirit-filled minister to lead our church. We also need prayers that our elders remember their calling and help with the process of maintaining the church without a full time minister. Our joys include the fact that our members have supported our church financially during our time of being shut down. We haven't needed to dip into savings or get any monies from the government. Also that when we did start worshiping in person that people did come back. Praises for our members! New Zion is alive and worshipping in Clarkson.

Homestead Presbytery

840 S. 17th Street, Lincoln, NE 68508

Monday-Thursday 9:00am-4:00pm

Friday 9:00am-12:30pm

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Interim EP: 803.556.3355

Stated Clerk: 402.217.3684

