

## **November 2023 Co-Leader Report**

In the time since our last gathering on September 16th I spent five weeks out of the office: one week in St. Louis for the PC(USA) Polity, Benefits, and Mission conference; two weeks of vacation in Oklahoma to mark the one year anniversary of my father's death; one week in Cleveland, OH for a training with the professor who developed the Appreciative Inquiry method. And after two days in the office to answer a backlog of emails and phone calls, I took three days in early November to gather with presbytery leaders from the Synod. There we met with staff from the Presbyterian Mission Agency along with a consultant working on an evaluation of the Synod's vision plan known as the New Way Forward.

In the three weeks I was actually in town between meetings the majority of my time was focused on resourcing sessions and pastors on a variety of topics from personnel to strategic planning. I also continued to resource the Admin/Ops and Finance committees as they worked this fall to evaluate the staff, review policies, and prepare the 2024 budget.

Now that I am back in the office until Christmas, my focus has shifted to developing an appreciative inquiry process that can be completed by the middle of 2024. While it is an ambitious timeline, my annual review stated this needs to be a priority for me and the presbytery. In order to move this project forward I will be gathering a small advisory team together this month. That team will help select a larger planning team who will in turn determine what stakeholders to invite into the process. In order to discern the answers to the questions we ask, it will be important to hear from as many different voices from around the presbytery as we can

Finally, I continue to make my way around the presbytery to visit pastors, sessions, and attend worship. To date, I have visited a total of 60 congregational pastors and/or sessions. I have worshiped with a total of 56 congregations - bringing my total to 82 of our 96 active congregations. That leaves me with just 14 churches to go. My goal is to make a connection with every congregation by May.

Steve Huston  
Organizing Co-Leader