

ASSOCIATE PRESBYTER REPORT

Billy Robinson

January 28, 2017

Dear sisters & brothers in Christ and colleagues in ministry:

A natural tendency in response to the absurdity of the daily news cycle is to lean towards cynicism. And yet, nothing is more damaging to us as Easter People than to let cynicism gnaw away at our hopefulness. We are called to be a people of hope, not a Pollyanna hope, but a hope founded in our resurrection faith in Jesus Christ. The practice of gratitude and remembering to praise our generous and gracious Lord is one step towards defeating the prevailing winds of cynicism. So, during this post-Christmas season of self-reflection and resolution making, I am renewing my resolution to be more grateful and to name and claim the small graces I've received daily.

Please know that you are always at the top of my "gratitude list". I am grateful for this calling to serve as your Associate Presbyter. I am truly enjoying my time among you already and I'm constantly humbled and surprised by the ministry that is being done in our presbytery by you and our congregations. Furthermore, I've had a chance to be in conversation with representatives from other presbyteries, and I am sinfully proud of our penchant for mission support and service.

Part of my calling as your Associate Presbyter is to work with the **Outreach & Mission Development Division**. This division oversees the work of the following committees: **Campus Ministry, UKirk at WCU, Mission Committee, Peace & Justice Committee, Self-Development of People Committee, and Hunger Committee**. Please feel free to contact me and share and celebrate the mission and outreach being done by your congregation.

And while I've made my New Year's resolution to be more grateful, I've also made my annual resolution to be more thoughtful about my diet. Yes, I need to lose some weight. But more than that, as your new **Hunger Action Enabler**, I realize that my first task is to be self-aware of my own food and consumption habits—habits that mirror those in our culture at large. We truly live in a time of cheaply abundant calories, and yet we hunger for sustenance. Our most food insecure neighbors in the United States have access to calories, but not necessarily to nutritious food. Cheap calories laden with sugar and fat are not enough to sustain a life worthy of the name. To that end, I urge you and your congregations to continue your support and participation in the **5-Cents-A-Meal program** and consider participating in **February's Souper Bowl**.

Just as we live in a time of cheap and abundant junk food, we also live in a time of cheaply abundant diversions distributed directly to our eyeballs. And yet, we hunger for more sustenance, we crave a more intimate sense of community. I believe our communities of faith, our congregations, can be a place of healthful and helpful respite in these confusing times, offering a deeper sense of community with our neighbors and with our Lord. Therefore, I am honored to work among you through our **Congregational Development Division**. This division oversees the work of the following committees: **Evangelism, Smaller Membership Churches Support, and New Worshipping Communities**. Please feel free to contact me and share and celebrate the ministry being done by your congregation.
Happy New Year and God Bless.

Billy