

REPORT OF THE GENERAL PRESBYTER JULY 3, 2025

"Slow and steady wins the race."

- Robert Lloyd

Dear PWNC,

Wow! The summer weather has really come upon us quickly!! I hope you all are experiencing the blessing of the summer season – and that you are staying cool.

For many people, summer is a time when (for the most part) life slows down a little. Families and individuals take vacation time, traditional schools have recessed, and church programming decelerates or stops all together. We look forward to rest and relaxation. It's the slow days of summer. However, ministry and mission hardly stop. It just moves at a slower albeit steady pace.

One ministry that has not stopped is the ongoing recovery from Hurricane Helene. Our Disaster Recovery Coordinator, Anne Waple, and the core volunteer team continue their work. With the assistance of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), our three worksites (Spruce Pine, New Hope Asheville, and Canton) continue to have a steady stream of volunteer workgroups from around the nation on a weekly basis to assist in cleanup and recovery. I was at Spruce Pine Presbyterian recently to preach and lead worship. While there I had the opportunity to meet volunteers from the national disaster team of the Church of the Brethren. It was wonderful to meet them and others who come from other parts of the country to offer their assistance. All three of our worksites are full for the summer! Anne is also working with an expanded group of people from other Long Term Recovery Groups in Western North Carolina as well. We are moving forward!

The Presbytery continues to grow our international partnerships with both Guatemala and Malawi. Our delegation to Malawi recently returned home and is sharing their experiences of visiting the Nkhoma hospital, Ebenezer school, Josophat Mwale Theological Institute (JMTI), and other sites. Kevin Frederick completed a training session on Couples in the Mirror, an expansion of the Men in the Mirror curriculum. I want to give a special thanks to Rev. Vasco Kachipapa, General Secretary of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. His term expires later this summer and the Synod will elect a new General Secretary. I appreciated his leadership, friendship and hospitality. I wish Godspeed to him and his family. Relating to Guatemala, Sarah Robinson, our Guatemala Partnership Coordinator, has scheduled a delegation trip to visit our partners the first week of October. I do hope you will have the opportunity to go! Further information and the application can be found in our weekly Friday eNews updates and on our website (www.presbyterywnc.org).

One of the most satisfying joys of this position is visiting our congregations. Since our April Presbytery meeting, I have visited and/or preached at New Hope (Asheville), FPC Spruce Pine, Green Street,

Bryson City, Columbus, and by the time you read this FPC Waynesville. This congregation will celebrate their 150th anniversary. Praise be to God! I look forward to my upcoming visits to other congregations as well.

I want to remind all pastors of the forthcoming Preaching Studio for Renewal workshop which will be held at FPC Asheville on November 13 – 14. Rev. Drs. Anna Carter Florence and Jake Myers from Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, GA will lead us in examining Advent and Christmas Revised Common Lectionary texts. Registration information will be forthcoming and a flyer is attached. Please save the date! (GP Attachment 1)

I want to give kudos to our Presbytery staff. Each of them – administrative and program – give more of themselves to serve you every time I look around. They are without a doubt fulfilling their call and commitment to work in God's vineyard here in Western North Carolina. Please thank them when you see them!

One of my ministry colleagues, Paul Vasile, sings often the song "Trust the Slow Work of God." Life may slow down in the summer season. However, we are still working. May God continue to bless our hands, feet, and minds.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Byron".

Byron Wade
General Presbyter

SAVE THE DATE

November 13-14, 2025

First Presbyterian, Asheville

FALL

Preaching for Renewal

An Advent and Christmas Season Workshop for Preachers

Join Anna Carter Florence and Jake Myers from Columbia Seminary for Advent and Christmas worship planning!

Together we will:

- Explore the upcoming lectionary texts
- Discover some new strategies for reading Scripture
- Move from text to sermon, as we consider what the familiar stories might have to say to us this year
- Talk about some images of the preacher
- Share roundtable conversation

Sponsored by the CTS Preachers' Studio for Renewal, this 2-day event will be a lively and energizing deep dive into Scripture and your own preaching ministry. Stay tuned! More details to come.



Anna Carter Florence is the Peter Marshall Professor of Preaching, and Jake Myers is the Wade P. Huie, Jr. Associate Professor of Homiletics, at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, GA.

The Columbia Preachers Studio for Renewal at Columbia Seminary is funded by a Lilly Endowment Compelling Preaching Grant.