

REPORT OF THE GENERAL PRESBYTER
OCTOBER 1, 2025

“Celebrate what’s right with the world”

- Dewitt Jones

In the last decade, I have become familiar with Dewitt Jones, a professional photographer, writer, film director and public speaker, who is known for his work as a freelance photojournalist for National Geographic magazine and his column in Outdoor Photographer magazine. Recently, I watched a video of his on YouTube entitled *Celebrate What’s Right with the World*, in which he shared how his perspective of seeing things in his work as a photographer influence the way he thinks about things of the world. From his experiences, he believes there is more that is right with the world instead of what is wrong with it. There is always something to celebrate and give thanks. I’m glad he has this optimistic view! Many of us can attest that the world is basically on fire! You name it – it is happening. Even here in the PWNC, it is hard to witness celebration in the midst of everything. However, I believe there is much to celebrate and give thanks.

We can truly celebrate that God has brought us through Hurricane Helene as we just remembered the anniversary when this happened a year ago. The recovery and repair have been and still is much before us for years to come. However, I have seen how God has walked with the Presbytery in the past year to rebuild our communities and churches. Our Disaster Recovery Coordinator, Anne Waple, is doing a fantastic job! Her experience and skill set are tremendous assets to the Presbytery. Whether it is with coordinating with our three Presbyterian Disaster Assistance worksites, making decisions on grant requests with other volunteer coordinators, or meeting with various county long-term disaster groups, her commitment and dedication to this work is very impressive – and it shows! In addition, I made a trip to Marshall to preach one Sunday and spent time learning about the progress of the church from its members. They are currently worshipping at Madison Early College High School. I had breakfast with members of the congregation and saw the progress of the church’s rebuilding, including the sanctuary. Their plan is to return to worship in the sanctuary by the end of this year. They have been faithful in rebuilding and you can see their excitement in light of the devastation. Please continue to pray for them and other congregations that were affected by Helene.

The Presbytery continues to celebrate what is right in many other ways. We’re moving forward with the new ministry design. We continue to work towards more people participating in our ministries and teams in responding to God’s Holy Spirit for mission and ministry. We continue to celebrate our partnerships with Guatemala and Malawi. As a matter of fact, Sarah Robinson, our Guatemala Partnership Coordinator, will be leading a delegation to Guatemala next week. The next scheduled trip to Malawi will be in the spring of 2026. Camp Grier is celebrating a new way of envisioning ministry under the direction of Jason McDougald as they continue to engage campers as well as the Old Fort community. Our congregations continue to celebrate what is right on my visits, living out the teachings of Jesus Christ into the world.

As I sit and write this (October 1) I am aware that today is the fifth anniversary of my start as your General Presbyter. Through the COVID pandemic, church and staff transitions, Hurricane Helene, and the growing anxiety and uncertainty of the world, it has been and continues to be a wonderful place to engage in ministry with all of you. Yes, even through everything I still believe we are celebrating what's right in the world through the leading of the Holy Spirit. May you believe so as well!

Peace,

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

Byron