

PRESBYTERIAN LEADERSHIP FORUM

Fall 2022



From the President

*In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.
(John O'Donohue, "For a New Beginning")*

As students head back to their studies, teachers to their teachings, and churches to the rituals of fall, these words from John O'Donohue stir in my heart. While the world turns its eyes toward the goldening of leaves and the quiet that comes with lengthening nights, for many around the church world, fall is a time of new beginnings.

At Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation (OPSF), we are experiencing our own new beginning. OPSF is not new to re-creation. Founded as the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Omaha, in 1891, to bridge the gap in theological education between the Mississippi River and the West Coast, the seminary was closed when World War II squeezed the ability of students to attend. But, like a seed germinating beneath the surface, a new way of serving was emerging. Ten years after what should have been the death of the seminary, a scholarship/loan program made theological education accessible to training pastors. Since that time scholarships, grants for Presbyterian institutions, and a long-lived School for Pastors have developed, evolved, and sunsetted as OPSF responded to the landscape of contemporary ministry. Today, we continue to be reformed, with our Pastoral Leadership Revitalization program taking root and some fields of prior programming lying fallow while we discern how to best serve churches and their leaders.

Still, with the fall comes the ritual of OPSF supported students returning to school, pastors we've partnered with kicking off fresh programmatic years, and signs of fresh hope and

possibility emerging through our scholarships and grants. I am grateful for the new beginnings which God provides again and again. Through our scholarship-award discernment, I have been inspired by the great potential I see in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s developing leaders. When the future of the church seems hazy, everyone should be so lucky as to get to know a bit about the faithful, inquisitive, principled, creative pastors and pastors-to-be who are dedicating themselves to our beloved congregations. Through grant discernment, I've gotten to know gifted pastors serving under-resourced congregations, with grit, and great purpose, and Presbyterian institutions devoted to nurturing those they care for with tremendous imagination.

In this newsletter, you'll get a peek of what we've been up to in this season of new beginnings and a glimpse of the hope that is stirring those of us at OPSF. It is our joy to share these programs and people with you; may you too be stirred to hope during these turbulent times. We look forward to journeying with you in the future as we learn and grow, and I offer us all this closing blessing (also from John O'Donohue's poem, For a New Beginning):

*Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.*



Blessings for the promises opening before you,

**The Rev.
Shelli Latham**

President, Omaha
Presbyterian Seminary
Foundation



Supporting Pastors and their Families

Pastoral Leadership Revitalization (PLR) is a program offered by OPSF, in partnership with presbyteries, specifically for newly ordained and/or isolated pastors to provide support, rejuvenation, and resiliency. Pastors participating in this program receive monthly coaching from a seasoned pastor and retreats for rest and renewal. The retreats provide education, worship, fellowship and rest.

Read more about how PLR supports pastors and their families through retreats on pages 6-7

2022 APOLLOS SCHOLARSHIP

OPSF's Apollos Scholarship supports fulltime Master of Divinity students, in Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) seminaries with awards of **\$8,000 per full academic year**. Our Scholarship Committee was inspired by the applicants and rejoices in the cultivation of talented leaders. This year's award winners demonstrated a commitment to Christ, congregational ministry, and theological exploration.



Caroline Grindrod

MOUNT PLEASANT, SC; CHARLESTON ATLANTIC PRESBYTERY

Princeton Theological Seminary, Middler

Caroline's mentor says, "Caroline has an innate ability to advocate for anyone and everyone she comes into contact with, with the ultimate goal of them knowing how loved, seen, and cherished they are by Jesus. Her speaking/teaching ability is excellent, and she does a great job of making the gospel feel real and approachable."



Olivia King

FORKED RIVER, NJ; PRESBYTERY OF THE COASTLANDS

Princeton Theological Seminary, Final Semester of dual MDiv/MACEF

Olivia's undergraduate degree is in sacred music from Westminster Choir College. She says, "Throughout the years, I had the joy of worshipping God through different musical activities in the church, like its children, teen, and adult choirs and handbell ensemble. Through these musical offerings, my faith in the Lord was nurtured and strengthened, and the seed of calling to ministry was placed deep within the soil of my heart...[inspiring] me to create meaningful worship experiences in my future congregation."



Hannah Miller

RICHMOND, VA; PRESBYTERY OF THE JAMES

Union Presbyterian Seminary, Middler

In her early twenties, Hannah served on the personnel committee and as a deacon in her home church. She says that her own experience of finding community led her to a commitment of deep welcome, particularly for those who question whether they belong. Most recently, she has turned her attention to youth ministry, where she has "felt especially drawn to helping every student know their value both to each other and as a child of God."



Veronica Ota

ALTADENA, CA; SAN GABRIEL PRESBYTERY

Princeton Theological Seminary, Middler

Veronica says, “One of the biggest challenges the church faces today is irrelevance. The church becomes irrelevant to people when it does not prophetically proclaim the truth of God’s love for all creation and when it fails to bear witness to that guiding principle of faith through service, advocacy, and activism. If people come to understand and accept the gift of God’s abundant grace that we are all given, we realize that we have a shared calling to love God and one another. True love is not only a feeling; it is an action.”



Sarah Rutherford

PLANO, TX; GRACE PRESBYTERY

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Junior

Sarah’s pastor noted her robust engagement in the community, working with vulnerable youth and hungry populations, saying, “In her future vocation, Sarah will spend a lifetime caring for, spiritually guiding, and walking with people in the triumphs and challenges of life. As a former recipient of this scholarship, and now serving as Sarah’s pastor, mentor, and supervisor, I am proud to highly recommend Sarah for this scholarship for I know she will be the exceptional, devoted, and faith-filled Presbyterian pastor that our communities and world so desperately need.”



Erin Tolar

ASHEVILLE, NC; WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA PRESBYTERY

Columbia Theological Seminary, Senior

Erin told us, “Successes in the life of the Church often stem from the seemingly small things that are actually quite important: a well-placed word of encouragement, a prayer at the beginning of a meeting, inviting a new member to be involved in a project, taking the extra time to explain why we do things in a certain way. Moments of conflict may also come from “small” moments of missed opportunities, lost tempers in conversation, or leaving someone out...I’m the type of leader who pays careful attention to the needs of individual people and how each person can find and claim their belonging within a church community. I show each person that they belong.”

MARILYN A. JACKSON GRANT

The Marilyn A. Jackson Grant provides grants to pastors and commissioned pastors serving small churches in OPSF's thirteen-state service region, with a preference for leaders who are part of a racial and/or ethnic minority group.

This year's recipients demonstrate a commitment to small-church ministry, and share their leadership with indigenous, immigrant, and multiracial congregation.



Rev. Fern Cloud
GRANITE FALLS,
MINNESOTA
Pejuhutazizi Presbyterian Church; Stated Clerk, Dakotas Presbytery



Rev. Dwight Williams
OMAHA, NE
New Life Presbyterian Church



Rev. Amgad Megally
SHAWNEE,
KANSAS
Arabic Christian Fellowship



Rev. David Nzokia
OLATHE, KS
Neema Community Church

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY SCHOLARSHIPS



OPSF supports congregational leaders pursuing Doctor of Ministry studies with scholarships

\$1,000

Awarded per student per year on a rolling basis



Learn more and apply at opsf-omaha.org



Rev. Jay Cline
WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH;
CLARINDA, IOWA
University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

Jay is interested in congregational spiritual formation as a means for church revitalization. His particular focus is creating a community rule of life for the congregation. Jay's projected thesis will clarify focus for the Westminster Presbyterian Church and congregational renewal.



Rev. John G. Jansenn III
CEDAR HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH;
CEDAR FALLS, IOWA
University of Dubuque Theological Seminary

Rev. Jansenn receives this award for a second time. John's program focuses on identity of all kinds (personal, political, institutional, etc.) in one hand while holding "congregational revitalization" in the other. John notes that if there was ever a time/need for congregational revitalization, it is now with a fierce urgency. He is particularly excited about the opportunity to put new learnings into action as his congregation discerns alongside his studies who the church is post-pandemic.

LifeLong Learning GRANT AWARDS

OPSF's Lifelong Learning Program Grant provides funds to Presbyterian (U.S.A.) institutions, including mid-councils, colleges, and camps and conference centers. Grants will support educational events, workshops, programs, and seminars which equip congregational leaders, enrich congregational vitality, and strengthen denominational ties. Priority is given to funding programs which demonstrate the capacity to support and sustain congregational ministry leaders (ordained and non-ordained).

AWARDS FOR 2023

Glacier Presbytery

Within and Without: Strengthening Faithful Outreach

Heartland Presbytery

Healthy Congregations Leader Groups

Homestead Presbytery

Mental Health Spiritual Renewal Retreats for Pastors

Indian Nations Presbytery/Oklahoma

Pastoral Leaders Retreat

Presbyterian Urban and Immigrant Ministry Network

Anti-Racist Education and Engagement Project

Presbyteries of Northern Kansas, Southern Kansas, Heartland, John Calvin, Missouri Union and Giddings-Lovejoy

Spirit of Stewardship Conference

Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Synod School

Synod of Rocky Mountains

Synod-Wide Collaborative Leadership Equipping

Utah Presbytery

Fall and Spring Pastoral/CLP Retreats

Winnebago Presbytery

Ministry in a Secular Age with Dr. Andrew Root

Glacier Presbytery Mission Camps & Retreats

(co-sponsored with a 2022 Lifelong Learning grant)



CREATIVITY & CONFLICT:

Staying Connected with Imagination and Heart

hosted by Missouri Union Presbytery with support from OPSF

A retreat for Women Serving as pastors or Christian Educators

Conflict is a part of all relationships. However, we don't really like it do we? It is possible to not only survive, but thrive through conflict! Peace equals the ability to handle conflict with empathy, non-violence and creativity.

November 7-9, 2022

Heartland Conference Center
Kansas City, MO

\$200/person

Full grants available for MUP participants

REGISTER AT:

mupresbytery.org/upcoming-events

LED BY REV. SHARON EDWARDS



Rev. Sharon H. Edwards is a Presbyterian pastor, spiritual director, retreat leader, and yoga and meditation instructor. During the pandemic, she facilitated a PCUSA Mental Health

Grant program for pastors and chaplains around embodied practices for health. She is part of the Spiritual Integration Faculty with Companions on the Inner Way and has served as spiritual faculty on PCUSA's Clergy Wellness Program, CREDO; Summer Chaplain at Ghost Ranch Retreat and Conference Center and Workshop/Worship Leader at Synod and National Presbyterian Women events.



PASTORAL
LEADERSHIP
REVITALIZATION



PLR FAMILY RETREAT

The life of a pastor's family has some unique challenges and joys, and no one understands that better than the spouses and kids of other pastors' families. When the Pastoral Leadership Revitalization (PLR) program began three years ago, we quickly learned that the retreats we offered for clergy spouses, clergy families, and single clergy were unique. Pastor's spouses know the strain of expected involvement in congregational life. Families share the experience of growing up under the watchful eye of so many and having holidays oriented around church life. Single pastors understand the challenges of dating (or not dating) as clergy, navigating many couples-centric events, and having so many well-intentioned congregants curious about their personal lives. The community woven between these communities founded on shared experience nurtures and sustains both the pastor and the pastor's family.

On June 3-6, PLR held a family retreat at Mahoney State Park, in Ashland, Nebraska. While the clergy PLR members shared a session about the challenges and opportunities of contemporary ministry, Julie Anderman, of Artos Retreats, led two sessions with the clergy spouses, providing nurturing space for them to reflect and process together. Some of the spouses noted: "[This was] a great reminder that I'm not alone." "I loved the opportunity to be honest, cared for, and related to." Kids enjoyed their own time of art and recreation and then joined up with their parents again to play in the park. From water slides to horseback riding, the event offered respite and refreshment for all.



PLR FALL RETREAT

Our Pastoral Leadership Revitalization (PLR) program is designed to support and equip isolated and first call pastors through a combination of retreats, community nurture, and coaching. The first of our three fall retreats took place at Heartland Retreat Center, outside Kansas City, on September 19-22. Pastors and commissioned pastors from Kansas and Missouri joined in workshops led by the Rev. Dr. Tom Long, the emeritus Bandy Professor of Preaching at Candler School of Theology at Emory University, in Atlanta, GA. Dr. Long is a proponent of two pillars of preaching: strong exegetical work alongside strong presentation skills. His *Creating Vital and Faithful Sermons* workshop allowed participants to strengthen their skills in both areas. Participants also took time to catch their breath through worship, conversation, spiritual direction, and hiking.

Participants expressed gratitude for the time away, with opportunities for both community and solitude; connecting with colleagues, new insights for spiritual engagement, and relevant and useful content to take back to their congregations. One participant said that the workshops were both engaging and helpful a “10/10 that helped to fill my joy bucket.”





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The Enneagram in Ministry

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18

9 AM - 12:30 PM *Introduction to the Enneagram*

1:15 - 2:30 PM – *Worship & the Enneagram: A Practical Guide* (Option 1)

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19

9 AM - 12 PM – *Enneagram 2.0* (Option 1)

10:30 - 11:45 AM – *Worship & the Enneagram: A Practical Guide* (Option 2)

1 - 4 PM – *Enneagram 2.0* (Option 2)

The Enneagram is a powerful tool for understanding ourselves and others. It helps us to see ourselves at a deeper, more objective level and can be of invaluable assistance on our path to self-knowledge.

Join us for this **free online learning opportunity**, for Enneagram newbies and aficionados, as we explore how knowing your Enneagram number can lead to greater personal, spiritual, and relational health.

Event leaders are **Hunter Mobley** (former executive pastor and teacher at The Micah Center, in Dallas) and the **Rev. Stephanie Ells** (pastor, First Presbyterian Church, in Dubuque, Iowa; adjunct professor at the University of Dubuque).

Workshops

Intro to the Enneagram: Includes guidance identifying your number, and tools, and spiritual practices for each number.

Worship and the Enneagram: Includes practical ways to enfold spiritual practices specific to enneagram numbers in personal and corporate worship.

Enneagram 2.0: For those ready to dive more deeply into advanced Enneagram topics. Includes exploration of our journeys in stress and security, and the spiritual implications of the passion and virtue for your number.

The event is free, but pre-registration is required: tinyurl.com/OPSFenneagram

Each offering stands alone, or you may combine for a more robust event. Visit opsf-omaha.org for more information.