

# Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation

## BOUNTIFUL PREACHING COHORTS

*Bountiful Preaching Cohorts* are small communities of Presbyterian Church (USA) pastoral leaders gathered for nurture and learning to cultivate preaching practices that position pastors and their congregations to bear a fruitful harvest in worship, work, and witness.

- *Who may participate?*

Presbyterian Church (USA) ministers of word and sacrament and commissioned ruling elders, serving in a regular preaching capacity in an installed or commissioned ministry position

- *How does it work?*

Self-selected groups of pastoral leaders apply. If awarded a grant, the cohort will receive financial assistance of up to \$2,500/participant to support their nurture and development as preachers over two years

Selected cohorts must attend orientation, September 15-18, 2025 at the Preaching with our Whole Selves event in Branson, Missouri, and provide annual reports regarding their activities, learnings, and expenses

- *What makes preaching 'bountiful'?* (more info on next page)

Producing a fruitful harvest requires intentionality — whether that's fruitful worship-leadership development or congregational witness born out of purposefully crafted preaching. The Bountiful Preaching Cohort design is built upon three practices gleaned from Jesus' agricultural parables which teach us:

- For a plant to bear fruit, its soil must be tended. The same goes for church leaders: to preach in compelling ways, pastors must rest sometimes (like fields allowed to lay fallow) and be nourished in other times (with spiritual practices and life rhythms that sustain). Bountiful preaching requires intentional pastoral nurture.
- Side-by-side learning prepares and sustains leaders to cultivate the fields of ministry. Bountiful preaching is nurtured in purposeful learning communities alongside Christ and experienced practitioners.
- Just as some seeds are more effectively planted in certain soils, a knowledgeable sower knows where to cast seed, bountiful preaching requires awareness of the ministry's terrain and strategy in worship content and craft.

# BOUNTIFUL *Preaching Cohorts*

Grants up to \$2,500/cohort-member will be awarded to proposals designed to nurture preaching in three areas:



## *Pastoral Nurture*

**"The gardener responded, 'Lord, give it one more year, and I will dig around it and give it fertilizer. Maybe it will produce fruit next year ...'" (Luke 13:8-9a)**

Programs should be designed to nourish pastors in the cohort for sustained ministry and to cultivate spiritual and emotional well-being, so that God's word might take root and flourish. Effective proposals will demonstrate intentionality around care for body, mind, and spirit.



## *Preaching Instruction*

**"Put on my yoke, and learn from me. I'm gentle and humble. And you will find rest for yourselves." (Matthew 11:29)**

Programs should be designed for side-by-side learning, in community with one another and Christ. Successful proposals will demonstrate clear learning goals and activities to meet them.



## *Elevated Contextual Awareness*

**"Still other seed landed on good soil. When it grew, it produced one hundred times more grain than was scattered." (Luke 8:8)**

Programs should be designed with a clear plan for participants to learn about the contexts of the congregations and communities they serve, and to explore preaching themes/methods which will expand their effective sharing of God's word in their contexts.

**Start imagining your cohort's two-year shared journey today.**

**APPLICATIONS  
DUE JULY 15**



# *Bountiful Preaching Cohorts Grant*



## **Prepare Your Cohort**

Gather your cohort keeping the following criteria in mind:

- Cohorts are 5-8 people (Ministers of Word and Sacrament or Commissioned Ruling Elders/Commissioned Pastors)
- All cohort members must be employed by a congregation and serving in a regular preaching capacity
- At least half of the members of each cohort must be from the OPSF service region (Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin, Wyoming)

Identify a cohort leader who will submit the application and will receive and disseminate information from OPSF to cohort member.

Begin to think about a treasurer — You do not have to provide this information with your application. If awarded a grant, your grant will identify a church or presbytery to receive the funds and pay for cohort activities. The treasurer will be responsible for managing and approving expenses and providing financial reports to OPSF. Ideally a church of one of the cohort members will house the funds, and the pastoral leader serving that congregation will serve as the treasurer.

Prepare your application with your cohort and submit by July 15, 2025. All cohort activities will take place between August 1, 2025 and July 31, 2026. *Review the application information below.*

Mark your calendars for September 15-18, 2025. If selected, cohorts will attend the *Preaching with Our Whole Selves* event for onboarding and preaching instruction around wholistic preaching practices. Most of your group should prepare to attend. If the dates don't work for most of your group members, you should wait to apply in the next application cycle.

**About *Preaching with Our Whole Selves*** — All cohorts which are awarded grants will attend this event held in Branson, Missouri on September 15-18, 2025.

View details at [omahapresbyterianseminaryfoundation.org/whole-selves](https://omahapresbyterianseminaryfoundation.org/whole-selves).

What is included:

- Travel (airfare or mileage, whichever is less)
- Meals
- Worship, keynote, and workshops
- Time for your group to bond and prepare for your cohort activities
- Lodging in double occupancy rooms. (You may use grant funds to pay for a single room. Single occupancy must be reflected in your budgets.)

## Dream / Plan with Cohort

Each Cohort may apply for up to \$2,500/person. That means that if you have 6 people in your group, your total group grant may not exceed \$15,000.

Cohort members may engage in activities as individuals and as a cohort. Activities should align with the goals of the grant and the cohort's focus. \$1,500/person must support group/cohort activities. Up to \$1,000/person may support individual members if the activities align with cohort goals and are part of cohort check-ins and growth.

Budget Guidelines — This list is meant to provide guidance and is not extensive/fully-inclusive of allowable and not allowable expenses. If you have questions about whether an idea you have for your cohort would be funded, reach out to the Rev. Shelli Latham, at [slatham@opsf-omaha.org](mailto:slatham@opsf-omaha.org).

	Allowable	Not Allowable
Books, periodicals, subscriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Books for group discussion or collaborative worship planning</li><li>Subscription for worship planning resources cohort will engage in together</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Commentaries and books that are not for cohort engagement</li></ul>
Coaching/Spiritual Direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Individual coaching or spiritual direction* (within cost limitations)</li><li>Cohort coaching or spiritual direction</li></ul>	
Group Nurturing Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Retreats</li><li>Tours</li><li>Learning activities (cooking lessons, art lessons)</li><li>Craft/makers activities and supplies</li><li>Physical nurture: yoga, group sports, paddle sports, hiking, climbing, etc.</li><li>Admission to arts/sporting events</li></ul>	
Individual Nurturing Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Admission to/membership in local museum/garden, etc.</li><li>Massage</li><li>Learning activities (in line with cohort goals)</li><li>Craft/makers activities (in line with cohort goals)</li><li>Physical nurture: yoga, local group sport, gym activity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Total cost may not exceed \$250/person of individual nurture activities (not engaged in with cohort)</li><li>Admission to arts/sporting events</li><li>Not designed to pay for a membership or activity the pastoral leader already has/engages in</li></ul>
Educational Activities	<u>Examples</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Attending an event, workshop, etc. as a group</li><li>Hiring an expert to lead a cohort event</li><li>Book studies</li></ul>	
Travel/Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Meals, snacks</li><li>Mileage reimbursement, car rental</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expenses related to non-cohort members (spouses and children)</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tickets (train, plane, boat, bus . . . )</li> <li>• Parking fees</li> <li>• Tips</li> <li>• Tours, admission, speaker fees, group activities</li> <li>• Lodging (hotel, house rental, etc.)</li> <li>• Pulpit Supply fees to allow for time away</li> <li>• <b>Single occupancy offset for Whole Selves gathering (Cost with tax ≈ \$275/person.</b></li> </ul>	may attend as appropriate but not as part of cohort expense)
*Total Individual Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to \$1,000 total/person with activities aligned with Cohort/grant goals.</li> </ul> <p><u>May include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to \$1,000 in coaching/spiritual direction</li> <li>• Up to \$500 travel/retreat</li> <li>• Up to \$250 nurture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big ticket individual travel/retreat over \$500 (included in \$1,000/person total)</li> <li>• Nurture activities over \$250/person</li> </ul>

## Prepare Your Application

Your application will be submitted online at [tinyurl.com/bountifulpreaching](https://tinyurl.com/bountifulpreaching). Or visit our website [www.opsf-omaha.org](http://www.opsf-omaha.org) for more information. There is no mechanism for saving your application, so you will want to prepare ahead of time, so you have easy access to the responses.

- The application questions are listed below in the *Application Template Document*.  
Tip: Draft all responses in Word or other electronic document and paste responses into online application.
- You will be asked to upload a spreadsheet. Download the Excel spreadsheet at [tinyurl.com/bountifulspreadsheet](https://tinyurl.com/bountifulspreadsheet). (More information regarding spreadsheet below.)

## Prepare Your Cohort Spreadsheet

Note that there are three tabs you must fill out on the spreadsheet. You may access the tabs at the bottom of the sheet.

- Tab 1: Cohort Member Info
- Tab 2: Timeline (See the sample timeline on next tab.)
- Tab 3: Project Budget (See sample budget on next tab.)

You will want to have your spreadsheet complete before beginning the online application.

Save your spreadsheet as an Excel document, named “Your Group Name\_Bountiful Preaching.” You will upload your spreadsheet as the final step of application.

**— Applications are due by July 15, 2025 —**



# Application Preparation Document

## **Cohort Introduction**

Group Name

Name of Group Leader (Group member who will serve as the primary source of contact for the cohort)

Group Leader Email

Group Leader Phone Number

Group Leader Mailing Address

Number of pastoral leaders in your cohort

How many people in your cohort are from the OPSF service region (Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Wisconsin, Wyoming)

**Summary Statement** (Provide a paragraph outlining the focus of your cohort's initiative(s), with attention to how participation in the cohort will nurture bountiful preaching. (150 word max)

How does your group know one another? What are the common connection points? (50 word max)

**Cohort Description** — In this section, you will explain how the initiatives of your cohort will nurture bountiful preaching through: (1) pastoral nurture, (2) preaching instruction, and (3) cultural awareness. Each section should outline the particular activities your cohort will commit to over the course of the two-year grant period. (Include all activities whether a cost is associated with them or not. You do not need to provide budget information in this section.) Each question allows for a 150 word maximum response.

How does your proposed cohort provide for nurture of group participants? What specific activities will nurture the body, mind, and spirit of group members?

What activities will your group engage in over the two-years of the cohort to develop preaching proficiency? (What learning modalities will you engage in? Do you have instructors in mind?)

How will cohort members develop awareness of the cultural context of their communities to inform their preaching?

**Budget Snapshot** — In this section, you will highlight the three largest budget lines and explain how you calculated them and how you anticipate they will promote bountiful preaching. *Explanations should not exceed 100 words.*

#1 budget line/category

Amount

Please explain this line item and how it will fuel your cohort's nurture?

#2 budget line/category

Amount

Please explain this line item and how it will fuel your cohort's nurture?

#3 budget line/category

Amount

Please explain this line item and how it will fuel your cohort's nurture?

**Upload Spreadsheet** — In this section you will upload your spreadsheet. Be sure that you have completed all three tabs at the bottom of the sheet: (1) cohort member info, (2) timeline, (3) project budget.

Before you upload your spreadsheet. Check that you have completed the three required tabs.

- Cohort Member Information
- Timeline
- Project Budget — Note the line in red regarding Preaching with Our Wholeselves registration is required. You may budget up to a total of \$2,500/person, which includes double occupancy lodging at the Chateau on the Lake for Preaching with Our Whole Selves. If any members of your group will choose single occupancy lodging, you must budget \$275/person to cover the difference.

Upload Your Spreadsheet (Upload your spreadsheet in Excel format. Save as "Your Group Name\_Bountiful Preaching")