

November 29, 2022

When I was in seminary, I walked into the gym for a workout where I saw a classmate who was a former professional football player for the Tennessee Titans. He was talking with another classmate about specifics of weight training, to which I took an immediate interest (this was a *pro*)! He explained that while it's easier to track the value of the *big* muscles, what happens when the biceps flex and calves stretch, it's actually developing the *little* muscles that truly keep the big muscles agile, prevents injury, and supports the movements of the whole body.



It is like that for our per capita and mission giving. While there are big, missional flexes (like tech grants, and pastor retreats, and pastor support funds!) that are easier to recognize how they impact the body, none of it would be possible without the simple operational expenses of things like paying the internet bill. All of it together, bigger flexes and smaller muscles working together, all work together to create a strong, well-conditioned body that we call our regional witness as a presbytery.

The following is a (partial!) list that has *100 Things that Our Per Capita and Mission Giving Supports* to sustain the work of the presbytery: the big, the small, and everything in between. Together, they strengthen the body of our regional witness. It is important to note that the work of the church is not *transactional*, but rather *relational*. We measure the value of the church not in terms of “what we get out of it,” but rather in impacts and mutual transformations on our lives and the lives of our communities.

“Per Capita is crucial to the overall health of the PC(USA), because it binds presbyteries, synods, and congregations together in one church.” - J. Herbert Nelson, II, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC(USA)

“We must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.” - Ephesians 4:15b-16

May this list serve as a GLIMPSE of the work we are accomplishing together, and which you support by your faithful giving! Thank you for building up the body of Christ!

In this together,

Rev. Ryan J. Landino
Presbytery Leader
Presbytery of Giddings-Lovejoy

100 Things that Our Per Capita and Mission Giving Supports

1. Sustained activities, work, and programs that connect us to each other across theological, geographical, racial, and class differences so that we may continue to living out our theological tradition and roots
2. Bridging the resources of the national church to the local congregation through the presbytery leadership
3. Ensure coordination between organized teams and committees charged with conducting our regional mission
4. Resourcing to collect news of congregations' projects and events of regional interest for sharing with our congregations through the website, newsletter, and presbytery papers
5. Provide for electronic participation, hardware, and tech expertise for virtual and hybrid gatherings to broaden access to participation in the life of the presbytery
6. Provide for a point person to serve as advocate for emergency funds from the Board of Pensions and other agencies of the national church
7. Having community relations person and media correspondent in the event of a high profile incident
8. Emergency preaching and on-site response in the case of a traumatic emergency for a church
9. Ensuring sessions have a moderator when a pastor is absent so your work can continue
10. An office that keeps vital retrievable records of good standing, history, and tax exempt status
11. A weekly newsletter for regular communication with the presbytery so opportunities are not missed
12. Coaching or trouble shooting for issues that arise under the "didn't learn this in seminary" category
13. Provide for a legal advocate in court in the event that the presbytery would need to assist in representing any of our congregations
14. Provides for the programming from the Church Leadership Connection system which connects pastors with congregations and congregations with pastors
15. Provides for the creation and administration of Ordination Exams for preserving our tradition of raising qualified professional clergy
16. Travel for listening teams and Administrative Commissions to partner to assist congregations in crisis and major transition
17. Contract with licensed professionals and therapists to assess new leaders for strengths and vulnerabilities as a way to secure a healthy generation of new leaders in the church
18. Communicate, facilitate, and administer targeted grant support consistent with the emergent needs of our ministries
19. Internet access to do our work in a highspeed, 21st century ministry landscape
20. Postage for communication so we have the ability to communicate with the whole presbytery community, regardless of access to internet bandwidth
21. Honorariums for keynote speakers to inspire, educate, and encourage the work of our local ministries
22. Electronic subscriptions for programs like Zoom to allow instantaneous coordination across a geographically large presbytery, Doodle to establish available meeting times for volunteers gathering to support churches, our website for resources and blogging abilities to share testimony to our regional witness
23. Support for those organizing our annual statistics so we can track demographic changes in the church landscape and make sure our resources are aligned accordingly

24. Matching contributions to support the training of new commissioned pastors
25. Printing official documentation such as ordination certificates, anniversary statements, and other official documentation certifying the milestones of your ministry
26. Fair compensation for a capable and responsive staff to assist pastors in the role of coach, brainstorming partner, troubleshooting challenges, or collaboration partner to presbytery members
27. Fair compensation for a capable and responsive staff to help onboard new team and committee leadership so continuity of institutional memory is preserved and resources are not lost
28. Committed staff resourcing of our Commission on Ministry and other required bodies of the presbytery for the direct interfacing with our congregations needs
29. Committed attention towards supporting the emergent needs of our commissioned pastors
30. The fair compensation for a Stated Clerk to maintain our restorative judicial channels, so that in the event of a formal complaint against a member of our community, due process is followed, the community is protected from harm, members are protected against false witness, and so we can work for accountability, justice, and restoration.
31. Supporting the professional development of our staff so they have the most up-to-date training and resourcing capabilities that your congregations deserve
32. Provide for Association of Mid Council Leaders and Association of Stated Clerks so our presbytery leadership have access to the national network of crowdsourcing, best practices, and effective policies
33. Maintaining a Stated Clerk's portal for tracking pastor, congregation, and membership status in the denomination
34. Providing for an online presbytery database with access to contact information, demographic and representation data, and volunteer service history so that we can exercise our discipleship through volunteer service beyond the local congregation.
35. Connect us to our missional partners from around the world, including a mission partner in East Africa, a region with direct ties to one of the congregations of our presbytery
36. Providing for legal fees and services to protect the interests of our congregations as incorporated entities of the state
37. Travel budget provisions for staff so that our resourcing staff have ability to travel onsite to directly interface with our congregations
38. Professional expense provisions for staff so our resourcing staff has the discretion to provide hospitality and respite for pastoral leaders in the form of meals and coffee outings to offer respite, prayer support, solidarity
39. Provide for the travel and preaching from our presbytery staff as they celebrate, accompany, and interface with our congregations
40. New Worshipping Communities support as our newer worship initiatives work to become self-sustaining
41. Missional giving to the Interfaith Partnership of Greater St. Louis to sustain our interfaith relationships and our joint witness in the most religiously pluralistic area of our presbytery
42. A Kenyan Scholarship Fund that directly provides for the education for young women and girls in East Africa, in coordination with our mission partners abroad
43. Provide for Summer Grants that provide opportunities for summer Christian Education and witness, personal growth, faith formation, and recreation to children and adults in communities of need
44. Local emergency relief for our congregations suffering disaster such as flooding
45. Emergency relief for our pastoral leaders experiencing personal hardship that encumber or direct energy away from their pastoral responsibilities

46. To provide for matching grants in order to secure health insurance support from the Presbyterian Mission Agency for leaders of new worshipping communities in our presbytery
47. Initiatives like direct mission support for our Nicaraguan Community Partnership, and the Helping Hands Peru Partnership, a program of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, efforts coordinated by our Global Partnerships Team.
48. Initiatives for providing pastoral care of pastoral leaders, honorably retired, specialized ministry. including cohort learning communities, and events around congregational stewardship and youth education through our Dynamic Leaders Team.
49. Banking services and consulting that manage the investments of the presbytery community as a practice of good stewardship
50. Providing for the accounting of the resources of the presbytery community with a reliable outsourced firm as a practice of good stewardship
51. Maintain appropriate technology and basic office supply resources to provide for the needs of the staff
52. Having available staff on hand to direct questions, concerns, or issues affecting the life of your congregation to the correct place to deal with it constructively
53. Supporting the new pastor pipeline through supporting the Committee on Preparation for Ministry
54. Having support grants for pastors through the Commission on Ministry
55. Provide for hospitality for gatherings, trainings, and other events as an expression of community
56. Support programs like our "In the Neighborhood" event, where we relocate the office to a corner of the presbytery, and have appreciation meals with elders, clerks of sessions, and pastors so we can build relationship and update each other on available resourcing.
57. Managing the presbytery's resources, which includes processing payroll and other expenses for new worshipping communities as they build their own infrastructures
58. Running presbytery to presbytery background checks for the protection of our presbytery community
59. Running criminal background checks for the protection of our presbytery community
60. Tech support assistance for gathering sites serving as central meeting spaces across the presbytery for mission coordination
61. Having an assigned point-person to make it easier to receive the resources of the different agencies of the national church including, the Board of Pensions, Office of General Assembly, Presbyterian Investments and Loan Program, Presbyterian Foundation, Presbyterian Mission Agency, including the offices of PCUSA Special Offerings, Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries, the Office of Public Witness, the Self Development of People Program (our national response to the issue of poverty in our country), and the Office of Immigration Issues
62. A central space to connect with colleagues to address contemporary ministry challenges, ie: pandemic response, new models of electronic worship, technology in worship, etc
63. Offering of technology grants for enhancing, expanding, and enriching the experience of worship in our congregations
64. Confirming good standing for minister members seeking new calls in order to affirm the discernment of a good fit for ministry candidates
65. Supporting triennium for the young people of the church and their faith formation
66. Strengthening the regional witness of the synod through programs like the Swanigan scholars program which provides opportunities for women and men of color to obtain executive leadership experience or education at no cost to them, a project that is rooted in our presbytery
67. Supporting the Synod's transitional ministry training, which is a nationally respected offering that is usually hosted at the Mercy Center in St. Louis.

68. Pay for yearly required boundary training for our pastors to foster a culture of protection and accountability throughout the presbytery.
69. Honorarium support to guest speakers and trainers from beyond our presbytery for things like treasurer training
70. Assuring that the day-to-day operations of a five-staff organization of approximately 10,000 people are being well-served, as well as the care of the staff
71. Provide training, gifts, and encouragement to our General Assembly commissioners providing voice in the shaping of the denomination on the national level
72. Training on the curation of our history through the History Team so the continuing unfolding story of God's work in us is maintained for current and future generations
73. Sustaining the operations of the Presbyterian Historical Society, which collects historical records of congregations and the story of how the church has remained faithful through the centuries for current and future generations.
74. Support the national church's work in drafting a study guide for GA-approved paper on denouncing antisemitism and Islamophobia
75. Provide for the resources from the FBI for Parents and Church Staff Who Work with Minors through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance
76. Pay for annual Moderator Training event for our volunteer moderators so we can conduct the business of our regional witness
77. Support the Presbyterian office at the United Nations so we have access to world leaders through the Office of Public Witness
78. Advocate for humane immigration policy through the Office of Public Witness and Office of Immigration Issues
79. Ensure equal access to the decision-making table of the General Assembly, so regardless of wealth or church size, we have representational standing in the shaping of our denomination
80. Support the fair compensation of national staff who work to make sure that standing committees, special committees, taskforces, and other bodies are fairly represented by volunteer membership that reflects the diversity of the church
81. Support the fair compensation for qualified national staff who provide direct resourcing to standing groups such as: Advisory Committee on the Constitution, Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity, Advocacy Committee for Women and Gender Justice, Educator Certification Committee, Mission Development Resources Committee, Racial Equity Advocacy Committee, etc.
82. Support the existence of conferences like the "Unforced Rhythms of Grace" event as part of the Association of Partners in Christian Education (APCE) annual gathering through the Office of Christian Formation
83. Publishing resources for proposed amendments to the *Book of Order* as we live out our call, "Once Reformed, Always Reformed, according to the Word of God"
84. Fund the work of General Assembly approved taskforces such as: *the Special Committee on PC(USA) and Race*, *the Special Committee to Write a New Confession*, and *the Task Force to Explore the Theology and Practice of Ordination* so we can live more faithfully into our calling
85. Provide for the travel expenses of our denominational leaders so we may model our tradition of connectionalism and recognize the impact of the work of the national church on the local level
86. Promote resources for things like Homelessness Awareness Week, through books available through PC(USA) Store
87. Support the Presbyterian Older Adult Ministries Leadership Retreat
88. Support the Evangelism Conference through the work of the Office of Theology, Formation, and Evangelism

89. Promoting resources on healing and justice from the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation
90. Providing for the editing, printing, and distribution of our latest *Book of Order* and *Book of Confessions*, so our processes for inclusion are transparent and accessible to all to be able to participate in the life of the Church
91. Provide for translations services for the resources of our denomination to Spanish and Korean
92. An online workshop provided by the Office of General Assembly for a presbytery's clerks of session on parliamentary procedure
93. Orientation for new mid council leaders serving presbyteries and synods
94. Support for Presbytery Leader Formation, and ongoing program for strengthening the leadership capacity of ongoing presbytery leaders past their orientation
95. Provide for Student Loan Advising for individuals with student loan debt who have worked at a nonprofit organizations who may be eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness, including debt advising and document preparation for all PC(USA) leaders, with webinars for anyone with student loan debt.
96. Resources and support for presbyteries and their elected leadership from the synod, through advice, funding, training and equipping, consultation, mediation, process support, and leadership gatherings.
97. Supporting, promoting and/or leading cross-presbytery initiatives through the synod, such as the synod's contribution to the financial implications to the *Apology to African Americans for the Sin of Slavery and Its Legacy* overture that came from our presbytery
98. Strengthen a consistent, cohesive system of participation across presbyteries, states, and synods, so that as pastors changes and pages of a congregation's story turn, we can continue to incorporate the wisdom and leadership of those from beyond our organizational structure in ways that preserve continuity and organizational fluidity
99. Practice the model set forth by Paul of collecting an offering across multiple churches for the support of the body (*1 Corinthians 16:1-4, 2 Corinthians 8:13-15,19-20, Romans 15:14-32*)
100. Foster connections amongst our regional churches, as Paul did with all the letters he sent that would become part of the New Testament cannon. Someone would have needed to pay the postage on those letters! Financial giving across a region has been part of our faithful witness since the beginning