

Enews for 1/10/2024

Annual Statistical Reports

The Clerk's Corner

With the Annual Statistical Reports due next month (February 9), I wanted to talk a little about that process this week. The primary questions that I have heard about this annual report are "Why do we do this? Does anyone even look at it?" The answer to the second question also answers the first. Yes, someone does look at it. Including...

National Denominational Leaders

The data is compiled by the Office of the General Assembly and used to identify trends and recommend actions like providing materials for senior ministries in an aging church or investing in Youth and Young Adult Ministry to build up a new generation of leaders.

Potential Pastors

Savvy pastors know that all this data is posted publicly on the denomination's website and will do their homework in researching congregations. This information can provide a potential pastor an idea of what may have been happening in the life of the congregation, as changes in membership, finances, or gaps in reporting can all be clues that something significant happened that a new minister probably needs to know. Are you curious about what a potential pastor might know about your church? [Click here to find out!](#)

Sessions

The Book of Order says that sessions should be "reviewing the roll of active members at least annually and counseling with those who have neglected the responsibilities of membership" (G-3.0201c). The annual statistical report is a good way for sessions to begin that process and to notice other important trends in the life of the congregation as they plan for a new year of mission and ministry. Churches in transition could also benefit from taking a deep dive into this data as part of preparing for a new pastor. One of our congregations, Westminster in Akron, is doing just that. Their interim pastor asked me if I could help him pull past year's reports so that their Discernment Team can look at the trends of who they have been and who they are becoming. As a note, I have easy access to the last ten years of reports, and I am glad to help make the connection to the PC(USA)'s Research Services to get older data.

The Stated Clerk

Finally, I look at this data! As your General Presbyter & Stated Clerk it gives me a window into what is going on. It gives me a snapshot into what is going on in a congregation so that I can follow-up to see how the presbytery can support and encourage you! A few months ago, John Graves, our Moderator of Presbytery for this year told me that he will be inviting congregations to talk about evangelism in 2024. As part of that he asked me to pull some of this data so that we can understand where growth is already happening in the presbytery. To support that evangelism focus, I have decided to introduce a new award in addition to the John Calvin Award (that we give the first congregation to submit their statistical report each year): the Joseph Badger Award. In the spirit of the famed missionary who played an important part of the founding of so many congregations in the Western Reserve, this award will celebrate evangelism and church growth efforts here in Eastminster Presbytery so that we can learn from one another and grow together.

May the Peace of Christ be with you,
Barry