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Homesteader - January 27, 2015

YOU GOTTA SHOW UP!

Impressions from the Officer Training in Lincoln on January 10, 2015

Stated Clerk Gradye Parsons reminds Homestead officers to be leaders that don't just reminisce about the past, but look into the future - and show up.

And show up they did: Eventually, it was more than 138 current and incoming officers from Homestead and surrounding Presbyteries that gathered on this beautiful Saturday at Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church in Lincoln. Even more impressive than the mere number of deacons, ruling and teaching elders in one room may seem the reason behind this gathering: These men and women weren't here for a Presbytery meeting, but rather to attend an all-day continuing education event. The event in this form was the second annual officer training, sponsored by the Homestead Presbytery M & M, Ordered Ministries.

The impressive numbers might also have a little bit to do with the profile of the speaker. In his keynote "On the road to where...", the Rev. Gradye Parsons, challenged the attending church leaders then to take a sobering look at the fast changing landscape in which we are called to be church. With lots of statistic evidence, the Stated clerk of the General Assembly pointed out that the growth of the 'nones' is not just a temporary phenomenon. "We can't just wait for people to appear in our doors just because they are used to or out of a sense of obligation." However, people were still interested in faith-when they're personally involved, find meaning, and a sense of connection. Gradye left us with the hopeful story of First Presbyterian Church of Spring City, TN, who were down to a remnant of eight elderly

In the third presentation, Ingrid Kirst, executive director of Community Crops, and Leanne Masters, pastor at Southern Heights Presbyterian Church gave us a glimpse of the amazing things that can happen when a congregation starts to look beyond its walls. In their case, the needs of the larger community, their resources, and the willingness to collaborate led to a visionary project: the Southern Heights Food Forrest. (For more info, see: southernheightsff.org)

In the final presentation of the day, Jen Strickland, associate pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church, and Jacob Buchholz, associate pastor at First-Plymouth Church, invited us to create Worship that is more than just words, but involves all of our senses: Touch, taste, hearing, smell, as well as sight and also includes silence.



Earlier, during the opening worship, Jen and Jacob had reminded us of God's revelation to Moses in the burning bush. In all of the paradigm shifts that church and society are facing, in the challenge to reevaluate our relevance and re-think our identity, it is good to remember who and whose we are: Beloved creatures of the "I Am". Who shows up.

Thomas Dummermuth



members when they decided to do something new: youth ministry, of all things! They began to gather every Saturday on soccer fields and cheer on every kid. "They did the orderly thing in a disorderly world: They showed up!"-with the effect that people now start to show up at their church.

During the following break-out sessions, the ruling elders, clerks and deacons were invited to reflect on practical questions in their respective groups. The trainings were offered by Gradye Parsons, Ray Meester and Chris Reed.

The afternoon was all about fleshing out the paradigm shift for different areas of ministry, with four short presentations:

First, Dr. Beth Birstihl, member of the executive committee for the National 4-H Council, and Greg Jensen, Sr. Director of Development at UN Foundation, reframed fundraising and stewardship as something that is much more than maintenance with four key words: (1) Investment: More than just a gift, investments want to make an impact. (2) Integrity: Are you a true believer in the story you're telling? (3) Gratitude: Garner the stories about the difference a gift makes. You can't overestimate the power of saying Thank you. (4) Dream: What is your strategic dream for the next years?

In the second presentation, John Vest, associate pastor for youth ministry at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago, shared with us some of his fresh insights for Christian Education from his thesis "Post-Christendom Confirmation." John envisions faith formation not just trying to pass on the faith DNA, but actually building up disciples and equipping them for a life of faith. This task can only be accomplished in a communal manner, with sacred conversations that involves both parents as well as the larger faith community.

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Blessing Opportunity 2 Corinthians 9:7-8



GIVE...Homestead Presbytery Pastor Emergency Fund

Keep Thinking...

Scripture doesn't say, "Well done good and cynical servant." -S. Rah

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