

Monthly Mod Musings

By John A. Bolt, Moderator, Presbytery of West Virginia, 2026

I am one of those folks proud to be a part of the cadre of “cradle Presbyterians,” having been baptized by and a member of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Greenville, SC– and since been a member of five other Presbyterian congregations as we moved around the country (Anderson, SC; Lithonia, GA; Dallas, TX; Charleston, WV; and now Morgantown, WV).

I have often said that I’m not sure whether it’s God’s providence that my Southern Baptist mother and Methodist father “compromised” on becoming Presbyterian, or if I’ve been shaped and molded by Presbyterianism to be who I am at the core. It’s probably some of both.

So, it was no surprise, really, when at a recent retreat of the PWV Leadership Team and committee chairs, “relationships” was identified as a key trait of the presbytery’s culture. What was somewhat surprising, however, was that it turned out to be the main characteristic – and strength of – the presbytery.

At the same time, many of those present agreed this is an area that needs attention. For too long, for many reasons, it feels as if those relationships have been neglected or taken for granted.

That’s why the Leadership Team, led by Andy Rice, has committed to rebuilding and strengthening those relationships as well as creating new ones with the presbytery’s 100-plus congregations and their members in the coming year. I hope you’ve already noticed a foundational piece of that work with the addition of Kristin Rhodes to the staff as communication coordinator, and her initiative and creation of new vehicles to share each other’s news.

What you’re reading now – at least I hope you’ve stayed with me this far

– is another tool in that work. Monthly Mod Musings (I just can't resist alliteration) will come your way with various observations about the life and doings within the PWV bounds – and maybe some other voices or broader material tossed in for good measure. I encourage you to share your good news, or even your concerns, about the world around you. We have created a new email account to make that easier: moderator@wvpresbytery.org, so please send along your offerings, questions and/or suggestions often as you wish.

One more piece of this puzzle: congregations are encouraged and welcome to invite presbytery leadership to come speak to their members, either as part of a regular worship service or other event. Lead Presbyter and Stated Clerk Maureen Wright, as well as other presbyter leaders are willing to come to you to answer questions, update and/or explain the ongoing restructuring, or present any information you seek. Just ask; it will be helpful if you can give them plenty of lead time – two months is not too much.

As Presbyterians, we often talk about being a connectional church, although sometimes we lose that sense of connection. We may look upon the presbytery as “they,” but actually, it is we, you and me and more than 5,000 others in our congregations.

When we live that out, we are stronger and more effective in following Christ, who says in Matthew 18:20: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

You will hear more about that retreat at the presbytery stated meeting on February 21 at Village Chapple Presbyterian Church in Charleston.

Grace and peace.