



# WORKSHOP OPTIONS 2026

## A – MORNING WORKSHOPS, 11 am – 12 noon

### **A-1 Using Storytelling to Spread the Word**

Looking for new ways to say the same thing that's been said for two thousand years? Hoping to liven up your oratory skills? Come to this workshop to find creative ways to turn sometimes bland Bible verses into exciting stories. Learn how to create stories that convey Christian truths through stories that at first seem secular. Use your personal experiences to expand your speaking and teaching abilities.

*Bil Lepp, award-winning storyteller, author, and recording artist*

### **A-2 Finding God at the End of Your Pen: Journaling as Spiritual Practice**

In this interactive workshop, we will explore the why and how of journaling as a practice for personal reflection and spiritual growth. Participants are encouraged to bring something to journal in and a writing utensil.

*Mary Quick, Spiritual Director and Ruling Elder at Spencer Presbyterian Church*

### **A-3 How Storytelling Can Help Seniors Heal**

This practical workshop will focus on why storytelling is so important to seniors; how to create safe spaces to share; how to facilitate storytelling; and how to help, not hurt in doing so. There will also be the opportunity to practice facilitating stories.

*Kathryn Willoughby Weed, Associate for Ministry to Older Adults, Presbytery of WV and Parish Associate, First Presbyterian Church, St. Albans*

### **A-4 Presenting to the People: Why Effective Communications Matter from the Pulpit to the Pews**

Are there effective ways to communicate within churches of every size across multi-generational congregations? Absolutely! We will look at the importance of aligning mission statements and core values, while continuing to share the main message, the love of God, in whatever we do across all communication channels, including social media.

*Kristin Rhodes, Communications Coordinator, Presbytery of WV*

## **A-5 Redefining Opportunity: What One Writer Learned from Immigration**

Rajia Hassib will give a presentation on her immigration and writing journey, focusing on how she believes immigrants redefine opportunity.

*Rajia Hassib, Egyptian American author of two novels and several short stories and essays; and instructor at Marshall University*

## **B WORKSHOPS - 1:15-2:15 pm**

### **B-1 My Story: A Journey of Recovery, Redemption, and Faith**

In this workshop, Bernard Slater, Jr. will share his powerful personal story, his fall from grace, and his journey through addiction, recovery, redemption, and renewed faith. Through honest reflection and testimony, Bernard offers hope, inspiration, and encouragement to others facing their own battles. Attendees will hear how his experiences shaped his purpose, strengthened his faith, and continue to guide his commitment to serving others. This session is meant to uplift, connect, and remind participants of the transformational power of God's grace.

*Bernard Slater, Jr., community advocate who openly shares his journey through addiction, recovery, and redemption*

### **B-2 Hope for Our Emerging Presbytery**

Join the Lead and Connectional Presbyters to share stories of hope from around the Presbytery of West Virginia. We will also use the lens of hope to reflect on the progress of implementing the Strategic Plan including the work of the staff, the new committees, and communication, especially communication and relationship building with the churches of the Presbytery.

*Maureen Wright, Lead Presbyter and Stated Clerk, Presbytery of WV as well as the newly-elected Connectional Presbyter*

### **B-3 Treasurer and Finance Committee Chat**

Review of responsibilities of Church Treasurer and Church Finance Committees. Discussion of best practices, important duties, Reports. Review responsibilities to the Presbytery, Board of Pensions, IRS ETC.

*Chris Alfred, Treasurer and Business Administrator, Presbytery of WV and ruling elder at First Presbyterian Church, Parkersburg*

#### **B-4 Scrapbooking for FUN!**

If you want to tell a story, or preserve one, scrapbooking might be for you! This workshop will put your memories in perspective. Bring 10 pictures and a scrapbook in the style of your choice. All other supplies will be provided. A fee of \$8 will defray the expenses for those supplies.

*Rita Sockman, scrapbooker who loves arts and crafts, and ruling elder at Village Chapel Presbyterian Church*

#### **B-5 Story Talk: Children's Books Celebrating Family Stories**

Explore the wealth of children's books which celebrate the power of family stories. Learn ways to incorporate these books into your church programming and family life.

*Terri McDougal, Head of Children's Services, Kanawha County Public Library and ruling elder at First Presbyterian, Dunbar*

### **C WORKSHOPS 2:25-3:25 pm**

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*Bil Lepp, award-winning storyteller, author, and recording artist*

#### **C-2 Singing the Stories of the Christian Faith**

*Ecclesia Reformata, Semper Reformanda*, Reformed, Always Being Reformed is the motto of the Presbyterian Church, and it equally applies to congregational song. How we express the story of the gospel in our worship music has changed through the ages, from Old Testament times to last Sunday. We will trace the changes, be introduced to prominent hymnwriters, and learn the stories behind the hymns they wrote.

*Pam Ferrell, Organist, Rock Lake Presbyterian Church and ruling elder at First Presbyterian Church, St. Albans*

### **C-3 Telling the Biblical Story through the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving**

The Great Thanksgiving, with its emphasis on thankful praise, has been of central importance to the sacrament of Communion from very early centuries in Christian worship. But its form, praising God, recalling Christ's work of redemption, and calling on the Holy Spirit, invites us to tell the key parts of the Biblical story every time we come to the table. We will explore the parts of the Great Prayer as outlined in the Book of Common Worship, discuss some creative resources, and try our hand at writing Great Prayers of our own.

*Todd Wright, Pastor, Village Chapel Presbyterian Church*

### **C-4 Growing Up Black in Appalachia**

A series of personal stories shared by W.I. "Bill" Hairston, one of Appalachia's renowned Storytellers and a retired pastor in the Presbytery. Through these stories he will share the good, the bad and the ugly events in his life that led him to be the person that God has molded. The participants will be able to share and react to the good ... and the bad experiences of a young Black man living in Appalachia in the 60's and 70's. At the end, the workshop leader will share how those events shaped his life today.

*Bill Hairston, storyteller, old-time musician and pastor*

### **C-5 A Budget That Tells a Story: Stewarding Resources for God's Mission**

A church budget is more than numbers—it is a reflection of faith, values, and calling. This workshop explores how narrative budgets help churches tell a faithful story of God's mission in action. Participants will discover how to translate financial data into meaningful ministry impact, strengthening stewardship and inviting deeper congregational engagement in the life of the church.

*Rev. Ellie Johns-Kelley, Ministry Relations Officer for the Allegheny and Chesapeake Region, Presbyterian Foundation*