



So What Is Going On?

March 14, 2024

A communication from Cherokee Presbytery

Cultivate

I spend parts of two weeks a year at Columbia Theological Seminary enrolled in the Leadership in Ministry workshops. I began participating in these in 2016. The workshops study leadership from a Bowen Family Systems Theory perspective. Utilizing this lens has helped me gain greater insights on how I function as a leader, a family member, and a colleague.

I joined the workshops out of some sense of desperation. I had a leader in my congregation that I could not figure out. Sometimes she was gracious, kind, and supportive. At others she was angry, accusing me of all the ills within the church (and maybe Christendom), often shouting that the church was falling on the scrapheap of dying churches across the country and if I wasn't willing to do anything to save the church, then she would despise me (I am exaggerating, but only slightly). At the time, I would get caught up in her emotions and react to her statements. But on reflection, I am able to see that it really had nothing to do with me. I was able to become curious about her intense reactions to the changes taking place in that congregation, community, and her life. And I wondered aloud why the leaders of the church tolerated her behaviors, some which served as needed guide rails for the church and many which kept the congregation stuck in outdated patterns of ministry.

By working on myself and how I function, I have learned a bit about how to help congregations function in ways that are less reactive and with lower anxiety. They have really helped, particularly as I have served in transition ministry in a number of contexts since that church.

Last week, Catherine Renken, Joel Alvis, Stephanie Bishop, and I all participated in the Spring workshops at Columbia. In addition to CTS, there are workshop locations in Richmond, Boston, and online offerings. Each month there are also webinars on Zoom. Margaret Marcuson, one of the faculty members, will be doing a free webinar on "Reframing Staff Leadership" for Leadership in Ministry on Friday, March 15, at 3:00 ET. Click [here](#) to register [here](#). (The event will also be recorded.)

While the workshops tend to be mostly geared towards pastors and CREs,

the webinars are helpful for all congregational leaders. I invite you to consider joining us tomorrow afternoon.

*For more information on Leadership in Ministry, please see:

<https://www.ctsnet.edu/academics/lifelong-learning/pastoral-excellence-programs-courses/>

Andy Casto-Waters
Acting General Presbyter

Support

2023 By The Numbers

Cherokee Presbytery ended 2023 with 29 churches, 3,538 members, and 80 ministers. Of those 29 churches, 21 turned in statistical information!

Here are the congregational statistics for 2023:

Churches over 500 members:	1
Churches over 200 members:	2
Churches over 100 members:	7
Churches under 100 members:	19

Seven churches showed net gains in membership: Acworth, Faith Blue Ridge, Cohutta, Deer Creek Shores, Kirkwood, First Marietta, and Ringgold. Of the five churches that cleaned their rolls ("deleted for any other reason"), three would have shown net gains if they had not had those significant deleted losses (First Cartersville, First Marietta, Rockmart).

Other statistics from the churches who reported:

Total gains – 156 (Certificate – 91; youth professions – 15; professions & reaffirmations – 50)

Total losses – 277 (Certificate – 54; deaths – 59; deleted for any other reason – 164)

Total Baptisms – 26 (Presented by others – 19; at confirmation – 3; all other – 4)

Friends of the Congregation – 453

Age distribution:

17 & under	65
18 – 25	176
26 – 40	384
41 – 55	427
56 – 70	878
Over 70	975
Total	2905 (obviously, not all churches reported this data!)

Asian/Pacific Islander/South Asian - 9

Black/African American/African - 44

Middle Eastern/North African - 3

Hispanic/Latino-a - 15
Native American/Alaska Native/Indigenous - 6
White - 287
Multiracial - 17

Gender Distribution:

Women	1751
Men	1218
Non-Binary	3

And of the 80 ministers, 52 are retired (and 6 are serving churches), 11 are serving in validated ministries, 16 are serving congregations, and one is a member-at-large.

Cherokee Presbytery is blessed with committed and faithful leaders, members, and churches. Let us work together to discern God's will and seek to strengthen a strong Reformed presence in northwest Georgia in 2024.



Facilitate

REMINDER if you are interested!

For those who participated or would like to learn more about "The Matthew 25 Summit", we are exploring having a Zoom conversation sometime in March. If you are interested, please let us know. Email sarita@cherokeepresbytery.org

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