

Surrounded by Prayers

February 28, 2018

I returned to the Mother Ship this week and was welcomed with open arms. Some of you have heard me refer to our denominational headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky as “the Mother Ship.” I mean it in the most loving way. Truly.

In the budget adopted by the Presbytery this past fall, you included a grant for me to participate in the Presbytery Leaders Formation program, offered by the Office of General Assembly and financially supported also by the Synod of Lakes & Prairies. I have a mentor, coach, and access to thoughtful written materials from presbytery executives who have far more experience than me. I pray this will make me a stronger and better leader for the Milwaukee Presbytery.

This week at the Mother Ship, I joined nine other new presbytery leaders to begin our collective learning and sharing. This visit gave me the opportunity to reconnect with friends and meet new colleagues at the Presbyterian Mission Agency. I met with Kathryn Threadgill, the Associate for Vital Congregations, to learn about the new congregational vitality initiatives and toolkits offered by the denomination. Next up was a meeting with Samuel Son, Manager of Diversity and Reconciliation, to request resources and build connections that lead us to fuller diversity as the Church.

At each instance, the Presbytery of Milwaukee was lifted in prayer. Could you feel it? The prayers were unsolicited and spontaneous. People from OGA and PMA earnestly prayed for our vision and faith; they urged the Spirit to move in our midst and to allow us to glorify God in new and amazing ways. Could you feel it? Did you notice? You will.

Our connectional church is a beautiful thing. Of course, in any family, there can be frustrations and even pain. The Presbyterian Church (USA) is no different. But, it continues to ground itself in God’s love, the Spirit that encourages and inspires, and the promise of salvation in our Lord, Jesus Christ. We connect with written resources and mentors; we connect with financial support; and we connect with prayer. Our colleagues in Louisville desire the very best for us, and they long to serve us in practical and spiritual ways.

In jest, I call this place the Mother Ship. Having worked here and having been surrounded by prayer this week – on your behalf – I mean this term in the most loving way. Truly.