

**MODERATOR'S REPORT
SEPTEMBER 28 & 29, 2018
MACKINAC PRESBYTERY MEETING**

May the Peace of the Lord be with you!

“But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.” James 3: 17, 18 (NIV)

Wow!! Has this year ever gone fast!! It seems like only yesterday that I received the Mackinac Presbytery stole and gavel from Jessica. Thank you for granting me the privilege of serving as your Moderator. As you may recall, I chose “Peace” as the theme for my year. Even as we are challenged, God’s grace and love can prevail and grant us peace. It is for us to continue to seek God’s will and move forward through whatever changes, challenges and opportunities He brings.

At our special meeting in December, I shared that I find it easy to be at peace in a church service, having confessed my sins, been assured of being forgiven, singing the Gloria Patri and sharing the peace of the Lord with my church family. But then I walk out the church door and am confronted with the bad news happening around the World. That is when I have to rely on God to provide me peace.

In a devotional from the August 28, 2017 “The Upper Room” which I shared at that Meeting, God’s peace in chaos is likened to walking into a grove of trees to escape a severe snow storm. In there the snow gently drifts down through the trees and you are protected from the wind. But you can see that outside the calm protected area, the storm continues to rage. That’s how it is with God’s Peace, the storms of life rage around us, but due to God’s love, we can receive His Peace.

During this year I had the opportunity to welcome pastors into Mackinac Presbytery membership; install a pastor to serve a congregation; re-commission and commission Commissioned Lay Pastors; worship with various congregations; participate in a church Education Wing addition dedication; participate in a church’s 90 year anniversary celebration and another church’s 150 year anniversary celebration; meeting with a church’s session and making a presentation about our Presbytery to the Synod of the Covenant Assembly. Those are just the highlights of a busy, motivational year.

In response to concern about lack of communication within the Presbytery, I attempted to activate our four regions hoping to have regular regional meetings where information could be shared from the Presbytery and churches could share good news and challenges they were facing. This effort resulted in one meeting in the Upper Peninsula East Region. For this effort to be successful there needs to be one or more individuals in each region who takes the responsibility of organizing these meetings. With our large

geographic area, I believe regional meetings are a necessity and can greatly contribute to communication within the Presbytery.

Another way I sought to improve communication this year was by sharing a Message to the Presbytery each month. For additional information about the activities of this past year I refer you to these Messages. Some of you have told me you appreciated them; how they communicated what had happened in the Presbytery and at meetings during the month; and hope` that they are continued by in the future.

As you know, your Coordinating Council has spent a great deal of time this year in study and discernment to determine God's will for our Presbytery. Also, we worked with the Synod's Administrative Commission (AC) reviewing allegations of dysfunction in the Presbytery. You have received a copy of the AC Report as approved by the Synod's Assembly in August and there will be a presentation of the Report at our Meeting. This Report will require some changes in our structure and mode of operation. We need to welcome this next year as an opportunity to grow in God's grace and love, being at peace with each other.

Again, I want to thank you for the privilege of serving as your Moderator this past year and look forward to serving you as Chair of the Coordinating Council. If you are asked to serve the Presbytery in some way, I hope you will find it to be God's will that you serve. I believe you will find it rewarding and a great way to share God's grace, love and peace. If we all put aside our self-interest and focus on God's will, great things can be done in the Northern Lower Peninsula and Upper Peninsula as we serve the One who gives us grace, love and peace. Let us "sow in peace".

And Jesus said, **"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."** John 14:27 (KJV)

Grace and Peace,
Richard A. Wissell, DrPH, Elder
Moderator